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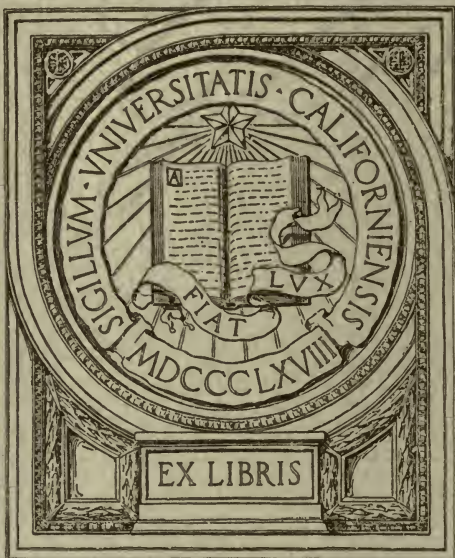
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A PROBABLE ITALIAN SOURCE
OF
SHAKESPEARE'S "JULIUS CÆSAR"

BY

ALEXANDER BOECKER, PH.D.

INSTRUCTOR IN THE MANUAL TRAINING HIGH SCHOOL, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

NEW YORK

1913



IL CESARE
TRAGEDIA
D'ORLANDO PESCETTI

Dedicata

AL SERENISS. PRINCIPE
DONNO ALFONSO II. D'ESTE
DUCA DI FERRARA, &c.



IN VERONA,
Nella Stamparia di Girolamo Discepolo.
M D X CIII.

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PREFACE

This monograph was submitted to the Faculty of New York University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and was accepted by them in May, 1912. Its composition was prompted chiefly by a desire to call attention to the long forgotten work of Orlando Pescetti, because it is at least an open question whether Shakespeare derived from the "Cesare" of the Italian dramatist many hints which he later used in his own "Julius Caesar." Pescetti's drama seems to have been entirely overlooked as a possible source, although the many striking similarities to Shakespeare's tragedy render it well worth investigating. I believe that the present work is the first attempt to demonstrate the possible relation between the two dramas.

"Cesare" seems to be the only play on the subject which has not been exhaustively examined. The only notices in English with which I am acquainted appeared in letters published in the *Nation*, June 2 and 9, 1910, while this work was in process of preparation. The first, by Miss Lisi Cipriano, called attention to some marked similarities in expression and treatment between the two dramas. In reply, two letters appeared the following week: one from Professor Harry Morgan Ayres of Columbia University, the other from Professor Henry N. McCracken of Yale. Neither seemed to regard the parallels cited by Miss Cipriano as indicative of direct borrowing on the part of Shakespeare. Professor Ayres had previously in the June, 1910, number of the "American Modern Language Association Publications" been the first to make any mention of Pescetti in relation to Shakespeare. In his article, "Shakespeare's Julius Caesar in the Light of Some other Versions," he called attention to some parallels, without, however, attaching to them any particular significance.

The above writers seem, however, to have missed the really vital points of contact between the two dramas. These, I trust, will become sufficiently evident in the following pages.

Pescetti has been no more fortunate in his Continental critics. The mere mention of his name from Tiraboschi on is all one finds till Emilio Bertana, in his "La tragedia" (1904), gives a brief analysis and critique of the play. Ferdinando Neri, in his "La tragedia italiana nel Cinquecento" (1904) has a brief mention, but none of his countrymen have ever discussed Pescetti's drama as a possible Shakespearean source. It seems unknown to French and German critics.

Owing to the absence in America of material bearing upon Pescetti, I was compelled to base my study upon a very carefully executed transcript of the 1594 edition of "Cesare" now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence. Through the courtesy of Professor Ayres, I have been enabled carefully to check all quotations by reference to his own copy of the 1594 edition. The references to "Julius Caesar" are to the Globe Edition. The copy of Lydgate referred to is in the Library of Columbia University, while the quotations from Ovid are taken from Golding's 1575 translation in the Yale University Library. To the latter I am also indebted for the extracts from the 1578 translation of Appian. The references to Plutarch are to Professor Skeats' edition.

To Mr. Emilio Bruschi of Florence I am indebted for his careful transcriptions of documents, and to Professor Salomone Morpurgo, the head librarian of the Biblioteca Nazionale, for his courtesy in putting the available material contained therein at my disposal. To Professor Harry Morgan Ayres I wish to express my thanks for permitting me to use his copy of "Cesare." To Professor Theodore F. Jones and Mr. Arthur H. Nason of New York University I owe many valuable suggestions regarding the arrangement of subject matter. My many obligations to Professor M. W. MacCallum's "Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background," and to Professor F. H. Sykes' edition of "Julius Caesar" are in evidence throughout.

I am above all indebted to my colleague, Dr. Edoardo San Giovanni, for his kind help and encouragement, without which this work would probably never have been consummated.

ALEXANDER BOECKER.

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INTRODUCTION

I intend in this monograph to demonstrate the probability of Shakespeare's indebtedness in the composition of the first three acts of his "Julius Caesar," to the "Cesare" of Orlando Pescetti, an Italian tragedy on the same theme, first published at Verona in 1594.*

This connection has never yet been demonstrated. The work seems almost totally unknown to the English literary world.† Shakespearean criticism, eager to investigate the smallest matters in regard to the great poet, is silent on Pescetti. I know of no French or German‡ references. In Italy, Pescetti has received scant notice; few writers have so much as mentioned "Cesare," while not one has made any suggestion as to a possible connection between this play and "Julius Caesar."§

* A second edition followed in 1604 from the same press (Girolamo Discipolo) in 4°.

This is exceedingly rare; the only copy which I have traced is in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice. I use the 1594 text, following the copy in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale at Florence.

† The only reference in English with which I am acquainted is by Harry Morgan Ayres in the June, 1910, number of the Proceedings of the Am. Modern Language Association. In his article, "Shakespeare's Julius Caesar in the Light of some other Versions" he makes a brief mention of this play. But see Preface.

‡ A careful search of the forty volumes of *Jahrbücher*, published by the "Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft", failed to reveal any mention of Pescetti. A search of the registers of the very complete collection of German literary periodicals contained in the library of New York University was equally unproductive.

§ For a brief sketch of Pescetti see G. B. Gerini, *Gli scrittori pedagogici italiani nel secolo decimo settimo*. 1900. In addition to the above the following are the only works known to me which mention Pescetti's "Cesare":

Fonte, Michelangelo, [Paolo Beni], *Il Cavalcanti*, 1614.

Quadrio, Fr. Saverio, *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia*, 1739.

Fontanini, Giusto, *Biblioteca dell'eloquenza italiana con le annotazioni del Sig. Apostolo Zeno*, 1753.

Allaci, Leone, *Drammaturgia*, 1755.

The inscription upon the title page of the 1594 edition is as follows:

Il Cesare
Tragedia
d'Orlando Pescetti
Dedicata
al Sereniss. Principe
Donno Alfonso II. d'Este
Duca di Ferrara, etc.
(Device)
In Verona
Nella stamparia di Girolamo Discepolo
MDXCIII

Pescetti's work is in quarto, and consists of six pages of dedicatory matter, and one hundred and fifty pages of verse, for the most part hendecasyllabic varied with septenarians. In the tragedy proper there are nearly four thousand lines.

The author in his dedication establishes, to his own satisfaction at least, the descent of the family of Este from the mighty Julius, and ventures the belief that Brutus and Cassius, though they could not abide Caesar's rule, would rejoice in Alfonso's. At the end of several pages of this sort of flattery we read: "Di Verona il dì 19 di Febraio 1594. Di V.A.S. Divotiss. et umiliss. Servitore Orlando Pescetti."

Tiraboschi, Girolamo, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, 1822.

Ginguené, P. L., *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*, 1824.

De Sanctis, Natale, *G. Cesare e M. Bruto nei poeti tragici*, 1895.

Salvioli, *Bibliografia universale del teatro drammatico italiano*, 1903.

Bertana, Emilio, *La tragedia*, 1904.

Neri, Ferdinando, *La tragedia italiana nel Cinquecento*, 1904.

Flamini, Francesco, *A History of Italian Literature*. Translated by Evangeline O'Connor, 1907.

Of the above only Bertana has more than a brief mention. He alone attempts an analysis of the play.

THE PLOT OF "CESARE"

The following is a list of the persons in the drama, called by Pescetti, "Interlocutori."

Marte }
Venere } Fanno il Prologo
Giove }
Bruto
Cassio
Sacerdote
Porzia moglie di Bruto
Calpurnia moglie di Cesare
Cameriera di Calpurnia
Cesare
Marc'Antonio Consolo
Decimo Bruto
Lenate
Messo Primo
Messo Secundo
Coro di Matrone Romane
Coro di Donne di Corte
Coro di Cittadini
Coro di Soldati

The tragedy proper is preceded by a prologue in which Mars, Venus, and Jove are the actors. Pescetti, probably following Ovid's account in Book XV. of the "Metamorphoses," represents Venus as bewailing the destined death of Caesar, the last of her earthly descendants. Mars extends his consolation and proffers his aid. She informs him that Jove is responsible, and indulges in a denunciation of the Thunderer that must have made his celestial ears tingle. All further discussion of the matter is terminated by the appearance of the Father of the gods, who reproves Venus for her blasphemous utterances, assures her that his ways are inscrutable, and consoles her by promising Caesar immortality

among the gods, and the infliction of dire punishment upon his assassins. Venus bows to his will, and impatient Mars hurries at Jove's command to sow the seeds of civil strife throughout the Roman world.

This Prologue is a literary curiosity. Its style is at times more reminiscent of the madrigal than of tragedy, while the very earthly flavor which clings to the celestial personages is decidedly humorous to the modern reader. Pescetti undoubtedly was in grim earnest when he wrote the Prologue, but many of the sentences he puts in the mouths of his immortals must have made Melpomene smile. The admonition of Venus to Mars on omniscient Jove's approach, "*Ma e' vien ver noi, tacciam, ch'egli non ci oda,*" despite its Renaissance setting, is delightful for its sheer absurdity.

The tragedy follows immediately after this prologue. In view of the extreme length of Pescetti's work and the lack of interest for our purpose in many of the speeches, I have thought it advisable not to inflict upon the reader an extended synopsis of the plot, but to confine my efforts to the following outline of the story.

ACT I

The scene is not stated, but is evidently, throughout the play, an open space before a temple in the vicinity of Caesar's house. The time is just before dawn. Brutus is discovered apostrophizing the shade of Pompey. He vows to deliver Rome from the tyrant. Cassius overhears him, and commends this resolution. Brutus relates how the ghost of Pompey had appeared to him during the past night and commanded him to restore the ancient liberties. Together, they enter the temple to pray for the success of their enterprise. The Priest now appears, deploras the prevalent irreligion, urges the observance of the ancient rites, and then goes to prepare the sacrifice commanded by the Dictator. Brutus and Cassius reappear and discuss their plans. Cassius strongly favors the killing of Antony along with Caesar. This Brutus will not tolerate, in spite of the many forceful arguments of his fellow conspirator. He abruptly terminates the discussion

by detailing the manner of Caesar's murder. As he concludes, Portia enters in search of Brutus. She deploras that her sex prevents her taking an active part in the conspiracy. She begs to be favored with their confidence. Cassius hesitates, but finally divulges their plans, and beseeches her to aid the enterprise with her prayers. This, rather reluctantly, she promises. Brutus, who has taken no part in this conversation, now bursts into an ecstatic speech wherein, in imagination, he already hears the rejoicing which the news of the tyrant's death will cause among Rome's noblest families. He advises Portia to return home while he and Cassius go to join the other conspirators. Portia invokes the blessing of Heaven on them, and the act concludes as the Chorus of Matrons implores the intercession of Romulus to restore to the city its former peace and happiness.

ACT II

Calpurnia and her nurse indulge in the inevitable lengthy and tiresome discussion concerning the former's terrible dream. The ghost of Caesar, horrible with wounds, had appeared to her that night. Almost half the act is devoted to Calpurnia's expression of grief and to her nurse's fruitless efforts at consolation. The Chorus declaims the fickleness of mankind, whereupon Brutus and Portia reappear. The former, believing that his wife has wounded herself in some domestic labor, reproves her for turning her hands to such work. She tells him that she has wounded herself to prove that she could commit suicide were her death necessary. She fears that her husband may perish in his attempt against Caesar and has resolved to restrain him. This dialogue, filled with mutual protestations of love and constancy, is terminated by the appearance of Calpurnia, whose perturbed countenance prompts them to overhear her. Calpurnia, in a long and tiresome speech, condemns the desire of men for dominion over others as the cause of all their sufferings. The nurse interjects the usual advice and consolation. Calpurnia voices her determination to persuade Caesar to abandon his contemplated visit to the Senate. Brutus petitions Jove to

steel the tyrant's heart to the appeals of his wife. Portia retires to pray for her husband's success, while he goes to rejoin Cassius and the others in the plot. The Chorus sings the mutability of human happiness, and the act ends.

ACT III

Caesar and Antony indulge in a lengthy dialogue which is started by the observations of the former regarding the banquet at the house of Lepidus the preceding evening. Caesar, ably seconded by Antony, enlarges upon his glories. His companion warns him against treachery, and advises a bodyguard. Caesar scorns those who would harm him, but resolves after this day to be surrounded by some of his trusty veterans. He orders Antony to prepare for the Parthian campaign. Here follows a soliloquy by Antony, in which, in contrast to Calpurnia, he exalts the pleasures of rulership. He intends so to contrive that in the event of Caesar's death he can seize the reins of government. Hereupon the Priest in the longest speech in the play recites the many and various portents which have lately occurred. As he concludes, Caesar and Calpurnia join him, and another long scene ensues in which Caesar stands firm against all the arguments brought forward to dissuade him. He is resolved to go to the Senate, and the scene is brought to an end by a final warning from the Priest. The Chorus sings the direful results following the disregard of religion.

ACT IV

Brutus and Cassius discuss the probability of a detection of their plot. It seems that Lenate, evidently not of their number, had approached Brutus and whispered his good wishes for the success of their enterprise. Brutus and Cassius engage in a dialogue concerning liberty, but are interrupted by the appearance of Decimus Brutus, who laments the perversity of fortune. It seems that Caesar has yielded to Calpurnia's entreaties and will stay at home. Worse still, on the morrow he will appear with his bodyguard. Marcus Brutus feels that Jove will yet favor their designs. Caesar

enters and condemns those as fools who are guided by the advice of women. Nevertheless, as he fears treachery, he has resolved to heed the entreaties of his wife. He indulges in a panegyric of himself. The conspirators now approach, and Marcus Brutus addresses him, inquiring his reasons for not attending the important session of the Senate. Caesar is in doubt as to the manner of his reply. The prayers of his wife, he asserts, have influenced him. Besides, he has reason to fear treachery. Decimus Brutus, by artfully playing on his vanity, succeeds in overcoming his doubts. Caesar resolves to attend the Senate. Marcus Brutus can hardly find words fit to sing the praises of Jove, who has inspired this determination in the tyrant's heart. The conspirators indulge in pious prayers and felicitations. Caesar, Calpurnia and Decimus Brutus are the persons in the next scene. Caesar tells Calpurnia that her entreaties are vain; now, as formerly, the gods will protect him. She bows to his will. Decimus, in another useless speech, continues his laudation of Caesar and the belittlement of his fears. Caesar at length starts for the Senate. He is detained by Lenate who addresses him, to the great consternation of the conspirators, who fear the revelation of their plot. Lenate begs a favor of Caesar, which the latter is disposed to grant. The increasing panic of the conspirators is stayed by Brutus, who has watched Lenate and feels confident that he is not talking of the plot. At the conclusion of Lenate's address Caesar departs for the Senate, and Lenate joins the conspirators and assures them of his silence. In the concluding scene Calpurnia breaks into lamentations while the Chorus of Ladies of the Court comments upon her distress and beseeches Juno to turn aside her wrath and spare Caesar.

ACT V

Brutus addresses the citizens and announces the death of the tyrant. He calls on all to rejoice in their reestablished freedom, while the conspirators shout the glad tidings. This is his last appearance. The rest of the act is devoted to the

lamentations of Calpurnia, the report of the catastrophe by the First and the Second Messenger, and the comments of the various Chorus.

Pescetti's tragedy, as will readily be seen from this statement of its plot, is thoroughly Senecan in its construction and perpetuates some of the worst faults of its type. The dramatic unities are strictly observed; there are the same lengthy speeches, the same moralizing, the same absence of action evolved before the spectator, the same lack of life characteristic of this dramatic form. The actors soliloquize, converse, declaim, listen; they do everything but act. Their exits and their entrances constitute the total of visible action. Deeds are carefully excluded, or relegated beyond the stage; the declamatory powers of messengers, the comments of the Chorus, and the speeches and conduct of the actors are relied upon to vitalize them in the imagination of the audience.

Of characterization, in the Shakespearean sense, there is very little. It would be easy to dismiss the whole matter. A careful search is necessary to locate those passages wherein Pescetti displays any decided flashes of dramatic power in his characterizations. Yet there are times when he attempts, and in a measure successfully, to provide adequate motivation for the speeches of his characters; but unfortunately, these are rather few and far between. He almost invariably locates these places in such a rank rhetorical jungle that it requires considerable care to discover them. Yet he reveals at times a true dramatic instinct in his choice of material and in the handling of certain situations.*

But the force of convention was too strong for him successfully to resist its insidious influences. Following in the footsteps of his contemporaries, he spins his drama out to some four thousand lines, ninety-nine percent of which are versified prose and the remainder dubiously poetic. Never-

* In parts of the Brutus-Cassius dialogue in the first act; in his attempted contrast of Calpurnia and Portia; in his inclusion of the portents; and above all, in the scene wherein Lenate addresses Caesar, and the ensuing panic among the conspirators.

theless, compared with the crudities of Giraldi (Cinthio), or the revolting horrors of Sperone and Cresci, Pescetti's work marks an advance in Italian drama.

The *dramatis personae* common both to Shakespeare and Pescetti are Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Marcus Brutus, Cassius, Decius Brutus, Popilius Lena, Calpurnia and Portia. Pescetti calls Decius, Decimo, and Popilius Lena, Lenate. In addition, the Italian mentions incidentally Casca, Cimber, Trebonius and Cicero. Of the others occurring in Shakespeare, there is no trace. Pescetti, however, introduces two new characters: the Servant or Nurse to Calpurnia and the Priest. The former is one of the traditional figures of the Senecan drama, while the latter performs at various times the functions of monitor, mediator and chorus. From non-Plutarchian sources the Italian obtained the names Spurrinna and Bucolianus, which occur in the First Messenger's recital of the assassination. The first he doubtless owes to Suetonius, while the second he obtained from Appian's account of Caesar's murder. In obedience to the formal demand of his drama, Pescetti has the first and second Messenger, the Choruses of Roman Matrons (probably suggested by Lucan),* of the Ladies of the Court, of Citizens, and of Soldiers. The two latter are merged in the mob of Shakespeare.

As a natural result of the limitations imposed by his model, Pescetti has to confine his action to the events of the day of Caesar's assassination, and can only inferentially introduce material of which Shakespeare could avail himself to the full. The place is always the same, and, though unmentioned by the dramatist, is presumably an open space before a temple in the immediate vicinity of Caesar's house. In consequence of these restrictions such hints as Pescetti may have furnished Shakespeare, are, almost exclusively, to be found embodied in the composition of the first three acts of "Julius Caesar."

Shakespeare's main source was Plutarch; Pescetti's was Appian, though he did not hesitate to draw liberally from

* Pharsalia, Bk. II., where the Chorus of Matrons bewails Caesar's approach.

Plutarch, Suetonius, Lucan, Ovid, and Vergil when the occasion required. In this I disagree with the only two commentators who have given this drama more than passing attention.* With the exception of the Brutus-Portia scene, the portents, and his idealization of Brutus' character, in every one of the main incidents of the first four acts, and in the entire fifth act, the Italian follows Appian faithfully. But, like Shakespeare, he does not hesitate to amplify† his material nor to invent such incidents as the exigencies of the situation seem to demand.

That Shakespeare went further than Plutarch for his sources has been the subject of much discussion. He introduces historical touches not found in the biographer. I purpose to show in the course of this work that almost every one of these he could readily have obtained through Pescetti. This Renaissance rhetorician was thoroughly at home in the classics, and his work throughout bears unmistakable evidence of their influence.

It is certain that he was well acquainted with the Latin tragedy "Caesar," written in 1544 by the French humanist Marc Antoine Muret (Muretus). Pescetti's enemies were quick to recognize the resemblance between the two plays and openly accused him of plagiarism. While the Italian undoubtedly received many hints from the work of his predecessor, there is no ground for the vicious attack made upon him by Beni.‡ Moreover, his borrowings, such as they are, in no way affect our investigation. Undoubtedly he was also acquainted with the "César" of Jacques Grévin (1561).

* Emilio Bertana in "La tragedia," 1904, and Francesco Neri in "La tragedia italiana nel Cinquecento," 1904.

† *Instate* is perhaps more accurate in Pescetti's case.

‡ He says, "E di qui è che preso animo e fatto cuore, poco dipoi compose, o più tosto tradusse in volgare, una Tragedia del Mureto detta il Cesare. . . . È vero che per alquanto ampliarla e ricoprir' insieme il furto, vi andò inserendo, e qua e là traponendo, varie leggierezze e vanità di sua testa. In modo tale che almen per queste meriterebbe d'esserne stimato Autore." From "Il Cavalcanti," by Michelangelo Fonte (Paolo Beni). In Padova per Francesco Bolzetta, 1614. Page 107 ff. The animus back of such a charge may be inferred from the fact that Muretus has but little over eight hundred lines,

But, whatever the hints as to treatment Pescetti may have received from Muretus,* it is to his minute knowledge of the classic authors that he owes the substance of his drama. He makes a far greater use than do his predecessors of the material later employed by Shakespeare. Very noteworthy is the fact that here we find for the *first time* in any play on the subject, the Brutus-Portia scene; the suspense occasioned by the suspected discovery of the plot; the panic among the conspirators when Popilius Lena addresses Caesar; the great prominence of the portents.

The material derived from classical sources and used both by Shakespeare and Pescetti includes the conference between Brutus and Cassius; the respect in which the former was held; his relations to his wife, and her demand to share his confidence; the enthusiasm of the conspirators; their sparing of Antony at Brutus' request; the prodigies and portents that preceded Caesar's death; Calpurnia's dream and her efforts to stay

and that Pescetti introduces much effective material not found in the former's tragedy. Fr. Saverio Quadrio in "Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia," Milano, 1739, Vol. IV, p. 72, says of "Cesare:" "Fiorì questo poeta celebre per altre opere circa il 1590; e questa fu la prima tragedia di tale argomento che in lingua volgare si componesse: nè ha che fare con quella del Mureto, come ha malamente scritto il Fontanini, togliendolo da Paolo Beni." In Fontanini, Giusto, "Biblioteca dell'eloquenza italiana con le annotazione del Sig. Apostolo Zeno"-Venezia, Pasquali, 1753 (4 vols.), Vol. I, p. 483, we read of Pescetti's work: "Nel Cavalcanti del Beni si fa nuovo stragio di Cesare per colpa di questo autore, come di plagiario del Mureto nella Tragedia latina del Cesare. Si vede, che i ladri letterari, colti in flagranti come succede, si rendono poi scherniti e ridicoli; e che poco giova l'andarsi rampicando per forza, quasi erba parietaria, sulle industrie degli altri, come se fossero loro proprie, con cercar poi di occultarlo, quando per conoscerlo di primo aspetto, ci vuole assai poco, mentre le cose o presto or tardi si scoprono." In a note Zeno says: "Il Cesare del Mureto, e'l Cesare del Pescetti poco più di commune han fra loro, che l'argomento, la storia, ed il titolo; e però l'accusa di plagiario data del Beni al Pescetti, contra del quale scrisse il suo Cavalcanti per difesa della sua Anticrusca, è anzi dettata dalla passione che dalla verità." It is interesting to note that Fontanini, like Allaci, speaks only of a 1604 edition of "Cesare." Zeno, however, is careful to point out the error.

* There are portions of the speeches of the principal characters decidedly reminiscent of Muretus, but the similarity is more in content than in expression, and seldom enter those portions of "Cesare" which parallel those in "Julius Caesar."

her husband at home and the counter efforts of Decimus Brutus; the warning letter given to Caesar (only mentioned in "Cesare" by the Messenger); all the details of the assassination scene, and Brutus' speech to the people. Both also make use of personal characteristics mentioned either in Plutarch or in Appian. Thus Antony's friendship for Caesar, his fondness for revelry, his hold on the soldiers; Brutus' intense patriotism, his hatred for tyranny, his magnanimity, his disinterestedness, his love of study; the caution of Cassius, his hatred of tyrants; Caesar's lately acquired superstition and arrogance. These are all derived from the above sources. Pescetti refers to Pompey several times, but he says nothing about the actions of the tribunes, nor about their punishment. Nor is there any mention of the prophecy of danger on the Ides of March; of the offer of the Crown on the Lupercal or on any other occasion; of the anonymous letters sent to Brutus; of the conspirators' contempt for an oath; of their rejection of Cicero as confederate; of Ligarius; of Artimidorus or his attempted intervention; of Antony's speech.

On the other hand Pescetti introduces material either simply hinted at or altogether omitted in Shakespeare and the histories. Such is the account of the conversation between Antony and Caesar, and Caesar's opinion of death; the pleas used by Decimus Brutus; the various conversations between Portia and Cassius; between the Priest and Calpurnia, and between Caesar and the Priest; the lamentations of Calpurnia. He gives much prominence to the Priest and to Calpurnia's servant. He founded his choruses on material partly suggested by Lucan, and perhaps by Muretus, Grévin and Garnier.

While Pescetti drew liberally from Plutarch, yet his indebtedness to Appian is particularly significant for our purpose. There are passages in "Julius Caesar" wherein Shakespeare introduces historical touches which apparently can only be explained upon the supposition that he knew and used the English translation of Appian published in 1578. Owing to the peculiar parallelism often evident in the accounts both of Plutarch and of Appian, and to the absence in "Julius Caesar"

of those minutiae necessary to a positive confirmation, the question of Shakespeare's indebtedness to the Greek historian has remained largely conjectural. Pescetti undoubtedly used Appian, and in his use of the materials, and in the similarity to Shakespeare's subsequent treatment, the supposition that Appian was the ultimate source of the disputed passages seems to receive its strongest confirmation.

