

# THE LAST OF THE OLD GUARD

THOSE familiar with the history of the drama in Utah will not need to be told the names of the grand old quintet whose faces look forth from this page, or of the distinguished part they played in the early history of the state. They are almost the sole links that connect us with the days of Nauvoo, Clawson, Caine, Margetts, McKenzie, Margaret Clawson. What a pathway of achievements they can look back upon! What a stupendous total in the sum of the general good, is piled up to their credit! What a debt did the pioneers of Utah, for whose pleasure they toiled, owe to them! How many cares they banished, how many smiles they started, how many tears they wiped away, in the old days when the community was coming up through the hard processes of formation!

They and their associates were the fathers and mothers of the drama in Utah. One of them, Bishop Clawson, trod the boards with T. A. Lyne in Nauvoo during the 40s. All of them were members of the band that President Young called together soon after Salt Lake was founded, and gave it the commission to form an association for the study of the drama and to provide amusement for the people.

Of that historic cast, which took part in the first play on which a curtain ever ascended in Utah, "Robert Macaire," rendered in the old Bowers on the temple block, in 1850, three of the Old Guard were members. They are H. B. Clawson, who played Jacques Strop; Philip Margetts, the Pierre; and Mrs. Clawson, the Clementine (who was then Margaret Judd). The other members of the cast, John Kay, the Macaire, Robert Campbell, the waiter, and Miss Oram, the Celeste, long ago joined the innumerable caravan.

Of the still more brilliant and larger group that opened the Social hall as a theater, in the winter of 1852, four of the present group were members. Mr. Caine, Mr. Margetts, and Mr. and Mrs. Clawson. The first play was "Don Caesar de Bazan," two others followed immediately, "The Lady of Lyons," and "Pizarro." The opening night was Jan. 19, 1853. Other players, who long since made their final exits, were James Ferguson, J. M. Simmons, Horace K. Whitney, Henry Malben, Bernard Snow, David Candland, J. D. T. McAllister, Mrs. Wheelock, Mrs. Tuckett, Mrs. Bull, Mrs. John Hyde, and Mrs. Sarah Cooke.

Nine years sped by and a greater era dawned. The labors of the pioneer Theatians and their steadily developing tastes, decided President Young on building the Salt Lake Theater. It was opened on the night of March 6, 1862, with a double bill, "The Bride of the Market," and "State Secrets." All the quintet of today were in the cast; John T. Caine as the Marquis de Volange, Mr. McKenzie as Dubois, Mr. Clawson as Isadore, and Mrs. Clawson as Marton, in the first named play. In "State Secrets," Phil Margetts appeared as Humphrey Hedgehog, W. C. Dunbar sang between the pieces, and H. E. Bowring, Mrs. Bowring, and Miss Maggie Thomas, (now Mrs. Romney), were also in the cast. Prof. C. J. Thomas led the orchestra.

A joyful occasion it was, as may be imagined, when the five survivors of the old Deseret Dramatic Association (its official title) came together a few weeks since, at the request of the management of The Deseret News, and posed before the camera for the picture shown on this page. It was the first time they had met in years, and the greetings, the inquiries for each others health and welfare, the solicitude for "dear old Phil," who still suffers from a paralytic stroke, and is helped in and out of the carriage by members of his family—all make up a delightful babel of sounds. What a flood of reminiscences is let loose! Mrs. Clawson, Mr. Margetts and David McKenzie, three survivors of the once famous "Under the Gaslight" cast, salute each other by their stage names. Who that beheld them can ever forget them, "Old Judas," "Byke" and "Snorker,"—the one armed soldier, whom the villainous try to kill by tying him to the railroad track? Imagine the gentle faced Aunt Margaret of today in that role, or as Judy O'Toot! Bishop Clawson comes in a few minutes later and his old time managerial associate, John T. Caine, austere informs him that he is docked two dollars for keeping the rehearsal waiting!

"Dear old John Graham, wouldn't he have liked to be here?" reminisces his old associate and fellow comedian, Phil Margetts, Graham, the Bermudas of that "Under the Gaslight" cast, how his image stands out! Lindsay, Hardie, Nellie Colebrook, Harry Bowring, W. C. Dunbar, Al Thorne, and a host of others whose names are now but a memory, come in for some mention or other as the skein of recollections is unwound, and very tender, very gentle, grow the tones of the veterans as the exchange of reminiscences goes round.

