

From inside the book: WHEN I went out to China to edit the Hongkong Daily Press the Boxer troubles were just approaching their acutest point. It was customary then for foreign journalists and other residents on the China coast to speak of the Empress Dowager as a bloodthirsty old harridan, a murderous-hearted hag, and the like. I well remember the outcry aroused by an American missionary (whose name, however, I forget) when, soon after the return of the Chinese Court to Peking, he ventured to couple her name with those of the recently dead Queen Victoria and of Queen Elizabeth of England, speaking of them as the three most remarkable women who had occupied thrones. In those days it was more usual to compare Her Imperial Majesty with Jezebel, Messalina, and such pleasing characters, and the missionaries bold innovation was greatly resented. And when ladies from the Legations and other foreign households in Peking were seen accepting invitations to call at the Palace, with their little sons and daughters, there was much fiery indignation expressed, especially as they did not refuse presents from hands stained with the blood of European children. Times have changed since then. We have read in recent years many whole-hearted eulogies of the old Empress Dowager, both before and after her death two years ago. For some reason which I cannot profess to explain, it is from American pens that the warmest praise has come. Yet it cannot be denied that there has been a general revulsion of feeling among Europeans as well. Those who have committed themselves most deeply in writing against the late Dowager have no doubt retained their prejudices. But others have come in to swell the court sitting in judgment upon her, who have drawn their impressions from the period 1902-8, after she began to purge herself so completely of her sin in befriending the Boxers and proclaimed herself a sympathizer with Reform. It is now by no means certain how a verdict on her character would be cast, if it could be taken from the mouths of all Westerners interested in modern Chinese history. As I say in the last paragraph of this book, I refrain from attempting to indicate definitely how that verdict should go. I have endeavoured to set out the evidence impartially. I was led to the task of writing this biography by my admiration for the people over whom the Empress Dowager ruled for so long and with such ability. I am conscious of my rashness in doing so when I am no Sinologue – a fact which will be evident to the Sinologues merely through the spellings which I have adopted for Chinese names. This pre-1923 publication has been converted from its original format for the Kindle and may contain an occasional defect from the original publication or from the conversion.

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Empress Dowager Cixi (second from left) ruled China for much of the of China and set up a new dynasty called the Great Qingâ€”â€œGreat Purity. Empress Dowager Cixi (Chinese: ????.; pinyin: Cixi Taihou; . Among them was Prince Gong, who had great ambitions and was at that. However, the life of Empress Cixi, a woman, who really ruled over China for My sisters had everything they wanted, while I was, to a great extent, ignored. paint the portrait of the notorious empress dowager of China, Cixi (â€œ.). . brought together the greatest collection of the different people of the Globe.

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