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TWELVE NEW TRICKS

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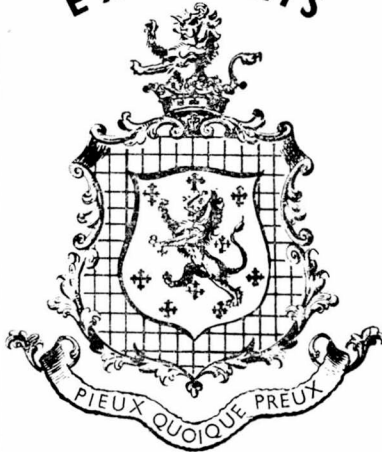
FABIAN

A
GOODLIFFE
PUBLICATION



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(TWELVE NEW TRICKS)

Edited by
FABIAN

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"THE CONJURER COMES FORWARD"

OR

MAKING MONEY OUT OF MAGIC

BY

RON BISHOP

IT is necessary at the commencement of this article to explain that I fully realize that I am placing myself in an invidious position. Anyone who has the temerity to lay down the law on technicalities or to expound theories before a group which includes so many experts as are to be found in the field of magical entertaining does this.

In my case, however, I have ventured to find excuses which at least satisfy me and which, at the termination of the article, you may admit to be sufficient justification for using your valuable time.

While being able to claim no honours in the field of magic, thirty-three years of delightful wandering along its illimitable paths have taught me, inevitably, some of its primary truths.

I do not now perform in public but conjuring is still a hobby of absorbing interest and I propose to discuss some of the important points which may help the ambitious to procure more bookings and higher fees — an aspect of the art likely to attract the attention of a large proportion of sincere semi-professional entertainers.

Among you are many with longer and more varied experience than I. My remarks are not directed to those in this category — rather to the average artist trying to improve his performances and his market value and to the many who, unfortunately, have yet to realise that the important things in a magical show are not the tricks.

Anyone can do a series of tricks but a lot of thought, study and experience must go towards building up a series of tricks into an entertainment of professional standards.

Probably these introductory remarks have taken longer than they should. The main idea behind them has been to establish with you the trend of my thoughts. If you get one and only one practical idea from them, I maintain, in all sincerity, that your time will not be wasted and that ultimately it will help to put money in your pockets.

STYLE

It is doubtful if anyone will fail to agree that Style and Poise are of paramount importance to the conjurer.

There are painful examples frequently to be seen, of an utter disregard of these vital factors and at no time is the possession of them so necessary as at the commencement of the show.

Style results from the perfection of your own personal attributes allied to a knowledge of the little things that matter.

At the rise of the curtain, **the audience is ready to welcome you and believe you capable, almost, of miracles**, but the man, who, for instance, has not learned to walk on properly, dispels this expectation and goes down many points from the 100% rating which was his **before he started**.

Let us chart progress and see how you — the magician, fare in the average performance.

Our job will be to keep you rated 100% until the fall of the curtain.

I said just now that style is a development of self; don't try and be some other fellow — develop to the utmost that special something with which each of us is blessed and which is the real you.

No one can be comfortable in borrowed clothes—everyone has a tailored-made self to develop. Develop it—it is not conceit but merely good business.

All right, then; the curtain is up — what about it? From which point do you enter? Quite a small matter, you say? Not one to be despised. When I have had the choice I have thought it worthwhile to choose a different entrance to the one being used by the other artists. Particularly in the case

of the magician I would choose the centre opening whenever possible.

Now as you enter, SMILE; whether you like it or not, SMILE, even if it is only "eyes and teeth" — as they say. If you enjoy your show it will be more than that, it will be a real answering friendly smile in response to the welcome from the audience. Include everybody in front in it and all is well. **You have established the point of contact.** You have maintained your 100% start.

"The conjurer comes forward" — How many times do you read those words during the description of a trick? The idea is all right as far as it goes but most of us over-do it.

When making your entrance and subsequently during the act, **do not come right down to the the footlights.**

Seven out of ten did this recently at a show I witnessed. The immediate result was that the audience could not see the face of the performer. It was in shadow. Perhaps the people who do this do so unconsciously from a lack of confidence in their ability to "stand alone." It must be the herd instinct — the need to feel safety in the company of others!

This trait is noticeable only with inexperienced performers. If you will but get a friend to stand for you on an empty stage when the floodlights and battens are on, two minutes' experimenting will prove the value of working fairly well "upstage."

So study your lighting and stand by yourself.

Now, use that smile. In the act it is worth pounds to you. Nothing warms the human heart like a sunny smile and there is hardly a soul in front who will fail to respond. If you have yet to discover its magic power, try it on people you meet — at home or in business — everyone will respond. You do not mind trying out a new pocket trick on folk, you magical enthusiasts. Here is something which will pay far greater dividends. Is it not worth a trial?

It necessarily follows that if you smile at your audience you must be looking at them. Looking at them and not pottering about the stage talking to yourself, apparently for your own edification. We all know this type of performer. He is the man who has not heard of the "fourth wall" — the invisible wall which is built along the front edge of the

footlights and which forms an almost impenetrable barrier between the artist and the audience **unless the former has learned how to break it down.**

Use that smile; the extent of the development and practice of this asset is largely the measure of your success as an entertainer.

What is a successful entertainer? Always a man of outstanding personality; and the strength of a man's personality is felt through the expression of his human magnetism.

One has only to think for a moment of all the famous magicians, living or dead, to recognise this quality in all of them — Devante, Dante, Oswald Williams, Douglas Dexter, Culpitt, Levante, De Biere, The Maskelynes. These men all have or had personality with a capital I; the I in I-identity, the irrepressible Ego!

We all have it—in varying degree. It is the thoughtful man who will develop it and build it into his show. Believe me, it is not conceit but good business.

Here is another important point to remember; Hold up your head, when you enter and during your act. If you ask me why, I will tell you that you will instantly feel better and more confident. You will develop Poise which is one of the golden keys of the magic door of Showmanship and consequently bigger fees!

Of course, all these things have a direct bearing on that indefinable thing we call "stage presence." Correct bearing, graceful actions and convincing speech — careful thought and practice will help to develop these things but they are still very dependent upon the frame of mind in which the magician enters the stage. The mind must be at rest about the result of your effort, and confidence in the result can only come through the work which is done beforehand.

REHEARSALS

This brings me to the all-important matter of rehearsals, and let me say at once that by rehearsal I do not mean practice. Perhaps you will allow me to differentiate.

Before you are in a position to rehearse the show you must have practised at the tricks and learned the moves of them so thoroughly that you know you have the ability to

perform them — that is if you want to get the same result every time!

It is merely common sense. You must have your tricks all ready before you can think about building the act, but a lot of fellows, unfortunately, seem to stop just here with a collection of tricks they have practised, and delude themselves into imagining they have “made the grade,” whereas the thinking man, realising his shortcomings and anxious to get better fees for a good show, really starts where the other man leaves off.

BUILDING UP THE ACT

Laughs and gags are the currants in the pudding. I don't like plain pudding and I don't think plain magic interests the agent very much. A conjuring show is the most boring thing—if the conjurer happens to be one of these boys who just does his tricks and has not done any “building up.” But plain tricks have a habit of growing into first-class entertainment if you put the currants in as well.

The secret is to use your opportunities — always be on the lookout for a little addition. Ask yourself; Where can I get an extra laugh, some new bit of business, light and shade or variety?

By way of illustration, perhaps my great friend Rex Reader will forgive me if I instance just one of the little touches he adds to an effect — one of the details which in the aggregate have helped to put him in the front rank of entertaining magicians.

When Rex returns a borrowed £1 note to the assistant being escorted from the stage, the assistant thinks he has the note and turns to leave — only to find it is not in his hand at all. Rex produces it from behind his knee.

Here is a perfect example of business — the extra laugh which, incidentally, does not create an anti-climax because it comes, not at the end of the trick, but after the end. A very different proposition.

To mention but a few of the many examples which come to mind, we have the variations in the “build up” of Mr. Roberson Keene's brilliant routining for the “Miser's Dream,” published some years back in “The Magician,” and Billy O'Connor wiping the forehead of his assistant with a

handkerchief when he finishes counting a number of cards out aloud on to the table. Remember the way the late Fred Culpitt repeated his production of an egg from behind the knee and his "Oh, of course, you've seen that."

Another first-rate artist, Ben Said, puts more solid entertainment detail additional to his actual tricks than any performer I have ever seen. When he tries to light a candle the matches fly out of his hand, he blows out the candle in blowing out the match flame and altogether gets about seven fat laughs from one simple operation. His lemon dropping from the nose of the assistant, the way the tassel of his inevitable fez is made to bob whenever he bows are examples from the act of a man who knows his job from A to Z.

Naturally, these illustrations touch only the fringe of the study of "additional business," which subject might well form the basis for an extremely informative book.

PATTER.

The natural corollary of "business" may well be "patter" and for what they are worth I include a few observations on this important subject.

