

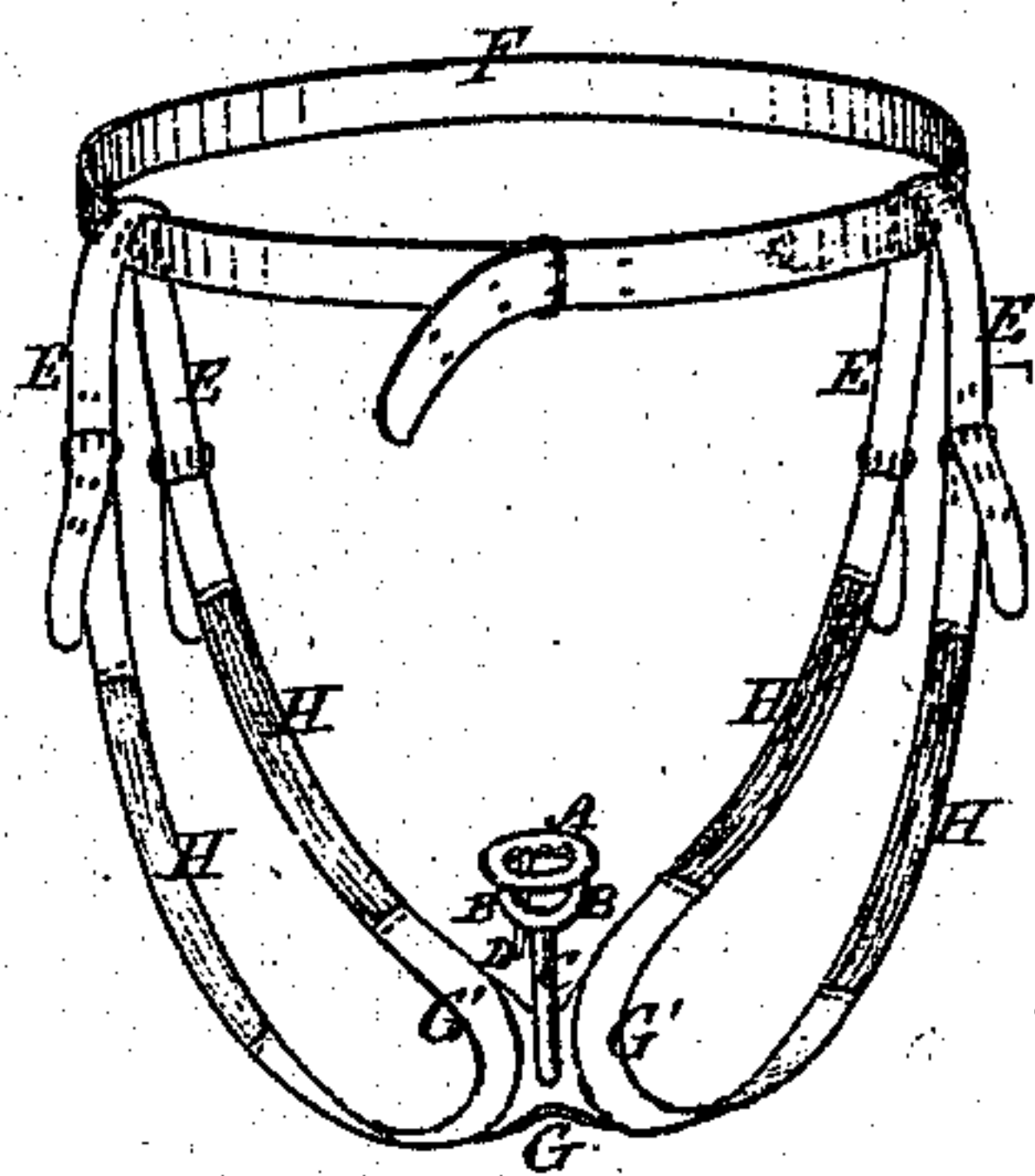
*B. F. Stephenson,*

*Pessary.*

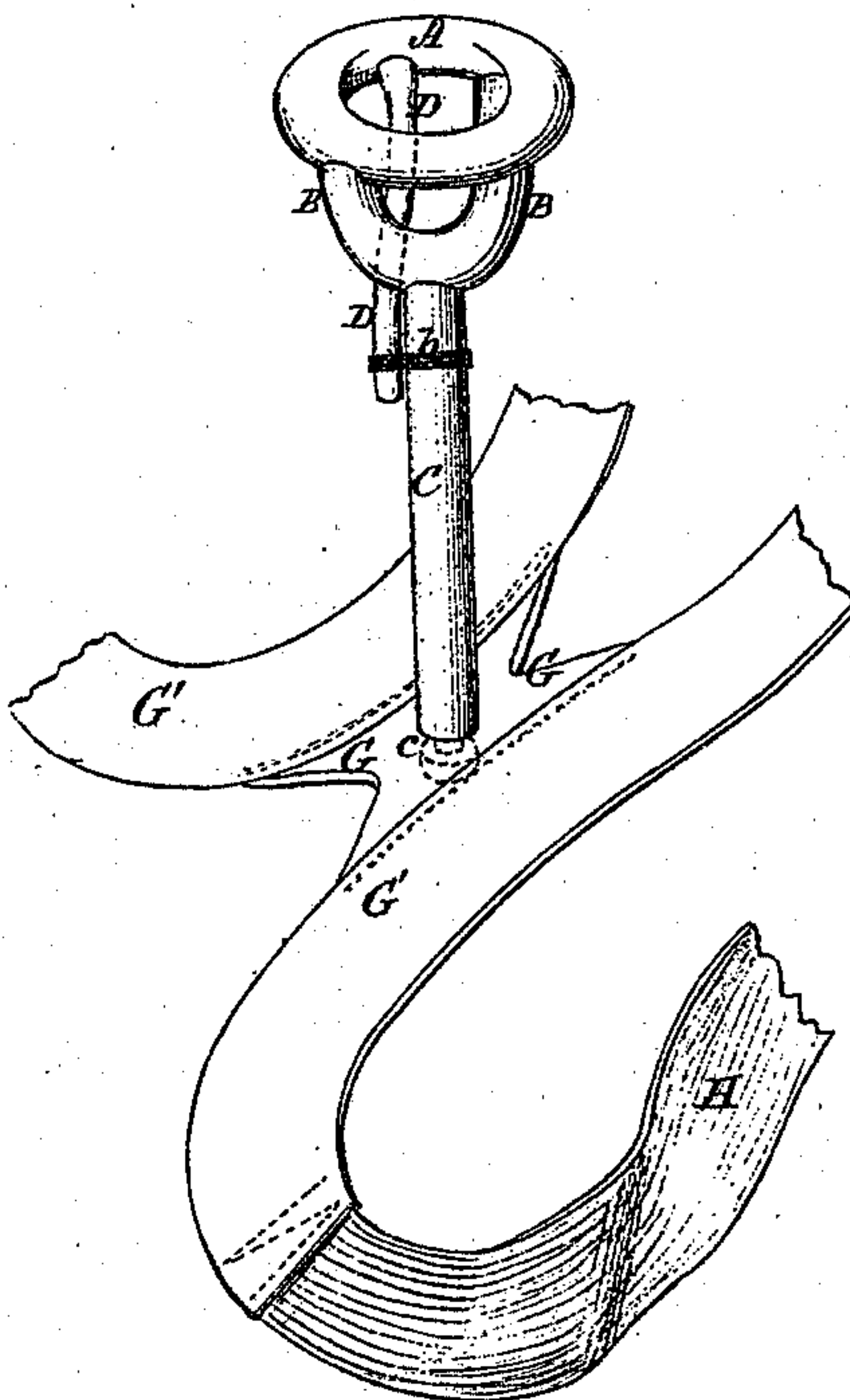
*No. 104,657.*

*Patented June 21, 1870.*

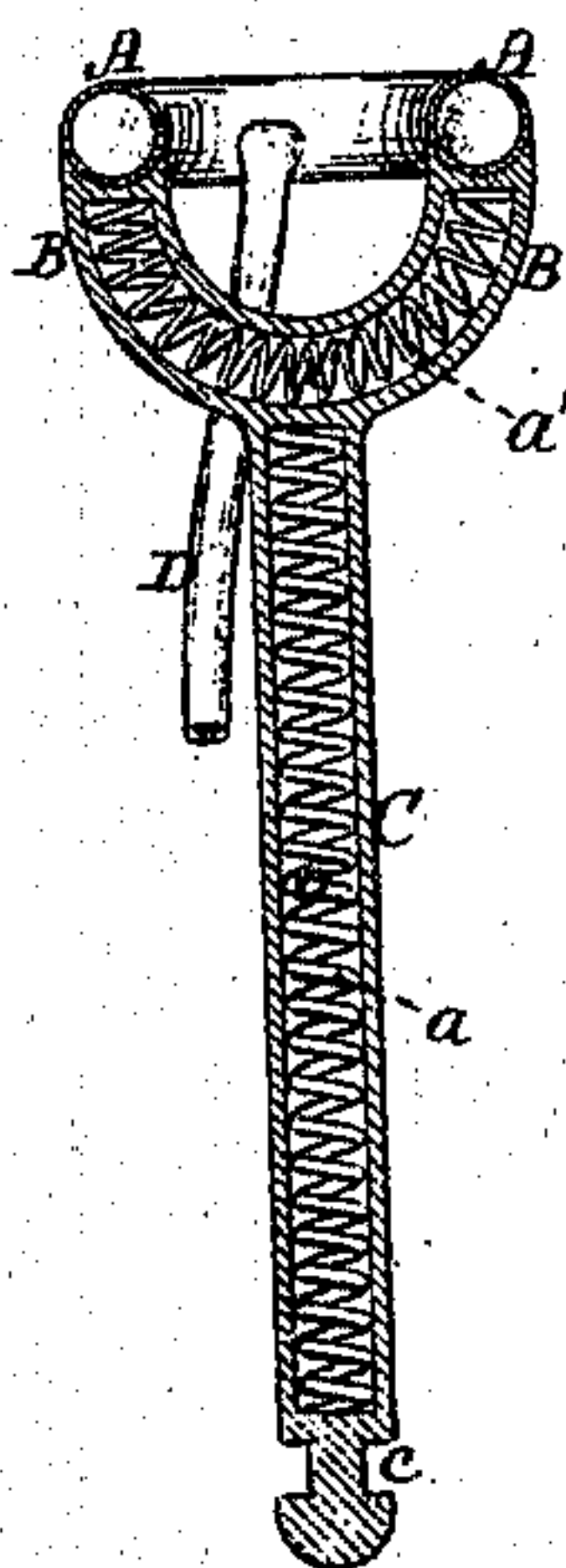
