

HINTS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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Names and Address must accompany all letters, or no attention will be paid thereto. This is for our information, and not for publication.

References to former articles or answers should give date of paper and page or number of question.

Inquiries not answered in reasonable time should be repeated; correspondents will bear in mind that some answers require not a little research, and, though we endeavor to reply to all, either by letter or in this department, each must take his turn.

Special Written Information on matters of personal rather than general interest, cannot be expected without remuneration.

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Scientific American Supplements referred to may be had at the office. Price 10 cents each.

Minerals sent for examination should be distinctly marked or labeled.

- (1) L. Z. asks: 1. Does a lion belong to the cat or dog family? A. The cat family, 2. Why is it necessary to have the pneumatic gun, described in Scientific American of October 31, 1885, so long in construction, and was there ever any other projectile tried than the one described in the same issue? A. The gun is required to be of considerable length to realize the full expansive force of the air. We believe there have been some minor changes made in the cartridge carrying the dynamite, but nothing has been used in this gun similar to the buffer-like arrangement used where dynamite has been fired with powder from regular service guns.
- (2) J. R. asks if glass is porous? A. According to the usual understanding of the word "porous," glass is not porous.
- (3) A. F. H. asks: Is it an essential in a dynamo, substantially after the Siemens pattern, that the armature coil should be wound upon iron? Will not a wood core answer the purpose? A. A current can be generated in an armature without an iron core, but it will be very weak. The iron core seems to be necessary for the production of strong currents.
- (4) N. J. asks: 1. What is the temperature kept up in the so-called "flasher" engines (i. e steam engines without a boiler, where the steam quired for each stroke is generated by injecting a sm quantity of water into a heated vessel)? If above 35 how is it that the water does not assume the spheroi shape? A. The temperature may vary between will e limits. To generate a pressure of 100 pounds to an in a temperature of 320° Fah. must be maintained. With sufficient heat, the water would assume a spheroidal condition. 2. "Flasher" engines are said to be impracticable on account of their rapid destruction. In which way does this destruction take place? Is it owing to the rapid succession of high pressure and low pressure in the heated vessel, thus loosening the joints. and tending to tear the vessel, or is it the surface action on the heated brass, where the water spray strikes it? And if so, is the abrasion of the surface of the brass due to the mechanical action or to increased chemical action of the water jet? A. The rapid destruction of such engines is due to the oxida tion of the steam generator.
- (5) C. E. M. asks for information for making pocket battery for Edison's incandescent light Explain theory of Holtz electrical machine. A. A battery which will operate a small Edison lamp for a short time, say a half hour or so, may be made by using two elements, each composed of one zinc rod, from % to 1/2 inch in diameter, and two carbon rods such as are used in electric lighting. The zinc must be amalgamated. The solution used is that formed of bichromate of potash, sulphuric acid, and water, which has been so often described in the Notes and Queries. For a description of Holtz electric machine consult SUPPLE-MENT, Nos. 278, 279, 282, 70, 291, and 321.
- (6) F. J. S. writes: I am using a McIntosh galvanic battery, the hard rubber cups of which have become leaky; is there any way of repairing them? A. Stop the leaks with a cement composed of equal parts of gutta percha, brown pitch, and shellac.
- (7) A. J. H. writes: 1. I have for some time been using glass lamp chimneys known as "lead glass," also called fireproof; very often they fiv to pieces. especially in cold weather; can you explain the reason why? A. It is due to the unequal expansion caused by heating one part of the chimney more than another. or by the exposure of one part of the chimney to a draught of cold air, causing a sudden contraction of that part. 2. Some claim that it is caused by the friction raised by rubbing them when cleaning them with a cloth, while others hold that it comes from the gas generated by the coal loil that accidentally gets inside. A. We think that the answer to your first query is sufficient explanation.
- (8) G. F. asks: 1. Can you refer me to back number, or repeat solution to plate brass or cop per, in a bath, without electric current? A. You do not say what metal you desire to use in plating the copper. 2. Can you tell me how to make and apply the black japan or paint on woodwork, like trays, handles, pen holders, and the like. A. You will find full instructions for japanning in Supplement, No.
- (9) J. F. asks (1) for an ink for hand stamps that will not injure the rubber. A, Mix and dissolve 2 to 4 drachms aniline color, 15 ounces alcohol, 15 ounces glycerine. The solution is poured on the cushion and rubbed in with a brush. 2. How to make a varnish or covering for woodwork, such as the black handles on enameled water pails, and the like. A. 1 ounce nutgall broken into small pieces; put into barely 1/2 pint vinegar, which must be contained in an open vessel, let stand for about 1/2 hour, add 1 ounce steel filings; the vinegar will then commence effervescing; cover up, but not sufficient to exclude all air. The solution must then stand for about 21/2 hours, when it will be ready for use. Apply the solution with a brush or piece of rag to the article, then let it stand until dry; if not black enough, coat it until it is, each time of

course letting it remain sufficiently long to dry thoroughly. Afterthe solution is made, keep it in a closely corked bottle.

