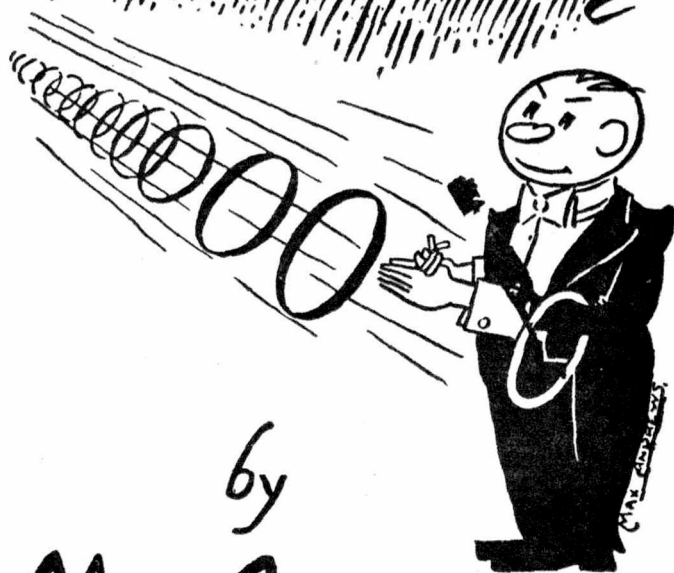


• Sixteen Thumb Tie Gems. •



by
MAX ANDREWS.

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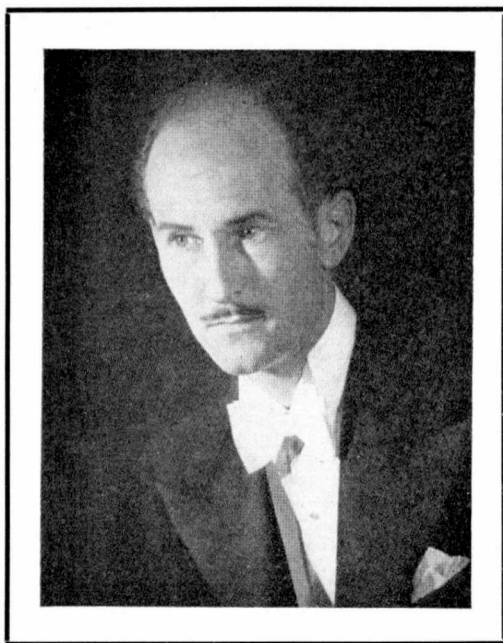


WILL ALMA

M.I.M.C. (LONDON)

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS





Photo

Cliff Osman

THE AUTHOR

SIXTEEN
THUMB TIE GEMS

by

MAX ANDREWS

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Author of
THE AMAZING MEMORY FEAT
ENSATINING
SIXTEEN CARD INDEX GEMS
and Inventor of many well-known Tricks



ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



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FOREWORD

As a dealer in Magical Apparatus, I am constantly being asked by my magical friends, "What is the best way to do the Thumb Tie Trick?"

Now this trick is one of those peculiar effects where the presentation seems to be unusually acceptable to most audiences, yet a number of performers will all use different methods to achieve the same purpose.

Often when offered the method wherein the small metal feke is used, a magician will reject it on the ground that he would not have enough confidence to work it, and would prefer a sleight of hand method. Against this we have the fact that well-known performers have, and are, using this method with great satisfaction and effect.

It all depends on a performer's personality and style. The method that appeals to him, the one he confidently feels he could get away with, then that is the best method for him to use.

Many different methods have been evolved, many of them in books that today are out of print and unobtainable. I have also been fortunate enough to collect several that have never before been published. My purpose in presenting this collection of Thumb Tie Methods is to enable the would be performer to find out everything there is to know on the technique and methods used. He can then use his own judgment and select the one that pleases him. Properly mastered, and presented with style and showmanship, he will find that this trick is as good, if not better than many in his repertoire.

MAX ANDREWS.

LONDON

HISTORY OF THE THUMB TIE

So far as can be ascertained the Thumb Tie escape seems to have been known from the days of Clip Pinetti, circa 1784. The actual method used however, is not known, and the effect never really had any prominence or popularity until the advent into Europe of a troupe of Japanese by the name of "Ten Ichi." These people made a specialty of working this effect, and the peculiar method they used has since become known as the "Ten Ichi" Thumb Tie.

They certainly achieved widespread success with their method, and although many imitators have since claimed to have been working the same method, very few of them have had the same success owing to the difficulty of correctly making the special paper covered cords which were supposed to be an integral part of the "Ten Ichi" method.

The effect gained great popularity in this country and many other methods were originated, some using small metal 'fekes' to assist them in effecting an escape. It seems fairly certain however, that the most effective presentation can only be given if the thumbs are freely shown and examined whilst the tying is taking place.

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I have been extremely fortunate in having been able to include some new and original methods which have up to the present been closely guarded secrets of professionals. I think that many magicians will be able to improve their Thumb Tie Presentation with the help of this book, and if they do, then it becomes a part of Magical History.

PRESENTATION

The performer asks one or several gentlemen from the audience to come on the stage to act as a committee during the showing of this trick. The cords to be used are freely examined and then the performer places his thumbs together and requests one of the committeemen to tie the cords round the base of his thumbs as tightly as possible. When this is done, the committee conduct an examination until they are all convinced that it would be a physical impossibility for the performer to release himself. Several light wooden hoops are handed to the committee, who are allowed to stand at one side of the stage, whilst the performer stands at the opposite side.

The hoops are thrown across the stage one at the time, to be caught by the performer, who then holds his hands up high and allows the hoop to drop down on to one of his arms! You will realize by this that the solid hoop has apparently passed right through the securely tied thumbs!!

This can be repeated until several hoops have been caught, and the committee have the privilege of examining the tying at any time between the throws. The thumbs are, indeed, clearly exhibited to the audience from time to time so that they can see that everything is exactly as it should be.

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As a spectacular climax to this ring routine, the performer may walk up to a committeeman and ask him to take hold of the rings and examine them. As he does so the performer just walks casually away to talk to the audience and the amazed man is left with the rings in his hand and a problem on his mind that I'll bet 'a thousand pounds to a pinch of snuff,' he will not come even near to solving in the next six months!

