(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

M. S. CODY.

MAIL BAG CATCHER.

No. 587,115. Patented July 27, 1897.

Fig. 1.

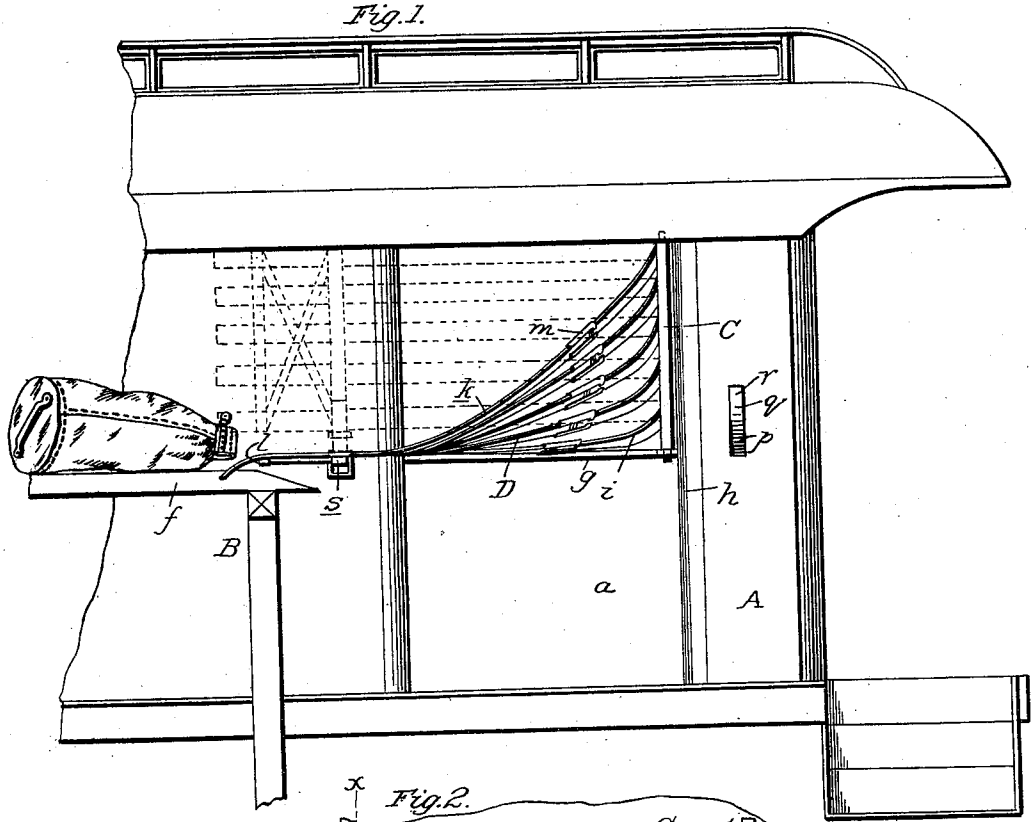
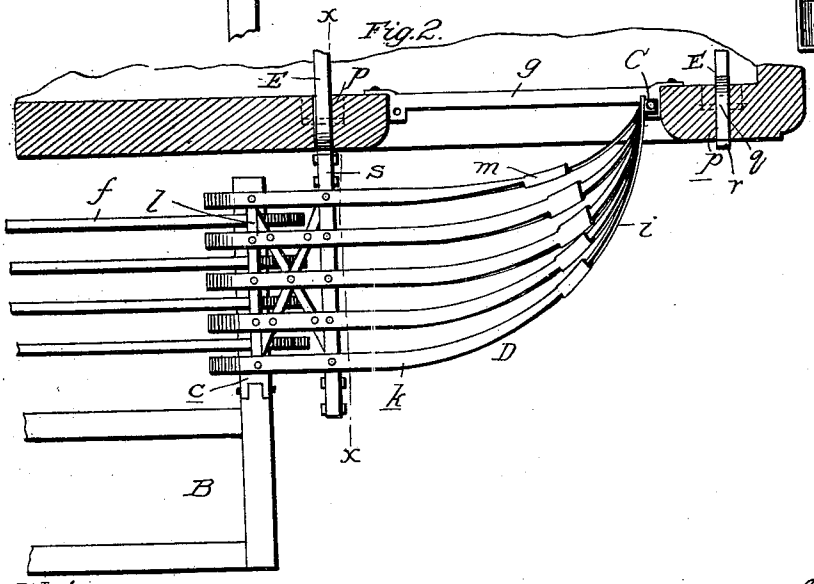


Fig. 2.



