

HOW LONDON IS GOVERNED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GLASGOW: A MUNICIPAL STUDY."



ETROPOLITAN London, the greatest and most enlightened city this world has ever seen, has never had a legal existence, a fixed boundary line, or a municipal government.

For limited purposes the metropolis became last year an administrative county and acquired a representative council; but previous to the new local government act, which gives all the counties of England elective councils, the metropolis had no distinct organization or corporate form. London, the ancient City, had maintained its old-time bounds and its venerable charters; but its area was only one square mile and its resident population was only fifty thousand, while "Greater London" had attained a population fully a hundred times as large, spread over an area of at least five hundred square miles. Greater London lay in the three counties of Middlesex, Kent, and Surrey, with huge suburbs in Essex and encroaching outposts in Hertfordshire. It was governed in the most anomalous manner by Parliament directly as an interposing providence, by the ministers of the Crown, by the magistrates of the several counties, by special boards and commissions, and by many scores of parish vestries and other minor local authorities. The acts of Parliament that affected one feature or another of the administration in whole or in part of the metropolitan area were legion, and were scattered through the statute-books of centuries. Truly this great aggregation of people and interests had a perplexingly intricate organization. But still it was somehow governed. Its vast expanding life as one social, commercial, and industrial entity found its organs.

How London has been governed in the past, how it is governed at present, how it is meeting the various social and economic problems of modern metropolitan life—these are questions eminently worthy of consideration by all who would study municipal matters. For London is the capital not only of the British Empire, but in some sense also of the whole world. Its experiences are of universal interest and importance. In it the new forces of urban life are at work in most significant ways. It is slowly but surely evolving central municipal institutions that shall meet its peculiar needs. Its population is waking

up with a sense of unity and with an appreciation of great things to be done through united municipal action for the common welfare. It is only lately that the people of advanced industrial nations have learned to accept the fact that life in cities under artificial conditions must be the permanent lot of the great majority, and that it is the business of society to adapt the urban environment to the needs of the population. Life in the modern city should not be an evil or a misfortune for any class. There should be such sanitary arrangements and administration as to make the death rate of the great city smaller than that of the nation as a whole. There should be such educational facilities as to insure to all the young people of a city the most suitable physical, intellectual, and industrial training. The masses of people in London are rising to some faint perception of these truths, and they are beginning to clamor for social and governmental reforms. The immediate future of London is fraught with magnificent possibilities. From the extreme of chaos, disorganization, and uncontrolled freedom of individual action, it is not impossible that the great metropolis may a generation hence lead all the large cities of the world in the closeness and unity of its organization and in the range of its municipal activities. Municipal socialism has a better outlook in London than in Paris or Berlin, although as yet London has given fewer tangible evidences of this trend than has any other center of civilization. However that may be, the London questions have assumed an extraordinary importance in England, and to understand them reasonably well it is necessary to review and analyze with some care the government of London.

BRITISH MUNICIPAL REFORM.

THE ever-memorable reform act of 1832, which gave representation in Parliament a modern and rational basis, was soon followed, as a part of the reform program of the day, by a general municipal government act which abolished the ancient and exclusive privileges of the merchants and trades guilds and enlarged the municipal corporations to the inclusion of the whole body of citizens paying a certain minimum amount of rates. This act of 1835 is the most signally important piece of

legislation in all the history of modern city governments. Similar to it, and a part of the same general movement, were the act of 1833, reforming the Scotch municipalities, and that of 1840, which rendered a like service to those of Ireland. Apart from minor differences in the three acts, this legislation gave a uniform framework of municipal government to practically all the large towns and cities of the United Kingdom. It preserved the old-time government by mayors, aldermen, and councilors, while doing away with close corporations and throwing open the municipal franchise to the new classes of electors who had received the borough parliamentary franchise in the reform of 1832, the councilors becoming the direct representatives of the burgesses or citizens. I have recently described the working of one of these reformed city governments in the pages of this magazine; and Glasgow may suffice as a type of the simply, and therefore effectively, organized municipality of Great Britain, in which the whole administrative authority centers in the town council, as an elective committee of the citizens, the mayor being the annually designated presiding officer of the council. Half a century witnessed much additional legislation, which was embodied in the great municipal government consolidation act of 1882; but the general plan of 1835 remains unchanged because experience has given it the stamp of thorough approval. It is not a little strange that none of our American States has seen fit to adopt the superior and strictly republican model of a city constitution that works so well in England, and that is so obviously suited to American conditions.

But London was excluded from the operation of this act that gave healthy and popular representation to all the other large communities of England. The situation of London was exceptional, and Lord Russell announced that its reform must be made the subject of a separate act. For more than fifty years that promised reconstruction and modernization of London government has been awaited in vain, except in so far as various special enactments are to be regarded as advance instalments of reform—the new administrative county government being a very substantial instalment.

The conditions of medieval town life seem to have been fairly well met by a local government that was in the hands of the organized mercantile and trade bodies. It was these associations of burgesses who secured the old borough charters and revived the local liberties that had languished under feudal tyranny. But when in the later days the organization of industry was revolutionized, and the towns were growing at an unprecedented rate under the new forces of modern life, the government

by the self-perpetuating guilds became totally obsolete and inadequate. The guilds had remained as close corporations with their old names and old privileges, but they included few, sometimes none, of the actual working members of the trades whose names they bore, and they had no longer any relation to the industrial life, nor were they in any sense representative of the community at large. In short, their pretenses to exclusive governmental authority had become absurd and intolerable. Elsewhere they were disbanded and their accumulated estates were applied to public objects, or else they survived merely as social or mutual-benefit clubs; but in the City of London they held their ground, and they survive to-day, their authority being only slightly diminished.

THE GILDS OF LONDON.

LET us examine briefly the survival of old-time municipal government as it exists within the narrow bounds of London proper, before passing to the discussion of the great metropolis that has overflowed the limits of the old City walls. There are nearly eighty of the so-called City companies, these being the survivors of the medieval guilds. They are commonly known as the Livery Companies, because on occasions of ceremony their members of the higher grade wear distinctive garbs that date from the reign of Edward III. The twelve principal companies, in the order of precedence, are the Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Taylors, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, and Clothworkers. It might seem superfluous to give the long list of minor companies; but each name contains a picture of the old London life of periods when nearly all the reputable citizens were grouped as members of these quaint callings. Alphabetically arranged, and omitting the twelve already named, the London companies are: Apothecaries, Armourers and Braziers, Bakers, Barbers, Basket Makers, Blacksmiths, Bowyers, Brewers, Broderers (Embroiderers), Butchers, Carmen, Carpenters, Clockmakers, Coach and Coach-Harness Makers, Cooks, Coopers, Cordwainers, Curriers, Cutlers, Distillers, Dyers, Fanmakers, Farriers, Fellowship Porters, Feltmakers, Fletchers, Founders, Framework Knitters, Fruiterers, Girdlers, Glass-sellers, Glaziers, Glovers, Gold and Silver Wire-drawers, Gunmakers, Horners, Innholders, Joiners, Leathersellers, Loriners, Makers of Playing Cards, Masons, Musicians, Needle-makers, Painters, Parish Clerks, Pattern Makers, Pewterers, Plasterers, Plumbers, Poulterers, Saddlers, Scriveners, Shipwrights,

Spectacle Makers, Stationers, Tallow Chandlers, Tinplate Workers, Turners, Tylers and Bricklayers, Upholders, Watermen and Lightermen, Wax Chandlers, Weavers, Wheelwrights, Woolmen.