But finally the young photographer, in whose career this event marks an epoch, and who has stood in wondrous silence listening to the interchange of comment between the venerable player folk, announces that the camera waits, and the curtains close behind the Old Guard as they yield themselves into the artist's hands. There let us leave them, in the hope that with such a group for a subject, he may be inspired to reach new heights of excellence in his art.

## Theatre in Pioneer Days

Mrs. M. G. Clawson, the Veteran Player, Narrates Her Experiences.

MRS. MARGARET GAY CLAWSON, was born Sept. 6, 1831, in Westport, Ontario, Canada. Her maiden name was Judd, and her parents brought their family to the valley in 1849, landing here Oct. 26. She was always a lover of poetry and the drama, and still fondly exhibits a faded volume of Byron, with which she beguiled the hours around the camp fire in the journey across the plains.

An interview with Mrs. Clawson, whose recollection is as bright and keen as it was 20 years ago, is like turning over the pages of the theatrical history of Utah. Her own narration of some of her dramatic experiences, told with the vein of humor which was ever her distinguishing characteristic, is as follows:

"In the summer and fall of 1850, Hiram B. Clawson, James Ferguson, Robert T. Burton, and some others discussed forming a company for amateur theatricals. President Brigham Young was consulted. He gave his willing consent and told them to go ahead and do the best they could. After they had gotten together enough people to cast a play, the president gave us great encouragement. He very often came and spent the evening at our rehearsals and made suggestions. He seemed to enjoy the rehearsals very much, but I wonder now how he could.

"The first piece we played was 'Robert Macaire,' in the old Bowers; its top was covered with green boughs from trees and the stage was of rough boards laid on uprights. That was the beginning of theatricals in Utah. I well remember my feelings when asked to take the little part of Clementine in that play. I felt the great responsibility and feared I could not do it justice, although there were only seven or eight lines to be spoken. In one scene she had to faint. Well, that did take practice. I started at home, and fainted four or five times a day, my sister Phoebe catching me each time. After a week she got pretty tired (I was much heavier than she) and refused to catch me often than once a day. Well, after repeating my lines thousands of times and fainting hundreds of times, I went on the stage with fear and trembling. After the play was over I was congratulated on doing so well.



Photo by Olsen & Griffiths.

The figures in this notable group are, sitting, Philip Margetts and Margaret Clawson; standing, on the left, David McKenzie; in the center, John T. Caine; on the right, Hiram B. Clawson. The photograph was taken specially for the Christmas News, on Nov. 7, 1910, the day on which one of the group, Bishop Clawson, celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday. The total of all the ages of the group was 493 years, an average of 80 3-5 years, the respective ages being as follows: H. B. Clawson, 84; Philip Margetts, 82; John T. Caine, 81; Mrs. Clawson, 79; David McKenzie, 77.

The part these five persons played in founding the drama in Utah is told in the accompanying article.

playing for the pleasure of it, and to please President Young and the people. Our first playhouse was the Social hall and a splendid one we thought it. We always had very appreciative audiences. I have seen crowds of people reaching clear across the street, waiting for the doors to open. Our bills said, 'Doors open at half past five; performance to commence precisely at half past six. Tickets to be had at the Tithing office.' No matter how long our play was, we always ended the performance with a farce—like dessert after a good dinner. Families used to bring their picnic and eat between the acts. No criticism in those good old days. Everybody got their money's worth—or their produce worth. Butter, eggs or garden produce was taken when money was not available.

"After I had played a long time, I don't remember just how long, the President gave me enough black silk for a dress. (It did not take as much then as now) I was the most delighted person in the world; only think, to get a silk dress for acting! My great trouble was to know how to have it made so it might last me forever. While playing in the Social hall there was nearly a year that I did not go on the stage, (for reasons best known to myself), and when I did make my first appearance I was greeted with a hearty round of applause. I was very much frightened and embarrassed, as I had never heard a person applauded before she had said or done anything. When I was told afterward that it was a kindly greeting for my return, I felt very much relieved. It seems that some of our merchants had gone east for goods, and had 'caught on' to the custom there. In those primitive times there was no such name as star; all were equal, each one played any part.

