

(No Model.)

A. P. VENEN.  
MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

No. 496,238.

Patented Apr. 25, 1893.

Fig. 1.

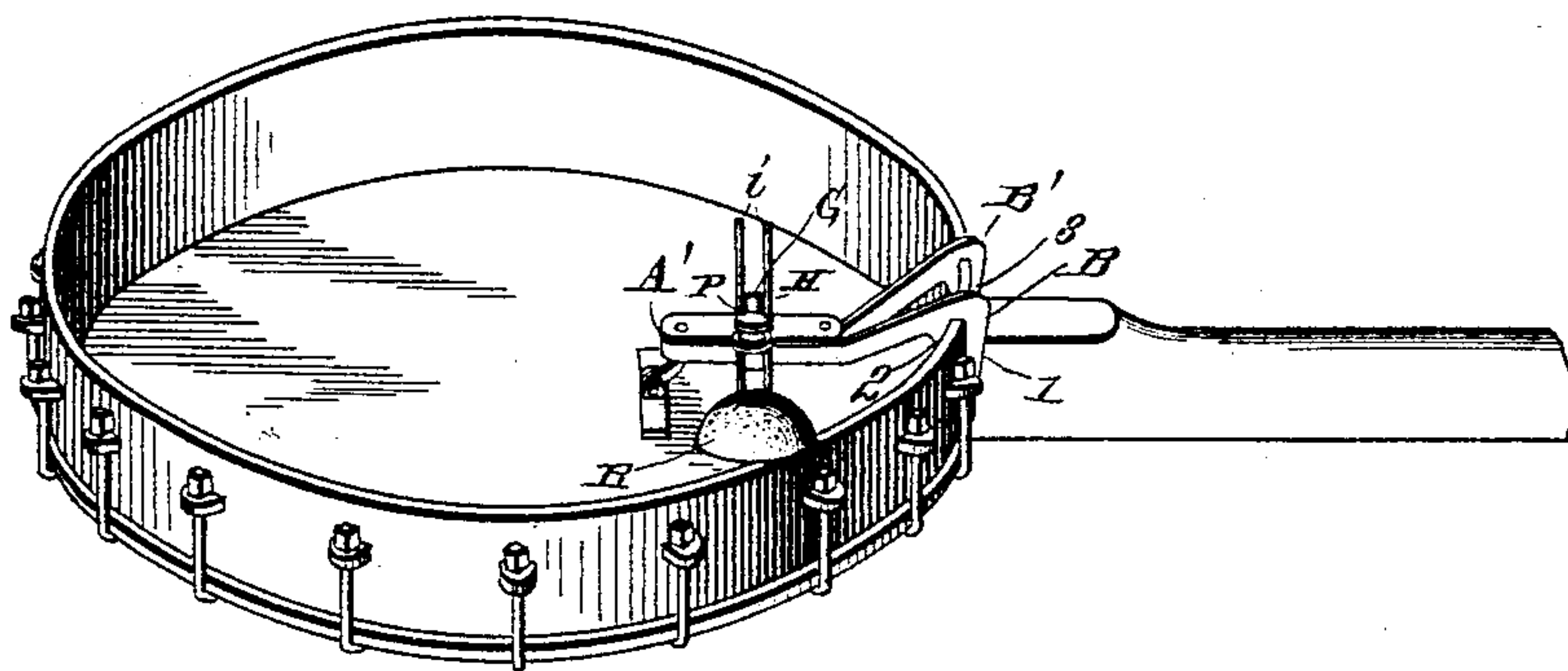


Fig. 2.

