

**ORIGINAL  
MAGICAL  
PROBLEMS**



*By*

**BERT DOUGLAS**

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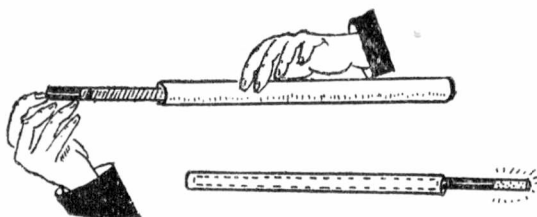
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### THE EMBLEM OF DEGREE

**Effect:** The performer explains that he belongs to the Magicians Union, and one of the rules is that he must use a Magic Wand wherever possible, as it is the emblem of the Magic Art. Unfortunately by mistake he brought a Beginner's Wand with him (here he shows a yellow wand with black tips), and as he wishes to give a first class entertainment he must use a Professional wand to enable him to do so. The performer rolls a sheet of paper into the form of a tube, and pushing the yellow wand through the tube it emerges at the other end changed into a beautiful professional wand, the body being of black ebony, and the tips a cluster of diamonds. The paper tube is crushed up and tossed aside.



**Explanation:** The beginner's wand is the usual paper shell wand as used for the Vanishing Wand trick, but in this instance made up of yellow and black papers. This paper shell wand is made to slide rather easily over the solid wand, which is prepared as follows. A wand of black ebony finish should be used, and with a counter sinking tool make a number of cavities in both tips of the wand. Into these cavities fix securely with glue a number of brilliants specially selected from Woolworth brooches, etc. This produces an exceptionally flashy wand, a decided contrast to the shell yellow one.

Paper tube is formed and the beginner's wand, with solid one inside, is pushed into the tube. By slight pressure on paper the shell wand is retained within the tube, and the solid wand pushed through and extracted at other end. Paper tube containing shell wand is torn up and tossed aside.

For the diamond studded wand idea I am indebted to a suggestion by Mr. Geo. Johnson in his excellent quarterly magazine, the "Magic Wand."

### B.D. COIN STAND

**Effect:** The magician shows a small glass bowl to be unprepared and places same on a tripod stand (see illustration) at rear of stage. Showing his hands empty, he proceeds to catch coins one by one at the finger tips, and drops each coin into the bowl, each coin is plainly heard and seen to drop in bowl. A handful of coins are then produced and showered into the bowl when all may be given for inspection.



**Explanation:** This novel presentation of the Aerial Treasury will, I believe, be welcomed by magicians as forming a splendid variation from previous methods employing a bowler hat and the use of both hands during the production. The use of a glass bowl instead of a hat adds fifty per cent. more charm to this old favorite, and the tingle of the coins in the glass makes the illusion much more effective.

The production of single coin may be by sleight or apparatus, and bundle of coins is obtained from the vest in the usual manner. It is advisable to produce say half a dozen coins from the finger palm and drop in bowl previous to placing in the stand.

The secret of this new method is our old friend the black thread, and illustration will make clear the method of working. Thread has a pellet of wax on each end. One end is fixed to leg "C", it is then brought round back of leg "B" and over a small hook (bent pin will do) then into the bowl. Coin is fixed to pellet of wax on this end, as illustrated. When coin is produced, it is apparently placed in bowl, but really it is back palmed, and hand in approaching bowl gives thread a slight jerk between B and C, causing coin in bowl to jump up and drop back into bowl. A trial will convince that this is a perfect illusion of a coin being dropped from the hand. When apparently

placing coin in bowl the wrist will naturally strike thread between B and C, and coin appears to have dropped from hand and is heard tingling in the bowl. The illustration is not quite correct, in that the bowl should be lower down in stand to allow more space for jerking of thread between B and C. I am certain if you once try this method of presenting the Aerial Treasury you will always include same in your repertoire. The stand of course is made to take apart for packing.

