The Turmoil

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

(Copyright 1915, by Harper & Brothers)

CHAPTER XXVIII-Continued. -15-

Sybil, the loud-mouthed daughter-in- don't believe it would been so much law, is engaged in poisoning Mrs. harm if-" family and Mary Vertrees, whom Bibbs leves. The two women are family? Why she-" Bibbs' room. He hears it all.

lived you'd had another daughter-in- marry him-" law before this, as sure as I stand here telling you the God's truth about it! Well-when Jim was left in the cemetery she was waiting out there to Sibyl. She ain't that kind of a girl." drive home with Bibbs! Jim wasn't cold-and she didn't know whether the only one of the rich Sheridan boys left. She had to get him."

The texture of what was the truth how she ran after Jim-" made an even fabric with what was mot, in Sibyl's mind; she believed every wouldn't take Jim. She turned him stooped over, like." word that she uttered, and she spoke down cold." with the rapidity and vehemence of fierce conviction.

"What I feel about it is," she said, "it oughtn't to be allowed to go on. It's too mean! I like poor Bibbs, and turning to his wife. "This won't have I don't want to see him made such a any effect on your idea, because there foel of, and I don't want to see the wasn't any sense to it, anyhow. D' family made such a fool of! I like you think she'd be very likely to take the door. realize he isn't the kind of a man any Bibbs come to see her, but if she'd ever girl would be apt to fall in love with. given him one sign of encouragement He's better looking lately, maybe, but the way you women think, he wouldn't you know how he was-just kind of a of acted the stubborn fool he has-he'd girls like men with some go to 'em- some kind of a job he could support a some sort of dashingness, anyhow! No- wife on. There's nothin' in it-and body ever looked at poor Bibbs be- I've got the same old fight with him on fore, and neither'd she-no, sir! not my hands I've had all his life-and till she'd tried both Roscoe and Jim the Lord knows what he won't de to first! It was only when her and her balk me! What's happened now 'll family got desperate that she-"

Bibbs-whiter than when he came born, but-" from the sanitarium-opened the door. He stepped across its threshold and stood looking at her. Both women step-he's comin' downstairs." She

"Were you in there? Oh, I wouldn'ting her toward the stairway. "Come do?" on, mother Sheridan!" she urged, and | Her timorousness had its effect upon as the befuddled and confused lady the others. Sheridan rose, frowning. obeyed. Sibyl left a trail of noisy ex- but remained standing beside his chair; clamations: "Good gracious! Oh, I and Roscoe moved toward Sibyl, who wouldn't- Too bad! I didn't dream stared uneasily at the open doorway. he was there! I wouldn't hurt his feel- They listened as the slow steps deings! Not for the world! Of course he had to know some time! But, good | the library.

She heard his door close as she and stairs, and she glanced over her shoulder quickly, but Bibbs was not following; he had gone back into his room.

"He-he looked-oh, terrible bad!" stammered Mrs. Sheridan. "I-! wish-"

"Still, it's a good deal better he knows about it," said Sibyl. "I shouldn't wonder it might turn out the very best thing could happened. Come on!"

And completing their descent to the library, the two made their appearance to Roscoe and his father. Sibyl at once gave a full and truthful account of what had taken place, repeating her own remarks, and omitting only the fact that it was through her design that Bibbs had overheard them.

"But as I told mother Sheridan," she said, in conclusion, "it might turn out for the very best that he did hearjust that way. Don't you think so, father Sheridan?"

He merely grunted in reply, and sat rubbing the thick hair on the top of his head with his left hand and looking at the fire. He had given no sign of being impressed in any manner by her exposure of Mary Vertrees' character: but his impassivity did not dismay Sibyl-it was Bibbs whom she desired to impress, and she was content in that

"I'm sure it was all for the best," she said. "It's over now, and he knows what she is. In one way I think it was lucky, because, just hearing a thing that way, a person can tell it's soand he knows I haven't got any ax to grind except his own good and the good of the family."

Mrs. Sheridan went nervously to the door and stood there, looking toward the stairway. "I wish-I wish I knew what he was doin'," she said. "He did look terrible bad. It was like something had been done to him that was-I don't know what. I never saw anybody look like he did. He looked-so queer. It was like you'd-" She called down the hall, "George!"

"Were you up in Mr. Bibbs' room just now?"

"Yes'm?"

"Yes'm. He ring bell: tole me make him fiah in his grate. I done buil' him nice fiah. I reckon he ain' feelin' so well. Yes'm." He departed.

