

# A Mad Monk Passes

## Rasputin as Beheld by a Boy

By B. CAHN

Riga, Latvia.

IT WOULD appear, perhaps, that the observations of a boy of eight would be of no interest to anyone, but the events which I lived through when I was that age were of such a nature that I never have been able to forget them—much as I should like to.

I was born in Riga, and during the war, as the German troops bombarded our city, my parents removed to St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), taking my little sister and me with them.

Those early days in Petersburg have become faint in memory, but I shall begin at the point at which they became unforgettable. It was a beautiful sunny day. I stood before the door of our house in the Gorochova and with a friend discussed, with the wisdom becoming my years, the war. We could not understand things at all. The papers wrote that the victorious Russian troops were on the way to Berlin, but fugitives told quite a different story—that the Germans had reached Warsaw and Reval.

Unnoticed by me, an elegant motor car drew up before the door of the house next to ours. My little friend doffed his cap. I looked into the car and stared at a "narrow face" with pointed beard and eyes which gazed at me with such fixity that even now, when I close my eyes, I see it before me—a dark face with eyes flickering green.

"Why don't you salute me, youngster?" I heard a voice, low and fierce, and before I could answer the apparition had disappeared.

"Rasputin," whispered my little playmate, and ran away to tell his parents.

Thoughtfully I ascended the steps to our flat and related my experience to my parents, who seemed to be very uneasy. They told me that Rasputin lived next door. I saw him a few times later, but took care that



Rasputin, the unholy monk.

the seeing was on my side and not his, hiding myself so that he could not see me. But his glance followed me in my mind everywhere and all the time.

Another memory of this soul-stirring period. Our servant ran into the room one morning, informing us that Rasputin had been assassinated. Out of the window I saw how groups of men came together, talking excitedly, delightedly.

"Now everything will be better," said they, but their joy was short-lived, as the police came up and dispersed the gathering crowds.

And again a picture. The czar has abdicated. Again I look out of the window. Again the crowds gather, but the picture presented is diverse. Some faces beam with joy, while other people, cover their faces with handkerchiefs to hide their tears. This time the police do not interfere.

## Memories of Russia's Terror

They have not yet made up their minds as to whom they belong. Then come a few quiet months. Kerensky is in power. I live the life of a little boy, and what does it matter to me? Then comes the bolshevik revolution.

One night I am awakened by a strange light. A rosy hue colors the street. I rush to the window. The police office at the corner of Gorochova and Zagorodni is burning. It is the first flame of revolution.

Next morning I am again at my window and see an excited crowd. Here and there are people flaunting red ties. The police are not to be seen at all; only soldiers with red arm bands are trying to keep order. Suddenly there are wild cries. In the distance appears a troop of Cossacks, striking with their sabers, firing their pistols. The crowd tries to escape; many succeed, but there are others who will run no more. Despite my fear, I gaze with fascinated horror. My eight-year-old soul takes in every detail. By main force my father drags me away from the window and takes me into another room. I go to the opposite wall. There is a hole in it; something metallic seems to be in it. My father sees it also, turns pale and presses me to him. I do not realize the danger and wish to return to the window.

"Now," asks my father, "do you want to be shot?" His voice has changed. It trembles. A few days later the terror is in full swing. From my window I often see a high officer being taken away by soldiers and workmen. They disappear behind a corner. Suddenly I hear a shot. The soldiers and workmen come back. They are alone. Another morning I run again to my window. On a near lamp post hangs a man. Quite still he hangs, except that now and again a gust of wind moves him. Then he seems like a scarecrow. This is all I remember. It is enough!

# Building Art Reborn

## Scientists Transform Industry

By THOMAS M. BECK

BACK in the middle ages there were plenty of good architects, engineers, and artisans, and, according to those who know architecture, they built a number of excellent buildings. Unfortunately, they labored under the handicap of a decidedly limited variety of building materials. They had stone, brick, and wood for walls and floors and roofs, and a little lead, copper, plaster, and glass for trimmings, but that was about all.

