A STORY OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE BY BERTHA RUNKLE.

"You are a good girl, Lorance,

"Yes, I will let your boy go,"

"You have called me a good

give you another just as good."

"Am I Friday-faced?" she said, sum-

moning up a smile. "Then my looks be-

lie me. For since you free this poor boy

whom I was like to have ruined I take

husband have yellow hair or brown?

not have his Margot. Yet in less than a

year he is as merry as a fiddler with

"It is the most foolish act of my

"You can swear him to silence, mon-

"What use? He would not keep si-

"He will if I ask it," she returned,

that made the blood dance in my veins.

as long as I have you will not so flat-

Thus it happened that I was not

bound to silence concerning what I

had seen and heard in the house of Lor-

"What I do I do thoroughly. I said I'd

Mademoiselle sprang forward with

"Let me cut the cords, cousin Char-

He recoiled a bare second, the habit

of a lifetime checking him against the

putting of a weapon in another's hand.

Then ashamed of the suspicion, he

yielded the knife and she cut my

bonds. She looked straight into my

ing, loving; and then I began to read

"Monsieur, I shall never cease to

With a bare inclination of the head

"Do I get but a curtsey for my cour-

He held out his arms to her and she

"I will conduct you to the staircase,

mademoiselle," he said, and taking

her hand with stately politeness led

"Lorance!" Lucas cried to her, but

could not repress a grin at him. Mark-

ing which he burst out at me vehem-

ently, yet in a low tone, for Mayenne

devil's brat? Let him laugh that wins;

"You think I am bested, do you, you

"I will tell M. le Come so." I an-

"By heaven, you will tell him no-

"I have Mayenne's word," I began,

but his retort was to draw dagger.

deemed it time to stop parleying, and

I did what the best of soldiers must

the oratory, flinging the door to after

me. He was upon it before I could get

't shut, and the heavy oak was swung

this way and that between us till it

seemed as if we must tear it off the

hinges. I contrived not to let him

push it open wide enough to enter;

thought it no shame to shrick for suc-

cor. I heard an answering cry and

hurrying footsteps. Then Lucas took

his weight from the door so suddenly

that mine banged it shut. The next

minute it flew open again, mademoi-

selle, frightened and panting, on the

A tall soldier with a musket stood

at her back; at one side Lucas loung-

ed by the cabinet where the duke had

Mayenne, red and puffing, hurried

"What is the pother?" he demand-

"Mademoiselle's protege is ner-

I had given him the lie then and

there, but as I emerged from the

open before me, I said nothing. Nor

"When you marry me, Paul de Lor-

CHAPTER XVII.

Lucas's prophecy came to grief within five minutes of the making.

house door for me the first thing "I

My spirits danced at sight of him,

day. Within the close, candle-lit room

I had had no thought but that it was

For when the musketeer unbarred the

sanctuary in the oratory."

darkness Mayenne commanded:

do sometimes: I ran. I bounded into

thing." he cried. "You will never see

swered with all the impudence I could

had not closed the door:

I shall have her yet."

daylight again."

candle flame.

his face:

Mayenne took out his dagger.

"When you have lived in the world

the Duchesse Katharine."

ly if not merrily.

yours is the credit."

sieur," she cried quickly.

But Mayenne laughed.

"Aye, and you must stay happy. Par-

a grateful and happy heart to bed."

in Charles?" she asked.

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Certes, he was in no very pleasant corner, this dear M. Paul. His mistress Mayenne said. had heard his own lips decribe his plot egainst the St. Quentins: there was no possibility of lying himself clear of # Out of his own mouth he was conwicted of spycraft, treachery and cowardly murder. And in the Hotel de Lorraine, as in the Hotel de St. Quentin, his betrayal had come about through me. I was unwitting agent in both cases; but that did not make him love me the more. Could eyes slay I had fallen of the glance he shot me over mademoiselle's bowed head; but when she rose he said to her:

"Mademoiselle, the boy is as much my prisoner as M. le Duc's, since I got him here. But I too freely give him up

dieu, what does it matter whether your She swept him a curtsey silently without looking at him. He made an My brother Henri was for getting himself into a monastery, because he could eager pace nearer her.

"Lorance," he cried in a low, rapid voice, "I see I am out of your graces. Now, by Our Lady, what's life worth to me if you will not take me back gain? I admit I have tried to ruin the Comte de Mar. Is that any marvel, since he is my rival with you? Last March, when I was hiding here and watched from my window the gay M. Mar come airily in, day after day, see and make love to you, was it any marvel that I swore to bring his proud head to the dust?" Now she turned to him and met his

saze squarely. "The means you employed was the marvel," she said. "If you did not approve of his visits you had only to tell him so. He had been ready to defend to you his right to make them. But you never showed him your face; of ter yourself, Lorance. course had you you could not have become his father's housemate and Judas. Oh, I blush to know that the same blood runs in your veins and mine!"

