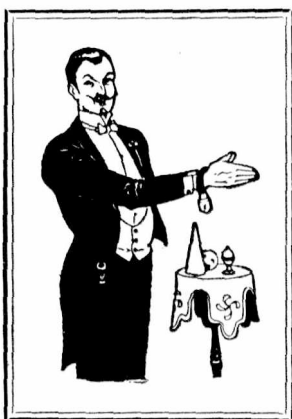


Learn How to be a  
**Handcuff King**  
And **Mystery Man**



**BAFFLING TRICKS OF MYSTERY**

Worth Ten Dollars each to anyone making  
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**JOHNSON SMITH & COMPANY**  
**DETROIT, MICHIGAN**

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# Learn How To Be A Handcuff King and Mystery Man

## Preface

The world opens its arms to the successful illusionist. Mystery is fascinating—it grips the interest, holds the spectator awed and breathless. The marvelous success of many magicians shows the world-wide popularity of performances of this kind. These successful artists tour the entire world, performing before royalty and earning enormous salaries. Their knowledge and cleverness mark them for favors from crowned heads.

These men possess no marvelous power. They know the trick, that's all. It's very simple when you know how. The object of this book is to supply the missing link—THE SECRET THAT HAS MADE THESE MEN FAMOUS. We show you just how these marvelous tricks are performed so that you, too may learn this fascinating profession as well as surprise and mystify your friends. With proper practice, there is no reason why you should not become a professional entertainer and earn a big salary.

Before studying the various tricks set forth in this book, we would like to offer a few preliminary suggestions. If you wish to become a successful entertainer as a Handcuff King, Mystery Man and Escape Artist, the first thing to bear in mind is that you must overcome self-consciousness, and to be absolutely sure of what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. While this comes natural to some, to others it is accomplished only by a reasonable amount of practice. It will enable you to overcome fear in getting up and in performing before a crowd, whether it be a gathering of your family or in front of a paid audience. As a well known teacher of magic once said, "You must develop your nerve."

Now let us give you a few DON'TS, that, if heeded, will prove of the greatest benefit to you in giving your performance.

Don't ever repeat a trick, even at the request of your audience. This is a fatal error that embryo magicians often make. Don't you do it.

Don't ever expose a trick. People will oftentimes use all their influence to get you to show them how a trick was performed or how an escape was effected, but just as sure as day follows night, once you let them into the secret your work will lose all its mystery. It may sometimes be a temptation to tell the secret of your tricks, but take our word for it, you will profit by not doing so. There is only one thing that holds people's attention and interest and that is the mystery that surrounds the trick.

Don't tell what is coming. As a general rule, it is not wise or safe to advise your audience of what is going to happen. It is perfectly natural and reasonable to ask for a committee to come up on the stage; to explain to them that you are going to do some important feat and that you want them to watch very closely to satisfy themselves that everything is strictly on the up and up.

At all times, please remember that you are going to entertain, so if, at times, things do not go just as you would like them to, pray do not lose your nerve. For a magician or an escape artist that would, indeed, be fatal. Convince yourself that you are the master magician and that you must be a real dictator at all times. Then the audience will do as you direct them to and your task will be greatly simplified.

Perhaps one of the most important things in giving an entertainment is to see that your motions are natural. This requires practice. Every move should be free and without any special flourishes. You can call the attention of your audience to some particular thing when in reality you are

doing something else at that very moment. This, in magic, is known as "misdirection" and is employed by most successful magicians. Remember, it is not, as many suppose, "the quickness of the hand that deceives the eye;" it is the knack of misdirecting the attention of your audience, when you wish to do something, that has considerable bearing upon the trick.

Once more let us impress upon you that nerve is the most essential thing in giving a good evening's performance. If for any reason you spoil a trick, or if the committee that you might happen to have on the stage does not follow your directions, do not get nervous. Let no one get the idea that they are getting the best of you. Continue to smile as though you were absolutely sure of yourself and you will find that it is your audience or committee that is losing its nerve and not you. Always keep well in mind that the audience does not know one-half as much about the trick as you do, and if anything does happen, make a joke of it. If you carry out this plan, the chances are that they will think that it was an intentional part of the performance.

When performing escape or rope-tying tricks, it is essential, in most cases, to have a committee representing the audience to come upon the stage to see that there is no fake and to see that you are properly tied or handcuffed, as the case may be. In such cases, especially in rope-tying tricks, to find out if there are any sailors or expert knot-tiers in the audience, so that you may be prepared for any difficult situation. Let them assist you in some of your rope-tying feats which are absolutely certain of success, regardless of whom the committee may be, and which do not need any particular manipulation. The idea prevails among many people that a rope tied about the wrist can be slipped down over the hand. It is a good plan to let your committee try to do this themselves, to prove that this is a silly and erroneous idea. Be original. One of the most important things to bear in mind is originality. It is absolutely necessary if you are going to be a real adept in this kind of work to know everything there is about escape tricks, rope-tying, etc., and the most essential thing about it is the fundamentals. If you do not know the ordinary knots, you are not apt to be much of a success as a rope-tying expert. Many of the professional performers in magic today do the things they have seen some one else do, so it is seldom indeed that you see an absolutely original trick. The publishers of this book publish a little book entitled "USEFUL KNOTS, HITCHES AND SPLICES" that can be bought for 10 cents, and with a fundamental knowledge of rope-tying and knots as given therein, it should help you immeasurably in performing various escape tricks and there is no reason why you should not be able to originate many feats of your own and which, naturally, you will take a great delight in performing. People will recognize that you are doing things they have never seen before. Of course, it is always well to duplicate some of the feats of other magicians, but it is also equally important to have a few of your own up your sleeve. This can be accomplished by developing your imagination and ingenuity and training your thoughts along lines that are original.

Some magicians delight to have boys to assist them in a performance but we should like to add a word of caution to amateur performers. It is a very difficult matter to deceive young children with tricks of this nature, so if you are not **QUITE** sure of your powers, we advise you not to ask young boys to come up on the stage. Besides, at times they are apt to be unruly and distract attention and perhaps spoil the effect of your trick completely.

Wishing you the very best of luck and success in your tricks,

JOHNSON SMITH & COMPANY

# A Great Handcuff Trick



This wonderful trick is now exposed for the first time. Through it you can defy the police or anybody to confine you in their own handcuffs. A little secret manipulation, simple and easy and you are free. No doubt you have marveled at this

wonderful trick.

