

RASPUTIN—DEVIL OR SAINT

by The Princess Radziwill

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The Russian Secret Police, the Scourge of Russia for Decades, Wanted to Be Rid of Premier Stolypine, Who Persistently Refused to Permit the "Okhrana" to Violate the Security of the Citizen's Home as It Had Been Doing in the Past

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING INSTALLMENTS

The career of Gregory Rasputin, the "Black Monk of Russia," can be compared to the life of a comet, both in its physical flight across the sky and in its effect upon a childlike people whose faith is bound up in mysticism and superstition. Out of the obscurity of the small Siberian town Pokrowskoie, Rasputin appeared on the horizon of political Russia and wielded an influence over the State and Church such as has never been duplicated by a civilian and a layman.

There are many stories concerning the relationship existing between Rasputin and the Empress of Russia, but the author says that the latter regarded the "monk" merely as a person who could save the life of the ailing Tsarevitch. That the "Prophet," or "Blessed Gregory," as his devotees called him, did wield a powerful influence over the Ministers and Court is emphasized in example after example. The same spell which he cast over the "moujik" of his native town brought the sophisticated Russian nobility under his power. Despite his filthy, unkempt and revolting appearance, they, in company with the uneducated millions of peasants and townsmen, regarded him as a saint and a savior.

Rasputin's "ered" contained precepts objectionable to the orthodox Church and to the person not blinded by his mysticism, and after many unsuccessful attempts he was finally "drilled" to his old home. After two years he returned to the capital, where he continued intriguing against his enemies. He skillfully turned the ministerial crisis growing out of the Balkan War into a victory for himself.

CHAPTER III

AMONG Rasputin's adversaries was Mr. Stolypine, who, with strong common sense and great intelligence, had objected to the importance which certain social circles in St. Petersburg had tried to give to the soothsayer. At first he had regarded the whole matter as kind of a wild craze which was bound to subside in time as other crazes of the same sort had dwindled into insignificance in the past. Later on, however, some reports that had reached him concerning the persons who frequented Rasputin had given him reason to think that there might be something more than stupid enthusiasm in the various tales which had come to his ears in regard to the Prophet of Pokrowskoie. He, therefore, expressed the wish to see him, so as to be able to form a personal judgment on the man, and a meeting was arranged in due course at the house of one of the ladies who patronized Rasputin. It is related that after he had cast his eyes upon him Mr. Stolypine, when asked to give his opinion on the personality of the individual about whom he had heard so many conflicting reports, had simply replied:

"The best thing to do with him is to send him to light stoves; he is fit for nothing else."

Stolypine Opposed to Rasputin

The words were repeated and circulated freely in St. Petersburg; they reached Rasputin, and enraged him the more, because, shortly afterwards, it was Mr. Stolypine who had insisted on his being expelled from the capital, and who for two whole years had refused to allow him to enter it again. When, therefore, in the early autumn of 1912 the "prophet" at last was allowed to return to St. Petersburg, it was with the feelings of the deepest enmity against the Minister who had exiled him. He had the satisfaction of finding that during his enforced absence the popularity of Mr. Stolypine had decreased, and that a considerable number were openly talking about overthrowing him. Rasputin very soon discovered the use which could be made of this state of things, which surpassed by far any hopes he might have nursed of being able to be revenged upon the President of the Cabinet for the injury which he imagined that the latter had done to him. He proceeded in all his sermons to compare him with the Antichrist, and to say that Russia would never be quiet so long as he remained one of its rulers.

The police agent, whose name I have already mentioned, Mr. Manassewitsch Manuiloff, who always had his eye on Rasputin and who had hastened to call upon him as soon as he had seen him return to the capital, was not slow to notice the now outspoken animosity of the latter in regard to the Prime Minister, who was offensive to him as well as to the whole secret police. The secret police, finding that it could no longer do what it pleased and that it had to respect the private liberty and life of the peaceful Russian citizens, or else be called to account by Mr. Stolypine, who ever since his appointment had been working against the occult powers of the "Okhrana," had but one idea, and this was to get rid by fair means or by foul of a master determined to control the police. It is known in Russia that Mr. Stolypine's assassination was the work of the secret police itself, who had found the murderer in the person of one of its own agents, to whom it had furnished even the revolver with which to kill the unfortunate Stolypine. But few people dared relate all that they suspected in regard to his heinous crime, and fewer still were aware of all its details, and of the manner in which it had been planned.