- (10) J. W. W.—The moulds for rubber stamps are made of plaster of Paris. The rubber is pressed into the mould with a small press or clamp, then placed in a small vulcanizing oven heated by steam or a furnace to a temperature from 250° to 275°. We do not know the cost of apparatus.
- (11) R. P. M. asks: What is the rule for silvering on glass, such as door knobs and ornaments? I have some glasswork which is hollow, and would like to silver them on the inside only. A. See "How to Silver Glass," contained in Scientific American Sup-PLEMENT, No. 105. Take silver nitrate 1 onnce, distilled water 1 pint, strong liquor ammonia sufficient quantity, added very gradually, to first precipitate and then redissolve the silver; then add honey, 14 ounce. Put sufficient quantity of this solution in the globe, and then place the globe in a saucepan of water; boil it for 10 to 30 minutes, occasionally removing it to see the effect.
- (12) D. P. asks the per cent of starch in white and vellow corn, also of potatoes. A. The average quantity is about 531/2 per cent in flat yellow American maize and 54% in the flat white and round yellow varieties. From 66 to 75 per cent of starch is obtained by the manufacturer from the potato.
- (13) M. B. S. B. writes: I have a lot of woolen clothing that has become soiled with linseed oil house paint. Please inform me what will remove it. A. Use turpentine, or benzine, and soap. See table on Removal of Stains and Grease Spots, contained in Sci-ENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 158
- (14) W. H. D. writes: I spilt tincture of iron on the edge of a book so that all the leaves are stained a little. Is there any way it can be removed without destroying the book? A. The tincture of iron is soluble in a solution of warm oxalic acid, in dilute hydrochloric acid, and in citric acid. These substances will readily remove the iron, but great care must be taken to avoid injuring or destroying the paper of the caves.
- (15) E. McG. asks what the ingredients of "Ayer's Hair Vigor" are. A. According to Professor Chandler's analysis of this preparation, it contains 2.89 grains of lead to the fluid ounce. It is therefore probably a perfumed solution of sugar of lead.
- (16) W. F.—All of the cotton factories in this and every other country produce cotton waste. All machine shops and all marine, river, and stationary engines, as well as all factories running machinery, use
- (17) P. D. L. asks a good recipe for walnut stain for pine wood. A. Make a solution of & ounces each permanganate of potash and sulphate of manganese, in 5 quarts hot water. Apply several times with a brush or dip small articles. When the proper tene is obtained, oil or varmed the work.
- (18) O. C. P. desires a cure for stammering. A. Reading aloud for several hours daily is often advised, but this fails to prevent stammering in speak ing. The latter appears to be a nervous affection, and its abatement depends upon the iudividual.
- (19) R. K. S. asks: Would the inletting of the ocean to the Sahara desert have any influence on the equilibrium of the earth? If not, why? A. Yes. It would change the center of gravity, proportionally, as the relative weight of the water let into the desert would to the whole weight of the earth divided by 2
- (20) H. G.-The piston travels fastest on the first half of its stroke, due to the impulse of the full pressure of the steam. This is not perceptible in engines with heavy flywheels running a large amount of shafting and machinery. It is very perceptible in the motion of the engines of sidewheel steamers
- (21) J. S.—Augers were twisted by hand hot by holding one end in a vise, by the early makers. Now they are made in dies and rollers by machinery, much of which is the subject of patents. The finishing is done with emery wheels and buffs.
- (22) W. S. C.—It is generally conceded that a high speed engine requires more lead than a slow speed. There are differences of opinion as to the requirements of the various kinds of engines, and engine builders generally set the lead to suit their own
- (23) T. S. W.—Pure, sweet, cold pressed lard oil mixed with ten per cent of Pratt's astral oil makes a good oil for lanterns. We cannot give the mixture sold by the dealers, as every one mixes to suit
- (24) J. S. asks: 1. What amount of tom of a well 30 feet deep 200 gallons of water in a minute, and what size pump and pipe would be required? A. Two horse power, including friction of pump. Pump should have 7 inch by 12 inch cylinder. and be worked 100 times a minute for 200 gallons. 2. If a vessel containing 50 gallons of air was placed at a depth of 30 feet under water, what amount of pound weight would it raise to the surface, how long would it be in making the ascent, and what amount of horse power would it produce? A. Fifty gallons of air will lift about 425 pounds in water. If placed at a depth of 30 feet, it must not be subject to compression for the above duty. If placed in an elastic inclosure, it will not lift more than 212 pounds at that depth, but will increase its lifting power by expansion as it rises. The time required to come to the surface might be 5 or more seconds according to the work required, and might produce 11/2 horse power.
- (25) J. A. H. writes: In replies to correspondents, October 3, 1885, is a recipe for aerated bread. 1. Are the directions there complete, for making this bread? A. Yes. 2. How much water should be used to the soda and acid? A. Sufficient to make a

dough. 3. Should any salt be used? A. No. Car | Cigar cutter and perforator, combined, A. Anbonate of magnesia and the muriatic acid combine and form salt. 4. Will the muriatic acid found at the stores do to use? A. It is best to buy the article from the druggist.

