

HOW TO PICK POCKETS

•

By

EDDIE JOSEPH

•

Price \$1.00

EX LIBRIS



WILL ALMA

M.I.M.C. (LONDON)

HOW TO PICK POCKETS

A Treatise on the Fundamental Principle, Theory, and Practice of Picking Pockets — For Entertainment Purposes Only.

By Eddie Joseph

Fifth Edition

1946

Printed and Published by
Abbott's Magic Novelty Co.
Colon, Michigan

SEWARD'S THEATRICAL & CONJURING SUPPLIES

2nd. Floor, 62 SWANSTON STREET, MELBOURNE

(a few doors down from Henry Bucks)

MF 4446 — MF 4447

To Whom It May Concern

The information in this manuscript is being given for the sole use of Magicians, for entertainment only.

Eddie Joseph

Calcutta, India

May 15, 1940.

C O N T E N T S

Introduction	7
The Theory and Fundamental Principle of Pickpocketing	9
The Practice of Pickpocketing	12
How to Steal Handkerchief from Outer Breast Pocket (Three Methods)	13
How to Steal Pen or Pencil from Outer Breast Pocket	15
How to Steal Pen or Pencil from Inside Breast Pocket	16
How to Steal Articles from Inner Breast Pockets	17
How to Steal from Outer Coat Pockets	18
How to Steal from Hip Pocket	20
How to Steal a Wrist Watch and Strap from Wearer's Wrist	20
How to Steal Sock Suspenders (Garters) from Wearer's Legs	23
How to Steal the Trouser Suspenders (Braces) from Wearer's Body	23
Between You and Me	24
Delivering the Goods	26
How to Rehearse Pickpocketing	29
A Few Words of Advice	30

The State Library of Victoria
"ALMA CONJURING COLLECTION"
INTRODUCTION

Turning the clock back to 1923, we find ourselves in the spacious ground of "Eden Garden," a heavenly spot on earth, adjoining the Government House in this Indian metropolis.

The Indian National Exposition is in progress. We move past the various stands and finally arrive at the entertainment section of the fair. In this section there is only one spot to engage our attention, "The Magic Theatre."

Men, women and children are seen streaming towards this objective, and above the din of the crowd we hear a voice calling from the direction of the theatre, "Come and see what Mabel is doing." Lifting our eyes to locate its source, we gaze upon the figure of a Magician who by then had already created quite a stir in this hard-to-please city of Calcutta. Towering well above the crowd on a raised platform, the Magician continues to draw the crowd — magnetically — to fill his theatre. This Magician is none other than Percy Abbott.

Our attention is now engaged by a stalwart form. He is elbowing his way through the mass of humanity, shouting, "He is darn clever, this fellow. I must see him again." Hardly did he reach the door of the theatre when he returned again, shouting, "I've been pinched. Someone has lifted my purse." "Who could it be?" inquired someone. "How should I know. All I know is that he was swifter than any Magician."

His misfortune, contrary to expectation, did not draw any sympathy, but hilarity. The people were tickled to

death to see someone deprived of his belonging. They found fun in our friend's calamity.

But for me, it was the beginning of a strange idea. Here is a man who lost his money, yet he cannot help admiring the perpetrator of this crime. "He is swifter than any Magician," and we are supposed to have earned the reputation of being the swiftest mortal beings extant.

Magicians are like blood-hounds; when they start on a trail they don't stop till they get "there." I immediately saw the possibility of employing the methods of the "pick-pocket" for entertainment purposes. To what extent I have succeeded may be judged from the pages that follow. To anyone who would add this branch of entertainment — for entertainment it certainly is — to his regular program, instantaneous success will reward his efforts. The practice of "pickpocket" for entertainment purposes is by no means difficult. You have to understand the underlying principle of it first. The rest comes easy. I will try and be as clear as possible in my instruction, and if you only follow it closely you will never go wrong.

The Theory and Fundamental Principle of Pickpocketing

People believe that the pickpocket can go about his business — nonchalantly — under all conditions. This is a fallacy. He is bound by limitations the same as the conjurer is.