First, I beg you to discard those irritating and entirely unnecessary remarks without which, it seems, no conjuring performance is ever complete. I refer to the infuriating and thoughtless description of articles. "Here is an 'ordinary' glass" — "Here is an 'ordinary' pack of cards." "You can see it is quite 'solid'!" Ordinary, solid, my foot!

And please do not say — "As empty as my pocket" or "being a conjurer my pocket is usually empty" or any other such variation. It is cheap and certainly not funny. Do not say: "Here is an ordinary wand." Just use it. If it is ordinary, why say anything? If it is not; why say anything?

If there is a special new gag you want to be sure of remembering at a certain point in the show, you might find it convenient, as I have, to write the first few words on a slip of card about 2 inch by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. This slip is placed with the prop you have to handle so that when the moment comes the cue is handy with the prop. This tip is useful for topical or local gags which require to be fitted in for one date.

I have always made a practice of collecting gags, laughs and ideas for business, in book form. Whenever I come

across an idea, perhaps in a newspaper or a book or, as frequently happens, from the chance remarks of people one meets, I jot it down and later write it under the proper heading in the book.

A long period of collecting has given me several volumes of valuable material and in my humble opinion it is worth more than any money I could pay for a new trick.

In speaking of patter the idea that the conjurer must talk throughout the show is absurd and utterly wrong. The old tag, "Speech is silver; silence is golden," applies very forcibly to a conjuring performance. If, normally, you patter all the time, try just one trick without it. It will be most refreshing both to you and the audience. It goes without saying that the effect must be suitable and will be given a special alternative presentation.

The late Oswald Williams's patter was brilliant, but he was clever enough to present the torn tissue strip without it and this item in his show was outstanding. The special presentation he used was that he whistled a haunting melody supported by special music from the pit. *Quod erat demonstrandum!*

Incidentally, why do we always start by saying "Ladies and Gentlemen?" Why not "Good evening, everyone!" or even "How do you do?" Remember the "fourth wall."

When you speak are you sure your voice can be heard comfortably — by everyone in the audience? Every room, hall or theatre possesses acoustic properties in varying degree. It is very necessary to discover, **when you start speaking**, the exact **pitch** of voice required.

This is done by listening to the **sound** of your voice when the first words are spoken and directed towards the back of the theatre. Early experience will teach your ears to tell you if your voice is reaching the back rows or if the pitch needs to be raised or made lower. This hardly constitutes a treatise on voice production, but it does sum up some valuable knowledge in a nutshell.

TRICKS

It is hardly possible for us to reach an agreement upon the subject of suitable tricks because if we were all of one mind on such a question one of the main topics of conversation

would be denied us, but if I may voice an opinion a stage full of stuff should, most decidedly, be out of the question.

The **proper selection** of suitable modern effects will not overburden you when travelling and yet will not disappoint the type of audience which likes to see some sort of spectacle with their magic. Speaking for myself (these remarks do not apply to shows for children), if I wanted to spend money on my show it would not be spent on new tricks. Rather would I buy a new opera hat—yes, they will soon be available again — a beautiful new suit of dress clothes from a first-class tailor or some good patter from a **specialist**.

Most amateurs and semi-professionals squander money on apparatus quite unsuitable to their needs. Frequently they are so disappointed when the tricks arrive that half of it is never used. It would be a grand world if we could buy a winner every time, but unfortunately it never works out quite like this.

What would be very good for magic in general would be an advance in outlook which makes us all agree to discard all props which look like conjurers' tricks! Things like coffee vases, trick billiard stands, vulgar looking gaudily-painted boxes, easels and the like, in company with the conjurer's table, complete with the inevitable little bits of fringe. Fringe really went out with waxed fruits in glass cases and antimacassars.

Could we not try to catch up with the times and use pleasant-looking clean-lined props acceptable to modern tastes? Admittedly, much of the contemporary apparatus comes under the heading of "modernistic," — hateful word — beloved by conjurers and completely misunderstood, but in the main the sight of a stage set for a magic show inclines to give one a nostalgic headache.

The man who bills himself as "The Modern Mystic" or something similar must make sure that his apparatus is in keeping with today's standards of good taste if his performance is to be comparable with other forms of entertainment.

I have always felt that the perfection of the art of magical presentation would be that which is performed with articles which appear to the audience to be articles in normal

everyday use. Under this heading there instantly come to mind many marvellous effects. How many tricks of this nature are included in your performance?

There is one very important point in connection with the choice of suitable tricks, however, that is, when you have finished your experimenting and have found the tricks which are **YOU**, **stick to them**, like glue, like the old friends they will become.

A classic example of the truth of this and incidentally of every other point I have made, is to be found in the experience of a very old friend of mine. It was quite twenty years ago when I first met him. He was the artist at a dinner in London and I was so struck by the entertainment value and quality of his show that I went along afterwards to the artists' room where we spent an engaging half-hour in conversation.

He told me he had been practising magic for two years and had paid Stanley Collins for a course of lessons, that his ambition was to be a first-class performer and make a lot of money.

Even as long ago as that his course was clearly mapped out in his mind and he had decided then not to change his act too much once he had found, by trial and error, the routines most suited to his personality and abilities. Have I mentioned that he was determined to get "in the money?"

All these years we have been meeting, sometimes in rivalry, but always in friendship, and I can state, positively, that this entertainer was, up to the outbreak of war, making regularly four to five hundred a year as a semi-professional; and mark this particularly, he was doing the same tricks then as those I saw him do at our first meeting.

My friend, by a process of trial and error, discovered the truths I have done my best to describe and has made big money as a **semi-professional** by applying them successfully to his own use.

The policy of selecting the most suitable effects for your particular personality and then making but few changes is a sound one. In time, granting that the necessary amount of constructive thought is applied, they will grow vigorous young shoots called "gags" and "business" without which,

as a fully satisfying modern entertainment, no collection of conjuring tricks is complete. Your original bare effects will become fully grown magical items **by which you will become known.**

There is a very good method for building a trick into a satisfying magical item. Get a conjuring friend to collaborate. Get him round to your house not to chatter, or for the purpose of showing each other “ moves.” Set the evening aside for one trick. Pull it to pieces, analyse it, compare moves allied to presentation angles. Conscientious study will reward you with such progress that you will be astonished.

A few oft-reiterated DON'TS for magicians may not come amiss — if you want to be a money-making magician.

DON'T keep having things examined. It waste time and really is not necessary.

DON'T keep on having people up from the audience. Plan your show so that you stand alone. It seems that half the audience get invited on to the stage during the course of most magical shows.

DON'T keep going down to the audience. It wastes time and you lose grip.

DON'T stay on too long. Ten to twelve minutes is a good time. Half an hour is usually far too long —unless you are brilliant, and then it's still too long. Don't be talked into it; let them wish you had done more.

DON'T forget to learn how to take applause — how to take a “ call ”—how to go off—if you want to finish 100%—if you want to be an **artist** who makes money.



ALLEZ OOP !!

BY

JACK SHEPHERD

I FIRST performed this effect in 1942 at a competition of the Order of the Magi — and managed to get only the second prize! Readers of my “Who Done It?” will remember that I suggested the actual magic involved might be altered so that the intending performer could use such apparatus as he already possessed while still keeping to the basic plot. The routine was the thing that mattered; the magic was purely incidental.

The same applies to “Allez Oop.” I shall describe the effect exactly as I performed it. But once more, what really matters is the basic idea, the routine. It does not matter much to an audience how you cut and restore a rope; whatever method you use, the audience will not see anything new. The reverse is also true: if you build old magic into a new routine, they regard it as really something new, and as new effects in magic are few and far between, here, in this idea of routining, is the magic of the future. Such, at any rate, is my opinion.

In all my magic, the great thing is to entertain the audience and get them laughing, and that is the aim of “Allez Oop.”

The performer explains that as a change from conjuring he proposes to show one or two juggling feats. In juggling, he explains, there is no attempt to mystify, but only to demonstrate the results obtained by practice of balancing, etc. So saying, he brings forward a small box. The back and front doors are let down and the box shown empty. Then the doors are closed and the box stood on the table, the performer explaining that it will be used merely as a stand to demonstrate the juggling effects.

For the first feat, the performer rests a penny against the handle on the top of the box, and shows a wine glass. The trick is to balance the wine-glass on the penny. For this

purpose, the wineglass is wrapped in a small piece of paper. This is shaped snugly about the glass and an attempt made to balance the wrapped parcel on the edge of the coin. There is a little difficulty, the performer regards the newspaper in a puzzled manner, crushes the paper between his hands and looks inside. The wineglass has gone!

So he leaves that, and offers to show them another feat. Taking an envelope, he removes five cards from it and explains that his next feat will be to balance the five cards one on top of the other. The cards are returned to the envelope, and immediately two of them are removed again and an attempt made to cause them to stand in the form of an inverted V on top of the box. Apparently, this is slightly aslant, and so the performer returns the two cards to the envelope while he makes an adjustment of the position of the box on the table. He reaches into the envelope again, but his hand comes out empty! Surprised, he gazes into the envelope, and then tears it open. The cards have flown!

