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# ROUTINE WITH THIMBLES Wilfred Bader. 0000000000

# AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

About seven years ago I decided to include a thimble routine in my show. After much trial and experiment, I hit upon the following simple but effective routine are which has gone down well with all types of audiences account the final production of ten thimbles being a real "applause provoker";

The following instructions are split up under four headings:

PREPARATION -SIEIGHTS AND STEALS ROUTINE PROPER ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATIONS.

I have placed "PREGENTATION" first because I cannot impress upon you too strongly, the importance of the correct placing of the holders. The success of the entire routine depends upon this coorspecially in the final "steals" for the production of ten thimbles.

PREPARATION,

You have two holders.coole clothesone metal. The metal one is similar to Doctor Tarbell's, with an improvement enabling you to equalise the tension of the elastic on all four thimbles. Round elastic is used deliberately as it makes for a smoother release.coolat elastic tending to drag on the thimbles. To set this holder,follow these instructions carefully, and remember that it's correct position is of the <u>utmost importance</u>. The position is shown in Figs.l & 2. To get absolutely correct placing,do this. Place the four thimbles you are going to use on the right hand, in the holder. Now insert the fingers of the right hand into the thimbles, little finger at the bottom, thumbextended upwards, and hold against the body. Now slide hand with fake and thimbles, under the coat until hand and thumb are completely covered. While you press the holder firmly against the waistenat, have somebody mark with chalk, the edge nearest the centre of the body. Remove coat, and fix holder in the correct

position. You should now be able to reach inside your coat, thumb extended above fist, and insert fingers into thimbles, without thumb being visible to audience. (Fig. 1) The concealment of the thumb is important, as will be seen in the routine instructions.

At 'B' in Fig.l, is shown a small band of clastic sewn to waistcoat to hold one thimble. In this case use a fairly stout clastic about half an inch wide, Place this immediately above the metal holder.

At 'C' is a similar loop. To get the correct placing for this lift left lapol when you insert right hand into holder 'A' coccleft thumb should be beneath lapol. Matk the place, and then fix loop so that when left hand lifts lapel, left thumb enters the thimble it conceals.

Before finally fixing the holders, try out the positions several times, making absolutely sure that they are just right for an easy and natural engagement of the thimbles.

The cloth holder is intended for the left hand jacket pocket of a dinner suit or left trousers pocket in the case of 'tails'. I adopted this little device after several unsuccessful trials with mechanical holders. It special attention is paid, as before, to correct placing, and the presentation followed carefully, an easy and unsuspicious steal is achieved. As in instructions for the metal holder, assemble with fingers inserted into thimbles fixed in the holder. Now lower the whole slowly down into the left hand jacket pocket until the extended thumb rests lightly on the front corner of the pocket. (Fig.3) The thimbles are shown in the sketch for clarity, but, of course, are really out of sight inside the pocket. When you have the holder placed correctly, fix it along top edge from inside of coat, to prevent thimbles talking against the pins as they are withdrawn. Now try it out. Your fingers should just engage thimbles as left thumb comes to rest on top edge of pocket. Do this several times, moving holder if necessary, until your fingers glide straight into thimbles by merely resting your hand casually in pocket. (With thumb outside)

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#### SLEIGHTS AND STEALS.

Four simple sleights only are used in this routine, ... and three special 'steals'.... one for the colour change, and two for the final production of ten thimbles on the fingers of both hands.

First we will deal with the sleights. They are simple sleights - known to all thimble workers...but it will be best if we deal with the routine right from the beginning.

# BASIC THUMB PAIM FROM FOREFINGER.

This is the most used sleight in the whole routine, and must be practiced until it is as nearly perfect as possible. It is illustrated in Fig.4, which shows the performer's view. A, B,& C in this figure, show how the forefinger holding the thimble is hold extended, back of hand to audience, second, third, and little fingers ourled into palm. The forefinger is rapidly bent back, and the thimble engaged in the crotch of the thumb....then the forefinger is extended once again......

