

(No Model.)

W. GRAY.
BASE BALL MASK.

No. 571,437.

Patented Nov. 17, 1896.

Fig. 1.

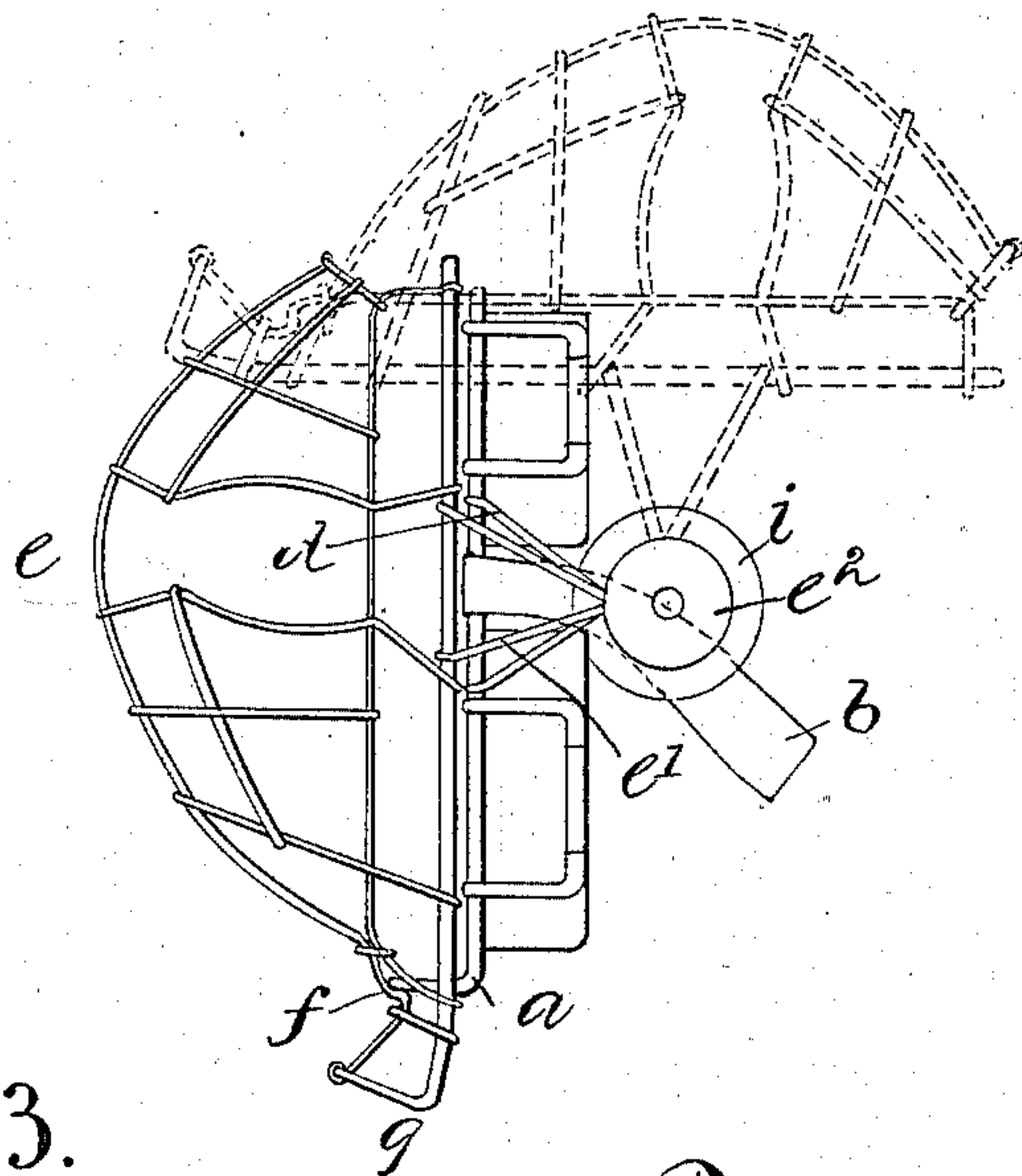


Fig. 4.

