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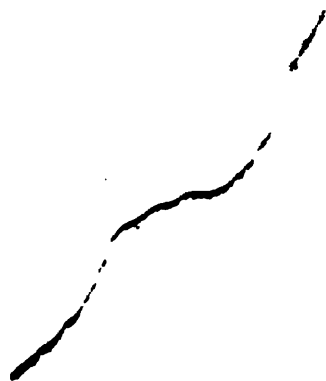
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Van Cortlandt Park—Northern End of the Lake



# THE NEW PARKS beyond the HARLEM

with thirty illustrations  
and Map

Descriptions of Scenery

Nearly 4000 Acres

## OF FREE PLAYGROUND for the People

Abundant space for a Parade Ground, a Rifle Range,  
Base Ball, Lacrosse, Polo, Tennis and all  
athletic games; picnic and excursion  
parties, and nine miles of water front  
for bathing, fishing, yachting, rowing.

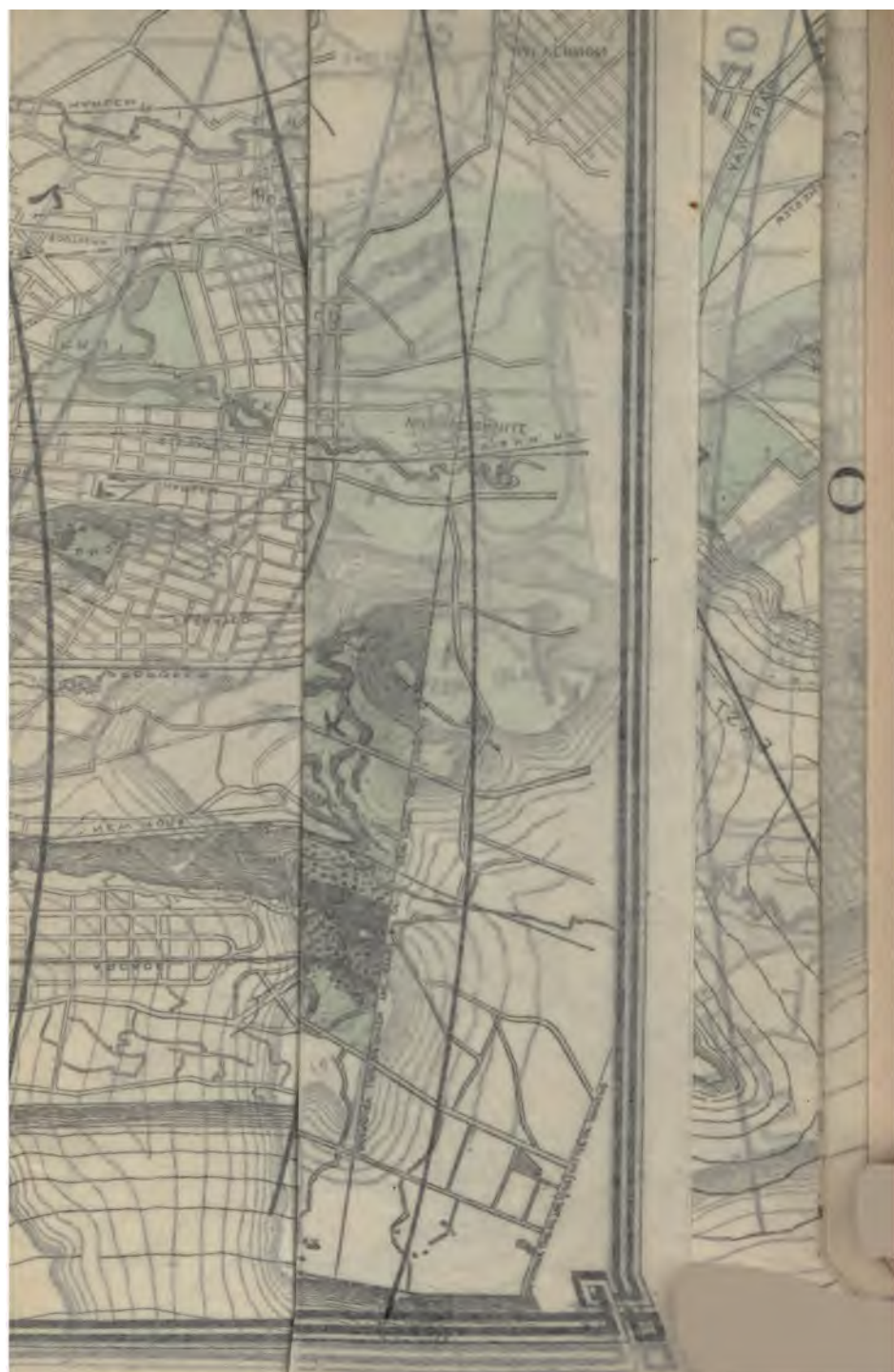
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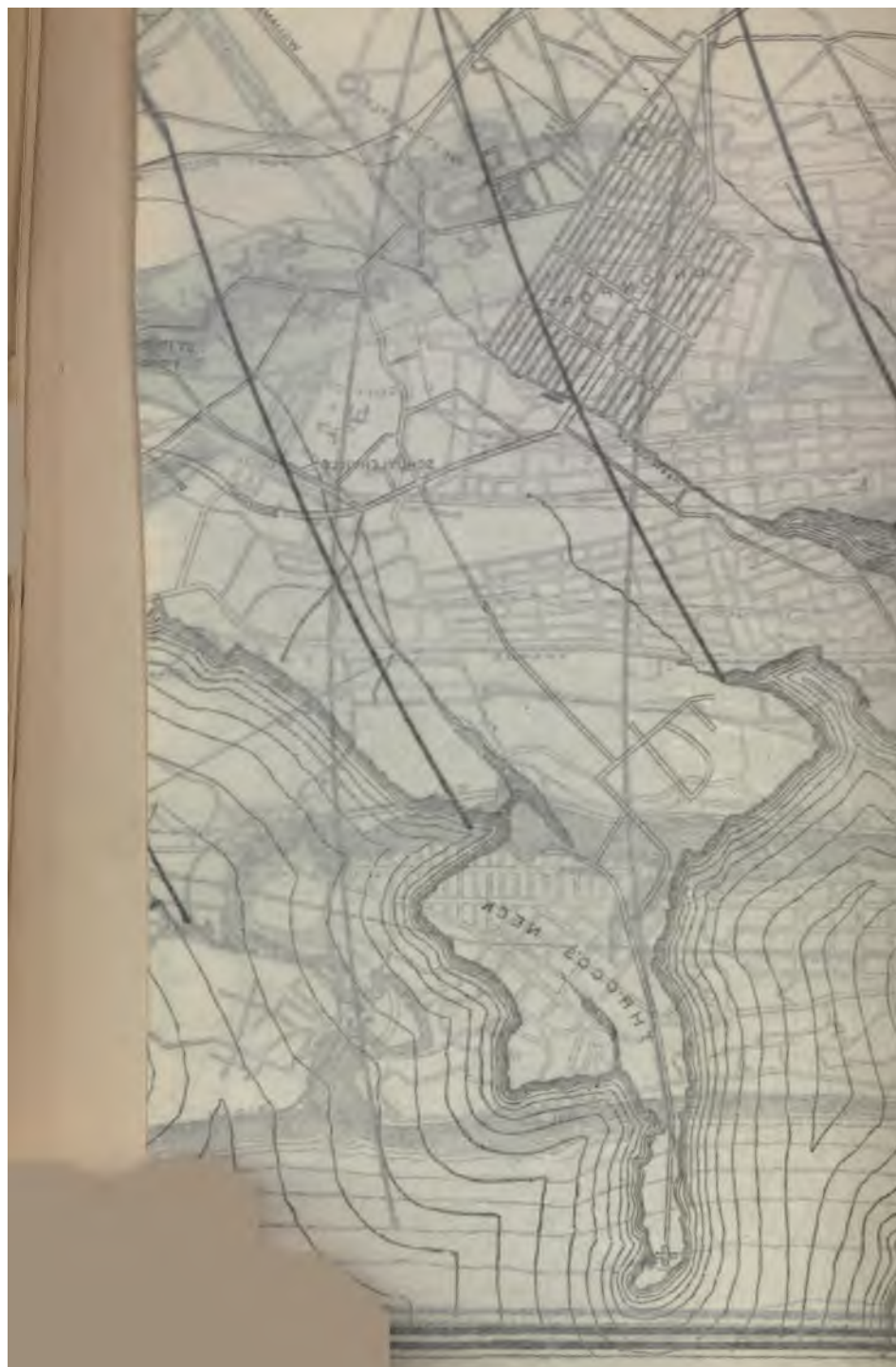
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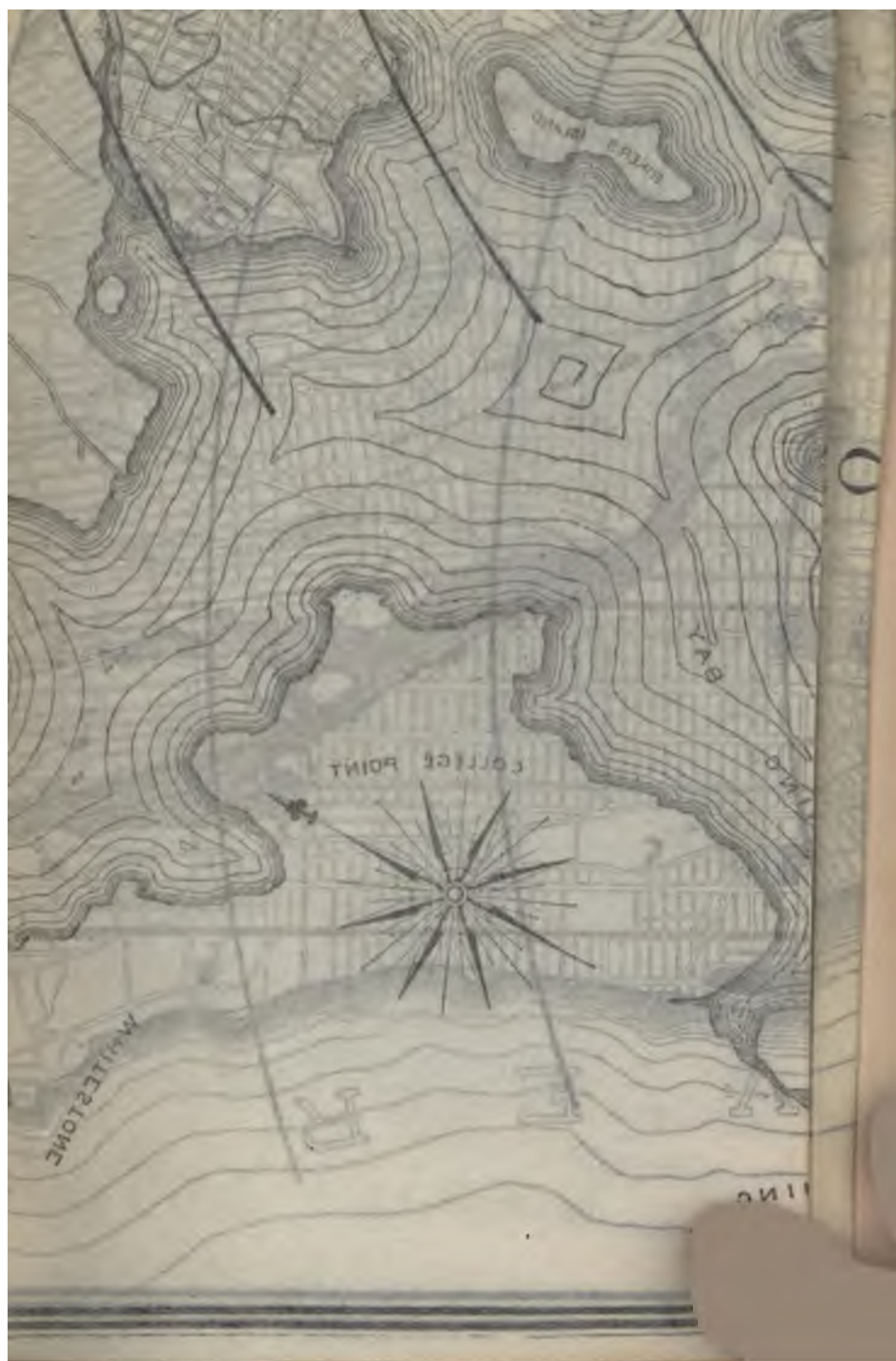
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# IMPORTANT STATISTICS

THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY HAVE  
 BEEN FOR SOME TIME PAST

IT WE HAVE THE RECORD BETWEEN

1870	1880	1890	1900
------	------	------	------

OR BETWEEN THEIR PREDECESSORS

1870	1880	1890	1900
------	------	------	------

THE RESULT IS THE SAME

IT DOUBLES EVERY SEVENTEEN YEARS

Now, what does this mean for the People?

FLUSH









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## INTRODUCTION.

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The author of the following pages has presented, in a compact form, a comprehensive history of the movement which, initiated in 1881, resulted in the enactment of a law that has added 3,840 acres to the park area of the city. Although the bill creating six new parks and three parkways was passed by the Legislature of 1884, the efforts by which the opponents of the measure sought to defeat its enactment have been carried on with more or less obstinacy ever since. In fact the experience of the men to whom the city is indebted for the existence of Central Park has been repeated in the present instance.

Having failed, after a bitter and protracted struggle, marked by most adroit tactics, to defeat the bill during the session of 1884, in which it passed by a vote of twenty-one to two in the Senate and of seventy-four to twenty-one in the Assembly, its enemies renewed the contest before the Governor. At the end of the thirty days allowed for Executive consideration, however, he resolved to give it his approval, and, affixing his signature thereto, it became a law on the 14th of June, 1884.

It might reasonably be supposed that the fierce and prolonged assaults on the New Parks Act would have ceased after the passage of the bill, which was fully discussed before the Cities' Committees of the Senate and Assembly, in both branches of the Legislature and before the Governor; but the attacks were kept up with unabated virulence and pertinacity even after the decisions of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals on the constitutionality of the law, and the reversal finally by the last tribunal of the decision of the Special and General Terms of the Court of Common Pleas on the Sinking Fund question. Nay, so far was this spirit of rancorous opposition carried that one of the most conspicuous in the unrelenting and at times unscrupulous warfare against the parks defiantly said that he would so "tie them up" in litigation that the city would not be able to obtain possession of them for years to come—if ever.

It mattered not to the enemies of the parks that the movement received the indorsement and in many cases the active support of a large number of public-spirited citizens, extracts from whose letters will be found in another part of this volume; that it had the approval of a great part of

the city press ; that the bill was not only passed by the Legislature of 1884, but that the Legislatures of 1885 and 1886 rejected the proposition to repeal the law ; that the insidious attempt to place the Real Estate Exchange in opposition to the measure had signally failed—all this had no weight with the opposition ; they had resolved at all hazards to have the act repealed, even though it subjected the city to the intolerable burden of vexatious, expensive and endless litigation. And so the war has been kept up to the present moment *in defiance of two decisions of the highest tribunals in the State.*

However, it is now fair to presume, after six years of public, legislative and legal controversy ; after the Court of Appeals has declared that "THE STATUTE ITSELF CONDEMNNS AND APPROPRIATES FOR PUBLIC USE THE PRECISE LANDS SELECTED BY METES AND BOUNDS SO THAT EVERY OWNER AFFECTED HAD MEANS OF KNOWING THAT HIS LAND WAS TAKEN," that we have reached the end of the fight, and that the work of the three citizens composing the Commission of Appraisal, whose characters are above reproach and whose ability has not been called in question, will be allowed to prosecute their work to the end without further embarrassment or interruption.

The intimate personal connection of the author with the movement, from its inception to the present moment, enables him to give from the minute data in his possession all the details herein set forth, and for the accuracy and correctness of which he holds himself responsible. It is this thorough knowledge, not only of the facts and circumstances, but of the true purposes of the movement and of the motives by which it was inspired, that justifies him in saying that it was conceived in an earnest, sincere, honest and unselfish desire to promote the sanitary welfare of the people, to secure to them opportunities for physical recreation and out-door exercise, and to add to the prosperity and embellishment of our imperial metropolis, destined within the next half century to be first among the cities of the world in population and wealth, first in culture, magnificence and power.

Not only was this movement begun and carried on in a spirit of generous devotion to the one great purpose, and with unflagging energy all through the varying fortunes of the struggle, but it was also prosecuted at great sacrifice of time and labor, and with a total disregard of all personal interests or selfish considerations. This much the author cannot refrain from saying, in justice to all, who, having no personal interest at stake, took part in the movement, and aided it by vote, or voice, or pen. But the cause of the new parks is in a special degree indebted for its success to the generous and sustained encouragement which its promoters and advocates received from the New York Press, which of all its promoters and advocates was throughout among the most earnest and steadfast.

Those who imagine that the extension of the park area of our metropolis at the present time is premature, should consider its rapid growth and future destiny. There are to-day within our municipal limits at least seventeen hundred thousand souls. The increase, therefore, since the census of 1880 has been half a million, and, at this rate, our population at the beginning of the twentieth century will be over three millions. This

rate of increase would give at least six millions in 1917, or nearly two millions more than there are in the British metropolis.

Nor should this be a matter for surprise when we consider the progress and growth of the whole country which more than trebles its population every forty years. Thus, while in 1800 the number was 5,338,483; in 1840 it was 17,069,453; in 1810 it was 7,239,881 and in 1810 23,191,876; in 1830 it was 9,633,822 and in 1860 31,443,321; in 1830 it was 12,886,020 and in 1870 38,558,371; in 1840 it was 17,069,453 and in 1880 50,155,783. Within the last forty years, although we have passed through a great civil war, this three-fold increase was almost wholly maintained. To-day our population is estimated at 63,000,000, and if the same rate is kept up there will be in our Republic nearly two hundred millions of souls in the year 1937.

New York must grow with the growth, must keep pace with the marvellous development of the whole country. Its public works must be carried on upon a scale commensurate with the progress of a city which is destined to be the world's capital, a city to which a continent contributes of its abundant wealth and resources. That a marked impulse has recently been imparted to its growth is evident from the activity in building operations during the past two or three years. The concentrated strength of tens of thousands of laborers is working through the inexhaustible power of the steam-drill, levelling the hills, piercing the rocks, preparing the way for the potent power of dynamite; both doing their share in the beneficent work of clearing the ground for human habitations.

And what may not the prolific future have in store for us? When new forces and new powers will be discovered in nature and new factors and appliances to develop and utilize them invented by man—for it is not to be presumed that this generation has wrested all her secrets from the one and exhausted all the intellectual activity of the other—then New York may see marvellous scientific revelations in her workshops and her factories; wonders of art in her museums and her homes; creations of beauty in ecclesiastical architecture that may equal, if they do not surpass, the famed basilicas and cathedrals of the Old World. By that time the steam engine will in all probability be a thing of the past, with all its din and rattle and sulphurous gases, and its place will be taken by the noiseless and safer, but not less rapid, electric motor. What has been already accomplished enlarges the field of future possibilities.

In less than two decades the East River has been spanned by the grandest and most graceful structure of its kind in the world, the elevated roads with a carrying capacity of three-quarters of a million daily have been constructed; the gigantic Statue of Liberty holding in her hand the torch of the imprisoned lightning has been upraised over the waters of our glorious harbor; our charities, our libraries, our museums and our institutions of learning have been multiplied beyond all precedent.

For the New York of the future, for the great metropolis as it is to be, the new parks may well be regarded as inadequate, and it would seem to be the part of a wise economy even now to make such provision for the still further enlargement of the area of our public grounds as will save the expenditure of millions hereafter. It is no exaggeration to say that even



with the supposed generous appropriation of space secured by the provisions of the act of 1884, the present park area will be as insufficient to meet the demands of three millions of inhabitants at the close of the century as the Central Park has proved to supply the present wants of seventeen hundred thousand inhabitants.

In this view of the case we can appreciate the extent of the damage that would have been inflicted on the city had the attempt to eliminate Pelham Bay Park, so correctly called the "Newport of the Toilers," been successful. Fortunately, however, two successive Legislatures and the Court of Appeals prevented the perpetration of that design, and this Court has put the seal of inviolability upon the act by declaring, as has been stated, that "it condemns and appropriates for public use the precise lands selected by metes and bounds."

Whatever apathy or indifference may have heretofore prevailed on this important question it is now reasonable to suppose that the success of the movement to increase the park area of the city, as described in these pages, will render it easy to enlist the public interest and support in behalf of like efforts hereafter. This is a great gain, for it will act as a much needed stimulant in the prosecution of the work that still remains to be done in this direction.



Van Cortlandt Park—Parade Ground—One Hundred and Twenty Acres.



# NEW YORK'S GRAND PARK DOMAIN.

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## THE SCENERY DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED.

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### The Sanitary and Financial Question Discussed.

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#### THE COURT OF APPEALS DECLARES THE LAND "APPROPRIATED," "CON- DEMNED," "TAKEN."

Although the question of the New Parks has now been before the public over six years, there has thus far been no consecutive narrative of the movement by which the great system of pleasure grounds beyond the Harlem has been secured for the people. The earnest interest manifested in its progress during the long contest, which, in view of the final decision of the highest tribunal of the State, must now be regarded as at an end, justifies the publication at this particular time of a connected account of the movement from its inception, with a more detailed description of the new parks than has yet appeared in print.

It is now evident that whatever expectations our opponents may have entertained of the success of the anti-parks war, they have been effectually dispelled by the many signal defeats which they sustained both in the Legislature and before the courts. The struggle, therefore, is virtually over and the erroneous impressions which, even up to a very recent date, had existed as to the effect of the decision of the Court of Appeals and the present status of the parks have at last been removed. That court to which the question of the constitutionality of the law was carried, after a favorable decision by the General Term of the Supreme Court, declared, as will be seen from the special reference to the subject in another part of this volume, that "the statute itself condemns and appropriates for the public use the precise lands selected by metes and bounds, so that every owner had means of knowing that his land was taken."

The opponents of the measure insisted that the movement was premature, but the rapid growth of the city since the first meeting of the promoters and friends of the parks, which was held in the Fifth Avenue Hotel on the 11th of November, 1881, proves that it was not commenced a day too soon. Up to that year there had been, in this important matter of public parks, a strange indifference not only to

the future wants, but even to the present needs of our population. We have been far behind not only the great cities of Europe, but the principal cities of the United States as to park area. Had the wise and generous policy of De Witt Clinton prevailed when, in 1807, he mapped out a plan of parks for the Island of Manhattan, there would be little if any necessity for the creation of small parks, so greatly needed in the densely crowded districts. If New York could be constructed anew, at least one-sixth of its surface might be appropriated for squares and parks with marked advantage not only to its health, but to its attractiveness and embellishment.

The park area which Governor Clinton laid out when the population of New York was less than 100,000 gave a proportion of one acre to every 160 inhabitants. The aggregate was about 500 acres in addition to those already established, and the total park area, south of 40th street, was nearly 400 acres. Of one park, the largest, which contained over 200 acres, and which extended from 23d to 34th street, and from 3d to 7th avenue, nothing is left but the  $6\frac{1}{2}$  acres of Madison square; while of the 400 acres, shown on Clinton's map below 40th street, only 66 remain. To purchase the balance of 334, which have been lost through the negligence or indifference of the authorities of the city, to remove the buildings and to construct the parks, would now involve an outlay of at least one hundred and fifty millions of dollars—probably two hundred millions.

De Witt Clinton's parks gave, as stated, an average of one acre to every 160 inhabitants. Before the passage of the act of 1884 the park area of our city was in the proportion of one acre to every 1,363 of the population, while the park acreage of London was in the ratio of 1 to 205; of Paris, 1 to 13; of Vienna, 1 to 100; of Dublin, 1 to 183; of Chicago, 1 to 200; of St. Louis, 1 to 167; of Boston, 1 to 190; and of San Francisco, 1 to 211.

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#### THE NEWPORT OF NEW YORK'S TOILERS.

It is evident, therefore, as intimated, that the movement to increase our park area was not commenced a day too soon, and that a wise policy dictated the selection of a park with an extensive frontage on the Sound, which if not secured at once could not probably be obtained twenty or twenty-five years hence, if at all, for ten times the price which it will now cost the city. This park embraces the most desirable portion of the territory on Pelham Bay, including Pelham Neck and Hunter's Island. It will be the favorite suburban resort of the mass of our population—the toilers of the great city; it will be their Newport. The majority of our fellow citizens, happily, is not made up of the very rich and the very poor, but of the industrial classes, who are fully able from their accumulated earnings to afford many a day (and hereafter they are to have a half-holiday every week) for healthful recreation and social pleasure in the country. Of the tens of millions of dollars in the savings banks of New York the greatest portion belongs to the thrifty and provident workers, and it is for such that Pelham Bay Park, against which the great force of the opposition has been directed, is specially required. It is really one of the most important



Van Cortlandt Park —View of Palisades from Vault Hill



of the whole system on account of its water front, and its importance and value justify special reference to the advantages which it possesses.

As the seaside park, and within easy reach by rail and boat of our east side population, its popularity will increase year by year. It is but ten minutes by rail from the Harlem River and two miles nearer than Glen Island, and will be a specially attractive point for all the trade and benevolent societies, for rowing and yachting clubs, for swimming matches, for fishing parties; and what place so admirably adapted for the many excursions which are organized by benevolent societies and individuals every summer, and through which tens of thousands who could never otherwise hope to spend a day in the country are enabled to enjoy that pleasure and breathe the pure air of heaven?

The wealthy and generous philanthropists of New York who get up summer excursions for the sick and poor of the metropolis could find no better place for the purpose than Pelham Bay Park. A sail up the Sound would be, in itself, a satisfying pleasure; but how that pleasure would be intensified, how immeasurably the gain in health of mind and body would be increased by every hour spent in these tranquilizing scenes! How the tired muscles would relax, the unquiet nerves grow calm, the dimmed eyes brighten and the plodding step become elastic under the potent spell exercised by the combined influences of sea and land and sky possessed by this park in perfection. Space, beauty and variety! Closed in on three sides by "water walls," roofed by "the brave o'erhanging firmament," how could such a spot fail to bring health to the body and peace to the mind? And what a sanitarium could be there established! The ever-moving panorama of the Sound, with its fleets of steamers and sailing vessels, yachts and fishing boats; the happy throngs of picnic parties, the games of athletic clubs, the merry shouts of romping children, would infuse such an element of joyousness into the surroundings as to make simple rest in itself a recreation. No more desirable or suitable spot could be selected for a sanitarium. But we should not look to the effect of the parks on the health of the people only; we should not overlook the subtle influence they will exercise on the manners, the morals, the imagination, the creative genius and artistic instincts of the population—an influence not less real because intangible, not less valuable because it cannot be reduced to dollars and cents. Communion with nature not only educates the eye and refines the taste, but it softens the manners and elevates the moral perceptions; and, thanks to the size of the most important parks of the system, our people can enjoy that communion to the fullest extent undisturbed by city sights and sounds—"can mingle with the universe and enjoy the charms of solitude to their heart's content."

Let us by all means have small parks. We cannot have too many of them; but we should not confine the denizens of our tenement districts exclusively to the city squares. It is natural that they should long to get into the country, away from the dust and din and stifling heats of their crowded quarters in the city, away out of sight of its scorching pavements and the noisome odor of filthy streets and reeking gutters. Surely the great metropolis can afford to give to its hundreds of thousands of workers



a park by the Sound, where they can drink in new life and health in its refreshing, invigorating breezes.

WHAT THE HIGHEST TRIBUNALS IN THE STATE SAY OF PELHAM BAY PARK.

Within three years that part of Westchester County in which Pelham Bay Park is located will be annexed to New York. This territory was included in the original bill of annexation, the present northern line having been continued from the Bronx to the Sound, which is the proper eastern limit of the city; but as objections were raised at the time the bill was introduced in the Legislature it was decided to compromise by making the Bronx the boundary.

By embracing this tract in the new park domain prior to the proposed extension of the northern line to the Sound the city has saved hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars on the purchase. It is evident that the Supreme Court does not believe its acquisition is either premature or undesirable. Referring to the objections raised by the opposition, that tribunal, in its decision on the 1st of December, 1884, declaring the act constitutional, said: "At most the appropriation of this land is but a short step into the future, and as it must soon be required for this object, if it is not wholly so at present, the time for obtaining it has already arrived. For the recreation and enjoyment of the present inhabitants of the city it will be advantageous, for those who are soon to follow them it will be indispensable, and *to meet the present and prospective wants of the city prudence requires that the property should now be obtained.*" The Court of Appeals, to which the case was carried, also made this park the subject of special reference, affirming the decision of the Supreme Court. "We must," said the highest tribunal in the State, "assume what we can see is at least possible and perhaps probable that the lands over the border are so near, so convenient of access, so likely to be overtaken and surrounded by the city's growth, so desirable for the health and recreation of the citizens, and so cheaply to be got in comparison with the consequences of delay, as to indicate a primary and predominant city purpose in a matter itself within the ordinary range of municipal action."

But it has been urged that the expense of the maintenance of Pelham Bay Park will be a heavy burden on the taxpayers of the city. Why should it be? If six or seven hundred thousand persons visit Glen Island every summer, and probably over thrice that number go to other resorts in the vicinity of New York, is it not evident that a large revenue would be derived by the city from the letting of privileges, the granting of leases and licenses to those who would cater in a multiplicity of ways to the vast throng of pleasure-seekers who would resort to the great park by the Sound? Much more than the interest on the bonds, which is 3 per cent., would be derived from this source. There is no better paying investment than that in parks. The parks of London and Paris are among their chief attractions, and all their largest pleasure grounds are miles beyond the limits of those cities. The Fairmount of Philadelphia, which contains about 2,700 acres, is eight miles in length and over two in width. Before the

movement to increase our park area commenced London had 15,000 acres and this has been increased to 22,000, one tract alone, the great Epping Forest, having an extent of 6,000 acres, or nearly one-half the area of Manhattan Island. Of these 22,000 acres, 2,000 only are within the city limits. How is it with Paris? Of its 172,000 acres, less than 500 are within its boundaries.

The opposition by which Pelham Bay Park has been assailed is but a repetition of the war waged against Central Park. The opponents of the Central contended that the expense would bankrupt the city, that it would become the resort of thieves and vagabonds, and they sent delegation after delegation and petition on petition, remonstrance on remonstrance to the State capital protesting against the passage of the bill; but, fortunately, they did not succeed. They insisted that it was too far from the centre of population and that the city would not grow up to it in half a century. It is now about thirty years since the land was acquired and to-day it is dwarfed by the city's marvelous growth and in a few years more it will be divided into sections by the streets which must intersect it to facilitate the traffic and travel east and west.

#### A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CENTRAL AND THE NEW PARKS.

The costly experience of the city in the case of Central Park will not be repeated, for, with the exception of some necessary roads and walks, comparatively little work will be needed in the new pleasure grounds. When Central Park was acquired it was one of the most uninviting sections of the island, and a considerable portion of it had been used as dumping grounds. As far back as 1860, four years after the land was paid for, one of the daily papers said "it was neither a park, a stone yard, nor a piece of waste land, and that after three years labor and an expenditure of millions of dollars New York is almost as parkless as ever." It was simply a space for a park and the city had to make one and put it there at a cost of \$20,000 an acre, in addition to the six millions six hundred and odd thousands paid for the land. The woods had to be planted, the large tracts of marsh filled in, roads and walks constructed, and the so-called lakes made. In the accomplishment of this necessary work fifteen years were consumed before it was ready for use.

All of the new parks created by the act of 1884 are not only required for the future, but for the present, and when they are formally declared open they will be thronged by tens of thousands of our population eager to enjoy that pleasure of unrestricted use denied them in our beautiful, picturesque, showy and artificial Central, which has never been in the true sense of the term the people's playground. Too far from the city! from a city advancing with gigantic strides to its predestined position, to the first place among the capitals of Christendom. If its progress during the last half century furnishes a fair basis on which to estimate its future growth, then within the lifetime of many who are still in their teens it will have a population of seven or eight millions.

#### MISAPPREHENSIONS AND MISSTATEMENTS CORRECTED.

It is to be regretted that the work of the Commissioners of Appraisal

should be retarded by the persistent efforts to repeal the law, and that a measure so beneficent in its character should have been attacked with such virulence that in one flagrant instance it was made the cause of a malicious personal persecution. The misapprehension, in many cases doubtless honestly entertained by some of the opponents of the movement as to its true character and the motives of its promoters, has at last, happily given way to a proper appreciation of the project, and of its vast importance to the sanitary welfare of the people, independent of the financial gain to the city. As to the assertion so freely, so unjustly, made that the movement for new parks was a land speculation, and that this charge was especially true of Pelham Bay Park, the writer knows absolutely whereof he speaks when he states that not one of the owners of that park knew that his land was included in the area first indicated, and which embraced all that was finally selected in the location of that magnificent pleasure ground. It is proper also to say right here that the most determined opposition to the selection of this particular park was made by several of the owners of property within its limits, that these property owners got up and forwarded petitions to the Legislature against the passage of the bill, that they employed counsel who appeared before the Legislative Committee and Governor Cleveland and used every effort to defeat its enactment. There never was a movement of the kind in this or any other city so wholly free from speculation of any description. It was conceived in the best and purest of motives, having in view the one great object, the public good.

