IV. Danish, like Swedish, is divided into the two great Pre- and Post-Reformation epochs of Old and Modern Danish.

1. *Old Danish.—*The territory of Old Danish included not only the present Denmark, but also the southern Swedish pro­vinces of Halland, Skåne, and Blekinge, the whole of Schles­wig, and, as stated above, for a short period also a great part of England, and Normandy. The oldest monuments of the lan­guage are runic inscriptions, altogether about 250 in number. @@1 The oldest of them go as far back as to the beginning of the 9th century, the Snoldelev-stone for instance on Sealand, and the Flemløse-stone on Fünen. From about the year 900 date the very long inscriptions of Tryggevælde (Sealand) and Glavendrup (Fünen) ; from the 10th century we have the stones of Jællinge (Jutland), in memory of two of the oldest historical kings of Denmark (Gorm and Harald) ; while from about 1000 we have a stone at Dannevirke (Schleswig), raised by the conqueror of England, Sven Tjuguskægg. Relics of about the same age are the words that were introduced by the Danes into English, the oldest of which date from the end of the 9th century, the time of the first Danish settlement in England ; most of these are to be found in the early English work *Ormulum. @@*2 No Danish literature arose before the 13th century. The oldest manuscript that has come down to us dates from the end of that century, written in runes and containing the law of Skåne. From about the year 1300 we possess a manuscript written in Latin characters and containing Valdemar’s and Erik’s laws of Sealand, the Flensborg manuscript of the law of Jutland, and a manuscript of the municipal laws of Flensborg. These three manuscripts represent three different dialects,—that, namely, of Skåne, Halland, and Blekinge, that of Sealand and the other islands, and that of Jutland and Schleswig. There existed no uniform literary language in the Old Danish period, although some of the most important works of the 15th century, such as Michael’s *Poems* and the *Rhymed Chronicle* (the first book printed in Danish, in 1495), on account of their excellent diction, contributed materially to the final preponderance of their dialect, that of Sealand, towards the Reformation.

As to the form of the language, it hardly differs at all during the period between 800 and 1200 a.d. from Old Swedish. It is only in the oldest literature that we can trace any marked differ­ences; these are not very important, and are generally attributable to the fact that Danish underwent a little earlier the same changes that afterwards took place in Swedish *(e.g., h* in *hv* and *hj* in Danish was mute as early as the end of the 14th century ; *cf.* p. 372, above). The laws referred to above only agree in differing from the Swedish laws in the following points :—the nominative already takes the form of the accusative (as *kalf,* calf, but Old Sw. nom. *kalver,* acc. *kalf)* ; the second person plural ends in -æ (as *köpæ,* but Old Sw. *köpin,* you buy) ; in the subjunctive no differ­ences are expressed between persons and numbers. Among them­selves, on the contrary, they show considerable differences ; the law of Skåne most nearly corresponds with the Swedish laws, those of Sealand keep the middle place, while the law of Jutland exhibits the most distinctive individuality. The Skåne law, *e.g.,* retains the vowels *a, i, u* in terminations, which otherwise in Danish have become uniformly *æ* ; the same law inserts *b* and *d* between certain consonants (like Old Sw. ; see p. 371), has pre­served the dative, and in the present tense takes the vowel of the infinitive; the law of Jutland, again, does not insert *b* and *d,* and has dropped the dative, while the present tense (undergoing an “ Umlaut”) has not always accepted the vowel of the infinitive; in all three characteristics the laws of Sealand fluctuate. After 1350 we meet an essentially altered language, in which we must first note the change of *k, ρ, t* after a vowel into *g, b, d* (as *tag,* roof, *løbe,* to run, *æde,* to eat) ; *th* passes into *t* (as *ting,* thing), *gh* into *w* (as *law* for *lagh,* guild) and into *i* (as *vei* for *wægh,* way) ; *ld, nd* are pro­nounced like *ll, nn* ; *s* is the general genitive ending in singular and plural, &c. The vocabulary, which in earlier times only borrowed a few and those mostly ecclesiastical words, is now —chiefly owing to the predominant influence of the Hanse towns— inundated by German words, such as those beginning with *be-, bi-, ge-, for-,* and *und-,* and ending in *-hed,* and a great number of others, as *blive,* to become, *ske,* to happen, *fri,* free, *krig,* war, *buxer,* pantaloons, *ganske,* quite, &c.

An Old Danish grammar is still wanting, and the preparatory studies which exist are, although excellent, but few in number, being chiefly essays by the Danes K. J. Lyngby and L. F. A. Wimmer, with N. M. Petersen’s treatise *Det Danske, Norske, og Svenske sprogs historic,* vol. i. (1829), one of the first works that paid any attention to Old Danish, which till then had been com­pletely neglected. A dictionary on a large scale covering the whole of Old Danish literature, except the very oldest, by O. Kalkar, has been in course of publication since 1881 ; older and smaller is Chr. Molbech’s *Dansk Glossarium* (1857-66).