He is apologetic now, expressing regret that his first two juggling feats have not gone exactly as planned, but hoping that no suags will arise in the feat which follows. Here is a neat balancing feat with a handkerchief. He places the silk in a glass, and on some pretext or other turns to his table. When he turns back to the audience, the glass is empty. The handkerchief has vanished!

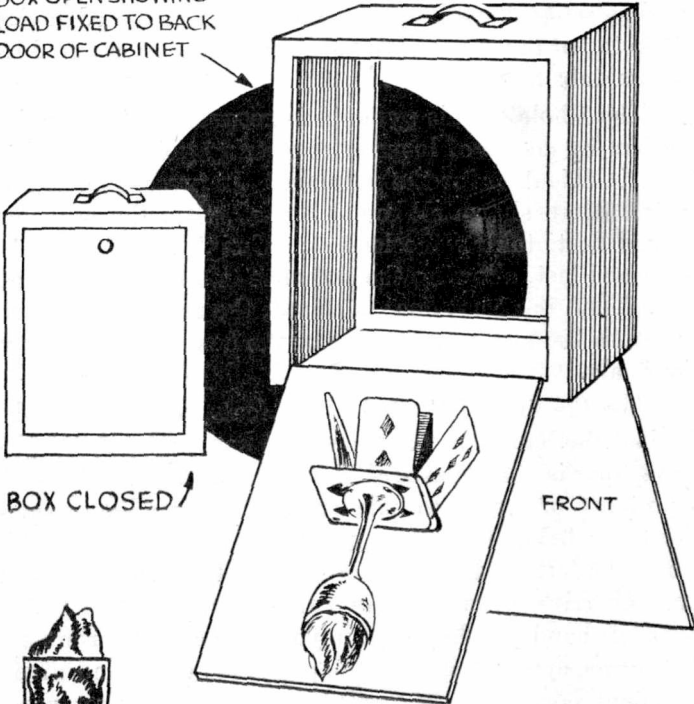
The performer says that perhaps he had better stick to magic after all. He opens the box, which has been standing in full view all the the time, and there inside it is a "house" made up of the five cards, with the wineglass balancing on the top, and inside the wineglass is the handkerchief.

Well, there you are — you attempt three juggling feats, and are defeated in your purpose by the fact that the articles you propose to juggle with all vanish right under your nose only to be found again, arranged in the form of a pyramid in a box previously shown empty. That is the plot; whether you adjust it to magic you already possess is your own affair, but that is exactly the routine I used.

The box I use is the one sold by dealers as Stanley Petty's Curious Cubes. It has a small fancy handle by which to hold it at the top, and front and back doors are hinged at the

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BOX OPEN SHOWING
LOAD FIXED TO BACK
DOOR OF CABINET



BOX CLOSED ↗

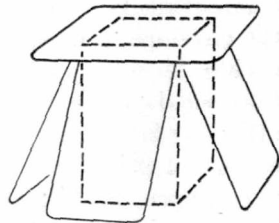
FRONT

CARDS SET UP
ROUND WOODEN BLOCK

**ALLEZ
OOP!!**



5 CARDS FORM
THE 'HOUSE'



SILK FIXED IN WINE GLASS WHICH IS GLUED TO TOP OF HOUSE

base so that they may be let down to show the interior empty. The flap which is an essential part of the effect for which the box is designed is removed. The pyramid made of five cards, one at each side and one on top, is glued around a piece of wood suitably shaped. The wineglass is cemented at the foot to the top of the "house," and a duplicate silk secured in this by two dabs of Seccotine.

The whole of this pyramid is secured to the rear door of the box by means of loops of fine string going through holes made in this door for the purpose. In presentation, the box is first of all shown all round, closed, then the back door is opened first, taking the load out of sight. The front door is opened last, allowing the audience to see clean through the box. Then the front door is closed, the rear door brought up to return the load to the inside of the box, and all is ready for the finale.

For the first of the balancing feats, a penny is balanced against the handle at the top of the box, and a small piece of newspaper is shaped around the glass in the usual way. Make a pretence of trying to balance this on the edge of the coin, the glass being held through the paper by the right hand, while the left holds the lower edge of the paper. After the first, abortive, attempt, draw back, steal the glass away with your left hand and deposit it in your jacket or trousers pocket. The newspaper retains the shape of the glass and gives you an excellent cover for the pocketing. And the first vanish is effected.

The five cards are in a special envelope having two compartments. Take them out, show them, return them to the envelope, remove two of them, rest them tentwise against each other on top of the box for a second, and on any excuse that occurs to you place them back in the envelope with the other cards. Put your hand in again, take it out empty, evince surprise, glance into the envelope, and immediately tear it open, holding the cards in the rear compartment firmly in place with your thumbs.

The handkerchief is vanished by means of a string pull. This goes from the left hand trousers pocket around the back and down the right sleeve. It terminates in a catgut loop which is slipped over the cuff-link. Whilst apologising for

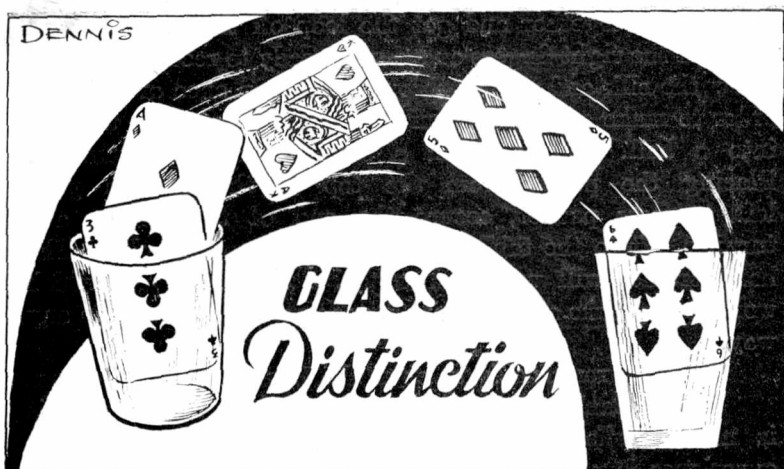
the failure which has attended your earlier efforts, stand with your hands together and get the loop off the cuff-link and between the right fingers and thumb ready to receive the silk. Show the silk and pull it through the loop once or twice in order to make sure it is secured, apparently making the silk into a ball. Place it in a small carafe-type tumbler. Placing the penny from the top of the box in your left trousers pocket, secure the end of the string, and turning left to the table give the string a good pull. The handkerchief will vanish all right. This is a pull which works every time and does not impede your movements in any way.

All that remains is to open the front door of the box.

The explanatory details have been given briefly, as this is not an effect for the beginner. Considerable stage experience is needed to act the part and perform the magic properly at the same time, and the practical performer can work out his own details.

As I work the effect, the rear door of the box cannot be opened when making the revelation at the end, but an ingenious magician with more mechanical knowledge than I possess could easily so arrange things that the load would be dropped on the floor of the box. The back door could then be opened, and the assembled pyramid shown to greater advantage. The writer could not devise anything of this sort using only string and glue, and since beyond these his constructional ability is nil, he gave it up.





BY

ROBERT W. EDMANSON

THE Thirty Cards or Pocket to Pocket Trick has been a standard effect for years. In its original form it has many adherents, and there have been many who have added to it new twist here and a little refinement there. Performed with the aid of envelopes, the cards in the second packet being identified as those which were originally in the other, the effect has taken on a new lease of life.

The method given here is one which may be performed without the aid of volunteers and is most effective as a "quickie." The effect is that two tumblers and a pack of cards are on the table; ten cards are counted and checked and placed in one of the tumblers; ten more, counted and checked are placed in the other. There is an immediate transposition of five cards from one tumbler to the other, without covering of any kind or any false moves.

The preparation for this neat little miracle is simple and straightforward. Take ten cards from your pack and rough the faces of five and the backs of the other five, so that when they are assembled to bring the roughed surfaces together, they may be handled and displayed as five cards only. On

top of these treated cards, ten others are dealt from the top of the pack, all the cards being face down. Five further cards are dealt face down upon the right hand mouth-up tumbler, and then the twenty cards from the table are placed back on top of the deck. The deck is returned to the case and the case placed upon the cards on the tumbler.

For clarity, let us see where we now stand. We have two tumblers on the table, and on the right-hand one rest five cards. On top of these is the card case containing the rest of the pack. At the top of the pack are ten unprepared cards, and beneath them ten treated cards. From the point of view of the audience, there are simply two tumblers, on one of which rests a deck of cards in its packet.

Now, to perform. Take up the card case with the five free cards underneath and transfer them to the tumbler on the left. The other tumbler is taken up and handled naturally as you patter, the audience getting the impression that it is perfectly normal without needing to be told so. The tumbler is replaced on the table and the card case with its accompanying cards taken up once more. The deck is removed from the case, which is then placed back on the left-hand tumbler.

