

that the first and natural inquiry of the human mind, upon learning of the existence of a man, is: "What is his origin—whose son is he?" As an evidence of this, in all Hebrew historical writings we find the laboured recitals of pedigrees, and note that the name of each individual carefully states his ancestry, sometimes giving the name of his father only, as "Solomon, the son of David;" "Joshua, the son of Nun;" but not infrequently going back through several generations. So, in Homeric times, "Pelides, the son of Pelous;" "Atrides, the son of Atreus." To the mind of the ancients, it is clear that individual identity was associated with sonship or identification with a family and could not be separated from it; and this is as true today as in ancient times.

By the long-settled custom of ages, therefore, the patronymic became and was commonly relied on as a true indication of the family origin of the individual; and enabled one, upon learning a man's name, to form a correct conclusion as to the family or gens from which he sprang. Thus, a Roman of classical times could so conclude upon hearing the praenomen, nomen and cognomen of a Roman citizen; the first name directly indicating the individual, the second the gens, and the third the stirps or family. And in small communities where men and families were well known, this was necessarily a matter of importance and value.

The Common Law of England permitted a man to change his name at will.* In *Doe ex dem. Luscombe v. Yates*, C. J. Abbott holds that a man may at any time adopt a new name and that such new name is for all purposes as good as if he had obtained an

**The King v. Inhabitants of Billingshurst*, 3 Maule & S. 250; *Doe ex dem. Luscombe v. Yates*, 5 Barn. & Ald. 544; Coke Lit. (1st Amer. Ed.) 3 A.M.; *Button v. Wrightman*, Popham's R. 56; Camden's Remains, 141.

See, also, the following American cases:

Smith v. U.S. Casually Co., 197 N.Y. 420; *In re Snook*, 2 Hilton (N.Y.) 566; *Laflin & Rand Co. v. Steyler*, 140 Penna. State, 434; *Gearing v. Carroll*, 151 Penna. State, 79; *England v. N. Y. Publishing Co.*, 8 Daly (N.Y.) 375; *Cooper v. Burr*, 45 Barb. (N.Y.) 9; *Bell v. Sun Printing Co.*, 42 N.Y. Superior 567; *City Council v. King*, 4 McCord (S.C.) 487; *Hommel v. DeVinney*, 39 Mich. R. 522; *Binfield v. State*, 15 Nebraska, 484; *Linton v. First Nat. Bank*, 10 Fed. Rep. 894; *Matter of Ludwig And*, 1 Law Bull. (N.Y.) 14; Cycl. of Law and Procedure, Vol. 29, p. 271; Am. & Eng. Encyc. Law (2nd Ed.) 311; 2 Fiero on Special Proc. (2nd Ed.) 847; *Matter of Burstein*, 69 Miscel. (N.Y.) 41.