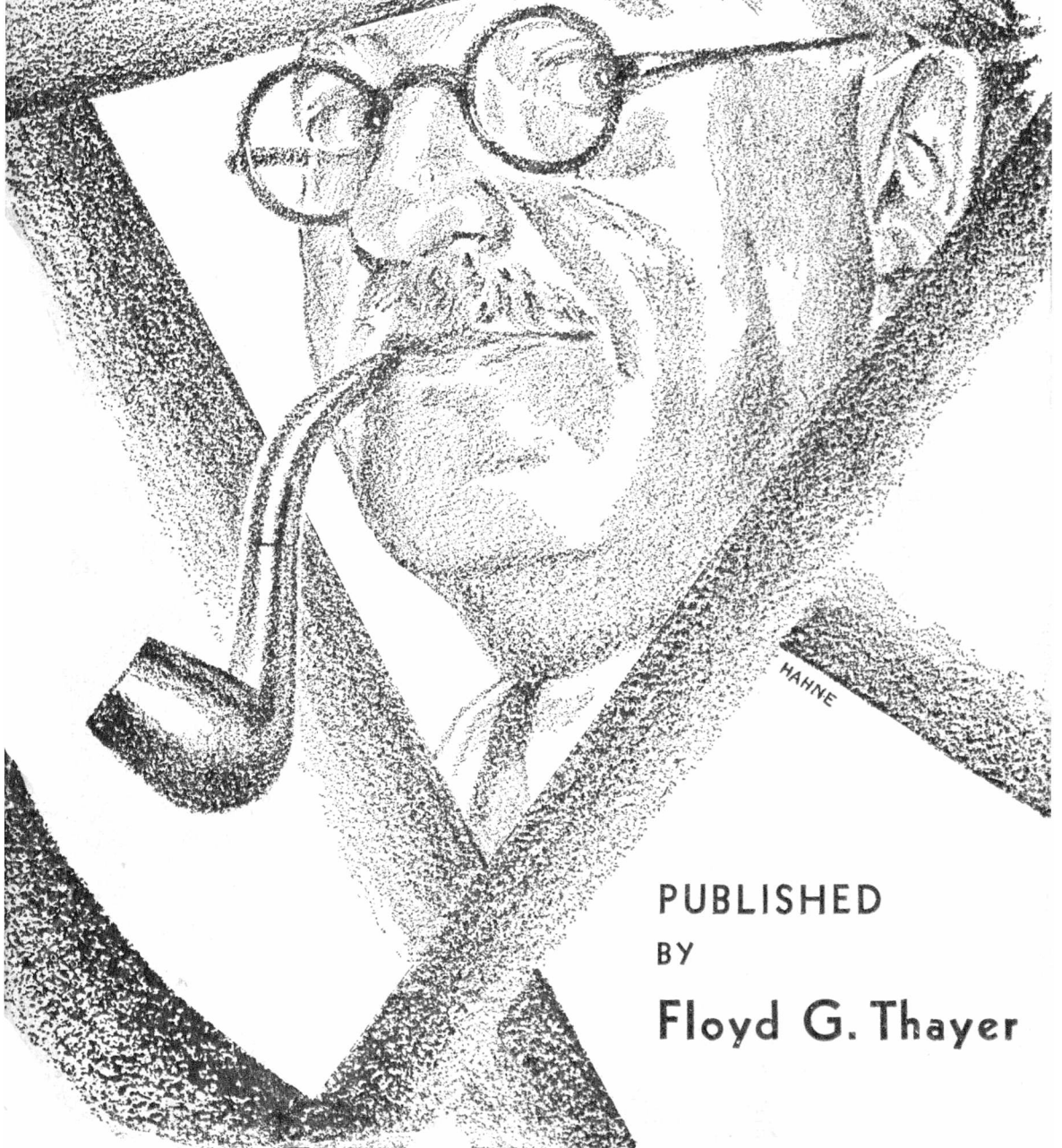


Leaves from
J. N. HILLIARD'S
notebook



PUBLISHED
BY
Floyd G. Thayer

EX LIBRIS



WILL ALMA
M.I.M.C. (LONDON)

LEAVES from
MY NOTEBOOK

BY

JOHN NORTHERN HILLIARD

Author of

"Down's Art of Magic"



Published by

FLOYD G. THAYER

THAYER'S STUDIO OF MAGIC

929 LONGWOOD AVENUE

LOS ANGELES

COPYRIGHTED BY
FLOYD G. THAYER

1935

INSTITUTE PRESS, GARDENA, CALIFORNIA



FOREWORD

With the passing of JOHN NORTHERN HILLIARD, magic and magicians have suffered another keen loss, not only of a true friend, for he was also a writer, inventor, and life-long scholar of magic.

I first met MR. HILLIARD nearly twelve years ago, when my little magazine, "The Magical Bulletin," was one of my active side lines in magic.

It was in the early spring of 1924 that MR. HILLIARD kindly consented to contribute a series of articles under title of "Leaves From My Notebook" which appeared in issues from June, 1924, to May, 1925, inclusive.

Now that those writings are the only ones on record to appear since his memorable advent of "Down's Art of Magic," it seems highly proper to place them at the disposal of the book-minded magicians, and which I do with considerable pride and satisfaction, and realizing the fact that regardless of what other of MR. HILLIARD'S writings may follow this publication, this present volume will form a fitting link in helping to perpetuate the living memory of this able author.

Floyd G. Sawyer

● DEDICATED
TO MY FRIEND
EARLE F. RYBOLT
OWNER OF THE
GREATEST MAGICAL
LIBRARY I HAVE
EVER SEEN

● A PERSONAL NOTE by way of INTRODUCTION

When in the summer of 1908 I finished the last page of "The Art of Magic," written at the behest of my old friend, T. Nelson Downs, I was already planning a companion volume to that work. The material was at hand. Many original ideas of Mr. Downs, as well as sundry effects of my own devising, had to be left out, owing to lack of space. And my note-books, filled with miscellaneous material I had gathered from amateur and professional magicians in the course of sundry wanderings about the world and by Mr. Downs during those triumphant years he had toured England and the continent as the undisputed "King of Koins," were far from exhausted. I looked forward to many happy hours in the writing of another book. A labor of love!

But the High Gods that sit in judgment upon the affairs of men willed otherwise. A few sporadic contributions to magical journals here and abroad followed "The Art of Magic." The most important of these stray papers was the first account, in "The Sphinx," of a thought-reading card trick of my own invention that has since enjoyed considerable popularity. I refer to the experiment commonly known as "The Telephone Trick." No one was more surprised than myself at the immediate and widespread popularity of this trick. That its success was not ephemeral, I judge from the fact that Mr. Thayer still keeps it in stock, and that many writers, including Mr. David Devant, have done me the honor to include it in their works. That they did not know whom to credit it to is not surprising; for I doubt if many magical enthusiasts even remember my explanation of the trick in "The Sphinx," something like a decade and a half ago. I have never taken the trouble to make the matter public; but as I am about to write again of things magical, after a silence of many years, I avail myself of this opportunity to claim my own again.

The "Telephone Trick" was my last contribution to magical literature. Pressure of outside work became so insistent that what had been a recreation was in danger of becoming a burden. Hobby-horses are

pleasant riding when the ways are smooth, but when it comes to taking the hurdles one must have a more substantial mount. To few mortals do the High Gods vouchsafe the supreme felicity of making the things one likes to do best of all yield an adequate return in the essentials of existence. The time had come to put away the toys. The pen, so far as magic was concerned, must be laid aside with the wand.

And in all likelihood neither of them would have been resurrected had it not been for my friend, Mr. Thayer who, like Peter Pan, has "a way with him"—a way that cannot be easily resisted by a mere mortal who has once been dazzled by the glamor of the Never-Never Land of Magic. How cannily he contrived to get his way is of no particular moment to this chronicle. But he did get it. And that is why, after all these years, I find myself rummaging through old notebooks for material that I venture to hope may not be altogether without interest to the reader of THE MAGICAL BULLETIN. I am not unmindful that much of this material is out-of-date. Magic is not immune to the inevitable law of change. And it has passed through many changes since "The Art of Magic" was published! So it is with some little trepidation that I take up the pen again to transcribe these magical notes and fancies for the critical eye of a new generation of magical enthusiasts. I promise, however, to do my best to bring this material down to date.

But enough of personalities. I am going to begin this series with a description of my favorite card trick. "Favorite," in the sense that I have seldom given a performance, extemporaneous or otherwise, in the last twenty-five years without including it in the program. "Mine," in the sense that the combination is of my own contriving. The trick depends solely upon sleight-of-hand and skillful address, and may be presented anywhere, at any time, with any cards. This, I may say in passing, is a hobby of mine. I like to do card tricks on the spur of the moment, with the spectators all around me, and with any pack that may be handy. The experiment under discussion admirably fills these requirements.

J. N. HILLIARD.

● THE TRIPLE MYSTERY

THE EXPERIENCED READER will not find anything fundamentally new in this experiment. Although the combination and method of presentation are my own, no claim beyond that is made for originality. In fact, when I first performed the trick (the date in my note-book is July, 1898), I was aware that Nate Leipzig was doing a similar trick. Indeed, it was partly his trick and partly my own that I described under the title, "The Ubiquitous Cards," on Page 141 of "The Art of Magic." My own routine, however, differed radically from the trick as described therein, as well as from Mr. Leipzig's method. And to the curious in magical matters it may be of interest to record that twenty-five years ago I was using the now universally popular "Spelling Bee" effect as an integral part of the trick. At that time I had never seen, or known of the "Spelling Bee" used as the basis of a card mystery. Of course, there was the ancient "spelling" stunt with thirteen pre-arranged cards, but it was regarded more as a puzzle than as a trick.

