

**THE RISING OF THE  
TIDE: THE STORY OF  
SABINSPORT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649303342

The rising of the tide: the story of Sabinsport by Ida M. Tarbell

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Cover @ 2017

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TORONTO

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*THE STORY OF SABINSPORT*

BY  
IDA M. TARBELL

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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, March, 1919

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# THE RISING OF THE TIDE

HOW THE WAR CAME TO SABINSPORT

## CHAPTER I

"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