

RUY BLAS.

A PREPOSTEROUS PIECE OF NONSENSE FOR PRIVATE REPRESENTATION.

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ARGUMENT.

DON SALLUST, a nobleman attached to the train of Maria, Queen of Spain, has been sentenced to banishment, in consequence of an intrigue which he has formed with one of the Queen's maids. Don Sallust determines to be revenged on the Queen, and, finding that a footman in his employ, one Ruy Blas, cherishes a mad love for her, he determines to dress him up in magnificent clothes, and pass him off as his cousin, Don Cæsar de Bazan. He does so—the fictitious Don Cæsar gains great favour at Court, and eventually rises to be Premier of Spain. Don Cæsar, when he was only Ruy Blas, was in the habit of placing a bouquet, every morning in the Queen's bower, together with an anonymous letter, declaring his passion for her. Her curiosity was naturally excited, and on comparing the handwriting in the anonymous letter with that of Don Cæsar, she finds that the two are identical. Ruy declares his love to the Queen,

and is on the point of marrying her, when Don Sallust (who has obtained admission to the palace in the disguise of a footman) appears, and produces a paper which he had made Ruy Blas sign before his promotion, and in which Ruy acknowledges his bondage to Don Sallust. Ruy, in horror at the power which Sallust exercises over him by means of this paper, determines to leave the palace, take his own name, and seek a place as footman again. However, Don Sallust is a secret witness to a farewell scene between Ruy and the Queen, and then produces the paper, and explains to the Queen that the man whom she has loved is only a footman. Ruy, stung to madness by Sallust's taunts, challenges him. They fight—Sallust is killed, and the Queen, delighted with Ruy's behaviour on the occasion, offers him her hand, which he, of course, accepts.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Don Sallust. An exiled Noble.

Gudiel (his Major Domo). A man with a *good deal* to look after, and who *made yer at home, oh*, when you came to stay with his master.

Ruy Blas. A Footman in the service of Don Sallust, a steady youth, though accustomed to *live-awry*, and one who never brought the red plush of shame to the cheek of modesty, because, of course, modesty has no cheek to bring it to. As we are about it, we may remark *en passant* that he is in love with the Queen of Spain. It's of no consequence, but we just mention it.

Don Diego. A scheming Noble, who only occupies the stage for a short while.

Servant. A complicated character (from his last place), which will unravel itself in the course of the piece. We should like to tell you more about him, but if we did, the plot would lose all its interest.

Maria. Queen-elect of Spain. "A little less than Queen and more than kind," to Ruy, who is "a little more than King, but less than kind" to her. This sounds enigmatical—but wait, and you'll see.

Casilda. The original Maid of Honour. Her berth is Richmond, and unstained her crust. This sounds foolish, but it isn't.

* * The airs introduced into this burlesque were selected on account of their being for the most part old and hackneyed, and at the tip of everybody's tongue. They were chosen for the convenience of those rough and ready amateurs who get up a thing of the kind in a back drawing-room at two day's notice. Of course, if you are ambitious, and have plenty of time to do it in, you can "go in" for operatic and concerted pieces of a complicated description. Only, you will have to write your own words.

SCENE I.

DON SALLUST'S room in the Palace, Madrid. At back are curtains to rise, right and left. Servants, superintended by GUDIEL, discovered in the act of packing boxes; and the stage, generally, must be so designed as to convey the notion that DON SALLUST'S family is going out of town in a hurry.



CHORUS OF SERVANTS.

AIR.—"Oh, dear, what can the matter be?"

Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be?
Sallust must surely as mad as a hatter be,
Growling away like a bear!
He's leaving Madrid at the height of the season
Without even giving his servants a reason,
It smacks very strongly of murder or treason,
But that isn't our affair!

Enter, DON SALLUST, in a great rage.

Don Sallust. How, now, base slaves, is't thus you take your ease?

Here, *Gudiel*, stop this *bad yell*, if you please.

[*GUDIEL* motions them all to be silent.

(*Sarcastically.*) I didn't know you sang—though I must say

I've found out, to my cost, that you could *play!*

Now, I'm not partial to the occupation

Which some folk call, I say, *fo-cal-i-za-tion*.

If you begin that "opening" agen,

'Twill be a bad one for some nice young men.

