

THE FORTUNES OF FIFI

"And what are you doing now?"

"I am an actor, your Majesty, at the Imperial Theater yonder in this street."

"An actor! You! One of my old moustaches! What do you know about acting?"

"Well, your Majesty, if you could see the theater, you wouldn't be surprised that they let me act in it. A franc the best seat—twenty centimes for the worst—eating and drinking and smoking—and cabbage-heads thrown at the villain, who is generally an Englishman."

"But how do you manage on the stage with your stiff leg?"

"Very well, Sire. I am always a wounded soldier, or a grandfather, or something of the sort. And I do other work about the theater—of so many kinds I can not now tell your Majesty."

"And the pretty little girl is your sweetheart?"

"No, your Majesty; I wish she were. She is not yet twenty, and really has talent; and I am thirty-five and look forty-five, and have a stiff leg; and, in short, I am no match for her."

Cartouche would not mention his poverty, for he would not that money should sully that hour of happiness when the Emperor talked with him.