

(No Model.)

F. FYLES.

DEVICE FOR PRODUCING SCENIC EFFECTS UPON THE STAGE.

No. 466,750.

Patented Jan. 5, 1892.

FIG. 1.

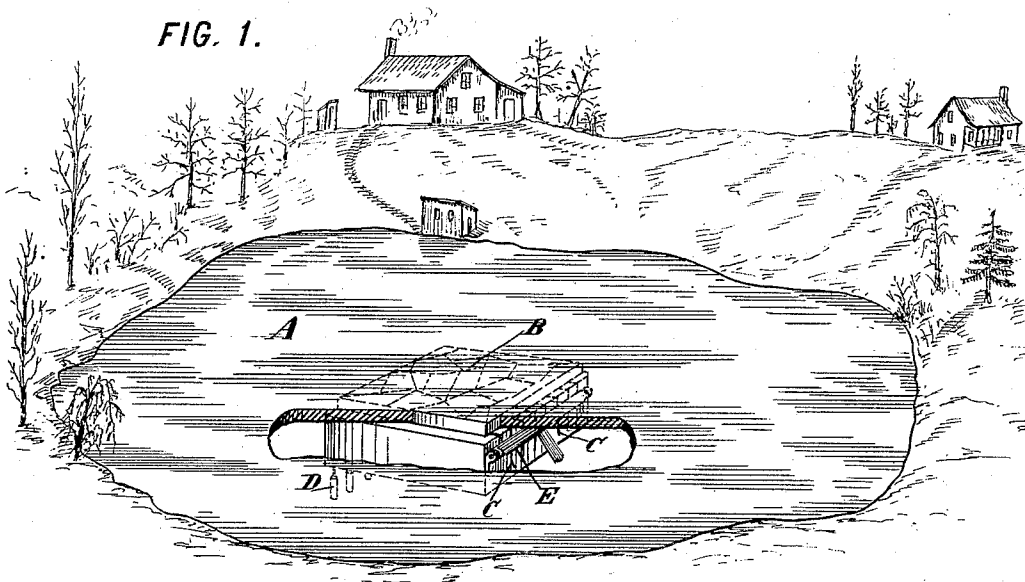


FIG. 2.

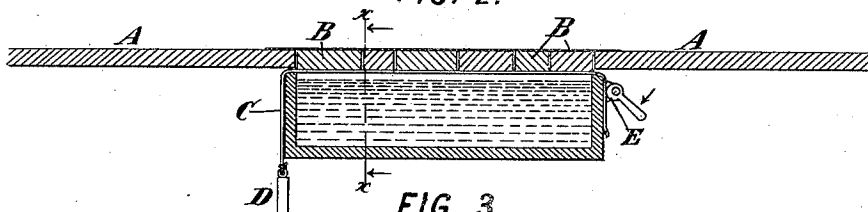


FIG. 3.

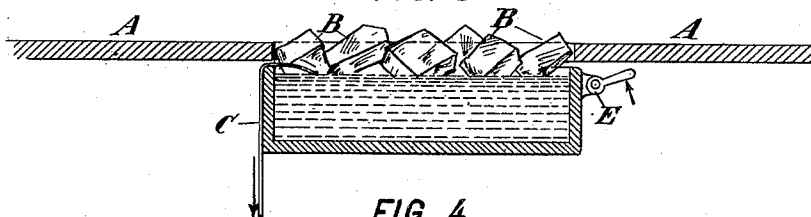


FIG. 4.

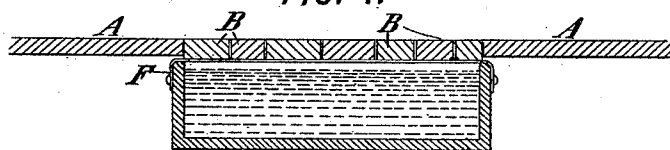
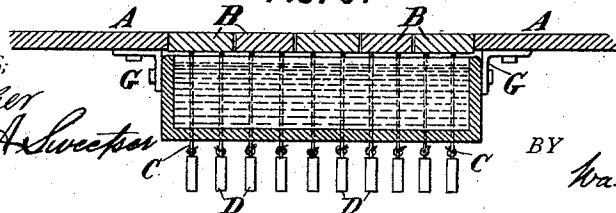


FIG. 5.



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DEVICE FOR PRODUCING SCENIC EFFECTS UPON THE STAGE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 466,750, dated January 5, 1892.

Application filed March 16, 1891. Serial No. 385,257. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, FRANKLIN FYLES, a citizen of the United States, residing in the city of New York, in the county and State of New York, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Scenic Devices for Producing Stage Effects in Dramatic Performances, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to the scenic representation for use on the theatrical stage or elsewhere of an ice-covered body of water so arranged that at a suitable time in the drama or exhibition in progress the ice will break into pieces and let the person or persons thereon drop into the water below. Tanks of real water are in common use on the stage, but an imitation of a body of water covered by a frozen surface has never been introduced upon the stage; and the object of my invention is to produce this scenic effect and representation for dramatic purposes, and in particular to produce the dramatic effect of a person or persons breaking through ice into the water underneath. In practical utilization for dramatic purposes the stage would usually be occupied by a winter scene, with skaters disporting on the ice of a lake or stream. A sound (which could easily be imitated behind the stage) of ice cracking under their weight would be followed by a breaking up of a portion of the surface and the submerging of one or more persons. The separated pieces of ice would float on the water, and from among them the imperiled person or persons would be rescued or not, according to the requirements of the play or exhibition then being given or enacted. I attain these objects by the mechanism illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 shows the stage of a theater set with scenery to represent a winter landscape scene, with an imitation of a frozen surface of water occupying the foreground, and in the center of the same a tank, the upper surface of which is on a level with the floor of the stage and covered with irregular blocks made to imitate blocks of ice and fitted closely together and supplied with the apparatus and appliances more fully described hereinafter. Fig. 2 is a transverse section of the tank, showing the imitation blocks of ice held in

position by ropes or wires, which are to be released at one end and drawn from under the blocks by weights attached to the other end. Fig. 3 is a transverse section showing the blocks of imitation ice as they appear when the support is withdrawn from underneath them and the imitation ice is broken up. Fig. 4 is a transverse section of the tank, showing the blocks as they appear when held in position by wires or cords that are to be broken by the weight of a person stepping upon the blocks instead of being withdrawn. Fig. 5 is a transverse section of the tank from the side facing the weights, which are attached to the ropes or wires.

