

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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ATTACHMENT FOR LETTER-BOXES.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 584,459, dated June 15, 1897.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, EDWARD P. CHANEY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Moline, in the county of Rock Island and State of Illinois, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Attachments to Letter-Boxes; and I do hereby 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.

This invention relates to letter-boxes, but more particularly to devices for closing the openings for inserting mail-matter in letter-boxes and other receptacles for mail, the device being especially adapted for use in connection with private or house letter-boxes.

The principal objects of my invention are to provide improved means for protecting the contents of letter-boxes against the entrance of rain or dust or other objectionable matter through the openings therein which are provided for the insertion of mail-matter, to provide an effective device for closing such openings that may be easily opened and automatically closed, and to provide a lining for the chute which leads from said closing device into the box or receptacle, so as to prevent the wearing away of the walls of said chute, said lining being adapted to be adjusted to fit openings of different sizes.

A further object is to provide an attachment of the character referred to for house letter-boxes and the like which shall be simple in construction, inexpensive in manufacture, and durable and reliable in use and which at the same time shall present a neat and attractive appearance.

The invention will first be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, which are to be taken as a part of this specification, and then pointed out in the claims at the end of the description.

Referring to the drawings, in which similar letters of reference are used to denote similar parts in each of the several views, Figure 1, Sheet 1, represents a front view of the invention, illustrating the same applied to a door-jamb in position for use. Fig. 2 is a side view of the invention, showing the door-jamb partly broken away and partly in sec-

tion and a vertical section through the chute. Figs. 3 and 4 are perspective views of the name-plate or lid and the mouthpiece or guard, respectively, disconnected. Fig. 5 is a vertical longitudinal section of the last-mentioned parts connected together for attachment to the door-jamb. Fig. 6, Sheet 2, represents a front view of a modified form of the invention. Fig. 7 is a side view of said modification, showing the door-jamb in section and a vertical section through the chute. Fig. 8 is a front view of a plate attached to the inner end of the chute. Figs. 9 and 10 are perspective views of the name-plate or lid and the mouthpiece or guard, respectively, of the modified form disconnected. Fig. 11 is a rear view of the name-plate and mouthpiece or guard of the modified form of the device connected together, and Fig. 12 is a detail showing a plate to be placed under the hinge of the name-plate to prevent wear on the door-jamb.

In the drawings, A may denote a door-jamb or a part of the structure to which the attachment is to be applied and which is adapted to receive mail-matter deposited therein. It will be understood, of course, that the attachment may be applied to various uses or to letter-boxes of any preferred construction, such box or receptacle having an opening through one of the walls thereof adapted to be closed by the hereinafter-described attachment, either with or without the inclined chute and the correspondingly-inclined lining therefor. In the form shown the device is represented as being applied to a door-jamb, in which case a closed receptacle is unnecessary.

The door-jamb may be formed or provided with an elongated vertically-disposed slot or opening having upper and lower inclined walls, as shown, and which may be of any desired length and width adapted to permit the insertion of mail-matter in the ordinary manner. In said opening, as shown in Fig. 2, are fitted sheet-metal or other suitable plates a^1 a^2 , which are preferably U-shaped in cross-section and have their contiguous edges arranged so that one shall overlap the other, as at a^3 , to adapt said plates to be adjusted and applied to openings of various sizes.

These plates may be secured by means of brads, screws, or otherwise.

To the mouth or front of the opening a is applied the mouth piece or guard B, preferred forms of which are shown more clearly in Figs. 4 and 10. This guard may consist of a single piece of metal, which may be cast or otherwise formed with a base portion b , having an elongated slot or opening b' therein adapted to register with the opening a in the door-jamb or other structure to which it is applied and extending nearly the entire length thereof, the said slot terminating slightly below the upper end of the guard, so as to provide a portion b^2 having an opening therein for the insertion of a nail or screw for securing the guard to the face of the door-jamb. The base portion b has also formed therewith or attached thereto along the margin of the slot b' a flange b^3 , which is gradually inclined outwardly from the lowest part thereof near the upper end of the base-plate to the opposite end. Near its upper end the flange is formed with an outward curve or bulge, as at b^4 , on each side of the slot and terminates in a semicircular projection or hood b^5 , the latter being adapted to project out from the base-plate sufficiently to prevent rain or dust from entering the opening or chute in the box or receptacle through the crevices or slits formed between the base-plate and the hinged lid or cover.

