

VICTOR HUGO



# RUY BLAS

ENGLISH / FRENCH

# Ruy Blas

VICTOR HUGO

*Ruy Blas, V. Hugo  
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck  
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9  
Deutschland*

*ISBN: 9783849651084*

*English translation by George Burnham Ives (1856 -  
1930)*

*Cover Design: based on an artwork by Ablakok - Own  
work, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?  
curid=41579854](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=41579854)*

*[www.jazzybee-verlag.de](http://www.jazzybee-verlag.de)  
[admin@jazzybee-verlag.de](mailto:admin@jazzybee-verlag.de)*

## **CONTENTS:**

### RUY BLAS

#### PREFACE

#### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

#### ACT FIRST. DON SALLUSTE

#### ACT SECOND. THE QUEEN OF SPAIN

#### ACT THIRD. RUY BLAS

#### ACT FOURTH. DON CESAR

#### ACT FIFTH. THE TIGER AND THE LION

#### NOTE

### RUY BLAS

#### PERSONNAGES.

#### ACTE PREMIER.

#### ACTE II. LA REINE D'ESPAGNE

#### ACTE III. RUY BLAS

#### ACTE IV. DON CÉSAR

#### ACTE V. LE TIGRE ET LE LION

# **Ruy Blas**

## **PREFACE**

Three classes of spectators make up what is by common consent called the public; in the first place, the women; secondly, the thinkers; thirdly, the multitude, properly so-called.

What the multitude demands almost exclusively in a dramatic work, is action; what the women desire before everything else is passion; what the thinkers more especially seek is delineation of character. If these three classes of spectators be attentively studied it will be noticed that the multitude is so intent upon the action that at need it makes very light of characters and passions. The women, who are also interested in the action, are so absorbed by the development of the passions, that they give little thought to the conception of the characters. As for the thinkers, they are so intent upon the characters, that is to say the men and women living upon the stage, that while they welcome the developments of passion as a natural part of the dramatic work, they may almost be said to be annoyed by the action. In other words, what the multitude demands most of all at the theatre is excitement, the women emotion, the thinkers food for thought. All are equally in search of pleasure, but with the first it is pleasure of the eyes, with the second pleasure of the heart, with the third pleasure of the mind. Thus it is that we find three distinct varieties of play upon our stage; the one vulgar and inferior, the other two noble and superior, but each of which supplies a want; melodrama for the

multitude; for the women, tragedy, wherein the passions are analyzed; for the thinkers, comedy, wherein mankind is depicted.

Let us say in passing that we do not undertake to lay down any rigorous rule, and we beg the reader to import for himself into our thought such restrictions as it should contain.

General rules always admit exceptions; we know full well that the multitude is a vast body wherein is found instinctive love of the beautiful as well as liking for the commonplace, and longing for the ideal as well as thirst for what is vulgar; we know also that every perfect thinker is a woman to all intent, so far as the delicate perceptions of the heart are concerned; and we are well aware that, by virtue of that mysterious law which unites the sexes in mind as well as in body, it very often happens that a woman is a thinker, pure and simple. Having said thus much, and having once more begged the reader not to take too literally the few words we have still to say, we resume.

Every man, who seriously considers the three classes of spectators we have mentioned, must be convinced that all three are right in a certain sense. The women are right to desire to be moved, the thinkers are right to desire to be instructed, the multitude does no wrong in desiring to be amused. From this fact is deduced the law of the drama. In fact, the whole purpose of the drama may be stated thus: beyond the barrier of fire which is called the footlights, and which separates the real from the ideal world, to create and present upon the stage, under artistic and natural conditions combined, the characters, that is to say, and we repeat it, real men and women; to inspire these characters, these men, with passions, which develop the one and modify the other; and finally, from the contact of these characters and passions with the great laws of the universe, to evolve human life, that is to say the mass of events, great and trifling, painful, comic, terrible, which

afford the heart that pleasure which is called interest, and the mind a lesson in moral philosophy.

Thus we see that the drama is related to tragedy in that it depicts passion, and to comedy in its delineation of character. The drama is the third great form of the art, including, linking together and fertilizing the other two. Corneille and Moliere would exist independently of each other, did not Shakespeare stand between them giving his left hand to Corneille and his right to Moliere.

In this way the two opposite poles, comedy and tragedy, are brought in contact, and the resulting spark is the drama.

