

Secrets of the—



Street Conjuror

By

WILFRED HUGGINS & FREDERIC CULPITT

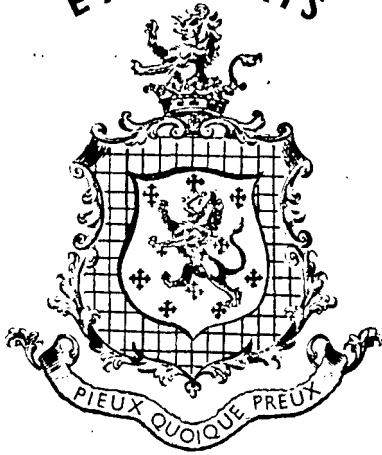
*A world-wide collection of Conjuring Secrets
for Magicians who entertain when
surrounded by spectators.*



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PREFACE.

The compilation of "A Street Conjuror's Secrets" is the outcome of many years of observation in this country, Australia, America, France and Germany. That the effects are well-known is not to be denied, but it is extremely doubtful if many conjurers are aware of the actual methods used by the street entertainer.

It is therefore hoped that everyone who reads these pages will appreciate the ingenuity of the methods employed, always bearing in mind the conditions under which the various effects are performed. Then, when next they witness some such show, they will generously patronise the artist not for "sweet charity's" sake, but to pay tribute to the art of which the Street Conjuror is a worthy exponent.

WILFRED HUGGINS.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

The additional matter in this brochure was contributed by the late Frederic Culpitt. The Publisher is indebted to the writers whose intimate knowledge of the wiles of the Street Conjuror is, in this third edition, submitted to the fraternity.

PREPARATION FOR THE HANDS.

Cold hands, or hands which are moist with perspiration are a bug-bear to most conjurers. This very simple method of preparing the hands and thus ensuring a safe grip for coins or billiard balls, especially in the case of the "Multiplying Billiard Balls," should prove a boon.

Wipe the hands dry with a cloth, then take a small lump of conjurer's wax and rub it between the palms. Dry-wash the hands and the result will be that the fingers and palms will be covered with a very thin film of wax. Manipulation is thus made almost foolproof.

A TABLE TIP.

Working in the middle of a crowd, apart from the manipulative side of the game, often places the street conjurer in a spot from an apparatus standpoint. For instance, the ordinary music-stand table is often in danger of getting knocked over and this can just as easily happen in a crowded drawing-room as in a bar parlour; this latter venue often provides a source of income to busking conjurers when it is raining.

These facts made clear to me the reason why one such entertainer's table-top spun round when it was touched. The flanged central spigot was not fastened to the leg with the usual thumb-screw. This omission allowed the table-top to revolve and thus obviated the whole lot going over when a passer-by accidentally passed too near to the structure.

THE GUINEA-PIG.

One of the most intriguing of the effects peculiar to the street conjurer when *surrounded* by his audience is the almost miraculous appearance of a guinea-pig under a hat. It usually occurs after a potato has been only apparently placed under the performer's soft hat, both of which rest on the usual small table. Someone then remarks, or the conjurer pretends to overhear it said, that the potato is *not* under the hat.

Turning swiftly to a spectator on his left the performer invites him to step nearer. Then, pointing to the hat with his right hand, the conjurer enquires of his helper:

"Did *you* see me take the potato away?"

"No," replies the spectator.

"No!" repeats the conjurer with emphasis, because it's still *there!*" and snatches the hat off the table, disclosing the potato. Simultaneously with this movement he covers his right hand, which during the foregoing altercation he slyly dipped into either his outside pocket, or the usual "poacher's" pocket and gripped and withdrew the guinea-pig. This is done with a backward swing of the body and the spectator on the performer's left affords good cover on that side.

Scarcely pausing in his movements the performer quite casually transfers his hat to the table, guinea-pig and all. He now picks up the potato with his left hand and holds it aloft for all to see. The spectators have by now lost all interest in the hat. The hat, by the way, is an old one with a soft crown. The potato is now vanished by a very simple sleight, during which move it usually finds its way into a pocket. Finally, when the hat is lifted, instead of the potato, the guinea-pig presents itself to the astonished gaze of the onlookers.

