

## SHAKESPERE'S "JULIUS CÆSAR." \*

NO part of history is more deserving of study than that meeting point of the ancient and modern world which is depicted in Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar." Inasmuch as it gathers up the contrast, and brings out the most striking characteristics of human thought and aspiration as it preceded and succeeded the coming of Christ, it may be called a revelation as to the meaning of all history. And though, I suppose, Shakespeare knew less of the career of Cæsar than almost any reader of our day, he may teach the most learned to understand the man and the time. The divination of genius forms the best introduction to the laborious work of the student, and those who stop at the introduction know the work better, in some respects, than those who omit it.

Julius Cæsar has been called by an English historian "the greatest name in history." I suppose Dr. Merivale meant that the only name to which that superlative would seem more fitted must be considered apart, as belonging to a world more mysterious than that of history. Certainly the only name equally commemorated in modern languages is that of Christ. Over the whole of Austria and the whole of Russia the monarch is still "the Cæsar"; and *Cæsarism* is an expression carrying its definite meaning to every ear. We gather up under the name that spirit of external rule which is most remote from the influence of Christianity; we are apt to connect it with ideas of oppression and of self-centred ambition, such as form the most complete antithesis to the spirit of Christ. But we may trace these associations rather to the many successors of the great man who first bore it than to anything in his own character or

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actions, and they find no echo in our play, which indeed indirectly vindicates its hero from some of them. Plutarch tells us of the attempt, made on Cæsar's way to the scene of his murder, to warn him of the conspiracy against his life, and adds that Cæsar received the paper and tried to read it, but "was hindered by the crowd of those who came to speak to him," giving no reply to the urgency of his would-be saviour. Shakespere, as he touches this incident, transfigures it with the glow of his genius. He makes the very emphasis with which, according to Plutarch, Artemidorus, the Greek who tried to save him, insisted that the paper was of importance to him a reason for his deferring its perusal.

"O Cæsar, read mine first; for mine's a suit  
That touches Cæsar nearer: read it, great Cæsar."

"What touches us ourselves shall be last served," is Cæsar's reply. Surely it may be regarded as a fine Pagan rendering of that sublime tribute of the Pharisees: "He saved others, Himself He could not save." It is remarkable as the only line in the play in which Shakespere has allowed himself what we may call a touch of personal admiration for his hero, and though it has, so far as I know, no historic foundation, it has the truth of poetry in condensing the purport of history. Had Cæsar made the use of his victory that Sulla did, had he struck down every possible foe and encircled himself with an atmosphere of terror, he might have lived inaccessible to the dagger of the assassin, and known a prosperous old age. But perhaps his assassins were his best friends. The name *Cæsarism* conveys a warning as to the temptations of absolute power which no study of a life ended on the threshold of such power can confute. "It is the bright day that brings forth the adder," says Shakespere's Brutus, with what scientific truth I know not; but the words have that brief, grand simplicity which make his most audacious inventions appear a fitter vehicle for truth than the most accurate metaphors of other men. We cannot verify the warning from the history of Cæsar because he knew no bright day. A morning of obscurity and an afternoon of storm was all that was granted him; when the clouds rolled away and the winds were lulled to rest his career had reached its limits. It ended on the brink of its deadliest perils. The world's experience shows that there is something strangely deteriorating in absolute power; the speech of Brutus remains as an ineffaceable warning, true for all states of society, though associated by him with the ordinary form of government of the modern world, that

"The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins  
Remorse from power":

that is, when it drops all those limitations, those reminders of responsibility, which holding in germ the possible rebuke of the neighbour, possess the true appeal for awakening self-rebuke. If to the highest goodness the conscience speaks clearest when it has no human echo, all lower forms of virtue are apt to find the still small voice in that case stifled by the din of the world. Imperfect human beings mostly need a conscience without to awaken the conscience within.

How Cæsar would have borne the supreme trial of irresponsible authority we cannot say, but it is unquestionable that he rose above the ordinary temptations of a career of almost unvaried success more consistently than any one with whom we can possibly compare him. Set him by the side of Napoleon, for instance. Of course he did some cruel things that Napoleon could not have done; Christianity would be an even poorer attempt than it is to follow the teaching of Him whose title it commemorates, if it were possible, in its second millennium, to ignore its spirit as did those to whom it was actually unknown. But Cæsar's cruelties are acts of ruthless policy, never expressions of hostile animus or personal spite. How little they shocked the conscience of that age we see by the fact that the brave nation against whose independence they were directed remained the loyal ally of its conqueror. There was a deserter among his followers, but the Judas was a Roman. There is no parallel among his Gaulish soldiers to the Prussian defection from Napoleon on his retreat from Moscow. The Gauls fought under his banner as nobly as they had fought against it, and answer all our doubts as to his humanity by the eloquent testimony of unswerving support, given by those who might be called his victims. I do not think there is any other great conqueror of whom we may say as much, and there are not half a dozen men in history whom we can compare with him in any way.

