LEMON HILL

AND

FAIRMOUNT PARK

THE PAPERS OF

CHARLES S. KEYSER AND THOMAS COCHRAN,

RELATIVE TO

A PUBLIC PARK FOR PHILADELPHIA.

PUBLISHED IN 1856 AND 1872.

REPRINTED IN 1886,

BY HORACE J. SMITH.

PHILADELPHIA.
1886.

Times Printing House,
Philadelphia.

PREFACE

The first of the two papers here reprinted was issued from the press in 1856, at a period when, what is now the great Park of Philadelphia, was a succession of dilapidated mansions and fields, in the last stages of decay and neglect. It at once secured, by its enthusiasm and broad prescience of the value of the ground to the City, attention, interest, and the liberal contribution from our citizens which secured part of, and eventuated in the final purchase of the whole tract by the city, and its public dedication. The second appeared in 1872, when a determined effort was being made to obtain adverse legislation under the plea that it was "too large," it was "costing too much," it was "a rich man's park," and it was "inaccessible to the people." Its effect, like the first paper, was instant and decisive; the newspapers which had been filled with communications preparing the way for the curtailment of boundaries, and restriction of the powers of the Park Commissioners, were from that time silent, and the ground in its entirety acquired and preserved. The first was issued in pamphlet form and circulated in a large edition, but is long since out of print. The second appeared in the newspapers only; it was stereotyped as part of the report of the Park Commission for 1873, but the plates were, at the time of going to

press, unfortunately destroyed, and the report for that year was never issued. The interest which I feel in the preservation of these two papers, and of the names of their respective authors, the former of whom, without a question, gave the most effective expression to, as the latter, in the time of its extreme peril in like manner sustained, the public sentiment through which our great pleasure-ground was created, and continues to exist, has led me to reprint them as legacies of value to those who shall follow us, to whom the future care and preservation of this great common and general pleasure-ground of the whole people shall be committed. By the right of a long personal friendship, I have permission from both these writers for this republication; under the first, published anonymously, the author's name now appears for the first time. How grateful must it be to them to look back on the purposes and prophecies completed by their earnest endeavors, in common with those who felt and worked with them as earnestly and unobtrusively in their day and generation.

HORACE J. SMITH.

Ivy Lodge, Germantown,
Dec., '86.

LEMON HILL

IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE

EFFORTS OF OUR CITIZENS AND COUNCILS

TO OBTAIN A

PUBLIC PARK.

LEMON HILL

This once beautiful piece of ground now lying in ruins, is, in its past associations, too well known to us all to require any particular description. It lies a short distance to the north and westward of the dam at Fairmount, and at present contains about forty-five acres of undulating ground.[1]

The Reading Railroad bounds its eastern slope; the Schuylkill its western; a small strip of ground, the property of Eli K. Price and John M. Ogden, separates it from Fairmount; a larger piece of ground, known as Sedgley Park, the property of Ferdinand J. Dreer, intervenes between it and the Spring Garden Water Works above, and forms its northern boundary.

During and after the Revolution, it was the country-seat of Robert Morris,[2] and passed, in the year 1799, as a consequence of his financial ruin, into the possession of the late Mr. Pratt, and under Mr. Pratt's care it retained that elegance and luxury which, up to a period comparatively recent, rendered it, as "Pratt's Garden," the pride and pleasure of our citizens.

While in his hands, it rose greatly in value, and early in the year 1836, he sold the estate, then containing 42 acres and 93 perches of ground, to Isaac S. Loyd, for the sum of two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

1 See Graff's map, 13,515, O. 4, Phil'a Lib.

2 From 1770 to 1799.

The crisis of 1836–7 followed soon after this purchase, and it, with all other real estate, sank rapidly in value.

On the 26th of October, 1843, Thomas P. Cope, availing himself of this condition of property, with a careful foresight for the future, offered a resolution in Councils for the appointment of "a joint committee, with authority to purchase on behalf of the city, the property known as the Lemon Hill Estate." This resolution was adopted with an unimportant amendment.

Immediately after, petitions numerously signed were presented to Councils,[1] and the measure was warmly recommended by the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, as a sanitary measure, on account of its importance in the preservation of the purity of the water.[2]

The proposition met with some opposition in the Councils, but the knowledge of its vast future interests to the city lent such effective conduct to the negotiations, that, after constant and uninterrupted attention, the committee were enabled to report on the twelfth day of September, in the following year, an ordinance announcing the purchase as effected, and thus completed their labors.[3] On the 24th day of July, 1844, the city of Philadelphia became the owner of this fine piece of land, then embracing 45 acres, at a cost of seventy-five thousand dollars, a price almost nominal when compared with its former and present value.

Among the names of the many friends of the measure in Councils, from a casual examination of the Journals, we select the following: THOMAS P. COPE, JOSEPH R. CHANDLER, JAMES Y. HUMPHRIES, WILLIAM MORRIS, ALGERNON S. ROBERTS, GIDEON SCULL, JAMES J. BOSWELL, THOMAS

1 Journal of Sel. Coun. 1843–4, pages 9, 14.

2 Trans. Col. of Phys., vol. 1, page 178.

3 Journal of Sel. Coun., 1843–4, Appendix, page 142.

SNOWDEN, and JOHN DEVEREAUX; names which should always be held in grateful remembrance by our citizens.

During the negotiations, the Horticultural Society presented a communication relative to the establishment of a garden, which was referred to the special committee,[1] and appears never to have been acted on. By this neglect the city lost the opportunity of preserving the spot in much of the beauty which it had attained in the hands of its early owners. But though the need was sensibly felt, though the whole report of the committee[2] exhibits the importance of the preservation of the grounds for this purpose, the friends of the measure were ultimately obliged to consent to a lease of the estate with a reservation of the right to resume possession upon six months' notice to the tenant, should a favorable opportunity occur to open it to the public as a pleasure ground.

Subsequently a narrow-minded policy seems to have prevailed in the Councils. The grounds were beyond the old city limits, and the corporate authorities would not improve the property, lest some little benefit might accrue, from their being laid out and planted, to the citizens of the districts lying north of Vine Street. The purchase served to preserve the purity of the water, and with that measure of benefit, the people were forced to remain content.

The property was again brought to the attention of Councils in 1849, by Mr. Job R. Tyson, who offered a resolution "for the appointment of a Joint Special Committee of three members of each Council, to consider the expediency of appropriating the grounds of the Lemon Hill property to a company of gentlemen for enclosure and improvement as a Public Promenade,"[3] but the consideration was postponed for

1 Journal of Com. Coun. 1843–4, p. 131.
2 Journal of Sel. Coun., 1843–4, Appendix, p. 11.
3 Journal of Sel. Coun., 1848–49, p. 163.

the present (in the words of the Journal) and referred to the Committee on City Property. It was in effect an indefinite postponement, and we are at a loss which most to wonder at —the generous thought of the citizen, surely worthy of any age, or the unaccountable apathy or opposition which then characterized, and has since too much characterized the action of our Committees in Councils and other official gentlemen, in measures of general benefit to the community. Thus was the second effort to preserve and embellish these grounds frustrated.

Again in the year 1851, the subject was revived by the late John Price Wetherill, and a beautiful plan of the property was drafted by Mr. Graff, the present accomplished superintendent of the Water Works.[1] It was proposed upon this plan, "to construct roads of forty feet in width, winding around the elevations of the ground, by which drives of three or four miles in length could be obtained" on the Hill; it was further proposed to add the place called Sedgley Park, and form "a direct communication between the Fairmount and Spring Garden Water Works," and when the bridge which now crosses Girard Avenue should have been completed, it was said a complete circuit could be made by passing over to the west side of the river across this bridge, then down along the river bank, over the wire bridge, and again through Fairmount, Lemon Hill, and Sedgley Park. This beautiful project, which was but a continuation of the idea of Mr. Cope, was referred to a committee, consisting of the Committee on City Property and the Watering Committee jointly.

Three years this slept in the hands of the committee; meanwhile the tenants settled like incubi upon the spot, and completed the destruction which had been commenced by Mr. Loyd; at the end of this time, by neglect, by fire and by

1 See plan before referred to, and Journal of Sel. Coun., 1851–2, p. 15.

wanton destruction, this place, the abode of a once princely luxury, had fallen into ruin; where beautiful hot-houses filled with rare exotics overlooked the river, only falling walls blackened by fire remained; the shrubbery had been destroyed; the little bark grotto over the spring and the shady summer houses had decayed; and the ponds once filled with the gold fish had become loathsome with slime; only the grand old tulip trees remained, and the pines which stood as they still stand to-day, silent sentinels around the deserted mansion where the great financier, whose guests were Washington and Franklin and Jefferson, held his Republican Court.

But the tenants further than by neglect, for which they were not responsible, defaced these sacred grounds; they erected great ice houses of stone, and when these fell into ruin, they left the ruins and erected others in other places; thus they added cumbrous buildings to ruins, and for all this they were also not made responsible. And what benefit did the city receive from the property during this destruction of its fairest ornament? Not one dollar.

The lease was made in 1847 for ten years, subject to the six months' notice; it stipulated for a yearly rent of six hundred dollars; but so unskillfully had the servants of the city conducted themselves, that, for the whole period of eight years which has elapsed, the city has not only not received one dollar in rent or otherwise from the premises, but the tenant leaves or would have left in compliance with the notice, the recipient from the City Treasury of nearly two thousand dollars more than he has paid into it in the way of rent.[1] This is a piece of official misfortune we may regret.

