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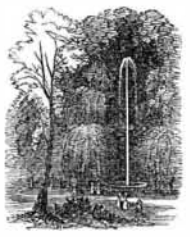
NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1859.

CITY PUBLIC PARKS.



A love of natural scenery is inherent to the constitution of man. It is this passion which creates frequent and deep yearnings in the hearts of the denizens in our cities to ramble among the green fields, "far from the strife of tongues and pens." City life is, in many respects, enervating and unnatural. We grow tired of contemplating the stars over the chimney-tops, and of continually beholding living streams of humanity flowing down between rigid banks of brick and mortar in our streets. "Man made the city, but God made the country" is an adage as true as it is forcible; and to combine the rural with the artificial in cities has been considered a most necessary and important arrangement for the health and happiness of the people. The utility of public parks and gardens in cities has been recognized in every civilized country from the earliest times. All the old walled cities contained extensive fields and gardens to which the people resorted for recreation, amusement, and athletic exercises. In all the cities of Europe, there are large public parks, which form huge lungs for the pent-up streets, and invite the toil-worn artisan, as well as the gay and idle, to seek enjoyment within their shady walks. As a means of promoting the public health, they have been considered invaluable, and indispensable; hence we find that, even in such cities as London and Paris, where the population is very dense, many very large public parks and gardens have been laid out. The very same wants have been felt for many years in all our growing cities, and especially in New York with its vast population. Hitherto our public parks have been so small as to excite the derision of foreigners; but our city has at last nobly redeemed itself in this respect by the purchase and arrangement of the "Central Park," which, when completed, will be one of the largest and most beautiful in the world. To convey some idea of its nature and extent we will briefly describe what has been done, and some operations now going on in it.

The Central Park of New York embraces an area of 843 acres, and is two-and-a-half miles long by half a mile wide. The most elevated portion of it is now completed, and is called the "Ramble," a romantic spot interspersed with rocks and dells; and here the genius of man has been skillfully applied to assist nature in developing her charms. From the topmost rock (on which is placed an observatory) the whole city, and its noble bay, with the blue hills of Staten Island in the distance, are spread open to the view of the spectator. Neat walks are laid out among the grey gneiss rocks, and crystal springs send forth their bubbling waters like threads of silver, to wind down the hill sides; while beds of flowers and clumps of shrubbery afford evidence of a master-mind in the whole arrangement.

When completed there will be, within the park boundaries eight-and-a-half miles of carriage-drive, five miles of bridle-road for equestrians, and thirty miles of foot-walks. Several miles of carriage-roads are already opened to the public; four additional miles having been completed and carriages admitted to it on Saturday last. The portion along the carriage-way now finished is called the "Mall," the road-way of which is 35 feet wide, and with the side grass-beltings it is 208 feet wide, forming a most splendid promenade. As works of engineering, the roads are unequaled. They are all macadamized, made hard as a rock, and smooth as the celebrated Boulevards of Paris. Three artificial lakes are being laid out, one of which covers 20 acres, and forms the skating-pond. A large extent for fields and lawns are assigned for the evolutions of military companies, games of ball, cricket and other athletic sports. For afternoon carriage-drives, pedestrian exercises and other healthful recreations the Central Park is one of the most beneficial undertakings in which the city of New York has ever engaged, and its benefits will be more fully appreciated years hence than at the present day.

The engineering works now being carried on are worth a visit from India to witness—they are grand and comprehensive. Several bridges are being erected, which, in point of architectural beauty, have not their equal on our continent, and are not surpassed by others anywhere. The most complete system of drainage is carried out, and several miles of rock will have to be blasted to effect this object. The whole grounds are laid out according to the designs of Messrs. Olmstead and Vaux, civil engineers and architects; and no less than 3,000 workmen and 400 horses are engaged in the operations. The scene is full of thrilling interest to visitors. Scattered over the wide extent of ground, the gangs of workmen appear like hives of busy bees; glittering carriages are seen driving along the Mall, and gaily-dressed pedestrians throng the winding foot-walks. Of all the public works undertaken by the city of New York, it appears to give the greatest general satisfaction, by the reasonableness of the contracts, and the integrity with which they are being carried out. The work was commenced in June, 1858, and is expected to be finished in the Fall of 1860. It is not easy to tell what the total cost will be, but it is estimated by some engineers that it will reach $10,000,000. The cost of the work when completed will, of course, depend upon the style and expense of artificial structures yet to be adopted and carried out by the Board. The cost of land purchased for this park, according to the comptroller's report for the present year is $5,406,178 89. Of the $2,000,000, authorized by the acts of 1857–9 for improvements, &c., $1,600,000 has been already expended. On page 33 of the above report will be found the comparative valuation of real estate in the three wards particularly affected by the purchase of land for the park; from this it will be seen that between the years 1855 and 1859, the value has increased to the amount of $7,470,984. In consideration of this and the many other obvious benefits, our wealthy citizens and taxpayers do not seem to grudge the expenditure. It is an enterprise which we advise every city in the country to imitate.

