A Study of Shakespeare’s
Julius Caesar with Reference to
North’s Plutarch

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A Study of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar
With Reference to Plutarch's Parallel.

In Julius Caesar so in all the great
works of Shakespeare the pre-eminent beauty
consists in the delineation of character.
In this play there are an extraordinary
number of interesting persons and the
interest is remarkably distributed, almost
evenly, each character is interesting in itself.
In this regard it is similar to the
histories, but it is tragedy and not
chronicle history. It is not dominated
by a single character as are the
later tragedies; yet it is not unreasoned
for although Caesar dies at the beginning,
this spirit dominates the play to the end.
Thus interested in the characters
of the play Julius Caesar, it is the
purpose of this paper to make a study
of them with reference to Plutarch's history
of them; with some attempt to
determine Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch for his character and his situations, noticing his selection of incidents with reference to their dramatic value, and his means of unfolding their significance in the story.

To enumerate all the passages in which Shakespeare has followed or imitated Plutarch would be a long and tedious business. To say what he has omitted would need a shorter plan. In general we may say that Shakespeare followed Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Lives of Caesar, Brutus, and Antony, closely in the main details, incidents, and speeches and even in single expressions and words. He seems never to have willingly allowed himself any essential modification of the given facts and his wish seemed to be to transform the whole account into a drama. He often found history already half turned into poetry in Plutarch, where he found
Passages so nobly phrased, while dialogue sustained as such a height of dignity, force and eloquence that he incorporated them into his play with essentially minor changes. But the difference between the prose historian and the dramatist remains. Whenever Shakespeare found himself placed between poetry and history, which are sometimes at variance, he follows the higher cause of poetry, so he makes his figures live and mixes up history with dramatic effect.

Very noticeable is the difference between Shakespeare's treatment of Plutarch and his other sources. Usually he derives from the material the barest outline, a mere suggestion here, and a name there, but neither dialogue nor character. Concerning Julius Caesar it is hardly exaggeration to say that the whole play is to be found in Plutarch. But it is Shakespeare who has given a rich mantle of poetry to all. He never surpassed the style and meter of this.
play. It is not too stiff and regular; in the earlier plays, we are inclined to be, or not too free as the later plays are inclined to be. Shakespeare is clearly at the height of his power.

The play commences with the disaffection of the Tribunes, who are represented as the adherents of Cæsar. This scene is used to let the audience know of Cæsar's increasing power and ambition. Flavius says:

"These rising feathers should this time quenching
Will make him fly as quick away with
The less would scorch above the view of men,
And keep us all in service capriciously.

While the incident in this scene is taken from Phædrus, the situation is different. In Phædrus, it happened after Cæsar had been offered the crown. After that (the usual of the crown by Cæsar) there were set up images of Cæsar in the city with academicians their leader like Menge. These the two Tribunes Flavius and Mervellus went

and pulled down, and furthermore meeting with them that first saluted Caesar. They committed them to prison. In Shakespeare this is in the occasion of Caesar's triumphal home coming after his triumph over Pompey. The images are decked with Caesar's trophies in honor of his home coming and the trait of Caiusus, Marullus, and Cassius themselves do not pull down the images, but tell the citizens to make them. The crown has not yet been offered to Caesar. Thus at this very evening the play makes known that Caesar is not a point of all, but that his thirst for power makes him hated. Shakespeare always takes the audience into account and he knew that this scene was dramatically necessary to prepare the audience for the scene in the market place where Caesar's disfavor is shown by the repulsing of the people whom he refused the crown. It gives us the key to the situation.

1. Dust; Shakespeare's Richard. p. 96 1741.
Tribune and people of power in Rome hated Caesar on account of jealousy of the growing power, while the common people were urged on to hatred of Caesar by the example of the Tribune and by their magnifying Caesar's faults and the injuries to Pompey. According to Plutarch Caesar was greatly loved by the people until shortly before his death. To refer to it several times, "Now Caesar immediately won many men's good will at Rome, through his eloquence in pleading their causes, and the people loved him also, because of the courteous manner he had to speak to any man, and to use them gently, being more clementious therein than was looked for in any one of his years." Again - The pride shown and proof of the love and goodwill which the people did have unto Caesar, was when he went to the Tribune of the soldiers to wit, 'Exulton of...
standing against
Sallus Tullius, at what time he was
preferred and chosen before him. But the
second and more manifest proof of the
first, was at the death of his late wife,
the wife of Mariner the elder... and at
her funeral did boldly venture to show
forth the image of Mariner: the which
was the first time that they were seen after
Sallus's victory... for whereas once
cried out upon Caesar for being fit, the
people of the other side kept silent, and
rejoiced at it, clapping of their hands, and
thanked him that he had brought, as
it were out of hell, the remembrance of
Mariner's honor again into time, which
had so long time been obscure and buried.
... Caesar was the first that praised his
own wife with publice veneration when she
was dead, the which also did increase
the people's good will to the more, seeing
him of so kind and gentle nature.
That Caesar was a favorite is shown also by the number of offices to which he was elected. He was chosen Tribune Militum, Bishop of Rome, Praetor of Spain, Consul with Calpurnius Bibulus "without gaining or contradicting of any man," Consul the second time, Dictator, Consul with Decius, Consul the fourth time, Dictator Perpetual. Furthermore he was so entirely beloved of his soldiers, that to do him sense (where otherwise they were no more than other men in any private quarrel) if Caesar honor were touched, they were invincible, and moved so desperately for themselves and with such fury, that no man was able to abide them. These instances are enough to show that according to Plutarch Caesar was during the greater part of his life, beloved by the people.
into the characters of Caesar, Antony, Decius, Brutus, Cassius and Cass, all of which are found in Plutarch. The true name of Decius was Decius with Brutus. It is interesting to note how Shakespeare follows Plutarch even in this mistake. This error of spelling is as old as the edition of Plutarch’s Greek Text produced by Henry Stephens in 1572. Shakespeare was misled by North who made the same mistake. Historically it was this Decius Brutus who had been the special favorite of Caesar and not Marcus Junius Brutus, as represented in the play.

The incidents of the Feast of the Ides of March and Antony running in the holy water, and brushing Calpurnia as he ran, are all in Plutarch! The character of Antony is fully sketched in this play, but we encounter his devotion to Caesar, his courage, his eloquence, and his love of pleasure. Brutus despises him for this very love of pleasure and
there is some suggestion of contempt when he says:

"I am not Jameson, I do lack some part of that quick spirit that is in Acton."

