

HUBER'S MUSEUM CLOSES ITS DOORS

Famous Dime Show in 14th
Street Bought Out for
a Restaurant.

HOME OF COUNTLESS FREAKS

Dr. Cook of Polar Notoriety Among
Those Who Have Exhibited There—
Place Made Its Owner Wealthy.

"Finis" is written in large letters over the door of 106 East Fourteenth Street. Huber's Museum is no more.

Yesterday George F. Huber and Albert Lüchow signed papers that transferred the property so long held by the former, and the home of the bottled snakes, the stuffed lizards, of the fat women, and of Bosco, who ate them alive, into the possession of Mr. Lüchow. Where the crowds once gathered to watch feats of strength and to hear the tones of the lecturer describing the beauties of the tattooed man and the two-headed calf, other crowds will soon gather to partake of German foods and to drink German beer. After twenty-two years of devotion to the satisfying of curiosity, the building will become a place for satisfying hunger.

Not the same building, however, for only the site will be used by Mr. Lüchow. He wishes to expand his restaurant, and he acquired possession of the nearest available property by purchasing Mr. Huber's long lease—it has still twenty-four years to run. He expects to tear down the old structure in Fourteenth and Thirteenth Streets and rebuild on the same site an addition to his present establishment. The Academy of Music now a stock theatre, Tony Pastor's housing a picture show, the old Union Square now another picture show, and Huber's Museum about to metamorphose into an eating place, Fourteenth Street has little left but Tammany Hall to recall other days.

With the passing of the museum will also pass from public life Prof. Hutchinson, who, next to the large stuffed boa constructor in the "Curio Hall," was one of the best known fixtures of the place. Prof. Hutchinson was the lecturer, the man who described the freaks. Those who went to the Museum will remember the impromptu rhymes with which he embellished his accounts of the numerous and constantly changing "attractions." Prof. Hutchinson is 83 years old—he celebrated his birthday last week and he has been a museum lecturer almost all of his professional life. His career began as a "lightning calculator," and his lecturing experience came after he had entered the Huber employ.

Many famous freaks and some famous showmen have had place in the halls of the old museum. Dr. Frederick A. Cook, the polar explorer of painful memory, was once an exhibitor in the Curio Hall, where he managed a group of Eskimos he brought from the arctic. Wild men, snake charmers, animal trainers, musicians of every conceivable variety, in fact, about every sort of entertainer known to the show world has been engaged at Huber's at some time in the museum's history.

On the stage in the vaudeville part of the building "artists" not unknown to Broadway have given their acts, and there is on record one Huber favorite who, when found by an uptown manager, became an even stronger favorite in the high-priced variety theatres.

For eleven years before opening the place in Fourteenth Street, which had formerly been known as Prospect Hall, a music hall and restaurant, Mr. Huber had been conducting museums. When he took the present site he set about making this the most complete museum of its kind in America, and he succeeded. Besides the freaks and special attractions the large hall contained enough of interest to keep an observing visitor busy for hours. There were war relics, pieces of flags, old uniforms, bullets, guns, fragments of shells, pictures of officers in frames and show-cases. A rather disorganized collection of stuffed birds and small animals had place in the big room, and pictures of events, old engravings, and more recent photographs filled about all of the wall space left vacant by the larger frames.

In the corridors and in the less-crowded rooms there were catch-penny devices—penny-in-the-slot phonographs, souvenir sellers, strength-testing devices, and the like. On busy days these reaped a harvest.

The visitors at Huber's formed the most heterogeneous gathering to be found anywhere in New York. People from out of town, east side folks, women and children, young men of the Bowery stamp, sailors on shore leave—all of them mingled in the crowds that went to Huber's. These last few years the crowds have not been so large—there are five-cent motion-picture theatres almost next door—but they have been just as heterogeneous.

The audiences were varied in their tastes, but they established certain fashions that the management observed. When the "Egyptian" dancer was discovered there and taken uptown there followed an epidemic of dancers, until a young man whose specialty was playing with rattlesnakes was dangerously bitten by one of his reptiles, and then came a plague of snake-charmers.

Huber's entertainments were always clean, if they did lack what fastidious people might call refinement. The comedians on the vaudeville stage were required to supply laughs to rather critical and not always subtle-minded audiences, and the performers with snakes and heavy weights and "untamed jungle beasts" were expected to furnish enough thrills to satisfy the most blasé spectators. There were fewer "fakes" at Huber's than one would expect to find at a museum of this sort, but not always were the freaks altogether genuine.

Mr. Huber does not know what will become of his collection of relics. He said last night that he might sell out the lot, together with the good will, or he might hold an auction and dispose of the collections that way. As to the freaks, the barkers, and Prof. Hutchinson, they have been on vacation since June and probably they were warned to seek other employment. Mr. Huber himself is retiring from the show business. He owns several apartment houses and a combined casino and hotel in the city and is counted rich. After thirty-three years as a museum proprietor he feels himself ready for a rest.

So in a very short time all that is left of the museum will be a memory and a regret on the part of those New Yorkers who always intended going there some time and kept putting it off because they could go any time. The restaurant will probably open for business early in the winter.

ARRESTED AT BROOKLYN PIER

Mother Accuses Salesman of Trying
to Abduct Her Daughter.

Just as William R. Philbrick, 25 years old, a salesman, of 673 Sterling Place, Brooklyn, was about to board a steamer bound for one of the New England cities yesterday at Pier 4, foot of Murray Street, he was arrested by Brooklyn detectives charged with abduction on a complaint made by Mrs. Sadie Johnson of 153 Gates Avenue, Brooklyn. Mrs. Johnson charged Philbrick with attempting to abduct her seventeen-year-old daughter, Beatrice Hood. The young woman was at the pier with Philbrick, and she, too, was taken into custody.

Philbrick was about to start on his vacation, he said, but he was forced to defer it at least until his case is thrashed out in the Adams Street Court to-day. He was taken to the Adams Street Police Station and the young woman was sent to the shelter of the Children's Society in Schermerhorn Street.

The prisoner stoutly denied that he intended to abduct the young woman, and she said she was at the pier merely to see him off. Investigation made by the police indicates that their story is true.