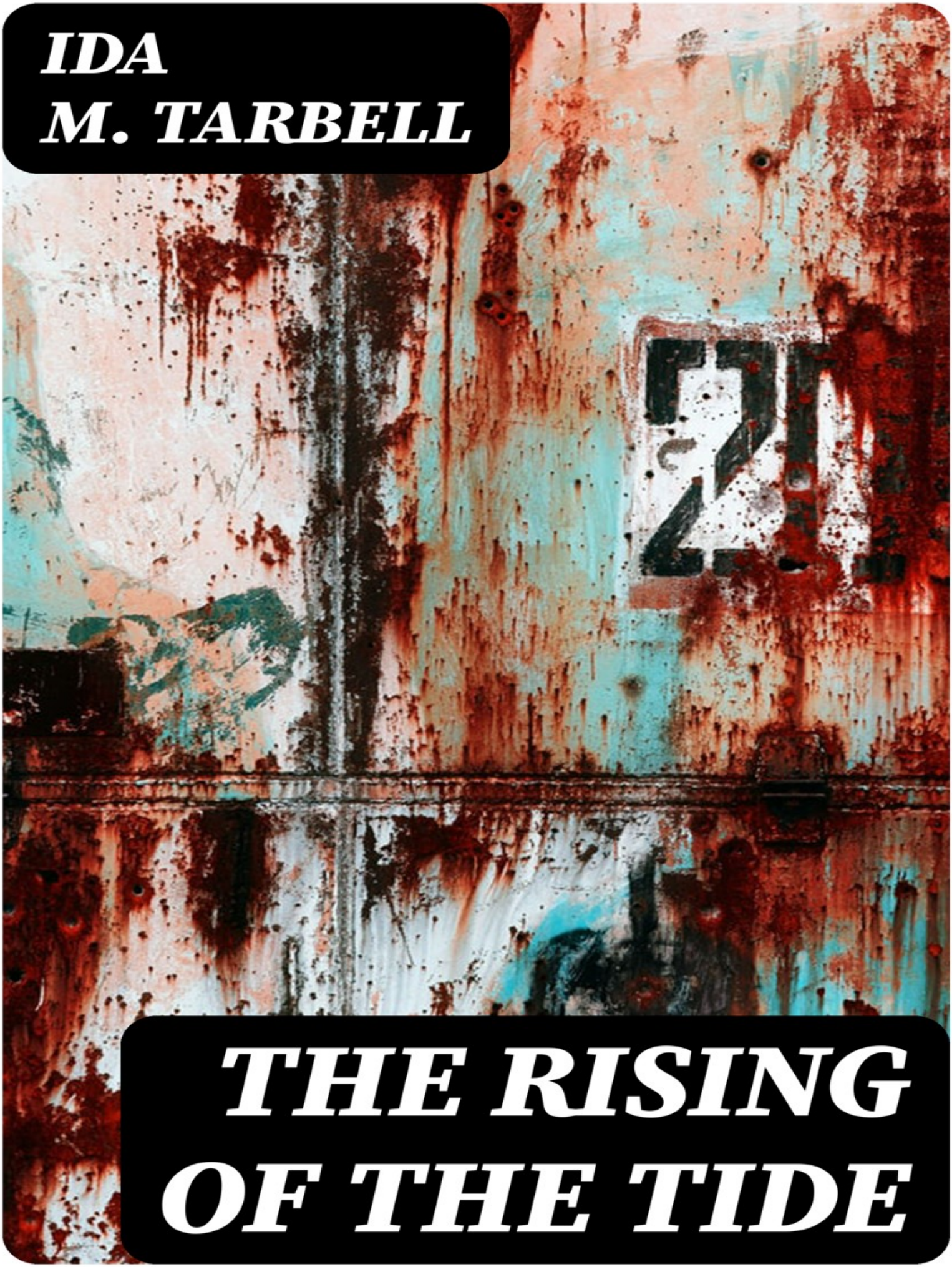
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The Rising of the Tide

The Story of Sabinsport

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I

Table of Contents

“The town is going to the Devil, and the worst of it is nobody will admit it. You won’t. You sit there and smile at me, as if you didn’t mind having Jake Mulligan and Reub Cowder pry open ballot boxes. You know those two birds are robbing this village every hour of the day. Nobody with pep enough to sit up and fight ’em. Rotten selfishness, that’s what ails this town. People getting rich here and spending their money in the city. Women won’t even buy their hats here—starving the stores. Can’t support a decent theater—don’t bring a good singer once a year. Everybody goes to the city, and we have to feed on movies.

