

Lord Chamberlain. But, as the play went on, her mood changed; her attention was fixed, and then she laughed no more. Yet she was puzzled; it seemed a strange, a horrible business. What did Lord M. think? Lord M. thought it was a very fine play, but to be sure, "a rough coarse play, written for those times, with exaggerated characters." "I'm glad you've seen it," he added. But, undoubtedly, the evenings which she enjoyed most were those on which there was dancing. She was always ready enough to seize any excuse—the ar-

rival of cousins—a birthday—a gathering of young people—to give the command for that. Then, when the band played and the figures of the dancers swayed to the music, and she felt her own figure swaying too, with youthful spirits so close on every side,—then her happiness reached its height, her eyes sparkled, she must go on and on into the small hours of the morning. For a moment Lord M. himself was forgotten.

LYTTON STRACHEY.

(To be continued)

Mr. Harding's News Service

PRESIDENT HARDING has not yet discovered, I suspect, since he came into the White House, that the most important commodity or service for him to have is a constant and continuous supply of fresh, uncolored, authentic news. Yet deprived of it he cannot move confidently in any direction.

It is an ascertained and proved fact that precious few men can carry a plain tale straightly. It requires experience and training, a certain inherent lust and fervor for truth, and not only clearness, but a stiff integrity of mind. These are not commonplace attributes and qualities. On the contrary, anyone who has had any experience in handling the news knows they are extremely rare.

Because Mr. Harding has been a newspaper man I can fittingly compare him at this stage of his progress to a greatly magnified managing editor facing as troublous, turgid, perplexing and clouded a news situation as has confronted any President since Lincoln. What is the news at home and abroad?

Presidents hear plenty of news. They have many sources of information, sometimes too many. Their difficulty is not with the quantity of supply, but its quality. They are the greatest victims of propaganda and evasions, unless they are extraordinarily careful and alert and discriminating. Men who have access to Presidents and who dare tell them the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth become notable figures at Washington. Mr. Harding must beware of colored and biased news, informants with axes to grind, or with prejudiced and cloudy minds.

From time to time you may have seen in some alert and enterprising newspaper the scene of a wreck, or a robbery or some other incident of the day's news susceptible to graphic treatment, "drawn

from telegraphic description." It is a most uncertain and hazardous method of portraiture. Too much of the news that comes to a President is like that. It is disjointed and fragmentary and has to be pieced together. The sources are not always above reproach.

How does the President of the United States get the news? How does he manage to find out and hear what is going on in the world? Who brings him the "inside story," the realistic, intimate, straight account of events and basic popular opinion that directly affect policy at home and abroad? He lives in the White House, hedged by dignity, and necessarily protected from intrusions on his time and his work. Yet he must know better and earlier than most what the world is doing and thinking and planning. The White House must have a news service as comprehensive as the range of our national interests, and absolutely trustworthy. Every President faces the need of it from the day he is elected.

Mr. Harding I suspect of having been a newspaper publisher rather than a newspaper editor—two entirely distinct species. He is not much of a newspaper reader. This was noted of him at Marion during the campaign when his habits and qualities first became a matter of public concern and interest. He does not seem to have the eager, acquisitive, reaching-out mind that lusts for news.

Here at Washington, so far as one can discover before Mr. Harding's daily walk has become a familiar and known routine, he gives a few minutes after breakfast to a cigarette and a brief reading of Mr. McLean's local morning newspaper. Then he comes over to the executive offices where he presently finds upon his desk some of the New York and other eastern newspapers. Doubt whether the President reads them is based upon the ease and the regularity with which these jour-

nals are "borrowed" by some of the secretarial entourage almost as soon as they come in. They would hardly be taken away from Mr. Harding's desk so promptly if he wanted them. It must be said that as the President arranges his mornings these days he does not allow any time for newspaper reading. No arrangement has been made yet, I believe, for any summary or précis of the daily papers to be prepared for Mr. Harding. This was done for Mr. Wilson.

