

RASPUTIN—DEVIL OR SAINT

by The Princess Radziwill

"Thanks to the English officers who had arrived in Russia with the aim of bringing some kind of order out of the chaos, not only in the War Office but in every other branch of the Government, the military position of the Empire improved considerably."

The Months Which Sturmer's Private Secretary, the Redoubtable Manussewitsch-Manuiloff, Had Spent in Prison Were Not Wasted, for While the Prime Minister Was Worrying Over Coming Events the "Prisoner" Was Making Use of Valuable Documents

With the Advent of British Army Officers Both the Military and the Internal Situation in Russia Brightened, and Many Observers Are Convinced That Without This Aid the Empire Would Have Been Overrun by Germany and the Revolution Thwarted

CHAPTER VIII (Continued)

THE fact was that Manussewitsch-Manuiloff had put to profit the months when, in his capacity as private secretary to the Prime Minister, he had access to all the archives and secret papers of the Ministry of the Interior. He had taken copies of more than one important document, the divulging of which might have put the Russian Government in an embarrassing position. Some persons even said that his zeal had carried him so far as to make him appropriate to himself the originals of these documents, leaving only a worthless copy in their place. True or not, it is certain that the spirit of foresight that had always distinguished him had induced him to take certain precautions against any possible mishap capable of interfering with his career. He was able to regard his imprisonment really philosophically. This was more than Mr. Sturmer could do. The latter had reason to fear that during the police search of the flat occupied by Mr. Manussewitsch-Manuiloff some compromising letters had been discovered. This fear did not add to his happiness or to his equanimity. Besides, he was not strong enough to resist the attacks which, dating from that day, were poured upon his head. In spite of the assurances which Rasputin was continually giving him that he had nothing to fear, he did not share the confidence of the "Prophet."

England and Russia

He had good reasons for this fear. In the Duma, in the Petrograd drawing rooms, in the army and among the public, all felt sick of Mr. Sturmer, and all spoke of nothing else but of the necessity of compelling him to resign his post. Among the different reproaches which were addressed to him was that of being an enemy of England and of trying to work against the Russo-English alliance. It was very well known that his relations with Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, were not cordial. Sir George, in spite of all that the pro-Germans liked to say about him, was a popular personage in Russia, that is, among the sane portion of Russian society, which had hailed with joy the initiative that he had taken in the great work of reorganization of the Russian administration.

Thanks to the English officers who had arrived in Russia with the aim of bringing some kind of order out of the chaos that had pre-



Russia was saved from early disaster by the English officers who took control of the War Office and had active charge of many of the Russian army divisions. The photograph shows one of the British officers observing his Slav charges.

vailed not only in the War Office, but in every other branch of the Government, the military position of the Empire had considerably improved, and the great work of national defense had been at last put upon a sound basis. As a man occupying a very important position in Petrograd wrote to me during the course of last summer:

"There are some people here who say that Russia is fast becoming an English colony, but I reply to them that she might certainly do worse, if by that word is meant the introduction of the English spirit of order and of English honesty in our country."

This was the opinion of a sincere Russian patriot. There is no

doubt that it was shared by all the best elements of the nation, who had recognized that in the crisis through which their Fatherland was going only one idea ought to dominate everything, and that was the necessity of imposing upon Germany a peace that would at last give to the world the assurance that it would never be called upon again to undergo another such catastrophe as the one under which it was struggling. Mr. Sturmer, however, was of a quite different opinion. This was well known everywhere, especially in parliamentary circles. Mr. Milukoff made himself the echo of the popular voice when he delivered his famous indictment of the Prime Minister. The latter retorted by issuing against the leader of the Opposition a writ for libel, and applied himself with renewed energy to the task of getting out of prison the man who had been the prime mover in the dark and sinister intrigue of which Rasputin was the principal figure. At last he succeeded, and Manussewitsch-Manuiloff was released on bail. Among all the papers which had been confiscated at his home not one incriminating document had been found, and the only thing against him that could be proved was the blackmailing scheme against the Bank whose director had had him arrested. He threatened, in case he should be brought to trial, to make certain revelations absolutely damaging for more than one highly placed personage, and he contrived to inspire a holy terror even among those most eager to have him condemned for his numerous extortions and other shameful deeds. As soon as he was at liberty he set Rasputin to working in his favor, and made the latter display an activity that at last exasperated the public against the "Prophet" to such an extent that the first thought of organizing a conspiracy to remove him was started, and very soon became quite a familiar one with more than one person.

