

S. M. NIBLACK.
TRAVELING LADDER FOR SLEEPING CARS.
APPLICATION FILED FEB. 20, 1909.

938,016.

Patented Oct. 26, 1909

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1

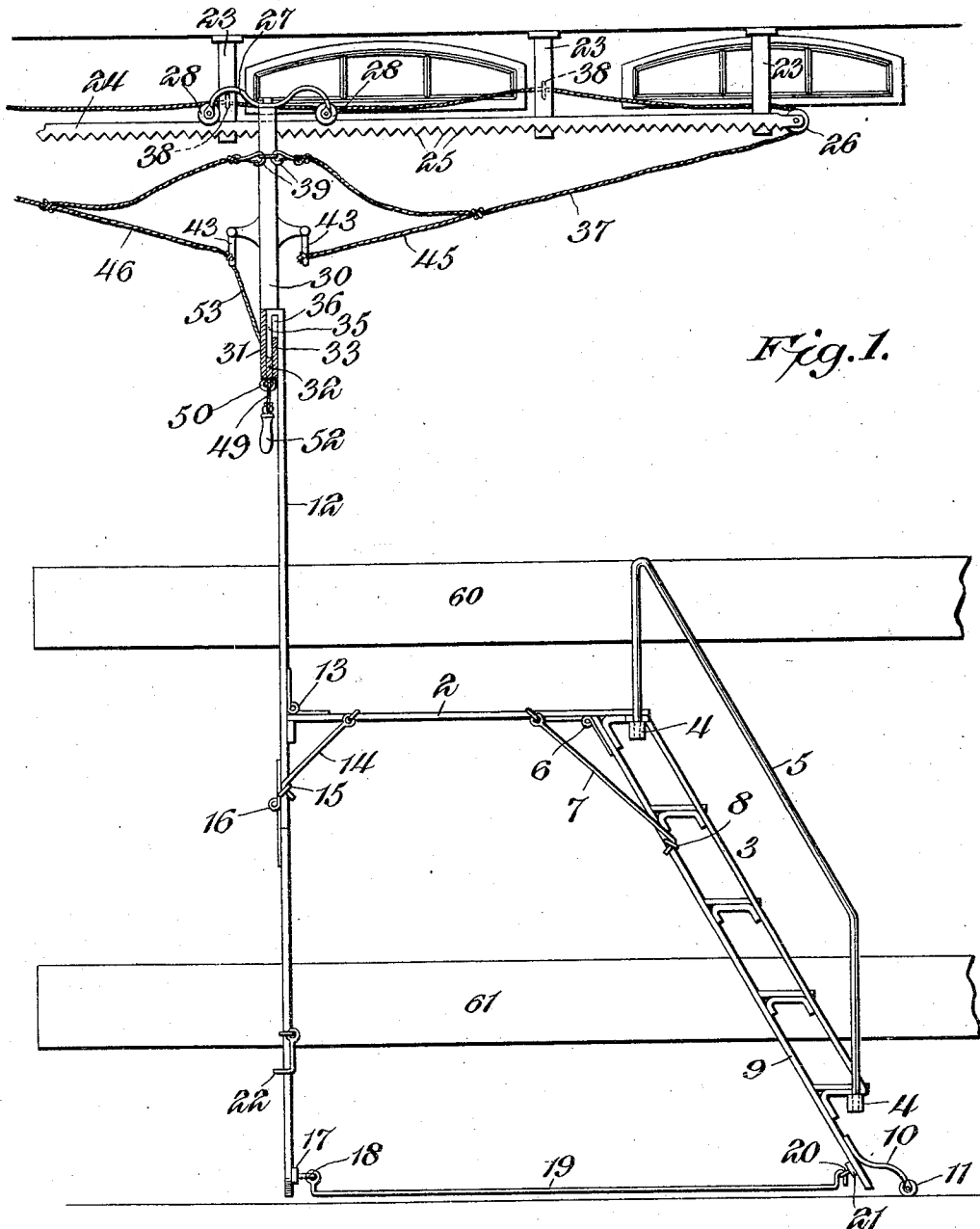


Fig. 1.