THE INFLUENCE OF APPIAN

The English translation of Appian, by "W. B.," was published in 1578. This is the work supposedly used by Shakespeare. In his "Julius Caesar" there are four places in which the influence of the historian seems predominant; in a part of the speech of Brutus to the citizens; in the oration of Antony; in the conduct of the conspirators immediately following the murder; and in a detail concerning Antony.

Neither the address of Brutus nor the funeral oration of Antony is recorded in Plutarch. Both are to be found in Appian. It has been suggested* that from him Shakespeare got the idea for Brutus' exclamation, "Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all freemen?" Appian's Brutus says: "We at his desire gaue him security, and as it should seeme, afrayde of himself, seking to make his Tyrany sure, we sware unto it. If he had required us to sware, not only to confirme the things past, but also to haue bene hys slaues in time to come, what woulde they then haue done that nowe lie in wayte for our liues? I suppose verye Romaines indeede, wyll rather choose certaine death as they haue oft done, than by an othe to abyde willing seruitude."†

While it is possible that Shakespeare, following his custom in the composition of this particular play, may have derived this hint from the scattered pages of Plutarch, or indeed conceived it independently as a dramatic consequence of Brutus' previously expressed attitude, yet the advantage of Appian's account is manifest. Pescetti knew and used this account,

* Especially by Prof. Frederick H. Sykes in his notes to "Julius Caesar," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1909.

† Appian (1578), p. 153. *Εἰ δὲ ἡμῖν ὀμνῦναι προσέττατεν, οὐ τὰ παρελθόντα μόνον οἴσειν ἐγκρατῶς, ἀλλὰ δουλεύσειν ἐς τὸ μέλλον ἐκόντας, τί ἂν ἔπραξαν οἱ νῦν ἐπιβουλεύοντες ἡμῖν; ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ, ὄντας γε Ῥωμαίους, οἶμαι πολλακίς ἀποθανεῖν ἐλέσθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ δουλεῖν ἐκόντας ἐπὶ ὄρκῳ.* Appian, Ed. Didot. P. 403.

and while the same idea does not occur in Brutus' address in "Cesare" it is repeatedly expressed throughout the play. If we admit the possibility of Shakespeare's derivation of the disputed hints through a careful selection from the pages of Plutarch, there can be no strong objection to granting him the exercise of a similar freedom in his perusal of Pescetti. It was a common enough practice of the Elizabethan dramatists to appropriate suitable material wherever and whenever they encountered it, a fact which must be borne in mind throughout this discussion.

Shakespeare could have found his matter in Pescetti. There is nothing more repugnant to the Brutus of "Cesare" than the idea of slavery, and he voices his opinion time and again throughout the play. To quote but one instance: Cassius and Brutus are discussing liberty and Brutus says:

"Il Tiranno è peggior dell' omicida,
Perchè la vita l'omicida toglie,
Ma con la dignità toglie il possesso
Della vita il Tiranno, e chi ad altrui,
Non à se, vive, è viè peggior, che morte:
Perciò saggio Caton, saggio et ardito,
Ch'anzi morir, che viver servo elesse."—*Ces.*, p. 89.

The possibility that the address of Antony, as recorded by Appian, furnished Shakespeare hints for the oration in the play, has recently been investigated by Prof. MacCallum.* He concludes that while Appian's account bears little resemblance to the oration, it nevertheless contains some parallels in details. Antony both in the history and in the drama calls attention to his friendship for Caesar; to the honors the latter had bestowed on his murderers; he proclaims his own readiness to avenge his benefactor's death; he recites Caesar's triumphs and the spoils he sent to Rome; he uncovers Caesar's corpse and displays the bloodstained robe; he makes Caesar cite the names of those whom he had pardoned and advanced only to destroy him.

* "Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background," p. 646. MacMillan & Company, London and New York. 1910.

Professor MacCallum confesses that the evidence is not very convincing, but that it is strengthened greatly by the apparent loans from the same author discernible in Shakespeare's treatment of various passages in "Antony and Cleopatra." The question at present is not whether the hints in "Julius Caesar" were derived from Appian, but whether they were derived from the English translation. The likelihood that Shakespeare knew and used this translation when he wrote his later tragedy, does not exclude the possibility that he was not acquainted with it when he composed the earlier work, nor that he received the hints attributed to Appian not at first hand, but through his knowledge of Pescetti's drama.*

The Italian's work contains no funeral oration by Antony, but the entire fifth act is dramatically parallel to the third act of "Julius Caesar." In it we find Brutus' speech to the people, the account of the assassination, the various laments for Caesar, a chorus singing Brutus' praises and another singing those of Caesar. The entire act is founded upon Appian, and despite its comparative inferiority in dramatic treatment, is rich in suggestions which a better dramatist could use to great advantage. Caesar's victories, his magnanimity to his enemies, their base treachery and Antony's

* As in the case of the supposed loan in the oration of Brutus, a careful comparison of Plutarch and Appian reveals nothing which Shakespeare could not have obtained from the former, if not directly, at least as a natural consequence of Plutarch's various accounts. Even the matter of the display of the corpse is mentioned by the biographer (Julius Caesar, p. 102, Skeat's Edition). As a matter of history, not the corpse itself, but a waxen image showing the mutilations, was exhibited to the populace. It is true that from Plutarch's *direct* accounts of the oration, Shakespeare could have obtained very little. The whole matter illustrates the great difficulty encountered by the investigator who seeks to disentangle Appian's contribution from that of Plutarch. This is especially difficult in view of the transformation inseparable from a dramatic treatment. In many passages covering the life of Caesar the marked similarity between the two writers has given rise to the theory that both worked from a common Greek source now lost. The minutiae necessary to a positive declaration in favor of Appian are lacking in Shakespeare's treatment of this particular scene, but as will be noted from the main argument, they are evident in Pescetti.

readiness to avenge his friend's murder; in short, all the hints* presumably derived by Shakespeare from the English translation of Appian are brought before us. Shakespeare could have found his material in Pescetti's drama, and the supposition that he actually did do so is greatly strengthened by the fact that not only does the material under discussion reappear in "Julius Caesar", but it reappears accompanied by certain individual touches peculiar alone to Pescetti's treatment.

Calpurnia's speeches, the recitals of the Messengers, and the comments of the Chorus are the dramatic counterpart in "Cesare" of the speeches of Antony in "Julius Caesar." Thus Calpurnia exclaims at the news of Caesar's death:

"O dolce, ò caro, ò mio fedel consorte,
 O di quanti mai Roma
 Produisse figli, più possente, e forte,
 O della nostra età sovrano pregio,
 O domator de' ribellanti Galli,
 Del feroce German, del fier Britanno;
 O altrettanto dolce
 Al perdonar, quanto al combatter pronto,
 O stupor delle genti,
 O miracol del mondo,
 Le cui maravigliose,
 E soprumane prove
 Stancheran tutte le più dotte penne,
 E con stupor saranno
 Cantate, udite e lette
 Da quei, che dopo noi
 Verran mill' anni, e mille."—Ces., pp. 128-29.

"Oimè quel, ch'ai nemici hà perdonato,
 Quel, ch'il maggior nemico hà pianto morto,
 È stat' ei da coloro, a cui donata
 Avea la vita, indegnamente ucciso."—Ces., p. 135.

Here Caesar's kindness to his enemies, his conquests, the sense of Rome's irreparable loss are emphasized.

"Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?"

* If we except the display of the corpse.

To Shakespeare, Pescetti's work could hardly have been more than a recital of events connected with a notable occurrence in history, and while he needed no "Cesare" to point him towards the aim of Antony's address, it is noteworthy that Calpurnia openly urges what Antony secretly wished, and towards which he shaped every sentence of his great oration. Shakespeare's treatment is so vastly superior that attempts at comparison seem well nigh ridiculous; yet, when we consider how the great poet was able to transform the meanest hints into the mighty scenes we find in his greatest dramas,* we may well hesitate to overlook similarities, however far removed they may seem from the matter under consideration. Thus Calpurnia exhorts the soldiers to vengeance:

"O robusti, o magnanimi soldati,
 Che sotto la felice scorta, sotto
 Le fortunate, e gloriose insegne
 Del mio Cesare invitto
 Mille vittorie riportate avete,
 Date di mano all' arme,
 Prendete il ferro, e 'l fuoco,
 E l'empia, indegna morte, e'l fiero strazio
 Vendicate del vostro
 Signore, e capitano:"—Pp. 133-34.

Later on the Chorus of Soldiers exclaims:

"Patirem noi, compagni,
 Ch' invendicato resti
 Lui, per cui fatto abbiamo
 Di ricchezze e d'onor tanti guadagni?—P. 143.

"there were an Antony
 Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
 In every wound of Caesar, that should move
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny."—J. C., III., 11, 224.

"He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill."

Calpurnia denounces Brutus:

* Especially in those founded on material derived from Italian sources.

“O Bruto, ò Bruto, veramente Bruto,
 Non men d’animo, e d’opre, che di nome,
 Come t’è dato il cuor d’uccider quello,
 Ch’à te donato avea la vita e in luogo
 Preso t’avea di figlio? ahi scelerato,
 Ahi d’ogn’ umanità nemico; cuore
 Più che d’Orso, e de Tigre Ircana crudo,
 Come a ferir quel sacrosanto corpo,
 Orrido gel non ti legò le membra?”—P. 133.

Antony specifically mentions Brutus as “the well beloved.” Of special significance is the fact that he makes the same play on the name Brutus* as we find in Pescetti:

“O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts
 And men have lost their reason.”—III., II, 102.

It is noteworthy that Calpurnia, after the play on the name, proceeds to emphasize the brutality of the murder, not only by referring to the closeness of the relation between Brutus and Caesar, but also by comparing the insensate cruelty of his assassin to that of the most savage beasts. There is no warrant for this touch in the histories. Again, note the parallel:

“For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar’s angel;
 Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him.”
 —III., II, 180.

Another individual touch of Pescetti’s reappears in Antony’s oration. Thus the Chorus in “Cesare,” on hearing that Caesar’s body is being borne to his house by a few slaves, exclaims,

“E quegli, a cui comandamenti presti
 Erano i Regi, e le provincie intiere,
 Or appena hà trè servi,
 Che’l portin sù le spalle.†—Ces., p. 127.

* It is found in Plutarch and in Cicero’s letters, but not in connection with this scene. See Sykes’ “Julius Caesar,” Notes, pp. 151-2.

† And when he wente from his house to the Senate, he was wayted on with manye of the magistrates, and great number of people, as wel Citizens as

The Messenger at the sight of the corpse laments,

“Ecco dov' è ridotto
Il pur dianzi Signor dell' universo.”—P. 136.

Antony says:

“But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.”—III., II, 117.

Also Act III., Sc. 1:

“O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this small measure?”

Calpurnia exclaims:

“Dunque, oimè, quella destra,
C'hà vinti, e debellati
Potentissimi eserciti, e distrutte
Fortissime Cittadi, or fredda torpe
Ad ogni officio inutile, e impotente?”—Ces., p. 129.

The corpse* of Caesar is not displayed upon the stage, but the comments of the Chorus warn the spectator that it is approaching borne by the slaves, and Calpurnia cries:

“Fermate o là, posate
Quel corpo in terra, acciocchè col mio pianto
Lavi dall' aspre sue ferite il sangue.”—Ces., p. 136.

The familiar,

“If you have tears, prepare to shed them now”

straungers, and servantes and free men in great multitude; all the which fleeing away by heapes, only three seruantes taried, which layd his body in the litter. Thus three men not suteable, did carie him home that a little before was Lorde of sea and lande. (Appian, 1578, p. 142.) *Kal ai pléones árchai kal polús dimilos állos ástōn, kal xénōn, kal polús therápōn kal éxeleútheros autōn épí tō bouleutḗrion ék tḗs oikías παρεπεθύμφεισαν· ὦν áθρόως διαφυγόντων, τρεῖς θεράποντες μόνοι παρέμειναν, οἱ τὸ σῶμα ἐς τὸ φορεῖον ἐνθέμενοι, διεκόμεσαν οἴκαδε ἀνωμάλως, οἱ αὖ τρεῖς, τὸν πρὸ ὀλίγου γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης προστάτην.* Appian, Ed. Didot. P. 394. Suetonius has a similar account.

* It seems that the matter of the display of the corpse in Shakespeare is as readily traceable to Plutarch as to Appian.

has its parallel in the lines of the speech of the Second Messenger addressed to the Chorus of Women:

“Apparecchiate, o donne, gli occhi al pianto.”*—*Ces.*, p. 146.

Calpurnia, in her exhortation to the soldiers referred to before, continues:

“Sù, che fate? stringete
 Nell' una man il ferro
 Nell' altra le facelle,
 E correte alle case
 De' traditori ingiusti,
 E uccidete, e ardetè ciò, ch'avvanti
 Vi si para, ond' al cielo
 Salgano le faville, e'l Tebro porti
 L'onde sanguigne al mare.
 Che parlo? o dove sono? ah! che'l soverchio
 Dolor t'hà tratta di te stessa fuori,
 Infelice Calpurnia.”—*Ces.*, p. 134.

Noteworthy in the above is the touch, “Che parlo? o dove sono?” etc. Thus Antony pauses:

“Bear with me;
 My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
 And I must wait till it come back to me.”

Plutarch records the doings of the mob after they had been aroused by Antony's speech. He recounts that the mob cried “Kill the murderers,” but chronicles no other exclamations. Neither does Appian. In Pescetti, Calpurnia's speech contains material for the exclamations which interrupt Antony's discourse, but a direct parallel is to be found in the cry of the soldiers inflamed by the exhortations of Caesar's wife and the laments of the Chorus. They shout:

“Sù diam di mano all'armi,
 E gridando armi, armi, armi,
 Alla vendetta gli animi infiammiamo.

* But, it should be noted, not quite in the same connection as in Shakespeare. The Messenger warns the women to fly the terrors sure to follow the assassination.

Arme, arme, sangue, sangue, ammazza, ammazza,
 Degli empì traditor non resti razza.
 Altri occupi le porte,
 Altri corra alla piazza,
 Altri al Tempio di Giove, altri alla Corte,⁷
 E per tutti apparisca orrore, e morte.”—*Ces.*, pp. 143-144.

During Antony's speech the mob cries:

“Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!
 Let not a traitor live!”

This is not only a close verbal parallel, but the similarity in the exclamatory treatment is remarkable.

Another personal touch is to be found in the idea that Caesar's fall was Rome's fall, which is strong throughout Pescetti, and is not traceable to the influence of the historians. Thus the Second Messenger says:

“Giunto è l'ultimo dì; giunto è la fine
 Di questa altiera patria, ò donne; Roma
 Fù; noi fummo Romani; or ogni gloria
 Ogni grandezza nostra è posta in fondo.”—*Ces.*, p. 146.

Antony exclaims,

“O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
 Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
 Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.”

But one more point in connection with Antony's oration remains for discussion. Antony's friendship for Caesar and his desire for vengeance on the latter's murderers are matters just as readily derivable from Plutarch's accounts as from the oration by Antony as recorded in Appian. Pescetti, following Appian's account of the events immediately following the assassination, puts the following in the mouth of the Second Messenger:

“Antonio . . .
 Fuggito è a casa, e d'essere credendo
 Anch'egli a morte destinato, or cinge
 Di ripari fortissimi la casa,

E si prepara alla difesa contra
 Chiunque oltraggio, ò scorno fargli tenti.
 Lepido s'è nell' Isola con quattro
 Legion ritirato, et ha mandato
 Dicendo a Marcantonio, ch'egli è pronto
 Co'suoi soldati a far quanto da lui
 Gli sarà imposto: Onde si stima ch'egli
 Per vendicar la morte dell' amico
 Debba spingergli addosso a congiurati,
 E lor tagliar a pezzi, e le lor case
 Arder, e rovinar da fondamenti."—P. 148.

Not only is Antony's desire for vengeance intimated, but the ultimate fate of the conspirators, and the failure of their cause is distinctly foreshadowed. But most significant is the fact that Pescetti, here almost literally following Appian, makes Antony take refuge in his *own* house. In Shakespeare Antony is also made to take refuge in his own house. Cassius inquires:

"Where is Antony?

Trebonius—Fled to his house amazed."—(Act III., Sc. 1, 96.)

This touch is certainly not derived from Plutarch. The biographer says (Julius Caesar, p. 101): "But Antonius and Lepidus, which were two of Caesar's chiefest friends, secretly conveying themselves away, fled into *other* men's houses and *forsook their own.*" Appian says: "Antony went to his *owne* house, entending to take advice for this case of Cesars." (Appian, 1578, p. 141.)*

But one more supposed loan from Appian remains for investigation. This is to be found in the behavior of the conspirators immediately after the murder. Plutarch's account is as follows: "Brutus and his confederates on the other side, being yet hot with this murder they had committed, having their swords drawn in their hands, came all in a troupe together out of the Senate and went into the market-place, not as men that made countenance to fly, but otherwise boldly

* Ἀντώνιος τε τὴν οἰκίαν ὠχύρου, τεκμαιρῶμενος συνεπιβουλευέσθαι τῷ Καίσαρι.
 Appian, Ed. Didot. P. 394.

holding up their heads like men of courage, and called to the people to defend their liberty, and stayed to speak with every great personage whom they met on their way." (Julius Caesar, p. 101, Skeat's Ed.)

In Shakespeare we read:

"*Caes.*— Et tu Brute? Then fall, Caesar. (*Dies*)

Cinna.— Liberty! freedom! Tyranny's dead!

Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

Cas.— Some to the common pulpits and cry out

'Liberty, freedom and enfranchisement!'"

A little farther on Brutus exclaims:

"Stoop, Romans, stoop,

And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood

Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:

Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,

And waving our red weapons o'er our heads,

Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom and liberty!'"—III., I, 106.

Plutarch mentions no sayings of the conspirators; there is no mention of the dripping swords. Shakespeare is here supposed to follow Appian, who says: "The murderers would haue sayde somewhat in ye Senate house, but no man would tarry to heare. They wrapt their gowns about their left armes as targets, and hauing their daggers bloody, cryed they had kylled a King and a Tyranne, and one bare an hatte upon a speare, in token of Libertie. Then they exhorted them to the common wealth of their country and remembered olde Brutus, and the oth mode againste the old kings." (Appian, 1578, p. 142.)* Here we find the matter of the dripping swords, and an intimation of the cry of the Conspirators. But Pescetti, who followed Appian, supplies a still closer parallel. Here Brutus, after announcing the death of the

* Οἱ δὲ σφαγεῖς ἐβούλοντο μὲν τι εἰπεῖν ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ. Ουδενὸς δὲ παραμειναντος, τὰ ἰμάτια ταῖς λαιαῖς, ὡσπερ ἀσπίδας, περιπλεξάμενοι, καὶ τὰ ξίφη μετὰ τοῦ αἵματος ἔχοντες, ἐβοηδρόμουν βασιλέα καὶ τύραννον ἀνελεῖν· καὶ πῖλόν τις ἐπὶ δόρατος ἔφερε, σύμβολον ἐλευθερώσεως· ἐπὶ τε τὴν πάτριον πολιτείαν παρεκάλουν, καὶ Βρούτου τοῦ πάλαι καὶ τῶν τότε σφίσιον ὁμομοσμένων ἐπὶ τοῖς πάλαι βασιλεῦσιν ἀνεμίμνησκον. Appian, Edition Didot, Paris, 1877. P. 395.

tyrant, and after exhorting the people to rejoice in their reestablished liberties, turns to the conspirators and exclaims:

“Ma scorriam per la terra,
O voi, che fidelissimi compagni,
Mi siete stati all’onorata impresa,
Con le coltella in mano,
Del Tirannico sangue ancor stillanti
E co’ pilei sù l’aste
E’l popolo di Marte
Chiamiamo a libertade.

Con.—Libertà, libertà, morto è il Tiranno
Libera è Roma, e rotto è il giogo indegno.”—*Ces.*, pp. 116–17.

Here we have the substance of Appian’s account. Here Brutus, as in Shakespeare, addresses his fellow conspirators. In the one case he refers to them as “most faithful companions,” in the other, as “Romans.” In both he exhorts them to the same purpose. In one they are to rove the streets with their dripping swords still in their hands, and to call the people of Rome to their reestablished liberty; in the other, they are exhorted to walk forth waving their red weapons over their heads, and to cry “Peace, freedom and liberty.” The cry of the chorus in Pescetti seems an answer to this appeal:

“Libertà, libertà, morto è il Tiranno
Libera è Roma e rotto è il giogo indegno.”

And this again is closely parallel to Cinna’s outburst,

“Liberty! freedom! Tyranny is dead!
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets!”

The latter part of this seems an echo of

“E’l popolo di Marte
Chiamiamo a libertade.”—*P.* 116.

“Cesare” contains no close parallel to Brutus’ exclamation:

“Stoop, Romans, stoop,
And let us bathe our hands in Caesar’s blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:”

But Pescetti indicates a similar savage desire:

“E fù si grande del ferir la voglia
 Ricandosi ciascuno a somma gloria,
 Tinger la spada sua nel sacro sangue.”*—P. 126.

He does say that the conspirators besmeared their swords, and Shakespeare but intensified the scene by making the murderers literally bathe in the blood of their victim.†

In this case, as in the others, the material from Appian is to be found in Pescetti, and reappears in Shakespeare accompanied by touches due to Pescetti alone. We find further, that in all the cases wherein the influence of Appian has been suspected, Shakespeare could have derived his matter from Pescetti, who, we can positively affirm, used Appian as his source. The resemblance in Shakespeare between the scenes under discussion and the corresponding scenes in Pescetti is far stronger than the similarity to their alleged source in the English translation of Appian, for not only does Shakespeare make use of the same historical matter which Pescetti derived from the historian, but he includes individual touches found only in the Italian drama. The conclusion that Shakespeare derived from Pescetti the hints previously attributed to his acquaintance with the English translation of Appian seems, therefore, tentatively justifiable. This conclusion will be greatly strengthened by the evidence adducible from the other similarities existing between the two plays. Among these the treatment of the supernatural element in both dramas offers points of contact which will now be discussed.

* Indicated in Plutarch also—Marcus Brutus—p. 119. He speaks of the eagerness of the conspirators to plunge their swords into Caesar, and records that every one of them was stained with blood.

† Also regarded as a supposedly ironical answer to Decimus' interpretation of the dream.

THE HANDLING OF THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT

Shakespeare's skill in the handling of the supernatural element in "Julius Caesar" has been much commended. The omens and prodigies are distributed in such a way as best to emphasize the tragic element and they serve to invest the entire play in an atmosphere of portent. For his material he drew largely upon Plutarch, but he also introduces matter apparently indicating a familiarity with Ovid, Vergil, Lucan, and Suetonius. Pescetti makes use of the supernatural element to a far greater extent than do his predecessors.* His recital of the omens and the prodigies embraces almost every item which the industry of a Renaissance scholar could cull from the pages of Plutarch, Ovid, Vergil, Lucan, Suetonius, and Appian. With a single exception, all the omens mentioned by Shakespeare and not directly traceable to Plutarch, can be found in Pescetti, whose treatment of the entire supernatural element affords some interesting parallels.

Plutarch's account, which furnished Shakespeare the bulk of his material, is as follows:

* In Pescetti the Priest's recital of the omens consists of some one hundred and three lines. Muretus has Calpurnia's recital to the nurse of the dream wherein she beheld Caesar's bleeding body, and the following:

Calp: Audere desine tu prius

Tuaeque si adeo spernis uxoris metum

Movere vatum oraculis minacibus,

Periculosam qui tibi hanc lucem admonent:

Si spectra, si te auspicia, si fibrae monent

Cavere, et hunc meum timorem comprobant:

Quid in paratam pertinax mortem ruis?

Caes: Quando timorem ponere aliter non potes,

Ne nos tibi queraris omnino nihil

Tribuere, mittatur Senatus in hunc diem. Lines 343-52.

Hereupon D. Brutus protests to Caesar and the latter yields. Grévin has substantially the same account. For Muretus and Grévin I use Collischonn's reprint. See Bibliography.

“Certainly destiny may easier be foreseen than avoided, considering the strange and wonderful signs that were said to be seen before Caesar’s death. For, touching the fires in the element, and spirits running up and down in the night and also of the solitary birds to be seen at noondays sitting in the great market-place, are not all these signs perhaps worth the noting, in such a wonderful chance as happened? But Strabo, the philosopher, writeth, that men were seen going up and down in fire; and, furthermore, that there was a slave of the soldiers that did cast a marvelous burning flame out of his hands, insomuch as they that saw it thought he had been burned; but when the fire was out, it was found he had no hurt. Caesar self also doing sacrifice unto the gods, found that one of the beasts which was sacrificed had no heart: which was a strange thing in nature, how a beast could live without a heart. Furthermore there was a certain soothsayer that had given Caesar warning long time before, to take heed of the day of the Ides of March, (which is the fifteenth of the month), for on that day he should be in great danger. That day being come, Caesar going into the Senate-house, and speaking merrily unto the soothsayer, told him ‘the Ides of March be come’: ‘so they be,’ softly answered the soothsayer, ‘but yet are they not past!’ And the very day before, Caesar, supping with Marcus Lepidus, sealed certain letters, as he was wont to do, at the board: so, talk falling out amongst them, reasoning what death was the best, he, preventing their opinions, cried out aloud, ‘Death unlooked for!’ Then, going to bed the same night, as his manner was, and lying with his wife Calpurnia, all the windows of his chamber flying open, the noise awoke him, and made him afraid when he saw such light; but more, when he heard his wife Calpurnia, being fast asleep, weep and sigh, and put forth many fumbling lamentable speeches; for she dreamed that Caesar was slain, and that she held him in her arms.”*

Professor MacCallum, commenting upon this account says: “It is interesting to note how Shakespeare takes this passage to pieces, and assigns those of them for which he has a place to their fitting and effective position. Plutarch’s reflections on destiny and Caesar’s opinion on death he leaves aside. The first warning of the soothsayer he refers back to the Lupercalia, and the second he shifts forward to its natural place. Calpurnia’s outcries in her sleep and her prophetic dream, the apparition of the ghosts mentioned by her among

* Life of Caesar, p. 98, Skeat’s edition.

the other prodigies, the lack of the heart in the sacrificial beast, are reserved for the scene of her expostulation with Caesar, and are dramatically distributed among the various speakers; Caesar, the servant, Calpurnia herself."*

Pescetti also takes this same passage† and distributes the various sections in a manner similar to Shakespeare's treatment, but dramatically infinitely inferior. He, however, devotes nearly two hundred and fifty lines at the beginning of the third act of "Cesare" to a dialogue between Antony and Caesar, rather tediously moralizing on destiny and Caesar's opinion on death. The only purpose, dramatically, is to continue the feeling of impending disaster created in the previous acts and to give Antony an opportunity of warning Caesar to beware of treachery.‡ The warnings of the soothsayer are entirely disregarded; the only intimation we receive of this very effective scene is the announcement of the messenger in the fifth act that a paper which gave all the details of the conspiracy, and which Caesar had had no opportunity to read, had been found clutched in his dead hand. Nearly half his second act is occupied by a long drawn out dialogue between Calpurnia and the servant regarding the former's fears, and the terrible dream she has had. The Priest, in the third act, together with Calpurnia, recounts the portents to Caesar, and tries to dissuade him from disregarding the manifest tokens of the gods' displeasure. The inspection of the sacrificial beast without a heart is reserved for the expostulation of the Priest. Pescetti, like Shakespeare, thus attempts a distribution of the supernatural which tends to emphasize the impending catastrophe and to invest his play in an atmosphere of portent very similar to that created in "Julius Caesar."

