

THE FALL OF BORIS



by Ralph Berry

'Speak, hands for me'. Casca's line as he is the first of the assassins to plunge his knife into Caesar sets off a frenzy of killing. Something similar has just been enacted in Westminster, where huge numbers of Government appointments resigned, 60-odd in a day. These hands spoke for a total failure of the Premier's authority, and the beginning of what is in JULIUS CAESAR a civil war that tears the republic apart. The factions are already in the field: the Remainers see their chance to reverse Brexit. The one-time supporters of Boris Johnson still hew to his vision of Brexit, however poorly it has been managed. This will be a bitter war with no peace in sight, at all points subject to the depressing state of the economy and the cost of living.

For Zelensky, the fall of Boris is terrible news. He was the paladin who came to rescue Ukraine and went to Kiev when it was hardly out of the bombing zone. His own reputation was twinned with Zelensky's.

Whoever succeeds Boris cannot have the same visceral attachment to the Ukrainian cause. Other voices will say that this has never been a vital interest of Britain's, and that Ukraine is Russia's business.

They will deal with it with their customary brutality, but it is after all their affair. Macron would agree. He is bent on retaining France's historic relationship with Russia. What can be Britain's future relationship with Russia?

Everything is in the air while the Conservative Party makes its arrangements to find a new leader. These will be swift and decisive, with the time factor an urgent consideration. The party at large in the country will have to be consulted for Conservative policies to have a genuine mandate. One imperative above all, then: Macbeth spoke it.

'If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly'.