THE EMPIRE CITY.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE OF MAYOR HALL.

Resume of a Year's Local Legislation.

The Metropolitan Taxation and How It is Spent.

What the New City Government Has Done and What It Proposes to Do.

Statement of the Finances Up to May Day.

Local and Federal Taxation Compared.

Proposed Sale of City Property and the Probable Result Thereof.

The Advantages of the Departmental System of Governing.

Yesterday afternoon, at two o'clock, the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Assistant Aldermen met for the transaction of business. The Mayor sent his annual message to both Boards, and it was, on motion, received and ordered to be printed.

GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMON COUNCIL:—

The city charter requires an annual message from the Mayor and reports from the city departments. The intention of the requirement is to furnish information to our constituents, as well as to afford material for the practical co-operation of city officials.

Copies of these annual reports are hereto annexed. They end as nearly to the close of the municipal year (1870-71, April) as it is possible to conform their narrative or statistics to a period which best agrees with the system of work established by each department for its own convenience. They are thorough in information and do not need elucidation or explanation.

Before proceeding to general comments a few statistics should be premised. New York Island has an area of twenty-two square miles and twenty-nine miles of water front, about three-fourths of which stretches along the Hudson and East rivers and the remaining one-fourth upon the Harlem river and Spuyten Duyvil creek. The streets, roads and avenues measure 460 miles. Two hundred and ninety-one miles of these are paved; 169 miles are unpaved. Nineteen thousand gaslights are burned every night at the public expense to light this area, water front and extent of streets. Beneath the surface of the city there are 340 miles of Croton water pipes and 275 miles of sewers. If we accept the last federal census the number of our constituents is 942,292. One thousand horse railway cars, 267 omnibuses, about twelve thousand licensed vehicles and quite as many more private vehicles continually traverse the thoroughfares and subject them to increasing wear. It is claimed that 40,000 horses are constantly stabled or used within the city limits. On the 26th day of May last reliewing officers of the Ordnance squad, stationed on Broadway, opposite the City Hall, were instructed to report the number of vehicles that from seven o'clock A. M. until seven o'clock P. M. passed and repassed, and they reported 16,246, exclusive of omnibuses. These specimen statistics imply how great a city we have to care for, keep in repair, sustain by taxation, protect by policemen, firemen or sanitary regulations and make provision for in respect to its more important future. During the ten months preceding May 1, 1871, $284,000,000 worth of foreign merchandise, exclusive of specie, was imported into this city. During the same period New York city paid the government $129,000,000 for duties on imports, and the value of exports, exclusive of specie, was $251,000,000.

Certain peculiarities of the city and its people may be serviceably recalled. New York is the cosmopolitan city of the globe. People of all nationalities, many jealousies and diverse creeds inhabit it. Every good and bad habit of human nature is illustrated within its limits. Every development of misfortune, poverty, vice and crime is here to be found. To the evil manifestations as well as the excellent ones of our city life every clime contributes. It is a misfortune to New York population that, contributed to, as it is, by all parts of the world, local pride develops within our city under increasing difficulty. Every other city seems to have its pride and its citizens more prone from motives of local loyalty, if not to apologize for or screen at least to act kindly towards, the defects and faults of fellow citizens and rulers. Topographically our city is peculiar, because it is long and narrow and lacks circumference of immediate rural suburbs. The suburbs are really tributary cities divided from New York by wide rivers. Nearly sixty per cent of the daily business inhabitants of New York own or rent their residences in the adjoining country, and while their wives and children are practically under the government of other cities and counties and even states, the business interests and security of persons and property of the family men are practically under the government of New York city, and they are more impressed to blame where they have no domestic interests. Thus, while the city possesses, as will be inferred from many of the foregoing references, great advantages for development of commerce and wealth, other references imply how difficult it is to frame, and how vexatious it is for rulers to try and develop, a perfect or universally acceptable municipal government.

After a quarter century of legislative experiments upon the government of this city—all of which have been from time to time complained about and referred to in annual messages of mayors of both parties—the existing municipal system went into operation one year ago. We simply returned then to the original form of our city government. Its system is almost identical with that which prevails in four-fifths of the cities in the Union. But we had been so long accustomed to something else that this return has been actually received in some quarters as an innovation. It has become in some partisan directions common cant to call the government of New York a despotism. What is this system? The Commonalty elect the Mayor. Executive duties are distributed and classified among many departments. The Mayor appoints the heads of departments. These heads appoint their subordinates. The Common Council or legislative department is filled by election. The oldest legal tribunal—the Court of Common Pleas—is a court of impeachment, before which the Common Council may prefer charges against the Mayor, or the Mayor in his turn prepare charges against the city departments. How these departments operate, and what subjects they appropriately take charge of, will be discovered in the reports. Some of these departments are controlled by boards and commissioners, and comment continues to be made upon the alleged inconsistency of maintaining boards and commissions after, as is averred, the advocates for independent city government denounced them. But no one ever did denounce boards and commissions *per se*. They have always existed within our local government. The opposition was only to the centralized mode of appointing at Albany boards and commissions of local control, and without any voice whatever from local officers or constituency in the appointment.

