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THE STAGE HISTORY

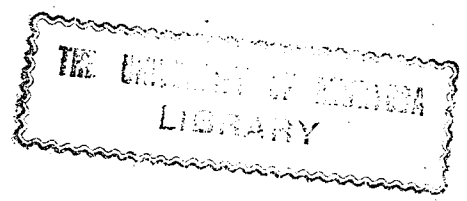
of

SHAKESPEARE'S "JULIUS CAESAR"

by

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THE STAGE HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARE'S
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INTRODUCTION.

In "Julius Caesar" Shakespeare availed himself of a theme already a favourite with the theatre-goers of his day. The story of the overthrow of the foremost man in all the Roman world, the progress of the conspiracy against him, the fall of this mighty prince of antiquity, and his revenge upon the murderers, furnished material well approved as a tragic theme for dramatic art. The subject was a very popular one, and had an abiding fascination for Shakespeare himself. That he made a special study of the character of Caesar is evident from the fact that no other historical personage is so frequently mentioned by him in such laudatory terms.

When the play opens a great political struggle, extending over many years, is reaching its crisis. The Roman republic has grown old and inefficient, it is ruled by a dictator, by a king in all but name, who has risen to a place of power such as no man has occupied in the world before, and republicanism and royalty, as rival principles, divide the community into two camps.

As an historical authority Shakespeare followed North's translation of the Greek biographer Plutarch. From the lives of Julius Caesar, Brutus, and Antony the dramatist took his materials for the play, judiciously selecting such incidents as might form the picture he intended to give of the declining days of the republic. Nevertheless, he gave to the actors that individuality which only a great dramatist can create, and the characters of Brutus, Cassius, Caesar, and Antony are revealed to us by their own deeds and words, and by what others say of them.

PART #1. "JULIUS CAESAR" IN ENGLAND.

The exact date of the first production of "Julius Caesar" on the stage is very uncertain. Malone assigns it to the year 1607. Craik supposes that it "can hardly be assigned to a later date than the year 1607", but that "there is nothing to prove that it may not be of considerably earlier date". Collier goes still further by maintaining that there is good ground for thinking that it was acted before 1603, and that there is no reason for believing it may have been performed in May, 1601. From "Henslowes Diary" we learn that Drayton, Webster, and others were engaged at that date on a tragedy dealing with the same subject, called

(1)

(1) "Henslowe's Diary".

"Caesar's Fall". When a play was a success at one theatre, a drama on a similar subject frequently followed at another, and we know that Henslowe had several playwrights working at this material in the early summer of 1602. Consequently, the probable date of its first production is 1601.

- This variety of drama had already been tried in the popular taste. A series of medley dramas, the work of Thomas Heywood, dealing with classical mythology had been popularized on the London stage during the nineties of the preceding century. Moreover, this particular subject had been frequently used for drama before. "The first day of February, at nyght, 1562, witnessed "Julius Sesar" played at Court, "the earliest instance", Collier declares, "of a subject from Roman history, being brought upon the stage". In 1578 a "Caesar's Tragedy" was published at Paris, and in 1579 a "Caesar and Pompey" was mentioned by Gosson. The latter is no doubt the same play as was performed in 1562. A
- (1) play called the "Storie of Pompey" was acted before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall by the children of St. Paul's in 1580, and two year's later a Latin play on the subject of the death of Caesar, the work of Dr. Richard Hades, chaplain to the Queen, was produced at Christ Church College. Two editions of an anonymous English play of Shakespeare's age entitled "The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey" or "Caesar's Revenge", have also come down to us. One bears the date of 1607, the same year in which Alexander's "Julius Caesar" was printed at London, and the other was apparently published earlier. The first performance of the anonymous play took place in 1594. Malone points out that "in the running title it is called "The Tragedy of Julius Caesar" the better to impose it on the public for the performance of Shakespeare". On November 8th of the same year Henslowe records a "seser and pompie" as acted by the Admiral's men at the Rose Theatre, followed by a "2 pte (part) of sesore" on June 18th, 1595. Thus a wide popularity had been aroused for the life of the greatest man of antiquity, and when Shakespeare's play appeared in 1601 it gave a new vogue to the subject. No doubt its
- (2) great success provoked rival companies to an extraordinary effort, for on May 22, 1602, Henslowe records a "sesers ffalle" produced by the joint efforts of Munday, Drayton, Webster, and Middleton, and in 1604 Lord Stirling's "Julius Caesar" appeared.

- Leonard Digges is the authority for the statement that Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" roused the emulation of all the theatres immediately on its appearance, and was acted with great applause before crowded houses during the poet's life. In the following lines he praises its scenic attractiveness at the expense of Ben Jonson's Roman plays:-
- (3)

"So have I seen when Caesar would appear,
 And on the stage at half-sword parley were
 Brutus and Cassius - oh, how the audience
 Were ravished, with what wonder they went thence!"

- (1) "History of Dramatic Poetry" Collier: Vol.1.p.180.
 (2) "Elizabethan Drama": Schelling: vol.2.pp.21-22.
 (3) ("Shakespeare: Commentaries": Prof.Gervinus.
 ("William Shakespeare": George Brandes: p.302.

"When some new day they would not brook a line
Of tedious though well-laboured Catiline".

