

The Bishop of Meath, speaking of public opinion in Ireland on this subject, says. p. 156—"Such marriages have been held in much greater abhorrence than in England. I know of only three or four in my long life; and the couples so united were cut off from all society, and even from the acquaintance of their nearest relations." If the Commissioners had desired to have the opinions of the clergy of England, their course was clear—namely, to submit to the Archbishops of Canterbury and of York a request that their Graces would in their respective provinces obtain through the several dioceses the returns of the archdeacons or rural deaneries, respectively, on the two questions of opinion and of fact. The *opinions* so collected would, we think, have shown a vast preponderance against altering the existing law. The *facts*, we also think, would have shown that the existing law is violated far less frequently than has been assumed.

We have ourselves taken town parishes and country parishes: in four agricultural parishes there has been no remembered instance of a widower marrying his late wife's sister; in another, only one in seventeen years. The Rev J. E. Tyler, having "made careful inquiries in his parish of St. Giles," says—"I have not known one in my parish since I became rector in 1826." (Ans. 1212, p. 108.) Another London clergyman, from whom we have seen a return, maintains that the feelings of the poor, and the habits of the poor, and the silence of the poor in respect to any grievance arising from the present law, all concur in proving that, speaking generally, they seek no change.

That it is not a poor man's question is clear from the fact (App. p. 140), that of the 1648 marriages enumerated by Mr. Crowder, 40 only are in the class of laborers and mechanics.—Of the twelve thousand widowers who marry spinsters, how many have infant children requiring care—and is that care never to be found in the widower's own mother, or in the widower's own sisters?—is he never to obtain help from his own aunt, or from his wife's aunt?—and must he see his children orphanless, unless he can prevail on their mother's own sister to