

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

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1.

A Study of Shakspeare's Julius Caesar with Reference to North's Plutarch.

In Julius Caesar as in all the great works of Shakspeare 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 every 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 misnamed, for although Caesar dies at the beginning, his 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 characters 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 or altered would be 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, there he found

passages so nobly phrased, whole dialogues sustained at 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 biographer and the dramatist remains. Whenever Shakespeare found himself placed between poetry and history, which are sometimes at variance, he follows the higher laws of poetry, for he makes his figures live and works up history with dramatic effect.

Very noticeable is the difference between Shakespeare's treatment of Plutarch and his other sources. Usually he derives from his 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 thrown a rich mantle of poetry over all". He never surpassed the style and meter of this

play. It is not too stiff and regular as the earlier plays, are inclined to be, or not too free as the later plays are inclined to be. Shakespeare is clearly at the height of his powers.

Sc I.

The play commences with the disaffection of the tribunes who are represented as the adherents of Pompey. This scene is used to let the audience know of Caesars increasing power and ambition.

Flavius says -

"These waving feathers plucked from Caesars wing
Will make him fly an ordinary fitch.

Who else would sour above the view of new
and keep us all in servile fearfulness.

While the incident in this scene is taken from Plutarch the situation is different. In Plutarch it happened after Caesar had been offered the crown, - "after that (the refusal of the crown by Caesar) there were set up images of Caesar in the city with diadems upon their heads like kings. There the two tribunes Flavius and Marullus went

1. Polf edition of Julius Caesar act I sc 1. 271-74

and pulled down, and furthermore, meeting with them, that first saluted Caesar, as being they committed them to prison." In Shakespeare this is on 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 Feast of Lupercal. Marcellus and Brutus themselves do not pull down the images but tell the citizens to remove them. The crown has not yet been offered to Caesar. Thus at the very beginning of the play we know that Caesar is not a favorite of all, but that his thirst for power makes him hated. Shakespeare always takes his 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 rejoicing of the people when he refuses the crown. It gives us the key to the situation. The

Tribunes and people of power in Rome hate Caesar on account of jealousy of his growing power, while the common people are urged on to hatred of Caesar by the example of the tribunes and by their magnifying Caesar's faults and his injuries to Pompey. According to Shalbach Caesar was greatly loved by the people until shortly before his death. He refers 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 every man, and to use them gently, being more ceremonious therein than was looked for in any one of his years" Again - The first show and proof of the love and good will which the people did bear unto Caesar, was when he sued to be Tribune

of the soldiers (to wit, Colonel of a

thousand footmen) standing against
 Caius Pompeius, at what time he was
 preferred and chosen before him. But the
 second and more manifest proof than
 the first, was at the death of his aunt Julia,
 the wife of Marius the elder ---- and at
 her burial did boldly venture to shew
 forth the images of Marius; the which
 was the first time that they were seen after
 Sylla's victory ... For when there were some
 cried out upon Caesar for doing of it, the
 people on the other side kept still, and
 rejoiced at it, clapping of their hands; and
 thanked him that he had brought, as
 it were out of hell, the remembrance of
 Marius' honor again into the world, which
 had so long time been obscured and buried.
 ---- Caesar was the first that praised his
 own wife with funeral oration when she
 was dead, the which also did increase
 the people's good will the more, seeing
 him of so kind and gentle nature"

1. Skelton's "Shakespeare's Othello". pp. 45-46 - IP 4.

that Caesar was a favorite is shown also by the number of offices to which he was elected. He was chosen Tribune Militum¹; Bishop of Rome²; Praetor of Spain³; Consul with Calpurnius Bibulus without gainsaying or contradiction of any man⁴; Consul the second time⁵; Dictator⁶; Consul with Decimus⁷; Consul the fourth time⁸; Dictator perpetual⁹. "Furthermore he was so entirely beloved of his soldiers, that to do him service (where otherwise they were no more than other men in any private quarrel) if Caesar's honor were touched, they were inimicable, and would so desperately venture 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.

sc. 2. In scene 14, we get a little insight to

¹ Skelton "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 45 ² *ibid.* p. 48 ³ *ibid.* p. 51
⁴ p. 53. ⁵ *ibid.* p. 69. ⁶ *ibid.* p. 76. ⁷ *ibid.* p. 70. ⁸ *ibid.* p. 91. ⁹ *ibid.* p. 92.
¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 56

into the characters of Caesar, Antony, Decius, Brutus, Cassius and Cæca, all of which are found in Plutarch. The true name of Decius was Decimus Brutus. It is interesting to note how Shakespeare follows Plutarch even in his mistakes. 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 Decimus 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 Lupercal and Antony running in the Holy Course, and touching Calpurnia as he ran, are all in Plutarch. The character of Antony is only 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 gamester; I do lack some part of that quick spirit that is in Antony."

