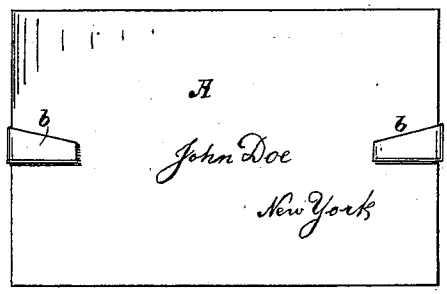
(No Model.)

F. VAN V. SLEETH.

REVERSIBLE MERCHANDISE ENVELOP.

No. 590,795. Patented Sept. 28, 1897.

Fig. 1.



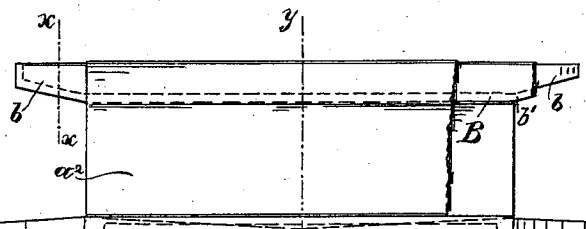


Fig. 2.

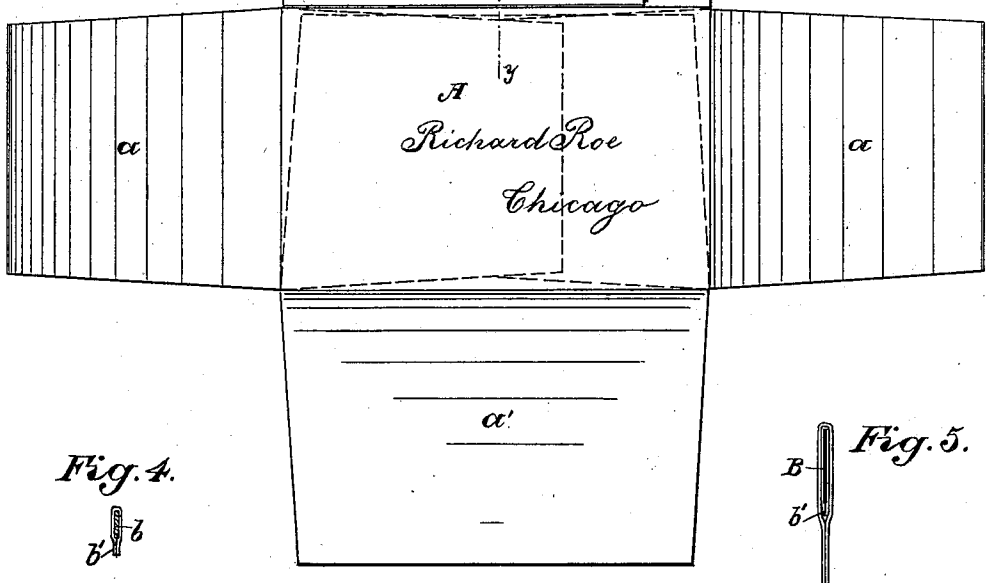


Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

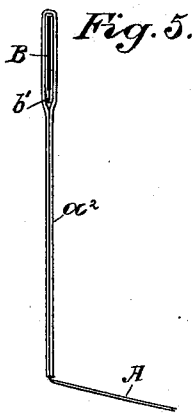
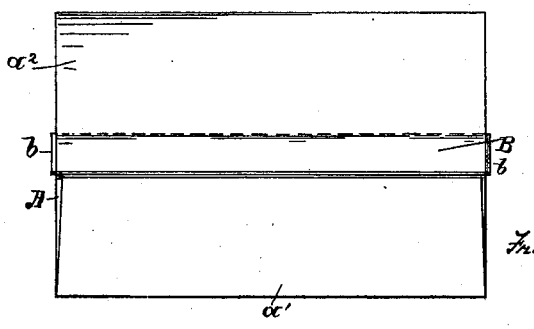


Fig. 3.



