

(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

E. H. MIDDLEAUGH.  
MAIL POUCH OR BAG.

No. 558,826.

Patented Apr. 21, 1896.

Fig. 1.

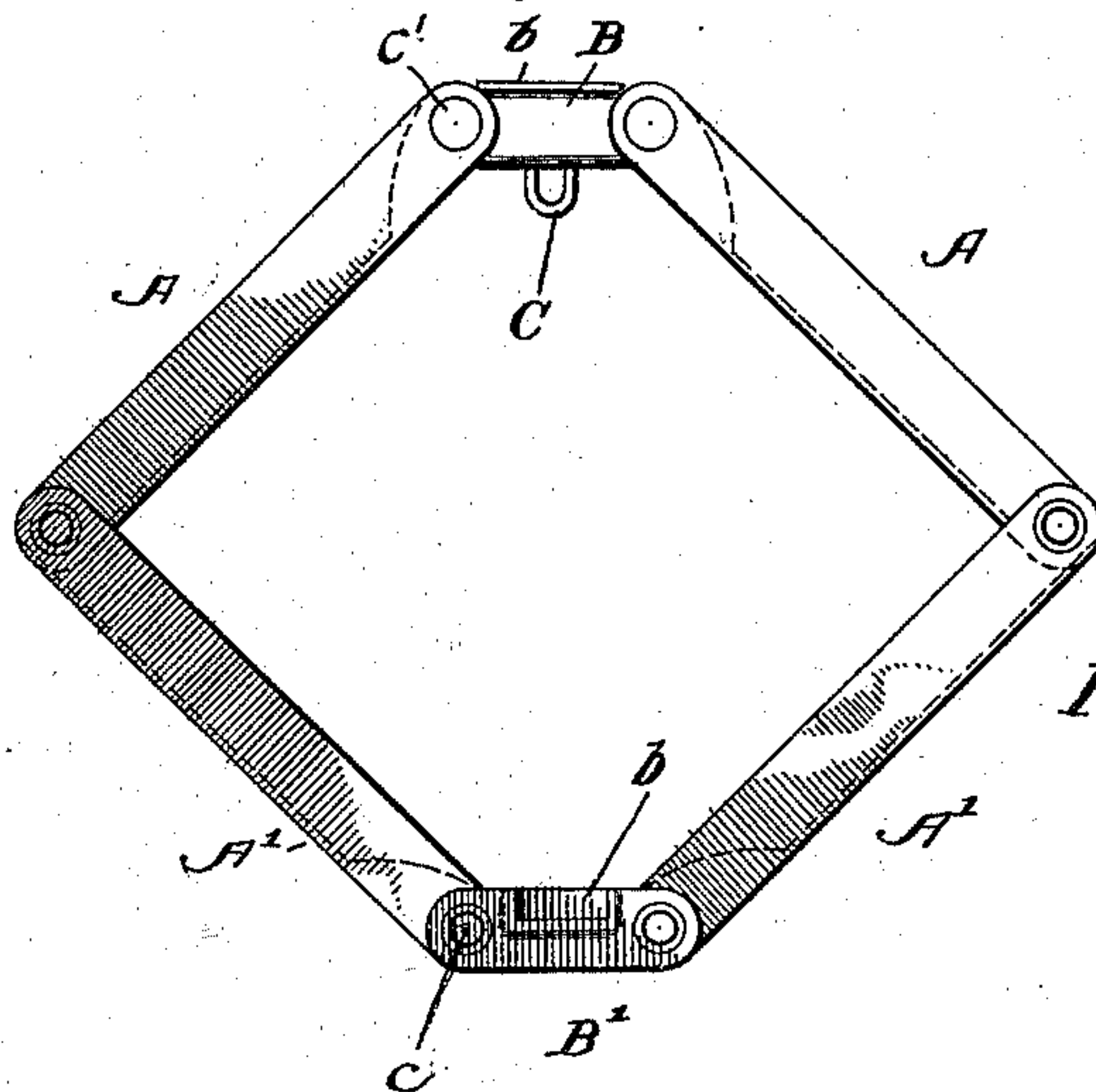


Fig. 9.

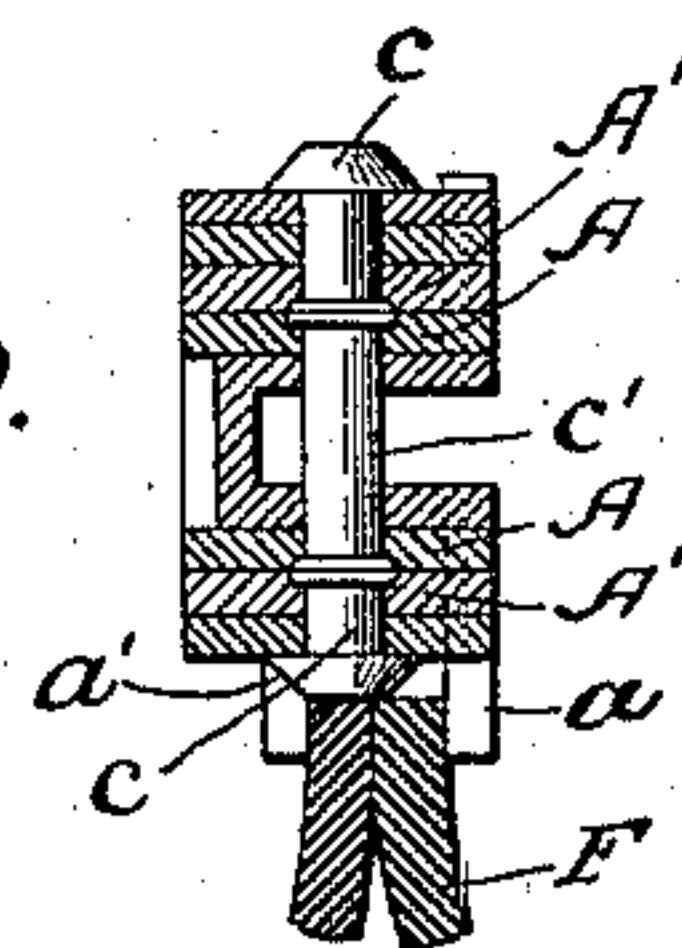


Fig. 3.

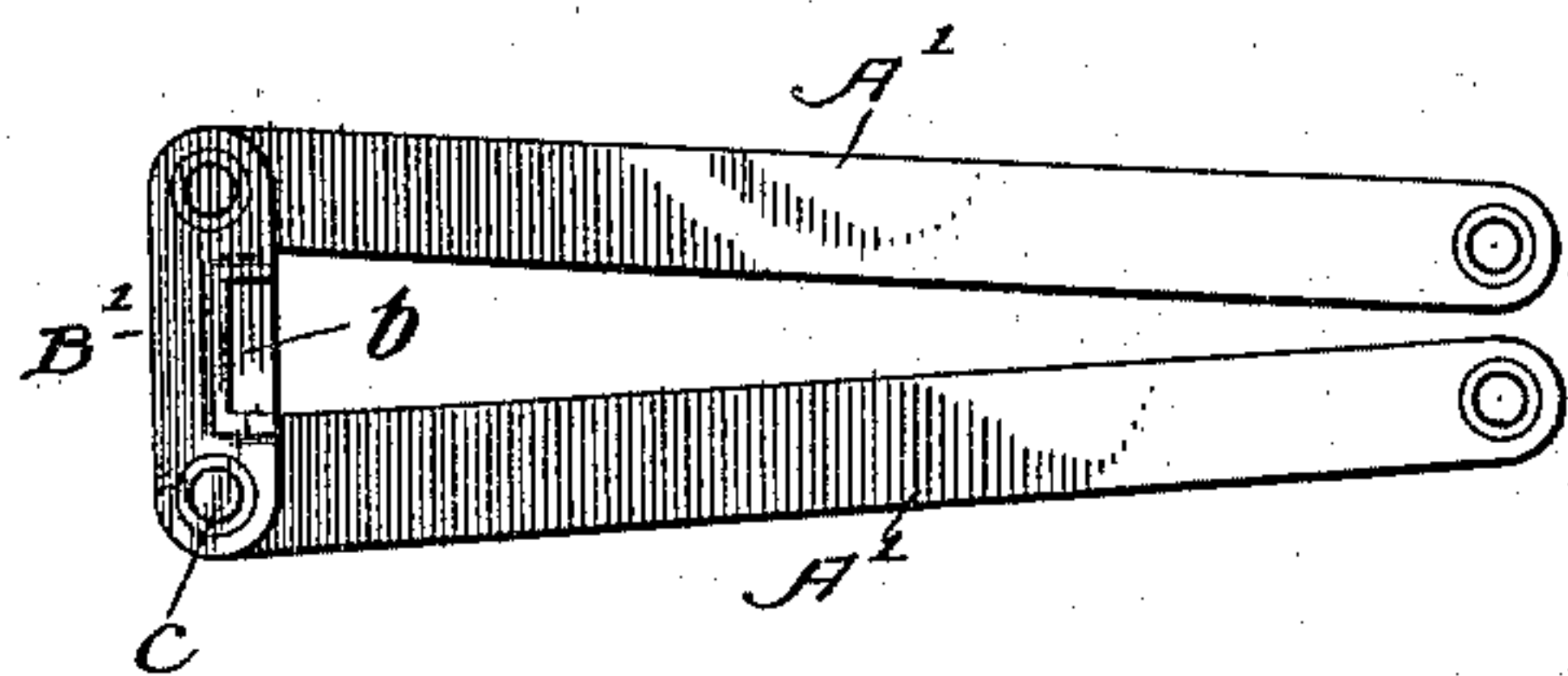


Fig. 4.