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 Plutarch the warning of the Soothsayer is merely mentioned when enumerating the signs that were seen before Caesar'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 as a means to bring out Caesar's character, who when he hears the warning merely says, - "He is a dreamer let us leave him; - pass."²

1. Prof edition of Julius Caesar. Act I sc II l. 27-28

2. Ibid act I sc II l. 23

and shows us that what he considers as idle talk does not awaken his fears, in fact makes no impression on him.

The dialogue in which Cassius modestly discovers to Brutus the fact that the people are groaning under Caesar's yoke and are looking to him to relieve them, is not suggested by Plutarch, but Shakespeare uses it to prepare us for Brutus' part in the conspiracy and also to bring out the characters of Brutus and Cassius, by contrasting them. Brutus is introduced in a way extremely in harmony with the character historically. He is utterly destitute of humor, therefore there is a weakness some where. He has a curious solemn 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 would kill Antony. This is a character complete, finished and historically true. Shakespeare has added nothing but he has omitted the hint as to Brutus being Caesars 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 one individual overbalances his moral judgment.

Cassius' 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 overthrowing the state, and it makes Cassius a 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 cured evil away with the tyranny and that Cassius hated the tyrant." This shows itself in the scenes in which Cassius tries to win first Brutus and then Casca to his design. It is not so much envy as it is, that to Cassius it is intolerable that any man should become a god. Plutarch says, "Cassius ever from his cradle could not abide any manner of Tyrants."

Brutus' remark "I do fear the people choose 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, cleverly contrived to stir up Brutus to action. Shakespeare secures unity of action and a means of stronger characterization by making Cassius the sole inventor. When Cassius hears Brutus use the word "Fear" he begins by telling him how all the citizens of the best respect in Rome look to him to free them from their yoke, and gradually reaches his point, -

"O you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked
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 Shakesperic own. Plutarch does

not tell the story of Cassius and Caesar
swimming in the Tiber when Cassius
had to lead Caesar to the shore, nor
does he mention the subtle temper
which Shakespeare suggests.

"He had a fever when he was in Spain
and when the fit was on him I did mark
how he did shake, 't is true this god
did shake;

His coward lips did from their colour fly,
And that same eye whose truth doth give
the world

And lose its luster, I did hear him groan".
Cassius says this with a sneer, and
simply means that Caesar is a
man like the rest and not a God.
Shakespeare saw how well this
would serve to bring out the difference
in the two natures and so used
it. Cassius' courage is active
and not the passive courage
which gives one strength to submit

to the inevitable with calmness. Thus, in the swimming match it is this that causes him to call for rescue. Cassius would have drowned rather than accept aid from his rival. So on the sick bed Caesar's highest physical and intellectual activity is helpless and he shivers and cries for drink like a sick girl. Thus the different nature of Cassius cannot understand Caesar's greatness and wonders what the people find in him that they so admire. But the very fact that Caesar was a weak man physically makes what he accomplished, all the more wonderful.

Although Heribach does not mention these incidents he tells the story of Caesar saving his life by swimming in the battle by the sea from the tower of Phos. "When 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 spears on every side. Leaping
 into the sea, with great hazard saved
 himself by swimming. It is said, that
 then, holding several books 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 suck into
 the water; howbeit the boat was rowed
 presently. Plutarch tells this story
 without comment but certainly with
 no view to depreciate Caesar. The
 instance of Caesar's cowardice as given
 in Shakespeare is judiciously chosen
 by one who wished to excite jealousy
 of a man in power. Historically
 there is no foundation for it and
 Plutarch mentions his courage many

times. "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 whosoever would
 compare the house of Fabius... it will
 appear that Caesar's prowess and deeds
 of arms did excel them all together"

"When one brought him his horse to
 get upon, which he used in battle,
 he said unto them; "When I have
 overcome mine enemies, I will
 then get upon him to follow the
 chase, but now let us give them charge.
 Therewith 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"

"Arivistus courage was well cooled,
 when he saw Caesar was come"

1. Steeles "Shakespeares Plutarch" p. 55.
 2. Ibid p. 58.

He wondered much at Caesar's courage, and the more when he saw his own enemy in a rage withal".

