

## Chapter 82

### A PROMENADE AT THE TOURNELLES.

In course of time the Angevin gentlemen had returned to Paris, although not with much confidence. They knew too well the king, his brother, and mother, to hope that all would terminate in a family embrace. They returned, therefore, timidly, and glided into the town armed to the teeth, ready to fire on the least suspicion, and drew their swords fifty times before the Hôtel d'Anjou on harmless bourgeois, who were guilty of no crime but of looking at them. They presented themselves at the Louvre, magnificently dressed in silk, velvet, and embroidery. Henri III. would not receive them; they waited vainly in the gallery. It was MM. Quelus, Maugiron, Schomberg, and D'Epernon who came to announce this news to them, with great politeness, and expressing all the regrets in the world.

"Ah, gentlemen," said Antragues, "the news is sad, but, coming from your mouths, it loses half its bitterness."

"Gentlemen," said Schomberg, "you are the flower of grace and courtesy. Would it please you to change the reception which you have missed into a little promenade?"

"Ah! gentlemen, we were about to propose it."

"Where shall we go?" said Quelus.

"I know a charming place near the Bastile," said Schomberg.

"We follow you, go on."

Then the eight gentlemen went out, arm in arm, talking gaily on different subjects, until Quelus said, "Here is a solitary place, with a good footing."

"Ma foi, yes."

"Well! we thought that you would one day accompany us here to meet M. de Bussy, who has invited us all here."

"It is true," said Bussy.

"Do you accept?" said Maugiron.

"Certainly; we rejoice at such an honor."

"That is well," said Schomberg; "shall we each choose an opponent?"

"No," said Bussy, "that is not fair; let us trust to chance, and the first one that is free can join the others."

"Let us draw lots then," said Quelus.

"One moment," said Bussy, "first let us settle the rules of the game."

"They are simple; we will fight till death ensues!"

"Yes, but how?"

"With sword and dagger."

"On foot?"

"Oh, yes! on horseback one's movements are not so free."

"Then, on foot."

"What day?"

"The soonest possible."

"No," said D'Epernon, "I have a thousand things to settle and a will to make; I would rather wait five or six days."

"So be it."

"Then draw lots."

"One moment! divide the ground into four compartments, each for a pair."

"Well said."

"I propose for number one, the long square between the chestnuts; it is a fine place."

"Agreed."

"But the sun? one would be turned to the east."

"No," said Bussy, "that is not fair;" and he proposed a new position, which was agreed to.

Schomberg and Ribeirac came first. They were the first pair; Quelus and Antragues the second; then Livarot and Maugiron the third. D'Epernon, who saw himself left to Bussy, grew very pale.

"Now, gentlemen," said Bussy, "until the day of the combat, let us be friends. Will you accept a dinner at the Hôtel Bussy?"

All agreed, and returned with Bussy to his hotel, where a sumptuous banquet united them till morning.