

# CAREER OF THE MOST REMARKABLE WOMAN IN THE WORLD.

She has just seized the reins of empire in China and has unlimited power. She was a poor peasant's daughter, was sold into slavery, but with pluck and unusual intelligence she won her way against extraordinary obstacles to the first position in the land.



AS A SLAVE GIRL ASKING HER MASTER ONE FAVOR: TO BE TAUGHT HOW TO READ.

WHO is the most powerful woman in the world? Not Queen Victoria, upon whose wide bounds of empire the sun never sets; not the Empress consort of all the Russias; not any leader of an acknowledged nation; not the wife or adviser of some strong statesman; not any great worker in the cause of women in that most open of all fields to women, America! The most powerful woman in the world is neither young nor beautiful nor good. She is no traveler, and she has never gone to college. She is old and ugly, wrinkled and ill tempered, but she controls millions of people with an iron hand; she dictates the policy of nations and makes or mars destinies. She is the Dowager Empress of China.

The Empress Dowager of China was in no wise born to greatness, neither was it thrust upon her. She achieved it in the face of what would seem to you utterly insurmountable difficulties. She was an ignorant little slave, with a good deal of what goes for beauty in China, and an intellect sharpened by adversity. Her parents were obscure, her life hard. Yet for over twenty years she has practically ruled a vast empire, and this very month, when the Chinese dynasty, it has been openly announced that the Empress Dowager has assumed the entire rights of the reigning monarch, a step unexpected by even those who were fixed upon the real power behind the throne, for that she should actually occupy it and all Ministers take their instructions from a woman is a marvel in that far-off land. It is a terrible thing for a woman to realize that a woman is her ruler, a despised woman, once a slave and a servant, a woman cruel as the fire and pitiless as fate. The story of Tuen-Tson-Hsi reads like a romance, and an impossible one at that.

In China it is believed that only souls undergoing punishment are born into the bodies of women. If a man lives evilly and dies in his sin, he is born again as a woman. But if he undergoes sufficient expiation of his wickedness he is suffered to be a man the next time he travels back to earth. With a belief like this as a basic principle, it is easy to see why girl babies are not welcome, and are often drowned at birth, like so many helpless kittens. So when little Tuen-Tson-Hsi was born it was hardly surprising that her disappointed father thought it might be just as well to drown the mite there and then, especially as he was poor, and it is a waste of good food to feed girls. But the mother pleaded, and being a good sort of fellow, in spite of his poverty, the father relented, and her pretty name, meaning "good luck," was given to her instead of a costly layette or a christening mug. Names are cheap, and in this case the title was prophetic, though for her first childhood there seemed nothing but drudgery and hard living for the little Tuen, except that she grew pretty.

Not pretty according to Western ideas, perhaps, but round and plump, with bright, sharp eyes, set in slantwise, and a firm little red mouth. Like her father, who had calculated how much extra rice it would take to feed this new chick if it were let live, Tuen was of a practical turn of mind, and when a rebel uprising burned the land, when Buddha seemed to grow dead to prayers and had not even a handful of rice for a miracle to keep them from going hungry, it was she who solved the problem of how to live. She suggested that her father sell her.

all-work, but at last she had plenty to eat, which, combined with an excellent conscience, or no conscience at all, which some people say is still better, she grew plump and pretty again, and you may be sure her alert mind did not fall in its activity. She was not called Tuen-Tson-Hsi for nothing, and her first move was to win the favor of the viceroys wife and be promoted from the kitchen to the embroidery frame, for fancy work of this kind is much more in demand in China, where men dress in silk and satins, and no dignity may go with his splendid attire unembroidered.

It fell to her task to embroider a robe for the Viceroy, and so well did she do it that her master assigned first to be pleased with the work and then with the worker, and it began to be shown that even a servant girl could do much to disrupt a household, provided she was young and pretty and clever enough.

