

**BULWER'S DRAMA OF
RICHELIEU: AS PRESENTED
BY EDWIN BOOTH**

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Bulwer's Drama of Richelieu: As Presented by Edwin Booth by William Winter

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WILLIAM WINTER

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cover



EDWIN BOOTH'S

PROMPT-BOOK OF

• RICHÉLIEU •

EDITED BY

WILLIAM WINTER

The Penn Publishing Company
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The Prompt-Book.

Edited by William Winter.



Bulwer's Drama

of

— Richelieu —

As Presented by

Edwin Booth.



*"I was born
Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,
And my triumphant adamant of soul
Is but the fixed persuasion of success."*

*"Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,
Netting great Neptune's warlike tribes, and
changing
Into all shapes when craft pursued himself."*

*"He had a way with him—a something
That always—"*

*"There is a strife in which the loftiest look
Is the most subtle armour."*

*"The power which in the age of iron
Burst forth, to curb the great and raise the low."*



PHILADELPHIA

The Penn Publishing Company

1909

Preface.



THE full title of this piece is "Richelieu; or, The Conspiracy." It was written in the fall of 1838, and it was first acted on March 7th, 1839. Macready—for whom, and under whose counsel it had been made—brought it out, at Covent Garden, London, of which theatre he was then the manager, and himself personated Richelieu. In Macready's "Reminiscences" there are several interesting allusions to this subject, notable as showing in what manner the drift of the play was changed by the author, under the actor's advice, and also as showing that the text was freely cut, in the process of adapting it to the practical uses of the stage. "When I developed the whole plan of alterations," says Macready, the author "was in ecstasy." This, evidently, was an instance in which the literary faculty was happily guided by an experienced and just dramatic instinct. In this drama, consequently, the story is told by direct action, out of which the language naturally flows,—tinged, it is true, with the romantic sentimentalism that thoroughly saturated Bulwer's thought and style,—and to which, for the most part, it is a spontaneous necessity. It appears to have been Macready's impression that Bulwer had drawn, under the name of Richelieu, a character entirely different from the historic original; but he records that

Bulwer at length satisfied him as to the justice of the portrayal, from the evidence of history. There is no doubt, however, that the poet has considerably—though neither unjustly nor inartistically—idealized the character of Richelieu. His own remarks upon it, in his essays upon "Self-Controul" and "Posthumous Reputation," in "Caxtoniana," illustrate this truth. "In Richelieu," he says, "there was no genuine self-controul; because he had made his whole self the puppet of certain fixed and tyrannical ideas." Yet the Richelieu of this play is iron in his domination of self and of circumstance. In the play, moreover, the cruelty of the Cardinal nowhere appears, while his craft and vanity are much softened. He is made, in fact, the ideal hero of a poetical work, and he should be regarded solely in this light. The text of the original has been cut and arranged in accordance with this idea, and with the plan of action pursued by Edwin Booth. This version differs from those used by Macready and Forrest, and it also differs from all others in print or in use. The purpose which has governed in the editorial work was the purpose to give all possible prominence to the poetical aspect of the character. As to particular modifications: the long monologue that begins Act Third has been shortened to a few carefully chosen lines; several minor scenes and several clusters of superfluous lines have been omitted; and the characters of the Governor and Gaoler of the Bastille have been excised. The year of the play is indicated by the reference, in Act Fifth, to the loss, by Charles I., of "a battle that decides one-half his realm." The earliest of the Parliamentary victories that could with propriety be so designated was the battle of Marston Moor, fought on July 2d, 1644. Bulwer, it must be assumed, intended to take a poetic license with history, since, while no

other battle than that is responsive to his allusion, both Richelieu and Louis XIII. were dead before that battle was fought, before any important battle had signalized the strife betwixt Charles I. and the Puritans, and before Cromwell had become known. Louis XIII., of France, reigned from 1610 to 1643. Richelieu died in 1642, aged 57. Cromwell, even at Marston Moor, was but second in command. Richelieu, it is probable, never heard of him. This drama was first acted in America, September 4th, 1839, at Wallack's National Theatre, in Leonard Street, New-York. Edwin Forrest was then the representative of the Cardinal.

*"Vivet extento Proculeius aevo,
Notus in frater animi paterni."*

W. W.

New-York, March 9th, 1878.



❖

"The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation : that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay,
A jewel in a ten-times barred-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honour is my life ; both grow in one ;
Take honour from me and my life is done."—SHAKESPEARE.

"To him the church, the realm, their power consign ;
Through him the rays of regal bonny shine ;
Turned by his nod, the stream of honour flows :
His smile alone security bestows ;
Still to new heights his restless wither tower ;
Claim leads to claim, and power advances power." DR. JOHNSON.

"The brave man carves out his fortune, and every man is the son of his own works."—CERVANTES.

"A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay."—DRYDEN.

"Conceal not Time's misdeeds, but on my brow
Retrace his mark ;
Let the retiring hair be silvery now,
That once was dark :
Eyes that reflected images too bright,
Let clouds o'ercast,
And from the tablets be abolished quite,
The cheerful past."—LANDOR.

"Old as I am, I know what passion is.
It is the summer's heat, sir, which in vain
We look for frost in."—SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

"Cardinal Richelieu's politics made France the terror of Europe." ADDISON.

"He who ascends to mountain-tops shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapped in clouds and snow ;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led." LORD BYRON.

