

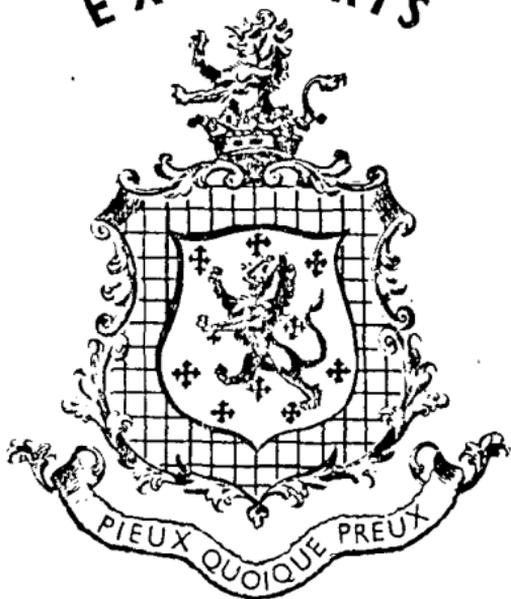
MODERN CONJURING



50 Novel
Illusions
by

PAUL BRUTON

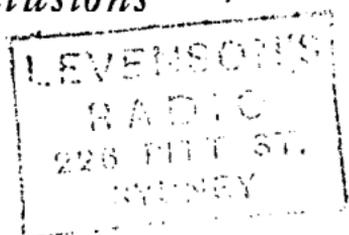
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MODERN CONJURING

50 Novel Illusions



By
PAUL BRUTON

Fully
Illustrated

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Nominal Conundrums..... What am I?..... Think of a Number
Would You Believe it?..... Brain Teasers..... Aggravating Tests
Unpunctuated Passages..... Arithmetical Problems
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THE royal road to entertaining is to be a conjurer. Anything with a mystery about it arrests people's attention. When they are tired of songs, recitations and the playing of musical instruments, your guests will become intensely alert if you regale them with a few good illusions.

This book describes all the tricks you will require for many performances. Glance at any item at random and see how clear the instructions are to follow.

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Modern Conjuring

JUGGLING WITH A HALF-CROWN

ALL good conjurers must be able to juggle with money, and unless you know how to make a penny or a half-crown disappear into thin air, your education will not be complete.

Accordingly, I advise you to practise the following trick. It is not easy to do until you have tried it over dozens of times, but as it can be done in odd moments, there is no reason why you should not master it perfectly.

First of all, take a half-crown—a penny serves almost as well, but to me the slightly greater diameter of the half-crown makes the movements far simpler. Preferably, select one that is not worn because the sharper pattern of a new coin gives you more grip on it.

Take the coin, place it on the fingers of the left hand, palm side, and grip it between the index and little fingers. The first picture of Fig. 1 shows the position exactly.

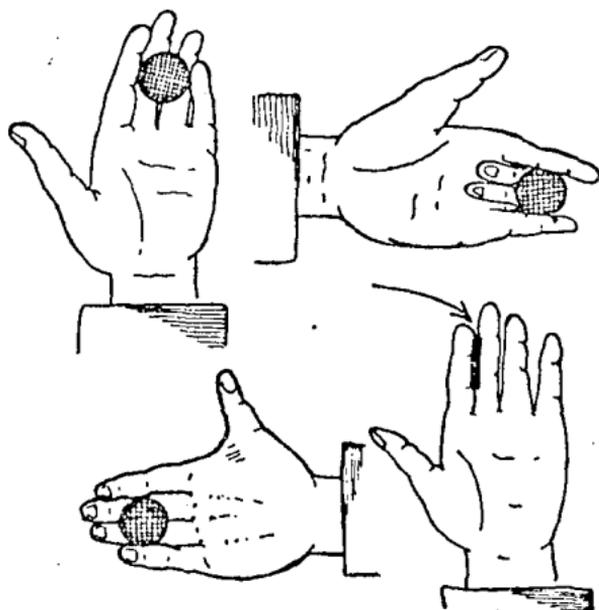


FIG. 1.
JUGGLING WITH A HALF-CROWN.

Next, maintain this grip between the two fingers indicated and, while doing so, slide the second and third fingers under the coin, so that these fingers point to the palm. The second picture shows this position.

Then, with the index and little fingers grip the coin securely and lever it over to the back of the hand by straightening up the second and third fingers. The third picture illustrates this position.

Following that, the little finger is disengaged, the coin swings up and is held as shown in the fourth picture, except that it need not be visible from the front as I have purposely drawn it.

Then you can go on by putting the third finger on the edge of the coin and pressing it over so that it becomes gripped between the second and third fingers.

In this position it can be held so that it is invisible from the back of the hand, whereas when clutched by the two previous fingers it was invisible from the front of the hand.

Lastly, by forcing the thumb on the coin, it can be brought back to the position shown in the first picture.

Now it all amounts to this: by going through all the movements and repeating them over and over again, you can have the coin in your hand all the time and yet, if you show the back and the front of your hand alternately, nobody sees the coin from start to finish.

When worked smoothly it is a very startling performance and one that is worth all the trouble you will have to put into it.

SEEING BY CODE

THERE are a great many mysteries you can perform with the aid of a confederate. Sometimes the confederate will work openly, with the full knowledge of the audience, and sometimes they will not know of his existence. Here is an excellent little performance in which the assistant is recognised as such.

You begin by telling your audience that from early childhood this friend of yours was able to transfer his thoughts to you in the same way as the wireless transmits sounds 'over' the ether. In fact, you rather believe that those who invented wireless took the idea from you, though, of course, you cannot prove it. You continue in this strain for a moment or two and then you offer to prove the truth of what you say.

To do this you submit to being securely blindfolded and you make much of the business, allowing two or three people to come out and see if you really are completely in the dark.

Then, when all is ready, your confederate goes among the onlookers and asks them to lend him various objects.

As he is given an article he asks you about it, thus :

“Is this a sixpence or a shilling ?”
You reply, “A sixpence.”

“Does this watch tell the right time or the wrong time ?” “The wrong time,” you answer.

“Is this handkerchief red, blue, or green ?” “Green,” you reply.

“Is this lady named Miss Jones, Miss Brown or Miss Robinson ?” “Miss Jones,” of course, you say.

Now, without reading any farther, let me ask if you have spotted the trick, because, if you have not it is pretty certain that it will baffle the audience as well. Ninety-nine people out of a hundred don't see how it is done.

This is the scheme. Quite obviously the assistant gives you a choice of answers and your job is to pick out the right one. For question No. 1 the first choice provides the correct answer. For question No. 2 it is the second choice. For question No. 3 it is the third choice. For question No. 4 you are back at the first choice. Keep a check on the number of questions by closing up a finger

each time one is asked. Also arrange with your assistant to pass over questions that should be numbered five and eight so that if anyone should hit on your method, he or she will be immediately put off the scent.

GUESSING THE DOMINO

THE more a trick is a base fraud the more I enjoy performing it. Now, here is one that is a hundred per cent fraudulent, so you may guess it is one I like doing.

First of all you need some dominoes. A really good wooden set only costs sixpence, but you want five sets. When you have them, take out all the ones that have spots on them adding up to 7, and all that add up to 6, and keep them decidedly separate.

Of the first lot there will be five of each of the following: the 4-3, the 5-2, the 6-1 and the 7 blank. Of the second lot, there will be the same number of the following: the double 3, the 4-2, the 5-1 and the 6 blank. Thus each set will consist of twenty dominoes.

Simply for the purpose of doing things neatly I have two squares of three-ply

wood, both painted black, so that they look exactly alike. Each is about a foot square.

On one of the boards, all the "sevens" dominoes are scattered, faces down, and on the other board are all the "sixes."

The "sixes" dominoes are kept out of sight, but the other board is presented to the audience and I ask someone to choose any domino at random, but before he picks I give the whole lot a twist round.

The person who picks is asked to close his hand round the chosen domino and not look at it. That done, I walk back to my table, put down the board with the dominoes and pick up a packet of sealed envelopes. I explain that each envelope contains a number which I have no opportunity of knowing.

Then I come forward. I fan out the envelopes and ask somebody to choose one. They do so and I tell them to open it. They rip it open, pulling out a card bearing a large figure 7.

I now return to the person who selected the domino. "Please open your hand and tell us how many spots are on it." They count the spots. "Seven," they

say, and the whole audience marvels, but one or two wise heads soon begin to think things out. So, to put them completely off the track you take the unused envelopes back to the table, pick up the board with the dominoes and bring it forward to the audience again. "Now, let us try it all over again," you say. But this time you use the "sixes" dominoes and, of course, you have another set of envelopes ready.

I suppose you have jumped to the conclusion that all the first envelopes contained the number 7 and all the second lot the number 6, so there was no fear that a wrong number could be chosen.

Of course, you must not fumble about in changing over from one set of dominoes to the other; but the fact that the two boards are exactly alike allays a good deal of suspicion and people are not quick to realise that a set of dominoes can be anything else but a genuine set.

HALF-CROWNS FROM PENNIES

EVERY good conjurer should be able to hold a coin in the palm of his hand and

at the same time use his fingers as though his hand had nothing in it. If you do not know how to do it, look up page 19 of *Popular Magic*, a Universal Publications book at a shilling.

When you know how to palm a coin in this way, you will find the following a very simple trick.

First get a penny with a hole in it and thread a half-a-yard-long piece of elastic through the hole. Fix one end of the elastic up your right coat sleeve at such a height that when not stretched, neither the elastic nor the coin shows.

As soon as you are ready to perform the trick, palm a half-crown in the left hand and, by stretching the elastic, hold the penny in the tips of the fingers of the right hand.

