

Settlement Bulletin



VOL. III.

MAY, 1909.

NO. 3.

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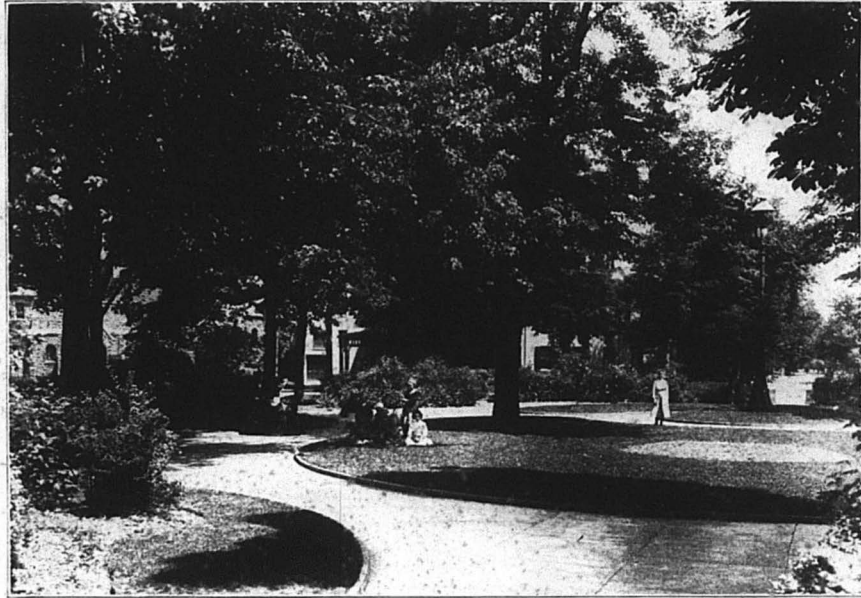
Settlement Bulletin

ISSUED NINE TIMES A YEAR IN THE INTEREST OF THE SOCIAL SETTLEMENT

Vol. III.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., MAY, 1909.

No. 3.



FRANKLIN SQUARE.

DO THE CHILDREN USE THE PARKS?

HOW TO BEAUTIFY ROCHESTER

You have asked me to say something about the beautifying of Rochester. I have noticed that there are two times in each year when people's thoughts turn intuitively to city beautifying. These are in the Spring, when the out-of-door world is most inviting, with the bright early flowers, the tender green of the opening foliage, and the warm air and sunshine that seem so good after the winter's rigors. The other time is in the Fall, when people come back to town after a season in the country. They return full of vigor, full of love for the town, and with pictures of natural beauty fresh in their memory to make inevitable contrasts with town conditions.

Now the Spring fever is on. That it is climatic to a certain extent does not mean

that it is inessential, or lacking in claim on our permanent attention. The wish to make cities beautiful, and by so doing to bring beauty in comparatively small area into the lives of the greatest number of people, is a phase of civic religion. The Spring impetus it receives is just as important as is the Holy Week and Easter strengthening to religious fervor. And it is just as little significant of a transitory value in the impulse.

The annually new appeal each Spring of the world out-of-doors is, of course, the secret of our quickened interest in, and closer observance, at that time, of the city's physical condition and scenic possibilities. But along with this call of beauty in nature, it is to be noticed that in Spring those parts of the city for which man is responsible, notably the streets, are most forlorn. Then the mud is thickest, or the dry dust borne on Spring gales

most distressing; then the accumulated filth and rubbish of the winter is revealed; then, just as there is most to do in cleaning up our gardens and houses, there is most to do in cleaning up the city. For this reason there has been lately established in a good many cities, and it has been suggested for Rochester, a general Cleaning-up Day. The mayor issues a proclamation, making the occasion a holiday from usual occupations, and calling upon every citizen to put his own property in order, and placing at the service of the citizens—for carting away the rubbish—all the teams of the city. Usually, too, as many more as can be obtained have to be pressed into service.

This is good work, but it is only the negative and temporary side of city beautifying. A house to be beautiful must be clean, but every clean house is not

Continued on page 4

Settlement Bulletin

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Editorial

It takes a disaster such as the recent fire to make us realize the amount of good feeling, of general human sympathy that exists in the world. It is a revelation—the way in which people come to each others aid at such a time, offering a part of their own possessions to make up for losses that cannot be quickly replaced.

