

THE CASTLE SQUARE THEATRE.

Thespis has not a more beautiful temple in this country than Boston's new and most magnificent home of the drama, the Castle Square Theatre, one of the finest, safest, best equipped, most comfortable and most elaborately furnished buildings devoted to theatrical purposes. The entire press of New England, as well as the representative journals in the States, have united in the fullest measure of praise of its grandeur.

The situation of the theatre, as every Bostonian is aware, is on the spacious square formed by the junction of Tremont, Chandler, and Ferdinand streets. As far as the public convenience is concerned the site is a happy selection. The Providence depot, and the Columbus Avenue station of the Boston and Albany Railroad, are not five minutes' walk distant; the prominent street-car lines of the city and the West End, the South Boston, and Cambridge lines are but a few steps removed; the elevated railway has a station at Castle Square; and altogether the location is as easy of access as that of any other theatre in the city.

What but a few months before the opening night, November 19, 1894, was an unsightly building has been transformed into a gorgeously appointed theatre.

Before passing through the principal entrance on Tremont Street, we are confronted by an arcade with a height of thirty feet from the ground, classic in style, and built of brick and terra cotta.

Two engaged columns of the Corinthian order stand on either side, on pedestals eleven feet high, and support an elaborately moulded terra-cotta frieze and cornice. Great garlands in terra-cotta relief interwine theatrical insignia, and

on each side of the arch a group of six immense wrought-iron lanterns of colonial style cast a brilliant light over the whole scheme of decoration. From the roof of the arch rows of electric globes send their brilliancy down and emphasize the artistic finish of the large 16' \times 16' vestibule. On the right and left of the sides of the vestibule are great terracotta panels each bearing the figure of a Greek dancing girl. In front and above are immense stained-glass windows, bearing in many-colored glass the outlines of a mediæval castle and the name of the theatre.

Passing through the main doors from the vestibule we enter the "grand foyer." Turning to the right or left we reach the mezzanine balcony by the grand staircases with their handsome electro-bronze newels and balusters, the top of the newels being set off by large electric-light globes.

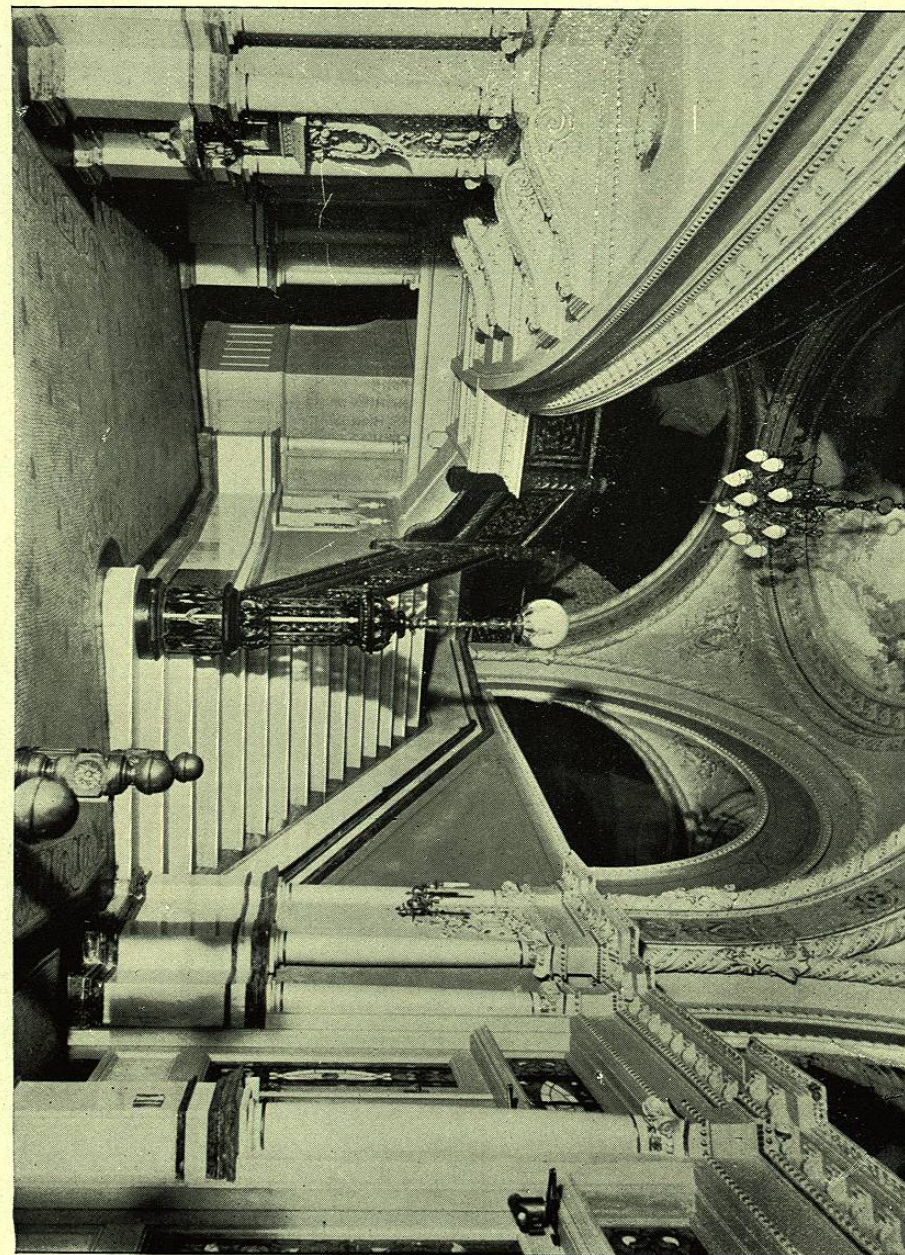
The grand foyer, or lobby as it is sometimes called, is circular in form, 19 feet wide, including staircases, and 60 feet in length. The staircases are each 8 feet wide, built of iron and marble.

