

AN AMBASSADOR'S MEMOIRS
By Maurice Paléologue
Volume I

CHAPTER V

SEPTEMBER 12--OCTOBER 28, 1914

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Saturday, September 12, 1914.

The Marne victory is hailed as a deliverance in all Russian social circles. Congratulations are pouring in to the Embassy. But the recent disaster at Soldau and disquieting rumours in the last two days as to the course of the great battle in progress in the east of East Prussia are casting a general gloom over men's minds and rendering them almost indifferent to the brilliant successes in Galicia. And even if the public pays a generous tribute to the heroism of the French army and General Joffre's skill in manoeuvre, it does not fail to add that if it were not for the terrible hecatomb of Soldau the Germans would now be in Paris.

Rasputin has recovered from his wound and has returned to Petrograd. It has been easy for him to prove that his recovery is striking proof of divine protection.

When he speaks of the war it is only in veiled, ambiguous, and apocalyptic terms, and the conclusion is drawn that he does not approve of it and anticipates great misfortunes.

Someone else has just come back to Petrograd on whose return I have equally little cause to congratulate myself, as he has done nothing but give vent to lugubrious prophecies since his arrival---I mean Count Witte, who was at Biarritz when war broke out. He called on me the day before yesterday.

My personal acquaintance with him is confined to a single meeting in Paris in the autumn of 1905. He was' returning from America after signing the Peace of Portsmouth and he spoke very bitterly of France, which he accused of giving insufficient support to her ally, Russia, against Japan. At the time I was much struck by his acute mind, broad views, and the somewhat contemptuous authority of his language and his whole personality.

Let me give a few biographical details. Sergius Yulievitch Witte was born on June 29, 1849, in the Caucasus, where his father was rector of the university department. His mother, a Fadeïev, belonged to an old Russian family. He took the mathematics course at Odessa University, but lack of means soon compelled him to break off his studies. He then obtained a post in the South Western railways. He was still only a stationmaster at Popielna, a little hamlet near Kiev, when Vishnegradsky, the President of the Company, "discovered him" and promoted him at one step to the post of manager.

In 1889, Vishnegradsky was made Finance Minister and he immediately sent for Witte to come to St. Petersburg and made him his right-hand man. Their close co-operation promptly raised Russian credit to a level it had never reached before. In 1892, however, Vishnegradsky had to retire, worn out by work. Witte succeeded him. His strength of character, experience, and talents soon secured him an outstanding place among the political leaders of the Empire. He became President of the Committee of Ministers at the end of 1903, but he did not succeed in foiling the insane combination of intrigue and speculation which led to the outbreak of the Manchurian war on February 8 following. After the disasters of Mukden and Tsushima it was universally recognized that he alone was of a stature to conduct the peace negotiations. On September 5, 1905, he had the melancholy honour of signing the Treaty of Portsmouth.

As a reward for his services Nicholas II gave him the title of count, but at the bottom of his heart he hated this proud and ironical nature and cold, penetrating and acid intellect, in contact with which he always felt himself *gauche* and disarmed.

Revolutionary troubles rapidly grew worse, however, and the dynasty was threatened.

Hitherto Witte had always been a sincere advocate of autocracy. In his view the western states had no particular reason to boast of their constitutional dogmas and Tsarism, though part of its machinery could perhaps do with renovation, was perfectly adapted to the instincts, manners, and powers of the Russian people. But faced with this urgent peril he did not hesitate. On October 30, after interminable discussions with the terrified Tsar, he induced him to sign the famous *Manifesto* which seemed destined to be Russia's *Magna Charta* and, conceding the principle of various fundamental liberties, summoned an imperial Duma for an early date. A week later he was appointed President of the Council of Ministers.

During the following months the situation did anything but improve. Emboldened by their first success the parties of the Left put forward new claims. The arrogance and audacity of the revolutionaries greatly increased. Simultaneously a violent reaction, the handiwork of the "Black Bands," mobilized the rural masses in the cause of orthodox absolutism. Massacres of liberals, *intelligentsia* and Jews occurred in every part of the Empire. Witte soon realized that he could never come to terms either with the Duma---because it was pursuing a programme of sedition---or with the Conservatives, because they would never forgive him for the manifesto of October 30. Preferring to keep himself for the future he offered his resignation to the Tsar who was only too glad to see him go. But before surrendering his portfolio he gave himself the pleasure of a last success in the service of which he is a past master---finance. On April 16, 1906, he negotiated in Paris a loan of two thousand million francs on terms very favourable to the Russian treasury. On May 5, Nicholas II finally accepted his resignation and appointed as his successor Ivan Loguinovitch Goremykin, the present President of the Council.

He arrived here from Biarritz a week ago and, as I have said, called on me the day before yesterday. As an excuse for his visit he reminded me of our meeting in Paris in the autumn of 1905, and at once, without any preliminaries, opened a discussion, head erect, eyes fixed on me, and his speech firm, precise, and slow:

"This war's madness," he said. "It has been forced on the Tsar's prudence by stupid and short-sighted politicians. It can only have disastrous results for Russia. France and England alone can hope to derive any benefit from victory. . . . and, anyhow, a victory for us seems to me highly questionable."

"Of course the benefits to be derived from this war---as from any other war---depend upon victory. But I presume that if we are victorious Russia will get her share, and a large share, of the advantages and rewards. . . . After all, forgive me for reminding you that if the world is now on fire it is in a cause which interested Russia first and foremost, a cause which is eminently the Slav cause and did not affect either France or England."

"No doubt you're referring to our prestige in the Balkans, our pious duty to protect our blood brothers, our historic and sacred mission in the East? Why, that's a romantic, old-fashioned chimæra. No one here, no thinking man at least, now cares a fig for these turbulent and vain Balkan folk who have nothing Slav about them and are only Turks christened by the wrong name. We ought to have let the Serbs suffer the chastisement they deserved. What did *they* care about their Slav brotherhood when their King Milan made Serbia an Austrian fief? So much for the origin of this war! Now let's talk about the profits and rewards it will bring us. What can we hope to get? An increase of territory. Great Heavens! Isn't His Majesty's empire big enough already? Haven't we in Siberia, Turkistan, the Caucasus, Russia itself, enormous areas which have not yet been opened up? . . . Then what are the conquests they dangle before our eyes

East Prussia? Hasn't the Emperor too many Germans among his subjects already? Galicia? It's full of Jews! Besides, the moment we annex Austria and Prussia's Polish territories we shall lose the whole of Russian Poland. Don't you make any mistake: when Poland has recovered her territorial integrity she won't be content with the autonomy she's been so stupidly promised. She'll claim ---and get---her absolute independence. What else have we to hope for? Constantinople, the Cross on Santa Sophia, the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles? It's too mad a notion to be worth a moment's consideration! And even if we assume a complete victory for our coalition---the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs reduced to begging for peace and submitting to our terms---it means not only the end of German domination but the proclamation of republics throughout Central Europe. That means the simultaneous end of Tsarism! I prefer to remain silent as to what we may expect on the hypothesis of our defeat."

"What practical conclusion do you come to?"

"My practical conclusion is that we must liquidate this stupid adventure as soon as possible."

"You'll appreciate that I can't follow you in your criticisms of your Government for its support of Serbia. But you argue as if it was responsible for the war. It was not your Government which wanted the war, nor indeed the French or British Governments. I can guarantee that the three governments did all that was honourably possible to save peace. In any case our business at the moment is not to ascertain whether the war could or could not have been avoided, but to win the victory. Why, the conclusions to which you yourself come on the assumption of our defeat are so terrifying that you daren't mention them! As for *'promptly liquidating this stupid adventure,'* it's an idea which astonishes me in a statesman of your intelligence. Can't you see that the gigantic struggle in which we are involved is a duel to the death, and that a compromise peace would mean the triumph of Germany?"

Looking incredulous, he replied:

"So we've got to go on fighting!"

"Yes, until victory."

He half shrugged his shoulders. Then after a moment's hesitation he resumed:

"I'm afraid you credit certain idle rumours and believe me inspired by ill-feeling towards France; that's how, you account for everything you don't like in what I have said."

"If I had credited you with ill-feeling towards France, particularly at the present moment, I shouldn't have received you, Monsieur le Comte; at any rate I should have broken off our conversation long ago. All I know is that you are hostile to the policy of the Triple Entente."

"Yes, but I've always been an advocate of the French alliance."

"On condition that it was completed by an alliance with Germany."

"I admit it."

"What about Alsace-Lorraine? How would you deal with that in your combination?"

"The difficulty did not seem to me insurmountable. In any case I should never have sacrificed the French alliance to the German alliance. I have given convincing proof of that."

"Are you referring to what happened at Bjorkö between the Emperor Nicholas and the Emperor William in July, 1905?"

"Yes; but it's a subject on which I'm bound to silence. . . . Do you mind my asking what you know about it?"

"Our information about the incident is very imperfect, and in the interests of the alliance itself we have not tried to clear up the semi-confidences my predecessor, Monsieur Bompard, received from you. If I had to sum up the various pieces of information I should say that at the Bjorkö meeting the Emperor William proposed to the Tsar an agreement incompatible with the French alliance and that, owing to your personal intervention, the scheme came to nothing."

"That's quite accurate."

"Forgive me for asking you a question in return. Did the agreement proposed by the Emperor William bind France to make common cause with Germany in future?"

"I'm sworn to secrecy on this matter. . . . All I can tell you is that the Emperor William has never forgiven me for having brought his scheme to nought. And yet they accuse me of being a Germanophile! As a matter of fact, the Emperor Nicholas hates me far more, not only because I frustrated the German intrigue, but---and this is my worst offence---because shortly afterwards I submitted for his signature the famous manifesto of October 30, 1905, which gave legislative power to the Duma. Since then the Emperor has regarded me as his enemy and goes about telling his intimates that I dream of succeeding him as President of the Russian Republic. How absurd! What a pity! From the Emperor's feelings towards me you can imagine what the Empress thinks! But enough of all these trifles! I'm afraid I've kept you too long, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*, and perhaps forced my effusions upon you. Only please remember that in one important affair I proved myself a true friend to France."

"I shall never forget it, and I'm grateful for your confidences."

He rose from his chair and, straightening himself awkwardly after the manner of tall men, he took his leave in the most friendly terms.

When he had gone I went for a walk on the Islands. As I strolled in the solitary avenue which is my favourite haunt, I turned this long conversation over in my mind. I could still see the tall figure of the old statesman---an enigmatic, unnerving individual, a great intellect, despotic, disdainful, conscious of his powers, a prey to ambition, jealousy, and pride. I feel that if the war goes badly for us his strength of character will bring him to the front again. But I also think how evil an influence the spread of his ideas on the war may have in a country in which public opinion is so emotional and unstable, and how dangerous it is to tell a Russian that "this stupid adventure must be liquidated as soon as possible."⁽¹⁾

Sunday, September 13, 1914.

In France the Germans are still retreating, abandoning prisoners, wounded and unwounded, guns and transport. The left wing of the French army has crossed the Aisne., the centre is making progress between the Argonne and the Meuse; the right wing is forcing the enemy back in the direction of Metz.

In the east of East Prussia General Rennenkampf's army looks as if it ought to escape the catastrophe with which it was threatened; it has practically succeeded in forcing a passage through the Masurian Lakes and is falling back on Kovno and Grodno.