[*The servants take various goods, with which the stage is covered (and which should be of a "comic" description, such as a perambulator, warming pan, hip-bath, and so on), and beat a sulky retreat.*

Gudiel. My Lord, may I request an explanation Of this most unexpected emigration?

Now that Madrid is full, your leave to take,

Does seem a *drid-ful* sacrifice to make;

The almanacs proclaim the height of season,

Yet you depart—and *all men ax* the reason.

(*Styly.*) Perhaps a lady's caused you to be sent to exile?

Sall. (*aside*). Humph! Your guess is *exile-ent!*

Gudiel. Or pr'aps you've robbed from Paul to square with Peter?

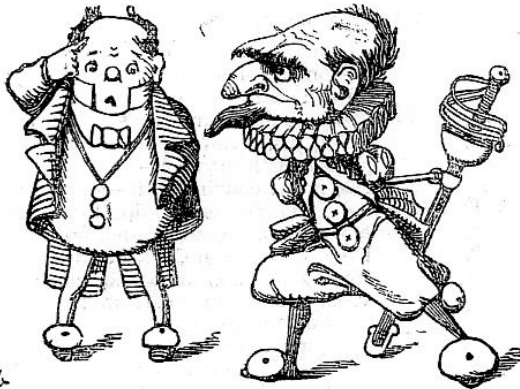
Sall. (*impatiently*). Turn off your *guess* and listen to my *metre*.

SONG.—SALLUST.

AIR.—"Kiss me quick and go."

One day the Queen's own waiting maid
Upon the stairs I met,
And 'tween the girl and me arose
A trifling amourette:

But she told her Majesty, they say,
I'd promised her to wed,
So the Queen took me aside one day,
And what d'ye think she said?



[GUDIEL thinks—then, as if struck by an idea, pretends to whisper to SALLUST. SALLUST says "No," very decidedly. Again GUDIEL whispers a suggestion. SALLUST again says "No," still more emphatically. The same business takes place a third time, when SALLUST relieves GUDIEL'S anxiety.

Why, wed this chick or go, my honey,
Wed this chick, or go!
A slavey wife, or a banished life,
So wed this chick, or go!
Now, I'm a high and mighty peer,
While she enjoys about
Ten pounds a year, and a pint of beer,
And a monthly "Sunday out."
I'll see her slammed and crammed and jammed
Before the girl I'll wed;
So I called the Queen aside, one day,
And what d'ye think I said?

[Same "business" as at the end of the first verse. Some fun may be made out of the different tones in which SALLUST says "No," as if shocked, or amused, or surprised, or indignant at GUDIEL'S whispered suggestions.

I'll pack up quick and go, my honey,
Pack up quick, and go.
What! pass my life with a slavey wife?
I'll pack up quick and go!

Gudiel. A breach of promise should be paid in fines,
But banishment!

Sall. Oh, Gudiel, it's hard lines!
The number of King Charles's foes I've killed,
The premiership I once so ably filled,
The jobs I've countenanced, the bosh I've spoken,
The promises for him I've made—and broken!
Yet, for King Charles's queen's entreaties scorning
I start from Charles' town, early in the morning.
All this, because I wont consent to wed
A girl who sweeps her floor, and makes her bed,
And lights her fire! This waiting-maid, you'll see,
Will "wait" a long time, if she waits for me.
Tho' we must fly like rats before a tarrier
Unless I'm willing instantly to marry her.
Think not that on my shoulders long will be
The yoke of this *hard egg-sile*. When I'm free
Like evil-omened birds we'll be behavin'.

Gudiel (aside). It seems to me, already he's a *ravin'*!

Sall. There's nothing in a name, say many slow men!
She'll find though there's a good deal in an omen.
When I return, to her 'twill carry sorrow.
Ha! ha! A thought!

[Starts.

Gudiel. You start!
Sall. (recovering himself). I do—to-morrow.

DUET.—SALLUST and GUDIEL.

AIR.—"Laughing Song," *Manon Lescaut*.

Sall. An excellent suggestion,
That solves a knotty question,
Has just occurred to me.
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Gudiel (aside). Well, I believe it barely,
Phenomenon we rarely
In this *hidalgo* see.
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sall. The scheme will answer well. Ha! ha!
You'll promise not to tell. Ha! ha!
If I confide in you?

