

“With the tongues of men and of angels!” said M. Dauphin enthusiastically.

The Curé frowned and continued: “You look on yonder burning walls,” he said, “and wonder when they will rise again on this hill made sacred by the burial of your beloved, by the christening of your children, the marriages which have given you happy homes, and the sacraments which are to you the laws of your lives. You give one-twentieth of your income yearly towards your church—then give one-fortieth of all you possess to-day, and your church will be begun in a month. Before a year goes round you will come again to this venerable spot and enter another church here. Your vows, your memories, and your hopes will be purged by fire. All that you possess will be consecrated by your free-will offerings.”—Ah, if I could but remember what came afterwards! It was all eloquence, and generous and noble thought.”

“He spoke of you,” said the Notary—“he spoke the truth; and the people cheered. He said that the man outside the walls could sometimes tell the besieged the way relief would come. Never again shall I hear such a speech.”

“What are they going to do?” asked Rosalie, and withdrew her trembling hand from that of madame Dugal.

“This very day, at my office, they will bring their offerings, and we will begin at once,” answered M. Dauphin. “There is no man in Chaudière but will take the stocking from the hole, the bag from the chest, the credit from the bank, the grain from the barn for the market, or make the note of hand to contribute one-fortieth of all he is worth for the rebuilding of the church.”

“Notes of hand are not money,” said the Curé’s sister, the practical sense ever uppermost.

“They shall all be money—hard cash,” said the Notary. “The Seigneur is going to open a sort of bank, and take up the notes of hand, and give bank-bills in return. To-day I go with his steward to Quebeo to get the money.”