

WEDDING BELLS

"There's no reason," he breathed deeply, "when you're so brave and wonderful."

"And you'd like me to go?" she whispered.

"*Like* you?" Speech was inadequate, and he didn't try it.

"Then why are you afraid?" she persisted.

"I'm not afraid that you wouldn't be equal to anything, but . . ." he hesitated before finding words—"you're so dainty and precious, and it's rough and rude up there! But, oh, Virginia, you'd be like a queen among them all if you came!"

She laughed soft and low, her head on his breast.

"I'd love to be a queen. Let's ask your mother what she thinks."

Mrs. LeRoy, hailed, heard the case stated by the two in concert, and took no time to deliberate her answer.

Sitting down heavily in her big rocker, she announced:

"Well, it's just what I'd do meself if I were a girl, an' I know I'd never repent it. Even if you was to be cold an' hungry once in a while, which I'm sure you won't, with Jack round, there's worse things than cold an' hunger, an' that's lettin' the days of your youth go by without tastin' the good of them. You can't begin bein' happy a day too soon, to my mind."

Jack gave a shout.

"You're right, mother. We'll begin at once. Of course, I've been planning nothing else for weeks, while all the time I was afraid it was too much to ask. And, after all, it's not a question of the mine at once, for there's business to keep me more than a month in Quebec, and then I'll have to stop at St. Maudez to see the things started off up the trail, and at the St. Maudez Inn you'd be as comfortable as you would be at home. Old Guillou