No. 789,243. PATENTED MAY 9, 1905.

W. H. STRICKLER.

AMUSEMENT DEVICE.

APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 3, 1904.

3 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

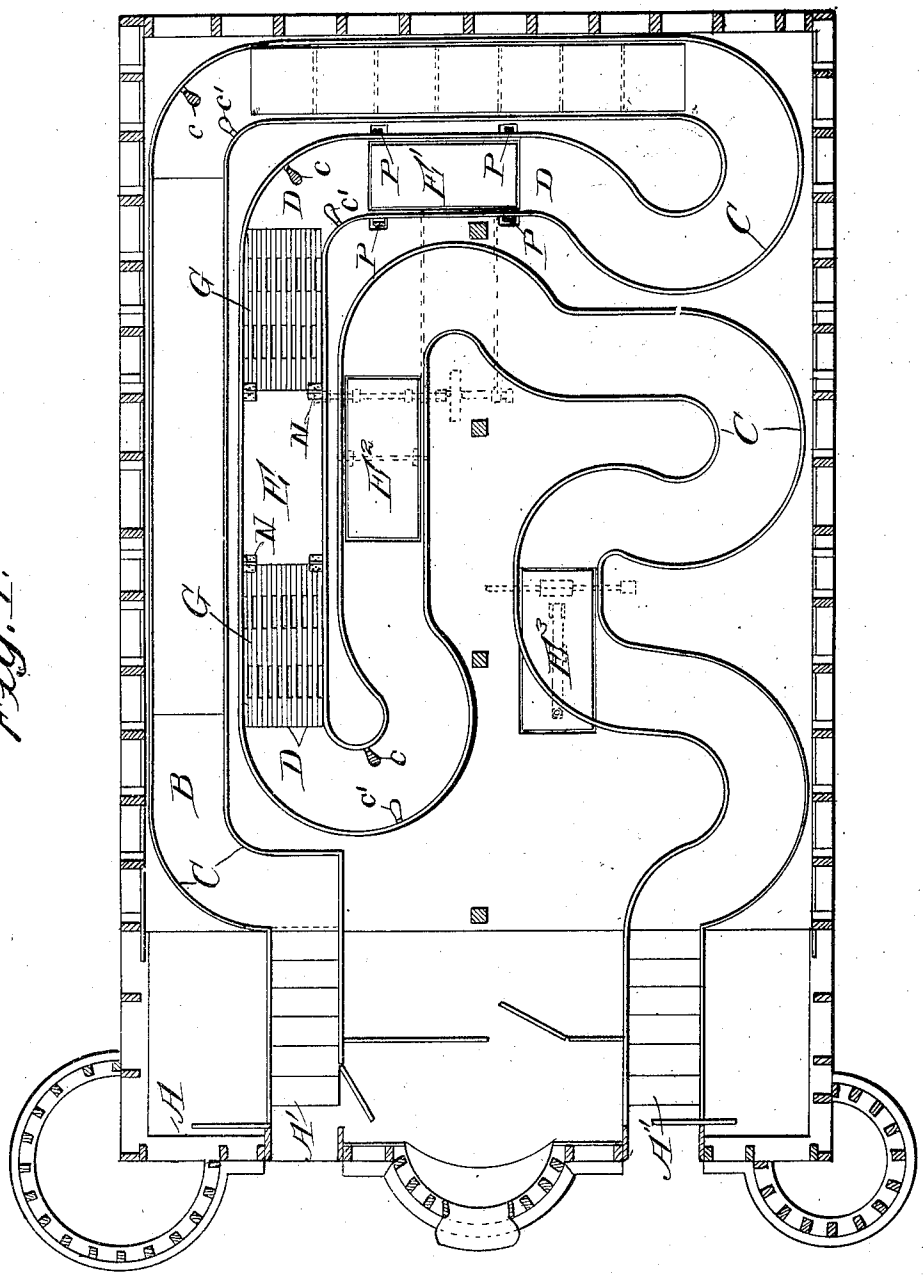

Fig. 1.