The truth of the story is that Mr. Manuiloff secretly took to Rasputin's house two or three police agents, to whom the latter said that God himself had revealed to him that Russia could never be saved from the perils of revolution until the removal of Mr. Stolypine. He even blessed the officers, together with a pistol with which he presented them. It turned out afterwards that this pistol was the very weapon that the Jew Bagroff fired at the Prime Minister in the theatre of Kieff during the gala performance given there in honor of the Emperor's visit to the town. When Stolypine had succumbed to his wounds, Rasputin made no secret of the satisfaction which his death had occasioned to him, and exerted himself in favor of several people who were supposed to have been privy to the plot that had been hatched against the life of the Prime Minister. He told his disciples that the fate which had overtaken the unhappy Stolypine did not surprise him at all, and that every one of those who would venture to oppose him would meet with a similar fate in the future.

In a certain sense, this threat had an effect on those before whom it was uttered. People began to dread Rasputin, not on account of any supernatural powers he might have been endowed with, but because they saw that he had managed to get into asso-



"Once he commanded one of the ladies to walk in one night to the village of Strelina, a distance of about twenty-five miles from St. Petersburg, and to return immediately."

ciation with individuals utterly unscrupulous and ready to resort to every means, even to assassination, in order to come to their own ends. They thought it better and wiser, therefore, to get out of his way and not to attempt to thwart him. He became associated in the mind of Russian society with conspirators similar to the Italian carbonari or Camorristi. The conviction that under the veil of religious fervor he was able to persuade his satellites to do whatever he pleased, and to hesitate at nothing in the way of infamy and crime, gradually established itself everywhere until it was thought advisable to have nothing to do with him, or else to submit to him absolutely and in everything. It was very well known that he had had a hand in the murder of Mr. Stolypine, but not one single person could be found daring enough to say so, and an atmosphere of impunity enveloped him together with those who worshiped at his shrine or who had put themselves under his protection.

Russia Trembled Before Rasputin

It was during this same winter of 1912-13 that the name of Rasputin became more and more familiar to the ears of the general public, which until that time had only heard about him vaguely and had not troubled about him at all. It was also then that rumors without number concerning the prayer meetings at which he presided began to circulate. Innumerable legends arose in regard to those meetings, which were compared to the worst assemblies ever held by Khlysty sectarians. In reality nothing unmentionable took place during their course. Rasputin was far too clever to apply to the fine ladies whose help he considered essential to the progress of his future career the same means by which he had subjugated the simple peasant women and provincial girls whom he had de- praved. He remained strictly on the religious ground with his aristocratic followers, and he tried only to develop in them feelings of divine fervor verging upon an exaltation which was close to hysteria in its worst shape or form. In a word, it was with him and them a case like that of the nuns of Loudun in the sixteenth

century. Had he lived in the middle ages it is certain that Rasputin would have been burnt at the first stake to be found for the purpose, which, perhaps, would not have been such a great misfortune.

I have seen a photograph representing the "Prophet" drinking tea with the ladies who composed the nucleus of the new church or sect, which he prided himself upon having founded. It is a curious production. Rasputin is seen sitting at a table before a samovar or tea urn slowly sipping out of a saucer the fragrant beverage so dear to Russian hearts. Around him are grouped the Countess L., Madame W., Madame T. and two other of his feminine admirers, who, with fervent eyes, are watching him. The expression of these ladies is most curious, and makes one regret that one could not observe it otherwise than in a picture. Their faces are filled with an enthusiasm that bears the distinct stamp of magnetic influence, and it is easy to notice that the ladies are plunged into that kind of trance when one is no longer accountable for one's actions.

The method used by Rasputin was to humiliate all the women of the higher circles whom he had subjugated, and who had been silly enough to allow themselves to fall under his spell. Thus he liked to oblige them to kiss his hands and feet, to lick the plates out of which he had been eating, or to drink out of the glass which he

Rasputin's Share in the Assassination of Stolypine Consisted in Relating to Several Police Agents That God Himself Had Revealed to Him That Russia Could Never Be Saved From the Perils of Revolution Until the Removal of the Prime Minister

with her had retired. Rasputin was dressed in his usual characteristic costume of a Russian peasant and was very silent, throwing only now and then a word or two into the general conversation or uttering a short sentence, after which he relapsed into his former silence. In his dress and in his manners he was absolutely uncouth, and when, for instance, he was offered an apple he cut out a hole at its top with his own very dirty pocket knife, after which he put the knife aside and tore the fruit in two with his hands, eating it, peel and all, in the most primitive manner. After some time Rasputin got up and went to the next room, where he sat down on a large divan with a few ladies who had joined him, toward whom his manner left very much to be desired.

