

"Monsieur de Sartines, what do you say?"

"Madame," said De Sartines, who began to see a gleam of light, "in my mind Monsieur de Beautrellis is right."

He bowed profoundly.

"Madame de Stenlis? Madame d'Harlancourt?"

"Tragedy!" cried the two women, laughing.

The baroness, ignoring De Maupeou and De Joyeuse, turned to Behrens.

"Monsieur Behrens, you who dress the actresses of the *Comédie Française*, give me your opinion. Could I act tragedy under that hat of pearl-gray which you are holding for me to try on?"

"If madame is desirous of ruining the effect of the hat and the play, why, yes," replied Behrens. Then, bursting out: "Heavens, Madame! no, a thousand times no! But if madame requires for her play a hat of tragedy—why, here is tragedy itself." He held up the black hat on the point of his finger, and as he did so a knock came to the door. It opened, disclosing Placide.

"Ah, Placide," said the baroness. "So you have returned. Have you got what I sent you for?"

"Yes, Madame," replied Placide, producing a paper.

"Goc l," said the baroness, putting on the gray