

CHAPTER VII

THE GENIUS OF PLACIDE

THE whole thing had been done with such beautiful simplicity and absence of fuss that the guests perceived nothing of the tragedy at the bottom of it.

The woman on whom the tables had been so completely turned stood by the man on whom she had brought destruction, yet neither of them allowed their emotions to be seen.

Since De Sartines had entered the room that evening, her heart had begun to relent toward him. His broken and anxious look told her that she had been avenged for the slights he had put on her. De Lussac was free, she was victorious. Yet she had decided to complete her lesson, to keep him on tenter-hooks for a while before releasing him.

And now the situation had been swept out of her hands. She had called up a devil and it had appeared. She instantly recognized that De Maupeou was absolutely master of the situation and that De