

THE JINX

105

ETCHINGS IN MAGIC

Each one of us has but to close his eyes to visualize magicians of the past and present in endless array as though he were walking through a gallery dedicated to "If this be magic, let it be an Art."

There we see the oil paintings and brilliant water color portraits of Herrmann The Great, Kellar, Thurston, Houdini, Goldin, DeBiere, Devant, Ching Ling Foo, Chung Ling Soo, Okito, Carter and Nikola.

Turning our head we see pencil sketches, sharp black and whites familiar to the public such as Downs, Clement de Lion, Bertram,

Dr. Byrd Page, Claude Goldin, Herbert Brooks, Jack Merlin, Leipsig, Hugh Johnston, Manuel, Mulholland, Blackstone, Al Baker, Dunninger, Jarrow and Gwynne.

A delicate hue envelopes us while passing the pastels. There were Adelaide Herrmann, Beatrice Houdini, Talma, and now Dell O'Dell, Joan Brandon, Rouclere, Jr., Roberta and Marion Byron, Rita del Gardi and Gloria Jerome.

Look at the weird and hypnotising pictures next. To-day we call them futuristic drawings. Here are the masters of telepathy and crystal ball; The Zancigs, Harry & Emma Sharrock,

Rosini, the Prestidigitator

Of the many forms of entertainment before the public today, none appears to be more generally popular than magic. There are, to be sure, various kinds of magicians. There are some who use tons of complicated apparatus, and require the help of a dozen stage assistants. There are those who call themselves "lecturers" and inject into their long discourses a few rather easily explained tricks. And there are still others who have developed their personal skill to such a degree that they are able to bewilder their audience utterly, though they use no apparatus save the common objects of everyday life which are to be found in one's own home.

It is to this latter group—a small, select company, including perhaps not more than a half-dozen performers in the whole United States—that PAUL ROSINI belongs. For years he has devoted himself wholeheartedly to the study of the art of deception. He has made such extensive improvements in some of the standard conjuring tricks as to puzzle completely the magicians who have been doing these same tricks for years. And he has devised some new magical effects that have proved amazing not only to the general public, but to expert magicians as well. It is significant that in the "inner circles" of magicians, the name of Paul Rosini is synonymous with the latest and best in magic.



PAUL
ROSINI

Page 629

Rosini, the Mentalist

AMONG the most thought-provoking feats of modern wonder-workers are those which seem to demonstrate the possibility of one person actually reading the unspoken thoughts of another.

It appears quite incredible that anyone should be able to name the card, the number, or the word upon which another person is concentrating, and still more unbelievable that one could predict in advance what will be the thought of presently. And yet, Paul Rosini has for years been performing these and similar feats which are wholly outside the realm of possibility.

It is fair to say that Mr. Rosini's work in the field of mindreading is without parallel in this country; and this is not surprising when it is recalled that he is the former associate and legitimate successor of the late Julius Zancig, whose uncanny exhibitions absolutely astounded Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and other serious investigators of mental phenomena. Mr. Rosini has developed a series of new tests in apparent thought-reading which appeal strongly to many persons who manifest but little interest in conjuring of the more usual type.

Hope Eden & Frescott, Jovedah De Rajah, Harry & Frances Usher, The Sunshines.

And then the etchings, that part of our Art closest to myself. Here, in a remote corner, are portrayals of those whose efforts are found in precise and exact finger handiwork - the men recognised in their Art rather than through public acclaim. We sit down to look at and study likenesses of Vernon, Horowitz, Finley, Cliff Greene, Malini, Fawcett Ross, Charlie Miller, Bill McCaffrey, Stewart Judah, John Scarne, Rufus Steele, Julius Dresbach.