The companies were originally designed to regulate the callings whose names they bear, and to benefit the members and their families in various ways. They became incorporated, and at length they assumed joint control of the government of the City. Admission to them was by the four methods of purchase, patrimony, apprenticeship, and honorary vote, all of which remain in vogue, although the apprenticeship is now, of course, a mere matter of form. The gilds are societies of gentlemen. Great endowments have accumulated from the rise in value and the gradual increase of modest estates or charity trust funds that were acquired by the companies for the most part several hundred years ago.

The aggregate annual income of the London gilds is not far from \$5,000,000, most of it being derived from the rents of the house property that they own in all quarters of the metropolis. They have estates in many parts of England also, and the capitalized value of all their holdings would probably far exceed \$100,000,000. The Mercers and Drapers are the richest, with incomes of \$400,000 or \$500,000 each; while the Goldsmiths, Clothworkers, and Fishmongers are reputed to be worth \$250,000 or \$300,000 a year. A number of other companies are very wealthy, while many of the minor gilds have trifling incomes. Half of the companies have their own halls, many of which are among the notable architectural survivals of the old-time London; and most of those which are without their separate buildings transact their business at the central Guildhall. About one-fourth of the income of the companies is derived from charitable trust property, and is devoted to the support of almshouses, to educational purposes, and to general charity. A large part of the remaining sums is spent in lavish ways, not less than half a million dollars a year going for banquets and entertainments. In many of the companies the members are paid solid cash for attending ordinary meetings. Membership varies from a mere handful of men in the smallest companies to about 450 in the largest, the average being not far from 100, and the total membership of the entire number being about 7000.

THE "CITY" AND ITS GOVERNMENT.

THE resident population of the City of London proper, as has been said, was fifty thousand by the last census. The "City" is a business district, with a day population of a

million souls, nineteen-twentieths of whom reside in Greater London. The members of the gilds do not, of course, to any extent live in the City. But those who reside within a radius of twenty-five miles are entitled to have a part in the City's government. They vote, in one or another of the twenty-six City wards, for aldermen and common councilors. Each ward elects an alderman for life, and each elects a number of common councilors for a one year's term. The common council has two hundred and six members. The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Councilors form a great court or governing body that controls all the affairs of the City. Recent legislation has made it possible for resident householders to assist in electing councilors and aldermen; but the affairs of the municipal corporation remain practically in the hands of the close and self-perpetuating gilds. The Lord Mayor—whose jurisdiction, it should be understood, extends only throughout the limits of the small inner City—is chosen annually from the ranks of the aldermen. The Court of Common Hall selects two aldermen who have served as Sheriff of London, and from these two the group of aldermen designate one to fill the office of Lord Mayor. Re-election to that office is an honor rarely bestowed. When the year is ended, the Lord Mayor turns the Mansion House over to his successor and continues to serve the City as an alderman who has "passed the Chair." Of the present aldermen about half have "passed the Chair," *i. e.*, have served their year as Lord Mayor. The Queen almost invariably bestows knighthood upon the Lord Mayor, and he emerges from his brief and always exceedingly expensive months of lavish entertaining in the Mansion House with the handle of "Sir" to his name.

The City corporation, with its headquarters in the noble old Guildhall, has, like the individual companies, large estates, chiefly in the form of house property; and it also owns the great markets of London. Its affairs are administered by committees of the council. The City proper has its own separate police system, its street and drainage authorities, its educational work, and its various functions. Its "livery-men," or gild-men, besides voting for members of Parliament in the districts where they actually live, assist in electing two members for the City of London. It is not to be disputed that the corporation of London, with its constituent gilds, has become a great privileged monopoly, held together by the powerful but selfish interest of some seven thousand influential men. It was perhaps in 1873 that Mr. Gladstone in a speech at Nottingham declared that the London gilds must be reformed and their great sums of money devoted

to public purposes. Previous to that utterance the livery-men were to a considerable extent Liberal in politics, but since then they have become almost unanimously Conservative. In 1880 a parliamentary commission was appointed to inquire into the history, status, and revenues of the London companies; and its voluminous report, published in 1884, is marvelously interesting. This commission, composed of men of the highest weight and authority, advised the reform of the gilds by law, and the application of their properties to public uses.

Recent years have witnessed on the part of the workmen and the Liberals of Greater London a series of determined assaults upon the companies; but as yet there has been no result except a marked change in the conduct of these societies. They have begun to make a large use of their funds for the purchase of parks and open spaces in and about the great metropolis, and for the endowment of technical and general education, principally in London, but also in other parts of the British Islands. The "City and Guilds of London Institute," endowed by a number of the companies, supports great central institutions for technical education, and it subsidizes night classes in the practical trades throughout the United Kingdom. Two or three of the companies are contributing heavily to the maintenance of polytechnic institutes and "people's palaces" for the young working folk of London.

Sooner or later the gilds will be obliged to surrender their political and municipal privileges, and public opinion will compel them to account openly for their funds. Possibly their endowments may be construed by Parliament as public trusts, and devoted by law, after the analogy of the old London parochial charity endowments, to the promotion of the general welfare of the metropolitan masses. However that may be, the County Council, as the representative of the aroused and gradually centralized municipal life of the Greater London, will eventually undermine the venerable charters and privileges of the City, and will reduce the central district to the status of one of a series of subordinate parts of an inclusive municipal corporation. This survival of the unreformed medieval borough will pass away within a few years; and those who have never seen a Lord Mayor's show on the 8th of November should not postpone the sight too long.

GREATER LONDON'S BOUNDARIES.

BUT we must turn from this anomaly, this fossilized relic of medievalism, to the vast modern city in which it is embedded. What are

the bounds of Greater London? There are a hundred or more diminutive old parishes within the area of the inner, the technical London. Outside this center, parish after parish has been invaded by the steadily extending rows of brick houses and the metropolitan street system. At least a hundred thousand people are added every year to this great aggregation that we popularly call London. One may go east or north or south or west from Charing Cross and almost despair of ever reaching the rim of the metropolis. In fact, at the time of the reform acts, between fifty and sixty years ago, the city had confessedly grown beyond all knowledge and control. It covered scores of parishes, each of which was governed upon ancient rural lines by an elected Board of Vestrymen whose business it was to provide for street-making, paving, drainage, public lighting, and other concerns, and to levy the rates wherewith to pay the cost of parochial government. No two parishes were governed exactly alike. There was little or no accountability on the part of local officers. No interest was taken in the election of vestrymen. One parish knew nothing about the affairs of another. The West End parishes knew less about those of East London than they knew about Calcutta or Hong Kong. Within the continuously built area there were several hundred separate local authorities. Scores of old villages had been swallowed up by the ever-encroaching metropolis, and rural conditions had given place to those of urban life.

There was a certain unmistakable organic unity in the metropolis; yet no political organization corresponding to that unity had been effected. Numerous affairs essentially important called for united action. But the absence of central agencies left the city to grow of itself, without regulation and without intelligent plans. When the vast developments of modern industry and commerce began fairly to appear, the necessity for measures recognizing the metropolis as a whole became absolutely imperative. Fortunately Parliament could be appealed to in cases of dire emergency; and the British Parliament may indeed be said to have been the governing body of London from the moment when it began to be regarded as something more than a network of contiguous parishes covered with houses.

