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B. LIVINGSTON

2,521,589

SHORTENER

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Fig. 1.

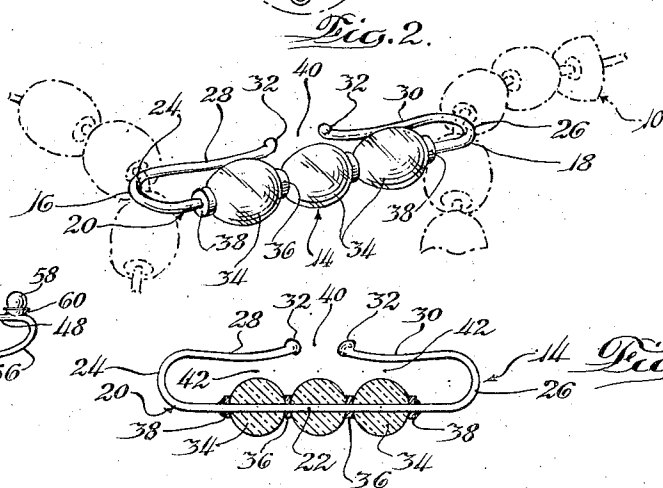


Fig. 2.

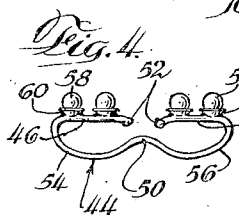


Fig. 4.

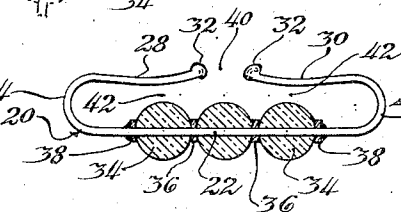


Fig. 3.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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SHORTENER

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2 Claims. (Cl. 63—20)

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The present invention relates to an ornamental and functional item of jewelry known as a "shortener" for use with a string of beads, usually a string of pearls, to hold it in a particular fashion and usually so that the length of the forwardly hanging loop will be shorter than it would be were the shortener not used.

Strings or ropes of pearls are very frequently of considerable length, and in order to reduce this length women have for many years been knotting the string of pearls close to the neck or by the use of an ornamental pin fastening the pearls to the garments. When a rope of pearls, particularly fairly large pearls, is knotted, a considerable bulk is created which is somewhat heavy on the wearer's chest and is likely to be crushed with consequent damage to the pearls should the wearer bump against a solid object or another person.

The present invention is concerned primarily with a "pearl shortener" which is used to shorten the effective length of a string or rope of pearls by engagement with the loop at opposite points so as to cause a portion of the string closely to encircle the wearer's neck.

A further object is to provide an item of jewelry which is both ornamental and functional—ornamental in that it is handsome and pleasing to the eye and blends with other items of jewelry, and functional in that it coacts with a string of pearls to fasten it in such a way that the string does not hang to an unduly long length either by gathering it up at an intermediate point or by fastening it to the dress or other garment of the wearer.

Another object of the invention is to provide an item of jewelry of the class described which might incorporate precious, semi-precious or non-precious gems.

Another object of the invention is to provide an item of jewelry of the class described which is relatively easy to manufacture and which may be made as an expensive piece of jewelry or which may be made as a low cost piece of jewelry using imitation or non-precious stones and gems.

Other objects and advantages will become apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing wherein:

Fig. 1 is a front head view of a woman wearing a string of pearls showing one use of the shortener of this invention;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged perspective view of the shortener of Fig. 1 with a fragmentary portion of a rope of pearls shown in phantom lines so

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as to illustrate exactly how the shortener is connected to the pearls;

Fig. 3 is a plan sectional view of the shortener of the present invention; and

Fig. 4 is a plan view of a modified form of shortener.

In the drawing, the reference character 10 indicates generally a string or rope of pearls fastened about the neck of a woman with the customary clasp (not shown) fastened at the back of the neck. Were this rope of pearls to fall naturally from the wearer's neck, it would occupy the position indicated by the phantom line 12 in Fig. 1. However, with a pearl shortener 14 constructed according to the present invention fastened at 16 and 18 to the sides of the rope of pearls, the loop is somewhat shorter than it would be were the pearls hanging freely. Furthermore, it will be observed that this loop will swing only from the points 16 and 18 and not from each side of the wearer's neck as would otherwise be the case.

The shortener 14 comprises a wire member 20 having a front straight portion 22 terminating in end loops or bights 24 and 26 and integral with rear short portions 28 and 30 which are generally parallel to the front portion 22. The portions 28 and 30 are directed generally toward each other but do not quite touch and are rounded with ball-like tips at 32 so that there will be no sharp ends to scratch the wearer or to snag in the wearer's garments. The rounded portions 32 may be formed by small globules of solder or by fusing or melting or otherwise deforming the ends.

