

A GLIMPSE OF NEW YORK AND CENTRAL PARK.

BY CATHERINE OWEN.



EW YORK has been described as a mixture of Liverpool and Paris, and the description is not inapt if people understand the Liverpool element to mean the wharves—the waterside, in fact—and remember that it in no way pervades the Parisian side of the city.

English readers probably know that the "Empire City" is an island—the Island of Manhattan—that it is a long narrow strip of land, the south end of which is New York Bay, one of the most beautiful in the world; on the west side runs the Hudson, on the east the East River, the continuation of Long Island Sound.

The south end of New York, a generation ago, was a fashionable quarter; the Battery, whose once handsome residences are now turned into steam-ship offices, emigration bureaus, and foreign consulates, and whose pretty green park is now canopied with the converging lines of the elevated rail-roads which all meet here, was then the chosen residence for wealthy families, some of whom lingered till actually driven from the stately old quarter by encroaching business traffic.

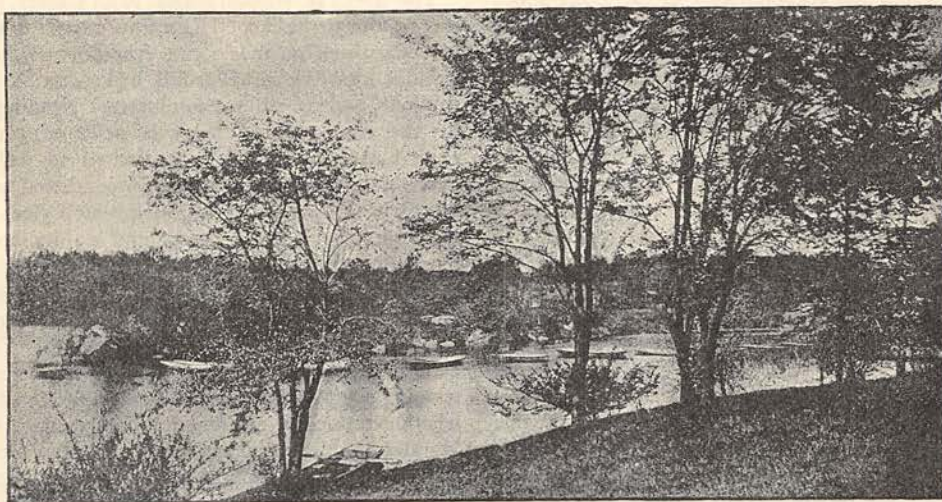
Now this same business is steadily pushing its way northward, and the private houses of ten years ago are shops and boarding-houses to-day.

hotels and Swedish, German, and Irish boarding-houses, which soon, however, give place to magnificent buildings for business purposes, on which money is spent lavishly. Then comes City Hall Square, with its vast and costly municipal buildings in the centre, its green park, and round it the offices of the principal newspapers.

After City Hall Square come the wholesale stores, gay with brilliant lettering and showy signs. Colour in this city, as in Paris, is the thing that perhaps most strikes the newly-arrived Englishman, accustomed as he is to his own sombre, not to say grimy, business streets. Wholesale business houses cede in their turn to retail stores, hotels, and theatres. Broadway becomes, in fact, a sort of Oxford Street until we reach Fourteenth Street, which crosses Union Square.

This square, a kind of "round point," has the centre unenclosed, and intersected in all directions by asphalt paths; it is a gay little park, with flowers, fountains, a kiosk for music, and, hung round with a cordon of globular gas-lights, is like a bit of the Champs Elysées transplanted to the very heart of a busy city. This park is surrounded by a broad pavement, at the curbstone of which are fine trees casting a grateful shade over the road; the shops in this square are very fine, and cater chiefly for the wealthy classes.

From Union Square to Madison Square, a distance



VIEW IN CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK.

From a Photograph by Messrs. J. Frith and Co., Reigate.

Broadway may be called the back-bone of New York, and the numbered streets that cross it at regular intervals the ribs. The lower end of Broadway was, like the Battery where it begins, once principally private houses; now it is devoted to business: the extreme south end of it, called Whitehall Street, to emigrant

of about ten blocks, Broadway again changes character, and may be likened to Regent Street in the class of its shops; everything that is best and most costly in New York may be found here.

