

WHAT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOT IN NEW YORK?

Well Known Artists Express Their Preferences and Show an Astonishing Lack of Unanimity, No Two Selecting the Same Place--But They Upset the Popular Opinion That Skyscrapers Are Ugly.

WHAT is the prettiest spot in New York? That is a question asked not only by the hordes of visitors who annually visit New York, but by an ever-increasing number of resident New Yorkers. Its constant recurrence implies that it is a question not easy to answer. For of late years we have been wading up to the fact that, from an artistic point of view, this metropolis of ours is anything but ugly. We were taught formerly to believe—and most of us, with exceeding docility, agreed to believe—that the prettiest spot in New York was an outward bound transatlantic liner. We became convinced that when business entered the door beauty flew out of the window, that, in art, a skyscraper was taboo, likewise anathema, that—in short

where he spends his time when he is not at Dublin, N. H., or Florence, Italy. Mr. Brush is by no means averse to American subjects. Years ago he first won prominence by his paintings of American Indians and Aztecs. But New York has never appealed to him. After that remark of his, though, he evidently repented of his harshness, for he recollected that he had indeed found something here that was beautiful—just one thing. "There is a little bridge in Central Park," he bethought himself, "which is not only the one pretty bridge in New York, but the one pretty bridge in all America."

The reporter eagerly inquired where this paragon might be found. "It's near 110th Street, in the north-

"It is a place where shouts and hurrys are out of place. You want to rest there. It is a place where Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' might be ideally given."

"The Flatiron Is Beautiful," Robert Henri.

Robert Henri was found in his studio, hard at work amid canvases big and little and multi-colored pots of paint laid out like ice cream of assorted flavors. The noted "insurgent" painter, renowned as the leader and inspirer of

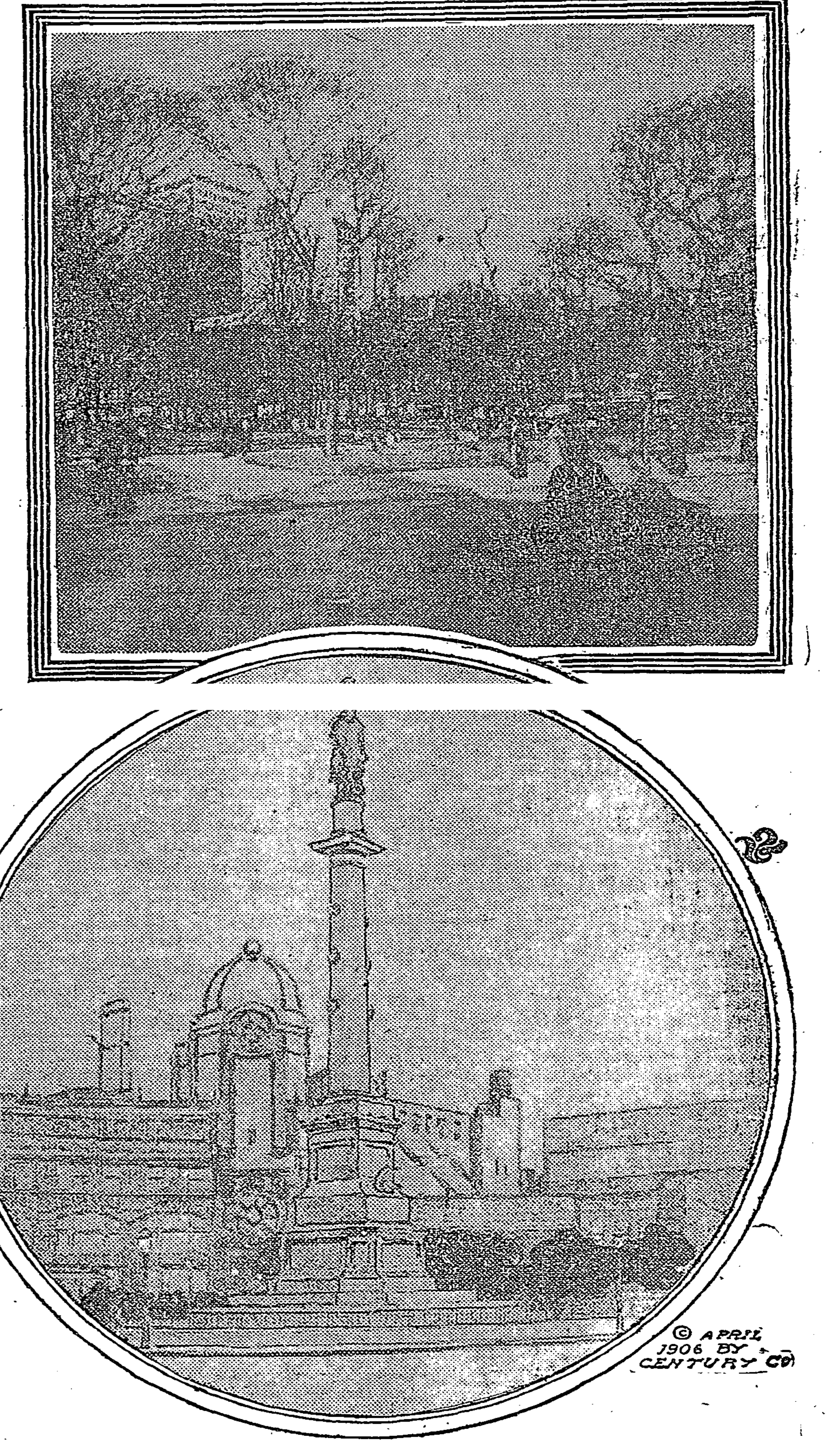
considered as typifying the New York spirit—the spirit of modernity and progress."