These men, when they meet, have that solitude and comradeship for the involvement of some of the finest things in magic. A trick with six sleights is tossed, football like, back and forth. The sleights decrease by stages. 5,4,3, 2,1, and then a subterfuge may even eliminate the last. Among them they have fostered The Academy of the Art of Magic, the less than two dozen members electing newcomers to the club only after they have proven their worth. Others of the group, besides some of those mentioned, include Cardini, Garrick Spencer, J. Warren Keane, David Bamberg, Ottokar Fischer, Paul Fox, the late G. W. Hunter, and myself. All tricks and effects worked over are each other's property for we all contribute to the final perfected effect.

My introduction to magic happened in my teens when lobby pictures of Thurston intrigued me so much that I went inside rather than follow my friends to another theatre. I had no money for apparatus, and after getting a few hard earned gimmicks I chanced to meet Zano, an itinerant busker who, with Malini, had "played" almost every saloon in the country with a set of cups and balls in his pocket. Zano told me to throw away my gimmicks and stick to sleight-of-hand. "You can always do something anywhere and at any time."

My greatest thrill was seeing Malini perform. I dreamed about him afterwards. The marvelous two hour performance of pure sleights and perfect misdirection used only 2 glasses, 10 new decks of cards, some eggs, a walking stick, a piece of rope, tissue paper, a lemon, and most of these were borrowed. Then came Vernon, whom I think is twenty years ahead of the times. He is a cagey person around the magic shops, often willing to do a trick, but he conveniently forgets several important features as does Horowitz and as did Leipsig. They know only too well how quickly the others will copy a cute or new twist and it is because of this smartness they are superior to other magicians when they entertain lay audiences. They have "something." Malini once fooled Horowitz with "Chink-a-Chink" and years later H. asked M. where he had kept the extra lump. During that time the others pooh poohed the trick, saying they knew all about it, but it was Malini's "how and where" that made it so perfect a piece of misdirection.

The pioneers of the present era of magical etchings are responsible for its development of new sleights never before known or explained in books. They conceived of the subtleties which give the effects we are used to doing to-day every appearance of real magic and miracles.

At the beginning of the twentieth century sleight of hand was confined to and consisted mainly of what is known among the real experts as magic of the Professor Hoffmann period, with one exception in literature, that immortal book "Sleight of Hand" by Sachs. However, the sincere students so vastly improved upon the general effects and methods described, adapting the dif-

ferent presentations to suit changing times, that it would be difficult for even the writers and performers of that time to recognise the material they so laboriously and painstakingly produced.

The youngsters who had a great part in that advancement of sleight of hand are now full grown men with reputations among magicians and laymen alike. Another masterpiece which is a "must" on every magical shelf is the Erdnase "The Expert at the Card Table." At the turn of the century, when it first made its appearance, the book was given scant notice by most tricksters because the pass, palm, and force were considered by them the pinnacle of endeavor. The few open minds that did find a new field between those covers have lived to cherish the foundation for their cleverness.

As time went on, this clan of original thinkers raised the art of subtlety and subterfuge to a height that even the wildest dreams of the oldsters could not encompass. Double faces, double backs, short cards, end strippers, slick cards, daub, and a multitude of other artifices found their way into clever routines that raised the blood pressure of the most knowing watchers.

Who among us can ever forget Prof. Morris Loewy doing his superb top change surrounded by Leipsig, Blackstone, and others at an old N.C.A. meeting. It was the misdirection mellowed by years of training in timing each glance and move by a master once the favorite court magician to Franz Josef, Emperor of Austria. Welsh Miller, who first showed a one hand ribbon catch with coins, thirty of them, would be a feast for any eyes otherwise bored by box and barrel manipulators.

Then came the "Think of a card" era. Dai Vernon and Cliff Greene lived in Ottawa. At the old Bennett theatre they met J. Warren Keane, one of the first since Hofzinsler days to try such work, but without faked cards. They saw possibilities in this type of location and set their minds to work. Many miles south Sam Horowitz had also met Keane. He, too, saw that here was a new base for miracles. Years later, when Vernon and he got together they found many details of common interest and more fires of intense thought were kindled to good result.