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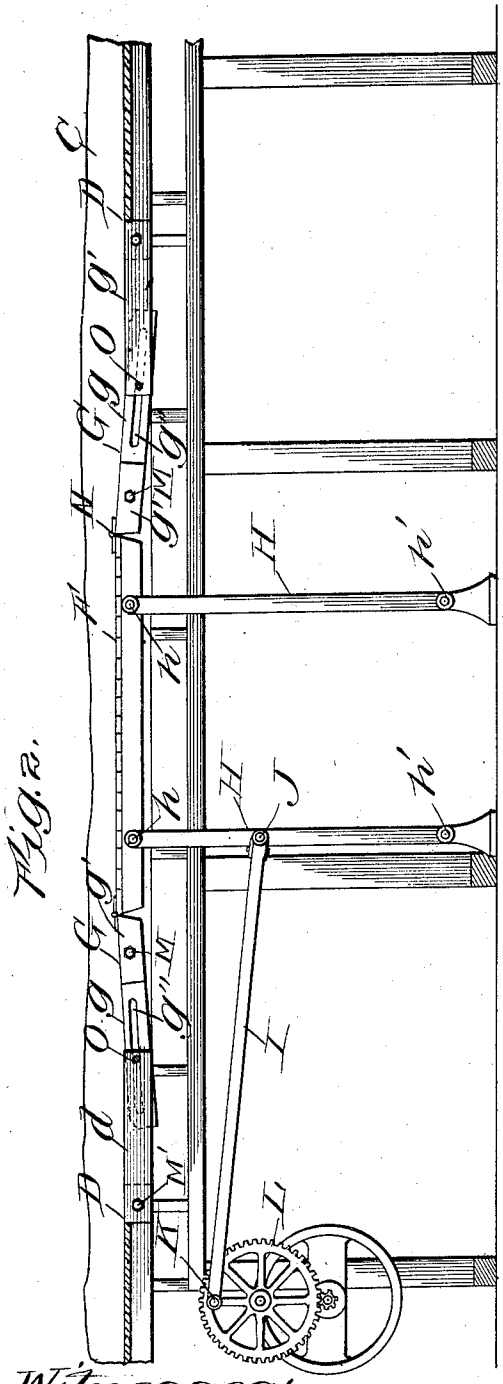

Fig. 2.

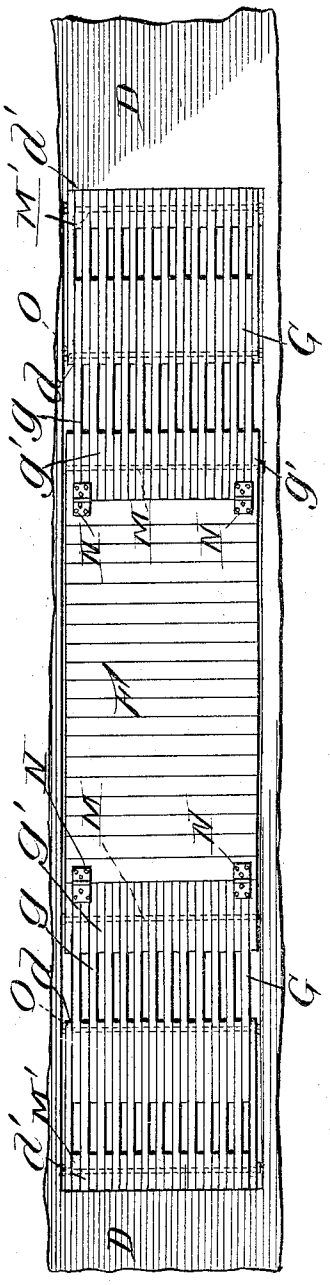

Fig. 3.