COMEDY STUNTS

The effect gives room for a good deal of comedy presentation in the hands of a good performer. It is quite an easy thing to dash up to one of the men on the stage asking him loudly to make sure you are securely tied after one of the hoops has passed over your arm. On his reply in the affirmative you push your hands forward in an obvious insistance that he examine them, when suddenly your locked hands are found to have become linked through one of his arms! Make a bit of business trying to get free by swinging him about a bit and he is sure to join in the fun.

Now have the remaining hoops thrown to you one at a time, and have the man stand in a position so that you are sideways on to the audience and they see clearly what is happening.

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You take up a dramatic pose with one leg in front of the other and knees slightly bent, and count up to three slowly, having previously instructed him to throw the hoop on the count of three. The great thing about all this is to make it look as difficult as possible, and make it seem that a great deal of careful practice has been spent before the effect could be accomplished at all!

For the third hoop, you count, "One, two, two-and-a-half—wait for it—you thought I was going to say three, didn't you? Well, here it is—THREE!" The ring is on.

The "Great Levante," who was so popular with British magicians and audiences alike before the War, used to make a special feature of the Thumb Tie Act. He would have several spectators on the stage during the performance, and always got a good deal of hilarity from the way he handled them. One of the stunts he worked was when he was close to the assistants and in the middle of getting them to examine his thumbs and the rings, he would suddenly dive down and find his arms linked through the leg of one of the assistants. The dismay and astonishment displayed on the assistant's face was too funny for words, and the ensuing struggle to get released always appealed to the audience.

The most important thing to remember is to have all your moves definitely decided upon, and the handling of your assistants should be care-

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS

fully rehearsed. Nothing looks worse than a performer who has members of the audience on to the stage and does not know how to control them.

Some performers allow their hands to become linked with the back of a chair, and so forth. Others work with a solid rod about two feet in length. A thick dowel or piece of broomstick is suitable. Get an assistant to stand in the middle of the stage, sideways to the audience. Have your thumbs examined (you cannot overdo this business, because the audience may think that whilst you are talking you will be wriggling them loose, and its your job to convince them to the contrary!!) Let him hold the stick one end in each hand, in a vertical position, and then you push your hands against it to make sure he has it firmly held, and when he is least expecting it, you pass through it. Ask him if he saw how it was done, and offer to repeat it. The next time you do it you can pass through the stick and on through his neck. Then allow your arms to slide down his body so that his arms are pinned at his sides, and much amusement will be caused by his struggles to release himself. Immediately after all this allow the committee to confirm to the audience that the THUMBS ARE STILL SECURE!

Some performers actually let the audience see that their thumbs become disengaged from the cord at certain times during the performance.

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS

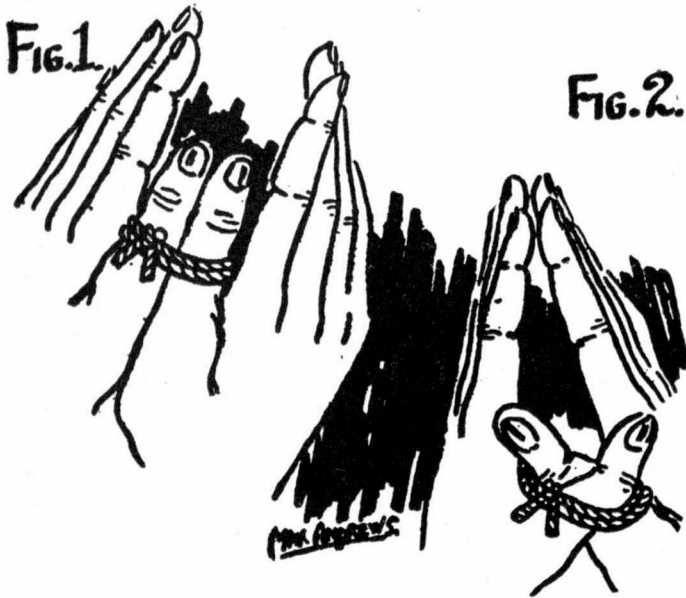
The magician comes up behind a man and reaching forward with one hand touches his face. At other times, under cover of an assistant's body he will slap him in a friendly way on the back and ask him if there are any holes in the hoops, etc. Personally I think this mode of presentation is greatly to be deplored, since there can be no real or necessary justification for it. Whatever happens afterwards, the performer can never convince his audience otherwise than that his thumbs come out of the loops when the penetrations are made. For actually he has shown them doing just that, and though this may be good comedy, it certainly is not good magic. And a magician is first and foremost a man of mystery.

Finally have the cords untied or cut, according to the routine you are working, and do not forget to rub the thumbs afterwards to show how tight were the bonds.

Also never overlook thanking the committee for their kind assistance, and show them the way down off the platform. This is a courteous gesture that even many stage performers overlook. It is very difficult to see one's way down from a brilliantly lighted platform into the dark auditorium especially with the glare of the foot-lights in your eyes. A regular performer may get used to doing this, but remember an assistant from the audience never does.

THE SCISSORS TIE

My own knowledge of this method goes back over twenty-two years, and how I originally came into possession, I cannot say after all this time. I certainly have never seen it in print in my more mature years, neither was it conveyed to me by a magician, for it is to my eternal misfortune that I never knew or met anyone who had any knowledge of, or who was even remotely interested in magic, during my youth. However, here is the method and you will find it is quite straightforward.



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Use a piece of blind cord or some similar stiff cord about twelve inches in length. Hold the thumbs together, side by side, and allow the spectator to bind the cord twice round the lower joints. As he is doing this exert a contra pressure with the palms of the hands in an outward direction. This will enable you to steal a little slack by preventing the binding from being too tight. See Fig. 1.

To effect your escape, you must allow the thumbs to cross over each other, similar to the way a pair of scissors do. Allow the right thumb to come underneath the left and you will then find that the cord will be slack enough to allow you to withdraw the right thumb. To get back again, slip the right thumb back into the loop, underneath the left thumb and in a diagonal direction. Then bring the palms of the hands quickly together and straighten the thumbs side by side again, and you will find that the cord is just as tight as originally.

See Fig. 2, for the correct release.