"I cannot remember all the plays that were acted in the Social hall. We were quite well organized. Our first president of the Deseret Dramatic association was Bishop Raleigh, a very strict disciplinarian. He had to be on hand all the time to see that everything was all right. Prof. Ball, clarinet player, was leader of the orchestra; David Candland was stage manager—a very good one too. As I think of it now, we had some quite talented men in our amateur company. James Ferguson was leading man, Joseph Simmons, lover, Horace K. Whitney, character actor, John T. Caine, good all round actor, Hiram B. Clawson, comedian, Philip Margetts, comedian, Robert Burton, Robert Campbell, Edmond Ellsworth, John D. T. McAllister and many others that I cannot recall at present. The Social hall was opened with the play of 'Don

Caesar de Bazan,' and I played Maritana to James Ferguson's Don Caesar. I cannot remember all my Social hall parts, but some of them were the countess in 'The Stranger,' Madame Deschappies in 'The Lady of Lyons,' Cora in 'Pizarro,' Clara in 'Money' and Margery in 'The Rough Diamond.' We rehearsed 'She Stoops to Conquer,' all winter and thoroughly enjoyed our experiences, but when the performance was given it was a failure. Ahead of the times, I suppose.

"In 18 years we left the Social hall for the Salt Lake Theater, which was opened March 6, 1862. In the opening play, 'The Bride of the Market,' I had the leading part of Marton. I need not say how delighted everybody was with the play and our magnificent theater, and to me it is still as grand as it was on that opening night. Of course, it has been improved, but it still has the same characteristics. I have been in theaters in New York and San Francisco, but never have seen one that could compare with our open, pleasant, delightful, old Salt Lake Theater.

"Some time after the theater was opened we were paid salaries, which made it still more interesting. After a while we began having stars pass through who stopped and played an engagement of a short or sometimes long season, supported by the Deseret Dramatic association. They said we gave them excellent support. Of course, we believed them. Our first importation was T. A. Lyne, who played tragedies and all kinds of heavy business. After him came Mr. and Mrs. Irwin, who did the lighter lines of business. They were good in their line. The next was Julia Dean Hayne, the first great actress to play here, and never a better one has ever been in the Salt Lake Theater since. I knew ladies who saw her play Lady Isabelle in 'East Lynne,' who spent the rest of the night in weeping, her acting was so realistic. Another never to be forgotten week was played by the great Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett with their own company. Oh, what actors and what acting! The born Hamlet; shall we ever see his like again?

"I recall some of the stars and great actors and actresses whom I played with in the long ago—the first, T. A. Lyne, the Irwins, Julia Dean Hayne, Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Booth, John McCullough, C. W. Coultick, James A. Herne, Lucile Western, E. L. Davenport, J. K. Emmett, George Pouncefort, Annette Ince, Annie Lockhart, Kate Denin, George D. Chapin, Lotta, Jean Clara Walters, McKee Rankin, Kitty Blanchard, and others I do not recall. Our first orchestra conductor in the Salt Lake Theater was Charles J. Thomas, a very rigid disciplinarian. When there was a ballet or chorus to be rehearsed, all knew they must do it to the best of their ability, for the eagle eye of the conductor was on them constantly, and if any of them got a little careless, they were called to account immediately. The company learned to fear, respect and admire him. I remember a little incident while playing under his leadership. I was playing a part that called for a few lines to be sung. I told the professor that I could not sing, but he said, 'I will sing for you. Well, when I did sing, I was watching him. (All our dancers and singers never took their eyes off that stern countenance). Having no time or tune, I did it so badly that he actually laughed, which I took as a great compliment. Again in 'Pocahontas,' there is a 'walk around' and dance by each one in the play. When it came my turn he laughed out right, which encouraged me so that at night my dancing brought down the house. Thanks to the professor. I looked upon him as my best friend in the old theater, and now I look upon him as a good friend and brother in a greater and grander place, the temple, where he is engaged and where I hope to work the rest of my days.

"If I had the gift of writing I could relate many amusing incidents and many pathetic ones too, that happened both on and off the stage. How few are left of those that were actors in them in the good old days! But this has already drawn out too long."

