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## ELICITIOUS NAMES.

(Concluded.)

Yet am I sensible that I am the victim of a deep-spread and deeply-rooted injustice. My son tells me that this feeling against and in favour of particular names and sounds is nothing more than the effects of wind, fancy, prejudice, habit, association.

Had there come over to England five hundred years ago, some marauding Norman Baron, or Sir (seignald de Swipes, probably his time Swipes might have been a gallant, sounding title, and they would have substituted some other abbreviation for small-ale. Would that it had been so!

But it is principally the poets, romancers, and other fictionists that have created and kept alive this delusion concerning names. Their works they have annexed certain virtues and certain vices: certain graces and certain vulgarities, to certain classes of names, and these names have in consequence, and by long continuance in such courses, become habitually and conventionally either virtuous or vicious; or gracious or vulgar. Other sort of writers retain a few intermediate ones, of an equal character, to suit the jaundiced and half-fledged reputations; but there is no missing the two extremes. Take up ten novels in nine out of the ten, if your eye lights on Beverley, Mortimer, or a Stanley, be sure of all sorts of brave, noble, generous, and spirited qualities and properties appertain these gentlemen. If you see mention made of a Rutven or a Arkham, ten to one but the former is the dark, designing, diabolical villain of the piece. And the latter his confederate, agent, or tool; and if there is a Potts or a Nihilis, the inference to be drawn is obvious. There is even an arbitrary classification, though not so marked off, of the pretty names of heroines. If you see any Fannies, Marias, Jessies, reckon with confidence on their being soft, sensitive, pensive, meek, mild, gazing blue-eyed damsels—victims or intended victims. And if there be an Augusta, Eleanor, a Caroline, or a Lady Jane, you may predict that they are high-souled, high-spirited, proud, lofty, black-eyed, black-bred, high-born dames—amiable or otherwise. It may chance to suit. Indeed, so well understood has this sort of thing become, that one tolerably conversant with such matters, glancing through a novel or reading the characters of a new play, can, without his standing, pick out the hero or the heroine, the doat-father, the avaricious guardian, the fop, the scoundrel, the lawyer, merely by the name. Should my unfortunate one appear in a new piece, it would signify, as plainly as here were a stage direction appended to it, "low fellow," or "waiter at a pot-house." It is too bad. Much unhappiness has been seen in the actual world by such absurd distinctions.

What, let me ask, is the use of any man possessing the habits, manners, feelings, and education of a gentleman, should he unfortunately happen to be called Muggs or Uggz? Our elder and more vigorous novelists did countenance this unfairness, but called their heroes Jones, and Pickle, and Random—Trews, and Adams, and Humphrey Clinker; their puny successors, fairly swamped them. They never thought of human nature actual life; but were all for nobility, gentility, or noble or villainous-looking impersonations of the virtues and the vices.

Much preferable was the open and direct term of the dramatists of the olden time, they plainly by the name intended to shadow the habits, disposition, and employment of man. When they called a fellow "Swashes Kler," you knew what you had to expect in him. The very name of Sir Epicure Mammon is the character half-sketched; and on Wart, Fribble, Mouldy, and Bulwer appear upon the stage, their titles give force and assistance to replies which the business of the scene necessarily renders too brief to give an idea of their characters. But those names did no harm in common every-day life. They were attached to individuals, not to species. They appertained to a particular

character in a particular play, and there the matter began and ended. There was not two Sir Epicure Mammons, or two Sir Frivolous Fashions; nor any settled rule which marked out Howard as being synonymous with gallantry and good-looks, or affixed the stigma of baseness and vulgarity upon Dawson and Scout.

It was very unhandsome in my Lord Byron, because he happened to be blessed with a noble and chivalrous name himself, to sneer at those less fortunately circumstanced—

"Oh Cottle! Amos Cottle! What a name!"

Suppose it had so happened that he had himself been called Cottle, instead of Byron, as the saying is—"how could he have helped it?" Would he, or that account, have shut up all the wags and misanthropes, real and imaginary, in the breast of a Cottle, which found such ready vent from the lozenge of a Byron? Would the

"Face thee well! and if for ever?"

not have been written; and would Childe Harold have travelled through Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor without saying anything about it?

If so, let us be thankful he was a Byron, and not a Cottle.

