

VICTOR HUGO



HERNANI

ENGLISH / FRENCH

Hernani

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HERNANI.

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HERNANI

PREFACE

The author of this drama wrote the following words some few weeks since, apropos of the premature death of a youthful poet: "At this moment of literary contention and tumult, which are to be pitied, those who die, or those who are in the fight? Doubtless it is a sad thing to see a poet of twenty years go to his long account, a lyre broken, and a future of great promise fade away: but is not the mere repose worth something? May not they be permitted, who are buried beneath the incessant avalanche of slander, insult, hatred, jealousy, underhand intrigue and base treachery: loyal men against whom disloyal war is waged; devoted men, whose only wish is to endow» their country with one more element of true liberty, the liberty of art and of intelligence: laborious men, who peacefully pursue their work of conscience, victims on the one hand of vile machinations of the censorship and the police, and betrayed, too often, on the other hand, by the ingratitude of the very persons in whose interest they are working; may not they, I ask, be permitted now and then to turn their gaze enviously upon those who have fallen behind them, and are sleeping in the tomb?'Invideo,' said Luther in the cemetery at Worms,'invideo, quia quiescunt.' "But after all, what matters it? Young men, let us be of good cheer! However hard the present may be made for us, the future will be glorious. Romanticism, which has been so often erroneously defined, is, upon the whole—and this is the only true definition, if it is viewed simply as an aggressive

quality--~ nothing more nor less than *liberalism* applied to literature. This truth is already pretty generally understood by people of intelligence, and their name is legion; and it will not be long, for the work is already well advanced, before literary liberalism will be no less popular than political liberalism. Liberty in art and liberty in society, such is the double goal toward which all consistent and logical minds should journey side by side; such is the double banner which attracts all the lusty, patient youth of to-day, with the exception of a very few minds, which will be enlightened in time; and with the youth, and at their head, the chosen few of the preceding generation, the wise old men, who, after the first moment of suspicion and inquiry, have come to realize that what their sons do is the result of what themselves have done, and that literary liberty is the daughter of political liberty. This principle is the principle of the age and will prevail. The Ultras of every sort, classical as well as monarchical, will lend their aid to no purpose to restore the old regime in every walk of life, society and literature: every step that the country takes in the path of progress, every development of the popular intellect, every step toward liberty will help to demolish all that they have built up, and their efforts to produce reaction will have been altogether fruitless. In times of revolution every movement must be forward. Truth and liberty have this great advantage, that everything which is done in their behalf, and everything which is done to injure them, is equally serviceable to them. Now, after all the great things that our fathers have done and we have seen, we have put off at last the old social form: why do we not put off the old poetic form? For a new generation, new art. While paying its tribute of admiration to the literature of Louis XIV., so well adapted to his monarchy, the France of today, the France of the nineteenth century, which owes its liberty to Mirabeau, and its glory to Napoleon, ought

certainly to have a literature of its own, individual and national.

The author begs to be forgiven for quoting himself: his words are so little calculated to impress themselves upon the mind, that it is necessary to repeat them frequently. Moreover, it is perhaps not unseasonable to-day to place before the reader the two pages we have transcribed. It is not that this drama can hope to deserve in any respect the enviable name of new art, or new poetry—far from it: but that the principle of liberty in literature has made a step forward; that progress has been made, not in art itself (this drama is too small a matter), but in the education of the public; and that, in this respect at least, a part of the prognostications put forward in the passage quoted have been realized. There was, in truth, much risk in changing one's audience thus abruptly, and in transferring to the stage experiments which had hitherto been practised entirely upon paper, which has to endure everything. The public of printed books is very different from the public of the drama, and there was ground for fear that the second might reject what the first had accepted.

But nothing of the sort occurred. The principle of literary freedom, already understood by the public which reads and thinks, was no less completely adopted by the vast crowd, thirsty for the pure emotion of true art, which fills the theatres of Paris to overflowing every evening. The loud and powerful voice of the people, which resembles the voice of God, has willed that poetry henceforth shall bear the same device that politics now bears:

TOLERANCE AND LIBERTY.

