

Sartines was lost. And not only De Sartines but she herself was lost. The document of which De Maupeou was now calmly breaking the seals would strike every one who had to do with it as a thunderbolt strikes, and more cruelly.

De Sartines, after a momentary impulse to draw his sword and attack the holder of the king's commission, conquered himself and stood unmoved, indifferent, as if bored.

De Maupeou, breaking the last seal of the paper in his hand, flung the enveloping wrapper on the floor and, unfolding the paper it contained, glanced at it.

He was a man who possessed tremendous command over himself. The contents of the paper in his hand would have caused another man in his position to rave and storm, to expose the fact that he had been tricked and fooled to the gaping on-lookers who would have made him in twenty-four hours the laughing-stock of Paris.

De Maupeou simply bent for the wrapper, inclosed the folded paper in it and, advancing to the baroness, handed it to her, at the same time taking the order to the king, which she still held.

"Madame," said De Maupeou, "this paper is interesting as disclosing the state of your mind. I