And now a few words in conclusion as to the financial question. On that point it is sufficient at present to say that the city will have this splendid park domain *entirely free of cost*; that, as in the case of the Central, more than the amount of the bonds and the 3 per cent. interest thereon will be paid back into the city treasury from the increased tax income on the enhanced value of the surrounding lands—yes, more than enough to pay for the smaller down-town parks which are to be created under the act just passed.

If, in a monarchical country, the opening of "The People's Palace," which took place in London the other day, was made the occasion of a royal pageant, and the dedication of an additional park area of 7,000 acres a few years ago was celebrated by the civic authorities of that city, should we not celebrate with appropriate ceremonies the opening of the people's parks next year by a grand municipal holiday?

#### FINANCIAL OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

One of the principal objections to the new parks was the great expense, which, it was contended, would seriously embarrass the city, if it did not actually impair its credit. It was urged that the expenditure of millions for this purpose would put a stop to necessary public improvements; that the money required for the parks was needed for increased school accommodations; that a new aqueduct and reservoir should be commenced immediately; that the rapid growth and extension of the city necessitated the construction of miles of additional streets and sewers; that three or four





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in proportion to the advance. Had the 120 acres which make up the area of Riverside and Morningside Parks been purchased at the rate paid for those in the Central, those ribbons of land and rocky ledges, less than one-half the area of which is available for park purposes, they would doubtless have reimbursed the city for the outlay. But these strips cost \$7,250,000, or at the rate of \$60,000 an acre! Small chance there for a return on the investment. It was a losing transaction from the start, and they will cost three or four millions more before they are fully "improved."

#### PARKS A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT—BOSTON'S EXPERIENCE.

The area of the new parks and parkways beyond the Harlem is 3,800 acres, or a little more than four times that of the Central, Riverside and Morningside combined, and requiring no outlay further than may be necessary for a few additional roads, they will cost much less than was paid for the land alone within those parks. Five years hence they will be worth more than double the price to be paid for them and the city will then possess parks worthy of the name, parks fully furnished by Nature with every element of beauty, hills and streams and trees, the product of centuries.

As to the ability of the city to bear the additional burden imposed by these parks, even were the returns inadequate to the outlay, a few facts will satisfy the most skeptical. The interest on the Central Park bonds at 7 per cent. amounted to \$466,200 a year, which was raised on taxable values of from three to four hundred millions of dollars. The interest on the new park bonds, fixed by the act of 1884 at 3 per cent, will not amount to \$300,000 a year, and this will be paid from the tax imposed on an aggregate value of about fifteen hundred millions, which will be materially increased by the influence of the parks themselves in the enhancement of the surrounding property. Will the weight imposed by this burden be more intolerable than that borne by the city thirty years ago, when it was obliged to pay almost double the amount of interest on one-fifth the present amount of real and personal estate? But there is no "burden" and the word has no place in this connection except for the purposes of illustration.

It has been already stated that the experience of New York and other cities proved that parks, financially considered, are a profitable investment. Believing that like causes produced like results the writer entered, in the early stage of the movement, into correspondence with the Commissioners of Parks in the principal cities throughout the country with a view of securing corroborative evidence on this important point. In every instance the immediate effect was a marked appreciation of real estate fronting on and in the immediate vicinity of the parks. Mr. W. Harmon, the Secretary of the South Park Commission of Chicago, wrote that "the *immediate* effect of their location was to double and quadruple property." The report forwarded from the Boston Commission stated that the Back Bay Park, which was given as an illustration, "is not a tax upon the city at large, but the increased taxes from the surrounding property pays its cost. The increase of values is *upon land alone, and does not include the buildings*. The valuation of the land in the rest of the city during the same time, 1877 to











Van Cortlandt Park—Northern End of the Lake



# THE NEW PARKS beyond the HARLEM

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The property owners, however, saw that by having their land placed by this ingenious device outside of the boundaries they would reap the advantage of the improvement and secure a frontage which would largely increase the value of their property. Of course their gain would have been the city's loss for, had they succeeded, the city would have been defrauded through the forms of law of large tracts which had acquired higher value by their appropriation for this special purpose.

But the scheme could not have succeeded even if the bill had passed, unless by collusion between the authorities and the property owners, which, under the administration of the present Mayor, would never have been tolerated if brought to his notice. It is certain that had the bill passed the Legislature the promoters and friends of the parks would have made known to the Governor its real design, and, if necessary, they would finally appeal to that Court which declared that "*the statute itself condemns and appropriates for the public use the precise lands selected by metes and bounds, so that EVERY OWNER affected had means of knowing that his land was TAKEN.*"

The scheme, if successful, would have caused still further delay and, postponed, by vexatious and costly litigation, the day when the people could enter into full possession and enjoyment of their own property. But the litigation which has already taken tens of thousands of dollars out of the city treasury, and through which hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens have been deprived of the use of the new parks for more than a year beyond the time necessary to ascertain the value of the various tracts—this litigation was one of the means by which the parks were to be so "tied up," as was defiantly threatened by an active and prominent opponent, that the people could not enjoy them for many years, if ever.

#### WHY THE WORK OF APPRAISEMENT SHOULD BE VIGOROUSLY PROSECUTED.

It was an audacious and an empty threat, but the delay that has already occurred through the contests in the Courts on the constitutionality of the law and in determining the sinking fund question is a reason why every effort should now be made to have these parks placed, as the law provides, under the Park Department at the earliest moment and thrown open immediately thereafter to the people.

To the three gentlemen who constitute the Commission of Appraisal the day that sees the termination of their labor will, there is no doubt, be heartily welcome. They may literally be said to give their time and experience as a gratuity to the city, for the compensation allowed by law for their services is a mere bagatelle to men of their means. To the chairman of the Commission, Hon. Luther R. Marsh, who freely and generously gave his time, his talents, his legal services, to the promotion of the project from the start, who threw on that side the weight and prestige of his personal and professional character, the city is especially indebted. And in saying this no injustice is done to others who effectively aided a measure the merit and value of which will be appreciated more and more as the years roll by.

But of all this more hereafter and in its proper place. The matter is

referred to at this time especially, as showing the necessity for expedition, in justice to all concerned, to the people that they may have the parks at the earliest day, to the city that it may get all the financial and other advantages flowing from them, and to the Commissioners that no more of their valuable time than is actually required for the completion of their work is consumed.

As the vexed questions arising out of the contest for the parks—one side endeavoring to hold them, the other determined to repeal the law—are closed forever, a few details from the city's records as to the revenue obtained from the increased value of the land around the Central Park before and after the acquisition of the various tracts, will prove of special interest just now, when the question of advancing values in property fronting on and contiguous to the new parks must necessarily attract the attention of the public, of purchasers, and of officials charged with the duty of assessing real estate.

#### SOME TELLING FACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF CENTRAL PARK.

In 1850, three years before the Central Park bill became a law, the whole area of the 12th Ward, which a few years after was cut up into the 12th, 19th and 22d Wards, was valued at \$8,356,265, and six years after it was assessed on a valuation of \$26,429,565, showing more than a threefold increase. At this time 42d street, so far as population was concerned, might be regarded as the limit of the city; all beyond, and in fact some distance south of it, consisting of "suburbs." It was in reality out in the country; there were fields and orchards and gardens—in fact the Central Park was as much in the country as Van Cortlandt and Pelham Bay Parks—which are directly accessible by railroads that carry the visitor not merely to the entrance, but right into the grounds. No wonder if, under such circumstances, with a taxable value of less than three hundred millions, some of the big property owners and taxpayers—the Astors, the Goelets, etc.—should have taken alarm and raised a clamor about bankrupting the city; but the wonder is, that, with the experience since acquired, such fears should now be entertained as to the expenditure of an amount not one-fourth the whole cost of Central Park and all its improvements.

Within the brief space of five years the taxable value of the three Wards bounding the park advanced from \$26,429,565 to \$47,107,393, and in 1866 it ran up to \$80,070,415. To attribute this extraordinary rise in ten years wholly to the increase of population would be absurd. That it was partly due to that cause there can be no doubt, but the Central Park had much more to do with it, and the boom that began the year the bill became a law continued for twenty years, when the official figures gave a total of nearly \$250,000,000. Here was an increase little less than tenfold from 1856 to 1876, far in advance of the growth of the population, which showed much less than a twofold increase in the same time. When it is understood that within this period we had the two great financial revulsions of 1857 and 1873, the influence of Central Park in the enhancement of values will be fully appreciated. And this impetus is

rendered still more marked by contrast with the assessed valuation of the rest of the city, which from 1856 to 1876 had gone up from \$314,452,508 to \$639,452,160, very little more than a hundred per cent. advance.

In view of these figures, in view of testimony no less convincing and conclusive as to the great and numerous advantages derived from public parks in other cities, can there be a reasonable doubt that similar benefits will be reaped by the city and the people from the parks established beyond the Harlem, and which are so admirably linked together by connecting parkways as to form one beautiful and harmonious system? In the selection and purchase of property, whether for investment or immediate use, the lands adjacent to and in the vicinity of these open spaces will be preferred to those more distant. Once satisfied that the law cannot be repealed—and it is now evident that any further attempt will not only be futile but certain to entail heavy expense and loss upon the city—the attention of purchasers will be directed to the most desirable pieces within this territory.

#### THE SINKING FUND AND THE CITY DEBT.

As to the financial condition of the city, of which the public has heard so much of late, a few facts will dispel the fears excited by alarmists. According to the Comptroller's report for 1885 the value of all assessable property was \$1,420,968,286. Of this amount \$1,303,941,005 was in real, \$158,014,378 in personal estate, and \$59,012,903 in bank stock. Upon this the rate was 2.29, and the total taxes collectable \$32,421,350. The gross debt—so called—as if there could be any true debt other than the net sum for which the city is liable—was on the 31st of December, 1886, \$131,601,108. The "gross" debt for the year 1885 was \$120,145,504, showing an increase of \$2,455,559, whereas there was really a reduction of the debt in 1886 instead of an increase. So much for this peculiar method of keeping the city afloat, and now for the true state of the case. Of the "gross" debt for 1885, \$35,077,139.90 consisted of bonds bought, paid for and held by the city until the day on which they matured—in some cases many years away off in the future—when they will be redeemed.

The process of reasoning, by which these purchased bonds were included in the debt of the city, was not appreciated by the people or the business public, and the Court of last resort swept away all the specious arguments as worthless and brought the financial witnesses and curia down to their bearings. Of the "gross" debt for 1885 bonds to the value of \$38,294,958.10 were held by the sinking fund, a scheme of subtlety which, according to the decision of the Court of Appeals, delivered on the 30th of April, 1886, were practically no debt at all. For, as that tribunal held, "a debt once paid has no existence and it is impossible that taxation should be resorted to in order to make a new outlay, or one which by redemption is to be paid out of the sinking fund." Now as the amount of bonds in the sinking fund at the present time was \$39,331,058.10, the actual debt of the city was \$92,309,149.90 which shows a reduction of \$702,479.53 on the debt statement of 1885, and a saving in taxes of over two millions.

In the meantime the resources of the city, as indicated by the receipts of





Bronx Park—On the Heights above the River





the sinking fund, steadily increased. In 1880 they amounted to \$4,951,237.04, and in 1886 to \$8,727,435.47, an increase at the rate of \$629,366 a year; so that the total amount from and including 1880 to and including 1886, a period of seven years, reached the aggregate of \$48,532,241.63, or more than one-half the true debt, and sufficient to pay for the parks five times over.

The last tax estimate values the total assessable real estate at \$1,203,941,065, and as the city, under the constitutional amendment, can issue bonds to the amount of 10 per cent. of this sum, its debt is at present \$27,087,961 below the limit; so that this amount is all available for public improvements if required. The future, of course, is provided for from the same sources, and if the sinking fund should grow with the years, *in five years more its accumulating revenues will reach the handsome total of \$53,077,625*. And as the fund increases the ascending scale of real estate values will by 1893, in all probability, have reached the grand aggregate of \$1,400,000,000, or probably nearer \$1,450,000,000.

It is evident from this estimate that there will be within the time specified—by the year 1893—ample means, not only to pay for the land within the parks, even if the law did not provide for its purchase by the issue of bonds, but sufficient for the construction of the new Croton aqueduct and dam, for new school houses, new docks and other public improvements. All this could be done with the \$33,077,625 which will be paid into the sinking fund from the increasing income of the next five years, and without the addition of a single dollar to the yearly tax budget.

#### THE NEW YORK OF THE FUTURE.

Nor is this an overestimate, if we take into account the marvelous growth of our population, which to all appearances is increasing at the rate of 6 per cent. a year, as in the decades from 1800 to 1810, from 1820 to 1830, from 1840 to 1850, and from 1850 to 1860. Should the present accelerated speed continue till 1890, we shall have in that year over 1,900,000 inhabitants in New York, and this rate of increase gives us at present a population of at least 1,700,000. By the close of the century there will, if this progress is maintained, be 3,000,000 souls within our city limits. Who can then say that we exceeded the bounds when we insisted at the commencement of the park movement in 1881 in appropriating not only the large tracts within the city limits, but the park by the Sound? Had we laid out 6,000 acres instead of 3,800, the area would still be inadequate before the end of the present century. Calling the attention of the public nearly six years ago to the necessity of making ample provision in advance by taking the most desirable and suitable sites the writer referred to this marvelous growth of our population, and said that this country must exercise a vast, a controlling influence on the civilization, the policy, the commerce of the world, and the great metropolis, the commercial capital of the nation, must be the financial centre around which the business interests of the whole continent shall revolve; that London will no longer hold the balance of power in the monetary world, and Lombard street and the Bourse will be governed in their movements by the Wall street barometer.

The New York of the future will be not only to the New, but to the Old World as well, what London and Paris are to Europe—the great centre of capital, commerce and enterprise, the arbiter of taste and fashion, the magnet to attract travelers from the ends of the earth. Here the wealth of a continent will find profitable fields for investment; here art and genius will discover new forms of expression; here invention will lighten labor, and liberty will dignify toil; here, too, wealth will find its noblest work in erecting homes and asylums for those who have been wounded in the battle of life, and its most graceful use in founding institutions wherein might be stored the products of the brain power of the world, whether in printed volumes or illuminated manuscripts, in speaking canvas or in sculptured marble; such institutions as the Astor and Lenox libraries, Cooper Institute and the Museum of Art.

Standing midway in the paths of commerce and trade between Europe and Asia, between the active civilization of the one and the long dormant but awakening civilization of the other, the most vivid imagination might well shrink from foreshadowing the future of our imperial city. Nothing can impede or delay its progress but the apathy or indifference of its citizens; nothing impart to it such an impetus as their active interest in every project designed to extend its boundaries and increase its attractiveness. Apprehensions of the decline of trade or the loss of this or that branch of business from competition with rival cities may alarm timid minds, but the true policy is to make our metropolis so inviting that it will bring not only pleasure seekers but profit seekers to enjoy its advantages and participate in its pleasures. The New York for which we are now to provide is a city whose population will, within the present century, surge in great waves up to the northern and eastern boundary lines and into Westchester county. In the next quarter of a century the new parks will be as inadequate to the demands of the future as the Central Park is to meet the requirements of the present.

#### THE REMEDY FOR A GREAT EVIL.

Reference has been made to the opportunity afforded our wealthy citizens by the great park on the Sound for the exercise of their benevolence in providing free summer excursions for the poor and infirm, for helpless age, the children of our orphan asylums and the inmates of similar institutions. There is no enterprise of a charitable or benevolent character more deserving of sympathy and substantial aid than the "Fresh Air Fund," and where can fresh air be found in greater abundance than in the invigorating breezes that blow over Pelham Bay Park from the purifying waters of the Sound. Were it possible to transplant the hundreds of thousands of toilers from the sweltering, suffocating, poison-laden atmosphere of the long miles of tenement houses to this great reservoir and bathe them in its refreshing air and water during the Saturday half-holiday of each week, there would be a decline in the death rate and a marked reduction in the bills of mortality.

It is to be hoped that the creation of small parks in the densely-packed sections of the city will not result in still more densely packing the huge,



Bronx Park—The Cascade.



overcrowded, surrounding buildings, where the death rate is so largely in excess of that in other parts of the city. Some twenty years ago the Board of Health suggested that the only absolute remedy for this great evil was the removal "of the overcrowded population to the neighboring county, where cheaper and better dwellings can be procured. This," it was said, "could not be done until means are provided by which the laboring population can return to their work expeditiously and at little expense." Of course the dispersion of hundreds of thousands living in tenement houses can only be accomplished in time and by other than compulsory means. One of the most effectual of these is the extension of the business area of the city, its encroachment on the residential portion and the consequent displacement of the occupants and their removal to other parts. Another is the strict enforcement of the law limiting the number of persons to each house and prescribing the dimensions of the apartments. But the most effectual, not only for the sanitary welfare, but for the moral well-being of the people, is a change of locality, pure air and more commodious dwellings. To effect the purpose for which they are designed the creation of small parks should be accompanied by a revolution in the tenement houses system. Otherwise the killing economy of space, fatal alike to health and morals, may go on increasing, and what was intended as a blessing may prove a curse. However, as the chances are largely in favor of the proposed and desired improvement the sooner it is carried into operation the better, and it is to be hoped that as the necessary power is conferred by the law there will be within the next five years many small parks located and ready for use in the most populous and the most unhealthy districts.

But what a pity it is that several years must elapse before the people for whose recreation the small parks law was enacted can have the benefit of them. The structures which now encumber the ground must be removed, the vacant spaces filled in with new earth, the grounds laid out and the trees planted—a work which will involve, in addition to the cost of the buildings, a heavy expense. Nothing of this will be required in the case of the new parks in the northern half of the city, which are even now ready for occupation.

#### THE TENEMENT HOUSE PROBLEM.

The costly experience which the city has acquired on this vitally important tenement house question should suggest some practical means of preventing the same evils in the 23d and 24th Wards, the area of which is about equal in extent to the twenty-two wards south of the Harlem River. As New York has now not more than one fifth or one-sixth of the population which will hereafter reside within its limits the legislation necessary to secure and preserve the requisite sanitary regulations as to dwelling space for the millions to come cannot be provided too soon. There is a large area yet to be occupied, and on this area millions are to live. Shall they be packed at the rate of 276,480 human beings to the square mile, as they are to-day in the 10th Ward; or, at the average of 225,280 to the same area, as in the 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th and 17th Wards.

But the worst of this packing business is not told, the climax is only

reached when we ascertain from the census of 1830 that there were in these wards sections or blocks in which the average of population to the square mile was, incredible as it may appear, 539,713. These are the fields from which Death gathers his most prolific harvests; here infants and children "fall like corn before the reaper;" here the slaughter of the innocents goes on from day to day and from year to year unchecked and almost unnoticed. Space, air, salubrious and commodious habitations, parks, the lungs of cities—these are the essentials to health and strength, to mental as well as physical vigor and power. More laws to regulate and secure the essential sanitary conditions, the proper distribution of space in the erection of buildings, should be enacted at the earliest day possible, in order to prevent the perpetuation and extension of the fatal tenement house system over the yet unoccupied territory. New York should be built hereafter along the ground, not into the sky; outward, not upward. In the space thus far occupied by thousands of dwellings there is only room, under proper sanitary conditions, for half the number.

#### NEW YORK'S PACKED POPULATION.

The last census presented a striking contrast between New York and other cities in the proportion of inhabitants to the area occupied. In 1880 the population of our city was 1,206,299, who lived in 73,684 dwellings, an average of  $16\frac{1}{2}$  to each house. Brooklyn had a population of 566,663 in 62,233 dwellings, an average of about 9; and Philadelphia 847,170 living in 146,412, or an average of 6 to a house. Thus the great city on the Delaware, with a little more than two-thirds the population of the great city on the Hudson, had double the number of dwellings. No wonder if such unhealthy localities as those on the east and parts of the west side of the city, where the huge tenement houses, four, five and six stories high, extending for miles and miles along the avenues and streets and looming up in unsunned lanes and alleys, swell the death-rate of the city far beyond the mortality of other sections. Pure air is as essential to the healthy growth and development of a people as the food they eat. Pack them into boxes, not rooms, and their growth physically, mentally and morally will be stunted.

As far back as October, 1881, when earnestly urging on the New York public the pressing necessity for an increase of the park area of the city by the selection of suitable sites in the 23d and 24th Wards and the adjacent section of Westchester county, the writer referred to the opportunity which would be presented by rapid transit for the distribution of the denizens of the tenement-house district, and their transfer to the healthier localities beyond the Harlem. "Here," he then said, "land can be had at reasonable prices, and dwellings fit for human beings can be built and rented at moderate rates. Here, along the lines of rapid transit, will eventually be gathered by tens of thousands the workers of the great metropolis, no longer cooped up in wretched, foul and disease-laden tenements—living tombs of the toiling masses. Here there will be no packing into close, narrow, pest-breeding apartments, but neat, commodious cottages free from that mental and physical contamination which is the curse of over-crowded cities. Rapid transit furnishes the most practical solution of the tenement-house problem.

and it is safe to say that the promise of such a system as will meet all requirements is near its fulfillment."

#### THE RAPID TRANSIT QUESTION.

Many of the difficulties which heretofore interfered with the practical solution of this vexed question no longer exist; they have been removed by the system of rapid transit, which, although not as perfect as could be wished, will eventually furnish all the facilities of transportation necessary to enable a large portion of the working classes to secure homes in healthier localities and yet be placed, in point of time, within convenient reach of their workshops, factories, stores and other places of business. For those who are obliged to remain there will be less crowding, consequently healthier dwellings; and when they can give a day to recreation in the country or desire to spend their half holiday in the large parks, the improved facilities of transit will enable them to do so in a half hour at the utmost. As yet rapid transit is only in its infancy, the present structures to a certain extent experimental and destined in the near future to give way to an improved system. The inventive genius of our people, so prolific in resources, will prove equal to the demands made upon it, and as the old stage coach gave way to the lightning express, and as the time of the surface car has been reduced one-half by the elevated railroad train, so the speed of the latter will be doubled to meet the public demand.

Who will say that in the near future some, as yet undiscovered, force, acting through new mechanical appliances, will not treble the rate of speed with which one hundred and twenty millions a year are at present carried over our elevated railroads. It is not yet ten years since these roads were opened to travel, and so absolutely indispensable have they become to the public that one week's suspension of the various lines would literally paralyze business. Without them the parks would be much less accessible; with them the great pleasure grounds can be reached in less than an hour from the most distant parts of the city, and when we have through travel and express trains this time can be reduced one-half. They will be nearer to the great mass of our population than was Central Park before the elevated railways were constructed and they will be what Central has never been—the play grounds of the people. Moreover, they will be a potent factor in keeping our population within our own borders and in bringing back tens of thousands who have been induced by the superior facilities of transit presented beyond the city limits to seek dwellings in New Jersey, Long Island and elsewhere. To this cause may be ascribed in part the marked increase of population in these localities since the last census.

The statistics of travel along all the lines—surface and elevated—may well excite surprise. The extraordinary increase of business on the latter evidently far exceeded the calculations of the companies themselves, and after a few years they were obliged to employ more powerful motors, to run longer trains and to reduce the time between them. If the following table could be taken as a basis of calculation the population of the city



## THE NEW PARKS.

must have doubled within the last ten years, and we have, instead of seventeen hundred thousand, two millions of inhabitants:

	Elevated R. R.	Horse Railways	Total.
1877.....	8,011,863	160,944,436	168,956,299
1878.....	9,391,319	160,952,892	170,244,151
1879.....	46,045,181	142,088,381	188,083,562
1880.....	60,831,757	150,890,592	211,222,349
1881.....	75,585,778	148,050,808	221,636,586
1882.....	86,361,029	166,510,617	252,871,646
1883.....	92,124,943	175,994,523	268,107,732
1884.....	96,702,830	187,413,242	284,115,882
1885.....	103,354,726	191,165,085	294,519,764
1886.....	115,109,591	204,313,288	319,422,839

An inspection of these figures and a comparison of the number of passengers carried by the horse cars and the elevated trains show that while there was a falling off in the horse car travel during 1879, 1880 and 1881, the lost business was recovered in 1883, '3, '4, '5 and '6, and largely augmented—the travel of 1886 over 1878 being more than 25 per cent. This would indicate, if the figures were accepted as a correct basis for estimate, a corresponding increase in the population, and adding thereto the increase of travel by the elevated roads from 1878 to 1886—about 106,000,000—we should have, as stated, nearly two millions of inhabitants at present in New York. But we cannot rely for accurate estimates upon these statistics, for it is a well-established fact that as the facilities and accommodations for transportation are improved an increased business follows, independent of the growth of population. It is in this case, as in every other—improved methods beget an increased demand.

## ACCESS TO THE NEW PARKS.

Particular reference is made to this question of rapid transit as it has a special interest in relation to the new parks. In connection with the progress of the city northward it is a matter of great importance. Within a year the elevated road on Third avenue beyond the Harlem will have been constructed as far as its terminus on the Bronx, and probably in less than five years the various lines comprising the suburban rapid transit system will be finished. The Harlem River improvement will give a decided impetus to the development and growth of our two most northern wards and to the adjacent portions of Westchester county, outside of the city now, but certain in two or three years to be annexed; and these wards will have a population of half a million by the time that improvement is completed. While it is in progress new lines of travel will be opened, new routes to the parks constructed, and the annexed district, so called, will be traversed by as many means of transit as the other half of New York below the Harlem. To Van Cortlandt Park there will be, besides the northern road, branches from the Harlem and the Hudson River, while the Bronx Park will be no less liberally supplied with means of access, and the grand outlying park, the indented shores of which extend in many curved and graceful lines a distance of nine miles, will be no less generously provided with tributary transit roads. There will be no lack of means of transportation when the new park territory is opened throughout its whole length and breadth. The necessary facilities will be



Bronx Park--Sylvan Point.



ready, are in fact ready now and only waiting the moment when the lands shall be declared free to the public.

When that announcement is made the people will be at liberty to wander over the green fields, up the grassy slopes, through the shady woods, free from the restraints imposed on the visitors to the Central. There they will not be confined to dusty roads and asphaltum walks, but can enjoy themselves in picnics in the groves, athletic exercises on the broad meadows, games of croquet, base-ball, tennis, polo or lacrosse, or such other recreation or exercise as they fancy. Already eager thousands throng every Sunday up to the very borders of the parks, gazing with wistful eyes on the tempting scenes, and, when not stopped by the owners, passing through the gates, or over the fences into the appropriated grounds. The elevated roads during the summer season, and even into the fall, carry tens of thousands into the new wards which are already known by the distinctive title of the park district; and these are but the precursors of the greater multitude that will follow when all is accomplished—the bonds issued, the Park Department in control and the people in acknowledged possession.

Last year and the year previous there were unmistakable indications of the impatient desire of the public to enjoy these great pleasure grounds. In some instances the visitors denied the right of the occupants to exclude them, forced their way in and insisted that as the lands were public parks they had a right to remain.

#### THE PARADE GROUND AND POPULAR RECREATIONS.

In Van Cortlandt, Bronx and Pelham Bay Parks there have been regular picnic parties, although in portions of Pelham Park prohibitory notices warn trespassers off the land. In Van Cortlandt Park curlers and skaters have, through the courtesy of the proprietor, free use of the lake in the winter, and the military are to be accorded the privilege next fall of using the hundred and twenty acres which have been set apart for a parade ground, without awaiting the report of the Commissioners, or its confirmation by the Supreme Court. And what a magnificent parade ground that level sweep of 120 acres will make! What Champs de Mars is framed in scenery so exquisite? On the west of it, and overlooking Broadway, rises the picturesque range of hills, which form the eastern bank of the Hudson, while on the other side the magnificent Palisades bound the horizon. Away to the south is the valley of the Harlem, spanned by the high arches upholding the tunnel which carries to the great city nearly a hundred million gallons of pure water daily. To the north are the wooded hills of the park, and beyond its limit, which is coterminous with the city line, are to be seen from these hills glimpses of the Hudson and some of the finest views to be found along the whole course of our American Rhine. A few hundred yards to the east of the inclosed tract is a sylvan lake covering an extent of fifty acres, which can be enlarged to eighty, and which is supplied by the ever-flowing Moshulu and natural springs.

Besides the opportunity the parks afford for recreation and healthful exercise, there are many varied features that can be introduced hereafter

which will be appreciated by visitors—many uses to which they can be legitimately put and which would materially increase the revenues of the Sinking Fund, and thus directly contribute towards the extinction of the municipal debt.

Capital and enterprise combined will be quick to find in such features profitable investment, and pay liberally for the privileges and grants which they may secure from the city. Every month, therefore, that the people are deprived of these benefits is so much lost to the municipal treasury.

#### A PERMANENT INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION.

One of the most valuable, one of the most important, and doubtless one of the most popular attractions that could be engrafted on the parks, would be a permanent industrial exhibition, for which buildings should be erected in a style and on a scale commensurate with the character of the enterprise. Such a work, if properly organized, could be made to subserve the industrial interests of the whole country, and be to the useful what galleries of painting and sculpture are to the fine arts.

The value of an institution of this character can hardly be overestimated, not merely as an instructor of the people, but as affording an opportunity of presenting on a grand and comprehensive scale the progress of the mechanic arts throughout the world, and especially as demonstrated in the products of American genius. Classified according to the States which have contributed to the development and perfection of this or that invention, the many labor-saving machines, and the multiplied and varied applications of mechanical power, whether used in manufactures or in commerce, in supplying human wants or facilitating travel and transportation—such an exhibition would practically illustrate the progress of material civilization, and present in a historical form the various stages in each particular case from the earliest and crudest efforts to the latest improvement, or the perfected machine. A large portion of the necessary material could be duplicated from the Patent Office at Washington, but the arrangement and classification in chronological order would be a task requiring for its successful accomplishment the highest qualifications and the ripest experience.

An exhibition of this character on Hunter's Island, in Pelham Park, would constitute one of the most attractive features in the multiplying attractions of our cosmopolitan city. There is no tract in all the new park domain so well adapted for the purpose. The scenery is picturesque in the highest degree, and it possesses what the Sydenham Exhibition lacks, an outlook over one of the most beautiful sheets of water in the world.

As to capital, there is an abundance in New York for the promotion of such a work, but the enterprise could justly appeal to the whole country, and if carried out on the plan indicated it would necessarily embrace every section and include every State. The objection as to distance is without force, for the means of access furnished by the Portchester and Harlem road, which runs through the park, in which it has even now three stations, and by the great fleet of steamboats ready for the task, would meet all demands.

## A DIVERSIFIED PARK SYSTEM.

The visitor to the three great parks cannot fail to observe the striking contrast presented by their topography. It is doubtful, indeed, if within an equal area anywhere in the United States such wide diversity could be found. The sites selected differ in a marked degree from one another, and in this difference is to be found the particular charms of each. Our metropolis has been especially favored in this respect, probably beyond any other capital in the world. So rapid has been its development and growth that had the movement through which these lands have been secured been delayed for ten or fifteen years this magnificent park domain would never have been acquired.

It is certain that if the precise tracts, located under the authority conferred by the act of 1883 and taken by the act of 1894, could be purchased fifteen years hence they could not be obtained for quadruple the price which the city will pay for them when the Commissioners of Appraisal have determined their value.

It has been said that they are natural parks; but this, after all, does not convey an adequate idea of their character as public pleasure grounds, though it is of much importance to the city when the question of expense is considered. It is a great matter certainly when it is understood that the Central is a wholly artificial affair; that it has been literally manufactured at a cost of over twenty thousand dollars an acre, and that any expense beyond that required for the laying out and construction of a few roads and walks will be wholly unnecessary in the case of the new parks. And this is a subject of no small account—in point of fact it is a question of millions, for within the tracts appropriated are lakes and streams and hills and rocks and meadows and glades and woods, the growth of centuries—in a word, all the natural features necessary to constitute a park, and many of which, as in the case of the Central, could only be furnished at an enormous cost. But there is one thing which no amount of money could create—the natural beauties of the sites selected, and which will be found on inspection to justify all that has been said in their praise.

## AREA OF PARKS AND PARKWAYS.

It is now nearly six years since the writer, as stated elsewhere, called public attention in a series of articles to the immediate necessity of securing at least four or five thousand acres of land in the annexed district and the adjacent territory of Westchester County, and the location of which he indicated on an accompanying map. Referring to the two great parks since taken under the act of 1894, he alluded to the difference in the topography as one of the great advantages to be secured in the location of the sites at the points selected. It was then urged as an essential feature of the system that the "two great suburban parks might be connected by one or more grand boulevards, which should be included in the general plan."