“Now, ladies and gentlemen, here is a very common or garden penny,” you will say, holding it out for quick inspection. “It was left to me as a legacy by a rich aunt.” At the same time, you wave the fingers of your left hand in a loose manner which suggests that the hand is perfectly empty.

Then you say, “One, two, three,” and immediately you toss both hands into

the air. The penny goes up a short way and then disappears. What happens is that you let the penny go as your arm moves up, and it snaps back into your sleeve. And then you discover the half-crown by pretending to snatch at it as it comes down.

If done neatly, it looks as though you threw a penny into the air and it came down a half-crown—a way of getting rich quickly, in fact.

THE DISAPPEARING COIN

THAT penny, tied to a piece of elastic up your sleeve, can be used for another startling trick.

First of all, you borrow a penny from someone in the audience and carefully have it marked. On your table you have a large cardboard box with the lid thoroughly well sealed down all round; but a slit is cut in it large enough to allow the penny to slip through.

When the coin has been unmistakably marked, you walk to your table to get a silk handkerchief, and as you pick up the latter you drop the coin into the box. It is just as well to give a good cough, as the coin drops, to hide the “plomp.”

When you have the handkerchief, it will be easy to handle it in such a way that nobody notices you are fiddling to get hold of the penny on the elastic. Once you have grabbed it you stretch the handkerchief over it and show the circular outline. You might even allow one or two people to feel it.

Now, you ask everybody to watch carefully. Very deliberately you toss the handkerchief into the air and the penny vanishes. Yes, it has gone up your sleeve again.

You look puzzled and then a bright idea comes to you. "Ah!" you say, "I know," and you go across to the table, pick up the box and shake it. There is the sound of a coin inside. Instantly you pick up an open pocket-knife and start cutting into the cardboard. Actually, you only pretend to do this, so that you are able to account for the slit. "I think I had better allow somebody else to get the coin out," you say, and thereupon hand the box to a member of the audience. He takes the box, cuts a hole in it, gets out the penny, and it is the one that was marked.

THE MAGIC SLATE

SLATES such as children used to write upon and then clean with their sleeves have gone out of fashion, but, none the less, they are soulful things and readily act to your bidding. But, of course, you know all this, though your audience is not so well aware of the fact.

Perhaps it would be amusing to show your onlookers a little matter that proves the point. Take an ordinary slate and ask someone to clean both sides, thus proving that it has nothing on it of any kind.

Now take a "dice" and get a person to shake it up and so reveal a number. That done, take the slate and wrap it up in a sheet of newspaper and put it on the seat of a chair; then invite the one who shook the "dice" to sit on the slate, on the seat, on the chair. Mind you make the request in this particular fashion, because everything naturally depends on it.

Next, request the sitter to think of the number until he can feel it vibrating through his whole body. I don't quite know how he will be able to comply with

your demand, but he usually says, after a few minutes, that the business is proceeding satisfactorily.

Then, ask him to arise and, when he does so, you tear off the paper and exhibit the slate. Upon it is a white impression of the number thought of.

Naturally, it is all too remarkable, until you know how it is done. Previously, you had chalked the figures 1 to 6 on six separate sheets of a newspaper, all the figures being done backwards. According to the number selected by the "dice," so you chose the particular sheet, tore it from the paper and wrapped it round the slate. In the wrapping you were careful to arrange the chalked number to come centrally on the slate, and also on the upper surface of the slate. The pressure of the sitter then imprinted the number on the slate, through the newspaper.

THE CIGARETTE FROM NOWHERE

OF course, it is not usual to get cigarettes from nowhere and that is why this trick may be made to appear very effective.

First, I take an empty packet of cigarettes of the "tens" size, slide out the inner tray and show beyond all doubt that there is nothing in it. I even hand the complete packet to a member of the audience for minute inspection.

When the packet is given back to me, I draw it open once more, close it up and hand it to another person in the audience who looks inside and finds a cigarette there.

How did the cigarette get into the packet? Quite simply. All the time we were examining the packet it was lying along the back of the longest finger of my right hand—held there with a dab of wax. When I shut the box, just before it was found, I slid the finger along the upper face of the box so that the cigarette was pushed inside it.

You must practise the movements a good many times—they are quite simple but they must be done very cleanly.

MAGIC CONFETTI

OF course, confetti is very wonderful stuff and you can make it do all sorts of things. I have known men who have

produced it from the permanent turn-ups of their trousers weeks after they went to a wedding ; but that is not quite what we want to talk about just now.

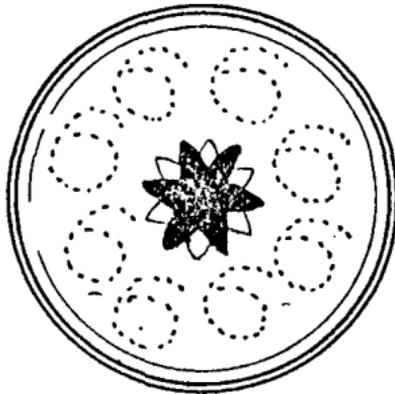


FIG. 2.
MAGIC CONFETTI.

Here, it is a question of a magic tray you possess. It is a black tin tray, circular in shape, the kind you can buy anywhere for sixpence. To make it look distinctive, you stick a design in the centre cut out of silver paper—something like the one suggested in Fig. 2.

After that, you paint the figure 6 in gum several times on the flat part of the tray and then scatter confetti all over. When the gum has dried, shake away the loose confetti and you have a tray

with the figure 6 outlined on it several times in confetti.

The next thing is to get a circular piece of tin that exactly fits the tray, and this you enamel black to look like the tray. In addition, you paste a central design on it, made of silver paper, just like the one on the tray. In fact, they must be as like as two peas. And on the underface you stick a circle of newspaper.

Now for the trick. You come forward to the audience and show them the tray with the tin circle in position. You should grip the edges of the tray so that your fingers are spread on the loose circle and thereby keep it from gaping up or tumbling out.

Having displayed the tray, you put it down on the table and bring forward a stack of cards. You fan out the cards and show the faces to the audience for a mere moment, then shuffle them, fan them out again, but this time faces down, and get somebody to pick one at random.

That done, the person in question looks at the card, but does not let you see, and then is required to gaze into

your eyes for three seconds so that his—or preferably her—mental aura may impinge on your cerebral grey matter.

The next step is to return to the table and spread a piece of newspaper over the tray. The paper being nice and flat and only a little larger than the tray, you sprinkle some confetti over it. Then you spread over this another sheet of paper and sprinkle on more confetti. Another sheet of paper and more confetti. One more sheet of paper and still more confetti. “That ought to be about sufficient,” you say, adding a remark that it is a good job you happened to pass a church where there had been a wedding on your way to the show you are giving, or you would not have had sufficient confetti.

All is now ready for the grand climax. You take the tray and newspapers and turn them upside-down on the table. Then you lift up the tray, leaving the false bottom behind, and ask the one who selected the card to hold it up. It is either a six or a nine of something, and you exhibit the tray one way up or the other to agree with whichever figure it is.

You may ask how the card was certain to be either a six or a nine. Simply because you picked all the sixes and nines out of two packs of cards with backs alike. The mere fact that they were not all of the same value, while some were red and some black, was sufficient to satisfy your audience that the pack was an honest mixture of all sorts of cards.

The upturned tray does not show on the table because it has had newspaper pasted on the surface that is now uncovered and because it is resting on pieces of other newspapers.

COLOUR BLIND

If you tell the people in your audience that they don't know the difference between a piece of red paper and a piece of blue, they won't believe you.

So, just to make them sit up, you proceed to prove that their eye for colour is perfectly hopeless. This is how you do it. Before the show starts, you take four equal-sized pieces of newspaper, each about 8 inches square, and stick them together in pairs. You only join them along the edges, and between

both pairs of papers you sandwich a sheet of coloured tissue paper—red tissue in one, blue tissue in the other. Thus, each piece of newspaper is really three pieces of paper. It will be as well to mark which contains the red and which the blue tissue, so that no mistakes will be made later on.

When all is ready, you produce two fresh pieces of tissue paper—one red and one blue—and screw them into tight balls. Following that, you wrap the red ball in the newspaper containing the blue sandwiched sheet and you wrap the blue ball in the newspaper containing the red sandwiched sheet. Then you get two empty glass tumblers and stick a label on each. On one label you write “Red,” and on the other “Blue.”

“Now,” you say, “watch me put the red ball in the red glass and the blue ball in the blue glass.” You thereupon pick up what you pretend is the red ball and say, “Oh, but perhaps you are not all certain that this is the red ball, so I will show you.” And, having said that, you slit the newspaper covering a tiny bit and show the red tissue within it. You do the same with the blue.

When everybody is absolutely certain which is red and which blue, you drop them into the appropriate glasses, cover over with a handkerchief, utter the mystic lines :—

*Red and blue, red and blue,
You've a puzzling job to do.*

So saying, you take away the covers and lift out one of the balls of newspaper, open it and find that the blue ball was in the glass marked "Red" and the red ball was in the glass marked "Blue."

Of course, the whole secret lies in the fact that, just before you put the balls into the glass, you showed which was which by tearing through the newspaper and showing what I may call the sandwich colours. These were the opposites of the colours you rolled up in the newspapers.

THE BLEACHING MACHINE

FIG. 3 shows a little piece of apparatus that can be bought for a shilling or two, or it can be constructed by anyone who is clever with his hands.

The essential parts are two rollers which can be turned first one way and

then the other. Around the rollers is a length of white paper, as wide as the rollers. One end of the paper is stuck to the upper roller and the other end to the lower roller. All this is shown in the diagram, but the winding of the paper must be much tighter than it has been drawn in the picture. It has been drawn loosely in order that the idea may be readily grasped.