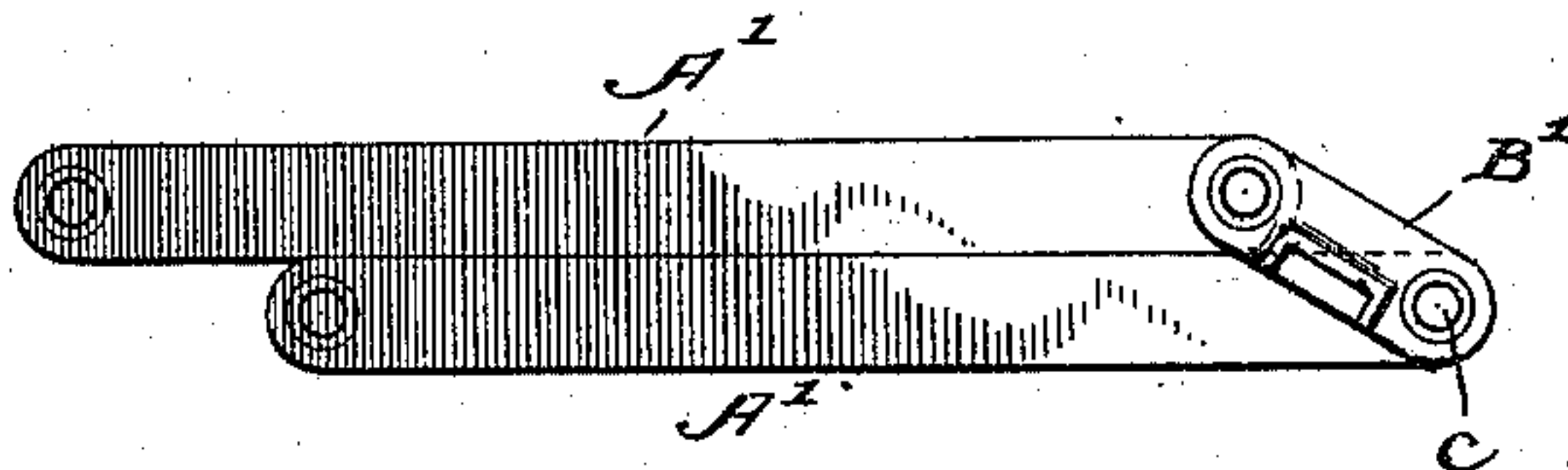
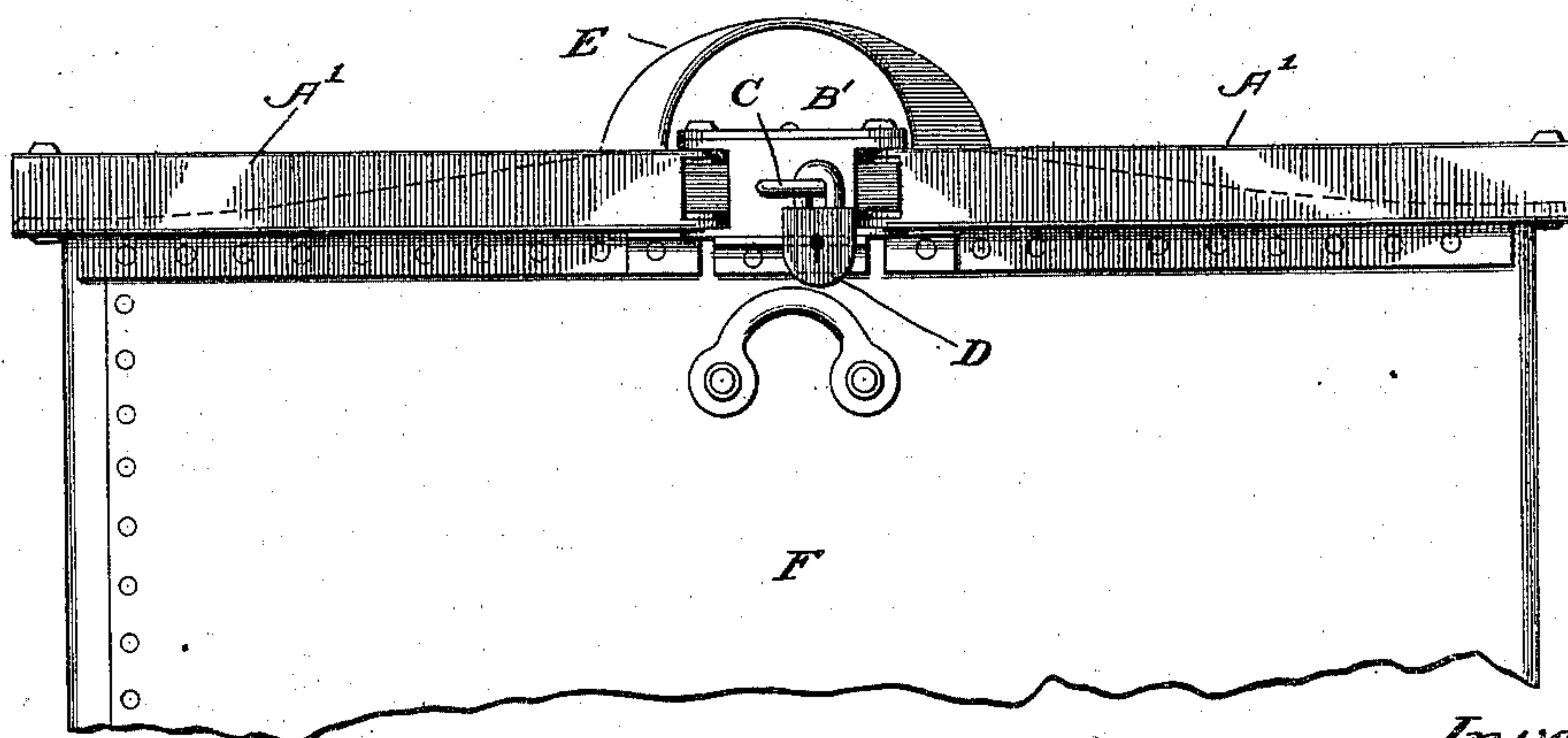


Fig. 2.



