

SUBURBAN AND MOUNTAIN PARKS IN MASSACHUSETTS

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C. Rev. of Revs.
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ECHO LAKE, WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN STATE RESERVATION.

(This lake and its shores now belong to the people of Massachusetts forever.)

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SUBURBAN AND MOUNTAIN PARKS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY EDWARD KIRK TITUS.

IN the making of public parks, city councils and legislatures have a fatal gift for not seeing things until after they happen. The man with a long look into the future, forecasting the possible ministry of shore or hill to tired humanity, soon bumps his head against aldermanic horizons. And so the public, disorganized and unimaginative, often loses its birthright to the real-estate promoter's keener foresight.

Hence the tawdry metamorphosis of many a marshy river bank or rocky hill, marked by nature with flaming maple or frowning cliff as land that ought to be common to all. Hacked into streets and lots by the real-estate speculator's mangling hand, they become Greensward Terrace, or Sky Top Gardens. In return for our heritage we are graciously invited to a land sale with free band concert and balloon ascension, permitted,—plated spoons thrown in,—to buy a fifty-foot lot for \$200. Thus arises the suburban slum.

In Massachusetts there has been a story with a better ending. It passes by Franklin Park in Boston and many another urban oasis, as not unlike the achievements of New York or Philadelphia or Chicago. It tells rather of a rare foresight that has included in its scope suburban and country life, and has induced the people in their corporate capacity to seize for their own many a shore and wildwood and hill, before the real-estate speculator realized their value,—thus beating him on his own ground and at his own game, and redeeming these beauty spots from abuses of private ownership.

Suburban life fifteen years ago, about Boston, as elsewhere, was crude. A return to nature,—vine-clad cottages, buttercup-starred meadows, and all that,—had been expected from the great migration that followed the building of trolleys beyond city limits. But the cold reality was commonly enough the exchange of a well-paved street, with substantial brick houses and a park fifteen min-

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BROOKS' ROAD AND PORTER'S COVE, MIDDLESEX FELLS RESERVATION.
(One of the attractive spots reclaimed by the State of Massachusetts for the benefit of the people.)

utes away by street-car, for a jungle of wooden dwellings on fifty-foot lots, and no park within reach. The Boston suburb of Everett, typical of many, had in 1893, with 16,000 people, not a foot of park land.

By a curious irony, the lovelier the spot the likelier for an area of ugliness under the hand of the speculator. Low land along the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset rivers, whose luxuriant vegetation revealed nature in most jocund mood, was peculiarly available for cheap promotion, because its unsuitability for building placed it on the market at a small price. Picturesque tracts about the Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells, unfit for street, sewer, and house construction because of rocky irregularity, were for similar reasons going for low prices that threatened shabby development. Kangaroo tenements, three stories in front and four or five in the rear to fit the slope, threw ugly gingerbread balconies

and spider-webs of clothes line over many a romantic hill and dale.

Public indifference to the need of park land and to the loss of beautiful scenery was a foe worse than the promoter. The early colonists reserved much "common" land, but it had been largely frittered away. Salisbury, for instance, had a fine "training-field." An abutter planted a row of trees in this field. When his fence fell, some years later, it was rebuilt outside the trees, to which, with the included land, his title is now undisputed. Yarmouth had a large

common that was granted to certain persons as long as they should use the land, but with no intent of giving transferable rights. These holdings were sold, and the town has never defended its now dubious title. Such encroachments could not ordinarily be called dishonest since they merely absorbed what no one valued. In more flagrant cases, men who swindled towns out of valuable "common"



VIEW EAST FROM MATTAPAN BRIDGE.
(Neponset River Reservation.)



NANTASKET BEACH, BOSTON.

(A noble example of a beach owned by the people and managed in their interest.)

rights were regarded with admiration by their townsmen for their smartness. Gloucester, population 25,000, had in 1893 no park or common. "Where do they go for band concerts?" a visitor asked. "The band takes the sidewalk and the people the street."

Abundant rights of public access to the seashore existed years ago, but in 1893 only five out of forty-six Massachusetts shore towns had any legal beach rights worth mentioning. Westport illustrated the general indifference. Several people having built houses within the line of a street running 1000 rods along the water, the town, to avoid making them move, relocated the highway inside the sand hills, thus spoiling a magnificent ocean drive. The rapid purchase of the Massachusetts shore front by people of wealth cut the public off from haunts enjoyed since time immemorial, and the rapid erection of gates and barbed wire was fast making the ocean front into some one's back yard.

Even the metropolitan district (within eleven miles of Boston) enjoyed public rights to the shore on only a few insignificant tracts. The harbor islands were unavailable because mostly used for penal and charitable institutions. Revere, Nantasket, and other resorts open to the public were so conducted under private ownership as to attract hosts of people of a somewhat disorderly type, so that these lovely shores were enjoyed by one class only.

