

# How British Cities Manage Public Utilities

How Birmingham, When Joseph Chamberlain, "Socialist," Was Mayor, Purchased Its Slum District and Made It the Most Valuable Tract of Real Estate in the World

By FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

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IN 1875 the most squalid district in England lay like a festering sore adjacent to the business center of Birmingham. It was thus described by Counselor White in an eloquent plea before the town council for improved conditions:

"It is not easy to imagine the dreary desolation which creeps after 2:30 in the very heart of the town presents to those who will take the trouble to visit it. Little else is to be seen but bowing roofs, tottering chimneys, tumble down and disused shops, heaps of bricks, broken windows and coarse rough pavements, damp and sloppy. In one case I found a house of only two rooms, about nine feet square and six and a half feet high, and in this hovel lived husband, wife and four children. Amid such deplorable conditions 12,000 of our fellow townsmen are spending their lives, with no bright thing about them and nothing of joy or gladness in their homes."

Joseph Chamberlain was then mayor of Birmingham, and the city had not yet attained the proud distinction of the metropolis of midland England, nor had that brilliant young man climbed far toward his present fame. He had evinced marked talents in municipal affairs and was an enthusiastic advocate of public ownership—so much so, in fact, that his political enemies declared him a Socialist. It was due to his efforts and energy that Birmingham had purchased the gas plant and the waterworks from private owners, and the success which followed these ventures gave him a prestige of which he was not slow to take advantage. The desolate tract populated with thousands of miserable persons aroused his sympathy, but he was more than a social reformer; he was one of the shrewdest business men in Great Britain. He surveyed the field as a general does one of a coming battle. He formulated a plan, one so startling in its originality, so radical in its scope and so stupendous in its magnitude that his friends and supporters hesitated when he proposed it to them.

Mr. Chamberlain urged that Birmingham proceed to purchase every foot of land in this contaminated area, and he included in it fifty or more acres practically in the center of the city. He proposed to ignore all existing street lines and to devote a large percentage of the land to broad thoroughfares. He proposed to demolish every house in this district, to lease part of the site to reputable landlords who would erect dwellings under the supervision of the city authorities and to lease the remainder of the land for business purposes. He admitted that for years this investment would impose a burden on the taxpayers, but contended that in the end it would prove a splendid investment. More than that, the eradication of the slum area would increase the value of every foot of property in the city.

The future statesman formally introduced the matter to the town council and, in one of the most masterly speeches of his career, urged its adoption. He claimed that Birmingham could never aspire to the commercial supremacy of its natural territory so long as it permitted thousands of its townsmen to live in misery.

"I believe," he said, "that the town and, above all, the next generation, will have cause to bless the town council of Birmingham if it carries out this scheme and exercises what I venture to call a sagacious audacity. We know how from time to time upon our coast vast operations have been undertaken by which large tracts of land have been reclaimed from the sea, and what was formerly the sandy bed of the ocean has been converted into smiling fields. I say that no less meritorious and no less necessary is the work which we are undertaking in this inland city by which we hope to wrest from the fell grasp of disease, misery and crime whole populations which would otherwise be abandoned to them."

"I heard it said the other day that the position of these people was their own fault. Their fault? Yes, it is legally their fault if they steal, and when they do we send them to jail, and if they commit murder we hang them for it. But if the members of this council had been placed under similar conditions—if from infancy we had grown up in the same way—does any of us believe that he should have run no risk of the hangman or the jail? For my part I have not sufficient confidence in my own inherent goodness to believe that anything can make headway against such frightful conditions as I have described. The fact is it is no more the fault of these people that they are victims and intemperate than it is that they are stunted, deformed, debilitated and diseased. The one is due to the physical atmosphere. The moral atmosphere as necessarily and surely produces the other. It is the only occasion for which I ever wish to live beyond the ordinary term of hu-

man life in order to see the results of these improvements and to hear the blessings which will be showered on those who have the courage to begin them."

The above is a brief extract from a speech which aroused the staid Birmingham councilors and aldermen to enthusiasm, as by a unanimous vote they indorsed and adopted the plan of their youthful colleague. This was in 1875.