"What do you expect he wants a fire for?" she asked, turning toward her husband. "The house is warm as can be. I do wish I-"

"Oh, quit frettin'!" said Sheridan. "Well, I-I kind o' wish you hadn't

said anything, Sibyl. I know you meant it for the best and all, but I

you want that kind of a girl in the

troubled woman quavered. "If he liked her it seems kind of a pity to spoil it. So she started for Roscoe; but she He's so queer, and he hasn't ever taken found out pretty quick he was married, much enjoyment. And besides, I beand she turned right around to Jim- lieve the way it was, there was more and she landed him! There's no doubt chance of him bein' willin' to do what about it, she had Jim, and if he'd papa wants him to. If she wants to

> Sheridan interrupted her with a hooting laugh. "She don't!" he said. "You're barkin' up the wrong tree,

"But, father Sheridan, didn't she-He cut her short. "That's enough. Bibbs was insane or not, but he was You may mean all right, but you guess wrong. So do you, mamma." Sibyl cried out, "Oh! But just look

"She did not," he said, curtly. "She

"But that's impossi-" "It's not. I know she did."

Sibyl looked flatly incredulous. "And you needn't worry," he said, poor Bibbs, but if he'd only stop to Bibbs-after she wouldn't take Jim? think a minute himself he'd have to She's a good-hearted girl, and she lets long white rag in good clothes. And 'a' been at me long ago, beggin' me for

"'Sh!" Mrs. Sheridan, still in the he wants. You've given up." doorway, lifted her hand, "That's his shrank away from the door as if she wonder-" she said, almost in a whis-She seized Mrs. Sheridan's arm, pull- per-"I wonder what he's goin'-to

scended the stairs and came toward

Bibbs stepped upon the threshold, and with sick and haggard eyes looked Mrs. Sheridan reached the top of the slowly from one to the other until at last his gaze rested upon his father. Then he came and stood before him.

"I'm sorry you've had so much trouble with me," he said, gently. "You won't, any more. I'll take the job you offered me."

Sheridan did not speak-he stared astounded and incredulous; and Bibbs

"I'll Take the Job You Offered Me."

had left the room before any of its oc- -marry me, if-if-you could," then out into the hall. Bibbs had gone I'm-in love with you?" from the house.

Bibbs' mother had a feeling about mourned for him uncomprehendingly. "Why?" She felt that an awful thing had been

charred ashes of paper. The lid of his Mary. "And when I first came home out being in love with you because you | Sibyl was altogether taken aback. tray, which she remembered to have marry that she'd have married me. She brother, and-" seen full of papers and notebooks, was meant it to express Sibyl's extremity. empty. And somehow she understood you see. But I hardly needed either time-that you-that you were-" that Bibbs had given up the mysteri- of them to tell me. I hadn't thought ous vocation he had hoped to follow- of myself as-well, not as particularly "You can't even say that! Bibbs, it to me, he didn't!" and that he had given it up for ever. She thought it was the wisest thing he could have done-and yet, for an unknown reason, she sat upon the bed and wept a little before she went downstairs.

So Sheridan had his way with Bibbs, all through.

CHAPTER XXIX.

As Bibbs came out of the new house, a Sunday trio was in course of passage upon the sidewalk: An ample young woman, placid of face; a black-clad, She bit her lip; there was anger in thin young man, whose expression was Sheridan's mind against the Vertrees "Mother Sheridan, you don't mean one of habitual anxiety, habitual warlness and habitual eagerness. He prepelled a perambulator containing the stopped wearing my furs?" standing just outside the door of "I don't know, I don't know," the third-and all three were newly cleaned, Sundayfied, and made fit to dine with the wife's relatives.

"How'd you like for me to be that young fella, mamma?" the husband whispered. "He's one of the sons, and there ain't but two left now."

The wife stared curiously at Bibbs. 'Well, I don't know," she returned. "He looks to me like he had his own troubles."

"I expect he has, like anybody else," said the young husband, "but I guess we could stand a good deal if we had his money."

"Well, maybe, if you keep on the way you been, baby 'll be as well fixed as the Sheridans. You can't tell." She glanced back at Bibbs, who had turned north. "He walks kind of slow and

"So much money in his pockets it makes him sag, I guess," said the young husband, with bitter admira-Mary, happening to glance from a

window, saw Bibbs coming, and she started, clasping her hands together in a sudden alarm. She met him at

"Bibbs!" she cried. "What is the matter? I saw something was terribly wrong when I- You look-" She paused, and he came in, not lifting his eyes to hers. Always when he crossed that threshold he had come with his head up and his wistful gaze seeking hers. "Ah, poor boy!" she said, with a gesture of understanding and pity. " know what it is!"

