REFORM.

Immense Mass Meeting of Political Reformers at Cooper Institute.

The Committee of Seventy Give an Account of Their Stewardship.

AN APPEAL TO THE VOTERS.

The Story of the Ruin, the Degradation and the Dishonor of the City.

A REMEDY SUGGESTED.

The Answer Given to "What are You Going to Do About It?"

UNION AND VICTORY.

Combination of Democrats and Republicans to Defeat the Ring.

GO-BETWEEN CANDIDATES DENOUNCED.

"The Lions of the Custom House and the Lambs of Horace Greeley to Lie Down Together."

Speeches by Stebbins, Choate, Tilden and Evarts.

What Mr. Choate Thinks of Tweed and His Constituency.

Tweed Has No Chance of Entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Union League Club on the Great City Crisis.

The Aldermanic Election and the Action of the Mayor.

Miscellaneous Meetings in the City Last Night.

Never since the great gathering to ratify the nomination for a second term of the martyr President was such an earnest, enthusiastic and respectable assemblage gathered within the hall of the historic Cooper Institute as last night woke its echoes. There were but a few ladies present; yet there was no disorder, and not a particle of excuse for the presence of the large force of policemen in the hall. A more orderly and intelligent, though determined, meeting was never held in the city. It would be impossible to estimate the number of people of all ranks, classes, trades and political complexions who were present within and without the building. Not an inch of standing room was vacant for a moment from the commencement of the meeting to its close, and it was exceedingly difficult for those whose duties required them to move about to squeeze through the earnest and compact crowd. Over the platform the significant legend was spread on canvas

"WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT,"

and around the supporting pillars were gracefully entwined State and national flags. There was no music, but the audience did not require the stimulus of sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. On the platform were the following named gentlemen:—Cyrus W. Field, General John A. Dix, Samuel J. Tilden, S. B. Chittenden, General Jackson, W. M. Evarts, Andrew W. Green, Major J. M. Bundy, Colonel Henry G. Stebbins, Father Farrelley, Colonel N. Cano Dunn, John Wheeler, ex-member of Congress, James M. Brown, Henry Clews, Collector Murphy, ex-Judge Edwards Pierrepont, John A. Stewart, Edward Cooper, Joseph H. Choate, Isaac H. Bailey, Judge Barrett, Jackson S. Schultz, Peter Cooper, Henry L. Clinton, William F. Havemeyer, Dr. Hepworth, Henry E. Crampton, John Foley and a host of other distinguished and well known citizens. The enthusiasm was unbounded, and each and every attack by the speakers on the members of the Ring evoked tumultuous cheering. Mr. Choate, who followed the Chairman, Colonel Stebbins, put the meeting in the best of good humor by reading the following most solemn announcement previous to his speech:—

"I am requested to state that the political funeral of William M. Tweed will take place at the new County Court House, in this city, on Tuesday, November the 7th. Rev. Edwards Pierrepont will officiate. The hymn to be sung is that good old tune by Dr. Watts,

'BELIEVING WE REJOICE TO SEE THE CURS REMOVED.'

Archbishop O'Conor, with seventy assistants, will conduct the services. The text for the sermon will be taken from the Gospels,

'LORD! BY THIS TIME HE STINKETH.'

This congregation are requested to attend."

And that his easy flow of language and pleasant diction should not weary his audience Mr. Choate interspersed his remarks with points and jokes that were heartily relished. Referring to Mr. Christopher Pullman, a republican sandwiched between O'Brien and Bradley in the Seventh Senatorial district, he said that, personally, he thought Mr. Pullman was a good man, but he had no more chance of going to the State Senate than had William M. Tweed to enter the kingdom of heaven. His statement that the fight between the wings of the republican party—wings that heretofore refused to flutter, fly or even flop together—had reconciled their differences, and on Tuesday the lions of the Custom House and the lambs of Horace Greeley would go to bed together elicited uproarious cheering, long continued. Mr. Choate's announcement of the withdrawal of Thomas T. Stewart from the canvass in the Fifth Senatorial district, and Mr. Hawes' declination in the Eighth district, at the request of the Committee of seventy, drew forth tremendous applause. Mr. Tilden, who followed Mr. Choate, was bitter and long winded, but effective. Mr. Evarts was loudly called for, and spoke eloquently, the audience cheering vehemently at every point in his speech. Three stands were erected outside the building, from which speeches were made to a very large crowd that had failed to squeeze into the Cooper Hall. Here the enthusiasm was also hearty and sustained, and altogether the demonstration of the citizen reformers was an overwhelming success. It commenced at eight and was brought to a close at eleven o'clock with a final burst of enthusiasm, echoed and re-echoed within and without the Cooper building.

ADDRESS OF THE COMMITTEE OF SEVENTY.

