

The Helmet of Navarre

BY BERTHA RUNKLE.

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(Continued.)

M. Etienne looked from one to another with the childlike smile of his bare lips, demanding if any here spoke Italian.

"I," answered Pierre himself. "Now, what may your errand be?"

"Oh, it's soon told," M. Etienne cried volubly, as one delighted to find himself understood. "I am a jeweller from Florence; I am selling my wares in your great houses. I have just sold a necklace to the Duchesse de Joyeuse; I crave permission to show my trinkets to the fair ladies here. But take me to them, and they'll not make you repent it."

"Go tell madame," Pierre bade one of his men, and turning again to us gave us kindly permission to set down our burden and wait.

For incredible good luck, the heavy hangings were drawn over the sunny windows, making a soft twilight in the room. I sidled over to the bench in the far corner and was feeling almost safe, when Pierre—beshrew him!—called attention to me.

"Now, that is a heavy box for a maid to help her. Do you make the heavy porters work, you Florentines?"

"But I am a stranger here," M. Etienne explained. "Did I hire a porter, how am I to tell an honest one? Believe me, I might run off with all my treasures, and where is poor Giovanni then? Besides, it were cruel to leave my little sister in our lodging, not a soul to speak to, the long day through. There is none where we lodge knows Italian, as you do so like an angel, Sir Master of the Household."

Now, Pierre was no more maître d'hôtel than I was, but that did not dampen his pleasure to be called so. He sat on the bench by M. Etienne.

"How came you two to be in Paris?" he asked.

My lord proceeded to tell him I knew not what glib and convincing farrago, with every excellence, I made no doubt, of accent and gesture. But I could not listen; I had affairs of my own by this time. The lackeys had come up close round me, more interested in me than in my brother, and the same Jean who had held me for my beating, who had wanted my coat stripped off me that I might be whacked to bleed, now said:

"I'll warrant you're hot and tired and thirsty, mademoiselle, for all you look as fresh as a rose. Will you drink a cup of wine if I fetch it?"

I had kept my eyes on the ground from the first moment of entrance, in case I should be called to look them in the face; but now, gaining courage, I raised my glance and smiled at him bashfully, and faltered that I did not understand.

He understood the sense, if not the words, of my answer, and repeated his offer, slowly, loudly. I strove to look as blank as the wall, and shook my head gently and helplessly, and turned, an enquiring gaze at the others, as if beseeching them to interpret. One of the fellows clapped Jean on the shoulder with a roar of laughter.

"A fall, a fall!" he shouted. "Here's the all-conquering Jean Marchand tripped up for once." He thinks nothing that wears petticoats can withstand him, but here's a maid that hasn't a word to throw at him.

"Pshaw! she doesn't understand me," Jean returned, undaunted, and promptly pointed a finger at my mouth and then raised his fist to his own, with such and gulps. I allowed myself to comprehend then. I smiled in as coquettish a fashion as I could contrive, and glanced on the ground, and slowly looked up again and nodded.

The men burst into loud applause.

"Good old Jean! Jean wins. Well played, Jean! Vive Jean!"

Jean, flushed with triumph, ran off on his errand, while I thought of Margot, the steward's daughter, at home, and tried to recollect every air and grace I had ever seen her flaunt before us. It was not bad fun, this. I hid my hands under my apron and spoke not at all, but sighed and smiled and blushed under their stares like any fine lady. Once in one's life, for one hour, it is rather amusing to be a girl. But that is quite long enough, said I.

Jean came again directly with a great silver tankard.

"Burgundy, pardi!" cried one of his mates, sticking his nose into the pot as

it passed him, "and full! Ciel, you must thank your lass has a head." Jean answered.

"I put out my hand for the tankard, running the risk of my big nose's betraying me, resolved that he should not drink with me of that draught, when of a sudden he leaned over to snatch a kiss. I dodged him, more frightened than the shyest maid. Though in this half-light I might perfectly look a girl, I could not believe I should kiss like one. In a panic, I fled from Jean to my master's side.

M. Etienne, wheeling about, came near to laughing out in my face, when he remembered his part and played it with a zeal that was like to undo us. He sprang to his feet, drawing his dagger.

"Who insults my sister?" he shouted.

"Who is the dog does this?"

They were on him, wrenching the knife from his hand, wrenching his lame arm at the same time so painfully that he gasped. I was scared chill; I knew if they mis-handled him they would brush the wig off.