(26) H. and M. have an argument about potassium. M claims it is a mineral. H says it is a metal. Which is right? A. H is right. Potassium is a metal, possessing curious qualities. It bursts into fiame when it touches water. It is silvery in appearance, but quite soft-softer than lead, and much lighter in weight than the latter. Potassium, although in itself soft, is a constituent of certain minerals found in one of the hardest rocks, namely, granite.

(27) S. T. writes: In SCIENTIFIC AMERI-CAN of October 17, you state that a sailboat would not move forward if the wind from a bellows on board were directed against her sail. This of course is correct if the bellows were parallel and the sail at right angles with the boat; but supposing the bellows were placed at right angles with a cathoat, and directed against a sail held 30 or 35 degrees from the boat, as in sailing across the wind, would not there be a perceptible motion forward on still water? A. The principle of an artificial blast athwartship impinging upon an inclined surface or sail, and thereby imparting motion to the boat, is correct; but the mechanical effort produced in proportion to the power consumed is so small that any practical allusion to such projects savors of the ridicuous. The bellows will do more work if pointed astern and blown against the air or water.

INDEX OF INVENTIONS

For which Letters Patent of the United States were Granted

December 1, 1885,

AND EACH BEARING THAT DATE,

[See note at end of list about copies of these patents.]

 Advertising sign, bas-relief, H. Fechteler
 331,290

 Air engine, J. A. Woodbury et al.
 331,359, 331,361

 Ash pan and sifter, combined, L. E. Phelps
 331,322

Air engine, J. A. Woodbury et al331,359	331,361
Ash pan and sifter, combined, L. E. Phelps Augers, die for shaping single twist. D. S. Holley.	331,322
Augers, die for snaping single twist. D. S. Holley. Augers, machine for working well, S. S. Collins	331,617
Baby jumper, H. S. Peck	
Bag. See Mail bag.	
Bag fastener, W. F. Wineberger	
Bag lock. D. P. Brophy	331.473
Baking powder, A. Peters	
Battery. See Secondary battery.	
Bed bottom, spring, P. H. Mellon	831,645
Bed cover fastener, M. J. Liggett	331,308
Bed, invalid, S. Bishop Bed, sofa, T. Hofstatter, Jr	
fled, spring, T. II. Mellon	231,520
Bed, spring, R. C. Young	331,599
Beehive, S. Perkins	331,539
Beer, apparatus for drawing, H. Metzger	
Bell, automatic alarm, E. P. Forbes Belt stretching machine, B. M. Plummer	
Bicycle, C. F. Hadley	331,295
Billiard tables, attachment for leveling, C. B	
Hall.	331,297
Blank feeding mechanism, F. H. Richards Boiler. See Domestic and agricultural boiler.	551,44 3
Boiler covering, M. Keenan	331.409
Boiler furnace, W. F. Grassier. Boiler furnace, J. Ham.	331,635
Boiler furnace grate, steam, M. A. Foster	331,700
Boiler furnace, steam. R. C. Carpenter Boiler furnace, steam, M. A. Foster	
Boiler furnace, steam, J. Ham	331,636
Boilers, furnace for heating steam, M. P. Elliot.	_,500
Elliot.	331,287
Book rest, adjustable, W. A. Sipe	331,563
Boot, J. F. Shaw. Boot, G. Valiant (r).	აა1,561 10 <i>ც</i> ლი
Boot or shoe nailing machine, W. P. Hopkins	331.299
Boot or shoe sole, J. E. Tilton	331,462
Bottling machine, H. Will	331,354
Bouquet holder, M. L. Cardell	331,614
Box. See Letter box. Paper box. Bracelet clasp, W. E. Willis	331 664
Brake shoe. S. Uren.	331,347
Brick machine, P. B. Mathiason	331,420
Brick or tile die, J. L. Friend	831,391
Buckle, R. M. Dillard Buckle, suspender, D. L. Durand	
Buckle, suspender, J. Spruce.	
Cab, hansom, W. Johnstone	331,504
Cabinet, jeweler's, H. Knickmann	331,719
Calculator for measurement of logs, tabular, C	
RichCamera. See Photographic camera.	. აა1,332
Can. See Sheet metal can.	
Car coupling, P. A. Aikman	
Car coupling, J. Hirn	331,639
Car coupling, S. Moorman	
Car door, grain, W. McGuire	331 ²²⁷
Car, railway, J. A. Enos.	
Car wheel, J. Ferguson	331,292
Carbon baking box, W. J. Possons	
Carrier. See Strawcarrier. Trace carrier. Cartridge, W. Lorenz	221 511
Cartridge, W. Lorenz	
charges for, E. Rubin	
Case. See Ticket case.	
Cash box system, automatic, J. C. Martin	
Caster, J. L. Purple	
Casting mould, metal, W. S. Platt	331.437
Centrifugal machine, E. Rothe	331,450
Chain link, J. P. Preston	331,326
Chain machine, F. P. Hinds	
Chains, appendage for ornamental, J. L. Sweet Chair. See Nursery chair.	. 001,743
Luight See Hursery Costs	331.634
Chair, Hall & Lane	
Chair, Hall & Lane. Chair, A. F. White	331,352
Chair, Hall & Lane	331,352 331,710
Chair, Hall & Lane. Chair, A. F. White Chimney protector, W. Hubbard. Chuck, lathe, G. A. Barnes.	331,352 331,710 381,6 0 3
Chair, Hall & Lane	331,352 331,710 381,6 0 3 331,598
Chair, Hall & Lane. Chair, A. F. White Chimney protector, W. Hubbard. Chuck, lathe, G. A. Barnes.	331,352 331,710 391,683 331,598 331,487
Chair, Hall & Lane. Chair, A. F. White Chimney protector, W. Hubbard Chuck, lathe, G. A. Barnes. Churn, F. I. White. Churning device, F. L. Foushee. Cigar boxes, press board for, C. Lorenz. Cigar bunching machine, Borgfeldt & Schutz	331,352 331,710 361,603 331,598 331,487 331,510
Chair, Hall & Lane. Chair, A. F. White. Chimney protector, W. Hubbard. Chuck, lathe, G. A. Barnes. Churn, F. I. White. Churning device, F. L. Foushee. Cigar boxes, press board for, C. Lorenz.	331,352 331,710 361,603 331,598 331,487 331,510

