

are no Ecclesiastical Courts here to enforce the law. We believe that there is a decision of the late Vice-Chancellor Esten, on a case which, however, did not bring the point "fairly and squarely" before the Court, to the effect that such a marriage was not *ipso facto* void, but *voidable*, provided a suit were brought to declare it void during the lifetime of the parties. This most important social question ought not to be left in this dubious state.

4. We are left to grope among old English Statutes to find out what is the law on the subject of the Proclamation of Banns. Can they be published thrice on one Sunday? or on a week-day? or in different churches? The practice is very various. The whole custom is out of date, and only suited to an age when there was no other form of public notice than one in church. It should be superseded by one better adapted to the times.

5. The License issued by the Governor-General ought thoroughly to protect the minister celebrating the marriage from all penal liabilities for so doing. He ought never to need to go behind that document. Yet a minister in Montreal was fined a hundred pounds for marrying a minor under a regular license, on the suit of the parents!

6. As the latest law of Ontario stands, every minister, of every church, is authorised to perform marriages; but if his standing in his own church be called in question, the burden of proof of that fact rests on him. But what if he be dead or removed out of reach? Doubt, the most distressing and injurious, may be cast upon a marriage performed by him, by *prima facie* evidence against his ministerial position, and it may be impossible to remove that doubt. There is a "missing link" here.

7. The system of Registration in Quebec is much more perfect than that of Ontario. In the latter Province, the minister is no longer required to keep any book for recording marriages,—but simply to fill in a slip with the required particulars, and hand it to the Registrar. The law does not say whether the parties to the marriage, or the witnesses, are to sign their names—we understand it rather to mean that the minister is to write all with his own hand. All this is very loose. We are informed by the officials, that under the present and the previous law, very many ministers failed to make returns. We shudder to think of the possible consequences of all this laxity.

8. The subject of Divorce is left in a very unsettled condition. Under the B. N. A. Act, the Parliament of Canada has power to establish Divorce Courts; but the Romish Church being rigidly opposed to all divorces, the French-Canadians will not consent to their establishment. Consequently, no marriage can be dissolved without a special Act of Parliament, to be carried by the Protestant majority—a very costly, tedious, and circuitous process. We are as far as possible from wishing to see the American methods of divorce-made-easy introduced into Canada; but whatever is done should be done by a court, and under a general law.