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SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA

Staging the Big Show

*An Inside Story of
What Is Going on
Behind the Scenes at
the Panama-California
Exposition at
San Diego*

*By
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Author of
Smoke-stacks on the Pacific;
Live Wires*

*Illustrated with
Official Photographs*



LAST fall the general manager and the directors of the biggest concern manufacturing agricultural implements came to San Francisco, towing an appropriation of a hundred thousand dollars for an exhibit. They saw the rising walls of the City of Color by the Golden Gate, nodded beaming approval, cut the rope, left the appropriation and departed—due east.

San Diego lies six hundred miles due south of San Francisco. San Diego likewise was building an exposition; San Diego also wanted an appropriation for an exhibit from the biggest concern manufacturing agricultural implements. When the directors headed due east, ignoring the existence of the second exposition, San Diego rolled up its sleeves, took a deep breath and began manipulating the levers until its joints cracked.

San Diego succeeded, pulled the general manager of the biggest agricultural-implement concern back across the continent. He came, without his directors, without an

appropriation, but with an exceedingly active prejudice. He did not want to come. To his mind the trip was a waste of time, and he did not hesitate to say so when he reached the office of the Director General. His firm was spending a hundred thousand dollars on an exhibit covering 25,000 square feet of floor space at the Big Fair; he could see no reason why the claims of the San Diego exposition should not have been turned down politely by correspondence.

The Director General smiled. That is one of his peculiarities, this friendly, disarming, quiet smile forever breaking out beneath the cropped red mustache. Also, he talked, quietly, in an even, level, friendly voice. And he talked to the point, talked straight business.

When the general manager of the International Harvester Company departed from San Diego he left behind him a reservation for 120,000 square feet of space. In Chicago he put the case before his directors. They authorized him to sign a contract

for 240,000 square feet of space. Also, they authorized him to erect a special exhibit building at San Diego; furthermore, they authorized him to plant an orchard in which to demonstrate the use of the implements under actual field conditions. The building is now ready; the orchard blossomed this spring, is being irrigated and cultivated regularly.

You know and I know that times were hard last fall; we both know that individual firms as well as nations held back last year, trimmed sails, cut expenditures. How, then, did the Director General with the freckles, the red mustache and the frank, boyish smile succeed in opening the purse and arousing the exhibit enthusiasm of a skeptic implement manufacturer at a time when the corn-belt farmers were renewing their notes?

The answer is very simple.

He took the manufacturer upon a statistical mountain and showed him the biggest undeveloped market for agricultural implements in the United States; then he showed the manufacturer, proved it by the books, how the fair would open its gates without a cent of debt, but with a nice lump of cash left in the treasury; thereafter he took him through the grounds and showed him just how the Panama-California Exposition at San Diego was to help develop this potential market. In his talk the exposition chief left the moonshine on the silvery bay, kept his feet on the solid ground of cross-indexed, double-checked facts, and presented a business proposition that landed the implement man's signature on the dotted line.

Skeptics by the score have traveled over the same route with the Director General. All of them ceased scoffing after they had seen and listened; went home thoroughly convinced that the fair in the southwest corner of the country would not only be an assured financial success, but that it would also have a pronounced effect upon the character and management of future expositions, would give a tremendous stimulus to the growth of the Southwest.

Of skeptics there had always been a plentiful supply ever since San Diego in 1910 proclaimed that it would hold a twelve-month exposition to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. It did not seem reasonable that a town of less than 40,000 inhabitants, located at the end of a

branch line, should succeed in putting on a show really worth while seeing, without mortgaging its last shirt and breaking its financial back. Portland, with almost 200,000 population, had been helped out by a fat appropriation from the state of Oregon for an exposition of much smaller size than the projected San Diegan enterprise. Seattle had 270,000 people when it undertook its fair, yet Seattle raised only \$1,200,000 and was \$600,000 in debt when the gates were opened. How could little San Diego, barely one-sixth of Seattle's size, expect to finance and carry through an exposition of greater magnitude? It seemed preposterous.

