

THE HONOR OF THE BIG SNOWS

and for her. His heart beat fiercely, and his great shoulders shook with the agony that was eating at his soul.

"Yes, it is the pretty music, my Mélisse," he murmured softly, choking back his sobs. "It is the pretty music in the skies."

The hand pressed more tightly against his face.

"It's not the music in the skies, John. It is real—*real* music that I hear—"

"It's the sky music, my sweet Mélisse! Shall I open the door so that we can hear it better?"

The hand slipped from his cheek. Cummins lifted his head, slowly straightening his great shoulders as he looked down upon the white face, from which even the flush of fever was disappearing, as he had seen the pale glow of the northern sun fade before a thickening snow. He stretched his long, gaunt arms straight up to the low roof of the cabin, and for the first time in his life he prayed—prayed to the God who had made for him this world of snow and ice and endless forest very near to the dome of the earth, who had given him this woman, and who was now taking her from him.