

fell upon her daughter Louise, who smiled at her very lovingly, and then leant forward to kiss her.

'Mother,' said Louise, 'you were the bravest and the most deserving, for it was you who fought and suffered. It is to you we owe the victory, paid for with so many tears. I remember. Coming as I did after you, it was no great merit for me to free myself from the past; and if never a quiver of error disturbed me, it was because I profited by the terrible lesson which at one time made all our hearts bleed in our poor mourning home.'

'Be quiet, you flatterer,' replied Geneviève, laughing and returning her kiss. 'You were the child who saved us, whose strong and skilful little mind intervened so lovingly and triumphed over every obstacle. We owe our peace to you; you were the first free little woman with enough intelligence, will, and resolution to set happiness on earth.'

Then Marc, turning towards Thérèse, explained: 'You were not born, my dear, at the time of all those things, and you are ignorant of them. Having come after Louise, having never had anything to do with baptism or confession or communion, you find it easy and simple to live freely beyond the pale of religious imposture and social prejudice, with no other bonds about you than those of your own reason and conscience. But, for things to be as they are, mothers and grandmothers passed through frightful crises, the worst follies, the worst torments. . . . As is the case with all the social questions, the one solution lay in education. It was necessary to impart knowledge to woman before setting her in her legitimate place as the equal and companion of man. That was the first thing necessary, the essential condition of human happiness, for woman could only free man after being freed herself. As long as she remained the priest's servant and accomplice, an instrument of reaction, espionage, and warfare in the home, man himself remained in chains, incapable of all virile and decisive action. The strength of the future will lie in the absolute agreement of man and wife. . . . And so, my dear, you see how sad it makes us that misfortune should again have come into your home. There is no abyss created by different beliefs between you and François. You are of the same spheres, the same education. He is not your master by law and custom, as he would have been in the old days; you are not his servant, seeking an opportunity to revenge yourself on him for his mastery. You have the same rights as he has.