In the rear face or back of the base-plate directly in rear of the raised or bulged portions b^4 and at the terminus of the slot b' are formed depressions b^6 to receive the pivots or pintles c of the name-plate or cover C. The cover C may also consist of a single piece of metal of a size and shape conforming to the shape of the flange which encircles the opening in the base-plate on which it is adapted to rest, said plate being formed or provided with a depending marginal flange which encircles and overlaps the flange b^3 of the mouth piece, so that when the cover is closed rain, dirt, and other foreign matter will be excluded from the opening. At its upper or hinged end the name-plate is provided with an angular extension or tongue C' , having the pintles or pivots c thereon and preferably extending from the body of the plate at an angle of about forty-five degrees, being of a width somewhat less than the body of the plate, so as to provide shoulders c' , which are adapted to abut against and ride upon the bulged portions or guides b^4 of the mouthpiece when the cover is raised and lowered, whereby the cover is steadied and guided in its movements and is prevented from wobbling in use.

The parts thus formed are adapted to be united for application to the mouth or front of the opening in the door-jamb or other structure by inserting the tongue or extension C' of the name-plate through the opening b' in the mouthpiece B and turning the same, so as to cause the pintles c to engage the re-

cesses or depressions b^6 , said recesses being of a sufficient depth to permit the pintles to engage the same with their surfaces flush with the back or rear surface of the base-piece, so that when the parts are fastened in proper position for covering and protecting the opening in the letter-box they may be retained in such position without any other fastening than the screws or other means employed for securing the mouthpiece at its top and bottom. When so connected, a neat and close joint will be formed at the top of the closure, but at the same time the lid or cover may be readily raised or lowered and will automatically drop down into position for closing the opening and will be retained in such position by its own weight, thus affording perfect protection against the entrance of rain or dust, while at the same time presenting a neat and attractive appearance.

If desired, small wires or projections may be formed on or secured to the back of the mouthpiece, as shown at D, Fig. 5, which may be bent down over the pintles to prevent the latter from moving out of the recesses; but such devices are not necessary and may be dispensed with. In the latter case, however, I preferably provide a metallic plate E, Figs. 2 and 12, which is secured between the face of the door-jamb or other structure and the upper part of the hinge-jointed parts B C, so as to prevent the pintles or tongue C' from wearing away the wooden surface with which they contact and thus working loose.

The rear of the opening a may be curtained or covered by a flexible strip F, of cloth or other suitable material, fastened at one end above the opening a and depending therefrom in front of the opening, being provided at its lower end with a weight f , so as to hold the curtain suspended in front of the opening, but adapting it to be readily pushed aside or out of the way of mail-matter deposited in said opening and to readily drop back into position to cover the opening after the passage of such matter. This curtain is especially designed for use when the closure is applied to openings in the door-jamb or other part of a private dwelling, so as to cover the opening on the inside without obstructing the passage of mail-matter that may be deposited therein. In ordinary letter-boxes such a curtain is dispensed with.

The hood or projection b^5 at the top of the base-plate or upper terminal of the flange thereon in addition to protecting the joint against the admission of rain, dust, &c., is also adapted to serve as a stop for limiting the upward movement of the cover or name-plate, thereby insuring the immediate return of the latter to its normal position for closing the slot in the mouthpiece the instant it is released after being raised; but in some cases the hood might be omitted. For convenience in raising the cover it may be provided at its lower end with a projection or handle c^2 .

In Sheet 2 of the drawings are shown various

modifications of the invention, which, while not necessary to the practice thereof, add greatly to its utility and appearance.