In Galicia the Russians have crossed the lower San and in the Bukovina they have occupied Czernowitz.

To-day is the birthday of Saint Alexander Nevsky, the Tsar of Novgorod, who defeated the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights on the banks of the Neva in 1241. On the spot where the national hero won his victory Peter the Great built a monastery as vast and sumptuous as the famous *Lauras* at Kiev and Serghievo. Girt with walls and moats like a monastic citadel the *Laura* of Petrograd comprises a cathedral, eleven churches, numerous chapels, the Metropolitan's residence, the monks' cells, a seminary, an ecclesiastical academy and three cemeteries. I often take my walk there to enjoy the charm of peace and silence it gives, the atmosphere of religious resignation and sweet humanity it breathes. To-day a huge crowd filled the courts and sanctuaries. In the Cathedral of the Trinity---one great cloud of incense---the pious were swarming round the shrine of Saint Alexander. The throng was quite as great in the Church of the Annunciation, round the bronze slab on which this modest and eloquent epitaph may be read: *Here lies Suvorov*. Women were in a large majority. They were praying for their husbands, brothers, and sons fighting away at the front. Several groups of peasants, men and women, made a touching picture with their grave and wrapt gaze. I was particularly struck by one *moujik*, an old man with snow-white hair and beard, swarthy complexion, broad and deeply wrinkled forehead, melancholy, luminous and distant eyes---the typical patriarch. Standing before an ikon of Saint Alexander he was turning his cap in his bony fingers, nor did he stop for a moment except to cross himself fervently while bowing low. He muttered an interminable prayer, a prayer very different no doubt from those which are being offered up at the present time in the churches of France; for the way of prayer varies with different races. When a Russian soul beseeches God's help what it expects is not so much the strength to will and act as the strength to suffer and endure. This old man's face and pose were so expressive that he seemed to me to personify the patriotism of the Russian peasant.

In the evening I went to the Marie Theatre for a performance of Glinka's *Life for the Tsar*. The Director of the imperial theatres had invited my English and Japanese colleagues, the Belgian and Serbian Ministers and myself to be present this evening as a demonstration in honour of the Allies had been prepared. Before the curtain rose the orchestra played the Russian national anthem, the *Boje Tsaria Kranie*, which Prince Lvov composed about 1825, a hymn with a broad sweep which produces a noble, religious effect. How many times had I heard it before? But I had never realized so forcibly how foreign the melody of the

national anthem is to Russian music and how German it is---in the direct tradition of Bach and Händel. But that did not prevent the public from listening to it in a patriotic silence which ended in an outburst of prolonged cheering. Next came the *Marseillaise*, received with transports of delight. Then *Rule Britannia* which was likewise hailed with loud cheers. Buchanan was in the box next to mine and I asked him why the orchestra played *Rule Britannia* and not *God Save the King*. He replied that as the latter was the same as the Prussian national anthem the authorities feared a mistake which would have shocked the public. Next came the Japanese national anthem, suitably greeted. I calculated that it was only nine years since Mukden and Tsushima! At the opening notes of the *Brabançonne* a storm of grateful and admiring cheers burst. Everyone seemed to be saying: "Where should we be now if Belgium had not resisted?" The ovation to the Serbian national anthem was more restrained, in fact very restrained. Many people seemed to be reflecting: "If it had not been for the Serbs we should still be at peace!"

Then we had to sit through the *Life for the Tsar*, a stale and frigid work with its too official loyalty and its too old-fashioned Italianism. The public enjoyed it all the same for Glinka's drama touches the very fibres of the Russian conscience.

Monday, September 14, 1914.

In France the Germans are slowly retiring northwards. They seem to have prepared strong positions on the Aisne. If they manage to hold us up in these lines the victory of the Marne will not have been as decisive as we could have hoped. It is only by the results of the pursuit that the importance of a victory can be measured.

Anyhow I was not surprised by a telegram I receive this morning in which Delcassé instructs me to impress on the Russian Government that it is essential for the Russian armies to press home their direct offensive against Germany. The fact is that Bordeaux is afraid that our Allies may have had their heads turned by their relatively easy successes in Galicia and may neglect the German front in order to concentrate on forcing their way to Vienna.

This very morning I went to the War Office and told General Sukhomlinov of the French Government's concern. He replied:

"But our direct offensive against Germany began on August 16 and we're continuing it vigorously and on the largest possible scale! You know as much as I do about our operations in East Prussia. What more can we do, I ask you?"

"How soon will the Niemen and Narev armies be able to resume their advance? "

"Oh, not for a long time yet! They've suffered too heavily. I'm afraid they may even have to retreat a little further yet . . . but I don't mind telling you---in strict secrecy---that the Grand Duke Nicholas is contemplating and preparing an operation on a wide front in the direction of Posen and Breslau."

"Excellent!"

"I mustn't hide from you that it will take a long time to organize this operation. We can't take any more risks. Don't forget, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*, that we've already sacrificed 110,000 men at Soldau to help the French army!"

"We should have made the same sacrifice to help the Russian army. . . . But without diminishing the practical importance and moral effect of the service you then rendered us forgive me for remarking that it was not our fault if General Artamanov retreated 20 versts on the left wing without notifying his Army Commander!"

We returned to the matter which was the reason for my visit. I reiterated my desire to obtain an assurance that the Russian armies would not allow themselves to be deflected towards Vienna and neglect their principal objective---the German objective:

"I am not forgetting," I said, " that the final decision as regards operations is the province of the generalissimo, but I know also that the Grand Duke Nicholas always attaches great importance to your views and suggestions. So I'm relying on you to back up my request to the Grand Duke."

He fixed his eyes on me, eyes that were sharp and cunning under their heavy lids:

"But we can't stop our advance in Galicia where we are gaining brilliant successes every day! Remember that since the campaign started the Austrians have already lost 200,000 men killed or wounded, in addition to 60,000 prisoners and 600 guns!"

"Your Excellency too must remember that the Germans are only 70 kilometres from Paris! What would you say if they were 70 versts from Petrograd, half-way between Luga and Gatchina? . . . Besides, I'm not asking you to suspend your operations in Galicia but merely not to get too involved there and forget that our main object the destruction of the German armies."

A smile, a hypocritically pleasant smile, spread over his face:

"We're both absolutely agreed on that! *Monsieur*

l'Ambassadeur, I'm quite sure we shall always understand one another."

"So I can rely on you to telegraph to the Grand Duke Nicholas?"

"I'll do more than that. I'll send him one of my officers this very evening."

Before withdrawing I asked the Minister about the result of the recent fighting in East Prussia. He replied that it had been extremely severe at Tilsit, Gumbinnen and Lyck, but that the Russian army had succeeded in making its way out of the Mazurian Lakes region and at the moment was falling back on Kovno.

"So all East Prussia has been lost?"

"Yes."

"What are your losses?"

"I don't exactly know."

"A hundred thousand men?"

"Perhaps."

Tuesday, September 15, 1914.

As I distrust General Sukhomlinov and all the doubtful intrigues in which he is an agent I again took up the question of the direct offensive against Germany with Sazonov this morning and asked him to put our representations before the Emperor on my behalf.

"For greater accuracy," he said, " draft the answer yourself that you want His Majesty to give."

I then drafted the following: "As soon as the Austro-Hungarian armies in Galicia have been put out of action the direct offensive of the Russian armies against Germany will be pressed with the greatest energy."

"That's all right," Sazonov said. "I'll write to His Majesty at once."

At eleven this evening the Tsar had me informed that he accepted my draft and had wired accordingly to the Grand Duke Nicholas.

Wednesday, September 16, 1914.

The Battle of the Marne is being continued on the Aisne ---with the difference that the Germans have dug themselves in on strong defensive positions, so that the struggle is assuming the character of siege warfare.

The Russians are on the heels of the Austrians between Sandomir and Jaroslav.

Since mobilization the Government has prohibited the sale of spirits, *vodka*, in the whole territory of the Empire. This great reform was introduced by the rescript of February 13, 1914, and the whole credit for it is the Emperor's. It is being carried out so methodically and strictly as to leave one astonished at the Russian bureaucracy. The effects of the reform are seen in a decrease in crimes of violence and an appreciable increase in the output of labour.

Thursday, September 17, 1914.

The Grand Duke Nicholas has just issued a proclamation to the nations of Austria-Hungary, inviting them to throw off the Hapsburg yoke and realize their national aspirations at last.

Simultaneously Sazonov is pressing the Rumanian Government to occupy Transylvania and join in the occupation of the Bukovina by the Russian troops.

Saturday, September 19, 1914.

The bombardment of Rheims and destruction of the cathedral are affecting Petrograd very deeply. No event of the war has made such a striking impression on the Russian imagination---an imagination excessively emotional, hungering after melodrama, indifferent and all but blind to reality except when it appears in the form of picturesque and theatrical happenings, or moving and dramatic scenes.

Sunday, September 20, 1914.

The Emperor is on a tour of inspection to the army fronts.

As a rule the meetings of the Empress and Rasputin take place in Madame Vyubova's little house on the Sredniaya. But yesterday the *staretz* was received at the palace itself and his visit lasted nearly two hours.

Tuesday, September 22, 1914.

This morning I was called on by a Frenchman, Robert Gauthiot, professor at the *École des Hautes-Études* in Paris. He has come straight from Pamir where he was engaged on an ethnological and linguistic expedition.

In the second week of August he was in the neighbourhood of Chorog, a valley 4,000 metres high on the slopes of the Hindu Kush. He had proceeded a twelve-days' march beyond the last Russian post guarding the frontier of Ferghana, the ancient Sogdiana. On August 16 a native who had gone to get him supplies from this post told him that Germany had declared war on Russia and France. He started back immediately and has reached Petrograd in one stage, via Marghelan, Samarkand, Tiflis, and Moscow.

I told him the extraordinary series of events which has marked the last two months. He told me how very impatient he was to get back to France and rejoin his territorial regiment. Then we explored the future. We calculated what a colossal effort will be required of us to destroy the power of Germany, and so on. I am particularly interested in his views because he has paid frequent and long visits to Germany. Among the most noteworthy of his remarks was this:

"I have spent a good deal of time among the German Socialists; I know their doctrines well and their habit of mind even better. You may be quite certain, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*, that they will do all they can to help in the war and fight as hard as the most inveterate junker. Why, I'm a Socialist myself; I'm actually anti-militarist. But you can see it doesn't prevent me from going to defend my country."

I congratulated him on his eagerness to perform his military duty and have asked him to lunch with me to-morrow.

When he had gone I reflected that I had had before me eloquent proof of the patriotism with which the French intellectuals are inspired, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary.

Here is one of them who hears of the war when he is in the depths of the Pamir, 4,000 metres up, on the "Roof of the World." He is alone, left to his own resources, away from the contagious fever of the sublime national impulse which is sweeping over France. Yet he does not hesitate a moment. All his socialist and pacifist theories, the interest of his scientific expedition and his own personal interests vanish before the vision of "La Patrie" in danger. He rushes to the rescue.(2)

Count Kokovtsov, ex-President of the Council, whose clear-eyed patriotism and high intelligence I so much admire, has been to see me at the Embassy.⁽³⁾ He has just returned from an estate of his near Novgorod.