The world's greatest statesman and warrior, delineated by the world's greatest dramatist—here surely we shall find a character of unique splendour! Is this what we find in Shakespere's Cæsar? Shakespere's readers resemble the spectators of that procession in Andersen's story, where an Emperor walks naked, but everybody having been told that some terrible sin in themselves alone can prevent their seeing his magic robes, the crowd joins in a chorus of admiration of them, till a little child remarks that the Emperor wears no clothes at all. We are accustomed to clothe Shakespere's Julius Cæsar with heroic virtue in much the same fashion. But wherever any one attends to Julius Cæsar with the sincerity of Andersen's little spectator he will make the same discovery. Shakespere seems to remember nothing of almost the greatest conqueror the world has ever seen except his weaknesses. He occupies the chief part of that small proportion of his work allotted to the utterances of Cæsar, in delineating such foibles and weaknesses as we should hardly make room for in

anything but an exhaustive biography. Especially note the space he gives to his physical weaknesses, telling us such incidents (sometimes against the traditions of history) as that he was a poor swimmer, that he fainted away in a dirty crowd, that he was impatient in the thirst of fever, and the like. One of the lines he allots to the greatest of statesmen and warriors curiously brings out his determination to force upon us a consideration of his weaknesses. "Come thou on this side, for that ear is deaf." Why should Shakespeare interrupt Cæsar's speech to Anthony to tell us that? These are not touches of shadow to enhance brilliant colouring. The play actually contains no references to the glories of Cæsar's career except in the ungraceful form of assertions made by himself, these being, indeed, in some cases absurd rhodomontade.

"Danger and I were twins, born in one night,  
And I the elder brother."

What nonsense! and it is not the only gasconade in the few speeches given to Cæsar, while no one else seems particularly impressed with his greatness, except so far as it is a danger to Rome. But the mere records of the stage might save us the trouble of all such analysis. A spectator who, in the early years of this century, had seen Brutus, Cassius, and Anthony played respectively by Kean, Kemble, and Young, could not remember who had taken the part of Julius Cæsar. It was not worth remembering; anybody is good enough for that part. In short, if it ended with the murder of Cæsar, we might apply to it a hackneyed quotation, and say that the conquering cause pleased the gods, but that it was the conquered which pleased William Shakespeare.

Of course, nobody will suppose this; most people assume the opposite so decidedly that they read into the character of Shakespeare's Cæsar a nobility which is not present in any speech put into his lips or any action that is ascribed to him. They need very little imagination for the effort. It is not as if the great actions which might truly be ascribed to him were unsuited to drama. The character thus unimpressive might have been lighted up by some of the most striking incidents of history. Shakespeare might have reminded us—with some outrages to chronology, perhaps, but none that he would have cared for if he had wanted to bring to a focus all that was remarkable in the character of his hero—that Cæsar as a stripling had refused to desert his wife at the command of the terrible Sulla;—surely the most romantic incident of classical history. He might have been painted as a prisoner among the equally terrible pirates, ordering them about, bidding them cease their chatter when he wanted to take a nap, scolding them for their bad taste in not admiring his probably very bad verses, and treating them in all

ways, to use words which Plutarch wrote but Shakespere might well have copied, "as if they had been not his keepers but his guards." The poet might have told us how Cæsar confronted the raging waves of the Adriatic in a light boat, and seemed almost to still their rage with the reminder, "Thou bearest Cæsar and his fortunes." Less hackneyed incidents might have been brought in; we might have heard, for instance, of that legionary, who here, on British soil, after performing prodigies of valour, thought only of throwing himself at the feet of Cæsar to ask pardon for losing his shield—such actions might naturally be remembered as well as dramatically depicted. All this, and much more, was ready to his hand in the story of Plutarch, as, for the immortal joy of Englishmen, Shakespere was enabled to read it in the translation, just completed, of Thomas North. But he rejected it all, and copied only such sentences as tell us that his hero was an invalid and a hypochondriac, while he was not even content with what he found in Plutarch to that effect, but exaggerated and multiplied it. Why has he done all this? Why has he taken the greatest name in secular history and associated it with weakness, vanity, and superstition, hiding all the glorious achievements it suggests, and insisting only that all which was noblest in Rome rose up against the pretensions in which those achievements culminated?