No confederates or fake handcuffs used, but the regular kind such as are in common use by the police everywhere. It's easy. The secret is all you need.

## The Secret

For a man fettered with handcuffs, leg irons and chains to free himself in less time than was taken to fasten him has long been so mystifying a performance that many people have acquired the impression that it bordered on the supernatural. The secret is, however, like many of the best tricks ever invented, in reality a surprisingly simple one. In the first place, it must be remembered that handcuffs such as used by the police are constructed with spring locks, which are fastened or released by means of a key, or some article which answers the same purpose, which pulls back the spring. Without the aid of such a key, or some article that answers the same purpose, it is impossible for any human being to free himself from the regular handcuffs employed by the police. And here lies the whole secret. The performer has a key, or rather several keys. All his ingenuity is exercised in concealing these about his person,

or inside the cabinet into which he retires to release himself, after being to all appearance, helplessly secured. Some of these keys are concealed in the framework of the cabinet, which is generally constructed of piping, having additional pieces which appear to be essential portions of the framework, but which in reality are only intended to hold the keys. Other keys the performer keeps disposed about his person in sundry small pockets especially made for the purpose and so arranged that he is able to place his hands upon some one or other of them in whatever position he may be. The best places for concealment are, first, the pocket between the knees, to permit the key to be reached when performer is in a crouched position; secondly, a pocket about six inches up inside the leg of the trousers; thirdly, a key carried in the hip-pocket for use when pinioned with the arms behind the back; and, finally, a small pocket inside the top of the waistcoat, or wherever it may be found convenient.

A performer is now fastened with six pairs of handcuffs in such a position that it seems impossible to free himself, but by putting his hands over his head and down his coat collar he has caught hold of a silk handkerchief thrust into the breast of his waist coat, to which the key is attached. After the performer has taken the handcuffs off he must lock them up again to avoid detection.

When placed in an awkward position, a piece of violin string is made into a loop and kept inside the cabinet. When it is impossible to draw the key and with it the lock spring with

the fingers, the loop is placed over the key, the heel of the boot is placed in the other end of the loop and lock is easily drawn back.

After one pair has been opened the others follow as an easy matter.

If the key falls on the floor the performer rolls over and picks it up, the rattle of the handcuffs hiding the sound of the fallen key; his next movement is to free his hands from his feet, which he does in the manner already described. The key for this position can be obtained from the leg of the trousers. It should be understood that an expert, when about to give a performance, inquires what position it is intended to place him. He then causes, as an introduction, a few pairs of his own handcuffs to be placed on his wrists, and while freeing himself from these in his cabinet, he arranges his keys to suit the position in which he will next be placed. Other implements besides are also used. A piece of bent wire is often quite sufficient.

Most experts are also conjurers and palm the key, especially in the case of a nude test, when they are stripped and locked up in a cell, or they make use of concealing key, which is made telescopic, the handle being constructed to close down the side of the key, and the whole being

fixed under the toes by a piece of shoemakers' wax and detached when inside the cell.

Although when explained it seems very easy to accomplish, it must be understood that it is necessary for a successful performer to possess hard, strong wrists and a great deal of finger strength, and to be a man of some resource. It is almost impossible for any person to fasten an expert securely unless he himself understands the method of escape, and even then he may not be successful.

Handcuffs are sometimes brought to fetter the performer with the lock plugged or otherwise tampered with, but it is the performer's own fault if he is trapped.

Always demand an opportunity of inspecting the handcuffs. Test them out in private to be sure that everything will work smoothly. Practice makes perfect, so it is well to experiment with a number of different handcuffs, which can usually be borrowed without trouble.

Duplicate keys for all standard handcuffs and picks for the simpler ones can be had from leading sporting goods dealers, locksmiths, gunsmiths and others handling this type of merchandise.

## No. 2

## Escape From A Safe Or Vault



The most thrilling mystery ever performed. The audience holds its breath with awe while the performer makes his escape. Far superior to the old jail escape. No confederates or expense. The performer is handcuffed and placed in a safe or vault locked by any one. The escape is made quickly and easily and to the extreme surprise of every one.

**The Secret**

This is undoubtedly the least known of all escapes. It is, of course, designed for free advertising and it always fills the bill. The secret is this: It is but little known (even to the owners) that on all vault doors or large safes, on the inside is a steel plate that can be removed by simply taking out the screws that hold the plate. This is well known, however, to people that make a specialty of repairing safes.

Enter any office, bank or newspaper office that has a vault or large safe, get inside and have it locked, and have the committee leave the room, and to be sure there are no "prowlers" around have the front of the safe covered with a large sheet. Once you are inside take out your electric flashlight and a screw-driver (a good one) and unscrew the plate, take it off and turn the combination until the tumblers drop into place, draw back the bolts and open the door, screw the plate back on again, shut the door and turn the combination again from the outside and all can be examined.

It is well to carry a small wrench

with you and a small can of oil, in case the screws stick, which you will very seldom find to be the case. Of course, before making this escape, it is always well for you to see the vault and examine the door (privately), and then you will know just what you are up against.

Always experiment in private with the vault from which you are to escape. It is well to loosen the screws in advance, but only very slightly, so that they will not be noticed. Remember, you must work fast, as, although a large vault or safe is comparatively free from danger, the ventilation is not of the best. It is advisable to experiment by shutting yourself in a vault, then time yourself to see how long you can remain there without feeling the lack of ventilation. Then should you find a combination which might prove troublesome, ask the committee to open the safe in five or ten minutes (whatever length of time you find it comfortable), should your skill fail you.

Never make light of the vault from which you are to escape. Always shake your head dubiously and say: "That's about the toughest case I've ever been up against." Spectators enjoy a performer's discomfiture and will be all the more impressed with the speed and ease of your liberation.

**WARNING!**—Always be sure of yourself. If you feel that you cannot make the escape, do not attempt it. Plead an excuse and then practice further until you are more expert. Always give yourself the benefit of the doubt. Don't take chances—at least, not at the start.

## No. 3

## The Vanishing Assistant



Here is a mystery with a "punch." Attendants bring out a step-ladder. The assistant ascends to the top and sits upon the top rung. He holds in front of him a large parasol, painted to resemble a target. You fire at the target, which falls to the floor. Presto! The assistant has vanished. Is nowhere to be found. A hair-raising mystery that makes them all sit up and take notice. Hear that startled "Oh!" of amazement when they see that the assistant has vanished. You can fool them all with this mystery.

