

DENNIS

Thumbs up!

TRICKS WITH
A THUMB TIP

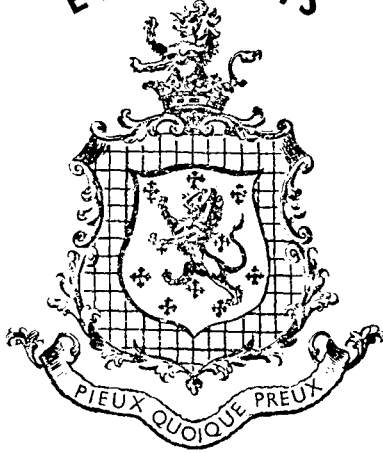


by

John Kenyon

A GOODLIFFE PUBLICATION.....

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THUMBS UP!

By

JOHN KENYON

Illustrated by DENNIS

A

**GOODLIFFE
PUBLICATION**

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FOREWORD

THE tricks which constitute this little book are intended both for the novice, who wants something easy to perform, and for the expert, who requires something striking in effect. They are written for the man who wishes to create a little world of make-believe for a short space of time with the minimum of apparatus. In addition to a few items easily found in any household, all that is required for their execution are a few thumb tips. With these gimmicks and a minimum of practice, the feats here described may be used to baffle the most sceptical audience and cause many a professional entertainer to put on his thinking cap.

For most effects, metal thumb tips are preferred to those of celluloid, since they may be used for tricks with lighted cigarettes and do not wear out. They may be small or large, and it is advisable to purchase a couple of each kind. A third type of thumb tip is made of cloth sewn on to a ring to form a little bag. The cloth, being flesh-coloured each side, may be turned inside out, and thus easily transferred from one thumb to the other. Therein lies the particular advantage of this kind of tip; its main disadvantage lies in the fact that it is not so easily rendered "invisible" as the other types.

There is a saying that a thumb tip is not seen unless someone looks at it. This need not be true. If care is taken to colour the tip to match the thumb exactly, there is nothing to fear. Mine are invisible *to anybody looking for them* at a distance of five feet, and I use them at far closer range with complete confidence.

When you first wear a tip, you will feel that the whole world is looking at it, just as a newly-engaged girl feels about her ring. The truth is that nobody will look at your thumb

unless, by unnatural movements, you call attention to it. The average person is very unobservant and sees only that which he wishes to see or that of which he has some knowledge. In almost every trick there is some point of "weakness," where some move must be made surreptitiously in order to bring the magic about. It is this imperfection that gives magic its fascination. The "weakness" is best concealed by an appearance of naturalness.

Provided that your thumb tip is coloured well and is as nearly invisible as possible, and provided you do not call attention to it by careless handling or an attempt to hide it, then here are some tricks which come very near to perfection—the sort of things a genuine magician would perform.

Natural concealment of the tip is, however, necessary. No matter how well coloured it may be, it is as well not to give the audience an uninterrupted view of it in a stationary condition. With the tip on the left thumb and your left side to the audience, allowing your arm to hang naturally at your side will give perfect concealment. If it is necessary to keep the thumb wearing the tip in full view of the audience for any length of time, then keep the hand on the move. Finally, a view of the tip head on renders it far less conspicuous than in side view.

People expect a conjurer to be a conjurer always. The expert, with a thumb tip in his pocket, may present a first-class programme which will suit stage or drawing-room conditions, and prove useful on after-dinner occasions or for publicity purposes.

I hope these tricks will be as useful to you as they have been to me.

THE TORN AND RESTORED CARD TRICK

THIS trick is seen so often in so many different guises that it is rapidly becoming a habit rather than a mystery. I recently attended a magical show where it was performed no less than six times, each different.

Basically, the effect is that a card is torn into several pieces and becomes restored. Whether the restoration is effected by means of a box, a large spider's web, a cigarette, inside a balloon, etc., etc., the magical climax is the same: the card is restored. In my opinion, these pieces of apparatus, being themselves suspect, detract from the mystery.

This method does away with all forms of magical apparatus, and the hands only are used for the whole trick. There is therefore nothing to cause suspicion in the minds of the audience. Once suspicion has been aroused the mystery is lost, and the trick is merely thought ingenious.

EFFECT.

A freely selected card is torn into eight pieces by a member of the audience, who selects and retains one piece. The performer shows both his hands empty back and front, and rolls up his sleeves. By rubbing the remaining seven pieces together they are restored, and the spectator verifies that his kept piece fits exactly. On being challenged to restore the whole card, the performer appears at first to be a little confused, but eventually complies with the challenge.

METHOD.

Two large thumb tips, some conjurers' wax, obtainable from magical dealers, and a forcing deck of cards are required. Whether you use a forcing deck composed of all the same card or one of the more sensational special decks depends upon the sophistication of the audience. I find that a "R and S" deck well repays the expense.

To prepare the trick, a force card is folded in half and refolded twice more. One of the sections, preferably one with the index on it, is torn off. The folded card is then put inside one of the thumb tips, and the extra piece secured to the outside of the thumb tip opposite the nail with a small dab of conjurers' wax. This is hidden behind the force deck, so that it can be gained by the left thumb when the left hand picks up the deck.

Another force card is similarly folded, but untorn, and put inside the other thumb tip. This is placed in the right coat pocket or somewhere where it can be readily gained by the right thumb when required.

PRESENTATION.

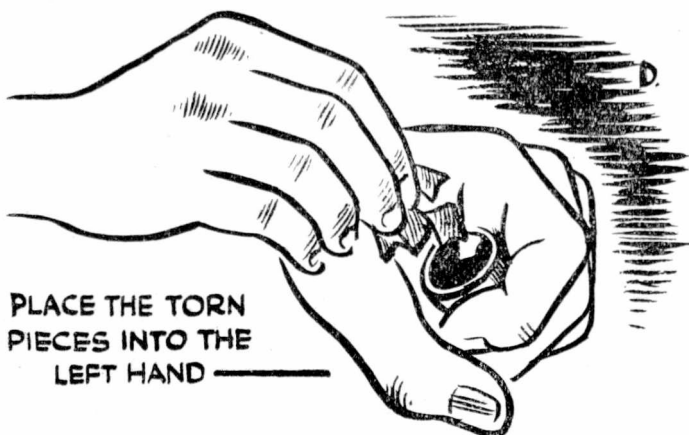
Pick up the deck with the left hand, secretly securing the thumb tip on the left thumb. Transfer the deck to the right hand.

Ask a spectator to select a card, and make a show that the card has been freely selected. Request him to tear the card into eight pieces, and take these from him with your right hand between the thumb and first finger.

Bring the hands together and fan out the pieces between the two thumbs and first fingers. This will bring the extra piece on top of the torn pieces.

Offer the fanned-out pieces to the spectator, and ask him to select one. As you approach him transfer the fanned-out pieces to the right thumb and first finger, so that he does not get a close view of your left thumb which is wearing the thumb tip. There should be no great difficulty in making him take the force piece, and convincing him that he had a free choice, if you do this fairly quickly.

As soon as he has taken the force piece hold up your right hand for all to see, and then count the pieces between the thumbs and first fingers, ensuring that you count only seven. Take the pieces again between the right thumb and first finger. At the same time, finger-palm the thumb tip between the left fingers and withdraw the restored card into the palm with the left thumb. Emphasis can be taken off the left hand by moving the right.



