

# MAGIC AND ITS PROFESSORS

By

**Henry Ridgely Evans**

AUTHOR OF

*"Hours with the Ghosts," Introduction to Hopkins'*  
*"Magic, Stage Illusions," etc.*

**Illustrated**



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TO THE  
MEMORY OF MY BROTHER  
WALTER DORSEY EVANS  
ENGRAVER, STUDENT, AND LOVER OF MAGIC  
I LOVINGLY DEDICATE THIS  
LITTLE VOLUME.



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\* Members of the Society of American Magicians.

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A Visit to the Grave of Robert Houdin.

\* Members of the Society of American Magicians.







HENRY RIDGELY EVANS, 32°, A. A. S. R.,

Member Society of American Magicians,  
Philosophical Society of Washington, D. C.,  
etc., etc.



## HENRY RIDGELY EVANS.

"Henry Ridgely Evans was born in Baltimore, Md., Nov. 7, 1861. Through his mother he is descended from the old Colonial families of Ridgely, Dorsey, Worthington, and Greenberry, well known in the annals of Colonial Maryland. His father, Henry Cotheal Evans, of Welsh descent, is connected with the U. S. Geological Survey, and is a topographical engraver and draughtsman of rare excellence. From him the subject of the present sketch inherits considerable artistic ability. Mr. Evans was educated partly at Georgetown University (D. C.) and Columbian University (D. C.). He studied law at the University of Maryland (Baltimore), but abandoned the legal profession for journalism. For a number of years he was connected with the reportorial staffs of the 'Baltimore Evening News' and the 'Denver Republican.' Subsequently he became connected with the U. S. Bureau of Education as one of the assistant librarians. His interest in psychical research and kindred topics led him to investigate the subject of spiritism and telepathy, the results of which were published in a work entitled 'Hours with the Ghosts; or Nineteenth Century Witchcraft' (Chicago, 1897). From boyhood he manifested a great interest in the feats of prestidigitators, and studied the art of legerdemain with several distinguished professors. In his writings, Mr. Evans has thrown considerable light on the psychology of deception and the history of natural magic. His articles in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* (1899-1900) on

occultism and magic attracted considerable attention. Mr. Evans has brought out an American edition of Ellis Stanyon's 'Conjuring for Amateurs,' supplemented with many unique illusions, and suggestions for performing sleight-of-hand tricks. In 1891 he was married to Florence, daughter of the late Alexander Kirkpatrick, of Philadelphia, Pa."—*National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*.

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Great pyramid, and Napoleon I; a masonic study, with complete bibliography of pyramid literature. Washington, 1895. 80 18 pp.

Hours with the ghosts; or nineteenth century witchcraft. Investigations into the phenomena of spiritualism and theosophy. Chicago, 1898. 80 (Illustrated.) 302 pp.

Introduction to Hopkins' "Magic, stage illusions," &c.

Magic (by Prof. Ellis Stanyon). Edited by H. R. Evans. With supplementary chapters on shadowgraphy, stage illusions, h&c. Philadelphia, 1901. 120 (Illustrated.)

## INTRODUCTION.

Many conjurers are adverse to exposés and fight shy of works on legerdemain. Books on magic, however, do not injure the profession of the prestidigitator, because only interested amateurs buy them and study them. The average reader would not take the time to wade through explanations of sleight-of-hand tricks. The danger to magic really lies in the exposés made by performers on the stage, when an unsuspecting general public is initiated into the secrets of the art. I could name a score of magicians who are guilty of this reprehensible practice, killing, as it were, the goose that lays the golden eggs—and all for what, to gain a cheap laugh from people who would rather be mystified than have tricks explained to them. A magician should not have a contempt for his calling, but always remember that he is an actor playing the part of a sorcerer. The slightest exposé spoils the illusion which his dexterity has conjured up. Two young men are now touring the country performing tricks and exposing the majority of them. On one occasion when they were exhibiting in New York City, my friend, Mr. François De Villiers, a clever illusionist, was in the theatre. He said to me afterwards: "After having

exposed some excellent tricks, one of the young men did the fishing-rod feat, but received no applause. "What," he exclaimed peevishly to the audience, "did you not like that trick?" The trick was all right, but he had explained the *modus operandi* of so many illusions and exhibited their simplicity, that the spectators had grown apathetic. Their interest and enthusiasm had waned."

This is an excellent statement of the bad effect of exposing magic tricks on the stage.

But text-books on conjuring have come to stay. The literature is on the increase.

To those amateurs and to my numerous professional friends who delight in new books, I send forth "Magic and its Professors," trusting that it will prove of interest to them. Part III is a symposium on magic by some of the best performers and inventors of the day. I sincerely thank them for the labor of love which they have rendered. I am indebted to Mr. T. Francis Fritz, the editor of "Mahatma," and Mr. William J. Hilliar, editor of "The Sphinx," for the right to reprint in book form some of the valuable exposés contained in their respective journals. I am also under obligations to those clever inventors and conjurers, Messrs. Adrian Plate, Henry Hardin, Doctor Elliott, W. B. Caulk, William J. Hilliar, Frank Ducrot, Clinton Burgess, Hal Merton, W. J. Sargent, "Selbit," Howard Thurston, T. Nelson Downs, Fred J. Peters, Prof. Hornmann, Martinka Bros., Prof. Ambrose, Ellis Stanyon, etc., etc.

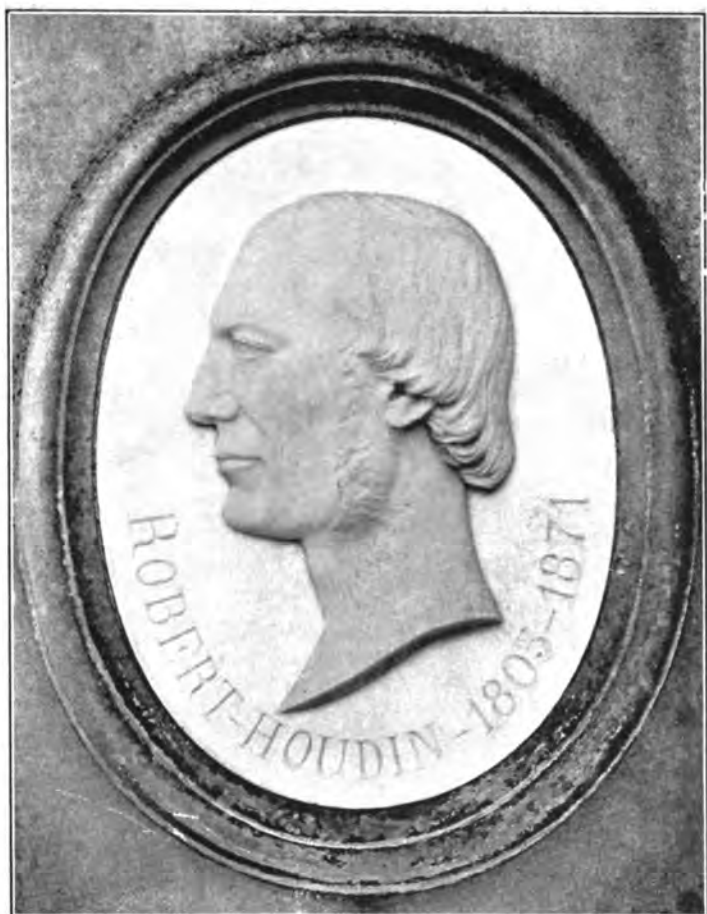
The chapters on Robert-Houdin and Trewey were orig-

inally contributed by me to the "Cosmopolitan Magazine," New York; the exposés of "After the Ball" and "She" to the "Ladies' Home Journal," Philadelphia. The article on Robert-Houdin, I have re-written and supplemented with much new material regarding the great conjurer's latter days—for many years a sealed book to the public. But thanks to the investigations set on foot by Mr. H. J. Burlingame, of Chicago, and M. Trewey, of Asnières, France, I am able to throw a flood of light on the subject.

HENRY RIDGELY EVANS,  
Washington, D. C.







**Medallion Portrait of Robert-Houdin**

**From his Tomb at Blois, France**

**From an original Photograph by Mr. Harry Houdini**

*(Courtesy of "Mahatma")*



## PART I.

### ROBERT-HOUDIN—CONJURER, AUTHOR AND AMBASSADOR.

#### I.

Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin was born at Blois, the birthplace of Louis XII, on Dec. 6, 1805. His father was a watchmaker in moderate circumstances. At the age of eleven Jean-Eugène Robert (for such was the necromancer's real name) was sent to college at Orleans. On the completion of his studies, he entered a notary's office at Blois, at the earnest solicitation of his father, but soon abandoned the uncongenial pursuit of engrossing musty parchments for watchmaking. One evening the young apprentice entered a bookseller's shop in Blois and asked for a treatise on clockmaking by Berthoud. By mistake the shopman, who was busy attending to more important customers, handed him a couple of odd volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, which in appearance closely resembled Berthoud's famous work. Home went Jean-Eugène to his little attic, au sixième in the mansard of an ancient house. Judge of his surprise to find one of the books labeled "Scientific Amusements," containing explanations of various feats of legerdemain. Overpowered with astonishment and fascinated beyond measure, Houdin devoured the mystic volume until far into the night, finally sleeping with it beneath his pillow.

This trivial incident was provocative of great changes in his future career. He vowed to become a famous prestidigitator.

Living at Blois was a mountebank, who, for a consideration, initiated the young aspirant for magical skill



*Robert Houdin* 

into the multiform mysteries of juggling, enabling him in a short while to keep four balls going in the air at

once and read a book at the same moment. From juggling he passed on to sleight-of-hand proper, in which the art of palming plays the principal part.

Though his passion for prestidigitation was so intense, Houdin had sufficient command over himself not to displease his master. He never neglected his trade of watchmaking. At length the apprenticeship was over, and Jean-Eugène went to Tours as a journeyman. He faithfully served his new employer, M. Noriet, who subsequently became a sculptor of distinction. In after-years the conjurer and the sculptor met on equal ground, both masters of their particular professions, in which great delicacy of touch and sleight-of-hand enter.

While in the service of M. Noriet (July 25, 1828) Houdin was poisoned by eating a ragout, cooked in a stew pan, in which there happened to be verdigris. His life was saved with difficulty. When he had partly convalesced, a monomania possessed him that he was soon to die. Under the influence of this unhappy obsession he took what is known as "French leave" of his nurse and doctor, and set out for Blois in a stage coach, in order that he might bid adieu to his family before departing from this world. Now occurred a most romantic adventure, another one of those so-called accidents of life, but which, in my humble opinion, are the working of Destiny. The jolting of the lumbering old coach gave Houdin inexpressible pain. He was consumed with a burning fever and grew delirious. Without any one knowing it, he opened the door of the rotonde, in which he happened to be the only passenger, and leaped out, at an imminent risk of his life, on to the high road, where he fell in a state of insensibility. When he regained his senses he found himself ensconced in a comfortable bed. Over him bent an unknown man, holding in his hand a phial of medicine. By the strangest luck, Houdin had fallen into the hands of a traveling conjurer named Torrini,

who went about the country in a sort of house on wheels, which was drawn by a couple of big Norman horses. Torrini, before taking up the magic art, had been a successful physician, hence he was able to treat his patient with intelligence and skill. Houdin mended slowly. Now began a delightful friendship. Torrini finding the young journeyman a clever mechanic, gave him some magical automata to repair, one of them being the little Harlequin that jumps out of a box and performs various feats at the command of the conjurer. In exchange for this work, Torrini supervised Houdin's studies in legerdemain, correcting his errors of manipulation, into which all self-educated amateurs fall, besides teaching him many new and surprising card sleights. Torrini was an expert with cards. The life led in this conjurer's caravan was most fascinating. Torrini was a charming raconteur and enlivened the journey with many entertaining anecdotes of his strange career. It was he, who, under the nom de théâtre of Comte de Grisy, had so unique revenge upon the Chevalier Pinetti. His performance before Pope Pius VII and his Cardinals is historical. On the day prior to the conjuring séance, while he was racking his brains to invent a trick worthy of his illustrious spectators, he strolled into the shop of one of the leading watchmakers of Rome. Presently a servant came in to ask if His Eminence the Cardinal de \_\_\_\_\_'s watch were repaired.

"It will not be ready till this evening," replied the watchmaker; "and I will do myself the honor of carrying it to your master."

When the servant had retired, the tradesman remarked to Torrini:

"This is a superb watch. The Cardinal to whom it belongs values it at more than 10,000 francs; for, as he ordered it himself of the celebrated Bréguet of Paris, he fancies it must be unique of its kind. Strangely

enough, though, only two days ago, a young scamp belonging to this city, offered me a precisely similar watch made by the same artist, for 1,000 francs."

Torrini's eyes sparkled with delight. Here was his opportunity to arrange a clever mystification. He commissioned the jeweler to purchase the chronometer and engrave the Cardinal's coat-of-arms on it. The tradesman, who was acquainted with the magician and assured of his discretion, complied, and that same evening brought the two watches to Torrini to examine. It was impossible to detect the slightest difference between them. The next day the performance took place at the Pontifical palace. As the culminating feat, Torrini borrowed Cardinal de \_\_\_\_\_'s watch which had been returned by the jeweler, and after many promises to handle it carefully, dropped it on the marble floor as if by accident, and set his heel upon it. Smash went the valuable timepiece. The Cardinal turned pale with rage and all were horror struck at the fiasco.

But the magician remained as imperturbable as ever. His assistant brought in at this juncture a huge mortar and pestle. Torrini cast into the mortar the remains of the watch, and proceeded to pound them up in true apothecary style. Red flames were seen to leap from the mortar, and presently the broken watch was reduced to an ingot of gold, which the magician by legerdemain made disappear from his hand. The watch was found restored in a pocket of the Pope's cassock. Torrini had adroitly slipped it there when the Holy Father with his attendants were engaged in looking into the mortar. This seeming marvel was speedily noised abroad, and Torrini became the idol of the Roman public. As may be imagined, his exchequer was filled to repletion, and he left the Eternal City with many valuable decorations and presents from admiring patrons, among them being a magnificent diamond-studded snuff-box, presented by Pius VII. It is not

recorded whether the Cardinal ever discovered the cheat practiced upon him.

Poor Torrini! his son was accidentally shot by a spectator in the gun trick, during a performance at Strasburgh. A real leaden bullet got among the sham bullets and was loaded into the weapon. Oppressed with grief at the loss of his only child, and at the subsequent death of his wife, he abandoned the great cities and wandered about the French Provinces in a castle on wheels, attended by a faithful assistant, his brother-in-law, Antonio. But *revenos à nos moutons*.

All was not smooth sailing, or rolling, with the caravan. One day at Aubusson the conjurer's house on wheels collided with an enormous hay cart. Houdin and Antonio escaped with light contusions, but the Master of the show had a leg broken and an arm dislocated. The two horses were killed; as for the carriage only the body remained intact; all the rest was smashed to atoms. During Torrini's illness, Houdin, assisted by Antonio, gave a conjuring performance at the town hall to replete the exchequer. Houdin succeeded very well in his first attempt, with the exception that he ruined a gentleman's chapeau, while performing the trick of the omelet in the hat.

Soon after this Houdin bid adieu to Torrini, and returned to his parents at Blois. He never saw Torrini again in this life. After following watchmaking at Blois for quite a little while, he proceeded to Paris, with his wife—for he had not only taken unto himself a spouse, but had adopted her name, Houdin, as part of his own cognomen. He was now Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin, master-watchmaker and—but that is another story, as Rudyard Kipling says.

## II.

In the year 1843, there stood in an unpretentious street of the Marais quarter of Paris, a dark little shop



over the door of which was displayed the following modest sign: "M. Robert-Houdin, Pendules de Précision." This sign indicated that the proprietor was a watchmaker, and that his wares were noted for precise running. Outwardly it was not an attractive shop, but its windows possessed a fascination for curious quidnuncs. There were watches displayed for sale, and there were some peculiar-looking clocks of clearest crystal that ran apparently without works, the invention of M. Robert-Houdin.\*



Houdin's Magic Clock.

\*"The cut represents the magic clock invented by Robert-Houdin about sixty years ago. This very remarkable time-piece consists of a dial composed of two juxtaposed disks of glass, one of which is stationary and carries the hours, while the other is movable and serves for the motion of the hands. This latter disk is provided with a wheel or rather a toothed ring concealed within the metallic ring forming a dial. The glass column which constitutes the body of the piece is formed of two tubes which operate according to the principle of the dial, that is to say, one

One day there sauntered by a certain wealthy scion of the Old Régime, the Count de l'Escalopier, who was a great lover of curios. He saw the magic clock in the watchmaker's window, and purchased it.

Being an ardent devotee of science amusante, or science wedded to recreation, the Count became a frequent visitor to Houdin's shop, to watch the construction of various automata. Houdin often showed sleight-of-hand tricks for the edification of his patron, and confessed his burning desire to become a public performer. The Count urged him continually to abandon the watchmaking and mechanical-toy trade and go on the boards as a prestidigitator. Finally Houdin confessed his inability to do so, owing to lack of means, whereupon the kind-hearted nobleman exclaimed: "Mon cher ami, I have at home, at this very moment, ten thousand francs or so, which I really don't know what to do with. Do me the favor to borrow them for an indefinite period; you will be doing me an actual service."

But Houdin would not accept the offer, for he was loath to risk a friend's money in a theatrical speculation. The Count in a state of pique left the shop, and did not return for many days. Then he rushed excitedly into the workroom, sank upon a chair, and exclaimed:

"My dear neighbor, since you are determined not to

is stationary and the other movable. To each of the extremities of the latter is fixed a wheel. These wheels gear with transmission pinions which communicate, one of them at the top with the movable plate of glass of the dial, and the other at the bottom with the movement placed in the wooden base which supports the glass shade covering the clock. All these concealed transmissions are arranged in a most skilful manner, and complete the illusion. The movable glass of the dial, carried along by the column, actuates a small dial-train mounted in the thickness of the stationary glass, and within an extremely narrow space in the center of the dial. It is covered by the small hand and is consequently invisible. The hands are very easily actuated by it on account of their extreme lightness and perfect equilibrium."—*Scientific American, N. Y.*

accept a favor from me, I have now come to beg one of you. This is the state of the case. For the last year my desk has been robbed from time to time of very considerable sums of money. I have adopted all possible safeguards and precautions—having the place watched, changing the locks, secret fastenings to the door, et cetera—but none of these has foiled the villainous ingenuity of the thief. This very morning, I have discovered that a couple of thousand-franc notes have disappeared.”

The upshot of it all was that Houdin invented a clever device for apprehending the criminal. It consisted of an apparatus fastened to the inside of the desk in the Count's house. When the desk was unlocked, and the lid raised ever so little, a pistol was discharged; at the same time a clawlike arrangement, attached to a light rod and impelled by a spring, came sharply down on the back of the hand which held the key, inflicting a superficial flesh-wound. With this clever machine the robber was successfully apprehended. He proved to be the Count's valet and factotum—a most trusted employee. The nobleman forced the thief to disgorge over fifteen thousand francs, which he had invested in government stock.

M. de l'Escalopier took the money thus recovered to Houdin, saying: “Take it, return it to me just when you like, with the understanding that it is to be repaid only out of the profits of your theater.”

With this money, Houdin built a little theater in the Palais Royal. One day the following modest handbill appeared on the theatrical bulletin-boards:—

“Aujourd'hui Jeudi, 3 Juillet 1845.  
“Première Représentation  
“des  
“SOIRÉES FANTASTIQUES  
“de  
“ROBERT-HOUDIN.”

These fantastic evenings became wonderfully popular. The little theater would seat only two hundred, but the prices of admission were rather high.

During the Revolution of 1848, when the poor "pear-headed" Louis Philippe was driven from his throne, most of the theaters of Paris went to smash financially. Houdin simply closed up his hall, put the key in his pocket, and went to inventing new tricks. His loss was very slight, as he was under no great expense. As soon as order was restored, he resumed his soirées.

When summoned to give a séance before Louis Philippe and his Court, at the Chateau of St. Cloud, Houdin concocted a trick worthy to set before a king. He successfully conjured a number of borrowed handkerchiefs into a rusty iron box concealed among the roots of an orange tree in the royal orangery. When the coffer was opened, the first thing that caught the monarch's eye was a parchment, upon which was the following announcement:

*"This day, the 6th June, 1786,*

*"This iron box, containing six handkerchiefs, was placed among the roots of an orange tree by me, Balsamo, Count of Cagliostro, to serve in performing an act of magic, which will be executed on the same day sixty years hence before Louis Philippe of Orleans and his family.*

I shall let Houdin tell the dénouement of the mystification.

"There is decidedly witchcraft about this," said the King, amazed. "Nothing is wanting, for the seal and signature of the celebrated sorcerer are placed at the foot of this statement, which, heaven pardon me, smells strongly of sulphur."

"At this jest the audience began to laugh.

"But," the King added, taking out of the box a carefully sealed packet, "can the handkerchiefs by any possibility be in this?"

"Indeed, sire, they are," I replied, "but before opening the parcel, I would request your majesty to notice that it also bears the impression of Cagliostro's seal."

"This seal, once rendered so famous by being placed on the celebrated alchemist's bottles of elixir and liquid gold, I had obtained from Torrini, who had been an old friend of Cagliostro's.

"It is certainly the same," the royal spectator answered, after comparing the two seals. Still, in his impatience to learn the contents of the parcel, the King quickly tore open the envelope, and soon displayed before the astounded spectators the six handkerchiefs which a few moments before, were still on the table."

Truly was Houdin a past-master of *mise-en-scène*. Everything was grist that came to his mill—even the seal of the arch-enchanter, Cagliostro!

Houdin was very fond of producing by apparently magical means all sorts of articles from a hat, handkerchief, or cornucopia, such as bouquets, candies, toys, fans, bijouterie, etc. These he distributed with lavish hand among the spectators, crying out:

"Here are toys for young and old!"

There was always a good-humored scramble for these souvenirs. Amid all his labors, Houdin found time to edit a small journal *pour rire*, a copy of which was presented to each spectator during the intermission. It was illustrated with comic cartoons, and eagerly read. The title was as follows: "*Cagliostro: Passe-temps de l'entre-acte (ne jamais lire passe-t-en). Ce journal, paraissant le soir, ne peut être lu que par des gens éclairés . . . le rédacteur prévient qu'il n'est pas timbré (le journal).*"

In one of the numbers, under the head of "*Fait divers*," is the following *bon mot*: "*Le Ministre de l'Intérieur ne recevra pas demain mais le Ministre des Finances recevra tous les jours—et jours suivants.*" The journal was tied with a band of white ribbon, upon

which was printed in gold letters: "*À M. et Mme. . . . demeurant ici. Votre abonnement, finissant ce soir, le gérant du journal vous prie de le renouveler demain, si vous ne voulez pas le voir expirer (l'abonnement).*"

As each theatrical season opened, Houdin had some new marvel with which to excite public curiosity. His maxims were: "It is more difficult to support admiration than to excite it." "The fashion an artist enjoys can only last as long as his talent daily increases." Houdin had but few, if any, rivals in his day. His tricks were all new, or so improved as to appear new. He swept everything before him. When he went to London for a prolonged engagement, Anderson, the "Wizard of the North," the great self-puffer and advertiser, sank into insignificance beside him, and retired into the Provinces with his antique repertoire. What had the English magician to offer alongside of such absolute novelties as the *Second Sight, Aerial Suspension, Inexhaustible Bottle, Mysterious Portfolio, Crystal Cash-Box, Shower of Gold, Light and Heavy Chest, Orange Tree, the Crystal Clock*, and the automaton figures, *Auriol and Debureau, the Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal*, etc.

### III.

To Robert-Houdin we are indebted for a complete revolution in the art of conjuring. Prior to his time magicians draped their tables to the floor, thereby making them little else than huge confederate-boxes. Conjuring under such circumstances was child's play, as compared with the difficulties to be encountered with the apparatus of the new school. In addition, Houdin discarded the long, flowing robes of his predecessors, as savoring too much of charlatanism, and appeared in evening dress. Since his time no first-class prestidigitator has dared to offend good taste by presenting his illusions in any other costume than that of a gentleman

habited à la mode, nor has he dared to give a performance with draped tables.

Houdin's center-table was a marvel of mechanical skill and ingenuity. Concealed in the body were "vertical rods, each arranged to rise and fall in a tube, according as it was drawn down by a spiral spring or pulled up by a whip-cord which passed over a pulley at the top of the tube and so down the table-leg to the



Fig. A—The talking bust.

hiding-place of the confederate." There were "ten of these pistons, and ten cords passing under the floor of the stage, terminated at a keyboard. Various ingenious automata were actuated by this means of transmitting motion."

Houdin's stage was very handsome. It was a reproduction in miniature of a salon of the Louis XV period—all in white and gold—illuminated by elegant candel-

bra and a chandelier. The magic table occupied the center of the room. This piece of furniture was flanked by little guéridons. At the sides were consoles, with about five inches of gold fringe hanging from them, and across the back of the apartment ran a broad shelf, upon which was displayed the various apparatus to be used in the séances. "The consoles were nothing more than shallow wooden boxes with openings through the side-scenes. The tops of the consoles were perforated with traps. Any object which the wizard desired to

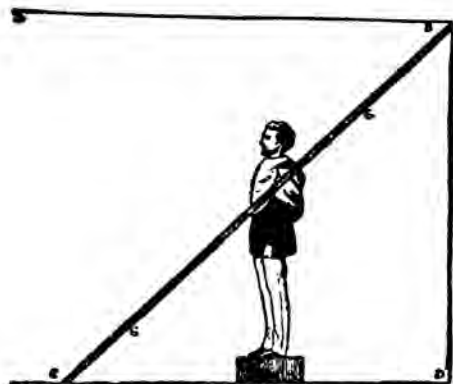


Fig. B—How the talking bust was worked.

work off secretly to his confederate behind the scenes was placed on one of these traps and covered with a sheet of paper, pasteboard cover or a handkerchief. Touching a spring caused the article to fall noiselessly through the trap upon cotton batting, and roll into the hand of the conjurer's concealed assistant."

Now for some of the tricks of this classic prestidigitator. His greatest invention was the "light and heavy chest." Speaking of this remarkable experiment he wrote: "I do not think, modesty apart, that I ever invented anything so daringly ingenious." The magi-



cian came forward with a little wooden box, to the top of which was attached a metal handle. He addressed the audience as follows: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have a cash-box which possesses some strange properties. It becomes heavy or light at will. I place in it some bank-notes for safe keeping and deposit it here on the 'run-down' in sight of all. Will some gentleman test the lightness of the box?"

When the volunteer had satisfied the audience that the box could be lifted with the little finger, Houdin executed some pretended mesmeric passes over it, and bade the gentleman lift it a second time. But try as he might, the volunteer would prove unequal to the task. At a sign from Houdin the box would be restored to its pristine lightness. This trick was performed with a powerful electro-magnet with conducting wires reaching behind the scenes to a battery. At a signal from the performer an operator turned on the electric current, and the box, which had an iron plate let into its bottom, covered with mahogany-colored paper, clung to the magnet with supernatural attraction. In the year 1845, the phenomena of electro-magnetism were unknown to the general public, hence the trick of the spirit cash-box created the most extraordinary sensation. When the subject of electricity became better known, Houdin made an addition to the trick which threw his spectators off the scent. After first having shown the trick on the "run-down," he hooked the box to one end of a cord which passed over a pulley attached to the ceiling of the hall. A spectator was requested to take hold of the other end of the cord and keep the chest suspended.

"Just at present," remarked the conjurer, "the chest is extremely light; but as it is about to become, at my command, very heavy, I must ask five or six other persons to help this gentleman, for fear the chest should lift him off his feet."

"No sooner was this done than the chest came heavily to the ground, dragging along and sometimes lifting off their feet all the spectators who were holding the cord. The explanation is this: On a casual inspection of the pulley and block everything appears to indicate that, as usual in such cases, the cord passes straight over the pulley, in on one side and out on the other; but such is not really the fact, as will be seen upon tracing the course of the dotted lines (Fig. C), which, passing through the block and through the ceiling, are attached



Houdin's trick table.

on either side to a double pulley fixed in the room above. To any one who has the most elementary acquaintance with the laws of mechanics, it will be obvious that the strength of the person who holds the handle of the windlass above is multiplied tenfold, and that he can easily overcome even the combined resistance of five or six spectators."

The "bust of Socrates" was another favorite experiment with Houdin. In this illusion a living bust with the features of Socrates was suspended in the middle of the stage without visible support. The performer,

habited as an Athenian noble, addressed questions to the mutilated philosopher and received replies in stanzas of elegiac verse. The *mise-en-scène* is represented in Fig. A. Houdin explains the illusion as follows:

"*A, B, C, D* (Fig. B) represent a section of the stage on which the trick is exhibited. A sheet of silvered glass, *G, G*, occupying the whole width of the stage, is placed in a diagonal position, extending from the upper part of the stage at the rear, down to the footlights, so as to form an angle of forty-five degrees with the floor. In the center of the glass is an opening through which the actor passes his head and shoulders, as shown in the figure. It should be further mentioned that the ceiling and the two sides of the stage are hung with wall-paper of the same pattern, and are brilliantly illuminated, either by means of footlights at *C*, or by gas-jets placed behind the border *A*. Such being the condition of things, the effect is as follows: The ceiling *A* is reflected in the mirror, and its reflection appears to the spectators to be the paper of the wall *B, D*, which in reality is hidden by the glass.

"By means of this reflection, of which he is of course unaware, the spectator is led to believe that he sees three sides of the stage; and there being nothing to suggest to his mind the presence of the glass, is led to believe that the bust is suspended in mid-air, and without any support."

"*Aërial Suspension*" was one of Robert Houdin's inventions. It has been a favorite trick since his time. In the original illusion Houdin had one of his young sons, who was dressed as a page, stand on a small stool. The performer then placed a walking-stick under the extended right arm of the boy, near the elbow, and one under the left arm. First the stool was knocked away and the youthful assistant was suspended in the air, held up only by the two frail sticks, which were in themselves inadequate to support such a weight. Then

the left stick was removed, but the boy did not fall. To the astonishment of every one, the youth was placed in a horizontal position. He remained in a perfectly rigid attitude with his head leaning on his arm, the top of the cane under his elbow.

This very ingenious trick was suggested to Houdin on reading stories about the alleged levitation of Hindoo fakirs. The walking-stick that supported the right arm of the assistant was of iron, painted to resemble wood. It fitted into a slot in the stage; its top connected with a bar concealed in the sleeve of the boy. This bar formed part of a strong steel framework worn under the assistant's clothing. Thus was the page suspended in the air.

Houdin's trick of the "orange-tree" was a capital one. The tree blossomed and bore fruit at the command of the conjurer. All the oranges were distributed among the spectators except one on the topmost branch of the tree. In this orange the magician caused a handkerchief to appear, which had been previously borrowed. The handkerchief was made to vanish from the hands of the performer. "Hey, presto!" the orange fell apart in four sections, whereupon two butterflies sprang out and fluttered upward with the handkerchief. The explanation of this beautiful trick is as follows: The tree was a clever piece of mechanism, so closely fashioned to resemble a plant that it was impossible to detect the difference. The blossoms, constructed of white silk, were pushed up through the hollow branches by pistons rising in the table and operating upon similar rods contained in the tree. When these pedals were relaxed the blossoms disappeared, and the fruit was slowly developed. Real oranges were stuck on iron spikes protruding from the branches of the tree, and were concealed from the spectators by hemispherical wire screens painted green. The screens were also partly hidden by

the artificial foliage. By means of cords running down through the branches of the tree and off behind the scenes, an assistant caused the screens to make a half-turn, thereby developing the fruit. The borrowed

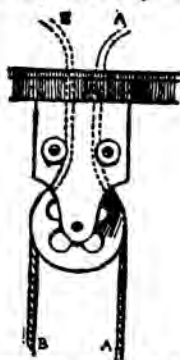


Fig. C—The trick pulley.

handkerchief was exchanged for a dummy belonging to the conjurer, and passed to an assistant who placed it in the mechanical orange. The tree was now brought forward. After the real fruit had been distributed, the magician called attention to the orange on the top (the mechanical one). By means of sleight-of-hand the handkerchief was made to vanish, to be discovered in the orange. The butterflies, which were fastened by wires to the stalk and fixed on delicate spiral springs, invisible at a little distance, flew out of the orange of their own accord, carrying with them the handkerchief, as soon as the fruit fell apart.

#### IV.

The crowning event of Houdin's career was his embassy to Algeria to counteract the influence of the Marabout priests over the ignorant Arabs. The Marabouts, or Mohammedan miracle-workers, were continually fanning the flames of discontent and rebellion against French domination. The French Government asked Houdin to visit Algeria and perform before the natives in order to show them that a French wizard, using only sleight-of-hand and the resources of science, was greater than the greatest of Marabouts who pretended to occult powers. Houdin was proud of the honor conferred upon him by his Government. No such mission had ever before been entrusted to a pres-

tidigitator. In the year 1856 he left France for Algeria, accompanied by his wife, two sons, and many trunks full of magical paraphernalia. The Governor of the Colony received the eminent conjurer with open arms, and placed at his disposal the leading theatre of the Capital. The coming of Houdin had been heralded far and wide, and the French inhabitants of Algiers were on the *qui vive* to witness the *soirées magiques*. As for the Arabs, they presented a front of stolid indifference. Their contempt for a French magician was unbounded. "Could he eat fire and glass and stab himself without injury like a Marabout?"

The journals of Algiers perpetrated many good-humored *bon mots* at Houdin's expense. One newspaper wanted to know how he could possibly be in Algiers hoodwinking the Arabs and at the same time appearing nightly at Paris, if he were not really *Robert le Diable*. The Parisian entertainment given at the Théâtre Robert-Houdin by M. Hamilton still went under the original title *Soirées de Robert-Houdin*, hence the joke about Houdin's strange ubiquitousness.

Foreseeing the difficulty of getting the superstitious and fanatical Arabs to voluntarily patronize Houdin's show, the wily Marshal-Governor of Algeria, sent out an official mandate to the leading chieftains to bring into the city so many of their people. This mandate the shieks dared not disobey. Accordingly on the appointed evening the theatre was crowded by a grave, sedate assemblage of white-bournoused sons of the desert, with a sprinkling of French officers and their families, the Governor and his household, and some of the leading French citizens of the place, to lend color to the scene. Never before did Houdin perform with such brilliancy and dash. The Arabs were soon aroused from their apathy. Frequent were the cries of *Shaitan!* (Satan). They told their beads, and often covered their

faces with their robes, fearful of encountering the "Evil Eye" of the little French necromancer. When Houdin produced coffee in a large silver bowl, by an apparently magical process, the sons of the desert were quite dumbfounded. Cups of the steaming hot beverage were handed about among the spectators by attendants, but it was some time before the Arabs could be induced to partake of it.

