

THE NEW THEATRE-ROYAL.

The construction of our new Theatre-Royal is now almost completed, and little more than the finishing touches require to be given to allow it being opened as arranged on the 26th inst. The house has been erected from the designs and under the superintendence of Mr C. J. Phipps, F.S.A., of London, who, after building some thirty theatres in various parts of the United Kingdom, has brought his large experience to bear in giving Glasgow a really fine and commodious theatre. The principal entrances are in Hope Street, near the Cowcaddens end of the theatre, an alteration which will admit of the former thoroughfare being kept private, and thus facilitate the arrival and despatch of carriages. Here, close together, there will be four doors—one for the stalls, another for the dress circle, and a third for the upper circle, while the fourth will be used as an extra exit for the stalls and dress circle. The old entrance to the stalls and balcony in Cowcaddens is now to be given up to the pit and amphitheatre, and the gallery door takes the place of that formerly set apart for the amphitheatre, and situated in the lane forming the southern boundary of the theatre. Besides these there are several exits which can be brought into requisition in cases of emergency. The visitor to the stalls will, after crossing a vestibule 22 feet square, turn to the right, and passing along a corridor 5 feet wide, gain the desired portion of the house, which is on the street level. The stalls are laid out in five rows, affording in all accommodation for 100 persons. For those whose places are at the side of the house farthest from the door, a passage at the depth of a few steps is provided underneath the stalls, so that the inconvenience of passing in front of the audience already seated in the theatre is avoided. Immediately behind the orchestral stalls is a spacious pit, which will hold over 1000 persons, whose view of the stage will be uninterrupted, and the slope of the floor will enable everyone to see well over the heads of those in front. Overhanging the pit, and at a judicious height, is the dress circle, which is reached by ascending a double flight of stairs, and at the top of which there is a crush-room, 22 feet square. It is of a graceful and easy sweep, somewhat of the semi-circular form, but expanding towards the proscenium, between which and the centre of the circle there is a distance of 35 feet. Apportioned off into half-a-dozen rows all the way round, it will seat 312 persons; while at the back and curtained off there are nine boxes, each of which will contain six seats. Behind this, and with the corridor, 7 feet wide, intervening, there is a saloon 30 feet long by 16 feet deep, and adjoining ladies' and gentlemen's cloak-rooms and lavatories. Rising above the dress circle is the upper circle, which recedes considerably, the distance from the centre to the footlights being 42 feet. This portion of the house will give accommodation for 300 persons, and the space beyond the corridor is laid out in a manner exactly similar to that in the circle below. The uppermost part of the building is, as usual, divided into amphi-

theatre and gallery, the slope of which is such as to insure everyone having a full view of the stage. There are four rows of seats in the amphitheatre, holding 366 persons, and the gallery placed in 16 rows—the width from wall to wall will be 74 feet—is intended to seat an audience of 900 to 1000. At the rear of the amphitheatre and underneath the gallery there is a double refreshment bar, serving both classes of the audience, though apart from each other, with separate lavatories. In the way of private boxes there are on each side of the house one proscenium box on the pit level, one on a level with the dress circle, and one still higher up; while at the side of these farthest from the stage there are three boxes on a level with the dress and upper circles respectively—18 in all. By means of pass-doors in the stairs the different parts of the house are in communication with each other, so that those obtaining transfer tickets will not have the trouble of descending and ascending long flights of stairs. Special attention is being paid to comfort in the seating, and the stalls and dress circle are fitted up with the folding chairs invented and patented by Mr Phipps, the architect, and made by Wadmans, of Bath. The theatre altogether is seated to afford accommodation for 2758 persons. All the floors and passages are of fire-proof concrete, while the inner walls are of brick and Portland cement. Regarding the stage. The proscenium opening is 31 feet wide and 36 feet high. Behind the act-drop the stage measures 72 feet in width, and from the foot-lights to the back wall 58 feet, which makes it very considerably larger than before, while below the stage there is a depth of 26 feet. The stage is solidly constructed, by Owen, of London, having the usual traps, doors, and bridges, and all the latest fittings and apparatus for the working of the scenery will be supplied. The dressing apartments for the performers are in the building running along the whole length of and having windows in Hope Street. The stage door is situated at the south-west corner of Hope Street, and gives access to all parts of the house behind the scenes.