This apparent aloofness from more than a passive interest in the current daily record of events, this static and incurious attitude is a singular and exceptional and interesting trait in a politician. Most of them are eager and inveterate and insatiate newspaper readers. But Mr. Harding seems to be as cool toward them as Mr. Taft was to the home or domestic life of she-wolves. Mr. Roosevelt was always trying to interest Mr. Taft in the birds and beasts of the fields. I remember one day when Mr. Taft made plaintive protest. It was in Mr. Roosevelt's office. "I don't want you to send me any more such books as you sent me the other day. I read it because you asked me to and it took me nearly all night. What do I care about dog-wolves, and whether they help she-wolves in procuring food for their young? I don't think I ever saw a wolf, and, certainly, I am not interested in their domestic affairs."

It would seem that Mr. Harding, unlike Mr. Roosevelt and like Mr. Taft, has not an eager searching, curious, restless mind that, in the New England phrase "wants to know." He will have to acquire it, or have somebody about him who has it, for he cannot get along without a news service.

Mr. Roosevelt had an extraordinary news service. He always knew what was going on at home and abroad. He received a great variety and an unheard of number of persons at the White House, questioned them, remembered what they said, sifted the content, checked one against the other until he had a clear, trustworthy picture. When it was quickly learned that he was receptive to news and news informants, people came to him in shoals.

Virtually everybody likes to spread the news, and to be able to tell the President something he doesn't know is a lure I have never seen anybody able to resist. These personal tale-bearers to Mr. Roosevelt were supplemented by his staggering array of correspondents not only at home but abroad. His letters published since his death have exhibited the variety and number of his contacts. I doubt whether any President ever had so

good a news service. Mr. Roosevelt knew its value, too, and used it to the utmost.

Mr. Taft, on the other hand, had an inadequate, and, I suspect in many particulars, an untrustworthy private news service. He paid the penalty for it.

About Mr. Wilson's news service there has always been in Washington the greatest diversity of opinion. Nobody seemed to know where and how and from whom he got his news. It was always a lively topic of discussion and argument. Until the early autumn of 1918, at least, he always seemed to know a little better and a little sooner than anybody else what the country was thinking, what was going on down close to the grass roots. But where he got his news while the dew of freshness was still on it nobody could tell, though there were many surmises.

Colonel House was always assumed to be the chief source of his foreign news. If he had other news channels abroad they were successfully kept under cover. But in the end Mr. Wilson's news service, both at home and abroad, broke down completely. That accounted for many things.

It is too early to be certain about such things, but if I had to make a guess, I should venture to say with some confidence that Mr. Harding's chief informants or news sources on domestic affairs at this time are his old friend Crissinger, from Marion, now Comptroller of the Currency; Secretary Fall, of the Interior Department; Senator Cummins, of Iowa, and perhaps Harry Daugherty, the Attorney General. There may be others, but I suspect that those I have named are "closer" than, for example, the familiar golfing trio, Senators Hale, Elkins and Frelinghuysen, whose names are printed so frequently in connection with the President's. This is only a surmise but it has a basis of information for belief.

One of the chief persons to whom Mr. Harding is indebted for news from Europe is Senator Medill McCormick, of Illinois. He was a newspaper man and a reporter before he was a Senator. He knows news and how to get it and sift it. He knows Europe and the chief figures who, at this juncture, manage its affairs. He speaks French; that may seem a trivial detail, but it is not.

After Mr. Harding was elected, Senator McCormick went abroad and visited England, France, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Italy, and Belgium. He saw and talked with most of the men who really matter in those countries. Then he came home and told Mr. Harding what he had heard and seen.

Now that M. Viviani has come to these shores

to tell the President about France and the European condition, Mr. McCormick's budget of news and views has proved most useful. It gave Mr. Harding a background against which to place and contrast what Viviani told him.

