

How British Cities Manage Public Utilities

Birmingham Owns Its Street Railways, Electric Light and Power Plant and Many Other Utilities—Its Gas and Water Works Were Acquired in the Seventies Under the "Boy Mayor," Joseph Chamberlain

By FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

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VII.

BIRMINGHAM owns its gas plant and has operated it successfully for more than a third of a century. A private company controls the gas in Liverpool, and it will be several years before the city can acquire possession of the franchise. On the other hand, Liverpool operates its tramways, while a private company operates those of Birmingham, leasing them from the city.

It is rather singular that of the ten most popular objects of municipal ownership in Great Britain not a city has undertaken the entire list. The ten I have in mind are as follows:

- First.—Dwellings for the working classes.
- Second.—Tramways.
- Third.—Gas works.
- Fourth.—Electric lighting and power plants.
- Fifth.—Markets.
- Sixth.—Telephones.
- Seventh.—Baths and washhouses.
- Eighth.—Refuse and sewer disposal.
- Ninth.—Cemeteries.
- Tenth.—Works department.

All of these, with the exception of cemeteries, are reproductive institutions and in Great Britain are technically classed under the head of "municipal trading." In the above list I have placed only those utilities which are practically municipally unknown in the United States and have not included waterworks for the reason that a large percentage, if not the majority, of cities in this country and Canada clearly recognize that the water supply should belong to the city and be operated by it. Glasgow comes the nearest of any city to complete municipalization, but as yet it maintains no burial grounds.

I had an interesting talk with Sir Samuel Johnson on this subject. For thirty odd years Sir Samuel has been town clerk of Nottingham, and it should be understood that the town clerk is the principal officer in a British town or city, having vastly more power and influence than the mayor or any elective official. He usually holds his place for life, and most town clerks live to a good old age. It would be difficult to find a higher type of the courtly, old fashioned English gentleman than Sir Samuel Johnson, and his official life goes back to the days before the present scope of public ownership was dreamed of.

"Why is it," I asked, "that there is so little uniformity of action among your cities in the matter of municipalization? If public ownership be a good thing, why do your cities omit certain enterprises and take up others? If it be practical for Birmingham to own its gas works, why is it not equally so for Liverpool and for all other cities?"

"When our young folks get married and start housekeeping," said Sir Samuel, after a pause, "each couple proceeds to fit up its house according to its tastes or means. One may buy a piano, another begin the collection of a library, a third may put all of its surplus earnings into land, while others will concentrate their energies on obtaining possession of various comforts and luxuries. But all have in mind the eventual ownership of everything which will conduce to happiness and prosperity. It is the same with our cities. There are good and sufficient reasons why they are compelled to wait before they dare assume certain responsibilities. Glasgow's proud position has been attained from the fact that she started on this work many years before the other cities did. In many instances we are hampered by leases and franchises granted to private companies and must wait until these expire or pay extortionate prices for their surrender. Every city in Great Britain knows that it should own its gas and electric lighting works, and every one has such ownership in contemplation. It is not a matter of principle, but of expediency—in other words, of money. Come over again," he concluded, with a smile, as he poured out another cup of tea, "come over again when you are as old as I am, and our successors will show you the municipal edifice of which we are building the foundation."

When Joseph Chamberlain became mayor of Birmingham in 1873 he set about to purchase the gas and water supplies for the city. Several previous attempts had been made, but the conservatism of the taxpayers and the influence of corporate interests had been sufficient to defeat his less energetic and resourceful predecessors. Mr. Chamberlain made an exhaustive study of the subject and presented it so favorably to the council that the measure passed by a vote of 54 to 2. The purchase price was in the neighborhood of \$10,000,000. The city immediately reduced the price of gas from 78 to 70 cents a thousand cubic feet, and the wisdom of Mr. Chamberlain's policy was shown in profits of \$170,000 for the first year. Since then the rates have steadily been reduced until they now stand at 50 cents, and at this low rate last year's profits exceeded \$230,000 after setting aside a large sum for sinking fund and depreciation.

The tangible result of the public ownership of gas works in Birmingham is best shown by the fact that since

1873 the sum of \$5,000,000, with an extra \$3,500,000 paid to the sinking fund, and the further fact that during these years the price paid for gas has averaged one-third less than that charged by the private company. The reduction in the expense of city lighting amounts to \$1,250,000. The hundreds of men employed in the works receive higher wages and work fewer hours than formerly, and it is worthy of note that the record of tests and the evidence of consumers prove that a much better quality of gas is supplied now than before the city assumed control.

The municipal gas monopoly is complete, but there are no complaints, and I heard of no scandals. Owing to the high price of coal the cost of production is much greater than in the United States, but the gas is sold for half as much, with a large and increasing revenue to the city. When the bonds are all paid and the city becomes the absolute owner of the property the price will be yet further reduced. In the meantime the profits will have more than paid the cost of the plant.

The gross profits last year were nearly \$900,000, and were it not that large sums had to be diverted to interest and sinking fund payments and to the assistance of the taxpayers it would be possible today, even with the abnormal price of materials, to produce and sell gas at less than 40 cents a thousand feet and leave a handsome profit. There is no theory about this. It is being done on an enormous scale in one of the world's largest cities.

I have space only to note the other enterprises in which Birmingham is engaged. The city maintains a comprehensive system of baths, ranging from open air baths for the poorer classes to modern Turkish baths. The income amounts to \$25,000 a year. The city burial board has charge of cemeteries in which 4,000 were interred last year. It is the policy of the board to so conduct this estate as to make it self sustaining, and successive years show alternating profits and losses in small amounts.

Four years ago Birmingham purchased the electric light and power plant, paying the owners of the franchise more than \$2,000,000. For the first two years the new management made so many improvements that there was a slight deficit, but the third year yielded a profit, and the last annual report indicated a net gain of \$150,000, which went into the common treasury. The city owns its markets, and they are a source of revenue. Birmingham is a farmer on a large scale. The municipal farm comprises 1,500 acres, and 1,000 more are about to be added. This land is fertilized by the sewage and is largely devoted to cattle raising and dairy business. There are also immense herds of sheep which belong to the city. There are filtration works and a plant for handling the byproducts, and these, with the farm, represent an investment of about \$2,500,000. The last report shows that the annual sales of stock amount to \$80,000, while \$25,000 is realized from milk and about as much from wool. By these scientific methods the cost of disposing of sewage is materially reduced.

Birmingham purchased its water supply in 1876 under the administration of Joseph Chamberlain, paying \$6,500,000 for the original plant. It has just completed at an expense of nearly \$30,000,000 an extension of the scheme by which it conveys water from Wales, eighty miles away. It owns outright 130 square miles of hills and valleys which will supply water for a population of more than a million.

Birmingham has owned its tramways for years, but has pursued the policy of leasing the lines to private companies. These leases are now expiring, and the city has decided to take over their control. The British Traction company is making a hard fight to renew its franchises and has offered to pay 15 per cent of its gross receipts for the privilege of a charter for a limited number of years. American cities which have a mania for giving such franchises away may find amusement in estimating how much their revenues would amount to from 15 per cent of the receipts of those companies which have the free use of their streets. But the Birmingham authorities have rejected all terms. They proceeded to employ Alfred Baker, formerly in charge of the London tramways and justly regarded as one of the most capable experts in Great Britain, and have placed him in charge of the proposed municipal system. Instead of electricity, which they refused to install until recently, the company which held the lease used steam power. The motor looks like a box freight car with a stovepipe thrust through the roof, and when one of them goes puffing and churning along the street strangers are overcome either with fright or amusement. Such is the service which Birmingham proposes to supersede with a strictly modern plant. Its experience with private tramway companies has been similar to that of a score of other British cities which in sheer self defense have been forced into public ownership in order to escape the antique methods of those stockholders who im-

BENEFACTOR OR BARBARIAN?

The following is a list of some of Rockefeller's gifts to educational and religious institutions of the country:

University of Chicago	\$13,000,000
Rush Medical College	6,000,000
Barnard College	1,375,000
Southern Educational fund	1,126,000
Harvard University	1,000,000
Baptist Missionary fund	1,000,000
Teachers' College, N. Y.	500,000
Vassar College	400,000
Brown University	325,000
Cornell University	250,000
Bryn Mawr College	233,000
Rockefeller Institute Medical Research	200,000
Newton Theo. Seminary	150,000
Adelphi College	125,000
Syracuse University	100,000
Smith College	100,000
Y. M. C. A., New York	100,000
Rochester University	150,000

Total.....\$26,131,000

Bigger than these is his reduction of the price of oil to consumers from dollars to cents per gallon.

So, is or is not this daily abused man a barbarian or a benefactor?

The following are Webster's definition of the two:

Barbarian:—A cruel, savage, brutal man; one destitute of pity or humanity.

Benefactor:—He who confers a benefit; especially one who makes charitable contributions, either for public institutions or for private use.

So, if he who runs may read, he must conclude that the Standard Oil king as a public benefactor is measuring purses with Andrew Carnegie.

Last Hope Vanished.

When a leading physician said that W. M. Smithart, of Pekin, Ia., had incurable consumption, his last hope vanished; but Dr. King's New Discovery for consumption, coughs and colds kept him out of the grave. He says: "This great specific completely cured me and saved my life. Since then I have used it for over ten years and consider it a marvelous throat and lung cure." Strictly scientific cure for coughs, sore throats or colds. Sure preventive for pneumonia. Guaranteed, 50c. and \$1 bottles at Tydings & Co.'s drug store. Trial bottle free.

The Star's Idea of Good City Financiering.