THE STEAL--Method I

Here is something entirely different. It is not an easy method to work for the uninitiated for there are a number of rather 'cheeky' moves, but for the magical veteran these will present no worries.

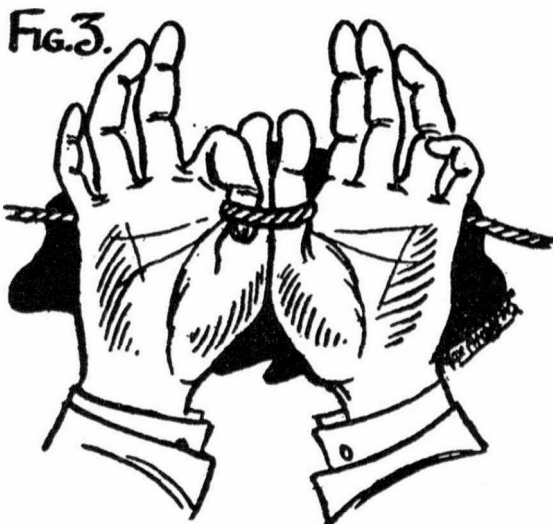
Two pieces of stout one eighth cord are used of lengths twelve and eighteen inches respectively. The cord should be of a kind with a certain amount of dressing in it, so that it is stiff enough to retain the shape of the thumb after withdrawal.

Commence by holding the two thumbs together side by side, and the cord is passed underneath them and out through the crutch on either side. As you approach a committeeman to have the knots tied you slip the first joint of the first finger underneath the cord, and the hands are clasped together immediately. The cord is then tied over the top of the thumbs in this position. See Fig. 3.

In order to show that everything is apparently 'all fair' lift the hands upwards to show the underneath of the cord, after having slipped out the forefinger. The slack is passed back to the top of the thumbs by pressure of the forefingers. The slack is then away from the audience and therefore it is not seen. Then in order to show the top of the hands again, allow the slack to be

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS

withdrawn back to the underneath as you turn the hands over.



The next move is to get hold of the short piece of cord and get it into position to tie at right angles to the first, in a similar way to the Ten Ichi Tie. After a little practice you should be able to do this whilst at the same time keeping the palms and fingers together to hide the slack. As soon as all is ready re-insert the forefinger in the slack underneath the thumbs and allow the last knot to be tied. Finally allow the hands to be quite openly seen again, and once more you transfer the slack up and then down again.

After the examination has been satisfactorily

carried out, you should grip your hands together with the left inside the right, and allow the first finger of the left hand to pull the cross cord over to the left thumb as far as you can. It should then enable you to slip the right thumb in and out quite easily.

THE STEAL--Method II

A very clever deceptive move in this method is responsible for the subtle stealing of enough cord to make your escape instantaneous.

To commence with, the performer clasps his hands together with the fingers interlocked, and offers his thumbs to be tied. The interlocking of the fingers however, has to be done in a special way, and here it is.

Clasp the hands together with the left forefinger on the top, and next to it comes the right forefinger. Then follows the left second finger,



Fig. 3a.

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS

then the right THIRD finger and the left third. Finally you have the right small finger and then the left small finger.

See illustration in Fig. 3a.

You will notice that in this order, one of the fingers is missing—namely the right second finger, and this is left free inside the two hands. As the whipcord is placed under the two crossed thumbs, the loose finger catches into the cord and takes it down. The slack thus gained is held very firmly whilst the knots are tied. You will see now that it is a very simple business to show your thumbs apparently securely tied, yet make your escape with lightning rapidity. To show thumbs tied at any time, simply re-insert the loose finger in the slack.

To finish have the cord cut and then pocket it unobtrusively, otherwise the extra large loop might cause some comment.

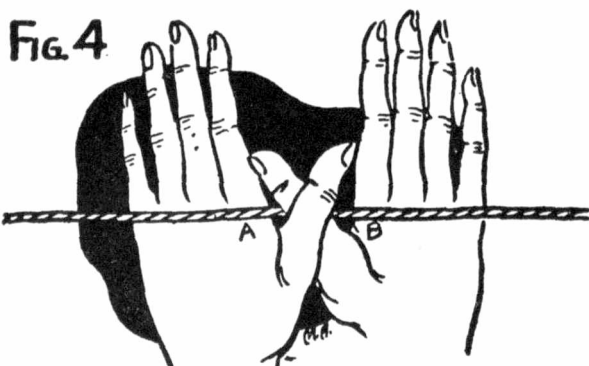
THE STEAL--Method III

Here a much longer piece of cord is necessary, and also you will require at least two gentlemen from the audience to assist you. Each man is asked to hold one end of the cord, which should be a stout whipcord, codline, or better still, a light rope such as is used by magicians for cutting, would be most suitable. The line is about

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three yards long and they stand that distance apart.

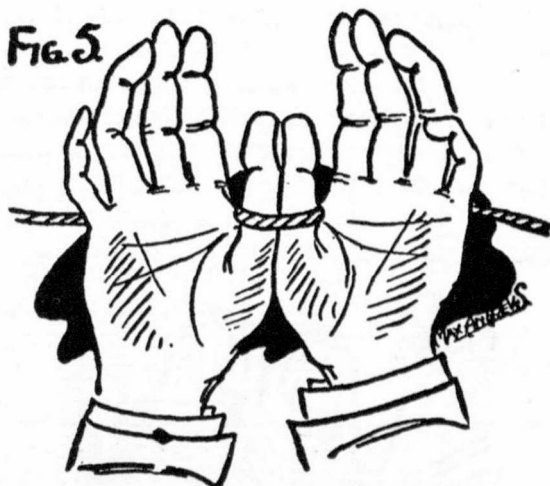
At this stage of the act, you use a little misdirection, by directing the attention of the audience towards the assistants. Nodding your head towards the man on left you request him to stand



a little farther away. Then turning to the man on the right hand side you nod him to stand at the end of the rope so that it is in a straight line. You have your thumbs crossed in the usual manner, but with hands wide apart and palms face downwards. The card runs under the crossed thumbs.

See Fig. 4.

