

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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IMPROVEMENT IN MAIL-BAGS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 210,579, dated December 3, 1878; application filed November 15, 1878.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, POLYDORE S. THOMSON and FRANK M. THOMSON, both of Jersey City, in the county of Hudson and State of New Jersey, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail-Bags; and we do hereby declare the following to be 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 perspective view. Fig. 2 is a longitudinal section. Fig. 3 is a front elevation; and Fig. 4, details of the staple and fastening-plate.

Similar letters of reference in the several figures denote the same parts.

The object of this invention is to render mail-bags more convenient for introducing and removing the mail-matter, and more secure against the unauthorized removal of their contents; and the invention consists in a new and improved device for fastening the same when closed.

In the drawings, A represents the front, and B the rear side of the pouch. To the rear side is attached a flap, C, which folds over the mouth and down on the front, as shown in Fig. 2. To the front side is attached another flap, D, which folds over the flap C across the top of the bag, and down on the rear side, as shown in the same figure. A lifting-strap, F, is attached to the lower part of the front flap, D, and a strap or straps, G, by which to hang the open pouch upon hooks or other suitable supports when filling or emptying the bag, is or are attached to the upper part of the rear flap, C, so as to fold in with said flap when the bag is closed.

The attachment of the strap G to the upper edge of the flap C not only enables said strap to be concealed when the bag is closed, but also causes the strap to hold the mouth of the bag open and keep the flap out of the way when the bag is hung up to receive the mail; and it has the further advantage of placing said supporting-strap out of the way of the locking-strap and its staples. Said staples s are attached, in the manner hereinafter shown and described, to the rear side of the bag, along the line or part where the rear flap is permanently riveted to the part B.

The locking-strap L is attached at one end to the lower part of the front flap, D, by a staple or other adequate fastening, *l*, and, for the purpose of locking the bag, is passed through the staples *s* on the rear side, and brought around laterally to the front side, where it is passed over another staple, *l'*, and locked by any suitable lock, *l''*, in the usual manner.

T is a tag-holder or label-holder, which may be made by riveting a leather or metallic plate to the flap D, said leather or metal having an opening, to reveal the inscription on the tag, and having a raised retaining-flange, under which the label is slipped, and by which it is held.

The open end of the holder is near the staple *l'*, so that when the label-card is in place the locking-strap, passed over said staple, as described, will prevent the card from working out or becoming displaced. Any other known and approved label-holder may, however, be employed.

The above-described mode of constructing the top of the bag or pouch—namely, by providing the two flaps C D, folding in the manner described, and securing the suspending-straps G to the rear flap—presents three important advantages, viz: First, it makes the passage into the closed bag very tortuous, it being necessary to pass the hand or other instrument in at the rear side, under the edge of the flap D, then up over the top of the parts A B, then down on the front side between the parts C D, then under the edge of the flap C, then up over the edge of the part A, and then down into the bag—an operation which is practically impossible; secondly, the staples *s* need only be passed through holes *m* in the flap D to securely close the bag, instead of passing said staples entirely through the sides of the bag, as heretofore—an improvement which dispenses with a large number of rivets, saves cost of construction, and renders the bag lighter, without detracting from its security; and, thirdly, as above stated, in the convenient presentation of the opening for the receipt of mail-matter, and the freedom of the sides of said opening from all projections that would obstruct the delivery of letters into the pouch.

The staple and its fastening-plate are shown

at *s* in Fig. 4. The staple consists of a stout wire or metallic rod, bent into the form of a buckle-plate, with the ends of the rod turned out in opposite directions at right angles to the plane of the buckle-plate, as shown at *r r*. This staple thus made is secured to the pouch by means of a plate, *E*, of metal, having a cruciform rib, *e*, struck up in it, said rib being concave on the under side. The plate *E* is passed through the staple *s*, and brought down upon the bent ends thereof, so that the latter will be received and held in the concave rib *e*, and then the plate *E* is firmly riveted to the pouch. The ends of the rib *e* may be flattened down to conceal the ends of the staple, if desired. The rivets which fasten the plate *E* to the pouch may pass through the material of the latter, and be headed or provided with a burr on the opposite side thereof; or another flat plate may be applied on said opposite side, and the rivets passed through and headed on the outer side of said back plate.

An equivalent mode of construction is to cut a cruciform slit in the material of the pouch, place the bent cruciform end of the staple *s* therein, pass a flat plate of metal through the staple and rivet it to the pouch, and, if preferred, apply a back plate of metal, as above described. The staple will then be held, as before, in a cruciform recess, and secured by a plate of metal extending through its loop, and, if preferred, another plate on the back. The ends of the staples *r r* may be flattened, or a piece of sheet metal may be inserted between them and the leather, to prevent their cutting through the leather. The plate *E* should be fastened to the pouch by four rivets, to insure permanence and rigidity. The staples will in this manner be held securely and presented accurately to the eyes on the opposite flap. The mode of fastening them is simple, and the whole construction cheap, convenient, durable, and strong.

A single row of rivets, *v*, will be sufficient for attaching the flap *D* to the pouch; but two or more rows, *n n'*, should be employed for the attachment of the flap *C*. The row *v* will be entirely concealed when the bag is closed, and

the upper row, *n*, will also be concealed, so that both rows are practically inaccessible when the bag is locked.

To prevent any possibility of a person's locking the pouch without properly folding the flap *D* into its place, the locking-staple *l* may be attached on the inner side of the flap *D*, so as to project inward, and holes or eyes may be made through the bag and flaps, so that when the flap *D* is folded the said locking-staple will pass through to the front side and project therefrom to receive the lock, as shown. With such construction the bag cannot be locked until both flaps are properly folded and secured.

One great advantage of our construction, hereinabove described, is that the bag can be more quickly and conveniently opened and closed than when made in the manner heretofore generally practiced; also a less number of staples are necessary, and less holes or eyes are made in the bag. As these eyes always require a row of rivets around them, the saving of cost, as well as of weight, thus effected is considerable. The staples are also shorter than when passed through the entire bag, and are consequently lighter, and less liable to become bent or broken, or to tear out.

We consider as the equivalent of the staple hereinabove described any staple in which the wire or rod that forms the loop has its ends bent into such shape as to support the loop both longitudinally and transversely of the plane in which it projects, or, in other words, to support said loop against force applied laterally to it in any and all directions.

Having thus described our invention, we claim as new—

The combination of the cruciform staple *s*, or its equivalent, and the retaining-plate extending through the top thereof, substantially as described.

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Witnesses:

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