It is a wonderful piece of good fortune for English readers that a question which, as I believe, gives the clue to the whole meaning of history, should be suggested by one of the greatest works of our greatest poet. But before we try to exhibit it in that light, let us dismiss some considerations which a little perplex the problem. Shakespere knew nothing of that wretched so-called realism—but the result seems to me most unreal—which leads writers of our time to fill their canvas with uninteresting detail in order to give solidity to their representation. He did not put in that line about Cæsar's deafness to make Cæsar seem natural. And another reflection suggests itself. The literary fashion of our day, whereby every second-rate writer thinks that he or she has nothing more to do than to inform us that their hero impressed the world in order to represent a great man, might be corrected by a study of the great characters of Shakespere. We might say, in a certain very important sense, that they are commonplace. They have for the most part the qualities and defects of ordinary humanity, they have hardly anything of that exceptional element which novelists are so fond of crowding into their work. But while this remark is true and important, and though it is naturally suggested here, it cannot contain an adequate explanation of Shakespere's feeble and colourless portrait of Julius Cæsar. The canon, as I should consider it, that genius is no subject for itself, is a reason rather for avoiding the character of a great man, than for treating it with a large space for those infirmities which he shares

with the most ordinary of mankind. The reason why Shakespere has done so seems to me as clear as it is important. The representation of the world's greatest statesman by the world's greatest poet, which appears so pale and ineffective, is in truth a brilliant revelation as to the meaning of history.

When we compare ancient and modern life, the most salient point of antagonism which attracts our attention is the different place which personality takes in the ancient and in the modern world. The feeling of devotion to a personal leader is to us an object of sympathy and respect quite apart from any estimate of its object. One may have the worst opinion of Napoleon, for instance, and yet feel touched at such an instance of devotion on the part of his soldiers as Byron has commemorated in his fine verses beginning—

"Must thou go, my glorious chief."

But I will read some lines which seem to me more effective as a tribute to our admiration for loyalty than anything Byron could have written, just because they are the utterance of a less poetic writer—of the least poetic writer, indeed, who ever gained the world's ear. If anything has pierced to the spring of poetry in Macaulay, it must have the true divining rod for that spring in every son of man. What is the subject which shows this magic power? An episode in the career of Hampden or Sydney? A scene in the American war? The hopes inspired by the early promise of the French Revolution? Something as unlike all these as possible—it is an epitaph on a Jacobite, supposed to be read by some eighteenth-century traveller in Italy:

"To my true king I offered, free from stain,  
Courage and faith; vain faith and courage vain.  
For him I threw lands, honours, wealth away,  
And one dear hope that was more prized than they.  
For him I languished in a foreign clime,  
Grey-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;  
Heard on Laverna, Scargill's whispering trees  
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;  
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,  
Each morning started from the dream to weep;  
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave  
The resting-place I asked, an early grave.  
Oh thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,  
From that proud country which was once my own,  
By those white cliffs I never more must see,  
By that dear language which I spake like thee,  
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear  
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here."

I cannot call to mind anything which illustrates so vividly the attraction of loyalty—the power of a *relation* as distinct from the influence of a character—for modern feeling, as the fact that one whose best known writing is a triumphant account of Jacobite defeat

should rise, for once, into poetry, in an ideal delineation of Jacobite fidelity.

“And sighed by Arno for my lovelier Tees.”

That line might have been written by Scott. It is hardly the expression of Macaulay. Like the note of an Æolian harp, it speaks the touch of an invisible influence, it breathes from vanished heroism, touching merely the imagination of him who contemplates it, but touching that so forcibly that he is constrained in spite of himself to give it a voice. That is what loyalty is to the mind of a modern, even one who had least sympathy with it, and lived when its influence was passing away.