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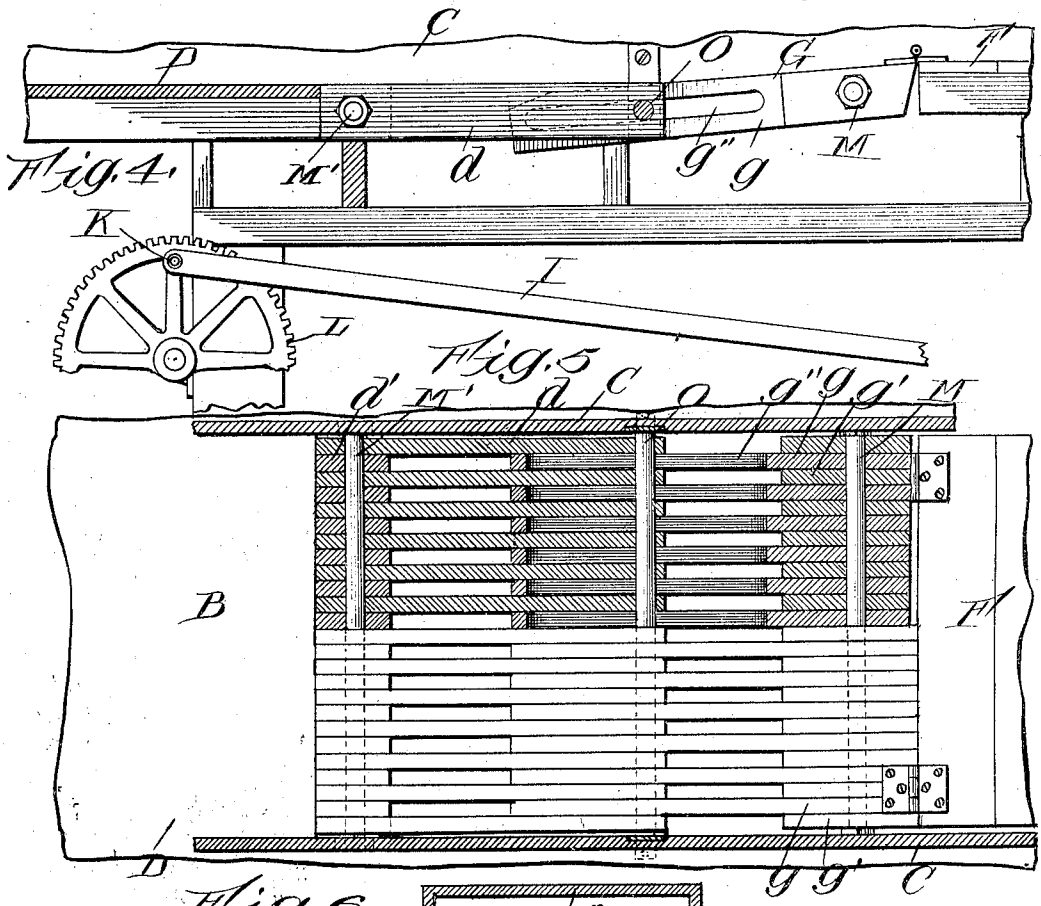
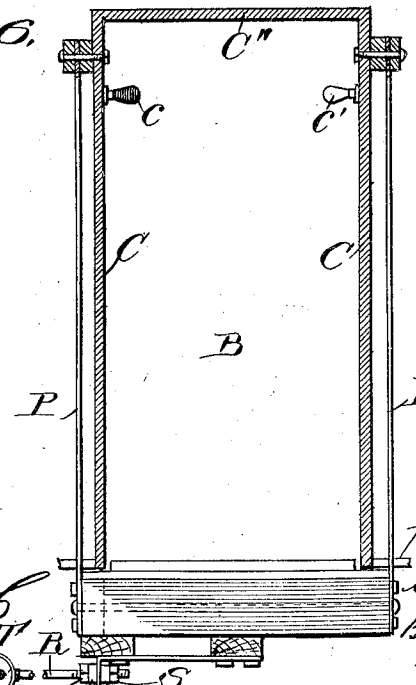


Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM H. STRICKLER, OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

AMUSEMENT DEVICE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 789,243, dated May 9, 1905.

Application filed September 3, 1904. Serial No. 223,285.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM H. STRICKLER, a citizen of the United States, residing at Chicago, in the county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Amusement Devices, of which the following is a specification.

The present invention relates to that class of amusement devices that have a continuous passage-way which usually is narrow, tortuous, and dark, or but dimly lighted, through which the revelers file, and which is equipped at intervals with devices for provoking merriment. It is concerned not so much with the construction or disposition of the passage, albeit this should be suitable for carrying out the general scheme, as it is with the devices for producing sensations which excite risibility.

More particularly stated, the invention relates to that class of devices which have movable sections or platforms incorporated in the floor of the passage-way and arranged in positions to be stepped upon, and means for moving or reciprocating said floor sections or platforms.

The invention consists in the features of novelty that are hereinafter described, with reference to the accompanying drawings, which are made a part of this specification, and in which—

Figure 1 is a horizontal section of a building equipped with devices embodying the invention. Figs. 2 and 3 are respectively a side elevation and a plan of one of the movable platforms and its accessories on a larger scale. Figs. 4 and 5 are respectively a side elevation and a plan view, partly in sections, of some of the parts thereof on a still larger scale. Fig. 6 is a view showing another of the platforms and its accessories in elevation and the passage-way in vertical transverse section.