On Tuesday, April thirteenth, about thirteen houses were destroyed and about fifty families rendered homeless in this neighborhood, through the spreading of the Gibbs Street fire to this part of the town. Many of these families went to the homes of relatives or friends, some found shelter in the Assembly Hall of the Settlement until they should be able to procure new lodgings. At once people began to appreciate the need of assistance of all kinds. The near neighbors were perhaps the most generous of all in sharing with those who had met with misfortune, but friends from all over the city brought what they could to help along. The city officials backed up the relief work staunchly, putting Dr. Crapsey in charge of a large relief fund. Other cities were prompt in their expressions of sympathy and offers of help. It was not a matter of form, it was real warm-heartedness and it prevented the suffering for food, clothing, and shelter that might have been the consequence of such a fire. When we are talking about "the city beautiful" it is worth while to make note of this other kind of beauty that seems to exist and to remember that the public works which we have or hope to have are expressions of something deeper in our city life.

One lesson of the fire that seems emphatic is the need of fire-proof construction. Such construction for small homes sounds expensive. It is not. Someone asked the day after the fire why the sudden demand for rooms did not send the rents up in this neighborhood. (The answer was that it could not because no one can raise what is already sky high. For no larger rent than is already paid by many long-suffering families, return could be made for an investment in fire-proof, model homes in this part of the city, and a good per cent. of interest paid to the investors as well. When will we learn to take proper precautions for safety. To say nothing of hygiene?

The Day Nursery is coming. We knew it would come when we suggested it. It seems almost too good to be true and we are sure all the small babies can hardly contain their joy, and their impatience to get into their new day-home.

Our children have a song that is loved above all others just now—in fact they would sing it the year round:

"Sing happy children, the birds and bees
are here.

The May time is a gay time, the blossom
time of the year."

Repeat and repeat. There is something about the song that just brings visions of parks and woods and fields, and the happy life of birds and bees and blossoms. The children long to go and run and roll over and over on the green, green grass. Then comes so vividly the picture of the vacation home, way out in the real country, that last year was a joy to so many "happy" children. Do you suppose there will be a vacation home in the real country *this summer?*

Heartiest thanks are particularly accorded the children of Public Schools Nos. 15, 18 and 26, whose kindly spirit met the appeal for relief for the school children who suffered from the recent disaster. It is a spirit of friendliness and kinship that may well strengthen from year to year among the children of our various schools.

HOW TO BEAUTIFY ROCHESTER

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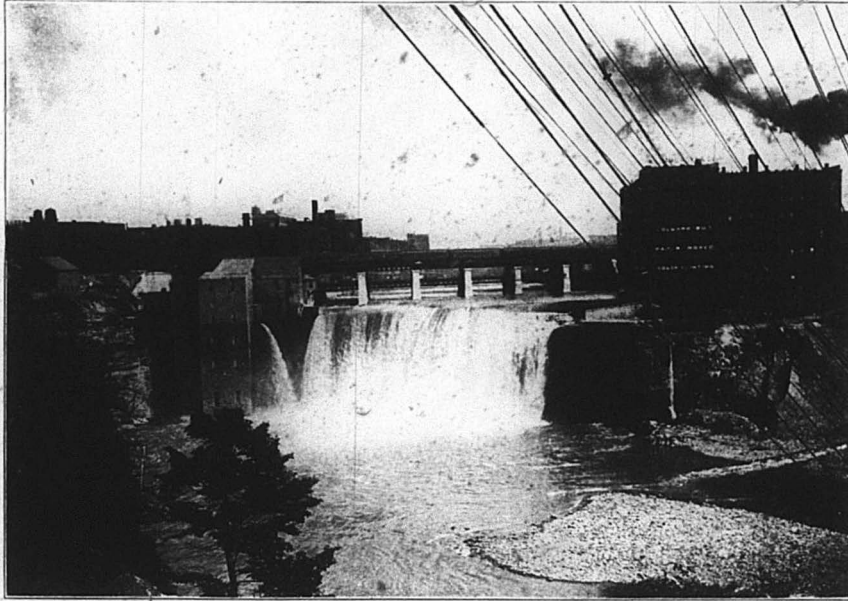
beautiful; and cities in this respect are like houses. There should be something constructive in our work. Each season's quickened interest should push Rochester, with all her great opportunities, one step nearer the goal of city beauty. If one year should see the sewage taken out of the lower Genesee and that romantically lovely gorge restored to the people's enjoyment; if another year should see a splendid new railroad station realized, and a couple of miles of city-circling boulevard; a third year a beautiful Public Library in fitting location, with more of the boulevard constructed, so that the parks might become jewels on a chain of beauty; if the interest of each year could be so controlled and directed that there would be annually marked a definite forward step toward the civic ideal for Rochester, we should not have to wait long to behold her the City Beautiful. By 1915, for example, how much we might have done, what a transformed city we might have.