The cards are counted off from the pack to the table, and the pack laid aside. Taking up the ten dealt cards, they are counted again on to the right-hand tumbler. Take up the pack once more and count a further ten cards to the table; these will be the ten roughed cards, and they are, of course counted singly. Place the remainder of the pack aside with one hand and take up the ten dealt cards with the other. These are to be counted singly on to the left-hand tumbler, but since the case is still upon it, this has to be transferred with the free hand to the other tumbler. The five concealed cards are thus added to the first packet of ten.

The roughed cards were naturally reversed in counting; them on to the table, but in counting them again on to the tumbler they are returned to their original order, and are ready for the final effect. The case is taken from the right-hand tumbler, leaving five extra cards behind, the remainder of the pack is placed in it, and it is set aside.

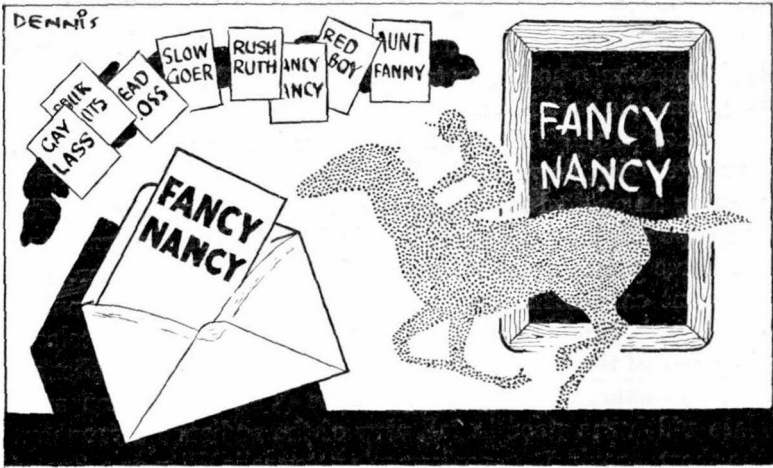
A brief study of the preceding moves will show that there is adequate reason for every one of them.

The piles of card are now taken in appropriate hands and inserted in their respective tumblers.

You may use your own ideas in effecting the transposition. At the close, the left hand packet is withdrawn from its tumbler and fanned to reveal only five cards. These cards are counted back into the tumbler. The five "missing" cards are shown to have travelled to the other tumbler, and the effect is finished.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. A. Mollan and Mr. Herbert Ingle of the Leeds Magical Society for hints and help they gave in devising the above effect.





THE GRAND NATIONAL

BY

SYD THE SORCERER

FOR me, much of the attraction of magic lies in the opportunities it offers to devise novel presentations for standard effects and new uses for well-worn props. That's how it happens that "The Grand National" is a favourite of mine.

If you are ever lucky enough to get an audience composed of ordinary human beings — and some of 'em are almost human — you will find that they relish this choice bit of fun. (When I wrote relish, I was going to pun about my being saucy — but let it pass.)

The performer on the stage announces that the Grand National is about to be run, and taking up a number of post-cards he proceeds to read off the name of a horse from each card. Each card may definitely be shown to contain a different name, and lots of fun may be made of these. "Aunt Fanny," for instance, is a good bet, and "Puddleton Pride" (localise) will always raise a laugh. It will be found that six or eight horses are enough. Each card as dealt with is placed in an envelope.

These envelopes are carried to the back of the hall (I almost wrote "hole" — some of them are), and distributed at even paces to customers in the back row. The performer's assistant stands holding a tray at the front of the centre gangway, and the race is on.

They're off! Envelopes are passed forward from the pit, row after row, down to the front line of stalls, the performer making an excited running commentary as they come. The envelope reaching the front first is deposited on the tray, and the horse whose name it contains is declared the winner. The assistant carries the tray up to the stage, and the winning envelope is handed to the performer, who opens it, discloses the name of the horse and throws the card out to the audience.

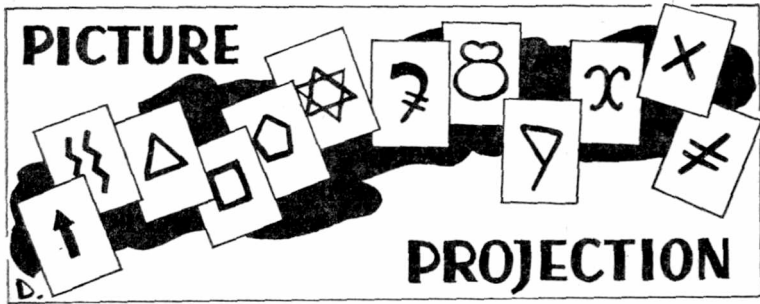
The name of the winning horse is shown written on a slate which has stood in full view of the audience throughout the show, proving the performer's utter reliability as a tipster — or something.

The method — if you are interested — is simply a combination of the "Just Chance" Tray and a spirit slate. Easy, isn't it?

The presentation can finish with a gag. A stage-hand enters from the wings and says, "The boys back-stage have been having a little bet on your race; what won?" The performer tells him, adding, "Were you lucky — did you back it?" Dejectedly, the stage-hand replies, "No, I put my shirt on Aunt Fanny." At the same time, he pulls open his coat, to show that he is minus a shirt. Black-out!

So long! Good betting!





BY

ARTHUR EYDMANN

FOR me a mental effect must be direct in its appeal and simple in execution. There must be nothing in the routine which, to the layman, has no logical reason there, and there must be no snags in the working which will take my attention from the all-important matter of presentation.

This effect fulfils these requirements. Twelve cards are used, each of which bears a design different from any of the others. The cards I use are Correspondence Cards and the pictures are drawn boldly in Indian ink. They are as large as possible.

The pictures I use permit of a very simple mnemonic. The single stroke of the first immediately suggests One. The second card contains two strokes. The third is a triangle, the fourth a square, and the fifth a pentagon. There are six sides or corners to the Star of David which adorns the sixth card, and "seven" may easily be read in the emblem on the seventh card. The cottage loaf motif resembles the figure eight, and similarity to a "9" will be seen in the next design. The Roman X will be read in the tenth card. The eleventh design is one stroke cut by another, and the twelfth is one stroke cut by two.

It will, of course, be understood that the designs need not be introduced in this order. The whole point is that whatever the order in which they appear, the performer will know the number appropriate to each.

In performing this effect, the magician may either introduce the cards singly in his hands and offer a fan of the cards for a selection to be made, or alternatively range them on a stand, face outwards. Whatever method he uses, the selected design is placed in an envelope, which is then sealed. The performer then carries the envelope to his blindfolded assistant and hands it to her behind her back. She immediately describes the design on the chosen card.

Clearly, all the operator requires to do in order to make this feat possible, is to signal one of the numbers from one to twelve. This information I convey by the following means.

If the design is in the first six, the envelope is placed in the medium's left hand; if in the second six, in her right hand. If the design is in the sub-section 1-2-3 or 7-8-9, she receives the envelope with the flap up; if it is in the sub-section 4-5-6 or 10-11-12, the flap is down. If it is the first number in any of the four sub-sections, nothing further is done. If it is the second, the performer presses her fingers over the envelope. If it is the third, he touches her wrist as he withdraws his hand.

All this is very straightforward and easily memorised. Furthermore, as will be seen, the signal is given by the strictest economy of means. It is almost impossible for anyone, even standing behind the lady, to detect anything underhand, or form any sound idea of how she receives her clue.





BY

JOHN K. BAYS

SPECIALISTS in the entertainment of children know that it is always necessary to give them something colourful and showy to look at. At the same time, it is surprising how ready they will be to appreciate a trivial item with small articles provided the plot is a strong one with a definite appeal to their imagination. I have found that the old flying knots effect is a winner in the following dressing.

“Once upon a time — that’s how all good fairy stories begin—there lived in Spain a very wealthy Prince, so wealthy that he fed his favourite puppy on mushrooms. He had a good and faithful servant, who had served him many years and was devoted to him. They played many games together one of which made use of two lengths of magic rope. By using this rope, they found they could easily send messages to one another, and on one occasion this proved very useful indeed, as I mean to show you.

“Now, it happened that a wicked prince in charge of a neighbouring province made war on the people of our Prince, and he was taken captive and thrown into a dungeon. In the course of the fighting, the Prince and his faithful servant were separated, and the servant managed to escape.

“Seated alone in his dungeon, the Prince was very dejected for a while. Everything of any value had been taken from him. All that his jailors had left him was a silly little length of rope that seemed to them worthless. He fingered and played with the rope for a while, until he became quite bored with it, and then he coiled it up and placed it in the corner of his cell.

“By great good fortune, his servant had kept his length of rope also. He did not know what had become of his master, but thought to himself, ‘If he is alive, I shall send a message to him.’ This is how he did it. You see he made in his rope one knot, two knots, three. Then taking out his fan, he wafted them through the air.

“Down in his dungeon, the Prince took up his rope and found that the message had arrived. Three knots were on his rope, and these, in the code they had arranged, meant, ‘I am safe, and shall arrange for your escape.’ And so the Prince took heart again, and when his friends came to rescue him that very night, they found him in very good spirits.”