In both dramas ghosts play important parts. Dramatically, it is quite probable that Pescetti was only following the Senecan tradition when he introduced the ghost of Pompey, but, historically, it seems that he was indebted to Lucan for

* Op. cit., p. 194.

† Rather Appian's almost parallel account.

‡ In the "Cornélie" of Garnier (1574) he also warns Caesar.

this hint. The poet in Book IX. of the "Pharsalia" describes how the soul of Caesar's foe, leaving the tomb, soars to the abode of the blessed, and thence, looking down upon the earth, inspires the breasts of Brutus and Cato.* This is the episode which probably furnished Pescetti hints for the employment of the ghost of Pompey as the prime exciting force upon the Brutus of his play.

Now, Plutarch mentions the apparition which appears to Brutus at Philippi, as Brutus' "ill angel" (page 104, J. C., Skeat). Shakespeare calls it "Caesar's ghost," thereby immeasurably enhancing its dramatic significance. That he should be compelled by his keen perception of its dramatic fitness so to handle this episode, seems a very reasonable conclusion; still, in view of his obligations to Pescetti, it would not be stretching probabilities too far to suggest that the Italian's use of the shade of Pompey was not without its influence in the composition of this particular scene. What a fitting example of poetic justice! That Pompey's shade should rouse Brutus to execute vengeance on a Caesar held responsible for his death; that this same ghost-inspired zealot should in turn have his own doom pronounced by the shade of his victim, closes a cycle of nemesis which surely must have appealed to the great poet.

But it is in regard to the disturbances in the elements, and the attendant prodigies, that we get a marked parallel between the two plays. Casca, while the storm is raging, exclaims:

"Are you not moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes, like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds;
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.

* Pharsalia, Book IX., lines 1-23.

Cic.—Why, saw you anything more wonderful?

Casca—A common slave—you know him well by sight,—
 Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
 Like twenty torches joined, and yet his hand
 Not sensible of fire, remained unscorched.
 Besides,—I ha' not since put up my sword,—
 Against the Capitol I met a lion,
 Who glared upon me, and went surly by
 Without annoying me. And there were drawn
 Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,
 Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw
 Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
 And yesterday the bird of night did sit
 Even at noon-day upon the Market-place,
 Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
 Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,
 'These are their reasons: they are natural:'
 For, I believe, they are portentous things
 Unto the climate that they point upon."*

In addition to the supernatural elements recounted in Casca's speech, Calpurnia trying to dissuade Caesar, says:

". . . There is one within,
 Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
 Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
 A lioness hath whelped in the street;
 And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead;
 Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
 In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
 The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
 Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan;
 And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets."

—II., II, 14.

.
 When beggars die there are no comets seen;
 The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

The servant reporting the sacrifice says:

* J. C., Act I., Sc. III, L. 1-32.

“Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
They could not find a heart within the beast.”

The Priest in “Cesare” in his soliloquy exclaims:

“Giunon con spaventosi, orribil tuoni,
Con spessi lampi, e fulmini tremendi,
Con infauste comete, con istrane
Pioggie di sangue, e grandini di pietre,
Con sembianze di pugne, con orrendi
Strepiti di tamburi, e suon di trombe,
Con alte grida, pianti, ùrli, e lamenti,
Uditi nel suo regno hà mostro, quanto
Sia contro noi d'ira, e di sdegno accesa.
Nettun volto hà sossopra tutto il suo
Immenso regno, e sì gonfiato hà l'onde,
Che pareo, che de' suoi confin volesse
Uscir, e tutta subissar la terra;

.
L'antica madre s'è più volte anch' essa
Scossa sì, che pareo, che il grave pondo
Dell 'huom malvagio, che sostiene, volesse
Scuoter del tergo suo, et in più luoghi
Per inghiottirlo hà il vasto seno aperto:
Ne pur questi gran corpi, ond'ogni cosa
Si genera, ma molti ancor de' misti
Predetto han gli infortuni, e i danni nostri.”—Pp. 74-75.

In other portions of the Priest's soliloquy we read:

“Nè questi pur co'lor maligni aspetti,
Ma la Luna eclissata, anzi di gocce
Sanguigne tutta sparsa, e'l Sol d'oscuro,
E ferrugineo vel coperto il volto.

.
Da mille tetti udito s'è lo stigio
Gufo versi cantar lugubri, e mesti;
In mille tempi gli ebani, e gli avori
Lagrimar si son visti, e sudar sangue;
Per le piazze, alle case, a i tempi intorno
Notturni cani urlar si sono uditi,
E strider importune, e infauste streghe.
Si son viste grand'ombre, de' sepolcri

Uscite, andar per la Città vagando
 Nelle persone alto terror mettendo.
 Il monte, che ad Encelado le spalle
 Col suo gran peso calca, e preme, rotte
 Le bollenti fornaci hà tai torrenti
 Di Zolfo, e di bitume vomitati,
 E tante fiamme, e sassi liquefatti,
 Ch'inondate, e distrutte,
 Le soggette campagne hà de' Ciclopi.
 Ma quel che più d'ogni altro mi spaventa
 E, che l'interiora di ciascuna
 Vittima mostran miseri, e infelici
 Avvenimenti, atroci, orribil mali:
 Perchè in alcune non si trova il cuore,
 In altre è guasto il fegato, o'l polmone,
 Altre di negro fel son tutte sparse,
 Segni tutti evidenti di gran mali."*—Pp. 75-76.

The soliloquy of the Priest seems to be a composite of the omens and prodigies mentioned by Ovid, Vergil, Plutarch, Appian, Suetonius, and Lucan. Ovid and Vergil seem to be his main sources.

* In Hamlet 1, 1, 113 seq. we read.

Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead,
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
 Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even the like precurse of fierce events—
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,
 And prologue to the omen coming on,—
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
 Unto our climatures and country men.—

The text is obviously corrupt. These lines do not appear in the Folio, nor is there any trace of them in the earliest quarto. It has been conjectured that the poet suppressed this passage in representation, after he had written "Julius Caesar." Certainly the similarity to Pescetti is striking. The "dews of blood" are again mentioned; also the eclipse of the moon, neither occurring in Plutarch.

Almost all of the ancient authorities mention the supernatural in connection with the life of Caesar. The extraordinary prodigies and portents attending his crossing of the Rubicon and his assassination are recorded in more or less detail. Among the authors accessible to Shakespeare, Ovid was available in the translation of the *Metamorphoses* made by Arthur Golding in 1567 and several times reprinted before 1600. Appian had been translated in 1578, while Marlowe's translation of Lucan's first book, while it remained unpublished till 1600 (after the first performance of "Julius Caesar"),* may have been known to the dramatist in manuscript. But the substance of Lucan's account was accessible in Lydgate's translation of Boccaccio's "*De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*." While Lucan mentions only the omens preceding Caesar's entry into Rome at the beginning of the Civil Wars, his work was a favorite source for the matters mentioned. Neither Vergil's "*Georgics*", nor Suetonius' "*Lives*", had as yet been translated.

The question of Shakespeare's classical learning does not concern us. The problem at issue is not whether the dramatist might have obtained his information directly from the ancient authors or through available translations. The following discussion purposes to adduce the evidence in support of the contention that Pescetti was the source of most, if not all, of the non-Plutarchian matter included by the dramatist in his handling of the supernatural.

That Shakespeare could not have built up his recital from an imaginative transformation of Plutarch's hints seems precluded by an examination of the various sources already mentioned. These contain the substance of the non-Plutarchian matter; it remains to establish Pescetti's claims against this evidence.

While there is a striking agreement as a whole in the various accounts of the classic writers, no single one contains all the omens recorded by Shakespeare. Pescetti, however, not only

* In an account of a visit to London written by Thomas Platter, a merchant of Basle, he mentions a performance of "Julius Caesar," Sept. 21, 1599. (*Ency. Brit.*, XI. ed., Art. Shakespeare.)

has the most comprehensive extant record but he accompanies his account with individual touches which seem reflected in Shakespeare's subsequent treatment.

An examination of the portents mentioned by Shakespeare reveals the following which can be traced to Plutarch: the flaming hand; the men all in fire walking up and down; the bird of night at noon-day hooting and shrieking in the market place; the beast without a heart; the comet. In addition we have the following not indicated by the biographer: the tremendous storm; the earthquake; the raging seas referred to by Casca; the wild beasts roaming the streets; the civil strife in the heavens; the dead leaving their sepulchres; the battle in the clouds.

Taking the earthquake first, a comparison of the available sources reveals the following: Casca says to Cicero,

"Are you not moved when all the sway of earth,
Shakes like a thing unfirm?"

Vergil mentions the earthquakes in the Alps and the openings of the earth as portents of Caesar's death.* Lucan† says "The Alps shook off their ancient snows," while Lydgate‡ has

"Earthquaues sodayne and terrible
Ouertourned castels up so doune."

In Ovid we read,

"And with an earthquake shaken was the towne."§

Pescetti mentions not only the earthquake, but he adds the violent upheaval of the seas, together with an individual touch peculiar to him alone which seems reflected in Shakespeare's treatment.

* See "Georgics," Book I., lines 463-488, for Vergil's account of the omens.

† Lucan's account is found in the *Pharsalia*, Bk. I., lines 523-583; Ovid's in the *Metamorphoses*, Bk. XV., lines 783-798.

‡ Lydgate's "Fall of Princes," Boke Sixte, Chap. XI., Leaf CXLVI., Edition of 1558 (see Bibliography).

§ Translation by Golding, Ed. 1575.

“Nettun volto hà sossopra tutto il suo
 Immenso regno, e sì gonfiato ha l’onde,
 Che pareo, che de suoi confin volesse
 Uscir, e tutta subissar la terra;
 E quanti legni han questi dì solcato
 Il mar, tanti egli n’ha miseramente
 O trangugiati, o in duri scogli spinti.
 L’antica madre s’è più volte anch’essa
 Scossa sì, che pareo, che’l grave pondo
 Dell’ huom malvagio, che sostien, volesse
 Scuoter dal tergo suo, et in più luoghi
 Per inghiottirlo hà il vasto seno aperto.”—Pp. 75.

The disturbance of the waters is not mentioned by Plutarch or Ovid. Casca does not specifically state that such a condition of affairs prevailed; he uses it as a comparison. But such a disturbance is indicated in Lucan. In Marlowe’s* translation we read:

“The ocean swelled as high as Spanish Calpe
 Or Atlas’ head.”†

Lydgate has

“Wyth flodes rage, hydious and horrible
 Neptunus dyd great distruction.”

Vergil speaks of the overflow of Eridanus,‡

“Eridanus, king of rivers, overflowed, whirling in mad eddy whole woods along and tore away the herds with their stalls over all the plains.”§

Of all these possible sources Pescetti supplies the closest parallel; Vergil and Lydgate seem too remote for consider-

* Works of Christopher Marlowe. Edited by Alexander Dyce. London, Wm. Pickering, 1850.

† Tethys maioribus undis

Hesperiam Calpen summumque impleuit Atlanta. *Phar. Bk. I, L. 555.*

‡ Proluit insano contorquens vertice silvas

Fluviorum rex Eridanus, camposque per omnes

Cum stabulis armenta tulit. *Geo. Bk. 1, L. 481 ff. Ed. Teubner.*

§ Translation by Davidson. Harper’s Classical Library, New York, 1896.

ation in this connection. Were we to exclude Lucan on the ground that his account deals with a different period of Caesar's career, Pescetti's case would be still further strengthened, for the Italian contains not only the substance of Casca's outburst, but there is a similarity in both style and sentiment. Where Pescetti says,

"Nettun volto hà sossopra tutto il suo
Immenso regno, e sì gonfiato hà l'onde,
Che parea, che de' suoi confin volesse
Uscir, e tutta subissar la terra:"

Shakespeare supplies the more poetic,

"I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds."

Again, the earthquake is mentioned in close connection with the raging of the waters, a feature missing in the other possible sources, while Casca's statement regarding the anger of the gods finds its counterpart not only in this portion of Pescetti's recital, but later where the dramatist, detailing other manifestations of the gods' displeasure, says,

"Giunon
. hà mostro, quanto
Sia contra noi d'ira e di sdegno accessa."

Such a condition of affairs is only faintly adumbrated in Ovid or Lucan.

The slave with the burning hand is from Plutarch. The "hundred ghastly women transformèd with their fear" seems a specification of the terror inspired by the ghosts as recorded by Pescetti,

"Si son viste grand' ombre, de' sepolcri
Uscite, andar per la Città vagando
Nelle persone alto terror mettendo."*—P. 75.

* Lydgate says:

Another token pitous for here
Which astonied many a proude Romaine

Plutarch mentions the men in fire, but says nothing of the fear inspired by them or by the ghosts.

The "bird of night sitting at noon-day upon the market place, hooting and shrieking" was probably primarily derived from Plutarch's "solitary birds to be seen at noon days sitting in the great market place." The biographer calls them "solitary birds" and makes no reference to any hooting and shrieking. Vergil refers to the "presaging birds";* Ovid says that the Stygian owl gave omens of ill in a thousand places;† Lydgate speaks of the "fowles at noonday"; Marlowe, translating Lucan, that "Ominous birds defil'd the day." Pescetti, almost literally translating Ovid, has:

"Da mille tetti udito s'è lo stigio
Gufo versi cantar lugubri e mesti."

He calls the bird the owl: Shakespeare refers to "the bird of night, hooting and shrieking." The Italian could here supply as much as any of the other non-Plutarchian sources.

Calpurnia says,

"Graves have yawned and yielded up their dead."

Plutarch mentions the "spirits running up and down in the night"; Vergil, that "spectres strangely pale were seen under cloud of night."‡ Ovid§ says: "And everywhere appeared

Dead bodies dyd in the felde appere
Which in battayle had afore be slayne,
Fro their tombes rising where they layne,

* Obscenaque canes importunaeque volucres
Signa dabant. Georgics, Bk. I., line 470.

† Tristia mille locis Stygius dedit omina bubo. Met., Bk. XV. Ed. Teubner. L. 791.

This Golding quaintly translates,

The Screeche owle sent from hell,
Did with her tune unfortunate in every corner yell.

‡ et simulacra modis pallentia miris

Visa sub obscurum noctis. L. 477. Georg. I.

§ umbrasque silentum

Erravisse ferunt. L. 797. Met., XV.

ghastly spryghtes" (Golding). Lucan mentions the ghosts; so does Lydgate. But none of the above state that "graves have yawned and yielded up their dead." Pescetti supplies a close parallel:

"Si son visti grand' ombre, de' sepolcri
Uscite, andar per la città vagando,
Nelle persone alto terror mettendo."

The battle in the clouds is mentioned by Ovid,*

"For battells feyghting in the cloudes with crassing armour flew,
And dreadfull trumpets sownded in the ayre, and hornes eeke blew."
(Golding.)

Lucan says: "Trumpets sounded and black night, amid the silent shades, sent forth an uproar as that with which the cohorts are mingled in combat."† In Shakespeare the combat is closely associated with the drizzling of blood upon the Capitol. This is not found in Lucan, while Ovid, in a detached phrase, says:

"It often rayned droppes of blood."‡ (Golding.)

Shakespeare speaks of the "noise of battle hurtling in the air" and of the groans of the dying. Pescetti has all that Ovid mentions in this connection, closely connected and associated with the shouts and groans in the heavens. This latter is not found in Ovid.

"Giunon con spaventosi, orribil tuoni,
Con spessi lampi, e fulmini tremendi,
Con infauste comete, con istrane
Pioggie di sangue, e grandini di pietre,
Con sembianze di pugne, con orrendi

* *Arma ferunt inter nigras crepitantia nubes,
Terribilesque tubas, auditaque cornua caelo.* . . Met., XV. Ll. 783-4.

† *Insonuere tubae et quanto clamore cohortes
Miscentur tantum nox astra silentibus umbris* Phar., Bk. I., 578-80.
Edidit.

Vergil has, *Armorum sonitum toto Germania caelo
Audiit.* Georg., Bk. I., l. 474.

‡ *Saepe inter nimbos guttae cecidere cruentae.* Met., Bk. XV., l. 788.

Appian mentions the rain of blood in connection with the crossing of the Rubicon.

Strepiti di tamburi, e suon di trombe,
 Con alte grida, pianti, urli, e lamenti,
 Uditi nel suo regno hà mostro, quanto
 Sia contra noi d'ira, e di sdegno accesa."—P. 74.

The comet is mentioned by Plutarch, but as occurring after Caesar's death. Lucan mentions comets; so do Vergil and Ovid. They are also in Pescetti. The omen of the beast without a heart is recorded by Plutarch, but not as occurring on the day of the assassination. Appian so has it and so it appears in Pescetti.

From the foregoing it is evident that Shakespeare could have derived through Pescetti the omens not mentioned by Plutarch. The Italian seems to have made use of all the generally available authorities. There is, however, one omen mentioned by Shakespeare which is not found in any of the assumed sources. There is no mention of the lions which Casca saw, nor of the lioness which whelped in the street. Vergil speaks of the "ill-omened dogs" and of "cities resounding with the howling of wolves by night."* Lucan† supplies a closer parallel.

" wild beasts were seen,
 Leaving the woods, lodge in the streets of Rome."‡

Lions are not mentioned, but Lydgate, translating Boccaccio, who in turn derived from Lucan, has the following:

"Lyons and wolves came down from the forest
 Wyth many other beastes sauagyne;
 Came to the cite, and some agayne kynde,
 Spake as do men in Bochas as I fynde."§

Pescetti goes as far as Ovid or Vergil. Following them, he writes,

* ; et altae

Per noctem resonare lupis ululantibus urbes. Geo., Bk. I., l. 486.

† Siluisque feras sub nocte relictis

Audaces media posuisse cubilia Roma. Phar., Bk. I, ll. 559–60.

‡ Translation by Marlowe.

§ Falls of Princes, Bk. VI.

“Per le piazze, alle case, a i tempi intorno,
Notturni cani urlar si son uditi.”—P. 75.

Yet none of the sources quoted above makes mention of the lioness whelping in the streets. Lydgate affords the closest parallel, and was probably one of Shakespeare's sources unless we are willing to concede to the dramatist a far deeper and wider knowledge of the classics than even the most enthusiastic advocates of his learning have dared to maintain. The whelping of beasts is noted as ominous in *Julius Obsequens*;^{*} but Shakespeare could hardly have derived from such an obscure authority.

From the foregoing examination of the various portents and prodigies included in “*Julius Caesar*” it is evident that, excluding those plainly derived from Plutarch, and the matter of the lions, Shakespeare could have obtained all the rest from Pescetti. Owing to his habitual method of manipulating and transforming material not directly found in his main source, it becomes exceedingly difficult definitely to fix the dramatist's obligations to his minor sources. The case under consideration is typical. It is certain that Plutarch did not furnish all the hints Shakespeare employed. There seems to be no good reason for denying him a knowledge of Ovid. He certainly was acquainted with Golding's translation. Nor can we fairly assume ignorance of such a mine of information as Lydgate's work furnishes. It is altogether probable that in the composition of the particular scenes discussed, Shakespeare employed a wider range of sources than has been credited. Nevertheless, while he might have built up his incidents from a selection from various authors, Pescetti's account, containing in its one hundred and three lines by far the most comprehensive extant account of the omens, set with an eye to dramatic effect in a tragedy dealing with the death of Caesar, and accompanied by touches not recorded elsewhere, formed the most convenient source for the dramatist.

Besides, Shakespeare's whole handling of the supernatural element is reminiscent of Pescetti's use of the same material.

^{*} *Julius Obsequens*, CXV., mentioned by Sykes in *op. cit.*

The Italian sought to give his drama a portentous background; Shakespeare succeeded in doing so in a manner which, however greatly superior dramatically, seems nevertheless but an extension of Pescetti's efforts.

The evidence herein presented is cumulative; the case for Pescetti does not rest here. Not only could Shakespeare have derived from Pescetti the historical matter not found in Plutarch, but his treatment of certain original scenes in his drama bears a very close resemblance to the same scenes as they occur in "Cesare." This is particularly striking in portions of the Brutus-Cassius action.

THE BRUTUS-CASSIUS SCENES

Especially important for our purpose is the fact that Pescetti makes use of materials and situations not found in the historians but later used by Shakespeare. Of these perhaps the most significant is to be found in the conversation between Brutus and Cassius regarding Antony. This is one of the most striking parallels to be found in the play. In Pescetti, as later in Shakespeare, Cassius strenuously favors the killing of Antony along with Caesar, and the reasons he advances are almost exactly those found in Shakespeare. As in the latter's tragedy, Brutus allows his magnanimity to overbalance his prudence, so in Pescetti, Brutus uses almost the same arguments against Cassius' plan as he uses in Shakespeare's work.

Plutarch nowhere specifically states that Cassius opposed Antony's entry into the conspiracy, or suggested his death.* Thus in the life of Marcus Antonius we read: "This was a good encouragement for Brutus and Cassius to conspire his death, who fell into a consort with their trustiest friends, to execute their enterprise, but yet stood doubtful whether they should make Antonius privy to it or not. All the rest liked of it, saving Trebonius only. He told them that, when they rode to meet Caesar on his return out of Spain, Antony and he always keeping company, and lying together by the way, he felt his mind afar off; but Antonius finding his meaning, would hearken no more unto it, and yet notwithstanding, never made Caesar acquainted with this talk, but had faithfully kept it to himself. After that, they consulted whether they should kill Antonius with Caesar. But Brutus would in nowise consent to it, saying, that venturing on such an enterprise as that, for the maintenance of law and justice, it ought to be clear from all villany."† In the life of Marcus

* Neither does Appian.

† Shakespeare's Plutarch. Ed. by W. W. Skeat, page 164.

Brutus, Plutarch writes: "For it was set down and agreed between them, that they should kill no man but Caesar only, and should entreat all the rest to look to defend their liberty. All the conspirators, but Brutus,* determining upon this matter, thought it good also to kill Antonius, because he was a wicked man, and that in nature favored tyranny; besides, also, for he was in great estimation with soldiers, having been conversant of long time amongst them; and especially having a mind bent to great enterprises, he was also of great authority at that time, being Consul with Caesar. But Brutus would not agree to it. First, for that he said it was not honest; secondly, because he told them that there was hope of change in him. For he did not mistrust but that Antonius, being a noble-minded and courageous man (when he should know that Caesar was dead), would willingly help his country to recover her liberty, having them an example unto him to follow their courage and virtue."†

In Pescetti the conspiracy has been hatched before the play begins, as is evident from the following lines. Thus Cassius, finding Brutus in the gloom of early morning apostrophizing the shade of Pompey, asks:

"Qual pensier ti molesta, e si per tempo
Abbandonar ti fa le molli piume?"—P. 15.

to which Brutus replies,

"Oggi, Cassio, disposto ho di dar fine
A quel, che già per noi s'è divisato."—P. 16.

namely, the death of the tyrant. Brutus and Cassius enter the temple to pray for the success of their enterprise, while the Priest, and then the Chorus holds the stage. On their re-appearance immediately thereafter, the two conspirators discuss the details of the assassination. I will quote the entire dialogue relating to Antony.

* Applan says: "Some of the Conspirators" (1578 Ed.).
Plutarch, page 119. Skeat.

Cas.—Parmi d'avere scorto in Marcantonio
 Disio di dominar: perciò s'in tutto
 Vogliam la patria assicurar, spegniamo
 Anco lui col Tiranno, e fuor de gli occhi
 Tragghiamci questo stecco, che potrebbe,
 Quando che sia, non poca briga darne.
 Che tu sai ben, quanto li siano amici
 I veterani, e quanto acconcio ei sia
 Gli animi a concitar del volgo insano.

Bru.—S'ad altri, oltre al Tiranno, darem morte,
 Si stimerà dal volgo, che le cose
 Sempre stravolge, e falsamente espone,
 Che non disio di liberar la patria,
 Ma privato odio, e brama di vendetta
 A ciò sospinti n'abbia, e di quell'opra,
 Onde da noi s'attende eterna fama,
 N'acquisterem vergogna, e biasmo eterno:
 E dove nome di pietà cerchiamo,
 Sarem del titol d'empietà notati;
 Nè perciò a noi gran fatto avrem giovato;
 Che non è Marcantonio huom, di cui deggia
 Altri temer gran fatto, un'huomo al ventre
 Dedito, e al sonno, e ne' piacer venerei,
 Nelle dissolutioni, e nell'ebbrezze
 Snervato, e rotto osarà prender l'arme
 Contra color, che nulla ebber giammai
 Amicizia con l'ozio, o col piacere,
 Ma tutta trapassar lor vita in duri
 Studi et in faticosi aspri esercizi?
 E'l veder a che fin pervengan quelli,
 Ch'altrui cercan di tor la libertade,
 E la recente morte del Tiranno
 Spaventarlo in guisa, che s'in lui
 Fosse di dominar alcun disio
 Subito spegnerassi. *Cas.*—È Marcantonio
 Dedito certo all'ozio, et ai piaceri,
 Ma di lui per contrario non si trova
 Altri più forte, e coraggioso, e delle
 Fatiche, e de'disagi paziente,
 Quando e'fa d'uopo; onde si poca stima
 Non è da far di lui: di ciò che dica

Il volgo, il volgo sciocco, ben dovemo
 Noi poco conto far, che chi si muove
 Per le voci del volgo, è più del volgo
 Lieve, e incostante. Br. In somma e' non si deve
 Punir, chi non hà errato, e a me non basta
 L'animo di dar morte a chi nocciuto
 Non m'hà, nè fatto ingiuria. Cas. A me più saggio
 Sembra colui che'l suo nemico uccide
 Pria, che l'offenda, che colui, che dopo
 Ch'è stato offeso, vendica l'ingiuria.