There always has been and still is a crying need for lighter and stronger building materials. As a matter of fact, these two factors, lightness and strength, are rather closely related to each other. Any article can be made strong enough if good material is put into it, but a good building material must have as high a ratio of strength to weight as is possible.

While there is not much prospect of an immediate return to the halcyon days of 1923 in the building industry, nevertheless there are considerable opportunities even now for the application of certain types of materials. Old buildings are not frequently being replaced by new ones; instead they are being remodeled and modernized. And for this remodeling lightness of the material is essential and ease of application is desirable.

Wood has a number of excellent qualities; it is light in weight, easy to work with, and beautiful to gaze upon. Unfortunately, it is inflammable. Moreover, because of its grain, its strength is not the same in all directions, as a result of which it frequently splits or warps. This latter defect is being obviated by the use of plywood for interior work. Plywood consists of a number of thin sheets of wood arranged so that the grains of alternate layers are at right angles, and then glued together.

In one of the newer plywoods the adhesive used is a synthetic resin made from formaldehyde and carbolic acid. This resin is applied as an oily liquid, which on being subjected to heat and pressure changes to a hard, glassy solid and permanently binds the sheets of wood together. It has an added advantage of permeating the wood with small traces of its original components, thereby rendering it immune to the attacks of insects.

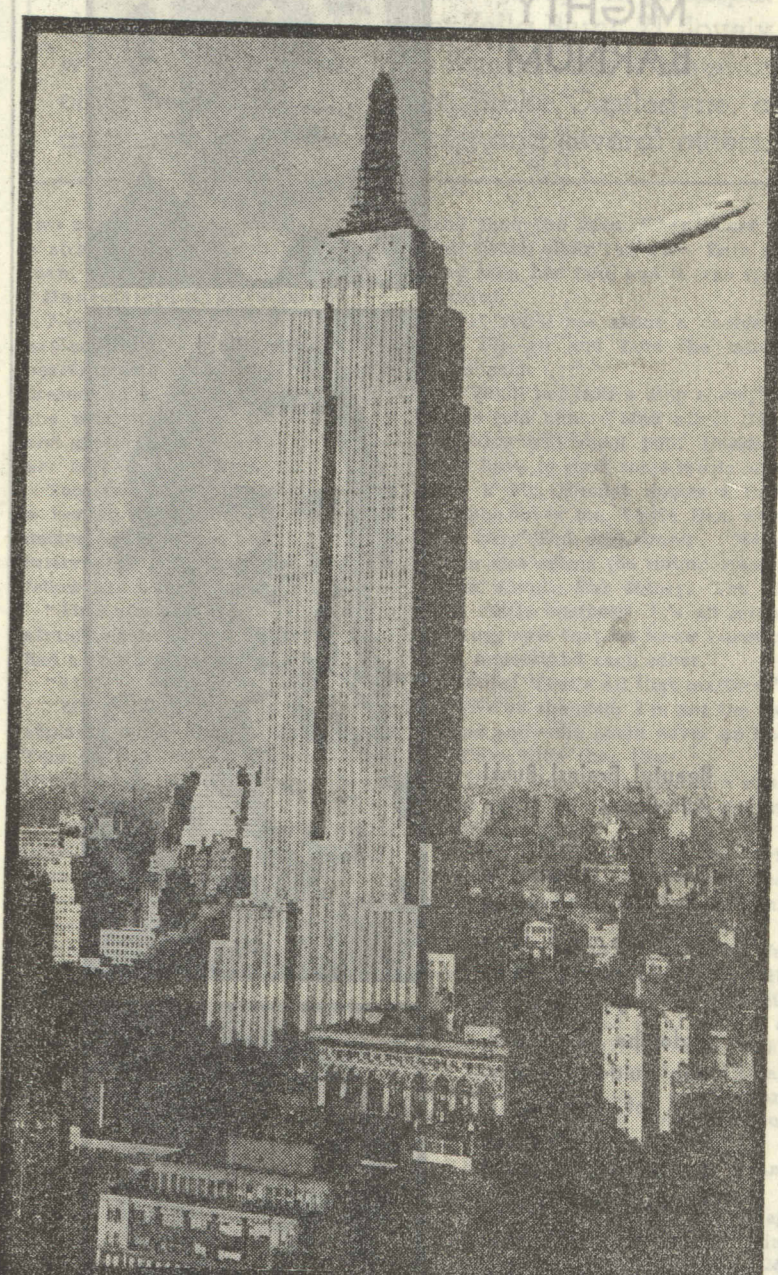
For fireproofing, plywoods are made which incorporate a thin sheet of asbestos. Steel plate is used for the same purpose, either as a base to be covered with a wood veneer or as

