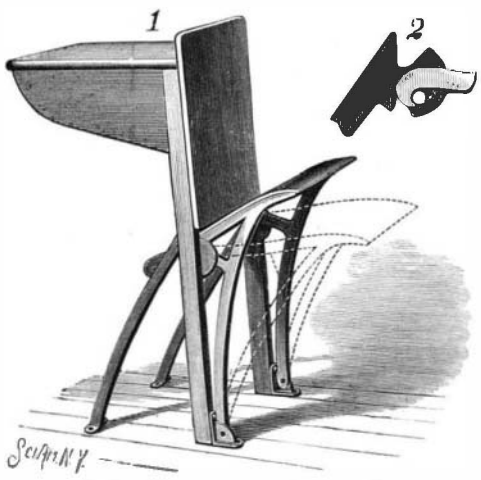
AN IMPROVED SCHOOL DESK AND SEAT.

The combined desk and seat shown herewith has been patented Mr. Gustavus Hamel, of De Soto, Mo. The desk is supported by two corner legs or standards, slightly inclined, an inclined brace bar being secured at its upper end to each leg and at its lower end to the

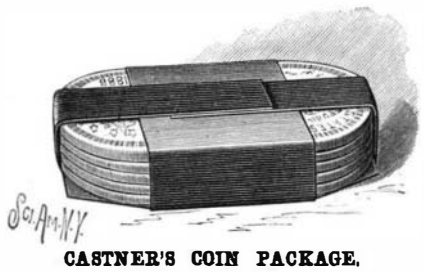


HAMEL'S SCHOOL DESK AND SEAT.

floor. The upper end of each brace projects slightly to the front of the standard, and carries an inwardly extending pin, preferably covered by rubber. When the seat is in a horizontal position, as shown in dotted lines, this pin is engaged by a hook on the horizontal arm of the seat bracket, as shown in Fig. 2, the bracket having another arm fulcrumed to the angle iron at the base of the desk standard. A connecting bar between the two arms of the bracket serves as a stop when the seat is folded up, these bars then striking against the pins to limit the rearward swinging motion of the seat brackets. The pins being covered with rubber or other soft material, noise is prevented in folding up or closing the seat.

AN IMPROVED COIN PACKAGE.

A coin package, to be formed of paper or other thin flexible material, and adapted to confine the coin so that a considerable portion is exposed to view, is illustrated herewith, and has been patented by Mr. George L. Castner, of Memphis, Tenn. The body of



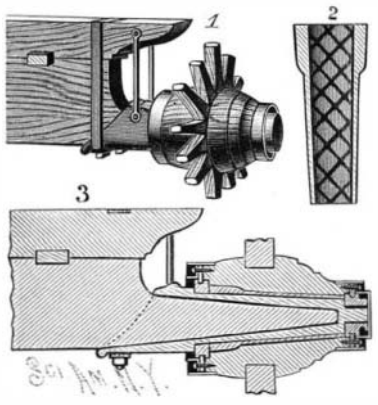
CASTNER'S COIN PACKAGE.

the holder proper is made by bending a strip in the form of a rectangle, a binding strip being pasted to the back of such holder, so that it is normally adapted to overlap the open ends, inclosing the coin when the ends are brought together on the top. The ends of the body strip may be enlarged on one side, as shown in the engraving. A package may be made on a similar principle to hold a number of packets, the package then having a broad backing piece, with narrow binding strips attached thereto, in such way as to facilitate tearing off a portion of the packet or holder containing one or more packets.

AN IMPROVED AXLE BEARING.

The illustration herewith shows an axle bearing for wagons which is designed to be simple and durable, and prevent any dust or grit from passing to the inside of the journal. This invention has been patented by F. Strauss, of La Crosse, Wis.

