

chief far beyond what can be here indicated.

In our judgment the Unionist programme would be greatly improved if it were reduced to one single measure. Let Parliament simply pay to every workman a daily or weekly stipend amounting to one-third or one-half of his wages. This would enable workmen to provide pensions, accident insurance, and dwellings for themselves, and such provision might be made compulsory. Moreover, as the Unionists argue, this would have no tendency to discourage providence and industry, since they defend their own measures on the ground that they are meant to "help" men to save; the theory being that public almsgiving can do no harm to those who are able to earn something for themselves, provided, of course, the gift is not called alms. We are very well aware that this experiment was formerly tried in England. All industries, that of agriculture especially, were then "rapidly sinking," and it was decided that the insufficient wages of the poor should be supplemented by allowances out of the rates. It is true that experience proved that this measure had the effect of reducing the rate of wages by the amount of the allowance, so that the workman received no higher wages than before; and if we were to be guided by experience, we could not escape the conclusion that the measures now proposed will have the same result. But modern legislators appear to have little interest in the lessons of experience, and even in England, the home of conservatism, the conservative spirit is, for the present at least, overborne. We cannot but regard it as ominous that this country, which maintained and gave to the world the great principle of resistance to governmental encroachment upon the liberties of the subject, should be threatened with socialistic oppression. As to the Unionists, it is in the highest degree discreditable to them that they should be willing to seek power by surrendering the defences of society to the Radicals.

#### TOWN GOVERNMENT IN MAINE.

BRUNSWICK, March 6, 1895.

THE best examples of the old form of town government in New England are naturally to be found in those communities which, in virtue of their small population and remote situation, stand somewhat aside from the great industrial and social movements of the time. It is amid such surroundings that the traditions of the elders are most faithfully preserved; and it is this type of community which has most often been described. There is, however, a type of town government different from this, to which much less attention has been given, yet which has in some respects a greater interest for students of political institutions. It is represented by those towns which, with population and wealth sufficient, according to the usage of the State in which they are situated, to entitle them to incorporation as cities, still keep to the old form of government in many of its essential details, and with no mani-

fest desire to exchange it for another. Though in important respects primitive social conditions have given way to the demand for modern necessities and conveniences, the modifying influence of increasing numbers and diversified interests has as a whole been quietly and successfully resisted. Such a town is on the one hand far removed, in most of its characteristics, from the simple country community; on the other hand, it is not yet overgrown, and the town meeting, the governing body, has not yet been broken down by the presence of a body of voters too large for orderly and concerted action.

Such a town is Brunswick, Maine. First settled in 1628, and incorporated as a town in 1738, it has for the past fifteen years enjoyed the distinction of being the most populous town in the State. Like most of the seacoast towns of Maine, it is of very irregular form, with an area of perhaps fifty square miles. Of its six thousand inhabitants, one-third are French Canadians, drawn hither by the various factories and mills which have grown up about the falls of the Androscoggin. All but about five hundred of the inhabitants live in "the village"; and there is almost no foreign population other than the French. In 1894, the valuation of the town, "full, fair, cash value," as the annual reports take pains to state, was \$3,514,436; the ordinary town expenses for the same year were \$57,120, one-fifth of the taxes being paid by the corporations doing business in the town. "The village" is provided with water, gas, and electric light, and a sewerage system is being constructed. The public schools (the French children largely attending a parochial school), including a free high school, are among the best in the State; and there is a free public library of about six thousand volumes. The voters number about twelve hundred, although of the two thousand French less than a hundred and fifty vote. The three hundred and forty-five students of Bowdoin College add a considerable temporary population for several months in the year; and probably not far from \$100,000 is annually expended in the town by the students and others connected with the college.

Although having a larger population than any other town in the State, Brunswick shows no desire to become a city. At least three attempts in this direction have been made; the last being in 1892; all have failed. There are but twenty cities in Maine; eight of these had each in 1890 a smaller population than Brunswick, and one of the remaining twelve exceeded it by only sixty-three. There are, of course, those who would prefer to see a mayor and council displace the selectmen, but with the great majority of the people the present conditions are entirely satisfactory. Yet it is manifest that the community presents, in population, industry, and wealth, many of the conditions which characterize the smaller cities of New England, and which are often thought to make a city organization, if not necessary, at least more effective. I looked forward, therefore, with interest to the annual town meeting, in which the business of the town for the coming year was to be discussed and arranged.

The annual meeting this year came on Monday, the 4th of March, and at a quarter before nine o'clock the bell on the town building rang out its summons to the citizens. The town hall is a large and not unattractive room, with a gallery in the rear, and the usual scenery and footlights on the stage; it will seat a thousand people, and has to do duty for all sorts of public assemblies. The day opened cold and

blustering; and when, promptly at nine o'clock, the town clerk mounted the stage and began the reading of the warrant, there were exactly fifty people scattered about the room. The reading finished, ballots were taken for moderator and town clerk. The first of these officers received six votes, the second ten. Both were declared elected, and at once administered the oath to each other. The moderator was a prominent lawyer of "the village," and presided throughout the day with ability and acceptance. A short prayer by a retired minister resident in the town followed, and then the important business of the forenoon, the election of town officers, began.