You speak hard words, mademoi- raine. selle." Lucas returned, keeping his set you free. Free you shall be." temper with a stern effort, "You forset that we live in France in war time and not in the kingdom of heaven. I toiling for more than my own rewenges. I was working at your cousin pleading hand. Mayenne's commands, to aid our holy cause, for the preservation of the Catholic Church and the Catholic kingdom of France.

"Your conversion is sudden then; n hour ago you were working for mothing and no one but Paul de "Come, come, Lorance," Mayenne in- eyes with a glance earnest, beseech-Larraine."

on the side of compromise. "Paul is all she meant by it. The next moment no worse than the rest of us. He hates she was making her deep curtsey behis enemies, and so do we all; he side the duke. power, and so do we all. They are love you for this. And now I thank Kingsmen, we are Leaguers; they you for your long patience and bid wight for their side and we fight for you good night." against us; we murder lest we be to Lucas she turned to go. But Maymurdered. We cannot scruple over our enne bade her pause. what do you expect? Civil war is not a tesy? No warmer thanks, Lorance?" dancing school.

"Mademoiselle is right," Lucas said let him kiss both her cheeks. humbly, refusing any defense. "We have been using cowardly means, men. And I at least cannot plead M. her from the room. The light seemed le Duc's excuse that I was blinded in to go from it with the gleam of her my zeal for the Cause. For I know and yellow gown. me. I went to kill St. Quentin because she never turned her head. He stood I was promised you for it, as I would glowering, grinding his teeth together, have gone to kill the Pope himself. his glib tongue finding for once no This is my excuse; I did it to win you. way to better his sorry case. He was There is no crime in God's calendar I would not commit for that."

He had possessed himself of her Band and was bending over her, burning her with his hot eyes. Mess of lies se the man was, in this last sentence I knew he spoke the truth.

She strove to free herself from him with none of the flattered pride in his declaration which he had perhaps Sooked for. Instead, she eyed him with positive fear, as if she saw no way of escape from his rampant desire. "I wish rather you would practise . little virtue to win me," she said.

"So I will if you ask it," he returned mabashed. "Lorance, I love you so there is no depth to which I could not stoop to gain you; there is no height to which I cannot rise. There is no shame so bitter, no danger so awful, that I would not face it for you. Nor there any sacrifice I will not make to gain your good will. I hate M. de Mar above any living man because you have smiled on him; but I will let him go for your sake. I swear to you before the figure of Our Blessed Lady there that I will drop all enmity to Etlenne de Mar. From this time forward I will meither move against him nor cause others to move against him in any shape or manner, so help me God!"

He dropped her hand to kiss the cross of her sword. She retreated from him, her face very pale, her breast

"You make it hard for me to know when you are speaking the truth," she "May the lightning strike me if

am lying!" Lucas cried. "May my tongue rot at the root if ever I lie to you, ed. "What devilment now, Paul?" Lorance! "Then I am very grateful and glad,"

she said gravely, and again curtseyed

"Yes, I give you my word for that too, Lorance," Mayenne added, "I have no quarrel with young Mar. His father has stirred up more trouble for me than any dozen of Huguenots; I have my score to settle with St. Quentin. But I have no quarrel with the son. I will not molest him.

"Grand'merci, monsieur," she said, sweeping him another of her graceful obelsances.

Mayenne went on. "I pardon him, but my valor before mademoiselle. Then, cause Mayenne promised him Mile. de not know it." not that he may be anything to you. reflecting how much harm my hasty Montiluc in marriage." are Navarre's men now and our ene- that the path to freedom was now mies. For your sake I will let Mar alone; but if he come near you again had I need. For as I turned she flash-I will crush him as I would a buzzing ed over to Lucas and said straight in

"That I understand, monsieur," she answered in a low tone. "While I live raine, you will marry a dead wife." under your roof I shall not be treacherous to you. I am a Ligueuse and he is & Kingsman, and there can be nothing between us. There shall be nothing,

monsteur. I do not swear it, as Paul She did not once look at Lucas, yet saw was the morning sun. I think she saw him wince under her stab. The Duke of Mayenne was right; as he himself might dance on Easter not even Mile. de Montluc loved her

step I passed from the gloomy house into the heartening sunshine of a new clean day. I ran along as joyously as if I had left the last of my troubles behind me, forgotten in some dark corner of the Hotel de Lorraine. Always my heart lifts when, after hours within walls, I find myself in the open am afraid in houses, but out of doors I have no fear of harm from

