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# NOTES ON THE PLAN OF FRANKLIN PARK

PARTS 1&2 2&3

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THE FRANKLIN PARK COALITION, INC.  
319 Forest Hills St.  
Boston, Mass. 02130  
April, 1984

First reprinted in November, 1978.

## PROCEEDINGS.

The taking of land having been completed, instructions were given for the preparation of a plan in general accordance with the views which had determined the locality and the limits of the proposed park. In December, 1884, a series of propositions in regard to the principal features of the plan were submitted and approved by the Board. In the spring of 1885 a preliminary drawing of the plan was submitted, and, to facilitate discussion, the lines of it were fully staked on the ground and followed out by the Commissioners. After debate this study, with some immaterial variations, was approved as the basis of the final plan. Later, a change in the membership and a re-organization of the Board having occurred, the preliminary plan was reviewed and found acceptable. Still later the Commissioners, to be satisfied as to various conditions of park economy, visited and made a comparative examination of several large parks in use.

January 30, 1886, at a meeting of the Commissioners held at the office of the Landscape Architect on the park site, the Mayor being present, the finished general plan was presented and considered.

February 10, the Commissioners voted as follows: -

- 1.) That the plan prepared by the Landscape Architect, now before the Board, is adopted as the Plan of Franklin Park.
- 2.) That the Landscape Architect is requested to prepare a statement for publication explanatory of the plan, and setting forth the views of undertaking that he has presented to the Board.

George F. Clarke,  
Secretary  
Boston Parks Department



## PART SECOND

### THE PLAN OF FRANKLIN PARK

#### *I. Of Certain Conditions of the Site of Franklin Park.*

That the site for Franklin Park could have been rationally bought only with a view to a purpose previously not all provided for, and that no use of the ground should now be permitted likely to lessen its value for this distinctive purpose, will yet more clearly appear if the topography of the ground and the manner of its selection are considered.

The scheme of Franklin Park, as it now stands, is a contraction of a much larger scheme outlined to the city government in 1869. This larger scheme included bodies of comparatively rich, humid, flat land, much better adapted to provide many forms of public ground than any within the field of the present scheme; a parade ground, for instance, and gall grounds; much better adapted, also, to the beauty to be obtained through refined horticulture, floral displays, and other decorations. It included streams of water and areas in which lakes with provisions for boating, skating, and bathing, as well as water-side beauty, could have been readily provided. All such ground has, long since, upon mature consideration by the city government, been thrown out of the scheme.

The ground finally selected has in its larger part the usual characteristics of the stony upland pasture, and the rocky divides between streams commonly found in New England, covered by what are called "second growth" woods, the trees slow growing from the stumps of previous woods, crowded, somewhat stunted, spindling; not beautiful individually, but, in combination forming impressive masses of foliage. It not only contains no lake, permanent pool or stream of water, but it commands no distant water view. It includes no single natural feature of distinguished beauty or popular interest. It is in all parts underlaid by ledges which break out at some points in a bold and picturesque way, at others in such a manner only to make barren patches, with scanty vegetation that wilts and becomes shabby in dry, hot weather. It is thickly strewn with boulders; even in parts where the surface appears smooth and clear, their presence just below it generally becomes obvious in dry weather, and they are turned out by the plough in great numbers. Any fine cultivation of the ground will be comparatively costly. It is not generally adaptable at moderate expense for lawn-like treatments, nor to the development of what are commonly, though perhaps not accurately, regarded as the beauties of landscape gardening. As a whole, it is rugged, intractable, and as little suitable to be worked to conditions harmonious with urban elegance as the site of the Back Bay Drainage Basins, Mount Royal Park at Montreal, East Rock Park at New Haven or Arthur's Seat at Edinburgh.

It is on the borders of the city, remote from its more populous quarters, remote, also, from any of its excellent water highways, and out of the line of its leading land thoroughfares.

What can be said for the property as a whole is this: That there is not within or near the city any other equal extent of ground of as simple, and pleasingly simple, rural aspect. It has been at various points harshly gashed by rudely engineered roads, scarred by quarries and gravel-pits, and disruralized by

artificially disposed trees and pseudo-rustic structures, but considering its proximity to the compact town, it has remarkably escaped disturbances of this character.

## *II. The Purpose of the Plan*

Under this head a distinction is to be made which is of critical importance. It is a distinction so rarely regarded in gardening works, or in engineering or architectural works nominally subsidiary to gardening works, that a strong prejudice of mental habit will be found to be working against a complete entertainment of it. It will be necessary, therefore, to set it forth painstakingly and to justify insistence upon it. An indolent indisposition to be bothered with it has added greatly to the taxes of several cities.

What is the special purpose of a large park in distinction from the various purposes that may be served by such smaller grounds as Boston is provided with?

In the first division of these pages reference has been made to the manner in which various evils of town life, by the introduction of one special expedient after another, have been gradually so well contended with, that in cities that at present have several times the population they had in the last century, much less time is now lost than then to productive industry; the average length of life much advances, and the value of life augmented. The evils in question have been for the most part intangible, and to those who were not close students of them have been considered inscrutable; not to be measured and reckoned up like the evils of fire and flood, famine, war, and lawlessness. Consequently plans for overcoming them have always been regarded for a time as fanciful, and those urging them as theorists and enthusiasts. For a time, no city outlays have been so grudgingly made or given so much dissatisfaction to taxpayers as those required to advance measures of this class. Looking back upon their results, after a

few years, it is admitted that no other money has been so profitably expended. No one thinks that they were untimely or were advanced too rapidly.

Of this class of evils there is one rapidly growing in Boston, in contention with which nothing has yet been accomplished. It is an evil dependent on a condition involved in the purpose of placing many stacks of artificial inconveniences for the interchange of services closely together. It may be suggested if not explained (for evils of this class are seldom fully explainable) in this way.

*'A man's eyes cannot be as much occupied as they are in large cities by artificial things, or by natural things seen under obviously artificial conditions, without a harmful effect, first on his mental and nervous system and ultimately on his entire constitutional organization.'*

That relief from this evil is to be obtained through recreation is often said, without sufficient discrimination as to the nature of the recreation required. The several varieties of recreation to be obtained in churches, newspapers, theatres, picture galleries, billiard rooms, base ball grounds, trotting courses, and flower gardens, may each serve to supply a mitigating influence. An influence is desirable, however, that, acting through the eye, shall be more than mitigative, that shall be antithetical, reversive, and antidotal. Such an influence is found in what, in notes to follow, will be called the enjoyment of pleasing rural scenery.

But to understand what will be meant by this term as here to be used, two ideas must not be allowed to run together, that few minds are trained to keep apart. To separate them let it be reflected, first, that the word beauty is commonly used with respect to two quite distinct aspects of the things that enter visibly into the composition of parks and gardens. A little violet or a great magnolia blossom, the frond of a fern, a carpet



of fine turf of the form and size of a prayer rug, a block of carved and polished marble, a vase or a jet of water,—in the beauty of all these things unalloyed pleasure may be taken in the heart of a city. And pleasure in their beauty may be enhanced by aggregations and combinations of them, as it is in arrangements of bouquets and head-dresses, the decorations of the dinner-tables, window-sills and dooryards, or, in a more complex and largely effective way, in such elaborate exhibitions of high horticultural art as the city maintains in the Public Garden.

But there is a pleasure-bringing beauty in the same class of objects—foliage, flowers, verdure, rocks, and water—not to be enjoyed under the same circumstances or under similar combinations; a beauty which appeals to *a different class of human sensibilities*, a beauty the art of securing which is hardly more akin with the art of securing beauty on a dinner-table, a window-sill, a dooryard, or an urban garden, than the work of the sculpture is akin with the work of the painter.

Let beauty of the first kind be called here urban beauty, not because it cannot be had elsewhere than in a city, but because the distinction may thus, for the sake of argument in this particular case, be kept in mind between it and that beauty of the same things which can only be had clear of the confinement of a city, and which it is convenient therefore to refer to as the beauty of rural scenery.

Now as to this term scenery, it is to be borne in mind that we do not speak of what may be observed in the flower and foliage decorations of a dinner-table, window-sill, or dooryard, scarcely of what may be seen in even a large urban garden, as scenery. Scenery is more than an object or a series of objects; more than a spectacle, more than a scene or a series of scenes, more than a landscape, and other than a series of landscapes. Moreover, there may be beautiful scenery in which not a beautiful blossom or leaf or rock, bush or tree, not a gleam of water or of turf shall be visible. But there is no

beautiful scenery that does not give the mind an emotional impulse different from that resulting from whatever beauty may be found in a room, courtyard, or garden, within which vision is obviously confined by walls or other surrounding artificial constructions.

It is necessary to be thus and even more particular in defining the term used to denote the paramount purpose embodied in the plan of Franklin Park, because many men, having a keen enjoyment of certain forms of beauty in vegetation, and even of things found only in the country, habitually class much as rural that is not only not rural, but is even the reverse of rural as that term is to be here used.

