

THE AMERICAN THEATRE.

The American Theatre, situated on the southeast corner of Eighth Avenue and West Forty-second Street, New York City, as designed and constructed by Charles C. Haight, architect, presents to us an example of the newest of the great places of amusements in which New York delights.

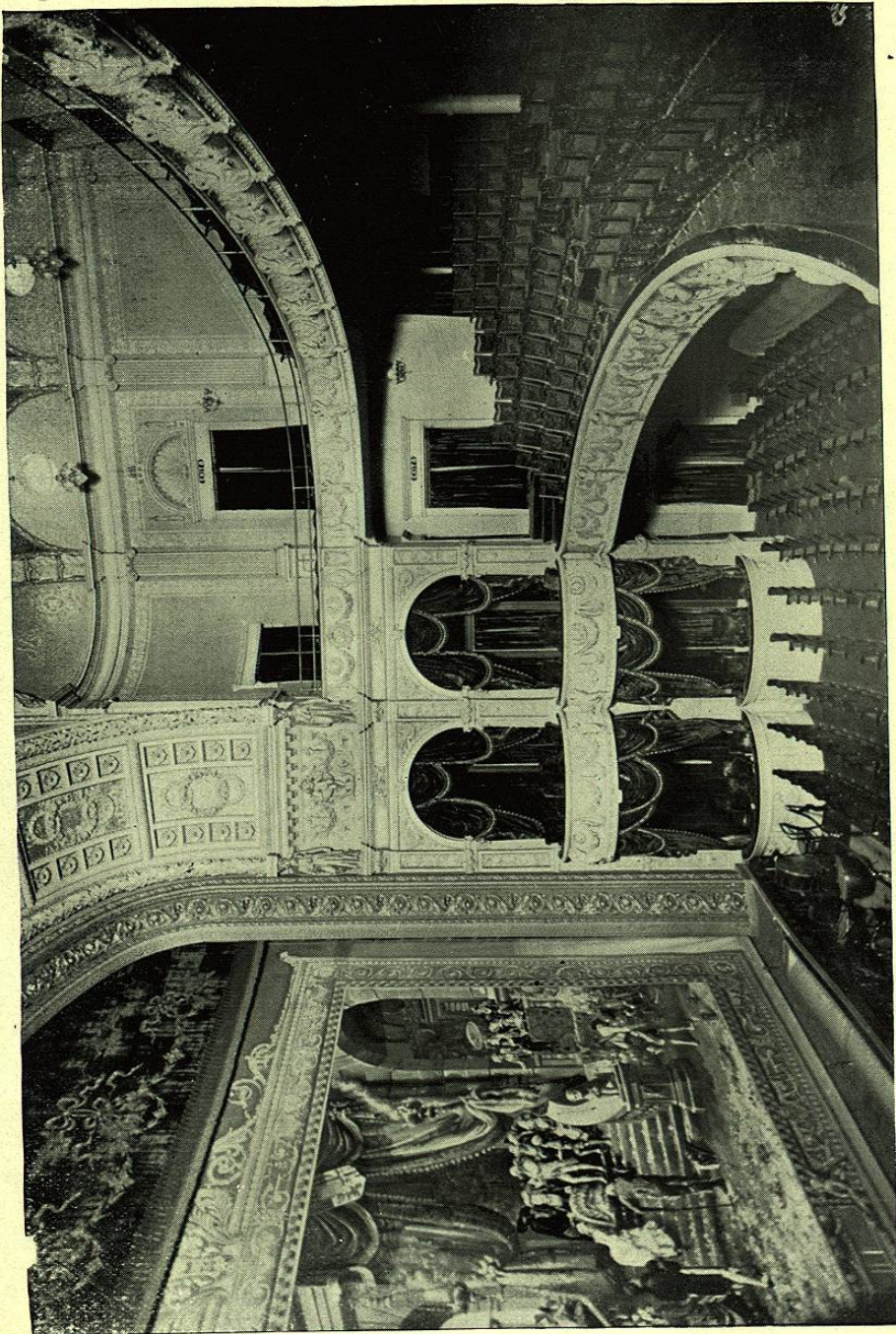
It was opened for the first time in 1893, and attained at once great popularity.

The theatre proper covers a plot of ground 100 feet by 98 feet 9 inches, with three fronts upon three different streets. The photo-plate shows the Forty-first Street front with entrances to the foyer, balcony, gallery, and stage. The other two fronts face Eighth Avenue and Forty-second Street respectively, and are used also as entrances to the foyer. The Forty-second Street entrance contains stairways leading to balcony and gallery. The architecture of the exterior is simple and effective, showing at once that the design has been well studied, and carried out with neatness and precision.

