

310 Second Street, S.E.  
Washington 3, D.C.

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Editor  
Scientific American  
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Dear Sir:

I have three things in mind about which to write you.

First, I would like to compliment you and your staff on the excellence of the issue for August 1955. Both my wife and I read and enjoyed practically every article in it.

Second, I want to thank whoever took such prompt care of my request for a replacement of the May 1955 issue which was lost in transit by the Post Office Department.

Third, I thought you might be interested in the following extract which appears as the first paragraph of the Preface to The Golden Age of Patents: A Parody on Yankee Inventiveness by Wallace Peck, published in New York by Frederick A. Stokes and Brother in 1888.

"Patents were doubtless unknown in prehistoric times, for we have good reason to suppose that the first was not issued until the mediæval era of Gonzago the Bald, when Ivan Wayoffski, a Russian inventor, obtained a caveat on a 'nouve devyse for combyngs ye lokkes' (a plan for what is now known as parting the hair)."

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN