

(No Model.)

T. S. SCOVILLE.

LETTER BOX.

No. 359,548.

Patented Mar. 15, 1887.

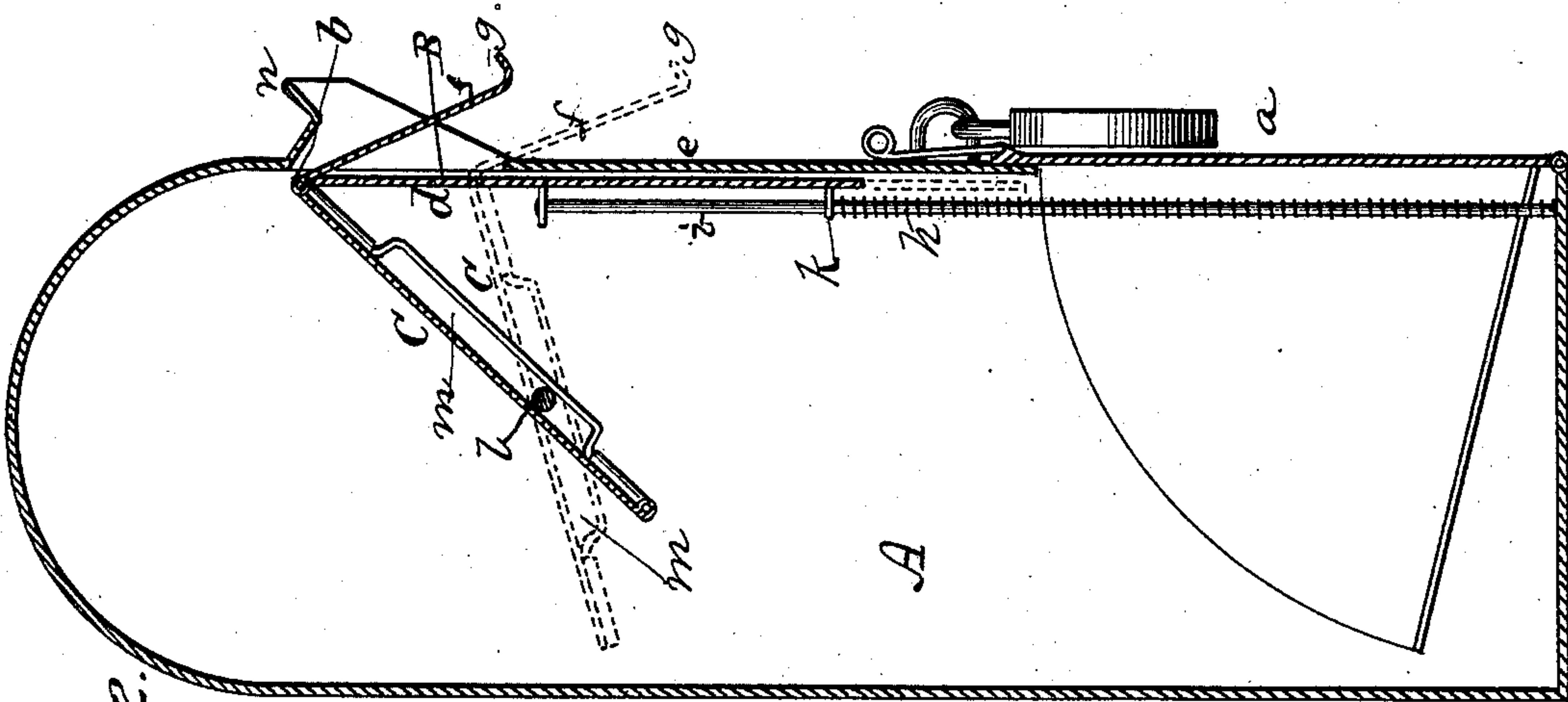


Fig. 2.

