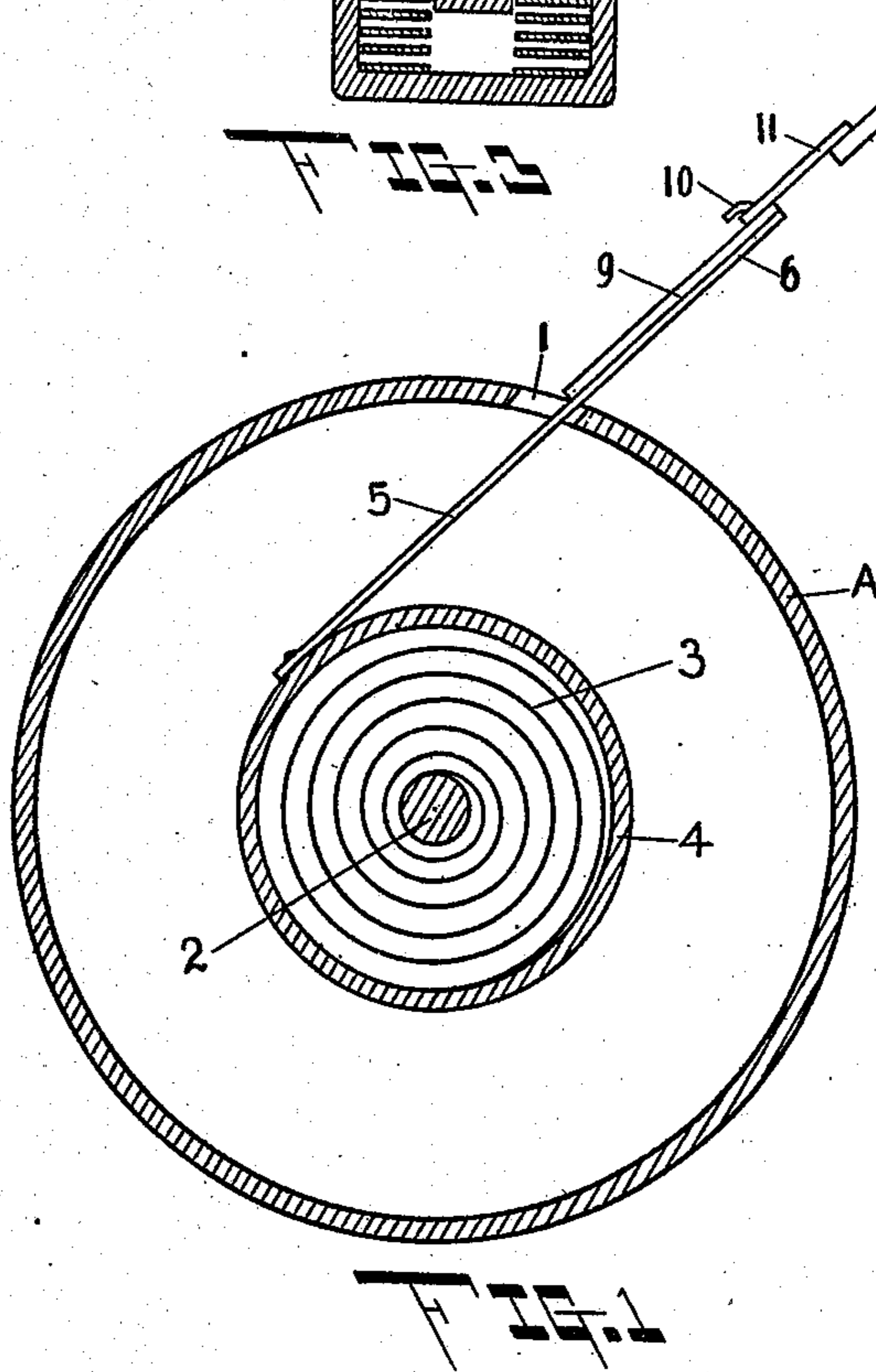
