No. 679,447. Patented July 30, 1901.

C. F. WALTHERS.

MAIL POUCH CATCHER.

(Application filed May 25, 1900.)

(No Model.) 3 Sheets—Sheet 1.

Fig. 1.

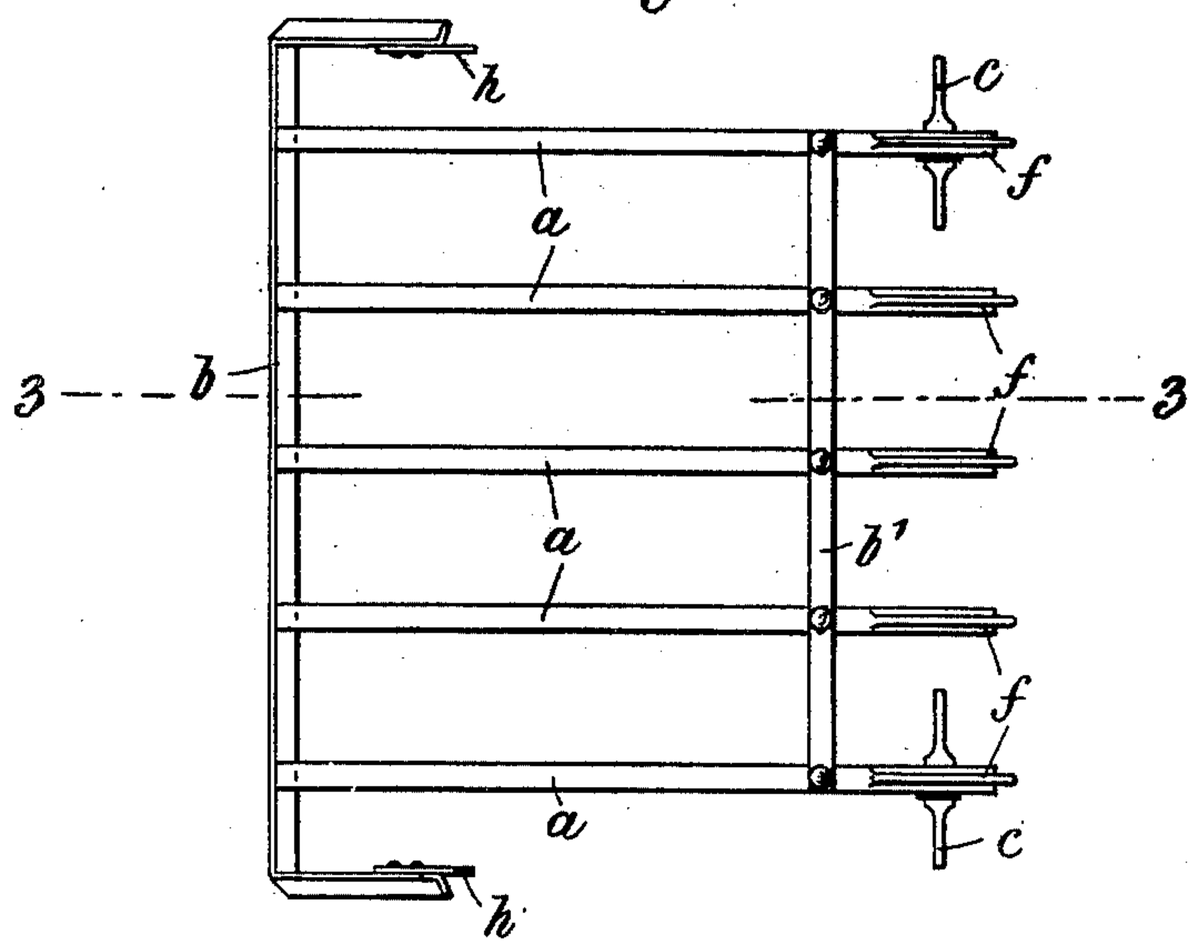


Fig. 2.