The earliest recognition of the unity of London was shown by the general government in its provision for the registry of vital statistics. London, according to the Registrar-General, was not merely the ancient City, but the larger populated district. The old so-called Bills of Mortality, dating from the plague of 1592, prior to which deaths were not officially recorded, were from time to time extended to

include larger areas as the outside population grew. In 1838 this wider area came to be definitely known as the Registrar-General's district. It then contained 44,816 acres, or just seventy square miles. It was afterwards extended several times, but for many years it has remained fixed at 75,334 acres, or about 118 square miles. This district is practically identical with that which was adopted as the metropolis in 1855 for the purposes of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and which was adopted again in 1870 as the sphere within which the newly formed School Board for London should operate. And it has now, by the law which became operative early in 1889, and which detaches its parts from the counties of Middlesex, Kent, and Surrey, been erected into a separate administrative county. This, then, must be taken as the present official limit of Metropolitan London. The London of the Metropolitan Parliamentary Boroughs has until very lately remained an area nearly identical with the seventy square miles of the reform period of fifty years ago; but it now includes $125\frac{1}{4}$ square miles, and is therefore larger, by a district covering seven square miles, than the new county. But the Central Criminal Court District, which is regarded as another of the London boundaries, comprises more than 268,000 acres, or 420 square miles.

Finally, the Metropolitan Police District contains 690 square miles, and includes all within a radius of fifteen miles from Charing Cross. This district is now called "Greater London" in distinction from the Metropolis, in the weekly returns of the Registrar-General. The multiplicity of boundaries is somewhat confusing. But henceforth "London" or "the Metropolis" will be commonly regarded as the county area, and "Greater London" will designate in a general way the whole urban population most of which is included in the Metropolitan Police District. The census of 1881 gave the City of London 50,652 people, found 3,834,354 within the area now known as the Metropolis or the County of London, and enumerated a total of 4,776,661 in the "Greater London" of the Metropolitan Police District. The census of 1891 will show that the County now includes decidedly more than 4,000,000 people, and that there are within the police circumscription about 5,500,000. The estimate of 6,000,000 or 6,500,000 people living within twenty miles of Charing Cross may not be regarded as extravagant. And popularly speaking these people are all Londoners. Ultimately the official bounds of the municipality will include them. This larger area is not as yet densely peopled, and it will be made to accommodate several millions more.

THE GROWTH OF LONDON.

WE are too frequently disposed to think of the rapid growth of our American cities as merely incidental to the settlement of a new country, and to regard the European cities as old and stationary. It is true that their *nuclei* are ancient, but so far as the greater part of their built-up area is concerned they are almost or quite as new as the American cities. They, like our own population centers, have grown unprecedentedly in recent decades as the result of modern transportation and industrial systems. Thus London to-day is five times as large as it was at the opening of the present century. From 900,000 at that time, the population of London grew to 1,500,000 in 1830; and by 1855 it had increased to 2,500,000. Since 1855 it has more than doubled. The present sovereign has witnessed a gain of two hundred per cent. or more since she began to reign. There are three or four dwelling-houses now for every one that was visible at the date of her coronation. In the past forty years from 2000 to 2500 miles of new streets have been formed in London. Who, studying the growth of foreign cities, can doubt the continued growth of our own? London is not an exception. All the other great towns of England have grown up as by magic within this century. And the same statement applies to those of the Continent. Paris is five times as large as it was in the year 1800; Berlin has grown much more rapidly than Paris; Vienna has expanded marvelously since 1840. This is a digression; but I shall continue it enough further to remark that an examination of the causes which have built up these European centers easily justifies the judgment that none of our twenty leading American cities has begun to approach its maximum size.

From about 1805 to 1855, an even half-century, London's population had grown from a round million to two millions and a half. The situation had become almost intolerable from lack of central management. The home department of the general government maintained a metropolitan police force and kept tolerably good order. Government commissioners of sewers also levied taxes upon the whole community and provided an imperfect sort of drainage system. Underground sewers were entirely unknown in London until 1831, and they were not numerous or extensive in 1855. Not a single large underground main had been constructed. Such as they were, the sewers and drainage ditches poured their pollution directly into the Thames at frequent intervals on both banks, and at times the river was so befouled and clogged with filth that navigation was obstructed. The era of mod-

ern trade and commerce had set in, and traffic was blocked on the streets for lack of suitable central arteries. There was not in all London at that time a good pavement, nor a broad convenient thoroughfare. The river was without an adequate supply of bridges, and without suitable embankments and retaining walls.

The parishes, of which there were seventy-eight outside the City proper and within the Registrar-General's metropolitan district, were attending in an irregular way to local concerns, while some parts of the metropolis were no-man's land and were without any pretext of local management whatever. The selfishness of the fossilized City corporation was egregious. It never at any time tried to extend its government so as to include the huge outlying population; nor would it consent to any reasonable scheme for the incorporation of the Greater London. Either proceeding would have swamped this inner sanctuary of monopoly and exclusive privilege. The outsiders were too disorganized to act together. Moreover, too many of their influential fellow-citizens were members of one or another of the city companies. And so reform dragged.

THE METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT ACT.

A GREAT beginning, however, was made in the year 1855. In lieu of the complete reform and municipalization of the overgrown city, Parliament enacted what has since been known as the Metropolis Management Act. This act contained the rudiments of a municipal constitution. It divided the area outside the City proper into thirty-eight districts, following parish lines and uniting small parishes for the purposes of the act. Twenty-three parishes were regarded as large and populous enough to stand singly, and fifty-five smaller ones were grouped into fifteen districts. To these thirty-eight districts were confirmed, under a somewhat more uniform system, the local functions that the parishes had always exercised—these including local sewerage, street making and paving, street lighting, sanitary administration, and some other minor matters to which additions have been made by subsequent enactments. The principal purpose of the act was, however, to create a central authority. This body was called the Metropolitan Board of Works. Each parish or district was governed by an elective board called in the single parishes the Vestry and in the consolidated areas entitled the District Board; and these bodies were chosen by all rate-payers who were taxed for the care of the poor on a rental value of \$200 a year. The vestries and district boards varied in size according to the population of the area, the average being about 75, and the

whole number of these local representatives being about 3000. Each district board or vestry was authorized to send a representative to the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the Corporation of the City of London was given three members. Subsequently the board was enlarged and the greater districts or parishes were accorded two or three delegates, making a central body of about sixty members in all.

These thirty-eight parishes and districts remain to-day in possession of their functions as constituted in 1855. The Metropolitan Board of Works survived until April, 1889, when it was superseded by the new County Council, which I shall take further occasion to describe. The central improvements of London for the period from 1855 to 1889, enormous as they have been in the aggregate, are the work of the metropolitan board. Its first and most imperative task was the creation of a system of main sewers. Obviously the petty parish vestries could undertake no such work. Then it became the board's duty to improve systematically the main thoroughfares. The river banks, the Thames bridges, the paramount problem of parks and open spaces, the problems of overcrowding and unsanitary houses and numerous lesser matters, came under the board's jurisdiction. Its rounded generation of active work has resulted in vast improvements. London was chaos when the board found it. To-day it has many of the appointments of a modern metropolis, and it is well advanced towards the assumption of a fully organized municipal life.

