

The *English Review* was enlivened in November by a brilliant article on The Law of Divorce from the fascinating pen of Mr. E. S. P. Haynes.

While sympathising to a large extent with the writer's learned views so lucidly expressed, we are of opinion that there is no middle course between the extreme position of the Catholic Church, that marriage is so holy a bond that nothing can break it, and to accept and even to encourage fornication rather than tamper with it, and the other extreme of allowing a marriage to determine as soon as the parties desire it, proper provision being of course made for the welfare of any offspring.

The problem is really insoluble so long as sexual relations give rise to bitter feeling of any sort. Polygamy is perhaps the most decent and dignified of the systems at present invented.

But the present degrading and stupid farce must be ended.

As things are in these islands to-day, nine-tenths of all divorces, at least in good society, are the result of cheerful agreement between the parties. Adultery on both sides is so common that a genuine grievance is as rare as a truthful witness.

In a case that recently came under my notice, for example, the nominal defendant was really the plaintiff. He had compelled his wife—for sufficient reason—to divorce him by the threat that unless she did so he would break off friendly relations with her. Next came a weary struggle to manufacture evidence, the plaintiff's lawyers keeping up the irritating wail: "Lord — is so strict. *We must have more adultery.*" So the already overworked defendant was kept busy all the summer faking fresh evidence to satisfy the morbid appetite of a Scotch judge, while at the same time he was obliged to hold constant and clandestine intercourse with his own wife, lest she should lose her temper and withdraw proceedings!

This may have been an exceptional case—we hope so. But that any such mockery can take place anyhow and anywhere is a scandal and a reproach to the nation whose laws and customs make it possible.

We hope to hear much more from Mr. Haynes, and that he will throw fearlessly the whole weight of his genius and energy into the cause of radical reform of these monstrous and silly iniquities.

ARIEL.