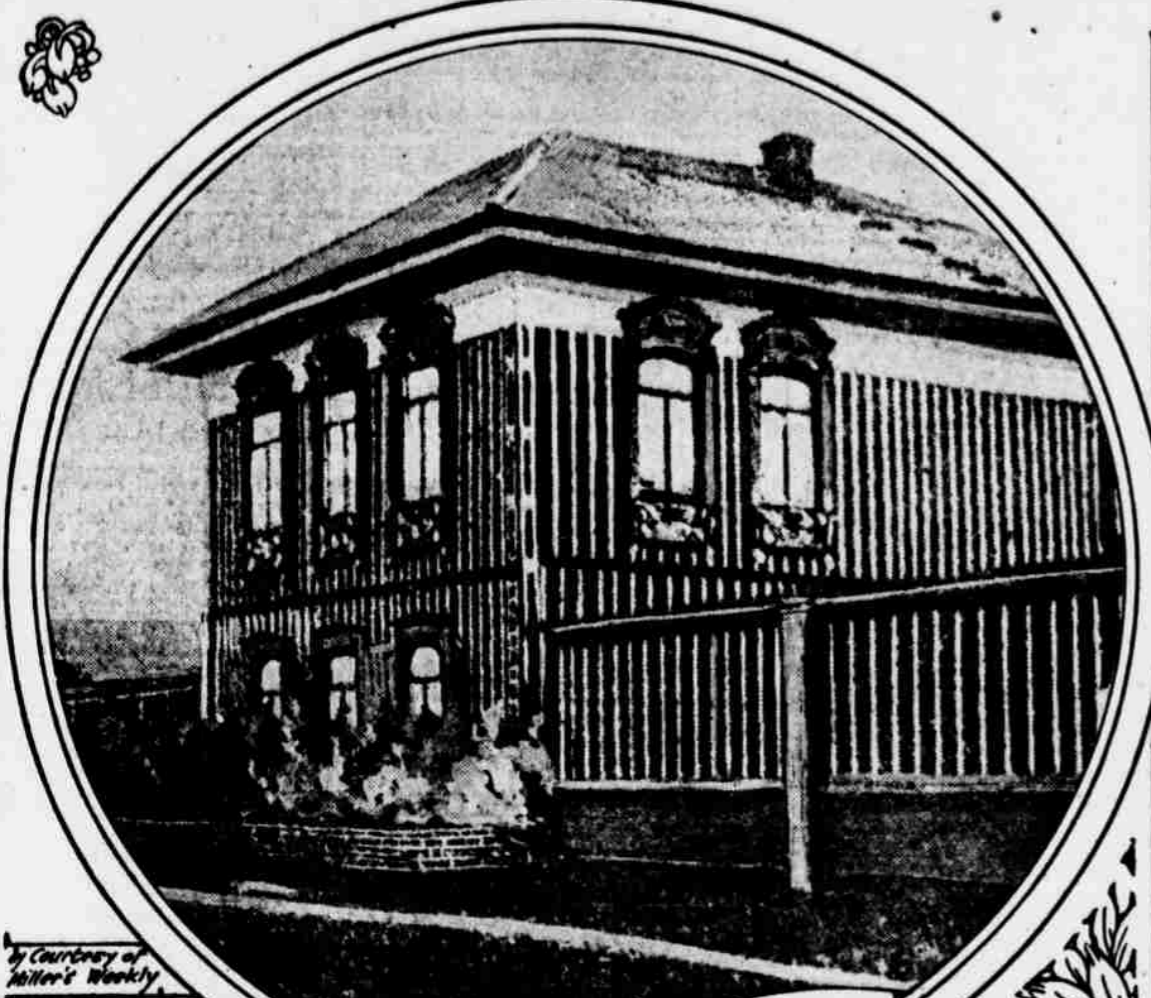


MYSTIC PEASANT WHO RULED CZAR



By Courtesy of
Miller's Weekly

HOUSE SAID TO
HAVE BEEN BUILT
FOR RASPUTIN BY
THE CZAR AND TO CONTAIN
PICTURES AND STATUARY OF
GREAT VALUE.

