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THE DIVORCE OF JEROME BONAPARTE FROM MISS PATERSON.

[The following historical sketch is from the pen of "Wilfred," the well known correspondent of the *N. Y. Freeman's Journal*. We recommend it to the attention of our readers as showing the firmness with which the Church has always asserted the indissolubility of the marriage tie against the passions of despots, to whom the precept of—"One with one, and for ever," has always seemed a burden too grievous to be borne. To a Philip I. of France—to a Philip Auguste—to a Henry VIII., and to a Napoleon—the language of the Sovereign Pontiff is still the same—"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." How strikingly the contrast, in this respect, between the conduct of an Urban II.—an Innocent III.—a Clement VII.—a Pius VII.—and the conduct of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Cranmer, and all the heroes of the Protestant Reformation. How great the difference betwixt Catholicity and Protestantism—betwixt the Church of Christ and the Synagogue of Satan.—Ed. T. W.]

The star of Bonaparte, after being eclipsed for thirty years, now beams forth with renewed splendor, and seems destined, during another coming period, to illumine the political horizon of Europe. The popularity of the Prince President has even extended as far as our shores, and we suppose that we may attribute to it the recent publication of an expensive work entitled "The Napoleon Dynasty." The recollection of the public has been called to the fact that a branch of the family are residents of Baltimore, and on the occasion of the graduation at the last examination at West Point of Jerome Bonaparte, the grandson of the youngest brother of Napoleon, the press have been almost unanimous in setting before their readers the genealogy of this young lieutenant in the Mounted Rifles, that bears so illustrious a name. But in giving an account of the divorce, which preceded the return of Miss Paterson to the United States, and the marriage of Jerome Bonaparte to a princess of Wurtemberg, the press have treated the subject in the superficial and inaccurate manner, which is particularly their characteristic when they touch upon matters in which the Head of the Catholic Church is in any wise concerned; and even the *Courier and Enquirer*, usually noted for veracity and independence of judgment, has put forth the statement "that Pope Pius VII. had permitted the divorce in order to enable Jerome to marry the German princess." So gross a historical error might excite our surprise, were we not daily witnesses and quite accustomed to the carelessness with which in our country newspaper articles are written. On the sheets is printed either truth or falsehood, according to the temporary interests of the moment; but seldom, if ever, are pains taken to establish by research or examination the accuracy of any proposition that may have been advanced.

We will begin by asserting that the Catholic Church, which proclaims the indissolubility of the marriage tie, never allows of divorce. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," are the words of our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, who has besides said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her." If then, in some very rare instances, the Church has severed the marriage tie, it has never been a sentence of divorce that she has pronounced, but a declaration of the nullity of the previous marriage, arising from some recognised insurmountable obstacle to the union of the parties, and in all such cases she has proceeded upon the ground that no marriage had ever taken place. In the middle ages the efforts of the Church were constantly directed to the maintenance of the unity and indissolubility of marriage against the barbarism and passions of the men of those days. The refusal by the Church to Henry VIII. of the divorce which he desired to obtain, brought about the separation of England from Catholicity, and in later times, before the power of Napoleon, the successor of Peter remained as untrifled and as immovable in his refusal to a similar request as he had in the former instance been, when pressed by the menaces of the monarch of England.

On the 24th of May, 1805, the Emperor of France, then in the zenith of his glory, wrote to the venerable Pius VII. the following letter:—

"I have frequently spoken to your Holiness of a young brother, nineteen years of age, whom I sent in a frigate to America, and who after a sojourn of a month, although a minor, married a Protestant, a daughter of a merchant of the United States. He has just returned. He is fully conscious of his faults. I have sent back to America Miss Paterson, who calls herself his wife. By our laws the marriage is null. A Spanish priest so far forgot his duties as to pronounce the benediction. I desire from your Holiness a bull, annulling the marriage. I send your

Holiness several papers, from one of which, by Cardinal Caselli, your Holiness will receive much light. I could easily have this marriage broken in Paris, since the Gallican Church pronounces such matrimonies null. But it appears to me better to have it done in Rome, on account of the example to sovereign families marrying Protestants. I beg your Holiness to do this quietly, and as soon as I know that you are willing to do it, I will have it broken here civilly. It is important for France that there should not be a Protestant young woman so near my person. It is dangerous that a minor and a distinguished youth should be exposed to such seduction against the civil laws and all sorts of propriety."

It would then appear from the above letter, that this was not the first time that Napoleon had addressed the Pope on the subject of this divorce, he had "frequently spoken" to Pius VII. on the matter, while in Paris, whither he had come for the purpose of conferring the Imperial Crown; and no doubt, the Holy Father had always refused the application, since the Emperor continued to plead his suit so pertinaciously. It is not true, that Jerome had, when he was married, resided in the United States only one month; it is equally false that the marriage was null and void by the laws of France, and also false that the ceremony was performed by a Spanish priest. Jerome before marrying Miss Paterson, had spent at least six months in the United States; the marriage was delayed two months later than the day first appointed, and the ceremony was performed by the Right Rev. Dr. Carroll, then Bishop of Baltimore. From the fact that this saintly prelate was present, and united them, we may well infer that the marriage was invested with all it might require to constitute it perfectly valid. The simulated apprehension expressed by Napoleon, that Miss Paterson could have influence enough on him to shake his faith, is, when we consider the respective personages, in the highest degree ridiculous.

