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Real & Easterday

GREAT LOVE STORIES of HISTORY

By Albert Payson Terhune

Theodora and Justinian

(Copyright, by the Author.)

The Roman capital of Constantinople in 525 A. D. was agitated at the news that the consul, Justinian (nephew and heir to the Emperor Justin I.) was to marry Theodora, the farce-comedy actress whose clever performances at the "Circus" had for years set the city in a roar of laughter.

For an emperor's heir to make an actress his wife was not only scandalous, but illegal as well. People began to inquire into Theodora's past life. Many of the facts they dug up were of too unsavory a nature to bear repetition. But they learned also that she was one of the three daughters of a brutal fellow who had been keeper of the wild bears in the menagerie under the Circus building. When Theodora was only seven her father had died. The child was an impish, gay little creature with a genius for mimicry. So she had been put on the stage. She could not sing or dance, but she was a born comedian. She grew to womanhood, small, thin and pale. Scarcely the sort of girl to attract the attention of the emperor's nephew.

Rome, since the days of Nero, had grown so great in size and wealth that it had at last split in two because of its own unwieldy bulk, and was divided into the eastern and western empires. The western empire (with the city of Rome as its capital) was soon overrun by barbarian tribes. But the eastern empire flourished for many centuries.

The actress who had fought his way up from the ranks to the command of the army. Then he had made himself emperor and had proclaimed Justinian his heir. Justinian was a wise man, but lacking in firmness. The sort of a man that a clever woman could manage to suit herself. Theodora won his love and pointed out to him a plan by which they two might become emperor and empress. His uncle's wife, the Empress Euphemia, sternly forbade the match. But this did not long stand in Theodora's way. For Euphemia died rather suddenly. Justin was old and as much under Justinian's influence as the latter was under Theodora's.

The rest was plain sailing. Justin was persuaded to set aside the law forbidding a prince to marry an actress. Theodora and Justinian thus were married in 525, when the girl was only 17. Two years later Justin died. Theodora made her husband, the new emperor, crown her as empress. Then she proceeded to do the lion's share of the ruling, interfering and having her way in nearly all state affairs. The civilized world was thus for a time swayed by an actress' whims. Nor was she as bad an empress as her early life would have seemed to forecast. She aided her husband to frame the celebrated "Justinian Code" of laws and in many ways helped make his reign great.

She attracted some notoriety by declaring herself the champion of wives whose husbands sought to divorce them, and she started besides a sort of royal "marriage bureau." Match-making was her fad. And certainly no one could have set a brighter example from her own success along that line. Justinian's love for her did not cool as the years went by. And she probably made him a fairly good wife.

Once when revolutionists seized Constantinople and clamored at the palace gates Justinian was wild with fear and decided to creep to the seashore unobserved and save his life by flight. Then it was that Theodora threw away the diplomatic tactics by which she had won and managed her husband. For once in her life she let him feel the lash of her scorn, and couched her speech in the language of the stage instead of that of the stately court. She bade him fly if he chose, but told him that death was nobler for a monarch than exile, and vowed that she would not stir from her throne, preferring, as she said, to quarrel with the "make empire her Royal Lovers." Justinian, stung into courage, stuck to his post, and thereby saved his crown. Once only he is said to have taunted her in anger with her humble parentage. She is reported to have answered that her father was quite as well born as her husband's grandfather, who had been a rude peasant.

Indeed, few dared to remind Theodora of her past. She had a way of putting to death persons who brought up the subject. For 23 years this strange pair of lovers governed most of the civilized world. Then, at the age of 40, Theodora died. The generally accepted story of her fate is that she fell victim to cancer. But some authorities hint that she tried to "manage" her elderly husband once too often and without her earlier tact, and that he, in a fit of rage, had her beheaded.

Dear Doctor—From your scientific investigations we learn that the millionth part of a certain substance brings about the greatest results. I beg, therefore, your kind acceptance of the accompanying millionth part of a Lyons sausage, which our friend gave me to deliver to you. If homoeopathy is a truth, then this little piece will have the same effect on you as the whole sausage. Your HEINRICH HEINE.

—Ughetti's "With Physicians and Clients."

