

possesses, and that there was therefore, no necessity for this bill—I hope I have refuted this objection and have proved its necessity by various considerations. Having removed this preliminary objection, I shall revert to the proposition which I stated some time ago, that laws, on such subjects as this bill relates to, ought to be such as the people desire unless they are unjust in principle or manifestly inconsistent with the safety of the government. Now, I do not recollect that any one has ever contended that this bill is unjust in its principle or would operate unfairly and grievously between man and man. But I confess, Sir, that I am not contended with this negative merit of the bill. It has still higher claims upon your favor and your cordial support. It will be an honest & equitable law substituted in place of an unjust law. The injustice of the present law is so manifest as to render proof of it unnecessary. It is unjust to the children who are disinherited, and it is unjust to society. It is inhuman in its operation; it is unnatural. The voice of nature in the heart of every parent condemns the aristocratic distinctions of the law of primogeniture, and commands him to provide equally and impartially for all who owe their existence to him. He acts unjustly to society also, if he leaves them destitute and throws the burthen of supporting his offspring on the community. He is manifestly bound to support them while he lives. Is not the obligation equally plain and forcible to provide for their support after his death, as far as it may be in his power, by an equal division of his property among them? Common sense, indeed, must teach any one that if there is to be any inequality in the division of his estate, it should be in favour of the weakest and youngest, who are least able to provide for themselves, and who require, besides, more to be done for them, in educating them and setting them up in life; so that the greatest share ought rather to be given to the females, or the youngest child than, according to our present absurd