A purple rope is used for the Prince, to signify royalty, and a white rope to signify the devotion of his servant. When the Prince’s rope is coiled, it should be placed in a silk; either a picture silk to represent a castle, or a brown one to suggest the dinginess of the dungeon. It occurred to me at one time to construct a small collapsible castle from cardboard, but I am convinced that any such elaboration would serve only to weaken the effect.

Left as it is, the effect is a good one. Two silks from your stock, a few feet of rope, a little dye, and you have an item of the kind that children like.



THE MECHANICAL BANNER

An Old Trick in a New Guise For You'se Guys

BY

JACK LE DAIR

IN my long experience of magic I have discovered that many devotees of sleight-of-hand cannot entirely resist the appeal of the mechanical trick and like to include at least one item of this kind in their programme, more especially if there are no worries about threads or assistants to work them.

I too have a weakness in this direction, and this caused me to add to my repertoire what may be called a mechanical Good Night Banner. It is only a Good Night Banner in its basic construction, the operation and the effect being, in fact, vastly different.

For those who are not conversant with the mechanics of the banner, here is a rough outline. In its usual form it consists of a 16-inch square of black cloth, with a flap of the same material, 16 inches by eight, attached by one of its long edges exactly across the centre of the larger piece. This flap, clearly, can be used to cover either half of the larger piece of cloth.

With the flap covering the top half of the banner proper, a length of white tape is sewn across the whole of the exposed surface in the form of the words, Good Night. With the flap dropped to conceal this message, and a duplicate length of tape at hand, the effect is ready for presentation.

The banner is taken up by its upper corners and shown to the audience back and front. To them it appears to be only a square of black material. It is rested on the table or across the knee and the duplicate length of tape, folded to a suitable compass, is placed on the lower half. The upper half is then folded over on to this, and the banner taken up again, this time by its six outer corners. The magician surreptitiously introduces his fore-finger tips between the upper corners of the banner proper and those of the flap, and then, having

shaken the banner a little on the pretext of working the tape into position, he drops the lower corners of the banner, revealing the message. The duplicate length of tape lies securely concealed in the pocket formed between the back cloth and the flap.

Many performers have introduced variations into this effect. Some, for instance, have used cigarettes instead of tape for the formation of the letters, others have utilised other messages to suit their own particular acts. My own variation was to use a word to which one could give a humorous definition. The inspiration came from a book by a Manchester conjurer named Palmer which was issued over thirty years ago under the title "Magic Made Merry." I think it may still be obtainable at the "Magic Wand" offices.

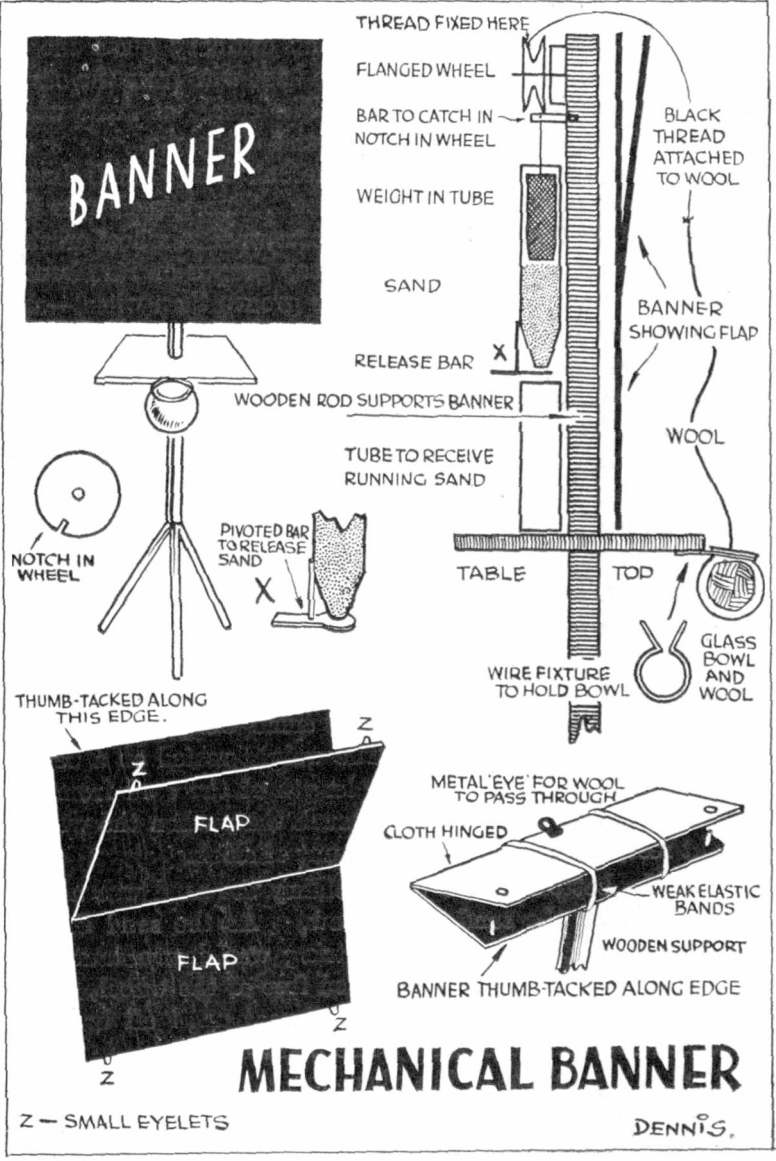
Palmer, I regret to say, is no longer with us, but I remember him as a breezy type of conjurer, featuring comedy rather than mystery. I never saw him work without collecting a few laughs.

His trick, as will be found in his book, was to show a flap slate clean on both sides and set it aside. He then read off names or words from a dozen or so cards, giving his humorous definition of each word given. A card was chosen, and the name upon it was found to be written on the slate.

The reader will already have surmised that all the cards bore the same word, the words called out by the performer having been memorised. Any card chosen, therefore, bore the force word. My method of handling the choice was to shuffle the cards and then ask a member of the audience to give me a small number. I counted down to that number in the pack, and handed the corresponding card out. Palmer's list of words carried excellent definitions; today, even more sophisticated ones might be added. One little tip of my own, when reading the cards, was to find one reversed top to bottom or upside down, thereby subtly intimating that the contents of the cards was actually being read. A small but important bit of psychology, and first-rate misdirection.

My banner hung from a crossbar of wood attached at the top of an extension to a music-stand. The banner was merely thumb-tacked to the crossbar, so that it could be changed at will. I had a dozen of these banners made, each bearing a

different legend, thus providing for a weekly booking of twelve performances. Needless to say, I had twelve sets of cards to match.



The flap hung at its full length and was introduced as a plain piece of black cloth. Then the lower part was raised and hooked at the top, leaving a folded banner hanging. A ball of red wool reposed in a bowl attached to the stand just below the banner. In my case, I had a small table-top fixed at this position. The globe was an ordinary glass one as used for incandescent burners, and a bent wire from the stand held it in position on the table. The cards, as dealt with, were placed in a pile on the table beside the globe.

Unknown to the audience, a fine but strong black thread was attached to the end of the wool. This passed over the crossbar, to be fastened to the rim of a wooden wheel erected behind. This wheel had a very deep groove on its circumference—in fact, it was almost more groove than wheel—and was operated by a clockwork arrangement made of a small alarm clock, minus all the small wheels. The wooden wheel was attached to the pivot fixed to the mainspring of this mechanism. The spring being tightly wound, it was prevented from operating the wheel by a crude but effective device. A small notch in the circumference of the wheel was engaged by a thin metal bar. The other end of this bar was loosely fastened by one small screw to the upright. The tension on the spring pressed the wheel against the metal scotch and held it in position until I was ready for its release.

Attached to this scotching bar near the end which engaged in the wheel was a short length of string, and the other end of this was fastened to a small weight of the kind used in grandfather clocks. The weight rested on a bed of fine dry sand in a tube. The length of the cord from the scotching bar to the weight was such that, when the weight was at rest, there was a small amount of slack.

At the bottom of the tube holding the sand was a vent through which the sand might flow. As the sand flowed, the weight descended until the string was drawn taut, and finally the scotching bar was pulled free of the wheel, which revolved rapidly, gathering up the wool until all had disappeared over the crossbar. The point of all this is that a delayed action release of the wheel was thus contrived.

A small lever at the base of the sand tube opened the vent at the appointed time in the routine. Beneath, another tube

caught the sand as it flowed.

One further ingenious detail remains to be described. At the end of the wool was a large knot, and as the wool had to pass through an eyelet just behind the bar, as soon as the knot reached it, it brought the bar up at the front sufficiently to lift the banner eyelets clear of the pins on which they hung, allowing it to drop and disclose the word.

It will be noticed in the drawings that the bottom of the flap and of the banner proper have small rings near each end. These rest on pins driven into the crossbar (which is actually two bars cloth-hinged at the back, the upper one having holes through which the pins from the other pass. A weak elastic band around the bars will prevent the upper one from going right over.

