

SB
483
N55H8

DESIGNS FOR THE GATEWAYS

TO THE

SOUTHERN ENTRANCES

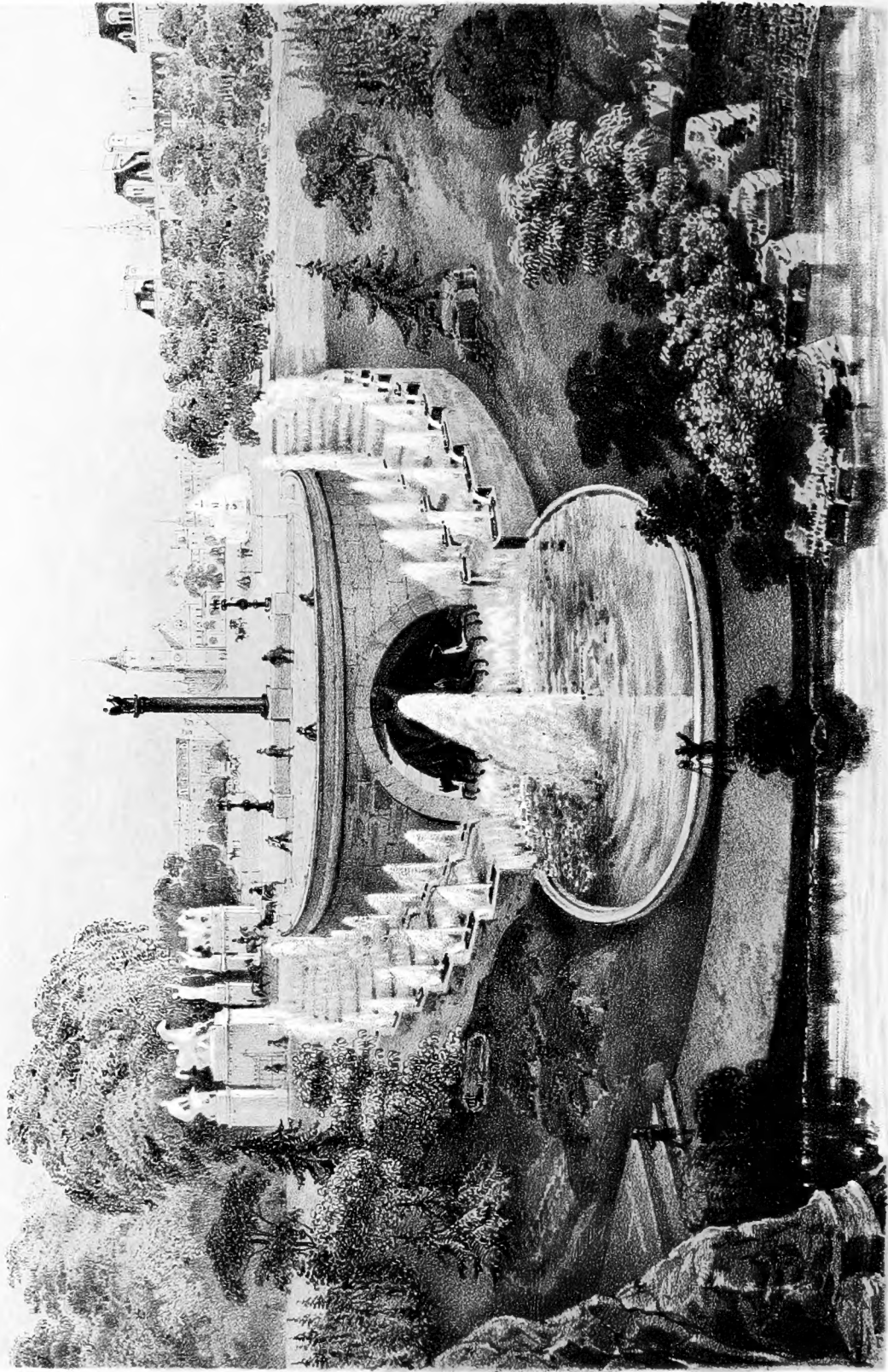
OF THE

CENTRAL PARK.

HUNT.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
Chief
of
the
U. S. G. P. O.
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





Engraved according to a plan by the late J. B. Hunt, Architect, in 1857, and the fountain is the property of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park.

CENTRAL PARK

REAR VIEW OF TERRACE NEAR THE ENTRANCE AT CORNER OF FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET.
DESIGNED BY RICHARD M. HUNT, ARCHITECT, AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK.

C 1302

DESIGNS FOR THE GATEWAYS
OF THE
SOUTHERN ENTRANCES
TO
THE CENTRAL PARK.

BY
RICHARD M. HUNT,
MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

WITH
A DESCRIPTION OF THE DESIGNS,

AND A
LETTER IN RELATION TO THEM,

ADDRESSED TO THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE PARK.

NEW YORK:
D. VAN NOSTRAND, 192 BROADWAY,
1866.

SB483
-N55H8

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1866.

By D. VAN NOSTRAND.

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

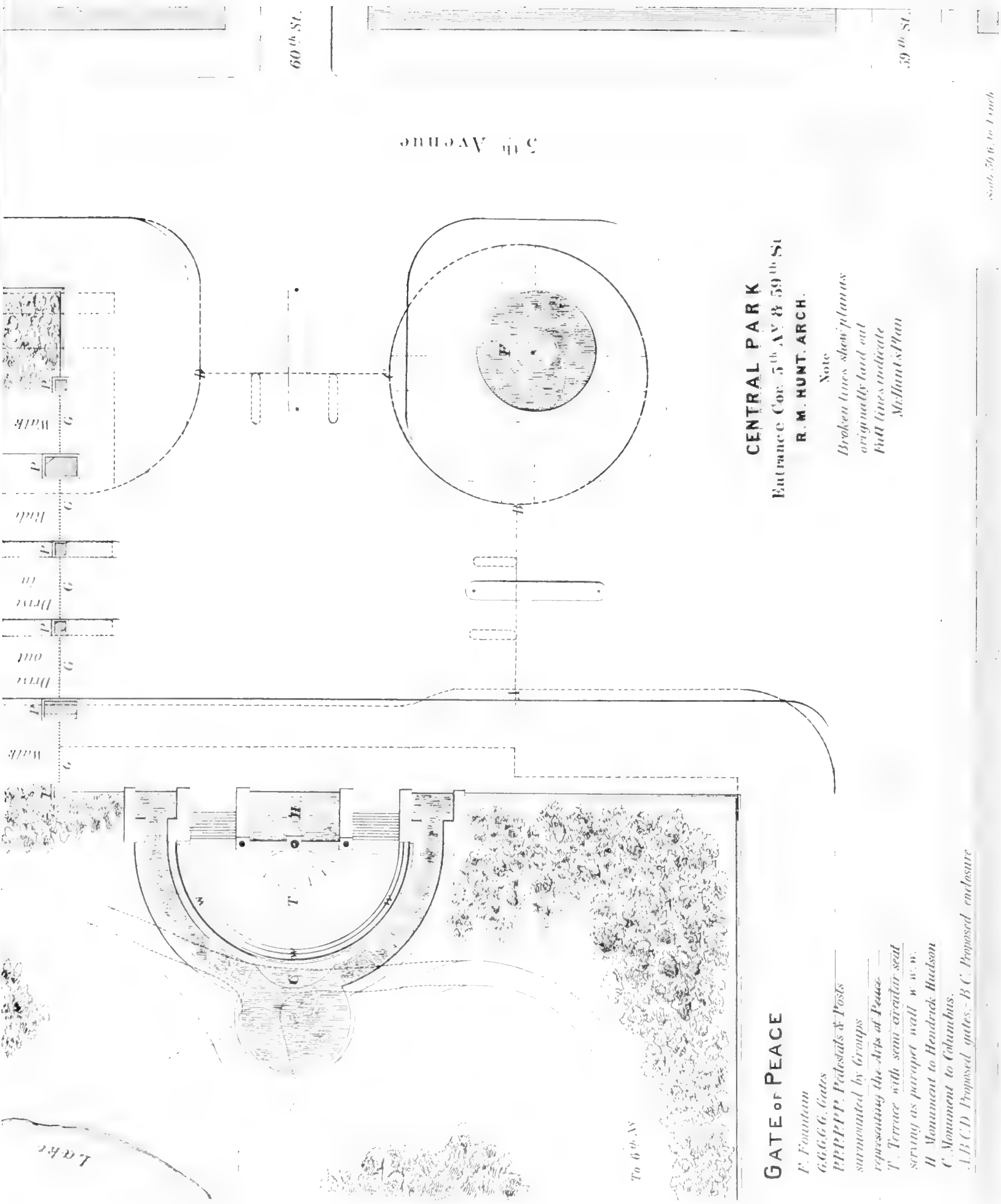
ALYDOR, PRINTER.

