

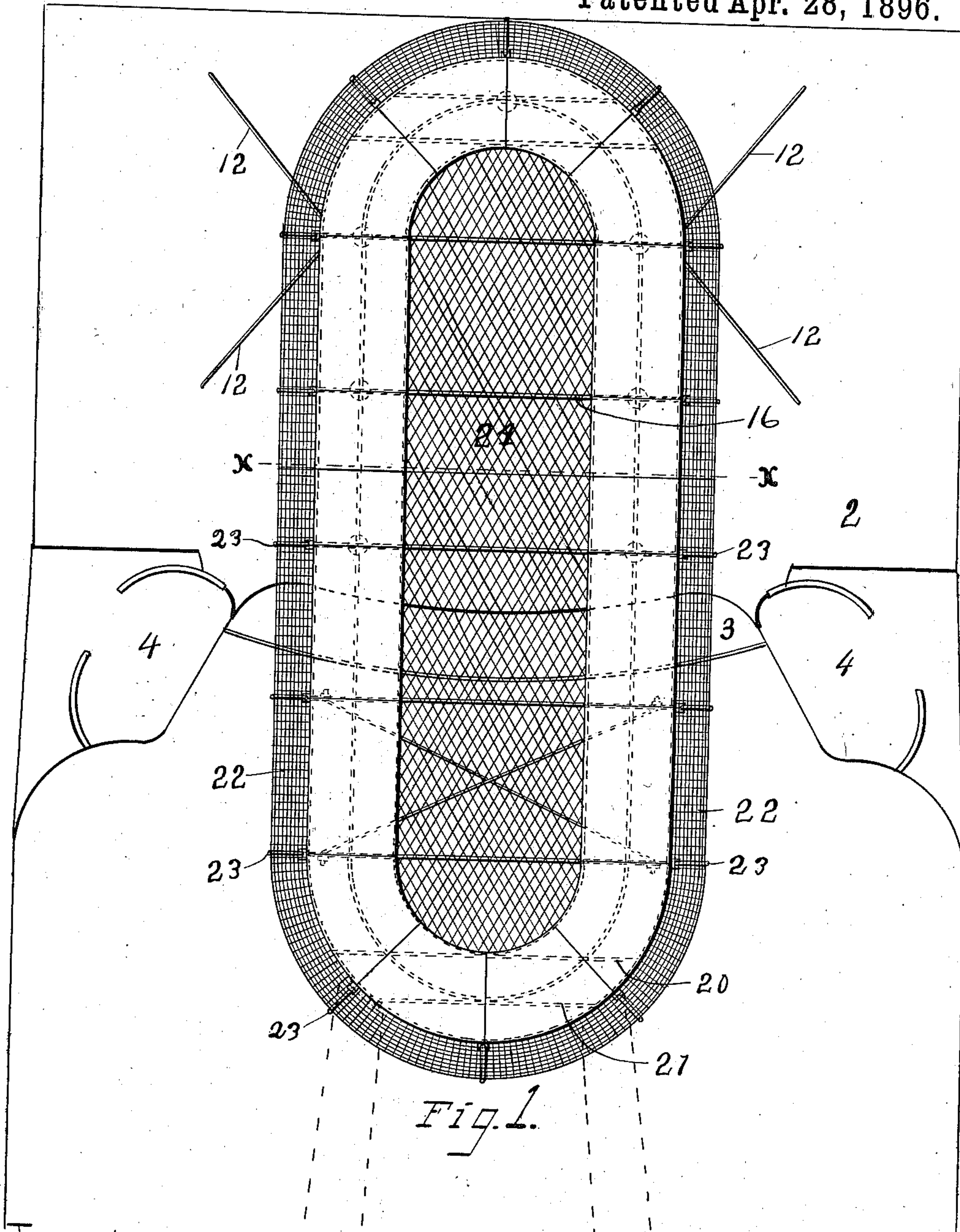
(No Model.)

3 Sheets—Sheet 1.

S. E. HOOPES.  
STAGE RACE TRACK.

No. 559,031.

Patented Apr. 28, 1896.