Some of the tales that can be told of the lengths to which these fellows will go for a secret are hardly believable. Vernon's quest for a "center deal" is an example. Dai had closed in Nashville, Tenn. and was due to open in Boston, Mass. several days later. Jean was packing while Dai went for the car. While having his shoes shined a newspaper item about a middle dealer in St. Louis struck his eye. It was his first clue to the whereabouts of a man he had tried for long to see. Several years before, in Wichita, he'd visited a mexican gambler in the local jail house and had been told of this "wonderful" dealer and "mechanic with cards". He'd tried then to track him down but never was able to catch up with him.

Cancelling Boston, Dai and Jean were on the road west in an hour. The gambling house in St. Louis proved of little help and finally, in Kansas City a gaming supply house man sent him on a 70 mile trip to another town. In order to make an impression Dai left his DeSota Deluxe behind and borrowed a big Buick car for the trip. At the bank in Pleasantville the teller mentioned a "mysterious sort of fellow" who periodically made big deposits but Vernon still was dogged by bad luck and couldn't get an a dress, even at the local pool halls. Sitting

the car, and pretty well discouraged, Dai asked a little girl if she wanted ice cream, and more to make talk than anything else asked if she knew where Bill Kennedy lived. And she immediately told him where to go. Kennedy turned out to be a truck driver type of person with an ambition to belong to the genteel and elite fraternity of gamblers. Dai's opulence evidently did the trick, and the search for an efficient "center dealer" was over. Two weeks later Dai was back in New York sweating over the sleight he now has mastered. In a letter to Horowitz Dai added a postscript, "And a little child shall lead thee." After several years and lots of trouble, an ice cream cone was the answer.

I've wanted to talk about these people as I know them. I've wanted to impress upon you the importance some men give to the fine points of their art, for nothing is too small to be neglected. Three of them have given me pet tricks to pass on and I want to start with Emile Jar-row, undoubtedly the world's greatest artist at "sleeving." His puzzle problem is really new.



Horowitz, Jarrow, Rosini

JARROW

DIMES AND PENNIES OF CONFUCIOUS

I originated this trick, puzzle, or whatever you can call it, while serving a long spell in the hospital. It appears to be so impossible that you will hear many times that you are lying when you give the rules.

Ten dimes and ten pennies (poker chips or checkers are as good) are placed side by side on a table to make four rows of five coins each. The pennies and dimes alternate with each other in both the horizontal and vertical rows. The problem: Using only the first and second fingers of one hand, a continuous move of any number of coins that can be touched, must leave the coins all of a kind in each of the horizontal rows when the fingers are lifted. There may be no empty spaces left nor may any row be lengthened or shortened. The set up must be as compact as at the start, but after the move, one row consists of all pennies, one all dimes, one all pennies and the other all dimes. You will appreciate this much more if you try it before sneaking a look at the solution.

It is very simple and it can never be forgotten once learned. The tip of each finger is rested on the second and fourth coins of the

top row. With a circular swing they are removed from their positions, moved to below the bottom row and then pushed up against the second and fourth coins there. The shove is continued which moves these two vertical rows upward and when the two coins under the fingers have taken their place in the bottom horizontal row, the feat is accomplished. Try this also as a trick rather than a puzzle. With one hand hold a big square of cardboard over the original layout. Show your two fingers outstretched and place them deliberately beneath the cover. Make the move without any jerking motions. Show the two fingers again and lift the board. The distinct change in the layout is very startling. It is hard to believe it yourself.



S. Leo Horowitz, Paul Rosini, Dai Vernon

PAUL ROSINI

A FUTILE LESSON IN MAGIC

One of my favorite card tricks for many years is a spelling effect which uses a person from the audience without the usual "take a card" angle. It brings many laughs and makes the audience think that the performer is an expert card manipulator.

Only thirteen cards are used, Ace to King, all of them black except the 9 which is red. They are on top of the deck, arranged as given here later, and when the spectator arrives, you give the deck a fancy shuffle and cut, pick off the group, toss the others aside, and say that you need only a few to teach him how to be an expert magician.

