

RASPUTIN ~ DEVIL OR SAINT

by The Princess Radziwill

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In Response to Numerous Complaints Against Rasputin's Actions, the Holy Synod Banished Him to His Old Home in Siberia After the "Blessed Gregory" Had Refused to Obey the Decree Ordering Him to Seclude Himself in Some Convent.

This "Exile" Was Far From Being a Punishment, for Once Back in Pokrowskoie, Rasputin Surrounded Himself With Twelve "Sisters," All of Whom Lived in the House With the Monk, His Wife and Their Children—Many Times the Wife Fought for Her Rights.

At the time this incident took place Rasputin was already living in St. Petersburg, whither he had repaired on the invitation of some of his admirers and protectors, who had the opportunity to listen to his preachings in Kieff and other Russian towns. Among them figured the Countess Sophy Ignatieff, a woman of high standing, irreproachable reputation and great influence in some circles of the capital, where her salon was considered the centre of the conservative orthodox party. Bishops and priests figured among her daily visitors, and it was among her habitués that the most important ecclesiastical appointments in the empire were discussed. Often it was the candidates whom she honored with her protection who were chosen for a bishop's place or for that of a superior to one of those rich monasteries, the heads of which are quite personages in the state.

The countess was already an old woman, widow of a man who had been murdered during the revolution of 1905, and, moreover, incapable of being even suspected of any frailties of conduct. She was the mother of a large family, and though by no means brilliant, was yet clever in her way, with a slight propensity to intrigue. She was extremely devout, with a strong tendency to exaltation where religious matters came into question, and was continually lamenting what she called the relaxation of modern society in those practices of strict church discipline which Russians belonging to the higher classes have lately taken to forgetting. She would not have missed attending any of the long church services, sometimes so tiring in the Orthodox faith, which are celebrated on Sundays and many feast days, and she strictly fasted at prescribed times. Indeed, her whole existence was, as regards its daily routine, more that of a nun than of a woman of the world. But for all that, she liked to keep herself well informed as to all that was going on around her, and politics was her especial hobby.

Among those who frequented her house were Mr. Sabler, then procurator of the Holy Synod, together with his future successor, Mr. Loukianoff; a good sprinkling of ministers—she was distinctly related to Mr. Stolypine, a fact that had considerably added to her importance during the latter's lifetime—and a few influential dames belonging to the immediate circle of friends of the imperial family. All this constituted a coterie that had gradually assumed perhaps more importance than it really deserved, but that brought into St. Petersburg society an element with which it would not have been wise to trifle and which it was impossible to overlook, for anyone caring to concern himself or herself with the course that public affairs were taking and assuming.

Illidore and Rasputin.

A few years before the time I am referring to, that is about 1908 or 1909, a good deal of interest was excited, not only in St. Petersburg, but in the whole of Russia, by a monk called Illidore, who also preached a new gospel to those willing to listen. There was, however, about him none of the peculiarities which distinguished Rasputin, and no one had ever found one word to say against his morals. But he tried also to found a religion of his own in the sense that he attempted to develop on a higher scale, and with certain Protestant leanings, the feelings of fervor of the people. At Sarato, where he lived, he did a great deal of good, and he had built there a large church, orthodox, of course, which soon became a centre of pilgrimage to which flocked thousands and thousands of people desirous of hearing him and of listening to his inflamed speeches. They reminded one of those crusades that in the Middle Ages had stirred whole nations to rise and rush to deliver the Holy Sepulchre from the yoke of the infidels. He was far more a Peter the Hermit than Rasputin, and had, moreover, education, which the other lacked.

But ecclesiastical authorities in St. Petersburg did not approve of his teachings, and he soon came into conflict with them, together with the Bishop of Saratoff, who had all along supported him and who considered him as being really a good and pious man. This conflict led to a quarrel, the result of which was that Illidore was confined in a monastery, whence, however, with the help of his disciples and adherents, he contrived to make his escape. There

was also a whole series of lawsuits, into the details of which it is useless to enter here. At last the monk was unfrocked for rebellion to his superiors, by a decree issued from the Holy Synod, and compelled to take back his secular name of Traufanoff. He became fearful of further annoyance and managed to get hold of a false passport, with the help of which he made his way to Norway, where he is still residing, and where we shall find him presently mixed up in a most extraordinary adventure with which Rasputin was concerned. But before all this had occurred there was a brief period when Illidore was quite an important personage in Russia, and the salons of the Countess Ignatieff and of other ultra-devout ladies used to see a lot of him whenever he happened to be in St. Petersburg. These feminine listeners were very fond of him and did their best to spread his reputation all over the capital.

