

have not asked for it ; that few petitions have been sent up for, and many against it ; but this is a question which does not take hold of the public mind ; because it is not one which touches the country's pride or its purse, it is passed over with the remark : " A mere question of family relations, and not likely to affect me or mine," say too many. But it has been discussed very widely in the Old Country, Australia and the United States. In the latter it has been decided favorably, and in Britain, the House of Commons, after years of discussion, passed it by a large majority. It is yearly growing in favor of the House of Lords, and it must succeed, for in all these discussions, so far as I have seen—and I have followed them with some degree of interest—I have not met one argument to convince me that it was wrong, for neither from pulpit, platform or press have I heard or seen any reason that can weigh against those which have been adduced in favor of the principle of this Bill. The main appeal has been to the Scriptures. Here, one party rests their case, and they have so far been singularly unfortunate. They involved the question in such a labyrinth of difficulties that in many cases they were forced to leave this ground and seek that on which we stand when discussing the ordinary affairs of life and duty, of which matrimony is one. Even Cardinal Wiseman, as has been quoted by the hon. member from York, is in favor of this Bill, for the poor, as necessary ; and will be productive only ; for them, therefore, it is right in his . . . may be obtained by the wealthy . . . a consideration. Standing upon this ground, I have put the case to my own judgment in every conceivable shape. I can see nothing in it but what is purely sentimental. Even this has its weight, and we are bound to respect it ; but there is sentiment also on the other side, and more than sentiment, there are realities which have come home to many a household ; and men and women, pure as ever lived, have been branded with disgrace, and made to feel the humiliating mark placed upon them until their death. And why ? Because certain prejudices have been framed into a law. Great names have been quoted in defence of certain views. Men in authority desired to pursue

a certain course, and this was made easy to them by those whose policy it was to please, but as in political matters, so in spiritual, or what is called spiritual, it is not always safe to be led by great names, as even the best of men have at times been, unwittingly, the victims of prejudice. They desire to believe a certain thing ; they frame it into a dogma, and, instead of going to the law and the testimony for the Truth, they, out of their own desires, frame a policy—they go to, and frame arguments from it, in defence of this policy, and thus even good men have been led astray ; and the old lines of Burns have been in order in their case :—

" Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penned.
E'en Ministers they hae been kenned
In holy rapture ;
A rousin' whild at times to vend
And nail't wi scripture !"

Confounding the Moral with the Ceremonial—that which is for all time, with that which was merely for a dispensation which passed away some 1,800 years ago—men have framed a plea from the Old Testament to sustain their opposition to this Bill ; but it goes too far. They say it meets their case ; let us read it : " Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her besides the other in her (the wife's) lifetime." We may not marry our wife's sister while she lives—that is all ; they forget that we may, by a parity of reasoning, when she dies ; and not only so, but while prohibited from vexing our wife, by wedding her sister while she lives, we are at perfect liberty, according to this law, to wed her after the death of the wife, and, from the example of the good men of that day, to wed her and any other man's wife's sister also, and there is no restriction on the number that might be thus wed ; so that if this law is of any force, we must take it with all that it commanded, and all that it permitted. Under it hon. gentlemen might establish Harems in this country—they might introduce the abominations of polygamy, now happily confined to Utah and a few other places not recognised in Christian circles. The same law to which appeal is had against this Bill, if we take it in all its fulness, would regulate our appetites in every direction ; our domestic economies ; what we should eat, drink and avoid ; how we