

# The Turmoil

By  
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## SYNOPSIS.

Sheridan's attempt to make a business man of his son Bibbs by starting him in the machine shop ends in Bibbs going to a sanitarium, a nervous wreck. On his return Bibbs finds himself an incognito and unacknowledged figure in the "New House" of the Sheridans. The Vertreeses, old-town family next door and impoverish, called, call on the Sheridans, newly-rich, and Mary afterward puts into words her parents' unspoken wish that she marry one of the Sheridan boys. Mary frankly encourages Jim Sheridan's attentions. Jim tells Mary Bibbs is not a lunatic—"just queer." He proposes to Mary, who half accepts him. Sheridan tells Bibbs he must go back to the machine shop as soon as he is strong enough, in spite of Bibbs' plea to be allowed to write. Edith, Bibbs' sister, and Sibyl, Roscoe Sheridan's wife, quarrel over Bobby Lamborn; Sibyl goes to Mary for help to keep Lamborn from marrying Edith, and Mary leaves her in the room alone. Bibbs has to break to his father the news of Jim's sudden death. All the rest of the family helps in their grief. Bibbs becomes temporary master of the house. At the funeral he meets Mary and rides home with her. Bibbs purposely interrupts a tea-party between Edith and Lamborn. He tells Edith that he overheard Lamborn making love to Roscoe's wife. Doctor Gurney, Roscoe Sheridan's wife, quarrel with Roscoe about Bobby Lamborn. Bibbs goes to work. Old man Sheridan hurts his hand.

If your daughter was deeply infatuated with a good-for-nothing young man who wanted to marry her, and you wanted to break up the affair, would you let the girl see so much of her lover she would become sick of him or would you forbid him the premises and try to keep her from meeting him out? Do you believe that Edith's father handled a delicate situation of this kind properly?—as described in the following installment.

## CHAPTER XX—Continued.

"Not at all," said Bibbs. "I'm going to stand by the old zinc eater till five o'clock. I tell you I like it!"

"Then I suppose that's the end of your wanting to write?"

"I don't know about that," Bibbs said, thoughtfully; "but the zinc eater doesn't interfere with my thinking, at least. It's better than being in business; I'm sure of that. I don't want anything to change. I'd be content to lead just the life I'm leading now to the end of my days."

"You do beat the devil!" exclaimed Gurney. "Your father's right when he tells me you're a mystery. Perhaps the Almighty knew what he was about when he made you, but it takes a lot of faith to believe it! Well, I'm off. Go on back to your murdering old machine." He climbed into his car, which he operated himself, but he refrained from setting it immediately in motion. "Well, I rubbed it in on the old man that you had warned him not to slide his hand along too far, and that he got hurt because he didn't pay attention to your warning, and because he was trying to show you how to do something you were already doing a great deal better than he could. You tell him I'll be around to look at it and change the dressing tomorrow morning. Goodby."

But when he paid the promised visit the next morning he did more than change the dressing upon the damaged hand. The injury was severe of its kind and Gurney spent a long time over it, though Sheridan was rebellious and scornful, being brought to a degree of tractability only by means of horrible threats and talk of amputation. However, he appeared at the dinner table with his hand supported in a sling, which he seemed to regard as an indignity, while the natural inquiries upon the subject evidently struck him as deliberate insults. Mrs. Sheridan, having been unable to contain her solicitude several times during the day, and having been checked each time in a manner that blanched her cheek, hastened to warn Roscoe and Sibyl, upon their arrival at five, to omit any reference to the injury and to avoid even looking at the sling if they possibly could.

## CHAPTER XXI.

The Sheridans dined on Sundays at five. Sibyl had taken pains not to arrive either before or after the hand was precisely on the hour, and the members of the family were all seated at the table within two minutes after she and Roscoe had entered the house.

