

THE FORTUNES OF FIFI

a hundred thousand Austrians could not have held us back then. We ate the Austrians up, Sire."

"Yes, you ate the Austrians up. Afterward, I never could recall without laughing the expression on the faces of my old moustaches when they saw me on the bridge."

"Ah, Sire, when the soldiers came to themselves and began to think about things, they were in transports of rage at your Majesty for exposing your life so."

The Emperor smiled—that magic and seductive smile which began with his eyes and ended with his mouth, and which no man or woman could resist. He began to pull Cartouche's ear meditatively.

"You old rascals of moustaches have no business to think at all. Besides, you made me a corporal for it. One has to distinguish himself to receive promotion."

"All the same," replied Cartouche obstinately, "we were enraged against your Majesty; and if your Majesty continues so reckless of your life, it will be followed by a terrible catastrophe. The soldiers will lose the battle rather than lose their Emperor."