For example: in a region of undulating surface with a meandering stream and winding valleys, with much naturally disposed wood, there is a house with outbuildings and enclosures, roads, walks, trees, bushes, and flowering plants. If the constructions are of the natural materials of the locality and not fashioned expressly to manifest the wealth or art of the builders, if they are of the texture and the grain and the hues that such materials will naturally become if no effort to hide or disguise them is made, if the lines of the roads and walks are adapted to curves of the natural surface, and if the trees and plants are of a natural character naturally disposed, and the result will be congruous with the general natural rural scenery of the locality, its rural quality being, perhaps, enhanced by these unobtrusive artificial elements. But in such a situation it oftener than otherwise occurs that customs will be followed which had their origin in a desire to obtain results that should be pleasing, not through congruity with pleasing natural rural circumstances, but through incongruity with them. Why? Simply because those designing them had been oppressed by a monotony of rural scenery, and desired to find relief from it, and because also they desired to find relief from it, and because also they desired to manifest the triumph of civilized forces over nature. And on account of the general association with rural scenery of things determined by fashions originating

in these desires, they are carelessly thought of as rural things, and the pleasure to be derived from them is esteemed a part of the pleasure taken in rural scenery.

It thus happens that things come to be regarded as elements of rural scenery which are simply cheap and fragmentary efforts to realize something of the pleasingness which their countryman finds in the artificialness of the city. This is why, to cite a few examples familiar to everyone, wooden houses are fashioned in forms and with decorations copied from houses of masonry, and why the wood of them is not left of its natural color, or given a tint harmonious with natural objects, but for distinction's sake smeared over a glistening white lead. This is the reason why trees are transplanted from natural to unnatural situations about houses so treated, why they are formally disposed, why forms are preferred for them to be obtained only by artificial processes, as grafting, pruning, and shearing; why shrubs are worked into fantastic shapes that cannot possibly be mistaken for natural growths; why groups are made studiously formal, why the trunks of trees are sometimes whitewashed; why rocks too heavy to be put out of sight are cleared of their natural beauty, and even sometimes also whitewashed; why flowering plants are often arranged as artificially as the stones of a mosaic pavement; why pools are furnished with clean and rigid stone margins and jets of water thrown from them; why specimens of rustic work and of rock work are displayed conspicuously that have been plainly designed to signalize, not be subordinate or soften, the artificialness of artificial conveniences.

Defining the purpose of the plan of Franklin Park to be that of placing within the easy reach of the people of the city the enjoyment of such a measure as a practicable of rural scenery, all such misunderstanding of the term has thus been explained must be guarded against.

That rural scenery has the effect alleged, of counter-

acting a *certain oppression* of town life, is too well established to need argument, but as the manner of its action will have a practical bearing on the purpose of the plan, the circumstance may be recalled that the evil to be met is most apt to appear in excessive nervous tension, over-anxiety, hasteful disposition, impatience, irritability, and that the grateful effect of a contemplation of pleasing rural scenery is proverbially regarded as the reverse of this. It is, for example, of the enjoyment of this pleasure, and not simply of air and exercise, that Emerson says, "It soothes and sympathizes," that Lowell says, "It pours oil and wine on the smarts of the mind," and which Ruskin describes as "absolute peace."

It is not an easy matter, in the immediate outskirts of a great city, to make a provision of scenery which shall be so far rural in character and pleasing in effect as to have a high degree of the influence desired.

Some wise men are accustomed to ridicule the earlier result of efforts to that end by comparing it with scenery remote from cities the rurality of which owes nothing to human care. But these higher examples not being available for the frequent use of the mass of the people of a city, it is only a question whether a result is to be gained under such conditions as are offered in the site of Franklin Park which shall be of so much value in this respect that it will be worth more than it will cost. And, in considering this question, it is to be borne in mind that the purpose requires no elements of scenery of a class that would induce sensational effects. It will be answered in a measure—it is a question whether it may not even be better answered—by scenery that may be comparatively characterized as tame and homely. It is almost certainly better that the aim in overcoming the difficulties of securing such scenery should be modest, provided a modest aim can be sustained, and the temptation to put it out of countenance by bits of irrelevant finery resisted.

Given sufficient space, scenery of much simpler elements than are found in the site of Franklin Park may possess the soothing charm which lies in the qualities of breadth, distance, depth, intricacy, atmospheric perspective, and mystery. It may have picturesque passages (that is to say, more than picturesque objects or picturesque "bits"). It may have passages, indeed, of an aspect approaching grandeur and sublimity.

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It is to be feared that there are some who may be inclined to question if a considerable degree of refined culture, such as is common only to the more worldly fortunate, is not necessary to enable one to enjoy the charm of rural scenery sympathetically with Wordsworth, Emerson, Ruskin, and Lowell. To enjoy it intellectually, yes; to be affected by it, made healthier, better, happier by it, no. The men who have done the most to draw the world to the poetic enjoyment of nature have, in large part come from lowly homes, and been educated in inexpensive schools. Burns, the ploughboy, was one such, known to all. Millet, whose works are honored in the stateliest houses, was a peasant in habit, manner, and associations all his life long. Leon Bonvin, whose pathetic love of the most modest natural scenery was illustrated in Harper's Magazine of last December was by vocation the bar-keeper of a wayside tavern. And in thinking of this question, especially with reference to a majority of the people of Boston, it is well to remember a phrase used by Dr. Shairp in his treatise on the Poetic Interpretation of Nature. Speaking of Wordsworth and his sister, he says that the woman was the greater poet of the two, "only not a literary poet." Poetic sensibility is one thing; inclination and capacity to give coherent form to poetic sentiment another.

The following is an account by Mrs. Gaskell of the poorer sort of the humblest work-people of Manchester,

England, and is drawn from life, as any one chancing to be in that town on a fine summer holiday may test. Abating something from the grandeur of the trees, similar scenes have been witnessed during the past summer in the new Brooklyn, Buffalo, and Philadelphia parks, and in the yet hardly begun Beardsley Park of Bridgeport. It is a question of time and of a wholesomely restrained ambition when they shall be seen in Franklin Park.

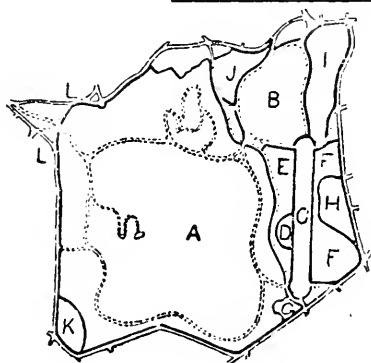
“He was on the verge of a green area, shut in by magnificent trees in all the glory of their early foliage, before the summer heat had deepened their verdure into one rich monotonous tint. And hither came party after party—old men and maidens, young men and children. Whole families trooped along after the guiding father, who bore the youngest in their arms or astride upon their backs, while they turned round occasionally to the wives, with whom they share some fond local remembrance. For years has Dunham Park been the favorite resort of the Manchester work-people. Its scenery presents such a complete contrast to the whirl and turmoil of Manchester . . . Depend upon it, this sylvan repose, this accessible quiet, this lapping the soul in green images of the country, forms the most complete contrast to a town’s person, and consequently has over such the greatest power of charm. . . Far away in the distance, now sinking, now falling, now swelling and clear came a ringing peal of children’s voices, blended together in one of those psalm tunes which we are all of us familiar with, and which bring to mind the old, old days when we, as wondering children, were first led to worship ‘Our Father’ by those beloved ones who have since gone to the more perfect worship.

“Holy was that distant choral praise, even to the most thoughtless; and when it, in fact, was ended, in the instant’s pause during which the ear awaits the repetition of the air, they caught the noontide hum and buzz of the myriads of insects who danced away their lives in the glorious day; they

heard the swaying of the mighty woods in the soft but resistless breeze, and then again once more burst forth the merry jests and the shouts of childhood, and again the elder ones resumed their happy talk as they lay or sat 'under the greenwood tree.'

"But the day drew to an end; the heat declined, the birds once more began their warblings, the fresh scents hung about plant and tree and grass, betokening the fragrant presence of the reviving dew . . . As they trod the meadow path once more, they were joined by many a party they had encountered during the day, all abounding in happiness, all full of the day's adventures.

"Long cherished quarrels had been forgotten, new friendships formed. Fresh tastes and higher delights had been imparted that day. We have all of us our look now and then, called up by some noble or loving thought (our highest on earth) which will be our likeness in heaven. I can catch the glance on many a face, the glancing light of the cloud of glory from heaven, which is our home. That look was present on many a hard-worked, wrinkled countenance as they turned backwards to catch a longing, lingering look at Dunham Woods, fast deepening into blackness of night, but whose memory was to haunt in greenness and freshness many a loom and workshop and factory with images of peace and beauty."



