

**Queer Things That Are Sent to the Patent Office.**

(From the New York Sun.)

Every event of importance brings down upon the examiners at the Patent Office a myriad of impossible inventions which their wild-eyed originators believe to be the greatest things in the world. It is, therefore, expected at the Patent Office that the possibility of a war with England will cause all the idle dreamers in the inventing line to send new devices for killing men and sinking ships. There will be, if the war talk is continued, guns, ammunition, war balloons, unsinkable ships, new kinds of armor, armed flying machines, and other similar devices, ninety-five per cent of which will be absolutely worthless in the eyes of the examiners and will be rejected on this ground. The policy of England is quite different in respect to worthless inventions, for any invention with which a fee is sent may secure a patent, and the visionary inventor may continue to haul up the empty buckets he has been letting down into the empty well. In the United States such discrimination is shown that the business of inventing has reached the dignity of a profession, in which many men are earning more than a mere livelihood.

Upon the model makers devolve the worry and bother of the visits of these inventors, and upon the examiners of the Patent Office the responsibility of selection. In certain classes of inventions, for a patent to be granted a working model must be furnished, and this rule, in the case of the perpetual motion fiend and his ilk, saves the examiner a great deal of work and needless bother. In the case of ordinary freak inventions the matter is not so simple, for some inventions that were once thought to be senseless, have, after the expiration of the patents, come into use and are of extreme value. There are other cases where the insanity of the idea of the inventor is too apparent. A man not long ago invented a plow with a cannon attachment. If the farmer was attacked in the field at a distance from his home, he could turn on the battery and disorganize the attacking party. Another man came to the patent office with what he considered to be the discovery of the century. This was nothing less than a new method of tempering iron. He was quite sure that as soon as the patent was granted he would have no difficulty in disposing of it to the great iron and steel makers of the world, and that guns and armor of a superior quality could be furnished in a short space of time through his idea. The tempering solution he proposed was Jamestown weed, one ounce; apples, one ounce; turnips, two ounces; water, one gallon. The ingredients were to be cooked, and the iron dipped into the mixture. Perhaps one of the most amusing patents ever granted was issued on the claim of an Ohio man in 1883. He evidently had not lived a great length of time on a farm, for his invention of a new corn planter, while original to an extreme degree, could hardly be put into use. The picture accompanying the patent is a work of art. It represents an old horse, driven by a stout man, who holds the lines nonchalantly in one hand, an expression of much pleasure on his face, while at his side trudges a small hairy dog of the yellow variety. To the horse's forelegs, just above the fetlocks, are attached two small boxes to contain the seed. Ropes are fastened to catches in the sides of these boxes and lead through pulleys attached to a small saddle over the horse's shoulder and back to the horse's hind legs. As the horse moved forward each step of the hind leg opened the seed boxes, and corn was sifted down into the holes made by the front hoofs. The verbiage of the claim on this patent is as original as is the drawing:

First. I claim the combination substantially set forth with the cheap old horse, A, to the forelegs of which are attached the boxes, B B, that are to be filled with corn.

2. I claim the pulleys, C C, in combination with the strings, D D, substantially as shown in the drawing.

3. I claim the guide, E (a small iron affair shaped like a rowlock, fastened above the horse's tail, through which the lines pass), for the purpose set forth, and the sticker, H, to prevent the lowering of the tail.

4. I claim the fat driver, F, to prevent the said cheap horse from going too fast.

5. I claim the fat dog, G, merely as company for the driver.

6. I claim the worms (not shown) in combination with the crows, K K, substantially as shown in the drawing for the purpose set forth (a purpose not set forth).

A man who was afraid of being buried alive claimed a patent for a coffin of peculiar shape. The coffin was connected with the air above by an opening containing a small spiral staircase. If the supposed dead person concluded to resurrect himself he could seize the handles above his head and haul himself up, ascending the circular staircase at his convenience. If he was not

strong enough to lift himself, a bell cord was situated near his hand by means of which help could be summoned from the neighboring office of the cemetery.