(1) On April 10, 1613, "Caesar's Tragedy" was acted at Court under the patronage of King James 1st., and this was possibly Shakespeare's play. In May of the same year John Hemming, a member of the King's Men and a lifelong friend of Shakespeare, produced "Julius Caesar" at Whitehall during Princess Elizabeth's marriage festivities. In the same company were Richard Burbage, the greatest tragic actor of the day, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips.

(2) Burbage was a devoted friend of the poet, and as fine a Shakesperian actor as has ever appeared on the stage. He was the son of James Burbage, a theatrical manager of some note. In appearance he was very graceful, although small in stature, and in voice and gesture he possessed all that is enchanting. Every thought and feeling could be read plainly marked upon his countenance. He commenced acting at a very early age, and soon outstripped all competitors. The character of Brutus was especially associated with him, his just and truthful representation of "the noblest Roman of them all" being very notable.

All of Shakespeare's plays were first performed at the Globe and at the Blackfriar's Theatres. Furthermore, the poet was closely associated with these theatres as an author, an actor, and a manager, and on this account they are the most supremely interesting of all the Elizabethan playhouses. The Globe was built in 1599 by James Burbage, who at this time was manager of the King's Company. It was a large theatre and lay partly open to the weather, differing in this respect from the Blackfriar's, which was a winter playhouse and was therefore roofed in. It quickly won the first place among the London theatres and became the most famous of all Elizabethan playhouses. The Blackfriar's was not occupied by Shakespeare's Company until December 1609, or January 1610, but from this time forward Shakesperian productions were given at both these theatres.

In considering the early stage history of a play it must be borne in mind that a theatre was a very different thing in the time of Shakespeare from what it has become since. When he went to London the theatre was a mere shed, in many cases open to the sky, except for the scaffolding over the stage and the gallery. A large platform, about five feet high, projected into the uncovered central part of the building, and consequently the actors spoke in the very centre of the house. About halfway from the front two pillars supported a roof over the rear part. At the back of the stage was a raised platform or balcony, and under this doors were placed for the entrance of the actors. Rushes were generally strewn on the floor of the stage, except on very special occasions, when mats were used. The fixed roof was painted blue to represent the colour of the sky, and when tragedies were performed it was generally draped with black. Scenery was practically unknown, and the stage machinery was

(1) Stage History: Fleay, p.176.

(2) "Elizabethan Drama": Schelling; vol.2.pp.21-22

of the simplest kind. A few lanterns scattered here and there through the body of the hall shed a dim light, while some candles stuck into branches hung over the stage.

There were no pauses between the scenes, and at the outset no music, except for the flourishes on trumpets at the opening of the play and between the acts. A board containing the name of the place where the action was supposed to be was hung up in some conspicuous part of the building.

(1) No endeavour seems to have been made to adapt the costumes to the represented period or place, as the fashionable dress of the day was used in nearly all the plays. However there was probably an attempt to distinguish nationalities, and differences of rank or profession, by means of false hair and beards, crowns and sceptres, helmets, and weapons of war.

All female parts were taken by boys or men, as it was considered unseemly for women to act at all. This was a striking defect in the practice of the Elizabethan playhouse, and was not remedied till after the Restoration. It is very difficult for us to realize how a boy or young man could adequately interpret Calpurnia or Portia.

The majority of the spectators stood up during the performance, as there were no seats in the pit. In the two galleries, however, benches were to be found, and if the playgoer had plenty of money at his disposal he could hire not only a seat but a cushion. Standing room rarely cost more than a penny, while the prices in the galleries ranged from two-pence to half-a-crown.

It is interesting to note the manner in which ghost scenes, such as the one in "Julius Caesar", were represented at this time. As a rule the ghosts seem to have appeared suddenly and quietly, although in some cases their entrance upon the stage was accompanied by thunder and lightning, and at times by smoke. They usually appeared wrapped in a sheet, with the face whitened and the hands sometimes smeared with blood. The absence of good lighting facilities and expensive stage accessories made it far more difficult to represent such a scene at this time than it does to-day, but it is a noteworthy fact that the Elizabethan audience was very ready of response.

(2) The growth of the Puritan spirit, the plague, and the outbreak of the Civil War led to the closing of the English theatres in September, 1642, when an Order of Parliament forbade all public performances. "Julius Caesar" had been acted at Court by the King's Players on January 31, 1637, under the patronage of King Charles 1st., and this seems to have been the last performance of this play until the more tolerant days of the Restoration had dawned. During this dark and disastrous period of stage history the oppressed actor did not dare hold up his head, but when the Restoration became an accomplished fact and when theatrical performances began to be frequented once more he began to take courage. Soon after the entrance

(1) "Elizabethan Playhouses and other Studies".

(2) "English Dramatic Companies": Murray, vol.1.p.177.
"History of the Stage" ; Fleay:

of Charles 2nd. into London patents were granted to two theatrical companies, Davenant's at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Killigrew's at the Cockpit in Drury Lane. Hart and Mohun were the principal members of Killigrew's Company, while Thomas Betterton was the mainstay of Davenant's.