- A The Country Park.*
- B The Playstead.*
- C The Greeting.*
- D The Music Court.*
- E The Little Folks' Fair.*
- F The Deer Park.*
- G Refectory Hill.*
- H Sargent's Field.*
- I Long Crouch Woods.*
- J The Steading.*
- K The Nursery.*

### III. A Review of the Plan by Divisions

*As to Local Names to be used in the following Review.*— For convenience of reference, names have been given on the drawing to various localities. Some of these have been found in use, as ABBOTSWOOD, GLEN ROAD, and ROCK HILL. In most of the others, old homestead names of the neighborhood are recalled, a choice from among them having been made of such as would couple not too roughly with appropriate terminals. SCARBORO HILL, HAGBORNE HILL, WAITTWOOD, ROCK MORTON, and ELLICOTTDALE are examples. Some of this class were suggested by the late Francis D. Drake, author of a History of Roxbury, shortly before his lamented death; others have been obtained from Colonial records of the park property, found at the Registrar's Office of Norfolk County. NAZINGDALE is from the birthplace of the first settlers. LONG CROUCH was the Colonial name of the road now known as Seaver Street, adjoining the woods to which it is given in the drawing. OLD TRAIL ROAD is nearly on the line of the Indian footpath used in the earlier communications between Boston and Plymouth. The name RESTING PLACE marks a shady knoll upon which the first military company formed in the Colonies with the purpose of armed resistance to British authority rested on its march home after the fight at Lexington. The captain and lieutenant of the company were both of families that at one time had homes on the park lands, and from them the names HEATHFIELD and PIERREPONT ROAD are taken.

The region named THE WILDERNESS is referred to in records of the early part of the last century as "the Rocky Wilderness Land." PLAYSTEAD is an old designation of a rural playground, STEADING of the offices of a rural estate. GREETING refers to the purpose of a promenade. COUNTRY PARK is a term used to mark the intended distinction of character between Franklin Park and other public grounds of the city in a report made by Alderman, now



Mayor O'Brien in 1877. SCHOOLMASTER HILL is so named in allusion to the circumstance that William Emerson and his brother, Ralph Waldo, while keeping school in Roxbury, lived in a house on the east side of this hill. Private letters of Emerson are preserved in which he refers fondly to the wildness and rurality of the neighborhood.

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*As to the map\**—The broad sheet that has been spoken of in the Introduction can be folded and carried in the pocket, and it is intended that copies of it shall be exhibited at different favorable points on the park site, with indices to the position on the ground of the more salient features of the plan. The drawing will best meet the intention with which it is prepared if it is examined on the ground with some exercise of the imagination, being considered as a map of what may be expected should the plan be carried out, the usual limitations of a map being had in mind.

In the review of the plan by divisions presently to be made, the verbal observations upon the broad sheet will be repeated, but in a slightly extended form, with a statement of some additional particulars, and with special reference to readers intending to look over the ground as just suggested.

The“limitations of a map” advised to be had in mind will be understood if it is reflected that a map of Boston would give a stranger but little idea of what he would see if he were walking the streets of the city; still less of that more important part that exists under its roofs.

Seen from above, the trees of even a half-grown park would hide the outlines of the principal part of its roads, walks, and other surface constructions. Hence in a map designed to

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\*See center page for the 1885 plan to which Olmsted refers.

exhibit the general plan of a park, the woods, which will be the most important element of its scenery, can be vaguely and incompletely represented; and bushes beneath trees, not at all.

Again, if it were attempted to show by the ordinary method of mapmakers those variations of the surface which, next to the woods, are the most important features of the design, the drawing would be too complicated to fairly exhibit the plan of the work to be done. To avoid the obscurity which would thus occur, figures are given on the drawing, by which the relative elevation of the ground at various points may be determined. The more important swellings and depressions are also indicated by names ending in "hill" or "dale."

If the drawing is taken on the ground where the existing hills and valleys can be seen, and if these and the principal existing masses of foliage are regarded as fixed features, the observer may with little personal trouble readily form a good general idea of what is projected. The conventional signs for foliage show, according as they are closely clustered, scattered, or wanting, the intended division into wooded, semi-wooded, and open turf-land; the positions of the principal outcrops of rock are indicated; the various routes for opening the scenery of the park to exhibition, in carriage, saddle, horse, and foot travel, are conspicuously lined out, and sites for the few structures necessary to public convenience are plainly shown.

It is to be considered in observing the position of these structures on the ground, that they are designed, as are all the artificial objects of the park, to be kept as low as will be consistent with their several purposes of utility, that their walls are to be of the stones of the locality, with weather stained and lichen mottled faces, and that they are to be so set in among rocks and foliage that, with a single not very marked exception, they will be seen only on near approach by those wishing to use them, and not at all by visitors following the

walks, drives, and rides of the main circuit. The bolder ledges, on the other hand, will be rather more open to view than they are now. The woods, again, as they generally occupy the more elevated ground, will be relatively more prominent than they appear in the drawing.

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It has been considered necessary to public convenience that the park should be divided by a road crossing it from Blue Hill Avenue to Forest Hills Street, and that this should be open night and day for all ordinary street uses as the park roads will not be. Also that a considerable space of ground should be open for pleasure use after daylight; that this space should be lightable in such a manner that no part of it will be in dark shadow, and to this end that it should be free from underwood, low-headed trees or other conditions offering facilities for concealment. (To keep all of the park open at night, making it a safe and decorous place of resort, would greatly pugment its running expenses without securing an adequate return.)

The only favorable line for the cross-road is one corresponding nearly with the present Glen Road. (The following diagram represents the outline of the park property. Glen Road passes from A to B.) Such a road will divide the park into two parts, as Charles Street divides the Common from the Public Garden. The division on the side furthest from the compact part of the city will contain two-thirds of the ground, and this being enclosed by itself may be considered as the main park.

The ground on the other side is designed to answer purposes relatively to the main park analogous to those of a fore-court, portico, and reception room, with minor apartments opening from them for various special uses, and to which it is desirable access should be had at all times without entering the main park. It may be called the ante-park. From the ante-park there are to be two general entrances to the

main park and an additional entrance for foot visitors.

For convenience in explaining the plan, the park must be considered as further subdivided as indicated by the black lines of the diagram below, but it must not be imagined that these lines will be obvious in looking over the ground. They are in part imaginary, and where not so will have the effect of barring the view or creating disunity of scenery less than an ordinary country road would do. Corresponding to letters on the diagram, names will be used to designate the several divisions as follows: A. The Country Park: B. The Playstead: C. The Greeting: D. The Music Court: E. The Little Folks' Fair: F. The Deer Park: G. Refectory Hill: H. Sargent's Field: I. Long Crouch Woods: J. The Steading: K. The Nursery.

The distinctive purpose to which each of these divisions is to be fitted will now be stated, the more comprehensive landscape design which includes them all being afterwards described.

A. *The Country Park* (before referred to as the main park) is designed to be prepared and taken care of exclusively with reference to the enjoyment of rural scenery, that is to say, if it is to be used for any other purpose, it is meant that its advantages for that other purpose shall have accrued at no appreciable sacrifice of advantages for this primary and dominating purpose.

The division will be a mile long and three quarters of a mile wide. Natural scenery of much value for the purpose in view cannot be permanently secured in a tract of land of diversified surface of these limits with a great city growing about it, if the essential elements of such scenery are to be divided, adulterated, or put out of countenance by artificial objects, at all more than is necessary to its protection and to the reasonable convenience of those seeking the special benefits offered. The plan proposes, therefore, that in the

Country Park nothing shall be built, nothing set up, nothing planted, as a decorative feature; nothing for the gratification of curiosity, nothing for the advancement or popularization of science. These objects are provided for suitably in the Public Garden, the Arboretum, and other grounds of the city. No other city in America has as good arrangements for them.

To sustain the designed character of the Country Park, the urban elegance generally desired in a small public or private pleasure ground is to be methodically guarded against. Turf, for example, is to be in most parts preferred as kept short by sheep, rather than by lawn mowers; well known and long tried trees and bushes to rare ones; natives to exotics; humble field flowers to high-bred marvels; plain green leaves to the blotched, spotted and fretted leaves, for which, in decorative gardening, there is now a passing fashion. Above all, cheap, tawdry, cockneyfied garden toys, such as are sometimes placed in parks incongruously with all their rural character, are to be eschewed. But a poor, shabby, worn, patchy, or in any way untidy rurality is equally to be avoided with fragments of urban and suburban finery. In this respect the park is designed to be an example of thoroughly nice, though modest and somewhat homespun housekeeping.

The site of the Country Park is in most parts rugged, everywhere undulating. Where there are no outcropping ledges, solid rock is often close under the surface, and where it is not, there is in many places almost a pavement of boulders. Compared with that of most public parks, the surface soil is poor, while the subsoil is stony and hard. For these reasons, when the natural surface is much trampled and worn it becomes an inert dust, pernicious to vegetation. It cannot, therefore, be prepared to resist the wear of athletic sports without undue expense.

Under wise regulations and with considerate customs of use, for the establishment of which the good will of the people

must be engaged, the site of the Country Park will be found happily adapted to its special distinctive purpose. But it can be wisely used for no recreations which would tend to the destruction of its verdant elements; for none not of the class of those in which women and children may not and do not customarily take part. The plan looks to its being maintained in quietness: quietness both to the eye and the ear. A grateful serenity may be enjoyed in it by many thousand people at a time, if they are not drawn into throngs by spectacular attractions, but allowed to distribute themselves as they are otherwise likely to do.

