

LONG-NEGLECTED CEMETERY TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO BEAUTY SPOT

Plans for Improving Lone Fir Cemetery Discussed by Howard Everts Weed, Landscape Architect, Who Will Lecture on Subject.



VIEW FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS BORDERLANDS

BY HOWARD EVERTS WEED LANDSCAPE ARCHT.

LONE FIR is the pioneer cemetery of Portland and has been used for burial purposes since 1854. It comprises 30 acres of land, bounded by East Morrison, East Stark, East Twentieth and East Twenty-sixth streets. Approximately 30,000 of Portland's citizens lie buried within these sacred grounds. The history of Lone Fir Cemetery is similar to all other first cemeteries in America in that no provision was made at the beginning looking to the after care of the tract when the land is entirely taken up with bodies. It has only been in recent years that the idea of "perpetual care" has been promulgated, but this idea is now so popular that no new cemetery can be a success without this feature.

Perpetual care means that a portion of the price paid for a lot is placed in a sinking fund. This fund is invested in approved securities and the income from this fund used for the care of the cemetery after the lots have all been sold. This is the common practice in all the better cemeteries of today. It means that our cemeteries no longer will be neglected. It means that they will be beautiful and park-like in their nature, a resting-place for the dead and an inviting spot for the living. Such a park cemetery at Webb City, Mo., has proved so valuable that real estate men have laid out high-priced lots all around it, owing to the enhanced value of the land on account of the park cemetery. This statement seems almost too extreme for those who have not investigated the subject and only know of cemeteries as neglected places filled with the cut and dried funeral emblems in the way of stones, fences and copings.

Suggested Improvements Various.

That Lone Fir has been an error for many years, all admit. Most people have accepted the conditions as facts, which cannot be remedied. The Park Superintendent has suggested that the bodies be moved to a new cemetery to be established by the city and use the present grounds for park purposes, having the city provide a perpetual care fund of \$100,000 for the after-care of the new tract and asking those interested in Lone Fir to remove the bodies therefrom. But such a plan surely is not feasible. Thirty thousand bodies never have been removed in this way. The cost is prohibitive for one thing and besides there is a feeling—rightly so—that the place of the interment of the dead is sacred ground. Once buried, the dead should be left in peace. Aside from this anyone who has ever had any experience with the removal of dead bodies knows that after a few years there is very little left to be removed. Many of the so-called removals are simply a matter of form. "What the lot-owners don't know won't hurt them," as it were. In the plan as outlined above, no bodies are to be in any way disturbed.

The other suggested improvements to Lone Fir have been that the cemetery be cleaned up and cared for each year. This is just what is done more

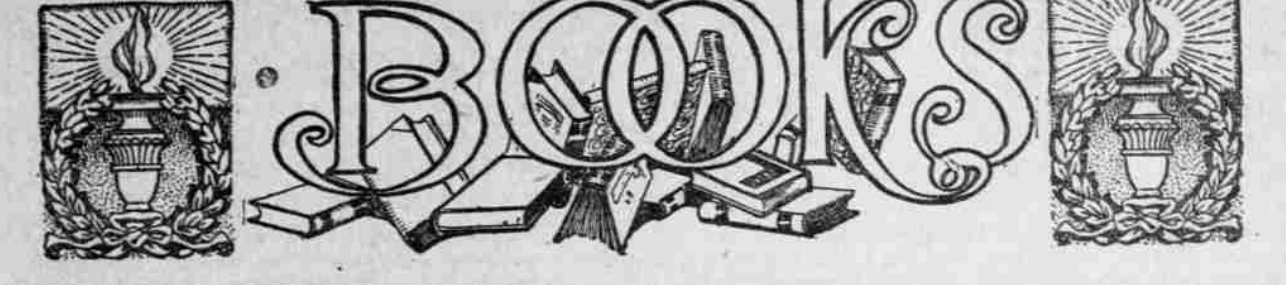
or less—largely less—now. Each lot-owner is asked for an annual contribution of \$5 for the care of the lot. But this fund has been getting smaller and smaller each year as those interested are themselves buried in Lone Fir or have moved to other places. So that the cemetery is today neglected and without funds for its care in any way.

Upon my visit to Portland last July I was asked to make a report on suggested improvements to this cemetery by Wilson Bonnell, the superintendent. He having known of my work in other localities along similar lines. The suggestions then made were taken up by J. A. Strowbridge and others as being the first practical plan offered for the improvement and after care of this cemetery. Through Mr. Strowbridge others became interested and I was invited here to take charge of the matter. At a recent meeting of a committee of the lot-owners I explained in detail my plan of improvements and these lot-owners formed themselves into a permanent organization to be known as the Lone Fir Cemetery Lot-Owners' Association, to be controlled by a board of directors, every lot-owner being a member of the organization. The directors have elected Dr. S. E. Joseph to be chairman and J. A. Strowbridge as secretary. They have started work by getting together a list of lot-owners so far as known and within a few days will publish a circular letter to all, asking their co-operation in this movement and making an explanation of what is proposed.