Illogical and erroneous comments have been made upon the recently authorized (and what is supposed to be a novel) mode of estimating, apportioning and levying by tax the city and county expenditures. Dispassionate examination, however, convinces that the system is a customary one. New York city always held, in this respect, an anomalous position. Everywhere else local officials made up estimates and reported them to the Boards of Supervisors, and thereupon the latter levied taxes to meet those estimates. Heretofore the Legislature made up our tax budgets. It is true, the local authorities attempted to make and did submit estimates in Albany. But these were comparatively disregarded. And it came to pass each session that when a tax levy appeared it was accompanied by a horde of jobbers and claimants who, turned aside by the local authorities, sought to (and sometimes did) impose upon ill-informed rural legislators.

THE BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT.

When the Metropolitan Police law was enacted (1857) one of its provisions created a Board of Apportionment consisting of the Mayors and Comptrollers of New York and Brooklyn and the Commissioners of Police, who met, estimated and fixed the expenditures for police purposes in each ensuing year. They reported this amount, and it was levied by the Supervisors. The Court of Appeals held the whole law to be constitutional. The provision was found serviceable, and accepted by the press and public. Other metropolitan departments (Health, Central Park and Fire) pursued a similar course for themselves in fixing estimates and taxes. In the charter of 1870 the like provision was applied to the municipal departments of Police, Health, Fire, Buildings, Works, Parks and Charities and Correction. When the Legislature assembled in January last only the expenditures for the Judicial, Aldermanic and Finance Departments, and for rents and interest (all these expenditures being deemed by law) remained to be classified and reported to the Supervisors. It was, therefore, deemed judicious by the Mayor, Comptroller and other city officials, and by a large number of holders of city bonds, and by many representative taxpayers, that procedures so generally acquiesced in should be consolidated. That instead of several Boards of Apportionment, each independent and not only acting without concert, but interferingly, there might be only one of adjusting and restraining power. That instead of distributing responsibility for expenditures among twenty officials and then dividing that responsibility with the Legislature, it might be centred in a few. Thereupon an act was introduced constituting such a Board of Apportionment, and naming as members the Mayor, Comptroller, the Commissioner of Public Works and the President of the Department of Public Parks. This selection was made because each one of the persons in those posts had held a variety of elective and appointive offices in the city and county during the past twenty years, were the seniors in public service of all the city and county officials, and were therefore presumed to be best and thoroughly acquainted with the wants and exigencies of that service. The act also contained a provision limiting their aggregate apportionment to two per cent upon a fixed valuation of property made by another board—that of Commissioners of Taxes and Assessments, composed of two democrats and two republicans—who had always fixed it, and who had already approximately ascertained it before this proposition of apportionment was broached. There could have been limitation made only by such a Board, because estimates had already been made by the numerous Boards, and only by the new system could adjustment and reduction then be made. Immediately upon the proposition becoming public there arose in certain quarters inconsistent and ignorant denunciation. It was inconsistent because it suspected jobbery when the plan presented limitation of expenditure, and granted power to one Board in place of the unlimited power of appropriation existing in several independent Boards. It was ignorant, because averring the provision unconstitutional and unprecedented, when the like plan had been ten or fifteen years in constant existence and had undergone the ordeal of constitutional challenge at the bar of the highest State court.

THE RATE OF FIXED TAXATION.

However the plan has become a statutory one, and for two years. A modification of it was made before adoption because the state taxes for 1871 and chargeable to our city and county were ascertained, since the bill of Plan was introduced, to exceed in amount that for 1870. The rate of fixed taxation will therefore be two per cent on the aforementioned fixed valuation in addition to the fractional per cent necessary to pay the State tax excess just spoken of. The amount of fixed valuation is $1,075,000,000—two per cent on this makes $21,500,000. The excess of State tax for 1871 over 1870 is $1,800,000, so that only $21,300,000 will be raised this year by taxation—of which $6,741,956 18 will be needed for our proportion of State taxes, about six millions for interest, about two millions and a half for education, about three millions for police, about a million for public charities and correction and another million for Fire Department. The operation of the two per cent bill, so far, in reducing expenses, in preventing schemes against the Treasury, and arresting throughout every department that tendency to extravagance which is the peculiarity of the age, even in private life, has proved a perfect answer to the frenzied attacks that were made upon it. It was to be the Behemoth which would trample down civic liberty and devastate our parks. It was to enrich all officials, corrupt the schools, poison our fountains of charities, and ultimately place the city in the hands of a vigilance committee.