Tell him that cards respond to their spelled out names. Spell A-C-E, putting a card from the top to the bottom for each letter. Turn up the next card. It's the Ace. Toss it away. Repeat this with TWO and THREE. Then give the deck to the spectator. He spells FOUR but turns up the red 9. You take the cards from him, return the 9 spot to the bottom, and proceed to spell FOUR and turn up the next. It IS four. He then tries to spell five, but he turns up the red 9. You take them back, put the 9 spot on bottom, and successfully spell out the five. He tries SIX. He gets the nine. You try SIX. You get the six. Then you try the SEVEN and, of course, you get it.

You call upon a woman, now, and she, trying EIGHT, gets it. She also gets NINE and TEN. As the nine spot goes out of the deck you remark that you're glad that won't bother anyone any more. The man how is allowed to try for the JACK but he misses, as usual. You try it, and get it. You give up now; as you start to have him try the Queen, shake your head and say that it's of no use. Then you get the Queen and King. Then excuse your helpers with a sad smile. "It just isn't in the cards, I guess, to make ex-

pert magicians out of you in one lesson."

THE DEVIL'S DIE SECRET

One of the cleverest single die and cup effects I've ever seen was shown me by a gambler several years ago. The secret of this truly impossible trick has been closely guarded. It is impromptu and uses only one die and a regular dice cup or a paper drinking cup.

The onlooker shakes the die in the cup and then turns the mouth of the cup downward upon the table. The seer takes hold of the cup without lifting it, shakes it a bit back and forth upon the table, and then announces the top number on the cube. He lifts the cover. He's right!

As shown me, my sharpshooting friend did the stunt on a billiard table covered with the regular green baize cloth. It is applicable, though, on almost any smooth surface. First you have the person shake the die and throw it a couple of times. During this time you wet your right second finger tip without being stingy with the spittle. On his last throw pick up the die and drop it in the cup. Your finger tip leaves its wetness upon a known side. The cup is given the person for the shake finished by turning it mouth downward quickly.

Take hold of the inverted cup and slide it feelingly back and forth on the table a bit. Feign attentiveness but keep your head at an angle which will allow you to see the thin mark of wetness which shows up when the known side of the die is against the table. If the streak doesn't show on the first move, give the cup a quick and jerky shake to change it. Continue this until the streak shows. Your known side subtracted from 7 tells you the number on the top side. And that was how and why a great many dollars changed hands.

When using the paper cups I have added a very cute angle for a repeat. The performer has about five of the cups nested. He brings them out with a die, uses a cup for the first stunt and then drops and accidentally steps on it, or proceeds to repeat while someone is looking at the first cup. This time the effect works quickly and precisely with no shaking and no evident trickery or attempt at it. He holds the cup and, turning his head asks the spectator to put the die underneath with any number uppermost.

This is strictly a subterfuge and there can be no one behind the performer at the moment. Beforehand, a one inch square has been cut out of this cup against its lip. When the cup is inverted, this opening is kept on the performer's side. He tips the farther edge so that the die may be placed underneath while his head is turned. Then he slides the cup a trifle on the table, and, glancing through the hole is able to name the top number and lift the cup for verification by the others. It is such a barefaced manœuvre it always gets by. Remember that they have been fooled by the first, and legitimate version.

S. LEO HOROWITZ

THE DIVINING PASTEBOARD

The deck is shuffled and fanned by the magician for the spectator to select any four of the cards from any positions. The spectator

thinks of one of the four, whereupon they are well mixed with their faces down so that no one can possibly know the location of the mentally chosen card. At random these four are shoved into the fanned deck which is squared.

The performer now puts the deck behind his back, saying that he'll attempt to find the thought of card through the use of another as a "diviner". His right hand brings out a card which the audience remembers as a "three" spot. Behind his back the magician pushes this card into the deck face up. The cards are now spread face down across the table and the three spot seen reversed near the center. Saying that the spectator's thought of card has been found, the performer has it called aloud and proceeds to prove his point!