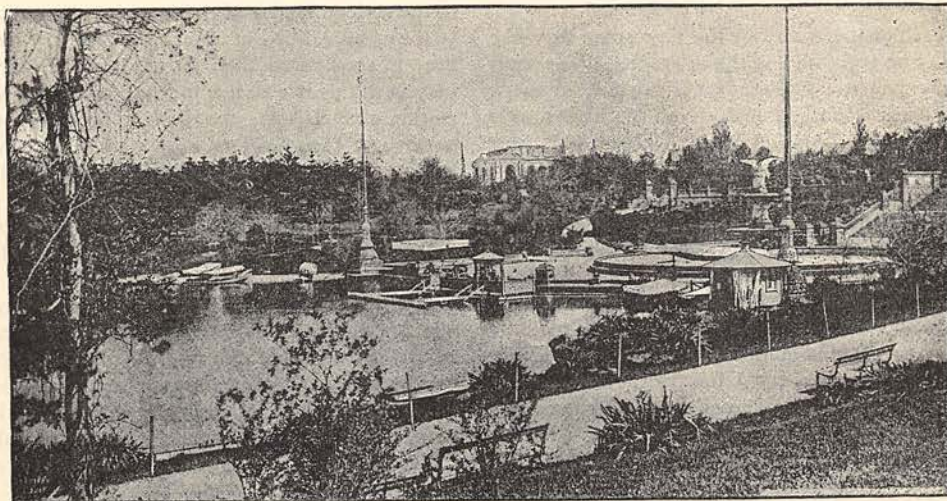
Madison Square is now perhaps the most attractive part of the city; in the middle is the shady, well-cared-

for park: masses of flowers and intersecting paths, with plenty of seats for the nurses and their charges, who are here in crowds, and larger children doing wonderful things with roller-skates on the asphalt.

On three sides of the square are handsome private residences; on the other runs Broadway, and in

indicate a mere garden. Central Park, the pride of New York, covers 980 acres, and is nearly two and a half miles long, while Fairmount Park, in Philadelphia, is of much greater extent.

Central Park, like Coney Island, is a proof of the energy of the American people, and I may add the



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this vicinity perhaps the best hotels in the city are established—at all events, the most fashionable and expensive. This square bears somewhat the relation to New York, that Trafalgar Square does to London.

At this point perhaps one gets the best idea of the splendour and taste of the "Empire City," as Americans love to call New York; although from it to Central Park the private houses on Fifth and Madison Avenues increase in cost and elegance.

It will have been observed that I have used the word "blocks" as indicating distance. A block is the common term for the distance between one street and another. These distances are very equal; for instance, from Twenty-first Street to Twenty-second Street is one block, and twenty blocks make about one mile.

As I have said, Broadway may be likened to the back-bone of the city, but the avenues on the east and west of that thoroughfare also run parallel with it at intervals of one block, the distances between avenue and avenue being also called a block—a "cross-town block." The houses are numbered east and west; as, for instance, West Twenty-first Street is west of Broadway, East Twenty-first Street is east of it, and they run, as the name indicates, the east to the East River and the west to the Hudson.

A "park," too, has been spoken of as being in the centre of Madison and Union Squares. This term is usually applied to any cultivated green spot or garden in the city: for instance, Americans would speak of the park of Belgrave Square if speaking of its enclosure. The term "park," however, does not always

fertility of their imagination, for surely not a generation ago a park in such a spot as this beautiful pleasure-ground now occupies would have seemed the wildest dream.

Little more than twenty years ago, the space between Fifty-seventh Street and a Hundred-and-seventh Street, and Fifth and Eighth Avenues, consisted of masses of boulders of trap rock, on salient points of which shanties were perched, and goats wandered in search of any chance blade of grass or scrap of herbage that might be in the crevices. Soil, I am told, there was absolutely none; but New Yorkers were determined to have a park, and natural obstacles were not allowed to stand in the way.

The idea once conceived, rocks were levelled, soil brought, trees planted, and what so short a time before had been shanty-land was now a park, beautifully laid out; trees, at first small, have since grown into fair proportions, and now there is no suggestion of the bareness of newly laid-out ground; on the contrary, everything is luxuriantly green and leafy.