The axle carries on each end a tapering projection, square in cross section, as shown in Fig. 3, fitting into a correspondingly shaped aperture formed centrally in a skein fastened by a clip to the axle. On



STRAUSS' AXLE BEARING.

the skein is mounted the journal, having on its inside diagonal channels, as shown in Fig. 2, to distribute the oil or other lubricant. The inner end of the journal has the usual lugs driven into the hub of the wheel, and on the inner end of the skein is a shoulder, against which rests a collar, secured on the skein, and having on its rim an annular groove, into which loosely fits a rubber washer resting against the inner face of the hub, and connected thereto by screws. In front of the washer is a metallic cap protecting the rubber from wear. On the outer end of the skein is a threaded offset, on to which screws a nut abutting against the ends of the journal, there being an annular groove in the nut into which fits loosely a rubber washer, on which is a cap secured by screws. The edges of the inner and outer washer and their caps are covered by bands. This axle bearing is especially designed for hay and barrel wagons, being durable and convenient, and so constructed that the outer screw of the axle can be adjusted to the width and weight of the load.

AN ADJUSTABLE LEG FOR CHAIRS.

An adjustable leg which may be easily attached to or detached from chairs or other articles of furniture, to vary their height, and which is particularly applicable in accommodating a chair to the growth of a child, is illustrated herewith, and has been patented by Mr. Hasbrouck Alliger, of Rondout, N. Y. A wedge-shaped block is used, having teeth at its upper end to engage the under side of the chair seat, and on the outer side of the block are numbers representing inches and fractions thereof, the block also having a longitudinal slot. An auxiliary leg, slotted, is adapted for engagement with this block by a bolt passing through both slots, and having a washer and wing nut. A hook with threaded shank and wing nut is also passed through and held in engagement in the slots, the hook being adapted to engage a round of the chair when the auxiliary leg has been fixed at the desired length, and the upper toothed end of the wedge block is driven into the under side of the chair seat or frame. Fig. 3 shows a modified form of the device, in which the wedge block may be dispensed with, the auxiliary leg being made longer, and its lower end made up of a series of spheres, which may be cut off as desired to lower the chair.

AN IMPROVED FOLDING BATH TUB.

A bath tub which may be folded in small bulk when not in use, and for transportation or storage, is illustrated herewith, and has been patented by Mr. Ransom Sabin, of Shelby, Mich. Each of the sides has a pair of folding legs, the legs each being held in vertical position by a pivoted catch when the bath tub is set up for use. The ends are each composed of two parts, hinged together at their inner edges, and at their outer edges hinged to the sides, a bolt and socket being provided on each end to lock the end parts in open position. A flexible sheet of rubber cloth or other waterproof material is secured to the side and end pieces, such sheet being of sufficient dimensions to provide ample space for the purpose of a bath when the device is set up. Two straps are also employed, running under the flexible sheet, which may be used to hold the parts together in folded position, as shown in Fig. 1, or these straps may be used to divide up the area of the bath tub into compartments when its whole space is not required.

For further particulars relative to this invention address the inventor, or Mr. Erwin Stanhope, of Mears, Mich.

THE MUD LAFF.—(*Synanceia verrucosa, Cuv.*)

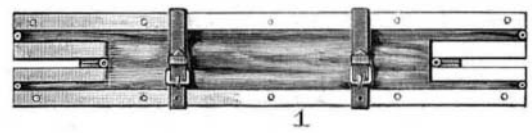
BY NICOLAS PIKE.

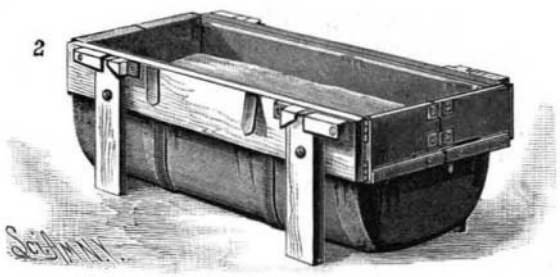
This curious fish, of such evil fame from its poisonous spines, is a native of the shallow waters within the reefs that nearly surround the island of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. This hideous and disgusting-looking fish averages from 16 to 18 inches in length. The spongy, wrinkled skin is blotched with gray, brown, and white on an olive ground, but is so generally covered with mud and weeds, it is only after a deal of trouble it can be cleaned. It seems to exude a glutinous matter, which, attracting anything that it comes in contact with, forms a thick coat over the whole body. The dorsal resembles an irregular row of tubercles, each with a spine, rather than a fin, and the wide, puffed-out pectorals give the appearance of a ruff round the neck when swimming. Being the color of the mud, it is difficult to distinguish at a short distance, and its small bright eyes near the top of the head enable it to lie in wait unseen by its victims. The brute flattens out the great pectorals, and squats in the mud, the head thrown back in the thick folds on the shoulder, and the great mouth wide open to catch any unwary fish that may pass that way. The prey is sucked in and swallowed, but it is a sorry day if human hand or foot touches it. I managed to escape them in my wanderings in search of marine curiosities by wearing very thick boots. I was anxious to experi-