gell	331,366
Cleaner. See Flue cleaner. Clevis, J. R. Davis	221 224
Clipping machine, hair, L. S. Lee	331,508
Clutch, Metzger & Cooper. Cocoanut pulp, F. Senn.	331,524
Coffee roaster, M. J. Clark	331,615
Collar attachment, horse, G. Van Wagenen	331,348
Coloring machine stop motion, F. P. Fitz Simons	331,486
Combination wrench, W. S. McKenzie Connecting rods, stub end for, L. Griscom (r)	10,668
Cornet tuning attachment, W. Buckley Corset shaping machine, T. S. Gilbert	331,701
Cotton gin, Nixon & Cress	331,514
Coupling. See Car coupling. Railway rail coup-	
ling. Thill coupling. Coupling bolt, M. Miller	
Cuffholder, E. Smith	331,365
Cultivator, H. C. Stahl	331,413
Cultivator and harrow, D. Walls Curtain stretcher, L. E. Lafferty	331,305
Cuspidor for railway cars, Enright & May Cut-off, automatic, P. Sears	
Cut-off for engines, electro magnetic, R. A. Bailey	
Cutter. See Cigar cutter. Feed cutter. Hay or straw cutter.	•
Desk, school, J. M. Sauder	331,549
Digger. See Potato digger. Disinfecting water closets, W. M. Ernst	33 1.693
Domestic and agricultural boiler, E. Richmond Domino, F. H. Richards	331,446
Dovetailing machine. L. P. Garcin	331,491
Drawing roll, N. L. Randall	
Drill. See Grain drill. Ratchet drill.	331 539
Drying apparatus, platen for, A. S. Nichols Earring, G. M. Hathaway	531.6 3 8
Egg beater, G. H. Thomas. Electric machine, dynamo, H. Muller	331,726
Electric machine regulator, dynamo, W. H. Schlesinger	331,552
Jackson Electric signaling apparatus, J. P. Tirrell	
Electrical conductors, contact device for sus-	
pended, C. J. Van Depoele Electrical indicator, C. H. Pond	331,650
Electrodes for secondary batteries, manufactur- ing, E. Jones	331,408
Electroplating, apparatus for, H. R. Boissier Elevator. See Hydraulic elevator.	331,609
Elevator belts, slat attaching device for, D. Maxwell	331,515
Elevator safety catch, H. Albert Elevator safety device, W. W. Jackson	331,405
Elevator stop, automatic, J. S. Ashton Enggate, wagon, H. H. Turner	331,744
Engine. See Air engine. Traction engine. Envelope, J. N. Williams	331,355
Bavelope machines blank picker for, F. 11. Back	331,445
Evaporating saline or saccharine liquids, system of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes	l -
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite	331,587
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite	331,587 . 331,465 , 331,340
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 . 331,465 . 331,340 331,379
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 . 331,465 . 331,340 . 331,379 . 331,453 . 331,464
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 . 331,465 . 331,340 . 331,379 . 331,453 . 331,464 . 331,507 . 331,307
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 . 331,465 . 331,340 . 331,379 . 331,453 . 331,464 . 331,507 . 331,564
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,564 331,423 331,423
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,453 331,464 331,507 531,307 331,564 331,5423 331,285 331,320
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,564 331,528 381,285 381,320 331,534 331,332
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,340 331,379 331,453 331,463 331,507 331,564 331,285 381,285 381,320 331,534 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,340 331,340 331,345 331,453 331,453 331,564 331,564 331,520 331,534 331,534 331,531 331,725 331,725 331,429
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,379 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,307 331,285 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,431 331,726 331,746
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,346 331,340 331,345 331,453 331,564 331,564 331,581 331,581 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,725 331,489 331,736 331,736
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,345 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,504 331,524 331,534 331,534 331,581 331,725 331,725 331,736 331,736 331,736
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,463 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,544 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,331 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,736 331,394 331,394
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465,331,340 331,345 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,564 331,534 331,534 331,531 331,725 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,439 331,331 331,736
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,353 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,353 331,423 331,234 331,324 331,581 331,746 331,349 331,746 331,349 331,746 331,394 331,312 331,394 331,312 331,394 331,312 331,380 331,380 331,380 331,380 331,380 331,380
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,463 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,544 331,324 331,531 331,781 331,786 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,281 331,281 331,282 331,294 331,394
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,353 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,307 331,423 331,423 331,324 331,581 331,786 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,394 331,312 331,746 331,312 331,746 331,312 331,746 331,312 331,746 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312 331,312
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,307 331,423 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,331,281 331,380 331,394 331,380 331,380 331,381 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281 331,281
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,464 331,507 331,564 331,320 331,581 331,489 331,581 331,581 331,581 331,581 331,581 331,581 331,581
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,350 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,534 331,324 331,581 331,736 331,334
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,463 331,464 331,507 331,564 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,331,281 331,786 331,394
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,345 331,453 331,463 331,507 331,564 331,534 331,534 331,736 331,736 331,736 331,380 331,380 331,381 331,281 331,380 331,381
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Watte. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,353 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,324 331,324 331,581 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,394 331,746 331,394 331,394 331,394 331,595 331,588
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells Face protector, E. T. Stover	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,463 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,544 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,329 331,429 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,321 331,538 331,538 331,538 331,538 331,538 331,538
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,345 331,464 331,507 331,507 331,324 331,324 331,581 331,725 331,736 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,336 331,331 331,536
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Watte. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,350 331,464 331,507 331,364 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,326 331,326 331,326 331,326 331,326 331,326 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,336 331,546 331,546 331,546 331,596
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,463 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,564 331,285 331,324 331,581 331,489 331,586 331,586 331,586 331,586 331,586 331,586 331,586 331,596 331,596 331,596
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,463 331,507 331,423 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,736 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,746 331,394 331,746 331,394 331,746 331,394 331,596
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,353 331,464 331,507 331,544 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,331 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,429 331,536
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,340 331,343 331,453 331,464 331,507 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,324 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,334 331,335 331,536
of inclined troughs with inclosed steam pipes for, C. N. Waite. Extractor. See Nail extractor. Eyeglass spring and nose guard, G. W. Wells	331,587 331,465 331,379 331,463 331,453 331,454 331,507 331,394 331,326 331,331 331,526 331,536

