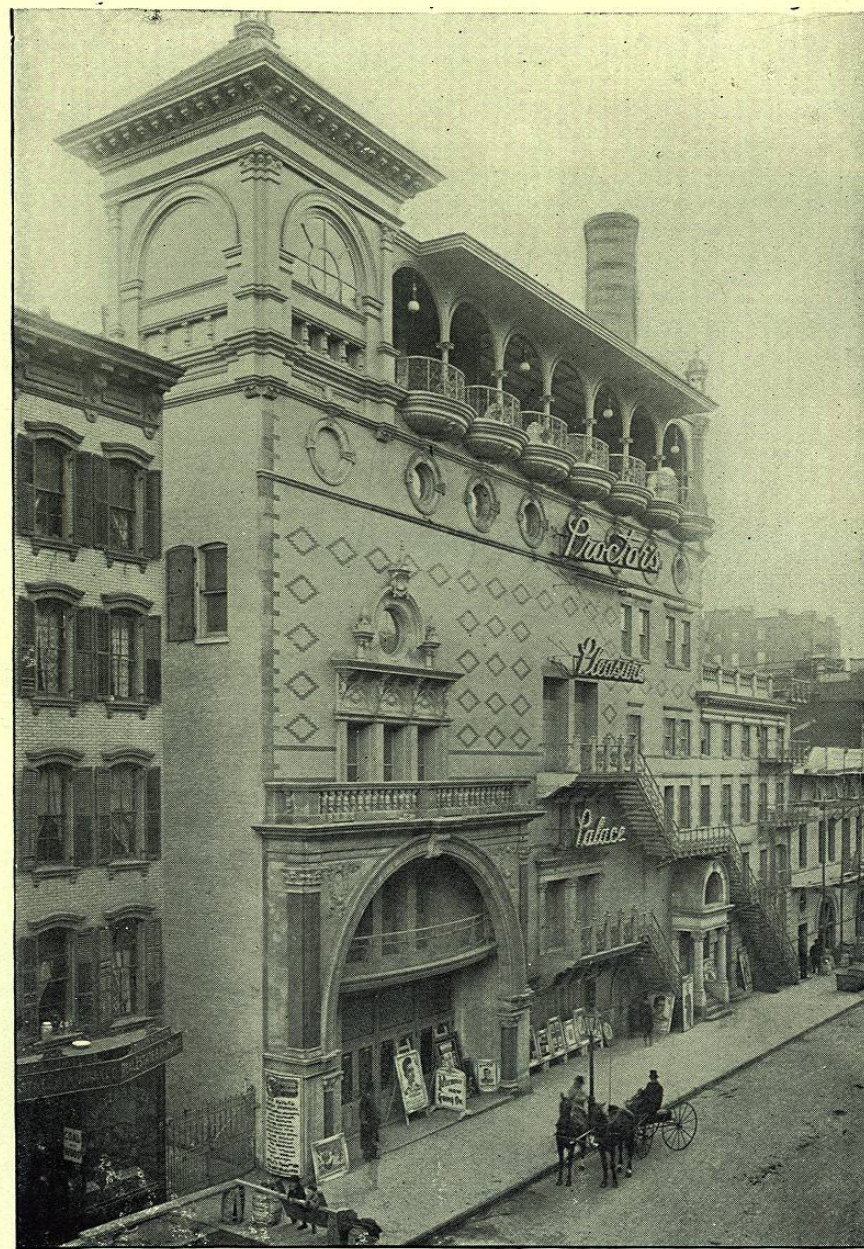


PROCTOR'S PLEASURE PALACE.