I. ELEVATIONS AND PLANS OF THE GATEWAYS FOR THE
ENTRANCES TO THE CENTRAL PARK ON FIFTY-NINTH
STREET.

II. A DESCRIPTION OF THESE DESIGNS, IN A LETTER TO THE
"EVENING POST," PUBLISHED JULY 21, 1865.

III. A LETTER TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK,
BY "CIVIS," PUBLISHED IN THE "EVENING POST," MARCH
29 AND APRIL 5, 1866.

IV. EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMIS-
SIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK.



CENTRAL PARK
 Entrance Cor. 5th Av. & 59th St.

R. M. HUNT, ARCH.

Note
 Broken lines show plants
 originally laid out
 Full lines indicate
 McMillan's Plan

GATE OF PEACE

- F. Fountain
- G.G.G.G.G. Gates
- PPPPPP. Pedestals & Posts surmounted by Groups
- T. Terrace with semi-circular seat serving as parapet wall w. w. w.
- H. Monument to Hendrick Hudson
- C. Monument to Columbus.
- A, B, C, D. Proposed gates. - B, C. Proposed enclosure

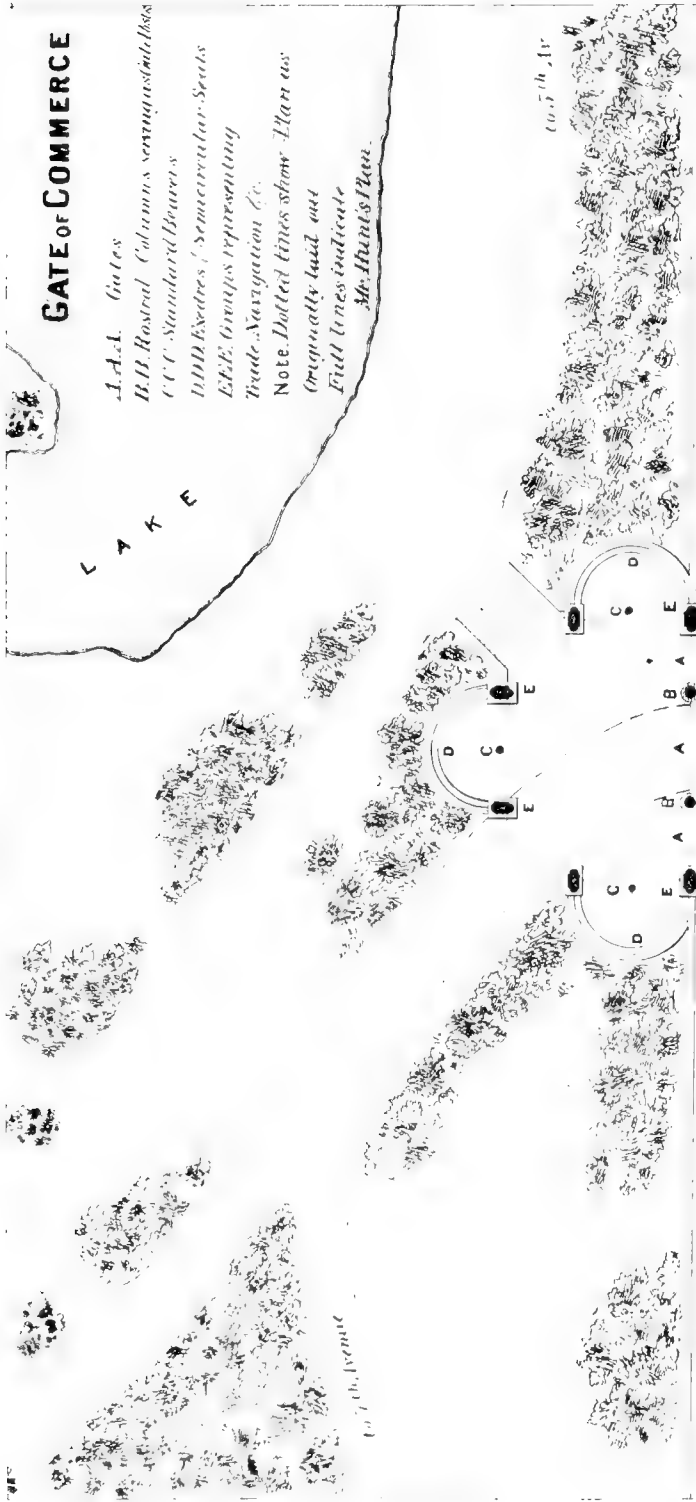


Engraved by J. B. Johnson, from a drawing by R. M. Hunt, Architect, and adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park.

CENTRAL PARK

DESIGNED BY RICHARD M. HUNT ARCHITECT AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK

J. B. Johnson, N.Y.



59th Street

Scale 50 ft. to Inch

60th Street

1858



1858. Lith. N.Y.

Engraved by G. H. P. for the Board of Commissioners of the City of New York, and published by the Board of Commissioners of the City of New York.

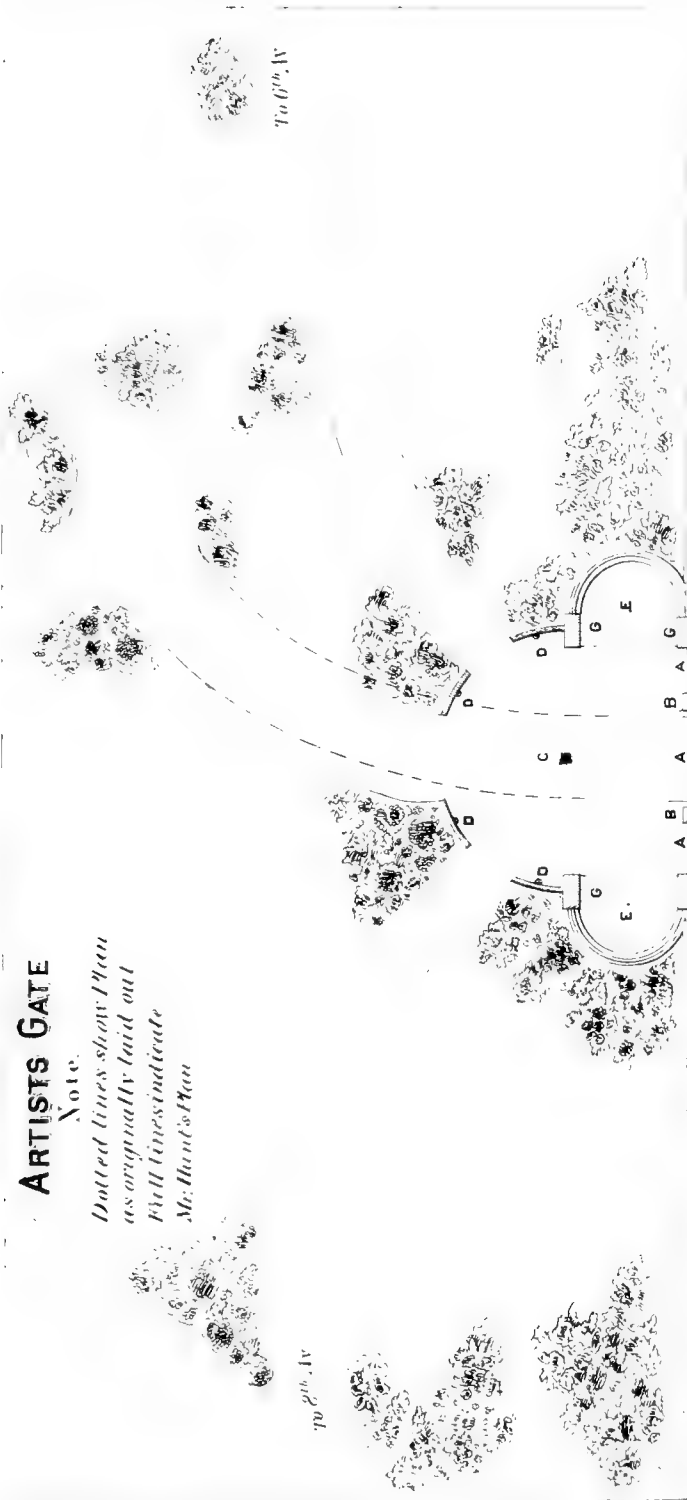
CENTRAL PARK

FIFTH AVENUE ENTRANCE ON FIFTY-NINTH STREET. DESIGNED BY RICHARD M. HUNT ARCHT. AND ADAPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK

ARTISTS GATE

Note.

