

## THE HELMET OF NAVARRE

BY BERTHA RUNKLE.  
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(Continued.)

"Now, that is where Huguet ran with his wounded arm," I said to M. Etienne. "Aye, and if we did not know the way home we could find it by this red track." But the trail did not reach the door; for when we turned into the little street where the arch is, where I had waited for Martin, as we turned the familiar corner under the walls of the house itself, we came suddenly on the body of a man. Monsieur ran forward with a cry, for it was the Squire Huguet.

He wore a leather jerkin lined with steel rings, mail as stout as any forged. Some one had stabbed once and again at the coat without avail, and had then torn it open and stabbed his defenceless breast. Though we had killed two of their men, they had rained blows enough on this man of ours to kill twenty.

Monsieur knelt on the ground beside him, but he was quite cold.

"The man who fled when we charged them must have lurked about," I said. "Huguet's sword-arm was useless; he could not defend himself."

"Or else he fainted from his wound, hushed so," M. Etienne answered. "And one of those who fled last came upon him helpless and did this."

"Why didn't I follow him instead of sitting down a John o' dreams?" I cried. "But I was thinking of you and Monsieur; I forgot Huguet."

"I forgot him, too," Monsieur sorrowed. "Shame to me; he would not have forgotten me."

"Monsieur," his son said, "it was no negligence of yours. You could have saved him only by following when he ran. And that was impossible."

"In sight of the door," Monsieur said sadly. "In sight of his own door."

We held silent. Monsieur got soberly to his feet.

that if I told him to desert me, I meant it."

M. Etienne ventured no word, understanding well enough that in such bitter moments no consolation consoles. M. Du added after a moment:

"Mordieu! I am ashamed of myself. I might be better occupied than in blaming the dead—the brave and faithful dead. Belike he could not run, they set on us so suddenly. When he could, he did go, and he went to his death. They were my charge, the papers. I had no right to put the responsibility on any other. I should have kept them myself. I should have gone to Tarigny. I should never have ventured myself through these black lanes. Fool! traitorous fool!"

"Nay, Monsieur, the mischance might have befallen any one."

"It would not have befallen Villeroi! It would not have befallen Rosny!" Monsieur exclaimed bitterly. "It befalls me because I am a lack-wit who rushes into affairs for which he is not fit. I can handle a sword, but I have no business to meddle in statecraft."

"Then have those wisecracks out at St. Denis no business to employ you," M. Etienne said. "He is not unknown to fame, this Duke of St. Quentin; everybody knows how he goes about things. Monsieur, they gave you the papers because no one else would carry them into Paris. They knew you had no fear in you; and it is because of that that the papers are lacking. But take heart, Monsieur. We'll get them back."

"When? How?"

"Soon," M. Etienne answered. "and easily if you will tell me what they are like. Are they open?"

"I fear by now they may be. There are three sheets of names, and a fourth sheet, a letter—all in cipher."

"Ah, but in that case—"

self. It was a great surprise to me when at length we arrived without let or hindrance before the door of a mean little drinking-place, our goal.

We went in, and M. Etienne ordered wine, much to my satisfaction. My stomach was beginning to remind me that I had given it nothing for twelve hours or so, while I had worked my legs hard.

"Does M. Bernet lodge with you?" my master asked of the landlord. We were his only patrons at the moment.

"M. Bernet? Him with the eye out?" "The same."

"Why, no, monsieur. I don't let lodgers. The building is not mine. I but rent the ground floor for my purposes."

"But M. Bernet lodges in the house, then?"

"No, he doesn't. He lodges round the corner, in the court off the Rue Clichet."

"But he comes here often?"

"Oh, aye. Every morning for his glass. And most evenings, too."

M. Etienne laid down the drink-money, and something more.

"Sometimes he has a friend with him, eh?"

The man laughed.

"No, monsieur; he comes in here alone. Many's the time I'll be standing in my door when he'll go by with some gallant, and he never chances to see me or my shop. While it he's alone it's 'Good morning, Jean. Anything in the casks today?' He can no more get by my door than he'll get by Death's when the time comes."

"No," agreed M. Etienne; "we all stop there, soon or late. Those friends of M. Bernet, then—there is none you could put a name to?"

"Why, no, monsieur, more's the pity. He has none lives in this quarter. M. Bernet's in low water, you understand, monsieur. If he lives here, it is because he can't help it. But he goes elsewhere for his friends."

"Then you can tell us, my man, where he lodges?"

"Aye, that can I," mine host answered bustling out from behind the bar, eager in the interest of the pleasant-looking, open-handed gallant. "Just round the corner of the Rue Clichet, in the court. The first house on the left, that is his. I would go with monsieur, only I cannot leave the shop alone, and the wife not back from market. But monsieur cannot miss it. The first house in the court. Thank you, monsieur. Au revoir, monsieur."

In the doorway of the first house on the left in the little court stood an



"We went in, and M. Etienne ordered Wine."

"Never lost a better man."

"Monsieur," I cried, "he asks no better epitaph. If you will say that of me when I die, I shall not have lived in vain."

