

striction, so unjust, so unnatural, so odious, so repugnant to reason and the best feelings and affections of the human heart, will be removed by the bill, and the principle established, that the parents of every intestate who leaves no children, shall inherit his property, in preference to any other kindred. In the third place, a similar spirit of exclusion prevails in our present law, with regard to relations of the half blood. Not only are the remotest kindred, of the whole blood, preferred to them, but they are like parents, absolutely and under all circumstances, excluded from the inheritance; so that one may have the mortification to see the intestate estate of a half-brother or half-sister escheat to the crown, for want of heirs, under our present absurd and unjust law. These two last modifications of the law have never been opposed. It would be an unpardonable waste of your time, therefore, to enter into a serious and formal argument in their favour. These, Sir, are the most important and prominent features of this measure; but there are some subordinate and subsidiary provisions, which I may as well perhaps not omit in its description. The first clause, which abolishes primogeniture, and the exclusion of parents and half blood from the inheritance, defines the mode of succession to intestate estates, in so particular manner and in so many cases, that a person of ordinary understanding can find no difficulty, as it seems to me, in any possible contingency, in ascertaining, from a perusal of it, the person who will be entitled to the property. The 2nd clause directs, that the personal property be divided in the same manner. In this respect the present law is not altered, except that this bill gives to the widow of an intestate, who leaves no children, all his estate, after the payment of debts, and it gives collateral kindred claiming through a nearer ancestor the preference to those claiming through an ancestor, more remote. For, under our present law regulating the distribution of the personal property, it is divided equally among the children and other kindred of equal degree