

City Lighting.

The people are unanimously in favor of competition in the supply of electric light, the parties interested in the twenty-year monopoly excepted. High prices for poor light, and prices so high that many people cannot enjoy electric light at all, is a condition of affairs that cannot always exist.

The question of municipal ownership of electric light plants is now being much discussed in the press in different parts of the country, and that solution of the problem of lighting meets with much favor.

The New York Independent recently had two long articles on the subject, giving statistics of the comparative cost to cities of their electric lighting service as performed by private companies or by municipal plants. Of these statistics it says: "The statistics here quoted at least prove this much, that the municipal plants are at no disadvantage in the matter of expenses nor as to the cost of the service rendered."

The Independent favors municipal ownership upon the grounds, among others, "that electric lighting is one of the monopolies of service whose rates are necessarily precluded from the regulative influence of competition; that it requires the exclusive use of a portion of the public streets," etc.

The Voice of New York, lately published a number of communications from leading men, who had studied the subject, all favoring municipal ownership. W. D. F. Bliss, of Boston, said: "The city, too, could earn large revenues from its municipal activities, as is the case in Berlin, Birmingham and many European and Australian cities, and even in Marquette, Mich., in this country, where the mayor recently declared that it was possible, and had actually been accomplished, to run the whole city without any taxes, merely from the profits of the municipal electric plant selling its power to manufacturers."

Buying light from a private plant has not been much of a success in this city, and it has become a matter worthy of grave consideration whether municipal ownership is not the only mode open to us to rid ourselves from monopoly. Less than \$10,000 per annum would pay the interest on the cost of a first-class plant, but little more than that sum would be requisite to operate the plant each year. Commercial light might be sold at such reasonable figures, as would put it within reach of all, while bringing in a sum sufficient to pay the interest on the bonds for construction, pay all running expenses and bring in some revenue besides. What has been done in other cities, this city can easily accomplish. Interest, and attention on the part of the people are all that is needed to get a public service equal to that of any city in the land. The first thing is to end the power of the present monopoly.

Reception at the Y. M. C. A.