

A PROPOSED NEW STATE PARK

H. S. PEPOON, LAKE VIEW HIGH SCHOOL, CHICAGO.

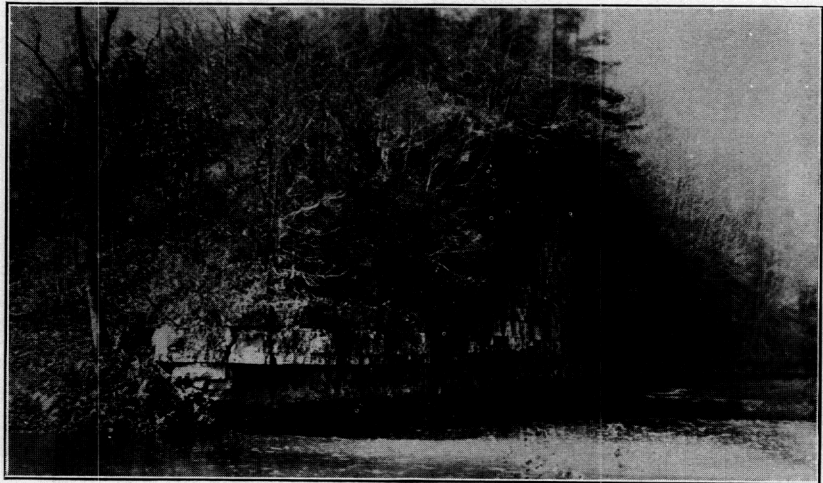
I am before you today to present and speak in favor of a Proposed New State Park, the Canyon Park, located in Jo Daviess County on the upper approaches of Apple River, a small tributary of the Mississippi. It seems hardly necessary for me to argue in favor of such a place of recreation, before a body of enlightened men and women such as constitute the Illinois Academy. All of you, doubtless, will subscribe to the proposition that within reasonable limits, all the more remarkable natural feature of a state ought, at least in part, to be preserved as playgrounds for our own and succeeding generations.

Let me, however, briefly, as stirring up your remembrance of the vital points of such a contention, that this may in turn be used by you on any doubting Thomas, state them as briefly as possible:—

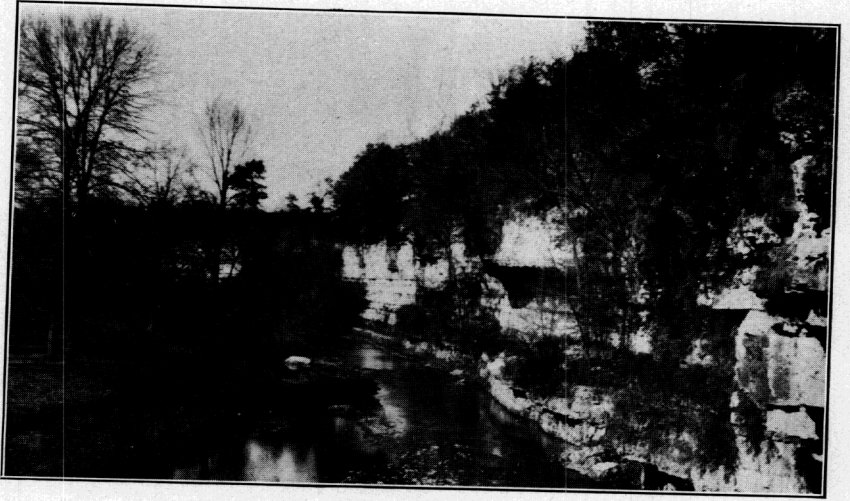
The first desideratum of any commonwealth is to possess a vigorous, contented, and ever improving citizenry. In these times of fierce and uncompromising strife for commercial advancement, personal betterment, and all that goes with the modern struggle for individual and community success, the strain of labor becomes more and more imperative and exacting, and the absolute necessity for relaxation is an equally imperative call. No man, young or old, can, with impunity, and without serious danger, toil ever without play spells; for if he is able to do so physically, the reaction on the higher qualities of mind and soul are disastrous. My first contention, therefore, is that a man or woman to keep normal must play at times, must relax and give place to these higher qualities, that, in their cultivation, he or she personally, may receive enlarged benefits, and the state have developed a better and more desirable people.



