

THE FORTUNES OF FIFI

of any of these scoundrels who hang about the Imperial Theater if they dared to be impudent to you, because I regard you as a—as a niece, Fifi, and I must take care of you.”

Cartouche had a wide mouth, a nose that was obstinacy itself, and he was, altogether, remarkably ugly and attractive. Dogs, children and old women found Cartouche a fascinating fellow, but young and pretty women generally said he was a bear. It was a very young and beautiful woman, the wife of the scene painter at the Imperial Theater, who had called attention to the unlucky similarity between Cartouche's grotesque name and that of the celebrated highwayman.

Cartouche had caught the scene painter's wife at some of her tricks and had taken the liberty of giving a good beating to the gentleman in the case, while the scene painter had administered a dose out of the same bottle to the lady; so the promising little affair was nipped in the bud, and the scene painter's wife frightened into behaving herself. But she never wearied of gibing at Cartouche—his person, his acting, everything he did.

In truth, Cartouche was not much of an actor, and was further disqualified by his stiff leg. But