We have said the plan of throwing this place open to the

[1] See ordinance of November 28, 1853, appropriating $6,630 to the tenant as damages, on account of the destruction of an ice house. Journal of Select Council, 1853–4, Appendix, p. 19.

people slept three years in the hands of the Joint Committee, and there, judging from its past history, it would have remained, until some parsimonious spirit, dull enough to care for neither nature nor art, would have demanded its sale, or some generous gentleman, willing for the sake of trade to pollute the very water we drink, should seriously have proposed to turn the place into a cemetery.[1]

But in February, 1854, the Act of Consolidation was passed.

That Act required Councils to provide for the people within the city limits suitable squares or areas of ground "for the health and enjoyment of the people forever."[2]

Early in the fall of that year attention was again drawn to the property by Mr. P. A. Keyser, of the Select, and Mr. O'Neill, of the Common Council; [3] and on the 7th of September a resolution offered by the latter was passed, instructing the Committee on City Property to inquire of the City Solicitor the proper course to be pursued to obtain immediate possession of Lemon Hill, and also to inquire into the expediency of improving the property for the use of the public as a park.

On the 26th day of the same month, we find an effort

[1] Mr. Stevenson, of the Eleventh Ward, offered the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the Committee on City Property inquire into the expediency of converting Lemon Hill into a cemetery for the burial of the dead. The said grounds to be improved thereby and the lots be sold upon applications in the usual way, and the proceeds of said sales to be appropriated towards the payment of the present city debt."

Which was twice read and not agreed to.

Jour. of Com. Council, May to October, 1855, p. 119.

[2] See Consolidation Act, 39 Pamph. Laws, 1854, p. 42.

[3] Journal of Select Coun., June to Dec., 1854, p. 252, and Jour. of Com. Coun., p. 424.

made in the Common Council to withdraw it from the hands of the committee, by an immediate dedication.[1] And on the 12th day of the following month a more stringent resolution was offered in the same body, directing the committee to report an ordinance declaring Lemon Hill a Public Park, in accordance with the resolution of September 28th.

This resolution was unfortunately passed with an amendment so as to allow the committee the right to judge of the expediency of the measure.[2]

The same day we find in the Select Council a message from the Common Council, with the resolution instructing the Committee to inquire into the expediency of reporting an ordinance in accordance with the resolution of September 28th.[3]

Immediately after this, a petition was presented to Councils, signed by property-holders, to the amount of twenty millions of dollars, and by men of every occupation, praying for the enlargement and dedication of Lemon Hill as a pleasure ground.[4]

But notwithstanding the character of the signers, and the manifest popularity of the measure; notwithstanding, too, the earnest wish of the committee to complete the measure, it remained unacted on, until the following spring. The resolution of March 8, 1855, was then adopted by the Select Council, instructing the Committee on City Property to bring in a bill dedicating Lemon Hill as a park.[5] This resolution drew the matter again distinctly before the Councils. An investigation of the cause of the delay resulted in showing that legal objections

[1] Journal of Com. Coun., June to Dec., 1854, p. 488.

[2] Journal of Com. Coun., June to Dec., 1854, p. 610.

[3] Journal of Select Council, June to Dec. 1854, p. 406.

[4] See petition in Sketch of Fairmount, etc., 13,551, O. 4, Philada. Lib.

[5] Journal of Sel. Coun., 1855, Jan. to May, p. 146.

had been interposed, which were narrow technicalities in nowise affecting the broad right to dedicate forthwith the property to the people; and that actual possession of the same might be obtained by the requisite notice to the tenant. This investigation terminated the delay.

On the 9th of June following, two resolutions were adopted by the Select Council. One instructing the Committee on City Property to report a bill dedicating Lemon Hill as a Park; the other providing for notice to be given to the lessee to surrender possession to the city within six months.

These resolutions were followed in the month of July by two similar resolutions in Common Council.[2]

Upon the second of them no further action was had, the tenant was suffered to remain without notice; but the first and the then most important, was carried into effect.

On the 8th day of September, the Committee on City Property, in accordance with this resolution, reported an ordinance making the Lemon Hill estate a Public Park, to be called "Fairmount Park," which was passed.

On the 18th day of September, the Common Council concurred; and on the 28th day of September, 1855, the ordinance was approved by the Mayor and became a law.[3]

To those members of the City Councils who aided in the original purchase of Lemon Hill (one of whom is still a member), and who watched it month after month and year after year, with a solicitude which the present benefit and future vital importance of the subject demanded, the act of dedication was a measure of honor which can be well understood by all.

They had, let us further say, some worthy successors in

[1] Journal of Sel. Coun., 1855, May to Oct., p. 78.

[2] Journal of Com. Coun., 1855, May to Oct., pp. 331, 332.

[3] Journal of Com. Coun., 1855, May to Oct., p. 526.

the late Councils, some who stood by this measure and by the propositions for its enlargement when financial clamor would have given ample excuse to have neglected its cause, they, and the press, with but a single exception, stood by it, and there appears to have been but one man in either body of Councils who opposed its dedication to the people.[1]

And though they failed to carry through the plan for the extension of its boundaries, yet in that act of dedication alone, they have conferred a never-to-be-forgotten benefit upon our citizens.

The legal effect of the act is to vest the soil in the people as a pleasure-ground forever. These grounds are now no more subject to the caprices of party—they are forever removed from the grasp of the city creditor, whatever liabilities the city may incur—they are forever placed out of the hands of the city authorities themselves, except for such purposes as may be conducive to the pleasure of the whole people. Thus is nature restored, in some measure, to the condition in which God gives it to man. The air that blows about it is the common property of the poorest as of the wealthiest. Its verdure grows for the eyes of the little child ignorant of the meaning of property, and for the old man who has long outlived the hope of acquiring it. The water that flows along it is the common heritage of all. In the largest

[1] *Debate in Common Council.*

Mr. Stevenson (of 11th Ward).—I am surprised at the remarks of the gentleman from the 17th Ward (Mr. O'Neill) upon the subject.

Mr. O'Neill.—You should not be surprised at anything these days.

Mr. Stevenson continued his remarks; he had, he said, proposed some two years ago to turn the place into a cemetery so as to bring in a revenue to the city.

Mr. O'Neill.—I am not like the last speaker. I am not surprised at anything I either hear or see. Public squares or parks are the lungs of all great cities. The last speaker has two sons, one of them a *doctor*, and the other, a *cabinet-maker*. He is on the look-out for a good job for them (laughter).

From the Daily Papers of Friday, July 27, 1855.

political sense, by this dedication every man stands within its bounds in every right the equal of his fellow-man. This is the greatness of the act; and it is only when we reflect that to this place alone, among all the thousand places where our boasted equality of right asserts itself, this last remark can apply, that we come fully to understand its large and genial liberality.

Cast your eyes over them all, and say of what spot other than this, of what temple known to our religion, of what forum known to our politics, of what institution known to our philanthropy, can this be said? To what other place than this, and such as this, has not wealth its passport, and from what other place may not poverty be debarred? We know of no other; not even that very noble public charity, the last refuge of misfortune and penury—the alms-house; and yet this, which is thus thrown open to all, contains the highest and purest luxuries which the soul craves, and which wealth and power can procure for itself—pure air, pure water, and the ever-changing, ever-beautiful and satisfying sights and sounds of nature.

How exhaustless are its resources! but of them is it not enough to say, its quiet shades will forever be sacred to the invalid and the aged; its sunny slopes to the vigorous and the young; that to the child it will be a play-house filled with pretty flowers; to the man, a temple in which renew themselves, from year to year, the intimations of his immortality.

Because of these exhaustless blessings to us, and because they will be transmitted all more perfect from year to year, and from generation to generation, we say of this act of dedication, IT IS WORTHY TO BE WRITTEN IN LETTERS OF GOLD.

On the 11th day of October following, on motion of Mr. George W. Biddle, a resolution was adopted by Councils, directing that notice be given to the tenant to vacate and de-

liver up possession of Lemon Hill in six months after receiving the notice.[1]

On the 15th day of October, this resolution was approved by the Mayor, and duly published in the daily papers.

We have thus traced to its legal conclusion, the history of a small portion of the greater design, now become a necessity, of enclosing a sufficient portion of both sides of the Schuylkill River above the dam, to preserve the water from contamination, and secure at the same time in the most eligible spot near the city, a pleasure-ground commensurate with the demands of its crowded population And let no one in reading the difficulties which have attended the dedication and securing this small spot of but forty-five acres, without adverting to those attending its purchase, despair of the success of the greater idea. In the spirit which overcame these hindrances, we find the guarantee of the future; in the daily increasing necessity which presses upon us; in the liberal tone which the press assumes towards the project; in the munificent generosity of some among our own citizens who stood years ago waiting for the sustaining hand of the city to aid in its accomplishment; and in the intelligence and determination of the people throughout our whole community.

