

FATHERS AND SONS



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INTRODUCTION

IN this masterly unromantic novel, Turgenev drew a character, Bazarov, who served to express what he taught us to call Nihilism, and made a movement into a man. In Russia itself the effect of the story was astonishing. The portrait of Bazarov was immediately and angrily resented as a cold travesty. The portraits of the "back-woodsmen," or retired aristocrats, fared no better. Turgenev had indeed roused the ire of both sides, only too surely.

The Petrovitchs, typical figures as he designed them of the Russian nobility, were intended he confessed to breathe "feebleness, nonchalance, narrowness of mind." His sense of fitness made him paint with extreme care these choice representatives of their class. They were the pick, and if they were humanly ineffective, what of their weaker kind? "Si la crème est mauvaise, que sera le lait?" as he put it. The bitterest criticism came, however, from the side of the revolutionaries and incompatibles. They felt in Turgenev the sharper artistry and the intimate irony as if he had only used these qualities in dealing with the specific case of Bazarov; whereas they were temperamental effects of his narrative art. He was ready to assert himself one of the party of youth. He was at one with Bazarov, he declared, in nearly all his ideas, a chief exception being Bazarov's ideas on art, which in truth are apt to be more crudely delivered than the rest of that iconoclast's destructive opinions. Bazarov, he said once and again, was his favourite child.

It is nearly forty years now (in 1921) since the novel appeared in *The Russian Messenger*, a weekly which was the recognised exponent of the new movement. That proverbial period has lent a softer cast to the lineaments of the people in the group, as time touches the canvas of the pictures in an old country-house gallery. But the

interesting thing is to find that history in the large has terribly and irresistibly confirmed the history in little that Turgenev drew, with a sure instinct, for the potential anticipations of his saga.

But we should be wrong if we mistook its clear pervading realities for those of a tract-novel, or a document of any one particular generation. It is as its title declares in a sense another fable of the inevitable coil and recoil of the two generations. The sympathetic power of Turgenev is shown in his instinctive understanding of them both. An aristocrat by training, he was saved as Tolstoi was from sterilising his imaginative and dramatic powers by any sense of caste and privilege. He loved the play of human nature, knew how to reckon with its foibles, its pride, habitual prejudices, and all tragic and comic susceptibilities. So he drew Bazarov, as a protagonist of the revolt against the old order and the protective habit of age. When Bazarov enters the house of Arkady's father, he is like Don Quixote entering the inn of his direst probation. If the parallel seems a trifle fantastic, it was yet one that Turgenev would let pass, since he affirmed that Don Quixote himself was, in his inimitable extravagance, a type of the eternal spirit of revolution. And one would like, if there were room for it, to print as preamble to *Fathers and Sons*, the essay in which its writer has compared the deeper essentials of Hamlet and Quixote.

We must be satisfied instead to recall the direct event of the novel, as it falls in his own record. The present writer, some years ago, spent a spring at Ventnor in the Isle of Wight, and found the house on the sea-brink in which he stayed had been occupied by Turgenev at one time. Then and there it was, in 1860 and at Ventnor, that he had the first idea of this novel; and it is scarcely being too fanciful to think that he imagined the home environment and the spacious vista of the Russian provinces more fondly and more freely, because of his being at a long remove from them in that small and confined seaside nook of Ventnor. Already, we must remember, the liberation of the serf had taken place; and the ferment of liberal ideas was working in the new generation. As we look back,

we see in our wisdom after the event, having realised Turgenev for the novelist he was—an artist who was for ever adjusting the moment to the permanent in art—that it was inevitable he should write this book, this tragi-comedy of age and youth, of the old order and the new, the conservating fathers and the revolutionary sons.

