

(No Model.)

M. R. JONES.

INDICATOR FOR DROP LETTER BOXES.

No. 353,139.

Patented Nov. 23, 1886.

Fig. 1.

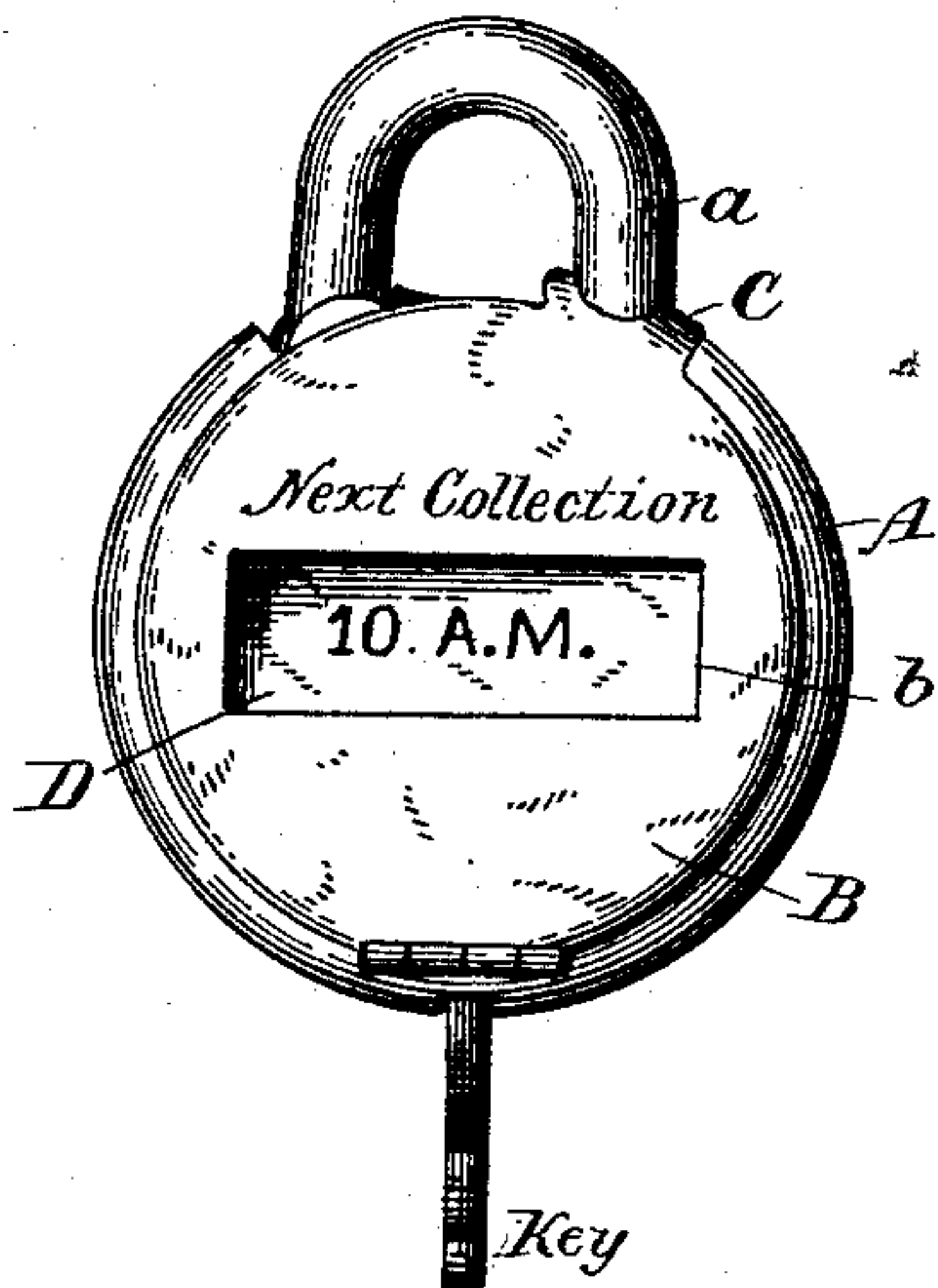


Fig. 2.