2. *Modern Danish. —*The first important monument of this is the translation of the Bible, by Chr. Pedersen, Peder Palladius, and others, the so-called Christian III.’s Bible (1550), famous for the unique purity and excellence of its language, the dialect of Sealand, then incontestably promoted to be the language of the kingdom. The first secular work deserving of the same praise is Vedel's translation of Saxo (1575). The succeeding period until 1750 offers but few works in really good Danish ; as perfectly classical, however, we have to mention the so-called Christian V.'s Law of Denmark (1683). For the rest, humanism has stamped a highly Latin-French character on the literature, striking even in the works of the principal writer of this period, Holberg. But about the year 1750 there begins a new movement, characterized by a reaction against the language of the preceding period and purist tendencies, or, at least, efforts to enrich the language with new- formed words (not seldom after the German pattern), as *omkreds,* periphery, *selvstændighed,* independence, *valgsρrog,* devise, *digter,* poet. The leading representatives of these tendencies were Eilschow and Sneedorf. From their time Danish may be said to have acquired its present essential features, though it cannot be denied that several later authors, as J. Ewald and Öhlenschläger, have exercised a considerable influence on the poetical style. As the most important differences between the grammatical forms of the 18th and 19th centuries on one hand and those of the 16th and 17th centuries on the other may be noted the following :—most neuter substantives take a plural ending ; those ending in a vowel form their plural by adding *-r* (as *riger,* for older *rige,* plural of *rige,* kingdom), and many of those ending in a consonant by adding *-e* (as *huse* for *hus,* of *hits,* house) ; substantives ending in *-ere* drop their final *-e* (as *dommer* for *dommere,* judge) ; the declension with suffixed article becomes simplified in the same way as in Swedish (see above, p. 372) ; the plural of verbs takes the singular form (as *drak* for *drukke,* we drank) ; and the preterite subjunctive is sup­planted by the infinitive (as *var* for *vaare,* were). The first Modern Danish grammar is by E. Pontoppidan, 1668, but in Latin ; the first in Danish is by the famous Peder Syv, 1685. The works of the self-taught J. Højsgaard (*e.g*., *Accentueret og raisonneret grammatica,* 1747) possess great merit, and are of especial import­ance as regards accent and syntax. The earlier part of this century gave us Rask’s grammar (1830). A thoroughly satisfactory Modern Danish grammar does not exist ; perhaps the best is that by Th. Möbius (1871). The vocabulary of the 16th and 17th centuries is collected in Kalkar’s *Ordbog,* mentioned above, that of the 18th and 19th centuries in the voluminous and as yet unfinished dictionary of Videnskabernas Selskab, and in C. Molbech’s *Dansk ordbog* (2d ed. 1859). @@3

As already mentioned (p. 370), Danish at the Reformation became the language of the literary and educated classes of Norway and remained so for three hundred years, although it cannot be denied that many Norwegian authors even during this period wrote a language with a distinct Norwegian colour, as for instance the prominent prose-stylist Peder Claussøn Friis (+1614), the popular poet Peder Dass (+ 1708), and, in a certain degree, also the two literary masters of the 18th century, Hol­berg and Wessel. But it is only since 1814, when Norway gained her independence, that we can clearly perceive the so- called Dano-Norwegian gradually developing as a distinct offshoot of the general Danish language. The first representatives of this new language are the writer of popular life M. Hansen (+ 1842), the poet H. Wergeland (+ 1845), and above all the tale- writer P. C. Asbjørnsen (+ 1885). In our own days it has been further developed, especially by the great poets Ibsen and Bjørnson and the novelist Lie ; and it has been said, not without reason, to have attained its classical perfection in the works of the first-named author. This language differs from Danish particularly in its vocabulary, having adopted very many Norwegian provincial words (6000 to 7000), less in its inflexions, but to a very great extent in its pronunciation. The most striking differences in this re­spect are the following :—Norwegian *p*, *t, k* answer to Danish *b, d, g* in cases where they are of later date (see above),—as *løpe,* Danish *løbe,* to run, *liten,* D. *liden,* little, *bak,* D. *bag,* back) ; to Danish *k, g* before palatal vowels answer Norwegian *tj, j ; r* (point- trill, not back-trill as in Danish) is assimilated in some way with following *t (d), l, n,* and *s* into so-called supradental sounds (see p. 372) ; both the primitive Scandinavian systems of accentuation are still kept separate from a musical point of view, in opposition to the monotonous Danish. There are several other character­istics, nearly all of which are points of correspondence with Swedish. @@4 Dano-Norwegian is grammatically treated by J. Løkke *(Mοdersmaalets formlære,* 1855), K. Knudsen *(Dansk-Norsk sprog- lsere,* 1856), and K. Brekke *(Bιdrag til Dansk-Norskens lydlære,* 1881), and others.

At the middle of this century, however, far more advanced pre- tensions were urged to an independent Norwegian language.

@@@1 See P. G. Thorsen, *De Danske runemindesmærker,* i., 1864, ii., 1879-81 ; L. F. A. Wimmer, “ Runeskriftens Oprindelse” *(Aarbφgerfοr Βοrdisk Oldkyndighed,* 1874).

@@@2 See E. Brate, “ Nordische Lehnwörter im Orrmulum ” *(Paul-Braune’s Beiträge,* x, 1884).

@@@3 See L(udvig) W(immer). “Det Danske Sprog,” in *Nordisk Conversations- lexikon,* 3d ed., 1885 ; T. Ström, *Dansk Literaturhistorie,* 2d ed., 1878.

@@@4 See J. A. Lundell, “Norskt språk” (*Nordisk Tidskrift,* 1882).