This mental location is very subtly arranged to leave little or nothing for watchers to catch. Any five cards are turned face up on top of the deck. These are covered with a face down three spot. These top six cards are crimped at the inside end so that they may be lifted together when necessary.

The deck is first dovetail shuffled if desired, keeping the top six cards in place and unrevealed as being out of the ordinary. Then the deck is fanned below these for the free selection of four cards.

Hold the deck face down in your left hand and openly show the four cards in a fan with the right hand. Have one thought of, and at the same time you are able to remember the order of the cards from back to face of the fan. It is only necessary to remember the values.

The group of four is now deposited face up on the deck. The right hand now apparently turns them over on the deck, but actually ALL cards above the break or crimp are turned at the same time. Immediately the performer says that perhaps the cards should be mixed. He deals four cards off the top onto the table, and asks the spectator to put his hands on them and mix them around on the table face down so that not even he will know where his thought of card may be.

Fanning the deck, with the exception of the top few cards, the performer now has the spectator push the four cards, still face down, in different places whereupon the deck is finally squared. Thus, to all appearances, four freely chosen cards are freely returned to different locations and only one is being thought of.

The deck is held behind the back. The performer moves the top card to the bottom. The second card is the face up three spot. He turns this over and then brings it out with his right hand. He shows it and says that it will be used as the "diviner" card. The card is returned to behind the back, placed face up on top, and the deck given a cut. Then the pack is brought forward and spread face down on the table. The face up three shows at about the center. And now, for the first time, the spectator names his mentally chosen card.

Knowing the remembered order of the four cards first shown, you know that now they rest, in that order, immediately under the face up three spot. Let us call them A, B, C, D. If A is named you simply show that the 3 spot has found it. If B, you say that the 3 spot locates the card. Counting the 3 as 1, the following card as 2, you turn up the next, or third card. If C, say that the 3 spot locates the card. Toss it aside, count to the third card below it. If D, do exactly the same thing, counting off three

cards below the reversed one. These are moved aside as counted. Then pick up the next card and turn it over. There is an "out" in each case

DAI VERNON

CARD OF THE GODS

Any deck is well shuffled by a spectator who then cuts off about a third of the cards. He is told to look them over and finally settle his mind upon one.

You now take the packet and appear to try finding the thought of card. But what actually is done is that you look for two spot cards of like value, preferably from 6 to 10. They are kept together and placed in the packet so that the second of the two will be at its number from the top of the pack. Thus if you use two "nines", one will be eighth and the other ninth from the top. If two "eights", one would be seventh and the other eighth.

Professing failure you now say that you'll deal the cards into a face up pile and ask the subject to watch for his card and remember its position in the packet. The performer counts the cards as he deals them into the face up pile.

You now put the packet on top of the remainder of the deck. And then the following method of shuffling takes place. It is extremely simple and there is little to forget. Undercut about half the pack, slip one card, injogging it, and shuffle off the rest. Cut under the jogged card, shuffle run the number of cards you stacked, injogging the last, and throw the rest on top. Square and cut below the jogged card placing two piles on the table. Remember which is the top half and which is the bottom.

At this time you tell the spectator that although it sounds impossible and strange, he has the intuition necessary to locate his own card. He is to pick one of the two piles, and, unless he picks the correct one, the test must necessarily fail. However, it is impressed upon him that he cannot help himself from taking the right heap.

You are perfectly safe all of the time. If the spectator indicates the top half you merely turn it completely over revealing one of your stacked pair. If he picks the bottom half you turn over its top card which is the other one of the set pair. Saying that the revealed card will find his thought of pasteboard you now ask him for the location of his card in the original pile. It may have been seventh, tenth, fifteenth, etc.

You then take his number together with the value of the card showing, subtract the smaller from the larger, count to the resulting figure in one of the piles, and the card there proves to be the one on his mind!

There is but one thing to remember at this point. If the spectator's given figure is lower, or less, than the value of the card turned up, the counting is done in the bottom pile. If the spectator's figure is higher, or more, the action takes place in the top pile.