It teaches us much of the meaning of history—much of the meaning of what we have learned to call evolution, as it affects the world of mind—to reflect that the sentiment which so much stirs modern sympathy, that he who feels it least feels it to this extent, is one with which the men of antiquity had no sympathy whatever. Nay, the expression is inadequate. They were not indifferent to it any more than we are; they regarded it with abhorrence equal to our admiration. The classic world, in this respect, may be regarded as a negative photograph of the modern world. The word king, which in every modern tongue brings such associations as are at their purest in this Jacobite epitaph, is in Greek and Latin a spell to evoke inappeasable hatred and terror. To us the name symbolises orderly government and national unity; to them it sounded as the herald of lawless and self-pleasing caprice. It is a new thing with us, after nearly two millenniums of Christian life, that a nation should exist without a personal head. Possibly this may be the condition of the future, many things seem to show that the era of monarchy is drawing towards a close; but throughout the whole history of Europe, from the date of Christianity, national life and monarchy have been inseparable. And monarchy is just as ancient as it is modern. All the great empires of the ancient world have a personal head when history dawns on them. But when we reach that brilliant epoch of ancient life which has arrogated to itself, very unjustly, the title of *ancient history*, we find it an assumption and starting-point of all moral feeling that a personal head to the State is incompatible with freedom—that the difference between a good king and a bad king, vast as it is, shrinks into insignificance in this respect when compared with the difference between the very best of kings and none at all. The feeling records the history of that age. About five centuries before Julius Cæsar lived the two greatest cities of the ancient world expelled their rulers, and from that time forward no virtue, no benevolence, could win forgiveness for any suspected attempt to renew personal rule in either Athens or Rome. A single

incident of Greek history known to every one affords us a striking illustration of this dread of personal pre-eminence. How was it possible that Aristides should be banished for being called the Just? The very fact that the anecdote and the name are so hackneyed proves the *feeling* which led to his banishment to be common; but that a legal institution should be created to give effect to it would strike us as needing explanation if we read history intelligently. The truth is that ostracism was a precaution, not against anything that we should think bad, but against a sentiment which modern feeling ranks among the purest virtues—that of loyalty to an individual. Goodness or genius became, to the conservative instinct of antiquity, a mere danger if either came within a measurable distance of threatening the supreme majesty of the ideal State; and he who thus imperilled its sacred eminence might so far be treated as a foe.

Of all the proofs of the greatness of Shakespere's genius none seems to me so remarkable as the fact that he should have reflected perfectly this characteristic sentiment of the classical world. No man had ever less of this anti-monarchic feeling than Shakespere himself. Note with what sympathy he paints the devotion to a king in his plays from English history, or, indeed, whenever such a feeling is possible. Remember "Henry V." or "Henry VIII.", and then turn to the speech of Cassius, and observe how the idea of kingly rule seems pre-figured and repudiated:

"I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life, but for my single self  
I had as lief not be as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.  
I was born free as Cæsar; so were you.  
We both have fed as well, and we can both  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he :  
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He had a fever when he was in Spain,  
And when the fit was on him, I did mark  
How he did shake: 'tis true, this god did shake;  
His coward lips did from their colour fly,  
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans  
Mark him, and write his speeches in their books.  
'Alas,' it cried, 'give me some drink, Titinius,'  
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me  
A man of such a feeble temper should  
So get the start of the majestic world  
And bear the palm alone."

But read the whole speech, and note how extraordinarily the greatness of Cæsar is ignored in it. Cassius talks as if it were by some general infatuation that the military equal of Alexander had obtained general dominion and influence! And then go on to the second part of his speech, and see how he tries to stir in Brutus the same envy of Cæsar's greatness which he feels himself:

"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves."



Here is a true picture of Cæsar among his contemporaries; but note how Cassius goes on to represent this as illusion:

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings,  
Brutus, and Cæsar, what should be in that Cæsar?  
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
Write them together, yours is as fair a name.  
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well."

And then note again his transition from trivial truth to striking falsehood:

"Weigh them, it is as heavy, conjure with them,  
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar."

Shakespeare must have meant us to recall that line in the scene where the spirit of Cæsar appears to Brutus, although Cassius fails to inspire in the nobler mind his own unrest at beholding a greater than himself. That speech, and every speech of importance which is given him, is a passionate deprecation of the feeling that we know as loyalty. It is the devotion to men neither mightier nor better than average mankind (as Cassius most untruly describes Cæsar) which makes up what we mean by loyalty. Cassius is speaking of the greatest man, probably (to be no more than man), who ever lived; but the horror of a possible elevation obliterates from the speech every trace of the real supremacy of Cæsar. Cassius dwells only on the points in which Cæsar was his equal or inferior; he could not see that an actual superiority had caused an actual dominion.