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(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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Fig. 3.

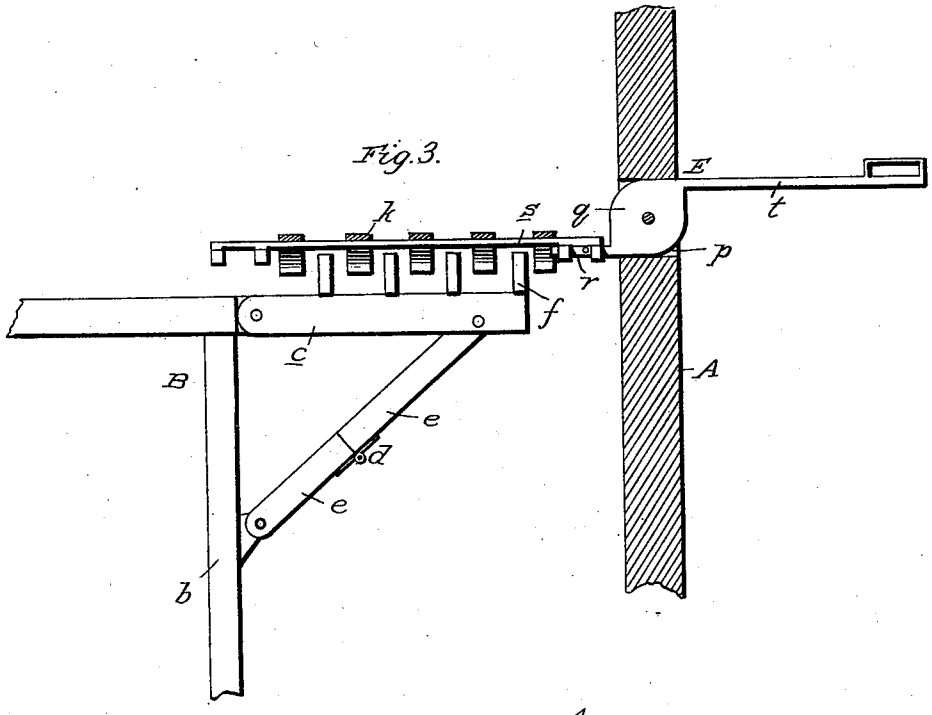


Fig. 4.

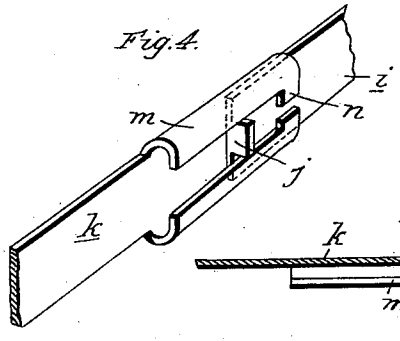
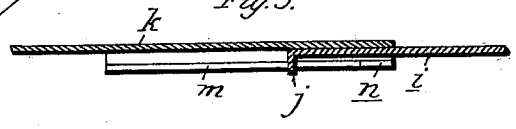


Fig. 5.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

MILES S. CODY, OF STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA.

MAIL-BAG CATCHER.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 587,115, dated July 27, 1897.

Application filed November 11, 1896. Serial No. 611,729. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MILES S. CODY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Stockton, in the county of San Joaquin and State of California, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail-Bag Catchers; and I do 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 mail-bag catchers for use on railway mail-cars; and it has for its general object to provide a mail-bag catcher which may be readily connected to mail-cars such as at present in use and one which is adapted, when adjusted to its proper operative position, to scoop up mail-bags placed on suitable stationary supports at the side of the track and guide the same through a door or other opening into the car, and which is also adapted, when not in use, to be readily folded or swung flat against the side of the car, so as not to strike obstructions at the side of the track.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will be fully understood from the following description and claims when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a side elevation of a portion of a railway mail-car equipped with my improved mail-bag catcher, the catcher being shown in its operative position in conjunction with the stationary platform from which it takes the mail-bags. Fig. 2 is a plan view of the same with the car in horizontal section. Fig. 3 is a transverse section taken in the plane indicated by the line x x of Fig. 2. Fig. 4 is an enlarged detail perspective illustrating the manner in which the sections forming the bars of the scoop are connected together to permit of endwise movement of one section with respect to the other, and Fig. 5 is a longitudinal central section of the same.