"Mand your manners, sirrah!" Jean cried. Monsieur's ardour vanished; a gentle, appealing smile spread over his face.

"I cry your pardon, sir," he said to Jean; then turning to Pierre, "This messenger does not understand me. But tell him, I beg you, I crave his good pardon. I was but angered for a moment that he should think to touch my little sister. I meant no harm."

"A kiss, forsooth! What do you expect with a handsome lass like that? If you will take her about—"

"Madame says the jeweller fellow is to come up," our messenger announced, re-

turning.

My lord besought Pierre:

"My knife? I may have my knife? By the beard of St. Peter, I swear to you I meant no harm with it. I drew it in just."

Now, this, which was the sole true statement he had made since our arrival, was the only one Pierre did not quite believe. He took the knife from Jean, but he hesitated to hand it over to its owner.

"No," he said, "you were angry enough. I know your Italian temper. I'm thinking I'll keep this little toy of yours till you come down."

"Very well, Sir Majordomo," M. Etienne rejoined indifferently, "so be it you give it to me when I go." He grasped the handle of the box and we followed our guide up the stairs, my master offering me the comforting assurance:

"It really matters not in the least, for if we be caught the dagger's not yet forged can save us."

We were ushered into a large, fair chamber hung with arras, the carpet under our feet deep and soft as moss. At one side stood the bed, raised on its dais, opposite were the windows, the dressing-table between them, covered with coot-bottles and boxes, brushes and combs, very glittering and grand. Fluttering about the room were some half-dozen fine dames and demoiselles, brave in silks and jewels. Among them I was quick to recognize Mme. de Mayenne, and I thought I knew vaguely one or two other faces as those I had seen before about her. I started presently to discover the little Mlle de Tavanne; that night she had worn sky-color and now she wore rose, but there was no mistaking her sunny face.

We set our box on a table, as the duchesses bade us, and I helped M. Etienne to lay out its contents, which done, I retired to the background, well content to leave the brunt of the business to him. It was as he prophesied; they paid me no heed whatever. He was smoothly launched on the third relating of his tale; I throw by this time he almost believed it himself. Certes, he never faltered, but rattled on as if he had two tongues, telling in confidential tone of our father and mother, our little brothers and sisters at home in Florence; our journey with the legate; his kindness and care of us (I hoped that duty would not walk in just now to pay his respects to madame la generale); of our arrival in Paris, and our wonder and delight at the city's grandeur, the like of which was not to be found in Italy; and, last, but not least, he had much to say, with an innocent, wide-eyed gravity, in praise of the ladies of Paris, so beautiful, so witty, so generous! They were all crowding around him, calling him pretty boy, laughing at his compliments, handling and exclaiming over his trinkets, trying the effect of a buckle or a bracelet, preening

and cooing like bright-breasted pigeons about the corn-thresher. It was as pretty a sight as ever I beheld, but it was not to end at such that we had risked our heads. Of Mlle. de Montluc there was no sign.

No one was marking me, and I wondered if I might not slip out unseen and make my way to mademoiselle's chamber. I knew she lodged on this story, near the back of the house, in a room overlooking the little street and having a turret-window. But I was somewhat doubtful of my skill to find it through the winding corridors of a great palace. I was more than likely to meet some one who would question me purpose, and what answer could I make? I scarce dared say I was seeking mademoiselle. I am not ready at explanations, like M. le Comte.

Yet here were the golden moments flying and our cause no further advanced. Should I leave it all to M. Etienne, trusting that when he had made his sales here he would be permitted to seek out the other ladies of the house? Or should I strive to aid him? Could I win in safety to mademoiselle's chamber, what a feat!

It so irked me to be doing nothing that I was on the point of gingerly disappearing when one of the ladies, she with the yellow curls, the prettiest of them all, turned suddenly from the group calling clearly:

"Lorance!"

Our hearts stood still—mine did, and I can vouch for his—as the heavy window-curtain swung aside and she came forth. She came listlessly. Her hair sweeping against her cheek was ebony on snow, so white she was; while under her blue eyes were dark rings, like the smears of an inky finger. M. Etienne let fall the bracelet he was holding, staring at her oblivious of anguish else, his browly tinged in distress, his face ashy with love and sympathy. He made a step forward; I thought him about to catch her in his arms, when he recollected himself and dropped on his knees to grope for the fallen trinket.

"You wanted me, madame?" she asked Mme. de Mayenne.

