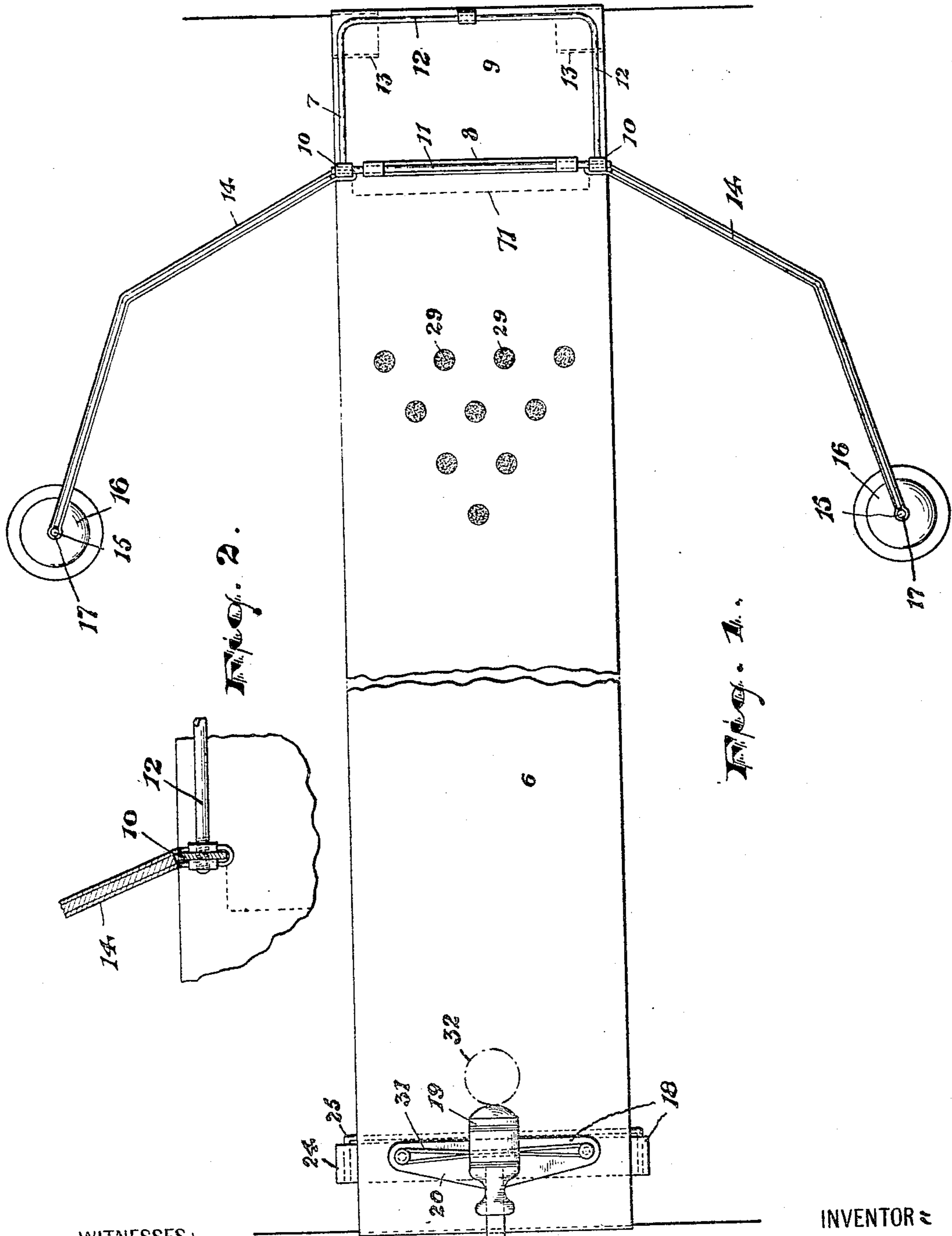


No. 801,031.

PATENTED OCT. 3, 1905.

A. E. MERCKLING.
TABLE BOWLING ALLEY.
APPLICATION FILED JAN. 9, 1905.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1



WITNESSES:

Ralph Lancaster
Russell M. Everett

INVENTOR:

