

"But father would help you, for you know you are a genius, Joe."

"All I could ever do lies in the woods, Miss Linda; woods-ways is the whole of it. A yard outside the woods and the meanest chap bred on the streets could beat me easy. I can't thank you nor Mr. Petersham the way I'd like to, for my tongue is slow. . . ." Here his voice fell.

A period of relief came to me, for some minutes after the interchange of speech, low and earnest as it was, reached us only in a vague murmuring.

"But if you hate the city life so much, you must not go to the city," it was Linda again. "Live your life in the woods. . . . I love the woods too."

"The woods is bleak and black enough to them that's not born among the trees. Them that's lived outside allus wants more, Miss Linda. The change of colour, the fall o' the leaf, the snow, by'nby the hot summer under the thick trees—that's all we wild men want. But it's different for them that's seen all the changes o' the big world beyond."

A long interval followed before the voices became audible again.

"Oh, no, no, Joe!"

Petersham clutched my arm once more at the sound.