Though Sir Sun was risen this half hour, and at home we should all have been about our business, these lazy Paris folk were still snoring. They liked well to turn night into day and lie long abed of a morning. Although here a shopkeeper took down shutters, and there a brisk servant lass swept the doorstep, yet I walked through a sleeping city, quiet as our St. Quentin woods . save that here my footsteps echoed into the emptiness. At length, "Will you let the boy go now, couswith the knack I have, whatever my stupidities, of finding my way in strange place, I arrived before the made answer. "But if I do this for you courtyard of the Trois Lanternes. The I shall expect you henceforth to do my big wooden doors were indeed shut, but when I had pounded lustily awhile a young tapster, half clad and cross as a bear, opened to me. I vouchsafed "Aye, so you are. And there is small him scant apology, but, dropping on a need to lock so Friday-faced about it. heap of hay under a shed in the court, If I have denied you one lover I will

passed straightway into dreamless When I awoke my good friend the sun was looking down at me from near his zenith, and my first happy thought was that I was just in time for dinner. Then I discovered that I had been prodded out of my rest by the pitchfork of a hostler.

"Sorry to disturb monsieur, but the horses must be fed." "Oh, I am obliged to you," I said, rubbing my eyes. "I must go up to M. Comte."

"He has been himself to look at be disturbed. But that was last week. Dame! you slept like a sabot." It did not take me long to brush the life," Mayenne answered. "But it is for straw off me, wash my face at the you, Lorance. If ill comes to me by it rough and present myself before montieur. He was dressed and sitting at

table in his bedchamber, while drawer served him with dinner. "You are out of bed, monsieur," I

flinging me a look of bright confidence | cried. "But yes," he answered, springing

"I swore then that I was mad arken his doors again; I was mad went with Gervals I went forever." shall never make it clear to you "Monsieur, if you repent your hot "Yes, yes, go on," he cried. "I must e'en give him the chance.

He sat down at the table again with the intention of eating his dinner as If he do repent them it were churlish talked, but precious few mouthfuls he to deny him the opportunity to tell took. At every word I spoke he got him so. If he still maintain them it deeper into the interest of my tale. I were cowardly to shrink from hearing never talked so much in my life, me, as I did those few days. I was always relating a history to monsieur, to mamust go tell him I repent. demoiselle, to M. Etienne, to-well, you shall know.

I came forward to kiss his hand,

"Oh, you look very smiling over it,

"But," I protested, indignant, "mon-

"Well, a prodigal son, as Lucas

"I have heard M. l'Abbe read the

story of the prodigal son," I said. "And

he was a vaurien, if you like-no more

monsieur's sort than Lucas himself.

But it says that when his father saw

him coming a long way off he ran out

"Well, however it turns out it must

"You will beg his aid, monsieur?"

moiselle under Mayenne's hand-well,

confess for the nonce that beats

"We must do it, monsieur," I cried.

"Aye, and we will! Come, Felix, you

did not mind, but was indeed

thankful to get any dinner at all. Once

resolved on the move he was in a

fever to be off; it was not long before

we were in the streets bound for the

Hotel St. Quentin. He said no more of

mousteur as we walked, but plied me

faced than ever his lady looked. He

M. Etienne; he found his own words

However, when we came within

dozen paces of the gate he dropped,

as one drops a cloak, all signs of

gloom or discomposure, and approach-

ed the entrance with the easy see-

ger of the gay young gallant who had | +

lived there. As if returning from a

morning stroll he called to the sentry:

"Hola, squinting Charlot! Open

"Morbleu, M. le Comte!" the fellow

"Well, this is a sight for sore eyes

M. Etienne laughed out in pleasure.

It put heart into him, I could see, that

his first greeting should be thus

of you, monsieur," Charlot volunteer-

ed. "The old man wasn't in the best

of tempers last night after Lucas got

away and you gave us the slip too. He

called us all blockheads and cursed

"Eh, bien, I am found," M. Etienne

I think he was half sorry, half glad.

"Somewhere about. I'll find him for

"No, stay at your post. I'll find him."

He went straight across the court

and in at the door he had sworn never

again to darken. Humility and repent-

ance might have brought him there,

but it was the hand of mademoiselle

drew him over the threshold without

Alone in the hall was my little friend

Marcel, throwing dice against himself

"Well, Marcel," my master said,

"I think in the stables, monsieur."

