



FOOT OF VAN BUREN STREET, LOOKING SOUTH ALONG THE LAKE FRONT.

MICHIGAN AVENUE, LOOKING NORTH FROM VAN BUREN STREET.

PRESENT CONDITION OF CHICAGO'S LAKE FRONT BETWEEN PARK ROW AND VAN BUREN STREET.—DRAWN BY H. G. MARATTA.

### CHICAGO'S LAKE FRONT PARKS.

WITH Lake Michigan in its door-yard, Chicago has been cut off for almost forty years from many of the advantages which cities usually derive from a water-front. Extending from the mouth of the river southward nearly seven miles, to Fifty-first Street, a great railroad corporation has maintained a barrier of tracks, spiked fences, and stone walls, which effectually prevented the public from approaching the lake. And it not only claimed the right to prevent passageways across its property, even at street intersections, but it contested with some success the efforts of pleasure-boat-owners to use the docks and piers along the shore, and it interposed every possible obstacle to their success. So it happened that a few fishermen, a few out-at-heels loungers, and ragamuffin boys have been the only frequenters of the lake front. Before the ordinary citizen could reach the water's edge he was forced to buy a ticket of the railroad company, with which to pass its turnstiles. In addition to this the great corporation, on the strength of its claims to the riparian rights, had been steadily encroaching on the lake, and reclaiming land worth millions of dollars.

A few years ago Chicago rebelled at being thus fenced in, and as a result of public indignation a fight was instituted in the courts, which continued for many months, bitterly contested by the legal representatives of the company. The supreme bench of the United States finally decided that the city of Chicago was the owner of the lake-front privileges, and that it could force a passageway across these tracks of the Illinois Central Railroad Company. Unfortunately this decision referred only to the frontage from Randolph Street south to Park Row, the eastern boundary of the Lake Front Park; but the Park Commissioners anticipate no difficulty in getting a satisfactory agreement with the railroad company when they are ready to continue the park southward along the lake shore to Fifty-first Street.

For a time this decision did not help matters much. The Illinois Central Railroad Company only fenced in its property more closely, and a huge unsightly viaduct was built over its tracks at Van Buren Street. Visitors to Chicago during the World's Fair will remember crossing this structure as they went to and from Jackson Park by water.

After the fair there was much agitation of the lake-front question, and the public demanded an opportunity to approach and to enjoy its water-front unrestricted by viaducts, fences, walls, and dangerous tracks. The city wanted room to expand, and a place in which to breathe freely on a hot afternoon. So great was the pressure that Mayor Swift took the matter up, and negotiations were opened with the railroad company, resulting quite unexpectedly in a prompt and satisfactory settlement of the whole question so far as the Lake Front Park downtown was concerned.

Since that time Chicago has begun the building of its greatest park, which, with the miles of boulevards, lagoons, viaducts, and tunnels connecting it with the other parks of the city, will cost more than \$12,000,000. And when the work is done, Chicago will have perhaps the finest water-front and driveway of any city in the world. Beginning at the end of Sheridan Road, at the northern limit of the city, it will extend southward through Lincoln Park, down the North Lake Shore Drive, now nearly completed, burrow under the river in a huge tunnel, extend through the Lake Front Park, and southward along the lake shore to

the southern boundary of Jackson Park, a distance in all of more than twenty miles.

Work is now in progress on the Lake Front Park proper, which extends eastward from Michigan Avenue, between Park Row and Randolph Street, containing about two hundred and twenty acres, nearly one hundred and seventy acres of which are being reclaimed from Lake Michigan; and as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made a narrow band of park will be built southward along the lake shore to Jackson Park, a distance of more than five miles.

Thus far all the actual expense of improvement has been borne by the Illinois Central Railroad Company, although the board of South Park Commissioners, of which James W. Ellsworth is president, has now accepted the park in the rough, and will complete the work rapidly.