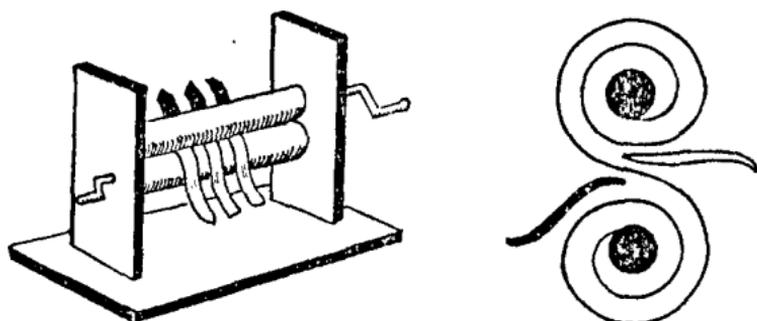


FIG. 3.

THE BLEACHING MACHINE.

(Left) The machine showing strips of paper in the process of being bleached. (Right) Sectional view of the rollers with coils exaggerated to show the method of working.

Now, the piece of apparatus is used in the following way: You tell your audience that you have a very wonderful bleaching machine; it takes the colour out of everything, in fact it is a marvel, and you proceed to show what it can do.

You take three strips of black paper and hold them up for all to see. Then you thread them between the rollers, turn the handle—just as you used to turn the mangle when you helped your mother—and out they come on the other side perfectly white. The picture shows all this.

Of course, before you introduced the machine to the onlookers, you threaded in the three white strips and they were all ready to peep out of the rollers at the moment the black strips were tucked in on the opposite side.

The bleaching machine can be used in several ways. For instance, cut two flimsy pieces of thin material exactly the same size and, for preference, bearing the same pattern. Thread one of the pieces into the machine before starting the trick, then take the other piece and get someone in the audience to drop a large spot of ink on it. Wait a second for the ink to dry partially, and then put the fabric into the machine, turn the handle and out comes the “identical” material without the blot.

Yet another example of the wonderful work of the machine can be done with a

pound note. Thread a plain piece of paper, the same size as the note and slightly crumpled, into the rollers and then borrow a note from someone in the audience. Put it into the machine, turn the handle and draw out the plain paper which you return to the person who so kindly lent you the note. Of course, you will be profuse in your apologies and tell the person you hope he doesn't mind.

THE TWO ENVELOPES

TAKE from a packet two apparently innocent envelopes and ask someone to initial them on the flaps. Then get someone else to scribble a message and sign it on a small piece of paper which you provide.

Now take the paper, fold it, slide it into one of the envelopes and stand it against some object on your table. Let the flap be kept up so that the audience sees it exactly as shown in the upper drawing of Fig. 4.

By the side of this envelope stand the other one, flap up also.

Do all your movements so that the audience has been able to follow the

course of the paper bearing the message with complete satisfaction.

Without moving the envelopes, very deliberately wet the flaps with a moistened paint brush and fold over the flaps.

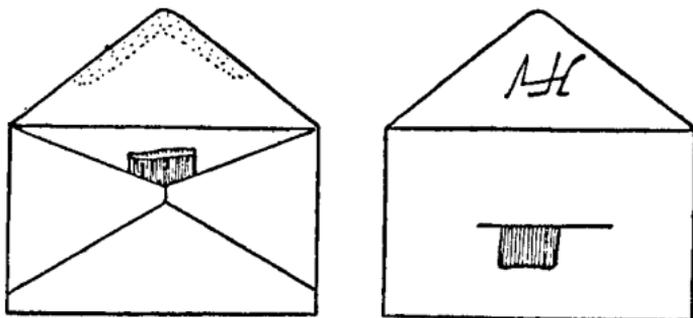


FIG. 4.

Back and front view of the Envelope, with the slip of paper on which is scribbled the message.

Nobody in the audience ought now to have the slightest doubt as to which envelope contains the message and which is empty.

Pick up the envelope with the message, stand it on a plate, light one corner and wait while the flames consume it entirely.

That done, go to the other envelope, rip it open and, in full view of everybody, draw out the message. Show that it actually is the message.

The swindle consists in making a slit across the front side of the envelope which first contained the message. When you pushed the folded paper into the envelope you threaded it through the slit as shown in the right-hand drawing of Fig. 4, and just when you were getting ready to burn it you pulled it through the slit and dropped it on the table.

When you proceeded to deal with the second envelope, you picked up the message as well, you held it flat against the envelope, and having torn the flap, you slid the paper along the envelope as though you were bringing it out of the envelope. Done well, the actions can be so deceptive that nobody will be able to say how the trick was performed.

THE CHANGELINGS

IF you are looking for a stunning trick that is as easy as can be, I can fully recommend this one.

It works like this: You show the audience two aces, one red and one black; any aces will do as long as you do not choose the decorated ace of spades, and as long as they are of different colours.

Having shown them, you produce two empty envelopes, into which the cards more or less fit. In other words, there should not be an amount of space sufficient to allow the cards to drop about inside.

You now take the cards and insert one in each envelope which you seal down very securely.

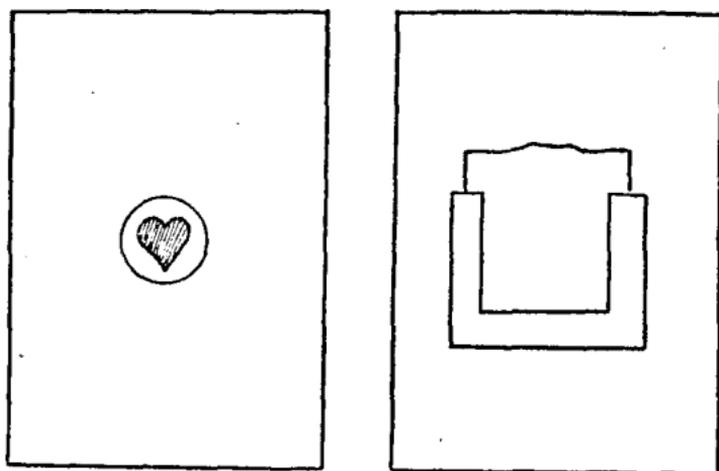


FIG. 5.

(Left) The front of the Envelope with opening to show the Ace inside. (Right) The inside of the Envelope showing the pocket arrangement, with a portion of a card slipped in it.

Previously to coming before the audience, you cut a small hole in the front of each envelope, just sufficient to enable the ace pip to be seen when the card is put in. Of course, you have to

be careful to make the hole in the right place to show the pip.

Allow the audience to follow all your movements while sealing down the envelopes, because you don't want them to think you are doing anything underhand. Oh dear, no!. When the cards are safely inside, hold up each envelope in turn, let the people see which ace is which, and then mark the envelopes accordingly—thus, ace of hearts, or whatever is correct.

You are now ready to do the impossible. You take your wand and draw it mysteriously across the face of each envelope, muttering incoherently to yourself as you do so. Then, once more, you exhibit the envelopes and, believe it or not, the aces have changed places. The names on the envelopes do not agree with the suits inside, as they did a moment ago.

Here's the explanation: Suppose you are going to work with the ace of hearts and the ace of clubs. Cut two small centre pieces out of two spare cards of these values. Then, unstick the envelopes carefully, cut out the necessary windows and around three sides of each

opening, gum little strips of paper, where they cannot be seen, to form slide-in pockets. Into them slide the centre pieces of cards, and then remake the envelopes.

When you are performing the trick, don't show the fronts of the envelopes until you have inserted the actual cards, and mind you put a red card behind a black centre piece and vice versa. Also, be careful to handle the envelopes the right way up, so that the centre pieces will not fall out of their pockets.

Of course, you mark the envelopes according to the centre pieces and not according to the cards. The wand was just a blind to slide the centre pieces out of the way, so that the actual cards behind them could be revealed.

THE HANK OF ROPE

BUY a hank of fine rope or very coarse string, such as many stores sell for clothes lines. The rope is folded into lengths of about 9 inches and then is tied by means of much finer twine close to the top and bottom.

Carefully undo the hank and cut off a length of about 18 inches; then take

the two ends of the long piece, unfray them a little and splice them together, so that the piece is now endless. Do exactly the same to the short length. Thus, you have two separate bits, with no ends at all.

Now re-form the hank by folding the long length and arrange the 18-inch piece in the folds; then replace the cross binding twine and the hank looks pretty much as it did when you bought it. By the way, don't tie up the binding pieces too tightly; but, of course, they must not be sloppy.

When you are going to perform this trick, fix a stout length of elastic somewhere on the left arm-hole of your waistcoat, with a safety-pin, and have a small hook on the free end.

All being ready, you show the hank of rope and prove to everybody that it is quite ordinary. You might explain that, being rope, it brings back memories of when you were a boy, etc., etc., etc.

Then you take up a pair of scissors and, holding up the hank, you ask how many ends it possesses. Naturally, the audience agrees that there must be two, at least. "Well, then," you say, "now

we will make four ends," and in full gaze of everybody, you cut completely through one of the ends of the folds, and you show the two ends to people here and there in the front row.

Now you begin to stroke the two ends and run your right hand three or four times up and down the hank. Of course, you are clutching the hank with your left hand all the time, preferably at the end farthest from where you did the cutting.

Then you ask somebody in the front if he will undo the rope and find the four ends. Thereupon you toss him the hank, he undoes it and finds that it has no ends at all. Marvellous, you must admit.

From what has been explained already, you know how most of the trick was performed, but the following needs to be added. The cut you made was in the short 18-inch piece. Then, when you were playing with the hank you were using the left hand to fix the elastic hook to the bend in the short piece of rope; also, you were easing it out of the hank for the elastic to spring back and take the rope under your coat. Your left

hand hid it as it sprang out of sight.