The gems which ornament the shortener are mounted upon the front straight portion 22. In the form shown in Figs. 2 and 3, three pearls 34, drilled or provided with the conventional central openings, are mounted upon the front portion 22 and are separated from each other by small spacers 36. At either end of the set of three pearls a ring or washer 38 is soldered or brazed to the wire 20 so that the three pearls 34, while being rotatable on the wire 20, are not slidable lengthwise of the portion 22. If desired the spacers 36 may also be soldered to the wire 20.

In some forms of the invention the pearls 22 may be natural or cultured pearls and, therefore, quite expensive. The wire 20 may be made of platinum or gold, such as 14 carat gold, and the spacers and rings 36 and 38 made of similar precious metal. In other cases the wire 20 may be made of an inexpensive material such as a nickel or chromium plated wire, and the pearls 34 may be imitation pearls.

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Mountings for other gems, such as sapphires, rubies, diamonds, or emeralds or simulations thereof may be brazed or soldered to the front portion 22 of the wire 20 and, therefore, the ornamentation given to the shortener by means of gems other than pearls.

It will be observed that the space 40 between the ends 32 of the wire is quite restricted, being somewhat smaller than the diameter of a pearl. Likewise, the spaces 42 between the portions 28 and 30 of the wire 20 and the pearls 34 are smaller or narrower than the diameter of a pearl. These spaces should be of fairly small dimensions so that the shortener will remain securely fastened to the string of pearls or beads with which it is used without the necessity of using spring clasps or pins or other similar types of mechanical fastening devices.

In the use of the shortener which is illustrated in the drawing, the pearls are put on by the wearer in the normal manner and allowed to hang naturally from the neck. The wearer then hooks the shortener to one side of the rope of pearls, as indicated in Fig. 2, through the spaces 40 and 42. This is done by sliding that part of the string or chain, upon which the pearls are strung, between adjacent pearls through the space 40 and then through one of the spaces 42 so that the string will be engaged by the loop 24. The same operation is repeated at the other side of the rope of pearls by engaging the string between adjacent pearls in the loop 26.

It is preferred that the radius of the loops 24 and 26 be less than the radius of the beads on the string with which the shortener is used so that when the shortener is fastened to the string as described it will remain in place and the beads on the string will not slip through the loop. The loops 24 and 26 should be made as small as compatible with good manufacturing techniques.

Fig. 4 illustrates a modified form of shortener wherein a wire member 44 is bent to provide two short straight front portions 46 and 48 interconnected by a rear portion having a central part 50 bent inwardly toward the adjacent ends 52 of the front portions. Thus, the member 44 has a pair of loops 54 and 56 adapted to be hooked around the string or chain on which the beads or pearls are strung in the same manner as described with reference to the embodiment of Figs. 2 and 3. The loops 54 and 56 are sufficiently small to prevent the beads or pearls from slipping through. It will also be observed that the spaces between the ends 52 and the central inwardly part 50 are very small and merely allow passage of the string or chain. It is preferable that these spaces be about the same size; they are smaller than the diameter of the beads on the string with which the shortener is to be used.

While the pearls could be mounted on the wire portions 46 and 48 in the same manner as shown in Fig. 3, Fig. 4 illustrates a modified mounting

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wherein a pearl or bead or other gem 58 is cemented or otherwise permanently secured in a shallow mounting or cup 60 which is brazed or soldered or otherwise suitably affixed to the wire member 44.

The shortener of Fig. 4 is used in the same manner as that of Figs. 1 to 3, except that the opening between the ends 52 is in the front of the shortener rather than in the rear (see Figs. 3 and 4).

Modes of wearing the shortener other than that shown are contemplated. For example, the shortener can be worn at the back of the neck or to interconnect two strands together or to fasten the strand to a garment.

While two forms of the invention have been shown, various changes or modifications in the shortener may also be made by those skilled in the jewelry art without departing from the spirit and scope of this invention which is limited only by the scope of the appended claims. What, therefore, is claimed as new and desired to be secured by United States Letters Patent is:

1. As an article of jewelry, a shortener for use with a string of beads comprising a wire member bent at each end rearwardly from the front portion, and then inwardly into close proximity to each other but with a small space therebetween to provide two elongated, laterally spaced open loops, each adapted to receive through said small space the strand upon which the beads are strung, and gem means mounted on said front portion and extending into the space bounded by said loops to form a constriction with said inwardly turned rear portions of the wire member to thereby give said loops an effective inside diameter less than the diameter of the beads at the point of application, whereby the beads will not slip or pass through said loops.

2. As an article of jewelry, a shortener for use with a string of beads comprising a wire member bent at each end in the same direction and then inwardly into close proximity with each other but with a small space therebetween to provide two elongated, spaced open loops, each adapted to receive through said small space the strand upon which the beads are strung, gem means mounted on portions of each loop, the effective inside width of the loop openings being less than the diameter of the adjacent beads, whereby said openings will not permit the beads adjacent thereto to pass through the loops, said wire ends being rounded to facilitate their passage over the bead strand.

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The following references are of record in the file of this patent:

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