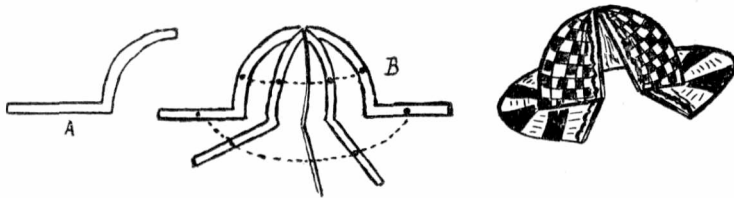
In a recent book an explanation of a somewhat similar stand appears, but in this case employing a mechanical coin dropper in leg of stand. Above simple method was invented by me in July, 1914, and contributed to the Magic Wand Quarterly, and I am sure readers will find same superior to the complicated mechanical stands.

In the devising of magical problems the writer at all times concentrates on obtaining the maximum effect by the easiest possible means, and the entire contents of this book will be found to bear the stamp of this policy.

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### A MILLINERY CREATION

**Effect:** The magician picks up from table a number of large silk handkerchiefs, these he displays separately, then bunching the silks up they instantly become transformed into a beautifully trimmed lady's hat.



**Explanation:** The construction of this novelty is rather difficult to explain in print, however, with the aid of the illustrations I think the reader will be able to grasp the idea.

The hat is built on the principle of the expanding paper bells, and other similar novelties used for Christmas decorations.

Frame of hat is made by cutting eight pieces of thin card-board in shape illustrated at (a). By means of adhesive tape these eight shapes are hinged together, and a stout thread is passed through each section, a knot being made in the thread

at each side of each cardboard section, and also at both ends. In other words, the threading is practically identical with that of the well known Electric Deck of Cards. Fig. (b) shows frame. This cardboard frame is then covered with silk and other trimmings, this preferably matching the silk handkerchiefs. The fully trimmed hat is folded flat, and concealed in B.A. well of table (or on table or chair servante).

The magician exhibits the large silks one by one, placing each on table when shown. Care must be exercised to see that the silks are dropped directly over the B.A.well (or chair servante), grasping the bunch of silks, and with same the hat from B.A.well, the performer advances to front of stage. He commences to bunch up the silks, and under cover of this motion of the hands, he smartly opens up the hat, at the same time quickly tucking the silks inside same, and transformation is complete. A tiny metal clasp as used in above referred to decorations, serves to hold hat expanded.

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### ALARM CLOCK MYSTERY

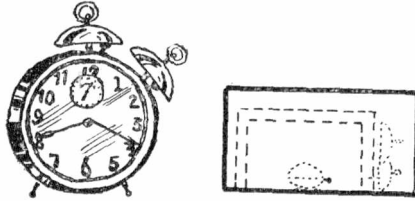
**Effect:** The magician enters carrying a cardboard box containing an alarm clock which is ringing merrily. The clock is removed and placed on side table, the lid being replaced on box. A large handkerchief is shown on both sides, the corners gathered up and held by performer in left hand, thus transforming the handkerchief into a sort of bag. The alarm clock is dropped within the bag shaped handkerchief, which is held well away from performers body at all times. The magician then releases two corners, and the handkerchief instantly drops open, it is shown on both sides, but the clock has absolutely vanished. Proceeding to the cardboard box the performer removes the lid, and reveals the alarm clock therein.

**Explanation:** Two dummy clocks are required for this effect, i.e. shell clocks, one nesting within the other, as used in the well known effect of producing six alarm clocks from borrowed hat.

The nested clocks are within box at commencement. The topmost clock is removed from box, placed on side table, and lid replaced on box. This leaves duplicate clock in box ready for production.

The ringing of the clocks is accomplished by fixing to the bottom of interior of box a bicycle bell of the winding variety,

the ringing being actuated by pressing knob on side of bell. A hole is cut in bottom of box just sufficiently large to allow finger to enter and press knob on bell. The bell of course rests within the hollow clocks, and is concealed at all times.



