

both model and stone and made his returns on the invoice "one stone over, estimated value 5dol."

'The stone was then placed in the walls of the "Castle," where it remained during the rest of the fair, and was kissed by at least 25,000 people, for which a fee of 10 cents was charged.

'At the close of the fair the manager of the village desired to take the stone and exhibit it in a store in the city of Chicago, and was informed that he could not do so unless he made a consumption entry on the same and paid the duty. This was done and on the 24th of May, 1893, I delivered the stone on a duty paid permit.'

If any of the unsuspecting thousands who kissed that old paving stone should ever happen to drop across the perpetrators of the fraud a long flat stone will probably again be in requisition, but this time it will be wanted for a tombstone.

NAMING THE CHILD.

CURIOUS INSTANCES OF PARENTAL FOLLY.

SAID Romeo to Juliet in the play (the lines have been quoted to extreme threadbareness):—

'What's in a name? That which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title.'

Perhaps he would. But if he had been called Hodge or Obadiah, or Praise-God-Barebones—or their Veronese equivalents—Miss Juliet would probably have found herself hunting about in search of a sweeter-sounding name to label him with. Hence, too, that mania for those oft-times misnamed 'pretty names,' which foolish mammas in our day so often compel their unhappy offspring to carry through life. How your groom would stagger under the intolerable weight of such a name as George Washington Orlando Briggs! And would not such an outrage in nomenclature as Thodolinda Irene Amelia Noggs, drive your scullery-maid for a certainty into an untimely grave? Some of our Catholic parents are following in the stream of tendency towards unsuitable or ridiculous names drawn from the works of fiction, from the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, and even from Greek and Roman heathen mythology. A dive into the pages of Lempriere would cure some of them of their fancy for certain pagan names. And in any case, the Roman martyrology, Butler's 'Lives of the Saints,' and a little knowledge of English, Irish, and Scottish Church history would furnish them with an abundance of glorious, and, at the same time, picturesque names to place upon the neo-Christian at the baptismal font.

For, after all (says the Editor of the N Z TABLET writing some time ago in the *Austral Light*), there is something in a name. Carlyle says in his 'Sartor Resartus' that 'there is much, nay, almost all, in names. The name,' continues the Sage of Chelsea, 'is the earliest garment you wrap round the early-visiting ME; to which it henceforth cleaves more tenaciously (for there are names that have lasted nigh 30 centuries) than the very skin. And now from without, what mystic influence does it not send inwards, even to the centre; especially in those plastic first-times, when the soul is yet infantine, soft, and the invisible seed grain will grow to be an all overshadowing tree! Names? Could I unfold the influence of names, which are the most important of all clothings, I were a second greater Trismegistus. Not only all common speech, but science, poetry itself, is no other, if thou consider it, than a right naming. Adam's first task was giving names to natural appearances. What is ours still, but a continuance of the same—be the appearance exotic—vegetable, organic, mechanic, stars, or starry movements (as in science), or (as in poetry) passions, virtues calamities, God attributes, gods? In a very plain sense, the proverb says: "Call one thief, and he will steal."

There is a good deal of truth in the rugged period just quoted. And yet you, and you, and you again yonder, will persist in pinning on—or rather into—your inoffensive seven pounds weight of palpitating humanity, a set of

ABSURD NAME CLOTHES

'hat it can never shake off or rub off. You make it—in the matter of nomenclature—a sort of of scare-crow, to be pelted, for the term of its natural life, with ridicule or with surprise and pity, that would just as deeply. And when it dissolves partnership with life, you, or somebody else in your place, will stick the name (or, rather the nickname) once more—a parting insult—on the coffin-plate and the gravestone, *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*; a monument to a passing craze.

The craze for strange-sounding 'pretty names' is by no means new. The fond mothers of a former day used to find inspiration in the long-drawn romances of Mlle. de Scudéry. The many-syllabled, high-sounding Christian names of that time have long since been run out of the market by the Mopsidoras and the Dorimenes and the Blouzelindas, and the other parodied imitations of comedians of later date. In the Puritan days, singular and sometimes grotesque ingenuity was displayed in the invention of suggestive and far-sounding forenames. These were usually drawn from words or phrases in the Sacred Scriptures, or from the stock terms of the contemporary pulpit, or from the political and religious watchwords of the hour. 'Praise-God-Barebones' is one of the gems of nomenclature of this period. 'Hew-Agag-in-Pieces-Before-the-Lord' was another. Ben Johnson makes Subile the Alchemist

(Act 3, scene 2) promise Parson Tribulation Wholesome and Dean Ananias that when he has given them the philosopher's stone,

(You will not need to) 'Call yourselves
By names of Tribulation, Persecution,
Restraint, Long-patience and such-like, affected
By the whole family or wood of you,
Only for glory, and to catch the ear
Of the disciple.'

