

story, and made much of his own share in the renewal of our battle. To my surprise, my father smiled.

«It seems plain,» he said, «that the lads were not to blame. But how wilt thou answer to the Meeting, Rupert Forest?»

«To it, to thee, to any man,» said the Quaker.

«It is but a month ago that thy case was before Friends because of thy having beaten Friend Waln's man. It will go ill with thee—ill, I fear.»

«And who is to spread it abroad?»

«Not I,» said my father.

«I knew that,» returned the Friend, simply. «I am but a jack-in-the-box Quaker, John. I am in and out in a moment, and then I go back and repent.»

«Let us hope so. Go to thy mother, Hugh; and as to thee, John Warder, wait until I send with thee a note to thy father. There are liquors on the table, Friend Forest.»

My mother set us in order, and cried a little, and said:

«I am glad he was well beaten. Thou shouldst never fight, my son; but if thou must, let it be so that thy adversary repent of it. *Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! j'en ai peur*; the wild Welsh blood of these Wynnes! And thy poor little nose—how 't is swelled!»

Not understanding her exclamations, Jack said as much; but she answered:

«Oh, it is a fashion of speech we French have. I shall never be cured of it, I fear. This wild blood—what will come of it?» And she seemed—as Jack writes long after, being more observing than I—as if she were looking away into the distance of time, thinking of what might come to pass. She had, indeed, strange insight, and even then, as I knew later, had her fears and unspoken anxieties. And so, with a plentiful supper, ended a matter which was, I may say, a critical point in my life.

(To be continued.)

S. Weir Mitchell.



THE BREATH OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

THE wind of Hampstead Heath still burns my cheek
 As, home returned, I muse, and see arise
 Those rounded hills beneath the low, gray skies,
 With gleams of haze-lapped cities far to seek.
 These can I picture, but how fitly speak
 Of what might not be seen with searching eyes,
 And all beyond the listening ear that lies,
 Best known to bards and seers in times antique?
 The winds that of the spirit rise and blow
 Kindle my thought, and shall for many a day,
 Recalling what blithe presence filled the place
 Of one who oftentimes passed up that way,
 By garden close and lane where boughs bend low,
 Until the breath of Hampstead touched his face.

Edith M. Thomas.

AN OBJECT-LESSON IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

SHOWING HOW PUBLIC AFFAIRS ARE CONDUCTED IN
THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM.

WITH PICTURES BY LOUIS LOEB.



It would be interesting, even to American readers, to develop with some fullness the personal side of a story so interesting as the redemption of a great community from the hands of incompetent men; but space will not permit more than the attempt to develop results, leaving out these most interesting details.

Joseph Chamberlain became mayor of Birmingham, England, November 10, 1873. On January 13, 1874, he proposed that the manufacture, supply, and sale, of gas should be taken under the control of the corporation.

GAS- AND WATER-WORKS.

A bill authorizing the purchase and amalgamation of the gas-works was submitted to the ratepayers, carried through Parliament, and the city obtained possession of the property September 1, 1875, the entire cost amounting to £2,000,931. A Gas Committee was appointed, efficient men were employed as managers, and the manufacture of gas began. Almost the first thing the committee did was to reduce the price *3d.* per thousand, making the new charge ranging from *2s. 9d.* to *3s. 3d.*

The conditions make the district of supply very large. For lighting purposes, districts more than ten miles from the town hall are dependent upon the corporation, and for many miles beyond the corporate limits the streets of the smallest villages and the main country roads are lighted. The price of gas varies according to quantity consumed, the highest charge being *2s. 10d.* per thousand, and the lowest *2s. 6d.* for consumers of more than 50,000 feet per quarter, the average price being just under *2s. 7d.* Bills are subject to a discount of five per cent. if settled within thirty days. The price charged to the city—the gas committee merely supplying the gas to the Public Works Committee, which erects its own street-lamps, which it lights, extinguishes, and repairs—is slightly less than *1s. 3d.* per thousand. Outlying towns or local authorities have the advantage of

the reduction, while private consumers pay at the same rate, whether in or out of the city.

In order to facilitate lighting in courts, the corporation undertakes to treat such lamps as public, on the principle that a light is almost as valuable as a policeman. In 1880 the number of court-lamps was 4, consuming 60,000 cubic feet of gas, at an annual cost of £10; in 1894 the number of lamps had increased to 1784, burning more than 25,000,000 cubic feet, and the cost to £1,866 per annum. Of the 160,000 houses in the district of supply, only 60,000 have meters, and of these not more than three fourths are dwelling-houses. In England gas-fixtures are individual property, furnished by the tenant, and removable when he goes into another house, the landlord supplying only the connection with the street mains. The department now encourages landlords to connect their houses, to supply tenants with fixtures, and to put in prepayment, or penny-in-the-slot, meters, like those in the artisans' houses belonging to the corporation, all to be covered by the gross cost of the gas furnished at a rate of *3s. 4d.* per thousand.

The success of the consolidated gas scheme has been much greater than was predicted. The total profits appropriated to public purposes during the twenty years ending in 1894 have been £532,298; the reserve fund for maintenance and extension of plant amounts to £100,000; and the sinking fund for the redemption of debt to £415,606; while the large expenditure for betterment does not appear in the capital account, but is found in annual expenditure.

One of the most difficult problems Birmingham had to solve was its water-supply. It occupies the unique position of a great city far from any considerable body of water, salt or fresh. Owing to its situation, there is no river of respectable volume within many miles; lying so near the source of streams, they have no opportunity to acquire volume or force. When the town had grown to such size as to render necessary a public water-supply, it was drawn from the river Tame.