"All New York Is Picturesque"—Jules Guerin.

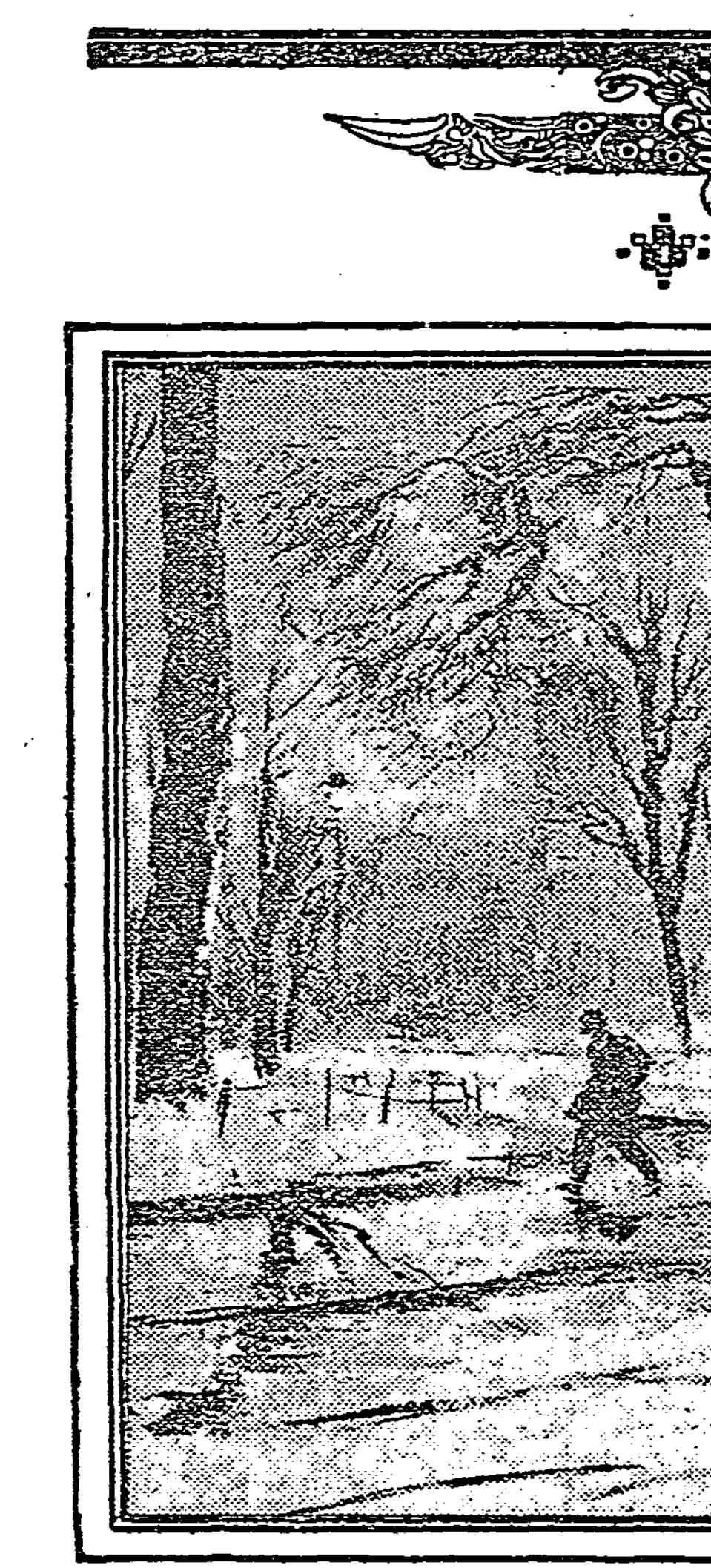
There is no artist more enthusiastic about New York than Jules Guerin. He has wandered over it, up and down, exploring its most recondite nooks, and, judging from what he says, he has never failed to hit on something beautiful. New York has been his hobby for years, as scores of pictures by him attest. And

old New York as with the best examples of the restless city of to-day. In fact, he was wholly unable to pick out any one spot as the prettiest. "Why, all New York is picturesque and beautiful!" he exclaimed. "I can pick out any number of pretty spots." He began to cite them at random—they tumbled from his lips rapidly, one on top of the other. "One thing that particularly appeals to me," he said, "is the view from a point on the Hotel Astor roof garden, above the level on which the tables are

Paul Cornoyer, Who Made This Painting of Madison Square, Considers that New York's Most Beautiful Spot.



This View of Columbus Circle by Jules Guerin Shows One of the Beauty Spots He Likes Best.



Everett Shinn Finds Washington Square Fascinating. This Painting by Him Shows It in Winter.



Broad Street, Above Beaver, Here Shown in Colin Campbell Cooper's Painting, Is That Artist's Choice As the Prettiest Spot in New York.



This View of Columbus Circle by Jules Guerin Shows One of the Beauty Spots He Likes Best.

that New York might be everything in the world but—as for its being beautiful—perish the thought!

Now all is different. Not only has this city been quietly acquiring a large assortment of extremely handsome buildings, but it has been steadily forcing its way into art on its own general merits. Nowadays the majority of New York's artist colony—men trained for the most part in Europe, accustomed to paint all those stock bridges and gates and peasants—returning-from-work which stand for Old World art—are enthusiastic upholders of the theory that modern New York is a beautiful city, skyscrapers and all.