Andrew E. Merckling

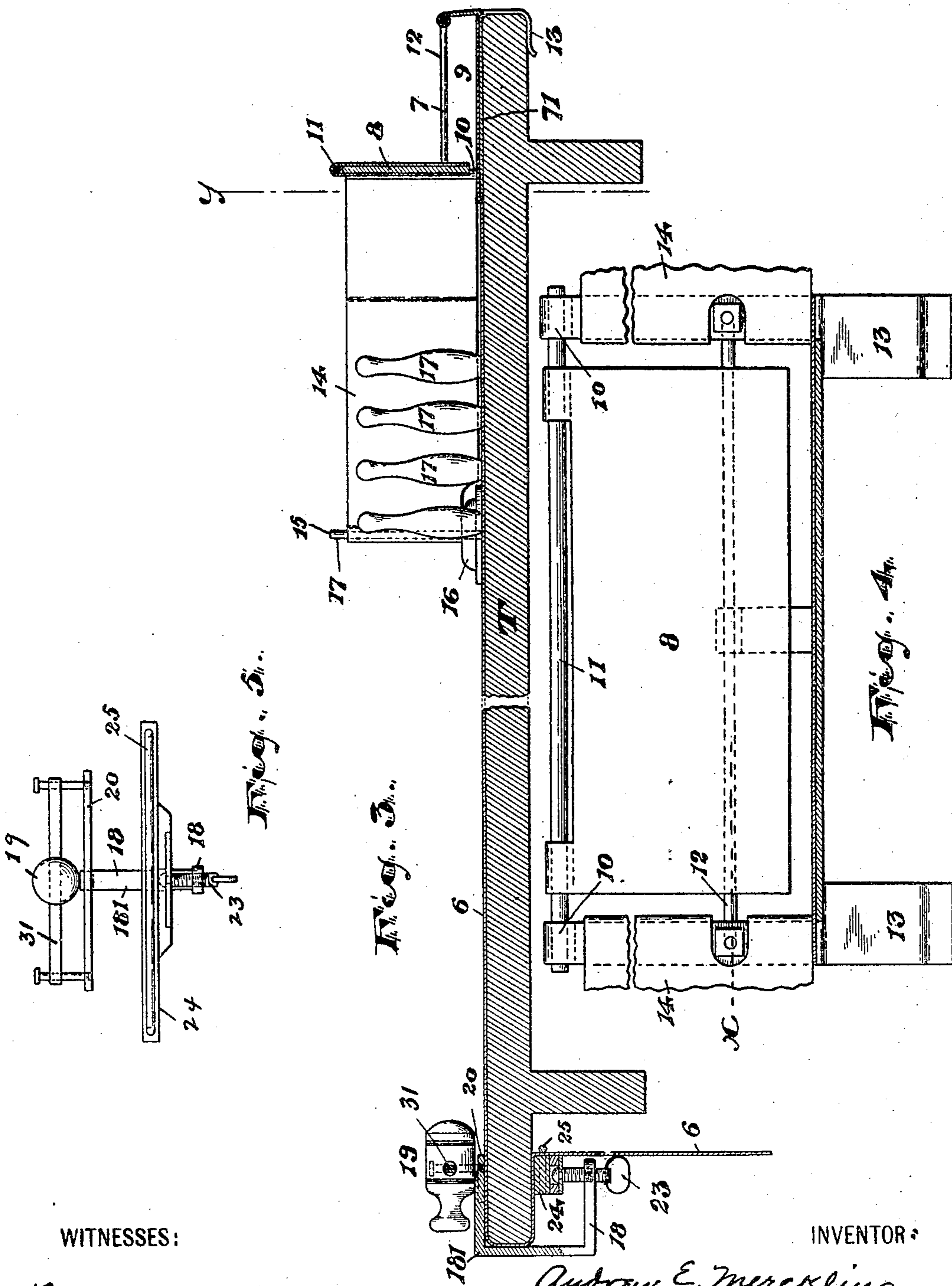
BY

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Andrew E. Merckling,

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ATTORNEY.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ANDREW E. MERCKLING, OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY.

TABLE BOWLING-ALLEY.

No. 801,031.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Oct. 3, 1905.

Application filed January 9, 1905. Serial No. 240,200.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ANDREW E. MERCKLING, a citizen of the United States, residing at Newark, in the county of Essex and State of New Jersey, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Table Bowling-Alleys; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to characters of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

The objects of this invention are to produce amusement of a novel variety; to reduce the cost of table bowling-alleys; to enable the same to be packed away in a small package, and thereby secure a greater convenience and occupy less space in storage; to reduce the cost of construction, and to secure other advantages and results, some of which may be referred to hereinafter in connection with the description of the working parts.

The invention consists in the improved table bowling-alley and in the arrangements and combinations of parts of the same, all substantially as will be hereinafter set forth and finally embraced in the clauses of the claim.

Referring to the accompanying drawings, in which like characters of reference indicate corresponding parts in each of the several figures, Figure 1 is a plan of the improved bowling-alley or game apparatus. Fig. 2 is a detail view taken at line *x* of Fig. 4. Fig. 3 is a central longitudinal section of the device. Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken at line *y* of Fig. 3; and Fig. 5 is a detail elevation of the ball-propelling device employed in connection with the other elements of the apparatus.

