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"THE MILK THAT CUTS
THE COST OF COOKING."

Julius Caesar: The Last Phase.

CAESAR HAD NEVER MET
CLEOPATRA!

(John O'London's Weekly.)

A very modern (and, maybe, a very foolish) writer has said that the whole of life is to create with the labour of years, and then to destroy in the twinkling of a night. That is exactly what Julius Caesar nearly succeeded in doing; what, indeed, only his wonderful luck saved him from. Caesar was fifty-two when he met Cleopatra, who was at the zenith of his fame. He had overcome all the insistent and persistent troubles that accompanied the conquest of Gaul.

The One Great Figure.

He had faced the dangers of the civil war forced on him by Pompey, he had defeated the Pompeian army in Spain. Finally, he had beaten his great rival himself at Pharsalia, and Pompey had been murdered. He was the one great figure left in the Roman world, with the exception of Cicero, who was too old and too weary to bother much with public affairs. There was great work waiting for

him to do, and no man ever had a more favourable opportunity.

As Ferrero says:—

He had only to make use of the enthusiasm of Italy, all the more overwhelming because it was inevitably short-lived, to return to Rome and attack the great problems of the age—to adjust the old republican institutions to a mercantile society, to consolidate liberty with imperialism, Latin traditions with the new demands of Eastern luxury and culture. But Caesar met Cleopatra, and their meeting profoundly affected the course of Roman and of world history. Caesar wanted money. He always wanted money, for the art of government in Rome during the last century before Christ was the art of bribery. The politician hungry for power was forced to embark on a war of conquest to obtain the wherewithal to buy patrician votes and plebeian acquiescence. Caesar was in Syria. Ptolemy owed him money, and was fighting with his sister, Cleopatra. Caesar decided to go to Alexandria to collect the money and settle the quarrel. Thus the meeting.

A Bald-Headed "G.B.S."

Mr. Bernard Shaw has written an entertaining comedy round the meeting. He has drawn Caesar as a bald-headed G.B.S. in a toga, and Cleo-

patra a reckless hoyden. As a matter of fact, Caesar was a man tired for the moment of wars and conquests and public affairs, and ready to be amused and flattered and caajoled by a pretty woman. He had been in the centre of intrigue since his youth. He had been compelled to fight ceaselessly for his own hand, and his very success had wearied him. He wanted to forget for a while, and Cleopatra well knew how to conjure up forgetfulness. Ferrero says of her:

"Herself utterly cold and callous, insensitive by nature to the flame of true devotion, Cleopatra was one of those women gifted with an unerring instinct for all the various roads to men's affections. She could be the shrinking girl, too shy to reveal her half-unconscious emotions of jealousy and depression and self-sabotage; or a woman carried away by the sweep of a fiery and uncontrollable passion. She could tickle the aesthetic sensibilities of her victims by rich and gorgeous festivals, by the fantastic adornment of her own person and her palace, or by brilliant discussions on literature and art; she could conjure up all their grossest instincts with the vilest obscenities of conversation, with the free and easy familiarity of a woman of the camps."

An Autocratic Empire.

Caesar stayed with Cleopatra, was besieged in Alexandria by her brother, and altogether spent nine months in Egypt. Caesar returned to Rome in the early autumn of the year 47 B.C. But he only stayed there four months. One more Pompeian army remained to crush, and he had to hurry across to Africa. During those four months he attempted to allay popular discontent by cancelling all rents under a certain figure for one whole year. The campaign lasted six months, and he went back to Rome to consolidate his authority. He had made many promises. Some at least of them had to be kept.

His ambition is very evident. It was to build an autocratic empire on the basis of popular prosperity.

Cleopatra came to Rome at the end of the year 46. She brought the son she had had by Caesar with her. She whispered to him of an empire greater than any that the world had yet seen, ruled by a dynasty that they should found. Meanwhile he distributed largesse with a generous hand, and initiated a scheme of sane and moderate social reform.

The Caesarian Dream.

But he lacked capable backing. New difficulties continually arose, and the man himself was worn out. He grew irritable. He never rested. He was overburdened with work and responsibility. His connection with Cleopatra was bitterly resented by the whole people. The attacks of epilepsy, to which he had always been subject, became more frequent and more violent. He had been appointed perpetual dictator, which meant in effect that the republic was dead and that the empire had begun, and he became obsessed with the necessity of strengthening his position by the annexation of Parthia.

Caesar was inventing the Caesarian dream which afterwards came to Napoleon I., Napoleon III., and the ex-Kaiser Wilhelm—conquest abroad, social reform at home, as the two props of an autocratic throne.

Caesar was a very great man. Mommsen has said, "No doubt Caesar was a great orator, a great writer, and a great general, but he became all these because he was a great statesman." An Italian writer has described him as "an incomparable opportunist." Certainly he was an amazingly shrewd politician to whom Tammany Hall could have taught nothing. He knew his people and he knew how to manage them. He was tremendously sure of himself. And his self-control was, until the last few months of his life, almost superhumanly complete. He suited the means to the occasion. Sometimes he was the very soul of forgiveness. Sometimes he was pitiless. His whole life was governed by considerations of policy, until he met Cleopatra and lost his head at the dangerous age of fifty-two.

He was a man without illusions even about himself. His personal life was generally abstemious, and he cared nothing for luxury. He loved glory, but he despised flattery. The difficulties that faced him in 45 and 44 were tremendous. The task that he had set himself was as perilous as Napoleon's invasion of Russia, but he would almost certainly have succeeded if he had not been sick and worn out. Caesar in 44 was a sick man, as Napoleon was in 1812. He was only the shadow of the man who had contrived to snatch victory from defeat in Gaul and to write the "De Bello Gallico" in two months.

A Great Destroyer.

While Caesar dreamt of Parthia, Italy was living in a state of economic chaos. Every class was eaten up with discontent, and the discontent came to a head in the aristocratic conspiracy engineered by Cassius and Brutus, and culminated in the assassination of the dictator in the Forum on the Ides of March, 44 B.C. To Ferrero, Caesar is nothing but a great destroyer.

In him was personified all the revolutionary forces, the magnificent

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H. J. BROWNRIGG,

Minister of Finance & Customs.

nov21.11

but devastating forces, of a mercantile age in conflict with the traditions of an old-world society—its religious scepticism, its indifference to morality, its insensibility to family affection, its opportunist and undisciplined politics, its contempt for precedent and tradition, its Eastern luxury, its grasping militarism, its passion for the baser forms of commerce and speculation, its first tentative efforts towards intellectual refinement, its naive enthusiasm for art and science. But men often build better than they know or ever intend.

What Might Have Been.

The scattered, mutually hostile tribes gathered together as the Roman legions marched through the land, first as Caesar's enemies, afterwards as his allies and as Roman citizens.

While Eastern influences were destroying the ancient virtues of the Roman republic, Rome was giving the best of herself to the great people bordering her northern frontiers. Thus history works out her own own schemes and men, even the greatest men, are but the puppets in her hand.

There remains, nevertheless, the inevitable speculation of the might have been. What would have happened, for example, if the Spanish Armada had sailed up Channel in fair weather? What would have happened if Anne Boleyn had been ugly? What would have happened if Napoleon had listened to reason and had never marched to Moscow? What would have happened if Caesar had never met Cleopatra?—S.D.

MINARD'S LINIMENT CURES
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