It is interesting to note Shakespeare's selection and treatment of details, how he slurs over one and emphasizes another. A good illustration of this is in his treatment of the soothsayer. In Clitarch the warning of the soothsayer is merely mentioned when enumerating the signs that were seen before Calchas's death. This is all the hint Shakespeare needed; he makes a living character out of the soothsayer who gives to the audience the first warning of the catastrophe, but he is mainly used for his words to bring out Oedipus's character, who when he hears the warning merely says, "He is a dreamer, let us spare him." 

2. Ibid. Act I, Sc. II. l. 24.
and show us that what he considers
as idle talk does not awaken his
fear, in fact makes no impression
on him.

The dialogue in which Caesar
modestly discourse to Brutus the
fact that the people are growing
under Caesar's yoke and are looking
to him to relieve them, is not sug-
gested by Plutarch, but Shakespeare uses
it to prepare me for Brutus' part
in the conspiracy and also to bring
out the character of Brutus and
Caesar, by contrasting them. Brutus
is introduced in a way extremely
in harmony with the character
historically. He is utterly destitute of
honor. Therefore, there is a weakness
some where. He has a curious sense
conceit of utter self-sufficiency, and
a perfect confidence in his own
judgment which spoils the plot
in some places, as for example when he meditated killing Antony. This is a character complete, finished and historically true. Shakespeare has added nothing but he has omitted the limit as to Brutus being Caesar's own son, not considering it necessary to dramatic interest. Brutus has a passionate love for justice and the chance of winning political liberty by the assassination of an individual overbalances his moral judgment.

Caesar's motives are more complex. We can't tell how far they were personal and selfish and how far public. The dominating emotion in this play is the fierce indignation on account of the way Caesar is overthroning the state, and it makes Caesar's very great character. But he has none of the noble qualities that distinguish Brutus. Plutarch says he was
"A choleric man and hating Caesar privately more than he did the tyrant openly. It is also reported that Brutus could not away with the tyranny and that Cassius hated the tyrant." This shows itself in the scene in which Cassius tries to win first Brutus and then Cassius to his scheme. It is not so much envy as it is, that to Cassius it is intolerable that any man should become a god. Brutus says, Cassius born from his cradle could not abide any manner of tyrants."

Brutus remarks, "I do fear the people chose Caesar for their king suggests that he has been thinking of the matter before Cassius mentioned it to him. This gives Cassius an opening which he takes advantage of to urge his point. In Shakespeare, Cassius is the sole
inventor of the plot, which in Plutarch
is represented as being the work of
many, clearly intended to stir up
Brutus to action. Shakespeare securities
unity of action and a means of
stronger characterization by making
Cassius the sole inventor. When
Cassius learns Brutus was the real
"fair" he begins by telling him how
all the citizens of the last respect
in Rome come to him to free
them from their yoke, and gradu-
ually reaches his point-
"O you and I have heard our fathers say,
there was a Brutus once that would not hold
the eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a King."

The depreciation of the personal
bravery of Caesar as one of the means
used by Cassius to excite Brutus
is Shakespearean in. Plutarch does
not tell the story of Cassius and Caesar surviving in the Diber when Cassius had to lead Caesar to the shore, nor

tire to mention the feeble temper which Shakespeare suggests.

"He had a fit when he was in Spain

and when he fit was on him I did mark

how he did shake; it is true this you
did shake;

His coward eyes did from their color fly.

And that same eye shine and both fixed

The world

But while it lasted, I did hear him prone.

Cassius says this with reason, and

simply meant that Caesar is a

man like the rest and not a God.

Shakespeare saw how wise this

notion serve to bring out the difference

in the two natures and so need

it. Cassius' courage is active

and not the passive courage

which gives one strength to submit
ts the inevitable with calumets.
Thus, in the running match it
is this that causes him to call
for rescue. Caucine would have
browned rather than accept aid
from his rival. So on the sick bed
Caesar's highest physical and intellectual
activity is helpless and he shakes
and cries for drink like a sick
girl. Thus the different nature of Caucine
cannot understand Caesar's greatness
and wonder what the people find
in him that they so admire. But
the very fact that Caesar was a weak
man physically makes what he acc-
complished, all the more wonderful.

Although Hubrich does not mention
these incidents he tells the story
of Caesar saving his life by running
in the battle by the sea from the
the town of Phars. Then meaning
to help his men that fought by sea.
he leapt from the pier into a boat. Then the Egyptians made towards him with their pike on every side. Leaping into the sea, with great haste, saved himself by swimming. It is said, that then, holding his sword in his hand, he did never let go, but kept them always upon his head above the water, and swam with the other hand, notwithstanding that they shot marvellously at him, and was driven sometime to duck into the water; howbeit the boat was drained presently." Histarch tells this story without comment but certainly with no view to depreciate Caesar. The instance of Caesar's cowardice given in Shakespeare is judiciously chosen by one who wished to excite malice of a man in power. Historically there is no foundation for it, and Histarch mentions his courage many
Tiem. "But the time of the great armies and conquests he made afterwards, and of the war in which he subdued all the Gauls... made him to be known for as valiant a soldier and as excellent a captain to lead men... For whoever would compare the time of Sabine... it will appear that Caesar's prowess and deeds of arms did excel them all together."

"When one tempted him his time to get upon, which he used in battle, he said unto them: "If here I have one come mine enemies, I will then get upon him to feel the charge, but now let us give them charge. Wherein he marched forward on foot and gave charge; and there fought it out a long time, before he could make them fly that were in battle."

"Virtue's courage was well cooled,
When he saw Caesar was come..."
I wondered much at Caesar's courage and the nerve when he saw his own army in a maze without. In the end he followed a dangerous determination, to embark unknown in a little furnace of 12 bars only, to pass over the sea again to Brund'susium, the which he ended not to do without great danger, considering that all the sea was full of Pompey's ships and armies. These quotations are enough to show that Tullach didn't make Caesar out a coward. But Shakespeare makes history the finest drama. He intended to make the conspiracy the main theme and he could not create too great an interest in Caesar. It was necessary to keep him in the back ground and prevent the view of him which gave a reason for the conspiracy. But yet Caesar is...
not an essential misrepresentation. There may have been moments in his life when Caesar was like this. Shakespeare made the character in regard to the point of view from which it would be seen, to take the audience into consideration. But he can't claim credit or be blamed for the plot, for although he has condensed a good deal, it is simply fact, and according to Plutarch, Caesar's character altered much for the worse shortly before his death. He says, "But the chiefest cause that made him mortally hated was the constant desire he had to be called king; which first gave the people first cause, and next his secret enemies hushed colour, to tear him to pieces."!

