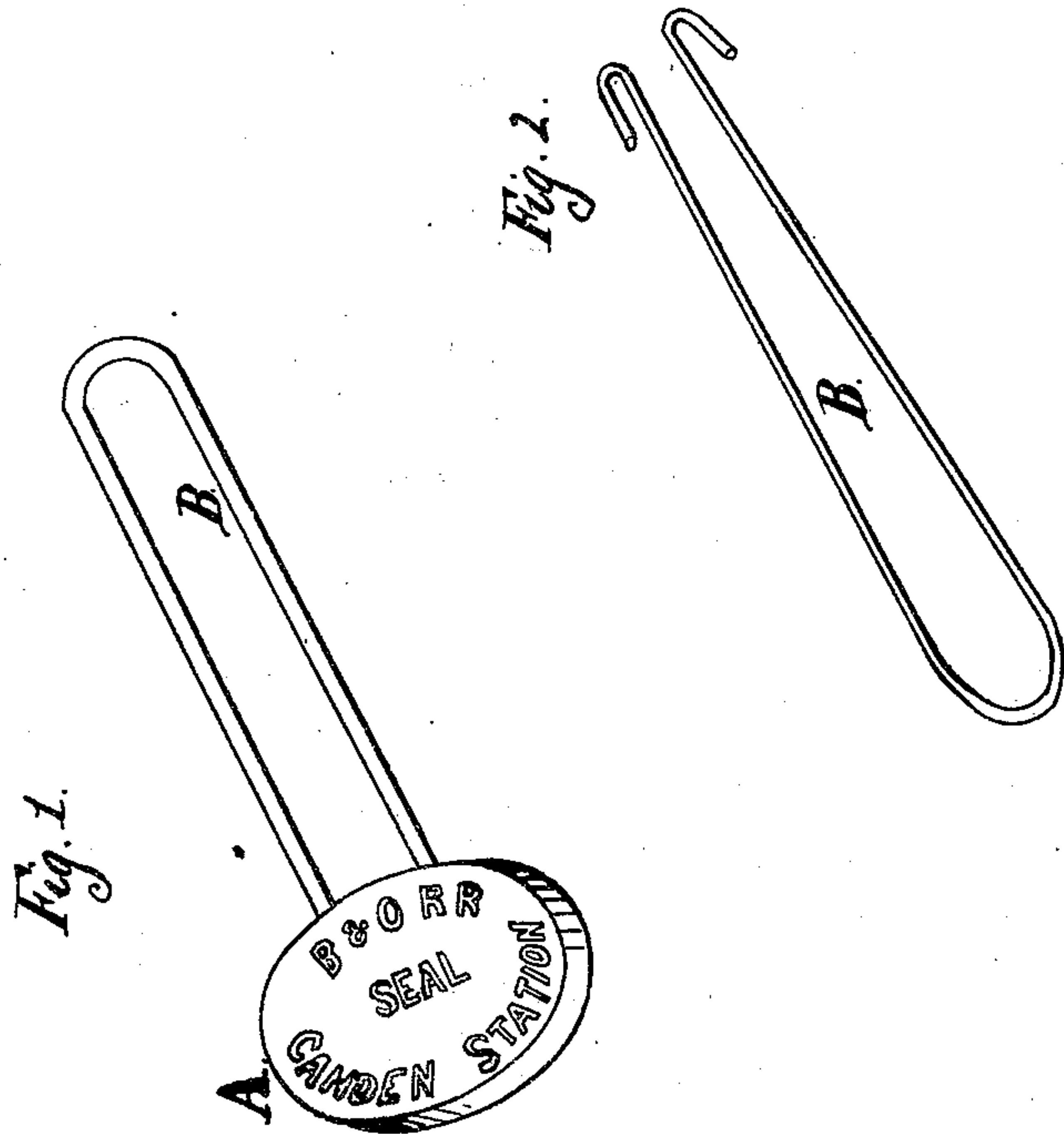
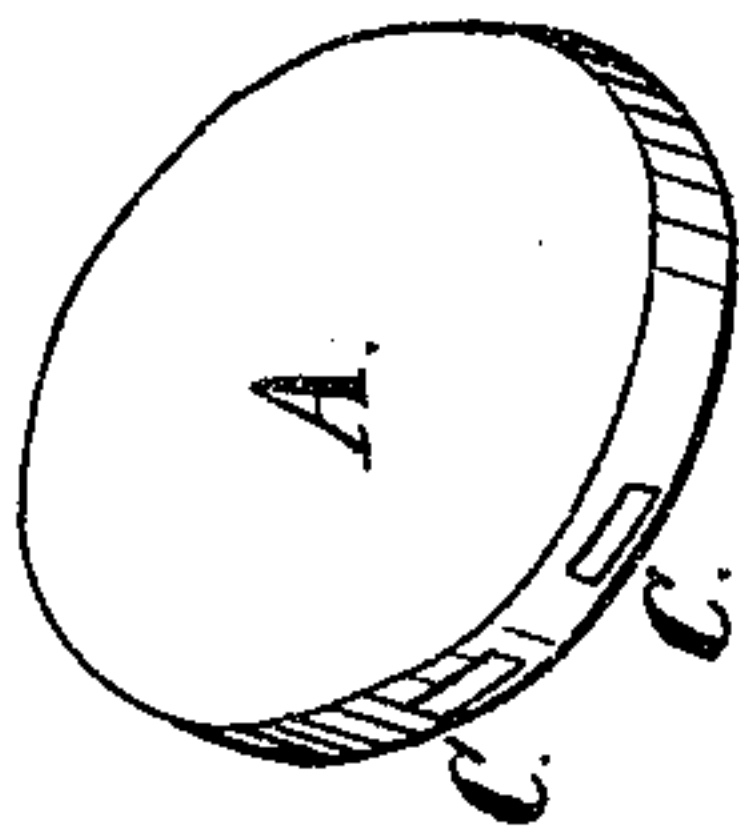