After the meeting was organized the following address of the Committee of Seventy was read by Mr. HENRY G. STEBBINS:—

The Executive Committee of Citizens and Taxpayers, which was charged by the meeting held on the 4th of September last to investigate the robberies and frauds that had been committed by the government of the city and county of New York, brought the municipality close to bankruptcy and shadowed the Empire State with financial discredit, and to secure the punishment of the manufactors and the recovery of the public property out of their grasp, respectfully report:—There is not in

THE HISTORY OF VILLANY

a parallel for the gigantic crime against property conspired by the Tammany Ring. It was engineered on the complete subversion of free government in the very heart of republicanism. An American city, having a population of over a million, was disfranchised by an open vote of a Legislature born and nurtured in democracy and republicanism, and was handed over to a self-appointed oligarchy, to be robbed and plundered by them and their confederates, heirs and assigns for six years certainly, and prospectively forever. A month's patriotic study of the crimes of the Tammany leaders has not so familiarized us with the political tenor of the new charter of the city of New York that we do not feel that it is impossible that the people of this State gave to a gang of thieves, politicians by profession, a charter to govern the commercial metropolis of this continent—the great city which is to America what Paris is to France—to govern it with a despotism more absolute than that of the sixteenth part of a century, which substantially deprived the citizens of self-control, nullified their right of suffrage, nullified the principle of representation—which authorized

A HANDFUL OF CUNNING AND RESOLUTE ROBBERS

to levy taxes, create public debt and incur municipal liabilities without limit and without check, and which placed at their disposal the property of the great municipality and the property of all its citizens. Every American citizen asks, "Is it incredible that this has been done." But the history of the paradox is over two years old. And it is a history of theft, robbery and forgery, which have stolen and divided $20,000,000; which have run up the city debt from $90,000,000 in 1869 to $97,000,000 in 1871, and which will be $120,000,000 in August, 1872; which have paid to these robbers millions of dollars for work never performed and materials never furnished; which paid astoundingly exorbitant rents to them for offices and armories, many of which were never occupied and some of which did not exist—which remitted their taxes, released their indebtedness and remitted their rents to the city due and owing; which ran the machinery for widening, improving and opening streets, parks and boulevards, to enable these men to speculate in assessed damages and greatly enhanced values; which created unnecessary offices with large salaries and no duties, in order to maintain a force of ruffianly supporters and manufacturers of votes—which used millions of dollars to bribe and corrupt newspapers, the organs of public opinion, in which honest discussion was growing limited the public advertising—which camped within the city

A RESERVE ARMY OF VOTERS

by employing thousands of laborers at large pay upon nominal work, neither necessary nor useful—which bought Legislatures and purchased judgments from Courts, both civil and criminal. This Tammany Ring and its success are the marvel of the world. It worked without notice, without force, almost without the public knowledge, they have accomplished a revolution in the very heart of American democracy and established an oligarchy of robbers in the place of a popular representative government. There is reason to dread that, with electric infectiousness, the easy and profitable villany may spread from New York city to the principal towns of the whole United States, till the American political system is menaced with a Roman typhoon of a fever of scoundrelism that may burn manhood and virtue all out of it. Certain it is that the spectacle of the legal possession of the municipality of New York city by an organized band of thieves has shocked and alarmed all in Europe who believed in democracy in America. Certain it is that popular government is now on trial there, and that the verdict will take its color from our future action. In this judgment we shall renounce and what judgment we shall execute against the conspirators who have stolen our public liberties and plundered our treasury. The burden of this duty is sternly judge and swiftly execute is exceedingly weighty. The spread of the democratic principle in Europe depends on it. The salvation of our own democracy depends on it. Our finances and our commerce depend on it. For if we fail to overthrow the Tammany rulers and to annul their city charter, and if we fail to send them as felons to the State's Prison, and to make them disgorge what they have stolen, will not the capitalists and merchants of Europe logically conclude that

OUR INSTITUTIONS ARE A FAILURE;

that the strength of American credit is gone, and that it is unsafe to lend to and to sell to a people whose rulers are thieves and whose legislators are robbers and rascals? Will not European funds loaned out here be recalled? Will not important negotiations for new loans be arrested? Will not our securities be returned here to be sold? Will not our orders for goods be refused? But, in like manner, as the domestic interests of a people are proportioned to its foreign interests as nine to one, so the home stake we Americans have in the overthrow and punishment of the Tammany Ring is simply that of our national life. The control of the government and the property of the city of New York was sought for a double purpose. It was sought, first, to enrich the Ring by plunder; second, to secure to them the political control of the State of New York. This control was necessary to secure the Ring in predatory possession of the city. But it was principally wanted to enable the Ring, through their political party to throw the decisive vote of the State of New York in the elections for the President of the United States. They calculated, and calculated rightly, that in a time of domestic peace, all the States voting, the thirty-three votes of New York would be necessary to a choice by either party, and if cast for the democratic party would elect its candidate, and of course would control the federal patronage. The Ring, which framed and set up at Albany the present New York charter, meditated the setting up in Washington in 1873 of a Ring government, precisely such in composition as that which has dishonored and bankrupted us, but vastly larger and vastly more desolating. On the 4th day of September last this spacious hall was crowded with masses of our best citizens, who had been gradually aroused to the necessity of meeting this fearful crisis in the American fashion; that is, by a concerted expression of public opinion. The revelations of municipal corruption had accumulated until no intelligent man could doubt that we were

