

WEDDING BELLS

village, past the group at the post-office, here in the sight of all their world; but once down the Bluff road and out on the stretch of frozen river, the twilight solitude enwrapped them like a rare and precious thing.

After sunset the clouds had parted in the west to open a great space of primrose sky, where a young moon sailed high. Kitty, depressed by this sudden reverse of fate, went soberly, and Jack was free to put one arm round Virginia and draw her close to him.

She breathed a little sigh of utter content.

"How unhappy I was one evening I snowshoed across here last winter, when we had no news of you," she murmured.

"And have you been unhappy lately?" he asked tenderly.

"I was anxious for you and sad for father. But, even then, it wasn't like last winter. I had your love at my heart to keep it warm."

"Please God, you'll have that to our lives' end."

One of the spruce trees, set to mark the road, brushed Jack's shoulder, scattering a handful of snow over the furs. Kitty, neglected, was avenging herself by making a devious track of her own.

In a glad revulsion of feeling, Virginia laughed out.

"You're a nice one to trust myself to!" she said.

"Well, you're going to, all the same, aren't you?" was his sturdy answer.

"Yes."

The light from the pink cottage behind the spruce trees shone out like a good deed in a naughty world, or like the steadfast heart of the old woman who had lit it. Within, the living-room seemed brimming over with warmth and savory odors, for Mrs. LeRoy had just drawn from the oven her first batch of Christmas cakes,