

W. HANLON.
DISMEMBERING APPARATUS.

No. 421,493.

Patented Feb. 18, 1890.

Fig. 1.

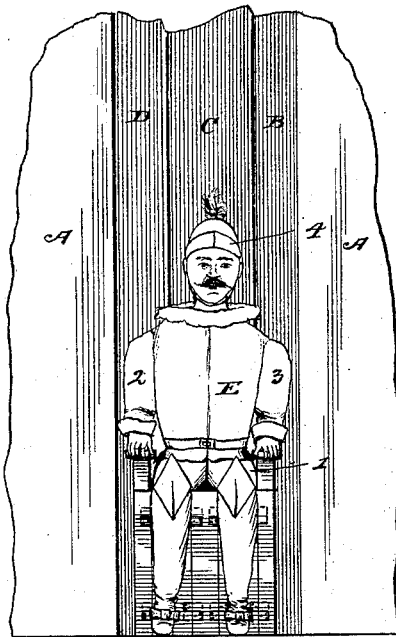


Fig. 2.

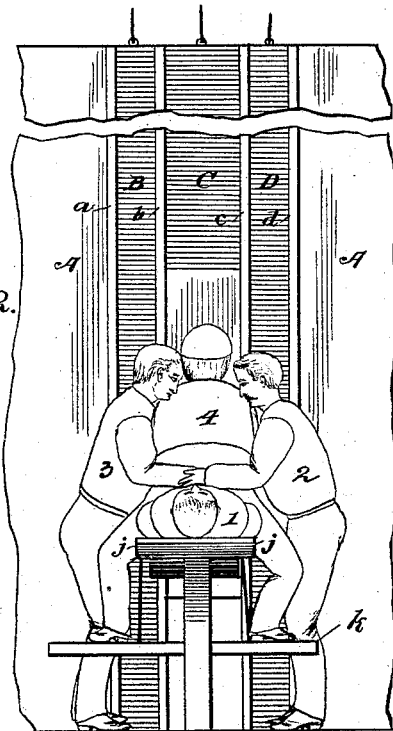


Fig. 3.

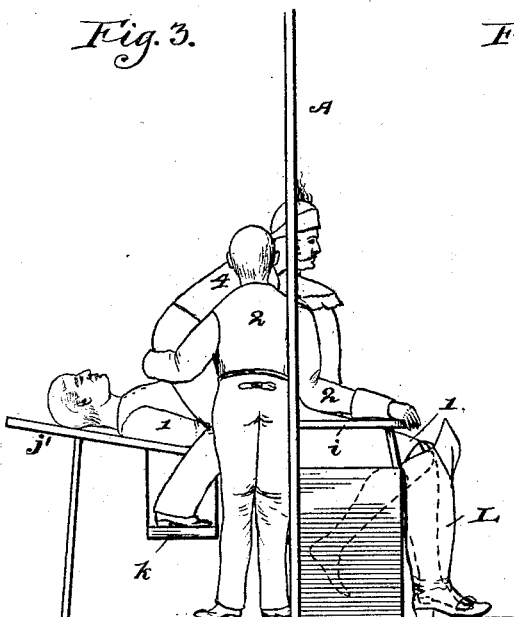
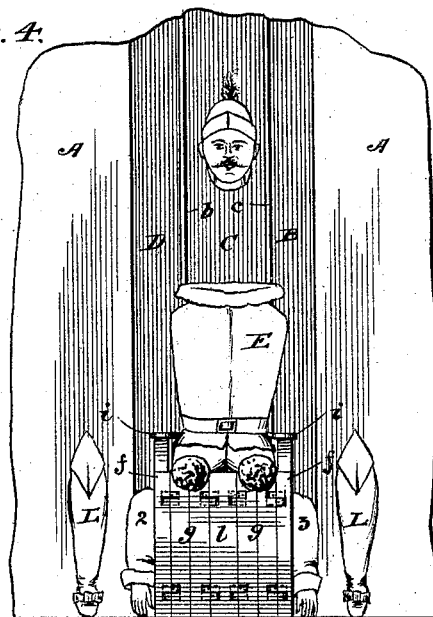


Fig. 4.



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Fig. 5.

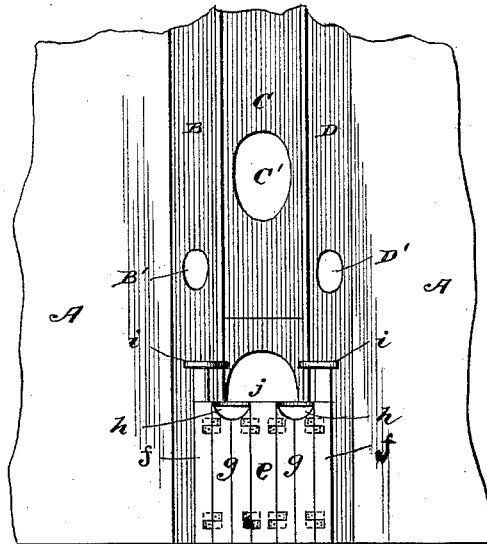


Fig. 6.