Dotted lines show Plan as originally laid out
Full lines indicate Mr. Hunt's Plan



A.A. Gates

B.B. Hermes serving as Gate Posts

C. Column Supporting the Genesol

the Arts

D.D.D.D. Drinking Fountains

E.E. Execla Semi-Circular seats

F.F.F.F. Groups representing

Architecture Painting

Sculpture & Music

CENTRAL PARK

7th St Entrance on 59th St.

R. M. HUNT, ARCH.

59th Street

7th St

Scale 30 ft. to 1 in.

Plan with 24 ft. x 18 ft.



THE GATES OF CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK. THE GATES WERE DESIGNED BY RICHARD M. HUNT ARCHITECT, AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK.

CENTRAL PARK

DESIGNED BY RICHARD M. HUNT ARCHITECT, AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK

WARRIORS' GATE

- F. Fountain
- G. Gate Posts
- H. Pedestals supporting Egyptian Statues
- I. Statues in Quadrangle
- J. Ornamental Statues

Ornamental Statues

0 0 0 0 0 Gates

Note: Broken lines show planes

originally laid out

Full lines indicate

Muller's Plan

S S

AS

AS

G

"

E

DRIVE

G

G

WALK

G

G

CENTRAL PARK

Entrance Cor 8th Av & 59th St.

R. M. HUNT, ARCH.

Scale 30 ft. to 1 inch

59th St

60th St



CENTRAL PARK

DESIGNED BY CALVERT CLAYTON AND PHILIP HENRY CLAYTON
CONSTRUCTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK

II.

A DESCRIPTION OF MR. HUNT'S DESIGNS,

IN A LETTER TO THE "EVENING POST," PUBLISHED JULY 21, 1865.

THE CENTRAL PARK.—THE PROPOSED NEW ENTRANCE GATES.

To the Editor of the "Evening Post :"

Among the sketches in the exhibition of the National Academy of Design, for 1865, were a series of designs for entrances to the Central Park, by Richard M. Hunt, one of the leading architects of New York. These designs attracted much less attention than they would have done, had it been generally understood that they were copies of those actually adopted by the Commissioners of the Park, and not fanciful sketches merely. The plans offered by the former architect of the Park for the entrance gates not meeting the views of the Commissioners, it was decided to throw the matter open to general competition, and the designs of Mr. Hunt were adopted some two years since, after advertising for designs and receiving over twenty in competition for the prizes offered.

The plans offered by Mr. Vaux, the architect of the Park, contemplated

nothing more elaborate, we believe, than a single row of trees about the entrances, protected by an iron railing; and perhaps a gate-keeper's lodge on one side. This simplicity was in accordance with what Mr. Vaux conceived to be essential to the preservation of the idea of rural effect which the Central Park is designed to embody.

Mr. Hunt's idea, which by adoption has become the idea of the Park Commissioners, is, on the contrary, that it is impossible to fully carry out this plan of rusticity. While conceding the importance of interfering with nature as little as possible, it is to be remembered that the most faithful endeavors in this direction will still, of necessity, leave the Park, what indeed it already is, a formal city pleasure-ground. We must, it needs be, so trim and restrain the wildness of nature that it can be called "rural" in no absolute sense, but only by contrast with the bricks and stone surrounding it.

And, when we have to provide for a population of some two millions or more, it will be impossible to preserve those narrow and winding walks at the entrance ways which form part of the plan for rural effect. It is folly, the Commissioners think, to attempt rural entrances for a park in the heart of a great city, surrounded by magnificent edifices of fashion, as our Central Park will soon be. Their idea, then, is that the entrances should be in keeping with the future external surroundings of the Park, and establish the connection between the street architecture without and cultivated nature within. It has been the purpose of the Commissioners, therefore, to secure designs which should leave nothing to be desired in the way of artistic effect. It was thought best to adopt at the start plans which, though they might require years for their entire completion, would give the right direction to effort, and ultimately secure for the principal entrances to the Central Park structures which would be every way worthy of the magnificence of this great public improvement and of the metropolis to which it belongs; satisfying the pride and educating the taste of our citizens.

The problem presented to the architect has been a most difficult one; to blend nature and art together in harmony; to secure the grand effect of a monumental *ensemble* while submitting to the practical necessity of leaving the entrance ways unobstructed, and to harmonize his designs with the surroundings of the Park, which are yet undetermined. How far he has suc-

ceeded can be judged in some measure from an inspection of the designs which have secured the approbation of the Commissioners of the Park.

The designs exhibited by Mr. Hunt are for the four entrances to the Park from the southerly side, on Fifty-ninth street—corner of Fifth avenue, opposite Sixth avenue, opposite Seventh avenue, and corner of Eighth avenue. The entrance at the corner of Fifth avenue it is proposed to call the Gate of Peace; the one on the opposite side, at Eighth avenue, the Warrior's Gate: thus representing the two great divisions into which all human industry and effort are divided—the arts of peace and the arts of war.

The intermediate entrance at Sixth avenue it is proposed to call the Gate of Commerce, and that at the Seventh avenue, the Artists' Gate. The designs are of a monumental character, in keeping with these several designations.

The entrance at Fifth avenue, the design for which is the most important of all, presents peculiar difficulties, as the elaborate architecture of the prospective Fifth avenue residences will tend to kill any effect sought by the artist. Looking north, two roads present themselves; the continuation of the avenue on the one hand, and the entrance to the Park on the other. Naturally, the continuation of the avenue predominates, presenting, as it does, the always imposing feature of a continuous avenue. Had the entrance to the Park been laid out at an angle to Fifth avenue, instead of parallel to it, it would have appeared less secondary. This difficulty the architect has sought to overcome by forming a spacious *plaza* at the corner of the Park, some four hundred feet square. This square will be bounded on the north by the entrance ways, five in number.

The triple road, with the broad walks flanking it, make an *ensemble*—a great improvement on the present disposition, one of the walks now turning off just before it arrives at the Park entrance, thereby detracting from the grandeur of the whole. The walks are also nearly doubled in width, a much needed improvement, they being now narrower than the sidewalks of our city avenues. The entire width of the entrance is to be two hundred feet, the five ways into which it is divided being distinctly marked by rows of elms. At the head of each row is placed a pedestal, serving as a gate-post. The principal of these separate the walks from the roadways, and the four secondary ones occupy the remaining places, thereby avoiding any monotony.

It is designed to surmount these pedestals with appropriate groups, representing the arts of peace. Thus naturally, the square, or entrance vestibule to the Park is bounded or framed in—on the east by the houses on Fifth avenue, on the south by those on Fifty-ninth street, and on the north by the entrance way.

On the west, directly opposite Sixtieth street, it is proposed to erect a semicircular terrace, one hundred feet in diameter—a grand monumental feature which shall frame in this side of the square, without which it might appear lop-sided. In the middle of the terrace front, and directly in the axis of Sixtieth street, rises a shaft, some fifty feet in height, surmounted by the Indian and Sailor, supporting the Arms of New York. At the base is to be a spacious basin of water, containing figures representing the East and North rivers, with the figure of Hendrick Hudson between them on the bow of an antique vessel; the centre group thus symbolizing the discovery by Hendrick Hudson of Manhattan Island, at the confluence of the North and East rivers.

On either side of the basin, steps twenty feet in width will lead to the terrace, some five feet above the level of the entrance square. The circular part of the terrace projects over the bank, which slopes down to the lake just below; a massive stone seat serving as a parapet wall. The effect of this bold feature is enhanced by cascades of water which descend on either side of the terrace to the lower level inside the Park; first into a grand basin and from this into the lake. At their points of convergence is a grand niche, thirty feet in diameter, to contain a group representing either Columbus or the Ocean. While this cascade will in itself form one of the most strikingly beautiful objects in the park, it is of great advantage for the relief it affords to all that disagreeably sunken part of the Park situated between the Fifth and Sixth avenue entrances—a feature caused by the filling in of Fifty-ninth street and Fifth avenue, which are graded over twenty feet above the surface of the lake below.