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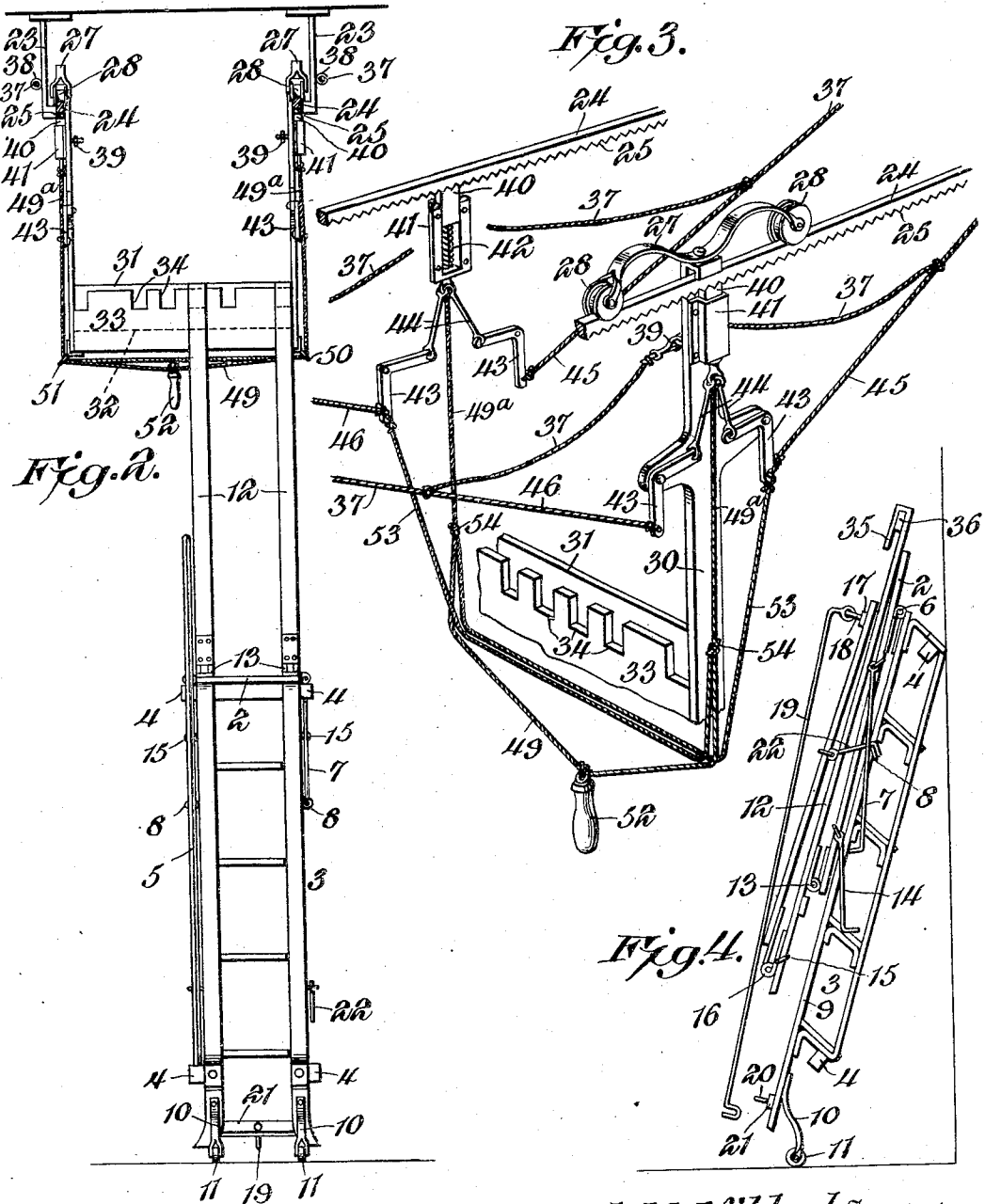
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

SAMUEL MORGAN NIBLACK, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

TRAVELING LADDER FOR SLEEPING-CARS.