"In the end he followed a dangerous determination, to embark unknown in a little pinnace of 12 oars only, to pass over the sea again to Brundisium the which he could not do without great danger, considering that all the sea was full of Pompey's ships and armies".² These quotations are enough to show that Plutarch didn't make Caesar out a coward. But Shakespeare makes history the greatest 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 present the view of him which gave a reason for the conspiracy. But yet Caesar is

1. Skelton's "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 59.

2. Ibid #77.

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, he took 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 facts, 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 covetous desire he had to be called king; which first gave the people just cause, and next his secret enemies honest colour, to bear him ill will."

Shakespeare has represented Caesar

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 personae.

The great question is why Shakespeare made his Caesar such an insignificant picture of the real Caesar. Rome practically controlled the world, Caesar saw clearly that the Republic was not a republic in the proper sense. Every body outside and some in Italy were regarded by the Republicans as merely subjects

and having no interest in the Commonwealth whatever. Caesar saw that this form of government could not 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 had not 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 work to do and would not be killed until he had done it. Brutus had no exceptions of this, he thought Caesar's attempts were infractions of the constitution and that it would be dreadful for Caesar to rule.

Shakespeare has represented this stupendous and amiable figure as a weakling, a man easily influenced, particularly a bombastic

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 jistingly 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 greatness.

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's 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 weak side of Caesar.

It made no difference whether it was a weak side 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 it 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 sides 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 convention 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 "Lambertine" is an example. That is, a tyrant type had been established, and the character of Caesar obeys that

convention.

Although Shakespere most frequently emulates yet it is true that some of the most beautiful passages are expansions of a mere thought borrowed from Plutarch. For instance, the thought of Cassius self conceit is expanded into that most beautiful speech of Cassius -

"Why man he doth betide the narrow world,
Like a Colossus," etc.

The words of Cassius set Brutus to thinking. The Brutus of whom Plutarch says - "Notwithstanding the great honors and favor Caesar showed unto him kept him back that of himself alone he did not conspire nor consent to depose him of his kingdom. For Caesar did not only save his life after the battle of Pharsalia, when Pompey fled, and did at his request also save many

us of his friends besides, but furthermore
 he put a marvellous confidence in
 him." Shakespeare omits this for
 he could hardly make Brutus other
 than a detestable character if he em-
 phasized it. As it is he lays stress
 on the grandeur of Brutus's soul
 which is an appeal to the poetic
 sense, and on the impression Caesar
 makes on forceful and strong men
 like Brutus. For this shows the
 force and strength of Caesar's character,
 and it is by such means that
 Shakespeare reminds the audience of
 that side of Caesar's character.

To see that Brutus was given to self
 study, if he does 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 repute himself a son of Rome

Under these hard conditions as this time
is like to lay on us".¹

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 he says of Cassius gives the
audience a clear picture of
Cassius character. This is from
Plutarch. "As for these fat men, and
smooth combed heads", quoth he,
'I never reckon of them; but these
pale-visaged, and carrion lean people,
I fear most." ² Antony's easy nature
comes out in his reply.

"I fear him not, Caesar; he's not dangerous
He is a noble Roman and well given".³

All through the play there are
many human touches, the one
here of Caesar having a deaf ear

1. Representation of Julius Caesar Act I sc 2, ll. 168-171
2. Skeats "I shall peruse Plutarch" p. 97. 3. Julius Caesar Act I sc II ll. 192-193

is a good illustration of Shakespeare's power to select the details that make a character real. Another illustration of this, is Casca's 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 Casca was cultured and spoke Greek. Plutarch says, in his account of the assassination, "Casca on the other side cried in Greek and called his Brother to help him." Plutarch makes little mention of Casca 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. Skeat's "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 100.

finished play. Another illustration of Shakesperes power to make his characters human is the little touch about the conspirators having gone to school together. If Shakesper had never gone to school he wouldnt have said these things.