It was a glum gathering, overhung with portents. The air seemed charged, awaiting any tiny ignition to explode; and Mrs. Sheridan's expression, as she sat with her eyes fixed almost continually upon her husband, was that of a person engaged in prayer. Edith was pale and intent. Roscoe looked ill; Sibyl looked ill, and Sheridan looked both ill and explosive. Bibbs had more color than any of these, and there was a strange brightness, like a light, upon his face. It was curious to see anything so happy in the tense gloom of that household.

Edith ate little. She never once looked at Sibyl, though Sibyl now and then gave her a quick glance, heavily

charged, and then looked away. Roscoe ate nothing. He did not once look at his father, though his father gazed heavily at him most of the time. And between Edith and Sibyl, and between Roscoe and his father, some bitter wireless communication seemed continually to be taking place throughout the long silences prevailing during this enlivening ceremony of Sabbath refectation.

"Didn't you go to church this morning, Bibbs?" his mother asked, in the effort to break up one of those ghastly intervals.

"I think so," he answered, as from a rosinate trance.

"You think so! Don't you know?"

"Oh, yes. Yes, I went to church!"

"What was the sermon about?"

"What, mother?"

"Can't you hear me?" she cried. "I asked you what the sermon was about."

He roused himself. "I think it was about—" He frowned, seeming to concentrate his will to recollect. "I think it was about something in the Bible."

White-jacket George was glad of an opportunity to leave the room and lean upon Mist' Jackson's shoulder in the pantry. "He don't know they was any sermon!" he concluded, having narrated the dining-room dialogue. "All he know is he was with 'at lady lives nex' do'!" George was right.

"Did you go to church all by yourself, Bibbs?" Sibyl asked.

"No," he answered. "No, I didn't go alone."

"Oh?" Sibyl gave the ejaculation an upward twist, as of mocking inquiry, and followed it by another, expressive of hilarious comprehension.

"Oh?"

Bibbs looked at her studiously, but she spoke no further. And that completed the conversation at the luxurious feast.

Coffee came finally, was disposed of quickly, and the party dispersed to other parts of the house. Bibbs followed his father and Roscoe into the library, but was not well received.

"You go and listen to the phonograph with the women-folks," Sheridan commanded.

Bibbs retreated. "Sometimes you do seem to be a hard sort of man!" he said.

However, he went obediently into the gilt-and-brocade room to which his mother and his sister and his sister-in-law had helplessly withdrawn, according to their Sabbathlike custom. Mrs. Sheridan was looking over a col-

lection of records consisting exclusively of Caruso and ragtime. She selected one of the latter, remarking that she thought it "right pretty," and followed it with one of the former and the same remark.

As the second reached its conclusion, George appeared in the broad doorway, but he did not speak. Instead, he favored Edith with a benevolent smile, and she immediately left the room, George disappearing after her in the hall with an air of successful diplomacy. He made it perfectly clear that Edith had given him secret instructions; and that it had been his pride and pleasure to fulfill them to the letter.

Sibyl stiffened in her chair; her lips parted, and she watched with curious eyes the vanishing back of the white jacket.

"What's that?" she asked, in a low voice, but sharply.

"Here's another right pretty record," said Mrs. Sheridan, affecting—with patent nervousness—not to hear. And she unlocked the music.

Sibyl bit her lip and began to tap her chin with the brooch. After a little while she turned to Bibbs, who reposed



"Now Then," said Sheridan to Lamborn.

at half length in a gold chair, with his eyes closed.

"Where did Edith go?" she asked, curiously.

"Edith?" he repeated, opening his eyes blankly. "Is she gone?"

Sibyl got up and stood in the doorway. She leaned against the casing still tapping her chin with the brooch. Her eyes were dilating; she was suddenly at high tension, and her expression had become one of sharp excitement. She listened intently.

When the record was spun out she could hear Sheridan rumbling in the library, during the ensuing silence, and Roscoe's voice, querulous and husky: "I won't say anything at all. I tell you, you might just as well let me alone!"

But there were other sounds; a rustling and murmur, whispering, low, protesting cadences in a male voice. And as Mrs. Sheridan started another record, a sudden, vital resolve leaped like fire in the eyes of Sibyl. She walked down the hall and straight into the smoking room.

