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Change of Name

THE right of a person to change his surname either by substituting a new one or by the more usual mode of assuming an additional one, was formerly much misunderstood, and even now there is much ignorance on the subject. And not only so, but not long ago a writer upon such subjects—well known, but whose statements are by no means generally accepted—published, in collaboration with another writer a series of articles in the *Genealogical Magazine* (London), for the purpose of declaring that no person could change his name except by the Queen's license, or, at least, parliamentary authority. This was formerly the prevailing notion of the law on the subject, which, however, was pronounced erroneous by legal decision rendered in England about thirty or forty years ago. The authors of the articles referred to get over the judicial decision, which most people will accept as an authoritative refutation of all their arguments, by the very simple and characteristic method of declaring that the judges did not know the law, and were incompetent to declare it. The other arguments advanced by them in favour of their contention are altogether inconclusive and fallacious, and are merely a reiterated begging of the question. As, however, one of these writers is himself the editor of the *Genealogical Magazine*, it is at least amusing to