In the whole category of conjuring feats there are few which compare with this *piece-de-resistance* of all street conjurers. The misdirection is perfect.

CARD CHANGE.

For simplicity of manipulation and deceptiveness the following card change ranks with the best. In effect the card is apparently thrown on the table. Actually this is what happens. The pack is held in the same position in the left hand as in the standard top and bottom change. The card to be changed is also held in the approved manner. Having shown it, the performer moves to his table and without pause swings the card down to the top of the pack. As the card in his right hand reaches the pack the left thumb simultaneously flips the top card on the table.

The change must be made as the performer walks round his little table. In the effect "Everybody's Card" where the performer moves from one part of his audience to another, this change is undetectable.

This is important. As soon as the card in right hand is safely on the pack, the arm swings up again and the hand gesticulates towards either the audience as a whole, or to a single person whose help is about to be solicited.

FLAP DISPOSAL—SINGLE SLATE.

The slate, bearing the message, or sum total, hidden by the flap, is shown on both sides, then placed flap side down on the table. A full sized sheet of newspaper, that is, four page, is unfolded and torn in half. The two half-sheets are held in the right hand separated by the fore-finger. The sheets are simultaneously spread over the table as the slate is lifted minus the flap. The latter, which is, in a sense, slid from under the paper, must be kept rather low, and is straightway dropped on top of the spread news sheets.

The slate is then wrapped in the top sheet only, the other sheet being left on the table covering the flap.

When the effect is concluded the slate is thrown on the newspaper table-cloth which is then wrapped around the slate and flap and placed aside.

CAP AND PENCE. I. The Load.

The "Cap and Pence" is another favourite effect with the street-performer, and he uses many ingenious subterfuges to deceive his audiences. The drawer portion of a match-box, instead of the leather cap, is generally used to cover the coins.

The move to secretly introduce the six faked pennies is very subtle. The "pile" as the six hollow coins are called, is deposited in the outside right coat or trousers pocket. A small die, or button, with the drawer of the match-box mouth downwards beside it, are seen on the table.

The drawer is daintily lifted, held between the right thumb and forefinger across one end, and the die is covered and uncovered several times. Then comes the feint. The mouth of the drawer is turned towards the onlookers, the backs of the three remaining, unoccupied fingers resting on the table with the die between the little and third fingers. The drawer is swung over the die and the two fingers between which it lies. Without pausing, these fingers are withdrawn from under the drawer and curled into the palm. The drawer is released and left, opening downwards, on the table and nearly everyone will swear that the die was removed between the fingers and is in the conjurer's hand. True, it would have been quite an easy matter for him to have retained the die between his fingers, but he doesn't, *he leaves it under the drawer*. Then, trading on the audience's assumption that he

holds the die in his hand, he dives it into his pocket and finger-palms, opening towards the fingers, the hollow pile of pence.

After sufficient by-play he lifts the drawer, again between his right thumb and fore-finger, and while the onlooker's attention is momentarily rivetted on the die, he twists the drawer over the finger-palmed "pile." A slight grip retains the dummy heap of pennies in the now mouth-down drawer. When the performer again covers the die he does it in such a manner that there are no doubts this time and neither have the spectators any idea that the pile of hollow coins cover the die.

II. The Get-away.

With the fake heap of pence under the drawer, six ordinary pennies are now shown and vanished. This is nearly always done by means of the *tourniquet*, the coins being retained in the left hand for subsequent reproduction. As soon as the right hand is shown empty it lifts the drawer and discloses the "pile."