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THE NORRIS PETERS CO., PHOTO-LITHO., WASHINGTON, D. C.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

FRANCIS VAN VOST SLEETH, OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

REVERSIBLE MERCHANDISE-ENVELOP.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 590,795, dated September 28, 1897.

Application filed June 11, 1897. Serial No. 640,299. (No model.) Patented in England March 9, 1897, No. 6,200; in Germany March 9, 1897, No. 36,974, and in France March 9, 1897, No. 252,426.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, FRANCIS VAN VOST SLEETH, a citizen of the United States, residing in the city and county of San Francisco and State of California, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Reversible Merchandise-Envelops, (for which I have filed applications for patents in England, No. 6,200, dated March 9, 1897; in France, No. 252,426, dated March 9, 1897, and in Germany, No. 36,974, dated March 9, 1897;) and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the same.

My invention relates to that class of envelops specially designed for carrying merchandise through the mails and which by reason of their construction with respect to their readily-foldable flaps and their designedly removable and replaceable fastenings are intended to be easily reversed to return the merchandise in the manner in which it was forwarded.

My invention consists, essentially, in an envelop having suitable reversible flaps, whereby the obverse and reverse sides or faces of the envelop may be used at different times, the closing-flap of said envelop having a stiffening-strip secured to it and adapted to extend the whole length of the envelop in approximately the median lengthwise line thereof, said strip having flexible or pliant ends projecting beyond the envelop and adapted to be bent around its edges, whereby said envelop is fastened and its whole body stiffened.

It also consists in the novel construction of the stiffening-strip with its pliant ends and in the novel construction of the closing-flap of the envelop in connection with said strip, all of which I shall hereinafter fully describe.

Heretofore in reversible envelops of this general class some of the fastenings were open to the objection of expense in manufacture and complication in manipulation and some to that of insecurity in use, but all of which I have any knowledge were seriously deficient in that they were not adapted to and did not and could not stiffen the envelop to better protect its contents. This is highly important in merchandise-envelops which are intended to carry through the mails such articles as textile fabrics, stationery, sample-books, color-cards, and like articles sent as samples or on approval and which the sender is desirous of having returned. Such articles and samples are often too valuable to risk injury, and it is obvious that any practicable way in which the constant tendency to injury due to crushing, crumpling, wrinkling, creasing, breaking, and other forms of damage to which mailed articles are subjected can be avoided or even reduced is an important improvement. Considering textile fabrics—such as laces, towels, and silks—sent as samples or on approval or otherwise, it is of the greatest importance that they should be kept from being wrinkled or crumpled in order to render them acceptable or in proper shape for exhibition, and in the case of color-cards, stationery, and delicate material like paper or fine cardboard provision must be made to avoid breaking. A merchandise-envelop should therefore be made not only with an easily-manipulated and generally secure fastening, but it must have some means of providing for the maximum stiffness and rigidity to protect its contents. To secure these results is the object of my invention, and this object I attain by employing a strip which by reason of its flexible or pliant ends serves not only as a fastener, but, because of its position in the approximately median lengthwise line of the envelop and extending throughout its entire length, serves also as a stiffener for the whole body of the envelop, rendering it firm and stiff, holding it straight and extended to conform to its contents, and keeping the contained article flat and smooth, avoiding in all cases the common damage of the mail due to crushing causes, and in the case of photographs, cards, &c., avoiding the necessity of using extra cardboards with increased postage. This result of stiffness is further attained in my envelop by a peculiar doubling of the closing-flap in connection with the stiffening-strip, and the ends of the latter are rendered more flexible and pliant by narrowing them from the general width. These constructions and their objects and results will be better understood by reference to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a view of my envelop, showing its addressed side and closed ready for mail-

ing. Fig. 2 is a view of the envelop opened out as in the act of reversing and showing the inside or reverse face, a portion of one of the folds or thicknesses of the closing-flap being broken away to show the wrapping of the stiffening-strip and the wrapping being broken away to show the narrowed end of the strip. Fig. 3 is a view of the other side of Fig. 1, showing clearly the location of the stiffening-strip in the median lengthwise line, or approximately so, of the envelop. Fig. 4 is a section of one of the pliant ends *b* of the stiffening-strip on line *x x* of Fig. 2. Fig. 5 is a section on line *y y* of Fig. 2, showing the doubled closing-flap and the seating of the stiffening-strip therein.