He followed her into the room where they always sat, and sank into a chair. "You needn't tell me." she said. probably only make him twice as stub-"They've made you give up. Your father's won-you're going to do what her voice shook, but she spoke rapidly.

Still without looking at her, he inclined his head in affirmation. "Oh, good heavens!" cried Sibyl. feared to have Bibbs see her. "I-I and came and sat near him. "Bibbs," then-" But now she faltered, and ft -just a quick scrawl. I told him just faint. But if you're ever goin' to she said, "I can be glad of one thing. though it's selfish. I can be glad you she was able to go on. "And then- I said I would not marry him. I post- the beginning and begin to show it tocame straight to me. It's more to me that I tried to marry-you! You 'heard ed the letter, but he never got it. That morrow.' than even if you'd come because you her say that-and you believe that I was the afternoon he was killed. That's were happy." She did not speak again don't care for you and that 'no girl' all, Bibbs. Now you know what I did for a little while; then she said: could care for you-but you think I -and you know-me!" She pressed

> it? Do you want to?" Still he did not look up, but in a

words. "Mary," he said, "could you marry you-

"What did you say, Bibbs?" she asked, quietly.

His tone and attitude did not change. Will you marry me?" Both her hands leaped to her cheeks

she grew red and then white. She rose slowly and moved backward from him, staring at him, at first incredulously, then with an intense perplex- plain. From the first of your leveliity more and more luminous in her ness to me, I was all seif. It was all stant, "But there's nothing to forwide eyes; it was like a spoken question. The room filled with strangeness in the long silence-the two were lean on you. We always talked of me, so strange to each other. At last she not of you. It was all about my idiotic

"What made you say that?" He did not answer.

"Bibbs, look at me!" Her voice was oud and clear. "What made you say that? Look at me!" He could not look at her, and he

could not speak. "What was it that made you?" she

said. "I want you to tell me." She went closer to him, her eyes ever brighter and wider with that intensity of wonder. "You've given up -to your father," she said, slowly, "and then you come to ask me-" She that I had-" broke off. "Bibbs, do you want me to marry you?"

"Yes," he said, just audibly. "No!" she cried. "You do not, Then what made you ask me? What is it that's happened?"

"Nothing." walk this morning-yes, since you left bered that Sibyl had gone to the new house.

cupants uttered a sound, though he She looked at him, and slowly shook tell me," she said. "You can't, because proved what you said of me, and dis- a machine a child could handle, and went as slowly as he came. Mrs. Sheri- her head. "Bibbs, do you-" Her you can't put it into words-they are proved what you said of her. She re- then come home and take a bath and dan was the first to move. She went voice was as unsteady as his-little too humiliating for me and you're too fused."

"No." he said. Somewhere in the still air of the me-" him then that she had never known room there was a whispered word; it before; it was indefinite and vague, did not seem to come from Mary's but very poignant-something in her parted lips, but he was aware of it. you want to marry me-"-

"I've had nothing but dreams." was almost smothered under thick faintly, though still be did not look at thought that I might marry you with didn't 1?"

exclaimed, sharply; and then, with again. Bibbs was agonized. thoroughgoing contempt: "Lamhorn! That's like them!" She turned away, you could cry!" went to the bare little black mantel. she asked: "When did Mrs. Roscoe

Sheridan say that 'mo girl' could care

"Today."

about you?"

captivating!"

Mary drew a deep breath. "I think I'm beginning to understand-a little.' good truth in her eyes and in her voice "Answer me once more," she said. "Bibbs, do you know now why "Yes.

"I thought so! Your sister-in-law told you, didn't she?"



"Mary, Mary!" He Cried Helplessly.

"I- I heard her say-"

now." Mary's breath came fast and "You 'heard her say' more than that. You 'heard her say' that we were bit- cheapened myself she had a right to you're goin' to do that! If you go down She gave a little cry of compassion. first to marry your brother and I left her, and I wrote to your brother reckon the whole office 'li fall in a was only after a convulsive effort that and believing that I could not want bowed before him.

Suddenly she sank down, kneeling. with her face buried in her arms upon the lap of a chair, tears overwhelming

"Mary, Mary!" he cried, helplessly. 'Oh no-you-you don't understand.'

"I do, though!" she sobbed, "I do!" He came and stood beside her. "You kill me!" he said. "I can't make it ways you that gave and I that took. I give." was the dependent-I did nothing but distresses and troubles. I thought of you as a kind of wonderful being that had no mortal or human suffering except by sympathy. You seemed to lean down-out of a rosy cloud-to be kind to me. I never dreamed I could do anything for you! I never dreamed you could need anything to be done for you by anybody. And today I heard that-that you-"

"You heard that I needed to marry -someone-anybody-with money,' she sobbed. "And you thought we were so-so desperate-you believed

"No!" he said, quickly. "I didn't be- never, never!" lieve you'd done one kind thing for me -for that. No. no. no! I knew you'd dience to her beseeching gesture, he never thought of me except generously got himself to the door and out of the -to give. I said I couldn't make it house. plain!" he cried, despairingly.