ON THE VERGE OF UTTER DESTRUCTION

to our credit, our good name and our most sacred rights as citizens. Indictments came from the judicial authorities who had betrayed their trusts and disgraced us. Not one act had been done by them to indicate either the purpose of investigation or of reform. The whole machinery of the city government seemed to be at the service of public spoilsmen, and the citizens were thrown back on the natural rights of redress in all legal means. This was the occasion of the meeting which organized and expressed the universal sentiment of good citizens on the 4th of September. As it was more than a mere transient ebullition of sentiment, it took care to make its expression effectual by the appointment of an Executive Committee of seventy and by the delegation to that committee the high responsibility of directing measures of reform. That committee has called you here to-night to receive a report of its action, recognizing, as its members all do, that it is responsible to the people for its deeds and omissions. I wish to say, in the first place, that such a committee as ours was necessarily somewhat promiscuous and composed of various elements. It had to be large, in order to represent all shades of honest political sentiment and to embrace all classes of citizens. It would be strange if all of its members had escaped criticism. But I can say without fear of denial that partisanship has never found the slightest encouragement in any of its deliberations and that the unity of the members of the committee have devoted their time and energies to their work, with a disinterestedness and devotion such as I have never before witnessed among any like body of men in this city. However they may have come short of impatient and inconsiderate expectations, they are certainly entitled to the credit of having done the best they could have done under the circumstances. What has the committee done? Within twenty-four hours after its creation the committee was organized and divided its work among appropriate sub-committees, A Committee on Remedies, containing eminent and able lawyers; a Committee on Elections, chosen equally from each of the two political parties; a Committee to call upon the Governor; a Committee on Legislation, whose duties have been fulfilled until we obtained the reformed city charter and the reveal of all

LAWS DEVISED TO SHELTER DISHONEST OFFICIALS;

a Committee on Finance; a committee to investigate frauds—these have been the principal sub-committees of our organization. The members of these various committees have given a good share of their time to their work almost every day since their appointment. They have sacrificed important business interests to discharge the highest duties imposed on them throughthe confidence of their fellow citizens. At first the heaviest and most responsible work fell on the Committee on Remedies. Even the most experienced lawyers in that committee were surprised and dismayed when they found how thoroughly the chief plunderers of our city had entrenched themselves behind legal defences, and how difficult it was to reach them through legal means. The conspiracy against the taxpayers revealed its full enormities only after the most patient search through the statute books for the last ten years. Slowly, deliberately, and with a purpose as steady as it was foul, the conspirators had gradually enveloped a great city in the meshes of legislation that left the honest citizen no apparent or easy method of redress. The clouds have begun to disperse, however, by judgments in the injunction case begun by Mr. John Foley and assumed by our committee. Whatever of success has attended our efforts has been mainly due to the prompt and fearless action of this Judge in seizing the keys of the city treasury from a corrupt custodian and in substituting in his place Andrew H. Green, a man who in his discharge of great and important trusts had showed himself to be one of the ablest and purest officers known in the history of our public affairs. The people of this city have breathed easier and freer since the eventful day when Mr. Green became acting Comptroller. On that day plundering from the city treasury ceased, not to be renewed so long as he remains at his present post. If the Committee of Taxpayers had secured no other result it would have a strong claim on the gratitude of a plundered city. Here it is proper to state that while the appointment of a committee by the Common Council, of which Mr. Booth is chairman, seemed to have had its origin in a disposition to throw open the city books and accounts to the inspection of our citizens, the willingness to do so and the positive results which followed from that action are the limits of the influence of the Committee of Seventy, which was preparing to do that very work. Whether the Common Council had a desire to control the committee by appointing it themselves, or preferred to have the investigation made by a committee of their own body, is now immaterial. The action of the Common Council's committee has been productive of wonderful results. Its report