At that time it was hoped that when the importance of the subject was fully appreciated and the deficiency of New York in the matter of parks was thoroughly understood, a movement in favor of the addition of at least four thousand acres would meet with popular encouragement and sup-

## THE NEW PARKS.

port. The result of the park movement proved that the confidence felt in the approval of the public was not unfounded. The area acquired under the act of 1884 was 3,848 39-100 acres, which were distributed as follows:

	Acres.
Van Cortlandt Park.....	1,069 65-100
Bronx Park .....	653
Pelham Bay Park.....	1,740
Crotona Park.....	135 34-100
St. Mary's Park.....	25 35-100
Claremont Park.....	38 05-100
Mosholu Parkway.....	80
Bronx and Pelham Parkway.....	90
Crotona Parkway.....	12
Total.....	3,848 29-100

Added to the parks already established, this gives a total of about 5,000 acres.

## VAN CORTLANDT PARK, PARADE GROUND AND RIFLE RANGE.

Of the area embraced in the new parks and parkways beyond the Harlem, the tract of 1,669 acres included in the Van Cortlandt Park possesses in the picturesque beauty of the surrounding country, as well as in its diversified surface, a rare combination of all that is essential to a great suburban pleasure ground. Lying midway between the Hudson and the Bronx its greatest width is a mile and three-quarters, while at its narrowest part it is about a mile across, and its extreme length two and a-quarter miles. Of its area, 40 acres are highly improved and cultivated garden spots, 400 are in wood, and 450 in meadow. Of the meadow land, 120 acres are so uniformly level, that they can, at a comparatively moderate cost, be converted into a magnificent parade ground. Probably there is not within the city limits a more suitable or a more valuable tract for this purpose.

Reference was made to the subject of a parade ground, but as the allusion was necessarily brief, the importance of this feature in the park, the extent which it covers, and the fact that it will not be exclusively devoted to the use of the National Guard, justifies more than a passing notice.

Our National Guard have for years been dependent on the courtesy of the Brooklyn authorities on the occasion of special parades, and they will have now, for the first time in the history of the First Division, a space sufficient for their proper education and training in the practical duties of the citizen soldier. Heretofore every effort to secure a suitable tract has failed. The Legislature has been appealed to again and again, and when at length, after years of unavailing effort, an act was passed condemning a piece of land of somewhat limited area; the law was repealed, and the city was involved in tedious and expensive litigation—a specimen of the sagacity by which its interests are protected. It has lost the land, and it has spent tens of thousands of dollars to no purpose. When the Central Park was under consideration, it was supposed that a portion of the ground would be set apart for the use of the military, although it was not certain that any direct pledge was made to that effect. Whatever hopes were then entertained by the National Guard that their wants would be provided for have been rudely dispelled by the fierce opposition made to the attempt to secure by legislation the temporary use of a particular tract in the park. Without entering into



Bronx Park—DeLancey's Ancient Pine.





the merits of the controversy, it must be admitted that the city should long ago have acknowledged and made ample provision to enable them to acquire that degree of efficiency so essential to the proper discharge of the duties of the service in which they are enlisted, and to which they freely give their time without compensation or reward.

Hereafter there can be no controversy as to a parade ground, for the right of the National Guard to the use of the 120 acres for this purpose, and as "a camp and drill ground," is fully provided for in section 6 of the act. Not only has a parade ground been located in this park, but "a rifle range to be used for rifle and target practice; said parade ground and rifle range to be used by the First Division of the National Guard of the State of New York when required by the commanding officer of such Division."

This is certainly explicit enough, and moreover the Park Department is directed within three months after it shall have obtained control to lay out the parade ground in the portion of the park designated for the purpose. Of the rifle range, which is to the east of the Moshulu and at the termination of which is a natural butt of rocks, it is enough to say that it is no less adapted to the use to which it is to be applied, and will require little outlay for its improvement. It extends along the valley to a length of twelve or fourteen hundred yards and the overlooking hill along which runs the old aqueduct affords an excellent view of the entire range.

#### GENEROUS PROVISION FOR OUR NATIONAL GUARD.

It is, of course, desirable that the preliminary work of the Commission shall be got out of the way as soon as possible; but in the meantime the present owner of the property has courteously placed the tract appropriated for the parade ground at the service of the Division, and will put it in proper condition so that it can be used next September or October, as the officers may decide.

As the parade ground will only be occupied on certain days by the National Guard it will be free at all other times to athletic and other clubs, and during the appropriate seasons it will doubtless be in constant demand. There need, however, be no crowding, for there is "ample room and verge enough" for base ball, polo, lacrosse and all kinds of physical recreation and exercise, and should it in time be found insufficient to meet all the demands that may be made upon it, abundance of space can be had in the broad meadows of Pelham Bay Park.

The opportunity afforded by this extensive parade ground, which has twice the area of that attached to the Prospect Park, of Brooklyn, for military exercise on a scale unprecedented in this city or its vicinity will attract tens of thousands of spectators on special occasions. Here it will be possible to manoeuvre as many as ten thousand men of all arms, and their movements can be witnessed by over a hundred thousand spectators from the hills which bound and overlook the northern extremity of this extended plain, while from the heights beyond the westerly side of the park double that number can see the brilliant spectacle, as infantry, cavalry and artillery go through their exercises or are arrayed in mimic battle.

## REVOLUTIONARY REMINISCENCES.

From the commanding eminence known as Vault Hill, and which has an elevation of over a hundred feet above the parade ground, an extended view of the park is presented on every side. On its summit is the cemetery from which it has obtained its name. Within the walled inclosure are the vaults in which repose the remains of several members of the historic family who are still in occupation of the property and from whose keeping it will pass, before the close of another year, into the possession of the city with all the land now and hereafter to be known as Van Cortlandt Park, the title conferred upon it by legislative enactment. But the vaults served another purpose than that of a place of interment, for in February, 1776, the Augustus Van Cortlandt of that day, who held the office of "Clerk of New York," reported to the Committee of Safety that for their security he had "removed the public records to Yonkers," and as the safest place of deposit they were secreted there, but it is supposed that they were subsequently found by the British when in occupation of this part of the park and returned to the city.

This portion of the park is rich in revolutionary reminiscences and may well be regarded as an object of special interest. Indeed this whole section of the city and its vicinity, forming the 23d and 24th Wards and the town of Yonkers, as well as the territory stretching beyond the Bronx and over to the Sound, witnessed many a scene of fierce encounter and sanguinary strife, and every acre of it may be truly said to have been traversed and fought over by the contending forces. From Vault Hill to Kingsbridge the tide of war ebbed to and fro with varying success throughout the long seven years' struggle.

## THE ANCIENT MANSION AND MILL.

The *ruse de guerre* by which in 1781 Washington deceived the British enemy lying at Kingsbridge while he withdrew his army to Yorktown, was planned and successfully carried out on this memorable spot. On the summit and along the slopes of Vault Hill he lighted illusive camp fires and ostentatiously displayed the few remaining troops, while the great body of his forces were on the march, under his immediate command, to join Lafayette at Yorktown, where British supremacy received its death blow. When in 1783, at the close of the war, Washington revisited this place, he made his headquarters in the Van Cortlandt mansion, where he remained three days awaiting the evacuation of New York by the enemy's troops. It will not detract from the historic interest attaching to the building to add that it was also occupied, and for a much longer period, by the colonel of the Hessian Yagers, for, the truth must be told, it was more frequently in the possession of the red coats than of the patriots. Such a relic must be preserved as one of the most valuable landmarks within the park. Then there is also the ancient mill—over a century old—which stands at the southern extremity of the lake, nestling in the deep shadow of towering elms, and which will long be a favorite resort of the lovers of the picturesque, for the retired nook in which it stands is one of the most beautiful in the whole range of the park. This same old mill



Bronx Park--The Woodland Mirror



served both the friends and foes of American liberty, both red coats and Continentals, as it changed owners in the varying fortunes of the contest.

At this point the overflow of the lake forms a miniature cascade and rapids, which flow between banks bordered with great trees, as the stream courses on its way to join the waters of the Spuyten Duyvil, a mile off in the valley below. The Van Cortlandt Station of the New York & Northern Railroad, which passes through the park, is within a few hundred feet of the old mill and cascade, and as he leaves the station the visitor finds himself in one of the most exquisite of rural scenes. Here he sees in all their perfection—perfect in being wholly free from art—

“The wonders of the lane,”

as wondrous, if not more wondrous, than those of which Elliott so sweetly sung.

#### SYLVAN SCENERY.

All that art has done for the Central, and it has done everything for it, can show nothing comparable with this lovely vista. Through the foliage of great ancestral trees the lake is visible, and the sound of falling water mingled with the melody of birds greets the ear as you cross the rustic bridge that spans the brook. This is literally the home of the birds and “the trees are full of song” the whole summer through. For them the much-abused pugnacious sparrow has no terrors. Robins, blackbirds, thrushes, orioles, catbirds, bobolinks, all build their nests

“Under the green roofs of trees,”

and raise their young fearless of the foreign foe. The thick, tangled sedge and dense shrubbery that hide the Mosholu as it flows into the lake are still the resort of wood duck, woodcock and quail, for here the park is a wilderness, and in both brook and lake the “lusty trout” is still to be found by the skillful angler, a testimony more truthful than iron-clad affidavit of the purity of the water. The writer has in his possession a well-preserved speckled two-pounder, caught near the mill and at which point an occasional capture is still made.

No danger from malaria here, as the lake is supplied by the ever flowing Mosholu, which still holds its Indian title despite its more common name of Tibbitt's Brook. The lake is not wholly dependent, however, for its supply from this source, for it has springs of its own, and it receives also the drainage from the range of hills on either side. At slight expense its area can be almost doubled and the brook, freed from the rank growth by which it is concealed, can be made a most attractive feature in the landscape.

#### A PARK CONTRAST—NEW YORK AND PARIS.

There are so-called lakes in the Central, but no brook or rivulet, and in this respect the Van Cortlandt has a decided advantage. In the Bronx Park there is the stream from which it has its name, but the Bronx is more than a brook, and in some of the histories in which it is described it is dignified with the title of river. A brook, however, is an attraction which very few parks possess, and it is deemed so essential in the plans of the French land-

scape gardeners that they have connected the lakes in the Bois de Vincennes, which has twice the area of Van Cortlandt Park, by an artificial stream three miles long. In the Bois de Boulogne the lakes are filled from artesian wells, and there is still sufficient to keep a cascade 40 feet high in constant operation. Like the lakes, the cascade is also the work of human hands, but nature is so closely copied that the imitation might well deceive the inexperienced. Then there are islands in the lakes and restaurants on the islands, and on the "mainland" a theatre, a concert hall, a race course—the celebrated Longchamps—and no end of entertainments and amusements for the young, who appear to have been the object of special regard in the designs of the great Paris playgrounds. The recreations and taste of all classes have been consulted in the arrangement and plan both of the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes, which, in addition to a race course, a spacious parade ground, a rifle range and a model farm, has several meadow tracts where the children can enjoy themselves without hindrance or threats of fines and penalties. There is, it is true, abundant space within these two grand parks, the combined area of which is nearly as large as that of all our parks north and south of the Harlem; but there is no good reason why we cannot reproduce in Van Cortlandt and Pelham parks all the attractions of the two great pleasure grounds of the French capital. Our Park Department can profit by the lessons taught by the municipality of Paris, which derives a large revenue from the leases and privileges granted to the keepers of restaurants and the caterers to the various amusements within these and other public grounds.

With all the attractions of the Paris parks—and no expense has been spared in their embellishment—they are inferior to the parks beyond the Harlem in natural beauty and in the picturesque character of their surroundings. Neither of them can boast of a valley like that of the Mosholu, with gently sloping hills, crowned in parts with dense woods, in which grow nearly all the varieties native to this section of the country—many kinds of oaks, stately elms, broad-leaved catalpas, evergreen pine and cedar, the hardy locust, the drooping willow, the umbrageous chestnut, the graceful maple, the valuable walnut, the wild cherry, and apple and plum, and the wild grapevine—all are to be found within the bounds of Van Cortlandt Park.

#### MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

Glorious, indeed, the revolutionary memories of this locality, but it is so crowded with incidents of "the days that tried men's souls" that four large volumes have already been filled, and there are doubtless others yet to come.

Looking from Vault Hill in a northeasterly direction the eye rests on an opening in the woods which is known as "the Indian Field," and there, in one grave, unmarked by memorial stone, lie the remains of eighteen of the forty Stockbridge Indians, steadfast allies of the patriots, who fell beneath British bayonets and bullets. From this point there is an extended view of the Palisades of the Hudson over to the west, and here an observatory may one day be erected which will still further extend the view and bring out

in fuller relief the charms of the surrounding scenery, for Vault Hill commands not only a view of the whole park but of the great range of country of which it may be regarded as the centre.

Immediately to the south, about a quarter of a mile away, stands the square stone mansion of the Van Cortlandts of Kingsbridge, of which Hon. A. Van Cortlandt and his family are the present occupants. It is in itself an antique relic, a piece of architectural bric-à-brac of the last century, and, as the quaint numerals carved in the stone tablet on its front informs the spectator, it was built in the year 1748. And that old tablet, if it could speak, could tell many a tale of fierce and sanguinary strife that took place either here or in the immediate vicinity of this now peaceful and lovely scene; for Kingsbridge, less than a mile to the south, constituted the barrier of the British lines, and this was "the debatable ground."

An order of Congress, dated May 25, 1775, directed "that a post be immediately taken and fortified at or near Kingsbridge, and that the ground be chosen with a particular view to prevent the communication between the city of New York and the country from being interrupted by land." Here the outposts of both armies had frequent encounters, and the records of many a deadly struggle are found in the bullets, bayonets, fragments of muskets and other relics which are occasionally turned up in the work of excavation. In fact, as already stated, all the country round, from and at times below Kingsbridge up to and beyond White Plains, and from the Hudson to the Sound, was one field of strife between the patriot forces under Washington, Rochambeau, Greene, Van Cortlandt, Heath, Parsons, Clinton, Thomas, Lasher, Graham, Berthier, De Lauzun, De Chastellux, Deuxpoints, De Noailles, De Beville, Du Portout, Paulding, Nicholas, Swartwout and Armand, and the British under Howe, Knyphausen, Cathcart, Tarleton, De Lancey, Simcoe, Emmerick, Van Wurmb and Rogers.

But the most protracted and determined fighting was done at and around Fort Independence, erected on the seventy-five-acre farm of General Montgomery, and within a few hundred yards of his dwelling. Portions of the fort still remain on Tetards Hill, which can be seen from the Van Cortlandt mansion. As to forts, every hill which afforded a commanding view of the country was crowned by some sort of defense, for both the American and English generals regarded the control and possession of this particular section of the utmost importance as a means of keeping open communication.

#### VAN CORTLANDT VISTAS.

But, as has been stated, the history of this locality is crowded with reminiscences of the Revolution, and to the space within Van Cortlandt Park belongs a liberal share of those glorious memories. It has, therefore, a distinctive value apart from that of its natural attractions as a public pleasure ground, and with these it has been most liberally endowed. On every side are views deserving of the best efforts of the artist, and whether on hill tops or in the valleys, on the lake, in the lane or along the brook, some new beauty greets the eye as the visitor changes his position. From



the door of the ancient mansion with its grotesque corbels and quaint devices is seen the valley of the Spuyten Duyvil with its flanking hills and occasional glimpses of the great city to the south. To the west is Riverdale, the site of many a beautiful villa set in the midst of highly cultivated grounds. Less than ten minutes by rail is the towering and graceful structure of High Bridge, a continuation of the Croton Aqueduct, which passes directly through the Van Cortlandt Park from north to south. Another aqueduct is now in process of construction, and will be completed this year, on a line nearly parallel with the first, but at a depth of a hundred feet and more at some points below the surface, and the direction of which is indicated by the air shafts constructed at intervals along its course.

The extensive and wide-spreading lawn in front of the dwelling descends by a series of terraces into the valley below, a relic of the old Dutch style of landscape gardening. This will be one of the favorite resorts in the park, and the building itself, with its antique interior decorations, its curious old parlor, fireplace and carved mantel are deserving of more than a passing glance. To the east of the mansion there are several fine evergreens and a line of grand old chestnuts that were planted nearly a century ago and that now sentinel and shade the path that runs through the meadow to the railroad station beyond.

#### A VOICE FROM FAIRMOUNT.

In the acquisition of this park the city has indeed secured what will be to the present and future generations "a thing of beauty" and "a joy forever." To this, as well as to the Bronx and Pelham parks, the glowing words of the Philadelphia Park Commissioners, in speaking of their own magnificent Fairmount, may with equal force and truth be applied: "*By Philadelphia having the park in contrast with Philadelphia without the park we shall soon have a value added to our real estate and taxable resources more than commensurate with the purchase money of all the park, and that value will increase indefinitely.*" In this way the city will be more than a second time requited for her whole outlay. Conceive of our approximate millions and coming millions as being without Fairmount Park. Can any human imagination begin to estimate the sum of human health and happiness that would be lost to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—the world! Who could make the trial to run the parallel of the value of \$10,000,000, as the price of the park, invested and running at interest for the city with the successive generations of her millions of people without the culture, and health, and happiness of the park, and not feel humiliation, and, withal, being shocked at the meanness of the suggestion? Money is a sacred trust, indeed, for its potency for good; but life, health and happiness and gratitude to God are worth more than all hoarded wealth. We have," say the Fairmount Commissioners in a burst of resolute defiance to those who had been conspiring to deprive their fellow citizens of this great treasure, "we have and will keep this park; we will improve and love it; it shall be our pride and perpetual enjoyment."

And so say we of our still more beautiful parks: we have and will keep them, and they shall be our pride and perpetual enjoyment.



Brave Deak - The Trout Pool



The boundaries of Van Cortlandt as fixed by the act begin at the intersection of the easterly line of Broadway with the northerly line of the city of New York, running thence easterly along the northerly line or boundary of the city of New York to the intersection of said line with the westerly line of Mount Vernon avenue; thence southerly along the westerly line of Mount Vernon avenue to the junction of said westerly line of Mount Vernon avenue with the northerly line of Grand (or Willard) avenue; thence westerly along said northerly line of Grand (Willard) avenue, crossing Jerome avenue to the westerly line of Jerome avenue; thence along said westerly line of Jerome avenue, in a southeasterly and southerly direction to its junction with the northerly line of Gunhill road; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Gunhill road, following its windings, and extending on said line to a point two hundred and seventy-five (275) feet easterly and at right angles from the easterly boundary of the Croton Aqueduct right of way; from thence crossing the Gunhill road at right angles for the full width of said Gunhill road; from thence in a straight line southerly of west to a point on the easterly side of Broadway aforesaid, ten feet southerly of the bridge over Tibbitt's Brook on said Broadway; from thence along the easterly line of Broadway in a northerly direction, following its windings to the place of beginning.

#### RARE SYLVAN BEAUTIES.

The Bronx Park has an area of six hundred and fifty-three acres lying on both sides of the "romantic Bronx" and extending from West Farms to Williamsbridge. It is two miles long and its width varies from half a mile to three-quarters.

It would be difficult to do justice to the exquisite loveliness of this tract without seeming to exaggerate, for the character of the scenery is so varied that every step is a surprise and the artist and "the wayfaring man might love to linger there." It is now in the height of its glory, in full summer garb of green, "the livery that Nature loves to wear," and those who have never seen it should go now and satisfy themselves as to the value of the domain the city has secured and its suitability for park purposes. The Bronx runs through it from north to south, not confined between parallel banks, but bordering curves, forming at intervals wide lake-like reaches, then closing in until they are scarcely fifty feet apart, where its waters are interrupted by the Lydig Dam, over which they are precipitated in one broad foaming cascade that adds a new charm to the landscape. The banks rise to the height of fifty, eighty and even ninety feet; in some places abrupt and precipitous, in others easily surmounted. Gigantic trees, centuries old, crown these summits, while great moss and ivy-covered rocks project here and there at different heights above the surface of the river, increasing the wildness of the scene. Among those is a grand old tree that towers to the height of over one hundred and fifty feet, a veritable monarch of the forest, which that predatory king and tree robber celebrated by Marco Polo would have sacrificed half his army to secure. It stands apart in solitary magnificence and has been

know to many past and will continue to be known to many future generations as De Lancey's ancient pine.

"Where gentle Bronx, clear, winding, flows,  
The shadowy banks between.  
Where blossomed bell or wilding rose  
Adorns the brightest green,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Stands high in solitary state.  
De Lancey's ancient pine."

It is not only a conspicuous and beautiful object but it is interesting in a historical point of view, and immortalized in verse it acquires added interest for the poetic imagination.

#### AN ICEBERG'S GIFT.

But De Lancey's ancient pine is not the only feature of special interest in the Bronx Park, for it possesses in a huge boulder (evidently deposited on its present resting place during the world's glacial period) an object of peculiar value and attraction. This great stone, weighing probably a hundred tons, is so balanced upon the rock upon which it was originally deposited by the melting of some huge iceberg, from whose frozen embrace it was, countless ages ago, released, that by an ordinary effort of human strength it can be set rocking to and fro on its immovable base.

"Like that stone of the Druid race,  
Which the gentlest touch at once sets moving."

Could such an attraction be duplicated by the most skillful appliance of man's ingenuity? Could engineering skill poise it so deftly, balance it so truly, and hold it so inexorably?

#### THE ARTISTS' HAUNT.

The Bronx Park has a great attraction for artists, for it affords such opportunities of studying effects; it presents such varieties of color, such mingling of light and shade, such blending of hues, such manifold forms of growth and such opposite types of beauty, from the stately oak to the

"Creeping ivy that flings its graces  
About the lichened rocks,"

that it is in fact a scenic reservoir to which they love to resort for inspiration and artistic "points." Little wonder that they got up a separate petition to the Legislature in favor of the Park bill of 1884, for to them it appealed in a special manner. To that petition was appended eighty of the highest names in the art circles of New York, and headed by Bierstadt, Huntington and others equally well known to fame.

The Bronx was at one time a considerable stream, draining the southern part of Westchester County, and its winding course is accurately marked out on a quaint old map preserved in the office of the Secretary of State at Albany. Its volume of water has been considerably diminished by tapping it for the new aqueduct, but there should still be sufficient to keep the river clear and to prevent a stagnation in the flow. Failure to attend to that vital point would, by converting the Bronx into a public nuisance, destroy its beauty and its usefulness together. To prevent the



Bronx Park—The River Glade.



possibility of such a misfortune the upper waters of the Bronx should be included in the park system as soon as Westchester is within the city limits in accordance with the original plan of annexation. That would secure the waters along many miles of its course. Future danger from such a source provided against, what a magnificent parkway could be laid out along its banks.

#### THAT BRITISH FLEET.

The Bronx formerly abounded in trout, but these have given way to the black bass; its bordering woods were full of game, and in the "sequestered leafy glades" the feathered minstrels pipe their sweetest lays. Many a gallant deed has been done and many a fierce fight fought in its vicinity—the very atmosphere of the place is thick with Revolutionary memories. It might have been the scene of a sanguinary naval battle that would have painted its banks red, but for that peace-making participle that hath "much virtue in it," "if" it had only been big enough. For Sir William Howe ordered the commander of the British fleet lying in New York up the Bronx, "to meander with his fleet and his guns and all that;" which the commander would have done, says Mr. William Allan Butler—

"If only the Bronx had been bigger."

The three large parks in the new park system, as elsewhere stated, have an individuality as marked as that which distinguishes one man from another. Each has its characteristic excellences, its distinguishing peculiarities, and what we may call its physiognomical traits. The park by the Sound has a character all its own; it is unique in position, and to that fact it owes its pre-eminence. Van Cortlandt has its magnificent parade ground; in itself an attraction that would be felt as far as the Battery; its wide reaches, its running brook, its magnificent views, its ancestral trees and its terraced garden; and the Bronx has a picturesque loveliness that satisfies but never satiates. As said before, it is the haunt of artists, for here they can find solitude profound enough to satisfy Zimmermann himself, and scenes as romantic as any in the Adirondack wilderness. And this within less than a half-hour's drive of the Harlem River, while New Yorkers scour the Continent and cross the ocean in search of beauty! And we laugh at Mrs. Jellyby who could see nothing nearer than Africa!

#### A SCHOOL OF BOTANY.

No better place could be selected for a model botanical garden than Bronx Park, and no better use could be made of any of the parks than to make them subserve educational purposes, practical schools of horticulture, zoology, arboriculture, etc., where children could learn without studying, acquire knowledge without opening a book, and where there could be levied "a tax of profit from their very play." A dry botanical catalogue of names and facts might be committed to memory and held retentively, but it would not arouse interest nor stimulate observation like the flower, shedding its perfume on the air, or the stately tree with its multitudinous leaves rustling in the summer breeze. And no representative of animal life ever gave a boy, or girl, such pleasure



as one glimpse of the same animal in motion or repose. What they have read may be forgotten; what they have seen remains impressed on the memory.

Philadelphia has a magnificent Botanical Garden in Fairmount Park, to the maintenance and extension of which her citizens contribute with praiseworthy generosity. In one year alone 1,000 plants, many of them rare and costly specimens, and \$6,500 were contributed. Who imagines that our citizens would display less generosity or less public spirit? Their donations to the Museum of Art and to the public libraries is conclusive on that point. Still, in spite of our municipal pride and civic *esprit de corps*, we must admit that in the Fairmount Park Association, a society of citizens numbering over a thousand, who contribute annually a certain sum for the adornment of the grounds and for embellishing them with valuable works of art, Philadelphia has taken a step far in advance of the Empire City.

In San Francisco the park authorities devote considerable space and attention to rare and tropical plants and have succeeded in raising from seed the gigantic water lily of South America, the "Victoria Regia," whose huge circular leaves measure twenty-three feet in circumference. In Boston an Arboretum has been added to the park system, which is commended to the people as "a museum of living plants in which every tree and shrub capable of withstanding the climate of Massachusetts is to find its appropriate place," "as a school of forestry and arboriculture," and as "a scientific station for investigation into the relations of forests to climate and the flow of rivers, and into the best methods of forest reproduction and management." Such an institution here would be of incalculable benefit, for it would arouse public interest in the subject of forestry and consequently draw attention to the rapid destruction of the woods of the Adirondacks, which as a piece of blended vandalism and folly it would be hard to equal.

#### AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

Such an institution would teach the true value of trees, show that they had a higher mission to fulfil than beautifying the landscape or affording grateful shade to the exhausted traveler; that they added to the fertility of our soil and increased the flow of our rivers, and thus made commerce and agriculture their debtors. And not only agriculture and commerce, but chemistry, medicine, metallurgy, mechanics and manufactures, art and science, owe to them not a few of their triumphs and most of their possibilities.

"I feel," says George Sand, adding her name to a petition of the French artists for the protection of the Forest of Fontainebleau, "that the destruction of beautiful forests is a monstrous proposition, and that we have no right, in an intellectual or hygienic sense, to remove large trees from a public domain. They are as sacred as the fertilizing clouds with which they hold incessant communication; they ought to be protected and respected, never left to barbarous caprice nor to the egotistic want of the individual. Beautiful and majestic, even in their decrepitude, they are as

much the property of our descendants as they were of our ancestors. They are eternal temples, the mighty architecture and ornamental foliation of which is constantly renewed; sanctuaries of silence and reverie, where successive generations have the right to assemble for meditation and for the development of that sense of grandeur of which every man has a consciousness and a need in the depths of his nature."

London and Paris have botanical gardens on a grand scale, that of Paris extending over twenty-two acres, exclusive of the space devoted to forest trees. All are carefully classified and ticketed, the poisonous plants in one section, the medicinal in another, the bane and antidote in close proximity.

In our parks, botanic gardens, arboreta, zoological gardens and any other desirable addenda to a public park, could be stocked with far less trouble and expense than those in European capitals, for our own continent could furnish a great deal that is most rare and desirable and most difficult to procure in the animal or vegetable kingdom. These, of course, could be arranged as the gentlemen in charge would determine, but whether arranged in consonance with variable geographical boundaries or unvarying isothermal lines, they would teach the youthful student something worth learning and something he would be likely to remember.

#### THE RIGHT THING IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

In the new parks there would be abundant space enough for these different departments without crowding out the people. These would be attractions not encroachments, and according to their different tastes some would seek one and some the other: some hie to the bear pit, some to the lily ponds and some to the deer paddock. But whoever has noticed how rapidly the love of flowers is increasing among our people, growing stronger and spreading wider every year, must admit that a botanical garden worthy of the name would be the most popular department in a park, for it would charm alike the refined and the uncultivated, the old and young, the rich and the poor. It requires no book learning to admire flowers, they were admired in the Garden of Eden; they are admired in the Jardin des Plantes. A grand botanical garden in the Bronx Park would be the right thing in the right place. Nothing more would be wanting to its completeness. Splendid specimens of silviculture on every side, a promenade of over two miles on the margin of a river that equals in beauty Fairmount's famed Wissahickon, on whose charms the Philadelphia Commissioners dilate in terms not only eloquent but poetic. And yet the Bronx has all the attractions they claim for their Indian stream and more; wooded slopes, rocky ravines, sequestered glades, banks carpeted with vines, miniature mountains crowned with trees, a placid, gurgling river that precipitates itself over Lydig's Dam as if resenting its temporary imprisonment and falls a broad, foaming cascade into its rocky channel, where after a time it recovers its equanimity and goes singing over pebbles as before. They lay stress on the unbroken quiet "that broods over the Wissahickon." Why! wandering by the Bronx, New York seems leagues away, and the nineteenth century yet in the womb of time. Solitude, like a pervading spirit, reigns throughout and the very atmosphere breathes repose. True, "the murmurous

sound of bees " is heard and the musical ripple of running water and the wild, sweet songs of wood birds that issue from the green gloom of trees, but

" Stillness accompanied by sounds so sweet  
Charms more than silence."

No wonder that artists love this favored spot. Had it been hidden away in the heart of the Adirondacks, or in the depths of the Yosemite, or did the Atlantic roll between us and it, we would have known all about it long ago; we would have journeyed by land or journeyed by sea to get a glimpse of it, but the curse of propinquity was on it—it was too near. If, as has been proposed, our present northern boundary should be pushed three or four miles further into Westchester County, a still more extended line of the Bronx Park, narrower it might be, should be secured as soon as possible. Thus the extension of the park northward would include the upper waters of the Bronx. That done the river could be made the line of a superb parkway and form a connecting link with another park, which we doubt will be laid out north of the present boundary hereafter.

#### BOUNDARIES OF THE PARK.

The metes and bounds of the Bronx Park as fixed by law are as follows: Beginning at a point in the Twenty-fourth Ward of the city of New York, formed by the junction of the north line of Samuel street and the west bank of the Bronx River; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Samuel street to the easterly line of Bronx street; from thence northerly along said easterly line of Bronx street to the northerly line of Ann street; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Ann street to the easterly line of Boston road; from thence northerly along said easterly line of the Boston road to a point in line with the northerly line of Kingsbridge road; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Kingsbridge road to the easterly line of the Southern Boulevard; from thence northerly, along and following the easterly line of the Southern Boulevard, to the northerly line of St. John's College property; from thence, crossing the Southern Boulevard and following the northerly boundary of the St. John's College property northwesterly, to the easterly line of the right of way of the New York & Harlem Railroad Co.; from thence along said easterly line of said right of way, and following its course northeasterly to a point about three hundred (300) feet northeasterly of the northerly line of Water street, to a point formed by the junction of the prolongation westward of the northerly line of Morris street, as laid down on a partition map and survey made by Egbert L. Viele, Civil Engineer, under an order of the Supreme Court, bearing date the 23d day of August, 1869; from thence along said prolongation of the northerly line of Morris street, crossing the Bronx River and along said northerly line of Morris street, to a point about twenty (20) feet easterly of the eastern line of Duncomb avenue, as shown on the map aforesaid; from thence, in a straight line southerly, and nearly parallel to and east of Monroe avenue, as shown on said map, to the northwesterly corner of land formerly belonging to John Hitchcock, as shown on said map; from thence, in a straight line south-



Bronx Park—In the Woods.



erly, to the southeastern corner of the Lorillard estate, as shown on map aforesaid; thence westerly along the southerly boundary of the Lorillard estate, as shown on said map, to the lands belonging to the Bronx Bleaching Company; thence southwesterly, southerly and westerly, along the easterly and southerly boundary of the Bronx Bleaching Company, to a point two hundred (200) feet easterly of the Bronx River; from thence southerly and parallel with the general line of the Bronx River, crossing the Boston road, to its southerly line; thence easterly along said southerly line of Boston road about five hundred and twenty (520) feet; from thence southerly, and parallel with the general courses of the Bronx River, and conforming thereto, about seven hundred (700) feet easterly of the general eastern line thereof, to a point formed by such line, and a prolongation of the southerly line of Kingsbridge road as now existing in the Twenty-fourth Ward of the city of New York, between the Southern Boulevard and Bronx street; eastwardly across the Bronx River to the said line, as drawn parallel to the general course of the Bronx River, as aforesaid; from thence in a straight line crossing the Bronx River to the place of beginning.

#### NEW YORK'S GREAT SEASIDE RESORT.

In the inception of the idea of the new parks a park on the Sound was regarded not only as a prominent, but as an indispensable feature, essential to the completion of the whole system. On the first map published of the proposed sites it not only had a place, but in the accompanying description it was stated that "a park site near or including Hutchinson River, and a little to the south of New Rochelle, might be so arranged as to include one or more of the islands in the Sound which are now connected with the mainland by causeways."

