

CORDRAY'S MUSEE-THEATRE.

A year ago there stood on the southeast corner of Third and Yamhill streets, in the heart of the business portion of Portland, a lumber yard occupying a quarter of a block of ground, surrounded by a ram-shackle fence and sidewalk and bordered with a few scraggy shade trees. On the same site now stands Cordray's Musee-Theatre, a place of amusement that will compare favorably in point of comfort, completeness in every detail and quality of attractions with any in the United States, except a few leading grand opera houses, and possessing some appointments not to be found in all of those.

The builder and manager is Mr. John F. Cordray, a gentleman who has had fifteen years of experience in managing combined museums and theatres in New York, Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans. Mr. Cordray is an energetic man of business, pleasant in manners and possessed of the push and executive ability requisite to the task he has undertaken and is performing—that of maintaining a first-class place of amusement at strictly popular prices. Having secured the ground spoken of, Mr. Cordray commenced the erection of a great tent upon it, the sides being boarded up to a height of twelve feet and the interior being divided into two compartments, each having a stage, one for a miscellaneous show and the other for regular dramatic presentations. The last load of lumber left the grounds on the fifteenth of June, and on the first of July the house was opened with a large collection of musee attractions, an entertaining programme on the first stage, and the production of "Lynwood" by the Essie Tittle Dramatic Company, which had been organized expressly for this house.

This was of itself a wonderful accomplishment, but was followed by an achievement of enterprise and executive management that stands unrivaled in the history of theatrical architecture.

That big tent has been converted into a solid two-story frame structure, roofed with corrugated iron and having an ornamental tower and band stand on the corner, without a single performance being missed. The theatre proper has had its simple dirt floor room seated with common chairs, converted into a splendid amphitheatred auditorium, with a large gallery supported by posts, and with loggia and proscenium boxes, and every night during the time this work has been going on—and it is still in progress—it has been crowded with a delighted audience from 7:30 till 11:00 o'clock, and on the regular matinee afternoons as well. Such a thing never was attempted before, and but few men would undertake such a feat, or having under-

taken it, fewer would have the ability and perseverance Mr. Cordray has exhibited in carrying it to success.

On the last page is given a view of the exterior of this remarkable structure, while sketches of various features of the interior accompany this article.

Entering the structure at the corner one finds himself in the musee half of the building, surrounded by a great number of curious and interesting objects, to which additions are being made constantly, the character of some of which may be seen in the accompanying sketches. At one end of this room is a stage where for an hour is given a variety entertainment of a high order, which is highly enjoyed, if the enthusiasm of the crowd may be relied upon. One act or specialty follows another in unbroken succession, the crowd standing with great patience and