Very little time is now wasted. The heaped penny fake is again covered and the loose coins are produced, usually from a boy's pocket. The drawer, with the dummy pile inside it, is lifted between the right thumb and fore-finger, and the mouth of the drawer is held over the three unoccupied right fingers which are cupped as soon as the hand is clear of the table. On the latter now rests the die which, aided by the conjurer's pointing left finger, holds the onlookers' attention for a moment. During that brief spell the pile is allowed to drop into the waiting fingers which grip the fake. The hand is turned palm down as soon as the coins are held and at the same instant the thumb jerks upwards releasing the empty drawer which tumbles to the spectators' feet. This diversion covers the swing-back of the right hand which, with a clean throw, disposes of the "pile" in the waiting inside coat pocket mentioned in a previous effect.

"WATER ON THE BRAIN."

The production of a glass of water from the top of a boy's head is a most effective trick of the out-door entertainer. It also serves as an introduction to the "Magic Funnel" which is well-known to every conjurer.

The glass of water covered with the usual rubber-cap rests in the inside coat pocket. The double handkerchief, in the

centre of which is sewn a light ring, is shown on both sides and then draped over the boy's head. The ring is positioned well back on the crown so that the major portion of the handkerchief hangs over the back of his neck.

After the usual palaver the conjurer grips the ring and lifts it, expressing surprise as the shape of the glass appears. He lifts a little more, then leans over and asks the boy if he is feeling all right. While the conjurer is in this position he deftly removes the glass from his inside coat pocket and slips it under the hanging folds of the handkerchief. Perfect cover is provided for this move. The bent arm on one side and the performer's body on the left. He naturally leans to the left side of the boy to question him and the coat swings open, thus allowing easy access to the glass. As the right hand lifts the ring still higher, the left follows *underneath the handkerchief* until the covered mouth of the glass meets the ring. The latter is allowed to rest for a second on top of the glass, then the handkerchief and the rubber cover are snatched away revealing the brimming glass of water.

THE REPEAT.

A friend once saw the foregoing effect performed on a race-course. The conjurer, he said, gave several performances and repeated the production on each occasion, but never once did he appear to load himself in readiness. Furthermore he kept to the same pitch all the afternoon. As the biggest part of the water was spilled on the grass and the rest drunk by the boy at every show, the repeated production was for a time very puzzling. Then close observation revealed this fact when the conjurer finished using the glass and funnel: when he was replacing these "props." in his bag before proceeding with the next trick in his programme, he slipped another filled and capped glass in his inside pocket all ready for the following show.

A USEFUL TIP.

A pack of cards is placed face-up between thumb and forefinger and a spectator is told to hold the cards tightly. The conjurer with a sharp downward blow knocks all the cards out of his helper's hand with the exception of a previously selected card.

The effect is well-known, but this tip will always ensure the chosen card being left in the assistant's hand. He is told to hold his fore-finger out straight and parallel to the floor; the hand is, of course, palm upwards. Place the pack, after the usual preliminaries, diagonally on the out-stretched finger, then tell the assistant to bring his thumb down on the pack and grip it tightly. A sharp downward blow with the side of the hand does the rest.

MARKED CARDS.

Long before the various inks, daubs, and so forth became a commercial proposition in magic, the street conjurer had his own method of card marking—one that proved useful in many an emergency. A free choice was given in the matter of card selection and, while haranguing the crowd, the wizard of the pavement casually scratched his ear. Now, not to put too fine a point on it, washing facilities are not always a source of anxiety to the street performer, and when that card was returned our worthy's now unclean finger left a mark on the back, which to his keen eye, was readily spotted. An un-savoury item it is true, yet undoubtedly the origin of the grease-paint on waistcoat button dodge.

BILLIARD BALLS.

A series of vanishes and recoveries are performed with a single, examined ball. Finally it is apparently placed in the left hand, from which it vanishes.

The right hand, in which the ball is palmed, is placed in the pocket and it is loaded in this way. A second ball is finger-palmed and a third one, with the usual half-shell, is taken between the thumb and fore-finger. Thus, when the hand, back to the audience, is withdrawn they only see the latter ball. This one is transferred to the left thumb and fore-finger and displayed as the ball which, a moment before vanished from the same hand. The right fore-finger points at the ball and successfully disguises the load.