All this must appear, in description, very complicated indeed. It isn't so in practice. In any case, the value of this arrangement surely outweighs the trouble of manufacture. Having moved the sand lever, the performer may walk to the other side of the stage and leisurely ask the name of the chosen card. It is named and checked, and only then does the wool begin to unwind, run up over the top edge of the banner to lose itself, apparently, between the folds. The banner is automatically opened to make the revelation at the close. The whole action is certain and self-contained. What more could one want?

PATTER

When I first thought of this trick, I intended it to be one in which the aid of spirits would be invoked, but as the price of spirits was rising, mine fell in proportion. So I decided to call it an experiment, because if it should fail, it was still an experiment, but if it succeeded I could call it a trick.

The apparatus used is quite simple, and as I didn't want the secret to leak out I use this square of black material to keep it dark . . . It was also my intention to use red tape for the trick, but the Government having priority in that commodity, I use wool instead. Being of a placid nature, I could never lose my wool if I got excited. The wool, as you see, rests in this glass bowl so that you may keep an eye on it. I shall now fold the cloth in two halves while I draw your attention to these few cards.

On each of these cards is written one word or name, all different. I'll read these out to you and give you some definitions, after which I shall have one selected, and then carry on with the good work.

Here is one: DUST. Dust, of course, is mud with the juice squeezed out. HONEYMOON is the next. A honeymoon is the end of a woman's curiosity. (He continues with the remaining cards in a similar vein.) Now I want someone to give me a number between 1 and 12. I'll count to that number, and that will be the card we shall use . . . Seven? Thank you, sir . . . And the seventh card is DENTIST — a man who is always looking down in the mouth.

* * * *

The card is now placed in the banner between the flap and the upper portion, where the actual word is formed in wool; the sand lever is moved; the magician retires to the other side of the stage; the wool runs rapidly from the bowl over the top of the banner; the banner falls open; and there, in wool, written right across the banner, is the word selected.



BLOWN EGG

BY

SYD THE SORCERER

ALMOST any performer who presents a miscellaneous magic act in which comedy has a place will know how valuable it is to have a real unrestrained "belly laugh" somewhere in the routine. This item is designed for just such a man. It is in my regular act, and I can vouch for its effectiveness.

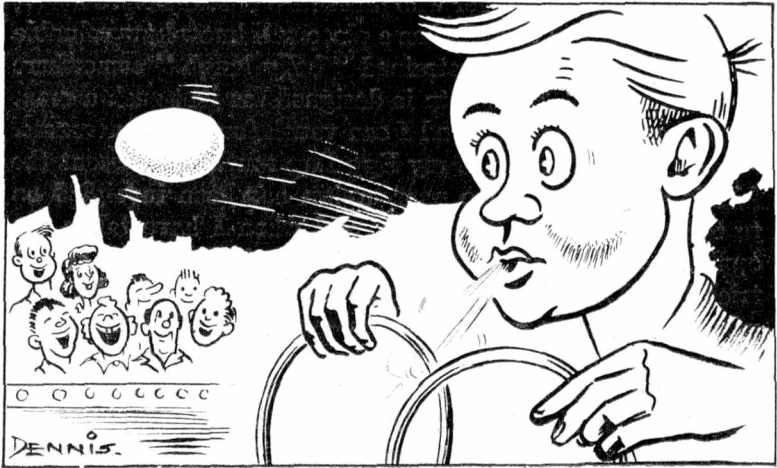
At the conclusion of my Egg Bag routine, I present the Linking Rings. Some poor urchin has been inveigled on to the stage for the Egg Bag, and when I have taken my applause for this I turn to him and ask, "Did you like that trick?" Whatever his answer may be, ignore it — a very wise proceeding in some instances — and say, "I'll make you a present of the egg." The egg, held in the left hand, is apparently transferred to the right, the tourniquet being performed so that it actually remains in the left. He is prompted to simulate swallowing, and you pat his tummy with the right hand. The right side thus being towards the audience, the egg is disposed of in the left trousers pocket. The tummy-patting gets a laugh, which the audience supposes to be the only aim of this little diversion, and the matter is presumably closed.

Now proceed with the Linking Rings. Every time a Ring is linked or unlinked, the boy is asked to blow on the point of fusion. At one point in the routine, he is asked to try the feat himself. He fails. Meanwhile, you secure the egg from the pocket in the left hand. Pass behind the boy as you offer to show him how, and transfer the egg to the right hand.

Take the two Rings from the boy and hold them for him to blow at. As he does so, flip the fingers backwards, shooting the egg across the stage. To the audience, it is exactly as though he has blown the egg out of his mouth.

Coming as it does, completely unexpected — the existence of the egg having been forgotten — it brings the aforementioned highly recommended belly laugh.

Well, you'll either like it or think it a lot of rot. But the poet has written: "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men," and my experience has borne him out.





BY

A. C. JACOBS

THE year is 1938; the venue, Tsingtao; the performer, a Shantung itinerant conjurer. His trick was of the cut-and-restored school, but nevertheless slightly different from the usual run. I had never seen it performed before, and have not seen it since. Prolonged search has not discovered it in any book of the art. And yet it seems to me to be ideal material for a children's party.

From a bundle of perhaps a dozen sheets of paper, he took one sheet and cut it lengthwise, twice, with a pair of scissors. The three resultant strips he placed together and cut them across the centre to make six pieces of similar size and shape. These were placed together in one packet, and another snip converted them into twelve squares. These squares were counted off singly on to the original sheaf of papers, using this as a tray. This "tray" was then taken and the loose squares shaken off on to the left palm. The performer squared up the loose pieces, made passes over them with his scissors, and then taking one of the squares by a corner, he showed that they had all become transformed into a chain.

I never did learn the story told by this wandering son of Cathay while he performed his little trick, though it must have been funny if one could judge from the laughter of his Chinese audience. He did, however, show me the *modus operandi*, which was clever and subtle.

PARAPHERNALIA AND PREPARATION

Take about a dozen sheets of thin—but not tissue—paper, about 9 inches by 12 inches. One sheet is prepared by cutting it into a dozen 3 inch squares; these are pasted together by their diagonally-opposite corners, thus forming a kind of chain. The corners should overlap by no more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, and when the paste is dry the chain should be folded zig-zag to finish as a flat, square stack. The remaining whole sheets should now be folded once, bookwise, giving a wad 9 inches by 12 inches. The fake is slipped between the centre sheets, and the whole is placed on the table with its fold towards the audience. The scissors, finally, are laid on top.

PRESENTATION

The right hand picks up the scissors and snips them once or twice, hairdresser-wise. The left hand takes up the wad of papers by the edge away from the audience, exercising slight pressure of the fingers and thumb to ensure that the fake does not move. Putting the scissors down, the right hand draws away the outer sheet. The folded wad is returned to the table and both hands exhibit the sheet back and front, and show themselves to be empty.

This sheet is cut up into 3 inch squares as already described, and these loose squares are counted singly on to the wad of papers. This is where the first subtle move comes in. The right hand takes the folded sheets at the fold and shakes the loose sheets into the left hand. As they are shaken off, the prepared chain goes with them, the tidy little parcel being completely concealed by the loose squares above. Placing the improvised tray aside, the right hand squares up the loose pieces on the left palm, and the fake under them, and when a neat stack has been made, takes the whole pile between finger and thumb, and in a wide sweeping movement shows the pile top and bottom.

The packet is replaced on the left palm in a reverse order, bringing the chain to the top. The right hand takes the scissors, makes a few passes over the left hand, and then, nipping the corner of the top square with the points of the scissors, draws it upwards and reveals that the loose squares have magically formed themselves into a chain.

The second subtle point is the disposal of the loose squares. One could imagine the ruses to which Western magicians would be put to convince the audience that these were the original squares of paper, and none others were left in the hand. My Shantung friend merely left them in the left palm concealed by the last three or four sections of the chain. Having shown the chain, he dropped it back higgledy-piggledy on to the left hand and put it right into the basket at his side where the equipment of other tricks had been put at their close.

SUGGESTED PATTERN

In the Palace of the late Emperor of China, there was an old slave beloved by all. He had a wonderful sense of humour, and delighted in performing magical tricks of illusion and deception for the enjoyment of his friends. This made him a great favourite. I want to show you one of his delightful little feats. He didn't claim any magical qualities for himself in this, explaining that it was all made possible by his magic scissors.

One summer's day, one of the little princesses, with a slightly sad expression on her olive-complexioned face and a tiny spot of trouble on her mind, approached him for help. She had lost her lesson book and had forgotten her two-times table. The great Tse-Tang, her tutor would be very annoyed. Furthermore, she had mislaid her necklace, and there was no doubt that Her Excellency the Empress would be more than a little annoyed.

"Don't worry, my little lady," said the old slave. "Here are a few sheets of paper, and whilst we think out what we can do about your necklace we shall run through your lessons at the same time." So, taking one of the sheets of paper and wielding his magic scissors, he went about it this way. "Twice one are two, and one makes three. Twice three are

six. And twice six are twelve. Now, are we right? Let's see. Yut, yee, say, ung, luk, chat, bak, gow, sup, sup-yut, sup-ye. Twelve. Yes, quite correct."