Take a thimble in each hand and practice this slaight continuously until you can with great rapidity place the thimble into the crotch of the thumb, and recover it. When you can do this, AND NOT BEFORE, go on to these

# BASIC THUMB PALM FROM SECOND FINGER.

This is exactly the same sleight sa the one with which we have just dealt, except that the thimble is recovered on the second finger. That is coplace thimble into crotch from forefinger, and recover on second. PRACTICE THESE TWO MOVES WITH BOTH HANDS UNTIL YOU CAN RAPIDLY PRODUCE OR VANISH A THIMBLE FROM EITHER FIRST OR SECOND FINGERS AT WILL.

## FINGER PALM.

As in the thumb palm, have thimble on extended forefinger. Bend forefinger back into palm, but when curled back with thimble, bend thumb in to rest on thimble tip, and lever it down to curled backsecond, third, and little fingers conthen straighten forefinger. A & B Fig.5 show performer's view. Concealed thimble is shown as a dotted line at 'B',

### CHANGE OVER PAIM,

This simple sleight is really two in one....it is a combination of the thumb palm from second finger of the right hand, and finger palm in the left hand. It plays a very important part in this routine, both for showing both hands empty, and for the colour change effect.

You have vanished thimble from right forefinger, and it is now in the crotch of the right thumb. With back of hand to audience, engage second finger in thimble, keeping forefinger pointing to left thumb, which is held facing audience. (Fig. 6A is a view from performer's right side, left palm being held slightly extended from left side.) Now swing left hand across the body, passing it in front of right hand which should swing also, so that they pass each other in centre of body. As they pass, and right hand is momentarily concealed by left palm, extend second finger of the right hand into left palm...enow the left second, third, and little fingers curl round thimble. (Fig.6B) The left forefinger is still extended, finally pointing to open right palm, now extending slightly from right side. (Fig.6C) You have apparently just pointed to the empty left palm, then to the empty right palm...but have actually transferred thimble from the right hand to the left, where it is held in the finger palm.

Practice it continuously until it becomes one easy movement without pause.

#### STEAL FOR THE COLOUR CHANGE.

After previous vanish of thimble in the routine, it is concealed in the thumb palm of the right hand. Reach under coat on the left side, and as you do so return thimble to right forefinger, and insert second finger into yellow thimble in holder B Fig.l. Curl second finger back into palm, and bring hand out, showing only red thimble on extended forefinger.

STEAL FOR PRODUCTION OF FOUR THIMBLES ON LEFT HAND.

This is the first 'steal' for the production of four thimbles on left hand.

Rest hand casually in left hand pocket, engage thimbles, then withdraw hand, curling all four fingers back into the palm as hand leaves pocket, but immediately extend left forefinger empty, leaving it's thimble in the thumb palm.

STEAL FOR THE FINAL PRODUCTION OF FIVE THIMBLES ON RIGHT HAND.

This is the final steal, to enable five thimbles to be produced on the right hand. It is not difficult, and has nice misdirection, as you apparently go into coat for another thimble as on previous occasions in the routine.....but actually you come out with four concealed thimbles, and one showing on right forefinger.

Immediately previously in the routine you have apparently thrown a thimble on to the third finger of the left hand, actually finger palming it in the right, second and third fingers being curled round thimble, forefinger extended empty, and thumb vertically above hand.

Lift left hand lapel with left hand (which has four thimbles) ontering left thumb into thimble under lapel. (Fig. 10) Reach under coat with right hand, and when it is entirely concealed beneath the coat, lower right thumb into thimble, and immediately straighten it out. Insert all four fingers into thimbles in the holder, and withdraw them.

Now, as you bring your hand from under coat, execute the following moves before it comes into view. Lower thimble on

thumb back into finger palm. Curl second, third, and little fingers, (with their thimbles) round it. Then withdraw hand with forefinger extended with it's thamble in viw. Fig.7 shows performer's view of right hand with concealed thimbles.

You may, at first, feel that you have 'a bit of a handful', but there is ample cover, and as you will find later, they are not concealed for long.

That concludes the instructions for sleights and 'steals' except to impress upon you once more the necessity to practice them continuously until you can execute them smoothly, before attempting the routine which follows.

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## ROUTINE.

Now we come to the routine proper. I only give the mechanical details to avoid confusion. It is proceeded by what I have called an 'Outline of Effocts.' The idea of this, is to give you, concisely an idea of what the finished routine will look like to an audience.

