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## TAKE A LOOK AT THE PARKS: CHANGES FOR THE BETTER MADE BY SUPERINTENDENT EGERTON

A Radiantly Different Distribution of Floral Beauties This Year -- Rare Specimens Are Now Labeled -- The Smaller Parks Rearranged and Artistically Decorated -- Hints for the Fourth of July.

Albany can boast as pretty public parks as any city. Under the management of Supt. Egerton, they have this season witnessed a complete reformation and change in floral characteristics. Mr. Egerton is a natural artist in decoration and has so changed and arranged the city parks that they not only exhibit the floral and botanical specimens much more excellently, but the plants are made up into striking beds and every one put where it will show to the best advantage. Mr. Egerton's love of contrast has become a characteristic feature in the park, and every-thing, from the gigantic trees to the smallest plants, is arranged in a way to attract and please the eye.

Through the courtesy of the superintendent reporter of *The Argus* drove about the various city parks yesterday and had the changes, which had been made in them explained. In every case, everything was in a healthful condition and showed up wonderfully well.

Regarding the changes which have been made under his administration Mr. Egerton said:

The plants and palms have been taken from the greenhouses, near the superintendent's residence on the New Scotland plank road, and placed in the several parks of the city. It has taken three weeks of the united efforts of four gardeners, several assistants and two or three teams to transfer the plants to the several parks, to prepare the beds and plant the stock.

The tulips, hyacinths and narcissus were carefully removed from the beds ornamented by this class of plants this spring, and as the planting of the greenhouse material was deferred this season until all probability of a frost had disappeared, ample opportunity was afforded the bulbs to ripen and a fine stock is on hand for next season's planting, to be supplemented by other now stock.

The following parks have been planted with bedding and semi exotic plants: Washington, Bleeker (below the Cathedral), St. Joseph's, and Rensselaer Park (north of St. Joseph's). The changes in the style of planting have been somewhat radical, and localities in Washington park, not heretofore ornamented with flowers, have been generously treated in this respect. There is

a good and sufficient reason for centralizing the floral effects in one or two localities, particularly adapted for such embellishment by exposure and design. It gives an opportunity to mass effects in color and variety, and to protect by day and night the plants from depredation, that otherwise would be dissipated in a more varied distribution and left to the tender mercies of every one tempted to despoil the beds or 'mutilate the specimen plants.

A gardener is employed by day at the Willet street side of the park, and one at the Madison Avenue side, where the principal effects in floral planting are noticeable. Those men care for the plants and lawns, and at the same time protect them. Both men are special officers, and have power given them by the police board to make arrests in case of necessity.

At night special sworn officers are detailed for the same purpose. Whenever plants are unprotected in Washington Park, it has, by past experience and that of the present season, been found impossible to preserve the bloom.

The smaller city parks where flower beds are exhibited, are enclosed, and thus to a certain extent protected, but frequent thefts of flowers occur. The citizens surrounding these parks should interest themselves in protecting them.

The styles of planting as exhibited at the Willett street and Madison avenue sides of Washington Park differ essentially, and this difference is studied and designed to offer contrasts in treatment, called for by exposure to the sun and wind. The former site is treated as an exotic garden, where palms, bananas, tree ferns, agaves, crotens, yuccas, pampas grasses, canvas, caladiums and such semi-exotics are lavishly used, supplemented by beds of achyranthus and the varieties of alternanthera, heliotrope, coleus, etc. The Madison avenue garden is more varied and less tropical, but a greater variety of well known border plants are here exhibited, with a generous display of perennial. The Lakehouse end of the park has been fenced off to protect the water plants there from incursions of careless boatmen. The margins of the lake have been generously planted with rare aquatic plants. The banks immediately surrounding this aquatic garden have been ornamented with water living plants, and the dense growth of shrubs thinned out to give the public an opportunity to command good views of this part of the flower exhibit and more distant views beyond to the bridge.

Later on the effect will be more noticeable as the lilies, lotus, reeds, water poppies and water hyacinths appear in full bloom.

At the upper end of the lake, nestled in front of a mass of Norway spruces, a round bed is planted with a fine specimen of an Abyssinian banana, surrounded by two varieties of cannas, and bordered by a circle of achyranthus. The large leaves of the banana appear in bold contrast and relief with the spruces as a background, and the spot seems designed for the proper protection from too great an exposure to rain and sun.

The terraces in front of the lake house have been ornamented with fine specimens of agaves and yuccas, the large vases being well filled with plants for color and graceful habit.

Immediately in front of the refectory a mass of heliotrope has been planted, and the small oval bed is placated with a variety of sweet-scented tobacco, which blooms about nightfall, called the *Nicotiana Aflinis*.

Near the Armsby bust, a mass of helianthus has been planted which will give some color and offer a natural barrier to the walks concentrating there.

In Rensselaer Park, the floral effect has been massed in the centre. The bed has been enlarged, and altered in design. The trees have been trimmed of some of their lower branches to permit more light and sun to reach the lawns and flowers and to give a better view from without the park.

St. Joseph's park has been generously treated with a varied assortment of plants supplemented with yuccas, pampas grasses, cannas, etc. The trees and shrubberies in this park are noticeable for their beauty, and too lavish a use of color cannot but detract from the pleasing effect of a variety of foliage already presented by these growths.

In Bleecker park the fountain has been repaired and painted, and some beds of color introduced that will give a less somber effect to that densely shade enclosure.

It has been no small task to study out and arrange the desired effects to be obtained from a proper disposition of about fifty thousand plants; ranging from a palm twenty-five feet in height, to the border plant of one inch; to take them without danger or accident from pits three feet deep in the greenhouse, elevate them on stone boats or trucks, place them in position, and have every individual plant go just where it was designed to go. But this has been successfully accomplished, with what result a few week's growth will show.

The plants are just recovering from the shock of exposure and drought, but the generous rain of last Thursday has revived everything in the park, and has restored color to such portion of the lawns and slopes as seemed to be suffering a few days since from want of rain.

The plants will be well grown, and give promise of what effect may ultimately be expected of them later on the season, on or about the 4th of July, when the superintendent expects a visit from ten or more thousand people at night to view the fireworks. He hopes to have the lawns so well mown the thousands of feet may trample without great injury: but to control or direct the average country youth with his girl in the way he should go though the Park when her or she sees a bomb or rocket in the air is a problem that "Albany's finest," supplemented by special details of park workmen, ropes and similar gentle reminders of the path he should take, may, he hopes, prove effective. But, after all, reliance must be placed upon the good sense and breeding of the mass of people who come to be amused and are generally good-natured. It is hoped they will protect the park and do as little damage as possible. It is a good plan to take the

roads, and not the paths, which are less direct on such an occasion. If the site for the fireworks is approached by Madison avenue, less damage will be done to the park.

The structures in Washington Park have all been placed in thorough repair. Evidences of forethought and care are noticeable. Indeed, the park was never looking as well as it does this season. A visit was made to the superintendent's cottage, on the New Scotland plank road, where everything in the arrangement of the buildings and grounds would indicate the same thoughtful supervision.

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