Place the torn pieces into the left hand, really into the thumb tip, and replace the left thumb into the thumb tip. Show the right hand empty back and front.

Take the restored card with the fingers of the right hand ; the audience will imagine that this is the pieces that they have just seen you put into the left hand. Show the left hand empty back and front.

If the thumb tip is too large to allow you to perform these last moves, do the following instead. Bring the two hands together with the fingers of each hand resting on top of each other so that the finger and thumb tips of each hand are touching. Keeping the hands moving all the time, perform the following moves :—

- (1) Place the torn pieces on the nail part of the gimmick, holding them there with the right thumb.
- (2) Withdraw the restored card from the thumb tip with the right thumb, and slide it to the side opposite the nail.
- (3) Slide the torn pieces into the thumb tip with the right thumb, and insert the left thumb again.

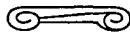
All this should be done in one continuous movement to give the impression that you are rubbing the pieces together.

Whichever method you adopt to gain possession of the restored card, proceed to reveal the restoration. Do not reveal the restored card all at once. The effect is better if it is done by stages. The lines made by the folding give added effect, too. Make a great show of your hands being empty back and front.

The final restoration of the whole card was first forced upon me at a troop concert by some of the boys who had previously seen the effect performed with apparatus. The challenge stumped me at first, but somehow I managed it, and was rewarded with that hushed moment before the applause that is every conjurer's dream. Since then I have always planted a stooge in the audience to throw me the challenge. His small voice is always joined by many others.

The second method of restoration is exactly the same as the first. Whilst the challenge is coming there is ample opportunity to drop the first thumb tip into a pocket, and secure the other on the thumb from the right coat pocket. The audience will imagine that the trick has ended after the first restoration, and so there is no need for any deception in gaining the other thumb tip; it can be done quite openly by removing a handkerchief from the pocket. The right thumb is used for the restoration this time, and there is no extra piece.

If your stooge is also an actor, you can have him write his name right across the restored and retained piece. Your miracle is then complete. Be careful not to do this if there is the slightest chance of failure.



CHAPTER TWO

PASSING THE SALT

THIS effect is fairly well known, but it usually involves the use of a faked salt-cellar, or of some piece of apparatus or "gimmick" that prevents the performer from showing his hands empty back and front. This method is very simple, and can be performed anywhere with a borrowed salt-cellar. It is ideal for stage or drawing room, or as an after-dinner trick.

EFFECT.

With sleeves rolled up, and having shown his hands empty back and front, the performer pours some salt from a salt-cellar into his closed left fist. The right hand is then shown empty again and fisted.

On opening the left fist the salt is found to have vanished, and on opening the right fist the salt runs out. Both hands are again shown empty back and front.

METHOD.

A large thumb tip is all that is required for this effect. It is advisable to test how much salt can be retained in thumb tip when it is worn. A small line can then be drawn to show as a guide. The thumb tip should be hidden behind the salt-cellar, so that it can be readily gained by the left thumb when the left hand picks up the salt-cellar.

PRESENTATION.

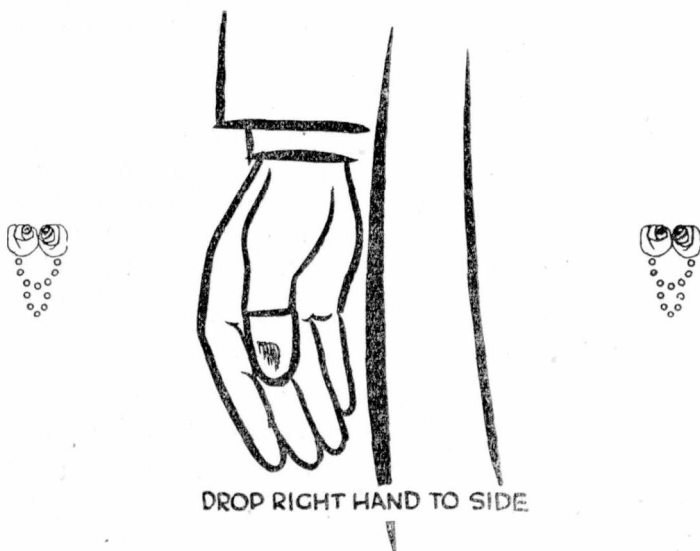
Roll up your sleeves, and show your hands empty back and front. Pick up the salt-cellar with the left hand, gaining the thumb tip on your left thumb, and show the right hand empty back and front. Transfer the salt-cellar to the right hand and show the left hand empty back and front. Close the left hand into a fist, and finger-palm the thumb tip with the left fingers.

Pour some salt from the cellar into the left fist, really into the thumb tip, spilling a little on the top and front side of the fist, as though by carelessness.

Casually wipe away the excess salt from the left fist with the right hand, and when the fingers form a screen for the right thumb, slip this into the thumb tip.

Much practice is required to do this in an offhand manner, as though the spilling of the salt is no part of the trick but is due to your carelessness.

Showing the right hand to be empty back and front, drop it to your side as though it has nothing to conceal, and call



attention to the left fist. Hold it up for all to see, and allow a long enough pause for all to realise that the salt is undoubtedly in the fist, and that there is no way of escape for it.

Now call attention to the right hand. Show it again, and close it into a fist. Hold both fists wide apart. Slowly move your fingers to and fro, pretending that you are working the salt from your left fist, across your shoulders to your right fist, and follow the supposed movement with your eyes.

Carefully open your left fist as though to see whether the salt has yet left it. Close it again, and show your right fist

empty once more. Repeat the process, and eventually work the left fingers across the left hand until only the tips are touching the palm. The audience will imagine that the salt has been pushed up into this small area. At the same time as the audience is diverted by this movement of the left hand, finger-palm the thumb tip with the right fingers.

Slowly open the left fist, and show it empty back and front.

Turn your eyes towards the right fist, pause for a short moment, and then turn the fist over and allow the salt to run out.

Slip the thumb tip on to the right thumb again at the conclusion, and show your hands again empty back and front.

This trick is very effective if performed smoothly. Take great care not to put the emphasis on the right thumb when transferring the thumb tip from the left fist. This is the most difficult move in the trick, and should be practised many times before you attempt the trick in front of an audience.

A WRINKLE

CLIPPO PLUS

HARDLY a trick in itself, this little use of the thumb tip can make a good strong finish to an otherwise dull routine. It is assumed that the reader knows the *modus operandi* of "Clippo"—specially treated newspaper strips which automatically "mend" themselves on being trimmed after being cut in two.

Take a piece of newspaper and prepare a strip to resemble the Clippo strip. Screw this into a wad and load it into a thumb tip. Place this in your right coat pocket, and place a pair of scissors beside it.

In performing your Clippo routine, every time you have finished using the scissors return them to your right coat pocket. On the last such return, secure the tip on your thumb. Show the Clippo strip restored and roll it into a ball. Switch this for the wadded strip in the thumb tip, and throw out to the audience.

CHAPTER THREE

MAGIC DOUGH

THIS effect is of a kind which experienced performers come to love, for it combines the maximum of impressiveness with the minimum of difficulty. Economy of means is one of the most fascinating studies of conjuring.

