BREACH OF PROMISE: ITS HISTORY AND SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: TO WHICH ARE ADDED A FEW PAGES ON THE LAW OF BREACH OF PROMISE AND A GLANCE AT MANY AMUSING CASES SINCE THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

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CHARLES J. MACCOLLA

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BREACH OF PROMISE

"THE FAERY QUEENE Book 6; Canto xi.

Verse I.

"The joys of love, if they should ever last Without affliction or disquictnesse,
That worldly chaunces doe amongst them cast,
Would be on earth too great a diesecinesse,
Liker to heaven then mortall worlchednesse.
Therefore the winged God to let men weet,
That here on earth is no sure happinesse.
A thousand source hath tempred with one sweet
To make it seeme more deare and dainty, as is meet."
—SFENSER.

"What causes young people to 'come out' but the noble ambition of matrimony? What sends them trooping to watering-places? What keeps them dancing till five o'clock in the morning through a whole mortal season? What causes them to labour at planoforte sonatas, and to learn four sougs from a fashionable master at a guinea a lesson, and to play the harp if they have handsome arms and neat elbows, and to wear Lincoln Green toxophilite hats and feathers, but that they may bring down some 'desirable' young men with those killing bows and arrows of theirs?"

-THACKERAY.

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RECORDER OF CARLISLE

THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO ILLUSTRATE THE TRUE PHASES OF

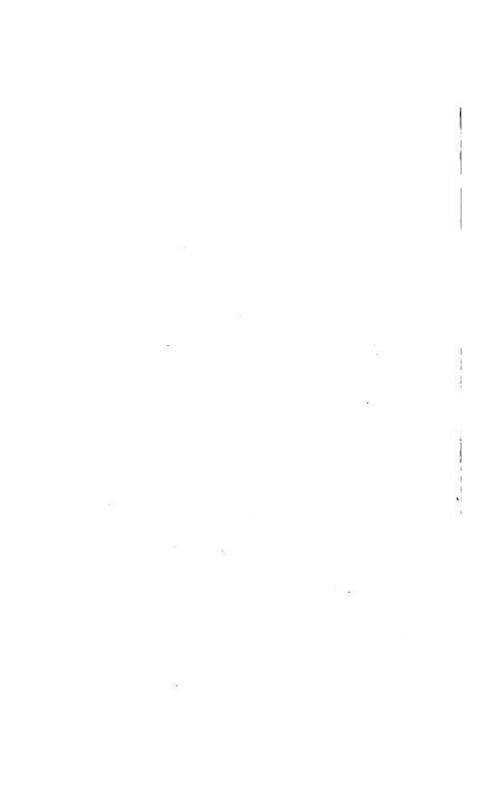
A GREAT SOCIAL QUESTION

WHICH, IN HIS ZEAL FOR THE WELFARE OF OUR COUNTRY, HE HAS SO ABLY SHOWN TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

18

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PREFACE

A HETEROGENEOUS mass is disclosed under the auspices of the Action of Breach of Promise of Marriage. Wounded feelings! Loss of position! Marital disunion! Extortion! Damages!—these are the ingredients of this social mixture.

Our legislative physicians are in doubt as to the efficacy of their medicine, and they differ but little in this respect from a few medical men, perhaps, of the reader's own acquaintance.

The patient sufferers, the unfortunate public have also, it is needless to add, but little confidence in the beneficial results of the mixture. Experience shows that by taking the dose a part of the body is certainly benefited, while the greater part is injured, sometimes beyond remedy. Hence it is that two subjects, paramount in importance, both dealing with the social welfare of our country, are now among those uppermost in the public mind. They affect all sorts and conditions of men. No marvel, therefore, that so much interest has, during recent years, attached to the Action of Breach of Promise of Marriage, and to the question of Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.

The altered condition of society has necessitated agitation on these questions throughout the length and breadth of England; and it is by no means