Shakespeare has represented Caesar

Shakespeare's "Plutarch" p. 94.
according to this suggestion, and his character is true to any natural conception of what he must have been at the exact moment of his fall. He gives us only a partial delineation of the man, little else beyond his vanity and arrogance, relieved and set off by his good nature and affability. All the grandeur and predominance of his character is kept in the back ground to be inferred from what is said by the other dramatic personages.

The great question is why Shakespeare made his Caesar such an insignificant picture of the real Caesar! Some practically controlled the world, Caesar saw clearly that the Republic was not a republic in the proper sense. Every body inside and out in Italy was regarded by the Republicans as merely subject.
and having no interest in the Commonwealth whatever. Caesar saw that this form of government cannot go on. To the world at large the Republic was dead. He wished to make a great Commonwealth in which the people would share the power. If it hadn't been for his tendency to pardon his enemies he would have carried out his plan. But he was a fatalist, he thought he had a distinct mandate and wouldn't be killed until he had done it. Brutus had no conception of this, he thought Caesar's attempt was an infraduction of the constitution and that it would be dreadful for Caesar to rule.

Shakespeare has represented this stupendous and unirrible figure as a weakling, a man easily influenced, particularly a fanatical
person, a boaster. Always "Caesar" instead of "I". This wasn't like Caesar at all. Why did Shakespeare represent him this way? Some critics say he didn't understand Caesar. Others say he didn't like him and referred to him jestingly in other places. But this doesn't hold for Shakespeare paid many serious tributes to his greatness and shows what reverence he has for him by the way in which he allows his memory to be respected as soon as he is dead, and the many references to him in other plays. He must have thought with his time that Caesar was a very great man, although he may not have understood all his features. Shakespeare always takes the audience into account, the impression a play will have on the audience.
as a whole, and in detail. He had learned his art long before he wrote Julius Caesar, so without much thinking he adapted his play to his audience almost unconsciously and instinctively. Bearing this in mind, we know that he was aware that every one in the theatre knew, in the main, all about Julius Caesar. In Shakespeare's day no one was educated without a knowledge of the common places of Roman history. The idea of Caesar with which the audience came to the theatre was part of Shakespeare's problem, part of his play. He didn't say anything about Caesar being great, the audience knew that. It was his task then, if he wished the characters of Brutus and Cassius to stand out at all, to show the real side of Caesar.
It made no difference whether it was a real note he really had or not. The one that fitted the plot best was the desire to be absolute self-conceit, and a profound impression of his own greatness. This made it possible for the conspirators to have some showing and Shakespeare knew he had not altered the opinion of the audience. They would go away with the impression that a great man had been killed, and this was the impression he wished them to go away with.

Shakespeare has been reproached with wronging Caesar by showing only the lowest and meanest side of his character, and in making him speak in a ridiculous and inflated manner, that is quite at variance with that simplicity of style in which his Commentaries...
are written. But the extreme bombast and strut of Caesar's speeches would not have struck the Elizabethans as they do us. For there was something of ceremony in dignified poetry, which allowed a man to talk of himself, if he used his own name instead of "I." It only left an impression of dignity to use one's own name a few times, but the extent to which Caesar used it left, perhaps, an impression of self-assertion. To justify the conspirators to the audience they must know that Caesar was a tyrant. Technically, to show this is what Shakespeare was trying to do. A type of the tyrant can be traced back to Herod, Marlowe's Tamburlaine is an example. That is, a tyrant type had been established, and the character of Caesar obeys that
Although Shakespeare most frequently
convinces yet it is true that some
of the most beautiful passages are
apparusenise your more thought found
from Plutarch. For instance, the thought
of Caesar's self-country is expanded
into that most beautiful speech of
Caesar—

Why must he doth betide th' narrow world,
like a Colossus, etc.

The writer of Caesar's set Brutus to
begging. The Brutus of whom
Plutarch says—"Not withstanding
the great honor and favor Caesar
showed unto him kept him back
that of himself alone he did not
conspire nor consent to deprive him
of his kingdom. For Caesar did not
only save his life after the battle
of Pharsalia, when Pompey fled, and
said at his request also save many
no of his friends treacher, but put a marvellous confidence in him. Shakespeare omits this for he could hardly make Brutus other than a detestable character if he emphasized it. As it is he lays stress on the grandeur of Brutus's soul which is an appeal to the poetic sense, and the impression Caesar makes on forceful and strong men like Brutus. For this shows the force and strength of Caesar's character.

I see that Brutus was given to self-study. If he were wrong it is because he thinks it is right, and we feel that he is sincere when he says, "Brutus had rather be a Villager than to repulse himself as son of Anne."

Under these hard conditions as this line is like to lay us no."

There is nothing weak about it when Caesar enters with his train and begins to speak in a stilled fashion, rather, it shows great discrimination and observation.

What to say, if Cæcina gives the audience a clear picture of Cæcina character. This is from Titus Andronicus. "As for thee, fat men, and smooth combed heads", quoth he, "I never recked of them; but these pale-visaged and carion lean people I reap most." And Androo's easy nature comes out in his reply:

"I mean him not, Caesar; his not dangerous. He is a noble Roman and well given." All through the play there are many Roman touches, the mere mere of Caesar having a deaf ear.
is a good illustration of Shakespeare's power to select the details that make a character real. Another illustration of this is Cassius ignorance of Greek. He has some more or less to affect the old gruff Roman. In this play he is the type of the old Roman not polished by Greek culture. As a matter of fact Cassius was cultured and spoke Greek. Plutarch says, in his account of the assassination, "Cassius on the other side cried in Greek and called his brother to help him." Plutarch makes little mention of Cassius and it might almost be said that he is Shakespeare's own creation. In Shakespeare he is a rough old man well drawn. In fact all the minor characters are well drawn and it is this that makes Julius Caesar an exceedingly

1. "Shakespeare's Plutarch."

\[\text{Page 100.}\]
finished play. Another illustration of Shakespeare's power to make his characters human is the little touch about the conspirators having gone to school together. Shakespeare had never gone to school, he wouldn't have said these things.