DISSECTING THE RING'S ACCOUNTS

in minute detail reflects the highest credit on the intelligence and honesty of these practical business men. To this committee also is due the credit of having morally influenced the appointment of the Brooklyn Committee of Fifty, which will care for that spoliated city in the regards in which law is powerless to protect it. And the committee can justly claim the merit of awakening from Montauk to Erie and St. Lawrence the elements of the supreme life of a popular State—conscience, self-respect and pride of nationality. These thoroughly aroused and kept aflame, liberty, law and honor are assured. The next movement made by the distinguished counsel employed by the committee was the bringing of the Ingersoll suit, in which the public-spirited and indefatigable Mr. Havemeyer is the plaintiff. Heavy charges of wrongs, corrupt motives and not after the eventual result of this suit. Other proceedings, including one against the Mayor, have been instituted as rapidly as the necessary evidence could be accumulated. The continued refusal of the city authorities to co-operate with us in bringing the guilty to justice, compelled the committee to seek the strong arm of the State of which to interpose for the relief of a quarter of its population, betrayed and left helpless by their own nearest and most immediate official defenders. A committee, of which Judge Pierrepont was chairman, visited the Governor at Albany, and presented the case so clearly and strongly that its request was granted, and the Attorney General was authorized to employ Mr. Charles O'Conor to act as the representative of the State in all prosecutions in which the Committee of Taxpayers might ask his assistance. This great step toward reform gave all good citizens new courage. With the power of the State at its back and with the services of such great lawyers as Mr. O'Conor and Mr. Evarts at his command the committee felt that it could bring to justice all the chief plunderers and reclaim at least a good portion of the plunder. What progress has already been made since the committee obtained its power to act with efficiency in the Courts I need not take your time to tell—the newspapers have already informed you. I must not forget, however, to allude to one important success of the committee in reclaiming money belonging to the city. Chiefly through the personal efforts of one of the most energetic and useful members of our committee, Mr. Jackson S. Schultz, property of Mr. Keyser amounting to nearly three-quarters of a million of dollars has been secured, and is now held in trust to await the development of Mr. Keyser's case. The committee has stopped the plundering and begun legal steps that are certain to result in

THE DISGRACE AND PUNISHMENT OF THE PLUNDERERS,

and in the recovery of a large amount of plunder. It has also afforded an indispensable nucleus for the organization of a hopeful political movement for the reform of this city. Representing to the public and to all classes of politicians the deliberate and earnest views of the best men in New York, it has been a constant and beneficent force. Its non-partisan organization and action have either invited or compelled all political organizations opposed to Tammany to co-operate and harmonize differences. I believe it is absolutely and unqualifiedly true that but for the existence of such a body as this committee there would have been neither union nor hope among the enemies of corrupt government in this city. Fellow citizens of the city and State of New York, this report of the doings of the Committee of Seventy would be incomplete if it did not fully unfold to you the perils and the enfeebled state of our condition. You know too well that the Ring which governs us has for years governed our Legislatures by bribing their members with moneys stolen from their treasury. That economy was supreme power and immunity. But it was not enough. A city charter to perpetuate power was needed. It was easily bought of a venal Legislature with the proceeds of a new scoop into the city treasury. Superadded to this the Ring had devised a system, fallacious and absolutely sure, of counting their adversaries in an election out of office and of counting their own candidates in, or of rolling up majorities by repeating votes and voting in the names of the absent, the dead and the fictitious. Still their intrenched camp of villany was incomplete. It was deficient in credit. This is

A GHASTLY JEST,

the self-investment of the robbers of the world with a boundless financial credit. And yet the Ring clothed themselves with it. They intrenched themselves within the imposing limits of some of our most powerful bank and trust companies. They created many savings banks out of the forty-two which exist in the city and county of New York. This they did within the last two years. The published list of directors will enable you to identify those institutions. Now, the savings bank is a place to which money travels to be taken out of, and if the bank has the public confidence people put their money in it freely at low rates of interest, and the managers use the funds in whatever way they please. In the Ring savings banks there are on deposit to-day at nominal rates of interest many millions of dollars. It is believed that late these banks the Ring have taken the city's obligations and converted them into money, which has been used in the various channels of unlawful administration, out of which they have drawn into their pockets millions on millions. The craft of this contrivance was profound. It wholly avoided the difficulty of raising money on the unlawful and excessive issues of city and county bonds and took out of the public sight transactions which, if pressed upon the national banks, would have convoked commercial disasters which have precipitated the explosion which has shaken the country. It is feared that among the assets of the savings banks of the city, county and State will be found not far from $50,000,000 of city and county debt taken for permanent investment. For the first time in the history of iniquity has the bank for the saving of the wages of labor been expressly organized as a part of a system of robbery, and for the first time in the history of felony have the workmen and workwomen, and the orphans and the children of a greaty city unwittingly cashed the obligations issued by a gang of thieves and plunderers. The attitude, temper and purposes of the Ring leaders are ominous. They deny their guilt. They defy investigation. They put their stolen property out of their hands. They rally their followers and fall back on their party lines and party machinery. They prepare to fight against the laws and the conscience and the decency of the State. They shield and uphold the fraudulent instruments of their wrongdoing. Not an official implicated in these infamies has had

THE VIRTUE TO COMMIT SUICIDE

or the decency to resign. They still govern the city they have plundered, and scheme for the retention of their power. The chief of them is actually a candidate for election to the State Senate, and he airily promises that he will be elected by a larger majority than he has ever received. Fellow citizens and citizens of the State at large, you must address yourselves instantly to the cure of the evils under which this commercial emporium suffers. Our brothers in the country, this is your city as well as ours. We are only the agents of your business. The money the Ring have stolen is yours in part. For if our taxes are increased by reason of political robbers, you have to pay its more for doing your work. New York is your business centre. Can you afford to have thieves in possession of it, flashing the corrupting spectacle of their successful villany on the ambitious desires and the weak consciences of tens of thousands of the agents of the nation's trade and finance? You know that you cannot afford it. You know that if New York is not rescued from the possession of the Tammany Ring its citizens will cease to pay their taxes into the city treasury. You know that if the State of New York should fall and the wheels of its government stop for want of supplies there will be ruin—there will be anarchy. A government without funds is no government. We tell it to you as a fearful truth that the only force which can control the municipal machinery that this city in motion and maintains even the semblance of lawful government is the expectation and belief that the whole structure will be remodelled and