Gudiel. I'm singularly sly. Ha! ha!
If on me you rely. Ha! ha!
You'll never, never rue.

Sall. 'Tis now the proper season
To hatch my plan of treason.

Gudiel (aside). High treason? Ho! ho! ho!

Sall. Lest spies should here be hiding,
The plot I'd be confiding
In whispers soft and low.

[Places his mouth to GUDIEL'S ear, then, as changing his mind.

ENSEMBLE.

Sall. No! no! no! no! no! no! no! no! [Repeat.

Gudiel. Oh, this behaviour is too bad,
He is a tantalizing lad.
It is too bad!
—talizing lad
—talizing—lizing lad!

[At the end of the duet, exit GUDIEL.

Sall. Ruy Blas! my crack-brain flunky! He must suffer—

A mazy, crazy, lazy, dazy duffer!
A poor romantic fool, without a brain,
Who loves—ha! ha!—Maria, Queen of Spain!
This state of things I wasn't long discoverin',
He's always *hoverin'* about his sovereign.
I'll clothe and fee him—introduce the man
As my lost cousin, *Cæsar de Bazan*.
And he shall wed her, for I'll plan it so,
Whedder she wants to marry him, or no.
But soft, he comes, and, very soft, I'll go.

[Retires to back of stage on tiptoe.

Enter RUY BLAS, C., with Wellington boot on his left arm and a blacking-brush in his right hand. He comes down brushing the boot thoughtfully.

SONG.—RUY BLAS.

AIR.—"On the Banks of Allan Water."

On the banks of Tagus' water,
At M. A. D. R. I. D.,
Dwelt a monarch's lovely daughter,
She was fair as fair could be.
For his bride a young man sought her,
(And a fine young man was *he*),
O'er his half-a-pint of porter
He daily toasted she!
But around about that quarter,
Men fancied they could see,
'Twixt the maid and him who sought her,
Some slight disparity.
For her truckling toadies taught her
That the Queen of Spain was she;
While the nice young man who sought her
Was but a poor flunkee!

Maria! much desired better half!
I never told my love—for chaps might chaff—
But let concealment—there, you know the rest:
It's like my "damask cheek" to let my breast
Harbour a thought for one upon the throne—
A love that burns in secret—burns alone!
E'en if she knew how my unhappy fate
Deafens me to the call of tarnished plate,
Her wily councillors would still remind her
That I am socially so far behind her.
Absurd idea! Could an excuse be hollower?
If I'm behind her, I *must* be her follower!

Sall. Ruy Blas!

Ruy. Yessir!

Sall. Come here—attend to me.
I've often fancied, Ruy, that I could see,
In short, a sort of something in your eye,
Which said you were not born for liverye.
These liv'ried splendours, Ruy, you cannot love them?
These crested buttons—

Ruy. I've a soul above them !
A soul above my place. I feel, though poor,
Like Thaddeus, that my birth is noble. You're
So precious careful that I'm neatly drest,
That I may add "unsullied is my crest."
[Showing his buttons, which are brightly polished.
The blood in torrents to my face will rush,
When I put on my powder and my plush,
My fellow-servants mock my weakness ivery,
And bait me so, because I stand at livery!
Sall. Ruy, I'll promote you to superior pay,
Be my amanuensis from to-day. [RUY starts.
Your rise in life from this affair commences :
In other words, Ruy Blas, a man you hence is.

[RUY stands amazed.
Ruy. What ! do I shed for aye these breeches fiery,
And drop your live-ry to keep your die-ary ?
Sall. Yes ; as the first act of your new estate,
Be good enough to write as I dictate.
[RUY takes pen, ink, and paper, and prepares to write.
"I, Ruy Blas, flunkey, willingly agree
To serve Don Sallust, well and faithfully,
As waiting-man, for fifteen pounds a-year,
My tea and sugar, and a pint of beer."

Ruy. But, I'm your secretary.
Sall. Sign, sir, sign.
It's only just a curious whim of mine ;
To give me thus your airs my temper tries,
If you don't mind, I wont give you your rise.
[RUY signs the paper.
That's it. Now write "Madrid, June seventeen,
Maria, of my heart the only queen,
Drop in to tea, to-night at half-past eight,
Just a few friends you know—we shan't be late."
Now sign it "Cæsar." [RUY looks up amazed.