The vanish of clock is accomplished by means of the new Super Jap Bird Handkerchief now being sold by Thayers, Holmes, and other magical dealers. The corners of this handkerchief are gathered up, and clock is dropped within the special folds in the handkerchief. On releasing two corners the handkerchief drops open, and alarm clock has vanished. No doubt many readers will be dubious as to this vanish being practical with so large an object, but I can assure you the shape of the clock within the handkerchief is invisible at a very short distance. This improved handkerchief is a very valuable accessory for vanishing objects in a subtle manner, and owing to the improved construction there is practically no "sag" in the handkerchief after the vanish. The shell clock is very light in weight, and by showing handkerchief smartly on one side and then the other, the vanish is perfect and absolutely puzzling. The writer has successfully vanished a shell alarm clock by this method in a parlor, and this should be sufficient guarantee of its being entirely practical for Club and platform presentation.

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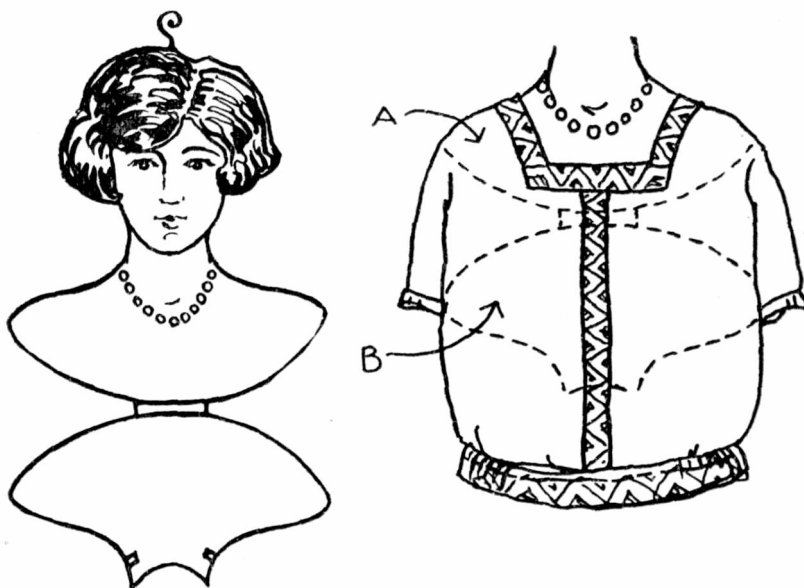
### MILADY'S BLOUSE WAIST

**Effect:** The performer exhibits a cardboard head and shoulders, as used in departmental stores for displaying ladies waists, jumpers, etc. The blouse waist is removed from this hanger, the latter being given to assistant to hold. The blouse waist after being wrapped in tissue paper, instantly vanishes, and reappears visibly on the cardboard bust.

**Explanation:** Two models of the cardboard head and shoulders must be procured. The head is very carefully cut from one of these, just round lady's chin, as illustrated. The remaining



part, i.e., bust only, is attached to the complete model by means of adhesive tape which hinges the two hangers together. It will thus be seen that when the headless part is folded up over the complete model, the latter looks quite unprepared.



Two blouse waists exactly similar are also required. One of these silk waists is used for the vanish, and the other is prepared as follows: The back is entirely cut away, and the front portion only is used. This is fixed on unprepared bust, and also to the back of headless one. This waist is then folded up small, and enclosed between the two busts. A string of pearls, or rather half strings, is attached to each bust. The string on headless section terminates at the neck in two tin clasps, these hold the two busts together with blouse concealed between. Release of clasps by assistant causes the headless bust to drop, the blouse waist automatically expands.

The unprepared blouse waist removed from hanger is wrapped in tissue paper, parcel is switched either by means of special tray, table or chair servante, and the vanish effected. The waist appearing visibly on cardboard hanger. A large size drawer box could be advantageously used for vanish of blouse.