"You know," he said, "that temperamentally I'm not prone to optimism, but all the same I think the war is going well for us. As a matter of fact, I never thought our war with Germany could have any other beginning. We've suffered some reverses, but our armies are intact, and our *moral* is excellent. In a few months from now we shall be strong enough to crush our terrible opponent."

Then he talked about the terms of peace we shall have to impose on Germany, and expressed himself with a violence which astonished me in a man who usually weighs his words so carefully:

"When the hour of peace strikes we must be ruthless . . . *ruthless!* Public opinion will drive us to ruthlessness, anyhow. You've no idea how furious the *moujiks* are with Germany."

"That's really most interesting! You noticed it yourself? "

"Only the day before yesterday. . . . I was leaving that morning and taking a walk in my grounds. I saw a very old peasant who lost his only son a long time ago and has his two grandsons in the army. On his own initiative and without my asking him he told me how much he feared that the war would not be fought out to the bitter end, the hateful German brood destroyed and the evil weed of the *Ni Metz*⁽⁴⁾ rooted out of the soil of Russia. I congratulated him on his patriotism in accepting the risks to which the two grandsons, his sole means of support, were exposed. He replied: 'Look, *barin*. If we're unlucky enough not to destroy the *Ni Metz*, they'll come *here*; they'll reign over the whole of Russia and then they'll harness you and me---yes, you as well---to their ploughs! . . .' That's what our peasants are thinking."

"Their reasoning is very sound, at any rate in a symbolical sense."

Thursday, September 24, 1914.

I have had a talk with the Minister for Agriculture, Krivoshein, whose personal authority, lucid intellect and political talents seem to have won him a high degree of confidence and favour with Nicholas II.

Yesterday he had a long conference with the Emperor whom he found in excellent spirits. During the conversation His Majesty casually remarked:

"I shall fight this war to the bitter end. To wear down Germany I shall exhaust all my resources; I'll retreat to the Volga if necessary."

The Tsar also said: "In starting this war the Emperor William has dealt a terrible blow to the monarchical principle."

Saturday, September 26, 1914.

In accordance with the promise I received from the Emperor on September 15, the Russian army is about to resume the offensive in the direction of Berlin, via Breslau. All the preparations are complete and a cavalry corps, consisting of 120 squadrons, has already been sent forward with infantry support.

On this subject General de Laguiche writes to me as follows from Baranovici:

I have received a formal promise that they will not allow themselves to be deflected towards Vienna. I can assure you that there is no dissentient voice on this subject, not one which asks anything but an advance on Berlin. The Austrian is not the enemy now; we are attacking Germany with our whole soul in our task and a burning desire to close with her at the first possible moment. I am touched to see how anxious the military leaders are about French intentions and aspirations. Everything is being done with a single eye to coming up to the expectations of our Ally. This has struck me very forcibly.

Sunday, September 27, 1914.

I have lunched at Tsarskoïe-Selo with Countess B----- whose sister is very friendly with Rasputin. I asked her about the *staretz*.

"Has he seen much of the Emperor and Empress since his return?"

"Not much. I've an idea that their Majesties are keeping him away to a certain extent at the moment. For example, yesterday he was at my sister's house, quite near here. He telephoned, in our presence, to the palace to ask Madame Vyrubova if he could see the Empress in the evening. She replied he had better wait a few days. He seemed very annoyed at this answer, and left us at once, without even saying good-bye! . . . In other days he wouldn't even have asked if he could go to the palace; he'd have gone straight there."

"How can you account for this sudden decline in his fortunes?"

"Simply by the fact that the Empress has been torn from her old fits of melancholia. From morning to night she's busy with her hospitals, sewing committees and hospital train. She has never looked so well."

"Is it true that Rasputin has told the Emperor that this war will be disastrous to Russia and must be stopped at once?"

"I doubt it. . . . Last June, just before Khinia Gusseva's attempt on his life, Rasputin was frequently telling the Emperor to beware of France and make friends with Germany; of course, he was only repeating the words old Prince Mestchersky had had such difficulty in teaching him. But since his return from Pokrovskoïe he has been talking in a very different strain. Only the day before yesterday he said to me: 'I'm very pleased this war has come: it has delivered us from two great evils, drink and German friendship. Woe to the Tsar if he stops the conflict before Germany has been crushed!'"

"Good! But does he talk in the same way to the sovereigns? Only a fortnight ago I had a very different report about what he was saying."

"He may have said something different. Rasputin is not a politician with a system or programme from which he draws his inspiration in all circumstances. He's a *moujik*, illiterate, impulsive, visionary, capricious and a bundle of contradictions. But as he's very cunning and feels that his position at the palace is shaken I should be surprised if he spoke openly against the war."

"Are you under his spell?"

"I? Not in the least! Physically I find him disgusting; he has dirty hands, black nails and an unkempt beard. Horrors! I'll admit he amuses me all the same. He has extraordinary *verve* and imagination. At times he is actually eloquent. He has a gift for metaphor and a deep sense of mystery."

"Is he really so eloquent?"

"Yes. I assure you that some days he has a very original and arresting way of speaking. He is familiar, mocking, violent, merry, ridiculous and poetical by turns. And with all this not a trace of pose! On the contrary, the most unexampled effrontery and the most staggering cynicism."

"You describe him to the life."

"Tell me, honestly, wouldn't you like to know him?"

"No, indeed! He's too compromising. But please keep me *au fait* with all he is saying and doing, as I'm uneasy about him."

Monday, September 28, 1914.

I, told Sazonov what Countess B----- told me yesterday about Rasputin.

He went purple in the face at once.

"For Heaven's sake don't mention that man's name to me! I loathe him. . . . He's not merely an adventurer and a charlatan: he's the incarnation of the Devil himself; he's Antichrist!"

So many legends have already gathered round the *staretz* that it seems to me useful to give some authentic facts.

Grigory Rasputin was born in 1871 at Pokrovskoïe, a wretched hamlet on the borders of Western Siberia, between Tiumen and Tobolsk. His father was a simple *moujik*, a drunken, thieving horse-dealer. His name was Eflin Novy. The surname of Rasputin, which young Grigory soon received from his comrades, is eloquent of this period of his life and prophetic of the future; it is a term of peasant slang, derived from the word *rasputnik* which means "debauchee," "rake," "woman-chaser."

Grigory was often thrashed by enraged fathers, and even publicly whipped by order of the *ispravnik*, but one day he found his "road to Damascus." The exhortations of a priest whom he was driving to Verkhoturie monastery suddenly awakened his mystic instincts. But his robust temperament, strong passions and unbridled imagination immediately drove him into the licentious sect known as the *Khlisty*, or "Flagellants."

Among the innumerable sects which are more or less detached from the established Church and reveal so strangely the lack of moral discipline among the Russian people, their hunger for mystery and their taste for the indefinite, the extreme and the absolute, the *Khlisty* are distinguished by the gross excesses and sensuality which mark their practices. They inhabit principally the regions of Kazan, Simbirsk, Saratov, Ufa, Orenburg, and Tobolsk; their number is put at about 120,000. The most lofty spirituality seems to inspire their doctrine as they aim at nothing less than communicating direct with God, steeping themselves in

the Word, and incarnating Christ. But to attain this celestial communion they resort to all the indulgences of the flesh. The faithful, men and women, assemble at night, sometimes in an *isba*, sometimes in a forest clearing. There, calling upon God, singing hymns and yelling chants, they dance in a ring, faster and faster. Soon they are overcome with giddiness and fall down in ecstasy or convulsions. The leader of the dance whips those whose energies flag. Then, filled and intoxicated with the "divine influx," the couples close like brute beasts. The service ends with monstrous scenes of sensuality, lust and incest.

Rasputin's richly-endowed temperament marked him out as ripe for the "divine influx." His exploits in the nocturnal *radéniés* soon won him popularity. His gifts for mysticism developed simultaneously. Travelling through the villages he delivered evangelical addresses and told parables. Gradually he ventured into prophecy, exorcism and incantations. He even boasted of having performed miracles. For a hundred versts around Tobolsk no one doubted that he was a holy man. Yet even in this period he had some tiresome brushes with justice over too glaring peccadilloes. He would have come out of them rather badly if the ecclesiastical authorities had not already taken him under their wing.

In 1904 his reputation for piety and the odour of his virtues reached Petersburg. The famous visionary Father John of Kronstadt, who had consoled and sanctified the dying moments of Alexander III, desired to know the young Siberian prophet. He received him at the Monastery of Saint Alexander Nevsky and congratulated himself on observing, from signs unmistakable, that he was marked out by God. After this appearance in the capital Rasputin returned to Pokrovskoïe, but from that day the horizon of his life was extended. He entered into relations with a whole gang of more or less illuminist, charlatan and dissolute priests, hundreds of whom may be met with among the dregs of the Russian clergy. It was then that he took as his acolyte a vulgar, blustering, erotic and "miracle-working" monk, worshipped by the mob, but a fierce enemy of liberals and Jews. He was Father Heliodorus who was later to raise the standard of revolt in his monastery at Tsarytsin and keep the Holy Synod in check by the violence of his reactionary fanaticism. Before long Grigory was not satisfied with the company of *moujiks* and priests. He was seen gravely walking with archpriests and abbots, bishops and archimandrites who all agreed with John of Kronstadt in seeing in him "a spark of God." Yet he had to withstand the continuous assaults of the Devil, and often enough he yielded. At Tsarytsin he deflowered a nun whom he had undertaken to exorcise. At Kazan he was drunk one fine June evening and came out of a drinking den driving before him a naked prostitute whom he thrashed with his belt---a proceeding which caused a great scandal in the town. At Tobolsk he seduced Madame L-----, the wife of an engineer and a woman of a great piety and he drove her to such a pitch that she went everywhere proclaiming her passion and glorying in her shame. It was she who initiated him into the refined joys of society women.

By such exploits, which accumulated as time went on, his reputation for holiness increased from day to day. People knelt in the streets as he passed; they kissed his hands, touched the hem of his robe, called out "Our Christ, our Saviour, pray for us, poor sinners! God will hear thee. . . ." He would reply: " In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I bless you, little brothers. Trust and obey. Christ will soon return. Be patient , remembering his death! Mortify your flesh for love of Him!"

In 1905 the Archimandrite Theophanes, Rector of the Theological College at Petersburg, a prelate of the greatest piety and the Empress's confessor, was unhappily inspired to summon Rasputin to see for himself the marvellous effects of grace upon this simple soul which the powers of evil tormented so pitilessly. Touched by his frank fervour he took him under his wing and introduced him into his own particular circle, a very considerable circle. At its head was a very influential group---the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaievitch, then Commander of the Imperial Guard and now Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, his brother the Grand Duke Peter, their wives, the Grand Duchesses Anastasia and Militza, daughters of the King of Montenegro. Grigory had only to make his appearance to amaze and fascinate this idle and credulous company, given to the most absurd practices of spiritualism, occultism, and necromancy. In all the "mystic" coterie there was quite a scramble for the Siberian prophet, the *Bojy tchelloviek*, the " Man of God."

The Montenegrin Grand Duchesses distinguished themselves by their excessive devotion to him. As early as 1900 they had brought the magician, Philip of Lyons, to the Russian Court. It was they who presented Rasputin to the Tsar and Tsaritsa in the summer of 1907.

