J. H. Van Houten,

Coffin,

No. 69,596. Patented Oct. 8. 1867.

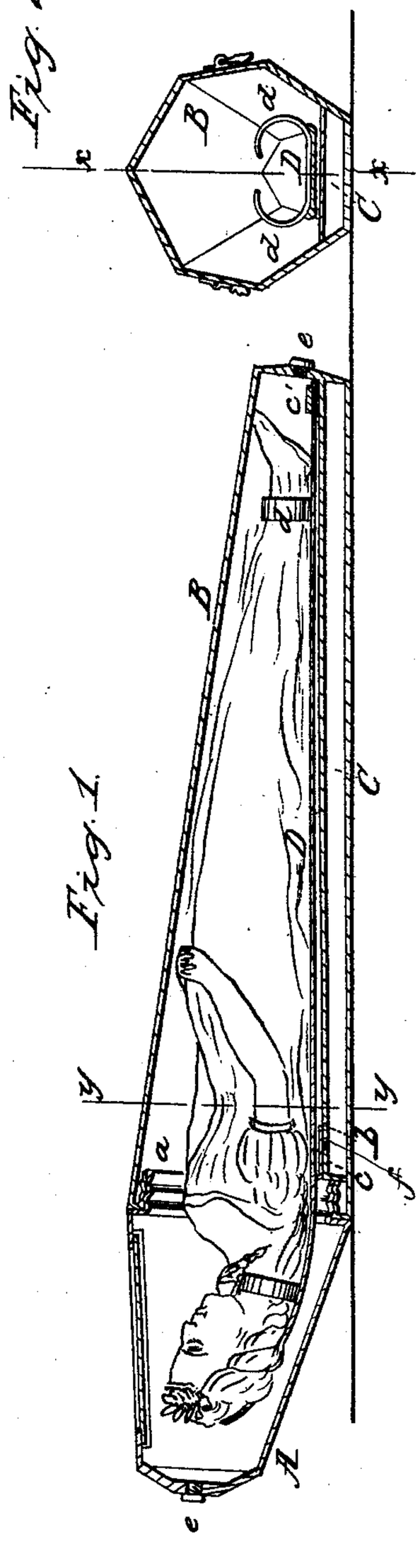

Fig. 1.

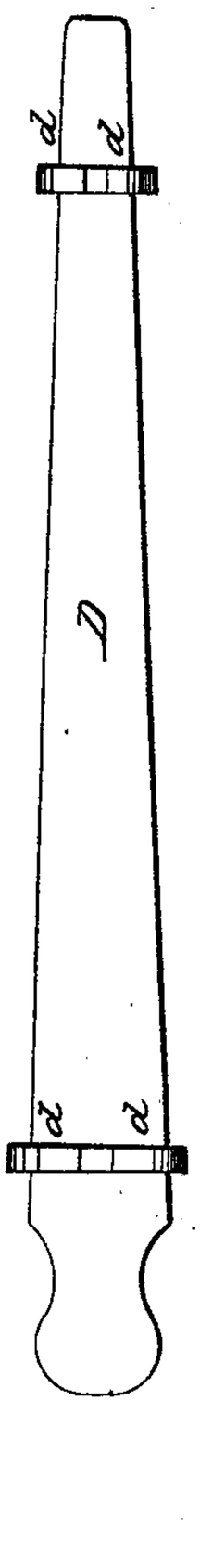

Fig. 3.

Witnesses:
James H. Gridley
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United States Patent Office.

JAMES H. VAN HOUTEN, OF NEW YORK, N. Y., ASSIGNOR TO NOAH W. KING AND ALBERT CASWELL, OF SAME PLACE.

Letters Patent No. 69,596, *dated October* 8, 1867.

IMPROVED BURIAL-CASE.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, JAMES H. VAN HOUTEN, of the city, county, and State of New York, have invented a new and improved Decay-Proof Burial-Casket; and that the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, hereinafter referred to, forms a full and exact specification of the same, wherein I have set forth the nature and principles of my said improvements, by which my invention may be distinguished from all others of a similar class, together with such parts as I claim, and desire to have secured to me by Letters Patent.