As will soon be shown, the intention of the plan of the park, as a whole, is that from no part of this Country Park division of it shall anything in any other of its divisions be visible, or, at most, be noticeable, except rock, turf, and trees, and these only in harmonious composition with the natural scenery of the Country Park. A large part of the Country Park is to be wooded and adapted to the use of picnic and basket parties, especially small family parties. Various conveniences for these are to be prepared. Tennis courts, croquet grounds, archery ranges, and small lawns for children's festivities, are provided for in connection with suitable picnic grounds in the several districts which are named on the Commissioners' map—THE WILDERNESS, JUNIPER HILL, WAITTWOOD, HEATHFIELD, ROCK MILTON, ROCK MORTON; on the western slopes of SCARBORO HILL and in ABBOTSWOOD.

Near the picturesque declivity and hanging wood of Schoolmaster's Hill, several small level places are designed to be formed by rough terracing on the hillside. Each of these is to be covered by vines on trellises, and furnished with tables and seats. Most of the arbors so formed look, at considerable elevation and advantageously, upon the broadest and quietest purely pastoral scene that the park can offer. These arbors are intended especially for the use of family basket parties. A small house is placed among them, to contain an office for the

superintendent of the district, a parcel room and closets, and at which, hot water for making tea can be had without charge. The house is to be placed and the other conveniences are to be so sheltered by existing trees and vines to be grown upon the trellises that they will be invisible except to those seeking them.

At a point central to all the picnic and basket party grounds that have been named, Abbotswood excepted, the map shows a space of unbroken turf, about eight acres in extent, named Ellicottdale, with a winding margin, which is generally rocky and shady. This ground is now for the most part boggy, and its surface strewn with boulders. The design is to convert it into a meadow adapted to be used (in the manner of the Long Meadow of the Brooklyn Park) for lawn games, such as tennis and croquet. On the north side of it another small house is provided, at which parties wishing to play will obtain assignments of ground, and can leave outer garments and store or hire needed implements. The position of this house is in a recess of the margin, near a great knuckle of rock and a large oak tree on the east side.

The district last described and the circumjacent picnic groves may be approached by a walk coming from Williams Street. The entrance at this point is arranged with a view to a terminus and turning place of a street railroad; and to avoid compelling women and children to pass through a throng of carriages, the walk from it to Ellicottdale passes the circuit drive of the Park by a subway.

South of the Meadow last described a walk and a narrow branch of the main drive will be seen on the map winding up the steep and rocky woodside of Scarboro Hill to a resting-place upon the summit, where a temporary shelter for visitors now stands. Half-way up the hill, where a level shelf may be found under a steep ledge, buildings are shown marked "Dairy". The Refectory, on the opposite side of the Park,

being intended to supply more substantial refreshments, and to accommodate considerable numbers, the Dairy is designed, first, to provide the necessities of picnic parties in this part of the Park; second, to supply to all a few simple refreshments, such as are to be recommended for children and invalids, more especially fresh dairy products of the best quality. Cows are to be kept in an apartment separated from the main room by a glass partition; as in the famous exquisite dairies of Holland and Belgium; and those who desire it are furnished with milk warm from the cow, as in St. James's Park, London. Fowls are also to be kept and new-laid eggs supplied. Immediately east of the grove in which this house will stand lies the principal expanse of turf of the Country Park. This is intended to be cropped with sheep, and a court with sheds south of the dairy and connecting with its cow-house is for the folding of the flock at night. The district of which this establishment is the centre slopes toward the prevailing summer breeze; is sheltered on the north; is already agreeable wooded, and will be a place at which invalids and mothers with little children may be advised to pass the best part of the day.

B. *The Playstead.* This is a field of turf, thirty acres in extent (the most nearly flat ground on the property, little broken by rock), designed to be used for the athletic recreation and education of the city's schoolboys, for occasional civic ceremonies and exhibitions, and for any purpose likely to draw spectators in crowds. The ground about Ellicottdale not being adapted to accommodate many spectators, for example, and a crowd being undesirable at any point in the Country Park, if a parade of school children, such as occurs in the Brooklyn Park every year, were to be made, this would be the place for it. "The Overlook", on its left, is an elevated platform for spectators. It is eight hundred feet long, covering a barren ledge which would otherwise be disagreeably prominent.

It is built of boulders obtained in clearing the Playstead,



which are to be mainly overgrown with vegetation befitting the form and material of the structure, adapted to harmonize it with the natural scenery, and make it unobtrusive. The Overlook will be in the shade of existing trees during the afternoon, and spectators will look away from the sun. Among these trees, in a depression of the rocks, a rectangular block appears on the map. This stands for a structure which will supply a platform, to be covered by a roof, to serve as a retreat for visitors during summer showers, and in the basement a station for park keepers, with a lock-up, a woman's retiring room, a coat-room, lavatory for players, and closets. An arched passage through the wall of the Overlook gives admission to it from the Playstead.

C. *The Greeting.* This division is to be wholly occupied by a series of parallel and contiguous drives, rides and walks, a double length of each, under rows of trees forming a Promenade, or Meeting Ground, of the Alameda type, half a mile in length. Monumental, architectural, and various decorative adjuncts are here admissible, but not essential. There are suitable positions for statues, water-jets, "baskets" of flowers, bird-cages, etc. The Playstead and the Greeting are to be without underwood, and adapted with electric lighting for night as well as day use. Together they will form an unenclosed ground, reaching across the Park, nearly a mile in length.

D. *The Music Court.* A sylvan amphitheatre adapted to concerts.

E. *The Little Folks Fair.* A division for childish entertainments, to be furnished with Swings, Scups, See-saws, Sand Courts, Flying Horses, Toy Booths, Marionettes, Goat Carriages, Donkey Courses, Bear Pits, and other amusing exercises and exhibitions, mostly to be provided by lessees and purveyors, to be licensed for the purpose.

F. *The Deer Park.* This will supply a range for a small

herd to be seen from the Greeting. Most of the ground, owing to the thinness of the soil over a flattish ledge, cannot be adapted to occupation by the public, or to be planted, except at excessive expense.

G. *Refectory Hill.* A place for refreshments, to be principally served from the house shown, out of doors, under a large pergola, or vine-clad trellis, upon a terrace formed in the manner of the Playstead Overlook. From this terrace extensive sylvan prospects open, one of which will be later referred to. In the rear of the Refectory building, across a carriage-court, there is a circular range of horse-sheds for the use of visitors.

H. *Sargent's Field.* This ground being comparatively free from rock, and to be easily brought to a nearly level surface of good turf, tennis courts and a small ball ground may be provided in it; the object being to save players coming from the east from walking further to reach a playing ground, and to provide a place for players in general to go to, when on holidays the Playstead shall be reserved for other uses. Until found to be needed, it may with advantage be made a part of the Deer Park.

I. *Long Crouch Woods.* A rambling ground, with sheltered southwestern slopes, to be held subject to lease to a suitable organization for a Zoological Garden.

J. *The Steading.* A rocky, sterile knoll, reserved for the Commissioners' offices, within a screen of woods.

K. *The Nursery.* Depressed ground, to be used when adequate drainings outlets for this part of the city shall have

K. *The Nursery.* Depressed ground, to be used, when adequate drainings outlets for this part of the city shall have been provided, for a service garden.

*Border ground.* The streets by which the property taken for the park is bounded, are generally laid down on this plan as if moderately enlarged from the present thoroughfares (which at various points are but narrow lanes) and with a sidewalk on the park side, at such varying distances from the wheelway as may be necessary on the park side, at such varying distances from the wheelway as may be necessary to avoid, in forming them, the destruction of fine trees and the cost of excessive grading. This arrangement is made practicable by setting back park fences and other obstructions fifty to eighty feet from the wheelways. In this way, also, a much larger widening of the wheelways than is suggested by the drawing can be made whenever public convenience will be served by it, without inordinate cost. In a few cases, for short distances, streets are shown as they may be improved by a slight taking of private land. This is to avoid heavy outlay for grading and the destruction of fine natural features on the park side of the present roads—as where, for example, rocky eminences of the park have their bases in the street. It is suggested that Canterbury Street should be widened ten feet opposite the park in order to avoid injury to the fine trees now growing in the park close to the street.

It is suggested on the drawing, also, that at the Williams Street entrance to the park the course of Forest Hills Street should be made more direct, and the grade improved by throwing it entirely into the park; and that some other variations from the present arrangements should be effected with a view to greater public convenience. To avoid interruption of pleasure travel by funeral processions, and to improve passage around the park, a short cross-road is planned opposite Forest Hills Cemetery, passing the park drive by a subway (LL in the index map). A short new street in extension of Sigourney Street is suggested to facilitate passage around the park. A small piece of land is proposed to be thrown out of the park property for all these purposes of street improvement is much larger than that to be taken in.



# GENERAL PLAN OF FRANKLIN PARK

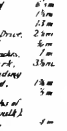
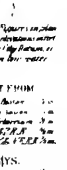
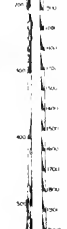
CONSERVATION. The plan is based on the following principles, which the Commission will discuss in detail in its report.

- A. The Country Park. E. The Larch Park. F. The Deer Park. G. The Larch Park. H. The Deer Park. I. The Larch Park. J. The Deer Park. K. The Larch Park. L. The Deer Park.

