

grantable by any Court in England prior to the Reformation. After the Reformation an attempt was made to revise and consolidate the Ecclesiastical laws of England and a commission was appointed which prepared a revision and consolidation entitled *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, but this work never became law. By these proposed revised Ecclesiastical laws it was intended to enable the spiritual courts to grant absolute divorces, on various grounds, which would, even in the United States, be regarded as liberal; but the law remained unchanged until the passing of the Divorce Act in 1857 when the jurisdiction in matrimonial causes was taken away from the spiritual courts altogether, and vested in another tribunal created by Parliament, and endowed with power to grant absolute divorces. By this Act, 20-21 Vict. c. 85, Divorces *à mensa et thoro* were abolished, and power was given to grant an absolute divorce to either party for the adultery of the other of them, or cruelty or desertion without cause for two years and upwards. In all cases except dissolution of marriage, this divorce court is required to act on "principles and rules which in the opinion of the said court shall be as nearly conformable to the principles and rules on which the Ecclesiastical courts heretofore acted." This Act and the principles on which it is administered is material in Canada as it virtually forms the divorce law of British Columbia.

Between the reign of Henry VIII. and the passing of this Act, although Parliament refused to give effect to the proposed *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, it commenced the practice of passing special acts of Parlia-