Gregory Rasputin, the Latest and Strangest of the Fortune Tellers, Fanatics and Charlatans Who Have Swayed the Destinies of the Russian Empire at Home and Abroad During the Reign of Nicholas II.

By HERMAN BERNSTEIN.

A NEW sensation has come from Russia. Russia has long been furnishing new sensations to the world, weird happenings in medieval settings, grotesque and grim tragedies. While the rest of the world kept advancing Russia stood still. While the Russian people, yearning for light and liberty, have produced works which constitute the pride of Russia, the Russian autocracy, even though it had a constitution and parliament forced upon it, has clung to medievalism with all its picturesque, its quaintness, its cruelties and its horrors.

For the third time in the last few years the story of the death of Rasputin has reached America. This time it is apparently true.

The story of Gregory Rasputin is unique even among the strange stories of the monks, mystics and fortune tellers who surrounded the Czars of Russia and influenced their decisions in matters of vital importance to the Russian people.

To the average intelligent American reader it may be inconceivable that a great empire like Russia, a people that has given to the world great men and women in literature, in art, in science and in music, that has brought forth some of the noblest and bravest martyrs for freedom, should be ruled in this age through the influence of charlatans, fortune tellers, weather prophets, mad monks and illiterate peasants. But when it is recalled that only a few years ago the medieval ritual murder myth was staged in the ancient city of Kiev in the form of the Belle affair, when it is recalled that only a few years ago pogroms were organized in many cities and towns in Russia on the same day, it ceases to be surprising that the ruler of the Russian Empire should be influenced and guided by all sorts of "saints" and prophets, charlatans and madmen, biggers and soothsayers, who appeal to him upon religious grounds.

Those who know anything at all about Russia to-day are aware of the fact that some of these powers behind the throne have made and unmade members of the Russian Cabinet and heads of the Holy Synod, and have caused the downfall of premiers. The list of soothsayers and fortune tellers and healers who have directed to a great extent the home policies of the Russian Empire and even influenced the course of Russia's attitude toward foreign affairs during the reign of Nicholas II, is long indeed. The most conspicuous among these were Klopov, an insignificant functionary whom the czar entrusted with special investigations; Demchinsky, the weather prophet, who was discredited by scientists and branded as a charla-

tan; Ukhomsky-Asiatky, who fired the czar's imagination with ideas of his great historical mission; Pere Philippe, the hairdresser of Versailles, spiritualist and healer; a girl named Gulatzky, who was the czar's favorite adviser for a time; Bezobrazov, who was raised from utter obscurity and made Secretary of State; Father John of Cronstadt, the mad monk Ilodor and Gregory Rasputin.

The strangest of them all was undoubtedly Philippe, the barber of Versailles, who used to call for the czar the spirit of his ancestors and ask their advice concerning family matters and affairs of state. As long as he remained in the palace of the czar Philippe was the most powerful man in Russia, and his influence in affairs of the gravest importance was greater than that of the Premier or other members of the Cabinet. Without his approval nothing was done by the czar.

But Philippe grew too bold in his deceptions one day and he was replaced by the Gulatzky girl. During the Russo-Japanese war she predicted that Russia would meet with defeat unless the czar himself went to the front. The czar was on the point of taking the girl's advice, but Count Witte, Kuropatkin and Polyedonostsev dissuaded him with great difficulty and he remained at home.

Bezobrazov and Alexeev, the latter appointed Viceroy at Bezobrazov's suggestion, were practically responsible for the outbreak of the war between Russia and Japan. Father John of Cronstadt appeared upon the scene at a time when intrigues were being agitated for the purpose of causing the czar to divorce Alexandra Feodorovna because she had brought him no male heir to the Russian throne. Father John told the czar of a newly discovered saint in the desert of Sarov and suggested a royal procession to the desert. The head of the Synod approved the suggestion and a royal procession was organized to visit the resting place of St. Seraphim.

