

No. 631,450.

Patented Aug. 22, 1899.

R. WHYTAL.
THEATRICAL SCENERY.

(Application filed Oct. 18, 1898.)

(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

Fig. 1.

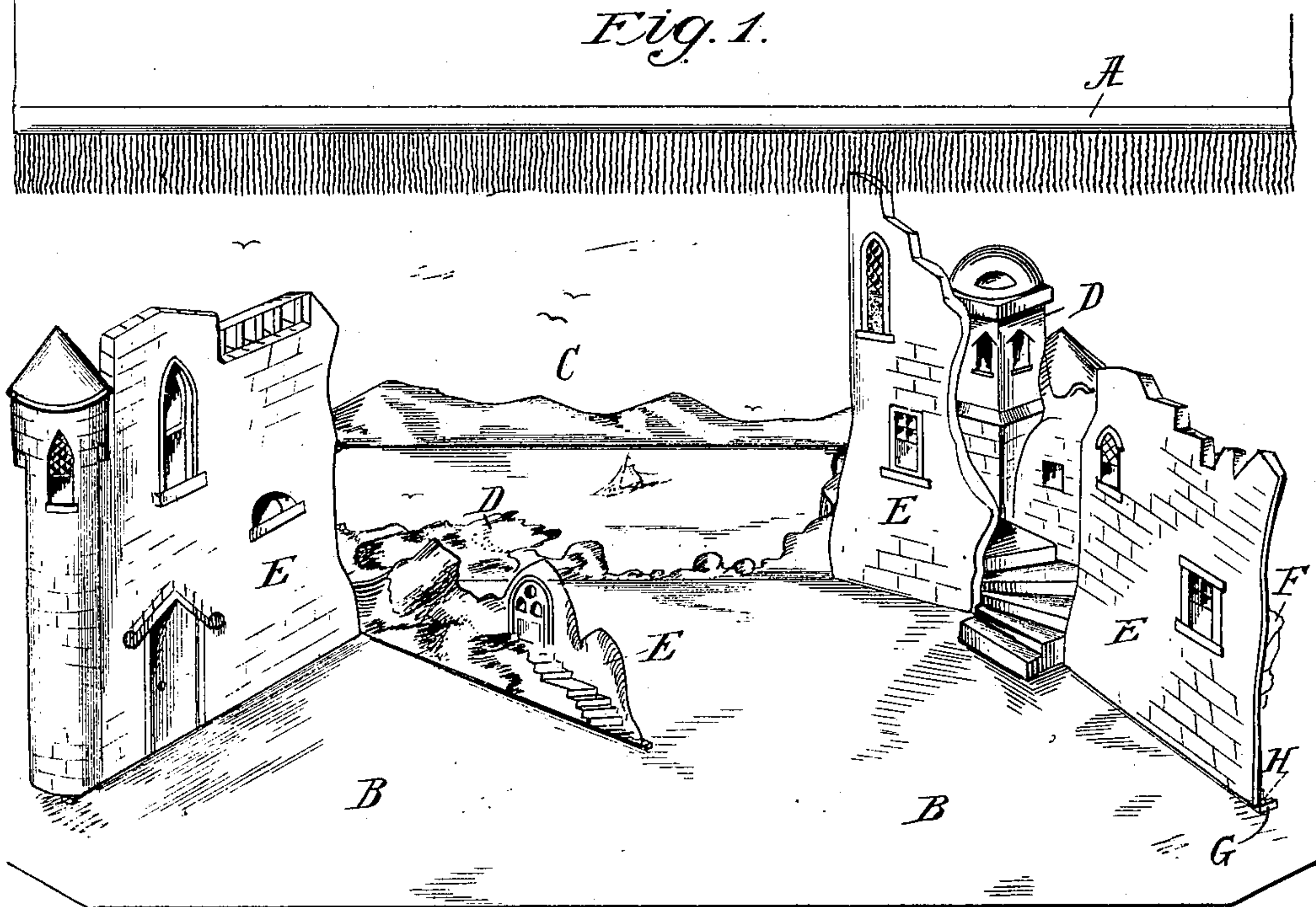
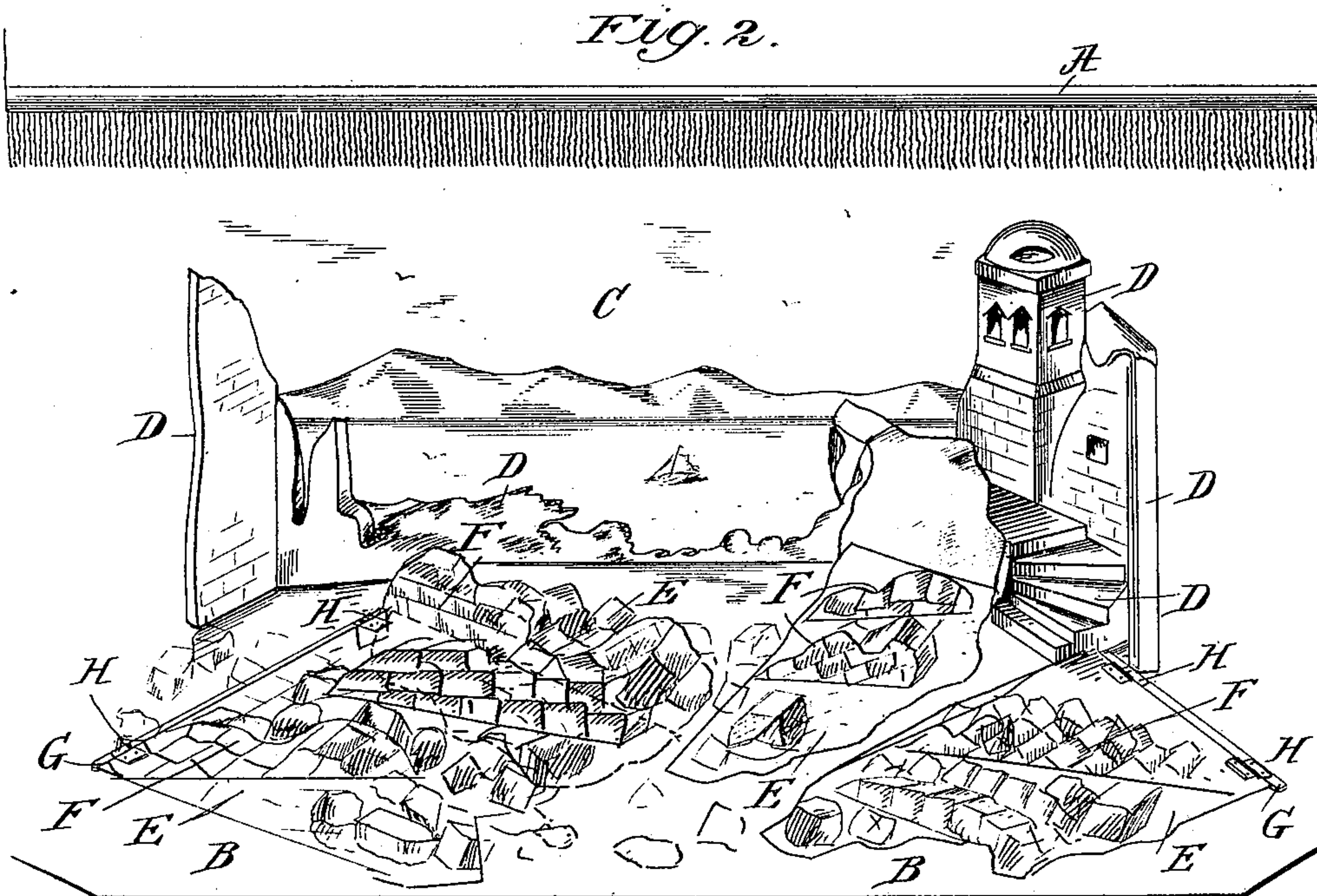