EFFECT.

A ten shilling note is borrowed from a member of the audience who is asked on to the stage to assist. He is then asked to select one of six loaves, or (until times get better) blown-up paper bags, and to hold it up for all to see.

The performer puts the ten shilling note inside an envelope, and seals it. He places it in front of a lighted candle so that its silhouette can be plainly seen through the envelope. The envelope is then burnt, and the performer shows his hands empty back and front.

The note is now found inside the selected loaf, or paper bag, and verified by the owner as his own.

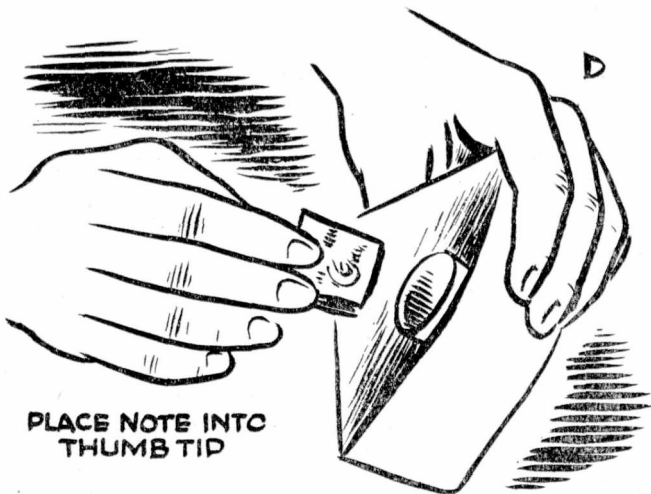
METHOD.

A thumb tip, six loaves or paper bags, a small envelope of the type used by Banks for sixpences, with a piece of paper inside to represent a ten shilling note folded three times, a candle and a black-board and chalk are required. The loaves should be placed on a tray, or if paper bags are used they should be hung upon a rack with coloured string, on the left side of the stage. Put the thumb tip inside the envelope.

PRESENTATION.

Ask for the loan of a ten shilling note, and invite the lender on to the stage to assist. Have him record the number of the note on the blackboard. Then ask him to select one of the six loaves or paper bags, and hold it up. He should be standing on your left.

Fold the note three times, and hold it with your right hand. Take the envelope with your left hand, and place the note inside the envelope, really into the thumb tip. Immediately insert the right thumb into the thumb tip and withdraw it, and seal up the envelope.



Light the candle, and hold the envelope in front of it so that the silhouette of the folded paper inside gives the audience the impression that they can see the note. "Accidentally" allow the flame to catch the envelope, and allow this to burn completely. Show the hands empty back and front.

Turn to the assistant, who is standing on your left, and ask him to throw the loaf or paper bag over to you. Catch it between both hands, fingers extended on either side, and thumbs hidden behind it. Immediately insert the left thumb into the back of the loaf or paper bag to make a hole, and then push the right thumb and thumb tip into the hole.

Turn your wrists towards you so that the hole just made in the loaf or paper bag is hidden underneath. This should be done neatly in one continuous movement, and is undetectable.

Hold up the loaf or paper bag, and allow everybody to see into your hands. Turn your wrists slightly away from you, and withdraw the note from the thumb tip with the left hand, allowing the thumb tip to remain inside.

Immediately hand the note out for identification, and casually put the loaf or paper bag aside.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAKING MONEY GO A LONG WAY

EXPERTS will recognise in the following effect an adaptation of the well-known "Lesson in Magic." The plot is an assured laugh-getter; the apparent mishandling of a borrowed article, to the supposed discomfiture of the lender, is the basis of many a comedy situation.

EFFECT.

A pound note is borrowed from a member of the audience, who keeps a record of its number. Offering to show how to make money go a long way, the performer inadvertently tears the note in two. He apologises that the trick has gone wrong, and tries without success to borrow another note.

He then rubs the two pieces together, and the note is restored. The owner verifies it as his.

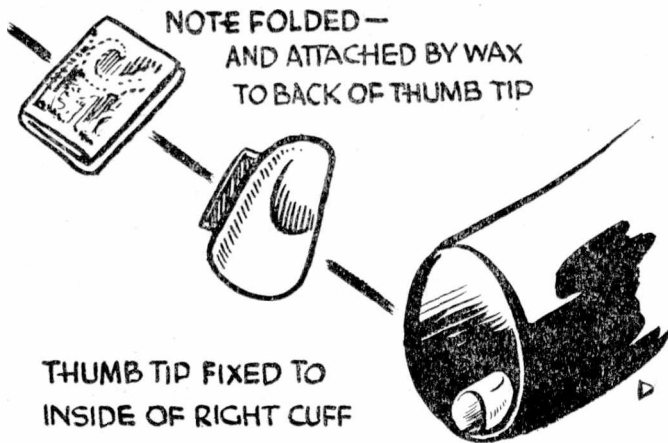
Again offering to show how to make money go a long way, the performer rubs the note and it becomes twice its former size. But the owner is unwilling to take it back in this condition, so the performer rubs it again. It now becomes a Postal Order for one shilling.

Further apologies! Finally, the performer causes the Order to become transformed to the original note, which is immediately identified by the owner.

METHOD.

Two large thumb tips, some conjurers' wax, two Excelsior clips, a large and an ordinary size stage pound note, and a shilling postal order are required.

To prepare the trick, the ordinary note is perforated roughly along the centre. It is folded four times, and attached with a small dab of wax to the outside of the first thumb tip opposite the nail. Attach this thumb tip with the Excelsior



clip to the inside of your right cuff, where it can readily be secured by the left thumb when required.

Fold the large stage note five times, and the postal order three times. One section of the postal order is then pasted to the back of the large pound note, so that when it is turned one way the postal order is seen, and when turned the other way the large note is seen. This little packet is then inserted into the second thumb tip, and put where it can be readily gained by the right thumb when required. A good place would be just above the right trouser pocket, attached by means of an Excelsior clip, where it would be hidden by the coat.

PRESENTATION.

Borrow a pound note from a member of the audience, remarking good-naturedly that this is the first time that you have attempted the trick because never before has anybody been so foolhardy as to lend you a pound note. Look at the note in astonishment, as you say this.

Make certain that you do not cause any offence by those words, or the next magician who plays to this audience will not get their co-operation. It is very easy to get a cheap laugh at the expense of somebody's embarrassment, and only the worst type of entertainer resorts to such bad manners. The purpose of your remarks here is to suggest to the audience

that something may possibly go wrong with the trick. An audience is always ready to laugh at a conjurer in difficulties, and will laugh even more if the joke is later turned on them by what our American friends call a "sucker effect."

Ask the owner of the note to record its number for future identification. Roll up your sleeves, securing the first thumb tip, with the ordinary stage note attached to it, with your left fingers. Take the real note in the right hand, and immediately transfer it to the left hand, really putting it into the thumb tip. Show your right hand empty back and front.

Take the stage note with your right hand, which the audience will take for the real one which they have just seen you put into the left hand, and show the left hand empty back and front.

