

them; and, instead of living divided, they will combine together. It will be for their own interest, and my wishes will thus be accomplished.

When I sent, a few days ago, to those of my family whom exile has dispersed over Europe, a medal on which is engraven the date of the convocation of my heirs, a century and a half from this time, I was forced to keep secret my true motive, and only to tell them, that my descendants would find it greatly to their interest to attend this meeting.

I have acted thus, because I know the craft and perseverance of the society of which I have been the victim. If they could guess that my descendants would hereafter have to divide immense sums between them, my family would run the risk of much fraud and malice, through the fatal recommendations handed down from age to age in the Society of Jesus.

May these precautions be successful! May the wish, expressed upon these medals, be faithfully transmitted from generation to generation!

If I fix a day and hour, in which my inheritance shall irrevocably fall to those of my descendants who shall appear in the Rue Saint-Francois on the 13th February, 1832, it is that all delays must have a term, and that my heirs will have been sufficiently informed years before of the great importance of this meeting.

After the reading of my testament, the person who shall then be the trustee of the accumulated funds, shall make known their amount, so that, with the last stroke of noon, they may be divided between my heirs then and there present.

The different apartments of the house shall then be opened to them. They will see in them divers objects, well worthy of interest, pity, and respect—particularly in the hall of mourning.

My desire is, that the house may not be sold, but that it may remain furnished as it is, and serve as a place of meeting for my descendants, if, as I hope, they attend to my last wishes.

If, on the contrary, they are divided amongst themselves—if, instead of uniting for one of the most generous enterprises that ever signalized an age, they yield to the influence of selfish passions—if they prefer a sterile individuality to a fruitful association—if, in this immense fortune, they see only an opportunity for frivolous dissipation, or sordid interest—may they be accursed by all those whom they might have loved, succored, and disinterestedly—and then let his house be utterly demolished and destroyed, and the papers, of which Isaac Samuel possesses the inventory, as well as the two portraits in the red room, be burnt by the guardian of the property.

I have spoken. My duty is accomplished. In all this, I have followed the counsels of the man who I revere and love as the image of God upon earth.

The faithful friend, who preserved for me the fifty thousand crowns, the wreck of my fortune, knows the use I mean to make of them. I could not refuse his friendship this mark of confidence. But I have concealed from him the name Isaac Samuel—for to have mentioned it might have exposed this latter and his descendants to great dangers.

In short time, this friend, who knows not that my resolution to die is so near its accomplishment, will come hither with my notary. Into their hands, after the usual formalities, I shall deliver my sealed testament.

Such is my last will. I leave its execution to the superintending care of Providence. God will protect the cause of love, peace, union and liberty.

This mystic testament—this term is sanctioned by legal usage—having been freely made by me, and written entirely with my own hand, I intend and will its scrupulous execution both in spirit and the letter.

This 13th day of February, 1682, at one o'clock in the afternoon.

MARIUS DE RENNEPONT.

As the notary had proceeded with the reading of the testament, Gabriel was successively agitated by divers painful impressions. At first, as we have before said, he was struck with the singular fatality which restored this immense fortune, derived from a victim of the Society of Jesus, to the hands of that very association, by the renewal of his deed of gift. Then, as his charitable and lofty soul began fully to comprehend the admirable tendency of the association so earnestly recommended by Marius de Rennepont, he reflected with bitter remorse, that, in consequence of his act of renunciation, and of the absence of any other heir, this great idea would never be realized, and a fortune, far more considerable than had even been expected, would fall to the share of an ill-omened society, in whose hands it would become a terrible means of action. At the same time, it must be said the soul of Gabriel was too pure and noble to feel the slightest personal regret, on hearing the great probable value of the property he had renounced. He rejoiced rather in withdrawing his mind, by a touching contrast,

from the thought of the wealth he had abandoned, to the humble parsonage, where he hoped to pass the remainder of his life, in the practice of the most evangelical virtue.

These ideas passed confusedly through his brain. The sight of that woman's portrait, the dark revelations contained in the testament, the grandeur of the views exhibited in this last will of M. de Rennepont, all these extraordinary incidents had thrown Gabriel into a sort of stupor, in which he was still plunged, when Samuel offered the key of the register to the notary, saying: "You will find, sir, in this register, the exact statement of the sums in my possession, derived from the investment and accumulation of the one hundred and fifty thousand francs, entrusted to my grandfather by M. Marius de Rennepont."

"Your grandfather!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, with the utmost surprise; "it is then your family that has always had the management of this property?"

Yes, sir; and, in a few minutes, my wife will bring hither the casket which contains the vouchers."

"And to what sum does this property amount?" asked Rodin, with an air of the most complete indifference.

"As M. Notary may convince himself by this statement, replied Samuel, with perfect frankness, and as if he were only taking of the original one hundred and fifty thousand francs, "I have in my possession various current securities to the amount of two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy—"

"You say, sir?" cried Father d'Aigrigny, without giving Samuel time to finish, for the odd money did not at all interest his reverence.

"Yes the sum!" added Rodin, in an agitated voice, and, for the first time, perhaps, in his life, losing his presence of mind; "the sum—the sum—the sum!"

"I say, sir," resumed the old man "that I hold securities for two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy-five thousand francs, payable to self or bearer—as you may soon convince yourself, M. Notary, for here is my wife with the casket."

Indeed at this moment, Bathsheba entered, holding in her arms the cedar wood chest, which contained the securities in question: she placed it upon the table, and withdrew, after exchanging an affectionate glance with Samuel. When the latter declared the enormous amount of the sum in hand, his words were received with silent stupor. All the actors in this scene, except himself, believed that they were the sport of some delusion. Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin had counted upon forty millions. This sum, in itself enormous, was more than quintupled. Gabriel, when he heard the notary read those passages in the testament, which spoke of a princely fortune, being quite ignorant of the prodigious effects of eligible investments, had valued the property at some three or four millions. He was, therefore, struck dumb with amazement at the exorbitant amount named. Notwithstanding his admirable disinterestedness and scrupulous honor, he felt dazzled and giddy at the thought, that all these immense riches might have belonged to him—alone. The notary, almost as much amazed as Gabriel, examined the statement, and could hardly believe his eyes. The Jew also remained mute, and seemed painfully absorbed in thought, that no other heir made his appearance.

In the depth of this profound silence, the clock in the next room began slowly to strike twelve. Samuel started, and heaved a deep sigh. A few seconds more, and the fatal term would be at an end. Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny, Gabriel and the notary, were all under the influence of such complete surprise, that not one of them even remarked how strange it was to hear the sound of this clock.

"Noon!" cried Rodin, as, by an involuntary movement, he hastily placed his two hands upon the casket, as if to take possession of it.

"At last!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, with an expression of joy, triumph, transport, which it is impossible to describe. Then he added, as he threw himself into Gabriel's arms, whom he embraced warmly. "Oh, my dear son! how the poor will bless you! You will be a second Vincent de Paul. You will be canonised, I promise you."

"Let us first thank Providence," said Rodin, in a grave and solemn tone, as he fell upon his knees, "let us thank Providence, that He has permitted so much wealth to be employed for His glory!"

Father d'Aigrigny, having again embraced Gabriel, took him by the hand, and said: "Rodin is right. Let us kneel, my dear son, and render thanks to Providence!"

So saying, Father d'Aigrigny knelt down, dragging Gabriel with him, and the latter, confused and giddy with so many precipitate events,


(Continued on page 8.)

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