938,016.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Oct. 26, 1909.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, SAMUEL MORGAN NIBLACK, a citizen of the United States, residing at New York, in the county of New York and State of New York, have invented a new and useful Traveling Ladder for Sleeping-Cars, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to traveling step-ladders, or those which move upon tracks and are adapted to be shifted from place to place thereon, and the invention relates particularly to a step-ladder peculiarly constructed and arranged for use in sleeping cars to assist passengers in getting into or out of the upper berths thereof, this ladder being adapted to be easily actuated to shift it from one end of the car to the other in front of the berths on either side of the aisle.

In order to provide a ladder capable of use in railway cars and shiftable as above described, on rails, it is not merely necessary that the ladder shall travel on rails in front of the berths, or that it shall have an endless flexible connection or cord whereby it may be drawn along the car aisle at the will of any passenger. A ladder with merely these arrangements will be liable to shift and slip when the car is moving at a high rate of speed or in rounding curves. Furthermore, if the connection of such a ladder was pulled upon while a passenger was climbing to his berth, an accident would be liable to occur which, because of the speed of travel of the car might be exceedingly serious. It is necessary then, in order to provide a traveling ladder for sleeping cars that the ladder be locked both when the person is on it and when unoccupied. Furthermore, in the first case, it must be prevented from shifting under an unobservant actuation of another passenger, and in the second case it must be possible to unlock the ladder and to keep it unlocked while a passenger at a distance is shifting it. Additionally it must be capable of being unlocked by a person immediately at the ladder, as by the porter. These necessities, as well as certain preferred details of construction, are attained in the ladder forming my invention, and shown in the accompanying drawings, wherein,

Figure 1 is a front elevation of the ladder shown as applied in place in a sleeping car, the upper and lower berths and the car roof being shown merely in outline; Fig. 2 is an end elevation of the ladder as supported in

the aisle of the car; Fig. 3 is a perspective of the hangers upon which the ladder proper is slidably supported; Fig. 4 is a view of the ladder detached from its engagement with the wheeled hangers and folded up.

The general construction of my ladder is as follows: Tracks are used which are supported from the roof of the car or in any other suitable position and which extend longitudinally of the aisle thereof. Opposed ladder hangers are used carrying wheels which ride upon said tracks. Detachably supported upon the hangers is the ladder proper which is foldable and is preferably arranged so that it extends longitudinally of the car, thus permitting passengers to pass to one side of the ladder. The hangers and the track wheels supporting the same are connected by springs which are of sufficient strength so that when no person is upon the ladder, the springs will flex and will lift the ends of the latter from the floor so that the lower end of the ladder will be supported entirely upon a small wheel. In this position it is obvious that the whole weight of the ladder is supported upon the upper and lower wheels and that the ladder may be very easily shifted along the aisle by drawing upon an endless cord connected thereto. When, however, the ladder is occupied the weight of the person deflects the spring and allows the body of the ladder to lower, whereupon the lower ends of the frame will bear against the floor of the car and will engage therewith to a degree which will prevent the shifting of the ladder until the person thereon leaves it. The hangers also carry latches which engage with the rails and these latches are so arranged that when the body of the ladder rises upon being relieved of the weight of a person, the latches will engage with a rail and thus hold the ladder in position until a pull upon the shifting cord unlatches the ladder.

In the embodiment shown in the drawings, 2 denotes a platform having a ladder proper, 3, hinged to or near its forward end, this ladder having any desired number of steps. The ladder frame, which is preferably made of light metal, is formed with sockets, 4, at the upper and lower ends of the ladder into which the downwardly turned ends of a hand rail 5 are inserted, as shown in Fig. 1. 6 denotes the hinge whereby the upper end of the ladder 3 is attached to the lower

side of the platform 2, and 7 denotes a brace freely pivoted to the platform and having on its end a hook which engages with an eye 8 on the ladder. There are preferably
 5 two of these braces 7, one on either side of the platform 2, engaging with two eyes, 8. The rear member 9 of the ladder frame 3 is extended below the lowest step of the ladder and is adapted to contact with the floor under certain conditions. It is also provided
 10 with an outwardly bent spring 10 having a roller 11, which normally under the action of the spring is supported below the end of the member 9 in the position shown in Fig. 1. The other end of the platform is
 15 hinged to two parallel vertical supporting bars 12, the hinge being designated by the numeral 13, and this hinge is so placed that the platform 2 may be swung upward against the bars 12 in the position shown in
 20 Fig. 4. In order to hold the platform down, however, and prevent any liability of relative movement, the platform is provided on either side with the freely pivoted hooks, 14, engaging in eyes, 15, projecting from the
 25 side edges of the bars 12.