Fig. 2.



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Fig. 3.

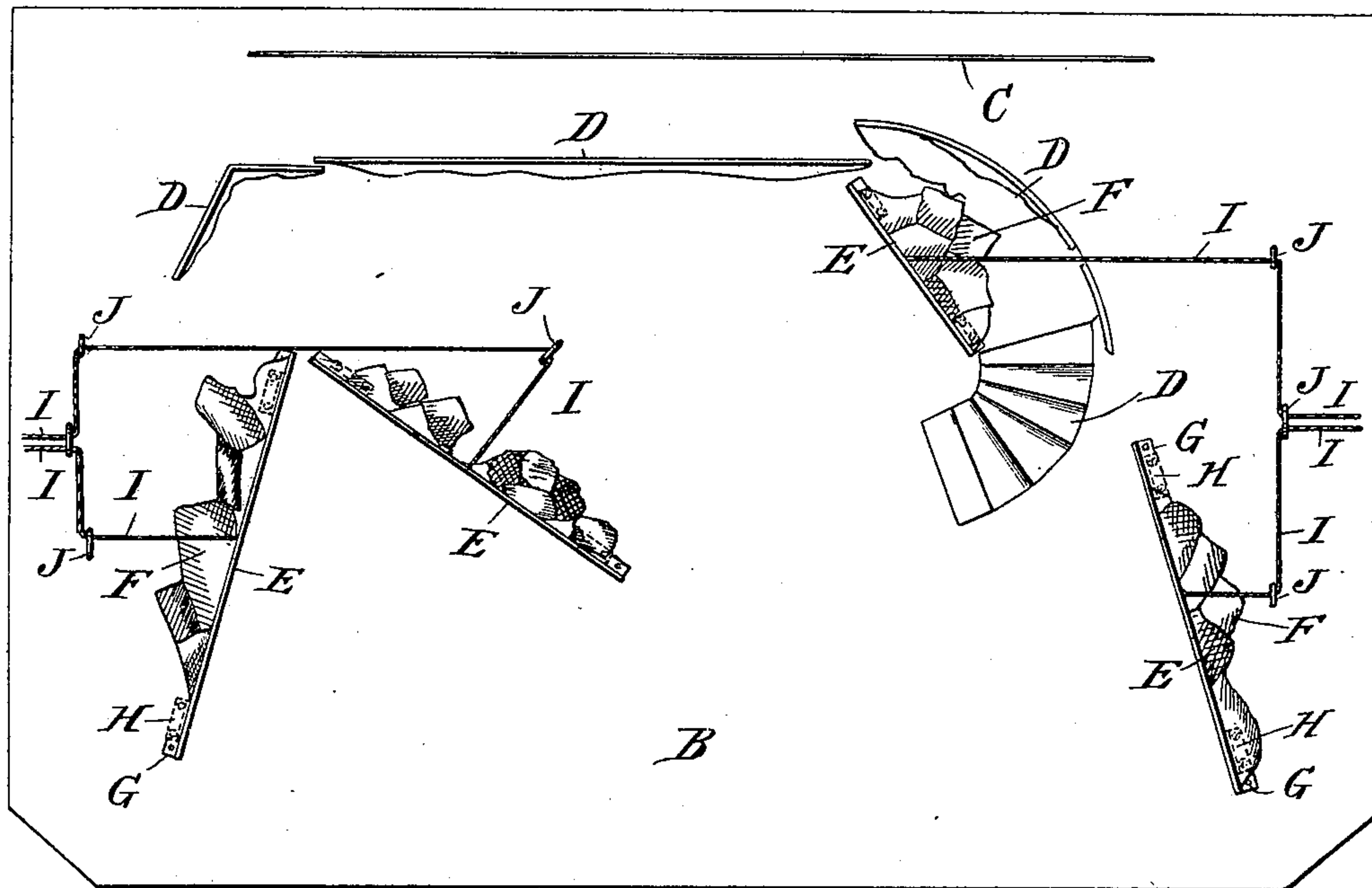
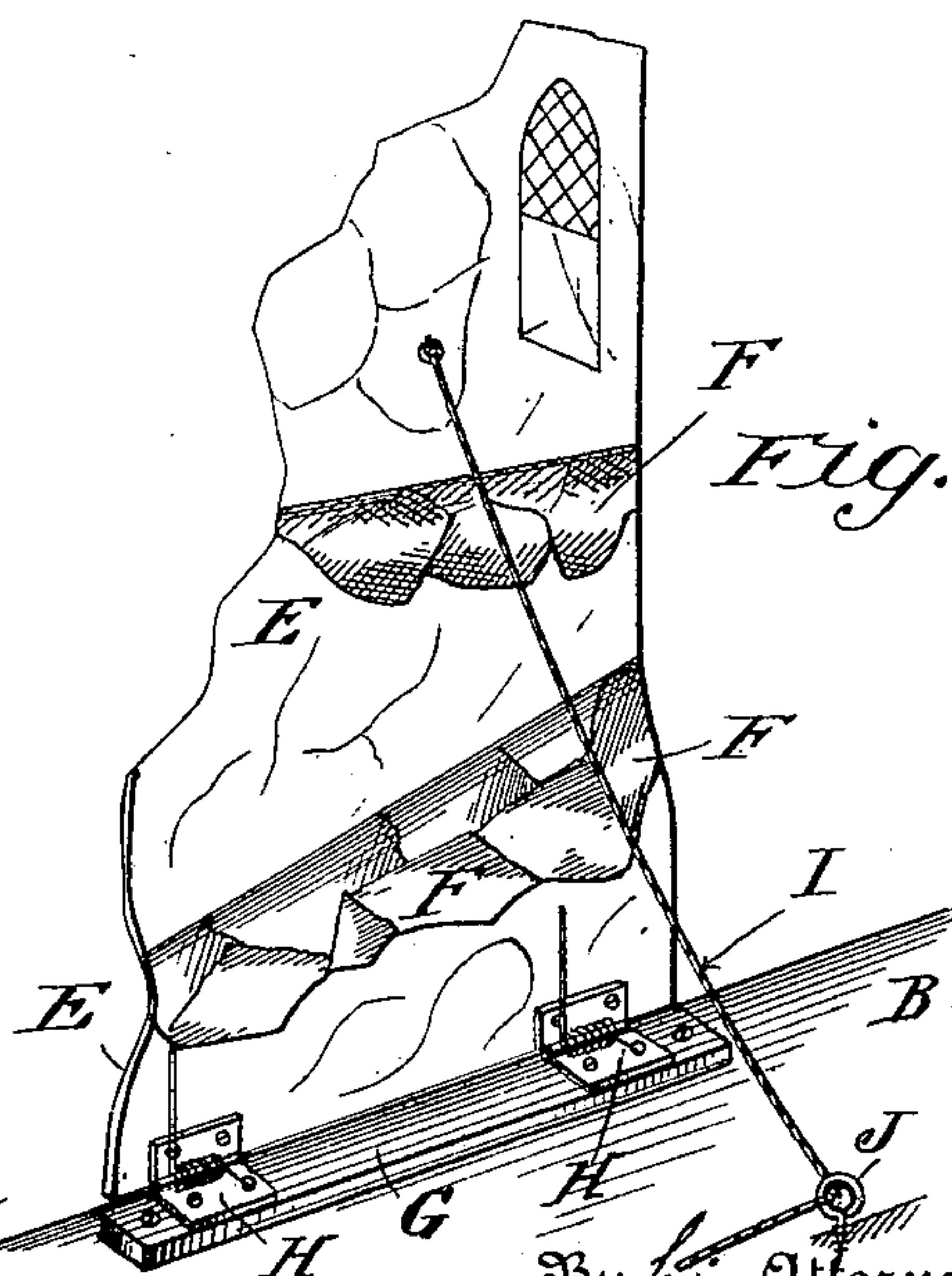