In the decoration of the auditorium and throughout the interior of other portions of the building the same taste has been exercised as in the front, the colors of which are in warm tints.

In the construction of the auditorium particular care has been taken to provide a system by which each spectator commands a good view of the performers.

Some of the important provisions for the safety of the public against fire are wide and easy staircases, large outside fire-escapes, open courts, and an abundance of exit doors; fire-extinguishers, fire-curtain, and skylights constructed to fly open automatically. Iron and concrete enter largely into the entire construction of the building.



VIEW OF BOXES, CURTAIN, AND PROSCENIUM ARCH, FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE.

A feature of the American Theatre is its roof-garden, which is constructed upon heavy iron girders over the auditorium, where in hot weather one may partake of refreshments and listen to the orchestral music.

The garden, as well as the rest of the entire building, is brilliantly lighted with electricity, and is reached by elevators and stairways.

The elevator-shafts are constructed of solid masonry walls, having openings leading into the different galleries, the auditorium, and foyer. The elevators are used by the audience at the beginning and close of each performance.

The auditorium will accommodate, in seats which are comfortably arranged, about 2500 persons.

The ground-floor plan clearly shows the entire arrangement of the entrances and lower portions of the building. The passage from Eighth Avenue is 19 feet 8 inches wide, and that from Forty-second Street 15 feet 8 inches; the lobby at the end of these two passages being 18 feet 6 inches in diameter.

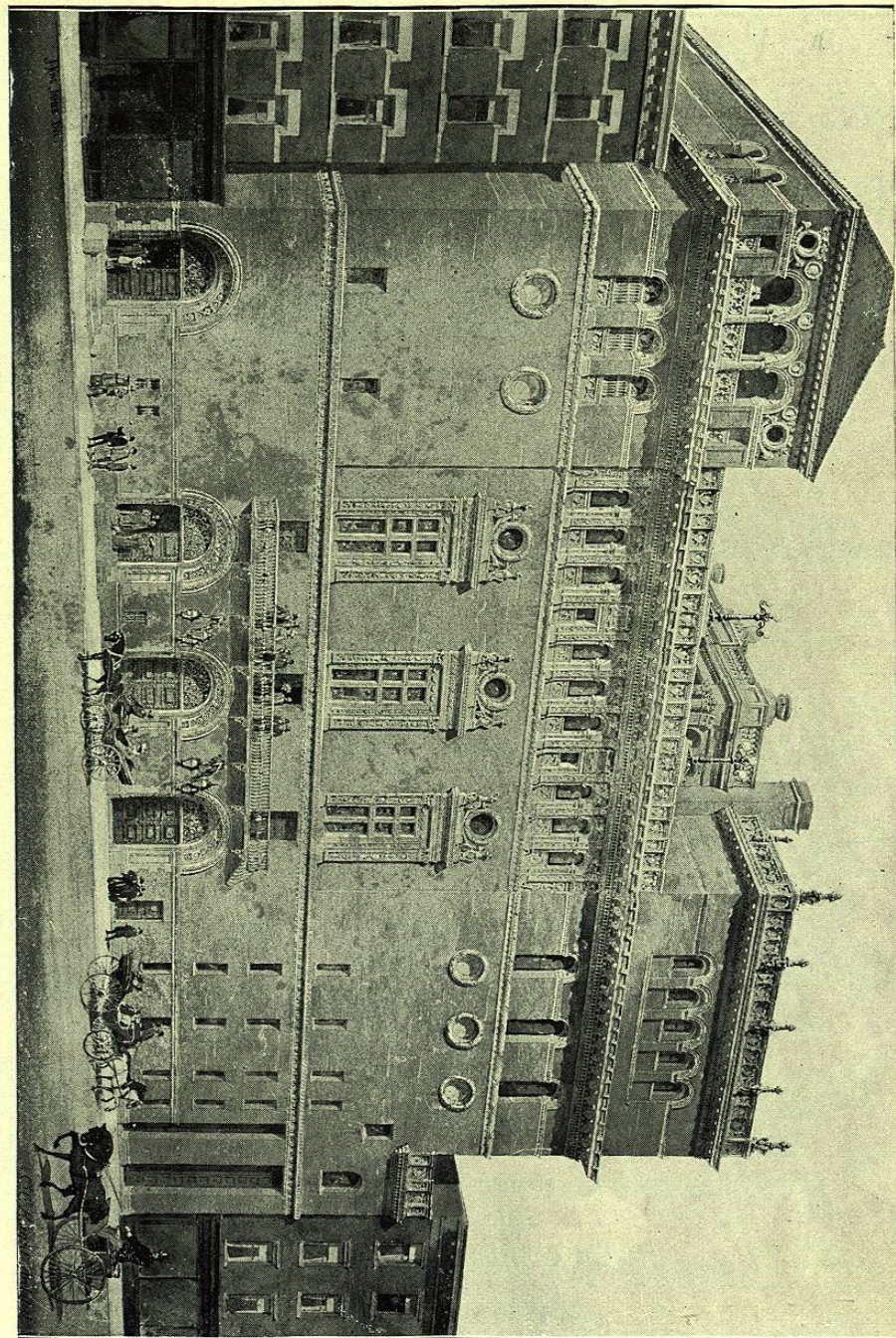
The foyer is 14 feet 6 inches wide at its narrowest part, by about 60 feet long.