The way to secure this, in my judgment, is to obtain a civic improvement commission, composed of public-spirited leading men of the community. This commission should be non-partisan, and it should be permanent, to insure continuity of effort. It should have the right, subject to popular approval by vote, to issue bonds; and it should receive from the Council an annual appropriation. The first thing this commission should do is retain a board of out-of-town experts in municipal improvement, who should make a study of Rochester, its possibilities and needs, and prepare a report on what ought to be done here, and how it should be done—an authoritative and artistic Plan for the city to grow toward. This would be the chart and compass of the civic improvement commission; it would give us a concrete ideal to work to.

CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON.

There was a little financier who got two
cents each day—
I think he was a boy about your size—
And half his wealth for candy and half
for gum he'd pay—
He squandered it, I'm sure no one
denies.

There was a little financier who had a
clever thought—
Now listen to the wisdom of the wise—
And to the Penny Provident each day his
bits he brought—
He's pretty rich by now, as I surmise.



GIVING VIEW OF PROPOSED SITE FOR NEW STATION.

Much has been heard of late and much has been accomplished in the line of municipal improvement to keep pace with the great strides that have been made by private enterprise in the development of a Greater Rochester.

One of the greatest, if not indeed the greatest movement, is that which contemplates the construction of a Grand Central Railway Station over the river bed at Central Avenue. Plans prepared by William J. Wilgus, of New York, at the instance of public-spirited men of Rochester provide for the handsomest railroad station in America.

The plan put forth by Mr. Wilgus calls for the masking of unsightly buildings between Central Avenue on the north and Main Street East on the south. The Genesee River at present flows between two banks which are lined by the rears of buildings of all sizes and character. The plan to place a union station, to cost \$1,400,000, over the river bed would have the banks of this stream lined with facades of great architectural beauty and grace. The distance to be so improved is about 3,000 feet. Twin boulevards would extend from the station to Main Street East, giving travelers a short, quick, covered approach to the business heart of the city. The property on Main Street East necessary to make

a suitable opening onto this thoroughfare can be bought for \$250,000. This, however, would be included within an estimate that provides for a plaza in front of the stations, the erection of the boulevards and improvement of two bridges. This estimate is \$750,000, and would be all that the city would have to expend under the plan. The building of the facades would naturally be left to the property owners along the river banks, but under the supervision of the city so that the erection of them might be uniform. There is no question in the minds of real estate men that the owners would gladly do this, as the boulevards will bring travel right past their doors, give them an entrance on two thoroughfares, instead of one, and increase property values to an enormous extent.

The completion of the plan would give Rochester a station and approaches more beautiful than anything ever dreamt of by other cities in America. In addition it would solve a question as to how the Genesee River could be brought to the fullness of its beauty.

The bringing out of these plans aroused much discussion and some raised the question whether the work could be done for the amount stated by Mr. Wilgus. That there might be no error of judgment the Chamber of Commerce, a body of great influence and activity, engaged

Professor William Burr. Professor Burr came to Rochester, studied the Wilgus plans and made a thorough investigation of local conditions.

In his report on the matter Professor Burr stated that the plans could be carried out in detail and within the estimate made by Mr. Wilgus. Professor Burr also offered some suggestions whereby the areaway of the river bed could be increased and the utilitarian value of the river enhanced.

There were still some who doubted, and Charles H. Palmer, vice-president of the Genesee Valley Trust Company, found that the property needed at Main Street East could be purchased for \$250,000 or just \$25,000 more than estimated by Professor Burr, but still at a figure that would bring the cost of the whole plan within \$750,000.

