

THE IMPERIAL THEATER

senator until the second act, could remain some time still with his guests.

Afterward Duvernet said that in the half-hour which followed, the Emperor found out all about theaters of the class of Duvernet's, rent, lighting, wages, and told him more than he had ever known before about his own business. But Duvernet was in no way reassured, and his complexion was yet green, when Cartouche, peeping through a hole in the curtain, saw him still talking to the Emperor—or rather answering the Emperor's questions.

The house was fast filling. It held only five hundred persons, and there were but one hundred seats where the élite of the patronage paid so much as a franc; and even these seats were filled. Fortune smiled on the Imperial Theater that night.

Behind the curtain, the agitation was extreme; the Emperor had been remembered and so had Berthier and Duroc. Everybody knew that the Emperor had recognized Cartouche, had walked and talked with him, had pulled his ear, and had come to see the performance as his guest—that is to say, everybody except Fifi. That grand lady, since acquiring the dignity of leading lady, always contrived to be just half a minute behind Julie