In the petition which accompanied the act (chap. 253 of 1883) the special attention of the Legislature was directed to the immediate necessity for "a grand park with a water front on Long Island Sound; one which should be the people's own, a resort for picnics and excursionists, a place where they could enjoy the pleasures of boating, bathing, fishing, etc." The advantage of such a park was strenuously advocated in the report made to the Legislature of 1884 by the commission appointed under the act of 1883. In this report it was stated that a personal inspection had been made of the coast line and its indentations for "the most suitable ground for such a park, believing that this growing metropolis ere very many years will embrace four or even five millions of inhabitants, and the citizens of the State who take a pride and an interest in the city's prosperity will not much longer be content that its eastern boundary shall be defined by the slender rivulet of the Bronx, but will insist rather that her territory shall embrace all the land below her northern line, lying between the Hudson and Long Island Sound—a domain that seems marked by nature for the site of a city, which we hope and firmly believe is to be one of the proudest cities of the world." It was then shown that "the improvements now in progress: the opening through the Harlem River, by the federal government, of a great commercial channel between the East and the North

Rivers, which will send thither the centre of our business city; the stupendous works of the national government for the removal of obstructions in the great channel connecting the Sound with the ocean; the railroad facilities which the last few years have developed and those contemplated in the immediate future; the improvement of the streams which lead into the Sound; and the push of population and business in that direction, cannot but have the effect of making the land bordering on the East River too indispensable for domestic, commercial and manufacturing purposes to permit the abstraction of the requisite number of acres required for the park, and to interdict the location of such pleasure grounds along the shore below Throgg's Neck."

#### PELHAM BAY PARK.

These lands, therefore, being destined for business purposes and the bordering land above, too cultivated, consequently too costly to be purchased by the city for a park, the commission discovered no place suitable until they reached Pelham Park and found there and in the vicinity a ready-made park fit for use and admirably adapted for the designed purpose. The waters surrounding it are pure and free from admixture with the sewage of a large city, for the tide from the Sound sweeps before it all contaminating impurities and leaves them clear and sparkling.

Pelham Bay Park has an area of 1,740 acres; it is two miles and a-half long and two miles wide, and its coast line is fully nine miles in extent. Picturesque inlets and bays of graceful curve indent the shore and the contiguous islands are marked by the same uniformly charming irregularity of outline. The sea that has been beating on these shores for centuries has done its work well and fashioned a margin that satisfies the imagination of the poet and the taste of the painter.

The surface of the park is varied in its character: green uplands and rolling meadows alternate with stretches of woodland which form groves overarched with meeting branches through which the mid-day sun sends tempered rays. Grassy fields slope down to the shore and shrubs soften down the rugged sides of hills on whose crest stand stately trees that were full grown before the Revolution.

Pelham Bay Park has not the strikingly picturesque loveliness of the Bronx, nor the tranquil beauty of Van Cortlandt, but it has a charm and an attractiveness all its own. Then it has its incomparable watery annex, the Sound! And what a panorama that presents! Life and motion everywhere. The waters lashed into foam by the breeze or seething under the prows of passing steamers, the panting tugs, the graceful yachts, the rowboats and the rhythmic stroke of oars, fluttering flags, swelling sails, the joyous music of excursion parties and ozone in the air—that's a picture worth going miles to see.

Few cities in the Old World or the New could secure such a domain at any price. Those inland capitals are at a disadvantage compared with New York. We have in our other parks all that they can boast; but all their means and energy, all their taste and skill combined, could not duplicate a park like Pelham. There are but few seaside parks in the world, and of





Bronx Park--The Lorillard Mansion.





these Stockholm's is the only one deserving of being even mentioned in connection with ours.

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Why there should have been such objection to this park is a marvel. Every man, woman and child longs for the sea in the summer time. It is a natural craving. Its very odor is invigorating, and a dash of the salt spray is an actual pleasure. This feeling is universal. The masses as well as the classes share it, but the classes can gratify it at any time. If the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet can go to the mountain; the masses cannot. They cannot go to Newport or Long Beach; they cannot go to Trouville or Ostend. To them, therefore, a seaside park is a boon and a blessing. What crowds the excursion boats? What drives the people to Glen Island, Oak Point, Locust Grove? What but the desire to get away as far as possible from the dull routine of their daily lives. This is the underlying, though it may be the unconscious, motive that impels them seaward. Everything around, about and above them is in such strong contrast to their city surroundings that life assumes a new aspect; the wearisome monotony of their work-a-day week is broken up; their minds are quickened, their thoughts freshened, and listlessness of mind and languor of body disappear together.

The men who cater to the public taste, who run excursion steamers, who provide seaside resorts, make no mistake in this matter. They know what the people want. They have felt the popular pulse and prescribed accordingly. They know that the desire to inhale the fresh sea breeze, to listen to the dash of the waves as they break on the shore, and to watch the sweep and swell of the waters that even

"As Creation's dawn beheld them rolleth now,"

is natural and wholesome, and they apply themselves to gratify it; and they have their reward. How comes it that private profit is more discerning than public spirit? What makes a business man or a merchant more clear-sighted than a Mayor? And are these questions to be asked, or not to be asked?

## A RARE ACQUISITION.

Chief among the objections to Pelham Bay Park and most strenuously insisted on by its opponents was its distance from the centre of population and its "inaccessibility." These objections are easily answered. A large part of Pelham is not further than Van Cortlandt, against which no such objection was ever seriously raised, and it is considerably nearer than Glen Island, which last summer had 700,000 visitors, and to which the people continue to resort in ever increasing numbers. Pelham Park can be reached as easily both by land and water and as cheaply as Starin's. The Portchester and Harlem Railroad runs through it and has three stations within its bounds, and on the water front there are three or four landing places where large steamers can disembark their passengers. Moreover, there are points from which docks can be built out into deep water. A glance at the map shows that it is not only as near the Grand Central depot as Van Cortlandt,

but its nearest point is only half a mile above a line drawn from the northern extremity of the Bronx. In addition it is connected with the rapid transit system of New York city by the Bridge at Second avenue, and when travel is established it can be reached from Forty-second street in less than half an hour. Those who prefer the water route can take the excursion steamers and enjoy an hour's sail.

Those who love fishing can have it here, for all along the coast bass, blue fish, black fish, flounders, snappers and other varieties abound in the season, and in many a nook and curve where the shore shelves gently bathers can disport themselves in perfect safety.

The opposite shore of Long Island, with its handsome private residences built at unequal distances from the water, according to the taste or fancy of the owner, with smiling skies above and dancing waters below, makes up a landscape that is pleasanter to look upon than any on exhibition in public gallery. In fact, the views obtainable from the park are not the least of its charms; its beauties are not confined by its boundaries; the Sound, in all its changing moods, belongs to it, is a part of it, and praise lavished on it is but a tribute to the excellence of the site. For the Sound is an outlying lake to the park, and is to Pelham what a lawn is to a country mansion.

#### POPULAR RECREATIONS.

Beyond all doubt this will be the favorite park of the people; *they* will not consider it too far, and their verdict on that point will be conclusive. Two or three miles nearer than Glen Island, too far! when steamers plying thither are overcrowded and the insular resources are taxed to the uttermost to satisfy the demands of each successive boat load of hungry and thirsty visitors, and parties of lunchers take possession of every available space and pre-empt every unoccupied seat in the grounds! Too far! The idea is absurd. The distance is an added charm, it infuses the flavor of an excursion into a simple day's outing and lengthens the pleasure by the time consumed in going and returning. Thus every moment they are from home is utilized and turned to account. The sail up the Sound in itself is no small pleasure, and the majority would probably elect to go by that route. There would be no difficulty in landing the passengers, for, as before stated, there are three or four suitable places along the water front for that purpose and if more were required the owners of steamboat lines would in their own interest see to it. And what opportunities for sight-seeing this nine miles of coast would give in regatta time! Each jutting point would be a "coign of vantage," and every rock and hillock would afford good standing-ground for interested watchers. And whether it was a boat race or a yacht race, whether it was to be won by skillful management of sails or vigorous play of human muscles, the city would send out its thousands and tens of thousands to watch the struggle for supremacy—many indifferent who won and who lost, more painfully interested in the result. And who that has ever seen a yacht race, the graceful contestants quivering under a full spread of canvas, speeding along apparently of their own volition,

no human agency visible and yet seemingly under the influence of human passion, struggling for precedence, straining for victory, like a man or race horse, can wonder at its power of attraction.

The races, of course, will be only an occasional diversion; but the land sports, the athletic games of all kinds, will be permanent, and can be enjoyed throughout the year at their proper seasons. Base ball, tennis and croquet can have special allotments; picnic and excursion parties Sunday schools, benevolent societies, and school children will find room sufficient without bespeaking it in advance, and trade, military and choral societies can come here at their own option, fearless of being crowded out.

#### A GRAND SITE FOR A ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN.

An aquarium and a zoological garden could be located here to advantage. The marine animals would be in their native element and their habits could be observed under more favorable conditions than in narrow tanks, which give neither scope nor opportunity for free natural action and movement. Aquatic birds, too, would thrive better in this atmosphere than in the drier air of the inland parks, and they would harmonize more with the surroundings. The savage forest animals would be less disagreeable here than elsewhere, for the fresh sea breeze would dissipate and neutralize their rank, offensive smell. Bovines and cervines could have roomier quarters, and ampler space could be afforded to all the larger animals than in parks of narrower dimensions. A zoological garden on a grand scale in Pelham would not necessitate the removal of that attractive feature from Central; it would not be a substitute for it, but a development of it—the idea perfected, the nucleus expanded to fuller proportions. Central without its zoological adjuncts would undoubtedly lose its chief interest for children and many others besides who take more pleasure in seeing different forms of animal life, even the grotesque and repulsive, than the most graceful specimens of vegetable growth. But the very imperfect collection in Central requires to be largely supplemented before New York will have a zoological garden worthy of the name, and in the park by the Sound there will be no lack of the prime essentials—pure air, fresh breezes and ample space.

Nor will the most generous allowance seem to curtail the people's portion—nine miles of water boundary is a guarantee that bathing, boating and fishing could be enjoyed without let or hindrance and that swimming matches could be extended to any desirable length.

Turning from the wind-swept, sea-washed coast, its manifold sinuosities and its multiform curves, to the park it bounds and circumscribes on three sides, the eye rests on a scene worthy of such a noble setting. No dead level here like the great Viennese Prater or Berlin's gloomy Thiergarten, but every phase of landscape beauty, wooded eminences, sunny slopes, grassy lawns, lanes walled by trees and roofed by branches, through which sun and rain find difficulty in entering, and undulations of billowy green that look like an ocean ground swell. Add to this and to its beauty of outline the charm of its internal configuration, its jutting peninsula, its

bridge-connected islands, and every unprejudiced mind will admit that its possession was worth struggling for. For Pelham Bay Park is no monotonous repetition of its inland contemporaries. Unique in position, form, attractions and possibilities, a noble expanse of water almost encircling it, a clear unobstructed view of the heavens overhead, the glory of space on every side, it was not only worth struggling for, but it was well worth incurring official hostility, with all its attendant pains and penalties, in order to secure it in perpetuity for the city and the next generation, who will prize it as it deserves, and hold in remembrance the men who worked so hard and so disinterestedly and made so many sacrifices for such an unselfish purpose.

#### A RETROSPECT.

Even those who opposed the acquisition of Pelham Park by the city will, after a few years have elapsed, and time has shown its value, recognise the wisdom of securing it and rejoice that their opposition came to naught. So it was over thirty years ago in the case of the Astors and the Goetschs and others who protested against the creation of Central Park as calculated to bankrupt the city and who now profit by the very measure they denounced and were so solicitous to defeat. But one man never gains wisdom from another man's experience, and so with generations, or how could history repeat itself? This generation of park advocates had the same arguments to combat and the same obstacles to surmount; moreover they had to bear with misconstruction of their motives and misrepresentations of their facts. It was the Central Park fight over again with more venom thrown in; the same discordant strain *de capo* with harsher dissonance. Nor was the misconception of results that marked the creation of Central Park lacking. Five or ten years from now everybody will be satisfied and there will be *de capo* to the harmony as there was to the discord. Then the parallel will be complete.

In full view of the park is City Island, the name being all that remains to tell of high hopes and ambitious projects entertained by the first proprietors. Here they intended to establish a magnificent commercial city which would carry on an extensive East India trade with the States of Holland. The Revolution, however, changed all that, and though the idea was revived after the War of Independence it fell through, and the grand projected city dwindled down into City Island. Formerly its inhabitants had no means of access to the mainland save by a ferry, but in 1873 a bridge erected by a joint stock company was completed and thrown open to the public, and of this structure the greater part of the materials used in its erection were taken from the frigate North Carolina. City Island, or "Great Minniefords," as it was formerly called, contains about 230 acres of land and is quite an attractive feature as viewed from the park.

The great drive which is to be hereafter known as the Bronx and Pelham Parkway, and which forms the connecting link between the Bronx and Pelham Bay parks is 400 feet wide and will be one of the grandest avenues in the world. It is a boulevard of splendid proportions and in every way worthy of the magnificent pleasure ground to which it will be the principal



St. Mary's Park — Northwest View.

11-11-11

entrance. As it approaches the southern boundary of the park and about a mile from the bridge which spans Eastchester Bay a fine view is obtained of the picturesque scenery of this part of the Sound with the opposite shores and upland of Pelham Neck or Annie's Hoeck, so called after the celebrated Anne Hutchinson.

#### A PROFITABLE REAL ESTATE OPERATION.

The "Neck," as it has been termed for generations, has long been celebrated not only for the beauty of the landscape, its gently undulating hills and the wide range of view which it affords of the surrounding country, but it is particularly noted for its historical reminiscences. According to the earliest traditions it was the great burial place of the Siwanoy, a branch of the Mohegans, and if further proof were wanted it is to be found in the many Indian mounds which still remain to attest its right to the title. The original Pell, whose cognomen and "ham," or home, have been combined to give name not only to the Neck, but to the town, had bought in 1654 the whole section of country, including Pelham, Westchester and New Rochelle, comprising 9,160 acres from the aboriginal owners for what in popular parlance is called "a mere song." In the language of the purchaser the title passed for "a valuable consideration." In the royal patent by which the purchase was confirmed it was called "due satisfaction," and for this patent the new buyer was "required to pay one lamb on the first day of May for each year."

As the 12,000 and odd acres of the Island of Manhattan had been bought of the red owners a little more than a quarter of a century prior to this transaction for \$24 worth of beads and trinkets, it is very doubtful if Mr. Thomas "Lord" Pell was a bull on real estate at that time, whatever his nephew and successor, John Pell, may have been when he sold 6,100 acres of the Manor thirty-five years after for the same number of dollars.

It is doubtful if in all the records of our Real Estate Exchange there is an instance of such marvellous and rapid increase in values. The Pells were evidently a thrifty and speculative family. The first Pell bought it from the Siwanoy in all probability for two cents an acre, the price the Dutch paid for Manhattan Island, for between the Dutch and the English the unfortunate red man was literally between the upper and nether millstone. At the close of another century very few of the Indians were left, and the remnant of the tribe had nearly all been laid to rest beneath the mounds, traces of which can still be found on the Rapelyea estate close to the water. Of these, two are said to be the sepulchres of Ann-hook and Nimhan, the Siwanoy Sachems, who lived long beyond the scriptural age. On the opening of several of these tumuli, skeletons, stone axes, flint spears and arrow heads, specimens of native pottery, and other relics were found.

These mounds should be preserved, as they will be objects of particular interest to visitors. They should, indeed, be the special care of the Park Department hereafter, as they doubtless will be, for they have a historical value that will increase with time.



## PELHAM NECK AND HUNTER'S ISLAND.

From the mounds on the southeastern point of Pelham Neck the view is one of the most beautiful to be found in the park. The shores on each side of Eastchester Bay, and far beyond where its waters mingle with those of Hutchinson River, are exceedingly picturesque and worthy the canvas of our best artists. In the once prolific waters of this bay, which has always been a favorite resort for anglers (who will long remember Dave Blizzard's float by the bridge, and its inexhaustible supply of lines, rods, shrimps, clams and crabs), the Indians found an abundance of fish; the dense woods furnished a supply of other game and the Siwanoy's village on the Neck was one of the most populous along the shores of the Sound. The waters do not swarm with fish as of old, but there are still sufficient to tempt the skill of the angler and afford many hours of healthy pastime to the disciples of "that quaint old cruel coxcomb," as Byron irreverently styled the gentle Izaak. As to the woods they are, it is true, neither so dense nor so extensive as they were, but Pelham Neck is well shaded and its groves afford many a pleasant cool retreat from the fervid summer heat.

Of Hunter's Island, which has an area of 164 acres, it may be said with absolute truth that it is without exception the finest tract to be found on the whole line of the coast of Westchester of equal extent, and it is doubtful if any piece of land on the shore of Long Island, or the Connecticut coast, is equal to it in rural loveliness, or in the views presented from its highest points. It is, indeed, a spot of rare attractiveness. From the most elevated summit, a grand prospect is spread before the delighted vision. Looking beyond the magnificent woods, which cover nearly one-fourth the surface of the island, the eye takes in the whole sweep of the Sound to the horizon, the opposite shore of Long Island and the Westchester and Connecticut coasts. Hudson River, with its towering palisades and lofty hills, has a grandeur peculiarly its own; but the eye must be satisfied to rest on them alone, for its majestic banks bound the range of vision. On Hunter's Island how different! When the eye has taken in the wide expanse of the Sound, it turns to gaze on the island itself, spread out beneath like a map, and sees within its 164 acres, and the eighteen-and-a-half of the outlying Twin Island, many a scene on which it might well love to linger by the hour.

These two islands will be the favorite resorts within the park, although some tastes may find more to admire in Prospect Hill and the views therefrom, or the finely cultivated tract, with its splendid old woods and acres of velvet lawn, which lie to the south of Pelham Bridge. Still, the majority will doubtless prefer Hunter's and Twin islands, especially as there will be found the most suitable sites for the structures of the great PERMANENT INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION, which it is to be hoped New York will have in the near future.

As the Bronx Park has its Delancey's Ancient Pine and its great movable boulder, so Hunter's Island possesses at its southeast end, a rare curiosity of its own in the great Indian rock "Vichou," and on the east side still another called the "Grey Mare," which the Indians regarded with special veneration as the gift of their Manitou.



St. Mary's Park—Southeast View.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

Like all parts of Westchester County, Pelham has its revolutionary memories and traditions. British raids were frequent, for a portion of the fleet was always anchored in the Sound, and demands were constantly made on the inhabitants for supplies in a way that admitted of no debate. It was "Give or ——" and the unuttered alternative was a convincing argument.

#### THE BATTLE ON THE NECK.

On October 18th, 1777, Pelham Neck was the scene of a fierce encounter between the Americans and a largely outnumbering British force from Throgg's Neck on their way to New Rochelle, a few days before the disastrous battle of White Plains. The British force numbered 4,000, and constituted the van of the army under General Howe, whose brother, the Admiral, controlled with his fleet the waters and shores of the Sound. To oppose the landing of this large body of well-appointed, well-equipped troops protected by the British gunboats, the full strength of the patriots under Colonels Shepard, Read, Baldwin and Glover was less than 800. These 800 were a detachment of General Lee's army, the main body of which was encamped at a distance of three miles, and took no part in the fight. But the men who were intrusted with this hazardous enterprise were equal to the emergency, and though the British effected a landing they little dreamed of the warm reception prepared for them. Drawing up his little force and placing them in ambush behind stone walls and wherever the nature of the ground afforded sufficient concealment, Col. Glover awaited the progress of the enemy. As the British confidently advanced, a small skirmish line of fifty men was thrown out as a *mas*: by Colonel Glover, who, having completed his arrangements, took command and temporarily arrested the progress of the foe. Then slowly falling back upon the ambuscade the patriots delivered a few volleys that put four of the redcoats *hors-de-combat*, the Colonel losing two of his own men. Having swept this seemingly slight obstruction out of their way, the British advance was continued till within thirty yards of the first stone wall, when the patriots rising up delivered a galling, point blank fire right into its close ranks, breaking it into fragments and driving the shattered remnants back on the main body. An hour and a half was lost in gathering up and reforming the broken lines before another advance was ordered.

Strengthened by fresh reinforcements the enemy now numbered 4,000 men of all arms, horse, foot and artillery, which kept up an incessant fire as it again approached the ambuscade; but Read and his men were still there, and when the enemy were within fifty yards they were received with volley after volley until seven well-directed discharges were poured into their compact columns. As they still advanced, Read having successfully performed his allotted part, fell back behind the second stone wall. Here Shepard's men had been placed, and as the enemy came within the required distance they were received with a storm of bullets which cut great gaps in their ranks. Bewildered by this second and unexpected ambuscade, they reeled as the deadly fire was delivered at short range, and repeated seventeen times before Shepard's command abandoned the second line of defense.

Again, and for the third time, the British line was reformed, Shepard's men falling back till the third and last line was reached, and here the same tactics were adopted and with heavy loss to the foe. This ended the fight, the American commanders having accomplished their purpose in checking the progress of the enemy, inflicting heavy damage and, what was still more essential, seriously impairing his prestige and confidence in his own powers. In this "affair" he had lost, according to some estimates, one thousand men, or about two to every American who actually took part in the engagement. It was a heavy blow and produced a telling effect, at the time, on the royalist cause. On this splendidly contested field, which has made Pelham Neck as famous in our Revolutionary history as that of Thermopylae, and which is worthy of memorial monument, only twelve of the patriots were killed.

#### A NAVAL PRIZE.

The same year saw another brilliant exploit, planned and executed by common boatmen, carried out triumphantly. At that time British gunboats were stationed along the Sound as guard ships. The officers and crew treated the villagers with exasperating harshness and received the natural return. Hatred and indignation incited the outraged people to attempt the capture of their oppressors. A plan was arranged by Connecticut whaleboatmen and successfully executed. Across Pelham Neck they carried their boat and took possession of a market sloop that traded to New York and supplied the guardship with provisions. The Connecticut men, ten or twelve in number, well armed, concealed themselves in the hold while their leader remained on deck and obliged the owner to lay his craft alongside the British vessel, as usual when furnishing supplies. In the dusk of the early morning the two vessels touched. Up rushed the boatmen, and in a twinkling the crew, only half awake, were prisoners and forced to help navigate the prize into New London.

In 1814 two British men-of-war, after bombarding Stonington, appeared in these waters and the shores of Pelham re-echoed to the roar of their guns. The Americans returned their fire, and after a sharp cannonading on both sides the patriots returned to New York and the men-of-war to New London. It was the last time the thunder of British guns disturbed the tranquility of this quiet spot.

#### MISTRESS ANNE.

Traditions of Indian outbreaks and atrocities still linger around the place, and Anne Hutchinson's eventful life and tragic death impart to it an element of romance and adventure. Driven out by the Puritans after a stormy conflict with their authorities and a contemptuous defiance of their intolerant laws, she and her family settled down in this then uninhabited wilderness to end her days in peace; and here she was massacred by the Indians. Her family shared her fate with the exception of one little girl who was carried off by the savages and lived with them four years, but at the end of that time was ransomed and restored to civilized life.

The Hutchinson River, which forms part of the western boundary of



St. Mary's Park—Northeast View.



Pelham Bay Park, keeps alive the memory of stately, heroic Mistress Anne, whose death caused Boston to rejoice, inasmuch as God had made "a heavy example" of "a woful woman;" for Acqueanouncke, its Indian name, disappeared from popular use long since and is only seen now in history or heard from the lips of book-worms.

There are persons who take more interest in curiosities of vegetation, or freaks of growth, or nature, than in traditions however ancient or well authenticated. Such will be struck with the curious spectacle of a tree growing out of a crevice in the heart of a rock that stands on the cross road between Pelham and New York roads. There it has stood for years without change. No one saw it as a sapling and no one has noticed any signs of decay. It is quite a landmark and a very odd and picturesque one.

#### PARK REVENUES.

From the new parks the city will derive a considerable revenue through the letting and leasing of certain privileges. Pelham Bay Park will contribute in dock rent paid by steamboats, and with the other parks will swell the income derivable from public restaurants and various kinds of entertainments patronized by the visitors, as in the parks of Paris, Vienna and Berlin, and on a more limited scale in Central Park. The aggregate amount obtained from these different sources will increase year after year as the population increases, and when within thirty years—a generation—we shall have, as the past history of our city and the census returns foreshadow, 6,000,000 within its boundaries, the income from our parks, if they are properly conducted, should be sufficient to pay the whole of the expenses of their support. Pelham, of course, will contribute more to the maintainance fund than the other parks, for the simple reason that being *sui generis* it will attract larger crowds. It is our only seaside park, it is the Newport of the masses, not to be admired only, but to be enjoyed with a clear perception of its worth and the serene consciousness of possession; and for these reasons, not to mention others, the people will flock to it and patronize the different refreshment stands, the more pretentious restaurants, the bathing houses, the coasting steamers, the shows, the various places of amusement that spring up like mushrooms wherever crowds resort.

#### A SITE FOR AN OBSERVATORY.

But in time other features of interest will be added besides those required for purposes of recreation or amusement; monuments to commemorate historical events connected with the locality, and works of art to preserve the memory of dead, or perpetuate the fame of living celebrities. There, too, might be erected a magnificent astronomical observatory on a grand scale. The unobstructed view of the heavens from many of the elevated points suggests it, the open space affords ample room for it. There no huge apartment houses can blur the sky, and shut from view "the turning about of Arcturus," or the circum-polar stars as they go swinging around the circle. Nowhere could "the stars in their courses" be seen to greater advantage, nowhere could astronomy be more practically or profitably studied than in an observatory located in Pelham Bay Park.



## THE BOUNDARIES.

The following are the boundaries as defined by the act: "Beginning in Long Island Sound at a point where a line drawn from the termination of the northern boundary of the city of New York touches the Bronx River to the furthestmost northern point of the 'Pass Rocks,' a ledge of rocks north of Hunter's Island, would touch the shore line and waters of Long Island Sound; from thence westerly along said line between the New York city northern boundary and Long Island Sound to a point about 1,000 feet easterly from the easterly side of the Old Boston Postroad, measuring from its junction with the extended northern boundary of New York city; from thence southerly to the nearest point on the northerly shore of Hutchinson's River; from thence southerly and easterly along the northern shore of Hutchinson's River to a point formed by a line drawn due northwest from the most westerly point on Goose Island, in said Hutchinson's River on Eastchester Bay, and touching the northerly shore line of said Hutchinson's River; from this point southerly in a straight line to a point formed by the westerly line of the Harlem River and Portchester Railroad Company's right of way with the southerly shore line of Eastchester Bay or Hutchinson's River; from thence in a straight line to the northwesterly corner of the property belonging to and known as the residence of John W. Hunter, Esq.; from thence along said property line of John Hunter southerly to the eastern line of the Eastern Boulevard; from thence along said eastern line of the Eastern Boulevard to the southwesterly corner of lands belonging to J. Furman, Esq.; from thence easterly along the boundary line between the property of said Furman and the lands of Lorillard Spencer and J. M. Waterbury to Long Island Sound; from thence following northwardly the coast line along the shores and waters of Long Island Sound, East Chester and Pelham bays, around and including Pelham Bridge Island and Pelham Neck to the southerly line of the causeway leading to Hunter's Island; thence along said southerly line of causeway to Hunter's Island; thence southerly, easterly, northerly and westerly, and southerly along the shore and waters of the coast line of said Hunter's Island and the small island known as the Twin, following said coast line entirely around said Hunter's and Twin islands to the northerly line of the causeway or bridge leading to the main land from Hunter's Island; from thence along said northerly line of causeway to the shore and water line of the main land; from thence along said main land shore and water line northerly to the place of beginning. Together with all small islands, rocks, etc., situate and lying within a line drawn between the extreme southerly bound herein described and the farthest southeastern projection of Pelham Rock, and between the most easterly point on Pelham Rock and the outermost southern and eastern point of Hunter's and Twin islands; and also including the rocks on the north and east of Hunter's Island known as Pass Rocks."

## FURNISHED AND UNFURNISHED PARES—A QUESTION OF ECONOMY.

In the selection of the sites the main object, as before intimated, which was kept steadily in view, was the suitability of the land for the purpose to



St. Mary's Park—East View.



which it was to be applied. While it was desirable that parks should be established at the most accessible points, it was also essential that the tracts chosen should be of such a character as to reduce the expense of their improvement hereafter to a minimum. In other words, it was deemed advisable, in the interest of economy, that the land should possess all the required conditions necessary to constitute a park—that it should have a diversity of surface, be well wooded and the presence of water, in the form of lakes or streams, was regarded as a specially valuable feature, adding largely to its attractiveness.

The experience which the city had acquired in the construction of Central Park warned against a repetition of that costly business, and it was decided that it was cheaper to purchase parks already made than to select treeless wastes, without water and devoid of those topographical features which constitute the great charm of all parks deserving of the name. Thus the city would be saved the expense of tree planting, and the water area could, if required, be extended by engineering skill. Much precious time which would be expended in this work would be saved and the people would enter into the immediate enjoyment of the parks, instead of waiting at least half a generation for their completion. If the choice could have been presented to the public when the ground for the Central was appropriated between that and a park already furnished, there could be no question as to their decision. They would doubtless have been most willing to have paid the difference in the price, if, by so doing, they could have secured immediate possession and use.

It is, therefore, needless to say that such considerations had great weight in determining the question of selection and location. One of the chief elements in the value of any article is its suitability to the purpose for which it is intended or required, and this rule was applicable in a peculiar degree to the case of the parks. A hundred acres of well-wooded land, with hills and dales, rocks and glens, with a stream or a lake to give the desired variety, would certainly be worth more to the city than a hundred acres of level waste. That might answer for a parade ground, or a huge base-ball field, but it would never do for a people's play ground. Better pay two, or three, or four thousand dollars, or even more per acre for *made* parks, than buy the required area at half those figures and expend double, treble, quadruple the amount and lose years in the work of preparing them for public use and occupation.

#### CROTONA PARK.

These were the considerations that prevailed in the location of the new parks, and in no instance were they lost sight of for a moment. The beautiful tract known as Crotona was found to possess all the features of a natural park, and to have the additional advantage of location and accessibility. It is situated on the ridge of land which forms the eastern crown of the water-shed of Mill Brook Valley and commands an extensive view of the surrounding country, bringing within the range of vision the Palisades and the piers of the Brooklyn Bridge. From its former name of Bathgate Woods it is evident that in the essential matter of shade it is

liberally provided. Of all the parks it is in fact conspicuous in this respect, and among its fine old forest trees, luxuriant in their foliage, can be reckoned the oak, the elm, the magnolia, the maple and a bewildering variety of others of more or less value. There is many a cool retreat and delightful vista within the depths of these grand old woods; many a favorite resort in which picnic parties have, through the kind indulgence of the owner, enjoyed themselves, free from the oppressive heat of the long summer day. Within its 135 acres are to be found commanding heights, wide-spread undulating meadows, shady glades and glens, green with the gloom of trees, soft carpets of moss and lichens, springs and rivulets of cool and refreshing water, and all this in the centre of a district that in less than a decade is destined to have within its bounds a large portion of the population north of the Harlem.

From its location it will be seen that Crotona Park is the centre of that portion of the city which lies beyond the Harlem, and that it is accessible by the horse cars and by the Harlem and elevated railroads. As to the means of access they are ample and bring the park within reach of all parts of the city; but, as intimated, it will not be many years before its area will be found barely adequate to meet the local demand. In fact as it has been considered necessary to provide for the education of the rapidly increasing juvenile population, a grammar school was erected within the limits of what is now the park, and it is one of the largest and finest structures of its kind in the metropolis. Those limits as defined in the act are as follows: Beginning at the junction of the northern boundary of the Twenty-third Ward and the easterly line of Fulton avenue, as shown on the map of the new system of streets as laid out by the Commissioners of Public Parks; thence eastwardly along said northern boundary of the Twenty-third Ward, crossing Franklin avenue (Broadway) and continuing on said boundary line to a point 320 feet westerly from the westerly line of Boston Post road; thence along a line parallel to and westwardly of the said westerly line of Boston Post road, and distant therefrom 320 feet, to the junction of the Boston Post road with the Southern Boulevard; thence on a line 320 feet westerly and parallel to the westerly side of the Southern Boulevard to a point 300 feet southerly from the southerly line of Fairmount avenue as shown on said city map; thence westerly 300 feet distant from and parallel to the southerly line of Fairmount avenue, crossing Franklin avenue (Broadway) to a prolongation southerly of the westerly line of Broad street as shown on said map; thence northerly along such prolongation of the westerly line of Broad street, and northerly along said westerly line of Broad street to its junction with the southerly line of Tremont avenue; thence westerly along the southerly line of Tremont avenue to the junction of said line with the easterly line of Fordham avenue; thence southerly along said easterly line of Fordham avenue to the northerly line of One Hundred and Seventy-fifth street (Fitch street); thence easterly 280 feet along said northerly line of Fitch street; thence in a straight line southerly to the place or point of beginning.

## ST. MARY'S PARK.

St. Mary's Park, the smallest of the tracts selected, lies nearest to the Harlem River, so near, in fact, that it seems rather a city park than a suburban. It is not connected with the trans-Harlem park system by boulevards or parkways, but stands isolated and alone, perfect in itself, its miniature loveliness challenging comparison with the largest and fairest of its compeers. Its area is twenty-five acres and one-third, and within that limited space all the points that constitute the charm of a public pleasure ground are to be found in abundance: wood and water, trees and shrubs, hill and valley, barren rocks and emerald meadows; and all these so disposed that one form of beauty heightens the other by contrast.

Unlike Mount Morris Park, which is a level tract encircling a rocky eminence, St. Mary's is beautifully undulating; the ground sinks and swells, rising in places to over a hundred feet, from which elevation an extended view of the great metropolis can be obtained. Spread beneath the spectator like an outstretched map it lies, from the bordering Hudson to the East River and the Sound.

Like all the new parks, St. Mary's requires no outlay for improvements or embellishments. Nature has been beforehand and done all that was necessary. She has fashioned it in her own way, built the hills, grassed the slopes, hollowed the valleys, and ranged the trees in social groups or solitary units. Consequently it is free from insipid regularity and formal devices. Its topographical peculiarities have been preserved and the result is a park that is a gem in its way without any artificial beauty about it. And yet one cannot look at this tract without feeling that it is so out of keeping with the surrounding land, that it seems to have been taken with its beauty of configuration and charming diversity of surface up bodily from some more favored spot and set right down here—a park superimposed upon an ordinary country tract, a flat, level surface fit only to be built on or ploughed over, or for any of the ordinary uses of every-day life;—and inside this park natural springs, woodland and upland, the air redolent with the odor of plant and flower and musical with the song of birds.

St. Mary's Park was included in the estate of Gouverneur Morris, the patriot statesman, whose name is inscribed in the early annals of the country, who was a member of the convention that framed the Constitutions of the United States and the State of New York, and who served the country subsequently in the Senate of the Republic. Mr. Morris also filled the post of Minister to France, and he now rests in the cemetery of St. Ann's Church, a few hundred feet from the park. St. Ann's is an old and picturesque edifice and its unmistakable air of antiquity contrasts strikingly with the modern buildings in close juxtaposition and adds not a little to the beauty of the landscape.

The people of Morrisania, long before it became part and parcel of New York city, recognized the suitability of this tract for a public park and proposed to set it apart for that purpose. Country picnic parties and city sight-seers enjoyed themselves therein, the popular will outrunning official action and virtually ignoring official tardiness. It was adapted for a park, it was intended for a park, and a park the people determined it should be.

And so it has been regarded and used by the people of Morrisania and the vicinity for years. Nevertheless, when it formally passes into the possession of the city next year there will be greater crowds and keener enjoyment. There will be no fear of loss, no dread of its being cut up into building lots and becoming the centre of an up-town tenement-house system, interfering with the enjoyment and threatening the health of the people. It is their's to have and to hold in *saecula saeculorum*, for it has been taken by the act in which its boundaries are defined. These begin at a point formed by the intersection of the southerly line of St. Mary's avenue and the easterly line of St. Ann's avenue; thence northerly along the easterly line of St. Ann's avenue to the southerly line of One Hundred and Forty-ninth street; thence along the southerly line of One Hundred and Forty-ninth street easterly to the westerly right-of-way line of the Port Morris Branch Railroad Company's property; thence southeasterly along said westerly line of railroad right-of-way to the easterly line of a street forming a southerly extension of Robbins avenue, as shown on a map of the new system of streets as laid out by the Commissioners of Public Parks; thence along the easterly line of such street, extending southerly from Robbins avenue about 150 feet; thence westerly and in a straight line to a point in the southerly line of St. Mary's street, distant about 30 feet northerly and at right angles with the northerly line of One Hundred and Forty-third street; from thence along the southerly line of St. Mary's street westerly to the point of beginning.

#### CLAREMONT PARK.

Claremont Park, like St. Mary's, is outside of the park system. It contains thirty-eight acres, and is situated about three-quarters of a mile from Hightbridge. It is thoroughly country-like and rural, and seems rather a valley in the Catskills than a park in the city of New York. Nothing reminds one of the busy, bustling life outside; the rush of business is unfelt here, and the struggle for wealth and the strife for precedence appears an absurd waste of time and energy. But the shriek of the locomotive as it rushes past soon corrects such ideas and brings with it thoughts more in harmony with the restless energy of modern life.

In one important particular, the conformation of the ground, Claremont differs essentially from the other detached park—St. Mary's. In brief, it is a lovely valley, lying between hills that border it on the east and west. These bordering ridges are not of a uniform height: the most elevated points rise over 100 feet and descend precipitously or gently some 50 or 60 feet, the irregularity of outline adding not a little to the picturesque effect of the whole. From these points a good view is obtained of the surrounding country, and at the same time the interlying valley, 100 feet below, is visible through its entire extent. The effect is pleasing, and the contrast between the lovely vale sleeping in the sun and the wide-awake world beyond its hill boundaries is striking, and reminds the spectator of the happy valley of Rasselas.

Its surface is beautifully diversified; stretches of meadow land alternating with eminences, and tracts well covered with flourishing stately





Crotona Park Entrance—North View.





trees of vigorous growth and magnificent foliage. Clambering vines drape the rocks and beautify the rugged pathways, fling a green veil over the gnarled roots and branches of decrepid trees evoking beauty from decay. Like all the parks of the new system it is ready-made, fit for use without loss of time or expenditure of money. We have, it is true, called attention to that important fact in every instance with a persistence that savors of monotony, but there is nothing the people are more interested in knowing. If, as in the case of the Central Park, they had to wait ten or fifteen years before it was ready, it would temper their pleasure considerably in the possession. Fortunately it is not so, and the time gained and the money saved are two important items to be added to the credit of these parks. Claremont is admirably located, and every year it will be more appreciated by the dwellers roundabout, as time makes its value more apparent and its use more universal.

The boundaries of the park begin at a point formed by the junction of the prolongation westwardly of the southerly line of Jane street (old name) with the easterly line of Fleetwood avenue; thence easterly along said prolongation and along the southerly line of Jane street and continuing eastwardly said straight line to its junction with the westerly line of (Grant Place) Elliott street; thence along the westerly line of Elliott street southerly to the easterly line of Fleetwood avenue; thence along the easterly line of Fleetwood avenue to the place of beginning.

#### THE PARKWAYS.

In the original design of the new park domain the great parkways were considered not only a most attractive, but an essential part of the whole plan. They were intended not merely as connecting links uniting the great pleasure grounds, but as extensions of the parks, and as affording a grand continuous drive from the Van Cortlandt through the Bronx over to the Sound.

The financial gain which would be derived by the city from the extended line of park frontage was also regarded as a matter of special moment in the conception and execution of the plan, as it was believed that the effect on the enhancement of the value of contiguous territory would be no less marked than in the case of the parks themselves. While the parkways, therefore, possessed all the advantages of boulevards their greater width would give them the appearance of continuous parks through which broad avenues, bordered with over-arching trees, could be constructed, with shaded walks for pedestrians and graveled roads for equestrians. It was also perceived that such a feature in the new park system, while it would add to the increased taxable value of the adjacent territory, was susceptible of embellishment in the highest degree, and, in the future of the northern portion of the city beyond the Harlem, would form one of its chief attractions.

The pleasure grounds of Chicago embrace a system of boulevards that is unequalled in the New World. With a width varying from a hundred to two hundred and fifty feet, their aggregate length is over thirty miles. But the magnificent parkway known as the Midway Plaisance, which con-

nects the two divisions of the Great South Park, has a width of nearly 800 feet and is a mile long. The art of the landscape gardener has contributed liberally to the plan and adornment of this unique and beautiful addition to Chicago's park system, and the result is seen in one of the most valuable and attractive ornaments of the Lake City.

The four parkways which form the main approaches to the principal pleasure ground of the Buffalo park system are 4 miles long and 200 feet wide. They are handsomely laid out, with six lines of shade trees, and have, at intervals of about 2,000 feet, wide circular and square plazas tastefully laid out in parterres and shaded walks.

With very rare exceptions wherever parks have been established, the parkway is now regarded as an indispensable adjunct and, as in the case of Chicago and Buffalo, a generous policy has prevailed in the appropriation of the necessary area of land for their construction. In the chief European cities the approaches to the parks, the grand avenues and boulevards, are as much the objects of liberal expenditure and artistic decoration as the parks with which they are connected. And so will it be with the Mosholu and the Bronx and Pelham parkways, which unite our two great inland and glorious seaside pleasure grounds.

#### THE MOSHOLU PARKWAY.

The Mosholu Parkway, which forms the connecting link between Van Cortlandt and Bronx parks, has an area of 80 acres, is 600 feet wide and a mile long. It is located on both sides of and includes Middle Brook Parkway, Brook street, and a small tributary stream which courses nearly through its centre, and which can be so utilized in the general design as to form one of its most attractive features. There is no need to tax the resources of landscape gardening for its ornamentation, or extravagant expenditure in its construction at the commencement or for many years to come. Tree planting in lines bordering the roads, the avenues and the walks that will be laid out with plots and grassy margins, will be all that is necessary till with the lapse of time comes a taste and a desire for more expensive cultivation and higher artistic embellishment. It would require, of course, large appropriations to make the Mosholu and the Bronx and Pelham parkways as magnificent approaches to our three great parks as the Avenue de l'Imperatrice is to that of the Bois de Boulogne; but the time will come, and it is not far off, when our parkways will have statuary and fountains and such other works of art as public or private taste may suggest and provide. At comparatively small expense, the natural brook which Mosholu Parkway already possesses can be enlarged, increased in volume by the aid of an artesian well, carried quite through the centre of the tract, and there is a sufficient descent to the grade to allow of the construction of dams enclosing lakelets, the overflow of which might be made to form miniature cascades, spanned by rustic bridges. Such ornamental attractions are possible in the plan of this broad parkway, which possesses natural conditions that permit of a wide scope for the invention and fancy of the landscape architect.



Crotona Park Entrance—South View.



## THE BRONX AND PELHAM PARKWAY.

The Bronx and Pelham Parkway traverses a tract of country differing materially in its topographical characteristics from that through which the Mosholu has been laid. It passes through a comparatively level section with gently undulating surface throughout almost its entire length of two-and-a-half miles. It begins at the junction of Fordham and Pelham avenues with Pelham Bay Park and takes, on the southerly line of the avenue, a continuous strip 300 feet up to the point of crossing by the Kingsbridge road. From this point to its junction with the Bronx Park it extends along the avenue in such manner as to allow the avenue to cross it diagonally from end to end between the Kingsbridge and the Boston Post roads, from which point a strip 300 feet wide is taken on the northerly side of the avenue as far as the boundary of the park. Throughout, its uniform width is 400 feet, in which is included the Fordham and Pelham avenue, the whole area taken being ninety-five acres, affording ample space not only for two broad drives for all classes of vehicles, but a bridle path, three or more walks and bordering margins of grass or shrubs as taste may determine.

If entrusted to competent hands this parkway could be made one of the finest avenues in the world, and when this part of Westchester is embraced within the city limits the tax income which will be collected on the increased and advancing value of the bordering lands will prove a prolific source of revenue to the municipal treasury.

A glance at the map accompanying this work shows the extent of territory embraced within the wide sweep of these great avenues, which, with the addition of the parks will afford a continuous drive of ten miles, extending in one unbroken line from the extreme northern boundary of Van Cortlandt clear over to the eastern extremity of the Pelham where its shores are washed by the waters of the Sound. And here along the sea-girt margin of this, the greatest of our parks, will one day be constructed a drive that should be a continuation of the Pelham Parkway and the views from which will far surpass those of the much-vaunted Riverside Park and Drive, that have already cost the city over \$6,000,000, and still more to come.

## THE CROTONA PARKWAY.

The Crotona Parkway, which has a width of 200 feet and a length of three-quarters of a mile, unites the Bronx and Crotona parks and will add largely to the value of real estate in this locality. It commences at the junction of the Southern Boulevard with the Bronx Park at Kingsbridge road crossing, thence southerly along the easterly side of the Southern Boulevard, and parallel with and touching the same, a strip of land 100 feet wide, as an addition to the width of said Boulevard, said strip continuing southerly, and of its full width of 100 feet to a point 100 feet south of the southerly line of Fairmount avenue, from thence westerly widening Fairmount avenue on its southerly side by a strip 100 feet in width, to a point 100 feet westerly of the northeasterly corner of Tremont Park, and at right angles northerly from said northeast corner of park aforesaid from thence

in a straight line parallel with said right angle 200 feet in width, touching the park and the street running easterly of the park. In its course it absorbs the Boulevard, making as stated a width of 200 feet.

If the improvement of this particular section of the city is made on a scale commensurate with the character of this fine avenue and the parks of which it is the connecting link, there should, as there doubtless will, be a marked and rapid increase in land values along the line and in the immediate vicinity of the parkways. With the exception of the Mosholu and Pelham parkways it is the broadest avenue in the city, exceeding by 50 feet the widest boulevards south of the Harlem. It is, therefore, capable of a greater degree of improvement than any of these, and property along its front will reach higher values and contribute correspondingly larger taxes to the city.

# HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT FOR NEW PARKS.

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## ITS FRIENDS AND FOES.

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### The Contest in the Legislature and Before the Courts.

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#### INCEPTION OF THE PROJECT.

In June of 1881 the writer of these pages directed his special attention to the question of public parks, in furtherance of a purpose which he had entertained for several years of advocating an increase of the park area of the metropolis, and organizing a movement to bring about a result so desirable for its sanitary well-being and the promotion of its material interests. With that object in view he collected from official and other sources a large amount of statistical and general information on the subject, believing that the time was propitious for the initiation of a movement in that direction. The investigations which he made satisfied him that the park area for many years prior to 1881 was wholly inadequate for the requirements of the population and that an increase in the extent and number of our breathing places was imperatively demanded by the present as well as by the future needs of our metropolis.

The data in his possession proved that New York was not only behind the great capitals of Europe, but that since Central Park was established, more than a quarter of a century ago, we have been left far in the rear by Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Buffalo and other American cities. His investigation also elicited the fact that less than 200 acres had been added to our park area since the passage of the Central Park act in 1853, and that had New York public grounds proportioned to her population, as compared with these cities, it would have from 7,000 to 8,000 instead of 1,100 acres.

As the matter, however, was financial as well as sanitary, particular inquiry was made into the question of expense, and with the most satisfactory and conclusive results in favor of the movement. An examination of official statistics proved that by the creation of Central Park the city had gained, in the enhanced value of surrounding property and the increased revenue derivable therefrom, \$17,000,000 over and above the natural



increase from the growth of population and the ordinary advance in real estate values; and this despite the enormous outlay necessary to convert the worst description of waste land into an ornamental park, to defray the extravagance of its embellishment and its costly maintenance for many years. This \$17,000,000, be it remembered, was in hard cash in excess of all expenses, and, in addition to this immense sum, the city was in possession of 864 acres, worth, as estimated, TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WHOLLY FREE OF COST.

After a careful study of the whole subject the writer was convinced that an enlargement of our park area would be attended by results no less satisfactory and conclusive; in a word, that the city's experience in the case of Central Park would be repeated on a larger scale; that the extension of our park domain NEED NOT COST THE CITY A SINGLE DOLLAR, but that on the contrary it would be a source of profit; that it would add greatly to its embellishment and attractiveness; promote the health and physical development of the rising and succeeding generations: improve our sanitary condition, and contribute to the recreation and social enjoyment of the hundreds of thousands of our toiling masses.

#### SUITABLE SITES.

Having collected and arranged this information in the form of newspaper articles he was fortunate in securing, as a medium of communication with the public, the columns of the *New York Herald*. In the descriptions of the sites, which were illustrated with a map showing the most suitable tracts for parks, he advocated the acquisition of at least four or five thousand additional acres beyond the Harlem River and in the adjacent territory of Westchester County. In one of these articles it was stated, in reference to the extension of the northern boundaries of the city, that "within the newly-acquired territory and in that immediately contiguous can be found available locations admirably adapted to the purpose and from which two sites containing from 1,500 to 2,000 acres each may be obtained at a comparatively moderate cost." It was further stated that "the withdrawal of so much land from the real estate market would alone materially enhance the value of the remaining territory, thus enabling the city to derive a largely augmented income therefrom."

The advantages of such parks was dwelt upon at length, and it was urged that in the selection of land for a park on the Sound the site "should be near, or include Hutchinson River, a little to the south of New Rochelle, and that it might be so arranged as to include one or more of the islands on the Sound which are now connected by causeways. These grounds," it was added, "should be rural parks, not artificial constructions requiring the expenditure of millions of dollars without corresponding benefit to the people. Extensive and well-shaded groves, running waters, widened here and there in their course into miniature lakes, broad tracts of meadow land for healthful exercise in athletic sports, camping, parade and rifle grounds; quiet little dells and nooks for picnic parties; in a word, great health-giving resorts for the whole people." The sites selected and shown on the map published at the time were the same as those subsequently chosen by the



Crotona Park—The Grove.



Commission appointed under the act, with such necessary modifications in boundaries as were deemed advisable.

#### THE NEW YORK PARK ASSOCIATION.

In the course of his inquiries for a map showing the territory between the Hudson and the Sound the writer made the acquaintance of Mr. Joseph S. Wood, who took a warm interest in the success of the project and to whom was communicated the intention to organize a movement for the increase of the park area of the city by the acquisition of the most suitable sites north of the Harlem and the adjacent part of Westchester County. Mr. Wood cordially offered his services in the prosecution of the work, and the co-operation of several gentlemen friendly to the movement having been obtained, a call for an informal meeting at the Fifth Avenue Hotel was issued, about two hundred invitations being sent out. The use of a parlor was obtained through the kind efforts of Mr. Charles Crary, and at this meeting the initiatory steps were taken for the formation of "The New York Park Association," which was organized on the 26th of November, 1881, the following officers elected and Executive Committee appointed: Waldo Hutchins, president; L. R. Marsh, vice-president; W. W. Niles, treasurer; John Mullaly, secretary; Chas. L. Tiffany, John E. Develin, H. B. Claffin, Major-General Shaler, W. E. Conner, Henry L. Hoguet, David Dows, S. R. Filley, Wm. Cauldwell, Chas. Crary, Gustav Schwab, Lewis G. Morris, Franklin Edson, Geo. W. McLean, Isaac Bell, Leonard Jerome, Augustus Schell, Jordan L. Mott, Egbert L. Viele, Joseph F. Wood, J. M. Carnochan, M.D.; John Fitch, H. P. De Graaf, Lewis May, Chas. J. Stephens.

At this meeting the writer, officiating as secretary, read a detailed statement, in which the reasons for the movement and "the imperative necessity of providing for the present and future wants of our rapidly increasing population in the important matter of park area," were set forth at length. Facts and figures were presented showing the deficiency of New York as compared with other great centres of population, and an addition to the park area of the city of at least four thousand acres earnestly advocated. Stirring addresses were made at this and other meetings by Messrs. Luther R. Marsh, Waldo Hutchins, W. W. Niles, Joseph S. Wood, Chas. Crary and E. L. Viele. The statement presented by the secretary was on motion adopted "as embodying the views of the meeting," and he was "requested to prepare it, with such additional matter as he might deem advisable for publication in pamphlet form."

Ten thousand copies were printed a few weeks thereafter, and the greater part sent through the mails to the press, to prominent citizens and to representative men of all classes, to clergymen, school teachers, officers and managers of benevolent institutions, presidents of banks and insurance companies, members of the various Exchanges, State and city officials, judges, athletic clubs, officers of trade and other societies, etc. In this way and through the columns of the daily press, which gave a liberal portion of their space to the proceedings of the Park Association and friendly

approval of its work, much valuable and interesting information on the question was given to the public.

#### PRELIMINARY WORK.

Encouraged by the general favor and support and the decided interest manifested in the progress of the movement, the Association determined that an effort should be made during the legislative session of 1883 to secure, if possible, the passage of two bills, one appropriating the Van Cortlandt Park and the other appointing a Commission "to select and locate such lands in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, and vicinity thereof, as they might deem advisable, for one or more public parks and a parade ground, and to make a report thereof at the earliest day practicable."

The Law Committee, to which the preparation of those bills was intrusted, consisted of Messrs. Marsh, Develin, Niles, Wood, Crary, McLean and Mullaly.

In the performance of this important work several meetings were held, and the proposal to locate a great park on the Sound was warmly discussed, and aroused a strong and persistent opposition. The fact that it would be outside of the city limits and beyond municipal jurisdiction was urged against any effort in that direction as a waste of time and labor until that part of Westchester was annexed to the city. In reply to this argument the friends of the waterside park contended that as this portion of Westchester was destined to become a part of New York in the near future, it was true economy to secure the land at once while it could be had at the minimum value, instead of waiting five or ten years when it could not, in all probability, be purchased at thrice the price. The affirmative of the proposition was sustained by Messrs. Wood, Marsh, Crary, Filley and Mullaly, Messrs. Wood and Crary being particularly strenuous and unyielding on this point. A compromise was finally agreed to, by which, as stated, two bills were prepared, accompanied by a memorial, which impressed upon the Legislature the policy of acquiring at least four thousand acres for public parks, and the urgent necessity of securing at once the tract described in the bill, and which has been appropriated by the act of 1884 under the title of Van Cortlandt Park. The special attention of the Legislature was directed to the great advantage of "a grand park with a water front on Long Island Sound, one which," in the language of the memorial, "should be the people's own, a resort for picnics and excursions, a place where they could enjoy the pleasures of boating, bathing, fishing, etc." Reference was also made to "the advisability of constructing parkways" and of the utilization "of some of the avenues and boulevards now existing for such purpose." The bills were placed in the hands of Senator Treanor and Assemblyman Breen, and, after several attempts to obtain a hearing from the Committee on Cities, the association arrived at the inevitable conclusion that nothing was to be expected from the committees to which the bills were referred, and they decided to postpone the matter to the next meeting of the Legislature.



Crotona Park—The Dell.





## A WORTHLESS RESOLUTION.

Before the close of the session, however, Mr. Breen introduced a resolution appointing the Mayor, the Commissioner of Public Works, the President of the Board of Aldermen and the President of the Tax Department, a Commission to report on the advisability of a public park in the annexed district and the adjacent portion of Westchester, such report to be made within thirty days.

It is needless to state that such a Commission could not, even if it were friendly to the measure, give it that consideration and attention which was essential to a proper understanding and appreciation of the subject, and so, after two or three meetings at the Mayor's office, the affair resulted in a report to the Legislature to the effect that the time allowed was "inadequate for the examination of the matter, and to enable them to form any fixed opinion as to where the park or parks should be located."

The meetings, of which three were held in March, 1882, afforded the friends of the movement a chance to give much valuable information to the public, and it is needless to say they fully availed themselves of the opportunity. At these meetings effective speeches were made by Messrs. Marsh, Niles, Wood, Dr. J. M. Carnochan and Judge Hall, and a new impetus was given to the project, despite the pronounced opposition of its enemies.

Although the efforts of the association to secure even the consideration of the Legislature of 1882 had failed, the work was prosecuted with unwavering vigor, and in 1883, through the well-directed efforts of the Hon. Leroy B. Crane, who represented the Twenty-third Assembly District, and whose friendly services in favor of the measure were enlisted by Mr. Marsh, a bill was passed authorizing the Mayor "to nominate, subject to confirmation by the Board of Aldermen, a Commission of seven citizens whose duty it shall be to select and locate such lands in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards of the city of New York and in the vicinity thereof, as may, in their opinion, be proper and desirable to be preserved and set apart for one or more public parks for said city."

## APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW PARKS COMMISSION.

The bill became a law on the 18th of April, and on the 1st of May the following gentlemen were appointed by Mayor Edson and confirmed by the Board of Aldermen: Augustus Schell, Waldo Hutchins, General Fitzgerald, C. L. Tiffany, W. W. Niles, L. R. Marsh and G. W. McLean. As Mr. Schell was on the eve of his departure for Europe, he resigned, and Mr. Thomas J. Crombie was appointed in his place.

Having taken the required oath the Commission was duly organized by the unanimous election of Hon. L. R. Marsh as president, in recognition of his unceasing and active interest in the movement from the beginning. C. L. Tiffany was elected vice-president, General Fitzgerald, treasurer, and John Mullaly, secretary.

The Commission, being now organized, proceeded immediately with the work for which it had been appointed, and on the 26th of May visited in a body and examined the various tracts of land which were considered suit-



able for park purposes. Their tour of inspection took in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards and a part of the adjacent territory of Westchester.

#### THE REPORT.

On the 1st of June the Commission inspected the tract now known as Van Cortlandt Park, and adjourned on the 15th for the summer vacation. During the interval the writer entered into correspondence with the park authorities of Paris, London, Dublin, Berlin, Vienna, Amsterdam and Brussels in Europe; and in the United States, with the Park Commissioners of Chicago, Washington, Boston, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Buffalo and San Francisco. Through the courtesy of these officials he obtained much valuable and interesting information in the form of annual reports and other documents. This information was turned to good account in the preparation of the elaborate report to the Legislature of 1884, describing and illustrating the sites of the new parks and presenting in more extended detail and with much additional matter the facts and statistics embraced in the pamphlet issued in 1882.

The contrast, as shown in the report, between New York and Philadelphia as well as other American cities, was decidedly unfavorable to our metropolis, while in comparison with the great European capitals its park area dwindled into absolute insignificance.

This document contained 217 octavo pages and was illustrated with thirty engravings of views in the new parks. It also included a reduced copy of the map compiled by the engineer of the Commission, General James C. Lane, who was appointed on the 11th of October, 1883, and whose services were so inadequately rewarded with the meagre appropriation of a thousand dollars; but to General Lane the question of compensation was of slight consideration in comparison with the importance of the work with which he had been intrusted. His experience in the art of civil engineering and landscape gardening, and the fine taste which he brought to the practice of his profession, qualified him in an especial degree for the performance of this task. In speaking of his reputation as an engineer it may not be out of place to add that he has a brilliant record of services in the principal battles of the late civil war from Bull Run to the surrender at Appomattox.

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS.

The Commission, as stated in the report, announced, through the daily press, that public meetings would be held, at which ample opportunity for a hearing would be given to all who desired to present their views, or to offer suggestions in relation to the proposed extension of the park area of the city, the location of sites, the recommendation of particular tracts of land and such other considerations as they desired to bring before them. Several meetings were held in the City Hall and correspondence was freely invited from parties interested in the subject. These meetings were largely attended, and of the forty or fifty persons by whom they were addressed all were unanimously in favor of the enlargement of the park area of the city, although differing in opinion as to the location of the sites and the

extent of land required. Local interests demanded parks in particular sections, and while the majority evidently regarded the subject from a metropolitan standpoint, favoring two or more large parks, others advocated the distribution of the proposed increase in the form of many and smaller parks and squares.

During the progress of this public discussion numerous letters were received containing suggestions and recommendations of particular tracts, and several visits of inspection were made before the sites were finally selected. The whole subject was fully and minutely discussed at the executive meetings of the Commission and the report and map adopted by a unanimous vote. Mr. Marsh, by whom the bill for the appropriation and condemnation of the various tracts of land embraced within the several parks and parkways had been carefully prepared and revised, proceeded to Albany on the 23d of January, 1884, and placed copies of the report and bill in the hands of Hon. G. W. Plunkitt, of the Eleventh Senatorial District, and Hon. Walter Howe, of the Eleventh Assembly District.

#### THE ANTI-PARKS WAR.

Up to this point the park movement had met with comparatively little opposition. Much work, it is true, was necessary to carry it on successfully, even in the face of such opposition as had been manifested. But the prospect was most encouraging and victory seemingly assured. Certainly none of the friends of the measure were prepared for the bitter disappointment they had to encounter.

As Mayor Edson had been and still was a member of the Executive Committee of the New York Park Association, and as he had taken an active interest in the distribution of the pamphlet issued in 1882, advocating an addition of four or five thousand acres to the park area of the city, his fellow members reasonably expected his continued co-operation and support. Having appointed the Commission and been invited to accompany them in their tours of inspection, it was naturally inferred that he would give the weight of his approval and official influence in securing the passage of the bill before the Legislature. In fact, no doubt whatever was entertained on the matter. This confidence, however, was rudely dispelled by his unfriendly attitude after the presentation of the report and bill and by his open and active hostility to its passage. He made it a matter of discussion in the weekly meetings of the heads of departments held in his office, which resulted in the adoption of two resolutions on the 15th of March, the first of which objected to the "location, extent and expense of the proposed parks," the second favoring the acquisition of "the whole or any portion of the land designated by the Commission within the limits of the city," provided the necessary power of approval were vested in the "proper authorities of the city and the Sinking Fund Commissioners."

#### THE PRESS FOR THE PARKS.

On this point, however, the Mayor found that the press instead of being in accord were in direct conflict with him and his Cabinet. The *Herald* called attention to the fact that the Commission had "received the approval

of the prominent financiers and business men of New York who represent over a thousand millions of dollars in real estate and various other forms of investment, and whose property will bear a large share of the burden—if burden it can be called—which will be not only a great financial gain to the city treasury, but a blessing to the thousands of the city's toilers and workers." \* \* \* \* "This bill provides, as in the case of the Central Park, for the appointment of Commissioners by the General Term of the Supreme Court, who are authorized to take the necessary proceedings to secure possession of the land. Under such circumstances, of course, the politicians would have no chance and so they are opposed to this beneficent measure and have employed the Mayor's Cabinet as a convenient tool with which to give it a death blow. But the public, they will find, will have something to say in the matter yet."

The *Times* urged the immediate acquisition of the lands on the ground that every year's delay would add to the cost. "We are forced," it said, "to accept the mature and carefully studied conclusions of the Commission in preference to the off-hand judgment of the Mayor's Cabinet. Every precaution should be taken against jobbery and land speculation at the expense of the city, but this is no more necessary now than it will be in the future. In fact, there will be a great advantage in taking the whole domain proposed before a movement is produced in real estate values by a beginning in park improvements and in the extension of rapid transit facilities through the annexed district. Now is plainly the time to acquire title to all the needed lands, and those designated by the Commission are all desirable."

The *World* said that "the approval of the bill relating to parks in the new wards will give general satisfaction. It is wise to provide for ample public grounds before the land is increased in value by improvements."

#### NOW IS THE TIME.

THE REAL ESTATE RECORD AND GUIDE was equally pronounced, declaring that "it is clearly unwise to wait until the price of land is high before providing ourselves with plenty of park room;" and in a subsequent article it took still stronger ground, maintaining that "a postponement of the improvement for another year will cost the city a great deal of money, for," it added, "there is every indication that a rise of values is imminent in all the suburbs of New York. The metropolis of the United States has really less park room than any of the leading capitals of the world. We have no parade ground for our militia, nor space for the open air sports which have become an institution in this country. The boys and girls of our public schools have no playgrounds. The young fellows in our New York College are forced to go to Prospect Park to play lawn tennis. \* \* \* It is clearly unwise to wait until the price of land is high before providing ourselves with plenty of room. It will be a red letter day for the annexed district as well as a matter for congratulation for our people generally when Governor Cleveland signs the admirable park bill passed by the Legislature."

The *Tribune* took "exception to the opinion of the Mayor and the other



Pelham Bay Park—From Pelham Bridge, Looking Southerly.



city officials, that the plan of acquiring several thousands of acres of lands for parks in the annexed district is unwise," and added that, "on the whole, the bill was a good one. The Mayor's Cabinet has a right to an adverse opinion beyond doubt; but in discussing this matter the Senate and Assembly Committees on Cities should not be entirely guided by it. They should carefully consider also the fact that the plan has the earnest and intelligent approval of some of the most prominent and public-spirited citizens of New York."

#### THE COMMISSION ENDORSED.

The *Mail and Express*, which has been the constant and consistent friend of the movement from the beginning, handled the enemies of the parks without gloves. "The opposition," said that paper, "to the splendid and well-considered scheme for new parks in the upper wards comes mainly from a few 'pernickety' and narrow-minded officials, and from persons whose 'interests' are not those of the people. Let the Legislature earn the gratitude of the great mass of New Yorkers by passing the bill recommended by the able and disinterested Park Commission, whose labors are at an end. And let legislators remember that a single pig squealing under a gate makes more noise than a thousand quiet people."

"We presume," said the *Evening Post*, "that the protest of that curious body, known as the 'Mayor's Cabinet,' against the bill providing for public parks in the annexed city districts will have little weight with the Legislature. That bill was drawn up by a Commission appointed by the Mayor under the provisions of an act of the Legislature and was the result of the most competent and careful investigation of the whole subject. The Commissioners went about their work with commendable public spirit, and their recommendations have met the warm approval of our most eminent and disinterested citizens." It added that the bill was a carefully considered measure and has met "its chief opposition from the politicians who dislike it, because they are excluded from all possibility of profiting by its provisions."

The *Star* was no less emphatic on the subject than its contemporaries, insisting that "the localities chosen, after thorough examination, are ample, accessible, beautiful, easy to care for, and for sale at a reasonable cost. \* \* \* New York of the present needs more breathing room. Shall New York of the future be stifled as now, by a foolish, niggardly and short-sighted policy? On grounds of future morality, health, decency and sound business judgment, the new parks should be secured at the earliest possible moment."

#### SUPPORT OF SOLID MEN.

It was evident from the decided stand taken by the press on the work of the Commission that the Mayor and his official aids could not look to that quarter for encouragement or support. To add to the perplexities of his position he had received a letter from many of the real estate owners, bankers, lawyers and business men, representing over a billion of dollars in real estate—subsequently swelled by additional names to two billions—directing

his attention to the unanswerable arguments and solid array of facts, presented in the report to the Legislature, pointing out the danger of delay, insisting that the purchase of more park room was more imperative now than ever, and that the sooner it was obtained the better.

Prior, however, to the reception of this communication by the Mayor, circular letters had been addressed by Mr. Marsh and the author to a large number of representative citizens, a copy of the report accompanying each letter, inviting an expression of opinion on the question of the enlargement of the park area of the metropolis. The response was prompt, emphatic and decided. The writers expressed their warm approval of the movement, and urged prompt action on the part of the Legislature.

In a hearing before the Mayor and the heads of departments Mr. Marsh made a powerful argument, sustained by a formidable array of facts, but the city government was not to be moved, and so the contest was carried to Albany before the Senate and Assembly Committees on Cities, and into both branches of the Legislature.

#### THE CONTEST IN THE LEGISLATURE.

The field of conflict having been changed from New York to the State capitol the whole strength of the friends of the parks was concentrated at this point, and throughout they were effectually aided by the press of the city. Messrs. L. R. Marsh, W. W. Niles, Waldo Hutchins, C. D. Burrill, the writer of these pages and others, attended the several committee meetings, and during their frequent visits to Albany fortified their friends in the Legislature, who were fighting the battle for the people's parks, with an overwhelming mass of facts and arguments. Conspicuous among the champions of the bill were Senator Plunkitt, by whom it was introduced, Senators Ellsworth, Gibbs, Lowe, Nelson, Daggett, Gilbert, Otis, Cullen, Thomas, Wilson, Kiernan, Newbold and Van Schaick. On the evening of the passage of the bill there was a spirited and prolonged discussion, in which Senator Ellsworth, who had from the beginning given the subject his earnest attention and taken an active part in promoting the success of the measure, made an eloquent, convincing and ringing speech in every way worthy of the occasion. It was one of the most powerful arguments which this distinguished Senator and learned jurist made during his Senatorial term and was listened to with marked attention and interest throughout. Senator Ellsworth was ably sustained by Senators Plunkitt, Lowe and Thomas, who were no less earnest in their advocacy of the bill and who guarded it against the peculiar tactics of its enemies with untiring vigilance.

The bill was vehemently opposed by Senator Daly, and, on its passage, his vote and that of Senator Jacobs were recorded in the negative, the following voting in the affirmative: Charles S. Baker, Shepard B. Bowen, Henry J. Coggeshall, John J. Cullen, Andrew J. Davidson, Timothy E. Ellsworth, Edward S. Esty, J. Sloat Fassett, Frederick S. Gibbs, John J. Kiernan, Henry R. Low, Michael C. Murphy, Henry C. Nelson, Thomas D. Newbold, James R. Otis, George W. Plunkett, James H. Robb, John B. Thacher, Edward B. Thomas, John Van Schaick, Commodore P. Vedder.

The service rendered on this occasion, as indeed all through the prog-

ress of the struggle in the Senate, by Senator Lowe, the consistent advocate of the parks throughout; the genial and earnest Otis, a host in himself; the untiring Plunkitt, alert and watchful; the calm and convincing Gilbert, and the steadfast and reliable Wilson, Newbold, Daggett, Comstock, Kiernan and Baker should long be held in grateful remembrance.

THE FRIENDS OF THE PARKS—HON. L. R. MARSH.

Of the pre-eminent part which Mr. Marsh took in the work done at Albany, as well as in the city, before the Committees of the Legislature and in the duties of the Commission in New York; in his able arguments before the Supreme Court; the Mayor's Cabinet; the committee meetings of the Real Estate Exchange; at the meetings in the City Hall; in the preparation of cases and legal documents, in which his name did not always appear; his co-operation with the author in the work of the report to the Legislature; and, outside of this, the many friends he made and enlisted in the work—in all this and still more that was essential and necessary to success, Mr. Marsh's services were invaluable and indispensable. His high sense of personal and professional honor, his integrity of character, added to the enthusiastic energy, and the cheerful, buoyant, hopeful spirit with which he entered into the movement; the unfailing courtesy with which he conducted his part of the controversy—a characteristic that has won for him the well-deserved title of the Chesterfield of the New York bar—with such elements enlisted in the cause and with the loyal co-operation of those who were faithful throughout, refusing to be swayed by threats, or cajoled by promises—with all these essentials to success, more potent than even official patronage, there was substantial reason for the abiding confidence which the friends of the cause had in its ultimate and complete triumph.

As to Mr. Marsh's share in the work, it is indeed doubtful if in the legal ranks of the city there could be found one who would have been willing through six years of steady, unwavering, chivalric devotion to give, without compensation, his talents and his life-long professional experience to the promotion and success of this great movement for the benefit of his fellow citizens. It is very certain that no other volunteered, or was discovered.

In paying this just tribute to Mr. Marsh's share in the prosecution and completion of the work in which he had so freely and generously co-operated through years of contest and controversy, the author desires to add the meed of his own personal admiration and respect. During all this time Mr. Marsh's sole object was the public good, and, the bill once passed, his chief solicitude was to protect the public interest and the rights which the people had by legislative enactment acquired to this magnificent park domain, to prevent its being wrested from them and to preserve it inviolate as their property and the inheritance of the generations to come. To this work he brought all the resources of a mind stored with the learning of a profession in which, in his earlier days, he was associated as a partner with Massachusetts' great statesman, the illustrious Webster. And now in his advanced life, which has already passed the allotted term, like Gladstone and De Lesseps, he still bears himself erect under the burden of accumu-



labor years, promoting the physical activity and the undimmed intellect of a robust and vigorous manhood.

HON. W. W. NILES.

It should be important work performed by that able lawyer, Hon. W. W. Niles, who was one of the earliest, most earnest, active and influential advocates of the new parks, be forgotten, for his practical legislative experience, acquired while a member of the Legislature some years before, and his extensive acquaintance among the leading members of both branches, rendered his personal attendance in the State Capitol at this juncture of special value. In fact, all through the six years' battle waged for the people's parks, Mr. Niles was ever ready, not merely with his individual efforts and influence, but he gave a large share of his time to the work of the Association both in New York and Albany, writing letters to and securing the support of members of the Senate and Assembly, and aiding where his help was most effective. Of all the advocates of the measure there was none whose interest and confidence in its success was more earnest and unflagging, and certainly none who was more efficient in making converts to the cause.

HON. JOHN E. DEVELIN.

Among the first to take part in the new parks movement was Hon. John E. Develin, whose experience and thorough knowledge of municipal law has placed him deservedly among the leading members of the legal profession in a city distinguished for its able jurists. To those who are acquainted with this gentleman it is needless to say that from the moment the project was presented for his consideration he gave it his unqualified, cheerful and hearty indorsement and support. From the commencement it had the benefit of his valuable advice, personal influence and professional knowledge. Mr. Develin attended all the meetings of the Law Committee of the New York Park Association and materially assisted in the preparation of the first bills introduced in the Legislature, where he rendered important aid, not only in the promotion of the measure, but made an effective argument before the Governor the day on which the bill received his signature. In fact, throughout the whole movement, and notably in the part he took in the Sinking Fund case in the Court of Common Pleas, and in securing the necessary application of the Park Department for the appointment of the Commissioners of Appraisal, his services were most valuable.

HON. W. HUTCHINS.

In the early stages of the movement, and as President of the New York Park Association, Hon. Waldo Hutchins played an important part, although his official duties as member of Congress made it impossible for him to give as much of his time and attention to the success of the measure as he desired. Despite of this, however, Mr. Hutchins rendered timely assistance at Albany, and spoke at one of the meetings of the Assembly Committee in reply to the arguments of Mayor Edson and the Corporation



Pelham Bay Park—Prospect Hill, Looking Westward.



Counsel against the Park bill. On that occasion Mr. Hutchins took strong ground against the effort to amend the bill by the addition of a clause assessing the surrounding lands, which he forcibly denounced as a vicious principle and a great injustice that in many cases would result in the confiscation of the property of small owners.

The movement had also the benefit of the legal experience of Mr. Albon P. Man, who in an able letter to Hon. Walter Howe exposed the utter weakness and fallacy of the position taken by the opposition on the Sinking Fund question, and pointed out with much force the urgent necessity for an increase of the park area of the metropolis.

HON. O. B. POTTER.

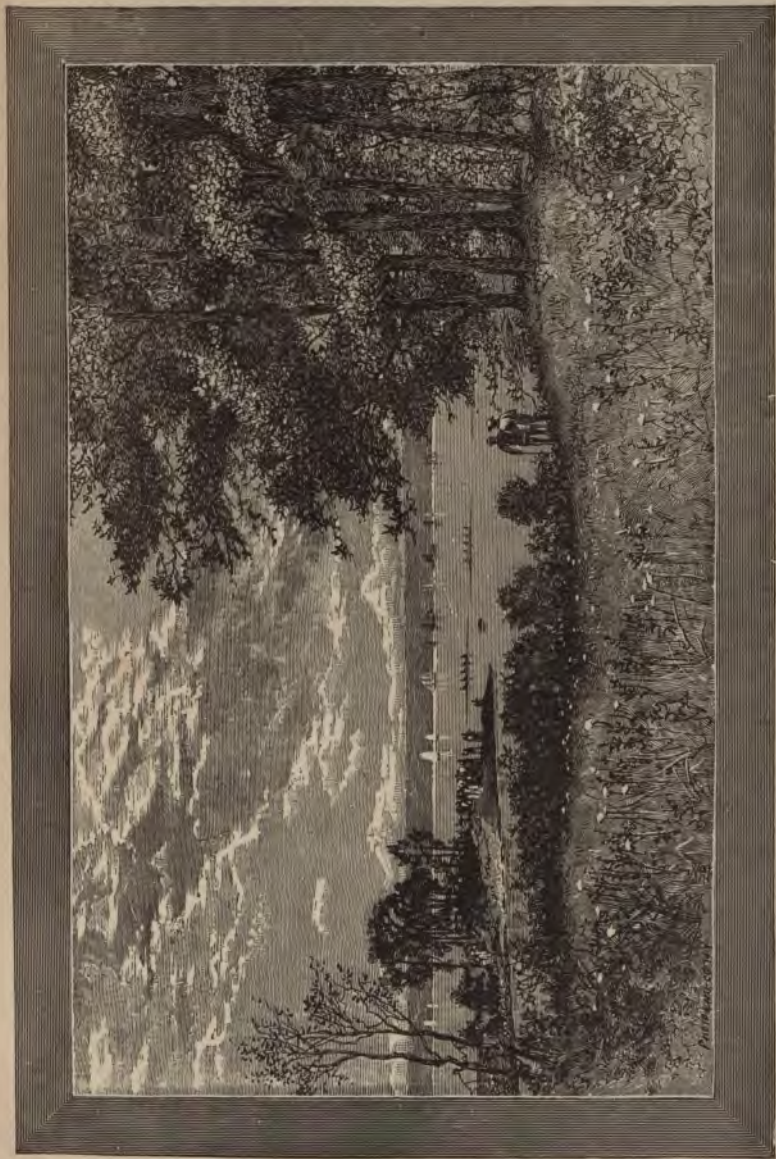
There was another gentleman who, although occupied with his duties as a representative in Congress and with the responsibilities inseparable from the care of large business interests, found time to say and write many a word in favor of the new park domain. In two strong and convincing letters Hon. O. B. Potter insisted on the acquisition of the whole park area taken by the act, and dwelt with particular emphasis on the value of Pelham Bay Park as a most essential, indeed as an indispensable feature in the system. To this welcome aid he added his personal influence, and in his last letter he took occasion to say that he was in favor of the parks *because* he was a large taxpayer and more than nine-tenths of his property were below Fiftieth street. "I do not own," said he, "and have not the slightest interest in any land in Westchester County, except my country seat in Sing Sing. I know that the acquisition of these new parks will *somewhat* increase taxes, but I am clear that they will add more to the value of my property in New York city than the *loss by taxation*; I shall be much more than repaid by the increased well-being of the city and its population."

COL. R. M. GALLAWAY.

To say that Col. R. M. Gallaway was an earnest supporter of the movement even before the New York Park Association was organized would be but a feeble recognition of his active and effective co-operation, the valuable assistance which he rendered at important stages of its progress, and the friendly aid enlisted in its service through his efforts. He was not only one of its earliest, most consistent and constant friends, but he was an enthusiastic advocate of Pelham Bay Park, especially on account of the great advantages presented by its extended frontage on the Sound, which, he believed, "could not fail to make it one of the most attractive of our public pleasure grounds, particularly," as he said in his letter to the Governor while the bill was awaiting his signature, "for the great body of our working people, whose various trade and benevolent societies, in addition to the athletic clubs, will throng it daily through the summer season. Better," as Mr. Gallaway sententiously remarked, "for the city to buy grass lots now than lots with improvements on them hereafter." Throughout the whole contest he was literally a tower of strength to the cause.

Particular reference has been made to the connection of Mr. Joseph S. Wood with the project, the prominent part he took as a member of the





Pelham Bay Park—From Hunter's Island, Looking South.



resorting to a certain kind of legislative and official legerdemain, to so smuggle their lands outside the parks as to secure the advantage of the advanced value.

However conflicting may have been the motives of the various parties in opposition, one conclusion was inevitable—they nearly all furnished irrefutable testimony in support of the argument that parks are a good investment and that they afford a profitable return on the outlay.

#### ONLY NATURAL PARK LANDS SELECTED.

The question of economy was, of course, an all important one, and it was, therefore, constantly kept in view in the determination of the various sites. It was desirable that the tracts should be natural parks, *requiring the least expenditure possible to adapt them for public use*, not like the Central, mere waste ground, the improvement of every acre of which cost thrice the original price of the land. A still further illustration of the folly and extravagance which had hitherto prevailed in the purchase of land for public grounds was exhibited in the case of the Riverside and Morningside "parks," so called, which, in addition to the original price of seven and a-quarter millions of dollars for 120 acres, will require an expenditure of three or four millions more to make them even presentable. At the best they can never be more than ribbon parks, and nearly one-half their surface consists of great ledges of rock so precipitous in places as to be impassable without danger to life and limb. When they are "improved" the whole 120 acres will have cost as much if not more than the 3,840 acres embraced in the area of the new parks and parkways. The difference between the old and the new pleasure grounds is the difference between an unfurnished and a furnished house, or rather between a vacant and an improved city lot.

The lands taken by the act of 1884 are natural parks, they are furnished and ready for use, and, keeping in view the city's costly experience in the three parks named, they will be worth more than thrice the amount that will be paid for them. As to the future—if in thirty-one years the 864 acres of the Central have advanced from a value of \$6,666,000 in 1856 to \$200,000,000 in 1887 what will be the value of the six new parks, embracing 3,840 acres, thirty-one years hence?

#### A SUGGESTIVE COMPARISON.

But the contrast does not end here, for it has been a question, not only of money, but of what is of as much if not more consequence—it has been also a question of time. The new parks are now ready for occupancy, as much so as the Central, which was fifteen years in a state of preparation. How is it with the two "ribbon parks?" They were bought seventeen years ago, and the city has ever since been paying heavy interest on the bonds! Of what use have they been to the public for purposes of recreation? Have they been—are they now "things of beauty?" parks? playgrounds? And yet, when a number of public-spirited citizens band together, give their time and their talents freely and generously to the work of providing a grand system of parks deserving of the name, and which will add to the



attractiveness, the health, the prosperity and renown of the great metropolis, they are accused of mercenary motives in the prosecution of a work *which will not only not cost the city one dollar, but which will place the whole of this magnificent park area in its possession entirely free of expense, and in all probability, as in the case of the Central Park, with a large profit to its account on the balance sheet.*

Unfortunately for the city, the facts and arguments presented in support of the new park movement failed to convince Mayor Edson and his official aids. They had determined to defeat the bill which provided for the appropriation of a park area of even less extent than he, as a member of the Executive Committee of the New York Park Association, had approved, indorsed and urged the Legislature to authorize and direct the city authorities to secure. In their opposition the Mayor and the heads of departments were vigorously supported by several property-owners in Pelham Bay Park, who employed counsel and circulated petitions to which they obtained among their friends a large number of signatures. Happily their opposition was counterbalanced by the support which the park movement received from other property-owners, who, although they were, as stated, wholly ignorant of the fact that their lands had been included in the area first indicated, and which embraced all that was finally selected in the location of Pelham Bay Park, were willing that their property should be devoted to public use and ready to assist the promoters of the good work.

#### STRONG FRIENDS OF THE MOVEMENT.

Of these Mr. John Hunter deserves special mention, as also Mr. Chas. D. Burrill, who acted as the legal representative of several owners, and who was unceasing in his efforts all through the struggle with the city authorities. And certainly never was more effective duty performed by lawyer in the interests of clients and incidentally in the promotion of a great public purpose than that rendered by Mr. Burrill. From the fall of 1883 up to the enactment of the law, in the arguments before the Legislative Committee, in the contests before the courts, in the defeat of the scheme to repeal the act of 1884; in a word, in the constant and persistent work required all through the years 1884, 1885, 1886 and 1887, Mr. Burrill never spared himself, but was always on hand at the right time and in the right place. Fortunate, indeed, the client whose case is intrusted to such able, vigilant, devoted, judicious counsel as Mr. Burrill proved himself throughout the four years of contention and strife during which he was connected with the park movement. In fact, his energy was irrepressible and his vigilance untiring.

To Mr. Hunter, especially, who secured the hearty co-operation of many influential friends and advocates in promoting the passage of the bill, great credit is due. Always ready, and wherever his influence was most required, this gentleman gave effective assistance to the movement, and throughout proved a most potent factor in the accomplishment of the result. In justice to Mr. Hunter it must be said that until the publication of the map, on which the suitable area for the location of Pelham Bay Park was marked out, he was wholly igno-

rant of the fact that any portion of his land would be taken for the purpose.

## OTHER FRIENDS.

Nor should the name of a strong friend of the parks be forgotten or dropped off this beadroll—the late Hon. John Kelly, who, taking a broad, comprehensive, generous view of the project, and satisfied that it would conduce to the interests of the great city in which he held high official positions, exercised his personal and political influence to secure the success of the measure, exercised it too at a time when it was of special importance at Albany. He did not ask what side was in favor of the bill, or what side was to be benefited by its passage; once convinced that it was for the good of the city he gave it his support. To him this tribute is justly due and willingly paid.

Of ex-Collector W. H. Robertson it is just to say that, from the moment he read the report and wrote his letter of approval, his influence was employed wherever it could be most effective. By letter, by personal effort, and by every honorable means he gave the bill his hearty support, and to Mr. Robertson no less than to Mr. Kelly are their fellow citizens indebted in a measure for its success.

To several esteemed friends, particularly to Mr. John H. Farrell, editor of the *Albany Press and Knickerbocker*; Hon. John W. Jacobus, Hon. Wm. Purcell, of Rochester; Hon. Hiram Barney, Thos. B. Connery, Gen. James R. O'Beirne, Hon. Joseph B. Carr, and Hon. Thomas B. Asten, the author makes his sincere acknowledgments for timely and cordial support. But the list of workers in the cause would be still incomplete without the name of Mr. D. H. Watson, who was ever ready to give his welcome co-operation whenever it was most required.

## THE WORK PERFORMED.

Republicans, or Democrats, it mattered not—on this question there were no party lines, and, with very few exceptions, they were found shoulder to shoulder working for the enactment of the law.

Probably there never was a measure introduced into a Legislature which depended so completely on its merits, and with which political considerations had so little to do. It was, from the beginning, steady, unrelenting, persistent, untiring work, backed by a determination to succeed, and, of course, Work & Will won the victory. It is a firm that seldom fails.

During the six years that have elapsed since the inception of the movement the author gave to it his best efforts, with an unflinching faith in its ultimate success. In these six years of steady, continuous work many thousand letters were written, several pamphlets and circulars prepared and distributed, independent of the dry monotonous details of a secretary's duties. All this, constituting a vast mass of work, *was performed without a dollar of expense to the city, or to any one except the worker.* To this was added throughout those years of contest and controversy unceasing personal efforts among friends and all who were willing to promote the success of the movement. For the writer it was a labor of love, a self

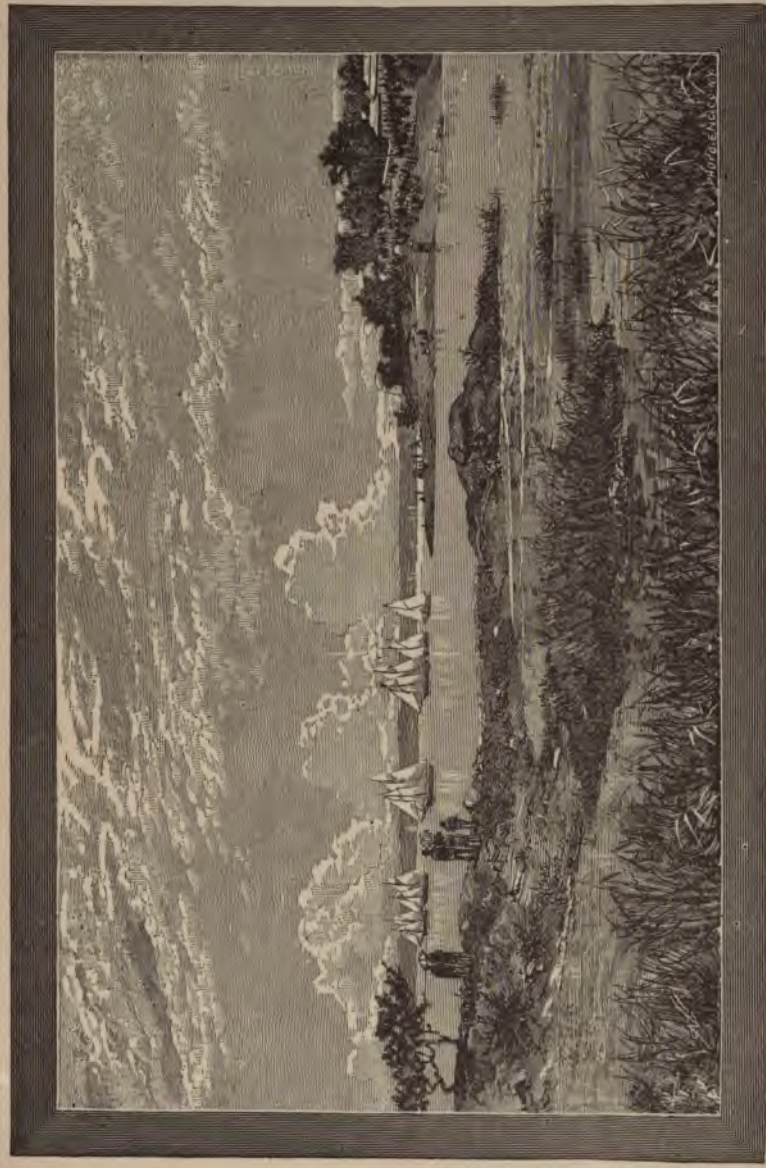
imposed task, and his services money could neither purchase nor compensate.

The information collected from official and other sources were compiled in popular form and scattered broadcast through the public press and in various publications. In fact, the literature of the New Parks had grown into the proportions of a small library, and including the legal arguments would fill twenty ordinary-sized volumes. In the meantime correspondence was kept up with unflagging energy. Wherever a friend could be secured, an enemy converted, or an earnest worker interested, no pains were spared either by letter or personal effort, to enlist them in the cause. They were furnished with batteries of arguments, and arsenals of facts. Whenever the influence of a public man who believed in it could be obtained his co-operation was solicited. In this way men representing large interests in real estate, the Astors, the Belmonts, the Tiffanys, the Claflins, etc., appreciating the effect of the New Parks in the enhancement of values and profiting by the experience in the case of the Central, gave their approval to the movement and united in an earnest appeal to the Mayor, the Legislature and the Governor in favor of the bill.

#### A HOST OF ALLIES.

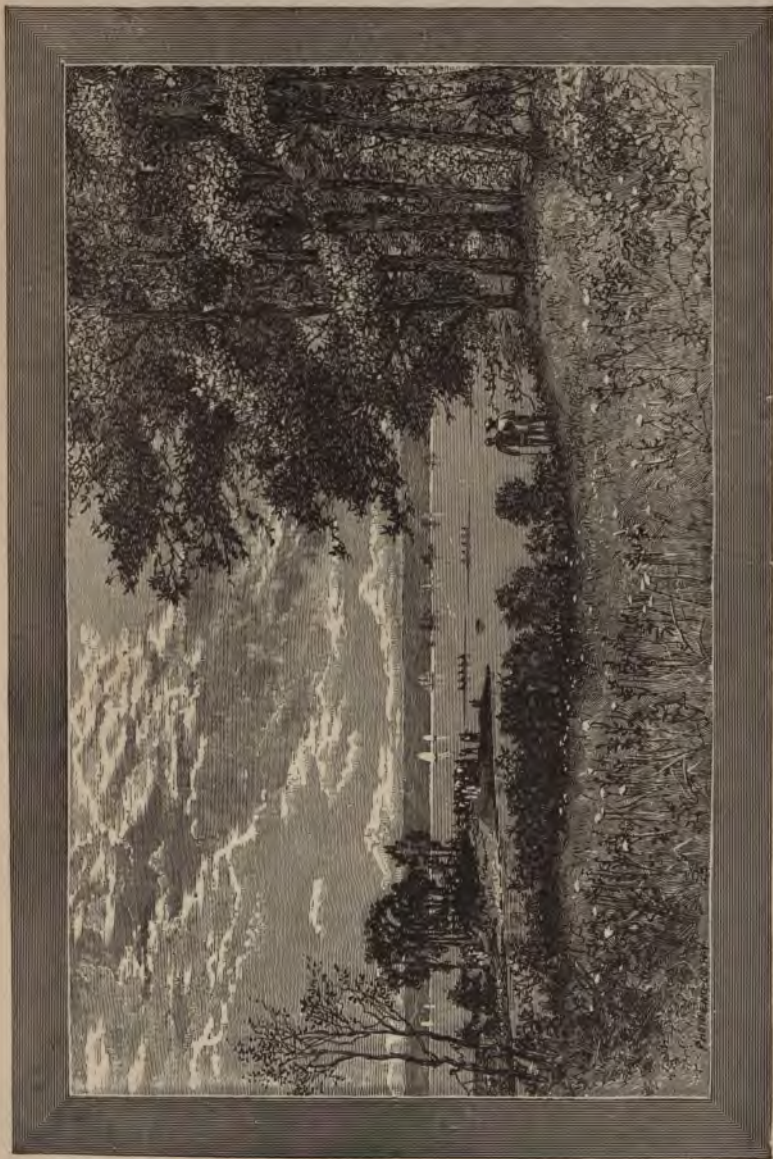
The signers of the several petitions belonged to all classes—bankers, merchants, tradesmen, laborers, physicians, artists, numbering over seven thousand. The artists, as stated on another page, sent a petition of their own to the Governor, and the physicians followed their example, while the General and Colonels of the First Division of the National Guard united in a special appeal. This last was forwarded the day before the Governor signed the bill, and as it was a matter of special importance the writer himself procured the signatures and placed the valuable document in the General Postoffice at twelve o'clock at night in order to secure its delivery at the Executive Chamber the following morning, being the last of the thirty days allowed by law for signing bills.

As it was a project of particular interest to the lines of railroads which ran near or through the parks, and as the business of the roads would be immensely augmented by the transportation to and from these great pleasure grounds of millions of visitors hereafter, active support was obtained from this quarter, while men of broad minds and benevolent sympathies, regarding it as a beneficent measure in a sanitary point of view and productive of great good, not only financially but physically, mentally and morally, indorsed it warmly, and in many instances volunteered their assistance in the circulation of documents among their friends and acquaintances. Among these friends was the brilliant and popular historian Charles Edward Lester, who manifested a deep interest in the success of the measure throughout, and who on the thirtieth of the momentous days addressed an earnest letter to the Governor, imploring him "in the name of all my fellow citizens now living and of the innumerable millions yet to be, and the deathless fame which is alone within your grasp, not to let to day's sun set over the grave of the park bill."



Pelham Bay Park—From Bartow's, Looking South.

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Pelham Bay Park—From Hunter's Island, Looking South.

not only to forward its progress through the committee, but to give it prompt consideration when it came before the Assembly. These gentlemen were among its ablest advocates, and the respect in which their views were held among their fellow members, and their conceded personal integrity, secured for the measure the fullest and fairest consideration.

When on the 6th of May the bill came up in the Assembly on its final passage, the vote, after a warm debate, stood 74 to 21, as follows :

#### AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY.

*Yeas*—L. R. Bailey, C. K. Baker, C. F. Barager, H. Becker, L. L. Boyce, N. C. Boynton, C. W. Brown, J. H. Brown, M. E. Butler, J. J. Clarke, G. Clinton, A. B. Craig, N. M. Curtis, I. Dayton, G. A. Dean, J. M. Dibble, J. H. Dimmick, George Erwin, J. W. Felter, P. Garbutt, J. Geddes, James Haggerty, C. S. Hall, H. C. Harpending, G. D. Hasbrouck, E. F. Haskell, S. S. Hawkins, H. Heath, F. Hendricks, D. P. Horton, F. B. House, W. Howe, W. Howland, W. S. Hubbell, L. L. Hunt, J. W. Husted, T. W. Jackson, S. W. Johnson, G. W. Jones, P. J. Kelly, J. Kent, Jr., A. J. Kneeland, F. W. Kruse, De Witt C. Littlejohn, L. R. Locke, S. D. Locke, J. T. McDonald, D. F. Mullaney, E. A. Nash, T. Noxon, J. C. Odell, J. Oliver, W. T. O'Neil, E. B. Osborne, N. P. Otis, T. J. Owen, S. S. Peirson, C. R. Pratt, O. F. Price, W. B. Willoughby, F. Rice, E. J. Seebor, C. Shoemaker, W. E. Smith, G. M. Sweet, T. H. Tremper, L. L. Van Allen, J. S. Van Duzer, J. W. Veeder, M. Walrath, Jr., G. E. Whiteman, D. J. Wilcox, J. Zimmerman, and the Speaker, Titus Sheard.

*Nays*—J. Ackroyd, C. A. Binder, P. Burns, M. J. Coffey, E. A. Darragh, J. E. Donnelly, J. A. Driess, P. H. Duffy, M. C. Earle, T. F. Farrell, J. Forsyth, Jr., G. R. Johnson, D. S. Kittle, G. H. Lindsay, B. S. McCabe, R. Nagle, P. H. Roche, T. Roosevelt, S. D. Rosenthal, F. Sipp, D. M. Van Cott.

#### THE BILL BECOMES A LAW.

In due time the bill was engrossed and sent to the Governor, who had thirty days within which to consider its merits and demerits, to hear arguments pro and con, and its fate was suspended in the balance during this long and trying ordeal. Arguments and petitions were showered upon him by both sides. He had only to intimate his desire for more light on the subject and it was given to him. Messrs. Marsh, Develin, Burrill and the author called upon him on behalf of the parks, and Mayor Edson, the Corporation Counsel and others against them. He was in doubt on the question of home rule as involved in the controversy, but Mr. Develin, who appeared at an opportune moment, satisfied his scruples on that point, and on the morning of the thirtieth day he received, as stated, a formidable petition, through the author, from the officers of the First Division, in addition to the seven or eight thousand names already forwarded, and a great portfolio of letters, all of which proved irresistible, and so, after a thorough and minute consideration of all the questions involved, Mr. Cleveland put his name to the bill late in the evening of June 14th, when it became a law of the State.

It was reasonable to suppose that the war against the park movement was at an end when the Governor signed the bill. Not so, however. Its

enemies were resolved to renew the fight, and they next directed their attacks upon the law itself. They dissected its various clauses, and they discovered, to their own satisfaction at least, that it was not only defective in its most essential provisions, but that it was *unconstitutional*, and so the objections were strung out and stretched till they filled page after page of briefs that sadly belied their title.

The act directed the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the city of New York, by and through the Department of Public Parks, to apply to the next General Term of the Supreme Court for the appointment of Commissioners of Estimate, and on the 14th of July Mr. Develin appeared before the Park Board and secured the adoption of the necessary resolution requesting the Corporation Counsel "to initiate and carry to conclusion the proceedings necessary and proper to acquire title, pursuant to Chapter 523 of the laws of this State for the year 1884, of certain lands and premises in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards of the city of New York and the county of Westchester laid out and devoted by said chapter to and for the purpose of public parks."

#### RENEWAL OF THE CONTEST.

The application was accordingly made in due form, and at this point the fight was opened again with renewed vigor. The counsel enlisted on the side of the parks were Messrs. John E. Develin, C. D. Burrill, John H. Miller and John L. Wells; and against, C. H. Roosevelt, J. C. Shaw and L. M. Leavy. Mr. Marsh did not appear, but it is only just to say that he furnished a large part of the most potent arguments. On the 1st of December, 1884, the Court announced its decision, which was delivered by Judge Daniels, and it was so direct and conclusive that it left no reasonable ground on which to rest an appeal. But legal ingenuity was never at fault in such an emergency, and where there was, even to the sharpest perception, no ground, the well-known professional acuteness succeeded in discovering a territory over which to spread itself, compared with which the parks were a mere speck. No ground! Why there was a whole continent, and with such a broad fulcrum a legal lever was applied that moved the whole case a distance of 150 miles and landed it right into the Court of Appeals. Here Mr. Simon Sterne stood against and Mr. John B. Dillon for the act. The Court, however, saw no reason why the decision of the General Term should be reversed, and it said so in its decision on the 6th of October, 1885, which was one of the tersest, ablest and most admirable pieces of legal composition that has ever been handed down by that tribunal. In fact the decisions of both Judge Daniels of the Supreme Court and Judge Finch of the Appeals were masterpieces of legal literature, and the broad treatment of the subject imparts to them an interest even for laymen, which is very rarely found in such productions.

#### DECISION OF THE COURT OF APPEALS.

Reference has already been made at some length to the decision of Judge Daniels, but as that delivered by Judge Finch should have ended the contest it is entitled to more than a passing notice. It covered all the



points in the controversy and declared, as stated before, that "*the statute itself condemns and appropriates for the public use the precise lands selected, by metes and bounds, so that every owner affected had means of knowing THAT HIS LAND WAS TAKEN.*" It furthermore declared that "*while it is not necessary IN ADVANCE OF THE TAKING to pay to the land-owner his compensation, it is necessary that the act which invades his ownership shall provide for a certain and definite and adequate source and manner of payment.*" As to the objection that "the purchase of land for public parks *outside* of the corporate boundaries is not a 'city purpose' and so the creation of a debt for such purpose is forbidden by the constitution," the Court cited several cases in which public works had been carried on outside the limits of the respective cities for whose use and benefit they were not only designed but for which they were absolutely essential and necessary. The case of the Brooklyn Park was referred to as bearing particularly on that before the Court. In the act of 1884 the Commission, said Judge Finch—

"was directed to recommend parks within the city and the adjacent district of Westchester County. They were not left to stray at large. Their authority kept them near enough to the city to subserve, in the judgment of the Legislature, the city's use and convenience. They were also directed to act, having in view the present condition and future growth and wants of the city. That an ordinary city may be, and often should be, planned and executed with reference as well to future as present needs, cannot be denied. The city may lay out a wide street when a narrower one would answer present wants, and extend it beyond habitations and immediate needs. The city may erect a public building, having in view future necessities, and exceeding the demands of present use. That is often true economy and wise municipal administration. The adjoining district of Westchester County, in which a portion of the park was located, is a triangle shut in between the city and the river on the east and west, and an extension to the river of the city's north line. That the current of city population will soon overflow this triangle, and the corporate boundaries embrace it, the Commission judged, and the Legislature determined—thoughtfully, with deliberation, after careful study and investigation upon facts not before us, and with the opportunity and the aid of personal examination. It would require a very clear and very strong case to justify a Court in pronouncing such a conclusion to be but a fraudulent cover for some ulterior design foreign to the city's welfare. Such is not the case before us. We must assume what we can see is at least possible and perhaps probable, that the lands over the border are so near, so convenient of access, so likely to be overtaken and surrounded by the city's growth, so desirable for the health and recreation of the citizens, and so cheaply to be got in comparison with the consequence of delay, as to indicate a primary and predominant city purpose in a matter itself within the ordinary range of municipal action."

The decision having minutely reviewed all the arguments presented and carefully considered every point submitted by the appellants, sustained the act and its interpretation by the Supreme Court. It was in fact conclusive on all the vital questions raised; so conclusive that opposition should have ceased on its publication, and opposition doubtless would have ceased but for the interests which were subserved by its continuance and which were in direct antagonism with those of the city.

#### THE COMMISSION OF APPRAISAL.

The Supreme Court in rendering its decision on the constitutionality of



Pelham Bay Park—Hunter's Island, Looking Easterly.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and dates, which appears to be a record of some kind. The names are written in a cursive script, and the dates are in a more formal, printed style. The list is organized into two columns, with names on the left and dates on the right.

2. The second part of the document is a short paragraph of text, written in a cursive script. It appears to be a continuation of the record or a separate entry.

3.

the act announced the appointment of Messrs. Luther R. Marsh, George W. Quintard and J. Seaver Page as Commissioners of Estimate and Appraisalment. Having qualified by taking the usual oath, the Commission was organized by the election of Mr. Marsh as chairman, and the appointment of Gen. J. C. Lane and Mr. R. L. Waters as engineers for the survey of the parks and parkways taken by the act.

Reference has already been made to General Lane's qualifications. Of Mr. Waters, it is sufficient to say that he has been engaged on some of the most important survey work for the city, that he has had a long experience in his profession, and that he is deservedly regarded as one of the most skillful and competent civil engineers in the metropolis. Mr. Arthur Berry was appointed clerk to the Commission, and Mr. Franklin Bartlett appeared as the representative of the Corporation Counsel on behalf of the city.

The first meeting of the Commission was held on the 30th of December, and thus, by the fruitless efforts to defeat the purposes of the act, many precious months were lost that could have been devoted to the work of appraisalment. But the vexatious delay was made still more vexatious and protracted by the new ground of attack which had been discovered, and which, though still more untenable than the first, caused the loss of over a year in the business before the Commission.

So long as the constitutionality of the act and the very existence of the Commission itself was in doubt the property-owners naturally hesitated about incurring the expense of employing lawyers to represent them before the Commission and of providing the necessary surveys of their land. But for these causes of delay a year and a-half could have been saved, an expense of over a hundred thousand dollars avoided, and large tax incomes derived by the city from the enhanced values of the property surrounding the new parks; for so long as litigation was kept up the public mind was in doubt and uncertainty as to the constitutionality of the act and the issue of the Sinking Fund case. Under such circumstances all the benefits which would otherwise result from the unobstructed disposal of the work of the Commission have been lost, and the people have been deprived of the use of the parks a year and a-half longer than was necessary.

This is what the opposition has accomplished; besides the damage otherwise inflicted on the city's interest by the preposterous theories and legal sophistries of the Sinking Fund controversy. Every petty device that legal ingenuity could suggest was employed to retard the progress of the work at the beginning. The Commission had hardly been organized before an attempt was made through the Supreme Court, after its decision on the constitutionality of the act, to direct and control the manner in which it should perform the duty with which it was intrusted. The opposition insisted that the small parks should be the first appraised, and as the Commission, with a proper sense of self respect and a thorough knowledge of its own powers, refused to submit to such dictation, the matter was carried into Court, and the intermeddlers, after a brief contest, defeated.

#### A FINANCIAL STUMBLING BLOCK.

The year 1855 has been made memorable in the history of the New Parks

movement by the persistent effort on the part of Mayor Grace to repeal the act of 1884. His predecessor, after the passage of the Constitutional Amendment limiting the right of New York and other cities to issue bonds in excess of 10 per cent. of the assessed value of taxable real estate, contended that the debt of the city had passed that limit.

At that time the actual municipal indebtedness amounted to \$92,047,403, and the assessed value of city real estate to \$1,175,057,885, leaving a margin of \$25,458,395, to the amount of which bonds might be issued for public improvements.

As there were in the Sinking Fund bonds to the value of \$34,823,735, which had been purchased by the revenues of that fund, and were, therefore, owned by the city, this amount by a strange perversion of language, or obliquity of reasoning, was construed *as a portion of the city debt*, so that if the total bonds thus held reached a hundred millions the city would be indebted *to that amount*, and thus it followed that the more the city paid *the more it owed*, as all these bonds were to be regarded as so much of the debt until they had matured.

This view of the matter was held by Mayors Edson and Grace, the Corporation Counsel and by the Special and General Terms of the Court of Common Pleas.

So long as this new stumbling block lay in the way of the Commissioners of Appraisal their proceedings were seriously embarrassed and delayed, and it was not until this last obstruction was swept away by the decision of the Court of Appeals on the 20th of April, 1886, that they were left free to perform their work without further interruption or delay.

The decision sustained the view presented in a pamphlet issued by Mr. Marsh and the author, the Court holding that the debt of the city was "\$92,000,000, or so much as is equal to its bonds, or stock, *not including that held in the Sinking Fund.*" The argument was made by Messrs. J. E. Develin and C. E. Miller for defendants, and Simon Sterne, counsel for the Bank for Savings, by which the action was brought to prevent the issue of bonds to the amount of \$3,000,000 for dock improvements. Although their names did not appear Mr. Marsh and Mr. Burrill here rendered important service in aiding the preparation of briefs.

#### HOSTILE ATTITUDE OF EX-MAYOR GRACE.

While the legal warfare was being waged on the Sinking Fund question the opposition rallied in force for a fierce and prolonged struggle under Mayor Grace, whose hostility was unmistakably foreshadowed in his annual message to the Board of Aldermen. In that document he stated that the estimated cost of the parks "as projected will be from \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000." As the Commission that located the sites and that had given the matter special attention placed the amount at about \$8,000,000, Mr. Grace's estimate, if not made with the premeditated design to mislead, had that effect on a large number who were ignorant of the facts. He had been informed as to the figures of the Commission especially, for the writer had furnished the information on the personal request of his secretary many days before the message was delivered.

The excessive estimate and the assertion by which it was accompanied, that "the recent Constitutional amendment would prevent the carrying out of the plan for the present," dispelled whatever doubts the friends of the parks might have had with regard to his attitude. His view of the Sinking Fund question applied to ordinary financial or mercantile transactions would be simply ludicrous. As stated, according to this theory, the bonds purchased, paid for and owned by the city, were still a city debt and continued a city debt till the day on which they matured. Thus, if a merchant bought up his notes several weeks before they were due he would still be indebted for the various amounts until the specified dates!

This financial *reductio ad absurdum* was kept up to the suspension of much needed public works till it was finally exploded by the decision of the Court of Appeals. In connection with the exaggerated estimates of the cost of the parks it served the purpose, however, of misleading many in regard to the special point of attack, the act of 1884, for the repeal of which, under cover of these misstatements, a movement was organized. When, therefore, the writer was requested to call upon the Mayor, about seven weeks after his inauguration, he found that the parks were the particular purpose of the conference.

#### THE SECOND MAYORALTY WAR AGAINST THE PARKS.

"As you are at the bottom of this trouble about the parks," said he, "I want to see if we can't make some compromise."

"With pleasure, Mr. Mayor," was the reply. "The friends of the parks are most willing. But why not assist instead of opposing this great work? Why not do as the Mayor of London has done? Although the Londoners had 15,000 acres when we began this movement he has been helping them to secure 7,000 acres more."

The conversation, of which it is not necessary to enter into the details, was somewhat protracted and embraced not only the new parks, but the Sinking Fund question, the financial condition of the city, the Constitutional Amendment and its effect on the power of the city to issue bonds for public improvements, the justice of assessing adjoining property for parks, Mr. Grace's plan of taking and paying for parks, and a comparison of New York with other great cities in the matter of park area. He was very emphatic in the expression of his determination to substitute a bill of his own for the Act of 1884, and strongly denounced the new parks movement.

"This whole thing," said he, "is a swindle."

"A swindle?"

"Yes, a swindle."

"Do you desire, Mr. Mayor, to have it go forth that you called this movement a swindle, sustained as it has been and is by the press and by a large number of our most respected citizens?"

"Well, no; I don't mean that exactly," was the reply; "but it is premature; and, besides, the city cannot issue bonds under the Constitutional Amendment."

The conversation, as stated, was somewhat protracted, and at its close

the Mayor announced his intention to go to Albany and secure the passage of a bill which would embody *his* plan.

The following day, February 27, in pursuance of a previous understanding, the author sent a letter to Mr. Grace, reviewing at length the Sinking Fund question, showing the city's actual indebtedness, its paucity in park area compared with other cities, the rapid increase of population and the financial benefits resulting from the creation of parks. "In view of such testimony," said the letter, "it is to be hoped that you will be able hereafter to say that you did not retard, but participated in accomplishing this great result. I can not help thinking that an opposition to this measure would be a serious mistake of your administration. \* \* \* \* One word more in conclusion. I have said that these lands are natural parks, and the moment they are paid for by the city the people can enter into possession. In the case of Central Park, which is almost wholly artificial, fifteen years elapsed before it was fit for public use; and its preparation and improvement cost four times the amount paid for the land—more than the entire cost of the New Park system. The Riverside and Morningside parks, which you alluded to in our conversation yesterday, could not be of any financial benefit to the city, for they were bought at the highest figure—\$60,000 an acre—and their total area of 120 acres cost the city the enormous sum of seven millions and a quarter. And even now they are not parks, but mere ledges of rock, ribbons from 100 to 300 feet wide, which will cost probably several millions more before they are fit for use. That was indeed a gigantic swindle, costing nearly as much for the 120 acres of rock as would pay for our 4,000 acres of natural and beautiful park lands."

#### A SCHEME TO NULLIFY THE ACT OF 1884.

Despite the facts presented in this letter it soon became evident that the war was to go on. Hostilities were opened with the introduction of a bill in the Senate on the 25th day of February, 1885, to amend the act of 1884, so as to eliminate Pelham Bay Park, and materially alter the law in other respects. In fact, the enactment of that bill, if constitutional, would have resulted in the destruction of the New Park system beyond the Harlem.

Mr. Grace's bill was accompanied by a memorial to the Legislature setting forth his reasons why the Act of 1884 should not stand, chief among which was the distance of the parks, particularly that on the Sound, from the city, the justice of assessing on the adjoining lands a portion of the cost, the obstacles presented by the Constitutional amendment to the issue of bonds, and other points which had already been fully considered and discussed.

The errors and misstatements were exposed and corrected in a reply forwarded by Mr. Marsh to the Legislature a few days thereafter. After showing the superficial nature of the objections urged against the act, Mr. Marsh concluded as follows:

"The Mayor, by his memorial and bill, proposes a *slow acquisition* of the lands for new parks; and at the rate of a million of dollars a year. If, therefore, as the Mayor claims, these parks would cost twenty millions, it would be twenty years before the last installment of lands would be bought.





Pelham Bay Park—East Chester Bay—South of Pelham Bridge.





By that time, according to the unvarying rate of increase for the past sixty years, the population of our city will be about four millions, having now 1,650,000. By that time the area within these locations will be filled with houses and people, and the value of the lands to be taken, probably a hundred millions of dollars. How can the city afford to take these grounds at this rapidly increasing value through all that time? The thing is absurd. If, at that time, we should want large parks we would be pushed up further into Westchester; and, for her seaside parks, perhaps into Connecticut. You cannot afford to take, for park purposes, a park respectable in size for such a city, in its populous or business portions, purchase and raze its buildings, and sweep away the inhabitants. An equal area cannot now be obtained anywhere south of the Harlem River under four hundred millions of dollars at the prevailing prices; and, if bought, it would take twenty years and an immense sum to remove the buildings, plant the trees, sow the grass and prepare it for a park. But it would take too much space to answer all the errors and misapprehensions which are crowded into the narrow space of the memorial. Perhaps no other document of equal length is so full of them."

MR. GRACE'S "MASS MEETING" DECLARED "A DEAD FAILURE."

To assist operations at Albany a movement was organized by Mr. Grace and his adherents in New York, which culminated in a meeting at Chickering Hall on the 23d of March. This was preceded by the distribution of thousands of circulars in several of the principal thoroughfares and at the Elevated Railway stations. In some of these it was stated that the parks would cost from *ten to fifty* millions of dollars—a wide range certainly—and in others that the park on the Sound would alone be ten millions.

Agents were sent to the tenement houses with petitions and the occupants were induced to sign by the false statement that, as the parks could only be paid for by direct taxation, their rents would be increased until such time as the whole expense was cleared off. So unscrupulous and mendacious were some of the parties engaged in this business of falsification that one of them had the audacity to tell a friend of the author that "Mr. Mullaly himself is in favor of the petition."

With very few exceptions the press of the city gave no countenance to these efforts to overthrow the legislation of 1884. The *New York Herald*, speaking of the "mass meeting" against the parks, said: "The dead failure of the carefully-nursed meeting in Chickering Hall last evening, to foment opposition to the new parks, is conclusive that the people want them and are determined to have them, and that Mayor Grace is unreasonable. Zealous efforts were made to fill the hall. The Mayor's influence was actively exerted to get up 'a demonstration' to which he could 'point with pride.' But the floor was only moderately filled, and the gallery, except on the front row of its seats, was dismally empty. Before the time the resolutions were put to vote half even of the scanty audience collected with so much pains perceived the situation and slipped out, and of the remainder so many voted "No" that it was fairly doubtful whether they were not defeated, though the chairman (Mr. James A. Roosevelt) of course declared

them carried. \* \* \* \* If Mayor Grace is properly sensitive to public opinion his own meeting is an urgent warning to him to change his course about the new parks."

In a previous article the *Herald*, warning him against his announced opposition, remarked: "Mr. Grace has been Mayor forty-four days, and on not one of them has he omitted to assure the inhabitants in some letter or other that he is 'big with blessings' for the city. \* \* \* If the sacrifice of the new parks is a specimen of the blessings Mayor Grace's administration has in reserve for the city, his assertion that he means to serve out his term at all hazards is deplorable."

#### HIS PURPOSE EXPOSED.

An explanation was given by the same paper, in a later issue, of the motives by which he was inspired in his opposition to the new Harlem River Bridge at One Hundred and Eighty-first street, as well as to the new parks. "It is not a secret," said that paper, "that the underlying motive of Mr. Grace's opposition to the new parks and the Harlem Bridge is political. He is busily building a political machine within the city government for his personal advancement, and cannot see a way to make the Bridge act help that purpose, for he believes that his two associates in the power of appointment will combine against him. Neither could he see a way to make the New Park act serve his purpose, for the New Park Commission was already filled."

The *New York World* took strong ground on the necessity for an increase of our park area. "New York's manifest destiny," it declared in a leading editorial, the day after the meeting, "is unmistakable. We are making preparations for a city of four or five millions. Shall we commit the mistake our ancestors committed, and fail to provide parks for the health, recreation and happiness of the coming generations? As well might we have heeded the selfish opposition of the tax-grudgers and have refused to provide the future New York with a sufficient supply of water. It is urged that we cannot incur any more debt under the Constitutional restriction. We do not believe that any Court will decide our indebtedness to be any more than our net debt. At all events, let us keep the new parks in view and secure them as speedily as possible."

The *Times* said "that only one side was presented, and there was no real discussion of the mooted questions. \* \* \* It ought to be remembered the while just what the question is. It is not proposed to provide costly parks for posterity, to be paid for now, but to secure lands for parks to be paid for in thirty years, and it would have been fortunate if those whose posterity we are had exercised a little foresight in such matters."

#### THE OPPOSITION AGAIN DEFEATED.

The *Mall and Express* declared that "the anti-park meeting at Chickering Hall, last night, was a solemn failure. As a mass meeting it was an utter failure. Free discussion was no part of the programme. Mr. Luther R. Marsh applied beforehand for a hearing and was refused. Subsequent application was made to the Mayor, and he said that he could do nothing,

although the appeal was put on the ground that the audience themselves might desire to know something of the other side."

The *Telegram* said that the meeting was "not representative, and that the demonstration was neither large nor enthusiastic."

After the decision of the Court of Appeals, the *New York World* referred to the subject in these emphatic words: "The good sense of the people approves the acquisition of land for parks in the new section of the city at once, while land is cheap and unimproved. In 1884, the Legislature, in response to public sentiment, passed a law providing for the acquisition of land for a number of new parks in the annexed territory. Mayor Grace obstructed the law and sought to overthrow it. He wanted a new law, with Commissioners of his own selection."

While Mr. Grace's bill was pending an important meeting of the joint Committees on Cities of the Senate and Assembly was held in the Capitol. At this meeting the argument on behalf of the new parks was made by Messrs. Marsh, Hinsdale and Joseph S. Wood, and a subsequent one was addressed by ex-Judge Wells, General Tremaine, C. D. Burrill and J. S. Wood, who illustrated his able and convincing arguments with several valuable maps, showing the comparative park areas of New York, Paris and London. This closed the discussion, and the result was the defeat of Mr. Grace in the field of his own selection, the Legislature of the State, the committee absolutely refusing to stultify itself by interfering in any manner with the legislation of the previous year.

#### INSIDIOUS ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE THE REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE.

Hostilities, however, were not confined to the State Capitol. The Real Estate Exchange was, by the connivance of some of the members, involved in the strife, much to the chagrin and mortification of the great majority. This was, so to speak, a flank movement, and in a quarter from which it was wholly unexpected.

On the 30th of February, 1885, a resolution was presented by Dr. John T. Nagle, of the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the Health Department, directing the appointment of a committee of five "to furnish whatever information they may be able to ascertain regarding the number of acres, the location, probable cost of construction, etc., of public parks in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards and the vicinity thereof, which were authorized by an act of the Legislature passed April 19, 1883, and also the methods by which such parks are to be paid for." The committee appointed consisted of John T. Nagle, M. D., chairman, Frank S. Allen, James Stokes, Jules E. Brugiere and James L. Wells.

Dr. Nagle, *without consultation* with any of the members of the committee, prepared a "report," and presenting it at one of the meetings requested some of the members to sign it, which they declined to do. Having failed in this he thereupon, as chairman, but without the authority or consent of the committee, sent to the daily papers printed copies of his report from which a synopsis and extracts were published. In this document he asserted that the cost of the land would be from \$12,000,000 to \$20,000,000, besides "a large additional purchase for Pelham Bay Park."

He also stated that the money would have to be raised by direct taxation, whereas the law provided that the payments were to be made in thirty-year bonds bearing 3 per cent. interest.

The Legislative Committee of the Exchange, as soon as it detected the imposition practiced upon it, held a meeting and passed a resolution to the effect "that where a subject has been referred for consideration and report to a special, or sub committee, that *no report*, either majority or minority, shall be issued by or on behalf of such committee, or by *any member thereof, unless such report shall have been previously made to and received by this committee*; and any report issued shall state at its head whether it is a unanimous, majority, or minority report."

The "report," so called, which caused this trouble in the Exchange and which roused it up to such a proper sense of indignation, was, in fact, a tissue of misstatements from beginning to end—false in its estimate of the cost of the land for the new parks, false in its estimate of expense, false in its premises and false in its deductions; false in its "facts" and false in its figures. And this "report," which was a gross imposition on the institution, and *repudiated as a piece of sharp practice, was printed and distributed among members of the Exchange, the taxpayers and property owners of the city*. The accuracy of its statements may be judged from the assertion that "in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards 177 small parks have already been laid out." Of course a section so liberally provided with "parks" should be perfectly satisfied. But when it is understood that the aggregate area of 170 of these 177 parks, which were only laid out *on paper and not taken*, does not exceed thirty acres, the trustworthy character of the statistics presented in the "report" becomes at once apparent. Every triangle, every petty grass plot was dignified therein with the title of "*park*."

#### AN ADROIT BUT AN UNSUCCESSFUL SCHEME.

Accompanying this distorted and misleading presentation of the park question was a letter dated March 12, in which an attempt was made to alarm the public by the reckless and unwarranted assertion that the whole expense of acquiring the new parks would be imposed by direct taxation. Still another document was added in the form of a printed letter, which was to be signed by the person to whom it was sent and forwarded in a printed and stamped envelope, of which this is a *fac simile* :

[STAMP.]

HON. WM. R. GRACE,

Mayor of the City of New York,

CITY HALL,

New York.

The form of the letter which was to be transmitted to the Mayor expressed the desire of the signer "to have his name enrolled as being in favor of the bill now pending in the New York State Legislature."



Pelham Bay Park—View of Upland.



The purpose of this scheme was to impress the public and the Legislature with the idea that the Real Estate Exchange was not only opposed to the parks, but that it was most pronounced and active in its opposition. However, it was exposed in time, and the effort to falsify the position of the Exchange in relation to the park question very properly and emphatically rebuked by its Legislative Committee.

For the service rendered in this side fight on the parks, Messrs. James L. Wells, D. G. Croly, J. W. Brugiere, James Stokes, Wm. C. Church and Wm. C. Orr are entitled to special mention and grateful recognition. These gentlemen took a firm stand against what Mr. Church justly stigmatized as "an attempt to put the Real Estate Exchange in a false position."

"Let me," said Mr. Church, in a letter to a friend, "put you on your guard against the attempt which has been made to represent the Real Estate Exchange as opposed to the parks. The matter has been considered by two several sub-committees of the Committees on Legislation of the Exchange; one of these presented an unanimous report, and the other a majority report, advising that no action be taken by the Exchange. Both of these reports have been adopted by the Committee on Legislation, which in these matters represented the Exchange. One of these reports was adopted to-day. I do not believe there is any serious opposition to the parks, ~~except~~ what is being worked up, skillful use being made of the doubt as to whether we may not have to submit to taxation to pay for them in a lump. I knew nothing about the parks until I came to investigate the subject, and have no interest in them, and I write now because my sense of fair dealing has been outraged by an attempt to put the Real Estate Exchange in a false position. Dr. Nagle, in his pamphlet, quoted the summing up our committee gave of the arguments presented before us against the parks. *He did not quote our final conclusion, which was not to meddle with the subject.*"

Mr. Marsh addressed one of the meetings of the committee and with such good effect that in their report they said "they did not feel themselves at liberty to re-discuss the matter so far, as it has already been decided by an *overwhelming majority of the Legislature and indorsed by men of the highest standing and experience in the community.*"

Thus ended the side fight in the Real Estate Exchange, a body which from its character and the purposes of its organization would naturally have been the very last institution in the city to array itself against a measure so well calculated and adapted to promote its own special business interests. It was certainly a novel idea to make use of such a body for the purpose of arresting a great public improvement, the success of which, in its enhancement of the value of real estate, must inevitably tend to its advantage and the benefit of its members.

#### THE CONTEST IN THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

In 1886 another onslaught was made on the parks. This time, however, it was in the Board of Aldermen. On the 11th of January Alderman Mooney offered a resolution instructing "the Corporation Counsel to draft



an act and, in behalf of the Aldermen, present the same to the Legislature, amendatory of the New Parks act, specifying that no sum greater than three millions of dollars shall be imposed upon the City Treasury for the purposes of said Act, and providing that the Commissioners of Appraisal shall begin the purchase of land suggested for parks in those localities which lie nearest to Harlem River."

This was referred to the Committee on Lands and Places, which reported a bill in accordance with the resolution—and also eliminating Pelham Bay Park—on the 2d of March, on which occasion Vice-President Jaehne, now a resident at Sing Sing, was called to the chair and presided over the discussion which followed.

It is sufficient to say that, although the bill was introduced into the Legislature, the Corporation Counsel refused his sanction to the attempted repeal of the law and authorized the statement that he was "for the parks as they are."

Senator Traphagen presented still another bill, which was designed to dispose of the whole question at one fell stroke by repealing the entire act of 1884. As it was not pushed, however, it went the way of all moribund legislation and was consigned to the limbo of defunct bills.

To the Legislative Committee which had the Aldermanic bill under consideration, Mr. Marsh addressed an argument, in which he presented the unconstitutionality of the proposed repeal with such force, and sustained his position with such a formidable array of authorities, that the committee decided by a vote of nine to two to make an adverse report, which was subsequently done.

#### AN ELOQUENT PROTEST.

In his admirable and conclusive summing up Mr. Marsh dwelt with particular emphasis on the trying and triumphant ordeal through which this great measure had passed, and as the principal attacks of its enemies had been directed against the magnificent playground on the Sound, he said:

"To repeal this park would really seem like legislative boy's play—give and take back again. Did not," he asked, "the three former Legislatures look thoroughly into the matter, the reasons for and the reasons against this Pelham Bay Park? Did not their committees, both of the House and the Senate, listen to the most elaborate arguments on both sides? Did not Governor Cleveland study all briefs and pamphlets submitted to him on the subject and then sign the bill? Did not these legislators know their own minds? Did they not see that the great land owners and taxpayers, as well as the people of the city, wanted this park with the others? Were not these legislators and the Governor competent to form just judgments on this subject? Shall their solemn action be now reversed? Is there no stability in or reliance on well-considered legislation? Is there any use in obtaining an act of the Legislature if the next one, without change or circumstance, is to repeal it? This is not a question of forfeiture for alleged misconduct or fraud, but of *deliberate repudiation of the deliberate acts of former Legislatures.*

"I do not abate one jot or tittle of my concluding remarks on the rehear-



Pelham Bay Park—Picnic Point.

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ing of the Parks act before the corresponding Assembly Committee on April 24th, 1884. They have been the rather strengthened and intensified by experience since. I will repeat them here, with two years of confirmation of their head:

Gentlemen of the Committee: I feel an absorbing and enduring interest in this enterprise. It is not a sentiment of recent growth. We cannot now know, we cannot now appreciate the greatness of the work and its increasing value and importance as the years go by. When some thirty years hence (the purchase bonds then maturing) our city, by the inevitable law which has ruled the past, holding within her limits more than five millions of people; with abodes lining these parks; the territory all below packed with inhabitants; these recreation grounds inviting all classes to their ample hospitality; the fame of them having brought here for residence families of wealth and culture from other parts of the Union, and visitors from all parts of the world; the treasury of the city demonstrating that all these parks are, in effect, *a gift to the city*, bringing large endowments besides; then will the men of that time begin, but as yet only begin, to realize the magnitude and usefulness of this day's work.

"I put these facts and prophecies and arguments on record. I perpetuate them in enduring type," said Mr. March in a fine burst of melodious prose—"partly that they may the more conveniently and quickly be read and appreciated by you, and partly that the people may see and ever know some of the reasons why this park should stand as it is. And if, indeed, the action of three Legislatures should now be reversed, and even if such action could stand before the breath of the Constitution, this record will enable the people, as years go and come, to see and know how much better, richer, healthier and more prosperous and attractive our city would have been if this cheap, magnificent and noble pleasure-ground had been saved to them, somewhat—though then with much fuller knowledge, for the records will be complete—as we now see, after the lapse of seventy-seven years, how beneficent would have been the park enterprise of De Witt Clinton had the authorities of that day seen with his eyes and judged with his judgment."

#### AN ATTACK FROM A NEW QUARTER.

The last assault upon the new parks was made in the spring of 1887, at the instance of some eighty residents and taxpayers of the town of Pelham, Westchester Co., in the form of a petition to the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of New York, "entreating their assistance in procuring the passage of an act repealing so much of the Park bill of 1884 as provides for the taking of Pelham Bay Park."

This demand was made on the ground that the appropriation of so much land—about one-half of the whole area of Pelham—would, if taxes were not paid upon the park by the city of New York, so increase the assessment as to make the burden intolerable. It appeared, however, in the course of the controversy, on a comparison of the names of the eighty taxpayers with the tax and assessment roll of the town of Pelham, that only *thirty* were on the list, while of the \$36,957.03 levied on the town the huge sum of \$567.77 was paid by the petitioners! Yet, on the protest of these a bill was prepared and introduced in the Legislature for the excision of Pelham Bay Park!

On the 2d of May, Mr. F. R. Coudert appeared before the Legislative Committee on Cities, and in the course of an able and conclusive argument proved that "although the fee or legal title will not pass from the present owners to the city until the report of the Commissioners shall be confirmed, yet the lands have been taken by the city and appropriated and condemned."

The committee took the same view of the matter as the learned counsel and refused to interfere in any way with the act. Thus, for the third time, the Legislature refused to undo the work of 1884.

#### FINAL REPULSE AND END OF THE WAR.

While the bill was yet under discussion in the State Capitol, an effort was made to secure a report in its favor from the Committee on the Law Department of the Board of Aldermen, of which Hon. D. F. Dowling is chairman. The chairman, however, was resolved that a subject of such importance to the city should not be disposed of without due consideration and that its merits should be fully discussed before his committee.

A day was, therefore, appointed, and Mr. Coudert made the argument which covered the essential legal, financial and other points of the subject, and which produced a marked effect on the committee. As there was a decided difference of opinion among its members on the propriety and wisdom of any further effort to interfere with the operation of the act of 1884, in view of the decision of the Courts, the committee took no action in the matter, and thus ended the second attempt in the Board of Aldermen to effect a repeal of the law.

