

A CHAPTER ON NAMES.

It is a convenience, if not an absolute necessity, that every individual person, and place, also, of any consequence, should have a name distinctive of that person or place. Names, besides serving the purpose of distinction, may become in some sense ornamental and pleasing. There is nothing in which the possession or want of taste, not to say *judgment*, is manifested than in the choice of names. Significancy and euphony we hold to be primary elements, which should be respected, or enter into the composition of a name.

There are *three* occasions on which the taste and discernment to which we refer are called into requisition:—The naming of *children*, of *towns* and *villages*, or *residences*, and *domestic animals*. Indulgence should, perhaps, be craved for mixing up the first with the two last, but the classification suits the drift of the writer's fugitive, random ideas.

The practice which now obtains so extensively of giving a *child* two or three names is to be deprecated. It strikes us as actually disfiguring the individual; and it certainly subjects those who are under the necessity of accosting by names, either to the hazard of being out of breath, of being perplexed as to which one of the several names to select, or of giving him altogether a misnomer. This senseless custom we conjecture arises either from affectation, or a wish to please a long list of relatives, such as grand-parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, &c., on both the paternal and maternal side. *Appropos*, to what can we ascribe the *penchant*, so many people evince for having other people's children called after them? Is it not one of the lowest and silliest kinds of ambition? In connection with the mention of long names, we are inclined to relate an occurrence which fell under our own observation. A person who had lived till comparatively late in life without being married, at length persuaded a young woman to have him, and a little girl was the first fruits of the union, (whether there is any more fruit, the writer knows not,—it would be an inconvenience if there were, for want of names) and the father applied to a parson of our acquaintance to baptize the child. The minister thought well to promise the dispensation of the ordinance. Before the parties were quite ready for the ceremony, the father with a somewhat embarrassed air, hitched up to his reverence and said, "The name I am going to give the baby is rather a long one, and I thought well to put it on a piece of paper." The minister pronouncing the precaution very considerate, the fond father handed over a scrap of paper on which it seemed as if he had been accumulating names ever since the child's birth. It was amusing to see the poor dominic's surprise and embarrassment—not unmingled with an ex-