How the fellow stares !
(Explains). The name I go by in my love affairs !
[RUY, satisfied, signs, and gives it to SALLUST, who
folds up both papers and puts them in his pocket.
There from this pocket neither note shall budge
Till I'm revenged—I owe the queen a grudge ;
There'll be some use in this insidious letter,
Ven creditor is paid by this ven-detta !
[Trumpet heard without. The curtains at the back separate.
Here take this cloak—the Queen and all her train
Are passing through.
[RUY puts on a large cloak and a sombrero.

Enter HERALD.

Herald. Maria, Queen of Spain !
[The QUEEN appears in the portion of the stage which
hitherto has been curtained off. NOBLES advance and kiss
her hand, in order to prolong her stay on the stage, until
RUY's apostrophe is ended.

Ruy. Oh, beauteous Queen, how infinitely fairer
Than Jane or Emma, Mary Anne or Sairer !
So far excelling in her various graces
The various cooks at all my various places !
I'll write to her, though she's beyond my scope—
A letter she may send anon ve'll hope.
I wouldn't give her up for any sum ;
No, no—I'll stick to that queen's head—by gum !
[Curtain falls as the QUEEN departs. During
this speech SALLUST has watched RUY closely.

Sall. Ruy Blas, you love that fine young woman !

Ruy. Don't I ?

Sall. You'll marry her, if she's agreeable ?

Ruy. Wont I ?

Sall. With such a Juno, you would like, proberbly,
To reign as Jupiter ?

Ruy. In-jupiter-bly !
But can I, by the rules of orthodoxy ?
For she is married !

Sall. Only wed by proxy.
The wedding's not confirmed by law—and still
She can dissolve it if she has the will.
I hate the Queen—and ere I beat retreat
I'll get you posted early to her suite,
And call you, say, Don Cæsar de Bazan,
My long lost cousin. Yes, you're like the man.

Ruy. But how will this your plan of vengeance meet ?

Sall. No matter.

Ruy. (suddenly). Oh, I know—"revenge is suite !"
I'm but the engine of your wiath, it's plain.

Sall. An engine ? yes : attached to the Queen's train !
Her person you'll approximate. I've stated
King Charles as yet has but a proxy mated !

DUET.—SALLUST and RUY BLAS.

AIR—from Kermesse Scene in "Faust."

Sallust. Come, come with me—
Soon you shall see—
Off you shall carry her.
Ruy. What, shall I marry her ?
Sall. Yes, yes, I vow,
Come with me now—
Ruy. No, no ; I couldn't do it—no, no, no, no.
Sall. (wheedling). Do, do, do, do, do, do, do, do !
Ruy. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no !
Sall. Do, do, do, do, do, do, do, do !
Ruy. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no !
Well, I don't much care-are !

I'll prepare-are
For ma chère-are,
Tho' I dare-are,
For to swear-are,
You're aware-are,
That the dodge is very far from fair !

Well { I } don't much care-are.
{ He }

Both. { I } prepare-are, etc.
{ He'll }



[Comic Dance, preceded by a "Walk round," and
exeunt, dancing off.

SCENE II.

QUEEN MARIA'S Boudoir in the Palace. QUEEN discovered, lying down, surrounded by her LADIES. The QUEEN rises as the scene opens.

Queen. Unhappy Queen—unhappy maiden, I !
In vain to get a wink of sleep I try ;
But wander, dressing-gowny and night-cappy.
I seldom get a nap—I'm so un-nappy !
Oh, gentle sleep—apostrophized as sich
By some late monarch—I forget by which—
Oh, how I nightly long for that blest time
When, bathed in sleep, I need not talk in rhyme,
Or be prepared to sing about my cares
In parodies on all the well-known airs !

SONG.—QUEEN.

AIR.—"A Hunting we will go."

The king announces every morn,
In summer or in snow,
To me, his faithful wife forlorn,
That a hunting he will go !
What kind of pleasure can he find
In tearing through his parks,
In search of game of various kind,
Confining his remarks
To "Hey ! ho ! Chevy !
Hark forward ! hark forward ! Tantivy !" &c.
If this goes on much longer, why
I'm sure that I shall die !

