

**THE PROMPT-BOOK.
THE COMEDY OF DON
CAESAR DE BAZAN**

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The Prompt-Book. The Comedy of Don Caesar De Bazan by William Winter & Edwin Booth

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WILLIAM WINTER & EDWIN BOOTH

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CAESAR DE BAZAN**

The Prompt-Book.

Edited by
William Winter.



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&c. &c.

As presented by
Edwin Booth.



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The Prompt-Book.

Edited by William Winter.

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The Comedy

of

Don Cæsar de Bazan

As Presented by

Edwin Booth.

*By Philippe Quinault, 1674. Translated by
Edwin Booth, 1878.*

"I have freed myself now from all anxieties. I've no money, so I am not teased by poor relations. I've no lands, so am without grumbling tenantry. I've no particular destination, so never take a wrong turning. I've nothing to support but my sword — and that keeps a sharp look-out for itself."

"His sword was ever the defender of the weak; his voice the advocate of the oppressed. Where'er he went mirth followed after."

Translated by Edwin Booth, 1878.

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Preface.



THE French comedy of which this is an adapted translation was written by MM. Dumanois and Dennery, and was first presented at the Porte St. Martin Theatre, in Paris. The original representative of Don Cæsar de Bazan was Frederick Lemaître. "Here," says Lewes ["Actors and the Art of Acting," p. 75], "was the union of grace and tatters, of elegance and low habits. The Spanish nobleman had stained his ermine, and dragged his honour through the wine-shop and the brothel; but he had never wholly lost himself, and had not perverted his original nature. Very shortly you perceived the real nature of the man underneath—the nature stained, not spoiled, by reckless dissipation; and it was, therefore, no surprise when, as the play proceeded, the nobler elements of this nature asserted themselves, and Don Cæsar claimed respect."—The comedy thus brilliantly vitalized in Paris was speedily made known in London, and thence it came to America. The first English translation of it—which, with a few changes, is here reprinted—was made by Gilbert A. A'Beckett and Mark Lemon, and was brought out at the Princess's Theatre, London, on October 8th, 1844—Don Cæsar being played by James W. Wallack. "The play," said N. P. Willis,—who there saw Wallack's performance, and mentioned it in a subsequent letter ["Life of Wallack," p. 39],—"seems conceived and written especially for this fine actor's peculiar powers. The high-born Spanish gentleman,

in pride and rags, indomitably gay in his worst perils and extremities, and preserving his elegance through all his trials and tatters, could never be represented with more admirable truth and attractiveness. The abandon with which Wallack plays, seemingly carried away by the gaiety of the part, yet always true to nature and to the poet's meaning, gives his performance, to me, a charm irresistible."—This personation of Don Cæsar continued, for many years, to illustrate that airy fancy, sparkling humour, and exquisite grace which were so delightful in the acting of the always honoured and now lamented Veteran. Two other versions of this comedy were produced in London at about the same time with this; one by Dion Boucicault, at the Adelphi; the other by Charles Mathews, entitled "A Match for a King," at the Haymarket. The piece first made its appearance in America, on December 9th, 1844, at Mitchell's Olympic Theatre, New-York. The historic period of "Don Cæsar de Bazan" is the same as that of Victor Hugo's "Ruy Blas." Charles the Second, of Spain—who, in the comedy, is not unlike the popular ideal of Charles the Second, of England, though in fact he was but little better than an idiot—reigned from 1661 to 1700. Neither "Don Cæsar de Bazan" nor "Ruy Blas," however, pretends to rest on a substantial historical basis. In Don Cæsar we encounter a kind of profligate Mercutio—a character towards which the old Spanish writers displayed a pardonable partiality [see, for a hint, Vincent de la Rosa, in chapter 47 of "Don Quixote"], and which steadily finds favour with all who love laughter and can sympathize with intrepid and comic audacity.

W. W.

New-York, November 2d, 1878.





"In truth he was a strange and wayward wight."—BRATTIE.

"When plate was at pawn, and Job at an ebb,
And stomach as empty as brain."—MARVEL.

"Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,
Happier than the happiest king!"—COWLEY.

"It is the nature of rags to bear a kind of mock resemblance to finery,—
there being a sort of fluttering appearance in both, which is not to be distinguished at a distance, in the dark, or by short-sighted eyes."—SWIFT.

"O, dark-eyed maid,
The soldier said,
I've been wounded in many a fray:
But such a dart
As you shoot to my heart
I never felt till to-day!"—SYDNEY DOBELL.

"And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but death who comes at last."—SCOTT.

"There may be better things to do
Than watching the weathercocks for pastime."—R. B. LYTTON.

Noblesse oblige.

