

GARDINER'S ISLAND.

A WILDERNESS OF TANGLED BEAUTY AND GRANDEUR.

MONTAUK POINT, N. Y., Aug. 17.—Nowhere within 100 miles of New-York City can such a complete wilderness be found—a wilderness of tangled loveliness and grandeur—as is found in the vast forests of Gardiner's Island. The fame of the forests on this famous old island has gone abroad, and thousands of people have visited them this year, and daily little parties of stragglers wander through the lovely glades.

The Gardiner's Island forests occupy a large portion of the interior of the island. They are composed chiefly of gray oaks and gum trees, standing at such distances apart as to have permitted them to grow to great size, while the ground is covered with fine sweet grasses. Many of the trees are heavy with Florida moss and festoons of poison ivy and wild grape vines, lending to the landscape an especially tropical effect. At one point in the centre of the forests the paths come together before a stile of rails. Here, in a dark, leafy glade is a directory of this year's visitors to the forest. Hundreds upon hundreds of cards are stuck into the chestnut fence rails and steps everywhere. In some places the leaf of a note book bears the name of a whole party. In the collection are names from all corners of the United States.

The woods are literally full of game birds and animals, but hunting them is not permitted. Passing over a narrow table land from the shore to enter the forest a *TIMES* reporter scared up an immense flock of quail, which whirred a few rods away and dropped in the grass only to dislodge another flock of similar proportions, and a great flock of cooing wild pigeons broke out of the edge of the forest as he entered. Midway in the forest are the black-berry swamps, the resort of reed birds, bobolinks, and blacksnakes. The latter are as thick as hail there, but the island colonists say they will not hurt any one, although last year a large blacksnake gave one of the farm hands a severe flogging. Further on the tree limbs are piled high in places with dead sticks and leaves, and great gray birds are circling high in the air overhead, crying wildly. They are fishhawks. The stick piles are their nests in the trees. Gardiner's Island is one of the breeding spots for the osprey on the North Atlantic coast, because the Gardiners would never allow their nests to be pilaged. The original Gardiner directed that all game be protected from ruthless invaders, and it has been. Fat woodcock and lazy rabbits barely rolled out of the reporter's way. A raccoon was sighted, then a wild cat, and finally a deer.

Nearly all of the eleven proprietors of this magnificent entailed estate have been buried on the hill overlooking the manor. The first one, Lord Lion Gardiner, was interred at Easthampton on Long Island. John Lyon Gardiner, the present proprietor of the island and manor, who is said by his dependents to possess all of the virtues of his ten predecessors, has made an interesting addition to the Easthampton cemetery, in the recumbent figure of his remote ancestor. The Knight, in complete armor, lies on a sarcophagus in a Gothic marble chapel surrounded by a low iron fence. It was designed by James Renwick, the architect of Grace Church and of St. Patrick's Cathedral. On the sarcophagus is inscribed in Old English:

"Lion Gardiner, an officer of ye English Army and an engineer and Master of Works and Fortifications in ye Leaguers of ye Prince of Orange in ye Low Countries. In 1635 he came to New-England in ye service of a Company of Lords and Gentlemen. He bulded and commanded ye Saybrook Fort. After completing his term of service there, he moved in 1639 to his Island, of which he was sole owner and ruler. Born in 1599, he died in this town in 1663, venerated and honoured."

A red cedar bar on two posts of the same material marked Lion Gardiner's grave for over two hundred years, until the present monument was erected. Before this work was done, as there was some doubt as to whether the first proprietor of the island was buried there, the grave was opened. Seven feet below the surface the workmen found a layer of stone, beneath which was a skeleton nearly perfect in preservation. A physician examined it and found it to be a man's frame. The skull was white and hard, the jaws square, the teeth good, locks of brown hair were found, together with five of the coffin nails and a bit of cedar wood. These relics established the fact that the grave was that of the first lord of the manor. They were put back, covered with cement and stones, and the monument was raised to his memory.

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