Lamborn and Edith both sprang to their feet, separating. Edith became instantly deathly white with a rage that set her shaking from head to foot, and Lamborn stuttered as he tried to speak.

But Edith's shaking was not so violent as Sibyl's, nor was her face so white. At sight of them and of their embrace, all possible consequences became nothing to Sibyl. She curtsied, holding up her skirts and contorting her lips to the semblance of a smile.

"Sit just as you were—both of you!" she said. And then to Edith: "Did you tell my husband I had been telephoning to Lamborn?"

"You march out of here!" said Edith, fiercely. "March straight out of here!"

Sibyl leveled a forefinger at Lamborn.

"Did you tell her I'd been telephoning to I wanted you to come?"

"Oh, good God!" Lamborn said. "Hush!"

"You knew she'd tell my husband, didn't you?" she cried. "You knew that!"

"Hush!" he begged, panic-stricken.

"That was a manly thing to do! Oh, it was like a gentleman! You wouldn't come—you wouldn't even come for five minutes to hear what I had to say! You'd heard it all a thousand times before, and you wouldn't even come! No! No! No!" she stormed. "You wouldn't even come for five minutes, but you could tell that little cat! And she told my husband! You're a man!"

Edith saw in a flash that the consequences of battle would be ruinous to Sibyl, and the furious girl needed no further temptation to give way to her feelings. "Get out of this house!" she shrieked. "This is my father's house. Don't you dare speak to Robert like that!"

"No! No! I mustn't speak—"

"Don't you dare!"

Edith and Sibyl began to scream insults at each other simultaneously, fronting each other, their furious faces close, and cracked—they screamed. They could be heard over the noise of the phonograph, which was playing a brass-band selection. They could be heard all over the house. They were heard in the kitchen; they could have been heard in the cellar. Neither of them cared for that.

"You told my husband!" screamed Sibyl, bringing her face still closer to Edith's. "You told my husband! This man put that in your hands to strike me with! He did!"

"I'll tell your husband again! I'll tell him everything I know! It's time your husband—"

They were swept asunder by a bandaged hand. "Do you want the neighbors in?" Sheridan thundered.

There fell a shocking silence. Frenzied Sibyl saw her husband and his mother in the doorway, and she understood what she had done. She moved slowly toward the door; then suddenly she began to run. She ran into the hall, and through it, and out of the house. Roscoe followed her heavily, his eyes on the ground.

"Now then," said Sheridan to Lamborn.

The words were indefinite, but the voice was not. Neither was the vicious gesture of the bandaged hand, which concluded its orbit in the direction of the door in a manner sufficient for the swift dispersal of George and Jackson and several female servants who hovered behind Mrs. Sheridan. They fled lightly.

"Papa, papa!" wailed Mrs. Sheridan. "Look at your hand! You oughtn't to be so rough with Edie; you hurt your hand on her shoulder. Look!"

There was, in fact, a spreading red stain upon the bandages at the tips of the fingers, and Sheridan put his hand back in the sling. "Now then!" he repeated. "You goin' to leave my house?"

"He will not," sobbed Edith. "Don't you dare order him out!"

"Don't you bother, dear," said Lamborn, quietly. "He doesn't understand. You mustn't be troubled." Lamborn was becoming to him; he looked very handsome, and as he left the room he seemed in the girl's distraught eyes a persecuted noble, indifferent to the rabble yapping insult at his heels—the rabble being enacted by her father.

"Don't come back, either!" said Sheridan, realistic in this impersonation. "Keep off the premises!" he called savagely into the hall. "This family's through with you!"

"It is not!" Edith cried, breaking from her mother. "You'll find out what'll happen! What's he done? You don't know anything about it! Don't you s'pose he told me? She was crazy about him soon as he began going there, and he doted with her a little

chain, and that she also has comprehended this, and wishing to look still more bewitching, discards her furs at the risk of taking cold. So you hold your peace, and try to look as if you had not thought it out.

