

R. J. HOWDON.
Coffin-Plate.

No. 214,392.

Patented April 15, 1879.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

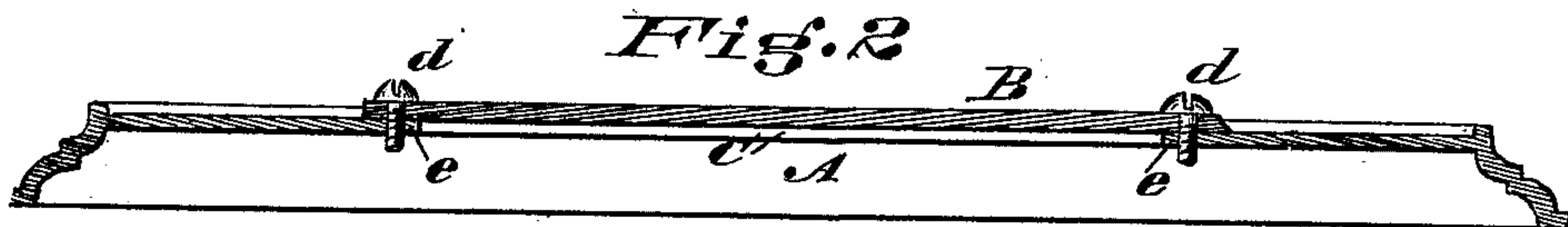


Fig. 3

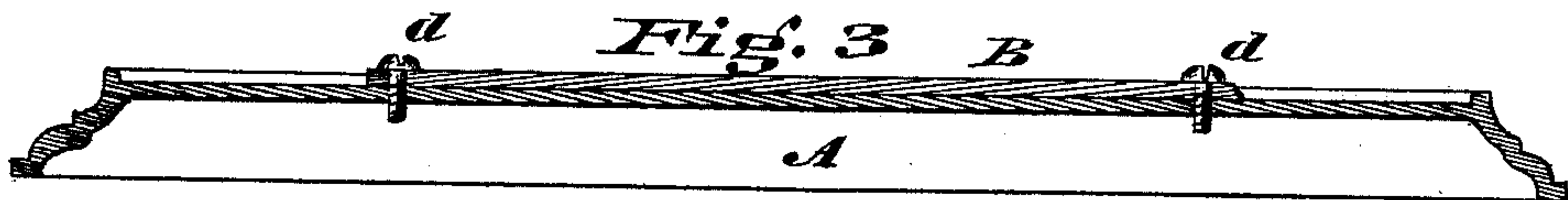


Fig. 4

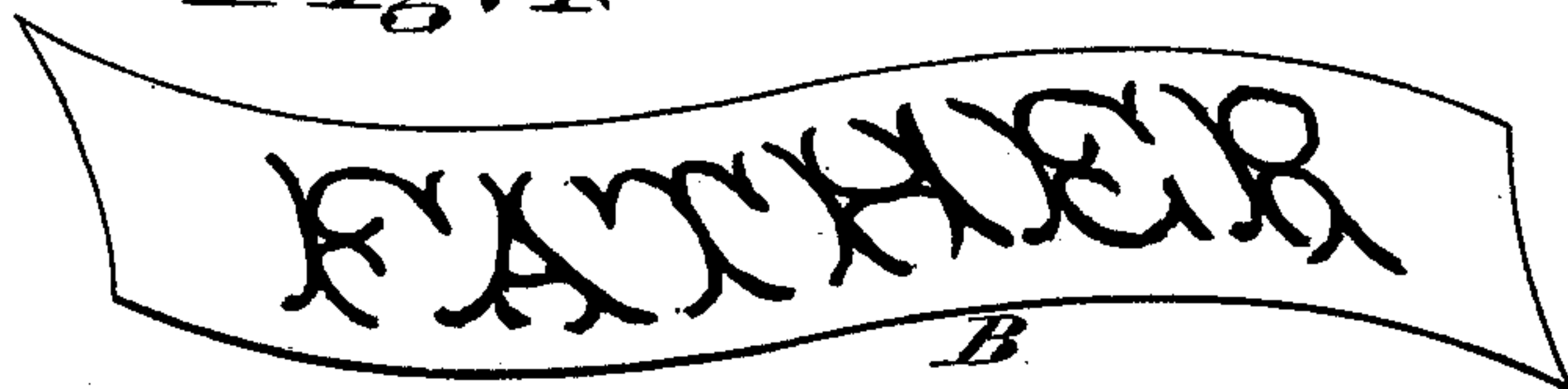


Fig. 5

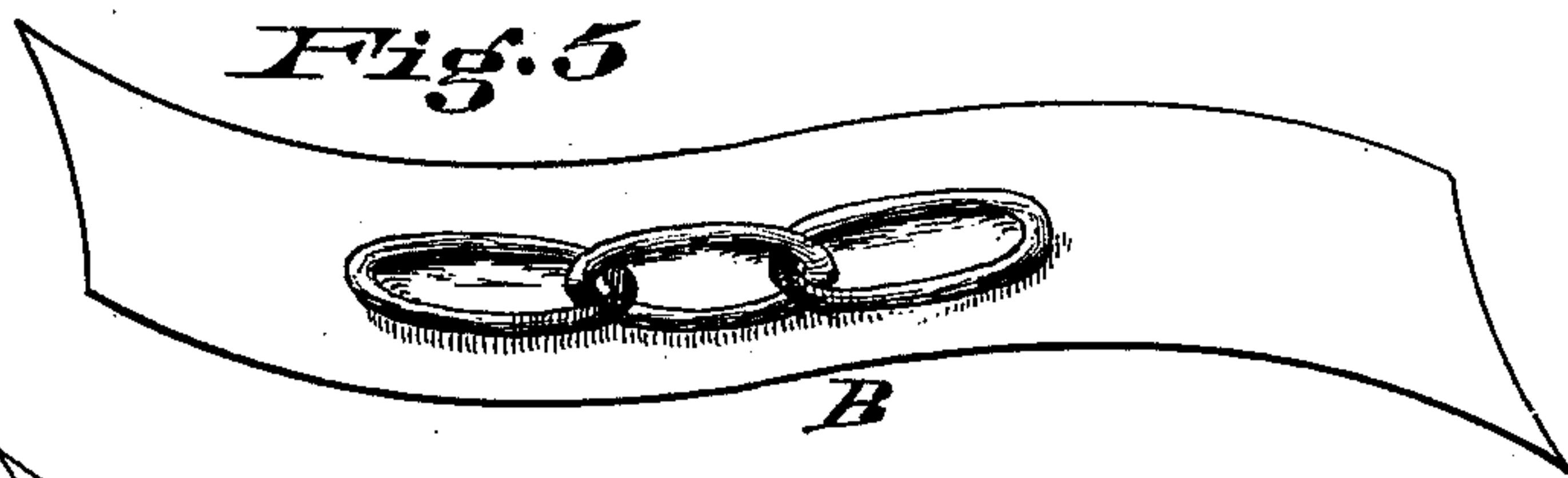
