

PERDITA AT THE FAIR.

CHICAGO, May 16.—Two weeks have passed since the opening of the great Columbian Fair, and step by step the Exposition shapes itself towards the goal of completion. Though the progress is seemingly slow, yet the end of each two or three days sees a perceptible enough advance made in each building and department to justify the conclusion that not only those who wait for the fall days before visiting the White City will have a fair chance of seeing the better part of the display promised by the great exhibit, for the latter part of May will see great strides accomplished in matter of finishing the Fair.

Though it is somewhat exasperating for sight-seers to find at present so much more work in course of progress than completion, there is a certain fascination to one whose stay is certain of extension to watch the gradual development of the great Fair, the successive surprises appearing in different buildings and departments from day to day as some new space is filled up, some more exhibits added to a display or some clearer idea carried out in arrangement which puts a new and charming aspect upon the general view of the Exposition.

Of course the visitor who is here but for a short time does not enjoy so gradual an unfolding of its wonders, for each presumably wishes to see all that is within his round each day without fear of missing some important feature of the display by failing to make a short delay which might possibly secure him the benefit of seeing some interesting exhibit. For him, however, there is yet a multifold variety of wonders already to be seen and what he misses by actual seeing can perhaps be made up by drawing upon the work at present finished for imagination to realize what each and every building will be like when completed. To us, however, who have time before us there is enough going on each day to lend additional interest to the Fair to make it seem in fact a new Exposition however often it may be viewed, so that we can hardly grumble at the gradual and probing process which marks its development.

In the Woman's Building especially is this interesting progress noticeable. One day will see the great spaces and rooms in the building either piled with cases, desolate with unfinished booths or showing a confused assortment of exhibits heaped promiscuously together in process of arrangement, and a few days later will behold the same spaces filled with artistic displays of the best work of the women of a country or state, each adding a new step to the stately measure by which the building is becoming a temple of beautiful handicraft and art.

The spaces near the door have been the first to be completed, Norway Sweden and Siam, which occupy contiguous booths being the first finished spaces which greet one upon entering the building. Sweden has some exquisite laces and quaint tapestries with royal portraits and coats of arms done in silk embroidery, and Norway some rare old Bibles and prayer-books of kings and queens, and a collection of dolls showing the costumes of the people through different centuries.

New South Wales, whose booth has been for sometime completed, has a splendid collection of rugs, portieres and

fine needlework, the latter forming a particularly fine display.

Pre-eminent above all other exhibits in fine needlework in the Woman's Building however is that comprised in the sections known as the Philanthropic Work of British Women, and the most of which is offered or at least marked as being on sale at the Fair. One beautiful piece of work in this department is a border for a court train seven yards in length worked by Mrs. Mitchell Irmes of Somersetshire. The material is of pale green silk done in embroidered silk and pearls and edged with feather trimmings, a piece of finery dainty enough to be worn by a princess.

There are specimens of a set of curtains worked by order of the queen for Windsor castle in the design of rose, shamrock and thistle done in lace work and silk embroidery—an exquisite set of draperies—and a portiere with embroidered design representing Poemona—the work of which is also marvelously fine. A magnificent three-fold screen with embroidery and frames of the time of Louis XVI is one of many beautiful pieces of work executed by the Royal School of Design, and another is a four-fold screen of pale green reseda silk, set in a gold frame, the former embroidered with designs of two harps, guitars, tambourines and flutes suspended in ribbon streamers and garlands of flowers. Royalty has contributed a large amount of work done by hand—crocheted rests, spreads, silken cushions, etc. The Princess May Adelaide and H. R. H. the Princess Victoria of Teck having a very creditable and extensive display.

In the British handicraft section is an excellent exhibit of busts and reliefs in clay done by women, a beautiful bust of Dorothea in Middlemarch by Miss Marian Ferguson being particularly good, and a number of fan-leaves and friezes making up an interesting collection.

Parry & Rack, a Swansea firm, have an exhibit of fine flannels in this department and also a loom at which sits a young girl in native costume weaving flannel throughout the day. In the Welsh department is an interesting piece of work done by Miss Austruther Thomson, representing an Arab train of soldiers on horseback, armed with spears, sabres, shields, etc., the whole work being done in pieces of rag, flannel, calico, linen, cordway, etc., as the costumes or figures demand, with pieces of tin and steel for the sabres, and the whole making a raised work set on a velvet background and producing the most striking and realistic effect. Besides this artistic and novel frieze, the principal exhibits in the Welsh display are the lines of cloths and wool manufactures, tweeds, shirtines hand-woven stockings, etc., with wax figures in Welsh costumes showing the hand spinning process which still holds with much of the Welsh work.

Other countries—France, Germany and Spain—are still in the midst of arrangements and a glimpse at the preparations shows a foretaste of the treat that each has in store. Some of the states have already done finely, Indiana showing a beautiful display of rare hand-painted china, beautiful laces and exquisite embroideries, the gem of these latter consisting of a table spread, scarf, napkins and doilies of fine linen embroidered in silk—a design of leaves and rosebuds in delicate green and rose-tints—one of the most elaborate and elegant

table sets it has been my fortune to behold.

New York state claims an absolute pre-eminence in her loom exhibit, having a splendid display of rare laces, some of them claiming an antiquity of more than ten centuries.

There is a piece of Point de France which was made for Marie Antoinette and with specimens of Guipme de Flanders dating from 1690 and a score of other ancient and rare laces with histories connected with royal personages that make the collection interesting both from an artistic and romantic standpoint.

Cincinnati has a room—offered as a special presentation to the Woman's Building—which is a credit both to the city, the building and the Exposition itself. The room is one of the most handsomely furnished of any upon the grounds and the display of ceramics to which it is principally devoted makes one of the interesting features of the Fair. Cincinnati has attained a fame for her achievements in ceramic art, and the history of her progress and accomplishments in its line form an interesting chapter in the history of the city.

The Japan room contains a number of screens whose elegance and beauty make the average visitor's eye glisten with covetousness and only the \$1000 price mark on the frames restrains the almost uncontrollable impulse one feels to risk all things for their possession.

There are several separate and individual displays outside, the state exhibits which form an interesting feature of the Woman's Building. One of these is a display of art paper work by the firm of G. H. Sleuth & Co. and consists of a booth literally blooming with flowers and other paper ornaments; a wire trellis extending around the top has morning-glory vines and flowers wound round it in a natural arrangement and inside the stand are flowers, lamp shades, mats, hats, bonnets, doll-dresses, fancy cards and booklets gotten up in the art paper designs, and the whole forms a gleaming bower which makes a charming note of color in the midst of its more prosaic surroundings.

Among exhibits of a scientific nature which have found place in the Woman's Building none are more interesting than the British nursing exhibit, which occupies a small room opening from the upper gallery. Around the walls are hung pictures of women who have distinguished themselves in philanthropic work, Florence Nightingale, Sister Dora and others of the profession, while large cases are ranged about the sides of the room containing articles relating to the profession of nursing arranged in specific departments. In one are padded splints, cut dressing, bandages, surgical dressing, syringes, thermometers and medicine glasses especially arranged or pouring out medicine at night. Another case shows designs or models of hygienic clothing which the Royal British nurse's association recommends for nurses.

An attractive feature of the exhibits is also a case of dolls dressed in costumes worn by the nurses of all the principal British hospitals.

Invalid appliances and furniture form an interesting feature in themselves, the most helpful device being the model of a bed bath so arranged that the tub can be brought to the level of the bed