

# VARIOUS

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*Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art, No. 691 / March  
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# **Various Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art, No. 691 / March 24, 1877**

## **NAMES**

There might be much amusement in tracing the origin of family names. Long ago – say about six or seven hundred years since – there were no family names at all. People had Christian names and nothing more, and of course there was often considerable difficulty in distinguishing individuals. Such at present is the case in Turkey, where the old eastern practice of using but a single name continues to be followed. Surnames were not introduced into England until after the Conquest. The fashion of using two names came to us from France, but for a time was confined to families of distinction, and extended slowly over the country. One thing is said to have promoted its use. Young ladies of aspiring tastes declined to marry gentlemen who had only a Christian name, such as John or Thomas, for they

would necessarily have still to be called by their own name, Mary, Elizabeth, or whatever it was. Spinsters accordingly thought it to be a grand thing to form an alliance with a person possessing the distinction of a family name, by which they should ever after be called. Curiously enough, so difficult is it to alter old usages, that until very lately surnames were scarcely used among the humbler classes of people in some parts of Great Britain remote from centres of civilisation. In these places, a creditor would enter the name of his debtor in his books as John the son of Thomas, just as you see genealogies in the Old Testament. Only now, from improved communication with the outer world, have practices of this kind gone out of use. We can easily understand how the names ending in *son*, as Johnson, Thomson, Manson (abbreviation of Magnusson), originated; and it is equally easy to conjecture how names from professions, such as Smith, Miller, or Cooper came into existence. It is equally obvious that many family names are derived from the nature of the complexion of individuals, as Black, Brown, and White.

At first sight, there is a mystery as regards the different ways in which certain names are spelled. Smith is sometimes written Smyth; and in some instances Brown has an *e* at the end of it. We see the name Reid spelled as Reade, Reed, and Rede. We see Long, Lang, and Laing, all variations of one name. The same thing can be said of Strong, Strang, and Strange; of Little and Liddle; of Home and Hume; of Chambers and Chalmers; and so on with a host of surnames in daily use. The mystery which

hangs over various spellings is cleared up on a consideration of the indifferent scholarship which prevailed until even the middle of the eighteenth century. Names in old legal documents and in the inscriptions on the blank leaves of family Bibles, are written in all sorts of ways. A man seldom wrote his name twice in succession the same way. Each member of a family followed the spelling suggested by his own fancy, and added to or altered letters in his name with perfect indifference. Eccentricities of this kind are still far from uncommon in the signatures of imperfectly educated persons. There is, in fact, a constant growth of new names, springing from ignorance and carelessness, though also in some cases from a sense of refinement.

Perhaps there is a still more vigorous growth of names from foundlings. Driven to their wits' end to invent names for the anonymous infants thrown on their bounty, parish authorities are apt to cut the matter short by conferring names that are suggested by the localities where the poor children were picked up. A child found at a door will be called Door, and so on with Street, Place, Steps, Basket, Turnstyle, or anything else. Hundreds of droll names are said to have begun in this way. Possibly it was from such origin as this that a respectable citizen of Dublin, mentioned by Cosmo Innes in his small book on Surnames, derived the name of Halfpenny. Mr Halfpenny, it is stated, 'throve in trade, and his children prevailed on him in his latter years to change the name which they thought undignified; and this he did chiefly by dropping the last letter. He died and was buried as Mr Halpen.

The fortune of the family did not recede, and the son of our citizen thought proper to renounce retail dealing, and at the same time looked about for a euphonious change of name. He made no scruple of dropping the unnecessary *h*; and that being done, it was easy to go into the Celtic rage, which Sir Walter Scott and the *Lady of the Lake* had just raised to a great height; and he who had run the streets as little Kenny Halfpenny came out at the levées of the day as Kenneth MacAlpin, the descendant of a hundred kings.'