a thin outside coating for plywood. But if you happen to be interested only in the appearance of wood, and not in its mechanical properties, then there are available thin, flexible wood veneers glued to a canvas backing, which can be pasted on walls after the manner of wall paper, thus giving a perfectly good hardwood surface. Perhaps the superlative development in this line is a certain Japanese wood that is sliced into paper-thin sheets which are pasted on thin paper. The resulting wall covering has all the appearance of ordinary wood, but is as thin and flexible as a piece of writing paper.

The various kinds of building stone, once so essential to builders, are now used in commercial buildings almost entirely in the form of veneers, about four inches thick, as facing for concrete. And there now appear artificial stones molded from concrete into any desired shape or size and finished in such a way as to resemble one of a number of natural rocks. Furthermore, concrete itself has been undergoing considerable improvement of late. Cements are now made that will set in a matter of hours instead of days. Moreover, by the use of certain highly porous slag-like substances as aggregates it is possible to cut down the weight of concrete by about a third without any great sacrifice of strength.

Gypsum, a white, rocklike mineral, on heating gives plaster of paris, which is easily converted back into gypsum by the addition of water. This process makes possible the manufacture of relatively thin sheets of gypsum of any size, which, because of their lightness and insulating properties, are quite useful for wallboards and roofing. Mixed with suitable binding materials, gypsum is becoming a competitor of concrete for certain kinds of flooring.

Among the metals used in building, steel is steadily taking over more and more of the former uses of wood. The most noticeable example of this is the increasing use of steel window frames. But in its original field, that of providing the framework of buildings, steel is still holding its own against competing metals. Certain aluminum alloys have properties superior to those of steel for this purpose, but so far the cost of such alloys has been prohibitive.



Highest and one of the newest buildings in the world is the Empire State building in New York. Steel, concrete, and many of the newer building materials were used in its construction.

however, consists of backing up a previously shaped sheet of stainless steel with a block of concrete, which makes it possible for the steel to be set in the face of a building as though it were stone.

The stainlessness of aluminum is plates. The resulting material looks like highly polished marble and has the added advantage of being obtainable in the most exquisite designs. Even window glass is undergoing changes. Ordinary glass is quite impenetrable to the health-giving ultra-

# Clash at Beauty Show

EUROPE'S recent annual beauty contest in Hastings, England, staged for the purpose of selecting a young woman to represent the continent in competition in Chile for the title of "Miss Universe," almost broke up in a battle when jealous finalists contended that one of the entrants from France was a "ringer"—an American, if you please.

Finally, however, after many harsh words had been exchanged, "Miss Europe" was chosen in the person of Esther Toivenen, a 20-year-old ash blonde from Finland. Miss Toivenen, according to the contest rules, not only won a trip to Chile but was assured of a journey to Hollywood, with all expenses paid, for the purpose of a screen test.

The young woman who created all the disturbance also is a blonde, Louisa Lyman. She was born in New York eighteen years ago, but has lived in Paris since she was five years old. Her great-great-grandfather was Oliver Ellsworth, American ambassador to France during the presidential term of John Adams. Her father was Chester Walcott Lyman, president of the International Paper company and member of a well-known American family.

Unladylike behavior threatened to mar the happy proceedings as beauties, mothers, and chaperons protest-

ed volubly that this contest was a European affair and that the girls were not supposed to meet any Americans until they got to Santiago, Chile—if they got there.