* Great Head, in Winthrop, perhaps seventy-five feet high, one of Boston harbor's most conspicuous landmarks, was bought in 1883

for only about \$18,000. The 200 lots into which it was cut must have netted a large profit above expenses, as it is estimated that they sold for \$400 each. And now, as seen from the decks of passing ships, this head, though a pretty and populous suburb, suggests the older materialism of the public, of councilmen and legislators, that no one saw the possibilities of this spot for an unusual and imaginative park development. How easy to have made it into a woodland park, so that one headland of a bleak and treeless harbor horizon might have emulated the beautiful Navesink Highlands of New York, thus offering the ocean traveler a captivating forecast of American scenic beauty.

WORK OF THE METROPOLITAN COMMISSION.

A movement for the enrichment of suburban and country life through public parks containing the best of the natural scenery had its beginning about 1892. During that year the Massachusetts Legislature created the Metropolitan Park Commission, which has now acquired, at the expense of the towns and cities of the district, 10,053 acres in the metropolitan district and outside of Boston. The principal holdings are the Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells reservations, forty-seven miles of frontage on the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset rivers, and five beaches with ten miles of shore. The commission has expended about \$12,000,000, and individual cities and towns in the district about \$23,000,000 more on their own account.

When the commission took Revere Beach, the Coney Island of Boston, a railroad ran



REVERE BEACH, BEFORE THE METROPOLITAN PARK COMMISSION TOOK IT.
 (All the usual cheap and tawdry features developed under private management.)

along the shore, and the sands between the track and the water were jammed by an ugly huddle of dingy and decrepit bath, fish, and boarding houses. Their owners, eager to utilize every inch of space, had built so far out that at two-thirds tide the public was cut off from the water, and could pass up or down only by walking upon the railroad tracks, where trains were running every ten minutes. Women and children shunned the rough crowd.

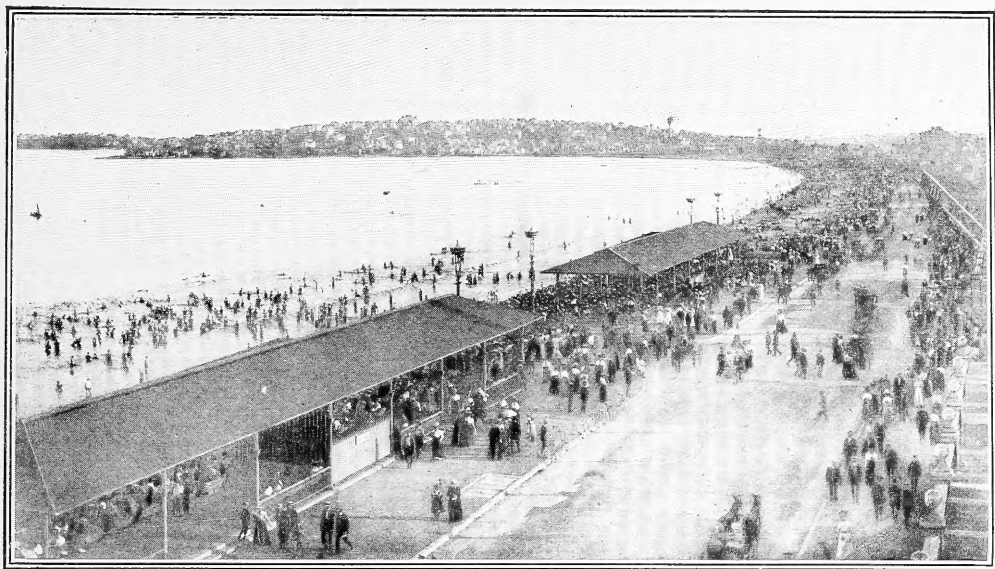
The commission removed the buildings, 107 in number, from the shore front, required the railroad to place its tracks at the rear of the village, and substituted an eighty-foot macadam highway. It erected and maintains a bathhouse used by 142,942 persons last year, which has accommodated 7171 in one day. The beach attendance, stimulated both by good police protection and by private amusement enterprises, has grown from 500,000 to 5,000,000 annually. The pleasures of the shore must be wholesome, as a two-hundred-thousand-a-day crowd has frequently required not one arrest. This is clearly not due to police laxity, as women and children feel so safe as to constitute half the attendance. When a shower comes, the police are less given to scurrying for doorways, more likely to be found rounding up helpless broods of children for tired mothers.

You still find at Revere the tawdriness of

all great resorts of its type. The merry-go-round man may have his organ, in deference to some back eddy of Boston culture, play "Aïda," or "Faust," but he feels that he must assist the imagination by setting up manikins of Washington and Roosevelt to beat the cymbals. The hotel-keeper would not be satisfied with a piazza railing of simple straight posts, but must have his rails belly out into fat ovals to satisfy his love for the beautiful.

