

1924

Arthur G. Staples : "The Inner Man"

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ARTHUR G. STAPLES

"THE INNER MAN"

*“O wad some pow’r
the giftie gie us
To see oursels
as ithers see us!”*



ARTHUR G.
"STAPLES"

"THE INNER MAN"





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SECOND EDITION



ARTHUR G. STAPLES



REPORTER, *City Editor, Managing Editor and Editor-in-chief; forty years associated with the Lewiston Evening Journal. During this period his facile pen has been a strong factor in molding public opinion on all issues directly affecting the economic, political and cultural life of the state of Maine. The initials, A. G. S., today are recognized and beloved wherever the influence of New England's journalism is felt.*

Among his innumerable friends is an appreciative group who believe that tribute to such a long and brilliant career should come during life. They have chosen this volume to bestow their tributes of esteem. Each in his own

manner, combining as a whole a bouquet of delightful color and rare fragrance, they dedicate this volume to him of the gentle life, the kindly influence, whose words have touched the heart of humanity—"A. G. S."

—J. B. WOHLFARTH

AUGUSTA, MAINE
APRIL, 1924

ARTHUR G. STAPLES

"THE INNER MAN"

TO ARTHUR G. STAPLES
THE REASON



Why is it that in following the trail
Of this lad's early years we have not found
Those little milestones of his childish round
Which mark he had been there? Why do we fail?
Why is it that we find of no avail
To question often, "Here? Was 't here he played?
Was 't there he sorrowed? There was made afraid?
And is there no one who will lift the veil?"

As the small Shakespeare in his boyhood day
Dreamed with the wood, was brother to the wind,
Or with light footsteps by his fancy winged
Sped o'er the meadow following the ray —
So he, unnoticed at his childish play,
Gathered his seeds of love, a precious store,
Borne in the priceless casket of his mind
To lie unconscious till this later day.
These he, still reading deep of Nature's lore,
Transmutes to lovely words to bless mankind.

— *Margaret Given*

Of Bowdoinham



THE YOUTH OF ARTHUR STAPLES

BY HAROLD M. SEWALL

"Youth! Well, it comes and it goes, and leaves stranded on the shoals of time everything save two elements supreme—the spirit and the memories. Love endureth, and the spirit grows greater with the years. Time is—and very little else is. And youth recreates itself, and age passes out of the presence of the festival, and stands outside."—A. G. S., "*Jack in the Pulpit*."



T was easy for Arthur to write of us. It is not so easy for us to write of him. The master pen is his.

Arthur is of Bath, but not born here. Bowdoinham claims this honor, and there he passed his summers. In Bath and Bowdoinham he passed his youth, and his ancestors on both sides lived their lives.

In writing of one of his friends he takes a slant

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against genealogy: "I can never remember anything about grandfathers, never having had any to my knowledge."

How far we of the literary laity, must indulge Arthur in this rhetorical play I do not know, but we can not grant him more than fifty-fifty. For cut out of his life his maternal grandparents, Uncle Reuben and Aunt Philena, as they were affectionately called by the townspeople of Bowdoinham, and you cut out the figures to whom we are indebted above all for his pictures of the homely virtues of our people, which of all his manifold themes touch our hearts the more deeply.

To their daughter, Mary Gray, Arthur owes his middle name, and those gentle qualities of heart and soul which endear him to us. Only a mother can give these, and once given, only a mother's care can foster. And back of Reuben, Thankful, his mother, and back of Philena, Dorcas her mother, and Libbell the mother of Dorcas. Simple and God-fearing as their names.

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What a rosary has Arthur hung about these women and the women for whom they stand! "Mothers of mothers of mothers" of Maine! "Mothers of men! Mothers of churches! Mothers of human thoughtfulness! Mothers of the spirit of Christ! Why stand we here idle when the World calls?"

Arthur has been no more consulted about what we write, than we were, when he revealed "The Inner Man." So I have been bold enough to pursue this genealogical quest to his paternal side, selfishly, I confess, for I had heard that somehow we were related.

There were no more notable pioneers of Long Beach, which then comprised Bath and West Bath, than Jonathan Philbrook and Isaiah Crooker. Philbrook came here in 1742, and built the first vessel built within these limits on the point where the Post Office is and where the mansion of Governor King stood later. Crooker followed him in 1748. There were only a dozen farms here then which

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meant a dozen families, so these two formed a large part of the community, and owned disproportionately a larger part of the land. They were men who carried weight wherever they went, especially Crooker, who weighed 400 pounds. He was an ancestor in common, and he married Philbrook's daughter, Betsy, and then, through the Lunts, a highly esteemed family of Bath and Bowdoinham, Arthur's father, Anthony, was descended. He was a character in the community when I was a boy, quick at good-natured repartee, and equally at sharp retort. He was a red hot patriot, and Union man, and one of the first to enlist in the old 19th Maine, when Arthur was in his mother's arms. Perhaps it was an inherited instinct that led Arthur to be such a "Martial Figger" at Skowhegan. I have never known an Anthony who did not have this Anthony's characteristics, and none of them ever accumulated property. In fact, we recall

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that St. Anthony, born rich, gave away everything.

Fifty years, as life goes, is a long span among mere acquaintances. And for friends how rare? Death, and the mutability of so many things that make up life, cut friendships short. For fifty years and more Arthur and I have been friends, the friendship of a lifetime! When friendship lasts thus long, the relation reaches to a communal zone of feeling, and affection stronger and more sacred than many ties of blood, for it is of the heart itself!