Yet when on the point of granting him an audience the sovereigns had one last hesitation. They took counsel of the Archimandrite Theophanes who fully reassured them "Grigory Efimovitch," he said, "is a peasant, a man of the people. Your Majesties will do well to hear him, for it is the voice of the Russian soil which speaks through him. . . . I know all the charges against him. . . . I know his sins which are numberless and most of them heinous. But there dwells in him so deep a passion of repentance and so implicit a trust in divine pity that I would all but guarantee his eternal salvation. Every time he repents he is as pure as the child washed in the waters of baptism. Manifestly God has called him to be one of His chosen."

From the moment of his entrance into the palace Rasputin obtained an extraordinary ascendancy over the Tsar and Tsaritsa. He wheedled them, dazzled them, dominated them. It was almost like sorcery. Not that he flattered them. Quite the contrary. From the first day his manner towards them was rough and he treated them with a bold and disingenuous familiarity in which the two sovereigns, nauseated with adulation and sycophancy, thought they recognized "the voice of the Russian soil." He soon became the friend of Madame Vyubova, the Empress's inseparable companion, and by her was initiated into all the secrets of the imperial couple and the Empire. All the intriguers at court, all the place-hunters and aspirants for titles and livings naturally tried to enlist his support. His humble residence on the Kirotnaia, and later the Anglisky Prospekt, was besieged day and night by applicants, generals and officials, bishops and archimandrites, Councillors of the Empire and Senators, aides-de-camp and chamberlains, maids of honour and society women. There was an unending procession of them. When he was not with the sovereigns or the Montenegrin Grand Duchesses he was usually to be found at the house of old Countess Ignatiev, whose salon on the French Quay comprised the official champions of autocracy and theocracy. The highest dignitaries of the Church liked to congregate about her. Promotions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, nominations to the Holy Synod, the gravest questions of dogma, discipline and Church liturgy were discussed before her. Her moral authority, which was universally recognized, was a valuable help to Rasputin.

Sometimes she had celestial visions. One evening, during a spiritualistic séance, Saint Seraphin of Sarov, who was canonized in 1903, had appeared to her with a flaming halo round his head. He had declared: "A great prophet is among you. It is his mission to reveal the will of Providence to the Tsar and to lead him into glorious paths." She had realized at once that he was referring to Rasputin. The Emperor was immensely impressed with this oracle for, as supreme guardian of the Church, he had taken a decisive part in the canonization of the blessed Seraphin and had a very special reverence for him.

Among Rasputin's patrons in his early days was another curious individual, the therapist Badmaiev. He is a trans-Baikal Siberian, a Buriat Mongol. Although he has not a single university degree he carries on the profession of medicine, not clandestinely but openly, in the public eye. It is a very curious sort of medicine, a kind of alchemy with a flavour of sorcery. When he first knew Rasputin, in 1906, a very unfortunate thing had just happened to him, a tribulation such as occasionally overtakes even the most honest of men. Towards the close of the Japanese War a highly-placed client of his had marked his gratitude by sending him on a political mission to the hereditary chiefs of Chinese Mongolia. He was commissioned to distribute two hundred thousand roubles among them to secure their support. When he came back from Urga he had presented a report enumerating the brilliant results of his journey, and on the strength of this document had been appropriately congratulated. But a little later it had been discovered that he had kept the two hundred thousand roubles for himself. The incident was beginning to have a somewhat ugly look when the intervention of the highly-placed client had settled everything. The therapist had then returned to his cabalistic operations with an easy mind. Never before had the sick and ailing flocked in such numbers to his consulting-room on the Liteiny, for it was rumoured that he had brought back from Mongolia all sorts of medicinal herbs and magic remedies, obtained with immense difficulty from Thibetan sorcerers. Secure in his ignorance and illuminism Badmaiev does not hesitate to treat the most difficult and obscure cases in the whole realm of medicine. Yet he has a preference for nervous diseases, mental affections and the baffling disorders of feminine physiology. He has established a secret pharmacopoeia. Under grotesque names, and in equally grotesque forms, he himself prepares the medicaments he orders. Thus he carries on a dangerous trade. in narcotics, stupefactive, anæsthetics, emmenagogues, aphrodisiacs. He christens them with names such as *Elixir du Thibet*, *Poudre de Nirvritti*, *Fleurs d'asokas*, *Baume de Nyen-Tchen*, *Essence de lotus noir*, and so on. And all he does is to get the substances for his drugs from a chemist who is in league with him. On several occasions the Emperor and Empress have called him in to the Tsarevitch when ordinary doctors seemed powerless to stop the child's hæmorrhage. It was thus that he met Rasputin. Their respective charlatanisms at once recognized each other and coalesced.

But ultimately the sane elements in the capital were roused at all the scandals which gathered round the name of the *staretz* of Pokrovskoïe. At long last his perpetual presence in the imperial palace, the part he had admittedly played in certain arbitrary or unfortunate actions on the part of the supreme authority, the insolent licence of his talk and the cynical effrontery of his morals roused a storm of indignation in all quarters. In spite of the strict censorship the press denounced the ignominy of the Siberian "magician," of course being careful not to refer to their Majesties. But the public read between the lines. The "Man of God" felt that it would be advisable to disappear for a time. In March, 1911, he took the pilgrim's staff and departed for Jerusalem. This unexpected decision filled his devotees with grief and admiration. None but a sainted soul could give such a reply to the calumnies of the wicked! Then he spent the summer at Tsarytsin with his excellent friend and colleague, the monk Heliodorus.

The Empress, however, kept in constant touch with him by letter and telephone. In the autumn she told him she could endure his absence no longer. Besides, since the *staretz* had been allowed to go the Tsarevitch's attacks of hæmorrhage had become more frequent. Suppose the child died! . . . The mother had not a single day's peace; she was a prey to an unending series of nervous crises, muscular spasms and fainting fits. The Tsar loves his wife and is absolutely devoted to his son, and he had a most trying time.

At the beginning of November Rasputin returned to Petersburg. The insanities and orgies immediately began again, but already certain dissensions began to be observable among his disciples: some thought him compromising and unduly licentious; others were concerned at his growing influence on Church and State affairs. As it happened the ecclesiastical world was still quivering with indignation over a shameful appointment forced on the weak-willed Emperor; Grigory had obtained the bishopric of Tobolsk for one of the friends of his youth, an illiterate, obscene and debauched peasant, Father Varnava. About the same time it was learned that the Procurator of the Holy Synod had received orders to ordain Rasputin a priest. This time there was an explosion.

On December 29, Monsignor Hermogenes, Bishop of Saratov, the monk Heliodorus and certain priests had an altercation with the *staretz*. They abused and buffeted him, shouting out: "Accursed!" "Sacriligious priest!" . . . "Fornicator!" . . . "Filthy beast!" . . . "Devil's viper!" . . . Taken aback at first and crouching against the wall Grigory tried to reply with a volley of counter-abuse. Then Monsignor Hermogenes, who is a giant, struck him hard on the head several times with his pectoral cross and cried out: "Down on your knees, you wretch! On your knees to the sacred ikons! Ask God's pardon for all your filthy knaveries! Swear that you'll never pollute the palace of our beloved Tsar with your dirty presence again!" Rasputin, quivering with fear and bleeding at the nose, beat his breast, stammered out prayers and swore never to appear in the Emperor's presence again. He left the room under a fresh shower of curses and abuse.

The moment he was out of this trap he went straight to Tsarskoïe-Selo. He had not long to wait for the joys of revenge. A few days later, on the express orders of the Procurator, the Holy Synod deprived Monsignor Hermogenes of his see and exiled him to the monastery of Khirovitsy in Lithuania. The monk Heliodorus was arrested by gendarmes and shut up in the penitentiary monastery of Floristchevo, near Vladimir.

At first the police were powerless to prevent this scandal from leaking out. Speaking in the Duma, the leader of the Octobrist Party, Gutchkov, attacked Rasputin's relations with the Court in veiled terms. In Moscow, the religious and moral metropolis of the Empire, the best and most respected interpreters of orthodox Slavism, Count Cheremetiev, Samarin, Novosilov, Drujinin, and Vasnetsov, protested publicly against the servility of the Holy Synod. They even demanded the convocation of a national ecclesiastical council to reform the Church. The Archimandrite Theophanes himself raised a dignified voice against Grigory. His eyes had at length been opened to the true character of "the Man of God," and he could not forgive himself for having introduced him to the Court. Although he was the Empress's confessor, by an immediate decree of the Holy Synod he was sent to Taurida.

The President of the Council at this time was Kokovtsov, who was also in charge of the Ministry of Finance. A upright, honest, and courageous character he did what was possible to enlighten his master as to the unworthiness of the *staretz*. On March 1, 1912, he begged the Emperor to let him send Grigory back to his home: "This man has obtained Your Majesty's confidence by false pretences. He is a charlatan and libertine of the worst description. Public opinion is roused

against him. The papers . . ." The Emperor interrupted his minister with a scornful smile: "You mean to say you take notice of what the papers say?" "Yes, sire, when they attack my sovereign and the prestige of the dynasty. At the present time it is the most loyal papers which are most severe in their criticism." The Emperor, irritated, interrupted him again: "These criticisms are ridiculous. I hardly know Rasputin." Kokovtsov hesitated to continue, but proceeded: "Sire, in the name of the dynasty, of your heir, I beg you to let me take the steps necessary to secure the return of Rasputin to his village and prevent him from coming back again." In cold tones the Emperor replied: "I shall tell him myself to go and never return." "May I conclude that this is Your Majesty's decision?" "Yes, it is my decision." Then, with a glance at the clock, which showed the time as half-past twelve, the Emperor held out his hand to Kokovtsov: "Good-bye, Vladimir Nicolaievitch, I need not detain you any more."

At four o'clock the same day Rasputin rang up Senator D---, a close friend of Kokovtsov. and said to him in a contemptuous tone: "Your friend, the President, tried to frighten *Papka* this morning. He said all sorts of nasty things about me; but he had no luck at all. *Papka* and *Mamka* still love me. You can ring up Vladimir Nicolaievitch and tell him so from me."

On May 6 following all the ministers were present, in full uniform, in the imperial palace to congratulate the Empress whose birthday it was. When Alexandra Feodorovna passed Kokovtsov she turned her back on him.

A few days before this ceremony the *staretz* had left for Tobolsk. He did not go because he was told to, but of his own free will, to see how things were getting on in his little place at Pokrovskoïe. As he bade farewell to the sovereigns he had uttered this formidable prophecy with a fierce scowl: "I know that the wicked are watching me. Don't listen to them. If you abandon me you will lose your son and your crown within six months." The Empress had exclaimed: "How could you think of our abandoning you! Are you not our only protector, our best friend?" Then she had knelt down and asked his blessing.

In October the imperial family stayed for a time at Spala in Poland, where the Tsar often went to enjoy the hunting in the wonderful forest of Krolowa.

