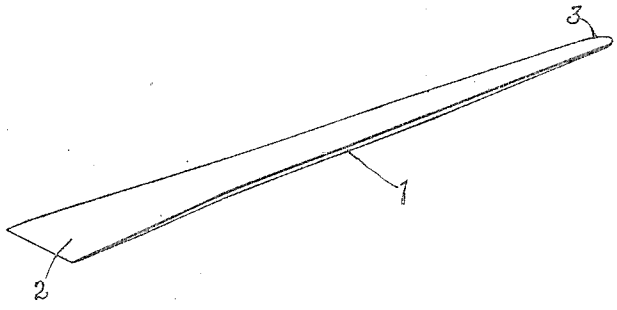
No. 797,423. PATENTED AUG. 15, 1905.

R. R. FREEMAN.

TOOTHPICK.

APPLICATION FILED OCT. 1, 1903.



WITNESSES:

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ROBERT ROSS FREEMAN, OF NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

TOOTHPICK.

No. 797,423. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Aug. 15, 1905.

Application filed October 1, 1903. Serial No. 175,338.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ROBERT ROSS FREEMAN, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Nashville, Davidson county, State of Tennessee, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Toothpicks, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to toothpicks; and its object is to provide a toothpick which will obviate the objections inherent in all kinds of toothpicks heretofore proposed or made.

Toothpicks have been made in many forms and of many materials; but all have failed to greater or less extent of the purposes desired, owing chiefly to the injurious effects resulting from the material used. The quill toothpick is perhaps the best heretofore used and most generally recommended by the dental profession, but there are serious objections to its use, for if it be made sufficiently thin to pass between closely-set teeth its strength is so impaired that it tends to and does frequently bend or double up instead of penetrating, and again the moisture of the mouth quickly softens its texture to such an extent as to make it useless, while it frequently splits, resulting in the penetration and wounding of the gums by the slivers thus formed. The most generally used is the wooden toothpick, which possesses similar objections as the quill toothpick, but greatly intensified, for it is well known that small slivers or pieces of the wood are readily detached from a toothpick of this material and are caused to penetrate the gum-pockets and the gums in the interstices between and about the teeth, resulting in setting up of undue and persistent irritation of the gums, which frequently becomes so serious as to cause the loss of the teeth by reason of the disease thus developed in the gums.

Many kinds of metallic toothpicks have been proposed and used, including gold and silver; but aside from the expensive nature of the materials all such metallic toothpicks have been liable to misuse, because of the failure to exercise the great care in their use necessary to prevent the injuries liable to follow such use, the most serious of which is well known to be the injury to the enamel of the teeth caused by the corrosive action thereon induced and promoted by the chemical action set up between the metal and the secretions of the mouth, as well as from elements of the food particles.

I have discovered that aluminium possesses all the characteristics essential for the purposes sought in the best toothpicks, inasmuch as it is entirely free from all the objections incident to the other materials, metallic or otherwise, hitherto used. Its advantages are clear and well defined, as developed by long experience and careful experiment and observation, for because of its softness it will not mar, injure, or break in any way the texture of the tooth; the secretions of the mouth have no chemical action on it, and therefore there is no corrosive or contaminating effect, so destructive in its effect upon the enamel; its strength is sufficient, even though very thin, to penetrate between very close contiguous surfaces of the teeth, and it can be readily bent to any form for reaching in remote recesses, while it can be readily restored without injury to its straight condition and it is not liable to be broken.

In the drawing I have shown a perspective view of a toothpick of the preferred form in which my invention may be embodied, though it is to be understood that any convenient and suitable form may be adopted. The form shown is designed not only with a view to efficiency in use, but cheapness and readiness in manufacture. The flat body 1 of the toothpick is flattened and tapered at the broadened end 2, while it is tapered and round-pointed at the narrowed end 3, thus providing in the one instrument two implements for reaching by the pointed and tapered narrow end the smaller and remote recesses and by the flattened and tapered broad end the thinner and elongated interstices between adjacent teeth.

I claim as my invention—

1. As a new article of manufacture, a toothpick having a thin body with narrow pointed end and composed of a metal, such as aluminium, possessing the characteristics of softness, pliability, malleability, strength, and imperviousness to the chemical action of secretions of the mouth and food elements, capable of being made very thin to penetrate between very close contiguous surfaces of the teeth, and possessing sufficient firmness and strength to be bent into and temporarily retain various forms for reaching every part of the teeth to cleanse the same, and straightened for use again in such straightened form, substantially as described.

2. As a new article of manufacture, a flat toothpick made of metal, such as aluminium, having a body provided with a flattened and tapered broadened end and a pointed and tapered narrowed end, possessing the charac-

teristics of softness, pliability, malleability, strength, and imperviousness to the chemical action of secretions of the mouth and food elements, capable of being made very thin to penetrate between very close contiguous surfaces of the teeth, and possessing sufficient firmness and strength to be bent into and temporarily retain various forms for reaching every part of the teeth to cleanse the same, and straighten for use again in such straightened form, substantially as described.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

ROBERT ROSS FREEMAN.

Witnesses:

A. WILLIAMS,

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