Nobody is ever pickpocketed out in the “wide open spaces.” It simply cannot be done. When you hear of someone being victimized, it was in a crowd — whilst boarding a bus — moving along in a hurry — accidentally colliding against someone — or under some other similar circumstances.

Now it is a psychological rule that the human mind can only be conscious of one thing at a time. We imagine we are thinking of several things together but it is not so. The man elbowing his way through a crowd has only one immediate aim in his mind, that of reaching his destination. The man boarding a bus is occupied with the fear of missing it. The man rushing in a hurry has his mind filled with the thought of being there on time, and the person who has just experienced a collision is too indignant to think of anything else. Whatever the circumstances, the mental state in each case is the same. The mind is preoccupied according to circumstances. The victim's thought, at the crucial moment, is focused in another direction. It is psychological law that facilitates the pickpocket's operations. In other words, the victim's “mental state” becomes a powerful accessory to his own victimization. Without this factor the pickpocket would never survive.

How many times have you experienced this “mental state?” Have you never felt oblivious to your surround-

ings some time or another when occupied with some distant thinking? Have you always been fully conscious of what was going on around you when, for instance, trying out a new sleight? We have all experienced this condition of the mind not once but many times over.

As the soil has to be tilled before the seed can be sown, the natural tendency of our mind does the tilling for the pickpocket. He is presented a rich and ready soil to do the sowing.

This explains that in the first and the most important part of the execution (?) the operator plays no part. He merely takes advantage of the mental condition of the victim at the "psychological moment." We shall now examine his role, the part he actually plays to complete the operation.

The pickpocket's work in certain respects bears comparison with that of the conjurer. By this I mean he appears to be doing something, and under cover of his open action, he fulfills his ulterior desire. In exemplification of this we shall look into one of his most common practices. He precedes his "lifting operation" by accidentally (?) colliding against a pedestrian. The moment of the impact affords an ideal cover. Simultaneously with the impact his task is accomplished. The movement of his hand to the pocket will never be felt; it will be absorbed by the force of the impact.

To give you a personal experience of this principle I suggest you place something in your outer coat pocket. Arrange with a friend to walk up and collide against you. He need not be violent as that is not necessary. Simultaneously with the impact he should reach into your pocket and draw out the article. When he does this you will not

be aware of the movement of his hand, through your sense of "feeling." Your "mental state," of course, will not play any part in this try-out because you already had previous knowledge of his intention. The bodily impact will "dull" the sensation caused by the movement of his hand to your pocket. Why? The reason is set out in the next paragraph.

It is a little known fact that the sensation resulting from a greater force supersedes that of a lesser force. To understand this point hold a match stick in your left hand and clench your right hand into a fist. First dig the point of the match into the flesh of your uncovered thigh. You will be pretty sure of that thrust. Now let both hands work in unison. The right fist hits the thigh sharply and the left repeats the dig with the match. You will only feel the blow and not the dig. Why? Because the blow is sharper than the thrust. Now if you were to allow someone to hit you on the same spot with a sledge hammer while you use your fist, then the result of the hammer will supersede that of the blow. It is the case of a weaker force succumbing under pressure of the stronger. In plainer language, the greater force numbs the weaker sensation to an extent that you don't feel it at all. However queer this analogy may seem to you, it is here for a definite purpose. This purpose will be evident when we study the practical side of this work.

Having arrived thus far, it becomes clear that the pick-pocket can only operate under the right condition. This condition he has to seek. As the magician does not seek but creates his own conditions, he is in a superior position to employ the method of the pickpocket for his entertainment. The "mental state," a condition of the mind, as we understand, is the reaction to our effort at "misdirection." As

this principle, by long usage becomes second nature to the magician, do you wonder at all why we are able to hold any member of the audience on whom we are operating in a vice-like grip? Then again, who understands the full significance of the "coverage" principle better than we do? We are already in possession of the two theoretical data. All that remains is to interpret them into practice.

The Practice of Pickpocketing

In the previous chapter we have seen that the pickpocket has to work under cover of some open action. He cannot just walk up to a person, help himself to what he wants, and then retire. We employ the same ruse.