This theory is satisfactory except that it does not account for the absence of the snuff. Ah, well, there must always be a mystery somewhere! Mystery is a part of enchantment.

Manual labor is best. Your heart can sing and your mind can dream while your hands are working. You could not have a singing heart and a dreaming mind all day if you had to scheme out dollars, or if you had to add columns of figures. Those things take your attention. You cannot be thinking of your friend while you write letters beginning, "Yours of the 17th inst. received and contents duly noted." But to work with your hands all day, thinking and singing, and then, after nightfall, to hear the ineffable kindness of your friend's greeting—always there for you! Who would wake from such a dream as this!

Dawn and the sea—music in moonlight gardens—nightingales serenading through almond groves in bloom—what could bring such things into the city's turmoil? Yet they are here, and roses blossom in the soil. That is what it means not to be alone! That is what a friend gives you!

CHAPTER XXII.

Bibbs was the only Sheridan to sleep soundly through the night and to wake at dawn with a light heart. His cheerfulness was vaguely diminished by the troublous state of affairs in his family. Bibbs was a sympathetic person, easily roused himself from reverie, and strolled in after her.

"She locked the door," said Mrs. Sheridan, shaking her head woefully. "She wouldn't even answer me. They wasn't a sound from her room."

"Well," said her husband, "she can settle her mind to it. She never speaks to that fellow again, and if he tries to telephone her tomorrow—Here! You tell the help if he calls up to ring off and say it's my orders. No, you needn't. I'll tell 'em myself."

"Better not," said Bibbs, gently. "His father glared at him."

"It's no good," said Bibbs. "Mother, when you were in love with father—"

"My goodness!" she cried. "You ain't a-goin' to compare your father to that—"

"Edith feels about him just what you did about father," said Bibbs. "And if your father had told you—"

"I won't listen to such silly talk!" she declared, angrily.

"So you're handin' out your advice, are you, Bibbs?" said Sheridan. "What is it?"

"Let her see him all she wants."

"You're a—" Sheridan gave it up. "I don't know what to call you."

"Let her see him all she wants," Bibbs repeated, thoughtfully. "You're up against something too strong for you. If Edith were a weakling you'd have a chance this way, but she isn't. She's got a lot of your determination, father, and with what's going on inside of her she'll beat you. You can't keep her from seeing him, as long as she feels about him the way she does now. You can't make her think less of him, either. Nobody can. Your only chance is that she'll do it herself, and if you give her time and go easy she probably will. Marriage would do it for her quickest, but that's just what you don't want, and as you don't want it, you'd better—"

"I can't stand any more!" Sheridan burst out. "If it's come to Bibbs advising me how to run this house I better resign. Mamma, where's that nigger George? Maybe he's got some plan how I better manage my family. Bibbs, for God's sake go and lay down! Let her see him all she wants! Oh, Lord! Here's wisdom; here's—"

"Bibbs," said Mrs. Sheridan, "if you haven't got anything to do, you might step over and take Sibyl's wraps home—she left 'em in the hall. I don't think you seem to quiet your poor father very much just now."

"All right," and Bibbs bore Sibyl's wraps across the street and delivered them to Roscoe, who met him at the door. Bibbs said only, "Forgot these," and, "Good night, Roscoe," cordially and cheerfully, and returned to the new house. His mother and father were still talking in the library, but with discretion he passed rapidly on and upward to his own room, and there he proceeded to write in his notebook.

There seems to be another curious thing while it lives and only opens its eyes and becomes very wide awake when it dies. Let it alone until then.

You cannot reason with love or with any other passion. The wise will not wish for love—nor for ambition. These are passions and bring others in their train—hatreds and jealousies—all blind. Friendship is a quiet beast for the wise.

What a turbulence is love! It is dangerous for a blind thing to be turbulent; there are precipices in life. One would not cross a mountain-pass with a thick cloth over his eyes. Lovers do. Friendship walks gently and with open eyes.