A NEW MUNICIPALITY AND A NEW LEGISLATURE,

of a new and better breed, will be created by the people in November. The good men of all parties should step right out of their party lines, and, coming fraternally together, should discard all the issues between democracy and republicanism and look hands on the rescue of our State and city. Affairs and engagements which may stand in the way of the paramount duties of political mutual assurance and self-preservation should be postponed or abandoned. The price of the neglect of these supreme duties may be revolution. Many things unanimously favor the union of the good men of all parties. Union without differences is practicable. The desire to unite is general. The eminent examples of O'Conor, Tilden, Havemeyer, Green and other honored democrats in withdrawing from the support of the Tammany candidates give assurance that honest democrats all over the State are waiting the signal to join honest republicans in numbers sufficient to work out successfully this dark problem and restore the Legislature of the state to the exalted position it enjoyed in the days of Clinton, of Van Buren and of Wright. Fellow citizens, you have just emerged from one of the most distressing wars in the history of our race. It was a war against human slavery, which had disgraced the age and the nation. It had hung over the country for years, but had been condoned temporarily and compromised with until its destruction or that of the government was imminent. The questions involved in that great contest were regarded as vital to the life of the nation, and they called into vigorous activity every element which could be made available by a people who "know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain them." In the judgment of your committee the contest inaugurated by our fellow citizens on the 4th of September in this hall is

MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WAR OF THE REBELLION.

Closely interwoven in your civilization is the absolute necessity of your success in your efforts to overthrow the corruptions of the present hour, which have permeated every department of the public service and threaten with their corrosive influences the permanency of your institutions and the stability of your social structure. You cannot temporize with it any longer. You cannot delay the solution of the problem. You cannot omit any public duty which may for a moment retard the reconstruction of your municipal affairs. Your duty calls you into your primary gatherings on the occasion of all local, State and national political movements. Your duty demands that your resources, your names and your labors be offered to the public necessities, no matter what the condition of your private affairs. A sleepless resolution to recover what you have lost of public honor and private honor can alone restore the treasury and re-establish you in your own good opinion and in the good opinion of the world. If widespread corruption is to be the recognized principle of your civilization there is nothing left to hope for on this planet. To the end, fellow citizens, in behalf of the committee whom I have the honor to represent, I earnestly beseech you that your zealous efforts in the 7th of November in the only apparently peaceful way of restoring the character of this great commonwealth and placing our municipal affairs in the position they should ever occupy. With its population of a million of souls, its vast estates pledged for the fulfilment of its obligations, and their fully equal to any demand that an economical and honest administration of its affairs can make upon it, it should stand out in point of credit and power the first on the globe. The perpetuation of the shameful city charter and the re-election of the men who are boldly demanding your support at the polls and who are the known and recognised leaders in and representatives of

THE FEARFUL GAME OF PLUNDER

perpetrated under the charter, will be a total surrender of your political birthright, together with every claim you may have upon the respect and love of mankind. There is but one side to this solemn question. If Mr. Tweed is returned to the Senate of this State as your Senator, and he carries with him to Albany the supports of other Senators elected in his interests and in the interests of the principles he represents, then either the nature of man has wholly changed or there will be no greater degradation in the opinion of the world than to be known and recognized as a citizen of New York. In concluding the Chairman desires to say one word in heartfelt recognition of the devotion, earnestness, public spirit and ability shown by the body of gentlemen over whose deliberations he has enjoyed the honor of presiding for two months past. Could the whole history of this committee's work be faithfully recorded and published it would be seen that the greatest crisis in the history of our city has been met bravely, wisely and nobly by the unpaid and disinterested citizens who were put in the front of this fight on the 4th of September. Criticisms of our action by indictments of members of the committee cannot obscure the verdict which history will record in favor of the committee as a whole. Remember, fellow citizens, that it was not a revolutionary organization, but was pledged to confine itself to legal and peaceful remedies. Do not forget that the men we have sought to degrade and punish are your own deliberately chosen official servants, and that they have long held control of every department of the city government and of the State government outside to a certain extent. Call to mind in what a helpless and hopeless condition the city lay two months ago, and reflect on the fact that