Having obtained some favors, Tuen began to ask more. But it was not jewels or rich dresses or leisure which she implored. It was a stranger favor still, and one which thrilled him with apprehension, for she begged him to be allowed to learn to read. Now, this is a thing few Chinese women desire, and these not of the serving class. Education is considered all right for men, and there are "learned doctors" and "literates" aplenty, but of the masculine persuasion all.

For a servant girl and slave to want to read was a little short of preposterous; it was as though a cook had suddenly requested singing lessons from a scholar. Still, the infatuated Viceroy granted it, and pretty Tuen-Tson-Hsi drank deep of the literature China provides for its high-caste women, which chiefly consists of exhortations to discharge all their duties as daughters, wives, mothers, sisters, and especially as daughters-in-law. There is the "Nu-er-Ching," which describes the daily routine of a girl's life both before and after marriage, and there is a larger work known as "The Girls' Four Books," in which the duties of daughter, wife and mother are explicitly laid down and illustrated by examples. Greatly do these books strain after humility and galling must their lessons have been to the ambitious slave as she read in the first book, for instance: "Girls, when they are born, are placed upon the ground to lie, and

not upon the bed. They will be clothed with a single wrapper. A broken tile will be given them to play with. What they do is not good, nor is it bad." Further on in this delicious literature Tuen found the teaching that the husband is heaven and the wife is earth, and the attitude of a wife toward her husband must be that of a subject to a prince. Very little to fire ambition, indeed, is there in "The Girls' Four Books," but two of them were written by Empresses, and perhaps that set the young girl thinking and aspiring to the high-

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est. If she ever got to be Empress she would write very different things. So Tuen progressed, and as she got prettier and smarter so she made more trouble in the Viceroy's calm household, and the wise man, proceeding on the principle of "anything for a quiet life," one day dressed his young favorite very handsomely in imperial yellow silk and sent her off in state a present to the Emperor, a sort of graceful acknowledgment of a recent decoration of peacock's feathers, which meant that the Emperor had moved the Viceroy one notch higher in the social scale.

Only thing on board was a corpse. Upon subsequent investigation they learned, much to their surprise, that this was actually the case.

"Now I maintain," said the colonel, shifting his slippered feet to the table, "that the power which could ascertain that there was a corpse on board that ship, while the ship was yet afar off, could just as easily ascertain how many guns and men there were, for instance, on one of Cervera's ships while the latter were yet in Santiago harbor. It is only a question as to whether people in these days possess the powers attributed to these ancients; and, of course, I believe that some do to a certain extent; and that it can be cultivated indefinitely. My wife often tells me that some particular individual is on the way to see me long before he rings my bell. How does she get this information? I don't know, and she doesn't. But I believe it is a hint of this same power which we read of in connection with the prophets of the Bible and the oracles of the Greeks. I believe that with persistent training and steady application to a particular purpose this power would be made available in military service.

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## HOW FRANCE MAKES HER COLONIES PAY.

THE colonial question is one which is agitating the United States just at present. When it comes to colonies we are entirely new in the business. But our curiosity is great, nevertheless. In view of the fact that the Hispano-American war has left us with foreign possessions of our own, and that we must carefully consider the problem of what we are going to do with them, any facts and figures bearing upon the colonies of other nations are of great interest.

The fifteen colonies that are under French rule contain a superficies of 1,877,961 square miles and have a population of 15,615,427. Their trade with the home country amounts to \$143,895,997; the imports into France therefrom being \$76,733,512. The recent delimitation of the Niger territory by the Anglo-French

commission, which terminated its labors on June last, will cause some changes in the figures referring to the African colonies, but they will not be forthcoming until some time in 1899. The boundaries fixed by the Anglo-French commission may be considered as still uncertain, as the German Colonial Society, on June 25, protested against them as "an infringement of German rights."