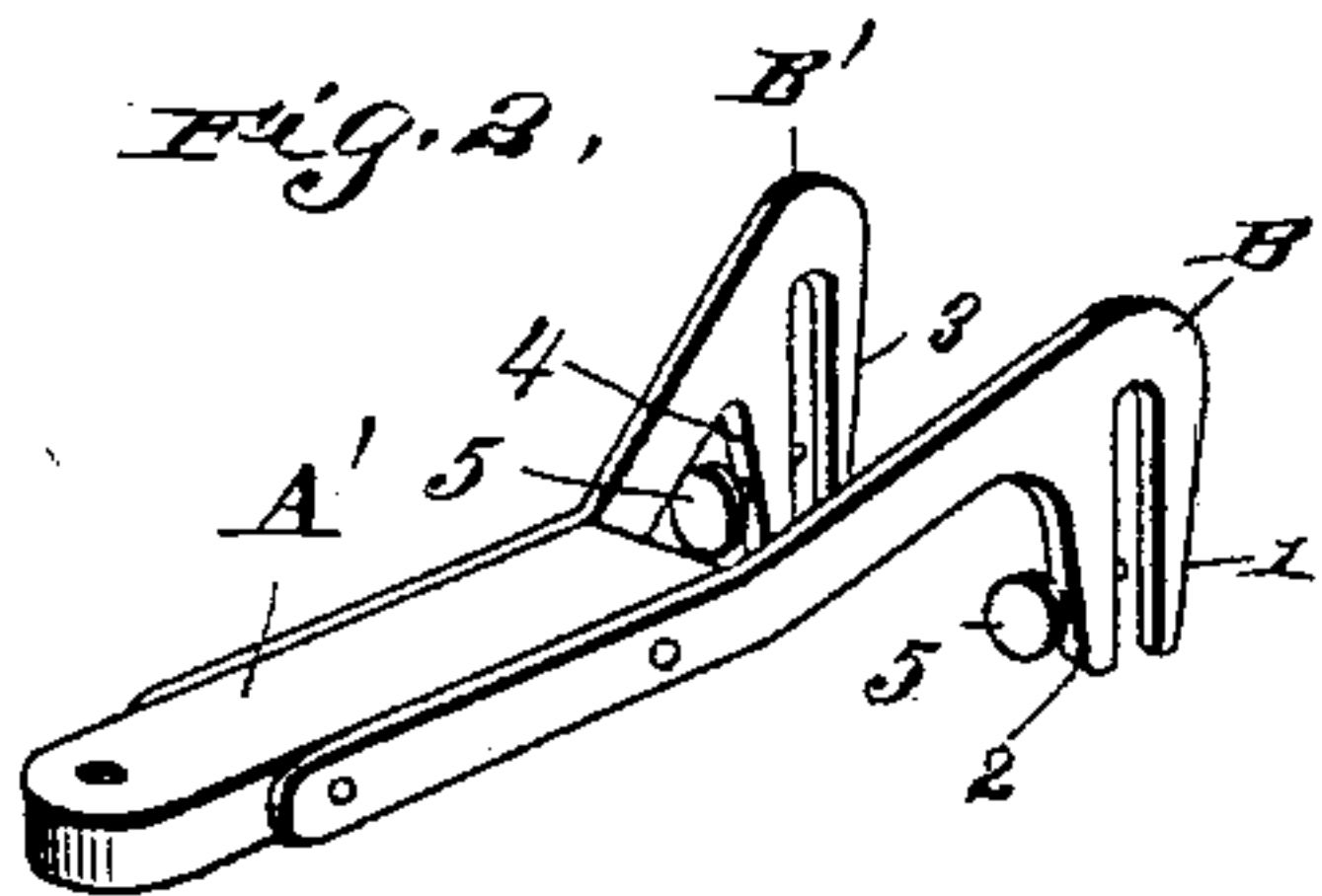


Fig. 3.