Now let the poet come forth! there is a public for him. And this liberty, as the public would have it, is as it should be, consistent with good order in the state, and with true art in literature. That the old rules of D'Aubignac should

die with the old customs of Cujas is well; that a literature of the people should take the place of a literature of the court is even better; but above all that a foundation of good sense should be found at the bottom of all these novelties. Let the principle of liberty do its appointed work, but let it do it well. In letters, as in society, no etiquette, no anarchy, but law. No red heels, and no red caps.

Such is the desire of the public, and a most judicious desire. For ourselves, in deference to the public, which has received with so much indulgence an undertaking which deserved so little, we give this drama to-day, as it has been put upon the stage. The day will come perhaps to publish it as it was conceived by the author, indicating and discussing the modifications it has been made to undergo. These details of criticism may not be without interest and instructiveness, but they would seem tedious to-day; the liberty of art is conceded, the principal question solved; of what avail is it to tarry to discuss secondary questions? However we will return to the subject some day, and we will also speak in detail, only to overwhelm it with facts and logic, of that censorship of the drama which is the only obstacle to the liberty of the stage, now that there has ceased to be any obstacle in the public. We will try, at our own risk, and from devotion to the interests of art, fitly to characterize this petty inquisition of the mind, which, like the other Holy Office, has its unknown judges, its masked executioners, its tortures and mutilations, and its death penalty. We will tear off, if it can be done, the police swaddling-clothes, in which it is shameful to the last degree that the stage should be swathed in this nineteenth century.

To-day there should be no room for aught but gratitude and thanks. The author of this drama offers his thanks to the public from the bottom of his heart. This work, not of talent, but of conscience and liberty, has been generously defended against many acts of hostility by the public, because the public is always, like himself, conscientious

and free. Thanks be to the public, therefore, as well as to the vigorous youth, who have lent their countenance and good will to the work of a young man, sincere and independent like themselves! It is for them above all that he works, because it would be the acme of glory to win the applause of that chosen band of young men, intelligent, logical, consistent, truly liberal in literature as in politics—a noble generation which does not refuse to open both eyes to the truth, and to receive the light from both sides.

Of his work considered by itself he will not speak. He welcomes the criticisms that have been made upon it, the most severe as well as the most kindly, because one may learn something from them all. He does not dare to flatter himself that everyone at first sight understood this drama, to which the *Romancero General* is the real key. He would be glad to request those persons who may be shocked by his work, to reread *Le Cid*, *Don Sanche*, *Nicomede*, or rather all of *Corneille*, and all of *Molière*, those great and marvelous poets. Such reading, if they will be good enough, first of all, to make allowances for the immeasurable inferiority of the author of *Hernani*, may lead them to be less severe as to certain matters in the form or substance of this drama, which perhaps have wounded them. In short, it may be that the moment has not yet arrived to pass judgment upon it. *Hernani* is simply the first stone of an edifice which exists completely built in the author's head, but nothing less than a view of the whole structure can give any merit to this drama. Perhaps, someday a favorable opinion will be held of the whim which has seized him to emulate the architect of Bourges, and furnish his Gothic cathedral with a door almost Moorish in style.

Meanwhile he is well aware that what he has done is of little account. May time and strength not fail him to finish his work! It will be of no value unless it is finished. He is not one of those favored poets who can die, or interrupt their work before it is done, without danger to their

memory; nor is he of those who remain great, even without bringing their work to completion, fortunate mortals, of whom one might say as Virgil said of half-built Carthage:

Pendent opera interrupta minaeque Murorum ingentes
MARCH 9, 1830. i

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERNANI

DON CARLOS

DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA

DONNA SOL DE SILVA

DUKE OF BAVARIA

DUKE OF GOTHA

DUKE OF LUTZELBOURG

DON SANCHO

DON MATIAS

DON RICARDO

DON GARCI SUAREZ

DON FRANCISCO

DON JUAN DE HARO

DON GIL TELLEZ GIRON

FIRST CONSPIRATOR

A MOUNTAINEER

IAQUEZ

DONNA JOSEFA DUARTE

A LADY Conspirators of the Holy League, Germans and Spaniards Mountaineers, Lords, Soldiers, Pages, Populace, etc.