Whilst the attention of the audience is directed to the second man, grip the rope at either crutch between thumb and forefinger very tightly, and then smartly bring the hands together, palms facing. The intervening rope will drop between



them as slack, and the hands are firmly held to keep it secure whilst the thumbs are tied. Using a rope obviates any apparent necessity for winding the rope round the thumbs more than once. You are now ready to carry on with the performance. For obvious reasons the rope should be cut away and 'vanished' at the finish! During the working it is advisable to have the long ends cut away.

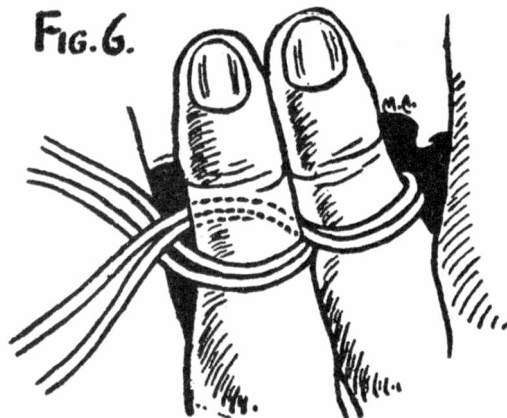
EM-AY ELECTRIC FLEX TIE

I am revealing now for the first time a method I originated (so far as I am aware). I have used it with great success, and to my mind it has several advantages over some of the other meth-

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ods included. It is so extremely simple in its subtlety that I do not think anyone would ever spot it, and the tying is done quite openly and apparently without any preconceived routine.

The best type of wire to use is a soft type of rubber covered bell wire, for this is very pliable and easy to handle. Also a single strand of ordinary mains flex will be found suitable. By



this I mean that you will have to untwist the double flex and use one strand only. The best length for ordinary purposes is eighteen inches.

Pick up the flex, and have it examined if you wish, although personally I never bother. I must confess that I belong to the school which thinks that the business of allowing spectators to examine things is the ruin of more magical performers' acts than many other so called faults. It

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slows down the tempo of the show, the rest of the audience are never really convinced that the examiner is not actually a stooge, and finally, if a thing looks ordinary, why not use it *ipso facto*? The audience will accept it as being so, without you drawing unnecessary attention to the fact. More often than not you will at once create doubt which previously did not exist. Furthermore, and especially does this apply to intimate audiences, they get into the habit of wanting to examine almost everything the performer uses, and in the end he finds that they are telling him how to run his show!

However, to continue. Double the length of flex in half and place the centre round the base of the right thumb. Cross the ends over inside the thumb so that the two cords nearest to you **CROSS OVER** the two that come from behind, and then put the left thumb up to it to hold the flex in position. With the other fingers of the right hand, push the underneath flex up through the crutch of the left thumb and allow the assistant to tie as tightly as he likes. Bear in mind that no attempt is made to steal any slack whatsoever. The position should now be that the flex is tied in the shape of a figure eight, with the two thumbs in the two loops and the cross over coming between them.

See this illustrated in Fig. 6.

To make your escape, all you have to do is to dip your right thumb down and turn it a little

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to the left. There will then be so much slack that it can be withdrawn in a flash. In order to regain the original position, re-insert the thumb in the loop, taking care that it goes over the side of the loop nearest to you, and quickly raise the right thumb into an upright position side by side with the left. The loop immediately drawn up tight again as at the commencement.

Variation

An exceedingly effective variation in presenting this method may be obtained through the use of an ordinary Pipe Cleaner. The kind I mean are made of twisted wire with white fluff round them. Although you may have difficulty in getting them at the present time, they used to be in everyday use. For an impromptu setting they are ideal and you could always carry a couple of spares in your wallet.

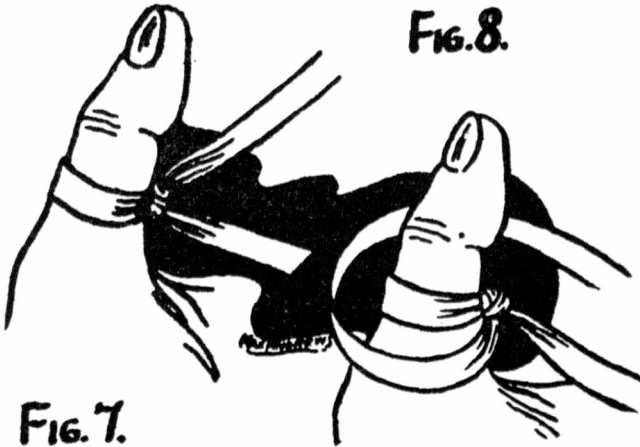
As for the method, you would use exactly the same twist as previously except that the pipe cleaner would only be long enough to go once round each thumb, instead of having it double as previously. The release would be exactly the same.

THE TAPE TIE

This is a very clever and clean method of working, and I am sure that it will appeal to many. It is easy to handle and the subtlety is absolutely undetectable.

A length of half-inch tape or ribbon may be used and it is firstly tied with the left thumb in the centre. A double knot is made so that it comes inside the thumb, and leaves two long ends hanging down. To convey an impression of complete indifference in the tying, you can pass to another member of the audience to have the second knot tied.

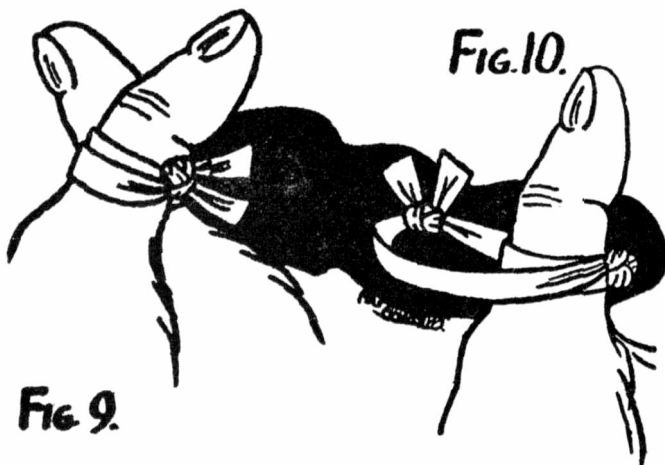
See Fig. 7, for the first knot.



