

THE PRESIDENT

BY ALFRED HENRY LEWIS

The Sunday Call has secured the serial rights of Alfred Henry Lewis' great novel of modern politics, "The President," and to-day gives its readers the second installment of what is conceded to be the best and strongest work of this brilliant, trenchant writer, already well known in the author of "Wolfville Days" and "The Boss." "The President" will appear in weekly installments in the Sunday Call until completed.

CHAPTER III

How Mr. Gwynn Dined With the Harleys.

ANY man who says that he is a gentleman is not a gentleman. A gentleman no more tells you that he is a gentleman than a brave man tells you he is brave. Gentility is a quality which the possessor never seeks to establish as his own by word of mouth; he leaves it to inference and the rule has no exception. This brilliant speechlessness arises not through modesty, but ignorance. However clearly gentility reveals itself to others, he who possesses it has no more knowledge on that faultless point than have your hills of the yellow gold they hold within their breasts.

Storri was one who went far and frequently out of his conversational way to assure you that he was a gentleman. Though he did no more than just recount how he gave his seat to a woman in a car, or passed the salt at dinner, or made a morning call, somewhere in the narrative you were sure to hear that he was "a gentleman" or "a Russian gentleman" or commonly the latter; and he always accompanied the news with a straightening of his heavy shoulders and a threatening pull at his mustache as though he expected to find his word disputed and planned a terrible return.

It could not be called Storri's fault that it was not three hundred years since his forebears wore sheepskins, carried clubs, and made a fire by judiciously rubbing one stick against another. None the less this nearness to a stone age left him barbarous in his heart; and the layer of civilization that was upon him was not a layer, but a polish—a sheen, and neither so thick nor so tangible as moonshine on a lake. The savageries of Richard were quite as vivid as Storri's, perhaps; but at least they had been advantageously hid beneath a top-dressing of eleven civilizing centuries instead of three; and those eight extra centuries made all the difference in life. They gave Richard a self-control and self-control; for the first separation between civilization and barbarism lies in this, that a civilized man is more readily quieted after a stampee than is your barbarous one. Also he is not so wide open to original surprise.

Wherefore, when Richard and Storri stood glaring at one another after the episode of the hands, Richard had vastly the better of Storri, who fell into a three-ply mood of amazement, fright and rage. Finally, Storri seemed to mutter threats while he retreated; and at last got himself out of the Harley front door in rather an incoherent way. It was understood that he mumbled "Good-afternoon!" to Dorothy, and that "he would talk with him again," to Richard, and all as he found his hat with his left hand, his right manfully wrapped in a handkerchief which was a smudge of blood. It could not be described as a graceful exit and had many of the features of a rout, but it was effective, and low Storri, successfully into the street. Dorothy, transfixed, turned with round eyes to Richard: "What was it you did?" she asked again. "It was nothing," replied Richard with a shrug. "Or if anything, then a piece of primitive sarcasm. Really, I'm sorry, since you are here, but I had no choice." "Will there be a duel?" gurgled Dorothy, catching her breath. Dorothy, among other valuable ideas derived from novels, had gained a middle-age impression that made flashing blades and gapping wounds a romantic probability.

Richard, "this is Mr. Storri. You remember he saved my—my nose." Certainly Mrs. Hanway-Harley remembered. She recalled the event in a manner superbly amiable and condescending. "And you told us then," said Mrs. Hanway-Harley, "that you would presently dwell in Washington. Is it your plan to make the town your permanent residence?" "My plans depend on the plans of other madam. I have become chained to my chair and cannot call myself free." Here Richard looked audaciously stily at Dorothy, who interested herself with certain flowers that stood in the window. "Ah! I see," returned Mrs. Hanway-Harley, who did not see at all. "You mean Mr. Gwynn." She had heard of Mr. Gwynn, so far as the town knew that personage, from her husband. "But you said 'other madam' beside Mr. Gwynn, there are Matzal and Mr. Pickwick." Then, responding to Mrs. Hanway-Harley's inquiring brows, Richard went forward with explanations. "Matzal is my valet, while Mr. Pickwick is a terrier torn by an implacable hatred of rats; which latter is the more strange, madam, for I give you my word Mr. Pickwick never saw a rat in his life."