WITNESSES  
B. P. Shepherd  
Richard Paul

Inventor  
Samuel E. Hoopes  
By Paul & Hawley  
his attorneys

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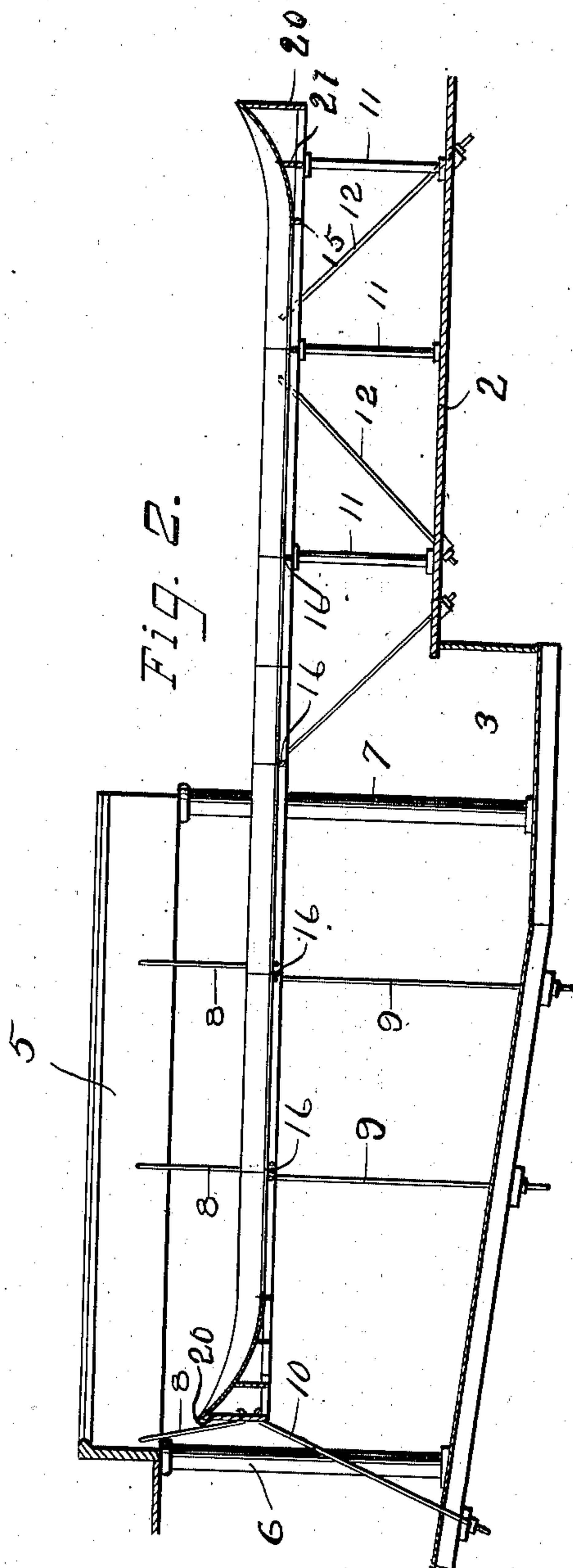


Fig. 2.