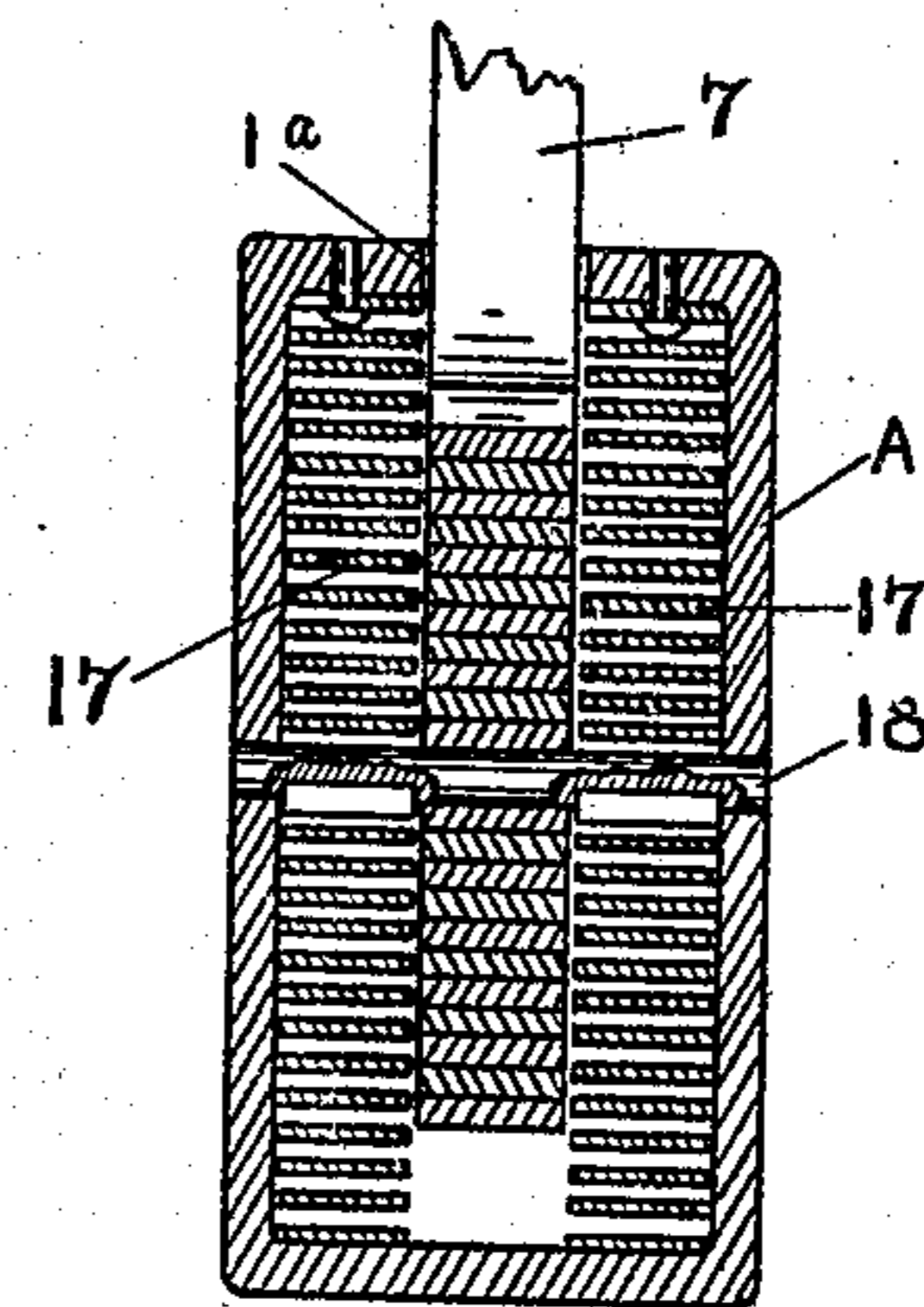
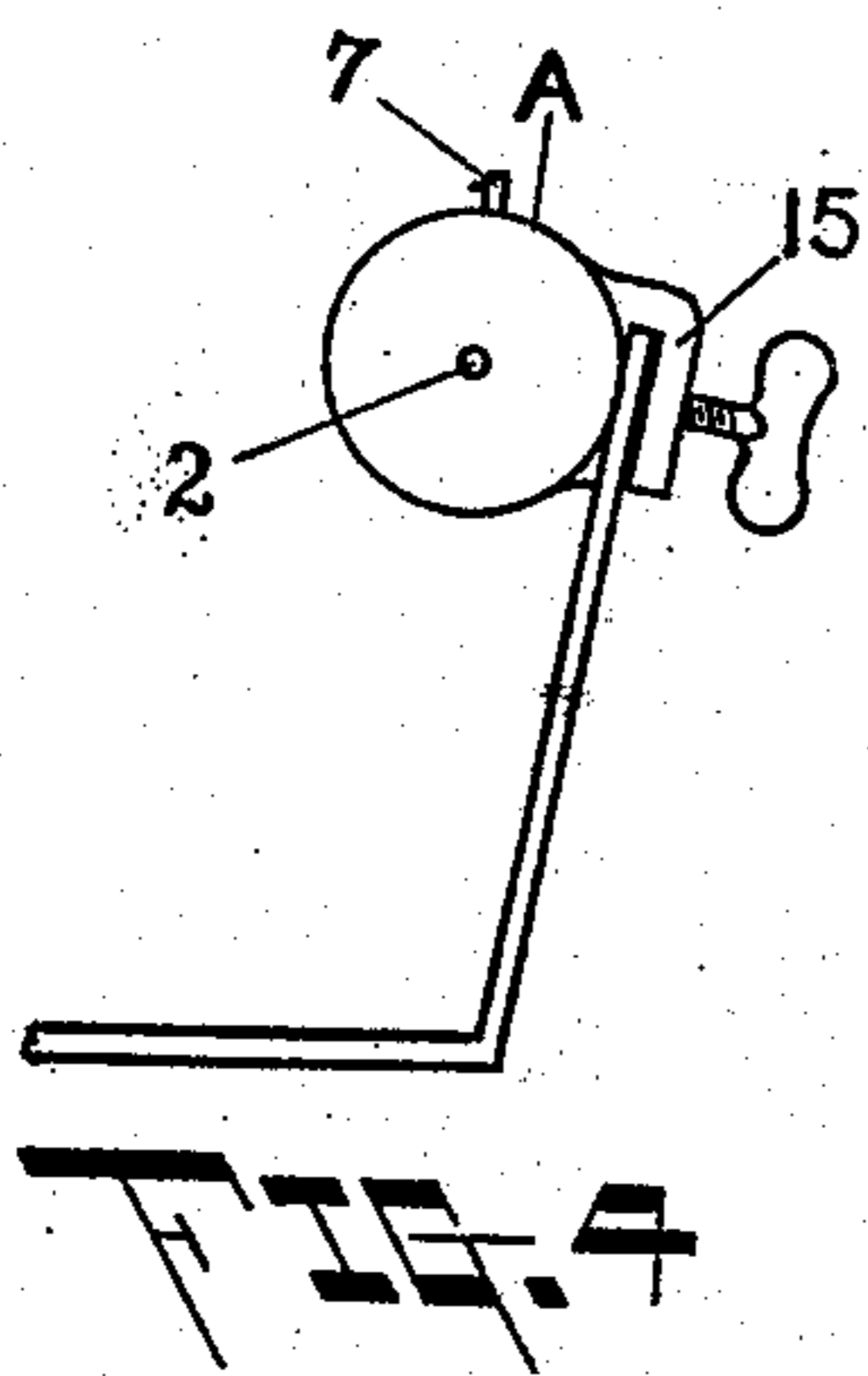