Of all her colonial trade France does the greatest amount with Algeria, the largest item of importance being wine, the aggregate being \$19,410,731. The next item is 458,343 head of sheep, valued at \$3,107,093. In point of population St. Pierre and Miquelon, one of France's American possessions, is the smallest of all her colonies, and yet in the matter of imports this little colony of only ninety-four square miles and only 6300 population, ranks second to Algeria.

### TIMELY FACTS ABOUT FRANCE AND HER COLONIES.

The following table gives an excellent idea of the commercial relations between our sister republic and her colonial dependencies:

Colonies and Protectorates	Superficie. Sq. Miles.	Population.	Imports into France.	Exports from France.
Algeria	4,429,421	339,372,000	\$20,000,000	\$42,000,000
Tunis	32,992	1,600,000	5,000,000	4,500,000
Guadeloupe	687	167,000	2,700,000	2,400,000
French Guiana	5,052	28,328	400,000	1,500,000
Reunion	1,690	169,493	3,400,000	2,200,000
French Indo-China	37,375	2,024,453	.....	.....
Cochin-China	55,250	15,000,000	.....	.....
Tonkin	162,500	6,000,000	3,400,000	4,800,000
Kingdom of Anam	75,000	1,500,000	.....	.....
Madagascar and dependencies	375,000	6,000,000	200,000	1,000,000
French India	196	283,063	500,000	300,000
Martinique	381	189,590	3,800,000	2,400,000
St. Pierre and Miquelon	94	6,200	6,000,000	1,200,000
Senegal	.....	1,800,000	2,800,000	2,900,000
Congo	429,750	12,000,000	.....	.....
Soudan	450,000	300,000	1,781,388	1,336,448
Dahomey and dependencies	7,500	22,000	1,881,381	500,000
New Caledonia	8,117	62,752	1,888,646	1,067,130
Tahiti	402	24,418	660,000	640,000
Total	1,887,961	51,615,427	\$73,073,415	\$70,733,512

## OCCULT POWERS FOR SECRET SERVICE.

IN discussing the signal and secret service of our army in the war with Spain Colonel Graham, a retired officer who served his country in the Civil War, has just expressed some unique views which will be of interest to others than those engaged in military affairs.

"In the first place," said the colonel, lighting a fresh cigar and placing his slippered feet comfortably on a chair, "you know that one of the most important things in connection with modern warfare is gaining accurate information of the position and strength of the enemy's forces. To accomplish this, many ingenious means have been employed. The spy system has serious limitations, not to speak of the risk to life involved—for in all countries a spy is executed when caught. Captive balloons, cameras, sent-up kites, carrier pigeons, have all been employed in the service of securing and transmitting to headquarters some information concerning the enemy. But all these methods fail in certain conditions. For instance, our Government was for a long time unable to learn the whereabouts of Cervera's fleet; and lack of more definite information as to the Spanish defenses of Santiago, no doubt, caused unnecessary loss of life in the first engagements. Now, I believe it possible to institute a secret service whose operations would be absolutely unknown to the enemy, and yet result in securing accurate information under all circumstances. As I said at first, these views will seem extreme to some, but I have Holy Weil, secular history and modern science on my side to support the possibility of what I assert.

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MAKING THE TUNIC THAT ADVANCED HER IN FAVOR AND WON HER IMPERIAL NOTICE.

It was a great trip for the young Tuen, this one forty-four years ago, when with a beating of tom-toms and a good deal of other unnecessary fuss she was escorted to the three-walled City of Peking, where, in the heart of the town, are set the Emperor's palaces. But it was a trip for which no return ticket is ever issued. She knew that, once well inside the third wall, she would never issue forth again, nor ever behold more father or mother or friends of the Viceroy's family.

From the royal harem, "the palace of earth's repose," as it is called in flowery language, no woman ever departs alive once she has entered, and the Emperor himself rarely leaves the splendid isolation of his palaces and gardens. Not that the prospect daunted Tuen. In the golden cage she saw another opportunity, for she felt that it was not her fate to "blush unseen," and her purpose never once faltered.