We entertain the audience. Our tricks form the instrument of entertainment, and consequently we make the instrument serve as our shield. Can anything be more natural than this? It would be absurd on my part to suggest specific tricks to precede each "lifting" operation. Each of us thinks and works differently from the rest. Each of us has to suit the need of the individuality.

The best manner in which I can serve you is to detail the moves I employ and which in my constant practice I have found to be suitable for the purpose which they are designed. All we are concerned with is to teach the simplicity of pocket lifting when employed for entertainment purposes.

To add to the hilarity some parts of the operation are conducted in a manner to make the audience aware of your intentions. They are allowed to see you, for instance, stealing the volunteer's handkerchief. As the volunteer at no stage, gets the slightest inkling of the procedure, the laughter increases with each successive operation. I will show

you how to deal with the stolen articles later. For the present, it would suffice to explain how to relieve the volunteer of his belongings without him or the audience knowing that you have taken possession of them.

To Steal Handkerchief from Outer Breast Pocket (Three Methods)

First Method:

Position of volunteer facing audience. Stand behind him and with your right hand, offer him something to hold in his right hand. Noticing that he is not doing it correctly, hold his right hand with your right and raise his hand as high as it will reach. During this time your left hand is resting on his shoulder, the left one. The left hand applies some pressure on his shoulder and should not lie there lightly. The moment you raise his right hand you say, "I want your hand up there," and as soon as his hand gets "there," press on his right hand and pull up the corner of the handkerchief with your left hand over his left shoulder. The "pull" on the handkerchief should be a decisive one; one swift action and not done slowly. The handkerchief is put into your trouser pocket. The owner neither saw nor felt anything, but in this case you have allowed the audience to see what you were about. This will produce a loud roar of laughter. The volunteer will naturally believe that they laugh due to your helping him on with his hand. The misdirection here is perfect. Since it is his right hand he is concerned with, his face will be turned towards his hand, and later follows its movement upwards. Your left hand presses on his shoulder with a purpose. When you pull away the handkerchief the volunteer will still feel the pressure of your hand there, or rather imagine it to be

there, although it has been moved away. The right hand presses on its hold at the critical moment to ensure that the volunteer's attention is maintained this side to cover the action of the left.

Second Method:

In this method, volunteer again faces audience. Let him hold a tray in both hands. You bring a chair and place behind him. Press down on both his shoulders with both hands, asking him to sit. This is a natural gesture. You have used it dozens of times in your home, in your office; in fact, anywhere else when inviting someone to sit. Your left hand here is in the correct position. The fingers should be more toward the front side of the volunteer than towards the rear. As he bends to sit, pull away the handkerchief and the fact that he is moving in the opposite direction to the pull the task becomes almost automatic. The handkerchief is disposed of in one of your pockets. The volunteer is again ignorant of what has transpired, but the audience know — and they laugh.

Third Method:

In this method both the volunteer and the audience are in the dark. A table stands on the left side of stage. Volunteer is still facing audience. You stand beside him. Under the pretext of asking him to fetch something from the table or putting something on the table, you hold him by his right forearm, your left again on his shoulder, and wheel him around so that his right side is now toward audience. Raise his hand about his shoulder height, then let go and point with your right forefinger towards the table. The moment you raise his hand, the right side of his coat is pulled forward with the action of his hand, and this is an additional

cover the block the audience's view to the action of your left hand which pulls away the handkerchief. The moment the hanky is pulled away your hand travels to your side. Your body hides the hanky from the audience's view. The volunteer doesn't stand a chance of a look-in. The hanky is disposed of in your trouser pocket. All one has to remember in this kind of work is to execute the secret move under cover of some open action, much the same way as, for instance, alternately passing a ball from hand to hand when proving each in turn to be empty, the wider sweep of the hand concealing the smaller movement of the ball's transfer.

To Steal Pen or Pencil from Outer Breast Pocket

This is the simplest thing to do. As a matter of fact, I used to do it out of devilment in my college days. When I could successfully get away with it, then you can realize how easy of execution it must be.