Of the present actual occupancy of the grounds, involving as it does an extraordinary piece of legislation, we must say one word. The Councils, under the impression that the grounds were now in their actual possession, for the purpose of improvement, recently passed a resolution ordering them to be enclosed. They supposed that the requirements of the resolution of the 15th of October, 1855, had been fulfilled, and that the grounds were now in the hands of the corporate authorities. The farewell advertisements of the under tenant

1 Jour. Sel. Coun., May to October, 1855, page 326.
Jour. Com. Coun., May to October, 1855, p. 626.

Zaiss, which were promptly published, had given us all reason to believe the grounds were now free to the enjoyment of the people.[1]

But our reader who relies upon the published Journals of Councils, and the printed ordinances, or upon the provisions of the City Charter which relieves committees of Councils from the performance of executive duties, has much to learn of legislation.

Early one afternoon, a month since, about the first of May, and after the time as fixed by Councils for the tenants to leave had expired, we visited these grounds; crossing from Fairmount we reached the entrance; it was barred and boarded up, and on the fence was posted the following:

"NOTICE.—ALL PERSONS ARE FORBID TRESPASSING ON THESE PREMISES."

We found the tenants engaged with their crops as they had been in years past; we found on the site of one ice house destroyed by fire, another huge structure of wood, rebuilt subsequently to the date of that six months' notice; still further up we found another ice house, erected on the river bank during the last winter, and everywhere were *unmistakable evidences of a continuous and to be continued possession.* We found on the ground refused for more legitimate uses by the Councils, nay, on the very spot which they refused to the Skating Club for the erection of their little house[2] (and properly, because at the

1 LEMON HILL, LEMON HILL.—FAREWELL.—The Public House on Lemon Hill, with a great Sour Krout Lunch, will take place on Monday, Sept. 17, 1855, on account of establishing new business. The lunch will be served up from 1 o'clock till 3 o'clock, P. M.

Lager Beer and other refreshments are all of the best kind.

P. ZAISS.

From Sunday Dispatch, September 16, 1855.

2 Journal of Select Coun., January to May, 1855, p. 120 and Appendix, p. 305.

time they had but a questionable authority to do so), there had just been erected another brick boat house, from which the lessee, now holding over, presumably derives rent.

And if you ask by what authority citizens are warned off from a property dedicated to them by a solemn act of their Councils, why these structures, defacing the grounds, still continue to be erected—the tenant will point you, and he will have the right to point you, to the placard, and the buildings in his possession, and you may seek your information elsewhere.

As far as the tenant and under-tenants are concerned, we have no interest; we are not acquainted with them; assuredly have no ill feeling towards them, and have no reason for any.

But as against their possession every man, woman and child in this community, have a deep interest. And we confess our first astonishment at the notice warning us off as trespassers was not lessened when we ascertained its authority.

It will scarcely be believed that after the passage of a resolution of the character of that of the 15th day of October, 1855, a committee of the same Councils, without authority took upon themselves powers not delegated to them by ordinance, and in direct violation of a fundamental law upon which the government of the city is based, passed the following quiet, but effectively worded resolution.

CLERK'S OFFICE, SELECT COUNCIL,
Philadelphia, October 17th, 1855.

At a meeting of the Committee on City Property, held this day, the following was adopted:

Resolved, That ——— be allowed and permitted to *continue to occupy* that part of the property on Lemon Hill estate, between the fence and the river, until the same shall be required by the city for improvement, and when the city desires to possess the same, that the said ——— shall immediately deliver up the possession of the same to the city upon notice given to him to that effect, the said ——— paying a rental of $200 per year

for the same during the entire period that he occupies the said premises; and that the City Commissioner be authorized to make the agreement in accordance with this resolution. Attest,

JOHN ZEILIN, *Clerk.*[1]

In conformity with this, on the same day, the 20th of October, 1855, the City Commissioner, in the discharge of his duties, served upon the tenant at Lemon Hill, two documents, emanating from the same body.

The one was a notice to vacate the premises at Lemon Hill, in six months from the date of the notice, in conformity with the resolution of Councils of October 15. The other was an agreement to remain from year to year at a nominal rent, in conformity with the subsequent will of a committee. A few months before, Mr. Roberts had presented to the Councils a communication from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, relative to the improvement of the place, which was referred to the Committee on City Property,[2] but those gentlemen by their action, preferred to have the grounds *improved* with great wooden barracks, rather than see them adorned with trees, shrubs, and flowers, and laid out for the pleasure of the people.

A learned jurist has said, if you would be secure in your persons and property, insure the life and the election of your judge, for the law lives and dies with the judge who pronounces it,[3] but we apprehend it was left to that Committee on City Property so to negative the action of Councils, that two conflicting laws should emanate from the same body, directing at the same moment, a notice to quit, and an agreement to remain, to be served on a tenant of their property, and that, too, a property over which they had just deprived themselves

[1] See resolution in MS Book in the office of Clerk of Select Council.

[2] Jour. of Sel. Coun., Jan. to May, 1855, pp 57, 119.

[3] Ch. Justice Black: Hole *vs.* Rittenhouse.

of all control for such purposes, by the ordinance dedicating the grounds to the people forever.

But on the afternoon of our visit to Lemon Hill, we were not deterred by notices to trespassers; we took the liberty of exercising our one five-hundred thousandth part ownership which made us a joint tenant with the occupant, having an equal interest, and we did not trouble our heads about Councils, committees, or clerks; we were for the time a law unto ourselves; and we surrendered our wills to the quiet beauties of the place; and whether it was because the spot was now for the first time our own, or whether it was the genial warmth of the spring coming so gratefully after the unrelenting severity of the past winter, or because an old German, with a great yellow beard resting on his broad chest, who was sitting on a rock at a short distance, recalled to memory the finished beauties of the Park at Weimar,[1] of which this place is the rude transcript, or whether it was the effect of the dreamy look of his great blue eye steadily bent towards the water, we do not know, but it seemed to us even then, in the first faint promises of bud and blossom on its trees, in the delicate blades of grass springing up with frequent flowers, to have a peculiar beauty.

We had seen the place a thousand times before, and revelled in the sight when, on some November day, the sun swept across it in one broad sheet of purple and gold,—when the giant tulip trees stood fantastically jewelled in every trembling leaf, and the pines rose up through the shadows of the glades below, with their tops gilded and burning in the air; when the red maple had its beauty, and the purple ash its own peculiar hue; when every slope was rustling with myriad leaves, as the low wind went wailing through this glory of the departing year, and gave a tone of sadness to the beauty of a

[1] See *Bizarre*, Vol. VI., p. 328. Philadelphia Library, No. 13,861 O.

season peculiarly our own—our Indian Summer. We have seen it, too, in the winter, when icicles hung from the leafless boughs, and snow, tracked with the dotted lines of the rabbit's foot, covered it everywhere. We have been one of the many hundred spectators gathered together there when the river lay below, a shining mirror; seated there as upon the benches of a vast amphitheatre, when our cheap and satisfying amusement was the ever-graceful and ever-varied movements of the skater, darting everywhere with sudden changes, on the hard steel that rang over its icy floor. And we have lain and slept there, boys fresh from our adventurous diving from the rock, and knew its one advantage then of coolness and repose.

But this afternoon its quiet budding beauty gave us pleasure unalloyed. We seated ourselves beneath the tree that stands alone on a high bluff, between Lemon Hill and Sedgley, overlooking the river, and we took our little note book, and made some brief notes descriptive of the ground. We transcribe them here:

The grounds lie in undulating slopes, breaking off in bluffs at the water's edge, at heights of perhaps from 50 to 100 feet. The intervening hollows are filled below and near the water's edge, with an undergrowth of shrubbery. They spread out in an easy ascent to the slopes above, covered with greensward. Upon the highest point of the grounds midway between the two Water Works, are the remains of the foundation of a small building, perhaps a summer house; it is surrounded with a broken circle of cedar trees. Further down towards the dam, on a beautiful lawn overlooking Fairmount, stands the mansion house; near this are the ruins of the summer houses. Back towards the railroad from the mansion, down a thickly wooded descent, is the once beautiful spring. A carriage drive appears from the position of some trees, yet remaining in a traceable order, to have followed the course of the river along the summit of the slopes through the grounds. Some large tulip trees of beautiful form and some venerable pines remain.

Turning your eyes along the Schuylkill, these slopes continue over the Sedgley estate, of the same character, up to the abutment of the bridge at the Spring Garden Water Works; the works lie in a deep

hollow, and back of them rises a hill bordered with trees, and shutting out the view to the north. Casting your eyes across the river, there rises a similar acclivity, back from the opposite abutment, well wooded, which also shuts out the view beyond. From this abutment following the opposite shore downward, it presents an analogous character. Nearest the bridge is the wide lawn of the Egglesfield mansion. Next come the West Philadelphia Water Works, and their little patch of ground. Still farther down back from the river, rises the stand-pipe of the works; the ground descends along the shore from this point toward the wire bridge, up to which the city is thrusting itself. The high hill of the Fairmount basins shuts the city out on the Lemon Hill side to the south. Any landscape gardener will see from these notes, that such is the character of the ground, thus simply, but we believe faithfully, described, that if a strip comparatively narrow were purchased on both sides of the river between the two bridges, together with the two little hills at each abutment of the upper bridge, say two acres on each side, that with but little art in the arrangement of the shrubbery, all trace of the city might be concealed from every part of the whole place, except the boundaries, and that, too, even when the city extends, as it will do, in a few years, entirely around and beyond it; we are not aware that this, the most delightful feature in a Park, can be effected with any other piece of ground in the suburbs of the city.