The envelop (designated by A) is made from a blank having the general shape of the reversible class—that is, with end flaps *a*, a bottom flap *a'*, and a top or closing flap a^2, as in Fig. 2. In the folding of these flaps to form the closed envelop it is usual to fold the end flaps first upon the body portion, then the bottom flap is folded upon the end flaps, and finally the top or closing flap is folded. This top or closing flap has secured to it a strip B of flexible or pliable material—in practice a sheet-metal strip—such, for example, as the ordinary tin-coated sheet metal. It may be secured to the flap in a suitable manner, but the best construction is that here shown, in which it is itself covered with the same material of which the envelop is composed and is confined and gummed within the fold made by the double thickness of material forming the top or closing flap. This strip B is longer than the flap and the envelop, so that its ends *b* extend beyond the ends of the envelop and are intended to be bent around the end edges of the envelop to the front thereof, as shown in Fig. 1, and to lie down snugly thereon, thus fastening the envelop, which requires no mucilage or other means of closing, as the bent ends of the strip B firmly hold it closed. The closing of the envelop is readily effected and its opening is as easily accomplished by simply straightening out the bent ends of the strip B.

The flaps of the envelop being adapted to turn either way, and the ends of the flexible strip being pliant in either direction, it is obvious that the envelop may be reversed—that is to say, turned inside out. This adapts it for a return-envelop, in the furtherance of which object the envelop is to be stamped on the inside as well as the outside and is to be addressed on the inside with the return direction, as in Fig. 2. Therefore all that the receiver has to do to return the package is to reverse the envelop and refasten it over its contents. It thus appears that this fastening is one which by reason of its simplicity of manipulation is adapted for a reversible envelop, but in addition thereto it has, because of its construction and position, the equally important function of stiffening the envelop. It will be observed that the position of the strip B is approximately in the median lengthwise line of the envelop and that it extends throughout its entire length. It is secured to the closing-flap in position to be thus located when in use, and as its best position with respect to said flap is at the free edges of the latter the flap itself is of such a width as to carry the strip down to the median line or plane.

Envelops, though of all sizes, are not, comparatively speaking, very wide, and it follows that a strip such as B can be made wide enough, consistent with its pliancy and general practicability, to occupy an appreciable width in the median plane of the envelop, thus leaving not very much of the envelop-body on each side of the strip, and the result is that owing to this and to the general character of the strip the whole envelop is very much stiffened and is rendered rigid not only in its width, but in its length also, in which direction it is held extended against compression, and it preserves its shape and smoothness under the several adverse conditions of mailing. Its contents will therefore be protected from injury and will be kept smooth and flat, free from wrinkles and creases, making the envelop especially advantageous for the transmission of valuable sample or other color cards, photographs, and similar things, and this even without the use of protecting-boards. To increase this effect of stiffening the envelop in connection with and by means of the strip B, I make the closing-flap a^2 of a double thickness of material, as I have shown in Figs. 5 and 2, and this construction furnishes also a good seat for said strip, which, as seen in Fig. 5, lies in the bend or fold of the flap.

The strip B is wrapped, as heretofore stated, and I find it the best construction to cover it with the wrapping material in such a manner that the edges of the latter will, as shown at *b'* in Figs. 2, 4, and 5, come down a little below the strip, whereby they may be caused the more securely to adhere; but in addition this construction serves to widen the stiffening-strip and increase its stiffening effect without adding more metal, and, further, it gradually reduces the general thickness of the flap from five layers to four, and then to two, as shown in Fig. 5, making a more attractive appearance. In order to make the ends *b* of the strip B more easily bendable, I narrow them slightly from the general width of the strip, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, thus making them more pliant and at the same time preserving the necessary stiffness of the body of the strip.

