

## The Catholic Atmosphere of Shakespeare's Dramas

THE extraordinary and spontaneous celebrations staged over the English-speaking world last April to pay honour to the memory of the great dramatist, William Shakespeare, were splendid manifestations of reverence and of admiration for the genius of the undisputed king of Elizabethan literature. People of every clime, complexion and degree entered enthusiastically upon these ovations to a great name. Shakespeare, with the vision of a seer, anticipated in his "Julius Cæsar" the universality and popularity of the admiration of yet unborn generations for the marvellous productions of his genius. When Cæsar, stricken to death by the hand of Brutus, fell at the base of Pompey's statue, Cassius cried out: . . . "How many ages hence shall this, our lofty scene, be acted over, in states unborn, in accents yet unknown." Only Shakespeare could have framed that sentence and now Shakespeare himself and his "Julius Cæsar" are being acted over by all the races of the world.

Perhaps the greatest tribute paid to the memory of the poet was that of Sir Sidney Lee who, in brief anticipation of the public ovations, contributed to Shakespearean literature "A Life of William Shakespeare." In this scholarly work of critical research the author apparently demolishes the foundations supporting the Baconian authorship of the plays and rejects as idle gossip the "irresponsible report that the poet dyed a Papyst." Father Thurston's clever article in the Catholic Encyclopedia on "The Religion of Shakespeare" does not affirmatively answer the question in favour of the poet's orthodoxy. Dr. Thomas Walsh in "America," (April 24,