(1) During their first season at Drury Lane, in the summer of 1663, "Julius Caesar" was performed by Killigrew's Company, with Mohun as Cassius, Hart as Brutus, and Kynaston as Antony. Mohun and Hart were both ranked as excellent actors, and were eminent as Cassius and Brutus respectively. Charles 2nd. said that Mohun "shone like the sun" and Hart "like the moon". The old critic, Rymer, in referring to Hart wrote that the eyes of the audience were prepossessed and charmed by his action before aught of the poet reached their ears, and that to the most wretched of characters he imparted a lustre which so dazzled the sight that the imperfections of the author were unnoticed. Downes says of him, "Mr. Hart, in the part of Arbaces in 'King and no King', Amintor in the 'Maid's Tragedy', Othello, Rollo, Alexander, or Brutus in "Julius Caesar", toward the latter part of his acting, if he acted in any one of these but once in a fortnight, the house was filled as at a new play". Mohun was notable for the spirit and passion which he put into tragic parts. His graceful deportment and dignified manner of treading the stage also won for him high praise from the dramatic critics of his day.

(2) In 1682 the two companies were united, as the rivalry between them became intolerable, and upon the union Hart and Mohun acted no more. At this date "Julius Caesar" was played with Betterton as Brutus, William Smith as Cassius, and Kynaston as Antony. Betterton had been engaged by Davenant in 1662, and it was not long before he became an established favourite. Although his personal appearance was clumsy and his manner unprepossessing, he had a singular habit of thoroughly identifying himself with his part. This was shown in his interpretation of Brutus, a character in which he obtained great success. He was a worthy successor of the celebrated actor, Richard Burbage, and like him inclined to the quieter delivery in a period when bombastic plays were in vogue. His voice was of an enchanting quality, and he possessed the power of expressing passion as it were by a touch of nature, without strain or exaggeration. Cibber says that the main characteristic of his acting was the power "to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice. When the Betterton-Brutus was provoked in his dispute with Cassius, his spirit flew only to his eye, his steady look alone supplied the terror which he disdained to show by an intemperate voice. I never," continues Cibber, "heard a line in tragedy come from Betterton wherein my judgment, my ear and my imagination were not fully satisfied, which since his time, I cannot equally say of any one actor whatsoever."

(1) "Dictionary of National Biography".

"Encyclopedia Britannica".

(2) "Introduction to Shakespeare": Dowden.p.112.

(1) For nearly fifty years Betterton held the stage and attained to great eminence in his profession. Steele said that he had "hardly a motion that any performer of antiquity could surpass him in any of the occasions in which he had appeared upon the stage", while Pepys stated in 1661 that he was regarded as the best actor in the world at that time. He encouraged the substitution of women for boys in female parts, and his wife was the first actress to present a series of Shakespeare's great female characters. From 1663 she gave her husband powerful support, and doubtless took the part of Portia to his Brutus. During his stage career Betterton formed a school of actors which carried on his traditions for many years after his death.

(2) The man who by consensus of opinion was acclaimed as the successor of Betterton was Barton Booth. As a Westminster boy he had attracted attention by the musical sweetness of his voice and by his graceful deportment in the Westminster plays. When he took to the stage as a profession Betterton befriended him and gave him all the assistance he could. His success in London was complete and he gained a reputation only second to that of his great instructor. He was a gentleman by birth, and a man of education and imagination, and these advantages were apparent in his acting. However, he was inclined to place too much emphasis upon moments of supreme effectiveness for which he would save his energies, while he would frequently slide over with an elegant intelligence the weak places in his parts. Competent judges have passed favourable verdicts upon his interpretation of Brutus, a role in which he appeared on several occasions. His perfect articulation and elegant deportment and his dignity and majesty made him specially suited to this character, and consequently he appeared in it to great advantage.

(3) Booth's most formidable rival was Robert Wilks, who took the part of Antony at the Haymarket Theatre during the years 1706 and 1707. He was famous in this role, his personal charm and easy and elegant manner contributing greatly to his success. He was at his best in the oration, although his customary fault of restlessness and the lack of fulness and variety in his voice counted against him when he tried to impress the sentiments and pathos with which the speech abounds.

During his first season at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1717 a celebrated actor, Quin, was assigned the part of Antony, and the following season he appeared as Brutus to the Cassius of Lacy Ryan. Tate Wilkinson says that he was excellent as Brutus, and this statement is borne out by the most trustworthy critics of his day. He has been severely criticised, however, on the grounds that he was an artificial actor who was incapable of merging in the character he played his own individuality. Churchill expresses this idea when he says:

"Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in -
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff - still ^{there} and Quin".

- (1) "A Life of William Shakespeare": Lee: pp.348-365.
 "Dictionary of National Biography".
 (2) "Short History of the English Stage": Sharp: pp.58-61.
 (3) "Dictionary of National Biography".

- (1) The main characteristic of his acting was his studied delivery, which seems to have been very acceptable to the theatregoers of the stilted period to which he belonged. "He carried on the Betterton tradition of the 'heroic' manner in his solemn, ponderous, chant-like, monotonous pronunciation, which gave an effect of ~~oppressive~~ dignity."

"Heavy and phlegmatic, he trod the stage,

Too proud for tenderness, too dull for rage."

Nevertheless he was a man of remarkable qualities and gifts and almost a great actor.

Ryan shared with Quin the lead in tragedy and comedy at Lincoln's Inn Fields for about fourteen years and was one of the most useful, if not the foremost, actor of his day. He excelled in the role of Cassius, giving a very truthful interpretation of that practical and sagacious politician.