Witnesses.

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By Buttenworth & Dowell  
his Attys

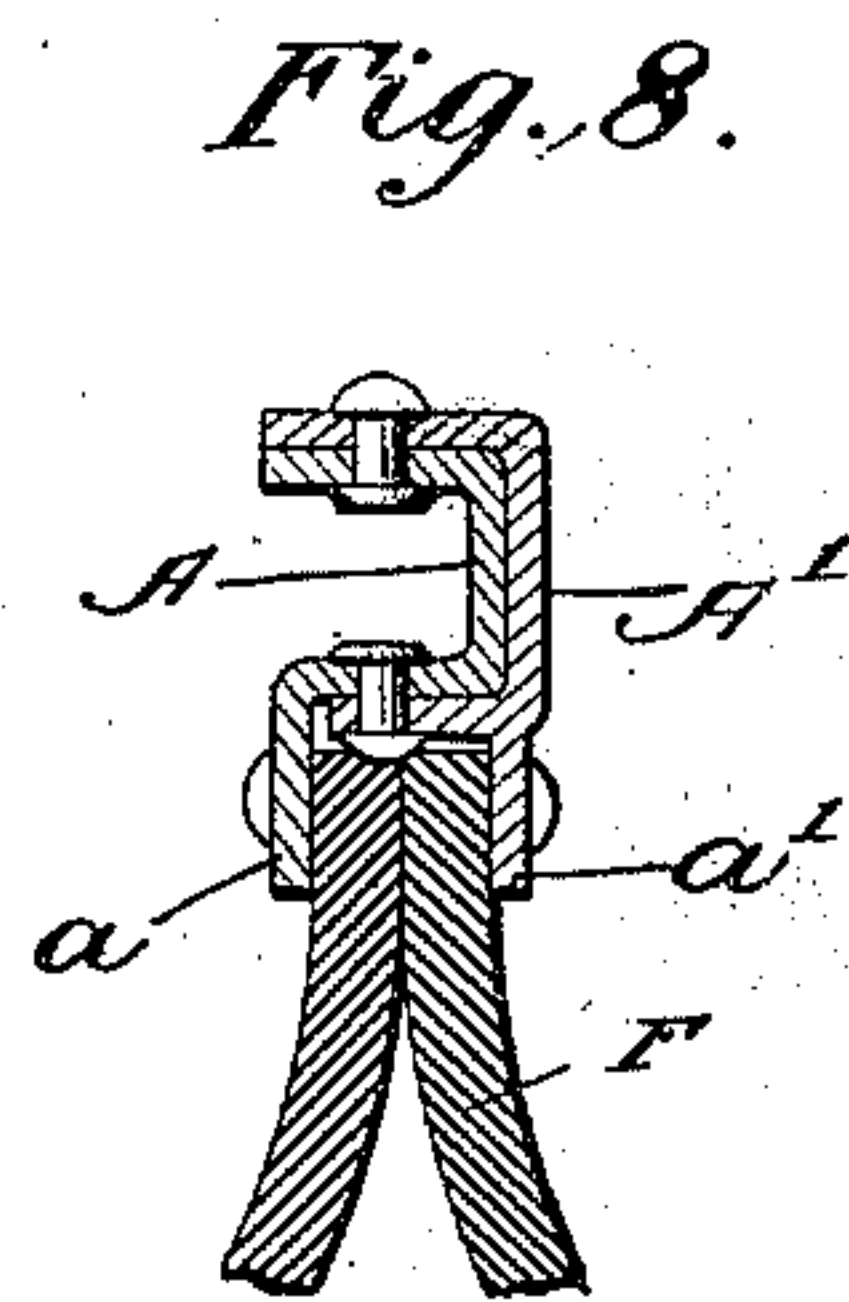
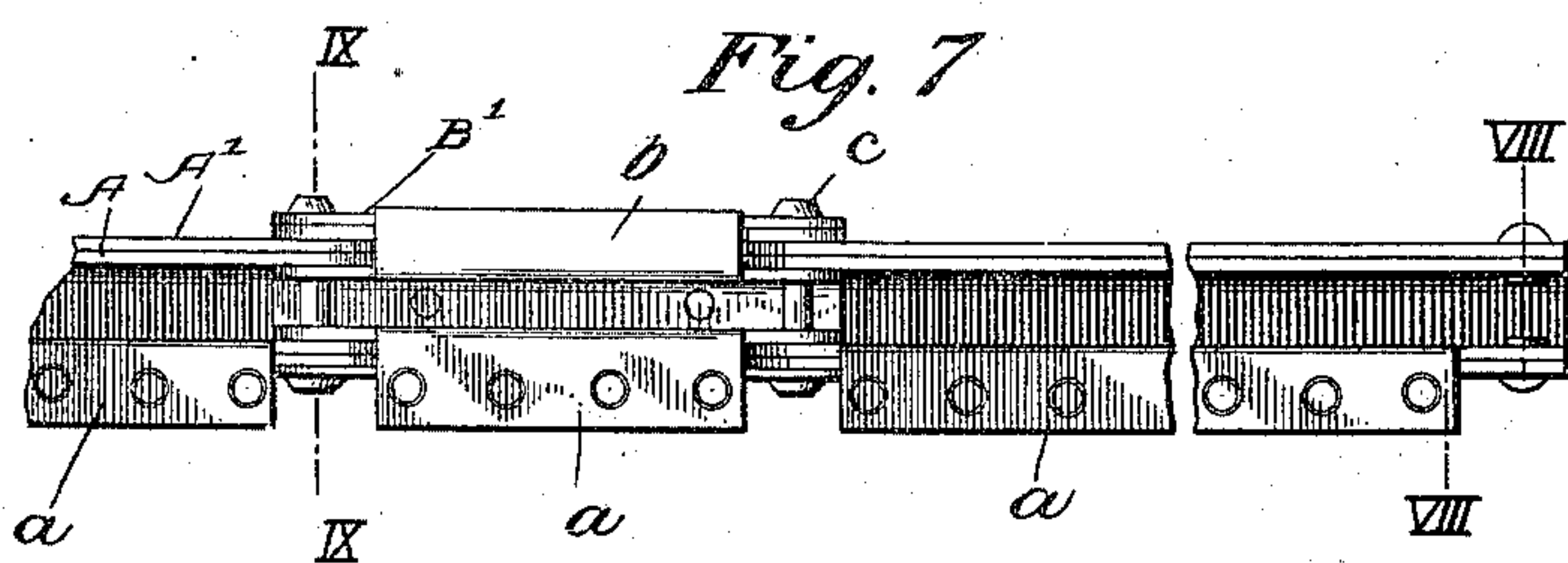
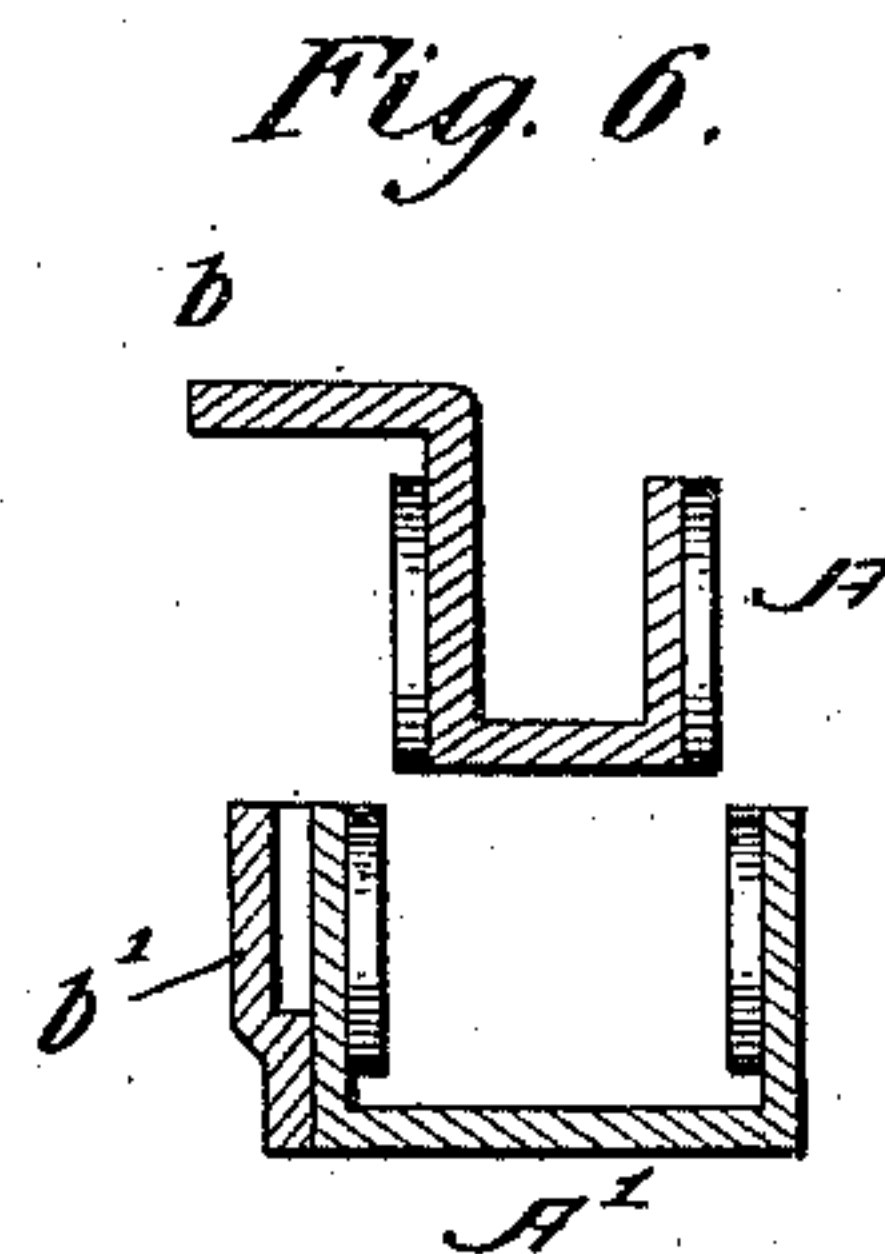
