

THE LITTLE GRANDMOTHER OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE Russian revolution is one of the great events of modern history. While it seemed to come with surprising suddenness, it was really the fruit of the labors and sacrifices of thousands of Russia's noblest men and women. Preëminent among these stands out the figure of Catherine Breshkovsky, known to millions by the affectionate name of Baboushka, the "Dear Little Grandmother" of the revolution.

She was born in 1844, on an estate in the district of Vitebsk, in Little Russia. She was fortunate in her parents. Whenever she speaks of them, her face lights up. "I had wonderful parents," she says. "If there is anything good in me, I owe it all to them."

Her father, Constantine Mikhailovitch Verigo, was the son of a Polish aristocrat. Her mother, Olga Ivanovna Goremykina, came of a noble family of Great Russia. Catherine is therefore three fourths Russian and one fourth Polish.

Constantine Verigo was a handsome, elegant man, of majestic presence, with a large head, a high forehead, and blue eyes twinkling with good nature.