The right hand now approaches the left, and in passing, the *finger-palmed* ball is transferred to the left palm and the palmed ball is claimed by the left fingers. By this time the right thumb and fore-finger have reached the ball (and half shell) held between the left thumb and fore-finger, from which it is removed. Simultaneously the performer swings

to the right and the right hand, now empty save for the ball and shell between the thumb and finger, is lifted high and left remaining motionless.

As the right hand moves down to the usual position for the production of No. 2 ball at the finger-tips, the left is withdrawn and the performer is all set to produce No. 3 and No. 4 ball without once having to go to a pocket.

THE FOLDED PAPERS.

Airily waving four squares of coloured paper of varying sizes and colours, the street conjurer then places them flat on the table. He places a half-penny in the smallest paper, folds it over at top and sides, and so proceeds with the other papers until he has encased all packets. When re-opened the half-penny has multiplied into two.

The four squares of coloured paper range in size from about 3in. square to 9in. square. The papers are first exhibited held near one corner. It should be noted that when the papers are waved about nothing is apparent but flat sheets—despite the fact that there is a concealed packet between two of the sheets. It is the same old double packet arrangement and the turn-over, but notice the little improvement that makes all the difference.

"In this little packet I put a ha'-penny," says the conjurer. "I fold over the sides, then the other sides, turn the packet over and down it goes on the next paper—the blue. Now, the blue paper in the same way. Turn over the packet and into the pink paper. Over once more and we wrap it up in the green. Now for the magic word 'Millionairitis.' Open the green and we come to the pink; *open the pink* and we come to the blue, turn it over and we come to the purple, turn that over, open it, and what do we find? Two ha'-pennies—the money has doubled itself!"

Here is the secret. The double packet (set) is the second largest—the pink packet. Pasted to the back of this is the duplicate set and in the smallest packet there are two half-pennies. Turning over each packet puts the watchers off the scent. When re-opening, however, it will be noticed that the conjurer does not turn over the *pink* packet *before* opening. In exhibiting to show the two half-pennies the papers are opened out one on the other on the table.

In making up, construct the faked (pink) packets first. The

papers are folded carefully into the necessary squares and the two packets are pasted back to back.

At the end of the trick the conjurer is in a position to either turn the two half-pennies back to one, or change, say, a six-pence back to the original half-penny. The effect is most puzzling.

A SILENT COIN VANISH.

The effect in which the writer saw this vanish used is very well known. Twelve pennies are laid on the table in two equal rows. Six of the coins are counted on to a tray and then tipped into a boy's cap. The remaining six pennies are vanished and when the boy re-counts the coins in his cap he finds he has twelve.

The "tourniquet" or drop sleight is used to vanish the coins, after which they are deftly thrown into the usual "Topit" or poacher's pocket. The puzzling part of this vanish to anyone who witnesses the sleight is the fact that the coins do not "talk." Here is the reason: The six coins counted on to the tray (a money-tray) are quite unprepared. The under-side of each of *five* of the others is smeared with wax. Thus when the coins are stacked, a slight pressure transforms them into a solid pile. The drop and throw can thus be carried out without the least fear of a chink betraying the whereabouts of the coins.

THE MAGNETIC WALKING-STICK.

A walking-stick is held erect, with the left hand at the top, the lower end of the stick resting on the floor. The outside of the right thumb, just below the first knuckle-joint, is pressed against the stick about halfway up it. The right hand is lifted with an alternate horizontal swinging movement, first to the left then back to the right. As long as the hand is kept in motion the stick adheres to the side of the thumb, but as soon as the movement stops the stick falls to the floor.

The stick adheres to the side of the thumb partly because the latter has been moistened with beer which has become tackily dry, and partly by the inward swinging movement.

The effect was first seen in a country tavern where the required adhesive was easily and secretly applied. A smear of conjurer's wax would, no doubt, serve the same purpose. Despite the use of wax or beer, a certain amount of practice is necessary before the correct balance can be obtained and the knack is acquired.