Trying to Snare Rasputin

To be quite exact, this thought had already existed for some time. About a year after the beginning of the war some enterprising individuals in Petrograd tried to get rid of the "Prophet" by entangling him in some disgraceful escapade which would have made it necessary for him to leave Petrograd. In accordance with this plan he was invited one night to supper at some fashionable music hall, of which there exist so many in the Russian capital. Bohemian singers were called in and an unlimited amount of champagne provided. Rasputin, who was rather fond of such adventures when he was not obliged to pay for their cost in rubles and kopecks, accepted with alacrity. He soon became quite drunk. Then, at the invitation of one of the guests, he proceeded to show them the manner in which the Khlystys, the religious sect to which he belonged, danced around the lighted fire, which was an indispensable feature of their meetings. As he was dancing, or rather turning round and round a table that had been put in the middle of the room, he took off some of his clothes, just as his followers used to do when they were holding one of their assemblies in real earnest. Some of the assistants seized hold of the opportunity and hid the garments of which he had divested himself, then called in the police, requiring them to draw up a report of what had taken place. On the next day this report was taken to a high authority, in the hope that it would have a damaging effect on the reputation of Rasputin. The result, however, was quite different from that which had been expected, for the person who had brought the report to the authority in question instead of being believed was treated as a libeler and compelled himself to retire from public life. After this it was generally recognized that nothing in the world would be strong enough to bring about the downfall of the "Prophet."

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

RAINBOW'S END

By REX BEACH

Author of "The Spoilers," "The Barrier," "Heart of the Sunset"

A novel of love, hidden treasure and rebellion in beautiful, mysterious Cuba during the exciting days of the revolt against Spain.

CHAPTER IX (Continued)

ASSENIO, muttering excitedly, was trying to crowd past him, for a few yards the two horses brushed along side by side. The distant point of light had become a glare now; it winked balefully through the openings as the party hurried toward it. But it was still a long way off, and the eastern sky had grown gray before the dense woods of the hillside gave way to the sparser growth of the low ground.

Esteban turned a sick, white face over his shoulder and jerked out his orders; then he kicked his tired mount into a wretched gallop. It was he who first broke out into the clearing. One glance, and the story was told.

The hut was but a crumbling skeleton of charred poles. Strung out across the little field of malangas, yucas and sweet potatoes were several hilarious Volunteers, their arms filled with loaves from the cabin. Behind them rode an officer bearing Rosa struggling against his breast.

Esteban did not pause; he drove his horse headlong through the soft red earth of the garden. His sudden appearance seemed briefly to paralyze the marauders. It was a moment before they could drop their spears, unsling their rifles and begin to fire at him, and by that time he had covered half the distance to his sister. Those rifle shots came faintly to Esteban's ears; he scarcely heard them; he merely lowered his head and rode straight at that black-visaged colonel, sobbing and whimpering in his fury.

But in spite of his speed he made no difficult target. A bullet brought his horse down and the boy went flying over his neck. Nothing but the loose loaves saved him from injury. As he rose to his feet, breathless and covered with the red dirt, there came a swift thudding of hoofs and Asensio swept past him like a rocket. Esteban caught one glimpse of the negro's face, a fleeting vision of wild yellow eyes, of flat, distorted features; then Asensio was fairly upon Colonel Cobo. The colonel, who had dropped his burden, now tried to dodge. Asensio slashed once at him with his long, murderous machete, but the next instant he was engaged with a trooper who had fired almost into his face.

profane commands which went unheeded. The field was small, the jungle was close at hand. A moment and the interlopers had vanished in it, all but one, who lay kicking among the broad malanga leaves, and over whom Asensio kept spurring his terrified horse, hacking downward with insane fury.

This was the first hand-to-hand encounter Esteban's men had had, and their swift victory rendered them ferocious. Flinging their guns aside, they went crashing into the brush on the trail of their enemies.

Rosa found herself in her brother's arms, sobbing out the story of the outrage and quivering at every sound of the chase. He was caressing her and telling her to have no further fears; both of them were fairly hysterical. Even before Esteban had heard all, Lofenzo, the mulatto, reappeared, leading three cavalry horses and shouting extravagant praise of his own bravery.

Esteban complimented him and the fellow galloped away again, voicing the most blood-curdling threats. Evangelina, thanks to her thick skull, was not dead. In the course of time, under Rosa's and Esteban's ministrations, she regained her senses, and when the other men returned they found her lying sick and dazed, but otherwise quite whole.