**Effect**

A stepladder is brought out by assistants and placed upright. A small lady ascends to top of ladder, sitting thereon, and holds in front of her a parasol, painted in imitation of a target. This the performer fires at, when target falls to floor, little lady having vanished, the assistants remove stepladder.

**The Secret**

The secret of this pretty illusion lies in the stepladder. The back of the stepladder is covered with the same cloth as that which is hung in the back of the stage. Now at a short distance a person is looking through the rungs of the ladder; it will appear as though he were looking through at the back curtain. Now, when a person stands behind the ladder (prepared as above), he is concealed. After tacking the cloth on the back of the ladder, a small shelf should be attached to the back of the ladder about a foot from the floor.

When the ladder is thus prepared, assistants bring the stepladder out on the stage and performer introduces the little lady, who ascends the stepladder and opens a large Japanese parasol and holds it in front of her. The parasol must be large; in fact, large enough to conceal the lady when she is standing. A target may be painted on the parasol if desired. As soon as the little lady gets to the top of the ladder and sits down, she crawls around in back of the ladder and stands on the shelf, the screen on back of the ladder concealing her; she holds the handle of the parasol, and at the report of the pistol she releases her hold on the parasol and it drops to the floor, and the little lady has vanished. The parasol will effectively conceal the movements of the lady when she is crawling behind the ladder. If the performer does not wish to carry a curtain for this illusion, it can be worked the same as one well known Illusionist does it, viz: In center door of parlor scene (which can be found in every theater) he hangs a strip of black cloth and tacks a piece of the same cloth behind the stepladder; the ladder is placed directly in front of the black cloth and makes a fine illusion. After the little lady has disappeared, the assistants can close up the ladder and carry it away, and with it the little lady, or she can crawl behind and make her exit through a slot in the curtain.

Never attempt any trick or illusion without considerable practice. Practice makes perfect, and the charm lies in the ease and lack of effort on the part of the performer.



## No. 4

## The Crack Marksman



Of course you've seen the wonderful marksman or sharpshooter. How skillfully he shoots glass balls, lumps of sugar off the assistant's head, puts out lighted candles or disrobes an assistant by rapid-fire shooting, making a dozen bull's eyes in less than that many seconds. There is not one in a thousand who knows that this act is "faked" or a trick. It is simple and can be accomplished by any one who has the least accuracy of eye. This is a complete act in itself, an act for which huge salaries are being paid. Here is the secret, which can be learned in a few minutes' time.

## The Secret

To begin with you require a black background and supply of balloons such as street venders sell. These are painted black and inflated to about six inches in diameter. They are affixed to the background and small white spots one inch in diameter are painted on them. From a short distance the outlines of the balloons are invisible and you have a target of some thirty inches to fire at. A repeating rifle is used and it is an easy matter to make ten targets in as many seconds. A shot anywhere would puncture one of the balloons, and with its instantaneous collapse the white target would disappear. Where lighted candles are extinguished with a rifle, candles are placed in compartments or open boxes on a background. The whole is painted

black to mask the partitions in the boxes. At the back of each box is placed a loosely hung steel plate, suspended only by the top and free to swing slightly. Before this is placed the lighted candle and the shooting begins. It should be remarked that these plates are six inches square and consequently give an area of thirty inches to shoot at. When a bullet strikes a plate anywhere the concussion of the air caused by the quick movement of the plate in response to the impact of the bullet blows out the candle instantly, and the trick is accomplished. The old familiar trick of shooting glass balls, cracking eggs, etc., thrown in the air is believed to be done with a rifle. It usually is, but the rifle carries no solid shot, but a special cartridge filled with a good charge of bird shot, which scatters when released from the gun. In the feat of disrobing an assistant with rifle bullets, the garments are made in two halves, front and back, fastened together with thin glass globes about two and a half inches in diameter and of dark material, and the usual white spots painted on them, while the assistant invariably stands against a black ground. If you can shoot reasonably straight it is not at all difficult. Nearly everybody has seen marvelous revolver shooting at moving targets. This is generally done with cartridges filled with bird shot, also. Never offer this trick without having practiced it carefully over and over again, to insure the best results.

## No. 5

## The Marvelous Levitation Act



A man or woman is apparently hypnotized and placed on a couch. You make a few passes over the body. The subject is seen to rise slowly in the air until he or she is floating in space. No wires or pulley work from overhead, no mirror or magnetism. The most sensational act you ever saw. It is easy and quickly arranged and performed on different principles. Can be worked out on any stage or platform in full light, away from curtain.

**Effect**

This illusion, while surpassing anything in this line, is very simple, but the effect to be obtained is certainly something great. Worked the same way as the "Aga" illusion, viz:

Performer comes on empty stage, assistants bring on small couch, painted white, and lined with black velvet or plush. Then lady assistant is introduced and hypnotized and laid on the couch, etc. She is covered over with a shawl, and performer places one hand at her feet and the other hand near her head, and raises the body in the air, clinging to the performer's hand.

**The Secret**

The lady has a half body on herself with ball face made of papier mache. Performer covers her over with a shawl. In the shawl a hole is cut, large enough to show the face of the body. When in the act of covering

the lady she drops, as quickly as possible, into a box in the seat of the couch, and performer covers the "shell" or false half body and allows the face to protrude, the illusion thus being perfect. During the time the performer is fixing the shawl, the lady is lowered down in box in the couch and she immediately covers herself with a cloth flap, made of same material and same color with which couch is lined. It is thus impossible to see that anything has occurred. The performer now places his hands on the form, the "shell" or half body has two pins driven into it, one near the feet and the other near the head. Performer wears a gold ring on the middle finger of each hand; in each ring there is a notch cut about one-half the width of the ring. He catches these notches on each of the pins and thus raises the form in the air (a la table lifting). Assistant now passes a hoop over suspended body, the performer removing each hand as the hoop approaches, and holding the form with one hand only. As the form is very light, this is not difficult. Performer can even walk around the stage; as the shawl is over the form, the deception is complete. The form is now lowered to the couch, the lady comes up from her concealed trap in the couch (the shawl covering everything), attaches the shell on herself and walks off. Never attempt any trick or illusion without considerable practice. Practice makes perfect, and the charm lies in the ease and lack of effort on the part of the performer.