If he'd confine his hunting to
The usual time of year,
I'd not complain—but all in vain,
The season's ever here.
How can he care to spend the day
With huntsmen and with hounds,
Expressing all he wants to say,
In such unmeaning sounds
As "Hey! ho! Chevy!
Hark forward! hark forward! Tantivy!" &c.
If this goes on much longer, why
I'm sure that I shall die.

Casilda. Oh, don't go on in that dejected way!
You'll live to rule us yet for many a day.

Queen. What is a *reine* with only half a *bridal*?
To sue is idle when one's *suicidal*.

Casilda. How shall we keep your Majesty before us?
(*Struck by a bright idea.*) Let's sing "God save the
Queen!"

All. Yes, with a chorus!

Queen. Your Poet-Laureate anthem's out of date—
An'them's the sort of *poet lore* I hate!

[*Taking up a bouquet.*]

I seek to cheer my solitary hours
With the companionship of lovely flowers;
My dreary loneliness they seem to cheer.

Casilda. Where did you get those lovely flowers, dear?

Queen (*hesitating*). I gathered them this morning, all alone
I always pick them. When you cull your own
The odour seems much sweeter to the nose.

Casilda. Odour cull *own* you'd call it, I suppose?



Bar

Queen (*aside to CASILDA*). Casilda, keep a secret if you
can.

The flowers were placed there by a fine young man,
Who, surely as nocturnal shadows fall—
Braving the broken bottles on the wall,
And all the obstacles that intervene—
Places a bouquet ready for his Queen;
And in the flowers on which he knows I dote,
This morning he concealed this tender note!

[*Taking note out of the bouquet, and kissing it
rapturously.*]

Casilda. You saw him?

Queen. Yes.

Casilda. His face?

Queen. Alas! he fled
Ere I could make remarks upon that head.
But as I scanned his footsteps in the mould
With eager curiosity, behold!
I found this blood-stained piece upon the sod!

[*Producing a piece of red plush.*]

Casilda. He must have had a most unpleasant prod.

Queen. The stuff's completely saturated!

Casilda (*examining it*). Tush!

It's crimson velvet, dear, or else (*examining it more
closely*) red plush!

Some footman, p'raps, who hopes, my dear relation,
By a grand junction to improve his station.
To spot the man's identity were aisy!

Queen. Ah! well-a-day!

Casilda (*pointing to bouquet*). Or, rather, *lackey-daisy!*

SONG.—QUEEN.

AIR—"The Warbling Waggoner."

When first I went a-governing,
A-governing did go,
I thought to have my own way—
That none should say me "No!"—
But ere I had been at it long,
I found it wasn't so-o-o.
I had to come and go,
Receive with pomp and show
From nations, deputations,
Which confusticate one so!

Chorus. She had to come and go,
Receive with pomp and show
From nations, deputations,
Which confusticate her so!

This weary life distresses me,
Away, I want to go;
On Margate's graceful jetty,
I long to have a blow.
I only wish that I had here
That gentlemanly beau-o-o
Whom yesterday, I know,
Was on the wall below
A-sticking in the broken glass
And swearing at it so!

Chorus (*stily to each other*).

Whom yesterday, we know, &c.

Enter a PAGE.

Queen. What want you?

Page. Please your Majesty, I bring
A letter from my sovereign Lord, the King!

[*Hands a note to the QUEEN.*]

Queen. At last he writes—perhaps to name the day.

Six weary, weary months have passed away
Since last he wrote to me, his queen dejected!

Casilda (*aside*). Considerably less that I expected!

Queen. I'll read it out—it may, perhaps, amuse you all.

(*Reads*). "I've killed six foxes—and it rains, as usual!"
(*In a rage*). This note which tells of his success, I'm certain
Is but a blind!

Casilda. It's certainly a *curt'un*!

Queen. It's not his handwriting! (*To PAGE.*) Who penned
this note?

Page. The king was mounted, and a noble wrote
As he dictated, madam.

Queen (*aside*). Can it be
That this handwriting's not unknown to me?
Pothooks and hangers such as these, appear
In that of my mysterious cavalier.

Stranger coincidence we seldom see!
King Charles does, sometimes, correspond with me,
But stranger still, by hap or by design,
King Charles's letter "corresponds" with mine!