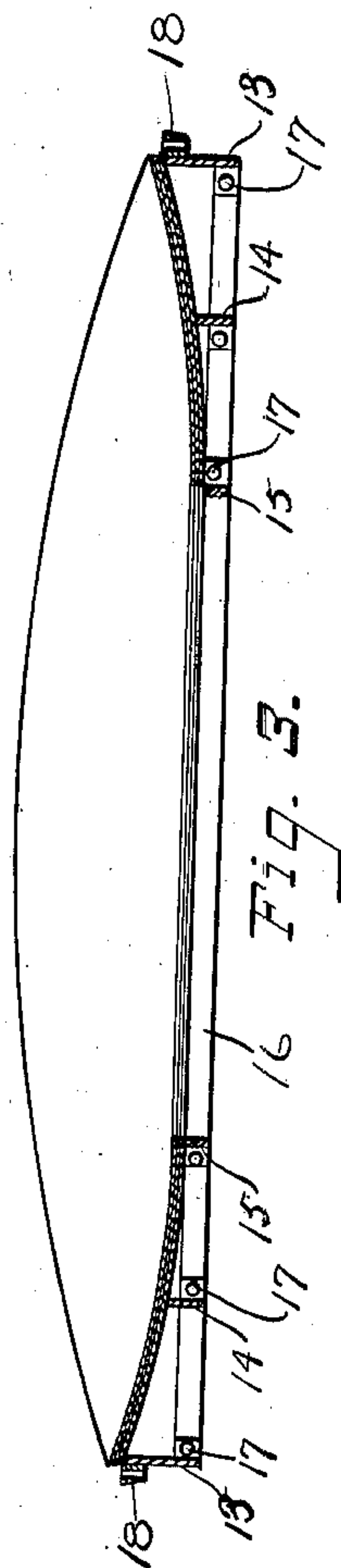


Fig. 3.

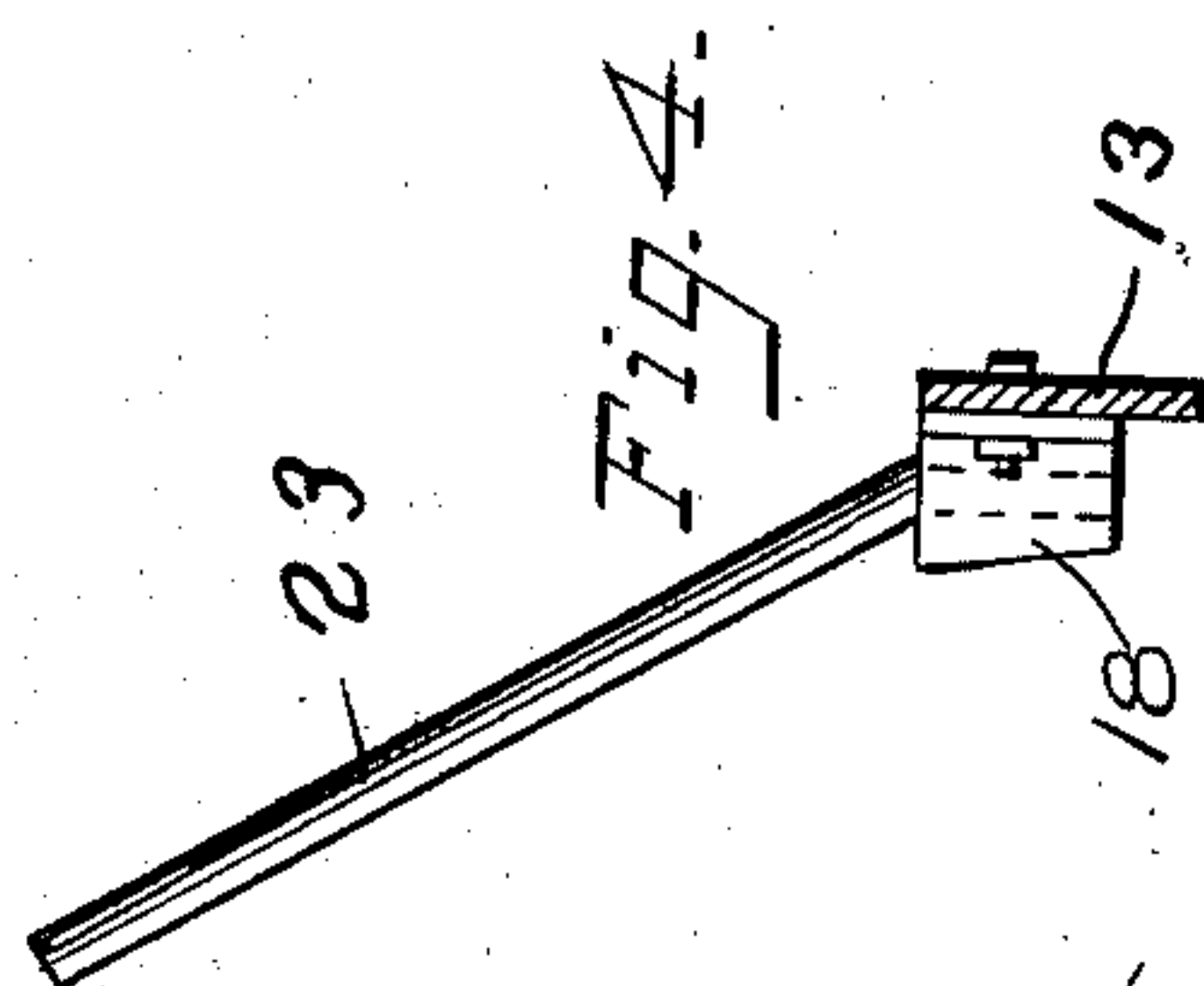


Fig. 4.