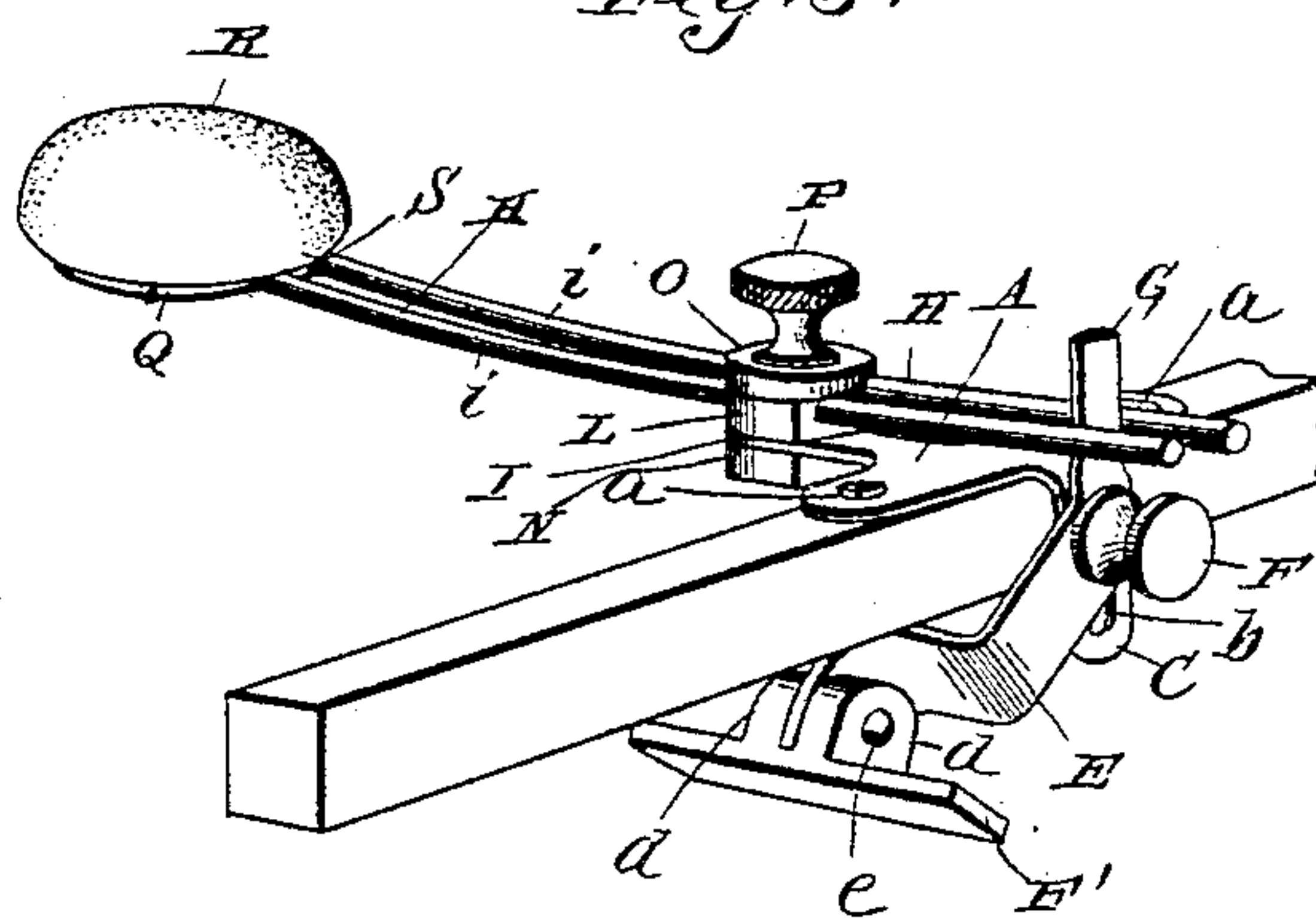
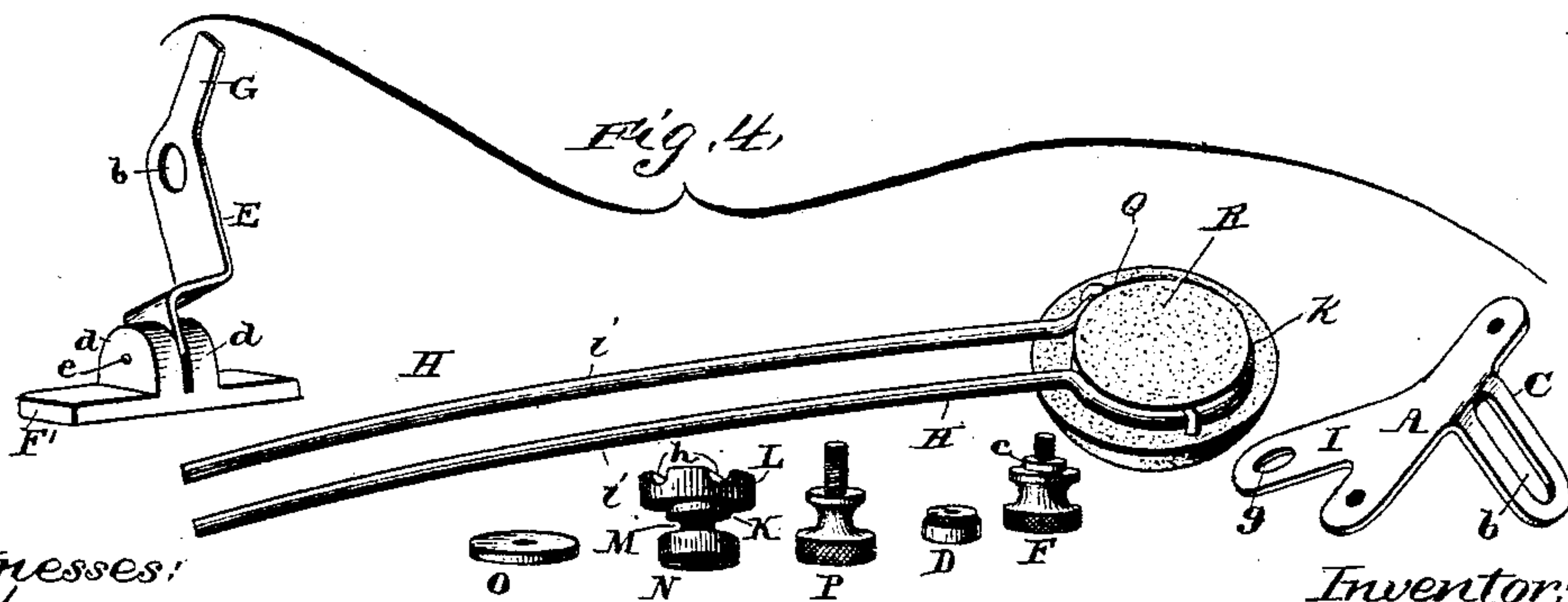