An independent, but, as it proved, an ineffectual movement was made by a few property owners, whose lands lay inside and along the lines of the parks, to secure the passage of a bill by which they would be enabled, through the adjustment of the exterior boundaries and the alteration of the maps, to have their particular tracts placed outside and immediately in front of the parks. As special reference, however, has already been made to this adroit little manoeuvre, it is unnecessary to say more than that it was introduced in the Legislature, and that it shared the fate of every other attack upon the integrity of the law.

THE PARKS AND PARKWAYS, THEREFORE, REMAIN IN THEIR ENTIRETY AND AS DESCRIBED BY METES AND BOUNDS IN THE ACT OF 1884.

But, as may well be conceived, this triumph was achieved only through unflinching zeal, through many sacrifices, through determined, sustained effort during six years, in two of which—1885-6—the war against the parks was carried on, as described, with a total disregard of the merits of the subject, by Mr. Grace, who in one instance, with the particulars of which the writer is thoroughly familiar, debased his high office by using it as a means of gratifying his private revenge. Indeed, the contrast between the character of the warfare waged by ex-Mayor Grace and that of his predecessor was most marked, for it is due to Mr. Edson to say that, while his opposition was strenuous, persistent and occasionally bitter, yet he never so far forgot the dignity of his position as to descend to the low level of personal

hostility, nor thought of inflicting, through his official power, a penalty for a difference of opinion on a great public question.

To have won this signal victory for the people's parks against a powerful opposition; to have saved the movement from the pitfalls into which many a noble and benevolent enterprise has fallen and been lost; to have upheld the cause against a power controlling and wielding the official influence and patronage of the municipal government; to have carefully and constantly guarded that cause and preserved it from the taint and suspicion of sordid, mercenary motives; to have prevented, above all, its perversion to political designs and uses; in a word, to have maintained throughout the long, harassing and oftentimes acrimonious contest the purity of purpose in which this beneficent project was conceived; to have done all this demanded, on the part of its promoters and advocates, unceasing vigilance, unrelaxing, determined effort, and a resolution that could not be driven from its purpose either by menaces, so freely and unscrupulously used, or the employment of insidious and questionable methods by the opposition. The project of the New Parks was, as already stated, conceived in the purest of motives—for the welfare of the whole people and especially for the benefit of the toilers of the great city. For them, and the millions to be, the battle was fought; for all the triumph was achieved.

The friends of the movement were not to be swerved from the prosecution of their grand purpose, confident that the success of their efforts would confer a lasting benefit by promoting the welfare, the physical culture and moral well-being of the people, and the prosperity, the embellishment and attractiveness of our great metropolis. They believed that it would accomplish for the New York of 1887 and succeeding years what New York's most illustrious Mayor and Governor had desired to effect over three-quarters of a century ago, but whose beneficent design was defeated by the culpable apathy of his official successors; *and in this belief they persevered and worked till their efforts were crowned with a glorious victory.*

# THE FRIENDS OF THE PARKS.

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## IMPORTANT CORRESPONDENCE.

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LETTERS OF REAL ESTATE OWNERS, CAPITALISTS, BANKERS,  
LAWYERS, MERCHANTS, ETC.—REPRESENTING AN AG-  
GREGATE CAPITAL OF TWO THOUSAND MILLIONS OF  
DOLLARS—TO EX-MAYOR EDSON.

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The following letter was addressed to Mayor Edson, who had unfortunately changed his attitude on the park question some time after his inauguration, and although he was even then a member of the Executive Committee of the New York Park Association, he had not only resolved to oppose the bill, but, as stated in the history of the movement, he arrayed the heads of the municipal departments in hostility to the measure. However, if Mayor Edson was not to be convinced by the facts and figures submitted for his consideration, they had their effect in other quarters and materially aided the good work.

When Mr. Grace assailed the legislation of 1834, and announced his intention to substitute a plan of his own for the park system laid out in the act of that year, nearly all the gentlemen whose names are signed to this letter united in a still stronger and more urgent communication protesting against any further interference with the law and emphatically expressing their "*desire that the act passed stand as it is*."

NEW YORK, February 29, 1884.

To HON. FRANKLIN EDSON, *Mayor of the City of New York:*

We consider the enlargement of our park area so important a matter that we beg respectfully to call your especial attention to a few of the salient points in the very able report of the Commission appointed by yourself, which report we most fully approve and indorse.

1st. The Central Park cost the city.....	\$6,666,381
Construction account and maintenance.....	16,378,844
Interest at 7 per cent. during 25 years.....	20,755,925

Total.....	\$43,801,150
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Taxes collected during this period in the wards in which the park is situated.....	\$110,000,000
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Estimating fifty millions of this as an increase from ordinary causes, there remain sixty millions, leaving a balance to the credit of the city of seventeen millions.

The city thus has this magnificent domain for nothing, with the enormous increase of tax income from the district in its neighborhood besides.

With the constantly increasing population, and the consequent imperative necessity of providing more park room, there is no doubt that a few thou-

sand acres secured now, north of the Harlem River (a portion in territory not yet annexed, and therefore cheaper), when it can be done for a few millions of dollars, would similarly prove a very wise and profitable purchase, and save millions to the city.

If in the case of the Central Park the city could pay 7 per cent. for twenty-five years besides enormous expenditures, and have the land free and clear, without cost, is there any room for doubting that thirty-year bonds, issued now at 3 to 3½ per cent., would at maturity be more than paid for by the increased tax income from property in the neighborhood?

In the case of the Central Park the increase of values was in some instances about 300 per cent. within a year after the purchase, and for one large tract near the park, which, in 1857, was sold for \$40,000, the owner refused \$1,250,000 in 1869, twelve years later.

2d. The taxable value of the three wards in which Central Park is situated increased from twenty-six and one-half to three hundred and twelve millions from 1856 to 1881, and contributes about one-third of the whole expenses of the city.

These facts speak louder than any words, and the silent argument of these figures must be sufficient to convince the most skeptical. We must not make the same mistake that the city authorities made in 1809, when none of the park reservations then projected were carried out, entailing a loss to the city of several hundred millions of dollars. The same opposition that then proved so unfortunate was repeated in the case of the Central Park and delayed the purchase several years, but all experience now demonstrates that there can be no better financial undertaking for a large and growing city than the purchase of park sites.

3d. As to the sanitary considerations, they are too well known and too generally admitted to be dwelt upon here—our object being merely to recommend the purchase of the land now as a wise financial enterprise. We would, however, remind you that in the matter of parks our metropolis—one of the first in the world—is sadly behind the age, our entire park territory, even with the Central Park (considered by some so large), being only 1,094 acres, against 172,000 in Paris, 22,000 in London, 8,010 in Vienna, 5,000 in Berlin and 3,000 each in even Philadelphia and Chicago. The purchase of more park room seems imperative, and the sooner the better.

We are yours, respectfully,

August Belmont,  
William Astor,  
Edward F. Winslow,  
Jacob D. Vermilye,  
Charles M. Fry,  
Thomas L. James,  
Frederick D. Tappen,  
G. M. Hard,  
John T. Agnew,  
Francis Leland,  
Eugene Dutilh,  
Robert Schell,  
William H. Cox,  
Edward Schell,  
John A. Stewart,  
Geo. S. Coe,  
Roswell G. Rolston,  
Thomas Hillhouse,  
Henry P. Hyde,  
William H. Macy,  
Samuel D. Babcock,  
George H. Potts,  
Columbus C. Baldwin,  
William Dowd,  
William Henry Smith,  
John S. Crane,

Jno. Harsen Rhoades,  
James M. Brown,  
Charles D. Dickey,  
Jesse Seligman,  
Thomas C. Acton,  
Charles Lanier,  
Eugene Kelley & Co.,  
D. O. Mills,  
Robert Winthrop,  
Isaac N. Phelps,  
Sidney Dillon,  
Samuel Sloan,  
Wm. B. Dinsmore,  
M. B. Fielding,  
Edward A. Morrison,  
Arnold & Constable,  
H. C. Farnestock,  
Arthur Leary,  
J. C. Johnson,  
T. P. Earl,  
Russell Sage,  
John Sloan,  
Julius Wadsworth,  
Henry Clews,  
George Bliss,  
George T. Adey,

Lewis G. Morris,  
Hon. Charles Donohue,  
Parkes Godwin,  
George Jones,  
William Cutting,  
Geo. H. Andrews,  
John A. Lowery,  
Hon. James M. Varnum,  
John Jay,  
William M. Evarts,  
Lloyd Aspinwall,  
George Sloan,  
Wm. A. Caldwell,  
James F. DeForest,  
Wm. J. Halstead,  
Robt. A. Livingston,  
James L. White,  
T. C. Eastman,  
W. H. Webb,  
Ambrose Snow,  
Edward Kemp,  
Irving Putnam,  
Steinway & Co.,  
Gustav Schwab,  
John H. Watson,  
Horace Porter,



John Jacob Astor,	Albon P. Man,	Chauncey M. Depew,
Morris Franklin.	Hon. Francis C. Barlow,	Hugh Auchincloss,
Aaron J. Vanderpool,	Geo. Deforest Lord,	Elliot Roosevelt,
Ex-Mayor Umith Ely,	George McCullough Mil-	Sackett M. Barclay,
Isaac Bell,	ler.	Edw'd Livingston Lud-
Samuel Raynor,	Algernon S. Sullivan,	low,
G. S. Schermerhorn, Jr.,	Francis N. Bangs,	David R. Banks,
Samuel H. Denton,	Peter B. Olney,	B. H. Van Auken,
H. K. Thurber,	Wheeler H. Peckham,	James M. Bailey,
Park & Tilford,	Fred'k R. Coudert,	D. Colden Murray,
F. F. Gunther,	Hon. Benj. A. Willis,	T. Bailey Myers,
Hunting & Hammond,	Hon. O. B. Potter,	Hiram Barney,
Hawk & Wetherbee,	B. F. Watson,	Hon. Wm. H. Wickham,
Hitchcock & Darling,	Sam. L. M. Barlow,	Benjamin D. Sillman.

Messrs. Vermilye, Rolston, Seligman, Tappen, Hillhouse and Stewart, whose names are among those of the signers of the communication to ex-Mayor Edson, addressed a letter to Mr. Marsh embodying the main points presented in the foregoing, and elaborating its arguments in favor of the New Park System. This letter was forwarded among the mass of correspondence laid before the Governor, while the fate of the bill was undecided.

#### EMPHATIC INDORSEMENT BY PROMINENT CITIZENS.

As allusion has been made to the support and encouragement which the cause of the New Parks received from well-known citizens, who took a strong interest in its success, the author feels that this history of the movement would not be complete without special reference to the correspondence which constituted one of its most interesting as well as one of its most important chapters.

On the publication of the report to the Legislature of 1884, Mr. Marsh and the author, acting on behalf of the Commission, sent copies to a large number of well-known citizens, with accompanying letters directing their attention to the array of facts and arguments presented therein, and requesting an expression of their views "on a matter of such vital importance to the well-being of our people and the best interests of our imperial city."

The replies, which were numerous and voluminous, warmly approved the report, and heartily indorsed the action of the Commission. As the letters alone would fill a good-sized volume, the following extracts will suffice to show the earnest and emphatic manner in which the writers responded and their cordial indorsement of the movement:

*President Arthur.*—I have not yet had time to give the document more than a hasty examination, but this brief inspection has sufficed to impress me with the thoroughness of the work of the Commission and the importance of carrying out its suggestions. Trusting that your labors may meet with a ready response from the Legislature, I am, with kind regard.

*Hon. O. B. Potter.*—I am so satisfied that the additional parks recommended will at a very early date become necessary and important to the health, growth and attractiveness of that great metropolis, that I am willing my estate shall be subjected to the taxation it will have to bear in order that these parks may now be acquired. I believe this to be the general sentiment of the principal property owners of the city, and of

men of all classes who feel a deep and intelligent interest in its development, growth, attractiveness and beauty as the great commercial metropolis of the country. I know there are a few, and among them our present Mayor, who do not think the acquisition of the parks at present desirable, especially in view of the large indebtedness of the city. Mayor Edson was among the first in favor of the Park Commission, and I certainly received from him the impression, in the early part of the movement, that he was entirely favorable to it, and I am somewhat at a loss to understand why it meets with his opposition now. At any rate, I am quite clear that those equally interested with himself in the welfare of the city, and who will pay a much larger proportion of the cost of these parks than he, do not agree with him in his present judgment.

*Hon. W. H. Robertson.*—No one familiar with that part of the city would doubt for a moment the wisdom of the Commission, either in respect to the location of those parks or to the amount of territory appropriated for them. They will add much to the health and enjoyment of the citizen, and to the beauty and fame of the city. The result of your labors will have, I trust, the unqualified approval of the Legislature. Your report will well repay perusal. It contains, considering its size, fuller and more valuable information on the subject of parks than any other work I have ever read.

*Hon. S. S. Cox.*—If there were any influence which I could exercise at Albany to induce proper legislation, so as to give New York its full breathing apparatus in the shape of parks, I should be very happy.

*Ex Judge Noah Davis.*—While I am earnestly in favor of rigid economy in the administration of our municipal affairs and would guard the expenditure of public money by the strictest rules, yet I do not hesitate to say that in my judgment the adoption of the system of public parks proposed by the Commission will be in every sense a judicious and economical proceeding. A wise prudence dictates that it should be done without delay. Both the property and the money required for its purchase are as cheap now as they can ever be, and the growing wants of the city in the direction of public parks can never be more advantageously supplied.

*Stewart Dean, Esq.*—Your benign project will be, I am confident, should the wisdom of the Legislature put it through, the biggest jump New York city ever took towards fitting herself for swaying the sceptre of ultimate domain as the world's metropolis. Though having lived in your city, I am here on the lovely marge of Lake Erie, with the freshness of Heaven on the air, and the long stretches of blue under the eye, and health in the gale; and I wish my crowded fellow-beings on the other edge of the State to have something of the same blessings—to accomplish which your efforts seem so earnestly bent. I hope the Legislature will commend itself to the gratitude of all the future by a fiat which shall speak these pleasure grounds into being.

*Rev. Morgan Dix, D. D.*—That the city of New York is very far behind the other great cities of the world in her provision for the health and happiness of the people by means of pleasure grounds and parks is, unfortunately, too well known. The views of your Commission on that point are stated in a way which could hardly be more impressive; while their recommendations seem to me to be eminently wise and practical. What they propose might, indeed, be regarded as the minimum; nothing less should be thought of; and they are right in urging prompt, or rather immediate, action, in order to secure inestimable advantages now within our reach, but liable through delay to be lost to our citizens forever. I earnestly hope that among our legislators at Albany there will be found the wisdom, the foresight, the statesmanship, the enlightened public spirit, nay, the common sense, which, if properly applied, will result in an approval of the recommendations of this admirable and exhaustive report, and in making provision for the speedy realization of the project.

*Hon. Wm Dowd*—I have received and read the report of the Commis-

sion to Locate Lands for Parks, which you so kindly sent me, and I was greatly interested in its contents, which are so plainly the result of thorough research and the fullest consideration of the matter. It seems to me that no language can too strongly set forth the absolute necessity of these parks to afford the largest amount of breathing space to the greatest number of people at the least cost. But now is the time to secure these lands, when the cost is probably at the minimum, and money is so cheap. The authority to purchase should be given by the present Legislature without fail, and no means should be neglected to bring about this most desirable result.

*Stansbury Norse, Esq.*—As an artist, familiar with all the localities mentioned in your report, I can understand the difficulties you have had to contend with and have surmounted, and I congratulate you upon the judicious selections you have made, and the picturesque sights determined upon.

*Morris K. Jessup, Esq.*—From my standpoint, the necessity of an increase of our park area is so apparent and so great as hardly to need the advocacy of a single person.

*Hon. Ernest Hall.*—I do not think that anything that I can say would add any weight to your magnificent and comprehensive report in regard to the parks in the annexed district, but if the hearty approbation of all owners of property in that district can aid you, that you may rest assured you have. It is rightfully considered that there is no subject of such vital importance to the entire city of New York as this one in regard to parks; it is a question to many of life or death in a physical sense, and the death rate of the city, at present so large, must increase unless places can be provided now for free air for the poorer classes. The work which your Commission has initiated must be completed at once. The people having obtained, through your report, such a glimpse of Heaven, will never rest contented with the present purgatory.

*John E. Parsons, Esq.*—I have some right to an opinion upon the subject. I was brought up in the lower part of Westchester County, at Rye, and all my life I have been familiar with the country between the Connecticut line and the Harlem River. It is all beautiful. From my father's house the water view extended to Sands Point in one direction and as far as the eye can reach in the other. A short drive reached the hill tops, from which the whole line of the Palisades was visible. One of my earliest memories is of a visit to a friend of my mother's, Mrs. Elisha King, whose beautiful place, with Hunter's Island, the finest gentleman's seat that I ever saw in this country, you seem to incorporate in your Pelham Park. It always appeared to me that the beauty of Westchester County culminated at Pelham on the shore, and at the Lydig property on the Bronx. Your committee must have been of the same mind, to judge from the fact that you have selected each for the site of a park. I still drive once in a while to New Rochelle and beyond. Don't delay the parks. They will make the distance seem only half as great. Let me thank you for your work.

*Everett H. Wheeler, Esq.*—Everything that makes the city of New York more healthful and more beautiful will attract population, increase taxable values, promote the comfort and the morality of our citizens. If the parks which your Commission advocate should be laid out, the value of the whole annexed district will largely increase. The owners of property there will thus contribute more and more to the public treasury. This will be easy for them, because the improvements you propose will make their land desirable for residence and in this way, before the bonds which the city will issue to pay for our new parks shall become due, the taxpayers of the wards north of the Harlem River will have paid for them, principal and interest.

*Isaac D. Cole, Esq.*—I have been very much interested in examining your report to the Legislature, and I feel that your enormous undertaking, and the progress which has thus far been made, will have a successful

issue; also, that your labors, as they merit, will receive the sincerest thanks of your fellow citizens.

*Abijah Curtiss, Esq.*—In agreeing most fully with your report and in your views of the necessity of present action upon the same, I wish also to add my thanks and commendation for the, to me, faithful manner in which your work has been done. Having a most conversant knowledge of the lands and topography covered by your report, I find nothing to suggest that would add to the conclusions you have arrived at in regard to location of the proposed parks.

*Gen. W. H. Morris.*—I beg to offer my entire approval of your admirable selection of sites. The arrangements for connecting the parks in the annexed district are excellent.

*Professor S. Waterhouse.*—Certainly the State of New York will not hesitate, in view of the urgent needs of its chief city, to authorize by legislative action the acquisition of grounds so essential to the health and recreation of its citizens. A neglect of the present opportunity may forever defeat an admirable system of public improvement. The legislators of New York are too sagacious to be guilty of a remissness so fatal to the best interests of their metropolis. And when under the prompt sanction of the legislature, the desired tracts have been secured, the municipal council of New York will scarcely be able to find better methods for the embellishment of the new parks than those embodied in the excellent recommendations of your Commission.

*Jas. F. Sutton.*—There is not, nor can there be, anything more important to the present and future of this city than the question of beautiful parks, and the larger and the more there are of them the better. The more a people of a great city can get of nature the better the people of that city will be. It must, indeed, be a small mind that would oppose this movement, and I cannot believe there is any opposition to it by the people of this city.

*John D. Townsend.*—It has often occurred to me that our city from its rapid increase of population would soon require more breathing places for the people, and I rejoiced when, in 1883, the Legislature passed the act by which your Commission could be appointed. I have delayed my response to your letter until I could get an opportunity of properly inspecting the subject, and now that I have done so, I take pleasure in adding my voice to the rest that the committee has performed its duty with extraordinary care and discretion.

*J. M. Hard, Esq.*—Please add my name to the many you already have, in emphatic approval of the proposed plan.

*Austin Corbin.*—As an individual citizen, interested as all should be, in anything affecting the common weal, I regard the question of providing an increased number of parks as of paramount importance to a city like New York. It has demonstrated such a marvelous capacity for growth, it needs a generous provision in the way of breathing grounds, to meet the wants of future generations—a necessity which I think few of our citizens appreciate as it deserves. Your views upon this question meet my cordial concurrence, and the only criticism I have to make is that you have not provided half the space that ought to be provided for this purpose. Increased taxation will more than pay the interest upon such acquisitions, but if it should not the city will be fully compensated for the money so expended, in the saving of health and life.

*Jas. M. Constable, Esq.*—The circular of the Commission and also the reports in relation to the system of park accommodation for the city has been received, and I have read the same with much interest. I heartily approve of the plan to give the people more breathing room.

*Hon. John C. Develin.*—I am in entire sympathy with the movement for increased park area, and cannot write in too high terms of the labor, intelligence and judgment devoted and displayed by the Commissioners to and

in the selection of sites. New York is nowhere so deficient as in the paucity of parks.

*Hon. Wm. E. Dodge.*—It is a great encouragement to all thoughtful men to feel that the authorities are willing to look forward and to provide for the future needs of this great city, while land can be procured and plans perfected wisely.

*D. Willis James, Esq.*—I take great pleasure in saying that I am most heartily in favor of prompt measures being taken to secure in the annexed district a liberal amount of lands for public parks, believing them to be a necessity for all great cities. I believe the lands should be secured at once, while it can be done at a comparatively modest cost; that any delay is both expensive and hazardous. No one at all familiar with sanitary science can fail to recognize that parks, open places, breathing spots are a necessity in any great city, and also that while they are a necessity they are the chief beauty and attraction any city can possess. I sincerely hope New York will be wise enough to secure suitable sites in the annexed district and secure ample space. No one familiar with our city can fail to regret that the wise foresight of De Witt Clinton, in laying out ample open spaces, failed of being carried out, and as a result, to day New York is suffering, and must go on to suffer in the future until suitable measures are taken to remedy, as far as possible, the dire calamity. In many parts of our overcrowded city—notably the tenement-house districts—the necessity now exists for providing open spaces for the health and well-being of our people. A wise statesmanship must provide these, even though the expense be great; but so costly a blunder should warn us not to repeat it in the annexed district, soon to be a thickly populated city; but to act at once and secure ample lands for open spaces while it can be done at a comparatively moderate expense.

*Hon. D. McMahon.*—Some years since I attended before Mayor Grace and spoke decidedly against proposed new parks, but now frankly admit myself converted to your suggestions. I am aware that the city south of the Harlem is not embraced within the limits of your powers as fixed by the law creating your Commission, but some provision should be made hereafter for small down-town parks, constructed in pestilential portions of the city, which last would be for the very poor who cannot afford the time nor money for the fresh air of the suburbs. If several blocks in the 4th, 7th, 14th, 11th and 19th Wards were separately taken, the houses on them demolished, open air spaces created, laid out in green grass, the sanitary condition of the city would thereby be improved. No better donation to their fellow-citizens of the "toilers" could be given by our rich men than to buy up in the tenement district several squares of buildings, demolish the vile, polluted, pestilent, reeking structures on them, donate one of them to the public, laying same out in an open space and erect around same improved tenements for the very poor. As a business speculation it would pay; as a benevolent enterprise the donors would stand on the same place as Cooper, Lenox, *et id omne genus*.

*W. K. Thorn, Esq.*—I can only say I entirely approve of the purchases and should favor an increase of the number of parks above your suggestions, as among the very best investments the city could make. As soon as parks are located, the property surrounding and near them will be selected as residences, and so their value be much enhanced and the taxable property of the city thereby very much increased in value.

*Rev. Howard Crosby.*—I most fully concur with all your views, and cannot but believe that the whole city will indorse your labors, and the Legislature give efficiency to your plans. These parks must be secured *now*, as you ably argue, and they cannot be more wisely located than they have been by you. Your treatment of the pecuniary aspect of the question is forcible and true.

*H. G. Marquand, Esq.*—I cannot see how any one having interest in the welfare, present and future, of this city, can take any other view or be led

by any proper motive to oppose the movement to secure them now. I cheerfully approve of your efforts and wish you success.

*Messrs. H. B. Cloflin and W. H. Dunn.*—If it is any encouragement for you to know that we heartily approve the work of the Commission, we are glad indeed so to advise you, and we sincerely trust that you will be able to bring to a satisfactory conclusion your effort to provide for the future welfare of our great and growing city, and if in any wise we can assist you, we shall be glad to have you command us.

*General Fremont.*—Regarding the city as the exponent of the wonderful growth of the country which is its background, and with which as well as the growth of the city itself I have been familiar for years, it is with a positive pleasure that I look upon the wise preparations which you are making to render it worthy and fit for the commanding place which it is to occupy in the future.

*T. B. Coddington, Esq.*—I am in hearty sympathy and accord with the movement. Looking to the present and the future growth of the city, I believe that its sanitary welfare will be best promoted, and the intelligence, taste and morals of the people fostered by an adequate provision in this direction.

*D. Connolly, Esq.*—The report is highly interesting, and I trust it will impress the Legislature with the importance of taking action on the subject of providing parks in that section as soon as possible. They will be greatly needed, and provision for them cannot be made too soon. New York will gain many millions of dollars, and much sanitary advantage as well, by prompt attention to this important subject. The information furnished in this report is valuable and should be carefully studied.

*Col. R. M. Gallaway.*—In addition to the letters, from which the foregoing extracts are taken, Vice-President Gallaway, of the Manhattan Elevated Railway, addressed a communication to the Governor, while he had the bill under consideration. After a reference to the effect of parks in the enhancement of the surrounding property, and his intimate knowledge of the whole territory to a distance of twenty-five miles around New York, acquired while engaged in the work of surveying, Col. Gallaway expressed his belief that no land within such easy reach (through the facilities afforded by the present system of rapid transit) can be found so well suited for public parks, considered in relation to adaptability, accessibility and economy.

"This," said he, "is true of the Van Cortlandt and the Bronx parks, and, in a special degree, of the Pelham Bay Park, which has the additional advantage of a front upon the Sound, that cannot fail to make it one of the most attractive of our public pleasure grounds, particularly for the great body of our working people, whose various trade and benevolent societies, in addition to the athletic clubs, will throng it daily through the summer season. I would say, right here, that this is the time to buy this seaside park while it is outside the limits of the city, and before it becomes a part of New York, for the moment it is annexed the property cannot be had for treble, or even quadruple its present price. Better for the city to buy grass lots now than lots with improvements on them hereafter. Then there would not be money enough to pay for them. The land which now can be bought for eight millions could not be bought ten years hence for fifty.

"To-day there are over a million and a-half of people in New York, and the centre of population is moving so rapidly northward that ere many years it shall have reached the Harlem River. That river, uniting as it does the Hudson and the East Rivers, must, when the present system of improvement shall have been completed, form an important artery of commerce, its shores lined by storehouses, and its docks crowded by vessels

of all kinds. A large part of the commercial business of the city will then be concentrated at this point. It requires no special foresight to predict the future of this section of the metropolis, which, as I have said, will be a great city in itself. During this generation New York will have 5,000,000 of inhabitants, and at its present rate of increase, in half a century it will have 10,000,000—more than double the population of London. Looking at its rapid growth and its future prospects I cannot help thinking that the Commission have actually fallen short in their calculation of the park area that will be needed. But if they have not, and if they have taken more than will be required, it is a difficulty that can be easily remedied and with advantage to the city by the sale of a few hundred acres, which can be done as such an advance as will more than pay the cost of the whole, and leave a good profit to the city.

"As to the question of accessibility, I can speak, as you are aware, from practical experience and an intimate knowledge of the subject. The facilities of approach have been so largely increased within a few years as to render all these parks easily accessible to the whole population of the city both by rail and steamboat. A line drawn due east and west strikes the two great parks—one on the Hudson and the other on the Sound—Van Cortlandt and Pelham Bay, both of which are in communication with all sections of the city by rail and the latter by steamboat as well. By rapid transit the Van Cortlandt Park can be reached in thirty minutes from Forty-second street and in forty-five minutes from the Battery, the extreme southern limit of the city. When the Second Avenue Bridge, which is now in process of construction, is completed, and the connection on both sides is thus effected between the Elevated and the Portchester and the Harlem Railroad, which runs through Pelham Bay Park, it can be reached within twenty minutes from the centre of population. This railroad connection will be complete within a year—certainly before the proceedings for the acquisition of the site of this park can be perfected."

*Hon. W. W. Niles.*—Besides the active personal services rendered by Mr. Niles, who, it should be stated, was present on the eventful night when the bill passed the Senate by a vote of twenty-one to two, that influential member of the New York Park Association and of the Commission appointed under the act of 1883, addressed a forcible and convincing letter, dated March 20, 1886, to a large number of his friends in the Senate and Assembly.

"I notice," said Mr. Niles in this communication, "an effort to repeal, or modify the act known as the 'New Parks bill.' None of us have any light for our guidance except the light of the past. I submit, therefore, a few facts in regard to this measure, and they shall be very few and briefly stated, for life, and especially official life, is too active and earnest to be wasted upon rhetoric." After referring somewhat in detail to the history of the park movement Mr. Niles alluded to the conflict precipitated by ex-Mayor Grace and the signal defeat of his scheme, concluding as follows:

"One word only by way of prophecy: the lands selected are almost without improvement. Within five years buildings would otherwise have been erected on them and improvements made which would each represent with an acre, or half acre, the cost of ten to fifty acres of the land at present; and the extension of the surface railroads and the Rapid Transit system and other pending improvements, would in some cases double and quadruple the cost of the land. With this past and with this probable future, it is submitted whether it is wise for the present Legislature to undo the work so carefully, so patiently, and after such earnest and long continued labor, accomplished, and for the completion of which a large proportion of the expense and liability has already been incurred."

PETITION TO THE LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR IN  
FAVOR OF THE NEW PARKS, AND ASKING THAT THE  
BILL BE PASSED AND SIGNED.

The following petition was signed by about seven thousand persons, representing every trade and profession.

In addition to this petition there were separate petitions signed by nearly one hundred of the first artists of the city, who urged the Governor to approve the bill, on the ground that the lands selected were natural parks, and especially on account of the beautiful and picturesque character of their scenery.

Separate petitions were also signed by a large number of leading physicians, setting forth the sanitary benefits which the whole people would derive from the new parks.

FREE PARKS FOR THE PEOPLE.

TO OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF  
NEW YORK.

The People of the City of New York demand more Parks.

THEY WANT FREE PLAYGROUNDS. IT IS A NECESSITY.

The Parks recommended by the Commission appointed under the act of the Legislature of 1883, have been wisely chosen, and we heartily approve of all of them in respect to "location, extent, mode of payment, and method of acquiring title."

There can be no better financial undertaking for a large and growing city than the purchase of park sites.

They will cost the city nothing, but, on the contrary, will be a source of great profit. The experience of other cities proves this.

The Central Park has not only repaid all its cost, but paid into the Treasury of the City SEVENTEEN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, and left the city the owner in fee free from all cost, of its 864 acres, now worth TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

We are convinced that similar results will follow from the parks laid out by the Commission.

The Central Park, for the following reasons, has ceased to be, if it ever was, a park for the people:

They are not permitted to walk or play upon the grass, but are confined to its dusty roads;

The lawns and meadows are for sheep and not for the people;

It is kept exclusive, like the baronial estates of European lords;

But were it all we could wish, it must soon give way to the necessities of trade and travel between the east and west sides.

Ample space is necessary for the proper training of our citizen soldiers and for the athletic sports and exercises of our youth.

Such spaces are specially provided for in the great parks of Europe. We have none.

The death rate in New York is larger than that of the other great centres of population, and must go on to increase unless remedied.



In one ward alone, of half a square mile, there are twelve thousand more inhabitants than in the whole city of Albany.

In one ward of one-sixth of a square mile there are five thousand more persons than in Hartford, the capital of Connecticut.

In some parts of five or six wards the population is packed at the rate of one thousand to an acre, and there is very little more ground space allowed to the living than is allotted to the dead.

Must this go on?

New York is behind the world in park area.

Even with Central Park, New York has less than a thousand acres (without its reservoirs) of pleasure grounds, against

*One Hundred and Seventy-two Thousand Acres belonging to Paris.*

*Twenty-two Thousand to London.*

*Eight Thousand to Vienna.*

*Five Thousand to Berlin*

*Three Thousand to Philadelphia.*

*Three Thousand to Chicago.*

*Over Two Thousand to St. Louis, and*

*Over Two Thousand to Boston.*

Other cities are now increasing their park areas, London having just added to its fifteen thousand acres seven thousand more, and these are outside of her boundaries; and Boston has within three years increased her area with an additional nineteen hundred acres.

All the parks and parkways must be secured now before the growth of population and the advance of property values shall make any of them costly; while money is cheap and before these natural parks are lost to us forever.

The woods, the growth of centuries, unless secured now must soon give place to bricks and mortar.

These parks are more accessible by road, by rail and by water than the Central Park when it was laid out.

We don't want expensive parks laid out by landscape gardeners, but parks made by nature.

We must have not only inland parks, with meadows and woods, but the grand one laid out on the Sound, with its miles of beach, its pure and cooling waves, where we and our children can bathe and row and fish, and be free to enjoy ourselves in its health-giving air and waters.

By the inevitable law of the past it is proved that the population of New York city will in seventeen years be three millions.

These parks would not alone benefit the city—destined to be the greatest in the world—and this grand Empire State, but the whole country.

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