Bru.—Non il pensier, ma l'opra punir vuoi;
 Oltra, che chi m'accerta, ch'ei tal mente
 Abbia qual dici? Chi può dentro il petto,
 Suo penetrar? e ciò, che vi nasconde,
 Veder? Gli uman pensier sol Giove intende.

Cas.—Bruto, tu se' troppo pietoso: voglia
 Il Ciel, che questa tua pietà non sia
 Un giorno a noi crudel. Nel risanare
 Dall'ulcere nascenti i corpi il ferro,
 E'l fuoco oprar convien, che tu ben sai,
 Che 'l medico pietoso infistolisce
 La piaga, e spesso tutto il corpo infetta.

Bru.—Col troncar della testa all'altre membra
 Troncasi ogni vigore, ogni possanza.

Cas.—Nell' Idra ov'una testa si troncava,
 Ivi ne rinascean subito sette.

Bru.—Pur alla fine anch'ella estinta giacque.

Cas.—Sì, ma da un figlio dell'eterno Giove.

Bru.—Chiunque ama virtù, figlio è di Giove;
 Ma ciò lasciam da parte, et ogni nostro
 Pensier intorno si raggiri, e volga
 Alla morte di Giulio.*—Pp. 25-27.

* This scene goes far beyond Muret and Grévin. In Muretus the scene is confined to the following lines:

Cass.—

Unus mihi nunc scrupulus restat:
 Unane opera confodiendum
 Cum Caesare ipso censeas Antonium?

In Shakespeare we have the following:

Dec.—Shall no man else be touched but only Caesar?

Cas.—Decius, well urged: I think it is not meet,
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,
Should outlive Caesar: we shall find of him
A shrewd contriver; and you know his means,
If he improve them, may well stretch so far
As to annoy us all: which to prevent,
Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

Bru.—Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar:
Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,

Bru.—Jam saepe dixi, id esse consilium mihi,
Salvis perimere civibus tyrannida.

Cass.—Perimatur ergo ab infimis radicibus,
Ne quando post hac caesa rursus pullulet.

Bru.—Latet sub uno tota radix corpore.

Cass.—Itan' videtur? amplius nil proloquar.

Tibi pareatur; te sequimur omnes ducem.

Vide modo, ut, cum opus erit, adsis. Brut. videro. Lines 184 ff.

Grévin differs but slightly. Cassius says:

Mais j'ay je ne sçay quoy qui mi detient pensif.

N'estes vous pas d'advis que de force pareille

Nous abordions Antoine, à fin qu'il ne resveille,

L'orgueil de ce Tyran en ses nouveaux amis?

M. Brute.

Je vous ay tousjours dict que ce n'est mon advis.

Cassius.

Si seroit-ce bien fait, arrachans la racine,

Avecque le gros tronc de tout ceste vermine,

De peur qu'ell' ne revive, ou que le pied laissé,

Ne ressemble celuy qui l'auroit devancé.

M. Brute.

C'est assez, soyez prest, pendant que je regarde,

Que chacun de mes gens se tienne sur sa garde. Lines 508 ff.

Cassius exults in the prospect of liberty and the scene closes. It is curious to remark the simile regarding Antony's relations to Caesar which runs through Muretus, Grévin, Pescetti and Shakespeare. In all Caesar is likened to a trunk of which Antony is simply an appendage.

And in the spirit of men there is no blood:
 O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit,
 And not dismember Caesar! But, alas,
 Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
 Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
 Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
 Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds;
 And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,
 Stir up their servants to an act of rage
 And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make
 Our purpose necessary and not envious:
 Which so appearing to the common eyes,
 We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers.
 And for Mark Antony, think not of him;
 For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
 When Caesar's head is off.

Cas.— Yet I fear him,
 For in the ingrafted love he bears to Caesar—

Bru.—Alas! good Cassius, do not think of him:
 If he love Caesar, all that he can do
 Is to himself, take thought, and die for Caesar;
 And that were much he should, for he is given
 To sports, to wildness and much company.

Treb.—There is no fear in him; let him not die;
 For he will live and laugh at this hereafter.

—II., i, ll. 154-191.

The statements in the above quotation which can, however faintly, be traced to Plutarch, are the love of Antony for Caesar, his power both as Consul and general, his ambitious mind, and, at some length, his loose manner of living.† But nowhere does the biographer mention this last among the reasons urged by Brutus for his salvation, nor that he was but a "limb of Caesar." Nor, in the handling of this scene by either Pescetti or Shakespeare do we find Brutus considering Antony a noble-minded man, who, once Caesar were dead, would gladly help his country regain her liberty.

* Julius Caesar, II, I, ll. 154-191.

† Particularly in "Marcus Antonius," page 161.

The reasons urged by Cassius are in substance exactly the same in Pescetti as in Shakespeare. They are either entirely absent, or only faintly indicated in scattered hints throughout Plutarch or Appian. The similarity is at times almost verbal. Thus Cassius, in urging the death of Antony says:

E fuor degli occhi
Tragghiamci questo stecco, che potrebbe,
Quando che sia, non poca briga darne.

Translated this reads,

And from our eyes
Let us pluck this thorn, which might,
Some time or other, cause us no little *annoyance*.

Shakespeare makes Cassius exclaim,

And you know his means
If he improve them, may well stretch so far
As to annoy us all.

Sir William Alexander in his "Tragedy of Julius Caesar" (circa 1604-7), in the course of the same debate, puts the following in the mouth of Cassius:

Well Brutus, I protest against my will
From this black cloud, whatever tempest fall,
That mercy but most cruelly doth kill,
Which saves one, who once may plague us all.

Works of Stirling. Edition 1870, Glasgow, p. 280.

While it is still to be proved that Alexander borrowed anything from Shakespeare, it is certain, as will be shown later,* that he not only followed Grévin, but also derived many hints from Pescetti. Although Plutarch was a common source for all three authors, it is certainly remarkable to find them all, in the same scene, using exactly the same term to characterize the threatened activity of Antony. Pescetti, Shakespeare, and Alexander agree in making Cassius urge the conspirators to kill him, for fear, that if spared, he might *annoy* them all.

* Page 114 et seq.

Cassius says further:

. . . . We shall find of him
A shrewd contriver;

And in a later scene when Brutus says of Antony,

"I know that we shall have him well to friend,"

Cassius replies,

"I wish we may. But yet have I a mind
That fears him much; and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose" (Act III., Sc. 1, ll. 144-147).

And again, in the scene between Brutus and Cassius regarding the former's resolve to permit Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral, Cassius urges:

Brutus, a word with you,
(*Aside to Bru.*) You know not what you do: do not consent
That Antony speak in his funeral:
Know you how much the people may be moved
By that which he will utter?—III., Sc. 1, ll. 232-236.

All this is very similar to Cassius' argument:

"Che tu sai ben, quanto li siano amici
I veterani, e quanto acconcio ei sia
Gli animi a concitar del volgo insano."

As Brutus cannot be persuaded, Cassius adds:

"I know not what may fall; I like it not.—III., 1, l. 244.

In Pescetti, his reply to Brutus' magnanimous but short-sighted attitude is:

"Bruto, tu se' troppo pietoso: voglia
Il Ciel, che questa tua pietà non sia
Un giorno a noi crudel."

All that Plutarch gives us of Brutus' counter-arguments is as follows:

"First, for he said it was not honest; secondly, because he told them that there was hope of change in him."*

* "Marcus Antonius," p. 119. Skeat.

Furthermore, we read:

"But Brutus would in nowise consent to it, saying, that venturing on such an enterprise as that, for the maintenance of law and justice, it ought to be clear from all villany."*

In Pescetti, Brutus says:

"S'ad altri, oltre al Tiranno, darem morte,
 Si stimerà dal volgo, che le cose
 Sempre stravolge, e falsamente espone,
 Che non disio di liberar la patria,
 Ma privato odio, e brama di vendetta
 A ciò sospinti n'abbia, e di quell'opra,
 Onde da noi s'attende eterna fama,
 N'acquisterem vergogna, e biasmo eterno;
 E dove nome di pietà cerchiamo
 Sarem del titol d'empietà notati:
 Nè perciò a noi gran fatto avrem giovato.†

Note his solicitude for the opinions of the people. Witness the parallelism, almost verbal at times, between the above and Shakespeare's treatment.

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

Again in Pescetti:

Bru.—" In somma e' non si deve
 Punir, chi non hà errato, e a me non basta
 L'animo di dar morte a chi nocciuto
 Non m'hà, nè fatto ingiuria.

* "Marcus Antonius," p. 164. Skeat.

† Pescetti throughout this scene follows Appian rather than Plutarch. Appian says: "Some thought that Antony ought to be killed also because he was consul with Caesar, and was his most powerful friend, and the one of the most repute with the army; but Brutus said that they would win the glory of tyrannicide from the death of Caesar alone, because that would be the killing of a king. If they should kill his friends also, the deed would be imputed to private enmity and to the Pompeian faction." (Civil Wars, Bk. 11, Ch. XVI., White's Trans.)

Col troncar della testa all'altre membra
Troncasi ogni vigor, ogni possanza."*

Compare this with Shakespeare:

Bru.—"Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar:
Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.

.
And as for Mark Antony, think not of him,
For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
When Caesar's head is off."

Again Pescetti's Brutus says:

Bru.—"Che non è Marcantonio huom di cui deggia
Altri temer gran fatto, un'huom al ventre
Dedito, e al sonno, e ne' piacer venerei
Nelle dissolutioni, e nell'ebbrezze
Snervato, e rotto osarà prender l'arme
Contra color, che nulla ebber giammai
Amicizia con l'ozio, e col piacere."

Thus in Shakespeare:

Bru.—"And that were much he should, for he is given
To sports, wildness and much company."†

Not only are these scenes in both dramatists almost exactly parallel in sentiment, but the abruptness of the conclusion and the sequence of the following scenes are noteworthy. Pescetti dismisses the idea thus:

Bru.—"Chiunque ama virtù, figlio è di Giove;
Ma ciò lasciam da parte, e ogni nostro
Pensier intorno si raggiri, e volga
Alla morte di Giulio."—P. 27.

In Shakespeare, Trebonius, whom Plutarch represents as opposing Antony's entry into the conspiracy, lightly dismisses the subject:

* This parallel is noted by Ayres (in work cited before).

† Noted by Ayres.

Treb.—"There is no fear in him; let him not die;
For he will live and laugh at this hereafter."—II., 1, ll. 190-92.

It is peculiar that in both Pescetti and Shakespeare the sequence of the immediately following scenes is the same. In the former Brutus proceeds to detail the plans for Caesar's assassination, and as he finishes, Portia enters. He concludes:

"Ma giamo ad informar del tutto gli altri,
Acciò gli spirti destino, e le forze,
Et apparecchin l'arme all'alta impresa.—P. 28.

This is closely followed by the entry of Portia. In Shakespeare the conspirators discuss ways and means of getting Caesar to the Capitol.

Towards the conclusion we have:

Cas.—"The morning comes upon's: we'll leave you, Brutus:
And, friends, disperse yourselves; but all remember
What you have said and show yourselves true Romans."
—II., 1, 221.

Soon after Portia enters. It is also noteworthy that Brutus and Cassius in both plays perfect their plans in the early morning. There is no warrant for this in Plutarch or Appian.

Another striking parallel in situation and treatment is to be found in the behavior of the conspirators during the conversation of Lenate (Popilius Lena) with Caesar immediately preceding the murder. This is Plutarch's* account: "Another Senator, called Popilius Lena, after he had saluted Brutus more friendly than he was wont to do, he rounded softly in their ears, and told them: 'I pray the gods you may go through with that you have taken in hand; but withal dispatch, I reade you, for your enterprise is bewrayed.' When he had said, he presently departed from them, and left them both afraid that their conspiracy would out . . . When Caesar came out of his litter, Popilius Lena (that had talked before with Brutus and Cassius, and had prayed the gods they might bring their enterprise to pass) went unto Caesar, and kept him a long time with a talk. Caesar gave good ear unto him:

* Substantially the same in Appian.

wherefore the conspirators (if so they should be called) not hearing what he said to Caesar, but conjecturing by that he had told them a little while before that his talk was none other than the very discovery of their conspiracy, they were afraid every man of them; and, one looking in another's face, it was easy to see that they were of a mind, that it was no tarrying for them till they were apprehended, but rather that they should kill themselves with their own hands. And when Cassius and certain other clapped their hands on their swords under their gowns to draw them, Brutus, marking the countenance and gesture of Lena, and considering that he did use himself rather like an humble and earnest suitor than like an accuser, he said nothing to his companions (because there were many amongst them that were not of the conspiracy) but with a pleasant countenance encouraged Cassius. And immediately after Lena went from Caesar, and kissed his hand; which showed plainly that it was for some matter concerning himself that he had held him so long in talk."*

Note that Plutarch, outside of Lena's remark, cites no sayings of the conspirators, but describes their demeanor only. Appian does likewise. Pescetti follows his account faithfully, but in spirit very similar to Shakespeare's treatment. In Pescetti, Caesar is accosted by Lena, who begs a favor for a friend. Their conversation is entirely too lengthy for dramatic effectiveness. Previous to this episode, Brutus, at the beginning of the fourth act, confides to Cassius his belief that the conspiracy will be discovered, if indeed it has not already been revealed to Caesar. Among other statements he says:

"Senza sangue rimasi dianzi, quando
 Ci s'appressò Lenate, et in disparte
 Trattine, nell'orecchia fin felice
 All'impresa auguronne, e dubitai,
 Che già non fosse discoperto il tutto."—P. 88.

In the scene between Lenate and Caesar, Cassius, marking the former's approach to the Dictator, says,

* *Marcus Brutus*, p. 117-118.

“Bruto, noi siam spediti; ecco Lenate
Che ragiona con Cesare in secreto.”—P. 107.

And then following:

Bru.—Questo ch'importa a noi?

Cas.—Come ch'importa?

Non sai, se la congiura gli è palese?

Bru.—T'intendo: ah! che valor, dove fortuna
S'opponga, nulla val. Stiam preparati,
Per proveder, se fia bisogno, al nostro
Scampo, e alla libertà farci la strada,
Se non possiam con altro, col passarci
Co'pugnali l'un l'altro il fianco, o'l petto.”—P. 107.

Lenate and Caesar continue their talk. Cassius' fears are increasing. He says,

“Gli occhi teniamo intenti, e se fa cenno
Che presi siam, pria che ci legghi alcuno,
Sciogliam noi l'alma de' corporei lacci.”—P. 107.

Near the end of the conversation Brutus says,

“Respira, ò Cassio, che li parla d'altro,
Per quel, che di qui posso dal sembiante
Comprender, e da gesti.”—P. 109.

After Lenate leaves Caesar, Cassius, turning to the former, exclaims,

“M'è ritornata l'anima nel corpo.
Il tuo parlar con Cesare n'hà messo,
Lenate, in gran spavento.”

To which Lenate replies,

“Dubitando
Della mia fede, avete dubitato,
Ch'un muto parli. Sievi pure il cielo
Propizio, com'io vi sarò fedele.”

This entire scene, as others in Pescetti, make us regret that his slavish subservience to his models caused him to

smother his dramatic ability in an avalanche of verbiage. He shows, in spite of many omissions, a true perception of the dramatic possibilities of his material. Had he only been able to condense his work by almost three-quarters, his tragedy would rank high as a representative of its type. Shakespeare uses the same material, takes out his few ounces of gold, and casts away the tons of dross. Nothing that can impede the swiftly approaching climax is tolerated, yet everything necessary to heighten the suspense is introduced.

Pop.—I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

Cas.—What enterprise, Popilius?

Pop.— Fare you well
(*Advances to Caesar*)

Bru.—What said Popilius Lena?

Cas.—He wished to-day our enterprise might thrive.
I fear our purpose is discovered.

Bru.—Look, how he makes to Caesar: mark him.

Cas.— Casca,
Be sudden, for we fear prevention.
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,
Cassius, or Caesar never shall turn back,
For I will slay myself.

Bru.— Cassius, be constant:
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;
For, look he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.*

These scenes are not only significant from a critical standpoint; they are historically of prime importance. In Muretus and Grévin the matter of Antony's entry into the conspiracy is confined to a few lines; Pescetti is the first to give it more importance and the first to employ material which later reappears in Shakespeare's work. The Popilius Lena scene is even more important, for it is in "Cesare" that we find the first dramatic treatment of this significant episode. Shake-

* J. C., Act. III., Sc. 1, ll. 14-27.

speare's treatment almost exactly parallels the work of his humble predecessor.

Pescetti seemed well aware of the dramatic value of suspense. In "Julius Caesar", Shakespeare's use of this device is much commended, but in this particular play he seems to have been anticipated by the Italian. The preceding scene is not the only one wherein it is employed by Pescetti. Some time before, D. Brutus joins Cassius and M. Brutus, deploring the perversity of fortune.* He fears that Caesar has scented the conspiracy and will not attend that day's session of the Senate. The introduction of this matter at this time strongly resembles Shakespeare's use of the same device, under the same circumstances. Cassius says to D. Brutus:

Cas.—Bruto tu sè turbato.

D. B.—E n'hò cagione.

Cas.—Che c'è?

D. B.—S'appon fortuna, à desir nostri.

Cas.—

“Ma che cosa incontrat'è, ch'interrompe
I nostri alti disegni?”

D. B.—S'è pentito

D'ir in Senato Cesar, e dimane

Come dianzi vi dissi, prende à guardia,

Del corpo suo cinquanta huomini eletti.

Et ò pur, che non abbia qualche cosa

Della congiura, e dell' insidie udito.”—Pp. 92-93.

In Shakespeare we read:

Cas.—

“But it is doubtful yet

Whether Caesar will come forth to-day or no;

For he is superstitious grown of late,

Quite from the main opinion he held once

Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies.

It may be these apparent prodigies,

The unaccustomed terror of this night,

And the persuasion of his augurers,

May hold him from the Capitol to-day.” Act II., 1, l. 194 ff.

* P. 91 ff.

In both dramas the object is the same; to awaken doubts in the spectators' minds as to the ultimate success of the plotters and to awaken an interest in the means whereby the conspirators succeed in overcoming Caesar's suspicion. The difference in content in the parallels seems due to the fact that while Pescetti follows Appian, Shakespeare follows Plutarch.

THE CHARACTER OF CAESAR

Of all Shakespeare's portraits, there are few which have so puzzled his critics as that of Julius Caesar. Their ingenuity has been taxed to the utmost to account for a characterization so at variance with historical fact, and many have been the theories advanced in explanation. It is not my purpose to detail this controversy. The facts are commonplaces of Shakespearian study. Neither is it necessary to set forth all the many and various tributes wherein Shakespeare, in his other works, and in "Julius Caesar" itself, gives ample evidence of his appreciation of Caesar's true greatness. What I do purpose to show is the marked similarity between the conception of Caesar's character in Shakespeare and that found in Pescetti.

It must be understood that I employ the term characterization as applied to Pescetti's dramatis personae for lack of a better term. In his type of the drama very little of the characterization is brought out by the clash of conflict, although, as I have before pointed out, there are passages in "Cesare" in which this is to some extent true. We gain our conception of character more through a recital of the characteristics or traits of his persons, rather than through a revelation in action.

To Shakespeare, therefore, "Cesare" would not have appealed as a drama; but as a history or a recital of the feelings animating various persons during certain situations, it had its attractions. I purpose to show in just what manner Shakespeare in his delineation of Caesar may have availed himself of the material provided by this long forgotten work.

It has been claimed, and in my opinion, erroneously, that Shakespeare's peculiar characterization of his titular hero was due to his lack of classical knowledge. Surely such a charge can not hold against the Veronese rhetorician, whose livelihood depended on his classical training, and who did not hesitate to dispute with Tasso. Yet his characterization brings into

relief many of those features which have in Shakespeare's portrait so aroused the surprise and chagrin of critics.

Professor Harry Morgan Ayres* traces these peculiarities in Shakespeare's delineation of his titular character to the influence of a Renaissance idea of Caesar which had its ultimate source in the Hercules Oetoeus of Seneca, found its way into the Renaissance drama through Muretus, and had become traditional in Shakespeare's time. No claim is advanced of any direct relation of "Julius Caesar" to preceding versions, but the similarity in certain particulars existing between the various characterizations of Caesar is emphasized. That Grévin's portrait should be markedly similar to that of Muretus is but natural in view of the former's open plagiarism. Pescetti also owes much to the noted humanist. The latter made Caesar a grandiloquent braggart. Pescetti, following his example, makes Caesar's boastfulness a prominent trait of his character. Yet neither Muretus nor Grévin emphasizes Caesar's vacillation, nor this indecision, which, seemingly through the Italian's drama, found its way later into Shakespeare's portrait.

While it is quite possible that the traditional conception of Caesar supposedly prevalent in Shakespeare's time influenced his peculiar delination of the Dictator, there is apparently no good reason for excluding the possibility that the dramatist's notion of his titular hero's traditional character was confirmed by an examination of Pescetti's work, if indeed he did not derive from the latter all the hints supposedly due to the tradition fixed by Muretus.

Like Shakespeare, Pescetti is not lacking in appreciation of Caesar's greatness; of his courage, patriotism, magnanimity. Thus Cassius says to Brutus,

"Tu sai, ch'egli è feroce, e ne' perigli
Non si sgomenta punto, anzi diviene
Allor più ardito, e coraggioso, quando
Maggior vede il periglio."†

* In the monograph to which reference has already been made.

† Page 24. See later chapter on Brutus.

In his dedication, the highest compliment he can pay to Alfonso d'Este is to number the mighty Julius among his ancestors. In the prologue his approaching death troubles the gods, and Jove promises for him immortality among the celestials as the only fitting reward for his merit, while ruin and destruction await his assassins. In the play the First Messenger refers to him as "huom divino."* The Chorus sings his praises:

"Così dunque
 Quei, che pur dianzi un folgor fu di guerra,
 Un' Achille, un Alcide di possanza,
 Un' Ulisse di senno, e d'accortezza,
 Un' Ciro, un' Alessandro d'ardimento,
 Di magnaminità, di cortesia,
 Estinto giace miserabilmente."—P. 127.

Criticism cannot be too guarded in considering as evidence of personal bias the words of an author's character, but cumulative evidence is certainly not without its influence. The chorus later in the play refers to Caesar again, and as

"Del più saggio, e più forte
 Huom ch'arme unqua vestisse."*—P. 131.

The Chorus of Soldiers towards the close of the play sings his praise. Decimus Brutus, trying to persuade Caesar, runs the whole gamut of the latter's deeds.

Nor does Pescetti, any more than Shakespeare, begrudge him credit for his courtesy and magnanimity. Regarding this trait, Professor MacCallum calls particular attention to the passage in "Julius Caesar" wherein Artemidorus urges the consideration of his petition:

Art.—Hail, Caesar! read this schedule.

Dec.—Trebonius doth desire you to o'er-read,
 At your best leisure, this his humble suit.

* Compare Antony's outburst:

Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
 That ever lived in the tide of times. J. C. III., 1, 257-58.

Art.—O Caesar, read mine first; for mine's a suit
That touches Caesar nearer: read it, great Caesar.

Caes.—What touches us ourself shall be last served.—III., 1, 3–8.

This is nowhere suggested in Plutarch. It is, indeed, quite easy to regard this magnanimous action as the caprice of a man so intoxicated by success that he has lost all sense of social perspective; a real Colossus, for whom the ordinary motives of men seem too insignificant for his semi-divine being. Pescetti's Caesar leaves no room for the exercise of surmise. In the scene between Lenate and the Dictator, Caesar is courteous and magnanimous beyond criticism. Lenate felicitates Caesar, who replies:

“E tè, Lenate, a pien contento renda.
Che chiedi? in che può Cesare, Lenate
Servir? in c'hà dell' opra sua bisogno?—P. 106.

Lenate praises Caesar's courtesy, and Caesar tells him to name his suit, for he will deny him nothing. Lenate begs a military appointment for Quinto Fulvio. Caesar says:

.
“A lor di soddisfarti io ti prometto,
Et in soddisfacendoti maggiore
Riceverò, che non farò servigio,
Ch'è somma grazia, e a singular favore
D'esser da tà servito mi rech'io:
E se, qual tu me lo dipingi, fia,
Come fia veramente, che Lenate
Sò, che non mente, i premi all' opre uguali
Andranno, e sarà Cesare con lui
Quel, chè stat' è con gli altri.”

At the conclusion of this scene he remarks,

“Huom, che d'umanità si spogli, indegno
Stim' io del nome d'huomo, e fu più degno
Di ruggir fra Leon, fremer frà gli Orsi,
Urlar frà i Lupi, e sibilar frà i Serpi
Nelle selve, negli antri, e nelle grotte,
Che formar nelle terre umani accenti.”—*Ces.*, pp. 106–110.

This, while rather declamatory, rings true.

Still, in spite of this consideration of Caesar's nobler traits, Pescetti so emphasizes his weaknesses that the total impression we receive from his characterization is not at all in keeping with that which we derive from the Caesar of history. True, Pescetti does not mention the Dictator's physical failings; but the same pride, the same thrasonical boastfulness, the same vacillation are to be found in both characterizations treated in a manner singularly similar.

Caesar, on his first appearance, while he displays traits which apparently are hard to reconcile with his future statements, strikes one note which predominates throughout; that of boastfulness. His very first words are:

"Magnifica, superba, e veramente
Qual darsi ad un Pontefice conviene,
La cena fu, che Lepido iersera
Ne diè. . . ."—P. 62.

His sense of his own importance, and of the honors due to his position, is evident. He comments philosophically upon the delights of conversation around the banqueting board. This gives Antony an opportunity to dilate upon the mutability of human fortune. Caesar replies,

"Quest' instabilità, quest' inconstanza
Delle cose mondane, à me ricorda,
Che lo stato presente, in che m' hà posto,
O fortuna, ò valor, non mi prometta
Perpetuo, ma ch' io creda, e stia sicuro,
Che si debba mutar, quando, che sia."—P. 66.