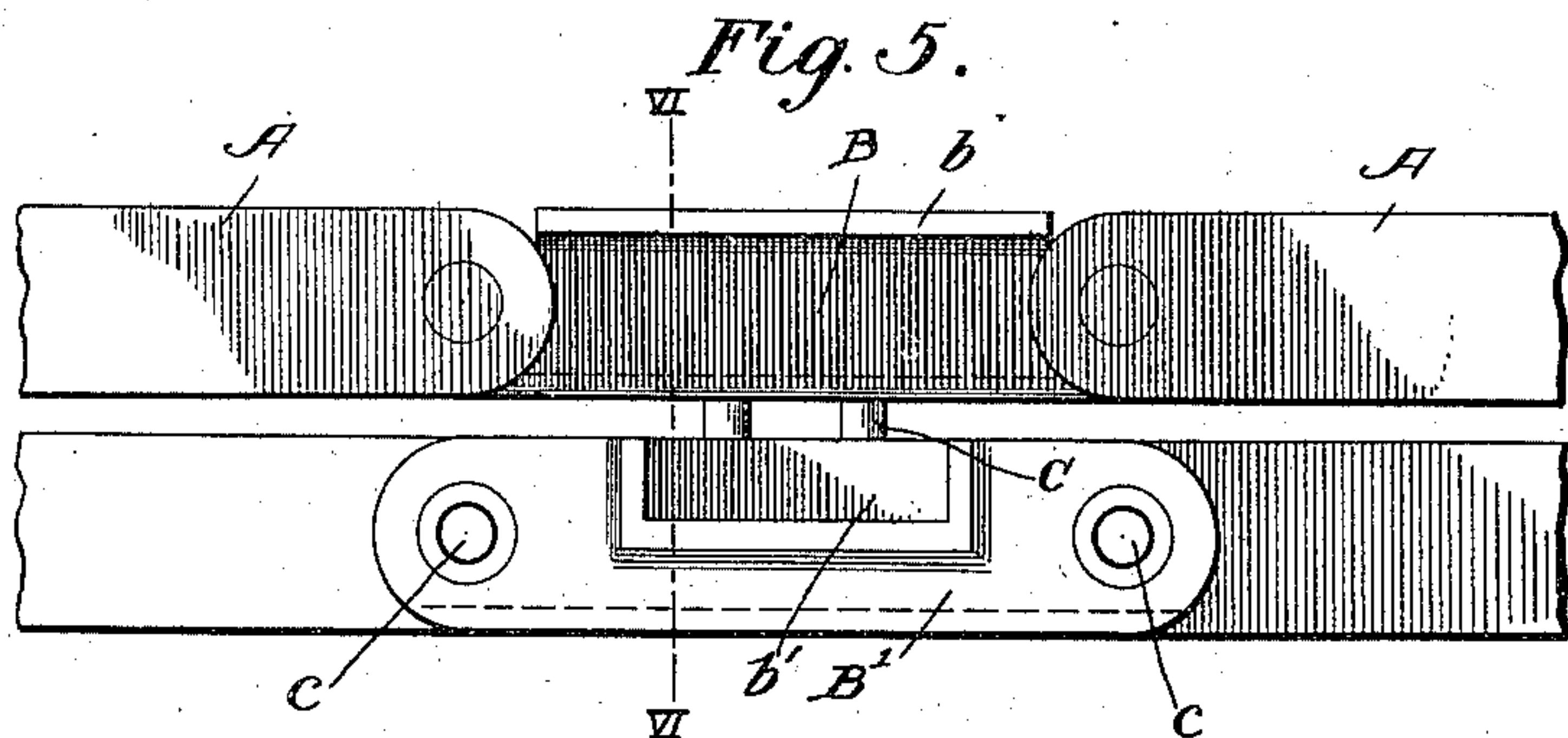
(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

