

RUSSIAN BABY COUNTESS, ORPHANED BY WAR, FINDS REFUGE FROM RED HORROR IN AMERICA

Rene de Montesse, Prenatal Victim of Bolsheviki, Is Adopted by N. Y. Widow

RETAINS HER TITLE TO REGAIN ESTATE

Mrs. Wendell Phillips, Foster Mother, Recounts Thrilling Revelation of Child's Life

OUT of the welter of Russian blood and Russian madness comes to America a two-year-old Countess.

Her father was killed by order of the Soviet Government; her mother, torn by the hardship of a heart-rending escape from death and worse than death, died not many months after the premature birth of her little girl.

Before this baby saw light o' day, destruction of dynasties touched her life; millions of men, women and children suffered, were murdered, died in battle and their grief and their blood swept into the life of this unborn child.



Mrs. Wendell Phillips, her adopted daughter, the Countess Rene de Montesse, and Prince de Lippe-Lipski, a cousin of the little Countess

A Russian Prince, disguised as a porter, effected her mother's escape from grief-wracked Russia.

Radio messages flashed, statesmen cast the die and a gray man-o-war out of Britain moved ponderously across the Mediterranean to Constantinople and carried her mother to the safety of England, where, shortly after, the daughter was born.

The settings of this child's dramatic story lie in many countries: in Poland, in France, in Russia, in England and now in America.

Today the two-year-old Countess Rene de Montesse is the adopted daughter of Mrs. Wendell Phillips, a widow, of New York, who spent thirteen and a half months on the French battlefield.

Mrs. Phillips, wounded and gassed at Verdun, knew Rene's mother, Claude Lapedevsky, before she was married to the French Count Henri de Montesse.

They were girlhood friends, and it is small wonder the dying mother, tortured by memory, begged her American friend to promise to care for her little girl in a country far from that of her crowding bitter-nesses.

Mrs. Phillips Recounts Rene's Thrilling Story

In her beautiful home on fashionable Park avenue, New York, Mrs. Phillips recounted something of Rene's thrilling story.

Mrs. Phillips is a beautiful woman, with a wealth of flaxen hair and laughing eyes. Since the day America entered the war she has devoted herself to the welfare of the American doughboy. She spent thirteen and a half months as representative of the Surgeon General's

office on the firing line in France. She was shell-shocked, gassed and seriously wounded. She was the only woman sent overseas by the American Legion to do relief work. She is national chairman of the "Carry-On Association," a member of the Legion of Honor, wears war crosses from most of the Governments, is an honorary member of the Wendell Phillips Post of the American Legion, and has been asked to head the Soldiers and Sailors' Memorial Institute at Washington.

Child Retains Title to Reclaim Estates

"You are a very busy woman," she laughed when she heard that. "And much honored."

"I suppose I am busy, but it's strange how one can always find time to do something else," she said. "My work has brought me many good friends. Do you know, I counted them the other day—not really counted but estimated—I have helped more than 47,000 soldiers since the war."

"But you don't want to hear about me—you want to hear about Rene?"

"If you want back far enough you'll find that Rene's forebears, on her mother's side, came originally from Polish nobility. This Polish family ranked high in the court of the Czar of Russia. The grandfather of Rene's mother was godfather to the brother of the Czar, and this placed him and his family close to the royal presence.

Rene's father was a French nobleman, who transferred all his property to Russia. The Bolshevik Government has since seized these estates; but the Countess Rene will retain her title, in order that she may claim her father's holdings in event

the present Government in Russia changes.

The other Russian nobleman who figured in Rene's mother's escape from Russia is the Prince Nicholas Lippe-Lipski, first cousin to Rene. "He is one of the last of the Baltic Knights," added Mrs. Phillips. A youngish-looking man he is, with a dark Chaplin mustache.

"In 1917 or thereabouts," resumed Mrs. Phillips, "the revolutionary element in Russia, you remember, swept into power, and nobility were everywhere captured, imprisoned and placed up against walls and shot.

"Rene's father was a scientific engineer. He fought against the revolutionary forces.

"One day, while he was with his wife in their home in Petrograd, the Reds surrounded it."

The grim-visaged revolutionaries, in their nondescript uniforms, trod rough-shod into the Count's house. They seized Count Henri. His young wife, about to become a mother, clung to him, begging the bearded and silent men to take her with her husband.