Fig. 4.



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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 496,238, dated April 25, 1893.

Application filed August 2, 1892. Serial No. 441,987. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, ALBERT P. VENEN, a citizen of the United States of America, residing in the city of Seattle, in the county of King and State of Washington, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Musical Instruments; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

This invention relates more particularly to an attachment for banjos, termed a mute, and has for its object the control of the vibrations of the head; and it consists in certain peculiarities of construction and combination of parts as will be hereinafter more fully set forth and described.

In the accompanying drawings which form a part of this specification and in which similar letters and numerals indicate like parts, Figure 1, is a perspective of the bottom of a banjo with my invention attached. Fig. 2, shows the rest with its arms and prongs. Fig. 3, is a perspective showing my invention attached to a banjo having a cross-bar. Fig. 4, shows the various parts detached.

The rim, neck, cross-bar, string-plate, bridge, strings and head of the banjo may all be of any well known form of construction without impairing my invention.

A' represents a rest provided on either side with arms B and B'; these arms are of equal length, and extend on parallel lines, or may be flaring. At the outer end of each of these arms are two parallel prongs 1. 2. 3. 4. of a length nearly equal to the depth of the rim of the banjo, and they may be close enough together to fit neatly against the rim and hold their places by friction; or they may be held in place by a screw 5. passing through one or two of the prongs and pressing against the rim, or the inner prongs may be connected by a bar and the center of the bar fitted with a screw to be driven in against the inner side of the rim; or I may use any other suitable device for securing my attachment to a banjo. This part of my invention is particularly designed for applying that part of my device hereinafter described to such patterns of banjos as have no cross-bars. Where the banjo

has a cross-bar that part of the device hereinafter described may be attached to it instead of to the rest A'.

A, represents a plate firmly secured to the rest A' by set screw *a. a.* One side of this plate is provided with an arm C, bent to a right angle with the face of the plate and constructed with a slot *b*, in its center extending from near its bottom to near its top. The slot *b* is fitted with a sliding nut D, its face being flush with the front of the arm C and constructed with a head that projects on either side of the slot *b*, so as to form bearing surfaces. A lever E. is attached to the face of the sliding nut D. by means of a thumb screw F. constructed with a bearing surface *c.* immediately above the screw thread, which forms the fulcrum of the lever E. and upon which the lever E. has a free movement when the thumb screw is tightened in the sliding nut so as to hold it rigidly as adjusted. The lower arm of the lever is extended in a line parallel to the face of the arm C. a suitable distance and is then bent inward at right angles extending to a point above the center of the rest A' thence it is extended a suitable distance, and to its end are secured the lugs *d. d.* of the damper F' by means of a pin *e.* passing through the lugs and the end of the lever E. In this construction there should be enough friction between the lugs and lever to admit of the damper being adjusted to a desired point and retain its place so as to rest squarely and flatly upon the under side of the head of the banjo. The damper F', is made preferably of metal the face being covered with buckskin, felt, or other suitable material for contact with the head, and it may be of any desired length, but preferably of equal length with the bridge, and so adjusted as to strike the head at or near the feet of the bridge. The arm G. of the lever E. is extended at an angle approximately of forty five degrees forward from the line of the lever E. and should be of sufficient length, to engage with the lever H when the lever E. is adjusted to the extreme end of the slot *b.* This construction permits of the easy and proper adjustment of the lever E. to the varying patterns and sizes of banjo rims and where the cross-bars are of varying thicknesses and distances from



the head. The opposite side of the plate A is extended a suitable distance forming an arm I. in the outer end of which is a circular opening *g.* for the reception of the trunnion  
 5 K. of the lever seat or fulcrum L. The lower end of this seat L. terminates in a screw M. for receiving a clamp nut N. that, tightened against the trunnion, holds the seat in place and leaves it free to revolve and form the  
 10 pivot of the lever.

