

been interested primarily in Roman history as such, they could easily have taken Florus as the basis of a first survey. But they were not so interested.³⁴ Nor was anyone else very strongly interested in Florus, as may be seen from the small number of editions called for.

Shakspeare has at least been accused of having used Florus. Cleopatra says,

bring it to that,
The gold I give thee will I melt and pour
Down thy ill-uttering throat.³⁵

Shakspeare might allude, thinks Theobald, to a story told by Florus (Book III, Chapter 11) of Marcus Crassus, or to another of Aquilius as told by Pliny.³⁶ Since Shakspeare later in the play refers specifically to "Marcus Crassus' death,"³⁷ it would seem likely, as Case points out, that Shakspeare was thinking here of Crassus' fate.³⁸ But while Plutarch emphasizes the avarice of Crassus, I do not find this particular item of pouring the gold down his dead throat mentioned there, and Cooper follows Plutarch. The riches of Crassus were proverbial, "Crasso ditior," but Erasmus does not attach our item to his adage. It was an ancestor of this Crassus who also got into the book of proverbs by laughing only once—when he saw an ass eating thistles. The Crassi were pretty certain to come to a schoolboy's attention. This particular item of having the gold poured down the dead throat of Crassus, Shakspeare is likely to have had eventually from Florus, for Dion Cassius seems to be the only other authority for this particular story, and Shakspeare and his contemporaries were not so likely to come across it there as in Florus. But whether Shakspeare had the story directly from Florus (at that time untranslated) is, of course, a different question.

This incident from Florus, however, may be made to point a moral for us. It will be seen that our studies of the historians so far do not test the kind of information the grammar school boy was supposed to derive from them. We need a study of Shakspeare's *Classical History* similar to that which Professor Root has made of his *Classical Mythology*. We would then know at least ultimate sources, and would be the better able to judge whether these grammar authorities likely supplied the bulk of Shakspeare's general information. Even where we

³⁴ The *Epitome* attributed to Florus in early editions of Livy is a different work.

³⁵ *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, 5, 33-35.

³⁶ Theobald, W., *Classical Element*, pp. 165, 307.

³⁷ *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, 1, 2.

³⁸ Case, R. H., *Antony and Cleopatra* (Arden ed.), pp. 63, 87.