Scene-Spain.

Time—1519

ACT FIRST. THE KING

SARAGOSSA A bedchamber. Night. A lamp upon a table.

SCENE I

DONNA JOSEFA DUARTE. An elderly female, dressed in black, the skirt of her dress stitched with jet, after the style of Isabella, the Catholic: afterward DON CARLOS.

DONNA JOSEFA.

(She closes the crimson curtains at the window and arranges the chairs. A knock is heard upon a small masked door at the right. She listens. The knocking is repeated.)

Can it be he already?

(Renewed knocking.)

Surely't is from the secret staircase.

(A fourth blow.)

I must open quickly.

(She opens the masked door. Enters Don Carlos, with his cloak pulled up to his nose and his hat over his eyes.)

Good even, sir knight.

(She admits him. He throws aside his cloak, disclosing a rich costume of silk and velvet, of the cut affected by Castilian noblemen in 1519. She looks into his face and recoils in dismay.)

What!'t is not you, Senor Hernani!

Help! Fire!

DON CARLOS (seizing her Say two words more and you're a dead duenna!

(He fixes a stern glance upon her, and she obeys in terror.)

Is this the domicile of Donna Sol, the promised wife of the old Duke of Pastrafra, her uncle, a worthy fellow, albeit bald and venerable and jealous?'T is said the fair one loves a youth, beardless and mustacheless, and beards the gossips by receiving her young beardless lover every evening, to her old lover's beard. Say, am I well informed?

(She makes no reply. He shakes her by the arm.)

Will you reply, perchance?

DONNA JOSEFA.

You bade me not to say two words, my master.

DON CARLOS.

And so I ask but one. Yes. No. Is thy good lady Donna Sol de Silva?

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes. Why?

DON CARLOS.

Oh! for no reason. The duke, her old lover, is absent at this moment?

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

And doubtless she awaits the coming of her young spark?

DONNA IOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Damnation!

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Will they meet here?

DONNA JOSEFA Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Hide me somewhere.

DONNA JOSEFA.

You!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, me.

DONNA JOSEFA.

What for?

DON CARLOS.

Oh! for no reason.

DONNA JOSEFA.

I, hide you!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, in this room.

DONNA JOSEFA.

Never!

DON CARLOS (taking from his belt a dagger and a purse).

I pray you, madame, deign to make your choice between this dagger and this purse;

DONNA JOSEFA (taking the purse).

Are you the devil?

DON CARLOS.

Even so, duenna.

DONNA JOSEFA (opening a small closet in the wall).

Go you in here.

DON CARLOS (examining the closet).

This box?

DONNA JOSEFA (closing the door again).

Go elsewhere, if you're not content.

DON CARLOS (reopening the closet).

Indeed?

(Examining it more closely.)

Is this the stable where you keep the broomstick that you ride at night?

(He squeezes himself into it with much ado.)

Ouf!

DONNA JOSEFA (clasping her hands as if scandalized).

A man in this room!

DON CARLOS (inside the closet, the door still open). Is he for whom your mistress waits, a woman?

DONNA JOSEFA.

O Heaven! I hear a step, 't is Donna Sol! My lord, pray close the door.

(She pushes against the closet door, and closes it.)

DON CARLOS.

One word, duenna, and your life pays the forfeit.

DONNA JOSEFA (alone).

Who is this man? God help me! Suppose I call for help? But whom? Saving my lady and myself there's not a soul awake in the whole palace. But never mind; the other one will come. It's his affair. He has his trusty sword, and Heaven keep us all from hell!

(She weighs the purse.)

He's not a robber, when all's said and done.

(Donna Sol enters, dressed in white. Donna Iosefa conceals the purse.)

SCENE II

DONNA IOSEFA, DONNA SOL, DON CARLOS, in the closet: afterward HERNANI.

DONNA SOL.

Josefa.

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes, my lady.

DONNA SOL.

Ah me! I fear that something is amiss. Hernani should be here ere this.

(Footsteps are heard outside the small masked door.)

