THE APPEAL.

THE BONAPARTES.

THE AMERICAN BONAPARTES AND THEIR IMPERIAL RELATIONS.

From the New York Times.]

PARIS, November 11, 1858.—I am often interrogated by Americans in regard to the relations at present existing between the American Bonapartes and their imperial relatives in France, and from this fact I am permitted to suppose that a history of these relations would prove interesting to your readers. It would not be proper here to enter into any details of a purely private nature, nor to go beyond the facts which naturally belong to the history of the first marriage and the divorce of the Ex-King Jerome; but enough may be said while keeping within these bounds to give a satisfactory history of the affair.

In order to render the subject clear to a portion at least of your readers, it will be necessary to go back and state that Jerome Bonaparte, youngest brother of the first Emperor, and still living, was first married to Miss Patterson, of Baltimore, in due form, after the Catholic ceremony, and that a few months afterwards he was divorced by an imperial decree of Napoleon I., and forced to marry a royal princess, of the latter's choice, Catharine of Wurtemburg. The first wife gave birth to a son nine months after marriage—Mr. Jerome Bonaparte, of Baltimore. The second wife, the Princess Catherine, gave birth to two children, the Princess Mathilde, in 1820, and the Prince Napoleon, in 1822, both living. The first wife is living, the second is dead. The son of the first wife, Mr. Jerome Bonaparte of Baltimore, married in turn an American lady, and has a family of children, the eldest of whom, Lieutenant Bonaparte, late of the United States army, passed into the French army in 1854, and is now a French citizen and a captain in the Imperial Guard. Finally, neither of the children by the second wife (the Princess Mathilde and the Prince Napoleon) have any children.

In 1814, Lieutenant Bonaparte came with his father to France. Both the son and grandson were warmly received by the Prince Jerome at the Palais Royal, and were lodged in the Palace. They were kindly received by the Emperor and by the half-sister and brother, and in every particular had reason to be proud of the reception extended them by their imperial relatives.

The war in the Crimea was then going on, and it was proposed that the young Lieutenant, having received a military education at West Point, should go into the army. In the face of the kind reception he had met from his imperial relatives, and the prospect of rapid promotion, that was held out, he accepted the proposition, and wrote to Washington resigning his position in the army of the United States.

Thus far everything had gone smoothly. But now we arrive at the first chapter in a history of troubles which has only gone on increasing to this day. The Lieutenant, and his father as well, very naturally desired to know what service he was to be placed, and what rank he was to take. The Princess Mathilde, who seems to have been the principal negotiator in the affair, told him that it was decided upon that he was to go, with a higher rank, into the *Foreign Legion*.

Mr. Bonaparte and his son were so surprised at this proposition, that, if the resignation of the Lieutenant had not gone to Washington, he would have returned at once to the United States army. He absolutely refused to accept such a commission, and declared he must be made a French citizen, and commissioned in the regular army, or he would accept nothing.

His demand was acceded to by the Emperor, and he was sent to the Crimea as a Lieutenant of Dragoons in the regular service. This act constituted him a dangerous individual to the people of the Palais Royal, and from that moment their conduct towards him and his father changed. In inviting him to stay in France and enter the army, the people of the Palais Royal did not anticipate this result, because they expected to manage the affair to their own wishes. They counted too much on the cooperation of the Emperor and the passive submission of their new found relatives.

Not long after this, the Princess Mathilde and the Prince Napoleon, by the knowledge and consent of their father, signed jointly a memorial to the Emperor, demanding the appointment of a committee of seven men to examine and decide upon the validity of their father's marriage with Miss Patterson—in other words, upon the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Mr. Jerome Bonaparte, of Baltimore. The object of this move was to compel the latter to take the name of Patterson, when in Europe, and cut him off effectually from all pretensions to the crown as to the senior son of the ex-king Jerome.

The committee was appointed, and consisted of cabinet ministers, bishops and judges and men of the first ability and personally satisfactory to the petitioners, or, more properly speaking, the conspirators. The committee took evidence, and established, 1. That the marriage between the Prince Jerome and Miss Patterson had been legally solemnized according to French law—first before a French Consul in the United States and then before a priest of the Catholic Church; 2. That the Emperor Napoleon, by an indisputable right, inherent to his imperial dignity, and basing his action upon the fact that he had not, as the head of the Imperial family, been consulted as the marriage, had declared it null and void, so far as regarded the civil service, first because it was done without the consent of the Emperor to repeal extending only to the civil part of the service, the Pope was asked to annul also the religious service, but his Holiness refused. On account of this difficulty between the Church and the State, the committee failed to give a decision. They showed that the Baltimore marriage was a legal one, but they did not dare say so; neither, on the other hand, did they dare—as it was hoped at the Palais Royal they would—declare the marriage null and duly illegitimatized by the act of the Emperor. This quarrel between the Church and State in France in regard to marriages still exists, and is constantly recurring. The State uniformly refuses to acknowledge any marriage as legal in which the civil service has not been performed, and the Church on its side as uniformly refuses to acknowledge any marriage in which the new service has not been performed. A need only point to the celebrated Pescatore trial of three years ago, to prove the virulence with which these disputes are carried on between the Church and the courts. The State, in demanding evidence of a marriage, only demands the papers which are furnished by the civil officers; the Church on its side goes no further than its own papers. In the Pescatore case, where only the civil service had been performed, and to which something like fifty millions of francs were involved, both parties contended till they were tired, and then compromised, dividing the money. But this compromise was suggested by the Emperor, who felt scandalized at the manner in which the two powers were contending. So the question remains open, and it results from this that the State regards the Baltimore marriage as annulled, while the Church takes exactly the opposite ground. Between those the committee did not care decide.

But there is still another incident which serves to separate wider the two families. When Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of the first Napoleon, died, he made provision in his will for the payment of a certain sum of money towards the education of all "Bonaparte children," while of a certain age. Mr. Jerome Bonaparte, of Baltimore, has now a child of the age indicated in this will; he has claimed under the terms of the will, it has been refused, and he has commenced suit.

The reader will not need to be told that a decision of this suit either way would decide the whole question at issue. To share in the Cardinal's gift the child must be a Bonaparte, and therefore legitimate; if it should be decided that it has no right to this gift it would be because the child was a Patterson, and therefore illegitimate. The friends of Mr. Jerome Bonaparte, feeling no confidence either in the courts or in the Emperor, have earnestly advised him not to press the suit to a judgment, and I believe he is acting upon that advice. The Emperor, it is thought, feels a sympathy for the Baltimore family, for he is a man of justice, and he knows as well as any man that justice is on their side. But the needs of his court have traced out a course for him; he must have an imperial family; that the Imperial family has been organized and accepted by the country, and he is compelled to protect it. The whole work of the organization of the Imperial family and of the regency would have to be done over again. This, however, is not the only obstacle in the way of the acknowledgment of the Baltimore family, and it is almost certain that they never will be acknowledged. The moment that the Cardinal's claim was decided upon that he was to go, with a higher rank, *into the