But San Diego did it! San Diego by subscriptions and municipal bond issues raised three million dollars without going beyond the city limits, thanks to D. C. Collier, the enthusiast whose boundless faith and energy started the ball rolling and kept it going. Collier's efforts financed the exposition; Frank P. Allen, Junior, the man who built Seattle's fair, looked after the physical features of the project, planned the grouping and design of the buildings, got ready to transform the barren slopes and deep *arroyos* into a fairyland of tropic foliage. Eighteen months ago the blue-prints were ready for the builders—but the spirit, the exact, specific purpose of the projected exposition had not yet materialized.

San Francisco's Exposition was universal, all-inclusive. It proposed to record, in visible, tangible form, the progress of civilization in all its phases; it was to be the final summary of man's past achievements. San Diego could not do the same thing on a smaller scale; San Diego could not even segregate Latin America and chronicle its achievements, because the South American republics would be represented at both fairs. Never was the need of a distinct, outstanding individuality, of a differentiating purpose more pressing than at San Diego eighteen months ago.

A rancher supplied the individuality, furnished the purpose, solved the problem. They made him Director General, put the exposition into his hands as a reward. It was this rancher who landed the International Harvester Company for the biggest exhibit ever made anywhere by an individual firm.

H. O. Davis, the man with the quiet voice and the boyish smile, did not seek

the office. He would still be raising blue-blooded stock at Yuba City if the supervisors of Sutter county, California, had not appointed him exposition commissioner, charged with the duty of arranging the county's exhibit at the two Californian fairs. In this capacity the rancher—he was a newcomer in California, having sold his manufacturing business in Chicago only a few years previously—came to San Diego, bubbling over with ideas that attracted the attention of Allen, the builder. Allen asked the rancher to stay; Collier, father of the exposition, made him assistant to the president and went abroad. Within a few months the board of directors appointed the newcomer Director General, discharged all committees except the executive committee, gave the new chief a free hand and told him to carry out his ideas; to build an exposition with a constructive purpose.

That purpose was the settlement of the still unproductive arable lands in the Southwest quarter of the United States, the acceleration of agricultural development in San Diego's potential trade territory, an area that comprises a million square miles covering the southern part of California, all of Arizona, western Texas and New Mexico, a part of Colorado, the southern half of Utah and Nevada. In this territory the Panama Canal will enable San Diego to lay down goods for less money than it costs to ship them from the manufacturing points in the East or Europe, across the continent by rail.

"Holy Gila Monsters!" said the Illinois tourist. "Do you mean to say that there is anything worth developing in *that* country? Why, it's drier than a Kansas town after a revival campaign. How much room for real farms, not cattle ranches, is there in that desert country? You got to *show* me the green spots."

No one knew. The Director General did not know. But he proposed to find out. Hiring a corps of statisticians he investigated every county, every valley and plain containing more than fifteen hundred cultivated acres in the territory. He enumerated every acre, irrigated or dry-farmed, in the region, determined the principal products of every valley, the rate at which production had grown between 1909 and 1913, compiled data on the rainfall, the length of growing season, on transportation and

educational facilities. Above all he ascertained how much raw land was left in every county or valley that could be made productive either by irrigation or by dry-farming methods, checking and verifying the figures thus collected most carefully.

The totals obtained in this painstaking survey surprised the Director General. They showed that in 1913 eight million irrigated and non-irrigated acres were producing crops in the Southwest; they also showed that this territory in addition contained forty-four million acres of untilled agricultural land, and water enough to irrigate almost half of this immense area.

In Western Canada less than twenty million acres are in crop this year. These twenty million acres, with a short growing season and rigorous winters, have pulled a hundred thousand American farmers across the line every year for a decade; these twenty million cultivated acres have built the cities of Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and a score of lesser towns. In the Southwest the survey showed that forty million virgin acres were available for settlement, half of them susceptible to irrigation and specialized intensive cultivation. There was room for 700,000 new farms, for a farm population of five millions over and above the total present population of 1,600,000 souls. In the establishment of these 700,000 new farms a billion dollars' worth of lumber would be needed for buildings and fences; they would require at the start twenty million dollars' worth of plows and harrows, twenty-six million dollars' worth of rakes, over a hundred million dollars' worth of pumps and engines. For farm equipment, tools and implements, for building material, furniture and household necessities, those 700,000 new farms would offer an initial market worth five billion dollars to the manufacturers. Would they go after this business with an exhibit at San Diego?