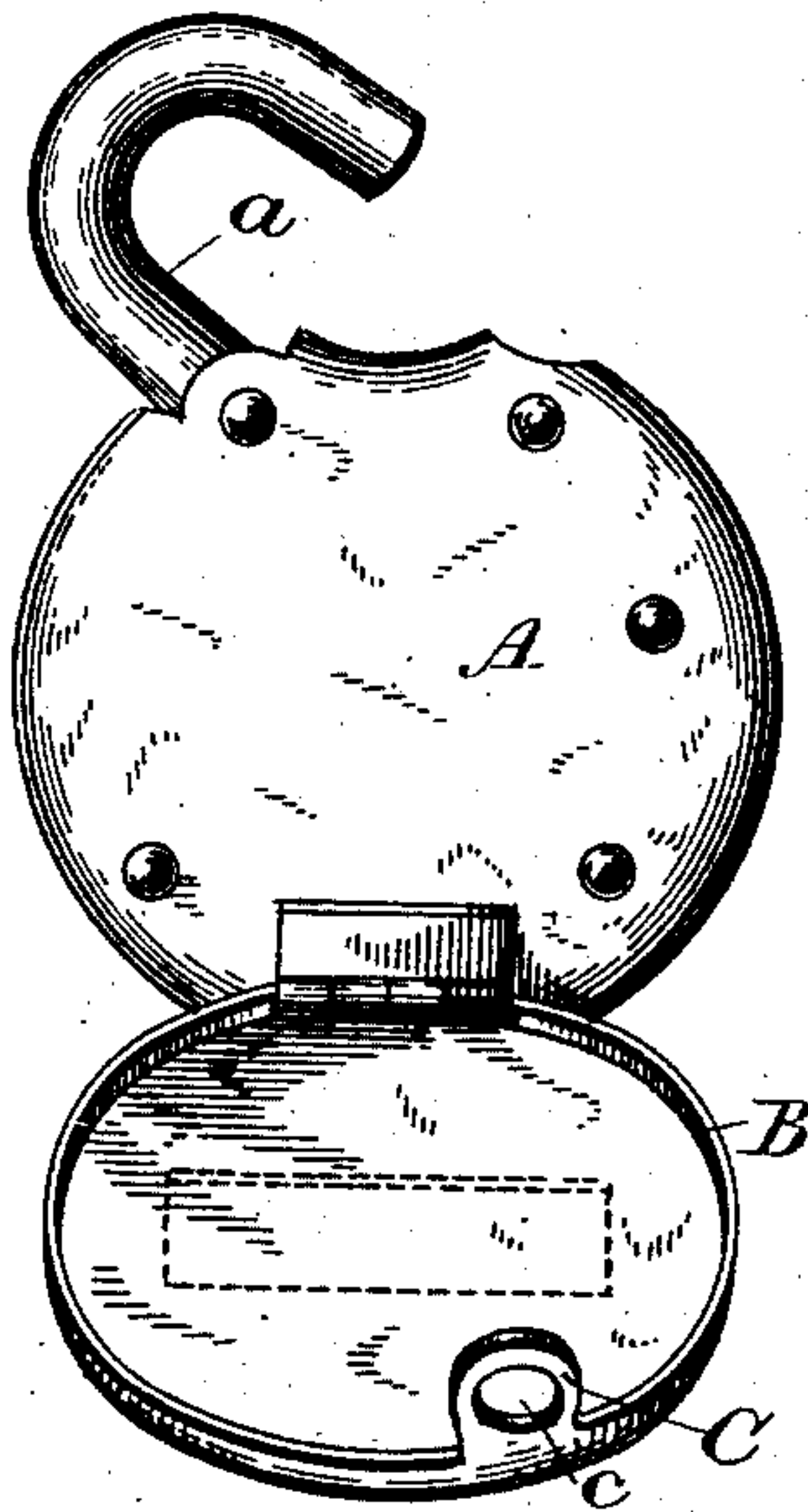


Fig. 3.