Two points need caution: (a) Be careful to fix the hook to the right fold—therefore give it a minute dab of red ink; (b) See that the elastic is fixed under your coat where it can carry the rope fully out of sight. You don't want an end to be dangling down where it can be seen.

If the trick is well done, without any fumbling, it is a stunner.

THE DANCING HANDKERCHIEF

BEFORE appearing in front of your audience, run a fine thread of black silk from one trouser leg to the other and about 8 inches up from the bottom of the trousers. Have the thread about 14 inches long. You can do this in less than a minute if you have a needle already threaded. Moreover, the thread will not greatly inconvenience your walking about, unless you are a very clumsy fellow.

Now ask some lady to lend you her handkerchief, tie a knot in it at one end and, as you do so, slip a tiny S-shaped hook into the knot. Then walk back from the onlookers a short way and sit

down on a chair. Put your feet fairly close together so that the black thread of silk touches the floor. Throw the handkerchief down and, in doing so, catch the hook on to the thread. If it misses and does not hook on to the thread, make some excuse for bending down and putting it on. You can easily say that you think the "doll" objects to be lying out flat where it can't see its owner, and you proceed to tell it not to worry.

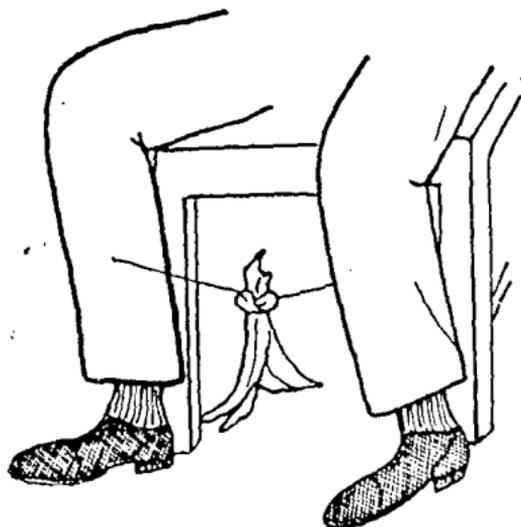


FIG. 6.

THE DANCING HANDKERCHIEF.

Having reassured the poor frightened little "doll," it jumps up and dances

about in a most jolly way. The fact is you separated your legs and tightened the thread; then by slightly jiggling your knees it capers about most merrily. The thread, being black, cannot be seen.

KNOTTING A HANDKERCHIEF WITH ONE HAND

CONJURERS are constantly using silk handkerchiefs in their work. Here is a little trick you can do with one while you are explaining something to your audience. It will at least show that you are smart with your hands.

(a) Hold the handkerchief—it must be a silk one—by the tips of two fingers, at one corner.

(b) Swirl it round and round until it makes itself into a kind of rope.

(c) Then flick it over your hand, as shown in the first picture of Fig. 7. Note that the hand has the edges horizontal and that the end of the handkerchief falling over the palm of the hand is shorter than the other end.

(d) By a jerk of the whole hand, toss the long end of the handkerchief forwards and upwards; then catch the tip as it comes up between the first and second

fingers, as shown in the second sketch. Note that as the handkerchief goes up, it must travel on the outside of the shorter end.

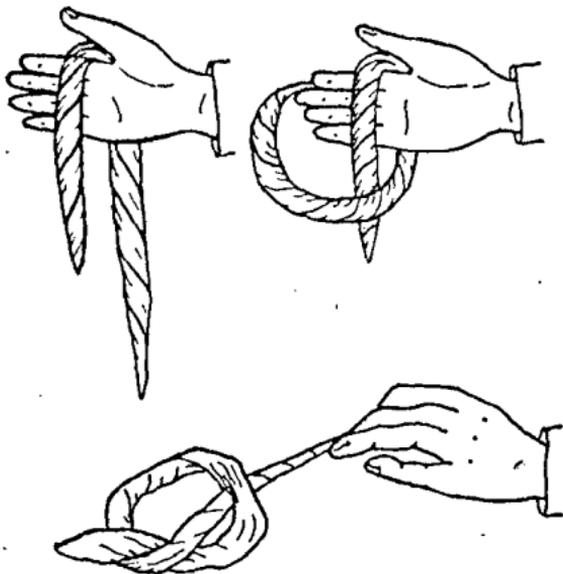


FIG. 7.

HOW TO TIE A KNOT IN A HANDKERCHIEF WITH ONE HAND.

This part of the work needs practice, but it soon comes to you.

(e) Still gripping the handkerchief by the tip of what was the long end, give the hand a sharp sideways jerk and, at the same time, throw it a little forwards. This has the effect of throwing the handkerchief off the hand and tying it in a

knot. As you have done it with one hand, you have accomplished something that very few people can do.

SPIRITING AWAY THE PENNY

THERE are several ways of getting rid of money, you can tell your audience, but you are going to show them a rather remarkable way.

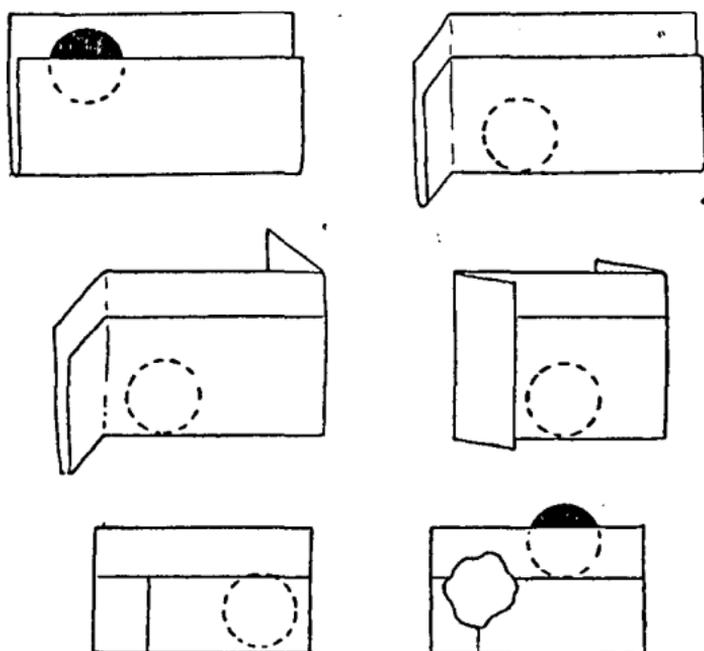


FIG. 8.

SPIRITING AWAY THE PENNY.

Take a penny and a piece of paper.
 (a) Fold the paper as shown in the

first picture of Fig. 8, and slip the penny into the fold.

(b) Then double over one end of the paper, as suggested by the second picture, but press it right against the main part of the fold.

(c) Fold back the other end, but note that the two ends do not lap over the same face of the paper. See the third and fourth pictures.

(d) Now bend over the horizontal upper edge. You will note that the front piece of paper is shorter than the back piece. It is the longer piece which wraps over the shorter. See the fourth picture.

The coin is now securely enclosed on all sides and to prove it is still in the package you tap the package on the table and the metallic sound is clearly heard.

Having done that, you turn round and pick up a piece of adhesive paper and, tearing it in halves, stick one piece on the front of the package (see the sixth picture) and one on the corresponding folds of the back.

With the tips of your fingers you proceed to tear the paper into small frag-

ments, thus showing that the coin has been spirited away.

If you will fold a piece of paper as described you will see that the folding does not completely enclose the coin as it appears to do. A slit remains open and the coin is allowed to slide through it into your hand just as you turn round to pick up the adhesive paper.

THE PENNY AND THE MATCHBOX

PROVIDE yourself with two empty matchboxes. Use the better one for the trick I am about to explain and pull the tray of the other one to pieces. Take one of the dismantled side strips and stick it firmly along the inside of the tray you are keeping and then cut the bottom of the broken-up tray so that it just fits easily into the same tray. The job must be done neatly so that the cover can slide on and off without a hitch.

Now work the trick in this way. Pull the cover about three-quarters off the tray and have the false bottom wedged out of sight between the top edges of the tray and the inside of the top of the cover. Show that the box is empty.

Then borrow a penny, put it very deliberately inside and close the box. In doing this, the false bottom is bound to fall on the coin and completely mask it.

Hold up the box and rattle it. The coin bumping about inside will be plainly heard. Then, with the box in your left hand, cover the hand and the box with a handkerchief. Do three mystic passes over the handkerchief and say some magic nonsense ; then mysteriously whip off the handkerchief. Grip the box tightly and press inwards at the sides ; then shake the box. No sound is heard because you are wedging the coin between the inward-bulging sides. Push the tray three-parts out of the cover and show that the coin is not there. Of course, it is covered by the false bottom.

If you like, smartly pull the box and cover to pieces, and as you do so, palm the coin and show the broken fragments. The coin has really disappeared.

The double side which you stick in the tray is necessary as otherwise the tray is usually a little too big for the penny.

THE TOSPY-TURVY BOTTLE

FIG. 9 supplies five small drawings which serve to illustrate an amusing trick. The business is all supplied by the gadgets and, therefore the trick is a valuable one in so much as it gives the performer a few moments in which he can take things easily.

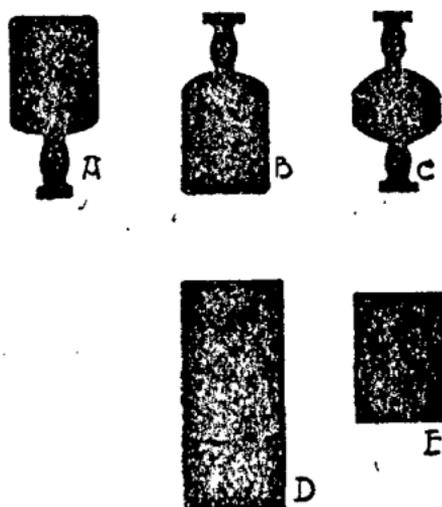


FIG. 9.