Together Again
Then, there beside the ruins of the hut, was a strange scene of rejoicing. Asensio, recovered now from his burst of savagery, was tearful, compassionate; his comrades laughed and chattered and bragged about their prodigious deeds of valor. Over and over they recounted their versions of the encounter, each more fanciful than the other, until it seemed that they must have left the forest filled with corpses.

Esteban alone was grave. He had heard of Colonel Cobo, and, remembering that denim-clad figure out yonder in the trampled garden, he knew that serious consequences would follow. The Volunteers were revengeful; their colonel was not the sort of man to forgive a deep humiliation. Doubtless he would put a price upon the heads of all of them, and certainly he would never allow them another encounter upon anything like even terms. Then, too, the narrowness of Rosa's escape caused the boy's heart to dissolve with terror.

Unfortunately his room was on the second floor of the hotel, and hence his goings and comings were always open to observation. But he noted that a window at one end of the upper hall overlooked a sloping, tile-roofed shed, and the garden wall behind the hotel premises was not provided with those barbarous spikes or broken bottles which decorate so many Cuban walls. It promised him a means of egress when the time should come to use it. In this hall, moreover, directly opposite his door, there was an oil bracket lamp which gave light to the passageway, and which was forever going out, a fact which the young man noted with satisfaction.

O'Reilly Pays a Visit

One evening, several days after his arrival, a sudden rainstorm drove O'Reilly indoors, and as he ascended to his room he saw that the lamp in the hallway flared and smoked at every gust of wind. It was very dark outside; he deserted the streets would be deserted. Hastily securing that book which Alvarado, the dentist, had given him, he took a position close inside his door. When he heard the spy pass and enter the next chamber he stole out into the hall and breathed into the lamp chimney. A moment later he was safely through the window and was working his way down the shed roof, praying that his movements had not been seen and that the tiles were firm. The rain was driving in sheets and he was wet to the skin when he dropped into the patio; nevertheless he was laughing to himself. He nimbly scaled the wall, crossed an inclosure, climbed a second wall and descended into a dark side street. Taking advantage of the densest shadows and the numerous overhanging balconies, he set out at a brisk trot.

A light showed through the barred windows of the Alvarado home, indicating that the family was in. After some fumbling O'Reilly laid hold of the latch; then, without knocking, he opened the front door and stepped in.

He found himself, as he had expected, in the parlor, a high-ceilinged, sparsely furnished room with a glazed floor of Spanish mosaics. His sudden appearance threw the occupants into alarm; a woman cried out sharply; a man whom O'Reilly identified as Ignacio Alvarado himself leaped to his feet and faced him, exclaiming:

The Signal

"Who are you?"
"I'm a friend. Don't be alarmed." Johnnie summoned his most agreeable smile, then he extended the sodden package he had carried beneath his arm. "I come from your brother Tomas. He asked me to hand you this book and to say that he is returning it with his thanks."
O'Reilly tore the wet paper from the volume and laid it in Alvarado's hand. "Look at it, please, and you'll understand. I didn't take time to knock for fear I might be followed."
Alvarado stared first at the book, then at his caller. After a moment he made a sign to his wife, who left the room. Wiping his lips, he inquired, with an effort, "What do you want?"
O'Reilly told him in a few words. Alvarado showed relief; he even called

THE STORY THUS FAR

JOHNNIE O'REILLY, more commonly known as THE O'REILLY, has fallen in love with ROSA VARONA, one of the orphans of DON ESTEBAN VARONA, a wealthy slave owner and sugar planter of Cuba. Don Esteban had hoarded a vast fortune in precious stones, old Spanish coins and modern currency in a secret chamber at the bottom of a well. In building this well he was assisted by SEBASTIAN, a faithful slave, the only other person to share the secret.

When Don Esteban's first wife died he became the target for many match-makers, who knew vaguely of his hidden fortune. DONA ISABEL succeeded in becoming the second wife and immediately set about intriguing to learn of the fortune. Hoping to get information from Sebastian, she succeeds in having his daughter EVANGELINA sold. The slave, infuriated, murders his master and several others before he is shot. Thus in a few minutes the only two persons who know the whereabouts of the fortune are killed.