Suddenly, after a few years of secrecy as to the real influences controlling the czar, the name of Ilodor, the "Mad Monk," was mentioned. This young monk became notorious for his daring harangues against the progressive elements in Russia, against the revolutionists and the Jews, whom he denounced with vitriolic venom, calling upon the populace to start massacres. Stories of his attacks upon high dignitaries of the Synod and the Church reached this country at the time. He defied the Holy Synod and ignored the commands of the Procura-

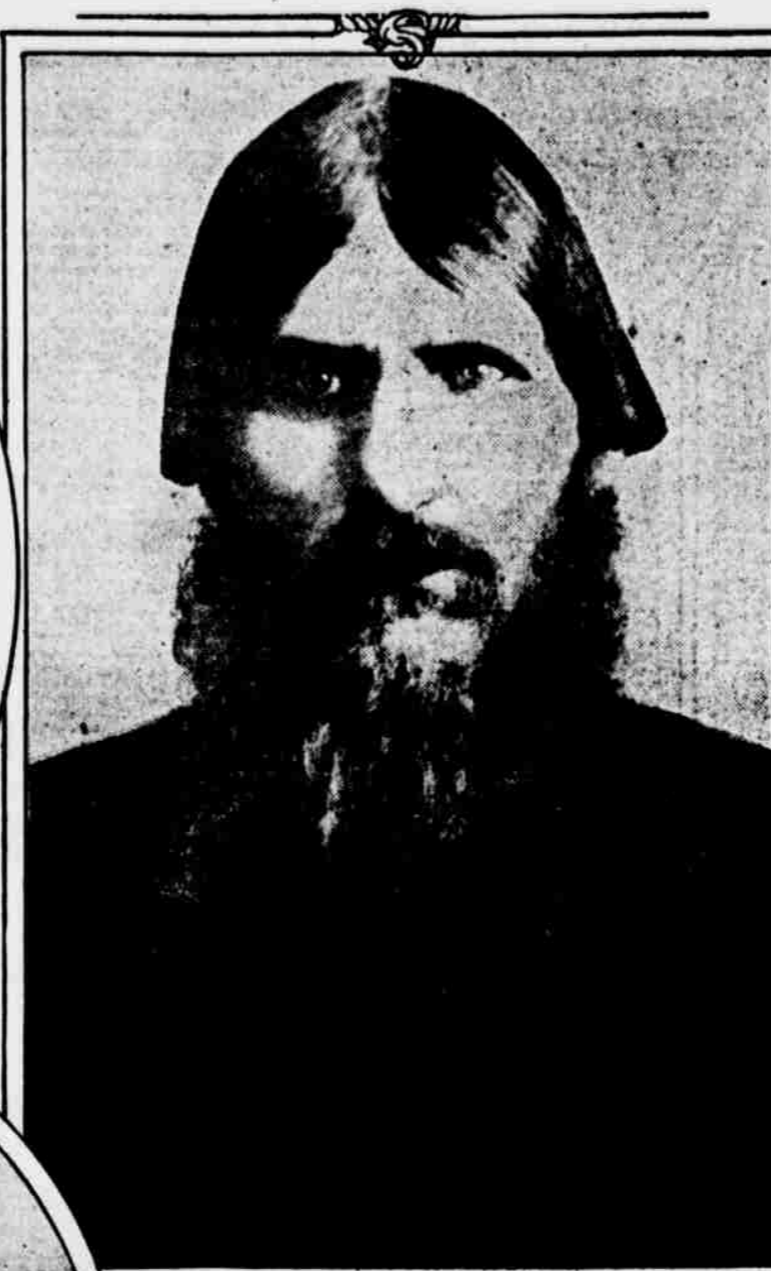
tor; he travelled about Russia preaching arrogantly against the Church, and at the same time incited the mob to riots and to massacres. Liberal Russia was puzzled. No one could understand why this firebrand was permitted to carry on his propaganda of anarchy.