In explaining the principles, the law and the aim of the drama, as he understands them, and as he has already explained them several times, the author is very far from desiring to conceal the meagerness of his powers, and the paucity of his intellect. He is defining, —let there be no misunderstanding—not what he has done, but what he has endeavored to do.

He is indicating his point of departure. Nothing more than that.

We have but a few lines to write at the head of this book, and we lack space for the necessary elaboration of our thought. We beg leave therefore to pass, without dwelling upon the transition, from the general ideas we have expressed, and which in our opinion govern the whole art, all the conditions of the ideal being maintained intact, from these general ideas we beg leave to pass to the consideration of some of the special ideas which this drama, *Ruy Blas*, may give birth to in interested minds.

And first of all, to take but one phase of the question, what is the meaning of this drama from the standpoint of the philosophy of history? Let us explain.

At the moment when a monarchy is tottering to its fall, several phenomena may be observed. In the first place the

nobility exhibits a tendency to dissolution. In dissolving it becomes divided, and this is how it comes about.

The kingdom is tottering, the dynasty is dying out, the law is falling to pieces; political unity is crumbling under the incessant attacks of intrigue, society in its highest strata is rapidly degenerating; a deathly weakness is felt everywhere, without and within. The great pillars of the state have fallen, the smaller ones only are still standing, a melancholy spectacle: no police, no army, no funds; everyone feels that the end is at hand.

Thence it comes to pass that every mind is filled with loathing of yesterday and dread of the morrow, every man is an object of suspicion, and profound discouragement and disgust are universal. As the disease of the state is in the head, the nobility, which occupies a position near the head, is first attacked.

What then becomes of it? A part of the nobles, the least honorable and high-minded, remains at court. Everything is soon to be swallowed up, time presses, they must make haste, they must take advantage of the opportunity and fatten and enrich themselves. Each thinks of himself and himself alone. Each one, without pity for his country, builds up for himself a little private fortune out of some fragment of the great public misfortune. If one is a courtier, or a minister, he makes all haste to become happy and powerful. If he has intellect, he becomes depraved and prospers. Orders, dignities, offices, money, they covet everything, seize everything, rifle everything. Ambition and greed are henceforth the mainsprings of all life. All the secret disorders which human weakness may engender are hidden under a grave demeanor. And as the first requisite of this life given over to the indulgence of vanity is forgetfulness of all natural sentiments, men become ferocious.

When the day of disgrace arrives, something monstrous develops in the fallen courtier, and the man is transformed into a demon.



The desperate condition of the state drives the other fraction of the nobility, the most honorable and the most nobly born, into a different path. They return to their own domains, to their palaces, their castles, their seigneuries. They have a horror of all business affairs, they can do nothing, and the end of the world is approaching. What is there for them to do, and why should they give way to despair? The only thing to do is to drive dull care away, to close their eyes, to drink and love and live, and enjoy life while they may.

Who can say that they have so much as another year before them? That said, or even felt simply, the nobleman begins to live at high pressure, increases his establishment, buys horses, pours out money upon women, gives magnificent parties, squanders his substance in midnight orgies, gives, throws away, sells, buys, pledges, devours, puts himself in the clutches of usurers and sets fire to the four corners of his property. Some fine morning disaster overtakes him. Although the monarchy is rushing down the incline at a great pace he has succeeded in ruining himself first. Everything is consumed and the end has come. Of all that splendid exuberant life, not even the smoke remains: it has blown away. A pile of ashes, nothing more. Forgotten and abandoned by everybody except his creditors, the impoverished nobleman becomes what he can, part adventurer, part fighting man, part Bohemian. He plunges into the crowd, a huge black mass which hitherto he has seen only from a distance, far beneath his feet. He plunges in, seeks shelter there, and disappears. He has no money, but he still has the sunlight, the treasure of all those who have nothing. At first he dwelt in the upper circles of society, now his quarters are well down toward the foot, but he adapts himself to his new surroundings. He laughs at his ambitious kinsman who is rich and powerful: he becomes a philosopher, and compares courtiers with robbers. A kindly, brave, loyal and intelligent nature: a mixture of the poet,

the beggar and the prince: laughing at everything: to-day inciting his comrades to pummel the watch, as in the old days he ordered his servants to do it, but taking no part in it himself: exhibiting in his manners a not unattractive combination of the impudence of the marquis with the effrontery of the gipsy; soiled without, but sound within; and with nothing left of the nobleman save his honor, which he keeps intact, his name which he hides, and his sword which he shows.