This invention consists in a novel manner of constructing a burial-case or casket, whereby the same, when closed up with a human body within it, may be rendered perfectly air-tight, and admit of gases being introduced to prevent the decay of the remains.

The invention further consists in the employment or use of a slide on which the body or corpse is placed, and secured by straps or springs, the slide being arranged and secured in position, when inserted in the case or casket, in such a manner as to prevent the displacement of the remains or corpse in moving the case or casket.

The invention also consists in the employment or use of plugs or screws inserted in the head and foot ends of the case or casket for the purpose of facilitating the injection of gas into the case or casket, and the expulsion of atmospheric air therefrom. In the accompanying sheet of drawings—

Figure 1 is a vertical longitudinal section of my invention, taken in the line *x x*, fig. 2.

Figure 2, a transverse vertical section of the same, taken in the line *y y*, fig. 1.

Figure 3, a detached plan or top view of a slide pertaining to the same.

Similar letters of reference indicate like parts.

The case or casket is composed of two transverse parts, A B, connected together by a screw joint, *a*. The part B is much longer than the part A, and receives the greater portion of the body, the head and neck being contained within the part A, as shown clearly in fig. 1. These parts A B may be constructed of metal, wrought or cast, or they may be of wood, or any other suitable material. Sheet metal, however, will probably be generally used, and the male and female screw may be spun on the abutting ends of the parts A B, or they may be of cast iron, and secured to said ends of A B. The former plan will probably be adopted. At the bottom of the part B of the case or casket there is a shallow chamber, C, which is filled with charcoal, and D is a slide, which may be of wood or metal, and has a lip or projection, *b*, to fit into a loop, *c*, on the top of the chamber C, while its end into fits into a loop, *c'*, at the inner end of the top of the chamber, to keep the slide D in place. This slide is somewhat longer than the part B of the case or casket, so that it will extend into the part A, and it may have straps or springs *d* attached to it, in order that the corpse may be secured upon it. By means of this slide it will be seen that a corpse may be readily placed in the case or casket, and prevented from being displaced by the moving of the same. It will be understood that the slide D, when the part A is unscrewed from B, is withdrawn from B, the corpse secured upon the slide, and the latter, with the corpse, inserted in the case or casket, and the part A then screwed into the part B, a cement composed of a mixture of white and red lead being used to insure an air-tight joint. Other cements, however, might be used for this purpose. In the head and foot ends of the case or casket there are inserted plugs or screws *e e*, which are withdrawn after the corpse is adjusted in the case or casket, and sulphurous gas is injected through one of the openings, which drives the atmospheric air out through the other opening, and when the case or casket is fully charged with the gas the plugs are replaced and made perfectly tight by means of any suitable cement. The sulphurous gas preserves the remains, but other gases would answer, such, for instance, as chlorine gas. The charcoal serves as an absorbent, the top of the chamber being perforated, as shown at *f*, in order that the gas may come in contact with the charcoal, as well as any liquids which may pass from the remains.

This invention has been practically tested, and has been found to keep the remains in perfect preservation. A corpse may be kept an indefinite period, in fact, so long as the case or casket remains air-tight. It dispenses with the use of ice, and also with embalming, modes of preservation which are repugnant to the feelings of

many but which have hitherto been a necessity when remains were to be kept to be viewed by relatives, and friends from a distance, or when the character of the disease of which they died induced immediate decomposition.

In consequence of having a casket constructed of transverse parts, a joint is obtained which may be readily made air-tight. A longitudinal joint extending all around the case or casket like those of ordinary construction cannot be made air-tight, as the joint has a great surface, and it is almost impossible to obtain perfectly-fitting edges over such a great extent of joint surface.

Having thus described my invention, I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent—

1. A burial-case or casket composed of two transverse parts, A B, connected together by a screw, substantially in the manner as and for the purpose set forth.

2. The slide D, in connection with the case or casket, constructed substantially as described.

3. The combination of the plugs *c e* with the burial-case A B and slide D, the whole made substantially as and for the purpose shown and set forth.

JAMES H. VAN HOUTEN.

Witnesses:
WM. F. MCNAMARA,
JAMES H. GRIDLEY.