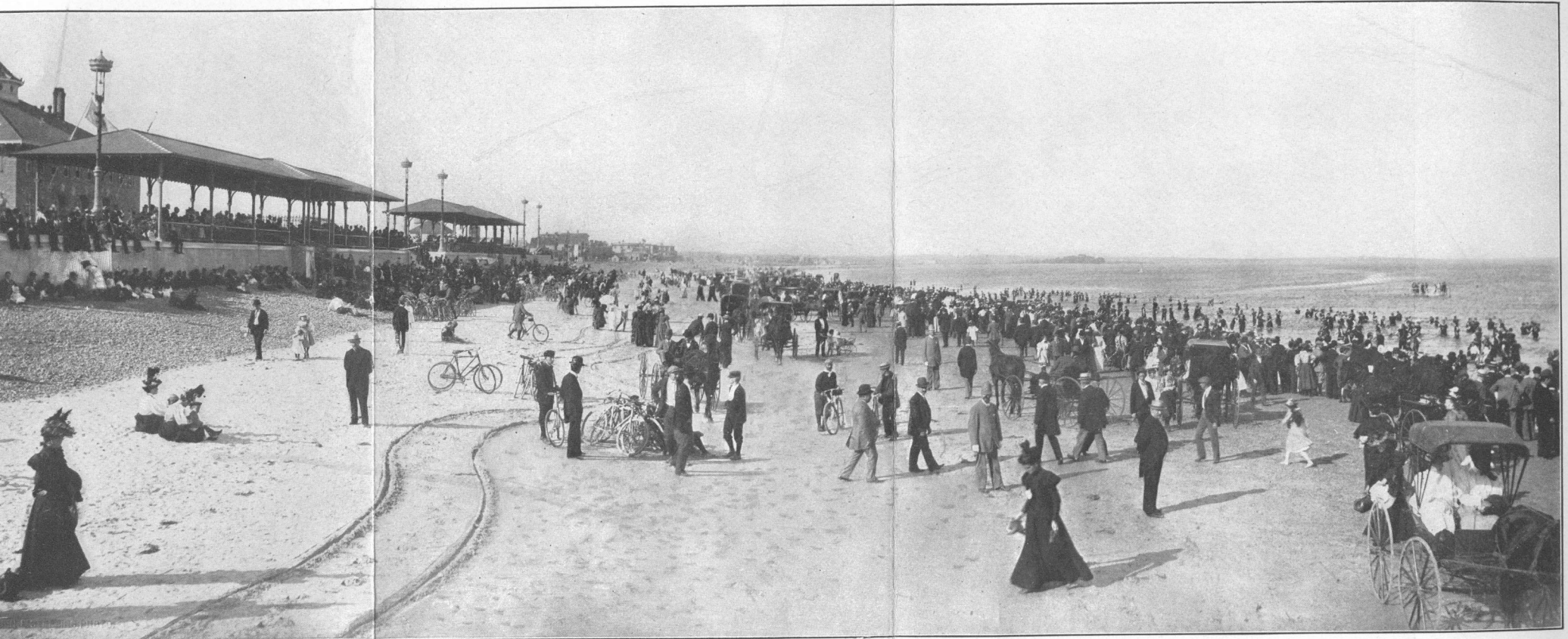


APPENDICES.



NO. 176.—REVERE BEACH, NEAR BOSTON. WHAT THE PEOPLE THINK OF ITS VALUE.



INK OF ITS VALUE.

APPENDIX A.—PUBLIC BATHING PLACES.

ONE of the most enjoyable and health-giving recreations for the people in a place with a hot summer climate is bathing, especially open-air swimming; but the natural facilities for it in Washington are not good. Sea bathing is unattainable within a reasonable distance, while the shallowness of the small streams and the muddiness and disagreeable banks of the Potomac and Anacostia do not make the fresh-water bathing attractive. In spite of these difficulties there is a good deal of unregulated bathing in retired places out of sight of the police, and the entirely inadequate temporary provision for bathing in the basin of Potomac Park is very largely used.