## No. 6

## The Excelsior Rope Tie



Each wrist is tied separately with a stout cord, after which you cross your arms and the ends of the cords are passed around and around and tied at the back, making it impossible to bring your hands together.

The ends of the cords are fastened to the top of the chair. Other cords are tied around the knees and legs. The closest examination is invited. Every one will declare that escape is impossible.

Presto, you are free. The rope lays a tangled mass at your feet. It's easy when you know how.

## The Secret

The performer takes two pieces of rope, each about two yards long. He places the middle of one rope on the extended wrist of the right hand, so that the ends hang down. The cord is now tied around the wrist by a committee, the knot coming on the inside of the wrist. The other wrist is then tied in the same manner. The performer now places his right arm over his left elbow, extending the right hand under the left arm-pit. The cords on each wrist are now tied into a secure knot at the performer's back, and may be sealed. The performer now seats himself in a chair, and the double ropes are tied to the top rail of the chair near the post on the right side. The rest of the body is now tied in any manner the com-

mittee chooses. The performer uses his arms only. TO ESCAPE: Lean back a little, sitting as far to the front of the chair as possible. Push the left hand as far as you can under the right arm-pit. This allows the right arm a little play. With the right thumb seize the double rope extending from the right wrist and lift it over your elbow and head, and your arms are free to perform any test. To get back into position again, quickly seize the double rope with the right thumb and lift back over your head and arm, assume your former position, and all can be examined. A borrowed watch or ring (watch has better effect) is now laid on the performer's right knee, and cabinet is again closed. Bring your right arm over as before and sit around to the right. Push the ring, or the ring of the watch, over the loop formed by the double rope, hanging between the right wrist, and the rail of the chair, seize the loop by the right hand and push it (without twisting it) under the tie around the left wrist from the rear out (that is, from the cuffs toward the fingers), then pull the loop over the tips of the fingers, drawing it entirely over the left hand, thence passing it under the tie on wrist (upper part), and pull it back over the left hand again. Then bring the double cord hanging from the right wrist to the front again, passing it over the head and left elbow, thus assuming the exact position in which you were tied. If the

directions have been carefully followed the ring or watch will be tied in a knot at the back of the chair. To remove the ring a reverse process is employed. The explanation may seem complicated, but if each move is followed with the material at hand,

the tie can be easily acquired. Never attempt any trick or illusion without considerable practice. Practice makes perfect, and the charm lies in the ease and lack of effort on the part of the performer.

## No. 7

## The Wonderful Trunk Escape



The performer is handcuffed and then locked in a trunk from which there seems to be no possible chance to escape. Any kind of a trunk is used. No fake bottom or other trick appliances. The escape can be made in less than two minutes. Every-

thing may again be examined and will be found to be in the same condition as before the trick was accomplished.

This action can be performed in any private house where a trunk can be obtained. You need no confederates.

## The Secret

It is but little known that tin and iron trunks are usually fitted with a lock on the outside and this is most always fastened on with screw nuts on the inside of trunk, so all that is necessary to escape is to simply remove the nuts and push the lock off.

Locks on ordinary trunks are always screwed on from the inside with ordinary screws (this is not the case with theatrical trunks). It is only necessary to remove the lock to escape. When locked inside and the lock proves troublesome, examine the hinges and unscrew them and you are free. Sometimes you can pick the lock off the staple and screw it back on again before announcing the fact. The locks on ordinary trunks are usually of simple construction and one out of a small stock of keys will generally be found to open them, or they can be very easily picked with a pocket file or a pick. Have a locksmith make you two or three

skeleton trunk keys, conceal these about your person before performing trick; after escaping from trunk, unlock same and screw hinges back into place, conceal key and step from cabinet. Files, small wrench, screw-driver and pocket electric lamp are necessary to carry in trunk with you.

Practice makes perfect. Do not attempt to perform in public until you have experimented in private, so that you know just how to liberate yourself speedily. Ventilation is not of the best, and this must be considered. If possible, loosen the screw nuts slightly before you are placed in the trunk. Of course, this should not be noticed.

It is advisable to experiment by shutting yourself in a trunk, then time yourself to see how long you can remain there without feeling the lack of ventilation. Then should you find a lock which might prove troublesome, ask the committee to open the trunk in five or ten minutes (whatever length of time you find it comfortable), should you fail.

Never make light of the trunk from which you are to escape. Always shake your head dubiously and say, "To be frank with you, gentlemen, I don't like those clasps." Spectators enjoy a performer's discomfiture and will be all the more impressed with the speed and ease of your liberation.

**WARNING!**—Always be sure of yourself. If you feel you cannot make the escape, do not attempt it. Plead an excuse and then practice further until you are more expert. Always give yourself the benefit of the doubt.

## No. 8

## Escape From 75 Feet Of Rope



Even better than it sounds. Call up a committee to tie you in any way they see fit. Watch them writhe and sweat in their endeavor to make it escape-proof. Invite strict examination. Then in the twinkling of an eye you can free yourself. It will puzzle and baffle the most skeptical. They will declare it the most marvelous feat they ever witnessed.

## The Secret

This rope tie we believe to be the best and strongest in the business, and like all other good tricks it is simplicity itself. The performer offers for examination a fifty or seventy-five foot clothes line and offers himself to be bound in any manner the audience sees fit, stipulating, however, that they start at one end of the rope and finish at the other, and that he simply stand before them. Now, the entire secret of the trick is this: It is not possible for any man to tie you tight with that amount of rope. While being tied you contract the muscles, not in a way that will be

noticed, but simply stiffen out the part of the body being tied. Let them tie you in any manner they want to. When they have finished request that you be carried behind your screen. Now commence to release yourself, a thing that after a trial once or twice will be very easy, and you will be able to do it in less than a minute. All there is to it is get out, and all the explanation in the world will not make it any plainer. If you expel your breath and relax your muscles it will show the weak points of the tie at once. Nine times out of ten you can release your hands first, and then take off your coat, which you should always wear. WE REPEAT THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY ONE TO TIE YOU TIGHT WITH THIS AMOUNT OF ROPE. A good plan is to offer one of the wrists to be tied first and to have a common slip knot in the rope when you start and you can always get at it in some way.

