

**SPRING FLOODS. A  
LEAR OF THE  
STEPPE; PP. 1-219**

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Spring Floods. A Lear of the Steppe; pp. 1-219 by Ivan Turgenieff

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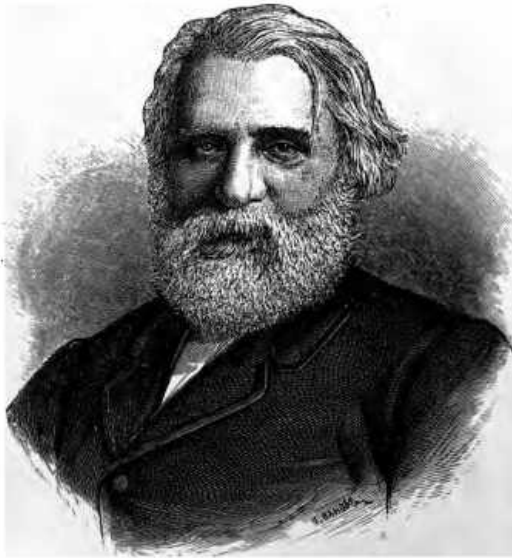
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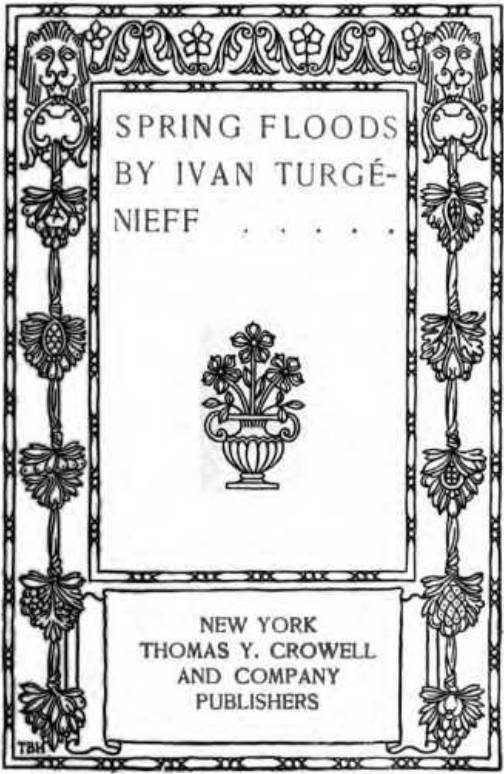
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BY IVAN TURGÉ-  
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TBH

Turgenev, I.S.

## SPRING FLOODS

TRANSLATED BY  
MRS. SOPHIE MICHELL BUTTS

## A LEAR OF THE STEPPE

TRANSLATED BY  
WILLIAM HAND BROWNE

BY  
IVAN TURGÉNIEFF

NEW YORK  
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.  
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## SPRING FLOODS.

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. . . It was two o'clock in the morning when he returned to his rooms. He sent away the servant who was lighting the candles, and throwing himself into an arm-chair by the fire, buried his face in his hands.

Never yet had he experienced such utter weariness, morally or physically. He had spent the whole of that evening in the society of agreeable and educated people; some of the women were pretty, almost all the men were distinguished for their intellect and talents; he, himself, had spoken well, if not brilliantly; yet never had that "tædium vitæ," already experienced by the Romans—that aversion from life—taken such strong hold of him before. Had he been some years younger, he would have wept tears of anguish, lonesomeness, and irritability, for his heart was full of bitterness. A heavy gloom encircled him like a dark autumnal night, and he could find no way out of this darkness and bitterness. The only remedy for such a gloomy state of mind was sleep, but that solace he felt was denied him.

He pondered slowly and bitterly over the useless turmoil of life, over the meanness and falseness of human nature. The different periods of life passed gradually before his mental vision, (he had only reached his fifty-second year,) and each received no mercy at his hands. In every period he perceived the same emptiness and frivolity, the same half-concealed, half-acknowledged love of flattery—which, instead even of soothing a child, would sooner cause it to cry—and then, as sudden as a snow-storm, he beheld old age approach, and with it the ever-increasing great



dread of death . . . next death itself hurrying old age into the dark abyss! Well is it, if every life is played out like this! But often, sickness and great sufferings sear our life long before our earthly journey is accomplished. Poets are wont to compare life to a troubled sea. In his fancy, the great sea of life lay stretched before him, so smooth, so stagnant and transparent, and gazing down from his imaginary small, unsteady boat, he could discern shapeless monsters lying far below in the darkness: all life's trials, sicknesses, sorrows, madneses, its poverty and its blindness. . . . Looking again, he could see one of these monstrous objects dividing itself from the darkness, and, rising higher and higher, it becomes fearfully distinct. Yet another minute, and danger menaces the boat! It is past: the monster sinks gradually lower, and falls at last to the ground, where it lies moving feebly. But alas! the fatal day must surely come when that small, unsteady boat shall be upset.