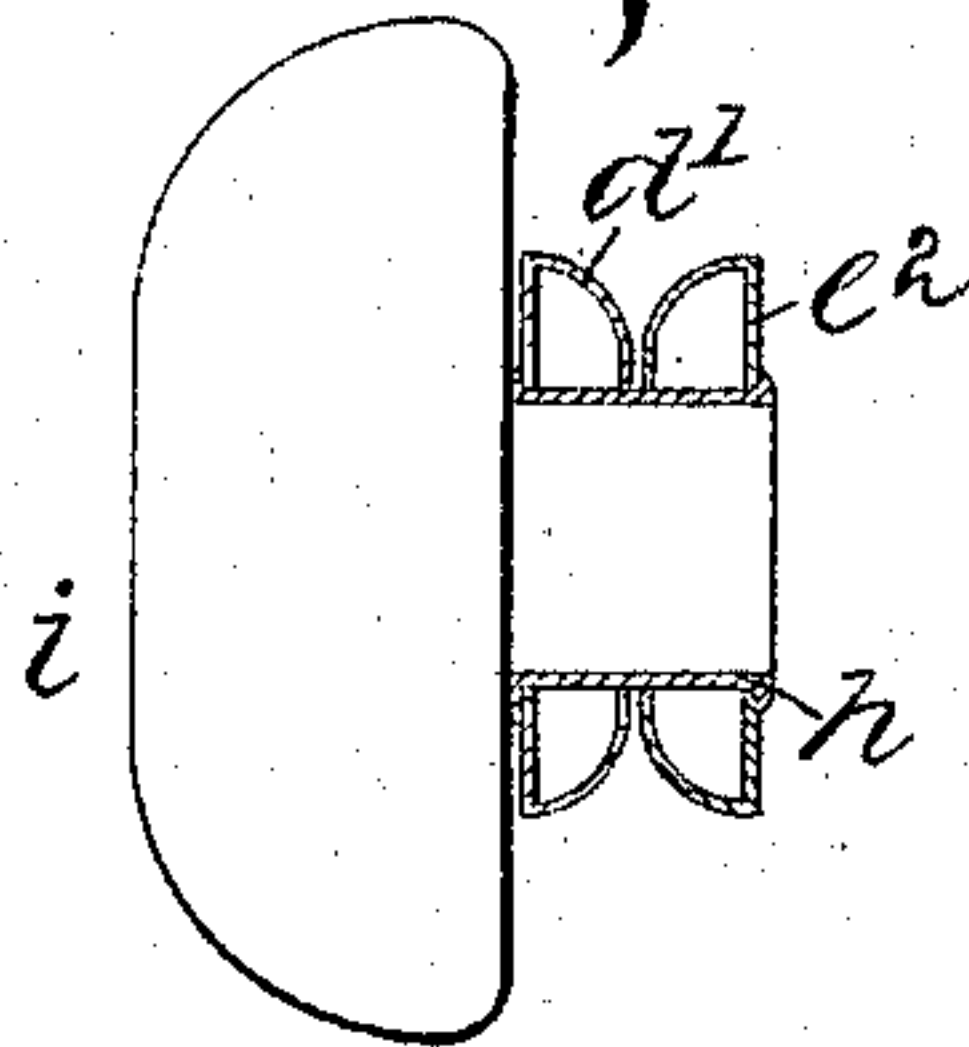


Fig. 3.

