

## Chapter 73

### DIANA'S SECOND JOURNEY TO PARIS.

Let us leave the two friends entering the Corne d'Abondance, and return to the litter of M. Monsoreau and to Bussy, who set out with the intention of following them. Not only is it not difficult for a cavalier well mounted to overtake foot travelers, but it is difficult not to pass them. This happened to Bussy.

It was the end of May, the heat was great, and about noon M. de Monsoreau wished to make a halt in a little wood, which was near the road, and as they had a horse laden with provisions, they remained there until the great heat of the day had gone by. During this time Bussy passed them, but he had not traveled, as we may imagine, without inquiring if a party on horseback, and a litter carried by peasants, had been seen. Until he had passed the village of Durtal, he had obtained the most satisfactory information, and, convinced that they were before him, had ridden on quickly. But he could see nothing of them, and suddenly all traces of them vanished, and on arriving at La Flèche he felt certain he must have passed them on the road. Then he remembered the little wood, and doubted not that they had been resting there when he passed. He installed himself at a little inn, which had the advantage of being opposite the principal hotel, where he doubted not that Monsoreau would stop; and he remained at the window watching. About four o'clock he saw a courier arrive, and half an hour afterwards the whole party. He waited till nine o'clock, and then he saw the courier set out again, and after him the litter, then Diana, Rémy, and Gertrude on horseback. He mounted his horse and followed them, keeping them in sight. Monsoreau scarcely allowed Diana to move from his side, but kept calling her every instant. After a little while, Bussy gave a long, shrill whistle, with which he had been in the habit of calling his servants at his hotel. Rémy recognized it in a moment. Diana started, and looked at the young man, who made an affirmative sign; then he came up to her and whispered:

"It is he!"

"Who is speaking to you, madame?" said Monsoreau.

"To me, monsieur?"

"Yes, I saw a shadow pass close to you, and heard a voice."

"It is M. Rémy; are you also jealous of him?"

"No, but I like people to speak out, it amuses me."

"There are some things which cannot be said aloud before M. le Comte, however," said Gertrude, coming to the rescue.

"Why not?"

"For two reasons; firstly, because some would not interest you, and some would interest you too much."

"And of which kind is what M. Rémy has just whispered?"

"Of the latter."

"What did Rémy say to you, madame?"

"I said, M. le Comte, that if you excite yourself so much, you will be dead before we have gone a third of the way."

Monsoreau grew deadly pale.

"He is expecting you behind," whispered Rémy, again, "ride slowly, and he will overtake you."

Monsoreau, who heard a murmur, tried to rise and look back after Diana.

"Another movement like that, M. le Comte, and you will bring on the bleeding again," said Rémy.

Diana turned and rode back a little way, while Rémy walked by the litter to occupy the count. A few seconds after, Bussy was by her side.

"You see I follow you," said he, after their first embrace.

"Oh! I shall be happy, if I know you are always so near to me."

"But by day he will see us."

"No; by day you can ride afar off; it is only I who will see you, Louis. From the summit of some hill, at the turn of some road, your plume waving, your handkerchief fluttering in the breeze, would speak to me in your name, and tell me that you love me."

"Speak on, my beloved Diana; you do not know what music I find in your voice."

"And when we travel by night, which we shall often do, for Rémy has told him that the freshness of the evening is good for his wounds, then, as this evening, from time to time, I will stay behind, and we will tell each other,

with a rapid pressure of the hands, all our thoughts of each other during the day."

"Oh! I love you! I love you!" murmured Bussy. "Oh! to see you, to press your hand, Diana."

Suddenly they heard a voice which made them both tremble, Diana with fear, and Bussy with anger.

"Diana!" it cried, "where are you? Answer me."

"Oh! it is he! I had forgotten him," said Diana. "Sweet dream, frightful awaking."

"Listen, Diana; we are together. Say one word, and nothing can separate us more; Diana, let us fly! What prevents us? Before us is happiness and liberty. One word, and we go; one word, and lost to him, you belong to me forever."

"And my father?"

"When he shall know how I love you?"

"Oh! a father!"

"I will do nothing by violence, dear Diana; order, and I obey."

"It is our destiny, Bussy; but be strong, and you shall see if I know how to love."

"Must we then separate?"

"Comtesse!" cried the voice, "reply, or, if I kill myself in doing it, I will jump from this infernal litter."

"Adieu, Bussy, he will do as he says."

"You pity him?"

"Jealous!" said Diana, with an adorable smile.

Bussy let her go.

In a minute she was by the litter, and found the count half fainting.

"Ah!" cried he, "where were you, madame?"

"Where should I have been? Behind you."

"At my side, madame; do not leave me again."

From time to time this scene was renewed. They all hoped he would die with rage; but he did not die: on the contrary, at the end of ten days, when they arrived at Paris, he was decidedly better. During these ten days Diana had conquered all Bussy's pride, and had persuaded him to come and visit Monsoreau, who always showed him much friendship. Rémy watched the husband and gave notes to the wife.

"Esculapius and Mercury," said he; "my functions accumulate."