One day the young Tsarevitch was coming back from a sail on the lake and miscalculating his jump on to the landing stage caught his hip against the deck. At first the contusion seemed superficial and harmless. But a fortnight later, on October 16, a swelling appeared in the groin; the thigh began to inflame, and then his temperature suddenly rose. Doctors Feodorov, Derevenko, and Rauchfuss were hastily summoned and diagnosed a sanguinous tumour which was becoming septic. An operation was necessary, but the hæmophylic tendency of the child made any incision out of the question.⁽⁵⁾ Yet his temperature rose every hour: on October 21 it reached 39'8. The parents never left the sick boy's bedroom as the doctors did not conceal their extreme anxiety. In Spala Church the priests prayed day and night in relays. By order of the Emperor a solemn service was simultaneously held in Moscow before the miraculous ikon of the Iverskaia Virgin. And from morning to night the people of Saint Petersburg, thronged Our Lady of Kazan.

On the morning of the 22nd the Empress came down for the first time to the drawing-room where she was met by Colonel Narishkin, aide-de-camp on duty, Princes Elizabeth Obolensky, her lady-in-waiting, Sazonov, who had come to make his report to the Emperor, and Count Ladislas Wielopolsky, Director of the imperial hunting establishments in Poland. Alexandra Feodorovna was pale and emaciated, but she wore a smile. To the anxious questions which were put to her she replied in a calm voice: "The doctors notice no improvement yet, but I am not a bit anxious myself now. During the night I have received a telegram from Father Grigory and it has reassured me completely." When she was pressed for details she simply read out this wire: "God has seen your tears and heard your prayers. Grieve no more Your son will live."

On the next day, the 23rd, the invalid's temperature fell to 38'9. Two days later the tumour in the groin began to dry. The Tsarevitch was saved.

During the year 1913 several persons made further attempts to open the eyes of the Tsar and Tsaritsa to the behaviour and moral degeneracy of the *staretz*.

The first was the Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna and she was followed by the Empress's sister, the pure and noble Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna, And how many more! But to all these warnings and pleadings the sovereigns returned the same imperturbable reply: "These are all calumnies. The saints are always exposed to calumny."

In the religious jargon with which Rasputin habitually clothes his erotic fancy, one idea is perpetually recurring: "It is by repentance alone that we can win our salvation. We must therefore sin in order to have an opportunity for repentance. So when God places temptation in our way it is our duty to yield, so that we may secure the necessary condition precedent to a salutary penitence. Besides, was not the first word of life and truth which Christ uttered to mankind 'Repent'? But how can we repent if we have not sinned?"

His homely sermons abound with ingenious disquisitions on the pardoning power of tears and the redemptive virtue of contrition. One of his favourite arguments, an argument which has the greatest effect on his feminine clientele, is the following: "It is not a horror of sin which usually prevents us from yielding to temptation, for if sin was really a horror to us we should not be tempted to commit it. Does a man ever want to eat anything he thoroughly dislikes? No, what really stops us and frightens us is the hurt to our pride which repentance involves. Absolute contrition implies absolute humility. No one likes humbling himself, even before God. That is the whole secret of our resistance to temptation. But the Sovereign Judge is not deceived, not for a moment! And when we are in the valley of Jehoshaphat he will know how to remind us of all the chances of salvation he has offered us which we have rejected. . . ."

These sophisms were employed by a Phrygian sect even as early as the second century of our era. The heretic Montanus calmly put the same proposition to his fair Laodicean friends and secured the same practical results as Rasputin.

If the activities of the *staretz* were confined to the spheres of lust and mysticism, so far as I am concerned he would remain nothing but a more or less curious psychological---or physiological---study.

But by the force of circumstances this ignorant peasant became a political 'instrument. Around him has gathered a regular clientèle of influential people who have linked their fortunes with his.

Of these the most eminent is the Minister of justice, Stcheglovitov, who is also leader of the Extreme Right in the Council of the Empire. He is a man of intellect, fluent and acid of speech, and he brings a good deal of calculation and elasticity to the realization of his designs. But he is only a recent acquisition to Rasputinism. Almost as important is the Minister of the Interior, Nicholas Maklakov, whose amiable docility is highly agreeable to the sovereigns. Then comes the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Sabler, a contemptible and servile character; through him the *staretz* as it were controls the whole episcopate and all the high ecclesiastical offices. Next in order I should place the First Procurator of the Senate, Dobrovolsky, then Sturmer, Member of the Council of the Empire, then the Governor of the imperial palaces, General Voyeikov who is a son-in-law of the Minister of the Court. At the end I should place Bieletzky, Director of the Police Bureau, a very bold and cunning individual. It is easy to imagine the enormous powers represented by a coalition of such influences in an autocratic and centralized state like Russia.

To counterbalance the evil influence of this cabal I can find only one man in the personal entourage of the sovereigns---Prince Vladimir Orlov, son of the former ambassador in Paris and Director of His Majesty's Military Chancellery. A man of upright judgment, proud and wholeheartedly devoted to the Emperor, he has

always denounced Rasputin and never ceased to fight against him---a fact which has naturally involved the enmity of the Empress and Madame Vyubova.

Wednesday, September 30, 1914.

In the Galician Carpathians the Austro-Hungarians are putting up a fierce defence of the Uszok Pass which leads into Transylvania.

In the east of East Prussia the Germans are making great efforts to cross the Niemen between Kovno and Grodno, at the very points which the Grand Army crossed on June 25, 1812.

Thursday, October 1, 1914.

The Turkish Government has closed the Straits on the pretext of the presence of an Anglo-French squadron off the entrance to the Dardanelles. This action does incalculable harm to Russia, which is left without maritime communications except by Vladivostok and Archangel. Now it must be remembered that Vladivostok is 10,500 kilometres from Petrograd and that the port of Archangel may be closed by ice at any time now until the end of May.

The closing of the Straits is all the more serious because for some time I have been receiving reports from Moscow, Kiev and Kharkov that the old Byzantine dream is reviving. "This war will have no meaning for us unless it brings us Constantinople and the Straits. Tsarigrad must be ours, and ours alone. Our historic mission and our holy duty is to set the cross of *Pravoslavie*, the cross of the Orthodox Faith, on the dome of Saint Sophia once more. Russia would not be the chosen nation if at long last she did not avenge the age-old wrongs of Christianity." That is what is being said and spread in political, religious, and university circles and even more in the obscure depths of the Russian conscience.

Friday, October 2, 1914.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna, sister of the Empress and widow of the Grand Duke Sergius, is a strange creature whose whole life is a series of enigmas.

Born at Darmstadt on November 1, 1864, she was a flower of exquisite loveliness when at the age of twenty she married the fourth son of the Emperor Alexander II.

I remember dining with her in Paris a few years later, somewhere about 1891. I can still see her---tall and slender, with limpid, frank and penetrating eyes, sweet, soft lips, delicate features and a straight, aristocratic nose. All her lines were pure and graceful and there was a delightful rhythm about her movements and gestures. Her conversation revealed a charming woman's mind unaffected, contemplative and gentle.

Since that time a good deal of mystery had gathered round her. Certain details of her married life remained inexplicable.

Physically Sergius Alexandrovitch was very tall. He had a good figure but a disagreeable face, distinguished by greyish-white eyebrows and a hard look. Morally he was quarrelsome and despotic by nature, and both his intellect and education were poor. On the other hand his artistic perceptions were very well developed. He was a very different man from his brothers, Vladimir, Alexis and Paul. He lived to himself, preferred solitude and had a reputation for oddity.

After his marriage he was even less understood. He certainly showed himself the most suspicious and inquisitorial of husbands. He would not allow his wife to remain alone with anyone or to go out by herself. He spied on her correspondence and her books, even forbidding her to read *Anna Karanina* for fear of its arousing unhealthy curiosity or too violent emotions. He was always finding fault with her in harsh and cutting terms. Even in public he sometimes spoke rudely to her. A calm and docile nature she merely bowed under the lash of his bitter tongue. Alexander III, the kind and considerate giant, was sorry for her and showed his affection, but observing that he was arousing his brother's jealousy he had to give it up before long.

One day after a violent outburst on the part of the Grand Duke old Prince B-----, who had witnessed the scene, offered the young woman his sympathy! She seemed surprised and answered in a frank tone: "I'm not to be pitied. . . People may say what they like, but I'm happy because I'm very dearly loved."

He certainly did love her---but in his own way, a way that was æsthetic and irritable, wayward and ambiguous, covetous and incomplete.

In 1891 the Grand Duke Sergius was appointed Governor-General of Moscow.

It was the period when the famous Procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine Pobiedonostsev, the "Russian Torquemada," enjoyed unbounded influence over Alexander III and was trying to restore the doctrines of theocratic absolutism and bring Russia back into the traditions of Byzantine Muscovy.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth had been baptized in the Lutheran Confession. The new Governor-General could not, however, decently appear in the Kremlin with a heretical wife and so he ordered her to abjure Protestantism and accept the national faith. It is said that she had already been inclined that way for some considerable time. Whatever the reason she adopted the creed of the Russian Church with her whole soul.

No conversion was ever more sincere, thorough and complete. Hitherto the cold, dry observances of Lutheranism had been but poor sustenance to the imaginative faculties of the young woman: the experience of marriage had not been any better. All her instinct for dreams and emotion, fervour and tenderness suddenly found its outlet in the mysterious rites and pomp and pageantry of orthodoxy. Her piety soared to amazing levels. She knew heights and depths whose existence she had never even suspected.

In the glory of his position as Governor-General, which equalled that of a viceroy, Sergius Alexandrovitch soon blossomed out as a protagonist of the reactionary crusade which was the sum total of the domestic policy of the "Most Pious Tsar" Alexander III. One of his first acts was the expulsion *en masse* of the Jews who had gradually made their way into Moscow. They were roughly driven back into their ghettos in the western provinces. Then he issued a whole series of vexatious edicts imposing all sorts of restrictions on the professors and students of the University. Finally he adopted a haughty attitude towards the *bourgeois* just to remind them that their liberalism, mild though it was, was not to his taste. As always happens in such cases, the officers and officials around him were only too glad to improve on his dictatorial ways. The general hatred he thus aroused filled him with pride.

In May, 1896, the coronation of Nicholas II marked a glorious date in the history of orthodox autocracy. The ideal of the Muscovite Tsars---the intimate association of Church and State---was seen to be the *leitmotiv* of the new reign. Only the catastrophe in Khodinsky meadows, where two thousand moujiks perished through the carelessness of the police, cast a sinister, though passing, shadow over the brilliant gaiety of the Holy City.

Two years later the monument of the "Martyr Tsar," Alexander II, was unveiled in the Kremlin in front of the Cathedral of the Archangel. During the ceremonies on this occasion the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine Pobiedonostsev, received the highest honour the Empire could give, the Order of Saint Andrew, founded in 1698 by Peter the Great. The "orthodox and most Christian" army was associated in the festivities by a magnificent review.

In 1900 Nicholas II took it upon himself to revive an ancient custom of his ancestors which had fallen into desuetude for more than fifty years; he came to perform his pascal duties in Moscow, to confirm once more, as he put it, the religious and national sentiments which joined the hearts of the sovereign and his people. Nothing was left undone to make these solemnities as impressive as possible. Throughout Holy Week services and processions succeeded one another with unprecedented pomp both in the Kremlin and the principal sanctuaries of the city. Before leaving Moscow the Emperor addressed the following rescript to the Grand Duke Sergius:

Your Imperial Highness,

By the grace of God I have realized my great desire, and the desire of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, to be with our children and spend the days of Holy Week, receive Holy Communion and stay in Moscow for the most solemn of all ceremonies among the greatest of our national sanctuaries under the protecting shadow of our age-old Kremlin.