He raised his head, rose suddenly from his chair, walked twice up and down the room, seated himself at his writing-table, and opening one drawer after another, began hunting amongst his papers, which consisted chiefly of letters. He did not know why he did it—he was not searching for any thing—he was simply striving to escape from the thoughts which oppressed him. Unfolding several letters, (in one he found a withered flower fastened with a bit of faded ribbon,) he only shrugged his shoulders, and turning to the fire, put them aside, probably with the intention of destroying them. Hurriedly introducing his hand into each drawer, he suddenly opened his eyes wide with astonishment, and slowly drew out a small octagonal box of an old-fashioned shape, and as slowly lifted the lid. In the box, beneath a double layer of discolored paper, lay a garnc: cross.

For several moments he gazed perplexedly at the cross, and a low cry escaped his lips. . . . Pity and joy were both expressed in his face. He felt like one who had suddenly met an old friend whom he had long lost sight of, whom he had fondly loved, and who now appeared before

him, unexpectedly, after the lapse of years, and yet unchanged by time.

He rose, and returning to the fire, seated himself again in his chair, and once more buried his face in his hands, murmuring, "Of all days, why to-day!" And many things that had happened to him in life came back to his memory.

This is what he remembered. . . . But we must first tell our readers his name. It was Dimitri Petrovitch Sanin.

And these were his recollections :

I.

It was in the summer of 1840. Sanin had only just entered his twenty-second year, and was passing through Frankfort *en route* to Russia from Italy. He was a young man of small means, entirely his own master, and with but few relations. On the death of a distant relative, he found himself the possessor of several thousand rubles, and he at once determined to spend this money abroad, before he entered the government service, which, he thought, was the only career left to him in his penniless condition. Sanin carried out his intentions faithfully, and managed so dexterously that the day he arrived at Frankfort, he found he had just sufficient money to take him back to St. Petersburg. In the year 1840 there were very few railways, and tourists traveled about in diligences. Sanin had taken a seat in a diligence, but it was not to leave Frankfort until eleven o'clock at night. He had therefore several hours at his disposal until that time. Fortunately, the weather was lovely, and Sanin having dined at the celebrated hotel, the "White Swan," sauntered out to explore the town. He saw Danneker's "Ariadne," which pleased him but little; he visited the house where had lived Goethe, of whose works he had only read *Werther*, in a French translation; he walked along the banks of the Main, and grew sorrowful, as every real traveler should do, and at last, at six in the evening, he found himself tired and dusty in one of the principal streets of Frankfort. Or

one of its numerous houses, the signboard of an Italian confectioner, "Giovanni Roselli," attracted his notice. He entered the shop to get himself a glass of lemonade; but in the first room, where, behind a neat little counter, were arranged on painted shelves glass jars with rusks, chocolate cakes, and sugar drops, he saw no one; a cat alone purred in a high wicker chair by the window, and on the floor, with a slanting ray of the evening sun full on it, lay a large ball of bright red wool, and close by a small basket overturned. Confused sounds were heard in the next room, Sanin waited awhile and then, as no one answered the bell, he called out in a loud voice, "Is no one here?" At the same moment the door from the next room was violently thrown open, and Sanin stood struck with astonishment.

## II.

A girl of nineteen, with a mass of black curls flowing over her uncovered shoulders, had suddenly burst into the shop with outstretched arms, and seeing Sanin, rushed up to him, seized his hand, and tried to lead him back with her, saying at the same time, in a stifled voice, "Quick, quick, here, save him!" It was not from an unwillingness to obey her, but from sheer amazement, that Sanin, instead of immediately following her, stood rooted to the ground. He had never seen such beauty before. She turned to him with such despair in her voice, in her look, in the movement of her clinched hand which she held to her pale cheek, and said so earnestly, "Come, oh! come!" that he sprang to the opened door.

In the room they had entered, stretched on an old-fashioned horse-hair sofa, lay a boy of about fourteen, apparently her brother, with a face as white as marble. His eyes were closed, and his dark thick hair threw a shadow over his pale forehead and finely-penciled eyebrows, and his parted blue lips showed his teeth firmly clinched. He seemed not to breathe; one hand had fallen over the sofa, while the other was thrown behind his head. The boy was lying dressed, with his neck-tie ended round his neck.