In the middle of the entrance square there is a space designed for pedestrians. This feature is of absolute necessity, and though it might be refreshing to the eye to see grass at this point, as at present, yet, as this place must be a refuge for the pedestrians crossing, necessarily it cannot be too

ample for their accommodation. Here again is introduced water, which always enlivens a place. Here, too, it has the great advantage of furnishing, as it were, this open space, which might appear too bare without the fountain in the centre, which forms a graceful feature, without hindering the view of the Park beyond; the latter a serious consideration, and one which has been carefully attended to.

At the Eighth avenue the space in front of the entrance to the Park is to be enlarged to double the present size, and laid out in a square, with a fountain in the centre, as at the Fifth avenue entrance. In the middle of each of the two roads diverging from the entrance is placed a pedestal, to be surmounted by an equestrian statue of some military hero—this disposition of the pedestals dividing the stream of vehicles passing in and out of the Park. Flanking these roads are the walks for pedestrians, and between the two roads is a massive stone seat, in the shape of a quadrant, with parapet walls, with pedestals to be surmounted by military statues.

The entrance at Sixth avenue is the width of the avenue. At the right and left, and directly opposite the entrance within the Park, are semicircular stone seats, bordering a small square or vestibule, from which spacious walks diverge. At the abutments of the seats are six pedestals, intended for statues of Trade, Navigation, etc. In the middle of each *exedra* (semicircular seat) rises a standard bearer. Rostral columns serve as gate-posts.

The Seventh avenue entrance has a similar disposition of an open space inside the gate, with *exedrae* to the right and left, from which radiate three walks. At the abutments of the *exedrae* are pedestals supporting groups representing Painting and Sculpture, Music and Architecture. In the centre of the space rises a column supporting the Genius of the Arts. The gate-posts are Hermes.

The various designs for the several gates, it will be seen, are all of a monumental character, and have been so combined as to satisfy the great requisites of effect, breadth, height, and simplicity; anything like meretricious ornament being studiously avoided. If they are carried out with becoming taste and skill, we may look forward to having such a *façade*, if we may call it so, to our grand pleasure ground as no city in the world can boast of. There are few examples of such entrances abroad worthy of

examination, if we except the Bois de Boulogne, the entrance to which may properly be said to be the Arc de l'Etoile, at the head of the Champs Elysées which marks the exit from the city into the broad avenues leading into the Bois.

III.

A LETTER TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK,

PUBLISHED IN THE EVENING POST, MARCH 2, AND APRIL 5, 1866.

To the Commissioners of the Central Park :

GENTLEMEN : The writer of this communication, for himself, and on behalf of others, lovers of art, and residents and taxpayers of the city of New York, begs leave respectfully to address you in regard to an important matter committed to your care—the gateways of the Central Park.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary for citizens ever to apologize for expressing their opinions upon the management of great public trusts. There is certainly no occasion for an apology in the present instance, because your Board, by its long delay in commencing to build the gateways, seems to invite suggestions from those who desire their completion. We, therefore, shall not hesitate to say frankly what we think on this subject, assuring you, meanwhile, that we feel a hearty admiration for what you have already done in the Park, and strong confidence in your prudent and patriotic action in the future.

On the 26th of January, 1863, a member of your Board submitted certain plans for the four gateways on Fifty-ninth street, which, after debate, were referred to the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural

Structures, to report thereon. This committee were also authorized to consult such architects in relation to the gateways as they might deem proper. They accordingly consulted Mr. Richard M. Hunt, who undertook to submit drawings himself, but also suggested that your Board should endeavor to procure others, and for that purpose should offer to give premiums for the best designs. This course was adopted, and during the summer ten designs were thus submitted. It appears, however, that on the 2d of September, 1863, your Board unanimously refused to adopt any of them, affirming the report of the sub-committee that none of them showed sufficient originality or fitness to the surrounding scenery to merit a premium.

It further appears that on the same day, the 2d of September, 1863, your Board unanimously approved, in their general features, of the designs for these four gates which Mr. Hunt had submitted, in obedience to the request of the Committee on Statuary, and authorized that committee "to employ Mr. Hunt, and to proceed with the erection of these gates, with such modification in their details as the committee might approve."

Again, on the 19th of April, 1864, your Board unanimously resolved that the Comptroller of the Park should be directed "to proceed forthwith in the erection of the four gateway entrances in Fifty-ninth street, together with the several appurtenances, as exhibited in the adopted sketches of Mr. Hunt, according to the resolutions of the Board, passed 2d September, in order that this portion of the work might be early completed."

Afterwards, on the 2d of December, 1864, your Board unanimously resolved that the subject of the change of quality of material for constructing the gateways on Fifty-ninth street should be referred to the Committee on Statuary, etc., with power.

We believe this was all the official action that took place in your Board on this subject down to a late period. It certainly seems to have been sufficient. Nothing could have been more explicit, direct, and comprehensive. But unfortunately not a single step was taken to carry it out. Not a spadeful of earth was removed for that purpose. This inaction continued for more than twenty months, until, finally, on the 11th day of May, 1865, your Board expressly resolved that all work on the gateways of the Park should be deferred till its further order. So far as we are informed nothing what-

ever has been done since in relation to this matter, and it thus appears that the whole subject, if not formally, has been virtually dismissed from all further consideration.

We have examined Mr. Hunt's designs with considerable attention. We believe they are well adapted in their plans to the convenience of the increasing multitudes who will pass in and out of the Park in future years; and in their elevations, that they are beautiful and expressive, and in every way worthy of the places they are intended to adorn.

We beg leave, therefore, most respectfully to remonstrate against this delay in building them, and to request that your Board will proceed with the work at an early day, or kindly inform us why it has been thought best to postpone it indefinitely.

We are well aware that the greatest caution should be used in deciding upon the forms of structures which are intended to be so permanent and so expensive as these. It is far better to be without gates than to erect those which we shall by and by regret to have adopted. But there should be a limit to this indecision. The Central Park now is in the condition of a picture without a frame, and to postpone the completion of this crowning grace year after year, in this timid, hesitating way, is hardly worthy of those who have so far shown so much energy and enlightened public spirit in this undertaking. In the summer of 1865, attacks, which appear to have been carefully concerted, were made upon Mr. Hunt's designs in several of the public prints. We do not know that your Board has been influenced by these criticisms. We have carefully read them, and they have not diminished in the least our approval of the general features of these plans. They may, however, have had a contrary effect upon your minds. We beg leave, therefore, to offer what we conceive to be a sufficient answer to all of them—at any rate, to the chief objections they present.

Excepting some criticisms upon details which we will notice hereafter, the main arguments against these designs are :—

1st. That they are too monumental; too elaborate and expensive for the places they are to occupy; and

2d. That they are too French.

I.

As to the first objection, your Board should remember that in its previous action respecting the gateways, it suggested the employment of sculpture and symbolical decoration. Mr. Stebbins, in his learned and interesting report upon the nomenclature of the gates, which was accepted by your Board, constantly alludes to this auxiliary in making them attractive. He indicates certain industrial pursuits which may give their names to the gates, and which may be of a character to "readily admit of varied artistic treatment in the gateways themselves." He speaks of the "Foreigners' gate," which may in its "sculptural decoration directly acknowledge the obligation that the owners of the Park are under to liberal and disinterested men of other nations."

It is true, he thinks, it can scarcely be considered within the proper scope of the Commissioners to provide out of the Park funds artistic decorations of a really high character, at all the various entrances, but he nevertheless believes "it is desirable to arrange the gateways with a view to possible elaboration hereafter," and that "an outlet may readily be left open for future effort in this direction by private subscription."

Your Board, also, in offering the rewards for designs and fixing your limits for the cost, stated that the "statuary represented need not be estimated" in this cost. You afterwards mentioned the names of the four gates which had been so ingeniously suggested by Mr. Stebbins, and then expressly said: "This nomenclature should, therefore, be illustrated in the designs, so far as each designer may consider it practicable or desirable."

Mr. Hunt, therefore, in obedience to the expressed wishes of the Board, if for no other reason, could not have avoided the introduction of sculpture and symbolism in his designs.

But there was a motive for this, better than mere courtesy or a fulfilment of the conditions of an architectural problem. The gateways of the Central Park, on account of its position, and still more of its future use, should exhibit the highest resources of monumental art. They afford the opportunity which we have never so completely enjoyed before, and which

we should not now neglect, of summoning the best artistic genius to the public service. Let us examine this matter with some attention.

