

RASPUTIN.

BY THE EDITOR.

GREGORY RASPUTIN was assassinated on May 11 according to the Overseas News Agency which bases its report upon information received from Petrograd; why and by whom is not reported. Has the war party removed him? Possibly! He has always been a most vigorous advocate of peace. Witte died suddenly when it was known that he intended to persuade the Czar to make peace, and there are a number of other advocates of peace who were either assassinated or died of untraceable causes in different countries.

Rasputin was a wonderful man, a simple peasant, but a pious man and his faith was power. It was the power of a deep conviction, an unshakable trust in God, a living Christian faith. Thousands and thousands of people believed in him, for his prayer has proved a help to many. He laid his hands upon the sick and their fears were calmed. Many patients were cured by him where physicians' drugs had failed.

The fame of Rasputin spread and reached Tsarskoye Selo, the residence of the imperial family. The son of the Czar, the heir apparent to the throne, is of delicate constitution, and during an illness the pious peasant was called to pray for the patient. Rasputin came, exercised his powers, and the prince recovered. Since that incident Rasputin gained great influence with the Czar and became famous all over Russia as a miracle-worker.

Nicholas II, Czar of Russia, is not a warrior, nor is he ambitious. He is not personally to be blamed for the present war, which was undertaken at the instigation of Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaivitch. The latter hungers for military glory; he has been head of the war party and is a powerful factor in Russian statecraft.

The Czar's wife has always tried to keep peace and is opposed to the Grand Duke, but when the formation of the Triple Entente

offered the prospect of an easy success in the conquest of Germany the war party gained the upper hand; and, as we all know, the Serb difficulty duly became the sufficient pretext for war,—a war which was certain to develop into a general European conflagration. The last straw which was to break the camel's back was, according to a letter of the Belgian ambassador at Petrograd, the assurance given by Great Britain that she would under all conditions stand by France; for thus it was designed that Russian weakness on the sea should be supplemented by England's naval supremacy. It was taken for granted that the English would bombard the German cities on the Baltic and North Seas and protect Russian transports landing a Russian army in Pomerania.

How the Czar was induced to overcome his objections to the war is not known. Some even hint that threats were used and that Nicholas, nominally autocrat and sole ruler over the Russian empire, was intimidated by the alternative of resignation or war. Possibly he may have been offered as alternative a worse fate than resignation. At any rate he uses the expression, in his correspondence with the Kaiser, that he would try to keep peace if he could withstand the pressure exercised on him.

Dr. Rohrbach informs us that the Czar, at the request of his advisers, visited the army in order to show himself to the troops and inspire the nation with the thought that the ruler of Russia is as martial as the Kaiser and, among the allies, the King of the Belgians.

When the Czar returned to Tsarskoye Selo he called Rasputin into consultation. In addition to his healing powers, Rasputin is said to have possessed the faculty of clairvoyance, and he gave warnings firm and unequivocal against the war, saying that if persisted in it would bring misfortune to the empire. As Rasputin's prophecy has so far turned out true, the Czar is believed to be inclined to accept his advice, but Nicolaivitch, the grand duke, is still in favor of continuing the war. Some time ago he blamed one of his generals, said to be the best and most efficient of his officers, for the defeat which he had suffered at the hands of Hindenburg; but Russia's supply of new armies seems to be inexhaustible, and the grand duke, although he has already lost three armies, is ready to risk a fourth in the hope that at last he will be successful. Germany cannot afford to have a single serious defeat, while Russia has enough men to be even wasteful of them, and a final triumph would make up for the enormous sacrifices which she has so far made. It is difficult to say what will be the end of this terrible embroglio,

but this much is sure, that the original hope of the Allies that England should become a power in the Baltic, that Germany could be starved into submission, and that Russia, with her tremendously superior numbers, should overwhelm the Germans, has absolutely failed. It looks as if Rasputin was to remain justified.

In speaking of Rasputin, the healer and prophet, we must not omit to mention that there is another side to the story of his great accomplishments and the religious halo that surrounds him. He may be very religious, but unfortunately he cannot be called moral. On the contrary he has been accused of gross immorality and habitual drunkenness. The charges against him seem to have been corroborated in the courts, and even his friends have apparently not been in a position to deny them. It would be interesting to have all the facts concerning this modern miracle-worker gathered and critically sifted, and thus obtain a psychological picture of him. The factors that have made him successful in his remarkable career would then be seen; for a remarkable career his surely was, even if his character would have to be condemned as corrupt and debased. Possibly his death has atoned for his misdeeds if his end was a martyrdom for the cause of peace.

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As our issue is going to press we find the following additional item reported through the Associated Press, from its correspondent in Christiania, Norway: "Details of a plot to murder Rasputin were revealed by Heliodorus, the 'Mad Monk of Tsaritsyn,' a fantastic leader of the masses of the Volga region, who has figured prominently in the Rasputin case and is now a refugee in Christiania. According to Heliodorus, a representative of the Russian minister of the interior, Khovstoff, arrived in Christiania last January and proposed that Heliodorus become party to a conspiracy to assassinate the mystic monk. Khvostoff's envoy is said to have declared that Rasputin was working for a separate peace between Germany and Russia. Heliodorus, desiring to learn the whole plot, posed as willing to enter the conspiracy and signed a contract to engage a band of murderers for 60,000 rubles."