

World's Fair Nearly Ready

FOUR full months from New Year's day, lacking one day alone, the World's fair will open its gates to the people of the earth. Will it be ready? "Yes," answer the exposition builders, "ready and waiting."

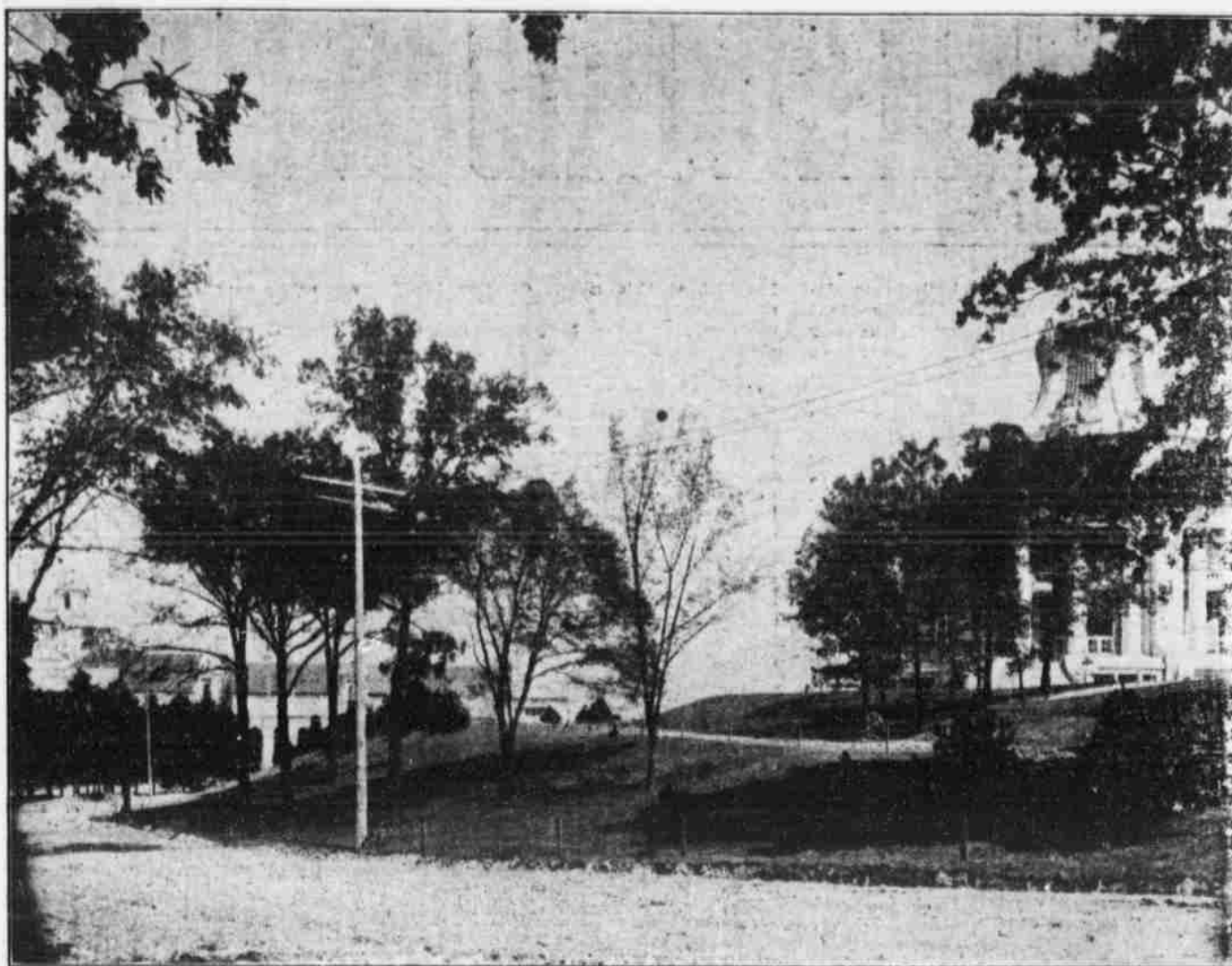
But this is an incredulous world, refusing to believe. Predictions of unpreparedness have been made concerning the World's fair ever since the first spadeful of frozen earth was turned on a bleak December day in 1901. "It will be like previous expositions," said the incredulous ones; "opening with a lot of the buildings in a half-finished state, and the visitors will be hampered by hordes of workmen engaged in construction work."

Such predictions were almost universal outside of St. Louis one year ago, and even in the city they were not lacking in vigor. Many citizens who made occasional trips out to the exposition grounds were heard to utter woeful predictions of unpreparedness, because of the evident immensity of the enterprise and the comparatively brief period for working. Even some of the most enthusiastic advocates of the fair shook their heads and muttered, sorrowfully, "They can't do it—no, they can't get this enormous thing ready in time."