Few men have lived to see so wild a dream come true. As I stood in Corporation street, which traverses what once was the foul center of Birmingham's slum district, I wondered what are Joseph Chamberlain's sensations when he gazes on that magnificent thoroughfare, the finest in Great Britain outside of London. Where the hovels once reeked in filth great marts and business palaces rear their fronts. The district from which respectable persons turned with loathing is now the fashionable shopping district. Delicate fabrics have taken the place of the rags of the pauper. As if Aladdin's magician had waved a wand, the grewsome district has disappeared. I would rather be Joseph Chamberlain and walk up Corporation street, Birmingham, than be able to pay the Russian national debt.

At an expense of \$8,500,000 the city purchased about forty-five acres of slums and proceeded to transform an irregular strip having an extreme length of about a mile. Starting at New street, one of the best business thoroughfares, it surveyed a broad road through the center of its new and strange property. Having laid out new streets in every direction, the municipality offered the frontage to those who were willing to build in consideration of seventy-five year leases. There was a demand from powerful interests that the leaseholds be extended to ninety-nine years, but Mr. Chamberlain was firm in his resolve that Birmingham should come into full possession of its reward at the end of the shorter term. He insisted that it would be possible to rent every square foot of the land on the terms specified, and his judgment was accurate. He also predicted that the average annual charge against the taxes would not exceed \$60,000. This would meet the interest on the bonds and make up the deficit after allowing for rents and other revenues. In brief, he estimated that the eventual cost of the investment would not exceed \$4,500,000.

The scheme has been greatly enlarged since its inception, but when the last payment is made in 1950 Birmingham will own in fee simple the most valuable tract of real estate in the world, and the price paid will fall below that set by the "boy mayor," who has a chance to live to see the partial fruition of his "audacious sagacity." If offered for sale in the open market today the former slum hole would realize \$15,000,000. Its improvement did more than any one thing to make Birmingham the "metropolis of the midland counties." It is no exaggeration to assert that the decision of the council of 1875 had the direct effect of doubling the value of every square foot of land in the business district, and it would be impossible to put a money value on the blessings which have come with a lowered death rate, diminished crime, an aroused local pride and the prestige which comes from a great campaign valiantly and successfully pushed to success.

**So He Appointed Jones.**  
"I began to practice law in Dakota in territorial days," said the lawyer from Chicago. "Our judges were sent to us, and some of them didn't know any more about law than they did about the political beliefs of the mount builders. One of them—I'll call him Jones—was so appallingly ignorant that it was a great relief when on the admission of North Dakota to the Union he left the bench and began to practice law. His successor was a man wholly without a sense of humor, and the only good thing he ever said in his life was wholly accidental. A man was brought to trial charged with selling liquor to the Indians. The judge asked him if he had a lawyer to defend him. "No," said the man, "I don't want a lawyer."  
"Well," said his honor, looking about the room till his eyes rested on his predecessor. "I'll appoint Judge Jones to defend him."—Washington Post.

**The Chronometer.**  
In 1713 the English government offered £10,000, £15,000 or £20,000 to any one discovering a method for determining the longitude at sea within sixty, forty or thirty miles. John Harrison, a carpenter's son, made his first chronometer in 1735 and was sent the next year to Lisbon and back to test it. The trial was successful, but the inventor was awarded only £500. He produced other instruments in 1739 and 1749, and finally in 1759 he constructed a chronometer in the form of a watch, five inches in diameter, which was only 1 minute 54½ seconds in error after a voyage to Jamaica and back. This was equivalent to determining the longitude within eighteen miles, but full payment for his invention was withheld till 1773.

## SOME FLORIDA INCIDENTS

ONE OF CAPTAIN WILLARD'S PRACTICAL JOKES.  
BY COLONEL O. T. GREEN.

It was during the early days of the phosphate in Florida, and more or less skepticism existed as to whether there really was phosphate in the state or not. Colonel John Dunn, of Ocala, a very prominent man and banker, had satisfied himself of the reality of the mineral and had invested a large portion of his fortune in the enterprise. Among his friends in Ocala was quite a noted character, one of the pioneers of Ocala, a clever, delightful gentleman, Colonel Eichelberger, who still lives among us.