● EFFECT

A pack is freely shuffled by the audience and three cards are either drawn or "sighted." The pack is again shuffled and laid face downward on the table. A number is chosen, and a spectator, taking the pack in his own hands, counts down to that number, turning up one of the selected cards. A second spectator deals the cards one by one on the performer's palm. He stops at whatever number he elects and turns up the second selected card. Again the pack is shuffled and given into the keeping of a member of the audience, who "spells out" the last card.

● REQUISITES AND PREPARATION

An ordinary pack of cards. No preparation.

● TIME OCCUPIED

To get the maximum effect out of this experiment it should be performed deliberately. Invested with suitable patter five minutes is none too long for its presentation.

● PRESENTATION

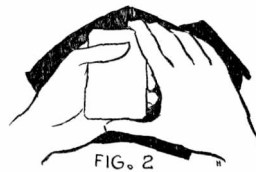
In my own routine I have two openings, or gambits, as they say in chess. The particular opening I use depends upon whether I am working with my own cards or with a borrowed pack. If a borrowed pack, I have the three cards "sighted" by the method described on Page 128 of "The Art of Magic." For the benefit of the reader, who may not be acquainted with this valuable sleight, I will briefly recapitulate the description in that book.

The pack is in the left hand, the tips of all four fingers pressing rather tightly against the side of the pack. The left thumb extends flat across the top of the deck and just touches the tip of the second finger. Thus held the pack is extended to a spectator, who lifts up the upper right-hand, or index, corner of the pack, noting one card. While this is being done the performer turns his head away, at the same time pressing the ball of the first finger firmly against the lower portion of the break. Thus when the raised portion of the pack is released



a small part of the fleshy tip of the first finger will be wedged between the two portions of the pack, forming a "break," the bottom card of the upper portion being the spectator's card. This sleight of hand is known as the "flesh grip." Immediately the spectator releases the upper portion of the pack, lower the left hand to the side, pressing the left thumb heavily on the top of the pack. This maneuver makes the "break" practically invisible.

The next step is to shift the sighted card to the top of the pack. Swing around to the left, thus bringing the right side toward the audience. During the swing the two hands come together, the right hand partially covering the pack. The right first finger is exactly placed at the upper right hand edge of the pack, in which position it is just around the corner, so to speak, from the left index finger. The right thumb grips the pack at the lower right hand side, just around the corner from the little finger. If this position is taken correctly, more than three-fourths of the top of the deck should be visible to the audience.



The thumb and first finger of the right hand now raise the upper portion of the pack just far enough to permit all the fingers of the left hand to slide the fraction of an inch into the opening. These fingers press upward and outward. This forces the spectator's card—that is, the card on the bottom of the upper packet—outward until it extends about half an inch from the right side of the pack. Now grip the upper right-hand corner of this card between the third and fourth fingers. The exact spot for gripping is at the knuckle or second joint of the third finger. Now slip the card to the top of the pack.



It is at this point that my method of making the shift to the top differs from the usual description or manipulation of this sleight. In the usual method the right hand does the work, the left remaining stationary. In my method *both* hands swing upward and slightly inward toward the body, describing an arc; and during this upward sweeping movement the right hand travels slightly faster than the left. The result is that without any apparent sidewise movement of the right hand, the card is drawn out of the pack. The instant the card is free of the pack, the right hand slows down, and the left hand (with the pack) increases its speed, impinging against the card in the right hand exactly at the conclusion of the upward swing. Correct timing rather than speed is essential. The broader, arc-like, upward and inward movement of the arms completely cover the smaller movement of the right hand's slipping the card out of the deck. In fact, this movement is absolutely invisible to the keenest eye. I know of no sleight more elusive—even to the performer. The card seems to fly magically to the top of the pack without any intervention of the performer himself. I have taken pains to describe minutely the working of the sleight, for once it is mastered correctly it will be found to be one of the most useful “moves” in the whole category of magic. It is a valuable substitute for the two-handed pass and an ever present help in making the color change.

Now for another subtlety. The instant the two hands stop at the end of the upward swing, the right hand is holding the pack in the exact position to execute the riffle shuffle. That is, it is held delicately

between the extreme tips of the fingers at the upper end and the thumb at the lower end. There should be no hesitation between the conclusion of the shift and the beginning of the shuffle.

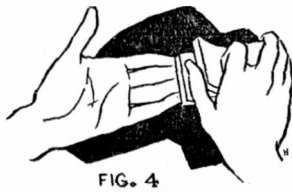


FIG. 4

The moment the two hands reach the end of the upward swing, the pack in the right fingers is bent backward by the thumb, the right first finger, at the same time bending in on top of the pack to act as a lever. Instantly the right thumb releases the cards, springing half of the pack in rapid succession against the outspread fingers of the left

hand. The left hand grips this packet and the ordinary riffle shuffle is made without disturbing the top card. In actual practice the movements of the shift and the shuffle blend into one operation. All that the audience actually sees, after the spectator has sighted a card, is that the hands come together merely for the purpose of shuffling the pack.



FIG. 5

Two more cards are sighted and shifted to the top, the performer winding up these preliminary operations with a final shuffle of the pack, without disturbing the three noted cards. The pack is then laid on the table and the performer is ready for the dramatic denouement of the trick.

Such is the opening routine I use when performing with a borrowed deck. When I use my own cards I have a still more subtle and mystifying routine. I have always done my conjuring with "Angel Back" cards. They have become a habit. In addition to being strong, flexible and highly calendared, they have one peculiarity that makes them invaluable to the card artist. This peculiarity is an irregularity in the scroll design on the back that renders them "reversible." When I divulged this secret in "The Art of Magic," in 1908, giving a chapter of card tricks of my own devising based on this principle, the secret was known to very few magicians and was jealously guarded. In recent years, however, it has become so generally known that I need not dwell on the method of using "reversible" cards, explaining only

my opening routine, as regards their employment in this particular trick.

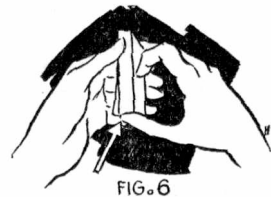
I shuffle the pack myself and spread it out face down on the table—or on the floor if no table is handy. Two spectators draw a card each. I ask them to mark their cards, and while they are occupied in doing this I gather up the card on the table and give them an overhand shuffle. Now, holding the pack in my hands, I request the spectators to place their cards face down on the table and to cover them with their hands. I explain this request on the grounds that all persons possess more or less animal magnetism and, as playing cards are more or less susceptible to this magnetism, it is through this particular force that I am able to accomplish the experiment. This is misdirection, of course. The real purpose is to see if the spectators have reversed their cards or not. It almost invariably happens in practice that they do not reverse the cards. Consequently, I reverse the pack in my own hands before spreading it out again face down on the table. Should they have reversed their cards, I do not reverse the pack, which is spread out in a fan across the table. I now invite the spectators to push their cards in the pack. This done I very deliberately—using only the tips of the fingers of both hands—square up the cards, merely sliding them together, and not for an instant so much as lifting the pack from the table. The two chosen cards are now “reversed” in the pack. Now comes the baffling part of the trick. I request one of the spectators to take the pack from the table himself and give it a shuffle. “Overhand, if you don’t mind,” I add, casually. “Any other kind of shuffle is likely to bend the cards—and a bent card would utterly destroy the mystery of the experiment.”

This is a natural enough request, for very few persons can do the riffle shuffle without fumbling; and in all the years I have been doing this trick I have never heard the slightest comment on this request.

So the spectator gives the pack a genuine shuffle, and the two drawn cards (the performer, of course, has not the slightest inkling of their identity) are to all intents and purposes hopelessly lost in the deck. This being so, the performer should make as much stock of it as possible in his patter, emphasizing the point that never once has he touched the cards. This is not quite true, of course, but by this time the audience has forgotten utterly that the performer even so much as spread the cards on the table.

Taking back the pack, then, I move toward the audience, requesting that a third card be selected. As I walk forward I am fanning the cards in readiness for the spectator to draw, and at the same time keeping a sharp lookout for the scroll irregularity in the upper left-hand corner that denotes a "reversed" card. By constant practice I am able invariably to locate both cards and slip them to the top of the deck before I reach the spectator. But it does not matter should only one be located and shifted to the top, for after the spectator has drawn his card I keep on running the cards until I locate the second "reversed" card. Then in the natural movement of turning away while the spectator marks his card, or shows it to the audience, it is a simple matter to shift the "reversed" card to the top of the pack. The two "reversed" cards are now on top. They are then brought to the center by the two-handed pass. The third card is replaced on top of these and all three are brought to the top by the two-handed pass. Of course, the three chosen cards can be palmed off and the pack handed out for shuffling. But this is an unnecessary refinement. As the pack was shuffled by the audience only a few moments since, the spectators should be convinced that all the drawn cards are lost in the pack. So I merely give the deck a perfunctory overhand shuffle, taking care, however, not to disturb the three top cards. This done, I lay it on the table.

But before laying the pack down I perform a very necessary sleight. On my way back to the table I thumb-count seven cards from the bottom of the pack and shift them to the top. The third chosen card (the last one replaced) is now the eighth card from the top of the pack.