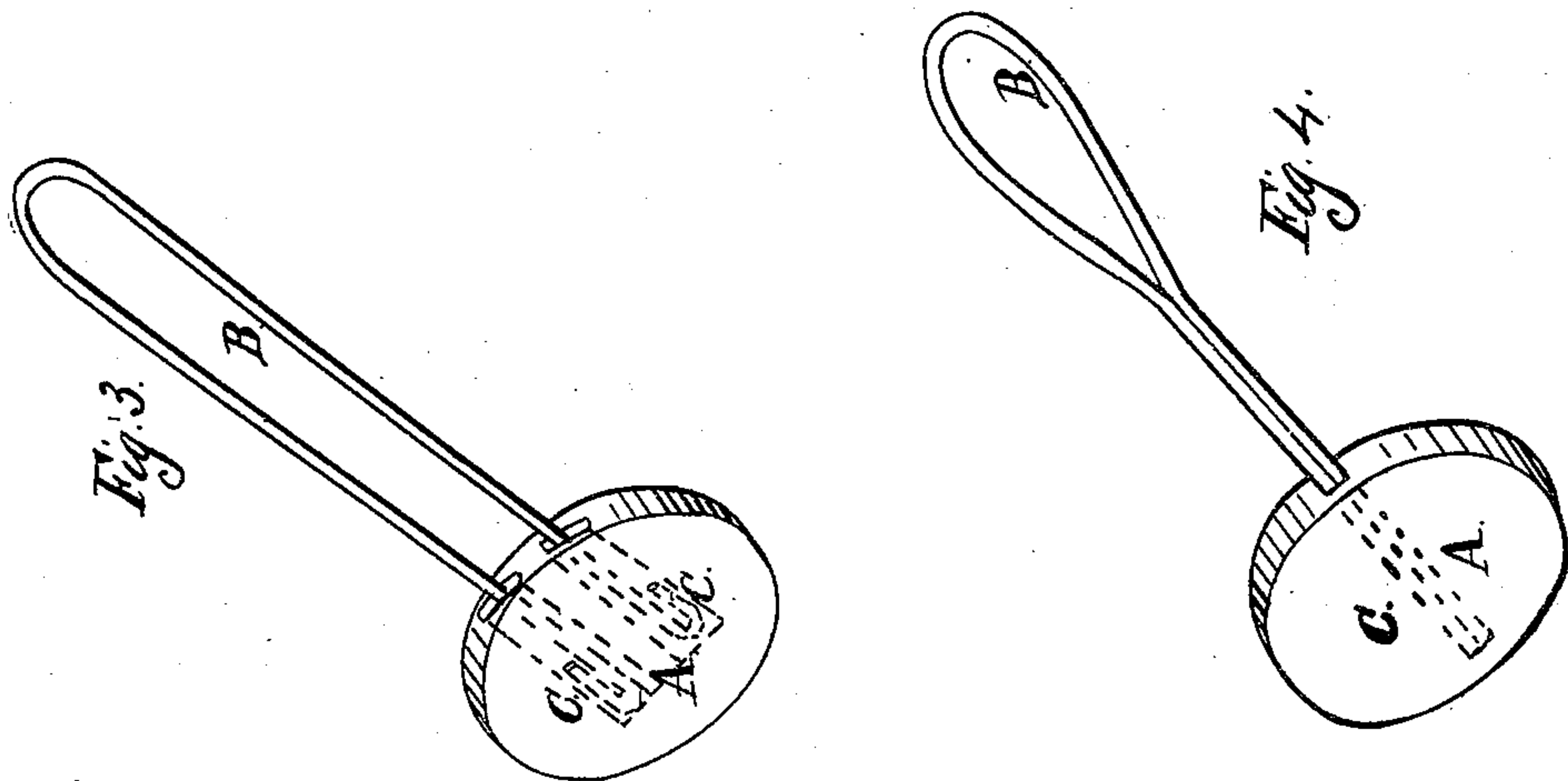


