

ALL SURNAMES originally conveyed a meaning; but, from the corruption in spelling, and number of words that in the course of time have become obsolete or wholly lost, it is often almost impossible to discover their true signification.

Until within about the last two centuries, the orthography of but few had become fixed; they being generally written according to the fancy of the writer, and, when spelt as pronounced, often lost all trace of their original.

To show how easily transformations can be made, we have only to look for the names of the Ale-house, the Andrew Mackay, Billy Ruffian, and Currant Juice, in a Royal Navy List; for so were generally styled the *Æolus*, *Andromache*, *Bellerophon*, and *Courageux*. These, to be sure, were misnomers of the illiterate; but it is not many years ago that all England was talking of "Abraham Parker," in whom I must confess I did not at first recognize one whom I had learnt to like in the East some ten years since, after seeing the deeds he had performed. It is very true that Ibrahim Pacha was so called in jest; but undoubtedly many of the lower classes believed it to be his real designation.

Even in the names of the nobility, what stranger would for Chulmley write Cholmondeley; Marchbanks, Marjoribanks; Beecham, Beauchamp?