It must be borne in mind that Caesar is talking to an intimate friend and companion in arms. Antony takes the occasion to warn him:

"Della fortuna io t'assicuro, ch'ella
Non ti sie mai contraria sì nel crine
Avvolte l' hai le mani. Dall' insidie
Ben t'esort' io guardati de' nemici.
Molti offesi da te si tengon; molti
Portano invidia alla tua gloria; alcuni
Abbaglia il tuo splendore: altri patire
Che tu lor sii superior, non ponno."—Pp. 66-67

Caesar replies:

“Diman cinquanta de’ più fidi, e forti*
 Scer della legion decima i voglio,
 Che mi stien di continuo al fianco, e scudo
 Mi sien contra ogni inganno, e forza esterna.
 Ch’io non son mica sì di senno privo,
 Nè m’hà sì la dolcezza inebriato
 Delle prosperità, ch’io non conosca,
 Quant’ abbia di temer giusta cagione:
 E già d’insidie non sò, che m’è stato
 Susurrato all’ orecchie: ma i disegni
 Schernirò di chi tenta oltraggio farmi.
 Ma ciò poc’ or mi preme, e mi dà noia:
 Più mi dà noia, e preme il ricordarmi
 Ch’ invendicata ancor resti la morte
 Di Crasso. . . .”—Page 67.

He longs to see the Roman eagle triumphant, and Rome mistress of the world.

This speech of Caesar’s is noteworthy. The dictator affirms that the intoxication of success has not blinded his common sense. He has reason to fear treachery, yet just what is contemplated against him he does not know. He despises those who would harm him. That humbled Rome has not yet wreaked vengeance on the Parthians concerns him far more. Here again this concern of Caesar for the welfare of others finds its echo in Shakespeare’s lines,

“What touchtes us ourself shall be last served.”

There is no historical warrant for this attitude in this particular connection.

Courageous words! But be it noted that Pescetti’s Caesar in the presence of Antony does not wish to convey the impression of fear. He hastens to voice his scorn of treachery, even as he recounts his suspicions. This man, who prides

* This is a detail which Pescetti derived from Appian’s “Civil Wars,” Bk. II., Ch. XVI., wherein it is stated that the conspirators had to hasten, as Caesar contemplated departing for Parthia within four days and would thereupon have a bodyguard. (White’s translation, p. 176.)

himself on his selfcommand, is destined to fall an easy victim to his own vanity. His own self praise opens the way for Antony's flattery :

“Alla fortuna, al valor tuo riserba
 Quest' alta impresa il cielo, acciochè nulla
 A tuoi gran vanti, alle tue glorie manchi:

 O quali omai trovar si ponno al tuo
 Merto conformi titoli, e cognomi?
 Son vili i Magni al vincitor de' Magni.
 Al ciel salir convien, por man bisogna
 A titoli, e a nomi de gli Dei.
 Divine l'opre son, divini i fatti
 Divino è il tuo valor, divini ancora
 Esser vogliono i titoli, e i cognomi
 Di che la grata età t'addorni, e fregi.—Pp. 68-69.

Ces.—Con quai nomi m'appelli il mondo, o quali
 Titoli egli mi dia, poco mi cale.
 A me basta, ch' ei sappia, e legga, e narri
 Le da me oplate cose in pace, e in guerra;
 Onde ne resti la memoria viva
 Al par del Sol, con cui gareggi, e giostri
 Di chiarezza, e splendor la gloria mia.”—P. 69.

The dialogue has become a duet of praise, in which Antony seeks to outsing his master. Finally Caesar says,

“Delle sovrane lodi, onde m'addorni,
 Molto mi pregio, ò Antonio, e con ragione,
 Poscia, che vengon da colui, che, come
 Scorge, così di dir hà per costume
 Il vero, e in bocca hà quel, ch'egli hà nel cuore,
 Ch'è così saggio, e candido, che come
 Esser nel giudicar non può ingannato,
 Così nel dir altri ingannar non vuole.”—P. 70.

He accepts Antony's praise because he feels that it is true, coming from the heart of a sincere and plainspeaking friend. He reposes the same faith in Antony's judgment as is the case in Shakespeare. Thus, when he speaks of Cassius, Antony tells him,

"Fear him not, Caesar; he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given."

A few lines later, Caesar says,

"Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him."

In "Cesare" to Calpurnia's entreaties he retorts:

"Donna, tu spargi le parole al vento;
Resta di più pregar, se saggia sei;
A i lamenti, alle lagrime pon fine,
Che vedrai sorger pria dall' Occidente,
Et attuffarsi il Sol là, dond' ei nasce,
Ch' io presti fede a i sogni, che possanza
Habbian di frastornarmi dall' imprese
Già destinate i sogni, od i prodigi
.
Esca di questo petto anzi lo spirto,
Che' l timor c' entri, e massime de' sogni,
Ch' altro non son, che vane ombre, e fantasmi.
Quel, che di me prefisso è il ciel, conviene,
Che sia: ne per por mente a sogni, ò a segni
Potrò schivarlo, e folle à me colui
Sembra, che teme quel, che per consiglio,
Nè per saver uman non può schivarsi."*—Pp. 76-77.

Let it be noted that Caesar is addressing Calpurnia in the presence of the Priest, and it would ill become the conqueror of the world to show fear or vacillation before them. He is discussing his wife's dream, yet in spite of his expressed disbelief in omens, it was he who ordered the fateful sacrifice, which, as the First Messenger announces after the catastrophe, he himself inspected. Evidently he was in doubt even then, but his vanity and the urging of the conspirators lured him to his doom. Compare his boasts of fearlessness with Shakespeare:

"Would he were fatter! but I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,

* Pp. 76-77. This speech, in substance, occurs both in Muretus and in Grévin.

I do not know the man I should avoid
 So soon as that spare Cassius

 I rather tell thee what it is to be fear'd
 Than what I fear: for always, I am Caesar."*

Yet immediately thereafter he wishes Antony to give him his true opinion of Cassius. What for?

Still, in spite of his outwardly expressed contempt of the omens, Pescetti's Caesar yields, just as does Shakespeare's, when the crafty Decimus plays on his vanity. In the presence of the conspirators he soliloquizes:

"Chi da consigli governar si lascia
 Delle donne, più d'esse è vano, e stolto;
 Tuttavia forza è, ch'oggi condescenda
 Al voler della mia, s'aver vuò pace,
 E tormi questa noia dalle spalle.
 Ma tanto, e così insolito timore,
 Ond' è si fieramente tormentata,
 Non è senza cagion: e benchè tema
 In me non abbia luogo, pur sospetto,
 Che qualche tradimento alla mia vita
 S'ordisca, et ho di sospettar cagione.
 Ma sia che può: s'è destinato in cielo,
 Ch'io muoia, e muoia: a voglia sua mi tolga
 La morte, che non può, se non illustre,
 E glorioso tormi: Andrà sotterra,
 Qualunque volta dal mortal sia scarca,
 L'ombra mia di trionfi, e spoglie addorna:
 E tal di me qui rimarrà memoria,
 Che finchè giri il ciel fia con stupore
 Cesare mentovato; e quel, che bee
 Il Tanai, l'Ibero, il Tigre, il Gange,
 Attonito udirà narrar il Reno,
 Il Nilo, e l'Ocean domati, e vinti
 E l'Africa, e la Spagna del Romano
 Sangue da me inondate, e'l gran Pompeo,
 C'hà del suo nome pien tutti i confini
 Dell' ampia terra, vinto, e d'ogni sua

* I., ii. 199.

Gloria, d'ogni suo onor spogliato, e privo:
 Morrà il terren, che fra pochi anni ad ogni
 Modo hà da sciorsi in polve: ma immortale
 Rimarrà del mio nome la memoria.
 Abbastanza ho vissuto alla natura,
 Et alla gloria, Omai ch' à far mi resti,
 Per più glorificar il nome mio
 Non veggio. Asceso sono à quella altezza,
 Cui non è pari in terra: oltre alla quale
 Non può salir, che del terreno incarco
 Non si spoglia, et isgrava, e mette l'ale."*

These are certainly "high astounding terms," but doubt and fear are at work, and this Caesar's long cogitations are very much like the whistling of a small boy to keep up his courage. When Decimus approaches, and informs him that the Senate is assembled, and awaits him, he says,

"Debbol dir, ò tacer? i preghi e i pianti
 Di mia mogliera avuto hanno possanza
 Di farmi variar proponimento;
 Oltre ch'io temo, e'l mio timor fondato
 È, non sopra fallaci, e vani sogni,
 Ma sopra certi indizi, e chiari segni,
 Che sien ordite alla mia vita insidie."—Page 95.

Here is a man who has just proudly exclaimed that fear was foreign to him, now confessing that he fears, and that his fears are founded not on vain dreams or portents, but upon substantial grounds. But what are the "certi indizi, e chiari segni" that threaten his well-being? The vague warnings of Antony? No more substantial grounds have been presented in the course of the drama. No conspirators have been named; Caesar, despite the talk regarding his conviction of impending disaster, is unsuspectingly conversing with one of the plotters. Are we to regard this lack of adequate reason for Caesar's fears as a flaw in Pescetti's technique? It must be remembered that Caesar ordered the fateful sacrifice, and that he himself

* Pp. 93, 94, 95. There are some similarities to "Cornelie" and to Grévin in this passage.

confesses, in soliloquy, that Calpurnia's unusual fear has disturbed him. But he dreads to ascribe his perturbation to the influence of the portents, and lays the emphasis upon a suspicion of treachery, which, as far as he had any personal knowledge, we know rested on the vaguest grounds. There is no fault in Pescetti's motivation. He presents a Caesar, shaken by the very fears that assail baser men, but too proud to convey such an impression, fatuously trying to persuade himself that he is "constant as the northern star," while he wavers like a weather-cock between his fear and his pride.

He listens to Decimus' arguments. The latter, knowing how to "give his humor the true bent," lays great stress on Rome's indebtedness to the Dictator: what Roman could be so base as to contemplate his death?

D. Brutus—" e nondimeno

Crederem, che si trovi alcun di cuore
 Così barbaro, e rio, così spietato
 Che pensi, non dirò, ch'ardisca, ò tenti
 Di privarti di vita? io non lo credo,
 Io non lo credo, nè che sia, ch'il creda,
 Credo, nè credo, che tu stesso il creda.
 E come io ti consiglio, ch'à guardarti
 La diligenza accresca; così voglio,
 Ch'ogni timor deponga, ogni sospetto,
 Acciochè, nulla nebbia offuschi, ò turbi
 Il seren del tuo petto, e acquetate,
 Dopo tanti travagli, e tante guerre
 Le cose, insieme con la patria goda
 Quella felicità, quella quiete,
 Ch'ognun del saggio tuo governo attende."—Pp. 96-97.

Thus Decimus artfully contrives to work on Caesar's vanity and to express his disbelief in the genuineness of Caesar's fears. The latter is sorely touched; he recognizes his mistake in using the word fear in his first statement, and hastens to assure Decimus:

"Non tem' io, nò; non hà luogo il timore
 In questo petto: unque il mio cuor non seppe,
 Che timor fosse: e già son giunto a tale

Etade, e tale cose oprate hò in arme,
 Che della morte aver non debba tema.*
 Potrà ben morte, ch' ogni cosa scioglie,
 Questo corpo atterrar; ma la memoria
 Del nome mio non spegnerà in eterno."—P. 97.

Still his fears are potent, but he no longer says "temo," a word so unbecfitting Caesar; it now becomes

"Tuttavia credo, e sopra certi segni
 E conietture è il mio creder fondato,
 Che si tendano insidie alla mia vita."—P. 97.

But he would not appear afraid; apprehensive lest fear may be suspected from this statement, he continues:

"Dalle quai guarderommi in guisa, ch'io
 Non paventi però, nè del mio petto
 In parte alcuna la quiete turbi;
 Ma tu v'è trova Marcantonio, e dilli
 Da parte mia, che vada a dar licenza
 Al Senato, e li dica, che per oggi
 In Senato non posso ritrovarmi."—P. 97.

And note the solicitude of this Colossus, for the opinion of Caesar's Senate:

"E mi scusi con lui sì, che non nasca
 Sospetto in lui d'esser da me sprezzato."—P. 97.

This Caesar, in spite of his words, fears. He fears the omens, but he will not betray his feelings. It might be claimed that his message to the Senate is a natural result of an innate courtesy typical of true greatness. But coming where it does and as it does, it seems more an exhibition of that pride which a man consciously great takes in the good opinions of his underlings. Surely Caesar had nothing to fear from his puppet Senators. He could just as curtly have disregarded them; but demigods must display some good attributes, some care for their worshippers, if only to feed the sense of their superiority on the admiration of inferior beings.

* "Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far,
 To be afeard to tell graybeards the truth?"

Decimus is quick to seize his opportunity and plays on this trait of Caesar's character. Surely the Senate will think that he has grown arrogant; that fortune has transformed a kind and courteous Caesar. The preservation of his reputation for generosity demands his personal appearance before the Senators. Caesar yields, while Marcus Brutus glorifies the gods for this turn of affairs. The Dictator tells the still anxious Calpurnia to banish her fears, for the gods which so long have defended him, will not fail him now, while Decimus lauds him and assures Calpurnia that it were unthinkable that harm could befall Caesar in his own city.

This scene, between Caesar, Calpurnia, and Decimus Brutus, seems to have no legitimate place in the plot unless Pescetti aims to heighten the pathos by bringing into stronger relief the vanity of the Dictator and the base treachery of his assassins. Caesar becomes to the modern reader a pitiable, almost a pitiful character. Any lurking admiration for the Conspirators' cause is effectually destroyed, and a feeling of horror supervenes. Perhaps Pescetti so intended. It is revolting to listen to Decimus, Caesar's beloved friend and companion in arms, recounting with smiling countenance his benefactor's courtesy, his magnanimity, his many great services to Rome, while he burns to plunge a dagger into his auditor's heart. And to think that Caesar, blinded by his vanity, allows a smiling villain to lead him like an ox to the sacrifice! This is pitiful, not pathetic.

Later on, Decimus' praises soar to such heights that Caesar tells him

“ Assai corso l'arringo
 Hai di mie lodi, Bruto, di che debbo
 Molto pregiarmi, e rallegrarmi, essendo
 Il lodator d'eterna lode degno.
 Ch'alor la lode è finalmente vera,
 Quando da huom lodato ella proviene.”—Page 106.

Yet Caesar accepts this fulsome flattery because in his judgment, it comes from a man well qualified to deliver it. Then, surrounded by his murderers, he walks unsuspectingly to his doom.

There is no historical justification for such a delineation of the greatest man of antiquity. Plutarch's account may not be sympathetic, but the modest author of the Commentaries is nowhere depicted as a vain, pompous, vacillating boaster. It is indeed difficult to account for such a characterization. Muretus may have fixed in his drama a conception of Caesar supposedly current in his day. But it must be remembered that this tragedy of Muretus was a youthful product, and one cannot expect of the student of eighteen, the mature judgment of the scholar of forty. Grévin followed Muretus, and since his drama is frankly an enlarged version of his predecessor's work, it is not surprising that the young physician took over the humanist's characterization of Caesar with scarcely any alterations. But Pescetti's livelihood depended upon his knowledge of the classics,* and his work bears unmistakable evidence of wide reading in both Latin and Greek authors. Unlike Muretus, he was over thirty when he wrote "Cesare"; surely his acquaintance with the sources must have made him well aware of the falsity of the traditional estimate of Caesar's character, if indeed in his time such an estimate was popularly current. There can be no question of the influence of Muretus in his own work, yet just why he should choose not only to follow the former, but further to emphasize the weaknesses of Caesar must remain purely speculative. Pescetti's position in the matter is all the more curious because he dedicated his work to Alfonso D'Este, a supposed descendant of his titular hero. Under such circumstances it certainly would have been much to his advantage to have cast his Caesar in the most heroic mold, instead of presenting him in such a manner as to provoke resentment in the very quarters where he expected praise.†

* He taught grammar and rhetoric in Verona. See Gerini, "Gli scrittori pedagogici nel secolo decimo settimo."

† Paolo Beni was quick to seize upon this feature of Pescetti's characterization of Caesar. He says: "Che se pur volesse alcuno che non perciò restasse suo Cesare di esser furto, almen convien confessare ch'egli solo fosse vero Autore dell'ingiuria la quale con tanta sciocchezza e temerità fece in tal Tragedia a quell'Altezza et a tutta la serenissima Casa d'Este, poscia che havendo pubblicato e celebrato Alfonso per congiuntissimo di sangue con la Casa Giulia; e con Giulio Cesare, finalmente si adduce a dedicarli la sua Tragedia; (che sua

Is it possible that Pescetti possessed sufficient dramatic technique to endeavor to present Caesar not as he really was, but as he appeared to the conspirators, and thus to give their action some excuse?

That Shakespeare so presented him has been contended by some critics, but the motives that actuated the dramatists are not the point at issue. The total impression we gain in both dramas is singularly alike, while in some details the coincidence is striking; as where Caesar says,

“Cowards die many times before their death;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear:
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come, when it will come” (II., II, 32).*

chiamerolla per hora) quella Tragedia dico nella qual Cesare vien com'empio tiranno e traditor della patria bruttamente trucidato. Vedi imprudenza estrema di quest'huomo: vedi sciocchezza et audacia incomparabile: ricordare che questo serenissimo Principe sia per sangue strettamente congiunto con Giulio Cesare, e disceso da Giulio Cesare, e poi immantinentemente far che il Theatro per ogni parte risuoni l'impietà, la perfidia, la tirannia di Cesare: e che su gli occhi di quell'Altezza ne venga quasi pernizioso mostro co'l ferro trucidato et estinto. E forse che non supplica il Serenissimo Alfonso (vedi nuova imprudenza et ardire) che faccia rappresentar questa Tragedia in publico con nobil pompa, e dia spettacolo sì horrendo d'un suo antenato al Mondo.” Il Cavalcanti, 1614, p. 107 et seq.

* It is interesting to note the fascination which this remark of Caesar's had for the dramatists of his fortunes. No doubt they drew their direct inspiration from Plutarch, who relates that Caesar, on being urged to have a body-guard, retorted, “It is better to die once, than always to be afraid of death.” (J. C., p. 92.) Skeat.

Thus Muretus says (Act III., verse 386):

“Sed tamen quando semel
Vel cadere praestat, quam metu longo premi.”

And Grévin, Act III., v. 791:

“. et si j'aime bien mieux
Mourir tout en un coup, qu'estre tousjours paoureux.”

Also Act I., v. 13:

“Il vault bien mieux mourir
Asseure de tout poinct, qu'incessamment perir.
Faussement par la peur.”

There is nothing novel in these views; one is directly traceable to Plutarch; the others are often repeated in the classic drama, but it is at least curious that the same thought occurs frequently in Pescetti. Thus the Nurse, trying to comfort Calpurnia, says:

“Che più? certo è ciascun d’aver un giorno
A terminar sua vita, e’l quando è incerto:
Ne può verun, per giovine, e robusto,
Che sia pur un sol dì, pur un momento
Promettersi di vita, or dobbiam noi
Perciò viver ogn’or col cuor tremante,
Come ogn’ora il carnefice ci stesse
Col ferro ignudo sopra, e avvelenare
Tutte col timor nostro le dolcezze
Della presente vita, anzi una morte
Perpetua far tutta la vita nostra?
Perch’ in temendo il mal pena maggiore,
Che nel patir lo stesso mal si prova.*

Caesar, in response to the Priest and Calpurnia, says,

• • • • •
“Quel, che di me prefisso è in ciel, conviene,
Che sia; nè per por mente a sogni, ò a segni
Potrò schivarlo, e folle à me colui
Sembra, che teme quel, che per consiglio,
Nè per saver uman non può schivarsi.”—Page 77.

Again, it is remarkable that in both Pescetti and Shakespeare, D. Brutus is made the bearer of Caesar’s message: in the former, to Mark Antony, who is to address the Senate; in the latter, he himself is to deliver the message to the Senate.†

Again, to Decius’ greeting Caesar replies:

“And you are come in very happy time,
To bear my greeting to the senators,

In Garnier’s “Cornelie” (Kyd’s trans.) we read:

“The fear of evil doth afflict us more
Than the evil itself, though it be neer so sore.”

* Pp. 39–40. Also pages 79, 80, 82, 83 and 94, in which this same idea finds expression.

† This is not the case in Muretus or Grévin, nor is it found in Plutarch.

And tell them that I will not come to-day:
 Cannot, is false, and that I dare not, falser:
 I will not come to-day: tell them so, Decius.

Cal.—Say he is sick " (II., II, 60).[†]

Who has intimated that Caesar fears to come to the Senate? His expressions are plainly those of a man influenced by circumstances which he considers it derogatory to his own sense of superiority to acknowledge. His exaggerated self-consciousness is feverish; even as he speaks, he builds inferences which no one but himself could derive from the premises.* He knows he is not sick, nor that he looks as if he were sick; when Calpurnia tells Decius to plead his illness, he builds another inference:

Caes.—"Shall Caesar send a lie?
 Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far,
 To be afeard to tell graybeards the truth?
 Decius, go tell them Caesar will not come."

The very thought that anyone would suspect him of fear, and worse yet, of attempting to hide his fear in a falsehood, revolts him. An absolute exhibition of will is more becoming, and he feels it.

Dec.—"Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause,
 Lest I be laugh'd at when I tell them so."

This request is dramatically effective: is it historically or dramatically true? Caesar has said nothing at which the Senate might laugh; the commands of a Dictator were dangerous subjects for mirth. His entourage were in no jocund mood after the Lupercalia.

Bru.—"I will do so; but, look you, Cassius,
 The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
 And all the rest look like a chidden train.†

* True, the conspirators have suspected that the portents and the auspices might persuade him, and Trebonius has prepared for this. But how was Caesar to know?

† I., ii, 182.

Yet here is a proud conqueror, that lets an underling, although a friend, hint that his commands might be laughed at. True, Decius says, "Lest I be laughed at," but to insult the messenger because of Caesar's message, would surely be to scorn Caesar. Instead of the decisive, imperious command we should expect, we get a reiteration of a previous statement, and then the Dictator is lost in the man. For Decius' private satisfaction, but by no means for his public announcement, Caesar confides his true reasons. Decius interprets the dream in a manner most soothing to Caesar's vanity, and when he intimates that were some one to tell of this dream to the Senate, Caesar might become a laughing-stock and be accused of cowardice, the Dictator is vanquished; pride has conquered fear. Yet, mark, the dream was told to Decius as to a good friend, and in confidence. What right had he to assume that the dream would be told to the Senate? If it were told, he alone could he held responsible for its telling, since he alone, (besides Calpurnia), knew of it. Since when has the valiant Decius become a superior interpreter of dreams? Why should his explanations of a woman's fancies have greater weight with Caesar than the solemn decision of the venerable college of augurs? Decius boasts his ability to overstay Caesar, but he succeeds only because the latter, as in "Cesare," in his pride and vanity, is only too glad to seize an opportunity to silence his own apprehension, without compromise to his own exalted opinion of himself. He is blind to all other circumstances. This conception of the scene is the only one, which, to me at least, renders it dramatically satisfying.

Professor MacCallum,* of all the many commentators on this character, seems to have offered the most satisfactory interpretation. Caesar's bearing certainly justifies this critic's opinion, that, in a certain sense, he is playing a part and aping the immortal to be seen of men. As has been shown above, Pescetti's entire treatment suggests the same conception. His Caesar, if we may overlook the omission of any mention of his physical failings, can be aptly characterized by Professor

* MacCallum, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

Dowden's appraisal of the character in Shakespeare. "Julius Caesar appears in only three scenes of the play. In the first scene of the third act he dies. When he does appear, the poet seems anxious to insist upon the weakness rather than on the strength of Caesar. He is subject to the vain hopes and vain alarms of superstition. His manner of speech is pompous and arrogant. He accepts flattery as a right; he vacillates while professing unalterable constancy; he has lost in part his gift of perceiving facts and of dealing efficiently with men and events."*

Another similarity in the treatment of Caesar must be noted. While Pescetti's tragedy is called "Il Cesare," the titular hero occupies a position of the same relative unimportance as the Caesar of Shakespeare's drama. He appears in but two of the five acts, the third and the fourth, and is fairly prominent. Yet, Brutus is the real protagonist. He appears in each act but the third, and is conspicuous throughout as the chief representative of the action.

Yet here, as in Shakespeare, the spirit of Caesar dominates the play. From first to last it permeates the drama and provides the mainspring of the action. From Brutus' first speech to the concluding words of the Second Messenger his name is always before us. Calpurnia beholds him in her dreams, the Priest sees in the portents destruction threatening him and Rome, while the Choruses beg the gods to avert the impending disasters. Even Portia is animated by a desire to wreak vengeance on him. The Messenger in his final lament sees in his death the end of Rome's glories and presents him to us as the nemesis of his murderers. The effect of this treatment is to invest the entire play in an atmosphere of portent, with Caesar predominant.

* "Shakespeare, A Critical Study of his Mind and Art," by Edward Dowden, Harper & Bros., 1903, pp. 253-54.

BRUTUS

Pescetti wrote his tragedy with the evident intention of flattering the Duke of Ferrara, yet never was fulfillment further from promise. "Cesare" could hardly have furnished agreeable reading to a prince, who, lauded on one page as the greatest descendant of the mightiest Julius, finds throughout the succeeding pages this same ancestor denounced as an odious tyrant, and displayed in action as a weak, vacillating braggart. Nor would his appreciation of Pescetti's efforts have been increased by a consideration of the treatment accorded Brutus. Far from presenting the assassin of Caesar in a manner which might have been regarded as acceptable to the Duke, the Italian dramatist considers him throughout with the highest favor and never wearies of his praises.

Pescetti's dedication renders it rather difficult to account satisfactorily for his Brutus. Possibly he harbored liberal sympathies of which he found it hard to rid himself; possibly he was here too greatly under Plutarch's influence; perhaps he was simply following in the footsteps of Muretus and Grévin. Plutarch certainly wrote the life "con amore," and both Pescetti and Shakespeare continue the idealization of the character begun by the biographer. To both dramatists, as to Muretus and Grévin, Brutus was the "last of the Romans," in whom the old regime found its final and noblest champion. Under the circumstances it is difficult to seize upon any phase of the character peculiar alone to Shakespeare and Pescetti. Both went to the same, or nearly the same source for their material; both followed their source faithfully. Yet it is this very similarity in the conception of the character which is especially significant for our purpose, for Shakespeare could have found in the Italian dramatist nothing to weaken, but much to confirm the favorable impression he gathered from the varied pages of Plutarch.