E. R.

The following is the list of Turgenev's chief works:

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF WORKS: *Russian Life in the Interior*: or, the Experiences of a Sportsman, from French version, by J. D. Meiklejohn, 1855; *Annals of a Sportsman*, from French version, by F. P. Abbott, 1855; *Tales from the Notebook of a Sportsman*, from the Russian, by E. Richter, 1895; *Fathers and Sons*, from the Russian, by E. Schuyler, 1867, 1883; *Smoke*: or, *Life at Baden*, from French version, 1868, by W. F. West, 1872, 1883; *Liza*: or, *a Nest of Nobles*, from the Russian, by W. R. S. Ralston, 1869, 1873, 1884; *On the Eve*, a tale, from the Russian, by C. E. Turner, 1871; *Dimitri Roudine*, from French and German versions, 1873, 1883; *Spring Floods*, from the Russian, by S. M. Batts, 1874; from the Russian, by E. Richter, 1895; *A Lear of the Steppe*, from the French, by W. H. Browne, 1874; *Virgin Soil*, from the French, by T. S. Perry, 1877, 1883, by A. W. Dilke, 1878; *Poems in Prose*, from the Russian, 1883; *Senilia*, *Poems in Prose*, with a Biographical Sketch of the Author, by S. J. Macmillan, 1890; *First Love*, and *Punin and Baburin*, from the Russian, with a Biographical Introduction, by S. Jerrold, 1884; *Mumu*, and the *Diary of a Superfluous Man*, from the Russian, by H. Gersoni, 1884; *Annouchka*, a tale, from the French version, by F. P. Abbott, 1884; from the Russian (with *An Unfortunate Woman*), by H. Gersoni, 1886; *The Unfortunate One*, from the Russian, by A. R. Thompson, 1888 (see above for Gersoni's translation); *The Watch*, from the Russian, by J. E. Williams, 1893; *Plays*, by M. S. Mandell, etc., 1924.

WORKS: *Novels*, translated by Constance Garnett, 17 vols, 1919-23; *Novels and Stories*, translated by Isabel F. Hapgood, with an Introduction by Henry James, 1903, etc.

LIFE: See above, *Biographical Introductions to Poems in Prose* and *First Love*; E. M. Arnold, *Tourguéneff and his French Circle*, translated from the work of E. Halperine-Kaminsky, 1898; J. A. T. Lloyd, *Two Russian Reformers: Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy*, 1910; E. Garnett, *Turgenev, a Study*, 1917; A. Yarmolinsky, *Turgenev*, 1926.

FATHERS AND SONS

I

"WELL, Peter? Cannot you see them yet?" asked a *barin*¹ of about forty who, hatless, and clad in a dusty jacket over a pair of tweed breeches, stepped on to the verandah of a posting-house on the 20th day of May, 1859. The person addressed was the *barin's* servant—a round-cheeked young fellow with small, dull eyes and a chin adorned with a tuft of pale-coloured down.

Glancing along the high road in a supercilious manner, the servant (in whom everything, from the turquoise ear-ring to the dyed, pomaded hair and the mincing gait, revealed the modern, the rising generation) replied: "No, *barin*, I cannot."

"Is that so?" queried the *barin*.

"Yes," the servant affirmed.

The *barin* sighed, and seated himself upon a bench. While he is sitting there with his knees drawn under him and his eyes moodily glancing to right and left, the reader may care to become better acquainted with his personality.

His name was Nikolai Petrovitch Kirsanov, and he owned (some fifteen versts from the posting-house) a respectable little property of about two hundred souls (or, as, after that he had apportioned his peasantry allotments, and set up a "farm," he himself expressed it, a property "of two thousand *desiatini*"²). His

¹ Gentleman or squire.

² The *desiatin* = 2.86 acres.