- (2) During the reign of Charles 2nd. there were two currents of feeling with reference to Shakespeare. It was impossible to deny the power and attraction of the plays of this great dramatist, but many believed that he belonged to an age which was half-barbarous in comparison with one which had been refined by the growth of art and culture. The result was that many of his plays were altered and adapted to the tastes of the day, and among these was "Julius Caesar". In 1719 Sir William Davenant and John Dryden altered it for performance at the Theatre-Royal and in 1722 John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, aided or at least abetted by Pope, divided it into two parts, one entitled "The Tragedy of Julius Caesar", the other "The Tragedy of Marcus Brutus". The original was considerably vulgarized and odes, interspersed in the play, were sung in chorus. It is not probable, however, that these plays were ever staged.

- (3) It is a noteworthy fact that during this Restoration period "Julius Caesar" was one of the few plays of Shakespeare that was represented and criticized. The effect of a separate scene like that between Casca and Cassius during the storm was very wonderful, while the speech of Antony, when heightened by the effect of external arrangement, aroused great enthusiasm among the spectators. The celebrated quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius also created tumultuous applause, and even the last act, which has often been criticized, was capable of holding the closest attention of the audience. "The learned rejoiced in the breath of air from ancient Rome which met them in these scenes and the populace were entertained and fascinated by the striking events and heroic characters of the drama."

No great advance in theatrical conditions had been made between the age of Betterton and that of Garrick, and it was not until the latter years of Garrick's management that a revolution in staging was begun. The present picture stage with scenery gradually replaced the old non-scenic platform

- (1) "Dictionary of National Biography".
 (2) "Julius Caesar". Samuel Neil: pp.50-51.
 (3) "Stage History of Richard 3rd": Wood: pp.107-108.

(1) and front curtains were introduced for the first time. The stage projecting into the auditorium was retained till the end of the century, and a great deal of the acting was performed on the proscenium stage, owing to the fact, that, with the inadequate facilities for lighting, it was necessary to keep in the "focus". The problem of lighting the theatres had not yet been solved on account of the absence of a light like gas, and as a consequence, the houses were comparatively dark. Moreover, the clumsy scenery was used with little intelligence and had little effect in the dim background of the stage. In 1772, however, a change was made. A young Alsatian artist and scenic painter, De Louthembourg, was engaged by Garrick, and prepared the way for greater improvements which took place in the latter part of the century. With the exception of the portions over the opposite proscenium doors, the balcony disappeared, and entrances were provided by doors opening on the forward part of the proscenium. Music began to form an important adjunct to theatrical performances and the song became an inevitable element, even in a drama like "Julius Caesar".

(2) In 1730 Dennis Delane began an engagement at Goodman's Fields, which lasted for four years. During this time he played very many roles, including that of Brutus, in which he was very successful. In 1735 he appeared as Antony at Covent Garden and was well received, although his popularity can scarcely have been merited.

David Garrick, the true successor of Betterton, does not seem to have appeared in "Julius Caesar" during his stage career, although he took part in an amateur performance at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, in 1737, when he played in a burlesque of the play. He once thought of playing Cassius, but for fear of adding to the reputation of Quin as Brutus he never carried out his intention, and the tragedy was never revived under his management.

One of the most celebrated actors appearing in "Julius Caesar" at this time was William Milward, whose powers were perfectly adapted to the part of Antony. He possessed a voice of exquisite beauty and a fine personal appearance, which, coupled with his easy action and address and his graceful deportment, contributed greatly to his success in this role. He commenced the oration with the soft tones of a man bent upon securing the suffrage of the people to revenge Caesar's death, and gradually rose to such a height as not only to carry away the populace represented, but also the spectator in the theatre. When he uttered the lines:-

(3) "But were I Brutus,
 "And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
 Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue
 In every wound of Caesar that should move
 The Stones of Rome to rise and mutiny."
 the enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds.

Although outstripped by Milward, Spranger Barry, who

(1) "William Shakespeare": George Brandes. p.302.

(2) "Dictionary of National Biography".

(3) "Austin Brereton". Introduction to "Julius Caesar".

(1) appeared at Covent Garden in 1750, was also famous as Antony. Like Wilkes he was at his best in the oration, although he did not attain to perfection in it. His fine personal appearance and pleasing manner made him specially suited to the role, but he was handicapped by the fact that his voice was not flexible enough nor sufficiently sonorous to express the full meaning of the prepository part of the oration. When roused by passion, however, he excelled all speakers, and consequently he delivered the conclusion of the speech in a remarkably warm and glowing style.

(2) Two brothers, John and Charles Kemble, with their sister, Sarah Siddons, the greatest of English tragic actresses, upheld the glory of the Shakesperian drama upon the English stage until after 1810. On the death of David Garrick, John Philip Kemble became the accredited chief of the theatrical profession in England, and enacted a wide range of characters of Shakesperian tragedy with a dignity that won for him deep admiration on the part of Pitt, Scott, and Charles Lamb. As Brutus, a part which he played in 1808, and again on February 29, 1812, he won high commendation and fully satisfied the most exacting dramatic critics of his day. "He had, as usual", wrote his biographer, "made some very judicious alterations and arrangements in the piece, and, in his own performance of Brutus, exhibited all the purity of patriotism and philosophy, which has been, not without some hesitation, attributed to that illustrious name." His tall and imposing figure and stately manner were uniquely adapted for such a character, while his elocutionary art and his fine sense of rhythm and emphasis made him impressive in a high degree.

He was the chief founder of what is known as the Kemble school of acting, in which a somewhat artificial, stilted, and declamatory style ruled supreme. The influences of this school, though fading, are still felt on the stage.