If the twofold picture we have sketched is presented at some period in the history of all monarchies, it was presented in a particularly striking manner in Spain at the close of the seventeenth century. And if the author had succeeded, which he is far from claiming to have done, in carrying out this branch of his thought, the first portion of the Spanish nobility at that epoch would be represented in Don Salluste, the second in Don César: cousins, as it is fitting they should be.

Here, as everywhere, in this rough sketch of the Castilian nobility about 1695, it is to be understood of course that there were exceptions, rare, but noteworthy. We resume.

In scrutinizing this monarchy and this period, below the nobility, thus divided, and which maybe deemed to be personified to a certain extent in the two men we have named, we shall see something moving in the shadow, a vast dark mass of unfamiliar appearance. It is the people. The people, who have a future, but have no present; the people, orphaned, poverty-stricken, but intelligent and mighty; placed very low in the social scale, but with very lofty aspirations; bearing the brand of servitude upon their backs, and the presentiment of genius in their hearts; the people, lackeys to the great nobles, and, in their abject poverty, enamored of the only form which, amid the crumbling social fabric, stands out in a blaze of divine light, representing to them authority, charity and fertility. Ruy Blas would stand for the people.

Now, above these three men, who from this point of view, would present to the eyes of the spectator three facts, and in these three facts an epitome of the Spanish monarchy in the seventeenth century; above these three men, we say, there is a pure, luminous creature, a woman, a queen. Unhappy as woman, because it is as if she had no husband; unhappy as queen, for it is as if she had no king; inclining toward those beneath her because of her royal compassion, and of her womanly instinct also it may be, and looking down while Ruy Blas, the people, looks up.

In the eyes of the author, without considering what the subordinate characters may add to the authenticity of the work as a whole, these four heads thus grouped would summarize all the most striking principles deducible by the philosophical historian from the condition of the Spanish monarchy a hundred and forty years ago. To these four it would seem that a fifth might be added, King Charles II. But in history, as in the drama, Charles II. is not a figure, but a shade.

We hasten to say that what has gone before is not an explanation of Ruy Blas. It is simply a view of it in one aspect. It is a suggestion of the special impression the drama might leave, if it were worth the labor of studying, upon the serious and conscientious mind which should examine it from the standpoint of the philosophical historian, for example.

But this drama, though it be of the most trifling value, has many other aspects, like everything in this world, and may be looked at in many other ways. One may take several different views of an idea as well as of a mountain: everything depends upon the point from which the view is taken. We ask pardon for venturing upon a far too ambitious comparison, simply to make our meaning clear; Mont Blanc as seen from the Croix-de-Fléchères does not resemble Mont Blanc as seen from Sallenches, but it is still Mont Blanc.

In like manner, to descend from a very great to a very small subject, this drama, of which we have suggested the historical aim, would present a very different appearance, if it were considered from a much loftier point of view, namely that of its purely human interest. In that aspect Don Salluste would represent absolute selfishness, anxiety without repose! Don César, his opposite, would represent unselfishness and recklessness; in Ruy Blas would be seen genius and passion kept down by society, and rising the higher the more violent the restraint; and lastly, the queen would personify virtue, undermined by ennui.

From a purely literary standpoint, the aspect of this thought, such as it is, entitled Ruy Blas, would change once more. The three sovereign phases of the art would then appear therein, personified and epitomized; the drama in Don Salluste, comedy in Don César, tragedy in Ruy Blas. The drama ties the knot of the plot, the comedy tangles it, the tragedy cuts it.

All these various aspects are exact and true, but no one of them is complete in itself.

Absolute verity is to be found only in the work as a whole. Let each one find therein what he seeks, and the poet, who does not flatter himself that such will be the case, will have attained his end. The philosophical subject of Ray Blas is the aspiration of the people to things above them; the human subject is a man who loves a woman; the dramatic subject is a lackey who loves a queen. The multitude which throngs night after night to witness this work, —for in France public interest never fails to respond to sincere efforts of the intellect, whatever may be their other qualities—the multitude, we say, sees in Ray Blas only the last, the dramatic subject, the lackey, and it is right.