father, one of the generals of 1812, had spent his life exclusively in military service as the commander, first of a brigade, and then of a division; and always he had been quartered in the provinces, where his rank had enabled him to cut a not inconspicuous figure. As for Nikolai Petrovitch himself, he was born in Southern Russia (as also was his elder brother, Paul—of whom presently), and, until his fourteenth year, received his education amid a circle of hard-up governors, free-and-easy aides-de-camp, and sundry staff and regimental officers. His mother came of the family of the Koliazins, and, known in maidenhood as Agathe, and subsequently as Agathoklea Kuzminishna Kirsanov, belonged to the type of "officer's lady." That is to say, she wore pompous mobcaps and rustling silk dresses, was always the first to approach the cross in church, talked volubly and in a loud tone, of set practice admitted her sons to kiss her hand in the morning, and never failed to bless them before retiring to rest at night. In short, she lived the life which suited her. As the son of a general, Nikolai Petrovitch was bound—though he evinced no particular bravery, and might even have seemed a coward—to follow his brother Paul's example by entering the army; but unfortunately, owing to the fact that, on the very day when there arrived the news of his commission, he happened to break his leg, it befell that, after two months in bed, he rose to his feet a permanently lamed man. When his father had finished wringing his hands over the mischance, he sent his son to acquire a civilian education; whence it came about that Nikolai, at eighteen, found himself a student at the University of St. Petersburg. At the same period his brother obtained a commission in one of the regiments of Guards; and, that being so, their father apportioned the two young men a joint establishment, and placed it under the more or less detached supervision of Ilya

Koliazin, their maternal uncle and a leading *tchinovnik*.¹ That done, the father returned to his division and his wife, and only at rare intervals sent his sons sheets of grey foolscap (scrawled and re-scrawled in flamboyant calligraphy) to which there was appended, amid a bower of laborious flourishes, the signature "Piotr Kirsanov, Major-General." In the year 1835 Nikolai Petrovitch obtained his university degree; and in the same year General Kirsanov was retired for incompetence at a review, and decided to transfer his quarters to St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, just as he was on the point both of renting a house near the Tavritchesky Gardens and of being enrolled as a member of the English Club, a stroke put an end to his career, and Agathoklea Kuzminishna followed him soon afterwards, since never had she succeeded in taking to the dull life of the capital, but always had hankered after the old provincial existence. Already during his parents' lifetime, and to their no small vexation, Nikolai Petrovitch had contrived to fall in love with the daughter of a certain *tchinovnik* named Prepolovensky, the landlord of his flat; and since the maiden was not only comely, but one of the type known as "advanced" (that is to say, she perused an occasional "Science" article in one newspaper or another), he married her out of hand as soon as the term of mourning was ended, and, abandoning the Ministry of Provincial Affairs to which, through his father's influence, he had been posted, embarked upon connubial felicity in a villa adjoining the Institute of Forestry. Thence, after a while, the couple removed to a diminutive, but in every way respectable, flat which could boast of a spotless vestibule and an icy-cold drawing-room; and thence, again, they migrated to the country, where they settled for good, and where, in due time, they had born to them a son Arkady. The existence

¹ Civil servant.

of husband and wife was one of perfect comfort and tranquillity. Almost never were they parted from one another, they read together, they played the piano together, and they sang duets. Also, she would garden or superintend the poultry-yard, and he would set forth a-hunting, or see to the management of the estate. Meanwhile Arkady led an existence of equal calm and comfort, and grew, and waxed fat; until, in 1847, when ten years had been passed in this idyllic fashion, Kirsanov's wife breathed her last. The blow proved almost more than the husband could bear—so much so that his head turned grey in a few weeks. Yet, though he sought distraction for his thoughts by going abroad, he felt constrained, in the following year, to return home, where, after a prolonged period of inaction, he took up the subject of Industrial Reform. Next, in 1855, he sent his son to the University of St. Petersburg, and, for the same reason, spent the following three winters in the capital, where he seldom went out, but spent the greater part of his time in endeavouring to fraternise with his son's youthful acquaintances. The fourth winter, however, he was prevented by various circumstances from spending in St. Petersburg; and thus in the May of 1859 we see him—greyheaded, dusty, a trifle bent, and wholly middle-aged—awaiting his son's home-coming after the elevation of the latter (in Nikolai's own footsteps) to the dignity of a graduate.

