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VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

OF THE

HON. JOHN S. SLEEPER,

MAYOR OF ROXBURY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

BOARD OF ALDERMEN,

MONDAY EVENING, DEC. 28, 1857.

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

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ROXBURY :

L. B. & O. E. WESTON, PRINTERS, GUILD ROW.

1857.

CITY OF ROXBURY.

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IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, Dec. 28, 1857.

ORDERED, That one thousand copies of the Address of His Honor the Mayor, be printed for the use of the City Council.

JOSEPH W. TUCKER, *City Clerk.*



## City of Roxbury.

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IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, December 28, 1857.

Alderman WILLIS offered the following Resolution, which was passed unanimously:

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Board be presented to His Honor the Mayor, for the judicious and dignified manner in which he has presided over our deliberations during the present year, and for the fidelity and ability with which he has fulfilled the other arduous duties of Chief Magistrate of this City.

His Honor the MAYOR responded to the Resolve as follows:

GENTLEMEN,—

I sincerely thank you for the kind manner, in which you are pleased to allude to my official proceedings and relations with this Board during the present year.

The sentiments expressed in the vote just passed are truly grateful to my feelings. You, gentlemen, have had opportunity to know my opinions, to appreciate my motives and to judge of my conduct, while acting in behalf of the interest and honor of our good City.

The office which I have held for two successive years, is one of importance, and of great responsibility. Indeed, the successful and satisfactory performance of all the duties connected with it, demands qualifications seldom found united in one individual. And I most heartily wish that an abler and a better man—and we can boast of many such—had been placed at the head of the Government.

During the year which is now rapidly drawing to a close, while some suggestions for expensive changes or improvements have met with no favor from the government, various measures of much public importance have been suggested, planned, and in whole or in part executed, or adopted. Some of these measures have been devised by the City authorities: some by the County, and others by the State legislature; but constituting in the gross an amount of expenditure, beyond what was contemplated at the beginning of the year, and causing a heavy and unexpected draft on the City Treasury.

It may not be unprofitable nor uninteresting to review briefly the acts of the present administration, which will at least prove that it has not been altogether indifferent to the demands for improvements, which have been pressed from every quarter.

Measures have been adopted for the prospective widening of Tremont street, making it of an uniform width of eighty feet; and the work, by taking parcels of land and setting back buildings, has already been commenced.

That portion of Brush Hill Turnpike which is in the City of Roxbury, has been laid out by the County Commissioners as a public highway, its bounds established, and given to the city with all its imperfections. It has been found necessary to grade and repair it at a considerable expense.

Two new School-houses have been constructed, and large additions made to a third to meet the pressing wants of an increasing population.

The improvements of Eustis Street Burial Ground have been completed, the grounds graded, gravel walks constructed, and forest trees planted.

Three new reservoirs have been constructed in different parts of the city for the supply of water in cases of fire. Also, five hydrants have been inserted in the main pipe of the Jamaica Pond Aqueduct, which, by the enterprise of individuals, has been carried through our streets. Two

hydrants, by permission of the Boston Water Commissioners, have also been inserted in the Cochituate pipe on Tremont Street.

Plymouth Street, which for years has been in very bad condition, has been raised, graded and put in excellent repair. The same may be said of Yeoman Street, an important portion of Warren Street, Highland Street, and of various other streets in the city.

Orders have been adopted for the grading and widening of the northern portion of Parker Street: the land has been taken and the work began. An order has also been adopted, which will, it is trusted, lead to a very important and desirable improvement on the southern extremity of the same street.

Parcels of land have been taken on Eustis, Washington and Walnut Streets, with a view to promote the public convenience by widening those streets.

Townsend Street has been raised and graded, and a substantial bank wall constructed along the north side for a distance of several hundred feet.

The important subject of sewerage has forced itself on the attention of the government, and means have been proposed, and considered, with a view to adopt the most practicable and economical mode of providing suitable drainage for different portions of the city.

The suit in relation to the removal of the Chemical Works, an insufferable nuisance, which has existed for many years in the heart of our city, has been brought to trial, with a result, although not decidedly successful, yet of a character to give assurance of ultimate success.