The great event of the evening, however, was the "Light and Heavy Chest," which literally paralyzed the Arabs with astonishment and set Houdin upon a pinnacle of greatness. Ever after that he was the Genius of the Arabian Nights, the necromancer par excellence. Presented simply as a chest rendered light and heavy at will, the trick would not have provoked such unbounded admiration and awe. Houdin altered the *mise-en-scène* and declared that he possessed the power of making the strongest man so weak that he would be unable to lift a small box from the floor, and that he could restore strength to the individual by a simple wave of the hand. This was indeed a magical undertaking, and cleverly designed to produce an extraordinary effect upon the Arab nature; a feat far surpassing anything done by a Marabout. I shall tell the story in Houdin's own words:

I advanced, with my box in my hand, to the center of the "practicable," communicating from the stage to the pit; then, addressing the Arabs, I said to them:

"From what you have witnessed, you will attribute a supernatural power to me, and you are right. I will give you a new proof of my marvelous authority, by showing that I can deprive the most powerful man of his strength, and restore it at my will. Any one who thinks himself strong enough to try the experiment may draw near me." (I spoke slowly, in order to give the interpreter time to translate my words.)

An Arab of middle height, but well built and muscular, like many of the Arabs are, came to my side with sufficient assurance.

"Are you very strong?" I said to him, measuring him from head to foot."

"Oh yes!" he replied, carelessly.

"Are you sure you will always remain so?"

"Quite sure."

"You are mistaken, for in an instant I will rob you of your strength, and you shall become like as a little child."

The Arab smiled disdainfully, as a sign of his incredulity.

"Stay," I continued; "lift up this box."

The Arab stooped, lifted up the box, and said to me, "Is this all?"

"Wait——!" I replied.

Then with all possible gravity, I made imposing gesture, and solemnly pronounced the words:

"Behold! you are weaker than a woman; now, try to lift the box."

The Hercules, quite cool as to my conjuration, seized the box once again by the handle, and gave it a violent tug, but this time the box resisted, and, spite of his most vigorous attacks, would not budge an inch.

The Arab vainly expended on this unlucky box a strength which would have raised an enormous weight, until at length exhausted, panting, and red with anger, he stopped, became thoughtful, and began to comprehend the influences of magic.

He was on the point of withdrawing; but that would be allowing his weakness, and that he, hitherto respected for his vigor, had become as a little child. This thought rendered him almost mad.

Deriving fresh strength from the encouragements his friends offered him by word and deed, he turned a glance around them, which seemed to say, "You will see what a son of the desert can do."

He bent once again over the box: his nervous hands twined around the handle, and his legs, placed on either side like two bronze columns, served as a support for the final effort.

But, wonder of wonders! this Hercules, a moment since so strong and proud, now bows his head; his arms, riveted to the box, undergo a violent muscular contraction: his legs give way, and he falls on his knees with a yell of agony.

An electric shock, produced by an inductive apparatus, had been passed, on a signal from me, from the further end of the stage into the handle of the box. Hence the contortions of the poor Arab!

It would have been cruelty to prolong this scene.

I gave a second signal, and the electric current was immediately intercepted. My athlete, disengaged from his terrible bondage, raised his hands over his head.

"Allah! Allah!" he exclaimed, full of terror; then, wrapping himself up quickly in the folds of his burnous, as if to hide his disgrace, he rushed through the ranks of the spectators and gained the front entrance.

With the exception of the dignitaries occupying the stage boxes and the privileged spectators, in the body of the house, who seemed to take great pleasure in this great experiment, my



audience had become grave and silent, and I heard the words "Shaitan!" "Djenoum!" passing in a murmur round the circle of credulous men, who, while gazing on me, seemed astonished that I possessed none of the physical qualities attributed to the angel of darkness.

The Marabout priests often boasted of their invulnerability, claiming to possess powerful talismans which caused loaded guns and pistols to flash in the pan when fired at them. Marshal de Neveu, Governor of the Province, who had inquired into the matter and discovered the trickery used, was very anxious for Houdin to counteract the effect of the pretended miracle. Houdin performed his celebrated "bullet catching trick," in which a marked bullet apparently shot from a gun is caught by the performer on a plate or in the hand. Many of the Arabs would not believe that this feat was accomplished by legerdemain, but attributed it to actual sorcery. After the series of performances were concluded at the Capital, Houdin traveled into the interior of Algeria, visiting prominent chieftains and giving his exhibitions in tents, in the open air, anywhere, always creating a furore and discrediting the Marabouts and their alleged miracles.

The Algerian mission over, Houdin returned to his beloved France and settled down at St. Gervais, near Blois, having ceded his theater to his brother-in-law, M. Hamilton. He had amassed a handsome fortune as a magician. In his retirement he was ever at work.

Houdin's magic villa at St. Gervais was full of surprises for visitors. The simple peasantry of the neighborhood regarded the place with awe, and imagined that the owner was in league with the powers of darkness. The villa was called the "Priory" by Houdin, but his friends jokingly named it "La Trappe Abbey." Electrical devices played a prominent part at "Catch 'em Abbey." Says William Manning:

"Robert-Houdin's employment of electricity, not

only as a moving power for the performance of his illusions, but for domestic purposes, was long in advance of his time. The electric bell, so common to us now, was in every-day use *for years* in his own house, before its value was recognized by the public.

"He had a favorite horse, named Fanny, for which he entertained great affection, and christened her 'the friend of the family.' She was of gentle disposition and was growing old in his service; so he was anxious to allow her every indulgence, especially punctuality at meals, and full allowance of fodder.

"Such being the case, it was a matter of great surprise that Fanny grew daily thinner and thinner, till it was discovered that her groom had a great fancy for the art formerly practised by her master, and converted her hay into five-franc pieces! So Houdin dismissed the groom and secured a more honest lad, but to provide against further contingencies and neglect of duty, he had a clock placed in his study, which with the aid of an electrical wire, worked a food supply in the stable a distance of fifty yards from the house. The distributing apparatus was a square funnel-shaped box, which discharged the provender in prearranged quantities. No one could steal the oats from the horse after they had fallen, as the electric trigger could not act unless the stable door was locked. The lock was outside, and if any one entered before the horse had finished eating his oats, a bell would immediately ring in the house.

"This same clock in his study also transmitted the time to two large clock-faces, placed one on the top of the house, the other on the gardener's lodge, the former for the benefit of the villagers.

"In his bell-tower he had a clockwork arrangement of sufficient power to lift the hammer at the proper moment. The daily winding of the clock was performed automatically by communication with a swing-door in his kitchen, and the winding-up apparatus of the

clock in the clock-tower was so arranged that the servants in passing backward and forward on their domestic duties, unconsciously wound up the striking movement of the clock."

The Priory is now an almost complete ruin. Owls and bats are the sole inhabitants of the magic villa. I am indebted to Mr. Charles L. Burlingame, of Chicago, a noted writer and authority on legerdemain, for the following account of *La Trappe Abbey*. Mr. Burlingame secured the services of the well known conjurer, Prof. Alber, of Paris, to make investigations at St. Gervais. Prof. Alber, in the spring of 1899, made several trips to the old home of Houdin, and reported as follows:

"The Priory no longer belongs to the family. It passed into the possession of M. Bergevin, father of the Marquise de Flers, who now occupies the castle of St. Gervais close by. The pedestrian going from Blois to St. Gervais passes through a long avenue lined with large trees, and after a short walk turns to the right into a narrow path which leads to the Priory. Let us follow him step by step and see the actual condition of the effects described by Houdin, and some which have not been described.

"The iron gate for carriages exists no longer. The little door to the left has been preserved, and in it we see the knocker and letter box described by Houdin, and which filled the functions of an automatic door-keeper. The mechanism for feeding oats to the horse, the sun dial and bell mentioned by him are still in existence; we must say, however, that none of the apparatus will work any longer. In the vestibule of the Priory can be seen a large frame in which are the armatures, commutators and other electrical apparatus necessary to work the effects. There can also be seen at Blois a dark room in which is reproduced the Castle of Blois and a panorama of the whole city. This room is in a small

kiosk on top of which is a lantern with some sort of optical apparatus. In it Houdin used to show the illusion now known as Metempsychosis, the same used by Prof. Kellar under the name of the Blue Room. Houdin was the first to produce it out of England, and then only for his own and friends' amusement. He would show the transformation of a grave stone into a beautiful maiden or a bunch of flowers. The miraculous orange tree first shown entirely bare of foliage, would gradually blossom and bear fruit; all these are still in existence. The exterior is very simple, it is a chalet with thatched roof, looking like the hut of a wood-cutter; it has two windows and a door in the centre, the interior is nicely decorated. There are no accessories present for performing the different illusions, but you can see how they were worked, i. e., the glasses and the small stage. At the Priory is still to be seen the grotto, a kind of cave about one hundred and fifty feet long, which has several openings in it. Inside there sat an automatical hermit which would greet the visitors, also a gardener, and in a dark corner was the seven headed hydra, serpents and other mechanical attractions. Not far from this is the Hermit's Chapel which shows nothing remarkable. Everything is in an advanced state of dilapidation, which is to be expected in any house or place that has not been tenanted for twenty years or more. It is much to be regretted that the property did not come into the possession of some wealthy amateur or admirer of the art who would have repaired these curiosities and kept them intact. The Priory excites no interest whatever in France or in its immediate neighborhood, it being entirely forsaken by tourists."

Houdin died at St. Gervais, June 13th, 1871, after an illness of only ten days. His death was due to pneumonia. The following is an extract of the notice of his death, taken from the registers of the civil authorities



## The Tomb of Robert Houdini

BL.OIS, FRANCE

From an original Photograph by Mr. Harry Houdini

*(Courtesy of "Mahatma")*



at St. Gervais: "June 14, 1871. Notice of the death of Robert-Houdin, Jean-Eugène, died at St. Gervais, June 13th, 1871, at 10 P. M., sixty-five years of age. Son of the defunct Prosper Robert and Marie Catherine Guillon; widower of his first wife Josephe Cecile Eglantine Houdin; married the second time to Françoise Marguerite Olympe Naconnier; Court House of St. Gervais, signed—The Mayor." The signature is illegible.

The closing years of the great magician's life were saddened by the tragic death of his beloved son, Eugène, who had assisted him in the soirées magiques. Much to the disappointment of his father who had destined him to follow in his footsteps as a conjurer, Eugène entered the military school at St. Cyr, from which he graduated as a sub-lieutenant. On the breaking out of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, Eugène was a Captain in the 1st Zouaves, and very much beloved by his men. He was killed at Reichshoffen in a reconnaissance against the Prussians.

Robert Houdin never recovered the shock of this lamentable death. It hastened his own end. In a letter to his old friend, William Manning, dated September 11, 1870, he thus describes the episode of Reichshoffen: \* \* \* "My son was thirty-three years old; he was captain since 1866; he belonged to the 1st Zouaves and was considered one of the bravest in that brave corps. You can judge of it by the following extract from an article in the 'Figaro,' of September 3d, entitled 'An episode of Reichshoffen,' an extract from a private letter. This letter was undoubtedly written by a soldier in my son's company; it is signed with an X. I omit the harrowing incidents which preceded this sad retreat. \* \* \* "The line had received orders to break up and we were defeated, 35,000 against 140,000! My company (1st Zouaves) was drawn up on the battle-field, to be used as sharp-shoot-

ers, alone, without artillery; we were to resist the retreat. Upon the order of Captain Robert-Houdin, Lieut. Girard advanced with two men to reconnoitre the enemy. He took three steps, and fell, crying: '*Do not give up the Coucou*' (a familiar expression applied to the flag). We carried him away and the Captain shouted '*Fire!*' The order to retreat came, but we did not hear it, and continued to beat against a wall of fire which illuminated our ranks. Soon our Captain fell, saying: '*Tell them \* \* \* that I fell facing the enemy.*' A bullet had pierced his breast. He was taken in the ambulance to Reichshoffen where he died, four days later, from his wound.'"

"My dear Manning, would you believe it, my brave son, mortally wounded as he was, had the heroic courage amidst flying shot to take from his pocket a pencil and a card and to write these words: '*Dear father, I am wounded, but be reassured, it is only a trifle!*' He could not sign this. The card and the envelope are stained with his blood. This precious relic was sent to me from Reichshoffen after my son's death."

Poor Eugène, handsome and genial, cut down in the flower of manhood!

Émile, the elder of the two sons, assisted his father on the stage, "with a manner and quickness peculiarly French." He distinguished himself in the "Second-Sight" trick. After his father retired from the profession of conjuring, Émile, who had no real love for the stage, became a watchmaker. He published a treatise on clock and watchmaking, to which his father wrote the following preface:

"I have often been asked why my son did not follow the career I had opened for him in prestidigitation, but preferred instead the study of horology. My answer to the question may be used fitly as a preface to this pamphlet.

"If you believe in hereditary vocations, here is a case



for their just application. My son's maternal great grandfather, Nicolas Houdin, was a watchmaker of great merit in the last century. J. F. Houdin, his son, has gained, as is well-known, a prominent place among the most distinguished watchmakers of his time. A certain modesty, which you will understand, prevents me from praising my father as highly; I shall only say that he was a very skillful and ingenious watchmaker. Before devoting myself to the art of conjuring, based on mechanism, I, too, was for a long time a watchmaker and achieved some success.

"With such a genealogy, should one not be predestined to horology? Therefore my son was irresistibly drawn to his vocation and he took up the art which Berthoud and Bréguet have made famous. It was from the latter of the two celebrated masters that he learned the elements of the profession of his forefathers."

Émile was subsequently induced to take up the magic wand, at the earnest solicitation of his father and friends. During his management the old theatre in the Palais Royal was abandoned, and a new theatre erected on the Boulevard des Italiens. He held this property until his decease in 1883. The theatre was partly destroyed by fire in the summer of 1901, but was subsequently rebuilt.

The father and sons who were so closely united in life now rest in graves far distant from each other. Houdin lies interred at Blois; Émile, the elder son, is buried in Père la Chaise, Paris; and Eugène, the beloved younger son, sleeps in a soldier's grave at Reichshoffen. The only surviving member of the family is Madame Émile Robert-Houdin, widow of the elder son. She resides at Boulogne-sur-Seine. I am indebted to her for many of the facts contained in this chapter.

Houdin's personal appearance is thus described by a writer in Larousse's "Encyclopédie": "He was a man of small stature. His manners were exceedingly

engaging and vivacious. His clean-cut profile resembled one of those medallion portraits of the noblesse of the eighteenth century. His face was clean-shaven, showing a large and eloquent mouth. In his old age, his head was crowned with snow-white hair; his eyes up to the last retained the fire and brilliancy of a man of twenty years."

Not only was Houdin the progenitor of the modern school of conjuring, but he was a man of science and a



Houdin's stage.

remarkable mechanical genius, having received several medals from the French government for his successful application of electricity to the running of clocks. If he had accomplished nothing more during his life than his electrical inventions, his name would have been heralded down to posterity. Besides this, he wrote several books, thereby distinguishing himself in the world of letters. Houdin was a master in all that related to the psychology of deception. His treatises on

the art of legerdemain are really psychological studies of very great interest to students. Houdin placed sleight-of-hand on a scientific basis, showing that it depended not only upon digital dexterity, but upon the careful observance of certain mental characteristics, common to all individuals. He laid down the axiom that it is easier to deceive an intelligent person than an ignorant one. This sounds like a paradox, but it is a fact. The ignorant man who witnesses a conjuring exhibition has determined beforehand not to be deceived by the artifices of the performer. In the case of educated persons, the conjurer's appeal to the imagination is eagerly responded to. People who have read about clairvoyance, psychometry, telepathy, hypnotism, and the like, are ever ready to attribute the feats of the necromancer to anything save mere conjuring; especially is this the case in mental magic, *i. e.*, second-sight experiments, et cetera.

A magician, according to Houdin, should always assign some plausible explanation to all his illusions, other than mere nimbleness of fingers. The public loves to be mystified. He remarks: "Although all one says during the course of a performance, is—not to mince the matter—a tissue of falsehoods, the performer must sufficiently enter into the part he plays, to himself believe in the reality of his fictitious statements. This belief on his own part will infallibly carry a like conviction to the minds of the spectators."

## THE MECHANISM OF GHOSTS.

## I.

The good old-fashioned Christmas ghost that "Blackwood's Magazine" was wont to treat us to, the phantasm of the moated grange, ruined castle, or ancestral chateau, which always made its appearance to the accompaniment of clanking chains and blue lights—is, alas, no more! The Society for Psychical Research has successfully laid these antiquated adumbrations of the dead, by showing their impossibility, as entities at least. The modern ghost is quite a different affair, the result of a telepathic impact upon the brain of the "recipient," who sees the phantasmal appearance, but knows it to be an hallucination. These fin-de-siècle shades are entirely too psychical to be interesting to the general public. They are not what the readers of the "shilling shocker" desire at all. Now there is another kind of ghost that is very old, but at the same time very much up-to-date. It is not of the Blackwood pattern, nor does it savor of the Society for Psychical Research. I allude to that very unsubstantial eidolon, the ghost of the concave mirror and the unsilvered sheet of glass; the ghost of physical science, which was known to the ancients, and which is to-day exploited by professors of the art amusante. It is of this most interesting of phantoms that I propose treating in this chapter. It may be manufactured by any ingenious amateur with a penchant for the mystic and marvelous. The history of the subject is quite romantic, and worthy of study.

"In the writings of the ancients," says Pepper, in his "Play Book of Science," "there are to be found certain

indications of the results of illusions produced by simple optical arrangements, and the sudden and momentary apparition (from the gloom of perfect darkness) of splendid places, delightful gardens, etc., with which—the concurrent voice of antiquity assures us—the eyes of the beholders were frequently dazzled in the Mysteries, such as the evocation and actual appearance of departed spirits, the occasional images of their *umbræ*, and of the gods themselves.”

There is very little doubt that the concave mirror was known to the priesthood of the Pagan world, as a medium for producing deceptions. Silver was the metal usually employed for such mirrors. In Egypt, the land of magic, the hierophants of the temples were well acquainted with the art of spirit evocation, as the following curious passage from “Damascius” shows: “In a manifestation which ought not to be revealed \* \* \* there appeared on the wall of the temple a mass of light which at first seemed very remote; it transformed itself in coming nearer into a face evidently divine and supernatural, of a severe aspect, but mixed with gentleness, and extremely beautiful. According to the institution of a mysterious religion, the Alexandrians honored it as Osiris and Adonis.”

Professor Pepper explains the mechanism of this illusion as follows: “The picture of a human face was reflected from a concave mirror concealed below the floor of the temple, the opening being hidden by a raised mass of stone, and the worshippers confined to a certain part of the temple, and not allowed to approach it.”

The projecting of images upon the smoke arising from burning incense was another spectacular method of evoking phantoms of the dead or the figures of the gods. It was probably with the help of some kind of smoke and the concave speculum that the deceptions practiced on the worshippers at the temple of Hercules at Tyre were carried out. Pliny says that a consecrated

stone existed there "from which the gods easily rose." At the temple of Esculapius at Tarsus a similar optical delusion was shown as a part of the religious ceremonies. Jamblichus actually tells us that the ancient sorcerers "made the gods to appear among the vapors disengaged from fire." The conjuror Maximus caused the statue of Hecate to laugh, while in the middle of burning incense.

Speaking of the concave mirror, Sir David Brewster says: "Those who have studied the effects of concave mirrors of a small size, and without the precautions necessary to ensure deception, can not form any idea of the magical effect produced by this class of optical apparatus. When the instruments of illusion are themselves concealed; when all extraneous lights but those which illuminate the real object are excluded; when the mirrors are large and well polished and truly formed, the effect of the representation on ignorant minds is altogether overpowering, while even those who know the deception, and perfectly understand its principles, are not a little surprised at its effects."

In the Middle Ages pretended magicians used the concave mirror for evoking spirits of the dead, or the powers of darkness. Benvenuto Cellini, the famous goldsmith and sculptor, in his autobiography, tells of an experience with a Sicilian sorcerer, to whom he applied for lessons in occultism. One dark night they repaired to the ruins of the Colosseum at Rome. The magician drew a mystic circle on the ground about himself and the goldsmith, and then built a fire, into which he threw various perfumes and herbs. Soon a dense smoke arose. After certain cabalistic words had been pronounced, a legion of little devils were seen dancing in the air, to the great terror of Cellini. This effect was evidently accomplished by the aid of a concave mirror manipulated by the wizard's confederates who were concealed amid the ruins of the Colosseum.

Like most of his confrères, Cellini was a very superstitious man and firmly believed in the reality of the conjurations. But it was an age of miracles and magic.

## II.

A scientific man, M. Villette, constructed in the year 1679, a very large concave mirror, which he exhibited before Louis XIV of France. It had the power of projecting the images of objects to a distance of fifteen feet or more, so that a man looking at himself in this mirror with a stick or sword in his hand, saw the image of them suspended in the air, apparently ready to strike the observer. It is stated that the King having placed himself, sword in hand, before this mirror, in order to observe the effect, was surprised to find himself face to face with an armed hand, apparently directed against him. The King could not conceal his surprise and fright, and afterwards felt so ashamed at being terrified at a mere shadow that he ordered the mirror to be taken away and could never be prevailed to look into it again.

During the French Revolution there arrived in Paris a Belgian optician named Etienne-Gaspard Robertson. The Red Terror was but recently past. Robespierre, the "sea-green incorruptible," the apostle of liberty, equality, fraternity and *death*, was in his grave, and the ghastly knitting women who were wont to assemble around the guillotine found their occupation gone. Paris longed for a new sensation. Etienne-Gaspard had an original idea in his head, which he desired to develop. He had a recipe for manufacturing ghosts by optical means. He was no charlatan like Cagliostro and Mesmer, who pretended to occult powers. For many years Robertson had studied the science of optics, both theoretically and practically. He flooded the city with advertisements and prospectuses. He set up his

ghost-making apparatus at the Pavilion de l'Echiquier. Nothing was talked of but the wonderful phantasmagoria of citizen Robertson.

Poultier, a journalist, and one of the representatives of the people, wrote an amusing account of the exhibition in a contemporary newspaper. He says: "A decemvir of the Republic has said that the dead return no more, but go to Robertson's exhibition and you will soon be convinced of the contrary, for you will see the dead returning to life in crowds. Robertson calls forth phantoms, and commands legions of spectres. In a well-lighted apartment in the Pavilion l'Echiquier I found myself seated a few evenings since, with sixty or seventy people. At seven o'clock a pale, thin man entered the room where we were sitting, and having extinguished the candles he said: 'Citizens, I am not one of those adventurers and impudent swindlers who promise more than they can perform. I have assured the public in the 'Journal de Paris' that I can bring the dead to life, and I shall do so. Those of the company who desire to see the apparitions of those who were dear to them, but who have passed away from this life by sickness or otherwise, have only to speak, and I shall obey their commands.' There was a moment's silence, and a haggard-looking man, with dishevelled hair and sorrowful eyes, rose in the midst of the assemblage and exclaimed, 'As I have been unable in an official journal to re-establish the worship of Marat, I should at least be glad to see his shadow.' Robertson immediately threw upon a brazier containing lighted coals, two glasses of blood, a bottle of vitriol, a few drops of aquafortis, and two numbers of the 'Journal des Hommes Libres,' and there instantly appeared in the midst of the smoke caused by the burning of these substances, a hideous livid phantom armed with a dagger and wearing a red cap of liberty. The man at whose wish the phantom had been evoked seemed to recognize Marat,



and rushed forward to embrace the vision, but the ghost made a frightful grimace and disappeared. A young man next asked to see the phantom of a young lady whom he had tenderly loved, and whose portrait he showed to the worker of all these marvels. Robertson threw upon the brazier a few sparrow's feathers, a grain or two of phosphorus, and a dozen butterflies. A beautiful woman with her bosom uncovered and her hair floating about her, soon appeared, and smiled on the young man with most tender regard and sorrow. A grave looking individual sitting close by me suddenly exclaimed, 'Heavens! it's my wife come to life again,' and he rushed from the room, apparently fearing that what he saw was not a phantom."

Other spirits were conjured up by the magician. Finally a royalist among the spectators called for the ghost of Louis XVI. Here was an awkward situation. Robertson who was not desirous of falling a victim to that greatest of ghost-making machines, la Guillotine, did not comply with the request. To have evoked the shade of the martyred Louis in that assemblage of red-hot Republicans would have raised a tumult. The courteous magician replied as follows to the aristocrat: 'Citizen, I once possessed a recipe for bringing dead kings to life, but that was before the eighteenth Fructidor, when the Republic declared royalty abolished forever. On that glorious day, I lost my magic formula, and fear that I shall never recover it again.' This clever retort was said to have been whispered to Robertson by his friend Ponthieu. It is supposed that the individual who called for the spirit of the defunct monarch, was a police agent in disguise, having a spite against Robertson. He hoped to entrap the conjurer. As it was, the affair occasioned such a sensation the following day, that the phantasmagoria was prohibited by the police, and seals were placed on the optician's boxes and papers. However, the interdiction was soon

raised, and the exhibition allowed to be continued. Robertson reaped the benefit of this wholesale notoriety. Finding the hall of the Pavilion too small to accommodate his audience, he moved his show to the old Capuchin convent near the Place Vendome. There the phantasmagoria was produced with splendid and awe-inspiring *mise-en-scène*, such as was calculated to evoke emotion even among the most skeptical in that epoch of rampant materialism. Many in fact believed Robertson to be a genuine enchanter and applied to him for all sorts of information concerning the living, as well as the dead. He generally referred such persons to the police authorities.

The Parisians went wild over the séances. They struggled for admission to the exhibition. The spectators were conducted through a series of dark passages to the abandoned chapel of the convent, which was in the middle of a vast cloister crowded with tombs and mortuary tablets. The chapel was hung with black. From the ceiling was suspended an antique lamp, in which burned a flame of spectral blue. Under the ghastly influence of this illumination the faces of the "ghost-seekers" resembled those of corpses. Robertson made his appearance, and delivered a lecture on ghosts, witches, sorcery and magic, after which he extinguished the lamp. Then arose a storm of wind and rain, thunder and lightning, interspersed with the lugubrious tolling of a church bell. Following this was heard the solemn strains of an organ. At the bidding of the magician, phantoms of the illustrious departed appeared—Voltaire, Mirabeau, Rousseau, and Lavoisier. Oftentimes the shade of Robespierre was evoked. A tomb would be shown from which would rise the figure of the "incorruptible one." A flash of lightning would strike the phantom, causing it to vanish. Very often people were carried fainting from the apartment, overcome by the spectral exhibition.

At the conclusion of the entertainment, Robertson said: "I have shown you, citizens, every species of phantom, and there is but one more truly terrible spectre—the fate which is reserved for us all. Behold!" In an instant there stood in the centre of the mortuary chamber a skeleton with a scythe in its bony hands. It grew to a colossal height and gradually faded away. These illusions were accomplished by the aid of a phantasmagoric lantern casting images on smoke, or upon a gauze screen. The figures were made to grow larger or smaller as the lantern was rolled forward or backward along a small track constructed for the purpose.

Effective as was Robertson's ghost illusion, it possessed one great defect; the images were painted on glass and lacked the necessary vitality. But it was the first exhibition of the kind the French had ever witnessed, hence they were not hypercritical.

A few words concerning the life of this ingenious optician will doubtless prove of interest to the reader. Robertson was born at Liège, Belgium, in 1763, where for many years he was a professor of physics. The French Revolution filled his head with extraordinary schemes for exploiting his inventions and promoting his fortune, and like so many venturesome souls of that epoch he was irresistibly drawn to Paris—the loadstone rock for political and scientific adventurers. While at the French capital, he addressed a memorial to the Government, proposing to construct burning glasses of sufficient magnitude to set fire to the English fleets, at that time blockading the French ports. Tradition tells us that the famous Grecian geometer, Archimedes, destroyed the Roman fleet in the harbor of Syracuse by means of metallic concave specula. Zonares, an historian of the twelfth century, relates that "Proculus, a celebrated mathematician of the sixth century, at the siege of Constantinople, set on fire the

Thracian fleet by means of brass mirrors. These stories, however, are very improbable. As regards Archimedes, Polybius and Plutarch make no mention of the igniting and the destruction of the Roman ships by means of mirrors, or other reflecting substances. Robertson's idea was evidently based on the alleged Archimedian experiment. The "Powers that Be" appointed a commission, composed of Monge, Lefevre, Gineau and Guyton de Morveau, to inquire into the subject. They made a report on the advantages of the project, but the matter went no further. Doubtless these curious documents are to be found among the musty archives of the French Government. They would make interesting reading. Robertson was the first to acquaint the French scientists with the facts of galvanism. He is not only noted as an optician, but as an aeronaut, having made fifty-nine ascensions in Europe. He invented the parachute, which has wrongly been attributed to Garnerin. Robertson died at Batignolles (Paris) in 1837. His "*Mémoires récréatifs et anecdotifs*" (1830-1834), contains descriptions of his ghost apparatus and other inventions. It has not, to my knowledge, ever been translated. It is an exceedingly rare work, highly prized by collectors.

### III.

It was reserved for the nineteenth century to evolve the greatest of ghost illusions, that of the Polytechnic Institution of London. This ghost was the joint invention of Henry Dircks, Civil Engineer, and John Henry Pepper, professor of chemistry, and honorary director of the Polytechnic. It is generally known as Pepper's Ghost, but Dircks conceived the original idea; Pepper perfected it and made it capable of being produced in a theatre. In the year 1863 letters patent were granted to Messrs. Dircks and Pepper for a device "for project-

ing the images of living persons in the air." This was a tremendous improvement upon Robertson's phantasmagoria. No concave mirrors, no magic lantern, simply a large sheet of glass. The illusion is based on a well known optical effect. In the evening carry a lighted candle to the window and you will see reflected in the pane, not only the image of the candle, but that of your hand and face as well. A plate of unsilvered glass, inclined at a certain angle, is placed on a stage between the actors and spectators. Beneath the stage and just in front of the glass, is a person robed in a white shroud, and illuminated by the brilliant rays of the electric or the oxy-hydrogen light. The image of the actor who plays the part of spectre, being reflected by the glass, becomes visible to the spectators, and stands, apparently, just as far behind the glass as its prototype is placed in front of it. This image is only visible to the audience. The actor who is on the stage sees nothing of it, and in order that he may not strike at random in his attacks on the spectre, it is necessary to mark beforehand on the boards the particular spot at which, to the eyes of the audience, the phantom will appear. Care must be taken to have the theatre darkened and the stage very dimly lighted.

So much for the mechanism. Now for the *mise-en-scène* of the ghost. The curtain rises on a gloomy chamber in an old castle. At a table of antique pattern sits a young student, poring over a huge folio by the flickering light of the lamp. The clock strikes the witching hour of twelve "when the grave gives up its dead." At the last stroke of the bell, there suddenly appears at the student's elbow the figure of a skeleton robed in a shroud. It waves its arms and addresses the student in sepulchral tones. The young man rises in affright, and picking up a naked sword from the table, makes a terrible lunge at the apparition. The weapon passes through the skeleton but produces no effect.

The ghost laughs mockingly at the student, who falls in a swoon upon the floor. In a flash of light the phantom vanishes.

The student revives and seats himself at the table once more to resume his midnight lucubrations. The skeleton appears again to haunt the wretched bookman, and as quickly disappears. The ghost was admirably performed by the actor at the Polytechnic, who, wearing "a cover of black velvet, held the real skeleton in his arms and made the fleshless bones assume the most eloquent attitudes, the lower part from the pelvis downward being attired in white linen, and the white skeleton ghost assuming a sitting posture, so that it appeared to come out of the floor."

Though this performance only lasted a few minutes, it filled the coffers of the Polytechnic with hundreds and thousands of pounds. The apparatus was subsequently used in the dramatizations of Charles Dickens' story of the "Haunted Man," and Bulwer's "Strange Story." In France the conjurers Robin and Lassaigue produced many wonderful effects with the Pepper ghost illusion.

A very fine ghost illusion on a small scale, based upon the above trick, may be arranged for fairs and amateur exhibitions.

I shall conclude this chapter with an account of the photographic ghost, to which spiritualists pin their faith. The mechanism used to produce these apparitions is very simple—a good portrait camera, some furniture, a sheet or two, and several willing sitters. Spirit photography has a long and interesting history. It was the invention of a man in London, who used it to defraud the ignorant. There are two ways of producing these photographs: (1) By double printing; (2) By double exposure. "In the first the scene is printed from one negative, and the spirit printed in from another. In the second method, the group with the friendly spook in proper position is arranged, and the

lens of the camera uncovered, half of the required exposure being given; then the lens is capped, and the person doing duty as the sheeted ghost gets out of sight, and the exposure is completed." The result is wonderfully effective when the picture is printed, the real persons being represented sharp and well defined, while the spectre is but a hazy outline, transparent, through which the background shows.

Coming down to the present day, we have the ghost illusion in a new form, that exhibited at the Cabaret du Néant, Paris, by the enterprising proprietor. This café, located in the famous Montmartre quarter, is one of the show places of the French capital. You enter a room draped in black and painted with emblems of mortality. The tables are fashioned like coffins, and the garçons are dressed as *croqmortes* (undertakers' men). When you have imbibed a "bock" you descend to a crypt where the illusion is exhibited. At one end of a large passage is seen a coffin, placed upright. A volunteer gets into the coffin and is draped in a winding sheet. Gradually he fades away and a grinning skeleton is seen in the casket. Finally he re-appears. Two men garbed as Capuchin monks take up a collection in a human skull, and the exhibition is over.

In this weird illusion a sheet of glass is placed obliquely across the room, in front of the coffin. At the side of the apartment, hidden by the proscenium, is another coffin containing a skeleton, or else a representation of such painted upon a board. When the electric lights surrounding the first coffin are turned off, and the skeleton and casket highly illuminated, the spectators see the reflection of the latter in the glass. To resurrect the man the lights are reversed.

## THE SHADOWS OF A CLEVER PAIR OF HANDS.

I was sitting at a little table in front of a café on the Boulevard des Italiens, Paris, when a tall, distinguished-looking man of clerical aspect sauntered by. His black frock-coat was buttoned up to his chin. Upon his head he wore a somewhat antiquated chimney-pot hat, such as is affected by priests in their promenades abroad, or else by eccentric old gentlemen who are worth millions but who take pleasure in hoaxing the public with a pretense of poverty.

"An abbé out for an airing!" I involuntarily exclaimed to my companion, a boulevardier who seemed to know all the celebrities of the French capital, at least by sight.

"Ma foi!" he replied, with a comical grimace and a characteristic shrug of the shoulders; "don't you recognize that man? An abbé! O la, la, la, mon ami, that is the famous Trewey—Félicien Trewey, juggler, prestidigitator, pantomimist and professor of the art of ombromanie. He is a true artist, and is now performing at the Concert des Ambassadeurs. His silhouettes of eminent persons are simply wonderful. You must go and see him."

"Silhouettes?" I inquired.

"Yes, and hand-made, too. Remarkably realistic and clever."