The Central Park is a regular parallelogram, half a mile wide and two miles and a half long. It is in the middle of the city, bounded on all sides by streets and avenues, which in a few years will be continuously enclosed by solid blocks of houses and filled with all the noise and bustle of metropolitan life. Opening into these avenues on the right and the left will be a hundred other streets, stretching off to the East and North Rivers, all compactly built and all crowded with thronging multitudes of people.

When these streets shall be finished and the whole island covered thickly with houses, this park in its very centre will not appear so large as at present. The idea of size is relative. This open area which is now on the outskirts of the city, and seems so vast, will look very much smaller when the inhabitants shall grow more familiar with its boundaries and with every nook and corner it contains. As it becomes apparently smaller, it will also become more artificial and less rural; more of a garden and less of a park. Its appearance is already shaped and colored by the art which is omnipresent in the curves of the roads, the opening of the vistas, the plantation of the shrubberies, in the bridges, the archways, the casinos, the aviaries, the music halls, the fountains, the kiosks, and the terrace and its surroundings. To say even now that we forget art—that we fancy ourselves in the quiet solitudes of nature—is absurd. And in the future, when this shall be the resort of two millions of people, when the roar of traffic through the transverse roads shall drown the singing of the birds—when the restaurants and summer houses, and music halls, and conservatories, and winter gardens and museums shall be greatly multiplied—when statues and busts, and monuments and columns shall crowd the avenues, the Central Park will become one great open air gallery of Art, instead of being, as some dreamers fancy it, a silent stretch of rural landscape caught up and inclosed within the raging tumult of a vast metropolis.

“Un pezzo di cielo caduto in terra.”

We know that this state of things is very different from the anticipations of our friends, the architects of the Park, and they will desire to postpone

it as long as possible ; but we nevertheless believe it to be unavoidable and inevitable, and that it will follow as a matter of course from the geographical position of the Park in the very centre of what will probably become the largest city of the Christian world—a position entirely unlike that of other parks, which lie generally on the outskirts of the cities to which they belong.

But this ornate, architectural character which we believe the Central Park of the future must possess, on account of its location, will follow still more certainly from the mode in which it was first established and is still maintained, and from the popular idea which prevails of its use.

The Park is the pride and the delight of the people. There is no other spot which they regard with so much affection and upon which they are willing to lavish so much treasure. It is not a mere fanciful notion, that as the sovereigns of Europe have their palaces and pleasure grounds, so this is the palace and the pleasure ground of our sovereign, the people. It is already the music hall of this potent monarch. Why should it not become his sculpture gallery—the ample treasury of the trophies of his power? There is no other place which, by its extent, its general plan, and, above all, by the wise and intelligent manner in which it has generally been governed, affords so excellent a field for the expression of great national ideas. Now, these great national ideas, the reverence for famous poets, the admiration of heroic achievements, the triumphal progress of important reforms, the advancement of the nation in material power and the like, need to be expressed by something more significant and suggestive than landscape gardening—than trees and flowers and stretches of greensward. They demand the best creations of art, and particularly of plastic art. The erection of the colossal bust of Schiller and the proposed monument to Shakespeare, show the direction of the popular feeling in this matter—a direction which the Commissioners of the future will find it impossible to resist. How absurd, then, it is to cheat ourselves into the belief that this is always to be a sylvan retreat fit for shepherds and their flocks? Not that we need sacrifice the charms of greensward, of spreading trees, of rocks and waterfalls, or exclude flowers and creeping vines. These may always exist, and be as lovely and enchanting as ever, but we must be content to see them united with the expressive forms of art, and intermixed with statues and monuments. We must not be

disappointed, also, if edifices for public recreation and instruction should be constantly added, like the Museum and Gallery of the Historical Society, for which several acres have already been appropriated. Winter gardens, conservatories, music halls, and libraries must follow. Indeed, all that concentration of the resources of intellectual and artistic pleasure which made the great public Thermæ of Rome so attractive, may at some future day be found in the Park, in addition to all those delightful appliances which modern civilization has invented.

For ourselves, we anticipate with satisfaction this probable future of the Park. We welcome the idea that it may become the field for the display of greater artistic triumphs than we have yet witnessed in America. It is sometimes the occasion, the happy conjunction of the necessity, with the ability to fulfil it, which quickens talents that would otherwise have lain dormant. The "Last Judgment" might never have been painted, if the vacant space over the altar of the Sistine Chapel had not summoned Buonarrotti to adorn it; nor the Arabesques of Raphael, if the Loggie of the Vatican had not required them. So the Central Park must call out in future the highest efforts of American genius. It is in plastic art that this has already made its best development, and here is the spot which of all others demands its exercise. There is little in our annals to paint. But in the great American ideas there is every thing grand and noble to symbolize in sculpture. It is in marble and bronze that the magnificent thoughts which have created and preserved this country must have their only adequate visible expression. But it will not be in the filthy streets, in the neglected squares, in the dilapidated market places, in the halls of public edifices, the building of which has been farmed out by peculating officials, and which will stand (so long as the frauds in their construction will permit) shameful monuments of execrable taste as well as of official corruption; it will not be in these unfit receptacles that the emblems of whatever is noble and pure and majestic in the character and history of the American people shall be erected. True artists will revolt from the task of associating their fine productions with all which is imbecile and dishonorable in the conduct of municipal affairs. But in the Central Park, which your honest and intelligent administration has made the brightest, the most beautiful, the most complete of all the city possessions,

the Cor Cordium of the metropolis, the spot where the pride and the love of the people are concentrated, there will the most exalted genius delight to have its creations exhibited, and there will private wealth be cheerfully expended in bountiful profusion, to place them worthily before the public eye.

We have endeavored to paint this picture of the Central Park of the future in order to ask what should be its framework, what should characterize its entrances—those portions of it which mark its boundaries, and shut it in from the world around it. It seems to us that it would be unfit to creep into such a place as this through a sort of accidental opening—like a wheel track worn out in the corner of a country training ground—a postern in a mean fence; a few plain pillars with swinging gates, opening into narrow paths. Surely, every one who reflects upon the character of this place must say, that the entrances to it should be majestic and monumental and endowed with all the grandeur that architecture and sculpture can bestow. If the palace is to be stately and full of every thing to delight the eye, to please the fancy, to elevate the imagination, to arouse the patriotism, so should the front of the palace, the doors which open upon its glories, be correspondingly magnificent.

We have dwelt with more earnestness upon the propriety, we may almost say the necessity, of introducing monumental art into the Park, because, in the Report of your Board for the year 1865, you express a widely different opinion. “Vegetation,” you say, “should hold the first place of distinction.” * * * * “It is the work of nature, invulnerable to criticism, accepted by all, as well the cultivated as the ignorant, and affords a limitless field for interesting observation and instruction.” * * * * “There is not only fitness in this idea, but there is safety. All art work is the subject of animadversion; much of it sinks beneath observation; it is the fortune of very little of it to escape wide censure; less of it finds permanent acceptance.” Will you pardon us if we say that we do not remember to have ever seen before the fear of criticism, put forward as a reason for not employing the resources of art? You will not use sculpture, because it may be the “subject of animadversion.” Statues are to be avoided, because it will be “safer” to plant trees. Artists are to be neglected, because their works may be exposed to the “wide censure” of some penny-a-liner. It seems to

us there are many things worse than the buzzing of the mosquitoes of the public journals, and one of them is the consciousness of having been frightened by trifles from the performance of important duties.

We have thus far attempted to defend Mr. Hunt's designs by showing that they are not too elaborate and monumental for the Central Park as we conceive it will be in the future. It is likely, however, that this imaginary picture of ours will be pronounced by many to be chimerical and extravagant. To all such persons we beg to say that even if we are in error on this point, and if the Park is always to remain in its present comparatively rural condition, we should still consider these designs to be extremely elegant and appropriate, and this for several reasons, but particularly on account of the greater convenience of their ground plans and the better adaptation of their elevations to the street architecture which will surround the Park, provided this architecture is to be of the character which the location demands.

