No. 883,484. PATENTED MAR. 31, 1908.

H. N. RIDGWAY.

AMUSEMENT DEVICE.

APPLICATION FILED MAR. 1, 1906.

Fig. 1.

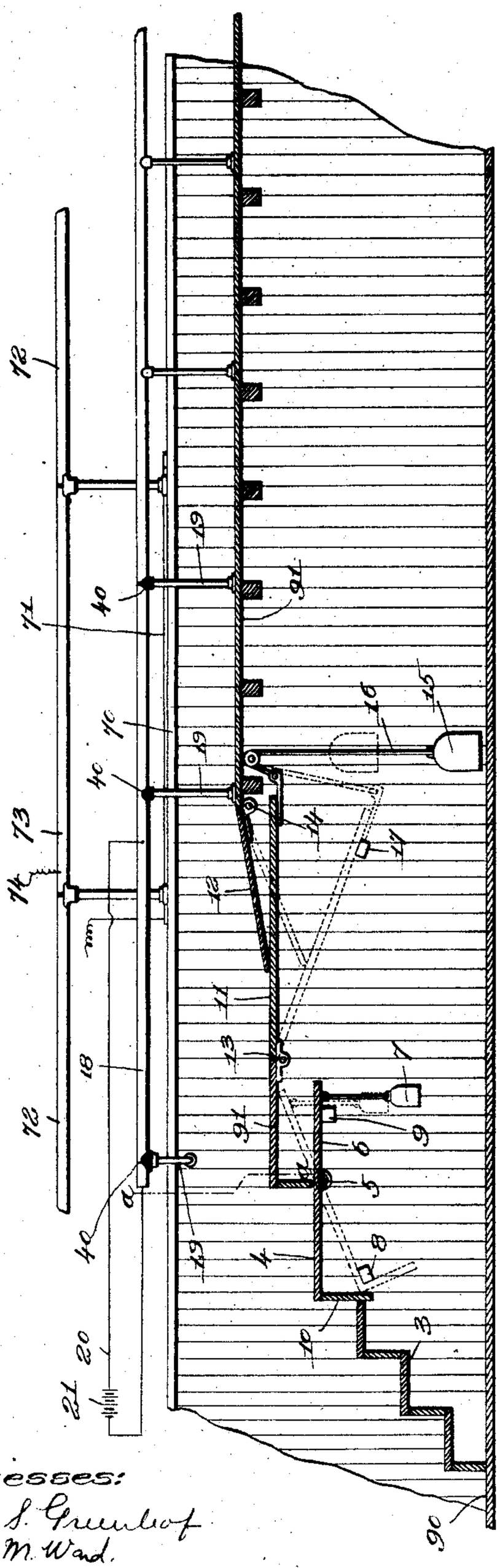

Fig. 3.

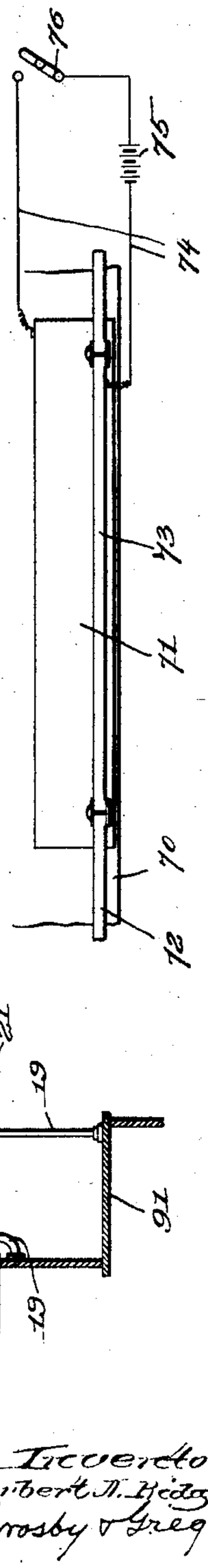

Fig. 2.

Witnesses:
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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AMUSEMENT DEVICE.

No. 883,484. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented March 31, 1908.

Application filed March 1, 1906. Serial No. 303,592.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, HERBERT N. RIDGWAY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Boston, county of Suffolk, and State of Massachusetts, have invented an Improvement in Amusement Devices, of which the following description, in connection with the accompanying drawing, is a specification, like letters on the drawings representing like parts.

This invention relates to amusement apparatus and has for its object to provide a device of this class which will afford amusement both to the persons participating in the use of it and to spectators or onlookers.

The device as herein illustrated comprises a runway or passage leading from one location to another, which is so arranged that as a person traverses said runway various unexpected occurrences will take place.

In the present embodiment of the invention the apparatus is arranged so that certain portions of the floor over which a person walks will sink underneath the weight of the person, thus giving any person stepping on these portions of the floor the surprising sensation of having the floor give way under him; and in addition to this feature, I preferably will also employ hand rails adjacent the sinking portions of the floor, which hand-rails may be charged with electricity so that when a person feels the floor giving way and reaches for the hand rails to save himself, he will receive a charge of electricity and thus receive a further surprise.

In the drawings wherein I have illustrated one embodiment of my invention, Figure 1 is a longitudinal section of a portion of a runway embodying my invention; Fig. 2 is a transverse section on the line *a*, *a*, Fig. 1; Fig. 3 is a plan view of a portion of the platform on which spectators may stand.