## MYSTIC FLOWERS, WATER AND GOLDFISH

**Effect:** The magician displays a sheet of white cartridge paper, this he deftly twists into a cone shaped bag. Passes are made over the cone and the latter immediately becomes filled to overflowing with brilliantly coloured flowers, these being showered into a wicker basket on seat of chair. A fresh supply materializes within the empty cone, and these also are emptied into basket, then as a fitting climax to this charming effect the cone now becomes filled with water and goldfish which the magician empties into a glass bowl.



**Explanation:** The first part of the problem is the well known "Flowers from Cone," but the magician during the showering of second load of spring flowers into basket must see that several are allowed to fall on the floor. In the act of picking up these flowers to place in basket, a celluloid cone containing water and goldfish is loaded into the paper cone, and production of water and goldfish is then a simple matter.

This celluloid cone is suspended on a special bracket (see illustration) behind the chair. The chair must of course have a solid back, or have drape over same to mask the load. Celluloid cone containing the water and goldfish hangs on special servante point downwards, and loading into paper cone is easy.

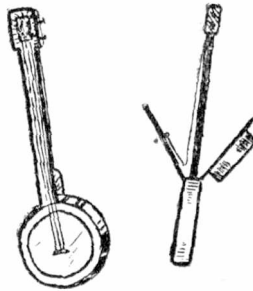
Perhaps some readers may consider this effect has a weak point in not being able to crush up paper cone at finish, this due to same containing the heavy celluloid cone. If it is desired to crush up cone at finish of effect, it will be necessary to construct the special cone of thick wax paper obtainable from any stationery store. Another method is to use the thin celluloid paper in which the better class boxes of chocolates are wrapped,

this I think is called Cellophane, it is waterproof, and can be obtained in sheets of any desired size. In both cases great care will have to be exercised in joining all edges, to ensure cone being absolutely watertight.

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### MAGICAL BANJO UKULELE

**Effect:** Bringing forward a banjo ukulele the performer announces his intention of providing a little music as a variation from the deep magical problems he has been presenting. Seating himself in a chair he commences, but, alas, he is doomed to disappointment, for at the first stroke of his hand the strings of the



banjo all break. In an endeavour to ascertain the cause of the trouble he opens up the entire banjo, but discovers nothing whatever therein, so he closes same up again. Performer is still convinced he can get music of some sort from the banjo so he commences to rap on centre of same with his fingers, when suddenly his fingers penetrate through front skin of banjo, and something is plainly visibly within. Requesting orchestra to play a little opening music he commences to extract from the banjo first a roll of music about two yards long, a banana, flowers, silks, etc., terminating with the flags of the world.

**Explanation:** The above effect is a combination of inexhaustible box load and production drum. The front and back of banjo are hinged to open as per illustration. When showing same empty the back is of course raised first, and then the front, thus the load in special container is at all times concealed.

Front and back of banjo is covered with paper in the same

manner as production drum, but of course prior to introduction of banjo.

The strings are attached to a small wooden bridge which has pin points on same so that when bridge is fixed in centre of front paper the mere act of striking with fingers dislodges the bridge, and causing all strings to apparently break.

The roll of music, is a long strip of white silk with music painted thereon. To the tune of "Yes, we have some bananas," a banana of the spring variety is produced. "The flowers that bloom in the spring tra-la-la" covers production of spring flowers. Squares of tartan, or miniature kilts may be produced to the accompaniment of Scottish airs, etc. A few bars of the appropriate national anthem should accompany the production of the flags.