"What an extraordinary young man!" ruminated Mrs. Hanway-Harley, and she bestowed upon Richard a searching glance to see if by any miracle of impertinence he was poking fun at her. That well-balanced gentleman realized the peril, and faced it with a countenance as blankly, not to say as blandly-vacuous as the wrong side of a tombstone. He ran the less risk; for the lady could not conceive how any one dare take so gross a liberty with a Hanway-Harley, one, too, whose future held tremendous chances of a White House. Being satisfied of Richard's seriousness, and concluding privily that he was only a dullard whom the honor of her notice had confused, she said: "Umph! Matzal and Mr. Pickwick! Yes, certainly!"

Then Mrs. Hanway-Harley set herself to ask questions, the bald aggressiveness whereof gave the daughter a red brow. Richard answered readily, as though glad of the chance, and did not notice the crimson that painted Dorothy's face. The latter young lady was as much puzzled by their caller as her mother, and should soon expect to hear of an argument of dullness. Indeed, she could see how he played with them: that there flowed an undercurrent of irony in his replies. Moreover, while by his manner he had pedestaled and prayed to be as to a goddess, when they were alone and before her mother came, Dorothy now observed that Richard carried himself in a manner easy and masterful, and as one who knows much in the presence of ones who know little. This air of ineffably invincible made Dorothy forget the adoration which had aforesaid glowed in his eyes, and she longed to box his ears.

"Is Mr. Gwynn your relative?" asked the cool, though somewhat careless, Mrs. Hanway-Harley. "No, madam, no relative." There drifted about the corners of Richard's mouth the shadow of a smile. "He is all English; I am all American." "I'm sorry," remarked the lady musingly. Then without saying upon what her sorrow was hinged, she proceeded. "Mr. Gwynn, I hear—I don't know him personally, but hope soon to have that pleasure—as a general of the highest breeding. My brother assures me that he has most delightful manners. I know I shall adore him. If there's anything I wholly admire it is an old-school English gentleman—they have so much refinement, so much distinction!" "It might not become me," returned Richard, in what Mrs. Hanway-Harley took to be a spirit of diffidence, "to laud the department of Mr. Gwynn. But what should you expect in one who all his life has had about him the best society of England?"

"Ah! I can see you like him—venerate him!" This with ardor. "I won't answer for the veneration," returned Richard. "I like him well enough—as Mr. Gwynn." Mrs. Hanway-Harley stared in maternally reproful. "You don't appear over grateful to your benefactor?" "No," returned Richard, "I'm quite the churl, I know; but I can't help it." Richard found a chance to say to Dorothy, "I see that you love flowers." "This was when Dorothy had taken refuge among those blossoms. "I worship flowers," returned Dorothy. "Now I don't wonder," exclaimed Richard. "You and they have so much in common."

Mrs. Hanway-Harley was for the moment preoccupied, with thoughts of Mr. Gwynn, and plans for the small Senate dinner at which that austere gentleman would find himself in the place of honor. However, she caught some flash of Richard's remark, "I'm sorry," and her instant it bred a doubt of his dullness. What if he should come pillanting after Dorothy? Mrs. Hanway-Harley's features began to rise. No beggar fed by charity need hope for her daughter's hand; she was firm-set as to that. Perhaps Mr. Gwynn intended to make him rich by his will. At this Mrs. Hanway-Harley's features showed less excitement. Mr. Gwynn should be sounded on the subject of bequests. Why not put the question to Mr. Storri? It would at least lead to the development of that equivoal gentleman's expectations. "Has Mr. Gwynn any family in England?" asked Mrs. Hanway-Harley. "A nephew or two, I believe; possibly a brother." "But he will make you his heir." "Me?" Richard gave a negative shake of the head. "The old fellow wouldn't leave me a shilling. Why should he? Nor would I accept it if he did." Richard's sidelong look at Mrs. Hanway-Harley was

full of amusement. "No, the old rogue hates me, if he would tell the truth—he won't—and if it were worth my while and compatible with my self-respect, I've no doubt I'd hate him." This sentiment was delivered with the blase air of weariness worn out, that should belong with him who has seen and heard and known a world's multitude; which manner is everywhere recognized as the very flower of good breeding. Mrs. Hanway-Harley sat tongue-tied with astonishment. In the end she recalled herself. Mrs. Hanway-Harley scented nothing perilous in the situation. In any event, Dorothy would be whomsoever she decreed. Mrs. Hanway-Harley was deservedly certain of that. While this came to her mind, Richard the enterprising went laying plans for the daily desolation of an entire greenhouse.