It was with cockney impudence that all sorts of such excrescences jostled in between sea and shore at old Revere, thus crowding old ocean out of sight and hearing, as if their tinsel were more fascinating than the romance of rolling surf and sounding sea. They took their cue from the faces of the loungers, which at any of our great shore resorts will turn their eyes from ocean's eternities to the boardwalk for some commonplace reproduction of Broadway or Washington street. But now at Revere the State's fiat has at least ordered all this tinsel of man's device to its place behind the great shore boulevard, and has restored unbroken to the eye of him who would see, a matchless crescent of silver sands and whirling surf.

The river banks and river life handled by the Park Commission have also had their vicissitudes. Fine estates in older days often



REVERE BEACH, BOSTON.—BATHING HOUSES TO THE RIGHT.
(Contrast this picture with that on the opposite page.)

faced the streams, and terraced their lawns, planted their gardens, and built their rustic houses to befit the dignity and beauty of the river. But manufacturing establishments, finding the water useful, began to drop their lines of refuse along the banks and to line the shores with ugly buildings. Decadent boat clubs left rotting piles and falling roofs. The outrages of rough canoeists led to much stringing of barbed wire, thus driving away the most domesticated picnicker. The newer houses all turned their backs to the stream.

The Park Commission has now acquired control of these rivers and of the view from the water, by taking strips of land 100 feet to half a mile wide, for a total frontage of forty-seven miles. Large tracts of woodland of sixty or more years' growth were saved as the choppers were beginning their cruel work. Barbed wire is now all cleared away, and the jocund picnicker again thrives. Ugly buildings are removed, or screened by poplars or other quick-growing trees. Roughs are kept off the water. The number of canoes owned along the Charles River for six miles near the city of Newton has increased from 1500 to 5000 under the new régime, making this the greatest boating river in the world, except the Thames.

Stupid forestry along these river banks under private ownership was corrected none too soon. The owners used to burn over their wood lots every year to get rid of un-

derbrush, or to prevent fires that in their absence might destroy buildings. Thousands of trees were irreparably damaged, but the commission saved many by applying coats of tar to trunks left without any bark to shiver in a northern climate. Portions of the Middlesex Fells and Blue Hills reservations had been burnt over shortly before the State took them, so that there had sprung up a weedy growth of monotonous thickets. Underbrush threatening fire has been removed, unpromising trees cut out, and individual trees receive thoughtful and affectionate treatment. When a branch is taken off, the wound is so carefully trimmed that the bark can cover the scar. Pruning is done so promptly that trees shall not waste vitality on limbs that must eventually come off.

Roads with lovely vistas, rules against shooting, removal of causes of fire, and hence return of long evicted varieties of plants, zinc labels for trees at rendezvous for nature study classes, 3000 skaters at woodland ponds in a week, 8000 climbers to the big Blue Hill in a day, planting of pine seedlings, picturesque flocks of sheep, waterfowl on the ponds,—these are a few features of recent progress.

Landscape effects have had a discriminating analysis under Olmsted Brothers. If a bridge was to be considered merely as a portion of a parkway, flat girders or arches, with all effect concentrated upon the parapet,

would be chosen to emphasize the importance of the roadway. If it was desired that the bridge emphasize the river, there would be an elevation of grade and a conspicuous arch.

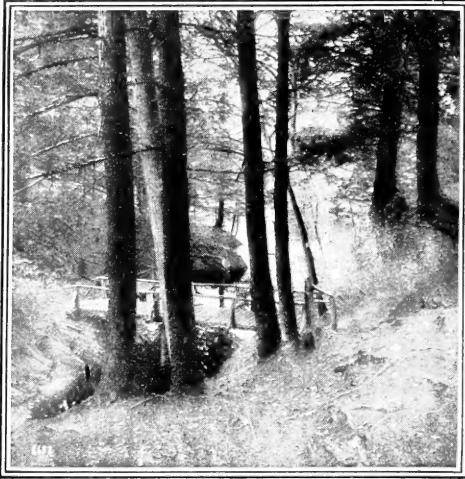
To avoid the stereotyped effect of the great European forests, where the differences of human control tend to average themselves in an uninspiring sameness, the landscape archi-

tion of this board, which became the model for the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty in England, encourages such benefactions by assuring possible givers that lands they may offer the public will be held and administered as parks forever by a responsible authority. Among the tracts secured in this way have been Mount Anne Park, in Gloucester, a rocky knob looking seaward to Maine; the Rocky Narrows, a picturesque gorge on the Charles River, and Monument Mountain, whose 200 acres of picturesque tree growth and jagged ledges constitute one of the finest of the Berkshire hills.

The Province Lands, 4000 acres upon the tip of Cape Cod, held by the State since colonial times, were until recently neglected. With cool air, a wide view of shipping, with memories of the toiling Puritans who here dried and salted their fish, this tract deserved a better fate. The State agent conscientiously kept away, to avoid burdening the commonwealth with his fee of \$3 per day. The land was once heavily wooded, but the wholesale taking of sod and trees let loose a ruinous and remorseless tide of the shifting cape sands, strangling great tracts of pine and maple, and choking many a lily pond and salt creek.

