No. 664,155. Patented Dec. 18, 1900.

T. J. HOUTMAN.

MOISTENING DEVICE.

(Application filed Mar. 8, 1900.)

(No Model.)

Fig. 1.

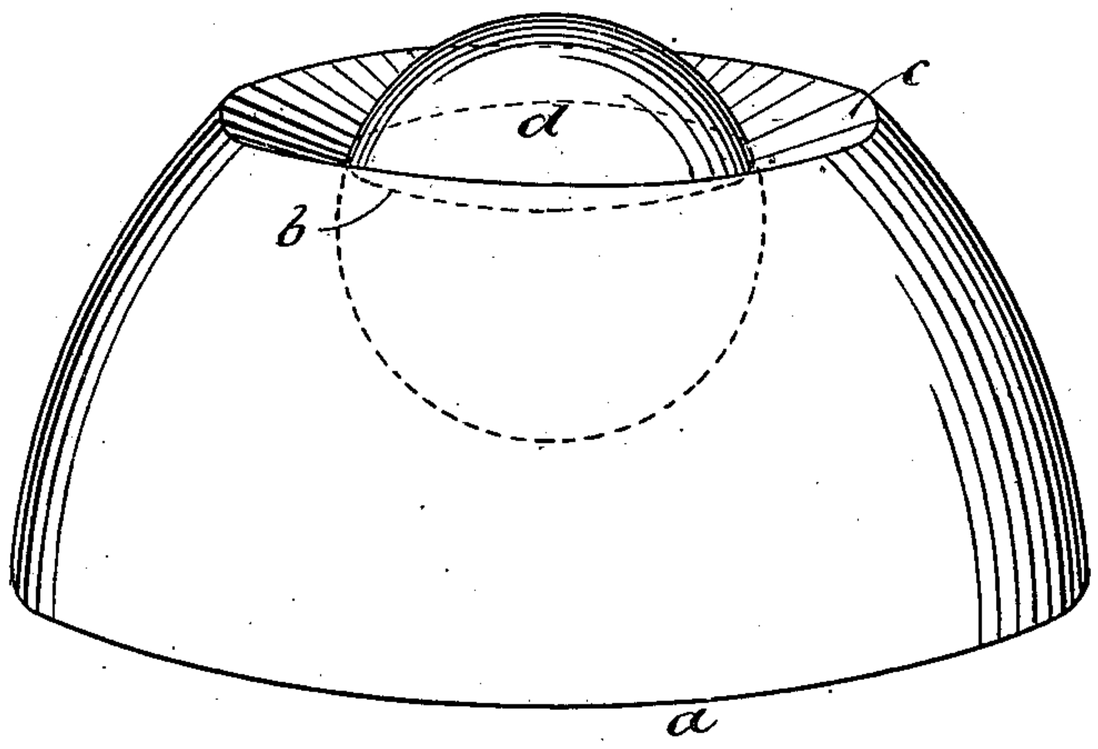


Fig. 2.

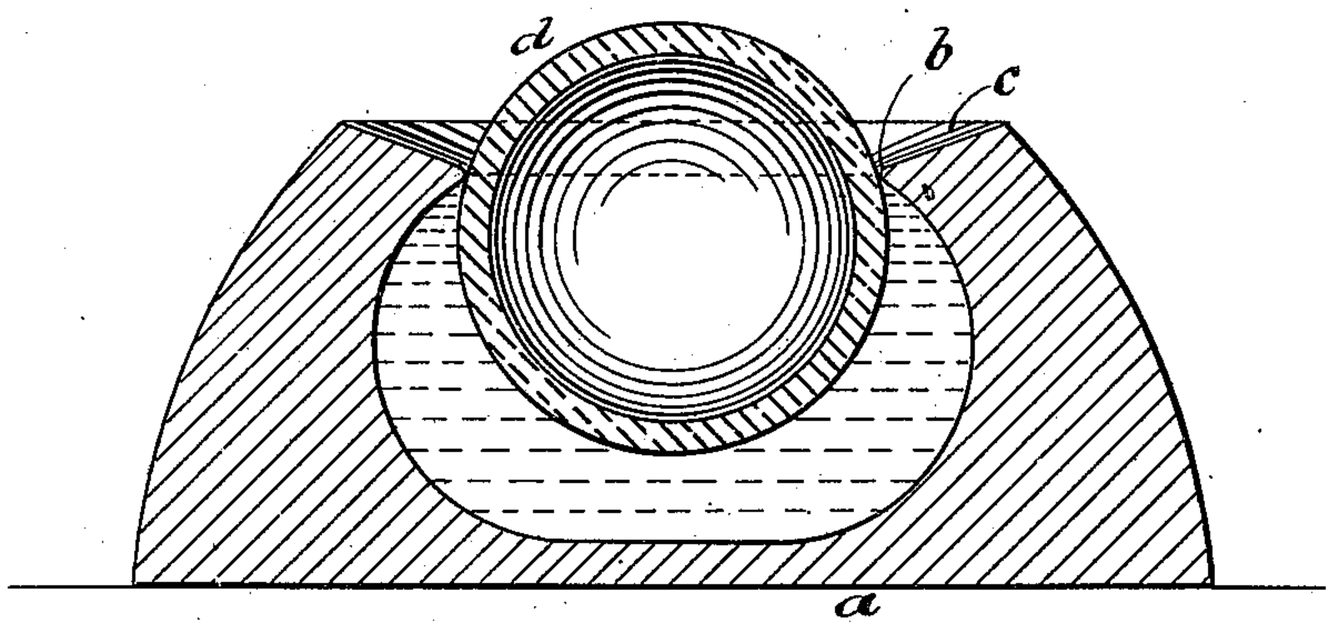
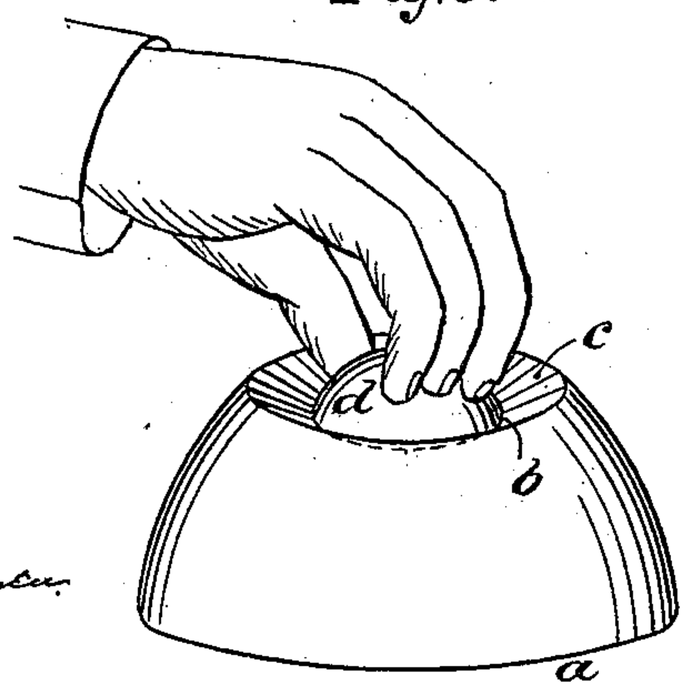


