

declared null and void. Provided, That nothing herein contained shall prevent the collection of any tax or taxes laid under any former law or laws.

Passed April 11, 1799. Recorded L. B. No. 7, p. 38, etc. See Act of February 10th, 1800, Chapter 2101, as to assessors in Westmoreland County.

CHAPTER MMXCVI.

AN ACT DECLARING THE MARRIAGE OF ALEXANDER DE TILLY AND MARIA MATILDA DE TILLY (LATE MARIA MATILDA BINGHAM) TO BE FRAUDULENT, NULL AND VOID.

Whereas the marriage contract, whether it is considered as a religious or as a civil institution, ought, above all contracts, to be free from fraud, artifice and collusion, and it hath accordingly been the policy of virtuous and enlightened legislators of every age and country to annul the same, whenever it appears (among other flagrant causes) that either party, being of tender years, hath been seduced and ensnared by menaces, intimidation, imposition, falsehood and deceit, to enter clandestinely into so important an engagement, without the consent or privity of parents, guardians or friends

And whereas it hath been represented, and satisfactorily proved, to the general assembly of this commonwealth that a certain French emigrant named Alexander de Tilly (commonly called Count de Tilly) did, by bribing and corrupting the servants of William Bingham of the city of Philadelphia, commence and prosecute a secret correspondence with Maria M. de Tilly (then Maria M. Bingham) the daughter of the said William Bingham, of the tender age of fifteen years or thereabouts, and in the course of such correspondence, by acts the most seducing, fraudulent and iniquitous, as well as by menace and intimidations, ensnared the said Maria M. de Tilly (then Maria M. Bing-

ham) into a midnight elopement from the house of her parents, and conveyed her to the house of a minister of the gospel, who was induced to pronounce the marriage ceremony between the said parties by false, fraudulent and corrupt representations made to him by the said Alexander de Tilly, touching the parentage, residence and age of the said Mariam de Tilly. And whereas it has been further satisfactorily proved, as aforesaid, that the said Alexander de Tilly, actuated by no motive religious, moral or civil, which could be a just, lawful and fair foundation for the marriage contract, but intending thereby merely to obtain and extort a sum of money from the said William Bingham, did, soon after the said clandestine and fraudulent marriage, offer to sell and surrender, and did actually sell and surrender all his marital rights for a pecuniary consideration, and hath since withdrawn himself from the United States, leaving and deserting the said Maria M. de Tilly.

And whereas, the laws heretofore enacted, are not in the case above stated adequate to the relief of the injured party, to the intent therefore, that the innocent victims of his baseness may find comfort, that an example may be made to deter others from offending in a manner so fatal to the order of society and the happiness of individuals, and that the solemn contract of marriage may be vindicated from practices so immoral, irreligious, fraudulent and corrupt:

[Section I.] (Section I, P. L.) Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That the marriage of the said Alexander de Tilly and Maria Matilda de Tilly be, and the same is hereby, declared to be void and annulled, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever, and they are hereby respectively declared to be separate, set free and totally discharged from the matrimonial contract, and from all duties and obligations arising therefrom, as fully, effectually and absolutely to all intents and purposes, as if they had never been joined in matrimony or by any other contract whatsoever, any law, usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.