What we have said of Ruy Blas seems to us to apply to every other work. The great works of the masters of the art are remarkable in this, that they present more aspects in which they may be studied, than do other inferior works.

Tartuffe makes this one laugh and that one tremble. Tartuffe is the domestic serpent, or he is the hypocrite, or he is hypocrisy personified. Sometimes he is a man, sometimes he is an idea. Othello, to some people, is a black man who loves a white woman; to others, an upstart married to a patrician; to this one, he is a jealous husband, to that one he is jealousy personified. Nor does this diversity of aspects detract in any respect from the fundamental unity of the composition.

As we have said elsewhere, a thousand branches go with a single trunk.

If the author of this drama has insisted particularly upon the historical signification of Ruy Blas, it is for the reason that to his mind, in its historical aspect, and, it is fair to say, in its historical aspect only, Ruy Blas is related to Hernani. The great fact of nobility appears in Hernani as in Ruy Blas, beside the other great fact of royalty. The distinction lies in this: in Hernani royalty has not yet achieved absolute power, the nobility is still struggling against the king, here with pride, there with the sword; half feudatory, half rebellious. In 1519 the nobleman lived far from the court among the mountains, a bandit like Hernani, or a patriarch like Ruy Gomez. Two hundred years later all is changed. The vassals have become courtiers; and if perchance the nobleman still feels called upon to conceal his real name, it is not to evade the king, but to evade his creditors. He does not become a bandit, but a Bohemian. We feel that the absolute power of royalty has passed over these noble heads during the long years that have elapsed, bending this one, crushing the other.

Finally, if we may be allowed a word more, between Hernani and Ruy Blas lie two centuries; two great centuries, during which it was given to the descendants of Charles V. to rule the world; two centuries, which Providence, strangely enough, chose not to extend by a single year, for Charles V. was born in 1500, and Charles II.

died in 1700. In 1700 Louis XIV. inherited from Charles V., as in 1800, Napoleon inherited from Louis XIV.

The rise and fall of these magnificent dynasties which from time to time cast a bright light upon the page of history are to the author a superb, but melancholy spectacle, upon which his eyes are often fixed. He endeavors sometimes to embody some reflection of it in his works. Thus he aimed to fill *Hernani* with the glory of dawn, and to envelop *Ruy Blas* in the shadows of twilight. In *Hernani* the sun of the House of Austria is rising above the horizon; in *Ruy Blas* it is setting.

Paris, 25th NOVEMBER, 1838.

## **DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

RUY BLAS  
DON SALLUSTE DE BAZAN  
DON CESAR DE BAZAN  
DON GURITAN COUNT OF CAMPOREAL  
MARQUIS OF SANTA CRUZ  
MARQUIS OF BASTO  
COUNT OF ALVA  
MARQUIS OF PRIEGO  
DON MANUEL ARIAS  
MONTAZGO  
DON ANTONIO UBILLA  
COVADENGA  
GUDIEL  
A LACKEY  
AN USHER  
AN ALCALDE  
AN ALGUAZIL A PAGE  
DONNA MARIA DE NEUBOURG, QUEEN of SPAIN  
DUCHESS OF ALBUQUERQUE  
CASILDA  
A DUENNA

Lords, Ladies, Privy Councilors, Pages, Duennas,  
Alguazils, Guards, Gentlemen of the Chamber and Ushers.

Madrid, 169 . . .

## **ACT FIRST. DON SALLUSTE**

The Salon of Danaé in the royal palace at Madrid. Magnificent furnishings in the semi-Flemish style of the time of Philip IV. At the left a large window with gilded sashes and small panes. On each side a low door leading into some inner apartment. At the back of the stage, a glass partition with gilded sashwork, with a wide glass door opening upon a long gallery. This gallery, which extends entirely across the stage, is hidden by ample curtains hanging against the glass partition. A table with writing materials, and an armchair.

Don Salluste enters through the little door at the left, followed by Ruy Blas and Gudiel, who carries a small chest and several packages which have the appearance of having been prepared for a journey.

Don Salluste is dressed in a black velvet court costume of the time of Charles II. He wears the insignia of the Golden Fleece about his neck. Over his black costume is thrown a rich cloak of velvet of a light color, trimmed with gold lace, and faced with black satin. Basket-hilted sword. Hat with white plumes.