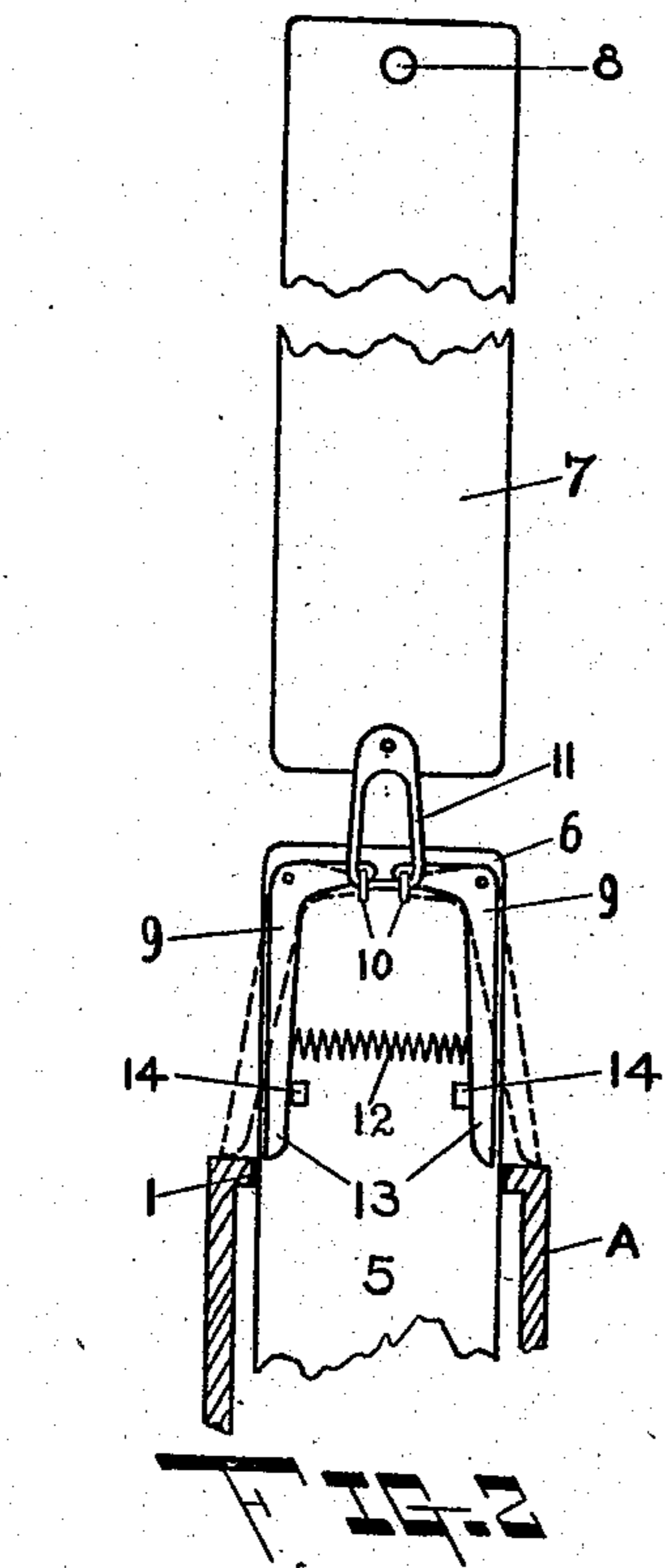


