

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD ENGLISH SPEECH IN OUTLINE

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The Development of Standard English Speech in Outline by J. M. Hart

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PREFACE

This little book is the outcome of lectures which have been delivered for some years past to our students of Middle English. In preparing the manuscript for publication and in reading proof I have got much help of every sort from Assistant Professor C. S. Northup and Dr. B. S. Monroe. As a whole, then, the book may be said to represent Cornell aim and method.

The book presupposes: (1). Students who have some knowledge of Old English, although this knowledge need not be extensive nor profound. Cook's First Book in Old English, or Bright's Anglo-Saxon Reader (the general features of the grammar, with the reading of a few of the simpler prose texts), will be quite enough. (2). A thoroughly trained teacher, one conversant with Old and Middle English prose and verse, and equally conversant with grammatical and phonological investigation.

Further, this book is not a history of the language, not even in the barest outline, but merely an

attempt to show how the Englishman or American of to-day has come by his pronunciation. Only where there was need of explaining apparent inconsistencies of pronunciation have I touched upon grammatical forms. And in handling the extremely difficult problem of Palatalization, §§ 19, 20, I have felt constrained to go even beyond the limits of Old English grammar and introduce theories which belong in strictness to comparative grammar. Here the teacher's guidance is indispensable. On my part I have given, I trust, theory enough and data enough for fairly logical deduction.

For the most profitable use of this book I would recommend two other works. The one is Skeat's Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language (ed. of 1901), an inexpensive and most convenient book for ready reference. It is not wholly free from errors, the author does not always exhibit the courage of his best knowledge. Nevertheless the book is a model of concise scholarship. The other work is O. F. Emerson's Middle English Reader, which offers the best collection of texts, the fullest annotation, and the fullest glossary. Of Professor Emerson's Grammatical Introduction my praise must be slightly qualified. With the purely grammatical part (declension, conjugation, &c.) I

have no fault to find ; but the author's treatment of the phonology is open to two criticisms. In the first place he tries to explain many phenomena which the beginner can afford to ignore ; in treating such an amorphous speech as Middle English, certainly amorphous until the coming of Chaucer, one should concentrate one's energies upon the most general phenomena and leave the rest to time. In the second place, Professor Emerson starts with Middle English sounds and harks back to Old English. This, it seems to me, is both awkward and unnatural. Surely no student in 1906 will begin his study of the language with Middle English, a procedure barely pardonable in the autodidacts of 1806.

Towards Kluge and other German scholars my attitude has been in places decidedly conservative, not to say rebellious. Although my obligations to Kluge's *Geschichte der englischen Sprache* are self-confessed on almost every page of this book, I must protest against his use of certain terms involving serious misconceptions. I mean the terms *Rückkehr* and *Rückumlaut*. They invite one to believe that *k* once palatalized to *ch* "goes back" to *k*, that *u* once unlauded to *y* "goes back" to *u*. Nothing of the sort ever happened or ever could have happened ! Next, in nearly all phonological dis-

cussions there is too much Ormulum ; the work of Brother Orm is viewed as if it were the norm of twelfth-century speech. This is to overlook the patent fact that it represented only one small district. Lastly, I am more than puzzled by the air of confidence with which the German school blocks out mediæval England in squares like a checker-board and assigns each bit of writing, from Layamon's Brut to the "Alliterative Poems," to its particular little square. I must confess to being deplorably deficient in this sense of the fourth dimension.

A word or two upon some peculiar signs and abbreviations used in these pages.

* denotes an assumed form. Either a form which may well have existed in the historical language, but which has accidentally not been preserved ; e. g., **drop*, **dropp*, § 12. Or a purely conjectural form which philological theory postulates for pre-historic times in explanation of historical forms ; e. g., **lay̅on*, **lay̅ō*, &c., p. 73.

[] denotes phonetic spelling, the vowels having the so-called Continental value.

ȝ is both phonetic and grammatical ; it represents a genuine semi-vowel which may function either as a pure vowel *i* or as a pure consonant *y*.

ð represents the peculiar English diphthongal sound in *law, saw, call, taught*.

ə is used, somewhat loosely, to indicate any indistinct vowel sound outside of the regular scale: *a-e-i-o-u, ö-ü*. In a strictly phonetic treatise I should have used more than one character; for the present book the ə seemed enough.

ǰ represents a *k* in the first stage of palatalization; the complete palatalization of *k* is represented by *ch* or [tʃ]. The corresponding voiced palatal, the *j* of *joke*, the *g* of *giant*, is here represented by [dʒ]; the usual sign might be confounded with an O. E. *dg*.

G. T. (General Teutonic) is a safer abbreviation than *Germ.* (Germanic), which might be mistaken for German, the language of Germany proper. General Teutonic is that purely hypothetical form of speech which lies back of English, German, Scandinavian, Gothic.

Sievers refers to *An Old English Grammar*, by Eduard Sievers. Translated and Edited by Albert S. Cook. Third edition.

J. M. HART.