[*Placing the two notes together, and comparing them.*]

They're just alike in every respect,
E'en to an insignificant defect
In the orthography—oh, lucky star!
In each I'm Queen M. A. R. I. E. R!
And this conclusion from that fact I frame—
This noble and my lover are the same!
On him, Casilda, from this hour I dote!
A noble, dear!

Casilda. No doubt, a man of *note*!

Queen (*to PAGE*). His name? Who wrote the letter?—an-
swer, man!

Page. Your Majesty, Don Cæsar de Bazan!

Queen. Oh, joy will surely turn my queenly brain!

The most accomplished nobleman in Spain.
Who, throwing all his rivals in the shade,
Rose rapidly through each inferior grade;
And now he fills a Spanish Premier's station,
All by competitive examination!

DUET.—QUEEN and CASILDA.

AIR—"Fly not yet."

Queen. The rank of him who sought my bower,
To doubt is quite beyond my power;
My lover clearly proves to be
That flower of nobility—
Don Cæsar de Bazan.

Casilda. Don't be too sure of what you say,
For errors happen every day.
The proof which drowns your common sense,
Is circumstantial evidence!

Queen. Oh, no! oh, no!

Casilda. Tho' circumstances, dear, it's true,
May, perhaps, corroborate your view;
The plush remains, my dear!

SCENE III.

Council Chamber in the Palace. DON DIEGO and NOBLES discovered in council, seated round a table. For amateur purposes, this scene may be the same as Scene I., with the curtains, as in that scene, for RUY BLAS to enter through. Of course it requires some little effort of imagination to suppose it likely that the Privy Council of a great kingdom would sit in what was once DON SALLUST'S private room, but you can explain that the real Council Chamber is being whitewashed, or that this is the day for the sweeps, which will account for everything.

Don Diego. My lords, I have a pleasant plan, by which
In less than no time we may all be rich—
[Enter RUY BLAS, dressed magnificently, through
curtains at the back. He listens unperceived.

In Queen Maria's kitchen, pounds, I find
Are lost in perquisites of every kind:
The servants' kitchen stuff, alone, I'm told
Is worth a hundred thousand pounds in gold.
The fees that tradesmen to the butler pay
Amount to several hundred pounds a day.
The Christmas boxes, too! They give, I hear,
A box upon the opening of each year!
The butter vanishes—so does the tea—
Best seconds disappear, and, like the bee,
They get them money all the day from flours,
These seconds, gentle sirs, may well be ours.

[During these lines, RUY has been expressing, in
pantomime, the profoundest disgust at DON
DIEGO'S proposal.

Stop all the servants' perquisites, the pests!
Cram all their wastes into our private chests!
Reduce their rations and cut down their wages,
Butlers and footmen, chambermaids and pages!
This is what I propose with all submission.

All. Hear! hear! hear! hear!

Ruy (aside). Outrageous proposition!
Received with, if the truth must be confessed,
Cheers which with difficulty are suppressed!
(Coming forward.) So, gentlemen, I've overheard your
plan,

(To Diego.) Oh, fie upon you! Call yourself a man?
Before I'd try so vile a game, I'd eat
For a whole fortnight nothing but cold meat.
How are the men to live without a ration?

Diego. Well, as for that, there's public approbation.
Virtue's its own reward—the saying's true.

Ruy. All the reward it's like to get from you.
The brave you employ to kill your foe
Is he rewarded if you say "Bravo?"
Your cavalry who fight for you afar,
Are not contented with a mere "Hussar."
The tradesman who supplies your bad veneers,
Thinks tables cheaply bought when paid with cheers.
The tailor, too, who fits you for Pall Mall,
Wants something more than the remark, "'Tis (s)well!"
And so your cook, whose joints with gravy run,
Deserves some better payment than "Well done!"
There's plenty to reform—peers—church—elections—
Places bestowed on penniless connections.
And yet in council you've conspiring been
To cheat your household servant! Why, it's mean!
For such behaviour none could find excuse,
You've cooked your estimates—and cooked your goose!*

Don Diego. Though wretched hunters in the usual sense,
Yet at your railing, sir, we take offence.