“Try to raise an issue, and you get laughed at. Treated like a kid. Tell me to ‘cut it out,’ not disturb things. Nice place for a man who’d like to help a community! I’m going to get out. Can’t stand it. Honest, Dick, I’m losing my self-respect.”

“Wrong, Ralph. You’re spoiling for a fresh turn with the muck rake. You can’t make a garden with one tool. You must have several. I’m serious. You’re like the men in the mines that will tackle but one job, always swing a pick. The muck rake did its job in Sabinsport for some time. You’ve got to pass on to the next tool.”

“I don’t get you. You’re like all the rest. You’re lying down. I’m ashamed of you, Parson. Get out of here. You’ll end in corrupting me.”

“No, only persuading you that taking a city calls for more weapons than one.”

Silence fell for a moment. Ralph Gardner was tired. Getting out the daily issue of the Sabinsport *Argus* was, as he often said, “Some job.” To be your own editor-in-chief, leader writer, advertising agent and circulation manager for the only daily in a town of 15,000 or more means hard work and a lot of it. Ralph loved it, “ate it up,” they said in the shop. It was only when calm settled over Sabinsport and he felt no violent reaction from his spirited attacks on town iniquities that he was depressed. This was one of these periods. The year before he had fought and won for the Progressive Party of the District a smashing victory. He was eager to follow it up with attacks on the special grafts of the two men who for years had run the town and vicinity. He had ousted their candidates from the County and State tickets. He meant to wrest the town from them, but he couldn’t get the support he needed. The town had lain down on him. He didn’t understand it and it fretted him.

Now here was his best and wisest friend, advising waiting. He hung his handsome head in sulky silence.

“What a boy!” thought the Reverend Richard Ingraham. They were the best of friends, this eager, active, confident young editor and this cool, humorous-eyed, thoughtful young parson. Wide apart in birth, in type of education, in their contacts with the world, they were close in a love of decency and justice, in contempt for selfishness and vulgarity. Both were accidents in Sabinsport, and so looked at the town in a more or less detached way. This fact, their instinctive trust and liking for each other, and the clinching force of the great tragedy in which they had first met had made them friends.

Ralph Gardner was only 28. He had graduated six years before at a Western university where for the moment the sins of contemporary business and politics absorbed the interest of the greater part of faculty and students. There was a fine contempt for all existing expressions of life, a fine confidence in their power to create social institutions as well as forms of art which would sweep the world of what they called the “worn out.” Whatever their professions, they went forth to lay bare the futility and selfishness and greed of the present world. They had no perspective, no charity, no experience, but they had zeal, courage, and the supporting vision of a world where no man knew want, no woman dragged a weary life through factory or mill, no child was not busy and happy.

Never has there poured into the country a group more convinced of its own righteousness and the essential selfishness of all who did not see with their eyes or share their confidence in the possibility of regeneration through system. Like revolutionists in all ages they felt in themselves the power to make over the world and like them they carried their plans carefully diagramed in their pockets.

Gardner was one of the first of the crop of St. Georges in his university. He had chosen journalism for his profession. He began at the bottom on an important Progressive journal of a big Western city. He worked up from cub reporter to a desk in the editor’s room. But he chafed at the variety of things which occupied the editorial attention, at the tendency to confine reform to an inside page or even drop it altogether. There were moments when he suspected his crusading spirit was regarded as a nuisance. And finally in a

fit of disgust and zeal he put his entire inheritance into the Sabinsport *Argus*.

Ralph had a real reason in buying the *Argus*. The town was ruled by two of the cleverest men in the State, giving him a definite enemy. It was not so large but what, as he planned it, he could know every man, woman and child in it. It had the varied collection of problems common to a prosperous Middle-West town, settled at the end of the eighteenth century, and later made rich by coal mines and iron mills. Ralph saw in Sabinsport a perfect model of the dragon he was after, a typical union of Business and Politics, a typical disunion of labor and capital. It was to be his laboratory. His demonstration of how to make a perfect town out of a rotten one should be a model for the world.

In his ambitions and his attacks Richard Ingraham had been his steady backer, and at the same time his surest brake. It would be too much to say that he had always kept him from running his head into stone walls, but the Parson had never failed Ralph even when he made a fool of himself. He never had shown or felt less interest because often the young editor ignored his advice. The relation between the two had grown steadily in confidence and affection. A regular feature of their day was an hour together in Ralph's office after the paper was on the press, and he was getting his breath. They were spending this hour together now, a late afternoon hour of July 28, 1914. It was a pleasant place to talk on a hot afternoon. The second floor back of the three-story building which housed the *Argus* opened by long windows on to a wide veranda, a touch of the Southern influence in building which was still to be seen in several

places in the town. The Parson had been quick to see that this veranda properly latticed would make a capital workroom for Ralph in the summer, and had by insistence overcome the young editor's indifference to his surroundings, and secured for him a cool and quiet office and a delightful summer lounging room. Here they were sitting now, Ralph's feet on the veranda railing, his head hanging—dejection in every muscle.