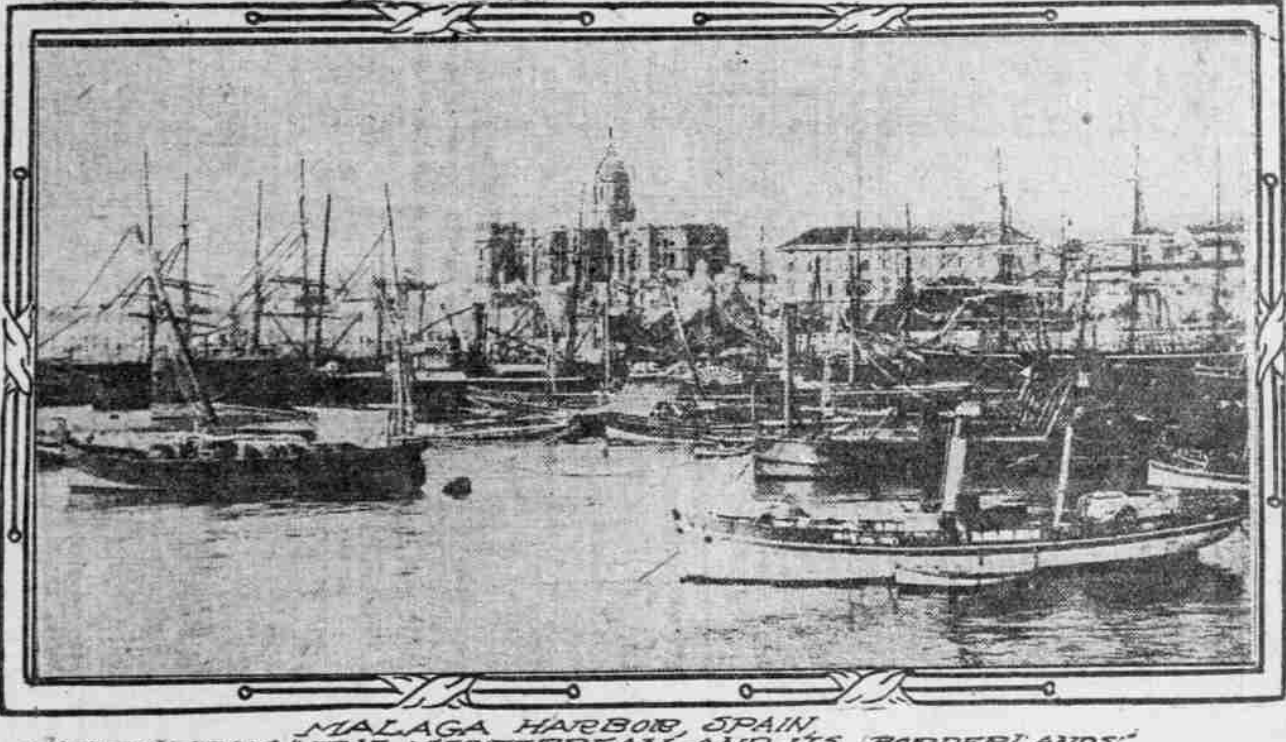
Work Proposed to Be Permanent.

Improvement work on this cemetery must be of a permanent character in order to do any good. The grounds must be so put in condition that they may be cared for hereafter in a very economical manner. Simply a good cleaning up would be money largely wasted, for the same thing would have to be done over again within a few months. It would be like a person having violent headache caused by improper food or poor digestion. The headache can be relieved for the time being by taking drugs which deaden the nerves and in this way cause the pain to disappear. But as soon as the effect of the drugs are gone, the headache is present again. To make the cure permanent the cause of the condition must be remedied. And so it is that in the proposed improvement to Lone Fir something more than a simple clean-up is needed. Let us get at the cause of the neglected condition, remove it, and then we can have a beauty spot which will be cared for economically afterwards.

Did you ever stop to think of why it is that cemeteries are neglected? Primarily it is because they cost too much to take care of. The reason of this is that the conditions are so complex. Each lot is a separate job in its care. In Lone Fir there are 30,000 lots. To make a separate job of each lot in the care of the tract is absolutely impractical. But if things can be so arranged that we simply have a 30-acre tract of land to care for, and this care to consist of only keeping the grass out with but few drives, we would then have things on a practical working basis, where, with a reasonable care fund,



"Don't mourn, my boy, for the days that are dead,
Rather think of the time that's near:
Don't cry, my girl, for your very own way,
Start right on the first of New Year."
John H. Coleman.



A VIEW FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS BORDERLANDS

there would be no excuse for a neglected future condition. Briefly stated, this is just what is proposed—to have a 30-acre tract of land to be cared for as a whole and not as 30,000 separate tracts or lots.