Fig. 4.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

RUSS WHYTAL, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

THEATRICAL SCENERY.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 631,450, dated August 22, 1899.

Application filed October 18, 1898. Serial No. 693,860. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, RUSS WHYTAL, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of New York, (Bay Side,) in the county of Queens and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Stage-Scenery for Theaters, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to improvements in stage-scenery for theaters; and it consists, generally stated, in frames of such size, shape, and material as desired which are provided with hinges or suitable pivoting devices at their lower edges, the frames being covered with canvas or other suitable material and having flippers or other usual devices, if desired. Both sides of the covering of the frames are painted or otherwise made to represent scenery, the two sides differing, however, in their character. In use these frames are ordinarily first presented to the audience in their upright or substantially vertical position, being maintained in such position by suitable appliances. The scenery thus first presented to the audience may, for example, illustrate the walls of a ruined castle, and during the course of the play an explosion is supposed to take place, which results in throwing down the walls or some portion of them, which may in the story of the play result in burying the villain or accomplish some other necessary result, depending upon the plot. At the point where such explosion takes place attendants upon the stage release the frames, which, being pivoted or hinged to the stage, fall forwardly upon it and in so doing present to the audience their rear sides, upon which other scenic effects are produced representing in the imaginary case referred to the broken rock or masonry of the walls as they fall in ruins. By this means a peculiarly startling effect is produced. The several frames composing the scenery may be so constructed that the wall will appear to break up as it falls, and yet there is no noise occasioned, because as the frames approach the stage the air beneath them prevents any slamming and they settle into place quickly and noiselessly, presenting their reverse sides—in other words, a scene representing the broken masonry in an astonishingly startling and effective manner. The illusion may be

aided by depositing upon the stage certain powders or dust-like material of suitable color, so that the falling frames will blow or puff this powder about, thus simulating the cloud of dust naturally attending the fall of a castle-wall.