In said drawings, 6 indicates the bowling extension of the alley, comprising a long band of textile fabric—such as felt, woven woolen, cotton goods, or like material—adapted to stretch from one end of the table to or near to the opposite end. To one end of this said alley extension 6 is attached a frame 7, from which a swinging gate 8 is suspended, the said gate 8 being disposed to lie vertically over the said alley extension 6, so that the balls rolling over the latter may enter under said gate and be held in a receptacle 9 in said frame at the back of said gate. This said gate serves to prevent the bowling-balls in the event of their missing the pins from rebounding and

thus striking the pins. In connection with said frame 7 or forming a part thereof are arranged posts 10 10, preferably coincident with the opposite longitudinal edges of the alley, the said posts extending up two inches, more or less, from the surface of the alley and at their upper extremities providing bearings for a horizontal rod 11, from which the gate 8 is suspended, the said rod 11 permitting a very free pivotal movement of said gate, so that the entrance of the balls beneath will not be materially interfered with, and yet the weight of the gate will provide sufficient resistance to prevent the return movement of the bowling-balls. At the back of said posts in the preferred construction of the frame I have provided a horizontal railing 12, which is suitably shaped and held in position to hold the said balls within proper bounds after the same have rolled beneath the swinging gate. Underneath the alley extension 6 the said frame provides a thin horizontal plate 71, to which the other parts of the frame 7 are rigidly secured. Underneath said plate 71 are stays or clips 13, (shown more clearly in Figs. 3 and 4,) the said clips being strap-like pieces of proper shape to hook beneath the edge of the table T, so that when draft is applied to the band-like alley the said frame will be held firmly in proper relative position on the table. The said hooks permit the said frame to be applied to the table with the greatest ease and facility. I am aware that the frame 7 may be made in various ways to meet different ideas of neatness, propriety of expense, &c. For example, the said frame may be made of wood, or it may be partly of wood and partly of metal, and the various modifications involved in such changes being obvious do not require specification. The said posts 10 10 provide terminal supports for fences 14 14, disposed at opposite sides of the alley extension. These may be of any suitable material or of any desired construction; but I prefer to make the said fences in sections of thin cardboard, the sections being joined by textile fabric, preferably such as is employed in the manufacture of the alley extension. The said textile fabric permits of an easy folding of the sections together in packing the device away and also permits a very free adjustment of the fence, so that it may be properly arranged to meet the demands of various tables. The outer or free ends of the fences 14 are preferably held by separable fence-posts 15. These comprise foundation-

pieces 16, of turned wood, and a wire-stand-
 5 ar-d 17, to which or around which the textile
 fabric for uniting the sections is turned, as
 indicated in Fig. 1. The posts permit of an
 easy adjustment of the ends of the fences, so
 that the angles of the sections may be changed
 with relation to the longitudinal axial line of
 the alley at will to meet the requirements of
 the game, or, as before indicated, to meet the
 10 demands of the table. Ordinarily the said
 fences 14 are disposed in their relation to the
 alley at angles less than right angles to the
 longitudinal line of the alley, so that the sur-
 face of the fences against which the balls im-
 15 ping-e will tend to guide the balls toward the
 swinging gate, the said fences thereby serv-
 ing not only to prevent the balls from rolling
 directly off the table, but as guides to conduct
 them into the receptacle 9 at the end of the
 20 alley.

In the folding and packing of the device for
 storage the posts 15 may be removed from the
 fence 14 by simply withdrawing the standard
 from the loop formed by turning the fence
 25 fabric from one side of the fence-section to
 the other, the said posts thereby being packed
 away independent of the other fence-sections,
 all of which conduces to compactness in stor-
 age.

30 The alley extension 6, preferably at a point
 between the ends of the fences when the lat-
 ter are in their preferred positions, is pro-
 vided with ten spots 29, Fig. 1, imprinted
 thereon, the said spots being in the usual or-
 35 der employed in connection with the game of
 tenpins. On these spots may be arranged
 the pins 17. (Shown in Fig. 3.)

At the end of the alley opposite the swing-
 40 ing gate I have provided an alley-extension
 holder 18, adapted to coöperate with the clips
 13 in holding the textile alley under tension.
 The said holder 18 comprises a clamp 181,
 provided at the top or near the top with a
 45 spring-actuated ball-propeller 19 of any suit-
 able construction and beneath said ball-pro-
 peller having a broad clamping-jaw 20, adapt-
 ed to extend transversely across or nearly
 across the extension. From this transverse
 50 bar 20 the body of the said clamp extends
 around and underneath the edge of the table,
 as shown in Fig. 3, and on the under side
 thereof it is provided with a clamping-screw
 23, having a second transverse bar 24. The
 last said transverse bar is somewhat wider
 55 than the textile alley and is provided with a
 loop 25, which forms a slot with the trans-
 verse bar 24, through which the textile ex-
 tension extends, said textile alley extension
 thus being held adjustably to the holder 18.