.390	
Grater, culinary, H. Horowitz	Planter and fertilizer distributer, combined seed,
Guard. See Pew guard. Gun carriage, C. T. M. V. De Bange. 331,611 Halter, H. Wood. 381,676	
Hand bag frames, handle cap fastening for, L. B. Prahar	Plow, gang, D. M. Johnston
Handle. See Sash lift handle. Handle for buckets, etc., J. Ringen	Polishing composition, H. L. Haas
Hanger. See Lamp hanger. Harness rack, D. J. Smith	Potato digger, H. H. Lovejoy 331,7
Harrow, G. G. Seeger 331,740 Harrow, A. Wilcox 331,353	Powder. See Baking powder. Power presses, automatic trip gear for, M. M.
Harrow and cultivator, wheel, I. J. Hunt	Power. See Water power.
Hat brims, machine for setting the folded or curled edges of, R. Eickemeyer	Printing paper bag tubes, type form for, A. J.
Hay or straw cutter, T. Tatnall 331,347 Hay rake revolving sulky, S. B. Collins 331,477	Propeller for steamboats, buoyant, W. Hall 331,4
Headlight, locomotive, G. M. D. Riley	tector.
Heel nailing machine, F'. F. Raymond, 2d 331,441 Heeling jack, G. N. Burgess, Jr 331,476	& Brelaz
 Hinges, manufacture of, E. Lucas	plates, R. Kron
Towel holder. Hook. See Whiffletree hook. Horses, apparatus for checking and controlling	Gates
runaway, W. O. Walley	Pumps, valve case for mercurial air, A. L. Rein-
Horseshoe machine, D. J. Farmer	Pyroxyline with its solvents in the manufacture
Hose, rubber, A. Bruegger, Jr	Hyatt
Huller. See Clover huller. Hydraulic elevator, N. C. Bassett	Railway and car hanger, suspension, J. A. Enos. 331,32 Railway frog, F. C. Weir
making, A. G. Southby	
Jack. See Heeling jack. Lifting jack. Shoe-maker's jack.	Railway track gauge and level, combined, D. H. Rhodes
Journal bearing, R. W. Hardie. 381,497 Journal bearing, J. G. Marquardt. 331,311 Key ring, G. W. Hutchins. 331,301	Railway track inspector, automatic, P. C. Compton
Kitchen cabinet, E. G. Burgett	Ratchet drill, A. A. Strom
Knitting machine, W. D. Huse 381,400 to 331,402 Ladder, folding, D. P. Sharp 331,560 Ladder, wheel step, A. Conine 331,685	Refrigerator, Nehrlich & Neubecker
Lamp burner, E. A. Dobbins. 331,331 Lamp, electric, G. C. Pyle. 331,327	regulator. Windmill regulator. Rein support, T. Desjardins
Lamp hanger, D. McMahon	Ribbon holder, Coburn & Van Fleit
electric, E. P. Thompson 331,663 Last, W. T. Martin 331,313 Lathing, fireproof, L. & W. H. Lane 331,643	Roaster. See Coffee roaster. Rock drill core breaker and puller, F. D. Parker. 331,31 Rock drilling machine, C. F. Peebles
Lead, apparatus for feeding white, M. Forst	Rolling mill overfeed regulator, W. W. McCallip. 331,51 Roof cleat, tin, W. C. Rockwell
Letter box, alarm, H. Roeske	berg (r) 10,66
for, F. Parson	Saddle, harness, R. W. Cahoone 331,68 Saddle pad, harness, H. Leibe 331,50 Safe attachment, C. Diebold 331,48
Lifter. See Transom lifter. Liftung jack, A. C. Long	Safe bolt work, device for operating, E. W. Fow-ler
Lifting jack, E. Suckow	
lock. Lock and latch combined, J. A. F. Anderson 331,671	Sash lift handle, W. F. Smith