A USEFUL SECRET.

A coin is borrowed and dropped into a glass of beer, or milk. Holding the glass in his left hand the performer beckons with his right, and the coin rises out of the liquid to his waiting fingers. The piece of money is immediately returned to the lender.

The reader will doubtless recognise this effect and immediately murmur "Hair!" Indeed a hair is used, but our wily friend the street conjurer does not fasten one end to his waistcoat button (so that when the free end with its tiny pellet of wax is fixed to the coin he can cause it to rise by movement of the hand or the body). True it is fastened to his clothing, but to the button situated at the fork of the front of his trousers. Thus the hair is out of the line of vision of the audience after it passes over the rim of the glass. When the conjurer removes from the coin the wax pellet and the attendant hair, the latter swings down between the legs where it is always available. The pellet of wax at the end of the hair is usually pressed against the inside leg of the trouser until required.

ROPES AND RINGS.

The premature snapping of the thread with which the two ropes are stitched for the "Ropes and Rings" led to a certain street performer in Australia using the following method.

The ropes are displayed singly, then laid side by side. Around the centre of the two ropes a small silk is tied with the rather weak but plausible excuse that the audience would now be certain that the ropes are not changed. At an opportune moment they are separated in the usual way and the two ends (of one rope) of the ropes are threaded through the handle of a pint pot. A knot is tied round the handle and a few bunches of keys, etc., are tied in what appears to be the centre of the ropes. They are then threaded through the sleeves of the boy's coat and tied in the approved manner.

To release the articles and the boy the performer first unties the silk and then removes the pot and all the other articles. Finally he pulls the ropes, or seems to, through the boy's body. The use of a silk may not appear very artistic to the fastidious but as a "get-out" it leaves little to be desired.

TWENTIETH CENTURY SILKS.

The usual double silk is knotted to an ordinary one. The knotted ends of the silks are placed between a boy's lips and he holds the free ends of the handkerchiefs one in each hand. The conjurer now rolls a third silk between his hands, palms the silk in his left hand and holds the clenched but empty right hand aloft. He walks behind the boy, pocketing the palmed silk as he takes up his position. The right hand is now lightly slapped down on top of the boy's head, the hand opening as it strikes the crown. The conjurer then takes hold of the boy's hands and stretches them apart. The vanished silk, having apparently passed through the boy's head, makes its appearance (via the double handkerchief as usual) between the other two.

THE EVER-CHANGING CARD.

This old trick is very effective in the hands of the street conjurer. He generally offers it for sale at two-pence. The card is double faced. On one side is printed two diamonds but the top space is blank. Thus the thumb covering the lower pip converts the card into an ace, and covering the blank space conveys the impression that the card is the three of diamonds. The other side of the card depicts either the six of clubs or the four, one side spot of the six being blank. By covering the sides of the card alternately with the thumb the card may be exhibited as the six of clubs or the four.

The performer stands with his side to the spectators and continually works his arm up and down. He shows the card as an ace, then as a three (diamonds), then as a six of clubs, then as a four. Finally he pulls off his hat, draws the card across his head and shows the ace spot with which he started. The moves are sometimes varied by the performer drawing the card between the sleeve of the coat and the coat proper, the change being made under the arm. Briskly presented the trick is most illusive.

ANOTHER CHANGING CARD.

This trick has long been a favourite with the street conjurer; he also offers it for sale. A court card, held in the hand changes first to a spot card, then to a "hand" of toy cards, the latter disappearing altogether.

The construction is simple, though tedious. A court card is doubled in half, face inwards. Thus folded it is pasted, on one half, to any odd card, so that a loose flap of the court card results. Another card, usually a ten-spot, is soaked in water and the face peeled off. This is pasted fairly on the odd card and on the folded part of the court card. As a result the card can be shown as a court card or spot card by bending the flap to and fro. Presuming the card to now indicate the "spot" card, *at the top and at the back of this*, strips of toy cards are pasted in a row.

