

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE PLAY

BEHRENS, who had been engaged in cording the last of the boxes, advanced, bowed low and took his departure, Placide only remaining.

"And now," said the baroness, "let us see." She opened the paper.

It was as blank as the palm of her hand. De Sartines took it from her, glanced at it and laid it down. He turned to Placide, but the baroness was before him.

"Placide," cried his mistress, "what trick is this? What has been done to the paper that I left in the Rue Plastrière? Answer! Don't stand there like a fool!"

"Oh, Madame," said the old fellow in a grumbling voice, "a story that is half a story is no story. You wish to know everything. Well, then, you shall. I went to the Rue Plastrière, as you told me, showed the ring as you told me, received the paper, took it to a place I know of, opened it and