THE TOSPY-TURVY BOTTLE.

The drawing marked *A* shows a bottle standing on its head. When the audience has taken a good look at it, you place the cylinder *D* so that it completely covers the bottle. Then you wave your magic wand over it, lift up the cylinder

and the bottle has turned upside-down, for it is now standing as shown by *B*. By returning the cylinder to cover up the bottle, you can change *B* into *A* and *A* into *B* as often as you like.

The explanation is simple. Really you have a bottle shaped like *C*. Conjuring suppliers stock such bottles made in papier-mache, or it is not too difficult to make one at home. You also have a cylinder like *E*. This cylinder fits fairly closely on to the bottle and you merely slide it up and down, according to whether you want the bottle on its neck or on its base.

Note that the cylinder *D* must not reach up too high, because you have to operate *E* with your fingers while you are handling *D*, and you do not want to do too much fumbling.

TWELVE PENNIES

COLLECT twelve pennies from the audience and arrange for each to bear a different date. In case it is towards the end of the month and pennies of varying dates are scarce, be prepared to come with sufficient in your pocket to make up the number.

Now ask someone to read out the dates and, as he does so, write each on a separate slip of paper, which you fold up and place in a glass tumbler.

Hand the tumbler to another member of the audience and ask him to pick out one of the papers. When he has done so, he is to show the date to everybody but you. And so that you cannot possibly get to know what is on the paper, you retire a good way back from the audience.

After a few seconds, you come forward again and ask that each person should fix his mind on the date. You look enquiringly at various faces, and then study the coins. Now and again you look again at the faces as though to satisfy yourself on some point or other.

Finally, you select one of the pennies and ask that the paper with the date should be revealed to you. It is, and it is found that the lone coin in your hand is the one with the same date as on the paper.

Astounding? Not quite. You see that when the dates were being called out to you, you took no notice of eleven of them. On each paper you wrote the

same date. So you knew what the dip out of the glass was sure to bring forth and acted accordingly.

Note that in going "back-stage," you took the tumbler and the "all alike" dates with you, and put them on your table. Then when you came forwards, you picked up another glass with eleven (not twelve) papers in it, each bearing a different likely date. This glass can then be examined if anyone happens to ask for it.

THE DICE THAT CHANGE PLACES

TAKE two dice and, with arm extended, hold them as shown in Fig. 10. Let everybody see them clearly. Then make a decided up-and-down jerky movement with the whole hand and once more come to rest. When the audience now gazes on the dice, it is found that they have changed places. If the *four* was on the left and the *one* on the right when you started, the *one* changes over to the left and the *four* to the right after you jerked your hand.

Here is the explanation: As you jerked your hand, you gave a slight outward twist to the thumb which

caused the dice to revolve slightly, bringing their under-faces into view. In fact the dice did not climb over each other, but you merely display the next two faces. Of course, you must arrange the dice at the outset so that when you revolve them, it is still the same numbers that come up, but in the opposite positions.

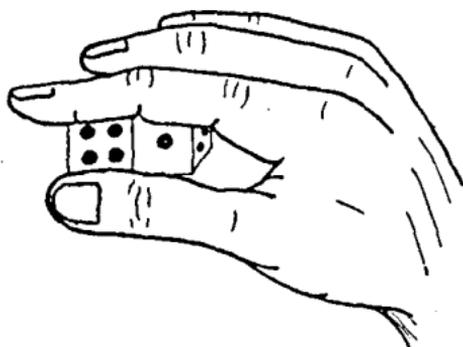


FIG. 10.
THE DICE THAT CHANGE PLACES.

THE TORN TISSUE

HERE is a most simple trick for those who can do a little palming.

Obtain two sheets of tissue paper, each about 8 inches square, and each of the same distinctive colour.

Crease one of the sheets into a tight ball and grip it well back in the palm of

the left hand. Then produce the other sheet and display it to the audience. That done, tear the sheet into several pieces. I always tear it into twelve and then halve one of the pieces, making the remark at the same time that I do that because thirteen is my lucky number.

The next step is to roll the thirteen pieces into a tight ball and when they have been formed into a ball, give them one extra roll. That extra roll enables you to bring to your finger tips the untorn roll and to force into your palm the torn roll.

Now that the creased sheets have changed places, you ask someone to blow three times on the ball, and when they have done so, you open out the ball and it is found to be untorn. The blowing, in fact, restored the ball to its original state.

LEARNING THE TELEPHONE BOOK BY HEART

It's rather a lot to learn the telephone directory off by heart, but you, having a wonderful memory, have achieved something of the sort. What you can do is

to tell anybody the Exchange and number that is given at the head of any column on any of the thousand-odd pages of, we will say, the London Directory. Pretty good going, that, you know.

Just to show that what you say is perfectly true, you ask about a dozen people each to suggest the numbers of two pages. As they call out the numbers, you write them down on a sheet of paper which, by the way, you do not show.

When you have collected the numbers you hand a copy of the Directory to somebody and, pretending to take a number at random from the list, you say, we will suppose, 532. The person with the Directory then hunts up the page and when he is ready, you look thoughtful and say, "First column, Eastwell 5307; second column, Speedfast 0328; third column, Flaxstead 2883," or whatever happens to be correct. Then you take another and perhaps a third number from the list, dealing with them in exactly the same way. You do not take all the numbers given to you because, as you say, you haven't time.

The secret is this: You take about a

dozen pages in the Directory and learn by heart the telephone numbers coming first on the three columns of each of the pages selected. Then, when you collect page numbers from the audience, you write these page numbers with them, and you arrange for some of them to be selected when you proceed to give the telephone numbers. You ignore all those given to you by the audience. The reason why you ask the people to give you two numbers is because they forget two numbers almost immediately and therefore cannot check what you are doing.

BLACK AND WHITE COTTON

YOU take two rather large reels of cotton, one white, the other black, and stand the black on the white. When everyone has noted the positions, you take a cylinder of paper, open at both ends, and slide it over the reels. It should be a fairly tight fit so that there is no possibility of allowing the reels to pass beside one another.

The cylinder is now lifted off, and instead of the black cotton being over the white, the white is on the black. They have changed places.

This is the explanation. You have two reels of white cotton and you colour a lateral half of each with fixed Indian ink. Thus, when you show the reels at the outset you are actually displaying a half white and a half black and hiding the complementary halves.

As you fit the cylinder over the reels, you turn them round so that the backs show. It is quite easy to turn them round if you stand them on a flat disc which should match the tablecloth. A mark on the disc will tell you exactly how much to turn it.

READING THE CARDS

FOR this, I take a pack of cards and note the five top ones. By selecting them in some particular sequence it is not difficult to remember them. I always arrange them in the order of hearts, clubs, diamonds and spades, and I make them ascend in value, thus : three, six, nine, queen, two and five. This gives a gap of two values between each consecutive pair.

I then shuffle the cards vigorously, but am very careful not to disturb the five at the top. This is quite easy to do with a little practice.

Next I ask five people to come out and I give a card to each. Then I submit to being blindfolded and at once proceed to tell what card each person holds. I pretend to do it by feeling the wrist of the hand not holding the card. By taking the people in the reverse order to that in which I presented them with cards much suspicion is allayed; in fact, though the steps are so simple, few people guess your method of working.

THE DOUBLE HANDKERCHIEF

YOU have seen conjurers place a handkerchief over one of their hands in which they are holding some small object such as a coin, a card, a cigarette, etc. Then, on whipping away the handkerchief, the hand is seen to be empty and the object has vanished.

Of course, there are several ways of making the article disappear, but the simplest is to use a double handkerchief. For preference, this should be of silk and provided with a pattern. It is made by sewing two identical handkerchiefs together along the four edges and then cutting a slit somewhere near the centre of one of them.

The double handkerchief then serves the purpose of a bag, the slit being the entrance. Into this bag the article you wish to spirit away can be easily thrust, but the slit must naturally come on the inner or under side of the handkerchief.

THE BALL THAT CHANGES COLOUR

FIG. 11 shows a long, narrow box-like tube, open at the top and bottom. In one side a hinged flap is fixed to an opening large enough to allow a hand to penetrate. The whole of the inside is covered with thick felt. Any amateur should be able to construct such a piece of apparatus in half an hour.

This is how the box is used. You show it to the audience, but keep the opening out of sight. You can even hold up the box in such a way that your onlookers can see right through it, the flap then being turned to the side.

Thus it will be recognised that the box or tube is quite straightforward and not in any way deceptive. Having proved conclusively all that, now let us see how the apparatus may be used.

Hold it by placing the right hand across the opening, thumb showing at one side of the box, little finger at the other side and the three remaining fingers pushed inside and holding a red or black ball. The fact that the fingers are within the tube means that the flap is forced into the tube and forms a kind of platform.

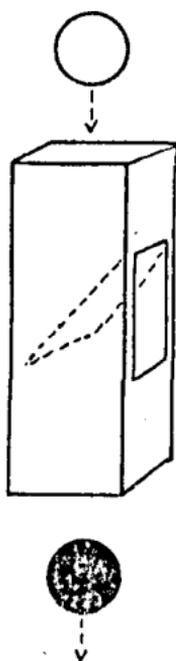


FIG. 11.

THE BALL THAT CHANGES COLOUR.

With the left hand, drop a white ball into the box and the moment you feel it

thud against the flap release the black or red ball. Thus, the effect is that the ball changes colour while travelling through—it enters as a white one and comes out coloured.

Of course, you must time your release perfectly and note one further point. The flap should slant when receiving the ball. If it is horizontal, it might bounce out and then the whole trick would be ruined.

THE THIMBLE TRICK

IF you are any good at talking nonsense the following trick can be made very realistic.

