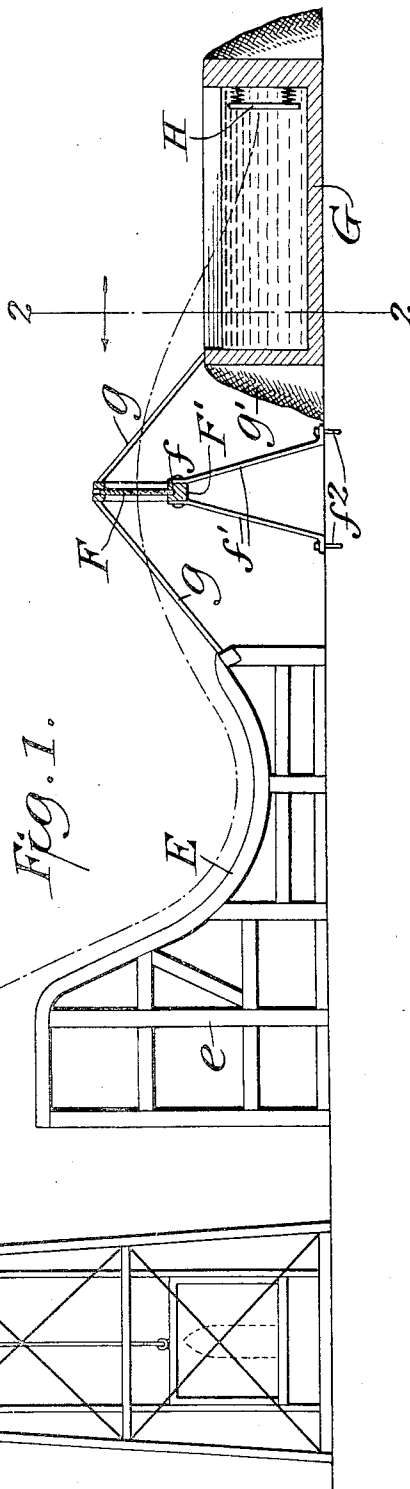
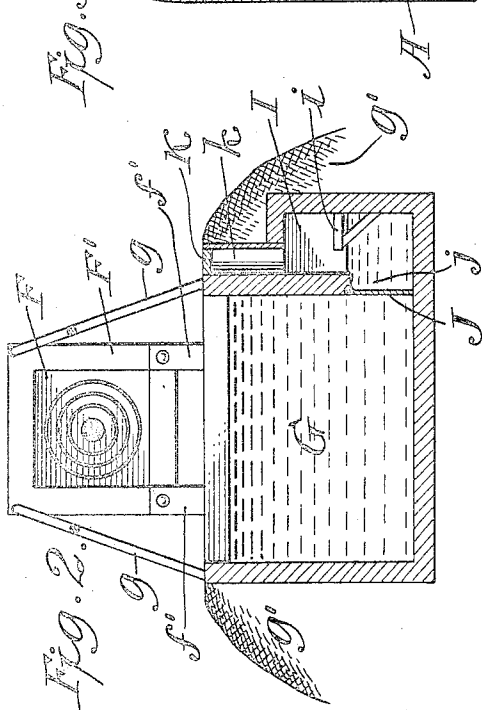


1,037,430.



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SPECTACULAR ILLUSION APPARATUS.

1,037,430.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Sept. 3, 1912.

Application filed December 18, 1911. Serial No. 666,505.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM J. BURKE, a citizen of the United States, residing in the city of New York, borough of Manhattan, county and State of New York, have invented a certain new and useful Spectacular Illusion Apparatus, of which the following is a specification.

This invention is a spectacular illusion apparatus, and the object of the invention is to amuse and mystify large audiences, the invention being adapted for use, more particularly, in the larger places of amusement such as circuses, hippodromes and theaters. With the specified objects in view, the invention embodies a suitable car or container in which a performer may be temporarily placed, which car or container, after the surreptitious exit of the performer therefrom, is then projected through a very considerable distance and into a specially constructed receiving chamber, where a confederate is stationed and emerges therefrom upon the arrival of the car, thereby creating the illusion that such confederate was the person who was placed in the car and, presumably, remained therein during the flight of said car.

In a preferred form of the invention the car is of torpedo shape, and is shot from a cannon, either by the force of an explosive or by springs, the said cannon being positioned on a tower. Moreover, the torpedo shaped car, in the course of its flight, strikes a chute or race way which lessens the momentum of the torpedo and also directs its path, preferably through a target, thereby giving a particularly realistic and startling effect.

The preferred form of the receiving or terminal chamber consists of a tank containing water, said tank being provided with a communicating chamber in which the confederate is stationed, and from which chamber he may enter the tank and pass up through the water therein immediately after the arrival of the torpedo.