Victor Obninsky, a prominent member of the first Duma, one of the ablest men in the Constitutional Democratic party, in his important book, entitled "The New Order in Russia," published in Moscow in 1908, said this of Ilodor: "The events of 1905 did not separate the State from the Church. In the practical twentieth century life did not bring forth in Russia any clergy who were not afraid of independent views, and the types of Nikon and Philippe have degenerated into the Ilodors and the Vostorgovs."

"After the dispersion of the first Duma the Synod prohibited the clergy from touching in their sermons upon any question relating to the political condition of the country. The circular of the Synod on this subject stated that in case the people desired to hear from their priest as to whether the conditions of the peasants would be ameliorated, the priests should arrange private discussions, pacifying the population, telling the peasants that the czar understood the needs of the peasantry and would improve their condition before long. The manifesto announcing the dispersion of the Duma was to be read with an appropriate explanation."

"Nevertheless, the churches were turned into political arenas. Bishop Nazary of Nizhni Novgorod ordered the Jews organized the revolution, are planning to murder the Real Russian Deputies. The Union of the Real Russians will adopt harsh measures and will destroy the Jewish Government."

"Another notorious priest, the founder of a sect, lectured in St. Petersburg on 'The Jews in general and pogroms in particular.' In that lecture he made the point that the Jews were making pogroms against themselves and he saw in such programs the finger of God, who punished the Jews for their sins against the Government. "But the record of fanaticism and bigotry was broken by the notorious Ilodor, the idol of the sanctimonious saloons of St. Petersburg, who was



GREGORY RASPUTIN.



THE CZARINA



THE CZAR OF RUSSIA.



RASPUTIN, HIS SON MISHKA, HIS DAUGHTER MATRIUSHKA and THE BABY VERA

By Courtesy of Miller's Weekly.

feared by the governors and police inspectors of the regions in which this turbulent instigator of massacres appeared. Finally the archbishops themselves began to ask for the removal of the fanatic, but in vain. Instead, Ilodor was placed in the very home of the man who complained against him, Anthony of Volhynia. Then Ilodor went to Rostov on the Don, where a massacre of Jews occurred immediately after his sermon on September 14, 1907."

When Ilodor commenced to attack the dignitaries of the Church who endeavored to interfere with his propaganda the only bishop who upheld him was Gernomen, another reactionary who also became notorious in connection with pogrom propaganda. No one understood how the young monk in the face of such powerful opposition was received by the czar. The press of Russia devoted much space to Ilodor's weird, eccentric talk, but no one knew at that time that Gregory Rasputin, the illiterate Siberian peasant, the new favorite of the czar, was behind Ilodor.

Rasputin and Ilodor became intimate friends. Rasputin had hoped to make his influence over the czar permanent through his relations with the "Mad Monk." He was illiterate

and he wanted some one who could write out what he regarded as his religious philosophy of life. He also wanted Ilodor's assistance in his plans to become the official father confessor to the czar. For some time Rasputin and Ilodor were close friends. Through Rasputin's efforts the "Mad Monk" was received in audience by the czar and by the Empress. He met them only once, for a brief time, and they spoke to him mainly about Rasputin.

The struggle for power and the desire to replace Rasputin in the favor of the czar turned Ilodor into Rasputin's arch enemy. Knowing of a number of Rasputin's escapades, Ilodor resolved to expose the "saint" Rasputin in the hope that he would be called to take his place as spiritual adviser to the czar.

But Rasputin was the abler and the cleverer of the two, and notwithstanding the assistance of Bishop Gernomen Ilodor failed in his efforts to shake the confidence of the czar and the Czarina in Rasputin. Ilodor was thrown into prison. He escaped from Russia on the day of the outbreak of the war, clad as a woman, and thus saved himself from the hand of Rasputin which was stretching out to crush him completely.

the same man who recommends Premiers and removes Procurators of the Synod, who helped Ilodor against the Synod and the Synod against Ilodor, and the man who is helped by Rasputin always wins."