After this task upon our laziness was done, looking up, we saw the old German still seated there, gazing downward upon the water, unmoved and silent as before. We caught the unusual contagion of day dreaming, and relapsing deeper and deeper into our reveries, there rose up before us a vision of the future of Lemon Hill. We cannot recall it as it passed before us then, but it was a scene of beauty known only to those who visit the pleasure-grounds of foreign lands. We saw fountains leaping up into the sunshine, and grottoes hollowed out in the rock masses along the river; broad drives and walks extending everywhere through the grounds thronged with myriad faces—thronged with the aged and the young the poor and the rich; little children and pale sickly women; and sorrow and joy all pouring in from a hundred avenues centering here in this one green spot in the heart of a great

city—a city of a million of people, with its miles of streets covered with heated brick and stone;—they were sitting or walking, or driving here an hour before the evening of a summer's day—an hour's repose before the evening, from the dust and toil of that great city; here they were gaining refreshment and strength for the coming morrow. Thick shrubbery stood around the borders of the park, and shut out its shades and slopes of greensward, and the pure stream of water that flowed through its midst, from the city around it. Statues of great men adorned it; music arose beneath its quiet shades, and merry voices came frequent to the ear; and we longed for wealth and power to summon the first fountain into the sunshine, and make the first child happy with its wonder. A sound of dripping oars disturbed the profound silence around us. An hour had passed away in the undisturbed reverie. We rose and looked a moment on the scene before turning our steps homeward. We saw three barges gliding with measured strokes along the unrippled stream below. On the opposite banks the shadows of the trees were lengthening along the greensward, the sound of the church bells from the city came indistinctly to the ear; the sun was sinking through purple clouds in the west—and the old German was still sitting on the rock.

We had dreamed our dream, and the city fathers may lay it aside as a dream; but we cannot shut our waking eyes to the fact that the government of Austria has made it a reality for its subjects.[1] That England has made it a practical matter not in a hundred, as we plead for, but in thousands of acres of park grounds.[2] That New York has secured seven hundred and seventy-six acres in the future heart of the city for this

[1]The Prater, Vienna, 4 miles in length.

[2]Kensington Gardens, 350 acres; Buckingham Palace Gardens, 40 acres; Hyde Park, 400 acres; St. James Park, 83 acres; Green Park, 71 acres; Regent's

purpose. It is not impracticable; it is insignificant, beside the great garden of the Tuilleries, the woody Elysian Fields, the immense Bois de Boulogne, the pleasure-grounds at Fontainbleau, and the leafy groves of St. Cloud, where poor and rich mingle together in the heart of the city, attracting by their charms the wealthy from other lands to the great benefit of the artisans and the trade of the country, making Paris the permanent residence of twenty thousand foreigners, including some of the most wealthy of our own people, even of Philadelphia; so far from being impracticable, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, that any one of our wealthy citizens can give us this great boon as easily and for one-thirtieth of the cost which one of our millionaires[1] has linked his name to immortality; that our City Councils could do it and at one-fortieth the cost of their late railroad subscriptions; that even a few of our citizens, blessed with "the root of all evil," could combine and do it if they would, as easily as we could dream it done.

We have not spoken definitely of the amount of money required to complete this project as it was presented last year to the Councils, because we have looked upon the question very much as the committee looked upon it; that is, that having selected *the most eligible spot*, their duty ended in paying the actual worth of the ground; that the largeness or smallness of the amount, in what was an absolute necessity, was not a subject to be considered before them.

Park, 450 acres; Primrose Hill, 50 acres; Greenwich Park, 200 acres; Victoria Park, 300 acres; Battersea Park, 350 acres; Albert Park, 409 acres; Kennington Park, 20 acres; Horticultural Society's Gardens, Chiswick, 33 acres; Botanic Gardens, Kew, 130 acres; Richmond Park, 2,200 acres; Windsor Little Park, 500 acres; Windsor Great Park, 1,800 acres; Hampton Court, 5 miles round; Phœnix Park, Dublin, 1,700 acres; Prince's Park, Liverpool, 90 acres; Birkinhead Park (opposite Liverpool), 120 acres.

[1] Stephen Girard.

This is in strict analogy with any other like object, and is a hitherto unquestioned mode of legislation; take, for instance, the introduction of water when the growth of the city rendered its supply incomplete by wells: we take down the register from that early day to the present, and we find, although a few men opposed it, whose affluence rendered it measurably unnecessary to them, the great body of the citizens sustained every change made, without regard to the price; and further, that when Councils satisfied themselves that they had selected the most favorable locations and adopted the best means of supplying the city, they gave themselves no further care than to preserve an economical conduct of the same, and having fulfilled this, the question whether the cost was $100,000 or $10,000,000 was of minor moment; they might have beggared the city, but the city could not exist without it.

So of the expense of lighting a city; so of the expense of a police force; for the increase or diminution of which every argument to stand must be simply and *no more*, do we require a body of men of this size for this purpose, and are their services worth this much? No one doubts the propriety of this; for the question is one upon which hangs the protection of life, and that has no money valuation.

So of the cost of cleansing the streets; and so of this question; it is one at this day as intimately allied, in a broad though absolute view, to the comfort, the health, the lives of our citizens, as any of those we have mentioned; nay, the manners, the morals, the political stability of our institutions in large cities, have efficient aids in the general intercourse afforded to the people by these places; in the harmonizing effects of nature, and in those social habits engendered by them which break down the curse of caste among us, resulting most frequently from habits of isolation.

Of all this no proof is needed; in one decisive sentence Lord Chatham said, parks are the lungs of cities. Whole

volumes could not speak more truthfully, and could not say more.

In a liberal way also our great founder justified the thought, providing in the forest, for his infant city, our public squares, and struggling against avarice to preserve the green shores of our Delaware.

If you want further proof, look at the contrasts which meet us daily in the street, not as between the farmer and the citizen, for this is the irremediable result of the life and labor in the fields, and the life and labor in the town—but between citizens themselves; take among your acquaintances the man who has been able from time to time to enjoy the advantages of country air and exercise, and the one who has been cramped in the city's bounds, and, other things being equal, you will be painfully struck with the difference,—nor are the evil effects of this want of breathing-places confined in their consequence to physical labor: they run to extremes and exercise their most baneful influences upon the men whose toil is in the brain. We say it, to conclude this portion of our argument very briefly, but with argumentative positiveness—through confinement and want of exercise our professions are filled in the cities of this country *with physical apologies for men.*

We might content ourselves with this, but we have not refrained from speaking of the expense, as we have said, because the cost was great; it is trifling, too trifling to be mentioned, and but that we have carefully consulted statistics too trifling to be believed.

We have a population of upwards of five hundred thousand people. We have an assessment list of 94,566 persons. We have real estate valued at upwards of one hundred and fifty millions of dollars, yielding a revenue for municipal and State purposes of some three millions of dollars. Now, the cost of the proposed park would be about twenty or twenty-five cents to each individual. A poll tax of a dollar a head on

those assessed would be ample for the purpose. But if levied on real estate, how truly insignificant the cost when compared with the great benefit we would receive from it. A citizen paying $100 per annum, would, for *a single year*, pay an increase of *six cents*. The rich citizen whose tax bill is $1,000 per annum, would contribute an additional *sixty cents*. Now, we cannot believe there is a man within the bounds of the city who has an estate paying a tax of $100 per annum, who would be unwilling to contribute a single six-pence for a park. We do not believe the proprietors of the paper which has opposed the introduction of pleasure-grounds for the people, would grumble at such a contribution. Nay, we are satisfied in our own minds, there is not a journeyman printer from the cellar to the roof of their establishment who would not with pleasure give ten times that amount from his hard-earned wages for a matter of so much importance to his comfort and his pleasure. The agents of the bulls and bears may continue to oppose the interests and the wishes of the people, but the aims, objects and interests of the jobbers are too well understood by our citizens to have any weight in the decision of this vital question.

Additional expenditures will, no doubt, be required for laying out and beautifying the grounds. But we are content to keep them as they are, now and forever, so only that nature there is allowed the mastery. We can do well without the fountains, although such are the facilities offered by the situation of these grounds that, without the loss of a drop of water, and with a trifling yearly outlay, one, rivalling the great Emperor Fountain at Chatsworth, could be here erected—and we can, for the present, do well without the gravel walks; and, as for the enclosure, nature and art, the river and the railroad have done that already.

We will keep it a great broad common forever, and be satisfied, if we can point, as the Bostonians to theirs, and say it is our own. It will cost six cents to the citizen holding an

estate which pays a tax of $100. Is the benefit he and his will gain from this pleasure-ground worth the six cents? You, our readers, in position and out of position, be the judges.

Let any one, man, woman or child, unaccustomed to the beauties with which our opulent citizens adorn their country seats, visit these grounds; go out to-day, this afternoon, it will cost a half hour's walk, or an omnibus ride, and if they, rude and despoiled as they are, will not afford pleasure enough for the afternoon, then throw aside this pamphlet, and let your wealthy neighbor save his six cents—and if you, a lover of nature, can find another spot *half* so beautiful around the city, then let this place, these banks up to Manayunk, if necessary, pass away from you, and be covered with brick and mortar forever.