Other features of the invention, together with their function and advantages will be apparent from the hereinafter detailed description of said invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

In the accompanying drawings, I have illustrated one practical embodiment of the invention, but the construction shown therein is to be understood as illustrative, only

and not as defining the limits of the invention.

Figure 1 is a side elevation, partly in vertical section of an illusion apparatus embodying this invention, the torpedo shaped car being shown in flight and adapted to follow the path indicated by dotted lines. Fig. 2 is a vertical section on the line 2-2 of Fig. 1 illustrating the terminal receiving tank and the air chamber thereof wherein the confederate is to be stationed out of view of the audience. Fig. 3 is a vertical section through one embodiment of the torpedo-shaped car wherein the performer is to be placed within the view of the audience, after which the car is raised to a position at the top of the tower, at which point the performer is to leave the car before it is projected from the top of the tower.

In the form of apparatus disclosed in the drawings, the car, carriage, or other vehicle, A, is represented in the form of a torpedo, the same being provided with a conical cap or top *a* and a trap door *b*; the latter being retained normally in the closed position by any suitable form of catch, *c*. It will be understood, however, that the shape of the car is not material, and that any suitable design or figure may be used. Prior to hoisting the car to the position where it is to be projected through the air, the top *a* is removed and the performer is lowered into the car, after which the top *a* is secured again in position, this operation being performed in the full view of the audience.

B designates a tower of any suitable construction, said tower being provided at its top with a platform *b* located at a suitable height above the ground. Near the top of the tower, and preferably below the platform *b*, is a chamber C, the height of which is sufficient to practically conceal the performer after leaving the car. The car is adapted to be hoisted or elevated to the top of the tower at which time the performer within the car operates the catch *c* so as to open the trap door *b*, thus enabling the performer to escape from the car and to pass into the chamber C. The exit of the performer from the car is thus effected without the audience observing the operation, the car being at all times within the view of the audience, the trap door being closed after the performer leaves the car. It is evident that any suitable hoisting or elevating mechanism may be used for raising the car

to the platform, *b*, but as this mechanism forms no part of the invention I have not considered it necessary to illustrate the same in detail. Upon the platform *b*, at the top of the tower, is a suitable projecting apparatus, the same being represented as a cannon *D*. The torpedo-shaped car is adapted to be projected by the cannon beyond the tower, and for this purpose the cannon is constructed so as to receive a charge of explosive, the gas resulting from which projects the car beyond the tower. It is evident that springs or compressed air, or other propelling medium may be employed in the projecting apparatus *D* for the purpose of imparting the initial movement to the torpedo shaped car, but as these matters do not form an essential part of this invention it has not been considered necessary to illustrate in detail a particular form of propelling apparatus.

E designates a chute or guideway which is spaced relative to the tower and upon which the torpedo-shaped car is adapted to run in the course of its flight from the tower to the target *F*. As shown, one end of the chute is higher than the other, and this chute is curved downwardly from the elevated end thereof and is curved upwardly toward the lower end thereof, the curvature of the chute being continuous and gradual so that the chute will have a checking action upon the flight of the car. The chute is supported by any suitable framework, indicated at *e* as a skeleton frame, and, if desired, this framework *e* and the tower *B* may be of a separable or knockdown construction in order that the parts may be easily and quickly separated and packed for transportation and storage. The target *F* is composed of paper, papier mâché, or any other material which will be easily broken or punctured by the torpedo shaped car as it leaves the chute *E*. The target is positioned within a slot or groove *f* of a framework *F'*, whereby a broken target may be easily removed from the frame and replaced by a fresh target. The opening in the frame and the target are of such dimensions that the torpedo-shaped car will readily pass through the target without coming in contact with the frame. The target is placed at such a distance from the end of the curved runway that the momentum of the car will be sufficient to carry said car over the space between the end of the runway and through the target. As shown, the target supporting frame *F'* is provided with suitable legs *f'* adapted to be secured in position upon the ground by stakes, or other suitable fastening means *f''*. The upper part of the target frame is retained in position by suitable stays, indicated at *g*, in the form of tie-rods, certain of said tie-rods being attached to the frame *e* of the

chute or runway whereas other tie-rods are fastened to the wall of a terminal receiving tank *G*. Tank *G* is positioned in spaced relation to target *F*, the latter being spaced relative to the chute or runway *E* and the tank *G*. The detailed construction of the tank is not material, but as shown it is adapted to be placed upon the ground and to be substantially concealed by earth piled around it so as to form an embankment *g'*. The tank is below the target, and when the torpedo-shaped car passes through the target its momentum is sufficient to carry it into the water contained within the tank. The motion of the car within the tank is arrested by any suitable means, but as shown in Fig. 1 a spring buffer *H* is provided at one end of the tank and in the path of the car, whereby the contact of the car with the buffer arrests the motion of the car, the buffer yielding to the impact of the car so as to avoid the liability to damage and injury to the parts.