How then is this to be done? In the first place, I desire to state that the monuments will in no way be disturbed. But by such a statement I meant the monuments, as distinct from the headstones and footstones. Some of the monuments are artistic, and these will be planted with a background of shrubbery which will give them a better setting. Some few monuments are so absolutely poor that shrubs will be planted around them so that they may not mar the general appearance of the cemetery. Throughout the cemetery are many footstones, in addition to the headstones. All such footstones will be entirely removed, one marker to a grave being ample. Many of the graves are marked with simply wooden stakes. Cement markers sunk in the ground even with the grass will replace these. There are some old-fashioned slabs as markers which will be taken out of their sockets and placed flat on the ground, with the inscription up.

The graves will be leveled. The walks between the lots will be graded up even with the lots themselves so as to present an open sweep of lawn. The copings around the lots will be largely left, excepting that by having the walks elevated the copings will only appear when one is standing directly over them. In grading the lawn the machine will pass right over the copings. The few fences around some lots will be removed. All trees and evergreens will be left as now. New trees and shrubs will be planted, especially at the east end. Single specimens of roses and other small shrubs will be grouped where they will give the best landscape effects, irrespective of individual lots.

Simplicity to Be Kept.

In simplicity lies beauty and economy. This is especially true in cemeteries, but is also true of the style of a woman's dress, the architecture of a building, the streets of a city or anything. The more simple a thing the greater beauty it possesses, the more economy or first cost as well as the more economy of after care. In all the work at Lone Fir this great principle will be kept in mind. Everything which is done will be done with the end in view of economy of after care. Beauty will follow as a natural result. The complete removal of monuments and much of what has heretofore been put in cemeteries is simply that much "trim" of the gradually learning new ideas. Simply because custom has dictated conditions in the past is no valid reason why we should continue our mistakes.

In cemeteries the trouble is that we feel the loss of relatives keenly. We regret that we have not treated them better during their lives and think to make up for all this after death. Only in this way can the expense of monuments, copings and the like be explained. They are all utterly useless. They do the dead absolutely no good. Then let us remember the dead with proper memorials consisting of the gift to our cities of parks, public playgrounds and the like. Upon the entrance gateway to a public park in Lansing, Mich., the donor of the park has placed this beautiful sentiment:

"I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, I can do any good to my fellow-men, let me do it now, for I will not pass this way again."

Next the East Morrison-street side of Lone Fir is the unsightly Chinese

cemeteries. Here the dead are buried to remain from three to 14 years. At intervals the bones are dug up, put in boxes and shipped to native soil, this being a part of the religious belief of the Chinese. If this part of Lone Fir remains in its present condition it will ever be the eyesore that it is now, so that any plan looking to the general improvement of the cemetery must take this into consideration.

Efforts are being made to keep this a burial-place for the Chinese. In fact, the contract for such does not run out for a number of years, so that burial therein could not be stopped if so desired. But there is no good reason why burials should not continue as at present. The change that I propose is that numbered cement markers sunk in the grass take the place of the present wooden markers, all graves to be level and the grass to be kept mown with a lawn mower. This would make the cemetery an eyesore as pleasing as could be asked.

Estimated Cost Is \$10,000.

To put Lone Fir in a proper condition according to the line of work proposed, will cost approximately \$10,000. The directors of the Lot-owners' Association will have to rely upon voluntary contributions in the raising of this fund. But aside from this an additional fund will be needed for the perpetual care of the tract, once the improvements are made. This fund will be invested in Portland securities by the directors and the income used in the after care of the tract. As to how much a fund can be raised for such a purpose, the directors cannot say. The larger the amount the better care can be given. A fund of \$25,000 for perpetual care is more than encouraged at the way the citizens have taken hold of this matter. Every one has a good word to say of the movement. Those few who have not responded have held back because of a lack of understanding as to what is proposed. It is hoped that this article will make the proper explanation to all.

Lectures to Be Given.

In order that all citizens in any way interested may know all details of the proposed work, arrangements have been completed by the directors to have the writer give two lectures illustrated with stereoscopic views. The first of these lectures will be given at the Hawthorne Park Presbyterian Church, East Twelfth and East Taylor streets, Sunday night, January 8, and the second at the Taylor-Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Third and Taylor streets, Sunday night, January 15. It is hoped that all citizens may hear one of these two lectures. Further than this, the writer will be on the ground at Lone Fir Sunday afternoons during January and February and early each morning during the week to explain to the individuals the owners of the proposed treatment of their lots. In this way the co-operation of all parties is asked. Nothing will be left to chance, but will meet the hearty approval of every one after the proposed improvements are fully understood.

Books Added to Library

BIOGRAPHY.
Beaumont. The life of Benjamin Beaumont, Earl of Beaumont, by W. P. Moner. 1910.
Mark Twain. by W. D. Howells. 1910.
Davenport. The country boy; the story of his own life. 1910.
Dickens. Charles Dickens and his friends; by N. T. Shaw.
Eugene. Empress of France—Empress Eugenie, 1870-1910; by Howard Leagard. 1910.
BOOKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES.
Aegle. A novel. 1910.
Johann. A novel. 1910.
Kranz. A novel. 1910.
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DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL.
Cran. A woman in Canada. 1910.
Johann. A novel. 1910.
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FICTION.
Beaumont. The hard rock man. 1910.
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WINE ARTS.
Beaumont. The hard rock man. 1910.
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