

THE IMPERIAL THEATER

"And remember—no flirtations."

"Ah, Cartouche!"

"No flirtations, I say. Do you know why Duvernet made you his leading lady instead of Julie Championet?"

"Because Julie Championet can no more act than a broomstick, and—"

"You are mistaken. It is because Duvernet saw that Julie was going the way of his three former leading ladies. They have each, in turn, succeeded in marrying him, and there are three divorce cases at present against Duvernet, and he does not know which one of these leading ex-ladies he is married to, or if he is married at all; and here is Julie Championet out for him with a net and a lantern. So Duvernet told me he must have a leading lady who didn't want to marry him, and I said: 'Promote Fifi. She doesn't know much yet, but she can learn.'"

"Is it thus you speak of my art?" cried Fifi, who, since her elevation, sometimes assumed a very grand diction, as well as an air she considered highly imposing.

"It is thus I speak of your art," replied Cartouche grimly—which caused Fifi's pale, pretty