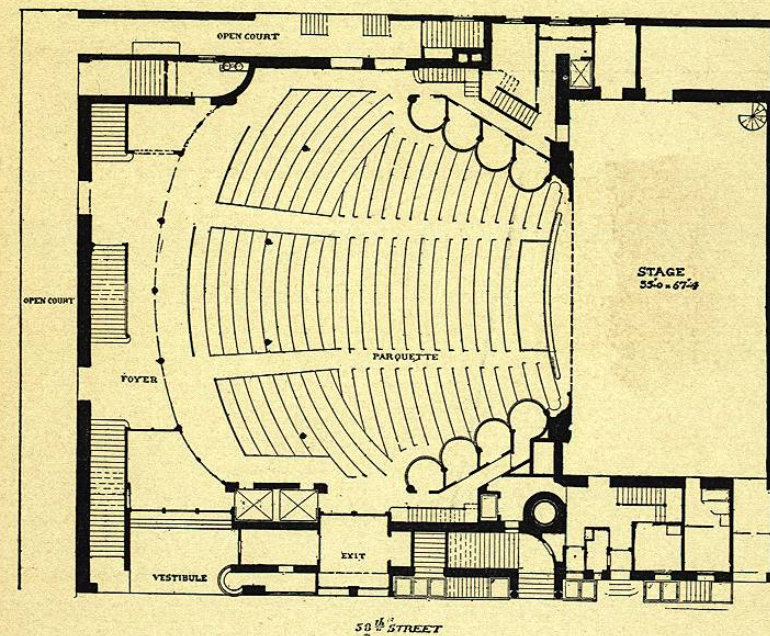
In the heart of the upper east side shopping district of New York a magnificent theatre has been designed and constructed by J. B. McElfatrick & Son, architects. The theatre is known by the name of "Proctor's Pleasure Palace," and stands upon the south side of Fifty-eighth Street, between Third and Lexington avenues. For its support it has many thousands of people to draw from, being the only pretentious place of amusement between Harlem and the lower portion of the city upon the east side. It is between two immense arteries of travel traversed by cable cars and the elevated railway, with ample cross-town communication. Magnificent hotels which beautify the plaza at the main entrance to Central Park, and the marble palaces of the Fifth Avenue dwellers, are close at hand. Within a stone's throw are luxurious club-houses of the principal German societies. Upon the north and east is an enormous population that before had been compelled to seek its amusement at remoter resorts. There is much to attract all classes, for in this new house of amusement there are combined the theatre proper, roof-garden, German café, Garden of Palms, and other adjuncts. It is devoted to the latest fad in theatre performances of this country—continuous varieties and novelties, which continue from 12 o'clock noon until 11.30 P.M.

The roof-garden is very large and commands a superb view, stretching across Central Park on the west and over the East River. Below the main auditorium is the German café, with a stage where vaudeville is presented at the close of the performance above and also at intermissions, when refreshments are served. Adjoining the theatre is the Garden of Palms, 65 by 100 feet—not shown in the illustrations—where



FIFTY-EIGHTH STREET FRONT, PROCTOR'S PLEASURE PALACE.

distinct musical programmes and exhibits are given, while beneath this is the divan, to be gorgeously fitted up in Oriental fashion, with the convenient adjuncts of library, writing-room and stands for the sale of flowers, books, papers, Turkish coffee and other light refreshments. Even a barber-shop and boot-blackening stand will occupy a convenient corner, with a plunge-bath also near at hand. A moderate