Here, where lie the mortal remains of the saints beloved of the Lord, among the tombs of the sovereigns who brought Russia unity and organization, the very cradle of autocracy fervent prayers have been offered up to the King of Kings, and a sweet joy has possessed Our soul as it has filled those of the faithful children of Our dear Church who have thronged the temples.

May God hear those prayers! May He strengthen the believers, succour those whose faith is shaken, bring back those who have strayed from the true path and bless the Empire of Russia which rests firmly on the unshakable foundation of orthodoxy, the holy guardian of the eternal Verities, love and peace.

Associating myself with the prayers of my people I draw fresh strength to serve Russia for her good and her glory, and I rejoice to be able at this moment to convey to Your Imperial Highness---and through you to the City of Moscow, Moscow so dear to my heart---the sentiments by which I am inspired.

Christ is risen

(Signed) Nicholas.

Moscow, April 9, 1900.

Thus from time to time some great religious, political, or military ceremony draws the eyes of the Russian people and the Slav world to the sacred mount on which the Kremlin stands.

In this active and brilliant life Elizabeth Feodorovna played her part. She made a graceful hostess at the magnificent receptions in the Alexander and Illinskoie palaces. She threw herself enthusiastically into much religious, charitable, educational and artistic work. The picturesque setting and moral atmosphere of Moscow had a profound effect on her æsthetic sensibilities. She had once been told that the mission assigned by Providence to the Tsars was to realize the Kingdom of God on the soil of Russia. The thought that she was helping, however modestly, in such a task fired her imagination.

Satisfied with the part assigned to her, a miracle of purity and charm, reserve and guilelessness, with her graceful lines and exquisite toilettes she exhaled a perfume of idealism, mystery and voluptuous charm which made her all that life could wish

Yet the ultra-reactionary policy, of which the Grand Duke Sergius boasted of being one of the principal authors, aroused a spirit of opposition in intellectual circles and the working masses throughout Russia which became more violent every day. A group of fearless anarchists, Guerchouny, Bourtzev, Savinkov and Azev, founded a "Fighting Organization," the exploits of which were soon to equal the Nihilist feats of 1877-1881. Plots and assassinations followed one another at short intervals with alarming regularity. A Minister of Education, two Ministers for the Interior, Commissioners of Police, provincial governors and magistrates were struck down one after the other. Towards the end of 1904 the situation, particularly in Moscow, suddenly became much worse owing to the disasters in the Far East.

The Grand Duke Sergius immediately took the most radical measures. With his fierce scowl and cruel sneer he let everyone know that he would not show the slightest mercy.

On February 17, 1905, as he was driving across the Kremlin and about to reach the Senate Square at three o'clock in the afternoon, the terrorist Kalaiev threw a bomb at him. It caught him on the breast and blew him to pieces.

At that moment the Grand Duchess Elizabeth was in the Kremlin where she was organizing a Red Cross sewing guild for the armies in Manchuria. When she heard the dreadful sound of the explosion she ran out, just as she was, without a hat. She was seen to throw herself on the corpse of her husband whose head and arms, torn from the body, lay among the debris of the carriage. Then she returned to the grand-ducal palace and passed the whole of her time in prayer.

She remained in prayer continuously for the five days preceding the funeral. This long communion with the Deity inspired her to a curious step. On the night before the obsequies she sent for the Prefect of Police and ordered him to take her at once to Tanganka prison where Kalaiev was waiting his summons to appear before a court martial.

When she was shown into the assassin's cell she asked him: "Why did you kill my husband? Why have you burdened your conscience with such a horrible crime?" The prisoner had at first received her with a look of angry suspicion, but he observed that she spoke in gentle tones to him and said "my husband," and not "the Grand Duke." "I killed Sergius Alexandrovitch," he replied, "because he made himself the instrument of tyranny and the exploitation of the working class. I have done justice in the name of the socialist and revolutionary people."

"You are wrong. My husband loved the people and thought of nothing but their welfare. So there is no excuse for your crime. Close your ears to your pride and repent. If you tread the path of re repentance I will plead with the Emperor to give you your life. and I will pray to. God to forgive you as I have already forgiven you myself."

Touched and amazed at this language, he was yet brave enough to reply: "No, I'm not sorry. I must die for my cause. I shall die."

"Then, as you have deprived me of any means of saving your life and will certainly soon appear before God, at any rate let me do what I can to save your soul. Here's the Gospel; promise me to read it carefully until the hour of your death."

He shook his head. Then he replied: "I'll read the Gospel if you, in turn, will promise me to read this story of my life which I've just finished writing. It will help you to understand why I killed Sergius Alexandrovitch."

"No., I won't read your diary. All I can do is to go on praying for you." She went out, leaving the Gospel on the table.

In spite of her rebuff she wrote to the Emperor to ask for a pardon for the assassin, but meanwhile the public had heard of her visit to Tanganka prison. The most extraordinary and romantic versions got abroad, but they all agreed that Kalaiev had agreed to plead for a pardon.

A few days later she received from the prisoner a letter which ran more or less like this: *You have taken advantage of my position. I did not say I was sorry, because I am not. If I agreed to hear what you had to say it was only because I regarded you as the unfortunate widow of a man whom I had executed. I was sorry for your grief, nothing more. The account you have given of our interview is an insult to me. I don't want the mercy you have asked for me. . . .*

The trial proceeded. The preliminary enquiries were very prolonged owing to a useless search for accomplices, the chief of which was Boris Savinkov. On April 4 Kalaiev was condemned to death.

The next day the Minister of Justice, Sergius Manushkin, was making his report to the Emperor and asked him if he intended to commute Kalaiev's sentence in view of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's plea. Nicholas II remained silent, and then casually remarked: "Is there anything else you want to talk about, Sergius Serguievitch?" And he dismissed him. But the Tsar immediately sent for Kovalensky, the Director of the Police Department, and gave him secret orders.

Kalaiev was then transferred to the Fortress of Schlüsselburg, the famous State prison. At eleven o'clock in the evening of May 23 the Attorney-General's deputy, Feodorov, entered the cell of the condemned man, whom he had known when they were students together, and said to him: "I am authorized to tell you that if you will ask for pardon His Majesty the Emperor will deign to grant it you." Kalaiev replied, calmly and firmly: "No; I wish to die for my cause." Feodorov persisted to the best of his ability in noble and humane terms. Kalaiev broke down but was not to be moved. He concluded with the remark: "As you're so good to me, let me write to my mother." "Certainly, you may write to her, and I'll see she gets your letter at once."

When the prisoner had finished his letter Feodorov made a last despairing effort to make him change his mind. Summoning up all his courage, but losing none of his unruffled calm, Kalaiev declared solemnly: "I want to die, I must die. My death will be even more useful to my cause than the death of the Grand Duke Sergius." The deputy realized that he would never succeed in overcoming such heroic resolution. He left the cell and went to the Governor of the fortress to order the execution.

The scaffold had already been erected in the courtyard of the prison. The executioner, a convict in a red cap, was waiting on the steps. He was a parricide named Philippiev and had been borrowed from the penal settlement at Orel on account of his herculean strength and professional skill.

The Governor's residence was at the far end of the court. It wore a festive look that evening. Merry shouts and loud laughter were heard every moment. When Feodorov entered he found a lively company, the principal officials of the fortress and all the officers stationed at Schlüsselburg, who were frolicking and feasting. By way of whiling away the time preceding the execution they were swilling champagne and toasting Baron von Medem, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Imperial Corps of Gendarmes, who had been sent by the Minister of the Interior to be present for the condemned man's last moments.

Now Kalaiev was extremely anxious to see his counsel, whose presence at the execution was legally permissible. This gentleman, Jdanov, had come to Schlüsselburg specially the previous evening and had asked several times to be taken to his client. But he was known as an advanced socialist; the imperial police feared that Kalaiev would give him some last message for the revolutionary party, so in spite of the express provisions of the law Jdanov was refused admittance to the fortress.

When Feodorov left the cell he was succeeded by a priest. The prisoner received him kindly but declined all religious assistance: "I have settled accounts with life," he said; "I need neither your prayers nor your sacraments. . . . All the same I am a Christian and I believe in the Holy Spirit. I feel it still within me and I am sure it will not abandon me. That's enough for me." As the priest persisted kindly in his desire to fulfil his mission Kalaiev continued: "It's very good of you to pity me. Let me embrace you!" They fell into each other's arms.

At two o'clock in the morning the prisoner was taken from his cell, his hands were bound and he was led into the courtyard of the fortress. He ascended the scaffold with a firm step. Not a shade of emotion passed over his face as he listened while the verdict was read out to him, an interminable proceeding. When the clerk of the court had finished Kalaiev said, in a very simple tone: "I'm glad I've kept my composure to the end." Then two gaolers dressed him in a long white shroud which covered his head, and the executioner called out: "Get on the stool!" Kalaiev demurred: "How can I get on the stool? You've covered my head. I can't see a thing." Phillipiev took him in his strong arms, lifted him on to the stool and quickly fastened a rope round his neck. Then he swiftly knocked away the support. But the rope was too long; Kalaiev's feet still touched the floor. The victim gave a terrible start. Cries of horror rose from the spectators assembled round the scaffold. The executioner had to shorten the rope and begin all over again.

After this sinister tragedy Elizabeth Feodorovna considered that she had finished with the world. Henceforward she devoted herself exclusively to the consolations of religion. She spent all her time in works of asceticism, piety, penitence and charity.

On April 15, 1910, she realized an ambition she had had in mind for a considerable period. She established a religious community for women and had herself appointed pointed abbess. Taking the name of "Martha and Mary," the convent was established in Moscow in a part of the city on the right bank. The nuns devoted themselves particularly to the succour of the sick and poor. But at the moment when she was thus saying farewell to the world Elizabeth Feodorovna made a last concession to feminine taste: she had the dress of her order designed by a Moscow artist, the painter Nesterov. The costume comprises a long robe of fine, pearl-grey baize, a cambric whimple drawn close round the face and neck and a long white woollen veil which falls over the breast in broad folds. The general effect is simple, austere and attractive.

There is a lack of warmth in the relations between the Grand Duchess Elizabeth and the Empress Alexandra. The original cause, or at any rate the principal reason, for their estrangement is Rasputin. In Elizabeth Feodorovna's eyes Grigory is nothing but a lascivious and sacrilegious impostor, an emissary of Satan. The two sisters have often had disputes about him which have several times led to an open quarrel. They never mention him now. Another reason for the coolness between them is their rivalry in piety and good works. Each of them claims superiority in knowledge of theology, observance of scriptural injunctions, meditations on the eternal life and adoration of the crucifix. The result is that the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's appearances at Tsarskoïe-Selo are rare and short. (6)

What is the origin of this extraordinary domination of the mystic sensibilities in the case of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth and her sister, the Empress Alexandra? It seems to me it is a legacy from their mother, Princess Alice, daughter of Queen Victoria, who was married in 1862 to the hereditary prince of Hesse-Darmstadt and died in 1878 at the age of thirty-five.