The suit in relation to the claim of the Commonwealth, to a very considerable portion of our soil and territory in the Back Bay, has also been prosecuted and acted on, and the result thus far gives reasonable prospect of belief that our right of possession will be confirmed by the decision of our highest tribunal.

Several suits against the city, some of which have been pending for years, have been brought to a close, by compromise, or in due course of law, and no claims for damages from accidents arising from neglect of repairs of highways or similar causes, are now known to exist.

Resolves have been adopted, and other measures taken, which must lead to the extension of Water Street to Washington Street, and to the grading and construction of that important avenue, without any unnecessary delay.

By order of the County Commissioners, the Dedham Turnpike has been laid out as a public highway, and the city is bound to put the same in good condition, according to a new and proper grade. This highway has also been continued through the city to the boundary line at Shawmut Avenue in Boston, and the work of constructing culverts, and grading portions of this Avenue, and filling in over the marshes with a view to the immediate completion of the same, has already been commenced, and is vigorously prosecuted.

The street, known as Elm or Pilgrim Street, leading from the Punch Bowl Avenue, through Oakland Place to the Longwood Depot in Brookline, has, by order of the County Commissioners, been widened to the extent of fifty feet,—graded and completed at the expense of the city,—and a substantial wooden bridge, thirty-six feet in width, and two hundred and twenty feet in length, exclusive of abutments, and supported on piles, has been constructed across Longwood Creek, at the joint expense of Brookline and Roxbury, which must prove of great advantage to the public.

The Metropolitan and West Roxbury Railroad Companies, having laid their tracks from the West Roxbury line to the boundary line on Tremont Street in Boston, an enterprise of incalculable benefit to Roxbury and West Roxbury, it has been not only expedient but necessary to newly grade the streets, and make extensive repairs along

the whole route, leading through Centre, Lowell and Tremont Streets. It was also necessary to construct new culverts, bank walls, railings, &c., requiring for the whole no small amount of labor and money.

Stone crossings, edgestones, and sidewalks, for the convenience of foot passengers, have also been greatly multiplied in accordance with the increasing wants of the community.

These, gentlemen, are among the labors of the year; and while it may be a subject of regret that so many important and expensive undertakings were considered necessary in a single year, yet it must be generally acknowledged that they will be eminently conducive to the public good, and will contribute largely towards making the good city of Roxbury, already so highly favored in many respects, a still more desirable and attractive residence, for good and exemplary citizens.

To you, Gentlemen, and also to the members of the Council, to the heads of the different departments of the Government, and the officers generally, I desire to express my acknowledgments for the support and assistance I have uniformly received, while engaged in the performance of my duties, and to which may be attributed the quiet and prosperity of our city, which in these respects holds a proud and elevated place among the cities of the Republic. Your counsels, gentlemen, have lightened my labors, and your approbation has cheered me while engaged in devising means for the public good, and in carrying into execution the expressed wishes of the City Council.

Gentlemen, the year is passing away. In a few short days its knell will be tolled, and with it expires the present municipal administration. We have passed together many busy but pleasant hours, to which it will be grateful to recur, perhaps in years to come. Differences of opinion, of course, have existed in relation to various subjects, such differences as are calculated to produce discussion,

always desirable for ascertaining the true merits of a question. And you now leave this Board with the consciousness that you have responded to the confidence which your fellow citizens have reposed in you, by laboring honestly, conscientiously and faithfully, for the interests of the great body of the people, actuated by no selfish feelings, or personal or political prejudices. While such is the case, you may well regard with indifference the misinterpretations which those who are ignorant of your motives or of facts, may have placed upon your acts, and the wilful misrepresentations of the envious and malignant, to which every man chosen to a public office, humble or elevated, in this "free and enlightened country," is inevitably exposed.

And now, Gentlemen, allow me again to thank you for the kind and favorable view you have been pleased to take of my official course, and to express my earnest wish that unalloyed prosperity and happiness may attend you through life.













