

2 LITTLE GRANDMOTHER OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Even when his brow grew cloudy and his manner stern, the children were never afraid of him.

Neither her father nor her mother ever made an enemy. Her father was frank and open-hearted, with a hot temper that revolted against injustice. He often told the other landowners just what he thought of their pretences and their brutal treatment of their subordinates; but these outbursts were never laid up against him. He was universally respected and liked. His chief pleasure was to sit alone and read the works of liberal writers.

Her mother was not so handsome as her father, but had an intelligent and amiable face, exquisite manners, and irreproachable tact. She had attended school at the well-known Smolin Convent in Petrograd, and was a woman of culture. She was sincerely religious. She cared little for the pomps and ceremonies of the Greek Church, but brought her children up on the gospels, and on beautiful stories of holy men and women.

The mother was very careful in her behavior towards others, regardful of appearances and of "good form." If a truth were painful, she delicately concealed it. Over and over again she said to her children, "The best thing in life is the golden mean." She constantly admonished them that nothing was so harmful as excess. If a child failed to read her Bible, the mother would reprove her; and if the child then read the Bible too assiduously, the mother would reprove her again, and repeat that excess of any kind was fraught with danger. This was drummed into the children's ears so often that they dreaded to hear it. Nevertheless this polished lady was genuinely