## HIRAM B. CLAWSON.

H. B. CLAWSON, builder, actor, manager, general of state militia, right hand man to President Brigham Young, superintendent of Z. C. M. I., bishop, and patriarch. This tells the career of the well known pioneer from the Nauvoo days down to the present time; few men have been more closely associated with the business, social and religious growth of the community.

Mr. Clawson was born in Utica, New York, Nov. 7, 1826. His parents were converted to the Mormon faith when he was very young, and the family moved to Nauvoo, where they became intimately acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith. The well known theatrical career of Mr. Clawson began when he heard the famous minstrel Dan Rice recite. Young Clawson gave several imitations of him, greatly to the pleasure of the Prophet Joseph, and when Thomas A. Lyne, then a famous tragedian, came to Nauvoo, he was asked to form a dramatic company and

Joseph Smith selected the plays and players and gave Hiram B. Clawson a place in the company. His earliest experience on the stage was in filling the part of the man who throws down the fire from the heavens in the play of "Pizarro," a duty which he performed from the "flies." Other young men in the cast were such eminent names as Brigham Young, George A. Smith, and Erastus Snow, the part of Roli being played by Lyne. In 1845 young Clawson traveled with the Lyne company, playing Mississippi river towns, taking part in the plays and rendering comedy sketches between the acts.

The Clawson family came to the Missouri river in 1846 with the pioneers, and remained in Winter Quarters during the winter of 1847. In 1848 they came to Utah with a company headed by President Brigham Young. Mr. Clawson was an active young man, chancier, and he built the first adobe building erected here, the little office adjoining the old Council House on the south. He also had charge of the mason work on the Council House building. Soon after, he became clerk in President Young's office, and had entire charge of his private business for many years. He resumed his theatrical activity early in the history of the valley, and his Jacques Strop in "Robert Macaire," is said to have been an imitable character. He played leading comedy parts from the opening of the Social hall, appearing in the first night's bill, "Don Caesar de Bazan," "Box and Cox," and was another of his favorite fares. At the opening of the Salt Lake Theater he was appointed manager with John T. Caine, and they acted together for many years. He also appeared on the boards quite often, his most famous part being that of Twinkle in "All's Not Gold That Glitters." In 1852 he, with John T. Caine, remodeled the interior of the theater, at a cost of \$20,000. He became adjutant general of the territory on the death of James Ferguson. He, with H. S. Eldredge, formed the partnership of Eldredge & Clawson, succeeding Hopper & Eldredge, and he made many trips to New York purchasing goods before the advent of the railroad. He then became manager of Z. C. M. I., which position he held for many years. After that he went into business on his own account. For some years he was bishop of the Twelfth ward, and then being released on account of advancing years, was ordained patriarch. Bishop Clawson, as he is still familiarly known, is now in his 84th year, and though his health is not the best, he is still a familiar figure on the streets of the city, with whose history his name has so long been associated.

## PHIL MARGETTS.

PHIL MARGETTS, whose name has been more of a household word in Utah for the past 60 years, than that of any member of the dramatic profession, was born in Warwickshire, Eng., Feb. 10, 1829. He was an engineer on the London Northwestern railway, when he joined the Mormon Church. He came to Utah in September, 1850. As locomotive engineers were things unknown in those days, he acted as a temporary stop to theatricals, and Phil became fester and general aerobist with Bartholomew's circus, at Camp Floyd. Another chapter in his dramatic life, not often recorded, is the fact that he organized the Mechanics Dramatic association, which gave performances in the home of Harry Bowring, in the Twelfth ward about 1860. Such ambitious pieces as "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," "The Barber of Seville," "The Merchant of Venice," were there presented. President Brigham Young attended one performance there, and it was then that the Salt Lake Theater first began to be talked about. The most notable stars who came to the Salt Lake Theater in past days were George Pouncefort, Julia Dean Hayne, C. W. Coultick, Nell Warner, Edwin Adams, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, Ben De Bar, Demian Thompson, E. L. Davenport, E. L. Davenport. The old veteran in passing the evening of his days peacefully, with his son, Bert, he of baseball fame, and his daughter, Minnie, at a new cottage recently built on the old family property in the Twelfth ward. While he is greatly afflicted, his mind remains clear, and he is never so happy as when some theatrical friend of former days calls on him to chat about their old theatrical experiences.