One of the most characteristic instances showing to what extent the czar was influenced by this corrupt and illiterate peasant "saint" occurred in connection with the death of Count Leo Tolstoy and the resolution of the church on that occasion. The czar made public the resolution prepared for him, praying God to be merciful to the Christian just departed. The reactionary press of Russia sang the czar's praises, but somehow the czar was not pleased with the order issued by the Holy Synod forbidding the traditional religious service at the Tolstoy funeral.

He was not quite sure that the church had taken the right course in the matter. Instead of consulting the foremost dignitaries of the church or the synod, he sent for his friend Rasputin, who was in Siberia at the time in his home village.

Gregory Rasputin, who not only preached immorality but who was attacked on several occasions by women he had deceived, was summoned to Tsarskoe Selo to advise the czar with regard to the attitude of the Russian Church toward the ex-communication of Leo Tolstoy. A fellow passenger of Rasputin's in the Siberian train relates the following conversation which took place while Rasputin was hastening to the czar.

"This is not my first visit to Tsarskoe Selo," said Rasputin. "It is true the members of the court party do not like me. But I pay no attention to them. I am supposed to visit the man nurse or tutor of the Czar's children, but I am ushered into the czar's room. "I drink tea with the czar and Czarina, and we always talk a great deal, discuss whether the priests have acted properly in prohibiting a religious ceremony at the Tolstoy funeral. The czar thinks it was foolish." "Later, when this passenger became better acquainted with Rasputin, he asked: "Tell me, is it true that you are doing all the nasty things we hear about you and read in the newspapers?" Rasputin smiled and said: "About half of it, of course, is a lie, but then—we are all human, we are only human." "And he laughed again. "The ablest and at the same time the most reactionary publicist in Russia, M. Menshikov, characterized Rasputin in the following account of his career,

which was suppressed by the Russian Government: "I know Rasputin, and I can speak about him from my own impressions. Zazonoff, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, brought this saintly old man to me when he was at the height of his glory a few years ago. The 'old monk' dined with me, and we had a long discussion about the affairs in Russia in general and about himself in particular.

"At first he appeared to me as a rather youthful peasant of about 40, neatly dressed. His face was that of a drunkard and his restless eyes, his low voice resembled those of a monastery servant or a palmer. His speech was abrupt and he used at times mysterious expressions.

"At first I was surprised that such a half savage peasant from Siberia could not only find his way to St. Petersburg but that he could find a welcome reception at the homes of the very highest society. After having spoken to Rasputin I convinced myself that he knew how to produce an impression. He is a natural philosopher coming from the depths, almost illiterate, but well learned in Scripture, a man who talks about religion like a grammarian and endowed with natural enthusiasm.

"Some of his sayings impressed me for their originality and even for their depth. Thus the oracles of old spoke in a state of delirium—there was something absurdly wise in his enigmatic words. Some of Rasputin's ideas seemed to me to be near the stoic and ascetic philosophy and his characterizations of some priests and high dignitaries struck me as very keen and correct.

"The first impression made upon me was a good one. I thought he was a cunning peasant, but naturally religious, capable of making people wake from their lethargic sleep as far as faith was concerned. But I did not like so much his fancy boots and the fact that he was going from my house to call on a certain lady.

"I should very much like to remain in your house," he said to me, 'but I have been invited to go there and I must go.' "It was also surprising that Rasputin kissed ladies' hands on bidding them good-by. A rather strange saint, I thought, one of those that occasionally make their appearance in fashionable drawing rooms. I had heard some of my friends praising Rasputin, but soon various strange stories about Rasputin reached me. "Then Rasputin lost the confidence

(Continued on Ninth Page.)