What is the prettiest spot in New York? The Times last week asked that question of a jury of twelve well-known artists. From their answers it will easily be seen how artists as a body look upon New York. Of all those interviewed only one came out with a statement wholly disparaging, and even he confessed that he had found here at least one thing which commanded his unqualified admiration.

As for the others—but here is what they said when the question, "What is New York's prettiest spot?" was put to them:

Skyscrapers Beautiful, Says Colin C. Cooper.

First and foremost in enthusiasm for the New York of to-day, the city of towering skyscrapers and fevered street traffic, is Colin Campbell Cooper, who may be considered the skyscraper artist par excellence of America, since no man has done as much as he to win a place in art for these giant structures. Years ago Mr. Cooper became fascinated by ultra-modern life and he has stuck to his first love through thick and thin. When asked the other day at his studio overlooking Central Park what he considered the prettiest spot in New York, he never hesitated for a moment. "Broad Street above Beaver Street," he answered, "I consider one of the grandest things ever concocted by man. Nothing anywhere else approaches it. It has a very handsome skyline, a perfect balance. It was one of the very first things I painted after arriving in New York."

"I took a vacant room at 60 Broad Street, from the windows of which I could get an excellent view northward along Broad Street, and at once set to work to paint. And while I was in my upstairs room, busily at work, another lover of the modern American skyscraper, Mr. Joseph Pennell, was seated on the stoop of the same building sketching the same view which had so strongly appealed to me."

"One of the points that most strikes me about this view up Broad Street is the dramatic contrast between the old, low type of buildings, put up in the 60s—both the brick buildings and those of the type occupied by J. P. Morgan & Co.—and the great skyscrapers. My pictures are built on these contrasts."

"I've sketched Broad Street from both its sidewalks and from its middle. In fact, it is hard to find a place from which the view is not excellent in composition and balance."

"Recently the big Gillender Building, on Nassau Street, the continuation of Broad, was torn down and another skyscraper of a different kind put up. But the latter, to my mind, has actually improved the view looking north from Beaver Street."

"New York a Horrible Mining Town"
—George De Forest Brush.

"No parts of New York are beautiful," declared George De Forest Brush. "It is a horrible mining town." "It is," he said, "in this studio on Macdonald Alley, that Paradise of New York artists"

"New York from Weehawken," As Painted by Henry Reuter Dahl. He Considers That View the Most Beautiful Hereabouts.

western corner of Central Park, close to the Subway exit on Amsterdam Avenue," replied the artist.

"It was merely by accident that I found it. In going to one of my art classes I took the wrong subway train. It landed me east of Central Park. I decided to get to my destination on the west side by walking through Central Park. In doing so I found this bridge."

"It really is very successful. Somebody, just by luck, happened to make it a handsome bridge."

"Prettiest Spot Here Is Known to Few"—Gutzon Borglum.

Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor, was asked whether he had views on the question. "Which is the prettiest spot in New York?"

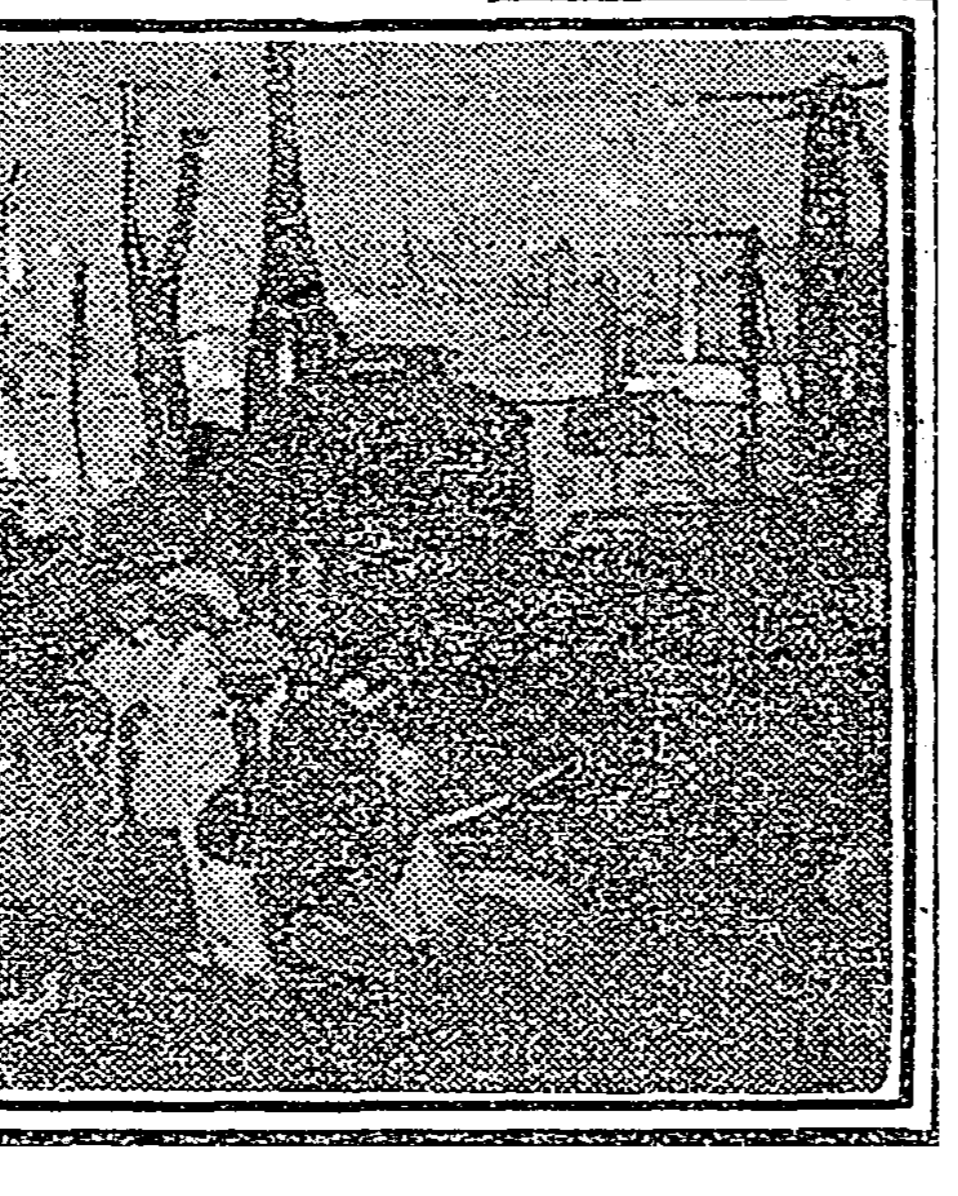
"Very decided ones!" he promptly replied, reply in keeping with Mr. Borglum's well-known reputation as a militant fighter as well as sculptor. "The prettiest spot in New York," he said, "is the Ramble in Central Park—that portion of the Park on the northern edge of the little lake. Oh, I'm sure of that; there are no two ways about it."