Considered in a partisan aspect this limitation of responsibility and taxation by the two per cent bill was impolitic. It concentrated responsibility for expenditure, which hitherto had been shared in undefinable proportions by the members of the Legislature, the Governor, the Supervisors, the members of the Common Council and a variety of city officials. Such concentration of responsibility, of course, now holds local party leaders to the strictest accountability to the people. It was a measure desired by the people, and it had the effect at least of repressing a score of claims and jobs. But the present was not a favorable time to initiate or to practice great economy. During the last fifteen years the extravagance of some of the irresponsible departments and the mistaken economy of others had developed deficiencies, claims and jobs, and had postponed necessary improvements. The consequence has been that the restored city government found itself a legatee of all such irresponsible extravagance, and, at the same time, a trustee for developing, and at enhanced cost, improvements that, in justice to our successors and posterity, can no longer be postponed. The Mayor believes that the people are willing, if they see available results of the expenditure, to incur a larger debt in order to improve the water front, repave streets, finish boulevards, supply defects in sewage and drainage, and, by means of widening, cutting and extending streets, adapt thoroughfares to the future demands of the great American metropolis. A million of dollars should be used for repaving the cobble stoned streets in the districts east of Bowery and south of Canal street. An equal sum ought to be expended for drainage and extending sewer heads into the river. It is just that old portions of the city should have their Croton mains renewed, and obtain a doubled or larger supply for water. Therefore, however much the people demand economy, and however many of his official associates differ from him, the Mayor is not willing to go on record without a protest in behalf of posterity against the want of foresight and generosity which so many of the taxpayers of to-day display and to whose clamors the city officials have responded with economical endeavors. If twenty millions could be expended within the next three years New York city, at the expiration of that time, would be entirely renovated. And the increased valuation thereby given to assessable property, and the additional attractions afforded to trade and commerce, especially at portions of the city which have been long neglected, would almost immediately lighten the burden of taxation by better distributing it. Outcry against "plunderers," "jobbers," "high taxation," "ruinous expenditure," &c., has been heard in New York for forty years. Of course the outcry increases in volume as the city expands, but any one who doubts the stereotype character of the cry may verify the fact by consulting, in the historical Library, continuous files of New York journals during the period mentioned.

FINANCE.

The Comptroller's Report comes down to the end of the fiscal year, December 31, 1870, but substantially the City Finances upon May-day may be summed up thus:—

CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

State of the Treasury.

Receipts from January 1 to April 30, 1871	$14,501,945
Deduct amount of over draft December 31, 1870	967,675
	$13,534,270
Payments—Warrants drawn	11,917,183
Balance in the Treasury April 30, 1871	$1,617,086

Debt of the City.

Funded debt December 31, 1870		$48,016,796
Less amount redeemed to April 30, 1871		51,432
		$47,965,364
Bonds and stocks issued to April 30, 1871, as follows:—		
Dock bonds	$85,000	
City Improvement stock	540,500	
Central Park Improvement Fund stock of 1856	100,000	
Ninth District Court House stock	300,000	
Croton Water Main stock	400,000	
		1,745,500
Outstanding April 30, 1871		$49,710,864
Temporary debt, representing bonds issued to provide means for payment of awards for opening streets and for expense of improving the same.		
Amount December 31, 1870		$10,521,100
Amount issued to April 30, 1871:—		
Assessment Fund bonds	$322,900	
Street Improvement Fund bonds	66,500	
		389,400
Outstanding		$10,910,500
This debt is redeemable from assessments to be collected.		
Revenue Bonds, 1870.		
Amount outstanding December 31, 1870		$3,080,000
These bonds were redeemed January 15, 1871.		
Revenue Bonds of 1871.		
Amount issued to April 30, 1871, in anticipation of the collection of the taxes for 1871		$9,774,300
These bonds are payable at stated periods, from October 1, 1871, to January 15, 1872, as the taxes are collected.		

1.—*Sinking Fund for the Liquidation of the City Debt.*

Capital of this fund December 31, 1870		$17,799,219
Increase since, to April 30, 1871		475,416
		$18,274,635
Payments, expenses, &c	$7,462	
Water stock redeemed	51,432	
		58,894
Capital April 30, 1871		$18,215,741

2.—*Sinking Fund for the Payment of Interest on City Debt.*

Cash balance to credit of this fund, December 31, 1870		$62,132
Receipts since, to April 30, 1871		215,444
		$277,577
Less payments		150,691
Credit balance April 30, 1871		$126,886

THE COUNTY OF NEW YORK.

State of the Treasury.