I had recently arrived in Paris from London, and had been too busy to visit the theaters. Hand-made shadows I had indulged in when a boy, to amuse the children of the household, but I was at a loss to know

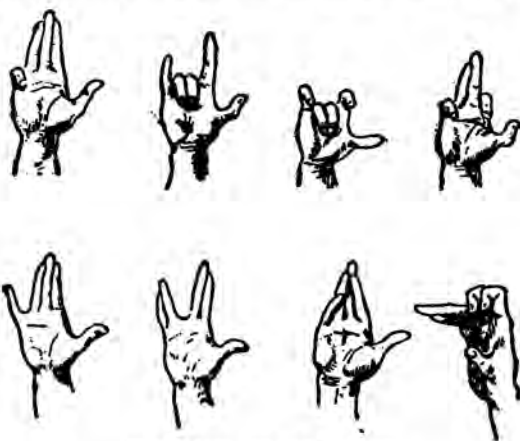


how such trivial things could be presented in a theater. I made a special pilgrimage that very night to the Concert des Ambassadeurs and "took in the show," as we Americans phrase it.

The art of casting silhouettes of animals, such as the dog, the cat and the rabbit, upon an illuminated wall, is very ancient. We find no mural paintings upon Egyptian temples recording such amusements, but it is more than probable that the ingenious dwellers in the Nile valley, who elevated the dog and the cat to the rank of deities in their pantheon, must have known something about shadow-making with the hands; they anticipated almost everything in vogue to-day. The Italian painter Campi, according to "La Nature," was one of the first to add new types to the collection of figures capable of being made with the shadows of the hands.

The clever Frenchman was the first to raise the art to the dignity of a stage performance, and endow it with movement and life. He stands behind a screen, which is brilliantly illuminated by an oxy-hydrogen light, and with his hands projects the silhouettes—pictures of soldiers, peasants, abbés, etc., to say nothing of animals. To form the headgear of his men and women, such as the grotesque bonnets of Norman bonnes, the képis of the little piou-pious, the shovel-hats of snuff-taking curés and the mortar-boards of the English scholastics, he has recourse to small pieces of cardboard cut to resemble the respective cranial coverings. Treway is not content with the "cold profiles," as he calls them, of living creatures, but endows his shadows with animation. His old peasants, for example, smoke, imbibe liquor from large jugs, inhale snuff, roll their eyes, open their mouths, gesticulate; his animals are exceedingly mobile. Besides this, he makes his characters enact charming little pantomimic scenes. One he calls the "serenade." A piece of cardboard, fashioned to repre-

sent the side of a house, constitutes the scenery. A gendarme (supposed to be violently in love with the servant-girl) knocks at the door of the mansion, whereupon his fair inamorata appears at the upstairs window. After an exchange of compliments, she withdraws from the window and reappears at the door. She gives to her lover a drink from a suspicious bottle, and he, after wiping his beard, kisses her and retires. Then comes the strolling musician, playing a lugubrious melody upon the clarinet. The owner of the house rushes to



Exercises for the fingers.

the bedroom window and motions the player away, but the musician derisively strikes up a lively tune. The irate proprietor now makes his appearance armed with a long broom, with which he thrashes the clarinetist. The musician still persisting, paterfamilias next produces the water-jug, and from the upstairs window pours the contents upon the head of the luckless serenade, who quickly makes his exit.

The little accessories used in this act, such as the helmet for the policeman, the broom, bottle, etc., are

cut from pasteboard and, where necessary, are attached to the fingers of the performer by means of india-rubber rings. The water-jug, however, is an actual little vessel, which is filled with fine sand. When this is poured out, it simulates a flow of water in the most natural manner.

"The pulpit orator" is a clever silhouette. About the left arm of the performer is tied a small box, which represents the pulpit; the bent fingers make a canopy. Between the fingers of the right hand is held a bit of pasteboard, cut in the shape of a mortar-board cap. The paraphernalia is very simple. You see the learned divine ascend the pulpit, bend forward in prayer, then begin to exhort an imaginary congregation. He thumps the pulpit-rail vehemently, twists himself into all sorts of grotesque positions, and wipes his perspiring brow. After having blessed the people, he descends from his elevated perch.

Having a decided penchant for the feats of prestidigitators, I sought an introduction to M. Trewey. I found him a most affable gentleman.

I learned from him many interesting things about shadowgraphy and sleight-of-hand generally. To excel in the art of ombromanie requires long practice. The fingers have to be exercised continuously in certain peculiar movements, such as are depicted in the accompanying illustration. Dexterity is largely dependent upon the formation of the hand; one of the particular characteristics of skilfulness being "the faculty of reversing the metacarpal phalanges of the fingers, so that when the hand is extended it is convex." Trewey possesses this faculty. Another peculiarity of his hands is the formation of the fingers; they differ very much in length. The middle finger exceeds the ring-finger by nearly an inch. The illustration, which is a reproduction of a photograph of the fantaisiste's hands, shows this very clearly. Long training has rendered Trewey's

hand very supple. The delicacy of his touch is something remarkable. He has a wrist of steel and fingers of india-rubber.

Trewey is a famous exponent of the "Tabarin," or twenty-five heads under one hat. The only paraphernalia requisite for this ingenious physiognomical feat is the brim of an old felt sombrero. With dexterous fingers the artist twists and turns this brim into all sorts of shapes to represent the headgear peculiar to different nationalities, trades or professions. Placing the improvised chapeau on his head, he assumes the proper facial expressions of the various characters represented. The audience is quick to recognize the portraits. No verbal explanations are necessary.

This peculiar exhibition was the invention of a certain Monsieur Tabarin, a quacksalver, who flourished on the Pont Neuf, Paris, in the eighteenth century.

Like most artists who have risen to eminence on the French stage, Trewey has known hardships and bitter poverty. His youth was a struggle against adverse conditions. But he had in him, in its truest sense, the soul of old Gaul—that joyous insouciance, that sardonic humor, which laughs at fortune and snaps its finger at the world. Natural vivacity will often keep a Frenchman alive, though his body is clothed in rags and his stomach is empty. Trewey was born at Angoulême, France, some fifty years ago. His father was an engineer in a paper-mill. Trewey père was ambitious for his son to enter the church, so he sent him to a Jesuit college at Marseilles to study for the priesthood. But fate had willed otherwise. When quite a young boy, Trewey had been taken to see a circus at Marseilles. Among the mountebanks was a conjurer, who gave a very interesting exhibition. The feats of magic of this strolling Merlin so fascinated the little Trewey that he forthwith secretly vowed to become a professional prestidigitator, as soon as he grew up. The studies pursued

at the Jesuit college did not cure the boy of his love for the stage. He divided his time between Latin verbs and juggling, mathematics and the art of palmistry. Soon he was able to give little exhibitions, private of course, for the amusement of his comrades. The good fathers must have thought him a very eccentric youth, for he was continually trying to balance his slate on the



Trewey's supple hands.

tip of his nose. Many a well-deserved cat-o'-nine-tails he got for his improvised feats of equilibration. Lying awake at night in the silent dormitory, he invented tricks, then fell asleep to dream of the wild delights of the mountebank's life—wandering like a gipsy over the country in a caravan, and performing at the little French villages and towns before crowds of rustics.

He pictured himself dressed in gorgeous raiment, covered all over with cabalistic emblems, exhibiting magic tricks for the amusement of gaping yokels—pulling rabbits from hats, turning omelets into doves and producing bowls of gold-fish from shawls. The boom, boom, of the bass drum, calling the spectators together, resounded in his ears. The boy had in him the spirit of adventure; the blood of some old strolling player of an ancestor ran in his veins. He longed to escape from under the watchful domination of the "black-robos," as he designated the good priests of the seminary. Three years passed. One day during the Christmas holidays, Trewey refused to return to his studies, so his father placed him in the engine-room of the paper-mill to learn machinery. Cog-wheels and oil-cans possessed no more fascination for him than Latin and Greek. One fine summer day he ran away from home in company with an acrobat.

Trewey at this period of his career was not over fifteen years of age, and had but little experience of men and manners. The quiet cloisters of a Jesuit seminary are not conducive to knowledge of the world. Life now became hard for Trewey and his companion, the youthful tumbler. They exhibited in market-places, cafés, and in inn yards. The life they led was next door to starvation. Soon Trewey left the acrobat, and obtained an engagement at one of the small music-halls of Marseilles. The munificent sum of six francs per week (one dollar and twenty cents) was the salary he received for his services. In addition to his juggling exhibition, given several times a day, he was obliged to appear in a pantomime performance at night. In this troupe was the famous Plessis, who eventually became one of the foremost comedians of France, rivaling even the great Coquelin.

In those days it was the custom for people to throw money on the stage to favorite performers. Applaud-

ing with the hands being monopolized by a paid claque, there was no better way for enthusiastic spectators, in French places of amusement, to show their appreciation of the talents of an artist, than by showering upon him gold, silver or copper coins. The vaudeville artists did not consider it beneath their dignity to stoop and gather up these substantial evidences of public favor.

Said Trewey to me: "I saved these coins until I was able to purchase two fine costumes. Then I secured an engagement at the Alcazar at Marseilles."

Other engagements followed this, and Trewey became the most popular performer in the south of



The "Pulpit Pantomime" shadow.

France. The desire for a roving life led him to become the proprietor of a traveling pantomime and vaudeville company. His versatility was shown here. He juggled, conjured, played Pierrot in the pantomime, danced in the clodoche, and managed the finances of the troupe. After two years of this life, he got an engagement at Bordeaux. It was here that he invented his ombromanie, and straightway became famous. From Bordeaux he migrated to Paris. His success was instantaneous.

Trewey resides at Asnières sur Seine. His villa is crowded with curios, and mementoes of his travels, one being a magnificent silver and gold laurel wreath presented to him by the public of Madrid. Trewey has compiled a number of large manuscript books on juggling and conjuring tricks that are highly interesting. Many of these feats are of his own invention. The text is illustrated with fine water-color designs made by himself. These volumes of mysteries are not shown to many people. It was only after much persuasion and many promises of secrecy that I was permitted to peep into the magic books of the modern Apollonius of Tyana. Trewey's constant endeavor has been to provide new illusions for his patrons. His ingenuity is tireless.



## PART II.

### THE PRINCES OF PRESTIDIGITATORS.

#### I.

One day the big bill-board of the town of B— was placarded with the most flamboyant of posters, representing a gentleman in full evening dress, standing in front of the giant sphinx of Gizeh. He was engaged in performing magic tricks. About him danced a legion of little imps and grisly skeletons, whilst Mephisto in the conventional red costume, long sword, peaked cap and cock's feather, grinned diabolically in the background, the presiding genius of the weird scene. In huge letters of black was the announcement that the Chevalier Herrmann, the world-famous necromancer and prestidigitator, would give a series of entertainments of magic and mystery at the town hall. A crowd of curious quid-nuncs,—the barber, the baker, and the candlestick maker, to say nothing of the inevitable small boy—was assembled before the play bill devouring it with greedy eyes. I was there, a juvenile fresh from the delights of the Arabian Nights, with my noddle filled to repletion with stories of Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp, the African Genii, etc., etc. This fascinating poster landed me the following week, breathless with excitement, in the gallery reserved for the gods. It was my first introduction to "white magic" and its branches. I can recall to-day my boyish admiration of the wonderful wizard who condescended to exhibit his

art in the small town of B——. I beheld him take bowls of gold-fish from shawls, catch money from the air, produce rabbits and doves from borrowed chapeaux, and other impossible feats. I vowed, too, to become a prestidigitator (what difficulty I had in pronouncing that mystical word). Years have flown since then. I studied magic, with the idea of going on the stage, but abandoned it long syne for more prosaic pursuits. Yet my fondest memories cluster about the beautiful art of sleight-of-hand, and its three great professors—Herrmann, Heller, D'Alvini, "the modern mystics" who have passed into the land of shadows, and have solved that greatest of mysteries, *death*. In this chapter, I shall endeavor to tell something about their lives and the tricks that made them famous, not forgetting their successors who are delighting the public to-day.

I shall begin with Alexander Herrmann, prince of good fellows, a raconteur, and legerdemainist par excellence. His oft repeated phrase, "Magicians are born, not made," was certainly realized in his case. He came from a family of prestidigitators, his father Samuel Herrmann, and his elder brother Carl, being famous exponents of the art magique. He was of Jewish extraction, and was born in Paris, France, February 11, 1844. After acting as assistant, for some years, to his brother, he started out on his own account to astonish the public. He traveled extensively over the world. In the year 1876, he became a naturalized citizen of United States and made several fortunes, but lost them in theatrical speculations. He was an extraordinary linguist, speaking French, German, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Dutch and English. Various chivalric orders were conferred upon him by foreign potentates. In 1875 he married Adelaide Scarsez, a beautiful and accomplished dancer, who assisted him in his performances. He died of heart failure in his private car, December 17, 1896, while on his way from Rochester,

New York, to Bradford, Pa. Such in brief are the facts of his eventful career.

Herrmann was a great sleight-of-hand artist, especially with cards and coins. His "misdirection," to use a technical term, was wonderful. This is the art of diverting the attention of the audience from one object to another.

Wherever the luminous orbs of Herrmann gazed, the eyes of the spectators were bound to follow, thus enabling the dexterous hands of the magician to perform certain secret evolutions, necessary to the successful accomplishment of his tricks. Herrmann possessed a wrist of steel and a palm of velvet. On one occasion he gave a performance before Nicholas, Czar of Russia. The Emperor who prided himself on his great strength, said to the conjurer:

"I will show you a trick." Taking a pack of cards, the Czar tore it into halves, remarking "What do you think of that? Can you duplicate it?"

The magician picking up one of the halves of the pack, tore *it* into halves. The Czar acknowledged that he was beaten at his own game.

Herrmann enhanced his reputation by giving impromptu performances in the street cars, newspaper offices, markets, clubs, cafés, often on the streets. He loved a practical joke above all things. A favorite experiment of his was to be detected by a policeman in the act of clumsily picking a stranger's pocket. Herrmann, on being arrested and taken to the station house, would protest his innocence, alleging that the policeman was the real culprit. To the astonishment of the officials the missing articles would be found on the person of the officer, whose own belongings not unfrequently were discovered in the pocket of the stranger. At banquets Herrmann would often cause the disappearance of a magnum bottle of champagne, and produce it from under a gentleman's coat. Most of these clever feats

were the result of palmistry, but palmistry of a peculiarly high order and absolutely undetectable by the spectators.

Herrmann resembled the conventional pictures of his "satanic majesty"—Mephisto stepped from the opera Faust. He cultivated this aspect, and it added to the charm of his entertainments. Besides being a conjurer, he was a clever ventriloquist and juggler, though he never exhibited these accomplishments in public. His most sensational feat was the gun trick, which was performed with fine *mise-en-scène*. I am indebted to the late Frederick Bancroft, magician, for an accurate exposé of this experiment in white magic:

It was performed with the aid of six soldiers under the command of a sergeant. At the rise of the curtain the soldiers marched upon the stage and took a position in oblique line, near the right wing. After they had been brought to attention and order arms, the sergeant crossed the stage to the left third entrance for the assumed purpose of depositing his gun, and taking from the same place a salver on which the bullets were to be placed. This salver was in the form of an ordinary waiter, about six by twelve inches in diameter, and about one inch deep. In the centre there was a small hole or well just large enough to hold six cartridges. Concealed in the interior of the salver was another compartment exactly the same size as the exposed well containing six blank cartridges, which were naturally hidden from view. Underneath the salver was a small peg connecting the two compartments.

The salver was taken by the sergeant to a committee of gentlemen, nominated by the audience. The gentlemen deposited on the salver the six cartridges which had been loaded and sealed. The sergeant then passed among the spectators and various individuals were permitted to take the cartridges and place marks upon the leaden bullets, after which the cartridges were deposited

back into the well. The sergeant then walked on the stage with the salver held at arm's length. In the act of crossing the platform he shifted the compartments of the salver by means of the peg, thereby causing the blank cartridges to take the place formerly occupied by the loaded cartridges. The loaded cartridges naturally were covered up, and nothing was exposed but the blanks. This salver the sergeant handed to the soldiers, and each one took out a cartridge. This is where the mystery came in, because the spectators were ready to swear that the salver containing the cartridges had never left their sight; furthermore that each soldier had taken a cartridge therefrom and held the same aloft. What the audience failed to notice, however, was the fact that the soldiers held the cartridges with the rims up, and not the bullet ends up.

After the soldiers had taken their cartridges, the sergeant crossed the stage to the third left entrance for the purpose of returning the salver and securing his gun. This was the critical point of the experiment. The minute he deposited the salver, two confederates who were in the third entrance took the cartridges, extracted the bullets, and put them on a plate which had been heated so as to make the bullets feel warm. The performer, who had been standing in the centre of the stage all this time, walked over to this entrance for the purpose of securing the plate upon which he proposed to catch the bullets. In the meantime the soldiers had loaded their guns with the blank cartridges and marched to the platform in the auditorium and faced about ready to fire. The performer secured the plate and the bullets at the same time. Concealing the bullets in the palm of the hand, he held the plate before him, and nodded to the sergeant to give the command to fire. An explosion followed, whereupon the performer turned the plate over with the bullets on it amidst great applause.

The greatest care was taken to see that the soldiers had no ammunition of any kind. As there were but six loaded cartridges in use, and as the magician did not give the signal to fire until he had received the six extracted bullets, there could be no danger connected with the feat.

One of Herrmann's favorite illusions was the Disappearing Lady, better known as "Vanity Fair" and "After the Ball." The effect was as follows: In front of a large pier-glass, which was elevated some two feet above the stage, a glass shelf was fixed. Upon this shelf a lady stood. A narrow screen was then placed about her so as not to exclude from view the sides of the mirror. Upon the firing of a pistol the screen was pulled away, and the lady was found to have vanished. As the mirror was shown to be solid it seemed impossible for her to have disappeared through it. To complete the mystifying effect the back of the mirror was exhibited.

This is how the trick was done. The mirror was in two sections, the platform upon which the lady stood concealing the top of the lower section. The upper section was placed to the rear of the lower mirror, so that its lower end slid down behind it. This upper glass operated like a window-sash. When it was pushed up, its upper end was concealed in the wide panel of the frame. The lower portion of this large glass had a piece cut out. Through this opening the lady was drawn by an assistant. When she had escaped through the back scene, the counterpoised mirror was again pushed down into its proper receptacle. The fact that some of the mirror was in view during the exhibition of the illusion added to the mystery.



Screening the "Disappearing Lady."



The disappearance explained.

## II.

I now evoke from the shades the figure of Robert Heller: All hail! Thou admirable Crichton of fantaisistes; magician, mimic, musician: Never shall the stage see thy like again. No better "all-round" entertainer ever lived. Robert Heller, or Palmer, was born in London in the year 1833. Early in life he manifested a wonderful talent for music, and won a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music at the age of fourteen. He was led to become a conjurer, after seeing Robert-Houdin perform in London. In 1852 he appeared in New York at the Chinese Assembly Rooms. He wore a black wig and spoke with a Gallic accent, having come to the conclusion that a French wizard would receive a more cordial reception in the States than an English one. His success was but meagre. Eventually he settled in Washington where he taught music, but the old love proved too strong. He eventually abandoned music for magic, and made his second *début* in New York. After a splendid run he returned to London and opened what is now Poole's Theatre. Subsequently he visited Australia and India, returning to the United States in 1875. He died November 28, 1878, in Philadelphia, after a brief illness. In his will he directed his executors to destroy his magical apparatus and paraphernalia, so that they should not fall into the hands of others. Heller was a clever advertiser. The following original effusion appeared on his theatrical posters—

"Shakespeare wrote well  
 Dickens wrote Weller;  
 Anderson was \*\*\*\*  
 But the greatest is Heller."

Superb renditions of original and other compositions on the piano constituted a most agreeable part of Hel-



ler's entertainments. Those who did not care for magic came to hear the music. But Heller's mystifying "Second-sight" trick was the pièce-de-résistance of his performances. It made his fortune. Robert Heller did not conceive the idea of this trick. It was originated by the Chevalier Pinetti, a conjurer of the eighteenth century. On this subject, the "Encyclopædia Britannica" says:

"In 1783 Pinetti had an automatic figure about eighteen inches in height, named the Grand Sultan or Wise Little Turk, which answered questions as to chosen cards and many other things by striking upon a bell, intelligence being communicated to a confederate by an ingenious ordering of words, syllables, or vowels in the questions put. The teachings of Mesmer and feats of alleged clairvoyance suggested to Pinetti a more remarkable performance in 1785, when Signora Pinetti sitting blindfolded in a front box of a theatre, replied to questions and displayed her knowledge of articles in the possession of the audience."

Robert-Houdin revived, or re-invented, the experiment. On the 12th of February, 1846, he printed in the centre of his bill the following announcement: "*In this programme M. Robert-Houdin's son who is gifted with a marvellous second sight, after his eyes have been covered with a thick bandage, will designate every object presented to him by the audience.*"

Robert Heller saw Houdin give an exhibition of "second sight" in London. Everybody thought it was the result of animal magnetism, but the acute mind of Heller solved the sphinx problem. He went to work to perfect a system of his own, adding to it certain effects that made the trick all but supernatural. In this performance he was assisted by a lady, known as Haidee Heller. Nothing seemed to baffle them.

At a performance in Boston, described by Henry Hermon in his work "Hellerism," a coin was handed

to Heller. He glanced at it and asked Miss Heller to name the object.

"A coin," she quickly answered.

"Here, see if you can tell the name of the country, and all about it?" he next asked.

Without a moment's hesitation she replied: "It is a large copper coin—a coin of Africa, I think. Yes, it is of Tripoli. The inscriptions on it are Arabic; one side reads 'Coined at Tripoli;' the other side, 'Sultan of two lands, Sultan by inheritance, and the son of a Sultan.'"

"Very well," said Heller, "that is correct. But look, what is the date, now?"

"The date is 1-2-2-0, one thousand two hundred and twenty of the Hegira, or Mohammedan year, which corresponds to 1805, of the Christian year."

Tremendous applause greeted this feat.

Mr. Fred. Hunt, who was for a number of years Robert Heller's assistant, revealed the secret of "second-sight," soon after Heller's death. The performer has first to be initiated into a new alphabetical arrangement, which is as follows:

A is H; B is T; C is S; D is G; E is F; F is E; G is A; H is I; I is B; J is L; K is Pray; L is C; M is O; N is D; O is V; P is J; Q is W; R is M; S is N; T is P; U is Look; V is Y; W is R; X is see this; Y is Q; Z is Hurry, "Hurry up" means to repeat the last letter. For example, the initials or name in a ring is wanted. Say it is "Anna." By the alphabetical arrangement H stands for A, D for N. The exclamation "Hurry up" always means a repetition of the last letter, and again H will give the answer when put as follows:

"Here is a name. Do you see it? Hurry up. Have you got it?"

Attention is paid only to the first letter of every sentence, and it will be perceived that the name of Anna is spelled.

By the above method, one is enabled to secretly convey to his assistant the name of any article. But it is too cumbersome, except for the spelling of proper names. Something simpler is necessary. A system is used, which is so arranged as to include every variety of article classified in sets (usually ten in a set), one question, with a word or two added, sufficing to elicit a correct answer for the different articles. There are sets representing numbers, colors, metals, precious stones, countries, materials, fabrics, makers of watches, secret society emblems, playing cards, and a great variety of miscellaneous things, such as wearing apparel, surgical instruments, ancient coins, modern money, bijouterie, etc. The first question asked is usually a clue to the set which contains the article to be described, the next query, the number of the article in the set, and so on. The different questions are worded very nearly alike, so as to make the spectators believe that the same question is being constantly asked.

Evoking the aid of electricity, Robert Heller was enabled to convey the cue words of the sets to Miss Heller, *without speaking a word*. It was this wonderful effect that so puzzled everybody. A confederate sat among the spectators, near the center aisle of the theatre, and the wires of an electric battery were connected with his chair, the electric push button being under the front part of his seat. Heller gave the cue to the set in which the article was, its number, etc., by some natural movement of his body or arms; and the confederate, rapidly interpreting the secret signals, telegraphed them to the clairvoyant on the stage. The receiving instrument was attached to the sofa upon which Miss Heller sat. The interchangeable use of the two methods of conveying information—spoken and unspoken—during an evening, completely bewildered the spectators. It was indeed a sphinx problem. In closing this part of his entertainment Heller declared

that "second-sight" was neither "mesmerism" nor "ventriloquism," but simply *Hellerism*.

With this brief exposition of the "second-sight" trick, one of the most mysterious ever presented on the stage, we bid adieu to Robert Heller. The black curtain of death descends, shutting out the form of the genial magician forever.

### III.

Who is this little man, gorgeously robed as a Japanese thaumaturgist who presents himself? Ah, that is D'Alvini, the juggler and magician, whose extraordinary feats of balancing and prestidigitation were the wonder of the world. William Peppercorn, known to fame as D'Alvini, the "Jap of Japs" was born in London, in 1847. He was cousin to the celebrated clown Governelli. He had a strongly marked Japanese physiognomy, which lent reality to the assumption of Japanese costume and *mise-en-scène*. He brought over the first company of Japanese jugglers that ever exhibited in this country or in Europe. It was while performing in Japan that D'Alvini decided to abandon the conventional attire of a Western conjuror and appear in Oriental dress.

He traveled all over the world and gave entertainments before many exalted personages, Queen Victoria, Napoleon III, the Mikado of Japan, the Sultan of Turkey, Emperor William of Germany, and the late Czar Alexander of Russia.

He performed before the Czar on Feb. 19th, 1880, and escaped death in a providential manner. Speaking of the event, he said: "When I was in Russia I had an experience that drove me from the land of the Czars, and I promise you I shall never return there. It was in 1880 that I visited St. Petersburg, and the Czar, Alexander II (who was afterwards assassinated by the Nihilists) summoned me to give a private entertain-

ment for him in the south wing of the royal palace. I was glad he did not choose the west wing, for on that very night, February 19th, 1880, while in the midst of my performance, the west wing was blown up by the revolutionists, but nobody was hurt. It kept me in the palace under police surveillance for four days, nevertheless, and I soon got out of that country. I won't go back again unless I am taken there in chains."

Some of D'Alvini's feats were admirable. The Fairy Fountain was a triumph of balancing. In this act, "he built a species of Japanese pagoda out of blocks of wood, the foundation resting on his chin. When the pagoda was completed a stream of water issued out of it, the structure revolving all the time. The climax was reached when in place of water, streams of ribbon and showers of paper flew out of the fountain." He performed with great skill the trick of the "Magic Portfolio" which was invented by Robert-Houdin. As originally presented by Houdin the effect was as follows:—The conjurer came on the stage with an artist's portfolio under his arm. It contained apparently nothing except a few prints representing various animals and objects. When closed it was not over an inch and a half thick. The magician placed it in a sort of rack, and proceeded to take from it a great variety of things, animate and inanimate, saucepans filled with fire, ladies' bonnets, bird cages containing live birds, doves, and last but not least, a small boy. Most of these were concealed upon the performer's person and introduced by him into the portfolio in the act of taking out the pictures, one by one, to exhibit to the audience. The bird cage was of the collapsible kind and was concealed in the portfolio. When it was exhibited, all the magician had to do was to shake it vigorously, whereupon it assumed its normal shape, and the birds, which were secreted in the top, flew about. The ladies' bonnets were made on watchsprings and went into a very small

space indeed. The small boy was shot up into the portfolio through a trap in the stage, while the attention of the audience was directed elsewhere.

D'Alvini performed the trick in a somewhat different manner. After showing the portfolio empty he placed it on an ordinary table and produced from it ladies' bonnets, shopping bags, bouquets, four large trunks, live ducks, fowls, rabbits, doves, birds in large cages and a small boy.

D'Alvini invented most of his feats. He was a very original man. He had a curious play-bill, at the top of which he depicted his rivals performing the same old tricks, while he, "Jap of Japs," occupied the rest of the picture, doing the most impossible things.

D'Alvini died in Chicago, July 3, 1891.

#### IV.

I shall now pass in review some of the living exponents of the magic art. First is Harry Kellar, the dean of American magicians, and for years Herrmann's most formidable rival. A native of Pennsylvania, Kellar started in the show business as an assistant to the Brothers Davenport, spirit mediums, from whom he learned the mysteries of rope-tying. Kellar makes a specialty of stage illusions, pseudo-mental feats in the nature of telepathy, clairvoyance, etc. He is very clever at handkerchief tricks. Though not an original feat, his rose-bush trick is unexcelled for grace of manipulation.

Madame Adelaide Herrmann, widow of the great Herrmann, and Leon Herrmann, his nephew, keep up the reputation of the family as prestidigitators, and are among our most popular performers on the stage today. Madame Herrmann, in her charming vaudeville act, "A Night in Japan," introduces a number of excellent tricks, such as the tambourine, ribbons and duck,

the trooping of the colors, marabout mocha, etc. Leon Herrmann is a fine manipulator of billiard balls, but he makes the fatal mistake of exposing his methods by exhibiting large photographs of his hands in the act of palming. These pictures are hung up in the lobby of the theatre, and form curious and interesting studies to the loungers. The great Houdin has said, never expose the simplest trick to your audiences for they will look with contempt upon your more ambitious efforts. An exposé of palmystry is getting down to the very bed rock of the art of sleight-of-hand.

Horace Goldin is a most popular conjurer. He has a charm peculiarly his own. His egg-bag trick, though by no means a new experiment, is performed with such dash and *sang froid* as to captivate his audiences. Barring the fatal error of exposing the method of palming an egg, which most exhibitors of the trick fall into (a totally unnecessary act, by the way, as a makeshift would do), I consider this egg-bag illusion an excellent one, and deservedly a favorite. It is a laugh from start to finish. Woe betide the unlucky amateur, who attempts the "egg-bag," without possessing the requisite amount of nerve!

Dr. Elliott, of Boston, is an earnest devotee of the magic art, and a remarkably skilful manipulator of cards. He has coached many of our leading performers in card work, and is the inventor of numberless tricks with cards, as well as coins, billiard balls and handkerchiefs. Dr. Elliott is past-master of all the subtle sleights known to card-sharpers, but uses his knowledge to expose such practices. He is an original genius.

Adrian Plate is an accomplished performer and the inventor of many subtle and ingenious sleights. He is particularly fine with cards. A Hollander by birth, he is an American by adoption. Mr. Plate is an ardent lover of the literature of magic, and has a fine collec-

tion of rare and curious books on that subject. His entertainments are confined solely to drawing-rooms, lodges, clubs and the like, and are noted for many interesting and novel features. His rooms in New York City are much frequented by visiting magicians, who come to see what the inventive Plate has evolved from his inner-consciousness.

Another admirable artist is William E. Robinson, for many years assistant to the great Herrmann. After the advent of the Chinese conjurer, Ching Ling Foo, in this country, Robinson conceived the idea of giving séances in Europe, disguised as a Chinaman, and performing all of the original Celestial's sensational feats. Under the nom de théâtre of Chung Ling Soo, he toured Europe, assisted by his wife and a genuine Chinese acrobat. So extraordinarily clever was his make-up and that of his spouse, who assumed the role of a Chinese dancing girl, that the public was actually deceived as to their nationality. They were thought to be natives of the Flowery Kingdom. It is reported that certain Parisian journalists actually interviewed Chung Ling Soo on the Chinese imbroglío. Decked out in a yellow robe, his face enameled and painted, with the eyes made up to perfection, the pretended Chinese magician, received the journalists in a room dimly illuminated with lanterns. He spoke through an interpreter, the Chinese acrobat, who had been carefully tutored for the act, and told all he knew, and lots that he did not, concerning the Boxer uprisings in his native land (?). How the jolly magician must have laughed in the capacious sleeve of his yellow robe at the credulity of the newspaper hacks.

The production of an enormous bowl of water with ducks swimming in it is the pièce-de-résistance of Robinson's act, together with the catching of live gold fish in the air by means of an ordinary bamboo fishing rod.

Frederick Eugene Powell, erstwhile professor of



mathematics at the Chester Military Academy, Pennsylvania, is another clever and conscientious performer, who keeps up the traditions of the old school of magic—the classic school of Robert-Houdin and Heller—which is coming into vogue again. His long and successful seasons at the Eden Musée made him a familiar figure to New Yorkers.

A fascinating manipulator of cards is Howard Thurston, who has created a sensation in Europe and America. He gave up the study of theology to become a conjurer, and served an apprenticeship in the provinces as an all-round sleight-of-hand performer, before attacking the great theatrical centers with his unique conception in magic—a complete card act. He evoked the astonishment of Herrmann the Great by his clever rising-card trick. Mr. Thurston not only possesses great skill as a manipulator of cards, but elegant bearing and address. He is a nephew of U. S. Senator Thurston. In the capitals of Europe he has performed before the nobility, initiating more than one Continental sovereign into the mysteries of card-palming. Mr. Thurston is the author of a very clever brochure on card conjuring, which has had a large sale.

Mr. Fred J. Peters, of Milwaukee, Wis., is well known in magical circles as a performer and inventor of novelties. He was born April 16, 1871. At an early age he manifested a decided talent as a designer. He is not only a portrait painter of ability, but thoroughly versed in all kinds of artistic work belonging to the trade of a decorator. As a magician, Mr. Peters, is remarkably clever. He gives performances during the winter months and tours the smaller towns of Wisconsin, ably assisted by his wife. His favorite illusion is called "Florenza, the dancing vanishing girl," a decided novelty, in which Mrs. Peters plays the title-role. Mr. Peters himself painted all of the scenery of his show. His tricks are very original and mystifying.

T. Francis Fritz, known to the world of magic as Frank Ducrot, is a most versatile artiste, combining magic, music and chapeaugraphy in his repertoire. After graduating with honors from a leading mercantile college of New York, he went on the stage, but subsequently adopted the more prosaic pursuits of a business career, his father being a well-to-do manufacturer of artistic furniture. But Mr. Fritz has by no means totally abandoned his first love. Magic still claims his attention. He is eagerly sought after by lyceum agents to entertain refined audiences from time to time. He is the able editor and proprietor of "Mahatma," the conjurer's magazine, the reputation of which is world wide, and has numbered among its contributors the leading writers on magic in America and Europe. Mr. Fritz was the president of the Society of the Sphinx, afterwards merged into the Society of American Magicians.

Henry Hardin is not only a clever magician, but the prince of new ideas. By his many inventions in the art of legerdemain, he has demonstrated the fact that there is something "new under the sun," despite the pessimistic adage of King Solomon. He was born in Hartford, Conn., Nov. 2, 1849, and is one of the foremost pianists and teachers of the pianoforte in New England. He was well acquainted with Robert Heller, and gave some entertainments in identically the same manner as that of the English performer, viz.: magic and piano solos. The elder Hartz was his intimate friend. Hardin has been an active contributor to the pages of "Mahatma," and his writings are distinguished for originality. Many of his magical efforts have been copied, often without credit. But such is the fate attached to all geniuses in the art of legerdemain.

William J. Hilliar, the editor of the "Sphinx," is one of the cleverest exponents of the English school of conjuring. For a number of years he performed in the drawing-rooms of London before fashionable audi-

ences. As a card manipulator he has but few equals, his work being distinguished for wonderful delicacy of manipulation and originality. His shadowgraphs are exceedingly fine, and he is the inventor of many new figures. He played before King Edward at the Royalty Theatre, London, and met with many encomiums for his neat work. Mr. Hilliar is a distinguished-looking man and performs his tricks with dignity and elegance. He is the author of several treatises on magic. Hilliar's remarkable card and billiard ball manipulation places him in the front rank of magicians.