The assumed name of MacAlpin brings us to the whole order of Macs, now spread out in all directions. Mac is the Gaelic equivalent for son, and accordingly Mr MacAlpin would in an English dress be Mr Alpinson. There happen to be two distinct classes of Macs, those with a Highland origin, such as Mackay, Macpherson, Macgregor, Macneil, Macfarlane, Macleod, and Macdonald – all great clans in the olden time; and the Macs of Galloway, where Gaelic is now extinct, and the races are somewhat different from the Highland septes – perhaps with a little Manx and Irish blood in them. Among the Galloway Macs are found the names Maclumpha, Macletchie, and MacCandlish, which evidently do not sound with the true Highland ring. The Irish have likewise their form of expression for son. They use the single letter O, as O'Connell and O'Donell. The O, however, signifies grandson, as it continues to do in the old Lowland vernacular in Scotland, where an aged woman in humble life may be heard saying of her grandchild, 'That is my O.' Prefixes or

terminations for son are common among names in every civilised country in Europe.

As is well known, the Norman Conquest gave a new character to English names. From that time many of the most notable of our surnames are to be dated, not only in England, where the Conquest made itself cruelly felt, but in Scotland, where families of Norman origin gradually effected a settlement by invitation and otherwise. Names traceable to the Norman families are very commonly derived from heritable possessions, and till this day bear a certain aristocratic air, though altered in various ways. Doubtless in the lists of those 'who came over with the Conqueror,' there are innumerable shams; but there are also descendants of veritable invaders. We might, for example, instance the late Sir Francis Burdett (father of the Baroness Burdett Coutts), who traced his origin by a clear genealogical line to Hugh de Burdett, one of the Norman soldiers who fought at Hastings in 1066. That gives a pretty considerable antiquity to an existing family without change of name. On the Scottish side of the Border, we could point to a family, Horsbrugh of that ilk, as being not less than eight hundred years old, and always occupying the same lands and possessions. Wallace, Bruce, Dundas, Fraser, Stewart, or to use its French form Stuart, are also Scottish surnames of great antiquity. To these we might add two names now ennobled, the Scotts, Dukes of Buccleuch, and the Kers, Dukes of Roxburghe. We find these various names meandering through history for six or seven hundred years.

On the original names borne by noted Norman families in England and Scotland, time has effected conspicuous changes. The prefix *de*, which was once held in high esteem, has been generally dropped. There has likewise, in various cases, been what might be called a vulgarising of the names. De Vesci is transformed into Veitch, De l'Isle into Lyle, and De Vere into Weir. Through various changes De Montalt has become Mowat, De Montfitchet sinks into Mushet, De Moravie into Murray, and Grossetête into Grosart. We cannot speak with too much contempt of the mythic fables invented to explain the origin of the names Forbes, Guthrie, Dalyell, Douglas, Naesmyth, and Napier – grand old names, which existed ages before the imaginary incidents that have been clumsily assigned as their commencement.

Any one disposed to investigate the historical origin of British surnames, would find not a little to amuse and instruct by making a leisurely survey along the east coast from Shetland to the English Channel. Every here and there he would alight upon patches of population, whose descent from Norwegians, Danes, Jutes, Angles, and other continental settlers in early times would be unmistakably revealed in their surnames, the colour of their eyes, their complexion, and in their spoken dialect – the very pronunciation of certain letters; for the lapse of centuries and innumerable vicissitudes have failed to obliterate the normal peculiarities of their origin. Strange, indeed, is the persistency of race. We have heard it stated as a curious and little known fact,

that on the west coast of Scotland there are families descended from the wrecked crews of the Spanish Armada, who scrambled ashore now nearly three hundred years ago. Herein, as we imagine, lies a mine of ethnographic lore, which in the cause of science and history would be not unworthy of exploration. A stretch within the Scottish Border would likewise not be unproductive. On the eastern and middle marches will still be found the descendants of the Eliots and Armstrongs who are renowned in the *Border Minstrelsy* of Scott; the Grahams in the Debatable Land; and on the west the Johnstons (with their cognisance of the winged spur), the Jardines, and the Maxwells. Are not these living memorials demonstrative of the truth of history and tradition?