Having compiled these detailed data, Director General Davis did not begin his campaign for exhibits until March first of this year. On that date he sent out six high-class salesmen to present the statistics and arguments to a selected list of manufacturers. Within ten weeks ninety per cent of the available space was gone, contracted for by manufacturers whose eyes were suddenly opened to the magnitude of

the virgin field in the Southwest. The remaining ten per cent did not go begging. The Director General was saving the space for emergencies, was actually turning down proffered exhibits.

The representative of a European government came to apply for 16,000 feet of space.

"What did you intend to exhibit?" asked the Director General.

"We shall again show our famous line of art bronzes," replied the commissioner, "the line that has made my country famous wherever it has exhibited."

"Have you anything else that you could show?"

The commissioner shook his head.

"Then I'm afraid I'll have to deny your application. We have made it a rule to accept exhibits only if the goods shown have a market or can create a market in our territory, and for art bronzes there is no demand."

The commissioner arose, wide-eyed.

"Do you mean to say that I cannot exhibit what I please at your exposition?" he cried. "That is an unheard-of thing! I have had the honor to represent my country for twenty-six years at expositions all over the world, but this is the first time that our exhibit has been declined. Do you really mean to say that you refuse my government space in which to exhibit its art bronzes?"

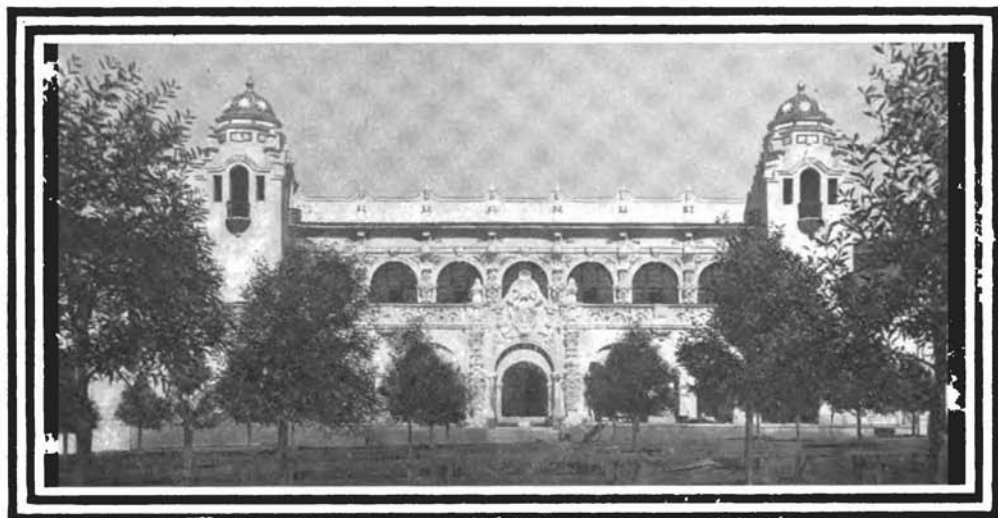
Davis disarmed the commissioner with his famous smile, but stood his ground. The familiar line of art bronzes will not be seen at San Diego.

And when the commissioners of states, counties and districts arrived with their exhibit plans, they ran full tilt into that same inflexible determination to have a constructive exhibition. They were asked to put up exhibits of real value to the visitors, exhibits that would visualize the opportunities in the Southwest at a glance. It was the Director General's idea to have a large-scale wall map part of every state's or county's exhibit. This map was to show every railroad line, the accurate dimensions of every town, every mile of road and its character, every school-house in its right location, every forty-acre field of grain, alfalfa and other field crops, every orchard and vineyard. In addition, these maps were to show not only the available area of irrigable virgin land and its location,