Balance in the Treasury December 31, 1870	$1,692,084
Receipts from January 1 to April 30, 1871	5,255,058
Total	$7,927,142
Payments—Warrants drawn	5,042,723
Balance in County Treasury April 30, 1871	$2,884,418

Debt of the County of New York.

Funded Debt—Amount December 31, 1870		$20,981,350
Amount of Stocks and Bonds issued since, to April 30, 1871, as follows:—		
New Court House stock No. 3, issued under tax levy of 1869	$600,000	
Assessment Fund stock	16,000	
		616,000
Total April 30, 1871		$21,591,350

Revenue Bonds.

Amount outstanding December 31, 1870, viz.:—	
Redeemable January 15, 1871	$2,574,200
Redeemable December 1, 1871	6,312,000
Total	$8,886,200
Amount issued in 1871 to April 30	4,584,800
Total	$13,471,000
Amount redeemed January 15, 1871	2,574,200
Outstanding April 30, 1871	$10,896,800

Surprise has been superficially expressed why the investments of the "sinking fund for the redemption of the city debt" are not cancelled and the principal of the debt reduced.

But when the object for which the fund was originally established is understood, it will be evident that the investments must continue until the whole city debt is ready for liquidation.

The ordinance creating the fund declares that the moneys received from certain specified sources "are hereby pledged to and constitute a fund for the redemption of the city debt, until the whole of the stocks of the city of New York shall be finally and fully redeemed."

The same ordinance directs the Commissioners to invest the moneys which shall accumulate in certain stocks, making it imperative, however, for them, at all times, to give preference to the stock of the city, if the same can be procured at a reasonable rate.

The ordinance also declares that the city stock purchased by the Commissioners shall not be cancelled by them until the final redemption of the said stock; and all interest accruing thereon shall regularly be carried to the sinking fund for the redemption of the city debt.

The ordinance created a cumulative fund for a specific object—to wit, "the redemption of the city debt"—and that fund is not to be abrogated, in part or whole, until the entire city debt can be fully paid and cancelled.

The net proceeds of all real estate sold, and all the other revenues to this fund, have been officially pledged to the holders of the stocks of the corporation for the payment of their stock at maturity, and this pledge cannot be withdrawn without a violation of the public faith, and such a violation of the public faith of the corporation would tend not only to depreciate the value of the stocks of the city now outstanding, but render it difficult to negotiate future loans on terms advantageous to the city.

Besides, if the accumulations of more than twenty-five years in this fund, so often referred to in the public documents of the Department of Finance as held beyond all contingencies for the redemption of the city debt, are cancelled and the pledge thus officially made and repeated to the holders of the city stocks violated, it would create a distrust in the public mind, and especially on the part of trust companies, savings banks, trustees and foreign stockholders. A result of which would be that large amounts of stocks must come upon the market, to be disposed of at prices far below their real value, and cause loss to those who have invested trust and other funds in the securities of the corporation, and relying upon the pledge of the assets of the sinking fund as a guarantee for the payment of their investments at maturity or of their ready sale, without loss, in case of necessity.

What compensating benefits would accrue to justify an interference with this fund, in its present prosperous condition, by cancelling its assets, in whole or in part? The investments in city stocks are in fact, if not in form, a reduction of the city debt in a like amount. They are held for this specific purpose, while the revenue arising therefrom as interest goes to increase the fund for the entire redemption of the city debt, the same as the rental revenues of former real estate before it was sold (now represented in these assets) used to be pledged to this object. The net city funded debt is uniformly stated as the balance remaining after deducting the entire assets of this fund. The only possible compensation that could be claimed would be the small item of taxes for interest on these investments. Even were this so it would not meet the case, as a much larger amount would be required to be raised by taxation (if these assets are cancelled) to redeem the stocks of the city, maturing from year to year.

The credit of the city now rests on a firm basis, because it has been frequently demonstrated that the sinking fund, as now constituted, with its accumulations from interests on its investments and other sources, will be found amply sufficient to pay the city debt as it matures without resort to taxation for a dollar for that purpose, except as provided for in the case of Public Education stock and Floating Debt Fund stock. The fund for reducing the city debt is apart from, and an addition to the immense property possessed by the city, and in obtaining which a large portion of this debt was incurred, thereby making the debt an investment. In the city report of the Comptroller (page 63) will be found an exact calculation regarding the mode and time of this ultimate extinction of the city debt.

DEPARTMENT OF TAXES.

The Department of Taxes and Assessments is composed of four Commissioners, appointed by the Comptroller of the City and county of New York in May, 1869, pursuant to chap. 808, laws of 1869.

This act reorganized the department, and was imperatively demanded of the Legislature in order to enable the department to exercise its important functions without question as to its authority to act.

The Commissioners of Taxes and Assessments have the power, and it is their duty to ascertain and fix the amount of all the taxable property, real and personal, in the city and county of New York.