Although the editor casually quotes Plutarch's Life of Caesar as the source for the situation where Caesar is offered the crown, it seems to me that the account given in the Life of Brutus is more in keeping with Caesar's way of telling the story. When he [Antony] was made to Caesar, he made his fellow Romans with him lift him up, and so he did put his laurel crown upon his head signifying thereby that he had deserved to be king. But Caesar making as though he neglected it, turned away his head. The people were so rejoiced at it, that
they all clapped their hands for joy. Antinous again did put it in his head. Caesar again rejected it; and thus they were driving off and on a great while together. At last as Antinous did put this laurel crown onto him, a few of his followers rejoiced at it; and it oft also as Caesar rejected it all the People together clapped their hands. — Caesar in a rage rose out of his seat and flinging down the chalice of his gown from his neck he showed it naked, bidding any man strike off his head that would: 'According to the life of Caesar this incident is in an entirely different situation. Caesar is sealed in the market place after his return from Alba. The Consuls, Gracchus, and whole assembly of the Senate go to tell him of the honors they have decreed for him in his absence, and he
quires them by "sitting still in the
majesty, demanding that hee suits them
when they came in and assured
him that his house bare need
not to be cut of then enlarged"

The senate and the people offended
departed and Caesar went home, and
the tearing open of his doublet collar,
and the offering of his throat to the
"cut was among his friends in his
own house. The supercalvis and the
offering of the crown are then describ-
ed as coming after this insult to
the magnificats of the Commonwealth.

In Shakespeare Caesar excuses himself
on the ground of his unfitness.

Plutarch says, "But in order to excuse
this freely he imprisned it to his desire,
saying, that their vits are not perfect
which have this dislike of the falling-
will." Plutarch also refers to Casoas

* "Quelle Shakespeare Plutarch." p. 90
falling sickness elsewhere. "For enervating the constitution of his body, he was lead white, and soft-skinned, and often subject to headache, and thence to the falling sickness." And again—"For as he did set his men in battle way, the falling sickness took him, whereunto he was given."

Caesar's weakness is shown when he is offered the crown, is explained by taking into account the change that had come over Roman political life. Caesar, on his return, had found Rome changed. It had degenerated. The mob has become the ruling force. Personal aims and temptations are interwoven with public action. Caesar cannot adapt himself to this change. His vacillation is the vacillation of unfamiliarity with the new.
political conditions. He refuses the crown each time grimmer than the other, showing want of decision. Reading in dealing with the mob, and in his return from the Capitol he is too restrained in his speech to conceal the angry spot on his face.

Cassius sees that Caesar account sinks into Brutus' mind. He feels his intellectual superiority over him because he cannot be influenced. In this respect Cassius is the intellectual superior of all in the play. He cannot be dominated by any one. He prepares to put papers in Brutus' window to show him the opinion Rome has of him, hinting at Caesar's ambition. Shakespeare takes his audience into account in preparing them that they may know the plot is forged.

Sec. 3. In scene III in Cassius' dramatic
account of the prodigies he has
borne as moved that he has sought
his affection of rusticity. The feeling
of his affection sets his true nature
to view. All the events here, related
are from Plutarch except the meeting
of the two in the Capitol. But here
we hear the account in its bare
simplicity and somewhat cold enum-
eration of facts, facts which are
an inevitable result of the impurity
of the historical style to that dramatic
poetry. Shakespeare gives movement, color,
and life to things.

Plutarch does not mention offering
Caesar the crown again after he
received it in the market place.
In Shakespeare Casca says:—
"Indeed, they say, the senators tomorrow
Meant to establish Caesar as a King;
and he shall wear his crown by land and sea.
In every place, oars here in Italy!"
Shakespeare adds this to hacket the catastrophe, and also to show the determination of Cassius and to lead him to disclose the conspiracy to Brutus. Who replies, —

"I'm speak to Casca and to such a man that is unpleasing tell-tale. Fidel, my lord, I am speaking for undone if all these griefs and I will set this foot of mine as far as who goes furthest." Casca here speaks of himself in the third person, it is not uncommon but Caesar use as much of it to give the idea of brisker. While Cassius is saying that the conspirators are waiting for them in the city's park, Cinna enter, conspir to win Brutus to the side of the conspirators, and Cassius takes advantage of his eagerness to send them with the papers which he intends shall stir up Brutus. Brutus. Octavius.
in the Life of Caesar, says that these papers were put in Brutus' seat. In the Life of Brutus they were put upon the Brutus statue.

Shakespeare uses both of these suggestions and also puts the papers in at Brutus' window. Plutarch doesn't say who was used as the instrument to distribute these papers, but Shakespeare by making Cinna do it, brings him into clever connection with the conspiracy.

Act 1. The opening scene of Act I is not hinted at in Plutarch who does not mention Lucine. In the soliloquy of Brutus we see the unsettled state of his mind. Up to now he has always found Caesar mild, gentle, and not the kind of a person who would be a tyrant, but experience has taught him that people who have

...
tyrannical. Therefore this is a public cause and it outrights the internal causes of Cassius' friendship. But we feel, after reading this scene, that Brutus' attitude toward Caesar is that of looking up. The strength of his greatness seems to cast a glamour over the plot and Brutus feels that the guile of the victim gives a dignity to the crime. Brutus is one of the noblest and most consistent of Shakespeare's characters. He is far above self-seeking and is capable of the loftiest patriotism. But he is an idealist; his purposes are the highest, but the means he employs to give them effect are utterly inadequate.

The coming of the conspirators to the house of Brutus is a situation added by Shakespeare. It is dramatically necessary to us to find the inside workings.
of the conspiracy, and to give it that last touch to Brutus' character, for it 
came out here in his full strength. 
This not allowing the conspirators 
to bind themselves by an oath is 
a characteristic touch. It was to 

him not a question of their fidelity 
to each other, but of their strength 
of purpose. If the face of men, the 
sagacity, their smile, and the 
time's abuse, could keep them to 
their purpose, there is no need to 
swear and they might as well stop. 
The whispering of Brutus and 
Casius is very natural in this 
scene. While they are talking it is 
necessary that the other say some 
thing, and so we have this discussion 
about the points of the compact. Nothing 
seemed to move natural than this, 
for when men have their minds 
burdened with the load of some
great enterprise, they are glad to avoid speaking of it among themselves, and when they are most absorbed in thought, conversation has the greatest tendency to turn upon trivial and indifferent matters.

Plutarch tells us that the conspirators excluded Cicero from their conspiracy. "For they were afraid that he, being a coward by nature, and age also having increased his fear, he turned turn and alter all their purpose, and quench the heat of their enterprise seeking by persuasion to bring all things to such safety, as there should be no peril." 1. In Shakespeare's, the conspirators at first are inclined to enroll Cicero among their number, but Brutus objects. "For he will never frame anything that other men begin." 2. Cassius gives up as he always does when...