In the said drawings similar letters designate corresponding parts in all of the several views, referring to which—

A indicates a portion of a railway mail-car which may have the door-opening a and may otherwise be of the ordinary construction, and B indicates one of the mail-bag supports which are arranged at the side of and in close proximity to the track upon which the car travels. This support B comprises, by preference, a suitable stationary frame b and a leaf c, which is connected in a hinged manner to the side of the frame b, contiguous to the track, and is designed to be supported in its operative horizontal position by the brace d, which is formed of two sections e, flexibly connected together and having one section pivotally connected to the frame b and the other section pivotally connected to the support c, as illustrated. The leaf c is provided upon its upper side with a plurality of longitudinally-disposed ribs or bars f, upon which the mail-bags are designed to rest, for a purpose presently described.

The construction of mail-bag support shown and described is preferable, for the reason that it permits of the leaf c, when not in use, being swung down against the frame b, so as to be out of the way. I do not desire, however, to be understood as confining myself to such construction of support, as the support may be of any construction suitable to the purposes of my invention.

C indicates the rock-shaft of the scoop for taking up and guiding the mail-bags into the car through the door-opening thereof. This shaft C is preferably arranged in the upper portion of the door-opening a, adjacent to one of the side stiles thereof, and it is journaled at its ends in suitable bearings in the upper cross-stile of the door-opening and in a bar g, extending across the door-opening. Said shaft C serves for the connection of the inner sections i of the bars D, comprised in the scoop. The said sections i, which are formed of resilient or spring metal, are fixedly connected at their inner ends to the shaft C at intervals in the length thereof and are provided at their outer ends with the angularly-disposed branches j. (See Figs. 4 and 5.)

The outer sections k of the bars D are also formed of resilient or spring metal, and they are fixedly connected together by the several cross-bars l or other suitable means. Said sections k have their forward or outer ends curved or disposed downwardly, so as to enable them to take between the ribs or bars f of the support B and under the mail bag or bags thereon, and they are provided at their opposite or inner ends with the laterally and

inwardly bent portions *m*, which are designed to receive the outer ends of the sections *i*, and are provided at their ends with the lateral projections *n*, designed to engage the angular branches *j* of the sections *i*, and thereby limit the outward endwise movement of the sections *k* with respect to the inner sections *i*. This specific manner of connecting the sections *i k* so as to allow of a limited endwise movement of the latter is strong, durable, and not likely to get out of order and is preferred for such reasons. I do not desire, however, to be understood as confining myself to such specific connection, as any connection that will permit of the endwise movement of the outer sections with respect to the inner sections may be employed.

E indicates the lever for adjusting the scoop. This lever E is fulcrumed in a slot or opening *p* in the wall of the car A and is arranged transverse thereof, and it preferably comprises the body *q*, which is shaped as shown, so as to engage the upper and lower walls of the aperture to sustain the forward end of the scoop in its operative horizontal position, the outwardly-directed arm *r*, which is connected to a cross-bar *s*, arranged beneath and connected to the several sections *k* of the bars D, and the inwardly-directed arm or handle *t*, through the medium of which the scoop may be adjusted by a person within the car.

In the practical operation of my improvements the mail bag or bags are placed upon the longitudinal bars or ribs *f* of the stationary support B, the said bars or ribs being so arranged with respect to the bars D of the scoop that said bars D will pass between and at the sides of the ribs or bars *f*. As the train approaches the support B the attendant in the mail-car raises the arm *t* of the lever E and thereby lowers the scoop to its operative position, (shown in Figs. 1 to 3,) and consequently it will be observed that when the scoop reaches the support B it will take beneath the mail-bags thereon and will guide said mail-bags into the car through the door-opening *a* thereof, the momentum of the car and the shape of the scoop causing the bags to take such a course, as is obvious. After the support B is passed the attendant within the car depresses the arm *t* of the lever E until it rests against the inside of the car-wall, which movement of the lever will raise the scoop to a position flat against the side of the car, as shown by dotted lines in Fig. 1, so as to prevent it from striking bridges and other obstructions along the track.