The conjurer holds the made up card in his left hand, using all fingers and the thumb. With the court card thus exposed he draws his right hand down the card, bends the flap and exhibits as the spot card. Repeating the movement, he bends the spot card and so discloses the row or "hand" of toy cards, for as such the spectators accept the little cards now on view. A pretence is made of a further brushing and smoothing movement, during which the now folded card is thrust into the right palm while the left turns, nearly closed, back to the spectators. The right hand of the performer dives into a bag on his table, drops the faked card and instantly withdraws an envelope, simultaneously turning and exposing the empty left hand. "Here you are, all complete with instructions, a child can do it!" The card within the envelope is often badly constructed.

Sometimes a complete toy card is loosely pivoted by thread, at one corner of the row of cards. Then the performer is enabled to tilt this loose card away from the others. It makes the hand of little cards look more convincing. Sold for two-pence. it will be conceded that the vendor earns his money.

Additional Effects by Frederic Culpitt.

FOUR PENCE AND A GLASS TUMBLER.

This is a favourite trick with street magicians and saloon bar performers. The operator commences by fumbling in his various pockets for pence, eventually producing two pennies. He explains that four coins are necessary, "So will some kindly disposed person please remedy the deficiency?" Needless to add, the two pennies so cadged rarely find their way back to those who loaned them, for the ways of the itinerant conjurer are dark, devious and full of guile.

the four coins are now laid on the table (or bar counter) the edges overlapping, and after pushing them into a stack with the rim of an inverted tumbler, they are covered with this glass. Grasping the tumbler by its base the conjurer moves it around in a series of circles, swinging the stacked coins about at the same time. After a few seconds at this sort of thing, the free hand reaches beneath the table, or edge of the counter, and a coin is produced and thrown down. The tumbler is slightly raised and by its rim the coins are separated by sliding one off the other. Three coins remain. These are arranged as before, the edges overlapping, and are again covered with the tumbler, and the swinging movement repeated. A coin is produced from beneath the table...the pile beneath the tumbler is shown to consist of two coins only...and these are covered as before. A third coin is taken from beneath the table...the glass is raised to show but *one* penny, which is now thrown out for examination.

Great stress is laid on the fact that, after the coins have been covered, they are not touched by the hands at any time.

The guilty secret is a "shell penny" of the ordinary type. At the commencement of affairs this is in the top pocket of the performer's waistcoat, together with an unprepared coin, and after a suitable amount of fumbling in his other pockets, these two pennies are produced. With the borrowed coins, these two are stacked on the table, the shell penny being undermost. As this coin is dropped the fingers retain the shell and the "nesting" coin is released; the shell is laid on (and overlapping) the nesting coin. On the shell is laid an unprepared penny, and on this another, which leaves a coin held by the fingers. This coin is palmed. To the spectators there appear to be four pennies overlapping each other on the table.

A glass is next inverted over the coins, the edge of the tumbler being used to slide each penny into a stack. This move causes the shell (second from bottom of the pile) to fall over the smaller coin beneath it, the two unprepared pennies remaining on top of the shell contraption. The hand containing the palmed penny now grasps the glass and commences to "circulate" the coins. After a few seconds of this manoeuvre the palmed penny is produced from beneath the table, the rim of the glass gently slides the coins apart,

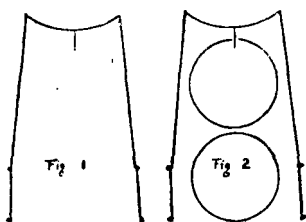
showing there are but three. These are picked up, the nesting coin is dropped, overlapped by the shell, on top of which one of the unprepared pennies is placed, the remaining coin being palmed, as before. Again the glass is brought into play to stack the coins, the swishing movement is repeated, a penny produced from beneath the fable, and the edge of the glass separates the coins on the table, showing that but two remain. Pick these up, show them on each side, drop the nesting coin on the table and overlap it with the shell, palming the remaining coin. Repeat the glass swinging movement, produce the palmed penny from beneath the table, raise the glass and show that there is but one coin there. Pick this up, palm off the shell and, if you think it necessary, hand this last coin for examination. This is not advised, as the difference in the circumference is apt to cause comment.

