

United States Patent Office.

R. K. CHANDLER, OF RUTHER GLEN, VIRGINIA.

Letters Patent No. 81,981, dated September 8, 1868.

IMPROVED STOCKING-STRETCHER.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, R. K. CHANDLER, of Ruther Glen, in the county of Caroline, and State of Virginia, have invented a new and useful Device for Stretching Hosiery; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 shows the stretcher before it is applied within a stocking.

Figure 2 is a similar view of the stretcher, representing it distended and in the act of stretching a stocking.

Figure 3 is a view in detail of the adjustable toe-piece, used for adapting the stretcher for stockings or socks of different lengths.

Similar letters of reference indicate corresponding parts in the several figures.

Every person who is acquainted with the washing and drying of stockings or socks, is aware that when socks, particularly woollen ones, are washed they shrink very much, and unless great care is taken to keep them properly stretched whilst drying, they are rendered useless to the wearer in consequence of their becoming so much smaller than the size required. To obviate this objection, stockings or socks are sometimes drawn while wet over forms of the required shape and size, and in this condition dried, and sometimes stockings are frequently distended by hand whilst drying, in order to prevent them from shrinking and becoming too small for the feet of the persons they were originally designed to fit.

It is laborious, and involves a loss of much time, to draw wet stockings over forms upon which to dry them, besides which, each pair of stockings requires a pair of forms adapted in size for them, thus requiring, when such forms are employed, a number equal to the number of stockings which it is desired to wash at one time.

To obviate the difficulty and loss of time required to stretch stockings previously to drying them, the nature of my invention consists in constructing a drying-stretcher, of two or more sections, pivoted together in a suitable manner at or near the toe-parts, and provided at their opposite ends with means whereby said sections can be readily distended after a stocking has been drawn upon them, and then securely fastened in such distended condition, to allow the stocking to dry without shrinking. The invention further consists in providing a stocking-stretcher with an adjustable toe-piece, whereby the length of the foot-portion of the stretcher can be regulated to suit the length of the stocking to be stretched or prevented from stretching, as will be hereinafter explained.

To enable others skilled in the art to understand my invention, I will describe its construction and operation.

In the accompanying drawings—

A B represent two plates, which are cut of a shape corresponding to the shape it is desired to have a stocking when stretched. The plate A gives the front part of the leg and the upper part of the foot, and the plate B gives the back part of the leg, the heel, and the bottom part of the foot, as clearly shown in figs. 1 and 2.

These two plates will, when shaped as shown, and pivoted together at *a'*, form a pattern or former, which can be contracted, as shown in fig. 1, and thus readily introduced into a stocking, and then extended, as in fig. 2, so as to stretch the stocking and preserve it in proper shape whilst drying.

At C C C notches are made in the edges of the plates A B, which will leave sharp teeth that will catch into the threads of a stocking and prevent it from contracting or shrinking lengthwise, or being drawn out of place whilst drying. The upper ends of the plates A B are perforated at *d d'*, for the purpose of forming finger-holes, into which the fingers of both hands are introduced to obtain a hold upon the plates while distending them.

A hooded pawl, D, is pivoted to the plate B, so that it will receive within it the upper edges at the ends of the two plates A B, and catch into the teeth *e*, which are formed on plate A, thereby serving as a means for keeping the two plates distended, as shown in fig. 2.

The stretcher may be made of thin sheet metal, or of other suitable material, cut, stamped, or cast in proper shape, and, if desirable, it may be made of wood or of cast iron.

If it is desired to adapt a single stretcher to serve for stockings or socks of different length, an adjustable toe-plate or piece, C, may be added, as shown in the drawings. This plate is properly shaped, and introduced between the toe-portions of the plates A B. It is held in place by means of two studs, *a a'*, which pass through oblong holes made at proper distances apart through this plate C, as shown in fig. 3. The holes *b b* are T-shaped, and all of them lead into an oblong slot, *g*, which latter allow the said toe-plate to be adjusted end-wise when-brought in line with the two studs *a a'*.

While I prefer to adopt the adjustable toe-plate for lengthening or shortening the foot of the stretcher, I do not confine my invention to its use.

The method of using the stretcher is simply to loosen the pawl D and contract the sections A B, as shown in fig. 1, in which condition a stocking, while wet, is drawn over it, and properly adjusted in place. The upper exposed ends of the plates A B are then grasped, as described, and drawn apart, during which operation the pawl D is pressed down upon its notched edge so as to catch and arrest the plates at the desired point of distension. When the stocking is dry, the pawl D is disengaged from its teeth, which will allow the plates A B to be contracted and readily removed from the stocking. The most important feature of my improvement is that the stockings can be stretched by the plates A B after they are introduced into them, thereby avoiding the labor and loss of time required to stretch a wet stocking in the act of drawing it upon a form.

Having described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. Constructing a stocking-stretcher, with the hinged sections A B, and the catching-device D arranged at the upper side of the sections, in such a manner that the stretcher is expansible after the stocking has been drawn upon it, substantially as described.
2. Providing for lengthening or shortening the foot-portion of a stocking-stretcher, by means of a longitudinally-adjustable toe-section, C, substantially as described.
3. Forming notches or serrations, C, upon the edges of a stocking-stretcher, substantially in the manner and for the purposes described.

Witnesses:

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R. K. CHANDLER.