During Rasputin's wanderings he had come across Illidore at Saratoff, and the latter, like so many others before and after him, had succumbed to the hypnotic spell which "Gricha" was casting all about him. He had believed him to be a real servant of God, and he had engaged him to come to St. Petersburg and to preach there before some of the people who had already listened to his (Illidore's) sermons. He had introduced him to the celebrated Father John of Cronstadt, this saintly priest who was so famous for his virtues and his good deeds. And, strange as it may appear, Father John also had been struck by Rasputin's eloquence and had believed him to be really inspired by the Lord. In order to explain the state of mind prevalent at the time among

the orthodox clergy one must say that this clergy, or at least some important members of it, were trying to bring about a revival of religious fervor in the Orthodox Church, especially among persons belonging to the upper classes, who had, during the last twenty-five years or so, become more than indifferent in regard to spiritual matters, and who had considered religion more a question of "convenience" than anything else. Since the religious censorship had been suppressed and books to any amount treating of every conceivable subject had been allowed to circulate freely in the country, the former attachment to Mother Church had waxed fainter and fainter, until this Church appeared in the eyes of many as simply a question of good breeding, to which it was necessary to conform when one belonged to good society, but which, beyond this, was treated entirely as a matter devoid of importance.



"Though Rasputin's wife tried to submit to his will respecting his relations with the twelve 'sisters' living under his roof, yet there were occasions when terrible scenes occurred between husband and wife."

In view of this fact those Prelates and Dignitaries of the Church who lamented over this state of things were not sorry to find that there were still in the world people capable of arousing in the minds of others an interest in religion and religious matters. This explains partly why the craze which seized some persons in regard to Illidore at first and to Rasputin later on was not viewed with the dissatisfaction one might have expected by the Russian ecclesiastical authorities. They argued that surely it was better for people to pray in the way these two so-called "saints" told them to do than not to pray at all. It was only much later, after Illidore's rebellion to the order of his superiors, and Rasputin's ever-growing personal influence had begun to alarm them, that there were found some bishops in Russia who made a stand against both, until at last a catastrophe removed these two men from the scene of their previous labors and successes.

"Rasputin and Illidore, Russia's two greatest mystics of the twentieth century, were in time to become mortal enemies; but at first a great friendship united them, and when Rasputin was sentenced to enter a convent Illidore took up his cause most warmly."

Rasputin's "Exile" Begins.

Rasputin and Illidore were in time to become mortal enemies, but at first a great friendship united them, and when Rasputin was sentenced to enter a convent in the manner already related Illidore took up his cause most warmly and telegraphed to one of the former's admirers, an ecclesiastic of high rank in St. Petersburg, in the following terms: "Neither Bishop Feofane nor Archimandrite Serge has behaved fairly in regard to the 'Blessed Gregory.'" Illidore's efforts, however, did not avail, and Rasputin was ordered to leave the capital immediately. But instead of being compelled to enter the convent whither they had wished to confine him at first, he was allowed to return to his native village of Pokrowskoie. Before doing so he bethought himself of calling on his former patron, Bishop Feofane, but the latter met him with the exclamation, "Don't approach me, Satan! Thou art not a blessed thing, but only a vulgar deceiver!" At Pokrowskoie Rasputin surrounded himself with twelve sisters, of whom the oldest was barely 29 years of age. They all lived in his house which was extremely well arranged and richly furnished. Rasputin's wife, together with her children, was also there and occupied a suite of five rooms, whilst each of the sisters had a separate room to herself.