It is a great pity that Mr. Hunt did not exhibit the ground plans of these gates as well as the perspective views at the Academy last summer. They would not have prevented the attacks of selfish and interested critics, but they might perhaps have induced more honest and intelligent observers to suspend their unfavorable opinions. It is only necessary to see the openings proposed by Mr. Hunt traced over those in the original designs, to be convinced of the immense superiority of the former, in all points of convenience and beauty. They are much more spacious and imposing, they provide more completely for the proper division of the incoming and outgoing crowds, and they display to better advantage the charming features of the scenery within. The Eighth avenue opening, in particular, seems to us such a vast improvement over the first arrangement, which is meagre in outline and narrow at the very point where it should be wide, that we wonder why your Board can hesitate a moment in adopting it. And as to the Sixth and Seventh avenue approaches, it is surprising that the diminutive paths which appear, upon the maps of the Park, to have been laid out for the throngs of visitors at those points, should find the least favor in comparison with Mr. Hunt's larger and more beautiful plans.

It has been made an objection to the changes he proposes here and at the other entrances, that they will require alterations of the ground, both expen-

sive and injurious to the natural beauties of the neighborhood. We believe that in every instance the advantage gained will more than compensate for any possible loss in this way. Mr. Vaux declares that the terrace at the Fifth avenue gate will break up the repose of the scenery around the small lake in that angle of the Park. But even if this be true, that region is too limited in extent and quite too near the boundary line for the Commissioners to attempt to preserve its present features by the sacrifice of other more important advantages. That instantaneous transition from city streets to a poor imitation of the wildness of nature which some persons admire in this spot, seems to us to be forced and even displeasing. It would be better if the deception could be made tolerably complete. But, while the eye is cheated by the rocks and the water, the ear detects in the rattling of the carriages the proximity of a tumultuous crowd, so that the illusion is destroyed, and we are struck with the affectation and pretence of the whole affair.

We repeat the statement, that a careful study of Mr. Hunt's ground plans will convince any one of their superiority to the others, even if they should require some alteration of the territory as it is laid out at present. And if we approve of the ground plans, we must also approve of the distribution of the masses which they generate. Now, this distribution of the masses is the most important part of the elevations. So that, if you reject the ornaments altogether, this arrangement of the principal forms will still remain extremely complete and satisfactory.

And as to the ornaments which Mr. Hunt proposes—the statues, the Hermes, the rostra, the columns, and other things—we cannot help believing that the great majority of the citizens will regard them as very noble and proper additions whenever the streets around the Park shall be finished in a manner which their position and the rank of New York as the greatest city of the western hemisphere demand. We beg to insist particularly upon this point. We think it is certain that whatever seems too elaborate and artificial in these designs will disappear when we reject the standard by which we are apt to measure such things in this country, and judge of them by comparison with similar objects in great European capitals. If New York is ever to resemble a metropolis, if it is ever to be any thing but an overgrown provincial town—an unmeaning, dreary waste of brick and brown-stone fronts

—it must have some marked architectural centre—some spot which shall be distinguished from all others by its vast open spaces, its long perspectives, its symmetrical masses of building, its imposing monuments, its richly elaborated *façades*. Now, the streets and avenues around the Central Park afford the best opportunity we have for giving this metropolitan splendor to our city; but, to attain this character, they must be laid out upon a scale and finished in a style more imposing than any thing we have yet attempted. We must discard the City Hall and the grounds about it as our standards of magnificence, and indulge ourselves in a breadth of space and a height and dignity of architectural composition which may appear absurd and extravagant to uncultivated eyes.

It is perhaps too much to expect that New York will ever present a region of such artistic grandeur as Paris shows between the Louvre and the Barrière de l'Etoile. We cannot hope to exhibit a *façade* upon our Park like that of the Tuileries, which extends along its garden front more than one thousand feet, nor a group of buildings like the Louvre, which, including the Tuileries, contains nearly thirty acres of ground, covered with the most imposing and richly decorated structures, and embraces the noble Place du Carousel, which has an area of nearly a million and a half of square feet. Even the small open court of the Louvre contains more square feet than the whole space lately appropriated by your Board to the Historical Society. We may despair of rivalling the Place de la Concorde, the centre of the finest city perspective in the world, and which it is hardly probable that Rome, in her best days, excelled. But if we are to make the slightest approach to all this splendor, if the outer boundary of the Park is to be a spot of marked architectural displays in its *façades*, its perspectives, and its monuments, and to equal in this respect not Paris, but some third or fourth rate European town, the artistic elaborateness of Mr. Hunt's designs is the very last quality in them to which we should object as a fault.

II.

We need say but little in answer to the second general objection to these plans : that they are too French.

The idea that they are French seems to have arisen, first, from the fact that Mr. Hunt, although he is an American, studied his profession in France ; and, secondly, because in borrowing certain forms of sculpture as temporary ornaments for his architecture, he happens to place the famous horses of Coustou on the pedestals of the Fifth avenue entrance, and to adopt for the Seventh avenue entrance the Hermes which Jean Goujon had already used at Fontainebleau.

Now, this is as unreasonable as to call Messrs. Vaux and Mould's designs English, because these gentlemen are Englishmen and studied their profession in England ; and as to the horses and the busts, we must remember that Mr. Hunt is not a sculptor ; he is an architect. He did not pretend to invent these designs for statuary. His selection was purely arbitrary. It might have been one thing as well as another, provided the statues harmonized with his masses. These designs were intended to exhibit general architectural effects and not ornamental sculpture, and it is for the former and not the latter that he is to be criticised and held responsible.

But if these plans be French in their character, why is this to be considered a reproach ? Is there a country in the world where art occupies so high a position at this day as it does in France ? Is there any modern architecture so much admired and so much copied as the French ? We see it reproduced constantly in England. If we may presume to express our own opinion about it, we should say that it unites in an admirable degree elegance of forms with a nice adaptation to the requirements of modern civilization. At any rate, it seems somewhat presumptuous for a critic whose studies have, perhaps, hardly extended beyond the new City Hall and the store fronts of Broadway, to characterize those noble works which embellish the Paris of our day, and which are the productions of men whose distinguished talent and conscientious devotion to their art are the admiration of all Europe, as the "barren spawn of French Imperialism" and "Louis Napo-

leon's favorite sop thrown to the dragon of the Parisian *ouvrier*." The writer to whom we allude seems to appeal to the popular feeling against the invader of Mexico to swell the blasts of indignation which he tries to raise against Mr. Hunt's gates. "We don't like," he says, "to be reminded of the existence of such riff-raff as the French Emperor when we are in our Park." "It would be an affliction to us," he adds, "that we couldn't enter our garden without being obliged to pass through gates which recall the cruelty and injustice of systems that Jupiter Scapin and his mates sustain and delight in."

Mr. Hunt little thought, when he made these designs, that he was about to add fuel to the flames of an international controversy. But seriously, all this is extravagant and puerile, and the author of it must confess, upon reflection, that this idea of connecting architecture with the vices of certain political systems is most shadowy and unsubstantial. It is a matter of no sort of consequence whether Mr. Hunt's plans are French in their character or not, provided they are elegant and appropriate to the purposes for which they were made.

III.

The objections to the details of these gates refer chiefly to the architectural ornament, which cannot be fairly criticised without a study of the finished drawings, or to the sculptured decorations, which, not having been invented by Mr. Hunt, and only selected by him as being adapted to the masses of his design, should not be made a subject of animadversion. A writer in a weekly journal, who is more courteous and intelligent than some of his brethren, admits the whole case when he says that "Mr. Hunt has almost perfectly well conceived his subject; it is evident he has grasped the whole matter in hand and can handle it." This critic objects to the Ionic of the capitals of the Eighth avenue gate-posts and to the use of the Doric cornice at the Fifth and Seventh avenues. These are points upon which connoisseurs may fairly differ. We do not believe that the best educated among them would make these objections after an examination of the finished drawings on a larger scale: but if they should do so, it would by no means afford a reason for what seems to be an indefinite postponement of their execution.

We confess that we are not perfectly satisfied ourselves with the use of a detached column to support a statue or a coat-of-arms carved "in the round." But, when we remember the problem the artist had to solve, we are disposed to be indulgent to him in this matter. It was necessary in all these gates to give height and dignity to a composition which required wide, vacant spaces and a thin, drawn-out system of posts and delicate iron work. In order to emphasize these entrances, to give them impressiveness and significance, and to take away from the low, flat appearance of long gates swinging between a succession of posts, it was desirable to carry the eye upward. Hence the use of these columns and the tall masts bearing flags and gonfalons. As marking boundaries, as indicating important points in the outer inclosure of the Park to be conspicuous at a distance, these columns seem to be unobjectionable. They are complete and independent objects, beautiful in themselves, and may as well be used for such a purpose as arches, which are also frequently detached from *façades* and set up to do duty in isolated positions. Any one who remembers the two columns of the Barrière du Trône in Paris, standing each by itself and bearing a statue, will confess that, however incorrect they may appear to fastidious critics, they are certainly very majestic in their general effect.

