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PATENTED NOV. 14, 1905.

E. THORN & T. N. DOWNS.
APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING STAGE ILLUSIONS.

APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 8, 1904.

3 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

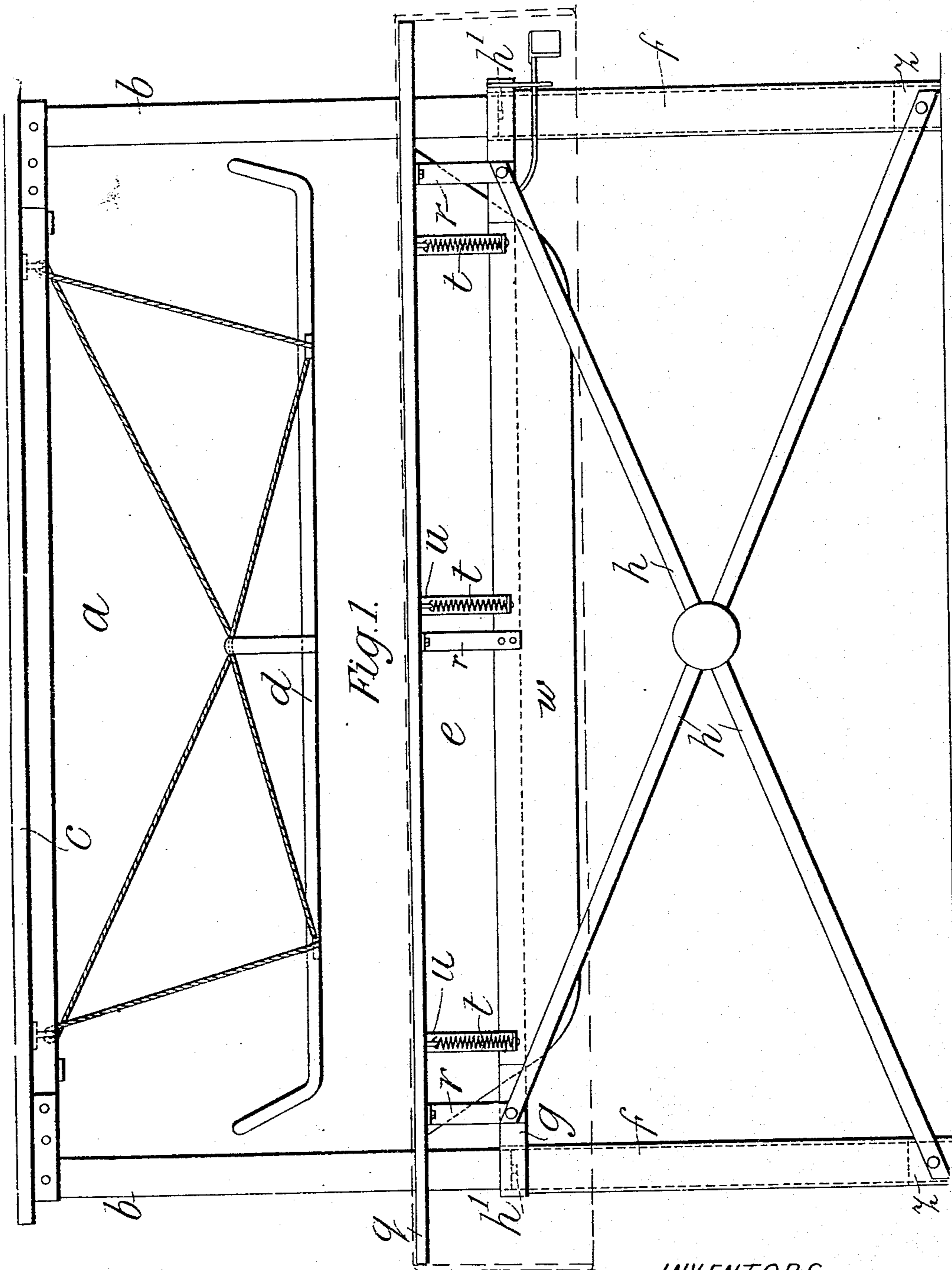


Fig. 1.