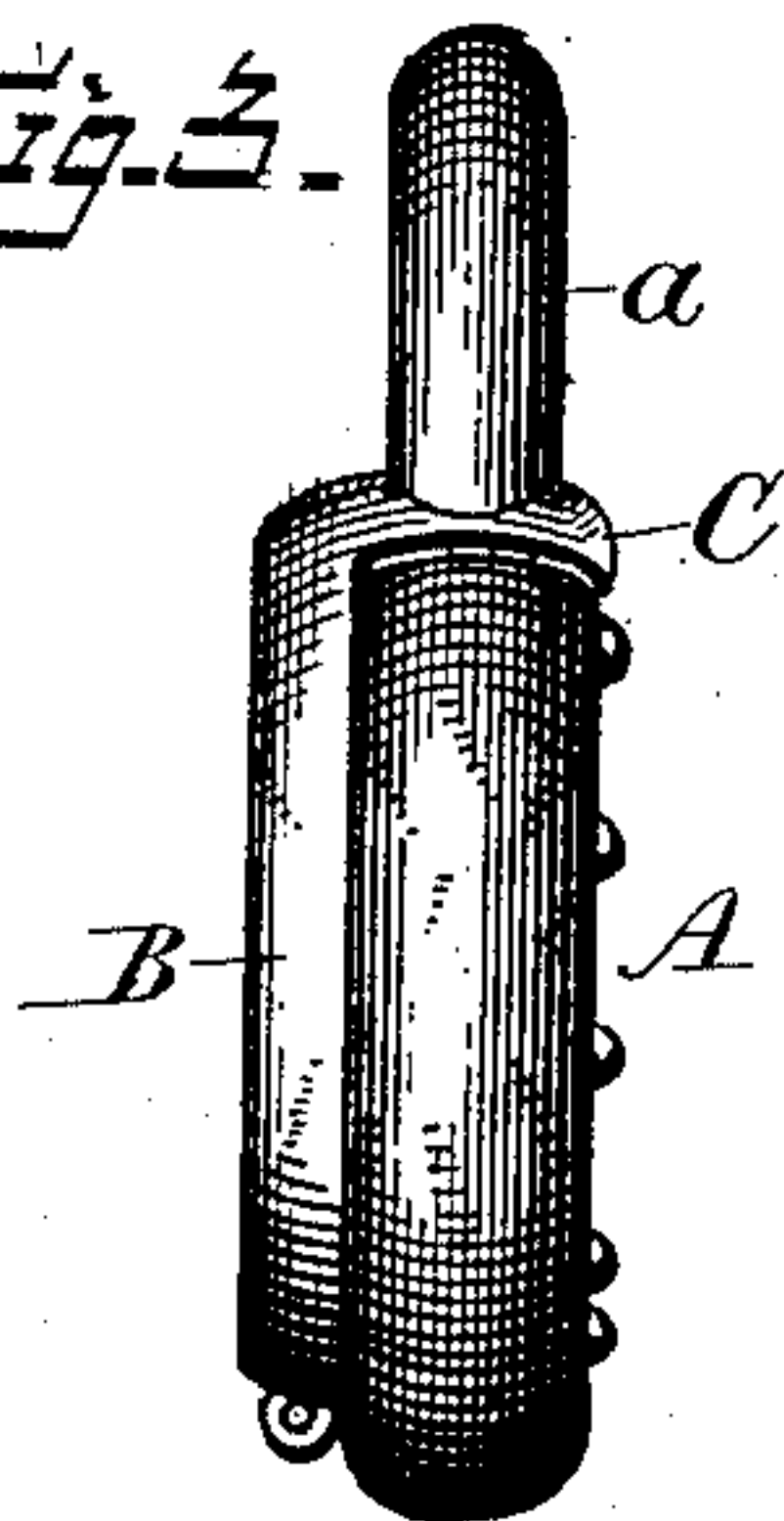