This will give you ample opportunity to make the secret move which alone makes an escape

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possible. You take one of the long ends, preferably the one nearest to you, and pass it round the back of the tied thumb and round to the front again. It should then lay alongside the other end in a natural way. This is shown in Fig. 8.



Now allow the right thumb to cross underneath the left in the usual manner, so that it comes between the two tapes, with the slack tape on the far side. Have the spectator tie the two tapes now as tightly and as efficiently as he likes providing no further turns are taken around the thumbs. They should now appear as in Fig. 9. When it is completed, there will be found enough slack to escape if you work as follows: Simply turn the thumb of the right hand downwards and inwards and you will find you can withdraw the

thumb unobtrusively. After the release the tape will be as in Fig. 10.

After the usual amount of business has been performed, the thumb can be slipped back quickly, and a twist in the opposite way will tighten up the tape so that it can be inspected again. At the finale, the best plan is to have the tape cut off, and if the performer takes care to keep possession of the tape everything will be well. Should anyone wish to look at it keep the scissors handy, and smilingly cut the tape in half, taking care to cut through the large loop. Hand half each to two people, and they will be unable to fathom anything!

This method was originated by Frederick Montague, who performed it in London very successfully. It first appeared in Will Goldston's "Tricks That Mystify."

THE LA FRANCE THUMB TIE

This is a completely New Method, which is entirely unknown in this country, and so far as I am aware, has never before appeared in print.

It was confided to me by my good friend, Mr. Victor Farelli, who tells me that whilst it is known in France, he has never seen or heard of it being used in any English speaking country. Mr. Farelli resided in France for many years before

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the War, and is vastly travelled, especially in the Americas and the Bahamas, so that I accept his viewpoint as that of an authority.

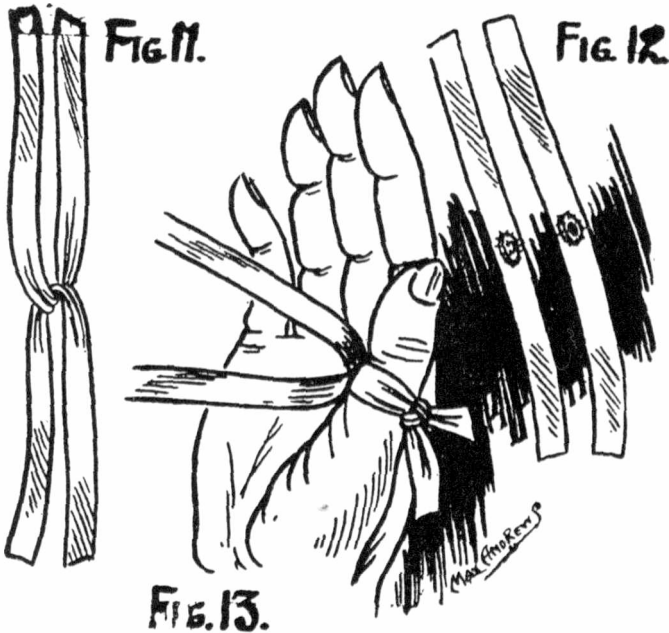
I do not think that I should be understating the facts when I say that I claim this tie to be **THE FASTEST THUMB TIE METHOD ON EARTH.**

The extraordinary thing about this method is that whilst the two lengths of tape used are clearly shown, and then tightly tied round either thumb without any tricky moves or stealing of slack, yet it is possible for the hoops to pass over the thumbs **INSTANTANEOUSLY!** In point of fact this is possible, because in order to allow the hoops to pass the barrier of Tape, it is **NOT NECESSARY TO RELEASE THE THUMBS FROM THE TAPE!**

After these challenging statements I hope I have aroused your curiosity to fever pitch and that being so, I shall now set about alleviating your magical sufferings. The secret is that the Tapes are feked by having either side a tiny press stud sewn in the center, see Fig 12. They are given a twist when being shown so that they are genuinely linked through each other, see Fig. 11. Then when the two ends of one tape are being tied round one thumb, the twist is secretly undone, but the other tape remains in position because the stud holds it there. Sub-

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sequently the other tape is tied round the remaining thumb and it is only necessary to separate the press studs to allow the hoops to pass on to the arm. The tapes remain tied all the time! See Fig. 13.



The Tape Thumb Tie was first shown here by Brindamor many years ago. The faked tape only had a loose stitch to hold it. Mrs. Holden devised the snap button method as an improvement which has been sold by Max Holden for several years.

METHOD I

Obtain some good quality white tape, five eighths of an inch wide, and cut two lengths

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about eight or ten inches in length. Take the smallest press stud you can get and for preference, or should I say for safety's sake, it should be painted white. Sew half the stud to the centre of either tape.

To present the effect, freely show the two pieces of tape, holding them in the middle by the thumb and forefinger, to conceal the studs. Now place the tapes together so that the two sides of the stud coincide and press them fast. Tell the audience that you will link the two tapes through each other, and this is exactly what you really do. Grasp two ends in either hand and pull in opposite directions several times quite vigorously, ostensibly to demonstrate that it is impossible in this position to get them apart. Now place the centre part under the right thumb but in doing so transfer the tapes from the right hand to the left and this will give you an opportunity to grasp one string from either end as you do so. This will automatically straighten out the tapes again but the change is hidden by the thumb and fingers. When the tapes are passed under the right thumb, bring up the two ends of one tape and request a spectator to tie them round the right thumb. Whilst this is being done the other two ends of tape are allowed to dangle down and give the appearance of being actually linked with the tied one. The reader will appreciate that actually they are only held by the press studs. Now put the left thumb up to the right

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so that the stud comes between them, and have the tape tied round this in a similar manner.

The whole procedure is very convincing, and when the hoops are thrown, the performer has only to separate his thumbs slightly and the press stud will open and allow the hoops to pass through. The entire lack of fumbling or curious moves make this certainly a thumb tie *par excellence*. The tapes should be finally cut off and disposed of.

METHOD II.

Victor Farelli has kindly given me permission to include here his own improvement on the above method. The difference is that instead of using a press stud he joins the two tapes together with a dab of rope cement. This is quite strong enough to hold the tapes together until the performer wishes to break them apart. This method does not allow the two tapes to be shown separately at the commencement, or at the finish.