I now request a spectator to think of a number between one and ten. The chances are ninety in a hundred that either "seven" or "eight" will be chosen. If "eight," I direct the spectator who drew the third card to take the pack in his own hands and count down to the eighth card. If "seven," I direct him to count off seven cards and to turn up the next one. If, as sometimes happens on rare occasions, some other number is called, I take the pack myself and shift the requisite number of cards from the top or the bottom, as the case may be. My own

experience extending over many years is that with a little knowledge of human nature and a little practice in putting the exact stress on the words "between one and ten," the performer will not miss forcing either "seven" or "eight" once in twenty-five times. In fact, so interested did I become in this psychological problem that for a period extending over six years I kept a faithful record of the numbers chosen each time I performed the trick. Out of 540 performances in that period, I missed forcing the required "seven" or "eight" only twenty-three times.

The first card revealed, I gather up the cards dealt by the spectator and place them on the bottom of the pack. The other two selected cards are now on top. I hand the pack to the spectator who drew the second card, saying: "I want you to take the pack and deal the cards one by one, face down, on my left hand, in such a manner that neither you nor I will know what cards are dealt. I count the cards aloud as they are dealt, "One, two, three," etc. When, say, five cards have been dealt, I slap my right hand smartly on the packet in the left, saying: "Pardon me! I forgot to tell you that you are privileged to stop at any number you wish. Do not let me influence you in any way. But not to make the experiment tedious, I suggest any number up to fifteen."

The deal goes on, the performer *not* counting aloud now, but keeping track of the cards nevertheless, for it is essential to the third and last phase of the "Triple Mystery" that he should know the exact number so dealt. Let us assume that the dealer stops with the twelfth card. His card, it will be remembered, is at the bottom of the packet of twelve in the performer's left hand. The right hand grips this packet, fingers at top and thumb at bottom, as if squaring up the cards. The finger tips of the left hand push the bottom card out at the right side of the packet; it is gripped at the upper right-hand corner between the third and little fingers, and shifted to the top of the packet in the manner already described.

With a little practice this "move" is undetectable. The performer is further protected by a very natural piece of misdirection. The instant the spectator stops dealing, I say "Stop!" in a rather peremptory tone of voice. Then, more casually: "Did I influence you in any way to stop at this particular card?" The exclamation "Stop!" draws all eyes away from my hands for a moment. In that moment, of course, the card is shifted to the top. At the words, "this particular card,"

I tap the top card of the packet lightly with my forefinger, thus indirectly revealing that there is nothing in my hand, and at the same time my left thumb pushes the top card slightly over the right side of the pack.

The spectator very naturally answers "No" to the question. "Very well," I go on, "if my trick has been successful, then this card (here I tap the top card with the forefinger again) should be your card. Will you name it, please? The Queen of Diamonds? Thank you."

Slowly, very slowly, and using only the tip of my forefinger, I tip over the top card of the packet which, of course, proves to be the Queen of Diamonds, or whatever the chosen card may be.

(NOTE: If the "sighting" method is used, the performer, of course, "glimpses" each card after he has shifted it to the top, this maneuver being covered by the shuffle. Knowing each card, he is enabled to hand the pack to the particular spectator who noted the card, in each phase of the triple mystery. But if the "reversed" card method be employed, the first and second drawn cards will very likely be shuffled out of their order, so that when he comes to the second phase of the trick he will not know whether the card to be revealed was drawn first or second. In this case I simply hand the pack to some one in the audience, who has taken no part in the experiment, and alter the patter accordingly. This variant in no wise detracts from the effectiveness of the trick.)

The condition of things at this stage of the trick should be as follows: Two of the drawn cards have been discovered, apparently by the spectators themselves under circumstances that would almost preclude any explanation of trickery, and the performer is left with a packet of twelve (or whatever the number may be) cards in his left hand. The last of the selected cards to be revealed is on the bottom of this packet. During the surprise occasioned by the revealing of the second selected card, I glimpse this bottom card. Let us assume that it is the Eight of Diamonds. For the third phase of our "Triple Mystery" this card is to be "spelled out." Now, there are fifteen letters in "Eight of Diamonds." As in this instance, it is the bottom card of a packet of twelve cards, all that is necessary is to get three additional cards on top of this packet in order to have the Eight of Diamonds in the right position for "spelling out"—that is, the fifteenth

card from the top. My procedure is to replace the packet of twelve on top of the deck and add the three necessary cards during a false shuffle. If the reader prefers, he can shift three cards from the bottom of the deck.

I prefer the shuffle for the reason that my usual routine at this point is to try to make the audience believe that I have forgotten all about a third card's having been drawn. After getting this card in the proper numerical position, I subject the pack to a vigorous shuffle and a series of false cuts. I use the V-shaped false shuffle, holding the two packets in the air as I riffle the cards together. I assume that the reader is acquainted with this sleight. If not, I advise him to acquire it as quickly as possible, for it is unquestionably the most valuable of all false shuffles in the artistic presentation of card magic.

But to return to our problem. After the shuffle and the cuts, I drop the pack on the table, take out a handkerchief to wipe my hands, at the same time walking forward and remarking: "For my next experiment I should like to borrow—"

At this point I am always reminded—more or less gleefully, for an audience dearly loves to catch a conjurer napping—that So-and-So also drew a card. Here is an opportunity for a little acting. I look as crestfallen as possible and apologize for my absent-mindedness. I admit rather sheepishly that I had forgotten all about a third card's having been drawn.

"Unfortunately," I proceed, going back to the table, taking up the pack, and giving it a single false riffle shuffle as I walk forward again, "unfortunately the cards have passed beyond my control. The spell has been broken, and your card, sir, (addressing the spectator who drew the card), is hopelessly lost in the pack. Consequently I shall have to bring the experiment to a different conclusion than I had intended. I shall have to resort to mind-reading rather than magic to discover your card. My success depends upon you, upon your power to transmit a mental image of your card to my sub-consciousness. At any rate, it will be an interesting experiment, even if it fail. Take the pack in your hands."

I give him the pack and request him to hold it tightly between his hands. Then, with all the solemnity I can muster, I address the audience: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have a request to make. It de-

pend upon you as well as this gentleman whether the experiment is a success. A word at the wrong moment, an impatient gesture, and the telepathic chain of communication is broken. Relax as much as possible. If you know the chosen card, so much the better. With many minds visualizing the card I shall have a better chance of succeeding. Now, sir, think intently of your card. Try to visualize it in colors."

With all the dramatic power I am capable of I purport to read his mind. "It is a red card. It fairly glistens—like diamonds. It *is* a diamond, is it not? One—Two—Three—Four—Five—Six—Seven—Eight—yes—it—has—eight—spots! The Eight of Diamonds is your card! Am I not right?"

"One moment!" The tone is almost a command. My body is tense, my face drawn, as from superhuman exertion. I fling out my arm to quiet the applause or murmurs of approval that always arise at this point. "We have been so successful in this telepathic experiment that I feel emboldened to go even further . . . to try something far more difficult . . . something infinitely more wonderful. I may not succeed. Indeed, I hardly dare hope to succeed. But so seldom do I find conditions right for this experiment, as they now are; so seldom do I find an audience so helpful as you have been, that I feel I ought to take advantage of this opportunity. What I propose to attempt, ladies and gentlemen, is one of the most inexplicable of all the problems of magic. It originated among the priests of the ancient Egyptian temples, in the days of the Ptolmies. It was revived by the Rosicrucians, ages ago, and was a part of their strange ritual. Laplace, the great philosopher and mathematical genius, devoted a volume to an attempt to solve this mystery. He called it the 'Paradox of Chance.'

Briefly, this paradox is that playing cards—ordinarily thought to be the most capricious of all mundane objects—fall into different sequences in different hands. What I mean is, that a pack of playing cards in my hands, for example will, through some magical influence that the philosophers are unable to account for, fall into a certain predestined order that will have more or less influence on my life—granting that we believe in a certain prearranged significance to each card. In your hands, sir, (addressing the spectator holding the pack), the cards will fall into an entirely different order or sequence. If we are to believe the ancient Egyptians and the Rosicrucian philosophers,

there is a deep significance in the fact that you drew the eight of diamonds tonight. In fact, according to their belief, you would have been unable to draw any other card at that particular moment in your life. Therefore, the Eight of Diamonds must have some dominating influence in your life. It is, you know, one of the four luckiest cards in the pack. It denotes power, wealth and material success.

“Now we come to the most inexplicable phase of this ancient mystery. As you are all aware, the Eight of Diamonds has been hopelessly lost in the pack—through my own blundering. What I want to find out is, if, during the time the pack has been in this gentleman’s possession, his card has fallen into its pre-ordained position. If it has, then it augurs happiness and long life as well as material success. This position is determined by the number of letters in the card. Come, let us test this Paradox of Chance! Deal one card at a time off the top, please, one card for each letter in the Eight of Diamonds.”

I take the first card in my right hand, immediately transferring it to the fingers of the left. I raise this card high in the air, saying “E” as I do so. I go through the same business with the second card, calling out “I.” The third card I herald as “G” as I place it with the other two in the left hand; the fourth one as “H,” and the fifth as “T.” The sixth card is called out as “O,” and the seventh as “F.” Follows the spelling out of the word “Diamonds,” the right hand placing each card as it is dealt into the left hand, with one exception. This exception is the last card, the one falling on “S.” The spectator turns this one over himself.

“Ah, there is something in this old Egyptian mystery, after all! I congratulate you, sir. All your wishes will be realized. Your dreams will all come true. I am glad we had the courage to put it to the test.”