"Bid him come to me in the small

He turped with accustomed feet into

Jigo kept the rolls of the guard I.

thanked him, and he hung about, .ong

ence not quite daring, till I took him

M. Etienne stood behind the table

looking his haughtiest. He was unsure

"M. Etienne, I had liefer see you

M. Etienne displayed the funniest

the Spanish gang may come hither to

clean us out. I want every man I have

to while the time away. He sprang up

at sight of us, agleam with excitement.

"and where is M.l'Ecuyer?"

"Where's Vigo?" he demanded.

returned. "In time we'll get Lucas too.

"No. M. Etienne, not yet."

"Vigo didn't know what had become

exclaimed, running to draw the holts.

no palatable meal.

anyway."

nom d'un chien!"

Is monsieur back?"

monsieur."

a falter.

had his fair allowance of pride, this

"I will beg his advice at least. For

to meet him and fell on his neck."

convinced.

named me yesterday. It is the same

sieur is not a whipped hound."

I had finished at length, "You little scamp, you have all the he cried. "Think you I like sneaking luck! I never saw such a boy! Well back home again like a whipped hound burst out at me: do they call you Felix! Mordieu, here to his kennel? I lie lapped in bed like a baby, while you go forth knight erranting. I must lie here with old Galen for all company, while you bandy words with the Generalissimo himself! And makefaces at Lucas and kiss the hands of mademoiselle! But I'll stand it no longer. I'm done with lying abed and letting you have all the fun. No; to-

day I shall take part myself." "But monsieur's arm"-"Pshaw, it is well!" he cried. "It is scratch— it is nothing. Pardieu, takes more than that to put a St. Quentin out of the reckoning. To-day is no time for sloth; I must act."

be gone through with. It is only de-"Monsieur" I began, but he not for mademoiselle." broke in on me: "Nom de dieu, Felix, are we to si dle while mademoiselle is carried of how you and I are to carry off madeby that beast Lucas?" "Of course not," I said. "I was only

trying to ask what monsieur meant to "To take the moon in my teeth," he

"Yes, monsieur, but how?" "Ah, if I knew!"

He stared at me as if he would read the answer in my face, but he found at least, monsieur," she answered gent- you, and gave orders you were not to it as blank as the wall. He flung away came back to seize me by the arm. "How are we to do it, Felix?" he demanded.

But I could only shrug my shoulders and answer: "Sais pas." He paced the floor once more and

with questions about Mile. de Mont-Iuc-not only as to every word she presently faced me again with said, but as to every turn of her head and flicker of her eyelids; and he calldeclaration: "Lucas shall have her only over my ed me a dull oaf when I could not answer. But as we entered the Quartier dead body." Marais he fell silent, more Friday-



"Sorry to disturb Monsieur, but the horses must be fed."

up, "I am as well as ever I was. Felix, "He will only have her own dead what has happened to you?" I glanced at the serving maid; M.

I faltered tongue-tied from very rich-

ness of matter. "Mademoiselle?" "Ah, mademoiselle!" I exclaimed. "Mademoiselle is"——I paused in a dearth of words worthy of her.

ing. "Oh, go on, you little slow poke! You saw her? And she said"-He was near to laying hands on me to hurry my tale. "I saw her and Mayenne and Lucas But he shook his head.

and ever so many things," I told him. demoiselle loves you." "She does!" he cried, flushing. "Felix, does she? You cannot know."

"But I do know it," I answered, not very lucidly. "You see, she wouldn't have wept so much just over me." "Did she weep? Lorance?" he ex-

claimed. "They flogged me," I said. "They didn't hurt me much. But she came set down the light. His right hand he down in the night with a candle and held behind his back, while with his left he poked his dagger into the cried over me."

"And what said she? Now I am sorry they beat you. Who did that? Mayenne? What said she, Felix?" "And then," I went on, not heeding swered. "I thought he was the worst his questions in sudden remembrance of the crew. But he let me go. He said of my crowning news, "Mayenne and vous," Lucas answered with a fine Lucas came in. And here is something sneer. "When I drew out my knife to you do not know, monsieur. Lucas is

get the thief from the candle he Paul de Lorraine, Henri de Guise's screamed to wake the dead and took son." "Mille tonnerres du ciel! But he is a Huguenot, a Rochelais!" "Yes, but he is a son of Henri le Balafre. His mother was Rochelaise, "Take him out to the street, d'Auv- I think. He was a spy for Navarre and captured at Ivry. They were going to The tall musketeer, saluting, mo hang him when Mayenne, worse luck, tioned me to precede him. For a mo- recognized him for a nephew. Since ment I hesitated, burning to defend then he has been spying for them, be-