## JOHN T. CAINE.

JOHN T. CAINE, who may be called the Nestor of the Utah drama in the early days, has had a busy and varied career. He was born on the Isle of Man, Jan. 8, 1829. He was a poor, friendless orphan boy, when he heard Elder John Taylor preach Mormonism in 1841. Among other early preachers who had heard were Joseph C. Briggs, a member of the Gill Mills. He emigrated to America as a youth, and was baptized in New York in 1847. He spent a long period in St. Louis, engaged in Church work, and then he met and married E. L. Davenport. They reached Utah in September 1852. Mr. Caine's first work was in digging bells, carrels, etc., on shares. Later he became a school teacher, and then a member of the board of directors of the Deseret Dramatic association in the Social hall.

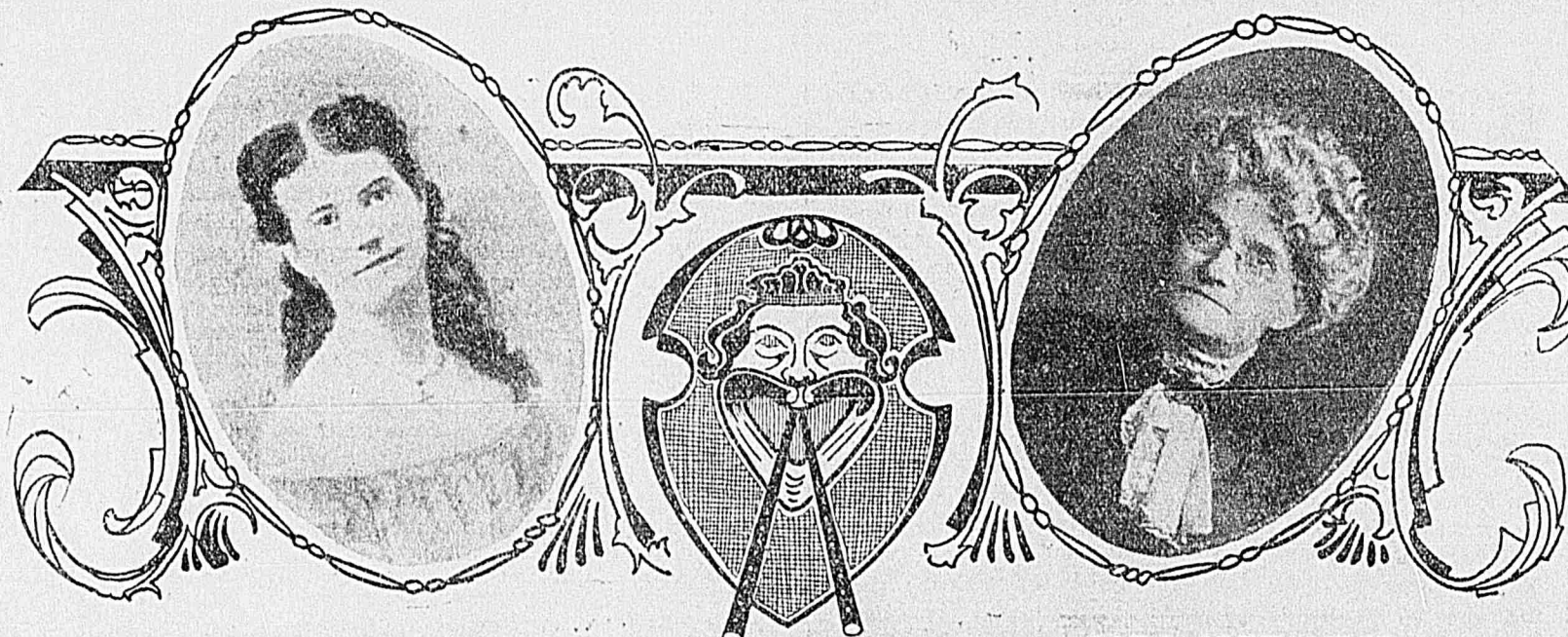
He had indulged his dramatic tastes somewhat in St. Louis, where he acted in a number of plays, his rendition of Amintadus Slek in "The Servant Family," and when he appeared in the same part here he created something of a sensation. Other roles he had played were "The Barber of Seville," "The Charcoal Burner," "Walmote, the Indian," "The Octoroon," and Eustace Baudin. He filled a mission to the Hawaiian Islands, at the same time and place, when he met and married E. L. Davenport. He urged on President Young the building of the Salt Lake Theater, and he and H. B. Clawson were its first managers. He spent some time in Washington as a delegate to Congress, and was a member of the Utah legislature from 1874 to 1882. In 1870 he founded the Salt Lake Herald, with E. L. Sloan and W. C. Dunbar. He was elected recorder of Salt Lake City, which position he filled from 1878 to 1882. He succeeded Hon. George Q. Cannon as delegate to Congress in 1883, and continued to act during the stormy period of history that followed. He was a member of the Democratic convention in Chicago, in 1882, where Grover Cleveland was nominated to the presidency. His Congressional career continued till 1882. He was nominated by the Democrats as the first governor of the new state in 1885, but the Democratic ticket was defeated.