Presented in this form, with a carefully arranged *mise en scene* and a suitable accompaniment of patter, I have never known this trick to prove other than an inexplicable mystery. I say this with some degree of authority, for I have presented it many hundreds of times, under all kinds of conditions, even to repeating it on occasions before the same audiences—a drastic test—and never once has it gone wrong or failed to please the most critical. I know of few other extemporaneous or impromptu card effects that have worn so well and proved so mystifying.

Given the requisite skill in the few sleights employed, there is little chance of failure. Also there is very little to keep track of in a mental way to worry the performer. About the only mental operation necessary is the figuring out of the number of letters in the chosen card, and even this may be reduced to an almost negligible system. Ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen or fifteen letters will spell any card. The following table, therefore, is quickly memorized:

(of) clubs . . . 7 letters	(of) spades . . . 8 letters
(of) hearts . . . 8 letters	(of) diamonds . . . 10 letters

In actual practice pay no attention to the word "of." Simply regard clubs as made up of seven letters, instead of five; hearts and spades, eight letters, instead of six; and diamonds, ten letters, instead of eight. Thus, when "glimpsing" the card that is to be "spelled out," you have only to count mentally the letters in the card's denomination. A simple matter, inasmuch as three, four or five letters spell the denominations of any card. The only other phase of the trick wherein the performer has to exercise his wits is the inventing, on the spur of the moment, something pleasant to go with the particular card that is to be "spelled out." A little practice will make this part of the trick plain sailing.

Such is "The Triple Mystery" as I conceived it more than two decades ago. If I have been unduly prolix in describing the three phases into which the effect naturally falls, I ask indulgence. The bare bones of the trick could have been described in a page, or even half a page of THE MAGICAL BULLETIN. But a conjuring trick so described, as the late Professor Hoffman observed in his preface to "Later Magic," is like an air picked out with one finger on the piano. It has no artistic value. So I have preferred to err on the side of prolixity rather than superficiality, even at the risk of wearing the experienced reader who, as is quite proper, will do the trick—if he does it at all!—in his own way, with his own *mise en scene*, his own arrangement, and his own words. But this building up of an experiment in card conjuring is not intended for the experienced reader. Rather is it a desire to explain my version of a favorite combination, in the hope that it may prove a lesson in card conjuring for the beginning magician, and a genuine addition to the repertory of the aspiring amateur. I have aimed to teach the interested reader *how to do* "The

Triple Mystery," rather than merely to tell him *how it is done*. So I strongly urge the reader to whom the effect may appeal to practice each detail patiently until the working of the mechanics of the trick, so to speak, has become automatic. Then if he will invest the experiment with the proper setting and clothe it with suitable patter, I give him my word he will have a card trick that will more than repay him for the time spent in mastering it. He will have a brilliant card mystery that can be presented at any time, at any place, under any conditions. And, above all, I believe that once he has "put it over" before an audience, he will never willingly relinquish it from his program.

A word in closing. About six years ago I devised another and even more effective and dramatic routine for the last phase of "The Triple Mystery." That is to say, an entirely different method of "spelling out" the name of the last card. But as the working of this method depends upon quite another principle of card magic, which would needs be explained at considerable length, lack of space prevents its being disclosed at this time. In a future "Leaf," however, I hope to be able to do full justice to this variant of "The Triple Mystery," and to describe in detail several other combinations of mine based on this particular principle. That is to say, if the readers of THE MAGICAL BULLETIN have the patience to follow me that far.

● THE CHINESE RINGS

It is not my intention, in this second "leaf" from my magical note-books, to go into a detailed working of this famous old sleight of hand mystery, which is to the art of magic what the figures of Praxiteles are to sculpture, the plays of Euripedes to the drama, and the symphonies of Beethoven to music. That is to say, a classic feat of conjuring. The perfect trick!

The reasons for not going into the trick as a whole are obvious. For one, it could not be compassed within the scope of a magazine article. For another, every performer of the rings has his own favorite routine. What I propose to do, therefore, is to explain my own routine in a general way and describe in particular certain moves of my own arrangement. These moves are all based upon a device I invented a good many years ago which, to my mind, greatly enhances the original mystery. I am aware that few things are more hazardous than to claim originality for a feat of magic; but I wish to put down here in black and white that to the best of my knowledge I am originator of the particular set of linking rings with which it is possible to perform the trick exactly as I have been accustomed to do it for almost three decades. It may be that others have used a similar device. I do not know. My set was made to my order by Milton Chase, of Boston, in the early Nineties. He was sworn to secrecy. Since then I have revealed the secret to less than half a dozen conjuring friends—among them Harry Kellar, T. Nelson Downs and the late Harry Stork. The idea was new to these masters of the art. Also it was new to Ching Ling Foo. I mean the genuine Mongolian conjurer, not any of the host of imitators that traded on the great success the Chinaman made in this country more than two decades ago. I count it something of a triumph that I completely mystified the wily old Foo with this particular device. And Foo was a great performer with the rings.

The original idea for my set of rings is down in my note-books under date of August, 1893. I was an enthusiast with the rings at that

time. I had met Harry Stork, only a year or two before, and a friendship had begun which lasted until his death. Stork was a remarkably fine magician and an adroit performer of the rings. Through him I became acquainted with Yank Hoe, the famous Italian conjurer, who was playing in Chicago at that time. Yank Hoe was a genius in the handling of the rings. These two men initiated me into the inner mysteries of the trick. Now, one of my failings or traits or whatever you call it, is that I always have been unable to do a trick exactly as I have been taught to do it. After I have learned the framework, I am not satisfied until I have arranged my own *mise en scene* and added a few little quirks and quiddities of my own. It was so with the rings. After I had got the routine at my finger tips, so to speak, I began to be unhappy. I wanted some moves that nobody else had. And it was in the course of my experimenting that I hit upon the device and the series of moves that this idea makes possible.

This device, in a word, is an extra ring. But it is not just an ordinary extra ring, though it will pass muster as such when handed out for examination with the other rings. It is not faked in any way. There is no cunningly contrived "key-hole" or mechanical trap-door. It is, in fact, a solid ring of steel. Its sole specialty lies in the fact that it is just a trifle larger in circumference than the other rings of the set. Just enough larger so that the other rings, single or linked, may be passed THROUGH it. This difference in size is not at all discernible to the eye, and the large ring may be handed out for examination without fear of any one's detecting the discrepancy. Never once in all the years I have been using this special ring has any one ever detected any difference in the size of the rings. Magicians have been as utterly baffled as the uninitiated. Of course, the rings have to be well made. Milton Chase, the old Boston maker of apparatus and a perfect wizard of a mechanic, made me a wonderful set that has stood the wear and tear of almost thirty years of hard usage. My rings are in as perfect shape today as when I bought them. I have the same confidence in the quality of Mr. Thayer's workmanship as I had of Chase's, and it is because of this faith in the integrity of Mr. Thayer's craftsmanship and work—that integrity which is, as the wise man of the old Arabian tale put it, "the priceless ingredient of any product"—that I want him to have all the privileges, so far as I am concerned, of putting this particular set of linking rings upon the market.

My set is composed of nine rings, as follows: A "Key" ring; the usual set of three rings welded together; the usual set of two rings welded together; two single rings of the same diameter as the others; and one single ring of larger size. The outside diameter of the eight ordinary rings is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The outside diameter of the large single ring is 9 inches. The inside diameter of this large single ring approximates $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. That is to say, the inside diameter of the large ring is practically the same as the outside diameter of the ordinary rings. Wrought to these specifications, the ordinary linked and single rings of the set may be pushed through the large ring, with just a minimum of effort on the part of the performer. And it is here that the factor of perfect workmanship must be taken into account. The large ring must not be so large that an ordinary ring will drop through it without any urging on the part of the performer. Nor must the fit be so close that the performer will have to exert any appreciable strength to force a smaller ring through the larger. Perfectly constructed, a small ring will nest comfortably within the large ring, but will not drop through of its own accord. In this position, however, a slight pressure of a single thumb or finger should be all that is necessary to force the smaller ring through. What actually happens, of course, is that the steel of the large single ring springs a fraction of a hair's breadth when the periphery of the small ring is pressed against the inside circumference of the large ring. My own rings are so accurately fashioned that the amount of force used to press a small ring through the large one would not crush the most delicate bird's egg. And yet the small ring will nest within the large one without danger of falling prematurely through. A set of rings to conform to these requirements must be wrought out of the best grade material, and the workmanship must be flawlessly accurate. It is because this is so that I want Mr. Thayer to make these rings.

Now for the handling of this special set. Like Charles Waller (see his book, "For Magicians Only") I conceal the "key" ring under my coat. Only I hang it on the left side, whereas Waller hangs his in a bicycle clip on the right side. I suspend the "key" ring from a hook of my own designing, of which I will have more to say later on.

I come forward holding the eight rings on my left arm. The precise arrangement of these rings, counting from the elbow toward

the wrist, is as follows: First comes the set of three (i.e., innermost, near the elbow); then the extra large single ring; then the set of two; and, lastly (at the wrist) the two ordinary single rings. These two single rings are passed out for examination. The set of two is dropped down so as to be held at the finger tips of the left hand. Back of them, nearer the wrist, is the extra large single ring; and back of this, the set of three. Now comes the move known as the "clash." Taking back one of the single rings from the audience, this ring is struck down on the rings of the left hand. It falls into the space between the set of two and the large single ring. Synchronously with the clash, the left fingers release one of the set of two. This ring falls down. The illusion is that one solid ring has been linked in another. This set of two is immediately handed out for examination.