F. A. GILCREST.
HITCHING STRAP HOLDER.
APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 13, 1907.

905,171.

Patented Dec. 1, 1908.



WITNESSES:

J. Ray Abbey.
Ralph S. Barfield.

INVENTOR
Frank A. Gilcrest
BY
Geo. B. Wilcox
ATTORNEY

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

FRANK A. GILCREST, OF KEARNEY, NEBRASKA.

HITCHING-STRAP HOLDER.

No. 905,171.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Dec. 1, 1908.

Application filed September 13, 1907. Serial No. 392,793.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, FRANK A. GILCREST, a citizen of the United States, residing at Kearney, in the county of Buffalo and State of Nebraska, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Hitching-Strap Holders; 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.

My invention relates to hitching strap holders, one object of which is to provide a neat and attractive case for containing the hitching strap when not in use.

Another object is to provide such case with automatic- or spring-actuated means for coiling the strap in the case when the strap is not in use, the strap being separable or removable from the holder and its self-contained retracting mechanism.

A further object is the provision of means for removably connecting the strap to the retracting mechanism within the casing, to permit the strap to be withdrawn from the casing and removed from the retracting mechanism when it is desired to use the strap.

A still further object is to provide means for retaining the free end of the retracting mechanism in an accessible position when the strap is removed, in order to prevent the spring from withdrawing the free end into the casing and thereby preventing the re-attachment of the strap thereto.