Prof. Ambrose was born Feb. 10, 1870, at Mahanoy City, Schuylkill Co., Penn. His father was an old-time magician and hypnotist. Prof. Ambrose is the inventor of many clever tricks. At the present writing, he is conducting a school of magic at Girardville, Penn.

Another clever conjurer is Francois DeVilliers, the "French illusionist," who has had some thrilling experiences as a soldier of fortune in the Anglo-Indian army, and under the banner of Don Carlos in Spain. He was captured by the Spaniards and condemned to be shot, but was extricated from his difficulties by the English Ambassador, having succeeded in proving himself to be a naturalized citizen of Great Britain. The sentence of death was changed to banishment. He is now a citizen of the United States. DeVilliers is very clever with billiard balls and handkerchiefs.

Hal Merton (nom de théâtre for W. J. Peterkin) has been before the public as a professional for the past five years, catering exclusively to the lyceum field. He is a resident of Brooklyn, N. Y. Under his own name he conducted "Mahatma" for eighteen months. His entertainments are distinguished chiefly for original improvements in well known feats, and for refined and humorous patter. He gives lessons in legerdemain, and writes patter for those whose ability does not lie in that line. Mr. Merton con-

tributed many excellent tricks to the pages of "Mahatma." He is a young and rising magician.

William B. Caulk, whose stage name is Prof. William Benjamin, was born in 1860. He has earned a deserved reputation in the West and Southwest as a magician of skill, and the inventor of numerous clever tricks and illusions. During the last few years he has devoted the greater part of his attention to the subject of taxidermy. All his life he has been a student of ornithology, and has one of the finest collections of birds to be seen in the United States. He was a member of the advisory council of the ornithological congress of the World's Fair in Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Caulk at the present writing only plays such local and nearby dates as his business admits of. He is a resident of Terre Haute, Indiana.

Clinton Burgess is an all-around magician, and one of the foremost card conjurers of America. He was born in Philadelphia, Penn., in the year 1880, and is a descendant of De Witt Clinton, New York's famous ex-governor. Mr. Burgess has traveled extensively throughout this country and Europe, working all of the latest magical deceptions. He is the originator of many novel card effects which he performs with great skill and address. During the past three years, he has confined himself to drawing-room entertainments among New York's "400." He is a frequent and able contributor to "Mahatma."

The Brothers Martinka, though not magicians in the strict sense of the term—that is to say performers—are deeply versed in the mysteries of the art. They are well known manufacturers of magical apparatus. The elder brother, who is a skilled mechanic, has "personally constructed and superintended the putting on of some of the most important stage illusions of the day." In the good old days—the golden days—of Robert-Houdin, the rendezvous for the magicians

of Paris was at "Father Roujol's." Roujol was a tinsmith, who manufactured apparatus for conjurers. Martinka's magical palace is a replica of Roujol's place. It is the mecca of the magicians who come to New York. It is situated on that great, grimy, bustling thoroughfare, Sixth Avenue. Though labeled in letters of gold, "Martinka's Magical Palace," one would never suspect the glories hidden within. But things are seldom what they seem. *Entrez, Messieurs!* Pass through the store into the office and shipping-room of the Martinka Brothers. Behold the walls plastered with flamboyant lithographs and autographed photos of famous conjurers, living and dead. Alexander the Great (who, by the way, never had to sigh for new worlds to conquer, for he had won them all by his enchantments) smiles down upon you, alongside of the inimitable Robert Heller, Signor Blitz, and others of the old school of conjuring, beloved of our youth. Glass cases crowded with magical paraphernalia greet you on every side: Crystal vases for the magical transformation of ink into clear water, orange trees designed to bloom and bear fruit upon the magician's center table; skulls that tap upon sheets of glass with their lower jaws, and thus rap out to you the mysteries of time and eternity—thanks to a black silk thread, manipulated by a concealed assistant; rice vases; pots for the production of rose-bushes; and goodness knows what else.

Here one may meet the great and lesser lights of the profession from Kellar the Great, to the humblest amateur. Martinka, the younger, is the Father Roujol of the establishment. He is ably assisted by his genial wife. In the miniature theatre attached to the shop frequent complimentary shows are given by amateur and professional talent for the amusement of friends and relations. To be invited to perform at Martinka's is to receive the stamp of approval of one's abilities.

It is an audience of keen-eyed critics. Many European performers before making their *début* in this country have given private exhibitions of their skill in the bijou theatre of the Brothers Martinka on Sixth Avenue.

T. Nelson Downs, the "King of Coins," has had a phenomenal success in Europe and America. His great originality and wonderful expertness in the manipulating of coins has placed him in the front rank of American magicians. He has many imitators but no rivals. Mr. Downs is the inventor of the back-hand palm with coins. Rehabilitating an old trick (catching coins in the air) under the fanciful title of "The Miser's Dream," and adding thereto many new sleights, he toured the States and Europe, creating a furore wherever he went, and astounding conjurers as well as laymen. He gave a new impetus to magic. Mr. Downs is a native of Marshalltown, Iowa. He is the author of a fine manual on coin conjuring, and is preparing an entirely new work on magic.

Maro, magician, musician, and artist, was born in Burlington, Vt., Sept. 25, 1868. After the death of his father, a merchant of Montpelier, Vt., he moved with his mother to Kansas City, where he began the study of music. He very successfully taught music in Kansas City and Chicago for a number of years. It was during this time, he began the study of magic. Being a musician of exceptional talent and technique, he was in great demand as a concert soloist. From this stepping stone, he became a popular entertainer at clubs and social affairs. Eventually he went on the stage, confining his exertions to the lyceum field. He is an adept at shadowgraphy and lightning sketches, and plays on a variety of stringed instruments with the greatest skill.

Fred Hurd, of Bridgeport, Conn., is a skilful, all-round conjurer, who believes in the old school of magic—combinations of sleight-of-hand and apparatus. His

duck and rabbit production is much admired by his confrères for its audacity. During a half-hour's entertainment he manages by some occult means to secrete about his person the rabbit and duck, and perform numberless tricks among the audience before producing the live stock, and without prematurely betraying their presence.

Prof. Hornmann, of New York, is another clever magician. He not only performs well, but writes of magic in an entertaining manner. His contributions to "Mahatma" have been well received. He has invented a number of excellent sleights and illusions.

J. W. Sargent, the "Merry Wizard," was born in Bangor, Maine, July 9, 1852. The performances of Heller, Cazeneuve and Patrizio fired his ambition to become a conjurer, for which profession he had evinced a decided predilection from boyhood. He is a very successful society and lyceum performer. At the present writing he is engaged in business in New York City and only accepts the pick of the engagements offered him. Prof. Sargent is a great believer in "patter," and has obtained the sobriquet of the "Merry Wizard." He is a clever conjurer and writer on magic.

Harry Houdini, the handcuff king, is the despair of detectives and manacle makers. He is also an expert with cards.

Imro Fox, the "Comic Conjurer," was born May 21, 1852, in Bromberg, Germany. In the year 1874 he left home for America, and eventually became a naturalized American. He made his début as a professional conjurer in Washington, D. C., in 1880. He has a style peculiarly his own, and the reputation of performing more tricks in a shorter period of time than any other magician, accompanied by witty patter, mostly jokes at his own expense, as the following example will show: "Why is my head like heaven?—because there is no parting there." It is needless to say

that Mr. Fox is very bald. He appeared in London in 1890, and made a hit, at the Trocadero Music Hall.

Last, but not least, is Dr. Saram R. Ellison, the conjurer's friend, who is the possessor of the largest as well as the finest library of magical literature in the world. His New York home is a favorite rendezvous for professors of legerdemain. Speaking of his remarkable library, the New York Sun says (March 2, 1902): "His [Dr. Ellison's] catalogue contains the titles of more than 600 different books and magazine articles, running from a 'History of Magic,' published in 1657, to a magazine issued in the interests of magicians this month." The works of De Cremps, Pinetti, Houdin, etc., may be found in the Ellison library. Dr. Ellison is a Mason of high degree and a great lover of rare books. It is one of his fads to collect wands that have been used by famous conjurers.

Mention must be made before closing this brief list of American illusionists, of Hartz, whose "Devil of a Hat" has evoked great amusement; Clivette, the "Man in Black," shadowgraphist, conjurer, and juggler; Miller, coin manipulator; Zanzic; Elroy; Stilwell and Thompson, handkerchief manipulators; Kaufmann; Krieger, expert with cups and balls; La Fayette, mimic, illusionist, and conjurer; Carl Hertz; Henry Hatton, conjurer and author; W. D. Le Roy, Boston's clever magician and inventor of conjuring appliances; A. Roterberg, author, card expert, and manufacturer of magical goods; Bowman; Burlingame, a clever conjurer, journalist, and author; Ziska; Stork; W. Golden Mortimer, erstwhile conjurer, now a physician, author and correspondent of various magical periodicals; Hewes, the "White Yogi"; Baldwin, occultist and magician; Werner, whose "torn bill" trick has gained him much notoriety; Zimmer; the Zancigs; De Biere; Ransome, etc.



## ENGLISH AND EUROPEAN CONJURERS.

Who has not heard of Egyptian Hall, London, the home of magic and mystery, and those hierophants of the Mysteries, Messrs. Maskelyne & Cooke, who for so many years past have catered to a wonder-loving public? The career of John Nevil Maskelyne is an interesting one. He is a descendant of Nevil Maskelyne, the English astronomer, and was born at Cheltenham, England. Like Robert-Houdin he manifested at an early age a remarkable mechanical genius. At the age of thirteen, he was apprenticed to a watchmaker and jeweler in his native town, and became an expert horologist. He employed most of his spare time in devising and constructing curious optical illusions and mechanical apparatus, for show purposes. The feats of the famous Davenport Brothers, alleged spirit mediums, fascinated him. At one of the morning séances of the Davenports, given in the town hall of Cheltenham, he acted as a member of the committee to tie the Brothers and examine their cabinet. The falling of a piece of drugget, used to exclude the light, from one of the windows, enabled Mr. Maskelyne to see Ira Davenport eject some of the musical instruments from the cabinet, and quickly re-secure himself with the ropes. The young watchmaker and future magician was delighted at discovering the imposture, and soon devised a clever imitation of the Davenport séances. Aided by a Mr. Cooke he gave a complete exposé of the spirit medium business a la Davenport, first at Cheltenham, and afterwards throughout the provinces, to crowded houses. Various other illusions were added to the entertainment. Finally Maskelyne and his partner located at London, first at St. James Hall, and afterwards at Egyptian Hall. Here some of the finest illusions of the age have been exhibited, and some of the most famous con-

jurers have assisted in the magical séances. An evening at Maskelyne & Cooke's is indeed a treat—a veritable symposium of magic and mystery, such as the ancient Egyptian temple could not offer to its devotees. Mr. Maskelyne was called as an expert in the trial of the notorious impostor Dr. Slade, and performed in the witness-box, to the astonishment of the Court, all of the bogus spirit medium's slate tests, and exposed them. The result was that Doctor Slade was sentenced to three months in jail but he escaped imprisonment owing to a technicality, and immediately fled to the Continent. Mr. Maskelyne is the co-author of an interesting work, "The Supernatural," anti-mediumistic. He has also written a number of pamphlets on spiritism and magic, and a wonderfully clever exposé of the gambler's art, entitled, "Sharps and Flats." "The Encyclopædia Britannica" devotes considerable space to Mr. Maskelyne's mechanical achievements, notably his whist playing automaton, "Psycho," a marvel of ingenuity. Says the Encyclopædia: "In 1875 Maskelyne and Cooke produced at the Egyptian Hall, in London, an automaton whist player, 'Psycho,' which from the manner in which it is placed upon the stage, appears to be perfectly isolated from any mechanical communication from without . . . The arm has all the complicated movements necessary for chess or draught playing; and 'Psycho' calculates any sum up to a total of 99,000,000. . . . 'Psycho,' an Oriental figure, sitting cross-legged on a box, is supported by a single large cylinder of clear glass, which as originally exhibited, stood upon the carpet of the stage, but was afterwards set loose upon a small stool, having solid wood feet; moreover, this automaton may be placed in almost any number of different ways. . . . It may be mentioned that in the same year in which 'Psycho' appeared, the joint inventors patented a method of controlling the speed of clock-work

mechanism by compressed air or gas stored in the pedestal of an automaton, this compressed air acting upon a piston in a cylinder and also upon a rotating fan when a valve is opened by 'an electrical or other connection worked by the foot of the performer or an assistant.' But it is not known whether the principle obscurely described in the specification was applicable in any way to the invisible agency employed in 'Psycho,' or whether it had reference to some other invention which has never been realized. The whist-playing automaton is affirmed to be the only one of Maskelyne's many subtle inventions in which he received suggestions from another person."

Psycho will not only play whist but a fine game of chess. It is without doubt the greatest automaton of the age—of any age. Robert-Houdin produced nothing like it.

Among English conjurers, David Devant is justly celebrated as a versatile and original genius. For a number of years he has proved a drawing-card at Egyptian Hall, and now heads the road company of Maskelyne & Cooke. As a silhouettist he is second only to the great Trewey. Mr. Devant presents an admirable imitation of the Chinese conjurer and his tricks.

Selbit is another popular and exceedingly adroit performer, who handles the pen as cleverly as he does the mystic wand. He has distinguished himself as a writer of ability on the art of legerdemain and its professors, and is the author of "The Magician's Handbook," a work that is unique in the annals of magical literature. He is the co-editor of the "Music Hall and Showman." Selbit was born in 1879 and began his career as a conjurer in 1895. He is the inventor of many subtle card tricks and illusions, and is one of the rising young magicians of England. He studied the psychology of hypnotism under an eminent Continental professor and

is more than ordinarily successful as a public operator.

Although not altogether ignoring apparatus, "Sel-bit" makes a specialty of sleight-of-hand; and the delicacy with which he manipulates the magician's usual accessories, cards, eggs, coins, and billiard balls, is to be admired.

Mr. Loudoun Cameron, "a canny Scotch" conjurer was born at Glasgow, May 29, 1878. He is not to be surpassed as a manipulator of coins, cards, and billiard balls.

Arthur Margery was born in London in 1871. He is an expert conjurer and entertainer. His collection of books on magic and old programmes is very fine.

Bert Powell, known to fame as the "Military Mystic," was born in Huntingdon, Hertfordshire, England, in 1876. Says Stanyon: "He was first in the field of English conjurers, to perform in Candia, Crete, after the late Turkish troubles and occupation by the Powers; as of late, he was first to perform at Lydenburgh, Transvaal, after the occupation by our troops. He was pent up in Ladysmith during the whole of the siege, and bore the brunt of the fighting, but happily escaped without a scratch." Powell is a fine card conjurer. He makes four colossal loads from a borrowed hat, on the lines adopted by Hartz.

Mr. Charles Bertram, humorist and conjurer, was born in Woolwich, England, in 1853, his father being an army and navy contractor who later went to London and engaged in the wine merchant's business. Mr. Bertram assisted his father. At the age of twenty-two, he had accumulated several thousand pounds. In 1882 he met with business reverses and lost everything. Then came a sudden resolution. He decided to become a professional conjurer, having had some experience as an amateur. Under the management of Mr. Graham Lewis, he secured an engagement at St. James Hall,

on March 15, 1885. Eventually he went with Maske-lyne & Cooke for one year, and from them to the Crystal Palace. Mr. Bertram has since then toured the world. His American engagement with Albert Chevalier was a success. His unctuous, "Isn't it wonderful" and his humorous patter delighted thousands in the States. His autobiography is an entertaining work. From it I epitomize the story of how he became a conjurer. In the year 1867 he was enrolled as a volunteer in the 19th Middlesex Rifles, and was chosen among others of the corps, in 1869, to go to Belgium to participate in an international shooting match. One day while in a café in Ghent, Belgium, he opened a bottle of champagne with a captain of the Garde Civique. The cork flew into the air and fell on the table, whereupon the captain took it up, pretended to swallow it, and brought it from his nose again. Bertram begged the captain to show him how to perform the trick, and from that moment devoted his spare time to the practice of sleight-of-hand, so fascinated was he with the simple cork feat. Mr. Bertram is a fine performer with cards, and has played frequently before Royalty. He is a great favorite with the English public, and deservedly so.

Magicians may come and magicians may go, but the fame of Angelo Lewis, M. A. (Prof. Hoffmann), like the fabled brook, will go on forever. He was the first in the field to write a professional treatise in English on the art of modern magic. Says Ellis Stanyon: "It is curious that many of the leading wizards of the day should have owed their first lessons in the art to him, an amateur, but such is the fact. At the time when his best known work 'Modern Magic' was written, Mr. Lewis was practicing at the London bar." "Modern Magic" ran as a serial in a boy's journal, afterwards it was published in book form, about 1879, and made an

instantaneous hit. It is without doubt the completest exposé of the art of prestidigitation ever written. It is now in its tenth edition.

Mr. Lewis eventually abandoned the wig and gown for literary work. He has been a leader writer in journalism, and a frequent contributor to magazines. In 1885 he won the prize of \$500, offered by the "Youth's Companion," Boston, for the best short story for boys. In his younger days, Mr. Lewis performed in public as a magician, for charitable purposes, but has for many years ceased to give entertainments. He is the English translator of Robert-Houdin's works and the author of "The Book of Card and Table Games," "Hoyle's Games Modernized," and "Every Boy's Book of Sport and Pastime," "Conjurer Dick," etc., etc. Mr. Lewis is also the inventor of many clever tricks. He is at present engaged in writing another work on magic.

Ellis Stanyon is one of the most prolific writers on legerdemain in the world, and his hand-books on magic are largely sought after. Among them may be mentioned, "Card Tricks" and "Conjuring for Amateurs," two capital treatises on up-to-date sleight-of-hand. Mr. Stanyon is not only a performer of ability and great originality, but the proprietor of a magical bazaar in London, and the editor of "Magic," a journal devoted to the doings of conjurers the world over. It is conducted on original principles, and makes a specialty of publishing explanatory programmes of magicians. Mr. Stanyon has invented many new sleights, and is an excellent shadowgraphist. Among other performers of note in Great Britain are Melot Herrmann, Martin Chapender, Rupert de Vere, Herbert Victor, Paul Valadon, Maurice Garland, and Clement de Lion. Mr. Edwin Sachs, a litterateur, has written a superb work on the art of sleight-of-hand.

One of the foremost prestidigitators of Europe is

Professor Conradi, whose fame as a performer and inventor is world wide. He is the son of a high government official of Germany, and became interested in the art magique while at college. After graduating with honors, he finally adopted magic as a profession, and soon broke away from the old school of legerdemain. He is the Robert-Houdin of the Twentieth Century. Carl Willmann and Prof. Suhr are also notable among German conjurers. Willmann is the editor of the magical magazine, "Die Zauberwelt."

Among French magicians *le Commandeur* Cazeneuve stands pre-eminent as a performer with cards, and in experiments of an occult nature, pretended transmission of thought, spiritism, etc. He was born at Toulouse in 1840. Charmed with the entertainment of the unique Bosco, Cazeneuve took up magic. He soon made a reputation and was commanded to appear at the Tuileries and exhibit before Napoleon III and his court. When the Franco-Prussian war broke out he offered his services to his country and was commissioned a captain in the First Regiment of Tirailleurs d'Elite under the command of Colonel Riu. He was frequently named in the order of the day for bravery. After the war, Cazeneuve toured the world. He has received numerous chivalric and other orders, and has performed before many of the crowned heads of Europe.

Servais Le Roy and his wife, Mlle. Talma, are fine sleight-of-hand performers.

Bautier de Kolta, a Hurgarian by birth, a citizen of the world by adoption, is a most skilful conjurer, and an inventor of great originality, as witness his "Cocoon," "Vanishing Lady," "Flying Bird Cage," etc. Selbit, speaking of the bird cage trick, says:

"He brought on the cage, containing a dummy bird, and explained that he did not use a live one because he had heard some ladies talking about the trick, and

saying that they did not like it because it must hurt the bird. He remarked that it really did not hurt the pretty canary; but as it was difficult to convince kind-hearted ladies that this was so, he had decided that it would be better not to alarm them, and so had substituted for the live bird a dummy.

"The charming manner in which he made this little speech always touched the tender-hearted, who rewarded it by applauding before he commenced the trick. Following the disappearance of the bird cage, he gave another illustration of the painlessness of the experiment by introducing a human being in place of the bird. This he worked by first bringing on a board which resembled the top of a box, and which was placed on the floor of the stage. Then the wire cage itself was brought on, fixed upon the board, and Bautier's wife (dressed as a bird) was placed into the same, and the whole covered with a silk shawl. The performer then explained that it was a development of the bird cage trick. If the bird was hurt, the lady must necessarily suffer the same injury, and that the audience would soon learn of it, because if the lady was hurt, she would very soon let the public know. While saying this, the block of wood which was placed over a trap in the floor, sank through the stage with the cage and lady, leaving the silk shawl suspended over a whalebone shape kept upright by being attached to a thread fixed to the flies overhead. Directly the speech was finished, the shawl and whalebone were dragged up the performer's sleeve by the pull, and everything had vanished."

Among Oriental performers is that Chinaman par excellence, Ching Ling Foo, the producer of the gigantic bowl of water, fire eater, etc., whose entertainments set America agog for several seasons.

Another clever Oriental now touring the United States is the Japanese, Ten-Ichi, whose specialty is pro-



ducing fine jets of water from sword blades, fans, burning flambeaux, his finger tips, etc. To accomplish these results, he has a large tank full of water elevated above the stage, behind the scenes. Tiny pipes connect this tank with the platform upon which the magician and his assistants, resplendent in Japanese costumes, are seated. The apparatus is worked with the toes, covering and uncovering the openings in the piping, just as one plays upon a flute with his fingers. It is a difficult experiment.

## PART III.

### SYMPOSIUM OF MAGIC.

BY HENRY HARDIN.

*The Evasive Dollar.*

This is a coin vanish which is intended primarily for an off-hand parlor trick, but may be used on the stage also. Take a silver dollar, rap it smartly on the top edge of any chair, close your hand for a moment and upon opening it the coin has vanished. Now bring the chair a little forward and explaining that the coin has passed up your sleeve and is traveling slowly down into your shoe, you take a seat. Then pretending to look for the coin you put your hand up your trouser's leg, but immediately bring it out and show it empty. Saying that the coin is only half way down and must be hastened, you slap your thigh, and putting your hand again into the trouser's leg you bring out the dollar. The secret of this surprising little deceit is vested in a small bit of wax which you have on the coin. When you first rap the back of the chair with it you lower your hand slightly and leave it sticking on the back near the top, bringing the closed hand up again and opening it to show that the dollar has vanished. Now with the same hand you grasp the chair over the coin, move it forward and take a seat. When the hand leaves the chair it carries off the dollar which you stick on the inside of your trouser's leg when making believe to search for it. First you bring out your hand

empty, but putting it back, find the coin and produce it.

*Mephisto's Mail.*

Here is a card trick of great simplicity and even greater effect. You offer the deck of cards for a free selection and after having the card returned you shuffle them. You then hand the party an ordinary envelope with the request that after examining it he will seal it up and mark it for identification, and then hand it back to you. You now call attention to the fact that the envelope is perfectly empty, at the same time holding it up to the light, when it will be seen to be so. Now, carelessly tossing it upon the table you explain that you are about to cause the selected card to fly into the sealed envelope, and suiting your words to a flourish of the pack you pick it up again, and holding it up to the light as before a card is seen to be inside. You then tear off the end of the envelope, insert your finger and thumb and pull out the chosen card. Afterward upon examining the pack it is found to have vanished therefrom. I can think of no more puzzling sleight with cards than this, and certainly no one could wish for a more magical one. The *modus operandi* is as follows: On the return of the card to the pack you at once get it on the bottom and secretly put a small bit of wax on the face of it. Now when you have demonstrated that the sealed envelope is empty, you casually lay the pack on it for a moment while in your hand, then turn them both over together (thus bringing the envelope on top). Now pick off the envelope and toss it on the table. Of course the chosen card adheres to the underside of the envelope, but the audience does not suspect this, as tossing the envelope away from you conveys the impression that all is fair and above-board. Now it is an easy matter to pick up the envelope and hold it against the window, or in front of a light,

and with the card on the opposite side from the company to convince the spectators that they see it inside. You must then tear off the end, blow down into it as is usual in separating the two edges of a freshly opened envelope, and inserting the first finger inside, with the thumb and second finger gliding down the outside, next your person, you grasp the card and bring it up into view, as if extracting it from the envelope.

### *A Wrinkle and a Deception.*

These two tricks are performed with the old familiar "shell half-dollar," but the results attained are new. You will understand that before performing a trick with the shell coin you cannot handle it carelessly as if it were an ordinary coin, unless you palm off the shell, and in that case you cannot show your hands freely. Now with my improvement you may toss the coin from hand to hand, or throw it up in the air, and all the time with the shell on. Thus also you can show your palm empty, and yet when ready your coin works as usual. The secret is simply a fine horse hair tied around the shell and coin. This holds them together, and when you desire to put the shell in use you have only to break the hair. So much for the wrinkle. Now for the description. This is a very subtle sleight and merits your close attention, for the result is a marvelous surprise to the spectator and seems to establish your kinship to his Satanic Highness. You exhibit a half-dollar and submit it for thorough examination. Then you take it and laying it on the table you show your hands freely, back and front. You now ask one of the company to step forward and announce which side is up, heads or tails. On this being stated you ask the person to spread his own handkerchief over the coin, and then to put his hand under it and turn the coin over so that the under side becomes the top. You ask

him what side he supposes is up now, and he of course answers that the top is opposite to what he saw before covering it with the handkerchief. Now with a flourish of your wand you command the coin to turn back to its original position, and upon uncovering it the surprising part is developed that it has done so, and all this without your touching the coin or going near it. To accomplish this feat you must first understand one thing. If a coin with the shell on be placed on a table with the *shell side* underneath, and a person be asked to turn it over with one hand he will inevitably pick it up with the thumb underneath, thus holding the shell on and insuring the coin being reversed without discovering that it has a shell. Now to commence with, when you first hand the coin for inspection you palm off the shell, and when you take it back you replace the shell in such a manner as to make both sides of the coin alike, viz.: both heads, or both tails, according as your shell is head or tail. Now you lay the coin on the table in the manner before stated (that is, shell side down), and ask a party to step forward and announce which side of the coin is uppermost. Then to cover a handkerchief over it, and to put his hand under and turn the coin over. Hence, if it were first heads up the supposition will now be that it is tails up, although you know that it is the same as before it was turned, as both sides are alike. You may now boldly command the coin to turn back again, and upon uncovering it will be found to have obeyed you. I would recommend that the trick be always done on a table which has a cloth.

#### *The Fakir's Test.*

This is simply a variation or addition to the well-known "*Chinese Bat*" in which a match is made to apparently jump from one hole to another in a miniature cricket bat. I use instead of the match, two thin flat

pieces of wood about the size and shape of a penknife blade, which I will designate as A and B. A is plain, while in the case of B, one side is colored red on the upper half and white on the lower, and the other side is painted in the same fashion, but in reverse, viz.: white at the top and red at the bottom. (Fig. 1.)

Now in presenting the trick I begin by using the plain stick, but after putting it in the second hole (which appears to be the first hole when the bat is turned over) I apparently turn the bat over and show that the stick is really through the second hole on both sides. I accomplish this by giving the bat one complete turn, thus showing the *same* side both times while the spectators think they have seen

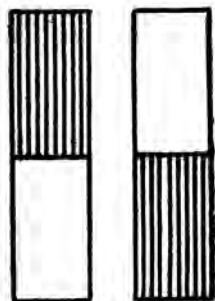


Fig. 1.

*both* sides. Then I simply turn it over and the trick is done. I then, to make the trick more startling, use the colored stick, putting it in the hole with the *red* end up. Of course, as the colors appear in the opposite order on the other side, when I really turn the bat over the stick appears to unquestionably jump into the next hole as the *red* remains above, and the white below. But, of course, caution must be exercised not to disclose the fact that the colors are *not* in the same order on both sides of the stick.

### *Dissolving Views.*

Here is the effect of this pretty deceit which is quite new. You show in your left hand a silver dollar at the same time exhibiting your right, front and back. Now you openly take the dollar in your right hand and hold it at the tips of your fingers between first and second. In a moment it totally vanishes and again you show

it to be in the left hand. You repeat this any number of times.

In explanation of this marvel I would say. You must make a "pull" as follows: Take about four inches of elastic cord, and on one end tie a long black thread, and on the other a short one. On the short end you fasten a silver dollar and on the long end you tie a finger ring. Now if the length of the whole apparatus is right, and you put the ring on a finger of your left hand and carry the pull up your left sleeve and across your back (the thread running through a couple of small brass rings which are fastened to the back of your vest), then down your right sleeve, the coin will always drop into your right hand when you bring the left up to the body. Now if you grasp the coin in your right fingers and extend both hands, the elastic will be brought into action, and upon releasing the coin it will vanish up your sleeve, and yet, at a moment's notice it will drop into your right hand again and be ready for another flight. You first show in your left hand an unprepared dollar. At the same time you have allowed the "pull" to slacken and the coin thereon to drop into your right. You then pretend to take the coin from your left but you really show the "pull" coin in your right and retain the first coin in your left. Extending your hands (thus stretching the elastic) and standing with your right side to the audience, you show the coin, and then let it fly, at the same moment opening the left hand and disclosing the first coin there. You now bring the left hand up to the body thus lowering the "pull" coin into the right hand again, ready for another flight.

#### *A Big Catch.*

This is intended as a sensational addition to the popular "Fishing Rod" act. The illusionist steps up to his table, and with the remark that "he wants

larger fish to fry" he picks up a stout hand-line with what appears to be a bait on the end of it, and standing about six feet from the flies, and sideways to the audience, he casts the line out to the center of the stage. In a moment he has a real fish the size of a large blue fish on the end of his line, and lifting it up to view he carries it off the stage. To accomplish this



**Fig. 2**

effect you must have a large dead fish of any sort, fastened to a long, stout, waxed thread and placed beforehand under a rug in the center of the stage. Now this thread is carried out into the flies and into the hands of an assistant who stands directly back of the performer. The hand-line is so arranged that the thread passes through a small ring on the end of the bait and through another ring at the other end of the



line, continuing on out to the assistant in the flies. Now when the fish line is first picked up, the thread is left slack enough to admit of casting the bait freely out toward the rug, then at the desired moment the assistant smartly pulls the thread, quickly jerking the fish out from under the rug, and up to the bait. (Fig. 2.) Then the performer, grasping both thread and line together, lifts the fish up to view. With a very little skill on his part the fish may be made to appear as if jumping up and down on the floor as he carries it off.

### *Transcendental Card Reading.*

The apparently impossible feat of reading all the cards of a borrowed pack by merely glancing at their backs has been accomplished by many different methods, but the one I shall present to you, while not pretentious, is, I believe, different in some particulars from all others, and has the merit of being very practical, easy to perform and quite inexplicable. After the cards have been shuffled you take them in the left hand, and holding them backs to the company you announce the name of the top card, which you immediately turn over on the pack. Your guess is then seen to be quite correct, and after depositing the card on the table you call out the name of the next which you also turn over to prove your statement, and then lay it also on the table. You proceed after this manner with the entire pack. This inscrutable mystery becomes clear by a glance at the two illustrations, and a few words of explanation. When you receive the cards back from the audience you at once face them, i. e., you divide them in halves and turn the lower half face to face with the upper half. Now while holding the pack vertically in your left hand if you push up slightly on the bottom card it can be made to project a little at the upper left hand corner (Fig. 3) and as the card is face

toward you, you can very readily see the indicator. Now as you do not want this exposé seen by the company you push up the card only after turning over the top card which you have just called the name of. This card you hold nearly crosswise on the pack (Fig. 4) thus masking the exposed end of the other card which you speedily pull down again when you lay the top card on the table. Now knowing the bottom card, all you have to do is to deftly turn the entire pack over, when it becomes the top card. You boldly announce its name, and turning it over you again under cover of it get sight of the bottom card. You proceed in the



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

same manner throughout the pack. It is hardly necessary for me to add that you will need to secretly glance at the top card before you commence the act, and also that you must stand with your right side to the spectators.

#### *The Chromatic Ribbons.*

I shall now disclose to you an illusion for the stage which has the prettiest effect imaginable. The trick is my own invention and has never been performed, but it will at once be seen that it is extremely practical and simple to get up.

This is the effect as witnessed by the audience: The artist brings forward two handsomely plated metal rods, each about six feet long and about two inches in diameter; one end of each is bent over, like the handle of an umbrella or the top of a shepherd's crook. He brings these rods to the center of the stage and stands them upright in two holes in the floor, about

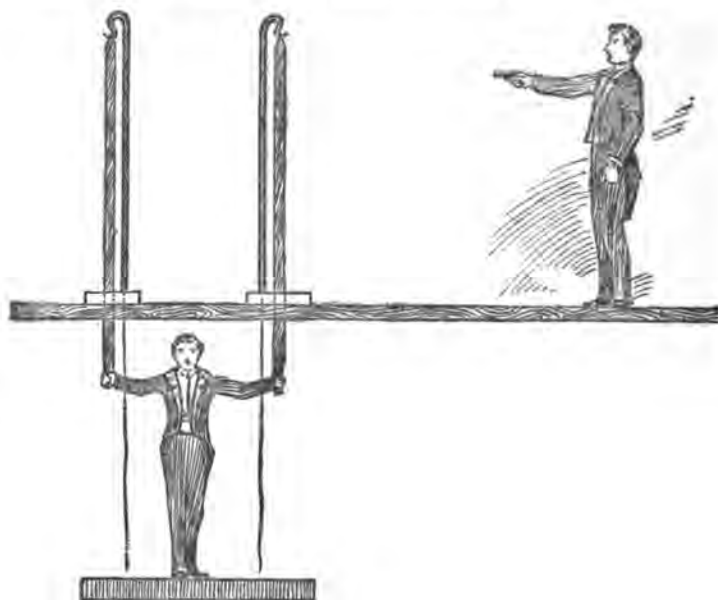


Fig. 5

eight feet apart, with the crook ends facing the audience. Next he passes around for examination two ribbons (one blue, the other red) and long enough to hang from the ends of the crooks on the rods and touch the floor. These ribbons are two inches wide and have snap hooks attached to their ends. The conjurer now takes two blocks of wood about six inches square, each having

a small staple or screw-eye in it, and places one under each crook (in front of the rod) and then fastens a ribbon to each crook, and attaches the lower end of the ribbon to the staple in the block. An ordinary Japanese screen is then brought forward, near the top edge of which are two hooks screwed in side by side. The performer places the screen in front of the rods and ribbons and discharging a pistol commands the ribbons to change places. On removal of the screen it is discovered that the red ribbon has exchanged places with the blue one. The conjurer now states that he will visibly shoot the two ribbons over on to the hooks which are seen on the screen. At the report of the pistol the ribbons vanish from the rods like a flash and are seen hanging from the hooks on the screen. The performer removes the ribbons from the screen, and loading them into the cone of his pistol, fires again at the rods, when instantly they appear as they were first placed, hanging from the ends of the crooks. They are then removed and handed for inspection.

