S. P. McCLEAN.

Metallic Burial-Safe.

No. 220,402. Patented Oct. 7, 1879.

Fig. 1.

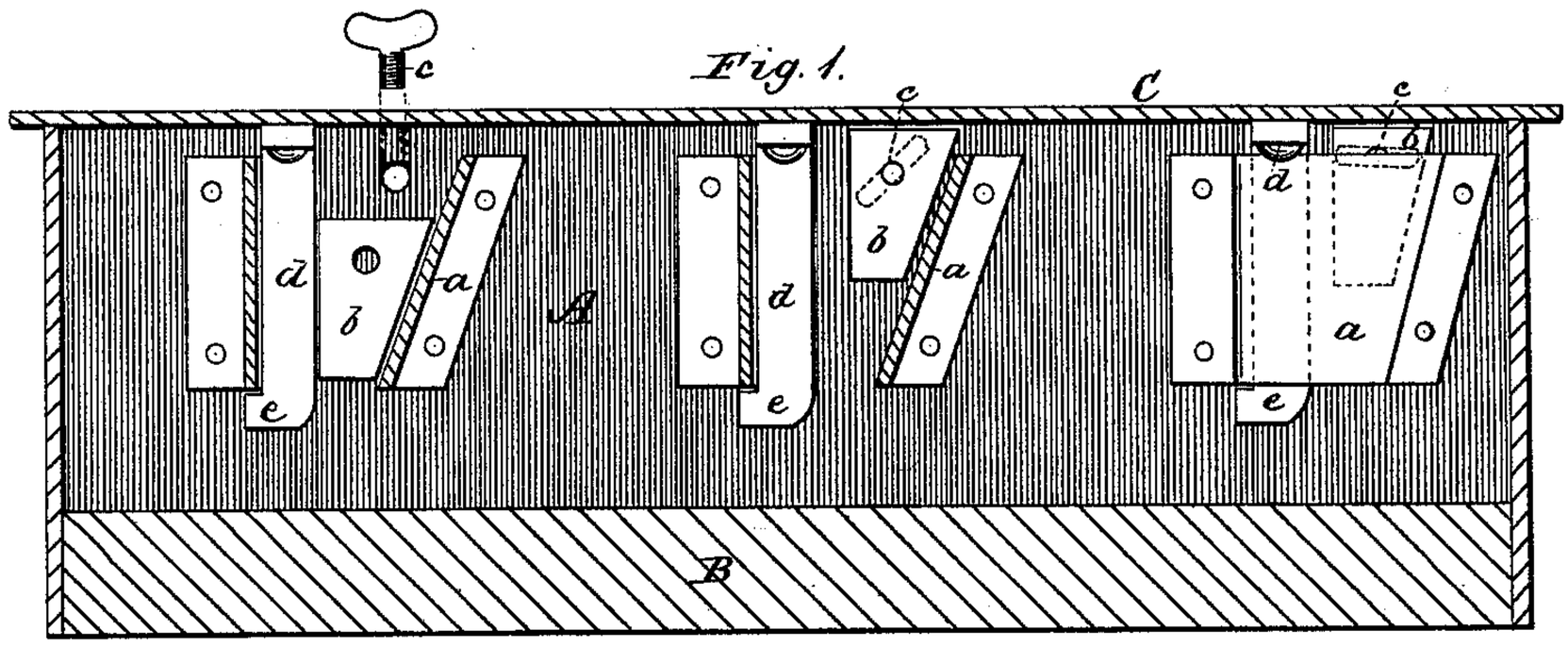
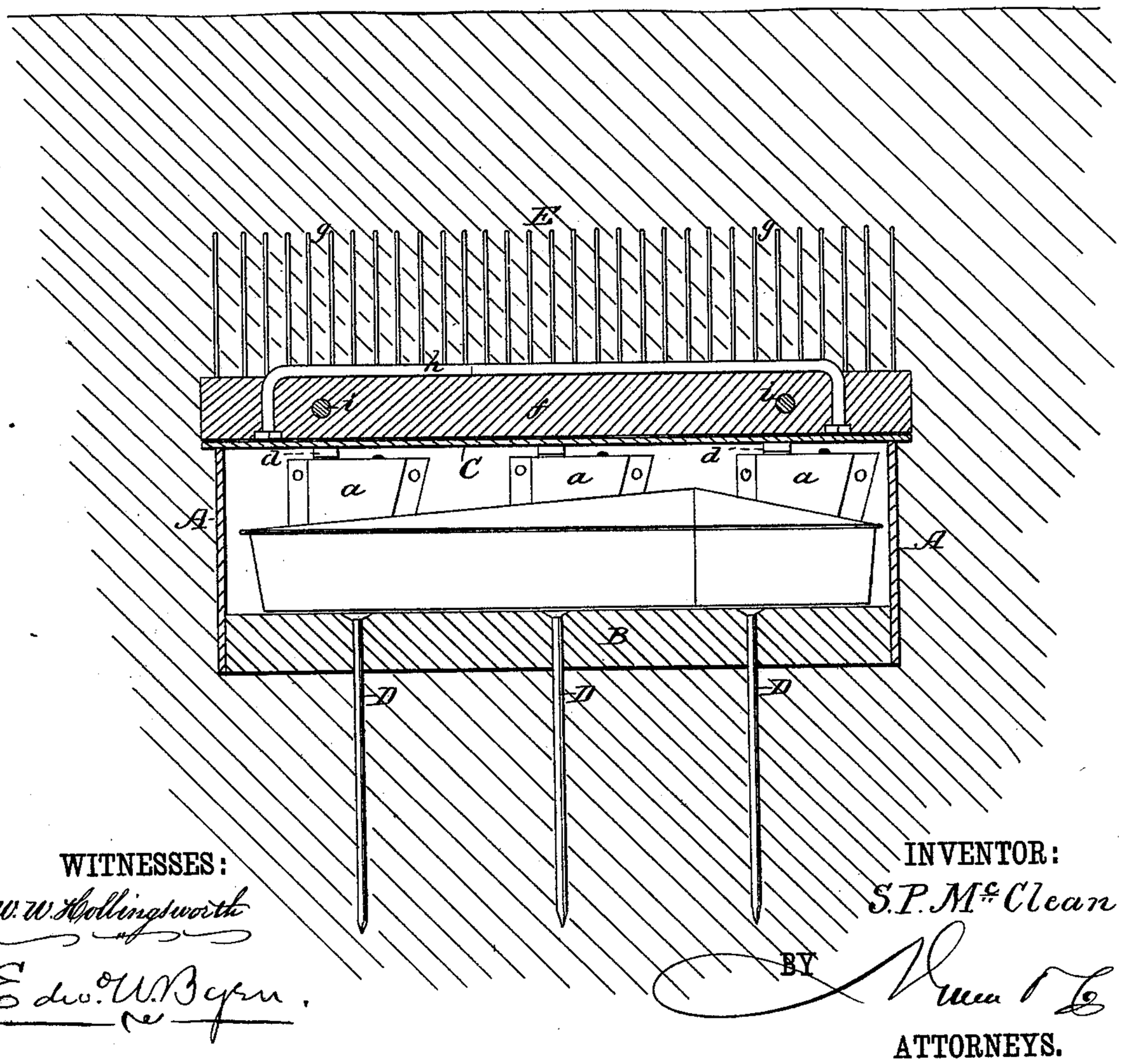