This duty requires the utmost caution and delicacy as well as vigilance on the part of the Commissioners and their deputies, as it become the inquisitorial power of the local government to discover the property liable to taxation, and the equalizing power to adjust the burden among our people so that no one shall pay more than his proper share.

Upon the valuations made by the Commissioners the annual tax is levied in the form of a specific percentage, and upon the authority of the Commissioners to act depends the right of the country to tax the property, and the lien of the unpaid taxes upon the real estate in the city. Owing to the confusion which had for ten years existed as to who rightfully held the office under various laws that had been passed, and under various decisions of the Court of Appeals upon the constitutionality of some of these laws, the Legislature, upon the petition of leading citizens, passed the act of 1869 above referred to, authorizing the Comptroller to appoint four Commissioners of Taxes and Assessments. The present incumbents were appointed and were selected by the Comptroller equally from both political parties, so as to take the arbitrary power of taxation out of the sphere of politics and make it, what it should be, a purely business function.

The department has been thoroughly organized, and is one of the most efficient in any city, giving unqualified satisfaction to our citizens.

The report of the Commissioners is exhaustive on the subject, and cannot fail to prove deeply interesting to all who participate in the direct support of the local government.

A commission, composed of Messrs. Anthony J. Bleecker, Courtlandt Palmer and Adrian H. Muller, is now engaged in compiling a tabular estimate of real estate owned by the city. Pending its reception the Mayor extracts a general estimate made editorially by one of the daily papers of republican politics; but he is of opinion that it is an estimate too minimum in value:—

For while the city has suffered by irresponsible misgovernment it has held a large estate of its own, which has grown in value far more rapidly than its debt, and which is to-day probably worth, in cash, five times as much as it owes. For instance, at the present prices of land and houses in this city, competent surveyors represent the following as a low estimate of the public property held in trust for the people by our municipal rulers:—

The Central Park, containing 11,000 lots, at $10,000 at least	$100,000,000
Twenty smaller parks and places	33,000,000
Ten public markets	5,000,000
City lots for public use	4,000,000
Water lots and Brooklyn lots	1,500,000
Seventy piers, North and East rivers	5,000,000
Croton Aqueduct property	100,000,000
Fire Department—land, buildings and apparatus	3,500,000
Police stations, &c	1,500,000
Public education—land and buildings	8,000,000
Courts, prisons and the like, with islands in the East river	7,500,000
Total	$267,000,000

These estimates do not include any prospective valuation of the islands in the vicinity of the Hell Gate channel, nor of the improvements projected by the Department of Docks. But it is confidently expected that plans now before that department will make the piers and the new lots in connection with them almost as important a source of revenue to the city as the Erie Canal ever was of income to the State. It is true that but a small part of all this property is likely ever to be sold; on the city debt is a lien upon it all, so that the possession of it sustains the public credit; and, besides, it is property in actual and productive use, and the only reason why it will not be sold is because it is more valuable to the city as a whole for public than for private purposes.

It has been urged that the city should sell its piers and improvable property, and only prepare and enforce some uniform scheme of improvement. But if this were done there would not come a uniform time in which the improvements could progress or be perfected. Besides, the improved piers would sell for a very much larger price than now, even adding the expenditures with interest.

There have recently been made attacks upon the city credit, which originated in the zeal of subagents of the government, appointed to place its new loan upon the market. It is fair to add they were discountenanced by the Secretary of the Treasury. But the best answer to them is that the Mayor and Comptroller find it the easiest of their duties to negotiate, both at home and abroad, in small or large sums and at handsome premiums, all the bonds authorized by the last Legislature. The fiscal books of the city are always open to its creditors, but the Mayor is responsible for often refusing their access to irresponsible persons who desired to examine accounts for undoubted purposes of misrepresentation, either by concealing some details or distorting others. Such is also the policy of the federal government at the Custom House and the Treasury. And because the accounts and resources of the city are found to be correct and ample, it is that city creditors retain or renew their loans, and shrewd bankers and corporations make request for city securities.

The rate of taxation in New York city has never been so great as that in Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and many other cities which could be named. The attacks upon what is called our excessive municipal taxation generally proceed from men and writers who could better improve their time and vindicate their disinterestedness should they turn their attention toward the oppressive federal taxation inaugurated under auspices of the party to which they belong.

It has been stated over and over again by them that our city taxation was more than double per capita than the national taxation. To refute this absurdity the Mayor presents a table, in which is shown an estimated consumption of commodities for the city of New York, the national tax charged thereon and the amount of taxes indirectly collected on the million of inhabitants in New York.

ESTIMATED CONSUMPTION OF SUNDRY ARTICLES IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK TAXED BY GOVERNMENT.