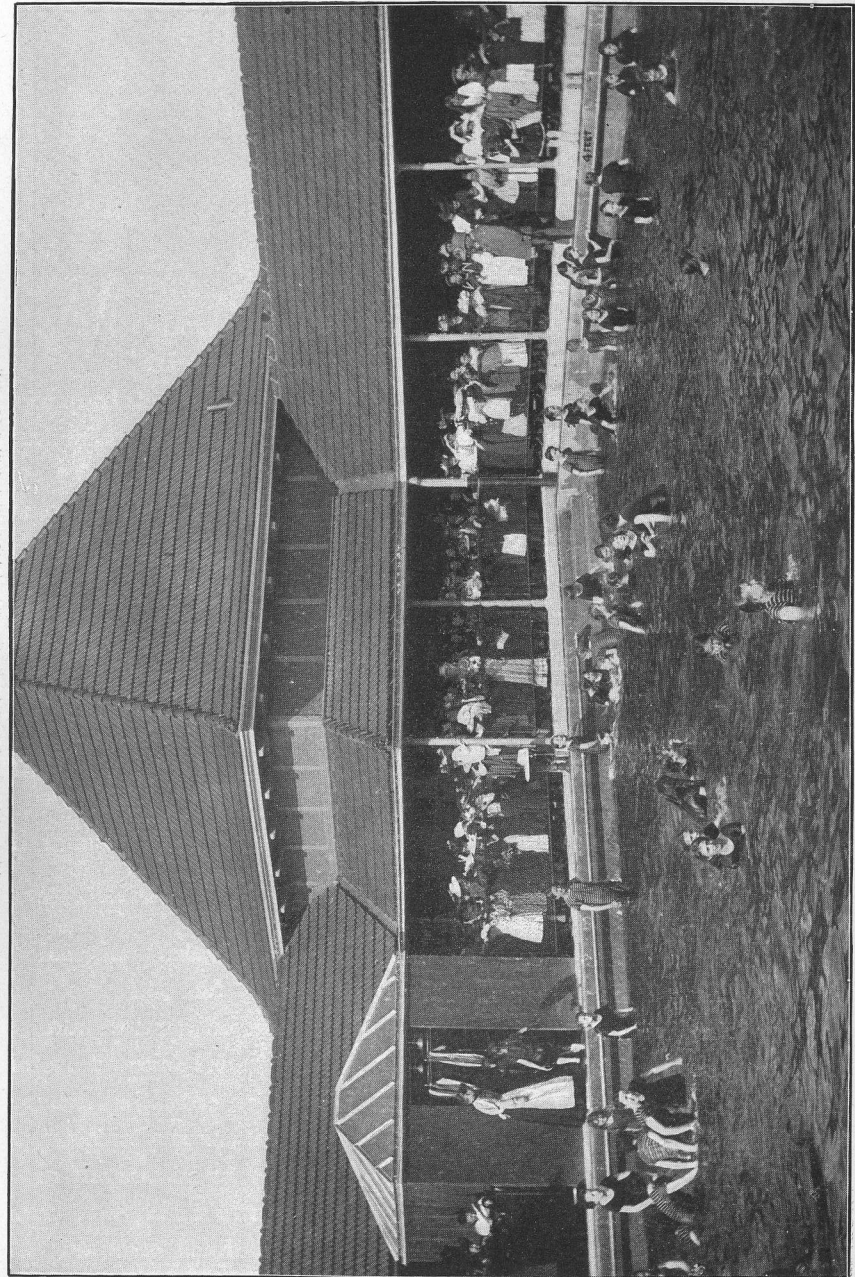
When a city has any place on sea or lake or river that is naturally well fitted for bathing, the popular appreciation of it quickly builds up some means of using it conveniently. Private enterprise erects bath houses and supplies bathing suits and towels in order to profit by the obvious public demand. But when, as at Washington, there are no natural facilities for bathing, the public demand is seldom sufficiently apparent to lead private enterprise into the large investment necessary to create good bathing arrangements. At Richmond, Va., recently, a private company built as a business venture a large open-air swimming basin, lined with concrete, supplied with filtered water purchased from the city, and surrounded by dressing rooms and shelters; but usually such undertakings are too uncertain in their financial outcome to attract private capital, and therefore when a city lacks natural advantages for bathing, it usually becomes necessary for the municipality to deal with the problem.