By glancing at the ceiling of the foyer we are shown the Guastavian domes blazing with light, which shed their brilliance over the most beautiful paintings that have ever decorated the ceilings of a theatre.

Scarcely are the beauties of the domes considered when we discover succession after succession of similar domes, with myriad circles of cherubs reaching away into a seemingly endless distance. The effect is so real and so astonishing, the purity and transparency of the glass so wonderful, that we had not noticed great mirrors set over the entrance-doors at such angles as to reflect in their clear depths almost every part of the entire theatre.

From the foyer on the right is situated the ladies' parlor, 12 feet wide by 20 feet long, a dainty resting-place furnished as in the days of Louis XVI. Its pretty onyx marble fire-

FOYER, CASTLE SQUARE THEATRE.



place, combined with the silken finish of the walls; its soft carpet in delicate design and colors, and the gilded furniture, lend to it an indescribable charm which is heightened by large mirrors covering two of its walls.

In sharp contrast to the ladies' parlor is the masculine appearance of the gentlemen's smoking-room—12 feet wide by 27 feet long—situated upon the opposite side of the building, but the same lavish generosity has made it an ideal place to court. Its leather-covered furnishings are solidly magnificent, commodious, restful, and inviting.

The beauty of the foyer is difficult to surpass. Exits from the auditorium, hung with draperies in softest red, are numerous. Cloak-rooms, dressing-rooms, and toilet-rooms are situated with a generous regard to comfort and convenience. The floors are of neat designs in mosaic tilings. Great arches, panelled, and beautified with exquisite paintings, are seen on every side. Directly opposite the vestibule doors are dainty Sienna marble fountains, with gold faucets. The walls are finished in satin effect, and the harmony of coloring in this part of the theatre defies description.

As we enter the auditorium through the doors shown upon the view from the stage, we see a series of domes supported upon the steel construction of the balcony, and a scheme of decoration after the Italian Renaissance style, the relief work being in cream and gold. Directly over the auditorium an immense circular electrolier, 40 feet in diameter, spreads its twenty arms out from the centre of the dome, and its three hundred and eighty incandescent lamps of frosted glass send their rays to every part of the auditorium with a grand illuminating effect.

Encircling this electrolier is another division of the dome, suspended from the electrolier a short distance, resplendent with floating cherubim trailing a bewildering mass of ribbons and garlands of flowers in their merry race around the

wide-spreading branch of three hundred and eighty electric lights. No less attractive are the proscenium arch, and the boxes, twenty in number, furnished with superb designs in stereo-relief. Beautiful beyond all is the sounding-board, a portion of which is shown in plate view of boxes, with a depth of fifteen feet over the proscenium arch, bearing the most exquisite work in painting about the theatre. Twelve dancing girls, life size in figure, present themselves in artistic abandon. The work was so elaborate that it was first executed on canvas in New York and then brought to the theatre to grace the sounding-board. The magnificence of the auditorium is entrancing. Wherever art has laid her finger she has left an impress of beauty. The grand sweep of the balconies, the soft harmony of the colorings, the beauty of the relief decorations, and the masterfulness of the paintings have impressed us with the fact that we have found an aesthetically perfect theatre.

While art has left its impressions, mechanical science appeals to us for a hearing. Every hygienic law has been considered in the construction. Pure air is forced into the building by a system of ventilation perfect in its conception. Each floor has a hollow space to admit the air from the immense air-ducts, supplied by a mammoth blower. The air is carried to every seat and forced into the house through the hollow-legged chairs.

We are attracted by the general roominess about the auditorium, and at once discover another distinctive feature in the seating arrangements. Every chair is of more than ordinary width, the places between them being so generous as to admit of free passage even when the audience is seated; even to the back seat of the second balcony, the chosen throne of the "gallery god." This majestic critic, the terror of all "thespians," is seated in comfort. He sits in a chair covered with finest plush.

MEZZANINE BALCONY, CASTLE SQUARE THEATRE.