ALLIGER'S ADJUSTABLE LEG FOR CHAIRS.

ment on the fish, and secured an expert old fisherman's services. The natives use the laff as food, and in spite of the dangerous wounds caused by the spines, those skilled in reef fishing actually catch the creature with the bare hand, and I never heard of an accident to them. When a laff is discovered, the wary fisherman, knowing it to be a sluggish fish, not likely to move quickly, creeps slowly up to it, and stooping down lowers his hand gently till it is below the level of the mouth, when with a sudden jerk he clutches it by the lower jaw, and draws it up, and it can plunge as it will, but cannot use the spines if held firmly.

My man caught me several specimens. One we laid on a dish, and I tickled it under the pectorals, when the dorsal, which lies in a lumpy mass on the back when

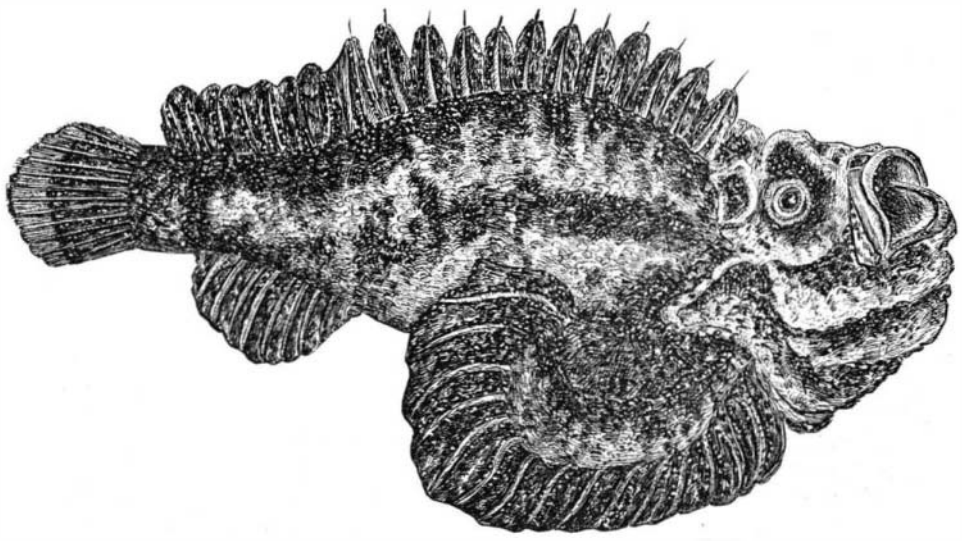




SABIN'S FOLDING BATH TUB.

undisturbed, was quickly raised, the spines protruded, and when the fin was touched, the fish, with a spasmodic jerk, ejected a greenish, slimy substance from the hollow spines, and this I concluded was the poison injected into wounds, making them so difficult to cure. To prove the dangerous nature of the poison, I punctured the ball of the foot of a kitten with one of the front spines (said to be the worst), and it was immediately affected, and died in convulsions in an hour.

I saw one poor fellow who had trodden on a laff, and had wounded the ball of the great toe of the right foot. It was much swollen, and I opened the wound with a scalpel and applied a strong solution of ammonia to it. His comrades made a poultice of the leaves of a plant near by, and this gave him a little relief. I gave him a good glass of rum, for he nearly fainted from the agony, and his state of alarm lest lockjaw should ensue was



THE MUD LAFF—SYNANCEIA VERRUCOSA CUV.

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