The Country Park. The entire project has been brought by the city because of its special importance to the people. This project is a special opportunity to secure a recreation area for the people of the city. The plan is based on the following principles, which the Commission will discuss in detail in its report.

The Larch Park. This is a special project which is of the most important character in the park system. It is a special project which is of the most important character in the park system. It is a special project which is of the most important character in the park system.

The Deer Park. This is a special project which is of the most important character in the park system. It is a special project which is of the most important character in the park system. It is a special project which is of the most important character in the park system.



THE PARK DISTANT FROM

The University	1.20
The City Hall	1.50
The City Park	2.00
The City Station	2.50
The City Station	3.00
The City Station	3.50

AREAS AND LENGTHS OF WAYS

Section	Area (Acres)	Length (Feet)
The Country Park	120	1.20
The Larch Park	150	1.50
The Deer Park	180	1.80
The Larch Park	200	2.00
The Deer Park	250	2.50
The Larch Park	300	3.00
The Deer Park	350	3.50
The Larch Park	400	4.00
The Deer Park	450	4.50
The Larch Park	500	5.00
The Deer Park	550	5.50
The Larch Park	600	6.00
The Deer Park	650	6.50
The Larch Park	700	7.00
The Deer Park	750	7.50
The Larch Park	800	8.00
The Deer Park	850	8.50
The Larch Park	900	9.00
The Deer Park	950	9.50
The Larch Park	1000	10.00
The Deer Park	1050	10.50
The Larch Park	1100	11.00
The Deer Park	1150	11.50
The Larch Park	1200	12.00
The Deer Park	1250	12.50
The Larch Park	1300	13.00
The Deer Park	1350	13.50
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The Deer Park	1450	14.50
The Larch Park	1500	15.00
The Deer Park	1550	15.50
The Larch Park	1600	16.00
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The Deer Park	1750	17.50
The Larch Park	1800	18.00
The Deer Park	1850	18.50
The Larch Park	1900	19.00
The Deer Park	1950	19.50
The Larch Park	2000	20.00
The Deer Park	2050	20.50
The Larch Park	2100	21.00
The Deer Park	2150	21.50
The Larch Park	2200	22.00
The Deer Park	2250	22.50
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The Deer Park	4050	40.50
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The Deer Park	4150	41.50
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The Larch Park	8000	80.00
The Deer Park	8050	80.50
The Larch Park	8100	81.00
The Deer Park	8150	81.50
The Larch Park	8200	82.00
The Deer Park	8250	82.50
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The Deer Park	9050	90.50
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The Deer Park	9150	91.50
The Larch Park	9200	92.00
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The Deer Park	9650	96.50
The Larch Park	9700	97.00
The Deer Park	9750	97.50
The Larch Park	9800	98.00
The Deer Park	9850	98.50
The Larch Park	9900	99.00
The Deer Park	9950	99.50
The Larch Park	10000	100.00

COMMISSIONERS  
Benjamin Dean, Patrick Maguire, John Forester, Andrew

A direct approach to the park from Boylston Station of the Providence Railroad, is suggested by an extension of the present Boylston Street to the Playstead entrance. By this route a thousand men could, in half an hour, be transferred in a body from the Common to the Playstead.

#### *IV. A Review of the General Landscape Design*

Suitable provision has not commonly been made in the first laying out of a large city park for the purposes of the Greeting and the Music Court. Wherever it has not, ground that could only be poorly adapted to these purposes, and this at heavy cost, has generally come, in after years, to be used for them. It is best to avoid this danger. The best arrangements will be of a formal character, and these can be best provided on the site of Franklin Park, in the locality indicated, near the east corner. This not only has topographical advantages for the ends in view, but it is at such a distance from, and stands so related to, the Country Park, that great throngs upon it will in no wise disturb the desired serenity of the latter. The formal arrangement of trees within this division, and the small structures that will be required in the adjoining Little Folks' Fair Ground, will not be observable except upon close approach, the rows of trees being so flanked by the outer, naturally disposed trees that, seen at a short distance in connection with the latter, they will have the effect of a forest growth.

Setting aside these two features, which stand to the rest of the park somewhat in the relation of the dwelling house to a private park, except that care is taken to place them in landscape obscurity, the landscape design may be understood by considering that the intention is to make no change in any of the present leading features of the ground except with the purpose of giving a fuller development, aggrandizement, and emphasis to what are regarded as the more interesting and

effective existing elements of this scenery, and of taking out or subordinating elements that neutralize or conflict with those chosen to be made more of. This first, and second, the sequestration, as far as possible, of the scenery of the park so that the outer scenery, to be formed by the gradual growing of the city about it, and which will necessarily be conflicting in expression, sentiment, and association with it, may be kept out of sight.

The latter purpose accounts more particularly for the woods which, it will be seen, are intended to be formed where no woods now are, along the borders of the Country Park; and the further to promote seclusion, these and other border trees are to be imagined as furnished with underwood.

The woods of the Wilderness, after having been much thinned and trimmed with a view to the growth of the best of them in sturdier and more umbrageous forms, and to some degree of grouping and more harmonious companionship, are also to be interspersed with scattered, irregular thickets of low, sturdy bushes, not only for picturesqueness, but to keep the ground, in the more arid parts, better shaded and moister, hide its barrenness, check rushing movements of visitors, and prevent the trampling of the drier ground to dust.

Trees in the Greeting and Playstead are to be all of large growth, and high stemmed (like those now growing spontaneously upon the Playstead), leaving room for light and vision to range under their branches.

The slope west of Glen Lane where, near the entrance to the Country Park, drives, rides, and walks come together, is designed to be closely planted with low bushes (shown on the Commissioners' map, but not on the reduced reproductions), the object being to obscure the artificial features without making a screen between the natural features of the Playstead and Nazingdale. Looking in this direction from nearly all of

the Playstead quarter there will be an open prospect extending to the Blue Hills of Milton, five miles away, the first mile within the park. The proposed plantation along the line of Canterbury Street will hide ordinary buildings that may hereafter be erected between the Park and the Blue Hills, leaving this permanently a broad, extended, purely rural prospect. The outlook westwardly from the hillside ending at the Refectory terrace will also extend permanently to a distant wooded horizon formed in part by those of the Arboretum, two miles away, both these properties, though out of the Park, being preserved from building by legal enactments, and the objects to which they are devoted requiring that they should be always overgrown with trees.

The centre lines of the two broad fields of extended vision that have been pointed out, cross nearly at right angles, the point of their crossing being where the Ellicott and Nazing dales run together, nearly midway between the two hanging woods of Schoolmaster Hill and Abbotswood crags. This locality, being at the centre of the property, may be considered the pivot of the general landscape design. Looking in the general direction of the lines that have been defined as crossing it from either of four quarters of the park, a moderately broad, open view will be had between simple bodies of forest, the foliage growing upon ground higher than that on and near the centre lines. From wherever these larger prospects open the middle distances will be quiet, slightly hollowed surfaces of turf or baskets, bracken, sweet-fern, or mosses, the backgrounds formed by woodsides of a soft, even subdued tone, with long, graceful, undulating sky lines, which, according to the point of view of the observer on the Park, will be from one to five miles away. Causeways, trees, rocks, and knolls interrupting or disturbing the unity, breadth, quiet, and harmony of these broader open passages of the Park scenery are to come away. There are none of importance that are not of artificial origin and easily removable. Trees wanting to the results proposed are to be planted and suitably devel-



oped by timely thinning.

A contrast to the fair open part of the Park which has been thus described will be found in following the circuit road where it is carried between Scarboro Hill and Rock Morton, Rock Milton, Waittwood, and Juniper Hill, through a part of the Wilderness, and between Hagborne and Schoolmaster Hill, all of the localities named being rugged, rocky, and designed to be for the most part somewhat closely planted. A narrow road is thrown out from and brought back to the circuit drive, passing by winding courses among the rocks of the upper part of the Wilderness, by which a higher degree of this character of scenery (serving as a foil to that of the open dales) may be enjoyed than it would be practicable to offer in a broad and much used thoroughfare. The branch drive to the summit of Scarboro Hill, before described, will serve a similar episodic purpose.

Comparatively speaking, this western region is picturesque and romantic; and the design is to remove what is inconsistent with this character, and to add, develop, and expose elements favorable to it.

Drives and Walks — The roads and walks of the park have been designed less with a purpose of bringing the visitor to points of view at which he will enjoy set scenes or landscapes than to provide for a constant mild enjoyment of simply pleasing rural scenery while in easy movement, and this by curves and grades avoiding unnecessary violence to nature. There is not a curve in the roads introduced simply for the sake of gracefulness. Every turn is suggested by natural circumstances. Notwithstanding the rugged surface of the larger part of the site, the circuit drive is at no point steeper than Bromfield Street between Washington and Tremont, its heaviest grade being one in twenty-five; nor are the branch drives at any point steeper than Brattle Street near Court, the steepest pitch being one in sixteen. The Greeting is an

inclined plane with a fall from south to north of four feet in half a mile, which is about the same with that of State Street, or essentially level. These grades are obtained without much disturbance of natural features; the heaviest cutting is in continuance of an excavation already made for the quarrying of building stone, the heaviest filling through an adjoining rocky depression. As a general rule, the surface of the roads is to coincide closely with the natural surface, where the natural surface has been hitherto undisturbed. As far as practicable, it is designed to be slightly below it, so that the road may be less observable from a distance.