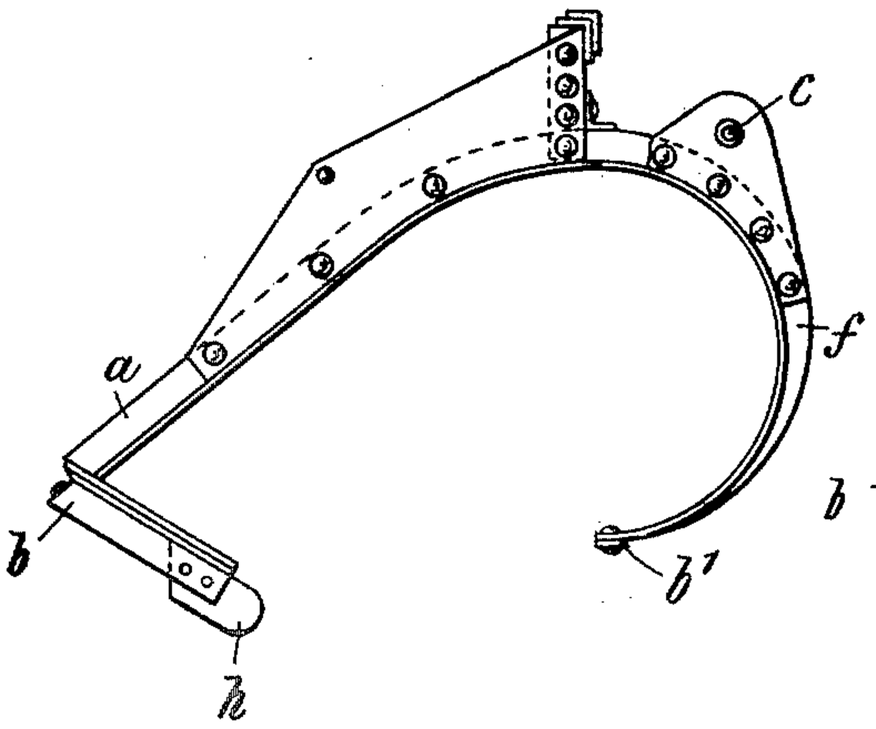
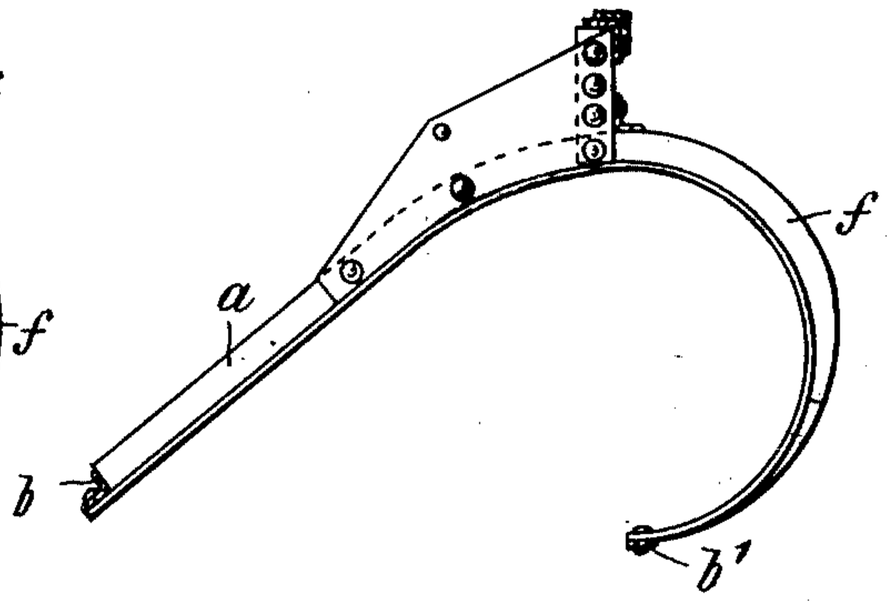


Fig. 3.



Witnesses:

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M. A. Helmke.

Charles F. Walthers Inventor

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3 Sheets—Sheet 2.

Fig. 4.

