

and dared not speak. I love him, Monsignor—I love him, and I believe him, and——”

“*Valérie!*” Raymond’s hands reached out to her. Weak he was. It seemed as though in his knees there was no strength. “*Valérie!*” he cried, and stumbled toward her.

And she put out her hand and held him back for an instant as her eyes searched his face—and then into hers there came a wondrous light.

“I did not know,” she whispered. “I did not know you cared.”

His arms were still outstretched, and now she came into them, and for a moment she lifted her face to his, and, for a moment that was glad beyond all gladness, he drank with his lips from her lips and from the trembling eyelids. And then the tears came, and she was sobbing on his breast, and with her arms tight about his neck she clung to him—and closer still his own arms enwrapped her—and he forgot—and he forgot—that it was only for a moment.

And so he held her there, his face buried in the dark, soft masses of her hair—and he forgot. And then out of this forgetfulness, this transport of blinding joy, there came a voice, low and shaken with emotion—the Bishop’s voice.

“There is some one calling from the house.”

Raymond lifted up his head. A woman’s figure was framed in the now open and lighted doorway of the cottage. It was Madame Bouchard; and now he heard Madame Bouchard as she called again.

“*Valérie! Father Aubert! Come! Come quickly! Madame Blondin is conscious again, but she is very weak.*”

He drew his breath in sharply as one in bitter pain, and then gently he took Valérie’s arms from about