Riding Pad — From Boylston Bridge, Back Bay Basin, there will be a shaded pad extending to the Park and through it from Forest Hills to the main entrance from the Playstead. It will be six miles long and from twenty-four to thirty feet wide. There is a double riding course in the Greeting, one division in the central alley, adjoining the carriage promenade, forty feet wide; the other in a side alley thirty feet wide.

Enclosures — The Country Park is designed to be enclosed with a wall formed of the field stone drawn from its surface, the wall to be four feet high and similar to that first built for the New York Central Park. It is to be draped with vines, and, though not costly, will be perfectly suitable for a rural park. If, as the city is built about the park, a wall of more urban elegance is thought to be required, the stone of the original wall will be used for its foundation. The present enclosing wall of the Central Park, which is but a neat, unobtrusive piece of masonry four feet high on the street side, has probably cost half a million dollars, and is yet incomplete.

Entrances — Much pressure is generally brought to bear on those controlling a park to establish entrances with a view to neighborhood convenience and favorably to local real estate speculations. Every entrance is costly in various ways, and there should be none that can be avoided without

incommoding the general public. The plan provides ten carriage and foot entrances and eight additional special foot entrances to the park as a whole, and five carriage entrances and two special foot entrances to the Country Park, all at points offering natural facilities of entrance and on easy grades. The average space between entrances is a little more than in the New York park, a little less than in most other large parks.

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The drives within the park will be about 6 miles in length; bridle-roads, 2 miles; walks, 13 miles.

The Country Park will contain about 334 acres; Playstead, 40 (of playing ground about 30); Greeting, 19; Music Court, 3; Little Folks' Fair, 14; Deer Park, 18; Sargent's Field, 8; Long Crouch Woods, 20. (Boston Common is 48 acres in area; the Public Garden, 22. The "Green" of the New York Central Park is 16 acres in area; the "Ball Ground," 10; the "North Meadows," 19. The Central Park Mall is half the length of the Greeting.)

The area prepared for public recreation of Franklin Park will be 500 acres; (of the Central Park, 680; Brooklyn Park, 540. The drives of Central Park are 9 miles in length; riding pads, 5; walks, 28).

## PART THIRD.

### THE KEY OF A CONSERVATIVE PARK POLICY AND THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE PLAN UNDER SUCH A POLICY.

The project of a rural park for Boston has been more than twenty years under consideration. It has been advanced always deliberately and cautiously. The earlier leaders of the movement in its favor, most of whom have now retired from active interest in local public affairs, and many passed away, were as a rule, no more anxious to press argument for a rural park than to press the importance of proceeding toward it by slow, frugal, and conservative methods. And this disposition has not only been constant, but has been growing in the community. There has hardly been a public utterance on the subject for several years past in which it has not been manifest. To carry out the scheme that was most prominently before the public fifteen years ago, would have cost more than double as much as to carry out that now in view. There is no party, faction, division, or class of citizens pressing the matter. There are no strong private interests engaged to force it.

The reasons why Boston should proceed in such an undertaking with exceptional caution are fully realized; yet, under the circumstances that have been stated, there can be little danger in pointing out the possibilities of an extravagant holding back.

Twenty years ago—even ten years ago—Boston was not conspicuously behind other cities in providing for the rural recreation of her citizens, but there was an apprehension that she might come to be, and a livelier conviction than at present that it would be a calamity. In 1869, Mr. Wilder, addressing a meeting called by the City Council, pointed out that Boston to sustain her reputation must not only have a park, but the first park in the country; and seven years later Mr. Collins, at a meeting in Faneuil Hall, called to discuss the park question, asked, “Can Boston afford to be less comfortable to dwell in, less attractive, less healthy than her sister cities?”

If such a question was then at all timely, it is now a great deal more so. There were then but two well advanced rural parks in America. There are now more than twenty. Every city that was then at a parallel stage in the discussion of a park project with Boston, now has that project in a large degree realized, and is enjoying the profits of it. There is not one city of America or of Northern Europe distantly approaching to rank with Boston in population, wealth, and reputation for refinement which, before unprovided with a park, has not gone further and moved more positively than Boston to make good the deficiency. London and Paris, Brussels and Liverpool have each within a generation twice doubled the area of their rural recreation grounds. All the cities of the British Islands thirty years ago possessed but four parks adapted to rural recreation; they now hold thirty, as large, on an average, as Franklin Park is intended to be.

There is an impression with some that the civilized world has been swept by a ruinous rage for parks. Not an instance is known of a park adapted to provide rural recreation that is not regarded by those who are paying for it as well worth all it has cost. No city possessed of a rural park regrets its purchase. During the last year New York City, which has had the largest and costliest experience of park-making of any in the world, has been purchashing land for six additional parks averaging six

hundred acres each in area. This after long and heated debate as to questions of extent and location, but upon the undisputed ground, so far as known, that the city's outlay for parks hitherto has had the effect of reducing rather than increasing taxation. Philadelphia has a park nearly six times as large as Franklin Park will be. Chicago has six rural parks, in each of which large works of construction have been completed, and are found valuable beyond expectation. Even smaller cities than Boston (as New Haven, Bridgeport, Albany, Buffalo, Montreal) have provided themselves with rural parks.

It cannot be questioned that a rural park is rapidly coming to be ranked among the necessities of satisfactory city life, or that a city that offers simply promises or prospects in this respect stands at a certain commercial and financial disadvantage—a more decided disadvantage today, very much, than it did when Mr. Wilder or even when Mr. Collins advised attention to the danger.

At the present stage of the Franklin Park undertaking another consideration enforcing a like caution presents itself.

Land having been acquired, a plan for forming a park upon it adopted, operations of construction begun, and considerable resort being had to the ground, the affair is bound to grow in some fashion. And if the work is to be pursued in a desultory, intermittent, and unimpressive way, that fashion will not be altogether the fashion of a desirable rural park. The ground will be much disordered by the work, it will be streaked and scarred, dusty and muddy. There will be an increasing public use of it; the process of determining the customs of its use and the manner in which it is to be regarded by the people will be continuous, and every year something will be done toward an irretrievable settlement of its character.

In their examination of parks last summer, the Commissioners were struck with the different standard of keeping

and of manners that had evidently become established on different parks. The keeping in one case was of a sort which in housekeeping might be described as squalid, and the manners largely loaferish. In another the keeping was comparatively neat and efficient, the manners decorous and civil. No matter what may be ultimately expended for a park, its value cannot fail to be largely determined by the expectations and usage of it into which the public is led in the early years of their resort to it.

Boston should continue to practice conservatism with respect to the park, but there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that conservatism will be concerned only to keep down the current cost of the work, and to this end will be engaged to impose checks on its progress at every opportunity. Conservatism cannot be concerned to have a state of things under which the leading aim of those in direction of the work is forced to be that of enlisting public support from year to year, by producing results from year to year that shall be immediately pleasing to superficial observation. It cannot fail to be concerned that the work shall be directed with a wise regard to what experience may have taught as to conditions of lasting, growing, and substantial value in works elsewhere of the same leading purpose.

The cardinal requirement of economy in obtaining such conditions has never yet been realized by the public in the early stages of a park work, but it is perfectly plain to any one who has so closely followed the history of a number of parks as to be able to compare marked differences in methods of management and the respective results obtained. It would take too much space to present an extended comparative statement of this kind, but the lesson it would present may be indicated by reference to a few typical facts.

To realize the full bearing of those that will be cited, it must be kept freshly in mind, first, that the only justification

of the cost of a large park near a growing city is the necessity of spaciousness to the production of rural scenery.

Second, it must be remembered that the choicest rural park scenery is that which, other things being equal, has been longest growing, and which has the least of the rawness and smartness of new constructions, and the weak puerilities of new plantations.

Third, it is to be kept in mind that the oldest part of the oldest part of the oldest rural park in the country is not yet half grown, and the primary construction of some of its parts is not even yet begun.

Take, then, this oldest park and see by what courses it has come to be what it is, and has been made to cost what it has.

Its site was determined almost by accident; no one, when it was first defined in the bill which became the act establishing it, giving the least thought to the question whether it was well adapted to the purpose of a large park; no one concerned having any clear notion what that purpose might be. In fact the idea in mind was simply this: "The great cities of the old world have large areas called parks, and they are popular. Let us have a great area to be called a park. To neutralize conflicting local jealousies let us have it as nearly as possible in the centre of the city's territory." That was thought to be the common sense of the matter. Not the slightest inquiry was made as to what sort of land there might be at this central point, and so thoughtlessly were the boundaries determined that upwards of a million dollars were judiciously spent after a few years, to secure an economical modification of them. Even since this modification a great sum has been expended in retaining walls and other adjustments between the park and its bounding streets. A few pages further on, official statistics will be quoted, further illustrating the costliness of this common sense proceeding, about which it may be as well to mention



that there was nothing peculiarly American or democratic. The Emperor of France began the Bois de Boulogne in the same spirit, trusting to common sense in a matter which was not one for common sense but for careful study and foresighted regulation; fell into blunderings even more humiliating than those of New York, and was obliged to make an abrupt change of plan after his work had been put well under way.