PHOTOGRAPH BY STINEMAN

In all its details the San Diego Exposition gives a true picture of Spanish architecture



PHOTOGRAPH BY STINEMAN

The Director General has censored the exhibits. In the Southern Counties' building, as in every other building, the displays will be not only instructive, of practical value, but will combine truth with novelty

but the character of this raw land, the quality of its soil, its adaptability to the production of alfalfa, fruits or vegetables. The Director General opposed the indiscriminate exhibition of embalmed fruit, tall cornstalks, sheaves of grain and giant vegetables. He insisted upon a show that would furnish the visitor in a week with more accurate, reliable information, with a better picture of agricultural conditions and opportunities in the Southwest than he could hope to obtain through a year's expensive travel.

And he censored the exhibits. They had to be not only instructive, meaty, of practical value, but they also had to be true. Misleading exhibits were worse than no exhibits at all, the Director General insisted. He gained his point. The old-time boom stuff, the yodeling of the land speculator with the heat-treated, vanadium steel conscience will be conspicuously absent at the Panama-California Exposition.

But the dancing girls will be there, thirty of them with castanets and tambourines imported bodily, castanets and all, from Barcelona, Seville and old Monterey, thirty sloe-eyed, nimble-footed *señoritas* who will, without fee or price, gyrate to the rhythmic swing of Spanish melodies before the palaces of the Prado, amid the bloom of the great Plaza, on the greensward of the Avenida Internacional, in the cool tiled patios of the ancient Missions where the fountains splash musically and the

curved shadows of palm fronds sweep silently over the creamy walls. The Isthmus will be there, larger, wider, bigger than the Midway at Chicago, the Pike at St. Louis. Already the longest, highest, dippiest, screamiest racing roller coaster in this hilarious world is ready for business, the mysteries of dopy Underground China are exercising their shuddery lure, on the Painted Desert real Navajo Indians are building real *hogars* and quaint pueblos, rehearsing the weird rites of the Snake Dance against the background of the purple Cuyamaca Range. Because the San Diego Exposition will continue for twelve months, from New Year's to New Year's, the amusement people, assured of fine weather and good business for three hundred and sixty-five days, could afford to put up attractions beyond the reach of short-time, rain-soaked, thunderstruck, heat-blistered expositions.

"But why this frivolity?" sniffed the tourist from Peoria, scratching the spot where the scalp lock used to sprout. "Why dancing girls and miles of thrillers at an exposition devoted to a serious constructive purpose?"

I submitted the pertinent question to Chief Davis. Of course he smiled.

"It takes all kinds of people—and lots of them—to make an exposition successful" he replied. "The primary constructive purpose of our exposition assures us a select attendance of serious people, but even



PHOTOGRAPH BY STINEMAN

A five-acre model ranch, complete to the climbing roses on the wire fence, was producing vegetables and berries this spring; fifty varieties of fruit-trees around the bungalow will be blooming by February

the most purposeful individual loves to relax, to enjoy novel sensations, sights and experiences. We want as many people as we can possibly induce to come to see San Diego, the Coast, the West. We want crowds, and in the attraction of great crowds the versatility of our amusements, the splendor of our palaces, the beauty of our grounds, the wide diversity of interest we offer are most important factors."

Novelty is the cornerstone upon which the success of any exposition is built. The mere size of Chicago's White City, the mass and variety of its exhibits and amusements, the sham magnificence of its classic structures, lifted it far above any preceding effort. And since the World's Columbian Exposition the builders have found it extremely difficult to surpass the Chicago climax. At San Diego, however, a new exposition note has been struck. It is best expressed in the experience of the men whose fantastic attraction was the strongest money-getter on the St. Louis Pike. They came and asked for a concession.

"What kind of a show do you want to put on?" inquired the Director General.

The visitors' chests expanded visibly.

"Creation!" they replied in unison.

"The biggest drawing card at the St. Louis Exposition." And they leaned back to let the announcement take effect.

"I'm sorry," replied the Director General, "but you can't have any space unless you devise something different. Your at-

traction has become identified in the popular mind with the St. Louis Exposition. We can't afford to imitate even if you would draw the crowds. Think up something fresh, something new and we'll welcome you with open arms."