The little princess was awfully pleased with the simplicity of this lesson in arithmetic and was quite sure she could now face the great Tse-Tang; "but—er—what about the necklace?" "That, my little lady," said the old slave, "is already provided for," and taking the loose squares of paper into his hand and waving his magic scissors over them, they formed themselves into a chain, so.



CIGARETTES TO POCKET

BY

JOHN K. BAYS

IN this effect, a well-known magical item is worked with unfamiliar articles. It is brief, unusual, easily worked and thoroughly effective.

The right pocket having been shown empty, three cigarettes held in the left hand travel across singly and are retrieved from the pocket. There are no fakes of any description; the effect is accomplished purely by sleight-of-hand of a very simple order. The first vanish is quite startling, and not only gives the performer confidence but also puts the audience in a perfectly receptive mood for the rest.

Four cigarettes are required. One of them is concealed in the top of the right-hand trousers pocket. The other three are displayed between the fingers of the left hand.

Having pulled out and returned the trousers pocket, the right hand approaches the left and apparently takes the cigarette between the left first and second fingers. Under the cover afforded by the right hand, the cigarette is thumb-palmed in the left. The right hand withdraws, apparently holding the cigarette, "vanishes" it, and is shown back and front. The cigarette is taken from the trousers pocket and tossed aside. The thumb-palming action by the left hand is completely illusive, as a trial before a mirror will prove.

The disposal of the remaining cigarettes is managed differently. The two visible cigarettes are taken side by side in the right hand, being held between thumb and fingers, the cigarettes extending in line with the fingers. The left hand is closed into a fist, bringing the thumb-palmed cigarette into the fist. With the left hand thumb upwards, the cigarettes are pushed in from above. Actually, use is made of the left forefinger as a pivot, the cigarettes thus being swung into the right finger-palm position.

The left hand is now moved away and extended on a level with the shoulder with its back towards the audience. The right forefinger points to it, and then follows the imaginary track of a cigarette up the left sleeve and across the body. The right hand is plunged into the pocket, leaves one of the cigarettes and removes the other, tossing it aside.

The remaining cigarette in the left hand is seen to rise gradually, being motivated by the thumb in the familiar manner. As the right hand taps it back, it is palmed in the right hand.

After a little working of the left fingers, this hand is shown to be empty, and then by any convenient change-over acquitment the right hand too is shown empty. The cigarette is left in the left hand which drops naturally to the side, and the very obviously empty right hand travels to the pocket to remove the remaining cigarette.

The effect now being over, the cigarette in the left hand may be disposed of at leisure.





BY

PETER A. McDONALD

IF you are of that body of magicians which is always in search of new principles, I must warn you at the outset that this routine contains nothing which has been hidden from the magical fraternity heretofore. It is simply the result of applying well-known and well-worn principles to a brand of effect which shows a tendency to increase in popularity. A few pence will provide enough materials for many presentations, and half an hour's work will place all the "apparatus" — to use the word in rather a wide sense — at your disposal. Furthermore, no sleights are required. I have tried to explain the routine thoroughly so that each move is covered in full.

The Master Mentalist, after giving a brief preliminary talk on the tricks employed by fraudulent mediums, distributes about twelve visiting cards among the audience. Eleven of these assistants are told to write on their cards the names of living acquaintances. The twelfth man is asked to write the name of a dead person, preferably one of whom the magician is not likely to have heard. Whilst this is being done, the magician returns to the stage. It is quite clear to everyone that he has no opportunity of seeing what is written.

A member of the audience is now asked to go around the assisting scribes and collect their cards. These he shuffles and hands to the magician, face down. Remarking that even a glimpse of what has been written will ruin the utter fairness of the demonstration, the magician carries the packet behind

his back. With his free hand, he pours a little petrol into a small metal bowl lying on his table and then sets light to the petrol, all the while keeping the packet of visiting cards behind him.

With the petrol blazing merrily, he brings the cards to the front, fanning them with their faces towards the audience and making it clear at all times that he cannot see the face of any card. Holding the cards at arm's length, he drops them into the blazing petrol, where they are quickly consumed.

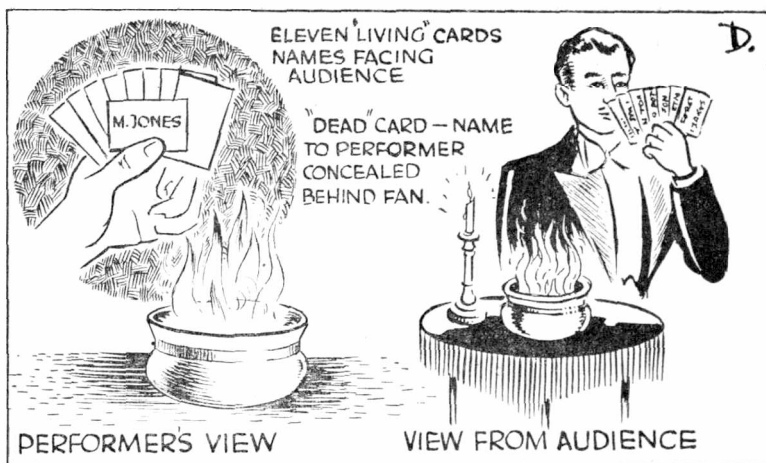
He speaks of the possibilities of writing with a spirit guide, and crosses to a blackboard. Taking up a stick of chalk, he rests his right hand limply on the board; gradually, it becomes rigid, and then it starts to move. As it moves, the audience sees that the hand, "guided by the spirits," is spelling out the message: "The name of the dead person was" — giving the actual name written by the spectator. Coming out of his brief trance, the magician asks the spectator if this is correct, and of course it is.

It will be seen that this effect has strong dramatic possibilities. With careful use of lighting and appropriate music, the magician sufficiently skilled at "hocus pocus" acting should be able to get a lot out of the eerie routine.

The main secret of the effect is our good old friend the long card, this time in the form of a visiting card. To prepare, take about two-thirds of a packet of visiting cards and with a sharp razor slice off about one-sixteenth of an inch from the end of each card. The remaining third of the pack is left as it is. Provide yourself with a small metal bowl and some weird looking receptacle from which to pour the petrol. A candle should be handy, ready lighted, unless you can depend utterly on your pocket lighter. And, of course, a blackboard should be available, or, failing that, a slate.

ROUTINE

The performer comes forward with a pack of visiting cards arranged so that the short cards form the top two-thirds of the pack, and the long cards the bottom third. The eleven spectators who are to write the names of living people are all allowed to take their cards from the top section of the packet, but as he advances to the spectator who is to write the "dead"



name, the performer reverses the packet and fans the top third of long cards for one to be taken. It is worth mentioning, in passing, that if any prominent person should be present in the audience, it is advisable to give him the privilege of writing the name of the dead person: it will serve to convince the audience that no confederate is used.

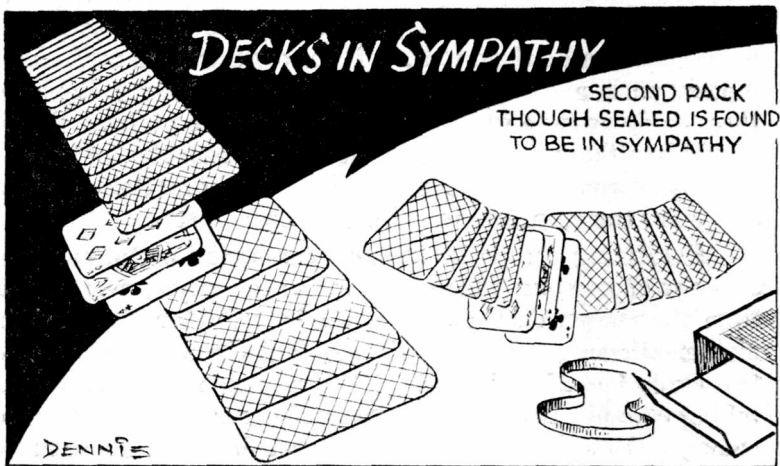
The performer makes his way back to the front and in due course has the cards collected, mixed and brought to him as already described. Placing the packet behind his back, he holds it with both hands for a moment while he speaks of the great influence the dead exert over us. Under cover of this line of patter, he finds the long card, reverses it, and places it on top of the packet. The "living" cards are thus face-down with the "dead" card face-up on the top of them. As soon as this has been done, the free hand comes forward to prepare the petrol.

The petrol ablaze, the hand returns behind the back and assists the other in fanning the cards. The top card is simply laid across the backs of the others, and the fan brought to the front in this position — see Diagram. Although the faces of the "living" cards are thus towards the audience, the "dead" card is facing the performer, and he can read the name of the dead person without any difficulty. One glance is sufficient. The cards are immediately dropped into the

bowl and the performer withdraws a short distance while the flames consume them, so that there can be no doubt that he has no opportunity to read them.