The distance from the curtain to the rear is 74 feet 6 inches by 74 feet 5 inches wide, and the height of the auditorium from the stage level to the top of the dome is about 70 feet.

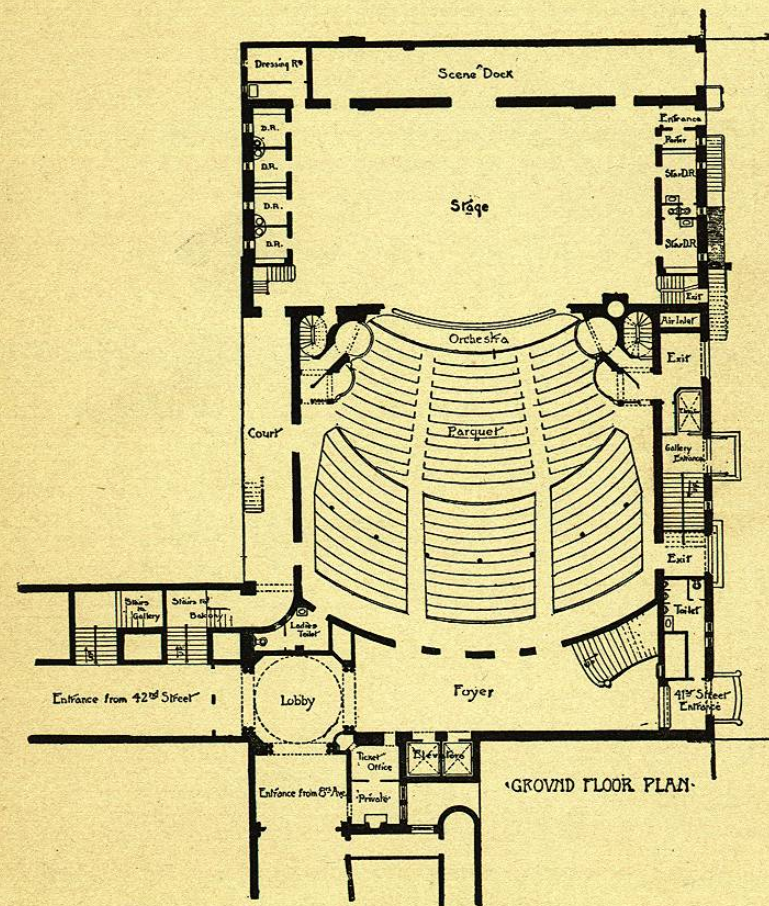
From a point on the centre-line, 7 feet 4 inches from the curtain, a radius of 34 feet describes the rail which separates the parquette from the parquette circle. Each successive row of seats in the circle, 2 feet 7 inches wide, is described from the same point, allowance being made for an aisle 6 feet 3 inches wide at the back.

The steppings of the parquette are described by a radius of 31 feet 8 inches to a point on the centre-line back from the curtain, each row being the same width as those of the circle.

EIGHTH-AVENUE FRONT OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE.



In addition to the main entrances to the foyer there are in this portion of the house four exits on each side, two leading to an open court and the other two leading to Forty-first Street.



The stage with its galleries, and the proportions of the auditorium, are shown in the section.

The proscenium opening is 39 feet wide by 39 feet high. The stage is 43 feet 4 inches deep by 77 feet 9 inches wide, and 73 feet 6 inches to the gridiron.