The surnames common to Great Britain and Ireland received an immense accession by those religious persecutions in Flanders in the sixteenth, and in France in the seventeenth century, by which hosts of intelligent and industrious foreigners were forced to flee for their lives. The prodigious immigration from this cause, and to which has to be attributed much of our manufacturing prosperity, has seldom been seriously thought of. A painstaking account of this interesting invasion of Flemish and French artisans has lately been written by Mr Smiles,<sup>1</sup> which may be advantageously consulted on the subject. We do not go into the religious part of the question, further than to say that

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<sup>1</sup> *The Huguenots: their Settlements, Churches, and Industries in England and Ireland.* By Samuel Smiles. New and Revised Edition. Murray, London, 1876.

the expulsion of so many skilled labourers in the useful arts was a terrible blunder, which we can imagine has been long since repented of. Our concern being principally with the names of the refugees, we shall run over a few items, taking Mr Smiles as our authority. Speaking of the lace-manufacturing towns in the west of England, which had been enriched by the ingenuity of Flemish settlers, he says: 'Such names as Raymond, Spiller, Brock, Stocker, Groot, Rochett, and Kettel are still common; and the same trades have been continued in some of their families for generations.' Some Walloon refugees, cloth-makers, named Goupés, settled in Wiltshire three hundred years ago, and there their descendants are still, but with the name changed to Guppys. From the De Grotes, or Groots, a Netherlandish family, sprung the late George Grote, the eminent historian of Greece. The Houblons, who gave the Bank of England its first governor, the Van Sittarts, Jansens, Courtens, Van Milderts, Deckers, Hostes, and Tyssens, were all descendants of Flemish refugees. 'Among artists, architects, and engineers of Flemish descent, we find,' says our author, 'Grinling Gibbons, the wood-sculptor; Mark Gerard, the portrait-painter; Sir John Vanbrugh, the architect and play-writer; Richard Cosway, the miniature-painter; and Vermuyden and Westerdyke, the engineers employed to reclaim the drained land of the Fens. The Tradescants, the celebrated antiquarians, were of the same origin.'

Driven from the Netherlands by the intolerant policy of the Spanish authorities, who had possession of the country in 1555,

the Flemish refugees with their descendants had been residing in England for several generations, when there occurred a fresh accession of immigrants on the score of religion. These were the families who, under prodigious difficulties, felt themselves obliged to flee from France in consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. in 1685. These unhappy people escaping across the Channel in open boats, or anyhow, arrived on the coast of England and Ireland to the number of fifty thousand. They brought no money with them; but animated by an immense spirit of industry and independence, their presence was more valuable than untold gold. Settling in London and other quarters, there are till this day innumerable traces of their names in the general population. We might instance the names Baringer, Fourdrinier, Poupert, Fonblanque, Delaine, Payne, Paget, Lefanu, La Touche, Layard, Maturin, Roget, D'Olier, Martineau, Romilly, Saurin, Barbauld, Labouchere, and Garrick, whose real name was Garrigue – all of Huguenot origin. The names of French refugees who introduced silk-weaving into England are now to be seen in Spitalfields, where also a few of their mulberry trees still survive. The town of Portarlington, in Ireland, was entirely peopled by French exiles, and continues to bear traces of the original names. We are informed that a taste for cultivating flowers was spread through a number of the English towns by the French refugees. Silks, ribbons, lace, gloves, hats, glass, clocks, watches, telescopes (by Dollond), and paper were among the manufactures which they introduced.

By the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, France appears to have lost all its hatters. Previously, England imported hats from France, but now the French had to import all their hats, at least those of a finer kind, from England.

