

would never talk to me. You seemed always to look me through and through, as though I were some person belonging to another world, whose five-franc pieces, perhaps, were useful to Chicot and to Ambrose, but whom you yourself regarded with the most supreme and absolute indifference. Yet you smiled at me once or twice — a wonderful smile it was, Christine.”

She laughed. “Well,” she said, “we will not talk of those days. After all, they were terrible. I was never happy, even when we were successful. I wanted everything I had not. I was cruel to Ambrose. I was possessed with a rabid and unwholesome craving for luxury.”

“Your life was not natural,” he said quietly. “Your very association with so strange a creature as Ambrose Drake was enough to unsettle you.”

She nodded thoughtfully. “I must not think of him,” she said. “It makes me sad. And to-night I do not want to be sad. Gilbert, what a stream of people! Are they all lovers, I wonder?”

“In Paris,” he answered, “the whole world loves. It is in the atmosphere. I too feel it, Christine.”

“We had better turn back,” she murmured.

“There is no turning back,” he answered. “I think we have come far enough for me to offer you that other support, Christine, and I think we have come far enough in life for you to give me both these hands, and to tell me