You now have two single rings in the left hand. The first one, that is, the ordinary single ring you took from a spectator, is at the finger tips. Back of it is the large single ring. These are handed out for examination also. The only discretion needed at this stage of the proceedings is to hand the large single ring to some one seated at some little distance from the spectators who are examining the other rings. By this maneuver you obviate all danger of the large rings being held up flat against the ordinary rings, in which case, of course, the discrepancy in size would be instantly noticeable. Such a contingency would not happen once in a hundred times, even if you passed the rings out together; but there is nothing gained in magic by taking chances. The success of putting over an illusion lies precisely in attention to small details.

While the single rings and the set of two are being examined, I take the set of three from the left arm, toss them into the air, where they apparently link themselves together. Catching them, I immediately hand them out for examination.

All the rings are now in possession of the audience. While waiting I take a silk handkerchief out of the left inside pocket of the coat. It is important that the handkerchief be taken from this particular pocket, as will be made clear later on. Deliberately, I wipe my hands. Then, with the handkerchief still in my hand, I go about the task of collecting the rings. I take them with the right hand from the spectators and immediately transfer them to the left hand. I take care to

put them in the left hand in their original order. That is to say, with one exception. This exception is the large single ring. Apparently, through negligence, I leave the ring in possession of the spectator who has been examining it.

I now have a bunch of seven rings in my left hand. I rub them with the handkerchief, explaining that it is by this means of the electricity so engendered that I am able to accomplish the mystery of the Chinese Rings. Still rubbing briskly, I turn to go to my table. As I turn to the left for this purpose, my right hand replaces the handkerchief in the left-hand inside pocket of the coat. This very natural action brings the right hand directly over the "Key" ring concealed there. Now, the hook on which this "Key" ring hangs is so fashioned that only a slight DOWNWARD pull is necessary to release the ring. Thus, in a half turn of the body, without any discernible move other than the natural one of putting away a handkerchief, I have added the "Key" ring to the bunch of seven rings in my left hand.

So much for the preliminaries. The trick proper now begins. With "Key" and ordinary single ring I go through the opening routine, known technically as "solo linking." This is a series of preliminary effects in linking and unlinking, designed to prepare the minds of the spectators for the more intricate mysteries to come. The "solo linking" over, I toss the single ring on the table and take up the set of two. Follows the usual routine with "Key" and set of two and the weaving of the conventional three-ring figures, such as the "Shamrock," the "Tete-a-Tete Chair," and the "Sec-Saw." Then the set of two is laid aside and the set of three taken up. Making what is known to conjurers as the "basic move" for the manipulation of this group of three rings and "Key," I twine the rings into such designs as the "Hour Glass," "Lady's Handbag," "Four-Leaf Clover," ending with the "Hottentot's Head-Dress."

As I remarked at the outset, it is not my purpose to go into a detailed description of this part of the routine of the linking rings. I am writing primarily for those who are familiar with these moves. Of course, I have a secondary purpose of hoping to interest the beginning amateur in this greatest of all the old mysteries. The reader who is not familiar with the routine of the Chinese Rings is recommended to get Namreh's typescript monograph entitled, "The Lincoln Rings."

This is not only the grammar, so to speak, of the trick, but also the only complete textbook ever written on its artistic presentation. To my way of thinking, Namreh has done for the Chinese Rings what Robert Houdin, in his "Secrets of Conjuring and Magic," did for the magic art in general. It is almost the last word on the rings. I say "almost" advisedly, for I think I may honestly claim that my own contribution to this classic is worthy of the most fastidious performer's consideration. When the aspirant has mastered Namreh's complete working of the trick, I advise him to study Charles Waller's arrangement in "For Magicians Only." Here he will get a lesson in the psychology of conjuring and also learn, through Waller's patter for Chinese Rings, something of the poetry of magic. Waller's conception of this trick is both dramatic and artistic. His patter is unsurpassed for charm, subtlety, and dramatic effect. Outside of Namreh and Waller, I am not acquainted with any literature on the rings that is of any value whatsoever to the student.

And so, taking it for granted that the reader is familiar with the "basic move" for the three-group, and with the manipulations necessary for the weaving of the designs mentioned, I will go on with the story. The last figure we made was the "Hottentot's Head-Dress." With this on my head I go down into the audience. Now, with the spectators all around me, I take off the head-piece and shake the rings out so that they hang in a chain of four in the left hand. The "Key," of course, at the top.

It is at this point that I depart from the usual routine and introduce the particular sequence of moves that are, so far as I know, of my own devising. First of all, I take back the large single ring which, it will be remembered, was left in the custody of the spectators. I take this ring in the right hand. Now, holding the chain of four in my left hand high in the air, so that the bottom ring of chain falls about level with the waist, I set it to swinging like a pendulum. At each return swing I clash the large single ring in my right hand against the bottom ring of chain. This crash of metal upon metal is for a purpose. It prepares the audience for what is to come as the preliminary throwing of a ball or orange in the air prepares the spectator's mind for the subsequent evanishment. Instinctively the audience knows that something is going to happen at the third clash.

And it does. The chain swings back for the third time. The ring in the right hand clashes against the bottom ring of the chain. And coincidentally with the clash the right hand makes a swallow-like upward sweep, running the single ring up the chain and leaving it linked in the "Key" ring at the top. The effect to the eye is that the single ring cleaves through each ring of the chain. It is a spectacular move. The fact that the ring has just been taken from a spectator and straightaway passed through four links of solid steel—under the very eyes of the audience, is what makes it so convincing.

The condition of things at this stage should be as follows: Left hand holds chain in air, "Key" at top. The large single ring, now linked in "Key," is held out by the right hand at right angles to chain.

I hold this pose for a moment. Then my right hand secretly unlinks the large single ring from the "Key." But I hold this single ring with the left fingers flat against the "Key," as if it were still joined. My right hand is now free. I take out the handkerchief from the left inside pocket of coat and gently rub the two rings at top of chain. Then the handkerchief is returned to the same pocket.

Now, holding the chain rather close to the left side, broadside of the rings to audience, my right hand grips the large single ring, which the audience believes is still linked at the top of the chain. This single ring is gripped at the right edge—the edge toward the audience. Slowly, very slowly, the right hand forces this single ring down the chain, eventually pulling it free from the bottom ring. I make no haste in this move, but apparently exert a great deal of strength, as if I were actually forcing solid metal through solid metal. And as my right hand moves downward with the single ring, the left wrist keeps twisting the chain. First to the left (i.e., away from the body); then back to the right (i.e., toward the body). This twisting movement of the chain gives the illusion of the single ring's passing through the links, instead of merely sliding over the surface of the chain, as is actually the case. The reader familiar with the old deception of bending a watch, will understand what I mean. The hands bend outward and then back inward on the polished metal case of the timepiece, and the effect is as if the watch were actually bent almost double. The effect in this move of the rings is analogous. Through the interplay of shadows, providing the requisite movements of both hands are syn-

chronised, the illusion of ring passing through ring is so perfect that the eyes of performer himself will be deceived.

I now come to the second spectacular move of this original routine. For a moment after the large single ring is pulled free from the bottom ring of chain, I hold it toward the spectators in the outstretched right hand. Just long enough so that the audience may be perfectly clear in its own mind as to what happened! Then I transfer this single ring to the left hand, at the same time taking the chain of four rings in my right. The "Key," of course, is still at the top. I raise the left arm almost perpendicularly above my head, and let the single ring slip up this arm to the shoulder. Once more I take the "Key" in the left hand. But this time I retain hold of the bottom ring of chain with my right. In other words, both hands hold the chain horizontally in front of the body. Both arms are lifted high above my head. I now make a swift downward swoop with the arms. This sends the single ring at the shoulder whirling down the left arm and crashing against the "Key" ring in the left hand. The movement is so violent that the force of it sends the large single ring completely OVER THE "KEY" RING. At the conclusion of this movement, the large single ring hangs down between the "Key" and the second ring of the chain, where it appears to be interlinked.

For the tick of a second or two the chain is held immovable, to give the spectators a chance to realize exactly what has happened. Then a second violent up and down movement, and the large single ring PASSES OVER THE SECOND RING. There is no more pausing now. The arms flail up and down until the large single ring has PASSED OVER ALL THE RINGS OF CHAIN AND FALLS FREE UPON THE RIGHT ARM. As it falls upon the right wrist, the arms are flung upward, the free single ring sliding down right arm to the shoulder.

The effect is that a solid, examined ring has traveled, without the intervention of the performer's hands, from the left shoulder to the right, passing through four solid metal rings during the magical journey. The violent clashing of the rings throughout the passage assists materially in maintaining the illusion.

I now come to the third and final move in the original routine. This is the "Knockout." Remember, I am right among the audience. I am still holding the chain of four rings horizontally between my

hands, the "Key" in the left and the bottom ring of chain in the right. The large single ring hangs on right shoulder.

Once more the arms swoop downward. The single ring is sent clashing against bottom ring of chain in right hand. The single ring PASSES OVER this bottom ring. Another swoop. The single ring PASSES OVER the second ring and falls into the space where the two middle rings of the chain are interlocked. During this last movement the right hand LINKS THE BOTTOM RING OF CHAIN INTO THE "KEY."

