

THEODORE A. SCHROEDER & H. WUEST.
Life Detector.

No. 121,666.

Patented Dec. 5, 1871.

Fig. 2.

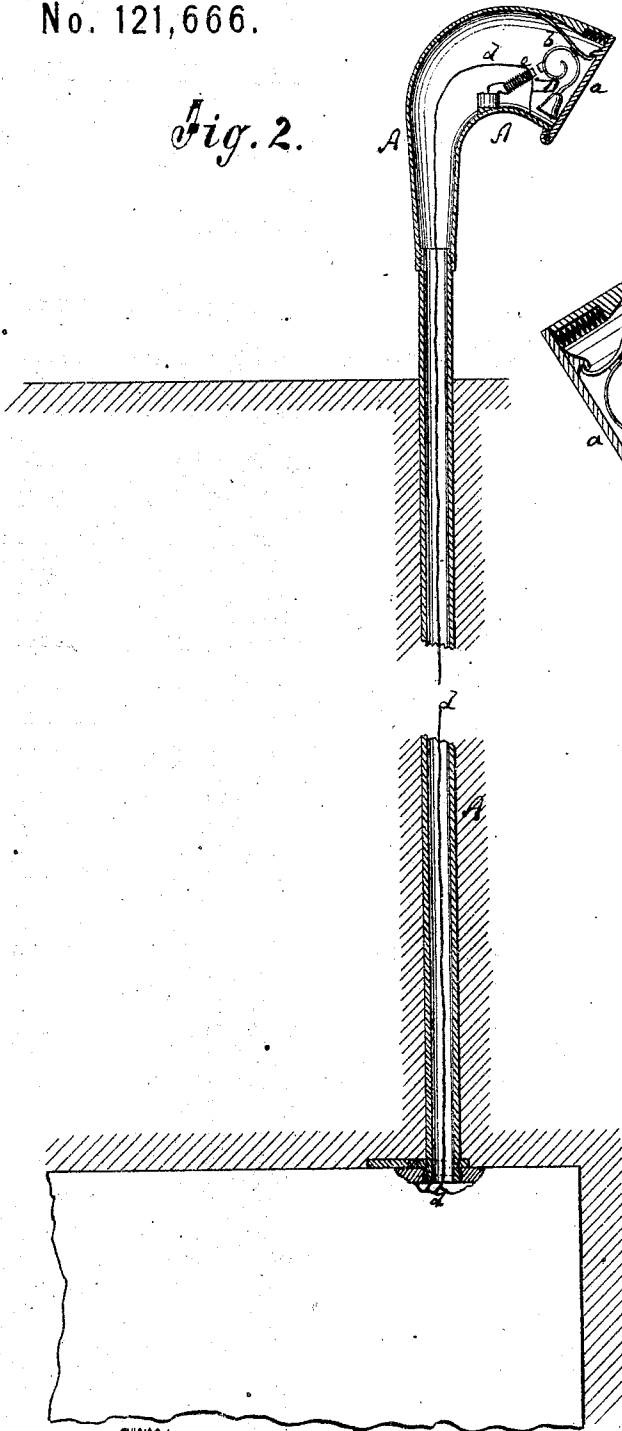
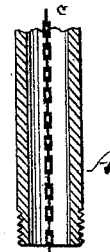
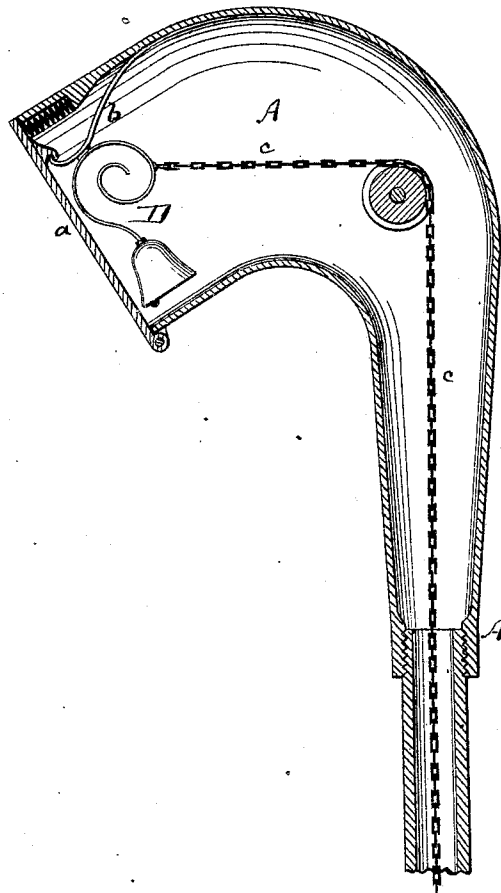


Fig. 1.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THEODORE A. SCHROEDER AND HERMANN WUEST, OF HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY.