(3) Pitt called John Kemble the noblest actor he had ever seen, while Byron said he was the most supernatural. The limits of his genius, however, are exactly defined by Sir Walter Scott, when he says:- "John Kemble is certainly a great artist. It is a pity he shows too much of his machinery. I wish he could be double-capped, as they say of watches; but the fault of too much study certainly does not belong to many of his tribe. He is, I think, very great in those parts, especially where character is tinged by some acquired and systematic habits, like that of the stoic philosophy of Brutus." He expresses the same opinion again when he says, "He seems to me always to play best those characters in which there is a predominating passion or acquired habit of acting and speaking, colouring the whole man. The stoicism of Brutus marks the class of character I mean."

(4) In 1808 at Covent Garden Charles Kemble played the part of Antony to the Brutus of his brother and the Cassius of Charles Young. His imposing person, classical countenance, and tuneful voice, eminently qualified him for this role and enabled him to be highly successful. Outliving his brother

(1) "Dictionary of National Biography."

(2) "A Life of William Shakespeare" Lee:pp.348-365.

(3) "The London Stage" Baker. p.112.

(4) "The London stage" Baker. p.112.

- (1) by about twenty years he carried on the traditions of the Kemble school and by force of some native genius and much careful study he became a graceful and refined actor.

The most successful of the Kemble school was Charles Young, whose name has been mentioned in connection with the production of "Julius Caesar" in 1808. Robson, the old play-goer, declares he was rather a fine declaimer than a fine actor, but nevertheless he became accepted as the leading English tragedian from 1812 until his supremacy was challenged, first by Kean and later by Macready. Cassius was one of his best parts, although Brutus was included in his repertory.

- (2) Another good actor playing in "Julius Caesar" at Covent Garden at this time was Conway. During the course of the dramatic season which ended on June 15, 1814, he appeared as Antony and won great praise from several contemporary actors. Genest, a severe judge, speaks well of his interpretation of this character, and a writer in the "New Monthly" magazine for August, 1821, probably Talfourd, says, "Conway has a noble person, a strain of brilliant declamation and no small power of depicting agony and sorrow". He appeared, however, to be self-conscious, ill at ease and fantastic in deportment. Macready states that he was deservedly a favourite but criticizes him on the ground that he endeavoured to surprise an audience into surprise by isolated and startling effects.

In 1820 James Wallack, an actor of the Kemble school, appeared at Drury Lane as Brutus to the Antony of John Cooper and the Cassius of Junius Brutus Booth. He lacked the enthusiasm and pathos required in this character, but in spite of this seems to have created a favourable impression. On October 26, 1829, he acted as Antony to his brother's Caesar.

Cooper was a very conscientious, steady, and capable actor, but his heavy and mechanical style prevented him from appearing to advantage in the role of the pleasure-loving Antony.

- (3) As Cassius, a part which he frequently played, Booth exercised wonderful sway over his audience. In appearance, stature, and voice he resembled the great tragic actor, Edmund Kean, and his close adherence to the style of his predecessor had attracted much attention to him. His presence and action were imposing and his face was capable of wonderful expression under the influence of excitement. His very appearance upon the stage frequently awed a crowded and tumultuous house into instant silence. The most competent judges place him below Kean, Charles Kemble and Macready, but before Wallack and Conway. In 1825 he appeared as Brutus and was received with great acclamation. His fame in England, however, was short-lived, for he spent most of his time after 1821 in America.

On September 26, 1825, James Warde, an eminently pleasing actor, appeared as Brutus at Covent Garden, and during

- (1) "Dictionary of National Biography".
(2) "Dictionary of National Biography".
(3) "Dictionary of National Biography".

the next season as Cassius, one of his best impersonations.

- (1) During his management of the Sadler's Wells Theatre, Samuel Phelps, a sound, capable, and powerful actor, produced this great drama on several occasions. He had graduated at the Haymarket, under Webster, and at Covent Garden under Macready. In 1844 he opened jointly with Mrs. Warner and Thomas Greenwood the Sadler's Wells Theatre and the history of the playhouse under his management is one of the most interesting episodes of stage annals. Up to this time this Theatre had been regarded as utterly suburban, and was situated in an unfashionable quarter of the city, yet it now was to take the lead in intelligent dramatic entertainment. He gathered around him a company of actors and actresses, whom he zealously trained to interpret Shakespeare's characters in an intelligent manner. He believed that, despite the fact that the native drama of his day was at its lowest ebb in the theatres of the west end, there was, nevertheless, a public in the vicinity of the "little theatre" at Islington to appreciate performances of Shakespeare intelligently acted and adequately staged. The scenic appliances were simple and inexpensive, no such extravagant outlay being made on such accessories as Charles Kean was lavishing at the Princess's. No long continuous run of any one play was permitted, the programme being constantly changed. He was the first actor to make such an experiment, and that he succeeded so well was largely due to his intelligent and reverent treatment of Shakesperian drama. During his eighteen years of management he revived thirty-two of Shakespeare's plays, and on a rough estimate played Shakespeare on four nights out of every six. Sadler's Wells became a recognized home of the higher drama and for nearly twenty years he succeeded in making Shakespeare pay. His rival, Charles Kean, produced Shakespeare on a much more splendid scale and like many modern managers he was constantly in danger of obscuring the jewel by the elaboration of the setting. "A main cause of the success of Mr. Phelps in his Shakesperian revivals", says Morley in his "Journal", is that he shows in his author above all things the poet". In 1845 he revived "Julius Caesar", and although it was not one of his most popular productions it was played several times during his management. He was seen as Brutus and also as Cassius, but lacked the passion and imagination which are necessary to give a truthful interpretation of those parts. Furthermore, he never electrified his audience by any flashes of genius for which several of his predecessors were famous. He was the last of the old school of tragedy and although a most intelligent and conscientious actor and a favourite with the old stagers "he never passed the invisible line that separates the good actor from the great".
- (2)