The Curious Pair. Mrs. Rubba—I wonder why that woman keeps watching me so? Mr. Rubba—Perhaps she's trying to find out why you are staring at her.—Philadelphia Press.

ON THE OLD MOGUL

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS OF RAILROADING.

Combination of Baggage and Passenger Coach Then Considered the Acme of Luxury—An Honor to Know the Engineer.

Way back in the fifties, when the wood to burn, it straight way burned it, as mercifully and ignorantly heedless of our approaching lumber hunger as most of us now are of the lumber starvation we are preparing for our children.



Those were the days when, in the more primitive regions, the fireman was liable to alight with an ax from the expiring locomotive, chop half a cord of fat pine saplings from the neighboring woods, and complete the run on that.

Prior to the fifties, the running time between Chambersburg and Harrisburg, a distance of 52 miles, was four hours, as the Cumberland valley timetable for 1832 shows—13 miles an hour. The ancient and honorable Mogul was the wonder of the mid-century that reduced the run to the cannon-ball speed of two and one-half hours.

Seth Wilmarth of Boston, designed it, in 1851. People then heard with awe that, together, engine and tender weighed 25,000 pounds. The immense driving wheels were actually four and one-half feet high—they would fit under a small man's armpit! It had half a dozen wheels in all, the drivers being located between front and back pairs of pony wheels, which would make dainty ornaments for one of the giants of to-day. The tank had a capacity of 600 gallons, enough to supply the needs of a suburbanite's dwelling now.

But the outward and visible sign of that little choo-choo's might was the vast, funnel-shaped smokestack. Everybody who saw that inverted pyramid of Cheops meandering down the line, belching smoke like a stogie, knew the great Mogul was thundering along at the rate of 20 miles an hour, and hastened to drive the hogs from their snooze between the old-fashioned slab track rails that served to let the nation wage the mightiest war of modern history and were not eliminated until 1868 from American railroad construction by the advent of the T rail.

The Mogul burned wood, and it was equipped with a couple of cylinders, eight and one-half by fourteen inches, with all the trimmings, such as brass bell, pilot, headlight, whistle—everything, except those extremely useful appurtenances, brakes. They used the reverse bar for holding her down in those Arcadian days.

George Wentz was the Mogul's engineer, and that in the times when being an engineer was next only to being a modern king or a South American dictator. Mayors of towns respectfully swapped high-hat salutes with such an engineer.

When, in 1855, the combination baggage and passenger coach was built and put on the roads, the acme of luxury was thought to be attained. It was 47 feet long, over all; it seated 40 passengers; the seats—ultimate and royal splendor—were covered with red plush.

That little old Mogul of the great designer, Wilmarth, ran daily between Chambersburg and Harrisburg, from 1851 to 1880; it ran occasionally until 1890. And it would probably run yet, the dead and cold Mogul would still warm up with its old-time energy, if haughty George Wentz, in his pyramid stovepipe were to arise from the dead and heave a few chunks of pine in near the neck of the stovepipe.

Cheap Fares in Belgium.

Passenger tariffs on Belgian railroads are very low, and the passenger service is generally very good. It is not as rapid as the French service, but it is cheaper. These rates show the influence of the politicians.

For instance, tickets are on sale which for a small price give the right to ride anywhere as often as you like for five days on any of the state lines. A third-class ticket of that sort, good anywhere any time for five days, costs only 11 francs five centimes, which is just a fraction under \$2.20 in American money.

Eighty-eight per cent. of all the passenger tickets issued are sold at one sort or another of reduced rates. Among other curious instances showing the fine hand of the small politician we find that tickets are sold to electors to go to their voting places at less than half price.—Moody's Magazine.

New Chinese Railroad.

The agreement for the American loan of \$50,000,000 for the construction of the Chin-Chow-fu Tsitsihar Aigun railroad has been imperially ratified. The new railroad will be a serious rival of the South Manchurian now being run under Japanese management between Darien and Harbin. The new line will run parallel to it, but about 100 miles further west, cutting the Russian line at Tsitsihar and extending on to Aigun, on the Amur river, 200 miles north of Harbin.