Offer to show them all how to make money go a long way, smooth the note carelessly with your fingers. After a little play tear it at the perforations, and appear to be overcome with confusion. Your ability as an actor will now determine the character of the trick from this point. If you can make the audience believe that you have made a mistake they will certainly sit up and take notice. If they believe that you are acting, then they will take it as just another stage gag. You are a magician, and must therefore be a better actor than most.

The method of restoring the note is exactly the same as in the Torn and Restored Card trick. Having performed the restoration, the thumb tips are exchanged as before, and the real pound note is then exchanged for the little packet of the large pound note with postal order attached.

Show the large pound note first, taking care to keep the postal order at the back out of sight. Refold the note, turn it round and reveal the postal order, this time taking care not to show the large pound note. Finally, change this packet for the real pound note, which is inside the thumb tip.

Hand it out for inspection immediately, and show the hands empty back and front.

CHAPTER FIVE

CIGARETTE MAGIC

HERE, a series of minor effects leads up to a vanish of a cigarette. The combination makes a very pleasing routine, thoroughly audience-tested and effective.

EFFECT.

The performer having shown his hands empty, he pretends to take a tobacco-pouch and a packet of cigarette-papers from his pocket. With these imaginary materials he proceeds to roll a cigarette in mime. Still, miming, he places the cigarette in his mouth, catches an invisible match in the air and strikes this on the sole of his shoe. There is a splutter and a flame, and he has a lighted match in his hand.

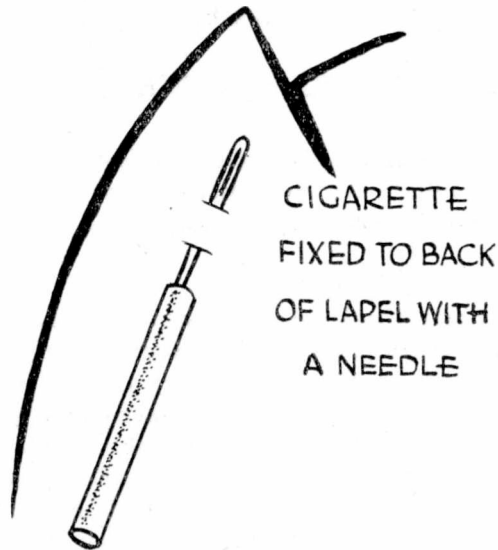
He brings this lighted match before his mouth, when there appears between his lips a real cigarette, which he lights. Taking the cigarette, he places it, glowing end first, in a borrowed handkerchief. This promptly catches fire. He extinguishes the flames, removes the cigarette from the handkerchief, and immediately shakes this out to prove that it is undamaged.

The performer again places the cigarette in the handkerchief, causing it to smoke. He stubs it out with his fingers. On shaking the handkerchief, it is again found to be unharmed. What is more, the cigarette has now disappeared. The handkerchief may now be examined.

METHOD.

A small metal thumb tip, some conjurers' wax, a cigarette-paper impregnated with saltpetre, a needle, a cigarette, a match and an ashtray are required. Put the impregnated cigarette-paper inside the thumb tip, and place this in the right coat pocket with the ashtray. Pin the cigarette with

the needle to the back of the left coat lapel. The match is stuck to the instep of the left shoe with a dab of conjurer's wax.



PRESENTATION.

Roll the cigarette in mime, as just stated, pretending to place it between the lips at the conclusion. During this play it is important that the audience see that your hands are really empty.

Pretend to catch a match in the air, and bend down quickly, as though to strike the imaginary match on your left instep; take the match which is attached to the instep and strike it against the shoe. At the same time the left hand goes to the back of the left coat lapel, where it finger-palms the cigarette. This movement is quite natural.

Bring both hands to the front of the mouth, so that the lighted match is seen but the cigarette still hidden. Raise the head slightly, and light the cigarette for all to see. These moves should be done smoothly and in one continuous action.

After a few puffs, remove the ashtray from your pocket

and knock the ash into it. Replace the ashtray, securing the thumb tip on your right thumb before removing the hand from the pocket.

Now borrow a handkerchief (a large one is preferable) and drape it over the left fist, which is held thumb upwards. With the right thumb press the handkerchief down into the fist, making a well which is encircled by the left thumb and forefinger. The thumb tip is left in the well. The recess should be made casually, and it may be thought preferable to have the right fingers assist in making it.

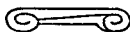
Place the burning cigarette into the recess, really into the thumb tip. When the impregnated cigarette-paper has caught fire extinguish the flames with the right fingers, remove the cigarette with the right first and second fingers, and slip the right thumb into the thumb tip again.

Shake out the handkerchief to show it undamaged. Drape the handkerchief over the left wrist again, and place the cigarette into the recess, really into the thumb tip, as before, and allow it to smoke a little, so that the audience will get the impression that the handkerchief will again catch fire. Stub it out with the right fingers and thumb.

When the thumb stubs it, insert the thumb into the thumb tip again, and withdraw it. Wrap up the handkerchief as though you are wrapping the cigarette in it.

Shake it out to show it undamaged and the cigarette to have disappeared. Hand it out for examination immediately, and show your hands empty back and front.

This is a version of a very well-known trick. To get the best effect you should ask somebody for the loan of a handkerchief that they prize. As you receive it thank the lender, and promise him that you will do it no—good. The burning of the handkerchief should be taken by the audience as a mistake, and a “sucker” effect is thereby introduced.



CHAPTER SIX

PENCIL MAGIC

THIS effect serves as an excellent example of the versatility of the thumb tip principle. Effects using the gimmick with cards, salt, money, cigarettes, are legion. Here it is used with a pencil.

EFFECT.

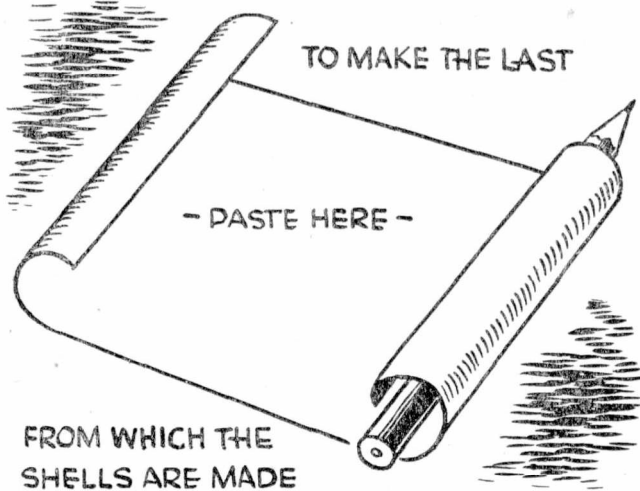
The performer causes a pencil to cling mysteriously to his finger-tips, and to rise up through his fist. Eventually it is covered with a handkerchief, the outline being clearly visible through the fabric. Yet, in an instant, it disappears. It is then produced from a pocket, and both pencil and handkerchief are handed out for examination.

METHOD.

A thumb tip, a length of black silk thread, a pencil, a faked shell pencil and a handkerchief are required. The fake shell pencil has only the ends genuine, the rest being made of paper.

To make it, procure two black pencils and a quantity of stiff black glossy paper. Paste the inside of a strip of the paper and roll it about four times around one of the pencils. This gives you a pencil slightly larger in diameter than the other, and it is used as a last from which to make the shells.