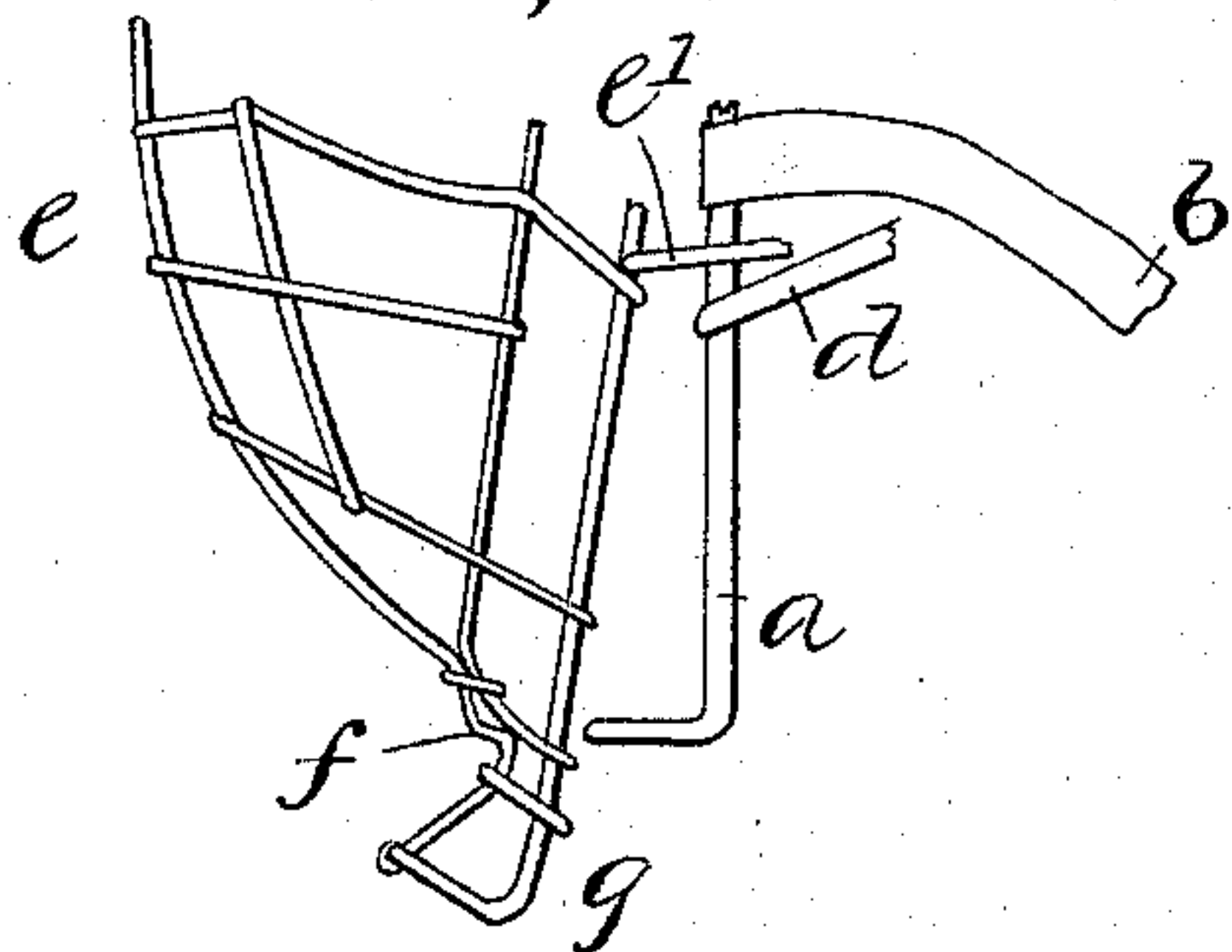
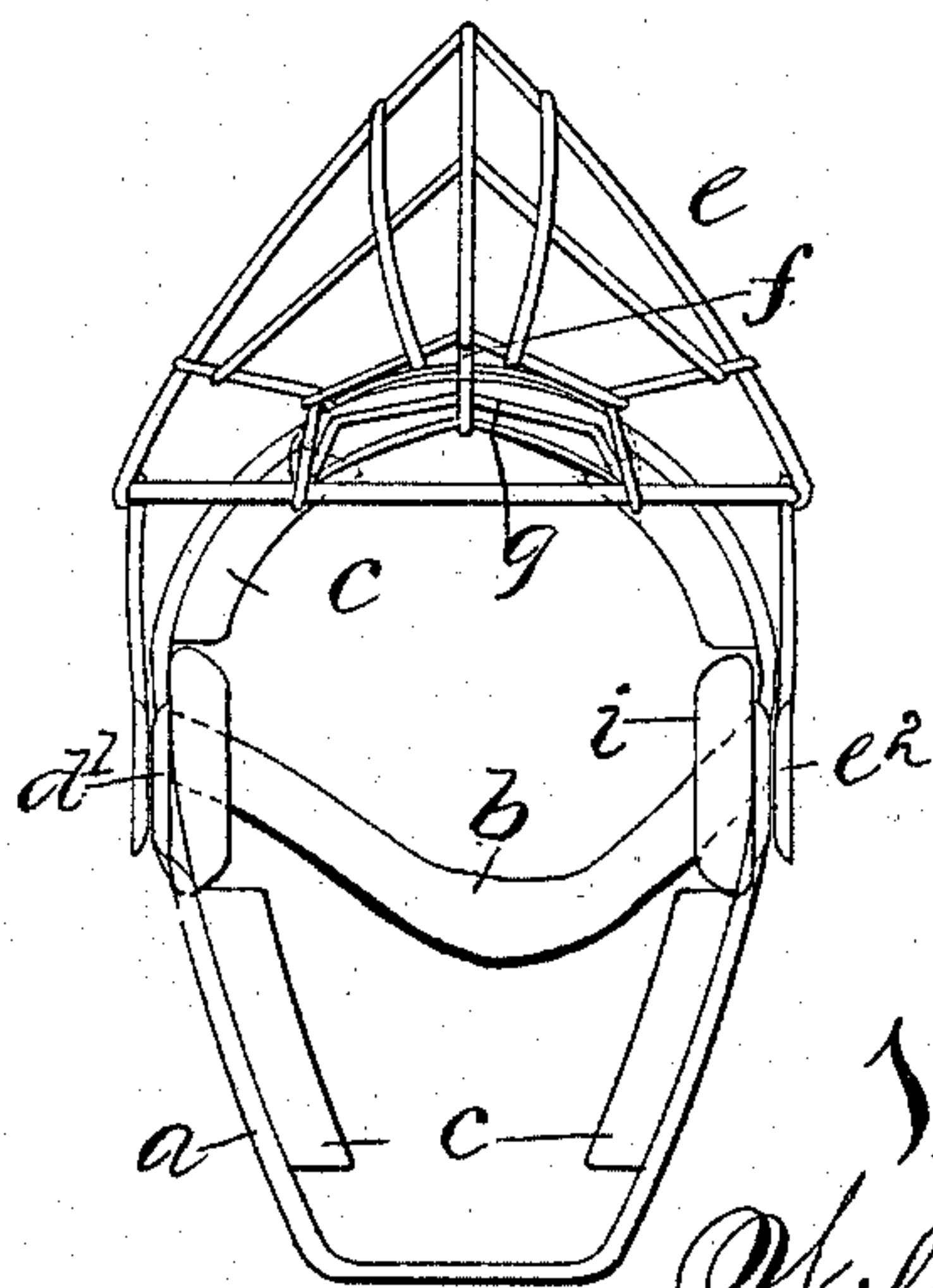


