

THE KING'S THEATRE, GLASGOW.

The city of Glasgow which already possesses many fine buildings of great architectural merit has had its number of such increased by the handsome Theatre which has been erected at the corner of Bath Street and Elmbank Street. The projectors of this enterprise are the well known firm of Howard & Wyndham, Limited, Mr F.W. Wyndham being the managing director, and it is not too much to say that among the important theatres they control none can equal their latest addition. The exterior is of classic design, carried out in a warm red stone. The bold lines of the building with its fine façade form an imposing adjunct to the wide thoroughfare in which it is situated. The frontage towards Bath Street contains

THE PRINCIPAL ENTRANCES.

Two rusticated piers on each side of the entry doors are carried up to the height of the façade which is crowned by a bold cornice and frieze supporting a pediment, and from this large consoles recede back to the main building, which is finished by balustrading surmounted by life size emblematical figures. The other end of the building is similarly treated and in the centre the façade repeats and has recessed bay windows, which light managerial offices and other important parts of the building. Over this is a distinctive feature, being practically an enclosed roof garden with glass doors opening on to outer balconies. The roof is a circular and domical one, a greater portion being of glass, giving the effect (which has been aimed at) of providing the King's Theatre with something novel in the shape of a grand saloon for which this apartment is intended.

The main building, consisting of the auditorium and stage, is set back from the front of the building already described and forms a good back ground for the varied outlines and levels which have been adopted, and creates a very interesting sky line.

The elevation to Elmbank Street is similarly treated. An additional feature to that containing the entrances in Bath Street is obtained, and between these a circular corner is designed which is kept low and surmounted by a copper dome, forming a satisfactory architectural feature.

The remainder of the frontage is carried up to the whole height of the main building, and with its pilasters, recessed balconies, and model cornices and pediments, completes what is certainly a handsome addition to the number of fine buildings in the city of Glasgow.

The other elevations are of less pretention, but go to complete the whole design. Handsome iron and glass shelters are to be erected over the pavements in Bath Street to shield early comers from inclement weather, and these will have coloured glass signs, and will be illuminated by electric light. A special feature is obtained over the

principal entrance, the verandah being carried up with a skeleton iron dome surmounted by a crown, thus carrying out the idea which suggested the title "The King's Theatre." The principal façades are fitted with arc lamps in the most prominent positions, so that the whole building at night has a very brilliant and effective appearance.

The site is one selected out of several by the company's architect, Mr Frank Matcham, of London, who has designed the whole building and personally supervised its erection. It was chosen on account of

ITS IMPORTANT POSITION

and more particularly for its availability, and for the opportunities which it afforded for the erection of a safe and up-to-date theatre. The site enables the building to be practically isolated, with frontage to three roads and to a private way at the rear, which constitutes the entrances and exits to the stage portion of the building.

In designing the theatre, it is evident that the architect's first consideration was the safety of the audience. From no floors or divided part of a floor, are provided less than two distinct and separate exits; in fact the pit, which is a large one, is provided with three exits.

The principal entrance as already mentioned is in Bath Street. Pairs of handsome polished mahogany doors open into a large and lofty vestibule, the walls of which are lined with white and coloured marbles, and the floor is of marble in white and black squares.

In the corners of this vestibule are handsomely designed pay offices and telephone rooms, and to the right a pair of doors give access to a whole corridor (similarly treated with marble walls and polished mahogany woodwork) leading by a short flight of easy steps to the stalls. On one side of this corridor are retiring and cloak rooms with every convenience; on the opposite side are the manager's suites of offices; and approached from a private lobby at the end is the star's room, a comfortably fitted up apartment. This lobby communicates both with the auditorium and the stage for the convenience of the management.