The shells themselves are made by pasting the outside of a strip of paper and rolling it around the pencil last. Be careful not to paste the inside or the shell will not come off. As a guide to the required length of fake pencil, it must be able to be held by the ends between the outstretched thumb and first finger of either hand.



Sharpen the other pencil, and cut off this end so that it is approximately half an inch long. Cut off another piece about a quarter of an inch long. Glue these pieces to the inside of the shell firmly. They should be a tight fit.

Cut the other pencil the same size as the fake one, and put it in any pocket. Attach a foot of black silk thread to the end of the shell pencil, which is then attached to the left coat lapel. Place the pencil inside the breast pocket.

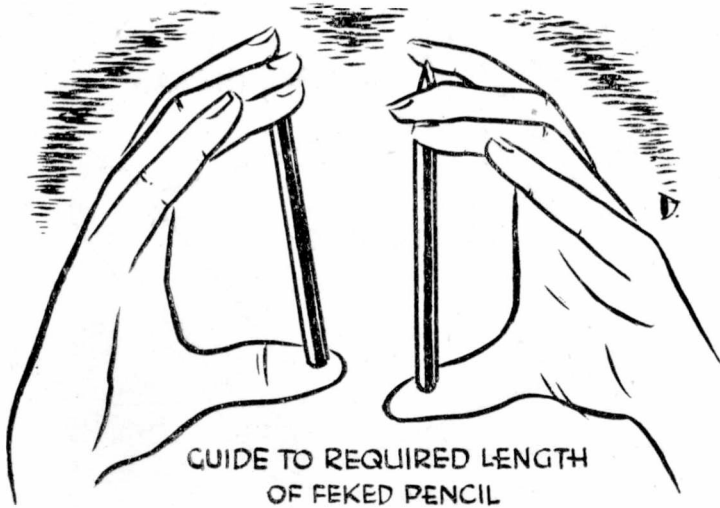
Place the thumb tip inside the left coat pocket with the handkerchief.

PRESENTATION.

Take the shell pencil from your breast pocket with the right hand. The thread should pass between the fingers from the back. By placing a finger either side of the thread, which will be invisible at a few feet, and tautening it, the pencil can be made to cling to the finger-tips.

Now form the left hand into a fist, and drop the pencil through the top, the end with the thread attached first, remarking that this is commonly known as "slipping down." Hold it at the bottom of the fist with the right hand.

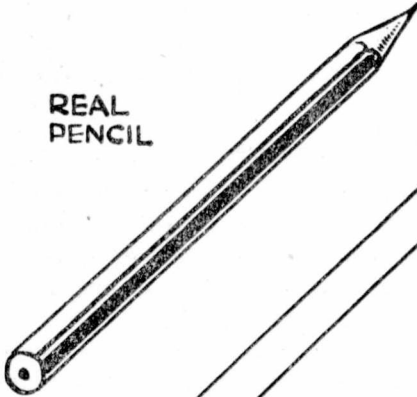
Draw the left hand slightly away from the body, and the



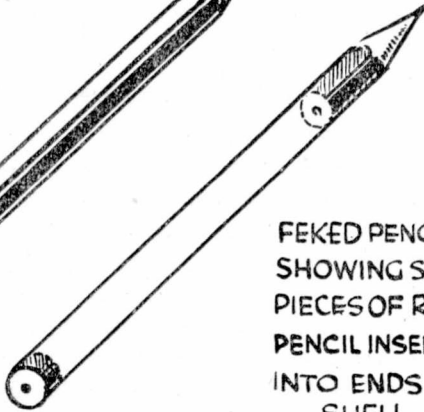
GUIDE TO REQUIRED LENGTH
OF FEKED PENCIL



REAL
PENCIL



FEKED PENCIL
SHOWING SHORT
PIECES OF REAL
PENCIL INSERTED
INTO ENDS OF
SHELL



pencil will mysteriously rise through the left fist. Remark that this is commonly known as "slipping up."

Finally break the thread by pulling sharply.

Remove the handkerchief from the left coat pocket with the left hand (securing the thumb tip on the left thumb), drape it over the left hand, and under cover of it finger-palm the thumb tip. If preferred, the thumb tip can be finger-palmed when the left hand is in the pocket getting the handkerchief, but this is not so clean in my opinion.

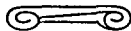
Hold the pencil between the thumb and first finger of the right hand outstretched, so as to give the impression of how it will be held when under the handkerchief. Transfer it to the left hand under the handkerchief where it is similarly held between the thumb at the blunt end, whilst the sharpened end is inside the thumb tip; it is held firm by pressure from the left thumb pressing it against the end of the thumb tip inside.

It is advisable to press the thumb tip slightly down so that it is parallel with the pencil, thus making a continuous line under the handkerchief from the audience's point of view. Seeing the outline of a pencil, they will imagine that everything is all fair.

To vanish the pencil, push the blunt end hard with the left thumb, which will cause the shell to telescope into the thumb tip. Complete the movement by inserting your left thumb into the thumb tip.

Immediately shake out the handkerchief, show it empty, show your hands empty back and front, and produce the real pencil from your pocket.

Hand both the handkerchief and pencil out for examination.



CHAPTER SEVEN

SENDING MONEY BY POST

MANY tricks with postal orders require that the serial number of one shall be faked to make it coincide with that of a duplicate. Performers who are not confident of being able to do this convincingly will find in the following routine a subtle method of handling which makes this practice unnecessary, and which requires no memory-work on his part.

EFFECT.

A member of the audience examines two envelopes and sets them on stands at either side of the stage. Then he is handed a postal order by the performer, who requests him to tear off the counterfoil and write its serial number on the blackboard. The performer then puts the postal order in one of the envelopes, which is sealed.

He sets fire to this envelope, and whilst it is still burning he verifies that the second envelope is still empty, and seals it.

When the first envelope has been completely burnt, the postal order is found none the worse in the second envelope. The assistant takes order and counterfoil to examine them at his leisure.

METHOD.

A small thumb tip, two sixpenny postal orders numbered consecutively, two ordinary envelopes, two envelope stands, a blackboard, a piece of chalk and a box of matches are required.

The two postal orders should be bought at the same time so that only their last figures will differ. To prepare them, remove and throw away the counterfoil of the first, and cut the counterfoil from the second just to the right of the perforations. Stick this counterfoil carefully to the first postal order so that they match exactly and appear as one genuine postal order. If this is done neatly it should bear very close scrutiny.

You now have two postal orders, the first with the second's counterfoil stuck to it, and the second with no counterfoil at all. Insert the second postal order that has no counterfoil in the thumb tip, and place it in the right trousers pocket with the box of matches, where it can be gained by the right thumb when required.

PRESENTATION.

Ask a member of the audience on to the stage to assist. Give him the two envelopes to examine, and ask him to hand them out to the audience for further examination. On receiving them back, ask him to place them on their respective stands, in full view of the audience.