Still it was unfair to attack poor Amos on that ground. He might have abused his poetry, but ought to have spared his name. It was not the man's fault; it was like lampooning a personal deformity.

But it was not Byron alone; Canning, who was a statesman and a legislator; and ought to have known better, has a fling both at him and his relative—

It was not the Cottle who Alfred made famous, But Joseph of Bristol, the brother of Amos." Shame—shame!

But Amos and myself are alike the victims of an absurd prejudice.

I will put one more case, in order to show its manifest injustice. What can be finer than those lines in Childe Harold, Canto III, Stanza twenty-nine, on the Field of Waterloo.

"Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;

Yet one I would select from that proud throng, Partly because they bleed me with his lines; And partly that I did his sire some wrong; And partly that bright names will hallow long; And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd The death-bolts deadliest thinn'd files along, Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd, They reached no nobler breast than thine, young gallant Howard!"

But suppose the young man had been called Muggins? He would have fought and fallen just as bravely, just as nobly—but what in that case would have become of his lordship's love, admiration, and sense of retributive justice. The poor fellow would have died if not "unhonoured," at least "unsung;" for Muggins rhymes not to anything I know of except Huggins, and both are peculiarly inapplicable for poetical purposes, according to our present ideas. His lordship would not have run the risk of setting the critics a sneering and the public a laughing, and Muggins would have died unknown.

On what slight causes does our chance of immortality depend.

Now Swipes rhymes to many things, but they are all of the same low and ignoble character—"wipes," "snipes," "pipes," and so on.

No, it is—I feel it is—impossible to raise or dignify it.

But my feelings again get the better of me.

It is much to be wondered how such names, together with hosts of everyday occurrence, ever get a footing in the world. We can account for many very easily.

The Robsons and the Hobsons, the Tomsons and the Bensons, the Harrisons and the Collinsons, the Johnsons and the Jacksons, are all plainly enough the sons of Rob, Hob, Tom, Ben, Harry, Collin, John and Jack. Of these there is an infinite variety.

So also the Smiths, the Glivers, the Dyers, the Carpenters, the Taylors, the Masons, clearly originate with persons following mechanical and labourous occupations and handicrafts in the olden time.

The Clerks and the Penmen are equally obvious. So are the Archers and the Bowmen. Likewise the Cooks.

Neither would it puzzle a conjurer to account for the numerous family of the colours—the Blacks, Whites, Browns, Greens, Scarlets, &c.

The Blackbirds, Nightingales, Goldfinches, Swans, Parrots, Ducks, Drakes, Hawks, etc., might have arisen from their being attached before there was any regular form of baptism, to individuals on account of their tawny, ostentatious, uncleanly, or rapacious habits, and have descended to their offspring.

The Bulls, Calfs, Hogs, Pigs, and other bestial titles for christian man, may have their origin in the real or fancied resemblances, in qualities or disposition of the tenete progenitors of the present race of Bulls, Calfs, Hogs, and Pigs, to the qualities and dispositions of those several animals.

The Bacous must have been a collateral branch of the Hogs.

The numerous families of the Lions and the Lambs, which are the occasion of so many beautiful newspaper jokes when one of each kind lie down together, must have appertained to the meek and warlike in past ages.

The Fishes must anciently have been a maritime tribe—good swimmers.

The Fishers were probably a rapacious and cunning set, who used the Hooks and Hooks to plunder and destroy the Fishes.

The Norths, Wests, Souths, and Easts must have emigrated from those points, and the Snows, Hails, and Rains, have been in some way connected with the elements, whose names they bear.

The Hills, the Dales, the Rocks, the Cliffs, the Lakes, the Woods, the Greenwood, the Forests, and the Mountains, must formerly have been Hail o'-th-Hill, Dan o'-th-Dale, Pile o'-th-Rock, Clean o'-th-Cliff, and so on, to distinguish them from other Hais, Dais, Robs, or Clems, and the distinction has settled upon their descendants.

The Towers, Hill-houses, Hardcastles, were doubtless very formidable and impregnable gentlemen formerly.

The Graces and Well-beloveds smack of a recent and punitarian derivation. They do not much abound. Neither are there many Saints.

Without much difficulty also may such *outré* titles as Sherpshanks, Longfellow, Heavy-sides, Remsbottom, etc., be accounted for.

I abstain from any observations on the origin of such names as the Cravens and the Cowards. Their present possessors may be as brave as lions. Besides, it does not become any one circumstanced as I am to make illiberal or unpleasant reflections.