Isabel tries vainly to get information from PANCHO CUETO, the manager of the plantations. Instead, he threatens to claim the estate as his because Don Esteban left no needs to the property. That night Isabel falls into the well and is drowned. She is rescued by ESTEBAN, Rosa's brother and a spy for Colonel Lopez, the leader of the Cuban insurgents. Pancho Cueto finds a letter with information which Esteban had dropped and turns it over to the authorities. Rosa and Esteban then escape up the valley to the hut of Evangelina, their old nurse.

O'Reilly, back in New York at the office of the firm which he represented in Cuba, anxiously awaits information from his sweetheart. His many letters do not bring a reply until months later, when Rosa tells him of the misfortunes that have befallen since he left Cuba. O'Reilly determines to rescue his beloved, and for that purpose calls upon Mr. Enriquez, head of the Cuban junta in New York, who helps him to return to the tropic island. There O'Reilly, in common with other Americans, is suspected, and he attempts to fool his hotelkeeper by stating that he came to Cuba for his rheumatism. After conferring with a Dr. Alvarado, O'Reilly moves on to Puerto Principe, nearer the scene of action, where he meets Leslie Branch, an American consumptive, trying to get cured or killed.

In the meantime, Esteban has been harassing Pancho Cueto by burning his sugar fields. The latter goes to Colonel Cobo, in charge of the Spanish troops, with the proposition that in return for exterminating Esteban and his guerrillas the colonel can have Rosa. Esteban during the rest between raids shows Rosa a Spanish doublet which he took from Isabel's clenched fist as he raised her from the well, thus establishing the location of the treasure. While he and his hand are on a raid Cobo and Cueto attack the little home and capture Rosa. Esteban in the distance sees the flames.

"I see, but—Curamba! You gave me a start. And this book! Ha! Tomas will have his jokes. It is well you took precautions, for I am under surveillance. I'll help you, yes! But you must not come here again. Return to your hotel and—Let me think." Senior Alvarado frowned in deepest thought; then he said: "I have it! Every morning at half-past 3 a man wearing a Panama hat and a gray silk necktie with a large gold pin will pass along the sidewalk across the street from the Isla de Cuba. You will know him. One day, I cannot promise how soon, he will lift his hat thus and wipe his face. You understand? Good. Follow him. He will give you final directions. Meanwhile I will make known your presence to certain of our friends who can be trusted. You know Manin, the druggist? Well, you can talk to him and he will keep you posted as to our progress. Now go before some one comes."

O'Reilly wrung the Cuban's hand. Then he stepped out into the night, leaving a pool of water on the clean blue tiles where he had stood.

CHAPTER X

O'REILLY TALKS HOG LATIN
IN THE days that followed his call on Ignacio Alvarado, O'Reilly behaved so openly that the Secret Service agent detailed to watch him relaxed his vigilance. Certainly there was nothing suspicious in the conduct of a fellow who sat all the morning tipped back in a hotel chair, languidly scanning the passers-by, whose afternoons were spent on the streets or at the soda fountain in Manin's drug-

store, and whose evenings were devoted to aimless gossip with his countryman, the newspaper writer. Manifestly this O'Reilly was a harmless person. But the spy did not guess how frantic Johnnie was becoming at this delay, how he inwardly chafed and fretted when two weeks had rolled by and still no signal had come. Manin told him to be patient; he assured him that word had been sent into the Cubitas hills and that friends were busy in his behalf; but Johnnie was eager to be up and doing. This inaction paralyzed him; it made him almost ill to think how much time had slipped away. Then, too, his money was running low.

At last, however, the day arrived when the man with the gray necktie raised his hat and wiped his brow as he passed the Isla de Cuba. Johnnie could scarcely hold himself in his chair. By and by he rose, stretching himself, and sauntered after the fellow. For several blocks he kept him in sight, but without receiving any further sign. The man paused to greet friends, he stopped at several shops and his aimless wanderings continued for the best part of an hour, during which he led the way to the outskirts of the city. Fortunately, O'Reilly's shadow was nowhere in sight.

The Appointed Day

Without a glance over his shoulder the man turned into a large, walled inclosure. When Johnnie followed he found himself in one of the old cemeteries. Ahead of him, up a shady avenue bordered with trees, the stranger hurried; then he swerved to his left and when O'Reilly came to the point where he had disappeared there was nobody in sight. Apprehending that he had made some mistake in the signal, O'Reilly hastened down

the walk. Then at last, to his great relief, he heard a sibilant:
"Past! Past!"