A systematic effort to reclaim this spot of memories and possibilities has resulted from this country-park movement. Experiments with willows, silver poplars, tamarix, hornbeam, cockspur thorn, common privet, silver maple, tree of paradise, white and seaside pine, proved that these could not flourish sufficiently to hold down the shifting sands. But common alder, black locust, and bay berry are found to thrive here, and native pitch pine, which grows well either from seed or transplanting, is most valuable in binding the sand in place.

The intense localism of the ordinary American community has been a most serious obstacle in all this evolution. The ineffectiveness of municipalities was suggested at the time of the threat to remove Norton's Woods, a lovely grove in the outskirts of Cambridge, and the principal pleasure ground for a humble neighborhood in the adjoining city of Somerville. Cambridge would not act because Somerville people would get the principal benefit; Somerville could do nothing because the land was in Cambridge. I was expressing regret to a Winthrop real-estate dealer that their Great Head had not been taken twenty years before for \$18,000, when



HEMLOCK GORGE RESERVATION.

(Looking toward pond near Devil's Den.)

pects have arranged these reservations in three distinct forms of woodland. There are the close woods, in which the leafy canopy is unbroken; the open woods, in which the trees stand so far apart as to develop their lower branches and leave sunny openings; and open ground, where the eye, though relieved by occasional trees, wanders freely through pasture and swamp. The city dweller not merely finds trees and blue sky, but can range freely without fearing lest at any moment he may emerge upon a crowded street.

RURAL SCENIC RESERVATIONS.

The outlying country always feels the park impulses last. With no particular need of "breathing spots," the cross-roads village realizes with difficulty the wisdom of preserving the finest scenery. But during the past few years even rural Massachusetts has caught the enthusiasm of what may be called the country-park movement, and about all the larger towns now have sizable parks. About a dozen beauty spots in the real country have been given to the people of Massachusetts as a result of the organization of "trustees of public reservations." The crea-

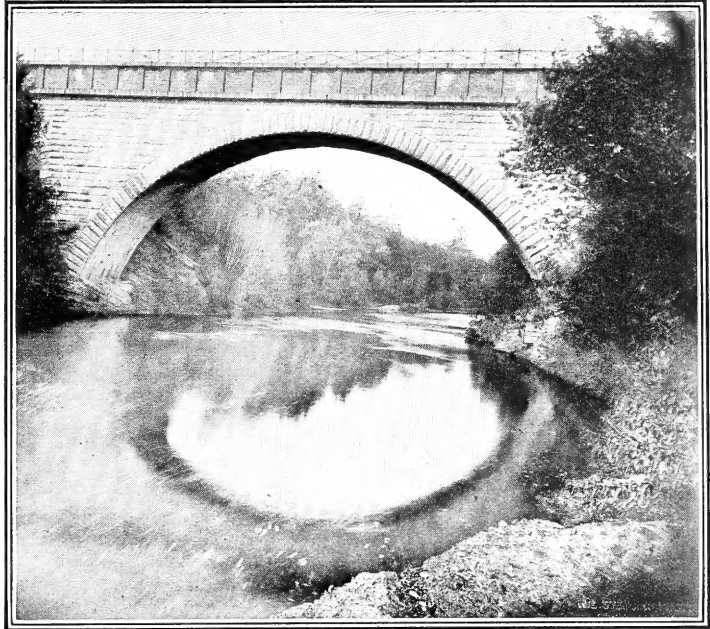
a moderate sum for trees would have made it Boston's loveliest playground and one of the most attractive headlands in the great Atlantic harbors.

"Well," said my promoter, "Winthrop had but 3000 people then. How could they have known that the town would be wanting a park now?" This ability to see only the interest of one's own neighborhood, a back eddy of our local self-government, will be encountered in almost any State that follows Massachusetts' example in this park movement. It was met there only through vigorous action by the commonwealth, and was a serious obstacle at first.

The logical outcome of the country-park movement has been the taking of three great mountain reservations by the State, 1800 acres on Mount Tom, near Springfield and Holyoke; 3000 on Wachusett, near Worcester, and 7000 on Greylock, near North

Adams. The assent by large majorities to these propositions by the voters of these counties, who were required to pay maintenance charges, showed that the real country wanted its parks, too.

Lumber and street-railway interests fought bitterly the taking of Mount Tom. "Only



ECHO BRIDGE, HEMLOCK GORGE RESERVATION.



THE CHARLES RIVER RESERVATION AT AUBURNDALE BRIDGE.
(Canoeing is a popular sport on the Charles.)



WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN STATE RESERVATION.

(One of the recently acquired State holdings.)

a mountain goat could climb it," was their contemptuous view. But an aged nature lover of Northampton knew better the secrets of these highlands, long deserted in our prosaic days, but loved by the forefathers. He felt that if the colonists built their homes



A SCENE IN WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN STATE RESERVATION.