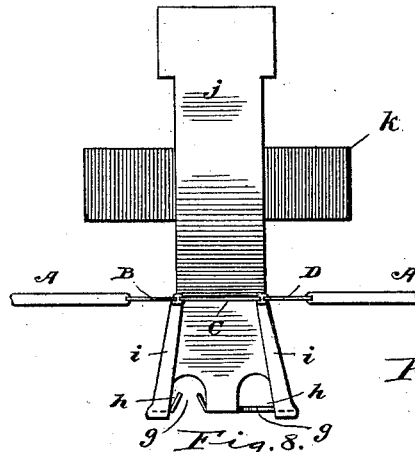
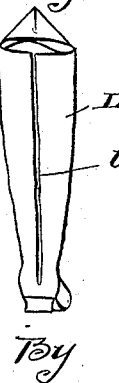
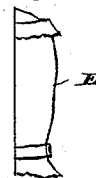


Fig. 7.



Fig. 9.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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DISMEMBERING APPARATUS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 421,493, dated February 18, 1890.

Application filed December 4, 1889. Serial No. 332,592. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM HANLON, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Jerusalem Road, Cohasset, in the county of Norfolk and State of Massachusetts, have invented a certain new and useful Dismembering Apparatus, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to dismembering apparatus whereby the illusion is produced of severing from the trunk of the human body the several appendages thereof, and has for its object the illusive dismemberment of all of the limbs and the head of a body seemingly in full view of the stage under full light. This object is attained by the devices and the attendants hereinafter described, and shown in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 represents a front elevation of the apparatus embodying my invention with the supposed body of the victim in full view and in position for being dismembered. Fig. 2 is a rear elevation of the same with the attendants in position to make up the natural portions of the person shown in Fig. 1; Fig. 3, a side elevation with the several devices and attendants in position for performing the feat; Fig. 4, a front elevation of the supposed victim after the dismembering act has been completed; Fig. 5, a front elevation of the chair of the supposed victim and of the several mechanical devices by and through which the dismembering act is produced. Fig. 6 is a rear elevation of the chair and of the immediately co-operating devices; Fig. 7, a detail sectional view of the hinges employed for the door of the chair; Fig. 8, a rear elevation of one of the boots worn by the supposed dismembered victim, and Fig. 9 a detail side elevation of the same.

Similar letters and figures of reference indicate the same parts in the several figures of the drawings.

A designates any suitable piece of scenery or background of the stage on which the dismembering act is performed; and having set therein a shutter in imitation of the back of a high chair, and in which are three separated vertical sliding panels B C D, which panels are shutter-like in their construction and slide freely between the vertical guides a b

c d. At a proper height from the floor and projecting from these panels, and on the front side thereof, is a chair, from the center or front of which is a post e, extending to the floor. Parallel with the legs of the chair and between this post e and said legs are a pair of doors g g, respectively hinged to said post and legs by reverse elastic strap-hinges, preferably rubber web, as shown in Fig. 7, the upper ends of the doors so formed being cut out on the arc of a circle at h, as shown in Fig. 5. The body of the chair is also provided with arm-rests i, of the usual construction, and, so far as can be determined from the front of the stage when a person is sitting in the chair, as shown in Fig. 1, the chair is of a very ordinary construction. Immediately back of this chair-seat and on a level therewith is an opening j, (see Fig. 5,) and rearward thereof and extending back of the scenery is an ordinary bench j', from which bench is suspended a platform k, (see Fig. 3;) but this platform may be supported from the floor without a departure from my invention.

In the panel or shutter B is an opening B', large enough for the passage of a human arm in the panel D, and a similar opening D' for the same purpose, and in the panel C an opening C', large enough for the passage of a human head and neck therethrough. Each of these panels, as before stated, is slidable vertically, and each of them must be extensible, so that when raised or lowered they will not expose an opening through the shutter or scenery.

Now, in carrying out my illusion a dummy human trunk E is placed in a natural position in the chair and the openings B' D' arranged so as to be at the point of the shoulders thereof and the opening C' where the neck and head of the trunk should be. These members, however, are supplied by attendants, one of which 1 lies on his back on the bench J' with his legs projecting through the scenery and in a natural relation to the dummy trunk in a sitting posture in the chair, the legs of number 2 being clothed to conform to the dress of the dummy, which in the present instance is a knight wearing high-top boots L. The fronts of these boots are leather or imitation leather, and their backs may be of the same material, but preferably of rub-

ber or other flexible substance split its entire length, as shown at 1, Fig. 8, so that the feet and legs of the wearer may be released by the backward movement from the boots as they stand in front of the chair in the position shown in Fig. 3; and in order that the boots may be supported against toppling over in this removal therefrom the boots are preferably of a width greater than the hinged doors of the chair, so that they may be supported on either side of said doors.

