

Utica  
Sept. 27, 1900

### The Old and the New Opera House.

Twenty-nine years ago next month, Utica—thanks to the Mechanics' Association—entered upon the possession of an Opera House that promised to last for a century, but which outlived its usefulness in a quarter of that time.

The old Opera House took its name slowly and under many protests. Those who had built it proposed to call it The New Mechanics' Hall. And they went so far as to rush into print with that title. But the preliminary lease of the premises to Nick Forrester's Theatrical Company confirmed the name of the Opera House—and as such it has always been known. The opening of the old Opera House was effected by the local Democrats, who had engaged it for a political meeting. It was packed as full as it would hold. When Horatio Seymour's voice—silvery and penetrating—resounded through its space, there fell on the great audience a hush of silence which was presently relieved by such applause as Seymour could evoke from a crowd of Democrats. When he had finished the sharper voice of Francis Kernan rang through the arches and awakened the vast audience to renewed enthusiasm. And after these two had finished, many looked about them and for the first time took stock of their surroundings. These found red the prevailing color in the richly-cushioned chairs that all occupied, as well as in the conscientious but futile effort of the scene painter to brighten up the stage. Much red and some gilt we all saw. It was such a contrast to the rude benches of the old Mechanics' Hall that it is small wonder that Uticans predicted a life of a century to our "splendid" new Opera House.

The "splendor" departed swiftly. Everybody discovered that Utica was behind the times in the matter of play-houses. Actors, who could afford it,

spoke disparagingly of the House. It was old-fashioned it was new. It had almost all the conveniences of the modern play-house.

Now comes the new Majestic Theatre which will have to undergo a struggle for a name than its predecessor underwent. It is natural to speak of the venture as the new Opera House. But as the Majestic Theatre it was opened last night, with Miss Viola Allen in "In the Palace of the King." A representative audience was present and witnessed the play. Those who entered the portals of the Theatre saw many sights unfamiliar to their native Utica eyes; the foyer glistening in white marble, the auditorium on the first floor, with chairs of real comfort to sit in, the balcony and the gallery, rising one above the other, gave such an impression as to draw forth the remark: "It's every way up-to-date."

Yes, we have an "up-to-date" Majestic Theatre. And as we are considering it, let us express the hope that the troubles growing out of its building will be quickly adjusted and that it will enter upon a career of prosperity commensurate with the growth of Utica, which is no longer "pent up," but is expanding.