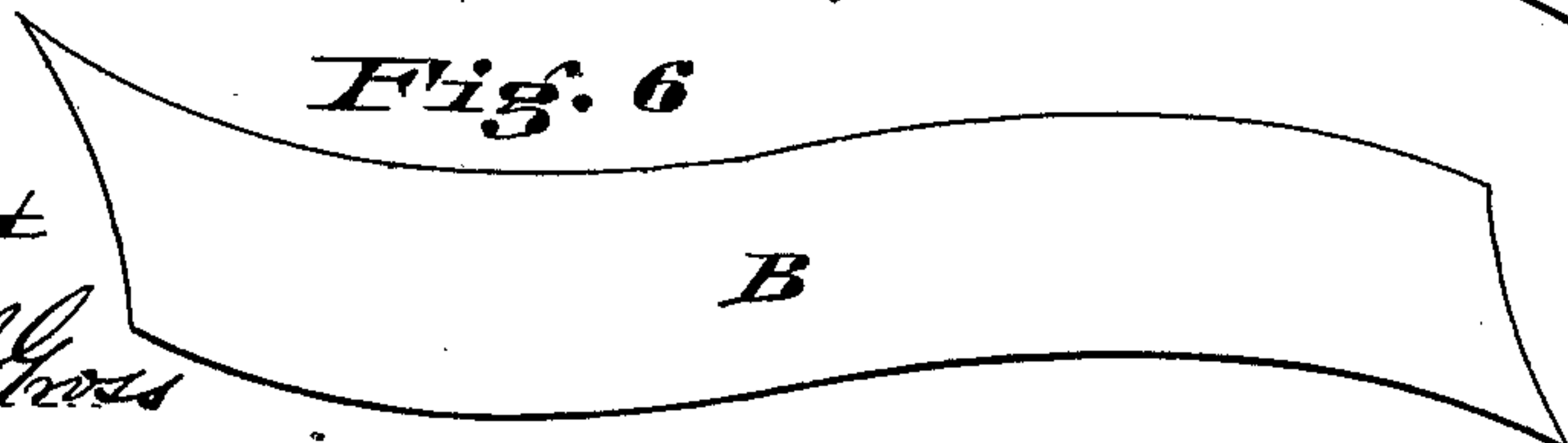


Fig. 6



Attest
Edw. J. Cross
John E. Jones

Robert J. Howdon,
Inventor

By Hosea Pillsbury,
His Atty

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ROBERT J. HOWDON, OF CINCINNATI, OHIO, ASSIGNOR TO CINCINNATI COFFIN COMPANY, OF SAME PLACE.

