

THE IMPERIAL THEATER

The Emperor had continued to pull Cartouche's ear during all this.

"And where are your moustaches?" he asked.

"And do you still belong to the Thirty-second Grenadiers? For they were the fellows who got across first."

Cartouche shook his head.

"I did not get a scratch at Lodi, your Majesty; nor at Arcola, nor Castiglione, nor Rivoli, nor at Mantua; but one day, I was ordered to catch a goat which was browsing about my captain's quarters; and I, Cartouche, first sergeant in the Thirty-second Grenadiers, who had served for nine years, who had been in seven pitched battles, twenty-four minor engagements and more skirmishes than I can count, was knocked down by that goat, and my leg broken—and ever since I have been good for nothing to your Majesty. See."

Cartouche showed his stiff leg.

"That is bad," said the Emperor—and the words as he said them went to Cartouche's heart. "Luckily it did not spoil your beauty. That would have been a pity."

Both the Emperor and Cartouche laughed at the notion of Cartouche having any beauty to spoil.