Fig. 2.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM GRAY, OF HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF
TO CHARLES SOBY, OF SAME PLACE.

BASE-BALL MASK.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 571,437, dated November 17, 1896.

Application filed June 4, 1896. Serial No. 594,237. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM GRAY, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Hartford, in the county of Hartford and State of Connecticut, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Base-Ball Masks, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description, whereby any one skilled in the art can make and use the same.

My invention relates to the class of devices used by the catcher in a game of base-ball to protect the head and face against injury from the ball. The device in common use consists of a padded framework fitted to the head in a vertical plane about over the ears, an articulated front formed of wire, and a strap for holding the whole in place. The difficulty with this form of base-ball mask is that the view of the wearer is so much obscured in looking upward at a fly-ball as to interfere with the chances of his catching it, and the object of my invention is to provide a mask which shall have all the advantages of the old form and the additional feature of such quick adjustment as will enable the wearer to uncover the face without removing the mask. With the old form the mask is quickly pulled off from the head and thrown upon the ground, often in the way of the player and forming an obstacle over which he trips in getting to the ball.

My improvement consists in the combination of the vertical padded frame with the adjustable front piece having a catch and in details of these parts, as hereinafter described, and more particularly pointed out in the claims.

Referring to the drawings, Figure 1 is a side view of my improved mask, showing the front piece in dotted outline in the raised position. Fig. 2 is a detail rear view of my improved mask, showing the front piece raised. Fig. 3 is a detail view of a portion of the mask, showing the front piece in its lowermost position and disengaged from the frame. Fig. 4 is a detail view, on enlarged scale, in section through the pivot.

