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JANUARY 20

1940

Editor's note: Here is one of those infrequent ideas well worth the evening's labor to make up. For that very reason, though, there will be comparatively few readers who will bother preparing such a deck, that is, until someone else performs it first. It should be needless to say that I made one up the evening of the day when first I learned the trick.)

For a number of years I wished to do a prediction effect with cards but did not want to use the card index in the pocket for securing papers as first promulgated by Al Baker. I considered it clumsy for my own personal use and considered most practical a means of getting the billet from a self contained pack of cards. The following method was therefore devised back in 1930, has stood me very well since, and this is my first release, in print, of the secret.

Secure a new deck of regular (not bridge) size cards, several packages of cigarette papers, and a paste-pot and pen with ink. Seat yourself at a well lighted table in a quiet corner where the children can't reach you.

On 53 of the cigarette papers write in ink the names of the 52 cards and the Joker, such as, for example, "The thought of card will be the ----." These papers are folded, writing inside, once each way.

As each paper is so prepared it is secured by a daub of paste, no larger than what can be

applied with the head of a pin, to the lower right corner of the back of the card to which it refers. The illustration on page 503 will make this part clear. The extra Joker or Score card is used to back up the deck and conceal the last paper. The use of cigarette papers keeps such a prepared deck from being too bulky, and of course, the faces of the cards are well mixed. Now follow the presentation from start to finish and see yourself if it isn't as clean cut in directness as any mental effect should be.

Writing a prediction upon a slip of paper I drop it, after folding, into a deep dish or hat. However, the paper is retained in the hand and is left in the pocket when I immediately reach for the deck in its case.

A spectator is asked to step forward. Stand at his left. Tell him that you are thinking of a card in the deck and that he is to look you directly in the eye and remember well the first card that enters his mind. Impress upon him that he is not to change his mind once that he has an impression.

You remove the deck from the case which is tossed aside. Step forward a bit and turn towards the spectator which action turns your back somewhat to the audience. Fan the deck from left to right with the faces towards the spectator. He looks for the card of which he is thinking, and at the same time the audience sees quite a

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**AS IN A
MIRROR
DARKLY**



ROBERT BRETHEN

— EDITRIVIA —

Last September's (1939) issue of TOPS contained a photograph of Winston Freer presenting a purported levitation of a girl over a dining table with people sitting all around. A hoop was in the process of proving "no support." In Percy Abbott's own words the illusion had previously been done "on an unprepared nitery floor, with absolutely no setting, scenery or assistance." Also "the volunteer assistant had obviously not expected to be called upon." A girl had been intimidated onto the floor to undergo the test. Mr. Abbott finished by saying "you may see what may be accomplished by the application of time, trial, and experience."

We applied all three of those requisites to very good results. First came the experience. We dimly remembered something away back in the past that strummed a memory chord. Time came next. We spent quite a few hours digging back into the files under all sorts of classifications, finally getting into back magazine copies for years upon years. Then it was found - a picture taken of Thurston at the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh on January 8, 1931. The Sphinx ran it in the March issue of that year. Next came trial. Trial by skepticism. We could recognize two of those present. The first, John Northern Hilliard, has passed on. The second, Bill McCaffrey, is as full of trickery as ever. We wrote. Bill answered. "We were giving Thurston a banquet and one of the club members, Mr. Irving Newman, an excellent local news photographer, thought he would take a publicity picture. The girl was placed on a board which was supported by the backs of two chairs and he photographed her in that position. Then Thurston stepped on the table and those of us left stared at where the girl was supposed to be. Newman then printed both pictures together with the result that you have seen. It was a clever bit of work, especially the shadows from the dress that are visible in the picture. They were drawn in by an artist and the effect was that of a miracle happening in a hotel banquet hall. As it happened, the editor turned it down because of the picture being a fake. Newman made up only a few prints for his friends!"

So there you have it. The editor wasn't bewildered, the evidently quite a few magi got upset and worried not a little.

