

W. CUNNINGHAME.  
DECORATIVE STRUCTURE.  
APPLICATION FILED APR. 22, 1910.

972,754.

Patented Oct. 11, 1910.

Fig. 1.

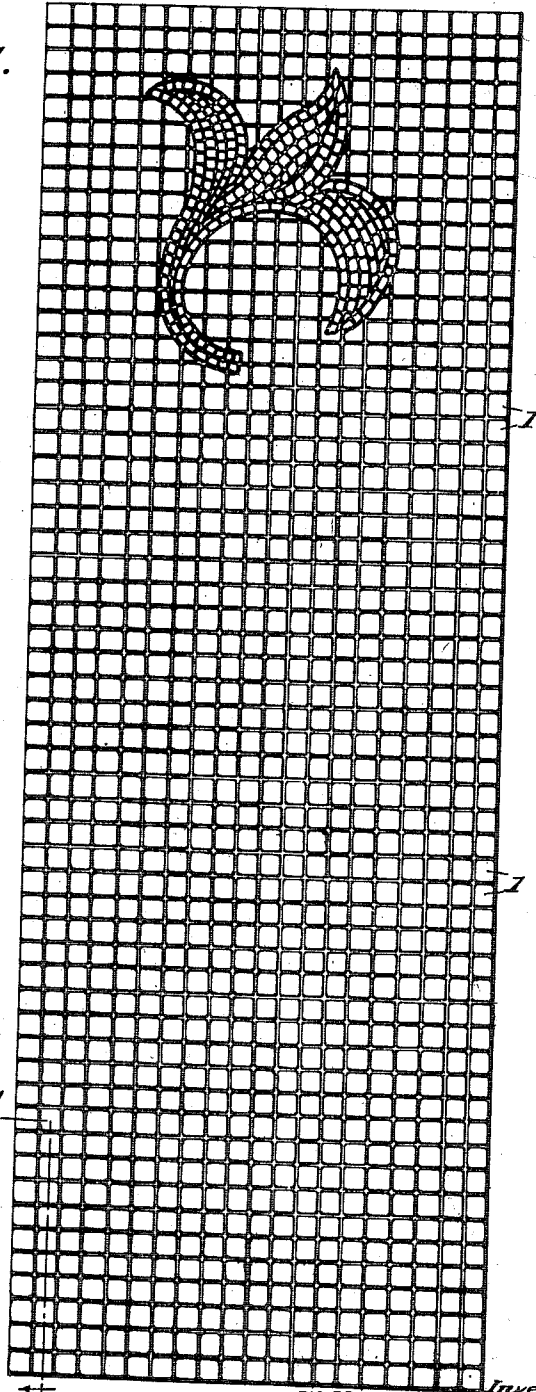


Fig. 2.



Witnesses  
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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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DECORATIVE STRUCTURE.

972,754.

Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Oct. 11, 1910.

Application filed April 22, 1910. Serial No. 557,086.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, WILTON CUNNINGHAME, a citizen of the United States, residing at Chicago, in the county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Decorative Structures, of which the following is a specification.

The primary object of my invention is the production of a decorative structure which will present a true mosaic appearance, but which, unlike mosaics made from stone or vitreous material, will be pliable, and yet inelastic under ordinary pressure.

Genuine mosaic work is constructed and built up of bits or blocks of heavy, hard, unpliant material, such as blocks of stone, glass, enamel, cement, ceramic material and so on. These blocks or bits of hard material are fitted together and set in cement, with their adjacent edges rigidly cemented or otherwise connected together. The bits or blocks are also sometimes first arranged and fitted together into sections of a complete design and the blocks of the sections are temporarily held together by paper or some fabric glued to the front faces thereof. When a design is to be installed, the surface for receiving the decoration is first coated with some cement and the sections laid therein and fitted together. After the cement is set and hardened, the temporary supporting material can be removed by water or other substance and the front face of the blocks washed clean. This setting of the hard unpliant bits or blocks in equally hard and unpliant cement produces a hard decorative coat or finish which is far from being pliable, and the least flexure thereof will cause cracking or breaking. Take, for example, a ceiling or floor to which mosaic has been applied in the ordinary manner, the least flexure or settling will result in cracks and separation or loosening of the blocks, and perhaps breakage thereof, there being absolutely no give or compensation effect in mosaic work as ordinarily constructed. Furthermore, should any of the blocks become worn or marred in any way, replacing can be accomplished only with difficulty. The usual method is to pound and to break up the structure, and to replace it, it then being necessary to use fresh cement and new units, the operation resulting usually in a sacrifice and waste of ma-

terial. The cost of genuine mosaic work is considerable and almost prohibitive for ordinary use of the mosaic.

The main object of my invention is, therefore, to produce a decorative structure which closely resembles the genuine mosaic work, but which possesses a great many features which go to make its use more desirable and more economical.

The decorative units in my invention are of some light material, pliable but inelastic under ordinary pressure, and at the same time, inexpensive, the units being treated to give color effect or to possess other physical or chemical properties, and they are fitted together and secured by some elastic and yielding cement or glue to a backing of some material which is also pliable, the adjacent edges of the units, however, remaining free to move relatively. The units may be cut from light material, such as paper, wood or other fibrous material, leather, composition, or any similar material which is pliable. The material either before or after the units are cut therefrom can be impregnated or superficially treated with substances to produce coloring effects or physical or chemical properties. For example, the material or the units cut therefrom may be saturated with some substance which would cause the resultant structure to be water-proof or fire-proof, or to give it antiseptic qualities. The units may also be treated superficially as by painting, staining, spraying, varnishing or the like. The units, however, should, after treatment, retain their pliability and yielding properties and their relative freedom.