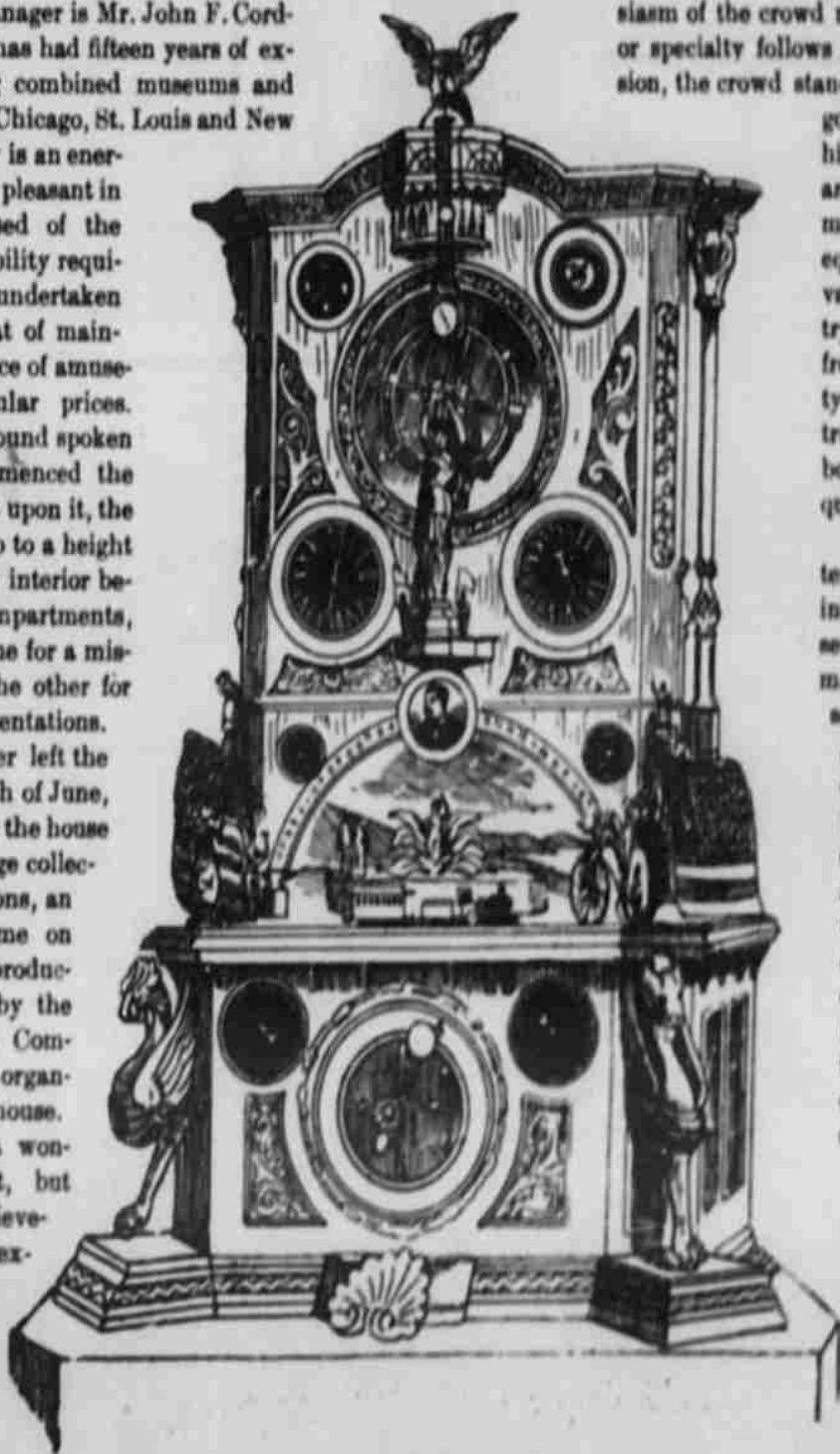
good humor until the end. The highest class of specialties only are engaged, and the entertainment, costing only ten cents, is equal to that given in the best vaudeville theatre in the country. Seats in the theatre cost from ten to fifty cents, the thirty cent seats being the orchestra chairs, the higher ones the boxes, and the lower the parquette and gallery.

At the close of the first entertainment the crowd passes into the theatre proper and is seated in an orderly and quiet manner, the system of reserve seat checks and efficient assistants preventing any confusion or unpleasantness. Here are presented by an excellent company the favorite dramas and comedies of the day, and the quality of the performances, as well as the character of the establishment generally, is attested by the fact that the intelligence and fashion of Portland may always be seen in the chairs and boxes.

Theatre parties by people moving in the first circles of society are frequently given. It is in his success in preparing an entertainment equally attractive to people of all classes that Mr. Cordray deserves the most praise.

The popular prices, ranging from ten to sixty cents, enable the poorer classes to attend, while the quality of the entertainment and the high moral character of the house attract those to whom the price of admission is not so important an item.

The stage is ample for the production of all plays but those requiring specially large and elaborate scenes, and possesses all the conveniences necessary. The entire house, including both auditoriums, is lighted by incandescent electric lights, which are under perfect control by the stage manager. There is, also, an attachment few theatres possess, by which the intensity of the lights in all the lamps may be increased or dimin-



THE ELECTRIC CLOCK.