The idea of searching the Scriptures for quaint and unusual baptismal names does not seem to be altogether abandoned, even at the present time. During the course of last year, for instance, a resident of Haslingden, England, applied for a certificate exempting his latest-born child from vaccination. The premonition given by him to the little bundle of pink humanity somewhat staggered the clerk. The 'fond parent,' noticing this, proceeded to explain that he had taken it from the eighth chapter, second verse, of 'Hisak.' The clerk took his office copy of the Old Testament, turned to the eighth chapter of Isaiah (authorised version), and at the third verse found the name, Maher-shalal-hash-baz (which, by the way, is rendered in the Douay version, 'Hasten to take away the spoils, make haste to take away the prey.') 'That is it,' said the applicant as he heard the name rolled out. And he then explained that he and his wife had stumbled across it in the Bible, thought it a rather aristocratic designation, and, therefore, pinned it as a permanent appellation to their latest arrival.

Writers of fiction are still, as in the specious days of Mlle. de Scudéry, the chief manufacturers of bizarre or euphonious names. The *Family Herald* and the *Family Reader* seem to make a speciality of coining fanciful first names for their heroes and heroines; and almost every work of fiction that soars into the literary heaven of passing popularity, leaves behind it on the birth registers a kite-tail of baby-names of a more or less atrocious kind. Catholics are, happily, less attracted by such curiosities of nomenclature than others. Nevertheless, it might unnecessarily harrow up the feelings of a few among the many readers of the *Austral Light*, if I were to give here a list of substitutes for honest and old-fashioned Christian names that I have culled at sheer random from a few dozen works of fiction that have won a brief and unmerited popularity during the past 10 years.

It was at one time a rather common practice in the rank and file of the army to bestow upon infants the

NAMES OF THE PLACES—

and especially of the places in foreign countries—in which they first saw the light. Dickens refers to this peculiar army custom in his 'Bleak House,' in which the three Bagnet children are named after their respective birth-place, 'Malta,' 'Quebec,' and 'Woolwich.' Political events that stir popular enthusiasm to its depths are responsible for many curious vagaries in Christian names. Great numbers of 14-year-old 'Jubilees' are, for instance, dragging the weary burden of their names in England at the present time. One hapless youth was saddled with the hyphenated premonition of 'Diamond Jubilee,' he having had the misfortune to be born on the fiftieth anniversary of the late Queen's accession to the throne. Popular wars, however, leave a far longer track in the name-columns of our birth registers than any other class of political events that I know of. During the Crimean war there was a great run on 'Alma,' as a name for girls. The last campaign against the Madhists, in the Soudan, saddled a great number of unoffending innocents with such names as 'Omdurman,' 'Gordon,' 'Kitchener,' 'Atbara,' 'Khartoum,' etc., and it left one hapless youngster, in the Islington district of London, languishing under the calamitous appellation of 'Osman Digna.' The struggle in South Africa seems to have produced an exceptionally prolific crop of topical and such-like forenames. Among the common ones are 'Bobs,' 'Roberts,' 'Buller,' 'White,' 'Baden,' 'Baden-Powell,' 'French,' and 'Methuen.' I have read of quite an extensive assortment of 'Mafeking,' 'Kimberleys,' 'Glencoe,' 'Dundee,' 'Ladysmiths,' 'Colesbergs,' 'Pretorias,' 'Bloemfontains,' and 'Elands' (the full term, Elandslaagte, being probably considered too formidable for constant domestic use), and of sundry 'Cecil Rhodes,' one 'Glencoe-Moder,' and of one 'Volunteer.' For some inscrutable reason the name 'Belmont' seems to have been by common consent reserved for baby girls. Towards the close of last year a newly-arrived maiden was registered in North London under the name of 'Roberts Pretoria.' A paragraph clipped by me from a Welsh paper runs as follows:—'Wales already possesses a "Modder River Jones," a "Kimberley Clifford," "Tugela James," "Jenny Ladysmith Jones." The widow of a Reservist has given her daughter the names of "Modderina Belmontina Methuena Jones." During the glowing enthusiasm which marked the departure of the various early contingents from New Zealand for the seat of war, the following names were, within a few days, given to little newcomers in Dunedin:—Baden-Powell Gordon Roberts, 'E'gar Pretoria, 'Alice Pretoria Baden-Powell, 'Buller Pretoria, and 'Alfred Pretoria.' Perhaps the most successful (though possibly unconscious) parody on the prevailing craze for war-names for children was perpetrated by a Zulu house-father during the period when the enthusiasm over the Patriotic Fund was at its height. The incident was related in the course of a letter from Mr E. Parker, of Wakefield, which appeared in a great English daily. Mr Parker wrote, 'In a letter I had from brother, who is at Mootman's Kop, South Africa, the following appears:—"One day last week the wife of a Zulu presented him with a son. The little nipper had been christened M'fowana E Kholalo, which in English is "The Absent-minded Beggar."'

The reasons that determine the

SELECTION OF A PARTICULAR NAME

for a bit of sprawling baby humanity are usually supposed to be—(1) its religious significance, (2) family traditions, (3) euphony, (4) the claim of friendship, and (5) the intuition of honoring the great. But there is a nondescript and erratic group of first-names that