The building, the outer walls of which are shown at A, may be of any desired construction. Within it is a tortuous passage-way B, the terminals of which are preferably at the entrance A′ and exit A″, respectively, of the building. The side walls C of the passage-way that are not formed by the outer walls of the building may be carried up only a few feet above the average height of a person, and the space above them may be left open or the passage-way may be provided with a ceiling C″, as desired. The best results are had by dimly lighting the passage-way, and for this purpose (the passage-way being otherwise darkened) a suitable number of incandescent electric lamps *c* with semi-translucent bulbs or globes are arranged near the top of the walls of the passage-way. Other lamps *c′* with transparent bulbs are also used for thoroughly illuminating the passage-way in case of emergency. The dim light or, still better, total darkness and the sinuousity of the passage-way make the place more mysterious and uncanny to the uninitiated and serve to heighten the effects produced by the floor devices. The stationary portions of the floor are shown at D. They are interrupted at as many places as desired to provide openings in which are located movable sections or platforms E E′ E², &c., which are thus incorporated in and form a part of the passage-way floor, over which the revelers must walk in passing from the entrance to the exit. Because of the darkness the differences in the floor construction cannot be seen, so that the person is not in the least forewarned that something is about to happen, and although in a state of expectancy still his inability to see makes it difficult to discern the direction of movement, and meanwhile he is nonplussed. The exclusion of light to the extent of substantial darkness is therefore important to the successful carrying out of the scheme.

The platform E comprises a central portion F and two approaches G, one at each end, which are of similar construction. The central portion of the platform is preferably supported by four parallel standards H, the upper ends of which are jointed to the platform at *h* and the lower ends of which are pivotally supported at *h′*, so that the standards may oscillate in unison, their parallelism, and consequently the horizontal position of the central portion of the platform, being at all times maintained. In Figs. 2 to 5 the standards are shown in vertical position, and the entire platform, including its approaches, is in cen-

tral position. Provision is made for moving the platform to and fro through equal distances on opposite sides of this central position, and as a simple, inexpensive, and effective means for moving it I prefer to use a pitman I, one end of which has an eye for receiving a rod J, carried by two of the standards H, and the other end of which has an eye for receiving a wrist-pin K, carried by a wheel L, which may be revolved at any desired speed by any suitable mechanism. Preferably it is revolved slowly, so that the platform is given a slow to-and-fro and up-and-down movement, the reversals of which are so gradual and easy that they produce no sudden jar or jolt. This is because of the gradually increasing and decreasing speed common to all crank movements. It is greatest at the middle and gradually dies away to nothing at the end of the stroke. Preferably the platform is arranged to move in the direction of the passage-way, and when so arranged the approaches and abutting portions of the floor D are provided with overlapping and intermeshing tongues. Each of the approaches is constructed of a number of narrow strips *g*, preferably of wood, placed edge up and spaced apart by short blocks *g'*, arranged between them at their ends adjacent to the central portion of the platform, the strips and spacing-blocks being provided with holes for the passage of a long bolt or tie-rod M, by which they are firmly bound together. The approach thus constructed is connected to the central portion of the platform by hinges N, so that they are capable of limited independent movement. The adjacent abutment is similarly constructed of strips *d*, spacing-blocks *d'*, and tie-bolt M'; but it is fixed immovably with relation to the floor D. The projecting portions of the strips *d* and *g* form the tongues above mentioned, and they intermesh and overlap each other far enough to prevent their disengagement as the platform moves to and fro. The tongues *d* are perforated near their outer ends for the passage of a heavy rod O, firmly supported by any suitable means, and the tongues *g* are provided with slots *g''*, through which also this rod passes, the slots being of sufficient length to permit the described to-and-fro movement of the platform. This rod forms the support for the outer extremity of the approach, and it also prevents the tongues *g* from riding up and escaping from the spaces between the tongues *d*. The overlapping and intermeshing tongues form at all times a practically unbroken treadway and absolutely obviate all danger of injuring persons walking upon it. The central portion of the platform when in central position is slightly higher than the abutments, so that in some positions the overlapping tongues are at an angle to each other; but at no time do the extremities of one set project above the other set, and in order to insure this they may, if desired, be beveled off, as shown. Any desired additional means may be used for supporting and giving strength to the approaches and abutments.

When the cause is known, sensations produced by this device somewhat resemble those produced by the roll of a boat; but when experienced in darkness and the cause is unknown it is difficult to discover it from the effect alone, and until it is discovered and understood it is impossible to keep one's balance even though the motion is slow.