Before taking up the specific departments of the board's work, and the whole subject of London's municipal appointments and public services, it may be well to continue a little further the discussion of the governmental machinery. The metropolitan board accomplished a great work, but in its latter years its administration was honeycombed with scandals. Its indirect election removed it from the people. There was no interest in its personnel, and its members were for the most part obscure. The London public knew astonishingly little about it. It was the creature of the vestries, and these vestry local governments have not themselves been successful. The vestries and district boards are practically unaccountable. The taxpayers, at least until very recently, have almost utterly ignored the election of vestrymen. The levying of taxes has been at the most various rates in the different parts of the metropolis. There has been much incompetency and extravagance, and often much lack of wisdom in the making of such public improvements as have come within the sphere of the parishes and districts.

PROPOSED MUNICIPAL CONSTITUTIONS.

NUMEROUS attempts have been made to build further upon the foundation laid in 1855, and to secure a full-wrought municipal government for London. A select committee of Parliament reported in 1861 in favor of the direct election of the Metropolitan Board of Works by the rate-payers, with a view to transforming it into a regular municipal common council. And about once in four or five years ever since 1855 some Cabinet Minister or prominent member of the House has brought in a bill to make the board a central elective council, and to supersede the vestries by newly constituted local areas with subordinate councils. Such bills were introduced by Sir George Cornewall Lewis in 1860, by John Stuart Mill in 1867, by Charles Buxton in 1869-70, by Lord Elcho in 1875, by Mr. J. F. B. Firth in 1880, and by Sir William Harcourt as Mr. Gladstone's Home Secretary in 1884.

As the latest of these important propositions it may be worth while to examine the bill of 1884, introduced by Sir William Harcourt. It created a great central council of 240 members, merging the old City corporation into the metropolis, and treating the inner City as one of the thirty-nine administrative areas, but giving it a large representation in recognition of its historical importance and its heavy property and commercial interests. Among the other districts representation was proportioned to population and wealth. All the authority possessed by the old board of works, by all the parish and district boards, by the authorities of the City corporation, and by other local functionaries, was concentrated in the hands of the new central council. This body was expected to revise and consolidate the districts, reducing their number, and granting to each a local district council composed of the members of the central body from any given district and of other elected members. These local councils were to do simply the things delegated to them by the higher authority, and were to be subject always to the control of the central council.

This London proposition adapted the general municipal system of England to the peculiar conditions of the metropolis. The principle of the English system is that of "absolute control through a directly elected authority of all administration and of all expenditure." This principle was not in controversy; it was accepted by all parties. But there had long been a strong party, inspired by the livery-men of the gilds and now largely identified with the Conservatives, who advocated the partitioning of London into six or

twelve, or even a greater number of cities, and the giving to each one a separate municipal government of its own. The idea had some seeming justification in the fact of London's vastness and of certain traditional topographic and natural lines of division. But the real motive was the effectual dismemberment of the great London that threatened to assimilate and absorb the ancient City and to dispossess its privileged beneficiaries.

What the situation called for was not a series of distinct municipalities, but a sort of federalized municipal government. There were great common concerns which required concerted action and vigorous central administration. The defeat of measures proposed in 1880 and 1884 was accomplished by the active opposition of the gilds, which spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in lobbying and sham demonstrations, and which flooded Parliament with petitions containing thousands of fictitious names. The great bill of 1884 contained the provisions of a magnificent metropolitan constitution, and its adoption would have been of incalculable advantage to the millions of Londoners.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY.

MEANWHILE there had been a continual demand for reform in the county governments of England. These governments had been wholly non-representative. In every county a number of gentlemen, usually belonging to the landlord class, held the Queen's commissions as magistrates or justices of the peace. And they, meeting four times a year in the so-called "quarter sessions," levied the county tax, managed the road business, granted liquor licenses, and attended to all the administrative as well as the minor judicial business of the county. The great towns had all acquired their representative municipal governments, and were for most ordinary purposes detached from the counties. It was at length proposed that elective councils on about the same plan as those of the municipalities should be given to the counties, with subordinate district councils in subdivisions of the county. This great measure was brought forward by the Ministry in 1888, and it became a law to the satisfaction of all parties. It was no part of the original intention of this measure to reform London administration; but it was found in drafting the so-called Local Government Bill that it would be wholly impracticable to include in an elective government intended for the great rural county of Kent a million or two of Londoners who had overflowed the extreme north-western corner of the county. And similar considerations were applicable to Middlesex and Surrey. It was found much more feasible

to treat all the great urban communities of England as separate counties for administrative purposes. Thus London was made a county, with the area of the old Metropolitan Board of Works. The other cities of England were already organized for administrative work; but the new "administrative county" of London had to be dealt with specifically in the bill. It is a curious fact that the Conservatives, who had so strenuously opposed the earlier plans for a great London municipal organism, were now the men who laid the solid framework for such a structure, as a mere incident in the elaboration of a measure intended to initiate local self-government in the rural parts of England. When direct and centralized self-government had been given to the towns and cities of England, London was made an exception. When, more than fifty years later, it was no longer possible to deny some measure of local self-government to the counties and townships of rural England, London was for the first time given an elective central authority. If English legislation is sometimes in defiance of logical symmetry, it sooner or later accomplishes the desired results with a practical wisdom that is rarely equaled in other countries.

The parishes and districts of 1855, which still remain the local government areas of the metropolis, and from whose vestries and boards the Metropolitan Board of Works had always been constituted as a delegate body, were not taken as the basis of apportionment for the new County Council. The parliamentary reform bill of 1885 had created fifty-seven districts besides the City within the metropolitan area, for the purpose of representation in the House of Commons; and these districts were taken as the best temporary divisions for the election of councilors. Each was accorded two members, while the City proper was allowed four; and thus provision was made for one hundred and eighteen members, to be elected every three years. The councilors were empowered to add to their body nineteen members having the rank of aldermen and holding their seats for six-year terms, but having no different authority from the ordinary members. They were further to choose annually, from their own number or otherwise, a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a deputy-chairman, thus bringing the whole body up to about one hundred and forty members of a metropolitan parliament.

The bill left much to be done in the future. Thus the City of London and its functions remain practically untouched, and the parish vestries and district boards continue to exercise their accustomed jurisdiction in minor affairs. Ultimately, of course, these powers will all be conferred upon the central County Council, in

order that it may re-delegate such authority as it deems best to a revised series of ward or district councils; or else Parliament itself will ordain a new and improved subdivision of London, and constitute minor councils with well-defined duties subject to the County Council. But as matters stand, the County Council is not without an important range of authority. It supersedes the Metropolitan Board of Works, which had grown to be an administrative body of vast undertakings. It is also assigned certain administrative duties that had formerly belonged to the county justices. It is now demanding from Parliament very extensive additions to its powers. If as yet it is but a framework, it is a substantial and enduring one, and it will in the very early future have become the most important municipal administrative body in the world. It is expected that it will secure an enlargement of the official bounds of London to include an area perhaps as extensive as that of the police jurisdiction. Its members will ultimately sit *ex officio* in reformed district councils for minor administrative purposes. It will invade the sanctuary of the inner City and destroy its "flummery" and ancient traditions so far as they carry with them peculiar immunities and privileges. It will take in hand, one after another, great public works, and will make London a fitting place for its people to live in, and a convenient place for the vast world commerce that centers there.

THE BRITISH IDEAL.

HENCEFORTH, then, *the* government of London will be that of the County Council, which will gradually absorb the authority now belonging to obscure parish authorities, and will acquire very much of the jurisdiction now and heretofore exercised directly by departments or bureaus of the imperial government. The full development of that government is only a question of time. Nobody doubts what its form and principle will be. The absolute control of municipal affairs by one central, elective body, representing the masses of the citizens, will be the permanent and final government of this chief of urban communities. Such is the British ideal of a perfect municipal government. All administrative and appointive power will be vested in the council. It will work through standing committees, each committee supervising some branch of business or administration, at the head of which will be a skilled executive officer appointed upon his merits.