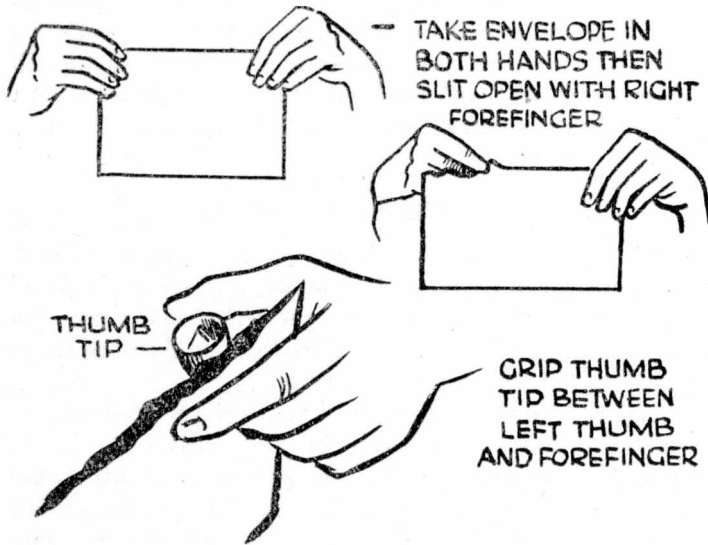
Show the postal order and ask your helper to tear off the counterfoil. Leave this with him and recover the order. Handing him a piece of chalk, you ask him to write the serial number of the order on the blackboard. Call out the number of the order, miscalling the last figure so that it tallies with his counterfoil. He may thus be allowed to check the number given against that on his counterfoil with perfect safety.

Now give him the postal order, and ask him to put it into the first envelope, seal it and hold it in his hand. Take the matches from your right trousers pocket with your right hand and set the envelope alight whilst he still holds it. This should cause some amusement with the audience.

On replacing the matches in your pocket, secure the thumb tip on your right thumb before withdrawing the hand from the pocket. Take the burning envelope from the assistant, and ask him to verify that the second envelope is still empty, seal it and place it back on its stand.

When the first envelope has burnt out, take the second from its stand between the left thumb at the back and the fingers in front. Place the right thumb at the back of the envelope, and the right fingers in front. Slit it open with the right first finger, at the same time removing the thumb tip, gripping it with the left fingers in front of the envelope and the left thumb at the back.

Withdraw the postal order from the thumb tip, making it look as though it is coming from the envelope, and insert the left thumb into the thumb tip at the conclusion.



Handing the postal order to the assistant, ask him to identify it and read out the number so that all may check with the number on the board that it is the same postal order.

Show your hands empty back and front, and allow the spectator to retain the order in payment of his services.

This is a most effective stage presentation which I have used often when staying in the country far away from my props, and have suddenly been asked to entertain some local gathering. All that one requires is a thumb tip and a village shop where one can buy postal orders.

I have heard the audience afterwards swearing that the assistant examined the postal order minutely before putting it into the envelope. The fact that he examined it quickly and kept the counterfoil which he himself tore off is sufficient to cause this assumption. Handing the second postal order for him to examine immediately it is withdrawn from the second envelope is enough for people to imagine that he himself took the postal order out of the envelope. Try it and see for yourself!

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE HYDROSTATIC POUND NOTE

THIS is an amusing effect for inclusion into a trick where a pound note is used, but can also be performed as a trick in, say, a bar with a glass of whisky, etc. Best done fairly quickly; it is sure to raise a big laugh.

EFFECT.

The performer rolls a borrowed pound note into a cylinder. Pouring liquid into it, he uses it as a drinking glass. On unrolling the note it is examined and found to be dry. The hands are shown empty back and front.

METHOD.

A large thumb tip and a small glass full of coloured liquid, such as milk, are required. The glass should be tapered at the stem so that when only a small amount of liquid is poured away the difference in level is most apparent. If the glass is too large the audience may suspect that you did not pour any of the liquid into the cylinder, as the difference in level would be so negligible. Hide the thumb tip behind the glass so that it can be secured by the left thumb when the left hand picks up the glass.

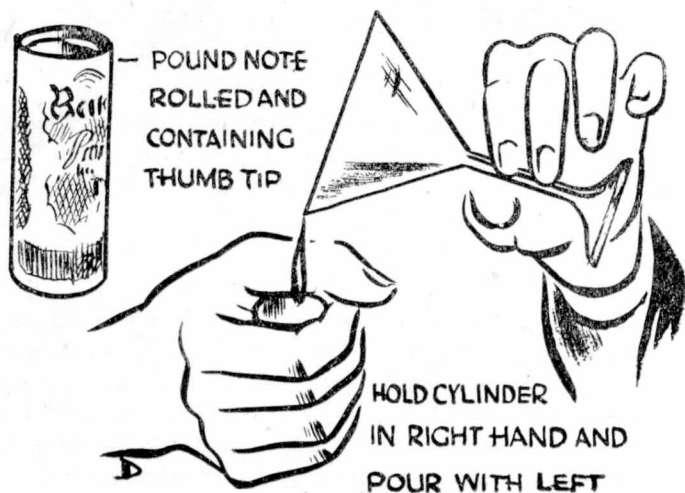
PRESENTATION.

Borrow a pound note from a member of the audience, and pick up the glass of liquid, securing the thumb tip on the left thumb.

Wrap the note into a cylinder using the left thumb to start it, and leave the thumb tip behind in the cylinder. Hold the cylinder in the right hand, and pour some of the liquid into it, holding the glass a few inches above the cylinder, so that all may see the liquid actually entering it.

Pour the liquid into the mouth in a similar manner, or, if the liquid is undrinkable, pour it back into the glass.

Secretly turn the cylinder over, insert the left thumb into the thumb tip, and unroll it. Hand both the pound note and the glass to the audience for examination immediately, and show the hands empty back and front.



CHAPTER NINE.

THUMB PENETRATION OF A HANDKERCHIEF

THIS is one of the few effects in which the thumb tip is actually on display. The conjurer should derive some private amusement from it if only for this reason.

EFFECT.

The performer pushes his right thumb through a handkerchief which is suspended stretched between two stands. At the close, the handkerchief is shown to be quite undamaged.

METHOD.

A thumb tip, a piece of cord about two feet long (preferably coloured), two stands on which to suspend the cord, and two Excelsior clips are required.

The cord is attached at either end of the stands, which are moved apart to make the cord tight. The Excelsior clips are attached to the centre of the cord with their sharp hooks a handkerchief's width apart.

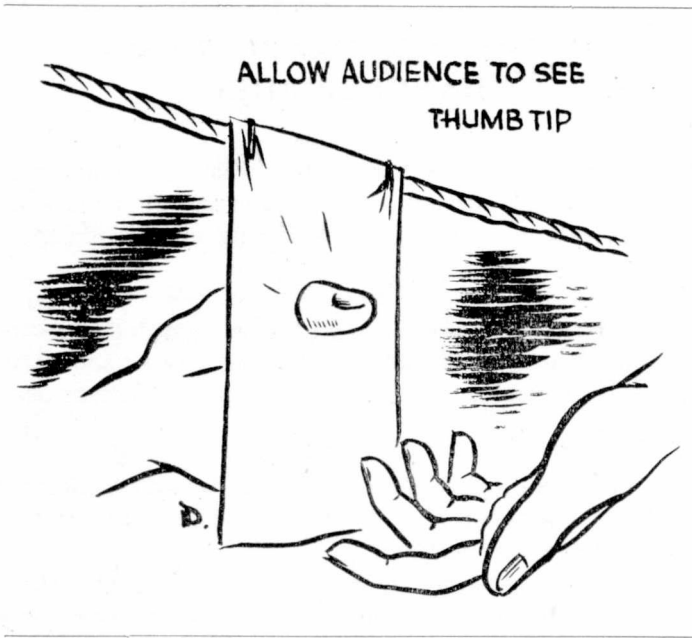
Ordinary cord as sold by the dealers can easily be dyed any desired colour. It makes a nice change from the everlasting white.