While the bars 12 might be made in one piece, I prefer to make each of them in two pieces, hinged together as at 16. This is to
 30 permit the ladder sections to be folded upon each other and so make the ladder extremely portable and capable of being packed into a small compass. The lower end of the bars 12 is connected by a cross bar 17, having an eye
 35 18. A link 19 is freely connected at one end to the eye 18 and at its other end is formed with a hook to engage with an eye 20 on a cross bar 21 on the ladder frame. This link 19, it will be seen holds the lower end of the
 40 ladder firmly adjusted relative to the lower end of the bars 12, thus the lower sections of the bars 12 are held parallel to the upper sections.

As will be seen from Fig. 2, the ladder
 45 with its vertical bars 12 is relatively narrow to the width of the aisle. It may be, of course, of any width desired sufficient to permit the easy passage of persons past it on one side and to afford sufficient convenience
 50 to those using the ladder. In order to hold it when folded up I provide a hook, 22, freely pivoted upon the vertical bars 12, which engages with an eye on the ladder structure 3 as shown in Fig. 4.

55 In order to support the ladder and permit it to shift longitudinally along the aisle I provide the depending track hangers 23, which extend downward from the roof of the car on both sides of the aisle, the lower
 60 ends of the hangers being inwardly angularly bent and supporting a rail 24 on each side of the car. The upper face of this rail may be flat, V-shaped or have any other desired contour, but the lower edge of the rail
 65 is preferably formed with teeth, 25. Each of

the rails, 24, at its opposite ends supports pulleys, 26. Carried upon the rails 24 are the spring-carriers, 27. These springs are preferably bent in the form of a bow having
 70 downwardly turned ends and a depressed center as shown in Fig. 1. These downwardly turned ends support rollers 28, having flanged peripheries engaging with the rail 24. The central depressed portion of each spring carrier 27 is attached to and
 75 supports a downwardly extending hanger 30. There are, of course, two of these hangers, 30, opposed to each other, and one riding on each of the tracks 24. The lower ends of the hangers 30 are connected by a
 80 cross bar 31. Extending parallel to the cross bar 31 and spaced therefrom by the intermediate cross bar 32 as shown in Fig. 1, is the recessed cross bar 33. This last extends not quite up to the top edge of the cross bar
 85 31, and is provided with recesses, 34. The upper ends of the bars 12 are bent over to form hooks, 35, and carried in each hook is a block, 36, the same width as one of the recesses 34. Hence it will be seen that when
 90 the bars 12 are hooked over the cross bars 33 in the position shown in Fig. 1, the blocks 36 will enter two of the recesses 34. Thus the bars 12, with the ladder supported thereon, will be prevented from any transverse
 95 shifting at its upper end.

37 denotes an endless cable, cord, or other flexible connection which passes through
 100 eyes, 38, on the hangers 23, and also passes over the end rollers 26. This cable has snap hooks, 39, at its ends adapted to engage with an eye on each of the hangers 30. There are, of course, two of these cables, one located on each side of the aisle so that a passenger
 105 in one of the upper berths may easily, by taking hold of the adjacent cable 37, draw the ladder structure toward him from one end or the other of the cord. Now, it is necessary, as before observed, that when a passenger is upon the ladder, the ladder shall
 110 be locked in position either from movement caused by the motion of the car or by an inadvertent actuation by a fellow passenger. In order to accomplish the first purpose, I have provided the spring wheeled carrier or
 115 support for the hanger 30 and also the spring 10 with the roller 11. It will be obvious that when the weight of a passenger comes upon the ladder 3 or upon the platform 2, the springs 27 and the springs 10
 120 will be flexed and that the lower ends of the members 9 and 12 will contact with the floor and that thus the ladder will be held as steadily as a ladder without wheels. It will also be obvious that when the weight
 125 is removed from the ladder or platform the springs 27 and 10 will raise the ladder structure free of the floor and support it once more upon the wheels 11 and 28. In this
 130 position, however, it must be locked against

