

Ye Olde Plum News

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PLUM AND SOME ROMAN EMPERORS

MARCUS AURELIUS

A great favorite of Plum. Ye Olde Plum News No 33 was devoted solely to allusions to this Emperor, stoic philosopher and author, so I will leave him there.

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### JULIUS CAESAR

44 b.Ch. Caesar was murdered in a plot by a group of senators, among them his old friend Brutus. His famous last words 'Et tu Brute?' were probably invented by Shakespeare. (Shakespeare: Julius Caesar III.i)

*Lady Caroline quivered with repressed emotion. This masterly woman had not lost control of herself, but her aristocratic calm had seldom been so severely tested. As Reggie had surmised, she had read the report of the proceedings in the evening paper in the train, and her world had been reeling ever since. Caesar, stabbed by Brutus, could scarcely have experienced a greater shock. (A Damsel in Distress, 1919)*

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Caesar said to me, 'Dar'st thou, Cassius, now Leap in with me into this angry flood An swim to yonder point?' Upon the word Accoutred as I was, I plunged in And bade him follow. So indeed he did. (Shakespeare: Julius Caesar, I.ii)

According to Shakespeare, Julius Caesar used to swim with all his clothes on. (Cocktail Time, 1958)

Lord Emsworth jumped into the lake to save a boy from drowning, but it wasn't a boy but a log. His grandson Goerge told the news to the duke of Dunstable. 'With his clothes on?' 'That's right. Accoutred as he was, he plunged in,' said George, who in the preceding term at his school had had to write out a familiar passage from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar fifty times for bringing a white mouse into the classroom. (Service With a Smile, 1962)

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Let me have men about me that are fat. Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights. (Shakespeare: Julius Caesar, I.ii)

*As is so often the case with butlers, there was a good deal of Beach. Julius Caesar, who liked to have men about him that were fat, would have taken to him at once. (Galahad at Blandings, 1965)*

*He was the only one who went in instead of out at the waist-line. All the others were well up in the class of man whom Julius Caesar once expressed a desire to have about him. (Money for Nothing, 1928)*

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GALBA, VITELLIUS, CALIGULA

All three emperors were murdered after a relatively short time in power.

Smedley quivered like a Roman Emperor hearing the leader of the band of assassins which has just filed into his private apartment say 'Well. Here we are, Galba' - or Vitellius or Caligula or whatever the name might be. (The Old Reliable, 1951)

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### VITELLIUS

Busts from the time of Vitellius, particularly the one in the Capitoline Museums, represent him as broad-faced with several double chins, and it is this type which informs paintings of the emperor from the Renaissance on. (Wikipedia)

*'She (Bingo's Nannie) says your stomach was always terribly weak, and you would overeat yourself at children's parties. She says you would stuff and stuff and stuff and go out and be sick and then come back and stuff and stuff and stuff again.' Bingo drew himself up rather coldly. No man likes to be depicted as a sort of Vitellius. (The Shadow Passes, 1950)*

*Jerry had abandoned his original idea of making the sort of lunch that would have appealed to the Roman Emperor Vitellius, but*

*he had summoned waiters and taken nourishment. (The Girl in Blue, 1970)*

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TIBERIUS

Villa Jovis on Capri was, according to Suetonius, the place where Tiberius engaged in wild debauchery. Modern historians regard these tales as sensationalized, but Suetonius' stories at least paint a picture of how Tiberius was perceived by the Roman people at the time. (Wikipedia)

There was that about Uncle Donald's personality which would have cast a sobering influence over the orgies of the Emperor Tiberius at Capri. (The Adventures of Sally, 1922)

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### THE LATER ROMAN EMPERORS

*I attribute the insane arrogance of the later Roman emperors almost entirely to the fact that, never having played golf, they never knew that strange chastening humility which is engendered by a topped chip-shot. (The Magic Plus Fours, 1922)*

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NERO, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA

On the use of spectacles:
And yet, I said musingly, 'bread and spectacles were the ruin of Rome.'
'If the Romans had thought less of their bread and more of their spectacles, they would have declined to fall as they did. Take NERO. Did he wear glasses? Not he. Not even a monocle. And look at his record of convictions. Same with them all. TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, every one of them. Utter scoundrels.' (Crime and the eyesight, Punch 1903)

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*Merry Christmas!*