To walk to church with a friend! To sit beside her there! To rise when she rises, and to touch with one's thumb and fingers the other half of the hymn book that she holds! What lover, with his fierce ways, could know this transcendent happiness?

Friendship brings everything that heaven could bring. There is no labor that cannot become a living rapture if you know that a friend is thinking of you as you labor. So you sing at your work. For the work is part of the thoughts of your friend; so you love it!

Love is demanding and claiming and insistent. Friendship is all kindness—it makes the world glorious with kindness. What color you see when you walk with a friend! You see that the gray sky is blue and that the shimmering sea is green; the smoke has warm browns and is marvelously sculptured—the air becomes iridescent. You see the gold in brown hair. Light floods everything.

When you walk to church with a friend you know that life can give you nothing richer. You pray that there will be no change in anything forever.

What an adorable thing it is to discover a little fob in your friend, a bit of vanity that gives you one thing more about her to adore! On a cold morning she will perhaps walk to church with you without her furs, and she will blush and return an evasive answer when you ask her why she does not wear them. You will say no more, because you understand. She looks beautiful in her furs; you love their darkness against her cheek; but you comprehend that they conceal the loveliness of her throat and the fine line of her

ly touched, but he was indeed living in a dream, and all things outside of it were veiled and remote—for that is the way of youth in a dream. And Bibbs, who had never before been of any age, either old or young, had come to his youth at last.

He went whistling from the house before even his father had come upstairs. There was a fog outdoors, saturated with a fine powder of soot, and though Bibbs noticed absentmindedly the dim shape of an automobile at the curb before Roscoe's house, he did not recognize it as Doctor Gurney's but went cheerily on his way through the dingy mist. And when he was once more installed beside his faithful zinc eater he whistled and sang to it, as other workmen did to their own machines sometimes, when things went well. His comrades in the shop glanced at him amusedly now and then. They liked him, and he ate his lunch at noon with a group of socialists who approved of his ideas and talked of electing him to their association.

The short days of the year had come, and it was dark before the whistles blew. When the signal came, Bibbs went to his office, where he divested himself of his overalls—his single divergence from the routine of his fellow workmen—and after that he used soap and water copiously. This was his transformation scene; he passed into the office a rather frail young working man noticeably begrimed, and passed out of it to the pavement a cheerfully preoccupied sample of gentility, fastidious to the point of elegance.

The sidewalk was crowded with the bearers of dinner pails, men and boys and women and girls from the work-rooms that closed at five. Many hurried and some loitered; they went both east and west, jostling one another, and Bibbs, turning his face homeward, was forced to go slowly.

Coming toward him, as slowly, through the crowd, a tall girl caught sight of his long, thin figure and stood still until he had almost passed her, for in the thick crowd and the thicker gloom he did not recognize her, though his shoulder actually touched hers. He would have gone by, but she laughed delightedly, and he stopped short, started, two boys, one chasing the other, swept between them, and Bibbs stood still, peering about him in deep perplexity. She leaned toward him.

"I knew you!" she said.

"Good heavens!" cried Bibbs. "I thought it was your voice coming out of a star!"

"There's only smoke overhead," said Mary, and laughed again. "There aren't any stars."

"Oh, yes, there were—when you laughed!"

She took his arm, and they went on. "I've come to walk home with you, Bibbs. I wanted to."

"But were you here in the—"

"In the dark? Yes! Waiting? Yes!" Bibbs was radiant; he felt suffocated with happiness. He began to scold her.

"But it's not safe, and I'm not worth it. You shouldn't have— You ought to know better. What did—"

"I was in this part of town already," she said. "At least, I was only seven or eight blocks away, and it was dark when I came out, and I'd have had to go home alone—and I preferred going home with you."

"It's pretty beautiful for me," said Bibbs, with a deep breath. "You'll never know what it was to hear you laugh in the darkness—and then to see you standing there! Oh, it was like—it was like— How can I tell you what it was like? They had passed beyond the crowd now, and a crossing lamp shone upon them, which revealed the fact that she was without her furs. Here was a puzzle. However, allowing it to stand, his solicitude for her took another turn. "I think you ought to have a car," he said, "especially when you want to be out after dark. You need one in winter, anyhow. Have you ever asked your father for one?"

