

opinions. Yet, whilst I may fail in these respects, I am still not altogether without hope of being at least able of laying the subject before the reader in such a clear and concise manner as will enable him after carefully reading the arguments that can be adduced on both sides, to form more readily and intelligibly an opinion of his own.

I may state here, that I approach the subject altogether with an unbiassed mind. I know of no relation, remote or near, who has married or is likely to marry a wife's sister; and, therefore, no consideration of this kind could likely induce me to lean more favourably to one side than the other in the discussion of the subject.

If we appeal to the earlier history of the Jews, we find at least one instance recorded of such a marriage having taken place. The patriarch Jacob not only married two sisters, but had them simultaneously as wives. It is true, that Jacob did not at first contemplate this double marriage; but only after having been deceived by Laban, who fraudulently substituted the elder sister Leah for the younger sister, that he agreed to serve another seven years in order to obtain Rachel, whom he loved. Still, we cannot for a moment suppose that, however deeply Jacob might have felt the fraud practised upon him, he would ever have consented to marry the sister also, had such an alliance been deemed sinful in his eyes. Indeed, it is quite evident, from other recorded marriages, that before the Mosaic laws were promulgated, the laws of affinity and consanguinity were not strictly observed, if observed at all. According to Gen. xx. 12, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was his half-sister. "And yet indeed," says the patriarch Abraham, "*she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.*" Josephus, in his *Antiquities*, b. i. ch. vi. par. 5, tells u