

are having become dangerous it was pulled down, and on June 13, 1827, Messrs. Edward Simpson and Joseph Crowell published the prospectus of a new theatre to be erected on its site, "suited equally for theatrical and equestrian performances," to be called the Olympic Theatre. This was the origination of the present **Front Street Theatre**, which was commenced by a stock company early in 1829. The architect and builder was Charles Grover, and when finished it was the largest and most complete theatre in the United States. It is situated on the south-western corner of **Front** and **Low Streets**, fronting on the former and binding on the latter one hundred and fifty-one feet to James' Falls. The building is four stories high, has three tiers of boxes and a pit, and comfortably accommodates four thousand persons. There are three entrances on **Front Street** and one on **Low Street**, built as a combined theatre and circus; there were extensive dressing-rooms under the stage, and stabling for over fifty horses. In the rear of the stabling, bordering on the Falls, there was a



FRONT STREET THEATRE.

spacious court with three large doors opening on the Falls, with steps descending to the water. The stage was seventy-five feet long and the same in breadth, with a large door twelve feet wide opening on the Falls, where a stage was erected over sixty feet long. The opening of the stage was thirty-four feet wide, with ways nine feet broad soon to admit boxes or carriages. The ring was forty-seven feet in diameter, with two doors, thirteen feet high and six feet wide, leading from the stables. The height from the dome to the ring was fifty-two feet; and the dressing-room was seventy feet long, twenty feet high, and the same in width. The scenery was perhaps the finest in the country.

The "New Theatre and Circus" (now called **Front Street Theatre**) was first opened on Tuesday evening, Sept. 10, 1829, under the most favorable circumstances. The audience was "larger than previous experience led persons to believe **Baltimore** could supply," the number of those present being estimated at about three thousand. It was opened under the management of W. Blanchard, a gentleman at the time well known through this country and Canada as the manager of a first-class equestrian corps. Previous to the commencement of the performance, Mrs. Hill, from the London and New York theatres, delivered a prize address, written by Robert Morris, of Philadelphia.

After the equestrian performances a musical farce entitled "The Spoiled Child" was produced. Doors opened at 6, and the curtain rose at 7 o'clock.

"Boxes, fifty cents; pit, twenty-five; and colored gallery, twenty-five."

The theatre had been erected by an association of citizens, and in February, 1830, they applied to the Legislature to be made a body corporate. Accordingly, on February 27th the association was incorporated, under the name of the "**Baltimore Theatre and Circus Company**," with the following incorporators: Thomas Wiley, president; William Hickey, Elijah Stanbury, John J. Gross, Joseph Robinson, Ephraim Barker, James Bash, John Boyd, Thomas J. Murphy, Adolphus Demas, Charles Grover, Jacob Gross, H. W. Baol, William Callinor, Henry Cliffe, Walter Cook, Jr., Richard Bradshaw, David Pugh, Joseph Otterman, and Theophilus T. Fitzelberger. The capital stock was not to exceed \$50,000, divided into shares of \$100 each, and the charter to extend until 1845.

Front Street Theatre never attained the celebrity of the Holliday, although many distinguished performers have from time to time appeared there. The most remarkable of its entertainments were two of totally different character. Built, as we have seen, as a combined theatre and circus, equestrian performances were from time to time held in it, and in 1838 it was occupied by Cooke, an Englishman, who invested his entire fortune, and brought to America the most remarkable troupe of performers who ever exhibited in this city. Unfortunately, about five o'clock on the morning of the 3d of February the theatre took fire, and the flames spread with such rapidity that not an article was saved. The entire wardrobe, scenery, decorations, and a stud of over fifty superb horses were consumed, and the buildings utterly destroyed. Mr. Cooke was totally ruined by the catastrophe. The theatre was rebuilt the same year by William Minifie, architect, for a number of new stockholders, and was reopened on Dec. 3, 1838, but its distance from the fashionable quarters of the city operated against it, although many noted actors appeared there.

No theatrical sensation of the day, however, was equal to that created by Jenny Lind when she appeared for the first time in **Baltimore** at the **Front Street Theatre**, on the night of the 8th of December, 1850. Her astonishing reputation had preceded her to America, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the people went mad over her. Abundant prices were paid for the first choice of seats,—from one hundred dollars in **Baltimore** to seven hundred dollars in Providence, R. I. Under the management of P. T. Barnum, the scale of admission to her concerts was far beyond any prices ever before demanded. Five dollars was a low average for good seats, and for her fourth and last concert in **Baltimore** a charge of twelve and a half cents was made at the door for all persons who attended the auction of tickets. The receipts from the four concerts were about sixty thousand dollars, a very strong sum for the staging of some two dozen songs. On the night of the first concert