As to the internal decorations. Now-a-days much attention is being paid to the elaboration of the auditorium of our playhouses, and in this respect the Royal will certainly excel. The general character of the architecture of the interior is the French Renaissance school, the roof terminating in a coved ceiling, having a sun burner in the centre. The main feature is the private boxes on either side of the proscenium opening. These are enclosed in elaborately moulded and fluted columns, having enriched capitals, and surmounted by a Pedimental head. Over the proscenium is an allegorical figure subject, representing the various arts allied to the drama, painted by Harford, of London. The ceiling has a ground of a light cream colour, upon which is painted in eight panels elaborate ornaments in gold and colours. The cornice below the ceiling is richly moulded and gilded. The cream-colour of the decorations becomes darker as the lower parts of the auditory are approached, and the raised ornament is richly gilded, colour being only sparingly used in the box fronts. The walls of the auditory are to be papered with a rich crimson-coloured paper, while those of the private boxes will be of gage green and gold, forming a suitable background to the crimson drapery hangings, which have been supplied by Stewart

& Co., of Glasgow. The painted decoration and gilding are being executed by Mr Edward Bell, of London, and the firm of Jackson & Sons, of London, are constructing the box fronts, proscenium, and ceiling in their patent fibrous plaster. The vestibule is laid in marble mosaic by Burke & Salviati, of London and Venice. We must not omit to mention that a very charming act-drop has been painted by Mr W. Haun, a well-known scenic artist, of London; while the traditional green baize will again form the drop-curtain closing each play. The tradesmen who have done the construction portion of the building are all of Glasgow, viz.:—Stevenson & Son, masons and bricklayers; Ross & Son, carpenters and joiners; Morrison & Son, slaters and concrete builders; M'Gregor, Gilnour & Co., and Stevens, ironwork; Bremner, plasterer; Rae, plumber; Chalmers & Tesh, gasfitters. The works were, after many delays, actively commenced in February of the present year, so that the theatre has been built in eight months from the commencement. Mr William Browne has been the inspector of works for the architect; and Mr Phipps has himself visited the works constantly so as to hurry everything forward.

The Royal will, as we have mentioned before, be under the management of Miss Marie Litton, who comes to us with the name and fame alike of an actress of merit and a successful lessee of metropolitan theatres. The lady, we glean, is a native of Derbyshire, and made her *debut* on the stage a dozen years ago at the London Princess's Theatre. Mr and Mrs Boucicault were there playing in "Jeanie Deans," and Miss Litton was entrusted with the part of *Effie*. Subsequently she joined the Gaiety Theatre Company, and in the end of 1869 appeared with Mr Toole in "Uncle Dick's Darling." Upon the withdrawal of that piece she migrated to the theatre at Brighton, remaining there for three years; and then she undertook the lesseeship of the London Court Theatre. During her *regime* pieces by leading contemporary dramatists were produced, and the *corps* numbered many prominent players, while she herself also appeared in comedy parts with marked success. It was while Miss Litton had the Court Theatre that the travesty by, it was understood, Mr W. S. Gilbert, "The Happy Land," in which Mr Gladstone, Mr Lowe, and Mr Ayrton were turned into ridicule, and which attracted the official attention of the Lord Chamberlain, was produced. At a later date Miss Litton had the management of the St James's Theatre, and after a successful term there was attached to the Prince of Wales Theatre Company. In the autumn of 1870 Miss Litton became lessee of the theatre in the Westminster Aquarium, which was afterwards changed to the Imperial Theatre, and with the assistance of an efficient company of comedians revived on an elaborate scale several of the Shakespearian and old English comedies, only withdrawing from the management of the house in the spring of this year. For the opening of the Royal our lady lessee has arranged to provide Shakespear's "As You Like It," with the same admirable company which carried it through such a successful run in London recently. Excellent bills will follow, and at Christmas a pantomime, having for subject, we believe, the familiar "Little Red Ridinghood." Miss Litton, who is known in private life as Mrs Wybrow Robertson, will, we understand, be assisted in the management of the theatre by her husband, Mr Wybrow Robertson, who has had considerable experience in matters pertaining to the stage.