That time is past. The St. Quentins tongue had previously done me, and He stared at me with dropped jaw, lieve that till doomsday—you will—of "He has not got her yet!" I cried. "Mayenne told him he should have her when he had killed St. Quentin. And St. Quentin is alive." "Great God!" said M. Etienne, only

half aloud, dropping down on the arm of his chair, overcome to realise the issue that had hung on a paltry handful of pistoles. Then, recovering him-self a little, he cried:

"But she—mademoiselle?"

"You need give yourself no uneasiness there," I said, "Mademoiselle hates him." "Does she knew"-"I think she wederstands quite well what Lucas is." I made answer, "Mon-

the room at the end of the hall where body," I said, knowing it to be my duty to keep close He turned away abruptly and stood Etienne ordered him at once from the at the window, looking out with un- at hand lest I be wanted, followed. Soon Marcel came flying back to sav Vigo was on his way. M. E.

seeing eyes. "Lorance-Lorance," he "Now tell me quickly," he cried as murmured to himself. I think he did not know he spoke aloud. ing to pump me, and in my lord's pres-"If I could get word to her"-he went on presently. "But I can't send by the shoulders and turned him out. you again. Should I write a letter-

But letters are mischievous. They fall I hate curiosity. "She is, she is!" he agreed, laugh- into the wrong hands, and then where "Monsieur," I suggested, "if I could of a welcome from the contumacious get a letter into the hands of Pierre, Vigo; I read in his eyes a stern deterthat lackey who befriended me"-

mination to set this insolent servant in his place. "They know you about the place. It | The big man entered, saluted, came "And they had me flogged, and ma- were safer to despatch one of these straight over to his young lord's side, inn men-if any had the sense to go no whit hesitating, and said as heartrein in hand. Hang me if I don't think ily as if there had never been a hard

word between them: I'll go myself!" "Monsieur," I said, "Lucas swore stand here than the king himself." by all things sacred that he would never molest you more. Therefore you

face of bafflement. He had been prewill do well to keep out of his way." pared to lash rudeness or sullenness, "My faith, Felix," he laughed, "you to accept, de haut en bas, shamed contake a black view of mankind." "Not of mankind, M. Etienne. Only trition. But this easy cordiality took of Lucas. Not of monsieur or you or

the wind out of his sails. He stared and then flushed, and then laughed. And then he held out his hand, saying "And of Mayenne?" "I don't make out Mayenne," I an-

simply: "Thank you, Vigo." Vigo bent over to kiss it, in cheerful ignorance of how that hand had itched to box his ears. "Think you he meant to let you "What became of you last night, M. from the first?"

Etienne?" he inquired "I was hunting Lucas. When does "Who knows?" I said, shrugging. "Lucas is always lying. But Mayenne monsieur return, Vigo?" -sometimes he lies and sometimes "He thought he might be back tonot. He's base, and then again he's day. But he could not tell. "Have you sent to tell him about kind. You can't make out Mayenne." "He does not mean you shall," M. me?" he asked coloring. Etienne returned. "Yet the key is no "No, I couldn't do that," Vigo said. buried. He is made up, like all the re "You see, it is quite on the cards that

of us, of good and bad." "Monsieur," I said, "if there is any bad in the St. Quentins I, for one, do "Ah, Felix," he cried, "you may be-

he went on:

"I understand that," M. Etlenne said, or two matters not," Vigo pronounced. His face clouded a little and he fell "He will presently turn up here or silent. I knew that besides his send word that he will not return till thoughts of his lady came other the king comes in. But since you are ughts of his father. He sat graveimpatient, M. le Comte, you can go to ly silent. But of last night's bitter dishim at St. Denis. If he can get through tress he showed no trace. Last night the gates you can." "Aye, but I have business in Paris. he had not been able to take his eye from the miserable past, but to-day he I mean to join King Henry, Vigo. saw the future. A future not altogether

There's glory going begging out there at St. Denis. It would like me well to flowery, perhaps, but one which, how-ever it turned out, should not repeat the old mistakes and shames. bear away my share. But"----He proke off, to begin again abrupt-"Felix," he said at length, "I see nothing for it but to eat my pride."

I kept still in the happy hope that I should hear just what I longed to; "Ah, Vigo, that still tongue of yours! You knew then that there was more (Continued on Page 3

if they do."

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