Telling the spectator that he will always be right in his pile selection is important and has much to do with the impressiveness of the feat. The turned up card either finds the spot of card in the opposite pile, or in its own, and this is logical in each case. If in the top pile (which has been turned over completely) the packet is turned over and the counting done. If in the bottom pile (the top card of which has been turned face up) the indicator card is turned face down and the counting done.

EDITRIVIA (continued from next page)

and I.B.M. have found it, but this business of paying dues with each hand, subscribing to two magazines, and dropping in on both conventions, does not encourage such belief. Perhaps the right answer is to celebrate 1941 as the fortieth anniversary of the "Order of the Sphinx", and try to grasp some of the fundamentals that were being considered in 1901, so as to analyze them, in light of subsequent experience.

At least, there is one fundamental which should provide the basic foundation. It is this:

Magicians, in themselves, constitute a natural fraternity, whose mutual interest is the secret knowledge, and specialized ability which they possess.

What need, then, of monkey trappings, and petty politics? Why pass-words, rituals, or sham importance of elective office? Those belong to synthetic fraternities, wherein artificial clap-trap and meaningless secrets are needed to create an atmosphere of mystery where none exists.

With magicians, the knowledge is inherent, and cannot be revoked. A true magical society should begin by recognizing magicians; not by expecting magicians to recognize the society. To eject a qualified member from a true magical fraternity is a joke, whatever the charges, because the secrets of the craft will still be his, in whatever proportion he possesses them.

Eject enough such men, and you will have them supplying the very tricks that member in good standing (five bucks and three signatures on an application) are buying at magic shops in the afternoon, and mangling at the evening meetings.

Ethical conduct is valuable among magicians, but it should be encouraged through persuasion, and not by dire threats no more formidable than an untoothed buzz-saw. Furthermore, the rules of such ethics should be formulated by practicing magicians, not by members of other professions, who happen to take up magic as a hobby, and think they can apply their own regulations to it.

When merit of performance, knowledge of the art, and professional experience become the highest qualifications to office in all magical societies, there will be no trouble in amalgamating such groups, because they will automatically become one.

Aside to Ted Annemann: By an interesting coincidence, a letter arrived while I was writing this article. It was signed by two persons who had evidently read my "Magician's Manual". They wanted to know how to join the Magician's League of America, which happens to be simply a name which was used to sponsor the Manual. Frankly, what should I do: write them separate letters, and tell one to join the S.A.M., and the other the I.B.M.? Or just advise them to double up on a subscription to the 'Jinx' so they can stay friends?

Walter Gibson

~ EDITRIVIA ~

While Mr. Annemann tries to enjoy a vacation away from The Jinx, the Editrivia page will be written by friends selecting their own subject matter to be reproduced here unexpurgated. This week Mr. Walter Gibson has his say. Next week the nod will be given to Dr. Harlan Tarbell.

Just why there should be two or more national magical societies, holding separate annual conventions, electing different groups of officers, and sponsoring individual publications, is a mystery to most thinking magicians. It leads to the opinion that one unified group, patterned along the right line, could achieve the very results that several conflicting organizations have consistently failed to accomplish.

Only by a plausible beginning could this be done; hence, to find the starting point, it is necessary to delve into the history of American magical societies, and candidly discuss their deficiencies. This takes us back to the year 1901, when the Hand of Fate performed a slick second deal, when it shaped the destinies of magical societies; for in that year began the organization which might have been the answer, had it not did a prompt and unfortunate death.

This was "The Order of The Sphinx" sponsored by Henry Ridgely Evans, with "Mahatma" as its official publication. Unfortunately, William Hilliar, then editor of Mahatma's new rival, the "Sphinx" magazine, objected to the use of his title. Before the new society could recuperate from that surprise, the props were out from under it, and on exhibit in the back room of Martinka's Magical Palace, at 493 (old numbering) Sixth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan, New York.