Even such an originator of a good many impossible mysteries as Brunel White, whose column in London's World's

Fair is a continental authority on things magical, professed himself stumped and went to some lengths in presenting theories. He could not be blamed though for Britishers never have exactly understood we Americans for spoofing each other. And it was a spoof, wasn't it Percy? Don't you think so, too, Winaton?

Without further delay we must bow low to the event, on January 8th, which precipitated a son into the lap of Sid Lorraine for him to rock roughly and tear his hair at while he's trying to answer questions for his TOPS column. Maybe he'll have to write himself a few questions now. --- Johnny Giordmaine, Canadian magish we mentioned last issue has reaped a number of press articles ridiculing the Dunninger vanishing battleship idea that we've also mentioned and pictured lately. --- Alden I. Dillenback, who writes of himself, "I am a showman," "I have given you nothing. John Snyder has given you his all," "Will you --- permit a continuance of Snyder prosperity or will you sit back like silly fools, and allow others to say, again, what you shall and shall not?" All of the foregoing pertains to the I.B.M. and Mr. Snyder, its present president. We don't know Mr. Dillenback personally, in fact we never heard of him until lately and we've been around magic going on twenty years and have read back fifty, so far. But all that "three sheeting" for John Snyder isn't necessary. The boys who have been to all the conventions, know the insides of all possible candidates and their qualifications, realise that John is their best bet. We've all known the man personally and intimately for a good many get-togethers. There's no need for a



self appointed press agent to "band wagon" for a president who already is in. That is, unless the "showman" is building a front in order to high pressure the 1941 convention to his home city. That has more or less been tried before. It's no spoilt plum for a local promoter to bring in a convention like that of the I.B.M. and there's quite a bit of money to be taken in and paid out. A few years back witnessed great repercussions when the reports divulged that \$50 and \$100 fees



were shoveled out in giant thumb tips for various local tie-ups and bands to march in the opening day parade. The I.B.M. has found out by trial and error that the smaller cities are best, for fun and profit. We know, from what has been printed, that Mr. Dillenback is sincere. He writes, "Scores of replies ask my continuance in the correspondence circle; dozens thanked me for what I was doing --What I have done has been done because --I know what you have had a right to expect; what you never have been given before." GABBATHA!!!

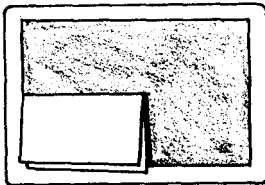
AS IN A MIRROR DARKLY
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little of the backs of the cards.

It is possible to further heighten the assumption that all is fair by using the subtle Hindu Shuffle described of late in several books on card work, and explained fully with effects in Jinx No. 56. The deck is first shuffled with faces showing and front of deck held downwards with the attached papers at that end. The audience sees cards genuinely mixed, and several times the performer can show the backs (?) of the cards, saying, "The 52 backs are mixed also but as they all look alike I have my subject think of a face so that there can be no mistake."

When the deck is fanned towards the subject he touches his card when he sees it. The performer immediately pulls it upwards in the fan about half an inch, saying, "This is the card you thought of while I was concentrating?" As he acknowledges the statement, or query, to be true you step towards the dish or hat which is behind and to the right of the spectator. As you do this, say, "Then tell everybody what card flashed into your mind. I'll put it here with the prediction I originally wrote for you."

You have cut the deck to bring the selected card to the back and you now are turned so that the face of the deck is towards the audience. At this point it is not necessary to be finicky or too particular about the audience seeing the cards. Remember that they have seen the deck fanned, and seen the spectator find his card. It is therefore impossible for you to do anything underhanded with the cards now. The card is withdrawn, keeping the paper attached covered with the fingers of the right hand and dropped into the container, and at the same time the paper slip is dislodged by a squeeze between fingers and thumb.



Pick up the container with the same hand and give it to another spectator nearby. Ask him to name and show the card which the spectator thought of. Then have him remove the paper and read aloud what you wrote before.