"Ralph," said the Rev. Richard, "it's your method of attack not your cause, I doubt. I don't believe you can win by going at this thing in your usual way. You must find a new approach. Mulligan and Cowder are no fools, and if you open on them from your old line, they'll be ready for you."

"There's only one way to do this thing," Ralph shouted hotly. "Show 'em up. Shame the town for tolerating them, fight them to a finish. If I could get the proofs that they opened those ballot boxes, do you suppose I'd be quiet? Not on your life."

"You won't get the proof."

"You mean you won't help me to get it?"

"I do."

The Rev. Richard could be very final and very disarming. Ralph knew he could not count on him for help in tracing the gossip. He did not suspect what was true, that his friend knew even the details of the bit of law-breaking Jake Mulligan had carried out. It had come to him by the direct confession of one of his young Irish friends, Micky Flaherty. Micky had listened at the Boys' Club, which Ingraham ran, to a clear and forceful explanation of why the ballot box must be sacred. He had given the talk at the first rumor that there

had been a raid on the ballot box by Jake, for the direct purpose of finding exactly how the town stood towards giving him and Reuben Cowder in perpetuity the water, gas and electric light franchises, which they had secured long before Sabinsport dreamed of their importance. He had thought it entirely probable that the rumor was founded on truth, also quite probable that one or more of the likely young politicians in his club had been used as a go-between.

His talk did more than he had even dreamed. Micky was struck with guilt. He was a good Catholic, and confession was necessary to his peace of mind. It was not to the priest, but to Dick, he went; telling him in detail, and with relish too, it must be acknowledged, how at midnight he alone had stolen from the clerk's office in the town hall the ballot boxes, and how he had worked with Jake and two or three faithful followers, carefully piecing together the torn ballots, until a complete roster of the election was tabulated. When this nice piece of investigation was finished and thoroughly finished, Micky had returned the boxes.

Ingraham had never for a moment considered a betrayal of Micky's confession. For one reason, he was keen enough to know it would be useless. Micky's sense of guilt might recognize the confessional, but it did not, and would not, recognize the witness stand. He had no intention of giving his friend the slightest help in unearthing the scandal. He was convinced, as he told him, that a new form of attack must be found.

"You're a queer one, Dick," fretted Ralph. "You don't believe for a moment that Jake and Reub are anything but a

pair of pirates. You aren’t afraid. What is it?”

“I suppose, Ralph, it is partly because I *like* Jake and don’t despair of him.”

“Like him! Like him! Do you know what he calls your mission over on the South Side—sacrilegious rascal. He calls it the Holy Coal Bin. Nice way to talk about a man who saved a neighborhood from freezing to death because he’s too blamed obstinate and narrow to listen to the leaders of his own workingmen. ‘Runs his business to suit himself!’ Think of that in this day! Those men and women would have died of cold if you hadn’t turned your club basement into coal bins. And now he laughs at you.”

“Do you know who paid for that coal; most of it at least?” asked Ingraham.

“You did, confound you. Of course you did. Everybody knows that.”

“No, three quarters of it Jake paid for, on condition I wouldn’t tell the men. Couldn’t see them suffer. Jake has possibilities. And then there is Jack. You know how he loves that boy. You know how fine and able Jack is. He has already swung the old man into modernizing the ‘Emma.’ If we will stand by him, I believe in time he will have reformed his father. Give him a chance at least. If you don’t do that, I am certain that eventually you will drive Jack himself away from you, and we must not lose Jack. Moreover, you have got to remember that Jake and Reuben made this town.”

“Nothing to recommend them in that,” Ralph growled. “They own it from the ground to the electric wires; and they use it twenty-four hours out of the day—and then some.”

“Listen, Ralph. It was Jake Mulligan who opened the coal mines, and for years almost starved while he brought them to a paying point. It was Reuben Cowder that brought in the railroad to carry out the coal. This town never would have had the railroad if it had not been for Cowder. You know perfectly well how little help either man has had from the old timers. Everything that is modern here has come through those two men. Moreover, they love Sabinsport. Did you ever hear of Jake’s celebration when the water works were finished in the ’90’s? He is never done talking about the water works. His wife used to say he celebrated them every time he turned a tap—water for turning a tap to a man who had carried every gallon in buckets from a spring by the barn for years and years! Pure water to a man who had seen a town he loved swept by typhoid! You ought to realize what it took for him to bring that about; you who are trying to do things here now. He could not budge the town. He and Reuben practically put up the money for the water. They had learned by the epidemic what bad water meant. They argued that towns subject to typhoid would finally be shunned, and they put through the waterworks with nine-tenths of the respectable men and women against them. Afraid of taxes! The town argued that it would not happen again, and that anyway it was the will of the Lord! Of course they bought votes to put it through, and of course they own the franchise, and of course they have made money. I don’t defend their methods, but I can’t help feeling that Sabinsport owes them something.