As the matter now stands, sub-committees made up of Rochester business men have reported as to the practicability of the Wilgus plan, as to the solidity of the river bed and banks; as to the approximate correctness of the estimated expense and as to the willingness of the New York Central Railroad Company to consider the project. All Rochester is now awaiting word from the railroad company whose annual meeting is to be held April 16th, when it is expected some action will be taken.

Walter B. Duffy has offered to head a subscription list with \$10,000, provided a million dollars is raised to defray the cost aside from the share to be borne by the railroad company.

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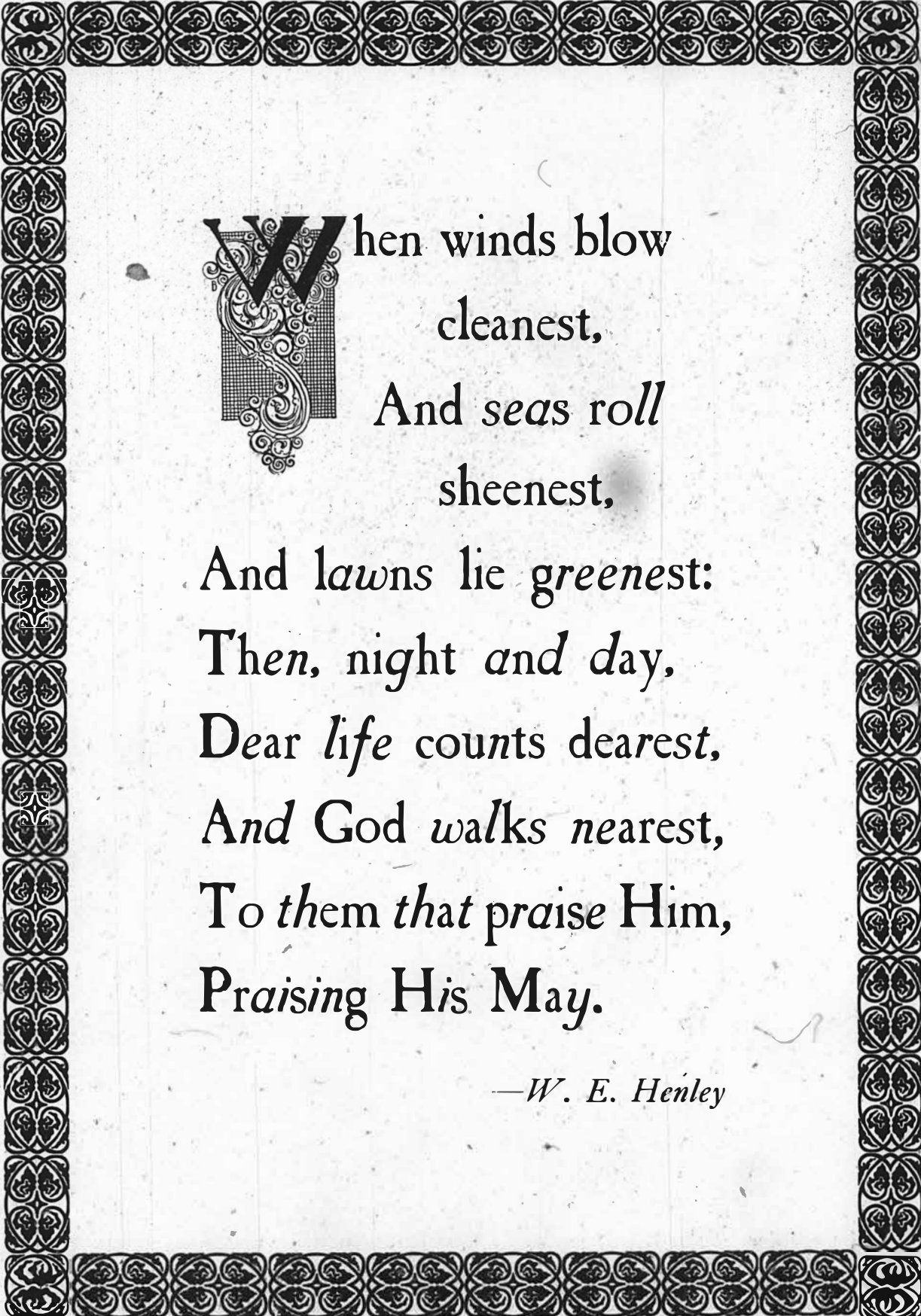
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—*W. E. Henley*