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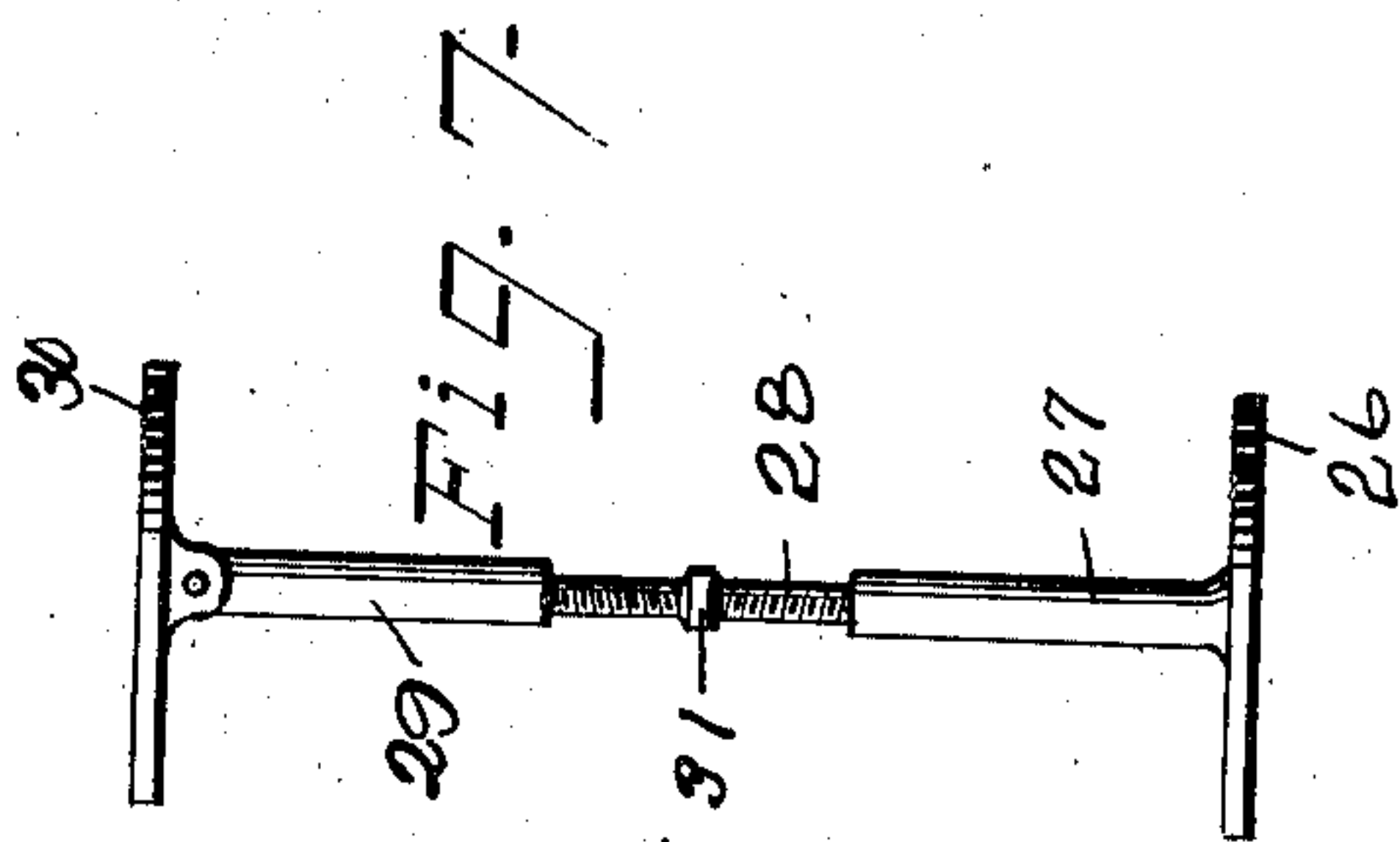
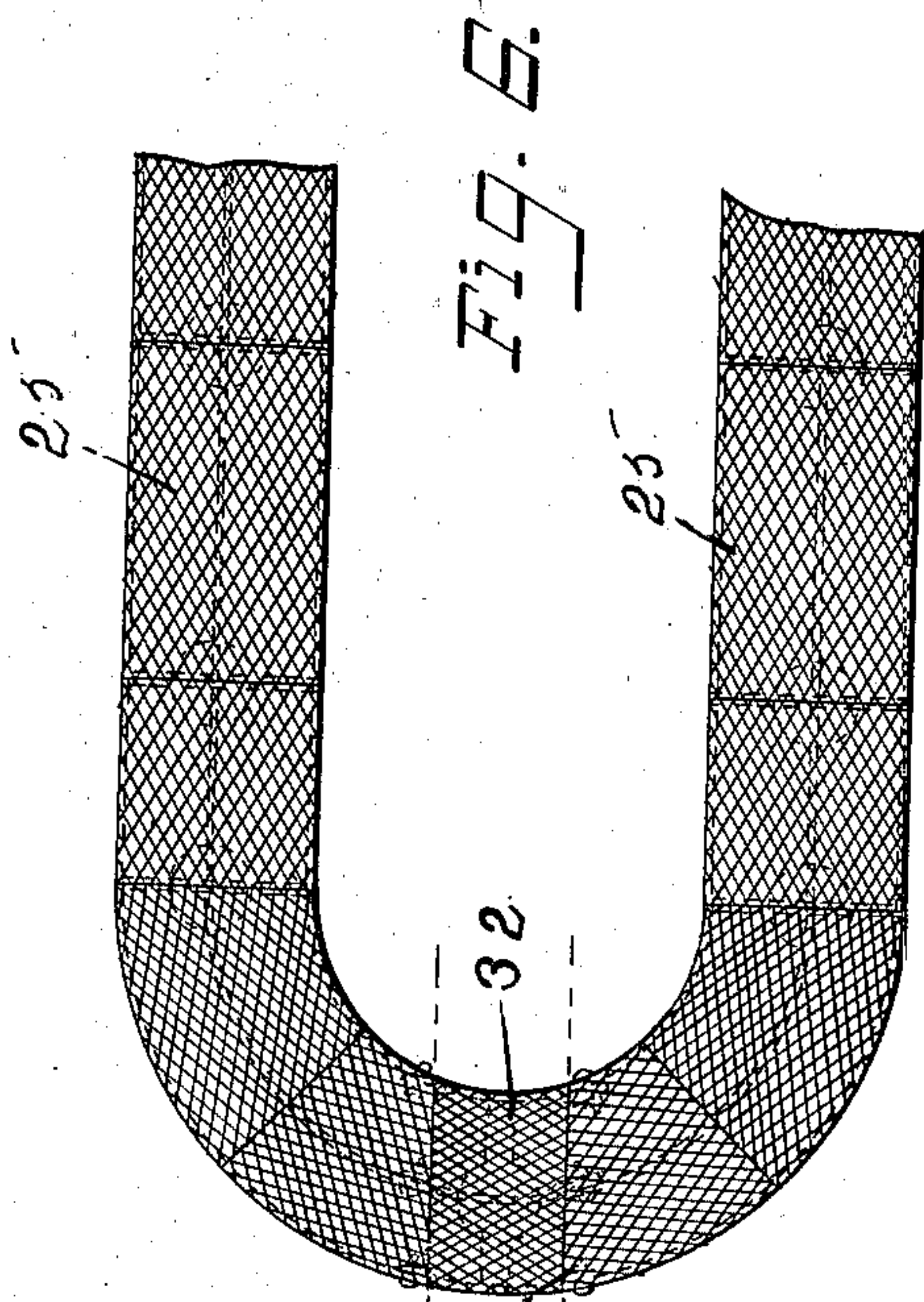