We were small town boys together, though Bath was then a city. We lived on the same street, within a stone's throw of each other, walked to and from the same school, muckered at baseball in the same vacant lot (I never got any higher in the game, although Arthur came to be a baseball reporter, and an ardent fan). We loafed in the same corner grocery, from which the Boston papers for the north end were distributed, and when the hunker

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Democrat, its proprietor, had finished his free reading of the old *Boston Post*, and the other loafers around the stove broke up, we left too. But here our paths diverged. We went to our homes, I to prepare my next day's lessons, but Arthur never had to study, at least not at home. Six months younger than I, he was a year ahead at school. I never remember having seen him carry a text book home. Instead he used to take from the old Phi Rho library, of which he was librarian, the English classics. The first time I ever saw a copy of Fielding or Smollett was under his arm. And with these, and the Victorian novelists, he would pass his evenings reading. When the twilight began to lengthen he might be trailing the smell of a brush fire, listening to the frogs in the old frog pond, or haunting the wharves. Afterwards he would read, always lying flat on his stomach, his mother calling to him to sit up. Although he enlarged his range of reading later it is thus that he laid

the foundation of his style; a sort of process of absorption, with the ripe fruits of which we have been so richly rewarded. Stevenson had the same habit all his life. Once on a long boat trip, which he called our Odyssey, we circumnavigated the island of Tutuila, Samoa, when I was with him night and day, and had an opportunity to study his methods of work. With his early cigarettes and coffee he would do what required original thought, and devise his plots. After lunch, and for the rest of the day, he would turn to similar reading, and as I remember especially to Sir Thomas Browne. Here again we see the result in a style that has won for him a fame beyond the dreams of his then most ardent admirers. But Stevenson laboriously revised his manuscript, none more interlined than his. Arthur's goes to press as written, and written with extraordinary speed. With him it is all in the day's work.

At school Arthur was studious and respectful, so his teachers testify. With his comrades he

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was a bit serious beyond his years, and he had a right to be. He had to make his own way in the world. Others have to do so, and are not so serious, but that is because they have set no high goal before them, as Arthur did. What this goal was we did not know then. I have doubted if Arthur did. But in one of his talks, a bit of autobiography which he thinks is securely locked against identification, but to which I have found the key, he does write that in the High School he was advised by a teacher to become a newspaper editor. "The seed was implanted then and there. Horace Greeley was nowhere in comparison with my ideals." From then on, he never had any idea of being anything else. He also records that the first book that ever suggested a desire to write anything was Washington Irving's "Sketch Book," and "Knickerbocker's History of New York," and then, in swift succession "Roughing It," and "Innocents Abroad." He refers to a series of books on English literary

men, and to James T. Fields' "Reminiscences of Authors."

There is a difference between being serious, and taking one's self seriously. The one is a matter of private concern, the other very apt to be obnoxious to others. I once asked a governor of Maine how he liked his job, and he replied: "It is all right, if you do not take yourself too seriously." Arthur never did that. There is no form of human vanity that the newspaper man enjoys puncturing more than the habit of taking one's self too seriously. "You are not the whole business, unless the business can do very nicely in your absence," writes Arthur. Personally, I have felt he never took himself seriously enough. If he had, and realized his power as a newspaper proprietor, and had chosen to use that power selfishly, instead of for the advancement of his profession, he might have been governor of Maine. He might have been, anyway, had he said the word. He may be yet. He would make a great

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governor. True, he has the soul of a poet, but Enoch Lincoln was a poet, and Arthur is no dreamer in his discussion of every-day issues. For him there is an issue that will not down day or night, and that is the development of Maine, by every means within the power of the people of Maine to apply. He knows Maine physically, as he knows her people.

Nor is he a dreamer in politics. He believes in practical politics to the extent that he loathes hypocrites who masquerade in the name of reform. He has put his paper behind every honest movement to remedy evils. But he has denounced the professional reformer, and the demagogue who rants of his devotion to the common people. "I hate to say it: but most of the reformers who are concerned only in the common people are not more interested in them than some others who do not protest so much. We 'common people' resent the classification. We don't want anyone going about with a bleeding heart on our account. We want

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a square deal, fair play, justice, opportunity, reasonable seclusion from governmental interference, a chance to work, a chance to sleep, a chance to pray, and a chance to play."

Besides a suggestion of seriousness, Arthur had at school a small streak of sensitiveness, that I never noticed, but which he has later acknowledged. Such sensitiveness is a part of a fine-grained make-up. It served to develop in Arthur a consideration for others, that was innately his. "Put yourself in the other fellow's place," was the golden rule of his newspaper reporting, and today the policy of his paper.

¶ He has, I believe, been the confidant of more men and women in sore perplexity, than any other man in Maine. There, in his little workshop, bending over his typewriter, with an ever insistent call for copy from the devouring presses, often trying to get a little ahead in order that he might take a well-earned holiday, he has never denied access to those who would unload upon him their troubles. Always

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patient and sympathetic, he has listened and given counsel. What sore spots he has healed! What news which would have provided his paper with sensations has he suppressed! What family skeletons has he pushed back into the closet to save broken hearts! And ever in the discussion of public questions, this consideration has dulled the point of a trenchant pen, not once steeped in malice.

Do not think I transgress my subject; the youth of Arthur Staples projects itself at every point into the present.

