

**THE  
CLASSIFICATION  
OF PATENTS; PP.1-38**

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The Classification of Patents; pp.1-38 by Various

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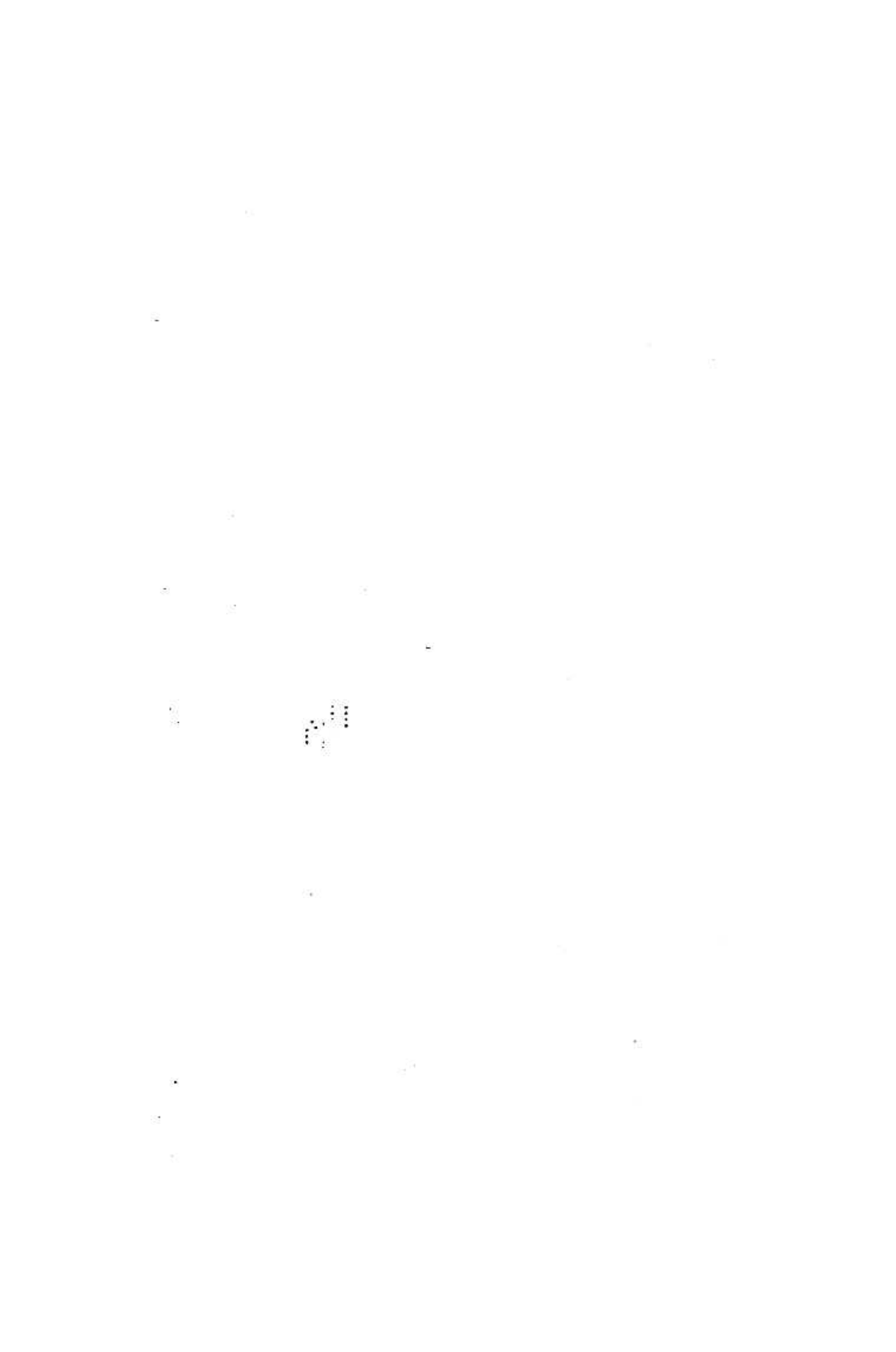
UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

# THE CLASSIFICATION OF PATENTS

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PREFATORY NOTE.

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Parts A and B of the following pages are designed to acquaint all persons using the Patent Office classification with the principles upon which the reclassification is proceeding.

Part C consists of a few tentative rules advanced with the notion of fixing classification practice within the office in certain doubtful cases.

Part D is intended to inform examiners reclassifying within examining divisions respecting the initial procedure in reforming a class.





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## THE CLASSIFICATION OF PATENTS.

### (A) INTRODUCTION.

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Classification lies at the foundation of the mental processes. Without the power of perceiving, recognizing resemblances, distinguishing differences in things, phenomena and notions, grouping them mentally according to those resemblances and differences, judgment is impossible, nor could reason be exercised in proceeding from the known to the unknown.

\* \* \* \* \*  
The facilitation and abbreviation of mental labor is at the bottom of all mental progress. The reasoning faculties of Newton were not different in qualitative character from those of a ploughman; the difference lay in the extent to which they were exerted and the number of facts which could be treated. Every thinking being generalizes more or less, but it is the depth and extent of his generalizations which distinguish the philosopher. Now it is the exertion of the classifying and generalizing powers which thus enables the intellect of man to cope in some degree with the infinite number and variety of natural phenomena and objects. (Jevons, Principles of Science.)

#### PAST CLASSIFICATIONS OF UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

As under the patent laws the people of the United States assume all the risks in granting a patent for any means of the "useful arts," a classification that will facilitate a judgment respecting the patentability of any means presented to the Patent Office is of peculiar moment. The enormous extent, diversity, and refinement of the useful arts preclude the formation of a judgment on novelty within a reasonable time, unless the necessary comparisons with known processes and instruments have been previously made along the lines that searches must follow and the results of such comparisons made available in a classification. The vast majority of available disclosures of the arts occur in patents. Hence the Patent Office classification must be adjusted in the main to the analysis, diagnosis, and orderly arrangement of the disclosures of patents.

For more than 80 years United States patents have been classified. The first published classification, promulgated in 1830, comprised 6,170 patents, divided into 16 classes. The change from a registration to an examination system in 1836 instigated a new classification in 22 classes, including 9,800 patents. The next came in 1868 with 36 classes, including about 75,000 patents. On March 1, 1872, a revised classification was adopted, comprising 145 classes, including 131,000