Once a secret is spoken it ceases to be a secret—it is in the air, and the beauty and wisdom of Tuen-Tson-Hsi was soon discussed in the harem, so by and by the "son of Huren" himself, the Emperor, began to hear of it, and naturally to be curious. He saw that she was lovely, with a soft, olive complexion, and lips as red as the cherry blossom, which Orientals love. As for form, she carried herself like a Queen—poor slave girl that she was—perhaps to her mind, but she was—perhaps that the blood of Tartars flowed in his veins, and the Tartars are the real aristocrats of China. Having won the Emperor by her beauty Tuen proceeded to her mind, by the way, her mental faculty. Never the sort of a person to let opportunities slip, you may be sure she had learned of affairs of state from her friend the Viceroy and the visitors to his household, and the Emperor was charmed to find that she understood public happenings and the needs of the

empire quite as well as many of his official advisers, which he trusted her infinitely more, believing her honest and single in purpose.

Naturally the said advisers disliked the new favorite, or else they began to think the old Emperor wiser than they had imagined, but what they were not prepared for was the oblique death of the Emperor, and after the term of courtesy mourning was over the marriage of the Emperor with Tuen-Tson-Hsi. Here was a thunderbolt. The old Emperor had been of the good Chinese type, worshipful, and of affairs of state all unknowing. She had left a son and heir, and died with a sense of having done her duty according to Nue er Ching and "The Girls' Four Books."

Tuen was different. The Emperor was just old enough to be completely swayed by his brilliant wife, clear-headed and practical as she was. Virtually she became the ruler of the harem empire, and when an indignant statesman ventured to oppose her decrees, as occasionally one of them would be brave enough to do, Tuen promptly ordered the offender's head cut off, not surgically, but literally, with a "short, sharp chop," and this drastic measure soon quelled any active impulse to criticize her policy or her methods—it wasn't safe.

Bitter, indeed, was it to the average Chinaman to feel that the real power behind the ruler's throne was one of the despised sex. Yet was Tuen magnetic withal, and won people by her force and intellect, and she was, rather than she was, always tactful, dearly as she loved power, and ministers of state grew to respect her ability even when they disliked the woman. Then the Emperor died, and the illness of years and Tuen became dowager Empress, with a weak boy for ostensibly reigning monarch.

Now did Tuen-Tson-Hsi get her real innings. Already she had achieved power, but she was in very truth, for what a child King be but the most transparent of figureheads? Neither did the shrewd woman exert herself to prepare the young Emperor for his duties in relating over the years, and numerically speaking—nation in the world! She did not beat or abuse him; she worked a more subtle injury, and one for which there could be no swift uprising against her. She was a weak boy and she simply let him have his own way. She surrounded him with luxury, with beauties of the harem, with idleness and dissipation. After twenty-six years of the emperor's life her step-son is the merest of spiritless puppets in her capable hands. He has never ruled, though he has had the name of ruler, and now the news comes that the powerful old lady has done what no one ever dreamed even she would dare to do—she has openly relieved the Emperor of all power and all ministers are compelled to take their instructions directly from her, Li Hung Chang practically superseding the Tsung-li-Yamen.

This is what the humble slave girl has risen to by means of her beauty, cleverness and diplomacy, to be absolute ruler over 600,000,000 of subjects, and to have it said of her that she is the Bismarck of China; that in statecraft there is not her equal in any court in Europe!

People used to wonder why cunning old Li Hung Chang struck his colors so close to the Emperor's flag, instead of to the Emperor; now the world knows. He has always been more or less of a favorite of hers, though being a fiery-tempered and exacting old lady she has more than once deprived him of his honors and his decorations, his yellow silk jacket and his peacock feathers, only to become pacified later and to give these marks of favor back to the old Emperor, who has worked so much commotion of late, and who is reputed to have sold his nation to Russia. He stands in well with her and to his advice only will she listen. It is these two against the nation.