You start off by putting a thimble on the index finger of your left hand and raising the finger into the air. Then you borrow a lady's handkerchief which you neatly drape over the elevated finger.

That done, you begin to talk a vast amount of rubbish about handkerchiefs and some you once gave as a present to Aunt Agatha. While you are rambling on, you fidget with this upstanding finger shrouded with the handkerchief, and press it on as though you were pushing on the finger of a glove.

Suddenly, you become all confused, for you have pushed your finger through the handkerchief and there, plainly visible, is the thimble. You are piteous with your apologies ; then suddenly you think of your wand. Three passes with that, the handkerchief is whipped off your finger and found to be intact. The secret lies in the fact that you have a duplicate thimble in your right hand and you slip it on to the index finger at a suitable moment. If the edge of the second thimble is cut irregularly, it will give the exact appearance of having torn its way through the handkerchief.

THE MYSTERIOUS CARD

FOR this trick you will need half a dozen small playing cards, such as are used for games of patience, and a fairly large glass jar with a tight-fitting cork.

Take two of the cards and stick one diagonally on to the other, so that portions of the two faces plainly show ; then trim away the overlapping pieces in order that when viewed from the back, one complete card only is seen.

Arrange this trick card with the four others and hold them out in a fan, faces

showing. You have five cards, but owing to the trick card, there appear to be six.

Display this fan very deliberately and emphasise the fact that there are six cards. Then explain that you are going to force one of them through the cork into the jar.

First, get some sealing-wax and put a band of it around the cork. Then drape a handkerchief over the jar. Again show the six cards and, like a flash, plunge your hand under the handkerchief, bringing it out again into view practically at once.

Now turn to the audience and count the cards in your hand, but show the backs this time. Clearly there are only five. One has disappeared. Whip the handkerchief off the jar and there, inside, is seen the card that disappeared. Hold the jar out and show that the sealing-wax is intact.

You already understand most of the trick, but it must be mentioned that the cork is fairly substantial. In the underside you cut a slot which can take a duplicate card doubled into four. The cork also has a central hole drilled in it, but it is unnoticeable. As you draped

the handkerchief over the bottle, you pushed a French nail through the hole and this dislodged the card.

BURSTING BALLOONS

THIS is something that youngsters love, and I rather think the older folk enjoy it too. You hold in your hand about a dozen gaily-coloured, fully-inflated air balloons. They are supported on the usual wire stalks.

You ask somebody, "Which colour do you like least?" We will suppose they say, "The blue balloons." Thereupon you go on to say, "Wouldn't it be fun to burst one of the blue ones?" Naturally, the answer is "Yes." "Well, then," you continue; "gaze steadily for five seconds at this blue one." Then you ask someone to check the time by his watch and hold up his hand when the five seconds are up.

The moment his hand is raised, bang goes a blue balloon and bursts.

Each wire stalk has a fish-hook attached to it and the hook is put inside the balloon before it is blown up. So, at the right moment, you merely tug on the wire and the hook does the rest.

STUFFING THE BALLOON

THIS is fairly mystifying. Hold out a few playing cards, faces down and ask somebody to choose a card. He does so ; you then tear the chosen card into four and hand the person one of the pieces, telling him to keep it very carefully.

You now produce four fully-inflated air balloons and request somebody to choose one of them. He selects one of them and you thereupon ask another person to burst it. When the balloon is burst, it is found to contain a complete card—the very one you tore into pieces, minus the portion the first individual is carefully holding.

The explanation. The cards offered to select from were all alike. You tore up the chosen card but, previously, you had very carefully torn a quarter from four cards similar to those offered for selection and you had been mighty particular to see that the tearing was identical in each case. One of these previously torn quarters is in your hand while you do the tearing and it is this piece you give back with the suggestion that it be kept carefully.

The complementary portions of the four previously torn cards are placed one each in all the four balloons before the latter are blown up. Thus, whichever balloon is burst, it contains a card with a torn-out portion that fits the piece held by the spectator.

SORTING OUT THE COLOURS

YOU know those coils of coloured paper which are about a quarter of an inch wide and which unravel for what appears to be miles and miles. Well, here is a good trick you can do with them.

This is how it appears to the audience. You have a box containing a jumbled mass of this unravelled paper, in three colours—red, blue and yellow. You also have three plates without any pattern on them. You take the plates, one by one, rest them in the box and heap the uncoiled paper on to them. Each is thus charged with a mass of tangled paper of mixed colours. Then you put the plates on the table and any paper left in the box you turn out on the floor. Thus the box is perfectly empty and you make much of the fact. If you like, pass the box round for inspection.

All that being done, you empty all the jumbled paper from the three plates back into the box and mix it up well. Then you say, "See me sort out these colours." And you ask, pointing to one of the plates, "Which colour shall I put on that plate?" Somebody calls out, we will say, "Red."

Thereupon you put the empty plate in the box, and in about five seconds, you show it to the audience piled high with nothing but red paper. Then you do the same with the other two plates, but you charge one of them with blue and the other with yellow paper. In very truth you sort out the coils with magic rapidity.

The fact is you have an unopened coil of each colour hidden in the fluffed-up paper and all you do when you want to fill a plate with a single colour is to release the coil of the colour required. Naturally, you squeeze up the unravelled paper in the box to make it look far less in quantity than at the outset, and also to account for the strips you pretend to have rapidly sorted out.

THE THREE COINS

OF course, conjurers stoop to the basest forms of deception, and here is a trick that illustrates what I am contending.

Take three ordinary pennies or coins, each having a small hole drilled through the centre. Show them round, and then thread them on a long piece of thin string about 6 yards long. Let a member of the audience hold each end of the string.

Work the coins to about the middle of the string but have them well separated so that the three are plainly visible. Drop a silk handkerchief over the trio and utter some magic word. Whip off the handkerchief and only two coins are left. Where did the third one go?

While showing the three coins, you had a fourth one palmed in your hand. This coin has a slit in it running from the centre to the circumference and you use it as one of the three to thread on the string. When you snatched away the handkerchief you caught hold of this coin and drew it off the string, via

the slit. The slit does not show because it is plugged with a pellet made of bread crumbs that are coloured.

THE BALL THAT VANISHES

FOR this trick get a small wooden ball of some vivid colour ; it should be about half the size of a golf ball. Then drive a pin into the ball so that about half its length projects ; snip off the head and file the tip to a point. Lastly, turn over the projecting part so that it almost lies on the surface of the ball.

When your audience is ready, throw the ball into the air and catch it. Toss it up again and catch it again. As you do the actions, swing your arms well up, down and behind you. Repeat the throwing about half a dozen times and suddenly the ball is found to have disappeared. The curious thing is that it is difficult for the eye to detect, exactly when it does disappear. The illusion is that it went up and failed to come down.

As a matter of fact, on the last occasion, when you swung your hands back, the right hand hooked it into the side of your tail coat.

CUTTING THROUGH THE BANDAGE

IF a person puts his two hands together and someone ties a bandage round his wrists, then threads a piece of string over the bandage, between the wrists and does not leave the two ends of the string, then there are two ways of tugging the string free. One is to cut through the bandage and the other is to saw off the wrists. You have only to look at Fig. 12 and think out for yourself how the string is placed with relation to the bandage to recognise that this is so.

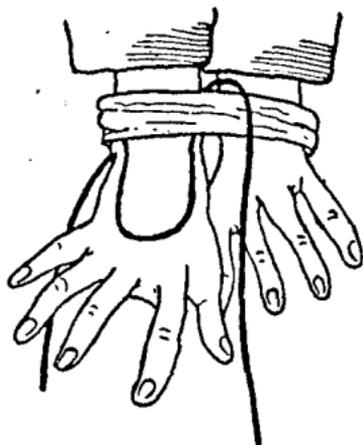


FIG. 12.

CUTTING THROUGH THE BANDAGE.

Having explained all that, let someone bandage your wrists together and thread

a piece of string over the bandage ; then tell them to hold on to the two ends of the string. Ask someone else to cover over your hands with a handkerchief.

Now wriggle your right thumb until it reaches behind the string at the point where it curves over the bandage at the back. Then ease the string over the back of the right hand and tell your "string-holder" to pull. He does so and away comes the string, leaving the bandage in its place and your wrists still fixed on to your arms.

CHOOSING THE CARDS

THE most involved tricks are not always the ones that cause the most sensation. Here is a trick of the simplest nature which I have performed dozens of times and never once have been caught out, although it is based on real impudence.

I hand out a pack of cards and say, "Please shuffle these," and half a dozen people deal with them vigorously.

Then I make an excuse for going to my table and no one sees that pack any more ; but I hold up a pack that everybody thinks is the same one.

I fan out this pack, faces to the audience, at such an angle that I cannot see the fronts. Then I ask for someone to name a card, and when that is done, I force up the card required so that it stands above the others. And the marvellous thing is that I cannot possibly see the fronts. No, but I can see the backs, and the backs are exactly like the fronts. The pack, in fact, has both sides of each card alike.

THE CARD THAT TURNS OVER

Do you know that if you square up a pack of cards, but draw the top one slightly off the pack to one side, and then let them all drop a matter of 18 inches on to a table, the top one will turn over however evenly you drop the lot. It turns over because it is pushed over by the air displaced by the pack as it falls. If you have not discovered this fact, just try it and see for yourself.

I mention it because it is a wonderful help when doing several kinds of tricks with cards. For example, suppose you offer to find a certain card that somebody has selected. Having found it, it adds considerably to the effect if you

work it to the top of the pack, slide it to one side as suggested, and then drop the lot. The card reveals itself by turning over while the others go down backs up.