Locomotives, apparatus for supplying natural gas to, J. H. Katz	Sawmill dog, Delaney & Bond
Looms, anchor shuttle box motion for, C. Stro- bel	Scale, linear or other, C. A. L. Totten 331,34 School seat, J. M. Sauder 331,55
Magneto call box, J. F. Kettell 331,718 Mail bag, D. P. Brophy 331,472 Mail bag lock, D. P. Brophy 331,474	Seal, metallic, C. L. Pond
Mailbags, machine for riveting staples to, R. Brass	hurst
Møndrel, S. P. M. Tasker	Secondary battery, E. Jones
Mechanical movement, G. D. Ferris	Barlow
Campbell	Binns
Mill. See Grinding mill. Oatmeal and grain reduction mill. Windmill.	Sewing machine shuttle, V. J. Mavo
Mould. See Casting mould. Moulding machine, sand, Schlickeysen & Bres- lauer	Meese 331,522 Sheet delivery apparatus, counting mechanism for, L. C. Crowell 331,282
Mole trap, W. R. Eddington. 331,483 Mop, tioor, G. A. Keene. 331,641	Sheet metal can, T. G. F. Dolby 331,262 Ships' logs, rotator for, J. & G. H. Bliss 341,262
Music, back for sheet, G. C. Scott	Shoemaker's jack, J. B. Litchman 331,414 Siding rest, J. McDonald 331,519 Side of the Management of the Control of th
Musical instrument, mechanical, M. Gally	Sifter, T. F. Timby 331,344 Sign for cars, traveling, G. M. Traylor 331,346 Skate, roller, G. P. Bosworth 331,470
Necktie, C. E. Page. S31,535 Necktie and collar fastener, R. S. Coffey. 331,279	Skate, roller, J. II. Fenton
Needles, wire, etc., straightening, G. M. Eames 331,386 Nursery chair, W. Holden	Sled runner, V. D. Johnson. 331,303 Sleigh knee, J. Parkhill. 331,537 Sower, seed, F. Reyner. 331,547
Oils, treating cotton seed and analogous, Grant & Mason	Spinning mule, E. A. Baldwin 331,272, 331,368 Spoke socket, J. H. Webb 331,591
Opera chair, J. M. Sauder	Spring. See Eyeglass spring. Vehicle spring. Stamp, marking, F. M. Bulkley
Pad. See Saddle pad. Paint, mixed, H. C. Dorr	Steam boiler, T. G. Hall 331,495 Steam engine, A. Reis 331,442
Pan. See Ash pan. Paper bag holder, E. T. Martin	Steam generator, W. H. Page
Paper bay finding, I. Tahl	Steno-typograph, A. Beyerlen
Paste, apparatus for making, O. Nichols	Stock releasing device, M. W. Hanley
Pen wiper and holder, I. W. Allyn	and water to, D. Shortsleeve
Photographic camera, G. B. Brainerd	Stove, coal, S. H. Fales 331,622 Stove, heating, W. C. Smith 331,455
Photographic camera shutter, W. C. Hadden	Stovepipe attachment, C. J. Hamilton.331,637Stoves, sliding top for oil, J. Milne331,516Straw carrier, Grater & Seibel331,703
Photographs, apparatus for developing and washing, H. F. Witmer	Submerged bodies, closing spaces between, C. Sooysmith
Pipe. See Tobacco pipe. Piston meter for fluids, H. M. Bartlett	Supporter. See Garment supporter. Telegraph apparatus, municipal, J. C. Wilson 331,356 Telephone, W. C. Lockwood
Planing machine, F. S. Belter	Temperature regulation, system of, W. S. Johnson
Planing machines, variable feed motion for, J. Roberts	Thrashing machine band cutter and feeder, C.