Mears & Houlton.
Baggage Seal.
No. 17,802. Patented Jul 14, 1857.



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

HENRY D. MEARS AND WILLIAM HOULTON, JR., OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

SEAL FOR RAILROAD FREIGHT-CARS, &c.

Specification of Letters Patent No. 17,802, dated July 14, 1857.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, HENRY D. MEARS and WILLIAM HOULTON, Jr., both of the city of Baltimore and State of Maryland, have
5 invented an Improved Seal Applicable to the Sealing of Railroad Freight-Cars and to a Variety of Analogous Purposes; and we do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description of the same, reference be-
10 ing had to the accompanying drawings.

The nature of our invention consists in a device for sealing freight cars, express chests, customhouse packages, wine cellars, mail bags, hatches of vessels, &c., in such a man-
15 ner that they cannot be opened without the seals being so violated as to render detection certain, said device consisting of a piece of wire of any suitable length, the ends of which are received into a disk of soft metal, and
20 fixed there by the blow of a hammer or by compression in pincers, the disk being by the same blow or compression impressed with any desired inscription or device.

The mode of sealing now in general use is
25 by means of wax. This material is objectionable because it becomes soft and loses the impression in warm weather, and becomes excessively brittle in cold weather, so as to fly at the least jar. In many cases of
30 suspected violation, it is impossible to determine whether a wax seal has been intentionally tampered with or merely injured by accident. Our seal is liable to no such uncertainty. It cannot be violated without
35 cutting the wire or forcing open the disk, either of which operations would be certain and easy of detection.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 represents our seal complete, as it appears
40 when applied to use with a stamp upon it. Fig. 2 shows the wire and disk separate, and the position of the holes or slots which receive the wire. Fig. 3 shows the wire inserted in the holes or slots in the disk, the

position of the wire within the disk being 45 indicated by dotted lines. Fig. 4 shows a modification of our device, being a disk with but one hole through it, into which the ends of the wire are passed.

A represents the disk, B the wire, and C, C, 50 the holes or slots in all the figures.

The operation is as follows: The wire is passed through staples or their equivalents, attached to the door and door-frame of the
car to be sealed. The ends of the wire are 55 then bent, if necessary, into the hooked or barbed shape shown in Figs. 2 and 3, and passed into the holes or slots in the soft metallic disk, which is then struck with the proper die by means of a hammer or pincers, 60 and, being compressed by the operation, grasps and holds the wire within it so firmly that no force short of what would destroy the seal is able to detach it. After being
used the disk is preserved for remelting. 65

It is obvious that a metallic strip may be substituted for wire without changing the nature of our device, and that holes or slots of various shapes and sizes may be em-
ployed, such changes being mere variations 70 of our plan.

What we claim as our invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The seal hereinbefore described, the same consisting of a disk of soft metal having one 75 or more holes or slots through it for the reception of the ends of a wire or metallic strip, which are confined by the compression of the disk, all constructed and operated substantially in the manner described and applied 80 to the purposes specified.

The above specification, signed and witnessed this eleventh day of June, A. D. 1857.

HENRY D. MEARS.

WM. HOULTON, JR.

Witnesses:

ROBT. B. JARVIS,

WM. E. CLARKE.