Although the editors usually quote Plutarchs 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 Antonius is more in keeping with Casca's way of telling the story. "When he [Antonius] was come to Caesar, he made his fellow Conjurors with him lift him up, and so he did put his Laurell crown upon his head signifying thereby that he had deserved to be King. But Caesar making as though he refused it, turned away his head. The people were so rejoiced at it, that

they all clapped their hands for joy. Antonius again did put it on his head; Caesar again refused it; and thus they were striving off and on a great while together. As oft as Antonius did put this Laurel Crown unto him, a few of his followers rejoiced at it; and as oft also as Caesar refused it all the people together clapped their hands. . . . Caesar in a rage rose out of his seat and plucking down the choller 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 seated in the market place after his return from Alba. The consuls, Praetors, and whole assembly of the senate go to tell him of the honors they have decreed for him in his absence, and he

offends them by "sitting still in his majesty, disdain[ing] to rise unto them when they come in and answering them that his honore has more need to be cut off than enlarged" 1

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 be cut was among his friends in his own house. The Supercalia and the offering of the crown are then described as coming after this insult to the magistrates of the Commonwealth."

In Shakspeare Caesar excuses himself on the ground of his infirmity.

Hotspur says, "Apartward to excuse his folly he imputed it to his disease, saying, that their wits are not perfect which have this disease of the falling-will." 2 O'Flarich also refers to Caesar's

1. Speant's "Shakspeare's O'Flarich." p 90-

2. *ibid* p. 90.

falling sickness, elsewhere. "For concerning the constitution of his body, he was lean, white, and soft-skinned, - and often subject to headache, and therewith to the falling sickness." And again - "For as he did set his men in battle array, the falling sickness took him, whereunto he was given"²

Caesar's weakness, as 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

¹ Speaks "Shakespeare's Othello" p. 57.

² Ibid. p. 89

political conditions. He refuses the crown "each time grunter than the other", showing want of decisive reading in dealing with the mob, and on his return from the Capitol he is too entrained in Hypocrisy to conceal the angry spot on his face.

Cassius sees that Caesar's account sinks into Brutus' mind. He feels his intellectual superiority over him because he can't be influenced. In this respect Cassius is the intellectual superior of all in the play. He can't 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 ^{writing of the} placards is forged.

⁴ I sc. 3. In scene III in Caesar's dramatic

account of the prodigee he has
 become so moved that he has forgotten
 his affectation of rusticity. The falling
 of his affectation lets his true nature
 to see. All the omens here, related
 are from Plutarch except the meeting
 of the lion in the Capitol. But here
 we have the account in its bare
 simplicity and somewhat cold enumer-
 ation of facts, faults which are
 an inevitable result of the inferiority
 of the historical style to that of dramatic
 poetry. Shakespeare gives movement, color,
 and life to things.

Plutarch doesn't mention offering
 Caesar the crown again after he
 refused 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, save here in Italy!"

J. Cress's Julius Caesar Act I. sc. II. l. 84-88

Shakespeare adds this to hasten the catastrophe, and also to show the determination of Cassius and to lead him to disclose the conspiracy to Casca, who replies, -

"You speak to Casca and to such a man
That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold, my hand;
Be factious for redress of 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 was not uncommon but Caesar
does so much of it he gives the idea
of bombast. While Cassius is saying
that the conspirators are waiting for
them in Pompey's porch, Cinna enters,
ambitious to win Brutus to the side
of the conspirators, and Cassius takes
advantage of his eagerness to send
him with the papers which he intends
shall stir up Brutus. Plutarch.

in the life of Caesar, says that these papers were put in Brutus' seat. In the life of Brutus they were put upon old 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 Cimra do it, brings him into closer connection with the conspiracy.

II. sc. 1.

The opening scene of act II is not hinted at in Plutarch who does not mention Lucius. 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 usurped the crown have been

tyrannical. Therefore this is a public cause and it outweighs the personal causes of Caesar's friendship. But we feel, after reading this scene, that Brutus' attitude toward Caesar is that of looking up. The thought of his greatness seems to cast a glamour over the plot and Brutus feels that the grandeur of the victim gives a dignity to the crime. Brutus is one of the noblest and most consistent of Shakespeare's creations. 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 let us know the inside workings

of the conspiracy, and to give a finishing touch to Brutus' character, for he comes out here in his full strength. It is 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 force of men, the suzerance of their souls, and the time's abuse, won't keep them to their purpose, there is no need to swear and they might as well stop.