In the simpler form, the invention is shown applied to the door-jamb A, which is provided with an inclined slot adapted for the reception of mail-matter. In said opening, as shown in Fig. 7, are fitted sheet-metal plates e^1 and e^2 , which are made in the shape of the slot in the door-jamb. One of these plates is made slightly smaller than the other and adapted to telescope horizontally with it, as at e^3 , Fig. 7, so as to adapt said plates to be so adjusted and the lining to be fitted to an opening of any desired width. This is very advantageous, as it allows any one of the chutes to be fitted to any door-jamb and does away with the necessity of making chutes of various sizes. These plates may be secured to the door-jamb by means of brads, screws, or otherwise. For greater range of adjustment it may also be desirable in some cases to combine the two adjustments of the chutes illustrated in Figs. 2 and 7 by dividing the parts a^1 and a^2 of Fig. 2 transversely, as shown by Fig. 7, or dividing the parts e^1 and e^2 of Fig. 7 longitudinally, as shown by Fig. 2, thus permitting a telescopic adjustment both vertically and longitudinally. The mouthpiece B of the form shown in Fig. 10 is the same as that shown in Fig. 3, except that as a further protection against the entrance of rain or dust into the chute a bridge-wall b^7 is formed across the slot in the mouthpiece. This bridge connects the opposite sides of the flange b^3 and is formed flush with the flange in front, but preferably projects out behind the plate a little, as shown in Fig. 7, the projecting portion being slightly sharpened, so as to take into the wood of the door-jamb, thus forming an impassable barrier against the passage of rain, which might trickle down through the crevices formed between the base-plate and the door-jamb, causing the rain to run off at the sides of the plate. This bridge is preferably formed integrally with the base-plate, but it may be formed separately therefrom and fastened to it by solder or other means. The name-plate or cover C of Fig. 9 is also like that shown in Fig. 3, Sheet 1, except that a channel c^3 is cut in the upper portion of the projecting portion c^2 to register with the bridge-wall b^7 of the mouthpiece when the lid is closed, so that any water that may leak in will be guided by the bridge b^7 into the channel c^3 and thence down through the depressions c^4 and out at the lower end of the lid. The cover C and mouthpiece B are hinged together in the manner described with reference to Sheet 1. Directly in rear of the hinge is placed the shield E. (Shown in Fig. 12.) This shield may be formed of tin or other suitable material, and is best suspended in proper position by means of the screw which fastens the upper end of the base-plate to the door-jamb, a hole E^1 in the plate being adapted to register with the hole g^2 of

the base-plate. This shield E prevents the wearing away of the wood under the hinge and the consequent loosening and too great play of the lid.

A more elaborate and preferred construction for the inner end of the chute is illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8 of Sheet 2, wherein a mouthpiece H is provided, adapted to be fastened by screws or otherwise to the inner side of the door-jamb, in which a recess h^4 is cut to receive it. This mouthpiece is formed integrally with (or may have attached thereto) a wide inwardly-projecting flange h^2 , rounded at each end conformably to the shape of the end of the lining-plate e^2 of the chute which it incloses. This flange is pivoted at either side by pins or studs h^3 to the lining-plate e^2 to adapt it to be turned on its pivot, thus giving a chance for a wide variation in the vertical direction of the chute. If it is desired that the slot through which the chute is to pass should be more horizontal, the chute may be turned down on the pivots and the lower portion of the plate e^2 cut away, so that it shall not extend beyond or below the mouthpiece. The mouthpiece is provided with a cross-bar h^1 , extending from side to side of the opening, on which a ribbon F may be hung, as in the form shown in Fig. 2.

Having thus fully described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States, is—

1. A closure for openings of letter-boxes, comprising an elongated mouthpiece or guard adapted to fit about such opening and having a slot therein registering with the opening, and an outwardly-projecting flange encircling said opening and extending along the margin of said slot and forming a seat for a hinged cover or name-plate; a cover or name-plate fitting over said mouthpiece and having a pendent flange adapted to encircle and overlap the flange of the mouthpiece, and an angular extension or tongue projecting from the name-plate and having pintles thereon engaging recesses provided therefor in the rear wall of the mouthpiece for hinging the parts together; said extension being of substantially the same width as the slot in the mouthpiece and adapted to pass edgewise through the slot from the front and lock the pintles in the recesses when the name-plate is brought into alinement with the mouthpiece, substantially as described.

