

WHO ARE THE SIX MOST FAMOUS WOMEN?

DEXTER MARSHALL
NAMES FIVE;
CHOOSE FOR YOURSELF
THE SIXTH

Famous Women

BY DEXTER MARSHALL

WHO are the six most famous living women?

If the most famous are those who, through strength of personal character, have become best known to most people, then the three most famous women now alive are the Queen of England, the Dowager Empress and the Dowager Empress of China.

Each of these three is known to all mankind of whatever color, or habit, save only the savage races because of her own individual character.

The unthinking might complete the half dozen by the addition of the names, say, of the Empress of Germany, the young Queen of Holland, and, perhaps, the Dowager Queen of Italy, perhaps "Carmen Sylva," the young Queen of Rumania, and these estimable royal ladies will hardly do for entrance in the list since they are known to the world only by reason of the accidents of birth and marriage.

The names of two American women should be written in the list. After the consort of King Edward and the mother of the czar, no white woman is a thing so well known to the races of seeming Asia because of what she stands for, personally, as the Vicerine of India, Mary Leiter Curzon, as clever as she is lovely, and famous, of course, throughout all civilized lands.

The other American name in this glittering half dozen should be that of the only woman, living or dead, who has ever established a faith, Mary Baker Eddy, the mother of "Christian Science."

Who is she whose name might complete the list? It would be hard to find one whose fame approaches in universality that of these five, but there are many women whose celebrity in art, philanthropy, literature, science and reform is almost worldwide, to choose from.

An Obscure Duke's Two Famous Daughters.

KNOWN to more people of more races than any other living woman, except, perhaps, the monstrous old Dowager of China, are Alexandra and Dagmar, as they were christened—daughters of old King Christian of Denmark—who was not a king at all when they were born, but simply an obscure nobleman with the formidable title of the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg. Life has run along strangely different lines for these two gentle Danish girls.

Their father, as you may remember, was so poor that he even had to give drawing lessons to eke out the family income, and the daughters had to make their own bonnets and gowns; you may also remember the gypsy woman who told their fortunes and declared that Alexandra would some day wear the double crown of queen and empress, that Dagmar would rule a vast empire and that a third sister, Thyra, would bear a title approaching the queenly, though she would never rule.

The three girls laughed at the prophecy, but it all came true. Thyra married the English Duke of Cumberland and her elder sisters, by a fate most ironical, marrying men who were to reign over peoples long to be eternally at odds—one to be the head of the most advanced constitutional monarchy of the world, and the other the last autocracy remaining in Europe.

Though Alexandra is known to the world chiefly because of her royal and womanly qualities her personality is as strong as her sister's. The English queen has been no better wife, no better mother than some other royal and imperial consorts. But Alexandra has always shown perfect taste, complete balance under the most difficult conditions, and perfect breeding, the lack in those countries has been almost painful on the part of some crowned women; indeed, most of the royal ladies sometimes lose their poise, but Alexandra never has. Besides, she is counted the best dressed, gentlest woman in all Europe.

The character of Dagmar, rechristened Maria Feodorovna when she married Alexander of Russia and was taken into the Russian Church, has developed stern qualities.

Trouble began for her soon after her betrothal. When first by Nicholas, eldest son of the then reigning czar, she wedded his younger brother Alexander, because of a promise made to her first lover, when, stricken by illness, he knew

death was near. Her husband came to the throne by reason of his father's assassination, just as he was preparing to grant a constitutional government to his people.

Thereafter Alexander lived constantly in terror of a like fate. From his accession to his death, and especially after the imperial pair had themselves narrowly escaped a bomb, his Danish consort was chief, almost sole, confident and adviser of this fear-stricken, though never cowardly, never irresolute Autocrat of All the Russias. She sat by his side in councils of state, she read his dispatches before he signed them, he went nowhere without her; she shared his terrible burden in every sense. Is it any wonder, then, that she is now a stern, implacable, relentless Russian reactionary? To her the people's cause, soon came to mean nothing save the destruction of the established order, carrying with it the almost certain murder of her husband, whom she loved, chaos, disaster, humiliation after and irretrievable.

Alexander escaped a violent death, but, probably, only because disease claimed him, and so it is surprising that she has fled with apprehensions when Nicholas, whom she knew for the weak, irresolute, vacillating man the world now also knows him to be, came to the throne? That she, who had known intimately and admired the stronger, fiercer father, should seek to control the son? That she should try to block all his schemes for bringing about a more liberal form of government?

There is a story that the grand dukes, uncles and brothers of Nicholas, and their adherents plotted without the Dowager's knowledge to make her Christina Regent and prevent him from ever ascending the throne. Another tale has it that the Dowager Christina herself, supported by the grand ducal coterie, had such a coup all planned.

A certain Count was in charge; it was schemed to get Nicholas out of the country "for his health" and never let him return. But the czar discovered the plot, surrounded himself with his bodyguard, sent for the count, his mother and the others implicated, ordered the count to retire from public life and heaped a mass of complaints upon the Dowager Christina. A stronger man would have banished or executed the count and sent his mother away permanently, but, though she did make a long visit to Copenhagen, she was soon back in Russia, and her influence over her son has been strongly apparent ever since. Her recent frequent exhortations to him to be firm and brave, as his father would have been, to show himself to the people, are just removed from the current news.

Maria Feodorovna has never been friendly with the young Christina. The Dowager is 55, her gentler sister, Alexandra, is 31.



1893 EMPRESS BOOTH, HEAD OF THE EMULATION ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES SURROUNDED BY MEMBERS OF HER STAFF



THE DOWAGER EMPRESS IN FULL IMPERIAL REGALIA



FOUR GENERATIONS THE KING AND LATE QUEEN OF DENMARK THEIR DAUGHTER QUEEN OF ENGLAND HER DAUGHTER THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND CHILD



MARY LEITER CURZON AT HOME



MARY LEITER CURZON WITH HER HUSBAND



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