

**PALATAL CONSONANTS  
IN ENGLISH  
WITH THE COMPLIMENTS  
OF THE AUTHOR**

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Palatal Consonants in English with the compliments of the author by Benjamin Duryea  
Woodward

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**BENJAMIN DURYEA WOODWARD**

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BY

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B. S. S., SORBONNE, PARIS, 1885

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## PREFACE.

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THE basis of this dissertation is the incontrovertible series of palatal sounds exemplified in the English language of the present day. These sounds are by no means peculiar to the primitive speech, but have crept in at periods more or less remote, and are still creeping in with or without our knowledge.

The end proposed is to gather such words as contain palatal consonants, to trace them back to their original sources, and to justify their present forms through comparative research in cognate languages.

On questions of etymology, reference is made almost exclusively to Skeat's "Etymological Dictionary," and in many instances passages are quoted literally. These quotations are so numerous that it seemed needless to designate them in any specific way. Wherever a number is affixed in parenthesis to a word of several meanings, it is indicative of the order in which Skeat has taken them.

On pronunciation, Stormonth's "Dictionary of the English Language" has been generally considered authority. Incidentally, however, reference is made also to other orthoëpists, such as Ayres, Phyfe, B. M. Skeat, and Sweet,—their works being of particular value inasmuch as they frequently sum up conclusions reached by authorities of wider recognition. They are, moreover, of special interest in that they call attention to fallacious pronunciations and popular tendencies.

It was not considered necessary, or even expedient, to adopt a system of transliteration. It is sufficient to note that  $\bar{u}$  is a compound vowel-sound, represented in pronunciation by the

entire word *you* ; and that *oo* is equivalent in sound to *oo* in the word *rood*.

The connecting sign = signifies equivalence.

Etymological or inflectional relationship of two words, and, in general, priority of forms are evidenced by >, <, — the form at the vertex being in every case older or primary.

Words with prefixed \* are no more than suppositional in form.

ABBREVIATIONS.

Anglo-F.....	Anglo-French.	N. E.....	Northern English Di- alect, i.e., Lowland Scotch.
A. S.....	Anglo-Saxon.	N. of E.....	North of England.
Bret.....	Breton.	Norm. F....	Norman French.
C.....	Celtic.	O. Du.....	Old Dutch.
Dan.....	Danish.	O. F.....	Old French.
Du.....	Dutch (mod.).	O. H. G.....	Old High German.
E.....	English (mod.).	O. It.....	Old Italian.
E. E.....	Early English.	O. L. G.....	Old Low German.
E. W. S.....	Early West Saxon.	O. S.....	Old Saxon.
F.....	French (mod.).	Pers.....	Persian.
G.....	German (mod.).	Port.....	Portuguese.
Gael.....	Gaelic.	Prov.....	Provençal.
Gk.....	Greek.	Prov. E.....	Provincial English.
Goth.....	Gothic.	Scand.....	Scandinavian.
Ic.....	Icelandic.	Skt.....	Sanskrit.
It.....	Italian (mod.).	Slav.....	Slavonic.
L.....	Latin (class.).	Span.....	Spanish.
L. L.....	Low Latin.	Swed. (dial.)	Swedish (dialect).
Late L.....	Late Latin.	Turk.....	Turkish.
L. W. S.....	Late West Saxon.		
M. E.....	Middle English.		
M. H. G.....	Middle High German.		

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

§ 1. A comparative table of consonantal sounds such as are to be found in the English language of the present day, and such as existed in the primitive Teutonic idioms, evinces considerable numerical increase on the part of the former.

§ 2. Most interesting among these additions is the class of sounds generally alluded to under the name of palatal sounds, and it is with this variety more especially that the following dissertation will deal, in respect both to their origin and to their development in English.

§ 3. Many instances suggested in a study of sound-mutation, and here in particular of assibilation, consonification, and palatalisation, are confirmed in their present form by a comparative study of parallel cases in other languages. The organs of speech are essentially the same the world over; and no definite reason would preclude like tendencies on the part of different peoples placed under similar circumstances. More especially can this be said to be true of a period when literary monuments and national academies had not as yet confined their respective languages to a set form; and when consequently there was nothing to thwart any attempt at modifying hereditary harshness of speech in favor of such a new articulation as should follow a course of less physiological resistance.

§ 4. This comparative study yields pre-eminently rich results in the case of the English language. For not only is English notably unphonetic in spelling, but the pronunciations insisted upon by the various authorities are often so conflicting that the field is ever open to the conciliatory efforts of orthoëpists.

§ 5. These divergencies are to be ascribed in very great measure to the fact that the English of to-day consists appar-

ently of heterogeneous elements. But an investigation of these elements will show that there is really much more consistency than would appear at first sight.

§ 6. In the main, English syntax and grammar are essentially Teutonic. The primitive Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, it is true, has been impoverished by the loss of many strong, expressive words; but this loss has been amply compensated by the vast amount of Romance material brought into England at the time of the Norman invasion. And, in its turn, this Romance element could not fail to leave many a lasting influence on numerous primitive words with which it came in daily contact.

§ 7. As with Teutonic languages, so also with Romance languages, palatal sounds were originally unknown. It is only in the protracted course of time that in the colloquial talk of the middle and lower classes during the declining days of the Roman Empire, the strong primitive system of articulation gave way to a softer, more effeminate mode of speaking. Thus in the case of Romance languages, this change had taken place, to a certain extent, previous to the introduction of Latin into Gaul. The Low Latin imposed and fostered in a new country by uncultured soldiers, was unrestrained in its development. It grew apace with the people, yielded to common tendencies, and took such a hold that, at the time of the introduction of Norman French into England, reform was a practical impossibility.

§ 8. But as the onward march of events would have it, Anglo-Saxon had been slowly undergoing a similar change at the hands of the English-speaking people; and the new element was not only readily assimilated but it contributed in no small degree to further degeneracy of speech in the native tongue of the invaded soil.

NOTE.—In connection with the gradual evolution of palatals from gutturals in late Anglo-Saxon, cf. Cook-Sievers' "Old English Grammar," § 206, where it is said in substance that guttural sounds were transferred from Germanic to primitive Old English without change. In the course of time, the original gutturals became palatals in certain situations, and these again affected the sounds in their vicinity in a particular manner. Initial *c*, *g* became palatal before the primary palatal vowels and their *i*-umlauts, but remained guttural before guttural vowels, their *i*-umlauts, and consonants. Initial *sc* shows a tendency to palatalisation without regard to the following vowel. Medial *c* and