The whispering of Brutus and Cassius is very natural in this scene. While they are talking it is necessary that the others say something and so we have this discussion about the points of the compass. Nothing could be more 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 would 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." In Shakespeare, the conspirators at first are inclined to enroll Cicero among their numbers, but Brutus objects, "For he will never follow anything that other men begin".¹ Cassius gives up as he always does when

1. Skelton's "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 114
2. Plutarch's Julius Caesar act II sc. 1, l. 151-152

Brutus makes up his mind. He reasons 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. His name also had a good deal to do with the feeling that if they could have Brutus the justness 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.

The conspirators again give way to Brutus when he does not want Antony killed. Cassius does not give this up so easily for he reads Antony well. Independence has become to him an ideal dearer than life.

He will stop for nothing now.

"I had as lief not live as to be in awe of such a thing as I myself." But it is necessary to keep Brutus in sympathy with the conspiracy and so Cassius yields 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 grown superstitious of late. It is probable that Cassius' fear lest Caesar stay away from the Capitol caused him to offer this as a reason, and it would not be unlikely for in those times the belief in omens was almost universal. This fear causes the

conspirators in Shakespeare, as in Plutarch, to plan to go to Caesar's house and escort him to the senate, but his fear keep him home on the day set aside for the murder.

Before the conspirators separate for the night Mellicus suggests Caius Ligarius as a conspirator on account of his hatred toward Caesar. This is from Plutarch who says - "Now amongst Pompey's friends, there was one called Caius 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."

Portia, as she appears in Plutarch, is almost as fine and interesting a character as she is in Shakespeare.

North's 'Shakespeare's Plutarch' p 113

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 Plutarch gives. We regret the absence of that beautiful scene in which Brutus and Portia take leave of each other at Elea. The Portia of Plutarch, in the way in which she understood and exhibited married love, represents the most beautiful type of a wife. The farewell at Elea is very human and not at all theatrical. At times, in Shakespeare's play she is statuesque, but always an impressive figure. Portia's expostulations with her husband for his want of confidence in her, when

she attributes the self-inflicted wound
 by which she thought to convince
 him of her constancy, is from
 Plutarch, almost every line is
 suggested by Plutarch. But Shakspeare
 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
 here that she goes further than
 the Portia of Plutarch, 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 8th in which
 Holspur takes leave of Kate.

The sickness of Ligarius and

his discarding it when he finds that Brutus has something for him to do is from Plutarch. The only difference being that in the history Brutus seeks Ligarius at his house while in the drama it is Ligarius that comes to the house of Brutus, this seems more consistent with Brutus' character and shows Ligarius' absolute confidence in Brutus.

Act II sc. 2. All the circumstances preliminary to the murder, including the dreams of Calpurnia, and Caesar's apprehension on that particular day, rest on Plutarch. But his account is wanting in clearness and precision when contrasted with the force and life which Shakespeare has given it in its dramatic form. If we accept vacillation as a description of Caesar's character we must explain his strong speeches as vanity and self assertion. But we

feel certain of his sincerity and courage, when he says -

"Towards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once: This beautiful thought is suggested by a passage in Plutarch in reference to other events. Just after 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 at home, he is not hiding behind his wife, he is not afraid but

1. *Plutarch's Julius Caesar* - Act II sc. 2. ll. 32-33
2. *Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Romans* - Plutarch - p. 72

is easily led, easily influenced, and wishes to indulge his wife. Apprehension 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 between Decius and Caesar where Decius prevails against Calpurnia, and Caesar decides to go to the Senate, Plutarch has no hint of the splendid characterization of Caesar struggling between his love for his wife, his fear, and his pride. His giant intellect by its very strength is unable to contend against the low cunning of a fifth rate intriguer like Decius. In this scene Decius goes so far in protecting his love to Caesar that he becomes the most odious character in the play. Caesar's manner to the conspirators is very amiable, the sweetness & gentleness of his nature

is noted. He is cruel when necessary, but his personal character is adverse to cruelty. It is his forgiving nature and his unwillingness to put the conspirators to death that led to his own death. Before they leave the house to go to the senate Caesar says - "Good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me;

And we, like friends, will straight way go together". Brutus in an "aside" says to this, -

"That way like is not the same, O Caesar the heart of Brutus yearns to think upon."²

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. Artemidorus and his warning to Caesar is suggested by Otletarch but the words of the paper are Shakespeare's own.