It is difficult to describe in words the exact appearance of the weaving of the rings resulting from this last maneuver. The rings appear to be hopelessly intermingled. But if you are following this explanation with the rings actually in hand, you will find that you have five rings twisted together in an apparently inextricable "Gordian Knot" of steel. The large single ring hangs down from the center of this knot.

I now ask a spectator to take this hanging single ring in his hands and pull against me. I am holding the "Key" in my left hand. The bottom ring of chain, which is now linked in the "Key," is held in my right. "You see, sir," I remark, as we pull against each other, "All the single rings are hopelessly interlocked. Can you take them apart, sir?"

He naturally answers "no." I urge him to try. "Harder," I exhort. "Pull harder!" This works up the excitement. And while we are struggling against each other, my right hand is engaged in secretly unlinking the bottom ring from the "Key."

"Harder!" I urge. "Harder!"

We are see-sawing back and forth, as if engaged in a tug-of-war. Suddenly I let go of the bottom ring, which I have just unlinked from "Key." The rings of the chain SLIP THROUGH THE LARGE SINGLE RING, and the spectator, to his blank amazement, is left with this solid single ring in his hand. This is the "Knockout." The impossible has happened under the very eyes of the audience. My own success with this move has been such to justify my opinion that it has a dumfounding effect upon any audience. For a moment the spectators, equally with the man holding the ring in his hand, are too stunned to move.

I do not give the spectators time to recover their senses. I move swiftly back toward the table and plunge again into the routine of weaving designs with the rings. In the main, I follow Namreh's routine. The final figure is the "Bunch of Keys." As I collect the rings on the "Key" for this figure, I go swiftly down into the audience and take the large single ring I left in their possession. I toss the ring into the air, and catch it as it comes down, in the "Key." This in the midst of the audience. Then I go back to the table, arm at full length swinging and clashing the rings violently all the while.

Halfway to the table I stop suddenly, turn around and, holding "Key" with both hands (opening of "Key" toward the floor), I let the rings fall and scatter on the floor. If working on a platform, I drop the "Key" among the other rings. If in a drawing-room or at a club, I lay the "Key" carelessly on my table.

Such is my routine with the Chinese Rings. I can assure the reader that if he will go to the trouble of having a single extra large ring made to go with his set, he will be in possession of a trick that he will never willingly leave out of his program. It is what latter-day writers on things magical seem to like to refer to as a "master mystery."

In conclusion, a word about the hook on which the "Key" ring hangs under the coat. For years I experimented with all sorts and conditions of hooks. But none of them proved wholly satisfactory. I wanted a hook that would satisfy certain conditions. It must be simple. It must hold the ring securely. And the ring must be released with a single DOWNWARD PULL.

This downward pull was really the sine qua non I was after, for the double movement of lifting the "Key" ring UP and OVER a hook had never been satisfactory to me. I wanted the movements of placing the handkerchief in my pocket and pulling away the "Key" ring to blend in one. The lifting of the "Key" up and over a hook destroyed the perfect timing I was after.

Eventually I hit upon a device that has worked perfectly for years. With a vise and a pair of pincers I twisted the hook out of ordinary soft steel wire. This wire is about one-eighth of an inch in diameter. In addition to being an ideal holder for the "Key" ring, it is adaptable to objects of different sizes. The wire being soft, a mere pinch of the fingers and the gripping part of the apparatus can be made larger

or smaller as the occasion demands. I use the same hook to hold the "Key" for the Chinese Rings, a Thayer Fire-Bowl, one coin or half a dozen coins, one card or half a deck. As the twisting of the wire is a complicated operation to describe, though simple enough to do, I am sending my home-made contraption to Mr. Thayer. I have no doubt that he will make up a similar device for any reader who may be interested in this useful appliance.

● THE QUICK OR THE DEAD

THE FOLLOWING TRICK is one of the best of thought-reading tricks, and I can say this without conceit, because I did not invent it. The secret reached me through a friend, and I do not know, and cannot discover, who originated it. Perhaps the clever conjurer, whoever he may be, who invented it will accept my apologies for including it in this book without mention of his name."

Thus Mr. David Devant in his description of a trick of mine that at one time enjoyed not a little popularity. I refer to a thought-reading experiment with cards commonly known as "The Telephone Trick." Mr. Devant did me the honor to include this experiment, with the complimentary words quoted above, in his well-known book, "Tricks For Everyone." I quote his introductory paragraph for three reasons. One, to assure the distinguished British conjurer that I, a humble admirer of his art and authorship, have long since accepted his apologies. Another, that to my mind the words quoted may be applied with a better grace to the trick on which I have bestowed the fantastic, if inappropriate, title of "The Quick or the Dead," which is the subject of this third "Leaf" from my note-books. I think this trick deserves the praise Mr. Devant bestowed on the telephone trick—"one of the best of thought-reading tricks." And, like Mr. Devant, I can say this without conceit, because I did not invent it. My third reason, simply that "The Quick or the Dead" is bracketed in my note-book with "The Telephone Trick" as coming into existence at one and at the same time. Twin tricks, so to speak. Under both tricks I made an entry at the time to the effect that they were of my "invention."

On sober second thought, I have come to believe that there was some justification for this entry. The telephone trick, of course, was a pure invention. The effect was original, and the methods used to obtain this effect, while based on the old and specific principle of code work, were my own. No such claim of originality can be made for "The Quick or the Dead." Neither the effect nor the specific principle is new. Nevertheless, it is an "invention" in the sense that in magic, as

in other fields of endeavor, the chief source from which inventors derive their inspiration is the work already done. Now, the principle on which "The Quick or the Dead" is based can be easily traced to a definite origin. The groundwork had all been done before the trick came to my hand. All that I can claim in the way of an "invention," therefore, is that I have applied the specific principle of a well-known spiritualistic effect to the magic of cards. By means of a distinctive *mise en scene* and specially arranged patter, I have made a magical effect out of mediumistic secret, a new trick out of an old one. To this extent, I believe, I am justified in claiming it as my own. To my mind it is immeasurably superior to the telephone trick originated at the same time. Indeed, so little value did I put upon the telephone experiment, save as a novelty, that I had no qualms about "giving it away" in print after I had played with it a while. But "The Quick or the Dead" I have guarded zealously. It has been one of my favorite tricks since I first worked it, in 1908. How many times I have performed it I cannot say, but the number runs into the thousands. And always it has proved undetectable, and always, if I may say so, it has had an impressive effect upon intelligent audiences.

As I have said, the trick can easily be traced to a definite origin. If you will turn to pages 222 - 228 of David P. Abbott's "Behind the Scenes With the Mediums," you will find the mediumistic secret on which this card trick is based. The inventor, so far as is known, was the celebrated medium, Dr. Schlessinger. In 1908, when Mr. Abbott's book was published, this subtle effect was comparatively unknown, although the late Billy Robinson had told me about it some years before. It speedily came into popularity, however, and is now one of the stock tricks of magicians. I have no doubt but that it will be found in Mr. Thayer's exhaustive catalogue. I believe it goes generally under the title of "The Dead Name." For my own purposes I changed the title to "The Quick or the Dead." While this title was decidedly appropriate to the Schlessinger "stunt," it has little or no bearing on the same trick done with playing cards. But as it is an effective title, and as titles of magical effects are designed to be misleading anyway, I have retained the name.

At the risk of wearying the well-informed reader, I will give briefly the effect of the Schlessinger experiment, as it is analogous to

the effect with cards I am going to describe. On a sheet of paper six names are written. Five are names of living persons. One name is of someone who has died. The dead name is written indiscriminately among the living names. The paper is then cut into slips, one name on each slip. The slips are folded and dropped into a hat. The medium takes out one of the folded slips, holds it against his forehead, and reads the name of the dead person. The slip is then opened and found to have the dead name written on it.

So much for the effect. I will not go into the details of the way the medium worked this trick, as Mr. Abbott has done this exhaustively in his book. His account is a masterly analysis of this purely psychological trick, and the reader who may be interested in the card effect I have based on this principle is earnestly recommended to study Mr. Abbott's explanation. It will help him to understand the psychology of the card trick. At the same time I will endeavor to make my explanation of the card effect as clear as possible, independently of Mr. Abbott's account.

I believe I have remarked somewhere in the course of these articles that I have a failing for tinkering with tricks already made. When I have learned a trick I am never satisfied until I have made it in some way or other my own. It was so with "The Dead Name" trick, quarried out of Mr. Abbott's book. Although a "knockout" in its original form, I soon became discontented. I wanted to do something "different" with it. I pondered the problem a long time without results. Then one evening, happening to be reading a book on mob psychology, I came upon the following paragraph:

"Let us suppose that a community is thinking of the same thing. Let us assume that this community is exercised over an atrocious crime. It is in everyone's minds. For the time being all other thoughts are crowded out. A stranger coming into this community would at once sense what had happened. His mind would at once react to the collective mind of the community. No one would have to tell him that a crime had been committed. He would know. The collective mind is highly sensitized and telepathic."

In a flash the problem was solved. I would make the "Dead Name" trick a card effect built on the basic idea of mob psychology. And so a card trick it became, and as a card trick I have been doing it ever since. This is the way I do it:

I begin with a brief dissertation on the subject of collective mind. I explain that a crowd has a mind of its own and that a person, by the mere fact of joining a crowd, loses consciousness of the individual qualities of his own mind. He becomes a part of the crowd. His thoughts are those of the crowd. His actions are ruled by the crowd. I introduce the idea embodied in the paragraph quoted above. Briefly I explain how a stranger, coming into a community obsessed with a single thought will, by means of telepathy, be made aware of the thought that is occupying the crowd mind. This patter is not pseudo-scientific fiction designed to lead the mind of the audience away from the true explanation of the trick. It is based on Gustave Le Bon's masterly book on mob psychology. The performer should deliver these opening remarks in all seriousness. The more serious he is the more effective will be the denouement. This is one of the few instances in magic in which the patter is not designed to misdirect an audience, and if the idea of mob psychology is properly presented, the spectators, at the end, will be more or less inclined to accept it as the only logical explanation of the mystery.

