

RICHARD MANSFIELD, 'BRUTUS'

MEMORABLE EVENT IN CITY'S THEATRICAL HISTORY.

Great Production of "Julius Cæsar" at the Herald Square—Eye Almost Overcast by the Spectacle—Mr. Mansfield's "Brutus" an Antique "Hamlet"

It was not alone the splendors of the production, nor yet the brilliant actor, who made Alma Tadema's designs that equaled "Julius Cæsar" at the Herald Square Theatre last night a memorable event in the theatrical history of New York.

It was really the novel impersonation of Brutus by Richard Mansfield that overshadowed in interest his sympathy of colors, costumes, settings, lights and scenery.

And yet the eye was almost overcast by the stage spectacle. Tadema, for whom Ancient Greece seems an open book, has realized the ancient surroundings of the play with all the precision of his deep art.

We have called his conception and execution of Brutus novel. It is, it is remarkable for its originality, the angle from which the character is viewed is Mansfieldian.

It is not classic—for which the gods give him joy! It would be staidly romantic were it not suffused with feeling distinctly modern, as modern as the most modern play as realistic. The tone is quite new.

Now this actor has not been signally endowed by nature with an heroic exterior. He is not suited to classical parts wherein would shine men with more imposing fronts, beaver men. His nose does not jut into the world, nor is his glance an eloquent one.

Worse remained. Mr. Mansfield was Richard Mansfield in every part he undertook. His personality, his manner, his voice, in certain roles, was impossible to deny. It was all Mansfield, Mansfield with variations.

But the supreme quality of the man, the quality that dominates his entire personality, is his imagination. An imagination that is not to be forgotten. Temperament drapes a multitude of minor qualities.

Now mark the operative synthesis of his qualities, good and bad, in the role of Brutus. Refusing to accept the staid and starchy of a tradition that reduces Shakespeare to the medium of melodrama with "purple patches," Mr. Mansfield found in the character of Brutus a medium for the expression of his own individuality.

And in this he reveals a close study of Shakespeare. "Hamlet" was not the order of creation; it would seem that Brutus had served as a preliminary sketch.

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Mansfield argues that the vision is entirely subjective, therefore should not be seen by the audience. Here again is the pattern preserved in its integrity. Brutus is a hero, not a martyr. He is not a martyr, he is a hero. He is not a martyr, he is a hero.

There is nothing of the brag that in this novel impersonation, and of the supposed irony that Hudson and several all too keen commentators discovered in the character. Mansfield's sentimentality speech over Cæsar's corpse is without a flourish of rhetoric or self-seeking; his every action is free from theatricalism.

His Brutus is a study in exalted mania—a mania that has for its theme no craving after mortal life, but a utopia of justice. He is not a martyr, he is a hero. He is not a martyr, he is a hero.

The acting version was in the main the result of the actor's own imagination. It is not classic—for which the gods give him joy! It would be staidly romantic were it not suffused with feeling distinctly modern.

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"Tannhäuser" is in danger of a lack of public appreciation. This seems a strange statement in view of the fact that it has for nearly sixty years steadily increased in popularity.

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