To the Editor of the Ocala Banner: The gentlemen who got the issue of city bonds carried can hardly appreciate the laudation of the Star when it gives the figures. In its yesterday evening's edition it cites a case of the redemption of a \$100 piece of scrip, on which \$80 interest had accrued. Any school boy can see that at 8 per cent. it was costing the city \$8 a year interest on this \$100 piece, but when the city borrowed \$180 at 5 per cent. to take it up, it is a loser to the extent of \$1 per annum during the term of the bonds. On the \$2000 batch, nothing was gained by redemption, had the holder continued to hold it the city would have been a gainer. On every dollar of scrip on which over 60 per cent. interest was due the city is loser by the redemption, so far as interest is concerned.

Ocala, April 22, 1905.

Cheated Death.

Kidney trouble often ends fatally, but by choosing the right medicine E. H. Wolfe, of Bear Grove, Ia., cheated death. He says: "Two years ago I had kidney trouble, which caused me great pain, suffering and anxiety, but I took Electric Bitters, which effected a complete cure. I have also found them of great benefit in general debility and nerve trouble, and keep them constantly on hand, since, as I find they have no equal." Tydings & Company guarantee them at 50c.

The Dunnellon Hard Road.

At the last meeting of the board of trade Col. W. N. Camp was before it with a statement that the Camp Phosphate company had subscribed \$1000 towards building the hard road from Ocala to Dunnellon; the Clark-Ray-Johnson company, \$1500; Capt. John L. Inglis, \$500, and that he felt sure that the town of Dunnellon would subscribe \$1500.

This will still leave \$2500 short of the amount required, which Colonel Camp wants to have subscribed by the public spirited citizens of Ocala. The road will be a great benefit to our county and will pay a large amount of interest many times over on the amount needed. We hope it will be raised.

All kinds of toilet articles, and at

IF I WERE YOU

(Written by L. T. I. for The Ocala Banner.) "If I were you," you often say. I would do that or this. But why would you—now tell me pray. Lest I should go amiss.

You do not know what moves my mind. Nor read my inmost heart— In these a reason you may find, Which makes us drift apart.

Some things there are, to you unknown— Exert a force you cannot feel— But through my eyes and mine alone, Gods are seen to which I kneel.

If you were I and I were you, Your eyes would see the things I see— Then you could say what you would do, Or leave undone—as the case might be.

But as it is, you cannot tell What you would do in another's place— His heart may be quite full of hell— While yours abound in richest grace.

The storm swept sea produces wrecks, And fills all hearts with fear— When I am calm we walk the decks, And breathe sweet freedom's air—

The heart's a sea—within its shore. Great storm lashed waves are driven— They wreck our hopes—our prayers ignore, And tomb ambition all unshirers!

Your ships sail not upon my sea, Your navigators have no chart— If I were you and you were me, Your ships would sail as in my heart.

"I have used Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets with most satisfactory results," says Mrs. F. L. Phelps, Houston, Texas. For indigestion, biliousness and constipation these tablets are most excellent. Sold by Anti-monopoly drug store.

At Rest.

The funeral services of the late Mrs. M. E. McConnell were held yesterday morning at 10 o'clock from the Presbyterian church, and the remains were interred in Evergreen cemetery.

The services were conducted in a most impressive manner by the Rev. Henry W. Little, assisted by the Rev. W. H. Gottwald.

The following gentlemen acted as pall-bearers: Messrs. R. A. Burford, D. W. Davis, E. T. Helvenston, L. Dozier, J. H. Livingston and W. W. Clyatt.

The casket was covered with beautiful floral tributes of love and affection from loving friends.

For Fancy soaps and perfumes call on Tydings & Co.

FOLEY'S HONEY and TAR CURES Coughs and Colds PREVENTS Pneumonia and Consumption

Foley's Honey and Tar not only stops the cough, but heals and strengthens the lungs and prevents serious results from a cold.

There is no danger of Pneumonia, Consumption or other serious lung trouble if **Foley's Honey and Tar** is taken, as it will cure the most stubborn coughs—the dangerous kind that settles on the lungs and may develop into pneumonia over night.

If you have a cough or cold do not risk Pneumonia when **Foley's Honey and Tar** will cure you quickly and strengthen your lungs.

Remember the name — **Foley's Honey and Tar**—and refuse any substitute offered. Do not take chances with some unknown preparation that costs you the same when you can get **Foley's Honey and Tar**, that costs you no more and is safe and certain in results. Contains no opiates.

Cured After Physicians Said He Had Consumption.

E. H. Jones, Pastor M. E. Church, Grove, Md., writes: "About seven or eight years ago I had a very severe cold which physicians said was very near pneumonia, and which they afterwards pronounced consumption. Through a friend I was induced to try a sample of **Foley's Honey and Tar**, which gave me so much relief that I bought some of the regular size. Two or three bottles cured me of what the physicians called consumption, and I have never had any trouble with my throat or lungs since that time."

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 DELIVERED BY

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 A \$2 T \$25.00

Suit Cases A \$3.00 T \$15.00

Hand Satchels A \$1.25 T \$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.

Cor. Forsyth and Cedar St.
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA.

Everything Used by the Carriage and Wagonmaker and Blacksmith.
Celebrated Davis Wagons for Sale.
Our Specialties: Leather Harness, Saddles, Buggy Harness, etc.