Pescetti's pronounced bias is discernible from the very

beginning. In his dedication* his fulsome flattery of Alfonso does not prevent him hinting that Caesar was no lawful ruler, nor from glancing at his excessive ambition, even though he afterward, in his drama, makes little mention of the one and none of the other. But perhaps most significant of his own feelings are the words he puts into the mouth of the Chorus of Citizens in his last act. The chorus sings the praises of Brutus in a manner which makes the immediately following praise of Caesar by the soldiers pale in comparison:

Coro di Cittadini:

O magnanimo Bruto,
 Vera stirpe di lui,
 Che cacciò i Rè, ch'uccise i figli sui:
 O vero Rè, ch'i regni
 Non pur sprezzi, ma spegni,
 Et, ucciso il Tiranno,
 Torni la libertà nel proprio scanno;
 Qual premio possiam darti
 Al tuo valor condegno?
 Qual lingua, qual ingegno
 È bastante a lodarti,
 Quanto se' degno?
 O quanto sdegno
 Hò, che'l mio stile
 Non giunga al segno?
 Delle tuo lodi, ond' io
 Portar potessi, al mio
 Desir conforme, il tuo nome gentile
 Dall' aureo Gange alla rimota Tile.
 Dov' è, dov' è la Tromba
 Ond' Achille, et Ulisse ancor rimbomba?
 Che con sonoro canto
 Celebri in ogni canto
 Il generoso, e pio
 Fatto, e tolga di mano al cieco oblio.—Pp. 140-141.

* E per non fare ora qui (che nè il luogo, nè l'occasione il ricerca) un catalogo di tutti, chi dell' antico, ò del moderno secolo possiam noi trovare, che a Cesare somigli più, e faccia meglio parallelo di quel, che fa la Sereniss. Altezza Vostra? Sol che quelli fosse stato Cristiano, e avesse saputo contentarsi d'esser il primo della sua Città, senza voler esser anche della stessa Città più potente, ò Signor legittimo fosse suto; . . . "Cesare," Dedication, p. 2.

It is difficult to consider these utterances as impersonal. Such is Pescetti's admiration for the assassin of Caesar that he speaks in his own person, apparently forgetting in his enthusiasm that he has assigned the words to the Chorus of Citizens.* A further remove from Dante's conception of Brutus can hardly be imagined.

Such an exhibition of partiality could not have been lost on Shakespeare. Such an emphasis of Plutarch's attitude could not have failed to confirm the favorable impression which he gathered from the biographer. Nor could Shakespeare, in those scenes in "Cesare" wherein Pescetti attempts to exhibit Brutus in action, have gathered any hints to shake the final opinion in his own play:

"This was the noblest Roman of them all."

Like Shakespeare, Pescetti very carefully eliminates from his characterization anything which might reflect unfavorably upon the moral character of the protagonist. We hear nothing of his positive moral defects; of his divorce, of his rivalry with Cassius for offices within the gift of the Dictator, nor of his many obligations to Caesar. All is discreetly passed over. Whatever Pescetti's intentions, he probably found it a dramatic necessity to exclude them, much for the same reason that Shakespeare, in all likelihood influenced by his example, was led to ignore them. Possibly it was the Italian's purpose to portray the fruitless struggle of a hopeless, though noble and virtuous Republicanism against a condition of affairs whose existence had been preordained by the gods, and against which all the forces of an outraged idealism could not prevail. The mortal embodiment of this power might fall; a place was ready for him with the gods, while Tartarus enlarged its bounds to compass his foes.†

* In the classic drama it is not unusual for the Chorus to speak in the first person, but this instance is unique in Pescetti. It strikes the reader with all the force of an individual opinion of the author.

† In the Prologue, Jove comforts Venus, saying:

"Giulio, della cui morte tanto lutto
Meni, e cordoglio, e si ti lagni, e duoli,
Risplenderà doman in ciel al pari
Della tua stella; . . .

Prologue, p. 10.

If we are to accept the opinion of some critics, Shakespeare was influenced in his treatment of the subject by the recent failure of the Duke of Essex' rebellion. It showed plainly and forcibly the folly of opposition to the monarchial power. The same idea can be discovered in Pescetti. Much as he lauds Brutus, the practical considerations of authorship compel him at times to a consideration of contemporary conditions. Possibly he realized that he was going too far in his denunciation of Caesar, for we find the Nurse engaging in a defense of monarchs, and declaring,

"E non son altro i Regi, che Vicari
Del sommo Giove."—P. 55.

At the end of the play, the author is careful to emphasize the futility of fighting against the established order:

"E chiaro vedrai meco,
Che questo mondo è una perpetua guerra,
Ove l'un l'altro atterra,
E si tosto, ch'un manca,
Rinascce un altro, e'l mondo si rinfranca."—P. 149.

But it is quite possible that neither Pescetti nor Shakespeare had the faintest idea of introducing any such problem into their tragedy. Possibly both dramatized history as they conceived it, without any attempt to invest their work with a larger significance. Yet consciously or unconsciously, by thus representing their hero as morally immaculate, actuated solely by the highest and most unselfish motives, while the representative of monarchy is depicted as weak, vacillating, and tyrannous, both Pescetti and Shakespeare have secured for the problem its most elemental and most emphatic statement.

Both dramatists, therefore, approached the subject in the same spirit. Both excluded from their portrait of Brutus whatever seemed to reflect unfavorably upon his character; both included whatever might add to his moral elevation. It is this peculiar insistence upon certain traits of Brutus'

character to the exclusion of others, that furnishes a close parallel between the two plays.*

The Brutus of "Cesare", at his first appearance, curiously resembles the Brutus of "Julius Caesar" after the famous soliloquy. He is torn by no doubts as to the moral excellence of his plans: his whole soul is bent upon the destruction of the tyrant. Thus, in his opening speech* he exclaims,

"Oggi a Roma farò conoscer, ch'io
 Degno nipote son di quel gran Bruto,
 Che di questa Città cacciando i Regi
 Alta vendetta, e memorabil feo
 Del barbarico stupro di Lucrezia.
 Roma, oggi questa mano, e questo ferro,
 O hà da sciorre, e romper le catene,
 Ond' in duro servaggio avvinta sei,
 O hà da trar di vergognosa, e grave
 Vita, anzi morte me."—P. 12.

This, in style, sentiment, and wording is closely parallel to the exclamation of Brutus on reading the notes:

"Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?
 My ancestors did from the streets of Rome
 The Tarquin drive, when he was called a King.
 'Speak, strike, redress.'—Am I entreated
 To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise
 If the redress will follow, thou receivest
 Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!"

The exclamatory style is particularly noteworthy, as it occurs frequently in the parallels.

* As is well known, Plutarch nowhere condemns Brutus for his murder of Caesar. Appian, however, while he recognizes Brutus' virtues, is strong in condemnation of his act. He says: "Against all these virtues and merits must be set down the crime against Caesar, which was not an ordinary or a small one, for it was committed unexpectedly against a friend, ungratefully against a benefactor who has spared them in war, and nefariously against the head of the state, in the senate house, against a pontiff clothed in his sacred vestments, against a ruler without an equal, who was most useful above all other men to Rome and its empire." *Civil Wars, White's Trans.*, p. 381.

It is curious to note how Pescetti here abandons Appian in favor of Plutarch.

A peculiar difference in treatment, but a striking parallel in content, is to be found in a portion of the Brutus-Cassius scene.* In Pescetti, Brutus enters the action fully resolved, and though Cassius is already in the plot, that cautious conspirator has his doubts as to Caesar's vulnerability. Brutus thereupon indulges in an argument curiously similar to that used later by Cassius in Shakespeare's play when he is striving to arouse Brutus. In Pescetti, Cassius says of Caesar:

"Tu sai, ch'egli è feroce, e ne' perigli
Non si sgomenta punto, anzi diviene
Allor più ardito, e coraggioso, quando
Maggior vede il periglio." †—P. 24.

Brutus replies:

". . . . E siasi, nulla
Li gioverà l'ardir, nulla la forza,
Che non potrà, se tutto acciaio ei fosse
Resister al furor di trenta, c'hanno
Posta la propria vita in abbandono
Per liberar la patria. O Cassio, credi
Tu, ch'io non sappia, ch'in cotesto tuo
Petto non meno ardir si chiude, e serra,
Ch'in quel di Giulio? e che cotesto braccio
Non è del suo men nerboruto, e forte?"*

* Just before the discussion concerning Antony, already quoted.

† From these words the reader may believe that the conspirators feared that very courage of which Caesar himself proves deficient. But by courage, Cassius here means sheer physical bravery, an attribute which no reader either of Pescetti or of Shakespeare can deny him. The courage Caesar lacked was that of his own convictions. Like Macbeth, the known had no terrors for him, but like the Scottish king, he is confounded by the unseen. No Roman could have found fault with a man for heeding the warning of the gods. The historical Caesar, it is true, oft expressed his contempt for omens, while the Caesar of the drama professes to disregard them. But his disregard is superficial, and apparently the result of an attitude which we cannot but attribute to a belief in his own semi-divine being. Rather than be suspected of feelings common enough to ordinary mortals, Caesar deludes himself by a process of self-hypnotism, and is led to his doom, a victim of his lack of true courage, a sacrifice to his own inordinate vanity.

‡ P. 24. Is this perhaps the hint from which Shakespeare built up the entire scheme of physical comparisons dwelt upon by Cassius? The swimming of the Tiber, for instance?

Shakespeare has:

Cassius—"I had as lief not be as live to be
 In awe of such a thing as I myself.
 I was born free as Caesar; so were you.
 We both have fed as well, and we can both
 Endure the winter's cold as well as he.*

It is remarkable that in both dramas the authors found it necessary to convince one of their conspirators that Caesar was physically the same as other men.

The Brutus of Pescetti is accorded the same high estimate by his countrymen as the Brutus of Shakespeare. Cassius refers to him as "Il mio Bruto" and lauds him as

"Bruto, sovrano pregio, e gloria della
 Romana gioventù, Bruto, in cui splende
 Ogni prisco valor, cui chiama il cielo
 A gloriose, et immortali imprese."—P. 15.

A little further on he continues:

"Or sì, c'huomo ti stimo, Bruto, e vero
 Ramo di quella eccelsa, e gloriosa
 Stirpe, ch'à Roma il giogo indegno scosse.
 Or sì, che chiaro veggio ch' in te spirito
 Veramente Roman sì chiude, e serra;
 Ch'in te quel valor vive, ch'oggi, invano
 Cerco nel popol nostro, invan disio."—P. 16.

This speech follows Brutus' revelation of his determination to kill the tyrant. In Shakespeare, after Cassius has succeeded in moving Brutus, he says,

"Well, Brutus, thou art noble. . . ."†

The shade of Pompey says to Brutus:

". . . Tu puoi dunque,
 Bruto, servir? tu, che l'origin trai
 Da colui, che premier la libertade
 A questa alta Città donò? tu puoi

* I., ii, 95.

† I., ii, 308.

A Tiranno servir? tu, che discendi
 Da colui, che'l leggitimo Signore
 Tollerar non poteo? questo appreso hai
 Da quella sacrosanta, e veneranda
 Maestra della vita, e de' costumi,
 Per cui seguir già nell' etade acerba
 La patria abbandonasti, e là te'n gisti,
 Ove fiorian tutti i lodati studi,
 Tutte l'arti gentili, e bei costumi?
 Ahi quanto defraudato hai quella speme,
 Che già fanciullo ancor di te destasti
 Nel petto di ciascun, che ti conobbe?
 Mal col principio il fin s'accorda, o Bruto,
 Mal risponde alla prima la mezzana
 Età: pur sai, ch'in valor dee l'huom sempre
 Irsi avanzando, qual fiume reale,
 Che quanto più dal fonte suo si scosta,
 Tanto più cresce, e al mar più ricco corre.
 Destati, e Bruto, destati, e raccendi
 Quel fuoco, ch'era in te ne' tuoi primi anni;
 E mostra, ch'al tuo nome corrisponde
 L'animo, nè dal ceppo tuo traligni."—P. 17.

Here we find many characteristics enumerated, garnered from Plutarch and Appian, which, in addition to those already quoted, could have enabled Shakespeare without Plutarch's scattered hints, to build a considerable part of his characterization of Brutus. In Shakespeare, Cassius says to Brutus:

"You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
 Over your friend that loves you."*

Here, as in Pescetti, all animosity between them is forgotten.

Further on Cassius exclaims, as Brutus assures him that he loves the name of honor more than he fears death:

"I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
 As well as I do know your outward favor.†

Just before this, he says:

* I., ii, 33-34.

† I., ii, 89-90.

“And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus,
And groaning underneath this age’s yoke,
Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes.”*

Casca refers to Brutus as follows:

“O, he sits high in all the people’s hearts.”†

Cassius again:

“. and no man here
But honors you; and every one doth wish
You had but that opinion of yourself
Which every noble Roman bears of you.”‡

Ligarius hails him as,

“Soul of Rome,
Brave son, derived from honorable loins.”§

.
“Set on your foot,
And with a heart new-fired I follow you,
To do I know not what; but it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on.”||

The same confidence in Brutus is manifested by the Cassius of “Cesare.” As Brutus and he come out of the temple, Cassius says:

“Scritta nel volto tuo veggio, e per gli occhi
Scintillar fuor tal tua baldanza scorgo.
Quindi felice angurio io prendo; quindi
Anch’ io tutto m’inanimo, e rincuoro
E certissima speme io concepisco,
Ch’aver felice fin deggia la cosa.”—P. 23.

* I., ii, 54-61.

† I., iii, 157.

‡ II., i, 90.

§ II., i, 321.

|| II., i, 332.

Like Shakespeare, Pescetti lays great stress upon Brutus' lack of foresight. As is evident from the discussion regarding Antony, he utterly fails to see the fatal mistake he makes in sparing that subtle opportunist. That it is a mistake, Pescetti shows, when, near the end of the drama, the Messenger announced that Antony and Lepidus are about to avenge Caesar's death. Brutus' whole argument is characteristic of the closet philosopher; books, not men, have been the object of his studies. He can dissect sagely the motives of his own actions, but he is helpless to penetrate the purposes of other men. In glaring contrast to the Brutus of the famous soliloquy, yet akin in his impracticability, here is a Brutus who speaks thus, when a cautious, worldly Cassius reminds him (in regard to Antony),

“A me più saggio
Sembra colui che l' suo nemico uccide
Pria che l' offenda, che lui, che dopo
Ch' è stato offeso, vendica l'ingiuria.
Bruto—Non il pensier, ma l'opra punir vuoi.
Oltra, che chi m'accerta, ch'ei tal mente
Abbia qual dici? Chi può dentro il petto
Suo penetrar? e ciò, che vi nasconde
Veder? Gli uman pensier sol Giove intende.”—P. 26.

He would spare Antony because he is a reveller and given to the pleasures of the flesh. How could such a man, he asks, triumph over those who have devoted their lives to study and toil? He fatuously believes that Caesar's death will so intimidate Antony as to drive all desire of domination out of the head of that wily schemer.

And to all of this, Cassius very appropriately replies:

“Bruto, tu se' troppo pietoso: voglia
Il ciel, che questa tua pietà non sia
Un giorno a noi crudel.”—P. 27.

Yet this Brutus, just like Shakespeare's Brutus, is so carried away by the conviction of the irresistible justice of his cause that he abruptly terminates this vital discussion by the lofty statement:

"Chiunque ama virtù, figlio è di Giove."

This overpowering sense of the righteousness of his cause is strong throughout. In his opening speech he exclaims, as he addresses Jove:

" nè sdegnar, ch'io sia,
Benchè indegno, ministro, et instrumento
Della giustizia tua; nè perche sacro
Luogo alla morte del Tiranno abbiamo
Eletto, riputar, ch'in noi s'annidi
Altro pensier, che pio: Rimira al cuore,
Che, se l'atto è profano, il cor è pio,
E pietà sola è di tal atto madre."—P. 13.

He considers himself the unworthy instrument of Jove's vengeance. He feels that the act itself is impious,* but his lofty motives must plead his excuse.

"O conspiracy,
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O, then, by day
Where will thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage?†

Just before this he says:

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar
I have not slept."‡

Since the shade of Pompey appeared to him, Pescetti's Brutus exclaims that his thoughts, like those of the Greek Milthiades,

"Non mi lascian dormir, nè prender posa."—P. 15.

When Portia reminds him that fortune often opposes merit he replies:

"Hà ben fortuna per antica usanza
Di contrastar alla virtù; ma quello
Addopra contra lei, che l'onda insana
Del tempestoso mar nel fermo scoglio."—P. 49.

* Probably because it involved a profanation of the sacred precincts of the Senate. But one might expect such an ardent patriot to regard Caesar's death here as a very acceptable sacrifice to the gods he supposedly outraged. But see Appian.

† II., i, 77.

‡ II., i, 61.

This is the same spirit that prompts Shakespeare's Brutus to reject the oath:

"What other oath
Than honesty to honesty engaged
That this shall be or we will fall for it?"

"Unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt, but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprise,
Nor the insuppressive mettle of our spirits
To think that or our cause or our performance
Did need an oath"*

In "Cesare," Brutus has such a hold over the conspirators that they gladly, as in Shakespeare, accept his leadership and decision on all points. To him are left all the details of the murder. When the fateful moment comes, he stands, after the first shock, unmoved by the fears of his fellows, and calms their panic when Lenate speaks to Caesar.

"Respira, ò Cassio, chi li parla d'altro,
Per quel, che di quì posso dal sembiante
Comprender, e da gesti."†

"Cassius, be constant;
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purpose;
For, look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change."‡

The Brutus of Pescetti, who can find time to study faces at such a critical moment, never forgets the respect due to himself. Just like Shakespeare's Brutus, as long as a fighting chance exists, he would fight to the last, but he would sooner die by his own hand than grace the triumph of his enemy. To Cassius, who rouses him to the danger in Lenate's talk to Caesar, he replies:

"T'intendo; ahi che valor, dove fortuna
S'opponga, nulla val. Stiam preparati,
Per proveder, se fia bisogno, al nostro

* II., i, 124.

† P. 109.

‡ III., i, 22.

Scampo, e alla libertà farci la strada,
 Se non possiam con altro, col passarci
 Co' pugnali l'un l'altro il fianco, o' l petto."—P. 107.

Cas.— "Then, if we lose this battle,
 You are contented to be led in triumph
 Thorough the streets of Rome?"

Bru.—No, Cassius, no. Think not, thou noble Roman,
 That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome;
 He bears too great a mind. But this same day
 Must end that work the Ides of March begun.
 And whether we shall meet again I know not;
 Therefore, our everlasting farewell take.
 Forever, and forever, farewell, Cassius!
 If we do meet again, why, we shall smile,
 If not, why then this parting was well made."*

One of the curious things in Shakespeare's drama is the rather vague causes of resentment which the conspirators have towards Caesar. As Professor MacCallum says, "Cassius, the moving spirit of the opposition, is, at his noblest, actuated by jealousy of greatness. And he is not always at his noblest. He confesses that had he been in Caesar's good graces, he would have been on Caesar's side. This strain of servility is more apparent in the flatteries and officiousness of Decius and Casca. And what is the motive? Cassius seeks to win Antony by promising him an equal voice in disposing of the dignities; and he presently uses his position for extortion, and the patronage of corruption. Envy, ambition, cupidity, are the principles of the governing classes; and their enthusiasm for freedom means nothing more than an enthusiasm for prestige and influence, for the privilege of parcelling out the authority and dividing the spoils. What care have these against the Man of Destiny, whose glories have given compass, peace and security to the Roman world? But their plea of liberty misleads the impractical student, the worshipper of dreams, memories, and ideals, behind whose virtue they shelter their selfish aims, and whose countenance alone can

* V., i, 109.

make their conspiracy respectable. And this very Brutus enters the conspiracy, not because of what Caesar did, or what he is, but because of what he may become! I need not here recount such causes of resentment which may be gleaned from the play. They all tend to the conclusions advanced above. The only serious charge urged against Caesar is that he was ambitious;—surely a sorry charge upon which to justify to the Roman populace the murder of a benefactor.”*

The same lack of definiteness in the charges against Caesar is to be found in Pescetti. The latter, like Shakespeare, could have found enough material in Appian and in Plutarch upon which to ground the conspiracy, but we look in vain for some decisive accusation. There is much talk of tyranny, much about the hard yoke under which Romans groan, but very little in the way of elucidation. Caesar is not accused of ambition; no mention whatever is made of the attempts to crown him. Envy does not seem to be a motive; at least we gain no such idea from the conduct of the conspirators, although Mark Antony directly hints at this in his warning to Caesar.

“Della fortuna io t’assicuro, ch’ella
 Non ti sie mai contraria sì nel crine
 Avvolte l’hai le mani. Dall’insidie
 Ben t’esort’ io guardarti de’ nemici.
 Molti offesi da te si tengon: molti
 Portano invidia alla tua gloria; alcuni
 Abbaglia il tuo splendore: altri patire,
 Che tu lor sii superior, non ponno.—P. 67.

As far as most of the conspirators in “Julius Caesar” are concerned, this seems to fit them; but, strange to say, it is difficult to see where it applies in “Cesare.” Of the many offenses of which Caesar is held responsible we get very little beyond this bare statement.

As far as Brutus is concerned, he evidently blames Caesar for Pompey’s death and burns to avenge it. Just why, is nowhere apparent. He longs to restore the ancient liberties, but in what degree they have been destroyed, and above

* P. 216-217, MacCallum.

all, just what part Caesar played* in their destruction is not very clear. In the very first scene, Brutus apostrophises the shade of Pompey, who had appeared to him during the night, and had said,

“ . . . Tu puoi dunque,
 Bruto, servir? tu che l'origin trai
 Da colui che primo la libertade
 A questa alta Città donò? tu puoi
 A Tiranno servir? tu, che discendi
 Da colui, ch' l' legitimo Signore
 Tollerar non poteo? questo appreso hai
 Da quella sacrosanta, e veneranda
 Maestra della vita, e de' costumi,
 Per cui seguir già nell' etade acerba
 La patria abbandonasti:†

He recounts the hopes entertained by the bright promise of Brutus' youth, and exhorts him to prove to the world that these hopes may yet be realized.

The shade does not demand vengeance on his own account; he deploras Brutus' fealty to a tyrant, and states certain conditions, but nothing specifically tyrannical. In his opening apostrophe to the shade, Brutus indulges in the same generalities. I will quote this entire speech, partly for its bearing on the matter under discussion, and partly for the light it sheds on Pescetti's conception of Brutus' character.

“Magnanim' ombra ecch'io ti seguo, ecch'io
 M'accingo all' alta impresa, a che m'esorti.
 Oggi ò del sangue del crudel Tiranno,
 O del mio spargerassi il terren sacro.
 Oggi ò vendicarò l'empia tua morte,
 E riporrò la patria in libertade,
 O verrotti a trovar, dovunque sei.

* The conclusion is irresistible that Pescetti was very much under the influence of Lucan. This is true not alone of the supernatural element, but also of the general attitude of Brutus and Cassius, who talk of Caesar very much in the spirit of the *Pharsalia*. In Book IX. Lucan describes how the soul of Pompey leaving the tomb soars to the abodes of the Blessed and thence looking down upon the earth inspires the breasts of Brutus and Cato. (Lines 1-23.)

† P. 17.

Oggi a Roma farò conoscer, ch'io
 Degno nipote son di quel gran Bruto,
 Che di questa Città cacciando i Regi
 Alta vendetta, e memorabil feo
 Del barbarico stupro di Lucrezia.
 Roma, oggi questa mano, e questo ferro
 O hà da sciorre, e romper le catene,
 Ond' in duro servaggio avvinta sei,
 O hà da trar di vergognosa, e grave
 Vita, anzi morte me. Giove, se giusto
 Se', se'l trar le Città di sotto a piedi
 De superbi Tiranni, se'l punire
 Gli empi, se'l dar a gli innocenti aita,
 Opra è, che sovra ogn'altra aggrada, e piace
 Alla tua maestà, deh favorisci
 La santa impresa, e se prosuntuoso
 Son in tor quell'effetto alla tua destra,
 Che si doveva a lei, ch'era suo proprio,
 Perdona al gran disio, c'ho di vedere
 Nella primiera libertà riposta
 Quest'alta patria; nè sdegnar, ch'io sia,
 Benchè indegno, ministro, et instrumento
 Della giustizia tua: nè perchè sacro

 Luogo alla morte del Tiranno abbiamo
 Eletto, riputar, ch'in noi s'annidi
 Altro pensier, che pio: Rimira al cuore
 Che, se l'atto è profano, il cuore è pio,
 E pietà sola è di tal atto madre."

Here is a man ready to kill Caesar because of a dream! The Brutus of Shakespeare would kill him not because of what he is, but for what he might become. The same statement regarding tyranny, ancient liberties, etc., occurs again and again throughout "Cesare." Cassius repeats them in the very next speech; but all is very vague, very indefinite. Brutus and Cassius later indulge in a lofty dialogue concerning liberty, and Brutus says that the only thing which has kept him alive is the hope that some day he may be able to help Rome regain her ancient liberties. That alone, he feels sure, has also kept Cassius from desiring to outlive the dead Republic.*

* Pp. 89-90.

Perhaps the strongest statement is contained in Brutus' speech at the beginning of the fifth act.†

“Cittadini, Il Tiranno hà col suo sangue
 Pagate le dovute pene, et hà soddisfatto
 All'anime di tanti huomini illustri,
 Che son, per colpa sua, giti sotterra.
 Omai libera è Roma,
 Dalle nostre cervici è scosso il giogo,
 Et ei conforme al merto suo nel propio
 Sangue, ch'in larga vena
 Per cento piaghe versa
 Giace a piè della statua
 Del magnanimo Duce,
 Cui non vider mai par quest' alte mura:”—P. 115.

Yet there is nothing stronger in all this than in Shakespeare. There Caesar comes in triumph over Pompey's sons; not alone the parent, but the offspring have fallen. Brutus says,

“No, not an oath: if not the face of men,
 The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse,—
 If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
 And every man hence to his idle bed;
 So let high sighted tyranny rage on
 Till each man drop by lottery” (II., 1, 114).

