

Camden says, "We have borrowed names from everything good and bad," and one curiosity-hunter asserts that he has discovered from 30,000 to 40,000 English surnames. This estimate gives from 15,000 to 25,000 more words than can be found in Shakespeare, the greatest word-user in literature. To furnish these names, the histories, languages, manners, prejudices, passions, localities and cant words of all peoples and times, have been laid under contribution. But though curiosity may have done a large business in gathering these facts and foibles of the noble Briton, it has done much, also, in this name-hunting, to throw light upon the history, condition, manners and customs of the British people.

The Ancient Hebrews did not employ surnames. They had their Jacobs, Davids and Jonas; but the family name was unknown. So of the Greeks. They had their Xenophons, Homers and Solons. In some cases the name of father, or place of birth, was added to prevent confusion, and, in other cases, a second name was given to mark some peculiarity of character or achievement. Thus, Antiochus became Antiochus Epiphanes—the Magnificent, and simple Ptolemy became Ptolemy Soter—the *Deliverer*. Sometimes a father would couple, or incorporate, the names of a distinguished ancestor with that of a son, to remind him of heroic deeds and to fire the spirit of emulation. But these second names did not descend to the bearers' posterity. We have something analogous in British history. The virtues or vices of the king and others, frequently suggested a second name. The school-boy can tell us all about Edward the *Confessor*, Edward *Ironside*, William the *Conqueror*, Robert the *Devil*, &c. To prevent confusion among the people, a *sobriquet* was prefixed to the patronymic or father-name. This took the form of *Mac*,—*Son*—among the Highlanders of Scotland, *MacArthur*, the son of Arthur, and *MacDonald*, the son of Donald, became the distinctions. The Irish employed the prefix *Oy*. or *O'*. meaning grandson, which still survives in the O'Tooles, O'Haras, &c. *Mac*, also, is common. And these two, *Mac* and *O'*, according to an old Rhymster are essential to the very constitution of a true Irishman :—

"By Mac and O, you'll always know  
True Irishmen they say;  
For if they lack both O and Mac,  
No Irishmen are they."

For the same purpose, the Welsh, down to recent times, added *ap*, son, to the surname. Evan *ap* Howell; Jabez *ap* Richard; John *ap* Rhys; &c., which are now served up to us in Powell, Pritchard