

THE WEST SIDE.

The Riverside and Morningside Parks-- Past and Future Improvements on the West Side of the City--The Effect on Real Estate.

The work of improving the upper end of the island on the west side of the City, which has been retarded by reason of the Ring frauds and the empty treasury they left behind them, and to some extent by litigation in the Courts, has attracted such general attention and is of such wide interest that the following account of the present condition of the improvements will prove both timely and interesting:

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

The first act of importance to improve the west side of the City at the upper end of the island, containing, as it does, 1,400 acres between Fifty-ninth-street and Manhattanville, was passed by the Legislature on the 13th of April, 1866, empowering the Central Park Commissioners to cause a survey to be made of that part of the City bounded on the north by One Hundred and Fifty-fifth-street; on the east by the westerly line of the Eighth-avenue, north of Eighty-second-street, and by the westerly line of the Ninth-avenue south of Eighty-second-street; southerly by the south line of Seventy-second-street east of the Tenth-avenue, and by the southerly line of Sixty-seventh-street, west of the Tenth-avenue, and westerly by the Hudson River, and to prepare maps and plans showing such changes in the width, direction and grades of the streets, avenues and roads then laid out within the area described, and in the pier and bulkhead lines established, as in their opinion could be made with benefit to the property affected, and also the boundaries of such streets, avenues, roads and public squares as in their opinion could be laid out or discontinued with like benefit, and to report the result of their labors to the Legislature.

Under this act the report of the Central Park Commission was made to the Legislature in March, 1867, and the final act was passed on the 24th of April following. In this act the Park Commissioners were given exclusive power to open or close such streets, avenues, roads, public squares or places, and to widen streets or avenues, and to change the grade thereof, as they might think proper, in the district bounded by the south side of One Hundred and Fifty-fifth-street, east by the westerly side of Eighth-avenue, south by the southerly side of Fifty-ninth-street, and west by the Hudson River, and also within a space of 350 feet in width surrounding the Central Park, the powers so conferred to cease on the 1st day of May, 1872.

The Commissioners filed their map on the 7th of March, 1868, fixing the grades of the streets and avenues between Fifty-ninth and One Hundred and Fifty-fifth-street. Since its commencement in September, 1868, has been partially stopped since the disruption of the Ring. It is expected, however, that it will be completed by the time the several existing contracts expire. The walk on the east side is to be narrowed several feet, to allow a greater width of carriageway. The matter has been referred to Messrs. OLMSTEAD and VAUX, who will soon report upon it. The engineer, Mr. M. A. KELLOGG, favored a sidewalk of twenty feet in width, while Mr. GREEN advocated one of twenty-five feet, instead of thirty, as originally proposed. The railroad tracks are to be placed upon the extreme easterly side of the avenue, close up to the sidewalk.

MANHATTAN-SQUARE AND THE ART BUILDINGS.

Work upon Manhattan-square was commenced as early as 1868. Upon the accession of the Ring Park Commission in May, 1870, they decided to change the location of the Zoological Garden from Manhattan-square to the Central Park. The site originally selected was never fitted for such a purpose, owing to the impossibility of securing perfect drainage. The square is to be removed for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Natural History, and other public buildings. A bill passed the last Legislature appropriating several hundred thousand dollars toward the erection of suitable buildings for the purpose.

MORNINGSIDE PARK.

Next to Riverside Park in point of importance to the improvements of the west side, is the proposed Morningside Park, situated on the high bluff of land lying north-westerly of the Central Park, commencing at One Hundred and Tenth-street, and extending to One Hundred and Twenty-third-street, between Eighth and Tenth avenues. Its name was suggested by the fact that it possesses a sunny exposure in the early morning hours. From it a clear and unobstructed view of the Sound and its moving craft can be obtained at all times, and the outlook in other directions is almost equally attractive. As laid out the Park will contain handsome walks, flower-beds, jetting fountains, a play-ground, &c. When finished, it will doubtless be a favorite resort for children and invalids, as bracing air and a charming prospect, in which marine and land scenery are blended, are attractions which will be sought after, especially in the early part of the day, even by those who do not reside in the neighborhood. During the past year it has been surveyed and a plan made to improve it. About \$8,000 has been spent thus far toward carrying out the plans.

STREET AND AVENUE NOMENCLATURE.

At the base of Morningside Park a new avenue has been laid out which is yet undesignated. It starts at One Hundred and Tenth-street and connects with the Avenue St. Nicholas at One Hundred and Twenty-fourth-street. It is proposed to name it Knowlton-avenue, after the Gen. KNOWLTON of WASHINGTON's staff, who fell near this point. Morningside-avenue begins at One Hundred and Tenth-street and follows a northerly direction to One Hundred and Twenty-second-street, when it takes a westerly course and taps the Riverside-avenue. Another avenue, extending from One Hundred and Sixteenth-street to One Hundred and Twenty-seventh-street, between Riverside-avenue and the Boulevard, is to be called Riverbank-avenue.

Among the numerous improvements proposed for the west side is a plan to change the designation of some of the avenues. For instance, it is proposed to call Eighth-avenue above Fifty-ninth-street Central Park-avenue. The Eleventh will be designated as West End-avenue, which name seems to meet with much favor, as this part of the City has with a certain class come to be regarded as the west end of the Metropolis. Other changes of names, it is thought, will follow.

THE EFFECT ON REAL ESTATE.

An important measure affecting the west side is the proposed widening of Broadway from Thirty-fourth to Fifty-ninth-street. The matter is now in the Courts, an appeal having been taken to the awards first made to the Court of Appeals. Property-owners regard the proposed widening as absolutely necessary, Broadway being to the west side what the small end of a funnel is to the larger one, the former representing the distributing part, while the latter is the receiver. With Broadway widened, a grand avenue of communication is established from the Battery, through the heart of the City, to the future homes of the wealthy classes on the west side. It is not difficult, those versed in real estate matters argue, to foresee the future of this section. The delay thus far in improvements has undoubtedly permanently benefited all property west of Central Park, for the reason that no inferior buildings have been erected, and values have now, in anticipation of the improvements above noted, reached a high figure.

With the completion of the Morningside and Riverside Parks, the improvement of Eighth-avenue, the erection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Manhattan-square, the widening of Broadway, and last, but most important of all, quick transit, the west side will present attractions not surpassed by any city, even among the boasted though beautiful capitals of modern Europe.