KAISERISM AND HEREDITY
Despots Are Largely the Product of the Breeds of Kings—Ancestry and Relationship of Caligula, the Roman Emperor—Comparison with the Kaiser
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A GREAT sensation swept over the German Empire in 1894. The young Kaiser, fresh in his untried power, had been, in a thinly veiled innuendo, compared to that horrible tyrant of the Roman Empire, Caligula Caius Caesar. It was all the result of a small brochure written by a quiet scholarly professor, of socialistic proclivities, one Quidde by name. The sensation lasted for some time, and was intensified by the appearance during the same year of a second publication, an anonymous supplement by the same author, "Ist Caligula mit unserer Zeit vergleichbar?"

The first pamphlet passed through twenty-nine editions before September, 1894, at which time, it is now amusing to see, the British Saturday Review referred to it as "a scandalous and outrageous production." Professor Quidde was a mild and well-meaning idealist whose vision anticipated the coming Caesarism in Germany, with all the evils attendant upon irresponsible control in the hands of one man. Of course there was much that was unjust in a complete comparison of the Kaiser with Caligula, especially in carnal characteristics—dissipation, gluttony and indolence. But there were many points of similarity—enough in fact to bring Quidde unpleasantly near a prison sentence. The German government had a delicate problem to handle. They did not care to fan the flames; yet how could they pass unnoticed such an outrageous example of lèse-majesté? It is said that at the trial the government prosecutor asked Quidde whom he had in mind when he wrote that article about Caligula. Quidde very cleverly replied, "I had in mind Caligula, but whom did you have in mind when you asked me the question?" The whole affair was too intangible. The matter was dropped and passed out of men's minds.

Now that subsequent events and the great war have brought out the truth of much of Quidde's grim foreboding, it is interesting to reconsider the life and characteristics of this arch tyrant of Rome, particularly in relation to the inheritance of mental and moral qualities as revealed by a study of the house of Caesar, that extraordinary family to which Caligula belonged. Caius Caesar, to give Caligula his true name, making all allowances, was undoubtedly one of the worst examples of royal tyranny, unchecked brutality, and egotistical madness that the world has ever seen. It is true that a large portion of Tacitus dealing with this period is lost, that Suetonius was a gossiper, and that aside from the dry narrative of Dio, we have comparatively little in the way of contemporary sources; but enough remains to make it fairly certain that the accounts about Caligula are substantially correct.

Baring-Gould has written a pains-taking and apparently impartial work dealing with all the members of the family of the Caesars, from Julius Caesar to Nero. He does not in the least show a disposition to belittle his characters, nor does he fail to bestow praise where praise is due. He discusses the sources of our knowledge of these persons in the light of modern criticism, yet his conviction is very certain that as far as Nero and Caligula are concerned, there is every reason to
believe the worst that has been said about them. The same idea is gained from reading H. P. Pelham's "Early Roman Empire" in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1905.  

Caligula, who, on his accession, was but twenty-five years old, began his reign very promisingly and ruled in a sensible manner for about eight months, when a sudden sickness overcame him, and ever afterwards his nature was changed. It is highly probable that this disease was a severe form of epilepsy, a malady from which the great Julius Caesar is known to have suffered. Such is the opinion of Baring-Gould, whose characterization of Caligula is presented in the following excerpts, taken from that writer's comprehensive work, "The Tragedy of the Caesars." It may be said in passing that the picture drawn by Professor Quidde was no more sensational than the one contained in this seemingly impartial work by Baring-Gould.

"Now, Caius Caligula we know suffered from both the worst form of this disorder [epilepsy] as well as from the less serious; and there can be little question that the sickness mentioned by the historians, but unfortunately not described by them, was a violent attack of epileptic fits, which when they passed left Caius in a measure deranged. Surely this table speaks for itself."

[Baring-Gould has here inserted a small chart showing insanity in six members of the family. The relationships of these six and others of the family are shown on the chart, page 350, of this journal.]

"Whatever his malady was, the prince rose from it very much changed, if not in disposition at all events in conduct. If hitherto he had worn a mask, with convalescence he cast it aside; if for a period of a few months he had rejoiced in the favor of the people, and had striven to retain it, he now found a pleasure in striking awe into their hearts, and in dissipating every particle of the affection he had inspired.

"He began to suffer from want of sleep; he seldom obtained more than three or four hours rest in the night and then could not sleep soundly, as he was disturbed with frightful dreams. fancying that old Ocean conversed with him in roaring tones. Unable to be quiet when sleep forsook him, he would sit up in bed the prey to wild fancies, schemes and terrors, or ramble about the porticos of the palace, looking out for the approach of day.

**THE TYRANT**

"Almost from the moment that he arose from his sick-bed, Caius behaved in a manner the reverse of his previous conduct. Some of his actions were certainly those of a madman, but he had intervals of sense, though he never again returned to the amiable mood of the first stage of his imperial career. To describe in a few words the change that took place in him, Suetonius says that at first he acted as a prince, afterwards as a monster.