Count Torn From Wife and Shot by Bolsheviki

But they didn't want her—then. The Count, brave but heart-stricken at sight of his poor weeping wife, was torn between the immediate necessity for dignity and his concern for his beloved. Surrounding him, the soldiers led him out into the cold black night.

That was the last Countess Claude saw of her husband. She drew a curtain at the window and, her forehead pressed to the frosted pane, watched the erect figure of her husband disappear down the street.

Later they placed the Count



Mrs. Wendell Phillips, New York society woman, who has adopted the two-year-old orphaned daughter of the Count and Countess, Henri de Montesse



Mrs. Wendell Phillips and the baby Countess on the S. S. President Polk, on which the child came to America from England

Her Father Shot Against Wall Before She Was Born, Her Mother a Fugitive

SAVED BY PRINCE AND BRITISH NAVY

Born in England, She Was Brought to U. S. After Death of Parent

but did she dare to murder her unborn child?

Hastily she threw a wrap about her and stumbled out into the dark night.

"She went to Prince Nicholas home," continued Mrs. Phillips. "She found his mother and sister pleading with him to go away, to escape before the mad peasants murdered him.

"Prince Nicholas refused to go at first. But when they insisted it was not right for him to stay, especially since Claude had come to them for protection, he reluctantly agreed to go.

"He disguised himself as a porter. He took Claude with him."

Their flight from Petrograd to Constantinople was fraught with danger. On every hand were spies and the enemy. What was worse, the country was poor and starving. Accommodations were not always at hand.

Countess Seriously Ill, Ordered to America

Through the ice and snow they fled. Claude, because of her condition, weakening day by day.

Sick, weary and heartbroken, the Prince's charge finally reached Constantinople.

Prince Nicholas had done some service for the British Embassy before and during the war. He had the rank of an officer in the British Army. And after much dickering he was able to arrange for the transport of the Countess and himself to England on a British man-o-war.

In England, shortly after their arrival there, Rene was born prematurely. She weighed only three and a half pounds and was expected to die any moment.

And the Countess herself was in a very serious condition. The physicians at the hospital told her frankly that

make the voyage, but by the time immigration regulations were suitably complied with the child was brought to this country by her nurse, Aileen Gowans.

"And there never was a better one," declared Mrs. Phillips. "Rene would never have lived, I am told, if it had not been for Aileen. She watched the child day and night."

On the trip to this country Rene seemed to be the only one aboard ship—it was the President Polk, of the United States Line—who did not get sick.

"Her appetite never varied," laughed Mrs. Phillips.

Rene is a dark-haired child, who speaks English as well, and a good bit better, than most children of two. Besides, she is an aristocrat with many pretty aristocratic ways.

"Myoh!" cried Mrs. Phillips, "you should watch her eat. Like a little old woman she sits in her chair, the level of the table not much below her chin. She dines with simple dignity, and like a queen expects to be waited on. For instance, she will not begin to eat until some one hands her a napkin.

"She eats with the care and the deliberation of a grown-up. And when she is through eating she will not leave the table until she has had a finger bowl placed before her. She dips her fingers into the warmed water and then holds out her two little hands—they are beautiful like her mother's—to be properly dried.

"That service over, she folds her hands contentedly in her lap and sighs. You really should see her eat."

Her breakfast she invariably has in bed, as any grand old lady might of the mid-Victorian era.

Makes Friends With All When Crossing Atlantic

On board the vessel she made friends with everybody.

"I just know," laughed Mrs. Phillips, "that she was a perfect nuisance, but somehow she will make friends. Aileen tells me that Rene spent a great deal of time drawing what seemed to her faces on pieces of paper, and she would go up to almost any one and snipe, point at the picture and say, 'This is you.'"

"When the boat landed, and she met me for the first time, she came to me without any embarrassment and immediately called me 'mother.' But then happened to be an old gentleman whom I didn't know standing beside me, and quick as a flash Rene asked him, 'Are you my daddy?'"

Mrs. Phillips owns a little bulldog. And, one day, it scratched Rene's knee. Rene didn't cry, but she came quickly to Mrs. Phillips, and her little forehead wrinkled, she said with dignity: "You have a nasty, nasty dog."