Volunteer faces audience. You are about to show some trick. You find that he is too close to the front. Placing both your hands flat on his chest, you push him slightly backwards with the remark, "Would you mind getting back a bit?" Your right hand goes right on top of the spot where the pen or pencil is; left hand about the same level on the other side of his chest. What also is important, your head is turned towards your left for misdirection, and as you press against him with both hands, get hold of the top of pen in the crotch of your thumb, or, in more technical term, in the thumb palm position. As you move hands away, pull away the pen or pencil and it comes right out. The pull is slightly upwards and to the right. In continuation of the same movement your right hand goes behind him as you turn to face audience and the pen clipped into your pocket

unobserved. It is unnecessary to say that when you are turning to face audience for a brief moment your right pocket will be away from the audience and this is the time to dispose of the pen. Here the pressure of your hands against his chest will "dull" the sensation caused by the withdrawal of the pen. Let someone try it on you and be convinced.

To Steal Pen or Pencil from Inside Breast Pocket

Many people carry their pens in their inside breast pocket. Some reason must be found to get there before stealing the pen. So you work a vanishing trick, say with a card, coin or hank, it does not matter which. After the vanish the article has to be recovered. Your left hand with the concealed article goes in search of it into his outer coat pocket and drops it in there. Not finding (?) it there, it next goes behind the coat as if still searching his inner breast pocket. The pen or pencil is lifted off the pocket and under cover of coat presses it against palm with the third fingers. Part of pen, owing to its length will naturally extend over the wrist. The hand is withdrawn in this position and the pen is kept hidden from view. The missing article not being found there, either the volunteer is asked to help in the search and he eventually recovers it from his pocket. In the meantime, the pen is either dropped to your pocket or pushed through your shirt front. That is why I advocate using the left hand because by merely passing your hand in front of your shirt the pen can easily be disposed of there. If wearing a vest then the pen is pushed through the vest opening. I will explain two other methods of disposing of the pen but in these two instances the pen is disposed of before the hand is withdrawn from under volunteer's coat. One method is to kick the pen with the sec-

ond or third finger after pulling off pocket and it will be shot up the sleeve. The other method is to push it under your watch strap. If using the latter be sure that your strap is not tied too closely to your skin. It is, of course, understood that the last two methods are particularly recommendable when it is desired to have the hand free and the moment it is withdrawn from under coat.

Stealing Articles from Inner Breast Pocket

People usually carry such things as wallets, driving licenses, visiting card cases, letter, etc., in their inner breast pocket. To empty contents of this pocket, several trips will have to be made there. Vanishing a bunch of coins and pulling them out one at a time will serve our purpose, but I have found playing cards make the better medium. Hand volunteer a pack of cards for shuffling but before doing so palm a portion of the pack. Reach into his pocket and load the lot but bringing out only one. This you hand to volunteer to include in the pack for shuffling and you appear to be surprised how that card found its way there. To facilitate subsequent operations, the cards are loaded on the other side of the articles that may be lying in this pocket. The articles are allowed to remain near the body side of the volunteer. Two or three trips are later made to the pocket. Each time you palm out an article but at the same time you also bring out a few cards at your finger tips openly. The impression on the audience is that you are merely producing cards from his pocket.

Your position in relation to the volunteer is as follows: Supposing you want to operate on his right inner breast pocket. He faces audience and you are on his right side. When you reach into his pocket you will naturally have to

turn your back to the audience partly. Your right hand goes in, palms an article and withdraws a few cards. As soon as cards are withdrawn you wheel slightly to the left in order to show the cards to the audience. This will take your left side away from the audience. After showing the cards you pass them to the left hand and incidentally the hidden article goes with it. You turn again, this time not as fully as in the first time and reach in pocket again while the left drops the article to your pocket on the left side.

In many instances you will find that it will not be necessary to palm out the articles at all. They are simply brought out behind the cards. Such small articles as driving license, cigar lighter, visiting cards and card cases, matches, etc., are all suitable. In the case of a letter in its envelope, the cover has to be doubled before rendering suitable for handling. You can even attract a large wallet if you get too close to volunteer and pass it under cover of your body to the other hand. A word of caution is necessary here. On no account take out any loose change or bills. This will avoid a lot of complications later.