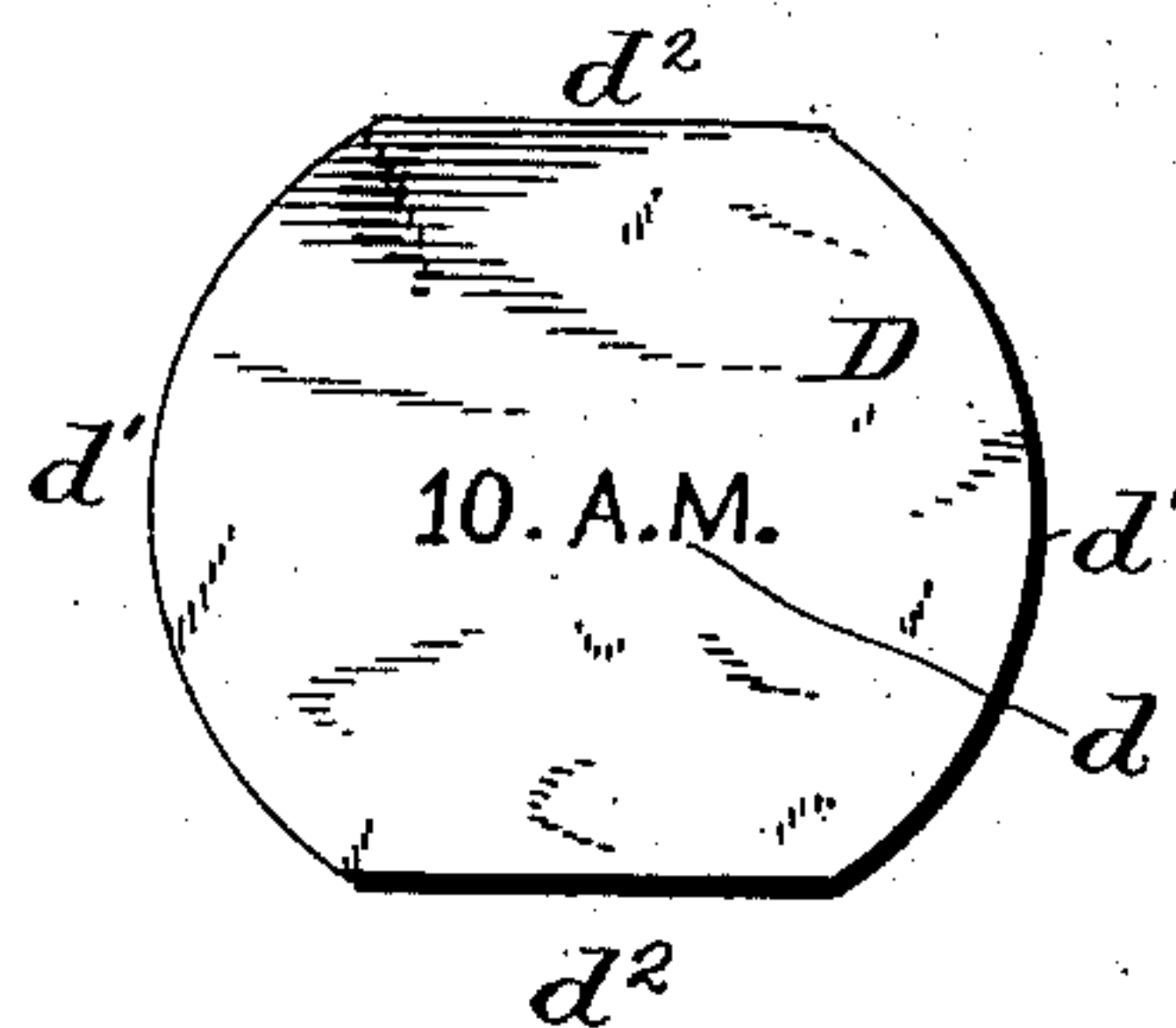