Nor did the Director General limit this policy to the multitude of amusement devices. With equal rigor he applied it to the exhibits themselves.

"The time for the mere exhibition of finished products in a state of dignified repose has passed" he explained. "Rows upon rows of polished electric motors, stacks of beautiful fabrics, miles of commodities, machines and products endlessly repeated weary the eye, tire the feet and bore the brain. The same thing can be seen any day in a department store, a wholesale house or an art bazaar. We refused to have these lifeless exhibits in our buildings. We demanded action, novelty, interest—and we got it. We will exhibit processes, not the product alone. In our textile exhibit, eight looms installed by different manufacturers will show the exact method of weaving various fabrics. Underwear, hosiery, knit goods, woollen and cotton fabrics will be made right before the visitor's eyes. We won't have an exhibit of Japanese art handicraft. We'll have the craftsmen themselves carving in ivory, weaving the tall Formosan hats, beating copper, lacquering and enameling jewelry. Our traction engines won't stand in solemn



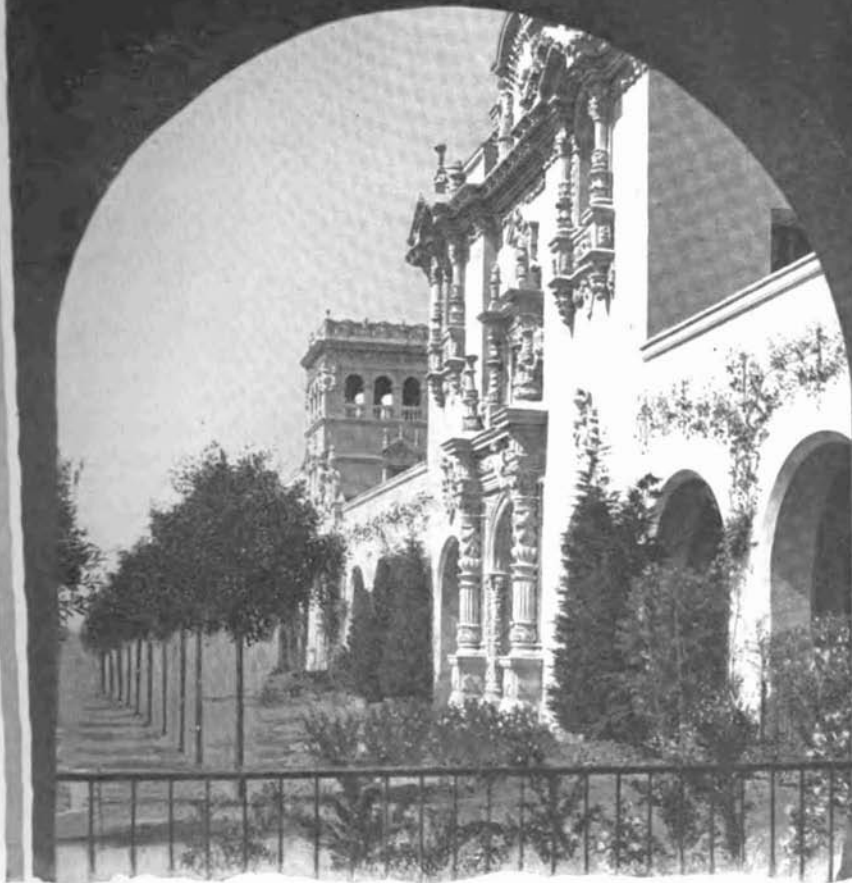
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Some of the buildings are of permanent concrete and steel, others are of stucco and plaster, but the eye cannot discern the difference. The Arts and Crafts structure, like all the others, looks as though it had been built for the ages

rows like wooden horses; they'll be out on a hundred-acre field in active competition, each one trying to show that it can plow the deepest furrow, haul the heaviest load in the shortest time at the lowest cost. There will be life, action—movement in all our exhibits. Seventy-five per cent of their number will show processes of production or the use and application of the product. Those that do not lend themselves to this treatment will be historical in character, will show the evolution of the appliance from its crudest form to its present perfection. And there won't be endless repetitions. We have limited every line of industry, every branch of manufactur-

ing, to two exhibits, except, of course, agriculture and everything pertaining to it, in order to avoid monotony and tiresome duplications."