Gudiel is dressed in black with a sword at his side.

Ruy Blas is in livery. Brown small-clothes and doublet. Red surtout trimmed with gold braid. Bareheaded. No sword.

### **SCENE I**

DON SALLUSTE DE BAZAN, GUDIEL: from time to time,  
RUY BLAS.



DON SALLUSTE.

Close the door, Ruy Blas, and throw the window open.

(Ruy Blas obeys, and at a sign from Don Salluste goes off through the door at the rear. Don Salluste walks to the window.) All are still sleeping here. 'T will soon be dawn. (He turns abruptly to Gudiel.) Ah! 't is a veritable thunderclap! —yes, Gudiel, my reign is o'er, —dismissed, disgraced, degraded! Ah! to lose everything in one short day! The misadventure has not gone abroad as yet. Speak not of it. All for a paltry amour—at my time of life a mad and idiotic freak, I grant you—with a lady's maid, a nobody! Seduced, God save the mark! because the damsel is of the queen's suite, and came from Neubourg with her: because the creature did cry out against me, and did hale her child to the king's chamber, goes the order forth that I must marry her. I steadfastly refuse. And I am exiled. Exiled! Twenty years of unremitting toil by day and night, of never-satisfied ambition; the hated president of the alcaldes of the court, whose name is never uttered without dread; head of the family of Bazan, who prides himself thereon; my influence, my power; all that I dreamed of, all I was and all I had, honors and offices, —the whole great structure crumbles in an instant, amid the mocking laughter of the crowd!

GUDIEL.

'T is known as yet to no one, monseñor.

DON SALLUSTE.

True, but to-morrow! 'T will be known to all the world to-morrow! We shall be far away. I will not fall; no, I will disappear! (He roughly unbuttons his doublet.) How thou dost always truss me up as if I were a priest! my doublet is so tightly buttoned, my dear fellow, that I stifle in it! (He sits down.) Oh! I will dig a deep, dark mine and none shall know that I am digging it . . . Degraded!

(He rises. )

GUDIEL.

From what quarter comes the blow, monseñor?

DON SALLUSTE.

From the queen. Oh! I'll have my revenge, Gudiel! doubt it not! Thou, at whose feet I 've sat, thou who hast aided me these twenty years, and served me well in times gone by, thou knowest whither in the dark my thoughts do tend, even as the skillful architect, with practised eye, doth know how deep 's the well that he hath digged. I go from hence, to my estates at Finlas in Castille—there to reflect. All for a lady's maid! Do thou arrange 'for our departure, for our time is short. Meanwhile I have a word to whisper to the knave thou knowest; at any risk. Can he be useful to me? That I know not. Till this evening I am master here. I'll be revenged! How? that I cannot say; but this I know—that it will be a vengeance to strike terror to men's hearts. Go now and make our preparations with all haste. Keep thy mouth closed. Thou goest with me. Go.

(Gudiel bows and exit.—Don Salluste calls.)

Ruy Blas!

RUY BLAS

(appearing at the door at the rear).

Your excellency?

DON SALLUSTE.

As I am no longer privileged to sleep within the palace, do you see to it that all the shutters are securely closed, and the keys given up.

RUY BLAS (bowing).

It shall be done, monseñor.

DON SALLUSTE.

Prithee, take heed of this. Two hours hence, the queen will pass through yonder gallery, returning from high mass to her apartments. Ruy Blas, be there.

RUY BLAS.

I will be there, monseñor.

DON SALLUSTE (at the window).

See you yon fellow in the square who shows a paper to the guards and on? Give him to understand, by signs, not words, that he may come up hither. By the narrow staircase.

(Ruy Blas obeys. Don Salluste continues, pointing to the small door at the right.)

Ere you leave us, cast your eye into that room where the police are stationed, and tell me if the three alguazils on duty there are yet awake.

RUY BLAS. (He goes to the door, partly opens it, and returns.) Monseñor, they are sleeping still.

DON SALLUSTE.

Speak low, I shall have need of you, so go not far away. Keep watch that we be not disturbed.

(Enters Don César de Bazan. Hat pulled down over his eyes. A ragged cloak, which covers him so completely that nothing can be seen of his costume save wrinkled stockings, and shoes much the worse for wear. He wears a sword of the kind usually carried by hired assassins.) (As he enters he and Ruy Blas exchange glances, and both start back in surprise.)