It is possible that the title of Mayor, or Lord Mayor, may sometime be transferred from the present head of the ancient City corporation

to the chairman of the County Council. In England, however, a mayor has no appointive power or special executive duties, but is simply a member of the common council and its presiding officer for the time being. The American idea of setting a mayor up, outside the council, as a sort of rival principality, would appear incomprehensibly absurd in England. In our own cities we attempt the impossible feat of governing ourselves by a council and by a mayor at the same time. Sometimes we arbitrarily give the greater power to the one, sometimes we give it to the other, and not infrequently we distrust both and confer administrative powers upon special boards and commissions. What is needed is municipal self-government exercised through one central organ; and this can be accomplished by choosing an absolute dictator from time to time under the title of mayor, in accordance with the ideas of certain American reformers. But this method is highly unrepresentative, besides being incompatible with a wise continuity of policy. Why does it not occur to reformers in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other American cities to espouse the simple, republican, stably balanced system that pertains in all foreign countries, and *par excellence* in England, of a city government controlled throughout by a central elective council?

THE NEW COUNCIL AND ITS ELECTION.

LONDON'S new government rests upon a franchise so popular that practically nobody who would care to vote is excluded. In the first place, all householders are enfranchised; and this includes every man who rents a place for his family, even if it be only a small room in the garret or the cellar of a tenement house. It also includes those who live within fifteen miles of the metropolis, but own or occupy metropolitan quarters, for any purpose, worth a certain very limited rental. Owners of freehold property in London, no matter where they live, if British subjects, are entitled to vote. Widows and unmarried women who are householders, occupiers or owners of property, are also authorized to vote for county councilors. The principal basis of the franchise is the household; and the chief disqualifications are receipt of public alms and failure to pay rates that have fallen due. Any resident of the metropolis or vicinity who is entitled to vote is eligible to election. Furthermore, any British subject who owns land in London or who is possessed of a limited amount of property, no matter where he lives, may be chosen a councilor of the county of London. The fact of residence in one district does not disqualify,

either in law or in the popular judgment, for candidacy in another district.

Thus the present council, elected in January, 1889, from fifty-seven districts besides the City, is constituted in utter disregard of the precise residence of members. The successful candidates in East or South London districts were in many instances prominent men who live in the West End or in rural suburbs. If it were the English fashion, as it is the American, to elect as representatives of a ward or district only men who live in that ward or district for the general duties of a municipal council, the ward plan would be given up in whole or in part, and councilors would be elected upon a general ticket by the whole city. For the strict ward plan can never result in a representative body of the best type. But nowhere in England is residence in a ward deemed a necessary qualification.

Great interest was shown in the election of the first council. The machinery of nomination and election was borrowed from the general municipal and parliamentary systems in vogue throughout the country. Thus, it being desired that John Burns should be a candidate for the Battersea district, it was only necessary for purposes of a valid nomination that a blank should be filled out with John Burns's name, residence, and calling, and the name of the district; that it should be signed by a "proposer," a "seconder," and eight other resident voters; and that it be filed with the county's returning officer at least six days before the date of the election. An unlimited number of such nominations may be filed. The names are announced, and opportunity is given for candidates to withdraw if they choose. Four days before the election the revised lists of candidates in all the districts are posted up conspicuously. The Australian system of secret voting has long been in vogue in England, and the government provides the ballot papers. Nobody may be voted for except those who have been duly nominated in the manner specified above.

Since two councilors are elected from each of the London districts, the nomination is equivalent to an election when only two candidates are presented. In the case of Battersea, for example, there were six nominations, and therefore six names appeared on the ballot paper. The voter marked two names, and the two candidates who received the highest number of votes were elected. The candidates averaged about five in each district, one having eight. In only one was there no contest. In Saint George, Hanover Square, Colonel Howard-Vincent and Mr. Antrobus were the only nominees, and no election was held. In subsequent elections it will doubtless happen in numerous districts that the present incumbents

will be returned without opposition, as is the custom to a great extent in municipal elections throughout Great Britain.

All the stringent regulations against the lavish and corrupt use of money that have proved so salutary in purifying English parliamentary elections have been made applicable to the election of London councilors. Under no circumstances may the election expenses of a councilor aggregate more than twenty-five pounds (\$125), except that an additional threepence is allowed for each voter in the district above the first five hundred. All expenditures must be made through authorized agents, and these must report the items to the candidate, who within a month must render a complete return of expenses incurred in his election. No payments may be made on behalf of any candidate for conveyance of voters, for bands of music or parades or other public demonstrations, for clerks or messengers except at the rate of one employed person for each thousand voters, nor for placards or printed matter except through a selected advertising agent. These laws are construed strictly, carry heavy penalties, and are scrupulously observed.

This first London council possesses as high an average of ability and distinction as the House of Commons. Sir John Lubbock and the Earl of Rosebery are two of the four members for the City, and such well-known men as Mr. Firth, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martineau, Colonel Hughes, Colonel Howard-Vincent, Mr. Antrobus, Lord Monkswell, Sir R. Hanson, Lord Compton, and John Burns are in the list, together with many who have a high local reputation for character and ability. Two ladies were elected — Lady Sandhurst and Miss Jane Cobden. The councilors added to their number by choosing the following persons as aldermen: Lord Lingen, Lord Hobhouse, Quintin Hogg, Sir Thomas Farrer, Frederic Harrison, John Barker, Edmund Routledge, Frank Debenham, S. S. Tayler, Arthur Arnold, Hon. R. Grosevenor, S. Hope Morley, J. Eccleston Gibb, G. W. E. Russell, Earl of Meath, Evan Spicer, Mark Beaufoy, Miss Cons, and the Rev. Fleming Williams. A council containing so much distinguished material and approved political ability can but have prestige and success. The aristocracy by no means predominates in the London council, although it is so liberally represented. The noble lords who hold seats are practical, popular men, with a talent for affairs, and they sit beside several scores of plain untitled citizens of London, some of whom are of as humble origin as John Burns, the labor leader, but most of whom are men of more than commonplace abilities. It may interest New York, Boston, and Chicago readers to be assured that there

are no saloon-keepers or ward "bosses" in this London council, over which Lord Rosebery presides as chairman, while the scientist-statesman, Sir John Lubbock, serves as vice-chairman, and the distinguished London reformer, Mr. Firth, as deputy-chairman.

THE LONDON SEWERS.

THE defunct board of works handed down its unfinished undertakings to the County Council. The more than thirty years of the board's existence witnessed vast, but only partly successful, attempts to undo the mistakes of the past and to modernize the metropolis. The prime occasion for the establishment of the metropolitan board in 1855 was the need of main sewers. Upon this work of a general drainage system the board had spent \$35,000,000 from 1856 to 1888. This is apart from the cost of the network of smaller sewers that ramify the parishes, and that have been built by the vestries and parish boards.