More than any exposition ever held, San Diego is laying stress upon outdoor exhibits. A five-acre grove containing every known variety of citrus fruits blossomed this winter, its fruit will turn a deep gold before the gates are opened on New Year's. A five-acre model ranch, complete to the climbing roses on the wire fence, was producing vegetables and berries this spring; fifty varieties of fruit trees around the model bungalow will be in bloom by February. Sheep will be sheared by



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The sumptuous carvings of the rich façades, as in the entrance to the Home Economy building, produce a perfect imitation of hewn-stone effects, so careful and painstaking has been the modeling, so close the attention to fine details

electricity, cows milked by compressed air, fruit trees sprayed by gasoline, under the deep blue sky the year around. And there will not be a single "Keep Off the Grass" sign anywhere within the grounds.

A visit to the average exposition is not a vacation; it is hard, strenuous, albeit pleasant, work. San Diego's exposition will be restful. Green lawns have been spread everywhere, winding paths lead through the groves of exotic trees, shady belvederes with spacious seats have been built at a hundred points, exposed to the cool breath of the Pacific trades, offering vistas of the city far below, of glinting bay

and blue ocean, of the Coronado islands' purple silhouettes on the far horizon. All around the exhibit buildings, green arms reaching into the spaces between them, is a sea of multicolored foliage brought from the far corners of the earth, of flowering shrubs and ornamental bushes whose odor and color are even now pervading the buildings. Strange combinations impossible in other climes are to be seen. Scotch heather is blooming in the shade of green-and-red pepper trees from Brazil. Slender cocoa palms from the South Seas and flowering sweet-scented acacias from Australia—there are twenty-seven varieties of them—

line the streets; bougainvilleas of deepest purple, rising from green lawn, climb the creamy walls of the palaces around the Plaza; bougainvilleas glowing with color borrowed from the heart of the red flame cover the façades of other groups. The greatest botanical garden in all the world is but a poor lifeless catalogue of single specimens compared with the wealth of massed plant life at San Diego's exposition. And every species of plant will be a living exhibit, plainly marked with its workaday common name and adorned with its stilted scientific cognomen. For the nature lover San Diego's exposition will be a source of costly delight, again and again he will deposit his obolus at the gate to explore the close ranks of the world's flora.

They are systematically spreading feed for the feathered songsters; the scented arroyos, the green slopes of the canyons may be filled with their melodies when other bands begin to play.

It takes a great deal of money to keep an exposition open and running twelve times thirty days. Some of the recent shows could not keep going five months without a deficit. San Diego, about as far from the geographical center of population as it is possible to get without dropping off the map, fully realized the magnitude of the task ahead of its exposition management. To make the fair a financial success, more people had to be drawn through the gates from a longer distance than at any previous exposition. And the visitors of the first six months must bring the crowds during

the last half of the show; they must be sent home so filled with enthusiasm that their descriptions will bring their friends to the Silver Gate. This enthusiasm, however, could not be aroused by an exposition of the home-cooked variety. It must be novel, and it must have a foreign exotic flavor. Therefore San Diego built an exposition that does not look like an exposition at all.

Some of the buildings are permanent, consist of reinforced concrete and steel; others are of the usual staff-and-plaster construction; but the eye cannot discern the difference. They all look as though they had been built for the ages. So careful and painstaking has been the modeling, so close the attention to the fine details, that the sumptuous carvings of the rich façades produce a perfect imitation of hewn-stone effects; real tile and imitation are used side by side, yet the uninitiated cannot tell one from the other, and the tile floors of the monastic patios would puzzle even an expert.