Before you get this far, if you have followed instructions, you have mastered the following sleights :

> THUME PAIM TO & FROM FIRST & SECOND FINGER T.P. FINGER PAIM F.P. CHANGE OVER PAIM C.O.P.

From now on they will be referred to by their initials, and similarly with 'left hand' L.H. core'right hand' R.H.

## OUTLINE OF EFFECTS.

1. Thimble produced on right forefinger.

2. Thimble vanished from left fist.

3. Thimble reproduced from left olbow.

4. Repeat above series, but fail to find thimble.

- 5. Thimble found in loft fist.
- 6. Thimble egain vanishes from loft fist.
- 7. Thimble produced from mouth.
- 8. Thimble vanishes from left fist, penetrates legs, and reappears on right forefinger.

- 9. Thimble vanishes from right forefinger.
- 10. Thimble recovered from under coat.
- 11. Thimble pushed through fist ... changes colour.
- 12. This is repeated and thimble changes back to priginal colour.
- 13. Thimble tossed into air, returns to right jacket pocket.
- 14. Thimble vanishes from left hand.
- 15. Sucker explanation.
- lo. Thimble dances from finger to finger.
- 17. Four thimbles produced on left hand.
- 18. One thimble thrown onto left thumb.
- 19. Surprise production of five thimbles on right hand.

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Commence facing audience, with thimble in R.H. thumb palma reach into the air on the L side and produce on R. forefinger, other fingers curled back.

Bring L.H. up,palm facing audience,fingers pointing front and down to floor, Rest for Minger and thimble on palm (Hig.8A). Swing left hand clockwise till fingers are above R. forefinger Fig.8B, then curl them downwards over thimble, and apparently draw it off finger. It is reall T.P. in R.H., as left fingers cover B. forefinger and thimble.

Carrying L fist away to L of body, move fingers in a brumbling motion, as though squaezing thimble away, then make a tossing motion into the air, opening palm to show that the thimble has vanished. Reach up under L elbow and reproduce thimble on R forefinger. Repeat these moves, but insert second linger of RH into concealed thimble. After vanishing thimble, seach up under elbow, but fail to reproduce it. Try again and hail, then COP leaving thimble in L fist.

Blow on L fist, then push R forefinger through fist from side emerging on the left with the thimble.

Draw thimble block through fist, FP under obver of fist... forefinger comes but empty. Toss L hand into air, opening alm...thimble has again ventered.

Now bring RH, thimble M2, up to chine.ees hand approaches hin, insert thumb rapidl, jute thimble, straighten out and nsert thumb with thimble into mouth. Draw thurb slowly out all exhibit thimble.

Lower RH to knee level on R side, forefinger and thumb extended, other fingers curled into palm, back of hand to audience. IH is formed into a fist and lowered to knee level. (Fig.9) Bring RH smartly over to left fist, thumb and thimble foremost. FP thimble just before thumb is momentarily inserted and withdrawn from L fist. Return RH to R side. Now rap smartly on left side of leg with fist apparently containing thimble, immediately reproducing from FP onto R forefinger.

Extond LH palm outwards to audience, fingers pointing to L, thumb to roof, hand at about chest level. Place forefinger with thimble vertically across L palm, R second thrid and fourth fingers also extended, but slightly apart from forefinger. (Fig. 10 shows audience view) Tap palm with thimble, then conceal thimble on fingertip behind back of hand. (Fig. 11) Return to front and tap palm again with thimble. Do this rapidly about three times, On the last time, bring forefinger out minus thimble which is TP. (Fig. 12) Thimble has vanished.

Now slowly lower RH till fingertips are just clear of LH. Turn RH palm outwards to audience with fingertips behind LH. As you turn hand, rapidly bend second finger into thimble and straighten up behind LH. (Fig. 13) The audience sees both palms empty.

Turn RH back to audience returning thimble to TP. That is, you reverse the movements you have just made, bringing hand down so that fingertips clear L palm. Once again thimble has vanished.

Insert Rh under coat and produce thimble again on forefinger, also execute the first'steal'. You now have red thimble on R forefinger, and yellow thimble on bent back second finger, back of hand to audience.