Article.	*Estimated Consumption Annum.*	*Duty or Internal Tax.*	*Amount of Taxes collected, Government and Monopolies.*
Pig iron	60,000 tons	$7 per ton	$420,000
Rolled and hammered iron	30,000 tons	$28 per ton	840,000
Lead	2,000,000 lbs.	2c. per lb.	40,000
Steel and wire	$2,000,000 worth	Av. 35 p. c.	700,000
Hardware, cutlery and tools	$2,000,000 worth	Av. 35 p. c.	700,000
Chemicals and drugs	$2,000,000 worth	Av. 40 p. c.	800,000
Coal	2,000,000 tons	$1 25 p. ton	2,500,000
Coffee	10,000,000 lbs.	3c. per lb.	300,000
Sugar	60,000,000 lbs.	3c. per lb.	1,800,000
Tea	11,200,000 lbs.	15c. per lb.	180,000
Domestic spirits	2,000,000 gallons	50c. per gal.	1,000,000
Fermented liq'rs	400,000 kegs	$1 per keg	400,000
Foreign wines	600,000 gallons	50c. in av'ge.	300,000
Champagne	50,000 dozen	$6 per doz.	300,000
Foreign spirits, brandy, &c.	100,000 gallons	$3 per doz.	300,000
Foreign cigars	100,000 lbs.	$2 50 per lb. and 25 p. c.	325,000
Domestic tobacco and cigars	Total tax for the city collected, $4,500,000	.....	1,200,000 as city proportion.
Income tax on	$120,000,000	2½ p. c.	3,000,000
On gas	2,400,000 c. feet	25c. per 1,000 c. feet	600,000
On banks and bankers	as collected in 1870	.....	1,500,000
Silks, velvets, ribbons and silk trimmings	6,000,000	60 p. c.	3,600,000
Silk dress goods mixed with other material	2,000,000	50 p. c.	1,000,000
Cloths, woolen, woolen dress goods and blankets	10,000,000	65 p. c. av.	6,500,000
Cotton goods	85,000,000	50 p. c. av.	2,500,000
Building materials, including lumber, stone, slate, cement, paint, glass, &c	$20,000,000	Av. 25 p. c.	5,000,000
Printers' paper and stationery	10,000,000	20 p. c.	2,000,000
Salt	2,000,000 bush.	10c. p. bush.	200,000
Boots and shoes	6,000,000	Ex'n'l 7½ p.c.	450,000
Foreign dried fruit	$500,000	60 p. c. av.	300,000
Green fruit	$1,000,000	25 p. c.	250,000
Linen and hemp goods	$1,000,000	35 p. c.	350,000
Tin plates and tinware	1,000,000	25 p. c.	250,000
Glassware, crockery and porcelain	2,000,000	45 p. c.	900,000
On stamps	Total tax collec'd in the U. S., $16,544,000	.....	N. Y. proportion, say 2,000,000
Total			$42,605,000

These estimates are much under the mark. It is impossible to enumerate all articles. It may be fairly assumed, however, that by the oppressive system of federal taxation this great city is annually mulcted in fifty million dollars of taxes. How much more our citizens pay into the pockets of a few favored classes, through enhanced cost of domestic manufacture, it is impossible to estimate.

This unimpeachable statement gives opportunity for a fair comparison as to whom the national taxes fall upon and on whom the city taxes press. The city tax is composed of two kinds, the real property tax and the personal tax. The latter does not fall on the poorer or working classes. But the former is held up as oppressive on them, inasmuch as it falls on rentals. To deal with this tax fairly it is necessary to fix a rental basis. Now, the rental value of real estate in the city of New York has been estimated by experts, on the valuation of the Tax Commissioners, to be at the very lowest one hundred and fifty million dollars per annum. Thus they value the real estate at $768,000,000. Their standard of value is less than the real market value. A tax of two per cent upon the above sum would amount to about $15,000,000, which latter sum is about ten per cent on the rental values. A tenant who pays $200 rent a year would be, on such figures, liable through his landlord to a tax of $20. But let us compare this tax with the local tax of a tenant who lives in the so-called honest and richest city in the world—viz., London. An official return of the local taxation actually collected in the year 1866 (the latest period at hand) in St. Marylebone, in London, shows a tax rated on the rental as follows:—

	On pound of rental value.
Poor rate	£0 2 2¾
General rate, street lighting, watering and paving	0 0 11
Sewer rate	0 0 4
Church rate	0 0 1
Metropolitan main drainage rate	0 0 4
Total	£0 4 10½

—on the pound of rental, or 19.37 per cent on the rental.

It therefore follows that if the London tenant inhabits a house at a yearly rent of $200 he would have to pay $38 74 local taxes, or nearly double the New York rate.