"No," said Mary. "I don't think I'd care for one particularly."

"But my mother tried to insist on sending one over here every afternoon for me. I wouldn't let her, because I like to walk, but a girl—"

"A girl likes to walk, too," said Mary. "Let me tell you where I've been this afternoon and how I happened to be near enough to make you take me home. I've been to see a little old man who makes pictures of a studio, and his wife and their seven children, and he's gloriously happy. I'd seen one of his pictures at an exhibition, and I wanted to see more of them, so he showed them to me. He has almost everything he ever painted; I don't suppose he's sold more than four or five pictures in his life. He gives drawing lessons to keep alive."

"How do you mean he paints the smoke?" Bibbs asked.

"Literally. He paints from his studio window and from the street—anywhere. He just paints what's around him—and it's beautiful."

"The smoke?"

"Wonderful! He sees the sky through it, somehow. He does the ugly roofs of cheap houses through a haze of smoke, and he does smoky sunsets and smoky sunrises, and he has other things with the heavy, solid, slow columns of smoke going far out and growing more ethereal and mixing with the hazy light in the distance; and he has others with the broken skyline of downtown, all misted with the smoke and with puffs and jets of vapor that have colors like an orchard in mid-April. I'm going to take you there some Sunday afternoon, Bibbs."

"You're showing me the town," he said. "I didn't know what was in it at all."

"There are workers in beauty here," she told him, gently. "There are other painters more prosperous than my friend. There are all sorts of things."

"I didn't know."

"No. Since the town began growing so great that it called itself 'greater,' one could live here all one's life and know only the side of it that shows."

"The beauty workers seem buried very deep," said Bibbs. "And I imagine that your friend who makes the smoke beautiful must be buried deepest of all. My father loves the smoke, but I can't imagine his buying one of your friend's pictures. He'd buy the 'Bay of Naples,' but he wouldn't get one of those. He'd think smoke in a picture was horrible—unless he could use it for an advertisement."

"Yes," she said, thoughtfully. "And really he's the town. They are buried pretty deep, it seems, sometimes, Bibbs."

"And yet it's all wonderful," he said. "It's wonderful to me."

"You mean the town is wonderful to you?"

"Yes, because everything is, since you called me your friend. The city is only a rumble on the horizon for me. It can't come any closer than the horizon so long as you let me see you standing by my old zinc eater all day long, helping me, Mary." He stopped with a gasp. "That's the first time I've called you 'Mary!'"

"Yes," she laughed, a little tremulously. "Though I wanted you to!"

"I said it without thinking. It must be because you came there to walk home with me. That must be it."

"Women like to have things said," Mary informed him, her tremulous laughter continuing. "Were you glad I came for you?"

"No—not 'glad.' I felt as if I were being carried straight up and up and up—over the clouds. I feel like that still. I think I'm that way most of the time. I wonder what I was like before I knew you. The person I was then seems to have been somebody else, not Bibbs Sheridan at all. It seems long, long ago. I was gloomy and sickly—somebody else—somebody I don't understand now, a coward afraid of shadows—afraid of things that didn't exist—afraid of my old zinc eater! And now I'm only afraid of what might change anything."

She was silent a moment, and then, "You're happy, Bibbs?" she asked.

"Ah, don't you see?" he cried. "I want it to last for a thousand, thousand years, just as it is! You've made me so rich, I'm a miser. I wouldn't have one thing different—nothing, nothing!"

"Dear Bibbs!" she said, and laughed happily.

This friendship business between Bibbs and Mary—do you married folk think it's a spell of friendship they're having or is it simply an old-fashioned case of love, with only one cure: a license and a parson?

TO BE CONTINUED.



"I've Come to Walk Home With You, Bibbs."

TO BE CONTINUED.