

Author: Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682)

Text type: Varia

Date of composition: 1684

Editions: 1684, 1686, 1927, 1964.

Source text:

Browne, Sir Thomas. 1684. "On the dialect of Norfolk". *Certain Miscellany Tracts written by Thomas Brown, K., and Doctour of Physick, late of Norwich.* London: Printed for Charles Mearne: 138-139; 146-147.

e-text

Access and transcription: October 2014

Number of words: 546

Dialect represented: Norfolk

Produced by Maria F. Garcia-Bermejo Giner

Copyright © 2014- DING, The Salamanca Corpus, Universidad de Salamanca



CERTAIN
MISCELLANY
TRACTS.

Written by

THOMAS BROWN, K^t,

and Doctour of Physick;

late of *NORWICH.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Charles Mearne*, and are to be sold

by *Henry Bonwick*, at the *Red Lyon*,

in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*,

MDCLXXXIV

[138]

The Saxons settling over all *England* maintained an uniform Language, onely diversified in Dialect, Idioms, and minor differences, according to their different Nations, which came in to the common Conquest, which may yet be a cause for the variation in the speech and words of several parts of England, where different Nations most abode or settled, and having expelled the Britanes, their Wars were chiefly among themleves, with little action with foreign Nations untill the union of the Heptarchy under Egbert; after which time although the Danes infested this Land and scarce left any part free, yet their incursions made more havock in Buildings, Churches and Cities than the Language of the Country, because their Language was in effect the same, and such as whereby they might easily understand one another.

And if the Normans, which came into *Neastria* or *Normandy* with *Rollo* the Dane, had preserved their Language in their new acquists, the succeeding Conquest of *England*, by Duke *William* of his race, had not begot among us such notable alterations; but having lost their Language in their abode in *Normandy* before they adventured

[139]

upon *England*, they confounded the English with their French, and made the grand mutation, which was successively encreased by our possessions in *Normany*, *Guien* and *Aquitain* by our long Wars in *France*, by frequent resort of the French, who to the number of some thousands came over with *Isabel* Queen to *Edward* the Second, and the several Matches of *England* with the Daughters of *France* before and since that time.

But this commixture, though sufficient to confuse, proved not of ability to abolish the Saxon words; for from the French we have borrowed many Substantives, Adjectives and some Verbs, but the great Body of Numerals, auxiliary Verbs, Articles, Pronouns, Adverbs, Conjunctions and Prepositions, which are the distinguishing and lasting part of a Language, remain with us from the Saxon, which, having suffered no great alteration for many hundred years, may probably still remain, though the English well with the inmates of Italian, French and Latin. ...

[146]

It were not impossible to make an origina reduction of many words of no general reception in *England* but of common use in *Norfolk*, or peculiar to the East Angle Countries: as *Bawnd*, *Bunny*, *Thurck*, *Enemmis*, *Sammodithe*, *Mawther*, *Kedge*, *Seele*, *Strast*, *Clever*, *Matchly*, *Dere*, *Nicked*, *Stingy*, *Noneare*, *Fest*, *Thepes*, *Gosgood*, *Kamp*, *Sibrit*, *Fangast*, *Sap*, *Cothish*, *Thokish*, *Bide owe*, *Paxwax*: of these and some others of no easie originals, when time will permit, the resolution may be attempted; which to effect, the Danish Language new and more ancient may prove of good advantage; which Nation remained here fifty years upon agreement, and have left many Families in it, and the Language of these parts had surely been more

[147]

commixed and perplex, if the Fleet of *Hugo de Bones* had not been cast away, wherein threescore thousand Souldiers out of *Britany* and *Flanders* were to be wasted over, and were by King *John*'s appointment to have a settled habitation in the Counties of *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*.