He's coming up the stairs. Open before he knocks; be quick.

(Iosefa opens the door. Hernani enters. Ample cloak, broad-brimmed hat. Beneath the cloak, an Aragonese

mountaineer's costume, of gray, with a leather cuirass, a sword, a dagger, and a horn at his belt.)

DONNA SOL (running to meet him).

Hernani!

HERNANI.

Donna Sol! Ah! Do my eyes at last behold you? and my ears at last hear your dear voice? Why has fate placed our paths in life so far asunder? I have such sore need of you to help me to forget.

DONNA SOL.

Merciful God! your cloak is dripping wet E Pray does't it rain?

HERNANI.

I cannot say.

DONNA SOL.

You must be cold.

HERNANI.

'T is nothing!

DONNA SOL.

I beg you lay aside your cloak.

HERNANI.

Donna Sol, my own Donna Sol, when you lie sleeping, in your innocence and purity, a calm and happy sleep, which parts your lips and with soft fingers closes your dear eyes, does not an angel come to you and say how sweet you are to the poor wretch whom all the world abandons and casts out?

DONNA SOL.

You're very late, my lord. But tell me, pray, if you're not cold.

HERNANI.

Cold! by thy side I burn! Ah me! when jealous love is boiling in our brains, when a fierce tempest rages in our bursting hearts, what care we for the rain and lightning from a paltry passing cloud?

DONNA SOL (removing his cloak).

Go to! give me the cloak, —and the sword with it.

HERNANI (placing his hand upon the sword).

No, 't is my other friend, faithful and innocent. Pray, Donna Sol, is the old duke from home,—your uncle and your future husband?

DONNA SOL.

Yes, this hour is our own.

HERNANI.

This hour! nothing more. For us, only one swiftly flying hour! And after that, what matters what may come? one must forget, or die. Angel! an hour with you! one hour, God save the mark! for him who fain would pass his life with you, and then eternity!

DONNA SOL.

Hernani!

HERNANI (bitterly).

How fortunate am I that the duke's not at home! How like a trembling thief who forces in the door, I skurry in, and feast my eyes on you, and steal from your old lover an hour of your songs and your soft glances; and I am very fortunate, and doubtless he'll begrudge me e'en the hour I steal from him, and take my life to pay for't.

DONNA SOL.

Be calm.

(She passes the cloak to the duenna.)

Josefa, take this cloak, and see that it is dried.

(Exit Iosefa.)

(Donna Sol sits down, and motions to Hernani to come to her.)

Come, sit you here.

HERNANI (who does not hear her).

And so the duke is absent from the castle

DONNA SOL (smiling).

How tall you are!

HERNANI.

He is not here.

DONNA SOL.

Dear heart, let's think no more about the duke.

HERNANI.

Nay, rather let us think of him, my lady! The dotard! he loves you, and is to marry you! Did he not take a kiss from you the other day? Not think of him, indeed!

DONNA SOL (laughing).

Is that the cause of your despair? An uncle's kiss! and on the brow! a kiss a father might have given!

HERNANI.

Not so. A lover's kiss, a husband's and a jealous husband's. Ah! you'll be his, my lady! Think of it! O driveling dotard! who, when his head is bowed with age, must have a woman by his side to finish out his journey, and chooses, tottering spectre that he is, a fair young girl! O driveling dotard! While with one hand he keeps fast hold of yours, does he not see that death is marrying the other? He thrusts himself between our hearts without a tremor! Old man! go give thy measure to the gravedigger. Who made this marriage? 'T is forced on you, I trust.

DONNA SOL.

'T is said that the king wishes it.

HERNANI.

The king! the king! my father died upon the scaffold, condemned to death by his. Now, notwithstanding that that deed was done long years ago, my hatred for the ghost of the late king, and for his son, his widow, all his kin, is ever fresh and new. He's dead himself, so he's of no account. When a mere child, I swore to avenge my father on his son. I've sought thee everywhere, Don Carlos, King of the Castiles, for there's a deadly feud betwixt our families. Our fathers fought for thirty years, without remorse or pity. 'T is true they both are dead, but they have died in vain; their hate survives them. Peace has not come to them; their sons are living, and the old feud goes on. Ah! so't is thou who didst contrive these execrable nuptials! So much the better.