My own variation which may appeal to some, would allow the tapes to be examined after the trick was finished. Instead of the press stud or cement, lay the two lengths of tape together and tie a single strand of good white cotton round the centre, using several knots. Cut the ends very short. The tapes are shown, but not separately. The procedure for tying is the same as before, but to separate the thumbs all you have to do is to break the cotton.

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A final word on the presentation on all these methods is this. When the tying is finished, hold the thumbs tightly locked together and entwine the lower fingers to help take the strain, then ask a spectator to take hold of either wrist and endeavour to pull the thumbs apart. To the audience this proves conclusively that everything is absolutely secure and above board!

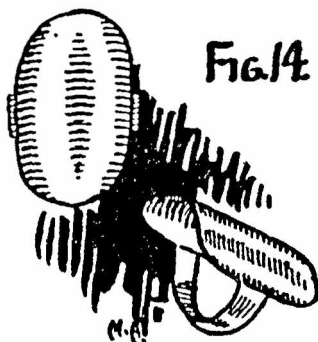
THE GIMMICK METHOD

Although so many members of the magical fraternity would not deign to use a 'gimmick' when sleight of hand will suit the purpose, there is no doubt that many people have worked this method and got away with it very successfully. Indeed, to my own knowledge, a first class card manipulator admitted to me that he always worked with the metal feke and had never been caught out on it. Of course, we all know that what you can get away with depends on an individual's personality, and flair for showmanship and bluff should he get in a tight corner or be openly challenged. However, in order to have this little work as complete as possible, here is the method.

The apparatus consists of a flat ring of metal with an oval flange on one side. The diameter of the ring must allow for the thumb to be slipped in and out quite easily. The flange is approximately one inch long and three-quarters of an inch wide and is curved to fit the underneath of the thumb.

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The whole thing is painted flesh colour when finished. See illustrations in Fig. 14.



In presenting the effect, only one piece of soft string or cord is required. The performer has the 'gimmick' on the right thumb before commencing the trick, and the oval flange should be on the underneath. By crooking the first joint of the thumb you will find that the 'gimmick' can be held firmly in position without slipping off the thumb.

Now pass the cord to the member of the audience who has agreed to tie you up. Crook the right thumb so that it completely hides the 'gimmick' and bend the left thumb over the top of the right. You will find that this will mask the ring at the top of the thumb. Let the palms of the hands come closely together whilst the thumbs are being tied. To avoid having the spectator passing the cord twice round, and so doub-

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS

ling the risk, you can ask him to double the cord in half before starting. It is then put once round and securely tied.

The presentation is exactly the same as for any other method, and you will find that you can undoubtedly get in and out very rapidly. When you have finished, the best plan is to have a pair of scissors handy and ask the spectator to cut the cord. As he does so you quickly pull it off with the left hand and hold it out for his inspection. This will give sufficient misdirection to enable you to pocket the 'gimmick'.

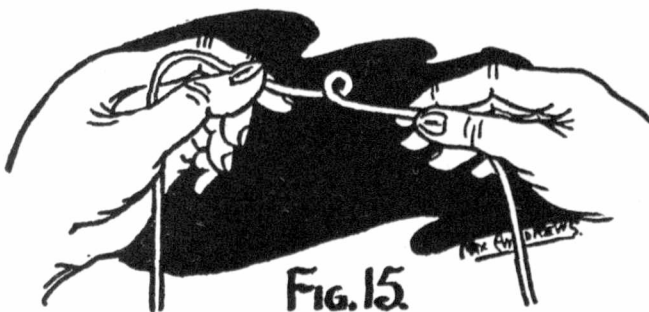
A very good way of presenting is to have the feke concealed by the fingertips of the two hands held together, whilst freely showing the thumbs quite ordinary. Now when you approach the person who is to do the tying, you quickly dip your hands downwards momentarily and at the same time thrust your right thumb through the ring. The thumb is immediately crooked, and the ring covered by the left thumb which comes on top. You are then ready for the tying. Although this takes a little time to describe it is but the work of a moment, and is repeated in the reverse way at the finish.

THE OSMAN THUMB TIE

I am indebted to my friend Cliff Osman for permission to explain his own exclusive method for performing the effect. This is the first time it has been disclosed anywhere and I am sure that my readers will agree that it is a very clever subtlety.

A stiff whipcord of about one-eighth diameter is used and should be well rubbed with beeswax prior to the performance. This serves the twofold purpose of keeping the cord as stiff as possible, and also making it easier to escape from the loop.

Only one piece of cord is used, and it should be of a length sufficient to make the requisite ties without having any left over. I can tell you that it will be approximately eleven inches in length.



Allow the cord to be examined by the committee, and then when you take it back hold it in

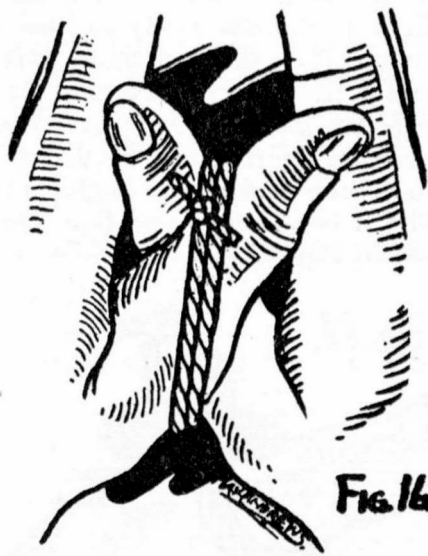
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the middle with both hands, between fingers and thumbs: Roll the cord with each hand at the same time and in the opposite direction, and also close the hands together. You will find that you have created what is commonly called a 'kink,' or otherwise a small twisted loop. Take this small loop between the forefinger and thumb of the left hand and place the loop right in the crutch of the right thumb. It is too small to be noticed, and is completely hidden when the thumb is held tightly against the base of the forefinger. Now have the two ends tied on top of the right thumb. After this lay the left thumb across the right and allow the cord to be tied again tightly. Everything can now be closely examined, but as soon as you release the 'kink' held under the right thumb, you will find that the loop is loose enough to make an easy escape. The kink is shown in Fig. 15.