“It is the same story about gas and electricity and trolleys. These two men have planned and fought and

bought and put things through, while the respectable have been afraid to go ahead, lest they should lose something. Now the respectable grumble. I must think that respectability and thrift are largely responsible for Jake and Reuben."

"Confound your historical sense, Dick; it is always slowing you up. If you would concentrate on the present, you would be the greatest asset this town ever had."

"Drop it, Ralph. What's the news?"

"There it is—more interested in a pack of quarreling Dagoes 5,000 miles away than living things at home. What's the use when your best friend's like that? What has it got to do with us in Sabinsport if Austria has declared war on Serbia—what's Serbia anyhow? A little worn-out, scrappy country without a modern notion in its head."

"Do you mean," cried Dick, springing up, "that Austria has declared war?"

"That's what this says. It just came in,"—flinging a yellow sheet across the table.

"My God! Man, don't you know what that means?"

"Well, I suppose it might mean a good-sized war, but I don't believe it. They'll pull things out; always have before, ever since I can remember. What if Germany gets in, as you said it would be the other day; what's that? They'll clean up a little affair like Serbia quick enough; teach her to stop running around with a chip on her shoulder. And no matter, I tell you, Parson; it's nothing to Sabinsport, and Sabinsport is our business. If the world is to be made decent, you've got to begin at home. Don't come bothering me about wars in

Europe! I've got war enough if I root out Mulligan and Cowder."

But the parson wasn't listening. His face was whiter than usual, and its lines had grown stern. "Good night, Ralph," he said curtly; "just telephone me to-night, will you, if there's more news. I think I'll go out to the 'Emma' after supper."

The Reverend Richard walked down the street without seeing people—something unheard of for him.

Tom Sabins, going home, said to his wife, "The parson is worried. Met him and he didn't see me. Has anything happened at the mines, do you know?"

But Mrs. Sabins said she hadn't heard of trouble. Maybe Micky had been up to mischief again.

And they both laughed affectionately. The parson never looked worried, they often had noticed, unless somebody had been very bad or there had been an accident in mill or mine.

But it was not things at home that sent the parson blind and deaf down the street. He was the one man in Sabinsport, outside of the keeper of the fruit store and a half dozen miners over the hill, who had some understanding of the awful possibilities of Austria's declaration of war. His knowledge came from the years he had lived as a student in England—the summers he had spent tramping through Middle Europe.

If Richard Ingraham's education had taken a different turn from that of the average American youth, like Ralph Gardner, it still was a kind common enough among us. What had been exceptional about it was the way in which it had been intensified and lengthened by circumstances of health

and family. Dick was an orphan, whose youth had been spent with his guardian, an elderly and scholarly man of means, in one of those charming, middle-west towns settled early in the nineteenth century by New Englanders, their severity tempered by a sprinkling of Virginians and Kentuckians. Great Rock, as the town was called from a conspicuous bluff on the river, was planned for a big city; but the railroad failed it, and it remained a quiet town, where a few men and women ripened into happy, dignified old age, but from which youth invariably fled. Dick had lived there, until he entered college at seventeen, in one of the finest of the old houses, set in big lawns, shaded by splendid, sweeping elms. “The most beautiful elms in the United States are not in New England,” Dick used to tell his college friends, when they exclaimed over campus elms. “They’re in the Middle West.” And he was right.

Dick’s guardian had set out to give the boy a thorough training in those things he thought made for happiness and usefulness. He had read with him from babyhood until Dick could no more go without books than without food. He had started him early in languages. He had given him horses, and, an unusual accomplishment, as Dick afterwards learned, had trained him to walking. A tramping trip by the two of them had been one of Dick’s joys from the time he could remember. He did not know then that his guardian had more than pleasure in view by these trips. It was only later that he discovered that the regular outside life into which he had been trained was the older man’s wise way of counteracting a possible development of the disease of

which both his parents had died, and which it was believed he had inherited.

When the time came, Dick had gone East to college, and from there he was sent for two years or more of Europe, as his taste might dictate. At the end of his first year his guardian had died. It left the boy quite alone and wholly bewildered. He had never thought of life without this firm, kind, wise, counseling power. He had done what had been suggested, and always found joy in it. He had never really wanted anything in life, as he could remember. His guardian had foreseen everything. And now what was he? A boy of 23, with comfortable means, a passion for reading, for travel and for people, and that was all. He must have a profession. It was his need of a backing, as well as a combination of æsthetic and the æsthete in him, with possibly something of environment—for he happened to be at Oxford when news of his guardian's death came—that decided him to go into the Church.

