

"I climbed. You did not suppose I flew?"

The tone was merry rather than saucy, and taking a few steps nearer, he saw she was quite a child. But she wore no cap and she shook the wind-blown hair aside with a dainty gesture. There was a fearlessness about her that charmed him.

"And you live—here?"

"Not here in the woods—no. But down in the town. Down there by the garden, M'sieu Hébert and the General. And Maman has one. But I hate working in it. So I ran away. Do you know what will happen to me when I go back?"

"No, what?" with a sense of amusement. "Perhaps you will get no supper!"

"I shall be whipped. And to-morrow I shall not be let out of the garden. When I get to be a woman I won't work in the garden. I won't even have a husband. They make you do just as they like. Why isn't one's way as good as another's?"

A line of perplexity settled between her eyes that were soft enough to melt the heart of a stone, he thought, if stones really had hearts.

"Older people are generally wiser. And mothers——"

"Oh, she isn't my mother," interrupted the child. "Even Catherine was not my mother. I was very sorry for that. She was good and tender, but she died. And Jean was very angry because she was not my real mother, and he would have nothing to do with me. So