

**SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF  
JULIUS CAESAR**

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Shakespeare's Tragedy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare & William J. Rolfe

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM J. ROLFE**

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JULIUS CÆSAR.

(Bust in the Museum of Naples.)

SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF  
JULIUS CÆSAR

EDITED, WITH NOTES

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, Litt.D.  
FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

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## PREFACE

My first work on Shakespeare for publication was an American edition of Craik's *English of Shakespeare* (a critical commentary on *Julius Cæsar*), prepared in 1867 while I was still teaching in the Cambridge High School. In that antediluvian period — before the recent deluge of annotated English classics for educational use — there was no school edition of Shakespeare. I had used Craik's book for oral instruction with a class in *Julius Cæsar*, and thought it might prove as helpful and suggestive to other teachers as I myself had found it; and my edition has had a steady sale down to the present time.

In 1872 I made the edition of *Julius Cæsar* on which the present one is based. It was revised in 1883, when the insertion of line numbers in text and notes necessitated a new set of plates; and slight changes and additions have since been made when the book had to be reprinted.

In the more thorough revision for the present edition the changes are mainly due to those which have taken place in the educational situation during the past thirty years. For instance, most of the notes on *textual variations* have been omitted. There are very few of these in the present play, and they are now accessible to the teacher in the "Cambridge" and other standard editions. I have also omitted most of the "Critical Comments" from the introduction, as the books from

which they were taken are now to be found in most of the public and school libraries. For these extracts I have substituted familiar comments of my own, and have added others of the same kind in the Appendix. A concise account of Shakespeare's metre has also been inserted as an introduction to the Notes.

Minor changes have been made throughout the Notes. Some have been condensed, some have been expanded, and new ones have been added here and there. All references to my editions of other plays have been omitted, their place being supplied by independent notes.

Though no radical changes have been made in the original plan, the present edition is substantially a new book, and many teachers will, I think, prefer it to the old one. Both, however, can be used, without serious inconvenience, in the same class or club.



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## INTRODUCTION TO JULIUS CÆSAR

### THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY

*The Tragedie of Julius Cæsar*<sup>1</sup> was first published in the Folio of 1623, where it was printed with remarkable accuracy, and no play of Shakespeare's presents fewer textual difficulties.

The date at which the drama was written had been variously fixed by the critics before Halliwell-Phillips proved that it was written "in or before the year 1601." This appears "from the following lines in John Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, printed in that year—lines

<sup>1</sup> This is the title at the beginning of the play and at the head of each page, but in the table of contents (or, as it is called, "A CATALOGUE of the severall Comedies, Historicks, and Tragedies contained in this Volume") it is given as *The Life and Death of Julius Cæsar*.