During the Nineteenth century a high place was allotted by public esteem to William Charles Macready, who during a stage career of more than forty years assumed every great part in Shakesperian tragedy. He acted with John Philip

- (1) "Shakespeare and the Modern Stage": Lee. p.11.
 "Short History of the English Stage": Sharp. pp.149-150.
 (2) "A Life of William Shakespeare": Sidney Lee: pp.348-365.

Kemble, Charles Young, and many other celebrated actors who appeared in Shakesperian roles at this time. Although less popular than Edmund Kean or Young, he was a favourite with the educated public, and was undoubtedly a man of great genius. In highly coloured parts which require abrupt transitions and strongly marked contrasts he appeared to the best advantage. Talfourd called him "the most romantic of actors", comparing him with Kemble as the "most celebrated" and Kean as "the most intensely human". "He tried to combine the dignity of Kemble with the vivacity of Kean, the deliberateness and majesty of the one with the animal spirits and rush of the other" and as a result of his earnest endeavours and a naturally fine intellectual grasp he developed into a noble actor.

(1) Macready played among innumerable parts those of Antony, Brutus, and Cassius. Cassius gave him constant food for thought. In the season of 1818-1819 he writes, "This year I studied in "Julius Caesar" the lean and wrinkled Cassius, a part in the representation of which I have, through my professional life, taken a peculiar pleasure as one among Shakespeare's most perfect specimens of idiosyncrasy". In 1821 he appeared again at Covent Garden in the same role to the Brutus of Young, the Antony of Charles Kemble, and the Casca of Fawcett. Crowded houses greeted the company during the several repetitions of the play and the production was a great success in every respect. "On this occasion", says Macready, "I entered 'con amore' into the study of the character of Cassius, identifying myself with the eager ambition, the keen penetration, and the restless envy of the determined conspirator, which from that time I made one of my most real personations."

On February 1, 1850, he played Brutus before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Windsor Castle, and acted it, as he himself says "in a style of reality and earnest naturalness that I think did, and I felt ought to, produce an effect on my auditors". Colonel Phipps came to me from the Queen and Prince Albert to express "how much they had been pleased". At this performance Charles Keane played Antony, Wallack, Cassius, and Mrs. Warner, Portia.

Macready found many capable critics. W.J. Fox in the "Morning Chronicle" of 1838-39 gave a very favourable account of his "Julius Caesar", and many other dramatic writers praised his interpretations of Brutus and of Cassius. Undoubtedly he excelled as Brutus and not as Cassius. In this role he seems to have formed a very high opinion of himself as can be seen from his diary of January 24, 1851. "Acted as Brutus as I never - no, never - acted it before, in regard to dignified familiarity of dialogue or enthusiastic inspiration. The distance, the reluctance to deeds of violence, the instinctive abhorrence of tyranny, the open simplicity of heart and natural grandeur of soul, I never so perfectly, so consciously, portrayed before".

At Drury Lane in April, 1865, Walter Montgomery

(1) "Dictionary of National Biography".

Austin Brereton; Introduction to "Julius Caesar".

played Cassius in a pleasing though not very subtle manner to the Antony of James Anderson. Montgomery's appearance and powerful voice were very much in his favour and made him fairly popular in this role.

(1) In 1881 Augustus Harris, the manager of Drury Lane, was responsible for a notable production of "Julius Caesar" by the famous Saxe-Meiningen Players. The aid of scenery and stage-craft was used to good advantage, while the marvellous management of the crowd in the Forum scene was the talk of London. Ludwig Barnay made a most impressive Antony, his interpretation of that character being a notable feature of the production. The other parts were also acted in an admirable manner which won great praise from the crowds that thronged to see the play. The Company made a triumphal tour of the chief European capitals, and exerted an influence upon stage art which is still traceable in nearly every Shakesperian production of the present day.

A magnificent revival of the play was given at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sidney, Australia, in 1889. George Rignold as Antony and J.F. Cathcart as Brutus acted their respective parts in a brilliant manner, while the stage-management and scenic effects left nothing to be desired.