DON SALLUSTE (watching them, aside).

Their eyes met! Can it be that they do know each other?

(Exit Ruy Blas.)

## **SCENE II**

DON SALLUSTE, DON CESAR.

DON SALLUSTE.

Ah! bandit, there you are!

DON CESAR.

Yes, cousin, here I am.

DON SALLUSTE.

It is gratifying past belief to see you in such guise!

DON CESAR (bowing).

I am most charmed . . .

DON SALLUSTE.

Señor, I know the tales they tell of you.

DON CESAR.

The which, I trust, are to your liking?

DON SALLUSTE.

Yes, those which most do merit commendation. The other night Don Carlos de Mira was robbed. They took from him his sword with chased scabbard, and his leathern cuirass. -'T was Good Friday night, —but as he is a chevalier of Saint James, they left his cloak.

DON CESAR.

Sweet angels! Why?

DON SALLUSTE.

Because the emblems of the order were thereon embroidered. Well, what say you to the affair?

DON CESAR.

I say, deuce take me! that we live in terrifying times! Great God! What will become of us, when robbers pay their court to good Saint James, and make him one of them?

DON SALLUSTE.

You were among them!

DON CESAR.

Well, —if I must speak, yes, I was there.

I did not touch your Carlos, I did naught but give advice.

DON SALLUSTE.

That's better still. After the moon had set last night, at Plaza-Mayor, a great mob of people of all sorts, hatless and stockingless, came rushing pell-mell from a frightful den, and set upon the watch. You were among them.

DON CESAR.

Cousin, I have always scorned to fight a convict-keeper. I was there. And that was all. During the affray I walked about beneath the arches, making verses. 'T was a pretty fight.

DON SALLUSTE.

That is not all.

DON CESAR.

What else?

DON SALLUSTE.

In France, you are accused, 'mongst other evil deeds, done with your comrades in defiance of all law, of having opened without keys the tax-collector's box.

DON CESAR.

I do not say I did not. France is the country of an enemy.

DON SALLUSTE.

In Flanders, falling in with Don Paul Barthélemy, as he was carrying to Mons the profits of a vineyard, by him collected for the noble chapter, you did lay your hand upon the treasure of the clergy.

DON CESAR.

Flanders! that may be. I 've traveled much. And is that all?

DON SALLUSTE.

Don César, when I think of you the flush of shame mounts to my cheeks.

DON CESAR.

Bah! let it mount.

DON SALLUSTE.

Our family . . .

DON CESAR. ' Nay, nay, in all Madrid no one but you knows my true name. So let us say naught of our family.

DON SALLUSTE.

A marchioness said to me but the other day as we came forth from church: "Pray, tell me who 's that brigand yonder, nose in air, strutting about with prying eyes and arms akimbo, more threadbare than Job and prouder than Braganza, covering his beggary with arrogance, his hand below his ragged sleeve coquetting with the heavy hilted sword which strikes against his heels, —and all with such a

magisterial and lofty mien as if his cloak were not in tatters and his stockings wrinkled like a corkscrew?"

DON CESAR (glancing at his costume).

And you replied: " Why 't is our dear Zafari I"

DON SALLUSTE.

Nay, señor, I blushed.

DON CESAR.

Ah well, the lady laughed, and that's enough for me. I love to make the ladies laugh.

DON SALLUSTE.

Your only friends are odious desperadoes!

DON CESAR. Clerks! and students meek as sheep!

DON SALLUSTE.

Where'er I go, I meet you with some prostitute!

DON CESAR.

O dear Lucindas! gentle Isabelles! fine things are these they say of you, my loves! What! are ye to be hounded thus, ye mischievous-eyed Venuses, to whom at night I read my sonnets of the morning?

DON SALLUSTE.

Lastly, Matalobos, the Galician highwayman, who terrorizes all Madrid, in spite of our police, is of your friends.

DON CESAR.

A word thereon, so please you. But for him I should go naked through the streets, which would be shocking surely. Seeing me coatless one December night, his heart was touched. That amber-scented fop, the Count of Alva whose fine silken doublet was purloined the other day

DON SALLUSTE.

Well, what of him?

DON CESAR.

'T is I who have his doublet; Matalobos gave it me.

