

The Dowager Empress of Russia

THE Dowager Empress is a few years younger than Queen Alexandra, and married, when only a girl, the Czarovitch Alexander, afterward Alexander III, to whom she was for a generation a devoted, strong and most able consort. Her husband came to the throne in 1881, three years after the treaty of Berlin had pushed the Russian influence back in southeastern Europe, and on the morrow of the ghastly tragedy which ended the life of Alexander II. Russian defeats, like those of other nations, have often led to internal discontent, and there was no small internal discontent when Alexander III came to the throne. Moreover, a hatred of all things western, which had been the main feature in the Russian political character since the days of Peter the Great, was rampant in Russia. It has been said that Czar Peter abolished the popular political institutions which existed in Russia at the beginning of his reign because he feared that a Russian would thwart his schemes for bringing in foreign arts and trades, foreign workmen and foreign inventions. Whether this be so or not, the year 1881 found anti-Europeanism very strong in Russia, and as long as that feeling existed the task of reform was doubly difficult. The Empress Dowager is generally credited with having thrown her strong influence on the side of autocracy, and with a passionate hatred for all popular institutions. It has never been proved that this was the case 25 years ago. Assuredly it is not the case today; and during the reign of her husband the Empress Marie stood for western culture and western influences, and

was against the policy of rigid or angry isolation which found favor in some quarters. Her frequent visits to Copenhagen brought her into touch with western Europe, and more particularly with the representatives of England at the Danish court, to more than one of whom she gave her gracious friendship. Though she and her husband were well aware of the extraordinary difficulties which would attend the introduction of reforms in Russia, they never turned their backs upon reasonable proposals for change.

In 1894 the greatest sorrow of a woman's life came to the Empress. Her husband was struck down by a terrible disease and died in the autumn of that year, his last hours comforted by the splendid devotion of his consort. The difficulties which beset Russia on the accession of the present emperor were manifold and pressing, and it is no flattery to say that in the difficult first years of his reign the young emperor was assisted and strengthened by the counsels

of his mother, and that her devotion to her son and people were a valuable asset to the government in those anxious days. In recent times the Empress has not exercised her influence over her son so constantly as in his earlier years. She has resided almost entirely at Gatchina, which is some distance from St. Petersburg, and has rarely come to town. Owing, moreover, to the rarity of court functions in the recent times of war and domestic strife, her majesty has been little seen even by those who have the entrée to the Russian court. Absolved from political cares, the Empress has devoted herself to letters and fine arts, and has had leisure to cultivate the literary and artistic tastes which are strongly developed in her. She has always been a very great favorite in St. Petersburg society, and as a woman of cosmopolitan tastes and the

highest intelligence, has earned golden opinions in a critical and exacting entourage. Today she is known to possess liberal sentiments, and so far as her influence is exercised it is certainly not in favor of what is euphemistically called the Extreme Right.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Irish Dueling Code.

The Irish dueling code was drawn up by the Irish bar at the Clonmel assizes in 1777 and appears to aim at so arranging matters that no Irishman anxious to fight shall be balked by his wish. "The first offense requires the first apology, although the retort may be more offensive." "After one fire the retort may be explained away. But if either party," the code hastens to add, "would rather fight on, after two shots each the principal who made the retort may explain and then the original offender tender his apology." "When the lie direct is the first offense, the aggressor must either beg pardon

in express terms, exchange two shots previous to apology, or three shots followed by explanation, or fire on till a severe hit be scored by one of the parties." "No 'dumb firing,' or firing in the air, is admissible." "In slight cases the second hands his principal but one pistol, in gross cases two, holding another case ready charged in reserve."—*Cornhill Magazine.*

What's in a Name?

A story is told of a waiter at a certain restaurant who was renowned for the clever way in which he interpreted the names of the different dishes to the cook through the speaking tube. For instance, if a customer ordered "sausages and bread" he would tell the cook "A doorstep and a bag of mystery" were wanted. On one occasion two city men had a wager, one of them saying he would give an order for which the waiter could not possibly find any other name. They repaired to the restaurant, and Mr. Jones gave his order.

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French Printed Batiste Lawns and Embroidered Swiss Lawn

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100 pieces of Persian Chiffons and Dress Lawns in the season's brightest and daintiest colorings.

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All Natural Colored Linens All Colored Dress Linens All Black India Linons

Every piece of Wash Goods in the house

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20c Silk Mulls

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25c Values in this Sale 14c a Yard

14c

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26c

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16c a yard

16c a yard

16c a yard

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6 1/4c

29c

29c

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22c

22c

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