

by The Princess Radziwill

Rasputin Became the Instrument of the Reactionary Party, Which He, in Turn, Contrived to Make Instrumental in Carrying Out His Own Views and Aims, and There Are Many Indications That He Was Working in the Interests of the German Government.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

In fact, when one reviews all one has heard concerning this personage one is tempted to ask the question whether his appearance in St. Petersburg had not brought along with it an epidemic of madness among all those who had come in contact with him. It hardly seems possible that bishops, priests, ministers, high dignitaries, statesmen, even, or at least men having the pretension to be considered as such, should have thought it necessary to go and seek the favor of this vulgar, ill-bred, dirty Russian mouluk, devoid of honesty and of scruples, about whom the most disgraceful stories were being repeated everywhere, and whose presence in the houses where he was a daily visitor used to give rise to the worst kind of gossip. This gossip was of such a nature that decent persons hesitated before repeating it, let alone believing it. Like an insidious poison it defiled all whom it touched. One fails to realize by what kind of magic grave men like Mr. Sabler, for instance, who for some time had occupied the highly responsible and delicate functions of procurator of the holy synod, one of the most important posts in the whole Russian empire, could be made so far to forget himself as to prostrate himself before Rasputin in his eagerness to become entitled to the latter's good graces and protection. And that he did so is at least not a matter of doubt, if we are to believe the following letter which the monk Illiodore wrote from his exile on the fifth of May, 1914, to a personage very well known in the political circles of St. Petersburg.

There exist at least indications that such a thing was within the limits of possibility, and, if so, those who put an end to the evil career of this dangerous man deserve well from their country, and the leniency which has been shown to them is but the reward for an act of daring which, though unjustifiable from the moral

in understanding and accord, if not directly with him, at least with some of those who were his immediate friends and habitual confidants, has been proved to the satisfaction of all impartial persons. And that he worked continually towards establishing an understanding between the Czar and the kaiser is another fact of which more than one man in Russia is aware. Whether he did so intentionally or whether he was the unconscious instrument of others cleverer and more cultivated than he ever was or would become, is still a point that has not been cleared up to the general satisfaction. But that his so-called influence only existed over certain weak people, and that the Czar himself never knowingly allowed it to be exercised in matters of state, is a fact about which there can exist no doubt for those who know the rare qualities of heart and of intellect of the sovereign.

At last, after succession of unavailing efforts, I chanced to light on a certain Mr. de Bock, with whom Rasputin had business relations, and for whom he procured when the war broke out an important contract connected with the supply of meat for the troops in the field. It was this personage who finally obtained for me the favor of being admitted into the home of Rasputin. The latter was living at the time in a very handsome and expensive flat in a house situated on the English Prospekt, a rather distant street in St. Petersburg, whose proximity to the quarters of the working population of the capital had appealed to the prophet's tastes. When I arrived there, at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I was, first of all, stopped by the hall porter, who wanted me to explain to him where and to whom I was going. Upon hearing that it was to Rasputin he insisted on my taking off my fur coat downstairs, and then examined me most carefully and suspiciously, surveying with special attention the size and volume of my pockets, so as to make sure that I was not carrying any murderous instruments hidden in their depths.

The "prophet" himself did not at all strike me as being the remarkable individual I had been led to expect. He must have been about forty years old, tall and lean, with a long black beard and long hair, falling not quite down to his back, but considerably lower than his ears. The eyes were black, singularly cunning in their expression, but did not produce, at least not on me, the uncanny impression I had been told they generally made on those who saw them for the first time. The hands were the most remarkable thing about the man. They were long and thin, with immense nails, as dirty as dirty could be. He kept moving them in all directions as he spoke, sometimes folding them on his breast and sometimes lifting them high up in the air. He wore the ordinary dress of the Russian peasant, high boots and the caftan, which, however, was made of the best and finest dark blue cloth. What could be seen of his linen was also of the best quality.