It makes our very heart sick to write these words, but we write them again, for the future, and for the glory or shame of Philadelphia: *In the year* 1856 *the City of Philadelphia had the opportunity to secure a Park* (*in the future heart of the city, and then convenient of access to the mass of her population*) *at a cost, to the property holder paying then* $100, *of six cents, to her few wealthy citizens, of sixty cents, and to the great body of the people, nothing.*

In conclusion of this sketch, let us, then, urge on our city authorities, its object. Let the present Councils complete the labors but partially effected by the former Councils. We have been contented long enough with our little squirrel cages.[1] We

[1] The following are the dimensions of the city squares:

	Acres.	*Roods.*	*Perches.*
Logan Square	7	3	13.55360
Franklin Square	7	3	13.55360
Rittenhouse Square	6	2	3.144160
Washington Square	6	2	3.144160
Independence Square	4	2	21.8176
Jefferson Square	2	2	27.

are tired of the Jersey sand gardens, and we want grounds for recreation in our own borders. For the gift of the Hunting Park we are duly grateful, and we most cheerfully accord with the recent action of the Select Council, providing for its improvement, and regret that its generous donors should have cause to complain of tardy legislation—but it is too far from the centre of population, and we cannot walk there—it is, over all, too small for the uses of a great city.[1] We want one of those broad areas of ground, convenient of access to the people, which the Act of Consolidation promised us, and we have suggested these grounds because we believe them to be the best fitted for the purpose. We do profess to know Philadelphia in every part up to its present ample bounds, and nowhere, leaving out of the question its present accessibility and future centrality, is there any spot for a park to be found in its natural advantages equal to the banks of the Schuylkill above Fairmount. We have no interests to subserve in suggesting these grounds. We have no interest in a foot of ground within a mile of them. We have no speculator or land owner for a master. But we are free to suggest that the most, perhaps all the owners of the lands required, if approached in a proper way by Councils, will deal liberally with the city. Still, if that should not be the case, there is a way of reducing these matters to an actual value; the lands have a value which can be ascertained, and the simple method adopted in New York avoids all the loss of time, uncertainty, and room for speculation, which attends on negotiations.[2]

[1] The Hunting Park Estate, containing 45 acres, was purchased by a number of our fellow-citizens, "with the intention of presenting it to the city for, and thereby dedicating it forever as a public park and pleasure-ground." See letter of C. H. Fisher, Joseph R. Ingersoll, James Dundas, G. Roberts Smith, and P. M. Price, Committee on behalf of the contributors, to the Select and Common Councils of the city, November 9, 1854.

[2] The Legisature of New York passed an act in July, 1853, authorizing the corporation of the city to take the land for public use. The act provides for

First, then, let us have Lemon Hill actually opened; give private taste and private liberality an opportunity to co-operate with liberal legislation, and the measure is secure.

Let the people have an early opportunity to show their appreciation of this place; let the grounds be placed at once in the hands of commissioners for laying them out; let these commissioners be selected from those gentlemen among us who have acquired a competency, and have an interest in the welfare, and a pride in the appearance of the city, let them be men having leisure to devote their time and attention to the subject, let them be empowered to receive from their fellow-citizens contributions for the laying out, planting and embellishment of the park, and our word for it, the thing will be done speedily and without aid from the City Treasury.

All classes will unite in this popular movement; the wealthy man will promptly embrace the opportunity thus afforded of contributing to the health, beauty and prosperity of the city, while the mechanic and laboring man will cheerfully add their mite to a measure which is for their true interests, and which for all time to come will remain a blessing to their posterity. Horticultural and Agricultural Societies and other kindred institutions will lend their official aid, and we may count upon the co-operation of our military organizations, our archery clubs and skating clubs, our cricket and boat clubs, to aid in the speedy improvement of these grounds.

Give us but Lemon Hill to begin with, as a nucleus, and the local pride of our citizens will be aroused, their public

appointment of five commissioners of estimate and assessment. Commissioners were appointed in November, 1853, who filed their report in October, 1855, which was confirmed by the Supreme Court on the 6th February, 1856. The land taken for the park, extends from Fifty-ninth street to One hundred and sixth street, and from the Fifth Avenue to the Eighth, containing 776 acres, and embracing 7,700 lots, for which the Commissioners awarded the sum of 5,111,526.30.

See Report of Controller Flagg, February, 1856.

spirit and liberality will at once be shown in contributions for its extension, and the city will possess a public park, comparatively small, but of unrivalled beauty.

We do not make these concluding remarks unadvisedly; we have had occasion to know that such results will follow liberal legislation. We live in a city, the monuments of whose dead are built in homes for the living—in a city, the very meaning of whose name has in almost every street, its illustration in its public charities, and we do not hesitate to accept as prophetic, words lately spoken in the Senate of our State upon the beneficial results of such legislation;[1] "some of these the public will provide, and find them just so much cheaper than the present system, as prevention of evil is always cheaper than its cure; others will come from the munificence of the wealthy, who, dying childless, will make the people their legatees, and posterity the grateful recipients of their bounty." And the Senator might well say, "the grateful recipients of their bounty;" there are no words of ordinary import to express that gratitude; the master of man's nature deemed such a will the worthy crowning act of him whose word once stood against the world, and a prevailing argument to stir up the last measure of a people's gratitude.

> "Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
> His private arbors and new planted orchards
> On this side Tyber; he hath left them you,
> And to your heirs forever; common pleasures
> To walk abroad and recreate yourselves."

The obtaining of such broad areas of ground, will, we believe, be the dawning of a new era upon our city; we will feel its immediate pecuniary benefit in the greater influx of strangers, and in the increased advantages thus given to it as a place of permanent residence; and this advantage to the city

[1] Speech of Eli K. Price in the Senate of Pennsylvania, April 6th and 7th, 1855.

and to its artisans will be obtained without any diminution, but with an increase rather of its revenue, for the opening of pleasure-grounds will lead to improvements, from which there will be received back again into the city coffers an increased revenue.

But this is its narrowest advantage; we will find in it an enticement from the corner-lounging and the drinking saloon, and a natural allayment of that feverish excitement that fills up the intervals of business; we will find in it a breathing-place for those whose lives are passed in narrow courts and alleys, and who rather die than live there; it will be a general place for recreation for the child, the aged man, the invalid; for every man, woman and child, at times, who dwell within our city, for all need such a place.

We want this great broad avenue of pure air to flow through our city, "it is the indispensable means of averting epidemics and pestilence," and its advantages will be written in the reports of our Boards of Health, in our police reports, in our legislative acts, and in a brighter future to our beloved city.

CHARLES S. KEYSER.

PHILADELPHIA.
CRISSY & MARKLEY, PRINTERS,
JUNE, 1856.

FAIRMOUNT PARK.

A NECESSITY FOR THE HEALTH AND RECREATION OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE POPULATION OF THE CITY.

FAIRMOUNT PARK.

Philadelphia is fortunate in being able to secure the grounds embraced within the limits of Fairmount Park, serving at once to protect the water of the Schuylkill River from the deposit of impurities which would render it unwholesome and unfit for use, and at the same time preserving, as an open green forever, one of the most beautiful commons which any city could desire for the health and enjoyment of the people. Pure air and water are essential to the health and even life of every person, and no expenditure which is requisite for the full and complete enjoyment of both is improvident or extravagant, but in the strictest sense of the term, is the purchase of the necessaries of life.

This has been so long recognized as to the supply of wholesome water, that to detail facts and arguments in support of it would be but a tedious recital of that which is known to every one; but in the economy of the source of supply for this city, one fact of the greatest importance is, that with the safeguard of possessing the water-shed of the river within the limits of the city, and with storage reservoirs of sufficient capacity, an unfailing supply of water can be drawn and distributed for all the uses of a population three times as great as Philadelphia now contains, without auxiliary supplies from other streams.

The vital necessity of securing and setting apart a large area of ground within the city limits for a park for the free

and common use of all the people, has been realized not too soon, and, happily, from fortuitous circumstances, not too late to secure the ground best adapted for the purpose before it was encumbered with extensive building improvements, and too costly for the purchasing ability of even a wealthy city. The scope of Fairmount Park is now fixed; and its broad acres will remain green forever, contributing more to the health, happiness and pleasure of the people, and to the material prosperity of the city in the future, than can be readily conceived by even its most ardent advocates at the present day, and the wisdom of its selection will be confirmed by the events of each passing year.

Why, some may ask, should the people of to-day and the future have municipal provisions for pure air and enjoyment? Why is it necessary to reserve such a large open space? Have not Philadelphians lived for nearly two centuries without an extensive park?

It is difficult for Americans to realize that the time has arrived when they must prepare for the requirements of a dense population. In the past, space and material have been abundant, and the great want felt everywhere on the continent, has been to get population to utilize them. In a country where rich agricultural lands are sold for one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, few think of the time when the question must arise, how large a population can be sustained by the land? How startling it seems to-day that the standing white-pine timber land in our own State sold a few years ago for less than one dollar per acre, will, at the present rate of consumption, soon be exhausted! yet it is nevertheless a fact which must be experienced in the near future; and in our large cities works of modern construction that were thought great and sufficient for the wants of a century are even now found to be inadequate.

Philadelphia was fortunate in having been founded by a man who directed its surveys and caused it to be laid out with

wide and regular streets, and who studied to avoid the evils which must be experienced in suffering a town to grow and expand without a comprehensive plan for regulating the line of its improvements.