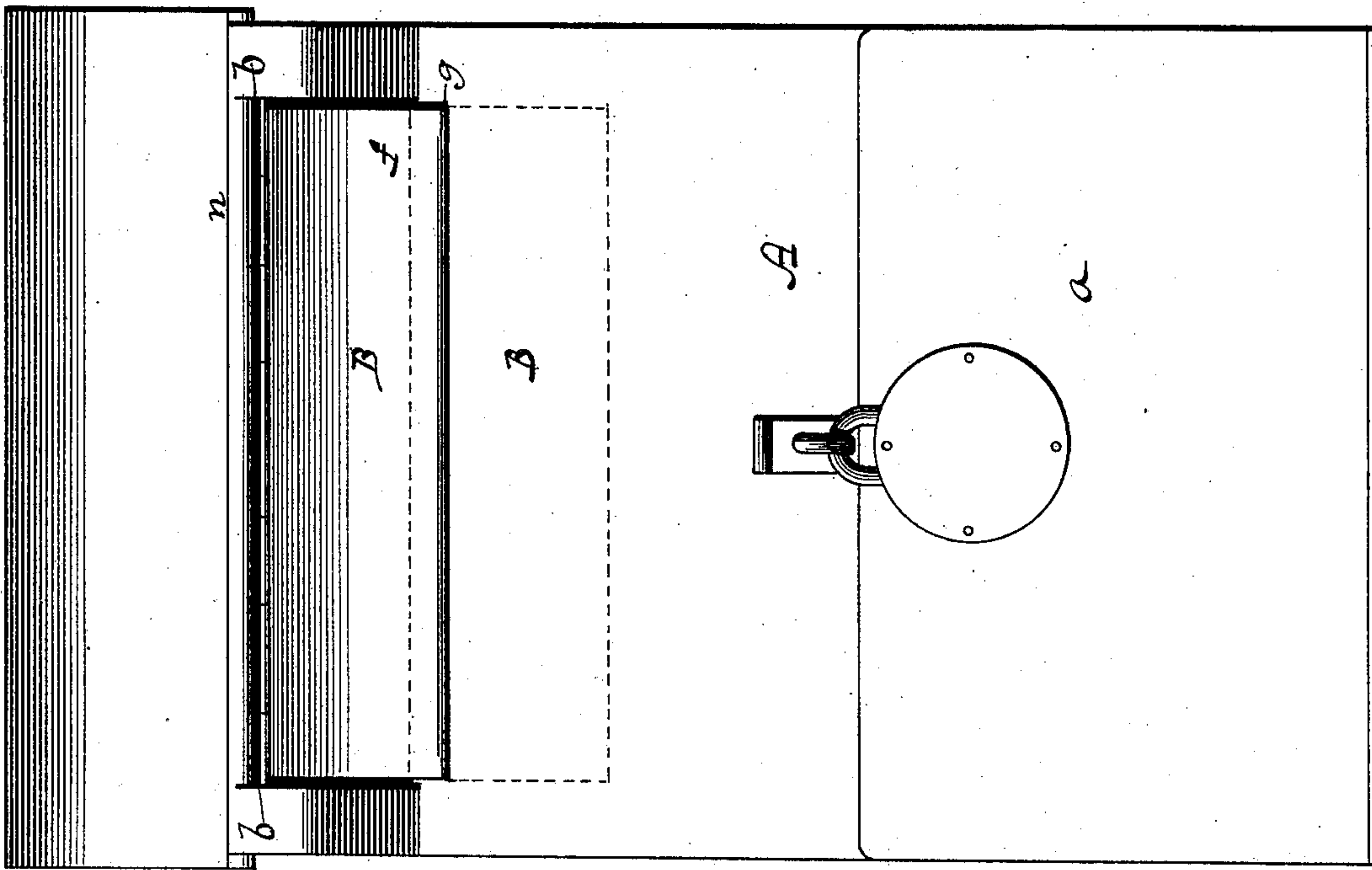


Fig. 1.

Witnesses.

Forris H. Clark

Wm E. Kennaugh.

Inventor,

Thaddeus S. Scoville.

By his attorney,
R. B.

J. S. Brown.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THADDEUS S. SCOVILLE, OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF TO WILLIAM L. LANCE, SR., OF WHITING, NEW JERSEY, AND HENRY TANNER, OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK.

LETTER-BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 359,548, dated March 15, 1887.

Application filed August 31, 1886. Serial No. 212,189. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, THADDEUS S. SCOVILLE, a citizen of the United States, residing in Brooklyn, in the county of Kings and State of New York, have invented an Improved Postal Box; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making part of this specification.

10 My invention consists in an improved postal or letter-receiving box having a receiving-aperture provided with a movable lid or shutter wholly or partially closing it, and a movable valve or shield-plate in the receptacle, 15 adapted to close the passage to the part below, which receives the letters, papers, and packages, against access from above when the receiving-aperture is opened, and to partially open the passage-way in the receptacle to allow the letters, papers, and packages to descend below the said valve or shield-plate when the receiving-aperture is closed, substantially as and for the purpose hereinafter set forth.

25 In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a front view of a postal or letter-receiving box constructed with my improvements; Fig. 2, a vertical section of the same in a plane cutting from front to back.

30 Like letters designate corresponding parts in both of the figures.

In the drawings, A represents the receptacle having a locked door, *a*, near the bottom for gaining access to the receptacle by the postal clerk or carrier. In all respects, except as to my improvement and its application thereto, 35 the construction of the box may be as usual, or as desired. Near the top of the box is the aperture or mouth *b*, through which letters, papers, and packages are deposited in the interior receptacle, A. I make this aperture 40 sufficiently large or wide to admit papers and packages as large as the receptacle will ordinarily accommodate. To make the aperture thus wide it will also admit the hand of a person, and of course unless some provision is 45 made to prevent any person from reaching or getting access to the letters, papers, or packages deposited in the receptacle, there would be no security against purloining them; and 50 yet a properly-secured postal box having such

an enlarged aperture obviously is very desirable, since now papers and packages are often too large to deposit in post-office boxes, and if sent to mail in that way such papers and packages have to be simply laid upon the top of the box, subject continually to theft, especially from street-boxes. Now, by my invention all of this difficulty and loss is obviated by a very simple device, as shown in the drawings.