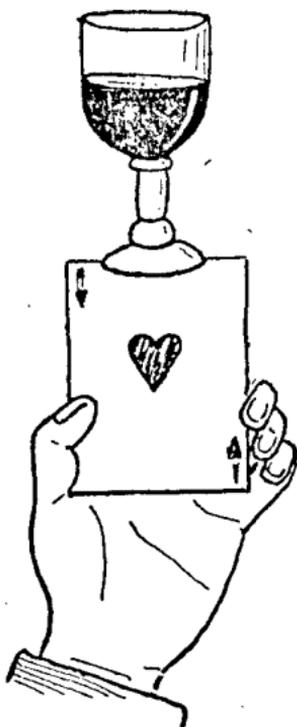


FIG. 13.

BALANCING THE CHARGED GLASS ON THE CARD.

BALANCING THE GLASS ON THE CARD

OF course, you have a fairly steady hand, and if you haven't, it is all the same, because in any case, you will tell

your audience that you have been noted for being a steady chap all your life.

And just to prove what you say, you will stand a glass, charged with wine, on the edge of a playing card, as shown in Fig. 13. Naturally, the card will be handed round, to dispel any thoughts that you are not acting fairly.

Neither are you, because the foot of the glass is propped up at the back of the card by the assistance of your index finger tip.

THE MAGIC TOPPER

FOR this trick you want a top hat with a false bottom, there being a space of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches between the lining and the real bottom. You can make the contrivance yourself, but I persuaded a local hatter to do the job for me because he could then give it the finishing touches of a professional.

The false bottom, I may say, is made of thin metal or wood, so as to be rigid, and the maker's crest, always applied in the centre of the crown, is fixed to a piece of tin which, by being swivelled round, reveals a small opening. Inside the concealed space I pack confetti, rice, sweets, etc., according to what I think will

most take the fancy of the audience, but whatever is put inside, there must be no rattling.

The effect is as follows. You show the hat to be perfectly empty; then you look inside and appear puzzled. "Did we say it was empty?" you exclaim. "Well, then, just look at this," you add. Thereupon, you turn the hat upside-down and out comes a wonderful shower of things. Of course, it comes out because you swivelled round the maker's crest and opened the hole.

ALL A-GROWING

THIS trick is more than ordinarily attractive. You have a flower-pot, three-parts filled with garden earth, and also a penny packet of mixed seeds.

You tell your audience that you are terribly fond of flowers and that, at home, you have a nice little garden in three lovely flower-pots. Then you glance round the room and say, "Ah! I can see by your faces that you are like I am—that you like flowers." Well, that being so, you suggest that the audience might help you to do a little bit of gardening, here and now.

Therefore you produce the flower-pot and the seeds and ask someone to empty the packet into the earth.

The seeds being sown, you mention that they are rather marvellous in that they grow quickly when screened from the light. So you take a stiff piece of brown paper with straight edges and roll it into a cylinder, putting paper-clips on it to keep it from unrolling.

The cylinder should be wide enough to fit over the flower-pot and about twice its height. Just to show that the cylinder is free from any deception, you allow one or two people to look through it, and to make doubly certain you slip it over your hand and coat cuff.

Now that everybody knows that the cylinder is innocent of any deception, you stand it over the flower-pot. You get out your watch and pretend to count up to ten seconds. Then you call out, "done," and so saying, you lift off the cylinder and there in the flower-pot is a fine bunch of flowers—paper ones.

Astonishing? Well, it was like this. Up your sleeve was a bunch of conjurer's flowers, compressed by a clip so as to

take up the minimum of space. You transferred it to the cylinder as you drew the cylinder off your coat cuff, and when it was safely over the flower-pot you released the clip which allowed the flowers to spring out to a voluminous bunch.

NAMES

SHOW your friends an ordinary sheet of paper and let them examine it carefully if they wish. Then draw straight lines across the sheet—two vertically and two horizontally, so as to make nine equal areas, three across and three down.

Now ask somebody to suggest any Christian name and write it in the top left-hand space. Then follow by having eight more names submitted to you. Write them in the following spaces, in order, across the horizontal rows. But, male and female Christian names are to be given to you alternately, though it does not matter whether you start off with a man or a woman's name.

When you have entered up the nine names, ask someone to tear the sections apart as neatly or as roughly as they care to, and then, while you are blind-folded you will tell which are male and

which female names, simply by means of your marvellously delicate sense of touch.

To understand how the deception is worked, think of the sheet divided into its nine sections and numbered, one to nine, across the rows. If you began with a male name, it follows that all the male names will be odd numbered; and they will all be even numbered if you began with a female name. Also note that the original sheet had straight-cut edges and that the divisions were made by tearing. Therefore, some of the divisions will have a different arrangement of the edges from others. But all that need be remembered is that all the even-numbered sections have one straight-cut edge and three torn edges. You feel for the one straight-cut edge and that tells you whether the sheet bears a male or female name.

THE MAGIC CIGARETTE

Take a small patience playing card, tear it into four pieces, roll them up tightly, and having withdrawn the tobacco from a cigarette, slide them into the place of the tobacco, but plug both ends of the cigarette with a little wad

of tobacco. Choose a popular brand of cigarette for the purpose.

When you appear before your audience, produce a pack of patience cards and have a duplicate of the torn card in the palm of your hand. Show the faces of the pack to prove that the pack is not doctored and then get someone to choose a card. Take the card from the person before he looks at it and then hold up the palmed card as though it were the one that had been selected.

Tear this card into four pieces and burn them on a saucer, then borrow a cigarette from somebody and if it happens to be of the same brand as the one used for the purpose of being stuffed, mention the name of the brand.

Light the borrowed cigarette and try to smoke it, but pretend that it has gone out. Turn to your table for some matches and, in doing so, substitute the borrowed for the stuffed cigarette. Try again to light it. It won't light, so in disgust, tear the cigarette open and there you will find the four pieces of card which presumably, you just reduced to ashes.

The trick may be made a little more uncanny if you stuff the cigarette with

only three of the four pieces, if you give the fourth piece to someone to hold, if you burn only three pieces and then find that the piece being held fits the tear marks of the three pieces disclosed in the cigarette.

THOUGHT WRITING

SOMETIMES it is advisable to do a stunt that is absolutely silly, with nothing clever about it. Here is a typical example of what I mean.

With a very serious expression, tell your audience that you can read thoughts and, to prove your contention, say that if a person will write something down on paper after thinking hard about it, you, without looking at the paper, will write on another slip just what he writes.

Naturally, that is a matter that wants some doing. Still, it's not beyond your powers.

Then you select a member of the audience, give him the necessary paper, look intently at him while he does his "think" and you wait while he writes what he has in mind.

That done, you rapidly scribble something on a slip of paper and say, "Now, then, sir, what have you written?" The individual thereupon reads from his paper, usually some atrocious concoction of involved phrasing and everybody turns to you with an expression which means, "That's beaten you." With a cheerful smile, you say, "I promised to write on my paper just what he writes and I have." Thereupon you hand your paper to the audience. It has on it *just what he writes*.

STUFFED APPLES

IF you practise this trick and do the actions cleanly, it can be made to appear very puzzling. Put a coil of coloured streamer paper just inside the coat-cuff of your left sleeve. Then hand an apple round to show that it has not been tampered with.

When it comes back to you, hold it in your left hand, palm turned from the audience and fingers pointing upwards. Then stab the apple with a "magic" knife and from the hole you have made, apparently draw out yards and yards of this coloured paper. Actually, the

paper is drawn over your wrist, under your left thumb and into full view by pulling with your right hand.

On one occasion, I could not borrow an apple for the purpose and did the trick with a nice, juicy orange instead. Well, I'm not going to do it with an orange any more. The juice ran all over me and, as it wetted the paper, the streamer kept on breaking.

THE CHANGING CUBES

GET three cubes, exactly the same size. They are easily cut from a strip of wood one inch in section. Then paste some blue paper on all the faces of two of them and some red paper on the third one. Also, make a cardboard cylinder with a diameter of about 3 inches and a height of about 6 inches.

Show the cubes to the audience and let the people see all their sides. Then, stack the three one on the other, thus: blue, red, blue, arranging the pile on your conjurer's table.

When the order blue, red, blue has been carefully noted, slide the cylinder over the stack, do a few magic words, lift off the cylinder and the cubes are

found to be in the order of red, blue and blue. Put the cylinder on again, repeat the magic words backwards, lift the cylinder and the order of the stack becomes blue, blue, and red. Repeat the whole performance, but forgo the magic words and on lifting the cylinder the order is back at the original arrangement of blue, red and blue.

The secret ? Inside the cylinder is a cardboard shape that fits comfortably over the stack ; it has a top, four sides, but no bottom. Two adjacent sides are covered with red, blue and blue sections to imitate the cubes and the two remaining sides are made to represent blue, blue and red cubes.

It is necessary to stand the cubes so that they are diamond-wise to the audience ; in other words the people must only be able to see two sides of a cube at a time. To go from the red, blue and blue arrangement to the blue, blue and red, the fingers are placed inside the cylinder and the stack is given a half-turn.

THE RIBBON AND THE HANDKERCHIEF

CAN you force a piece of ribbon through a handkerchief without making a hole? This is how you can do it in front of your audience.

First, obtain a strip of light-coloured ribbon, about a foot long and a quarter of an inch wide. Show it to your on-lookers and ask someone to pencil his or her initials on it. Also, have in readiness in your waistcoat pocket what conjurers call a finger-tip. It is a flesh-coloured contrivance which can be slipped on a finger. Cost, about 1s.

Now borrow a handkerchief and make a ring of your thumb and index finger of the left hand. Place the handkerchief over the left hand and force down the middle part of it to make a well or depression within the ring. As you are doing this, drop the finger-tip into the well.