At first glance the idea of attracting noxious insects to imitation flowers where they could be killed by poisoned honey might seem absurd. Yet it is said that this scheme, a patent for which has been issued, works very well. A man out in California patented a scheme for killing destructive insects on fruit trees a number of years ago. He surrounded the tree with a balloon-like affair, and then injected a gas noxious to the insects but harmless to the tree. People laughed at him, and he was considered a crank. Two years ago, when the patent expired, people began to see what a good idea it was, and now the method is in extensive use in California. It will be seen, therefore, that patent examiners are obliged to be both careful and discriminating in judging the merits and demerits of an application.

A man not long ago invented a balloon attached to a trolley wire. This balloon was presumably for purposes of long distance investigations by telescope in time of war. Underneath the trolley wire was a motor which operated two large wooden propellers sending the car along and pulling the balloon. Another man invented a "steam nigger," operated by an electric motor in the regions of the pit of the stomach. The invention's use is not set forth. S. S. Applegate invented an arrangement for waking himself up early in the morning. A series of corks dangled above the place his head ought to be in a bed, and, actuated by clockwork, made life a burden for the weary sleeper, until in self defence he was obliged to get up. Another invention was a contrivance for dumping the hired girl out of bed at 5 A. M. This, too, was actuated by clockwork. It was not considered to be so polite or gentle a method as that of Mr. Applegate's. There was another invention intended to save the weary Benedick a few hours of slumber in the morning, for a mechanism placed under the kitchen fire was supposed to light it at any hour desired. There is a very funny model at the Patent Office of a cat made of sheet iron operated by clockwork. It is intended to be placed on the roof of a house, woodshed or back wall in neighborhoods where the night is made hideous by nervous Thomases and Marias. At any touch or warlike demonstration on the part of its curious neighbors the clockwork sets the claws going all at once at a tremendous rate and there is a temporary rest for the weary. At the Patent Office there are models of Mark Twain's scrapbook, the pages of which are already muced, and Lincoln's device for getting ships off shoal places. This consists of bags of inflatable rubber, which, as occasion requires, are blown up and the vessel raised.

There are innumerable inventions to prevent accidents by collision on railroads. One of these patented recently consists of a very elaborate device by means of which one train runs over the top of the other, both presumably continuing on their way uninterrupted by the chance encounter. There is another English invention having much the same idea. The application is different, however, for the front of the engines are built wedge-shaped, with the wedge inclining more to one side than the other, by which means at the impact one train goes to one side of the track and the other train to the other side. Both trains are derailed, but the force of the collision is reduced and the loss of life brought to a minimum. Besides these inventions there are modes of changing the shape of the features, modes of operating every conceivable thing on earth by windmills, modes of soaring through space, and travelling through fire and water without the least discomfort, modes of making steel and iron by simpler processes than have ever been dreamed of, which uniformly do not work, and hundreds and even thousands of plans which have resulted in nothing but bother to anybody who has had anything to do with them. Certain methods have been patented for locating gold and silver by means of divining rods. Even methods of making gold are found. Here is an English receipt for manufacturing gold:

"Cut whole wheat straws into little square snips the width of the straw and mix this with a quart measure of the grains. Measure out half a two-quart saucepanful and set it aside. Fill the saucepan three quarters full of water and set it to boil over the fire. Pour in the mixture and let it boil two and a quarter hours, adding water at intervals. Then strain off the liquor in thin layers in soup plates, and allow the same to rest thirty-eight hours at a temperature of 46 degrees Fahrenheit. Then slowly bake them dry and find the gold adhering to the plates."

It is said that all the burglars' jimmies in London are made by one man, who is well known to the police, but cannot be arrested, as his work is not contrary to law. Besides, it is very convenient to be able to trace his customers.

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