"What is more—New York doesn't appreciate it."

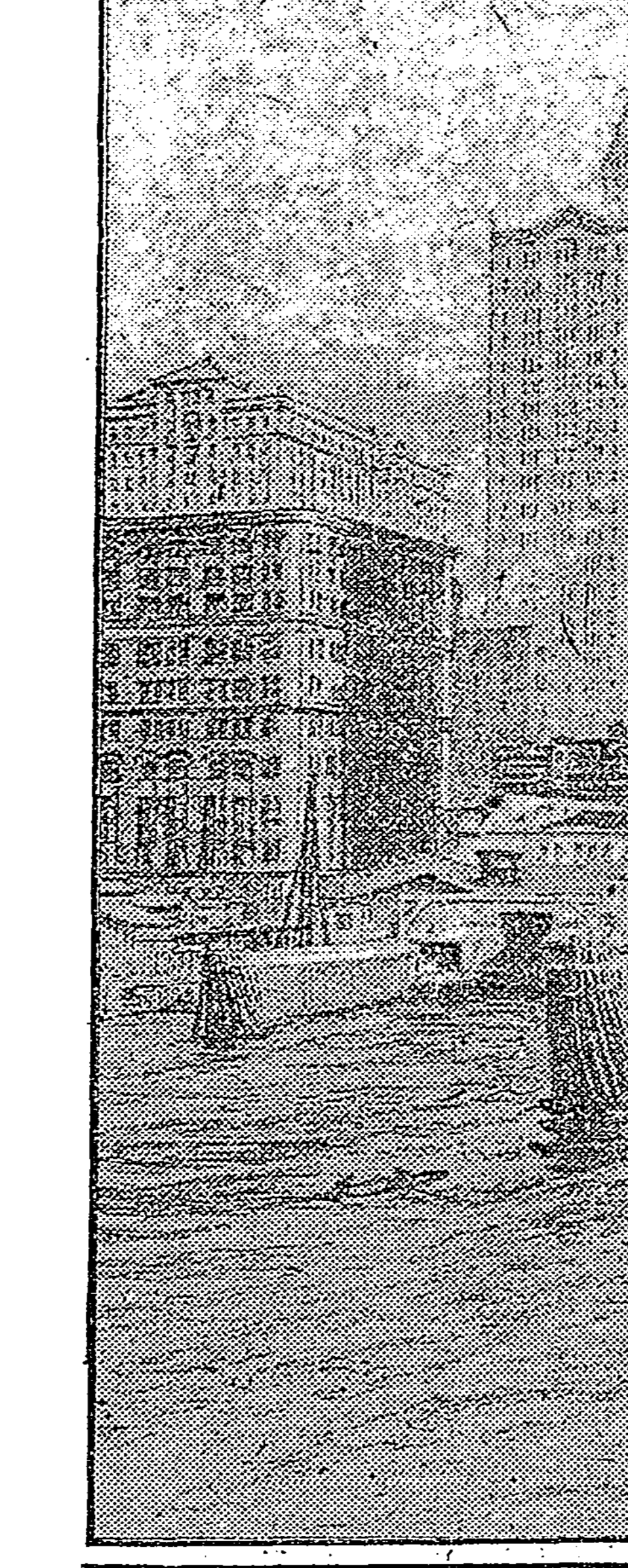
"Do you know why it is that every time a movement is started to encroach on Central Park, New Yorkers invariably step forward and successfully oppose it? Because the men who originally designed the Park guarded its natural features in a manner far different from what would have been done had it been designed in these days."

"The entire Park, with the exception of the Mall, is free from tedious landscape architect conventions. Its strange natural beauty, which persists in spite of drought, neglect, and lack of appropriations, is responsible for the Park remaining what it is."