UNUSUAL FINALE TO THE "CUPS AND BALLS."

Rightly, or wrongly, this version is claimed by Tom Reid, a wandering wizard who presented his *escamotage* in the Pimlico market places fifty years ago. Having completed the proverbial routine and brought the little black balls beneath their respective goblets the magician removes these spheres of cork and transfers them one at a time to the right hand outside pocket of his coat. Again the cups are lifted, to disclose three large balls (about one-and-a-half inches in diameter) on the table top. The magician stated that it was an easy thing to smuggle these larger balls under each cup, as the onlookers were not expecting such craftiness; but it would be a much more difficult matter sneaking them out again. As he said this, Reid would raise cup No. 1 (at the right hand end of the row) and pretend to take the large ball away and convey it to his right hand pocket. Paying no heed to the remarks of the audience, Tommy went on with the trick, making a feint of removing balls 2 and 3. The crowd would keep up a chorus of protest at such swindling. "Show us the balls," they would bawl out. Reid looked pained, stroked his De Kolta-like beard, and lifted each goblet to reveal the balls on the table, placing the cups at the side of each ball as he lifted them. "Oh, no," the artful old codger would say, "if I wanted to put the balls in my pocket, I would

do it quite openly, like this," and suiting the action to the word he would pick up each ball separately and dispose of them in turn in his pocket, being careful to show that his hand was empty each time he withdrew it. "So far," our magician would say, "everything has been fair, square, and above board"; a remark which never failed to register. "My job is to get those balls out of my pocket and back beneath the goblets without being detected. In any case they haven't arrived yet." At this point the cups were again lifted to show that the balls were not beneath them. "This is going to be a difficult task because you are all watching me so closely. If I succeed it ought to worth a few more coppers." This was the signal for the taking up of a collection. This having been done to Tom's satisfaction the cups were lifted to reveal three large balls, *but coloured* red, blue and yellow!

Apart from the sleight-of-hand, masterly in every way, the preparations were simple enough. The right hand pocket was in reality *two* pockets, in one of which reposed three large black balls, in the other, three coloured balls. In the centre of each goblet's roof was soldered a strong needle-



point about three-quarters of an inch in length (Fig. 1). Without desiring to detract from the cleverness of Reid's method and working, I may be permitted to remind readers that Bosco made use of some such artifice, employing several needle-points in one

of his cups.

Having reached that part of the routine where the small balls are shown to be back in their original positions beneath their respective cups, the performer secretly gained possession of one of the large black balls from his pocket, palming it in the right hand. This hand would raise cup No. 1, the left hand picked up the small ball from the table, the large ball was loaded into the goblet (which would be returned to the table top) and the small ball transferred to the right hand, which would then deposit it in the pocket. This movement was repeated with the other cups and balls, after this the cups were again raised to disclose the large balls.

This dénouement was sufficiently startling to bring about a

momentary distraction on the part of the onlookers, and Reid seized the opportunity to gain possession of, and palm, one of the coloured balls. Grasping the rim of cup No. 1 with his right hand, he tilted it top towards his audience, allowing the palmed coloured ball to roll into it, and having drawn attention to the large black ball on the table, covered it with the goblet. This action forced the coloured ball to the *top* of the cup, where it became impaled on the needle-point. (Fig. 2).

Here our friend made pretence of taking the ball away and conveying it surreptitiously to his pocket. Actually it was an empty hand which stole into the pocket, but the hand came away with another coloured ball palmed. The right hand lifted cup No. 2, loaded in the coloured ball, dropped the goblet over the large black ball, and the pantomime of sneaking away the black ball was indulged in. This manœuvre followed with coloured ball No. 3.