The detailed description of the accompanying drawings and of the invention as illustrated by them is as follows:

Fig. 1 shows the scene upon the stage of a theater in which the feature of an ice-covered body of water and of a person breaking through the ice is to be introduced. A shows the entire body of imitation ice-covered water. In or near the center or middle of the same (or this may be at any other part of the stage) is B, a tank, which is constructed so that the upper surface of the same is on a level with the stage and is covered with blocks or sections made to resemble natural blocks of ice. (It is not, however, necessary that the upper surface of a tank should be on a level with the flooring of the stage, although in most instances this would be preferable; but where it would be difficult to sink the tank below the flooring of the stage it can be constructed upon or above the same; but in such event it would of course be necessary to conceal the sides of the tank by means of imitation earth, snow, or other suitable material.) The tank is partly filled with water, and over or upon the surface of this water are fitted the blocks shown in Fig. 1 by the letter B. These blocks or sections are to be of sufficient lightness to float in water either in consequence of being hollow or in consequence of the lightness of the material, such as cork, and they are to be constructed of irregular shape so as to resemble natural blocks of ice, but their shapes are to be so contrived that the blocks will fit closely together and present to an audience the appearance of a solid surface of unbroken ice. In the drawings at the letter B the out-

lines of the blocks are shown by dotted lines; but upon the stage these lines will not appear. To prevent this the blocks are to be covered with paint, paper, or other material, so that they will present the appearance of a solid surface of ice when fitted together and will present an unbroken surface of ice when separated and floating in the water. These blocks, being fitted so as to cover the entire surface of the tank, are supported above the surface of the water by means of cords or wires running underneath them and across the tank from one side to the other. At one side of the tank the wires or cords are fastened by means of an eccentric clamp, (shown in the drawings by the letter E.) The ends of the cords fastened on that side of the tank are shown by the letter C. At the other end of the tank the wires or cords are run through holes or rings, and weights are attached to their extremities, as shown in the drawings by the letter D. When fastened in this manner, they are stretched taut and sustain the blocks in their proper position. (If greater security be desired, sliding sections of the stage or traps or hinged brackets may be placed under the wires or cords and may be removed, dropped, or drawn aside when so desired.)

Fig. 2 shows a transverse section of the tank. The letters A A show the surface of imitation ice surrounding the tank. The letters B B show the blocks of imitation ice fitted together in position and held above the surface of the water in the tank by means of the cords fastened at one side by the clamp E and at the other by the weights D.

Fig. 3 is a transverse section of the tank as it appears when the ice is broken up. When the performer—as, for instance, a skater—is to be submerged, the clamp E is turned, the cord C released and drawn downward, and the blocks of ice B B are broken up and fall into the water, and through the blocks the skater sinks into the water, the blocks giving way under his weight in the same manner as natural blocks of ice would. They are first partly submerged in the water, and then rising again to the surface float about there.

Fig. 4 is a transverse section of the tank, showing the blocks of ice B B held in position by wires or cords F, which are not fastened by means of a clamp and weights and are not to be released and withdrawn from underneath. These blocks are to be broken through by the weight of the skater, the cords or wires being made of merely sufficient strength to hold the blocks in place and weak enough to break under any additional strain. The mere weight of the skater as he steps upon the apparent ice would then suffice to

break the wires or cords. The method described above (of having the wires or cords fastened by means of a clamp and weights and having the same withdrawn) would, however, be preferable to the method shown in Fig. 4, because by that method the wires or ropes would be carried out of the tank and the possibility of the submerged skater becoming entangled in them would be prevented. It might be feasible to prevent the danger of such an occurrence by having small weights attached to the wires or cords that would carry them to the bottom of the tank and keep them there; but even then there might be a possibility of the skater finding that they would interfere with his movements.

Fig. 5 shows a transverse section of the tank from the side over which the ropes or wires are run and held taut by the wires attached to their extremities. B B are the blocks of ice. G G show the brackets by which the tank is attached to the flooring of the stage. C C are the ropes, and D D the weights attached to them.

What I claim as my invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. The combination, with a stage, of a tank adapted to contain water and disconnected blocks arranged practically even with the surface of the stage over the tank, substantially as set forth.

2. The combination, with a stage, of a tank adapted to contain water, disconnected blocks arranged practically even with the surface of the stage over the tank, and cords or wires to support the blocks, substantially as set forth.

3. The combination, with a stage, of a tank adapted to contain water, disconnected blocks arranged practically even with the surface of the stage over the tank, cords or wires to support the blocks, and weights to draw the cords or wires away, substantially as set forth.

4. The combination, with a stage, of a tank adapted to contain water, blocks of irregular shape arranged practically even with the surface of the stage and over the tank, and cords which support the blocks, attached to a moving support at one end and having weights at their other ends, substantially as set forth.

5. The combination of a stage, a portion of the surface whereof is made of disconnected regularly-shaped blocks, and a tank adapted to contain water placed beneath said blocks, substantially as set forth.

FRANKLIN FYLES.

Witnesses:

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MOSES I. FALK.