Here is the secret. In each rod (which is hollow) is concealed a ribbon of the opposite color to the one which you hang on it. The ribbon lies lengthwise in the rod, with one end projecting slightly through a slit in the end of the crook, the opposite end of the ribbon being near the lower end of the rod (this is open) to which is attached a spool of strong black thread.

When the performer brings out the rods and places them in the holes in the floor, the spools of thread drop down through the holes to an assistant under the stage. Now, when the ribbons are hung on the crooks of the rods, they are in reality fastened to the concealed ribbons in the rods. In place of fastening the lower ends to the blocks on the floor, he pushes the ends down through holes in the floor, which are directly behind the blocks.

Should the assistant pull these ribbons down their full length, the ribbons concealed in the rods will take their places, and being of opposite colors they will appear to have changed places. This is done while the screen is standing in front of the ribbons, and the change in their positions is shown to have occurred when the screen is removed.

At the report of the magician's pistol, the assistant quickly pulls the remaining ribbons down. They vanish and the threads take their places. Of course the threads cannot be seen by the spectators, and it will appear to them that the ribbons have entirely disappeared.

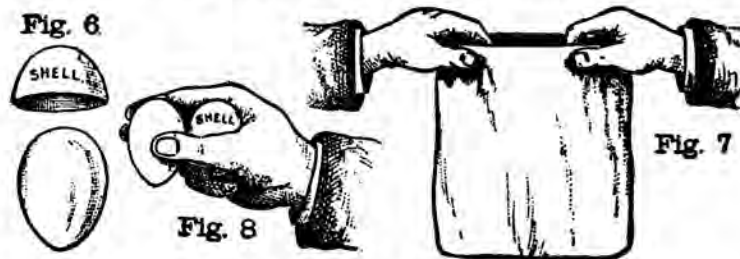
After the ribbons are removed from the hooks on the screen and fired back at the rods, the assistant smartly pulls down on the spools of thread and the ribbons are again brought to view, where they are seen hanging from the rods.

The appearance of the ribbons on the hooks on the screen is managed as follows: There are two long but narrow panels (nearly invisible to the eye) in the screen, which will be so constructed that it will instantly revolve or reverse the panels. On the front of these panels the hooks are fastened and on the rear the duplicate ribbons are attached. After using the screen the first time, to conceal the transposition of the ribbons on the rods, it is moved back close to the wings and an assistant steps behind it; at the sound of the pistol he releases the catch, which allows the panels to instantly revolve, and expose the duplicate ribbons.

### *An Original Egg Bag.*

For this experiment an unprepared bag of the usual size, two wooden eggs, and a half shell, Fig. 6 (which fits over the end of either egg) and a hat are required. Request some person from the audience to come on the

stage and assist you. You hand the bag for thorough examination, and also the two eggs and hat, keeping the half-shell palmed in right hand. You ask the person to hold the bag as in Fig. 7. Then you place the hat on your table after openly dropping both eggs into it. Now you apparently take out both eggs in right hand, but really take one egg and the shell side by side in right hand as in Fig. 8, and say that you will put one egg into the bag; at the same time dip your hand with the egg and shell into the bag; and quickly placing the shell on the egg bring it out. The audience seeing only one egg will think you have left the other in the bag. Now



place the egg with shell in the hat on the table, and command the egg in the bag to fly into the hat. The assistant now examines the bag and finds it empty, and you bring out of the hat both eggs with the shell upon one of them, and exhibit hat empty. You now have the assistant hold the bag as before, but while you are apparently helping him to get it fixed in position you slyly drop the egg from the shell into it, and then showing the egg and shell as in Fig. 8, the spectators will think they see both eggs still in your hand. Again place them in the hat and command one egg to fly back into the bag. Immediately bring out the egg from hat with shell on it, and then show the hat empty. Now ask your assistant to look in the bag, when he will find the egg. You can

now take both eggs as before with the shell on one of them and holding both in one hand drop one egg again from the shell into the bag while helping the assistant to raise the latter higher, and then placing shell and egg in the hat command as before the egg to fly into the bag.

## THE EGG BAG.

BY PROF. HORNMANN.

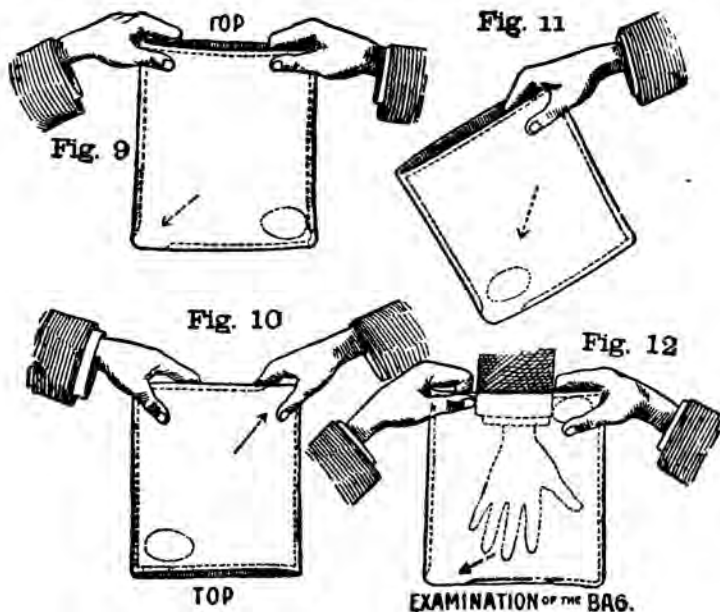
The performer produces an ordinary egg, from which the contents have been removed. Wrapping it in a handkerchief, he brings forth a small bag, which he shows to be empty. He announces that he will cause the egg to travel from the handkerchief to the bag. The handkerchief is then shaken out, and the egg it contained a moment before has vanished and is found in the bag, which previously contained nothing. Then the performer announces that he will replace the egg in the bag and cause it to vanish therefrom. He drops the egg into the bag and after commanding it to go, shows that it has disappeared.

At this point he is usually interrupted by some spectator, who claims to have seen him remove the egg and place it in his pocket (because he made a bluff that he did). The performer immediately accepts this challenge. He removes his coat, and hands it to the spectator. The coat and clothing are carefully examined, but the egg cannot be discovered. The performer then turns back his shirt sleeves to the elbows, picks up the bag, shows that it is still empty and the spectator after carefully feeling inside reports that it contains nothing. Holding the bag by his finger tips and showing his hands empty, the conjurer permits the spectator to grasp his wrist, then inserting one hand in the bag he produces the egg. Now is where the comedy comes in—the performer explains how the trick is worked.

First he shows how an egg may be held unobserved in the palm of the hand while turning the bag inside out; also that the hands can be shown empty by secretly dropping the egg into the bag. It looks simple, and the spectators



acknowledge with roars of laughter how easily they were fooled. But the performer is not yet through. He remarks, "I believe many of you do not understand it; I will show it once more." He repeats the movements, but the hand which, according to his explanation, ought to contain the egg, is seen to contain nothing, while again the bag is shown empty. The egg has once more dis-



appeared. Again showing his hand empty he produces the egg from the bag and to prove that there is no deception about it, crushes the shell between his fingers, thereby showing that it is a genuine egg.

### *The Explanation.*

The bag is about six or eight inches wide by eight to ten deep, made of red flannel or plush. One of its

sides, however, is double, the cloth of one side being turned over and continued to the bottom of the bag. Inside it is stitched across from one corner of the bottom to within about two inches of the other corner at the right hand. Thus there are two bags, one within the other, the innermost bag or pocket being upside down, formed by the double side of the other, its opening being only two inches in width; the opening is situated inside the bag, at one of its bottom corners. When the egg is placed in the bag, the performer forces it into the pocket through the small opening, and the bag may then be inverted and instead of the egg falling out it merely drops to the bottom of the pocket, where it lies between the double cloth, at the mouth of the bag. The bag may then be turned inside out and shown apparently empty without any danger of the egg falling out of the pocket.

When it is desired to produce the egg, the bag after being turned back to its original condition, is held by its mouth. The hand immediately above the opening of the pocket releases its hold, which tilts the bag toward that side and causes the egg to roll along between the double cloth until it arrives at the opening.

The hand is then placed in the bag and a gentle squeeze forces the egg through the opening into the bag, from which it is then removed.

The handkerchief in which the egg was wrapped consists of two handkerchiefs stitched together around three of their sides, the fourth remaining open, forming a large bag. When the egg is apparently wrapped up it is in reality placed between the two handkerchiefs through the open end, and when its disappearance is desired the performer merely grasps the handkerchief by the open end and shakes it out, the egg at the same time dropping to the bottom of the bag.

The handkerchief may then be shown from both sides and no trace of the egg can be discovered.

## THE GOLDFISH TRICK.

BY WILLIAM J. HILLIAR.

This splendid feat of up-to-date magic, which has so completely mystified modern theater-goers, was invented by Prof. Mingus and performed by him some four or five years ago at Tony Pastor's Theater, New York City. In my opinion, it is one of the greatest tricks ever presented on the stage, since the days of Robert-Houdin. I will now initiate the reader into its secret, which up to the present time has been very well kept by the magical fraternity.

Figure 13 shows the handle of the pole, which is made of brass, with four slots, cut into the same, but capable of being closed by turning round the pole, each slot working separately. Figure 16 gives a section of the handle, which should be colored to imitate the rest of the pole. The pole can be anywhere from six to ten feet long. At the end of the line instead of the regulation hook is a miniature brass plug, attached to the line by means of a knot pulled into the larger end (see Fig. 14). Now for the bait (Fig. 15). This is a piece of brass tubing  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter, one end of which will fit tolerably secure over the plug. An imitation fish, cut out of silk and properly colored, is attached to the "bait" with a fine but strong thread as shown in the illustration. A piece of wire must be inserted in the tail to weight it, thereby causing it to readily expand.

The rod is prepared by placing a fish in each of the compartments, and the openings closed. Each bait is treated as follows: A silken fish is rolled up as

tightly as possible and pushed into it. The baits are now placed in a box labeled "bait," on the conjurer's table. The performer enters with the pole in his hand, and announces that he is going fishing, but will first of all bait his hook. He puts the bait on the end of the line. In the act of swinging the line in the air, he



Fig. 13



Fig. 15



Fig. 14



Fig. 16



opens the first compartment in the handle of the rod by revolving the pole, thereby allowing a live fish to drop into his hand. Immediately after securing the live fish, the performer gives the line a slight jerk which causes the imitation fish to slip out of the bait and expand. In order to communicate an appearance of life to the silken fish, the magician keeps the line constantly in

motion. His next act is to put the pole under his arm, and with both hands unhook the fish from the supposed hook. While doing this he has ample opportunity to secrete the fake in his left hand and drop the live fish into a bowl of water with the right hand. In the meantime the silk fish is disposed of. The same procedure is repeated with the remaining fish. In my opinion two fish are enough to produce. To ensure everyone in the theater knowing that the fish are genuine members of the finny tribe I place a strong light behind my bowl before commencing the experiment.

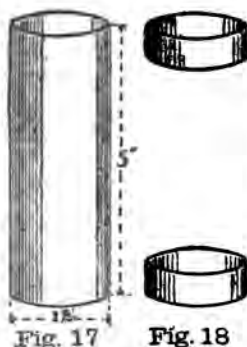


Fig. 19

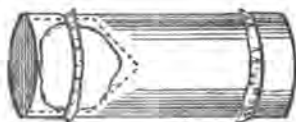


Fig. 20

### *A New Handkerchief Tube.*

For this very effective trick, the magician requires a metal tube, 5 inches long, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, open at both ends (Fig. 17). Two rings (Fig. 18), fit over each end. After passing the innocent-looking tube for examination, the performer asks a spectator to place a piece of tissue paper over each end and secure it by means of one of the rings, thereby forming species of drum heads a la tambourine rings. A handkerchief is now vanished from the conjurer's hands, and upon the spectator breaking the paper at one end of the tube, the handkerchief is found therein.

*Secret:* When the spectator has fixed the tube, the conjurer takes it for a moment and inserts into one end (of course breaking the paper), the little fake depicted in Fig. 19, which was previously palmed. This is a little box, the bottom of which is brought down to a point and the top covered with tissue paper, similar to that used with the tube. This box contains the duplicate handkerchief. The tube is now as shown in Fig. 20.

After inserting the fake (Fig. 19), which takes barely a second, the performer hastily hands back the tube to the spectator and requests him to hold it tightly, first having removed the ragged edges of paper about the ends. He now calls attention to the fact that the tube is sealed; nothing can be inserted into it without breaking the paper; also that he has not touched (?) it since it was given to the volunteer assistant. It is needless to say that this audacity has its effect, the spectators usually believing the statement of the conjurer and forgetting what really transpired, during the casual manipulation of the tube. The handkerchief is now vanished in any way desired, and the spectator asked to break open faked end of tube, whereupon the handkerchief is discovered, having apparently passed through the tissue paper in some occult manner. The magician, in his patter, can dwell on the disintegration and dematerialization of matter a la Mahatmas of Thibet.

### *The Hilliar Rising Cards.*

This is my original method for causing selected cards to rise from the deck held in the left hand to the right hand. The orthodox manner of working the trick is to have a fine black thread, stretched across the stage just above the performer's head. I will not tire the reader with a full description of the exact

modus operandi. It is well-known to all magicians. The great drawback to the old method was that the trick always had to be performed in a certain part of the stage unless two strings were used. In my method of working the trick I can stand in a drawing room with the spectators all around me and move my position as often as desired.

The motive power is the piece of apparatus depicted below. (Fig. 21.)

It is really a metal tube about 18 inches long. By pulling the thread through the minute hole at the top the weight rises naturally, but will fall again upon the thread being loosened.

This weight should be about four times the weight of a playing card. The thread should be the finest silk possible to procure and should protrude from the apparatus about two feet when the weight rests at the bottom. The apparatus must be attached with pins under your shirt, the hole being just on a level with your center shirt button hole through which the thread is passed. To the end of the thread is attached a small pellet of wax which is, until ready for use, stuck on a vest button. All is now ready. Three cards are selected, returned and brought to the top. The wax (with the thread) is now secretly attached to back card. The right hand now passes all around the pack and catches the thread between the first and second fingers. The thread once secured, the right hand is held above the pack. Care must be taken to press the left thumb on the wax end of the thread during the foregoing operation or it may slip away from the wax. Performer now asks name of first card and upon being told releases thumb pressure from the back card which immediately ascends to the right hand, the fall of the weight causing this to happen. The card is then placed



Fig. 21.

on the front of the pack, wax removed and attached to back card and experiment repeated. I think by reading the foregoing carefully the reader will at once appreciate the superiority of my method as the cards rise without the slightest movement on the part of the performer and the thread is absolutely invisible even at close quarters.

*Ching Ling Foo's Paper Tearing Trick.*

This trick, which is now being worked by Kellar, has puzzled many expert magicians and is really a very ingenious little piece of work.

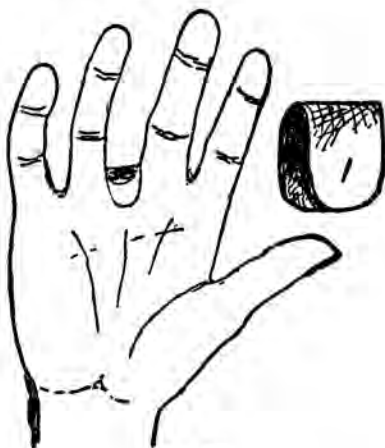


Fig. 22.

A strip of tissue paper  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide by 4 feet long is exhibited.

The performer shows both sides of his hands (fingers and thumbs spread wide apart). He then takes the paper and with palms facing audience tears it into 8 pieces. The pieces are rolled up between the



fingers, but upon the bundle being unrolled the paper is found intact and the hands still empty.

The secret lies in the tiny piece of apparatus depicted in Fig. 22.

This is made of metal painted flesh color and just fits the hand between the second and third fingers. In the space left is placed a duplicate strip of paper rolled up tightly. Fig. 22 shows the apparatus in position, (the dotted lines showing the roll of paper). The hands can be shown slowly from both sides, the attachment being absolutely invisible even at close quarters.

The strip of paper is now torn in eight pieces which are rolled into as small a space as possible, and under cover of the fingers the fake is removed, the duplicate paper withdrawn and the pieces replaced in the apparatus. The paper is now slowly pulled out whole and the hands shown empty.

## DUCROT'S WONDER VASE.

BY FRANK DUCROT.

The effect of this wonder-provoking trick is as follows: A glass vase is shown apparently empty. The performer pours water into it from a decanter. A borrowed handkerchief is then thrown over it, and after a few mystic passes the magician uncovers the vase whereupon the water is seen to have changed into ink. From the vase, the performer pulls an endless quantity of silk ribbons. The ink is now metamorphosed into water, and at command gold fish appear swimming about in it. The vase is now passed around for examination.

The explanation is as follows: A metal fake (see Fig. 24), is arranged so as to divide the vase into two sections. One side of this fake is silver plated, the other painted a dull black. It is divided into two compartments, A and B. A holds the silk ribbons, B the gold fish. A and B are separated by a metal shelf, while C is open. D is a lid which prevents the ribbons from being seen by the audience. E and E' are two wire hooks on either side of the metal section.

Before commencing the trick, the fake is placed in the vase, the gold fish being in the lower compartment, and water poured up to A (see Fig. 23—a corrugated glass effect hides the water line). The silver-plated side of the fake gives the vase a transparent effect. After water has been poured in until it reaches the top of the section, the handkerchief is thrown over the vase. Under the friendly cover, the fake is turned round. On the removal of the handkerchief, the

water presents an appearance of having been metamorphosed into ink. The ribbons are now pulled out of the upper compartment, and bundled together in the left hand. Passing the mass of ribbons in front of the vase, you take the opportunity to turn the section round, exhibiting the vase apparently filled with water again. The metal section is now entirely removed under cover of the ribbons, revealing the gold fish swim-

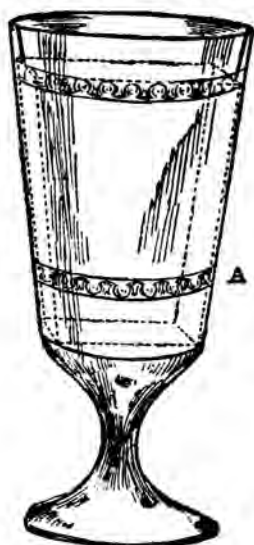


Fig. 23

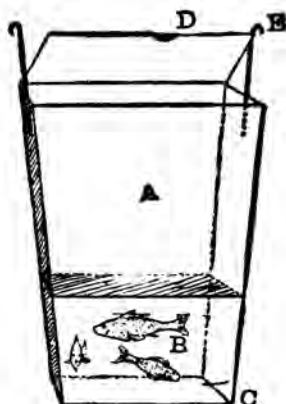


Fig. 24

ming about. The vase is now passed around among the audience.

### *Ink and Water Trick.*

At the present time, when every up-to-date magician employs a glass-topped table, it would be appropriate to describe an experiment that figured in one of my old programmes.

The effect: The performer shows a crystal decanter, containing water, to his audience. Approaching one of the spectators, he offers it to be examined, to prove

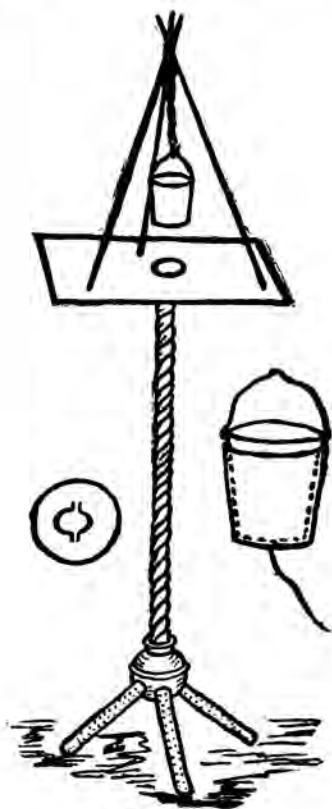


Fig. 25.

that its contents are unprepared. After satisfying his audience that everything is just as he represents it, he requests the loan of a handkerchief which he wraps around the decanter and hands it to some one to hold.

Next, attention is directed to a large goblet containing ink. This goblet is suspended over the table, as is shown in the illustration. To prove that it contains ink, he offers a pack of cards to be thoroughly shuffled; one of the cards is taken out by a spectator and is then marked for identification. Returning to the table, the performer dips this card into the ink and then shows both sides of the card to be stained.\*

The performer announces that at his command the two liquids will exchange places. The goblet of ink visibly changes into water and on removing the handkerchief from the decanter the ink is discovered.

Explanation: The decanter in itself is innocent of any preparation. Before the decanter is covered with the borrowed handkerchief, the performer secretly drops an ink lozenge into it; this will change the water into ink. These lozenges can be purchased at any of the first class magical repositories.

A glance at the illustration will show how the goblet is suspended. The goblet should taper slightly and have two small holes drilled at the top so that the handle can be attached. The tripod is made of three thin metal rods fastened together at the top by means of the chain. The top of the table should have three holes drilled into it to prevent the tripod from collapsing.

In the enlarged figure of the glass goblet you will observe that the outer side of it is covered with a black silk bag. This bag does not run to the very edge of the goblet. About three-quarters of an inch of the glass remain uncovered, to effectively carry out the idea that it contains ink.

To the lower end of this silk bag a stout black thread is attached; the loose end is then passed through

\*See "New Era Card Tricks," by A. Roterberg, for a description of the ink card.

the flap of the metal flange at the top of the table, down through the center leg, then out of one of the lower legs to the hands of your assistant. The metal flange has also been enlarged for the purpose of pointing out its construction. The center of this flange has a trap which is so made that it will close by itself. Instead of the pivot being in the middle it is placed to one side, so that if anything is drawn through the smaller opening, the weight of the opposite end of this miniature trap will close it.

When the performer commands the liquids to exchange places, the assistant pulls the thread, and the silk cover finds its way into the hollow leg of the table. It will be noticed that absolutely no covering is necessary—as the change is instantaneous. The glass goblet can now be passed down amongst the audience for thorough inspection.

## AN APPLE OF PARACELBUS.

BY MARTINKA.

Who has not heard of Paracelsus, the celebrated Bombast of Hohenheim, whose feats of sorcery and magic fill many volumes of mystic lore? There is a legend of his having conceived an intense hatred against a former friend. By magic power he caused the instant death of the unfortunate man by piercing his shadow with a dagger.

To demonstrate that a similar effect may be produced by a modern magician, the performer exhibits an apple, which he impales upon a spike attached to a suitable stand. A screen is then placed at some distance behind the stand, and a sheet of white paper pinned against it. The light must be so arranged as to enable the audience to obtain a full view of the shadow projected by the apple.

The conjurer exhibits a large knife with which he makes a downward stroke on the shadow of the apple, whereupon at the same instant, a section of the fruit drops to the floor.

For this experiment the apple is prepared in the following manner: A long needle is threaded with a black thread, to the end of which a small piece of wood or wire one-eighth of an inch long is securely tied. The needle is pushed through the apple some distance from the center and pulled down until the wire at the end of the thread touches the apple. The free end of the thread is now pulled through a screw-eye, fastened in the floor close to the table leg, and given to the concealed assistant to hold. With a sharp knife cut the apple through

from A to C, Fig. 26; after which place the two parts together when they will closely adhere, thanks to the moisture of the fruit.

The apple is now pushed on the spike on the stand, taking care not to shift the cut off section. When the performer makes the feint of cutting the shadow, the assistant pulls the thread which causes the section

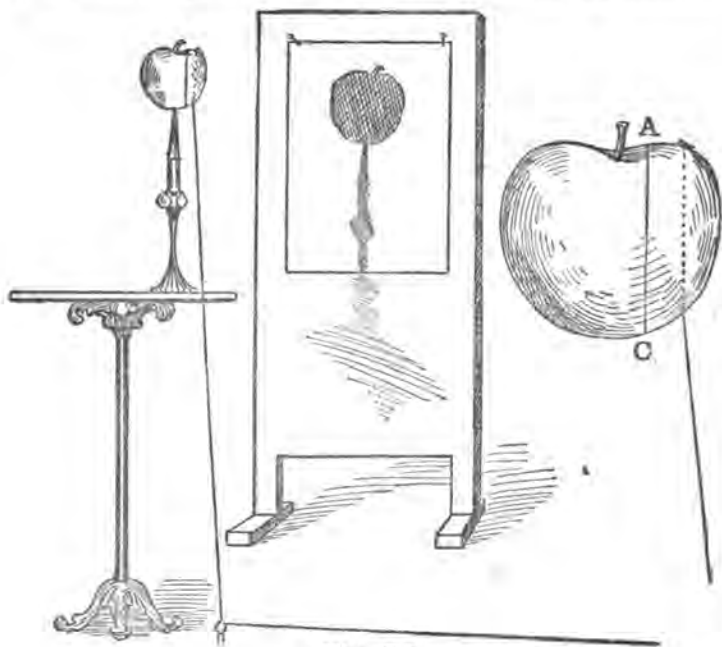


Fig. 26

of the apple to fall to the floor. The remainder of the fruit is taken from the spike and given to the audience for inspection.

The aid of the assistant may be dispensed with by attaching the end of the thread to the handle of the knife and taking care to adjust the length of thread accordingly.



## CARD TRICK

BY CLINTON BURGESS.

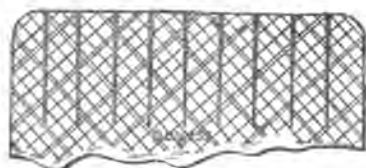
The following is a novel as well as an exceedingly simple method of cutting a pack or any number of cards called for by any one, using any quality of card, and permitting any one to count your cut, in order to prove the correctness of your "guess." For instance, we will suppose that the performer has been requested to cut the pack at nineteen cards; that is, the "cut," or upper heap, must contain just that number. In this method which is original (even if there is "nothing new under the sun") the performer may, by holding the pack face downwards upon the palm of one hand, and cutting the cards with the other, instantly determine the exact number of cards contained in the upper heap and, as the trick is purely mechanical and requires very little sleight-of-hand work, it should become a favorite as an introductory trick to the ever fascinating deceptions with the "pasteboards."

The modus operandi is as follows: Take from your regular pack one card and, after cutting it in two (lengthwise) and discarding one part, divide the remaining half into ten equal sections, cutting each of these to within about a quarter of an inch of the opposite side. The card so prepared, should somewhat resemble Fig. 27.

After this preparation, take your pack of fifty odd cards and divide it into packets of five cards each, placing the remainder in a separate pile. The latter which will not, of course, equal five in number, are laid in a pile (faces down) on the table and the "faked" or prepared

card laid over the right-hand edge of the heap, as shown in Fig. 28.

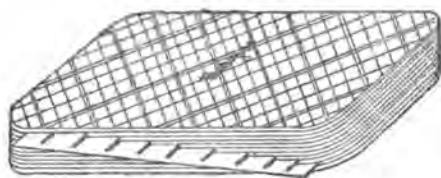
One of the packets of five cards is now placed between the slit dividing sections A and B, and next another packet is put between B and C, and so on until



**Fig. 27**



**Fig. 28**



**Fig. 29**

the comb-like half-card is completely filled, as shown in Fig. 29.

The pack, so prepared, is now in readiness for the trick, which is worked in the following manner: Holding the pack lengthwise on the palm of the right hand, "faked" side nearest the thumb, and curling the fingertips over the outer edge of end of pack, thus concealing

the prepared side, the performer requests that any one select a number. Suppose that it is suggested that the conjurer cut at six cards; all that is necessary for the performer to do, in order to get the correct number, is to slide the top packet of five cards sideways off the left-hand side of the pack and, while so doing, slip an extra card from the "left-over" heap at the bottom under cover of the packet of five; in this way the magician can guage how many cards he is taking from the pack, and, with the utmost confidence immediately offer the packet to be counted by some doubtful spectator.

When repeating the trick proceed for example, as follows—To cut at fourteen cards include the first cut of six which, after being counted and returned, was replaced on top of pack, and with this packet of six slide off the packet of five immediately under it and slip three extra cards from the bottom; thus you will be sure that your "cut" contains exactly fourteen cards before offering the pile to be counted. The 5-card packets are each drawn off the left-hand side of the top of the pack by the thumb of the left hand on their right hand side and by the first and second fingers of the same hand at the opposite side, sliding each packet sideways over the left-hand side of the deck; the third and fourth fingers being reserved for slipping an extra card or so, when necessary, from the bottom, into the upper heap. Should the performer receive at the commencement of the trick a request to cut at, say, nine cards, he would, instead of slipping four extra ones from the bottom, simply slide off the two upper packets minus the tenth card, and, after handing the packet of nine to be counted, place this extra card at the bottom; otherwise it would more or less interfere with the 5-card system of counting. The feat of cutting the pack at any number of cards called for may be repeated several times with the use of the method described

above, if the performer uses tact in selecting small numbers to start with; otherwise, the acceptance of a large number (say, for instance, 43 cards) would cause almost the complete disarrangement of the pack. However, the trick may be repeated indefinitely by using the following ruse, which is well to resort to after using the method described above and after disposing of the prepared half-card. Suppose the conjurer has been asked to cut the pack at sixteen cards; laying the pack on the table, he lifts from it a packet which contains, as near as he can judge, a number slightly exceeding sixteen. By practice, the performer can estimate (by the thickness of the pile and its weight) just about how many cards are in his hand and so, to make sure, and to prevent the necessity of recounting (as would be necessary were the number found to be lower than called for) he purposely cuts a packet which he knows must exceed in number the one requested. After this has been done the magician proceeds to count the cards in packet as follows: Holding them in the left hand, and pushing them one at a time with the thumb over into the right hand, counting aloud as each card is transferred from hand to hand, the performer waits until he reaches the fourteenth card and then "boxes-up" those in left hand (being careful to keep all edges even), and then, after passing the fifteenth card from the left to the right hand, takes the remaining ones at the right-hand edge between the forefinger and thumb of right hand and, passing them back to the left hand, and keeping them close together, holding them between the forefinger and thumb on the left hand side (not corner), counts them as one card, concluding by saying, "and *one* makes sixteen, the number called for. Would anyone like to count the cards for his own satisfaction?" The performer will find that he will very seldom be obliged to resort to palming off the surplus number after the bold declaration he

has made, and the fair way in which he (apparently) counted the cards. Should the conjurer find at the start that he has cut at entirely too many, (a mistake that is likely to be made when using packs of different thicknesses) the best way out of the difficulty would be to count the first three or four cards as one, concluding as heretofore described. In this way the last one(s) do not have a suspicious look as to thickness. The method shown above requires nerve—lots of it—but then, what is a magician without nerve and the necessary skill to back the same?

The various methods of working this trick by the use of prearranged packs are all more or less complicated and, in most cases, not as effective as those described above. By practice, one can become so proficient that he can cut at exactly any number of cards called for. Magician Fabian, of Philadelphia, was exceedingly expert in the performance of this feat; cutting the cards immediately at any number desired. I can, myself, within the space of two seconds, successfully divide the pack, nine times out of ten, at any number of cards called for.

## THE RING IN THE EGG.

BY HAL MERTON.

There is a capital parlor trick, well known to most magicians, in which a borrowed wedding ring is passed into the center of an egg. In order to bring about this effect, two wooden egg cups are needed, one, unprepared, to bear examination, and one having a deep slot cut in the bottom to receive the ring and hold it in an upright position. To perform the trick, it is absolutely necessary to secure a wedding ring, and to make an exchange of cups after the ring is slipped into the slot. It is obvious that very few rings are of the same width, and that a narrow slot will not admit a wide ring, while a narrow one would not be retained in a wide slot. Wooden egg cups, too, not being objects of general use, naturally come in for a share of suspicion. Furthermore, there is generally some difficulty in borrowing a wedding ring, many ladies having a superstitious feeling against removing the "endless band." For these reasons the trick, in the above form, finds little favor at present.

The little improvement, of my own invention, that I am about to describe, does away with all of the foregoing objections, and, I believe, will be found worthy of the attention of any artist. To begin with, any style of ring may be used, but one egg cup is needed, and that of the conventional china pattern, entirely free from preparation. The whole secret lies in the use of a small fake as shown in the illustration, which fits into the bottom of the egg cup. (Fig. 30.) It is composed of a metal shell, covered on the outside with cloth to prevent any telltale sound when dropped into the egg cup,

and liberally coated on the inside with conjurer's wax, into which the ring may be pressed to maintain it in an upright position. A rather large handkerchief with a duplicate ring attached to the center with a thread about four inches long, a plain glass tumbler, an egg and a button hook complete the list of articles necessary for the performance.

The egg is deposited in the right pockette. The little fake is placed underneath the vest, on the left side and, the prepared handkerchief is slipped into the breast pocket of the coat. The tumbler, egg cup and button hook are laid upon the table. The performer now comes forward

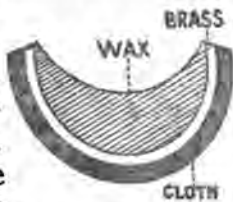


Fig. 30



Fig. 31

and borrows the ring, at the same time finding the egg in a little boy's ear, under a gentleman's beard or elsewhere. Particular attention having been called to the shape of the ring, it is then placed, apparently, in the

handkerchief, and for further safekeeping dropped into the tumbler where it can be heard to jingle. The corners of the handkerchief are then drawn under the tumbler like the handle to a bell, and a volunteer assistant is requested to seize them and amuse himself by shaking the glass. This expedient serves to prevent any undue curiosity on his part as to the actual contents.

Under cover of placing the ring in the handkerchief, the conjurer palms it in his right hand (the wand held in the same hand serving to conceal it). He exhibits the duplicate through the folds of the handkerchief, and later on drops it into the glass. In the act of walking to the table, with his back to the audience, the performer with his left hand, withdraws the little fake from under his vest, and with his right hand presses the ring firmly into the wax and palms wax and all. Taking up the egg and egg cup from the table he comes forward once more and offers both for examination. He receives the egg cup first in his left hand, and then passes it into his right. The fake is noiselessly dropped into the cup, as the magician reaches for the egg with his left hand. In returning to the table, the performer with the forefinger of his right hand adjusts the ring in the cup, in order that it may stand perfectly upright. The trick is now practically over, all that remains being to vanish the duplicate ring from the glass. This is accomplished as follows: The conjurer seizes the handkerchief by one corner (not by the center), and lifts it straight up from the glass, thereby carrying away, at the same time, the duplicate ring. If properly performed, there should not be the slightest sound. The performer quietly pockets the handkerchief while all attention is drawn to the empty tumbler, and thus avoids any unpleasant questions. Stepping back to the table, he announces that the ring has passed into the egg, shaking it at the same time close to his ear, and, apparently, hearing it rattle on the inside (the whole object being



to withdraw all attention from the egg cup, and to have it regarded merely as one of the accessories such as the tumbler and button hook). One end of the egg is now cracked slightly with the button hook and then, under pretense of avoiding a mess, the egg is thrust into the cup, *cracked end down*. This is necessary in order to force the ring into the egg, but with nine out of ten persons, the action escapes notice entirely. The other end is now cracked, the button hook thrust into the center of the egg and the ring withdrawn. It is well to have a glass of water to rinse the ring in before offering it for examination, also a few paper napkins to prevent any mess from the egg, and to dry the ring, after verification, and before returning it to the owner.