Lifting cup No. 1 *by its top* with the right hand the large black ball was removed and the cup dropped to the table top with a decisive thump, the resulting concussion dislodging the coloured ball from the needle-point. The black ball was openly dropped into the left-hand pocket. These movements were repeated in the case of cups 2 and 3. At the proper moment (which was *after* the collection had been taken up) the three cups were lifted to disclose the three coloured balls. The interior of each cup can be safely shown, the needle points being practically invisible.

A FOUR "ACES TRICK."

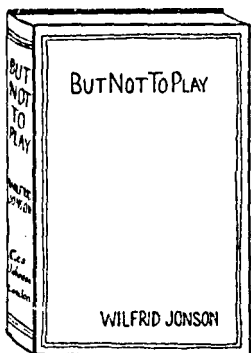
This was a favourite item with Solly Marks, who had a luncheon hour pitch in the Fetter Lane district some forty-five years ago. He possessed an arresting personality and had a strong facial resemblance to Charles Morrill. His good looks were somewhat marred as he had only one eye, which possibly explained why it was that Solly did not switch his undeniable talents to wider and more productive fields.

From the ranks of the gaping crowd he would drag some time-wasting errand boy and from his pockets, nose and chin extract bunches of cards, getting laughs from the varied collection of small objects brought forth in addition to the pasteboards. Then, running through the pack faces uppermost, he would remove the four aces and deposit them (faces up) on the table top. The press-ganged helper would then be requested to lay three "indifferent" cards on each

ace (faces *down*). Mumbo Jumbo of a more or less Rabelaisian flavour followed; the cards on the table were turned over to disclose the fact that each packet now consisted of four indifferent cards, the aces having vanished. The assistant was invited to search through his pockets and would eventually produce from his inside jacket pocket the missing aces. An excellent finale to a street act, full of diverting material and never failing to elicit a chorus of approval and a shower of coins.

The card palming preliminary was actually an excuse for surreptitiously introducing the four genuine aces into the boy's pocket; these were left behind as some half-a-dozen other cards were brought to light. The "aces" taken openly from the pack and placed on the table-top were double-faced cards, prepared by skinning four aces to single thickness by first immersing them in hot water and pasting on the reverse side four indifferent cards similarly treated, the process being completed by ironing out the cards or pressing them with a photographic print roller. When ready for presentation the fake aces would be planted at intervals in the pack—the ace side in line with the rest of the cards.

When removing these faked aces from the pack the conjurer held the cards in the left hand, faces uppermost, and ran them through from left to right, picking out each ace as it was arrived at and placing it on the table—*being careful not to show the backs of the aces*. The pack was then handed to the boy, who was told to count off three cards faces down on to each ace, leaving about an inch of the ace visible. This having been done and a suitable amount of *hocus pocus* indulged in, the magician squared up the four packets on the table by tapping the sides with a single card. This card was next used as a lever with which to turn over the four packets, when the *reverse* side of the aces would be disclosed. The boy would then be invited to search through his pockets, the performer suggesting the order in which the examination was to be carried out. "Try your jacket pocket on the outside of that horse-cloth which they sold you for a coat in Petticoat Lane. Nothing there? Funny: what about your hand? Try the other side... Only a hole there. Mind your dinner doesn't slip through it. What about your handkerchief pocket... You don't use a handkerchief. No need to tell me that. 'Eaven help the fly that tries to nestle on your cuff. Have a try at your inside pocket. What have you found? The four aces! And I never put my hand near you... Remember that."



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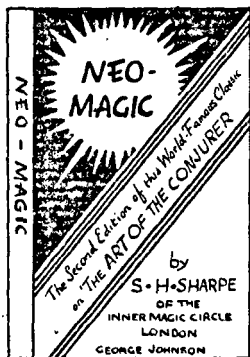
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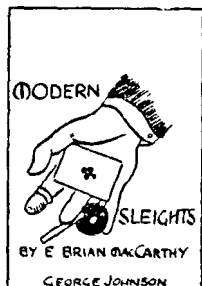
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