How he ever builds around the scenes of his youth   •••••

From his home in Bath he looked straight down on the shipyard, the river and the Woolwich shores beyond. When he writes of living by rivers, listening to the lapping of the waves, swimming in the docks, and the ships getting under weigh, to the singing of chanteys, who can fail to recognize Bath, as unmistakably as Portsmouth is revealed in Aldrich's "Story of

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a Bad Boy," and Binney Wallace drifting out to sea? And "Capping the Main Truck," of course, this is Bath. And do believe me, in all the outpouring of books on the old sailing ships, from the time of Clark Russell, there is nothing finer than this:

"Fairly piercing the skies, lifted the taper-like masts, swaying in the winds, rocking to the waves, over the dark, swift-running tide of the cruel deck below, littered with its machinery, and pierced by its open hatches." ❧

"My Aunt's Millinery Shop" and "T. Tyler, Tailor," still stand in Bowdoinham. Some members of the old brass band are met on the streets. The smell of the lilacs is as strong, the clover grows as high, the sweep of the fields and pastures is the same, and the willow still brushes against the window panes.

But the old brick oven has been walled up, the chimney corner is deserted, and the "Old Ladies with sweet Faces" are gone to receive their eternal beatification!

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Whether or not the goal he aimed at was in his mind at school, it would have been a cruel fate, indeed, that had cramped his destiny by keeping him from college. But that fate was close at his heels when he went there, and followed him through his entire course. But he carried on.

He records how he was helped to go to college without any capitulation of his self-respect. All a friend did was to give him a lift when he needed it. The friend "lost nothing, I gained everything. I taught school and carried my meals in my pocket to and from college, and never noticed that it was observed by anyone, or if it were, it operated to no personal discomfort or loss of friends. It taught me the value of money, and the value of thoughtfulness towards boys." What Pattangall once wrote of John Ballou was true of Arthur then, and has been true ever since. He held himself independent, "never coming under obligation to his wealthy friends, as he might easily have

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done, had he cared to do so," and "catered not to the powerful, nor failed to extend perfect courtesy to the most humble." In fact, in that only bit of autobiography to which Arthur confesses, he writes: "I have had more fun than riches, and would not swap. I have come to know people for what they are, and have no regard, I believe, for the standing or the wealth of any man—like better the men of the shop and the street than any other."

At college, as at school, he was studious, and outside of his prescribed work, continued his high range of reading. In his sophomore year, he underwent what began as a dismal experience, but with his capacity for enjoyment of human kind, proved a pleasant diversion. He taught the district school in the town of Bowdoin. His brother, who drove him over to the house where he was to board out, says he was a sorry and dejected sight. Arthur thus depicts himself, sixteen years old, "weight 102, flat, size immaterial." But he got along with the

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side whiskered big boys, and, needless to say to those of us who know him, with the girls, ranging from "a red cheeked Hebe," who weighed 192 pounds, to "pupilettes in pantallettes,"

By this time Arthur had his feet placed among his fellow students, was made a member of the D. K. E., and later elected managing editor of the *Bowdoin Orient*, a high honor. The files of the paper that year shows that students were thinking of the same things as now, sports, the merits and demerits of the faculty, etc. Of the few serious literary contributions, it is easy to mark those on Thoreau and Whitman as Arthur's, for they are the exemplars of life in the open, as Arthur is.

From college it was natural, since he tells us now he had chosen the goal of journalism, to come to his local paper. He had distinguished predecessors, the late Judge William L. Putnam and Edward P. Mitchell, both Bath boys, and Bowdoin graduates, Mitchell, so long the

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brilliant figure in New York journalism, indeed of the journalism of America. Trained by Charles A. Dana, long before Dana's death he did much of the work attributed to Dana, and later maintained for the editorial columns of the *Sun* the distinction of being the editorials to which college men first turned, and all others with a discriminating sense between the commonplace and individuality and strength, clothed in the perfect diction of a classicist.

¶ Oddly enough, Mitchell went from the *Bath Times* to the *Lewiston Journal*, whither Arthur was to follow him ten years later. Had Arthur followed him further to any of the metropolitan journals, which now solicit his contributions, his fame would have been extended, and with it his emoluments. But Maine would have lost Arthur, and Arthur would have lost Maine. That would be harder for him than to lose a vital part of his anatomy.

Arthur has never written an autobiography, and never will. He is too modest to think of

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that, as the slightest consequence to anybody. The only article of this nature to which he confesses appeared the other day, telling how, forty-three years ago, he first came to the *Lewiston Journal*, "the one live newspaper in Maine, had a city editor, a society editor, a city hall reporter, a baseball reporter, a prize-fight reporter, and a specialist on weddings. I was it."

¶ But as a matter of fact, no artist ever transferred his impressions to canvas more truthfully, than Arthur has revealed in "Inner Man" to us. His work has been so honest that it has been impossible for him to conceal, if he would, the very workings of his soul.

To estimate in words the privilege of sharing Arthur's intimacy, may well give one pause. On my part it shall not be broken.

But do we realize what beneficiaries he has made us, merely as members of human society? Few of us can appraise the work of one who is a peer in the profession of writing. I take refuge in what Arthur writes of Mitchell,

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and if this offends Arthur's modesty, let it stand for praise of Mitchell. "He has laughed more trouble out of the day's work than ten billion years of philippics could have done."

¶ It seems as if Arthur had found a voice for every noble emotion, and for a philosophy that is balm to every troubled soul, and to people of all years. He has written of children and for children, as we once thought only Eugene Field could do. Out of the memory of the struggles of his youth, he has sounded for youth the clarion notes of courage. He has endowed womanhood with a fresh halo. He has enshrined those of the simple virtues which have made our state what it is, so that we pay them a new and holy reverence. He has taught that righteous living is joyous living, if it is to be acceptable in the eye of the Creator of the "beauty of the world." And the doubters, he has bidden open their eyes to this beauty, and read their answer there—to go to the woods, always the trysting-place of God!