PRESENTATION.

Secure the thumb tip on the left thumb. Borrow a handkerchief, which should be fairly large, and clip it on to the cord.

Stand so that your left side faces the audience, and put your left hand in front and right hand behind the handkerchief. Show your left hand empty, and raise your right hand above the handkerchief so that all may see that it is really behind it. During this, finger-palm the thumb tip with the left fingers.

Make an indent in the middle of the handkerchief with your right thumb, and with your left hand pretend to rub the right thumb through the handkerchief, and slip the thumb tip on to the right thumb through the handkerchief.



Remove the left hand, and allow the audience to see the thumb tip, which they will take to be the right thumb. Waggle the tip slightly so that they do not get a view of it stationary, and let them see it chiefly head on.

Replace the left hand over the thumb tip again, pretend to rub it back through the handkerchief, and secure the thumb tip on the left thumb once again.

Remove the left hand and show it empty back and front ; remove the handkerchief from the stand, and hand it out immediately for examination.

CHAPTER TEN

THE VANISHING AND REAPPEARING SILK

IT is a strange but incontrovertible fact that many magical effects gain by repetition. The magical linking together of two solid rings would be only a very mild effect, but a good routine with the Linking Rings is one of the finest effects in magic.

This effect, too, grows with repetition, especially with young audiences. Variety is provided by the different places in which the silk is made to reappear.

EFFECT.

A small silk vanishes from the performer's hands and reappears in his pocket, which was previously shown empty. Vanished once more, the silk reappears in a spectator's pocket. After a third disappearance, it reappears as a large silk square. The hands are clearly empty throughout.

METHOD.

A large thumb tip, a small silk handkerchief and a large silk square are required. The large silk square is rolled up into a ball, and placed in the top recess of the right trousers pocket, so that it will remain hidden even when the pocket is turned out for examination. The small silk and thumb tip are placed in the breast pocket, so that the right thumb can gain the thumb tip when the right hand removes the handkerchief from the pocket at the beginning of the trick.

PRESENTATION.

Roll up your sleeves and show your hands empty back and front. Take the small silk from the breast pocket, and secure the thumb tip on your right thumb. Show the pocket empty.

Hold the handkerchief at one corner ; this will cause it to look larger than it really is. The size of the silk depends upon the size of the thumb tip. Do not be too discouraged if you have to use a very small silk. To the audience the effect is the same if you use an eighteen-inch, twelve-inch or six-inch silk.

Push the silk into the left fist, using all the fingers in turn, starting with the little finger and ending with the thumb, and then all the way back to the little finger again. Slowly open the left fist to see if the silk has yet vanished. Finding it is still there, show it for all to see.

This play is designed to take the emphasis off the thumb, and to dispel any theory that the silk will at any time be pushed into a receptacle in the left fist. From this point the silk will be pushed into the thumb tip in the left fist, and the thumb which pushes it in will wear the thumb tip. It is therefore most important that the vital moves in the trick are not revealed.

Having shown the silk to be still in the left fist, take it with the right hand at the same time transferring the thumb tip from the right thumb to the left hand, where it is finger-palmed. This movement should be done smoothly and continuously, and is undetectable.

Immediately push the silk into the left fist as before, though this time really push it into the thumb tip. The silk should be inside the thumb tip completely by the time the right thumb pushes it, and secretly secures the tip. Continue pretending to push it into the fist with the other fingers as before, ending with the little finger, so that the emphasis is taken off the right thumb.

Casually show the right hand to be empty back and front, and drop it to your side as in "Passing the Salt," standing with your right side to the audience. Now, looking at the left fist, hold it up for all to see, and turn it to face the front.

Move the fingers as in "Passing the Salt," ending up with only the tips touching the palm. Then open the left fist to show that the silk has vanished.

Casually show the right hand empty once more, and put the right thumb and first finger into the breast pocket, followed by the left thumb and first finger. The thumb tip is removed inside the pocket, and held with the right thumb and first finger, whilst the left thumb and first finger remove the silk. The right thumb again secures the thumb tip, and the pocket is turned out for all to see that it is empty.

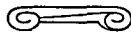
Invite a member of the audience on to the stage, and ask him to examine the silk carefully so that he will be able to recognise it again. He may tie a small knot in it if he likes. Ask him, further, to empty any pocket of his clothing that he chooses.

Vanish the silk, as before, but omit the play. The need for this piece of deception has now gone, and to repeat this play would tend to put the emphasis in the other direction. This time cause the silk to reappear from the spectator's pocket, and ask him to identify it.

Show your hands empty back and front, and dismiss the spectator with your thanks.

Now turn out your right trousers pocket to show it empty, taking care that the large silk square is hidden in the top recess. Turn the pocket in again.

Vanish the silk as before, and this time place the right hand in the right trousers pocket at the conclusion. Withdraw the square, and turn the pocket out to show it empty. Drop the thumb tip inside the pocket as you turn it in again.



CHAPTER ELEVEN.

SILK AND SOUP PLATE

THIS effect is so old that it will be new to most present-day audiences. It was performed by such an old master as Charles Bertram, who vanished two handkerchiefs with an orthodox vanisher, and secured the reproduction of the silks by means of a faked newspaper.

The method given here is simple and effective. Only one handkerchief, however, is vanished, and its size is limited by the size of the thumb tip.

EFFECT.

An empty soup plate is inverted on a sheet of newspaper. A silk handkerchief vanishes from the hands of the performer and is found again, a moment later, under the soup plate. It is a spectator who finds it there, and he may examine silk, plate and newspaper to his heart's content.

METHOD.

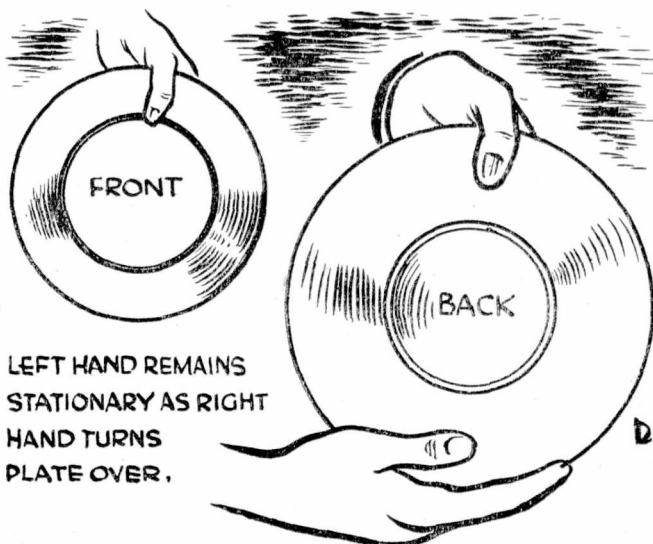
A large thumb tip, two identical silk handkerchiefs, a soup plate and a sheet of newspaper are required. One handkerchief, tightly rolled, is hidden behind the back rim of the soup plate, and the other is placed inside the breast pocket with the thumb tip.