(Deer are protected in Massachusetts.)

upon these crags because they loved the beauty of the spot, we should be as appreciative; if the better view of the movements of the red man was the motive, we should venerate the scenes of these vigils, and guard them against encroachment.

And so Christopher Clarke, nature lover, drove the State Harbor and Land Commission and a few crestfallen objectors over these forgotten old roads in a four-horse

wagon, past the old cellar holes, haunted by the sweetness of surviving lilacs. The impressions of that day's drive won the assent of this influential board, and by sanction of the county electorate a glorious mountain, accessible to 200,000 people, for a 5-cent fare, accumulating the wild creatures that find refuge here from the sportsman, safe from the assaults of the lumberman, became the possession of Massachusetts forever.

A SCENIC GIFT TO NEW YORK STATE.

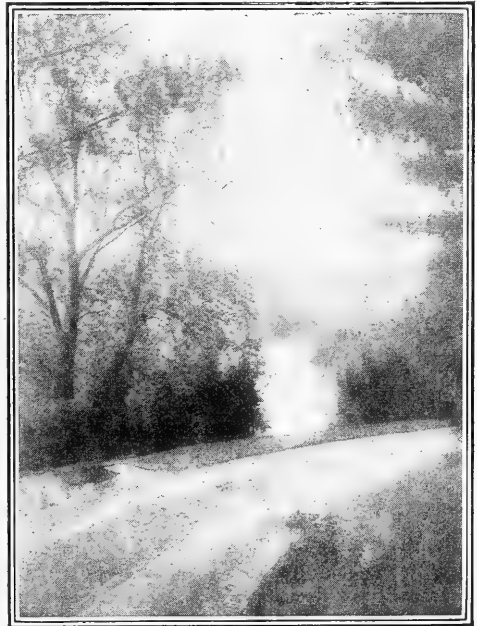
BY FRANCIS W. HALSEY.

WHEN Governor Hughes signed the bill accepting Letchworth Park as the gift of William Pryor Letchworth to the State of New York, he described the gift as "an act of generosity which fitly crowns a life of conspicuous public usefulness, and entitles the donor to the lasting regard of his fellow citizens." The circumstances in which Mr. Letchworth made this gift date, as to their beginnings, from a period somewhat remote from the present generation. After he had become a successful business man in Buffalo, he made, in 1859, his first purchase of land bordering on the great gorge of the Genesee at Portage. He bought additional tracts from time to time, until eventually he became the owner of about 1000 acres, extending on both sides of the river for a distance of three miles.

Retiring definitely from business in 1872, this estate, to which long before he had given the name "Glen Iris," became his permanent home. He had already done much to improve the grounds, and on the three farms included in his purchases carried on agricultural industries. Mr. Letchworth's life thenceforth was to be largely philanthropic and has had its radiating center in this beautiful domain. From the beginning he liked to have its charms shared by others. He was always hospitable to visitors, the grounds being constantly open to such persons as might wish to enter them. His desire to increase the usefulness of the property finally assumed definite form when he founded there an institution where poor children from cities might be entertained. This for many years continued in active operation through a board of trustees.

Meanwhile, Mr. Letchworth was approaching old age. (His years now number

eighty-three.) Just what he could most advantageously do with the property in his will, long remained a problem he could not satisfactorily solve. Through an act of the Legislature, a power company acquired, a few years ago, the right to use the waters of the river. This pointed to the building of a great reservoir above the upper falls and the conversion of the lower gorge into a tail-race, thus depriving the three cascades of their supply of water, all of which meant the virtual destruction of the chief beauties of Glen Iris. Indeed, Mr. Letchworth saw in this enterprise the probable defeat of his long cherished



VIEW OF THE RIVER GORGE FROM MR. LETCHWORTH'S HOUSE.

wishes to preserve the falls in perpetuity and in their original splendor for the benefit of the public.

While still in doubt as to what he should best do, he learned of the work of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society of New York City, in protecting Niagara Falls and the Palisades, and in the purchase and improvement, through State funds, of Stony Point and Watkins Glen, the society having become the custodian of the two latter reservations. Entering into communication with the trustees of the society, of which Dr. George F. Kunz is president, and Edward Hagan Hall the executive secretary, he held several conferences with a committee from the board of trustees, the result of which was his decision to give the property to the State as a public park, retaining for himself a life use and tenancy, with the right to make further improvements at his own expense, the custody of the property after his death to pass into the hands of the American Scenic Society, which should have the full control and management of it.