Long have I sought for thee, and lo! thou standest in my path!

DONNA SOL.

You terrify me.

HERNANI.

Burdened with a mission of anathema, I needs must terrify myself at last. Listen. This man, whose destined bride you are, your uncle, Ruy de Silva, is Duke of Pastrafia, a wealthy citizen of Aragon, and count and grandee of Castile. He can, O maiden, in default of youth, bring you such heaps of gold and jewelry and precious stones, that your fair brow will glisten among royal brows, and in respect of rank, pride, wealth and glory, it well may be that many a queen will envy his young duchess. Such is your destined husband. But I am poor, and in my infancy had but the woods to which I fled barefooted. Perchance I too once had an honorable scutcheon now stained with bloody rust; perchance I too have rights, now lost in darkness, and hidden 'neath the folds of a black gallows-cloth, but which, if my fond expectation be fulfilled, may one day issue from this scabbard with my sword. Till that day come I have received from jealous heaven naught but air, light and water, the dowry which she gives to all alike. The time has come to rid you of the duke or of myself. Choose 'twixt us two, to marry him, or go with me.

DONNA SOL I'll go with you.

HERNANI. Among my rough companions? Outlaws, Whose names the hangman knows by instinct, fellows whose swords and hearts are never dulled, for all alike have to avenge some deed of blood, which spurs them on? You'll come, and, as they say, command my band? For know you not that I'm a bandit? When every man throughout all Spain was on my track, and I was wandering alone among her forests and her lofty mountains, scaling those peaks where one is all unseen save by the soaring eagle, old Catalonia, like a mother, took me to her heart. Among her

mountaineers, free, poor and brave, I grew to manhood, and should I blow a blast upon this horn tomorrow in their mountain home, three thousand of her gallant sons would come to me. You shudder. Think well on what I say. To roam with me through forests, over mountains, and where the waves roll in upon the strand, to live 'mongst men whose like you never see save as the demons of your dreams, to look on all around you with suspicion, eyes, voices, footsteps, or the slightest sound — to sleep upon the grass, drink from the rushing mountain stream, and hear at night, while holding at your breast a crying child, musket balls whistling by your ears. To be with me a wanderer and outlaw, and if need be to follow me where I shall follow him I called my father—to death upon the gallows.

DONNA SOL.

I'll go with you.

HERNANI.

The duke is rich and great and prosperous. The duke has not to clear away a stain from his old father's name. The duke can do what pleases him. The duke together with his hand can give you titles, wealth and happiness.

DONNA SOL.

We will go hence to-morrow. Hernani, do not, I beseech you, make of my forwardness a subject of reproach. Are you my good or evil angel? That I know not, but I know that I'm your slave. Listen. Go where you will, there I will go. There tarry, or resume your wandering, still I am yours. Why do I so? I cannot say. I need to see you, and to see you once again, and see you always. Whene'er, at parting, the music of your footsteps dies away, me seems my heart has ceased to beat: I miss you so, and am no more myself: but when the step I long to hear, the step I love, strikes on my ear, then I remember that I live, and feel my heart within my breast once more.

HERNANI (pressing her to his heart).

Angel!

DONNA SOL.

To-morrow then, at midnight. Come with your escort underneath my window. Now go; I will be brave and strong. Knock thrice upon the door.

HERNANI.

But know you who I am?

DONNA SOL.

My lord, what matters it? I go with you.

HERNANI.

No, since you choose, a helpless girl, to share my lot, 't is meet that you should know what name, what rank, what nature and what destiny are hidden in the mountaineer Hernani. You could abide a brigand, but an exile?

DON CARLOS (noisily throws open the closet door).

Pray when will you have done with your philandering? You think, mayhap, that I am comfortable in this closet? (Hernani steps back in amazement. Donna Sol-shrieks and takes refuge in his arms, gazing with startled eyes at Don Carlos.)

HERNANI (with his hand upon his sword).

Who is this man?

DONNA SOL.

