Chap I

How the Story Came to Be

How do the chief characters look?

Dramatis Personae — more definitely presented - history, characteristics & physical appearance.

First names not precisely differentiating to the running reader — Jake - Rube - Sam - Dick - Jack - When used alone sometimes have to stop & disentangle them — might devise appellations - "The Red Fox" - "Roaring Boss" - "The Editor" - "Human Parson" - as what was.

Needs besides an outline of Story form (besides the Chapter Synopsis which is concerned with General treatment); and statement that all elements of changing life & opinion come in:- effect of telegram known bright hour, of profits & of transfer, of change in individuals as facts drive persons home; making new person & masses; welding of population; discipline of Story & food supply; old Customs &c; talk; Case of Change of Business &c coming pell mell down and chaps &c.

[John S. Phillips?]

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Chapter I

How The War Came to Sabinsport

by

Ida M. Tarbell.

I believe that I have just read the beginning of an important American novel. Several qualities in this first chapter stand out preeminently; 1) Miss Tarbell's thorough knowledge of the "average industrial western town" of which she writes; 2) her realization of the way in which the war actually did come to such a town; 3) her splendid character portraits, Gardner and Ingram.

The style of this first chapter makes me think of a factory - where hammers are driving nails, one after another, never missing. There is an incisiveness about the way Miss Tarbell thinks, and about the way she writes which gives me a sense of completion and perfection.

By the time you have finished the first chapter you have developed a keen interest in a number of people, two in particular; you are in suspense both about the next chapter and about the ultimate development of the two men; you feel a pleasure in watching the analysis of an expert of a thing that you yourself have noticed.

One question occured to me as I read the synopsis. Will our interest in the Towne hold strongly with Graham in the army - or will the burden of character interest fall on Ingram? There is no definite climax in the synopsis so far as I can see, and it seems to me that the matter after Gardner's enlistment may lack plot -

RL

About pre ville

"How the War Came to Sabinsport" is an attempt to follow an old average, industrial town of Western Pennsylvania , absorbed in itself and both ignorant and indifferent to world affairs, through all the varied experiences , material, intellectual and spiritual which the war thrusts upon it.

The theme develops around two chief characters. The first of these is Gardner, the editor, whose education and ambitions are outlined in the first chapter. He accepts the neutrality of the United States as a matter of course. He is skeptical about Belgium's innocence, by heredity suspicious of England. Munition making, on a large scale in Sabinsport gives him a point of attack into which he goes more heartily because the business is in the hands of the town's bosses whom he is after. He takes up preparedness, but it is merely political with him, he being an ardent Progressive. He does not believe our ships should enter the war zone, has the landsman's point of view about ships, that is, he does not really see them as a thing for a government to protect; has no feeling at all for international law; dismisses atrocities as a part of war, and argues that one side is probably as bad as the other, if we only had the documents. He does, however, sense keenly the meaning of a contract, and when Germany resumes her U-boat campaign, his resistance which for months has been bravado breaks down completely. He enlists at once, insists that he must begin at the bottom. His love story comes in at this point.

Ingram, the Parson, runs side by side with Gardner. He goes to Canada and offers himself at once when England goes into the war, but , as he fears, is physically unfit. It develops that he

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never will be able to take any active part in the affair. Makes a compact with himself to help Sabinsport to see the thing. As the affair develops, he helps interpret to the town in one way or another the meaning of the war, of German Kultur , the growing sense that there is something more at stake than self-defense; helps lead the town to the spiritual significances as they unfold.

The town has mills and mines. Plots go on in the mill, and there is a disaster in which a second -generation German, the son of a loyal 1848 emigré takes a part. This young man has in travelling abroad met prominent Germans. His vanity has been flattered. He has been converted quietly to Pan-Germanism. He is an easy tool. The German plotting in Sabinsport is partially unearthed by Katie Sullivan, Micky's mother. Micky ran away to Canada and enlisted early in the game. This turns Katie into a violent pro-ally. She is a maid of the Parson, and through her the point of view of the working people is daily expounded to the Parson as she serves his coffee. Opinions of rank and file are developed at the meeting of the War Board, where the Parson sits. These are nightly gatherings in the lobby of the "Paradise", of those who drop in and of travelling men who happen to be in town.

Other sectors of opinion are developed at the Y.M.C.A. headquarters, where they have been from the start a few patrioteers and which when the war really sets in, becomes the rallying point for drives.

The town is connected with Washington by Tom Coulter's call to a Council of Defense Committee. He is an able and experienced man in his industry, who does not know how to sell himself, but through great discouragement is kept on the job by the Parson who

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senses the difficulties in Washington. Tom hangs on and finally finds his place.

The town is 20 miles from a camp, with a connecting trolley; and is obliged to wrestle with the problems of the saloon and of the girls; finally works out through much sorrow a practical and successful relation. It is in establishing relations with the camp that the women of Sabinsport get their chief education; and become finally something more than knitters and bandage makers, developing in fact into a disciplined army, whose weapons are regular work, food conservation and economy.

The town goes through one after another of the successive shocks of experience,-the draft, the exodus of its best, bright and trained young people, casualties. It has its revolt, despairs submission; learns to endure; gradually catches larger meaning; and finally comes to the exultation of sacrifice.

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12/18/17. At dinner J. S. P. spoke idea of my diary "How our town came into the War" or How Jonesville (?) came " " " " " - for R. C. May Sister me up a bit; I can see a print of "Our town" - in 1913-14 - before the war. It is a town of 10,000 or so est. It has one bank & successful political boss - Rep - Solemn of Teddy when war came in 1914 - Small in population good example.

2 Reformery woman - dies - precipitated - interested in industrial conditions - suffragist - Take some pride from Mrs. (Del Carpio "Later")

3. Anti - suffragist who wears hat for war after Garland & plays politics with boss.

4 A factory - transformed & makes war munitions - factory & town - Race question & men by women - must look out for pleasure cursed by

5 - A nice musical cultured old resident a German spy -

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