

This list is a purely tentative one, and criticism and emendation are invited. Some of the names are, of course, capable of explanation from another source. Thus the bulk of our Days are beyond doubt the Middle

English *deye* (O.E. *de'ge*, O.Nor. *deigja*), dairy servant; Esson and Eason may be the O.E. *esne*, an individual who was almost as much a slave as the *thew* (O.E. *thēw*) or *thrall* (O.E. *thræ'l*). It may, too, be argued that Tay, Tees, Dee, and Kew are the geographical names; that Jay and Peacock are the bird-names; that Kay and Key=quay, and so with others; but I think that a tolerably good test of the patronymic nature of a surname is the fact of its being found in its genitive form, or with the suffix *-son* or a diminutive ending. My point is mainly this, that some instances of these names are not to be unquestioningly taken to have the face-origin which has hitherto been solely ascribed to them.

I cannot trace an English surname actually written with a single letter, but such names, as one may readily suppose, are found in France. The Paris correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, writing in that journal's issue of 12 November, 1894, said that there was a wine merchant living in the faubourgs named Monsieur O, and he added, "One-letter patronymics, however, are not so uncommon as might be imagined. There are said to be as many as five persons in Paris whose names are of this abbreviated type." He also mentions a Monsieur Adolphe Maximilien EFG, whose surname consisted of these three letters.

In England we can see from a modern instance, with which I am personally acquainted, how easy it may have been for single-letter surnames to arise. There is a well-known London City tailor who advertises himself as "Mr. A." If I remember rightly his real name is Alderton, but as he has been locally known to everybody in his trade for many years as Mr. A, and as many have never heard his full name, he thought it prudent to keep the highly shortened form for business purposes. HY. HARRISON.

BILL: WILLIAM BILL.—Having by chance made the acquaintance of a gentleman owning this somewhat uncommon surname, I searched the 'London Directory,' and found, to my surprise, that there are in London some five or six gentlemen of that name, one of whom had been by his parents—unwisely, it may be thought—christened William.

But a still more extraordinary thing came to my knowledge. On my mentioning the above fact to my friend, he assured me that his father's name was William Harper Bill, and that on one occasion the latter was called on to execute some deed or other legal document, and after signing his name in full, a

witness, an entire stranger, was called in to attest the document, and did so by signing the identical name, also in full.

My friend is a gentleman, and I think incapable of a wilful and wicked lie. In any case, he permits me to say that he is open to a personal reference by any unbelieving person. EDWARD P. WOLFERSTAN.

SIN-GAN-FU.—Six hundred miles from the coast of China is the city of Sin-gan-fu, whither the Emperor and the Dowager Empress are said to have fled. Sin-gan-fu was one of the ancient capitals of China, and for us possesses great interest as containing the oldest extant monument of missionary enterprise. Here, in the year 1625, a stone slab, about six feet by three, was accidentally dug up, containing an abstract of Christian doctrine in Chinese characters, with the names of the Nestorian patriarch, of the bishop, and of several priests appended, which are all written in Estrangelo, an old form of the Syriac alphabet. The inscription bears a date corresponding to 781 A.D., and its genuineness, at one time doubted, has now been accepted by the best scholars. This Nestorian alphabet became the parent of a whole family of alphabets, stretching across Central Asia from the Volga to the shores of the Pacific, of which the Kalmuk, the Mongolian, and the Manchu still survive. It was anciently used by the Turkish races of the Khanates, as is proved by the 'Kudatku Bilik,' a poem now preserved at Vienna, composed in the eleventh century and written at Herat, the seat of a Nestorian archbishopric. We learn from Marco Polo the great success of the Nestorian missionaries. Even the wife of Kubla Khan was a convert.

ISAAC TAYLOR.

A FRIDAY SUPERSTITION.—The following, from the *Scotsman* of 6 September, is sufficiently curious and important to merit preservation in these pages:—

"A row of paupers' houses, very neatly designed, has just been erected at Aharacle, Mr. Rudd, of Ardnamurchan, having advanced a considerable sum for building purposes to the parish council on easy terms. Accommodation is provided for ten persons. A few days ago Mr. H. MacPherson, Inspector of Poor, visited Aharacle in order to superintend the removal of the ten selected female paupers to the new cottages. They all occupied houses which were in a wretched state of disrepair, yet each of them resolutely and peremptorily refused to 'flit.' In vain did the inspector dilate on the increased comfort and conveniences to be enjoyed in the new dwellings. The aged dames were invincibly proof against all argument—nor did threats of compulsion and sheriff's warrants have any terror for them. At length it was elicited that