with a deceased wife's sister, as those aimed at by Mr. Girouard's Bill.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours truly,
JAMES ROY.

The following is the Petition of the Methodist Ministers of Toronto:

To the Honourable the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada:

The petition of the undersigned clergymen of the Methodist Church of Canada, resident in the city of Toronto, humbly showeth:—That, whereas a Bill for the purpose of legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, has been presented for the consideration and legislative sanction of both Houses of the Dominion Parliament; your petitioners are satisfied of the wisdom and expediency of such a measure, and the invalidity of the objections which are urged against it, and therefore respectfully request your honourable House to enact the principle of the Bill in a Statute, so as to give the formal authority and protection of the law to the marriage of a widower with the sister of his deceased wife.

In presenting this request to your honourable House, your petitioners may be permitted briefly to state some of the reasons by which they have been compelled to take a position so different from that which has been taken by petitioners belonging to some other Christian denominations in respect to the said Bill.

There are no ties of blood or relationship, which would make such marriages immoral or improper. There are numerous cases where they are eminently expedient, and, beyond doubt, promote the best interests of all the parties concerned.

Hitherto, there has been no law upon our Canadian Statute-book against such marriages; although we are aware they are regarded as illegal in Britain. Under these circumstances, believing that they were acting in a legal and proper manner, some of our worthiest and most respected Canadian citizens have formed such marriages. It would be a cruel and ill-advised thing for our highest legislative courts to take any course that would appear to place these excellent persons in a position of inferiority and outlawry. There is no good reason why such marriages should not have the formal sanction of law. No interest of social order, property, or morality would be injuriously affected by the enactment of such a law; while, in many cases, the legal denial of this privilege would be a very great hardship to innocent and worthy persons, whose interests should not be disregarded by those to whom the making of our laws is committed.

Apart from ecclesiastical law, which creates an artifical morality that has no general Christian obligation, the only feasible ground of objection to the proposed measure is obtained by a strained and unwarrantable interpretation of a passage in the 18th chapter of the Book of Leviticus; which says nothing about marrying, or not marrying, a deceased wife's sister.

The passage in dispute seems simply to forbid the taking of a wife's sister, as an additional wife, during the lifetime of the first wife. The fact that the Mosaic law made it the duty of a man, in certain cases, to marry his deceased brother's wife, is wholly inconsistent with the interpretation which some have put upon this passage. So is the fact that such marriages were customary among the Jews; which is unaccountable, if they understood this passage to forbid what they practised. Mr. Hirschfelder, the learned Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature, in University College, Toronto, has shown in his pamphlet, "A Wife to her Sister, that both the Septuagint version and the Chaldee paraphrase render the passage in Leviticus in such a manner as to leave no doubt that such marriages were allowed; also, that there is no evidence that, while Hebrew was a living language, this text was understood to prohibit such marriages; and that the Mishna and the writings of the learned Philo show that no such meaning, as modern writers attach to this passage, was formerly given to it by Hebrew scholars.

It seems to your petitioners somewhat singular, therefore, to see the representatives of Christian Churches, on the strength of such a forced interpretation of what is admittedly not a plain prohibition, attempting to prevent the enactment of a law that commends itself to reason; which has repeatedly received the sanction of the House of Commons of England, and which would now be the law of the Mother Country, only for the opposition of the House of Lords, mainly caused by the powerful ecclesiastical influence in that body. The idea of building a prohibition for whole communities on so doubtful a foundation is a remarkable illustration of the tenacity with which people cling to the side of a question that has the prestige of ecclesiastical authority and prejudice in its favour.

In view of the considerations herein named, and other weighty reasons, your petitioners earnestly request your honourable House to accede to the prayer of this memorial, and enact a measure that shall duly legalise a marriage contracted between a widower and his deceased wife's sister.

E. HARTLEY DEWART, D.D., Editor *Christian Guardian*.

JOHN POTTS, Metropolitan Church.

GEORGE COCHRANE, Chairman of the Toronto District.

S. D. HUNTER, Pastor of Elm street Church.

WM. BRIGGS, Book Steward, Methodist Book Room.

J. POVELL, Pastor Richmond street Church.

S. ROSE, D.D.

W. S. BLACKSLOCK, pastor of Bestheley street Church.

THOS. W. CAMPBELL B.D.

A. SUTHERLAND, D.D., General Secretary Methodist Missionary Society.

W. J. HUNTER, D.D., Pastor Bloor street Methodist Church.

W. H. WITHROW, Sunday School Editor, M. C. of Canada.

JOHN B. BLACKSON, M.A., Pastor Sherb. St. Church.

J. E. SANDERSON, M.A., Pastor of Wood. Church.