

O conspiracy,
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous
brow by night,
When evils are most free ?

But, on their entrance, they are not greeted as conspirators. Then they are men of such sublime honor, that they must not "stain the even virtue of our enterprise," by stooping to any act so degrading as an oath to bind their resolution. O! no, that step would be far beneath the dignity of men, engaged in the honorable enterprise, for which a few moments before, Brutus failed to find, even in Erebus, a cavern dark enough to mask its monstrous visage. The only conclusion, that can be drawn, is that the poet intended to paint Brutus The Hypocrite. The very words spoken by Brutus, when he has finished prating to the conspirators, about the dignity and honor of their undertaking, seem to justify this view.

Good gentlemen, look fresh and
merrily ;
Let not our looks put on our pur-
poses ;
But bear it as our Roman actors do,
With untired spirits and formal
constancy.

This is scarcely in keeping with his professed belief in the justice of his designs. If he believed their object to be an honorable one, why should it be necessary for them to act a part? However Brutus continues throughout the play to give strong evidence of histrionic ability. So well does he sustain the role, that, were it not for his utterances in private, the deception would be well nigh complete. On the fateful morning of the Ides of March, when Cæsar entreats the conspirators to taste some wine with him, as a pledge of truth and honor, Brutus is

touched with remorse for the hypocrisy of himself and his companions, and cannot refrain from soliloquizing.

That every like is not the same, O
Cæsar,
The heart of Brutus yearns to think
upon!

If these proofs be not convincing in themselves, who but a hypocrite could humbly kneel and kiss the hand of a benefactor, against whose life, the daggers of the assassins were already leaping from their scabbards ?

The gross ignorance of human nature, frequently displayed by Brutus, has often been commented on ; but we must remember, that the actor always plays to the mob, knowing full well, that if he meet their approval, all adverse criticism will be drowned in their noisy demonstration. Brutus plays to the mob. He is quite sensible, that it would be safer to have Mark Antony out of the way ; yet he spares him, not on any grounds of conscience, but because the course would seem too bloody. To Cæsar alone, is allowed the distinction of falling at the hands of the patriot band. He must not be killed wrathfully, but in such a way that,

This shall mark
Our purpose necessary, and not
envious ;
Which so appearing to the common
eyes,
We shall be called purgers, not
murderers.

Then Antony is permitted to speak in the order of Cæsar's funeral, not because it is a due right and a lawful ceremony, but because, It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

Through his eagerness to appease