At last things were patched up when it was pointed out that Miss Lyman's mother was a Frenchwoman. The contest promoters entered her as "Miss Atlantic." A preliminary contest in Paris already had resulted in a "Miss France" being selected.

Troubles, however, weren't over for the contest promoters and the judges, one of whom was Mack Sennett, the American film producer. The "misses" of fifteen countries and "Miss Atlantic" were kept in evening clothes from morning until night for three days running, until it got to be just too formal for one of the mothers, who insisted the girls should have a showing in bathing suits. There was seemingly little opportunity for her daughter to show off in evening dress what must have been a perfect form. To the credit of Mr. Sennett, who has picked a lot of bathing beauties in his time, it must be said he took no sides and worked only for peace. In the end it was decided the girls should keep their dresses on.

Another difficulty arose when the troupe was to be shown off in national costumes in a London department store. There just wasn't any national costume anyone could think of for "Miss Atlantic." And it couldn't be decided which of several possible costumes "Miss England" and "Miss France" should wear. It ended up with these three in evening clothes again and the rest in costumes.



(Acme photo.)

Esther Toivenen, 20-year-old ash blonde from Finland, chosen as "Miss Europe" at the annual beauty contest at Hastings, England.



(Acme photo.)

Louisa Lyman, who almost broke up the contest. She was allowed to compete as "Miss Atlantic."



Ten beauties from various cities in England. From this group was chosen a young woman to represent Great Britain in the contest at Hastings.



Perhaps the newest of all building materials is glass brick. The building pictured here, an exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair, was made entirely of glass.

Both stainless steel and aluminum are being used more and more for providing shiny trimmings, especially for exteriors. The former has the disadvantage of being difficult to shape conveniently. The more stainless it is, the more difficult it is to work with at temperatures below red heat. A fairly recent development,

due to an interesting property of the metal, pure aluminum is a highly reactive metal and is much more subject to rust than is iron. But aluminum rust, which is white, instead of flaking off and exposing fresh metal, forms a thin, tough, and almost invisible coating which protects the metal beneath from the ravages of air and weather. By means of a new process this coating can be made of microscopic thickness and quite invisible, so that the metal remains bright for an indefinite time.

Enameled steel plates are being introduced for outside walls. But since such walls are excellent heat conductors, it has been necessary to develop at the same time a number of insulators, chiefly of the mineral fiber type. It is interesting to note here that aluminum foil, although a metal, is a good insulator. Its shiny surface reflects most of the sun's heat in the summer time, and in the winter it equally well prevents the radiation of heat from the inside.

Glass is becoming more important in construction. Shaped into thick slabs, it is replacing marble to some extent. Hollow brick of colored glass suggest themselves as interesting. If somewhat expensive, material for exterior walls; although it may take some time for the average citizen to overcome his prejudice against having his home glow like a Christmas tree at night. But the height of artificiality, or perhaps economy, is reached by sandwiching a photograph of marble between two glass

violet light of the sun; but newer glasses are on the market which are fairly permeable to this radiation and thus make it possible for even a lover of the great indoors to get his share of almost unadulterated sunshine. This list of materials could be extended almost indefinitely, it is observed by Henry J. B. Hoskins of Holabird & Root, who has supplied much of the information presented here. Artificial fiber boards made of compressed cane or wood pulps are becoming almost essential as wallboards. New insulations are coming into use as wall coverings. Floorings are being made of compositions containing rubber or synthetic resins. Artificial tiles made from asbestos or resins or almost anything else are now available.



To many the ultramodern in interior decoration is bizarre, but there can be little doubt that it is here to stay. Glass and metals are predominant in the new style of interior decoration.

## Scientific Queries Answered

Mr. Beck will be glad to answer questions of scientific nature. Address: Thomas M. Beck, Graphic Section, Chicago Tribune. For personal reply, include stamped, addressed envelope.

Is there any known metal that is lighter than aluminum?—W. L. N., Chicago.

There are several metals lighter than aluminum. The metal lithium is the lightest one known, but it is much too easily corroded, even by water, to replace aluminum in any of its uses.

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