No. 635,251. Patented Oct. 17, 1899.

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PUZLLE.

(No Model.) (Application filed Nov. 18, 1897.)

FIG. 1.

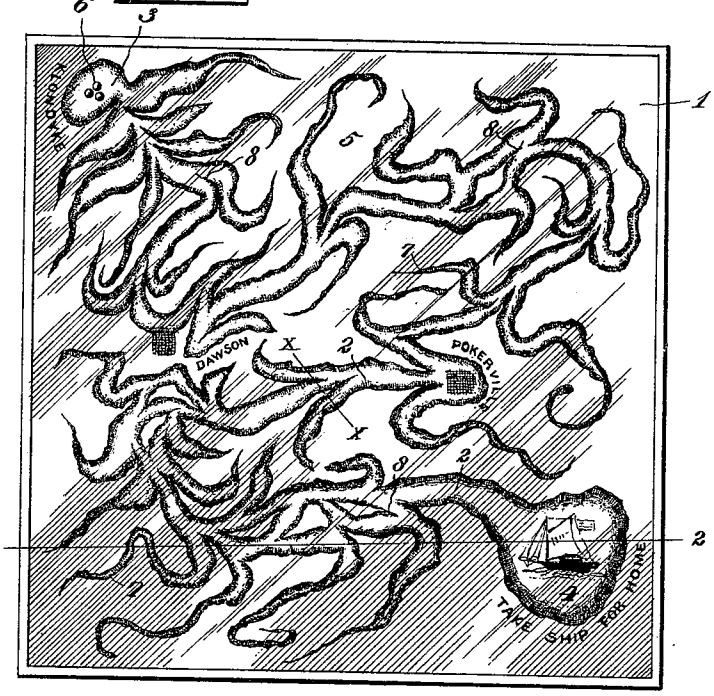


FIG. 4.



FIG. 3.

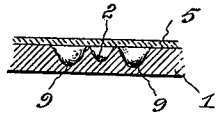
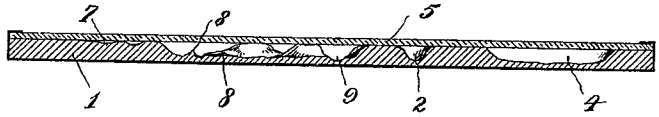


FIG. 2.



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Witnesses
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PUZZLE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 635,251, dated October 17, 1899.

Application filed November 18, 1897. Serial No. 658,937. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, W FORREST HOMMAN, a citizen of the United States, residing at Colorado Springs, in the county of El Paso and State of Colorado, have invented a new and useful Puzzle, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to puzzle-game apparatus of the class comprising a base formed with facial depressions representing terminal stations of a journey and a tortuous and sinuous groove connecting the terminal stations and by-passages or grooves leading from the main groove and travelers caused to travel in the path by proper manipulation and tilting of the base in various directions.

The purpose of this invention is to interpose obstacles in the path of the traveler, so as to easily divert it from the main path into the side paths, which are closed at their remote ends, whereby it is necessary for the traveler to retrace the path in order to resume the journey. The bed or bottom of the paths is rounded and the walls slope upwardly, whereby deflecting-ribs are formed at the intersection of the walls of the side passages with the main path or channel, said deflecting-ribs extending into and obstructing the main path to such an extent as to render exceedingly difficult the passage of the traveler thereby. The progress of the traveler is further impeded by having the walls of the path jagged and irregularly spaced, thereby increasing or adding to the tendency of the traveler to depart from the center of the path and enter the side passages. To still further retard the advancement of the traveler, the side passages enter the main path or channel at an acute angle, whereby the sharpened edges of the deflecting-ribs are presented in such a manner as to ensnare and divert the traveler into the side paths, and the latter are deepened adjacent to the channel or main passage, forming pockets from which the traveler can be dislodged only by tilting the base to a steep angle, which will impart to the traveler an initial impetus to cause it to retrace the main path a considerable distance unless the base is deftly manipulated.

A puzzle game constructed in accordance with this invention and embodying the vital features thereof is shown in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a plan view of the game apparatus. Fig. 2 is a sectional view thereof on the line 2 2 of Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is a section on the line $x\,x$ of Fig. 1. Fig. 4 is a fragmentary plan view showing more clearly the relative disposition of the deflecting-ribs.

