

leave it with you, and with it I take my leave. Monsieur de Beautrellis, may I crave again the use of your carriage? Adieu, Madame, we shall perhaps meet again."

Magnificent in his defeat, he bowed to his hostess, bowed to the guests, and followed by Beautrellis, left the room; while the baroness, astounded, scarcely crediting her senses, with the folded paper in her hand and wild to get at the meaning of it all, turned to her guests.

"Ladies, I must crave your permission for a few words alone with Monsieur de Sartines. My servants will offer you refreshment down-stairs. As for me, starting, as I am, for Vienna in less than an hour's time, I must here and now take my leave of you."

She bowed to Madame de Stenlis and Madame d'Harlancourt who, balked in their curiosity, sneering, yet not daring to cross their tongues with this woman whom they instinctively feared, bowed low, and followed by De Joyeuse gracefully vanished from the room. Their laughter could be heard on the stairs, a safe form of repartee, and in a moment the wheels of their departing carriages came from the street outside; they had not waited for refreshments.