

FATHERS AND SONS

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Fathers and sons by Ivan S. Turgenev & C. J. Hogarth

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IVAN S. TURGENEV & C. J. HOGARTH

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AND SONS**

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FICTION

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BY IVAN S. TURGENEV
TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
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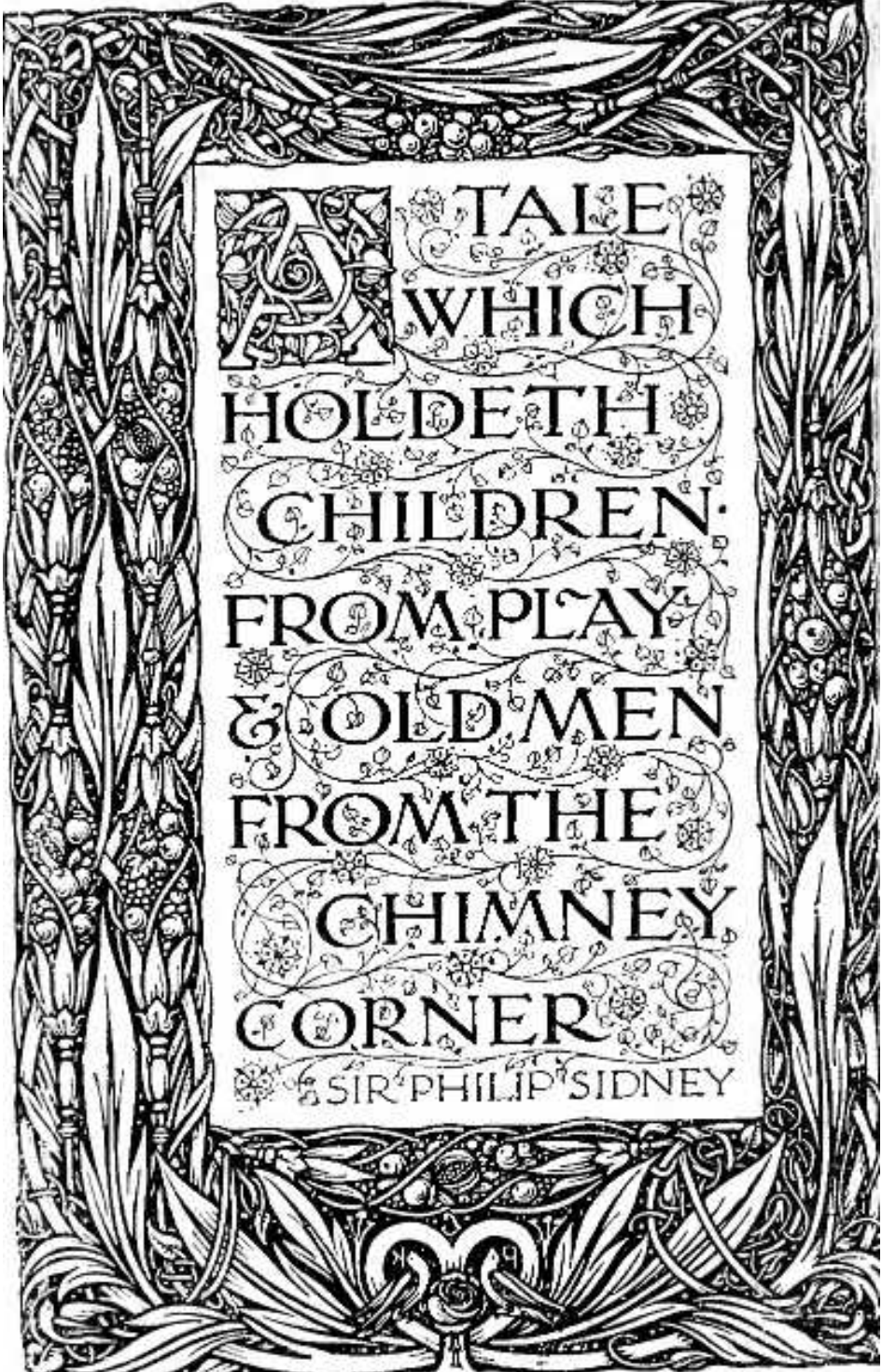
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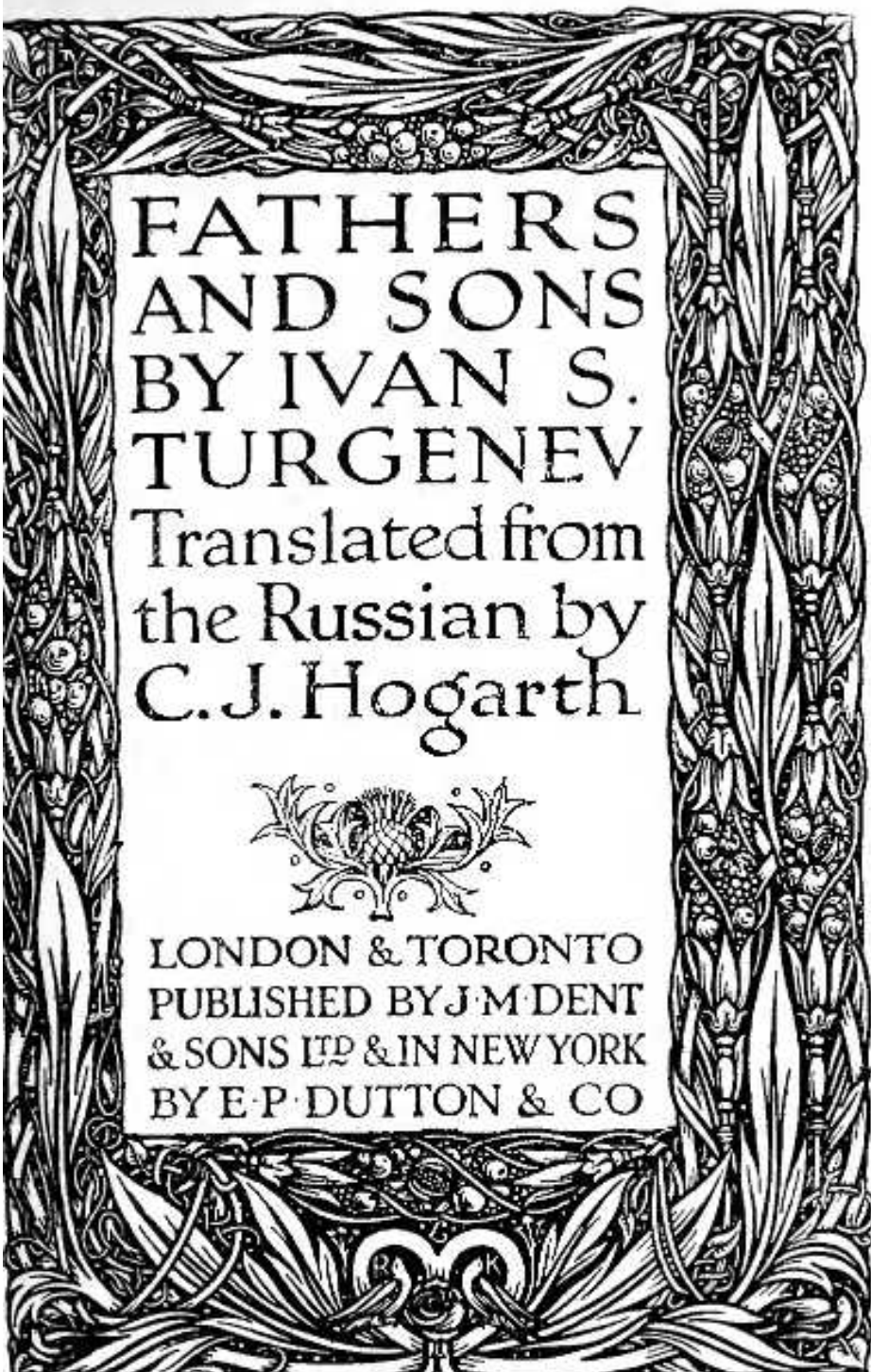