I desire to have it understood that in its broadest aspect the invention is not limited to a platform movable in the direction of the length of the passage-way, nor to a platform having relatively movable and self-accommodating approaches, nor to approaches of any particular construction, nor to any particular means for supporting the platform, nor to any particular means for moving the platform, and modifications of these features are shown in the drawings. Others will readily suggest themselves to those skilled in the art.

The movable platform E' is supported by metallic hangers or straps P, which depend from an overhead support and are located outside of the vertical walls C of the passage-way. They are arranged with their flat faces parallel with the passage-way, so that the platform is capable of moving transversely with respect to the passage-way, sufficient clearance being left in the floor for this purpose. To the platform is secured a bracket Q, having a perforation through which passes a threaded rod R, carrying nuts S, between which the bracket is clamped. The rod is provided with a ring T, embracing an eccentric U, whereby the rod is reciprocated and the platform vibrated. In order to permit the necessary play of the rod relatively to the bracket due to its lateral movement under the action of the eccentric, the opening through the bracket is enlarged somewhat, and rubber washers V are interposed between the nuts and bracket, as shown in Fig. 5.

The term "to and fro" is used in this specification in contradistinction to up and down and is intended to define directions that are transverse to the vertical.

The other movable floor sections or platforms have mechanism for moving them in various ways; but as the present invention is not concerned with this mechanism the details in this construction are not shown in the drawings and need not be fully described. Suffice it is to say that the movement of each platform differs in character from the movement of the others. For example, the platform E^2 is supported by a centrally-located horizontal pivot on which it rocks up and down after the manner of a teeter. The platform E^3 is hinged at one end and yieldingly supported at the other end, and beneath its yieldingly-supported end is a rapidly-revolving

cam, against which the platform is forced by the weight of a person. The result is a rapid vertical vibration and a loud rattling noise.

What I claim as new is—

1. A device of the class described having a darkened, narrow, tortuous passage-way having a floor provided at intervals with movable sections, and means for imparting movement to the several movable sections, the movement of each section varying in character from the movement of the other sections, substantially as described.

2. A device of the class described having a darkened, narrow tortuous passage-way having a floor comprising fixed and movable sections, means for dimly lighting the passage-way, and means for imparting movement to the several movable floor-sections, the movement of each section varying in character from the movement of the other sections, substantially as described.

3. A device of the class described having a continuous, darkened, narrow, tortuous passage-way having a floor provided at intervals with movable sections variously supported so as to be movable in different directions, and means for imparting movement to the several sections whereby the movement of each section varies in character from the movement of the other sections, substantially as described.

4. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform and means for moving said platform to and fro, substantially as described.

5. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform, and means for imparting to said platform a combined to-and-fro and up-and-down movement, substantially as described.

6. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform, supports carrying the platform, the platform ends of the supports being movable in arcs of circles, and means for moving the platform in said arcs, substantially as described.

7. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform, standards connected to the platform and having pivotal supports below the platform and means for moving the platform, substantially as described.

8. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform and means for moving the platform to and fro, said means including a wrist-pin and pitman, substantially as described.

9. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform, parallel standards connected to the platform and pivotally supported below it, and means for moving the platform, substantially as described.

10. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform and an approach movable relatively to the platform to and fro, and means for moving the platform, substantially as described.

11. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a movable section or platform, and an approach hinged to the platform so as to be movable relatively thereto, and means for moving the platform to and fro, substantially as described.

12. A device of the class described, having a floor comprising a fixed section and a movable section or platform and an approach hinged to the platform and at its free side meeting the fixed portion of the floor and means for moving the platform to and fro, substantially as described.

13. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a fixed section and a movable section, said sections having overlapping tongues, and means for moving the movable section to and fro, substantially as described.

14. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a fixed section and a movable section, said sections having overlapping, intermeshing tongues, one set of tongues being movably connected to its section of the floor, and means for imparting a reciprocating to-and-fro movement to the movable section, substantially as described.

15. A device of the class described having a floor comprising fixed sections and a movable section, the said movable section having at each end a plurality of tongues jointed thereto, and each of the fixed sections having a plurality of tongues intermeshing with the tongues of the movable section, and means for imparting a to-and-fro reciprocating movement to the movable section, substantially as described.

16. A device of the class described having a floor comprising a fixed section, a movable section, said sections having overlapping, intermeshing tongues, provided with openings, a rod passing through said openings, the openings in one set of tongues being elongated, and means for moving the platform, substantially as described.

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