

The wonder is that the name of the river has not come to be written, as so persistently pronounced. This is the kind of change which *has* taken place in the names which I am about to adduce. The traditiorⁿ pronunciation was at length phonetically expressed and perpetuated.

Again, a pun or play upon words may sometimes determine the pronunciation of a name at a particular time ; as in Warwick's

"Roam hither then!"

in reply to the Bishop of Winchester's reference to "Rome."—(1 Hen. IV. iii. 1.) This tends to shew that the pronunciation of *Room*—which was prevalent among old-fashioned orthoepists not many years ago—was not Shakspeare's rendering of "Rome." In *Roumelia*, however, and the *Roumans* of Moldavia and Wallachia, and in the Turkish sultanate of *Roum*, we have intimations that this was a pronunciation of Rome, at least in the Eastern Empire. Stocqueler (*Oriental Interpreter*, p. 198) gives *Room* as the Persian name to this day, of Constantinople, the *Nova Roma* of Constantine. In a somewhat similar manner, the familiar title "John of Gaunt" shews, by an incorrect anglicised form, how our forefathers designated the birth-place of that personage.*

But in the case of the ancient Greek and Roman proper names, to which I am about to refer, we are not guided to their pronunciation by the aid of rhyme—nor by a play upon words—although instances of this I think I have seen—but simply by the modern forms which they have assumed.

I begin with some proofs of an unexpected deviation from the usual European pronunciation of the first vowel.

1. The normal sound of the first vowel we may take to be *ah*.—We shall be pretty safe if we give it this sound in most of the foreign words we meet with. Its peculiarly English force is in many words, as we have seen, *ay*, which continentals would rather express by *e*. Still the curious thing is, that in some ancient proper names, as preserved in their modern form, the *a* seems to have had something of this anomalous English sound. Take the name for example, of a tributary of the Rhone, entering the main river, near Valence—the Isère: the letter which this accented *e* represents is *a* in the

* Ghent: Fr. Gaud. Shakspeare, of course, plays on "Gaunt,"—as, for example, in "Gaunt am I for the grave," (*Ric. II. ii. 1*); and Charles V. boasted that he could put all Paris into his "Gant" (glove), alluding to the great extent of the city (also *his* birth-place) in his day.