The original French names were not always preserved by the refugees and their descendants. Becoming Anglicised, their names in several instances assumed an English form, which was not always an improvement. Mr Smiles gives us some examples: 'L'Oiseau became Bird; Le Jeune, Young; Du Bois, Wood; Le Blanc, White; Le Noir, Black; Le Maur, Brown; Le Roy, King; Lacroix, Cross; Tonnelier, Cooper; Le Maitre, Masters; Dulau, Waters; Sauvage, Savage and Wild. Some of the Lefevres changed their name to the English equivalent of Smith, as was the case with the ancestor of Sir Culling Eardley Smith, Bart., a French refugee whose original name was Lefevre. Many names were strangely altered in their conversion from French into English. Jolifemme was freely translated into Pretymen; Momerie became Mummery, a common name at Dover; and Planche became Plank, of which there are still instances at Canterbury and Southampton. At Oxford, the name of Williamise was traced back to Villebois; Taillebois became Talboys; Le Coq, Laycock; Bouchier, Butcher or Boxer; Boyer, Bower; Bois, Boys; Mesurier, Measure; Mahieu, Mayhew; Drouet, Drewitt; D'Aeth, Death; D'Orleans, Dorling; De Preux, Diprose; De Moulins, Mullins; Pelletier, Pelter; Huyghens, Huggens or Higgins; and Beaufoy, Boffy.' Some other

conversions are mentioned, such as Letellier into Taylor; De Laine into Dillon; Dieudoun into Dudley; Renalls into Reynolds; Saveroy into Savery; and Levereau into Lever. While such havoc has been played in England with French names, a similar change, though on a less extensive scale, has been made on English and Scotch names in France – witness only Colbert, a minister of Louis XIV., descended from a Scotsman named Cuthbert; and Le Brun, an eminent artist, sprung from plain Mr Brown.

When William Prince of Orange arrived in England in 1688, he brought with him a number of trusty Dutchmen, who in civil and military life so distinguished themselves as to rise to eminence. Among these were William Bentinck, created Earl of Portland, whose son was raised to a dukedom; General Ginkell, who fought manfully at the Boyne, was created Earl of Athlone; and Arnold-Joost Van Keppel, was created Earl of Albemarle, whose descendant now enjoys the title. With George I. there began a number of German names which are now lost in the general population. Far greater additions, however, have been made by the progress of industrial settlement within the last fifty years.

A good feature in the more intelligent classes in England is, that entertaining no grudge at the immigration of foreigners who desire to pursue an honest calling, they receive them hospitably, and willingly hail them as naturalised subjects; for them and their descendants are indeed opened up according to merit the higher offices in the state. As a token of this liberality of dealing,

we have only to glance over street directories and see the vast number of names of persons of German, Dutch, French, Swiss, Greek, and Italian origin. We could specify many estimable persons of these nationalities. But the topic would branch out sufficiently to fill a volume; and the more it is investigated the clearer is the view to be obtained of the manifold changes that have taken place in the tastes and conditions of society. Thanking Mr Smiles in the meantime for the ingenious contribution to the history of surnames, to which we have called attention, the subject is little more than touched on, and we should like to see it treated if possible in a thoroughly comprehensive spirit.

*W. C.*

# THE LAST OF THE HADDONS

## CHAPTER XV. – ROBERT WENTWORTH'S NEWS

'Do you really think that I ought not to tell Arthur yet, Mary?' whispered Lilian to me later in the day, when she was about to accompany her lover into the garden.

'I should certainly advise you not to do so until we know whether or not the discovery is of any importance,' I replied in the same tone.

'I would so much prefer telling him,' she murmured anxiously.

'I can understand that, dear Lilian.'

'And still you think it best not to tell him?'

'I am only afraid that he might not hold the same views as you do yourself upon the point; and it would only lead to painful discussion, which it is as well to avoid; at anyrate, until you know for certain whether the document is genuine or not.'

Her respect for my opinion proved to be stronger than her respect for his; perhaps because I tried to appeal to her reason as well as to her feelings, and she did *not* tell him.

The next day passed, and the next, slowly enough to me, in the miserable state of uncertainty I was in, no sign being made

by Robert Wentworth. But when another day went by, and then another, the truth began to dawn upon me. He had gone to Scotland to make inquiries on the spot, which proved that what he had learned from Mrs Pratt rendered it necessary so to do; and that everything now depended upon the validity of Mr Farrar's marriage with Marian's mother. Then I saw that it was not right to allow Lilian to go on without some sort of preparation for the blow, which might fall at any moment. It was now my duty to prepare her in some degree for what she had not the slightest suspicion of. If Robert Wentworth's inquiries had brought out the fact that Marian's mother died before Lilian's was married to Mr Farrar, there would not have been the slightest necessity for the journey to Scotland; and his setting forth without delay shewed me that he had grave grounds for believing the document to be a legal one. It was evident that everything now depended upon the legality of that marriage.