"Then she raised her knee," continued Mrs. Phillips, "and I had to kiss it better."

"You know, she has been taught never to make any noise when she cries. And she is so brave, and so patient. Her lips quiver, tears come to her eyes and roll down her cheeks, but she stifles every noise. She is as brave as her mother was, and as lovely."

Rene is now in my home in the Highlands, with her nurse. I haven't made any real plans for her yet. I've been buying her clothes, and I am continually struck by this dignity of hers. One might imagine she were a little adult.

"Later I suppose we'll be having her educated."

"It is my desire that she become like her mother. I want her to go to the best of this country and Europe, and I want her to be as distinguished in the arts and general culture as her mother was. I want to see her delicate hands grow more beautiful. I want some day I shall tell her how like her mother's hands used to be."

Puts on Mother's Tiara And Calls It 'Pretty Hat'

"She is the sort of child who bothers you with questions—the most naive and droll and quaint questions—but who draws your love too, and quickly."

In one of Rene's little trunks is a gem-studded tiara. Humming about among the garments in the trunk, the little child found this brilliant the other day.

"She sat on the floor, picking at the gleaming stones.

"It was her mother's. It was brought out of a seething Russia, rescued from the hands of vandals. It represented perhaps a dying cause. Certainly, among the garments in the trunk, the thing of the great grief of her mother—the tragedy of death, the hardship of flight.

"Somehow, her mother wanted Rene to have it. She wanted her to have it. And Rene, fingering it, might have been willing to give it up for her funny doll that cost perhaps fifty cents. Certainly, she had no value for her except as something to amuse."

Perhaps instinctively, perhaps for no reason at all, the little child raised the tiara and placed it on her head.

It was a little big, so it sank over her short bobbed black hair and rested crooked over one ear.

"Like a little countess, indeed, she sat there thinking, but her only comment was: 'Pretty hat!'"

"Pretty hat?"

"Pretty hat, that's all it is. A pretty hat, to be sure, with an amazing story.

"Tomorrow, depending on the destinies of people, depending on the European politics, depending on the astuteness, the crime of statesmanship, this 'pretty hat' that sat so comely on this little child, may take her to continental courts, to continental power.

For isn't she the Countess Rene de Montesse, beside being just a droll little old-woman child?"

against a stone wall. Standing there, he saw his dear wife, with her beautiful ivory-white hands. He saw the little child, unborn as yet but filling his mind, so weary of pain, with the intensest longing. What would become of them?

In a moment he crumbled into the snow. Red stained the snow—red spreading from his broken and bullet-torn heart.

"Claude had the loveliest hands," murmured Mrs. Phillips. "White like ivory or pearl, and so delicate and slim. Little Rene's hands are going to be that way."

"Claude was an accomplished woman. She painted, spoke a number of languages, loved poetry and all the beautiful things of life.

"She had dreams, and she loved her husband."

Mother Flees to Home of the Prince Nicholas

And now it seemed that life mattered no longer. She expected that soon enough the soldiers of the revolution would return for her. Well, it didn't matter now. Death seemed no longer terrible; it meant release, either oblivion, or, if the priest spoke sooth, a finer companionship with her husband in that golden place of many mansions.

She remembered her child—the little babe who had not seen her yet, whose she had not seen, for whom she and her husband had planned so much. To remain in the house spelled suicide for her. That she didn't mind any more;

there was but little hope for her life if she remained in England. They advised a trip to America.

"Then I will go to America to get well for Rene," she promised.

"The day she left," continued Mrs. Phillips, "she wrapped Rene in the white shawl, and she promised to get well and come back to her."

Prince Nicholas brought Claude to America. I met them at the pier. She was lovelier than ever—pale, worn, but so beautiful.

"For a time she appeared to improve, and then her life seemed to ebb. Hour by hour she thought of her little child. She wanted to live for her, but the tragedy and the hardships she had suffered were too much.

"Just before she died she called for me. She asked me to promise to take care of her baby—to adopt it—in equity. I didn't want to refuse, but who could have, anyway? The last thought in her mind was for her baby, the last word on her lips was 'Rene.'"

Immediately following the death of the mother, Mrs. Phillips and Prince Nicholas made arrangements for bringing the baby to this country. The child at the moment was not in condition to