Encircling bands, eyelets, and metallic tongues and similar devices heretofore employed as removable fastenings for reversible envelops do not stiffen the envelop in the least, if in fact the bands do not actually tend to bend or crease it.

I am aware of a fastening for a paper bag consisting of a metallic strip with bendable

ends, but this strip is located near and is intended to close and fasten the mouth of the bag. The latter is therefore inadequate to carry through the mails such merchandise as I have heretofore indicated, as articles of that nature would, on account of the form of a bag, drop down into and imperfectly fit said bag and be subject to all the bad effects of crushing and crumpling to which they would be subjected in an unstiffened bag. I do not therefore claim, broadly, a reversible envelop provided with a fastening, nor do I claim, broadly, a package having a metallic strip with bendable ends for a fastening, but

What I do claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A reversible merchandise-envelop having flaps adapted to be bent in either direction, to utilize, at different times, the obverse and reverse sides of the envelop, the closing-flap being provided with a stiffening-strip in such position that when said flap is closed down, the stiffening-strip will lie in, approximately, the median line or plane of the envelop, whereby the whole envelop is stiffened, said strip extending throughout the length of the envelop, and having flexible or pliant projecting ends, adapted to be bent around the ends of the envelop, whereby said envelop is fastened.

2. A reversible merchandise-envelop having flaps adapted to be bent in either direction, to utilize, at different times, the obverse and reverse sides of the envelop, the closing-flap being made of a double thickness and having secured between its folds, at its free edge, a stiffening-strip, said flap having such a width that when closed down, the stiffening-strip will lie in, approximately, the median lengthwise line or plane of said envelop, whereby the whole envelop is stiffened, said strip extending throughout the length of the envelop and having flexible or pliant ends, adapted to be bent around the ends of the envelop, whereby said envelop is fastened.

3. A reversible merchandise-envelop having flaps adapted to be bent in either direction, to utilize, at different times, the obverse and reverse sides of the envelop, the closing-flap being provided with a stiffening-strip in such position thereon, that when said flap is closed down, the stiffening-strip will lie in, approximately, the median line or plane of said envelop, whereby the whole envelop is stiffened, said strip extending throughout the length of the envelop and having flexible or pliant projecting ends narrowed from the general width of the body of the strip, and adapted to be bent around the ends of the envelop, whereby said envelop is fastened.

4. A reversible merchandise-envelop having flaps adapted to be bent in either direction, to utilize, at different times, the obverse and reverse sides of the envelop, the closing-flap being made of a double thickness and having secured between its folds, at its free edge, a stiffening-strip, said flap having such a width that when closed down, the stiffening-strip will lie in, approximately, the median lengthwise line or plane of said envelop, whereby the whole envelop is stiffened, said strip extending throughout the length of the envelop, and having flexible or pliant projecting ends narrowed from the general width of the body of the strip, and adapted to be bent around the ends of the envelop, whereby said envelop is fastened.

5. A reversible merchandise-envelop having flaps adapted to be bent in either direction, to utilize, at different times, the obverse and reverse sides of the envelop, the closing-flap being provided with a stiffening-strip in such position that when the flap is closed down, the stiffening-strip will lie in, approximately, the median line or plane of said envelop, whereby the whole envelop is stiffened, said strip being covered or wrapped, with the edges of the wrapping material projecting beyond the edge of the strip and adhering, and said strip extending throughout the length of the envelop and having flexible or pliant projecting ends, adapted to be bent around the ends of the envelop, whereby said envelop is fastened.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand.

FRANCIS VAN VOST SLEETH.

Witnesses:
D. B. RICHARDS,
CHAS. L. ALLEN.