Presently either a sense of decency or (more probably) a certain disinclination to remain immediately under his master's eye led the servant to withdraw to the entrance gates, and there to light a pipe. Nikolai Petrovitch, however, continued sitting with head bent, and his eyes contemplating the ancient steps of the verandah, up which a stout speckled hen was tap-tapping its way on a pair of splayed yellow legs, and thereby causing an untidy, but fastidious-looking, cat

to regard it from the balustrade with marked disapproval. Meanwhile the sun beat fiercely down, and from the darkened interior of a neighbouring granary came a smell as of hot rye straw. Nikolai Petrovitch sank into a reverie. "My son Arkady a graduate!"—the words kept passing and repassing through his mind. Again and again he tried to think of something else, but always the same thought returned to him. Until eventually he reverted to the memory of his dead wife. "Would that she were still with me!" was his yearning reflection. Presently a fat blue pigeon alighted upon the roadway, and fell to taking a hasty drink from a pool beside the well. And almost at the instant that the spectacle of the bird caught Nikolai Petrovitch's eye, his ear caught the sound of approaching wheels.

"They are coming, I think," hazarded the servant as he stepped forward through the gates.

Nikolai Petrovitch sprang to his feet, and strained his eyes along the road. Yes, coming into view there was a *tarantass*,¹ drawn by three stagehorses; and in the *tarantass* there could be seen the band of a student's cap and the outlines of a familiar, well-beloved face.

"Arkasha, Arkasha!" was Kirsanov's cry as, running forward, he waved his arms. A few moments later he was pressing his lips to the sun-tanned, dusty, hairless cheek of the newly-fledged graduate.

¹ A species of four-wheeled carriage.

II

"YES, but first give me a rub down, dearest Papa," said Arkady in a voice which, though a little hoarsened with travelling, was yet clear and youthful. "See! I am covering you with dust!" he added as joyously he returned his father's caresses.

"Oh, but that will not matter," said Nikolai Petrovitch with a loving, reassuring smile as he gave the collar of his son's blue cloak a couple of pats, and then did the same by his own jacket. Thereafter, gently withdrawing from his son's embrace, and beginning to lead the way towards the inn yard, he added: "Come this way, come this way. The horses will soon be ready."

His excitement seemed even to outdo his son's, so much did he stammer and stutter, and, at times, find himself at a loss for a word. Arkady stopped him.

"Papa," he said, "first let me introduce my good friend Bazarov, who is the comrade whom I have so often mentioned in letters to you, and who has been kind enough to come to us for a visit."

At once Nikolai Petrovitch wheeled round, and, approaching a tall man who, clad in a long coat with a tasselled belt, had just alighted from the *tarantass*, pressed the bare red hand which, after a pause, the stranger offered him.

"I am indeed glad to see you!" was Nikolai Petrovitch's greeting, "I am indeed grateful to you for your kindness in paying us this visit! Alas, I hope that, that—— But first might I inquire your name?"

"Evgenii Vasiliev," replied the other in slow, but virile, accents as, turning down the collar of his coat,

he revealed his face more clearly. Long and thin, with a high forehead which looked flattened at the top and became sharpened towards the nose, the face had large, greenish eyes and long, sandy whiskers. The instant that the features brightened into a smile, however, they betokened self-assurance and intellect.

"My dearest Evgenii Vasiliev," Nikolai Petrovitch continued, "I trust that whilst you are with us you will not find time hang heavy upon your hands."

Bazarov gave his lips a slight twitch, but vouchsafed no reply beyond raising his cap—a movement which revealed the fact that the prominent convolutions of the skull were by no means concealed by the superincumbent mass of indeterminate-coloured hair.

"Now, Arkady," went on Nikolai Petrovitch as he turned to his son, "shall we have the horses harnessed at once, or should you prefer to rest a little?"

"Let us rest at home, Papa. So pray have the horses put to."

"I will," his father agreed. "Peter! Bestir yourself, my good fellow!"

Being what is known as a "perfectly trained servant," Peter had neither approached nor shaken hands with the young *barin*, but contented himself with a distant bow. He now vanished through the yard gates.

"Though I have come in the *koliaska*," said Nikolai Petrovitch, "I have brought three fresh horses for the *tarantass*."

Arkady then drank some water from a yellow bowl proffered by the landlord, while Bazarov lighted a pipe, and approached the ostler, who was engaged in unharneßing the stagehorses.

