

**HEATH'S MODERN
LANGUAGE
SERIES. RUY BLAS**

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Heath's Modern Language Series. Ruy Blas by Victor Hugo & Samuel Garner

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VICTOR HUGO & SAMUEL GARNER

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Ruy Blas

Victor Hugo, Olin Harris Moore



VICTOR HUGO.

Heath's Modern Language Series

VICTOR HUGO

RUY BLAS

*EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY
NOTES*

BY

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1900

PREFACE.

VICTOR HUGO is one of the greatest personalities of French, if not of all, literature. Though not without the faults and eccentricities which frequently characterize great geniuses, he never entered any field of literature without excelling in it. The novel, the lyric, the drama, criticism, all fell from his facile pen without apparent effort. Having at the outset of his career become the champion of a movement which, in spite of its extravagances, wrought a most salutary influence in rescuing French literature from the arid formalism into which it had drifted, he will be the one central individual towards whom will verge all efforts to study and appreciate that movement both in itself and in its relations to antecedent and subsequent forms of French literary thought.

The study of some part of Hugo's work is, therefore, essential in any, even the most cursory, survey of French literature. His dramas adapt themselves more easily to such study than his other works, chiefly because the theatre was chosen as the battle-ground of the innovators in their contest with the conservatives. It seems to be conceded, at least by usage, if not otherwise, that *Ruy Blas* and *Hernani* are to be the stand-bys for college class-work, and the former has slightly the lead as a favorite, in that the poet has therein reached a higher plane of dramatical lyricism than in the latter.

Several editions of *Ruy Blas* have appeared both in this country and in Europe, but none of them are wholly satisfactory. This play, while it is the most highly interesting of Hugo's

dramas, is likewise the most difficult to interpret. The text swarms with words and historical allusions which need explanation, but which former editors seem to have avoided. Keeping in mind both the teacher and learner, I have endeavored to clear up all these points; and although a surmise will occasionally be found in place of the positive information which long and patient research failed to secure, I believe I have not passed over anything of importance without having thrown some light upon it.

In the preparation of the notes, while I have had to rely mainly upon my own efforts, it is proper to state that I have secured very valuable aid from Mr. A. Morel-Fatio's *Etudes sur l'Espagne, première série*. Mr. H. A. Perry's edition of *Ruy Blas* has likewise furnished considerable assistance, notably in heraldry, some of the illustrations being merely reproductions of his. Other aids have been acknowledged elsewhere, when it was deemed fitting. To the many friends who have helped me in word and in deed, I here extend my hearty thanks; but more particularly to Professors A. M. Elliott of the Johns Hopkins University and John E. Matzke of Leland Stanford Jr. University, both of whom went carefully over the notes with me and suggested certain changes and improvements, and to my colleague, Prof. H. Dalmon, who revised for me the translations.

The text here presented is that of the *édition définitive d'après les manuscrits originaux*, published by J. Hetzel & Co. and the Maison Quantin of Paris. In one or two instances a comma has been added where it seemed necessary, but no other changes have been made.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

THE SPANISH MONARCHY IN THE XVII CENTURY.

1. When the Emperor Charles V abdicated, his son fell heir to the Spanish crown with the title of Philip II. During the latter's reign the kingdom rose to a degree of power and influence such as has rarely been surpassed in the history of monarchical institutions. Like England at the present day, it could proudly boast that the sun never ceased to shine upon its possessions. Philip's, though a despotic, was a master, mind, but it did not always properly measure the magnitude of its own plans. Not content with securing the unity of the Spanish peninsula and largely extending his colonial territory, his restless ambition led him into numerous undertakings which ended in miserable failures. His designs against England came to naught in the wreck of the *Armada*, and his efforts to exercise a controlling influence over France were foiled by Henry IV. In the prosecution of these and other grand schemes he squandered the resources of the kingdom and laid the foundations for that numerous train of humiliations and disasters which, in the seventeenth century, followed each other in unbroken succession.

While Philip bequeathed to his son, Philip III, a kingdom nominally intact, the successor had none of that masculine vigor so characteristic of his father, who, in the bitterness of his heart, was wont to exclaim that God, who had been gracious in giving him so many states, had not given him an heir capable of governing them. This was lamentably true, but Philip failed to

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see that he himself was largely to blame for the utter unfitness of his son to rule, since he had allowed him to be brought up among priests and women, as a girl rather than as a boy destined to govern a great nation. As the natural consequence of such an education, Philip III, when he came to the throne, had neither ability nor taste for the affairs of government. These he entrusted solely to his prime minister, the Duke of Lerma, while he busied himself with the performance of his religious devotions and the silly ceremonies of an etiquette-ridden court. The resources of the country, already sapped by the ambitious schemes of conquest of the father, were destined to suffer even greater disasters from the religious zeal of the son. The Moors, the most industrious and thrifty of Spain's inhabitants, had been most cruelly oppressed by numerous edicts of former rulers. They had been forbidden to exercise their religious rites or even to write or speak their native language. Being outnumbered they had to submit, but they abated none of their zeal in developing and perfecting the industries in which they were engaged. In manufactures and commerce they showed themselves in every way the equals of their Christian competitors. They were no less successful in the cultivation of the soil. They were the first to cultivate silk, rice, cotton and sugar in Spain. By a judicious system of drainage they had brought certain provinces, notably Valencia, to a very high degree of productivity. A wise statesman would therefore have welcomed the labors of these people as constituting the very bones and sinews of the nation; but Philip was not a statesman. He was only a fanatical bigot, and he determined to prove his zeal for the faith and complete the work of his predecessors by driving all the Moors out his kingdom. The commission of this act of folly was the ruin of Spain, as she never recovered from the disastrous blow. Had Philip's successor proved himself a wise and strong ruler, the rapid decline of the country might have been arrested in