The right arm of the dummy is produced by an attendant 2 projecting his arm through the opening B' and the left arm by another attendant 3 projecting his left arm through the opening D', as indicated in Fig. 2, both attendants standing close to the scenery and in such a position that they may give their arms natural movements relative to the dummy-trunk. A human head is supplied to the trunk by another attendant 4, standing on the platform k and projecting his head through the opening C' to a natural position with the trunk, but with the attendant in a stooping position, for the purpose hereinafter described. The top boots worn by the attendant, in side elevation, are preferably flat, as shown in Fig. 9, and are split down the entire back, as shown in Fig. 8, the back flaps preferably being made of rubber or other flexible material, so that they will remain closed unless subjected to unusual force. Now, with the several parts and attendants in the positions shown in Figs. 1, 2, and 3, effect is given to the illusion by a stage-performer assuming a revengeful mood and approaching the supposed knight with a sword, and at the same time uttering threats against his person, the supposed victim in the meantime making natural movements with his legs, arms, head, and face, and some movements of the hands and arms, apparently in effort to prevent the actor from cutting off his legs, which in the meantime he proceeds to do. Now, at or before the time the actor begins the operation of severing the legs with a sword, the attendant has drawn his legs to an upright position in front of the chair and with a slight effort has forced his lower limbs out of the boots and through, between, and behind the doors g g, so that in due time, when the legs are supposed to be severed and the boots removed, there appears only the bloody stumps, which, in fact, are the knees of attendant No. 1, as will be understood by reference to the dotted lines in Fig. 3. The actor then proceeds to sever the right arm, and as soon as this is apparently accomplished attendant 2 drops his arm to the floor, as shown in Fig. 4, the panel B, of course, following it; but the movement of the panel is not visible to the audience and the arm appears to have dropped to the floor, and the same is also done by attendant 3 with the left arm when the severing act thereof is performed by the actor. The actor then, after some by-play, approaches the knight to sever his head. The knight, in

the meantime and during the severing operation, makes faces at and ridicules the actor; but as the sword passes between the dummy-body and the head of the knight he makes a guttural sound, indicating the severing of the windpipe. Immediately the head is apparently severed it rises above the trunk, as shown in Fig. 4, this being accomplished by attendant 4 rising from the stooping position in which he is shown in Fig. 3, the panel, of course, rising with him; but its movement, like the other panels, being invisible to the audience, and the ruffle or collar about his throat serving to conceal the opening in the panel through which the head is projected. As soon as the dismembering is completed the actor draws a curtain in front of the dismembered knight, and, walking across the stage, congratulates himself for and boasts of the feat, and while in the midst of this a knight, apparently the same in every appearance and manner of dress as the one just seen dismembered, walks in front of the actor and off the stage.

From the foregoing it will be understood that my invention is not limited to the precise construction and combination of devices for performing this dismembering act in every detail—as, for example, the sliding panels may be wholly omitted and the dismembering of apparently natural legs be performed by the peculiar construction of the chair alone, and, on the other hand, the chair may be of the ordinary construction and the performance be limited to the removal of the arms and the head, and therefore the employment of the panels, or to either of these human members, and therefore to the employment of but a portion of said panels. So, also, the bench and other supports rearward of the scenery for the attendants assisting in the performance of this deceptive dismembering feat may be substantially varied, or even wholly omitted, without changing or modifying the operation of either the chair or the sliding panels, or both, for the essential feature of my invention is a chair the back of which is composed of one or more sliding panels having openings therein through which natural members of the human body may be projected in their proper relative positions to some one sitting in the chair or to the dummy-trunk of a human body therein.

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

1. The combination, with a chair, of one or more sliding panels forming the back thereof and provided with openings, substantially as described.

2. The combination of a chair provided with hinged doors in the front thereof and a chair-back composed of one or more sliding panels having openings therein, substantially as described.

3. The combination of a chair having inwardly-swinging doors recessed at their upper ends and one or more sliding panels form-

ing the back of the chair and provided with openings, substantially as described.

4. The combination of the chair, the hinged doors in the front thereof, and the split boots
5 located in front of and in a plane with said doors, substantially as described.

5. The combination of the chair, the hinged doors in the front thereof, and the split boots

located in front of and in a plane with said doors and of greater width than the door-openings, substantially as described.

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Witnesses:

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