"Wait!" She lifted her head and ex-"Wait," she said. "Let me think, tended her hands to him unconscious-It's something that happened since our ly, like a child. "Help me up. Bibbs." Then, when she was once more upon tremulous murmur of amazement and but reassuringly, as if to tell him, in that the others might hear. I'd tried to make you fall in love with had entered it.

> "Never! Never for an instant!" "You didn't believe I'd tried to make of his doin' that?"

"No, no, no!" "I believe it. Bibbs. You thought done to him, though she did not know Bibbs said, desolately, "but they that I was foud of you; you knew I there and-" what it was. She went up to his room | weren't like this. Sily i said no girl cared for you-but you didn't think I The fire George had built for him could care about me." He smiled might be-in love with you. But you I told you she wouldn't have Jim, hopeless blank.

trunk stood open, and the large upper Edith told me Sibyl was so anxious to did believe I had tried to marry your

"Mary, I only knew-for the first

was true: I did try to make Jim want Oddly enough, Mary's pallor changed to marry me. I did!" And she sank to an angry flush. "Those two!" she down into the chair, weeping bitterly

and stood leaning upon it. Presently through-I want you to understand. fairs. She wrote to Jim she couldn't We were poor, and we weren't fitted to take him, and it was a good, straight be. We never had been, and we didn't letter, too. It came to Jim's office; he know what to do. We'd been almost never saw it. She wrote it the afterrich; there was pienty, but my father noon he was hurt." wanted to take advantage of the "I remember I saw her put a letter growth of the town; he wanted to be in the mail box that afternoon." said richer, but instead-well, just about Roscoe. "Don't you remember, Sibyl? the time your father finished building I told you about it-I was waiting for next door we found we hadn't any- you while you were in there so long thing. People say that, sometimes, talking to her mother. It was just bemeaning that they haven't anything in fore we saw that something was wrong own kind, but we really hadn't any- me." thing-we hadn't anything at all. there-and I didn't know how to be a Roscoe crossed the street. Then, Bibbs, I did what I'd been raised that letter?" to know how to do. I went out to be had meant to fascinate him and that I up to Bibbs' room. was not in love with him, but I let him I had never cared for anybody, and I it back and lay down on me again?" thought it might be there really wasn't anything more than a kind of excited "I think I know what happened. truth-oh! I saw myself! She was I expect much of you-not from the terly poer, and on that account I tried assume that I would. But I couldn't! there and show a spark o' real gir-up, I what I'd done; I asked his pardon, and

ther. Isn't there some way you could use the money without-without-"

She gave a choked little laugh. "You gave me something to live for." he said. "You kept me alive, I thinkand I've hurt you like this!"

"Not you-oh no!" "You could forgive me. Mary?" "Oh, a thousand times!" Her right hand went out in a faltering gesture, and just touched his own for an in-

"And you can't-you can't-

"Can't what, Bibbs?" "You couldn't-"

"Marry you?" she said for him. "Yes."

"No, no, no!" She sprang up, facing him, and, without knowing what she did, she set her hands upon his breast, pushing him back from her a little. "I can't, I can't! Don't you see?"

"Mary--"No, no! And you must go now. Bibbs: I can't bear any moreplease--"

"Mary-" "Never, never, never!" she cried, in a passion of tears. "You mustn't come any more. I can't see you, dear! Never.

Somehow, in helpless, stumbling obe-

CHAPTER XXX.

Sibyl and Roscoe were upon the point of leaving when Bibbs returned me at noon. Something happened her feet, she wiped her eyes and to the new house. He went straight to that-" She stopped abruptly, with a smiled upon him rucfully and faintly. Sibyl and spoke to her quietly, but so

dawning comprehension. She remem- that way, that she knew he had not | "When you said that if I'd stop to meant to hurt her. And that smile of think, I'd realize that no one would be way to get ahead is to do ten times hers, so lamentable but so faithfully apt to care enough about me to marry the work of the hardest worker that Bibbs swallowed painfully and con- friendly, misted his own eyes, for his me, you were right," he said. "I works for you. But you don't know trived to say, "I do-I do want you to shamefacedness lowered them no more. thought perhaps you weren't, and so I what work is, yet. All you've ever "Let me tell you what you want to asked Miss Vertrees to marry me. It done was just stand around and feed

nervously back to the doorway, and more than a whisper. "Do you think gentle to say them. Tell me, though. And, having thus spoken, he quitted a mighty different proposition now, and isn't it true? You didn't believe that the room as straightforwardly as he if you're worth your salt-and you

grimly.