1. Reed's Julius Caesar Act I sc 2, ll. 126-127
 2. Solid Act I sc 2, ll. 128-129

In this short scene we partly correct our idea of Caesar, for a man of humble position who has nothing to gain, regards him as a pattern of goodness and justice. Our opinion of Caesar has been somewhat modified, because Decius has shown himself so odious and we feel that he is to be sacrificed by a lot of envious men.

Act II sc. 4.

The anxiety of Portia while her husband, whose terrible secret she has extracted from him, is at the Capitol, 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 uneasiness and her sending of Lucius to the senate without a message, 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 Portia, 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 feeble man liable to be crushed by the throng that follows Caesar, makes him a real person.

Act III sc 1

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 have

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 sooth-sayer going to the Capitol he would have been as likely as not to toss this remark to him.

When addressed by Artemidorus Caesar unconsciously adopts the language of a king. "Who touches us wrongfully shall last be served." This is particularly fitting here, where 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".

1. Shrew's "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 99.

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 porches 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 on the fifteenth of the month March, which the Romans call Idus Martius, 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, Poppilius says to Cassius. "I wish your enterprise today may thrive", and the conspirators think he refers to the conspiracy. In Plutarch he says - "I pray the goddess

1. Skeels' "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 116. 2. Plutarch's Julius Caesar Act III Sc 1 l. 12

you may go through with that you have taken in hand; but inthall, dispatch I read you, for your enterprise is betrayed. When he had said, he presently departed from them, and left them both afraid that their conspiracy would out." Shakespeare follows Plutarch and Brutus calms the frightened Cassius, with -

"Pompilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;
For, look, he smiles and Caesar does not change."²

It is interesting to see how Brutus who till now had not been a very good conspirator but has thwarted them on every occasion saves 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

1. Skeat's *Shakespeare's Plutarch* p. 117

2. Rolfe's *Julius Caesar*, Act III sc. 1 ll. 24-25

himself like a despot with absolute power. This is very proper here for it justifies the conspirators if any thing can -

"If thou dost tread and pray and fawn for him I spurn thee like a cur out of my way. Know Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause will he be satisfied."

This is not much like the real Caesar. It shows him at his worst, but it is proper if Caesar show his weak 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 Plutarch closely.

Shakespeare represents Caesar as abandoning all notions of safety or defence as soon as he found that Brutus was among his assailers. The exclamation "Et tu, Brute", is not found in Plutarch. 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 "True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York" 1595, and also in a poem by S. Nicholson entitled "Colastes his afterwit". (1600) Evidently some play had contained these words. It is very clear that the audience expected to hear the words "Et, tu Brute", They were associated with the murder of Caesar. If Shakespere 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 now in sympathy with Caesar, but Shakespere makes the conspirators a little more

human by having Brutus say -
 "Publius, good cheer,
 There is no harm intended to your person,
 Nor to no Roman else; so tell them, Publius".

Antony, of course, 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 menial but as a person in the service of Antony. He is called a "friend of Antony", by Brutus. Cassius 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 his devotion to Caesar and his turbid

eloquence. The complete delineation 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 despicable, 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 to whom his attachment is genuine. This scene with Antony serves well to bring out one side of Cassius's 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 as strong as any man's in the disposing of new dignities".

1. Arden's Julius Caesar act II sc 1. ll, 178-179

This scene also serves to develop Brutus' character. His love for Caesar is again brought out 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 mounting 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 Plutarch's statement, "that they supped 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 reinstate Caesar in our affections.

All the rest of Act III including Act III sc. 7. the orations of Brutus and Antony, the reading of the will, the announcement of the coming of Octavius and the incident of the port Cuiria is found in Plutarch. It is chiefly in the orations 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' speech brings out his ignorance of men's hearts,

his blindness to actual facts, and his want of common sense. So little does 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 Laconic 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 Shakespear 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 note in some of his Epistles, that he counterfeited that brief compendious

manner of speech of the Lacedaemonians".
The whole speech in Shakespeare is filled with tragic irony for Brutus brings ruin on his own head when he beseeches the people to hear Antony.

Then follows Antony's beautiful speech which can't be worn out.

"Bear with me

My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar
and I must pause 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.

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

In this speech, for the first time, some indication, of blame comes out

While Antony is still talking to the citizens, a servant announces Octavius' arrival and adds - "I heard him say Brutus and Cassius are red like mad men through the gates of Rome". This shows Shakespeare's little care for time. He cares only for the impression of time on the audience.