"No spot in the Park has more of this natural beauty than the Ramble." Mr. Borglum was asked to express exactly what he meant. He shook his head. "Why, to give adequate expression to my ideas about the Ramble I should have to recite a poem by Keats," he declared. "The best way to approach the Ramble," he continued, "is by the ball ground just south of it. To go through the throng of gayly dressed children, playing games on that field, and suddenly to find yourself in the quiet of the Ramble makes a wonderful contrast. Instead of the shouts of the players, which a minute before were ringing in your ears, you have the rustle of trees, the waving of the green grass, the songs of birds. You almost expect to find Keats or Shelley seated on one of the benches in the Ramble's quiet paths."



Vernon Howe Bailey Has a Partiality for the View of Lower New York from North River. A Drawing of It by Him Shown Here, by Courtesy of Harper's Weekly.

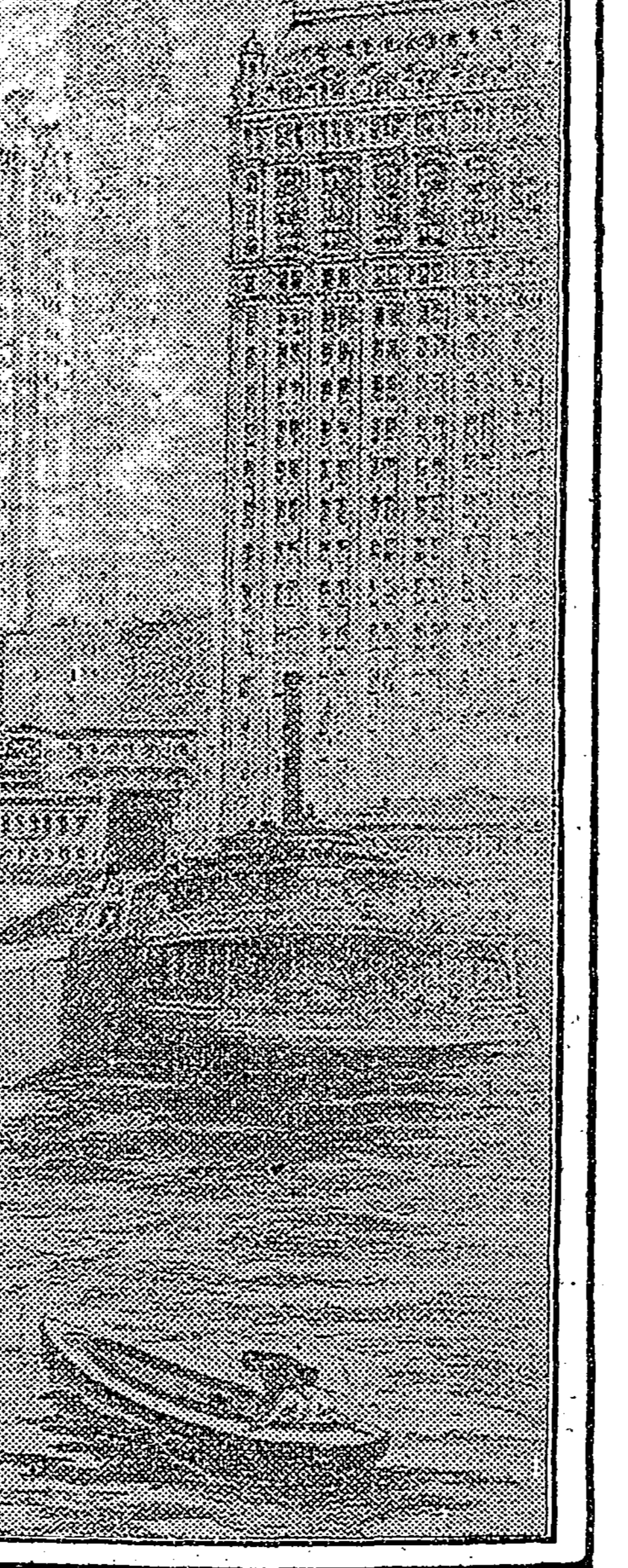


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"The Eight," declared he could not pick out any one spot as the most beautiful in New York. When he finally did make special mention of one, he insisted that it be thought of it "among many other beautiful spots."