"At the time of his sickness he had drawn up his will in which he constituted his second sister, Drusilla, to whom he was devotedly attached, heiress of his property and of the empire. He snatched her away from her husband and associated her with himself in a manner that gave rise to scandal. She had been united to Cassius Longinus by Tiberius, but Caius apparently after his sickness, divorced her from Longinus and married her to a creature of his own, M. Lepidus, and then took her from Lepidus and startled even dissolute Rome by the declaration that he proposed marrying her. This relation—even in Rome, not squeamish as to moral scandals—was regarded as one crying out to heaven for vengeance.

. . . On medals and on cameos, the heads of Caius and Drusilla appeared together; and it is possible that he would have carried his daring purpose..."
Nero, Caligula, and Agrippina "the younger" were the most notorious of all the Caesars for their cruelty, tyranny and perfidy. They are here shown at the bottom of the chart, very closely related.

* Trouble probably caused by a wound.
into effect, and have openly married her. But his mad career was frustrated. The unhappy girl fell ill, with shame may be, and died. Caius was plunged in a frenzy of despair.

"Unable to find rest in his Alban villa, the mad prince roved through the cities of Italy and Sicily, and let his hair grow in token of sorrow. He would thenceforth swear by no other oath than the divinity of Drusilla. But now intoxicated with power and elevation, he became convinced of his own deification. Philo tells us the line of reason Caligula pursued: 'If the shepherds are of a different order from the sheep they pasture, and the bullock-drivers from the cattle under their rods, then I must be distinct and superior in kind from the mortals I rule.'

"He assumed a beard of finely beaten gold thread, and passed along the streets, thus adorned, to be saluted as Jupiter; then he would appear with wings at his heels and adjusted to his cap, to represent Mercury; then with a bow and quiver, his head surrounded by flashing rays, as Apollo. It was even said that he attempted to pass himself off, in appropriate costume, as one or other of the goddesses. He went about surrounded by a train of attendants, who were dressed as the ministers of the deity he was pleased to personate at the time, and his gold statue was supplied with suits of clothes which were changed daily to correspond with those worn by Caligula. He ordered the most famous statues to be brought from Greece, and then removed their heads and substituted his own for theirs. "Drunk with flattery, and with sudden succession to absolute power . . . 'abandoned himself to wine and gluttony.'"

"The inordinate vanity of Caius made him resent anyone being thought to be better than himself in any way. In his insensate jealously, he forbade the Pompeii to bear the name of Magnus and the Torquati to wear their golden torques, and the Cincinnati to flourish a curl on their temples, as hereditary badges of their illustrious families. When Ptolemy, son of King Juba, and his own cousin, whom he had invited to Rome, entered the theater in his purple robe of royalty, all the spectators rose to stare at him. This so stirred the bile of Caligula that he had him put to death. There was in Rome a very tall man who went by the name of Colossus. Caligula, observing him in the amphitheater, ordered him to be dragged from his seat and thrust into the arena, and forced to contend with a gladiator, and when he proved more than a match for this man, then with a second. On his worsting this opponent also, he commanded the tall fellow to be bound, clothed in rags, and drawn up and down the streets, and after being exhibited in this sorry plight to the women, to be then butchered. There was, says Suetonius, no man, of however mean a condition, whom he did not envy, if that man were suspected of any excellence that might excite his envy."

Such then, is the picture of Caligula. The above is but a fraction of all that is brought together—testimony in its completeness and in its corroboration undeniable and unassailed. The same may be said of Nero. Testimony remains of such a nature that historians are forced to retain the view that Nero was of a type of bestiality and cruelty rarely exhibited among the world's sovereigns.

Here, then, is our first argument in favor of the hereditary origin of the characteristics of Caligula. Many thousands of absolute rulers have existed in history. Only a very few of these have been as debased as either Caligula or Nero, yet Caligula and Nero, two extreme examples, were as closely related as uncle and nephew. We only realize how close this relationship is when we remember that all the ancestors of any man's uncle are also ancestors of his own. In addition to this is the fact that of all women in history, few, if any, can show a blacker record than Agrippina "the Younger,"
a sister of Caligula and mother of Nero. Also the mother of Caligula, Agrippina "the Elder," was, according to Baring-Gould, "probably half insane." If we are to trust the rather condemnatory Jacoby, she was "subject to uncontrolable fits of anger." Other members of the family considered by Baring-Gould to have been insane are Drusus, the brother of Caligula, Agrippa his aunt, and Julia, his grandmother, who is characterized as exhibiting "moral paralysis." All accounts agree as to the shamelessness of Julia's life. Indeed she is one of the most notorious women mentioned in Roman history. The insanity that ran in the family, the epilepsy (inherited perhaps in the combined strains from Julius Caesar), the concentration of the family degeneracy, in the pedigree, in the persons of the above three—Caligula, Agrippina "the Younger," and Nero—combine to make a very strong case for causation through defective germ-plasm. But it is not by any means the concatenation of insanity and moral depravity shown in the pedigree of Caligula that compels us to conclude that his exaggerated traits were the product of inborn defects ultimately traceable to the chromosomes of germ-cells. All our modern discoveries in heredity point toward the far-reaching principle of segregation of unit characters, more or less definite, and sufficiently clear-cut in outline, or in the nature of their substance, to be spoken of as traits. Here good characters alternate with bad. If environment were the chief cause of the deprivations of some of the members of the Claudian and Julian branches of the house of Caesars (shown on the chart) we should not expect to find their close relatives failing entirely to exhibit any such defects.

