

Parks, Gardens, Drives, Promenades, Etc.

Our parks are three; the Yerba Buena, Buena Vista, and the Golden Gate.

THE GOLDEN GATE PARK.—The Grand Central Park of New York contains but seven hundred and seven acres, used as a park proper. The Golden Gate Park of San Francisco presents a surface of one thousand and forty-three acres. New York's great park was not actually commenced until the fall of 1857, when the great commercial city of the Atlantic was well advanced in her third century. That of San Francisco was begun in the summer of 1871, before the great metropolis of the Pacific had fairly entered upon her second decade. In New York, during several years pending the proposed withdrawal of so many acres from purposes of building and commerce, the project called forth much heated and bitter discussion. This continued several years after the commencement of the park improvements. In respect to this particular, San Francisco presents an entire similarity. The original project, and especially the subsequently chosen location of the Golden Gate Park, elicited an amount of public misrepresentation and ridicule never previously equalled and which has not yet fully subsided. In the primary matter of financial cost and pecuniary returns, it is yet quite too early to institute comparison. Two facts relating to this part of the history of the Central Park may possibly indicate the probabilities in regard to our own great park which has but just begun to be. The total cost of the great New York Park, for the first twenty years, including the land, was over \$15,000,000. On the other side stands the great compensatory fact, which the opponents of such public improvements usually ignore or deny, that the increase in the tax revenue in the three adjoining wards, in 1872 alone, was nearly \$4,000,000 over and above what it would have been but for the opening of this great place of popular resort. Hence, laying aside all sanitary and artistic considerations, one can readily appreciate the truth of Mayor Kingsland's remark, "The people of New York look upon their park as a great public blessing cheaply purchased." Except in a few sordid souls the public opposition to the Central Park in New York has now wholly subsided before the almost universal public conviction that the outlay upon the park is the most healthful and every way profitable public investment in the annals of the present, and especially for future generations, that could have been made.

The Golden Gate Park lies in the western, or possibly northwestern margin of the city. Its length, lying east and west, is about six times its width. From Fulton Street, its northern boundary, it extends southerly some eight blocks to Franklin Street, which bounds it in that direction. The eastern limit of the park proper is the west line of Stanyan Street. From a little north of the center of this eastern end the entrance drive, or grand avenue of approach, with its bordering greenery, shrubbery, and meandering paths, occupying the full block between Oak and Fell streets, stretches eight blocks eastward to Baker Street. Westerly it extends to the shore of the Pacific, where its "Grand Drive," running nearly north and south, lies along the line of what would be Fiftieth Avenue, were it completed. It is fifty-six blocks long and nine blocks wide. The original surface was largely composed of small hills, sparsely covered with low shrubs, with here and there a few stunted trees, and toward the ocean end hills and banks of wind-blown sand. Much of it is nothing more than barren sand-doons. After careful study the most approved plans of covering, protecting, and fencing these sands by the cultivation of such trees and shrubs as have been most convenient for that purpose in similar situations along the coasts of France and Holland have been adopted and their successful adaptation and execution entered upon. The area of the park includes seven natural lakes or ponds. Avenues, rides, drives, and walks, eight miles in extent; groves, greens, and grottoes, arbors, terraces, mounds, and valleys, gardens, lawns, base-balls, and cricket grounds, embankments, cuts, tunnels, and bridges find place among the multiplied improvements and adornments already completed or contemplated in the present, immediate, and ultimate plans. Among the indispensable preliminaries, a well yielding eighteen thousand gallons of water a day was sunk, nearly three miles of water pipe, of which the larger part is four and one half inch wrought iron, has been laid. Besides these, the nursery, which was very early established, has already propagated over sixty thousand plants, of which upward of thirty thousand have been transplanted to different locations about the grounds. Already more than one thousand teams a day have driven over the broad, smooth roadway, while five hundred a day is quite a common average, and the increasingly large number of picnic parties, with the equestrian and pedestrian visitors, begin to afford satisfactory demonstration that the benefits of the Golden Gate Park are no longer problematical or prospective. Total disbursements to December 31, 1874, \$375,000.

The Commissioners, feeling the necessity of concentrating their resources on the principal park, have as yet paid but little attention to Buena Vista Park, which, however, will not be much longer neglected. The fine prospects of bay and city scenery which it presents will, together with its other natural advantages, make it a most popular resort. The small park around Mountain Lake, as an indispensable feature to the general plan, will also be improved before long, and Congress will also, almost certainly, grant the use of the most of the Presidio Military Reservation to the city for the purposes of a park. It will, therefore, be seen that San Francisco is in process of being liberally and well supplied with desirable places of outdoor recreation.

WOODWARD'S GARDENS.—Park, garden, pond, fountain, museum, aquarium, conservatory,

The Best and most Cleanly Family Baths in the City are at 113 Geary.