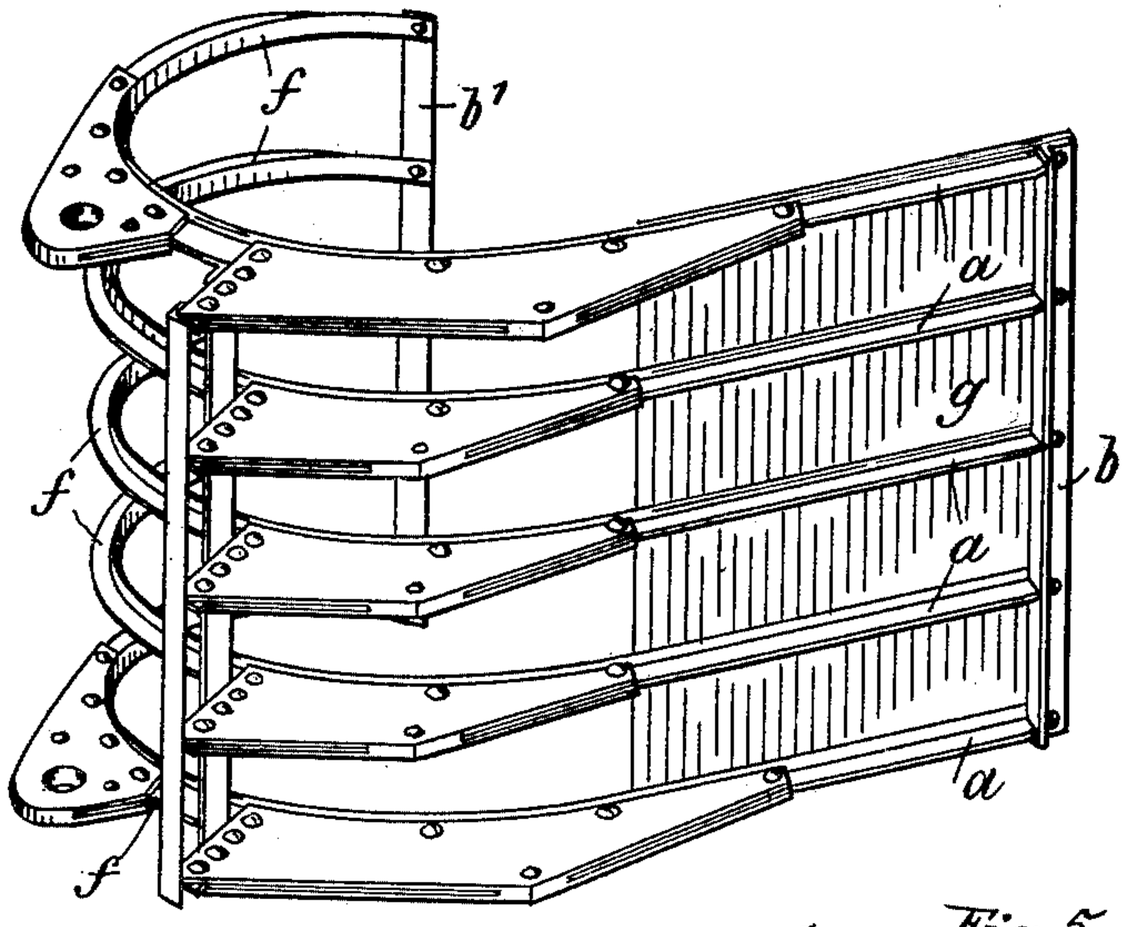

Fig. 5.

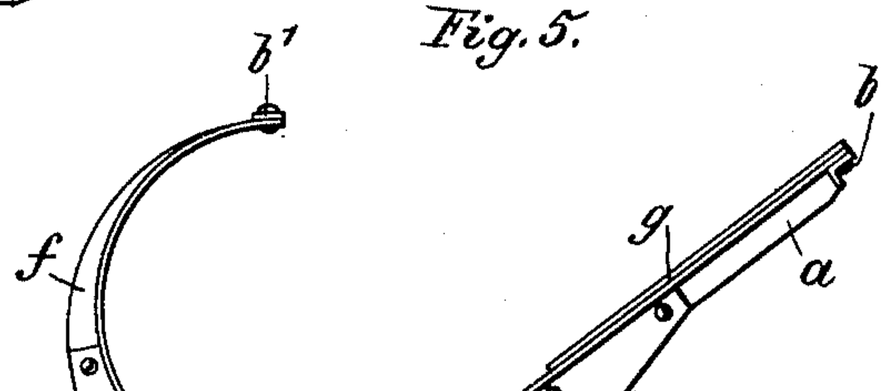

Fig. 6.