Each performer will work out his particular method of presentation, I know, but it is suggested that he first try it as given here and endeavor always to make it clear that he writes first, has any card thought of, picked from the deck, put into the hat with the paper, and both are shown and read for everybody to know of the performer's correctness.

For those who use only this one effect in their program which requires cards, the deck may be recased and put out of the way. For those who wish to continue with some other effect, there is ample opportunity for an exchange of the deck during the interval when the spectator takes the card and paper from hat to read.

(By Annemann: The self contained feature of Mr. Brethen's deck carries this effect quite a distance beyond the ways it has been done before. When body work can be eliminated practically, it always helps both in presentation and service-

ability. I might suggest the simplest of exchanges with a reason to follow. Have another deck to match on your table with the rest of your apparatus. This deck is stacked with your favorite system. Remove the Brethen deck from case, and toss case to table on top or close to the stacked deck. During that finale of disclosure, step back to table, lay your faked deck down behind or into a crumpled handkerchief and at the same time with your left hand pick up the stacked deck and the case. You now are facing the audience at the very conclusion, and excuse your assistants.

Explain that you have shown a test of prophecy, although the critical people before you might disbelieve in that solution and say that it was merely a matter of your will forcing the thought upon the spectator's mind. Put the deck into the case as you say this, and then decide to show how possible it is for you to actually read the mind of the spectator.

Toss the cased deck into the audience and ask whoever gets it to come forward. He removes the cards and gives them a shuffle, but you hurry up the procedure to prevent more mixing by saying, "Put the deck face down on your left hand. (And as an afterthought) You've shuffled the deck - now give it one complete cut."

Continue, "Look at the top card, whatever it may happen to be. Your selection has been made by chance with no conscious liking for any card, or my will-power, influencing you. (Your back is turned during the cutting and picking off of the card) Hold the card against your forehead with your right hand covering it completely." Now you turn around and approach him. Take the remainder of the deck from him and toss to the table. In doing so you glimpse the bottom or face card, count one ahead in the system, and you know what he is holding. Touch his forehead hand with your finger tips and slowly reveal the color, suit and value of the pasteboard. Have him acknowledge the correctness with each step. If wrong on any one of them, say that you won't guess, and that he isn't thinking hard enough. Hand him back the deck for a cut and second selection. This never will fail twice once you have tried it out and become acute at letting a person shuffle and stopping him by giving additional directions. I first published the idea in slightly different form back around 1932 and called it "The \$1000 Test Card Location." To date it has been (so they say) quite a prized method with some of the best cardologists, especially the late Nate Leipsic. However, you take it for what it is worth to you, and I suggest it as a finish to the Brethen mystery so that the deck is handled and unobtrusively shown to be quite unprepared.)



Rochester, New York

Dear Ted;

I keep forgetting to tell you that the grandest changing bag in the world for a banquet is simply to fold your napkin as it was when you sat down, giving it one more fold, if necessary. What could be more easy? Or more innocent appearing for the purpose of switching cards, coins, billets, cigarettes, etc.?

Regards

(signed) Ed Wolff

HERMANN'S DINNER TABLE PULL

Through the pages of now rather dusty literature has been detailed time and again the life and exploits of Alexander Hermann. Much space has been devoted to his constant penchant for impromptu performing at odd moments regardless of where he might be, and this cultivating of notice by the populace near him undoubtedly helped no little in making his name quite one of word of mouth.

The story about his finding coin after coin in objects of fruit picked up from a curbstome cart, with the subsequent refusal of the vendor to sell any more of the supposedly money bearing produce while he, himself, started to mutilate it beyond repair, is almost too well known. Continuous mention has been made of Hermann's prowess at sleight-of-hand, and many are the times when I have read about his sitting at a banquet table, ever entertaining those near him with the evanishment of knives, forks, and FRUITS. That last is capitalized for it is with such things as oranges, apples, etc., combined with the position of sitting at a table, that we are most concerned. Just recently it came to our attention that Hermann had a rather majestic way about him when he would pick up an orange, toss it into the air a couple of times and on the last throw cause it to disappear. Heretofore, in all print that it has been our fortune to peruse, the trick was passed off with mention of Hermann's sleight-of-hand ability.