"No," said the duchess, with a tartness of voice she seemed to reserve for Mlle. de Montluc; "it was Mme. de Montpensier."

"It was I," the fair-haired beauty answered in the same breath. "I want you to stop moping over there in the corner. Come look at these bangles and see if they cannot bring a sparkle to your eye. Fie, Lorance! The having too many lovers is nothing to cry about. It is an affliction many and many a lady would give her ears to undergo."

"Take heart o' grace, Lorance!" cried Mlle. de Tavanne. "If you go on looking as you look today, you'll not long be troubled by lovers."

She made no answer to either, but stood there passively till it might be her pleasure to have done with her, with a patient weariness that it wrung the heart to see.

"Here's a chain would become you vastly, Lorance," Mme. de Montpensier went on, friendly enough, in her brisk and careless voice. "Let me try it on your neck. You can easily swap Paul or some one to buy it for you."

She fumbled over the clasp. M. Etienne, with a "Permit me, madame," took it boldly from her hand and hooked it himself about mademoiselle's neck. He delayed longer than he need over the fastening of it, looking with burning eyes at her, and she, looking at him with a quick frown of displeasure, drawing herself back; then all at once the color waived across her face like the dawn flush over a gray sky. She blushed to her very hair, to her very ruff. Then the red vanished as quickly as it came; she clutched at her bosom, on the verge of a swoon.

He threw out his arms to catch her. Instantly she stepped aside, and, turning with a little unsteady laugh to the lady at whose elbow she found herself, asked:

"Does it become me, madame?"

The little scene had passed so quickly that it seemed none had marked it. Mademoiselle had stood a little out of the group, monsieur with his back to it, and the ladies were busy over the jewels. She whom mademoiselle had addressed, a big-nosed, loud-voiced lady, older than any

of the others, answered her bluntly: "You look a shade too green-faced today, mademoiselle, for anything to become you."

"What can you expect, Mme. de Brie?" Mlle. de Montluc promptly demanded. "Mlle. de Montluc is weary and worn from her vigils at your son's bedside."

Mme. de Montpensier had the temerity to laugh; but for the rest, a sort of little groan ran through the company. Mme. de Mayenne bade sharply, "Peace, Blanchette!" Mme. de Brie, red with anger, flamed out on her and Mlle. de Montluc equally.

"You impudent minxes! 'Tis enough that one of you should bring my son to his death, without the other making a mock of it."

"He's not dying," began the irrepressible Blanchette de Tavanne; her eyes twinkling with mischief; but whatever naughty answer was on her tongue, our mademoiselle's deeper voice overrode her:

"I am quite of the opinion, madame, that with half the guard at his back, set on one wounded man."

"I'll warrant it was not," muttered Mlle. de Montluc.

"Mar has turned traitor, and deserves nothing so well as to be spit in the dark," Mme. de Brie cried out.

Mademoiselle waited an instant, with flashing eyes meeting madame's. She had spoken hotly before, but now, in the face of the other's passion, she held herself steady.

"Your charge is as false, madame, as your wish is cruel. Do you go to weepers and come home to say such things? M. de Mar is no traitor; he was never pledged to us, and may go over to Navarre when he will."

It was quietly spoken, but the blue lightning of her eyes was too much for Mme. de Brie. She opened her mouth to retort, but she dropped her eyes, and finally turned away, yet seeming, to feign interest in the trinkets. It was a rout.

"Then you are the traitor, Lorance," chimed the silvery tones of Mme. de Montpensier. "It is not denied that M. de Mar has gone over to the enemy; therefore you are the traitor to have intercourse with him."

She spoke without heat, without any appearance of ill feeling. Her words were merely the desire, for the fun of it, to keep the flurry going. But mademoiselle answered seriously, with the fleetest glance at M. le Comte, where he, forgetting he knew no French, feasted his eyes recklessly on her, pitying, applauding, adoring her. I went softly around the group to pull his sleeve; where lost if any turned to see him.

"Madame," mademoiselle addressed her cousin of Montpensier, speaking particularly clearly and distinctly. "I mean ever to be loyal to my house. I came here a penniless orphan to the care of my kinsman Mayenne; and he has always been to me generous and loving."

"If not madame," murmured Mlle. de Montluc to herself.

(To be continued.)

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A bootblack named Biaggio Fontana fell from street car No. 61 at the corner of Dock street and Market Square last night. He was stunned for a few minutes and sustained an ugly scalp wound. The police assisted him to his home on the corner of Water street and Market Square and Dr. Berryman dressed the cut. The young man was evidently unused to the open car, and missed his footing.

