THE EVENING NEWS.

Thursday, - - - October 28, 1869.

OLD HONESTY'S REMINISCENCES OF SALT LAKE THEATRE.

The Theatre is situated on the corner of State and First South streets; in dimensions, its ground plan is eighty by one hundred and forty-four feet, with walls forty feet high to the square. From the ground to the top of the decking it is sixty-five feet; it has an additional roof of shingles over the decking. The rock work, three feet thick, rises twenty feet above the water table; the upper part of the wall is of adobies, two and a half feet thick; the roof is self-supporting. The front entrance of the building has an open porch, supported by two doric columns. The stage has an opening at the drop curtain of thirty-one by thirty-three feet, the whole depth of the stage being sixty-two feet.

The first ground was broke, July 1st, 1861. The architect, Mr. W. H. Folsom, the carpenters, the masons, the painters, the decorators, the laborers, the teamsters, all went to work for its erection and completion with an energy which was truly praiseworthy. From its commencement until its completion, not a serious accident befel any of the workmen employed upon it.

The building contains an office, each, for Manager, Treasurer, Stage Manager, Janitor, Copyist and Band Master; also a Band Room, Male Wardrobe, Ladies' Wardrobe, Carpenter's Shop, Painters' Shop, three Property Rooms, Lamp Rooms, Green Rooms, Scene Rooms, seven Stove Rooms and fifteen Dressing Rooms.

In the month of February, 1862, as we visited this mammoth building, we saw near two hundred men working with all their might and strength, to get this temple of the drama ready for the opening night, which was fixed for the 6th of the following month. The carpenters, under the direction of W. H. Folsom; the masons under J. Staples; the painters under W. Pitt; the scenery by W. V. Morris, G. M. Ottinger and their assistants; the costumes by C. Clive, Mrs. H. Maiben and their assistants, and properties by C. Millard and assistants. Each seemed determined to be ready for the appointed time. The long anticipated hour arrived; we were favored with an invitation from President B. Young to be present with our family at the dedication, which commenced with the choristers singing—

"Lo! on the mountain tops appearing."

Then came a prayer by President D. H. Wells. We have a very vivid recollection of that prayer, and often think of it; we imagine, even now, if it were occasionally repeated with the same spirit, and sensed as it should be, it would not have a bad influence. Perhaps it was the first and only Theatre upon this continent that was ever dedicated by prayer, and indeed it was a great and good prayer. After the dedicatory prayer Elder W. C. Dunbar sung,

"Then conquer we must, when our cause is just,
And this be our motto 'in God is our trust.'"

Then followed addresses by President B. Young and our much-lamented and higly esteemed friend, the late President Heber C. Kimball, and Elder John Taylor. Songs and music were interspersed during the evening, the music under the direction of Professor C. J. Thomas.

On Saturday the 8th, the first dramatic performance was given, when the Deseret Dramatic Association performed the "Pride of the Market" and the farce of "State Secrets." A few performances were given in quick succession, when the first season closed with the play of "Love's Sacrifice" and the farce of the "Widow's Victim," on Saturday, April 19th.

Immediately after the close of this season the auditorium was pulled down, remodelled and re-arranged, and many improvements made, affecting both sound and sight; and on Christmas Eve, 1862, it was so far completed that the doors were again opened to receive an auditory, invited by President B. Young. The house was soon filled to its utmost capacity with a respectable and delighted audience. On the stage were seated Presidents Young and Kimball, with ten of the Twelve Apostles. The Orchestra opened the entertainment, the Tabernacle choir appeared before the footlights and sung

"On the Mountain Tops appearing,"

and Elder E. T. Benson (who has since finished his earthly mission) offered prayer. The choir sang

"Hard Times come again no more."

Presidents Young and Kimball and several of the Twelve made brief and pertinent addresses. During the pleasant evening several songs were sung by ladies and gentlemen, after which the scenes were suddenly drawn and the orchestra struck up that beautiful old English contra-dance, "Sir Roger de Coverly," and a select company, already on the boards, went through it with right good will. The time flew swiftly on, until the hour of eleven,

"When a kind good night to all"

Was pronounced. The following night the doors were opened for a dramatic entertainment. Manager J. T. Caine stepped before the curtain and expressed a short and welcome greeting to the patrons of the drama; then came a few harmonious strains from the Orchestra, lead by Professor C. J. Thomas, when "tinkle" went that ever welcome bell (to the audience), up rolled the beautiful proscenium curtain, and Tobin's splendid comedy of "The Honeymoon," with a strong and excellent cast from the Deseret Dramatic Association, appeared to great credit. A patriotic address, composed by T. A. Lyne, Esqr and spoken by J. R. Clawson, was next in order, which was followed by the side splitting farce of "Paddy Miles' Boy," concluding an excellent bill, for the first night, everybody going home highly gratified with the magnificent appearance of the Theatre, and the careful and spirited manner in which each played his respective part.

A few nights rolled by when we had presented that famous "Charcoal Burner," whose commodity was at that time at a high premium in the market, and he availed himself of the opportunity, and nightly supplied the great demand until stone coal was discovered in abundance, which soon run out the old burner with his

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(To be continued.)

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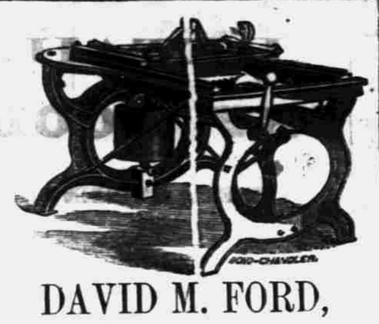

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