Lvoff's Description of Rasputin

I had kept examining him the whole time with great attention, seeking for that extraordinary glance he was supposed to possess, to which was attributed his power over people, but I could not find any trace of it or notice anything remarkable about him. The expression of his face was that of a cunning moujik such as one constantly meets with in our country, perfectly well aware of the conditions in which he was finding himself placed, and determined to make the best out of them. Everything in him, to begin with his common dress and to end with his long hair and his dirty nails, bore the character of the uncivilized peasant he was. He seemed to realize better, perhaps, than those who surrounded him, that one of his trump cards was precisely this uncouthness, which ought to have been repelling, and that if he had put on different clothes and tried to assimilate the manners of his betters, half of the interest which he excited would have disappeared. I did not stay a long time, and went away thoroughly disappointed, and perhaps even slightly disgusted at the man.

A few months later, in February of the present year, 1916, I was asked again to meet Rasputin at Baron Miklos's house. There I found a numerous and most motley company assembled. There were members of the Duma, Messrs. Karauloff and Souratchane; General Polivanoff, a great landowner of the government of Woronege, N. P. Alexieff; Madame Swetchine; the Senator S. P. Bieletsky and other people. Ladies were in a majority. Rasputin remained talking for a long time with the Deputy Karauloff in another room than the one in which I found myself. Then he came to join us in the large drawing room, where he kept walking up and down with a young girl on his arm—Mlle. D., a singer by profession—who was entreating him to arrange for her an engagement at the Russian Opera, which he promised her to do "for certain," as he expressed himself.

Every five or ten minutes Rasputin went up to a table on which were standing several decanters with red wine and other spirits, and he poured himself a large glass out of one of them. He swallowed the contents at one gulp, wiping his mouth afterwards with his sleeve or with the back of his hand. During one of these excursions he came up to where I was sitting, and stopped before me, exclaiming: "I remember thee. Thou art a gasser, who writes, and writes, and repeats nothing but calumnies." I asked the "Prophet" why he did not say "you" to me, instead of addressing me with the vulgar appellation of "Thou."

"I speak in this way with everybody," he replied. "I have got my own way in talking with people."

I made him a remark concerning some words which he had pronounced badly, adding, "Surely you have learned during the ten years which you have lived in the capital that one does not use the expressions which you have employed. And how do you know that I have written or repeated calumnies. You cannot read yourself, so that everything you hear is from other people, and you cannot feel sure whether they tell you the truth."

"This does not matter," he replied. "Thou hast written that one is stealing, and thou knowest thyself how to do so."

"I do not know how to steal," I answered. "But I have written that one is doing so at present everywhere. This it was necessary to do for the public good."

"Thou hast done wrong; one must only write the truth. Truth is everything," he said.

The conversation was assuming an angry and sharp tone. Rasputin became enraged at my telling him that all he was saying was devoid of common sense, and he began shouting at me, at the top of his voice. "Be quiet, how darrest thou say such things. Be quiet!"

I did not wish to remain quiet, and I began in my turn to shout at the "Prophet," who became absolutely furious when I assured him that I was not a woman whom he could frighten, that I wanted nothing from him, and that he had better leave me alone, or it might be the worse for him.

He then howled at me, screaming as loud as he could: "It is an evil thing for everybody that thou art here!"

