

find Brutus reading one of Cassius' letters, and later receiving the conspirators. The truth seems to be that in this scene the auditors are kept mystified in reference to the time; the chasm between February 15 and March 14 is artfully bridged over and this scene is a true transition scene between Acts I. and II.

The next five scenes, the four of the second Act, and the first of the third Act, follow closely upon one another as regards the historical facts represented, which all occurred on March 15. There are no intervals and there is no need of careful transitions. Of course, there was an interval, marked by important occurrences, between the assassination of Cæsar and his funeral; this interim, however, is skilfully obviated by the closing speech of the first scene of the third Act. Antony says—

“ Yet stay awhile ;  
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corpse  
Into the market place, etc.”

Brutus had told Antony to prepare the body and follow him, and in the next scene Antony enters with Cæsar's body. These two scenes are made to appear continuous, although Brutus' words, “ The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol, etc.,” glance at the historical occurrences between the assassination and the funeral.

The third scene of the third Act, as regards the date of the incident, follows, of course, immediately upon the second, but the first scene of the fourth Act refers to an historical event that occurred a year and eight months after the events referred to in the third Act. The auditors are intended here to feel the lapse of time to a certain extent, but the meeting of the triumvirs has been carefully shadowed out in the closing words of the second scene of the third Act :

*Serv.* Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.  
*Ant.* Where is he ?  
*Serv.* He and *Lepidus* are at Cæsar's house.  
*Ant.* And thither will I straight to visit him.

The meeting, as recorded in the first scene of the fourth Act, is at *Antony's house*, (as a matter of history the meeting did not take place in Rome) and *Lepidus* is sent on an errand to *Cæsar's house*; but the connection between the two acts is made sufficiently close. The incidents of the second and third scenes of the fourth Act were of the same date, but between them and the meeting of the triumvirs there was an interval of nearly a year, from November 27, 43 B.C. to the autumn of 42 B.C. Once more the artist does not altogether blind the auditors to the lapse of time. It is true the mention of the proscriptions makes a connection with the first scene of the act, as also does the appearance of Cassius and Brutus with their armies after Antony's announcement that the conspirators were levying powers, but the change of scene from Rome to Sardis suggests the idea of an interim.

The repeated mention of Philippi in the third scene of the fourth Act and Brutus' speech, “ What do you think of marching to Philippi *presently* ?” makes us forget that there is some ground to be covered between Sardis and Philippi. We think of this night as the eve of battle; although in the last scene of the play Brutus says :

“ The ghost of Cæsar hath appear'd to me  
Two several times by night ; at Sardis once,  
And this last night here in Philippi fields,”

yet the fourth Act had concluded with his sending word to Cassius to set on his powers.

In the fifth Act Shakespeare has compressed two battles into one. Historically there was an interval of

twenty days between the two fights at Philippi. The dramatic artist has here handled boldly the historical materials. The first three scenes of the fifth Act deal with the incidents of the first battle, and the fourth and fifth scenes with the incidents of the second battle; between the occurrences of the third and fourth scenes, therefore, twenty days elapse; but this interim is expunged by the concluding lines of the third scene, in which Brutus says :

“ Lucilius, come ;  
And come, young Cato ; let us to the field.  
Labeo and Flavius, set our battles on ;  
'Tis three o'clock ; and, Romans, *yet ere night*  
We shall try fortune in a second fight.”

It has now been shown how the dramatist has established a fictitious time in the minds of his auditors, and how he has compressed history to meet this fictitious time; an example or two will show how by a sort of artistic expansion the artist has reconciled the time of the stage-representation with the fictitious time. The first scene of the second Act will not take longer than twenty or twenty-five minutes to play, yet it represents the time between one and six, say, of the morning of the assassination. The soliloquy, or meditation, of Brutus, the entrances and exits of Lucius, the scene of the conspirators, the scene with Portia, the scene with Ligarius, impose on the auditors and abuse the imagination on the subject of time. Many of the speeches anticipate morning; Brutus says, “ I cannot by the progress of the stars give guess *how near to day*,” “ I have been up this hour, awake *all night*.” We are not surprised that before the conspirators disperse the clock strikes three. The dispute between Casca, Decius and Cinna about the dawn and the east tends to blind us to the fact of how rapidly time is passing. Cassius in farewell says, “ The morning comes upon's,” and Brutus, “ and so good morrow to you every one.” When Portia enters, her husband refers to the “ raw cold morning,” and we are not taken aback at the end of the scene when it is suggested that Brutus and Ligarius are about to set out for Cæsar's palace :

“ What it is, my Caius,  
I shall unfold to thee as we are going  
To whom it must be done.”

A similar exercise of art to make a few lines seem to occupy the space between night and eight o'clock is found in the second scene of the second Act, and the last two scenes of the fourth Act are so contrived that the auditors become oblivious of the stretch of hours covered from the afternoon of one day till the morning of the next.

It is interesting to note how Shakespeare was able to dispense with the unity of time by the employment of what seems like an elaborate substitute. It is a question for the psychologist to determine how far all these nice adjustments were the result of instinctive art, and how far they were the result of conscious pre-contrivance.

—“ The acquisition of knowledge is a good thing, the sharpening of the intellect is a good thing, the cultivation of philosophy is a good thing; but there is something of infinitely more importance than all these—it is, the rectification, the adjustment, through that mysterious operation we call sympathy, of the unconscious personality, the hidden soul, which co-operates with the active powers, with the conscious intellect, and, as this unconscious personality is rectified or unrectified, determines the active powers, the conscious intellect, for righteousness or unrighteousness.”—*Corson*.