One of the most gorgeous and spectacular revivals of "Julius Caesar" was that of Beerbohm Tree at Her Majesty's Theatre on January 23, 1898. Every form of art was lavished on the play regardless of labour or expense, and a remarkably fine presentation was the result. By instinct Beerbohm Tree is an enthusiastic defender and lover of elaborate spectacle in his productions. He is also a man of extraordinary brilliancy and cleverness. His greatest ambition was to distinguish himself in Shakespeare, and for this reason he built himself a beautifully designed theatre, specially suited for the production of Shakesperian drama. It was opened in 1897 under the name of Her Majesty's Theatre, but was renamed His Majesty's in 1902. In 1898 "Julius Caesar" was played one hundred and sixty-two times under his management, and during the autumn of the same year on thirty-eight occasions in the provinces. The cast included Beerbohm Tree as Antony, Lewis Waller as Brutus, Franklin Macleay as Cassius, Charles Fulton as Caesar, Evelyn Millard as Portia, Miss Lily Hanbury as Calpurnia, and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree as Lucius. All of the parts were taken in an admirable manner, Tree's performance of Antony being particularly fine, in spite of the fact that he is not altogether at his best in the "big style". His speech in the Forum was intensely dramatic, his manipulation of the crowd being simply masterly. "He swayed it, played on it as if on an instrument, now inflaming, now soothing down." Each speech was delivered fluently and correctly, like an excellent recitation, but without much heart, passion or feeling. He failed to fill out the character or to "offer those moods and hesitations and sudden changes which make up true acting".

(1) "Contemporary Review". Vol.95: 1909.

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Nevertheless he proved himself to be an admirable and judicious artist in his own line.

(1) Lewis Waller's name is familiar to Canadians on account of his recent visit to this country in "A Marriage of Convenience". At the present time he shares with Tyrone Power distinction in the role of Brutus. His grace, elegance of manner, fine voice and pure diction, in addition to his skill as a player, make him appear to fine advantage in this character, and added much to the success of Tree's revival.

Tree's desire has been to produce work above the ordinary level, and he deserves great credit for the thoroughness with which he has carried out his ideas. However, there is a grave danger of distracting attention from the play itself by reason of such an elaborate and costly setting.

The arrangement of the play as it was presented at this time is worthy of note. Instead of five acts there were only three. The first act ended with the death of Caesar in the Senate-house and the despatch by Antony of Octavius's servant to inform his leader of the catastrophe that had occurred. The second act was devoted entirely to the scene in the Forum while the last covered the scenes before and within the tent of Brutus and those on the plains of Philippi. It is interesting to compare these alterations with Shakespeare's text. Tree's first act covers all the ground embraced by Shakespeare down to the end of his first scene in Act 3. The second act corresponds with the second scene of the poet's third act, while the third division deals with the remainder of the play. It was found necessary to make many excisions, especially in the latter part of the drama, and to abbreviate the speeches of several of the minor characters. The Forum scene, however, was given in full with the exception of the dialogue between Antony and Octavius's servant at the end. The curtain falls on Antony's apostrophe concerning Brutus:-

"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) In dealing with the recent stage history of "Julius Caesar" the excellent touring company of F.R. Benson deserves to be mentioned. For over twenty-five years Benson has directed a Company which has achieved a reputation in English provincial cities, in Ireland, and in Scotland for good all-round performances of Shakespeare, and for constituting a training school of Shakesperian actors. Unlike Beerbohm Tree he places greater emphasis on the genius, form, and soul of the play itself than on stage effects. His idea is that the scenic embellishment should be simple and inexpensive and should always be subordinated to the dramatic interest of the play. He has produced thirty of Shakespeare's plays and among these is "Julius Caesar". This remarkable display of energy has been

(1) "Who's Who in the Theatre": 1912.

(2) "Shakespeare and the Modern Stage". Lee.

largely due to the fact that he believes that Shakespeare's plays should be constantly acted and in their variety for the benefit of the whole nation, and he deserves great praise for this laudably high aim. In addition to this his company has supplied the great actor-managers of London with many of their ablest recruits during the last few years.

(1) During the Shakesperian week at Stratford-on-Avon on April 20, 1896, Benson played Antony, one of his specialties, to the Brutus of Oscar Ashe, and the Cassius of Frank Rodney. His interpretation of the vigorous and able Antony was very fine, although he marred it to some extent by over-acting and too much calisthenic display. As Brutus, Ashe was not specially brilliant although he played the part well, while Rodney was seen to fine advantage in a role admirably suited to such a versatile actor.

(2) In honour of the coronation of King George 5th. a Gala Performance on a vast scale was organized by the theatrical profession of England. It took place on June 27, 1911, and included the Forum scene from "Julius Caesar". Sir Herbert Tree played the part of Antony, E.S. Willard that of Brutus, Basil Gill that of Cassius, and A.E. George that of Caesar. As a result of the performance a net profit of over four thousand pounds was realized and the proceeds were placed to the credit of a fund to commence a pension scheme for aged members of the theatrical profession.

That the play is still popular in England is evident from the success of the revivals during the last few years. On January 23, 1911, Lewis Waller appeared at the Palladium in London as Antony in the forum scene, and in the same year Arthur Bouchier took the part of Brutus in a revival of the play at His Majesty's Theatre. On both of these occasions it was clearly demonstrated that in the hands of capable actors "Julius Caesar" is as fascinating to the audience of the twentieth century as it was to the theatre-goers of the Elizabethan age.

Part #2. "JULIUS CAESAR" IN AMERICA.

In the various productions of the play in America many celebrated actors have appeared, including James Fennell, John Cooper, Junius Brutus Booth, Henry Wallack, Edwin Forrest, William Charles Macready, George Vandenhoff, Charles Kean, J. W. Wallack, Richard L. Graham, T.S. Hamblin, John R. Scott, W. Marshall, E.L. Davenport, Lawrence Barrett, George Boniface, Edwin Booth, Hermann Hendrick, Frederick Warde, Ludwig Barnay, James K. Murdoch, John McCullough, Louis James, Thomas Keene, John Malone, Richard Mansfield, Ben Greet, Robert Mantell and William Faversham.