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The pause of the French offensive, due to great losses, led the Germans to make their only considerable effort of the year in the west, their sustained attack on Verdun and the Somme. It was rivaled in pertinacity and in extensiveness their already famous assaults at Verdun. For many weeks German purposes of this offensive remained ob-

Helig Starts Fireworks. The first days of June saw the British fleet off Helig Bight after having taken Vimy Heights and all the time the British fleet was moving eastward from Arras, the British shifted their operative front to the sea. It was by one of the most perfectly co-ordinated operations of artillery in the history of the world that they swept the German coast of the West-English Ridge and returned to the West-English Ridge which had been lost on

Had Russia been able to continue her attacks on Galicia, which opened up the shining process, we should have seen the end of the war a year or two ago. There has been able to hold her lines in the west only by steadily stripping those of the east. The Russian campaign has become a joke. Today the Russian army is incapable of attack. It is incapable of defense, and is incapable of resistance. At last Germany has succeeded, partly through the efforts of the British, and partly through the efforts of her spies and her agents among Russian radicals, in making the Russian army incapable of front and having done this she has been able to concentrate her whole efforts on the East. She has taken her munitions, her guns, the larger half of all her resources, have been concentrated in the East. The British and British; and yet, given all these advantages, she has failed and is falling back. It is a very curious thing. Looked at in its proper perspective the campaign of 1917 in the west is a very curious thing. It is a very curious thing. The Marne and the Yser permitted the

now nor hereafter. Is there any chance that Russia will do her part or any part of it? No, she has become a burden. Such of the Russian territory as the Germans feel they can take. Yet it is necessary also to recognize that as Russia has become a burden, so Germany has become a burden to Russia. Hence the German attack on Russia has become as completely a German burden as the Russian attack on Gallipoli. The decisive front is the western front, and on this front Germany has been fighting since 1914.

Every sign that can be seen points to the falling of German numbers, the falling of German morale, the falling of the German war process is going forward; the disintegration is unmistakable. Lee's army in the East is being annihilated. The army of Peterburg was still unbroken when it was annihilated. The army of the West is the Appomattox. Yet Lee's army and Grant's army knew that there could be no Appomattox in the East, and they continued through another campaign.

Next spring will see, a German retreat in the East, and a German retreat in the West. The winter operations are inconceivable, because a longer stay upon the Russian soil would mean a Russian counter far more extensive than that which has been met. The German retreat from the Noyon salient last spring. That retreat will be the first of a series of retreats. The German defeat, but already the British success in Flanders has insured that victory.

The campaign of 1917 that must be borne in mind. In 1914 the Germans sought to win a decisive battle, and in 1915 their great western offensive, which was shipwrecked at the Marne, was the last of it. In 1915 they sought simply to hold their lines in the West while they destroyed Russia, and they succeeded. In 1916 they sought to crush France at Verdun, and they failed. In 1917 they conducted a peace campaign favored by the Allies, and they failed. In 1917 they succeeded. But in 1917 they abandoned all hope of a military success, and asked for a peace which would give them until the submarine won the war. Solely for this purpose, giving the submarine time to win the war, they agreed to a truce on the west have held on, suffering the terrible losses of the battle of the Marne. Now at the close of the campaign of 1917 the submarine has been able to make a failure. It is failing a week by week, and now the German masters ask their armies of the west to make a failure. They are asking them to give up the war, and they are asking them with the far more illusory hope that they will be able to make a failure in 1918 where it failed in 1917.

More than anything else, it seems to me that the German situation is such that in 1917 the Germans, who set out to conquer the world with their armies, are now asking for a peace which would save them from a military disaster, and gave over all purpose of one day being able to conquer the world. The sword, accepted a desperate defeat, is now being used to ask for a peace, steady if slow losses of ground, while the submarine campaign, which has been the contrast between this strategy and that of the Allies, is now being used to ask which saw Verdun, and which on the east saw the great victories from the Marne to the Golden Horn, is the most eloquent testimony one can desire of the success of the submarine campaign. The approach of the unmistakable German defeat, and the approach of the alone insure permanent peace to the world.