"Dorothy," observed Mrs. Hanway-Harley, after Richard had gone his way, "there you have a young man remarkable for two things; his dullness and his frontory. Did you hear how he spoke of his benefactor? The wretch! After all that good, poor Mr. Gwynn has done for him!" "How do you know what Mr. Gwynn has done for him?" Dorothy, while she confessed the justice of her mother's strictures, felt uncommonly inclined to defend the absent one. Her memory of those tender glances was coming back.

"Why, it is all over town! Mr. Storri is dependent on Mr. Gwynn. By the way, I hope Count Storri did not meet him!" This was given in the rising infection of a query. "Only for a moment," returned Dorothy, breaking into a little crow of laughter. "The count did not seem to like him." Dorothy thought of that combat of the hands, and how Storri was benten to his knee, and how fiercely glorious Richard looked at that instant.

"What should you expect?" observed Mrs. Hanway-Harley. "The Count is a nobleman. And that reminds me; Dorothy, he appears a bit smitten. What if it were to prove serious?" "You wouldn't have me marry him, mamma?" "What! Not marry a Count!" Mrs. Hanway-Harley was shocked as only an American mother could have been shocked. She appealed to the ceiling with her horrified hands. "Oh! the callousness of children!" she cried. Following her outburst of despair, Mrs. Hanway-Harley composed herself. "We need not consider that now; it will be soon enough when the Count offers us his hand." Mrs. Hanway-Harley sank back in her chair with closed eyes and head to the wall at the Court of the Czar. Then she continued her thoughts aloud. "It's more than likely, my dear, that the Czar would appoint Count Storri Ambassador to Washington."

"It would be extremely intelligent of the Czar, I'm sure," returned Dorothy with a twinkle. "The next morning a colored youth clad in the garish liveries of an avenue florist made his appearance on the Harley premises bearing aloft an armful of flowers as large as a sheaf of wheat. By the card they were for 'Miss Harley.' The morning following, and every morning, came the colored youth bearing an odorous armful. What were they from? The card told nothing; it was the handwriting of the florist. "Don't you think it might be Count Storri?" said Dorothy demurely, taking her pretty nose—the nose Richard saved out of the powers and "those Russians are so extravagant, so eccentric!" "Suppose I thank him for them," observed Mrs. Hanway-Harley; "that would bring him out!" "No, no," exclaimed Dorothy hastily; "it might embarrass the Count."

"Pshaw! I'll ask the florist." "No; that would offend the Count. You see, mamma, he thinks that we will know without asking. He would hardly regard our ignorance as a compliment," and Dorothy pouted. "You'd spoil everything." Mrs. Hanway-Harley saw the force of this and yielded, though it cost her curiosity a pang. Dorothy's dearest friend was with them—a tall, undulating blonde, who was sometimes like a willow and sometimes like a cat. When Mrs. Hanway-Harley left the room, and Miss Marklin and Dorothy were alone, the former said firmly: "Dorothy, who sent them?" "Now, how should I know, Bess? You read the card."

"When a woman receives flowers, she always knows from whom," returned Dorothy. "Well, then," said Dorothy resignedly, drawing the golden head of the pythonesse down until the small, pink ear was level with her lips, "if you must know, let me whisper." There are people who hold that everybody they do not understand is a fool. There be others who hold that everybody who doesn't understand them is a fool. Mrs. Hanway-Harley belonged to the former class, and not making Richard out, she marked him "fool!" and so informed Mr. Harley as she penned the dinner invitation to Mr. Gwynn. "Of course, we shall not ask this Mr. Storri to the dinner. He would be misplaced by his years for one thing. Besides, I'm sure Mr. Gwynn wouldn't like it. I saw enough of Mr. Storri to doubt if, in their own house, he dines at the same table with Mr. Gwynn." "At any rate," remarked the cautious Mr. Harley, "it's safe to leave him out this time. We'll establish his proper level, socially, by talking with Mr. Gwynn." Mr. Gwynn came back from New York on Thursday afternoon. His traffic with Talon & Trehawkie was successful, and he had bought the Daily Tory. Richard was put in charge of the