Now point to empty palm of LH with forefinger of RH containing thimble. Then exceute COP with the yellow thimble, retaining red on R forefinger. You thus end up with yellow thimble in L finger palm, pointing with L forefinger to empty R palm, with R forefinger extended holding thimble (Fig. 14)

Curl L forefinger back to form fist, and lower it on L side to about waist level. Turn R hand back to aulience, curling second third and little fingers into palm, pointing with forefinger to L fist.

Now make a sharp flicking motion with forefinger and thimble towards the L fist, counting mentally one costwo costhree. On the count of 'three' TP thimble and insert finger into left fist and yellow thimble, pushing finger and thimble right through fist until they emerge at the opposite end. You have apparently changed thimble from red to yellow by pushing it through your fist.

Now withdrwa yellow thimble clear of LH. You have red thimble TP in R hand. Insert R second finger and repeat previous sequence of moves, changing thimble back to red.

Next hold L hand in a partly closed position, fingers cupped, about waist high. Make a rapid throwing motion with the R forefinger , under cover of which thimble is TP, and left hand closed as though it had caught the thrown thimble. (Fig. 15).

Practice the timing of this move repeatedly until you get a perfect illusion of catching the thrown thimble.

Your RH now contains concealed, rod thimble TP and yellow thimble on second finger.

Toss LH upward, opening palm...,follow imaginary flight of himble with your oyes. As it apparently starts to descend, rasp R jacket pocket, and hold it open to catch the thimble. lance down into pocket, smile, and reaching in, produce red thimble rom TP leaving the yellow one behind in pocket.

when wacring tails, this move is not possible. In this case cach under L out-away and reproduce thimble from TP at the same ime straighten second finger and replace yellow thimble in older B Fig.1

Show thimble, then lower both palms down to front of body, oth facing audience (Figl6) Turn them back outwards until thumbs re almost touching. url IH round R forefinger and thimble, and apparently draw himble off in LH, really TP in R. (Fig. 17). Crumble thimble away rom LH and turn palm outwards. Turn R palm outwards also, but as ou do so, insert second finger into thimble and straighten till op is just behind back of LH. (Fig. 18) Both palms are empty.

Turn both hands back outwards again, TP thimble as you do so, seping all fingers pointing to the floor. Let hands drop to ides, and at this point go into fake explanation.

I will give the resentation of this series of moves, here, 1th the sleights, to avoid confusion.

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In your own style tell the audience that they have seen a thimble vanish, reappear, change colour etc. Possibly they have been a little puzzled as to how it is done. Out of pure generosity you now propose to show them.

"Several times, Ladies and Gentlemen, you have seen this thimble vanish and reappear from my left elbow. (Execute the first series of moves in the routine.) Looks clever, does'nt it ? Well..., here's what really happens..., you sec..., when I place the thimble in my "LH, I don't actually put it there at all..., as I close my LH, (suit the action to the words) I really hide the thimble behind it on my R forefinger. (Do this openly, keeping thimble on finger tip out of sight behind open LH. Fig.19) The thimble has apparently vanished...but all I have to do now is run my finger up my arm and produce the thimble from my elbow..., simple, is'nt it ? I'll do it again." (Repeat the whole sequence, but this time, as you hide fingertip behind LH.TP thimble in the RH. When you reach elbow, pull finger out MINUS thimble:

"There, you see how simple it really is ?" and with a smile produce thimble from right knee, actually recovering it from finger palm.

Now prepare for the second 'steal. Extend thimble on R forefinger to R of body, palm to audience, about chest high. Turning body slightly to the right, rest LH in jacket pocket. (If tails, LH trousers pocket.) thumb on outdide. If you have taken pains with your preparation, LH fingers should now be engaged in the thimbles. Placing of hand in pocket should be done casually ....concentrate all attention on exposed thimble on R forefinger whilst you address the audience as follows:- "Of course, I could go on indefinitely, but I think the time has come to close the show. Most acts finish with a song...but whoever heard of a thimble singing ? However, with or without musice, 'He' will attempt the steps of an old-fashioned waltz." As you say these last underlined words, execute the second 'steal' pointing with left forefinger to thimble.