Brutus makes up his mind. The reason why the other conspirators defer to Brutus as they do are historical.
He was the representative of old Rome. Cato was regarded as a sort of saint, and his mantle had fallen on Brutus.
This name also had a good deal to do with the feeling that if they could have Brutus the pictures of the affair would be secured, for the people were superstitious and they thought that Brutus might be a liberator as the great Brutus had been. They also deferred to him on account of his strength of will and character.

To conspirators again give way to Brutus when he does not want Antony talked. Cassius does not give this up so easily for he reads Antony well. Independence has treasured to him an ideal dearer than life.
He will stop for nothing now. "I had as little time to be in any of such a thing as I myself." But it is necessary to keep Brutus in sympathy with the conspiracy lest Cassius yield to him, for Cassius is a politician and he understands human nature.

Historically Caesar is said to have been an Epicurean and that doctrine carries with it a disregard for omens, but Shakespeare has not made him an Epicurean; he may not have known that he was. Cassius tells us that Caesar has great superstition. That is probable that Cassius' fear led Caesar to stay away from the Capitol, caused him to offer this as a reason, and it would not be unlikely for him that times the belief in omens was almost universal. This fear causes the
conspiratorius in Shakespeare, as in Plutarch, to plan to go to Caesar's house and escort him to the senate, lest this year keep him home on the day set aside for the murders.

Begun the conspiratorius separate for the night Metellus suggests Gaio Ligarius as a conspirator in account of his hatred toward Caesar. This is from Plutarch who says "Now amongst Pompey's friends, there was one called Gaio Ligarius who had been accused unto Caesar for taking part, with Pompey, and Caesar discharged him and therefore in his heart he was always his mortal enemy."

Vitius, as she appears in Plutarch, is almost as fine and interesting a character as she is in Shakespeare.
Shakespeare has no doubt given the historians account the more vivid life of the drama, and has given more force to her words, more distinctness to her actions, but he has added no feature of any importance to her character. He has however left out some of the beauties of the character which Brutus gives. He regret the absence of that beautiful scene in which Brutus and Portia take leave of each other at Elaea. The Portia of Brutus, in the way in which she understood and exhibited married love, represents the most beautiful type of a wife. The farewell at Elaea is very human and not at all theatrical. At times, in Shakespeare's play she is statuesque, but always an impressive figure. Portia's expectations with her husband for this next of confidence in her, when
She writes the self-inflicted wound by which she thought to convince him of her constancy, as from Huluck, almost every line is suggested by Huluck. But Shakespeare gives the scene with all the perfection of dramatic language, and yet emphasizes every point of Portia's character, and especially her sense of the dignity of marriage and what is owing to her as a wife. It is true that she goes further than the Othello of Huluck, in claiming her share in her husband's perils, and in her notions of her rights and her duties, in which there is more of the Christian and English woman than the pagan. This scene is often contrasted with the scene in Henry V in which Hotham takes leave of Falstaff.
his discarding is when it finds that Brutus has something for him to do is from Brutus. The only difference being that in the history Brutus reads Ligerius at his twice while in the drama it is Ligerius that comes to the house of Brutus, this seems more consistent with Brutus' character and shows Ligerius' absolute confidence in Brutus.

II. Sec. 2. All the circumstances preliminary to the murder, including the dreams of Calpurnia, and Caesar's apprehensions at that particular day, rest on Brutus. But this account is wanting in clearness and precision when compared with the force and life which Shakespeare has given it in its dramatic form. For accept vacillatin as a description of Caesar's character we must explain his strong speeches as rarity and self assertion. But we
you certain of his sincerity and courage, when he says:
"Towards die many times before their death; the valiant never taste of death but once."

This brave idea is suggested by a passage in Plutarch in reference to other rulers. Just as Caesar had been made Dictator perpetual, and sometime before he was offered the crown, Plutarch says: "When some of his friends did counsel him to have a guard for the safety of his person, and some also did offer themselves to serve him, he would never consent to it but said: it was better to die once than always to be afraid of death." 2

In this scene when Caesar, yielding to his wife's entreaty, consents to stay as long as she is not hiding behind his mule, he is not afraid but

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1. Quintus Junius Brutus = Act 3 sc. 2, ll. 32-33
2. Quoted by Shakespeare, Plutarch: "Caesar" p. 72
is easily led, easily influenced, and
wishes to indulge his wife’s apprehen-
sion of danger and keeping out of it is
not the same as fear. There is no
suggestion of personal fear on Caesar’s
part in this whole play.
In the scene where Decius and
Caesar while Decius prevails against
Calphurnia and Caesar decides to go to
the Senate, Plutarch has no hint of
the splendid characterisation of
Caesar struggling between his love
for his wife, his fear, and his pride.
This giant intellect by its very strength
is unable to contend against the
cunning of a first-rate intriguer like
Decius.” In this scene Decius goes
as far in protecting his own to Caesar
that he becomes the most odious char-
acter in the play. Caesar’s manner
to the conspirators is very amiable.
His courtesy and gentleness of his nature
is noted. He is cruel when necessary, but his personal character is adverse to cruelty. It is his feigning nature and his unwillingness to put the conspirators to death that led to his own death. Before they leave the time to go to the senate Caesar says:

"God friends, go in, and taste more wine with me.
And we, like friends, will straightway go together." Brutus in an aside says to this,

"That very like is not the same, O Caesar; the heart of Brutus frowns to think upon."

Here again Shakespeare considers his audience and puts in this aside that they may not be misled but may see the reluctance of Brutus.

Act II sc.3. Arminious and his warning to Caesar is suggested by Shakespeare. The words of the paper are Shakespearean.
In this short scene we partly correct our idea of Caesar, for a man of humble position who has nothing to gain, regards time as a pattern of goodness and justice. Our opinion of Caesar has been somewhat modified; treachery Decius has shown himself so odious and we feel that he is to be sacrificed by a lot of envious men.