NOW THE TREASURY IS SAFE,

the plunderers are in fair way of punishment, the plunder is coming back to its rightful owners every honest political organization is combined against the enemy; the Ring's Tammany leaders have been broken and its chiefs are either fugitives or under arrest or expecting it, and our complete disenthralment can only be postponed until a reform Legislature has had time to adopt plans proposed by your committee. Having been the means of accomplishing so much in so brief a time, we now simply ask our fellow citizens, here and tonight, so nobly represented, to complete the work of our action. As for myself, as an individual, I take pride in saying that no honor which I ever enjoyed through the confidence of my fellows will be regarded by me in after years as at all comparable to that of having presided over the Committee of Seventy. One word more and I have done. To the distinguished chairman of our Committee on Elections I will now refer and I feel it remains to be said in relation to the duties and efforts of this committee. I have avoided any reference to that committee and its duties because it is really the only one whose daily labors have not been constantly reported upon through the sleepless vigilance of the city press. Their work has only just commenced to show positive practical results. To this date they have really nothing to report, except that committee has been engaged in the multifarious duties it had described—with the natural appeals to you for your approving endorsement. I leave in the hands of your earnest and faithful fellow citizen, Mr. Joseph H. Choate, its chairman, whom I now have the pleasure to introduce to you.

SPEECH OF MR. JOSEPH H. CHOATE.

Mr. CHOATE, on being introduced by the Chairman, spoke as follows:—

At last, fellow citizens, for the first time in many years, we can once more hold up our heads like men, and declare with out any sense of shame that we are citizens of the great and glorious city of New York. Until within the last three months we exhibited to the world a truly humiliating and disgusting spectacle. A city of a million free inhabitants, the metropolis of the Continent in every sense of the word, the centre of its wealth, its intelligence and its influence; the seat of its commerce, and the starting point from which all its greatest enterprises proceeded, had, nevertheless, become, by the apathy of its citizens and their absolute desertion of all their civic duties, the victim and the prey of a gang of political miscreants whose villanies were without a parallel. Every avenue and department of the municipal service fairly reeked with corruption. Robbers sat without disguise at the head of the Department of Public Works, in the City and County Treasury, in the administration of the Central Park, and their friends and dependents filled almost every office. From these points of power the band of conspirators exercised a gross and brutal tyranny over the people of the city, more grinding than civilized men had before submitted to. Far worse than "taxation without representation," which all history has declared to be sufficient cause for revolution, it was highway robbery under the pretense of taxation, with no pretense of representation whatever, and before we knew it we had been literally plundered of twenty millions of the public money. At last the press—(applause)—true to its functions as the guardian of the public liberties, sounded the alarm. The people awoke from their long slumber, assembled in hasty meeting for mutual protection, and resolved, as the only remedy for the wrongs they had suffered, to take their own affairs into their own hands. And now two months of vigorous and united action have changed the whole aspect of affairs. The general scorn and contempt which rested upon us has, in all quarters, been changed to sympathy and fraternal encouragement, because we have shown a determination to take care of ourselves, and have resolved, at all hazards, and by whatever means may be necessary, peacefully if we can, but if we must, then in some other way, to recover our mutilated liberties and vindicate our civil rights. It is true that we still wear the shackles, and our necks still show a fearful galling from the collars they have borne so long. But we no longer wear our fetters meekly, and are prepared for the struggle, however desperate, that shall cast them off. We no longer kiss the rod of our oppressors, but now have snatched it from their grasp, and mean henceforward to give blow for blow. We no longer lie still with the bedclothes over our heads, pretending to be asleep, while these burglars are rifling our pockets and our safes, but have raised the hue and cry, and joined in full pursuit, and mean not to let go the chase until we have hunted the scoundrels down. (Laughter.) Realizing at last the deadly peril into which the body politic had been plunged by your own shameful neglect, and convinced that it could only be rescued and restored by the removal of the cause of the mischief and the return of all good citizens to the performance of their public duties, you created the Executive Committee to represent and to guide you in that great enterprise, to ferret out and ascertain the full extent of the mischief that had been done, to recover the moneys that had been stolen, to bring to justice the chief criminals, to summon to your aid the legislative and executive powers of the State to obtain the repeal of the City Charter, to exterminate from office the Ring and all its minions, and finally, in the words of your resolution of September 4, "to search out and secure a united effort by the citizens of New York, without reference to party, to obtain a good government, and honest officers to administer it."

And it was the fulfilment of this latter duty, so far as it might be accomplished, that was intrusted to the Committee on Elections, whose proceedings your chairman has requested me to report to you. It was obvious at the outset, in the conduct of this great movement of reform, that you had no idea of confiding your municipal affairs to either of the political parties to the exclusion of the other, and that both alike, so far as their past participation in those affairs was concerned, were the objects of your supreme distrust. You had no choice between