Matters had reached this stage just before the Christmas holidays in 1906. The proposed gift was then made known to Governor Hughes, who in his message on January 1, specially recommended that the proper legislation be undertaken at once. A bill providing for the acceptance of the gift was introduced, but it encountered opposition that resulted in an amendment eliminating the American Scenic Society as the eventual custodian of the estate. From this amendment



A BIT OF ROADWAY IN LETCHWORTH PARK.

serious danger was threatened to the property in the future, because power companies, through new legislation and permission from State officials, might be able, in spite of the gift, to acquire the right to dam the stream above the falls. "With all due respect," wrote Mr. Letchworth to a friend in Albany, "I cannot accept the amended bill, but must regard a vote for it as a vote not to accept the gift." A few days later the objectionable amendment was stricken out, and the original bill passed. The name of the park was then changed by the Legislature from Glen Iris to Letchworth Park, "to commemorate the humane and noble work in private and public charities to which his (Mr. Letchworth's) life has been devoted, and in recognition of his eminent services to the people of the State."

A visitor to Letchworth Park, as it now exists, would probably



INDIAN COUNCIL HOUSE IN LETCHWORTH PARK.

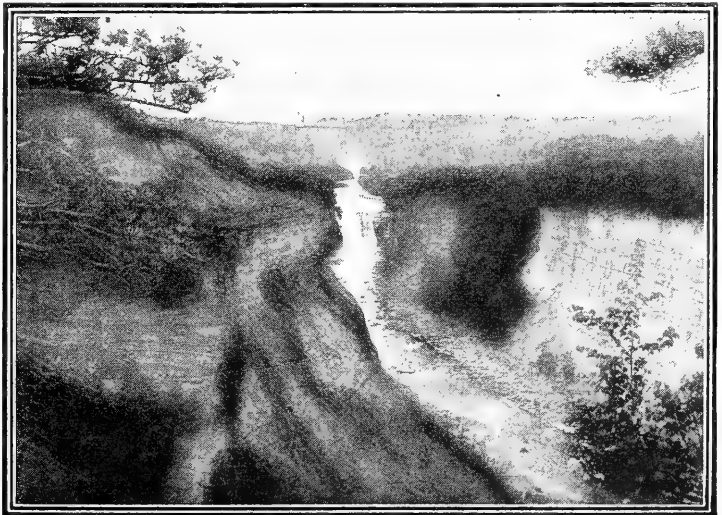


THE FAMOUS PORTAGE BRIDGE ACROSS THE GENESEE RIVER.
(A prominent feature of the Letchworth Park landscape.)

approach it from Portageville, a little station on that line of the Erie Railway which runs from Hornellsville to Buffalo. Portageville stands at one end of the famous Portage Bridge over the Genesee gorge. This bridge is 800 feet long and 234 feet high, and has been familiar in many photographs and engravings. After walking across the bridge the visitor enters Mr. Letchworth's domain by descent of a stairway and thence may drive or walk along a well-constructed winding roadway through the virgin forest until, at a distance of about a mile, he reaches a stone gateway through which he passes to the doorway of Mr. Letchworth's home. This house fronts on the canyon, and overlooks the middle, or larger, of the three cascades, the walls of the canyon there rising from the base of the falls to a height of 350 feet.

A spacious lawn spreads out before the

house and reaches the brink of the chasm, with a lake at one side of it, and a fountain in the center of the lake. The visitor notes the almost tropical luxuriance of the vegetable life around him. The grass of the lawn is wonderfully thick and green; the trees, whether of maple, beech or evergreen, display a marvelous thickness of foliage and surprising symmetry of form. All this, of course, is



GORGE OF THE GENESEE, INCLUDING UPPER AND MIDDLE FALLS.



PARTIAL VIEW OF MIDDLE FALLS.

due to the constant refreshment which grass and leaves obtain from the spray rising from the waterfalls. Botanists find here a greater variety of plant life than is to be found else-

where in New York, and more song birds in the trees than anywhere else in the State. The waterfalls, with the rapids between them, make a combined descent of 340 feet within the park. The canyon rises in places twenty feet higher than the Palisades opposite New York City, and continues beyond the park in an impressive curve, the walls still high, but the water comparatively still, for a distance of about fourteen miles.

Soon after taking possession of his early purchases Mr. Letchworth began to make improvements, and has continued to do so down to the present time. It is estimated that his entire expenditures would make a total of half a million dollars. Before his time the marketable lumber had been cut off, leaving large tracts in a state of melancholy denudation. A saw mill existed near one of the cascades, with the usual refuse of such a place lying about it. Mr. Letchworth, in so far as was possible, restored the forest to its original condition. He laid out a public highway, parallel with the river, and built many private roads and paths in the neighborhood of his home. These improvements involved retaining walls, culverts and gateways. Several rustic arbors were also erected.

Maples planted by Mr. Letchworth have grown to be as large specimens of that tree as one ever sees. They are quite the equal in



VIEW ACROSS "GLEN IRIS" LAWN.