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He has charted us to civic virtues—to pride in our state and country. “Fairer than all others,” he has painted Maine, and rebuked those who sometimes half apologize for living here, here in a state whose history is of all states, the oldest and most aristocratic. And to our country he has given in the “Toast to the Flag” as noble an epic as any national crisis has ever evolved!

My task passes, but not Arthur’s youth! You have noticed how this youth continually projects itself. This is a mark of genius. Coleridge says this is genius—“Genius is the power of carrying the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood,” and this is what Arthur has done.

The fullness of youth has come upon him—at a time when men lose it.

I have seen him in years past, when he thought he was afflicted with every malady. But no more of such hallucinations—seriousness gone—sensitiveness gone, save as it still stimulates

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to service, and consideration for others. Serenity in its place. He has reached his goal! And reached it in a larger power for work, and the enjoyment of life which to him means adding to the enjoyment of others.

The glory of achievement is his, and we rejoice. But his ebullieny of spirit, the fountain spring of youth, this makes it hard for us of his years to repress our envy.

He has become within a few years one of the most sought for after-dinner speakers, this modest, at times almost bashful man. And the after-dinner speech is the most dreaded ordeal of famous orators. Any achievement in the art of letters we expected from Arthur, but not this. Yet I saw him the other night, at the State of Maine dinner in New York, score a triumph that put professionals to shame. No empyrean flights were his. But he kept the guests alternately convulsed with laughter, spell-bound at his eulogy of our State, and then moved to heart throbs by the pathos of his

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picture of the Maine grandmother, rocking and rocking on the kitchen's yellow floor, while the old willow brushed the window panes outside.

¶ He works harder than ever, is at his desk from early 'til late. Subjected to all kinds of interruptions, he has to solve on the spot the multifarious questions of his business organization. He has written one million words in his "Talks," and is adding to them every day. There are about seven hundred and fifty thousand words in the Bible—his average per day is between three thousand and four thousand words.

He gets tired, of course, "I am impressed with the error of those that work with the bodies alone," he writes. "How little they know of the utter weariness of the other half of the world, the desk-ridden toiler who sits hour by hour over the problems of the day!" But sleep—softly as the touch of an angel's wing he falls to sleep, to sleep unbroken as the babes, and on the morrow, full rejuvenation!

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He can carry his pack up the Spencer stream, trail his gun all day with the mighty hunters, and at night furnish the entire entertainment for the William Tell. This post is assigned to each member in turn, but every night is Arthur's; his comradeship breaks all bounds of age. I have seen him sitting up with my boys long after the elders have gone to bed, expounding to them the Marxian doctrine or the theory of Relativity, or telling them stories of Jim Withee, or of the camp. No gathering of statesmen at Augusta or a climb up Katahdin with governors is complete without him.

Youth! I call Arthur himself as the last witness. "My youth," he writes on a return to Bowdoin, "I do not count it dead, but living." And in testimony thereof, because his youth is genius, and his genius youth, he stands now doubly crowned with laurels at the hand of his Alma Mater!

"Youth recreates itself and age passes out of

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the presence of the festival, and stands outside."

Not so with the youth of Arthur Staples.

It passes not as age out of the festival.

It is the central figure of the festival.

It is the festival itself!





ARTHUR "GLENWOOD" STAPLES

BOWDOIN '82

BY KENNETH C. M. SILLS



THE difference between the old and the new journalism is that nowadays there is little personality in the modern newspaper, even on the editorial page. Too many journals of the day are medieval in their anonymity. A. G. S. brings to his paper a breath of the Renaissance, a precious individuality that refreshes and delights. One now associates the name of Staples with the *Lewiston Journal* as one does Mitchell and Dana with *The New York Sun*, Godkin with *The Nation*, Watterson with *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, Bowles with *The Springfield Republican*. In his hand the pen is a medium for the expression of per-

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sonality. And you not only get news in the *Journal*, but you get a philosophy of life.

Bowdoin College is proud that it had a share in the editorial as well as in the intellectual training of A. G. S. In his undergraduate days he was chairman of the college paper, *The Orient*, and tradition tells us that he early showed the journalistic traits associated with late hours. Like his great predecessor, Edward P. Mitchell, of *The Sun*, he came to Brunswick from Bath, Maine. About thirty men were in his class, that of 1882; among them were several who have since attained distinction. One, Edwin U. Curtis, practically alone and unaided, broke the police strike in Boston and made a president of the United States; another, William A. Moody, has been professor of mathematics all his life, and has made countless generations of freshmen tremble and as many later rise up to call him blessed for having inculcated proper intellectual habits; still another, George G. Weeks, speaker of the

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Maine House back in 1909, was one of the most high-minded men who have of late served the state of Maine; Charles H. Gilman, who was business manager of *The Orient* when A. G. S. was editor-in-chief, became one of the leading financiers of Maine. These men were among his friends and comrades in those formative years when a boy becomes a man. I can not help thinking that something of the strong personality which makes A. G. S. a real person is due to his early associates and training, grant, though we must, that the real impulse is in the inner man and is only brought to the surface by education. A. G. S. came to Bowdoin College hight Arthur Gray Staples; but, not liking his middle name, with its rather drab connotations, he changed it so that in the earliest catalogue Freshman Arthur Glenwood Staples appeared. He worked hard when he was in college, for he was a poor boy and had to make every cent count. It is interesting to know that the future inhabitant of Lewiston

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took for the subject of his commencement essay, "Irish Emancipation."

Since completing his course at Bowdoin A. G. S. has taken a deep interest in the official affairs of the college. He served for a while on the Alumni Council and has been since 1923 a member of the Board of Overseers, elected to both posts by his brother alumni. In 1919 his Alma Mater gave him the well-earned degree of Master of Arts, and in 1923 the higher degree of Doctor of Letters. Bates College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1921.