The top of the seat L. is provided with two transverse grooves *h. h.* on either side of its center for the reception of the arms of the lever H. These grooves while wide enough to  
 15 permit of the free movement of the lever arms backward and forward have a depth a trifle less than the diameter of the arms. Consequently the arms project a trifle above the surrounding face of the seat and are held in  
 20 place when properly adjusted by a washer O. pressed upon them by a thumb screw P. passing through the center of the washer and fitting in a threaded hole in the center of the seat.

25 The lever H. may be of any suitable shape or material but preferably is formed of a single round rod of metal bent to form a loop Q. at its outer end, that forms a seat for the pad R. The two ends of the rod forming the arms  
 30 *i. i.* are projected upon parallel lines a suitable length passing through the grooves *h. h.* of the seat L, beneath the washer O, and passing on either side embrace the arm G of the lever E.

35 The pad R. may be of any suitable form, the button shown in the accompanying drawings being preferred; the under side of the button form is cut away around its outer edge, forming a groove *k.* except at one point  
 40 where a tongue S. is left to fit between the arms and prevent the rotation of the button. This groove for the loop should be cut deep enough to permit the button to extend beneath the loop far enough to rest upon the  
 45 edge of the banjo rim. The top of the pad is rounded, and the entire pad is covered with buckskin, felt, or other suitable material for contact with the clothing of the player and the edge of the banjo rim. The loop and pad  
 50 are held together by any suitable means, but preferably, the button form is made of light wood, and they are held together by two or more staples driven into the pad, clamping the loop to the groove.

55 When constructed as hereinbefore described this attachment for banjos usually termed a "mute," may be adjusted to fit any one of the varying sizes or different patterns of the various manufacturers of banjos. The  
 60 plate A being secured to the rest or cross-bar as the case may be and the lever E. adjusted as hereinbefore described so that the damper may fall to a position beneath the feet of the bridge, the thumb screw P. is loosened

and the lever H. moved to a position so that 65 the center of the pad rests upon the rim, and upon the upper side next to the breast of the player when the banjo is in use; the thumb screw P. is then tightened and the attachment is ready for use. The banjo should be held 70 so that the pad R. will be lightly pressed against the body. A slight movement of the neck upward will then cause the lever H. engaging with the arm G. to move the lever E. backward and thereby withdraw the damper 75 from contact with the head and permit it to give its full sound. A slight movement of the neck downward reverses the action of the mute, bringing the damper into contact with the head. This checks the vibration and res- 80 onance of the head.

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

1. An attachment for banjos comprising a 85 seat, arms for attachment to the rim, and a damper and operating mechanism substantially as shown, for the purpose specified.

2. The seat A' having arms B and B'. and prongs 1. 2. 3. 4. substantially as shown for 90 the purpose specified.

3. The lever H. having two arms *i. i.* and loop Q. substantially as shown for the purpose specified.

4. The pad R. having on it the groove *k.* 95 cut away as described to receive the loop Q. in combination with the lever substantially as shown, for the purpose specified.

5. The combination of an adjustable lever H. with an adjustable lever E. and interme- 100 diate connecting devices substantially as set forth.

6. The combination of the lever H. seat L. washer O. thumb-screw P. and plate A. sub- 105 stantially as shown and described.

7. The combination of the lever H. with the lever E. having arm G., plate A. arm C. and adjusting devices substantially as shown, for the purpose specified.

8. The plate A. slotted arm C. nut D. thumb 110 screw F. in combination with the lever E. having an adjustable damper F' substantially as shown and described.

9. The plate A constructed with an arm I. for sustaining the lever seat L. and an arm C. 115 for sustaining a lever E. substantially as set forth.

10. The lever seat or fulcrum L. having a trunnion K. and screw M. substantially as shown for the purpose specified. 120

11. The lever seat or fulcrum L. having transverse grooves *h.* substantially as shown for the purpose specified.

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