It came from behind a screen of shrubbery, and there he found the Cuban waiting. The latter began rapidly:
"Ready for the Attack"

"Our plans are complete. Listen closely. One week from today, at 10 o'clock in the morning, you must be in Manin's drugstore. Directly across the street you will see two negroes with three horses. At fifteen minutes past 10 walk out San Rafael street to the edge of the city, where the hospital stands. The negroes will follow you. There is a fort near by—"

"I know."
"It commands the road. You will be challenged if you pass it, so turn in at the hospital. But do not enter the gates for the negroes will overtake you at that point. They will stop to adjust the saron of the led horse. That will be your signal; mount him and ride fast. The Spaniards will fire at you, but if you are hit one of the blacks will take you on his horse. If one of them is hit or his horse falls you must stop and take him up. Ride out half a mile and you will find a band of Insurrectos in the woods at the right. They know you are coming. Now, adios and good luck."

With a smile and a quick grip of the hand the messenger walked swiftly away. O'Reilly returned to his hotel. At last! One week, and this mumbled, head-breaking delay would end; he would be free to take up his quest. O'Reilly choked at the thought; the blood drummed in his ears. Rosa would think he was never coming; she would surely believe that his heart had changed. As if it could! "O God! Come quickly, if you love me." Well, a week was only seven days. He longed to risk those Spanish bullets this very hour.

But those seven days were more than a week; they were seven eternities. The hours were like lead; O'Reilly could compose his mind to nothing; he was in a fever of impatience.

Meanwhile, he was compelled to see a good deal of Leslie Branch. The reporter was anything but cheerful company, for, believing firmly in the steady progress of his malady, he was weighed down by the deepest melancholy. The fellow was a veritable cave of despair; he voiced never-ceasing complaints; nothing suited him; and but for something likable in the man—an effect due in part to the fact that his chronic irritation took amusing forms—he would have been an intolerable bore. To cheer him up was quite impossible, and although it seemed to Johnnie that the Cuban climate agreed with him and that he lacked only strength of will to cheat the grave, the mere suggestion of such a thought was offensive to the invalid. He construed every optimistic word, every effort at encouragement, either as a reflection upon his sincerity or as the indication of a heartless indifference to his sufferings. He continued to talk wistfully about joining the Insurrectos, and O'Reilly, who had been glad to put him in the way of realizing his fantastic ambition to "taste the salt of life" had it been in his power; but, since he himself depended upon friends unknown to him, he did not

dare to risk complicating matters. In fact, he did not even tell Branch of his coming adventure.

The day of days dawned at last, and Johnnie was early at Manin's soda fountain, drinking insipid beverages and anxiously watching the street. In due time the negroes appeared, their straw sarons laden with produce which they innocently disposed of. O'Reilly began to consult his watch with such frequency that the druggist joked him.

Manin's banter was interrupted by a bugle call. Down the street came perhaps two hundred mounted troops. They wheeled into San Rafael street at a gallop and disappeared in the direction of the suburb.

"Now what does that mean?" murmured the druggist. "Wait here while I go to the roof where I can see something."

Something Wrong

O'Reilly tried to compose himself, meanwhile becoming aware of a growing excitement in the street. Pedestrians had halted, shopkeepers had come to their doors, questioners were flying from mouth to mouth. Then from the direction of the fort at the end of San Rafael street sounded a faint rattling fusillade, more bugle calls and finally the thin, distant shouting of men.

"Rebels!" some one cried.

"Dios mio, they are attacking the city!"

"They have audacity, eh?"

The roofs were black with people now. Manin came hurrying down into the store.

"Something has gone wrong," he whispered. "They're fighting out yonder in the woods. There has been some treachery."

"It is 10:15," said O'Reilly. "I must be going."

Manin stared at him. "You don't understand—"

"Those black fellows are getting their horses ready. I'm going."

The druggist tried to force Johnnie into a chair. "Mad man!" he panted. "I tell you our friends have been betrayed; they are retreating! Go back to your hotel quickly."

For the first time during their acquaintance Manin heard the good-natured American curse. O'Reilly's blues eyes were blazing; he had let go of himself completely.

"I'm going!" he cried hoarsely. "All the damned Spaniards in Cuba won't stop me. God! I've waited too long—I should have made a break—"

"Idiot!" stormed the druggist. "You wish to die, eh?"

O'Reilly ripped out another oath and fought off the other restraining hands.

"Very well, then," said Manin, "but have some thought of us who have risked our lives for you. Suppose you should escape? How would our troops receive you now? Would they not think you had cunningly arranged this trap?"