This particular type of "lifting" is also suitable for work in the auditorium. Once in each spot is enough, for the palmed article will have to be disposed of first before attempting again and this is best done when walking to another part of the theatre. Since they are only witnessing a feat of card production from the pocket there is no reason to suspect otherwise.

Stealing from the Outer Coat Pocket

To steal from the two outer side coat pockets, it will not be necessary to go there openly as in the last. Let us suppose you have designs on his right side pocket. You

stand on his right three-quarter way facing audience. Your left side at this stage should be slightly behind volunteer's body. You either work a body production here which you have previously loaded or go in search of something. With your right hand reach across his body and move the left side of his coat away, remarking, "Nothing there." Then take hold of the right side of his coat and move it away towards you to expose a part of his body under coat, and whilst pretending to look there expectantly, the coat front forms a wonderful screen for the left hand to operate. It is the simplest thing now for the left hand to take out anything found here. The disposal of it is equally easy owing to position of your body. If operating on his left side you naturally stand on the other side, and the right hand does the stealing.

It would appear to some of my readers that a lot of nerve is required to go in for this sort of thing. That is not so. If you were seated in the audience, would you suspect that anything other than what the magician appears to be doing is being done. No question of pickpocketing will enter the mind. A magician is supposed to "put" things secretly into an audience's pocket and not "take out." Besides, you are working under cover all the time. In a later chapter, I shall show you how to practice the necessary actions without having to go under any friend's obligation to act as the dummy volunteer. All I want you to keep in your mind is **TIMING — TIMING — TIMING**. This plays an important part in this kind of work, the same as it does in conjuring, swimming, running, or anything else for that matter. One may train his hands in sleights from now till Doomsday and if he has not got the sense of correct timing his display will always appear as "Untidy."

To Steal from the Hip Pocket

Have a pair of lady's stockings hanging under your coat at the back. You are standing, say on the right side of the volunteer. Your left hand goes under your coat getting hold of the stocking and moves from the back under the coat of volunteer. You are slightly behind volunteer so the movement of your left hand is well covered by your body as well as that of the volunteer. Your right hand moves across the body of volunteer from the front under his coat and around him to his left side, and takes the stocking, PRESS against body of volunteer with your right arm and body. In other words, you "squeeze" him in an embrace while the left hand relieves him of the contents of the hip pocket. This "squeeze" will dull the sensation that the movement of your left hand may have produced otherwise, under ordinary conditions. The article is not withdrawn timidly nor gingerly, but JERKED out. Having gained possession of the article, the right slowly brings the stocking into view while the left passes the stolen goods from the back and sticks it under the belt unobserved.

Stealing a Wrist Watch and Strap

This is one of those rare feats that creates real talk and publicity. Does it seem feasible? By all means, and it is no more difficult than the rest. First, let us study the different variety of straps or bands that hold the watch to the wrist.

- (a) This is the ordinary strap and buckle arrangement. One end of the strap is passed through the buckle, the solitary prong in the buckle is passed through a hole in this end of the buckle to keep it in position. This variety is similar to the usual type of leather belts.

- (b) This is a metal band whether gold, silver or any other metal. One end of the band has a stud and the other end has several holes. When the band is placed around the wrist the stud is simply pressed into one of the hole which fixes it in position.
- (c) An endless chain or band that has to be slipped over the hand and then adjusted to the size of the wrist with a catch.
- (d) Strap made of leather, cloth or metal, fixed into position by means of a catch.

To effect the steal go to the auditorium and ask for someone to come up stage. As the volunteer rises, get hold of his wrist with your right hand and hold him there with a strong grip. This is very important, and the success depends 99 per cent on this hold alone. Your hold position is as follows: The palm of your hand is directly on the face of the watch, the thumb and fingers on either side of the buckle, clasp, or stud arrangement as the case may be. This position comes second in importance.

