H. Ropes.

Pocket-book.

No. 62,689. Patented Mar. 5, 1867.

Fig. 1.

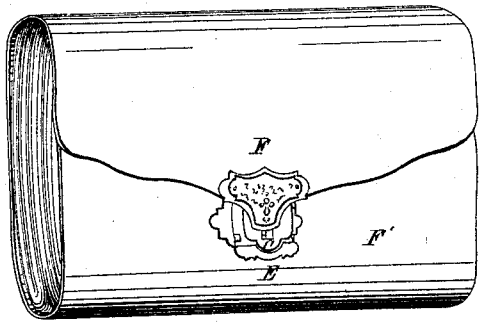


Fig. 2.

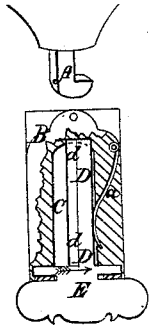
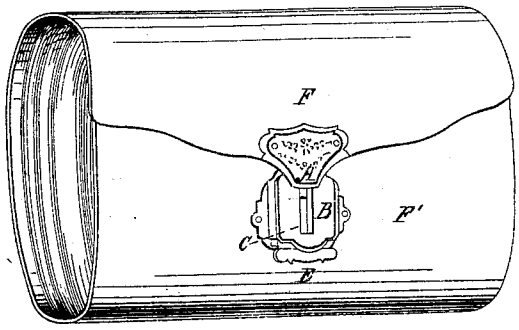


Fig. 3.



Witnesses,

L. D. Law

W. R. Ronalds

Inventor,

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United States Patent Office.

HENRY ROPES, OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

Letters Patent No. 62,689, *dated March* 5, 1867.

POCKET-BOOK CLASPS.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, HENRY ROPES, of Brooklyn, in the county of Kings, and State of New York, have invented a new and useful improvement in Clasps for Pocket-Books, Purses, &c.; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description thereof, and of its mode or manner of operation, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon, and making a part of this specification.

The nature of my invention or improvement consists in so constructing the clasp used for fastening and holding together the pocket-book, purse, &c., that such clasp will of itself admit of free expansion or contraction, so as to permit the purse, &c., to accommodate itself automatically, or without manipulation, to a less or greater quantity of matter in it, and without the use of any spring or elastic material to secure such expansion.

Figure 1 shows the clasp in the position when the purse is not filled.

Figure 2 is an enlarged view of the clasp.

Figure 3 shows the position of the clasp when the purse is full.

In clasps, as heretofore generally constructed, the connection between the two parts of the clasp, that is, between the body of the clasp, which is permanently fixed to the side of the purse, pocket-book, &c., and that part of the clasp which is fixed to the flap, has been rigid, and not capable of variation or lateral movement or expansion, and, when provided for at all, has been secured by the introduction, in connection with the movable part of the clasp, of an elastic spring, or some elastic material, as rubber, or by some mechanical arrangement which allowed the movable part of the clasp to connect with the other part at different points, such change, however, requiring to be made with the hand, and the clasp, when changed in position, being fixed until again moved by the hand. Elastic springs, however, when made use of, are liable soon to get out of order and become worthless, and elastic or rubber material very soon loses its elasticity, and becomes wholly insufficient for the purposes and uses desired and necessary; and the other method or form of construction permitted expansion and contraction only by fixed distances, and which also could only be effected by manipulation.

My invention secures the benefits of the clasp; that is, a firm and certain connection; and also, by the peculiar construction of the clasp, the benefits and advantages of the elastic spring or material, for the purposes of expansion, without the necessity for any such elastic springs or material.

Instead of having the catch A pass into and connect with the body B of the clasp, by means of an orifice or opening just large enough to receive such catch, as is usually the case, I make in the body B of the clasp a slot, C, of any length desired, to receive the catch A, and in which such catch can move freely forwards and backwards, or up and down, according as the pocket-book or purse to which the clasp is fixed is more or less filled. Within the body of the clasp, and somewhat longer than the slot C made therein, is a bar, D, behind or underneath which the hook of the catch A passes, to hold the two parts of the clasp together. The edge *d* of such bar is chamfered or bevelled off, so that the catch A, when pressed down with the hand, will easily pass by and under the bar for the purposes mentioned. Such bar D is also rigidly fixed to or made a part of the projecting piece E, so that, as the latter is moved by the thumb or finger in the direction indicated by the arrow, such bar will be carried from off the hook of the catch, and allow the purse or book to be easily opened. The bar D, when in its natural position, partially or nearly fills the slot C, and is kept in position so as to pass over the hook of the catch as the latter is forced down, by means of a spring, *a*, which may be arranged as shown in the drawings, or in any other convenient manner to effect the same purpose. It will be at once apparent that the catch A can freely move forwards and backwards, or up and down, in the slot C, and thereby, and to the extent of the length of the slot, the capacity of the book or purse can be varied, while at the same time the connection can be as firm and secure as if the catch had no lateral movement. Expansion is also wholly secured by the peculiar construction of the clasp, and without the application or use either of elastic springs or elastic material. The length of the body of the clasp and of the slot made in it may be varied as desired or found most convenient. The bar D is not pivoted at either end, but moves loosely in the clasp.

Clasps have heretofore been made having in one part a long slot, in which the other part was fitted to move; but such movement could be made only by manipulation, and only to and from particular points or

places in such slot; and the parts, connected together in any position, could afterwards have no motion on each other until disconnected and actually changed or moved in position. Such construction, however, of clasp, while it provided for movement, or expansion and contraction of one part of the clasp upon the other, does not permit or in any manner provide for free motion of the parts upon each, or automatic expansion or contraction. But in a clasp constructed with a slot and method of fastening, as in my invention, free motion of one part of the clasp upon the other, or motion without the necessity of manipulation, and limited in extent only by the length of the slot, is provided for and permitted, thus allowing automatic expansion and contraction, as the book is swelled or reduced in size; and such expansion or contraction is also secured without the use of any elastic materials. Such motion or movement of one part of the clasp upon or within the other is not, however, wholly free and unrestricted, or the catch A permitted to slip back and forth in the slot C at random or uncontrolled, but the movement of such catch is somewhat restrained or influenced by the pressure and friction of the bar D, which is held against such catch by means of the spring *a*. It is such automatic expansion and contraction, secured or rendered possible from the construction of the clasp itself, and not the result of any elastic materials, that I seek to obtain, and which is the object and purpose of my invention.

What I claim as my invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

In a clasp for purses, pocket-books, &c., the construction and arrangement of the slot C, which takes the catch, and catch A, substantially as described, to allow of automatic expansion and contraction of the purse, in combination with the bar D and spring *a*, or their equivalent, for locking or fastening the catch, and holding the two parts of the clasp together, the several parts operating substantially as and for the purposes set forth.

H. ROPES.

Witnesses.

S. D. LAW,

W. R. RONALDS.