

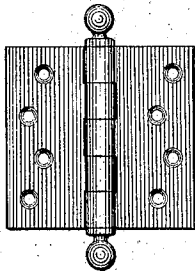
941,499.

Patented Nov. 30, 1909.

158

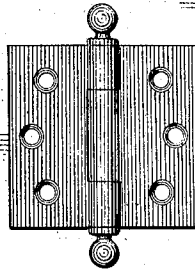
Catalog, Hardware Co.

BALL TIPPED, LOOSE PIN, WROUGHT STEEL BUTTS



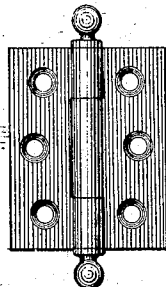
STANDARD

LIGHT (239) PLANISHED FINISHES,



LIGHT,

*For Cupboard, Wardrobe
and other light doors.*



LIGHT NARROW,

*For Cupboard, Wardrobe
and other light doors.*

SIZE OPEN, IN	2x2	2½x2½	3x3
No 158 D - Plain Bronze Finish (A) Per Dozen Pairs			
No 158 E - Old Copper Finish (D2) Per Dozen Pairs			
No 158 F - Standard Old Copper Finish (SD2) Per Dozen Pairs			
No 158 H - Lemon Brass Finish (F) Per Dozen Pairs			
No 158 K - Old Brass Finish (F4) Per Dozen Pairs			
No 158 L - Standard Old Brass Finish (SF4) Per Dozen Pairs			
Sizes In.	2x2	2½x2½	3x3
Weight per Dozen Pairs, Lbs.			

WITNESSES:

Jno. F. Oberlin
E. W. Saywell

INVENTOR:

Richard T. Close
by his attorney
J. D. Gay

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

RICHARD T. CLOSE, OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA.

SYSTEM OF CATALOGUING.

941,499.

Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Nov. 30, 1909.

Application filed July 21, 1906. Serial No. 327,133.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, RICHARD T. CLOSE, a citizen of the United States, resident of Duluth, county of St. Louis, and State of Minnesota, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Systems of Cataloguing, of which the following is a specification, the principle of the invention being herein explained and the best mode in which I have contemplated applying that principle, so as to distinguish it from other inventions.

My invention relates to improvements in systems of cataloguing, particularly in systems of cataloguing articles of merchandise for the use of salesmen and buyers, manufacturers and users.

The object of the invention is to provide a system for designating articles of merchandise that will be self-indexing, that will be capable of indefinite expansion at any point, and that will present various other advantageous features to be later expatiated upon.

Said invention consists of means herein-after fully described and specifically set forth in the claims.

The annexed drawing and the following description set forth in detail certain means embodying the invention, such disclosed means constituting but one of various forms in which the principle of the invention may be used.

In said annexed drawings:—the figure represents a page of the catalogue as it would be arranged to list certain articles of hardware, the list as shown being only partly filled in.

In order to bring forth clearly the nature of my present invention, I propose to first of all indicate briefly several of the more common methods of cataloguing goods that up to this time have prevailed in large mercantile undertakings such as department stores, wholesale hardware firms, general mail order houses, and the like.

The objects sought in any such system are obviously to render easy the finding of the illustration, description and price list of any desired article when given its number; to provide a different number or designation for absolutely every article, whereby confusion of one another is prevented; and to avoid as far as possible the use of descriptive words in connection with the number of an article since words are apt to be insuffi-

ciently and incorrectly written, not properly read, and wrongly understood.

The simplest method of cataloguing is perhaps the consecutive numbering system, in which successive numbers are given to successive articles from 1 up to 10,000 or whatever the total may be. This method, however, does not permit the expansion that ordinarily takes place in lines, without destroying the straight continuity of numbers. Thus when new goods have to be inserted they must either be designated by mixed numbers as 4999-1/4, 1/8 or 1/16, depending upon the number of articles, or else the alphabet must be called in play by calling successive insertions after 4999, 4999 A, 4999 B, 4999 C, etc. Still another way to get around the difficulty would be to extend the number at the point where the expansion was needed, thus 4999-1, 4999-2, 4999-3, etc. When the foregoing means, singly or combined, have been exhausted it frequently becomes necessary to add a distinguishing word to set apart different finishes, sizes, or grades of otherwise identical articles.