Fig. 3.



WITNESSES:

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BY

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

TJARK J. HOUTMAN, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

MOISTENING DEVICE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 664,155, dated December 18, 1900.

Application filed March 8, 1900. Serial No. 7,876. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, TJARK J. HOUTMAN, a citizen of the United States, residing at the borough of Manhattan, New York city, in the county and State of New York, have invented new and useful Improvements in Moistening Devices, of which the following is a specification.

By means of this device moistening of a stamp or of the fingers or other object can be readily effected, and the moisture or liquid in the device can be kept from evaporating, so that the device is continually ready for use.

This invention is set forth in the following specification and claims and illustrated in the annexed drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the device. Fig. 2 is a sectional view of Fig. 1. Fig. 3 shows the device in use.

A cup or dish of glass or other suitable material has the bottom *a* and the mouth *b*. The rim *c* about the mouth catches water or moisture if the latter should rise in the cup above the edge or level of mouth *b*. A ball *d* of larger diameter than mouth *b* and of floating or light material is shown in the cup. The reservoir or cup being filled or supplied with water, the ball *d* rises or floats, but cannot rise up through mouth *b*. In other words, the ball floating or pressing against mouth *b* forms a stopper to prevent the moisture in the cup evaporating.

Should it be desired to moisten a stamp, the ball or float *d* is rotated, so as to expose a moist part of its surface above mouth *b*. The stamp can be drawn over or pressed to such moist surface to be thereafter pasted in place. By rotating the ball by the fingers the latter can be moistened as required—for example, when counting bills or money—or a rag or handkerchief when used to rotate the ball can be moistened so as to wipe a slate or tablet.

The ball *d* can be made hollow and of rubber or other suitable compressible material.

Should the ball be suddenly pushed toward bottom *a*, the contents of the cup may temporarily rise above mouth *b*, in which case rim *c* prevents overflowing.

If the ball or stopper is of hollow rubber, it can be forced into the cup through the mouth of the latter, even though said ball is normally of larger diameter than the mouth. When in the cup, the ball or sphere expanding to its normal size cannot rise up through the cup-mouth, but when floating or pressing against the interior of the mouth the latter is plugged or stopped to prevent escape or evaporation of the liquid in the cup. The cup can be made of any suitable size, shape, or material and of one piece of material, or, if desired, of several pieces or in sections which can be assembled or screwed together and separated at will. A separable cup will allow such a ball—as, for example, a hollow glass or metal sphere of larger diameter than the mouth—to be placed in the cup. By having the ball simply float in the cup or not mounted on a fixed axis the ball is freely rotatable or can be turned in any direction.

By having the cup so deep that the ball floating against or closing the mouth is clear of or some distance from the bottom such ball can be rotated easily or without rubbing against the bottom.

What I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A moistening device for stamps and envelops consisting of a cup or reservoir having a mouth and an overflow-rim above the mouth, and a ball-float freely rotatable in all directions in the reservoir, said mouth and ball being of such relative size that the ball when closing the mouth will project above the top of the rim, and the cup being so shallow as compared with the diameter of the ball that the latter when touching the bottom of the cup will have its apex above the top of the rim, so that said ball is continually accessible for the contact of an object to be moistened, substantially as described.

2. A moistening device, comprising a cup or reservoir having a mouth and a ball-float freely rotatable in the reservoir, said ball being of such size that it will fit against the interior of the mouth but cannot rise out of or through the same, and the reservoir being so shallow, as compared with the diameter of the ball, that such ball when touching the bottom of the reservoir will have its top point project above the mouth, to enable a stamp or the like to be brought into contact with or moistened by such ball, substantially as described.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

TJARK J. HOUTMAN.

Witnesses:

W. C. HAUFF,

E. F. KASTENHUBER.