O Heaven! Help!

HERNANI.

Be quiet, Donna Sol! you will awaken jealous eyes. When I am by your side, whatever may betide, I pray you seek no other aid than mine.

(To Don Carlos.)

What were you doing here?

DON CARLOS.

I? Why, it's very clear I was not riding through the forest.

HERNANI.

Who jokes after an insult given is in a way to give his heir cause for rejoicing.

DON CARLOS.

To each his turn! Senior, let us speak openly. You love madame and her black eyes, and come to see your own reflected in them every evening. Very good. I also love madame, and wish to know the man whom I have seen so often enter by the window, while I was left outside the door.

HERNANI.

In all respect, my lord, I'll see to it that you go out the way I entered.

DON CARLOS.

Of that anon. I hereby tender to madame my love. Let us divide the prize. What say you? In her pure heart I've seen such store of love and gentleness and tender sentiment, that surely she must have enough of all of these to satisfy two lovers. This evening, wishing to bring my undertaking to an end, I gained an entrance here by stratagem, taken, I think, for you; I hid myself, and, to be frank with you, I listened. But I heard very ill, and suffocated to perfection: I found, besides, that I was crumpling up my frills like any Frenchman; and so, i' faith, I thought best to come out.

HERNANI.

My dagger also is not comfortable, and thinks best to come out.

DON CARLOS (saluting him).

That shall be as you please, senior.

HERNANI (drawing his sword).

On guard!

(Don Carlos draws his sword.)

DONNA SOL (rushing between them).

Hernani! God in heaven!

DON CARLOS.

Be calm, seniora.

HERNANI (to Don Carlos).

Tell me your name.

DON CARLOS.

Eh? do you tell me yours!

HERNANI.

I keep the secret, a fatal secret, for another, who will someday, my knee upon his breast, hear my name ringing in his ear, and feel my dagger at his heart!

DON CARLOS.

What is that other's name?

HERNANI.

What is't to thee? On guard! defend thyself!

(Their swords meet. Donna Sol sinks tremblingly upon a chair. Someone knocks at the door.)

DONNA SOL (rising again in terror).

O Heaven! there's someone at the door!

(The combatants withdraw their swords. Josefa enters by the little door, much alarmed.)

HERNANI (to Josefa).

Who knocks?

DONNA JOSEFA (to Donna Sol).

An unexpected blow, my lady! 'T is the duke returning!

DONNA SOL (clasping her hands).

The duke! then all is lost! unhappy woman that I am!

DONNA JOSEFA (looking about).

Jesus! the stranger! and drawn swords! They're fighting. Fine doings these!

(The two combatants sheathe their swords. Don Carlos wraps himself in his cloak and pulls his hat over his eyes. The knocking continues.)

HERNANI.

What's to be done?

(Renewed knocking.)

A VOICE (outside).

Open, Donna Sol!

(Donna Josefa takes a step toward the door. Hernani stops her.)

HERNANI.

Nay, do not open.

DONNA JOSEFA (producing her Blessed Saint James! O help us to come safely out of this!

(Renewed knocking.)

HERNANI (to Don Carlos, pointing to the closet).

Let us hide.

DON CARLOS.

Where? In the closet?

HERNANI.

Go you in. I'll answer for it, that't will hold us both.

DON CARLOS.

A thousand thanks, it's much too wide.

HERNANI (pointing to the masked door).

Let us escape that way.

DON CARLOS.

Good-evening. For my own part, I remain.

HERNANI.

Body and blood! senor, for this you'll answer to me!

(To Donna Sol.)

Shall I not barricade the door?

DON CARLOS (to Josefa). Open the door.

HERNANI.

What does he say?

DON CARLOS (to Josefa, speechless with terror).

Open, I say!

(The knocking is incessant. Donna Josefa goes tremblingly to the door, and opens it.)

DONNA SOL.

I am a dead woman!

SCENE III

THE SAME: DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA, white hair and beard, and dressed in black. Servants with torches.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Men in my niece's chamber at this time of night! Come hither all! this is well worth a little light and noise.

(To Donna Sol.)