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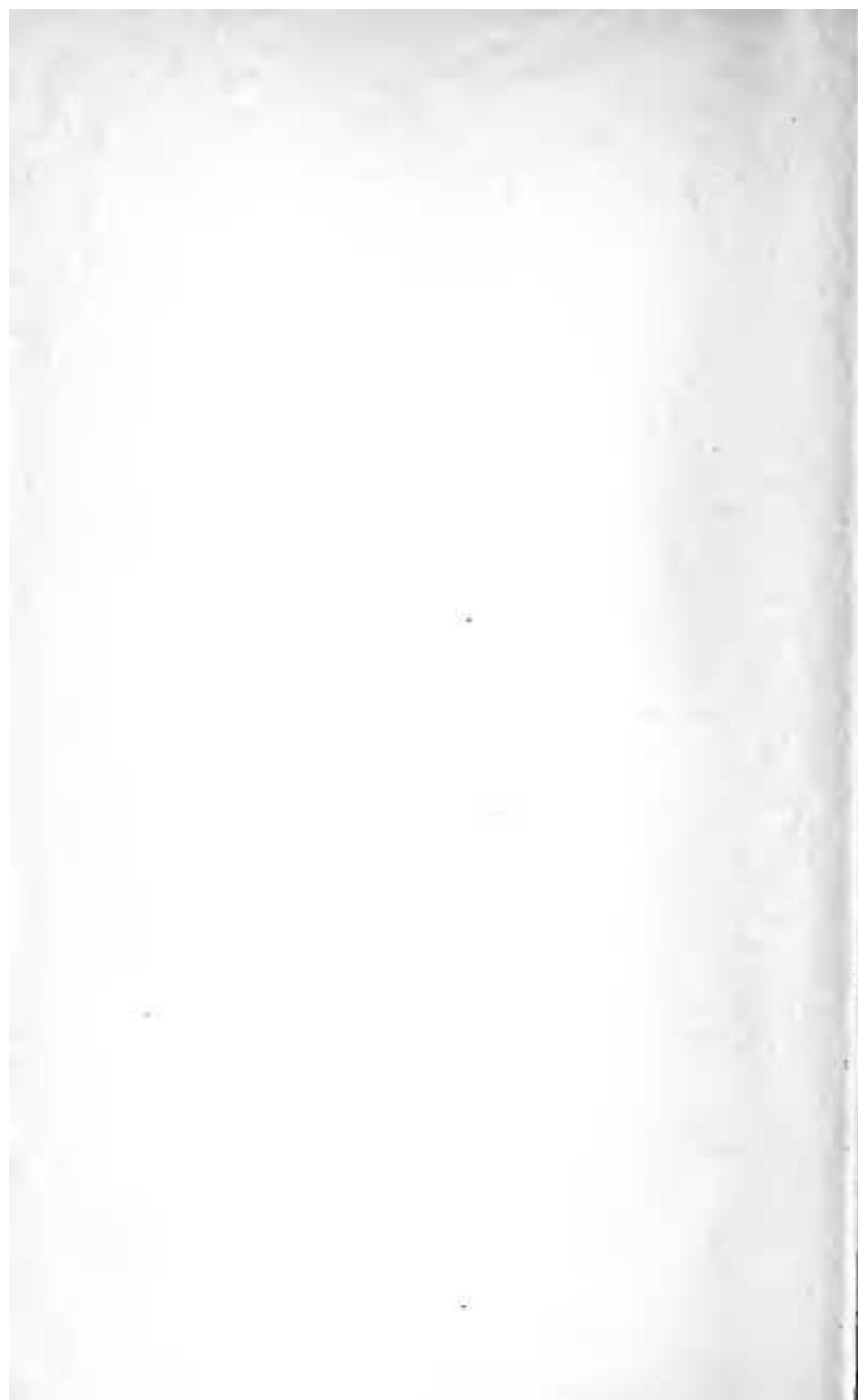
A TALE
WHICH
HOLDETH
CHILDREN
FROM PLAY
& OLD MEN
FROM THE
CHIMNEY
CORNER
BY SIR PHILIP SIDNEY



FATHERS
AND SONS
BY IVAN S.
TURGENEV
Translated from
the Russian by
C. J. Hogarth



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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 "backwoodsmen," 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,