"Now it is Rome indeed, and room enough,  
When there is in it but one single man."

The pun may be Elizabethan, but the sentiment is that of the ancient world. To have one man thus raised above his fellows was, to classic feeling, to leave room for no brother by his side.

Cassius shows us the ignoble form of the recoil from a possible loyalty; its noble form is given in the antagonism of Brutus. We feel in him all the glow of a possible loyalty to Cæsar, but some other element is present which turns that glow to resolute opposition. His is not the vulgar passion for equality which we feel in every word from Cassius. He feels, not that he and his brethren are dwarfed by the pre-eminence of one whom he recognises as eminently great, but that the majesty of the invisible state is threatened by the majesty of the visible man. He speaks with absolute sincerity when he declares to Anthony:

"Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful;  
And pity to the general wrong of Rome—  
As fire drives out fire, so pity, pity—  
Hath done this deed on Cæsar."

He truly declares the principle of his action to the citizens: "Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more." He reminds Cassius in their quarrel that they have "struck the foremost man in all the world." No one, not even Anthony, bears a higher tribute to the character of Cæsar than he when meditating his murder:

"The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins  
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Cæsar,  
I have not known when his affections sway'd  
More than his reason."

The quarrel, he expressly says, "will bear no colour for the thing he is, he must be thought of as a serpent's egg," a strange expression as applied to a man old in years, and older in the experience of honours sufficient for more than one lifetime, but most expressive as an unconscious prophecy, regarding not an individual life, but a new spirit coming upon the world—a spirit confronted with apprehension and dismay by some of the noblest among those who belong to the age about to pass away. And Shakespere does not merely give us, in the persons of Cassius and Brutus, the poor and the noble version of the antique dread of loyalty; such is his marvellous genius that he seems even to make himself the accomplice of his hero's detractors. We are made to look upon him with the eyes of his fellow citizens. We are taken back to the spirit of an age which could not regard any one who aspired to monarchy, even at a time when the alternative of monarchy was a tyranny as cruel, as selfish, and as corrupt as the world has ever seen, without gross injustice. We are reminded that the dawn of personal loyalty was, to the ancient world, as the light of a conflagration.

The change by which individual life took a new sanctity as the old world gave place to the new, is not surprising to those who believe that humanity was at that time flooded with a new influence. The perilous height from which Athens and Rome had hurled every aspirant would naturally cease to appear unfitted for the sons of men, when it was seen that the true Son of Man was also the Son of God. But the change is one that may be recognised by those who have no belief in Christianity. They, of course, will invert cause and effect in describing it. They will say that a legend was created by a change in general feeling corresponding to a certain stage in the spiritual evolution of our race. But both sides must join in the belief, that at a certain stage in the world's history, personality, either for good or for evil, took a new importance. There was a change like that which Dante describes, when, in passing the centre of the world, the ideas, up and down, above and below, changed their significance—when the travellers saw that which had been below them as above them, and felt that the whole meaning they had connected with the words high

and low was henceforth inverted. So it was when humanity passed from what we call ancient to what we call modern history. The devotion to a person had been a danger, it became a duty. A colossal genius discerned the meaning of the change, sprang to the helm of the vessel, and strove to direct it in accordance with the new vision of the stars accessible to his gaze alone. He had the fate of all who see what they must see alone. He seemed to guide the vessel upon the rocks, and he perished a victim to the hatred of those he would have saved. But his work remained, or, rather, we may say, it then truly began. "Bind, son of Rome, the nations in thy sway," sang Virgil a generation after Cæsar was murdered. That had been the aim of Cæsar. His eagle gaze saw the new mission of Rome, saw the new place of personality. He recognised that the era of monarchy had dawned. He felt that the Roman world needed a ruler, and knew that he could rule it—the discernment was a vocation; he was its martyr, and his was the resurrection of every true martyr. His work began in its fulness as he himself disappeared from the scene; the historian who seeks to estimate its import is forced to take in the age which followed him and gather up results not obvious till a period far removed from his own.

The magnificent temperance of genius, which dims the brightness of a hero's career so as to bring out its true meaning as a prelude to his posthumous influence, and blots out some of the most brilliant passages of history to enforce her lesson, proves Shakespere to be not more a perennial model for the artist than a guide to the true historian. The keynote of the play is struck in the cry of the dying Brutus;

"Oh, Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords  
Into our proper entrails."