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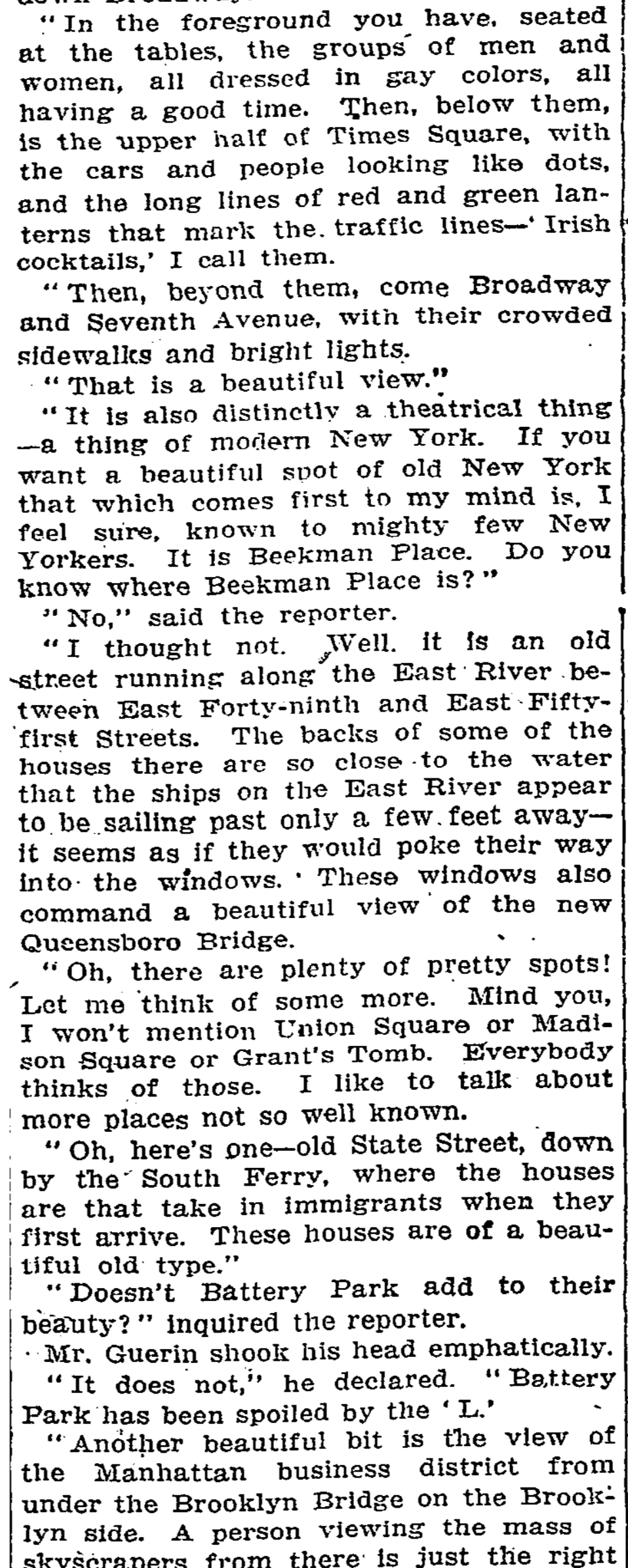


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it is in New York that his most ambitious work has found a home. His are those colossal mural decorations in the lobby of the new Pennsylvania Station on Seventh Avenue, before which even the traveler with but a few seconds to spare before "train time" must needs stop to admire.



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Guerin's fame rests largely on his work as a decorative illustrator, especially of architectural subjects. Like Cooper, Pennell, and others, he has fully recognized the beauty of the skyscraper. But he by no means confines his attention to that giant form of structure. His eye for beauty is equally well satisfied with bits of

affair highly suggestive of art and work. "First, there is the beauty that has the quality of charm," continued Mr. Bailey, "the kind that is to be found in Gramercy Park or in quiet Greenwich Village. If I went out looking for charming spots I'd look for them in those older sections of the city."

"But, on the other hand, take the Metropolitan Tower over there"—he waved his hand toward his studio window, "the side which the snow white giant rose majestically into the air—that tower is under certain conditions of atmosphere an impressive thing. Seen from across the East River it is perfectly beautiful."

"The same is true of downtown skyscrapers, most especially of the group of them seen from the North River. It is also distinctly a favorite among these views of skyscrapers I should take this group: The Hudson Terminal, the City Investing Building, the Singer Building, and the West Street Building, as seen from the North River."

"This mass of big structures, contrasted with the low buildings and ferry houses lining West Street, makes an impressive and beautiful view."

"To me it is the concentrated essence of the downtown skyscraper. All the buildings forming it are different in style, yet, together, they form a whole that is perfectly stunning. What a bully skyline they have!"

"One thing that contributes to this effect is that the West Street Building is beautiful not only for its size and architecture but from the color standpoint. Owing to the rich coloring around its roof and upper stories it contributes very materially to the beauty of the whole group."

"Another favorite with me is the view down Madison Avenue, from about Thirty-first or Thirty-second Street, toward Madison Square Garden. There you get all its soft terra cotta in the foreground, the old tower, with its statue of Diana, and in the background the great, white Metropolitan Tower."

"New York Is All Very Beautiful."
—John Sloan.

"The most beautiful spot in New York is the spot where you happen to be at the time you are seeing it right," said John Sloan.

He, too, is a member of The Eight, young, but famed already as a painter of the slums, of the "depths of city life." Sloan hails from Philadelphia—but years ago the beauty of New York lured him away and kept him away from the Quaker City.

"New York is all very beautiful to me," he said. "Not being a native of the city, it keeps up its interest for me. I lived in Philadelphia from early childhood, from the very start that I knew Philadelphia so well I had to go further to find its beauty."

"The surprise was off things—that was the trouble. Here it's not. Everything seems new to me and beauty is easier to find."

"On successive days one spot in a city may run all the way from ugly to beautiful. Beauty depends on the condition of the eye at a given moment. Tastes as to the beautiful things in a city differ as much as they do regarding the beauty of women. And you know how tastes differ there—which is what makes it possible for all to find mates!"

intrinsic charm. Lately I have been looking at the western half of Stuyvesant Square. Usually it seems to me very beautiful, yet to show you how one's tastes vary at different times and in the heat of Summer when it is too hot to be beautiful."

"The Hudson River is one of the finest things here, yet how many people daily miss its beauties by coming to New York in the tunnel underneath it. The Hudson varies greatly at different times and is seen through differing moods. And it is not only the artist who sees the same things in different ways, according to his mood. Take the case of the business man crossing the Hudson in a ferryboat toward New York."

"If business is good, New York, from that ferryboat, looks good to him; if business is particularly good, it seems like the gates of Paradise."

"But if business is bad, that same New York looks like the gates of hell. In that, all men are artists."

"One reason why I find it difficult to choose one spot in preference to another is that, in my work, I seek to subordinate mere places to the persons I paint and to the idea of city life I seek to convey."

