

marriages, and it will probably be long before they will be careful to furnish the Registrars with the required information; but you may afford material assistance, by reminding the proper persons of their duty, whenever a birth or a death occurs in any family.

Two annual reports have been issued, and it is satisfactory to find that the returns are much more complete for the second, than for the first, year, and it is to be hoped that they will become more so, until they are as perfect as we can expect them to be. As you have all received the report for this year, I need not detain you with details, but it may suffice to commend to your notice the observations of the Secretary to the Board of Statistics, by whom the report is prepared.

An Act has been passed, remodelling the Divorce Court, and chiefly affecting the mode of procedure. But it is for the first time expressly enacted, that persons divorced may marry again. This, however, is accompanied by a provision securing every Clergyman, who may be unwilling to officiate at such a marriage, from liability to any penalty, to which he might be liable for refusing to do so, or for refusing to publish the banns of such parties. I hope that you will all gladly avail yourselves of this provision, more especially as divorce is allowed *here*, for some causes for which it is not allowed in England, and in some cases wherein the law appears to be directly opposed to the teaching of Scripture, which does not admit of divorce except in one case. And even in *that* case, it does not appear that a man may lawfully marry the woman who has been put away as guilty. Increased facilities for divorce must necessarily lead to a deterioration of morals, and this appears now to be acknowledged as the effect of the new Divorce Act in England.* Let us be careful, if we cannot check the torrent, at least to refuse to do anything which may augment its force and effect. If the law of the State conflicts with the Law of God, our course is clear, "we

*Last year in Convocation the Bishop of Oxford said: "That the present state of the law is satisfactory, I think hardly any of my Right Rev. brethren will affirm. Although the dissatisfaction in some minds may be deeper than in others, I believe it to be universal. Many of those who, at the time of the alteration of the law of Marriage, and the formation of that unhappy Court of Divorce, supported the change, have to my knowledge expressed their deep regret at what has resulted from the establishment of that Court."

The Archbishop said: "The all important point which is here at issue is, the re-marriage of the guilty parties, and that is to my mind most contrary to the Word of God."

This year, the Lower House unanimously again adopted the resolution, "That this House believes that the Marriage and Divorce Act of 1857 operates most injuriously on the