

(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

P. M. CUNNINGHAM.
POCKET BILLIARD TABLE.

No. 559,790.

Patented May 5, 1896.

Fig. 1,

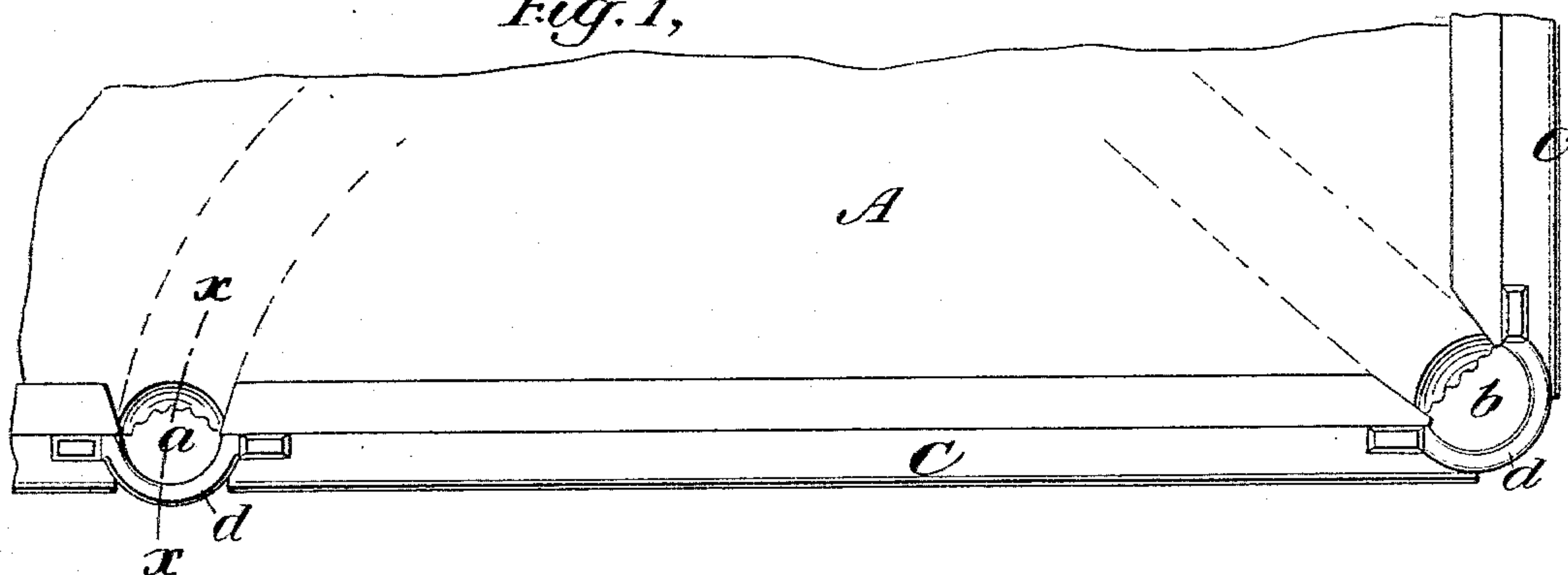


Fig. 2,

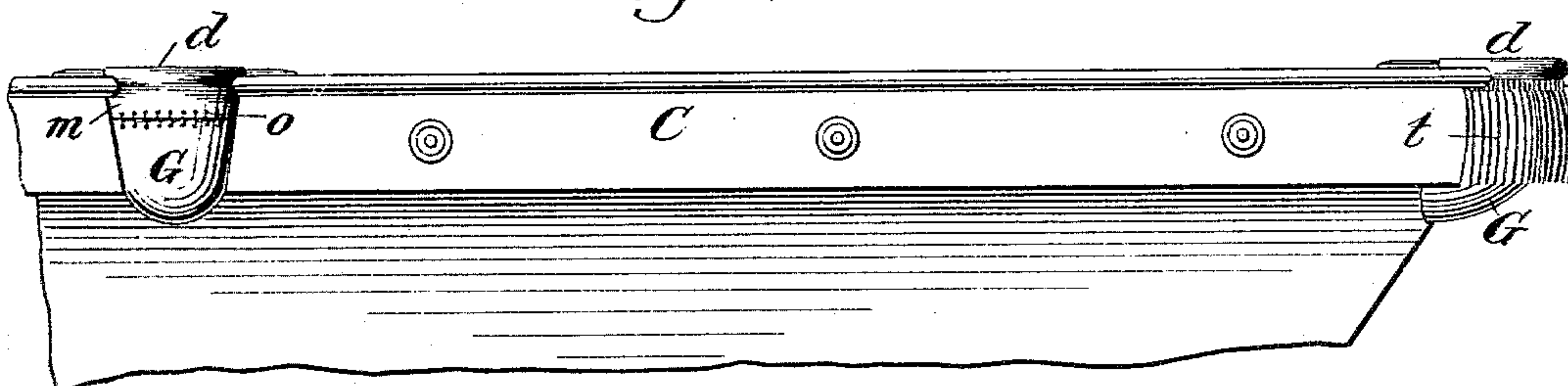
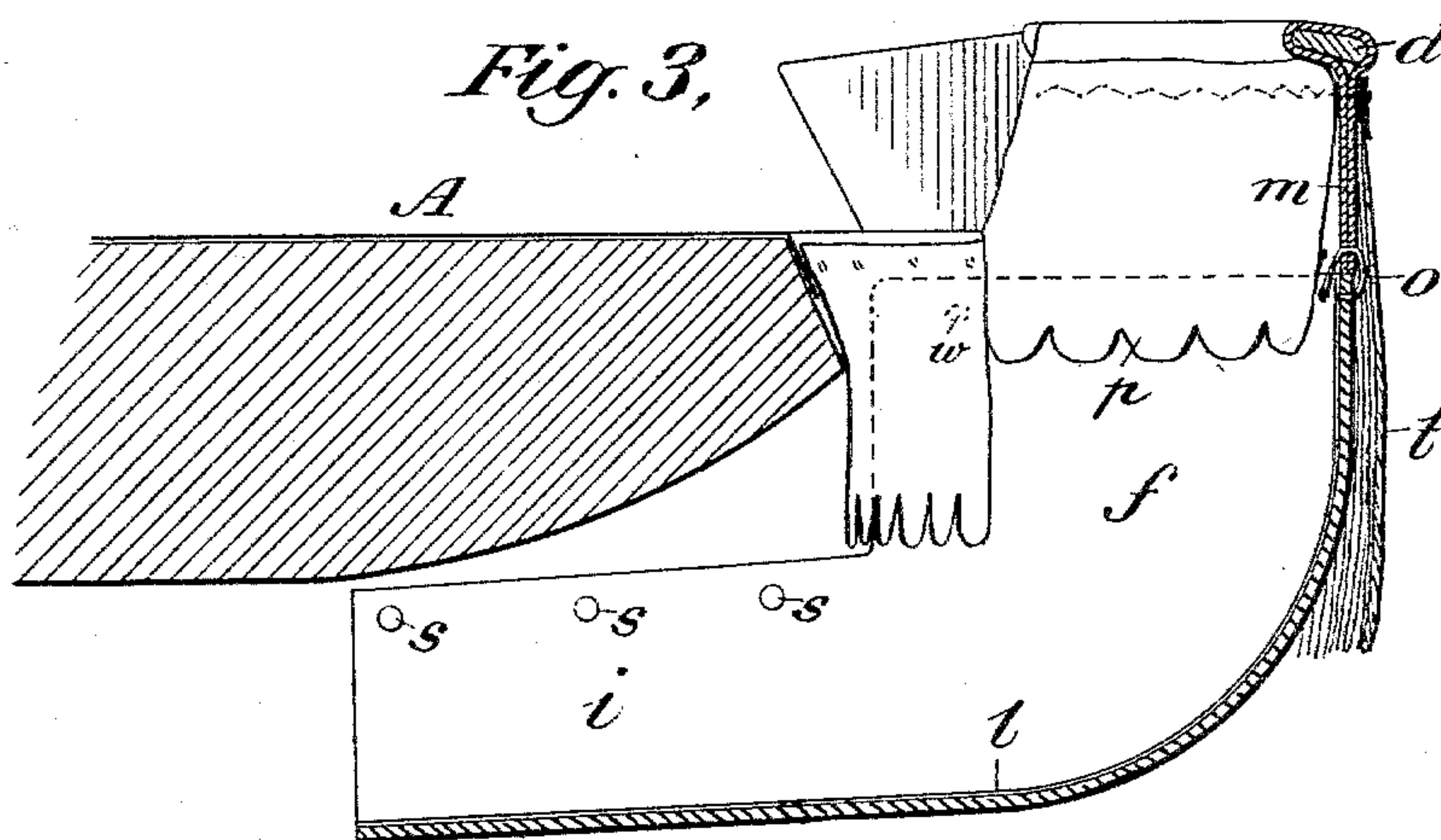