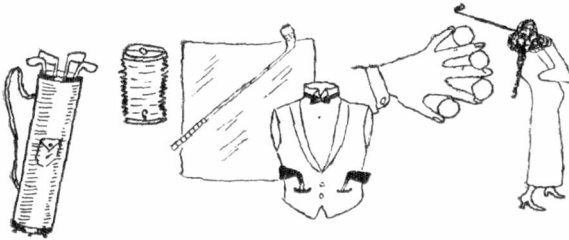
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## GOLF

**Effect:** Performer enters and from a green foulard shown on both sides he produces a full sized golf bag containing half a dozen golf sticks. One of the golf sticks is taken from bag and wrapped in tissue paper. Paper is instantly crushed, golf stick has vanished, and is produced from vest pocket and proved quite solid. Magically producing a white silk handkerchief he rolls same between his hands, and transforms the handkerchief into a golf ball. After a series of clever manipulations with this golf ball, he magically produces four golf balls between the fingers of his right hand, these the magician causes to vanish one by one as mysteriously as they were produced, until he is left with one ball. From a derby hat the performer produces a ladies stocking and some other articles, and attaching same to manipulation screen he discloses a clever rag picture, "The Golfing Girl," bringing this novel act to a fitting climax.

**Explanation:** Production of full size golf bag and sticks. Reference to illustration will explain construction of bag. This is made of cotton, white, with brown edges top and bottom, the handle being brown cotton rope. The bottom of bag is weighted and has attached to interior a small hook, this engages in ring at top of bag and serves to keep same compressed. By disengaging hook the bag instantly drops to full length. Clubs are only a series of heads mounted at top of bag, and by a simple dodge explained in next effect the audience receive impression that all sticks are full length.

Vanish and reproduction of golf stick. While turning to hang the golf bag on rail of chair the magician apparently removes one of the golf sticks from bag, really this club is withdrawn from vest pocket. Pocket has a hole in same allowing club to lie down inside leg of trousers. A duplicate club arranged in the same manner is in other vest pocket. The club for vanishing is really a paper shell (wall paper in imitation of wood is very suitable, the handle grip being painted black), the head of club may be of wood or tin. Wrap club in tissue paper, twist ends, then crush up, and golf stick has vanished. The solid club is then produced from vest pocket as explained above.



White silk handkerchief changing to golf ball. This is hollow wooden ball, the handkerchief being tucked inside same. The production of golf balls at finger tips is the one to four billiard ball trick, using Thayers white clingo balls, or Wilford Hutchinson's celluloid golf balls at finger tips recently placed on market.

The several articles produced from derby hat, or inexhaustible box, include extra large ladies stocking, small sock, wool, and two wire shapes for feet. These are attached to screen as illustrated, the golf stick being attached first, then stocking, etc.

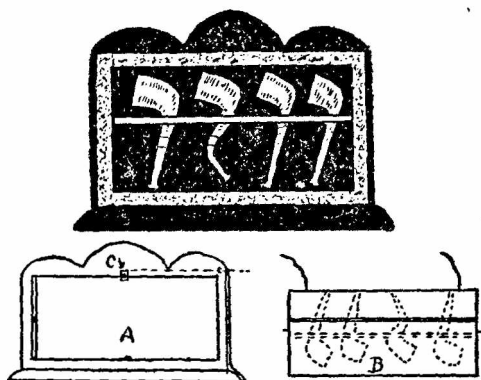
Readers wishing to elaborate on this act are referred to my complete original act "The Magical Golfer," see *Magical Bulletin*, January, 1923.

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### LADY NICOTINE

**Effect:** The magician shows a mahogany pipe rack, containing four briar pipes. Removing the pipes from the rack, he proceeds to side table on which rests a polygon glass tobacco

jar containing a small quantity of the fragrant weed. The performer places the pipes inside jar amongst the tobacco, drops in a few matches, places the lid on jar, and covers all with a handkerchief. A pistol is fired at the jar, and instantly the pipes reappear visibly on the pipe rack, he removes the handkerchief and jar is seen to be filled with smoke which pours forth in clouds when lid is removed.