The natural drain for the whole region is, of course, the Thames; but the time had come when a free discharge at intervals into the river was intolerable. Long before this the stream would have been filled with a putrid, plague-generating mass of sludge, to the destruction of navigation and commerce as well as of life. Main sewer tunnels, following either bank, carry the sewage to a point some fifteen miles below the city, where it meets a strong tidal movement. Filtration works have been erected there at vast expense. It has been hoped that the compressed sludge, of which there are several thousand tons per day, can all eventually be disposed of as a manure; but hitherto it has been necessary to barge much of it out to sea, large vessels having been built for that purpose. The experimental work is far from completed, and the new council will find the problem of sewage disposal both expensive and vexatious. A royal commission appointed for that purpose in 1882 reported in 1884 upon this question. All the large cities of Europe have since then been watching the experiments at London, and hoping that a solution might be found that would be applicable elsewhere.

The royal commissioners found the discharge of crude sewage objectionable at any point on the Thames estuary, on both sanitary and navigation grounds, and could not approve, as a permanent measure, the discharge into the river of the impure liquid after the process of deposition or precipitation of the solid material. The only final remedy they could advise for the further purification of this liquid was its application to land. It now remains for the County Council to add sewage farms to its

present means for the disposal of the London drainage and the protection of the Thames. Sir Robert Rawlinson in an elaborate paper on "London Sewerage and Sewage" has lately declared that the entire volume of that sewage is now worth \$8,750,000 a year for manurial purposes, and that the direct irrigation of land is the true system for the London authorities to adopt. London is now a well-sewered city; and this great sanitary reform has reduced the death rate most notably.

STREETS, PARKS, AND TRANSIT.

A STREET map of London as the city was in 1840 or 1850 would be necessary to make plain all the improvements that have been wrought, especially in the central districts lying within four or five miles of Charing Cross. As the metropolis grew, naturally the pressure of traffic upon its central thoroughfares became enormous. It was necessary, at great cost, to widen and straighten important streets, and to open new thoroughfares. Thus great improvements were made in the lines of streets that lead from Charing Cross to the Bank. It became imperative to create other arteries between the City and the West End, and the Holborn Viaduct with High Holborn and New Oxford streets was constructed. Queen Victoria street and the magnificent Thames embankments constituted still another new route created with the outlay of millions. The Northumberland Avenue, the Gray's Inn Road, the Charing Cross Road, and dozens of other now important thoroughfares, have been recently cut through solid masses of buildings, involving heavy financial operations in condemning property, clearing sites, constructing the streets, and reselling the new street frontage.

London, like all other old cities, is a vast tangled network of streets that for the most part begin nowhere and end nowhere. Upon this network it became necessary to superimpose a system of main thoroughfares as avenues of communication. This work had begun, either under the authorities of the City corporation or under special parliamentary commissions, long before the day of the metropolitan board; but this body has accomplished the major part. Including the splendid river boulevards and retaining walls known as the Albert, Victoria, and Chelsea embankments, I find that the metropolitan board had expended from 1856 to 1887 about \$75,000,000 upon these main street improvements, during which time the outlying parts of the metropolis had added to the ordinary street system about 2000 miles of new thoroughfares, lined with from 500,000 to 600,000 new houses. But the

cost of these new streets has been defrayed by the adjacent property owners and the local boards; and it is to the expense of main arterial improvements that I refer. Including what the City and special commissions have spent, not less than \$100,000,000 has gone into this work of reforming the vicious street system of London since 1850. And still the task is far from completed. New lines of communication must yet be made to relieve the glut of traffic on east and west routes north of the Thames.

Only a competent central authority like the new council can manage these gigantic municipal reforms in the suitable way. While these main improvements have been in progress, it should be said in justice to the vestries and district boards that the network of lesser streets has been wonderfully changed for the better, and that London as a whole is now a well-paved city. It devolves upon the council, as upon its predecessor the board of works, to regulate the width and formation of new streets, the lining of the buildings, the naming of streets, and the numbering of houses. Unfortunately the metropolis was already far too large when this power was given to a central authority. There are fine avenues in the newer suburbs; but throughout most of the metropolis the lesser streets must remain in a condition that to an American seems painfully chaotic. An important work was done by the metropolitan board in constructing Thames bridges, but the supply is wholly insufficient. One or two new Thames tunnels are now in progress, and \$20,000,000 ought to be expended soon for additional bridges.

Great attention has been given in recent years to the acquisition of ground for parks. Formerly the principal public gardens and open spaces of London were appurtenances of the Crown, and were under control of the "Commissioners of her Majesty's Works and Public Buildings." This remains true of Hyde Park, with St. James's and Green, of Richmond, Hampton Court, and the Kew Gardens, of Regent's Park and of Greenwich — all noble pleasure grounds that are freely at the service of the London masses. But the County Council has fallen heir to a number of parks that had been either created by the metropolitan board or transferred to it. Thus in 1887 the Victoria, Battersea, and Kennington parks had been transferred from the control of her Majesty's commissioners to the metropolitan board. And among the other well-known parks, commons, and open spaces that have come under the council's charge are Southwark, Finsbury, Blackheath, Hackney, Clapham, Hampstead Heath, Stoke Newington, Shepherd's Bush, Tooting Beck, Plumstead, Streatham, Wormwood Scrubs,

Wandsworth, Vauxhall, and Brixton. A large amount of legislation enacted within the past quarter-century has had for its object the creation and preservation of open spaces, the transformation of disused cemeteries into park spaces, and the encouragement in all possible ways of park-making in and about the metropolis. The result has been surprising in the aggregate. The City corporation has lately made good use of some of its wealth in the purchase for public parks of several extensive tracts beyond the limits of the metropolis. The guilds and certain private associations are also zealously helping to atone for past neglect, and to provide the present and future metropolis with recreation grounds and breathing-spaces. But there is daily reason for regret that the need of parks was not sooner foreseen, and that so many ancient tracts of common land have been swallowed up in the expanding wilderness of brick and mortar and narrow streets beyond recovery. Much remains to be done in the opening of park spaces in London.

The great metropolis needs improved and systematized local transit. For want of anything better, the omnibus system has grown to enormous magnitude. The street railways are only moderately successful, because not permitted in the heart of the city. There are three systems, one in South London, one in North London, and one in East London, operated by several companies, and having lines aggregating about a hundred miles in length. They are not very profitable, and contribute nothing to public revenues except ordinary taxes. The regular steam railways run innumerable suburban trains, and constitute the rapid-transit system of London. Their tracks are laid upon elevated road-beds which bridge the streets. But they enter the city with so little system that their network of tracks comes short of furnishing a really scientific scheme of metropolitan transit. An underground line, the "District" road, continued by another, the "Metropolitan," serves a very important purpose, making a circuit and connecting a number of the principal railway passenger stations. Ultimately this underground system will be extended, although it has many disadvantages. The streets of London are hardly broad enough or straight enough for the introduction of anything like a complete system of surface cable or electric lines.

WATER AND LIGHTING SUPPLIES.

THE London water supply is another problem that demands attention. The health, comfort, and permanent well-being of a large city depend upon its having an abundance of

pure water as upon almost no other consideration. London has always been served by private water companies, and there are now eight of them operating in different districts. They derive nearly all their supply from the rivers Thames and Lea, the intakes being several miles above London. Strenuous attempts are made, under the acts forbidding the pollution of rivers, to keep these sources of supply uncontaminated, but with only partial success. For the most part the companies filter their water; but the supply is none of the purest, and it is limited in quantity. Because a continuous flow is not provided, most houses are obliged to use cistern storage. Legislation intended to protect consumers and compel the companies to give adequate service has not been very successful. Absurdly enough, the companies have been allowed to collect water rates based upon the rental value of the houses supplied. Now it so happens that the assessed rental value has trebled since 1855 and doubled since 1868. It has increased twenty-five per cent. since 1880. The consequence is that the water companies have been steadily increasing their charges without improving their services. They supply actually less water per house on the average than they did ten or fifteen years ago, and they collect greatly augmented rates. The market value of their shares has gone up accordingly. The advance in assessed values of house property from year to year is worth additional unearned profits of half a million dollars to the water companies every year. From 1871 to 1883 their stock had increased one hundred per cent. in value.

