

HELIOGABALUS: A BUFFOONERY IN THREE ACTS

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Heliogabalus: a buffoonery in three acts by H. L. Mencken & George Jean Nathan

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H. L. MENCKEN & GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

**HELIOGABALUS: A
BUFFOONERY
IN THREE ACTS**

HELIOGABALUS

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

VARIUS AVITUS BASSIANUS

HELIOGABALUS:	<i>Emperor of Rome.</i>
PAULA:	<i>His senior wife.</i>
ANNIA FAUSTINA:	} <i>Junior wives.</i>
CAELESTIS:	
AQUILIA SEVERA:	
ALINIA:	
DACIA:	} <i>A Christian maiden.</i>
LUCIA THE GALATIAN:	
SIMON OF CAPPADOCIA:	
CAIUS MACRINUS:	
	<i>Commander of the Western fleet.</i>
POLORUS:	<i>A physician.</i>
PISO:	<i>A physician.</i>
RUFINIUS:	<i>Major-domo to HELIOGABALUS.</i>
HECATUS:	<i>A Greek.</i>
CORNELIA METELLI:	<i>A public woman.</i>
LUCIUS MACEDONICUS:	<i>A pickpocket.</i>

Army Officers, Imperial Guards, Additional Wives of the Emperor, Dancing Girls, Slaves, etc.

ACT I: The atrium in the imperial palace. The night before New Year's Day, A.D. 221.

ACT II: The imperial bed-chamber. Toward the middle of the year 221.

ACT III: Antechamber and banquet hall in the palace. The evening of the following day.

ACT I

ACT I

The atrium in the imperial palace on the Palatine Hill. A splendid and even gorgeous apartment, perhaps fifty feet long and twenty broad. The spectator views it from one side, and one of the longitudinal walls thus constitutes the background. At the left of the spectator is the arched doorway that leads into the ostium, or entrance hallway. At the right are two doors giving into the peristyle, or garden. In the back are doors opening upon various apartments, among them, a small triclinium or banquet-room.

The atrium has walls of Cipilino marble, and there are ornate pillars supporting each door-frame. In the centre of the floor is a small pool, perhaps six by eight feet, and flush with the floor. Above it, in the ceiling, is a skylight with movable bronze sashes, and gaudy silk blinds beneath. Despite the architectural magnificence of the apartment, its furniture, to modern eyes, seems meagre. To the spectator's right, between the garden doors, there is a solium—a high, stiff, ungainly chair, very wide, and upholstered in imperial purple, i.e., a colour rather like the crimson of today. In front of the solium stands a very ornate mensa, or table, with a few backless stools. There is nothing more. Light is furnished by Roman lamps