*Figure 1.*



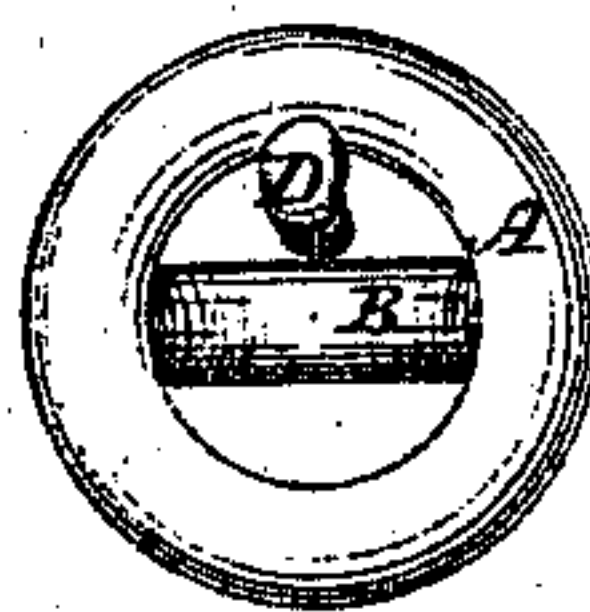
*Figure 2.*



*Figure 3.*



*Figure 4.*



*Witnesses:*

*J. W. H. Johnson*  
*W. S. Levin*

*Benjamin F. Stephenson*

*By his Attorneys,*

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# United States Patent Office.

BENJAMIN F. STEPHENSON, OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

Letters Patent No. 104,657, dated June 21, 1870.