In the accompanying drawings the letter *a* denotes the frame of the mask, *b* the straps by means of which it is secured in place on

the head of the wearer, and *c* the pads interposed between the frame and the head of the wearer and forming cushions to support the weight and to save the head from the effect of blows on the framework of the mask. At convenient positions about midway of the length of the frame and on the side parts are secured brackets *d*, which extend backward substantially parallel to each other. To these brackets *d* is pivoted the front piece *e* of the mask. The front piece is made up of a framework of wire with the base-wire overlying the pads on the frame and having a framework of wire mesh braced and soldered to each other at points of intersection; so as to form an effective shield which will withstand the blow of the hard ball used in the game. This front piece *e* is pivoted to the frame, as described, in any convenient manner, and is provided at its lower edge with a spring-catch *f*, formed preferably by a bend of the spring-wire forming part of or fastened to the frame of the front piece, the lower edge of the catch forming in some instances a part of the throat-protector *g*, which extends below the bottom of the frame.

When the wearer of the mask wishes to obtain a clearer view, the front piece is quickly released by pulling on the spring-catch, and may be then turned upward into the position indicated in the drawings. It then is out of the way and is held in that position either by a spring device or preferably by arranging the pivotal points of support a sufficient distance back of the plane of the frame as to cause the weight of the front piece to hold it in position. The position of the frame may be also controlled by the frictional hold of the pivots.

The construction of the mask as described enables the mask as a whole to be retained in place on the head, and except for its added weight it may be worn by the catcher whether close behind the bat or at a distance from the home-plate, the front piece being turned down when needed for protection and held in place by the spring-catch, or turned upward out of the way when a clearer view is needed.

It is obvious that the spring-catch which holds the front piece in position on the frame

may be located in another position than that described without departing from my invention, and it may be also of different construction, my invention not being limited to the specific location or specific form of the catch by which the frame and the front piece are held in place.

The throat-protector *g*, extending below the catch and having a forward bend, affords a convenient means for readily grasping the front piece *e* to release it from the grasp of the spring-catch.

Brackets *e'* are preferably formed on the front piece *e* and extend rearward in line with the brackets *d*, the frame and the base-wire lying practically in the same plane. The brackets *d* and *e'* afford a sufficient spring action in connection with the wirework of the base and front piece to allow the spring-catch to readily operate and the two parts to be easily disengaged.

Ears *d'* and *e²* are secured at the outer ends of the brackets *d* and *e'*, respectively, a hollow pivot *h* extending through the ears and forming the means for pivotally uniting the frame *a* and the front piece *e*. Pads *i* are suitably located in these hollow pivots and are interposed therebetween and the head of the wearer for the purpose of supporting the side parts of the mask and preventing any shock to the wearer from any blows delivered on the mask.

The ears *d'* *e²* consist of hollow metallic pieces, as shown in Fig. 4 of the drawings, these ears being secured to the frame and front piece, respectively. The pivot *h* is formed of a cylindrical piece of metal extending through the ears and having a shoulder

at each end outside of the ears to hold it in place.

I claim as my invention—

1. In combination in a base-ball mask, a frame, means for securing the frame to the head of the wearer, a front piece having a swinging movement in a plane lengthwise of the frame and connected thereto by a pivot located centrally at each side of the frame and front piece, all substantially as described.

2. In combination in a base-ball mask, a frame, means for securing the frame to the head of the wearer, a front piece having a swinging movement lengthwise of the frame and secured thereto by pivots located centrally at each side of the front piece and frame, and a spring-catch for uniting the mask and frame and adapted to be released on the upward movement of the front piece, all substantially as described.

3. In combination in a base-ball mask, a padded frame, means for securing the frame to the head of the wearer, brackets extending backward from the central side parts of the frame, a front piece having backward-extending brackets from the central side parts thereof and corresponding with the brackets on the frame, a pivot uniting the ends of the brackets on the frame and front piece whereby the latter is adapted to be swung upward and backward, and a spring-catch for uniting the frame and front piece and adapted to be released on the upward movement of the latter, all substantially as described.

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Witnesses:

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