GREAT LOVE STORIES of HISTORY

By Albert Payson Terhune

Nero and Poppaea

(Copyright, by the Author.)

A long train of donkeys were driven daily to the mansion of Rome's most beautiful woman, Poppaea Sabina. There they were milked. The milk was poured into a huge marble tub. In this tub Poppaea took her morning bath, on the plea that washing in donkeys' milk added to her beauty. However true or false this theory may have been, it certainly had the effect of advertising Poppaea. It even brought her to the notice of the emperor, Nero, and led to a love affair which was to cost thousands of innocent lives.

Octavius (Julius Caesar's nephew) had turned Rome from a republic to an empire, with himself as emperor. His successors kept the title without inheriting any of its originator's genius. At last a weak, foolish man named Claudius came to the imperial throne. In 49 B. C. he married his niece, Agrippina, a wicked, clever woman, who induced him to disinherit his own son and to proclaim her young son Nero as his heir. Having accomplished this, Agrippina poisoned Claudius and set Nero on the throne. The young emperor was at first a gentle and wise ruler, meekly obeying his ambitious mother's commands. But flatterers at court finally prompted him to defy her and to run the empire to suit himself—and them. Still Agrippina's influence was more or less powerful over the youth until he met Poppaea.

A Jealous Husband. Poppaea Sabina was wealthy and of patrician family. As a girl she had married a nobleman who had divorced her. Then she had married a daring young soldier and profligate named Otho, one of Nero's boon companions. Otho loved her jealously. So when Nero, falling in love with the beautiful woman, suggested that Otho give her up, the husband flatly refused. In this refusal he was backed by Poppaea herself. Not that she cared for Otho, but she read Nero's nature, and knew that opposition would fan his fancy for her into worship. She was justified in this belief, for Nero before long found means of separating her from the heartbroken Otho.

Poppaea had made up her mind to be empress. Agrippina hated her. Nero also had a wife, Octavia. But these obstacles did not check Poppaea. One by one she cleared them away. She persuaded Nero that his mother was conspiring against him, and worked him to such a frenzy of rage and fear that he had Agrippina murdered. Next Poppaea induced him to divorce Octavia and to consent to her death. Nothing now stood in the fair adventuress' way, and she and Nero were formally married. Poppaea's ambition was gratified. She was empress of Rome. Moreover, Nero loved her so madly that her slightest wish was his law. She could frighten or cajole him into doing anything she desired. At her order one after another of his saner advisers were put to death.

And now began a period of reckless dissipation on the part of Nero and Poppaea that nearly wrecked the empire. Poppaea brought out all that was worst and maddest in Nero, and spurred him on to terrible deeds. Among these (which she is credited by many authorities with suggesting to her husband) was the burning of Rome in 64 A. D. While the city burned the emperor composed and sang an ode in honor of the conflagration.

The plain people had been patient under their ruler's tyranny. But the burning of their city drove them to fury. Nero was frightened. Advised by Poppaea and his flatterers, he declared the Christians had set fire to Rome and put hundreds of them to death in barbarous manner by way of pretended punishment for the crime. This for the moment pacified the people. But soon fresh iniquities on the part of the imperial couple angered them again. At last, in a fit of jealous rage, Nero one day struck Poppaea. She died from the effects of the blow. Nero mourned her loudly and long and wrote poems to her memory. But his own time of retribution was at hand. And the man he had most wronged was to punish him.

Otho had joined with an old general named Galba in stirring up the Roman armies against Nero. He marched to Rome at the head of his legions to avenge himself on the tyrant who had robbed him of his wife. In spite of his haste Otho turned aside long enough in the march to visit the grave of Poppaea. There, weeping, he piled her last resting place with fresh flowers, and passed on to his work of vengeance.

But Nero did not await his enemies' coming. Deserted by flatterers and guards alike, he killed himself to avoid the fate he knew he must otherwise expect at Otho's hands.

Y. M. C. A. in Germany and America. There are 1,990 Young Men's Christian associations in Germany—only 1,529 in America; yet, where the German associations have but 117,000 members, the American have 446,000. And German association property holdings have a value of \$2,400,000, contrasted with a value of \$40,000,000 in America.

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