Fig. 3,



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BY

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(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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POCKET BILLIARD TABLE.

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Fig. 4.

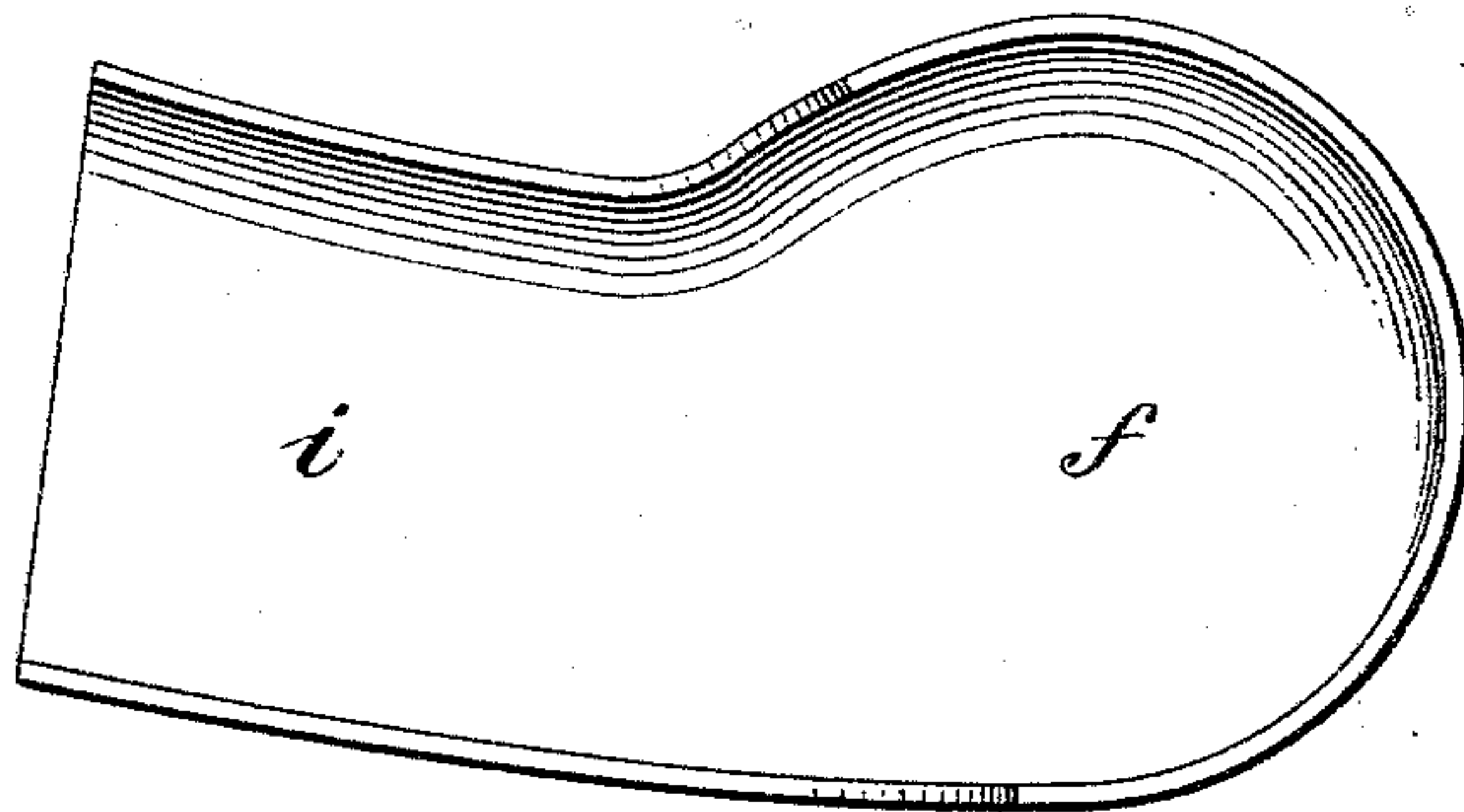
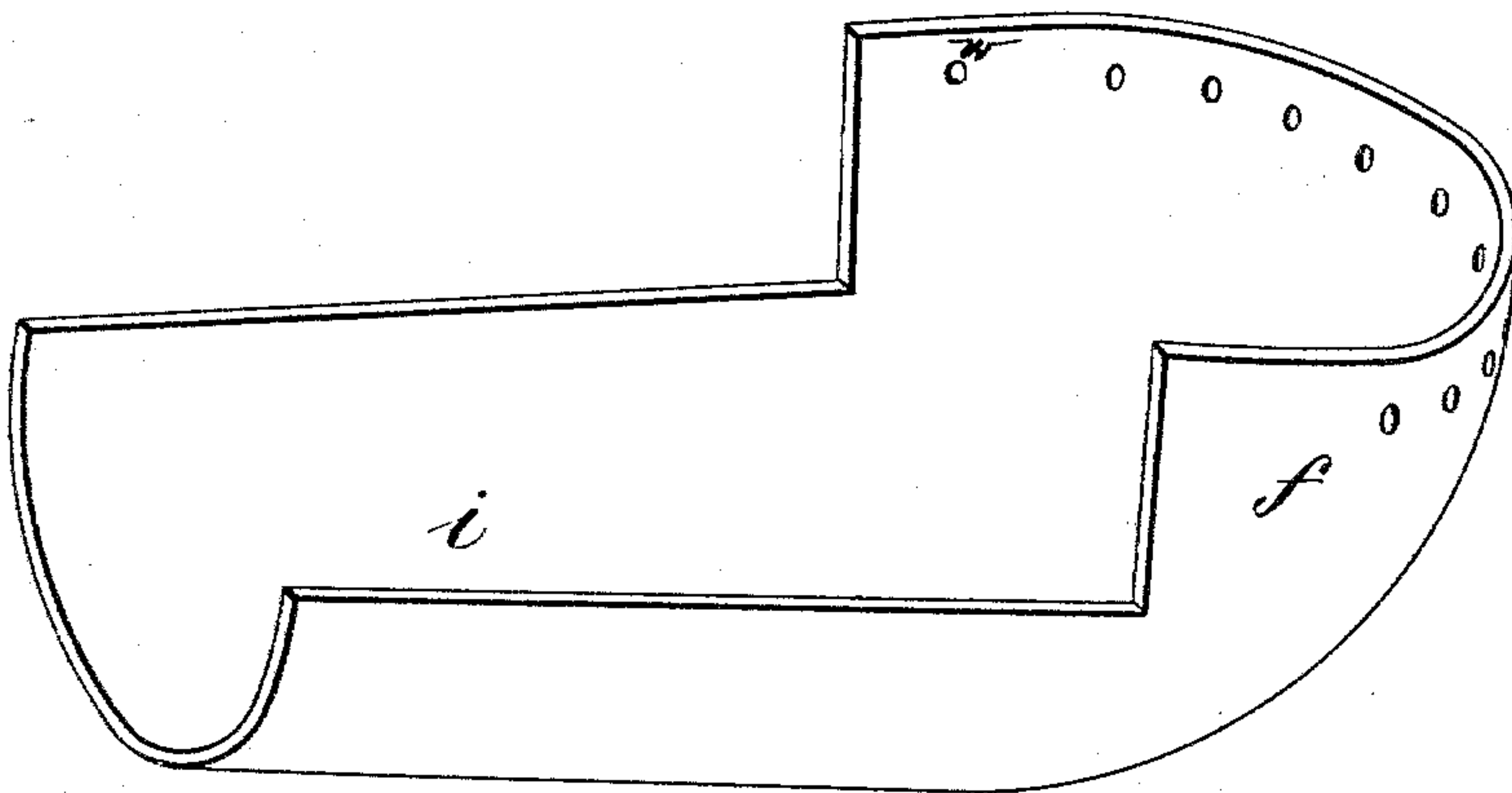


