

SHCJ ARCHIVES ROME

[Copied from original]

The Convent
Sep 3rd [1868]

JMJ

My dear Elizabeth, [wife of John Bowen]

Mary has written to tell us of her sudden engagement which has filled me with anxiety not only for our darling Mary, but also for you and all the dear children. If you do not know ^{the [sic]} man's former life and history for the love of God defer the marriage till you do know from reliable authority who & what he has been & now is. The instances are endless of adventurers who leave a wife or even wives in other countries – marry a girl, get hold of a widowed mothers property, spend it by wheedling her out of every thing she has (by getting her to sign what she does not understand) and when he quarrels with his so called wife absconds and gets another in some other new country too far off to be pursued or brought under the law – Now do not imagine this to be a fable or any very uncommon act. One of your husband's sisters (not myself) was on the eve of accepting an engagement of marriage. Ralph wrote to New York (where the lover had passed two or three years) to know the history of this man's life – the answer came immediately that he was a gambler and a married man! As soon as he knew that dear Ralph had written to know something ab^t him he went off & was never heard of again Now dear Elizabeth do not be persuaded to consent to the marriage until you know from others, not from himself, his whole true history. And moreover I beg you to have a proper marriage settlement to secure the little property Mary will be entitled to from her father,

(continued below)

should the man's character & history prove to be honourable & honest – What are two years of residence in a Country if the former part of his life was not worthy & honest !!! Oh Elizabeth get some worthy friend to inquire for you all that is necessary, who will say nothing to anyone, and if no one can be relied upon to act as a friend for you go to the Priest & get advice and knowledge of how you can be secure and get the proper certain knowledge of the man's character.

May God bless you and yours,

Ever yours affectionately in JC

Cornelia Connelly.