During these preliminary remarks I have taken from the table a small clipboard holding a single sheet of paper. As I formerly worked the trick, this clipboard was the ordinary office or billing file, without any preparation whatsoever. But lately, since Mr. Thayer has put his "Mento-Detector" on the market, I have been using this subtle device, which makes the effect of the trick little less than diabolical. I shall describe the trick in its original form, however. The reader who may possess the "Mento-Detector" will know how to apply it to this trick.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," I continue, "I purpose to illustrate what I have said about crowd psychology and the collective mind with a scientific experiment. You, the audience, will represent the community. I will enact the role of the stranger who is to come into this community. The atrocious crime will be represented by a playing card."

While talking I have drawn five straight lines across the sheet of paper on the clipboard, thus marking the sheet into about six equal spaces.

"In order to convince you that this experiment is scientific, and not based on subterfuge or trickery, the card used to represent the

crime will not be drawn from the pack. In fact, we will not use any cards at all. I will go out of the room, and during my absence you shall decide yourselves what card is to represent the crime committed in the community that you, as an audience, represents. I have only one condition to make. It is that after you have agreed upon a card you shall exclude all other thoughts from your mind. You shall think of just one thing—the card. In that way your minds will become merged into a collective mind.”

I lay the clipboard on the table and leave the room while the audience decides upon a card. When I come back I briefly recapitulate what has been done. “One card out of a pack of fifty-two has been mentally agreed upon—not actually withdrawn from a pack. In ordinary circumstances, I should have just one chance in fifty-two of guessing the card you are thinking of. But through the operation of certain psychological laws I hope to be able to prove that the individual mind is absolutely controlled by the collective mind. If you can think of the card you have agreed upon, to the exclusion of all other thoughts, then it is a foregone conclusion that the name of that card will be conveyed telepathically to my mind by the dynamic force of your collective thought. If you cannot concentrate on the card, then I shall fail. Let us make the experiment. I am the stranger coming into the community where a crime has been committed. The card, as I have said, represents the crime.”

With these words I take up the clipboard, with its sheet of paper ruled into six spaces, and advance to the audience.

“In order that there may be no question raised afterward as to the authenticity of this experiment, and no misunderstanding as to the card, I want you to select one of your number to act as referee. Select some one who by no possibility can be suspected of being in collusion with me.”

I hand the clipboard to whomever is selected, and address him with all the gravity I can muster:

“Now, sir, I want you to follow my directions carefully. You are the court of last resort. If any dispute arises, it will be referred to you. Now, to prevent any such dispute, I want you to write down on that piece of paper in your hand the name of the card you and the rest of the company have agreed upon for the experiment. But in order

that there may not be the slightest possibility of my knowing what name you put down, I want you to write it among the names of several other cards of your own choosing. Any cards you please. Only among them somewhere include the name the card this audience has fixed upon in their minds.”

Up to this moment I have purposely held the pencil in my own hand, for it is a psychological fact that the mind of the average person does not begin to think of what he will write until a pencil or pen is in his hand. It is not a part of my plan that the subject shall do any thinking until I am ready for him to do so.

At this point I hand the subject the pencil, at the same time saying sharply: “Any cards you please—one in each space—and don’t let me or anyone else know what cards you write down.”

This last is said very emphatically as I move to the other side of the room.

“Remember,” I add, “any cards you please, only among them somewhere the name of the audience’s card.”

Now, as the subject begins to do as I have commanded, he will naturally pause, before writing the name of each card, in order to think of a card to write. The pause may be slight, but in the nature of things there must be some hesitation; for no one can think instantly of a card, inasmuch as there are fifty-two cards to choose from. Should there be no pause, then the performer, watching from the other end of the room, may be absolutely certain that the subject is writing the name of the audience’s card in the first space, at the top of the paper, as this is the only card he has in mind at the moment the performer commands him to write. So if he doesn’t write this card down first, he will have to pause in order to think of some other card.

In actual practice it seldom happens that the subject writes the name of the audience’s card in the first space. My experience is that this is not done twice in a hundred times, provided the subject is properly manipulated.

After writing the name of a card in the first space, there will be another pause while the subject is thinking of a second card. Now, as the name of this second card is being written down, I increase my watchfulness, for experience has taught me that seventy times out of

a hundred the subject will write the audience's card in the third space. If it falls out this way, there will be no pause after he writes the name of the second card. As the audience's card has been in his mind all the time, he does not consciously have to think of it. Should there be the usual pause after the writing of the second name, then I know that the audience's card will not be written in the third space. But seventy times out of a hundred, as I have said, the name will be written in the third space. If not, twenty-five out the remaining thirty cases the name will be put down in the fourth space. In the remaining five cases the name will be written in the last space. Those deductions are based on approximately one thousand performances of this trick. It has been a practice of mine for many years to keep a statistical record of these things.

In theory the subject has the choice of six spaces in which to write the name of the audiences' card, just as in theory a spectator has a choice of fifty-two cards in drawing one from a pack. In actual practice, however, he is really forced to use the third space for the particular purpose of this trick, just as a spectator is forced to take a particular card the performer wants him to draw. As the subject is predisposed to choose the third space of his own accord, the forcing of this space is a much simpler operation than forcing a card. Here is the way to go about it—a way based on sound psychological laws:

(1) Just as the subject takes the pencil and starts to write, I say suddenly: "Write the names of any cards you wish, and don't let me or anyone else see what you are writing." This is almost certain to insure a pause and the name of an indifferent card to be written first.

(2) I continue talking in a natural manner about the importance of not letting anyone know what cards are selected, and this inevitably results in another pause before the subject puts down the name of a second card.

(3) The instant the second name is down, I exclaim suddenly: "Now write as rapidly as possible! Any card! Quick, please!" Almost invariably the subject will react to this suggestion and write the name of the audience's card in the desired space. If such is the case, the subject will pause to think of a fourth card. If so, then I am sure of my card. If, however, the subject should pass rapidly into the fourth name, I am uncertain whether the audience's card is in the third or fourth

space. But with a little practice this contingency will seldom arise. If it does, there is no need to worry. In the denouement he will have two names to work with, instead of one. If he makes a mistake, and reveals the wrong one first, he can lay the blame to the audience's lack of concentration. Then, with a little patter on the necessity of the spectators becoming merged into a collective mind, he can reveal the second name. Given two chances, the most indifferent performer need not fear failure.

I will assume that the desired name has been forced in the third space. Once I am sure of this, I no longer pay any attention to the subject, but go to the table and take up an envelope that has been lying there on top of a small stack of sheets of extra paper and extra envelopes. This particular envelope is prepared. It has a horizontal slit in the bottom just large enough for a paper billet to be passed through. A duplicate paper billet is pasted vertically inside the envelope at its center.

When the subject has finished his writing, I direct him to fold the paper in half *three times*. As the size of the sheet used is about four inches by five, this folds into a billet the size of the duplicate billet inside the envelope. When the subject has folded his paper, I take it in my right hand. The envelope is in my left, held between the fingers and thumb, the slit, of course, against the palm. Front of envelope is toward the audience.

Slowly, very slowly, I push the billet into the envelope, just far enough so that one end passes through the slit at bottom. Then I seal the flap and take the envelope in my right hand. It is during this transfer that the billet is left palmed in the left hand. My eyes follow the envelope as I take it in the right hand, and this naturally causes the eyes of the audience to follow it. Now, while all eyes are following the envelope, I stand it on the table against a candlestick. The candle is unlighted. My left hand goes into the trousers pocket, brings out a box of matches, and I light the candle. During this natural action I have left the billet in my pocket.

I hold the envelope before the flame of the candle, and as the shadow of the duplicate billet is plainly visible no suspicion of trickery enters the mind of the audience at this juncture.

Now comes a subtle part of the trick. I set fire to the envelope in the flame of the candle, and drop it, flaming, into a brass vessel (or

onto an ordinary plate) on the table. While I am doing this, my left hand goes to the trousers pocket and opens out the billet. As all eyes are focussed on the burning envelope, I take advantage of a moment in which nobody is paying any attention to me to move around the table and gather up the extra sheets of paper and envelopes. I sweep them up with one movement of the right hand, immediately transferring them to the left. This is what the audience would see were it looking at me. But this is what actually happens: As the right hand with its bunch of paper and envelopes moves toward the left hand, this hand comes out of the trousers pocket, *bringing with it the unfolded paper*, which is immediately covered with the paper and envelopes taken from the right. Now, in the act of evening up the paper and envelopes on the table, it is the work of an instant only to glimpse the names written on the undermost paper and to memorize the name of the audience's card. My own practice is to memorize all six names. Long experience with this trick has enabled me to do this at a glance. Thus fortified, I am prepared for any contingency. But as a rule, one need memorize only the names in the third and fourth spaces in order to be on the safe side.