In order to have the thumbs examined again at any time, with the cord absolutely taut, reinsert the right thumb back in the loop, and with the hands fairly wide apart, allow the left thumb to make a revolution round the right at the same time turning the hands up with palms to audience. The right thumb simply gives a half turn inwards across the left palm. In the finished position the right thumb is pointing to the left and is on top of the left thumb. This move gives a twist in the cord and tightens it up instantly.

THE TEN ICHI THUMB TIE

The name given to this tie is that of a troupe of Japanese performers who first exploited the effect in this country. In actual fact the trick took the country by storm, and owing to the fact that few were able to correctly duplicate the Ten Ichi Thumb Tie, any number of imitations and variations were produced.

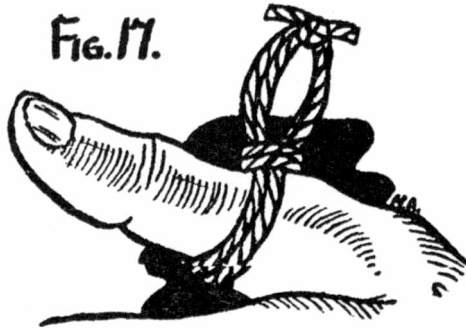


The main secret of the Ten Ichi method was in the use of specially prepared cords which they used. These were stiff cords about one-eighth of an inch thick, and they were covered with rolled strips of Japanese Paper. The main idea of this

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preparation was to produce a stiffness and smooth surface in the cord, which would effect an easy escape. The two cords used should be about fifteen and eighteen inches in length respectively.

To commence the tying, allow the cords to be freely examined, and then place the two thumbs together crossed scissorwise as in Fig. 16. The first cord is wound twice round as shown, and finished off in a double knot, any long ends being cut off. Keep the thumbs closely together so that the cord comes across the thick fleshy part of the thumbs, and is tied tightly. The knot should be at the top of the thumbs. Now have the short cord tied around the first one, so that it comes between the thumbs and at right angles to the first cord. Wind it twice round and tie. The effect is as shown in Fig. 17.



As soon as a loop has passed over the arm, slip the thumb in again quickly and as soon as it

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is straightened out again the cord becomes tight, and can be immediately examined.

The hands should always be held together with palms slightly apart, then when you come to the actual slipping of the thumb, you can let the thumbs dip a little and the movement will be covered by the palms. The actual release is now quite simple, for as soon as the thumbtips are opened slightly, you will find you can withdraw one thumb quite easily. Once it has been released and whilst you are waiting for the committee to throw the hoops, keep the thumbs well down between the palms, or otherwise keep the backs of the hands to the audience.

SPECIALLY PREPARED STRINGS

For those who wish to use the special strings similar to those used by the Ten Ichi Troupe, I give here the method that they employed.

Obtain some stiff cord of the one-eighth thickness variety and also endeavour to get some Japanese fibrous paper. You can sometimes get old Japanese water prints quite cheaply in second-hand picture dealers and this will give you an idea of what the paper looks like. Otherwise you can use a damp strip of brown paper cut to about one inch wide. This is gummed or pasted and then rolled down the entire length of the cord.

The method of rolling is to lay the strip on a

smooth table top diagonally away from you. Put the end of the cord against it, but parallel to the side of the table nearest to you and commence rolling evenly and firmly so that the paper spirals down the cord. Press firmly as you do it to prevent any slackness of the paper. Then when you have finished the end of the cord should be tied to prevent them unwinding.

The stiffness of these papers will cause them to keep a complete loop when thumb is withdrawn and thus there is no fumbling when the time comes to re-insert it.

THE M. A. BLUFF TIE

Here is an idea for those who enjoy real cheating. Mind you, if you can get away with it, it is magic just the same. Some magicians amuse me very much when on principle, they choose the hard way of doing things. They will always use very complicated sleight of hand to do what most people would use a simple 'gimmick' for. By doing this they feel that they are being more honest with their public! So what!! The public know they are being cheated and deceived; indeed, having paid their money they would be disappointed if they were not.

To my mind, its all justifiable magic if well put over, and cleverness is no better than a bare-

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faced swindle. In fact I prefer the latter, and the audience of course, cannot differentiate.

For this tie use a very thick piece of white cord (or round) elastic, silk or cotton covered. Bind the left thumb in the centre of the cord, taking the cord twice round. Tie securely, then place left over right thumb and tie again. Of course you can get out very easily as the elastic stretches. Similarly you can get in again as the elastic is stiff and holds its shape.

This tie is only suitable if you are prepared to arrange for a stooge in the audience or if you have your own assistant. In the latter case, have a piece of thick white string to match the elastic. Get your assistant to take this out and have it examined and either on the way back to the stage, or in passing it to the performer, the string is switched for the elastic. It will never be noticed at even quite close range.



DUNNINGER'S THUMB TIE

This was originated as Dunninger solemnly admits, for amateurs. Just where this definition starts and finishes would be hard to define. The tie however, is certainly very cheeky and to my mind is one which would require more nerve or showmanship than the average 'amateur' possesses, in order to safely get away with it. However, you may think differently, so here it is.

A stout cord is used for the tying, and a little preparation is necessary beforehand. A piece of the cord is tied twice round one thumb, and the ends are tied or sewn together. This hand, or rather thumb is kept out of sight from the audience until the psychological moment. Then the hand with the tied thumb is brought up under cover of the other hand. See illustrations in Figs. 18 and 19.

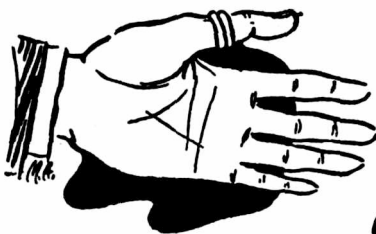


FIG. 18.



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The spectator is given a piece of stout cord about fourteen inches long, and he places it under the thumbs. With a little misdirection such as pushing the man slightly under pretext of getting him to stand in a slightly more advantageous position, you manœuvre the lower thumb out of the string. Thus it is tied round only the top thumb. So far as the spectators are concerned, it looks quite genuine, and it is obvious now that any of the usual—or should we say unusual effects of the Thumb Tie routine can be performed.

When the demonstration is finished get someone to cut the strings with a sharp penknife, commencing with the lower one.