Fig. 4.



WITNESSES:

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

MARCUS R. JONES, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF, BY DIRECT AND MESNE ASSIGNMENTS, TO EDWARD MAYER, OF SAME PLACE.

INDICATOR FOR DROP-LETTER BOXES.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 353,139, dated November 23, 1886.

Application filed October 30, 1885. Serial No. 181,417. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MARCUS R. JONES, a citizen of the United States, residing at Washington, in the District of Columbia, have invented
5 a new and useful Improvement in Indicators for Drop-Letter Boxes, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to indicators for drop-letter boxes.

10 The nature and object of my invention are the provision of means whereby upon the lock of a drop-letter box there shall be indicated the time when the next collection shall be made by the carrier from each specific box, and
15 whereby the public shall be informed whether or not a box has been tapped by the carrier at a given time, as hereinafter described, illustrated in the drawings, and specifically pointed out in the claims.

20 Referring to the accompanying drawings, in which like letters of reference point out similar parts on each figure, Figure 1 represents a closed letter-box lock embodying my invention. Fig. 2 is a view representing the lock
25 open. Fig. 3 is a side view of Fig. 1. Fig. 4 is a detail view of one of the detachable time-plates employed in carrying out my invention.

In the drawings, A represents an ordinary letter-box lock; *a*, its spring-pressed hasp; B, a
30 hinged face-cap, having an opening or slot, *b*.

C is an upper lip or flange, having an orifice, *c*, for a purpose hereinafter set forth.

D is a detachable time-plate; *d*, the inscription thereon; *d'*, its sides, curved coincidently
35 with the sides of the face-cap into which such plate is to lie. Said plates are formed with upper and lower edges cut off in parallel right lines, *d''*.

40 The custom at present in vogue for informing the public when letters will be collected from drop-boxes is to place thereon a printed schedule of such collections. Such printed notices have to be renewed whenever railroads change their time-table, and for other reasons,
45 thus involving considerable expense.

A carrier has a certain route assigned to him embracing several boxes, and it is manifestly impossible for him to tap every box on his route at the exact time shown on the schedule-

list. Some boxes he visits before and some 50 after the time indicated. In the drawings I have, for convenience' sake, illustrated 10 a. m. as the hour of collection, and one part of my invention relates to giving positive information to the public whether or not such special 55 collection has been made. If not made, a letter can be dropped in the box with the certainty that it will be withdrawn before the next following hour of collection. To be more explicit, the 10 o'clock collection may not have 60 been made as late as 10:30, and the public by my invention will be correctly notified thereof. Again, such periodical collection may have been made, say, before 10 a. m., in which case the plate, D, denoting such hour will not be in 65 place, and there will be no danger of dropping a letter for an earlier collection than appears upon the identical plate D, the inscription whereof is visible through the slot *b* of the face-cap. 70

When the collector withdraws the contents of a box, he takes out the plate D and deposits in its place another one upon which is inscribed the hour when the next following collection is intended to be made, and then closes 75 the lock.

It will be seen that the face-cap B is dish-shaped to receive the time-plate D; that it also has upon its upper portion a turned-over flange or lip, C, provided with an orifice, *c*, which 80 flange laps over the opening of the lock wherein the hasp *a* intermeshes; and it will be seen that the cap B is locked by means of said hasp passing through the orifice *c* in the cap-flange C, requiring no additional device to hold it in 85 place.

The use of detachable plates D will be readily understood from the foregoing description and by reference to the drawings.

When a carrier starts out on his route, he is 90 supplied with the exact number of indicating-plates D necessary to supply one to each box on his route, inscribed with the next following period of collection, and one of such latter time-plates is to be inserted in position in 95 place of the one withdrawn. The plates D withdrawn are intended to be by him delivered to the superintendent of the carrier-de-

partment, who will thus be supplied with positive evidence that such carrier has tapped each box in the district assigned to him.

It is well known that constant complaints reach the post-office authorities that boxes have not been tapped in due time, and investigation has proven that such is the case in some instances. To check this evil, decoy letters and postal cards are constantly dropped into boxes in order to detect derelict carriers. This involves expense of stamps and cards, besides the time employed in writing such communications and in verifying their transmission.

My invention provides means for overcoming these objections and for complete detection of any carrier who passes by a box without opening it.

Having now fully described my invention, I claim—

1. An indicator-lock for drop-letter boxes, provided with an outer dish-faced cap, B, having an open panel, *b*, and having an overturned orificed flange, C, whereby said cap can be secured by the hasp *a* of the lock, as and for the purpose intended, substantially as described. 20 25

2. An indicator-lock for drop-letter boxes, provided with a hinged cap, B, having an open panel, *b*, and having an overturned orificed flange, C, in combination with an inscribed removable plate, D, as and for the purpose intended, substantially as described. 30

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Witnesses:

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