DON SALLUSTE.

You have his doublet! Are you not ashamed?

DON CESAR.

I ne'er shall be ashamed to wear a handsome doublet, broidered and belaced, which keeps me warm in winter and in summer makes me fair to look upon. See, 't is quite new. (He throws aside his cloak and discloses a superb pink satin doublet, trimmed with gold lace.) The pockets are well filled with billets-doux by hundreds. Frequently, poor, lovelorn, hungry, I espy a cook-shop with a glowing vent-hole, whence the vapor of the edibles is wafted to my nostrils. There I sit me down, and read his lordship's billets-doux, and thus, cozening my stomach and my heart at once, I have the odor of the banquet, and the ghost of love.

DON SALLUSTE.

Don Cesar . . .

DON CESAR.

Nay, cousin mine, a truce to your reproaches. I am a nobleman, 't is true, and near akin to you. My name is César, Count of Garofa. But from my birth I was predestined to be mad. Wealthy I was, had palaces and broad domains, the wherewithal to handsomely endow the wayward fair; but what the deuce! ere I had left my teens I had consumed the whole! and naught remained of my prosperity, real or false, save swarms of creditors a-yelping at my heels. I' faith, I fled and changed my name, and now I am a jovial ne'er-do-well, Zafari, unrecognizable to all but you. Of money you do give me none at all, my master, so I go without. At night I sleep beneath the starlit sky, my pillow a cold stone, in front of the old palace of the Counts of Tevé—there I have passed the night these nine years past. I 'm happy thus. Pardieu! 't is a delightful life! The world believes me at the Indies, with the devil—dead! The fountain near at hand has water, there I go to drink, and then I walk abroad with lordly mien. My palace, whence in the old days my wealth did take its flight, belongs at this hour to the nuntio Espinola. 'T is well. When it so happens

that I wander thither, I give friendly counsel to the nuntio's workmen, who are occupied in carving a stone Bacchus over the great door. Can you lend me ten crowns?

DON SALLUSTE.

Hark ye . . .

DON CESAR (folding his arms).

Now let us see your style.

DON SALLUSTE.

I sent for you that I might help you. César, I, a childless, wealthy man, your senior, too, have watched your downward course with deep regret. 'T is my desire to turn you from it. Swagger as you may, you are unhappy. I will pay your debts, restore your palace, reinstate you at the court, and make of you once more a gallant squire of dames. Zafari disappears and César 's born again. I 'd have you at your pleasure plunge your hands into my coffers without fear, and with no apprehension for the future. When one has kinsfolk, César, one should succor them, and not be pitiless to their shortcomings.

(While Don Salluste is speaking Don César's expression becomes from moment to moment more astounded, joyous and confident. At last he can contain himself no longer.)

DON CESAR.

You always were as clever as the very devil, and what you say is eloquent, yes, very eloquent. Say on.

DON SALLUSTE.

César, but one condition I impose.-One moment and I will explain. First, take my purse.

DON CESAR (weighing the purse, which is filled with gold).

By Jove! this is superb!

DON SALLUSTE.

I And I'll give you five hundred ducats more . . .

DON CESAR (bewildered).

Marquis!

DON SALLUSTE.



This very day.

DON CESAR.

Pardieu! I 'm yours without more ado. And as for the conditions, make them what you will. Faith of an honest man, my sword is yours, and I am your slave. And if such be your pleasure I will try a bout with Don Spavento, captain of the troops of hell.

DON SALLUSTE.

Nay, César, I do not accept your sword, and for good cause.

DON CESAR.

When then? I 've very little else.

DON SALLUSTE (drawing nearer to him, and lowering his voice).

You know—and in this circumstance 't is rare good fortune—all the beggars in Madrid.

DON CESAR.

You do me honor, faith!

DON SALLUSTE.

A pack of them is ever at your heels. You could, I know, if need were, raise a riot.

That will serve our turn mayhap.

DON CESAR (laughing heartily).

'Pon honor! one would say that you were writing opera. What part do you assign my genius in the work? Shall I compose the poem or the symphony? Command me. I 've a pretty talent for discordant music.

DON SALLUSTE (gravely).