VIRTUOUS MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

Nero Caesar, uncle of Nero and brother of Caligula, is characterized as mild, easy-going and unambitious. He is a contrast to his notorious kinsmen, and in character he resembles his father, Germanicus, his uncle Claudius, and his grandfather Nero Claudius Drusus. The chart shows that a number of the women in both branches of the family were, as far as can be known, both normal and virtuous.

The old idea that degeneration in families is due to the environment in which they have lived has got to be given up. The modern view that acquired traits are not transmitted is enough in itself to negative such a notion. But the principles of the transmission of hereditary traits, as we understand them today, explains much that has happened in human history—pure transmissions, combinations, segregations, all obedient to the law of averages. It would seem that nearly all the misery brought into the world by Caligula and Nero came about because a defective royal strain was allowed to perpetuate its kind. If royalty and its culmination, Caesarism, are to be feared, how very important it must be to guard against the formation of such breeds. before their existence has made their control impossible. Tyrants work insidiously. The growth of their power is gradual and their own subjects seldom notice the conditions imposed. Exploitation of the masses is easy, for man is naturally an exploit-able animal. The fashion of obedience becomes established, so that, more and more, all individualism is discouraged, and command from a superior in rank is the touch-spring of action.

The latest Caesar has seemingly been eliminated, but Caesarism will rise again as long as the laws of heredity continue to act. Power will seek to mate with power and the majority of mankind will remain as an exploitable mass. No laws of man can change the laws of nature. The best that man can do is so to direct these laws of nature that the dangerous breeds shall be kept at a minimum. The evil influences of the baser elements, and the need for restriction of undesirable elements among the poorer classes have been widely rec-
recognised, but the need for public control of the mating of sovereign houses has scarcely been realized. Nor is it likely to be realized at the present day. But the argument is there, nevertheless. If Caesarism must be abolished, and if despots are largely the result of hereditary forces, then the only way to eliminate despots is to regulate the sources from which they spring. It will be objected that evil tyrants may come from the middle classes—Napoleon for instance. The answer is that they do not as often come from such origin as from the breeds of kings. The argument remains just the same. As far as they are recast in the ancestral mold (and our increasing knowledge makes us more and more believe that important psychic differences are due to heredity) then just so far the number of despots can be reduced by a control of the marriages from which they usually originate.

Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station Annual Report, Ames, Iowa

The following is taken from the report of the activities of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, submitted for the year ending June 30, 1917.

The work of the year was characterized by satisfactory progress with regard to all of the active projects of the station. Special emphasis was placed upon the following lines of investigation: Improvement of crops and live stock by breeding; improved methods of growing various farm crops and the management of soils; new and better methods of feeding and handling live stock; up-to-date methods of manufacturing and marketing dairy products; the growing and marketing of fruit and truck crops; the control of insect pests and plant diseases; modern methods for housing live stock and storing crops and up-to-date systems of farm management.

Adams Fund projects were carried on successfully during the past year on the same basis as in the preceding year. Interesting and valuable data were secured from each of the five projects listed below:

1. A study of Mendel’s law in cattle breeding. (By the Animal Husbandry Section).
2. Arkansas dairy cattle improvement work. (By the Dairy Farm Section in cooperation with the Chemical Section.)
3. Apple-breeding investigations. (By the Horticultural Section.)
4. Humus investigations. (By the Soils Section.)
5. A study of humus and its relation to the physiological activities of the apple. (By the Horticultural and Soils Sections.)

During the year the Chemical Section did not cooperate as heretofore with the Horticultural Section in the apple breeding investigations. In the work connected with the humus project, particular attention has been devoted to the study of the evolution of carbon dioxide as a measure of the rate of decomposition of organic matter in the soil. Experiments were carried on which involved the treatment of soil with varying amounts of stable manure alone, and with lime. Very interesting conclusions were reached in this line of investigation.

The Arkansas cow work continues to be the most extensive investigational work carried on by the Dairy Husbandry Section. There are at this time 28 animals on hand, including the first, second and third generation grades by purebred dairy bulls.

The work on the Adams Fund projects will be continued next year practically without change.