UPPER FALLS OF THE GENESEE.
(Portage Bridge in the distance.)

size of many trees planted much earlier elsewhere. Some Norway spruces have grown to a splendor of height and thickness of foliage which seem almost to imply that the original habitat of this tree was a tropical, rather than a northern, climate. In the rear of the house, but removed to one side, has been laid out a large floral garden, oval in shape, and surrounded by a hedge of evergreens, twelve or more feet high, this serving as a wind break. Within this area familiar flowers of the garden, such as roses, nasturtiums, heliotropes, geraniums, and mignonette, grow to unusual sizes. One rarely sees in England more splendid floral growths than this domain affords,—not even in Cornwall.

On an elevated plateau, not far from the house, stand several interesting memorials of the Indians. One of these is a section of what is known as "the big treaty tree of 1797," which originally stood near Mount Morris. It was under this tree that Robert Morris negotiated the purchase of the lands of the Genesee Valley, the Indians reserving 18,000 acres for Mary Jemison, the famous "old white woman of the Genesee." Near the tree stands the former cabin home of

Mary Jemison, as removed from its original site further down the river, and just outside the doorway of the cabin is Mary Jemison's grave, with the monument erected over it by Mr. Letchworth.

Mary Jemison originally was buried on the Buffalo Creek reservation, but the opening of a street making necessary the removal of the body, Mr. Letchworth caused it to be taken to "Glen Iris." She was the most remarkable white woman ever married to an Indian. Born on the ocean in 1742, she went as a child with her parents to western Pennsylvania, where she was made a captive by the Indians during the French War, and afterwards became the wife of Hiokatoo, a Seneca chieftain, who was the most bloodthirsty of all the Indians at the massacre of Cherry Valley. She spent forty years with Hiokatoo, and afterwards prepared her memoirs, which were published in a book that is still famous with students of that period of American history. She declared in this book that, although Hiokatoo was famous for his ferocity in war, he had uniformly treated her with tenderness; he had never once been insulting in his conduct.

Within this same part of Mr. Letchworth's grounds stands a building in which he has brought together a notable collection of Indian relics, in stone and flint. It is doubtful if another collection so large as this, or so interesting in all its features, exists

elsewhere in the State. Mr. Letchworth has received from the Indians a name in their own language,—“Hai-wa-ye-is-tah,”—which means “The man who always does the right thing.” It is not alone an Indian who can speak of him in such words as these.

OCEAN-BEACH RESERVATIONS FOR NEW YORK CITY.

BY WILLIAM H. ALLEN.

THE same week that the press of the country announced the gift of \$10,000,000 for the Russell Sage Foundation the fiscal authorities of New York City added to the map of the city 7000 feet of ocean beach at Rockaway for a seaside park and sanitarium. In addition, authority was given to secure for the public in perpetuity an ocean park at Coney Island. So conventional are our ideas of benevolence that the private gift invokes news comment throughout the world, while the gift of the Atlantic Ocean to 4,000,000 of people almost escapes notice. A private donor of millions is canonized, while the benevolent motives of the public official are lost sight of in the turmoils of business and politics.

In January, 1906, Mayor McClellan's message called attention to the fact that Greater New York, with more available

ocean beach than any other city in the world, had but a paltry thousand feet that it could call its own. He had a bill prepared authorizing the city to spend \$2,500,000 for the establishment of a seaside park where millions could enjoy a respite from the monotonous shop and overheated tenement, and where private societies and the city might erect, back from the high-water mark, convalescent homes for use in winter as well as summer.

For two years the opportunity and the need had been described by the Metropolitan Parks Association, the Outdoor Recreation League, and the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The papers took turns in featuring New York's lack of free ocean beach where it should have been beach rich. So enthusiastically was the project supported by the public that a Republican Legislature and Republican Governor



OUT-OF-DOOR, SEA-AIR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOSPITAL WARDS.



"SEA BREEZE" BUILDINGS AND RECREATION PIER.

aided a Democratic Mayor to make this gift of health.

The first institution to be erected will be a seaside hospital for crippled children, victims of non-pulmonary forms of tuberculosis. For this \$250,000 was raised by the New York Association for Improving the Condition of

the Poor, which will begin construction at once. It is expected that within a short time charitable societies owning about 1500 feet of land at Coney Island will exchange this property for sites at Rockaway, making thus the nucleus of the people's seaside park at Coney Island.



NEW YORK'S CHILDREN BATHING AT "SEA BREEZE."



A WESTCHESTER COUNTY LANDSCAPE ALONG THE LINE OF THE PROPOSED BRONX-RIVER PARKWAY.

NEW YORK'S PROPOSED BRONX-RIVER PARKWAY.

WHILE the suburban development to the northward of New York City has been disappointing, in the main, from an æsthetic point of view, the situation is not altogether hopeless. The scenic features of Westchester county, long ago described by Cooper and Irving, have not been wholly marred by the ruthless hand of "improvement." Here and there a tract of woodland preserves its native beauties. The rugged hills and ravines, although in many instances denuded of trees, still give an interesting variety to the landscape. Occasionally a sightly knoll or slope has come into the possession of men who have had enough consideration for nature's prior rights to make their improvements conform as far as possible to the original contour of the land. From some of these elevations fine views may be had of miles of green and peaceful countryside.