shifting through the motion of the train. To this end I form the lower edge of the track 24 with the teeth, 25, and provide each of the hangers 30 with a bolt or latch 40, moving in a bolt casing 41 bolted to the outer face of the hanger 30, as shown clearly in Fig. 3. A spring 42 within the casing 41 acts to force the bolt 40 up against the underside of the pivoted rail. The bolt 40, is, of course, formed with a notched or toothed extremity which engages with the rail. Means must be provided whereby the bolt may be disengaged from the toothed rail by a pull in either direction upon a cable 37. To this end I provide opposed bell cranks 43, which are mounted upon lateral extensions of the hanger 30 and connected by links 44 attached to the horizontal arms of the bell crank to the lower end of the bolt 40. The vertical arms of the bell cranks are attached to the extremities of the cable 37, or if these extremities are connected by the snap hooks, 39, then auxiliary cords, 45 and 46, connect the vertical arms of the bell cranks to the ends of the cable 37. It is to be understood, of course, that the bolts 40 and the hangers 30 are located across the aisle of the car. A cord, 49, is attached at one end to one of the bolts 40, passes down the hanger 30, through an eye 50 at the corner of the cross bar 32, passes along underneath the cross bars 31, 32 and 33, then through another eye 51 (see Fig. 2), and up to the opposed bolt. This cord 49, at its lower end is connected to a handle 52, whereby it may be pulled. It will be obvious that a drawing down of this cord, 49, will withdraw both of the bolts 40 from engagement with the rails of the track and permit the ladder to be rolled along the rails to any desired position. The handle 52 may be called the "porter's" handle, and the cord, 49, the "porter's" cord. One of the bell cranks of each pair of bell cranks is connected by a cord 53 to the porter's cord, 49, as shown in Fig. 3, the cord, 53, passing downward from the end of the bell crank, then passing through the eye 50 beneath the hanger cross bars, through the opposite eye 51 and along parallel with the upwardly turned end of the cord 49 to which it is attached as at 54. Thus a pull upon the cord 45 will pull the cord 53, which, through its connection, 54, will draw downward on the end, 49^a, of the porter's cord, 49. Thus the bolt 40 on one side of the track will be withdrawn by the bell crank connection, while the bolt 40 on the opposite side will be withdrawn through direct connection with the portion 49^a of the porter's cord. Likewise a pull upon the connection, 46, from an opposite end of the cord from that just above described will actuate the bell crank connected thereto. This will draw downward upon the bolt 40 upon one side of

the cord. The link 44 will depress the other bell crank of the pair, the connection 53 will be drawn upon by the action of the bell crank, and, as before explained, this will draw upon the portion 49^a of the cord 49, which will withdraw the opposite bolt.

The description of the attachment of one of the cables 37 to the two bolts will apply to the cable 37 on the opposite side of the car. One end of this cable 37 is connected to the bell crank, which, in turn, is connected by a cord 53 which is attached at 54 to the porter's cord 49. This arrangement provides a means whereby both bolts are withdrawn upon the actuation of either cable from either end of the car. Immediately after the bolts 40 have been withdrawn from engagement with the tracks, the cables will exert a pull upon the ladder structure which may be rolled along the track. Immediately the pull upon the cable is slackened, as, for instance, by the ladder moving too rapidly forward, which might be dangerous, the bolts 40 are forced upward into engagement with the track and the ladder is supported, thus the ladder may be drawn along the aisle by a series of jerks or may be drawn steadily if desired, and under no circumstances can become free to roll up or down the car by reason of the locking mechanism above described.

Inasmuch as this ladder as above described requires no change in the car structure over what is in use to-day, except the addition of the hangers, 23, and the rails, 24, I have not considered it necessary to show in detail the berths. I have merely indicated them by the numerals 60 and 61.