"Here, now"—the artist took up a picture of a group of persons in Union Square—this is a good illustration of what I mean. It represents, as you see, a Spring day in a beautiful spot—for Union Square is a beautiful spot. Here you have a recruiting Sergeant seeking to enlist men in the army. Here you have a young man who, instead of enjoying the freedom and beauty about him, is gazing at the Sergeant and the poster beside which the latter is standing, evidently meditating the sacrifice of his freedom."

"Now, that's the way I paint—Union Square, you see, is simply the spot where that incident happens."

"No! I cannot pick out any one spot as the prettiest in New York. If you had, I'd get through my work here very quickly. As it is, there are so many beautiful spots in the city that an entire lifetime seems too short for painting them."

Madison Square Has a Champion.

Paul Cornoyer, well known as a painter of New York subjects, answered the question as to the prettiest spot in New York thus:

"My first choice is Madison Square, my second Washington Square." "Madison Square has such a broken skyline," he continued, when reasons were demanded. "Then its clumps of trees, the variety of architecture in the buildings surrounding it, and the beauty of the old Madison Square Tower all contribute to the fine effect of the whole."

"But the principal reason for my partiality toward it is that it lends itself so readily to pictures. I have painted it many times."

Mr. Cornoyer's studio-gives ample proof of that. Madison Square from various points of view lies about in corners or on easels. Another painting on the same subject is now a part of the United States exhibit at the International Exhibition at Rome.

"I like trees combined with people—a combination of landscape, buildings, and the life of the city," the artist observed. Then he said a few nice things about Washington Square and went on with his work.

"Nothing Like North Washington Square"—Everett Shinn.

But it took Everett Shinn to sing the real paean of praise to Washington Square. To begin with, he loves it so that he lives in Waverley Place, just around the corner from it—and, to judge from the number of paintings adorning the walls of his home, this energetic member of "The Eight," spends a good part of his time putting his favorite spot into art.

"That north side of Washington Square

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WHAT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOT IN NEW YORK?

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with the Washington Arch is fine," he exclaimed. "There is nothing like it. The architecture of the row of houses is of the best—it is the only mark to be found in New York of a fine old city.

"As architecture it is famous. The row of houses is well known abroad, as it has been picked out for special praise by foreign critics.

"Portico Row in Philadelphia is something like it—quiet, and distinctive of a great city.

"Yes, when I want to be sure to find beauty I go to Washington Square. Of course, there are plenty of other fine spots in New York. But—when you want to be reasonably sure of getting a good meal, you prefer to go to your favorite restaurant, don't you? Part of the meal you get may be bad, but the chances are that the rest of it will suit you—aren't they?

"Well, the same sort of thing happens to me with Washington Square. No matter what the conditions may be under which I see it—no matter what my mood may be—I feel almost sure that it will appeal to me as beautiful. So that's where I go."

Nothing in the World Equals New York's Skyline.

Henry Reuterdaahl, marine painter, who went round the Horn with the battleship fleet and has painted scores of warships and other subjects of the brine, lives over in Weehawken and never tires of gazing across the river at the jagged line of buildings on Manhattan's North River front.

"In my opinion the most beautiful thing about New York is its skyline—the pile of skyscrapers as you see it from the North River," he declared.

"Nothing in the world equals it. Paris has nothing like it, neither has London. Architecturally, outside of the old City Hall and some few other relics, our skyscrapers are the only buildings which are distinctively American.

"Nothing of the city's grand architecture is American. The new Public Library is fine in its dignity, but it does not belong here. It is Greek; its lions are foreign, so is its architecture.

"The grandeur of the Pennsylvania Station comes under the same head—it is another Greek temple. And almost every bank in the city is a reproduction from the Acropolis, elbowing for room between a brownstone front and a dilapidated tenement, its severe face lighted

Famous Places in Various Parts of the City Selected by a Jury of Twelve Artists.

up by the blazing sign of a neighboring chop suey joint. The classicism of these banks does not belong here; it merely indicates safety and the respectability of the Directors and makes the depositors go to bed happy.

"Our proud Fifth Avenue is a conglomeration of foreign styles. Schooled in Paris, our architects seem to have retained the memories of the Beaux Arts and brought over their influence. The châteaux of Francis I. are here; the 'curlycues' of the French Renaissance, modernized with open plumbing, are the background for the new aristocracy. And Senator Clark's new mansion, an international crazy quilt of the builder's art, should be in Coney Island with the roller coaster and not on our great thoroughfare.

"Not so with the skyscraper. It is American from its caisson to its coping. It was made to suit American requirements and character. Massive and thoroughly practical, it is ugly to the effete, but its gigantic simplicity becomes beautiful because it fits the soil. It is a monument to go-aheadness to the nervous energy that stamps the city. In Paris it would be out of key.

"From the edge of the Palisades I have every day, morning, noon, and night, for eight years looked at this wonderful skyline. To-night again I see over there the great pile of downtown skyscrapers rising in the mist. The sinking sun is gilding their tops—their towers turn into gold. Every window in the Singer Building glows like a jewel, rich in opalescence. The lone monolith at the edge of the Battery shines like a burnished sword. The low buildings beneath, the piers and their shipping, lie in the shadow, a confused mass of purple—only the red of the Mauretania's smokestacks looms up, a note of color to balance the glow on the towers above.

