

tionship which, at the time, actually surrounded them. As the law was and is, the harmony was never for an instant hazarded by a suspicion; but, as Mr. Wortley will make the law, the intercourse will become impossible, and a sister, once married, can never receive an unmarried sister into her house in the present fullness and freedom of confidence. The widower, likewise, will suffer equally. At present he receives—the Commissioners cannot be ignorant of the fact—the aid of his deceased wife's sister as her best successor in the charge of her children. That sister enters his home with a confidence and a purity which, if he had had a sister of his own blood, he could not find surpassed in her case. As the law now stands, and as the feelings of society are developed, the deceased wife's sister remains in the widower's house, or enters it in the midst of his sacred sorrows, and soothes them, and adopts his children, and supplies her lost sister's place to them, without one thought as to him which one of his own blood might not blamelessly indulge.

All this must be blotted out from English society. And where is it to stop? If A. B. may marry one sister, C., he may, after her death, marry another sister, D. and, if there be a third, he may look forward to the prospect of marrying E. * We ask, can either D. or E. ever be to him or to C. what she now is?—she is lost to both as a sister. Mr. Keble has well put the case, in substance—the word *sister-in-law* will henceforth disappear from the English language; as the relationship itself will be expunged from English life: “the very name will become an absurdity, if once this change is made—the relation, I mean, of sister-in-law.”

It has been asked in Parliament—and we have already hinted at the question—where, if the proposed law shall break down the present lines, is the inroad to stop? We repeat the question formally: is there any consistency in stopping where

* “There was another case at Norwich where a man married three sisters in succession.”—Evidence, Ans. 1040. “I saw one woman who was the third sister the man had married; and her expression to me was, that, if she died, she believed her husband would have the fourth. That was in Sheffield.”—Ans. 150.