It can be readily seen that where the total list of articles is great the numbers will become unduly large; hence where, in the handling of the goods, separate departments have been organized, the expedient has been utilized of employing a separate consecutive series of numbers, such as has been described, for each department, the particular department being indicated by a prefixed letter. This still further adds to the complexity of the system, and combinations such as No. 0273×5331×5332-1/4×A 20, Queen Anne designs are not unusual where it is desired to indicate definitely the article wanted, its size, finish, quality and design.

To avoid the use of fractions, literal suffixes and the like, it has been customary to allot within each consecutive series of numbers departmental or otherwise, all the numbers between certain limits, *e. g.* 1 to 500, to one line of goods, and all between certain other limits, *e. g.* 500 to 750, to another line of goods, there being in each instance more numbers available than articles of merchandise. The gaps thus left can then be used as occasion arises, to furnish whole numbers for the designation of additional articles when revision of the catalogue becomes necessary. Obviously the difficulty with this arrangement is that the gaps must be left

at indefinite places, inasmuch as what the new articles will be, for which room will have to be made, is a matter of entire uncertainty, being largely dependent upon the exigencies of supply and demand.

The final and most serious of the faults to be here enumerated against the consecutive numbering system, even in its simple and unmodified form, is the fact that it is not self-indexing. In other words, having a given sample or number in hand, it would require a prodigious memory and long familiarity with the stock to enable a clerk to recall the exact page of the price list or catalogue on which the description and price of the article may be found. The only escape is to turn to the index, from which the approximate page can be determined,—provided the index be carefully constructed,—and then by more or less leafing over of pages the number and article may be located. Every book in use in a warehouse will prove by its dilapidated index how true the above portrayal of conditions is.

The manner in which I propose to eliminate the major portion of the foregoing difficulties may be readily explained, reference being had, for the sake of illustration, to the accompanying drawing. In my system of cataloguing, the articles take as part of their designation that of the page on which they are listed, the individual articles of each list being distinguished among themselves by the addition of a further arbitrary character of such page designation. Since the successive pages of a book are universally designated by consecutive numbers, usually expressed in Arabic numerals, a number will accordingly form a part of the designation of each article. The distinguishing character will preferably be a letter of the alphabet suffixed to the common page number. Thus just as the number will denote the page on which the article is to be found, so the literal suffix will indicate in what part of the list shown on that page the particular article is described. Hence, on the assumption that the number of the page shown in the figure of the drawing is 158 every one of the articles, which are in this case ball tipped, loose pin, wrought steel butts, appearing on that page bears as a part of its designation No. 158. As usual, an illustration of each style or form of butt is given, accompanying each of which is a list giving the price of each of the several finishes and sizes of such style or form. In this particular instance, it has been convenient to show three different styles, together with the accompanying lists on page 158, namely the standard, light, and light narrow. The list has been actually illustrated in connection with the second of these only, since a single list will serve amply for the purposes of this description. It being

desired to give each finish of each butt a separate designation, and there being three finishes of the standard style to be listed, the first of the light style will be given No. 158 D as shown. The following ones are No. 158 E, No. 158 F, No. 158 H, No. 158 K and No. 158 L. The first of the series following, *i. e.* of light narrow butts would be given the number of the page and the next succeeding letter of the alphabet, or No. 158 M. Ordinarily I should dispense with the use of letters G, I, J, O, Q, U, Y and Z as being either too much like figures or else difficult to write intelligibly. Nor will there be need, as a rule, to employ more than twenty such distinguishing characters; in fact the usual limit of articles on a page requiring separate designations is nearer ten than twenty. Should, however, the number of items on a page be in excess of the number of letters thus available, such letters may be doubled up, as No. 158 AA, No. 158 BB, or even tripled, as No. 158 AAA, No. 158 BBB. Or, instead of doubling or tripling the letters, it may be found simpler in the case of an excessive number of items to have each letter followed by a figure, from 1 to 9, as No. 158 A1, No. 158 A2, etc. Thus suppose it were considered advisable to give a separate designation to each size in each of the finishes of light butts listed on the sample page shown in the figure, instead to merely the separate finishes, the list might be arranged as follows:—

LIGHT (289) PLANISHED FINISHES.

Plain Bronze Finish (A).

No. 158 D	—size open,	2x2 in.	
No. 158 DD	— “ “	2½x2½ in.	105
No. 158 DDD	— “ “	3x3 in.	

Old Copper Finish (D²).

No. 158 E	—size open,	2x2 in.	
No. 158 EE	— “ “	2½x2½ in.	110
No. 158 EEE	— “ “	3x3 in.	
Etc.		Etc.	

