

in high esteem by all the Romans, his quiet meditative disposition inspired confidence. He was supposed, at first, to be Caesar's friend, having all to gain and nothing to lose from the Imperator's administration. Thus if he were won to Cassius' side, he would impart to it an air of truth, patriotism and honesty, without which such an act as the faction, or Cassius, contemplated, would seem mere brutal, jealous murder. Cassius knows that Brutus is weak, that he lacks penetration, has too much pride both in his own dignity as a man and in his ancestors' Republican fame, (which he thinks it his duty to maintain) to occupy a position under a tyrannical ruler. He admires and loves Brutus for his good and noble qualities, but he feels sure that he can be seduced from his loyalty to Caesar. Cassius has not much confidence in his judgment. All through their partnership they hold opposite opinions on important questions and always Cassius is justified, especially in his mistrust of Antony and in not wishing to leave their camp to battle at Phillippi with Octavius and Antony. He knows Brutus is a better philosopher and Stoic than he, but he is surprised at his fortitude concerning his wife's death. Cassius thinks Brutus is foolish to be prevailed upon to act against his personal interest, in rising against Caesar.

To Portia, Brutus' second wife (he having divorced his first one, to marry Cato's widowed daughter) he is a faithful loving husband. A great deal of weakness is displayed in his conduct to her. First he refuses to acquaint her with the cause of his uneasiness, when he was cogitating about Caesar, then after her importunities, he is willing to share all his secrets with her. That Cassius' words had aroused Brutus is proved by his reply to his wife when she says:—

“Brutus is wise and were he not in health

“He would embrace the means to come by it.”

“Why, so do I,” he says, meaning that he is planning to secure the health of the state. The fact that Portia voluntarily wounds herself to give him an example of her firmness, shows that he was no great observer of humanity, and that she knew it, for, had he known his wife's character thoroughly, he would have confided in her immediately, if he had trusted her, or else would have been afraid to do so at all, especially as he had time to reflect between her petition and his granting it.

Before becoming a friend of Caesar, Brutus was a partisan of Pompey, though that general had ordered the death of his