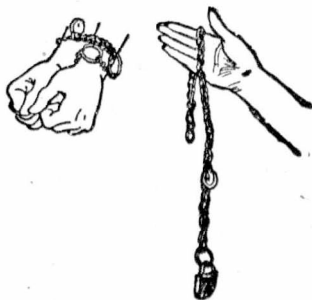
NOTE.—The above sounds very simple, and as if it wouldn't amount to much, but try it once and you will be surprised. It can be worked as a finish to any act.

## No. 9

## The Siberian Chain Escape



With this simple apparatus you can make a sensational escape a few seconds after your wrists are securely locked. A strong chain with padlock and key, is thoroughly examined by all, and after everybody has satisfied themselves that they are not faked or



prepared in any way, you permit one of the spectators to bind your wrists together tightly with the chain, which is tightly drawn, and then locked. If desired, they may furnish their own lock, retaining the key and sealing up the key hole. Escape is apparently impossible, yet under their very eyes, you make your escape in a few seconds.

The only material needed for this clever trick will be a piece of chain, such as No. 12 Jack Chain, about 24 inches in length, with 2 metal rings about  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in diameter and a small padlock. One of the rings is attached to one end of the chain and the other ring  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches from the same end of the chain.



Fig. 1. Lefthand

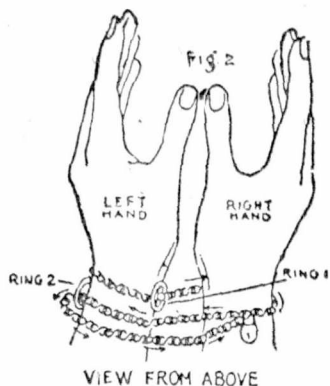
A running loop is made by passing end of chain through end ring. The left hand is slipped through this loop, leaving the same END ring on the top of large bone at the base of left thumb, which thumb should be pointing up. The remainder of the chain is left hanging down over palm side of the wrist.

Now the right wrist is quickly pressed against left wrist (palm to palm). The chain is now thrown or brought under and over the right wrist, then down through the SECOND ring, which ring should be at the bottom of the left wrist. The chain is immediately brought back, that is, upward, after passing through ring. The end link is locked to another link by the small padlock, care being taken that the padlock is not fastened to either of the rings. The hands are now strained to emphasize the hard shackle, which can be minutely examined.

A sharp blow on the knee or the back of the chair allows of the immediate release by simple releasing the pressure of right wrist against left. This, you will appreciate if you follow the above carefully, will give

you the necessary slack and will allow you to withdraw both hands and give the chain for examination again. The whole trick you can appreciate lies in allowing the chain to hang toward the floor after the left hand is slipped through the loop. This gives you the necessary slack when the right wrist is placed against the left. You can now place the chain on anyone else's wrist and they will find it quite impossible to escape, provided no slack is left between the wrists. If the above is studied carefully with the chain as a guide and the trick neatly done, it is absolutely one of the neatest chain releases ever invented.

The complete apparatus, including chain and padlock, for this trick can be obtained, if desired, from the publishers of this book for 50 cents. Just specify SIBERIAN CHAIN ESCAPE,



VIEW FROM ABOVE  
 sending remittance in any convenient form, and the trick will be sent you by mail postpaid.



## No. 10

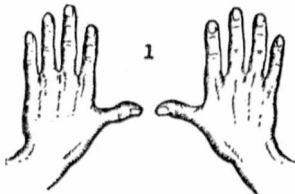
## The Japanese Thumb Tie

This very popular trick was first performed by a Japanese troupe which created quite a sensation throughout America and Europe. The thumbs of the performer are crossed and, in this position, tied together with cords by a committee, one member usually being an assistant or confederate. The two sides of the cord are then brought together by another cord, which crosses at right angles to the first, and this cord is also tied. The ends of the cords are then tied together—an end of one to an end of the other. A cane is held perpendicularly, one hand at each end, by one of the committee. The tied hands of the performer are thrust at the cane, which passes between them, and the hands are shown at the other side of the cane, still tied. The same effect is produced with a bicycle rim, when thrown through the air and caught on the performer's arm or on the arm of one of the committee, who, interlocking his fingers, makes a ring of his arms. Two members of the committee, each with interlocked fingers, stand side by side. The performer first thrusts his hands around the arm of one man, then withdraws them and immediately repeats the effect with the other man and finally withdraws his hands. Before and after each move the thumbs are submitted for examination and found to be securely tied. At the finish the assistant unties the cords.

Two cords are used. The first should be about seventeen inches long and a quarter of an inch in diameter at its center, tapering to points at both ends. The second about thirteen inches long, an eighth of an inch in diameter at its center, also tapering. To make them, cut any strong, coarse tissue paper, or better still Japanese rice tissue paper, the long way, into strips an inch wide. Beginning at one end, twist the paper at an angle, as in making an old-fashioned lamp-lighter. Each turn should lap over the former, half its width. When within

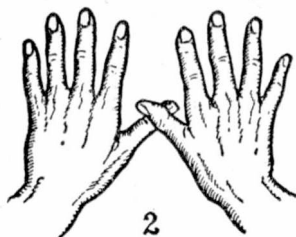
three inches of the end of the first strip, take a fresh strip, moisten its end, lay it under the end of the former and break off the strip of paper, take a fresh strip and recommence twisting, but in the other direction, beginning at the end just finished and finishing at the other. Use enough layers to secure the lengths and diameters as given above. When finished, the cords should be stiff and so strong that a strong man could not break them between his hands.

With all fingers pressed together, spread both thumbs away from the hands until they form the letter L with the line of the forefinger. Lay the right thumb across the left and at right angles to it as illustrated. The thumbs cross at their base—the large knucklebone of the one lying directly over that of the other. The larger cord is laid, at its middle, directly over the point of juncture; both ends brought down, crossed under the thumbs, brought up again and tied in two knots on top of the right thumb.



Right here is where all the trick lies. Just as the tie is being made, pull the left thumb until its smallest diameter (midway between the points) reaches the cord, and pull down with the left hand. Push the right thumb so that its fleshy part goes as far into the cords as possible. Insist upon the tie being tightly made.