A. G. S., B.S., A.M., Litt.D., LL.D., is quite a collection of letters, almost as worthy of note as the little g's in which that late charming daughter of Maine took such pride when she subscribed herself Kate Douglas Wiggin Riggs. But the appendices to A. G. S. add little to his fame; one mentions them only to show that this prophet is not without honor in his own country. His college and the splen-

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did institution in his city have showered
degrees upon him because he represents those
qualities that the college of liberal arts delights
to draw forth from her sons, independence in
thinking, clarity in expression, culture
that is a real part of the man, cour-
age of conviction and charity;
in a word, a sound mind
and a warm heart.





ARTHUR G. STAPLES

BY LESLIE C. CORNISH

IT IS not four o'clock in the afternoon of a busy day in the editorial sanctum of a live evening newspaper. The paper has not gone to press. I am not sitting alone, playing the keys of my typewriter upon paper of just the regulation and never-varying size. Most of all, I am not a genius, either in perceiving or in portraying "The Inner Man" of my companions and friends. The conditions, therefore, which have produced a series of such marvelous essays as have graced the columns of the *Lewiston Journal* for the past few years are not present and the result must fall far short of what the subject of this sketch deserves.

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How much better he could do it himself. He has lived with himself so many years that nothing can be hidden and I would trust him to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But no price is large enough to tempt him. Therefore, I will take my camera and focus it upon the Inmost and Utmost man, in his way, within my acquaintance.

Were I to select one word with which to characterize him it would be originality, spelled with a capital O. This is one of the secrets of his success in the novel path which he has cleared for himself as a writer of essayettes. Many men who have this asset convert it into a liability by making it so designedly prominent in word and act and bearing as to become positively offensive. A. G. S. moves about, the quietest, simplest, most modest man in any gathering, attracting no undue attention, other than the frequent handclasp of admiring friends, seeking no front seat, content to stop and look and listen, and then he bears away

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with him the very essence of all that has transpired. He is original in his power of keen perception, his x-ray method of probing beneath the surface, and his remarkable power of intellectual and moral diagnosis. In his Foreword to the Inner Man he reveals the sweet charity of his nature in all his explorations where he says: "Perhaps the fault of the volume is that it has been written by one who has a peculiar joy in discovering the good rather than the ill that men and women have done or would do, while they are yet living. It may make him a poor critic, but it possibly has the compensating merit of discovery." This joyous power of discovering the best in other people is a talent all too rare.

Again our good friend is original in his power of expression, in his simple, clear-cut delineation of what his x-ray has revealed. It is a style all his own. No one need attempt to copy it. He has the right word for every thought. Usually it is a short, crisp Anglo-Saxon word

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that weighs a ton. He hits the nail on the head and the wood remains unscarred. If he wishes to touch a foible he does it with such deftness and tenderness that even the possessor must smile along with all other readers. There is no hint of bitterness or malice or meanness in all the portraits that he has painted. His praise has sometimes undoubtedly savored a bit of flattery, but the world can stand that in these days of probings and investigations, and scorings, and flayings, and, most of all, it is not distasteful to the flatteree.

Is it any wonder that A. G. S. has a legion of loving friends to whom he always comes as a ray of spring sunshine?

But his field of unique essays is not confined to character sketches of his friends. He travels far and wide in thought and sympathy, even though he does not stray far from home. He himself calls his books a collection of familiar essays the subjects of which are all next door to us. And so they are, but they awaited dis-

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covery by him. What delicious humor illuminates many of them, as he describes events which have a foundation of fact and a superstructure of lively imagination. Read his "Martial Figger," a ludicrous description of himself marching in a Knights Templar parade in Skowhegan on a hot summer day. I doubt if Emerson or Hawthorne ever pictured themselves in just such a light. Holmes would have enjoyed the act and might have attempted the description, but no one could have done it with a finer touch than A. G. S.

But best of all, I believe he loves to recall the associations of earlier days, rural scenes and the simple country life of four or five decades ago in our Maine villages, with their corner grocery, and post-office, and blacksmith shop, and millinery store, and the local characters for which each was noted, before the days when the telephone and rural delivery and the flivver began their leveling and standardizing process and sought to run us all through a

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common mold. In this field he has no superior, especially in the opinion of those of post-meridian age, who, sitting before the open fire of a winter's evening, can travel back along the same road with him, and for whom the winds of memory clear away the days that are gone and disclose similar scenes and characters. These sketches touch the heart, and the reader finds not infrequently a tear-drop on the page as he lays the open book upon his knee and thoughtfully gazes across the intervening years.

Throughout all his writings runs the golden thread of Mr. Staples' personality, the man himself, the Inner Man, and of his sweet and sane philosophy of life.

A lover of books, a keen student of nature and of human nature, possessing a rare sense of humor, a kindly sympathy and tolerance, honor of the highest type, a self-effacing modesty that puts others first, a wholesome outlook on life's problems, and a wise patience

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based on the firm belief that these problems will be worked out all in due time under the guidance of a divine Father, loyal, steadfast, true, this is A. G. S. as his friends, or, at least, as one of his friends, see him and know him. Maine is richer in the realities of life because he has never been tempted to other fields of work beyond our borders, but has devoted his entire life to the highest interests of the state where he was born and reared, and educated—the state which he loves with an abiding affection and which loves him in return.

My text shall come not first, as usual, but last, and in it perhaps may be found the key to much that I have said:

“Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart.”—*I Kings, 3: xii.*





ARTHUR G. STAPLES, *Editor*

BY WILLIAM R. PATTANGALL



HAVE not met with Arthur G. Staples often, nor have our interviews been long, and yet I know him intimately—I have been reading him for twenty years.