During the previous week Democratic and Republican caucuses had been held, and had put in nomination lists of officers which were identical except in the three candidates for selectmen (one most commonly hears of selectmen in Brunswick). An attempt to organize a citizens' caucus had failed, although a "split" ticket appeared on Monday. Neither of the caucuses was largely attended, nor were the leading citizens very numerously represented. On Monday "straight" tickets seemed to be the rule. The polls remained open until one o'clock, at which time 712 votes had been cast. The number of votes was 114 less than last year; but this year no special effort was made to secure a large vote, and the cold weather doubtless kept away many from the country. Within the hall everything went on in a quiet and orderly manner. But few of the voters remained after depositing their ballots, though a few of the older men, some of them as genuine rustics as one could wish to see, sat on the hard benches the greater part of the forenoon, attentively studying the reports of the town officers and school committee, which had been printed in neat pamphlets and distributed. I formed the impression that these reports were more widely and carefully read than are similar documents in the smaller cities. Nearly every man I met had copies, and I heard them discussed in shops and stores, in the post-office and at street corners, as well as in the town hall.

The only offices over which there was any contest were those of selectmen, and here the Republican nominees won. The selectmen serve also as assessors, overseers of the poor, and surveyors of highways. The other principal officers—treasurer, collector, auditors, town agent, town clerk, and school committee—are usually reelected year after year, following the good old New England custom. The "village" naturally gets the larger share of the offices; this year it has two of the three selectmen, all of the school committee, and all the other offices mentioned above except the town agent, an officer whose duty it seems to be to care for the legal interests of the town. As the compensation of the town agent last year was only \$10, it may be inferred that his duties are neither numerous nor burdensome. I was told that it was customary to choose the moderator from the village, and that several of the college professors had at various times served in that capacity.

The popular interest of the day centred in the afternoon session. The voters were reinforced by a large number of students from the college and high school, who crowded the rear of the hall and watched the proceedings with evident interest. The moderator displayed considerable skill in expediting business, ten of the twenty-five articles in the warrant being disposed of in less than an hour. Most of the minor town officers were given another term, among them the time-honored measurers.

of wood and bark, surveyors of logs and lumber, fence-viewers, fire-wardens, and surveyor of shingles and clapboards. This part of the proceedings called out but little discussion; indeed, the vote on the adoption of each article was in most instances scarcely audible. The usual appropriations for town expenses were made without opposition, the amounts voted being in two or three instances in excess of those suggested in the annual reports. A statement from the public-library association to the effect that the appropriation of last year would need to be doubled this year if the library was to remain free to all residents of the town, was favorably received, and the amount asked for, one thousand dollars, was promptly voted. The library was made free only a year ago, and an increase from one hundred to nine hundred in the number of persons taking out books was convincing proof of popular satisfaction with the experiment.

One item of business before the meeting was "to see if the town will vote to accept a U-shaped town-way over land of D. B. Blethen on the west side of the Twelve Rod Road." The moderator explained that the way in question was not shaped like the letter U, but in reality formed three sides of a rectangle; and in proof he displayed a small plan of the locality. The acceptance of the road was achieved without opposition, and the next article was about to be taken up, when some one raised the momentous question as to what and by whom the new road was to be named. It then appeared that there were three streets in the locality, which the owner of the land had expressed a desire to name respectively Columbia and Belmont Streets and Central Avenue. A dignified gentleman was moved to ask the length of the street which it was proposed to call Central Avenue; and on being told that its length was twenty rods, provoked loud applause by remarking dryly that the proposed name seemed to him "somewhat ambitious." The town finally decided to name the new highway South Spring Street, because it was in line with a Spring Street in another part of the town, which might some day be extended.

Under the influence of the discussion over the new road the hitherto rather frigid assembly had thawed perceptibly, and began to show interest in what was being done. One or two requests for electric street lights were granted, the town listening attentively to brief arguments by several men who "drove a good deal," to the effect that several accidents had occurred either from the absence of lights at the points named, or because existing lights were badly placed. One light asked for was granted on the statement of the deputy sheriff that the locality was "a hard place," and that an electric light would make things easier for the town police—a suggestion which seemed to imply the existence of an embryonic slum.