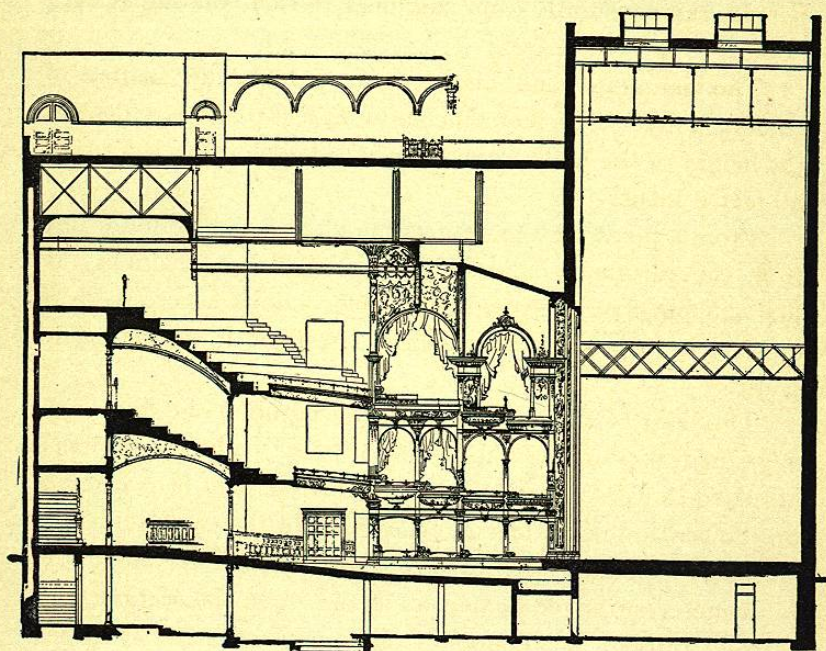


MAIN-FLOOR PLAN.

admission price allows a visitor to range at will throughout the entire building and witness all the entertainments.

The frontage is on Fifty-eighth Street, extending 200 feet, with a depth of 100 feet 9 inches. The architecture combines the most picturesque features of the Romanesque and Renaissance styles. The main entrance, at the end nearest Third Avenue, is through a spacious stone arch 24 feet wide by 30 feet high, with a large balustrade overhead.

The main auditorium is reached through a vestibule and lobby paved in mosaic tile, with three huge oaken doors, arched and illuminated with art glass, opening upon a foyer 60 feet in length and shown upon the ground-floor plan. The vestibule mentioned above has an entrance over 6 feet in width leading to the German café in the basement, and another from Fifty-eighth Street, over 5 feet wide, also leads to the café.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION.

The ground-floor, in addition to the entrances, contains foyer, parquette, and parquette circle, eight boxes, manager's room, toilets, box-office, and superintendent's office.

There are upon this floor five emergency exits: two at the back of the foyer, 6 feet wide, leading to an open court 10 feet wide, two upon the left to the same court, and one large exit, 12 feet wide, leading through a corridor to Fifty-eighth

Street. The various stairways which lead to all portions of the building are very large. Those in the foyer are entrances to the balcony above, and the one in the centre to the café below. These staircases are constructed of white marble upon stringers of steel, guarded and ornamented with bronze hand-rails and wrought-iron scroll balustrades.

Two large passenger-elevators, each accommodating thirty people, run constantly from basement to roof, landing at each floor.

The parquette and circle, from curtain-line to line of column in foyer, is 74 feet 4 inches by 74 feet 6 inches wide, and the height of the auditorium from the stage level to the top is 49 feet 8 inches.

From a point on the centre-line of the auditorium 6 feet from the curtain, a radius of 39 feet 5 inches describes the first steppings of the parquette circle. Each successive row of seats, 2 feet 6 inches wide, is described from the same point.

The seats of the parquette are placed upon the floor with a gradual slope of 18 inches toward the orchestra-pit, and arranged in rows 2 feet 6 inches apart, described from a point on the centre-line 50 feet 4 inches back of the curtain.

The four boxes upon each side of the parquette are 7 feet in diameter, arranged in tiers as shown upon the section, and reached through small doors from a passage 2 feet 9 inches wide.

The proscenium arch, with elaborately moulded relief work, is dotted with colored electric lights. A distinct novelty is adopted here; it is what may be called a "double proscenium." One reveals an opening of 34 feet square, sufficient for ordinary performances, made to slide up in side grooves, leaving an opening 42 feet square should the stage be required for grand spectacular display. The sounding-board is covered with mythological figures painted upon canvas secured to a

coved iron frame, filled in between with hollow fire-proof blocks.

The stage is 70 feet wide and 40 feet deep, 30 feet to the fly-gallery and 40 feet additional to the gridiron. It is fitted up with every known species of trap and the latest labor-saving devices. It is suited to every form of performance—grand opera, romantic drama, spectacle, or vaudeville.