I know him as a writer. I know him as an editor. There may be phases of his being which I have not seen, but I do not think so. In twenty years a man who writes much exhibits every mood and tense and side and angle that he has, especially a man who writes with as little conscious effort as does Arthur Staples   •••

I like to say nice things about people. Somehow I have not that reputation, but I deserve it and I mean to acquire it. But when I say

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nice things about people I want them to be true. And I like to say as nice things as I can truthfully say about them when they can read what I say, rather than to wait and write sugar-coated obituaries after they have ceased to care what any of us say about them.

I am glad of this opportunity to speak in honest praise and admiration of Arthur Staples and of his work as a newspaper man. He deserves a whole lot of kind words, from those who know and ought to appreciate what that work involves. And yet I would not speak fulsomely of him. For one reason, if for no other, he would not wish me to do so.

There are times when the scope of his writings is narrowed by partisanship—the kind of partisanship that is expressed on election day by the voter who says, “If I put a cross over the word Democrat on my ballot I should expect my hand to become paralyzed.”

I do not mean by that quotation to suggest that all narrow partisanship is confined to

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Republicans. The quotation in reverse would apply to many Democratic voters. I put it as I do because, somehow, Republican partisanship offends my sense of civic righteousness more than does Democratic partisanship.

When Arthur Staples is at his best he is fair, truthful, analytical, clear-visioned, moved by high ideals and splendid inspiration, humanized by a touch of kindly, sometimes whimsical humor and animated by a spirit of practical common sense. All of which make his writings a delightful compound of everything that any writings could or should contain and reveal behind them a man and a nature at once as complex as creation and as simple as the clear sky or the open sea.

When at his worst he writes sophistries designed to lead his readers along the devious paths of misunderstanding to a point where they will find a ballot-box awaiting them in which to deposit a straight party ticket.

I enjoy reading him so much that I read him at

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his best, at his worst, and in all the intermediate stages. The fact is, at his worst he is better than most, and at even half-way to his best he is easily at the head of Maine writers of his time. He is without question the first newspaper man of our state and generation.

¶ To understand and appreciate him there are two or three things which one must postulate. He is human, very human, indeed; he loves mankind and he is intensely loyal to the state of Maine. He is a part, a big part, of the life of our state. For a good many years he has influenced it for good through the columns of his newspaper; for the past decade he has not only edited the *Lewiston Journal*, he has been the *Lewiston Journal*.

Most writers have one "line." They are either serious, argumentative, humorous or poetic. He is all of these and more. His versatility is marked, and yet there is no straining for effect, no apparent effort to be serious when he is serious, or humorous when he is humorous.

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The change from gravity to wit is just the natural change of mood that comes to all men and is most marked and most frequent in those possessing much imagination, which he has ☞ ☞

His "Just Talks," the sense of which appeals to many, the nonsense of which appeals, perhaps, to more, have revealed something of him to thousands of readers and very much more of him to the smaller number who read between the lines and get not only the letter of his writing but the spirit. Here and there are readers who do not appreciate "Just Talks." They are the type of people who want their literature manufactured by clean-shaven authors garbed in evening dress, and do not enjoy what is written by a man as he sits at his desk in his shirt-sleeves, smoking his pipe; but there are not many such in Maine, and Staples writes for Maine.

His editorials, even his partisan editorials, are worth reading. In private life he is not parti-

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san. His nature is omni-partisan. His sympathies are too broad, his vision too keen, not to see good in all men and in all classes and divisions of men, and faults in all of them, too; and his heart is too big not to swell with love for the good and throb with tenderness for the faults, wherever he sees either. But a Maine editor must be officially partisan or colorless, and he could not be colorless.

Arthur G. Staples, writer, editor, newspaperman, has made a success of life. To stand at the head of the class—that is the test. Not which class; not in which school. But in the class where one belongs. In the school which fate caused one to attend. To make good, to lead and have the right to lead. That is success. ~~so~~ Maine is the school which he attends. Newspaper making is the grade in which he is placed. And he leads that grade in that school.

¶ If his grade had been law or medicine or theology or farming or shoe-making he might have led it, like enough, because certain qual-

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ities make for success in any line of endeavor; but he would not have enjoyed his work as well. He was created a newspaper man. If he had matriculated at New York or California or Mississippi or Ohio he would have attained high honors, because a man who can come through in Maine can take blue ribbons anywhere; but he would not have lived as full a life as he has lived here, because he is a typical Maine man and that kind grow best in our soil and atmosphere.

He has made good. He is at the head of his class—and deserves to be there.





UNJUST STALKS
ON COMMON THEMES ON
“LITTLE ARTHUR”

BY WILLIAM T. GARDINER
AND BYRON BOYD



IF Harold had n't written it we would n't take much interest in Arthur's life history. We expect some good fortune in this world and, with gratitude, we accept Little Arthur, when, as and if he is. God sent him to us, and we suppose in the course of time God will take him back. But until then he is ours—to wonder and ponder over, a personality with whom to laugh and with whom to live.

Arthur often talks as if he were the Archimedes who discovered the fulcrum for uplift. That may be so, and the funny part of it is that in a

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way it is partly so, the little cuss is quite an uplifter. But look at the friends he has. The only explanation is in Arthur's humanity. Humanity of humanities, all is humanity! As a matter of fact Arthur does n't suspect that he is any better than anybody else, and nobody would admit that he is—he just happens to be a little more articulate about it than some, and the divine spark that he can discern in every breast is fanned to a glow in his own.