If musical accompaniement is available, arrange for a suitable waltz to be played. I use "My Hero" from the "Chocolate Soldier". This blends in nicely with the routine.

As music starts both hands are lowered to sides of body, packs to audience,forefingers extended downwards. In LH are poncealed four thimbles... three on the curled back second, third and little fingers, and one in the TP.(Fig. 20). Beat time to the music with both fingers, one two three, one two three. On the third beat vanish the thimble from R forefinger by transferring it to the TP. Simultaneously produce thimble on L forefinger. Still beating time to the music, reverse these moves. If this is done rhythmically, the thimble will appear to dance from finger to finger. Repeat several times, then on the third beat of the final transfer, produce thimble on each forefinger.

After a slight pause, pick up the beat of the music, and on the third beat as before vanish thimble from R forefinger by TP. Simultaneously straighten L second finger and produce thimble. Continue transfer from finger to finger as before, using second finger of IH. Again after a few times produce the thimble on R forefinger at the same time as the appearnce of the thimble on L second finger.

Three thimbles are now exposed. Still keeping time to the music throw thimble from RH on to L.Really FP it as you straighten little finger of IH to show arrival. Immediately reach into air with the RH reproducing thimble from FP on to R thumb.

Apparently throw this thimble onto third finger of LH, but really FP it again. Straighten curled back finger to show arrival.

You now have four thimbles on LH to which you point with R forefinger. R hand has thimble FP ready fro the last 'steal'.

Facing L.count four thimbles on IH., reach into coat for lifth, execute the third'steal, bring out thimble on forefinger, with other four concealed as previously instructed.

Carry LH with four thimbles away to L of body, hand with back to audience, curling L thumb back into palm to conceal thimble from holder C under lapel. Make a throwing motion with R forelinger towards LH, TP thimble, and simultaneously straighten L thumb.

Drop right hand to waist level and turn LH palm outwards to udience, exhibiting five thimbles.

You take a bow as if you have concluded the act. After a light pause, reach into the air on right side, insert R thumb into inger palmed thimble, straighten, insert forefinger into Thumb balmed thimble, straighten all fingers and exhibit ten thimbles ith a flourish.

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#### ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATIONS.

#### CHILDREN.

I have always found the thimble routine immensely popular with children. I insert it in the show after three or four other effects, say about fifteen minutes...and then introduce it something like this.....

"Well, Boys and Girls, I've been talking to you for quite a while, and it's made me a little hoarse....so, if you don't mind, I'll let a little friend of mine take over the show. (Reach into hir and produce thimble)..... Ah ' here he is. His name is Percy. Just a thimble...but, believe me Boys and Girls, he's very clever indeed. Now I want you to watch closely whilst he does a few ilever tricks all by himself."

Go into routine, and if you can play up an air off surprise t the various vanishes and reproductions, so much the better. You'll find that the children invariably start guessing ildy as to where the thimble has gone. You can make capital out f this by finding the thimble as far as the guessed at place as ossible. If this calls for varying the routine slightly....it ill be found well worth while.

I use the following little stunt in drawing-room children's hows....it usually brings shrieks of laughter from the little lctim's pals, and usually one or two of them want to try it hemselves. You can safely let them...but not more than twice, you'll have the entire audience on it's feet and out of hand.

Briefly..., you pause in routine, call up a little assistant, d stand him on your L side. Take his arm by the right wrist, d hold it with the palm facing the audience. Lay your right refinger across his palm, then tap with forefinger and thimble, ying to the little assistant, "I'm going to count one...two... ree," synchronising the tap with the counting. "When I get to hree' I want you to grasp the thimble, and hold it tight." u do this once and let them actually grasp the thimble as you ing it down on the palm for the last time. Say "That's the bring the finger down to the count of 'three' quickly TP thimble. The child will grasp the empty fingertip. You thdraw finger from his fist, and produce thimble from victim's or elbow. Thank him and sond him back to his seat.

Having gone through all the single moves, the final duction lends itself to a little audience participation.

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Address the children as follows:-

Well Boys and Cirls, my little pal has finished his show, and he's going to end up with a little dance. Now sa we have'nt any music, If there IS a pianist, see that he IS NOT NEAR THE PIANO) I want you to help. As I beat time with my finger cone, two three, one, two, three I want you all to count with me" (You do this a few times to get them all busily chanting, then start the thimble fancing from hand to hand as per routine.)