It cannot be doubted that he was thoroughly familiar with the embarrassing difficulties which the people of London experienced in altering the city streets and roads; and as it was in Penn's early manhood that the great fire of 1666 occurred —a disaster which resulted in the destruction of thirteen thousand three hundred and fifty-one buildings, covering an area of four hundred and thirty-six acres of ground, which enabled the authorities to seize the opportunity to readjust and widen the streets of the portion of the city swept by the conflagration—it is more than probable that he, and those who assisted him, were educated by this experience to adopt a plan far in advance of all other cities of his time in the regularity and breadth of its streets, and which has saved his successors vast sums of money for providing against the necessity of alterations suitable to its greater magnitude. We do not intend here to enter into the details of this plan farther than to note that in the limited space which was plotted five squares were reserved, four of which were dedicated to remain as commons or parks. This was so far in advance of population that more than four generations of men passed away before the first of these was required for the purpose for which it was dedicated, and the last was not reached by the line of building improvements one hundred and fifty years after it was set apart for public use.

The value of the ground of these squares, together with Independence Square, subsequently purchased, estimated by a comparison with price paid for ground in their vicinage, is seven millions of dollars; but if they were to be purchased at this day by the city for their present use, covered as they no doubt would be by expensive buildings, it would cost a much

larger sum to possess them—perhaps not less than ten millions of dollars, or two and a half millions of dollars more than the cost of all the lands in the extension of Fairmount Park.

It is but just to say that in the establishment of these squares more wisdom and foresight was exhibited than by those who followed and extended the improvements of the city into the former suburbs, for we find those districts built over without any reservations of ground, with one or two insignificant exceptions, and the people of thirty or forty years ago, whilst resorting to and liberally patronizing outlying gardens, such as "Vauxhall," "McArann's," "Parker's," "Bolivar," "Pagoda," "Smith's" and others, secured no ground for public commons over the large space which it was then requisite to extend a plan of the city streets. This omission of the generation past is more remarkable from the fact that they had the example of the founder who set apart such spaces and indicated their use when the site was a wilderness, and the ground improved in their time extended the outlines of the built surface far beyond the limits planned by him and over the green fields, meadows and hills which formerly were convenient and accessible to the people of the heart of the old city, rendering such increased provision much more important than that which was made for the smaller municipality.

Fortunately, it is not too late to supply the want which they neglected; but with the light of the present day, a great open park is certainly more desirable than a multitude of small squares distributed over the various sections of the city. The most obvious advantage of such small squares thus distributed is that they are near and accessible to the people of the section in which they are situated; but there are objections to their great multiplication when they are located in a business section of the city; they seriously interrupt the concentration of business houses, and when over four or five acres in extent, interfere with the continuity of streets. They are too limited

in extent to serve one of the chief purposes of a park, in affording relief which inhabitants of cities feel in experiencing a change of scene away from the bustle of the town. The long blank spaces, unless watchfully guarded, are in the night time, places of meeting of disreputable people, which is a source of annoyance to families residing in the proximity, and they are far more expensive for maintenance than a large park. One hundred squares, of eight acres each, would be only one-third of the quantity of ground embraced in Fairmount Park, and the annual cost of maintenance would be scarcely less than fifteen hundred dollars each, which would aggregate a sum fifty per cent. greater than the cost of the requisite attendance and repair in the larger space in one enclosure.

A large park, situate as Fairmount Park, at a proper distance from the great city thoroughfares, without needlessly interfering with present or prospective avenues for business, or closing the routes by which people can directly reach the centres of trade, furnishing sloping hillside and deep valleys, with an extensive water view and with pure air uncontaminated by the noxious gases and exhalations which permeate the atmosphere in the compactly-built portions of the city, furnishes the needed change of scene and air and opportunities for rest and amusement which give fresh vigor to the bodies and minds of the people.

The area of Fairmount Park is not a larger space than will be requisite for the people of the great city of the future for recreation and for the ventilation of the city. Its metes and bounds have not been determined so much with reference to the quantity of ground for this purpose as for securing the slopes and ravines which drain into the Schuylkill River; but the time will come in the life-time of the present generation, when the proportions of the park for its second use will be deemed no more extravagant or needlessly large, than the five squares laid out in the old city proper are now regarded by the

people of this city; indeed, without being intentional, there is a parallel in the relative size of the squares and the park which amounts to a coincidence. The combined area of the five squares laid out in the chartered city was forty acres,* and the number of acres within the city limits, extending from Vine to South Streets and from the Delaware to the Schuylkill Rivers, is 1,364 acres. The proportion of ground within these squares to the whole number of acres would therefore be one (1) to thirty-four and one-tenth (34 1-10).

The land within the limits defined by law as the boundary of the park, exclusive of the surface of the Schuylkill River, comprises twenty-three hundred and ninety (2,390) acres, and the area of the consolidated city of Philadelphia is eighty-two thousand and seven hundred (82,700) acres, which would give the proportion of land in the park to the whole city as one acre to every thirty-four and six-tenths (34 $\frac{6}{10}$).

The angles on the central (afterwards called Penn) square were designated for buildings for public affairs; so also a portion of the park grounds is and will be to a larger extent, occupied for park buildings and municipal uses. Fairmount

* Thomas Holme, Surveyor General, in an advertisement of the extent of the city (1683) says: "The model of this city appears by a small draft now made and may hereafter when time permits be augmented; in the centre of the city is a square of ten acres, at each angle are to be houses for public affairs, as a meeting-house, assembly or state house, market-house, school-house, and several other buildings for public

There is also in each quarter of the city a square of eight acres to be for the like uses as the Moors fields are in London."

The area of the squares as stated by the Surveyor General probably was intended to convey an idea of their relative size without strict accuracy of description.

Centre Square on the model or plan referred to by him (a *fac simile* of which is in possession of the writer) contains eleven and one-half acres, and the squares in each quarter of the city diminished by the opening of side streets are of the following dimensions: Franklin, seven acres three roods; Washington, six acres two roods; Logan, seven acres three roods; and Rittenhouse, six acres two roods.

reservoir, covering twelve acres, and Belmont reservoir, nine acres and twenty-four perches, are within its boundaries, and the storage reservoir, in course of construction in East Park, occupies one hundred and five acres.

Carrying this parallel further, if we add to the land surface in the park the Schuylkill River surface within its limits, an aggregate of twenty-seven hundred and forty (2,740) acres is produced, or one acre to every thirty and eighteen one-hundredths (30 $\frac{18}{100}$) of the consolidated city; and if we add to the forty acres of public ground reserved in the old city from its foundation, Independence Square, subsequently purchased, containing four and one-half (4½) acres, the forty-four and one-half (44½) acres relate to the whole number, as one to thirty and sixty-five one-hundredths (30 $\frac{65}{100}$).

It is almost impossible to obtain unanimity in the judgment of a large number of people upon any public question, but we venture the prediction that in one decade from the present time, most of those who now entertain an opinion that the park surface is unnecessarily large will be convinced of their error by the events which the developement of the city in that time will disclose to them; and it is not improbable that other spaces will be demanded by the people before the loan created for the purchase of Fairmount Park has matured.

How rapidly the surface of the city is being covered with buildings and paved streets! Few who continually live in Philadelphia realize in the full measure of existing facts, and a still smaller number forecast the future as it inevitably must be. One who was familiar with the outline of the improvements of the city, and returns after an absence of many years, comprehends it in a more marked degree. Let us illustrate this by supposing that a citizen left the city in 1828—forty-four years ago—seemingly a long period, yet men then mature, were in active business, who are to-day no less actively employed. At that time the city and liberties had a popula-

tion of 160,000 people, and the whole county little more than 180,000. The city proper was less than half built up; Northern Liberties and part of Southwark were improved; East Kensington was built with houses that can be easily designated by their appearance at this day, and the new districts of Spring Garden and Moyamensing were just beginning to improve on the extreme eastern corners and streets adjacent to the old city; the house line on Walnut Street did not extend beyond Broad Street, and all that section west and southwest of Broad and Walnut Streets was occupied by truck farms and brick yards, with a few scattering tenements for the accommodation of their employees. Many of the blocks of ground east of Broad Street in the old city were open commons. Ridge Avenue was improved little north of Callowhill Street, and the space north and west of that point was open country, and if the improvements that then stood in the city and incorporated districts had been built as compactly as building is now done east of the Schuylkill River, they could all be easily clustered in the space from Vine to South Streets between the two rivers. But if he should return at this time to view the change, he will find the building line of Walnut Street extending to Forty-fourth Street, a distance of three and seven-tenths (3 7-10) miles from the Delaware; Sixth Street solidly built up for four and three-quarters (4 3-4) miles; Ridge Avenue built up to Twenty-third Street, two miles from Vine Street; on the southeast improvements extending far below the Navy Yard; on the southwest encircling the United States Arsenal, nearly three miles from the State House, and on the northeast to Kensington and Lehigh Avenue three and three-quarters (3 3-4) miles from the State House, whilst, west of the Schuylkill a large city has spread out over the farms of a few years ago, and streets are authorized to be paved to the line of Delaware County.

The extent of new surface that is annually covered with

improvements is best illustrated by grouping them in connected space.

In the year 1871 there were erected five thousand three hundred and sixty-five (5,365) dwelling houses and nine hundred and thirty (930) stores, factories, churches, and other buildings. If the houses and buildings were upon connected blocks four hundred (400) feet square, built with the average compactness that modern improvements are erected (with two intermediate streets in each square), they would make a continuous line of blocks from the Delaware River, at Market Street, extending to Fifty-second Street, a distance of four and one-third (4⅓) miles; and if the twenty-one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven (21,827) buildings erected in the four years previous to January 1st, last past, were arranged in a similar manner in the old city proper, they would cover all the surface from the Delaware to Fifteenth Street, and from Vine to South Streets.