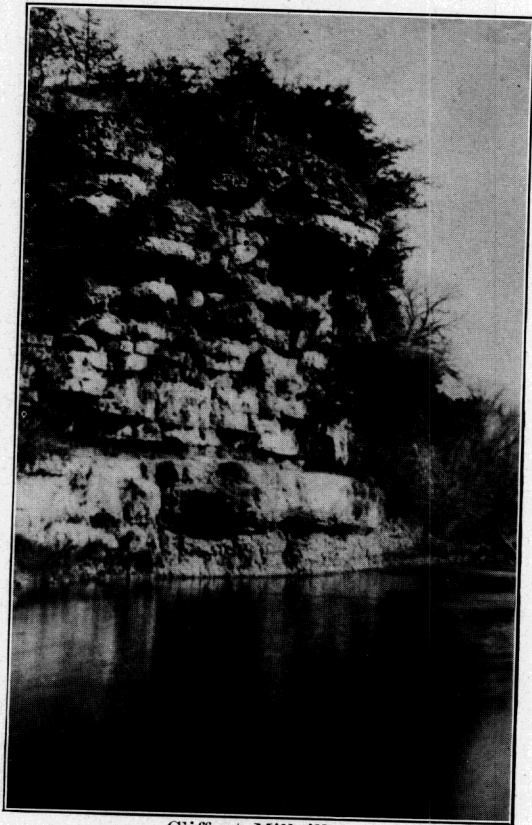
Junction of Rivers, Head of Canyon



In the Canyon



The Primrose Cliffs



Cliff at Millville

My second point is, that no method is more sure of mind and soul enlargement, so that broader and higher vision may attain than to send to the hills and woods, these tired and business befogged men of affairs, and let them absorb from the ozone of air and rock, water and leaf, new and more extended outlook, with broader horizon and higher vault of heaven, with purer and sweeter breath of life, and with food and drink stimulating to more perfect growth in manly power and experience. The man who drinks in the love of Nature and studies her varied phases, is not a wrecker of the commonwealth or a despoiler of her best interests.

And again, I hold, that these schools of God's Outdoors are not merely the best places for broadening the characters and forging principles of eternal right and justice, because their influence is always uplifting and never at variance with normal development; but that further, the State has no force at its command, that, for the minimum of expenditure will produce such a maximum of increment in citizens strong in body, acute in mind, clear in vision, broad in humanity, deep in reverence, loyal in patriotism; for Nature teaches no heresy and breathes no false doctrines of social or political expediency, but ever demands the best.

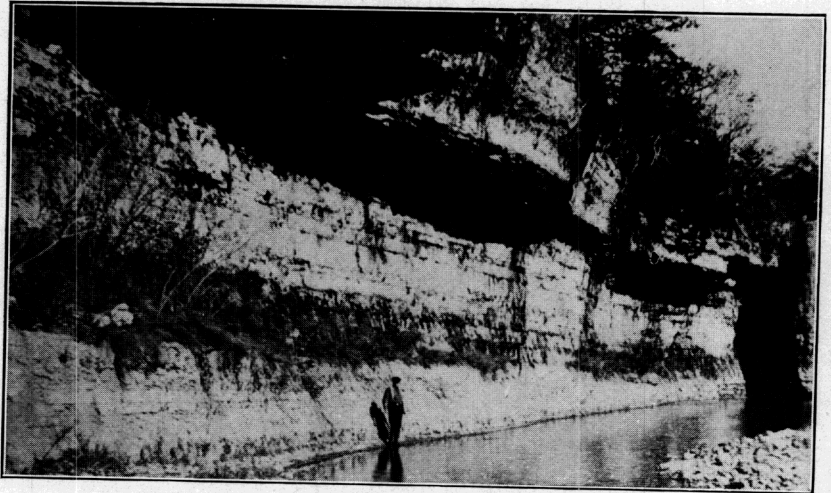
When we look at the condition of affairs in our own great state, we find her woefully behind her sister and neighboring commonwealths. It may be news to many of you that our nearest neighbors on the north and west, Wisconsin and Iowa, neither possessing but a fraction of our great wealth and resources, are far more long-sighted and provident than we are. Iowa has a law on her statute books permitting and appropriating a large sum annually for the purchase of large or small tracts of land possessing desirable features that ought to be preserved and conserved for the people. In this way a lotus lake here, a fine primeval forest there, an area of cliff and stream or a piece of original prairie are bought, and a well trained corps of enthusiastic men and women are ever on the search for any obtainable lands. In this simple and perfectly feasible way, Iowa has now between 20 and 30 state parks and reservations purchased or provision made for their acquirement. It is needless to say her citizens, from Gov. Hard-

ing down, are proud of this record, and well they may be, for who will be more benefited by such farsighted philanthropy, (note the word "love of mankind") than the people themselves.