Similar numerals of reference indicate corresponding parts in all the figures of the drawings.

The body portion of the puzzle apparatus consists of a base or board 1, provided with a channel, groove, passage, or other depressed path 2, arranged in a tortuous, sinuous, or irregular line connecting an initial point consisting of a basin or depression 3 with a destination-point consisting of a basin or depression 4, the upper face of the base or board being provided with a transparent cover 5, of glass or its equivalent, by which the path and terminal depressions are closed to prevent the escape of travelers or movable objects 6, consisting of balls, shot, or the equivalent thereof. Communicating with the channel 2, main continuous groove, or path are provided a series of blind channels, grooves, or paths 7, which converge or incline toward the initial point of the main path or in the direction in which said main path must be traversed in order to reach said initial point, with the object that the difficulty in traversing the main path from the initial toward the destination point will be increased, while movement of the objects in the opposite direction is facilitated. Furthermore, the walls of the blind grooves or paths are extended into the main path to form deflecting fins or ribs 8, which project upwardly from the floor of the main path and have a tendency to turn the objects out of the main path and into the blind passages. A simple embodiment of this construction is illustrated in the drawing, wherein the channel or main groove and blind paths or passages consist of grooves which are cross-sectionally round or concaved and have their walls sloping upwardly, and it is obvious that at each point of intersection

of a blind groove with the main groove the acute angle formed by the contiguous sides or walls of the main and blind paths will form a V-shaped rib 8, reduced gradually to a point and terminating approximately at the center of the width of the main path. Inasmuch as all of these tapered ribs or fins 8 incline in a common direction with relation to the main path—namely, toward the initial or starting point of said main path—the principal difficulty in causing the objects to traverse the main path will be due to the fact that the travelers or objects must be so rolled as to avoid these ribs or fins and continue in the main path rather than pass into one of the blind paths. Obviously if one of the plurality of objects should pass into the blind passage and the board should be inclined in the opposite direction to cause it to return to the main path those objects which have not entered said blind path will immediately and quickly traverse the main path in the opposite direction, and thus necessitate a repetition of a good portion of the effort previously required to bring the objects to the point at which said deflected object left the main path.

It will be evident upon inspection of Fig. 1 that certain of the branches or side passages are disposed in pairs, the inlet ends, respectively, of which are in line at opposite sides of the main channel, whereby when a sphere reaches a point opposite said inlet ends the tendency of the sphere will be to roll into each of the branches, and to prevent this unusual skill will be required.

The bed of the blind or side passages is deepened adjacent to the main channel, forming a pocket 9, in which the traveler or movable object lodges, requiring the tilting of the base to a great angle in order to bring the traveler back into the main path, and the tilting of the base to this relatively steep angle is such as to cause the traveler to move quickly when started and carry it back along the main path a considerable distance unless prevented by a quick and deft manipulation of the base. The walls of the channel and blind passages are jagged and irregularly spaced, whereby the difficulty of keeping the traveler in the central line of the channel is increased, and the bed of the channel is of unequal depth.

Obviously the surface of the base or board may be inscribed to represent natural objects—such as mountains, rivers, and the like—and may also be inscribed to represent cities or other points of geographical destination, as indicated in the drawings, wherein the initial point is marked "Klondyke," while the destination-point is marked to indicate a harbor of departure, intermediate points being marked to represent cities *en route* from one terminal point to the other.

It is obvious that various changes in the form, proportion, and the minor details of construction may be resorted to without departing from the spirit or sacrificing any of the advantages of this invention.

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed is—

A puzzle game comprising a base, remotely-situated depressions indicating terminal stations of a journey, a continuous tortuous channel connecting the stations and having a rounded bed of variable depth, and upwardly-sloping ragged and unequally-spaced walls, blind passages or side channels leading into the main channel at an acute angle and arranged in pairs at opposite sides respectively thereof and converging toward the initial station, and the walls of said branches or side channels being upwardly curved and the terminal portions thereof intersecting with the sloping walls of the main channel thereby forming deflecting-ribs which extend into and obstruct said main channel, and the outer ends of said branches or side channels being closed, and a movable object adapted to traverse the channel by a proper manipulation of the base and readily divertible into any one of the branches by said deflecting-ribs, substantially as described.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my own I have hereto affixed my signature in the presence of two witnesses.

W FORREST HOMMAN.

Witnesses:
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