The buildings erecting this year (1872) with two more years of the same progress, would cover the remaining surface from Fifteenth Street to the Schuylkill River. As we have before stated that the buildings standing in the city in 1828 could have been grouped in the same space with like compactness of building, it follows that if we continue to the end of 1874 to improve in the same ratio that has been accomplished from 1868 to the present year, as much surface will be covered with improvements in seven years as was occupied in the city and liberties one hundred and forty-six years after its foundation.

It is not probable that the space to be covered in the future by dwelling houses will much exceed the ratio of houses to the population in the past; and the increasing value of ground is a sufficient check to warrant this opinion. Philadelphia has always provided well for the abode of families, the highest average per house, in any enumeration made within the last

one hundred and twenty years, being $6\frac{33}{100}$, and the average at the last census being $5\frac{99}{100}$, there is no reason to expect or desire that the percentage of population to dwellings should sink much, if any, below the last named figures. All other buildings are increasing, not only in proportionate numbers, but in size and description, and it is fair to presume that there will be a still further increase in the future. In justification of the last remark, it will only be necessary to refer to the accommodation of railroads at their termini in the city. Twenty-five years ago an ordinary store building or warehouse served for both freight and passenger depots of the longest roads. Although occupying buildings at the present time for terminal business that twenty-five years ago would have been thought colossal, it is evident that other depots larger in size will be demanded by the requirements of trade. City passenger railways, unknown before 1857, gird the city with 200 miles of tracks, adding twenty-five new depots at various points, and stores, warehouses, and factories are continually erected larger than any before known in the history of the city, which in time will be surpassed by buildings of greater magnitude.

This contributes to swell the square miles of improved surface more rapidly than would be supposed without critical examination.

From the brief glance that has been given of the physical growth of the city in the last forty-four (44) years, it is not difficult to conclude that unless ground sufficient for the wants of the population of the city as a place for common resort is now procured, it would be impossible in a few years to obtain it in a like eligible location, except at enormous cost and at a price which would forbid the purchase, however desirable it might be for the health and enjoyment of the people; indeed, one of the objections that has been urged against the present limits of the park is that many parts of the ground are too far off for easy access. The avenues of approach and the facilities

for reaching it are improved each year, and additional improvements and conveniences will be made and supplied with each year to come; but the objection just stated is in fact an argument in support of the present reservation of the land, for if the most eligible ground for the purpose of a public park, although distant from some of the extremes of the city, is not secured at a time when the building line has reached portions of it, and the owners are permitted to build over this space, any other lands more remote will be much more difficult of access. As the city expands its improved surface, the extension will in a few years encompass the whole of the park with edifices, and its location will cease to be suburban when it is in the heart of population. It is not possible, moreover, to have a plot of ground in a territorially large city which will not be distant from some extreme points, and it would be surprising if Fairmount Park was not open to this criticism, as the territory of the city exceeds in extent all other cities in the United States, and even that within the metropolitan district of London. An examination of the distance of the park from some extreme points within which the city will be most densely populated compares favorably with like distances in other cities which have laid out great parks. The distance from the Navy Yard by street lines to the Green Street entrance of the park is very little over four miles; from the Richmond coal wharves to Thirty-third and York Streets less than four and one-half miles; and from League Island to the Green Street entrance five and one-half miles. The south line of the park, extending on the west from the Schuylkill River to Hestonville, renders it accessible to the large section of the city south of that line.

The city of New York, with much foresight, secured the ground of the Central Park more than fifteen years ago, and have made it as beautiful and attractive as art and a great expenditure of money enabled them to make of the situation.

The area of the city being only fourteen thousand five hundred and two (14,502) acres, there has been set apart for this purpose eight hundred and sixty-two (862) acres, being more than one acre in seventeen of the entire surface for this magnificent place of public resort, and located it, as the name implies, as nearly in the centre of population, present and prospective, as possible. This location has met with a general approval by the people; it is five miles from the Battery and four miles from the City Hall to the south entrance, from thence it extends with a width of one-half mile, two and a half miles to One Hundred and Tenth Street, from which point the distance is seven miles to Kingsbridge, the north extremity of the island.

Those familiar with the scope of territory embraced within the distances stated above from Fairmount Park, will note that, notwithstanding the fact that the consolidated city of Philadelphia is five and one-half times larger than the territorial limits of New York, the distances in Philadelphia compare favorable with those of our sister city, and it is indeed a matter of surprise that a park could be here located as accessible to population, present and future, without interruption of the great thoroughfares.

Some remarks as to how rapidly the population of the city will increase in the future may not be out of place, however conjectural all such estimates must of necessity be, but it is worthy of consideration that in the last eighty years Philadelphia has had many trials and some reverses that would have dwarfed a city less favorably located. *Within that period every household felt the desolating hand of death in the visitation of a tropical fever; the National

*In 1683 the population of the city of Philadelphia was 600; 1684, 2550; 1700, 5000; 1731, 12,240; 1744, 13,000; 1753, 14,563; 1760, 18,766; 1769, 28,042; 1777, 21,767; and in 1783, 39,000.

The following is a table of the population of the territory embraced since 1854

and State Governments removed and fixed their capitals in other cities; commercial pre-eminence was lost and the Government of the United States removed the national deposits from the bank of the United States—its fiscal agent here located. Passing through foreign and domestic wars, it had a full share of all the financial disasters that periodically swept over the country, and in common with all Eastern States and cities, was continually drawn on, to people the new western country; and yet in that period its population has increased 1139 per cent., and there is reason in the anticipation, that the measure of its increase in the future will not fall short of that which was aggregated under such circumstances, especially as the city has grown to be the first manufacturing centre in the Union, combining in the value of its products more than one-thirteenth of the manufactured products of the United States—has thousand of miles of railways tributary to it, which in turn connect with tens of thousand of miles of road extending to every part of the continent the metropolis of a region abounding in iron and coal, which will be a more staple source of wealth in the future than in the past, when at hazardous risk it had to compete with the cheaper productions of Great Britain, with a harbor capable of receiving vessels of the largest class, and with an area of territory capable of seating population without limit, the city furnishes and can continue to furnish better homes for the toiling masses of people of moderate circumstances, with cheaper average cost of living expenses than any

in the limits of the consolidated city, from the first census taken by the Government of the United States:

Year.	*Population.*	*Gain per cent.*	*Year.*	*Population.*	*Gain per cent.*
1790	54,391		1840	258,037	36.5
1800	81,009	48.9	1800	408,762	58.4
1800	111,210	37.2	1860	655,529	38.3
1820	137,097	23.2	1870	674,022	19.2
1830	188,961	37.8			

other city of the first class in America. The increase of population in the eighty years last past has varied in each decade. In some decennial enumeration the variance being slight, in others marked, the largest increase was returned in the census of 1850, over 58 per cent., and the smallest in 1870 over 19 per cent. Yet these variances will be observed in all prospering cities, both in Europe and America; London, whose marvelous growth has excited the wonder of the world, not even being an exception in this respect, and an increase of less than the average of previous enumerations in one decade is no evidence of decline, unless it is produced by an inherent weakness of a city in its ability to retain and attract population for occupation and residence.

The reduced percentage of gain, however, shown by the census of 1870 needs an explanation, lest it be taken as indicating a decline in prosperity and future growth. Philadelphia in common with all the large cities of the country, was disappointed in the results of the enumeration then made of its population, and it was charged that the imperfect machinery of the government had yielded a smaller aggregate than the correct number of its inhabitants.

The imperfections of existing laws for gathering a census of the people is admitted by every one conversant with the details of the method, but the re-enumeration of the cities of New York and Philadelphia taken to verify the first, must satisfy those who examine the subject, that although there were undoubted errors and omissions in the returns, they are as accurate as could be expected under the law, and perhaps more reliable than some, made at former periods. Admitting the result the census of 1870 to be essentially correct, we find a reason for the smaller decennial increase not in want or prosperous condition in material wealth, for the statistics of commerce, manufactures and property, gathered at the same time showed an enormous advance in their value and relative progress but

in the disturbing and retarding influences, due to an increase of population occasioned by the war.

The Superintendent of the Census estimates that the effects of the war made a difference of at least three millions between the population of the nation as projected from previous experience and that reached by the census, and if it be admitted that the rule of progressive increase, which is applicable to the country at large, does not apply to the growth of cities, towns and localities, it must also be acknowledged that a war of such magnitude distributed its effects to every part of the land, and cities were subject to its retarding influence as much as any other division of population.

When it is remembered that from 1861 to 1865, Philadelphia furnished 93,323 men for the military and naval service of the country, of which number 69,749 were for long terms, and that her citizens in the ardor of patriotism filled whole regiments, the quotas of neighboring States, how many of those men died on the field of battle, and how many from wounds and from diseases contracted in the service. When the indirect loss by the removal of so many married or marriageable men from domestic life, and the check thus given to the increase of native population is considered, we have facts which alone would justify the conclusion that from these causes the permanent growth was so much disturbed in the first half of the decade that no substantial gain was made or could be expected. The check given to emigration in those years, and the growth of habits of luxury and fashion which tend to reduce the rate of increase are also to be considered among the causes of retardation, and it is noticeable in the changing fortunes of people that the census of 1860 showed a marked decline in the number of colored residents* which was attributed to the flight of many

* Census of colored population, Philadelphia,

1850, 24,461 1860, 22,185 1870, 22,147

to more northern homes after the enactment of the fugitive slave law in 1850; and again in 1870 a smaller number was returned, for which we may find reasons in their losses by the war, and that the South was then opened and its genial climate was attractive to them.