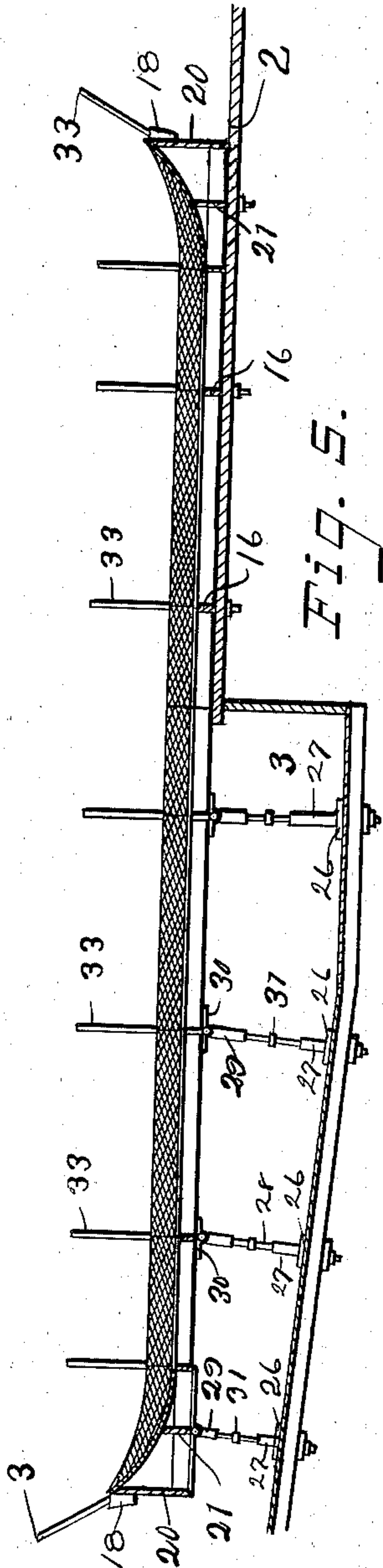
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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