There is no important general public purpose now served, or likely to be served in the future, by the New York Park, for which if ground had been well selected, and if every step in the subsequent operations had been well devised with reference to it, and pursued without unnecessary complexity or confusion, provisions of equal value might not have been made at half the cost of those now possessed by the city.

The degree of public unpreparedness at the outset to sustain such a course, however, may be inferred from the fact that one of the leading newspapers at that time treated the undertaking as an affair for the benefit of rich men—an affair of fashionable luxury—while another thought that any park in new York would be so entirely taken possession of by the low, rowdy, and ruffianly element of the population, that respectable people would avoid it, and that a woman would not be able to enter it without compromising her reputation. Each of these views turns out to have been as wrong as possible. There is not a church in the city in which rich and poor come together as satisfactorily to both. And for years after it came into use there was not a public street in the city in which a woman or a girl was secure from rudeness.

The next most instructive circumstance in its history, as far as it concerns Boston at this time, is the gradual advance of public opinion toward a correct understanding of the conditions of the park's value. Such an understanding has not yet, after twenty-nine years, been universally attained. The papers

of the city are at this moment denouncing a proposition, made in good faith and urged with elaborate arguments, for introducing an important new feature into the plan of the park. An interview is publicly reported (in the Sun, January 15) with a prominent citizen, who urges in counter-argument not the waste that would be involved in the value of the park as a place prepared at great expense for the ready enjoyment of rural scenery, but what is assumed to be the more practical objection of the contraction of areas available for games, a use of the park in which with the present area available for it when the park is in largest use, but one in several hundred of its visitors takes part.

Twice in the history of the park, after enormous expenditures had been made upon it with the stated purpose of excluding urban and securing rural scenery, this purpose has been distinctly and publicly repudiated; in one case, the Superintendent for the time being, explaining to a reporter of the press that his leading object was a display of architectural and urban elegance, and that he had removed certain trees because they prevented visitors passing through the park from seeing the stately buildings growing up outside of it.

But although these incidents may seem to argue otherwise, no one can have long been a reader of New York newspapers without knowing that the public opinion of the city has of late years been often aroused to prevent various proceedings upon the park, running counter to the purpose of rural recreation, that earlier would have been permitted to pass without objection. For example, when the trees of the park were yet saplings, and its designed rural scenery wholly undeveloped, the suggestion that the most central and important position upon it should be given to a public building was received with no apparent disfavor, and one of the Commissioners of the park declared that any ground the promoters of the undertaking might desire would be gladly assigned to it. Fortunately, because of hard times, the scheme fell through.

Ten years later, a monumental building was actually given a site upon the park, but it was one in which the structure would not interfere with any extended view, or been seen from a distance, and even this concession did not pass without much remonstrance. When the next scheme of the class was disclosed, though coupled with many most attractive incidental propositions, skillfully presented, and supported by eminent citizens, so much popular indignation was soon manifested that in response to petitions a bill was rapidly advanced in the legislature to make it illegal for the Commissioners to entertain the proposition, and would have passed had not the head of the movement publicly and apologetically announced the abandonment of the idea. At the present time, a proposition similar to that once accepted in the case of the Museum of Art, no matter how highly its objects were valued, and no matter how worthy a body of public spirited citizens were backing it, would be less agreeable to the public opinion of New York than would a proposition to build a public hospital in the middle of the Common to that of Boston.

In the early days of one American park a proposed ordinance to establish a Small-Pox Hospital in its midst was gravely debated in the City Council, being advocated on the ground that there was plenty of unoccupied room there, that no private interest would suffer from it, and that nobody wanted it anywhere else. Many occurrences showing similar public indifference, in the early work of a park, to the essential conditions of its ultimate value, might be cited. At least four times in the history of one park obstructive disturbances of natural scenery have been established, and afterwards, in respect to a rising public sentiment, have been removed. Twice these have been works of alleged art presented to the city and received and set up with acclamation.

Is Boston quite safe from falling into similar costly courses? Has she been so in the past? Let the history of the little but important ground called the Public Garden be considered.

The design first made public for this ground, prepared by an eminent and popular architect, had in view a highly decorative garden, with many beds of flowers and ornamental foliage, architectural basins of water, jets, fountains, and other richly artificial embellishments. The weight of influence in the matter, however, tended toward a parklet in the natural style, simple, quiet, and in a degree sequestered. The plan at length adopted was devised mainly with reference to such a ground, with a slight compromise manifested in a few scattered features which would have been more congruous with a decorative garden. But the work had not gone far before objections were urged to its more important naturalistic features, and several of these, one after another, were modified or radically changed. Large mounds of earth at first formed in accordance with the design were afterwards removed. What was intended to be a rural lakelet with natural borders was changed to a basin with formally curving outlines and a rigid edging of stone. After many years and large outlays made with a plan thus fluctuating in the spirit of its details, the purpose, originally rejected, of a splendid urban garden with all practicable display of art, was fully revived, and has been gradually carried out as far as it could be without a complete structural transformation of the site, but necessarily under great disadvantages from the necessity of working upon the timbers of a wreck originally modelled with a wholly different ideal. It cannot be doubted that, had all the work from the beginning been undeviatingly directed with reference to the essence of the present leading motives in the management of the ground, more valuable results would have been attained, at much less cost.

Whatever the difficulties may be of avoiding another experience of the same kind, but on a much larger scale, it is best to look them fairly in the face. It is best to beat them, and beat them now, at the start. That it is practicable to do so, and at moderate cost, may be established, if a single instance can be shown in which a city has been able to secure a steady,

straightforward, business-like pursuit of the proper purpose of such a park.

Testimony of such an instance that cannot be gainsaid has been furnished the Commissioners from Buffalo, a city that has not earned a reputation for honesty and efficiency of administration exceeding that of Boston.

It is believed that the difficulties of securing a sound public opinion were at the outset much greater in Buffalo than they are in Boston. There was a more general and a more heated apprehension among the taxpayers that the undertaking of a "big park" would be excessively costly. More ignorance and confusion of mind prevailed as to its proper purposes. The history of what has since occurred is summarized in the statement below. Of the gentlemen signing this statement, five have been Mayors of Buffalo during the period in which the park work has been in progress, three Judges of its Courts, three presidents of the Board of Aldermen, five members of Congress, several members of the State Legislature, Commissioners of the Park, leading editors, bankers, and merchants, and heads of the working organization of each party, and of each faction of party of any importance in local politics, a fact in itself evincing the remarkable popularity earned by the management to be described.

### **A Brief History of the Rural Park of Buffalo, with Reference to Its Management, Cost and Value**

"There were at the outset many grounds of objection to the site selected for the main Park of Buffalo. Parts of it were rocky and bare of vegetation; other parts swampy and most unattractive. It was at the opposite end of the city from its populous quarter, and more than three miles from its centre. Hence the project had to encounter a strong sectional jealousy,

and for this and other reasons met with determined opposition, which succeeded in reducing the area originally intended to be taken—a misfortune since deeply regretted even by those to whom it was due. After the work of construction was entered upon, repeated efforts were made to arrest it; to alter the plans; to introduce new features, and to compel the adoption of different methods of operation.

“In full view of the acknowledged objections to the site, it was selected as, on the whole, the best that could be found for the purpose exclusively had in view. This was to provide recreation for the people of the city through the enjoyment of simple, rural, park-like scenery. The ground was laid out upon a plan that made everything subordinate to this purpose.

“The work was organized with exclusive reference to the steady and methodical carrying out the plan. The heads of the organization were drawn from a similar work in another city, and were at once familiar with their duties, disciplined and cooperative. No change in the staff of the superintendence has since been made, except as the work has advanced to points where permanent reduction could be afforded. The present General Superintendent has been Superintendent from the start. In the city reform movement that first brought Grover Cleveland as mayor of the city prominently before the public, no occasion for reform or improvement was found in the park work. No change of men or methods was made or suggested to be desirable. The work has been pursued steadily and without the slightest deviation from the plan upon which it was started. As it advanced and the intentions of the plan approached realization, the park grew in favor. Opposition to it gradually died out. It is now universally popular, and with no class more so than the frugal, small house owning taxpayers, who constitute an unusual proportion of the population of the city.

“The cost of the work has been much less than was predicted by the opponents of the undertaking, and even less

than its promoters expected it to be. It is regarded as moderate relatively to the return already realized. It is believed that through the increased attractiveness of the city as a place of residence, the rise in the value of property adjacent to the park and its approaches, and the additional taxable capital invested in land and buildings in the vicinity of these improvements, the outlay for the park has lightened the burden of the taxpayers. The city has recently obtained an act of the legislature authorizing a portion of the land originally thrown out to be purchased and added to the park. Its market value is now estimated to be from four to five times as much as when thrown out. Broad avenues from different directions have been opened, and a street railroad constructed expressly for the use of visitors to the park. Its value is largely increasing every year. The city is now proud of it and grateful for it.