The anxiety of Portia while her husband, whose terrible secret she has extracted from him, is at the capital, is well told by Othello in a charming and vivid manner. The drama is fuller still of life. Shakespeare shows Portia here as a woman, her vivacity and her sending of Lucine to the senate without evidence makes her truly human and not so statuesque. She reminds us again that there is at least one of the conspirators who is not envious...
and our sympathies are brought back to the conspirators again. Thus they go back and forth to the end of the play. In this scene the soothsayer, who enters to be questioned by Brutus, wants to save Caesar too. Here is another instance of a man of humble position who regards Caesar as a good man. The soothsayer is as individual as any of the rest of the characters, although we see little of him. The thought that he is a noble man liable to be crushed by the tyranny that follows Caesar, makes him a real person.

It is historical that Caesar was killed on the Ides of March. He had been warned to beware that day and now when he sees the soothsayer he says: "The Ides of March are come." Some critics think it is not in keeping with Caesar's character to say this to the soothsayer, and we can
some tendency to doubt it, but there is no evidence that it didn't happen and there is some evidence that it did happen. If Caesar had seen the soothsayer going to the Capitol he would have been as likely to stone this remark to him.

Then addressed by Artemidorus Caesar unconsciously adopts the language of a king. "This touch will surely shall last we served." This is particularly fitting here, while Caesar is on his way to the Senate, where he will be killed on account of his desire to be king. Shakespeare's Caesar has a certain dignity here which we do not feel for Plutarch's Caesar who took the paper from Artemidorus "but could never read it though he many times attempted it, for the number of People that did Salute him."

In Julius Caesar, as in Antony and Cleopatra and in Hamlet, the
death of Caesar is represented as taking place in the Capitol instead of the Curia Pompey as it did historically. Plutarch says: "For it was one of the places about the Theatre—Where also was set up the image of Pompey. In this place was the assembly of the Senate appointed to be, just in the fifteenth of the month March, which the Annals call Iuno Martialis, so that it seemed some god of purpose had brought Caesar thither to be slain for revenge of Pompey's death!"

When the conspirators have entered the Capitol, Otho Pilatus says to Cassius: "I wish your enterprise today may stem", and the conspirators think he refers to the conspiracy. In Plutarch he says: "I pray the goddess
you may go through with that you have taken in hand; but in that, dispatch I read you: for your enterprise is discovered. When he had said, he presently departed from them, and left them both afraid that their conspiracy would out." Shakespeare quoting Brutus and Cassius: "Ophelia! Lena speaks not your purpose: For, look, he smiles and Caesar does not change.

It is interesting to see how Brutus who till now had not been a very good conspirator but has thwarted them on every occasion save the whole situation for Cassius is in a panic, he has lost his head, while Brutus is perfectly composed.

In his refusal to repeal the sentence of banishment passed on Publius Cimber, Caesar conducts
himself the a despot with absolute power. This is very proper here,
for it justifies the conspirators if any
thing can.
"If they do't think and pray and for him,
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.
Here Caesar doth not wrong, no insurrection
will he be satisfied."
This is not much like the real Caesar.
Hastens him at his most, but it is
proper if Caesar show his male side
at all, to show it here.
All the
rest of the scene, the incidents of
the murder, and the flight of the
senators, follow Cæsar closely.
Shakespeare represents Cæsar as
abandoning all notions of safety in
defence. As soon as he found that Brutus
was among his assassins. The explanation
"Et tu, Brute," is not found in Cæsal.
There is no Latin authority for it.
It may have been in the Latin play of Caesar acted in Oxford 1582. It is found in the "Tragedy of Richard Duke of York" (1590) and also in a poem by J. Webber entitled "Coloetius his posterity" (1600). Evidently some play had contained these words. It is now clear that the audience expected to hear the words "et tu, Brute". They were associated with the murder of Caesar. If Shakespeare had left them out, the people would have missed them. If he had translated them into English, they would have thought of them in Latin? But in Latin they were less disturbing for the audience to hear than not to hear. Therefore they are justified although there is no historical basis for them.

The audience is not in sympathy with Caesar, but Shakespeare makes the conspirators little more
human by having Brutus say—

"Publicius, good cheer.
There is no harm intended to your person,
Nor to us Romans else; so tell them, Publicius!"

Antony, I suppose, expected to be
attacked so fled to his house. Shakespear
adds that a servant comes to Brutus
and asks if it be safe for Antony to
come to him, to hear an explanation
of Caesar's death. This servant must
not be regarded as a mercenary but as
a friend in the service of Antony. He
is called a "friend of Antony." By Brutus
Caesars has some misgivings about the
friendly purposes of Antony and he
turns out to be more nearly right than
Brutus. Antony shows here that he
is sincerely attached to Caesar. He
should be regarded as a true mourner
for his death. Here again we encounter
this devotion to Caesar and his turbulent
ellegence. The complete delination of Antony is left for Antony and Cleopatra, but so far as it appears, his character is the same as in Antony and Cleopatra. In Plutarch the character of Antony is very different; it is at times almost dis-picable, but by many happy and delicate touches Shakespeare renders him an interesting and lovable, and almost a beautiful character. He appreciates the greatness of Caesar, and in the first part of the play, he is willing to rise to power as the useful tool of Caesar. Where his attachment is genuine. This scene with Antony serves not to bring out one side of Cassius' nature, the side of the professional politician. He has the politician's low view of human nature. While Brutus talks of principles Cassius appeals to interest. He says, "Your voice shall be strong in my ears in the disposing of new dignities."

Act II, Scene 1, lines 178-179
This scene also serves to develop Brutus’ character. His love for Caesar is evident throughout, and we see with what candor he trusts Antony. He gives way to Antony’s desire to speak at Caesar’s funeral. He thinks he will obviate the danger dreaded by Cassius by first reviving the pulpit himself and explaining to the people. His confidence in himself and in the Roman people is strong. He thinks they will be moved by reason and not by appeals to passion. He looks at every man as if he were like himself, he regards them as the old Romans.

The apparent reconciliation between Mark Antony and the conspirators is justified by Brutus’ statement: “that they suspected together.” At first, the audience may be unable to understand Antony’s motive.
in making friends with Caesar's murderers. But just as soon as he is alone with the audience he explains what he means. Shakespeare does not leave the audience in doubt any longer than is necessary. Antony's soliloquy is very strong. It has some splendid figures in it and serves to reinvigorate Caesar in our affections.