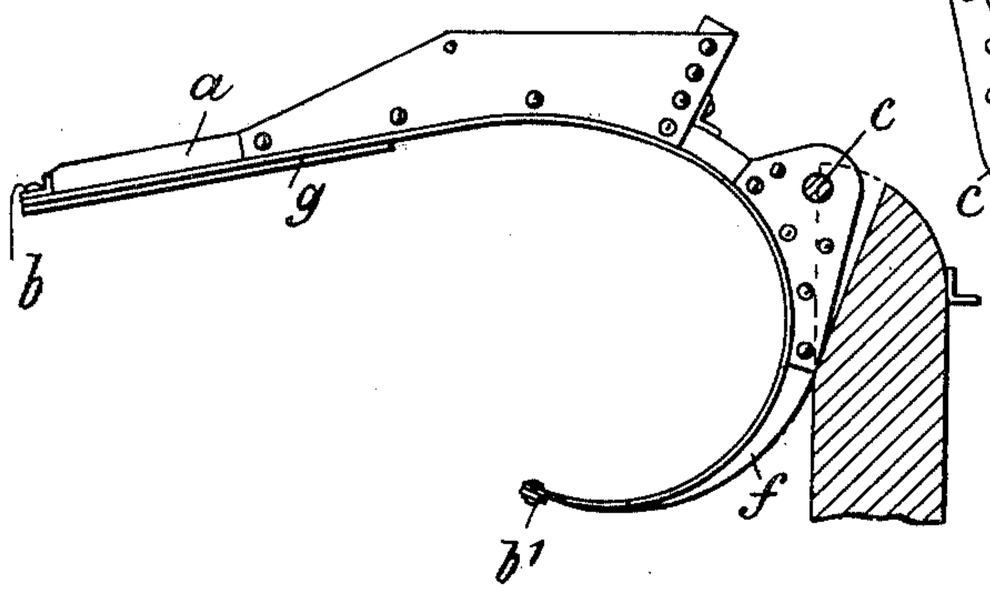

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Fig. 7.

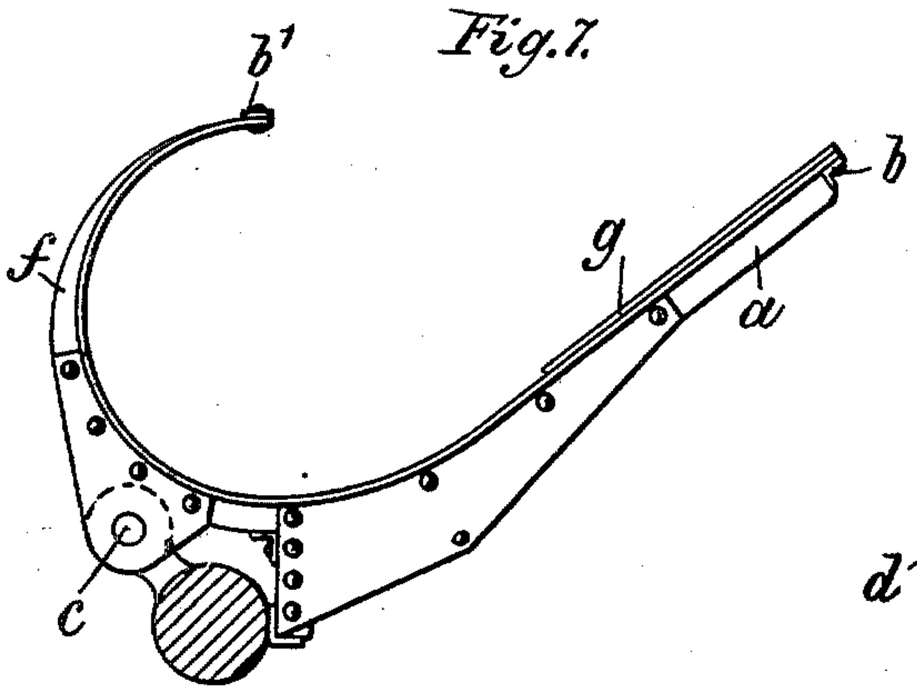


Fig. 8.