The public bathing establishments which abound in European cities and in many of our own may be divided roughly into three classes. The first, and perhaps the most important, includes those intended for the poorer people, who suffer most from the summer heat, who most

need the healthful refreshment of the bathing, who can not go out of the city to get it, and who can afford to pay little or nothing for it. The establishments of this class are free or open upon an almost nominal charge—1 cent, 2 cents, or at the most sometimes 5 cents. The commonest type is the floating bath, a great, wooden, scow-like affair, built around four sides of an oblong space, which has a perforated flooring a few feet below the surface of the water. The scow serves as a platform round the bath and supports the dressing rooms or lockers, which with a high board fence inclose the whole affair. The water space is sometimes roofed over and sometimes open. These floating baths are anchored next the shore in river or harbor at convenient points during the summer months.

Another form differs only in being built on piles or on permanent piers running out from the shore, and is sometimes open on the outer side when the opposite shore is distant and no near passing vessels would be annoyed by the sight of the bathing; for in establishments of this class, in which the sexes are always separated, the bathers are commonly nude, to their own greater comfort and enjoyment as well as for economy and simplicity of operation and maintenance. The bathers bring their own towels and bathing suits, if they wish them, and are only provided with small dressing closets or mere lockers in which to place their clothes. The running expenses are very low and the value to the people is such as to justify the establishment of such bathing places at several points along the water front where they can be conveniently reached from different quarters of the city. The construction of bathing places of this type should be very simple and inexpensive, but the arrangements should be carefully thought out so as to make them absolutely convenient, and the regulations should be kept as simple as possible and contrived with a studious regard for the habits, tastes, and prejudices of the bathers in order to encourage the use of the baths at the season when no one is inclined to exert himself to overcome difficulties.

The second class of establishments, which have usually grown up at beaches where the bathing is naturally good, afford more convenient dressing arrangements, supply towels and bathing suits, and provide for open-air bathing of what might be called a social sort under pleasant surroundings, in view of the public, for large numbers of both sexes. The bathers are charged an amount which generally varies between 10 and 25 cents, according to the accommodations furnished,



NO. 189.—SWIMMING POOL, GARFIELD PARK, CHICAGO.

and although the location is often somewhat remote from the center of population the patronage is always large and profitable upon Sundays and holidays in hot weather. It is only under very favorable circumstances, however, that private enterprise can afford to provide thoroughly adequate, convenient, and sanitary arrangements, because the attendance is extremely irregular and will not pay interest on a costly plant at moderate rates of charge.