Act III sc. 3. The tragic-comic incident of the death of the fat Curia is made more of in Shakespeare than in Plutarch. The questioning by the citizens and the answers of Curia are added by Shakespeare for comic effect.

Act IV sc. 1. The characters and situations in the first part of Act IV are taken from Plutarch's Life of Antonius. But here the place of meeting was on a small island in the river Rhenus. That the scene is laid in Rome in Shakespeare's

"Prof's Julius Caesar Act III sc 2. ll 267-268."

may, is evident from the fact that
 Lepidus is sent to Caesar's house for
 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 he 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 behind 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 ungenerous and
 cold as ice. The way he

insists on calmly having things
his own way shows the greatness
and frightful coldness of his character.

Act IV sc. 2.

In all Shakespear's plays there
is hardly a finer and more memorable
scene than the quarrel between the
two leaders and their reconciliation.

The ground work of the scene
Shakespear found in Plutarch. He
has wrought up his material into an
admirable scene in which, while
some of the speeches are almost
copied from Plutarch, the interest
and feeling of the dialogue are much
heightened by some slight poetic touches.

But these are in no way inconsistent
with the characters which history
has assigned to Brutus and Cassius.

Here Cassius' affection for Brutus
comes out. He was honestly attached
to Brutus. We don't 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.
 Plutarch offers a fine opportunity to
 emphasize these differences here and
 any other poet but Shakespeare would have
 seized it. But Shakespeare's method is differ-
 ent. He is seeking truth and life
 rather than unity 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.

1. The usually just and generous hearted Brutus is completely in the wrong. Cassius' impetuous nature plunges into the quarrel at once. At first Brutus is calm and his very calmness makes Cassius the more infuriated, whose replies are at first sharp and hasty. But he gradually softens and endeavors to calm Brutus who loses control of himself pretty quickly and speaks stronger than he believes. What a beautiful touch of nature when Cassius says - "I said an elder soldier, not a better; Did I say better?" What a natural reply Brutus makes when Cassius accuses him of making his infirmities greater than they are. "I do not till you practice them on me."² These replies are so natural that no one but Shakespeare would have thought of them.

Brutus cools off and comes around beautifully when he sees that Cassius

1. *Caesar's Julius Caesar*. Act IV sc. 3 ll. 55-57

2. *Ibid.* Act IV sc. 3 ll. 87

is about to break down and beg his pardon. The reason of Shakespeare's uncontestable 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 little seeming contradictions which keep his characters closer to nature and avoid all superficiality.

There ^{are} a few points of slight difference between Plutarch and Shakespeare in this scene, that may be mentioned. In Shakespeare, Cassius objects to the condemnation of Lucius Pella because he is a friend of his. In Plutarch we read - "This judgment much disliked Cassius, because he himself had secretly (not many days before) warned two of his friends, attainted and convicted of the like offence, and openly had cleared them". In Shakespeare Brutus answers - "What! shall we of us
break's 'Shakespeare's Plutarch' p. 185"

That struck the foremost man in all this world
 But for supporting robbers, - shall we now
 Contaminate our fingers with base bribes"¹.
 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. However Plutarch
 mentions it. Another difference is
 that in Plutarch it is a Philosopher,

Phaonius that enters during the
 quarrel and he recites a verse of Homer -
 "My Lords, I pray you turnen both to me,
 For I have seen more years than suchie three"
 Shakspeare makes it more lively by having
 a poet recite a verse of his own -
 "Love and to friends as two such men should be;
 For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye"².

Another seeming inconsistency of character
 comes out here for it is the patient and
 gentle Brutus that is exasperated and
 the violent Cassius who says -

1. Arps's Julius Caesar - Act IV sc 3 ll. 21-25
 2. Shakspeare's Julius Caesar - Act IV sc 3 ll. 129-130

"Bear with him Brutus, 'tis his fashion".
 But Cassius has some sense of humor
 and Brutus has not a bit, he is always
 on his dignity.

The manner of Portia's 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 Portia's death he pretends
 to Messala that he hadn't heard of it
 and takes credit to himself for not being
 moved. It is an evident slip in Shakespeare's
 part. Brutus' stoical indifference
 in his reply to Messala is not from
 Plutarch - "Why, farewell, Portia, - We must die Messala.
 With meditating that she must die once,
 I have 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 Philippi Julius Caesar Act IV sc 3. ll. 187-190

of Luppi 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 devise nothing more
than to put all to the hazard of battle
as soon as might be possible to the end
he might quickly restore his country
to her former liberty, or rid him forth-
with of this miserable world, being still
troubled in following 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
Shaks. "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 138.

decided that they shall go to Philippi to meet the enemy. Later it was seen, as before, that Brutus was in the wrong and Cassius right.