The runway I have chosen to illustrate herein includes a stairway 3 leading from a lower floor or platform 90 to an upper floor or platform 91, although it is not essential to the invention that the runway or passage leading from one location to another be arranged with a flight of stairs therein. The sinking portions of the floor may be associated with the stairway or may be associated with the floor portions 90 and 91. I have herein illustrated said sinking floor sections as associated both with the stairway and with the upper landing.

As herein shown one of the treads 4 of the stairway is arranged to be depressed when a weight is applied thereto, said tread in this embodiment being pivoted at 5 and having an arm 6 extending beyond the same, to which is hung a counterweight 7 which normally holds the tread in its horizontal position, as shown in full lines Fig. 1.

9 is a stop against which the arm 6 rests when the tread is in its normal position.

Whenever a sufficient weight is placed on the tread 4 to overcome the counterbalance 7 said tread will swing about its pivot into the dotted line position Fig. 1, thus giving a person stepping on to the tread the sensation of having the floor give way beneath him.

8 is a stop which limits the downward movement of the tread.

The riser 10 which is directly beneath the tread 4 is preferably secured thereto and moves therewith, so that both the tread and the riser will drop when a person steps on the tread. The purpose of this is to prevent any danger of a person's getting his foot caught by the tread when it moves up or down.

The sinking floor arrangement may also be associated with a level portion of the runway instead of with a flight of stairs, and in the embodiment of the invention herein shown I have shown the floor section leading from the landing 91 arranged so that it will sink for a limited distance when a sufficient weight is applied thereto. This may conveniently be done by providing two pivoted floor sections 11 and 12 which extend toward each other and which overlap each other. As herein shown the floor section 11 is pivoted to the landing 91 at 13 and extends toward the floor section 12, while the floor section 12 is pivoted to the fixed portion of the floor at 14 and extends toward the section 11 and overlies the section 11. A counterweight 15 is secured to the free end of the floor section 11 by means of a flexible connection 16, said counterweight being sufficient to normally hold the floor sections in the full line position. Whenever a person attempts to walk over said floor sections, however, the weight of the person will overcome the counterweight and said floor sections will sink, thus giving the person the sensation of having the floor drop out from under him. 17 designates a stop to limit the falling movement of the floor. When a person traverses the runway and suddenly finds the floor apparently giving away beneath

him, the natural tendency of said person would be to reach for any support to save himself a fall, and I have provided hand rails 18 at either side of the runway, which are supported on suitable fixed supports 19. These hand rails are conveniently located so that a person passes them in traversing the runway, and when a person feels the floor giving away, he naturally reaches for the hand rails to save himself a fall.

In order to still further increase the excitement and amusement due to the sensation of having the floor apparently give way beneath one, I have provided for charging the hand rails with electricity so that when a person grasps the hand rails in the attempt to save himself an apparent fall, he will receive a charge of electricity which will add greatly to his bewilderment and to the enjoyment of spectators.

As herein shown the hand rails 18 are insulated from their supports 19 by suitable insulation 40, and said hand rails are connected to a circuit 20 having a source of electrical energy 21 therein. In this way the hand rails 18 may be charged with electricity so that when a person grasps both of them at once in the attempt to save himself from an apparent fall, he will receive an electrical shock. In addition to this, I have provided means for unexpectedly giving an electrical shock to spectators who may be watching persons passing over the sinking floor portions. In the present embodiment a platform 70 is arranged adjacent the sinking floor sections on which spectators may stand to watch people passing over the sinking floor portions. This platform is provided with an insulated terminal 71 in the form of a plate on which persons may stand and is also provided with a railing 72 having an insulated section 73. The insulated section 73 of the hand rail and the plate or terminal 71 are connected to a circuit 74 having a source of electrical energy 75 therein and this circuit is provided with a push-button or switch device 76 by which the circuit may be closed. If a person is standing on the plate 71 with his hands on the insulated section 13 of the railing at the time that the circuit 74 is closed by the switch 76, such person or persons will receive an electrical shock as will be obvious.

The particular shape or configuration of the runway herein shown is not essential to my invention, for the sinking floor sections may be associated with a stairway or with a level portion of floor or with any other passage leading from one place to another.

Since the embodiment of the invention herein illustrated is sufficient to disclose the principle of the invention, I have not deemed it necessary to illustrate all ways in which the invention may be embodied.

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

1. In an amusement apparatus, the combination with a runway having a sinking floor section, of electrically charged hand rails adjacent said floor section.

2. In an amusement apparatus, a runway having a pivoted floor section in combination with electrically charged hand rails adjacent said floor section.

3. In an amusement device, a runway having a portion of the floor thereof movably mounted, in combination with electrically charged hand rails adjacent said portion of the floor.

4. An amusement apparatus comprising a runway having two pivoted floor sections arranged to turn about separate axes, one of said floor sections overlapping the other, and means to counterbalance said floor sections.

5. An amusement apparatus comprising a runway having a counterbalanced pivoted floor section 11 and a second pivoted floor section 12 extending in the opposite direction to the floor section 11 and overlapping the latter.

6. In an amusement apparatus, a runway having a movable floor section in combination with hand rails adjacent thereto, and means to electrically charge said hand rails.

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

HERBERT N. RIDGWAY.

Witnesses:
LOUIS C. SMITH,
BERTHA F. HEUSER.