A CORRUPT DEMOCRAT AND A CORRUPT REPUBLICAN,

and were perfectly well aware that the Ring of malefactors who had usurped the powers of taxation and government, and were enriching themselves without labor at the public cost, was composed of political prostitutes from both the party organizations, and that their found the real secret of their power in the mutual betrayal of their trusts, and if better chance or greater cunning had given to the base men of one party the lion's share of the spoils it was only the want of opportunity, and not of evil purpose, that had prevented their associates of the other party from perpetrating just as great iniquities, and carrying off just as much plunder. With these views, though we rally the good men of all parties, and of every creed, color and condition to a united effort for an honest government, your Committee on Elections was composed of equal numbers of democrats and republicans, and they were instructed to forget their politics, to confer with all organizations, parties, societies and individuals who might desire to co-operate for the common good, and to bring about as nearly as possible a complete union of all citizens upon one reform ticket for all the city and county offices and for the Senate and Assembly. With the State tickets it was wisely concluded that we had nothing whatever to do, since the question of city reform united the support of the honest portion of both the great parties of the State. To that direction the Committee on Elections have faithfully adhered. They have preferred none because they were republicans. They have rejected none because they were democrats. They have counselled with all and closed their doors upon none.

They claim credit for some forbearance, for much patience and an unfailing purpose to unite the entire opposition to Tammany. They are happy to announce to you that this purpose has been substantially accomplished, and that, with some few exceptions, of which I shall presently speak, a substantial union of the friends of reform will speak with one voice and cast a consolidated vote on election day. It was manifest from the first that the movement which you inaugurated at your first meeting had aroused a response as hearty as the call was loud, that all classes of society were profoundly agitated, and that a general determination pervaded the community to drive out the Ring and put honest men in their places. But there was a total want of organization; there was a countless number of associations, each with a distinct head and under a different name. There were all kinds of democrats, hailing from all sorts of halls, generally with harmonious and musical names, but not very harmonious spirits. There were Apollo Hall democrats and reform democrats, German democrats, independent democrats and Union democrats, lukewarm democrats and democrats fiery hot, but none, I believe, professedly cold-water democrats. And even the republicans were divided. We found that the republican party of this city had what it was pleased to call "wings;" and although the republicans, when gathered together, doubtedly don't allow any criticism from outsiders, yet I in this Union meeting, as a republican, from the beginning to the end devoted to its general policy and proud of its record, may be permitted to say here that these two wings of the republican party in this city are the strangest and most uncomfortable pair of pinions with which any political bird was ever encumbered. (Laughter.) They will neither fold together, spread together nor flap together. (Laughter.) Each goes in a different direction and on its own hook, and is more likely to hit the other and make the feathers fly from that than from any common enemy.

Besides, like the wings of the ostrich, they are very small compared with the general bulk of the bird, and seem designed for no better purpose than to make a great noise and flapping and frighten innocent persons and young political children; and, as to locomotion and progress, why a bird with one wing would get along a great deal better. But, nevertheless, out of all this jarring discord and these many associations pulling in different ways, and each having purposes of its own to serve, superadded to the great object of reform, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, not quite second to that, substantial harmony has grown at last, and, especially in regard to the county ticket, there has been a perfect union. So that, for once, we can show you all the different kinds of democrats of whom I have spoken feeding at the same trough; and as to the republicans, the lions of the Custom House are actually lying in the

SAME BED WITH HORACE GREELEY'S LAMBS.

And here your Committee on Elections is bound to recognize and acknowledge with gratitude the very great service rendered to the cause of union and reform by a body of citizens assembled in a convention which was, I believe, without a precedent in our political history. The Council of Political Reform, an organization created some time ago for the general purposes indicated by its name, composed of respectable citizens of all parties and organized in every ward of the city, invited a representation of men of every party, creed, nationality, color and class to meet in convention and to nominate a complete list of officers for the ensuing election, and, having called them together, the Council of Reform left them to take their own counsels and action, uninfluenced by any policy or dictation of its own. The Convention so assembled at Chickering Hall embraced every interest in the whole city. There were gathered in harmonious action democrats and republicans and men who had never voted with either, Christians and Israelites, Catholics and Protestants, Americans, Germans, Irishmen, Italians and Frenchmen, capitalists and working men, rich men and poor men—all under the one name of citizen and all in the single interest of reform. They selected, with infinite care and after