#### *The Chinese Rice Bowls.*

The effect of this trick is startling to the uninitiated, and its great value lies in the fact that it may be safely exhibited with spectators completely surrounding the performer, if necessary.

Having shown two china bowls, a quantity of rice is poured visibly into one of them from a common paper bag. The rice is then carefully smoothed off until it is just level full. The second bowl is placed over the first, and after the usual hocus pocus, upon the top bowl being removed, the spectators see the rice has doubled in quantity, even to overflowing. This is once more leveled off; the other bowl, having been shown empty, is again placed over it. Upon separating the bowls for the second time it is seen that the rice has entirely vanished, and in its place the under bowl is found filled to the brim with clear water.

Explanation: One of the bowls is as honest as it seems, but the other has undergone a rather extensive preparation. The whole secret lies in the application of the well-known principle of air pressure as applied in

the magic funnel, demon punch bowl, inexhaustible bottle, etc. A metal disc having a hole drilled in the center to serve as an outlet for the water is fixed firmly in place over the mouth of the bowl. After being painted white, a little rice is cemented over the surface to give it the appearance of a well filled bowl. Another hole is drilled through the center of the bottom of the bowl to admit the air pressure so necessary in order to secure a free flow of the water when desired. Before the commencement of the trick, the bowl is sunk almost level with the top in a pail of water until the fluid rises to its level on the inside. A finger is then placed over the hole in the metal fake, the bowl is turned upside down, and little cork is thrust firmly into the hole in the bottom, after which it may be safely handled without fear of leakage. This bowl is then placed on the table mouth down and the other one is placed over it.

In presenting the trick the first bowl is carelessly shown empty before filling it with rice, and there being nothing in the subsequent proceedings to arouse suspicions to the contrary, the audience will readily accept the implied conclusion that both bowls are unprepared. The rice is poured into the first bowl from the usual paper bag thus negating the idea of dummy forms. The bag may now be rolled up into a ball and vanished at this point, as all performers appreciate the value of these little interludes which serve to distract the attention of the spectators from the main issue. The fake bowl is placed over the first and they must then be so manipulated that the unprepared bowl is brought to the top. This is best accomplished when turning to your table or while requesting the aid of a spectator. By holding the bowls as shown in the drawing, the turnover may be affected while directly facing the spectators, the movement being entirely covered by a careless gesture as if merely indicating the steps by which your volunteer assistant may ascend the

stage, or some particular part of the stage upon which you wish him to stand. Having accomplished this, you may now lift the unprepared bowl off at any period that will best suit your convenience, and the rice with which it was filled will pour onto the stage, enough remaining, however, to form a considerable mound on the fake cover. This having been smoothed level, the first bowl is carelessly shown empty before being placed on the fake. The spectators having no reason to suspect the previous change of position, and having witnessed

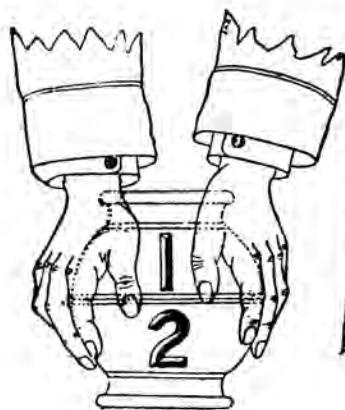


Fig. 32.



Fig. 33.

the open filling of the under bowl, will naturally jump to the conclusion that both of the bowls are free from deception.

It now becomes necessary to make the change a second time in order to bring the fake bowl containing the water, to the top. This having been attained, the tiny cork is withdrawn and the water starts to run down to the under bowl. It will be found advisable to use a handkerchief for a cover at this stage of the proceed-

ings in order that the hole in the bowl may not catch the eye of some keen observer. Perhaps it is as well to withdraw the cork while throwing the handkerchief over.

As a little time must necessarily elapse before all the water escapes it will be found advisable to introduce at this point some other experiment that will serve the double purpose of killing time and accounting for the appearance of the water in place of the rice. Two tricks that lend themselves to this end are the "paper bits and fan," and the "Hindoo



Fig. 34.

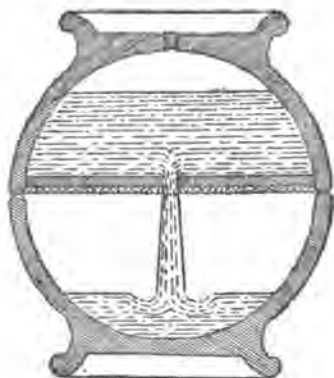


Fig. 35.

sand trick," in which the disappearance of water forms a principal feature, thus rendering them most appropriate for a combination with the trick I am now describing. Let us suppose that either one of the foregoing feats has been duly presented. Stepping up to the bowls, the performer, taking the precaution to cover the air hole on top to shield it from view and to prevent the escape of any water that might by chance have remained in the fake, separates the bowls, showing the audience that the rice has vanished

completely, and the bowl contains in its place, pure water. The trick in the above form is not generally known, and will form a valuable addition to the programme of every performer who appreciates effective mechanical apparatus in an unsuspected form.

The illustrations will show the manner of construction (Figs. 34 and 35), yet I should not advise anyone to attempt to make a set for exhibition. As the relative size of the holes has considerable to do with the proper flow of the water, and the correct fastening of the metal fake requires considerable technical knowledge, I would suggest that the rice bowls be procured from some first-class dealer in magical apparatus.

The late Prof. Balabrega, in presenting the above trick at Keith's theater, showed in the first place two unprepared bowls. In the act of placing them together he loaded a lemon between them. Subsequently vanishing a duplicate, he lifted one bowl off the other and disclosed the first lemon. While all eyes were drawn to the fruit he exchanged the bowls on the servante, and proceeded with the trick, winning considerable applause for his skillful presentation.

## VANISHING MOUCHOIRS.

BY ADRIAN PLATE.

The following is an excellent trick, in which the evanishment of four silk handkerchiefs is accomplished. The properties are as follows: Four handkerchiefs, colored respectively red, blue, white, and green; a handkerchief of similar size as foregoing, but divided into four squares, red, blue, white, and green; Fig. 36; a pull, and a hollow finger, to be worn over the little finger, but easily detachable and inserted when desired

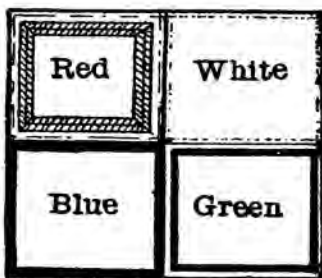


Fig. 36

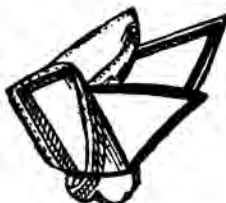


Fig. 37

between two of the fingers of the performer's hand. The handkerchief with the colored squares is first folded in such a manner that when held in the hand it will look like four separate handkerchiefs (see Fig. 37); afterwards it is vested. Show the four handkerchiefs after having produced them magically in any of the ways familiar to the conjuring fraternity. In the act

of spreading them out, get possession of the vested handkerchief. Now work off the four handkerchiefs unobserved by means of the "pull," which can easily be managed under cover of the fake handkerchief, which the audience very naturally imagines to be the genuine ones. Remove the false hollow finger from the little finger of your left hand, and work into it the fake handkerchief. Finally insert the false finger between the other fingers, and you can show your hands empty. This splendid disappearance of four mouchoirs can be accomplished with the arms bared to the elbows.

### *Handkerchiefs and Cylinder.*

A glass cylinder, preferably of ribbed design and closed at the bottom, is used. It is divided in the middle by a double-sided mirror. (Fig. 38.) When shown with a mirror towards audience, it looks empty. Into one partition insert a number of colored silk handkerchiefs. Exhibit the cylinder with the empty side toward the audience and place it on your table. Produce magically a handkerchief of same color as those in the cylinder, and place it in the partition facing the audience, taking care that it occupies the same space as the roll of handkerchiefs. Now you can show the cylinder from all sides, and the spectators will be deluded into the belief that there is but one handkerchief in the cylinder. Fan



**Fig. 38**

the cylinder, and produce the ten or eleven handkerchiefs from one partition, and then under cover of the last handkerchief turn the cylinder around and take out the first handkerchief shown. The glass tube may now be exhibited empty.

*The Multiplying Flower.*

When performing the flower trick, take one of the flowers and show it, first having casually exhibited your hands empty. Now place the flower between the hands and soon a multitude of flowers will pour out upon the stage, creating a remarkable pretty effect. The explanation is simple. Have lying on your table a flower prepared as follows: Take a good-sized spring flower with silk leaves. Paste on one side a piece of green silk, forming a bag. Now insert a dozen or more smaller size spring flowers into the bag. When the flower is shown, the side containing the bag is, of course, turned towards yourself. You release the small flowers from their receptacle as you press the single flower between your hands.

*The Restored Ribbon.*

The restored ribbon is an effective trick. A ribbon about three-fourths of an inch wide and about a yard long is cut in three pieces, and tied together again. Two persons keep it stretched between them. Two small handkerchiefs are now placed over the knots. A fan is waved gently over them for a few seconds to enhance the mysterious effect. Upon removing the handkerchiefs, the knots have disappeared and the ribbon is whole again. The explanation is simple: Two ribbons are used, one of them being prepared as follows: Two small pieces of the same colored ribbon are tied around it, to simulate knots. This prepared ribbon is placed in a piece of black tissue paper, forming a little parcel. You first exhibit the whole ribbon and proceed to cut it in three pieces, which are afterwards tied together. Place this in a similar piece of paper as the prepared ribbon. Substitute the parcels by any of the methods in vogue among conjurers. If you are not an adept at sleight-of-hand, secretly introduce the prepared



parcel into a borrowed hat. Place the parcel containing the pieces in the same hat, but changing your mind take out the fake parcel which the spectators will imagine to be the genuine one, remarking, "I think the experiment will be more effective if two gentlemen hold the ends of the ribbon." The fake ribbon when removed from the parcel will exactly resemble the one that was cut and tied together. Place the handkerchiefs in position and act the hocus pocus with the fan. Show an envelope with some powder in it, remarking that the powder has the power of restoring the ribbon to its original condition. Place the envelope under the handkerchiefs, as if to apply the magic powder, but really avail yourself of the opportunity of untying the first small piece from the ribbon. This piece you get rid of in the envelope. Proceed in like manner with the other one. Now remove the handkerchiefs with a flourish and the trick is done.

## GROWTH OF FLOWERS.

BY WILLIAM B. CAULK.

The old method of producing a rose-bush, filled with genuine buds, in an examined pot of sand by merely covering the pot with a previously examined cardboard cone, is a favorite with the public. For a number of years I have performed the trick, which is a most beautiful and pleasing one, but the fact that it was necessary to use long drapery on the stands on which the flower-pots were placed, was detrimental to an otherwise perfect illusion. After some experimenting I discarded the stands entirely, using instead two medium sized colored boys who walked on the stage with the pots in their hands.

The pots were passed for inspection and found to be about half full of white sand, then returned to the colored assistants and seeds planted in the sand.

The cone, open at both ends, was now shown and proven to be free of all trickery. With the cone the first pot was covered for a moment. When the pot was uncovered the seed had sprouted, at least there was a green sprig springing from the sand. The second pot was then covered for a moment and when the cone was removed a large rose-bush filled with genuine buds was found growing from the pot. The first pot was now covered for the second time with the cone, on removal of which a large rose-bush filled with roses was seen in the pot. (Fig. 39.)

The explanation is as follows:

While the stands and drapery are done away with yet the same principle is made use of as in the old form of the trick. At the back of each assistant is

arranged a shelf, upon which is placed a cone containing a rose-bush with the genuine buds attached by their stems, which, for obvious reasons, are cut as long as possible. The cone behind the first assistant is a little smaller than the cone shown by the performer, in order that the examined cone may be passed over it. The cone that is back of the second assistant is small enough to allow the smaller of the others to pass over it. By this arrange-

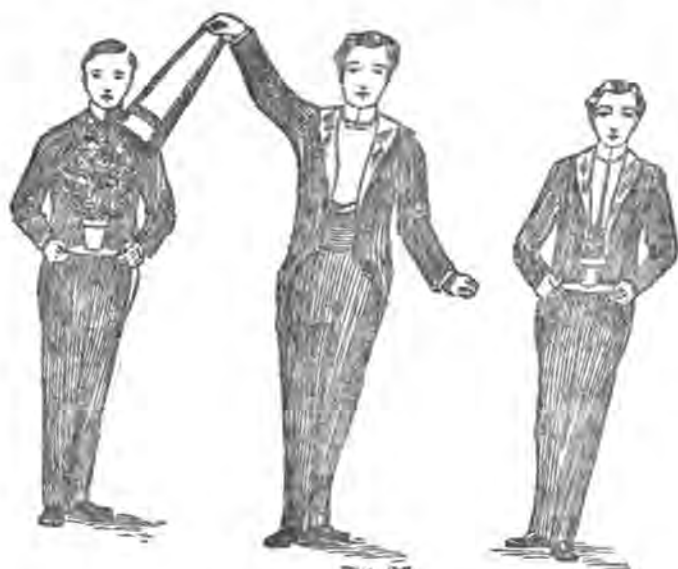


Fig. 89

ment the three cones will nest in one another, the reason for which will be explained farther on. After the examined pots are returned to the assistants the large cone is shown, and on a favorable opportunity the performer palms in his right hand a green sprig, made of feathers weighted with lead, and transfers the cone from the left hand to the right in such a manner that the cone is grasped at the small end with the fingers containing the palmed green sprig inside.

The first pot is now covered with the cone and the sprig dropped into the pot, where the weighted end causes the green feathers to stand upright. The pot is uncovered, disclosing what is apparently a small sprout springing from the sand. The cone is placed on the assistant's head while the performer carries the pot down and shows the sprouting flowers. Returning, the pot is given to the assistant with the left hand while the right hand takes the cone from his head and passes it down behind his back and over the concealed cone, which is grasped with the fingers through the open end of the larger cone. This movement is a natural one, yet is most effectually covered while pretending to instruct the assistant how to hold the pot.

Referring to Fig. 40, it will be noticed that the rosebush itself is fastened to a circular disk of lead so cut as to fit in the flower-pot and rest on the sand, preventing any possibility of the heavy bush toppling over when the cones are removed. Also notice that the bush is retained in the second cone by means of a strong black thread and a small hook caught over the top of the cone.



Fig. 40

The performer now goes to the second assistant and places the cone over the pot held by him, then slips the hook that is holding the rose-bush in the inner cone, off the edge, when the weighted base sinks down on the sand in the pot, thus holding the bush in the proper upright position when the cone is removed a moment later. When the cone or cones, as we should now say, are removed disclosing the large growth of flowers, it is a very easy matter to pass them over the concealed cone at the assistant's back. When the second bush is thus secured the performer returns to the holder of the first pot, covers the pot and produces the bush from it, or rather removes the cones from

around the bush, leaving it in the pot. The cones are now turned so that the spectators can see through them, and as the inside of all are finished alike, and the lower edges blackened, there is no danger of anyone noticing the extra cones. The shelf on which the pot is placed at the assistant's back is hinged to a belt which he wears, and when the cone is removed he places one hand behind him and pushes the supporting brace aside, allowing the shelf to sink down out of sight under the coat tail. The shelf is fully explained in Fig. 41.



Fig. 41.



In the above form the trick is all that can be asked for on a large stage, or when the performer can afford to carry two assistants. When I concluded to try and secure dollars in place of glory, and left the large stage, with its equally large expense, and took up my present style of entertainments, the necessity for two assistants compelled me to lay aside the Growth of Flowers as above described, and invent a new way of securing the same effect. Following is a description of what I am conceited enough to believe the very best method now known by which the Growth of Flowers can be produced.

On the stage are seen two small square top ebony and gilt stands, something like the illustration shown in Fig. 42. On each of the stands is a pot of sand, in which a seed is planted and caused to germinate and grow to a large rose-bush filled with genuine roses, by merely covering the pot with an open cone, as in former method. In fact, it is the same old trick, with the exception that it is now clad in a tailor-made suit

in place of a "hand-me-down." My stage, be it large or small, is always draped in plush. When working in a parlor, plush screens are placed back of each of the stands. Such hangings, or screens, are necessary when presenting this trick, as you will understand presently. Fig. 43 shows the rear of one of the stands.

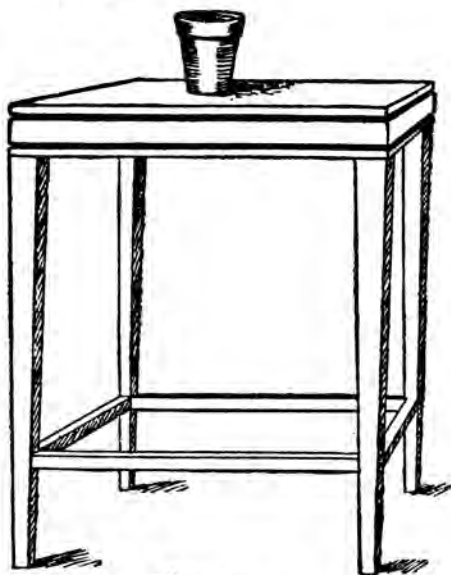


Fig. 42

A is a curtain mounted on a roller spring (B) that is placed on top of the stand. The curtain is of plush, the same as hangings of stage, or screen. At the lower edge of the curtain is inserted a metal rod, the ends of which work freely in grooves, one in each rear leg of the stand, as shown at C. The side edges of curtain also just enter the grooves. A cord D is attached to the lower edge of the curtain and is passed

through a ring in floor and off to an assistant, where it is fastened to a small hook, or cleat when the curtain is drawn down. When the cord is free from such fastening the spring roller draws up the curtain. When the curtain is down, and the stand placed about three feet in front of the rear hangings, or screen, a person

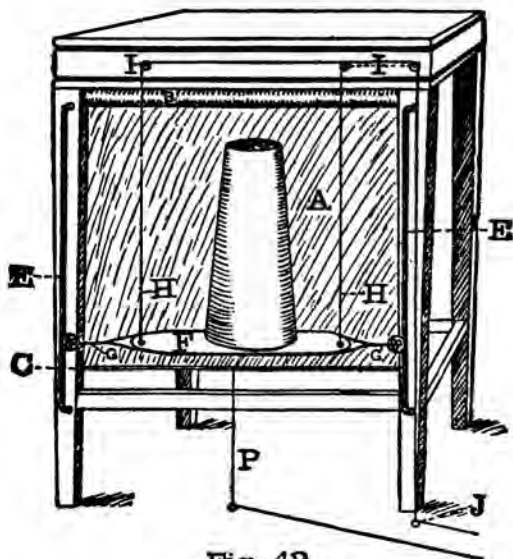


Fig. 43

sitting fifteen feet in front never dreams but what he is looking directly through under the stand at the rear hangings, or screen, as the case may be.

Attached to the back of each rear leg of stand is a metal rod E, E. This rod is raised from surface of legs about a half inch by means of small brackets at each end.

There is a small shelf F, with projecting arms, G, G, at each end. These arms terminate in small grooved

wheels that engage the rods E, E. Cords, H, H, are fastened to the shelf, then carried up and over pulleys I, I, then down leg of stand to J and off to the assistant. By pulling on these cords the shelf is raised up to back of stand top.

This stand is set for working by placing cone containing suspended rose-bush on shelf and dropping it down. The spring controlled curtain is drawn down, and things are as shown in Fig. 42. It is not necessary for me to describe further the workings of the trick, aside from a few points, as it is practically the same old Growth of Flowers from this on. After showing sprig in pot at first stand, hold cone with the lower end back and just below the stand top, when assistant pulls cords H, H, lifting the shelf F and causing the cone containing the flowers to pass into the cone you hold. When the cone has been secured walk to the second stand, passing in front of the first stand. Cover the pot on the stand and produce your rose-bush, then hold the cone, or cones, as you really have two, in position to secure the third cone and its bush as it is lifted on the shelf. While the spectators' attention is attracted to the second stand as the rose-bush appears, the assistant releases the cord D of the first stand and the curtain is drawn up on the spring roller. Now go back to the first stand, this time passing back of the stand, which you can now do as the spring curtain is out of the way, and produce the second rose-bush in the pot on that stand. While doing this the assistant releases the cord and allows the curtain of the second stand to be rolled up on its spring roller.

In cutting the roses from the bushes the performer should pass around each stand a number of times, which will tend to confuse the "wise ones."



*Improved Decanter and Flying Handkerchiefs.*

Several years ago some inventive mind gave to the magical fraternity a very clever and beautiful trick, by which a handkerchief was vanished from a decanter held in the hand, and instantly made its reappearance in an uncovered decanter that was resting on a thin topped stand.

In that form the trick has appeared in the programmes of nearly every magician of note. Many improvements have been made on this experiment, even going so far as to allow both of the decanters to be examined, before and after the trick, as well as closing them tightly with examined glass stoppers.

The very latest phase of the trick is to vanish either of two handkerchiefs from a decanter, which has previously been emptied of wine, closed with a glass stopper, and placed on a skeleton (glass topped) stand, as pictured in Fig. 44.

As stated, after the wine has been emptied from the decanter, two handkerchiefs, one green and the other orange in color, are placed in it and the decanter is left standing on the table. The performer now steps aside from the table, and the handkerchiefs disappear from the decanter in the order named by the audience, either the green or orange going first as the spectators may desire.

This is a mechanical trick and not a very complicated one. The stand or table is an ordinary one with a glass top, in which is drilled a one-inch hole, so that it will come directly over the hollow tubing forming the center leg of the table. There is also a corresponding one-inch hole in the metal flange that holds the glass top to the center leg of the table. The hole in this flange is closed with a metal cap, which can be palmed off at the will of the performer, leaving the

hole clear through the flange, glass top, and into the hollow leg of the table. A glance at Fig. 46 will give an idea of how this cap can be arranged: a slight pressure with the first finger at B will throw the cap into

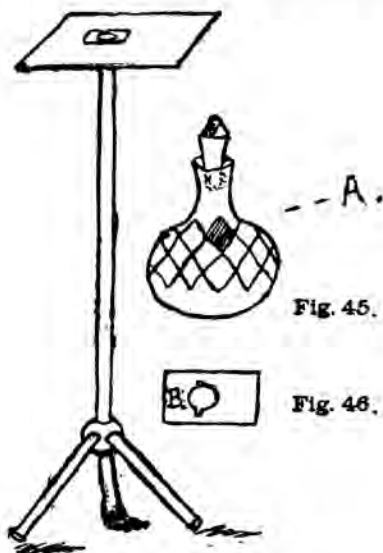


Fig. 44.

the palm of the hand, where it can be retained like a coin.

The decanter is an imitation cut glass, or it can be the genuine article if one so desires. The design is of diamond shapes, as you will see by the illustration. One of the upper diamonds is neatly cut out (see A in Fig. 45) and the edges highly polished. Pass two stout threads through the hole in the side of the decanter, up the neck and out of the mouth. Form loops

on these ends of the threads, passing the other ends down through the hole in the top of the table, down the center leg thence to the one lower joint of the table and off to the assistant. Pour wine into the decanter, and cork. Let the decanter down, drawing the loops out and laying them on the table top. Have a tray of small glasses alongside the decanter.

When ready to introduce the experiment, step to the table, remove the glass stopper, pick up the decanter with the right hand and pour the wine into the glasses on the tray. In the meantime secretly pass the fingers of the left hand through the looped ends of the threads. The assistant now comes on and gives you the two handkerchiefs, and taking the tray of glasses, passes the wine amongst the audience. Now place the handkerchiefs in the decanter, one at a time, passing each handkerchief secretly through the loop on the end of its respective thread before placing it in the decanter. You now pick up the decanter, grasping it by the neck with the thumb pressing over the two threads, where they enter the secret opening at the side of the glass, and step several feet away from the table, the threads being drawn after you. On returning to the table, the assistant draws in the slack of the thread until you place the decanter on the stand. Cork the decanter and set the same on the stand in front of the hole in the top, and with the side of the decanter containing the hole, to the back. While doing this remove the cap that conceals the hole in the top of the table. There being play enough between the cap and the flange to allow the thread to be drawn back and forth, it is not necessary to remove the cap up to this point of the trick.

The spectators now select the handkerchief that is to vanish first, and the assistant pulls the proper thread and the handkerchief disappears; the second handker-

chief vanishes by the assistant pulling at the remaining thread. To prevent a possible mistake the threads should be of different colors.

If the performer wishes, he can palm duplicate handkerchiefs and produce them from the pocket of some gentleman in the audience, after both handkerchiefs have been vanished from the decanter.

## NEW SOUP PLATES AND HANDKERCHIEFS.

BY PROF. AMBROSE.

The performer shows two ordinary soup plates. On one of them he places a red silk handkerchief, and then turns the second plate upside down upon it. He next exhibits his hands perfectly empty. Placing them together he slowly develops a red handkerchief. Upon lifting the upper plate the red handkerchief, previously deposited upon the first plate, is seen to have vanished, *ergo*, the magician has caused it to dematerialize and materialize in his hands. Rubbing the red handkerchief between his hands, the performer causes it to change into a green one. Laying the green handkerchief aside, he again shows his hands empty and seizing one of the plates by the extreme tips of his fingers, he places it once more upside down on the other empty plate. He now causes the green handkerchief to disappear, and upon lifting the upper plate the missing handkerchief is found in the lower one. So much for the effect of this novel illusion; now for the *modus operandi*.



Fig. 47.

The main secret lies in one of the plates, which has a false bottom so constructed that it can be laid down or lifted by the extreme tips of the fingers only. The false bottom will not fall out of place. This false bottom which fits neatly into the plate is made of tin, to the center of which is soldered a piece of wire in an upright position, the end having a slight curve to it. Through the center of the bottom of the plate is drilled

a small hole. Now when this false bottom (which must be covered on both sides with glazed paper or white enamel) is placed in the plate, the wire enters the small hole and the slight curve on wire grasps the outside of the bottom of plate proper and keeps the false bottom in place. The space between both bottoms should be about one-half inch and the length of wire should be gauged so that it will have a slight strain on it. The next thing required is another false bottom made of tin covered with glazed paper; this bottom is to lay right on top of the other false bottom. Both should look as though they were the bottom of the plate proper.

Previous to the trick a green silk handkerchief is placed on the plate, which has the hole drilled in it, and is then covered with the false bottom that has the wire upright soldered to it. The wire enters the hole in the plate and holds the false bottom securely; the other false bottom is placed right on top of the other.

The performer exhibits both plates freely. To prevent the loose false bottom from falling out while it is shown the conjurer holds it in place with his fingers. He now places a red silk handkerchief in the genuine plate and places the faked plate upside down on it, the loose false bottom falling down and covering the handkerchief. Placing the plates on the table, he shows his hands to be empty and magically produces a red handkerchief, which can be accomplished in numerous ways, the extra finger being as good as any. He then raises the upper plate and the handkerchief is seen to have vanished.

The magician now takes the visible red handkerchief and causes it to change its color to a green. This can be done by sleight-of-hand or by mechanical means. Laying the handkerchief aside the performer seizes the plate (which has the false bottom held fast by the wire upright) by the extreme tips of his fingers only, and places it once more upside down on the other

plate. Then by simply pressing the fingers on the end of the wire, where it is exposed on the bottom of the plate, the false bottom falls and covers the other fake bottom. He now takes the visible green silk handkerchief and vanishes it, (which can be done in various ways, for instance, by means of the Hand Box, Vanishing Pull or by sleight-of-hand), and upon lifting off the upper plate the duplicate handkerchief is brought to view.

## THE FAIRY FLOWERS AND CHARMED CARD.

BY RUPERT DE VERE.

For the purpose of this experiment you obtain a small bouquet. Round the stem of the bouquet twine a piece of colored ribbon and to one of the ends of the ribbon sew a small clip. Now take a card—say the Knave of Hearts—and, after marking it with a pencil, insert it into the clip. You next take a piece of newspaper and fashion it into a cone. Inside this cone (which we will call cone A) you must carefully place the flowers and card. Fold over the top of the cone and place it in a box nearly full of paper clippings of different colors. Having secured a gentleman to assist you from the audience you take another piece of paper and after showing it to be free from preparation you fashion it into another cone which we will call cone B. Now fill ? cone B with clippings from box. To do this you take the cone in the right hand, then tilting it mouth downward into the box you pretend to push with the left hand the clippings into the cone. Under cover of this movement you will find that you can easily introduce cone A into cone B secretly, afterwards placing a few clippings on top of cone A, so that cone B will appear to be full of paper. Come forward with the cone and show it to be full ? of cuttings, then fold over the top and give it to a gentleman to hold. Now force a duplicate Knave of Hearts on a lady, and giving her a pencil ask her to mark the card so that she will know it again. When she returns the card to you, you change it for a third Knave of Hearts, which



card must be marked in exactly the same manner as the card in the cone. You show this card to the gentleman who takes it to be the same card which the lady marked. You now vanish the card and on *tearing* open the cone the clippings are found to have changed to a bouquet of flowers attached to which is the chosen card. Take the card from clip and show to gentleman, who seeing the mark takes it to be the same card which the lady selected. Then change card for the chosen card which you will remember is on top of pack, and give it to lady to identify. Now present her with the flowers.

My readers will notice that the above trick can be varied to a great extent. If instead of resorting to newspaper for the cones you use paper of a very strong kind you can produce a dove instead of flowers. The effect of the dove flying from the cone when you tear it into halves is very good. The ribbon and card would be attached to the neck of the dove. Again you can use the torn card dodge and instead of having the card marked, simply retain a piece as in the old way, the remaining pieces being vanished by means of the pistol. In this latter way plenty of fun may be obtained by pretending to shoot assistant, etc. Always destroy the remains of cone after performance.

## BOER VS. BRITON.

BY ELLIS STANYON.

The performer comes on the stage brandishing a cavalry sword, and, having gone through various exercises, stops short and remarks: "No! I am not mad, but have recently found it advisable to take a little sword exercise." He now introduces a Boer flag and placing it over the blade of the sword announces that he intends to cut it into three pieces. He, apparently, attempts to cut the flag, making a quick movement with the sword as in the genuine silk cutting feat; but the flag has vanished entirely. At this point performer overhearing a remark (real or assumed) to the effect that the flag may have gone into the sword, walks down the run-down exclaiming, "Oh no! certainly not, this is an ordinary sword, perhaps you would like to examine it." (Hands sword for examination). Taking back the sword performer places it on a table at the rear of the stage and turning to address the audience is made acquainted with the fact that he has something on his back. He appears surprised but eventually brings forward three strips of silk representing the original Boer flag. These pieces (not his golden hair) were seen hanging down his back as he returned to the stage. The performer next hands the three pieces of silk to a lady with a request that she will rub them together, when on taking them back a moment later he shows that they have changed to what everyone present would desire, *i. e.*, the Union Jack.

The working of the trick is as follows: The sword is an ordinary one. The disappearance of the flag is caused by a mechanical pull; in this case, however, the cat-gut loop is replaced by a small swivel hook. At the center of one side of the flag, on the extreme edge, is sewn a metal ring, by means of which the flag is connected to the swivel hook of the pull. The flag is folded in half over the blade of the sword, and while seeming to place it in the position required for the supposed cut the connection is made unperceived; the movement of the arms in the supposed cutting puts the necessary pull on the cord and the flag disappears.

The three strips of silk found on the performer's back are, prior to the commencement of the trick, made up in a roll and concealed under the collar of the coat, one end being lightly attached to the coat with silk thread. While the sword is being examined, the performer under cover of rearranging his coat, a very natural movement after his recent exertions, releases the roll which forthwith runs down his back. When returning to the stage, performer palms the Union Jack from his vest, or elsewhere, in the right hand, then taking the strips from his back, *in the same hand*, executes the "change," handing the lady the Union Jack and retaining the strips *in the right hand*. Finally, the performer receives the flag from the lady with the hand in which are palmed the strips, which enables him to secretly dispose of the "palm."

*The Change.—By Sleight-of-Hand.*

The performer prepares for this "change" by secretly palming say in the right hand, a mutilated handkerchief, or such article for which the one visibly shown is to be changed. If the wand be carried in the same hand it will help to conceal the "palm." Supposing the wand to be used, it is first placed under the left arm, the performer then takes the handkerchief, or flag, to be changed and throws it over the right hand thus successfully concealing the "palm." The performer next proceeds to place the four corners, one by one, in the center of the handkerchief, remarking as he does so, "I will make the handkerchief a little smaller." Repeating the operation with the newly formed corners he continues, "and still a little smaller." This movement is repeated a third, and, if necessary a fourth time, until the handkerchief is folded up into a small and compact parcel, *resembling in size and appearance that for which it is to be changed.* Now under cover of seeming to roll the handkerchief still smaller, the respective positions of the two bundles are changed, that palmed being brought to the top. Showing this to the audience as the original article the performer remarks "and now the handkerchief is so small that I can almost conceal it in my hand," and suiting the action to the word he takes the uppermost bundle in the left hand, (allowing only a small portion to show) at the same time making a half turn to the left he takes the wand from under the arm in the right hand thus effectually concealing the "palm."

A lady or gentleman is next requested to take the (presumably) borrowed handkerchief and to rub it from north to south. Here the performer returns to the stage, and while doing so contrives to vest the borrowed article, and at the same time, in the case of a second "change" to secure another "palm." Having

done this he turns round and exclaims, "Dear me! whatever are you doing, I told you to rub from north to south, and you are rubbing from east to west." This very naturally causes the person to at once make an examination.\*

The great thing to bear in mind in this kind of "change" is to *execute all sleights under cover of natural movements*, (the above can only form an example), when detection is next to impossible. The spectators not knowing what is about to take place, suspect nothing; in fact experience has taught me that they do not for one moment think the actual trick has commenced; their surprise on finding their property mutilated is therefore the more marked.

#### *Parasol v. Handkerchiefs.*

The parasol and handkerchief trick is not by any means new, but the method hereafter explained is original in so far as it is worked on any table without the aid of chairs, servantes, trick cases or papers, or any assistance whatsoever; also that, in the course of the trick, the parasol is merely wrapped in a sheet of brown paper, *the top part of cover being left visible the whole time*. The effect in its entirety is as follows:—

The performer asks for the loan of several cambric handkerchiefs, finally selecting one that best suits his purpose. This he hands to a lady to hold with the result that it is quickly found in a long strip; this strip

\*I have given this "change" at full length, it being of general utility in connection with combination tricks, notably the *Handkerchief and Sunshade*, hereafter described. In the case of the trick referred to, having made the first "change" the performer returns to the stage and takes up the sunshade, *still keeping the borrowed handkerchief palmed*. He next opens and shows the sunshade, and when closing it, drops the handkerchief inside. Returning to place the sunshade on the table he secures the next "palm."

undergoes, in the hands of the lady a similar change, being eventually found in a number of small pieces. In a state of apparent perplexity the performer pushes the pieces, corresponding in number to the ribs of the parasol, into the apparatus known as *The Burning Globe*. The performer has previously shown for examination an ordinary parasol, quite ordinary save that it is fitted (for effect) with a very brilliant cover, red and white sections for instance; this he now wraps in a piece of brown paper leaving a portion of the top of the red and white cover showing. In this condition the package is given to a gentleman to hold. The performer now sets light to the pieces of cambric in the burning globe, and finally extracts from their ashes, *i. e.*, from the globe, the cover of the sunshade uninjured, with the exception of a hole in the center. The package is next examined, when, on the sunshade being opened, attached to the end of each rib is found one of the pieces of cambric, while the portion of silk at the top is found to correspond exactly with the hole in the center of the cover.

