

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

The New American Museum and Menagerie.
In a great city like this the list of places of amusement is not complete without a museum, and yet there has been nothing of the kind in Philadelphia since the destruction of Barnum's Museum until a few months ago, when the new and handsome structure at the corner of Ninth and Arch streets was opened by Messrs. Carnross, Dixey & Simpson. Barnum's Museum in this city was a great attraction, not only to our citizens but to strangers, and the establishment conducted for many years by Mr. Barnum in New York was, as every one knows, one of the most popular places of amusement in that city. Every visitor to New York went, as a matter of course, to the museum, and those who found the time hanging heavily on their hands could always devise a way of killing it in an agreeable manner by inspecting the innumerable curiosities or by listening to the performances in the "lecture-room." It needs no argument to prove that a well-conducted museum fills a place that other places of amusement do not, and such an establishment as that now in operation at Ninth and Arch streets deserves the hearty support of the people of Philadelphia, if only for the reason that it is an inducement for strangers to come here, and is a valuable auxiliary to the business interests of the city. Mr. Robert Simpson, to whose enterprise the citizens of Philadelphia are indebted for the new museum, is entitled to great credit for entering into such a speculation at all, as well as for the very complete and satisfactory manner in which he has accomplished his object of giving Philadelphia a first-class museum. The building at the corner of Ninth and Arch streets is not only an architectural ornament to the city, but it is most admirably adapted for the purposes intended. The various apartments are arranged so as to be easy of access and so as to show the various objects of interest they contain to the very best advantage. More important even than handsome architecture and convenient arrangement is the fact that the whole edifice is constructed in the most substantial manner possible, so that there is not the slightest doubt of its being able to sustain the greatest pressure that can be placed upon it, while the provisions for the egress of the audience are most ample, so that the entire building can easily be emptied of a crowd within a very few minutes. No pains have been spared to make the building as perfect as possible in these particulars, and it can be visited with less fear of accident than almost any place of amusement in the country.

The museum has started with a most interesting and valuable collection of curiosities that will well repay many examinations. The fourth floor, which extends over the whole building, and which, by the way, is supported upon heavy wooden trusses, so that it is quite as strong as the rest of the building, is occupied in part by a fine menagerie which contains a young elephant, a rhinoceros, an alligator, some magnificent lions, tigers and leopards, monkeys, a zebra, a sacred Indian ox, an ostrich, and a great variety of other animals. Upon this floor are also placed a number of the Chinese curiosities brought over by the Perry expedition. This collection comprises a great variety of life-size figures representing the Chinese Emperor and Empress and their attendants, a Chinese court of justice, episodes of Chinese home life, ferocious-looking Chinese idols, and an immense number of magnificent specimens of the manufactures of the Celestial Empire. These Chinese curiosities formerly belonged to Mr. J. R. Peters, and they are valued at \$100,000. In the large room upon the fourth floor the glass-blower is at work, and the visitor will find it interesting to stop for a few moments and inspect her operations. Upon the three floors of the front part of the building are located portions of the Chinese curiosities and the innumerable articles comprised in the famous Hoffnagle collection. These curiosities were collected by Dr. Hoffnagle during a long residence in Asia. They consist of Indian idols, carvings, metal workings, silk in all the processes of manufacture from the cocoon to the finished cloth, elegantly embroidered articles of dress, pictures, and innumerable specimens of oriental industry. Upon the second floor is a life-size group of wax figures representing Christ and His apostles seated at the last supper, and in the middle of the room the armless woman is at work, sewing, writing, and performing all the functions of the fingers with her toes. All the living curiosities of any importance will be found at the museum from time to time, and additions will constantly be made to the permanent collection, so that something fresh and interesting will always be on sight there.

A prominent feature of the museum is the "lecture-room," in which performances are given every evening and every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon. This is a very pretty and comfortable little theatre, to which all the visitors to the museum are admitted without extra charge, except for seats in the best parts of the house. Farces, vaudevilles, and spectacular pieces of unobjectionable character are produced by an excellent company, particular care being taken to adapt the performances to the tastes of family parties, and to prevent anything offensive from being said or done. A vaudeville theatre conducted on this principle ought to be popular for its own sake, but this one is additionally interesting from the fact that it is attached to the museum. At present a dramatization of Dumas' novel of *Monsieur Christo*, which is being produced in handsome style as a holiday piece, now occupies the boards. This makes a very attractive performance that affords much innocent amusement for both old and young.

The features we have mentioned of course only represent in a very general manner the inducements which the museum holds out for those who wish to be amused to invest twenty-five cents occasionally, and we recommend our readers to go and see for themselves. The museum has thus far been a great success, and as it supplies a desideratum, the citizens of Philadelphia should take such an interest in it that its permanent success in the future will assured beyond a doubt.

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