WITNESSES.
Albert Jones
Samuel Percival

INVENTORS
Ernest Thorn
Thomas Nelson Downs
By Attorneys.
Wheatley & Mackenzie

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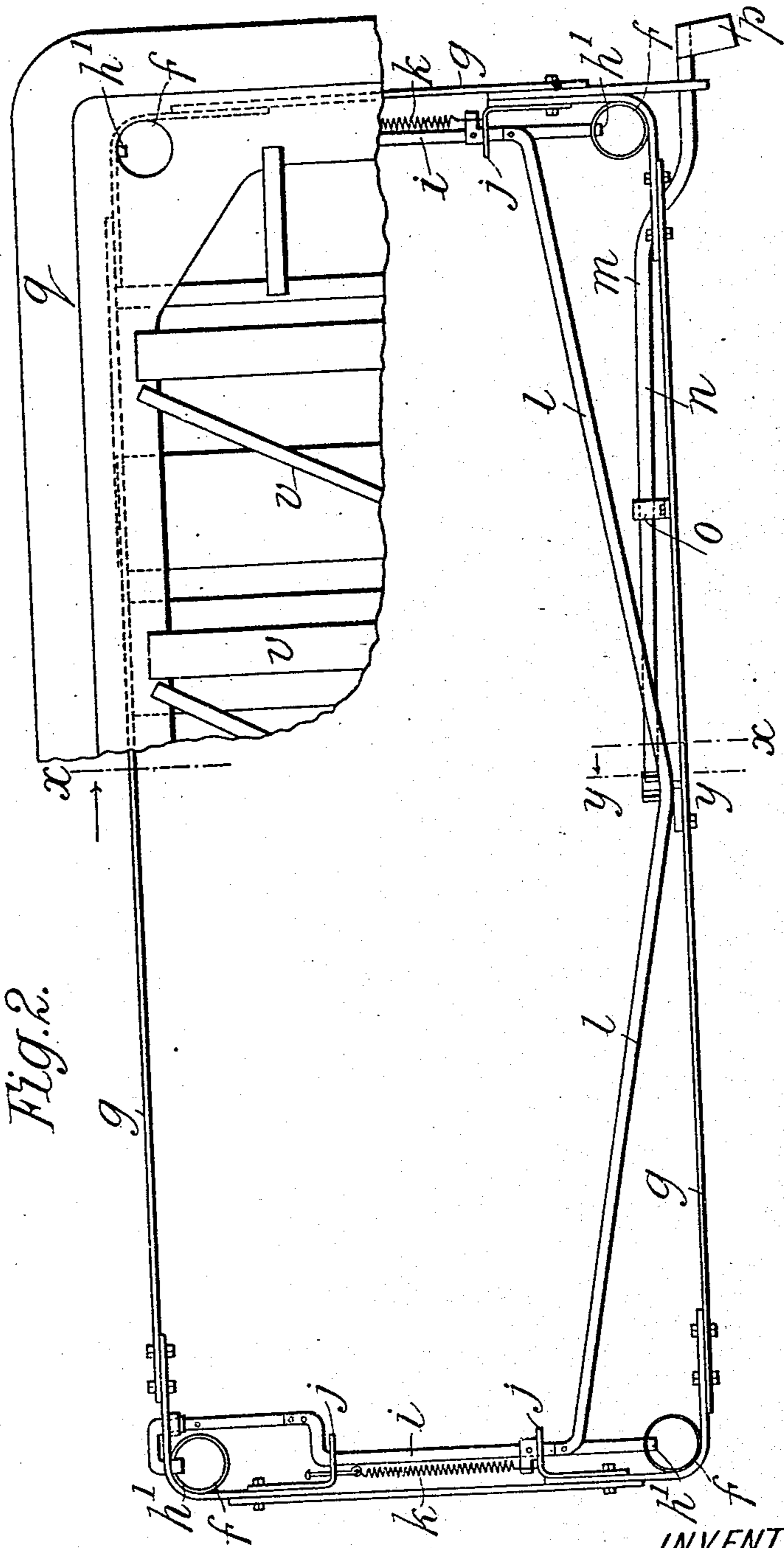


Fig. 2.

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Albert Jones

Samuel Percival

INVENTORS

Ernest Thorn

Thomas Nelson Downs

By Attorneys.