The sunshade, also the loose cover, are now wrapped in the same piece of paper, the top of the cover still remaining visible; for greater security the package thus formed is now wrapped bodily in a second sheet of paper, and again handed to the gentleman. The performer now fires a revolver at the package, when, on opening the same, the sunshade is found restored to its original condition; the borrowed handkerchief is found, uninjured, inside the sunshade.

*Explanation:*—There are of course two sunshades, the trick, and the ordinary one. The trick sunshade is wrapped in a single sheet of paper with the top exposed as explained, the package being concealed under four or five extra sheets of paper on the table. Having wrapped up the ordinary sunshade to match the trick package, and while holding it *in the left hand*, performer

raises rear edge of several sheets of paper on the table with the right hand, and casually remarks "I was going to use more paper" (here he drops package behind papers, apparently by accident, and takes up trick package in its place) "but perhaps it will be more effective" (looking at exposed end) "if I leave it as it is."

The package is now handed to gentleman.

The trick here proceeds as described, the working of the *Burning Globe*, I shall take it, being understood.

Finally, having wrapped the thick sunshade and the loose cover in one sheet of paper, the performer, when about to wrap it in a second sheet, contrives to change it, under cover of the paper on the table, for the package containing the ordinary sunshade and the lady's handkerchief.

The handkerchief is introduced into the sunshade from the "palm" at the conclusion of showing the sunshade, and while attention is directed to the appearance of the long strip of cambric in the hands of the lady. The palming of small pieces of cambric, from the vest, is best executed when returning to place the sunshade on the table. The sleight-of-hand "change" described above is suitable for this trick.

## THE MAGIC BOMB.

BY FRED J. PETERS.

For the benefit of those readers whose taste lies in showy and sensational feats rather than in smaller-sleights, I submit below a sketch and descrip-

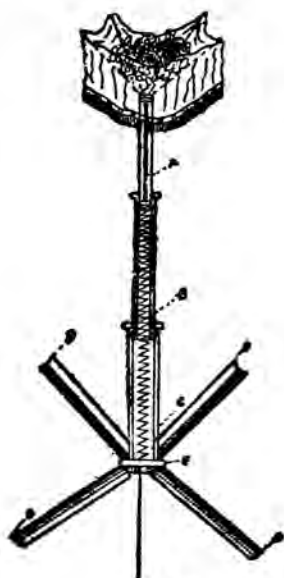


Fig. 48.

tion of my latest effect, in which a firecracker about ten inches in length is instantly transformed by its explosion into a handsome magician's side-table overflowing with beautiful flowers.



A glance at figure 48 will almost suffice to render the action of the mechanism clear to all. A, B, C and D are four pieces of tubing that fit one within the other. Within B and C there is a rather weak spring that has just force enough to keep the three tubes extended to their full length by pressure against the base, E, and the bottom of A. The tube D is divided vertically into four sections that serve as legs when the table expands. They are, however, hinged to the base E and can thus be folded around the tube C. The table

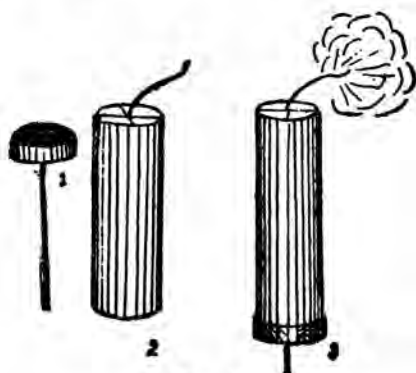


Fig. 49.

top is really composed of thin cloth or silk and it is extended and held in place by precisely the same principle as that of an umbrella.

To perform the trick, the spring flowers are placed in the folding top and this slides completely into the tube A. This in its turn telescopes into B, and that into C, the four pieces of D are folded over it; four strings attached to the four sections are then tied across the top and retain all in place; a fuse is fastened to the center, the appearance of the packet being then as shown in No. 2, Fig. 49. As the outside of the sec-

tion D is painted a bright red, it seems to differ in no way from the usual giant firecracker of the same size. As the inside of the same section is nickel plated to resemble the rest of the table, and it is the inside that the audience views at the conclusion of the trick, the effect is perfect. You next bring forward a little stand (No. 1, Fig. 49) and plant it firmly upon the stage, end-

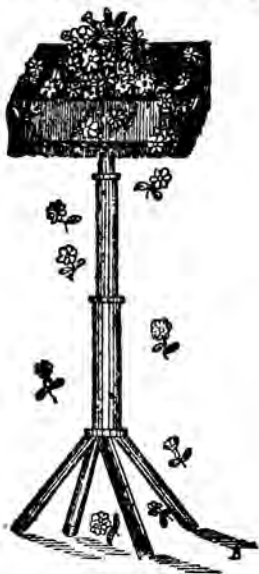


Fig. 50.

ing by setting the cracker in it and lighting the fuse. The strings which serve to hold the pieces secure must be soaked in some inflammable material in order that they may be quickly destroyed when the fire reaches them. In the center of the cords you may add a little piece of flash paper to simulate that puff without which no well regulated cracker will explode. With the flash, there is an involuntary closing of the eyes, and when they are opened again, instead of the disagreeable "bang" with the clouds of smoke and frag-

ments of paper which the ladies dread to see, there stands the pretty table as shown at Fig. 50, covered with beautiful flowers, and the performer may prepare to accept the rapturous applause that this effect has never failed to elicit.

It will be understood, of course, that the table depends for its support mainly upon the little stand that served as a holder for the supposed cracker but as the legs now hide this from view no one will suspect its use.

#### *A Novel Card Ladder.*

After three cards are selected from the pack, the attention of the spectators is drawn to the ladder, which from all appearances is innocent of any preparation. The wand is passed through the five openings proving beyond all doubt that no mirrors are concealed between the rungs of the ladder. The pack of cards is placed in the box at the top, and at command the chosen cards leave the pack and appear instantly between the three center spaces, (as shown in Fig. 51), from which they are then removed.

As the reader will have surmised, the cards are forced and duplicates appear in the ladder.

This ladder is made out of half round metal tubing (see Fig. 53), the flat surface measuring five-eighths of an inch. The box at the top has two compartments, the front one being just large enough to hold the pack of cards while the rear section is more properly speaking a shelf. It is on this shelf that the wire frame (see Fig. 52), with the concealed duplicate cards rests, being held there in position by a very small clip. A piece of black silk thread is fastened to this clip while the other end of the thread is attached to the wand. It is now apparent that the frame containing the cards can be instantly released by merely drawing the wand away from the ladder.

This wire frame requires, perhaps, a little closer

study, as it forms the sole mechanism for producing this pretty effect. It consists of four small wire frames, each large enough to hold a card. To the top is attached a spiral spring A, (see Fig. 52), and by means of the protruding pivots the whole frame can be instantly unhooked. It is straightened out flat against

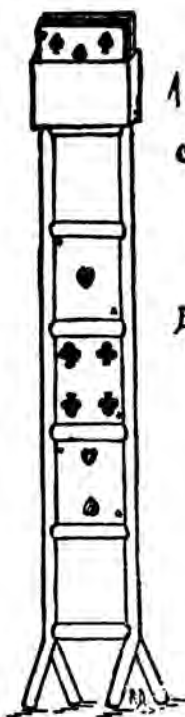


Fig. 51.



Fig. 52.



Fig. 53.

the ladder by the springs B and the double clips C serve to hold the cards in the frame.

The top space of the frame is left vacant, so that when the wire frame is flattened against the ladder, the top and bottom spaces are empty as shown in the first drawing.

## DR. ELLIOTT'S STAGE SETTING.

BY DR. ELLIOTT.

I wish to introduce to magicians a novel stage setting, which is the only thing I use, and which is peculiarly adapted to performers who make a specialty of manipulation versus apparatus. The setting consists of a collapsible opera hat and a cane, the latter made in two portions which may be screwed together to facilitate portability in packing. A piece of sheet tin is fixed in the crown of the hat. In its center is soldered a device designed to hold the handle of the cane in a secure manner. (Fig. 54). The cane is of a proportional length according to size of the performer. So much for the paraphernalia, now for the effect of the same.

The magician enters with hat and gloves on, and carrying his walking stick in a jaunty manner, as if just home from some social function. He bows to audience, sticks cane into a hole in the stage, adjusts hat upon it, and thus makes his table. The right hand glove is tossed into air once, the second time it is vanished by means of a "pull" which carries load up the sleeve. The performer then leisurely proceeds to take off the remaining glove, and while doing so produces his magic wand, which is a collapsible affair of steel, some eighteen inches long when pulled out, from his left sleeve. The second glove is vanished in a decidedly artistic manner. It is first palmed in the right hand while pretending to place it in the left, and apparently tossed away. The sides of the coat are now opened widely, and the bottom of the vest pulled up to show

that the glove is nowhere upon the performer's person, but in reality he deftly tucks it under the vest where it remains. The inside lining of the vest is made of white stuff to correspond with color of the glove. The effect is all that can be desired. The conjurer next produces a silk handkerchief and places it over the crown of the hat to form a table cloth. The stage setting is now complete, and the performance begins.

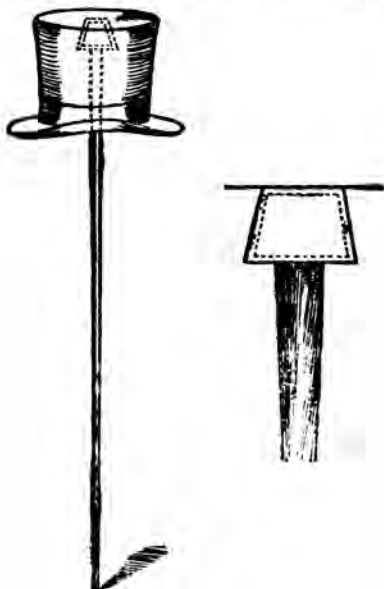


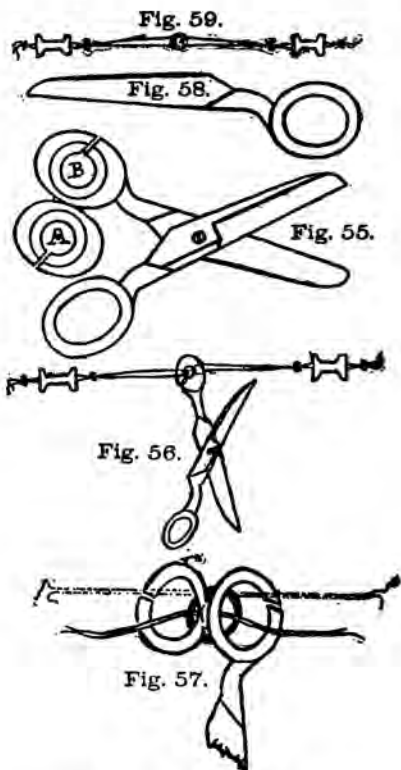
Fig. 54

*The Mystic Scissors, Ring, Spools and Ribbons.*

The effect of this original experiment is well worthy of your closest attention and consideration. The scissors (see Fig. 55 in illustration), are especially designed for the trick. This special pair of scissors is so constructed that the larger finger-loop (the one used

by the thumb) will contain and conceal a borrowed ring which has been put therein secretly. The effect of the trick is as follows:

The performer passes out for examination two thick ribbons or pieces of braid, identical in color and



equal in length. He then borrows a wedding ring, and has the same securely wrapped in paper and held in full view by any one during the experiment. Next, the conjurer, in order to prove the ribbons are in no

way prepared, requests the loan of a pair of scissors, receiving of course, his own special pair, with which he proceeds to clip off the extreme ends of each piece of braid, thus showing that the ribbons are not double or prepared in any manner and, at the same time, giving an excuse to introduce the pair of shears. After this has been done, the performer passes the two lengths of ribbon through the larger finger-loop of the scissors, (the loop containing the secret opening as shown in Fig. 55), and has the extreme ends of each ribbon held by any two obliging gentlemen. The conjurer next offers for inspection two common spools. He then directs each of his volunteer assistants to tie a knot in the ribbons, about four or five inches from the ends. After this is done, he gives each man a spool and requests him to thread it over the ends of his respective ribbons, and after so doing, to knot the extreme ends, in order to prevent the spools from slipping off. (See Fig. 56.) The performer now borrows a handkerchief and, with the same, covers for a moment the scissors hanging on the ribbons and almost immediately exhibits the shears released from the braid. He now calls special attention to the fact that the borrowed ring must have vanished from the package held by the party to whom it was given, as it is now plainly seen by everyone to be securely held in the very center of the ribbons. At the request of the conjurer the package is opened and found to be entirely empty. The ring while still on the ribbons, is identified by its owner and everything is then left in the hands of the mystified onlookers for thorough inspection.

The *modus operandi* is as follows: As before stated, the pair of scissors is of special pattern; in other words, the larger loop (made for the insertion of the thumb) is constructed in the form of a round steel box in its interior, minute in size though perfect in shape, the outer surface being oval as shown in illustration (Fig. 55). To this is hinged a cover, (see A),



the exact counterpart of the opposite side B, which cover conceals the borrowed ring upon its being secretly inserted in the box-like interior of B. It is at once apparent that, after a ring has been placed therein and A closed on to B, and the ribbons threaded through the loop formed by A and B, the ring which is between the two latter is already on the ribbons. Though still concealed, it can be released and made to appear on the tapes by drawing the same through the slits in A and B, while the cover A is raised to admit the release of the ring; the ring is thus brought onto the ribbons (note method of crossing the same in center) in the act of releasing the scissors from the tape, (see Fig. 57). The rivet connecting the blades of the shears being removable gives the performer an opportunity to exchange the prepared blade for one of ordinary pattern, (Fig. 58). The vanishing of the borrowed ring from the paper held by the spectator may be executed by any method the performer fancies.

The effect of this trick is so mysterious that, I can assure you, it will be worth any dozen of old tricks known to magic. The manufacturers of conjuring apparatus will make the scissors and you will find the trick a splendid one to add to your repertoire. It was invented by me five years ago, and this is the first mention of it in any book on legerdemain.

*Dr. Elliott's Watch Box.*

This is an entirely new effect and will create a great sensation wherever performed. Purchase any cheap watch that is reasonably sure to keep on ticking under all circumstances; it is not necessary that it should keep time. Have this watch sewed in a special pocket, the opening of which is concealed inside of your left coat sleeve, near the cuff. The watch must be small and the pocket tight, in order to prevent mishaps.

You come forward with an ordinary watch box minus the ticking mechanism, but having a hinged cover, lock and key, and a press board which may be locked by pressure from the bottom when it is desired to give the box for examination. Next request the loan of a valuable gold watch. Allow the owner to place the watch in the box, laying particular stress on the fact that you refrain from touching it yourself; close the box, and in the act of so doing press the fake (thumb-board) inward, and the watch will drop through the bottom into your hand. You now close the box under cover of a slight upward movement and allow audience to lock the box and retain the key, and seal the lock opening. While this is taking place the performer has ample time to get rid of the watch in any manner that will best suit the subsequent production. The box is next returned to performer, who takes it by the tips of his fingers and carries it amongst the audience, occasionally holding it to the ears of skeptical spectators in order that they may hear the watch ticking away. (What they really hear is the dummy watch concealed in the sleeve pocket.) The box is now taken from the hand by a spectator and wrapped in a handkerchief and the watch is caused to vanish at any subsequent stage of the trick as may best suit the will of the performer. The beauty of the trick in this form may be readily imagined, particularly as the box will bear a minute examination. It can only be opened (that is, the fake) by inserting the sharp point of a needle or pin through the lower side of the rear of box. The above explanation is, I believe, clear enough to enable our readers to add this clever effect to their list of stock tricks. To those who do not care to go to the trouble of having pockets prepared in their sleeve, I would suggest the wrapping of the dummy watch in black cloth and fastening it in the desired position by means of a common safety pin. It could then be readily removed at the conclusion of the trick.

## "SHE."

BY HENRY RIDGELY EVANS.

Those who have read H. Rider Haggard's novel, "She," will recall the weird cave scene. The scene suggested the idea of the stage illusion, "She," in which a young woman is cremated in full view of the audience. The lady mounts a table which is placed in an alcove formed by a folding screen. Over her head



Fig. 60—Prepared for cremation.

is suspended a cylindrical cloth cover. This cover the magician lowers to the level of the table, thereby completely concealing the woman from the spectators. The table, to all appearances, has four legs. Underneath it are four lighted tapers fixed in sconces extending from a central rod. The space thus illumin-



Fig. 61—The escape.

ated appears to be clear and open. The screen contains no traps, and the cloth cover no mode of egress except through the top or bottom, consequently it seems impossible for the woman to escape without being seen. The conjurer now fires a pistol, where-

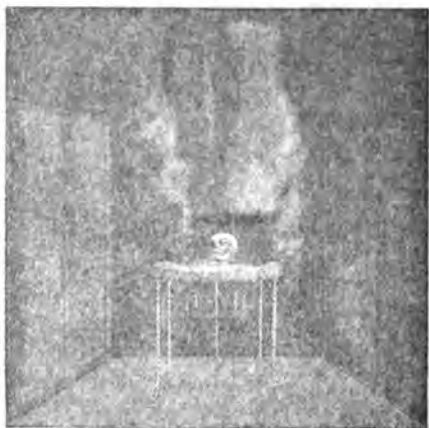


Fig. 62—Finish of the trick.

upon smoke and flames burst forth from beneath the cover. The agonizing shrieks of the victim are heard, succeeded by a profound silence. When the cover is lifted naught remains of the beautiful "She" but a smouldering heap of cinders, a few charred bones and a ghastly skull. A thrill of horror pervades the audience. What has become of the lady? Surely she has not been consumed in the fire? The spectators are dazed.

Now for the exposition of this unique illusion: The innocent looking table in reality has but two legs, the other two which appear are but reflections—astral shapes, as it were! The central rod supports but two candles, the other two being reflections. Converging at this central standard, beneath the table, are two plane mirrors fixed at an angle of ninety degrees with each other and forty-five degrees with the side panels of the screen. These mirrors by reflecting the side panels, which are of the same color as the panel at the back, delude the spectators into the belief that they see underneath the table the rear of the screen when in reality they only behold the reflections of the side panels. The reflected table legs and extra tapers enhance the effect of the illusion. The triangular wooden box, upon the sides of which the mirrors are fastened, extends to the back panel of the screen. It is either topped by a mirror, or covered with the same material as that of the screen. This box is on a level with the table. To the audience the table presents the appearance of being completely isolated on the stage. Thanks to the mirrors and the cover the woman descends unseen through a trap in the table and gets away. Before making her final exit she arranges the skull, bones and ashes on the table and when the pistol is fired ignites a quantity of red fire. Then she closes the trap and the trick is completed.

*Magnetic Wand.*

A wand about three feet long is given for examination. The conjurer, after showing that his hands are empty, holds the wand near the top, in the manner depicted in the illustration. (Fig. 63.) The fingers are partly extended; the thumb steadies the wand. After some hocus pocus, the wand is seen to slowly rise in the performer's hand until the bottom is reached, when it stops. The *modus operandi* is the conjurer's friend—an elastic black cord, which is arranged in a most ingenious manner. The wand is of black wood with nickel-plated tips. It is hollow. Through it runs the



Fig. 63.

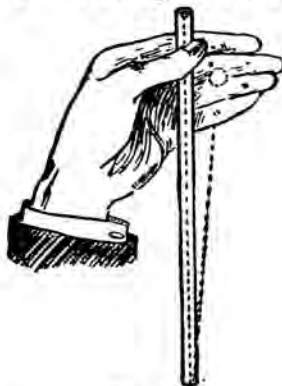


Fig. 64.

elastic cord which is attached to an eyelet fixed inside of a movable cap which fits over one of the tips. The cap is about the diameter and thickness of a ten-cent piece. The elastic of course keeps the cap in place, and the stick can safely be given for examination. On returning to the stage, the performer pulls off the cap, and places it between the fingers at the back of his hand. (Fig. 64.) The cord stretches along the stick which the conjurer holds. By slightly releasing the pressure of the thumb, the wand will slowly rise. When entirely up, the cap is in its place again, and once more the stick may be passed for inspection.

6

## JAPANESE MAGIC.

BY HERBERT VICTOR.

(By permission of "The Showman," London, England).

The following interesting trick, which is here presented for the first time, can best be worked when the magician is assisted by a young lady, attired as a "Jap" for preference.



Fig. 65.

Let us commence by detailing the effect. A handkerchief is produced by any means known to the performer, or it can be brought on by the assistant. A

top corner is held by the magician, and the other extreme corner, top also, by the assistant. It is then pulled away from the young lady by the magician, who is seen holding a large Japanese lantern attached to a short staff.

Before describing the secret, a line or two relative to the lantern is necessary; the most suitable being those that measure, when extended, about two feet long, with a diameter of fifteen inches, the staff being also about fifteen inches in length. To the lifting handle the staff is attached by means of a swivel hook, and on the outer circumference of the lantern a small eye is fastened; this should be placed exactly above, and in the same straight line as the staff, when placed in position on the assistant's back. (See Fig. 65.)

A hook sewn to the costume the assistant is wearing, exactly between the shoulders, is also necessary. The assistant, of course, comes on with the lantern attached to her costume, with the large handkerchief also (if a necessary excuse is wanted for her coming on).

The magician here takes the handkerchief from her, and seizes the top right hand corner of it, in his right hand, then gathering along the handkerchief by the top edge, until he has the left hand top corner also in his right hand. He then gives the said left corner to be held by the assistant in her left hand, at the same time placing his left hand behind her back (a very natural movement, as he stands half-facing the young lady) and seizing the staff of the lantern, immediately runs out the gathers in the handkerchief, which is now held by the two top corners, by the conjurer and assistant respectively. As the folds are run out, a slight upward movement detaches the lantern from the hook on the dress, which extends at once behind the handkerchief. A weighted bottom to the lantern may be found necessary. The handker-



chief is jerked away, and the lantern given to the Jap assistant to go off with.

If desired the lantern can of course be produced lighted, this further enhancing the prettiness of this conjuring item.

### *An Opening Trick.*

Have a large flag or handkerchief tucked up your left hand sleeve, and to one corner, which should just come to the buttons of opening of sleeve, attach a loop of silk, which you place over the second finger of the same hand.

Borrow a hat, show left hand, back and front, pass over hat to the same hand, and show right free from preparation. Now slope the hat, which is held by the brim lengthwise, towards the body, and dip the right hand into the hat, bringing it out again with no result. Do this again, but at the third attempt, get possession of the silk thread and break it away from finger, pulling the flag out from the sleeve over the front of hat at the same time. Keep on running out flag till the end is free of sleeve. This end will drop into the hat with persuasion. You now clear the hat from the body and continue the production, at the same time tilting the hat towards the audience. This is very illusive if well worked, and after a little practice the silk loop can be dispensed with altogether.

## CLEOPATRA'S TOMB.

A NEW, EASY AND STARTLING ILLUSION BY LA VILLE.

(By permission of The Showman, London, England).

We will suppose that the performer has been doing his "turn" on a stage surrounded by curtains and scenery. During the performance a four-legged stool has been in evidence, and many of the audience will no doubt have wondered what it is to be used for. There are also four frames covered with Egyptian

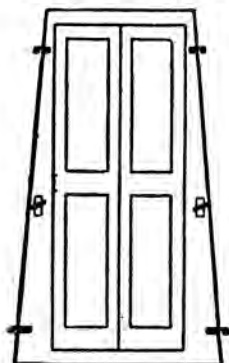


Fig. 66

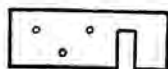


Fig. 67

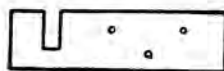


Fig. 68

hieroglyphics placed in a prominent position, with a pointed top-piece beside them.

At the conclusion of his legerdemain, the performer announces that he is about to present his new illusion, which is of the most simple character. He first of all draws the attention of his audience to the stool before

mentioned, which is about two feet high, raised upon four turned legs; its only peculiarity is that it has a slightly raised edge running around the whole of the top. It should be three feet six inches long by three feet wide, but a smaller one would do, according to the discretion of the maker. This is passed around by the assistant to show that it is perfectly solid, and is then returned and placed in the center of the stage, well forward, so that all can see it. If thought advisable one or two small lighted candles can be placed underneath; but if that is the case, care must be taken that the stool does not catch fire. The assistant then takes the first frame, which is three feet four inches wide at the base and two feet six inches wide at the top, and is six feet high; it has two plainly marked doors, each thirteen inches wide and five feet eight inches high; these open outwards (see Fig. 66), and are screwed on the inside at the top with small bolts or buttons, for safety sake. As the assistant begins to move this piece, the professor takes the second, standing well in front of it; the assistant holds his frame in a horizontal position, and the professor rests his against the back of it—needless to say, it is exactly the same size as the front. He then returns for one of the side pieces, which are two feet eight inches wide at the base and two feet at the top, with the same height as the front and back. He then proceeds to join the three parts together; this is accomplished by the aid of thumbscrews and special hooks (see Fig. 67). These can be made by any ironmonger; they are simply pieces of flat iron one inch wide and three inches or four inches long, and are one-fourth inch or three-sixteenth inch thick. There will be sixteen of these required. At two inches from the end, a slot corresponding with the thickness of the metal is filed, so that they will exactly engage; the necessary screw-holes (as in the figure) are of course drilled and countersunk.

It should be particularly noted that the front and back pieces should have the slots downwards and the side pieces upwards; the four such pieces are of course for the sides. It will now be readily seen that the front, back, and one side will stand of their own accord, whilst the fourth piece is being fetched and then fitted together. The top is next placed on, but something of the pyramid shape should be adopted, small enough to assure the audience that there can be no concealment. There is no special fitting for this, any plan that suits the performer can be adopted. When this is accomplished, the thumbscrews already referred to, one on each side of the front, and the same at the back, are screwed home, by the professor and his assistant, one taking the right and the other the left hand side; two iron bars are put under half staples (see Fig. 68), screwed at each edge of the front and back, and the completed tomb is lifted by these on to the four-legged base. All this will take less time to accomplish than write, and the audience will be interested and amused all the while in watching the proceedings.

The assistant then borrows a pocket handkerchief and the conjurer produces a bowl of fire from the same—this trick is so well known that we need not explain it—saying in the meantime that he will resuscitate Cleopatra who is not dead, but only hovering in spirit form around her tomb, which he has had the good fortune to purchase from the authorities of the British Museum, who did not know its value and kept it in their cellars for many years. Immediately he puts the fire upon the floor the doors open, and there is a maiden dressed in Egyptian costume, who steps out and does a dance, or anything else that the professor may think fit. The solution of the mystery is not very hard to find if the foregoing particulars have been carefully noted. The back of the tomb has two doors, exactly similar to those in the front, but they open in-

wards. The thumbscrews used are really not necessary, but it is while they are being screwed in that the girl, who should be fairly tall and slim, creeps through a fold in the curtains or portion of the scenery into the interior, and then at a given signal, she steps upwards and straddles her feet against the sides where the transverse piece has been intentionally thickened to two inches instead of one as is to be found elsewhere. By this means she can be lifted without the audience knowing she is within. Care should be taken that her dress is not too long behind, or else there is a chance of it showing.

We have assumed throughout that the wood used for the construction is two inches by one inch, and based all our calculations on that. The exterior can be covered with millboard nailed and glued on, except for about six inches at the bottom of the two sides where wood should be used. If the interior is painted a dark brown, or dead black, nothing will be noticed.

## THE MAGIC WATER BOWL.

BY GEORGE W. BROWN.

(By permission of the N. Y. World.)

This is Ching Ling Foo's greatest feat—that of the magic water bowl. Before this begins the audience is invited to examine the stage for trap-doors, etc.



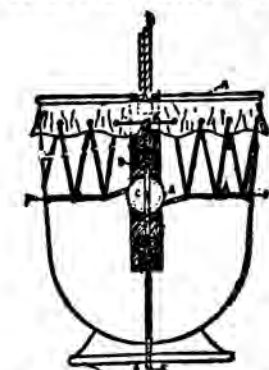
Fig. 69—Manner of attaching the jar of water to the person.

Nothing of this sort is found, but to make assurance doubly sure a large Oriental rug is dragged forward

and folded. Ching Ling Foo appears, wearing a flowing silk robe and holding in his hands a small silk shawl, which he twists and turns to prove that there is nothing in it. Then comes incantation, accompanied by much varied facial expression, at the end of which a shawl is thrown upon the folded rug. The magician and his assistant dart forward, lift the shawl by each end and reveal a large porcelain bowl about eighteen inches high and fifteen inches in diameter, filled to the brim with water. That the water is real is shown by the

presence of several large red apples bobbing comfortably on its surface.

Ching explains to the audience that the bowl contains three buckets of water and weighs ninety-five pounds. He proves this by bringing forward two buckets and filling them with water from the bowl, after which he demonstrates that there is another bucketful left in the bowl. The smiling magician disappears and the audience is left to wonder where the bowl came from. The



A—Water-tight cover. C—Drum. B—Stand. D—Metal plate. E—Supporting rod.

Fig. 70.

trick is very simple. One can readily understand it by reading this explanation and studying the accompanying diagram.

The explanation: In the performance of this trick Ching Ling Foo is attired in a voluminous satin robe extending to within eight or ten inches of the ground. Many of the knowing ones surmise, and rightly, that the large bowl filled with water is concealed on his person—but where and how it is produced remains mysterious. The bowl with its contents weighing ninety-five pounds is no easy object to juggle. As Ching Ling Foo makes not one suspicious movement, simply

stooping and picking up the shawl to reveal the bowl, the trick is very puzzling.

Figure 69 illustrates the principle of attaching and detaching the bowl. The waterproof cover (A) is a canvas cover rendered waterproof. Hemmed around its edges is the heavy cord (H) by which it is suspended. Its lower or outer edge is provided with a number of eyelet holes by means of which it is laced to the heavy catgut cord (F) surrounding the bowl, the terminals of which are wound in opposite directions around the drum (C) attached to the long metal plate (B) which in turn is secured to the top of the cover (A).

When the conjurer is about to perform the trick the bowl is filled with water, and a few red apples are thrown into it. Then the cover is placed on; the catgut cord (F) is stretched tightly around the bowl by turning the drum (C) with a large clock key, each turn of the drum being held in place by means of the ratchet wheel (K) and the pawl (D). Next the lacings (N) are drawn as tightly as possible, and all is secure.

Yet all this manoeuvring to close the bowl can be undone in a second through the medium of the rod (E) secured to the metal plate (B) and in contact with the pawl (D). For, as can be seen, the rod (E) is pushed upward the moment the bowl is set squarely upon its base, and thus disconnects the pawl (D) from the ratchet wheel (K), causing the drum (C) to unwind and allowing the cover to be removed by the cords (H).

Now as to the suspending and the lowering of the bowl by means of the cords (H). The performer wears a sort of harness, a combination of belt and suspender. (Fig. 69.) To the back of the belt is secured an iron ring or staple. Through this in opposite directions are passed the ends of the cords (H). The bowl is then lifted until it rests on the performer's thighs, and the terminals of the cord (H) are secured by snap hooks



to iron rings attached to the tops of his Chinese half boots.

Now it is plain that if the bowl were attached directly to the belt it would be brought almost to the ground upon the performer assuming a squatting position. By the other arrangement the whole of the distance is attained through the slack caused in the cord (H) when the performer bends his knees.

At the same moment the cover and all its mechanisms are automatically released and dragged back under the robe of the performer upon his again assuming a standing posture. All this is accomplished while the performer stoops to pick the shawl from the floor. As soon as he has lifted the shawl so that only its lower edge touches the folded rug he spreads his legs apart, steps backward, lowering the shawl, and the feat is accomplished.

### THE SVENGALIS.

Novelty in magic is the great desideratum. Soon after the advent of that incomparable Chinaman, Ching Ling Foo, the Svengalis, mind-readers and impersonators, entered the vaudeville field to demonstrate that there is something new under the sun, or rather, I should say, under the calcium light. From London they came to New York and created quite a furore in magical circles. It was a capital exhibition of silent second-sight. The effect, as described by the New York Herald, August 11, 1901, is as follows:

"Two persons (lady and gentleman) are on the stage, both with their backs toward the audience. A third one goes into the auditorium, with his back toward the stage, to receive the wishes of the audience. If the name of any international celebrity is whispered to him, with lightning rapidity the thought is transmitted. The gentleman on the stage turns round immediately and appears in features, bearing and dress

as the desired personage—with wonderfully startling resemblance.

“One can likewise whisper to the gentleman in the auditorium the name of an international opera, operetta or international song. The thought flies like lightning and the lady sings what is wanted, instantly accompanying herself on the piano.”

The secret of this surprising act depends upon a silent code of signals, transmitted by the performer

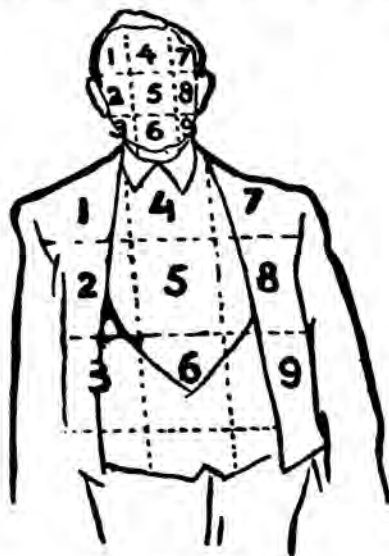


Fig. 71.

who goes down among the spectators. The Herald's exposé is an ingenious one, and near enough to the secret for all practical purposes, though not indorsed by the Svengali trio. By permission of the editor I reproduce it.

“When the curtain rises the master of ceremonies, well dressed, with a modest flower in his buttonhole, walks to the front of the stage with the confidence that inspires confidence and in a pleasing voice begins:

'Ladies and gentlemen—I have the pleasure of introducing to you, etc., etc. I will call your attention to the fact that the spectators must confine their whispered wishes to international celebrities, names of well-known personages, songs and operas of international fame,' etc.

"This limitation of choice is the key to the performance. They have lists of these 'international celebrities,' rulers, statesmen, diplomats, great writers and musical composers; songs of world-wide reputation, popular selections from the operas, etc. And the secret of the evening is that all of these carefully selected names, titles, etc., are numbered, as in the following examples:—

## STATESMEN AND RULERS.

- 1—Bismarck.
- 2—King Humbert of Italy.
- 3—Napoleon Bonaparte.
- 4—King Edward VII.
- 5—Paul Kruger.
- 120—Lincoln.