To Don César I would speak, not to Zafari. (Lowering his voice more and more.) List, I need a man who 'll work beside me in the shadow, and will help me to construct a great event. I am not bad at heart, but there are moments when the man who is most scrupulous, must lay aside all sense of shame, turn up his sleeves, and do what's to be

done. Thou shalt be rich, but thou must help me noiselessly to set, as the bird-snarers do at night, a trap well hidden 'neath a glist'ning mirror, and baited with a skylark or a maid. Thou must, by means of some mysterious, fear-inspiring plot—I think that thou 'rt not over-scrupulous—avenge me!

DON CESAR.

Must avenge you?

DON SALLUSTE.

Yes.

DON CESAR.

Avenge you upon whom?

DON SALLUSTE.

A woman.

DON CESAR. (He draws himself up and gazes proudly at Don Salluste.) Say no more. Stop there! My cousin, by my soul, my feelings touching this are soon expressed. The man who, being privileged to wear a sword, doth seek revenge in base and devious ways, a noble, by intrigue, a man, upon a woman, and who, though born a gentleman, doth act the alguazil—that man— were he grandee of Castille, and followed by a hundred trumpets with their hideous din —though he were swathed in orders and gold lace, viscount and marquis, and descendant of the chevaliers of old—to me is no more than a treacherous, vile knave, whom I would like to see hanged on the common gallows for his cowardice!

DON SALLUSTE.

Don César.

DON CESAR.

Nay, add not a word; 't is a foul insult.

(He throws the purse at Don Salluste's feet.) Keep your secret and your money too. Ah! I can understand how one can steal and rob and kill, or carry by assault on some dark night a prison, axe in hand, supported by a hundred filibusters; that we should cut the throats of jailers,

turnkeys, warders, slashing and roaring all the while like bandits that we are, eye for eye and tooth for tooth, is well enough! at least 't is men 'gainst men! But by foul means to ruin a weak woman! dig a pit beneath her feet! and, who can say? perhaps to use some little indiscretion to her hurt! To catch the poor bird in some execrable snare! Oh! rather than arrive at such dishonor, rather than, at such a price, be a great nobleman of wealth and station— here do I say for God to hear, who reads my heart—rather than carry infamy to such a pitch, I would prefer, a hateful, vile, perverse, disgraced and miserable wretch, to have my skull gnawed clean by dogs upon the pillory!

DON SALLUSTE.

My cousin—

DON CESAR.

I shall have no need of all you offer me, so long as I can find, in my free life, water in the fountains, fresh air in the fields, and in the town some robber who will clothe me in the winter, and with all the rest, oblivion of past prosperity; and furthermore, before your palace, good my lord, a spacious gateway, where I can lie down to sleep at noon, without thought for my waking, my head in shadow, and my feet in the bright sunlight! Fare you well! God knows which of us twain is the just man. I leave you with your fellow sycophants and courtiers, Don Salluste, and go back to my vagabonds. I live with wolves, but not with serpents.

DON SALLUSTE.

Stay! one instant—

DON CESAR.

Let us cut the matter short, my master. If you propose to order me to prison, do it quickly, pray.

DON SALLUSTE.

In good sooth, César, I believed you a more hardened villain. Nobly have you borne the test. I am content with you. Your hand, I beg.

DON CESAR.

How now?

DON SALLUSTE.

I did but speak in jest. All that I said was said to try you. ' Nothing more.

DON CESAR.

Go to, you make me dream as you stand there. The plot, the woman, the revenge . . .

DON SALLUSTE.

Decoys! Imagination! Fantasy!

DON CESAR.

The deuce you say! and your proposal to pay all my debts! Was that a vision? And the five hundred ducats! did I dream of them?

DON SALLUSTE.

I 'll go and fetch them for you.

(He goes to the door at the back of the stage and motions to Ruy Blas to enter.)

DON CESAR (at the footlights, looking askance at Don Salluste. Aside).

Hum! a traitor's face! and when the mouth says "yes," the look says "perhaps."

DON SALLUSTE (to Ruy Blas).

Remain here, Ruy Blas.

(To Don César.) I will return.

(He goes off by the small door at the left. As soon as he is out of sight, Don César and Ruy Blas rush eagerly toward each other.)

### **SCENE III**

DON CESAR, RUY BLAS.

DON CESAR.

Faith, I was not mistaken, Ruy Blas, 't is thou!

RUY BLAS.

'T is thou, Zafari! pray, what dost thou in this palace?