* Here you have a capital opportunity of distinguishing yourself. In this speech you can introduce all sorts of allusions, not only to the grievances of the day but to the peculiarities of your friends in the audience, and to private matters known to them and to you, but not of general interest to the world at large. You can make yourself agreeable by alluding to the bankruptcy of one, the divorce of another, the manner in which a third allows himself to be hen-

So draw, unless you wish to make us wilder,
Your bitter rail considerably milder.
Upon the whole, we think we'd best resign;
Here is my resignation, sir (tendering paper).

All the others. And mine!
Ruy. Good—this day month (aside) unlucky observa-
tion!

(Aloud). Her Majesty accepts your resignation?
[Nobles bow and exeunt.

So, so; that's settled. Now to tell the Queen
Once more how fond of her I've always been.
She's but half wedded—only half a bride—
And that can easily be set aside.
Shall Carlos from his love Don Caesar savor?
No, no—I love her—and what's more, I'll have her.
I know she loves me—that she'll freely own;
Why, it will prove the key unto the throne!
No more cold mutton, beef that's hard and junky,
A throne-key! and just now I was a flung-key!
But while I've here been chattering about
Affection's warmth, the fire's been going out!

[He rings the bell—enter SALLUST, dressed as a
footman, in RUY'S old livery.

Put on some coals (sees SALLUST). Ha! Sallust's every
feature!

Oh, thou reverse of a Sallustial creature.
So, you've come down to livery, I see!
Put on the coals, and quick about it be.
I can't stand flunkies, grooms, and men-in-waiting,
P'raps it's because my nature's vassal-hating.
How have you managed to come down so low,
You once were such a heavy swell, you know?
Betting and rattng? Losses on the turf?

[SALLUST nods.

Well, heavy swells do often end in serf!
Sall. (reads from a paper). "I, Ruy Blas, servant, willingly
agree

To serve Don Sallust well and faithfully
As serving man, for fifteen pounds a year,
My tea, my sugar, and my pint of beer!"

Ruy. The paper I, in confidence so blind,
Six months ago preposterously signed!



Sall. Just so, vile cur. Impossible to doubt it,
Put on some coals—and just look sharp about it!

Ruy. At my poor head he thinks it meet to toss
Insults, which tend to make my frail clay cross.
Of his requirements when—when will the calls end?
His motto is—"The weaker to the Wall-send!"

Sall. I gave the word, "look sharp"—there's no gain-
sayin' it—

When I say "look sharp," you must be obeyin' it.

[RUY puts on coals.
I'll have you yet to serve me at my table,
An able valet is most valley-able.

pecked, and so forth. All this will tend to make the evening jolly. But before you attempt the radical allusions in the text, be sure that they will "go" with your audience—if not it will be a case of "Laudatur ab his." Of course, if you find that you have tumbled into a radical set—a Lord-hater abyss—you can go a-head with the speech as we have written it. Only take care.

DUET.—RUY and SALLUST.

AIR.—“*The Story of the Ring*,” from *Zampa*.

Ruy. Still I must act as flunkey in waiting,
As Sallust here has just been a-stating,
And it's all along of the
Document that's signed by me.

AIR.—“*Danse Nègre*,” by *Ascher*.

Sall. Ringy bringy dinner in-er, platey weighty cleany sheeny,
Booty sooty scrubby rubby dressy messy drubby tubby,
Wagy pagy getty petty, stocking shocking weary pairy
Blushy plushy leggy peggy put!

(*Zampa*.)

Ruy. After my time as premier employing,
Thus to descend is very annoying.
And it's all along of the
Document that's signed by me!

(*Danse Nègre*.)

Sall. Ringy bringy dinner in-er, etc.,

RUY and SALLUST (*ensemble*).

Ruy. Still I must act as a flunkey in waiting, etc.

Sall. Ringy bringy dinner in-er, platey watey cleany sheeny, etc.

[*Comic dance and exeunt.*]

SCENE THE LAST.

Apartment in the House of RUY BLAS. Lights down.
RUY BLAS discovered.

Ruy. Ruined and stripped of e'en my last poor copper,
Or p'r'aps the term “last bronze” would be more proper,
Of promised loaves and fishes not a trace,
For I've no bread, and I am out of *place*.
To suicide all circumstances point,
My nose and larder, both, are *out of joint*,
And from starvation, I'm just now enjoying
A gnawing pain that's really most *annoying*.
I'd like to see the broad and mighty land which
I wouldn't barter for one little sandwich,
With power to change—to make the meal a fitter—
This bitter cup for just one cup of “bitter!”
To service once again I'm forced to go,
And this, in print, to-morrow's *Times* will show.