We cannot agree with the writer whom we have quoted, in considering the terrace of the Fifth avenue entrance an accessory of no value, and being not only useless and badly designed, but positively injurious. We think, on the contrary, it gives importance and dignity to the gateway, and it would be worth all the money it would cost. This spot—the south-eastern angle of the Park—will probably be for many years to come the most attractive and distinguished architectural point on the island, and it should be marked by a liberal display of embellishment and by a breadth and majesty of treatment beyond all others. Mr. Hunt has accordingly concentrated here all the resources of his art—ample space, imposing masses of mason work, colossal sculpture, graceful fountains, and picturesque vistas, and he has succeeded in producing an *ensemble* which, while it is infinitely more convenient in the plan than the original design for this entrance, is peculiarly striking and satisfactory to the eye.

We may say, generally, in answer to objections to some of the architec-

tural details of these compositions, both those to which we have alluded and others, that if, upon further study and the criticism of competent judges, they should seem to require alterations, we feel sure that no false pride would prevent Mr. Hunt from making them. But after all, considering his education and position as an architect, he is quite as likely to be right as his critics, and we may well leave these smaller matters in his hands.

We have stated our opinion of the unfairness of attacking the suggestions for statuary which Mr. Hunt introduced to complete the masses of his compositions. All the small wit which some writers have condescended to use about his heathen symbolism seems as pointless as it is unjust. Mr. Hunt has no intention of adopting these statues, or of designing himself any others in their places. We have masters in this department of art, to whom he is willing to intrust this work. We fancy that Powers or Brown, or Palmer or Ward, or Launt Thompson or Rodgers, or Miss Stebbins, could furnish sculpture which the boldest of these critics would hesitate to ridicule. We feel sure that the "Indian Hunter," for instance, could find no more appropriate resting place than at one of these gateways, and the prospect of such a destination for it, if it could be assured, would seem almost to settle the question as to the practicability of raising a sufficient sum to cast it in bronze, and thus preserve it forever as one of the noblest ornaments of the city.

We have already alluded to the writer in a daily journal, who hates the French so bitterly. He attacks these designs with an indiscriminating ferocity, which characterizes much of the art criticism in that particular newspaper. He writes cleverly, and seems to have learned some of the "*ingenuas artes*" of which Ovid speaks, but the study of them has not produced upon his manners the influence that the poet ascribes to it:

"Emollit mores, nec sinit esse ferus."

He says of these drawings that he "never heard any one approve them;" that they "are both ugly and unsuitable;" that "they break the law of use and beauty;" that "they are as un-American as it is possible to make them;" that "they are tame and spiritless copies of modern French work;" that "nothing springs out of the needs of the place, nor is dictated by conditions that exist and ought to be respected, but every thing is intense, artificial, and

formal ;" that they exhibit "no freedom," "no play ;" that they are "all show, and expensive show ;" "the minimum of beauty for the maximum of money ;" that they are "ugly," "unmeaning," and "unnecessary ;" that "to get them we have to throw away in each case some marked peculiarity of the ground, some natural condition which has been well turned to account" by Messrs. Vaux and Olmsted ; that "Mr. Hunt tries to wipe out Nature, to substitute symmetry for her irregularity, to give us stones for bread." "We have lightly touched," the writer says, "upon the unreason of these designs ; their ugliness, their utter weakness, would take us too long to consider," and much more in the same strain.

"Brave words," as Fluellen says ; "brave words," but nothing else. Something more than an indictment is required before a man can be convicted. Here is the indictment. We traverse it in every count. It has not been proved. Until it shall be proved, it is worth no more than our denial.

This critic, however, had another duty to perform besides attacking Mr. Hunt's designs ; he had at the same time to sustain those of Mr. Vaux and Mr. Mould, and to reconcile the grounds of his praise and his blame in the two cases. He has not done this in a very skilful manner. We beg you to understand that we do not intend to find fault with what either Mr. Vaux or Mr. Mould has executed in the Park. These gentleman have contributed several fine things to the grounds, and the latter especially has a charming idea of the use of color in architecture. We only wish to show how difficult it was for our pugnacious friend to make the principles upon which he praised the English artists square with those upon which he attempted to demolish the American. He is a great admirer of nature, as we all are, and contends that we should have no more architecture in the Park than is absolutely necessary. His first difficulty is to reconcile this with Mr. Vaux's archways, which we know are very elaborate and expensive, and intended, of course, to be seen and admired for all time to come. He disposes of these, however, at a mouthful. He says that "every year's growth shuts the archways more and more out of sight ;" that "before a great while the existence of most of them will hardly be suspected !" Every child must see the absurdity of this assertion ; and even if it were true, how ridiculous

it was to waste so much time and labor upon beautiful structures which ought to be hidden as soon as possible!

After the archways "are taken out of the scene," says our critic, "there is left of the architecture only the terrace," and this was erected "in obedience to the law that makes a centre, to which all drives, walks, and rambles tend, absolutely necessary." Mr. Vaux, he says, would have preferred a "mountain, or at least a hill, or even a great mass of rock;" but Nature had not given it and it could not be supplied, so he put the terrace there.

We believe a very respectable "mountain, or at least a hill, or a great mass of rock," could have been constructed for much less than the cost of the Terrace; but Mr. Vaux was quite too good an artist to think of any such thing. He wanted as much art as he knew how to make, and so he designed the terrace. But, having once gotten the terrace, our critic does not seem to look upon it any longer as a *pis aller*—as only a substitute for a "mountain," &c. He pronounces it most beautiful, and then brings out another objection to Mr. Hunt's gates, that they "detract from the importance of the great central feature;" "that it is a mistake to make subordinate features equal or superior to the central one." How this can be true, if the gates are as ugly and weak as he asserts, we cannot understand; and if they are beautiful and appropriate, as we say they are, the fact that they may thereby injure the effect of Mr. Vaux's terrace is not a good reason for discarding them. The better plan would be to improve Mr. Vaux's terrace. But we have no desire to pursue any further the inconsistencies of this critic.

IV.

We have attempted in this letter to show that the beauty of the Park, the architectural completeness of the city, and the convenience of the people, would all be greatly promoted by the erection of these gateways, which your Board two years and a half ago unanimously decided to undertake. You have ever since neglected to commence this work, and at last voted to post-

pone it by a formal resolution, which, when taken in connection with your long inaction, seems to amount to a virtual abandonment of the whole affair.

Will you pardon us for saying that we think it is due to Mr. Hunt's professional position that you should reconsider this resolution? Whatever may be the faults or the merits of his designs, he deserves to be treated courteously and justly, and, since they have been once adopted, to know at least whether they are ever to be carried out, and, if not, for what reason they have been discarded. He is neither a child nor a charlatan, and has as good claims as any one to seek for the honor of erecting these gateways. It is true, he is an American, which seems sometimes in a competition for artistic laurels to be a hinderance rather than an advantage. But we feel sure that in your eyes both his birthplace and his well-known loyalty will give him an additional claim on your regard. It is particularly to his professional antecedents, however, that we beg to call your attention. Let us state these very briefly. He commenced the study of architecture in 1844, twenty-two years ago, with M. Darier, at Geneva, in Switzerland. In 1845, he entered at Paris the atelier of M. Hector Lefuel, who is now the architect of the Emperor. He continued with him as a pupil for nearly ten years, pursuing at the same time his studies in the Ecole des Beaux Arts. In 1853, he employed a vacation in making a careful professional tour through Germany, Italy, Egypt, Syria, and Greece, having already visited Germany once and Italy twice before. In 1854, M. Lefuel being engaged upon that great work which is the crowning architectural triumph of the reign of the present Emperor—the completion of the connection between the Louvre and the Tuileries—Mr. Hunt, who had become one of his favorite and most valued pupils, entered the Bureau des Etudes of that magnificent undertaking. He was employed there constantly in the most important and instructive labors upon various parts of the work, but had special charge of the pavilion, called the Pavillon de la Bibliothèque, opposite to the Palais Royal, for which, under the supervision of M. Lefuel, he made the original sketch and the working drawings. This design was afterwards executed, and the *façade* now exists—a conspicuous monument not only of Mr. Hunt's talent, but of M. Lefuel's confidence in his ability. He also made the designs and working drawings for the dormer windows of that part of the palace fronting on the Rue de Rivoli. In the

autumn of 1855 he returned to America, and in 1857 became the assistant to Mr. Thomas U. Walter, the architect of the Capitol at Washington. For several years past he has resided in New York, and has designed buildings for this city, for Boston, and other places, which have been deservedly admired. He has just completed the sketch for the new museum and galleries of the Historical Society, which has met with the approval of the Building Committee of that institution.