During late years Mr. Caine has retired from participation in public life, but continues active in his religious duties, as a member of the high council of English stakes, and still maintains his connection with the business world as a member of the board of directors and executive committee of Zion's Savings Bank & Trust company.

## DAVID MCKENZIE.

DAVID MCKENZIE, the juvenile of the group, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Dec. 27, 1833, and came to Utah in October, 1854. He often narrates with an amused smile, that his entrance into the drama was the result of a mistake. He and a young man, named Robert Y. Taylor, came to this city to man and amuse their earliest acquaintances was the poet and dramatic critic, John Lyon. Mr. Taylor had a letter of introduction to Mr. Lyon, and he was invited by him to attend the meeting of the theatrical association, then playing in the Social hall; Taylor and McKenzie went to the meeting together, and through an error, Mr. Lyon introduced McKenzie to the company instead of Taylor. McKenzie was then a young, good looking fellow, with a fine voice and manly appearance, and he was taken into the company as a supernumerary. He continued to appear with the company in the Social hall, generally playing the part of the clown, and the creation of the Salt Lake Theater, when he attracted the attention of the Irwins, traveling stars, who recognized his ability and pushed him rapidly to the front. After that he was the leading man of the Salt Lake Stock company, playing opposite roles, generally, to the favorite actress Annie A. Adams. Later he became manager of the Theater, and for a time the house was crowded with his management. He retired from the profession many years ago, and has ever since been employed in the office of the Trustee in Trust.

## Reminiscences of The Old Stock Days in Salt Lake



SARA ALEXANDER, 1864.

In a Harlem apartment near Morningside Park, there lives a quiet, unassuming gray-haired lady, who in the early days of Utah's theatrical history played an important part. Theatricals were a vital factor in the life of those pioneer days, and this woman was known from north to south and east to west in the mountain regions, as one of the leading members in the stock company that kept the Salt Lake Theater open three times a week, sometimes oftener.

Miss Sara Alexander, in company with her mother and sister, Ada, arrived in Utah in the autumn of

1850, from Louisville, Ky., where they had been converted to Mormonism by James Dwyer, the pioneer bookseller of Utah; that was just three years before the opening of the Salt Lake Theater in 1852. Being in mourning for the eldest son and brother, who died a few weeks before their departure for the west, the Alexander family at first attracted much attention from the curious on account of their sombre mourning dresses. The elder daughter, Ada, married James Finlayson of Payson, at Florence, Neb., on their way west, and three years after arriving in Salt Lake, the girl, Sara, became an in-

SARA ALEXANDER, 1910.

mate of President Brigham Young's household, where she remained during all her theatrical career and until she departed from Utah for the coast. Stocks of old programmes, and heaps of newspaper notices are hidden away in an old trunk in this cozy Harlem apartment, old, yellow programs, withered and almost illegible, but the names that appear upon them—what memories they call up! Phil Margetts, Mrs. M. G. Clawson, David McKenzie, Asenath Adams, John C. Graham, John Lindsay, H.

(Continued on page five.)