IMPROVEMENT IN LIFE-DETECTORS FOR COFFINS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 121,666, dated December 5, 1871.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, Dr. THEODORE A. SCHROEDER and HERMANN WUEST, of Hoboken, in the county of Hudson and State of New Jersey, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Life-Detectors; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description thereof, which will enable others skilled in the art to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawing forming a part of this specification, and in which—

Figures 1 and 2 are sectional elevations, showing modifications of our invention.

Similar letters of reference indicate corresponding parts.

The object of this invention is improvement in means for detecting the recurrence of life in persons that have been buried in a state of trance or apparent death; and relates particularly to that class of appliances whose main feature is a tube leading down into the ground.

Heretofore such tubes have had signal attachments in the form of bells or analogous devices, arranged to be operated by a cord extending down into the coffin. In our invention the tube is so shaped or curved at its upper end and the lid so applied as to allow it to open by its own gravity when released from engagement with a spring-catch placed within the tube. Thus the lid will be instantaneously opened without any exertion or movement on the part of the person buried other than the slight one required to operate the delicate catch by aid of a cord or electrical appliances, as hereinafter explained.

The importance of an instant admission of air at the moment of recurrence of symptoms of life, and that the physical exertion requisite to effect this shall be reduced to a minimum, cannot well be overrated.

The lid of the tube is not only adapted to open, as it were, automatically, but to constitute or display a signal, so as to give timely warning of the need of assistance.

By this invention the timely exhumation of the unfortunate person alluded to will be effect-

ed, much misery avoided, and precious lives restored to useful activity.

The connecting apparatus, with the lid, may vary in its construction. It may be mechanical or electrical, and in either case admits of numerous modifications.

We consider the use of the lid, closed as long as life is not detected but opened as quick as life appears, of great importance. It prevents the escape of noxious gases from actual corpses and the consequent deterioration of the outer atmosphere, but causes a supply of wholesome fresh air to reach the person entombed when waking to life, and at the same time produces the signal, as stated.

A in the drawing represents the tube, of suitable length and diameter. Its lower end is to be screwed or otherwise fastened to the coffin-lid or top. The tube is to extend up through the ground, and has a lid, *a*, whereby its upper end is closed. A spring-catch, *b*, or equivalent device holds the lid closed, which otherwise would drop open of its own accord. This spring-catch is, in Fig. 1, represented with a chain or rope, *c*, hanging through the tube down into the coffin, and so placed or arranged that the least motion of the person buried will cause it to be pulled, the spring-catch drawn, and the lid, released, to drop open. For this purpose the chain may be connected with a hand or other part of the body of the buried person, or suspended within convenient reach of the hand. The lid, when dropped open, constitutes a visible signal. An audible signal, in shape of a bell, *D*, or other mechanism, may also be used, to be operated by the opening of the lid or drawing of the chain.

Fig. 2 represents the same device connected by conducting-wire *d* with the person within the coffin, so that, when the latter moves, to connect one end of wire with the metallic lining, or a metallic section within the coffin, an electric circuit will be established and the spring-catch attracted, as an armature, to an electric magnet, *e*, or other action produced to cause the lid to drop, and, if audible signal be provided, the same to be sounded. A battery may, in such case, be ar-

ranged within the tube, or a mere ground battery used, if desired.

Should the lid remain closed for three or more days after burial the tube is withdrawn and the aperture closed with earth.

Having thus described our invention, we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent—

The lid *a* and tube *A*, provided with spring catch *b*, all constructed and arranged as shown

and described, whereby said lid will open by its own gravity when the catch is operated, and thus simultaneously admit fresh air to the tube and display a signal, as specified.

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