The second and smaller cord is laid at its middle, below the right and on top of the left thumb and against the first cord. Both ends are



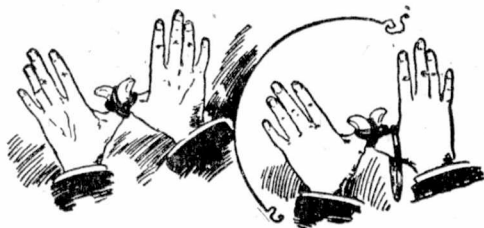
carried around the first cord, crossed, brought back and tied twice. When this is being done, reverse the pushing and pulling as above explained, pushing up the left and pulling out the right. Get all the slack on the left thumb—the right being pushed into the cord at its smallest diameter, the second cord being tied high up, as near the right thumb as possible and very tightly drawn. Remember, if this second knot is not tight it will give trouble later.

#### THE RELEASE

Bring the tips of all the fingers together. Carry the thumbs down into the palms. If the ties, as just described, have been correctly made, using the finger-tips as a hinge to mask the movement, there will be no difficulty in withdrawing the left thumb. The peculiar nature of the

cord causes the loop from which the thumb has just been withdrawn to remain open and rigid, like wire, and if the last tie was tightly made, the second cord will not slip down to close the loop. In approaching the cane, or the arms of the committee with the joined hands, touch the article to be passed with the finger-tips and withdraw them, leaning backward three or four times. As you draw back the last time before passing it, withdraw the left thumb from its loop, make a lunge forward and upward, open the finger-tips, pass the object, close the finger-tips, open the palms, push left thumb back in the loop, close the palms, strain on both thumbs and show the tie. In passing the cane, hoop or arm, press both thumbs well into the palms so that the tips will not strike in passing, bringing them up again in exhibiting their tied condition. Always exhibit the tie from the back of the hands and with the palms outspread before and after passing any object.

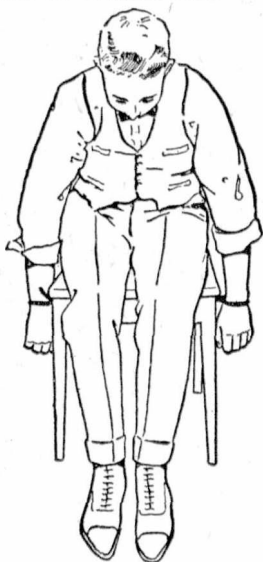
If there is any difficulty in drawing out or in replacing the left thumb in its loop, it is because the ties and positions have not been made in careful conformance with the above descriptions. Practice until the proper method is obtained will prove that it is a very easy as well as a very strong and effective trick.



## No. 11

## Escape From Chair Tie

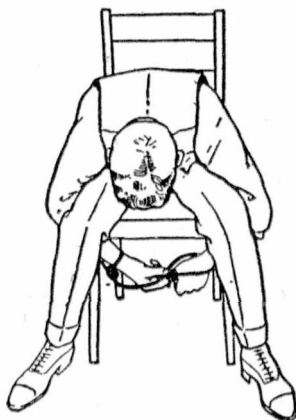
This trick is especially recommended where the committee is chosen from an audience among whom there are no confederates.



The performer puts on his coat before beginning the trick. A piece of rope about four feet long is used. One end is securely tied to the performer's right wrist. Then the rope is passed under the chair as shown in the accompanying illustration; draw very tight and firmly tied to the left wrist on the other side. The performer is then pushed back into the cabinet or in back of a screen. When the screen is removed, the performer is still found securely tied, but in the meantime he has removed his coat. This trick can be repeated, that is, he can be pushed back of the screen again and then appear with his coat on, etc.

## THE SECRET

This trick is really quite simple, because of the fact that it is impossible to tie anything but a slip knot when the rope coming under the chair is pulled tight, that is, when the rope is under strain. All that the committee can do is simply tie a series of knots around the rope crossing under the chair, and each one of these knots is nothing more than a slip knot, or what is sometimes called a running knot. The performer simply spreads his knees apart, as il-



lustrated, which allows him to lean forward and causes a slack in the rope. With his right hand he can reach the slip knots which have been tied around the left wrist, thereby being able to slip the knots along down the rope, and to make a large loop, enabling him to withdraw his hand. He will then be able to remove his coat, place his hands back in the same position, his left hand through the slip knot, draw them taut again and the knots will slip back tight to the wrist.

## No. 12

## The Twentieth Century Escape

The performer has his two wrists securely tied with a silver sash cord. Six or more knots should be tied between the wrists, to permit wrists to pass buttocks. The necessity of the silver sash cord is that it is difficult to tie a tight knot and also makes it easy to untie the knot. The wrists are tied between the performer's back and it is important that they be secured as close to the hands as possible. The importance of this will be apparent later on.

## THE SECRET

The hands are brought down as shown in the illustration. This is more or less of a scientific feat and requires pulling the wrists as far apart as possible. Shrugging the shoulders downward in order to make the loop formed by the arms as large as possible, permit the hands to pass by the hips. In going through this movement, it is necessary to lean forward. You will also find that the feat of passing the hips will be accomplished better by slightly bending to one side, thus enabling one arm to pass first and then the other.

At first you will think this trick almost impossible, but with patience and practice you will soon see that it can easily be done if you possess any agility at all. You will also find that the rope will give a little bit and more slack is gained, if it is always worked downward.

When the arms have been worked by the hips, you sit down on the floor and draw one foot through the loops of the arms and then the other foot. The arms are now easily brought up to the mouth, where the knots can be untied with the teeth, just as easily as they could be with the fingers.

With a little practice you will be able to do this trick with a great deal of satisfaction to yourself and your audience and it will be found that the most skeptical in the audience will be fooled.



If anyone in your audience thinks he is able to escape from such a tie, all that is necessary is to allow himself to be tied, and to the uninitiated it will be impossible to become free, first on account of the lack of practice and secondly because, as a ropetying expert, you know how to firmly tie the knots and you will not be as lenient as the committee when drawing the knots tightly about the wrists.

## No. 13

## Escape From Sack Trick

One can generally find an old sack in a garden, and so a trick with a sack seems specially suitable for a conjuring performance in the garden.



**THE SACK TRICK.**—(1) The Conjurer gets into the sack, which has a very long cord, and invites someone to tie him up.—

Bring forward the sack and allow anybody to examine it. The sack should have a long, stout cord or string running under the hem. When everybody has examined the sack, the conjurer gets into it and asks someone to come forward and pull the strings tight and tie them in a knot or several knots. The knots may then be examined by some other member of the audience and then may be sealed.

