

16 LITTLE GRANDMOTHER OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

tions. The only rebel against these ceremonies was little Katya. She objected to bowing before the Duchess as before a goddess. Her mother told her that the Duchess was her elder in years, and demanded reverence; but Katya felt that the old lady preferred submission to reverence, and fear to love.

The mother had brought the children up on the Bible and religious stories; but in the Duchess's library they found material of every kind. There were pictures of foreign countries, landscapes and love scenes, romances and books of history and travel. At nine years old Katya had read the whole of Karanzin's "History of Russia", in several volumes. She read books of travel with eagerness, and remembered the details so well that once, years after, when she talked about foreign countries with the captain of a ship, he felt sure that she must have actually visited the places she described. Her practical mind led her also to devour discussions of the market price of wheat, of land, etc., and to study her father's business records and letters. She did not care for fiction. What interested her was real life.

As she learned more, she grew more and more heart-sick over the way the peasants were treated. When she was but ten years old, her indignation against the flogging of the serfs broke out in such hot words that her old peasant nurse begged her to speak low.

"My father helped me to think," she says. "He was a man of broad, liberal ideas. We read together many books of science and travel. Social science absorbed me. By sixteen I had read much of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, and I knew the French Revolution by heart. I spoke French from babyhood, and my German governess had taught me German; and