While walking and leading volunteer up stage, your thumb and fingers operate on the part that holds the strap together. If it is of the "A" variety, the fingers and thumb undo the buckle by first sliding the end of strap out from the buckle, then doubling the strap over itself and applying a little pressure until the prong slips out of the hole. The hardest part is done.

As you get up stage, you are walking ahead of him, pull away watch with your back to audience. I can almost see a skeptical smile on your face, but before I attempt to remove it I will explain how to deal with the other varieties of catches, viz. "B" and "D." The "B" variety is simplest to

remove. You merely squeeze on the two ends of bands and they open out immediately. The removal of the watch is the same as in "A." The "D" type is opened by pulling out the clasp with the middle finger. The "C" type is best left alone.

Now we shall deal with your skeptical smile. Get your wrist watch and place it on your left wrist, but for the moment don't fix the buckle or clasp. Just place the watch in the position it ought to be when worn ordinarily. Now get hold of it as explained, i. e., palm on the face of watch and fingers below and press as hard as you can. Use your full force and then suddenly jerk the watch away. What do you feel? Long after the watch is removed the sensation of the watch still being on the wrist persists.

Do you recall an impromptu stunt with a small coin which you stick on the forehead of a victim? You press on the coin and then you draw it away without him knowing. He is told to drop the coin from his forehead by making his brow jump up and down. The coin is not there but he continues for a long while in the attempt of dropping the coin which he really believes to be there. The pressure on the coin when placed against his forehead creates the sensation of the coin being present long after it has been removed. It is the same thing with the watch.

I would further explain that the watch is not pulled over the hand of the wearer but taken directly off his wrist. Only remember to press on the watch as hard as you can; the harder the better as the watch is jerked away. When practicing this steal don't practice it on yourself, but strap the watch on the arm of a chair and, dragging the chair with you, count the paces taken before the watch is un-

strapped. With each repetition try to reduce the paces until you come to the minimum. The chair should be a light one.

Stealing Sock Suspenders (Garters)

This section will deal with the garter of the "Paris" variety. A coin is vanished, leaving it concealed in the right hand. Suddenly swoop down, getting hold of volunteer's trouser end and pull it right up to his knee. This will bring out spontaneous laughter. His leg is bare from his knee downwards. The right hand goes under the sock and while looking for the coin the left thumb and forefinger with one twist undo the fastener that holds the sock up. Left is retained in the same position while right offers coin to volunteer. Now both hands go up to pull trouser down to its normal position. As soon as trouser leg nears the part of garter that goes around the calf, the left hand lets go of the trouser and goes around calf so that the fingers and thumb are on either side of the clasp that holds the garter in position. A mere squeeze and the thing is undone. In the meantime, the right keeps on pressing on the trouser leg but as the left hand is in the way, the trouser cannot be lowered and this is taken by the audience as a byplay to raise additional laughter and they respond. Since the garter by now is fully released or free, it is pulled away backward and trouser lowered at same time. Garter dropped in left pocket or the side that is away from audience.

Stealing Trousers Suspenders (Braces)

If anything could send the audience into convulsive laughter, this is it. Just imagine the effect on the audience when you pull volunteer's braces right off as he is asked to return to his seat. In search of a missing coin you reach

under his vest and under cover of looking for coin, you undo the side buttons which hold the braces. Both your hands work together, one on each side, and the unbuttoning is done as swiftly as snapping the fingers twice. You don't interfere with the back buttons yet. Go into your routine and when about to pull the braces off (this after you have done your trick right through), thank assistant and ask him to get back to his seat. As he walks away reach under his coat from behind, both hands going there together, and with one move the two back parts of the braces are unbuttoned. Pull down on the braces and it comes right clear from behind the coat in your hands. The volunteer will immediately get hold of his trousers and begin fearing it would result in a calamity, and you, with the braces dangling in your hands, follow him.

Between You and Me

In the foregoing pages I have explained how we can get into the different pockets of the volunteer. The methods explained are not some theoretical "possibility" but the results of practical experience. When driving a car each of us follows the same line of successive action, but if the mannerism of each is studied, it would show us that no two persons can be alike. The hold on the steering wheel, the position of the legs and body in each case suggest a different individuality. While each driver is following the one set rule of driving, each applies it according to his own mannerism and convenience.