People wondered that the woman who ought to have been the sole mistress in the place had consented to share her authority with all these girls, and some even thought that she was as bad as her husband. In reality, the "Prophet's" consort had done all that she could to persuade her husband to give up the "mission" which he declared had been imposed upon him by the Almighty and to return to his former life of a simple peasant. Her efforts had remained fruitless, and Rasputin had replied to all her entreaties that his past existence had come forever to an end and that he knew his star was about to shine in a wonderful way within a short time. He commanded his wife not to attempt to interfere in the matter of his own personal relations with the "Sisters" living under their roof. Though she tried to submit to his will, yet there were occasions when terrible scenes occurred between husband and wife. Then the latter would attack violently, the girls, whom she accused of all kinds of dreadful things, and would then fall on the ground in attacks of strong hysterics, screaming so dreadfully that people heard her from the street. But tears and submission were equally of no avail and Rasputin did not trouble about his wife's rage or grief any more than he had troubled in general with any other impediment he had found in his way. As concerns the kind of life which the "sisters" were leading at Pokrowskoie, this is how one of them describes it:

It is now already six months since I am here, living in a kind of nightmare. I do not know to this day whether the "Blessed" Gricha is a saint or the greatest sinner the earth has ever known. I cannot find a quiet place in this miserable village. I would like to run away, to return to St. Petersburg, but I dare not do so. I am so afraid, so terribly afraid of the "Blessed" one. His large, grey, piercing eyes crush me, enter into my very soul and absolutely terrify me. At a distance of 5,000 versts I feel his presence near me. I feel that he has got extraordinary powers, that he can do everything that he wishes with me.

For two whole years Rasputin was not allowed to show himself in the Russian capital, but the influential friends he had there never left off trying to get the decree of banishment rescinded. Among others, the Archbishop of Saratoff, Hermogene, and Illidore worked most actively in his favor, and the latter in one of his sermons did not hesitate to call Rasputin the "greatest saint which the modern Russian Church had ever known." At last the efforts of his friends proved successful and Rasputin, toward the end of the year 1912, reappeared in St. Petersburg, where this time his progress was far more rapid than it had been formerly, and here his reputation of a latter-day saint grew with every hour, until at last he came to be looked upon as a real manifestation of the Divinity upon earth.

It was about that time that he was seen more frequently at Tzarskoie Selo, where the poor Empress was eating her heart away in anxiety over the health of her only son, the little heir to the throne, whose days seemed to be numbered. Rasputin, who had been introduced to her as a pious good man, whose prayers had already worked miracles, was very quickly able to influence her in the sense that he persuaded her that the small grand duke could only be cured if constant prayers were said for him by people who were agreeable to the Lord. It is not to be denied that the pseudo-saint had cultivated to a considerable extent the science of hypnotism and that he used it in regard to the consort of the sovereign in the sense that she grew really to believe that the presence of the "Prophet" by the side of her sick child might cure the latter. There was nothing else in their relations to each other, which remained always, in spite of all that has been said, purely official ones.

CONTINUED IN TOMORROW'S

ADVERTISER

WHOLE CONVOY QUESTION BRITAIN WILL NOT 'ARM TO BE INQUIRED INTO

Sir Eric Campbell-Geddes First Appearance in Commons.

LONDON, Oct. 23.—Sir Eric Campbell-Geddes, first lord of the admiralty, made his first appearance in the House of Commons this afternoon as representative of the admiralty to reply to further questions regarding the destruction last week of the convoy of neutral merchantmen and their two torpedo-boat destroyer escorts, inquiry into which already has been commenced. This inquiry, Sir Eric said, would deal with the general question of convoys which was being revived in consequence of the occurrence referred to. He added that it must be realized that occasional isolated raids by surface craft were incidents which could not always be prevented.

COPPER STRIKE SETTLED. WASHINGTON, Oct. 22.—Settlement of the strike of copper miners in Arizona was formally announced today in a telegram from the Arizona Copper Labor Commission in the west. The commission, headed by Secretary Wilson, is expected to press for settlement of many other industrial controversies, during its western tour, of which the Arizona agreement is the first fruit.

BOARD ORDERS G. T. R. TO SERVE EGREMONT TP.

TORONTO, Oct. 23.—The Dominion Railway Board, at its session here today heard the complaints of ratepayers from the township of Egremont, in Grey County, relative to the service given by the G. T. R. on their line in that district. The board ordered that the railway keep the station at Egremont open for one night train, and heat it, until further investigation is made by the board into the earnings derived from that point.

HUNTING IN THE HIGHLANDS. Probably the best hunting districts in America are located in the Highlands of Ontario, and that section of the province recently opened up by the new Transcontinental Railway, stretching for a distance of 100 miles from the western boundary of Quebec to the Manitoba boundary. This immense virgin area offers unlimited opportunities to the hunter for moose and deer. The open season for the Highlands of Ontario district is from November 1 to November 15, both days inclusive, with an extension to November 30, in some of the northern districts, including Temagami. The open season in the new area north of the Transcontinental is from October 10 to November 20. Ask any agent of the Grand Trunk Railway system for full particulars of a synopsis of the game laws is contained in "Playgrounds," sent free on application.