It seems necessary to explain Mr. Hunt's professional position to show that on this account, if for no other, he should be treated fairly and justly, and not dismissed from the charge of erecting these gates without full opportunity for discussion and explanation.

We beg to submit these remarks to your careful consideration, and to ask such action in the premises as the interests of the public, the honor of your Board, and the claims of Mr. Hunt may require.

CIVIS.

IV.
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK,
RELATING TO THE ENTRANCES ON FIFTY-NINTH STREET.

July 12th, 1860.—Resolved, That the Architect-in-Chief be requested to furnish designs for an inclosure along the southerly side of the Park, providing in the line of said inclosure for entrances with appropriate ornamentation at both Sixth and Seventh avenues, and that in said designs entrances be adapted to the use of pedestrians, and so adjusted as to admit carriages, should the proper interior arrangements hereafter be provided therefor, with the estimated cost, and that at the same time he present designs for the proposed entrances at the Fifth and Eighth avenues.

November 23d, 1860.—Mr. Green submitted designs for iron gateways, and stone wall or fence for inclosing the Park.

Debate was had thereon, when

On motion of Mr. Green, the whole subject was referred to the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures.

March 29th, 1861.—A further communication was received from the Architect-in-Chief and Superintendent, relative to, and transmitting designs for fencing and inclosing the Park.

On motion of Mr. Belmont, said communication was referred to the Special Committee appointed this day (Messrs. Stebbins, Russell, and Belmont).

January 26th, 1863.—Mr. Green submitted several plans of gateway entrances to the Park on Fifty-ninth street.

Debate was had thereon, when

Mr. Hutchins moved that said plans be referred to the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures, to report further thereon, and that said Committee have power to consult such architects in relation thereto, as they may deem proper.

The question being put on the adoption of said motion, it was determined in the affirmative as follows :

Ayes—Messrs. Russell, Hutchins, Green, Stebbins, Grinnell—5.

May 14th, 1863.—Resignations of Messrs. Olmsted and Vaux accepted by the Board.

By unanimous consent,

Mr. Russell, from the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures, to which was referred several plans of Gateway Entrances to the Park on Fifty-ninth street, to report further thereon, and to consult such architects in relation thereto, as they might deem proper, reported verbally that said committee had made some progress therein, and would report upon said subject at a future meeting of the Board.

SPECIFICATION FOR DESIGNS OF GATES AND GATEWAYS.

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK,
June 12th, 1863.

Designs are to be drawn to a scale of a quarter of an inch to a foot, and may be in colors or in neutral tint.

No expenditure for the four gates and their appurtenances exceeding \$50,000 is contemplated.

Persons offering designs will send with them an estimate of the cost of

constructing the respective gates and gateways, which should not exceed this sum; economy in construction will be an important element in the selection of a design, and in awarding the premium.

Places for Statuary should be shown in the designs, but the Statuary represented need not be estimated in the above cost.

Following a general plan of nomenclature of the Park entrances, the following names are suggested for these gates respectively :—

That at Fifth avenue and Fifty-ninth street,	THE SCHOLARS' GATE.
That at Sixth " " "	THE ARTISTS' GATE.
That at Seventh " " "	THE ARTISANS' GATE.
That at Eighth " " "	THE MERCHANTS' GATE.

This nomenclature should therefore be illustrated in the designs, so far as each designer may consider it practicable or desirable.

Without committing itself to this course, the intention of the Board is, in case either design is adopted, to engage the services of the Architect, submitting the design, to carry it out in construction, at the usual professional compensation; if this course is adopted, the premium will be awarded to the set of designs that the Board shall determine to be the second best, otherwise the premium will be awarded to the set of designs which the Board determine best entitled thereto.

The series of designs to which the premium is awarded will become the property of the Board.

August 13th, 1863.—On motion of Mr. Russell, the Board proceeded to open the plans and sketches for four southerly gates and gateways of the Central Park, submitted for competition, which were numbered.

Debate was had on them, when,

On motion of Mr. Green, said plans and sketches were referred to the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures, to report thereon to the Board, or to the Executive Committee of the Board.

September 2d, 1863.—Mr. Russell, from the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures, to whom was referred the plans and sketches for four southerly gates and gateways of the Park, at the last meeting of the Board, to report thereon, presented a report in writing.

Mr. Russell moved that said report be adopted, and entered at length upon the minutes.

The question being put on the adoption of said motion, it was determined in the affirmative, as follows :

Ayes—Messrs. Russell, Butterworth, Green, Blatchford, Grinnell—5.

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK:

The Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures report, that they have examined the plans referred to them, marked Nos. 1 to 10, and while they find a variety of designs, it does not appear to them that either of the plans offered comprehends a sufficient degree of originality and fitness to the surrounding features of the landscape to justify the Committee in recommending the Board to award the premium proposed to its author, nor would the Committee recommend the erection of either of the gateways shown in the design offered.

As the question may arise as to the disposition of the premium offered, the Committee recommend that the Treasurer be authorized to distribute among the competitors such portions of the premium as he may deem judicious.

Dated NEW YORK, *September 2d*, 1863.

C. H. RUSSELL,	} <i>Committee on Statuary,</i>	
J. F. BUTTERWORTH,		<i>Fountains, and Archi-</i>
ANDREW H. GREEN,		<i>tectural Structures.</i>

Mr. Butterworth offered the following :

Resolved, That the sketches of the four gateways on the southerly boundary of the Park, submitted by Mr. Hunt, be and the same are hereby approved in their general features, and that the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures, be authorized to employ the designer of said sketches, and to proceed with the erection of these gates, with such modifications in their details as said Committee may approve.

The question being put on the adoption of said resolution, it was determined in the affirmative, as follows :

Ayes—Messrs. Russell, Butterworth, Green, Blatchford, and Grinnell—5.

November 12th, 1863.—Mr. Green offered the following resolution :

Resolved, That no gateways be constructed or erected on the Fifth or Eighth Avenues until they have been referred to the Committee on Statuary, Fountains, and Architectural Structures, and reported on by said Committee to the Board for their action.

Debate was had thereon, when

The question being put on the adoption of said resolution, it was determined in the negative, as follows :

Ayes—Messrs. Russell, Hutchins, Green, Stebbins—4.

Nay—Mr. Fields—1.

April 19th, 1864.—Mr. Russell offered the following :

Resolved, That the Comptroller of the Park be directed to proceed forthwith in the erection of the four gateway entrances in Fifty-ninth street, and southerly boundary of the Park, together with the several appurtenances, as exhibited in the adopted sketches of Mr. Hunt, according to the resolution of this Board, passed 2d September last, in order that this portion of the work may be early completed.

The question being put on the adoption of said resolution, it was determined in the affirmative, as follows :

Ayes—Messrs. Russell, Hutchins, Green, Blatchford, and Grinnell—5.

May 11th, 1865.—On motion of Mr. Fields,

Resolved, That all work on the gateways of the Park be deferred till the further order of the Board.

Ayes—Butterworth, Hutchins, Field, Green, Blatchford—5.

Nays—Russell—1.

In reference to this delay, the following communication was addressed to the Commissioners :

NEW YORK, *December 18th, 1865.*

To the Commissioners of the Central Park :

GENTLEMEN :—Several months since, your Honorable Board passed a resolution, accepting the plans for the Central Park Gates which I had

the honor, at the request of some of your number, to submit for examination; subsequently, by another vote, further action on this resolution was indefinitely deferred.

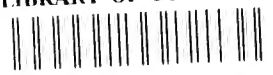
Under these circumstances, I respectfully ask you to inform me if the delay thus agreed to, is owing to any proposed modification of the details of my designs, or is to be attributed to prudential motives in reference to the expense; if the former, I am ready and desirous to confer at an early day with your Board, or with the Committee in whose hands the matter was placed; and if the latter, it would greatly accommodate me to know the probable time when the work authorized by your Board can be auspiciously commenced.

All of which is respectfully submitted by

Your obedient servant,

RICHARD M. HUNT.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00009115687