My invention further consists in certain other novel features and combinations, such as will be more fully described hereinafter and particularly set forth in the claims.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a part sectional view of my invention; Fig. 2 is a detail plan view showing the free end of the retracting member and a means for releasably connecting the strap thereto; Fig. 3 is a view of a slight modification; and Fig. 4 shows one means for attaching the device to the dash-board of a carriage, for instance.

(A) indicates a flat circular disk of suitable width and circumference, the periphery of which disk is provided with a slot (1). Passing centrally through the disk from side to side is a stationary pin or axle (2) to which one end of a coiled spring (3) is adapted to be secured, the opposite end of the coiled spring being secured to an annu-

lar drum or rim (4) surrounding the pin and inclosing the spring (3).

It is obvious that I might use any other suitable form of retracting means, and I have merely illustrated the foregoing as one of a number of convenient arrangements.

One end of a flexible strap of steel, leather or other suitable material is secured to the outer periphery of the drum (4), the free end of such strap (5) passing out through slot (1) of the casing. The hitching strap is removably secured to the free end (6) of the flexible strap (5). The fastening means for removably connecting the hitching strap to the flexible connecting member (5) may be of any suitable construction.

My invention therefore, broadly consists of a hollow casing containing a suitable automatic retracting mechanism, the casing being slotted, and a suitable flexible connecting means extending from the retracting mechanism out through the casing and having a hitching strap removably connected to the free end of such connecting means. The outer end of the hitching strap is provided with a knob or button (8) adapted to engage the walls of the slot (1) of the casing, in order to prevent the strap from being drawn entirely within the casing and also to permit the operator to withdraw the strap against the tension of the retracting means when it is desired to use the strap.

As one means for removably securing the strap to the flexible connecting member (5), I have shown a pair of inwardly-turned bell-crank levers (9) (9) pivoted at their angles to the outer free end (6) of the connecting member (5). Pins (10) (10) project upward from the adjacent inner ends of the bell-crank lever or fingers (9) (9). A ring, bail or link (11) is secured to the inner end of the hitching strap and adapted to take over the up-standing pins (10) (10) on the bell-crank fingers (9) (9). An expansion spring (12) extends between and is secured to the opposite rearwardly projecting arms (13) (13) of the bell-crank levers or fingers and normally tends to force them apart into the dotted line position shown in Fig. 2. Stops (14) (14) on the free end of the connecting strip (5) limit the movement of the rearwardly projecting arms (13) (13) toward each other.

The operation of the invention is as follows: Assuming that the strap is coiled within the casing (A) and it is desired to

remove the strap for use, the operator will first grasp the knob or the protruding end of the hitching strap (7) and pull outward on the same against the tension of the re-
 5 retracting means until the outer end of the connecting member (5) is drawn out through the slot (1), whereupon the flexible means is also grasped by the operator and the link (11) released from the up-standing pins
 10 (10) (10) of the in-turned bell-crank fingers (9) (9). As soon as the link is released from the pins the tension of the spring (13) will operate to force the rearwardly-projecting arms (13) (13) of the fingers away
 15 from each other into the dotted line position shown in Fig. 2 whereupon the operator releases the free end of the flexible connection (5) and the rearward ends of the fingers en-
 20 gage the casing to retain such free end of the connection outside of the casing, in order to permit the end of the strap to be re-secured thereto when it is desired to coil the strap within the casing. Thus the free end of the
 25 connection is retained in its extended position automatically and cannot be retracted within the casing accidentally, as it is necessary to grasp and hold such free end when
 30 removing the link (11) from the pins (10) (10), and the moment such link is removed the action of the spring occurs to force the arms (13) (13) of the bell-crank fingers apart.

In re-attaching the strap to the connecting member, the operator must grasp the extend-
 35 ed end of the connecting-member compressing the free rearwardly-extending arms (13) (13) of the bell-crank fingers to bring their forward intumed ends toward each other, thus bringing the pins (10) (10) together
 40 to permit them to be embraced and surrounded by the link (11), after which the operator releases the free or extended end of the connection (5) and the retracting mechanism is allowed to operate to coil the con-
 45 necting-member and the strap within the casing, a slight pull being exerted on the strap as it is drawn within the casing to overcome the tension of the spring (12) which would normally force the rearwardly-
 50 projecting arms (13) (13) of the bell-crank fingers outward. The link, however, may be depended upon to prevent the outward movement of the arms (13) by restricting the pin-supporting ends of the fingers.