"You didn't tell us he'd go over "I told you she wouldn't have him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Do you suppose it's true? Do you suppose she wouldn't?"

"He didn't look exactly like a young man that had just got things fixed up "Were desperately poor," she said. fine with his girl," said Sheridan, "Not

"But why would-" "I told you," he interrupted, angrily, "she ain't that kind of a girl! If you got to have proof, well. I'll tell you and "Mary," he groaned, "I didn't know get it over with, though I'd pretty near just as soon not have to talk a whole "Listen," she said. "Listen till I get lot about my dead boy's private af-

comparison with other people of their over here, and Edith came and called

Sibyl shook her head, but she re-Bibbs! And we couldn't do anything. membered. And she was not cast down. You might wonder why I didn't 'try to for, although some remnants of perbe a stenographer'-and I wonder my- plexity were left in her eyes, they were self why, when a family loses its dimmed by an increasing glow of money, people always say the daugh triumph; and she departed-after some ters 'ought to go and be stenographers.' further fragmentary discourse-visibly It's curious!-as if a wave of the hand elated. After all, the guilty had not made you into a stenographer. No, I'd been exalted; and she perceived vaguebeen raised to be either married com- ly, but none the less surely, that her fortably or a well-to-do old maid, if I injury had been copiously avenged. She chose not to marry. The poverty came bestowed a contented glance upon the on slowly, Bibbs, but at last it was all old house with the cupola, as she and

stenographer. I didn't know how to When they had gone, Mrs. Sheridan be anything except a well-to-do old indulged in reverie, but after a while maid or somebody's wife-and I she said, uneasily, "Papa, you think it couldn't be a well-to-do old maid. would be any use to tell Bibbs about

"I don't know," he answered, walkfascinating and be married. I did it ing moodily to the window. "I been openly, at least, and with a kind of de- thinkin' about it." He came to a decent honesty. I told your brother ! cision. "I reckon I will." And he went

"Well, you goin' back on what you think that perhaps I meant to marry said?" he inquired, brusquely, as he him. I think I did mean to marry him. opened the door. "You goin' to take

"No," said Bibbs. "Well, perhaps I didn't have any cal! fondness. I can't be sure, but I think to accuse you of that. I don't know that though I did mean to marry him as you ever did go back on anything I never should have done it, because you said, exactly, though the Lord that sort of a marriage is-it's sacri knows you've laid down on me enough. lege something would have stopped You certainly have!" Sheridan was me. Something did stop me; it was baffled. This was not what he wished your sister-in-law, Sibyl. She meant to say, but his words were unmanageno harm-but she was horrible, and able; he found himself unable to conshe put what I was doing into such trol them, and his querulous abuse horrible words-and they were the went on in spite of him. "I can't say proposing a miserable compact with way you always been, up to now-unme-and I couldn't breathe the air of less you turn over a new leaf, and I the same room with her, though I'd so don't see any encouragement to think show any, you better begin right at

"You better, if it's in you!" Sheridan was sheerly nonplused. He had "Bibbs-dear-could you tell me about am in such an 'extremity,' as Sibyl was her clenched hands tightly against her always been able to say whatever he -that you- And so, not wanting me, eyes, leaning far forward, her head wished to say, but his tongue seemed bewitched. He had come to tell Bibbs voice, shaken and husky, he asked her you-except for my 'extremity'-you Bibbs had forgotten himself long about Mary's letter, and to his own a question so grotesque that at first she took your father's offer and then came ago; his heart broke for her. "Couldn't angry astonishment he found it imthought she had misunderstood his to ask me to marry you! What had I you Isn't there Won't you " he possible to do anything except to scold shown you of myself that could make stammered. "Mary, I'm going with fa- like a drudge-driver. "You better come down there with your mind made up to hustle harder than the hardest workin' man that's under you, or you'll not get on very good with me. I tell you! The way to get ahead-and you better set it down in your books-the



"You Don't Know What Work Is, Yet."

go callin'. I tell you you're up against never showed any signs of it yet-not any signs that stuck out enough to "He's so queer!" Mrs. Sheridan gasped. "Who on earth would thought bang somebody on the head and make 'em sit up and take notice-well, I "I told you," said her husband, want to say, right here and now-and you better listen, because I want to say just what I do say. I say-"

He meandered to a full stop. His mouth hung open, and his mind was a