

34. As master of the Roman dominions, Cæsar did enough to prove that he was as capable of ruling as of winning an empire; of benefiting as of conquering mankind. In B.C. 46 he had effected the important work of reforming the calendar, which, from inaccurate reckoning, had fallen into confusion, so that the real time was three months behind the nominal. A Greek astronomer was called in to rectify matters, and the *Julian calendar* remained in use till A.D. 1582. He formed great plans for the public good. If Cæsar had been allowed to live, the still malari-ous *Pomptine* (or *Pontine*) *Marshes*, on the coast of Latium, would have been drained and turned into healthful, profitable land; and the river Tiber, still mischievous from inundations, would have flowed in a deeper and safer channel. Amongst his beneficent designs were the codification of the Roman law, the establishment of public libraries, the cutting of a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, and the development of trade by the enlargement of the harbour at Os'tia. A genius so universal, backed by a spirit so enlightened, might at once have restored the decayed agriculture of Italy, and extended and secured the boundaries of the empire on the Danube and in the East—for these things, with divers other schemes, had entered into his all-embracing mind. All was cut short and rendered vain by the lowest baseness of human envy, and the worst foolishness of human folly. Cæsar had been fully accepted by the great mass of the Romans as their one possible, their one peaceful ruler, when his career was brought to the sudden and tragical end known to all the world.

35. There is no need to dwell on the crime of the probably sincere and fanatical *Brutus*, and the assuredly malignant and ungrateful *Cassius*, who were the prime movers in the plot that slew Julius Cæsar. On the *Ides* (15th) of March, B.C. 44, in the Senate-house at Rome called "*Cúria Pompéii*," the greatest man in history died by the daggers of assassins. He fell, bleeding from many wounds, at the foot of the statue of Pompey, whom he had pursued with intent only to spare, whose fate he had bewailed, whose friends he had first conquered and then forgiven, only to be murdered by their hands at last. Julius Cæsar was in the fifty-sixth year of his age when he died, and left his work unfinished, and his power as a prize for the victor in another inevitable civil war.

"*et tu Brute*"