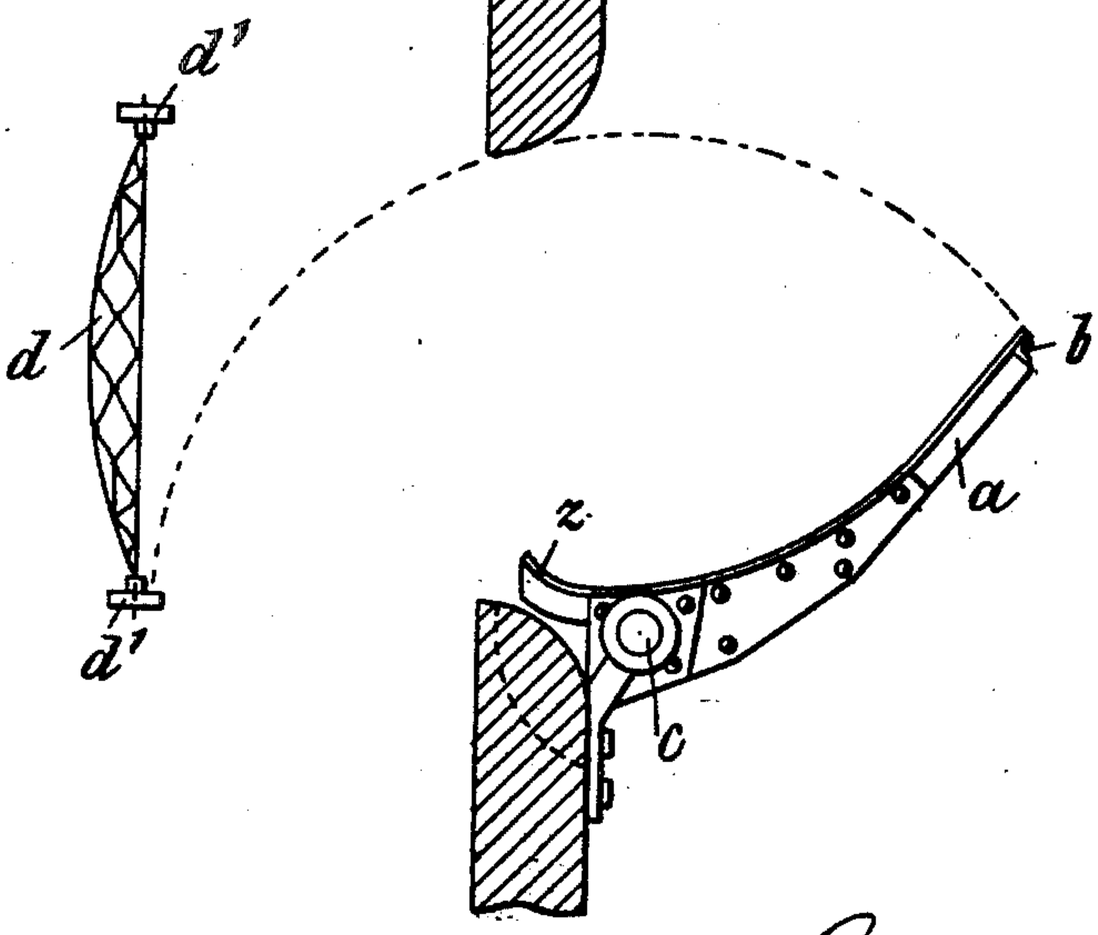
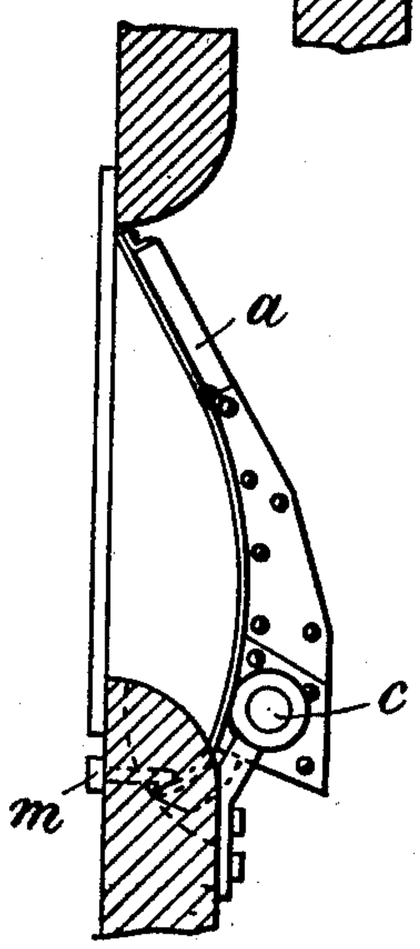


Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.



Witnesses:

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

CHARLES FREDERICK WALTHERS, OF CINCINNATI, OHIO.

MAIL-POUCH CATCHER.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 679,447, dated July 30, 1901.

Application filed May 25, 1900. Serial No. 17,970. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CHARLES FREDERICK WALTHERS, a citizen of the United States, residing at Cincinnati, in the county of Hamilton and State of Ohio, have invented a new and useful Mail-Pouch Catcher, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to the devices for receiving and delivery of mail-matter at railroad-stations where the mail-trains do not stop; and it consists of the hereinafter-described mail-pouch catcher illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein—

Figure 1 is an elevation, and Fig. 2 a plan view, of my improved mail-pouch catcher. Fig. 3 is a sectional view on line 3 3, indicated in Fig. 1. Fig. 4 is a similar view like Fig. 1, showing, however, the mail-pouch catcher provided with sheeting. Fig. 5 is a plan view showing my improved mail-pouch catcher applied to the door of a car and at the moment of its operation. Fig. 6 is a similar view like Fig. 5, showing the relative position of the devices after the catching of mail-pouch is accomplished. Fig. 7 is a plan view showing my improved mail-pouch catcher applied to a delivery-post and in position to receive the mail-pouch from passing train. Fig. 8 is a cross-sectional partly-plan view showing a modified construction of my improved mail-pouch catcher applied on the outside of a car and combined with a cushion or netting, the catcher being in position to receive a mail-pouch from the post or station-shed. Fig. 9 is a view similar to Fig. 6, showing the modified construction of my improved mail-pouch catcher combined with a cushion or netting, showing the position of the catcher after the catch of mail-pouch is accomplished; and Fig. 10 is a view showing the catcher in the car-door when not in use.

The frame of my improved mail-pouch catcher consists of two or more curved braces *a* and transverse connections *b* and *b'*, arranged, preferably, as shown in Fig. 1. The braces may terminate at the point *z*, as shown in Figs. 8 and 9, or may be elongated, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3. The purpose of such extension of the braces, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3, will be explained in describing the operation of the catcher.

On the forward end of the catcher blades *h* are affixed thereto in such position that they may cut the cords or other means for suspending the mail-pouch to be delivered or received at a catch-station. As shown in the drawings, the blades *h* are affixed to the ends of the transverse connection of tie *b*, which are extended beyond the width of the catcher and bent for that purpose. This method of affixing the blades may, however, be varied.

The frame is provided with pivots *c*, by means whereof the catcher may be suspended in suitable position, like a door on hinges, in the frame of the car-door and in such position that opening and closing of the car-door is not interfered with.

The forward part of the brace *a* may be covered and connected by a sheathing *h*, as shown in Fig. 4. This sheathing is intended to afford a flat surface against which the mail-bag strikes when it comes in contact with the catcher, so as to avoid cutting or breaking of it upon and jamming between the braces; but the sheathing should not be wider than as shown in the drawings. There ought to be an open space left between this sheathing and the door-opening of the car, because otherwise the catcher would divert into the car the dust raised by the train and cinders.

To resist the force exerted upon the catcher at the moment of catching a mail-bag, the catcher is provided with one or more short lever-arms *z*, which are approximately radial to the curve of the braces and transmit this force to its proper bearings, and the momentum of the pouch is utilized to swing the catcher on its hinges or pivots into the opening of the mail-car or station-shed.

The operation of my improved mail-pouch catcher is illustrated in Figs. 5 and 6 of the drawings. Fig. 5 shows the catcher in position to receive the mail-pouch, and Fig. 6 shows it in position when the catching of the mail-pouch is accomplished.