On the 23rd of June, Pius VII. replied to the Emperor's demand, and his letter will remain for ever as a model of sacerdotal candor, and as a well reasoned explanation of the doctrines of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage, when contracted even between Catholic and Protestant. He examines and discusses each in its turn, the several causes for nullity put forward by the Emperor, he refutes them all, and declares, that none of them have force to invalidate the marriage, and concludes with the following words:—"We may not depart from the laws of the Church, by pronouncing the invalidity of a marriage, which according to the declaration of God, no human power can dissolve.—Were we to usurp an authority which is not ours, we should render ourselves guilty of a most abominable abuse of our sacred ministry before the tribunal of God and the whole Church. Your majesty could not, even in justice, approve of our pronouncing a decision contrary to the testimony of our conscience, and the invariable principles of the Church. We, therefore, earnestly hope that your majesty will be persuaded, that the desire with which we are animated, to second, as much as on us depend, your majesty's desire, is, in the present case, rendered inefficacious, by want of power, and, that your majesty will accept this same declaration as a sincere token of our paternal affection. We give to your majesty our Apostolical Benediction."

Napoleon was exasperated by this refusal; but he was compelled to overlook the matter for a few months while he attended to matters of greater importance. All Europe was in arms against him. At Austerlitz he defeated the combined efforts of the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and after the victory he wrote under date of the 7th of January, 1806, from Munich, to Pius VII. as follows:—

"Since the return of your Holiness to Rome, I have met with nought but refusals from it on all matters, even on those that were of the highest order of interest for religion, as for instance when the object in view was to prevent Protestantism from raising its head in France."

He then goes on to state the accumulated grievances that he has suffered from the Holy See; the Holy Father will not permit him (the Emperor) to be the head of religion in France, he will not consent to drive British subjects out of Rome, nor close the ports of the Pontifical States to British vessels. The conqueror, up to that time invincible, infatuated by his pride, becomes indignant to see his might powerless in the domain of religion. It was about this time that he once, in a spiteful mood, exclaimed, "The Priests reserve to themselves the soul, and cast to me the body;" or when in his blindness deploring his inability to pass himself off as a Deity, he said to one of his courtiers, "I was not born soon enough; behold Alexander, he could assert that he was the son of Jupiter without being contradicted. But I find in my age, a Priest who has

more power than I, for he governs minds, and I reign over matter alone."

Though the personal liberty of Pius VII. was in danger, and though he was in great dread of seeing a schism break out in France, and Napoleon embrace the counsels of the Russian Autocrat, who urged him to declare himself the head of the Gallican Church, still he could not be moved, and in his reply of the 29th of January, 1806, we find this passage:—

"If we have been unable to satisfy your Majesty in the matter of the marriage, a question in which, according to the facts, so far ascertained, we have found ourselves, by force of divine disposition, without power, but not without will; be assured that this refusal has cost us more pain than it could possibly have afflicted your Majesty's self."

On the 13th of February of the same year, the Emperor renewed his attempts to carry his point; and in a letter, in which his insatiable ambition manifests itself by the following phrase: "All Italy shall be subject to my law;" he tells the Pope in an insolent manner, "that those who display so much zeal in protecting Protestant marriages, will be held answerable by God." Pius VII. replied, by appealing to Divine Law, from which flows the indissolubility of marriage, even between Catholics and Protestants.

Napoleon's arms continued to be crowned by success and triumph. He had conquered Prussia at the battle of Jena, and defeated Russia at Friedland and Eylau; all Germany was at his feet, and he determined to apportion out of it kingdoms for his brothers. He would no longer brook any delay in the matter of Jerome's divorce, and as he could not get the Pope to grant it, he made up his mind to do without him. In his first letter to Pius VII. he had stated, "I could easily have the marriage broken in Paris," and accordingly he found without any very great difficulty a complaisant prelate free from the conscientious scruples which restrained the Supreme Pontiff. The marriage was proclaimed in Paris to be null and void, on the ground that Miss Paterson had not been baptised. This, if it had been true, would indeed have constituted a sufficient cause of nullity; but it is singular that it should never have been mentioned to the Pope. On the 23rd of Aug., 1807, Cardinal Fesch, the Emperor's uncle, blessed the new union between Jerome, then become King of Westphalia, and the Princess Catherine of Wurtemberg. It is well here to point out for admiration and delicacy of conscience of Napoleon. He appeared to be scandalised at Miss Paterson's marriage, because she was a Protestant; he reproached with all the zeal that could be imagined the Pope for not supporting him in his crusade for the defence of Catholicism, which was threatened by a young and beautiful American lady, and the Princess whom he gets his brother to marry is also a Protestant.