## IMPROVEMENT IN UTERINE-SUPPORTERS.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, BENJAMIN F. STEPHENSON, of Springfield, in the county of Sangamon and State of Illinois, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Uterine-Supporters; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawing of the same, which makes part of this specification, and in which—

Figure 1 is a view of my improved uterine-supporter, with its connecting and supporting-strap.

Figure 2 is a view, in perspective, of the supporting-instrument, with a portion of its attaching-straps.

Figure 3 represents a vertical section, and

Figure 4 a top view of the open annular rubber air-cushion.

My invention relates to an instrument for sustaining the uterus, in cases where that organ has become diseased; and consists in the employment of an open annular air-cushion, of thin, soft rubber, provided with an air-inflating tube, and supported upon a bifurcated hollow rubber stem, stiffened by interior springs, so as to render the stem and its supporting branches sufficiently strong to hold up the uterus, and yet be perfectly mobile to accommodate itself to the flexions of the body without impinging upon the parts, or producing or aiding their irritation.

In the accompanying drawing—

A represents an open annular cushion of soft rubber, having only such thickness as will bear inflation, and of a diameter just sufficient to fill the vagina, without distending it in the least, so that the fine ligaments sustaining it with the uterus may be allowed to contract, and thus obtain strength.

This air-cushion is supported upon two curved branches B B of a central vertical stem, C, and they are cast hollow, in one piece. The bifurcated end of the stem is of semicircular form, and, therefore, supports the air-cushion A, at its opposite sides only, for the purpose of allowing the greater portion of the annular cushion to yield vertically, as experience has shown that a rigid support is not adapted either to the structure or the disease of the parts to be upheld.

The space between the air-cushion and the branches of its supporting-stem receives and sustains the mouth of the uterus, in such manner as to facilitate the circulation, and permit the free discharge of the secretions; because, in no case could the mouth of the uterus be entirely closed, as when supported upon a diaphragm, as a perforated surface will be practically closed by the folds of the uterus, and thus, instead of aiding, will prevent the necessary circulation. A skeleton-support for its mouth is, therefore, a great advantage.

In order to give a proper degree of stiffness to the central stem C, and the supporting branches B B, the soft rubber is cast around properly-tempered spiral

springs *a*, so that, while imparting sufficient rigidity to the stem, yet it must possess the required degree of mobility to yield in any direction with the bending or sitting position of the body. This adjustment is more especially effected by the separation of the springs at the junction of the stem C with the branches B B, so that the instrument can have, at this point, a sort of universal swiveling motion, without affecting its capacity for vertical and lateral support.

The supporting annular air-cushion A is inflated by means of a small branch rubber tube, D, of sufficient length to extend from said cushion (to which it is secured by cement) to its central supporting-stem, to which it is tied by a cord, *b*, or other suitable means, and thus closed when the annular pillow is filled with air. The inflation may be made by a glass tube inserted in the end of the inflating-tube.

The springs *a* of the branches are separate from those of the stem, and, with the delicate annular cushion A, render every part of the instrument perfectly yielding, so that no part has a frictional motion, and, therefore, can produce no irritation.

The instrument, when inserted into the vagina, is held in position by means of elastic connecting-straps E, which lead up to and are secured to straps F, which pass around the waist of the wearer.

The junction of the instrument with these connecting-straps is such as to admit of a swiveling motion of the air-cushion A, and, for this purpose, the lower end of the supporting-stem C is cast with a shoulder, *c*, or groove, into or upon which a buckskin center-piece, G, is secured, having a branch, G', which fits around the inside of each limb, to the ends of which elastic straps H are attached, with their upper ends fastened to the straps E of the waistband, and, by this means, the supporting-pillow is always maintained in proper position.

Having described my invention,

I claim—

1. The uterine-supporter, formed by the thin open annular air-cushion A, in combination with its inflating-tube D, and flexible bifurcated supporting-stem C, substantially as herein described.

2. An open annular air-cushion, A, supported at two points only, so as to admit of universal flexion, for the purpose herein described.

3. The supporting branches B B, provided with stiffening-springs *a*, in connection with a central stem, C, also fitted with a stiffening-spring, *a*, in such manner as to admit of a universal yielding motion at the junction of the stem with its branches, substantially as described.

B. F. STEPHENSON.

Witnesses:

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E. E. AYERS.