But the builders kept on at work, steadily, sturdily, strenuously. Like little Johnny Jones' peach, the exposition grew and grew; it still grows and grows and grows, and so rapidly that one can almost see it grow. The growth is general, too, and not merely in spots; wherever it is not already full grown the World's fair is gaining flesh, so to speak, and putting on muscle.

The progress of building operations since the first day of December has been very considerable, though estimates of the progress during the closing month of 1903 are not obtainable just now. Estimates furnished by the director of works up to December 1, however, showed at that date that the great exposition was so near to completion that one who takes the most casual glance at the figures cannot fail to comprehend the fact that it is a foregone conclusion that practically everything will be in readiness for the opening on April 20.

In the main picture of the exposition



COMPLETED LANDSCAPE BETWEEN WESTERN RESTAURANT PAVILION AND PALACE OF MACHINERY.

itself, but how rapidly it was pushed along under the scrapers, and spades, and rollers of the landscapists! And those twin restaurant pavilions, one at each end of the Colonnade of States—why, they were finished so long ago that visitors have been to ask when meals will be served. Already

below them that they lacked only the voice to become mouthpieces of information like the Jefferson Guards.

Right in the center of the Colonnade is going up the wonderful Festival hall—the abode of the music of many nations. This great round theater of harmony was ac-

dinner, till the last.

Back of the Festival hall, on the level top of Art hill, what do we find? The eastern section of the Palace of Fine Arts 99½ per cent done, and the western section but one-half of 1 per cent behind that, while the main and central structure of the palace, which is to be permanent, and is built of solid granite and marble, lacks only about 20 per cent of completion.

Going back down the hill, what of the main thoroughfares and waterways? Grand basin—scooped out so many months ago that grass has grown in its bottom, and there is nothing to do but turn on the water and give the cheerful gondolier a chance to put in his oar. Lagoons and bridges—complete as to lagoons, and nearly so as to bridges. Paving and grass plots—ready and waiting these many moons. Sunken garden—ready for the shrubbery and flowers, and waiting for winter days to pass.

Nearly a month ago the laying of the last beam on the German government building, conspicuous at the eastern end of Art hill and toward the north, was celebrated with characteristic ceremonies imported direct from the fatherland; and still farther east and north the grand steel arch structure built by the United States government, with its splendid dome topped off with an inspiring sculpture group, looms largely, very near to completion. Just south of the Government building is the Government Fisheries structure, gleaming in its staff sheathing, a finished specimen of Roman classic architecture; and farther up the hill the handsome Missouri state building is more than nine-tenths complete.

Thirty other state buildings are nearing completion, with a dozen more ready to be "clapped up in no time," as expressed by a man who thoroughly believes that every building will be ready. Louisiana, Arizona, Nevada and Oklahoma were placed in the 100 per cent class December 1, their buildings being finished. The Temple of

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)



SOUTH FRONT OF PALACE OF VARIED INDUSTRIES, WITH CORNER OF PALACE OF ELECTRICITY ACROSS THE LAGOON AT THE RIGHT.

the great fan-shaped area of exhibition palaces, grand boulevards and lagoons, there are eight buildings, exclusive of the elaborate structures on Art hill. These eight buildings were 97 per cent finished on December 1; that is to say, striking an average. Five of them were each 99½ per cent completed—Education, Electricity, Machinery, Varied Industries and Liberal Arts. On the Manufactures building but 6 per cent of work remained to be done, and but 7 per cent each on the Transportation and the Mines and Metallurgy palace. During December the work has been pushed forward on each of these structures with remarkable rapidity, so that New Year's day finds them so nearly completed that the difference is scarcely worth mentioning. Each of the buildings was ready, weeks ago, to begin receiving the exhibits.

On Art Hill, summit and slopes the work has reached a stage that kindles admiration in the eyes of beholders, who require but little aid to the imagination to see the picture complete. What has become of the man who three months ago said that it would require a year to do the landscape work on the slopes of Art Hill? Where are the snows of yesterday? Where is last year's bird's nest, and the dandelion of last May? All are flown—particularly the man mentioned; he is ashamed to show his face, for the hill slopes are symmetrically shaped and sodded, ready for the setting out of the millions of flowers that will adorn them when the warmth of spring justifies that work. The shaping up of these slopes to conform to the artist's dream was a stupendous piece of labor in

nearly all of the fourteen huge pedestals designed for the carrying of gigantic figures typical of the Louisiana Purchase states and territories are occupied. Some of the immense ladies in staff have sat on their pedestals for months, and the later arrivals received hearty Christmas greetings from the earlier ones, who had become old-timers and had gazed so long at the glories of the exposition spread out

counted 25 per cent finished at the December 1 estimate. Work has progressed since then to such an extent that the percentage must be considerably raised. As a matter of fact, this Festival hall is about the only thing in the grand picture that shows any appearance of incompleteness. As it is to be in a sense the center piece of the exposition, and therefore the crown or climax, it has been saved, like the best things at



PALACE OF MACHINERY—SCENE FROM ART HILL.