“But its promoters had ultimate results in view, which cannot be fully realized during the lifetime of the present generation or of the next. As the growth of its plantations develops, as the city extends to its borders and becomes densely settled at the centre, the attractions, the accessibility, and the benefits to the community to be derived from the park, will correspondingly increase. Its chief value lies in its ever-growing capabilities of usefulness in the future, as the city grows in wealth and population.”

The estimate to be presented of the cost of preparing Franklin Park for public use, will be so much less than has been generally anticipated by those familiar with the cost of parks elsewhere, that it will be received with incredulity. Something, therefore, should be said in explanation of it.

First, it may be observed that more than two-thirds of the cost is calculated to be for the construction of roads, walks, concourses and other structures, for the estimates of which the City Engineer is responsible, and that the entire estimate is

made in the same manner as that, of about the same amount, prepared for the Department with respect to the work of the Back Bay Basins, which work after a progress of seven years is likely to be completed within the estimate.

That it is possible to meet Mr. Wilder's demand that the Boston park should be the first park in the country, meaning the first in respect to adaptation to provide city people with rural recreation, is largely to be accounted for by the fact that the site was selected discriminatingly for that purpose.

The advantage gained by this circumstance has already been partly suggested in the statement that the cost of piecing out the New York park has been considerably more than a million dollars. It may be added that the annexations to the primary scheme in the case of the Brooklyn and the Philadelphia parks, made in each case with a view to rural advantages, have been much larger though less costly. In Brooklyn the original site was greatly modified by a process of exchange.

But a more important part of Boston's economical advantage may be inferred from the statement made in the Third Annual Report of the New York Department of Parks that the modifications of the surface of the site of the Central Park had involved the lifting and readjustment of its entire surface to an average depth of nearly four feet, and of the material moved that nearly half a million cubic yards had been originally in the form of solid ledge rock, twenty thousand barrels of gunpowder having been used for breaking it out. More than two hundred thousand cubic yards of first class solid mason work have been laid on the Central Park, a large part under ground and most of it in retaining walls that would have been unnecessary to the proper purposes of a park in a situation as well adapted to those purposes as is that of Franklin Park.

A considerable part of the outlay for most parks has been made for materials which the site for Franklin Park supplies.



The stone and gravel of the Chicago parks, for example, is brought to them from distant quarries and pits, and the cost of transportation is not a small matter. The same is the case at Detroit. The gravel used in the New York and Brooklyn parks has cost twice as much per yard as that to be used in Franklin Park. (It must be said that it is a better sort of gravel.) In Franklin Park there are no difficulties of drainage to be overcome by costly expedients (there are thirty three miles of sewers in the Central Park.) No costly works of damming and puddling or concreting will be required as has been the case elsewhere. And as an illustration of the advantages of its site in these particulars (the plan being adjusted to it) it may be said that the conditions in question of the five hundred acres of Franklin Park are directly the reverse of those which the city has for seven years past been gradually and slowly and at great cost overcoming in the one hundred acres of the Back Bay Basin.

The work required to carry out the plan of Franklin Park can nearly all be done, after practicable training, by a force recruited from the class of working men who command but the lowest wages, and who are most liable to fall into a condition requiring charitable assistance from the city. More than nine tenths of the needed outlay would be in wages to citizens. The few manufactured articles necessary would nearly all be manufactured in the city. Not one per cent of the entire expenditure contemplated would be required for what are commonly called park and garden decorations. The larger part would be for substantial matters, to endure, and generally to gain, in value, for centuries.

Estimates of cost, to have any value, must be based on some definite understanding as to the manner in which the work is to be conducted, the adequacy and in what military operations is called the solidity of the organization, the thoroughness of the discipline, the time within which the work is to be completed, and, above all, the degree in which steady, orderly progress, smoothly interlocking in all parts,

can be calculated on.

The work will proceed much more economically with a moderately large force, if kept "well in hand", than with a small one. The reason can easily be seen. It is mainly a transfer of material—stone, sand, gravel, soil, and peat. To proceed with the work at one point certain materials are to be sent away that are wanted for the work at another point, and certain materials are required that are to be taken out at yet another. Unless a force large enough to keep a considerable system of exchanges in operation is employed, the same materials will need to be rehandled, perhaps repeatedly.

It is to be assumed that the work of construction will be completed within a period of six years; that it will be carried on with as large a force as may be best; that advantage may be taken of favorable seasons and favorable markets, and that it will be placed and maintained from the start in all respects upon a soundly economical basis.

The work to be done during the period stated is not to include the public roads and their borders outside the park, as this would extend it beyond the territory under the Commissioners' control. It does not include fountains, sculptural or other purely decorative works that may be thought desirable later upon the Greeting, or in connection with the gateways, nor does it include movable furniture. But it includes all that is necessary to the making of the park in substantial accordance with its general plan as it has been set forth.

As thus proposed, the work may be expected to cost not exceeding fifteen hundred thousand dollars.

*Maintenance Cost* — The question of the economy of what is proposed in the plan for a park is less a question of what the work of construction will cost than of what ever afterwards will be required for reconstructions, repairs, and for pursuing

a system of maintenance adapted to secure its intended qualities of beauty and keep it in suitable order for its intended uses. An explanation of the character of the plan in this respect will therefore be offered.

Rural parks may be excessively costly of maintenance, either by setting the standard so low that visitors gain but little rural refreshment from them, or by setting it so high that it cannot be lived up to, and they become forlorn through shabby gentility. In some parks both errors are illustrated, high keeping being apparently attempted at some points as a compensation for general gracelessness and dowdiness, with a result like that from putting a few bits of bravery upon a meanly dressed and dirty person. Nearly all American Park Commissioners apologize for the condition of some parts of their work, stating that they are not allowed funds enough to keep them in good order throughout.

In a considerable part of one park examined by the Boston Commissioners last summer, they found roads in very rough condition and dusty gravel walks in such bad repair that they had actually gone out of use, and visitors were trying to walk in lines parallel with them, some making a crooked way among trees and bushes, or over what had once been turfed ground, some turning out upon the wheelway. A family party was seen moving along the ruts of the dusty road, the father dragging a baby wagon, the mother in trepidation lest they should be run over, and the entire party evincing anything but the quieting and restful pleasure that they would have had in a park suitably fitted and kept. Elsewhere they saw lawns from which the turf had wholly disappeared, dry brooks and fountains, green stagnant waters, dilapidated and rotting rustic structures, trees with dead branches, flower beds gray with dust, set in coarse seedy grass half trodden out, opposite a sign, "Keep off the Grass". They saw a large and substantially fine house, of which the details and furniture were so out of repair that the public had been for some time excluded from

it, and its windows appeared to be targets for ambushed boys. The explanation in every case was that the city was unwilling to suitably carry out and sustain what had been undertaken.

It is difficult to make comparative statements of the cost of maintenance of different classes of public grounds. In most cases it is found to vary widely from year to year, and this capriciously, accordingly as successive city councils are disposed. The appropriation for one year has in several cases been but half that for others. Accounts are kept upon different bases.

But omitting police, museum, and menagerie expenses it may be roughly reckoned that the annual running expenses of a park of the extent of Franklin Park, if laid out, stocked, and maintained in the manner of the Public Garden of Boston, or of any much decorated, garden-like ground, would be about \$500,000; of the Central Park, New York, \$160,000; Brooklyn Park, \$80,000; Buffalo Park, \$40,000.

The plan adopted by the Commissioners for Franklin Park is one that, when the designed plantings have been well established, will require comparatively little fine garden work, no exotic or fine decorative gardening, no glass, no structures of an unsubstantial class, and few of any kind subject to fall into serious disrepair, except roads and walks. All walls and roofs are to be of stone, tile, or slate; all guard rails and seat supports of stone or wrought iron. The economy of substantial work in all such matters may be seen in the fact that of upwards of forty arches and bridges on the Central Park built more than twenty years ago, all but three were structures of stone, brick, or iron. As a matter of alleged economy, three were built with timber superstructures. Each one of these three has been at times closed for use because of disrepair, each has been entirely rebuilt, and one twice rebuilt; each has already cost more than a substantial structure would have cost, and no one of them is now in a satisfactory condition. The others remain perfectly sound, and with but one important

exception have been in continuous service. This exception is an iron bridge with a wood flooring. This has been several times closed for painting and the relaying of the wood work. A similar story could be told of other structures; and the moral could be enforced by reference to every class of work done on the park. Its entire history is an indication of the economy of using as sterling masonry and thorough, exacting professional superintendence in park work, as in water works, sewers, and monumental buildings. If the Commissioners could have taken a different view of their duty, which for the moment would possibly be a more popular view, the estimate they have presented might have been reduced.

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To restate briefly the lesson in conservatism most important for Boston to learn from the experience of other cities in parkmaking, it is this:

That those in charge of a park work may proceed economically and with profit they must be able to proceed with confidence, method and system, steadily, step after step, to carry to completion a well-matured design. Until the point of completion is reached the work of each year must be the carrying out of work prepared in the previous year, and of the preparation of work to be done the following year. Plans laid with an economical purpose in this respect must not be held subject at any moment to be nullified, or hastily and radically modified, even under worthy impulses of economy.

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