If the conjurer has no screen which can be placed in front of him, it will be necessary for him to get behind a bush near the lawn while he gets out of the sack. He will have to get there in a series of short jumps, in the same way that a boy gets along in a sack race, but as he cannot see where he is going to he must be guided by his assistant. He should ask his as-

sistant to say "Go!" when he is well hidden from view, and then he proceeds to get out of the sack. He then takes the sack down to the audience and asks them to examine the knots and seals; in fact, the whole sack may be thoroughly examined, and the conjurer need have no fear that anyone will discover his secret.



(2)—Being tied up, and secretly hauling in the slack of the long cord running around the neck of the sack. To escape without untying the knots the conjurer lets go the slack cord he hauled in, gets out of the sack, cuts away the slack and joins up the cord, pushing the knot he makes under the hem of the sack.—

The secret, however, is very simple. The cord which ran round the hem of the sack was very long, and the hem of the sack was not stitched up close to the sack all the way round. Thus, when the conjurer got into the sack he was able to catch hold of the cord under the hem and pull it down. This move was not seen by the audience because the conjurer was then standing inside the sack. The conjurer must pull on the cord until it reaches the bottom of his waistcoat,

and while he is doing this with his right hand he must press against the



(3)—He then appears with the sack on his arm, and the knots intact, and bows politely.

unstitched part of the hem of the sack with his left hand.

It will be seen that when someone pulls the cord tight and ties the ends the conjurer still has a good deal of "slack" inside the sack. When he wants to get out he simply releases this and steps out. Then he cuts the cord close to the hem, removes the spare piece—that is to say the part which was the slack—and slips it into his pocket. Then he ties the two ends of the cord together in a knot, slips the knot under the hem, and the top of the sack is apparently in the same condition that it was in when the audience tied it and sealed it, because their knots and seals have not been touched.

Any sackmaker will make you a sack, or the trick can be done with a large home-made bag of black sateen.

## No. 14

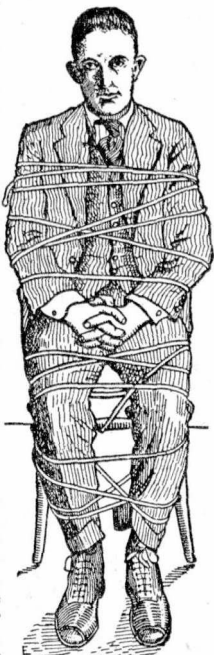
## Escape From Chair Trick

The performer exhibits an ordinary chair and a piece of cotton rope. He then seats himself in the chair, asking a committee, previously selected from the audience, to bind him to the chair. After the performer is securely bound, a screen is placed in front of him and in a comparatively short time he appears in front of the screen free from his bondage.

**THE SECRET**

Note how the arms are kept in front of the body. Sit half-way in the chair, leaving a space between your own back and the back support of the chair, expand the muscles, throw out the chest and keep your legs slightly apart. After you have had some of your friends tie you several times, following the directions closely, you will be surprised how easily you can escape from a rope tie of this kind.

It is possible you may be unfortunate at some time to have a spectator come upon the stage to tie you who is thoroughly familiar with knots



and who binds you so securely that you apparently cannot possibly free yourself. Even for such a predicament we have a simple solution. Carry an ordinary penknife in a pocket where it is easily available from the position in which you have your hands. Have an exact duplicate of the piece of rope you have passed for examination concealed somewhere in your clothes. What you do is to cut the rope, thus freeing yourself, and pass out the duplicate rope for examination by the audience. In case you are bound so tightly that you cannot manipulate the knife with your



hands, all you have to do is to put it in your teeth, though this is very seldom necessary. You might offer suggestions now and then to the committee as to the tying of the rope; this will often help you to be bound in whatever way you desire.

## No. 15

## The Dangerous Rope Tie Trick

We call this trick The Dangerous Rope Tie, because if a member of the committee attempts to release himself from this bondage he is apt to find himself in a very embarrassing position, and it will probably be necessary for him to call for help in order to extricate himself.

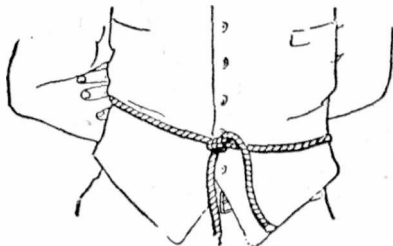


## THE SECRET

Two separate ropes are used. One arm is tied at the center of one rope and the other wrist is attached to it behind the back. The hands are then crossed as shown in the accompanying illustrations and the rope tied in front about waist high. Note the position of the hands. The right arm is lower down and outside of the left. It is also important to keep the hands low down on the back. Now, if the uninitiated rope manipulator is tied in this way and tries to release himself, the first thing he attempts is to put his arms up over his head, as that appears to be the logical means of escape. It is only necessary to say here that if you will try this trick yourself you will readily see the danger involved if the hands are brought upward toward the head. He will soon find the rope around his neck and in a dangerous position bordering on strangulation. He will not only be unable to get out of the position, but will have to call upon you for help.

The secret of the trick lies in moving the rope downward instead of upward. The necessity of pushing the hands forward in order to secure as much slack as is possible is quite ap-

parent. Now bend the waist and knees and bring the right arm down under the buttocks towards the knees. Seat yourself on a chair. Now follows the most important part of the trick. Cross the left leg over the right and work the rope toward the knees, where it can be grasped in the teeth. It is then worked completely over the knee. The next move consists in pulling the left leg through the loop formed by the hands crossed in back, the rope passing in front of the body. You will now find yourself with the rope twisted around the right leg; the next move is to cross the right foot over the left knee and again proceed by working the rope downward as above described. You will now find yourself in position to readily untie the knots between the hands by the aid of the teeth.



A difficult part of this trick lies in working the rope over the knee. A thick and rather stiff rope is absolutely essential, for it enables the performer to grasp the rope in his teeth. Some performers use a belt hook fastened about the belt or to some part of the cabinet to assist them in working the rope down. When you first begin practising this trick you will discover that it is not only very difficult and requires a whole lot of effort and hard work, but it also takes considerable time to release yourself.



# LOCKS

## Their Construction, How to Pick Them, Lock Breaking

This short chapter will serve only as an introduction, defining the styles of locks and adding a few hints or approaches that may be tried when attempting to open them.