55 I am aware of numerous hitching weights wherein is shown a weight containing a retracting spring to which one end of a strap is connected, the free end of the strap adapted to be hooked onto the bit of the horse,
 60 but my invention differs therefrom in that the hitching strap shown by me is adapted to be entirely removed from the casing when in use. The casing may be attached in any suitable manner to any portion of the car-
 65 riage or to the saddle of a riding horse.

I have shown in Fig. 4 a set-screw and clamp (15) carried by the casing and adapted to secure the latter to a dash-board, but it is obvious that any other fastening means may be employed to secure the casing in
 70 any suitable manner to any part of the vehicle wherever desired.

In Fig. 3 I have shown a slight modification, wherein the casing is provided with a pair of coiled springs (17) (17) secured
 75 to a centrally-located rotatable axle (18). These coiled springs are spaced apart from each other to leave a space in alignment with the slot (1^a) in which the strap and connecting member are received when coiled,
 80 the connecting member being secured at its inner end to the rotating axle (18) and the strap and connecting member when drawn within the casing lie in a coil between the
 85 two springs (17) (17) which also serve to guide the strap and connecting member when being withdrawn from and when retracted within the casing.

Having thus fully disclosed my invention, what I claim as new is—

90 1. The combination with a casing having an opening therein, and retracting means located within the casing, of a connecting member, one end of which is secured to the retracting means, the opposite end of the
 95 member adapted to be drawn through the opening, a hitching strap, levers secured to that end of the connecting member capable of projecting through the opening, means normally tending to force the inner ends of
 100 the levers apart to take against the exterior of the casing, and a link on the hitching strap detachably connected to the outer ends of both levers.

2. The combination with a hollow slotted
 105 casing and an automatic retracting means located within the casing, of a flexible connecting member, the inner end of which is secured to the retracting means, a hitching strap formed independently of the flexible
 110 connecting means, the free end of the flexible connecting means adapted to project out through the slot in the casing, fingers pivoted intermediate their ends to the free end of the flexible connection, a link carried by
 115 the inner end of the hitching strap, pins carried by the forward ends of the fingers over which pins the link is adapted to be placed, and means for separating the rear ends of the fingers when the strap is re-
 120 moved from the free end of the flexible connection to permit the rear ends of the fingers to engage the casing and prevent the withdrawal of the connecting member into the casing.

12 3. A hitching strap holder comprising a hollow slotted casing, a retracting mechanism within the casing, a flexible member, one end of which is secured to the retracting mechanism, the free end of the member 1

adapted to extend out through the slot in the casing, a hitching strap formed independently of the connecting member, in-
turned bell-crank fingers pivotally connected
5 at their angles to the free end of the connecting member, pins carried by the adjacent forward ends of the bell-crank fingers, a link carried by one end of the strap and adapted to take over the pins, the rear-
10 wardly-projecting portions of the fingers normally lying approximately parallel with each other and within the plane of the longitudinal edges of the connecting member, a spring tending to force the rearwardly-
15 projecting portions of the fingers apart from each other to cause their rear ends to contact with the casing and prevent the retraction of the free end of the connecting member, and stops carried by the connecting
20 member for limiting the inward movement of the rear ends of the fingers.

4. A hitching strap holder comprising a

suitable hollow casing having a slot formed therein, a retracting mechanism located
within the casing, a connecting member, the
25 rear end of which is secured to the retracting mechanism, a hitching strap formed independently of the connecting member, movable means on the free end of the connecting
member adapted to be engaged by one end
30 of the hitching strap, and when so engaged retained within the plane of the edges of the free end of the connecting member, and means for automatically projecting the movable means beyond the plane of the edges of
35 the connecting member when the hitching strap is removed from the movable means.

In testimony whereof, I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

FRANK A. GILCREST.

Witnesses:

W. S. CLAPP,

MARY EARLEY O'BRIAN.