An essential feature of the terminal receiving tank consists in the provision of means whereby a confederate may be concealed in the tank and out of view of the audience. As shown, the tank is provided at one side thereof with a chamber *I*, within which is a shelf *i*. This chamber *I* has communication with the tank by an opening *j* which is normally closed by a door *J*, the latter being hinged to a wall of the tank. The upper part of chamber *I* is reduced so as to form a manhole *k* the top of which is closed by a manhole cover *K*, the latter fitting air tight to the tank and being composed preferably of glass. The chamber *I* conceals the confederate of the performer from the view of the audience, and at the proper time, *i. e.* after the car enters the tank, the door *J* is opened and the confederate passes from the chamber *I* into the water of the tank *G* and emerges therefrom within view of the audience.

The operation of the apparatus is as follows: The torpedo-shaped car is brought into view of the audience, and the conical top, *a*, thereof is unscrewed from the body of the car. A performer now climbs into the car, or is hoisted and deposited therein, after which the conical top is replaced upon the body of the car, thus securely housing the performer within said car. The confederate passes through the manhole *k* into the chamber *I* of the terminal tank, and is thus concealed from the view of the audience. The car with the performer therein is lifted to the top of the tower, the car being at all times in the full view of the audience. The performer within the car operates the catch *c* and opens the trap door *b*, thus allowing the performer to leave the car without the audience becoming aware of the deception, the trap door being thereafter closed. The

car is now placed within the projecting apparatus D and the latter operated to project the apparatus from the tower. The torpedo-shaped car follows the course indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 1, and in its flight this car rests upon the chute or runway, the latter operating to support the car and to guide or direct its movement, the speed of the car being checked by the frictional contact thereof with the chute. The momentum of the car is sufficient to carry it through the target and into the tank, the impact of the car against the target breaking the latter. When the car enters the tank its movement is checked by contact with the spring buffer and the confederate passes from the chamber I through the door J into the tank, said confederate rising through the water of the tank within the view of the audience thereby creating the illusion that the car carried the performer from the tower to the tank and that the performer emerged from the car while the latter is in the tank.

Having thus fully described the invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:—

1. In an illusion apparatus, a closed car adapted to contain a performer, in combination with a terminal receiving tank provided with a chamber wherein a performer may be concealed, means whereby the car is projected along a predetermined path, a checking and guiding chute intermediate the projecting means and the terminal receiving tank, and a target intermediate the chute and the tank.

2. In an illusion apparatus, a closed car within which a performer may be temporarily concealed, in combination with a terminal receiving tank provided with a chamber wherein a performer may be concealed, means whereby the car is projected along a predetermined path, and a checking and guiding chute intermediate the projecting means and the terminal receiving tank.

3. In an illusion apparatus, a closed car adapted to contain a performer, in combination with a terminal receiving tank provided with a chamber wherein a performer may be concealed, mechanical means for projecting the car along a predetermined path, a checking and guiding chute intermediate the projecting means and the terminal receiving tank, and a target spaced with relation to the chute and the tank.

4. In an illusion apparatus, a closed car adapted to contain a performer, in combination with a terminal receiving tank provided with a chamber wherein a performer may be concealed, means whereby the car is projected along a predetermined path,

and a checking and guiding chute bridging a part only of the path of said car between the projecting means and the terminal tank.

5. In an illusion apparatus, a closed car adapted to contain a performer, in combination with a terminal receiving tank provided with a chamber wherein a performer may be concealed, means whereby the car is projected along a predetermined path, a checking and guiding chute intermediate the projecting means and the terminal tank, said chute being comparatively short and positioned so as to leave a free path between the projecting means and the chute and between the chute and the terminal tank, and a target located in the path of the carriage and positioned intermediate the chute and the terminal tank.

6. In an illusion apparatus, a closed receptacle adapted to contain a concealed performer, means whereby the receptacle is projected along a predetermined path, a receiving station for said car, and a checking and guiding chute positioned intermediate the car projecting means and the receiving station and of such length as to leave a gap between the projecting means and the chute and also between the chute and the receiving station.

7. In an illusion apparatus, a closed receptacle adapted to contain a concealed performer, means whereby the receptacle is projected along a predetermined path, a receiving station for said car, a target positioned in the projected path of the carriage, a checking and guiding chute positioned intermediate the car projecting means and the receiving station and of such length as to leave a gap between the projecting means and the chute and also between the chute and the receiving station.

8. In an illusion apparatus, a closed receptacle adapted to contain a concealed performer, means whereby the receptacle is projected along a predetermined path, a receiving station provided with a buffering means for said car, and a checking and guiding chute positioned intermediate the car projecting means and the receiving station and of such length as to leave a gap between the projecting means and the chute and also between the chute and the receiving station.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

WILLIAM J. BURKE.

Witnesses:

H. I. BERNHARD,
JAS. H. GRIFFIN.