I have set out the rules — the line of action — for you to follow. It is for you to apply this knowledge according to your own requirements. I have purposely not referred to the manner in which your hand should operate in the pock-

et, nor the exact move of unbuckling the strap and watch, and neither did I detail how to undo the button from the braces. A couple of trials in private and you will have discovered a method far more suitable to your mannerism than any that I can show you. Anybody knows how to undo a button with one hand. It is far easier than doing the button. Is it necessary for me to say to put this finger here and the other there?

I have not mentioned anything about the trouser pockets, as I prefer to leave that alone. Many people go about with a handkerchief, paper or other thing sticking half way out of their pocket. It would be easy to pinch this. Just ask him to walk up under some pretext, as you take hold of the article — you don't even need to pull it. He does it unconsciously for you, by walking away. A tie pin can easily be lifted under the disguise of lighting a cigarette for the volunteer. The tip of the little and third fingers do the deed. During your regular program, keep an eye for openings and you would be surprised to see many undreamed-of opportunities. Walking up the aisle in the auditorium for some reason or another you have countless opportunities especially with those seated at the end of the aisle. I was extremely fortunate once finding a lady's brooch on the floor of the theatre. She had dropped it there when entering: You can imagine the publicity I got when later producing the brooch. The lady claiming it was seated right in the center of one of the rows of seats where I did not enter. By this I do not mean to suggest that if you "look out" you are going to find trinkets on the floor, but I do mean that you will see countless openings for your operation which did not enter into your earlier calculation.

In the next part of this work I am going to explain

how to "Deliver the Goods," that is, the manner in which they are returned to the owners. On this depends a great deal. It would detract more than fifty per cent from the desired effect if the articles were merely brought to light and returned. There should prevail the right element of SURPRISE which contributes in a large measure to the completion of the MYSTERY.

Delivering the Goods

We now come to the most interesting part of the subject. It is here where the "hounds" are unleashed. Having completed your work with the assistant, or assistants, as the case may be, they are dismissed and asked to retire to their seats. Suddenly it dawns upon you that you are going to do another trick and ask for a handkerchief. Your remarks are directed to the fellow whose hanky you have pinched. He goes for his handkerchief and the expression on his face is enough to start the "roar." If you have used the method to steal where the audience is in the know, so much the better, and the laughter increases. Say, "Never mind. I shall use one of mine." Here take out the hanky you have stolen. You appear quite innocent while handing it to him. The handkerchief has to be marked so you call for a pen. This is missing also and the pen comes out. It is immediately recognized. In the minds of the owners, it appears as if you have stolen these just before calling for them and not much earlier as the case might have been. Addressing the owner of the wallet, for instance, you ask for the loan of a bill. He goes to his pocket, but you immediately take the wallet out and say, "Is this what you are looking for?"

In the case of a cigarette case, offer a cigarette to the owner. The moment he sees it, he goes to his pocket to as-

certain whether his case is there or not. You remark, "Well, never mind. You may have mine." The mechanical lighter is used to light the cigarette and then shown casually to owner with the remark, "I wonder what this cost." In the case of the sock suspender, hold it by the extreme end with finger tips and say "What am I bid for this?" This is just a brief idea. Each article is brought to light with some excuse.

Now the magician with the greater imagination always takes full advantage of any situation. He makes his work appear far more stronger than it really is, so here we employ a ruse. In the pocket, have already a few other articles of your own. Articles suitable are such things as a man's underwear, a lady's garter, a piece of tape, in fact, such articles that cannot be removed easily under even the most favorable conditions. Don't have too many of them. Two or three are more than enough and for most of the time only one such will suffice. This part is always best concluded by pulling off the braces (trouser suspenders), but before attempting it, hand say the lady's garter to this man and tell him it belongs to that lady over there. "Will you please hand it to her?" Point at some imaginary spot. As he moves away, you pull the braces out. He forgets the garter and goes straight to his waist to hold up his trousers. The imaginary spot to which you point must be one of the spots which you have been to at the early part of the program otherwise nobody will believe it, and to make it more realistic, in passing that way earlier accidentally drop something near a lady and pick it up. When the garter is brought out later, the "clever" ones will at once recall this incident and figure that the accident was specially arranged and the garter was really stolen then. Besides, whoever expects a

lady to lift up her skirt in public in order to disprove you. You are in any case not pointing to any particular individual.