HOLLAND MAKES PACT TO GIVE HUNGARY FOOD BERNE, Switzerland, Oct. 22.—(British Admiralty, per Wireless Press.)—A Vienna dispatch says that under the agreement recently concluded between Austria-Hungary and Holland for an exchange of products, Austria-Hungary agrees to supply various articles, including wood and lubricating oil, Holland is to furnish foodstuffs. To facilitate the transactions, Dutch banks will lend Austria-Hungarian banks four million guilders.

TWO MEN OF CANADIAN NAVAL RESERVE DROWN

OTTAWA, Oct. 23.—The labor department announces that Walter Bowcock of Liverpool, England, a petty officer in the Royal Naval Canadian Volunteer Reserve, and Wm. J. Barry of Valcartier, Que., a seaman, also in the reserve, have been drowned.

BRITAIN WILL DELIVER SWEDISH MAIL BAGS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23.—The British embassy today decided to deliver to the Swedish legation without examination the three mail pouches seized at Halifax several weeks ago, and claimed by Sweden to contain only statistics relating to its import and export trade, called for by the war trade board in its negotiations with northern European neutrals on exports of those countries. The delivery will be made tomorrow without ceremony.

ELECTION WRITS NOV. 4. OTTAWA, Oct. 23.—Write for a general election it is expected will be held on November 1. This would bring the election in the week of December 17. The exact date of the election, the Canadian Press, Limited is officially informed, has not yet been determined. They will most probably be held on or near the day indicated.

Opening Hunting Season Near and Prospects Good

Forty Moose Seen in Four Days in Abitibi District of Quebec.

The crack of the hunter's rifle will soon be heard once more. The hunting season for deer, moose and caribou opens in the Province of Quebec on September 1, except in the counties of Ottawa, Pontiac, Labelle and Temiskaming, where the open season begins October 1. Sport will be excellent this year, according to reports received at Grand Trunk headquarters, Montreal. Many sportsmen are planning trips to the new moose country in the Abitibi district of Northern Quebec, reached through Cochrane, the junction of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway and the Transcontinental Line. In the hunting reserves, there known as Chaudier Camps, moose are more prevalent this year than ever before. This is believed to be due to the natural increase, and to the fact that the moose are steadily moving into this new region from the more southern areas. One party just returned from this region sighted in four days more than forty moose. Some wonderful moving pictures of moose have just been taken there. In this Abitibi district there is also considerable bear with some deer and a few caribou. In Ontario the hunting season opens November 1, but an order in council has just been promulgated allowing moose

VICE-CONSUL'S WIFE STRICKEN SUDDENLY

DETROIT, Oct. 23.—Mrs. Helen Newland Meredith, wife of Howard Graves Meredith, British vice-consul, died suddenly today at her home, 855 Jefferson avenue. Mrs. Meredith's death will be keenly felt among society and philanthropic circles, although she has not taken an active part for several years because of ill-health. Her name appeared on the list of patronesses for all leading charity events, and she was well known for her generosity. Besides her husband, she is survived by a son, Newland Meredith. Arrangements for the funeral have not been made.

FOUR NEW SENATORS. OTTAWA, Oct. 23.—It is announced that four of the nine Senate vacancies in the western provinces have been filled by appointment of Dr. F. L. Shaffner for Manitoba, W. S. W. Loughby of Saskatchewan and Col. J. D. Taylor and G. H. Barnard for British Columbia.

BRITISH AIRMEN WHACK SEVEN FOE AIRDROMES

Hangars and Airplanes Are Objects of Direct Hits.

LONDON, Oct. 23.—An official statement on the aerial operations tonight says: "Last night, as soon as it was dark, our airplanes vigorously attacked seven enemy airdromes. The bombs fell on hangars and airplanes which were out on the grounds. Later in the night the Courtrai railway station was again attacked and a train hit the rear portion bursting into flames. "There was little fighting during the day. Two enemy machines were brought down. Two of our machines collided in the air over the enemy's lines, and one other is missing."

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