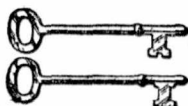
The simplest type of lock is one where the key throws the bolt or releases the catch directly, the only protective device being the keyhole. The most common examples of this type of lock are the ordinary room door locks in houses, and the cheapest padlocks. Any key or pick that will fit the keyhole and catch the bolt in at least one place, without interfering with the simple guards, will open the lock.

A good lock requires that the entire shape of the lock must be correct in order to satisfy and open the lock.

In the cheaply constructed locks mentioned in the first paragraph, pressure on any point on the bolt will operate the lock.

It might be easier to understand what is meant by comparing the two keys illustrated: Key A and Key B.

Key  
A  
Key  
B



A simple bolt lock which operates by using Key B will also operate when using

Key A, even though Key A has an additional vertical notch on the head. In other words, this type of lock has no protective mechanism which detects a key that does not cover the full face of the lock's pattern. It will open if anything is used that will fit the opening, catch the bolt in any spot and have a sufficiently large head to throw lock all way open.

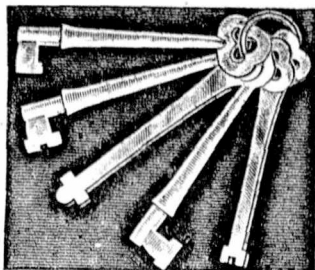
In a lock of this type it takes only a little experimenting to open. The set of master keys illustrated here will usually fit most of these.

### LEVER LOCKS

There is only one general type of door lock (aside from cylinder type Yale locks) which uses a protective detector making it necessary for the vertical notch or groove in the key to be correct before key will turn and throw bolt. This is accomplished by means of one lever, although in some

5  
Master  
Keys

(SEE  
FOOTNOTE)



locks more than one lever is used. A lever is used for each vertical notch across the head of the key. In Key A, there would be one lever that would operate on the vertical notch across the top of the inverted T-shaped head. This lever is fitted with a gate mechanism and a metal pin or post. There is only one opening—the gate—which will allow the pin or post to pass through it and consequently allow the bolt to be thrown open. As the lever rests upon this notch, the notch must be cut so that when the lever falls in place, the metal pin will be opposite the gate. If the notch is too big or too small, the gate will fall to one side or the other and will not allow the pin to pass through and the bolt to be thrown.

The notch can be made wide or narrow and can be varied in other ways, as well as depth, to make the lock more difficult to pick.

When you start to study this lock you will find that it is not as pick proof as it may have seemed. It is immediately seen that the horizontal notches (or WARD as it is called—see illustration) mean little or nothing. It is necessary to make sure that the pick or "key" you use has a narrow enough head so that it will turn and miss the guards or ward. The only other consideration is the depth of the vertical notch. This is mostly by trial and error, starting from a key similar to B and filing a vertical notch in the head, increasing the depth of the notch until it operates the lock.

### YALE AND CYLINDER LOCKS

We are illustrating a general type of cylinder lock upon which all other similar locks are based. Essential feature of this lock is that the entire cylinder of lock turns while operat-

Set of 5 Master Emergency Keys, suitable for opening a variety of simple door locks and padlocks. Is sold by publishers, Johnson Smith & Co., Detroit, Michigan, for 25c.

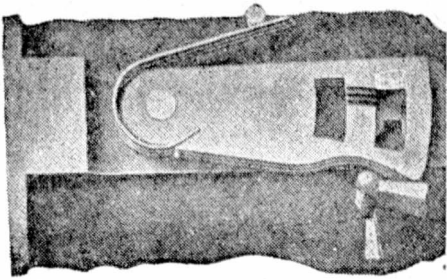


### Lock Wards

By **WARDS** is meant the moulded guide bar on outside of lock. This offers little protection as any pick which does not hit ward can open lock.

### Lever Locks

Illustration shows bolt and gate mechanism. Key is just beginning to turn lever and lock bolt will not move left until gate in lever is opposite the pin. (Square pin looks to be part of lever, to right of gate.)



ing, at the same time, a pin which opens the bolt. The invention of this lock made it possible to use a small key on a large, powerful lock.

Lock has five pins (although some locks have more and some less) which fall down into corresponding holes in the plug or cylinder. These holes also contain 5 similar pins. Thus each hole has two pins with a spring on top. The cylinder will turn only when the breaks between all five pins are correctly lined up with the division between the cylinder or plug and the rest of the lock. Then the plug or cylinder will turn freely.

The key in a lock of this type must satisfy all five points of the lock. The key must be exact to open the lock.

There is the added practise of milling the grooves of various patterns on the key itself so that a larger range of combinations is possible.

In solving a lock of this type you will see that there are many added complications. The groove pattern of the key can be readily determined merely by examining lock or taking a wax mould of it. These designs are more or less standard and key blanks to fit all of them are available at locksmiths or keymakers. The next problem is the correct notching of the key. This is dependant upon the way the pins are set and must be solved from the lock itself. There are expert locksmiths who use sensitive picks and feel out the correct depth for each pin. But this requires special tools and expert handling and need not be discussed here.

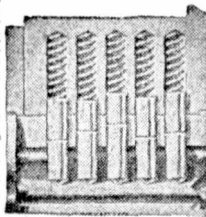
### COMBINATION AND KEYLESS LOCKS

This type of lock, generally speaking, consists of aligning tumblers in the correct order so that the bolt of the lock can be thrown.

The dial type of combination lock is most common. Their mechanism usually consists of several concentric

discs or wheels. Each wheel is notched and when the notches are all lined up the "dog" or catch can fall into place releasing the bolt.

The dial of the lock operates the first disc. Each disc has a pin which, when it hits the pin of the following disc, carries both discs around. And when the pin on the second disc catches up to the pin on the third disc, all three discs are in motion. Thus you can see that when you stop going one way and start going the other, it will take one complete revolution before you start moving the second disc again, another complete revolution before the pin on the second disc comes around and moves the third disc, etc. This fact should be kept in mind when attempting to solve combination locks of this type. The amateur will find it difficult to solve these locks. There are some cheap combination locks with only two number combinations that may be solved merely by trying to force the bolt and then feeling when one of the notches is in the correct place and noting the number. However, this requires experimenting and results are not positive.



### Yale Type Lock

Left—before key is inserted. Note that plug cannot turn until breaking point of pins is lined up with cylinder of plug.

Below—key being inserted. When correct key is in, breaking point of pins are lined up with edge of plug cylinder, permitting plug to turn. If even one pin is not lined up, it will prevent plug from turning.