As the scoop is raised the connections between the inner sections *i* and outer sections *k* of the bars D will permit the sections *k* to move endwise with respect to the sections *i*, and this endwise movement of the sections *k* will, as will be readily appreciated, permit the scoop to assume the position flat against the side of the car. Such connection when the scoop is lowered to its operative position will also enable the sections *k* to move forwardly with respect to the sections *i*, and by reason of this and the resiliency of the bars D the scoop will assume the position shown in Figs. 1 and 2 when lowered.

When the scoop is raised, the arm *t* of the lever E may be secured in its depressed position by any suitable means, (not illustrated,) so as to prevent the scoop from casually falling into its operative position.

I would have it understood that when it is not necessary to have the scoop capable of being swung up flat against the wall of the car said scoop may be of any construction and may be connected with the car in any manner that will enable it to scoop up bags from supports as the car passes the same and guide or shoot such bags into the car through an opening in one of the side walls thereof.

It will be observed that my improved scoop, when properly adjusted, takes the bags from the supports and delivers the same into the car, and that it is therefore a material improvement over those catchers which receive and hold the mail-bags until the same are removed and drawn into the car by the attendant. It will also be observed that my improvements, notwithstanding their many advantages, are very cheap and simple and may be quickly and easily connected to mail-cars such as at present in use.

When the scoop is to be reversed in order to suit the direction of movement in which the car is to travel, it is simply necessary to disconnect the bar *s* of the scoop from the outwardly-projecting end *r* of the lever E, which connection may for the sake of convenience be made by the employment of a socket or loops and a spring-key or cotter-pin. The rock-shaft C is then changed to similar bearings on the opposite side of the door-opening and the bar *s*, connected to the arm or projected end of a lever, as E, arranged in the slot *p* on the opposite side of said door-opening.

Having described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A mail-bag catcher comprising a scoop made up of sectional bars or strips slidably connected, a rock-shaft to which said bars are secured, and a lever secured to the outer sections of the bars, and having a handle for moving the bars into an approximate horizontal and vertical position respectively, the whole being adapted for attachment to a mail-car, substantially as specified.

2. A mail-car having an opening in one of its side walls, and a scoop disposed at one side of the car and connected at one end with the wall of the car at one side of the opening therein and curved downwardly and forwardly therefrom and having the horizontally-disposed forward portion, whereby it is adapted to take mail-bags from supports as

the car passes the same and guide such bags into the car through the opening in the wall thereof, substantially as specified.

3. A mail-car having an opening in one of its side walls and a scoop disposed at one side of the car and connected at one end with the wall of the car at one side of the opening therein and curved downwardly and forwardly therefrom and having the horizontally-disposed forward portion; said scoop comprising bars disposed downwardly at their forward ends; in combination with a stationary support having bars upon its upper side disposed in the direction in which the car moves and adapted to support mail-bags, substantially as specified.

4. A mail-car having an opening in one of its side walls, and a scoop disposed at one side of the car and comprising resilient bars having inner sections connected with the car and outer sections connected together and adjustably connected with the inner sections, means for supporting the forward portion of the scoop in its operative, horizontal position, and means for adjusting the scoop; the said scoop, in its operative position, being adapted to take mail-bags from supports as the car passes the same and deliver such bags into the car through the opening in the wall thereof, substantially as specified.

5. A mail-car having an opening in one of its side walls, a scoop comprising a vertical rock-shaft journaled at one side of the door-opening, and resilient bars having inner sections connected with the rock-shaft and outer sections adjustably connected with the inner sections, and a lever fulcrumed in one wall of the car and connected with the outer sections of the scoop-bars; said lever being adapted to support the scoop in its operative position and being also adapted, when its inner end is depressed, to raise the scoop flat against the outside of the car; the said scoop being adapted to take mail-bags from supports and deliver the same into the car through the opening in the wall thereof, substantially as specified.

6. The combination with a mail-car; of a scoop comprising bars or strips, a vertically-disposed rock-shaft secured at one end of said strips and bearing on one side of the door-opening, and a lever pivoted on the opposite side of said opening and secured at or near the opposite ends of said bars or strips, so that the movement in one direction will turn the scoop into a receiving position, and movement in an opposite direction will raise the scoop into an approximately flat contour against the side of the car, substantially as specified.

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

MILES S. CODY.

Witnesses:

WALTER JAMES,

CHARLES H. RAEDER.