By St. John of Avila, I do believe, upon my soul, that here are three of us in your apartments! 'T is two too many, madame.

(To the young men.)

My gallant knights, what do you here? When we had Bernard and the Cid, those giants, not of Spain alone, but of the world, went through Castile, honoring old men, and protecting maidens. They were strong men, and found their mighty blade and shield less burdensome than you your velvet doublets.

Those men showed due respect to hoary beards, evinced their love by kneeling at the altar, were false to none, and all because the honor of their families was in their keeping. If one of them would have a wife, he chose some maid of spotless purity, and took her to himself in broad daylight, in sight of all men, with sword or lance or battle-axe in hand. As to those reptiles, who, with furtive glance, trusting to darkness to conceal their execrable schemes, purloin the honor of a wife behind her husband's back, I warrant that the Cid, the ancestor we all are proud to own, would have esteemed them viler than the dust, and that he would have brought them to their knees, and buffeted their scutcheons with the flat of his sword blade, and thus despoiled them of their false nobility! Thus would the men of old, I grieve to think, have dealt with the base churls we have with us to-day. Why are you here? To say that I am naught but an old man, fit to be made the butt of youthful gallants? You think to turn me into ridicule, to laugh at me, the soldier of Zamora? And when I pass, with my gray head, you'd have the people laugh at me? At least't will not be you who laugh!

HERNANI.

My lord . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Silence! How now! You have the sword, the dagger and the lance, you have your hunting-parties, and your hounds and falcons, your banquets and your serenades beneath your fair one's balcony, —plumes in your hats, and silken doublets, balls, tournaments, and youth and joy, and yet, like little children, you tire of them all. At any price, you needs must have a plaything that is new. You take an old, old man. 'Ah! you have broken your new toy! but God grant that the fragments may fly back into your faces! Follow me!

HERNANI.

My lord duke . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Follow me! I bid you follow me! Seniors, think you that this is all in joke? Good lack! my house contains a priceless treasure. That treasure is the honor of a maid, a wife, the honor of a whole family; I love the maid, she is my niece, and soon is to exchange the ring upon her finger for a wedding ring; I deem her chaste and pure, and sacred in the eyes of every man. I go abroad but for an hour, I, Ruy Gomez de Silva, and lo! in that brief space a pilferer of honor glides beneath my roof! Avaunt! go, lave your hands, ye soulless men, for with your lightest touch you soil our wives. But no. 'T is well. Go on. Have I aught else?

(He tears off his necklet.)

See, trample upon this, trample upon my Golden Fleece!

(He throws down his hat.)

Tear out my hair, and make it a vile thing! and then tomorrow you can boast throughout the city that lecherous villains in their insolent mockery did never outrage whiter hairs upon a nobler brow!

DONNA SOL.

My lord . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ (to his servants).

Ho! squires! squires! to the rescue! my axe, my dagger, my Toledo blade!

(To the young men.)

And do you follow me.

DON CARLOS (stepping forward).

Duke, there are matters of more moment to be first considered. I mean the death of Maximilian, Emperor of Germany.

(He throws aside his cloak and removes his hat from his face.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Do you make sport of me? Great God! the King!

DONNA SOL.

The King!

HERNANI (with kindling eyes).

The King of Spain!

DON CARLOS (with great gravity).

Yes, Carlos. In God's name, my lord duke, are you mad? My grandfather, the Emperor, is dead. I knew it not until this evening.

Hither I came in person, in hot haste, to tell the news to thee, my trusty, well-beloved subject, and seek thy counsel. I came incog., and under cover of the darkness, a very simple matter after all to have caused all this uproar.

(Don Ruy Gomez dismisses his people with a wave of the hand. He approaches Don Carlos, while Donna Sol eyes him with mingled wonder and alarm, and Hernani, from a corner of the stage, gazes at him with glistening eyes.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But why so much delay in opening the door?

DON CARLOS.

Reason enough! thou didst return with a large escort! When a state secret leads me to thy palace, my lord duke, think'st thou I come to tell it to thy whole staff of servants?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your Highness, I beseech you, pardon me!

Appearances . . .

DON CARLOS.