The rest is simply a matter of acting. The magician's aim must be to suggest to the audience that his arm is under the influence of some mysterious agency. His writing should begin with a few meaningless squiggles. If he closes his eyes as he writes, his characters will be less than perfect, and for that reason add to the effect. If the performer is skilled in writing upside-down and backwards, the effect may perhaps be made stronger still, the blackboard requiring to be turned upside-down before his scrawl makes any sense. But all these details may safely be left in the hands of the competent worker.





BY

ARNOLD GIBSON

EFFECT

TWO decks of cards are introduced and displayed. The audience is invited to choose one of them, and this is placed back in its case, which is then encircled by a rubber band and given into the hands of the chooser.

From the second deck anyone now removes three cards from different positions, a perfectly free choice being permitted. These three cards, reversed, are returned to the centre of the deck. After explaining that the packs are in complete sympathy with each other, the performer ribbon-spreads the one he holds, and the three reversed cards are removed by a helper. The assistant holding the other pack is requested to remove it from its case and look through it. He finds that now three of his cards are reversed, and these prove to be the duplicates of the other reversed cards.

It will be seen that the effect is identical with that devised by the late Edward Bagshawe. His effect, however, was brought about by means of an elaborately faked pack. In the method about to be described, only perfectly normal packs are used.

WORKING

Take two packs of cards, preferably of different-coloured backs, and shuffle them well. Three cards are removed from the first pack, and duplicates of these from the second. Replace these cards, reverse way up, in their respective packs. They should be either near the top of the pack or near the bottom — as long as you know which it doesn't really matter. That completes the preparation. You are now all set.

Exhibiting the packs in their cases, the performer has someone choose one. There is no force; the cards are removed from the chosen deck with the words, "If there is a quick mathematician present, he will see that there are just fifty-two cards here." So saying, the magician fans the deck, taking care not to expose the reversed cards. The aim is to convince the audience, silently and casually, that the pack is in a perfectly normal state, with all the cards facing the same way. The fan is closed, and the performer either gives it a simple cut or makes the pass, to bring the reversed cards to the approximate centre. The deck is returned to its case and when an elastic band has been snapped about this it is handed out to a helper.

The performer now removes the second pack from its case, displays it as he did the first, and fans it for a selection of three cards to be made. These three cards are to be removed and placed face-down on the table without being looked at. For this selection, the fan — as wide as possible without disclosing the presence of the cards already reversed — is made over the table. As soon as the three selections have been made, the fan is closed and the hand holding the pack is dropped to the side. There, the thumb pushes off the top card so that its edge presses against the trousers leg. The pack is then brought up against this so that the card is face-up on the top.

The pack is brought forward again, apparently face-up and the cards from the table, still face-down, are inserted "somewhere near the centre." Now, as the performer turns to spread the cards on stand or table, he again reverses the top card. The whole deck now faces the same way, with the exception of the three cards secretly reversed from the outset. A simple pass is made and the deck ribbon-spread to reveal

three cards face-up near the centre. These are naturally taken to be the three cards selected. The helper is asked to remove "his" cards and show them to the audience.

All that now remains to be done is to ask the person holding the other pack to remove it from its case and run through it. He finds that there are three cards reversed in it, and these prove to be duplicates of those chosen from the deck on the table.

This effect has been worked a number of times before critical audiences and has always proved to be a highlight of an all-card act. The moves blend into a series of perfectly natural movements, and are never suspect. Apart from the suggestion of a state of sympathy existing between the two packs, the patter should be quite straightforward.



CABINETS AND CRINOLINES

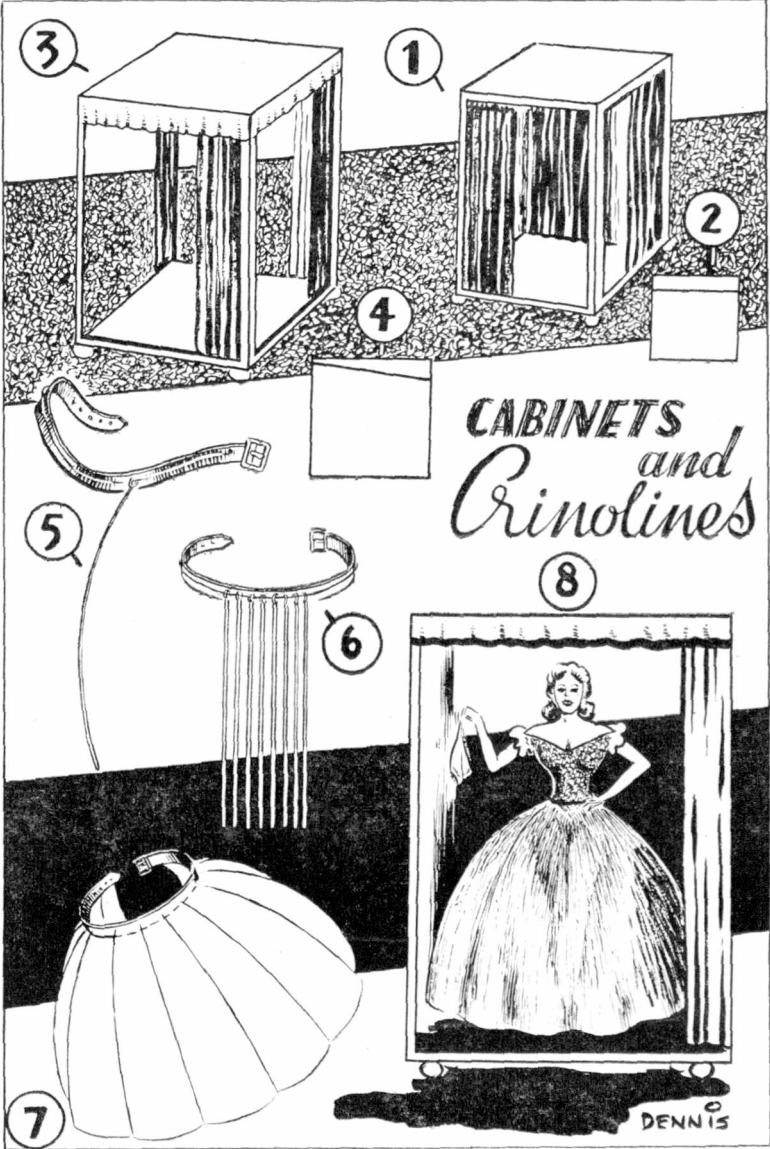
BY

WILFRID JONSON

THERE is, I am told, a great, unsatisfied, demand for illusions which are light to carry, easy to set up, and which can be performed on any small stage. This is an attempt to satisfy that demand, an attempt by one who has never in his life presented an illusion.

Let us first take the old curtained cabinet and improve on it. In its original form it consisted of a base and a roof supported by four uprights — but I can see that this is a matter in which an illustration or two will help us a great deal. Figure 1 gives a view of the cabinet as seen by the audience, with the front curtains drawn back to give a view of the interior. But as everyone knows, the back curtain is double, an extra curtain being inserted about seven inches from the back behind which one or two persons may be concealed. Figure 2 gives a plan of this arrangement. Figure 3 gives a view of the cabinet in its improved form, with all the curtains drawn back. Notice the addition of a pelmet to the roof. You will notice also, please, that the rear and right side curtains draw back to the same corner. The back curtain is still double but instead of being parallel to each other the two curtains form a triangle with the side curtain. Figure 4 gives a plan of this arrangement. It is apparent, I hope, that even when the back and side curtains are drawn back a space remains sufficient to conceal one person.

But the production of one person from a cabinet big enough to hold four, although often presented, is not a very remarkable effect. The production should at least appear to fill the cabinet. The crinolines worn by our great-grandmothers — or was it our great-great-grandmothers? — immediately occur to one. Very well, we will produce a girl in a crinoline so large that it will fill the cabinet. But it is obvious that, wearing the crinoline, the girl cannot be cou-



cealed within the secret triangle. Suppose we make the crinoline detachable and conceal it elsewhere in the cabinet?

Crinolines, I believe, are made like lamp shades on a wire foundation. If you mount a wire on a leather belt after threading this wire through eyelets in the ends of all the other wires that keep the crinoline extended, the whole thing should open and shut like a fan in the manner Dennis has sketched in Figures 5, 6 and 7. The folded crinoline we will conceal in the roof of the cabinet and the pelmet around the roof will hide the thickness necessary for this. Wearing only the bodice (and essential scanties) the girl is concealed in the secret triangle of the cabinet.

We now need to dress up the effect unless we are to present it like a lightning illusionist — slap, bang, wallop, and there you are!

Let us display a number of large fashion drawings depicting feminine raiment of various periods. There would be Egyptian costume of the Cleopatra type, very attractively scanty, a medieval costume, voluminous and stiff with lace, an Elizabethan dress, waisted like an hour glass, the Crinoline girl, and several others. The audience are informed that they may choose to see any costume they desire but that as, if it is left to them, they will obviously choose the Egyptian one, it shall be left to chance.

The curtains of the cabinet are drawn. The crinoline girl is forced by the illusionist's favourite method. The girl emerges from her hiding place and dons the crinoline. The "choice" of costume is revealed and the front curtain drawn to reveal the girl in the crinoline filling the cabinet.



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