

sees that, by his adulation, he has succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of Brutus, how he glories in the fact.

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet; I see,

Thy honorable metal may be wrought

From that it is disposed :

Once again it is Cassius, who formulates the scheme of sending to Brutus anonymous letters, all tending to the great opinion that Rome holds of his name. One of the letters was cunningly affixed to the statue erected to Lucius Brutus. This was a master-stroke of flattery. Lucius Brutus, after delivering Rome from the Tarquins, had put his sons to death and died childless; but Cassius knew that the Brutus of the play denied his plebeian birth, and claimed lineage with his illustrious namesake. The deception seems to have gained credence among the people, for one of the citizens suggested that Brutus should be given a statue with his ancestors, as a reward for slaying Cæsar. Brutus takes the bait; although the following passage would seem to indicate that he is sensible of the concealed hook :

Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,

That you would have me seek into myself

For that which is not in me?

If we wish to obtain an infallible criterion of a man's character, we must study how he communes with himself. When alone, he comes forth in his true colors. Under constraint of the presence of others, his words and actions are more or less studied. A strictly upright man would be consistent alike in privacy

and in public. As soon as Brutus entertains the thought of the assassination of Cæsar, he commences to cast about in his own mind for some plausible excuse, to give countenance to the affair. He can find no apparent ground for complaint against Cæsar in anything he has yet done.

And, since the quarrel
Will bear no color for the thing he is,

Fashion it thus,—that what he is,
augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities :

And, therefore, think him as a serpent's egg,
Which, hatch'd, would as his kind,
grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

In his heart of hearts, Brutus realizes that he is committing a grievous wrong, for he says :

To speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason.

Calm and cold as Brutus appears before his fellow-men, in his secret soul, he is affected by the nature of his undertaking.

Since Cassius first did whet me
against Cæsar,

I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing

And the first motion, all the interim is

Like a phantasma or hideous dream.

How different does he appear to his associates! Before them, there is no wavering doubt apparent in his mind. When Lucius announces the approach of masked men, it is Brutus' better nature that speaks.