It will be seen that my construction provides a ladder which may be shifted from one side of the car aisle to the other, thus allowing it to be used with either range of berths and that this ladder may be readily shifted along the length of the car by a pull upon the cords 37 in either direction, or may be shifted by drawing upon the handle 52, thus withdrawing the bolts 40 and by then pushing the ladder in any direction desired.

The locking arrangement I have devised engages with the rail, 24, whenever the pull upon the cords 37 is released or slackened, thus there is no danger of the ladder after being unlocked being accidentally shifted along the length of the car or becoming loose. At the same time, it is held in position whenever the ladder is occupied by a person by reason of the springs 27 and 10 yielding and permitting the base of the ladder to rest solidly upon the floor. This is necessary for the reason that it might occur that the cords 37 would be drawn upon by some other passenger at the time the ladder was being used. Hence, some means must be provided as before explained for holding the ladder steady even when the bolts 40 are unlatched.

The extension of the platform 2 longitudinally along the aisle of the car provides for a commodious platform, yet, at the same time, does not require that the ladder and platform shall extend laterally so as to block the passage along the aisle. When it is not desired to use the ladder, it may be easily disengaged from the cross bars of the ladder hanger and folded up. The hangers under these circumstances are sufficiently high up out of the way.

While I have shown and described my ladder as applied particularly to sleeping cars, I do not desire to be limited to this application, as it is obvious that it could be used in other situations of like character where it is desired that there should be no chance of slipping when either occupied or unoccupied by a person.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters-Patent, is:

1. A step ladder having a wheeled support vertically yieldable under pressure to permit the ladder when occupied to have engagement with the floor.

2. A step ladder having a wheeled support resiliently yieldable under pressure to permit the ladder to have engagement with the floor.

3. A step ladder provided with supporting wheels having yielding resilient connection with the ladder whereby when a weight is placed upon the ladder, the bottom thereof will contact with the floor.

4. A step ladder having a frame whose lower end is adapted to contact with the floor, supporting wheels for the frame, and a yielding connection between the wheels normally resiliently supporting the frame above the floor but yielding under a weight on the ladder to permit the frame to contact with the floor.

5. The combination with a longitudinally overhead track, of a step ladder having a vertically yieldable supporting wheel mounted at the upper end of the ladder, said wheel engaging with the track, and a vertically yieldable wheel at its lower end normally projecting down below the bottom of the ladder.

6. The combination with a longitudinal overhead track, of a step ladder having at its upper end a spring having downwardly bowed ends, and wheels mounted on the ends of the springs and engaging with the track, the lower end of said ladder being provided with downwardly projecting springs extending below the lower end of the ladder and wheels mounted on the lower ends of the springs.

7. The combination with a longitudinal overhead track, of a hanger having at its upper end opposed wheels resiliently connected to the hanger and engaging with the

track, a platform supported from said hanger, and a folding ladder connected to said platform.

8. The combination with opposed longitudinal overhead tracks, of opposed hangers, each having a pair of wheels engaging with the track, said wheels being resiliently mounted on the hangers for vertical movement of the latter, a cross bar connecting said hangers, and a ladder structure detachably engaging with said cross bar to move along the track and adjustable laterally on the cross bar from one side of the track to the other.

9. The combination with opposed overhead longitudinally extending tracks, of a hanger depending from each of said tracks having at its upper end wheels engaging with said tracks, a cross bar connecting said hangers, and a ladder structure carried by said cross bar to move with the hanger longitudinally of the track and adjustable on the cross bar from one side of the track to the other.

10. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending overhead tracks, of opposed hangers, opposed wheels engaging with said tracks and resiliently supported on the upper ends of the hangers for a vertical movement, a cross bar connecting the opposed hangers, and a ladder structure comprising vertically arranged supporting bars detachably engaging with said cross bar, a platform hinged to the supporting bars, and a ladder hinged to the said platform.

11. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending overhead tracks, of opposed wheels engaging with each of said tracks, opposed hangers, resilient connections between the hangers and their adjacent wheels, whereby the hangers may have downward movement under pressure, a cross bar connecting the opposed hangers, a detachable ladder structure supported on said cross bar, and springs attached to the lower end of the ladder structure, projecting below the same and having wheels engaging with the floor.

12. The combination with opposed longitudinal overhead tracks, of wheels running on said tracks, opposed hangers, bowed springs forming a connection between the upper end of the hangers and said wheels, a cross bar connecting the opposed hangers, supporting bars having hooked ends engaging with the cross bars but detachable therefrom, a platform hinged to the supporting bars, a ladder hinged to said platform, braces for holding the ladder in its operative position, springs attached to the lower end of the ladder and extending down below the same, and wheels mounted on the ends of said springs.

13. The combination with a longitudinally extending overhead track, of a step

ladder having a wheeled support on said track vertically yieldable under pressure to permit the ladder to have engagement with the floor, a bolt engaging with the track, and means for withdrawing said bolt to move the ladder along the track.

14. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending overhead tracks, of a ladder structure having wheels moving along said tracks, said structure being adapted to yield vertically under pressure to permit the lower end of the same to contact with the floor, an endless cable connected to the ladder structure for drawing the same along the tracks, and means for locking the ladder to the track adapted to be released by a pull upon said cable.

15. A traveling ladder for railway cars, in combination with a track for supporting the same, the track extending longitudinally of the car and the ladder being yieldingly supported upon the track normally out of contact with the floor of a car but yielding to rest upon the floor when supporting a person.

16. A traveling ladder for railway cars in combination with a track for supporting the same, the ladder being provided with a lock automatically engaging with the track along its extent, and means extending along the track for releasing the lock and moving the ladder to any berth in the car.

17. A traveling ladder for railway cars in combination with a track for supporting the same, said ladder having a locking engagement with the track, means for disengaging said locking engagement to permit the ladder to be shifted, and additional means located at the ladder for releasing the locking engagement of the same with the track.

18. A traveling ladder for railway cars and a track for supporting the same upon which the ladder travels, in combination with means for locking the ladder in any desired position on the track, and means for unlocking the ladder and for moving it along the track.

19. A traveling ladder for railway cars in combination with a track for supporting the same along which the ladder may travel, an endless cable connected to the ladder, and means for locking the ladder to the track, said means being operated to unlock the ladder upon a draft on said cable.

20. A traveling ladder for railway cars, in combination with a track for supporting the same along which the ladder moves, an endless cable connected to the ladder, a lock on the ladder normally engaging with the track, and a connection between the ladder and said cable whereby when said cable is drawn upon the lock is withdrawn from engagement with the track.

21. A traveling ladder for railway cars in

combination with opposed tracks for supporting the same, the tracks extending longitudinally of the car and the ladder being yieldingly supported from the track and normally supported out of contact with the floor of the car, but descending to rest upon the floor when supporting a person, said ladder being provided with locks engaging with the tracks and with an endless cable co-extensive with the tracks adapted to actuate the lock and to move the ladder when pulled upon.

22. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending overhead tracks, of wheels mounted upon said tracks, hangers resiliently supported on said wheels, a cross bar connecting said hangers, opposed endless cables co-extensive with said tracks and connected to said hangers, and a ladder structure supported from said hangers.

23. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending tracks, of wheels rolling on said tracks, opposed hangers resiliently supported on said wheels, and connected by a cross bar, opposed endless cables connected to said hangers and co-extensive with each of said tracks, and a foldable ladder structure detachably engaged with said cross bar.

24. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending overhead tracks, wheels mounted to roll upon said tracks, opposed hangers yieldingly supported on said wheels and engaged by a cross bar, opposed endless cables connected to said hangers and co-extensive with the tracks, vertical supporting bars having hooks at their upper end engaging with the cross bar of the hangers, a platform hinged to said supporting bars, a ladder hinged to the platform, braces for holding the ladder and platform in operative positions, and wheels yieldingly attached to the ladder and resiliently supporting the same.

25. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending tracks, of wheels mounted on the tracks, opposed depending hangers resiliently supported on the wheels and connected by a cross bar, a bolt attached to each of said hangers and engaging with said rail, opposed endless cables connected to said hangers and to the bolts, and a ladder structure detachably connected to the cross bar of the hangers and having vertically yielding supporting wheels at its lower end.

26. The combination with a longitudinally extending track, of wheels mounted on the track, a depending hanger resiliently supported on the wheels, a ladder structure supported on a hanger, an endless cable co-extensive with the track and connected to the hanger, a bolt on the hanger engaging with the track to hold the hanger from shifting thereon, and connections between said endless cable and said bolt whereby

when the cable is pulled, the bolt shall be unlatched.

27. The combination with a longitudinally extending rail having a toothed edge, of wheels movable along said track, a hanger resiliently supported on said wheels, a ladder structure connected to said hanger, a bolt normally engaging with the track teeth, an endless cable co-extensive with the track, bell crank levers mounted on said hangers and connected to the bolt, said cable being connected to the bell crank levers.

28. The combination with a longitudinally extending overhead track having a toothed face, of wheels movable along the track, a hanger resiliently supported on said wheels, a bolt on the hanger engaging with said toothed face, opposed bell cranks connected to said bolt, an endless cable co-extensive with the track and having its ends connected to said bell cranks, and a cord attached to said bolt and depending therefrom independent of said cable.

29. The combination with opposed longitudinally extending overhead tracks, of wheels mounted on said tracks, opposed hangers resiliently supported on the wheels and connected by a cross bar, opposed bell cranks on each of said hangers, bolts on each of said hangers engaging with the associated track and connected to said bell cranks, a ladder structure supported on the hangers, and endless cables co-extensive with said tracks and connected at their ends to said bell cranks, one of said bell cranks on each hanger being connected to the bolt on the opposed hanger.

30. The combination with longitudinally extending overhead tracks, of wheels mounted on said tracks, opposed depending hangers resiliently mounted on said wheels, a cross bar connecting the said hangers, bolts on each of said hangers engaging with the opposed rails, a ladder structure supported on the cross bar, opposed endless cables co-extensive with the tracks, a flexible connection extending downward from each of said bolts and connecting the same, opposed pairs of bell crank levers connected to the bolts and to the endless cables, and connections from one of each pair of bell crank levers extending downward beneath the cross bar and then being connected to the flexible connection depending from the bolt.

31. The combination with longitudinally

extending overhead tracks, of wheels on said tracks, depending hangers resiliently supported on said wheels, a cross bar connecting said depending hangers, said cross bar being toothed, and a ladder structure narrower than the cross bar and having hooked upper ends engaging with the bar and with said teeth whereby the ladder may be shifted transversely along the cross bar to any desired position.

32. A traveling ladder for railroad sleeping cars comprising a track extending longitudinally of the car, a ladder carried by the track and normally raised from the floor to be depressed into engagement therewith under the weight of the person on the ladder, and means for bodily moving the ladder laterally from one side of the track to the other into cooperative relation with the berths at opposite sides of the car.

33. A traveling ladder for railroad sleeping cars comprising a track extending longitudinally of the car at a point above the upper berths thereof, a ladder carried by the track and movable to any berth, and means supporting the ladder on the track to be moved into cooperative relation with the berths on either side of the car.

34. A traveling ladder for railroad sleeping cars comprising a track extending longitudinally of the car at a point above the upper berths thereof, a device movable along the track, a platform connected with the device and disposed between the upper and lower berths, and a ladder connected with the platform and reaching to the floor.

35. A traveling ladder for railroad sleeping cars comprising a track extending longitudinally of the car at a point above the upper berths thereof, a device movable along the track, a platform connected with the device and disposed between the upper and lower berths, a ladder connected with the platform and reaching to the floor, and means connecting the platform and ladder with the device providing for lateral adjustment of the platform and ladder to the berths at either side of the car.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my own, I have hereto affixed my signature in the presence of two witnesses.

SAMUEL MORGAN NIBLACK.

Witnesses:

SAMUEL B. OGDEN,
CAROLYN A. WADLER.