E. H. MIDDAGH.  
MAIL POUCH OR BAG.

No. 558,826.

Patented Apr. 21, 1896.



Witnesses.  
Edw. J. Sullivan  
Charles E. Riordan

Inventor.  
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his Attys



# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ELMER H. MIDDLEAUGH, OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, ASSIGNOR TO GEORGE G. BRIGGS, ALBERT J. GIDDINGS, AND HOMER L. BOYLE, OF SAME PLACE.

## MAIL POUCH OR BAG.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 558,826, dated April 21, 1896.

Application filed August 12, 1895. Serial No. 559,093. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, ELMER H. MIDDLEAUGH, a citizen of the United States, residing at the city of Grand Rapids, in the county of Kent and State of Michigan, have invented a certain new and useful Mail Pouch or Bag, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to mail bags or pouches for carrying mail-matter and for other purposes, but more particularly to mouth-plates or closures for mail-bags.

The primary objects of my invention are to provide a mouthpiece for mail-bags and the like which shall be light and flexible, yet strong and durable, simple in construction, and inexpensive in manufacture.

Other objects are to provide a mouthpiece or closure for mail-bags or other similar contrivances adapted to present an opening of large area for the reception of mail-matter, and to permit a free and unobstructed discharge thereof, so as to facilitate the filling of the bag with letters, papers, &c., and the emptying of the same of its contents, and to prevent a letter or package from catching into a crevice or onto a projection in the act of being discharged, and, further, to provide a mouthpiece or closure which may readily flex or fold in opposite directions to prevent bending the sections of the mouthpiece in use.

The invention will first be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, which are to be taken as a part of this specification, and then pointed out in the claims at the end of the description.

In the drawings, Figure 1 represents a plan or top view of the pivotally-connected plates forming the mouthpiece or closure for the mouth of a mail-pouch, showing the mouth open. Fig. 2 is a side view of the same with the pouch closed and locked. Fig. 3 is a plan or top view showing the mouthpiece closed and folded in triangular form. Fig. 4 is a plan or top view of the same, showing the parts folded in the opposite direction, with the longer plates in contact. Fig. 5 is a fragmentary top view showing the jointed plates or sections of the mouthpiece slightly separated and provided with a label-holding device. Fig. 6 is a cross-section on the line VI VI of Fig. 5. Fig. 7 is a side view of the

mouthpiece closed, part being broken away. Fig. 8 is a cross-section on the line VIII VIII of Fig. 7, showing also attached parts of the mail-sack in section. Fig. 9 is a cross-section on the line IX IX of Fig. 7.

The plates composing the mouthpiece or closure of the mail bag or pouch are made, preferably, of wood fiber, but they may be made of any other suitable material.

As shown, the two longer plates or sections A A at one side of the mouth of the pouch or sack are pivotally connected to the shorter section B, while the corresponding longer sections A' A' on the opposite side are pivotally connected to the short section B', the three sections A A B forming one half of the mouthpiece or closure, while the three opposite corresponding sections A', A', and B' form the other half thereof.

The several plates or sections of the mouthpiece, as shown in Figs. 1 to 9, inclusive, are channeled or U-shaped in cross-section. Two of the longer sections and one of the shorter sections, forming one side or half of the mouthpiece, are preferably larger than the opposite corresponding sections, so that the smaller sections may close into or fit snugly within the concavity or channel formed in the larger sections when the mouthpiece is closed, as shown in Figs. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9. The longer sections of each half or side are connected at one end to an intermediate shorter section and have their opposite or outer ends pivoted to the outer ends of the opposing longer sections, so as to adapt the smaller sections to fit into the channel or concavity in the inner faces or sides of the larger sections, and the several sections are provided with pendent flanges, as at *a a'*, to the inner sides of which the upper edges of the mail pouch or sack may be secured, as shown more clearly in side view in Fig. 7 and in cross-section in Fig. 8, the cloth or leather forming the pouch being attached by rivets or otherwise to the inside of the flanges entirely around the framework or mouth-plates, so as to present a smooth surface between the pouch and mouthpiece and thereby prevent letters or other mail-matter from lodging or catching onto projections when emptying the pouch. This method of attachment also tends to strengthen the



mouth-plates and obviates the necessity for using protecting - plates or strengthening means. A staple C, projecting from the inner side of the intermediate plate or section B, is adapted to pass through an opening in the section B' when the mouthpiece is closed, so as to receive a padlock D or other suitable fastening.

E denotes a handle or loop for carrying the pouch, sack, or bag proper, F, the upper edges of which are shown as they appear when the sack is closed in Figs. 8 and 9, such handle being attached to the framework of the mouthpiece.

As will be seen more clearly in Figs. 7 and 9, the pivots which connect the longer and shorter plates or sections are so arranged that when the mouthpiece is closed the pivots of the smaller sections will be coincident with the pivots of the larger sections, so as to pass between the upper and lower rivets of the larger sections, as shown in Fig. 9, whereby the mouthpiece is adapted to flex or yield at the joints and to be turned upon its intermediate pivots in such manner as to fold readily in opposite directions toward either right or left, as indicated in Figs. 3 and 4, thereby adapting the mouthpiece to readily give or yield under pressure without bending or warping the individual sections.

One of the intermediate sections, as B', is formed or provided with a recessed projection b', adapted to receive and hold any suitable label, which may be retained in position in the recess, when the mouthpiece is closed, by a flange or projection b on the opposite corresponding section, the flange being adapted to come into contact with or sufficiently near the label when the mouthpiece is closed to confine the label in position in the recessed holder and prevent displacement thereof until the closure is unlocked and opened. A metallic or other suitable label may be employed, with any desired inscription thereon.