Fig. 2.



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SAMUEL P. McCLEAN, OF RANGE, OHIO, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF HIS RIGHT TO WILLIAM R. UNDERHILL.

IMPROVEMENT IN METALLIC BURIAL-SAFES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **220,402,** dated October 7, 1879; application filed December 10, 1878.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, SAMUEL PERRY MCCLEAN, of Range, in the county of Madison and State of Ohio, have invented a new and Improved Metallic Burial-Safe; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 is a longitudinal vertical section of the case, two of the keepers being cut through, showing the wedge fallen in the one and elevated in the other. Fig. 2 is a longitudinal section of the case and its appurtenances when buried in the earth.

The object of my invention is to provide such security for the dead in their graves as to effectually prevent what is known as "body-snatching." Of late years this offense has become so notorious and of such frequent occurrence as to have elicited various expedients to prevent the same, among which may be mentioned strong and heavy metallic casings for the reception of the coffin, torpedoes placed in the earth above the coffin, and watches set to guard the grave.

My invention consists in the employment of a strong metallic case having a cover provided with locking devices of such a character that when once locked they are permanently locked, and can never be opened except by cutting through the heavy iron of the case; and, also, in providing devices which prevent the digging of the earth down to the case; and, further, in securing the case so that it cannot be removed bodily for the purpose of gaining entrance thereto through the bottom, all as hereinafter more fully described.