[*Reads from a piece of paper.*]

“As footman in a house of serious strain,
Where all the maids are elderly and plain;
He don't mind cleaning boots, or minding plate,
He's done a deal of dirty work of late!
Age twenty-two—in figure, five feet high.
N.B.—No Irish master need apply!”

[*Retires up.*]

Enter QUEEN MARIA, in ball-dress.

Queen. All darkness? Why, there's surely some mistake,
No question if I'll tea or coffee take,
No hop or tune—no company I see,
In-hop-or-tune my presence seems to be.

Ruy (*coming down*). May I request you'll kindly tell me,
ma'am,

To what unusual circumstance I am
Indebted for the honour of this visit?
Now, don't be *deaf in it*—though be explicit.

Queen (*producing note*). This note—it's penned and
signed by you, I see?

Ruy (*reading it*). A weak invention of the enemy.

Queen (*reproachfully*). You've put me to the cost of gloves
and cabby,

And now you're backing out—oh, shabby, shabby.

Enter DON SALLUST, through door, R.

Don Sall. So, so! An interview with Cæsar, mum!

Queen (*alarmed*). If I'd a *hint* of you I'd not have come.

Sall. I've come to tell a tale which must be told.

Ruy. Well, shut the door—the wind blows mighty cold,
Unless you're very anxious that your story
Be illustrated by a *gust-of-door-e!*

Your business in my chamber quickly state.

Sall. When you propose to have a *tête-à-tête*,

Best close your door—or by that way, you know,
Some *foe may come*—which were not *commy-fo*.
(*Aside*.) Ruy, you *must* wed her, now, and aid my plot,
Whether you want to marry her or not.
The cup of nectar is within your reach,
Come, take this *nectar-in*, or I shall *peach*.
She's neither poor nor cross, nor plain, nor old,
And then she absolutely rolls in gold!
However much you loved the handsome witch,
You couldn't eat her, she's so very rich!
Her telegraphs are made of thick gold wire,
And in her grate there blazes a *sapphire*.
In golden carriages her subjects ride,
Her very prisons, too, have *guilt* inside;
The cellars underneath her palace hold
Five hundred million coffers, crammed with gold!
You'll find her still, however much you range,
Always the same—she's tired of so much change!
Last week she burnt the Court gold-stick for fuel,
And when she fights, she always fights a *jewel!*
Why there's a prize! you lucky dog to win her!
And so accomplished too—As I'm a sinner,
Her drawing-master, sir, could go no furdur—
Sings like Parepa—*parepably* you've heard her?

Ruy. Never. Avaunt.

Sall. Refusal you will rue.

Ruy. A *vaunt* have anything to do with you.

Sall. Is it for this that hours below I've waited,
And up and down the street perambulated,
And doubled, till I've nigh exhausted natur'—

Ruy. I'll double *thee* up, vile perambulator,
To stand this longer, I am disinclined,
Draw, ruffian, draw, and fight—you'll surely find
No fiercer lion on the banks of Niger!

Sall. I can remember when you were a *tiger!*

[*QUEEN starts.*]

Ruy. I can't submit to such insulting dealings;
Though but a servant, yet, I have my feelings!

To SALL. I wouldn't stand in your shoes.

Sall. Stop that scoffen',

You needn't be so proud—you've cleaned 'em often.

Ruy. I'll give you, wretch, no law.

Sall. (*argumentatively*). I gave you *suits!*

Ruy. You've blacked my character—

Sall. You've blacked my boots.

Queen. This is Don Cæsar—Minister of Spain!

Sall. (*giving the QUEEN the paper which RUY signed in the First Act*). This paper, ma'am, will make my meaning plain.

[*QUEEN reads in horror.*]

Ruy (*aside*). Let me be calm—down, down, obtrusive monkey—

(*Aloud*). My name's Ruy Blas—I am Don Sallust's flunkey!



DUET.—RUY and SALLUST.

AIR.—“*A Master I have.*”

Ruy. A master I have, and I am his man.
A thundering leary one.

Sall. A master he has, and he is his man.
A blundering beery one.