That the orange was dropped into the lap on the last throw seemed to be taken for granted, and we passed it up to until we learned from one most certainly "in the know" that TO CIRCUMVENT SUCH A THOUGHT FROM BEING ENTERTAINED BY HIS OBSERVERS, HERMANN WOULD IMMEDIATELY PUSH HIS CHAIR BACK, STAND UP, CRUMPLE HIS NAPKIN ONTO THE TABLE, EXCUSE HIMSELF, AND WALK AWAY FOR A FEW MINUTES. With such a showmanlike exit, who could blame those watching him for rapt speculation on the whereabouts of the orange? We do not doubt that they peered under the table, and we are certain that more than one made a quick grab for the crumpled napkin. All of which was perfect psychology. It kept his audience busy for a few minutes and that few minutes of endeavor served to make an impression that would take a long time to erase.

So now we find that it wasn't ALL a matter of sleight-of-hand. Some might say that Hermann was wearing "tails" and made use of the proverbial "profonde." Such a thing could be true, we'll admit, but it would require plenty misdirection while the hand made a pretty long and obvious down sweep below table level. The secret we heard about was far more subtle, and it can be used to-day without special dress.

A stiff wire loop, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter is formed and at one part it is twisted a time or two to make a small quarter inch loop. To the large loop a soft cloth bag is sewn of such depth that when the loop is held perpendicularly an object within the bag will hang down unable to fall out past the lower lip of the wire loop.

A package of not too heavy rubber bands now

finds use in the forming of about a ten inch length of "pull." One is first "figure 8" looped through the small twist of wire on the bag. Other bands are succeedingly engaged likewise into each other until the desired length is attained. This ten inch length will stretch to more than 4 times normal, and much more than the ordinary and common black elastic.

The end of this pull is attached to the inside of the coat NEAR THE COLLAR AND EXACTLY AT THE CENTER. It hangs at the center hollow of the back.



When sitting down at a table, the performer unobtrusively reaches back with the free hand, depending upon which side he approaches the chair, and pulls the bag down TO SIT ON IT. As he manuevres the chair into position, the other hand naturally reaches down to the front of the chair seat and pulls it forward. DURING THIS SETTling DOWN PROCESS, THE PERFORMER HAS PLENTY OF TIME TO REACH FOR THE BAG UNDER HIM, PULL IT UP BETWEEN HIS LEGS, AND LET THE WIRE LOOP OF THE BAG REST ON HIS CLOSED LEGS. With a napkin on his lap he may eat his entire meal with no discomfiture at being "ready."

Comes the time when a trick is needed. He may do others as long as he doesn't stand. Then, picking up an orange, apple, salt cellar, or even a demi-tasse from which he has sipped his coffee, he holds it in his right hand, looks upward, and may state that whenever he touches the ceiling with a thrown object it fades away like a comet in the sky.

The left hand drops just below the table edge, pushing the napkin aside, and remains there palm upward. The right hand makes a sweep upward. ONE! Again. TWO! And, always looking upward, the third toss is made. But on the 2nd downsweep, the object is dropped into the left hand which pushes it into the open bag and turns the wire form sidewise so that it will slip between the legs.

During this time there has been no hesitation with the right hand which went up with the count of THREE! The object has vanished, and the spectators' eyes come down. The performer's left hand comes up with the crumpled napkin, he brushes his lips as he starts to rise, murmurs "excuse me, please" and stalks off. The moment he arises six inches from the chair the rubber bands have acted in unison and the object whose fate is in doubt comes to rest at the performer's back for removal when out of the room.

The pull may be used in many ways at a table for there are many tricks with small glasses and material at hand which would allow of a vanish at the finish to very good effect.