"Only two can ride in the *koliaska*," continued Nikolai Petrovitch; "wherefore I am rather in a difficulty to know how your friend will——"

"Oh, he can travel in the *tarantass*," interrupted

Arkady. "Moreover, do not stand on any ceremony with him, for, wonderful though he is, he is also quite simple, as you will find for yourself."

Nikolai Petrovitch's coachman brought out the horses, and Bazarov remarked to the ostler:

"Come, bestir yourself, fat-beard!"

"Did you hear that, Mitiusha?" added another ostler who was standing with his hands thrust into the back slits of his blouse. "The *barin* has just called you a fat-beard. And a fat-beard you are."

For answer Mitiusha merely cocked his cap to one side and drew the reins from the back of the sweating shafts-horse.

"Quick now, my good fellows!" cried Nikolai Petrovitch. "Bear a hand, all of you, and for each there will be a glassful of *vodka*."

Naturally, it was not long before the horses were harnessed, and then father and son seated themselves in the *koliaska*, Peter mounted the box of that vehicle, and Bazarov stepped into the *tarantass*, and lolled his head against the leather cushion at the back. Finally the cortège moved away.

III

"To think that you are now a graduate and home again!" said Nikolai Petrovitch as he tapped Arkady on the knee, and then on the shoulder. "There now, there now!"

"And how is Uncle? Is he quite well?" asked Arkady—the reason for the question being that though he felt filled with a genuine, an almost childish delight at his return, he also felt conscious of an instinct that the conversation were best diverted from the emotional to the prosaic.

"Yes, your uncle is quite well. As a matter of fact, he also had arranged to come and meet you, but at the last moment changed his mind."

"Did you have very long to wait?" continued Arkady.

"About five hours."

"Dearest Papa!" cried Arkady as, leaning over towards his father, he imprinted upon his cheek a fervent kiss. Nikolai Petrovitch smiled quietly.

"I have got a splendid horse for you," he next remarked. "Presently you shall see him. Also, your room has been entirely repapered."

"And have you a room for Bazarov as well?"

"One shall be found for him."

"Oh—and pray humour him in every way you can. I could not express to you how much I value his friendship."

"But you have not known him very long, have you?"

"No—not very long."

"I thought not, for I do not remember to have seen him in St. Petersburg last winter. In what does he most interest himself?"

"Principally in natural science. But, to tell the truth, he knows practically *everything*, and is to become a doctor next year."

"Oh! So he is in the Medical Faculty?" Nikolai Petrovitch remarked; after which there was silence for a moment.

"Peter," went on Nikolai, pointing with his hand, "are not those peasants there some of our own?"

Peter glanced in the direction indicated, and saw a few waggons proceeding along a narrow by-road. The teams were bridleless, and in each waggon were seated some two or three *muzhiks* with their blouses unbuttoned.

"Yes, they are some of our own," Peter responded.

"Then whither can they be going? To the town?"

"Yes—or to the tavern." This last was added contemptuously, and with a wink to the coachman that was designed to enlist that functionary's sympathy: but as the functionary in question was one of the old school which takes no share in the modern movement, he stirred not a muscle of his face.

"This year my peasants have been giving me a good deal of trouble," Nikolai Petrovitch continued to his son. "Persistently do they refuse to pay their tithes. What ought to be done with them?"

"And do you find your hired workmen satisfactory?"

"Not altogether," muttered Nikolai Petrovitch. "You see, they have become spoilt, more's the pity! Any real energy seems quite to have left them, and they not only ruin my implements, but also leave the land untilled. Does estate-management interest you?"

"The thing we most lack here is shade," remarked Arkady in evasion of the question.

"Ah, but I have had an awning added to the north balcony, so that we can take our meals in the open air."

"But that will give the place rather the look of a villa, will it not? Things of that sort never prove effectual."

But oh, the air here! How good it smells! Yes, in my opinion, things never smell elsewhere as they do here. And oh, the sky!"

Suddenly Arkady stopped, threw a glance of apprehension in the direction of the *tarantass*, and relapsed into silence.

"I quite agree with you," replied Nikolai Petrovitch. "You see, the reason is that you were born here, and that therefore the place is bound to have for you a special significance."

