

as a consequence have not much to fear from the marriage laws of the Dominion Parliament, the law of divorce excepted; but it is to be hoped that this Parliament will never follow the example of the British Parliament which, to use the language of an eminent Protestant legal writer (Dr. Redfield) "has degraded the solemnisation of that sacred relation to the level of a mere civil contract, allowing its solemnisation before the civil magistrate, and practically abandoning the former claim of its indissolubility." Now, one word with regard to the social objections raised by the opponents of the Bill. It is said that it will upset happy social relations and would destroy the relations between brothers and sisters-in-law, the free, truthful and pure feelings with which a man regards the sister of his wife. This objection exists to-day under the prohibitory laws, for these marriages are almost daily contracted; public feeling is decidedly in their favour and they are socially recognised. Why then maintain a restriction which has only the effect of branding the issue of such marriages with the mark of illegitimacy before the law of the land. One of the leading journals of London, England, (the *Telegraph*, 7th May, 1879) answers the objection in this spirited manner:—"A man's feelings in such matters are wholly unaffected by Statutes, for as yet no human legislature has ever discovered how to modify or control the domestic affections by Acts of Parliament. The Bishop of London's reasoning seems to rest on the assumption, which is really as insulting as it is gratuitous, that but for the law which prohibits a man marrying his deceased wife's sister, everybody would try to taint with impurity this now spotless relationship. The way of dealing with such a question is to treat it in the spirit of those whose solvent for all social and political difficulties is liberty." Lastly, Mr. Speaker, and I conclude with this point, an effort was made to bring the great influence of the fair sex against the Bill. But what a failure! One or two women only from the isolated sea coast of Cape Breton, acting, no doubt, under the pressure and restraint of unmerciful husbands, appended their names to the petitions already alluded to. On the other side what have we seen? A lady under the *non de*

*guerre* "Gunhilda" in the columns of the leading journal of Ottawa (the *Citizen*), rushing into the *melée* and displaying such an amount of learning and ingenuity that she forced her antagonist, the valiant Bishop of Ontario, to withdraw from the contest. The brilliant success is not surprising; we all know that the ladies have a style of putting their arguments, which is simply irresistible. The following language of the Countess of Charlemont is a fair sample of it:—"There is one argument," and Lady Charlemont considers it a strong one, in favour of such marriages, which is, "that now the foolish opponents thereof say that a woman would never feel safe in admitting her sister to her house as a resident, if after the wife's death, a marriage between the widower and the sister were possible. This is sheer folly," continues this noble lady, "Why such a degrading idea would prevent a woman of having a cousin, often as dear as a sister, or a friend to stay with her. Now, if a kind girl goes to nurse and comfort her dead sister's children, for whom she must have a natural affection, old gossips shake their heads and malign her, though as the law stands (not, we hope, for long) she is in her brother's house. Who would cherish the motherless things like her? A stranger? Well, the kind aunt would be thrust aside for some giddy girl, who would have no love for them, perhaps, even a feeling of repulsion."

Mr. JONES: I must congratulate the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Girouard), on the very able legal manner in which he has brought this matter before the House. We all know the ability and the energy of that hon. gentleman when he takes anything in hand. I think ever since the 16th of February, when he first brought this matter before the House, he has been sleeping over it and thinking over it, and he has made up a brief, which might be placed before any Court in this Dominion. It is a regular legal brief. But I do not look at this matter from either a legal or civil point of view. I take a different ground. It is contrary to the law of God; it will cause disturbance, trouble, and jealousies in many a household, when otherwise all would be peace and quiet. The hon. gentleman has said that numerous petitions have been presented in