Or, following the second suggestion as to extending the system of designation the following appearance would be presented:—

LIGHT (289) PLANISHED FINISHES.

Plain Bronze Finish (A).

No. 158 D1	—size open,	2x2 in.	
No. 158 D2	— “ “	2½x2½ in.	
No. 158 D3	— “ “	3x3 in.	

Old Copper Finish (D²).

No. 158 E1	—size open,	2x2 in.	
No. 158 E2	— “ “	2½x2½ in.	
No. 158 E3	— “ “	3x3 in.	
Etc.		Etc.	

Another way of using the doubled and tripled letter series for distinguishing characters would be to run through the complete alphabet singly first, then doubly, etc., instead of grouping the single, double, and triple letters together as first shown above.

It is also understood, of course, that the distinguishing characters may be other than letters or combinations of letters with figures, such as I have just described. Any other arbitrary symbol, as asterisks or the like, might be employed equally well so far as effecting a distinction between the articles on a given page is concerned; clearly, however, letters of the alphabet have an advantage in that they are ordinarily sufficiently numerous for the requirements of any page, and furthermore they have a well understood and familiar sequence that is of decided use in indicating at a glance where, on a page, to look for the object sought. While it is a matter of convenience to have the arbitrary character, whatever it is, follow the page number, it may be employed as a prefix just as well as a suffix, if found for any reason desirable.

Having thus set forth the nature of my improved system it remains to briefly describe the manner of its use and incidentally to indicate wherein it is adapted to successfully fulfil the objects previously delineated. Under my system all the goods described in a circular, price list, or catalogue would be numbered in the way described and illustrated in one practical form in the figure. The goods themselves being arranged, as almost always is the case, in the order of their value, size, or description, everything in the catalogue will follow a similar order. Hence, if a clerk has a call for No. 158 H,—it is not necessary to say Light butts or even Butts,—he merely turns to page 158 of his catalogue and runs down the list thereon appearing to the given letter. To find the stock on his shelves will then be an easy matter for as stated the same arrangement maintains here and by means of numbered placards or other prominent signs the goods listed on any one page are here similarly set apart. A green hand can thus get out goods as fast as the man who now spends years learning his stock arrangement and then is frequently nonplussed with new or unfamiliar goods. If No. 158 H is out the clerk knows that No. 158 F or No. 158 K are the next closest in description and value, all without the turning of a leaf or a reference to the index. Orders by wire are much simplified, since quantity and catalogue number will in most instances make such orders perfectly definite. Not only are telegraph codes

and separate numerical indices thus done away with, but the expense of telegraphing and the likelihood of error in transmission is reduced to a minimum.

A self indexing system of cataloguing, such as mine, will be appreciated and effect a great saving of time not only for selling agent and buyer but also for price clerk, checker, claim agent, invoice examiner and indeed everyone about a firm who has occasion to find the goods wanted, to verify quotations, and to detect errors in pricing and shipments. Not only is this system self indexing but it presents room for indefinite possibility of expansion at any point in any list of the catalogue without disturbing the remaining lists. Thus to add in a revised edition of the catalogue page shown one or two additional finishes of light butts it will be merely necessary to utilize any one of the methods of extension previously described or an entirely new arbitrary character to make the insert wherever desired; and if, as will usually be the case, there are letters in excess of the original requirement, one or more of these can be used. It is accordingly seen that the system in hand fulfils to a highly satisfactory degree all the objects the attainment of which has been previously noted as being desirable.

Having thus described my invention, that which I particularly point out and distinctly claim is:

1. A catalogue for merchandise or the like comprising a book made up of pages each bearing a numerical designation, and a list of articles of merchandise, each of said articles bearing the numerical designation of the page on which the list appears, and an additional arbitrary character.

2. A catalogue for merchandise or the like comprising a book made up of pages each bearing a numerical designation, and a list of articles of merchandise, each article of said list bearing the numerical designation of the page on which the list appears, and a suffix consisting of a letter of the alphabet.

3. A catalogue for merchandise or the like, comprising a book made up of consecutively numbered pages, each of said pages bearing a list of articles of merchandise, each article of said list bearing the numerical designation of the page upon which the list appears, and a supplemental designation consisting of a letter of the alphabet, successive letters being applied to successive articles in the list.

Signed by me, this 16th day of July, 1906.

RICHARD T. CLOSE.

Attested by—

F. M. COMSTOCK,
E. A. MOYER.