

the result of his conceptions or of his idiosyncrasies, had marked out his own line of rendering, and intended to abide by it. I do not wish to differ materially with either of them. I was, perhaps, one of the few critics, or for the matter of that, few persons, present, who had seen two of the foremost actors of a past generation—viz., Phelps and Creswick—alternate the "parts" in question at the Surrey Theatre some five-and-thirty years ago, and I shall never forget the impression they made upon me, particularly when Phelps took the "part" of Cassius, and I am bound to say that Mr. Franklyn McLeay in no way fell short of either of his eminent prototypes, save, perhaps, a little in expressing the exquisite pathos of the concluding portion of the famous quarrel scene, happily preserved by Mr. Beerbohm Tree in his third act—for he has divided, not compressed, the drama into three acts. Mr. Lewis Waller, to my mind—and I see that I am supported in the view by many of my critical *confrères*—made Brutus a trifle too calm and philosophic, though he did slightly let himself go twice or thrice, and he was, as a well-known actor, who sat next to me on the first night, pithily observed, "somewhat lacking in weight," but, nevertheless he gave us a masterly impersonation, though in too great a degree partaking of the style suitable for the modern, or rather the romantic, drama. In this, however, he may amend as the piece goes on. Mr. Charles Fulton, in Julius Cæsar, had, as must always be the case, in consequence of the bare outline in which Shakespeare has sketched the character, a difficult task in endeavouring to impart to it due dignity and prominence. Several of the great literary critics have found fault with Shakespeare for the comparatively meagre delineation of the mighty genius who constitutes his title rôle, but they forgot that he had a sound dramatic reason for not developing his character more fully, as otherwise the tragedy must have ended with Cæsar's death, which it was not designed to do, Cæsar's assassination being the *raison d'être* of the tragedy, and not its *dénouement*. Thus his exalted abilities and lofty sentiments are fittingly made the themes both for the eloquence of Brutus and Mark Antony, instead of being shown in Cæsar's deeds, or even in his words. A finer trait of self-abnegation—perhaps itself the finest trait in any disposition—could scarcely be shown than when Cæsar puts aside the scroll of Artemidorus and prefers that of Trebonius, when he is informed that the former touches his own safety and interest. But to the performance. Mr. Beerbohm Tree gave well-nigh a novel charm to his embodiment of Antony, by bringing all his peculiar repertory of artistic power to bear upon both the situations and the language. His entrance into the Senate house, by permission of "Brutus and the rest," after the consummation of the murder, and his sarcastic remonstrances levelled against the whole band of conspirators as he contemplated their bloody work, were splendid examples of histrionic art—albeit that I could not agree with the action in which he flanks off the palms of his hands to get rid of the blood supposed to have been left on them after shaking hands severally with the group: first, because the said action was disagreeable in itself, and secondly, because as, being Cæsar's blood, it would have been sacred in his eyes. Any such minor error, however was amply atoned for by the graphic, touching, and subtle delivery of Antony's subsequent address to the crowd, after Brutus had left the pulpit. Here Mr. Beerbohm Tree was subtle rather than vehement, and emotional rather than powerful. Still, he created a

tremendous impression, and his audience in the auditorium cordially followed and shared in the effects produced upon his audience on the stage. Never, perhaps, on any Boards, has a stage crowd been better drilled and handled than was that at Her Majesty's, and from personal experience—as I saw the Saxe-Meiningen Company's presentment many times, fifteen years ago, at Drury Lane—I can fully confirm the opinion expressed by a contemporary, that the present management of the crowd at Her Majesty's is undoubtedly superior to what theirs was. As the boy Lucius, Brutus's attendant, Mrs. Tree had a pleasing opportunity for the display of her usual sprightliness and vivacity, and was, as might easily have been anticipated, particularly charming in her rendering of the song—newly set by Sir Arthur Sullivan—of Orpheus, when she takes the lyre at the bidding of Brutus, to soothe him as he reads at night in his tent, just before the appearance of Cæsar's Ghost. As is known to all readers of Shakespeare, there are only two female characters in this piece, viz., Calpurnia, the wife of Cæsar, and Portia, the wife of Brutus, Cato's daughter. Both parts are short, but were played with much grace and force, by Miss Lily Hanbury, as Calpurnia, and Miss Evelyn Millard, as Portia. Mr. Louis Calvert—shall I say *filius dignior patris digni?*—was excellent as the exponent of rough humour, in Casca, besides having, as Mr. Beerbohm Tree stated in the short but appropriate speech, wrung from him by a resolute call at the close of the performance, greatly contributed to the smoothness of the Representation by his experienced aid in its production; and the feeble and infirm, yet energetic Caius Ligarius was strikingly impersonated by Mr. Fisher White. Space unfortunately prevents me here from doing justice individually to other members of the Cast, who, in their several degrees, contributed to the strength of the *ensemble*; but I cannot conclude without warmly commending Mr. Beerbohm Tree for the judgment he has shown in selecting "Julius Cæsar" as the subject of his great Revival, especially, though it seems but little known, as it was so popular a drama in former days, and for displaying in that Revival a spirit so sympathetic with Art and with Shakespeare. There is surely a great public who will appreciate such an effort, and that, too, in the most effectual way, by hastening to witness the performance.

E. G. H.

Bookland.

The January number of *Asylum News* comes to us in a new guise, being now issued in a mouse-coloured cover, which is a distinct improvement. In the first place, it keeps the numbers clean for binding, and, secondly, it undoubtedly gives the Journal a more important appearance. *Asylum News* has made many advances since its first issue last year, both in the quality of the paper upon which it is printed, and the way in which it is turned out, as well as in the actual matter; it is, in fact, a bright, well-edited, and useful journal, and, as its guaranteed circulation now exceeds two thousand six hundred, we may hope that it has "come to stay," and that it has a long and prosperous career before it.

It is stated that Sarah Grand's latest work, "The Beth Book," has been refused a place in Northampton

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