† In Muretus the case against Caesar is also weak. In Grévin, Brutus in his speech to the citizens makes definite charges:

“Ce Tyran, ce Cesar, enemí du Senat,
 Oppresseur du pays, qui de son Consulat
 Avoit fait heritage, e de la Republique
 Une commune vente en sa seule pratique,
 Ce bourreau d'innocens, ruine de nos loix,
 La terreur des Romains, e le poison des droicts,
 Ambitieux d'honneur, qui monstrant son envie,
 S'estoit fait appeler Pere de la patrie,
 E Consul à jamais, à jamais Dictateur,
 Et pour comble de tout, du surnom d'Empereur.
 Il est mort ce meschant, qui decelant sa rage,
 Se fait impudemment eslever un image
 Entre les Rois, aussi il a eu le loyer
 Par une mesme main qu'eut Tarquin le dernier.”

(Lines 1017 ff.)

Nor can I, despite all this talk concerning ancient liberties, this vehement denunciation of tyranny, discern any definite republican tendencies in "Cesare." As has already been pointed out, Pescetti's treatment of Caesar aroused the resentment of the partisans of Alfonso d'Este, yet the author takes pains to have it understood that princes rule by divine right as God's vicars on earth. In the fourth act, Brutus and Cassius indulge in a dialogue, entirely superfluous, regarding liberty, and Cassius advances what, to a Roman at least, must have seemed rather a novel view of this much discussed subject.

Cas.—"La libertà null'altro
E, ch'imperio, e dominio di se stesso."—P. 89.

The interjection of this philosophical conception, seemingly so at variance with classical traditions, serves only further to complicate an already sufficiently complicated issue. In short, the motives of the conspirators are not expressed with sufficient clearness to enable us to indicate their exact nature.

Yet, in spite of his impracticability, in spite of the haziness of his motives, the Brutus of Pescetti, like that of Shakespeare, leaves us in no doubt as to the sincerity of his purpose. Whatever base motives may actuate his follows (and in Pescetti none are discernible), he seems to deserve the same eulogy accorded the Brutus of Shakespeare. The salvation of the common weal alone, even at the expense of his own life, seems to animate him. Thus, he says to Decimus Brutus:

"Albin, tanto al morir, quanto al dar morte
All' ingiusto Signor siam preparati:
Però succeda, come piace al cielo.
Se l'opre de' mortai rimira Giove
Con occhio giusto, à fin felice, e lieto
Scorgerà i pensier nostri, ch'all' altrui
Salute, all' altrui ben rivolti sono."—*Ces.*, p. 93.

"He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them."—*J. C.*, V., v, 71.

It is certainly significant, that with a wealth of material to draw upon, both Pescetti and Shakespeare should, in regard to Brutus, treat the available sources in a manner so similar. Pescetti excludes much historical matter which he might have employed; Shakespeare makes practically the same exclusions. Thus the histories contained sufficient data upon which to found a formidable indictment against Caesar, but both chose to overlook them and to found the conspirators' cause on comparatively insignificant accusations. In both dramas, certain phases of Brutus' character are emphasized to the exclusion of others. Much is said of his virtues: nothing, not even by his enemies, of his vices. In their inclusions, a similar parallelism exists between the two dramatists. Pescetti, with a keen perception of the dramatic value of that phase of Brutus' character, assigns to his mistaken idealism in sparing Antony, a far more significant position in the development of his tragedy than did his predecessors.* Here we get an individual treatment of this dramatic crux which has a striking similarity to that in Shakespeare. It leaves us with the same conception of Brutus' practical failings, with the same misgivings which we experience in the work of his great contemporary.† Unlike Muretus and Grévin, Pescetti does not overlook the importance of the Popilius Lena incident, and by his treatment he introduces an element of suspense which Shakespeare could well use to advantage. Though both dramatists used practically the same source, Pescetti's individual touches seem reflected in Shakespeare's handling of this episode. Again, unlike his predecessors, Pescetti was fully alive to the value of the Brutus-Portia scenes, and reveals Brutus in his domestic relations very much as Shakespeare does some ten years later.‡ Finally, in both dramas the

* There is no doubt that Pescetti found in Muretus the hints for some of Brutus' speeches, but his loans from his predecessor do not affect the argument.

† But, as usual, Pescetti fails to take full advantage of this motif. During the wordy progress of the drama we lose sight of Antony, and only a few lines at the end suggest him as the Nemesis of the conspirators.

‡ See section on Portia.

protagonist is but a pawn moved by invisible powers, pursuing his fated way against an ominous and supernatural background. In both tragedies, destiny has its ghostly precursors; in the one to arouse the hero to action, in the other, to herald his doom.

THE OTHER CHARACTERS

I

There is little in Pescetti's presentation of the figure of Cassius suggestive of the splendidly drawn portrait in "Julius Caesar." Pescetti found it a difficult matter to differentiate between Brutus and Cassius; much that the latter says or does throughout might with equal propriety have been assigned to his fellow conspirator. Both seem to be of one mind in most matters; only in the two important scenes already noted* does Cassius seem possessed of any distinct individuality. In one his caution is emphasized, in the other his rashness in the face of danger.

II

Pescetti was little more fortunate in his characterization of Antony. He is hardly more than a puppet who acts the part of an echo to Caesar in the dialogue before mentioned, indulges in a soliloquy, and then vanishes from the scene. Obviously Pescetti intended him to play the part of the tried friend and counsellor, but there is nothing resembling individuality in his speeches. He talks like a book, and has about as much true vitality as an automaton. Possibly the soliloquy was introduced to contrast his ideas on dominion with those of Calpurnia on the same subject, and to lend force to the dictum contained in the concluding passage of the play:

"Che questo mondo è una perpetua guerra,
Ove l'un l'altro atterra,
E si tosto, ch'un manca,
Rinasce un' altro, e'l mondo si rinfranca."—Ces., p. 149.

This is not a bad dramatic device, but the progress of the plot is so obstructed by the mass of needless declamation, that long before the end, all thought of Antony as a possible

* In regard to Antony and the Popilius Lena episode.

successor to Caesar has escaped the reader. In Antony's recital of his secret longings, he reveals traits which justify us in classifying his utterances as those appropriate to a crafty opportunist. Pescetti could describe his characters acceptably enough, either in their own words, or in those of others, but he could not exhibit them successfully in action; hence, this soliloquy, while ineffective in his own drama, could readily furnish hints which a better dramatic artist could use to advantage. To this Antony, nothing is dearer than dominion; for him there is no bliss comparable to the "sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

“ Ma sperar tanto
 Non oso. Pur chi sà quel, ch'ordinato
 Sia nel celeste regno? A me medesimo
 Di non mancar deliberato sono,
 Se mi presenta occasione il cielo,
 E mi mostra la via di conseguire
 Quel, che può farmi un' altro Giove in terra,
 A pormi in man dell' universo il freno.
 In tanto io cercherò per ogni via,
 D'accattar appo il popolo favore,
 E di farmi benevoli i soldati,
 Acciò, mancando Cesare per morte
 O naturale, ò violenta, i possa
 Col mezzo lor por sù quel grado il piede,
 Ov' hà condotto lui benigna stella.”—P. 72.

Antony disappears after this scene, and no mention is made of him again till near the end of the tragedy, where he is described as having fled to his house after the murder. Unfortunately, Pescetti fails to give Antony an opportunity to realize his ambition, but he provides material for the delineation of a counter player who would have delighted the Elizabethan dramatists. Pescetti certainly was not amiss in his estimate of the character, but it remained for a greater dramatist to exhibit him in action.

Antony does not appear in the fifth act of "Cesare," but there is between several of his statements in Shakespeare, and those contained in Pescetti, a marked similarity in style and

sentiment. Some of these have already been indicated. Among others, Antony over Caesar's body, exclaims,

"Pardon me, Julius! Here was't thou bay'd, brave hart;
Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in they spoil and crimson'd in thy lethe.

.

How like a deer stricken by many princes
Dost thou here lie!"—III., 1, 205.

It must be remembered that Antony's "credit stands on slippery grounds," and it is hardly to be expected that he would use, at this critical moment, the simile employed by the Messenger in Pescetti as he laments the murder:

"Non fu mai fatto sì crudele strazio
Di mansueto agnello
Da un gregge di rabbiosi
E famelici lupi,
Com' han del Signor mio quest' empi fatto.
Parean cani bramosi
D'insanguinar l'acuto
Dente, e l'ave labbia
Nella già morta fiera."—P. 120.

There seems in Antony's lament, an echo of Mars' threats in the Prologue to "Cesare."

Ant.—"

A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartered with the hands of war:
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds:
And Caesar's spirit ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry 'Havoc', and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial" (III., 1, 263).

Marte.—"Strage orribil vedrai; dell' empio sangue
 Correranno le strade, e quai torrenti
 Porteran l'arme, e i corpi morti al mare.
 Fin di quì n' udirai lo scoppio, e' l grido."—P. 6.

Jove commands Mars:

"Mescola sdegni, odi, discordie, versa
 Sopra il popol Roman furor, disio
 Di sangue, di vendetta, ond' alla fine
 Tutti gli empi dal mondo il ferro tolga."—P. 11.

The idea of civil strife is found all through the last act of *Pescetti*, and is probably due to the influence of *Appian*, who details the horrors following the proscription.

III

Historically and critically, the *Brutus-Portia* scenes in "*Cesare*" are of prime importance: historically, because here for the first time in any play on this subject does *Portia* figure among the actors; critically, because the Italian dramatist avails himself of the same episode chosen from the same source and treated broadly along the same lines later followed by *Shakespeare*.

Pescetti, of all the dramatists of *Caesar's* fortunes, seems to have been the first to realize the dramatic value of the *Brutus-Portia* scenes.† Like *Shakespeare*, he found his material in *Plutarch*, and while he does not adhere as faithfully to the *Plutarchian* sequence, the correspondence in the motifs he

† In *Muretus* she has no place in the action. *Brutus* refers to her in his soliloquy: Act II., lines 107 ff.

Brutus— . . . Haec parum si te movent,
 Tua jam, vir ut sis, te satis conjux monet,
 Fidem cruore quae tibi obstrinxit suam,
 Testata sic se avunculi prolem tui.
 Si ab exequendis te advocat coeptis timor,
 Animusque pigro torpet ignavus gelu,
 Ex femina perdisce, quid deceat virum."

This is the only reference to *Portia* throughout the drama. *Grévin* makes no mention of her, while *Garnier*, in his "*Porcie*" (1568) treats of events following the death of *Caesar*.

employs is so close as to render the presentation of parallels peculiar alone to the two dramatists, a matter of extreme difficulty, and in most instances, of doubtful value. With perhaps two exceptions, to be noted later, there are no hints in Shakespeare's treatment which he could not have derived from Plutarch, a fact, however, which in no way invalidates the hypothesis herein advanced that Pescetti's inclusion of Portia influenced Shakespeare to introduce her in his drama. "Julius Caesar" without her would have lost nothing in technical completeness, whatever it might have forfeited in human interest. Voltaire, with Shakespeare's example before him, excluded Portia from his drama on the ground that the introduction of a love element would detract from the high seriousness he considered proper to his tragic hero. Technically, his drama is sufficiently satisfactory, but like in Muretus and in Grévin, her exclusion injures the fullness of his characterization of Brutus, and robs his tragedy of a character which, skilfully handled, would greatly have enhanced its popular appeal.

Shakespeare's Portia is a character with which we would grudgingly part. Beautiful in herself, her presence serves to bring the softer side of Brutus into relief, while after her husband's departure on his fateful mission, her mental anguish serves admirably to increase in the mind of the spectator the presentiment of impending disaster.

Pescetti, like Shakespeare, makes Portia occupy a relatively small part in the action, perhaps for the same reason that prompted the greater dramatist. We are irresistibly attracted to the latter's Portia, and her persistence in the action would inevitably have led to a divided interest. Possibly Pescetti was dramatist enough to realize this and acted accordingly. His Portia, like Shakespeare's, serves further to broaden our conception of her husband's character, while in herself, she is portrayed with power sufficient to revive, at her appearance, the flagging interest of the modern reader, even though she seems at times a Brutus in female attire, and shows a fondness for dialectic more appropriate to the schoolman than to the Roman matron.

From the evidence presented in Pescetti's handling of this theme little is adducible in support of the hypothesis advanced above; its probability must rest upon the cumulative evidence favoring Shakespeare's knowledge of "Cesare" presented in the course of this work.

Yet, while these scenes offer little of value for our purpose, their historical significance, and the fact that, as far as can be determined, this is the first time that the matter has been dwelt upon in the literature of the subject,* must excuse the expository character of much that follows.

In Pescetti, Portia appears three times: once in the first act in the scene immediately following that between Brutus and Cassius; in the second act with Brutus alone; and lastly, in the same act in a scene wherein both overhear Calpurnia's lament to her Nurse. In the first scene Brutus has little to say. The dialogue is carried on mainly with Cassius. On her first appearance Portia indulges in a soliloquy:

"Non senza gran cagion stamane uscito
 Si per tempo di casa è il mio consorte:
 Gran cose ei tratta certo, e se non erra
 Il mio pensier, egli apparecchia il giusto
 Premio al Tiranno ingiusto, se pur giusto
 Può darsi premio ad huom si ingiusto, et empio.
 Ah perche il sesso mio non mi permette
 Vestir gonne maschili, e ne' consigli
 Mescolarmi de gli huomini, e le cose
 Trattar della Republica, e di duro
 Acciar gravando il corpo in prò di quella
 L'asta, e la spada oprar?"—P. 28.

She longs to dye her sword in the tyrant's blood. This is a Portia, more like the Roman matrons who could calmly watch the bloody shows in the amphitheatre than resembling the

* I know of but two notices of these scenes, neither being much more than a mere mention. Neri says: "Su tutte ancora primeggia il Cesare d'Orlando Pescetti, che per il rilievo della figura di Bruto, tratta da Plutarco—vedi la bella scena di Porzia nel secondo atto, etc." (*La Tragedia italiana nel Cinque cento*, Ferdinando Neri, Firenze, 1904, p. 158.) It is also referred to by Emilio Bertana in "*La tragedia*," Milano, 1904, p. 75 ff.

idealized portrait of Shakespeare. Yet, considering her terrible suicide,* perhaps Pescetti had the truer conception of her real character. That, in spite of her martial bearing, he appreciated her more womanly traits, is evident from the tenor of Cassius' address, even though it does reflect the attitude of the Renaissance courtier:

“Molto per tempo esci di casa, ò Porzia,
 Porzia, di pudicizia raro esempio,
 E della matronal prudenza chiaro
 E purissimo specchio, viva imago
 Di quel saggio; appo cui fu stolto quale
 Più saggio ebbe la Grecia; alla cui morte
 Morì la libertade, e nello stesso
 Sepolcro a canto a lui volle esser posta,
 Qual facenda a quest'ora, oltra l'usato
 Tuo, quà ti mena? Senza gran cagione
 Non è ciò fermamente, che non suoli
 Tu, se non per gravissime, e importanti
 Cagioni uscir in pubblico; ma come
 A grave, e saggia femmina conviensi
 Dentro a muri domestici in onesti
 Studi passar il tempo, riputando
 Degna d'eterna lode quella donna,
 La cui bellezza a pochi, ma la fama
 È nota a molti, che non fa del corpo
 Nelle pubbliche piazze, e ne' teatri
 A cupid' occhi, ma alle caste menti
 Fa di sua pudicizia altiera mostra.”—Pp. 29-30.

To Cassius' compliments, and his inquiry as to her early rising, she replies that the love she bears her country demands that she be made a party to their plans. It is in vain that they withhold secrets from a loving woman. Cassius assures her that no one doubts her worth and constancy, but the matters they contemplate are such that it would be unwise to risk their discovery. Yet, since she longs to know, he will tell her.

“Noi trattiam di trarre
 Di sotto al giogo Roma, e di riporla
 Nello stato, ond' altrui spietata, e ingorda
 Voglia di dominar la trasse a forza.”—Ces., p. 31.

* Plutarch notes that she was of a “noble courage.”

He asks her to aid the cause with her prayers. This is not much to her liking; she would rather draw a sword against the tyrant. Cassius assures her that the prayers of woman have often had greater force than that of arms. Her reply is one of Pescetti's unconscious gems of humor:

"Io dunque, poich' à me stringer non lice
 Contra il Tiranno il ferro, con la lingua
 Gli farò cruda, e dispietata guerra."—P. 32.

Towards the end of the scene Brutus indulges in an exultant outburst. He seems already to hear the paens of joy resounding throughout Rome at the news of the Dictator's death. The scene concludes as Portia invokes Heaven's blessing on the conspirators' enterprise. She announces her readiness to die, if failure attend their efforts, for the love she bears her husband is such that she cannot live without him.

We get a nearer approach to Shakespeare's treatment in Portia's dialogue with Brutus. This is opened by Brutus, who perceiving that Portia has wounded herself, and thinking that she had sustained the injury in the discharge of some household duty, reproves her for turning her hands to the lowly tools of the housewife. She replies:

"Hò voluto far prova, s'in me tanto
 Regni animo, et ardir, che darmi possa
 Di mia man morte, occasion venendo,
 Ch'il morir bello, ò necessario sia."—P. 49.

Brutus admires her courage, and inquires the reason for her fears. She assures him that often fortune opposes merit, and she fears for his safety. He loftily replies that fortune can no more prevail against the virtue of his enterprise than the raging sea against the immovable rocks. At this, Portia, in spite of her martial bearing heretofore, begins to exhibit the same vacillation as Shakespeare's Portia. Fears for her husband now dominate; the Amazon is lost in the wife. She replies:

"Tuttavia, benche lei* non vinca mai,
 Impedisce sovente i suoi disegni;

Et io, s'avvien (che no'l consenta il cielo)
 Che ciò, che tenti, abbia infelice effetto,
 E dove pensi dar, riceva morte,
 Hò stabilito di tenerti dietro."—Pp. 49-50.

Bru.—"Lodo, Porzia, et ammiro la grandezza,
 E generosità della tua mente
 Sprezzatrice del fato, e della morte
 E sopra modo pregiomi, et altiero
 Vò di consorte tal."

Yet he does not approve of her design, and conjures her, by the love she bears him, to refrain from all thoughts of self-destruction. Portia replies that she cannot live if he die;

"Porzia di Bruto moglie, e di Catone
 Figlia? soffrir il volto del Tiranno,
 Onde sia giunto a crudel morte il padre
 Et il marito, potrà Porzia? O Bruto
 Quanto più ti stimava accorto, e saggio?
 Dunque in tant' anni, che vissuto hai meco
 Non hai l'animo mio compreso appieno?
 Dell' amor, ch'io ti porto, ancor potuto
 Non ho farti ben chiaro? E tu mi stimi
 Si poco amante, ch'io potessi senza
 Tè star un' ora in vita? *Bru.* Io sò, che m'ami:
 Ma sò dall' altra parte, che non meno
 Saggia, che amante se'."—P. 50.

The scene is now spun out to include a series of mutual protestations of love. It concludes as Calpurnia is seen coming out of the temple, whereupon Brutus and Portia descend from amatory dialogue to vulgar eavesdropping.

Plutarch relates that when Portia showed Brutus the wound in her thigh, "he was amazed to hear what she said to him, and lifting up his hands to heaven, he besought the gods to give him the grace he might bring his enterprise in so good pass, that he might be found a husband worthy of so noble a wife as Portia: so then he did comfort her the best he could."†

* That is, Fortune.

† Marcus Brutus, p. 116. Skeat.

In the "Julius Caesar" of Sir William Alexander, (Earl of Stirling) written a few years after Shakespeare's play, there is a decided similarity between some

Pescetti does not rest Brutus' appreciation of his wife on this basis; he rejoices in the possession of a wife so spirited. Shakespeare idealizes the situation in Brutus' exclamation:

"O ye gods!
Render me worthy of this noble wife."

Near the end of the third scene in which Portia figures, and wherein she and her husband overhear Calpurnia's determination to prevent her husband from attending the session of the Senate, Brutus advises her to go home while he goes to join the conspirators. The scene concludes as she speeds him with her blessing.

Throughout these scenes Pescetti utilizes many of the motifs derived from Plutarch, which Shakespeare afterwards included in his treatment. But the emphasis upon several of them has been shifted; the similarity in parts between the two authors is due mainly to this common source. There are but two points of importance wherein distinctly individual resemblance is noticeable. Both in Pescetti and in Shakespeare, as has previously been pointed out, Portia enters the scene under practically the same attendant circumstances. In both dramas she appears immediately after the completion of the details of the assassination. Brutus says to Cassius:

"Ma giamo ad informar del tutto gli altri,
Acciò gli spirti destino, e le forze,
Et apparecchin l'arme all' alta impresa.

Cas.—Aspetta, ch'esce fuor di casa Porzia.—P. 28.

Hereupon Portia enters.

Shakespeare has:

Cas.—The morning comes upon's. We'll leave you Brutus,
And, friends, disperse yourselves; but all remember
What you have said and show yourselves true Romans.

Bru.—And, gentlemen, look fresh and merrily;
Let not our looks put on our purposes;

portions of the Brutus-Portia scenes and those in Pescetti. The prologue seems an echo of Pescetti's. Nor do these portions have anything verbally in common with Seneca, the model of both tragedies. See Conclusion, page 121.

But bear it as our Roman actors do,
 With untired spirits and formal constancy;
 And so, good-morrow to you every one.

Exeunt. Brutus remains. Act II., 1.

Immediately after the few lines to Lucius, Portia enters. While it may be simply a coincidence, it is worth remarking that in both dramas Portia arises in the early morning to seek her husband. There is no warrant for this in Plutarch. That Pescetti should have the conspirators perfecting their plans in the early morning may be regarded as a necessity of his dramatic form. Plutarch does not suggest this touch. Possibly Shakespeare considered it a gain in dramatic effectiveness to have the conspiracy confirmed during the tempestuous night. Perhaps Pescetti's treatment influenced him. In both dramas the interrogator comments upon Portia's early rising.

Cassius—Molto per tempo esci di casa, o Porzia.—*Ces.*, p. 29.

Brutus—Portia, what mean you? Wherefore rise you now?
 It is not for your health thus to commit
 Your weak condition to the raw, cold morning.

Portia in soliloquy says:

Non senzo gran cagion stamane uscito
 Si per tempo di casa è il mio consorte.—*Ces.*, p. 28.

In Shakespeare we read:

Portia— . . . You've ungently, Brutus,
 Stole from my bed.

Plutarch says: "So when the day was come, Brutus went out of his house with a dagger by his side under his long gown, that nobody saw nor knew but his wife only." (Marcus Brutus, p. 116.) Thus, according to the biographer, the conspiracy had been perfected days before and Portia by this time evidently knew of it.

Neither is there any warrant in the histories for Portia's prayer for Brutus:

"O Brutus,
 The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!"—Act II., Sc. IV.

Similarly, in Pescetti, Portia's last words are a blessing on Brutus:

"Và, che ti scorga, e ti difenda Giove."—P. 58.

Even closer is her prayer at the conclusion of Brutus' rapturous outburst in her scene with Cassius:

"Ite, ò forti, ite ò saggi, te ò de gli alti
Legnaggi, onde scendete, degni; il Cielo
Secondi i desir vostri."—P. 33.

These coincidences may be simply accidental, but taken in connection with many other points of contact between the two dramas, they assume greater significance, and lend strength to the hypothesis herein advanced: that Shakespeare was influenced by Pescetti's treatment to include the Brutus-Portia scenes in his own drama.

IV

Pescetti's other principal feminine character is the conventional lay figure of the drama of his time: a lifeless automaton who seems to exist solely for the purpose of indulging in intolerably wordy lamentations.* Yet Pescetti has put in the mouth of this lachrymose puppet a few lines which form the closest parallel to be found between the two plays.

D. Brutus thus replies to Caesar's depreciation of his flattery:

D. B.—"Non è lingua mortal per pronta, e scaltra
Che sia, non è di dir sì ricca vena,
Nè sì divino ingegno, che, non dico
Degnamente lodar, ma narrar possa
Le sopr'umane eroiche tue prove.
E se vivesse il grande Omero, altrove
Certo non volgeria l'alto suo stile,
Che a cantar i tuoi fatti eccelsi, e magni,
E tema vil reputaria lo sdegno
D'Achille, e i lunghi error del saggio Ulisse."

* Many of the motifs of the Calpurnia-Nurse scene in Pescetti are derived from Muretus. Others are reminiscent of Grévin.

Hereupon Calpurnia exclaims:

"Ahi pur, ch'anzi a gli Euripidi non porga
Materia, onde risuonino i teatri
Ne'secoli avvenir le sue sventure."

This outburst is entirely lost on Caesar, who says:

"A parlar d'altro omai volgiamo i nostri
Ragionamenti;" . . . —*Ces.*, pp. 105–106.

Calpurnia's prophetic doubt is placed in such a setting that its dramatic effect is lost. This, it seems, was too tempting a morsel for Shakespeare's keen sense of dramatic fitness to overlook, and at the moment when the conspirators have reached the climax of their success, we find him assigning Calpurnia's speech to the exultant Cassius, to stir the audience with its theatrical effect and to bewilder generations of future critics.

Cas.— "How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!"

Bru.—"How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along
No worthier than the dust."* (III, I, 112.

I regard this as the most remarkable parallel between the work of Pescetti and that of Shakespeare. It is entirely too close in word and content to be fortuitous. The dramatic effect of Cassius' outburst is undeniable; yet its dramatic truth is questionable. All the more so since the speech of Cassius immediately following,

". So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be call'd
The men that gave their country liberty,"

* Malone long ago suggested that this scene probably refers to the popularity of the play on the stage, and that it points to other contemporary dramas on the same subject. *Prolegomena*, II, ff. 448–9. Ed. 1823. Prof. Sykes sees in it a dramatic device to emphasize the reality of the presentation. "Julius Caesar" note, page 142.

has always impressed me as an anticlimax. This, both in word and in thought, coming so soon after his noble speech, produces the same unpleasant effect as,

"O world, thou wast the forest to this hart,
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee,"

which, intruded into Antony's lament, has caused many critics to regard these lines as interpolations. Nor does Cassius' first exalted outburst seem in keeping with his character. Of all the conspirators he is the last whom we would expect to find indulging in raptures at such a critical moment. Far more in keeping are his next words,

"Ay, every man away:
Brutus shall lead, and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome."