When you reach four thimbles, stop, and produce the fifth rom FP onto the right thumb...then pointing to empty L thumb, say, I'm sorry, Boys and Girls, but I've made a mistake....this himble (holding up right thumb) should have been on this thumb, holding up empty left thumb) But never mind....I'll soon put hat right...tell you what I'll do....I'll send him up my left leeve to my shoulder, then wriggle him out from under mymcoat, nd throw him onto my left thumb."

Start them counting again, hold up left arm fairly high, and pparently throw thimble off thumb into sleeve, really finger alming it ready for the last steal.

Hold left arm vertically and pretend to wriggle thimble own the sleeve, stroking left arm with right fingers to apparently elp it along. You then reach under coat and pretend to grope for nimble, not forgetting to wriggle the shoulder as if to help the nimble through the sleeve, and execute the last 'steal' bringing it the thimbles concealed.

The exposed thimble is apparently thrown up the left sleeves nrow this thimble onto the left thumb, really FP it, then count if five thimbles on left hand and take a bow.

After a pause, reach out with right hand for the other five.

Hold up both hands for a moment, exhibiting ten thimbles....

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## CONCERT OR CABARET.

For concert or cabaret shows to adult audiences, I recommend at the routine be worked in silence, except for the accompanient, where possible, of dreamy music. Have the planist or chestra play something that has no recognized beat, as you will nd it very difficult to make slow graceful movements to music tempo.

Do all your sleights gracefully ... move the hands across the

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ody in wide sweeps....avoid all jerky movements.

BE RELAXED.....after all is said and done, a thimble routine ls a whimsical...intimate little trick.....PLEASE TREAT IT AS SUCH.....and if you can manage a little chuckle at the various sleights, you will usually find it very infectious.

Stop the music for the fake explanation, and finally give a lirect cue to the orchestra to commence the old-fashioned waltz to the final production of ten thimbles.

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## LEVITATION.

The following levitation of a thimble is most effective for tage and platform work...and is invariably used by the author n his routine. However, since it is not advisable to use it in he drawing room, it has been omitted from the routine proper, and s appended here for those who may wish to use it.

THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT A PIPE DREAM, And for those who want omething just that little bit different....THIS IS IT.

Drill a small hole in the top of a thimble, and pass through t a strand of No.34 black cotton. Tie several small knots one ver another to make a large one which is then drawn inside the himble. This knot should be large enough to hold the thimble, ntil when required, a slight tug will release it.

The length of thread will vary with the performer.....but bout 30" should be sufficient. The loose end is attached to the ottom button of the jacket.

The routine is commenced with this thread attached to the himble, and performed as already laid out until the fifth effect in Outline of Effects' is reached.

At this point the thimble is found in the left fist, and ithdrawn on the right forefinger. Forefinger places thimble back cross left palm.

To do this, it is important that the left hand be held palm up humb pointing to audience, about waist level. With a circular wceping movement, right hand places thimble into left so that THREAD 'S HANGING DOWN ON AUDIENCE SIDE OF HAND.

Now left fist is turned up as in Fig.21... thread emerging from he top. Right hand is swept up into position over left (Fig.21) humb engaging thread and carrying it up with it. Left thumb is now looped into thread as near the button as ossible.

The mere action of drawing the hands slightly apart will cause he thimble to climb up the thread into the right hand, which whibits it for a moment.

A slight tug will now release the thread, and the routine is aken up where you left off.

Although we can assure you that this method is thoroughly ractical, and that the thread does not cause the slightest aconvenience during the early moves of the routine, some performers ill prefer to switch to a threaded thimble specially for this effect o do this, we suggest that a holder similar to that illustrated in ig.l at C, be fitted under the RIGHT lapel. The thimble can be tolen by the right thumb as the lapel is lifted to permit left and to apparently recover a vanished thimble from under coat. This thimble can be casually disposed of in the left trousers peket as performer turns to right and displays thimble on right numb.

After the levitation this thimble is detached from the thread and the routine contained with it.

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