A BROAD SURVEY OF THE WHOLE FIELD,

a ticket which, with some inconsiderable changes, not only received our approval and endorsement, but that also of the united councils of both branches of Republicans and the democratic reform party, and that is the county ticket which we present for your suffrages. It consists of the nominees for Judges and for Register, and bears at its head the name of George C. Barrett for Justice of the Supreme Court. Of Judge Barrett I need not speak to this company at length. An Irishman by birth, but a loyal American by education and growth, thoroughly identified in spirit with his adopted country—he is young, talented, well qualified by professional education and experience for the office—is the spontaneous choice of the great body of the reform party, and determined, if elected, to do honor to his high office. Of his only competitor for that high office it is, perhaps, enough to say that his name is Thomas A. Ledwith. I desire to speak only in kindness of Judge Ledwith, especially as you, in your wisdom, selected him to be the judge of the election of Tweed. His most sanguine friends have not ventured to state that he has any qualifications for the station to which he aspires, and so I will waste no time in proving that he has none; but this, I think, we may justly say, that his nomination by Tammany Hall was intended as a deadly blow at the cause of reform, and that he is supported by men inside of Tammany who hope to gain his local support for their own candidates; and by men outside of Tammany, who, indeed, at first joined the standard of reform, and began to battle against the walls of that stronghold of corruption, intending, not to destroy it utterly, as we mean to do, but merely to make a breach and get inside themselves, and turn the guns against us. And so, as soon as the back door was opened to them they glided swiftly in, and, abandoning the advancing column, joined the ranks of our enemies. Clearly, then, it is our first duty to defeat Ledwith, and we shall do it. Of the rest of the judiciary ticket, which is approved and endorsed by everybody outside of Tammany, and of the gallant German who is our nominee for Register, I need not speak. In regard to the Aldermanic ticket you will observe a discrepancy as to six out of fifteen names between the nominations approved by us and the names placed upon the combined tickets of Apollo Hall and the republicans. We endeavored to make that union perfect, but the trouble lay with one wing of the republicans, who offered us names, some of which we disapproved and rejected, but offered on our part to accept an equal number of unexceptionable names in their stead, which was declined. But if our united forces prevail we shall have a working majority of the Board of Aldermen, and as that body will come into existence only to expire, we must be content with that.

But now, gentlemen, suppose you have elected your county ticket, your judges, your Register, your full Board of Aldermen, what good will it do you? How far will that triumph advance the cause of reform? And who of those, if elected, will have power to remedy the abuses whose frightful enormity has roused you to put forth your might? Will Tweed be shorn of one feather's weight of his power? Will Sweeny be less cunning in his counsels and Connolly to do the dirty work of the Ring than now? Will this iniquitous charter, under which they have planned to rob us of our rights and mortgage our houses, to tax the food we eat and the air we breathe, and all without our consent, be any the less the government under which we live than it is to-day? And this brings us to the very pinch of the whole case, and to the account of the greatest difficulty and difficult labors of your committee. I mean the selection of candidates for the Senate and Assembly, upon whose action our fate, as citizens, must wholly depend. If we cannot carry the Legislature in the cause of reform, if we cannot elect Senators and Assemblymen enough to repeal this infamous charter and wipe out with it all the crimes and criminals of which it is the child, then all our efforts will have gone for nothing. And therefore it is that you will have to bend all your efforts to these Senatorial and Assembly districts, and lend your whole aid to dissuade and suppress certain symptoms of faction, which, in these imminent points of our great battle, threaten us with danger. In the Fourth Senatorial district the entire opposition has centred upon Mr. Donovan's desire to hold up our standard bearer, Mr. Rossa himself, unhaunted by the full exposure of his crimes, dares still to insult God and man by claiming the votes of the district for the great office of Senator. It is undoubtedly a most benighted and God-forsaken district, which will enlist the missionary labors of the reform party for years after the Tammany candidate shall have been stripped of the stolen treasures and consigned to that ignominious punishment which will sooner or later overtake him. When you consider the population of the district, and that for generations it has been the bloody arena of the most brutal politics which bred the race of politicians of which Tweed is the fit example, we may be over-sanguine in hoping to carry it by one assault; but Rossa will push him to the wall and make a most gallant fight for it, and we cordially recommend all good citizens to rally to his support.

In the Fifth Senatorial district we have endorsed the nomination of Mr. Erastus C. Benedict, one of the most eminent and esteemed citizens of the district, and demand for him the universal support of all who are really in favor of reform. He can be elected, and the people of the district owe it to themselves and to their fellow citizens to secure his return and the defeat of Michael Norton, one of the most reckless and audacious of the corrupt instruments of Tammany. (Applause.) But here come in again the double and distracted wings of the republican party to threaten us with destruction. Fellow citizens, your committee have carefully surveyed the whole field; they have listened with tireless patience to the advocates and claims of all the candidates; they have studied the history and statistics of the district and have come to the unanimous conclusion that Mr. Benedict is more likely than any of the others to win the victory over Tammany, and that it is the solemn duty of every man who is not in league with Tammany to vote for him. Nay, more; that, if that district is lost, it will be the fault of the republicans of the district preferring their own frivolous and disgusting quarrels and jealousies to the great cause of reform, in whose sacred name they are pummelling each other. And, good heavens! what are gentlemen thinking of who raise such an objection? Do they forget what we are fighting for? We don't want his services twenty-five or thirty years hence, when he and all of us will be under the sod. We want him now, we want him to-morrow; we want the votes of the Senate on the great repeal of the Senate and vote in our behalf for the instant repeal of this wicked charter, and we want the benefit of his wisdom and experience in planning an honest representative government and new securities against all future Rings and conspiracies against the life of the city. We have refused to listen to the stupid suggestion that reform democrats are not fit to vote for a republican, or that reform republicans will not vote for a democrat, and we insist on throwing the whole risk and peril of the loss of that district where it justly belongs. But we have a confident hope that under the weighty pressure of your influence every man in the Fifth district who is not ready to own himself an open adherent of Tammany will work and vote for Mr. Ben