

to make regulations under the Act, in respect of marriages of foreigners with British subjects contracted in the United Kingdom, has yet been exercised, so that section 2 of the Act is absolutely inoperative.

It is true that a slight and partial attempt to meet the trouble has been made by the Home Office, in the exercise of its inherent jurisdiction apart from the last-mentioned Act, by issuing a circular urging the clergy and registrars to insist upon the production by the foreign party of a certificate of no impediment, before celebrating a marriage between a British subject and a French citizen, and such a certificate may be procured from the French Consulate; it may be, too that, by comity, the consular authorities of other foreign countries give similar assistance; but this is not enough, and, in the absence of a general international agreement, the position remains full of serious risks.

There may be difficulties, which are not apparent, in establishing reciprocity herein between the United Kingdom and other countries; but whatever the difficulties may be, they should be resolved, so as to secure for British subjects, upon an international legal basis, the protection contemplated by the Marriage with Foreigners Act in making marriages, contracted in accordance therewith, universally valid.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the Hague Convention for the Regulation of Conflict of Laws respecting Marriage, signed 12th June, 1902, is annexed to the Blue Book, although Great Britain is not a party to it, because its provisions may indirectly affect the marriage of British subjects with nationals of the signatory States. The principal of the Convention is declared in its first article, thus: "The right to contract marriage is governed by the law of the country of each of the future spouses, except where that law expressly provides for the application of another law:" the article is subject also to certain reservations in favour both of the law of the place of celebration and of the law of the nationality of the respective parties, in particular as to religious obligations and disabilities.