In all its details the San Diego Exposition gives a true picture of the richest, most beautiful part of a Spanish colonial city. Even the pigeons are there, hundreds of them cooing in the towers of the palaces. The names of the streets, avenues and boulevards are all in sonorous Castilian; the gatekeepers, guards and attendants will appear in Spanish costumes; Spanish dishes will be served in Spanish restaurants, even the advertising copy of the exposition will be flavored and spiced with quotations from the Spanish poets in the original.



PHOTOGRAPH BY STINEMAN

Real Indians from New Mexico are building on the Painted Desert real *hogars* and quaint pueblos



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Before the palaces of the Prado thirty slee-eyed *señoritas* from Spain will dance daily, without fee or price, to the rhythmic swing of Castilian melodies

To obtain the early visitor's enthusiastic cooperation, Director General Davis has gone to extraordinary lengths. He is determined that every visitor shall receive full value for every dollar he spends within the grounds. The contracts with the concessionaires dispensing food and drink within the enclosure provide not only a rigid regulation of rates and prices, but they also provide for a strict supervision of food preparation and service. Every kitchen will be on exhibit; no partition can be used except it be made of plate glass. All the ice cream, candy and lemonade must be made on the ground in full view of the audience. Unclean, questionable or crooked attractions have been excluded. Every possible precaution has been taken to protect the visitor against fraud or deception within the grounds.

But the Director General has gone a step farther. The exposition management's protective hand will greet the visitor before he lands in San Diego, before he has reached the grounds.

"We have decided that the exposition shall not be used as a cloak behind which extortion can be practiced," declared the Director General—without a smile. "We will see to it that even during the months of the greatest crush every visitor can obtain a clean, comfortable room for a dollar and a half a day, for two dollars and a half a day with private bath. We are now mak-

ing contracts with all hotels, rooming and apartment houses to fix their rates for the exposition year, this rate not to exceed the price demanded during the height of the tourist season in an ordinary year. Under the contract this rate cannot be raised, and every room must have a card stating this price on display. The contract provides for a penalty of a thousand dollars for violation of its provisions, and the exposition stands ready to refund to every visitor the amount of the overcharge beyond the rate as contained in the published lists. We want the visitor to depart with a sweet taste in his mouth, and we are going to see that he does."

There was still another question on my mind. I hesitated to put it since it was none of an outsider's business. But having the experience of other expositions in mind I blurted it out.

"How much money will you have to borrow on your gate to complete the exposition?"

The Director General seized his hat with a broadening of his smile. "Come on," he said, "let's see Frank Belcher. He is handling the finances."

Like Davis, the chief, and Allen, the engineer with the genius for building, Belcher is a young man, with keen black eyes and features cast in a stern Roman mold, dealing out words as sparingly as he hands out dollars. He reached for a report sheet.

"To June first the exposition has spent a little over a million seven hundred thousand dollars," he stated, tracing the column of figures. "The cost estimate of the remaining work—we haven't been fooled on any of our estimates yet, thanks to Allen—shows that every bill can be paid before January first, nineteen fifteen, out of the funds in sight. We'll open the gates with a cool hundred thousand dollars left in the treasury. Want to see the books? All right, just as you say. Besides, we have now on hand a fund of sixty thousand dollars from the sale of concessions. The peanut and popcorn man, for instance, paid us ten thousand plus twenty-five per cent of his

gross sales. That fund is untouched, draws four per cent and is growing. We'll have money to lend instead of borrowing it."

I touched wood. The Director General's smile crept toward his ears. "Come around New Year's eve and look over the books," he invited. "And don't judge San Diego by the standard of previous expositions. It isn't fair. We are all new in the business. We had no precedent to cling to. We were forced to proceed on entirely new lines, make our own way irrespective of what others had done."

That is the reason why the Panama-California Exposition will be an unprecedented success.

A CREED

By DAVID LESLIE BROWN

TO overlook unreasonableness, and to reverence fact; to avoid error, and to exalt right-doing; to counsel when asked; to strike—and strike hard—when a wrong is wilful; to see Divinity in Man, and seek God in Nature; to be sincere; to be natural; to be honest, and kind, and courteous; to be dignified, confident, and determined; never to wrong friend or foe—there's enough for a creed—and to keep anyone busy!