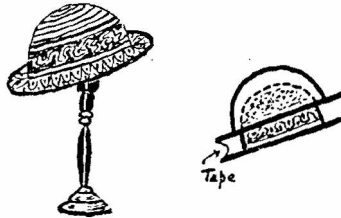


**Explanation:** Reference to the illustrations will enable readers to follow the working of the pipe rack. The rack consists of frame (a) in which works the panel (b). This panel has four briar pipes on each side, one set being removable and the other securely fastened to the panel. A needle point at center of each end of panel serves as pivot on which panel revolves. Two short lengths of elastic are attached to edge of panel, and also to bottom of frame. The side of panel containing set of removable pipes is pulled to front of frame, this stretches the elastic taut, and the catch (c) is turned, thus holding the panel securely. Release thread is attached to pistol, a pull on thread moves catch, thus releasing panel which revolves like a flash, bringing the duplicate set of pipes to the front.

The polygon glass jar is a large size mirror jar. In front portion is a small quantity of tobacco, the rear portion and lid being treated with a few drops of hydrochloric acid and ammonia respectively, for producing the smoke effect. It will of course be understood that lid is not on jar at commencement.

### MAGICAL MILLINERY

**Effect:** The following charming effect will be found to cause a sensation amongst the ladies: A lady's hat devoid of any trimming (buckram hat shape) is shown to the audience. This is covered with a sheet of tissue paper and placed on a milliner's display stand. Several sets of complete hat trimmings are now shown, from which a selection is made. The selected set of silks and ribbons is taken by the magician, and without any covering instantly vanishes. The tissue paper is removed from display stand, and hat is found to be gorgeously trimmed with the selected set.



**Explanation:** The properties used make this a most beautiful and showy effect. It is easily made up, and the working is extremely simple, being practically self contained.

Two buckram hat shapes exactly alike are required. Care should be exercised in the selection of these, as shapes with curled edge are unsuitable for this problem. One of the shapes must be completely trimmed, while the other is left bare. The hats are joined together at their brims by means of a piece of narrow tape.

At the commencement the trimmed hat is nested within the untrimmed shape, and this rests on milliner's display stand. It is very important that the hats should at all times be inclined at an angle, i.e., slanting towards the audience, this to avoid anyone catching a glimpse of the underside of brim.

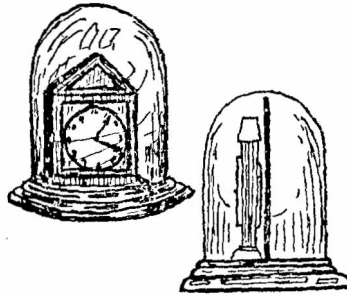
The untrimmed shape is removed from display stand, and while covering with the tissue paper the first finger of the right hand is placed between the brims, and reverses the hats, i.e., the untrimmed hat is transferred from outside to inside the trimmed hat. This twist is practically impossible to explain in print, but with a little practice the knack will soon come. A large sheet of dark tissue paper is used to cover the hat, and this effectively conceals the move, which should not be made hastily. As a matter of fact the inside hat may be released and allowed to

hang down, and the nesting part of the move completed while placing on display stand, the left hand at front of paper assisting in the movement. This move, however, will be found quite easy with the right hand alone, after giving same a few trials.

Duplicate set of trimmings to match those on the hat must, of course, be amongst the several sets offered for selection. The required set is forced, and the trimmings are vanished by means of lightning pull, or by any other method the performer desires.

### B.D. VANISHING MARBLE CLOCK

**Effect:** On centre table at rear of stage rests a marble clock covered with a glass dome. While the magician shows a wooden box to be absolutely empty, the assistant removes the marble clock and replaces the glass dome on stand. The magician proves the clock to be absolutely solid and genuine, then places same in the wooden box. A square of silk is now placed over the empty glass dome. The performer with his wand strikes the top of box, which instantly collapses, the clock having vanished. On removing the square of silk from glass dome the marble clock is revealed once more in its crystal prison.



**Explanation:** The wooden box used for the vanish of the clock has a false bottom, and the sides are hinged about two inches above the actual bottom of box. (See Brunel White's box for the Disappearing Dog effect, in "Original Mysteries.")

The stand on which the glass dome rests is a large Thayer Turntable Stand, and is fitted in the centre with a partition to match back drop, behind the partition being a duplicate marble clock. The black velvet drop may be eliminated if performer places a small velvet manipulation screen on table just behind the glass dome.