By the employment of my invention a great variety of astonishing stage effects may be produced—as, for instance, a forest blown down by a hurricane, earthquake effects, the falling masts of a ship, &c.

Referring to the drawings hereof, Figure 1 illustrates an elevation in perspective of the stage-scenery as seen in the first instance above alluded to, the frames being in their upright position. Fig. 2 illustrates an elevation in perspective of that which is shown in Fig. 1, the scenery having fallen forwardly upon the stage. Fig. 3 illustrates a plan view of that which is shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 4 illustrates a detail of the frames, showing the rear side thereof.

A illustrates the drop-curtain; B, the stage floor proper.

C is the rear or background curtain.

D D may be considered the flats.

E E are the pivoted frames, which form the subject-matter of this invention. As shown best in Fig. 3, their front surfaces are smooth, or substantially so, although they may have flippers or permanent projections upon them, if desired, and they are painted or otherwise treated to represent in the case shown portions of the walls of a ruined castle. The rear side may likewise be plain, if preferred, or may have flippers, as shown at F F. (See Figs. 3 and 4.) The rear sides of the frames are painted or otherwise made to simulate the broken masonry resulting from the fallen walls. (See Fig. 2.) These frames may be hinged or otherwise movably attached to the stage in any preferred manner. A desirable way in which to effect the stated construction is to employ battens G G, (see Fig. 4,) which may be of such size as preferred and which may be nailed or otherwise fastened to the floor of the stage and are provided with hinges H H, preferably spring-hinges, as shown, so that they will aid in throwing the frames forwardly to insure the proper effect as soon as the attendants let go or release the cords or ropes I, by means of which the frames

are maintained in an upright position. These cords may each be held in the hands of an attendant; but in order that the simultaneous action of the screens may be under more complete control I ordinarily prefer to have the cords engage with screw-eyes J, screwed into the floor of the stage, so that the cords may be conducted to such point that a single operator on each side of the stage may manipulate them. It will be understood, of course, that any guiding means may be used instead of the screw-eyes and that the cords may go up to the upper part of the stage or lead to any other desired point, and it will likewise be apparent that devices, such as a latch of suitable construction or equivalent means, may be employed instead of the cords.

It will be understood that the frames may be made in sections, as scenery is now frequently made, so that it may be folded for transportation, and that the battens or other means may be likewise made in sections. The cords, if they are used to maintain the frames in upright position, are preferably colored, so that when the frames fall and the cords lie across their rear sides they will not be distinguishable by the audience.

I do not limit myself to frames arranged laterally of the stage, because the background-curtain may itself be made in the form of one of my frames and fall forwardly, and sometimes instead of having the frames fall forwardly upon the stage I have them fall outwardly therefrom, either to the rear or to the right or left, having flippers, projections, or recesses arranged upon or in them in such manner that when their position is changed, as stated, a different side of such flippers, projections, or recesses is presented to the audience, having produced thereon different scenic effects. It is not necessary that the spring-hinges should be employed, because the action of gravity will frequently be sufficient to cause the desired movement of the frames. I prefer them, how-

ever, or some equivalent mechanical device because thereby the movement of the frames upon being released is assured, and also the restrained tension of the springs holds the frames more rigidly in their upright position, thus counteracting air-drafts and other disturbing means which might tend to wave or rock the scenery.

Having described my invention, I claim—

1. In stage-scenery, a covered frame, both sides of which bear scenic representations, devices whereby the frame is pivotally connected to the floor, and means to temporarily maintain the frame in an upright position, for the purposes set forth.

2. In stage-scenery, a covered frame, both sides of which bear scenic representations, spring-hinges connecting the lower edge of the frame with the floor, and a cord or like device for temporarily maintaining the frame in an upright position, for the purposes set forth.

3. In stage-scenery, a covered frame, both sides of which bear scenic representations, flippers, projections or recesses upon said frame, devices whereby the frame is pivotally connected with the floor, a cord to temporarily maintain the frame in an upright position, and guiding devices whereby the cords of several frames are guided to a desired spot, for the purposes set forth.

4. In stage-scenery, a covered frame, both sides of which bear scenic representations, spring-hinges connecting the frame with a batten adapted to be attached to the floor, said batten itself, and a cord whereby the frame may be temporarily maintained in an upright position, for the purposes set forth.

Signed at New York, in the county of New York and State of New York, this 13th day of October, A. D. 1898.

RUSS WHYTAL.

Witnesses:

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