A mouthpiece or closure constructed as thus far described is not only strong and durable in use, but is sufficiently flexible to prevent bending and consequent injury to individual sections, and enables the user to fold the same when closed into either of the positions indicated in Figs. 3 and 4, and to readily open the mouth of the bag, so as to provide a hexagonal or polygonal opening, which is approximately circular and therefore of large area, affording free access to and egress from the pouch for the purpose of filling or emptying the same, and which at the same time may be closed and locked at a single point, and the rivets connecting the intermediate sections with the longer ones cannot be removed without practically destroying the mouthpiece, for, as will be seen in Fig. 9, the larger sections A' B' are connected by short upper and lower rivets c c, which are exposed at one end only, while the smaller sections A and B are connected by a single rivet or pivot-pin c', which, when the parts are closed, is not

exposed at either end, but appears to be a continuation of the smaller rivets c, and the inner ends of both sets of rivets are preferably countersunk, so as to be flush with the surface of the plate through which they pass and thereby present smooth contacting surfaces.

When the sack is closed, three of the mouth-plates will fit securely and snugly into three of the opposing plates, and in case either plate should become bent by accident or otherwise it may be readily straightened without removing the same from the sack, or, if broken, another plate may be readily substituted in its stead. The rivets, which attach together the sections of the mouth-plates, may also, if desired, be made of different designs, so that if one should be lost or removed and another substituted the sack will show that an alteration has been made, and thus afford means for detecting and thereby preventing tampering with the mails.

Instead of providing channeled or U-shaped plates, as hereinbefore described, the plates in Fig. 2 may be cut away, as indicated by the dotted lines, to lessen the weight.

It will be observed that in the several figures the mouth-plates upon one side of the mouth of the bag are adapted to close and fit snugly into—i. e., within or in interlocking relation to—the opposing plates forming the other half of the mouthpiece, so that when the mouthpiece is closed the intermediate pivot or pivots connecting the sections composing opposite sides or halves of the mouthpiece will be so arranged that the intermediate pivots on one side will be brought into the same vertical plane with the corresponding pivots of the opposing sections the intermediate pivots of the two opposing sections being thus made to coincide, thus permitting the mouthpiece to flex at the joints and assume various positions between the straight position shown in Fig. 2 and the folded positions shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

Having thus fully described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States, is—

1. A sectional flexible mouthpiece or closure for mail-bags and the like, the sections of which are pivotally connected together end to end and adapted when spread apart to form an opening of large area; the sections upon one side of the mouth of the bag being adapted to close into the opposing sections so as to arrange themselves in the same longitudinal plane therewith, with the pivots of the intermediate section upon one side in the same vertical plane with the pivots of the intermediate plate of the opposing sections, whereby the closure may flex or yield at the joints toward either the right or left and may be compactly folded in either direction, substantially as described.

2. A sectional flexible mouthpiece or closure for mail-bags and the like, comprising for each side of the mouthpiece three pivotally-



connected plates or sections; those upon one side being adapted to fit into the opposing sections so as to be arranged in the same longitudinal plane, with the pivots connecting the intermediate and end sections in the same vertical plane, whereby the closure may flex or yield at the joints both right and left and may be compactly folded in either direction, substantially as described.

3. A mouthpiece or closure for mail-bags and the like comprising, for each side of the bag, three pivotally-connected plates or sections two of which are longer than the intermediate section to which they are pivoted at their inner ends, the outer ends of the longer sections being pivoted to the outer ends of corresponding opposing sections and the intermediate shorter sections being arranged diametrically opposite each other; the pivots uniting the longer and shorter sections upon one side being so arranged that when the mouthpiece is closed the pivots of both intermediate sections will be coincident with each other at the joints, to permit the closure to flex either to the right or to the left and to be compactly folded in either direction, substantially as described.

4. A mouthpiece or closure for mail-bags comprising, for each side of the bag, a pair of channeled or U-shaped plates pivotally connected at their inner ends to a short similar section and having their outer ends pivoted

to the outer ends of the longer plates of similar opposing sections, the plates upon one side being larger than those upon the other and arranged so that when closed the smaller plates may fit snugly within the concavities of the larger ones, with the pivots of the intermediate smaller plate fitting between the pivots of the larger intermediate plate and coincident therewith, substantially as described.

5. A mouthpiece or closure for mail-bags and the like, comprising, for each side of the bag, a series of pivotally-connected plates or sections having pendent flanges to which the upper edges of the mail bag or pouch may be secured; said plates being adapted when closed to fit one into the other so that the contiguous edges of the mail-sack may be brought into close contact between the flanges of opposing plates; the pivots of the intermediate section upon one side of the sack being coincident with the pivots of the corresponding opposing section when closed, so as to permit flexure in opposite directions, substantially as described.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal in the presence of two witnesses.

ELMER H. MIDDAUGH. [L. S.]

Witnesses:

EDWARD TAGGART,  
CHRISTOPHER HONDELINK.