It is of no more use for us to attempt to record our concept of Arthur's mental storehouse than to define infinity. It leaves us cold. Like Bacon, he seems to have taken all knowledge for his province, like Shakespeare, he seems to possess that power of projection into the unrecorded provinces of the souls of men and women, real or imaginary, of history, of the present or of the future. He is a rambling writer, but does not often ramble. He must have used up a yard full of pulp wood and his product is rather scattered. Luckily he has an

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assistant paper baler now who grabs some of the stuff and preserves it for us. Anonymity has sometimes helped his reputation. There is nothing quite like a smoothly written party platform, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, at critical political moments. Many a hall has reverberated to one of Arthur's vicarious speeches. Not that he is unduly self-effactive—just accommodating and helpful. And he has talked somewhat on his own account, yes, broadcasted and all. Probably the easiest man to listen to in the state of Maine, no egotism, no circus barking, no flattery and no condescension. Compare him with other speakers and it is like the change from kerosene to electricity—press the button and he lights up and glows.

No use mentioning literary style. There she stands. In grand old New England he has no peer   •••

There has been a lot of loose talk by chief justices, college presidents, national com-

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mitteemen and such, about Arthur always seeing the best side in everybody. We would like to explain that a little, because we think that posterity might get a wrong notion. There is no trick about his vision, he wears no blinders, in fact he has nothing whatever to do with it, subjectively. It just happens that when Arthur is around everybody naturally reveals their true and noble self. Why even we have caught ourselves expressing noble sentiments to him. The mask is dropped, the harsh exterior crumpled, the guard lowered; there is no defence against the defenceless, no front against the frontless. We think that all this has something to do with friendship. If any one is known well there is undoubtedly something to love. The friendship strikes mighty quick with our little Arthur. The fact of the matter is that he has never been anywhere when he was not among friends. He is the tin one on wheels among the lares and penates, he can't move very far without bumping into an old

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friend, and he no sooner gets among strangers than he is among new friends, and that is all there is about it. You and we, all of us, have made Arthur what he is, Arthur would not deny it, we know it, and we like to be frank. If we have built better than we knew, why so much the better.

We guess that little Arthur is one of the truest and finest specimens of manhood and loyalty, put up in small packages as most of them are, that can be presented in the state of Maine at the present time. For us amateurs the hard part about writing is that there is a natural tendency to idealize, to break into superlatives, to mount to a maudlin ecstasy. We like Arthur, we're d——d if we don't, that's all. He is a pretty good feller to sit around with (Win Cram is the only competitor as a story teller); and yet he's more than that somehow, and without pretension or obtrusion to break the simple spell of equal fellowship.



AN APPRECIATION AND A JUST TALK

BY GEORGE C. WING, JR.

IN THAT delightful volume, *Contemporary Portraits*, second series, by Frank Harris, is found a most pleasing chapter, "Shaw's Portrait, by Shaw," or, "How Frank Ought to Have Done It." As a constant and devoted reader of the "Just Talks" column and the contemporary portraits therein occasionally set forth, I have been led to wonder how A. G. S. would do a pen portrait of A. G. S. Like George Bernard Shaw, who made free with the talented author of the Oscar Wilde biography, it seems to me that A. G. S. should offer his readers Arthur G. Staples's portrait, by Arthur G. Staples. But he, being very

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retiring, as well as modest, thus far in this detail has made default, and to a public I trust interested, I offer A. G. S.'s portrait, by A. G. S., or How Arthur Ought to Do It.

UP and down the highways of the world, sometimes on foot, sometimes in ocean liners or river steamers, and sometimes in express trains, in motor cars or in buggies, with those in high places and who exercise authority, with those whose lives are ordered in homespun, Arthur G. Staples has journeyed these many years, a friend to all the world.

¶ Small of stature, but big of mind and heart, he has observed the deeds of men and unconsciously become one with their hopes, their aspirations, their ambitions, their frailties, their loves and their passions, until he filled and overflowed and from his pen fell a record of the years of contact with all that has moved and made our social and political life. Like Ernest, in the *Story of the Great Stone Face*,

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it has never occurred to him that of him The Folks would like to know. He is too modest. That was a failing of Ernest, in the far off valley of the story, but at last the people found him and claimed him. So, too, with A. G. S. Those who desire the hills and know the fair prospects from their summits, those who follow the gentle art of angling for fish in sparkling brooks, those who follow in a canoe, down the swift, quick waters of a forest-fringed river, those who love the mellow autumn and the alluring spring, the snows of winter and the ways of summer, those who read o' nights old tales of the loves of men and women and of their brave deeds and many faults, those who crave always the society of books, those who sit in darkness, mourning for the voice that is still, those whose ambitions lead them to political intrigues, all claim him as theirs, and wherever a drop of Maine blood flows his "Just Talks" have made men and women rise and call him blessed. As a neighbor and

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citizen he is human and eager for public advancement and progress. Alert in mind, he has sympathy for the new and untried. Studious in habits he brings to the present the experience of the past. Unsuspected of religion, he shows the delights of the Bible to our modern thought and motorized civilization and makes us children again at our mother's knees. His failings, too, are human. He smokes cigarettes and throws his ashes on the floor, but, unlike a distinguished friend of his, he never loses his hat. In keeping his hat, and thus his temper, it may seem to some that he fails in coming out the door wherein he went, but the morrow shows the truth and the morrow is always a new day, with much of labor and of toil to do.