Napoleon officially acquainted the Pope, in common with all the other sovereigns of Europe, with the marriage. Pius VII. was daily suffering new encroachments on the part of the Emperor; at one time his ports were occupied, at another his provinces were taken from him. The least feeling of disapprobation expressed by him could but serve to call forth more rigorous treatment; nevertheless the Holy Pontiff wrote as follows to the Emperor:—

"We still hope that, after the examination made by us of the reasons which have been submitted to us in regard to the nullity of the first marriage of the prince, new and just motives may have been brought to light that have not been stated to us, and with which we are not acquainted; in consequence of which the celebration, of which your Majesty has informed us, has taken place.

"This hope sustains us in the bitterness and anxiety from which we cannot defend ourselves, when we call to mind what, on a similar question and after most mature deliberation, we have formerly written to your Majesty."

A few months later, on the 2nd February, 1808, Rome was occupied by the French army, and Pius VII. was a prisoner in his palace.

And now, in presence of the testimony I have adduced, who would venture to affirm, that this Holy Pope, this energetic and unconquerable Emperor of the Faith, has authorized or pronounced the divorce of Jerome Bonaparte. We trust that the *Courier and Enquirer*, with his usual fairness and courtesy will acknowledge his error, and we should be pleased if he were to publish in his paper some of these letters, which reflects so much glory on the Church.—His Protestant readers would be convinced, that our dogmas protect in the marriage tie the honor of their daughters, as well, and as sacredly as our own, although they are estranged from us. We have taken these letters from the life of Pius VII. by the Chevalier Artaud, who was formerly French Ambassador to Rome. The work is in high repute on ac-

count of the official character of the numerous documents which it contains, and we will remark, *en passant*, that the work entitled, "The History of the Napoleon Dynasty," to which allusion has been made in the beginning of this article, while it cites two of these interesting letters, pretends that they appear in print for the first time in its pages, and that they have been communicated by the Bonaparte family. This is a literary ruse pretty frequently practised, in order to induce a high opinion of the importance and value of literary or historical materials.

The courageous and unfortunate Pius VII. lost his realm; he was persecuted, imprisoned, and loaded with opprobrium, for having dared to resist the will of Napoleon, and for having refused to close his ports to British vessels, and British subjects. It belonged to our day to witness what remembrance, of these so called Christian sentiments, is preserved by England; and what return she makes in her insults which both her Parliament and the populace have so prodigally heaped on Pius IX., equal in courage, and, so far, almost equal in misfortune to his illustrious predecessor.

WHO SHALL HAVE THE CHILD?

(From the *N. Y. Freeman's Journal*.)

To whom do the children of Catholics belong? Who has a right to their training? Who is to have them? There are just now only two claimants—the Church and the World;—that is to say, God and the devil!—The world claims them. It insists that they shall be brought up as children of the World, loving the World, obeying the World, identified with the World, forgetting God with the World, and going to the devil with the World.

But the Church also claims them. She set her seal on them in Baptism. She does not bestow on them the inestimable gift of regeneration except on the solemn promise and vow of their parents that they shall be brought up in the discipline and in the instruction of the Lord. The Church claims that they shall be brought up as *not of the World*;—that they shall be taught not to love the World, not to conform to it, not to follow or obey it. Parents contract the solemn obligation to bring up their Catholic children in this spirit, as soldiers of the cross and freemen of Christ, and not as slaves of the devil and votaries of the World. Pastors stand as watchmen and as monitors to warn and urge their people to the discharge of this obligation—by the neglect of which children and parents, and all who do neglect doing their duties in these premises, will certainly perish.

In schools of the World and of the devil it is reasonable to expect that children are to be brought up to shun the evils of the world, and to resist the snares of the devil? The whole question lies here:—are schools of the World, are schools where God is shut out, the places for children to be brought up for the religion which the world hates, because it hated Him who died to establish that religion? Think of this, you Catholics who even yet suffer your children to frequent schools against which the Successor of St. Peter has warned the Church; and which the Bishops of this country, as well as of every other, have pronounced to be hostile to the faith. Think of this, and act on the thought quickly, or harsher epithets will be due you than those of *sleepy Catholics*, *ignorant Catholics*, *stupid and shortsighted Catholics*. If the experience of the past, if the demonstrations of the past, if the voice of Pope and Bishops, and the attitude of all earnest and living Catholics throughout the world, are not able to arouse *all* who call themselves Catholics to the discharge of this great duty of nature and of religion, then those who still side with the World in this question will not from our pen find terms applied to them gentler than that they are *disobedient* and *faithless* people, too brutish to prize heaven more than earth, too base to respect their word plighted in the vows they have taken at the baptism of their children, too servile and too shallow to prefer the communion and the blessing of the Saints to the fellowship of the hollow infidels with whom they cast in their lot, and the lot of their children.

Once more let us be up and doing. The work that is before us to do for ourselves, for our children, and for our country, is perfectly plain. Infidelity, if it triumph, will be the ruin of our country as well as the perdition of our children. But infidelity now reigns supreme in the State education of this country. What we Catholics must do, and must do *now*, is first to get our own children out of this devouring fire. At any cost, at any sacrifice, we must deliver the children over whom we have control from those pits of destruction which lie invitingly in their way under the name of Public or District Schools. We must, wherever there are enough of Catholics together to render it possible, organise Catholic Parish schools.