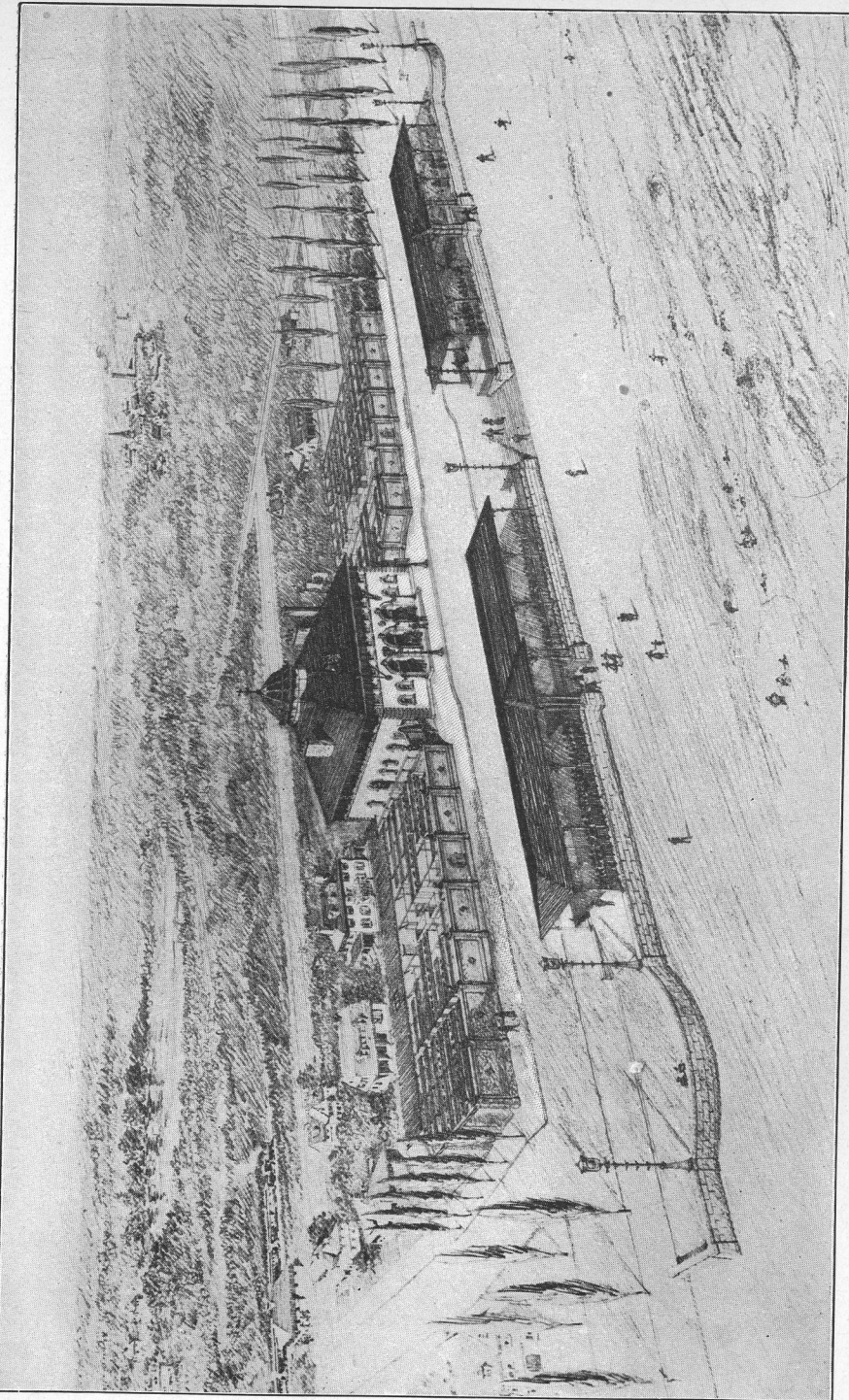
For these reasons, and because of the difficulty of regulating the sanitary and moral conditions of such private places, municipalities have in many instances provided their own public bath houses of this class. The best example is probably that at Revere Beach near Boston, under the control of the Metropolitan Park Commission of that city, shown in the accompanying



Public Bath, Town of Brookline, Mass.