## OPERAS.

- 1—"Faust."
- 2—"Lohengrin."
- 3—"Bohemian Girl."
- 4—"Lucia di Lammermoor."
- 5—"Carmen."
- 120—"Trovatore."

## POPULAR SONGS.

- 1—"Home, Sweet Home."
- 2—"Last Rose of Summer."
- 3—"Marseillaise."
- 4—"The Jewel Song in 'Faust.'"
- 5—Walter's Prize Song.
- 101—"Comin' Thro' the Rye."

## GREAT WRITERS.

- 1—Thackeray.
- 2—Victor Hugo.
- 3—Dickens.
- 4—George Eliot.
- 5—Shakespeare.
- 101—Dante.

*"How the Signals are Concealed.*

"The manager reiterates that if only names of international reputation are given the responses will be correct nine hundred and ninety-nine times in a thousand. Then he descends from the stage, and, smiling right and left, inclines his ear to catch the whispered wishes as he moves slowly up the aisle, generally with his back to the stage. An auditor whispers to him, 'Bismarck,'

"Herr Svengali, gesticulating freely but naturally, pressing his eyes with his fingers for an instant as if going into a momentary trance—only a second or two, just enough to impress the audience—then thrusts a hand into the air, wipes the moisture from his face with his handkerchief or leans toward a spectator, seeking his attention, when a voice from the stage says, 'Bismarck.'

"'Right,' responds the man who whispered that illustrious name. Then there is a craning of necks and



Fig. 72.

crushing of programmes, all eyes fixed on the stage, where the impersonator, standing before a cabinet of costume pigeonholes, with the aid of an assistant has donned wig and uniform in his lightning change and whirls around disguised as Bismarck, while the girl at the piano plays 'The Watch on the Rhine.' It is all the work of a few seconds and makes a great impression upon the spectator.

"The next man calls for an opera air, 'Bohemian Girl,' and the piano plays 'I Dreamt That I Dwelt in

Marble Halls,' etc. Another man suggests the magic name 'Sheridan.' It is echoed aloud from the stage, while the audience applauds and the girl plays 'The Star Spangled Banner.'

"The few experts present pay little attention to the stage. Their eyes are fixed on the man Svengali in the aisle, noting every move he makes. It is observed that his numerous gestures, his frequent use of his handkerchief, the pressure of his fingers on his eyes, as if to hypnotize his assistants on the stage, are natural movements, attracting no attention, yet necessary to hide the vital signals in the cipher code of the show.

In the programme and show bills it is emphasized that the lady and gentleman on the stage have their backs to the audience, while Svengali down in the aisle has his back to the stage, making collusion apparently impossible. This makes a profound impression on the public.

*"A Confederate Behind a Screen.*

"But not a word is said of that curious looking screen panel, bearing a double headed eagle—the Austrian coat of arms—surmounting the large cabinet of costumes occupying so much space on the stage. The programme does not explain that this screen panel is transparent from behind and that an accomplice with a strong magnifying lens reads every move made by Svengali; and not a word is said of the other man in the gallery, who faces Svengali and repeats his signals to the man behind the transparent coat of arms bearing the imperial eagles of Austria, who directs the pretty girl at the piano and the impersonator at the cabinet.

"There are twenty variations of the trick. In case one is exposed there are nineteen others to fall back on. There are wireless telegraphy; the hidden camera, that commands the house; a little silken thread, running from the man in the gallery to the little spring

trigger under the perforated shoe of the girl at the piano, held high above the audience by the big chandelier or a pendant from the ceiling. This invisible silk thread is worked by the man in the gallery repeating the signals by a tick tack code, giving the numbers to the pianist on the stage. Then there is the telegraph wire, laid down along the aisle or to the gallery, the signal being given with the foot so deftly that the man at the operator's elbow, his eyes glued to the stage, knows nothing of it, all of which may be verified by visiting Martinka's Palace of Magic in Sixth avenue, where other equally wonderful tricks are exploited and explained to visiting magicians, from Kellar to Herrmann.

"In the present performance by the Svengalis the key signals, so few and simple as to be unobserved by a majority of the spectators, tell the chief operator, concealed behind a transparent screen on the stage, what has been whispered as clearly as if the word were shouted through a megaphone.

#### *"The Systems Explained.*

"Here is an illustration of how the figure system can be worked. As explained above, the famous personages, popular songs and operas are on numbered lists. Svengali in the aisle, with his code of signals, has all these numbers committed to memory.

"When a spectator whispers 'Dickens' Svengali knows it is No. 4 and he signals accordingly.

"But how?

"By touching his head, chin, or breast, or that particular part of his body designated in the signal code of the Svengali Company. The diagram given herewith illustrates the system of communication by numbers, nine figures and a cipher (o), by which all the wealth of the world may be measured, and any number of words

may be communicated without a word of speech. One has but to map out a square on his face, breast or body, and number it with these nine figures, with an extra space for the cipher, to be ready for the Svengali business. That is, when he has memorized the names and the numbers representing them.

"Say the human head is used for this purpose. Imagine the top of the head, right hand side, as No. 1, the right ear as No. 2, the jaw as No. 3 and the neck as the cipher; the forehead No. 4, the nose No. 5, the chin No. 6, the top of the head on the left side as No. 7, the left ear No. 8 and the left side of the jaw No. 9.

"Thus you have the code system by which operators can communicate volumes by using a codified list of numbered words or sentences.

"If you label the Lord's Prayer No. 4 and the Declaration of Independence No. 5 you may instantly telegraph the mighty literature through wireless space—enough literature to save all Europe from anarchy—by two natural movements of the hand.

"You can label your eyes, your movements or even your glances, making them take the places of the nine omnipotent numbers. Again: Glance upward to the right for No. 1, straight upward for No. 2 and upward to the left for No. 3. Repeating, glancing horizontally for Nos. 4, 5 and 6. Repeating the same again, by glancing downward for Nos. 7, 8 and 9, and stroking your chin for the cipher (o).

"With your back to the audience, you can telegraph in a similar way, using your arm and elbow to make the necessary signals. Let the right arm, hanging down, represent No. 1; the elbow, projecting from the side, No. 2; elbow raised, No. 3. Repeat with the left arm for Nos. 4, 5 and 6; with either hand placed naturally behind you, on the small of the back, above the belt and over your shoulder for Nos. 7, 8, and 9, and on the back of your head or neck for the cipher (o)."

## THE FAIRY CHRISTMAS CRACKER.

BY F. C. JENKENS, CHILI, S. A.

This pretty little trick is worked as follows:—Having produced magically or otherwise, two silk handkerchiefs, yellow for instance, tie them together and place them on a piece of paper about eight by five inches, with the knots in the middle of the paper. Draw the handkerchiefs in toward the center, until about two inches of each end project over the edge of the paper. Roll the paper round the handker-



Fig. 73.



Fig. 74.



Fig. 75.

chiefs in the form of a cylinder. Screw the ends up and you will have a bundle as at Fig. 74, looking for all the world like one of the Christmas crackers the children amuse themselves with at parties. You will have prepared beforehand a similar cylinder, containing a green handkerchief tied between two yellow ones, with the ends projecting, so as to resemble the first cracker as closely as possible. This is placed in readiness on



the servante. Under cover of a second sheet of paper, this previously prepared packet is deftly substituted for the first cracker, general likeness and the projecting ends of the yellow handkerchiefs preventing the audience from noticing the change. Next request two of your spectators to assist you by each holding one end of the cracker. Produce a green handkerchief, and announce your intention of passing it into the center of the cracker. Vanish it in any way you may prefer (the "pull" is the best method in this case) at the same time telling your assistants to pull on the ends which they hold. To the astonishment of the spectators the green handkerchief is seen to be firmly knotted between the two yellow ones. (See Fig. 75.) If not too wide the paper cylinder will fall to the ground as the handkerchiefs are withdrawn.

## A NEW FACE ON AN OLD FRIEND.

BY HARRY KELLAR.

The following is a very clever device for securing a message written on paper while the performer is out of the room where the writing is done. Prepare a table with impression paper over a layer of draughtsmen's cloth and

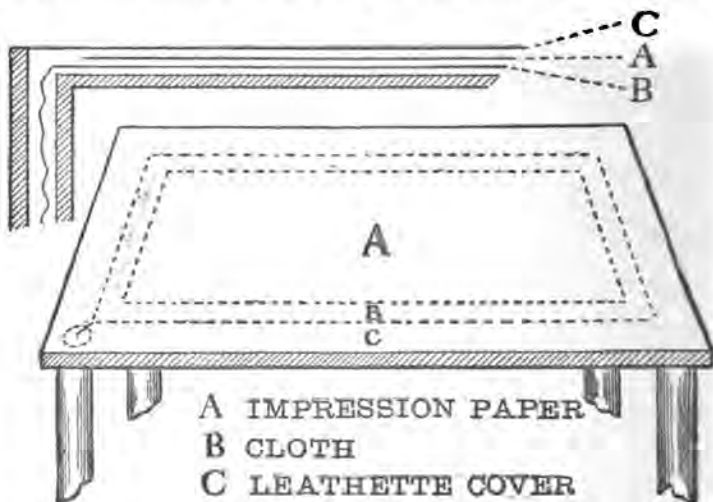


Fig. 76.

cover the same with leatherette. To one corner of the cloth attach a strong cord leading through a hollow leg.

When the writing is finished the performer gives a jerk to the cord and pulls the cloth through the leg of the table under the floor and can then read the message at leisure. (Writer should be given a hard pencil.)

## THE HOMING HANDKERCHIEFS.

BY JOHN W. SARGENT.

In this trick the magician comes forward, saying: "You have all seen homing pigeons, or, as they are more commonly called, carrier pigeons, but I doubt if any of you have seen or even heard of homing handkerchiefs. No? Well I have a couple of them that I have trained down to the pink of condition. They are out now but I expect them back any minute. Ah! here they come now!"

A red and a blue liberty silk handkerchief are produced from the air by any means that the performer prefers and laid on the table.

"As homing pigeons, when released, strike a bee line for their cote, so these handkerchiefs make all haste to their nests which consist of nests of envelopes which I would like you to examine."

The performer takes two envelopes (legal size) from the table, also a red and a blue lead pencil, and passes them to two different persons in the audience for examination, saying: "By 'nest' I mean a series of three different sized envelopes arranged nest fashion, that is, one inside another. Now, gentlemen, if you are satisfied that the envelopes are perfectly normal, entirely free from the false bottoms and trap doors that are common to the apparatus of all magicians—except myself—I wish you would carefully seal the smallest and place it inside the second size. That's right. Now place that in the largest and seal that also. Observe that these envelopes are not to leave your sight for a single instant, so it will be quite impossible for me to

exchange them for others, but, to make assurance doubly sure, I am going to ask you to put a mark on each with the colored pencils which you hold, and please make the mark large enough to be seen from where you sit when the envelopes are placed on the small easels which you see on my tables. Thank you very much. I will hold them at arms length as I see that there is still a lingering suspicion in your minds that I intend to deceive you in some manner. How you wrong me, alas, how you wrong me!"

He returns to the stage and places one envelope on a small easel that stands on the table at the right and the other on a similar one at left, picks up the two handkerchiefs and comes forward, saying, "Now it will be necessary for me to send these to some point at a considerable distance in order to prove to you that they really possess a true homing instinct. Will some one suggest a place? 'The city hall belfry?' Very well. Of course it would be quite too commonplace to send a messenger down there with instructions to release the handkerchiefs, and, beside, you are so extremely suspicious that you might not put faith in him, so we will send them magically. For that purpose I will make use of this sheet of paper which I will form into a cornucopia thus, and place the handkerchiefs inside thus. In order to get the utmost speed it will be necessary to fold down the top of the cornucopia like this, and to ask some one to hold it for a moment. Will you oblige me, madam? Thank you. Would you prefer to have them pass visibly or invisibly? Visibly? Very good. Now watch the paper very closely. Professor, a little handkerchief music, please. There! Did you see them go? No? It must be that you did not watch them closely enough for you can see that they have really gone." Open the paper and show it empty. "Now watch the envelopes and you may see them when they get back to their nests. The nest with the red

mark is the home of the red handkerchief and the other is—the other. Keep one eye on the red, one eye on the blue and one eye on me. Attention! Here they come. A little more of the same, Professor.” Pianist plays “Home, Sweet Home.”

“Isn’t that beautiful? No one could render that with such touching sweetness unless he had the true home feeling. He lives in an inside flat and gets his inspiration from his mother-in-law.

“How stupid of us, while we have been discussing the music, the handkerchiefs have stolen home without our seeing them.” Picking up the envelope with the red mark, the conjurer tears off the end and takes out the smaller one. He walks to the front of the stage and opens this in the same way, taking out the last size; and on opening this the red handkerchief is found. Then he takes the other envelope from the easel and holding it up asks the gentleman who marked it if he is satisfied that this is the envelope which he marked. He tears this one open as before. Throwing the large envelope on the table and taking the other to some lady in the audience he asks her to open the remaining two, and, of course, the blue handkerchief is found in the inside one. Finish the trick by saying, “Now I will tell you a secret, every handkerchief in the world has the same instincts possessed by mine, and if you will do exactly as I have done you will get the same results. Try it when you go home. If you fail you may be sure that it is because you have not followed my methods exactly.”

Explanation: Nearly all the moves are indicated by the foregoing “patter.” You should prepare for the trick as follows: Take two sheets of rather stiff paper twelve or fifteen inches square and paste the edges together on three sides, the fourth side being left open, so that it forms a sort of paper bag but looks like a perfectly innocent sheet of paper. When you use this

roll it into a cornucopia with the open side at the top then lay it on the table and press it flat with the hand, being sure that one of the folds runs from the bottom to the highest peak at the top; this will make a three cornered bag; then open the top to put in the handkerchiefs, being careful to open between the two thicknesses of paper. After the handkerchiefs are in let the audience see that they are really there and then fold down the top *twice*. Of course when this is opened in the regular way the handkerchiefs will be concealed between the two thicknesses of paper, both sides can be shown and the paper then crumpled up between the hands and thrown aside, but not where the spectators can get hold of it.

The envelopes are prepared as follows: Those on the table are unprepared, being two sets of three each, but inside your vest on the right side you have concealed duplicates of these with the exception of the outside envelopes, with duplicate red and blue handkerchiefs sealed in them, the set containing the red one being next to the body. When you return to the stage after having the envelopes sealed and marked by the audience, hold them high and slightly fan-shaped in the right hand with the blue one in front so that both can be seen all the time. While your back is toward the audience get the duplicates from your vest with the left hand and as you turn bring them behind the marked ones. Lift the blue as if to show the red mark more plainly and put it behind the red and in doing this put it between the duplicates, then you will have a duplicate behind each of the large envelopes containing a handkerchief of the same color as the mark. Then place the red marked envelope with the duplicate still behind it on the easel on one of the tables and the blue on the other. It is very easy to keep the duplicates concealed as you are continually telling the audience to notice that you never for an

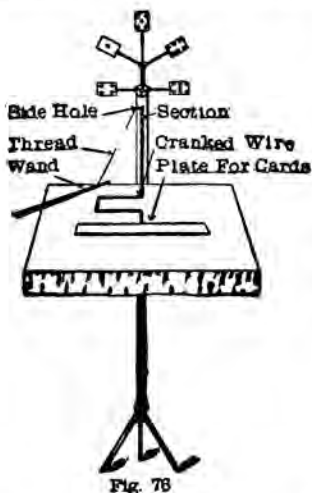
instant turn the envelopes so that the marks cannot be seen. The rest is easy. When you pick up the envelopes bring the duplicates along with them and after tearing off the end reach in with two fingers, the thumb going behind, and instead of drawing out the inside envelope slide the duplicate from the back and throw the large one aside with the others still inside, and there you are.

If you wish you can finish by gathering up all the envelopes and throwing them to the audience for another examination. In that case you let the inside envelopes slide out onto the servante of your table when gathering them up.

## THE LEVITATION OF A PACK OF CARDS.

BY "SELBIT."

So much interest having been aroused by the apparent supernatural feat of levitating a human body, the reader may possibly appreciate the following experiment, by which a precisely similar effect may be produced with a pack of cards. It being usual to preface



an exposure with a description of the effect, I will not take upon myself the responsibility of proving an exception to this time honored rule.

Following a series of card tricks, the professor spreads his pack of pasteboards on the table. Assisted



by magnetic passes the cards proceed to rise, and slowly ascend until they reach an altitude of a dozen inches from the table top. Here they remain without visible means of support; and to prove the absence of any tangible connection, a solid and examined hoop is passed completely around them from end to end. Subsequently the cards are demagnetized and in consequence commence their descent, returning slowly to the table until they finally spread themselves out flat upon it, as at first. The professor is now able to gather them in his hand and throw them one by one to the audience as souvenirs of a wonderful mystery.

Without further description, let me enter upon the more important part of the trick—its secret. The table top is covered with black plush. At the back of it, a metal rod, fifteen inches high is fixed. As an excuse for its presence, the rod supports a fan of cards which the magician manipulates. A section is cut from this rod, of sufficient width to accommodate a thin steel wire. The section extends to a height of twelve inches, terminating in a small hole on the side of the rod. The wire which is cranked as shown in the first illustration, is passed through the section of the rod and bolted on the outside. It is also attached at the other end to an aluminum plate, twelve inches long and slightly narrower than the width of a playing card. The method of attaching the wire or bar to the plate is shown in Fig. 78, which illustrates the sliding arrangement at the back. Both plate and cranked-bar are black and consequently invisible when lying on the similar colored table cover. One end of a strong black thread is tied to the bar and from thence passes through the rod and out at the side hole, its other end being attached to the conjurer's wand as shown in Fig. 77. When desiring to present the trick, the magician must first "spring" the cards along the table by means of the movement utilized when spreading cards along

the sleeve for the "turnover." Care must be taken that they are face uppermost and laid directly over the metal plate. Picking up his wand the performer now makes a few presumed magnetic passes, when the cards rise slowly and stand up on end. This is of course accomplished by pulling the thread with the wand. As a result of the aforementioned sliding attachment the cards are forced to rise almost perpendicularly before being "drawn aloft." On further pulling, the cards proceed to ascend. They do not fall off the plate, because it is furnished with a projecting ledge on which the cards rest. When the pasteboards have reached the desired height, the performer secretly loops the thread around a hook on the back of the

METHOD OF ATTACHING BAR TO PLATE.

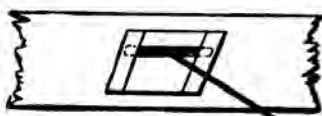


Fig. 78.

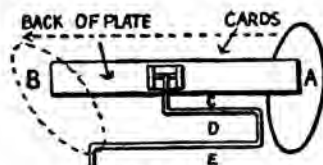


Fig. 79.

table, thus allowing him to lay down the wand and move about. Owing to the peculiar cranking of the supporting bar, the reader will readily perceive how a hoop can be passed completely around the suspended cards. The course taken by the ring is shown in the third drawing. It is first passed over at end A and between the upright rod and the first bend in the bar through the passage E. When further progress is barred by the elbow of the support, the hoop should be brought around the extremity B in a slanting manner as depicted in Fig. 79. Apparently the hoop has now passed completely over the suspended cards, although it is not yet clear of the support, therefore it must be brought behind the cards and the passage D and passed from there at the necessary angle around

the end A. From this position the hoop can be taken swiftly or otherwise across the whole row of cards, being free of course at the opposite end to which it was passed over originally. Should it be desirable to reverse this method of introducing the hoop test, it will be quite obvious that it can be passed over B and removed at A equally as easily as from the opposite direction. To conclude the trick, the performer must unloop the thread from the hook, and allow the cards to descend by manipulating the wand. At last, of their own accord, the cards sink flat on the table as at first, and are gathered up and thrown around the hall. When presenting this trick in the manner explained, the presence of a dark colored screen at the back assists in heightening the illusion. There are, of course, several other methods of working up this experiment that may appeal to the reader, such as pushing the wire through the back curtain, instead of utilizing the rod on the table.

## THE FLYING HANDKERCHIEF.

BY T. NELSON DOWNS.

First allow me to describe the effect of one of the most sensational and bewildering handkerchief tricks I have ever seen. Upon an ordinary magician's table, two transparent glass liquor bottles are standing. The performer enters, and from the air produces a silk handkerchief. The spectators are requested to select either of the two bottles and this being done the handkerchief is pushed right down into the body of the chosen vessel, where it is of course plainly discernible.

Now taking up both bottles by the necks, the magician advances to the front of the stage and emphasizes the fact that there cannot possibly be any trickery in what has taken place.

Yet at the word three, the handkerchief vanishes out of the bottle in which it was seen but a second before, appearing in the other vessel, held at arm's length away from it.

Such is the effect and now for the secret.

In reading the description of this illusion which is not exaggerated, many perhaps will imagine that some elaborate preparation of the bottles is necessary to accomplish the astonishing result. Such, however, is not the case, and the apparatus required will cost but a few pennies. In the first place it is necessary to procure two ordinary transparent glass liquor bottles. One of these must have a small hole drilled in the center of the bottom, while the other is left quite unprepared. A piece of stout black thread, two feet long,

with a small watch swivel attached to one end, is next required. One end of the thread must be firmly fixed to the bottom of the unprepared bottle, while the others should be passed through the hole in the bottom of the second vessel, pulled through the neck, and then attached to the swivel, which for the sake of firmness is wedged into a slit made in the back of the magician's table.

Before the performer makes his appearance a little dressing is necessary. A mechanical pull, the working



Fig. 80.

of which every reader will be thoroughly conversant with, is arranged so that it comes down the right sleeve, terminating in a loop, such as is made use of for vanishing a handkerchief from the glass cylinder. A silk handkerchief, to the center of which is attached a thread loop some three inches long, is tucked up the

left sleeve, so that the loop hangs down into the magician's hand.

The magician now makes his bow, having a handkerchief palmed, a duplicate of the one concealed in the left sleeve. Producing this square of silk from behind his elbow or from where fancy may dictate, the conjurer places it in the unprepared bottle, taking care to loop the mechanical pull round it before pushing it right into the body of the glass receptacle.

While the right hand is engaged in performing this operation, the left obtains possession of the thread loop attached to the handkerchief in the sleeve, and secretly hooks this on to the watch swivel on the back of the table, afterwards loosening the swivel from the slit in which it was wedged.

Now the two bottles should be held by the necks and lifted clear of the table.

It will be quite apparent now, that when at the word three, the performer spreads his arms apart, the first handkerchief will be dragged up the right sleeve by the pull, while the thread attached to the duplicate will be pulled through the bottom of the left hand bottle, thereby causing the sudden appearance of apparently the same handkerchief that vanished from the opposite vessel. The thread will, of course, break when it has been stretched to its full extent, and so, the bottles can be placed down wherever convenient.

#### *A Novel Match Trick.*

The effect of this pretty little trick is to cause the disappearance of five or six matches one at a time from the finger tips.

To accomplish this experiment the performer must wear a ring, which is a trifle too large, on the third finger of the right hand. A match is now held between

the first finger and thumb and under cover of a tossing movement of the hand it is slipped under the ring on the back of the hand. The illustration shows the movement just described. The other matches can now be



Fig. 81.

vanished in the same manner. Their single reproduction can be accomplished by a reverse process of the above. The fingers being spread apart helps considerably to make this a really excellent impromptu trick.

## TRICKS WITH CARDS.

BY HOWARD THURSTON.

*Card in the Coat.*

Effect: A card is disappeared from the right hand and immediately produced from the inside of the coat by the left hand.

Explanation: The performer stands with his left side to the audience holding the card face outward in the right hand. Suddenly the card is back palmed. When the card is disappeared the right hand and arm should be at right angles to the body. Extend the left arm so as to make the same angle on the opposite side, then approximate the right and left hands, being careful to keep both arms in the same plane. The reader will see that in doing this, as the right hand is brought forward, the back palmed card will be flashed, but to prevent this, just before the card is about to be exposed to view, the left hand is brought in front of the right so as to act as a screen. Then the left hand immediately palms the card from the back of the right hand. The right hand then grasps the right side of the coat and draws it slightly back while the left hand is extended in toward the right arm pit. The right hand drops the coat and the left hand draws the card out slowly with the tips of the fingers.

*Card Through the Knee.*

This trick is an improvement on the trick of passing a card through the knee.

Effect: The performer stands facing the audience holding in the left hand the ace of spades and in the



right hand the ten of diamonds. A movement as if to throw the ace of spades through the knee is made by the performer and as he does this the card vanishes from the left hand and appears in the right hand which then holds two cards, the ace and ten. The ten is then transferred to the left hand. After this is done the right hand apparently throws the ace through the knee and it appears in the left hand which then contains the ten spot and ace. This may be repeated if desired.

Explanation: The effect is the result of back-hand work and an extra ace.

When the magician commences he has back palmed in the right hand the extra ace. As the motion to throw the card through the knee is made by the left hand, the ace in the left hand is back palmed and the one in the right hand is brought to the front, thus showing in the right hand the two cards. Then placing the ten in the left hand by the right the effect may be repeated.

In ending the sleight the two cards in sight are transferred to the hand which contains the back palmed card, then all three together are placed on a table or tray.

It is needless to say that any series of cards may be used. In an extemporaneous performance, use any three cards and do the trick with the backs of the cards to the audience.

### *Rising Card For Parlor.*

I recommend the following trick as effective for the parlor: Back palm a forced card in your right hand. Hold the pack in your left hand, showing fingers towards the audience. Now hold the right hand about eighteen inches above the pack, and make several motions of the hand towards the pack, as if to draw something from it. At the third movement bring the card

from the back of palm, just as your hand is leaving the pack and rising. The effect is as if the card left the pack of its own accord and flew into your right hand. If neatly executed the illusion is perfect.

### *Card Through a Hat.*

Take a derby hat and hold it in the left hand so that the second and third fingers will be over and the first and fourth under the rim.

Now bend the thumb under the palm of the hand and catch the little finger (4th). By forcing the finger outward and then suddenly releasing it with the thumb a distinct thump will be heard as the finger strikes the crown of the hat.

Now for the trick. Stand with your left side to audience. Hold the hat in your left hand, as described, with opening of hat to the footlights. Take a playing card in the right hand and pretend to strike its edge on the crown of the hat, each stroke being accompanied with a thump from the little finger of the left hand. After striking the card on the crown of the hat about three times, back hand it (which will produce the effect of the card having passed through the crown of the hat), then turn the opening of the hat towards yourself and apparently withdraw the card from it.

## A SUBTLE COIN TRICK.

BY HENRY V. A. PARSELL.

Two coins are required for this trick. Place one openly between the teeth and show the hands empty. The other coin is now taken up with right hand and placed in the left hand (really palmed by right); the left arm is extended to the left side at full length and slightly

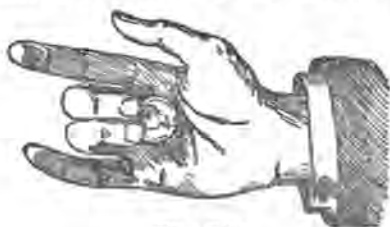


Fig. 82.

upwards with the eyes of the performer carefully watching same.

With the right finger tips you now take the coin from between the teeth, back of the hand toward audience. Throw the coin upon the table and immediately let the concealed coin fall from your right palm onto the two middle fingers which are slightly curved inwards to receive it and grip it tightly.

Now point with the index finger to the left hand, at the same time extending the little finger and thumb, the two middle fingers just concealing the coin, thus allowing the palm to be seen (?) empty. (See Fig. 82.)

With the thumb and forefinger of the left hand pick up and turn over the coin on the table once or twice, the three last fingers remaining closed as though holding the other coin.

The right hand now boldly picks up the coin, the left hand being placed over bend of right elbow and pulling up the right sleeve with finger and thumb. Drop the coin once more upon the table. Bring the left hand, still closed, to its original extended position. Pick up the coin with the right hand, concealing coin (coins), and carry hand to bend of left elbow. Look intently at the left hand and apparently vanish coin.

Both coins are now produced by the right hand from bend of left elbow, and hands shown otherwise empty.

### *New Divining Wand.*

This consists, as will be seen by the accompanying figure (Fig. 83), of the tube A, about ten or twelve inches in length, made of brass and blackened. This tube is provided with two caps B B, which may be either blackened or nickel-plated. These two caps are held by the rod

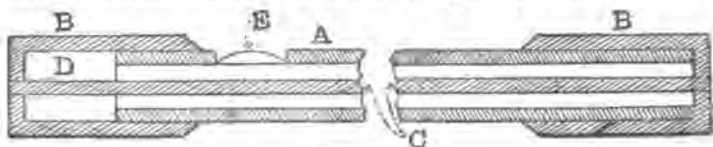


Fig. 83.

C running through the center of the tube A and keeping the caps B B separated far enough to allow A to have an end motion of about half an inch.

At E, is inserted a small reflector of plane or convex glass, which is uncovered by the cap at the left hand end. But if the body of the wand A is pushed into the space D within the cap B then the mirror is entirely concealed and the wand may be safely inspected.

Pressure on the cap on the farther end of the wand will instantly uncover the mirror, but when in use, the wand is held in the right hand with the mirror at the farther end.

A pack of cards is opened fan-like in the left hand and the wand passed under them as though to read their value by feeling, but care is taken to move it so that the indicator of the uppermost card will be reflected in the mirror.

Many other uses will suggest themselves to the owners of this unique apparatus.





## APPENDIX.

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### A VISIT TO THE GRAVE OF ROBERT-HOUDIN.

By W. GOLDEN MORTIMER, M. D.,

*President of The Society of American Magicians.*

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Robert-Houdin! What hallowed recollections are conjured up through this name! With what sacredness it is thought on by all magicians! What feelings of admiration it recalls, to hundreds of thousands, who have learned to love the man through reading of his trials and triumphs so admirably told in his *Memoirs!*

Through these, we have all watched the evolution of the father of modern conjuring. We saw him as a lad contriving some unique device by which means alone his canaries were permitted to feed. We have shared with him his feverish delight in learning the rudiments of the magician's art. We long since felt that we personally knew his genial companion and adviser, Antonio. We were overjoyed with the happy circumstance that led the Count de l'Escalopier to advance the wherewithal to build the little theatre in the Palais Royal for his *Soirées Fantastiques*. There, when all was in perfection, we marvelled at "The Pastry-cook," "Cupid and the Rose-bush," laughed at the antics of "Harlequin in the box," and enjoyed a host of pretty automata. We sat in enrapt wonderment at the presentation of innumerable semi-scientific experiments in the form of illusions. We were entertainingly bewildered at the quickness of his son Emile, in what

seemed to reflect an almost supernatural intelligence, in his "Second Sight," and we forgot that Pinetti had ever lived.

We followed the successful magician into Algeria, where as an Ambassador for France, he proved to the Arabs that the supposed necromancy of the Marabouts was surpassed by scientific trickery. And when he had retired from the amusement loving public to work out his hobby of applying electricity to clocks, we followed him to his retreat near the historical old town of Blois. This town having been the birthplace of Louis XII, and of Papin the inventor of the steam engine, it seemed quite proper that Eugène Robert when ushered into this terrestrial sphere, December 6th, 1805, should here first have seen the light. At St. Gervais, at the Priory, or—as some of his friends nicknamed it—"L'Abbaye de l'Attrape"—he applied so many automatic devices to the necessities of his surroundings as to make his home that of the veritable magician. Finally, from afar, we were still permitted to enjoy his "Confidences" and to learn at his own hand the "Secrets" of his art.

The story of Robert-Houdin has been often retold, yet it always commands respectful attention. But it is not the mere story, it is not alone the interest in the marvelous, it is not that we read of a wizard mechanician, or even of a great magician, for there have been others of less reputation who perhaps were equally clever in these lines. Robert-Houdin created for the world a new school of conjuring, and with that he created for himself a universal popularity by taking the great public into his confidence. By this, in a most charming manner, he permitted us to share in his own joys and sorrows, so intimately, that these same emotions became as our own. For the world's mighty heart pulsates synchronously in sympathy with that of all mankind. So, when there came a gap—when the last link between the man and his admirers was severed by his death, it was but to be expected that his memory would live as a sacred thought to be cherished by all who had learned to love his doings.

It was such a spirit as this that led Mr. Harry Houdini, in a recent professional visit to France, to search out the relatives of Robert-Houdin. The gleanings of that visit,



related to me, seem full of interest to all magicians. Though he found that his hero-ideal, like the prophet of old, was little known in his own country, he found that the name—which was originally adopted by hyphenating that of his wife's to his own, and which eventually became his professional patronymic through a decision of the Council of State—still remains as a family possession. The magician's son, Eugène, had followed the fortunes of the army and as a Captain he died for his country in the Franco-Prussian war. His death so completely unnerved the father that he never fully recovered interest in anything. Emile, who had helped to make the success of "Second Sight," outlived the famous conjurer and prior to his own death had taken up magic. His widow, who bears the name Madame Robert-Houdin, lives in the suburbs of Paris. She became the heir of the estate and of the business of her magician father-in-law, and from her the theatre bearing his name passed with its magical belongings, into other hands. Madame Robert-Houdin is described as living so conservatively that she cannot be induced to manifest any interest in those who seek reminiscences of the dead conjurer. Her mother-in-law, Madame Robert-Houdin the elder, died January 2d., 1901, at the advanced age of eighty-five.

The Théâtre Robert-Houdin, now but a reconstructed affair bearing the name of the original, which was successful for so many years as the home of magic, is prettily trimmed in white and gold and bears on its walls the names of many magicians, such as Pinetti, Hamilton, Jacoby, De Kolta, Houdin, &c. It is up one flight of stairs, on the Boulevard des Italiens, a street that is said to never sleep. This property sold to the present proprietor for 35,000 francs. All the original automata are said to be still here, but the clever conjuring is of the past, and magic is made subsidiary to an exhibition of moving pictures, which is given on two matinees a week and as often each evening as an audience can be assembled.

Mr. Houdini being desirous of visiting the places associated with the great magician, which have been made familiar to us all, tried several times to get an audience with the widow of Emile, but without success. He finally went to Blois, some four hours' ride from Paris, determined to

at least get sight of the birthplace and the last home of the dead master. Here he called on the daughter of Robert-Houdin, who is the wife of M. Lemaitre, a Municipal officer. He was courteously received, and had the pleasure of viewing a number of mementoes, among these a photographic portrait of the conjurer that has not been published; enclosed in the frame with this is a card on which is written an untranslatable pun that wittily displays the kindly feeling its author entertained for others.

Another important paper in the handwriting of the mechanician, implies that the secret of the modern telephone had been worked out by him before it had been made known to the world at large.

It is interesting to know that M. Lemaitre has united his own name with that of his famous father-in-law, and styles himself H. Lemaitre-Robert-Houdin. It is a family pride—as I have learned from a personal letter—that the great name shall be continued from generation to generation as an exclusive privilege, and a sacred trust which the relatives purpose to jealously guard.

But all things must come to an end, and it was a satisfactory termination of this visit when Mr. Houdini was accompanied to the cemetery at Blois, and there shown where, on June 13th, 1871, the great conjurer had been laid at rest. Being permitted to photograph that sacred spot, he returned to Paris, after having laid upon the grave a large memorial wreath, thoughtfully inscribed: "Honor and respect to Robert-Houdin from the Magicians of America."







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