UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

RICKASON STILWELL, OF NEW YORK, N. Y., ASSIGNOR, BY MESNE ASSIGNMENT, TO EMELINE C. STILWELL, OF SAME PLACE.

MATERIAL FOR STUFFING PILLOWS, BEDS, &c.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 231,459, dated August 24, 1880.

Application filed January 2, 1880.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, RICKASON STILWELL, of the city, county, and State of New York, have invented an Improvement in Materials for Stuffing Pillows, Beds, &c., of which the following is a specification.

As is well known, feathers are considered to be the best material for filling or stuffing pillows, beds, &c., but are very expensive, and in hot weather the beds, pillows, and the like are found to be inordinately warm, owing to the character of the material. Furthermore, inasmuch as the down of feathers is much more valuable for several purposes than for the purpose just hereinbefore indicated, it is now the universal practice in the feather trade to strip the down from the quill ends of feathers and to use the feathers thus denuded of their finer and more valuable portions for filling beds, pillows, &c.; but the feathers thus denuded present long quill ends, which the remaining portion of the soft, fibrous, and elastic material is insufficient to disguise, so that beds and like articles filled with these partially-stripped feathers are objectionable, the quill ends being hard and comparatively sharp and readily felt through the tick or covering.

The object of my invention is to provide a filling for beds and similar articles which will possess all the elasticity and uniform softness of the best quality of feathers at a fraction of the cost, and this, too, by the use of an inferior quality of feathers, or by feathers denuded of their down, in conjunction with a material which may be roughly stated as costing but about one-tenth as much as a good quality of feathers.

My said invention comprises a new product or article of manufacture composed of feathers, with which are intimately intermingled the fibers of commercial cotton, the two substances being commingled and combined in such a manner that the elastic but comparatively coarse feathers support and sustain the diffused cotton fibers, so that the mass as a whole is of the looseness and elasticity inherent in good feathers when used alone, and has at the same time the downy character due to the presence of the cotton, which latter not only supplements the elastic fibrous portions of the feathers, but covers and disguises to the touch the quill ends of the feathers, so that the latter are made less prominent, and are practically unobjectionable to the person using the bed or pillows, one or both, as the case may be.

In the manufacture of my said new product, the cotton, by picking or by treatment by any suitable machinery, is separated into a loose mass, in order that it may be uniformly distributed throughout the mass of feathers with which it is to be commingled. No definite rule can be laid down as to the exact proportions of feathers and cotton, as these may be varied within extremely wide limits; but in practice an excellent article is obtained by using equal parts, by weight, of feathers and cotton. The commingling of the two materials may be performed by hand or by any suitable machinery, the object being to have the cotton fibers, in a measure, separated from each other and loosely coherent to the feathers, so that the cotton fibers, forming, so to speak, an artificial down upon the feathers, are interposed between them.

It will be seen that each of the two materials employed modifies that of the purpose for filling the beds, &c., the character of the other, the cotton giving a downy character to the feathers, and the feathers, from their elastic nature, preventing the cotton from getting into a closely coherent and unelastic mass, as cotton invariably does when used alone or in its ordinary condition, my said new product possessing therefore properties not existing in either of the component parts thereof when used alone.

By means of my said invention I provide an article equal to an excellent quality of feathers at a cost which, as nearly as I can ascertain, is but about one-third of that of the feathers. It is, of course, to be understood that my new material aforesaid may not only be used as a filling for beds, pillows, &c., but also as a filling for "comforters," so called, and for other purposes for which feathers are ordinarily used or required.

I am aware that it has been proposed to crudely mix cotton with hair, moss, corn-husks, cork, wool, &c.; but these have been mere admixtures in which the properties of the mate-

rials used have not coacted upon each other, and in which the mixture has not been of the peculiar and advantageous character exemplified in the combination embraced in my aforesaid invention.

What I claim as my invention is—

As a new article of manufacture, the material composed of feathers and cotton combined, the cotton being commingled and diffused throughout the feathers, substantially as and for the purpose herein set forth.

RICKASON STILWELL.

Witnesses:
CHAS. H. DOXAT,
H. F. PARKER.