Washington correspondence. He was given a brace of assistants to protect, as he said, the subscribers; for he it known that Richard of the many blemishes knew no more of newspaper work than he did of navigation. Mr. Gwynn found Mrs. Hanway-Harley's dinner invitation awaiting him; it was for the next evening. He brought it to Richard. "You will go, Mr. Gwynn," said that gentleman, "I will consider; and tomorrow I will tell you what you are to say."

Richard has been referred to as a soul of many blemishes. The chief of these was his cynicism, although that cynicism had a cause if not a reason. With other traits, the same either virtues or vices according to the occasion and the way they were turned, Richard was sensitive. He was as thin-skinned as a woman and as greedy of approval. And yet his sensitiveness, with nerves all on the surface, worked to its own defeat. It rendered Richard fearful of jar and jolt; with that he turned brusque, repelled folk and shrunk away from having them too near.

For a crowning disaster, throughout his years of manhood, Richard had had nothing to do. He had been idle with no work and no object to work for. You can suffer, from brain famine and from hand famine. You may starve your brain and your hand with ideas as readily as you starve your stomach with no food. And Richard's nature, without his knowing, had pinned for lack of work.

There had been other setbacks. Richard lost his mother before he could remember, and his father when he was twelve. He was an only child, and his father, as well as his mother, had been an only child. Richard stood as utterly without a family as did the first man. He grew up with schoolmasters and tutors, looked after by guardians who, infected of a fashion, held that the best place to rear an American was Europe. These maniacs kept Richard abroad for fairly the fifteen years next before he meets you in these pages. The guardians were honest men; they watched the dollars of their ward with all the jealous eyes of Argus. His mind they left to chance-blown influences, all alien, and to teachers, equally alien, and as equally the selection of chance. And so it came that Richard grew up and continued without an attachment or a friendship or a purpose; and with a distrust of men in the gross promoted to feather-edge. Altogether he should be called as a beleaguered man, as unlovable, a character as any you might encounter, and search throughout a summer's day.

Most of all, Richard had been spoiled by an admiration for Democritus, which Thracian's acquaintance he picked up at school. He saw, or thought he saw, much in the case of the Abderite to remind him of his own; and to imitate him he traveled, professed a chuckling indifference to both the good and the ill in life, and heedful to laugh at whatever turned up, humored himself with the notion that he was a philosopher. Democritus was Richard's affectation; being only an affectation Democritus did not carry him to the extreme of putting out his own eyes as a help to thought.

Richard, to reach his thirtieth year, had traveled far by many a twisting road. And for all the good his wanderings overlooked, he would have come out of the world still. But a change was riping at the door. In Dorothy Richard had found one to love. Now in his sudden role of working journalist he had found work to do. Richard caught his bosom swelling with sensations never before known, as he loafed over a cigar in his rooms. Love and ambition both were busy at his heart's roots. He would win Dorothy; he would become a writer.

Richard, his cynicism touching the elbow of his dream, caught himself sourly smiling. He shook himself free, however, and was surprised to see how that ice of cynicism gave way before a little heat of hope. It was as if his nature were coming out of winter into spring; whereas Richard was cheered. "Who knows?" quoth Richard, staring about the room in defiance of what cynicism was present. "I may yet become a husband and an author before a twelve-month." Richard later took counsel with the gray Nestor of the press gallery—a past master at his craft of ink. "Write new things in an old way," said this finished one, whose name was known in two hemispheres; "write new things in an old way or old things in a new way or new things in a new way. Do not write old things in an old way; it will be as though you strove to build a fire with ashes."