Parliamentary investigating committees have from time to time reported in favor of the assumption of the water supply by a central public authority, but until now the suitable authority has not existed. Negotiations looking to a purchase for the public a few years ago resulted in agreements on the part of the companies to sell out their antiquated and insufficient plants for the modest sum of about \$170,000,000; but eminent engineers estimated that an entirely new and superior supply could be procured at a cost of \$60,000,000 — this to include four gallons per inhabitant per diem of pure water for drinking purposes brought from the chalk strata, and an unlimited supply of river water for general uses. The fire department was under control of the metropolitan board, and is now subject to the County Council. Its work is hampered by the private control and the insufficiency of the water supply; and everything in the situation conspires to demand a new consolidated municipal water department. Upon the organization of the council last year,

a number of bills for the enlargement of its powers and the further improvement of London government were introduced in Parliament. One of these bills provided for the purchase of the plants and rights of the water companies by the County Council. The question has been vigorously agitated during the present year, and the County Council, encouraged by the vestries and all London, is besieging Parliament for the requisite authority. The demand cannot be long resisted. A public water supply would give the citizens a far better service at materially reduced cost, besides earning sufficient profits to pay the interest charges and gradually redeem the principal of the original investment.

Most of the large British towns and cities have assumed the gas supply as a municipal function, and have found it advantageous to do so. But London has not been properly organized for such undertakings, and the manufacture and distribution of gas remains in private hands, although it is under the surveillance of the County Council. Until a few years ago a large number of gas companies competed for the London business. These are now consolidated into three companies, which operate in different territories. Their shares sell at from 250 to 300, and they pay dividends of from 12 to 18 per cent. They, like the water companies, tear the streets up quite at their own pleasure. The general government with its postal telegraph wires, the water companies, the gas companies, the council with its main drainage system, and the parish boards with their control of local drainage and paving, all have independent right to break the street surface, and it would be superfluous to comment upon the confusion that has often resulted. Nothing could better illustrate the need of a fully empowered central authority.

Twenty years ago, or more, London began to construct capacious subways for wires, pipes, and various conduits to protect the surface of the streets. But the gas companies secured the right to use the subways or not at their option; and there are on record instances where, immediately after the completion of costly and magnificent subways under beautifully paved streets, gas companies have torn up the pavement on each side from one end of the street to the other, and laid their leaking pipes in the ground. It is not so very strange then, especially in view of the fact that nearly all of the large cities of Great Britain have assumed the water and gas supplies and are operating them with great success as municipal monopolies, that the London people are now determined to centralize and to municipalize such services in the hands of their new representative body.

Electric lighting has made relatively little progress in English cities; but a noteworthy beginning in London is now announced by the St. Pancras Vestry, which has decided to provide electric light within its own populous district both for street illumination and for private consumption. Within a few years we shall undoubtedly see the subway system extended throughout the central parts of the metropolis, and carrying water pipes, illuminating and fuel gas pipes, telegraph and telephone wires, electric light and power wires, numerous pneumatic tubes, and perhaps other and newer fangled things. And these services of supply will have been taken in hand very largely by the public authorities.

HOUSING AND SANITATION.

THE housing of the working people and of the masses of the population has forced its way to the front in London, as in all great European towns, as one of the most serious problems of the day. Unfortunately, in the period when the new forces of industry were giving modern cities so rapid a growth,—the period, we may roughly say, embraced in the first half of this century,—it was deemed a matter of little public concern how private owners constructed either factories or residence blocks. They might build tenement houses to accommodate a hundred families, with practically no open court space, with low, small, and dark apartments, and with an arrangement of rooms that offended against privacy and decency and invited epidemic diseases. An ounce of prevention would have been better than remedies that are costing millions of pounds sterling. The metropolitan board was given authority over the construction of new buildings, and by successive acts of Parliament it acquired wide functions as to the housing of the people, that have now descended to the council.

Besides regulations of a sanitary nature, and those relating to safety of construction, the authorities make rules as to the height, frontage, projections, and general street appearance of houses. An act of 1882 confers a much needed power to require a certain proportionate clear space in the rear of each house. Under a series of artisans and laborers' dwellings acts the metropolitan board acquired the power to buy up property in unhealthy areas, clear away the old houses, and sell or lease the ground for the erection of suitable tenements. Several millions have been expended in this way, the best results being due to the coöperation with the authorities of private individuals and associations. Thus the Peabody Fund houses, Miss Octavia Hill's model tenements, and the

fine blocks of several incorporated associations for building workingmen's dwellings, have provided decent homes within twenty years for several hundred thousand people.

Fortunately in the outlying parts of London the prevailing type is the small house of two or three stories, and in a majority of the metropolitan districts the average is not greater than eight or ten people to a house. There are, however, in the central quarters many terribly congested districts in which nothing will suffice but wholesale demolition by the public authorities. Gradually a million or two of Londoners must be rehoused; and the vastness of this problem seems to be transforming some very practical and conservative men into socialists. In connection with the house reform legislation, authority has been given to establish workingmen's lodging-houses in London, upon the plan of those so successful in Glasgow. But little or nothing has yet been done in this direction. The parish and district authorities have power to establish free libraries and reading-rooms, and to construct and operate public baths and wash-houses. Something has been accomplished towards these ends, and there are perhaps fifteen of the combined baths and wash-houses in London; but there should be at least a hundred and fifty. The free libraries, moreover, are so few and far between that their existence is known to a very small percentage of the population.

I am aware that there is much in the intricate management of London affairs that I have left undescribed. Thus for the purposes of the English poor law there is a Metropolitan Poor Law District, subdivided into thirty parishes or unions of parishes, each subdivision having a board of guardians elected by the rate-payers. These boards administer the poor laws and care for the hundred thousand paupers of London. They administer outside relief, and support poor-houses—"work-houses" as they are called in England—and infirmaries.

The ordinary sanitary administration is in the hands of the vestries and district boards. These bodies attend to garbage removal and street-cleansing, maintain sanitary inspection of houses, employ public analysts and food inspectors, and provide against epidemic diseases. It must be remembered that each of these parishes or consolidated districts is as populous as a fair-sized city, their average inhabitancy being more than 100,000. While their functions are similar, no two of them organize their business in exactly the same way, and there are wide differences in the efficiency of their work. The sanitary administration of the entire metropolis ought to be brought under the control and inspection of the central council,

although parceled out for practical execution to the minor councils.

As a result of public improvements and reforms in the sanitary administration, imperfect as these reforms have been, the death rate of London has been reduced from more than thirty as the average annual rate per thousand during the half-century from 1800 to 1850, down to the present average rate of about twenty. This means in a population of 5,000,000 the saving of 50,000 lives a year. It means, of course, the prevention of a vastly greater number of cases of sickness, a marked increase in the average duration of life, and an important conservation of the physical strength and wealth-producing energy of the people. The saving of 500,000 lives in every decade in the one city of London as a result of improved public arrangements is a triumph in sanitary science that may well encourage further efforts.

THE LONDON SCHOOLS.

