

THAT LATH-HOUSE SHALL WE OR SHALL WE NOT?

October 1911

Last month Alfred D. Robinson had a dream about an exposition lath house of unique arrangement and generous proportion which was the chief attraction at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, which according to this dream, was then in the height of its glory.

The man who dreamed is this month communing with nature in the fastnesses of the Yosemite, but the dream seems to have struck such a popular cord that The Garden has been importuned on every side to see if this one dream at least cannot be made to “come true.”

Some go so far as to say that this feature alone, if entered into with right spirit by the exposition directors, would make the show worth while, even if the visitors from the four corners of the earth had first paid their entrance fee to the grand aggregation under the big tent at Frisco.

Many have painted their mental pictures in such lifelike colors that one could fairly hear the music of the band, and smell the plants and flowers, here and there catching a glimpse of the lath over which had crept the tinges of brown and green gathered from the dews and the sunshine from without, and the damp earth and growing plants within, until the house and the plants, the music, the birds and the odor seemed to have been there from the beginning of things.

Of course there are objections. All admit the beauty of the conception, but it has never been done, and the idea of combining the lath house feature with the central auditorium hasn't a precedent.

The Eiffel Tower and the Ferris Wheel were a little out of the ordinary in their day, and some in San Diego say this lath house would be to the Panama-California Exposition what the Ferris Wheel was to the only and original World's Fair.

All other objections might be overcome, however, but what about the matter of getting the money to put it up? It might cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000, and spots have been picked out for practically all the Exposition's twenties, and then some, so we are told.

The question naturally arises, “Is it a good enough scheme to warrant cutting off a corner here and there, in order to permit of its consummation?” Many who haven't the spending of the money seem to think it is.

Naturally The Garden is prejudiced in favor of the lath house proposition, and sees in it a most attractive exposition feature. At the same time it sees no obstacle in the way of the project too great to overcome.

Here are the opinions of a few of our citizens:

“Why not?” asks Fos. Sefton, Jr., Acting Director-General
“A lath house that shall be a permanent and beautiful ornament

to the park, and one of the great features of the Panama-California Exposition?”

“Why not?”

“It strikes the exposition company in a soft spot, this suggestion of Robinson's. There is no reason why such a lath house cannot be built. There is no reason why, once being built, it cannot become one of the most striking and beautiful features of the whole exposition.

“The only objection to your dream is that it is too small. Make the lath house just as large as architects and constructors will dare to build it with the light materials that must be used in its construction. If possible, make it conform to the general architectural appearance of the exposition. Fill it with the rarest plants, vines and flowers that can be gathered together. Arrange it like our lath house now in the park, with overhead pipes so that rain showers can be used when irrigation is needed. Such a house will always be warm enough to grow any species of plant life wanted for interior decoration.” ■