60 When the alley is to be fixed upon the table
 under tension, the hooks 13 of the frame
 to which one end of the alley extension is fas-
 tened are caught at one end of the table. The
 said alley extension is then drawn smoothly
 65 across the table and through the loosely-ar-

ranged clamp 18 applied to the opposite edge
 of the table. Said clamp is then screwed up
 to fasten the alley extension in place under
 tension. The fences are then properly ar-
 70 ranged in position substantially as shown in
 Fig. 1. The pins 17 are then placed on the
 spots 29, a bowling-ball 31 placed in the front
 of the ball-propeller 19, the latter drawn back
 against the power of the spring 31, and on
 75 releasing the hold the ball is driven over the
 alley extension to the pins or against one of
 the fences or into the receptacle through the
 gateway of the swinging gate. When the
 alley is to be fixed upon the table under ten-
 sion, as above described, the said holder 18 is
 80 slipped along the textile band to a position
 where it will while holding the band lie in
 proper relation to the edge of the table oppo-
 site that holding the opposite end of said alley
 or band. 85

I am aware that various changes of con-
 struction may be employed, and I do not wish
 to be understood as limiting myself to all the
 details of construction referred to, it being
 understood that various modifications may be
 90 employed without departing from the spirit
 or scope of the invention.

Having thus described the invention, what
 I claim as new is—

1. The improved game apparatus herein de- 95
 scribed comprising a flexible alley of textile
 fabric adapted to be rolled or folded for pack-
 ing and storage, said flexible alley having at
 one end thereof, a fence having a swinging
 gate in the line of said alley, and back of said 100
 gate also in the line of the alley having a re-
 ceptacle for the bowling-balls, and at the op-
 posite end having a ball-propulsion device
 adjustably attached thereto and means for
 holding the said alley upon the table, sub- 105
 stantially as set forth.

2. The improved game apparatus herein de- 110
 scribed, comprising a flexible alley of textile
 fabric adapted to be rolled or folded for pack-
 ing and storage, said flexible alley having at
 one end thereof a swinging gate and on oppo-
 site sides of said swinging gate and flexible
 alley, a folding fence, and also having back 115
 of said swinging gate a receptacle for the
 bowling-balls, and at the opposite end having
 a ball-propulsion device adjustably attached
 thereto and means for holding the said alley
 upon the table under tension, substantially as
 set forth.

3. The improved bowling-alley herein de- 120
 scribed comprising a flexible band adapted to
 be stretched upon a table to form a bowling-
 alley, said band having at one end a clip adapt-
 ed to engage the edge of the table, and hav-
 ing adjustably arranged thereon, a clamp 125
 adapted to coöperate with said clip to hold
 said flexible band stretched upon the table, a
 receptacle at the end of said band for the balls,
 means for preventing the rebounding of said
 balls, and a fence, substantially as set forth. 130

4. The improved bowling-alley herein described comprising a flexible band having clips attached at one end and distant from the said clips having an adjustable clamp, provided at the top with a ball-propeller, the said clamp being adapted to hold fixed both the ball-propeller and flexible band to the table, a receptacle for the balls, means for preventing the rebounding of said balls, and a folding fence, substantially as set forth.

5. The improved bowling-alley herein described comprising flexible band having hooks attached at one end and distant from the said hooks having an adjustable clamp, a receptacle for the balls, means for preventing the rebounding of said balls and a sectional fence arranged on opposite sides of said band and adapted to be unfolded and disposed at acute angles to the alley to guide the balls into the receptacle after passing the pins on said band, substantially as set forth.

6. The improved bowling-alley herein described, comprising a flexible band having a frame at one end with a receptacle for balls, said frame also providing supporting means for a swinging gate and vertical fences, said fences attached each at one end to said frame

and at its opposite end being free to be adjusted on the table at any desired inclination to the flexible band; said swinging gate being suspended from said supporting means of the frame and adapted to prevent the return of the balls, and means for fixing the band under tension to the table, substantially as set forth.

7. The combination with the alley adapted to be stretched upon a table and having at one end an attached frame to which a hook is attached and which is provided with a suspensory support for a gate, posts for folding fences and a railing to prevent passage of the bowling-balls from the table, of folding fences attached at opposite sides of said alley to said posts of the frame and a swinging gate suspended from the suspensory support of said frame, substantially as set forth.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing I have hereunto set my hand this 22d day of December, 1904.

ANDREW E. MERCKLING.

Witnesses:

RUSSELL M. EVERETT,
CHARLES H. PELL.