Dick worked hard in term time, but all his long and short holidays he spent tramping Central Europe. This had been his guardian's request.

"You will come back some day to your own land to work, Richard. My own judgment of you is that you will find your greatest interest in shaping whatever profession you choose to meet the new forms of social progress which each generation works out. I think this because you so love people. You'll never be content, as I have been, with books and solitude. I don't think you realize how full your life has been of human relations, or how you have depended on them, so I urge you to go among people in your holidays,

common people, to be one of them; and do not hurry your return. You are young. Take time to find your place."

Dick had faithfully followed this advice. He had spent six years in Europe without returning to the United States. He was thirty when he came back to take a church in a prosperous and highly energetic community. One year had been enough. They kept him busy from morning until night with their useful activities. To this he did not object; but while so active he had been chilled to the bone by his failure to get spiritual reactions from his parishioners. Moreover, he had been unable to establish anything like companionship, as he had known it, with any one in his church. He resigned, giving as his reason: "I am not earning your money. I don't know how." It was a sad blow to more than one member of St. Luke's, for while they were a little afraid of him (which, if Dick had known, would have made a difference), they were also enormously proud of him.

His failure turned him to Great Rock, which he had never had the heart to visit since his guardian's death. There was a girl there he had always carried in a shadowy way in his heart, the only girl he ever saw in the dreams which sometimes disturbed him—a fair, frank, lovely thing, he remembered her to have been, Annie Dunne. For the first time in his life he wanted his mate. He couldn't face life again without one. He would go and find her. Why, why, he asked himself, had he not done this before? It was so clear that it was she that he needed. He did not ask himself if he loved her. He knew he did. As for Annie's loving him? Had he waited too long? Every mile of his journey westward was filled with recollections of their youth, the summer evenings

on the veranda, the winter evenings by the fireside. And her letters, never many, but how dear and friendly and intimate they had been! He felt so sure of her, almost as if she were telling him, “I knew you would come.”

It was night when he reached Great Rock. He was always thankful that it was in the dark that he heard the words at her door, “Miss Annie? Miss Annie is dead. She was buried a week ago.”

There was a blank space after that which Dick never tried to fill. All he knew was that he pulled his courage together and took to the road, Swiss bag on his back. He seemed to have no friend now but the road, and more than once he caught himself announcing to the long winding highways he followed eastward, “You’re all I have.”

He was in the hills that roll up from the Ohio in long, smooth billows, forming lovely, varied valleys for the great streams that feed the mighty river, and mounting always higher as you go toward the rising sun, until finally they are mountains. A fine, old post road from the East, one that had been fought over by French and Indians and British and trod by Washington, was Dick’s main route. He knew it well, for as a boy he had more than once walked it with his guardian. Moreover, it was by that road that half of Great Rock, his own family included, had made their pioneer trip into what was then the West.

He often spent his night in an old inn, a relic of those days, with thick walls, splendid woodwork and great rooms, but low and narrow doors, built at a time when it was not wise to have too generous entrances or too many windows.

Now and then he found one of the old places transformed into a modern road-house, for the automobile was creating a demand for a kind of accommodation the country had not needed since the passing of the stage coach. Often he struck off the highway and made detours over wooded hills and along little traveled roads. It was in returning from one of these excursions that, late one September afternoon, he discovered Sabinsport.

He had been quite lost all day and walking hard. As he came across a valley and mounted a long winding hill, he saw by the growing thickness of the settlement that he was approaching a town. He came upon it suddenly as he went over the brow of the hill. It lay to right and left, stretching down and over two natural terraces to a river which formed here a great half moon. The whole beautiful, crystal curve was visible from where Dick stood in charmed surprise. The town that filled the mounting semicircle, in spite of its wealth of trees, could be roughly traced. On the high slope which ran gently down from where he stood were scores of comfortable houses of well-to-do folk, all of them with generous lawns. They ran the American architectural gamut, Dick guessed, for he could see from where he stood a big, square brick with ancient white pillars, the front of a dark-brown, Washington Irving Gothic, and the highly ornamental cupola which he knew meant the fashionable style of the sixties. He was quite sure, if he looked, he would find the whole succession. “There’s a *nouveau* art concealed somewhere,” he thought to himself, and later he found he was right.

The big houses became smaller as the slope descended, giving way for what Dick guessed was a red brick business section. “It was once a port,” he said to himself. “The Ohio boats came up here, I wager.”