Wheatley & Markensie

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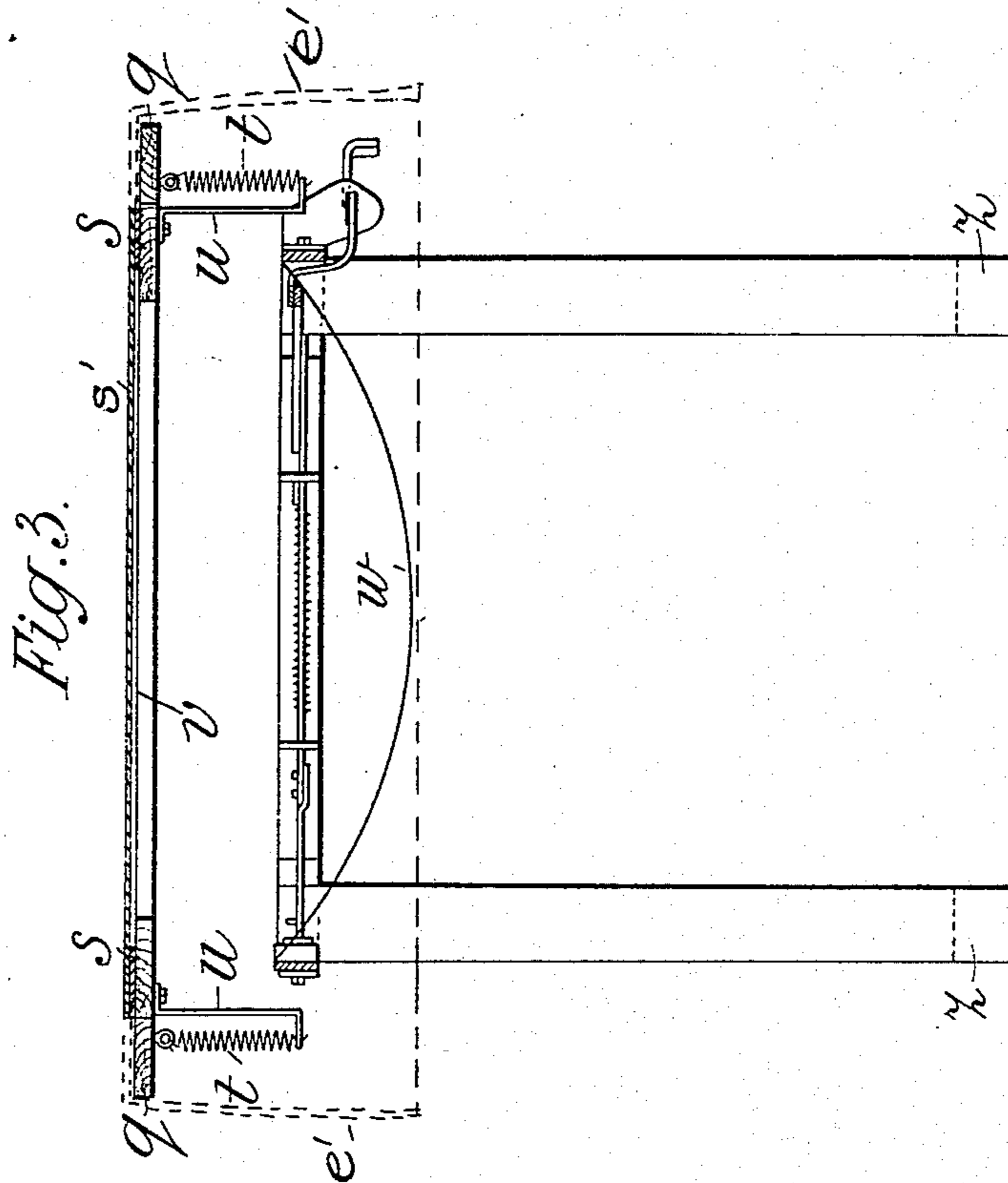
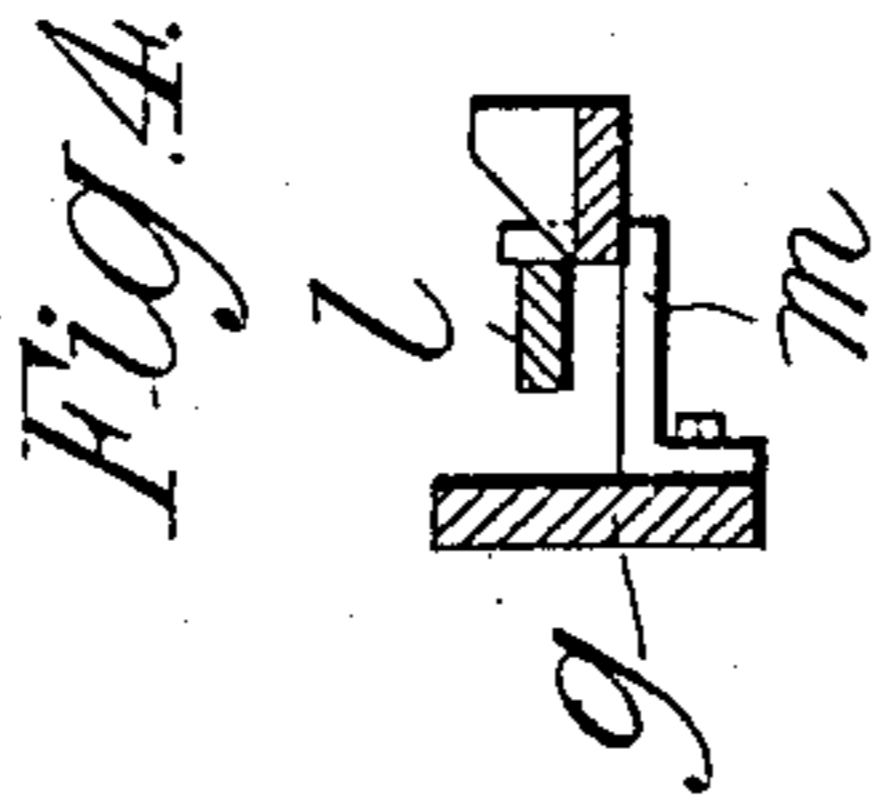
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3 SHEETS—SHEET 3.



