

## ROBBING THE CITY.

**How the Wealth of the Workers is Confiscated—If Every Land Owner Should Follow this Plan the Industry of the City Would Come to a Full Stop—But Its Inevitable Results are Partial Congestion of Business, Crowded Tenements and Poverty for the Workers.**

(From the Evening Journal, May 20.)

If Hetty Green does not know Miss Mary G. Pinkney she has a great pleasure in store for her when she makes that lady's acquaintance. Miss Pinkney is declared by the officials of the Department of Collection of Assessments and Arrears to be the "champion all-round fighter against taxes" of America.

Miss Pinkney is eighty-two years old and lives at the Hotel Buckingham, in Fifth avenue. In the summer she occupies a pleasant house at Seventh avenue and One Hundred and Thirty-ninth street.

The tax officials estimate her wealth at something like \$10,000,000.

It is Miss Pinkney's proud boast that she has never cheated the city out of a cent honestly due it, but the tax officials declare that she has certainly profited by making the city her banker.

### LONG LIST OF UNPAID TAXES.

In the book containing the printed names of those whose property is advertised for sale for failure to pay taxes Miss Pinkney's name occupies page after page, and carried out to the dollars and cents column are figures in various sums, ranging all the way from \$7 to \$3,000.

Within the last ten years the records in the Arrears Bureau show that not less than one thousand different parcels of real estate belonging to Miss Pinkney have been advertised for sale because their owner wouldn't pay the taxes assessed against them for sewers, flagging, paving, street widening, grading and a lot of other things.

Miss Pinkney never allows any of her property to be sold for taxes, however. On the last day of grace, or perhaps a little before, her agent, Curtis B. Pierce, or her lawyer, John C. Shaw, is always on hand with a check.

### PAYS INTEREST CHEERFULLY.

According to Miss Pinkney's system, it is a good thing to make the city wait. Of late years she has quite cheerfully paid 7 per cent. in-

terest on unpaid taxes, knowing that her property was rising in value from 25 to 50 per cent. a year.

Generally speaking, that is what has been happening for thirty years, until now, the tax officials say, Miss Pinkney is one of the half dozen wealthiest women in Manhattan.

The city has, in a sense, been her banker. She has owed the city hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes. There have been suits by the dozen, compromises, more suits and more compromises, until the clerks in the Arrears Department have come to regard Miss Pinkney as a near neighbor, with a plentiful supply of the American quality called "grit."

### MADE RICH BY HARLEM FARM.

Sixty years ago her father, Col. John N. Pinkney, of Maryland, of the Revolutionary family of that name, died leaving her \$40,000. Her mother married Archibald Watt, of Harlem, who owned a farm of 200 or 300 acres right across Manhattan Island, between One Hundred and Fifth and One Hundred and Fortieth street.

This farm was transferred to her in 1843.

### MILLIONS AT HER COMMAND.

"I've been in this office about thirty years," said Edward Gillon, Collector of Assessments and Arrears. "Ever since I've been here Miss Pinkney has been in the habit of taking her time in paying her taxes. She owns more than a thousand lots, and it wouldn't be much out of the way to estimate the value of these at \$10,000 apiece.

"The city has awarded her \$1,128,000 for land needed for a part of St. Nicholas Park.

"Whenever Miss Pinkney sells a big plot the new buildings go up on it so rapidly that what is left of the parcel frequently is worth more than the whole parcel before building began. That's the way it goes. The more she sells the more valuable the remainder becomes."

Years ago Miss Pinkney was assessed nearly \$1,000,000 for sewers along Seventh, Eighth and St. Nicholas avenues. Her lawyer, John C. Shaw, resisted payment, and the sewer contracts finally were adjudged invalid. She saved \$500,000 in taxes by the litigation.

### HOW MISS PINKNEY ACQUIRED MILLIONS

Owns a thousand lots in Harlem.

Average value, \$10,000 apiece.

Estimated wealth, \$10,000,000.

Is eighty-two years old and single.

Lets property be advertised for sale for unpaid taxes.

Pays up on the last day.

Pays 7 per cent. interest to city.

Property meantime increasing in value 30 to 50 per cent.