

MISSION PLAY READY TO OPEN

*First Performance of New
Season Tomorrow*

*Only Personally Invited
Guests to Attend*

*Drama Tells History of
Early California*

[Illustration on Picture Page]

Housed in its beautiful new \$650,000 theater, John Steven McGroarty's Mission Play, a feature in the dramatic life of Southern California for sixteen consecutive seasons, will reopen tomorrow night at San Gabriel. The famous drama and pageant, for which McGroarty refused \$100,000 only to sign over all his rights without cost to the people of California, has played in the past to audiences totaling more than 2,000,000 men and women and has established a record unequalled by any other stage performance in the world.

Saturday night's reopening will be unique in that only personally invited guests of the officers and directors of the play will attend. These guests will be the men and women from all sections of California who have contributed \$100 or more to the fund being raised to finance the furnishings of the new playhouse. The Mission Play is handled by a non-profit corporation of business men and all the proceeds from the historical spectacle are used to assist in restoring the old landmarks of California.

STORY OF STRUGGLE

The history of the play is the history of seventeen years of struggle and effort by Mr. McGroarty, whose early attempts to mirror the lives of the mission padres, Indians, Spanish soldiers and adventurers brought repeated rebuffs from theatrical men and producers. He refused to be disheartened, however, and slowly built up the beautiful spectacle and pageant until the business men of the city swung themselves solidly back of his enterprise. Year after year the Mission Play has been shown to capacity houses, until it has become to Western America all that the Passion Play of Oberammergau is to Europe.

The play, as a pageant, is the personal pride of San Gabriel. Members of the old Spanish families of the mission town enact some of the roles year after year, sing the songs that their forefathers sang at the fiestas and dance the dances of yesteryear. These are features of the Mission Play which give to it absolute beauty and sincerity.

PART OF OLD MISSION

The site of the new playhouse is a seven-acre garden tract which once was a part of the cactus-walled compound of the old San Gabriel Mission. Remaining in the tract are many objects of historic interest. One is the world-famous old San Gabriel grapevine, the parent vine of all California grapes, planted during the eighteenth century. Then there is the quaint adobe house referred to in Helen Hunt Jackson's famous book as the birth place of Ramona. Later on there will be built on the grounds an Indian village reproducing exactly the homes of people who inhabited this section of California at the time when white men first made their appearance here. Indians, descendants of the people who used to dominate this region, actually will live in the village.

The Mission Play tells the story of the bringing of civilization to the western shores of America. It tells how California began. The glamour and the romance of old Spain, mother of California, is portrayed. Franciscan monks, Spanish soldiers and sailors, Indians, picturesque adventurers and beautiful Spanish singers and dancers all furnish thrills, pathos and romance.