	ć.
Planter and fertilizer distributer, combined seed,	1
Zeigler & Autley 331,600 Planter, potato, Christenson & Timmers 531,278	3
Plow, Kinard & Maddox	?]
Plow, gang, D. M. Johnston. 331,503 Plow harrow attachment, V. Wood. 331,358	3 1
Polishing composition, H. L. Haas. 331,632 Post driver, J. G. Stigers. 331,740) [[
Potato digger, S. W. Kelchner 381,505 Potato digger, H. H. Lovejoy 331,724	١ 1
Potato digger and bean harvester, C. Peets 331,321 Powder. See Baking powder.	ו ני ני
Power presses, automatic trip gear for, M. M. Wilson	- 1
Power. See Water power. Press. See Cotton press. Printing and the second press.	7
Printing paper bag tubes, type form for, A. J. Boynton	. 1
Privy sink, P. Cassidy	
tector. Pulp from woody matter, manufacture of, Pictet	ו מ
& Brelaz	
plates, R. Kron. 331,304 Pulverizer, soil, J. B. Okey. 331,318	
Pulverizing machine, etc., dust guard for, R. D. Gates	: -
Pump, J. H. Rook 331,734 Pump, hydraulic, J. H. Hubbell 331,711	
Pump piston, air, J. A. Woodbury etal	
mann	r: r _i
of solid compounds, compounding, J. W. Hyatt	r
Rack. See Harness rack. Railway and car hanger, suspension, J. A. Enos 331,387	
Railway frog, F. C. Weir	V
Railway rail coupling, H. C. Burkhead	V
Railway track gauge and level, combined, D. H. Rhodes331,329	V
Railway track inspector, automatic, P. C. Compton	1
Rake. See Hay rake. Ratchet drill, A. A. Strom,	V
Refrigerator, F. Hainsworth	V
Refrigerator, H. Von Rom	V
regulator. Windmill regulator. Rein support, T. Desjardins	V
Ribbon holder, Coburn & Van Fleit	v
Roaster. See Coffee roaster. Rock drill core breaker and puller. F. D. Parker. 331 319	Į W
Rock drilling machine, C. F. Peebles	V
Roof cleat, tin, W. C. Rockwell 331,655 Ruler, M. Dittenhoefer 331,481	V
Saccharine compounds, manufacture of, C. Fahlberg (r)	l _w
Saddle, harness, R. W. Cahoone 331,681 Saddle pad, harness, H. Leibe 331,509	N
Safe attachment, C. Diebold	V W
ler	V
Sash fastener, M. Bourke	V
Sash lift handle, W. F. Smith	
Sawmill dog, Delaney & Bond	N W
Scaffold clamp, T. N. Subers 331,742 Scale, linear or other, C. A. L. Totten 331,345	W W
School seat, J. M. Sauder 331,550 Seal, metallic, C. I. Pond 331,439	W W
Seal press, portable, J. W. Allen	W
hurst	Y
Secondary battery, E. Jones	Y
Barlow	
ewingin a spiral or helical path,machinefor, R. Binns	Ca Fi
Sewing machine shuttle, V. J. Mavo 331,314	La Or
sewing machine waxing degice, B. F. Landis 331,306 shafts, device for locking collars and rings to, C.	Pa
Meese	
for, L. C. Crowell	Сŧ
thips' logs, rotator for, J. & G. H. Bliss	Са
Siding rest, J. McDonald 331,519 sifter, T. F. Timby 331,344	Co
ign for cars, traveling, G. M. Traylor	Di
kate, roller, J. II. Fenton	FI H
Sled rumner, V. D. Johnson	Me
ower, seed, F. Reyner	Nε
poke socket, J. H. Webb	Oi
team boiler, A. O. Frick	Pa
team boiler, T. G. Hall 331,495 team engine, A. Reis 331,442 team generator, W. H. Page 331,431	Re
team generator, W. H. Fage	Re
teno-typograph, A. Beyerien	Sc Sig
FORK 331,438 thock releasing device, M. W. Hanley 331,396 took sawing machines, machine for feeding sand	Тċ
and water to, D. Shortsleeve	Ty Va
Dumke	_
tove, coal, S. H. Fales	an
tovepipe attachment, C. J. Hamilton	ce
traw carrier, Grater & Seibel	of Br
Sooysmith	spe
elegraph apparatus, inunicipal, a. C. Wilson	ha

