

is unfit to become king. "He is superstitious grown of late"; Decius boasts that he "can o'ersway him"; he is suspicious of Cassius because "he reads much and is a great observer"; he is capable of petty revenge, for the two tribunes were "put to silence for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images," and he rated Caius Ligarius "for speaking well of Pompey." At every turn we find some further evidence of vacillation, superstition, vanity, cowardice, and a score of other minor faults. And even in physical qualities he is found wanting. Cassius describes him as "a man of feeble temper"; he is deaf in one ear, and he is subject to the falling sickness. But in spite of these weaknesses the dramatist does not make the mistake of painting him in such colours that he appears inhuman or unreal. In the midst of all his petty weaknesses he gives expression to sentiments which are, under some conditions, the mark of greatness. "Cowards die many times before their deaths." "Shall Cæsar send a lie?" "What touches us ourself shall be last served." "Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause will he be satisfied." These in themselves are not the sentiments of a weakling. And it is worth while to notice that throughout this half of the play no word falls from the lips of Brutus in personal condemnation of Cæsar. "To speak truth of Cæsar," he declares, "I have not known when his affections swayed more than his reason"; and he is ready freely to admit that "the quarrel will bear no colour for the thing he is."

With the death of Cæsar the fabric of petty weaknesses which has been woven about his character at once disappears. The Cæsar of the latter half of the play is the world-hero of history with whom we are familiar; and of this Cæsar whose "glories, triumphs, spoils," are the theme of Antony's eloquence, there is no further need to speak.

Brutus is the real hero of the play. Even before he joins the conspiracy he is marked out for us by qualities which place him above the common rank of men. He is descended from Lucius Junius Brutus, who drove out the Tarquins from Rome. He is a Roman praetor; and one of the things upon which Cassius repeatedly lays emphasis is "the great opinion that Rome holds of his name." As soon as he joins the conspiracy he at once by common consent assumes the position of leader; but, as later events prove, he is lacking in those qualities which are necessary to a great leader of men. He has thus far lived in a world of theories and ideals and he is unable to judge of men's character or motives or to analyse the conditions of practical life. From the time when he joins the con-