'Well, Mary, what is it? news – good news?' asked Lilian, as she entered my room. I had sent a message begging her to come to me after dinner, knowing we should be secure from intrusion there.

'Dear Lilian, what would you consider to be good news?'

'The legality of the marriage being proved, of course,' she answered promptly.

'I have no news, dear Lilian; but – I want to talk the matter over with you a little. I am beginning to get very anxious about not hearing from Mr Wentworth. He must have seen the necessity

for going to Scotland; and if the marriage is proved to be a *bonâ fide* one, I fear' —

'What do you fear, Mary?'

'Dear Lilian, I foresee something which it is extremely painful to think of — something which has not, I think, occurred to you.'

'What is that?' she asked wonderingly.

'I do not like to even suggest it, because all may yet be well. Still it is my duty to warn you that there may be a consequence which you have not anticipated with reference to the' — Some one was tapping at the door, which I had locked, and on opening it, I saw Becky.

'Mr Wentworth has just come, and he wishes to see you by yourself, please, Miss.'

'Where is he, Becky?'

'In the drawing-room, Miss; and I'll see that nobody shall disturb you,' mysteriously whispered Becky, who had, I suppose, received a hint from him that he desired to see me privately.

'Say that I will come immediately;' adding to Lilian, as I hurriedly made my way towards the door again: 'Will you wait for me here a few minutes, Lilian?'

But I had said enough to arouse her fears, though she was still in ignorance as to the cause, and she gravely replied: 'No, Mary; I will go with you. I know now that you are trying to spare me in some way — O Mary! why do you look at me like that? — I *will* go with you and hear the worst!'

Well I knew that he would be as careful in telling her as I could

be. And if there was indeed bad news, I should be very glad of his assistance in breaking it to her. We went down together; and one glance at his face, as we entered the room, warned me to expect the worst. His grave words, 'I wished to see you alone for a few moments, Miss Haddon,' confirmed my fears.

'I wished to come – I would come, Mr Wentworth,' said Lilian, slipping her hand into mine; 'and you must please to let me stay, if what you have to say concerns me. You have come to tell us what you have ascertained about the paper I found; have you not?'

I put my arm round her, with a look towards him. She looked from one to the other of us in some surprise.

'Yes,' he hesitatingly replied; 'I have been to Scotland.'

'Then why do you look at me like that? Why are you both so strange? Mary, *you* ought to know there is nothing I should be more rejoiced to hear than that the marriage was a legal one.'

'It is not that, Lilian. – I have guessed aright; you have been proving the genuineness of the marriage during your absence; have you not, Mr Wentworth?' I asked.

'I grieve to say that there was no difficulty in proving it, Miss Haddon.'

'Grieve! grieve! – when it proves Papa to have acted like an honourable gentleman, instead of – O Mary, you too!' turning from him to me, with a wounded look.

He saw now that the one thing had not yet occurred to her, and turned silently away. He could not strike the blow.

I drew her to a couch by my side, and said with faltering lips:

'I fear that it has not occurred to you that, though it might be better for Marian that her mother's marriage should be proved, it would be worse for you.'

'Worse for me? Is it possible that you can for one moment be thinking about the money? Can you suppose that my father's good name is not more to me than such' —

'Dear Lilian, I was not thinking about the money,' I slowly replied, with a miserable sickening of the heart as I suddenly realised that the property also was lost. She would be penniless as well as nameless. I glanced towards him again. No; there was no hope!

'Then how can it be worse for me? How can it possibly be worse for me that Papa did right instead of wrong. Please tell me at once what you mean.'

Alas! the more she dwelt upon the honour, the more she was shewing us how terribly she would feel the dishonour! My eyes appealed once more to him for help. But he gravely said: 'Miss Haddon knows what there is to tell, and it will come best from her.'

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