Fig. 5.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

PATRICK M. CUNNINGHAM, OF NEW YORK, N. Y., ASSIGNOR TO THE BRUNSWICK-BALKE-COLLENDER COMPANY, OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

POCKET BILLIARD-TABLE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 559,790, dated May 5, 1896.

Application filed June 26, 1895. Serial No. 554,084. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, PATRICK M. CUNNINGHAM, a citizen of the United States, residing at New York, in the county of New York and State of New York, have invented a certain new and useful Improvement in Pocket Billiard-Tables, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming part of this specification.

My invention relates to billiard-tables provided with pockets and to that species of pocket-tables (used mostly for the game of fifteen-ball pool) in which bottomless pockets are used that communicate with the outer ends of a series of ball conduits or gutters, by means of which all the holed balls are automatically conducted from the several pockets of the table into a receptacle at the foot of the table and beneath its bed, in a manner and for the purposes well known.

Previous to my invention the primitive construction of this species of table was such that a reticulated pocket of strong cord, made with its lower open end somewhat smaller than the mouth, communicated directly with the outer end portion of the ball-conduit, the discharge end of the pocket being reinforced by the insertion within the outer portion of the conduit of a piece of strong thick leather bent into a somewhat concave shape and having its outer end coupled, by straps and buttons, to the pocket-net, said leather operating to lessen the noise which would otherwise be made by the balls passing from the pockets into the conduits, usually made of wood. A later construction, and that used almost wholly up to the present time, is that in which metallic gutter-irons of approximately hemispherical form are secured to the exterior of the table-body, so as to form cup-shaped extensions outwardly of the conduits, and in which the usual pocket-netting which depends from the ordinary "pocket-iron" has its lower edge securely fastened to the upper semicircular edge of said gutter-iron, all in a manner well understood by those familiar with the manufacture and use of pool-tables. This last-mentioned and almost universally employed construction, while it is compara-

tively strong and durable, (the metallic gutter-irons being usually able to bear the strain and shocks of forcibly-holed balls,) is objectionable in some particulars, chief among which are, first, that of a great liability of injury to the ivory balls by contact with the upper edge of the gutter-iron; second, that of a liability of a forcibly-holed ball to rebound or jump back onto the table, and, third, that of a tendency of the hard knocks and jars to which the gutter-iron is subjected to loosen the connections between the gutter-iron and the table-body. I propose to provide for use a construction which shall be free of all the defects or objectionable features of the pocket devices now in use, while at the same time simple, economic of manufacture, perfectly efficient, durable, and of extremely neat appearance.

To these main ends and objects my invention may be said to consist, essentially, in a device adapted for use in connection with the usual pocket-iron and ball-conduit, which has a cup-shaped outer end extending nearly up to the pocket-iron and attached securely to a depending portion of the pocket-iron "leather," the said device also having its inner end gutter-shaped and connected with or forming a continuation of the ball-conduit, all as will be hereinafter more fully explained, and as will be most particularly pointed out in the claims of this specification.

To enable those skilled in the art to which my invention relates to understand and practice it, I will now proceed to more fully describe the same, referring by letters to the accompanying drawings, which form part of this specification, and in which I have shown my improvement carried out in that precise form in which I have so far practiced it with great success.

In the drawings, Figure 1 is a partial top view, on a small scale, of a pocket billiard-table made according to my invention. Fig. 2 is a side view of the same, but with the pocket-fringe of the side pocket omitted. Fig. 3 is a vertical detail section at the line *xx* of Fig. 1, drawn on a scale of about half-size. Fig. 4 is a view, on the same scale, of one of the side-pocket ball receiving and

guiding devices detached. Fig. 5 is a perspective view, same scale, of one of the corner-pocket ball-receiving devices detached.

