

some remote village, though he would experience something of the exultation of a naturalist encountering a dodo in Kensington Gardens.

The author's excuse for publishing this second instalment of his harmless researches is that the end of his *Dictionary*, like that of all similar undertakings, has a way of receding as it is approached. It seemed possible that information representing the leisure amusement of several years might be doomed to the waste-paper basket by harassed executors, in which case some students of the English language might be the losers.¹

The "practical man," when his attention is accidentally directed to the starry sky, appraises that terrific spectacle with a non-committal grunt; but he would receive with a positive snort any suggestion that the history of European civilization is contained in the names of his friends and acquaintances. Still, even the practical man, if he were miraculously gifted with the power of interpreting surnames, could hardly negotiate the length of Oxford Street on a motor-bus without occasionally marvelling and frequently chuckling. As a review of my former book puts it—

"We go about our dignified proceedings, solemnly addressing each other by the names of beasts and birds and kitchen implements; we are dressed like savages in fantastic feathers, and the most important list of honoured personages contains a set of nicknames graceless enough to keep us laughing for a month" (*The Times*, February 22, 1914).

¹ See p. 22.