In the drawings, A represents a rectangular case, made of heavy boiler-iron from one-fourth to one-half inch thick, and of sufficient size to receive the coffin or casket, and provided with either a wooden or metal bottom, B, the joint of said case being connected by rivets so shaped with tapering heads that they cannot be easily cut with a chisel. Upon the inside of the case and upon each side are strongly riveted three (more of less) plate-metal keepers, *a*, of a tapering or wedge shape, in which are sustained metal wedges *b*, the same being held in elevated position by screws *c* arranged upon the outside of the case.

C is the cover of the case. This is also constructed of heavy plate-metal, and is provided with strong arms *d*, made of metal, corresponding to the number of keepers *c* in the case. These arms are provided with lugs or catches *e* upon their lower ends, and when the cover is placed upon the case these arms enter their several keepers, and the lugs rest below the edges of the same. Now, the coffin having been inserted and the cover thus placed upon the case, the screws *c* are all removed, and as fast as they are removed the metal wedges *b*, which they sustain, drop down from gravity in the inclined space of the keepers, out of range of subsequent manipulation, and wedge or bind the arms of the cover tightly against the vertical side of the keeper, in which position the lugs or catches of the arms are beneath the edges of the keepers, and the cover cannot possibly be removed except by cutting through the case. This, it will be seen, makes a permanent and impregnable lock for the cover, since no access can be had to the locking devices (the wedges) for the purpose of manipulating them to unlock the cover.

To prevent the case from being removed bodily and carried off or turned over and broken into through the bottom, the case is fastened down into the earth by tie-rods or screw-rods D, which extend through the bottom of the coffin, and are suitably secured at their lower ends by an anchorage in the earth.

To render access to the case improbable I provide a device, E, which is planted immediately above the case. This consists of a heavy base, *f*, of either wood or iron, thickly studded with a series of upwardly-projecting metal rods, *g*, which penetrate the earth upwardly and prevent the use of shovels or other devices for removing the earth.

When the base *f* is made of wood, as shown, it is preferably about two inches thick, and is provided with two longitudinal bars of metal, *h h*, to prevent it from being sawed in two, and has also two or more transverse tie bars or rods, *i i*, to prevent it from being split in two. In inserting the rods *g* they are headed upon their lower ends, and said heads are arranged

upon the under side of the base *f*, so that said rods cannot be pulled out from the top.

In modifying my invention I may make the cover of the case serve as the basic attachment for the rods *g*, in which case the separate base *f* may be dispensed with.

From the foregoing description it will be seen that by the device E, I render access to the case difficult and improbable. By the permanently-locked case I prevent it being opened except by difficult, slow, and laborious cutting of heavy metal, while by the anchorage of the case in the earth I prevent the same from being removed bodily, which safeguards combine to render the coffin so nearly impregnable as to make the trouble of securing the body greater than its value to those who would steal it, and the time of getting at it too long to be successfully accomplished in one night without detection.

In defining my invention with greater clearness, I would state that I am aware that efforts have been made to lock the cover of a burial-case to the body portion by devices located upon the inside, so as to be inaccessible when locked, an example of which is seen in the patent to Gilbert, May 9, 1876. In such case, however, the locking-hook is pivoted at one end, and is held into engagement with the keeper by a spring. The position of this locking device is not changed in the manner in which mine is, since one end of the hook is pivoted, and hence the position of the locking device, as a whole, is not removed from the joint between the cover and the case sufficiently far to prevent prying up the cover enough to permit a tool to be inserted which will thrust back the spring-hook. In my case the wedge or block which secures the locking-hook in its locked position slides bodily from gravity out of range of any tool which could be inserted between the joint of the cover and case, and I therefore limit this feature of my invention to a falling block or wedge adapted to move bodily from gravity out of its first position to a position in which it co-operates with the other parts to permanently lock the cover.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim is—

1. The falling block or wedge, in combination with a metallic burial-safe and its cover, and with a locking device, substantially as described, one part of which locking device is located upon the cover and the other upon the case, and which parts are arranged to be engaged by a horizontal movement and held to such engagement by the falling of the block, as set forth.

2. The combination of the case having keepers *a*, the falling locking-wedges *b*, sustained by screws from the exterior, and the removable cover provided with downwardly-projecting arms having lugs at their lower ends, substantially as and for the purpose described.

3. The device E, consisting of a basic support studded with upwardly-projecting metal rods, adapted to be placed above the coffin or case, with the rods penetrating the earth, substantially as described.

4. The combination, with the metal case, of tie-rods extended through the bottom of the case and anchored in the earth, as and for the purpose described.

The above specification of my invention signed by me.

SAMUEL PERRY McCLEAN.

Witnesses:
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