All the rest of Act II, including the deaths of Brutus and Antony, the reading of the will, the announcement of the coming of Octavius and the incident of the first Curiae is found in Plutarch. It is chiefly in the evocation of Brutus and Antony that Shakespeare improves upon his original. Out of Plutarch's suggestion he has constructed some of the finest passages in the play. Brutus's speech brings out his ignorance of men's hearts.
his blindness to actual facts, and his want of common sense. So little did he know men that he addresses the multitude as though they were philosophers. He uses no persuasive eloquence because he himself despises any appeal made to the imagination or to the passions, and cares only for what recommends itself to his reason. In this speech Brutus attempts to imitate the Lucanic style. Whether this is historically Brutus' style or not is no matter for it is a contrast to the oratory of Antony and so has the dramatic effect that Shakespeare was seeking. But from Plutarch's life of Brutus we may believe this was his natural manner of speech; for we read there that — They do not in some of his Epistles, that he counterfeited that brief copiousness
manner of speech of the Lacedaemonians. The whole speech in Shakespeare is filled with tragic irony. In Brutus' song, nine on his own head when he beseeched the people to hear Antony. Then comes Antony's beautiful speech which can't be worn out: "Bear with me. My heart is in the coffin随处 with Caesar and I must pace till it come back to me." This pause gives an opportunity to the people, as Antony intended that it should, of expressing to each other the feeling which he had excited. It gives them an opportunity to readjust their minds.

In dramatic writing this is good, but as a piece of writing that which follows is better: "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." etc.

"This speech, for the first time, gave indication of blame comes at
While Antony is still talking to the citizens, a servant announces Octavius' arrival and adds: "Heard him say Brutus and Cassius are not like mad men through the gates of Rome." This shows Shakespeare little care for time. He cares only for the impression of time in the audience.

The tragic-comic incident of the death of the first Gaius is made use of in Shakespeare than in Plutarch. The questioning by the citizens and the answers of Gaius are added by Shakespeare for comic effect.

The characters and situation in the first part of Act II are lettered from Plutarch's Life of Antony. But then the place of meeting was on a small island in the river Rhenus. That the scene is laid in Rome in Shakespeare's

very, is evident from the fact that Lepidus is sent to Caesar's house in the will and told that on his return he will find Antony and Octavius in here, or at the Capitol. According to Plutarch, the person referred to by Shakespeare as Mark Antony's sister's son was Lucius Caesar. Historically, Mark Antony was Lucius Caesar's sister's son. Thus it was really Antony's uncle instead of his nephew. It is a little slip by Shakespeare. This scene serves to give us better ideas of the characters of Lepidus and Octavius than we get from Plutarch. Lepidus is the man who is always blind and may be used as the tool of others and yet is a tried and valiant soldier. Octavius is a remarkably capable young person, but unsympathetic and cold as ice. The way he
insists on entirely having things
this way may show the greatness
and frightful coldness of his character.

In his Shakespeare's play, there
is hardly a finer and more memorable
scene than the grand conflict the
two leaders and their reconciliation.
The ground work of the scene
Shakespeare found in Titus
he has wrought up into material into an
admirable scene in which, while
some of the speeches are almost
copied from Titus, the interest
and feeling of the dialogue are much
lightened by some slight poetic tacks.
But these are in no way inconsistent
with the characters which history
has assigned to Brutus and Cassius.

Cassius' affection for Brutus
comes out. He was honestly attached
to Brutus. We will know whether
Brutus was attached to Cassius
or not, we can't tell. In this scene Cassius is shown more to advantage than Brutus, he is more a human being. By the time we come to this scene we are well acquainted with the characters of Brutus and Cassius and their essential differences. Brutus we know to be an idealist of a calm and gentle disposition, loving justice blindly, and firm and rigid in his duty. Cassius is a practical politician of a fiery nature, self-interested and clever, and willing to use any means to attain his end. Nathaniel offers a fine opportunity to emphasize these differences here and any other poet but Shakespeare would have seized it. But Shakespeare's method is different. He is seeking truth and life rather than vulgarity and clearness. He knew that in real life men are not always logical and consistent, so he shows us Brutus unfaithful
to his nature and his principles. He usually just and generous hearted.

[The text is slightly obscured, but it continues with a discussion of Brutus and Cassius' interactions, particularly focusing on Brutus' calmness in contrast to Cassius' quick temper.

"At first Brutus is calm and his very calmness makes Cassius the more ruffled, whose replies are at first abrupt and hasty. But he gradually softens and endeavors to calm Brutus who tries to control things pretty quickly and speaks stronger than he believes. What a beautiful touch of nature when Cassius says, 'I said an elder soldier, not a letter.' Did I say better?"

What a natural reply Brutus makes when Cassius accuses him of making his inquiries greater than they are. 'I do not tell for practice them Anni.' These replies are no natural that none but Shakespeare could have thought of. Brutus costs off and comes around beautifully when he says that Cassius..."
is about to break down and beg his pardon.

The reason of Shakespeare's uncontested pre-eminence among all other poets as a delineator of character comes out in this scene. It consists in the breadth of his treatment. He alone dares to introduce the littlest evening contradictions which keep his characters close to nature and avoid all superficiality.

There are points of slight difference between Plutarch and Shakespeare in this scene, that may be mentioned. In Shakespeare, Cassius objects to the conduct of Lucius Vella because he is a friend of his. In Plutarch we read: "This judgment much misliked Cassius, because he himself had secretly (not many days ago) warned two of his friends, attainted and convicted of the like offence, and openly had cleared them." In Shakespeare Brutus answers,—"What shall we do,—great'st Shakespeare's Plutarch," p. 180.
That struck the foremost man in all this world
But by supporting rotters—shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base tribes.
This motive for the conspiracy has not
Been mentioned before. All may not
Have been mentioned, but this is not
Consistent with the rest of the play and
the conception of Caesar. Therefore Brutus
Mentions it. Another difference is
That in Brutus it is a Philosopher.
Knowing that nature durng the
Quarrel and he recites a verse of Homer—
"My Lord, I pray you, darkness to the rear,
For I have seen more years than an old tree.
Shakespeare makes it more lively by being
A joint recite a verse of his own—
"For and to friends as two such men should be,
For I have seen more years than an old tree.
Another seeming inconsistency of Character
Comes out here for it is the patient and
Gentle Brutus that is exasperated and
The violent Caesar who says—

1. "The Tragedy of Caesar" Act V, Sc. 3 ll. 21-25
"Bear with him, Brutus, to his fashion."
But Cassius has some sense of humor and Brutus has not a bit, he is always on his dignity.