The smile of the outburst, but I did not care; if he would only smile, I was content it should be at me.

"Nay, Beliz," he said. "I hope it will not be I who compose your epitaph. Come, we must get to the house and send after poor Huguet."

"Felix and I will carry him," M. Etienne said, and we lifted him between us—no easy task, for he was a heavy fellow. But it was little enough to do for him.

We bore him along slowly, Monsieur striding ahead. But of a sudden he turned back to us, laying quick fingers on the poor torn breast.

"What is it, Monsieur?" cried his son. "My papers?"

We set him down, and the three of us examined him from top to toe, stripping off his steel coat, pulling apart his blood-clotted linen, prying into his very boots. But no papers revealed themselves.

"What were they, Monsieur?"

A drawn look had come over Monsieur's face.

"Papers which the king gave me, and which I, fool and traitor, have lost."

I ran back to the spot where we had found Huguet; there was his hat on the ground, but no papers. I followed up the red trail to its beginning, looking behind every stone, every bunch of grass; but no papers. In my desperation I even pulled about the dead man, lest the packet had been covered, falling from Huguet in the fray. The two gentlemen joined me in the search, and we went over every inch of the ground, but to no purpose.

"I thought them safer with Huguet than with me," Monsieur groaned. "I knew we ran that risk of ambush. Myself would be the object of attack; I bade Huguet, were we waylaid, to run with the papers."

"And of course he would not."

"He should; it was my command. He obeyed, and saved my life perhaps, and lost me what is dearer than life—my honor."

"He could not leave you to be killed, Monsieur; that were asking the impossible."

"Aye, but I am saved at the ruin of a hundred others," Monsieur cried. "The papers contained certain lists of names of Mayenne's officers pledged to support the king if he turn Catholic. I had them for Lemaitre. But at this date, in Mayenne's hands, they spell the men's destruction. Huguet should have known

Monsieur cut short his son's jubilation. "But—Lucas."

"Of course—I forgot him. He knows your card, then?"

"Dolt that I was, he knows everything."

"Then must we lay hands on the papers before they reach Mayenne, and all is saved," M. Etienne declared cheerfully. "Those fellows can't read a cipher. If the packet is not open, Monsieur?"

"It was a span long, and half as wide for all address, the letters St. Q. in the corner. It was tied with red cord and bore the seal of a flying falcon, and the motto, Je revivrai."

"What! the king's seal. That's serious. Expect, then, Monsieur, to see the papers in an hour's time."

"Etienne, Etienne," Monsieur cried, "are you mad?"

"No madder than is proper for a St. Quentin. It's simple enough. I told you I recognized that worthy back there for one Bernet, who lodged at an inn I wot of over beyond the markets. Do we be-take ourselves thither, we may easily fall in with some comrade of his whom who have not the misfortune to be lying dead in a back lane, who will know something of your loss. Bernet's sort are no bigots; while they work for the League, they will lend a kindly ear to the chink of Kingsmen's horns."

"Ah," cried Monsieur, "then let us go." But M. Etienne laid a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Not you. I. They will kill you in the Halks just as cheerfully as in the Quarter Marais. This is my affair."

He looked at Monsieur with kindling eyes, seeing his chance to prove devotion. The duke yielded to his eagerness.

"But," M. Etienne added generously, "you may have the honor of paying the paper."

"I give you carte blanche, my son. Etienne, if you put that packet into my hand, it is more than if you brought the sceptre to France."

"Then go practise, Monsieur, at feeling more than king."

He embraced his father, and we turned off down the street.

The sun was well up by this time, and the city rousing to the labours of the day. Half was I glad of the lateness of the hour, for we ran no risk now of cut-throats; and half was I sorry, for it behooved not a man supposed to be in the Bastille to show himself too liberally to the broad eye of the streets. Every time—and it was often—there we approached a person who to my nervous imagination looked official, I shook in my shoes. The way seemed fairly to bristle with soldiers, officers, judges; for aught I knew, members of the Sixteen, Governor, Belin him-

self, old man with a wooden leg, sweeping heaps of refuse out of the passage.

"It appears that every one on this stair lacks something," M. Etienne murmured to me. "It is the liver of the house. Can you tell me, friend, where I may find M. Bernet?"

The concierge regarded us without cordiality, while by no means ceasing his endeavors to cover our shoes with his sweepings.

"Third story back," he said. (To be continued.)

### A RIGHT WAY and A WRONG WAY

Many people have many ways to bring about the same result. Most of them are mistaken ways, but this is not known until the test of time points plainly to the error. Practically there are but two ways to accomplish anything: a right way and a wrong way. Take, for instance, a man with a bad back, there are lots of them, and of various kinds, some with stitches and twinges, others with cricks and twinges; then there's the dull, heavy continuous kind that lasts all day and doesn't sleep at night. They're all bad enough, they're all hard enough to get rid of. Some people rub the back with liniment, others cover it with plasters, either or both means often bring relief, but the pain comes back—it's the wrong way to cure the trouble.

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