The interest of the meeting reached its climax in connection with the proposed discontinuance of the liquor agency. Under the Maine liquor law, each town or city may, at its discretion, establish an agency for the sale of liquors for medicinal, scientific, and mechanical purposes. In 1894 the town meeting voted to request the selectmen to establish an agency in Brunswick, the town having been for several years without one; the agency was accordingly opened, and the annual report showed sales for the year amounting to \$1,700. The reading of the article in the warrant referring to the agency was hardly finished before a loud chorus of voices burst forth, and

half-a-dozen men were on their feet calling for recognition. The minister who at the morning session had thanked God for the "high moral character" of the town, obtained the floor, and, producing a manuscript, read from it a vigorous denunciation of the liquor traffic in general and the agency in particular; but his rhetoric and enthusiasm played havoc with his argument, for he presently dropped the subject of temperance, and devoted the larger part of his address to a glorification of Brunswick, Bowdoin College, and the chief justice of the United States. Although listened to with impatience, and frequently interrupted by applause from the crowd in the rear of the hall, there was nevertheless no disposition to deny him the right to speak as long as he chose. The short speeches in rebuttal were rather the best of the day, the last speaker, a blind man, bringing down the house as he urged his demand for an agency on the ground that he was tired of being lied to by all the druggists in town. The article of the warrant was adroitly worded: it was "to see if the town will vote to discontinue the liquor agency"; and there was doubt among some of those present as to the precise effect of a vote not to discontinue, since the maintenance of an agency is optional with the selectmen. The moderator was interrogated, but vouchsafed only evasive answers. By an overwhelming majority the town voted not to discontinue the agency. The episode illustrated very well the unfortunate tendency to make the mention of liquor the occasion for joke and jest, and also the plain wish of the people for a place at which liquor could be legally purchased.

I was disappointed in the general character of the public speaking throughout the day. With one or two exceptions, none of the speaking was good, and most of it was noticeably poor. Of course, no one nowadays would look for oratory in a town meeting; but the speaking on Monday was distinctly inferior, in simplicity, readiness, and effectiveness, to what may be found in many smaller communities. In this respect, at least, the old order has passed away.

The town meeting this year was an average meeting; that is to say, there was no great political contest to bring out the voters, and the warrant contained few items of special interest. The occasion was favorable, therefore, for observing the ordinary and usual conduct of the town business, and in particular the fitness of the town meeting for its work. I came to the following conclusions: The population of Brunswick is not yet either so large or so heterogeneous as to make town government inefficient or the town meeting unmanageable. The affairs of the town are well and economically administered, political corruption is unknown, and such political favoritism as exists is not at the expense of the public service. The town reports are extensively read and freely criticised. The centring of political control in the hands of a few men, most of them residents of the village, undoubtedly helps to simplify and expedite business. The French or foreign vote is small, but intelligent and appreciative, and, while naturally Democratic, is not cast as a unit for either political party. Non-political officers are reelected year after year, practically without opposition. The town meeting remains as of old the event of the year, is well attended, and appeals forcibly to the young men of the community. A few men in the town meeting do most of the talking, but the measures passed have virtually unanimous approval. To sum up, the modifications in the old town system have been political rather than

administrative, and while these changes are in the direction of more rigid party control, they have not yet interfered with a management of town affairs which is at once effective, economical, and pure.

WILLIAM MACDONALD.

## THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

LONDON, February 26, 1895.

THE session has opened with a preliminary battle several times renewed and marked by incidents of great interest. The Government met Parliament with a nominal majority of 32, reduced during the recess to 14 by the formal defection of the 9 Parnellite members. The former majority of 32, none too large, was rather nominal than normal, because the attitude of the Parnellites was always unfriendly, and their support, often withheld, was tolerably certain only during the progress of the Irish Home-Rule Bill. The majority of 14 has been increased to 16 during the debate on the address, by a Liberal victory at Colchester. So small a majority, besides being an abiding element of danger, invited a repetition of the tactics which were pursued by the Opposition when the Liberals came into power after the general election of 1892. The old custom was for the Opposition, if they felt strong enough, to challenge the Government by moving an amendment to the address which was in terms or by implication (more often in terms) a vote of no confidence or of censure. It was done once and no more at that stage. But in August, 1892, the Opposition, believing that the Liberal majority of about forty contained elements of disintegration, delivered a series of assaults, led mainly by Mr. Chamberlain. These failed, and the Government was left materially stronger.

The same thing has happened again. The feature of the case most damaging to the Opposition has been that the unsuccessful attempts to dislodge the Government have been based on organized combination with groups to whose principles the Conservatives profess a strong antipathy. The Parnellites were, of course, available without any formal treaty. Then a dexterous attempt was made, by dangling the question of the unemployed, to detach from the Liberal Left the votes of a few members strongly sympathetic with labor distress, and not averse to socialistic experiments. That was the nature of the first amendment proposed by Mr. Jeffreys, member for an agricultural district in Hampshire. As it first appeared, it was a complaint of a familiar Conservative type, that the Government were neglecting agricultural depression. But, after consultation with Mr. Balfour, it was extended so as to include the question of the unemployed. The amendment was defeated by 12, nearly the full majority which the Government could reckon on. But the result was exhilarating to the Opposition and depressing to the Liberals, as it showed for the first time in black and white how slender an advantage in the House the latter possessed.

Next, Mr. Redmond, the Parnellite leader, moved an amendment calling for a dissolution on the question of home rule for Ireland. It was supported by the official Opposition, led by Mr. Balfour, but was defeated by a majority of 20. There were a few Conservative abstentions.

Then came the official Opposition amendment, which was intrusted to Mr. Chamberlain. The substance of it was, that the Government were bound to disclose their policy with