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Samuel Percival

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By Attorneys.

Wheatley & McKenzie

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ERNEST THORN AND THOMAS NELSON DOWNS, OF LONDON, ENGLAND;
SAID THORN ASSIGNOR TO SAID DOWNS.

APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING STAGE ILLUSIONS.

No. 804,637.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Nov. 14, 1905.

Application filed September 8, 1904. Serial No. 223,781.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, ERNEST THORN, a citizen of Austria-Hungary, and THOMAS NELSON DOWNS, a citizen of the United States, both residing at 4 St. Albins Place, Regent street S. W., London, England, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Apparatus for Producing Stage Illusions; and we do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

This invention relates to an apparatus for producing a stage illusion wherein a table and a person or an object suspended underneath the table are both caused apparently to disappear suddenly or vanish without the manner of their disappearance being detected, and comprises a table, a support for the table having the appearance of a second table, but provided with hollow legs and a false top or top portion and a canvas sheeting, padded trough, or the like arranged at a suitable distance below the false top of the support and screened by a drapery hanging therefrom, the two tables being so arranged that on releasing a catch the legs of the real table slide down into those of the false table and a person or object suspended from the real table passes through the false top into the sheeting or padded trough, the top of the real table then taking the place of the false top of the support, so that there appears to be only one table left.

The invention is hereinafter more fully described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a side elevation of a table provided with a hammock and the support into which the table and hammock are arranged to disappear. Fig. 2 is a plan of the support or false table with the greater portion of the padded trough and top left out. Fig. 3 is a transverse section taken along the line $x x$, Fig. 2; and Fig. 4 is an enlarged section taken at $y y$, Fig. 2.