The manner of Octavius' death as given by Shakespeare is the same as in Plutarch, but in Plutarch, it was after Brutus' death. There is an inconsistency here in Shakespeare, for after Brutus had told Cassius of Octavius' death he pretends to Messala that he hadn't heard of it and takes credit to himself for not being present. It is an evident slip in Shakespeare's part. Brutus' stoical indifference in his reply to Messala is not from Plutarch - "Why, farewell, Brutus - I must die. Messala, with meditating that she must die too, that the patience to endure it now." Shakespeare's Brutus was a stoic and to him all evils were accidents, not real evils.

The discussion concerning the battle of Actium was as follows...
of Cassius between Cassius and Brutus, is slightly different in Plutarch and Shakespeare. In Plutarch, it is rather a question of the time of fighting the battle. Cassius wishing to delay it, but Brutus ... did desire nothing more than to put all to the hazard of battle as soon as might be possible. To this end be might quickly restore his country to her former liberty, or rid him forthwith of this miserable world, being said trembled in gathering and maintaining of such great armies together." Other reasons for hastening the battle were that their men were stronger and better and because some of them had already yielded to the enemy and it was suspected that others would do so. In Shakespeare, the question is, whether they shall seek the enemy or let the enemy seek them. Brutus, as usual, has his way, and it is
decided that they shall go to Philippi to meet the enemy. Later it was seen as tragic that Brutus was in the way and Cassius right.

The kindly side of Brutus' nature comes out in his relation to the scene. There is nothing more tender in all Shakespeare than this scene. The Brutus who at the call of duty could stab a Caesar cannot make a sleeping boy. Fully to appreciate this passage it must be remembered that it was on the eve of the Battle of Philippi, and the day after Brutus' death. He asks for music and even this detail has its significance when contrasted with the brief remark made by Caesar respecting Cassius, 'he bears no music.' Thus we see him at the eve of the battle of Philippi seated in his tent, taking up a book and asking for music. In Philarch he is the same, on the day
ly the battle of Tarsus, when every one else thought only of the great battle which was about to decide the fate of the Republic. Brutus "wrote all day long till night, writing a Compendium of Polybius."

The appearance of Caesar's ghost and the other principal incidents of the period which preceded the battle of Philippi are in Oenantharch, in both the lives of Caesar and Brutus. In neither place is the ghost spoken of as the ghost of Caesar. In the life of Brutus—"I spirit answered him, and thy evil spirit, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the City of Philippi. Brutus being no otherwise afraid, replied again unto it: 'Well, then I shall see thee again!' In the life of Caesar—"The image answered him: I am thy illAngel, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the City of Philippi. Then—"
Brutus replied again, and said, "I see, I shall see them."

The fifth act follows Othello closely. The announcement by the messenger that the sign of battle is hung out, the parley, Cassius' protestations to Messala, are all found in Othello. The dialogue between Brutus and Cassius as to the disposal of themselves in the event of defeat is in the main from Othello. In Shakespeare, an inconsistency appears to exist between the philosophical doctrines of Brutus when he blames Cato for committing suicide, and his almost immediate resolution to put an end to his own life should he lose the battle of Philippi. This seeming inconsistency arises from Shakespeare's misreading the passage in North's Othello. "Brutus answered him, being yet but a young man and not over greatly"
experienced in the world, I trust (I know not how) a certain rule of Philosophy by
which I did greatly blame and
reprove Cato for killing himself, as
being no lawful, nor godly act, Touching
the gods; nor concerning, men valiant:
not to give place and yield to divine
prudence... but being wry in the
midst of the danger... I am of a contrary
mind. For if it be not the will of God that
this Battell fall not fortunate for me, I
will look no more for hope, but will
ride me of this miserable world and
content me with my future." Here,
Brutus refers to his opinion against
suicide as one which he had enter-
tained in his youth, but had now abandoned.
This is a striking instance of Shakespeare's
invariable use of his authorities.

It is very difficult to represent
a battle on the stage, especially as in
the Elizabethan times, for they did not
theatrical Shakespeare's Outlaws 140
have much pageantry, but only a great number of men out the scene.

Shakespeare manages the Battle of Philippi well here. The play's picture in the events of the battle but he has condensed the two battles of Philippi into one. Therefore Brutus and Cassius are in the same battle but they are in different divisions so that one may be successful and one not. Even in the description of a great battle Shakespeare does not forget the little things that make a play human.

It is a pretty touch when Cassius tells

Cinndarns to go up on the hill and
take for "my sight was very thick."

When Cinndarns comes down Cassius takes leave of him. In his last words he glories that he has killed Caesar. But at his death we think none of him, for nothing gives us a

better opinion of a man than to
have a clear notion him as
Cicero does here. Cassius is also
dignified by the tribute from Brutus.
"It is impossible that one Rome
Should freed thy fellow friends, but nature
To this dead man than you shall see me pay".

v sec. 4. The rest of the play, the taking of
Sicilia, Antony's kind treatment of him,
and Brutus account of the second appearance
of the ghost, are from Plutarch. But he
v sec. 5. doesn't mention the ghost as Caesar.
The second Buttell bring at hand, this spirit
appeared again unto him, but speak-

v sec. 6. was a word. Thereupon Brutus knowing
that he should die, did put himself to
all hazard in Buttell, but yet fighting
he could not be slain." In Shakespeare
Brutus says "The ghost of Caesar hath
appeared to me
Two several times by night: at Tarsis once,
And last night here in Philippi fields.

* "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p.47.
I knew my time was come.

Thus it seems that Brutus identifies the spectre as the ghost of Caesar the second time it appears and not the first.

Plutarch gives two probable means of Brutus' death. He came as near to him as he could, and taking his sword by the hilt, with both his hands, and pulling down upon the point of it, ran him through. Others say that not he but Strato (at his request) held the sword in his hand, and turned his head wide, and that Brutus fell down upon it, and so ran himself through, and died presently. Shakespeare follows the second suggestion. It is probable that Strato was a free Roman in Brutus' service, attached to him and not a slave. He presumed that to hold the sword was his duty, therefore he did it. It is a recommendation for him.
What Antony in spite of all his
tility could not choose but admire
and respect in Brutus was his
disinterestedness, and this admiratio
is the more significant as coming
from an enemy. Plutarch says-
Antonius spoke it openly several
times, that he thought that of all
them that had slain Caesar, there
was none but Brutus only that was
moved to do it, as thinking the act com-
mentable of itself. "Shakespeare has made
magnificent use of this passage at the
end of this tragedy. When standing, by
the dead body of Brutus, Antony say-
"This was the noblest Roman of them all,
All the conspirators save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only, in a general sense, thought
and commissed good to all, made me of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
Do mind'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"