"And is that all?" asked Richard. "And so informed Mr. Harley as she finished one. With that Richard, nursing a stout heart, began his grind. Every writer, not a mere bricklayer of words, has what for want of better epithet is called a style. There be writers whose style is broad and deep and lurid, like a lake. It shimmers bravely as some bay of fancy touches it, or it tosses in billows with some stormy stress of feeling. And yet you who read must spread some personal sail and bring some gale of favoring interest all your own to carry you across. There be writers whose style is swift and flashing, like a river, and has a current to whirl you along. The style seizes on you and takes you down the page, showing the right and the left of the subject as a river shows its banks. You are swept round some unexpected bend of incident and given new impressions in new lights. Addison was the king of those who wrote like a lake; Macaulay of those who wrote like a river. The latter is the better style, giving more



BY THE CARD THEY WERE FOR MISS HARLEY

and carrying further and tiring less. Richard belonged by native gift to the Macaulay school. He tasted the profits of his occupation when, having sent his first story, the night manager wired: "Great! Keep it up." Richard read and reread the four words, and it must be confessed, felt somewhat ashamed at the good they did him—being the first words of encomium that had ever come his way. They confirmed his ambition; he had found a pleasant, unexpected window from which to reconsider existence.

It was 7 o'clock, and Richard sat turning over a pile of papers which related to the purchase of the Daily Tory. They had been left by Mr. Gwynn. These he compared with a letter or two that had just come in. "What a fool and old rogue it is!" cried Richard disgustedly. Then he pushed the button that summoned Mr. Gwynn. That severe Briton appeared in flawless evening dress. It was the occasion of the Harley dinner, and Mr. Gwynn had ordered his carriage for 7:30. "Mr. Gwynn," said Richard, "the Harley purpose is the Presidential hopes of Senator Hanway. You will offer aid in the form of a speech, will you not?" "You are to let him know that the Daily Tory is at his service. Say that I, as its correspondent, shall make it my first duty to wait upon him."

"Very good, sir," said Mr. Gwynn. "Another moment," Mr. Gwynn said Richard as the other was about to go. "Give me your personal check for \$1,500." Mr. Gwynn's face twitched; he hesitated, rocking a little on his set. Richard had turned to scribble something; with that, representing whatever had been upon his lips, Mr. Gwynn withdrew. He was instantly back with a strip of paper fluttering in his fingers. Richard placed it on his desk. Taking a similar strip from his writing pad he gave it to Mr. Gwynn. "My own check for \$1,500, Mr. Gwynn," said Richard. "I make you a present of it. That is to save your credit. Hereafter when you see a chance to play the account before you embrace it please measure the probable pillage and let me

know. I will then give you the amount. In that way you will have the profits of every act of villainy you might commit, while missing the mud and mire of its accomplishment. Remember, Mr. Gwynn, I will not tolerate a rascal." "You are extremely good, sir," said the frozen Mr. Gwynn. Mrs. Hanway-Harley placed Mr. Gwynn on her right hand, a distinction which that personage bore with a petrified grace most beautiful to look upon. Senator Hanway was on the other side of Mr. Gwynn. The party was not large—eight in all—and besides the trio named and Mr. Harley counted such partisans of Senator Hanway as Senators Gruff and Kink and Wink and Loot and Price. Mr. Gwynn was delighted to meet so much good company, and intimated it in a manner decorously conventional. "Isn't it utterly English, and therefore utterly admirable?" whispered Mrs. Hanway-Harley to Senator Loot. "That statesman agreed to this as well as he could with a mouth at work on fish."

"Mr. Gwynn," said Mrs. Hanway-Harley affably, "I shall make the most of you while I may. You know I only intend to see you gentlemen safely launched, and then I shall retire." Mr. Gwynn bowed gravely. Mr. Gwynn's strength lay in bowing. He was also remarkable for the unflagging attention which he paid to whatever was said to him. On such occasions his unblinking stare, wholly receptive, like an underlying taking orders, and never a glimmer of either contradiction or agreement or even intelligence to show therein, was almost disconcerting. Mrs. Hanway-Harley, however, declared that this receptive, blank stare was the hall-mark of exclusive English circles. Mr. Gwynn gave another proof of culture; he pitched upon the best wine and stuck to it, tasting and relishing with educated palate. This set him up with Mr. Harley.

"Yes, I shall make the most of you, Mr. Gwynn," said Mrs. Hanway-Harley. By way of making the most of Mr. Gwynn, Mrs. Hanway-Harley spoke of next Speakership of the House which should interest his paper. I shall see you