

34 LITTLE GRANDMOTHER OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Odessa tried bravely but unsuccessfully to follow them. As the talk grew more and more philosophical and abstruse, Axelrod and Catherine lost all interest in it, and both fell fast asleep.

Catherine was determined to go out and work among the peasants; but she was advised to wait a little while until some further degree of organization should have been effected among them. Efforts to this end were being made throughout the country, stimulated from Petrograd by Kovalik and others of like views. The opponents of the Bakuninites called them, half mockingly, "flame-seekers", because they sought out those villages where a longing for freedom was already smouldering in the peasants' hearts, and tried to fan it into flame. Catherine was a "flame-seeker."

In "the commune" life was carried on simply, without ceremony or affectation. Plain living and high thinking were the order of the day. Catherine and her friends lived on the poorest fare, while their minds were busy with the greatest questions, all centering about the problem of the peasants.

On the outside, the homes of members of "the commune" differed little from other houses; but inside it was like a different world. There were many large rooms, and each looked like a workshop. In one were carpenters' tools, with noblemen working as apprentices to the trade; in another students were learning shoemaking; in yet another etchers were preparing metal seals to stamp false passports.

There was a general office where letters and telegrams were received, all in cipher. Here young men and women could be seen discussing political and economic questions. Some were dressed as peasants, others, not