The mail-pouches to be gathered by the passing train are suspended in the station, usually on posts having one or two horizontally-extending arms, to which the mail-pouch is attached by cords or in such manner that when the mail-pouch is struck by the catcher in the direction of the passing train the fastenings thereof slip off the arms and the mail-pouch is delivered to the catcher. When the

pouch is attached to the arms by cords, blades *h* come into action, cutting them, as explained above. The force wherewith the mail-pouch is struck when it comes in contact with the catcher is sufficient to cause the projecting braces to yield for some distance rearwardly in a similar manner like a stiff spring would yield under heavy pressure, whereupon their inherent resiliency causes the catcher to rebound toward the opening of the car. The mail-pouch slides along the curved braces, carried by its momentum, and its pressure against the curved extensions *f* of the braces completes the inward motion of the catcher into the car. When the pouch reaches the end of the braces, its momentum is fully or nearly consumed, and therefore the pouch when reaching the point *b'*, or may be before—this depending on the weight of the pouch—drops gently to the floor of the car. In this manner the tearing of mail-pouches, destruction of mail-matter, and the danger to employees in mail-cars caused by forcibly throwing in of the mail-pouch are absolutely avoided.

In some of the mail-cars now in use it is not well possible to have the ends of the braces extend rearwardly into the car, as shown in Figs. 5 and 6, and it is sometimes also necessary to apply the catcher on the outside of the car, as shown in Fig. 8. For this purpose the modified construction of my improved mail-pouch catcher, as shown in Figs. 8 and 9, is devised. In this construction braces *a* do not extend so far rearwardly as to form the curved extension *f*, and instead a cushion or screen *d*, preferably of netting, is set up in the car, as shown in those two figures. This netting may be attached to posts *d'*. This device is made removable, so as not to interfere with the operations in the car when not in use. In other respects this modified embodiment of my invention is constructed in the same manner as the one hereinbefore described, and its operation is also the same, except that the mail-pouch when caught is not retarded by sliding upon the inwardly-curved extended arms *f*, but is flung against the netting.

My improved mail-pouch catcher can also be used at the stations for receiving the mail-pouches from the cars and for this purpose is hinged to the shed or post, as shown in Fig. 7, in the same manner as described with reference to its attachment to a car. Its operation is in this instance the same.

The modified construction of my improved mail-pouch catcher, as shown in Figs. 8 and 9, can also be used at such stations in combination with the cushion or netting operating in the same manner as set forth with reference to its use in a mail-car.

When the catcher is not in use, it is swung aside and fastened, so as not to interfere with the operations in the car. When such catcher is used, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, it is fastened inside of the car. The putting aside of the catcher involves merely swinging it toward the inner wall of the car and fastening it there. Such catcher, as shown in Figs. 8 and 9, when not in use is folded against the car-door, as shown in Fig. 10, and fastened in its position by a key-bolt *m* and held securely in position. A catcher attached to a receiving shed or post at the railroad-station when not in use is merely swung away from the track and fastened in that position.

I claim as my invention and desire to secure by Letters Patent—

1. A mail-pouch catcher comprising a frame of two or more curved braces joined by transverse connections, pivots secured to the braces in position to engage with suitable bearings and having the rear ends of the braces extended rearwardly to provide a return-bend, as herein shown and described.

2. A mail-pouch catcher comprising a frame consisting of two or more transversely-connected braces, and provided with pivots in suitable position to engage with bearings to which the catcher is to be affixed, and cutting-blades affixed to the ends of the bar connecting the forward ends of the braces, the ends of the bar extending beyond the width of the frame and being bent approximately at right angles thereto, as herein shown and described and for the purposes set forth.

3. A mail-pouch catcher comprising a frame of two or more curved braces joined by transverse connections, pivots secured to the upper and lower braces in positions to engage with suitable bearings, and a sheathing covering the braces for some distance from the outer edge of the frame as herein shown and described, and so as to leave an open space between the sheathing and the car when the catcher is swung in position to receive the mail-bag.

4. A mail-pouch catcher comprising a frame composed of curved braces and transverse connections; a sheathing and cutting-blades, short lever-arms and a key-bolt all combined as herein shown and described and for the purposes set forth.

5. A mail-pouch catcher consisting of a pivoted frame having transverse connections and curved braces, the concave sides whereof are covered by a sheathing and provided with cutting-blades, short lever-arms and a key-bolt in combination with a cushion or netting for arresting the mail-pouch.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

CHARLES FREDERICK WALTHERS.

Witnesses:
C. D. KERR,
CHAS. H. REEVES.