Thus do I give you A. G. S., the man and the friend, the worker and the thinker, the reader and the writer, the editor and the observer, the believer and the doer. Scorn touches him not, neither does envy make him sour, but gentle

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and sweet and kind he travels the road where-
on passes the great affairs and commerce of
the mystery we call life, and he, finding it all
good, makes it better and richer for us, who, on
the same highway, travel to the common end.

Some time, some one ought to write of
his wife, for I suspect she is respon-
sible for most of him, but that
is another story, and I
am a bachelor





A. G. S.—AT CLOSE RANGE

BY CHARLES S. HICHBORN

. . . . . May he live
Longer than I have time to tell his years !
Ever beloved and loving . . . . .
And when old Time shall lead him to his end,
Goodness and he fill up one monument.



O record, if in simple fashion,
my keen appreciation of
Arthur G. Staples, is a genu-
ine pleasure: made doubly
joyous, in this instance, be-
cause it permits me to speak
while yet he lives to feel and know the warmth
of my affection.

Arthur is unique!
He is a "Character:"
There is none other like him.
He is *sui generis*.
God bless him!

ARTHUR G. STAPLES

I picture him not as *he* thinks he is—because he is too modest.

I show him as others know him, and as he really *is*.

He is quiet and undemonstrative, but he toils unceasingly.

His brain is a veritable workshop.

His kindliness is contagious.

He views life from the hill-top: the sunshine plays about his feet.

He understands the seen: he portrays the unseen.

He separates the wheat from the chaff with a wand of magic.

His commendation is an uplift: his condemnation has no sting, but it is death.

His sarcasm is a rapier.

His wit is a flash of lightning.

He believes in the might of Right.

He hates fraud: he loves truth.

He encourages righteous living: he is intolerant of evil.

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He enjoys life for its opportunities: he bears
the ills of the unfortunate.

He withholds not his sympathy: he covets not
another's gain.

He wipes away tears: he begets smiles.

He uproots thorns: he scatters roses.

He gathers strength from the hills.

He sees God in the dew-drop: he walks with
Him in the untrod forest.

He clothes the common things of life with
beauty and turns the daily grind into a song
of gladness.

His charity never faileth: he vaunteth not
himself—is not puffed up.

His writings have been an inspiration to
thousands.

They have no equal in contemporary litera-
ture.

He has touched the heart of humanity.

He has found the soul of Man.

He has made the world his debtor.

Gentle in manner, simple in taste, forbearing,

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forgiving, forgetting, he goes his way with faith and courage—a valiant soldier of the King of kings.

Delightful companion, charming conversationalist, brilliant essayist, successful journalist, faithful friend, I like to think of him as one great leader thought of Mr. Roosevelt—whom *he*, also, loved and followed—when he spoke of

“That gallantry of spirit which neither adversity nor prosperity could blunt or soften, which neither success nor failure could weaken or destroy, which carried the zest of living, the humor of life, and the love of all living things, into the daily business of what he well called the greatest of all sports, aggressive fighting for the right.”

This is A. G. S. as the People know him.
This is the man I love.



ARTHUR G. STAPLES

BY PERCIVAL P. BAXTER



HERE is no field in which a man's talents can be put to nobler use, or in which he can render greater service to his fellows, than that of journalism. The ownership of a modern newspaper involves more than a mere business venture—it carries with it the obligation of leadership.

In a community such as ours, a fearless newspaper guided by a clear head and a strong hand is an asset for righteousness, the importance of which can not be overvalued.

The Lewiston *Evening Journal*, under the kindly yet forceful management of Arthur G. Staples, exercises an influence for good throughout central Maine, and seeds of adherence to principle and loyalty to country

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scattered by it broadcast have borne good fruit far beyond the borders of our state.

The *Journal* is *Arthur G. Staples*, and he is the *Journal*. They are one and inseparable. He has stamped his personality upon its every column. Whether he writes approvingly of men or measures, or analyzes them critically, pointing out their weaknesses and foibles as he sees them, he is genuine.

His praise is not fulsome, nor his criticism bitter. His sense of humor prevents him from taking trivial things or differences of opinion too seriously.

As a young legislator I knew "Arthur" just twenty years ago. Modest in my demeanor and reluctant to speak in public, there was no reason why I should have been particularly noticed by him. I do recall, however, that, from the first, he was considerate and helpful, and certainly no publication in Maine has been as generous as his in alloting its space to a discussion of the principles for which I long have

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stood. This has been unusually helpful to me, because without adequate newspaper publicity a public man is seriously handicapped, and to successfully advance his views it is necessary that they be widely disseminated.

I forever shall be grateful for the fair, courteous and generous treatment that Arthur G. Staples and his associates have accorded to me.

¶ He and I have not always agreed on public matters. That is a test of friendship. Both have recognized the right of honest differences of opinion, and neither has allowed anything to interfere with our mutually warm personal relations.

On his too infrequent visits to my office he never fails to leave with me a message that helps. In one way or other he brings me a note of inspiration: something that lingers after he has gone, and makes easier and pleasanter the next piece of work undertaken.

All over Maine people love him. In my travels about the state he is constantly spoken of by

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ARTHUR G. STAPLES

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persons in all walks of life. No man is better or more widely known than he, and those who never have come in personal contact with him know him through his writings. His position is unique.

I regard Arthur G. Staples as one of my warmest friends, as one of the state's most useful and interesting citizens, and as one who can do as much as, and, probably, a little more than, any other newspaper man in Maine to aid our people in steering a straight course ahead and in avoiding the pitfalls of ignorance and error.

The state of Maine is a better place in which to live because he is living and working here with us.

As governor I extend to him the most expressive greetings known to the Oriental: "May he live a thousand years."

Percival P. Baxter,
Governor of Maine

Augusta, Maine,
May 7, 1924.

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