SAMUEL E. HOOPES, OF MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

## STAGE RACE-TRACK.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 559,031, dated April 28, 1896.

Application filed February 16, 1896. Serial No. 579,361. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, SAMUEL E. HOOPES, of Minneapolis, Hennepin county, Minnesota, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Stage Race-Tracks, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to improvements in theater race-tracks, and particularly to a preferably continuous oval or circular race-track, which may be quickly erected or taken down, will be adapted to any theater, and the construction of which will permit its easy transportation from place to place.

Further, my invention relates to a bicycle race-track not confined to the stage, but occupying the auditorium as well, and raised to such a height above the floor of the house that it will be in view from all parts of the theater.

Heretofore theatrical races composing a chief part of the play have taken place entirely upon the stage, and usually before a moving panorama, by which the illusion of movement was obtained.

It is the object of my invention to provide means whereby a real race upon a track, all parts of which are clearly in view, may be performed in a theater as an adjunct to a play. To this end it is necessary that a track of sufficient length for a realistic race be provided, that the track be one which will permit the riders to make several laps thereon, and that the entire track shall be in view of the audience. I find upon consideration that it is further necessary that the track be of such a construction that it may be in position throughout the performance of which the race forms the last act, and yet not materially interfere with the view of the stage. Further, as a theatrical appliance the track structure must be light and composed of sections, so that it may be easily transported with other theatrical properties. It must be of a construction so simple that the ordinary stage-hands may erect it. It must be extensible, to adapt it to theaters of various sizes, as to the length of the hall and the depth of the stage. Means must be provided for supporting the track over uneven or inclined floors and at a considerable height above the same, all without obstructing the theater aisles or seats or the view of the stage; and, further, means

must be provided for firmly anchoring the track, which means should preferably be independent of the walls of the house, as few theaters are provided with such permanent fixtures as would be required for the purpose. Further, the track must be of such a nature that persons sitting beneath the same may watch the approach of riders thereon. Devices must be provided for the safety of the riders, which devices, except during the race, should be either collapsible into a small space or removable; and, further, as the track is preferably raised above the stage floor, means must be devised to allow the curtain to drop clear to the floor.

Having determined the requirements, it is the particular object of this invention to provide a theater race-track conforming therewith.

My invention consists generally in a theater bicycle race-track occupying space both above the stage and the floor of the auditorium; and, further, my invention consists in such a track, preferably in oval or circular form, whereon the riders may make a number of laps; and, further, the invention consists in particular constructions, arrangements, and combination of parts, all as hereinafter described, and particularly pointed out in the claims.