(1) "Post-Lore" - 1896.

(2) "Who's Who:" 1912.

(3) "Who's Who in the Theatre" : 1912.

On March 14, 1794, "Julius Caesar" was presented for the first time in America. Since then it has been played on many occasions both in the United States and in Canada, and at the present time is one of Shakespeare's most popular tragedies.

- (1) James Fennell, an erratic actor of some reputation in England and Scotland, came to America in 1804 and joined Thomas Wignell's Company in Philadelphia. There are several records of his appearance up to 1810 in a varied repertory, but it was in Shakespearian roles that he gained his best success. As Brutus he was especially fine, his personal appearance fitting him for such a part. His tall, imposing figure; deep solemn voice; and cold, stiff manner were well suited to the noble idealist of the play, and reminded one of his great predecessor, John Philip Kemble.

- (2) Another member of Wignell's company was Thomas A. Cooper, who was a conspicuous favourite on the American stage about the beginning of the nineteenth century. He soon became the leading tragedian of America, and kept this position for thirty years. John Bernard states that he was endowed with great genius and possessed the highest qualifications in face, voice, and person, but criticizes him on the ground that he had little or no art and never strove to attain it. On January 14, 1818, he was seen as Antony at the Park Theatre in New York, and in 1830 he played in the same role to the Brutus of T.S. Hamblin. In 1833 he took the same part to the Cassius of Junius Brutus Booth, while in the following year Edwin Forrest acted Antony to his Cassius.

- (3) Junius Brutus Booth made his debut in New York on October 5th, 1821, at the Park Theatre when he was seen as Brutus. In 1826 he played Cassius to T.S. Hamblin's Brutus at the same playhouse. This role was one of his specialties, and he appeared in it on several occasions during the next few years. On November 13, 1844, he acted this part with Wallack as Brutus, Wheatley as Antony, Barry as Caesar, and Mrs. Slocum as Portia.

- (4) A noted actor who also made his first appearance in this play in 1821, was Henry Wallack. On June 26, 1826, he was seen as Antony to the Brutus of Conway, the Cassius of Duff, the Caesar of James Scott, the Portia of Mrs. Duff and the Calpurnia of Mrs. Wallack. Three years later he appeared as Cassius to the Antony of Hamblin and the Brutus of J. W. Wallack. Both of these performances took place at the Park Theatre in New York. He acted again as Cassius on September, 25, 1837, at the National Theatre, when George Vandenhoff took the part of Brutus.

The first great native actor of America was Edwin Forrest. He possessed a powerful, rich, and resonant voice which aided him very materially in the interpretation of a role

- (1) "Dictionary of National Biography".
 (2) "History of the New York Stage". T. Allston Brown. Vol. 1.
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(1) like that of Antony. His dark, piercing eyes and rugged build made him an impressive figure on the stage, and his intensely realistic method of acting added greatly to his popularity. He has been called the chieftain of the robustian school of acting, because at all times he could be seen, heard, and understood. In this respect he reminded one of Junius Brutus Booth and Kean, two of the greatest exponents of human passion ever seen upon the stage. There was remarkable energy in his movements, and wonderful expressiveness in his piercing eyes. Every time he struck, he struck with a sledge hammer, and by his impassioned manner roused his audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm. At the Bowery Theatre on December 1, 1827, he appeared as Antony with Conway as Brutus and George Barrett as Cassius, and in May of the following year he took the same part to the Brutus of Cooper.

(2) William Charles Macready appeared at the Park Theatre in this play on two occasions in 1827. In February he was seen as Cassius and in June as Caesar, and was well received by appreciative audiences.

(3) Charles Kean, whose extravagant productions of Shakespeare's plays has been mentioned in connection with the stage history of "Julius Caesar" in London, acted in this play at the Bowery Theatre in New York on December 27, 1840.

The name of James W. Wallack is one that frequently appears in the records of this play in America. In 1843 he played for Hamblin's benefit at the Bowery Theatre, appearing as Cassius to the Antony of James Scott. On May 28, 1860, he was seen in the same role at the New Bowery Theatre, when Conway played Brutus, with George Boniface as Antony, Mrs. Conway as Portia, and Kate Fisher as Calpurnia. In December of the following year E.L. Davenport replaced Conway as Brutus, while Mrs. Wallack took the part of Portia.

(4) Up to 1847 Davenport appeared chiefly in Boston, where he soon became a leading actor in comic and tragic roles. For two seasons he supported Macready in England, but in 1854 he returned to the United States, where he travelled extensively, playing especially Shakesperian parts. On April 29, 1857, he acted as Brutus at the Old Broadway Theatre in New York, in a versatile and finished manner that won for him great popularity. On this occasion he was supported by Wallack as Cassius, Lorraine as Antony, and Mrs. Davenport as Portia. Again in 1862 he secured a great success in the same role at the Bowery Theatre when William Wheatley appeared as Antony, Wallack as Cassius, George Ryer as Caesar and Mark Smith as Casca.

(5) Several performances of the play were given at the Bowery Theatre during the fifties. On September 28, 1850, Richard L. Graham played Brutus, and two years later Hamblin

(1.2.3). "History of the New York Stage". Vol.1.p.98

(4) " " " " " " " " " " 1.pp.191, 380.

(5) " " " " " " " " " " 1.pp.127, 130.