At the back is a movable iron door (not shown upon the illustrations) made impervious to sound, which can be opened upon the stage in the adjacent Garden of Palms. Certain features, acrobatical, spectacular, or zoölogical, as for example performing elephants, can be exhibited upon this combined stage and viewed simultaneously by two distinct audiences that will face each other. In fact, the stage can, if necessary, be extended back the entire width of the garden. The stage also has its scene-room, property-room, entrances, and freight-elevators to the roof.

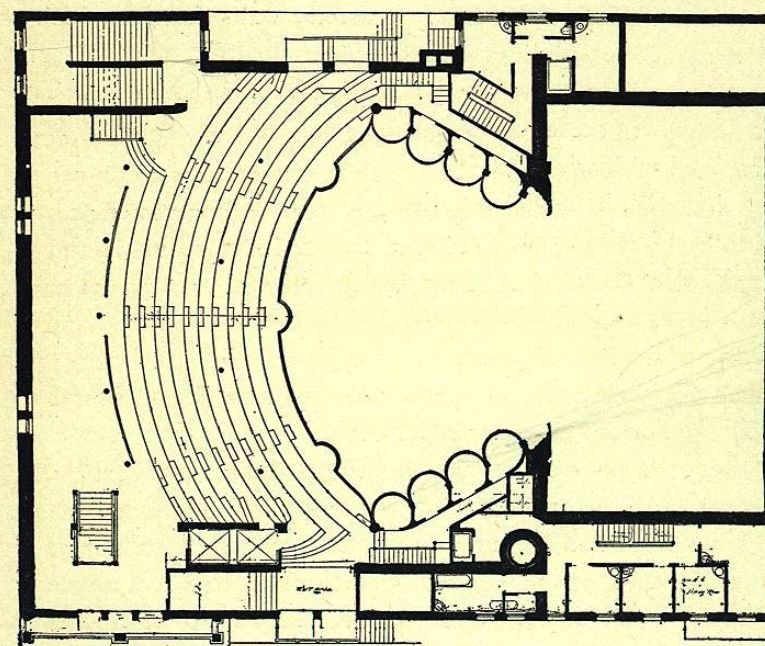
The dressing-rooms are cool, spacious, and fitted up with marble lavatories and electric-call bells.

Under the stage and rooms mentioned above is placed the machinery hall, containing the boilers, dynamos, and engines. The house is heated by the direct-blower system; fresh air is brought through an inlet 4 feet square, rising to 8 feet above the roof. Every appliance for cooling the auditorium in the summer has been provided. The theatre has 4000 electric lights, of which 600 are used upon the stage for illuminating and spectacular effects.

The balcony is 21 feet 9 inches above the foyer-level, and is reached by four staircases well arranged and commodious. The emergency exits all lead to the fire-escapes. To arrange the steppings of this circle a radius of 39 feet 1 inch was taken from a point upon the centre, 6 feet from the curtain-line; each step above the first is 2 feet 6 inches wide by 10½ inches high; each successive rise increases ½ inch up to 17 inches.

The first or lower step is 2 feet 10 inches wide, bowed out in front of the centre aisles and at other points each side.

One prominent feature is shown upon this plan which needs particular mention, and that is the large outside balcony at the Fifty-eighth Street side at rear of the seats. In case a fire occurs in the theatre these balconies become a valuable means of egress for the audience and ingress for the firemen. Out-



BALCONY PLAN.

side balconies should be placed to every tier leading from the different galleries, and every division of the audience should have different accommodations.

Some one has said that "a theatre should be divided into four separate and distinct buildings, separated by substantial brick walls rising above the roof, and all communications be cut off by the best known fire-resisting means." First, there should be a fire-proof auditorium; second, a stage building;

third, a fire-proof building for dressing-rooms, etc. ; and fourth, a fire-proof storage-room for scenery, properties, etc., with double fire-proof doors; and all the four buildings provided with large separate exits to the open air—we might say six different buildings, for, as we have seen, the lower floor is separate and distinct from the balcony and gallery.