We trace the first faint suggestion of that idea in Plutarch's assertion that the great genius which attended him through his lifetime even after his death remained as the avenger of his murder, pursuing through every sea and land all those who were concerned in it, and suffering none to escape, but reaching all who in any sort or kind were either actually engaged in the fact or, by their counsels, any way promoted it. Here Shakespere touches silver and leaves gold. That idea of a guardian genius captivates his fancy; he uses it for the delineation of meaner men; he brings it in to one of the finest speeches of Brutus; but in delineating the greatest of Romans he bids the guardian stand aside, the great genius who pursues Cæsar's murderers shall be Cæsar himself. I confess that in another passage which he has so transformed, Plutarch's silver seems to me changed to a baser metal. The historian tells us of a spectre appearing to Brutus on the eve of his last battle to tell him that he should meet his evil

genius at Philippi, and Shakespere makes this spectre Cæsar himself. The message seems to me an inadequate reason for recalling the mighty dead into the trammels of the visible. But Shakespere was fond of such incidents, and turned this to his own purpose, making it an expression of that pervading presence which is henceforward to overshadow the world. Shakespere keeps the living Cæsar poor and pale that the dead Cæsar may blaze forth in unrivalled splendour. It is an invisible presence which gives the play its meaning. While Cæsar is visible we are allowed to see nothing of him but his weaknesses. When he has passed into the Unseen we are reminded that he came at a crisis of the world's history when an old order of things was passing away and all things were made new. We are called on to discern in him one worthy to embody the coming age, we have to recognise—it is but another way of expressing the same truth—that his work did not cease when he ceased to be visible among men, but then entered on its most important and most effective stage. It is the noblest of his enemies who, in his dying exclamation, confesses that the deadly blow has been struck in vain, and that the true Cæsar is immortal.

The new importance of a name which had, up to the death of the great man we are considering, meant no more to Roman ears than any aristocratic family name does to us, is attested by the fact that it is the only name out of what we call the secular world which is reported for us in the words of our Lord. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," said He, when an attempt was made to put Him in the wrong with the Roman or the Jewish party by eliciting a formal condemnation of one of them, and He pointed out the head of the Cæsar on the coin which was brought Him. It is an instructive reflection that the first Roman coin ever stamped with a human image bore that of Julius Cæsar, and it is not impossible that some coin of his—it would only need to be about seventy years old—was the actual object of attention to the Pharisees and the Saviour. One likes to imagine that His eyes rested for a moment on those striking features, that as He spoke of rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's His mind went back to one who was in some sense the ideal Roman, as He was the ideal Israel, and whose fate at the hands of His countrymen dimly prefigured His own. Mr. Froude was blamed for concluding his history with an elaborate parallel between the two men, unjustly it seems to me. The parallel is suggested by Dante, who allots to the murderers of Cæsar a similar infamy with those concerned in the Crucifixion, and who always speaks of the Empire as of parallel importance and sanctity with the Church as a divine institution. It is a great thought that the new unity which was to become Christianity had its secular and pagan forerunner, that it was heralded by one whom Shakespere has

here represented to us as mighty in the invisible world. It stirs many thoughts of the possibly unsuspected vocation of any life. To me it seems such a warning against opposite political dangers as makes our fitting conclusion—a warning, first, against that distortion of our reverence for the past which refuses to welcome the future; which considers evolution a truth only for the ages which preceded Christianity, and fails to realise that we are living in the great week of creation, and that each of its secular days has its own work, which all are called on to recognise and welcome. And then, too—and this warning seems to me more needed, especially by the young—it should guard us against the readiness to receive any reformer unless he comes “not to destroy, but to fulfil.” The Past is fulfilled in forms most utterly dissimilar from itself, but by none which repudiate their affiliation with it. But above all, the warning bids us wait to judge the work of a great man till we see it as a whole. It is surely such a lesson in what we mean by Faith as elsewhere we find only on the page of Scripture. By Faith, I mean the trust in character rather than in any results by which we can test the influence of character—the belief elsewhere so perfectly expressed by our great poet that—

“Spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues—”

that these issues transcend our narrow vision, and that when all that we can see of a man's working is ended, his work has but entered on a stage where its results are deeper, wider, every way larger, and nearer to the realm of the Eternal.

JULIA WEDGWOOD.