



CHAPTER XIII.

INDIAN NAMES.

THE proper names of Indians are in general given to them after animals of various kinds, and even fishes and reptiles. Thus they are called the *Beaver*, *Otter*, *Sun-fish*, *Black-fish*, *Rattle-snake*, *Black-snake*, &c. They have also other descriptive names, from their personal qualities or appearances, and sometimes from fancy or caprice; but many of those are given them by the whites, such as *Pipe*, *White-eyes*, *Kill-buck*, &c., which are not real Indian names. They do not always preserve the names first given to them, but often assume a new one after they have come to man's estate.

Indians, who have particularly distinguished themselves by their conduct, or by some meritorious act, or who have been the subjects of some remarkable occurrence, have names given to them in allusion to those circumstances. Thus, I have known a man whose name would signify in our language *the beloved lover*, and one who was named *Met by love*. Another, a great warrior, who had been impatiently waiting for day-light to engage the enemy, was afterwards called *Cause day-light*, or *Make day-light appear*. So, one who had come in with a heavy load of turkies on his back, was called *The Carrier of Turkies*, and another whose shoes were generally torn or patched, was called *Bad Shoes*. All those names are generally expressed in one single word, in compounding which the Indians are very ingenious. Thus, the name they had for the place where Philadelphia now stands, and which they have preserved notwith-

standing the great change which has taken place, is *Kúequendku*,¹ which means, *The grove of the long pine trees*.

They have proper names, not only for all towns, villages, mountains, valleys, rivers, and streams, but for all remarkable spots, as for instance, those which are particularly infested with gnats or mosquitoes, where snakes have their dens, &c. Those names always contain an allusion to such particular circumstance, so that foreigners, even though acquainted with their language, will often be at a loss to understand their discourse.

To strangers, white men for instance, they will give names derived from some remarkable quality which they have observed in them, or from some circumstance which remarkably strikes them. When they were told the meaning of the name of William Penn, they translated it into their own language by *Miquon*, which means a feather or quill. The Iroquois call him *Onas*, which in their idiom means the same thing.

The first name given by the Indians to the Europeans who landed in Virginia was *Wapsid Lenape* (white people;) when, however, afterwards they began to commit murders on the red men, whom they pierced with swords, they gave to the Virginians the name *Mechanschican*, (long knives,) to distinguish them from others of the same colour.

In New England, they at first endeavoured to imitate the sound of the national name of the *English*, which they pronounced *Yengees*. They also called them *Chauquaquock*, (men of knives) for having imported those instruments into the country, which they gave in presents to the natives.² They thought them better men than the Virginians; but when they were afterwards cruelly treated by them, and their men shipped off to sea, the Mohicans of that country called them *Tschachgoos*; and when next the people of the middle colonies began to murder them, and called on the Iroquois to insult them and assist in depriving them of their lands, they then dropped that name, and called the whites by way of derision, *Schwammack*, which signifies *salt beings*, or *bitter beings*; for in their lan-

¹ According to the powers of the English alphabet, it should be written Koo-ek-wen-aw-koo.

² Rogers's *Key into the Language of the Indians of New England*, ch. vi.

guage the word *Schwan*, is in general applied to things that have a salt, sharp, bitter, or sour taste. The object of this name, as well as of that which the Mohicans gave to the eastern people, was to express contempt as well as hatred or dislike, and to hold out the white inhabitants of the country as hateful and despicable beings. I have, however, in many instances observed that the Indians are careful not to apply this opprobrious name to any white person whom they know to be amicably disposed towards them, and whom they are sure to be a good, honest, well-meaning man. I have heard them charge their children not to call a particular white man *Schwannack*, but *Friend*. This name was first introduced about the year 1730. They never apply it to the *Quakers*, whom they greatly love and respect since the first arrival of William Penn into the country. They call them *Quækels*, not having in their language the sound expressed by our letter R. They say they have always found them good, honest, affable and peaceable men, and never have had reason to complain of them.

These were the names which the Indians gave to the whites, until the middle of the Revolutionary war, when they were reduced to the following three :

1. *Mechanschican* or *Chanschican* (long knives). This they no longer applied to the Virginians exclusively, but also to those of the people of the middle states, whom they considered as hostilely inclined towards them, particularly those who wore swords, dirks, or knives at their sides.

2. *Yengees*. This name they now exclusively applied to the people of New England, who, indeed, appeared to have adopted it, and were, as they still are, generally through the country called *Yankees*, which is evidently the same name with a trifling alteration. They say they know the *Yengees*, and can distinguish them by their dress and personal appearance, and that they were considered as less cruel than the Virginians or *long knives*. The proper English they¹ call *Saggenash*.

3. *Quækels*. They do not now apply this name exclusively to the members of the Society of Friends, but to all the white

¹ For "*they*" read "*the Chippeways and some other nations.*"

people whom they love or respect, and whom they believe to have good intentions towards them.

Not only the Delawares, but all the nations round them, make use of these names, and with the same relative application. I have myself, in 1782, while at Detroit, witnessed the Chippeways, who on meeting an American prisoner, who was walking about, called out *Messamockkèmaan* (long knife), though he had no knife, sword, or dirk at his side. I was one day about the same time hailed in that manner as I was walking up the river, and apprehending that I might be seized as a runaway prisoner, I immediately answered: *Kau! Saggenash*; No! an Englishman; and they passed on. I might with great propriety make this answer, as I was born in England.

In the year 1808, while I was riding with a number of gentlemen through Greentown¹ (an Indian town in the State of Ohio), I heard an Indian in his house, who through a crevice saw us passing, say in his language to his family: "See! what a number of people are coming along!—What! and among all these not one *long knife*! All *Yengees*!" Then, probably observing me, he said correcting himself, "No! one *Quækel*."

Such are the observations which the Indians make on the white people, and the names which they give to them. They may sometimes be in the wrong; but, as they make it their particular study to become acquainted with the actions, motions, deportment, and dress of the different nations, they seldom commit mistakes, and in general, they apply their different names precisely to those whom they are meant to designate or describe.

¹ [In Green township, in what is now Ashland County.]