Brought up in the strictest tenets of Anglicanism Princess Alice, shortly after her marriage, conceived a strange passion---a passion wholly ethical and intellectual---for the great rationalist theologian of Tübingen, David Strauss, the celebrated author of the *Life of Jesus*, who died four years before herself.

Under the manners of the Swabian philistine and unfrocked minister David Strauss concealed the soul of a romantic. In the early days of his fame he had felt the temptation of love: the bulwark of his books was not enough to save him from the spell of the "eternal feminine." A young girl, a stranger (who was dazzled by his growing fame) offered herself to him, as Bettina von Arnim offered herself to Goethe.. He had respected this naive flower, but in breathing its fragrance he had tasted mortal poison. When he recovered his self-possession he was able to compare himself to "the fakirs of India who boast of gaining a superhuman glory by heroic mortifications while the jealous gods send them female visions to seduce them from their faith." A few years later another witch once more deranged his studious life. This time it was not a fair and frank German lily but a perverse creature, Agnes Schebest, an opera singer of great gifts and amazingly beautiful. He loved her passionately, so much so that unable to do without her, and fearing to lose her, he married her. Of course she lost no time in betraying him with a fervour of sensuality and a callous audacity which seemed to heighten her beauty. At first he refused to open his eyes. "The world," he wrote, "calls me credulous. Perhaps I am only a slave." Ultimately he was forced to admit he had been deceived. After a terrible scene he turned away the sinner. Then he went back to his work. But after the frenzy of passion he found the interpretation of Holy Writ somewhat insipid. He could not remain in one place for an inward unrest made him change his residence time and again. He carried his sorrows from Ludwigsburg to Stuttgart, from Heidelberg to Cologne, from Weimar to Munich, from Heilbronn to Darmstadt. The historic evolution of doctrine gave him pleasure no longer; even Hegelian dreams revolted him. In this general bankruptcy his character became daily more soured, his irony more acid, his dialectics more destructive. Weary of a life from which he had nothing to expect he longed for dissolution.

It was then that he first knew Princess Alice. He at once obtained a great influence over her. But the romance of their minds and hearts was still wrapped in a deep mystery, though it is impossible to doubt that he shook her faith to the depths and that she passed through a terrible crisis.

Thus it may be that her daughters have inherited from her their tendency towards religious exaltation. Perhaps, too, they betray the influence of an atavism far more ancient. Have I not found the names of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and Mary Stuart among their female ancestry?

Saturday, October 3, 1914.

The Grand Duke Nicholas is making preparations for a general offensive in Poland and Galicia. The operations will develop in the region of Warsaw and extend to the San and the Carpathians. If they succeed the Russian army will immediately make a bee-line for Cracow and Breslau.

Monday, October 5, 1914.

At the moment the Emperor is making a round of the battle fronts to encourage his troops and receive their salute: *Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant!*

According to General Bielaiev, Chief of Staff of the Army, the Grand Duke Nicholas means to carry through the next offensive with the greatest possible vigour and intensity "in the hope of deciding the war with one great blow."

Thursday, October 8, 1914.

The Russian offensive is general all along the line There is violent fighting from the confluence of the Bzura, which joins the Vistula 60 kilometres above Warsaw, to the source of the San, i.e., the western chain of the Carpathians. The front of attack thus measures more than four hundred kilometres.

The transport movements which have preceded this vast operation have been carried out with the most perfect skill and organization.

Simultaneously the Russian troops have gained a brilliant success between Augustov and Suvalki on the frontier of East Prussia.

Sunday, October 11, 1914.

Count Joseph Potocki, who arrived yesterday from his Antoniny property in Volhynia, has been to lunch at the Embassy.

He has confided to me the disappointment of his Polish compatriots.

"The manifesto of August 16 filled us with a great hope. We thought that Poland was to be reborn.

. . . When the manifesto was issued I had it read out in church by the priest. We all dissolved in tears; I wept like a child. But we are already feeling that the Russians are trying to get out of their promises. They are giving us to understand---and later on it will be their excuse---that the manifesto was signed by the Grand Duke Nicholas and not by the Emperor; that it is an impulse of the military authorities, not an act of the supreme power. They will resort to other subterfuges no doubt. And in any case these magnificent promises are conditional on the conquest of Prussian Poland! Do you really think the Russian army will *ever* enter Posen? Here we are seventy-two days after mobilization and it has only reached the Vistula! Anyhow, the Russians can't hold their own with the Germans. I simply daren't tell you all I think, all I anticipate. . . . No! No! The day of Poland's resurrection is a long way off yet!"

I did my best to revive his faith:

"The promise to restore Poland has been sworn in the face of Europe. I can assure you that it is the Emperor's personal intention. . . . No doubt the reactionaries are secretly working to secure that the manifesto of August 16 shall remain a dead letter; I often hear of their intrigues. But their calculations are much too obvious. In opposing the restoration of Poland they are merely trying to pave the way for a reconciliation between Russia and Germany. Thus the whole policy of the alliance is involved, and on that point the Emperor will never give way. The Allies will see to that, if necessary. . . . As to your military anticipations, forgive me if I regard them as an impression, not an opinion. This war will be very long and very stern, but our victory is not in doubt so long as we display tenacity and loyalty."

He shrugged his shoulders sceptically and then talked about the evil situation in which most Polish families find themselves at the present moment.

"To begin with," he said, "most of the fighting is on Polish ground. It is our towns, fields and estates which are being ravaged, burnt and looted by *both* sides! But that isn't all. Owing to the partition of Poland this war is having the most dreadful effects. Look at my family! I'm a Russian subject; my brother's an Austrian subject. One of my brothers-in-law is a German subject, another a Russian; all my cousins and nephews are similarly distributed by the necessities of inheritance among the three countries. Though all of the same race, we are condemned to civil war!"

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At the Marie Theatre this evening we had Tchaikovsky's ballet, the *Lac des Cygnes*, a picturesque and poetical work of high symphonic qualities. The theatre was filled with a brilliant audience as on a subscription night in the days before the war.

Is the inference that Russian society is indifferent to the war? No, indeed! On the battlefields the Russian officers show a wonderful spirit of dash and heroism. In the front line dressing-stations the finest of society ladies are rivalling each other in courage, endurance and devotion. In every quarter public generosity is at work on an unparalleled scale. Gifts are flowing in from every side, particularly anonymous gifts which are almost always the largest. In every part of the Empire relief work for the wounded, sick, necessitous and refugees is going on under most ingenious forms. Taking the Russian people as a whole, their social and patriotic solidarity is all that could be desired. There is no ground, whatever for charging them with not taking seriously the terrible trial in which the future of the nation is at stake. But it would be vain to ask them to go without their theatres, music and ballets. One might as well ask the Spanish to give up their bull fights. Nor are the observations to which I have been inspired to-day by contemplation of the brilliant audience at the Marie Theatre confined to the upper and propertied classes, for the cheaper seats were crammed to the roof. The numberless theatres of Petrograd are full every night, and it is the same in Moscow, Kiev, Kazan, Karkov, Odessa, Tiflis, &c.

In one of the intervals I called on Teliakovsky, the Director of the Imperial Theatres; I found him with General M----- and two officers who have just come from the front. Of course we talked about the great battle which is developing west of the Vistula, the opening moves of which have been terribly sanguinary.

"In short," said Teliakovsky, "we're letting thousands and thousands of men be massacred for the sake of restoring Poland! I hope to goodness we shan't persevere in this mad course!"

General M- broke in:

"But we've made a promise, a solemn promise! It's an obligation of honour to restore Poland!"

"That's all right!" replied Teliakovsky; "let's take Posen---if we can. But we should go on and take everywhere else that really wants us; let's have Armenia and Constantinople!"

As I went back to my box I passed Potocki, looking as gloomy as ever:

"Oh Ambassador!" he sighed. "I've been thinking over what you said this morning. I'm sorry to say you haven't convinced me at all!"

Monday, October 12, 1914.

The King of Rumania, Charles I, died yesterday in his seventy-sixth year.

A submissive vassal of the German powers he was always an admirer, I might almost say under the spell, of their military, political and moral superiority, and never harboured the slightest doubt about their victory in the immediate future. As long as he was alive we had no chance whatever of rallying Rumania to our cause.

The new king, Ferdinand I, will have an open mind and his hands free. Besides, his wife, Queen Marie, is the granddaughter of Queen Victoria through her father, the Duke of Edinburgh, who succeeded the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1893. Her mother is the Grand Duchess Marie, daughter of the Tsar Alexander II, and her sister is the Grand Duchess Victoria, wife of the Grand Duke Cyril Vladimorovitch. She thus has family ties, ties which are very close and affectionate, with the English and Russian courts.

Tuesday, October 13, 1914.

Warsaw is in danger from a violent counter-attack by the Germans north of the Pilica. The Russian resistance is magnificent.

Wednesday, October 14, 1914.

A Jew from Odessa, employed to buy corn by a large exporting house, came to see me this morning on a business matter.

Struck by his intelligence and sagacity I questioned him about the state of public feeling among the lower classes, especially the *moujiks*. I could not have found a better authority on this subject as his work obliges him to travel continuously in every part of the Empire and brings him into daily contact with the million. This is more or less what he says: "The patriotic impulse has not died down among the masses. On the contrary, hatred of Germany seems even more marked than in the first days of the war. Everyone is determined to carry the struggle through to victory. No one doubts that victory: . . . In Moscow, I however, there is some uneasiness owing to the rumours coming from Petrograd. The Empress and those about her are suspected of carrying on a secret correspondence with Germany; this suspicion extends to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, the Empress's sister, abbess of the Convent of Martha and Mary in Moscow, who spends her life in good works. The Emperor's weakness with the Empress, Vyrubova and Rasputin comes in for severe criticism. On the other hand, the popularity of the Grand Duke Nicholas increases every day. . . . People are beginning to talk a good deal about Constantinople, particularly in the southern provinces. . . ."

Thursday, October 15, 1914.

The German thrust at Warsaw has been stayed. The Russians are extending their offensive, but the operations are greatly hampered by the state of the roads which have been turned into quagmires by the autumn rains: in places the mud is more than a metre deep. In 1807, in the same region and at the same time of the year, Napoleon had to admit the impossibility of manoeuvring troops on such a spongy soil.

The remarks made to me by the Jewish broker from Odessa yesterday have been confirmed somewhat curiously this morning. A French manufacturer, Goujon, who has been established in Moscow for forty years, came to see me this morning, and said:

"Several of my Russian friends, commercial and industrial leaders, have asked me on their behalf to put a question to you which will no doubt appear somewhat strange. Is it true that the court clique have succeeded in shaking the Emperor's determination to continue the war until Germany is completely defeated? My friends are extremely anxious. They say they are quite positive about it, so much so that they've come to Petrograd with me this morning and intend to ask an audience of the Emperor. But before doing so they want to consult you, and will be extremely grateful if you'll receive them."

I told Goujon all that I know about the intrigues in progress in the Empress's entourage, intrigues which need very careful watching. As to the Emperor's determination I told him of the accumulation of evidence I am continually receiving:

"You can assure your friends from me that I have unlimited confidence in the Emperor's word, his loyalty to the alliance and his determination to carry the war through to final and complete victory. . . . They will understand, of course, that I cannot receive them; it would look as if I were coming between the Tsar and his subjects. If you hear anything definite about the intrigues at the palace don't neglect to let me know."