All these and many others are obvious or probable, but what I want to know is, how such unaccountable and unseemly titles as Muggs, Wiggins, Jubbs, Clutterbuck, Sniggs, Snooks, Hugginbottom, and a host of others, too numerous to mention, first found their way into the world. Who invented them? Who propagated them? Above all—who was the first Swipes? Are such titles Teutonick, Sclavonick, or Celtic? Had they their origin in the Scandinavian forests, or among the fogs of Jutland? Do they belong to the aboriginal Britons, or did any of them come from Saxony with Hengist and Horsa? Had Pagan Pomerania to do with them? Did the Romans find them on the British islands? Does Caesar in his Commentaries make any mention of a person of the name of Clutterbuck; or, to go farther back, did the Phenicians on their landing find any painted savage rejoicing in the name of Swipes; or did they import the perpetrator of that abomination?

Riddles! mysteries! how are ye to be solved? In the words of Ossian—"dark clouds roll before my sight." Frigidally speaking, I cannot tell anything about the matter. But nothing is more certain than they (the names) must have had a beginning.

Some of them seem to have been created for the express purpose of leading people into the sin of punning. The old clerical name of Goodenough, for instance, handed down to posterity by the epigram committed on the occasion of the celebrated doctor of that name, preaching before the House of Lords—

"'Twas well-enough that Goodenough Before the House should preach, For sure-enough right had-enough Were those he'd got to teach."

What a temptation for witticisms of an inferior description, more especially as the poor gentleman happened to be a clergyman. He often would be annoyed in his day by his friends wishing they were Goodenough like him, or his enemies calling at once his goodness and his identity in question by insinuating that Goodenough was not Goodenough.

Small, Stout, Long, and Short have been of infinite comfort from time immemorial, to those who could not muster the skeleton of a joke in any other way.

Some names, such as Shrimp, Snipe, Chicken, have a henpecked sound. But the most obnoxious I know of in this respect, is Gotobed. Think of the title of a lady addressing her spouse by this title in anything but the mildest of tones, especially before company. Yet there was a Mr. Gotobed, a party in a duel, which "came off" in England lately and which terminated fatally. What had such a man to do with sanguinary proceedings? Nothing could make him appear heroic in the public eye. The valiant Gotobed.

It is an old adage that

"Company in distress Makes the trouble less,"

and I sometimes find a melancholy pleasure and a sad relief in perusing the Directory and noting down the large proportion of incongruous and infelicitous names which it contains, and I at times succeed in reasoning myself into a state of comparative resignation with my lot. But no sooner do I dress myself and go back among my fellow-creatures, than some incident occurs which shakes my nerves, suffices me with blishes, and perfectly drives me to despair.

For instance, I meet my friend Tom Dashwood. Tom is a rattling, vivacious, good-hearted fellow, but he has a most unpleasant way of speaking intolerably loud in the street. "Well, Swipes!" he bawls, "how are you!"

People look.

"Pretty well, Tom," I reply, in a mild undertone, in the hope that he may pitch his note by mine. In vain.

The world may think very little of my name, but Tom seems to have a particular fancy for it, and interlards his conversation with—"Well, Swipes!" "I tell you what, Swipes!" Swipes, my boy! what do you think?" etc.

At last I shake him by the hand, bid him good morning, and fancy myself clear of him. Vain hope. I have not proceeded ten yards when there comes upon my ear the horrid sound—

"Swipes!"

Some young ladies are passing. I pretend not to hear.

"Swipes! Swipes! I say!"

The young ladies look.

An officious urchin pulls me by the coat—

"Gentleman calling of you, sir."

I again turn round, and Tom bawls out, at the top of his voice—

"Swipes!" will you go to the fancy-ball to-night?"

Swipes and a fancy-ball! What a combination!

The ladies look at me and then at each other. A succession of oblique glances ensue—a whisper—a titter—a visible effort not to laugh.

Torture! Such things are of perpetual occurrence.

## THE DUELLIST.

A foreigner who has lately written a work on England, says that Englishmen are cowards—they do not fight duels, but content themselves occasionally with boxing. The error is very ill acquainted with the people of England who could pen such nonsense as this. If duelling be not practised amongst Englishmen, it is because they—we speak of the middle classes—have more good sense than to re-