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THE NEW ELEVATOR

THE LATE FRANCIS PALMS.

The Romantic Family History of Detroit's Dead Millionaire.

The pontifical high mass of requiem which was recently celebrated in the old cathedral of Detroit marked the close of the career of Francis Palms. It was notable from the fact that 1,500 employes attended the service as a tribute to their late master, while numerous insurance, banking and mercantile institutions in which he was interested when alive also sent representatives, for the dead man had been a millionaire merchant prince of Michigan. Little did the public know of the old man's private life, for he seldom spoke of it, but the romance of his son's life throws a little light on that of his father's.

The father of Francis Palms was a secretary of Napoleon I, and when Waterloo came it brought disaster to him as well as the French emperor. He came to America and tried Detroit, but not finding the city of the



FRANCIS PALMS. (Photo by Stevenson.)

strait to his liking, he moved to and settled in New Orleans, leaving a son, Francis, in Detroit, to grow up with the place. Francis married and a son was the result of the union, the mother dying at his birth. Later Francis Palms married again, to the discomfiture of his little son, Francis, who found that his stepmother was

averse to children. The temperature under the paternal roof being decidedly chilly for young Francis, with the possibility of a cold wave and a "freeze out," he sought a warmer clime in the care of his grandfather, at New Orleans. Here he was educated and brought up in total ignorance of his father, as there was no correspondence between the two families. When a young man he started out on a tour north. With a vague knowledge that he was born in Detroit, curiosity led him to visit the city of his birth and inquire if his father was yet in the land of the living. On making inquiries he found that his father was regarded as the wealthiest man in the state of Michigan. A spirit of pride and family independence, which he inherited, prevented him from calling at his father's house. He learned that it was the habit of the elder Palms to visit the hotel reading room every evening at 8 o'clock to read his letters, look at the papers, and occasionally do a little business with people from out of town. That night the son was on hand, and, punctually at 8 o'clock, a short man with a little stoop to his shoulders came into the office. There was a smile on his kindly face as he nodded good evening to the people he knew, and then made his way to a sofa in the reading room. The son possessed his soul in patience until he saw his father, tear open his last letter, glance through it, and then turn to take up a paper. Sauntering up to the elderly gentleman, the young man, with the cast of a southerner, began the conversation. Gradually he drew from Mr. Palms the admission that he had relatives in New Orleans. "I have a father there and brothers, too," said the elderly man. "Indeed," said the younger, in apparent surprise, "and what is the name?" "Palms is my name." "And mine, too," said the young man, coolly. "Perhaps you and I are related?" "My father's name is Angelo Palms," admitted the elderly one. "And he is my grandfather," was the young fellow's response.

There was no second or few words the father told the son that he was glad to see him again, and then gave him to understand that the hotel would prove more comfortable quarters than the big brick house up the avenue.

The son thanked him for his kind interest and acknowledged that the hotel life agreed with him.

Without asking any favors from his father the son returned south. At the outbreak of the war he left the plantation he owned to enter the army. War proved a Waterloo for him, as it did for his grandfather, and he went back to New Orleans to begin a life anew. Family influence obtained him a clerical position in the United States courts, and he settled down to a quiet life. At the outbreak of the war he had been engaged to a lovely girl of Scotch parentage, but the struggle had separated them, and when the war ended each heard that the other had married. By chance they learned of their mistake in time to enjoy a short period of domestic happiness before her death. He afterward married a second time and his wife is still living.

In the course of time the stepmother died, and on returning from his wife's funeral Mr. Palms set down and wrote to his son to come north. He pointed out to him that before many years he must come into a large property distributed among pipe lands, iron mines, business blocks, railroad cases, etc., manufacturing and bank stocks and the like.

The son came and stilled near the little brick office in the rear of the paternal residence. There he has lived quietly, making few friends and spending the greater part of his leisure with his wife and his eight children. He now inherits one-half of his father's millions, his only sister, Clothilde, receiving the other half. This sister—Miss Clothilde Palms—was, it was said, last winter the object of the attentions of Senator Jones, of Florida.

Fred. Douglass in England.

Frederick Douglass, who has been traveling on the continent, wrote a letter to a citizen of Jefferson, Tex., in which he says: "I am again on the soil of dear old England. The contrast between my present visit and that of 1845 is striking. Then I came as a slave, now I come as a freeman; then as an alien, now as a citizen; then I was young, now I am comparatively old; then to plead the cause of my brethren in bonds, now to tell of their freedom and progress."—Exchange.

There had just a project that the burning shelves and cases of the congressional library will be removed, though quite how soon no man knows. The ground is being cleared for the new library building. It will stand just south of the Capitol, and will be a noble structure. Many houses will have to be torn down to make room for it. Among them is the new historic mansion that Mary Queen of Scots owned and lived in.

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