Everybody who comes to the President to favor or oppose any proposal of national concern is naturally prejudiced and has taken sides. Mr. Harding must find disinterested, competent men of absolute integrity of mind who will tell him the facts and the truth. He will go forward or blunder as he succeeds or fails in establishing such a private news service. For he, more than any of us, must have the news.

EDWARD G. LOWRY.

The Advent of Mr. Austen Chamberlain

A CHANGE of atmosphere in politics, as in war, can be sensed before the events of which it is a sign. Morally, the strategical situation in Europe was transformed long before the American armies began to land and the troops who came exerted a much greater moral effect than their mere numbers justified. Here in the political field in England the sensitive mind detects already the moral change wrought by the disappearance of Mr. Bonar Law and the emergence of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, chosen at the Carlton Club to be leader of the Unionist party in the House of Commons. The faithful followers of the Coalition declare there is no change, for if there be a change it is certainly the Coalition that will suffer, and they are like the Germans who would not admit that the arrival of the United States in the war meant any change in fortune, since it could mean no change but what must injure them.

On the surface the substitution of Mr. Chamberlain for Mr. Law should mean no difference to the fortunes of the Coalition and his chief. Mr. Chamberlain, in accepting his new post, accepted also the Coalition; he spoke gravely of the un-wisdom of thinking too much of party and too little of the state, and he appealed for the "broader view" in the very vein of Mr. George himself when he addresses Liberals. Mr. Chamberlain, then, is a Coalitionist like Mr. Law and he resembles him in some important personal qualities. Mr. Law was an honest and straightforward man and so is Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain has a reputation for staunchness and loyalty, just as had Mr. Law. If Mr. Law has consented to trim his coalition sails, to surrender a little of his principles now

here and now there in the give-and-take which makes up Coalition politics, Mr. Chamberlain has at all events followed his leader without any gesture of protest or rebellion that met the public eye. But then *ex hypothesi* Mr. Chamberlain is a very loyal man. And it is strange, but though the Daily Chronicle and other tame Coalitionists are proving to demonstration that the situation is not changed, everyone is aware of a deep and general conviction that it is changed, and profoundly changed, and that the Coalition and above all Mr. Lloyd George are the sufferers of the change.

The qualities most indispensable to coalitions are pliability among the leaders and obedience among the rank and file. Mr. Law and Mr. George have worked admirably well together. Mr. Law's is a gentle, amiable character, apt to be worked on by the suppleness and personal charm of our Prime Minister. Mr. Law was not clever but he was adaptable. Mr. Chamberlain is not clever either—everyone is agreed about that—but he is not, on all present showing, supple, pliable or adaptable. He is, by comparison with Mr. Law, angular and unbending. It is difficult to conceive of his "doing a trade" with Mr. George in the way that Mr. Law has done. Mr. Law has pitched Unionism overboard and consented to a Parliament for southern Ireland, while stipulating for separate Home Rule for Ulster; he insisted in 1919-20 on an anti-dumping and key-industries bill being brought into the House of Commons and then leaves it, to be quietly thrust away, *Spurlos versenkt*, because the Coalition Liberals would not have it.

As a follower Mr. Chamberlain accepted these traffickings with principle from his leader, Mr. Law, for he has a high sense of discipline and party loyalty. It does not follow that as a leader he will traffic equally himself. Almost every one believes that in practice he will prove himself much harder metal, and that the day of easy bargaining is gone. That is the reason why the Morning Post, which has long been girding against Mr. Law, is very well satisfied with his successor. The Morning Post wanted the full Conservative policy—protection, the complete ostracism of Russia, and the iron hand wherever an opening can be found for iron hands, as in Ireland, India, Egypt, Germany. Most of the Unionists are probably at heart in favor of this policy, but they have given way to the belief that only by Coalition with its makeshifts and compromises can Labor be kept out of office. Some of them, however, like the Morning Post, believe that the Unionist party can now stand on its own legs and hold the field against the warring factions of a broken Liberalism and against Labor,