From the south and opposite bank of the stream rose a steep bluff perhaps two hundred feet high. Rows of unpainted houses ran along the river bank and were scattered in a more or less haphazard way over the face of the bluff; their ugliness softened by trees which grew in abundance on the steep slopes. The most striking feature of the picture was a great iron mill to the left. It filled acres of land along the south river bank, its huge black stacks, from which smoke streamed straight to the east, rose formal and imperative. They were amazingly decorative in the soft, late September day, against the green of the south bluff, and curiously dominating. “We are the strong things here,” they said to him,—“the things to be reckoned with.”

As Dick walked down the long hill looking for a hotel, he felt more of his old joy in discovery, more of his old zestful curiosity than in many a day. The beauty of the place, the strong note of distinction the mills made in the picture, had finally stirred him. His interest was further aroused when he walked straight up to the quaint front of the Hotel Paradise. It was like things he had seen years before in the South; a long, brick building with steep roof and tiny gables fronted by narrow verandas with slender, girlish, iron pillars. The arched door was perfect in its proportions, and the big stone hall was cool and inviting. But once inside, Dick suddenly realized that somebody had had the sense, while preserving all the quaintness of a building of at least a hundred years

before, so to fashion and enlarge it as to make a thoroughly comfortable, modern hotel. His curiosity was piqued, though it happened to be years before he learned how the Paradise had been preserved.

The night brought Dick rest, but the morning found his flare of interest dead. He made his pack with a dull need of moving on, and he would have done so if, when he came into the office, he had not found there a group of white-faced, horrified men. He caught the words, “On fire.” “One hundred and fifty men shut in.” “No hope.” A word of inquiry and he learned that at a near-by coal mine, they spoke of as the “Emma,” there had been a terrible disaster. He learned too that help of all sorts was being hurried to the place by the “spur,” which, as he rightly guessed, was the road connecting the mine with the main line of the railroad which he had traced the night before along the south bank of the river.

Dick drank a cup of coffee and followed a hurrying crowd to where an engine and two coal cars rapidly filling with all the articles of relief that on the instant could be gathered, were just ready to leave. Quickly sensing the leader, a young man of not over twenty-five, Dick said, “I’m a stranger, but I might be useful. I understand something of relief work. I speak languages. I would be glad to go.”

The man gave him an appraising look. “Jump in,” he said curtly. A moment later they were off.

The coal road ran from the river to the top of the bluff by a steep and perilous grade. It came out on the plateau at least three miles from the mines, but a mile and a half away they first saw the point of the steel tipple of the power

house over the main shaft. It all looked peaceful enough to the straining eyes of the men on the flat car. It was not until they were within a quarter of a mile of the place itself that they caught the outline of the crowd that had gathered. Dick's first thought was, "How quiet they are!" They were quiet, and there was not a sound as the men bounded from the car and raced through to the shaft itself. There a dreadful sight met their eyes. A dozen men were being lifted from a cage that had just come up. It took but a glance to see that they were dead or dying.

It was days later before Dick learned what had really happened. Like so many ghastly mine accidents, the fire, for they found out it was fire which was ravaging the mine, had come from a trivial cause, so trivial that the miners themselves who were within reach and might easily have put out the first flame had not taken the trouble. An open torch had come in contact with a bit of oily rag. It had fallen, setting fire to the refuse on a passing car. To that no one paid attention, for over it were bundles of pressed hay; and the tradition in the mine is that pressed hay will not burn.

The whole thing was ablaze before the men had realized what was happening. There was no water on that level, and they had been ordered to run the car into the escape shaft and dump it to the bottom, and there to turn on the hose. So great was the smoke and heat from the blazing stuff that the men below, who had promptly enough attacked it, were driven back. The shaft was timbered, and before they knew it the timbers were blazing. The smoke spread through the levels. A thing, so easy to stop at the beginning, was now taking appalling proportions. Men who had passed by the

flames on their way to the 1:30 cage and had not even stopped to lend a hand to put it out, so little had they thought it necessary, felt the smoke before they reached the top. The men below on the second and third levels began to run hither and yon, trying to notify the diggers in the side shafts. A man more intelligent than the others urged that the fan be stopped. It was done, but it was too late. The fire was master.

A second load of men, the last to escape, had given the people at the top a sense of the disaster. The mine manager had called for volunteers. There had not been a minute's hesitation. Men crowded into the cage, not all miners. Among them was a little-thought-of chap, an Italian street vender. Another, the driver, who moved everybody who came and went to the mines. They had gone down without hesitation. Halfway down the smoke began to overpower them, but they went on. The probability is that they were unconscious before they reached the bottom, for only a feeble signal was given, and the engineer, not understanding, did not respond. It was only when signals did not come, and the now thoroughly frightened crowd had pleaded and then threatened the engineer that he had brought up the cage. And now they were taking them out—twelve dead men.