Wisconsin has already made provision for some 13 state parks, the largest being in Door County and at the mouth of the Wisconsin River, where some thousands of acres each have been reserved for perpetual playgrounds for her citizens. If one talks to those conversant with the ambitious plans of the Park people, there appears no question of the advisability and expediency of such a movement, the only problem being how to obtain as many of the desirable beauty spots before they are ruined by commercialization.

When we turn to Illinois, a very different condition confronts us. We have *one* State Park at Starved Rock, beautiful in scenery and rich in educational and historic features, and rumor is, that one or two other insignificant plats of a few acres have been acquired. But how utterly inadequate is such a condition to meet the actually needed requirements of five millions of people! We ought to have 40 state parks—large and small—to provide for this host, and Illinois is abundantly able to pay for all such lands, receiving not dollars and cents of cash in hand, but what is far more important, better equipped men and women, who will add immeasurable assets to the commonwealth.

And so I present for your consideration, The Canyon Park of Apple River, and bespeak for it your hearty support. The region proposed comprises about 1,000 acres of the wildest, roughest and most picturesque lands in Illinois, lying along Apple River from the junction of the east and west branches five miles southwesterly. This canyon is a chasm eroded in the Galena limestone to the depth of 250 feet, and it has a bottom width of 8-10 rods. The walls on either side are 45° forested slopes or vertical cliffs, these alternating from side to side as the enclosed river meanders from the west to the east rim of the canyon. The highest cliffs are 150 feet vertical walls of gray or buff dolomite unevenly bedded, full of gash veins or contraction fissure, with many small caverns, isolated towers, castles, rock masses, and huge talus blocks of all dimensions. Everywhere a forest growth rich in species, clothes



Water-worn Cliffs

the canyon floor, the steep slopes and all but the most exposed and precipitous cliffs. Springs, seepage areas, and side ravines and miniature canyons are everywhere, and all abounding in a rich and diversified flora. Some sixty species of forest trees and 400 species of smaller plants, many exceedingly rare, add charm to the region and make it a veritable Botanist's paradise.

As a preserve for fish and birds it is ideal. As it now is Apple river is one of the finest small-mouth bass streams of Illinois, and certain kinds of trout would certainly thrive in its cold shaded depths. The angler would find here a place of rest and recreation second to none in the state, with a park affording protected camp sites, with neighboring farmers supplying the daily menu, and with game in the rushing waters, to tax his best skill and endeavor, there would be little to complain of. For the bird lover the varied topography and the innumerable trees and thickets make a haven that birds find specially alluring. Protected from all piercing winds of winter, with many springy places giving water at all times, with seed and fruit plants galore, many forms linger late or even winter in the canyon. For example, a jacksnipe was enjoying himself immensely Christmas day, 1918, when the upland temperature was arctic. He had a deep side gully, filled with a living spring water full of algae and small animal life, so what cared he for wintry blasts? Nearby a flock of waxwings ate juniper berries, a pair of cardinals flashed their brilliant wings, and a horde of pine siskins made the air full of their dainty twitter, whilst across the gorge a long-eared owl defied a roustering band of crows.

Historically, here was one of the happy hunting grounds of the turbulent Sauks, and in the primeval white oak forest as it stood in 1870 ancient areas of cultivation were yet to be seen. Untold wealth of arrows, spears, hatchets, and other flints attest to the esteem in which this land of vale and hill, forest and glade, was held by the red man of long ago. The ancient stage routes from Ft. Dearborn and Dixon's Ferry join not far from Millville, at the canyon's head, and thence proceeded via Frink's barn to Galena, the ancient mining town of the Indians, French, and later, Americans.

Ethically, scenically, historically, geologically, biologically, here is an ideal spot for *one* of the many state parks Illinois must have to keep abreast of the time and the demand, and it is sincerely to be hoped that her legislators will arise to the occasion and acquire the same, as it can now be done for a not unreasonable outlay; so that generations now living and the untold number of those to come may bless the foresight, wisdom, and broad statesmanship of those thru whose efforts fruition was at length attained.

To give a little idea of the beauty and character of the topography, a few illustrations are appended. It is earnestly urged that all who can visit this region, and learn at first hand what it has to offer of beauty and wildness, recreation and rehabiliement for all the care-worn, business fagged, mentally benumbed citizens of our great commonwealth, who here may come to renew themselves with might in the inner and outer man.