

in Ireland still is happily found—of a public disapprobation, equal in force to law, even if law had been wanting, against the the unsanctified alliance.

But “the plague is begun,” and the evil is already gone forth. Legislation, indeed, will make it worse, since the nation as a nation will then be committed to the sin. But even the popular discussion of the subject, however inevitable, on the right side, when the agitation has been urged on by our opponents, is itself an almost incalculable mischief. Thoughts, which never would have occurred to the pure, have been forced on the purest—a relationship which had given a mother to orphans, while it still gave a sister to the widower—is hazarded, if not broken up; and hundreds, who have looked on each other with the feelings of a blood-relationship, are even now compelled to think that the protection, which saved them from even a doubt or a thought in each other’s minds, will no longer save them from suspicion; and the children, the objects of their joint care, must be abandoned, since some loud and interested clamourers have declared that sisters of a wife deceased are to the widower no more than any other marriageable woman; and their own delicacy will then prompt them to withdraw from a position which no other marriageable woman could fill.

The Commissioners thought fit to address to the Lord Primate of all Ireland a communication requesting his Grace to ascertain the opinions of the clergy of Ireland on the subject of Marriages within the Prohibited Degrees. Why did not they address a similar communication to the Lord Primate of all England? Perhaps the reply which they received from the Archbishop of Armagh and the other prelates of Ireland did not encourage them to prosecute their inquiries. The words of the first noble and venerable man are as follows:—“My opinion is decidedly opposed to a removal of the prohibition which prevents a man from marrying his wife’s sister. There are, I believe, but very few cases of such marriages among persons of the higher ranks of society in this country; and among the lower orders, I understand, marriages of this kind are regarded with great dislike.”