I have just told Sazonov of this conversation and he has entirely approved what I said. He added:

"I'm very glad indeed about this; it's enabled you to feel the pulse of Russia: you can see for yourself it beats strongly."

Monday, October 19, 1914.

At two o'clock this afternoon there was a memorial, service for King Carol in the chapel of the Winter Palace.

While the interminable funeral service was in progress I had a talk with the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Vladimir Sabler, the successor and rival of the formidable Pobiedonostsev, fierce guardian of orthodox traditions and, discipline; otherwise a nice, kind man.

"Ambassador," he said, "why weren't you present yesterday evening at the sacred concert got up by the clergy of Petrograd in aid of the wounded? There was nothing but religious music in the programme. We began with the Russian national anthem and then---the *Marseillaise!* . . . It's a fact, the *Marseillaise* sung by Russian clergy! They put their hearts into it, too! And I of all people, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, actually encored the *Marseillaise!*"

"You were absolutely right, Your Excellency! The *Marseillaise* was in no way out of place in your sacred concert. At the present moment it is an epitome of every Frenchman's national faith."

Then he smilingly told me of the terrible scandal at court and in Russian high society when the Tsar Alexander III allowed the *Marseillaise* to be played in his presence in July, 1891, during the visit of the French fleet to Kronstadt.

Tuesday, October 20, 1914.

The Russian offensive is in full career on a front of 450 kilometres from Vloslavsk to Jaroslav.

In the Constantinople quarter the sky is even darker the storm is approaching. Sazonov tells me that the Grand Duke Nicholas will not allow himself to be deflected from his plan by the threat from Turkey; he will spare as little as possible for the defence of the Caucasus and will keep all his troops for the principal theatre of operations. It is in Berlin where all the accounts will be taken. General de Laguiche writes to me in the same strain.

Wednesday, October 21, 1914.

West of the Vistula the Germans are retreating all along the line.

A terrible battle is in progress in France and Belgium, in the region of Arras and on the line of the Yser.

Thursday, October 22, 1914.

The victory of the Russian armies is becoming more pronounced and extending

It is a case of now or never for Rumania to take the field against Austria-Hungary, especially as she is no longer held back by the objections of King Carol. But Bratiano, the President of the Council who is now the sole master of Rumanian policy, is showing himself increasingly undecided and timid.

Friday, October 23, 1914.

Up to the present the students of Russian universities have been exempted from military service so that they can finish their courses. A ukase has now been issued authorizing the Minister for War to call them to the colours. The reason for this measure is the enormous losses suffered by the Russian armies in Poland and Galicia. After a six months' course in certain special schools students possessing certain degrees will be granted commissions as second-lieutenants.

This ukase has come in for severe criticism in conservative circles. One of the leaders of the Right in the Council of the Empire said to me:

"It's ridiculous! Our corps of officers is to be contaminated. . . . All these students are nothing but revolutionary virus which will infect the army. . ."

In the university towns such as Petrograd, Moscow, Kazan and Kiev, the students have been organizing patriotic demonstrations. The Moscow students have even thought the best way to prove their nationalist fervour is to loot the shops of Germans.

Saturday, October 24, 1914.

Following up their campaign against everything German the Government has decided that the *Petrograder Zeitung*, the influential *Petersburg Gazette*, which has been published in German since 1726, is to be suppressed on December 31 next. The German party in Russia, the party of the "Baltic Barons" will thus lose its official organ.

In many ways the animosity against the Germans, even Germans who are Russian subjects throughout the Empire, recalls the nationalist outburst of 1740 which put an end to the regime of the Birens, Ostermanns, Munnichs, Lowenwoldes and all the other German favourites of which Herzen wrote so picturesquely: "They wrangled over Russia as if it were a jug of beer."

Sunday, October 25, 1914.

Sazonov has shown me a letter he has just received from a student at Kazan. It runs as follows

"Your Excellency,

"I have not the honour of knowing you. I am about to join the army. If this war is to bring us Constantinople I will die twenty times, and gladly. But if we are not to have Constantinople I shall die but once, with death in my heart! I beg Your Excellency to reply with a simple yes' or 'no' on the enclosed postcard, on which I have given my name and address."

Monday, October 26, 1914.

I have dined quite privately at Tsarskoïe-Selo with the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna.

The Grand Duchess is absolutely delighted at the great successes the Russian army has just gained in Poland:

"I attach the greatest importance to these successes," she said. "We may legitimately call them a victory. In the first place the German army has lost its prestige in the eyes of our men. They thought it invincible! In the second place it has removed any possibility of a premature peace with Germany."

I made cautious enquiries about Rasputin. She replied:

"Alas! Some believe in him more than ever! He is more than ever the "Man of God"! Some do not doubt that our successes are due to his prayers! Some have even asked him more than once to give his blessing to the plan, of campaign. . . . What a pity!"

" Does he ever talk about peace? "

" I don't know, but I should be greatly surprised if he had. He's too cunning not to feel that he would not be listened to at a time like this."

Wednesday, October 28, 1914.

For the Jews of Poland and Lithuania the war is one of the greatest disasters they have ever known. Hundreds of thousands of them have had to leave their homes in Lodz, Kielce, Petrokov, Ivangorod, Skiernewice, Suvalki, Grodno, Bielostock, etc. Almost everywhere the prelude to their lamentable exodus has been the looting of their shops, synagogues, and houses. Thousands of families have taken refuge in Warsaw and Vilna; the majority are wandering aimlessly like a flock of sheep. It's a miracle that there have been no pogroms---organized massacres. But not a day passes in the zone of the armies without a number of Jews being hanged on a trumped-up charge of spying.

Incidentally, Sazonov and I have been talking of the Jewish question and all the religious, political, social and economic problems it raises. He informed me that the Government was considering what modifications could be made in the far too arbitrary and vexatious regulations to which the Russian Jews are subjected. A new law is about to be issued in favour of the Jews of Galicia who will become subjects of the Tsar. I have encouraged him to be as tolerant and liberal as possible:

"I'm speaking to you as an ally. In the United States there is a very large, influential and wealthy Jewish community who are very indignant at your treatment of their co-religionists. Germany is very skilfully exploiting this quarrel with you---which means a quarrel with us. It 's matter of importance for us to win the sympathy of Americans."

Chapter Footnotes

1. The documents published by the Bolsheviks in September, 1917, have completely revealed what happened between the two Emperors when they met on July 23, 1905, on board the *Hohenzollern* in Bjorkö roads. It is now known that the Emperor William suddenly proposed to the Tsar Nicholas a treaty of alliance between Germany and Russia; this treaty, aimed at England, stipulated for the subsequent adhesion of France. The

Russian Government undertook to do everything necessary to obtain the signature of the French Government. Dazzled by the Kaiser's eloquence, Nicholas II signed at once without even taking time to consult his Foreign Minister, Count Lamsdorff, who had remained behind at St. Petersburg. As William II insisted that the document, drafted beforehand in Berlin, must be countersigned (for that purpose he had brought with him a high diplomatic official, Tchirsky, subsequently Secretary of State at the Foreign Office and then Ambassador in Vienna), the Tsar called up his Naval Minister, Admiral Birilev, one of his cronies who was on board, covered the text of the treaty with his hand and ordered him to sign his name at the bottom of the page. The Admiral, with touching docility, did so at once.

When he got back to Tsarskoïe-Selo the Tsar Nicholas told Count Lamsdorff the results of his fortunate negotiations. Lamsdorff could hardly believe his eyes or ears. With all the necessary tact he brought home to his august master what an appalling mistake he had made. Just at this time Count Witte, who had just signed the peace treaty with Japan at Portsmouth, arrived in St. Petersburg. Although he had long advocated an alliance between Russia, Germany, and France, he was too intelligent not to realize that an affair begun in so idiotic a fashion could never lead to anything. For that reason he supported Lamsdorff against the Tsar. When the Russian Ambassador in Paris, Nelidov, was informed of the proposal he too lost no time in replying that France would never consent to join Germany against England. Nicholas II thus found himself compelled to go back on his signature. He instructed Count Osten-Sacken, his ambassador in Berlin, to inform the German Chancellery that the Russian Government regarded the Treaty of Bjorkö as inoperative in view of the fact that one of its essential provisions, i.e., the adhesion of France, had become impossible of realization. A personal letter from the Tsar to the Kaiser confirmed this official communication. Seeing his scheme vanish into thin air William, II was simply furious; he tried to regain his hold over Nicholas II by arguments drawn from the realms of mysticism: "We have joined our hands," he telegraphed on October 12, 1905. "We have signed before God, who heard our oath. I am sure that the treaty can be carried out perfectly well. If you want some modifications of detail, make your own suggestions. But what has been signed is signed. God is our witness!" The matter went no further.

It is difficult to judge the part played by Nicholas II in this affair. In signing the Treaty of Bjorkö did he show himself disloyal to France? No. The conclusion of the adventure itself is enough to acquit him. But unquestionably in his ignorance and blindness he went much too far.

2. Robert Gauthiot died of wounds in September, 1916. He was forty years of age. As a linguist he was in the front rank. In him our knowledge of Indo-European languages has lost the most brilliant heir of Burnouf and Darmesteter.

3. Vladimir Nicolaievitch-Kokovtsov was born on April 19, 1853. After serving for several years in the Penitentiary Department he turned to matters of finance and public accounts and was therefore in 1890 appointed Under-Secretary of State in the Accounts Department. He became Count Witte's assistant and in February, 1904, was made Finance Minister. He laid down this office in 1905, but was reappointed in May, 1906. Appointed President of the Council of Ministers on September 24, 1911, he saw himself abruptly deprived of his high office on February 12, 1914, thanks to the agitation of Rasputin and his gang, whom he had the courage to oppose. It was not without regret that the Tsar dismissed this loyal servant whose ability, upright character and disinterestedness he valued highly. He made Kokovtsov a count as a reward for his services.


4. The Germans.

5. Hæmophilia is a congenital disease, very uncommon and peculiar. It is supposed to be a sign of degeneracy. The characteristic symptom is change in the blood which more or less loses the power to congeal. The result is frequent hæmorrhage which it is sometimes impossible to stop. The least trauma, such as nose bleeding, a slight blow, a prick, or even a trifling accident like a fit of coughing, or a false step is enough to cause a great effusion of blood. In most cases the hæmorrhage is internal; it floods the tissue and invades the joints and the intestines. The ordinary hæmostatic

treatments are powerless to control it. Injections of physiological serums are sometimes efficacious. Two-thirds of all haemophylic subjects die before the age of eleven. Very few survive their twentieth year. From the point view of heredity hæmophilia is very curious in one way: the disposition is only transmitted to males and always by mothers who are themselves exempt.

6. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth was arrested by the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1918 and interned in the little village of Alapayevsk, north of Ekaterinburg. In the night of July 17, twenty-four hours after the massacre of the Tsar, the Tsaritsa and their children, she was beaten to death with the butt end of rifles and thrown into a mineshaft. Her remains were recovered a few weeks later when Admiral Koltchak's army approached the Urals. After many vicissitudes her coffin was brought to Pekin: it is to be placed in the Russian Convent of "Saint Mary Magdalene at the Judgment Seat" in Jerusalem.

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