"And the tumult in the river!—snorting tugboats, puffing upstream, the 'canalers,' giddy in color, with the wash flying in the breeze—the river steamers plying north to Albany, their white sides shining iridescently in the green water—a stately clipper loosening sail while the towboats take her to the lightship—all these are just some of the parts of the kaleidoscope which is the foreground of this great scene.

"The picture is still unpainted. Whistler might have done it had he lived—Claude Monet, perhaps—but none of us has yet succeeded!"

Beautiful Central Park Should Be More Beautiful.

William Ordway Partridge, sculptor and painter, declared without hesitation that, among all New York's beautiful places, there is none to compare with Central Park.

"It is the focal point of New York and a centre of great natural beauty," he told THE TIMES man. "For a park of its size it has more variety of scenery than any park anywhere. Its topographical features were treated with supreme art by its designer. He kept the natural beauties and yet made them accessible.

"That sort of thing is better done in England than here. There they treat a forest, for instance, so that it looks as if

it were untouched, and yet it is accessible to people.

"I think the most beautiful portion of Central Park is the upper part, near the corner of 110th Street and Central Park West. There you go down into quite a glade, where rocks rise up over thirty feet."

Strong as is Mr. Partridge's admiration for the Park he thinks that it could be greatly improved in all sorts of ways. He said:

"It has many sites which could be treated for sculpture and where landscape architects could erect pergolas or ornaments such as the Japanese use in their gardens. This would enhance the Park's beauty. Stone seats might be introduced in place of the unsightly benches.

"I don't share in the hue-and-cry against Central Park. Of course, there are a few trees in it which need attention and, in spots, the grass is worn down, but money might easily be appropriated to remedy these ills.

"But I do concur with the men and the newspapers who are making a fight to preserve the integrity of the Park against all aggressions.

"Central Park's statues interfere greatly with its beauty. The sculpture is of the crudest kind. The Park would be much better without them. It would be well for the Art Commission to exercise its power of removing these statues, as has been done in the Public Garden at Boston, where statues that were no better than caricatures of the eminent men they represented were taken away and artistic representations of the same men substituted. Here in Central Park statues like those on the Mall of Burns, Scott and Halleck are a dishonor to those they were intended to honor.

"Statues for a park should be of a sylvan, lyrical character. It is entirely unfitting that a statue of Daniel Webster should be, as it is, standing at a crossroads, with automobiles careering past on every side, and yet show the statesman wearing a dress suit! That is grotesque.

"And take the statues of poets on the Mall! If a poet's statue is to be in a park, he should be represented more or less as he would be if he went to that park in real life.

"It is extremely unlikely that Scott or Burns or Halleck would ever sit on the Mall in the pensive attitude in which they are now shown there, with crowds of noisy people walking past them.

"There is plenty of reason for having a building like the Art Museum in the Park. Another especially appropriate adornment is Cleopatra's Needle. Harmoniously placed as it is, it invites people to contemplate it quietly and turn their thoughts to its history; its sister obelisk, amid all the hurly-burly of the Thames Embankment in London, is not calculated to invite contemplation.

"I think that figures of nymphs should be placed in the Park—say, over cascades, the latter being an especially attractive park feature.

"Another suggestion: Why not take away the entire animal kingdom, with the exception of the flocks of sheep on the lawns—which remind one of England—and the fowl on the lakes? Bronx Park is the place for the other animals. The Central Park Zoo is, at best, a small one. It is also unsightly and full of bad odors.

"Central Park is no place for a menagerie. People go there for rest and recreation, not to look at wild animals."

Brooklyn Bridge The Finest Thing of All

"The finest thing of all in New York is to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge at twilight," said Francis C. Jones, well known as a figure painter, and Treasurer of the National Academy of Design.

"Then the waters of the East River are like opal and the whole effect is like fairyland. The best time for the walk is about 5 o'clock on a Winter afternoon, when every light in every one of the big downtown buildings is lighted.

"But there are plenty of other beautiful spots in New York—oh, a great many. One I particularly like is the view looking down the slope on the bank of the Hudson, between Eighty-ninth and Ninetieth Streets, toward Grant's Tomb.

"Then there is the outlook from Morningside Park through the groups of Lombardy poplars toward the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and its terrace.

"And here are a few others: The extreme end of Manhattan Island, opposite Spuyten Duyvil; in Central Park, looking toward the building of the Historical Society and the Universalist Church, and the glimpse of the City College from West 145th Street. Any one suddenly catching sight of that last would not know he was in America."

Just Greene's Luck

IF anybody but Greene had told me this I wouldn't have believed it, and I wouldn't have believed him if it had happened to anybody but Greene," said the man. "The other day Greene lost five dollars. When he got home he began to figure out where he might have lost it. There was a chance every time he took out his pocketbook. He had had his pocketbook in his hand, he remembered, when he left the drug store at 104th Street, and again when he left the florist's at 101st Street.

"In order to expedite the search Greene telephoned the news of his loss to the druggist. The druggist was very accommodating. He promised to put the whole drug store force on the job and to telephone back the result as soon as the premises had been thoroughly searched.

"While waiting for a message from the druggist Greene telephoned to the florist, and received similar assurances of co-operation. In about five minutes the druggist called up. The five dollars had been found lying under the edge of a dry goods box on the pavement and would be handed over to Greene.

Greene jumped into his coat and grabbed his hat, but before he got to the door the florist telephoned that the five dollars had been found in the ash can just outside his door, and would be held against all comers until Greene called for it. Greene's conscience is of the India rubber variety, so he had no compunctions about collecting the five dollars from both druggist and florist. "I'll bet that wouldn't happen to anybody else on earth but Greene."