The kindly side of Brutus' nature comes out in his relation to the page. There is nothing more tender in all Shakspeare than this scene. The Brutus who at the call of duty could stab a Caesar cannot wake 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 Portia's death. He asks for music and even this detail has its significance when contrasted with the brief remark made by Caesar respecting Cassius, "he hears no music". Thus we see him on the eve of the battle of Philippi, seated in his tent, taking up a book and asking for music. In Plutarch he is the same. On the day

before the battle of Pharsala, 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 Otho's, 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 - "A spirit answered him, I am thy evil spirit, Brutus; and thou shalt see me by the City of Philippi's." 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 ill Angel, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the City of Philippi's.' Then Otho's 'Shakespeare's Otho' p. 136

Brutus replied again, and said, 'Well,
I shall see them!'

Act. 1. 4. 7. The fifth act follows Plutarch closely. The announcement by the messenger that the sign of battle is hung out, the parley, Cassius' protestations to Messala, are all found in Plutarch.

The dialogue between Brutus and Cassius as to the disposal of themselves in the event of defeat is in the main from Plutarch. 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 Plutarch.

"Brutus answered him, being yet but a young man and not over greatly

1. Skeat's "Shakespeare's Plutarch", p. 104.

experienced in the world, I trust (I know not how) a certain rule of Philosophy by the 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 providence . . . but being now 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 out fortunate for us, I will look no more for hope, but will rid me of this miserable world and content me with my future". Here, Brutus refers to his opinion against suicide as one which he had entertained in his youth, but had now abandoned. This is a striking instance of Shakespeares careless use of his authorities.

It is very difficult to represent a battle on the stage, especially so in the Elizabethan times, for they did not
 Skeats's Shakespeare's Plutarch p 140

have much pageantry, but only a great number of men on the scene.

Shakespeare manages the Battle of Philippi well here. He follows Plutarch 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

Esc. 3. Shakespeare does not forget the little things that make a play human. It is a pretty touch when Cassius tells Pindarus to go up on the hill and look for "my sight was ever thick." When Pindarus comes down Cassius takes leave of him. In his last words he glories that he has killed Caesar. But at his death we think more of him, for nothing gives us a better opinion of a man than to

have a slave mowen him as
Pindarus does here. Cassius is also
dignified by the tribute from Brutus.
"It is impossible that ever Rome
Should breed thy fellow; Friends, I owe more tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay".

§ sc. 4. The rest of the play, the taking of
Lucilius, Antony's kind treatment of him,
and Brutus account of the second appearance
of the ghost, are from Plutarch. But he

§ sc. 5. does not mention the ghost as Caesar.
The second Battell being at hand, this spirit
appeared again unto him, but spake
never a word. Thereupon Brutus knowing
that he should die, did put himself to
all hazard in Battell, but yet fighting
he could not be slain".² In Shakespere
Brutus says "The ghost of Caesar hath
appeared to me

I see several times by night; at Sardis once,
And last night here in Philippi fields,

² Skeat's Shakespere's Plutarch p. 147.

1. Rolfe's Julius Caesar Act 5 sc 3. ll. 100-100

"I know my hour is come".¹

Thus it seems that Brutus identifies the specter 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 falling down upon the point of it, ran himself through. Others say that not he but Strato (at his request) held the sword in his hand, and turned his head aside, and that Brutus fell down upon it, and so ran himself through, and died presently."² 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.

¹ *Perseus' Julius Caesar*. Act. V sc. 5 ll. 17-20

² *Greene's "Shakespeare's Plutarch"*. P. 151

That Antony in spite of all his levity could not choose but admire and respect in Brutus was his disinterestedness, and his admiration is the more significant as coming from an enemy. Plutarch says -
"Antony 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 commendable of itself." Shakespeare has made magnificent use of this passage at the end of his tragedy. When standing by the dead body of Brutus, Antony says -
"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 honest thought
and common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"²

¹ Skeat's "Shakespeare's Plutarch" p. 149.

² Rich's Julius Caesar act E sc 5 ll 68-76

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