Through the heart of this region, about midway between Long Island Sound and the Hudson, and nearly parallel to the latter, runs the Bronx River, a small stream, which in most of its course is little

more than a brook, and occupies a narrow valley some fifteen miles long. After the Bronx enters New York City on its northern bounds it passes into what is known as Bronx Park, an extensive reservation including the city's botanical and zoölogical gardens. The metropolis is therefore deeply interested in the sanitary purity of this stream, which, of course, is determined by conditions at its head waters.



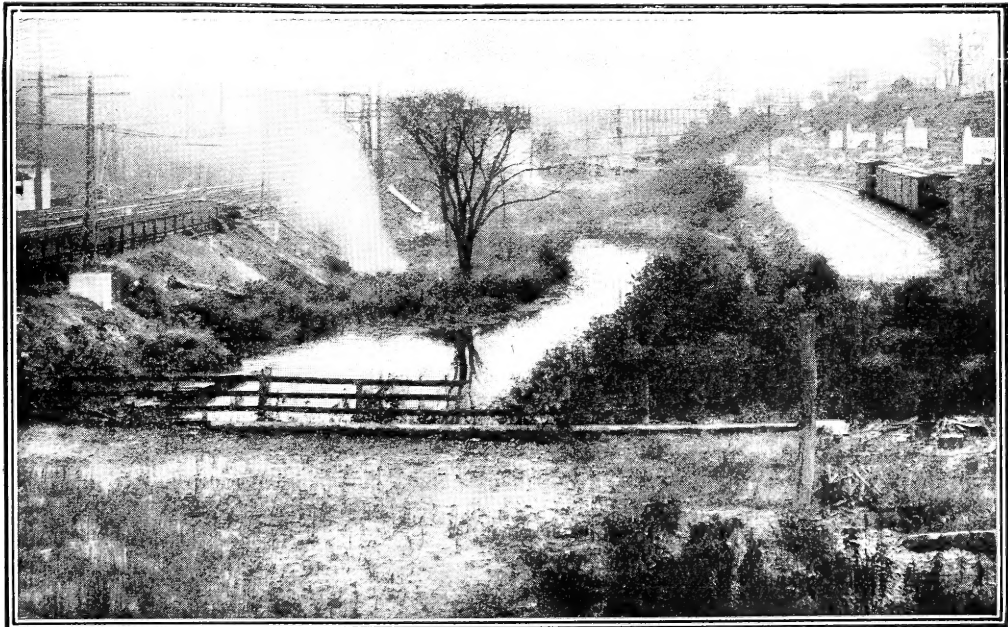
COURSE OF THE BRONX THROUGH ONE OF THE WESTCHESTER TOWNS.

(The unsightly and unsanitary features presented in this picture will be removed by the creation of the parkway.)



SYLVAN BEAUTIES STILL PRESERVED IN NEW YORK CITY.

It was this latter consideration that led parkway to follow the course of the little directly to the conception of a project for a river from Bronx Park northward to Ken-



VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE SHOWN IN THE PICTURE ABOVE, REVEALING THE ENCROACHMENTS OF COMMERCE.



INDUSTRY INVADING NATURE'S HAUNTS,—A SCENE ON THE BRONX IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY.*

(To restore the right bank to a condition something like that of the left bank will be one of the objects of the Parkway Commission.)

sico reservoir, amid the Westchester hills. Acquiring by condemnation a strip of land from 300 to 1000 feet wide, along both banks of the Bronx, the parkway commission will be able once for all to check the pollution of the stream and restore its waters to their original state of purity. Without some control of this sort the stream is rapidly becoming a public nuisance. It is only a question of time when it will have to be dealt with as a sewer.

Apart from the question of sanitation, the preservation of scenic features would justify such a work as the proposed parkway. For several miles in Westchester county the banks of the Bronx are wooded and remain almost as they were when white men first came to the region, more than two centuries ago; but if steps are not taken very soon to secure possession of these wooded banks they will be despoiled of their beauty forever. It would

be a shame to permit the needless sacrifice of these bits of woodland scenery, within twenty miles of New York City, now that they have survived to this late day the ravages of real-estate companies and suburban-lot speculators.

Besides ministering to the city's æsthetic needs, the Bronx-River parkway will offer a direct and practical connection between New York's park system and the open country to the northward. It will be the chief boulevard leading out of the city. From the limits of Bronx Park it will form a continuous driveway for fifteen miles, to the great Kensico reservation of 4000 acres which is soon to be established in connection with New York's system of water supply. The cost of the parkway will be divided between New York City and Westchester county, the former paying three-fourths and the latter one-fourth. The total cost is estimated at \$2,500,000, the amount to be expended under a State commission named in the bill as introduced in the Legislature at Albany.

*The photographs accompanying this article, taken by Col. E. A. Havers, are reproduced by the courtesy of the Bronx-River Parkway Commission.

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