In the several figures the same part will be found always designated by the same letter of reference.

A is the bed of the table, formed with cut-outs at the vicinities of the pockets *a b*, (see Fig. 1,) of which there are usually six, and provided with cushion-rails C, the adjacent ends of which have secured to them, as shown, the pocket-irons *d*, all in a manner well understood by the billiard-table manufacturer.

From the vicinities of the lower portions of the pockets or the holes *ab*, into which the balls are played, extend inwardly of and beneath the bed of the table the usual ball-conduits, (indicated by dotted lines at Fig. 1,) which conduct the holed balls to the common receptacle therefor, all as well understood.

Instead of using in connection with the pocket-openings *a b* and the pocket-irons *d* the usual devices of a gutter-iron of cup shape secured to the table-body with its upper semicircular edge about on a level with the lower end of the usual netting that is fastened at its top to the pocket-iron leather and at its bottom edge to said gutter-iron, I dispense wholly with the usual net and use the construction which I will now describe.

G is a device made, preferably, of heavy or sole leather (though it may be made of other analogous material or even of metal, having its upper or interior surface faced with leather or other sound-deadening material) and formed so as to possess a cup-shaped outer end portion *f* and an approximately semicylindrical inner extension *i*. The gutter-shaped portion *i* is arranged within the outer end portion of the usual ball-conduit, as shown, and the part *f* lies adjacent to the outer part of the cushion-rail of the table and extends upwardly to within a short distance of the usual curved part of the pocket-iron *d*. That portion *i* of the device G which lies fitted within the ball-conduit of the table is in the case shown securely fastened to the bottom and sides of said wooden conduit by small nails or large tacks at *s*, (see Fig. 3,) and the pocket-iron leather or covering has a depending apron-like portion *m*, the lower edge of which just meets the upper edge of the part *f* of the device G, which part *f* is tacked to the cushion-rail at *w*. These meeting edges of the parts *f* and *m* are securely fastened together in the case shown by a strong lacing-cord *o*, passed through holes made in their meeting edges, though some other suitable means may of course be adopted to firmly and durably connect these parts of the pocket contrivance.

t is the pocket-fringe or outer ornamental draping of the pocket. It is fastened to the pocket-iron covering of leather and depends from the leather-covered curved portion of said iron in about the usual manner of the fringe hung exteriorly of the net pocket or

bag that prior to my invention has always been suspended from said pocket-iron.

Preferably the sole-leather device G is lined with a piece of thin and fine leather or kid *l*, both for appearance sake and to render the action of forcibly-holed balls still more noiseless, and an ornamental apron *p*, of some suitable material, may be arranged to depend from the pocket-iron to form a sort of loose lining to the pocket-iron leather *m*, all as shown.

It will be observed that in my improved construction of pocket-table not only are the usual nettings (or net-pockets) wholly dispensed with, (at a very considerable saving in the cost of manufacture,) but the usual lower row or piece of fringe is also discarded, the dispensing with this lower fringe being due to the fact that the only joint or connection between the device G and the pocket-iron *d* is where the parts *m* and *f* are fastened together, which is at a line above the level of the bottom of fringe *t*. In practice that small convex portion of the device G that is exposed to view below the ornamental fringe *t* (the lower edge of which fringe should be about on a level with the bottom of the cushion-rail) is made to match in color and appearance the wood of the broad rail, so that, unlike the gutter-irons so generally in use prior to my invention, the device G, where its exterior is exposed to view, appears to be a part of the table-body. It will be understood, of course, that while all four of the corner-pocket devices G are alike and have the portion *i* somewhat longer than the corresponding part of the side-pocket devices the two side-pocket devices G differ in the respect of having their gutter-like parts *i* run obliquely in different directions to match the directions in which the ball-conduits leading inwardly from the side pockets always run.

In the use of my improved construction all the serious objections to previously-employed pocket devices are wholly overcome or avoided by reason of the different mode of operation of the former.

