

**IN THE ARENA:
STORIES OF
POLITICAL LIFE**

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In the Arena: Stories of Political Life by Booth Tarkington

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BOOTH TARKINGTON

**IN THE ARENA:
STORIES OF
POLITICAL LIFE**





THE CONVERSION OF THE SENATOR FROM STACKPOLE

**IN THE
A R E N A**

**Stories
of Political
Life**

**BOOTH
TARKINGTON**



ILLUSTRATED BY A. J. KELLER, POWER
O'MALLEY AND J. J. GOULD

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
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1912

*Gift of the
Lodge Family
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“IN THE FIRST PLACE”

The old-timer, a lean, retired pantaloon, sitting with loosely slippers feet close to the fire, thus gave of his wisdom to the questioning student:

“Looking back upon it all, what we most need ‘in politics’ is more good men. Thousands of good men ARE in; and they need the others who are not in. More would come if they knew how MUCH they are needed. The dilettantes of the clubs who have so easily abused me, for instance, all my life, for being a ward-worker, these and those other reformers who write papers about national corruption when they don’t know how their own wards are swung, probably aren’t so useful as they might be. The exquisite who says that politics is ‘too dirty a business for a gentleman to meddle with’ is like the woman who lived in the parlour and complained

"IN THE FIRST PLACE"

that the rest of her family kept the other rooms so dirty that she never went into them.

"There are many thousands of young men belonging to what is for some reason called the 'best class,' who would like to be 'in politics' if they could begin high enough up — as ambassadors, for instance. That is, they would like the country to do something for them, though they wouldn't put it that way. A young man of this sort doesn't know how much he'd miss if his wishes were gratified. For my part, I'd hate not to have begun at the beginning of the game.

"I speak of it as a game," the old gentleman went on, "and in some ways it is. That's where the fun of it comes in. Yet, there are times when it looks to me more like a series of combats, hand-to-hand fights for life, and fierce struggles between men and strange powers. You buy your newspaper and that's your ticket to the amphitheatre. But the distance is hazy and far; there are clouds of dust and you can't see clearly. To make out just what is going on you ought to get down in the arena yourself. Once you're in it, the view