It could be, however, statistically established that the average rent is really about one-seventh of a mechanic's earnings in our city. Thus, a man, in order to pay $200 rent per annum, ought to earn $1,400. The average rent of the working classes is $2 40 to $2 50 per week, or $130 per annum. The city tax, therefore, on that most useful class of citizens is, or should be $13 per annum, which, if divided as per usual rate of a family of six, would be $2 17 per capita.

Then how does the national taxation compare with all this? Say that a family, consisting of two adults and four children, consume of the following five articles (as actual statistics average in a family whose head receives $700 a year wages):—

Per Week.	*Amount*	*Duty.*	*Amount of Tax.*
Sugar and molasses	$1 26	Average, 50 per cent.	63c.
Tea	51	Average, 50 per cent.	25½c.
Coffee	25	20 per cent.	10c.
Soap and starch	25	10 per cent.	12½c.
Coal, 1-6 ton	1 15	$1 25 per ton, and including protection	21c.

The tax, therefore, paid to government by such a family, $1 32½, is $68 64 per annum on these simple five articles of necessity. Of course there has to be added a tax on clothing, household articles, liquors, tobacco and a hundred other articles; and it is fair to assume that a mechanic, with six in the family, is taxed by government at least $100 per annum, or fully one-seventh of his earnings, or $16 66 per capita, or nearly eight times more than he is taxed by the city in which he lives. Besides, it must be remembered that the city gives him something for his tax, such as free schools, hospital service, health legislation, police protection, use of parks and water, &c., while the government gives him nothing in return beyond extending over him the ægis of its military protection.

It could be furthermore shown that while the city taxation, as a rule, falls heavy on capital, great incomes and stately mansions, the government taxes fall solely on the labor of the country and in a most ridiculously small degree on opulence and wealth.

A mechanic earning $700 per annum and being six in a family, as before shown, pays to the national government $68 64 tax on five articles—viz., sugar, tea, coffee, soap, starch and coal—which alone is about one-tenth of his income.

Suppose next an instance of a rich family consisting of six, whose income is $100,000 per annum, what would their national tax be on those five articles? Suppose them to use or squander three times the same amount of commodities as the first named family—for instance, 25 tons of coal per annum, 150 pounds of coffee and 75 pounds of tea. The tax per annum for the rich family would then be $205 92, which is a four hundred and eightieth part of the income of $100,000, or, in an income of $10,000, about one forty-eighth part of the income.

Suppose, again, a city millionnaire to consume, during the year, ten dozen of the best champagne, costing $300; the government tax thereon is $6 a dozen, or $60, which is only 20 per cent on the gross amount. Suppose a city mechanic to use two gallons of whiskey per annum, at $1 per gallon; the tax thereon is fifty cents per gallon, or 100 per cent on the gross amount.

Under these illustrations what logically becomes of the absurd charge that by comparison with federal taxation the municipal is oppressive?

It is in contemplation to dispose of much city property, such as piots and buildings heretofore used by city departments, as well as market and pier property. It is believed by the commissioners of the sinking fund that at least $5,000,000 can be realized to the fund for extinction of the city debt by such a sale. Within the next year the intention of the commissioners of the sinking fund will assume a practical and serviceable shape. It is desirable that the property now used for markets should continue to be so used, but in the hands of individuals or companies. It has not been the wish of the city authorities to embarrass market privileges of property, but only to disincumber themselves of the trouble and expense of publicly maintaining markets after developments of public economy have shown that individuals or private corporations can better discharge market duty than can a municipal corporation. Indeed, treating the market traffic as a business, why should the city carry that on any more than any other species?

POLICE.

Next to city finances the subject most important to the public is the maintenance of good order and the suppression and punishment of crime. It is a partisan fashion to call New York city the wickedest one in the civilized world. But notwithstanding that the refuse vice and crime of every town, village and city of this country, and of those of many foreign countries, is substantially drained into New York city, it has a less percentage of crime committed every year, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, than is committed with the majority of the New England cities. Citizens who will take the trouble during the next two or three months, while reading the newspapers, to observe and number the accounts of crime and vice from places elsewhere than in New York, will not need statistics to support these averments. Our very homicides are, with rare exceptions, the results of chance-medley and accidental encounters. For reports of cruel grudge-cherished murders and abominable, romantic or plotted crimes, the sensation press search elsewhere than in New York. The Boston *Advertiser*, which is not a democratic newspaper, recently commenting upon the result in the Foster case remarks:—

Probably, and in spite of the general impression to the contrary, the way of trangressors who fall into the hands of the law in New York is harder than in almost any other city in the country. Governor Hoffman, when City Recorder, made himself a reputation, which Recorder Hackett has worthily sustained, as a terror to evil doers, and ex-Governor Morgan once remarked that he believed that to Hoffman, Hackett and City Judge Bedford, New York was more indebted than to any other three men she had ever had for the repression of crime and the strict and rigorous administration of justice. Since becoming chief magistrate of the State Governor Hoffman has rarely exercised the executive clemency to save or rescue criminals from the judgments of the courts.