With the tape, for instance, just walk down and address a man saying, "Are you sure you are not in distress?" Whatever the reply, you hand tape to him. The audience will draw different conclusions and, since this raises more laughter, that is all that matters.

With the underwear I proceed as follows: When the braces are pulled off, naturally everyone starts laughing. So you bring out the underwear and hand it to someone whom you see laughing quite loudly and remark, "One can't be too careful, you know." If he does not accept it, naturally the laughter increases. All this helps the situation and many such ruses will suggest themselves to the operator.

Articles belonging to one person are later discovered in another's pocket. The handkerchief which the audience saw you pinch earlier is secretly loaded to another's pocket or under coat and here the audience, while sharing your earlier secret, is equally mystified when it is later produced from elsewhere. With the greatest of ease — and I mean greatest of ease—articles stolen could be dropped into the pockets of people sitting at the end of the row near the aisle. Get near him under some pretext — you have to be close to him — and the hand that is closest to him does the work. Another way is to ask him to stand up for some thing or another or during a card trick to hold up a card to show the rest. Your hand naturally touches him gently on the arm which he is resting on the arm of the chair. You drop the small article to his pocket and sort of gently help him up. What a natural cover your body makes to assist this operation. In all such

transfers from one pocket to another, one has to remember to allow some time to elapse before the final recovery or discovery. The detective attributes his success to the power linking one isolated incident with another. We conjurers, in order to evade detection, always destroy the means of connection and hence it is not necessary for me to go into details — you already know this part of the business.

How to Rehearse Pickpocketing

One has to be familiar with one's work before attempting it. In the case of a new sleight or trick, we just stand before our mirror and repeat the same move over and over again. We do not need any outside help. But in this work we have to ask someone to stand before us while we rehearse the operation. It is not so easily accommodated. The person on whom you may be practising soon gets "fed up." He has no interest in the work. I will show you how you can go through the necessary practice in the privacy of your own bed room. If you can get hold of one of those tailor's dummies, so much the better, but that is not absolutely necessary. Get a table and place it before your mirror. Now find a chair and place that over the table with the seat side facing front. The highest point of the chair should coincide with about shoulder height of the average person and this can be adjusted by getting the right size of table. Hang a coat on the back of chair the same way as you naturally do at home many times. Now this outfit represents your volunteer and you can go at it for all you are worth. Just to convince you of the effectiveness of this procedure I can modestly claim that this outfit has helped me to learn how to load a bundle under the coat of a volunteer to such a degree of perfection that I am able to work it as close as a

couple of feet away from the audience without being caught. Before this, I tried it with several boys to act as dummies, even paying them by the hour, yet they got fed up standing there "for no reason at all," as some have said to me. This is your dummy volunteer and go at it with full swing.

A Few Words of Advice

Just remember the time when you first started magic. You were keen and enthusiastic. You came to the first public demonstration and the loud round of applause you got. What did that mean to you? Wasn't that the REAL stimulant for you to forge further ahead? While learning the tricks, everything seemed so dead that at times you wondered whether your tricks would be appreciated at all. I am referring to the time when you first started magic; not the present period. So it was the first public demonstration that showed you the worth of the trick and not the private practice.

The first public applause and appreciation was the real incentive for you to "carry on." It was then when you realized the "Performing" value of conjuring. It is the same case with "Pickpocketing." After its first public presentation you will understand more about its worth than I can tell you in fifty years.

SEWARD'S THEATRICAL & CONJURING SUPPLIES

2nd. Floor, 62 SWANSTON STREET, MELBOURNE

(a few doors down from Henry Bucks)

MF 4446 — MF 4447