Next, take the marked piece of ribbon and stuff it bit by bit into the well, and without the audience knowing, into the finger-tip. And as the last bit of ribbon disappears, slip the finger-tip

on to the index finger or thumb of the right hand.

The audience supposes that the ribbon is above the handkerchief. Therefore, slip the right hand under the handkerchief, pull the finger-tip off the finger by gripping it with the left hand and then draw the ribbon into view by slowly pulling with the right hand.

Thus, the ribbon has miraculously travelled from above to below the handkerchief—through it, in fact. Do not forget to show the initials on the ribbon when the feat has been performed.

THE CLINGING RULER

YOU probably know the trick of holding a ruler or pencil in your outstretched hand and yet there appears nothing that is actually supporting it. It is an excellent fraud but the worst of it is that many audiences also know it.

In case you find some people who apparently are unacquainted with this trick, let me explain how it is done.

Take a thin penny ruler, grip it in your hand which you display with the knuckles turned to the onlookers. Now clasp the wrist of this hand with your other hand

and very gently and slowly you stretch out the fingers, one by one, until the tips of all of them are pointing upwards.

As the last finger goes up, the ruler should fall out of your grasp because the last bit of support is removed ; but it doesn't ; it stays mesmerised to your fingers. Why ?

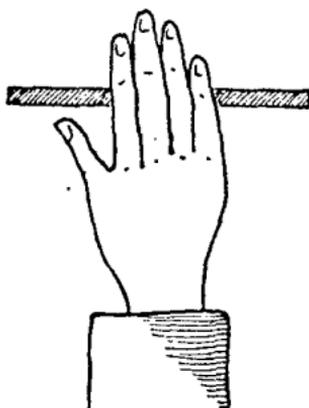


FIG. 14.

HOW THE CLINGING RULER APPEARS TO THE AUDIENCE.

Simply because, the hand that is gripping the wrist in order to endow the outstretched fingers with sufficient strength to exert their attractive force—I hope you understand all this—is not so innocent as it looks. The little finger is not wrapped round the wrist as the

other fingers are; it runs flat up the palm and the tip presses against the ruler and in this way keeps it supported.

But, as I say, many people know this trick and if you try it on them they will merely laugh. Never mind, do the business exactly as I have described and, just when they smile because they know the trick depends on that supporting little finger of the left hand, take the left hand right away from the wrist. And the ruler doesn't fall. That is one too many for them and they are non-plussed. It is something they did not expect.

The way it is done is as simple as possible. Two little pellets of wax sticking to your fingers and the ruler is pressed against them. Being a flimsy ruler, it holds long enough for your purpose. The diagram shows how your hand and the ruler appear to the audience.

THE DISAPPEARING DAMSEL

I SAW this trick performed a short while ago and to me it seemed that the effect was remarkably good for the slight amount of preparation needed.

A dark screen was set up and in front of the screen was an ordinary 6-foot step ladder. A damsel came on to the scene holding a large Japanese umbrella. She ran up the steps, sat on the flat top of the ladder and dangled her feet over the side. The ladder, I must explain, was set so that the steps and the back strut presented an inverted V to the audience. Thus, her feet were hiding some of the area formed by the inverted V.

Then she held the umbrella in front of her and twirled it round at a rapid rate. It was such a large umbrella that while she was doing this she was completely hidden by it.

Gradually the umbrella twirled at a slower rate, and just as it was about to come to rest, it fell to the floor and there was no girl. She had disappeared completely.

This is how it was done. The moment she was safely behind the umbrella she ran the handle through a hook on the top platform of the ladder and it was given a twirl now and again to keep it going. Thus it stayed in place but continued to revolve.

The girl slipped off the ladder, over the side away from the audience, and crouched down behind the rear V-shaped space. This was covered with the same material as the screen behind, and therefore, was not noticeable. When she was safely hidden, she reached up and pushed the umbrella handle out of the hook to make it fall on the floor.

THE CHAMELEON PENCIL

HOLD up a pencil of full length with a bright coloured outside, say, red. Then, roll it in a sheet of paper so that only the tip shows. While you are holding one end, ask a youngster in the audience to come and pull the pencil out of the paper. He does so and the pencil is found to be not red but yellow. Thus it has miraculously changed from one colour to another.

The explanation ? You provided yourself with a yellow pencil and carefully fitted a tube of red paper around it. By making the tube a trifle longer than the pencil, to project beyond the untrimmed end, it is easy for you to hold the covering wrapper so that the person

who pulls on the tip leaves the tube in your hands with the wrapper.

CONJURING WITH A CONFEDERATE

OF course, it may seem a little unfair to use a confederate, but such startling things can be done with the aid of a friend that it usually pays.

Therefore, why not stoop to the following trick? First, plant a confederate in the audience who is pretty quick at figures. Then tell your hearers that you can work sums even before the sums exist.

Having said a good deal on the matter, ask anybody to mention a sum of money. Perhaps they say £1 4s. 9d. "Ah!" you remark, and thereupon you write an amount on a piece of paper, fold it up, put it in an envelope which is stuck down and ask someone to hold it.

Then, you go on and collect three or four further amounts. As each is given you, you write it on a large slate which all can see.

Naturally, you keep an eye on the growing total of these amounts, and when you think fit, you turn with unconcern to your confederate and he calls

out a certain amount. You write that on the slate and make the complete addition.

Then you call upon the person holding the sealed envelope. He opens it and reads out what was written by you on the slip of paper. It is the very sum of money that is indicated by the slate.

Of course, your confederate always gives you an amount which completes a total that you have prearranged with him.

THE PICTURE BOOK

THOUGH I do not agree with using a confederate too much, I am certainly not averse to depending on him now and again and this is a trick that always amuses me.

I produce a fat book of some 200-odd pages which has pictures on almost every page. I keep the book, I may say, for the purpose.

I then tell my audience that I am going to choose five people and intend to ask each to give me any number they like between 10 and 20; then I shall add up their numbers and the total will indicate a page in the book. After

that I will describe the picture or pictures given on the page determined in this way.

Of course, the audience smiles incredulously and I start off by collecting one, two, three, four and then I turn to my confederate and he gives me the fifth. As the four numbers are called out to me, he adds them up and his number makes the total come to the figure he knows I want. I have learned off the details of that page down to the most minute particulars, but of the others I have not the slightest idea.

Naturally, this idea of the book can be developed and used in a dozen different ways.

THE AUTHOR wishes to remind readers of this book that there is another volume in the present series which will probably entertain them. It is entitled *Popular Magic*, and it deals with many things of interest to conjurers.

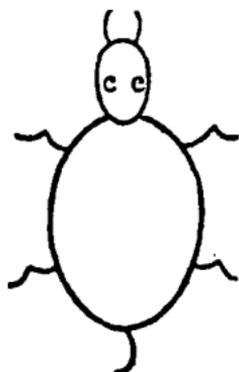
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Camp Concert Parties, etc.

SCRAMBLE, 1s. 9d.

"Scramble" consists of more than 100 well-known couplets, proverbs, songs, hymns, etc., all of which are divided by perforation so that one half of each can be placed anywhere about the area chosen for play. The other halves are retained by the M.C. who hands these out to the competitors one at a time. The object of the players is then to compete with each other to see who can "pair" the largest number of couplets, etc.

Example: Distributed: "MY LITTLE GREY HOME."
Handed to the Competitor: "IN THE WEST."

This game is designed for any number of players up to 14, and will provide 40 minutes of rollicking fun. Where more than 14 players will be taking part, additional boxes of the Game will be needed to cover the number of extra players.

A U.P.L. SHOPPING EXPEDITION

For 12 players 1s. 6d. When more than 12 players are taking part, extra Shopping Cards can be obtained in packets of 12 for 6d.

The game is designed for small family parties of, say, 5 people and large parties of any number up to 500 by using extra Shopping Cards.

It is adaptable for either indoor or outdoor entertainment—viz., for the Home, Social Hall, Women's Institutes, Youth Clubs, and it makes the perfect game for Garden Parties, School and Club grounds, etc.

The Shopping Cards provide for two distinct expeditions, each taking about 30 minutes.

Action and frivolity are its chief characteristics.

GOT IT!

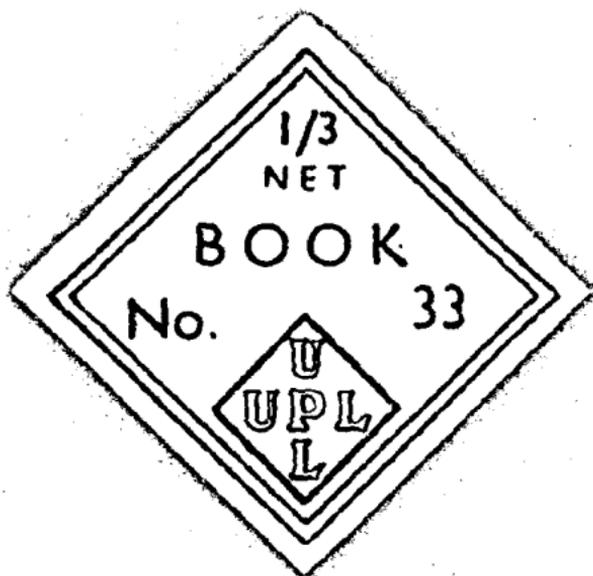
For 12 Players, 1s. 9d. For 24 Players, 3s. 0d.

A progressive table game of exceptional merit combining laughter and concentration.

When play commences an equal number of competitors (3 or 4) must sit at each table. The game consists of developing the names of well-known personalities from jumbled letters. These jumbled letters are obtained by the throwing of specially designed dice and therefore as play progresses an animated competitive spirit is created.

Approximate time allowed for the game is one hour, but if desired, this can be shortened.

There is such a distinct air of originality and fascination about this game that it can be rightly termed the SUPREME Party Game.



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