This indeed is Cassius; every man on the alert, and every energy bent to insure the successful conclusion of their enterprise.

But, whatever its fitness to the character, Shakespeare, from the point of view of effect, certainly could have found no better place for its introduction. Doubtless, in his day the gentry clenched their pipes, while the gaping groundlings clutched their greasy jerkins, both animated by the same feeling that overpowers the modern audience at these ringing prophetic phrases. And then the simple stage direction, "Enter a servant:" the beginning of the end! For sheer dramatic effect few passages in Shakespeare surpass it.

V

The other persons in "Cesare" may be dismissed in a few words. The Nurse and the Priest are simply the conventional lay figures of the drama of the time, while Decimus Brutus seems to have been included because he happened to be in the histories. Neither he nor Lenate possesses any individuality, and considered solely in themselves, contribute nothing of value to this investigation.

“CESARE” IN ENGLAND

Pescetti's work, tedious as it is to the modern reader, was not without its attractions to the Elizabethan. An age which could produce "Polyolbions" could very well tolerate a "Cesare." It was cast in the popular dramatic form, dealt with a popular theme, and above all, came from a land inseparably connected in the public mind with romance and tragedy. To the Elizabethan, "Ex Italia, semper aliquid novi." That the work was probably known to English authors receives additional support from the use seemingly made of it by Sir William Alexander (Earl of Stirling) in his own "Tragedy of Julius Caesar."

Alexander's work was issued about 1604-7. Of it, Dr. T. A. Lester says: "In general it may be said that Alexander follows Grévin, availing himself not only of Grévin's original scenes, but also of Grévin's non-Plutarchian order. . . . There can be little doubt that Alexander's 'Julius Caesar' is nothing but Grévin's 'Cesar' rewritten and enlarged."* Alexander followed Grévin, but he did so with an admixture of Pescetti.

Prof. H. M. Ayres claims that Alexander got his Prologue from the Hercules Furens of Seneca, substituting Caesar for Hercules as the object of Juno's wrath. Pescetti's Prologue is one of the curious things about his drama. Such an introduction is lacking in both Muretus and Grévin.† Possibly both Alexander and Pescetti got their idea from Seneca, but there are parallels in content between the two which are only faintly adumbrated in the Latin author. Juno's censure of

* "Connections between the Drama of France and Great Britain, particularly in the Elizabethan Period." Harvard Dissertation, 1900 (unpublished), quoted by Ayres.

† Alexander's Prologue is the first act of the drama. Juno delivers a long monologue and the chorus closes the act. In Muretus, Caesar and the chorus occupy the first act. In Grévin, it is Caesar, Antony and the Chorus of Soldiers. In Pescetti, the Prologue is separate, but like in Alexander the actors therein do not appear in the drama proper.

Jove's amours in the Scotchman's work bears a very close resemblance to the denunciations of Venus as recorded by the Italian. The threat of civil strife and discord are found in each. But more important is the fact that in certain scenes lacking in Grévin, there is a close parallel between Alexander and Pescetti.

Thus, in the dialogue concerning Antony, Pescetti has:

Cas.—Parmi d'avere scorto in Marcantonio
 Disio di dominar: perciò s'in tutto
 Vogliam la patria assicurar, spegniamo
 Anco lui col Tiranno, e fuor degli occhi
 Tragghiamci questo stecco, che potrebbe,
 Quando che sia, non poca briga darne.
 Che tu sai ben, quanto li siano amici
 I veterani, e quanto acconcio ei sia
 Gli animi a concitar del volgo insano.

Bru.—S'ad altri, oltre al Tiranno, darem morte,
 Si stimerà dal volgo, che le cose
 Sempre stravolge, e falsamente espone,
 Che non disio di liberar la patria,
 Ma privato odio, e brama di vendetta
 A ciò sospinti n'abbia, e di quell'opra,
 Onde da noi s'attende eterna fama,
 N'acquisterem vergogna, e biasmo eterno:
 E dove nome di pietà cerchiamo,
 Sarem del titol d'empietà notati;
 Nè perciò a noi gran fatto avrem giovato:

.
 In somma e' non si deve
 Punir, chi non hà errato, e a me non basta
 L'animo di dar morte a chi nocciuto
 Non m'hà nè fatto ingiuria.

.
Cas.—Bruto, tu se' troppo pietoso; voglia
 Il Ciel, che questa tua pietà non sia
 Un giorno a noi crudel. Nel risanare
 Dall' ulcere nascenti i corpi il ferro,
 E'l fuoco oprar convien, che tu ben sai,

Che'l medico pietoso infistolisce
La piaga, e spesso tutto il corpo infetta.

In the "Tragedy of Julius Caesar" we read:

Cass.—
There is Antonius, Caesars greatest friend,
A man whose nature tyranny affects,
Whom all the soldiers daily do attend,
As one who nought but to command respects;
.
And in my judgment I would thinke it best,
When sacrific'd the proud usurper lyes,
That this seditious enemy of rest
Should fall with him, with whom he first did rise:
Thus, of our liberty we now may lay
A solid ground, which can be shak't by none;
.

Brut.—I cannot, Cassius, condescend to kill,
(Thus from the path of justice to decline)
One faultlesse yet, lest after he prove ill,
So to prevent his guiltinesse by mine;
No, no, that neither honest were, nor just,
Which rigorous forme would but the world affright,
Men by this meane, our meaning might mistrust,
And for a little wrong damne all that's right:
If we do only kill the common foe,
Our countries zeale must then acquire due praise
But if (like tyrants) fiercely raging so,
We will be thought that which we raze to raise;
And where we but intend to aide the state,
Though by endangering what we hold most deare,
If slaying him (as arm'd by private hate)
We to the world all partiall will appeare.
.

Cass.—Well Brutus, I protest against my will,
From this black cloud, whatever tempest fall,
That mercy but most cruelly doth kill,
Which thus saves one, who once may plague us all.

This is not in Grévin, neither is the Brutus-Portia scene. Here again, there are significant points of contact. Alexander's whole handling of the scene resembles Pescetti's treatment, while in individual sections the parallels are almost verbal. Portia's attitude throughout is reminiscent of Pescetti's delineation. In both dramas the conspiracy is revealed to her; in both she proffers her help; in both she falls back on prayer as her best aid; in both the failure of the plot means her self-destruction.* She says:

"Though nature, sexe, and education breed
 No power in me, with such a purpose even,
 I must lend help to this intended deed,
 If vows and pray'rs may penetrate the heaven;
 But difficulties huge my fancie findes,
 Nought, save the successe, can defray my feare:
 'Ah! fortune alwayes frownes on worthy mindes
 As hating all who trust in ought save her.'
 Yet I despaire not but thou may'st prevaile,
 And by this course to ease my present grones,
 I this advantage have which cannot faile:
 I'll be a free-man's wife, or else be nones:
 For, if all prosper not as we pretend
 And that the heavens Romes bondage to decree,
 Straight with thy liberty my life shall end,
 Who have no comfort but what comes from thee;
 My father hath me taught what way to dye,
 By which if hindred from encountring death,
 Some other meanes, I (though more strange) must try;
 For after Brutus, none shall see me breathe."

(Tragedy of Julius Caesar, pp. 268-69, Vol. 2, Glasgowedition, 1872.)

In Pescetti Portia says:

"Più volentier la man di ferro contra
 Il Tiranno armerei, che di preghiere
 La lingua, e'l cuor: ma poichè ciò mi niega
 Il sesso mio, con quel ch'a me conviensi
 E lice, aiuterò la santa impresa."—Ces., p. 32.

* Of the above only the fact that the conspiracy was revealed to her is recorded by Plutarch in this connection.

"Ite, ò forti, ite ò saggi, te ò de gli alti
 Lenaggi, onde scendete, degni; il Cielo
 Secondi i desir vostri: Scorga, e regga
 Benigno i piedi, e le man vostre Giove,
 Tu vedi, ò Porzia, in che periglio posta
 Del tuo consorte la salute sia.
 Or di mestier t'è preparar il petto
 A colpi della morte, s'egli avviene,
 Che'l Ciel (sia lunge ogni sinistro augurio)
 Contrasti a generosi suoi disegni.
 O libera convien, che viva, ò chiugga
 Con glorioso fin degno del padre,
 E del marito tuo la vita: In questa
 Luce di padre libero venisti,
 Et a marito libero congiunta
 Vivesti, ch'ambo altieramente amaro
 Di più tosto morir, che viver servi:
 Si che di spirti generosi, e maschi
 Arma il femminil petto, e'l cuor rinforza;
 Onde con fin del nascimento degno,
 E della vita tua la vita chiuda."—Pp. 33-34.

She says to Brutus:

"Dell' amor, ch'io ti porto, ancor potuto
 Non ho farti ben chiaro? E tu mi stimi
 Si poco amante, ch'io potessi senza
 Tè star un ora in vita?"—P. 50.

"Or tu non sai
 Quanto sovente a generosi sforzi
 Soglia fortuna ingiuriosa opporsi?"—P. 49.

Following his lofty response she says:

"Tuttavia, benche lei* non vinca mai,
 Impedisce sovente i suoi disegni."—P. 49.

There is no historical warrant for Portia's contemplated suicide at this time. In both dramas Brutus' reply is the same in content:

*Fortune.

"Do not defraud the world of thy rare worth,
But of thy Brutus the remembrance love;
From this fair prison strive not to breake forth,
Till first the fates have forc'd thee to remove."—P. 269.

In Pescetti, Brutus says:

"Ma che accidente pensi tu, che possa
Addivenir, ch'armar contra te stessa
Le man ti stringa, e innanzi tempo l'alma
Spigner del caro albergo?"—P. 49.

"Ma non approvo
Già il tuo consiglio, e pregoti, per quanto
Amor mi porti, ch' à sì fiera voglia
Dij del tuo petto bando, e l'ora aspetti
Prefissa al tuo partir da questa vita."—P. 50.

Her "rare worth" is emphasized by Brutus:

"Ma non consentirà Giove, che donna
Si valorosa, e bella, a dar salute
A mille altri atta, se medesma uccida."—P. 52.

Alexander also makes Cassius mention that Laena had accosted him, and expressed the wish that his desires might prosper, thus making Cassius suspect the conspiracy was discovered. This parallels Brutus' experience in Pescetti. Decius refers to the banquet at the house of Lepidus and Caesar's opinions on death. This is also mentioned in Pescetti. Alexander's recital of Caesar's perturbation, as he describes it in soliloquy, is too long to quote, but it is simply an echo of Calpurnia's state of mind as revealed in Pescetti.

If we can assume that Alexander was acquainted with Pescetti's drama, as these parallels seem to indicate, we have no reason for supposing that it was unknown to the literati of his time. "Cesare" was popular enough to go through two editions in Italy. Alexander was a man of wide reading, but no more so than was Ben Jonson. Possibly Alexander was indebted to the latter for his knowledge of Pescetti's

work.* Alexander's drama followed that of Shakespeare. If he knew Pescetti's work some few years after the composition of Shakespeare's drama, there is no reason to deny to Jonson, the most learned author of his day, a prior acquaintance.

In this connection, the hypothesis advanced by Frederick Gard Fleay,† regarding the two-part nature of Shakespeare's play, assumes new significance. According to him, "Julius Caesar" was originally written in two parts, "Caesar's Tragedy" and "Caesar's Revenge," following a custom of the time, and that through some exigency the two were later merged into the play as we now have it. This is not the place to enter this controversy. Fleay presents his reasons, and among them the fact that in "Julius Caesar" the name Antony occurs without the h, contrary to Shakespeare's custom in his other plays wherein the name occurs. It may be well to suggest here that the prevalent fondness for Italian names probably prompted the use of the name as found in Pescetti: Antonio or Marcantonio. But especially significant is Fleay's surmise that it was Jonson who performed the merging of the two plays, and who is, therefore, responsible for the present form. If this be the case, it may well be that Jonson introduced "Cesare" to Shakespeare's notice, for notwithstanding its tediousness, it was cast in a form which appealed to Ben's classic taste. The hypothetical "Tragedy of Julius Caesar" could well have been inspired by Pescetti's drama, for the first three acts of "Julius Caesar" as we have it now, form a satisfactory dramatic whole, and all of Shakespeare's assumed indebtedness to the Italian is contained in these three acts.

Jonson's "Sejanus," whose composition was probably prompted by the popularity of Shakespeare's work in the same field, followed "Julius Caesar" in 1603. The friendly rela-

* Alexander, in his younger days, travelled in France, Spain and Italy. He was high in the favor of James VI. of Scotland and accompanied him to London in 1603, where he became an intimate of Prince Henry. That he was well and favorably known to the authors of the day may be inferred from the dedication of a sonnet to him by Michael Drayton.

† In Shakespeare Soc. Pub., 1874, p. 357. Also his *Life of Shakespeare*, 1886, p. 215-6.

tions existing at this time between the two great dramatists is sufficiently attested by the fact that Shakespeare was one of the actors in Jonson's tragedy. "Julius Caesar" as we now have it appears first in the 1623 folio; what alterations were made in the preceding twenty years are matters of speculation. Jonson was sufficiently interested in its success to strive to rival it along purely classic lines, while about the only criticism of a Shakespearean play that we possess from Ben deals with a speech in "Julius Caesar."* It seems, therefore, within the bounds of probability that Jonson may have introduced "Cesare" to Shakespeare's notice.

There were, however, other means whereby Shakespeare may have become acquainted with "Cesare." Much as we know of his wonderful age, we do not even now realize its vast and all-embracing activities, especially in literature. Translations by the score were made from the Italian.† Plagiarism, especially from foreign sources, was rampant; nor was such plagiarism decried.‡ Shakespeare may not have known Italian, yet the evidence to the contrary is steadily growing stronger. Italian was the fashion in his day; many of his colleagues had travelled in Italy; many knew the language. His patron, Southampton, spoke Italian fluently, while among his guests Italian scholars were conspicuous.

* The allusion to the phrase Act III, Sc. 1.

"Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied."

This originally stood:

"Caesar did never wrong but with just cause" and is ridiculed by Jonson in his "Discoveries." It is quite likely that the Caesar in the play as originally written was an even more self-important individual than he is at present. Possibly Shakespeare saw no absurdity in the line when he first penned it. Caesar, in his own estimation, is semi-divine. The cause of things is in his will. What might seem wrong to the mob was not so to Caesar, for he felt that the cause was just, no matter what the world thought. That was sufficient. The apparent contradiction in terms thus seems capable of explanation.

† Appendix to Vol. IV of the Cambridge History of English Literature, Also M. A. Scott, Elizabethan Translations from the Italian. Mod. Lang. Assoc. Pub., X. to XIV., 1895-99.

‡ Sidney Lee, *The French Renaissance in England*, 1910. Phoebe Sheavyn, *The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age*, 1909.

Amid such surroundings it is well-nigh inconceivable that Shakespeare failed to come into intimate contact with the Italian literature of the day. Recent research renders it almost positive that he not only did, but that he was sufficiently versed in the language to read the literature in the original tongue. We marvel at his intimate descriptions of Italian life, explicable, apparently, only on the supposition that he was an eye-witness of the scenes he describes. We wonder at the familiarity with Italian authors evident upon a close examination of his work. Brandes, in his study of *Othello** calls attention to several portions of that drama, which both in content and expression, form too close a parallel to the Italian of Ariosto and Berni to be accidental. More recently, Professor Carlo Segré† has pointed to places in *Othello* explicable only upon the supposition that Shakespeare was intimately acquainted with the Italian version of *Cinthio*.

“Segré disagrees with Sidney Lee, who avers that Shakespeare borrowed from Italian sources, only bare outlines and general ideas which lent themselves to his scheme, and that these in his masterly hands were so arranged and reconstructed as to be almost unrecognizable. In Segré’s opinion, Shakespeare studied the Italian literature, not only with the analysis of a man of letters, but also with the careful attention and open mind of a poet, for the benefit he drew from these sources was chosen with consummate art and critical skill, according to what seemed most useful to him in the exercise of his marvellous gifts.”‡ As we have seen, Shakespeare’s procedure with “*Cesare*” differed in no essentials from his usual method.

Even if Shakespeare knew no Italian, it was still possible for him to become fairly familiar with “*Cesare*.” Shakespeare was a dramatist because the drama was profitable.

* *Shakespeare: A Critical Study*, George Brandes—London, William Heineman, 1902, p. 444-45.

† “*Relazioni Letterarie fra Italia e Inghilterra*,” Florence, 1911. Reviewed in article, “*The Italian Sources of Othello*,” by Ethel M. de Fonblanque, *Fortnightly Review*, Nov., 1911, p. 907.

‡ Ethel M. de Fonblanque in *Fortnightly Review*, Nov., 1911.

Like a keen playwright, he studied the taste of his public. The story of Caesar was no new one to theatre-goers. Other plays on the subject had met with success. The chronicle history had had its day, and with its waning popularity Shakespeare turned to that hazy, romantic epoch in history when Rome was mistress of the world; for in his day Rome's name still loomed large in the imagination of mankind. The great dramatist never scrupled to appropriate the efforts of others, when, by the transforming power of his genius, he might use them to further the success of his own work. The more we know of the Elizabethan world, the more modern it seems to us. No doubt, in those days as in these, theatrical managers were ever on the lookout for promising material. Perhaps Jonson did not introduce "Cesare" to his notice, yet what was to prevent Shakespeare's employing lowly but learned hacks to investigate plays or other works, both native and foreign, which promised to provide adequate material for his own dramas? There is nothing startlingly novel in this assumption, although it seems to have been overlooked in the discussions concerning the poet's linguistic knowledge. It had been done before; it was done afterwards. Association and collaboration were common. What one man lacked another supplied. Why did Henslowe, in 1602, commission Munday, Drayton, Webster, Middleton, and "the rest," to write a "sesers falle"? Why so many to write one play? No doubt many an old drama was ransacked for material, many an ancient source laid under contribution, many a verbal jewel or entire scene torn from its setting to grace the new production. Shakespeare, employing scholarly searchers, who brought to his notice whatever they considered valuable in the material they investigated, had no need of knowing various languages. He wanted the ideas; his imagination provided the rest.

There was no lack of books. The late Professor J. Churton Collins, in his consideration of Shakespeare as a classical scholar, says: "The collection of books was not only the fashion, but the passion of the age. His friend Ben Jonson had one of the finest private libraries in England, so had Camden and

Cotton, and their liberality in lending books was proverbial. He could have had books from the library of Southhampton and through Southhampton from the libraries of others of the nobility. The magnificent collection of Parker at Lambeth would have been open to him, as well as the collection at Gresham College. There was the Queen's library at Whitehall, well stored according to Hentzner, who visited it in 1598, with Greek, Latin, Italian, and French books. What afterwards formed the nucleus of the Bodleian at Oxford, which contains, by the way, an Aldine Ovid, with his name in autograph, to all appearances genuine, on the title-page, was during the last decade of the sixteenth century almost within a stone's throw of the Black Friars Theatre."*

* "Studies in Shakespeare."

CONCLUSION

To claim that Pescetti's drama possesses any intrinsic attraction for the modern reader would be straining truth in the interest of zeal. It is doubtful whether it ever attained the dignity of a stage representation; the least regard for the patience of humanity prompts the hope that it never was inflicted upon an audience. Too often, throughout its toilsome progress, "Declamation roars while Passion sleeps." Pescetti attempted to individualize his major characters, yet we miss the life which throbs in Shakespeare's pages; all too frequently the passionate utterances of real men and women are sunk in the frigid rhetoric of book-born puppets. Still while it was not given to Pescetti to scale Olympus, he at least glimpsed the path. His drama is true to the traditions of its type; in some ways it marks an advance over its predecessors. While the English drama, freed from the shackles of convention, buoyed by the exuberant spirit of a conscious nationalism, followed the *Zeitgeist* to the highest pinnacle of achievement, Italian tragedy, misled by the ignis fatuus of a false classicism, floundered ever more helplessly and hopelessly in the depths of the Senecan morass.

Pescetti has most of the faults of his contemporaries, but in a few respects he rises superior to many of his predecessors. His work is free from their revolting horrors; he shows a true perception of the dramatic possibilities of his material; he arranges his subject matter with a proper regard for dramatic effect, even though he well-nigh stifles his plot under an avalanche of words. He dares attempt what Symonds* scarcely believed possible; to portray upon

* In his discussion of the state of the Italian drama during the sixteenth century, Symonds says: "At the same time, we may question whether the Despots would have welcomed tragic shows which dramatized their deeds of violence; whether they would have suffered the patriotism of a Brutus, the vengeance of Virginius, the plots of Catiline, or the downfall of Sejanus to be

the Italian stage the patriotism of a Brutus and the downfall of a tyrant.

But what renders this long-forgotten work of special interest to the modern reader is the probability of its relation to "Julius Caesar"; a probability which the preceding investigation has sought to confirm. It seems that "Cesare" furnished the greatest dramatist of the age with hints which he did not hesitate to employ. It deserves recognition because here, for the first time, we find individual scenes which appear later in "Julius Caesar." Here for the first time in any extant drama on this subject, we find the debate (in its extended form) concerning the contemplated murder of Antony. In "Cesare," Portia for the first time enters the action, while Brutus is shown in his domestic relations in a manner suggestive of Shakespeare's treatment. Here, for the first time, the omens and prodigies find a prominent place in the drama, while the significance of the Caesar-Lena episode receives its first recognition. All these scenes appear later in "Julius Caesar," accompanied by individual touches peculiar alone to the Italian dramatist.

Muretus and Grévin both include in their dramas the debate concerning Antony. But Pescetti seems to have had a better idea of its dramatic value, for not only is his treatment of this significant episode far more comprehensive, but he includes matter purely his own, which, both in form and content, is so similar to its dramatic counterpart in "Julius Caesar" as to render the supposition of accidental coincidence highly improbable.

In his delineation of Brutus, Pescetti continued the exaltation of the character, begun by Plutarch and introduced into the Renaissance drama by Muretus. In view of the fact that the Italian dramatist openly courted the favor of the ruler of Ferrara, his treatment of the assassin of the Duke's great ancestor is surprising. Pescetti could have found many

displayed with spirit-stirring pomp in the theatres of Milan and Ferrara, when conspiracies like that of Olgaiti were frequent." John Addington Symonds, "The Renaissance in Italy, Italian Literature," Vol. II., p. 119. Henry Holt & Co., 1888.

things in his sources which would have detracted from the moral excellence of his Brutus, but he ignores them, and portrays his protagonist along the same lines as his great contemporary. Therefore Shakespeare found nothing in Pescetti to induce him to change his conception of the character.

The Brutus-Portia scenes in "Cesare" mark the first introduction of this material in any drama on the same subject. Pescetti portrays Brutus in his domestic relations along the lines later adopted by Shakespeare, and adds touches not traceable to Plutarch, yet included in "Julius Caesar."

Inasmuch as Pescetti dedicated his tragedy to Alfonso D'Este, whom he hails in his preface as Caesar's reincarnation, we naturally would expect a delineation of the titular character cast in the most heroic mould. Yet, whatever the intention, the fulfillment seems the very antipode of the promise. The Caesar of Pescetti appears the same weak, vacillating, boastful figure that in Shakespeare has so puzzled his critics, and who occupies in the drama the same position of relative inferiority assigned to him in "Julius Caesar."

Pescetti was the first dramatist of Caesar's fortunes to realize the dramatic value of a supernatural background. He presents the ghost of Pompey as the exciting force on his Brutus; Shakespeare introduced the ghost of Caesar to herald his doom. In his attempted distribution of the omens and prodigies, the Italian seems to have anticipated Shakespeare's similar but vastly superior treatment. With a single puzzling exception, he mentions all the portents later used by Shakespeare, and adds many more culled from the classic authors. Shakespeare includes among the omens several not mentioned by Plutarch; to obtain these he had no occasion to go beyond Pescetti.

The Italian seemed to realize the dramatic value of suspense, and uses this device twice in a manner almost exactly parallel to that of Shakespeare. Like the Cassius of Shakespeare, the Decimus Brutus of Pescetti raises a doubt as to Caesar's attending the session of the Senate, and the introduction of this element of suspense paves the way for his ultimate persuasion of the Dictator. In Shakespeare's play the episode

performs the same office. But more significant is Pescetti's employment of the Caesar-Lena scene, which in word and thought constitute a very close parallel to the same scene as it stands in "Julius Caesar."

"Cesare" seems to shed new light upon the much discussed question of Shakespeare's indebtedness to Appian, for the historical matter supposedly derived by the great poet from the English translation of the history can be found in the Italian drama, and reappears later in "Julius Caesar," accompanied by touches peculiar alone to Pescetti's treatment. The resemblance between these portions of the Italian's work and the corresponding parts in the English drama, is far stronger than their similarity to their hitherto supposed source.

Pescetti's minor figures are hardly suggestive of Shakespeare's vivid portraits, but, as has been pointed out, the significant speech which he assigns to Calpurnia furnishes the most striking parallel between the two plays.

When Cicero said:

"But men may construe things after their fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves,"

he uttered a truism which might well serve us a warning to all critics, especially those of Shakespeare. But the great poet often builded better than he knew. Shakespeare to us is what we can get from him. Because Pescetti was no Shakespeare is no reason for interpreting his efforts in an unkindlier spirit. His critics have, however, judged him by his fellows; often, apparently, without reading him. We cannot attempt to measure his influence in his own day by our modern standards. What is tedious to us was not necessarily so to the Elizabethans. It may be well to remember that even among Shakespeare's contemporaries the Senecan drama had its advocates.* There are few purple patches in "Cesare" to catch the eye of the romantic dramatist; probably as a tragedy, Pescetti's drama had as little attraction for Shakespeare as

* "The Monarchicke Tragedies" of Alexander by 1617 had gone through three editions, besides several single quartos.

it has for us. But to a dramatist who never scrupled to appropriate suitable material wherever he could find it, "Cesare" must have appeared well worth investigation. It presented, in convenient dramatic form, material which served to supplement his own selections from the scattered pages of Plutarch. With the sure perception of genius the great poet took from the Italian the matter best suited to his purpose and discarded the rest.

It is for this reason that "Cesare" is worthy of notice. It is for this reason that the obscure pedagogue of Verona, whose pedantic personality lay buried beneath the controversial debris of three centuries, deserves to stand to-day among that humbler brotherhood whom association with our greatest dramatist has preserved for the curious admiration of the literary world.

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