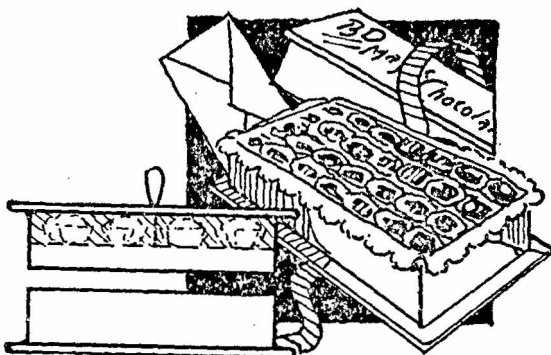
The clock is taken from stand by assistant, the magician at the same time directing attention of the audience to box, lowering sides of same and proving empty. Clock is then placed in box, in reality being laid flat down on its face, and false bottom of box brought down on top of same. In the act of covering empty glass dome with silk, the stand is reversed bringing the duplicate marble clock to front. Bang top of box with wand, and sides collapse, revealing box empty. Whip off the silk foulard and reveal the marble clock within the glass dome again.

If performing without assistant, it would be advisable to have dome empty at commencement, the clock resting beside wooden box on side table. This eliminates having to raise dome to remove clock, with the risk of critical observers noticing the partition. When working with assistance this is of course unnecessary, as the magician misdirects the attention of the audience while assistant removes marble clock and replaces dome.

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### B.D. CHOCOLATE BOX MYSTERY

**Effect:** At conclusion of performance as magician is making his final bow, a member of the audience (or conductor of orchestra) hands him a small parcel. Asking the pardon of the audience for a second, the magician removes the tissue paper from parcel and discovers therein a chocolate box tied with a



dainty silk ribbon, and a letter on top of same. The letter is read aloud, and is from a lady in the audience, stating she is sorry the chocolates are finished but could he do a little trick

with the empty box. The magician is nonplussed at this strange request, but finally decides to try a simple problem with the box. Showing box empty he places same on a side table, then taking the 2 in. silk ribbon with which the box was tied he causes same to vanish, at the same time explaining that the ribbon has travelled invisibly to the box. On opening the box the ribbon is found therein nicely folded—but, to the complete surprise of the audience, the box is again filled with delicious chocolates, which the magician may distribute if desired.

**Explanation:** The vanish of ribbon may be with pull, pistol, or any other method the performer desires. The chocolate box requires very little preparation if the proper kind of box is secured in the first place.

Procure box of the deep, variety, square if possible, and having a tray in which the top layer of chocolates are contained. This tray of chocolates is retained complete, but the chocolates in bottom of box are not required in the experiment. These trays are usually supported on small cardboard supports in the corners of the box, but if these are not found therein, they will have to be inserted. A slit is cut in lid of box, and a loop of catgut is attached to centre of tray amongst chocolates. This loop passes through lid of box, and by inserting finger in loop the tray is lifted inside lid. Most boxes and trays are lined with white enamelled paper, and when tray is inside lid the latter may safely be shown without anything unusual being noticed. It would, however, be unwise to draw special attention to empty lid, just show bottom and lid of box casually. When lid is placed on box, the finger is withdrawn from loop, and weight of chocolates serves to hold tray in box when lid is again withdrawn. A duplicate silk ribbon is of course laid on top of tray of chocolates. The method of working will, I am sure, be clear from presentation above.

This, as will be noted, forms an exceptionally good encore effect, but could, if desired, be introduced as a separate item in programme by changing presentation. For instance chocolates placed in large glass confectionery jar travel to empty box. Mirror jar is of course used to accomplish the vanish of chocolates in this instance.

The exclusive manufacturing rights for sale purposes of this novelty are held by the Thayer Magical Mfg. Co., Los Angeles, who can supply the complete effect, ready for working, at an extremely low price.