I provide the receiving-aperture *b* of the box 60 with a closing or partially-closing lid or shutter, B, and so arrange the said lid or shutter as to wholly or partially close the receiving-aperture *b* when left free, as shown by full lines in the drawings. I say "wholly or partially" close the aperture, since a narrow portion of the aperture may be left permanently open sufficient to deposit letters through, as shown in the drawings, so that letters may be deposited in the receptacle without moving 70 the lid or shutter; but when papers or packages are too large to insert through such a narrow opening, I provide for moving the lid or shutter B away from the aperture *b*, as shown by dotted lines in the drawings, so that then 75 such papers or packages can be freely inserted in the receptacle. The said lid or shutter may be constructed and arranged in any desired way to effect the purpose. I have shown in the drawings this lid or shutter as moving 80 up to close and down to open the aperture by a sliding movement. The main body *d* of the lid or shutter is represented as sliding inside of the front wall, *e*, of the box, while a front wing, *f*, thereof is folded over at the top and 85 moves up and down outside of the said front wall of the box. It has a finger-piece or flange, *g*, turned out at the lower edge of the front wing, by which it is drawn down when a person has occasion to open the aperture. It 90 should have springs or equivalent means to force it upward automatically as soon as it is let go by the hand of the person opening it. I have shown coiled springs *h* inside of the box, running on fixed rods *i* for the purpose, the 95 lid or shutter having bearing strips or lugs *k* *k* to slide on the rods, and the springs pressing upward against the lower lugs. Obviously the said sliding lid or shutter is not sufficient of itself to fulfill the purpose of this invention, 100

since it does not protect the contents of the receptacle from theft.

To complete this invention, a backwardly-inclined valve or shield-plate, C, is placed 5 across the interior receptacle, A, just below the receiving-aperture, so as partially to close the passage to the lower part of the receptacle, in the following manner: When the receiving-aperture is closed by the lid or shutter B, there is sufficient passage-way in the receptacle back of the rear edge of the said valve or shield-plate to allow letters, papers, and packages to descend to the lower depository part of the receptacle, as shown by full lines 15 in Fig. 2. The said valve or shield-plate in that position is also sufficiently inclined to allow the letters, papers, or packages to freely slide back to the rear passage and drop therefrom into the depository; but when the lid or shutter B is depressed or opened the valve or shield-plate is caused simultaneously and automatically to turn or move into a position whereby the rear passage will be closed, or so far closed as to effectually prevent a person 25 from inserting his hand behind it, or to insert any instrument through the passage and abstract any letters, papers, or packages thereby, and preferably the said valve is at the same time turned into an approximately horizontal position, with the rear part moved well upward, as shown by dotted lines in Fig. 2. In order that the movements of this valve or shield-plate may be automatic and in harmony with the movements of the lid or shutter, I 35 provide for the connection of the two movements, so that when the lid or shutter is moved the valve or shield-plate will be moved properly at the same time. I have shown in the drawings the lid or shutter hinged to the valve 40 or shield-plate at their upper adjacent edges; and the valve or shield-plate rests near its

middle on a transverse bearing-rod, *l*, on which it turns, as desired. There are also guide-loops *m* at the ends of the said valve or shield-plate, which work over the fixed rod 45 *l*, or their equivalent, to guide their movements. The shield-plate may oscillate, slide, turn, or have any convenient movement or construction.

There is or may be a projecting or overhanging ledge or flange, *n*, at the top of the box immediately over and in front of the receiving-aperture of the box, to assist in guarding against the insertion of any instrument downward and backward through the passage of 55 the receptacle; also, to protect the receptacle from storms.

I claim as my invention—

The combination, in a postal box, of a receptacle, A, having a receiving-aperture, *b*, 60 opening into its upper part, a sliding lid or shutter, B, automatically closing the aperture of the receptacle nearly or entirely, and adapted to be moved aside by the hand in inserting the letters or articles to be mailed into 65 the receptacle, and a movable shutter or valve, C, partially or entirely separating the receptacle to form two compartments therein, and connected with the sliding lid or shutter, substantially as herein set forth, whereby it is 70 moved to open a passage between the upper and lower compartments of the receptacle when the said lid or shutter closes the aperture into the receptacle, and to separate the compartments when the lid or shutter opens 75 the aperture into the receptacle, substantially as herein specified.

THADDEUS S. SCOVILLE.

Witnesses:

J. G. DAVISON,
HENRY MAPES.