ON the creation of a popularly elected school board for the metropolis in 1870 and its great work of education I may say in a word that it has now more than four hundred schools, with about 450,000 children enrolled as pupils. Prior to 1871 all the elementary schools of London were denominational and private, being partly supported by grants from the government. There were then about 300,000 pupils enrolled in all London; and a large proportion of the schools were utterly inefficient, and attendance was irregular. Probably not 200,000 children were receiving efficient and regular instruction. There are now at least 650,000 enrolled in schools of good character and standing approved by the government inspectors. Thus the general educational condition of London has been revolutionized within twenty years. Compulsory education is not a merely nominal provision in London, for school attendance is enforced by an army of 272 "visitors."

The school board was the first public body that the metropolitan population was permitted to elect by direct vote. It has fifty-five members, elected in eleven large districts. The entire board is renewed every three years, and the principle of minority representation prevails. Thus in the Tower Hamlets district, which elects five members, the voter might "plump" his five votes for a single candidate, or might distribute them to two, three, four, or five candidates. In that district two years ago Sir Edmund Hay Currie and Mrs. Annie Besant were regarded as candidates favoring the "progressive" as opposed to the "reactionary" policy. The radicals and anti-denominationalists con-

centrated their votes upon these two candidates and elected them, whereas if they had pushed a full ticket of five names they would have been defeated. The plan gives every considerable element an opportunity to secure representation.

Supported by various agencies, public and private, technical education is rapidly advancing in London. I have recently described in this magazine the Polytechnic Institute movement, and a long chapter might be written upon the gratifying progress of other practical education movements among the working people of London in recent years. No large American city has, at this moment, so favorable a prospect for the intellectual and industrial training of all its young people as has the English metropolis.

CERTAIN PENDING QUESTIONS.

THE metropolitan police force is not under the control of any local authority, but is directed by commissioners who are responsible to the Home Office of the general government. There is a strong demand in London for the transfer of the police authority to the County Council, and the subject has provoked much discussion. It is urged that the concentration of imperial and national interests in London is so vastly important that the higher authorities should maintain control of the police in protection of all those central concerns that pertain to the greatest capital in the world. Ultimately a compromise will probably be reached. The County Council ought certainly to have some share in the police administration of the metropolis.

A problem that is continually upon the minds of the London reformers is that of the ownership and taxation of the land upon which London stands. There is very little freehold land in or about the metropolis. Houses are built upon land acquired by leasehold title. When the leases fall in, they carry the houses with them. Everything eventually goes to the ground landlord. The ownership of ground-rents and of houses is usually separate, though sometimes united in the same individual; but it is almost never the case that the occupier is the owner of either. House occupiers have no motive to make repairs, and house owners make as few as possible, especially in the twenty years that precede the falling in of a lease. Nobody acquires the home feeling, or takes a proper interest in the affairs or improvements of the vicinity in which he lives. Taxes are collected chiefly from the occupier, and local revenues are raised almost wholly from rates imposed upon the rental value of occupied house property. Lots not

built upon, since actual rental is the basis of taxation, are exempt.

The whole system is wrong. Large parts of London are held as individual properties, such as the estates of the Dukes of Westminster and Northampton and the Portman and Bedford estates; and these properties are increasing enormously in value by the falling in of leases and the increase of rentals. There is a powerful movement, led by the Liberal party, in favor of what is known as leasehold enfranchisement. It is proposed to enact laws giving the holder of a lease the right to purchase the freehold at a fair valuation. The reform has everything to commend it. The most determined opposition to it comes, however, from the advanced socialistic element that advocates the municipalization of the ground upon which London stands, and that fears the success of a reasonable reform like leasehold enfranchisement. Eminent men serving on a parliamentary commission that investigated the leasehold question in 1884 signed a report emphatically condemning it. "The system of building on leasehold ground is a great cause," they declared, "of the many evils connected with overcrowding, unsanitary building, and excessive rents"; and they further averred that "the prevailing system of building-leases is conducive to bad building, to deterioration of property towards the close of the lease, and to a want of interest on the part of the occupier in the house he inhabits; and legislation favorable to the acquisition on equitable terms of a freehold interest on the part of the leaseholder would conduce greatly to the improvement of the dwellings of the people of this country."

It remains to give a few facts about the financial administration of London. The parishes are the areas within which assessments and collections of taxes are made. The various rates are all levied upon the rental value of occupied premises, and the County Council and school board levies are collected and paid over to those central bodies by the local officers of the parishes and districts. Taxation is much heavier in some districts than in others, because of the greater amount of pauperism, or other neighborhood causes. Bills are pending in Parliament for the equalization of taxes throughout the metropolis. The council, as successor to the metropolitan board, is the borrowing authority for London. About one hundred lesser authorities — vestries, district boards, guardians of the poor for various districts, bath and wash-house commissioners, burial boards, and the school board — owe the council more than \$40,000,000, which they have expended in public improvements. The council's own net indebtedness — inherited from the metropolitan

board—approaches \$85,000,000. Thus the outstanding obligations in the name of the central municipal authority amount to about \$125,000,000. This sum may be regarded as the debt of London. The annual rental value upon which rates are levied exceeds \$150,000,000.

Many of the public improvements of the metropolis have been paid for out of the proceeds of an ancient but thoroughly objectionable tax of thirteen-pence—about twenty-six cents—upon every ton of coal brought by land or by water within an area considerably greater than that of the metropolis. The list of public works that the proceeds of these coal dues have secured in the past two hundred and fifty years is most formidable, but taxes of this kind bear too heavily upon the poor. It is the fault of the rating system of London that wealth does not pay its fair share towards public objects.

THERE is much that is instructive and admirable in the governmental arrangements of London, and still more that is commendable in the spirit of reform and progress that is now awake and active there. But perhaps the chief lessons for us in America are lessons of warning. If London, within the lifetime of men still in their prime, had taken due pre-

cautions, what errors might have been averted! London is now creating a park system, and acquiring land that has quadrupled in value within thirty years. London is widening and straightening streets, and incurring thereby the expense of appropriating frontage that costs twice as much now as it would have cost a few years ago. The people of London have been compelled to pay hundreds of millions as a penalty for the neglect to provide an adequate public water supply. They suffer an inestimable loss in convenience and in actual money through the haphazard nature of passenger transportation facilities. An intelligent system might have been devised if the matter had received due attention thirty years ago. If London had provided suitable building regulations forty or fifty years ago, and forbidden faulty and unsanitary construction, enormous subsequent expenses of demolition would have been averted. If the ground-rent system had not been allowed to grow insidiously through the past generations the general character of London, architecturally and in other respects, would have been enormously improved. Our American cities, studying the experience of Old World centers like London, cannot exercise too great forethought in preparing for the greatness that inevitably awaits them.

Albert Shaw.



THE RETURN OF THE DEAD.

WHEN the dead return, 't is not in garments ghostly,
And shapes like those in life they wore ;
Not as vague phantoms shivering through the casements,
Like fugitives from night's dim shore :

Not with signs and omens dolorous their coming ;
No outward sense their forms may mark ;
To spirit prescience alone their spirits
Speak sweetly from the outer dark.

When the dead return, 't is as a blest conviction
That fills like light the waiting soul.
It is but this ; and like the daylight fading
It vanishes without control.

Yet who has felt this bliss no more can sorrow
Hold utterly within her sway ;
He knows that howso sharp may be his anguish
It can endure but for a day !

Arlo Bates.