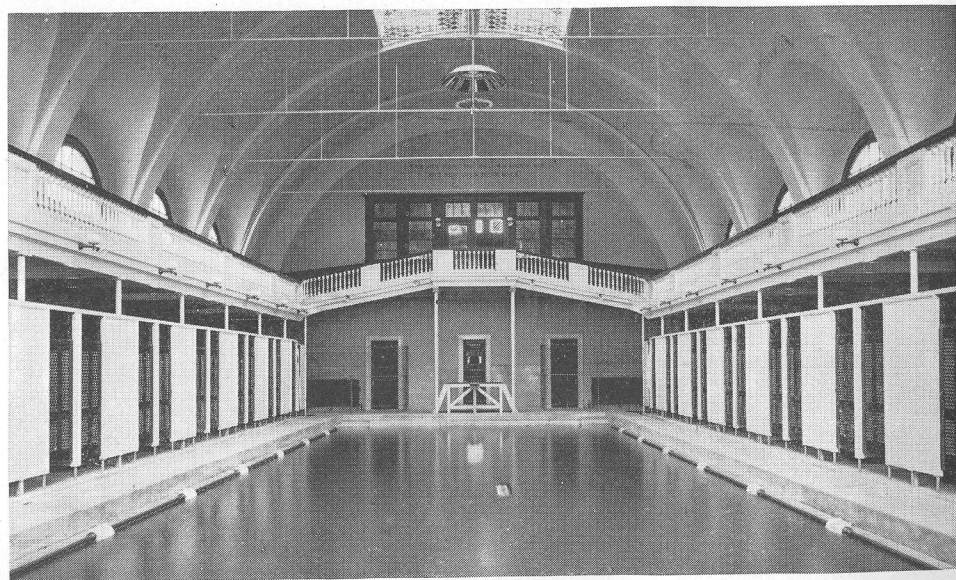
illustrations. Since the date of the illustrations the accommodations have been considerably enlarged to meet public demand, and now include 1,700 separate dressing rooms within inclosed yards for men and for women, flanking a central brick administration building. This contains offices where keys, suits, and towels are given out and valuables stored, toilet arrangements, an emergency room, and the like. It is supplemented by a building containing a police station and a laundry, where the suits and towels are washed, sterilized, and repaired. To economize space additional provision is now being

NO. 188.—REVERE BEACH PUBLIC BATH HOUSE, NEAR BOSTON.



made for a general locker room, for boys who do not care for separate dressing rooms, where the charge will be 10 cents, instead of 25 as for adults having private rooms.

During the summer of 1900 the bath house was used by 153,299 bathers, with a maximum number in one day of 7,529. The running expenses were \$22,381.17, and the receipts were \$34,374.30, leaving a surplus of \$11,993.13 applicable to repairs and extensions. The total cost of land takings for control of the beach has been \$1,117,778.29, and the total cost of buildings, roads, and other constructions and miscellaneous expenses during five years has been \$564,055.62. It is universally conceded that these large sums have been well invested and



Public Bath, Town of Brookline, Mass.

are bringing adequate returns to the people in relief and refreshment during the heated term; but if this is true in Boston, where the summer heat is greatly mitigated by the cool ocean breezes and where there are numerous seashore resorts within easy reach, it is manifest that the benefit to Washington of similar facilities would be in proportion to its population immeasurably greater.

A third class of public bathing places, as yet not very greatly developed in this country, is that of inclosed swimming pools and other baths for winter use. These have been provided for some years on a limited scale in the larger cities by private enterprise and are to be found in a number of athletic clubs

and gymnasias, but it is only recently that municipalities on this side of the water, recognizing the value of such baths to the health of the community, have begun to erect them as public institutions. New York led the way, and a few other places have already followed the example. The accompanying illustrations show the public bath erected in 1896 by the town of Brookline, Mass., at a cost of \$50,000. Besides other baths and dressing rooms it contains a swimming basin, 80 feet by 26 feet, supplied with a steady flow of fresh water and kept at a uniform temperature. It is used on different days of the week by men and by women at a charge of 5 to 15 cents for residents and 25 cents for nonresidents, and one day is reserved for the use of a swimming club of limited membership. The running expenses during 1900 were \$7,994.10; the receipts, \$6,151.50, and the number of bathers, 51,453.

As mentioned in the body of the report, we believe that open-air bathing places of the second class, although on a much smaller scale than at Revere Beach, should be provided in the improvement of the Anacostia, and we believe that there will be ample justification before long for an important establishment of this sort near the present bathing place in Potomac Park, in connection with the development of the central group of parks. Ultimately there might be good opportunity to develop at the same point a winter bathing place of the third class.