IMPROVEMENT IN COFFIN-PLATES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **214,392**, dated April 15, 1879; application filed October 10, 1878.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ROBERT J. HOWDON, of Cincinnati, Hamilton county, and State of Ohio, have invented Improved Coffin-Plates and Ornaments; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the same, which will enable others skilled in the art to which my invention relates to make and use it, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a coffin-plate constructed in accordance with my invention. Fig. 2 is a central longitudinal section of the same. Fig. 3 is a similar view, showing the center of the main plate solid; and Figs. 4, 5, and 6 are separate views of the supplemental plates detached from the main plate.

Similar letters refer to similar parts.

My invention has for its object to improve the construction of the metallic name-plates and ornaments for coffins, for the purpose of cheapening their cost of manufacture, and avoiding the expense and trouble to the undertaker of carrying a large stock of plates liable to become tarnished or injured by exposure. These plates are usually composed of cast metal, having names or emblems upon their faces appropriate to the use to which they are to be applied. For example, one set of plates may bear the word "Father," another set the word "Mother," and another set the words "Rest in Peace," and so on. The undertaker must therefore carry in stock as many plates of each kind as he thinks may be required in his business for a certain time, and if other words or symbols are wanted other than those he has he must send to the manufacturer for entirely new plates.

To avoid these objections my invention consists in constructing the plates without names, emblems, or mottoes, and providing separate supplemental plates carrying the words, symbols, or other devices, which can be readily applied to and removed from the main plates. By this provision the undertaker need only provide himself with a few main plates and an assortment of supplemental plates, which are much less expensive, so that he can supply any standard name, emblem, or device at any

time by simply attaching the supplemental to the main plates.

If he does not happen to have the required name or motto he can readily supply himself with it from the manufacturer at comparatively trifling expense, because he does not have to buy a complete plate of the full size. The supplemental plates may also be left plain for engraving the desired name, or any special symbol or motto not made for the trade. A stock of each kind can therefore be kept on hand, and if special designs are required the plain plates can be engraved accordingly.

These plates are so small and light that they can be easily and cheaply sent by mail from small towns or places where there are no engravers to larger towns or cities containing these artisans, whereas the large plates could not be so transmitted, and must therefore be sent by slower and more expensive means. Any style of supplemental plate, whether cheap or expensive, or of any desired form or dimensions, can be employed on the main plates, and therefore a greater variety of designs and ornaments is thus available without increasing the expense of the complete plates or necessitating a large stock to be kept on hand.

In the accompanying drawings, A represents the main plate of cast metal silvered, nickel-plated, or otherwise treated, and made of any form, style, or dimensions; and B is the supplemental name-plate or ornament. The main plate may be left plain in the center, and the supplemental plate screwed, bolted, or otherwise fastened to it, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3, or the plate cast with a central opening, C, as shown in Fig. 2.

I prefer this latter construction because it requires less metal and therefore reduces the cost of the plates, besides making them somewhat lighter. As shown in this figure the supplemental plate is secured to the main plate by screws *d d*, passing through the latter plate into lugs *e e*, cast in the ends of the opening C in the main plate.

Any other suitable or convenient means of fastening the plates together may be adopted, however, without departing from the spirit of my invention.

Figs. 4 and 5 represent several varieties of

marked supplemental plates, and Fig. 6, a plain plate for engraving. The configuration of the plates may be varied indefinitely, and the general design or ornamentation may be in harmony with that of the main plate, or in contrast therewith.

I am aware that coffin-plates have heretofore been made with ornamental detachable borders, and that they have been provided with receptacles or holders for separate and movable letters whereof the inscription should be composed.

I am also aware that signs have been constructed with detachable letters fastened upon a base-board or plate.

But my invention differs from these. First, mine is not a removable border to which the plate must conform in outline, but a base or foundation-plate, to which a smaller inscription-plate of arbitrary form or design may be

attached; second, it has no receptacle for movable types or letters; third, it is not a sign, and does not present a group of letters or figures fastened separately upon a base, but a plate having an inscription fastened upon the ornamental face of said plate.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim is—

An engraved or otherwise ornamented coffin-plate provided upon its face with a detachable secondary inscription-plate of arbitrary form, substantially as shown.

In testimony of which invention I hereunto set my hand this 2d day of October, A. D. 1878.

ROBERT J. HOWDON.

Witnesses:

L. M. HOSEA,

E. A. ELLSWORTH.