When the Illinois Central Railroad Company was negotiating for a right of way into Chicago in 1852, Michigan Avenue was unprotected from the hard northeast storms which so often blew in on the south shore of the lake. Often the roadway of Michigan Avenue was washed out by the waves. Finally the city entered into an agreement with the company by which the road was to come in on pilings driven out into the water, and as a compensation for this privilege it was required to build a breakwater which should protect the city front. After litigations and bickerings lasting through many years, the contract entered into with the city one year ago last fall has been fulfilled. The railroad company has its right of way 200 feet wide, and from Park Row to Randolph Street it has depressed its fourteen tracks an average of four feet. Four hundred feet east of Michigan Avenue it has built a retaining-wall twenty-two feet high, with ornamental stone copings, and on the lake side of the right of way is another wall of like dimensions, thus providing a great stone trench, cutting the park north and south, in which all of the railroad's movements will be concealed. Twelve hundred feet eastward, in fifteen feet of water, it has built a sea-wall thirty feet wide and 8000 feet long, and four ornamental steel viaducts have been built from the old Lake Front Park over the trenched tracks of the road to connect with this great new part of the park, most of which is still under water. All of these passageways are made ornamental, with a view to hiding as much of the railroad operations as possible. They are slightly higher than are the street grades of the city, and from the top of them there is a magnificent view of the park and the lake to the eastward and the buildings and street traffic of the city to the westward. On the old park site the company has dumped 200,000 cubic yards of earth brought in from the drainage canal, making the surface of the park slope from Michigan Avenue to the top of the retaining-wall. For this work and for the relinquishment of litigation the city gave the Illinois Central Railroad Company nearly seven acres of land along its right of way. Resident Engineer H. U. Wallace had 800 men employed on the work for nine months. Fourteen tracks have been depressed and all the other improvements made with 1000 train movements every twenty-four hours—without delaying a single train.

The work of the Illinois Central Railroad on the park has cost something more than \$1,100,000, and it is now completed. The company has built for itself a commodious underground station, which, with its approaches at Van Buren Street, cost \$75,000.

Between the railroad's right of way and the outer sea-wall the Park Commissioners now have the giant's task of

filling in 169.6 acres of surface, in which is a water depth of six to fifteen feet. When this is done they will have a stretch of rough park land 1760 feet wide at its southern end and about one mile long. In addition to this they will have a fine strip of water between the park and the Illinois Central pier at Twelfth Street for use as a yacht harbor. In improving this magnificent park possibility they intend to spend millions of dollars. The plans, which are already being made by D. H. Burnham, former director of works at the World's Fair, show the inspiration of the exposition, and they are laid on a scale almost as grand. The park will be improved on architectural lines after the manner of many European pleasure-grounds. The strip directly east of Michigan Avenue will be laid out in beautiful drives and footways.

At the end of every street there will be either a Roman fountain or a statue, which may be seen a long distance, thus carrying the influence of the park far into the crowded parts of the city. Opposite one of the streets, probably Eldridge Court, there will be an equestrian statue of General Logan, by Augustus St. Gaudens. At Adams Street the Art Institute, already constructed, will stand in the centre of a beautiful park of its own; and at Washington Street there will be a magnificent Roman arch crowning the entrance to the tunnel which will lead under the Chicago River. This tunnel is to be a marvel of engineering architecture. It will be thirty feet wide, with a broad driveway at the centre, a bicycling-path on the left, and a footpath on the right. It will begin at Washington Street and extend northward under the river to Pine Street, where it will connect with the extended Lake Shore Drive in a grand concourse. Its various paths and driveways will be connected with archways ornamented with statues in full relief, and throughout the tunnel will be lined with marble or tiling, making it the finest tunnel in the world.

To the east of the Illinois Central tracks, in the part of the park reclaimed from Lake Michigan, there will be a number of handsome buildings. In the very centre, opposite Congress Street, the new Field Columbian Museum will be erected, and the priceless relics of the World's Fair now housed in the old Art Gallery at Jackson Park will be moved into it. The museum will stand at the centre of a park of its own, four blocks long; and to its eastward, facing the lake, there will be a monument to Columbus the discoverer; on the north, a monument to Washington the liberator; on the south, a monument to Lincoln, the emancipator; and on the west, a pedestal, to be left vacant until Chicago sees fit to honor the memory of one of her own sons. Eastward from the museum, and at the very edge of the lake, a space is provided for a fountain, modelled after the Macmonnies fountain which stood in front of the Administration Building at the World's Fair. It will pour a constant stream of water into the great basin of the harbor which fronts the park. To the north of the museum, and separated from it by a broad parade-ground, there is room for a huge armory building for housing the various military organizations of the city, and to the southward there will be a great play-ground and a possible exposition building. Extending the full length of the park, a wide terrace will slope to the water's edge, and provide a lounging-place for the thousands who wish to escape the heat and noise of the city. Plans have also been made for a great viaduct, beginning at Randolph Street and running northward over the river to the north side. This, with the tunnel, will provide ample means of crossing the river.