It was four days later when, through the combined efforts of both state and federal mine experts, a picked body of men fitted out with the most approved life-saving apparatus made their first trip into the burning mine. The hours of waiting, Dick remembered as long as he lived. The whole mining village, a motley collection of nationalities now fused

into one, stood around the shaft for four hours before the first signal was given, a peremptory call to raise the cage. As it came up and the few that were allowed at the shaft saw who were in it, such a shout of exultant joy as Dick had never heard came from them, “They are alive!” “They are alive!” And certainly here were men, believed to be dead, alive, twelve of them, their pallor and wanness showing through their blackened faces, too weak to walk; yet almost unaided, they tottered out, and one after another dropped into the arms of women and children who sobbed and shouted over them.

The news quickly spread, twenty men, who had walled themselves up had been found alive after four days of waiting. They believed they would get them all out alive. The cage descended and shortly after the signal was given to raise, and eight more came up alive. Such a tremendous burst of hope and joy as it is rarely given men to see spread through the stricken crowd. If twenty were alive, might it not be that the other hundred were? But it was not to be! The draft had aroused the smoldering flames, and when the cage attempted again to descend sharp signals were soon given. This time it was only the rescue party that came up, and they were in various stages of collapse. The cry went out, “She has broken out!” “She has broken out!” The reaction on the stricken crowd, after its hours of hope and joy, was prostrating. Men and women sobbed aloud. They knew too well that the reviving fire meant that there was nothing to do but to seal the main shaft. No other way to smother the fire. White-faced, heavy-hearted men did the

work; and it was not until ten days later that the experts on the ground pronounced it safe to open the mine.

Through this long fortnight of agony and waiting, Dick stayed in the settlement. From the time that he had bounded from the flat car with the relief party there had never been a moment that he had not been busy. The fact that he knew a little of everybody's language, enough to make himself understood at least; the fact that he understood their customs, had made many of the miners open their hearts to him in a way which otherwise would have been impossible. Dick had that wonderful thing, the ability to be at home with people of any sort or of any nation. He seemed at once to the miners to be one of them in a way that not even those in authority whom they had known longest could be.

But it was not only to the people that he had made himself a helpful friend. In a hundred ways he had instinctively and unconsciously worked with Jack Mulligan, the stern young man who had bid him to jump on the flat car the morning that they had started from Sabinsport. Jack, he had found, was the son of the man who had opened the mines, a man known as "Jake," and, as Dick was to discover, a man notorious, but beloved.

Mining had been in the blood of Jack Mulligan. If he had had his way he would have taken a pick at sixteen, and worked his way up. His mother, long dead, had extracted a promise from her devoted but riotous husband that Jack should have the best education the country would afford, if he would take it. And because it was his mother's wish, he had taken it; but he had turned it into the way of his own

tastes. He had thrown himself heartily into the work of the great technological institute to which he had been sent. He had taken all of the special training as a mining engineer that the country afforded, and he had studied the best work of foreign mines. When he had come back at twenty-four to his own home, it was the understanding that he was to be employed as a general manager, not in any way to supplant the educated but tried men that had grown up under his father, but, as he planned it, to modernize the mine.

Jack's heart was set on making the mines safe. No serious accident had ever happened in them and to his father's mind that was proof enough that no serious accident would ever happen, and the plans for lighting, supporting and airing that Jack brought back he treated first with contempt, then with a sort of fatherly tolerance, only yielding inch by inch as he saw how much this boy, whom he adored and in whom his pride was so great, had them at heart. Jack had finally brought his father to consent to electrify the mines completely. The whole equipment had been ordered. In a few months at least it would be in place, and now this fearful thing had happened. No wonder that day after day as he went about white and silent among the people, his heart was bitter, not against his father, but against the horrible set of circumstances that had led to the thing he had always feared and which he believed that he was going to prevent. Dick little by little got the story, and his sympathy with the boy was hardly more than he felt for the rugged, old man, who, like Jack, never left the mining settlement, but followed his son about in a beaten, dogged silent way which at times brought tears to Dick's eyes.