The dressing-rooms, as shown upon this plan, are seven in number, separated by heavy masonry walls from any other portion of the building. They are reached by staircases constructed of iron and slate, 3 feet wide and of short runs. The smallest of these dressing-rooms contain 64 square feet, arranged with windows opening upon the outer air and connecting with balconies and fire-escapes. There are also small elevators in close proximity.

The boxes, four in number on each side of the auditorium, have separate iron staircases.

The gallery over the balcony does not extend as far into the auditorium, but is described from the same point, 42 feet 8 inches distant, the first step being 2 feet 10 inches wide, while the successive steps in the height are each 2 feet 6 inches wide.

The height from the balcony is 16 feet 1 inch, and the clear distance between fronts at inner line of columns is 10 feet 3 inches, while the balcony at this point from the parquette circle is about the same distance.

The rise of the steps on this tier at the centre varies from 17 inches for the lower to 21 inches for the upper, increasing in height as the sides of the auditorium are reached.

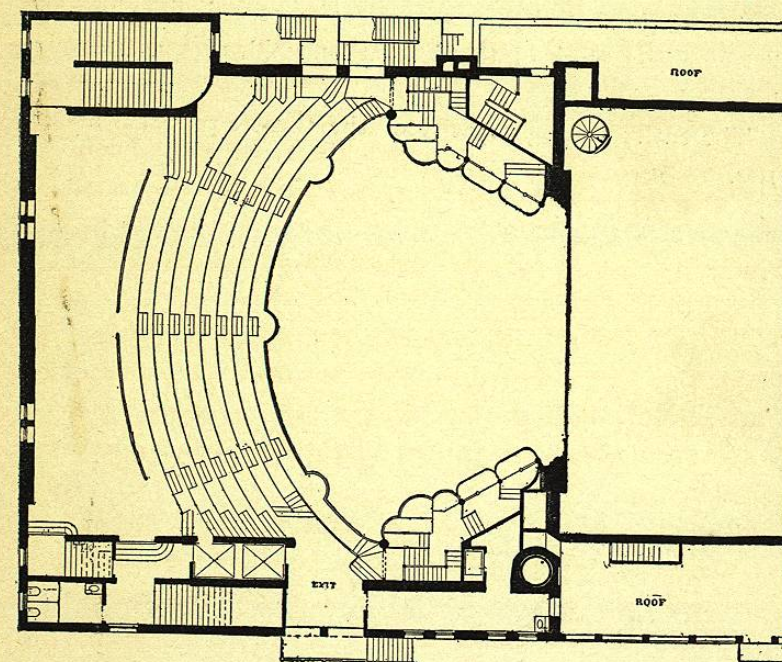
The equipment of this theatre leaves nothing to be desired. The lower floors, balcony, and gallery all have ample toilet-rooms; comfortable upholstered chairs are provided for every occupant regardless of location.

Altogether there are some fifty exits, directly connected to wide, open courts, fire-escapes, and the street. The fire-

escapes arranged upon the Fifty-eighth Street side are so ingeniously devised that they do not mar the architectural effect.

The aisles throughout are plentiful and wide, with no intersecting gangways and not over ten or twelve seats in every row between aisles.

The corridors behind each tier of seats have sufficient super-



GALLERY PLAN.

ficial area to hold the whole of the occupants of each tier. But the writer would suggest that the corridors be separated from each tier by solid masonry walls and fire-proof doorways, so that in case of fire the audience, after leaving the tier, would be away from any fire or smoke that fills the auditorium.

As shown in the plans all staircases are wide and have

large square landings with no windows, and are constructed between solid brick walls.

In staircases the number of steps in each flight is all-important. There should not be over twelve steps in a run, and they should be the same width of passage, height of rise, and width of tread.

While we are attracted by the general roominess of every portion of the building, we are also impressed with the simplicity and neatness of the decoration, gold, cream, and pale blue predominating.

The entire seating capacity of the theatre proper is about 2100.



BROADWAY FRONT, HAMMERSTEIN'S OLYMPIA.
J. B. McELPATRICK & SON, ARCHITECTS.