We must credit Francis J. Martinka with anticipating the Society of American Magicians, for he had instituted the back room with its Bijou Theatre, several years prior. It made an excellent gathering place for his best customers, and the title "Doctor" seems to have influenced Martinka, for Doctors Mortimer and Ellison were the two members of the privileged group who inoculated the dying "Order of The Sphinx" and revived it as the Society of American Magicians. But whether or not the worthy doctors realized it, they localized the S.A.M. when they used Martinka's back shop as an operating room.

During the first fifteen years of its existence, the S.A.M. fulfilled the functions of a national magical society, in the following wise. It elected New York members, nearly all non-professionals, or non-stage magicians, to all the executive offices, on somewhat of a yearly move-up basis. One startling exception was Howard Thurston, who must have become Second Vice President by mistake, around 1911, for he dropped from the list of officers, instead of moving up. The phenomenal happened in 1914, when the most noted creator of card tricks, Theodore Deland, was elected Trustee, just before he resigned from the S.A.M. because the society termed an imitation of his card tricks as a dealer's dispute, and therefore outside its jurisdiction. Another exception to the local rule of choice was C. Victor Dealy, of Philadelphia, who commuted regularly to the New York meetings, and finally worked up to first vice president.

To justify its national claim during those

fifteen years, the S.A.M. established ONE other assembly outside of New York; namely, in San Francisco, which seems to have been generally conceded as beyond commuting distance from N.Y.

Meanwhile, individual magical societies had sprung up by the dozens, showing the crying need for the assemblies which the S.A.M. did not form. At one time, they actually grouped to support their own magazine, the "Combined Magical Clubs Bulletin", and in 1915, an even more remarkable thing happened. Through the medium of the "Sphinx" which had become the official organ of the S.A.M. itself, magicians actually established a "National Order of The Sphinx", going back in title, and greatly in idea, to the original Evans society of 1901!

It is only too plain that those were the ripe years when magicians should have started a truly national order: as plain as the fact that the structure of the S.A.M. was not suited to the task that it had undertaken. But instead of recognizing the latter fact, supporters of the S.A.M. simply turned the works over to a genius named Houdini.

From the moment that he became permanent president, in 1917, Houdini went after national expansion. Before he could get moving, another society, the National Conjurer's Association, had formed in the S.A.M.'s cherished territory, New York, and was gathering in locals from all over the country. But Houdini overtook the N.C.A. and with the turn of the twenties, the S.A.M. was actually tops, but only in assemblies. It still didn't have what magicians wanted. Another society was formed, based upon the lacks of the S.A.M., a group of corresponding magicians who called themselves the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

It is quite evident that if the S.A.M. had been satisfactory, the I.B.M. would have been unnecessary. The phenomenal growth of the I.B.M. further proves the fact. But singularly, the I.B.M., instead of recognizing the errors of the S.A.M., fell into them, employing everything from one man leadership to membership campaigns, and rush formations of local rings. Like the S.A.M., it established the law of less majeste, with the Grand Bounce as the reward for any one who didn't like the set-up, regardless of the objector's rating as a real magician

Which brings us to the International Magic Circle, formed in 1931. Having been one of its organizers, I must necessarily take a personal viewpoint as to the I.M.C., which was planned, not with the purpose of eliminating societies then existing, but toward eventual amalgamation with them. The I.M.C. had, as basic by-laws, certain features which other organizations had overlooked or ignored; notably, that the principle officers should be professional magicians, and that the president could serve only a single year. Despite the fact that the I.M.C. was publicly attacked before its aims had been announced, and the gunnery kept right on, afterward, it lasted long enough to be classed as one of the "Big Three" when pleas were made for societies to unite in their conventions. I'd say that facts showed that a new society was needed, otherwise the I.M.C. would not have traveled as far as it did; but it was equally evident that its failure to survive was proof that the I.M.C. was not the answer to the real want of magicians.

What IS the answer?

I would like to believe that both the S.A.M. (turn back to last page)