The winding bridle-paths and carriage-drives are well shaded with spreading trees, the many beautiful rustic arbours are densely covered with honeysuckle or wistaria, and such rocky eminences as were left for picturesque purposes are now covered with the gorgeous trumpet-vine.

Some parts have been arranged with an artful suggestion of Nature's sweet wild way, others are as artificially beautiful as Park Monceau itself. Stone bridges span winding lakes, on which float gay little

boats with awnings, and at least one genuine Venetian gondola, in summer; and in winter the scene is animated with skating.

The whole is very well kept, as is not always the case with public property in America any more than in England. The park police wear a different uniform from the city force—a very pretty one, by the way, grey with silver buttons—and do their duty well.

At the fashionable hours of the day some very fine riding may be seen, and in the afternoon many well-appointed carriages and handsome horses: in short, if Central Park is not, as many New Yorkers fondly believe, the most beautiful park in the world, it is certainly one of the most beautiful.

All, or nearly all, American public parks have the advantage and disadvantage of being made to order: they have not to grow, as Old World places of the kind have done, with all the uglinesses of tasteless generations, all the mistakes of bygone authority. They have had the world's beauties for their models, and have more or less adopted them.

One cannot wander down the "Mall" of Central Park, and picture it to oneself full of gay-coated courtiers, bewigged and beruffled, or King Charles, with his ebony stick, and numerous spaniels at his heels, taking the air in it, or any of the many pictures

that fill one's mind when one lingers in the London parks or those of France. Nor are the trees, green and beautiful as they are, the great slow-growing monarchs, centuries old, that welcome us to their shade in older countries. Yet Central Park is something to be very proud of.

Of course the vicinity of the park is now a very choice neighbourhood, and wonderful stories are told of the sudden wealth of the sagacious few who held on to the wretched bits of unsaleable property they owned near it, considered then too far up town for any but very needy people to live in; and still more wonderful stories of keen men who bought the lots from their poverty-stricken holders, who were only too glad to sell a few hundred feet of rock which they had been beguiled into buying years before.

One part of the park is reserved for a zoological collection, to which is attached a museum of natural history.

In winter the lakes are covered with skaters of both sexes, and the climate usually affords several weeks of this frosty sport absolutely without danger. The ice breaking and submerging many people, as in the rare London skating seasons, is never heard of here; and, perhaps because it is so general and so national a sport, everything is done to make it attractive.



JUNE DAISIES: A KENSINGTON ROMANCE.



IT was only a London garden, but it was so walled in from intrusive eyes, was so judiciously planted with flowers that could stand the air of cities and the neighbourhood of smoke, was so surrounded by trees, and the walls that encircled it were so covered with creepers, that it was difficult to realise that it was actually a part of that "Old Court Suburb" which is now a part of London itself. There was an old bowling-green that made the smoothest and greenest of tennis-lawns; there were stately alleys, planted with quaint shapes of box and yew; an ancient sundial and a moss-grown fountain; trim walks through trellised doorways, that led to conservatories gorgeous with tropical flowers; and shady corners, much appreciated by the young people who came to Lady Mary Hazlewood's garden parties, and that at other times were Meta Hazlewood's favourite retreat.

Lady Mary was the widow of a general officer, and Meta was her only daughter, a tall and rather stately brunette of twenty-two, who had been out two or three seasons, and had refused several eligible offers without any very apparent reason. Miss Hazlewood did not even give any reason. The gentlemen who had done

her the honour to wish to marry her were not to her taste, she said, and seemed to think that statement conclusive.

Meta's indifference to suitors was the only point of difference between her mother and herself. Lady Mary would gladly have seen her daughter suitably settled—as, indeed, what mother would not?—but in the long run the girl always had her way.

"Do you want to get rid of me, mamma?" she would ask, with one of the smiles that were half saucy, and wholly sweet; and there could be but one answer to such a question. Nevertheless, Lady Mary could not help feeling that her daughter was perverse. The feeling was intensified just now by an offer from Meta's latest admirer, and by the fact that Lord Castleman seemed likely to fare no better than those who had gone before him.

"I can't understand it, my dear," said Lady Mary plaintively. "What was there in Sir John Hope that any girl need have objected to?"

"He was not to my taste," said Meta, for the hundredth time.

"Or in Captain Shaw? And I am sure they both worshipped the ground you trod on."

"They would have been welcome to do that, if they