)	Thill coupling, D. E. Kempster		
9	Tile section between walls, joists, etc., W. F. Higgins	W4 188	n
	Tire and setter therefor, vehicle, A. Heusser	331,704	1
3	Tobacco pipe, A. & C. Tappe		
	Tobacco steaming apparatus, S. G. Flintom	331.696	•
)	Tongs, pipe H. F. W. Sohst Tool, combination, M. Bourke	331,456 331,371	i
	Towel holder, D. H. Murphy	331,728	8
1	Trace carrier, J. S. Dick		
Ì	Transom lifter, A. English		
ï	Trap. See Mole trap. Tricycle gear, A. C. Latta	331,644	Į
	Tricycle shaft fastening device, D. H. Rice		
:	Trimmer. See Welt trimmer. Trough. See Feed trough.		
	Truck for elevated cars, J. A. Enos Trunk, G. H. Wells		
İ	Trunk lock, Mix & Cowles		
	Trunk lock, plate, and socket, F. W. Mix Tub. See Bath and wash tub.	3 31 ,426	j
	Tubes, apparatus for centering and inserting		
	disks in the ends of C. W. Nason		
	Tubes from hollow ingots, machine formaking, S.	001,020	,
i	P. M. Tasker331,571, 331,572, 331,579 to Tubes from hollow ingots, machine for making	331,584	
	taper, S. P. M. Tasker331,574 to	331,577	,
	Tubes, machine for welding plugs in the ends of,	001 505	
ļ	C. W. Nason		
1	Tunnels, building, C. Sooysmith		
	Twist drills, manufacturing, G. R. Stetson Type writing machine, C. Spiro		
ļ	Type writing machines, platen shifting attach-		
!	ment for, C. S. Southworth		
i	Valve, slide, D. O. Ladd	331,506	:
l	Vegetable and meat slicer, T. M. Knapp Vehicle platform gear, Cunningham & Barnes		
	Vehicle reach, Mack & Hanson	3,31 ,31 0	
į	Vehicle running gear, J. M. Bouck	331,471 331.667	
ĺ	Vehicle, spring, C. W. Saladee	3 3 1, 334	
	Vehicle spring, J. D. Owen		
ļ	Vehicle, two-wheeled, J. P. Calnan	331,375	١
į	Vehicle, two-wheeled, A. Hofmann		
l	Velocipede, C. E. Buell	331,276	
	Velocipede, A. W. McClure		
l	Vise, saw, A. J. Tyler		
	Walls and ceilings of buildings, material for the decoration of the interior, J. M. Baker	331,469	
ļ	Washer. See Leather washer. Washing machine, B. A. Allison	991 6 09	
	Washing machine, D. L. Bates	331.675	
ŀ	Washing machine, Hall & Lane. Watch, stop, H. A. Lugrin	331.633 331.417	1
İ	Water, apparatus for checking the waste of, E.		j
ļ	E. Furney		1
İ	Water closet valve, W. Scott 331,556 to Waterpower, M. J. Erskine	3.31,558	
	Waterproof fabrics, making, T. Hawley		
	Web threading apparatus, L. C. Crowell		l
ı	Weighing apparatus, W. F. Irvine	331,714	
	Welt trimmer, C. A. Squire	3 31, 33 5	I
:	Wheelbarrow, D. J. Huckins		
	Whiffletree hook, C. G. Jacobus		
	Windmill, A. C. Ellsworth 3	31,288	:
	Windmill regulator, H. R. Adams		:
	Window, hanging, J. R. Whitney	31,466	
	Wire drawing apparatus, S. H. Byrne		
	Wrench. See Combination wrench.		İ
	Wrench, F. Farrar		i
ľ	Yoke, neck, D. W. Clarke	331,376	ļ
į	Yoke, ox, W. H. Gibbens	J1,631	İ
i	DESIGNS.	10 :	ŀ
	Carpet, A. Petzold		ļ
1	Lamp chimney, Argand, W. Duffield		ĺ
	Ornamentation of walls, etc., surface, F. Mankey, 16,401,	16,402	
1	Panel, F. Mankey	16,400	
	TRADE MARKS.		. 1
•	Canned beef or cooked compressed corned beef,	10 04 -	
•	Fairbank Canning CompanyCards, playing, Russell & Morgan Printing Com-	12,814	
	pany	12,826	
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	Cards, playing, Russell & Morgan Printing Com-	
	pany	ı
	Condition powders, H. Johnson	í
i	Cotton, ginned, Ralston Ginning Company 12,823	ı
	Distilled products of pine wood, Southern Chemi-	1
	cal Company 12,828	1
ĺ	Flour, wheaten, R. F. Piper 12,821	1
ł	Harrows, clod crushers, and levelers, pulverizing,	ļ
	Nash & Bro	
1	Medicine called a blood renewer, R. Guinn 12.815	į
1	Nails and similar products made from wire, Wire	i
ĺ	Goods Company 12,829	i
ı	Ointments, salves, pills, medicated liquids, and	1
ļ	soaps, Ichthyel-Gesellschaft Cordes Hermanni	ı
i	& Co 12,816	ı
I	Paper of all kinds, writing, Z. Crane, Jr., & Bro 12,812	ı
į	Remedy for rheumatism and similar diseases,	į
i	Pfaelzer Bros. & Cc	i
ļ	Remedy for uterine and womb diseases, R. P.	ł
	Crump 12,813	
ĺ	Scarfs, gentlemen's neck. L. Auerbach 12,310	
ļ	Sign, emblematic, Z. Marx 12,818	i
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ı	cnewing, and fine-cut. W. J. Pegue 12,822	
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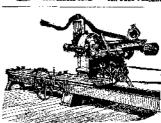
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