Now, Colonel Eichelberger conceived in his mind that his friend Dunn was acting very rashly, and without saying anything to anybody he took the train and went down to where are located the finest phosphate mines in the Withlacooche valley, and from the pits in the land that Dunn had optioned and purchased, he took numerous samples, and as the schedule of the train was such that in order to find accommodations for the night he went on to Homosassa, and spent the night with his friend, Albert Willard, one of the most noted bonifaces in the state, whose famous old place, "The Homosassa Inn," has sheltered many of the most distinguished sportsmen of this country.

Captain Albert was a great wag, very fond of practical jokes and no respecter of persons and conditions, and as the wee sma' hours drew on and the bottle passed, the colonel disclosed to his friend Albert what his mission had been. He had taken samples of the phosphate rock and was going to have them analyzed so as to see whether or not his friend Dunn had ruined himself.

After Colonel Eichelberger had retired Captain Willard took the gunny-sack in which the rocks were placed; emptied it of its contents and filled it up with pure lime-stone rocks. The next morning Colonel Eichelberger returned to Ocala, and in a few days, with a very long and serious face, called on his friend Dunn and showed him the analysis of the rock which he had had taken and very solemnly said:

"John, you are a ruined man," and the colonel described what he had done.

Colonel Dunn was a very cool, level-headed man, and although he was at first startled by the earnestness of his friend, who he was satisfied was telling the truth, according to his light, commenced questioning him as to his doings, where he had been, etc.

As soon as the fact had developed that he had spent the night with Willard and had disclosed his mission to him, he was satisfied that a practical joke had been played, and going to telegraph office in a few minutes had confirmed his impression, and informed Colonel Eichelberger that he had been the victim of a practical joke.

The language he used when this became plain to him was very fiery and emphatic, and he was very much in earnest; so much so that it was several months before Captain Albert came near enough to him to laugh the thing off.

**Nothing Equal to Chamberlain's Colic Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy for Bowel Complaint in Children.**

"We have used Chamberlain's Colic Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy in our family for years," Mrs. J. B. Cooke, of Ederlands, Texas. "We have given it to all of our children. We have used other medicines for the same purpose, but never found anything to equal Chamberlain's. If you will use it as directed it will always cure. For sale by Anti-monopoly drug store."

### The Elk Cafe.

Messrs. C. M. Whitesides and G. R. Troxler are now the lessees of the Elk Cafe, and the same is closed temporarily while extensive improvements are being made upon it. Its opening will be duly announced and it will be run in a style commensurate with the city's growing needs.

**FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR**

### Brains Not Essential.



Mrs. Henpeck—Here's a story about a woman who lived a whole week without any brains.

Mr. Henpeck—Humph! That's nothing. You've lived much longer than that.—New York World.

### As She Is Wrote.

The letter below was written by a Japanese tailor to an American lady in Yokohama. It speaks (English) for itself:

Our Dear Mrs. —: I am very sorry to say that it will take three days at least to make up your kimono ordered at all, for, tell the truth, the dye house in Tokyo was damaged by an inundation of the recent much rain, so I beg you pardon me having break of promise. Yours very truly, TANI SHOKWAL.

P. S.—How are your honorable husband? I hope he will soon recovered.  
—Hugh Allen in Lippincott's Magazine.

### A Pony's Influence.

Little Dick—Mamma, I think I'd be a better boy if I had a pony like Tom Hunter's.

Mother—Better in what way, my boy?

Little Dick—I think I'd be more charitable.

Mother (surprised)—More charitable? Little Dick—Yes. Because then I wouldn't feel so glad when Tom's pony runs away with him.—Pittsburg Post.

### Pounding Acquaintance.

Mrs. Grimes—Do you know Mrs. Sykes? She lives in the same hotel that you do.

Mrs. Joslyn—No, I can't say that I know her, but we are on pounding acquaintance with the Sykeses. They make so much noise we have to rap on the wall now and then to keep them quiet.—Boston Transcript.

The Equitable row, the re-trial of Nan Patterson, the New York gas inquiry, Roosevelt in the western wilds, the meeting of the Japanese and Russian fleets and the session of the Florida legislature, do not come under the subdued scare head lines of Lenten talks.

# Stubborn Coughs and Colds CURED BY FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR

Obstinate, racking Coughs that make your head ache, your throat and lungs sore and inflamed, that rob you of sleep until your system becomes so run down that you are in grave danger of Pneumonia or Consumption, are quickly cured by **Foley's Honey and Tar.**

### FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR

soothes and heals the inflamed air passages, allays the feverish conditions, stops the cough and prevents serious results from a cold.

### FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR

is the only prominent cough medicine on the market that does not contain opiates or harmful drugs of any kind and on this account is safest for children.

It is unexcelled for Croup and Whooping Cough and will quickly cure the racking cough which follows measles and leaves so many children with weak lungs unless properly treated.

Remember the name — **Foley's Honey and Tar**—and refuse substitutes that cost you the same as the genuine. Do not take chances with some unknown preparation.

### Consumption Threatened.

C. Unger, 211 Maple St., Champaign, Ill., writes: "I was troubled with a hacking cough for a year and I thought I had consumption. I tried a great many remedies and I was under the care of physicians for several months. I used one bottle of Foley's Honey and Tar; it cured me, and I have not been troubled since."

Three sizes—25c, 50c, \$1.00. The 50 cent size contains two and one-half times as much as the small size and the \$1.00 bottle almost six times as much.

**SOLD AND RECOMMENDED BY** Postoffice Drug Store.

# MIGHT AND WILL VS GRIP

Let us illustrate vividly the difference in meaning of the words might and will—the child might live; the child will live. Might implies doubt; will means certainty. Might live means might die; will live means will not die.

These two words aptly illustrate the difference between Johnson's Tonic and the horde of commercial remedies on the market, and that vast horde of inert professional remedies which only bear the sanction of the High Priests of medicine.

**USE JOHNSON'S TONIC** in a bad case of Grip and you will live! Use inert, or commercial products, and you might live.

Johnson's Tonic quickly drives out every trace and taint of Grip. It is not simply good, it is supremely good—not good as anything, but better than everything—a genuine life-saver. Those who believe in it are safe—doubters are in danger and jeopardize their lives. Summed up, Johnson's Chill and Fever Tonic is the best Grip medicine on earth. This is the sober, serious, earnest truth.

**JOHNSON'S CHILL & FEVER TONIC CO.** At all druggists. Savannah, Ga. Take no substitutes.

GRIP GERMS MAGNIFIED 1000 TIMES

## THE CHAMBERS SHOE COMPANY.

We have just received a complete line of Trunks **\$2** to **\$25.00**

Suit Cases **\$3.00** to **\$15.00**

Hand Satchels **\$1.25** to **\$15.00**

Come in and see them,

## THE CHAMBERS SHOE COMPANY.

Opera House Block.

Ocala, Fla.

# Strauss' Royal Reserve.

### OCALA MINING LABORATORY.

F. T. SCHREIBER.

Consulting and Analytical Chemist. Member of the Society of Chemical Industry, London, Eng. Member of the American Chemical Society.

P. O. Box 703.

OCALA, FLA., Oct. 22, 1904.

Messrs. Strauss & Co., Wholesale Whisky Merchants, Ocala, Fla.

Gentlemen.—In accordance with your instructions, I visited your warehouse on the 19th, instant, and personally selected from your stock a sample of

### "Strauss' Royal Reserve"

whisky, the analysis of which shows it to contain:

Alcohol (by weight), per cent.....	36.66
Alcohol (by volume), per cent.....	43.61
Degree proof, per cent.....	87.10
Residue on evaporation, p cent.....	0.660
Ash, per cent.....	0.011
Reducing sugar, per cent.....	0.225
Volatile acids, per cent.....	0.027
Amyl alcohol (fusel oil), per cent.....	0.073

The above results show the whisky to be a carefully blended brand of high grade and that it has been distilled from a clean, pure grain mash. The amount of fusel oil and of volatile acids is very low.

Respectfully,  
F. T. SCHREIBER, Chemist.

FOUR FULL QUARTS \$3.50 EXPRESS PREPAID.

# STRAUSS & CO.

Sole Owners and Distributors.

OCALA.

FLORIDA.

## THE VEHICLE AND HARNESS CO.

JACKSONVILLE.

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FLORIDA.

Everything Used by the Carriage and Wagonmaker and Blacksmith.

Celebrated Wisconsin Wagons for Sale.

Our Specialties: Log Carriages, Wagons, Buggies, Surries, Delivery Wagons, Saddlery, Harness, Etc. We solicit your business and guarantee satisfactory Service.