2. A closure for the openings of letter-boxes, or receptacles, comprising a mouthpiece having an elongated slot or opening therethrough adapted to register with the opening in the receptacle, and having a flange encircling said opening; said flange gradually decreasing in depth from near one end to the opposite end thereof, a name-plate or cover fitting over said mouthpiece and having a pendent flange extending along its margin or edge adapted to overlap the flange of the mouthpiece; said name-plate having an angular extension or tongue with pintles

or lugs thereon for engaging recesses in the rear wall of the mouthpiece, for hinging the parts together; the flange upon the mouthpiece being formed with bulged or raised and rounded portions near the hinged connection, and the name-plate having shoulders adapted to abut against said portions for steadying and guiding the cover when lifted or raised; said mouthpiece also having a semicircular projection or hood above the hinged connection adapted to protect the joint and serve as a stop to limit the upward movement of the cover, substantially as described.

3. A closure for the openings of letter-boxes and similar receptacles, comprising a mouthpiece adapted to be secured in front of the opening and having an elongated slot therein registering with said opening and a flange extending along the edge or margin of the opening in the mouthpiece with a gentle slope from top to bottom; said flange being formed with rounded projections or bulged portions adjacent to the slot and terminating above the same in an outwardly-projecting hood or shield, together with an elongated name-plate or cover having shoulders adapted to abut against the bulged portions for steadying and guiding the cover when lifted; said cover having a marginal flange adapted to overlap the flange upon the mouthpiece, and provided at one end with an extension or tongue projecting therefrom at an angle to the body of the plate and provided with pintles or lugs which engage recesses provided therefor in the rear wall or face of the mouthpiece; said parts being hinged together by engaging said lugs with said recesses, substantially as described.

4. The mouthpiece having an elongated opening therethrough adapted to register with a similar opening in a letter-box and provided with an outwardly-projecting flange surrounding said opening, in combination with the name-plate hinged thereto so as to rest upon said flange; said mouthpiece being provided with a bridge or arch extending across said opening below said hinge, for directing any water that may enter from above down the sides thereof, substantially as described.

5. The mouthpiece having an elongated opening therethrough and provided with an outwardly-projecting flange encircling said opening, in combination with the name-plate hinged to said mouthpiece so as to rest upon said flange; said name-plate having a marginal flange overlapping the flange on the mouthpiece and provided on the inside thereof with an elongated raised portion conforming

to the contour of said opening, so as to provide inside grooves or channels between said marginal flange and raised portion for directing any water that may enter from above down said channels and out at the lower end thereof, substantially as described.

6. The mouthpiece consisting of a longitudinally-slotted plate adapted for attachment to a letter-box and provided with an outwardly-projecting flange encircling said slot, and a bridge or arch near the upper end thereof extending across the slot and connecting opposite sides of said flange, in combination with a name-plate hinged to said mouthpiece at its upper end and adapted to rest upon said flange; said name-plate having a marginal flange adapted to overlap the flange upon which it rests and an inside elongated raised portion conforming to the shape of the elongated slot in the base-plate so as to provide grooves or channels between its marginal flange and said raised portion for directing any water that may enter between the crevices of the hinge down said channels, substantially as described.

7. In combination with the opening in the door-jamb or the like for the insertion of mail-matter, the mouthpiece or closure for the front of said opening, comprising an escutcheon-plate formed in two parts one of which is hinged to and rests upon the other; the inner plate having an elongated slot therein which registers with the opening in the letter-box, a lining for said opening consisting of two or more telescopically-arranged sections shaped to fit the contour of the opening, and an inside escutcheon-plate having an elongated slot therein to register with the opening in the letter-box and an inwardly-projecting flange pivoted centrally to the inner section of said lining, substantially as described.

8. In combination with the opening in the door-jamb for the insertion of mail-matter, the lining composed of two or more telescopically-arranged sections shaped to adapt them to the contour of said opening, and an inside plate having an opening therethrough to register with the opening in the door-jamb and provided with an inwardly-projecting flange to which the inner section of said lining is pivoted centrally of the opening therein, substantially as and for the purpose described.

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

EDWARD P. CHANEY.

Witnesses:

BURTON F. PEEK,
GEO. W. WOOD.