The vestibule is of attractive design and good proportion. The marble walls are surmounted by a decorative frieze from which springs a boldly panelled domed ceiling. An arched opening opposite the entry doors leads to the foot of the

FINE MARBLE STAIRCASE,

and off the first landing (divided by marble columns and arches) is the space allowed for access to and from the dress circle cloakrooms. On the other side of the staircase is continued to a crush-room, having a figure-painted ceiling; the walls are tastefully painted and the floor is laid with mosaic. This room is comfortably furnished with settees and a rich turkey carpet. From this room a short flight of steps leads to the foyer, an artistically designed apartment in the form of a half circle. The walls are panelled and filled with rich silk brocade, the ceiling is oval in shape and artistically

decorated, and the whole is carpeted and furnished in a most luxurious manner. At one side of this foyer is the ladies retiring rooms which are daintily furnished and fitted up with every convenience for their comfort.

The pit and gallery are approached through wide entrances from Elmbank Street, and here, by an ingenious arrangement, the people are led singly to the pay offices without barriers of any description, through separate entry doors; thus the exits are always clear and uninterrupted. Additional entrances are obtained (and these form extra exits) for early doors to these parts of the house.

The interior of the house is fitted up with comfort, combined with artistic taste, to such an extent as is seldom achieved in buildings of this description. Every little detail has been studied, and the result is most creditable to all concerned.

The gallery contains fifteen rows of seats, and these all face the stage. There are no side seats, as the gallery is not continued along the two sides in the usual manner, which usually gives very poor seats, and causes the gallery occupants to hang over the fronts sometime in rather and alarming manner.

The dress circle is fitted with luxurious tip-up chairs, and the broad sweep of the eight rows (uninterrupted as the view is by way of any columns) affords such a view of the stage that every inch of its floor is seen from even the very end seats; in fact, this perfect view is obtained from every part of the auditorium, the occupants of the gallery having a view of the whole of the stage equal to that from the stalls or dress circle. This is in consequence of the galleries being constructed on a

SPECIAL CANTILEVER PRINCIPLE

by girders built in from wall to wall, curved to the shape of the fronts; the raking bearers from the walls, projecting beyond these curved girders, are all plated and jointed together and encased in concrete; the whole forming a mass of rigid fireproof construction.

The sanitary work throughout is all of the latest and most perfect description; the occupants of the gallery have been as thoroughly considered as those of the other parts, it being the intention of the management to give proper consideration for the safety and comfort of their patrons in all parts of the house. The theatre is heated throughout with a special system of coils, radiators, &c. The fresh air is forced into the auditorium through chambers containing hot water pipes, and is drawn out through flues, etc., so that a continual stream of fresh warm air is obtained through the winter and cool air in the summer.

The stage is divided from auditorium by an asbestos fireproof curtain, and hydrants, fully equipped, are placed in the most desirable positions, both in front and behind the curtains, and as the whole building is lighted by electricity and constructed of fire-proof material the risk of danger from fire is reduced to a minimum.

We cannot profess to describe all the artistic features which Mr Matcham has introduced into his decorative scheme, they must be seen to be appreciated; the whole displays great taste, and is set off by the rich silk draperies to the boxes, and the proscenium and other openings throughout.

The tone of colour in the decorations is kept in very quiet shades of cream with white and gold, and this effect is greatly enhanced by one shade of Rose de Barri [sic] being adopted throughout for not only the curtain, but also the carpet, chairs, and even the wall paper, all being of this lovely shade, the effect of the whole when illuminated by the electric light being charming.

THE STAGE

is a large one, being 70ft wide, including the scenery docks, and 50ft deep. It is fitted up with the usual traps and bridges and all requirements for modern pieces. The height to the grid is sufficient to raise the scenery out of sight without rolling it. Carpenter's shops, property rooms and storage rooms are all provided in the most convenient positions, and all doors in the stage wall for access to the orchestra and front of the house and provided with fire-proof doors.

The dressing-rooms form a fire-proof block cut off entirely from the other parts of the building; these are controlled by a porter's lodge, and access to the rooms is obtained by fire-proof corridors and staircases. They are comfortably furnished, and heated by hot water, and are lighted by electricity, and are furnished with retiring rooms and complete means of exit, the safety and comfort of the artists being considered in every way.

It will be seen that Mr Wyndham has been determined to provide Glasgow with a theatre embracing the latest and most improved ideas as regards theatre construction and arrangements. The theatre was opened on Monday last by Mr Willard and his Company to a full house and brilliant company.

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