The horror of the disaster brought scores of people to Sabinsport, and every day they filled the little settlement. There were the Union organizers; there was a score or more of reporters; there were investigators of all degrees of intelligence and hysteria. Among these Ralph circulated. He had bought the *Argus* but a few months before the disaster. His very lack of personal acquaintance with the stockholders, officers or active managers of the mine left him without any of the moderating personal feeling which a man who had long known the town might have had. Ralph saw just one thing, that the two leading stockholders in the "Emma," the men who had always run it, were the two most unscrupulous and adroit politicians in that part of the world —the two that he had set out from the start to "get." He felt that in the mine disaster he had, as he said, "the goods." They, particularly Jake, were responsible for this awful thing. And never a day that he did not in the *Argus* publish wrathful and indignant articles, trying to arouse the community. He received no protest from his victims. Jake was so overwhelmed by the disaster itself, so absorbed in what he knew his son was going through, that the *Argus* was hardly a pin prick to him. It was Dick that discovered how hard it was for the old man. In that hundred men who never came back alive there had been a full score that had grown up with him, that had stood by always in the development of the "Emma." They were the trusted men, the permanent, responsible men, who, if they had not made money, were still in Jake's opinion his greatest asset. And then they were his friends. With these burdens on his heart, why should he mind a little thing like the *Argus*?

Almost immediately after the disaster, Dick found that the place was swarming with claim agents, some of whom he instinctively felt were untrustworthy. Familiar as he was with the whole theory of accident compensation, he immediately informed himself about the laws of the State. They were practically null. It was then that he went to Ralph and laid before him the possibility of using this disaster as a means of securing in the State a fair compensation law. And he said to him very frankly, “I believe that if the Union leaders here, the better class of investigators, you yourself, would but put this thing before the officers of this mine, that they would take the lead and voluntarily accept a liberal system of compensation. If they would do this, it probably would clinch the campaign for a state compensation law.”

It was a wise suggestion. Ralph, who had been spending his force in violent and personal attack, immediately began to work on something like a program. In the meantime Dick, who by this time had won the entire confidence of Jack, opened the matter. It needed no argument. He lost no time in putting it before his father, who at the moment was ready to agree to anything that the boy wanted.

The various interests of the mine were called together with expert labor men and others who were informed and influential. It did not go through without a fight. There were stockholders in Sabinsport and elsewhere who, hearing of the liberal plans that were being discussed, wrote anonymous notes, protesting against the diversion of the stockholders’ dividends in sentimental and Utopian plans. Reuben Cowder stood steadfastly against the scheme. To him it was utterly impractical, an un-heard-of thing. While

the matter was being discussed, Ralph hammered daily, wisely and unwisely. It touched Dick to the heart that Jack never but once spoke of this, and that was one day when he said, “He is right in the main, but it would be easier for me if he would be a little less bitter against Cowder and my father.” In the end the whole generous plan was adopted. It came about by Reuben Cowder’s sudden withdrawal of opposition. It was years before Dick learned the reason of this unexplained and unexpected change of front.

It was not until the struggle over compensation was ended that Dick suddenly remembered that he was only a wayfarer in Sabinsport, a traveler delayed en route. With the remembrance came the realization of what these people had come to mean to him, that he was actually more interested in this community than in any other spot on earth. Unconsciously he seemed to have grown into the town, to belong to it.

In the end it came about naturally enough that he should stay on. A little church in the town had lost by death a clergyman, twenty years in its service. The little band of communicants were fastidious and conservative. In the disaster which had for a time swept down all the barriers in the community they had become deeply interested in Dick. His hallmarks were so much finer than any they had ever dreamed possible to secure for their church, that it was with some trepidation that they suggested that he stay on with them. They were even willing to wink at what their richest member, a grumbling stockholder in the Emma mine, called his “revolutionary notions.”

The Bishop was willing to wink at them too. “They need you, boy,” he had told him, “even more than they want you. They are in a fair way to die of respectability. You can perhaps resurrect them; but don’t try to do it by shock treatment. You have the advantage of not being an applicant.”

And, consenting only for an accommodation, Dick accepted, and remained. He soon came to call Sabinsport home. Moreover, he was happy. He realized in his leisure moments, of which he had few enough, that he was happy without several things that he had supposed essential to happiness—without a home, a wife, a child, companions of similar training and outlook to his own.

The town interested him profoundly. It was his first close contact with an old American town which had undergone industrial treatment. He felt its cosmopolitan character, something of which the inhabitants themselves were quite unconscious. As a matter of fact, all sorts of people were blending in Sabinsport. A thin pioneer stream of Scotch, Irish and English had settled the original lands, and early in the nineteenth century had selected as their trading post the point on the river which had afterwards become Sabinsport.

The port had prospered amazingly in those first days. After forty years and more it looked as if it were destined to be the metropolis of that part of the world. Then the first railroad came across country, and it left Sabinsport out. A smaller, poorer rival, some twenty-five miles away, secured the prize. Slowly but surely the trade that had so long put into Sabinsport changed its course to what only too soon they began to call the City. Fewer and fewer boats came up