A table a , having four legs b , preferably formed of steel tubing, and an ordinary top c , under which a hammock d or other support is suspended, is placed upon a false table or support e , also having four legs f , of steel tubing, connected to a metal framing g and strengthened by braces h , fixed to the bottoms of the legs and to the framing g . The

legs f of the false table e are each formed of such a diameter that the legs b of the table a can telescope or slide freely therein, and when the table a is placed on the table e the centers of the corresponding legs of both tables coincide, the legs b of table a resting when in the position shown in Fig. 1 on catches or bolts h' , which project through suitable openings into the hollow legs f of the false table. These catches or bolts may be operated in any suitable manner to release the table a . As shown in Fig. 2, the catches for each pair of legs at opposite ends of the table are formed of a bar i , mounted to slide in brackets j , secured to the frame g and provided with a retractile spring k . The ends of the bars form the catches h' , and the bars are bent as shown, so that the catches all operate in the same direction. In order to operate the catches simultaneously, the bars i are connected together by a yoke or bar l , which is pulled forward against the action of the springs k to cause the catches h' to project into the legs f and is retained in this position by a fixed catch m , secured to the frame g at one side. To release the yoke l and allow the catches to be withdrawn by the springs k , a lever n , fulcrumed at o on the frame g and formed with a handle p at its outer end, has a wedge or inclined projection at its inner end which is adapted to raise the yoke l out of engagement with the catch m on being forced against the yoke by operating handle p .

Above the frame g of the lower table or support e is mounted a false top, consisting of an outer fixed frame q , of wood, supported by brackets r from the frame g , Fig. 1, and an inner frame s , resiliently supported within the outer fixed frame q by springs t , connected with the frame g and with depending brackets u on frame s . The opening within the frame s is covered by a cloth s' , supported on elastic bands v , or in any other manner, so as to be readily displaceable to allow a person or other body descending with the table a to pass entirely through the frame s , taking the cloth with him into a canvas sheeting w or a padded trough attached to the frame g .

The frame s corresponds in size with the top of table a , and in its lowered position table a depresses frame s below the level of the outer frame q , the table-top c taking up the position previously occupied by the frame s and forming the top of the bottom table. It

will be readily understood that the cloths or coverings of both table-tops should correspond, so that the substitution of one for the other is not perceived.

5 Pads or cushions of rubber *z* are inserted in the bottoms of the legs *f*, onto which the legs *b* fall, and similar pads may be fixed under the top of table *a* to absorb shock.

10 The bottom table *e* has a drapery or fringe *e'* (shown in broken lines) hanging from the top sufficiently long to hide the trough *w*.

When presenting the illusion, the performer introduces the false table or support *e*, which to an audience has the appearance of an ordinary table. The top table *a* is then placed in position on the table *e* and a person, for instance, gets into the hammock *d*. On the performer withdrawing the catches *h'* by operating the handle *p* the table *a* instantly descends into the support or false table *e*, the person in the hammock dropping into the trough *w*.

What we claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

25 1. Apparatus for producing a stage illusion consisting of a support having the appearance of an ordinary table but provided with a false top, a real table adapted to telescope into the false table, catches or retaining devices on the false table adapted to project under the legs of the real table, and means for simultaneously withdrawing the catches, substantially as described.

35 2. Apparatus for producing a stage illusion consisting of a support having the appearance of an ordinary table but provided with a false top, a real table adapted to telescope into the false table, catches or retaining devices on the false table adapted to project under the legs of the real table, means for si-

multaneously withdrawing the catches, and means arranged below the top of the false table for catching a body suspended under the top of the real table.

3. Apparatus for producing a stage illusion 45 consisting of a support having the appearance of an ordinary table but provided with a false top and hollow legs, a real table adapted to telescope into the false table, catches or retaining devices on the false table adapted to project under the legs of the real table and means for simultaneously withdrawing the catches to allow the real table to telescope into the false table or support.

4. In illusion apparatus as described in 55 which a table is made to disappear, a table or table-like support having a false top consisting of a fixed frame arranged to form the edge of the false top, and a movable frame resiliently supported within the fixed frame 60 and adapted to be depressed below the level of the fixed frame.

5. In apparatus for producing a stage illusion a table or table-like support comprising hollow legs open at their upper ends, a metal 65 frame connected to the upper ends of the legs, a trough attached to the framing, a false top consisting of a fixed frame supported on the metal framing aforesaid, and a movable frame resiliently supported within the fixed frame and adapted to be depressed below the level of the fixed frame. 70

In testimony whereof we have affixed our signatures in presence of two witnesses.

ERNEST THORN.

THOMAS NELSON DOWNS.

Witnesses:

ALFRED NUTTING,
FREDK. L. RAND.