HYATT'S EXTENSION CASE—REMARKS ON THE COMMISSIONER'S DECISION.

We publish in this week's issue the decision rendered by Commissioner Bishop in the case of Hyatt's application for an extension of his patent, and bespeak for it a careful perusal, as it is a document of unusual interest to all who are in any way concerned in patented inventions. The application for the extension was hotly opposed, in fact we may say that we never have had connection with any case where more curious arguments were resorted to, in order to accomplish the defeat of an inventor's claims. At one time it appeared to us that the counsel for the remonstrants, in their zeal to defeat the application, lost sight of argument, and were endeavoring to carry their points by a sort of *brutum fulmen* process. Forgetting the place and the occasion, an attempt was made to impress upon the mind of the Commissioner that Hyatt, the applicant, was what is known in modern politics as a "freedom-shrieker." It was read to the Commissioner from a political journal that Hyatt had actually had an interview with President Pierce upon some Kansas matter, and from all that appeared to the contrary, the President treated him like a gentleman; we wish we could say as much for the counsel. We presume from the emphatic manner in which the Commissioner reasons down the more solid arguments of the remonstrants that no attempt will hereafter be made before him to put an inventor down upon political grounds. The Patent Office, as we understand it, is administered on different principles; and one inventor's claims are to be as righteously adjudicated upon as another's, no matter what opinion he may have of the Administration in power. When the Patent Office becomes a mere machine to punish political offenders, it will then cease to be what it now is—the repository and encourager of the genius of inventors; we believe there will be no two opinions on this subject in the minds of all right-thinking men. The report of the Examiner to whom the case was referred, was of the "jug-handle" order; and although, we doubt not, honestly formed, yet we must believe that if the same spirit should be brought to bear upon all cases presented to the Patent Office, few inventors could feel encouraged to seek its friendly protection. We desire to do no injustice to the Examiner who examined and reported on this case; but we will present a point or two from his report, to show the peculiar reasoning to which he resorted. He attempted to force an analogy between Hyatt's invention and the iron sash used for windows and also the semi-spherical diving-bell, with glasses in its crown, in order to show that Hyatt had invented nothing. Hyatt's invention, on the contrary, is an illuminated load-sustaining grating, whereby subterranean apartments are rendered light, airy and useful for business; it is also a perfect system of protection against burglars and the elements, which cannot be said of the iron window sash, or even of the semi-spherical diving bell. We believe the Patent Office once rejected an application for an improvement on rakes by reference to a *picket fence!* The Examiner also took the position that underground apartments could be and had been well lighted without the use of Hyatt's invention; and that *the general employment of his patent merely proved its superiority over other forms*; and then proceeded to say, with a strange inconsistency, that "even were it clearly established that Mr. Hyatt himself was mainly instrumental in stimulating the increased construction and employment of these basement vaults, this would by no means prove that such construction could justly be credited to the account of his patent vault cover; the growing use of business vaults beneath the pavement in the more busy thoroughfares of great cities is, in fact, the necessary development in the enormous increase in the value of land, and arises solely from this new demand." Yet it was in evidence before the Examiner, and is a fact, that Hyatt had spent the best portion of his life in endeavoring to make property-holders in this city realize the value of basement extensions on his plan, and one half the term of his patent had expired before its value was recognized; and furthermore, in no other of the crowded cities of this country or Europe, except New York, where Mr. Hyatt resides, has his invention been introduced to any extent. It is, therefore, clear that "the increased construction and employment of these basement vaults" is *solely* due to Mr. Hyatt and his invention. We will, however, say no more upon this report, but invite our readers to a careful consideration of the Commissioner's decision. He meets, in a clear and succinct manner, all the points raised by the remonstrants, and completely overwhelms them; and upon the question of what constitutes the proper remuneration for an invention, his remarks are strikingly forcible and unique. The inventors of the country need no other assurance than this, that the successor of Judge Mason and of Mr. Holt is a true friend to their interests.

IRON VESSELS.

There is nothing connected with our industrial interests more worthy of attention at the present time than the development of iron ship-building, which is probably destined to experience a very rapid and gigantic growth; the superiority of iron over wood in every respect except cheapness having been fully settled by thorough trial. It is fortunate that this material did not come into general use before the great improvement in the model of vessels which has been made in the last ten years, as the great durability of iron would have operated run powerfully to retard the change in model. Having commenced the history of iron ship-building in this country, with full descriptions and illustrations of the mode of building iron ships, we intend to continue it by the publication of such facts as will keep our readers informed of the general progress of this great industry. We learn that Samuel Sneeden, of Greenpoint, L. I., has just made a contract with the Flushing Steam Ferry Company to build for them a first-class iron steamboat, 160 feet long, and 27 feet breadth of beam. Mr. Sneeden was the builder of the *Alabama*, which we illustrated on page 242, this volume of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.