Summer Wash Silks for Waists and Suits.

Just think, 85c. and 90c. wash silks selling at 40c. a yard. They are silks that will wear well, are good colorings and very pretty patterns. Included in the lot is white broadcloth silk and also black broadcloth silk which will make very handsome waists. \$1.00 for a waist length of silk that will look well, wear well and is very stylish. The other colorings are

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TO REVOLUTIONIZE

THE ELECTRIC WORLD

ASHVILLE, N. C., June 13.—The Asheville Citizen publishes an interview from Thomas A. Edison, who says that he has made cobalt discoveries in North Carolina.

Mr. Edison claims he will reduce thereby the weight of storage batteries in automobiles 50 per cent. and the cost of traffic in cities 35 per cent. He has been in this state some time prospecting for cobalt. He says:

"I knew that a North Carolina trip would be successful, and although I am satisfied now, I was well confident that I would not be disappointed. There is a streak of it running from a point just east of Nashville, Tenn., into this state, and I must add that some of the richest beds I have found have been in North Carolina.

There is a large quantity of it, and my discovery means a revolution in the electrical world. I can reduce the cost of city traffic 35 per cent. and cut the weight of storage batteries just in half. It can be seen very readily that more automobiles and electrical vehicles will be built, because the cost will be placed within the reach of many people who cannot now afford to own them."

"I have found cobalt in Lincoln, Gaston, Shelby, and Jackson Counties. In Jackson county there is a large quantity of it, while the beds are valuable in the other counties. I made assays of the mineral in many places, and I find the quality to be just what I was looking for."

"The electric vehicles have been under a great handicap because of the very heavy storage batteries we are forced to put in them, and also on account of their high values. Under the present plans electric autos cannot be made without a large outlay of money, and that has kept the people—the majority of the people I mean—from using them. An automobile is considered a luxury even by our richest citizens. When I can equip an automobile propelled by the cobalt system, the weight will be one-half, thereby giving the new machine an enviable advantage over the ones now in use, and when the price is reduced so as to place them within the reach of everybody it means that a horse is a thing of the past. The crowded streets of the cities will be cleared, and that will mean a great thing in some of our largest towns. I have left a force of men in this state, where I found the mineral, and they will investigate thoroughly as to the quality to be found."

LODGEMEN

ARE ANGRY

P. W. A. Lodges Demand the

Resignation of Their Grand

Secretary Because He Mixed

Into Politics.

SYDNEY, June 17.—(Special)—Several of the P. W. A. lodges in Cape Breton passed resolutions last night condemning in unqualified terms the action of John Moffatt, the grand secretary, in publicly favoring one of the political parties in the present campaign in preference to the other, thus violating one of the great principles of the association that it should be distinctly non-political. The resolutions demand Mr. Moffatt's resignation.

Mr. Moffatt took the platform at Dominion No. 1 recently and spoke strongly in favor of the liberal candidates. This has displeased members of the association so much that they are now asking for his immediate retirement from office. The introduction of politics would be fatal to the association and this is what the lodges wish to guard against most particularly. The action of the lodges has created a mild sensation in political circles.

Neither Satisfied.

"I hear that the Van Swellers have remarried each other—that neither was satisfied with the divorce?"

"Yes; the stupid Judge gave him the custody of the dogs, and gave the care of the children to her."—American Spectator.

Game to the End.

She—"When you were in the Arctic regions you must have found the night, three months long, very tiresome."

He—"Well, no; you see we got it created in a game of chess, and it was three months long, very tiresome."—Boston Transcript.

A Bad Case.

"McLugh has been arrested for drunkenness and wants you to bail him out."

"Bail him out?" ejaculated Colonel Popper, who had heard the remark indistinctly.

"Good gracious, is he that full?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Confirmed.

"Money is in strong demand," says an evening contemporary in opening its financial review. We are able to confirm the news on the highest authority.—London Globe.

Adamless Eden.

Mother Eve never would have made much of a sensation in the Garden of Eden alone.—Life.

And Then?

"What would you do if I'd steal a kiss?"

"I'd scream at my brother."

"Where's your brother?"

"Why—he's visiting in New York."—Cleveland Leader.

In a Dilemma.

Girl tourist (to her companion)—"The guide just kissed me—and I don't know as to whether I should deduct, or give him a tip."

A Congressional Muck Rake