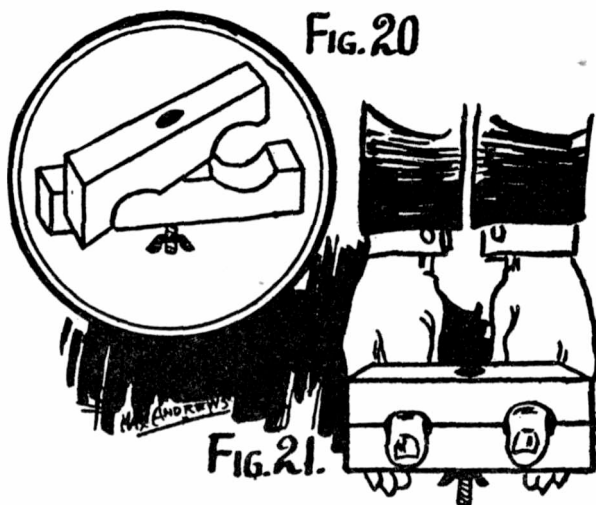
THE THUMB STOCKS

Although not strictly a Thumb Tie, this is actually a mechanical Thumb Restraint and the effects which can be performed are so similar that I thought it worthy of inclusion in this present collection.

The stocks are usually made of wood consisting of two small bars held together by a long bolt which runs right through the centre of the two blocks, terminating in a wing nut. Through either end of the blocks a hole is drilled in such a manner that the centre of the hole is at that point where the blocks meet, and thus each block

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is only cut with a half circle. A glance at the illustration will make everything quite clear.



The real secret of the manner in which you escape however, lies in the way these thumb holes are cut. One is cut slightly **above** the center line of the two blocks, and the other is cut just slightly **below**. Now the holes are cut of a size just sufficiently large to accommodate the thumbs when the blocks are parted and then closed together. The screwing up of the wing nut should prevent the thumbs from being withdrawn.

Now take the top block and give it half a turn on the pivot of the bolt. This will reverse the ends so that half the hole which was **high**

now comes opposite the half of the hole which was cut low. The result is that a hole is formed which is much larger, whilst on the other side of the blocks is a hole a little smaller!

The method of working is to have the stocks examined in a Locked position. Then unscrew the wing nut and invite a spectator to insert his thumbs. Screw it up again and then ask him if he can possibly get his thumbs out. After a struggle he will say no. You then release him and ask him to screw you in. With a quick movement in walking round him you turn the top half of the stocks round so that you get the large and small hole. Insert your thumbs and the one that goes through the large hole, keep the thumb pointing downward so that it completely fills up the hole and prevents it being noticed. It is obvious by now of course that you can pull one thumb out instantaneously and re-insert it again without any kind of a fumble.

If you wish to work the Thumb Stocks in the ordinary way, then you will find everything in the Chapter on Presentation. It is possible however, to put on a very different kind of an act with these stocks. In fact they are often listed by magical dealers as Spirit Stocks, as they are very suitable for demonstrating so called spirit manifestations.

You will need a screen or a sheet suspended by ropes or some other form of cover if you wish

SIXTEEN THUMB TIE GEMS

to present a spirit act, for it is obvious that you cannot allow the audience to see exactly how you work, but it is necessary that they appreciate the result of your efforts. Have also a small table handy on which to place all the objects on which the spirits will display their skill. A musical instrument, preferably one you can get a little music out of is best. Even a gramophone would do but keep it muffled. A good plan would be to have the gramophone completely unwound so it would be necessary to wind it before it would play! Also a tambourine, a pair of slates tied together with chalk between, a piece of rope for knotting and any other tests you wish to perform. After the thumbs have been secured, you can sit on a chair, and to make it more impressive you can be bound to the chair with ropes.

As soon as the screen is placed round you, release your hand and commence producing manifestations. You can even untie the other ropes round your body, and finally walk round from the screen with your thumbs apparently still securely fastened!

THE THUMB SCREWS

This is another piece of apparatus for putting an apparent restraint on the thumbs to prevent their release, and it can be used either for the thumb tie or spirit show effects.

The thumb screws are made in metal, and their shape can be best imagined by reference to the illustration.

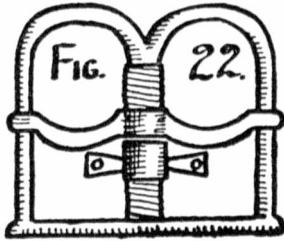
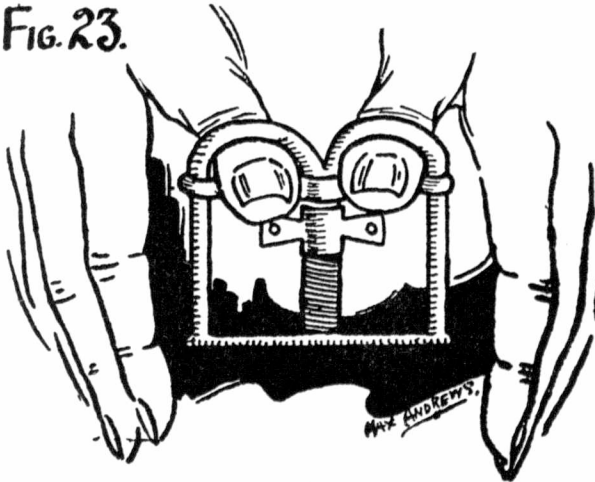


FIG. 23.

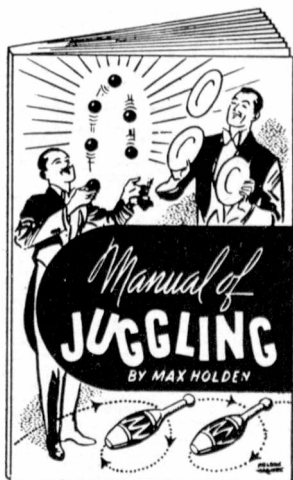


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The two loops in the top of the frame are made to take the thumbs, whilst the large wing nut in the centre screws up the lower bar to lock them tightly. It has every appearance of a genuine restraint, although the escape is very cheeky, and is made by the performer.

This apparatus is only obtainable through a good magical depot. I might add that it will bear the closest examination before and after the trick.

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