In the use of a table made according to my invention, when a ball is played forcibly into the pocket it strikes the leather-covered pocket-iron *d*, as usual, and is thereby deflected downwardly; but instead of next coming into contact with the heretofore usual netting (or net bag) and bulging or straining the latter outwardly sufficiently to partially seat itself on or forcibly strike the upper edge of the usual gutter-iron the ball in its course after coming into contact with the pocket-iron follows downwardly the continuous curved course formed by the interior surfaces of the connected leather *m* and cup-shaped part *f* of the device G, so that without any obstruction from any sort of inward projection (or shoulder-like device) the ball follows the curved surface, by which its forward course is gradually translated into a downward one, the inertia of the ball being gradually overcome until it enters the ball-conduit at a com-

paratively slow pace. Thus not only is all liability of a ball rebounding out of the pocket (when played into the hole very hard) entirely overcome, but the shocks and blows to which the ball and also the pocket or gutter devices of the table are usually subjected (to the injury of both the ball and the table) are wholly avoided. Furthermore, I am enabled by my improvement to dispense entirely with the worsted or silk net pocket-bags, always heretofore necessarily used in the manufacture of the table, thus saving, where the best quality of goods is used, three or four dollars on a table, and I also save one piece of fringe or one set of fringes for the six pockets of each table, besides which saving of costs in the manufacture of the table, the latter having only one set of fringes *t*, that hang down even with the lower edges of the cushion-rails, (see Fig. 2,) the table presents a more unique appearance than when trimmed with two sets of fringes, the lower one of which hangs wholly below the level of said rails.

I have found in practice that the special construction of the device *G* shown—that is, made of heavy or sole leather, molded or shaped as illustrated—is admirably adapted to all the designed purposes of my invention, as it is comparatively cheap, possesses the qualities of combined stiffness and a moderate degree of softness, and is more noiseless under the action of balls played into the pockets than a metallic device would be unless very heavily lined with softer stuff, and the more lining materials used the more liability of crumpling and wear there must be to the interior of the device. Of course as the greater part of the shock and strain to which a pocket device is subjected is at the vicinity of that part extending downwardly from a point at about the middle of the curve of the pocket-iron *d* it is not so very necessary that the side portions of the cup-shaped part *f* should be so securely held in place; but, as seen at Fig. 5, I perforate the top edge of *G*, so that it is laced to the pocket-iron leather *m* far enough around on each side to insure a perfect support to the device *G* and keep it always perfectly in place.

The device *G* (especially since no part of it is subjected to any blow delivered transverse to any part of its ball-surface) is easily retained durably in place by the fastening of its portion *i* within the wooden conduit or trough of the table by nails or tacks *s*, and

the securement of its outer end portion *f* to the stout leather *m* of the pocket-iron, and there is no liability of any derangement of any of the parts by the roughest usage to which a pool-table is ever subjected.

I wish it to be understood that so far as the generic feature of my invention is concerned the device *G* might be made of some other material and that variations may be made in the details of the general construction, though the special construction which forms a secondary part of said invention I consider desirable and important.

Having now so fully explained my invention that those skilled in the art can practice it, either in part or in whole, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. In that species of pocket-table provided with ball-conduits, or concealed alley-ways, the combination, with the table-body; the ball-conduit thereof; and the usual pocket-iron, of a ball receiver and guide which communicates, at its inner portion, with said ball-conduit, and the outer upper portion *f* of which is curved upwardly toward and near to the pocket-iron and is securely fastened at its upper edge to the depending portion of the leather covering of said iron; all substantially as and for the purposes set forth.

2. In combination with the table-body; the ball-conduit; and the usual leathered pocket-iron, a device (such as *G*) formed with a gutter-like portion *i* and a cup-shaped portion *f* and having the upper edge of the latter secured, to the pocket-iron leather and the former fitted within and securely fastened to the outer end portion of said ball-conduit; all substantially as and for the purposes described.

3. In combination with the table-body; the ball-conduit thereof; and the usual pocket-iron, a ball receiving and guiding device having a cup-shaped outer portion *f* extending up toward and fastened to the pocket-iron, or its covering material, and composed of thick leather molded, or formed, into the requisite shape; as and for the purpose set forth.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 31st day of May, 1895.

P. M. CUNNINGHAM.

In presence of—

CHRIS NAGLE,
JOHN J. LOGUE.