It is also a stereotyped partisan charge that criminal complaints, capable of being perfected by convictions, are pigeon-holed by the magistrates and the District Attorney. This is a groundless fabrication. For instance, at the time when the present incumbent of the mayoralty resigned the District Attornership, after twelve years of almost continuous service, he is sure there was not one untried indictment, or one untried complaint in the prosecutor's office, for the non-trial of which, either by intrinsic evidence among the papers, or by extrinsic evidence easily procured, there did not exist some absolute reason, founded upon defects in the law or in the character of the evidence, or in the absence of witnesses. The present District Attorney asseverates the like fact as to his office and challenges proof to the contrary. Aggrieved complainants and even malicious ones hold such ready access to the public ear through communications in the public press that if the assertions here disputed had been true neither of the District Attorneys would have found his social relations as agreeable as they certainly are. It has been alleged that new-born zeal against criminals exists. Can any citizen, however, recall the case of one desperado or culprit whose crime (unless shrouded in an incomprehensible mystery) has not for years and years been as exemplarily dealt with as criminals are now?

The report of the Police Department makes a good exhibit. But the time is at hand when the citizens must endure an additional tax of a million dollars per year to maintain 7.0 or 800 more patrolmen. The police report states the number of the force at 2,325 (there are nearly 10,000 in and around London,) which gives one policeman to only about every 400 of our inhabitants, computing upon the last census.

The ordinary difficulties under which even a large force labors appear to be well stated in the following three paragraphs, quoted from a recent London Metropolitan report:—

A system of beats is indispensable to every police system, although open to the obvious objection that every point in the beat is necessarily uncovered for a longer or shorter period, and that no one knows where to find a policeman when he is wanted.

It may be said, as a rule, that no crime is committed when a policeman is in sight; ubiquity being impossible, activity and intelligence must, as far as possible supply its place, and to develop these qualities to the utmost is one of the great considerata of any police system.

Detection of crime is, after repression, a most important part of the duty of the police force. At the best the police can only make clean the outside of the platter; the improvement of the morals and manners of the people must be left to higher agencies, and practically, the police cannot hope to do more than prevent a certain proportion of crime in such an enormous aggregation as London.

The number of arrests stated in the police report seems great. But it must be remembered that these statistics embrace repeated arrests of the same person during the year for vagrancy, drunkenness, disorder and the lighter offences. But the report of the Police Board is so elaborate that it would be waste of time to indulge in comments.

Indeed, the same may well be said of the reports of all the other departments. All of them deserve the most attentive perusal. They would each and all be here summarized if it were not certain that the reporters for the press will discharge that duty to the public better and more disinterestedly.

PARKS.

That from the Department of Public Parks will be found peculiarly interesting. The citizen who walks or drives about the island, however, may witness for himself how materially and favorably this department, by its works, has reported to the public. The Park Commissioners have literally fulfilled their expected duty "of making the waste places glad." They have discharged their responsibility with taste and economy. When the old Board left Central Park as a legacy to the new one the advocates of the former claimed that this Park would now go to ruin. But its widened roads, its new paths, its improved drainage, its newly opened landscapes, its universally neat appearance, its increased administration in preventing disorder, its museum and its new plans, carry with them many reasons for the prevailing approval of the populace. With any set of men who have done well, but must give place unto others, it is natural to indulge in apprehensions about successors. Few individuals encounter even death without wondering how will the world progress without them. But even copy books inform us that what man has done man can do, mortifying as such a reflection may be to one who hopes to best keep his memory green by preventing others from sharing in or emulating his own greatness.

FIRE AND HEALTH.

Not a suggestion of complaint has been made throughout the year against the Fire Department. It is universally appreciated.

The Health Department (warring as it peculiarly does and must against personal liberty and property uses) has also won encomiums from the citizens.

WORKS.

The Department of Public Works is just now a costly one. The foresight of its eminently executive chief last summer prevented great disaster to the city from threatened insufficiency of water supply. It is absolutely necessary that he should in this year acquire all the water property possible in the counties tributary to New York in order to provide not so greatly for the present as for the future, and that not only of Manhattan Island, but as well of Westchester county, when the metropolis shall absorb its growing towns.

It is also necessary that he should make large expenditures for repairing sewers and relaying and extending Croton pipes. The old croton boards claim credit for economy, but they receive the Credit while there is a great debit to their foresight. It is due to the eminent engineer in this department, Mr. Edward H. Tracy, that the Mayor should emphasize in an official document the popular verdict to Mr. T