"But no significance can attach to the place of a man's birth, Papa."

"Indeed?"

"Oh no. None whatsoever."

Nikolai Petrovitch glanced at the speaker, and for fully half a verst let the vehicle proceed without the conversation between them being renewed. At length Nikolai Petrovitch observed:

"I cannot remember whether I wrote to tell you that your old nurse, Egorovna, is dead."

"Dead? Oh, the poor old woman! But Prokovitch—is *he* still alive?"

"He is so, and in no way changed—that is to say, he grumbles as much as ever. In fact, you will find that no *really* important alterations have taken place at Marino."

"And have you the same steward as before?"

"No; I have appointed a fresh one, for I came to the conclusion that I could not have any freed serfs about the place. That is to say, I did not feel as though I could trust such fellows with posts of responsibility." Arkady indicated Peter with his eyes, and Nikolai Petrovitch therefore subdued his voice a little. "He? Oh, *il est libre, en effet*. You see, he is my valet. But as regards a steward, I have appointed a *miestchanin*,¹ at a salary of

¹ A member of the trading or shopkeeping class.

250 roubles a year, and he seems at least capable. But"—and here Nikolai Petrovitch rubbed his forehead, which gesture with him always implied inward agitation—"I ought to say that, though I have told you that you will find no alterations of importance at Marino, the statement is not strictly true, seeing that it is my duty to warn you that, that——" Nikolai Petrovitch hesitated again—then added in French: "Perhaps by a stern moralist my frankness might be considered misplaced; yet I will not conceal from you, nor can you fail to be aware, that always I have had ideas of my own on the subject of the relations which ought to subsist between a father and his son. At the same time, this is not to say that you have not the right to *judge* me. Rather, it is that at my age—— Well, to put matters bluntly, the girl whom you will have heard me speak of——"

"You mean Thenichka?" said Arkady.

Nikolai Petrovitch's face went red.

"Do not speak of her so loudly," he advised. "Yes, *she* is living with us. I took her in because two of our smaller rooms were available. But of course the arrangement must be changed."

"Why must it, Papa?"

"Because this friend of yours is coming, and also because—well, it might make things awkward."

"Do not disturb yourself on Bazarov's account. He is altogether superior to such things."

"Yes, so you say; but the mischief lies in the fact that the wing is so small."

"Papa, Papa!" protested Arkady. "Almost one would think that you considered yourself to blame for something; whereas you have *nothing* to reproach yourself with."

"Ah, but I have," responded Nikolai Petrovitch. His face had turned redder than ever.

"No, you have *not*, Papa," repeated Arkady with a

loving smile, while adding to himself with a feeling of indulgent tenderness for his good, kind father, as well as with a certain sense of "superiority": "Why is he making these excuses?"

"I beg of you to say no more," he continued with an involuntary feeling of exultation in being "grown up" and "emancipated." As he did so Nikolai Petrovitch glanced at him from under the fingers of the hand which was still rubbing his brows. At the same moment something seemed to give his heart a stab. Mentally, as before, he blamed himself.

"Here our fields begin," he observed after a pause.

"I see," rejoined Arkady. "And that is our forest in front, I suppose?"

"It is so. Only, only—I have sold it, and this year it is to be removed."

"Why have you sold it?"

"Because I needed the money. Moreover, the land which it occupies must go to the peasants."

"What? To the peasants who pay you no tithes?"

"Possibly. But some day they will pay me."

"I regret the forest's loss," said Arkady, and then resumed his contemplation of the landscape.

The scenery which the party were traversing could not have been called picturesque, for, with slight undulations, only fields, fields, and again fields, stretched to the very horizon. True, a few patches of copse were visible, but the ditches, with their borderings of low, sparse brushwood, recalled the antique land-measurement of Katherine's day. Also, streams ran pent between abruptly sloping banks, hamlets with dwarfed huts (of which the blackened roofs were, for the most part, cracked in half) stood cheek by jowl with crazy grinding-byres of plaited willow, empty threshing-floors had their gates sagging, and from churches of wood or of brick which stood amid dilapidated graveyards the stucco was peeling,