All that remains is to reveal the card the audience is thinking of. I do this in various ways. Sometimes I have the spectators join hands in a circle around my table. In this case, I have incense in the bowl into which I drop the burning envelope; and the perfumed smoke spiralling to the ceiling makes an effective *mise en scene* for the denouement. I stand in the center of the circle, thus following out the suggested idea of the stranger in the community. And under the "influence of the collective mind," my hands weaving in the incense smoke, I make the revelation of the card as dramatic as possible. Performed in this way the trick is an ideal one for the drawing-room.

At other times, especially when called upon to do the trick as an impromptu, I do not use the envelope at all, but follow Schlessinger's routine of folding the billets and dropping them into a hat. I request the subject, after he has written down the names, to cut the paper in slips, one name on each slip. I help him fold the slips into billets and, of course, I make it my business to fold the particular slip bearing the name of the audience's card. I fold this slip slightly different from the others—not so that it will attract attention, but so that I shall be able to identify it at a glance. Of course, as I am folding the billet I memo-

rize the name. Also, if in doubt, I fold a second choice—this one folded a little differently from the other, so that I may also recognize it at a glance. If I am certain of my choice, I let a spectator shake up the billets in the hat and then hand them to me, one at a time. I place each billet to my forehead, but, of course, without result until the proper one is handed to me. This I recognize by the way it is folded, and I read the memorized name with the proper effect.

I also have another way of ending the trick that is very impressive. This method depends upon the performer's ability to memorize the names of six cards almost at a glance. By the means of a very simple mnemonic system I am able to do this in less than ten seconds. I have not the space at my disposal in this installment to go further into this subject of instantaneous memorizing; but as the use of a mnemonic code as a practical factor in card magic is an especial hobby of mine, I hope to be able to treat it more or less in detail in a future series of articles, and to explain some card problems based on this principle that to my mind are among the marvels of modern conjuring.

But to get back to our trick. In this method I fold all the slips myself, memorizing each name as I fold the papers. I fold each slip in a distinctive manner so that I know which is number one, which is number two, and so on. Then, as the spectator hands me each slip, I am able to call out the name written on it. I proceed in this way until I am handed the slip with the audience's card on it. I read this out to the accompaniment of loud rappings from the table, which is equipped with a spirit-rapping device. This is really a "knockout" effect—no pun intended. If so desired, the performer can have the "spirit" rap out the card. This effect is so well known that no explanation is necessary.

If the reader uses a Thayer "Mento-Detector" the trick is much simpler to operate and infinitely more mysterious in effect, especially to an intelligent audience. Equipped with this subtle device the performer need never handle the subject's paper at all. That is the way I am working the trick now. After the subject has written down the names, I come forward with an unprepared envelope in my hand. I request the subject to fold the paper in half. When he has done so, I hand him the envelope, requesting him to place the paper in the envelope himself and seal the flap: As he takes the envelope I naturally

relieve him of the "Mento-Detector." While he is engaged in sealing the envelope I go back to the table, slip the carbon copy out of the "Mento-Detector" and add it to the extra sheets of paper on the table. Now you can have the subject himself burn the envelope, or put it in his pocket. I prefer the pocket myself, as it follows out logically the idea of the subject's acting as referee, as suggested earlier by the patter. After reading the name of the audience's card, I request the subject to take the paper from his pocket and substantiate the fact that I have called the right card.

When I am in the mood for it—I am not naturally inclined toward tricks demanding much preparation—I sometimes bring the trick to a very startling conclusion. I have found by actual experience that more often than not the choice of an audience will fall upon one of the following eight cards: Ace and King of Clubs, Ace and Queen of Hearts, Ace and Jack of Spades, Ace and King of Diamonds.

With glycerine I write the names of the Ace and King of Clubs on my left arm—Ace on the front of the arm, King on the back. The right arm is similarly prepared with the names of the Ace and the Queen of Hearts. The Queen I write on the front of the arm, as this card will be chosen more frequently than any other in the series. I have two china plates on the table. On one I write with glycerine the name of the Ace of Spades. On the other, the Jack of Spades. A flap slate is on the table, with the name of the Ace of Diamonds written on the side under the flap. (Thayer's "Dr. Q" slate, by the way, is the ideal one for the purpose.) A nest of envelopes hangs above the table throughout the performance. In the innermost envelope is a slip of paper bearing the name of the King of Diamonds. Thus prepared, if the choice of the audience falls on any card of this series the performer is in a position to bring the trick to a most impressive conclusion.

For example, suppose that the card chosen is the Queen of Hearts. If you use the "Mento-Detector," you can have the subject burn the paper himself. Then, by rubbing the ashes on the front of the right arm, the name comes out with startling effect.

I know that I have been diffuse in describing this trick and, perhaps, overliberal with patter. My excuse is that I am not describing the trick for the benefit of the experienced magician, but for the amateur, drawing-room performer, who may not be versed in all the quirks and

subtleties of the art. As this is essentially a trick for the home magician, I have aimed to be explicit in every detail, so that the amateur may be able to follow each phase of the experiment. As to patter, instead of an apology, I shall quote a moral of the late Professor Hoffman to adorn my tale: "A trick described, however minutely, from the mere mechanical or technical point of view, gives scarcely more idea of its actual effect than the rough charcoal sketch of the artists does to the finished painting."

Of course, I do not wish to be understood as implying that the reader should use the patter I myself use for this trick. But I do suggest that the general idea on which the effect is built—that of mob psychology and the collective mind—is a pertinent and effective basis for this particular trick. Were it not, I surely should have found this out in the sixteen years I have been performing the trick exactly as I have described it here.

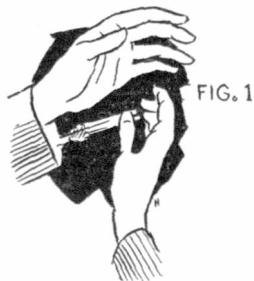
● ROLL YOUR O W N

● EFFECT

Some loose cigarette tobacco is poured on the performer's right palm. This is poured into the left hand and this hand is closed, forming a fist. A sheet of cigarette paper is now laid on the top of the closed fist, and pushed with a finger of the right hand slowly down into the left hand, until it is out of sight. Performer now takes a lead pencil from his pocket and tamps the tobacco in his left fist, and as he keeps on tamping, a perfectly rolled cigarette is pushed out of the lower end of the fist. The cigarette is taken in the right hand, and the left hand is opened and shown empty.

● SECRET

In the act of pouring the tobacco from the right hand into the left hand, the tobacco by a twist of both hands is thrown up the left sleeve. This move is precisely the same as the familiar sleight with a coin—throwing the coin from the right hand up the left sleeve, whilst apparently taking the coin in the left hand. This is executed in the following manner. Take the coin between the thumb and two middle fingers, and slap it in the left hand which you close. Take up the coin and repeat. Now as you pick it up again, throw it up the right sleeve, and slap the left hand again, closing it. Show the right hand empty, and push up the left sleeve. Apparently transfer the coin to the right hand, and push up the right sleeve. Rub both hands together, whereupon the coin apparently vanishes. With the tobacco, the performer would shake the tobacco on his left hand, and throw it up the right sleeve in exactly the same movement as described in sleeving the coin. Adroitly done, the sleight is a perfect one, but it requires a great deal of practice. The moment the



tobacco is sleeved, the left hand is closed, and extended slightly upwards from the shoulder, and the sleeve pulled upwards a little, which serves to hold the tobacco securely against the arm. At first it will be found a little more difficult to sleeve loose tobacco, than it is a coin, but a little practice will make the sleight absolutely impossible to detect, and no one will imagine loose stuff like tobacco could be put in such a place, anyway!

Performer now takes up a cigarette paper, at the same time inserting his thumb in a thumb fake. While a spectator is tearing out one of the cigarette papers, the performer inserts the right thumb in the left fist leaving the thumb fake behind, just below the left thumb and left first finger, which completely hides the fake. Spectator places the cigarette paper on top of the left fist. Performer slowly works the paper into the fist with forefinger. The paper slowly disappears into left hand, but in reality is being pushed into thumb fake. The final pushing movement is made with the left thumb, which comes out with the fake on tip. Thus the paper is disposed of in a perfectly simple and natural manner. The right hand is, of course, shown perfectly empty all through the operation.

At this stage of the experiment, the spectators believe that the left hand holds a quantity of loose tobacco and a cigarette paper. However, the left hand is empty, the tobacco being sleeved and the paper being in the thumb tip. Performer now reaches into vest pocket for a pencil, leaving the thumb fake behind at the same time. This pencil is in reality a hollow tube containing a cigarette. In the perfectly natural movement of tamping the tobacco with the pencil, the cigarette is introduced into the left fist, and is then slowly pushed through the fist until it emerges from the lower end.

The effect of the cigarette coming out of the fist is extremely startling, and as every move is clean and subtle, there is really no chance for a spectator to get any clue to the *modus operandi*.

In handing out the cigarette for examination, there is every chance for getting rid of the tobacco in the sleeve, for as you draw down the sleeve, the tobacco will drop into the hand.

For the performer who cannot sleeve the tobacco, we suggest that he introduce the thumb fake into the left fist at the commence-

ment of the experiment, and into the fake drop the loose tobacco and the cigarette paper, poking it down as described above, and removing the fake with the final poke. Afterwards the experiment is carried on as already explained, by supposedly tamping down the paper and tobacco in the left fist with the pencil, and producing the cigarette which is handed out for inspection, and during which interval the fake on the thumb is disposed of.

Properly presented this will prove a very mystifying effect indeed, and is especially good for an introduction to any Cigarette Act.

Thayer's Studio



MAGIC
of