The invention will be more readily understood by reference to the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification.

In the accompanying drawings, forming part of this specification, Figure 1 is a plan view of a bicycle-track embodying my invention. Fig. 2 is a longitudinal section of the same. Fig. 3 is a cross-section on the line *xx* of Fig. 1. Fig. 4 is a detail of one of the standards which support the guard wire or netting surrounding the track. Fig. 5 is a longitudinal section of the track arranged to rest directly upon the floor of the stage. Fig. 6 is a plan view of a portion of Fig. 5. Fig. 7 is a detail of the standard supporting the inner end of the track, as shown in Fig. 5.

In the drawings, 2 represents the stage raised above the floor of the orchestra-pit 3, and 4 represents the boxes arranged upon either side of the stage. By these outlines the position of the track is defined.

In Fig. 2, 5 represents the balcony supported



by the posts 6 and 7, and from the balcony hangers 8 may depend to support the inner end of the track. Beneath the track are arranged upright standards 9, adjustable if desired. These support the track, and at the inner end of the track I preferably provide the inclined standards or guys 10, which serve to prevent any longitudinal movement of the track. I may provide hangers and standards upon each side of the track, if they are needed, to prevent it from swaying.

Upon the stage I provide the upright standards 11 and the inclined rods or guys 12, which securely brace the sections of the track and hold them firmly in position.

To facilitate the movement of the track from place to place, it is made in sections adapted to be securely fastened together. The frame, between the sides of which the floor or track proper is placed, is made up of strips or bars, such as 13, 14, and 15. These bars are connected by cross bars or braces 16, the parts together making up a number of short sections. The cross-bars are provided with holes 17, through which bolts are passed to secure the different sections together. The outer bars 13 upon each side of the track may have sockets 18 to receive the lower ends of the standards 23, between which the safety-nets 22 are stretched.

At each end of the oval track I provide cross bars or rails 20 and 21, together wider than the cross-bars 16, to provide for the incline required at the ends of the track to enable the riders to make the turn without slackening their speed.

Around the outer edge of the track are the nets 22, arranged on the inclined standards 23. The open space in the middle of the oval may, for the further safety of the riders, be closed by a netting 24. In this case the nets 22 may be dispensed with around the inner edge of the track.

A section of the track directly beneath the curtain may be hinged to permit its being raised up or dropped down, or the section may be removable to allow the curtain to fall clear to the stage when it is desired to conceal the stage during the progress of the play.

The track extends from the back of the stage out into the main body of the house, reaching nearly to the balcony. It is raised above the floor and seats of the auditorium and preferably above the stage.

The length of the track and its exact position with respect to position of theater walls and balcony cannot be here determined, as the position of the track in each theater wherein it is used must be so adjusted as to afford the best possible view thereof from all parts of the house. Extra sections are provided to increase either the width or the length of the track oval.

The track proper for bicycles I prefer to make about eight feet in width, although this may be varied according to the number of riders it is desired to put on.

In one view I have shown the track composed of thin strips of wood. These are preferably arranged upon canvas, so that the flooring may be rolled up; but I do not confine myself to this kind of flooring, as I much prefer to employ a style of flooring which will form less of an obstruction to the view of the stage and of the riders upon the track. Such a floor is composed of wire netting or matting, through the meshes of which a view may be had of the stage or of the riders upon the track. The wire-netting may be rolled into a small space and may either be placed in position before the performance or rolled in between the frame parts of the track just before the performance. The guard-nets 22 are preferably thrown down upon the track, except during the race.

The whole track, or at least that part of the same within the auditorium, may be suspended from the ceiling; but I prefer to support the track entirely from beneath, as few theaters are provided with the permanent wall-fastenings which would be required for securely anchoring the track.

In Fig. 5 I have shown a modification of the manner of supporting the track, which consists in resting one end upon the floor of the stage and bolting the sections securely thereto, while the end that extends out over the seats is supported by upright standards. This track is also made in sections, and the different sections are bolted together in the same manner as the track shown and described in Fig. 1.