If the views stated be correct, the percentage of gain was made therefore chiefly, if not entirely, in the years succeeding the war, years of prosperity and unexampled progress; and it is not difficult to discover wherein people were mistaken in their judgment of the population and misled by deceptive appearances, for at the time Philadelphia was largely drawn on to supply the wasting armies in the field, thousands of the Southern people fled here for residence; many from the small towns, villages, and farming districts visited the city from time to time, remaining for weeks and months to receive the earliest intelligence of the conflict; the gathering of and continual movement of troops passing through to the front, the exciting events of the times which drew people in large numbers almost daily into the streets, served temporarily to fill the void and deceive the eye; and it may be added the activity of many branches of business where improved machinery supplied the absence of muscle, and other circumstances, gave color to the opinion of those who did not make proper allowance for losses, that the resident population was increasing more rapidly at that time than the facts warranted. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the census of 1820 covering the period of the war of 1812–14, produced a result 14 per cent. less than those preceding and following, and we think it may be attributed to like disturbing effects of war.

Assuming that the last eighty years furnishes an index of future growth, we have an average decennial increase in that period of 37-4 per cent., which would indicate a population in the year 1880 of 926,106
1890 of 1,272,469

It is possible this ratio of increase may not be realized, but it must be remembered that the calculation is based upon its increase during a long period when popular opinion regarded it as a slow city; and it is also possible, if the people in Philadelphia grasp the adventitious circumstances now within their reach, that this calculation of the population in eighteen years is an under-estimate.

This increase of population will measure the time required to double the extent of the built-up surface of the city. Building will progress for the wants of population, and an advance at the average rate of the past would double the extent of built-up and paved surface in a comparatively few years from this time. Great as Philadelphia is to-day, its proportions will be insignificant compared with such development as this and what will follow, and then the value of a great park for the people will be more thoroughly understood and appreciated than is possible to know by a theoretical view of the future.

The constant accumulation of animal and vegetable matter in cities necessarily renders the air impure, and the air being the natural food of the lungs, when vitiated affects the bodily and mental health of the people who are compelled to breathe it. Will this park be too large a lung for a city as extensive as we have pictured it in the life-time of many now living? And unless this is set apart, where would youth and adults go to for recreation? It is only requisite to seriously consider this aspect of the question to justify all that has been said respecting it as a necessity; but there is another illustration of its great beneficial influence in saving human life, which we wish to bring clearly to view, and that is that such an open space is more necessary for children than adults. "Children," says a medical authority, "suffer more than adults from impure air." This can readily be accounted for, when we take into consideration that each day children breathe from four to ten thousand times oftener than adults.

They suffer more severely from impure air than adults. Let us take in connection with this statement of the vital wants of children, the facts as they exist in this city.

The exhibit of the Board of Health for 1871 shows that there were 18,346 births registered in that year. The number of registered births is believed to be at least twenty per cent. less than the total number occurring, and the true number born within that year would not be less than 22,000; and if this number was not exceeded in any one of five (5) consecutive years, they would aggregate 110,000. The number of children in Philadelphia who die between birth and the age of five years is, perhaps, not over forty per cent., some estimates placing it at fifty per cent.; but a close examination of statistics do not, we think, warrant this high estimate, and forty per cent. is a more accurate conclusion from known data.

Of the number born in five years there would be living 66,000 children five years of age and under. The health of these children requires that they should, in summer months have a change of air from that breathed from houses defectively ventilated and the streets and alleys of the compactly built city. The only medicine which their little emaciated bodies need is air, pure and uncontaminated; but what number of these childen will ever obtain that, which should be free and unstinted to every mortal, unless a place is provided within our own borders?

Those parents who can afford to remove their children to rural homes or seaside retreats do not feel the want of this public provision, but we think it is an under-estimate to say that Fairmount Park or adjacent fields will be the only country that 40,000 of these chidren could ever know; and being true at this day, where, would the majority of the 150,000 to 200,000 children of like age, three decades hence, find that change of air if this park was not provided? And who can estimate, in this use of the park alone, what a vast saving of

human life will be accomplished of the millions yet unborn who will dwell in this city?

It has long been observed, too, in the great cities of the world, even some whose locations are favorable for promoting the health and longevity of the people, that they must continually be reinforced with the fresh and hardy offspring of the village and rural districts, and that successive generations born within their limits degenerated in physical and mental vigor; and whilst the existence of this fact does not as yet find a striking illustration in the people of Philadelphia, it is nevertheless sufficiently well established in older cities to demand careful inquiry into the causes, and if they exist here the possibility of their aggravation and consequent evils resulting from them. One undoubted cause of this degeneracy will be found in the vitiated atmosphere breathed by residents of the town.

As the stalwart and deeply rooted forest tree, basking in the clear sunlight of heaven, with leaves breathing in the pure air of the country, is stronger and more vigorous than the tree grown on the sidewalk of the streets of the town in air charged with deleterious gases, so the more delicate organization of man is affected and his vital forces strengthened or weakened by the quality of the food of his lungs.

In this view the reservation of Fairmount Park, as an open space for ventilation is a mere sanatory provision.

It will be noticed that the East and West Parks, on the Schuylkill, occupying high ground, in form like a fan, will conduct the pure, invigorating air that sweeps down from the northern mountains to the streets and avenues on the lower plane, and from here the inner city will receive purifying currents to its utmost extremities.

It is a great wrong in any community to neglect provision for the health, comfort and prolongation of life of the people who come after them, when that provision can only be made in their generation, and when the necessity for

such provision is clearly understood. Such work is often postponed, with a flippant remark, that "posterity never did anything for us." It cannot do anything for us; but we, the posterity of the past, are enjoying a thousand comforts and benefits provided by it without labor or cost to us, and common justice demands that we shall not neglect reasonable preparation for those that come after us. If it is commendable in individuals honestly to accumulate property for their children, that they may perpetuate themselves in a posterity enjoying more comforts and a greater intelligence than was the condition of their parents, is it not a higher aspiration in the people of a great city to provide the only retreat which millions of people—its own children—will have for health and recreation?

We have dwelt particularly on its uses for the poor; for the wealthy can provide for themselves here or elsewhere. There are not wanting, however, those who denominate it "the rich man's park," and if their opinion had weight in forming popular judgment, they would be doing incalculable injury to the people of humble circumstances whom they array in hostility to it; for whilst it may, and of right ought to, afford pleasure to the wealthy, it is a necessity for the life of the poor for all time, and there is no reason or justice in attempts to prejudice the minds of any class of citizens in its use as common ground.

If a public park was restricted in its use to the poor alone, the pride which is natural to the American would debar many from taking advantage of its enjoyments; and the display of handsome equipages which appear on its drives add variety to the scene, which is gratifying to all but the envious, and interferes with the proper use of the grounds by none.

Here people of all condition in life, whether they be rich or poor, old or young, robust or weak, without entrance fee or charge and without any of the temptations to indulgence in

dissipation so common where rural places of resort are dependent for support on the custom of their frequenters, can enjoy a grand expansive park, on which nature has been lavish in bestowing beautiful landscape scenes, rendered doubly charming by views of the placid river which parts its sloping hills; here noble and exquisite works of art distributed on grounds rich in historic associations, gallerys of paintings, museum and collections, illustrative of natural history, will gratify the sight and elevate and refine the taste of the masses; here every one feels conscious of the right to freely use a domain which is the property of the people, and thus ample opportunity for healthful recreation for the body will be combined with a pleasing and delightful education for the mind.

It is true that the money required for this purchase is a large addition to the many other demands upon the treasury for municipal improvements. The preservation of the purity of the water alone would justify all the expenditure made, for the cost of constructing works from any other available source of supply above tide-water would, in the opinion of competent engineers, be a sum much greater than this purchase, and the annual cost of pumping from such new sources of supply a large advance beyond the expense of lifting the water at the Schuylkill Works.

The use which the people of the city have of the grounds and beneficial influence which it will have in promoting the health of numbers of its people, will in itself also justify this expenditure, if it served no other purpose. But in addition to these compensating uses, it will contribute to the revenues of the city, in its influence in sustaining and enhancing the value of property in many portions of it. Time will be required to demonstrate this; although property adjacent to the park has advanced in value, and improvements in its proximity been greatly forwarded, it is not here alone that the city will reap substantial returns; but in adding the opportunity for the enjoy-

ment of a park so beautiful and expansive to the many other advantages of residence within its limits, people are, and will be, attracted to us from other sections of the country. Already this influence is felt in former residents of Pittsburg and the interior counties of Pennsylvania, Ohio and other States, choosing our city as their home. Our wealthy citizens have been stimulated to erect houses of cost and elegance for their own occupancy; and the general business interests of the city will be largely promoted in the reputation which this attractive feature will give to Philadelphia throughout the land.

THOMAS COCHRAN.

Printed from
the Evening Telegraph,
Sept. 16, 1872.