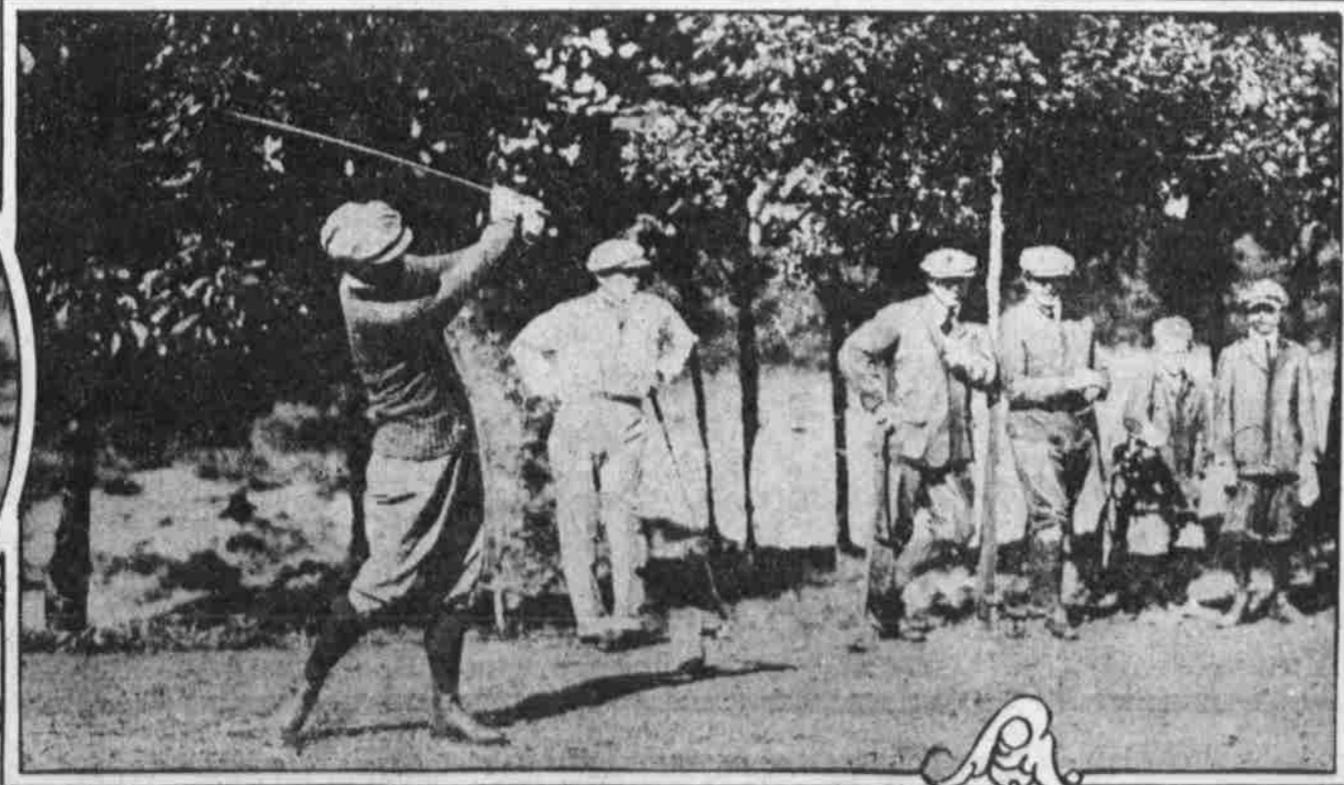
When in the following April it came to my knowledge that Mr. Sturmer wanted to expel me from the capital, I was surprised to have Baron Miklos come to me one day in the name of Rasputin, who had asked him to tell me that though I was a "proud man," he did not bear me any grudge, and that if I wished it, he would take steps to have the order for my expulsion revoked, and that at all events, he begged me not to think that he had taken any part in this whole affair. I categorically refused to avail myself of the help of Rasputin, and there ended the whole matter.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

SOME OF THE STROKES THAT MADE "CHICK" EVANS NATIONAL AMATEUR AND OPEN CHAMPION



CULMINATION OF THE CHAMPION'S UPWARD SWING



THE FINISH OF EVANS'S STROKE. TO HIS RIGHT STANDS EUGENE GRACE, PRESIDENT OF THE BETHLEHEM STEEL COMPANY



TOP OF THE STROKE, JUST BEFORE THE CLUB DESCENDS



THE CLUB IS DESCENDING AND ABOUT TO BOOST THE BALL

THESE ACTION PHOTOGRAPHS OF EVANS'S PLAY WERE TAKEN ON THE PINE VALLEY LINKS BY GEORGE H. BROOKE, FORMER PENNSYLVANIA FOOTBALL STAR, AND SHOW THE CHAMPION MAKING ACTUAL SHOTS. EVANS PLAYS IN COMPETITION AT THE WHITE MARSH VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB NEXT MONDAY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SOLDIERS' TOBACCO FUND