The adjustable standards supporting the track comprise the base 26, secured to the floor of the theater, having a hollow upright standard 27, threaded at its upper end to receive the screw 28, which enters the threaded lower end of the tube 29, hinged to the under side of the track. The screw 28 is provided near its middle portion with a shoulder 31, having square faces to permit the screw to be turned with a wrench to raise or lower the track. The plate or block 30 being hinged to the top of the jack or adjustable standard 29, the track can be easily adjusted to a horizontal or inclined position without regard to the unevenness of the floor of the theater.

In Fig. 6 the track is shown provided with a removable section 32 opposite the main aisle. (Indicated by dotted lines.) This section may be hinged at one side or may be removed entirely when the track is low down and it is desired to seat the people in the space surrounded by the track. Around the outer edge of the track (shown in Fig. 5) I provide the series of inclined standards 33, like the parts 23, to support the guard wire or netting while the track is in use.

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

1. In a theatrical race-track, the combination, with the stage, of the track above the same, said track extending into the body of



the house over the front of said stage, and means for supporting said track, for the purpose set forth.

2. In a theatrical race-track, the combination with the stage, of the sectional track projecting beyond the front of the stage into the body of the house, and means for supporting said track, substantially as described.

3. The combination, in a device of the class described, with the stage or platform, of the oval sectional track, having one end supported above said stage, and its opposite end projecting beyond the front of the same and supported above the floor of the auditorium, for the purpose set forth.

4. In a stage race-track, the combination with the stage or platform of the sectional track, having one end projecting beyond the front of said stage, means for supporting said track in a horizontal position, and said track being provided beneath the stage-curtain with movable sections or traps, for the purpose set forth.

5. In a stage bicycle-track, the combination with the stage or platform, of the track composed of a series of sections, each section being composed of the rails or bars 13, 14 and 15 and the cross-pieces 16, means for securing said sections together, and supporting the same in a horizontal position, and said track being arranged to project beyond the front of the stage into the main portion of the house, for the purpose set forth.

6. In a device of the class described, the combination with the stage, of the track composed of a series of sections and projecting beyond the front of the stage, means for supporting said track, and the floor or tread of the track being inwardly inclined, for the purpose set forth.

7. The combination, in a stage race-track, of the stage, the track having one end supported upon said stage and the other extending beyond the front thereof into the main portion of the house, said track being composed of a series of sections securely fastened together, means for supporting said track, the guard-netting surrounding the same, and a similar netting filling the space in the middle of the track, for the purpose set forth.

8. In a device of the class described, the combination, with the stage, of the track having one end supported thereby, and its opposite end projecting forward above the seats, said track being composed of a series

of sections secured together, the guard-netting arranged about the track, the wire-matting forming the floor of the same and being inwardly inclined at each end, and means for supporting the inner end of the track, substantially as described.

9. In a device of the class described, the combination, with the stage, of the oval section of track having one end supported thereby and its opposite end extending over the seats, means for supporting said last-named end of the track, the matting forming the floor of the track, the guard-netting surrounding the same, and the movable sections beneath the curtain and opposite the aisles, for the purpose set forth.

10. A theatrical device consisting in a suitably suspended or supported race-track having a floor or tread of an open-meshed material, as and for the purpose specified.

11. An oval or circular theatrical race-track, having adjustable supports and the floor or tread of the track being inwardly inclined and of an exaggerated inclination at the ends or turns, as and for the purpose specified.

12. A theatrical appliance consisting in combination with the stage, of a curvilinear track extending from the stage into the body of the house and suitable supports therefor, as and for the purpose specified.

13. A theatrical appliance comprising a substantially curvilinear race-track extensible above the floor of the stage and of the auditorium and composed of separable sections and adjustable supports whereby the track is adapted for use in various theaters, as and for the purpose specified.

14. The combination in a theatrical device of the class described, of a curvilinear track supported from the stage and the floor of the auditorium, and said track having sections which are removable to permit the curtain to drop, as and for the purpose specified.

15. A theatrical appliance comprising an oval or circular track made in sections and having vertically-adjustable supports, as and for the purpose specified.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 11th day of February, A. D. 1896.

SAMUEL E. HOOPES.

In presence of—

RICHARD PAUL,  
M. E. GOOLEY.