The units are properly arranged and fitted together to reproduce any desired design and are preferably arranged in easily handled sections, the units of each section being fastened at their backs to some thin pliable material or fabric such as paper or cloth, some glue or cement being used possessing strong adhesive and resisting properties, but which at the same time possesses give and pliability so that the resultant structure is extremely pliable and can undergo considerable flexure, bending or distortion without resulting in loosening or separation of the units. The sections thus formed are intended to be secured directly against the surface to be decorated much in the same manner as wall paper is applied. The ornamental

structure being so pliable will follow all the flexures or distortions of the wall without showing the effects. At the same time its cost is not prohibitive and it so closely simulates the genuine mosaic that except upon close scrutiny the difference is hard to detect. It is possible to imitate any mosaic surface by the application of finish dressings or coatings. Any color can be reproduced.

5 A dull finish or a glassy finish can be given. The units can also be secured to panels of stiffer material such as paper or fiber board, wood or the like, and these panels can be secured to a wall in any desired manner.

10 The units also can have any shape, regular or irregular, as irregular shapes can be much more readily cut from material such as paper than they can be formed from stone, glass or other hard material. Another advantage is that repairs can be much more readily effected. If one or more units should become loosened all that is necessary is to apply glue and to replace the unit. A single unit or any number can be readily cut out

25 and replaced.

The backing to which the units are applied is permanent and it is, therefore, unnecessary to wash or otherwise remove temporary supporting material from the ornamental face of the units, as is the case in genuine mosaic work. The ornamental pattern of the section is, therefore, always open, and the sections can be applied with much more certainty than is the case with the genuine mosaic, where the section patterns are hidden by temporary supporting fabric.

30 In the accompanying drawing: Figure 1 is a plan view of a decorative section having the mosaic appearance; and Fig. 2 is a section, taken on line 2-2 of Fig. 1.

40 As shown, the units or blocks 1 which can be accurately cut by suitable cutting tools are placed adjacent each other, but in separated relation, to build up a desired design and are glued or otherwise fastened at their backs to a permanent supporting backing 2 which may be of thin pliable material, such as paper or cloth or which may be of the more rigid form, such as wood or paper panels. The units may be treated for coloring effect or other properties before being glued to the backing or may be applied first and then stained, painted or otherwise treated. A complete design is usually sub-divided into a number of easily handled sections and these sections may be applied to a wall much in the same manner as wall paper or as panels are applied, and after application to a wall, a finish treatment may be given

60 the units. The product of my invention, therefore, gives a true mosaic effect but eliminates the undesirable features of rigid genuine mosaic in which the units besides being securely cemented to a backing are rigidly

65 connected together so that the least flexure

of the backing will cause cracks, and individual distortion of the units will be transmitted to other units, which causes the units to break away from the backing. The units of my invention are secured to a backing or supporting surface at only one of their areas and are entirely independent of each other so far as their adjacent edges are concerned, the result being that each unit can individually follow its own distortions, flexures and so on without in any way influencing other units, and each individual unit and the units as a whole are free to follow any flexure, warping or other distortion of the supporting surface or backing. The product can, therefore, after manufacture, be applied to any curvilinear surface, as the individual units will assume the curvature of the surface to which the product is applied. The product is a true work of art and the units can have any form, regular or irregular, to be arranged on a backing to mosaically reproduce a picture or design.

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It will be noted that while the units making up the mosaic are pliable and flexible, yet their surfaces are, at the same time, comparatively inelastic under ordinary pressure.

I do not desire to be limited to the particular materials or arrangement which I have referred to, as any material could be used for the units or backing so long as pliability would be the chief property.

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What I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A decorative mosaic structure comprising a backing, and a facing thereon entirely composed of mosaic units arranged on said backing and secured thereto along one area only, said units being formed from pliable but inelastic material whereby they are individually and collectively free to conform in any direction with any flexure or distortion of said backing, as set forth.

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2. A mosaic section comprising a backing, and pliable inelastic units arranged mosaic-ally on said backing, said units being secured to said backing along one area only and separated a distance from each other at their edges to retain their individuality and to be adapted to follow individually as well as collectively any flexure or distortion of the backing, as set forth.

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3. A mosaic section comprising a backing, and pliable inelastic units arranged on said backing into a mosaic design, said units being secured to said backing at one of their bases but separated a distance from each other at their edges, whereby they are enabled to follow individually as well as collectively any flexure or distortion of said backing, as set forth.

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4. A mosaic section or panel comprising a permanent backing, and mosaic units of pliable inelastic material arranged on said backing and permanently supported solely there-

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by, said backing being sufficiently pliable to follow the curvature or irregularity of the surface of a wall, ceiling or other support to be decorated, said units being separated by gaps from each other all around their edges to be entirely free from each other, whereby they may individually, as well as collectively, follow in any direction any flexure, warping or distortion of said backing without separating therefrom, as set forth.

5. A mosaic structure comprising a backing, pliable but inelastic units secured at one

face to said backing and arranged to produce a mosaic design, the adjacent edges of the units being entirely free from engagement and connection with each other, and an elastic decorative coating applied to the outer faces and to the edges of said units.

In testimony whereof I hereunto set my hand this 14th day of April, 1910.

WILTON CUNNINGHAME.

In presence of—

L. HEISLAR,

R. SCHAEFER.