PRESENTATION.

Show the sheet of newspaper, and lay it on a table or a chair, remarking that this is done to show that there is no communication with anyone below.

Take the soup plate with the left hand, palm facing the audience, the fingers behind the rim concealing the handkerchief, and thumb in front. Show the front of the soup plate to the audience.

Take the bottom edge with the right fingers, and without moving the left hand turn the soup plate over, and show the back to the audience. This turn must be made casually, but fairly quickly so that the audience does not get a glimpse of the handkerchief concealed by the left fingers.



As soon as the turn has been made, grip the top of the plate with the left fingers behind it, and thumb in front. This will bring the handkerchief to the centre of the front of the plate, which is now facing towards you and away from the audience.

Place the plate face-down on the newspaper.

This move will require much practice if it is to be done smoothly. Try it first, without a handkerchief, in front of a mirror. Then, with the handkerchief concealed, try to duplicate the moves exactly.

Now take the duplicate silk from the breast pocket with the right hand, securing the thumb tip on the right thumb. Vanish the handkerchief as in the "Vanishing and Re-appearing" handkerchief trick, pretending to throw the silk towards the soup plate; show your hands empty back and front.

Allow a member of the audience to find the silk under the soup plate, and hand the plate and sheet of newspaper out for examination.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CIGARETTE AND RIBBONS

THIS is a colourful opener and closer to a cigarette routine. Though it is rather brief, it may be performed as a trick in itself.

EFFECT.

A gaily coloured set of ribbons changes into a cigarette. After performing several sleights with the cigarette, it is thrust alight into the left fist. The fist opened, it is found that the cigarette has disappeared, and the ribbons are again found in its place.

METHOD.

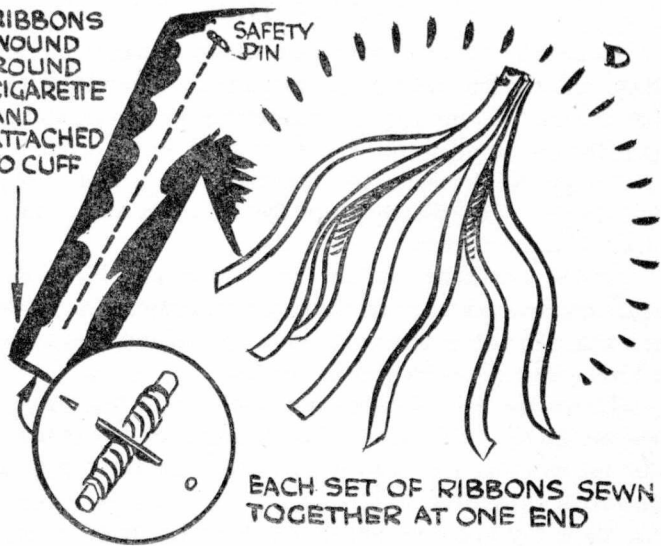
Required are two identical sets of ribbons about nine inches long, a thumb tip with a small hole drilled through the top, a piece of elastic, a safety and an ordinary pin, a box of matches, and a cigarette.

All the ribbons in each set are joined together at one end. The first set is attached, by the sewn end, to a length of elastic, the other end of which is attached to the back of the waistcoat, just below the neck, with the safety pin. The ribbons are passed down the left sleeve, rolled around the cigarette, and secured to the inside of the sleeve, just above the cuff, with the ordinary pin. The exact length of the elastic required depends on the performer's height; what matters is that the elastic should be fully stretched when the ribbons are held by their sewn ends in the left hand.

The second set of ribbons are attached at their sewn ends to the thumb tip, with a thread which passes through the hole in the top of the tip and is secured inside with a small bead. The ribbons are wound around the tip, which is then placed, with the box of matches, in the right trousers pocket.

RIBBONS
WOUND
ROUND
CIGARETTE
AND
ATTACHED
TO CUFF

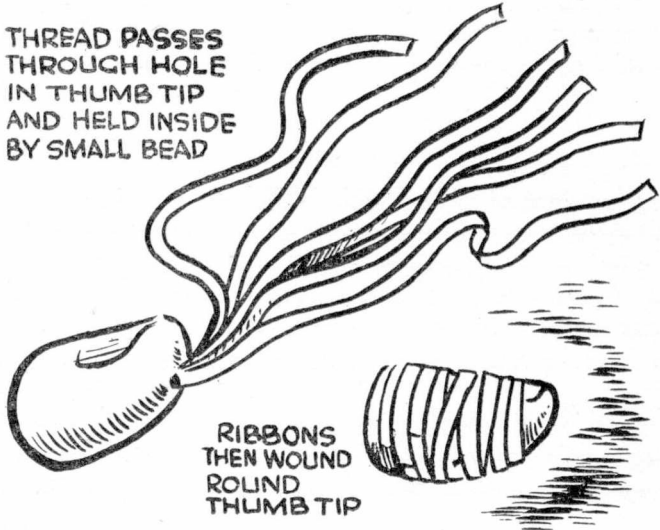
SAFETY
PIN



EACH SET OF RIBBONS SEWN
TOGETHER AT ONE END



THREAD PASSES
THROUGH HOLE
IN THUMB TIP
AND HELD INSIDE
BY SMALL BEAD



RIBBONS
THEN WOUND
ROUND
THUMB TIP

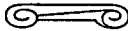
PRESENTATION.

Secure the roll of ribbons with the right hand, and unroll them into the left hand, finger-palming the cigarette with the left fingers. Ensure that the cigarette is well clear, and wave the ribbons for all to see. With a quick upward movement of the left hand release the ribbons which will fly up your left sleeve. Immediately show the cigarette, and commence your cigarette routine.

At the conclusion, remove the box of matches from the right trousers pocket, and light the cigarette. On replacing the box into the pocket finger-palm the thumb tip and set of ribbons with the open end to the top.

Thrust the lighted cigarette into the right fist, really into the thumb tip. Give a cry of pain, insert the left thumb into the fist as though to stub it out, and draw the hands apart to reveal the ribbons.

Allow the audience to see into your hands to be able to realise that the cigarette has vanished, but take care that they do not see the sewn end of the ribbons which is attached to the thumb tip. Lay the ribbons aside, and with them the thumb tip, before proceeding with your next trick.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAGICAL SURGERY

THIS is a particularly good publicity trick. The first part is so obviously free from deception that it leads up gently to the more preposterous second part. I performed it before some doctors once. They were very guarded in their observations, and said simply that it was a "medical impossibility."

Unless you feel that you are capable of acting as though the whole thing was genuine, better not perform it at all; as "just another stage gag," it is worthless.

EFFECT.

Pins are examined and driven into the performer's knee with a mallet by a member of the audience. This causes no pain or ill effects to the performer. Next a long needle and length of wool are passed right through the performer's thumb. At the conclusion his thumb is examined, and found to be uninjured.

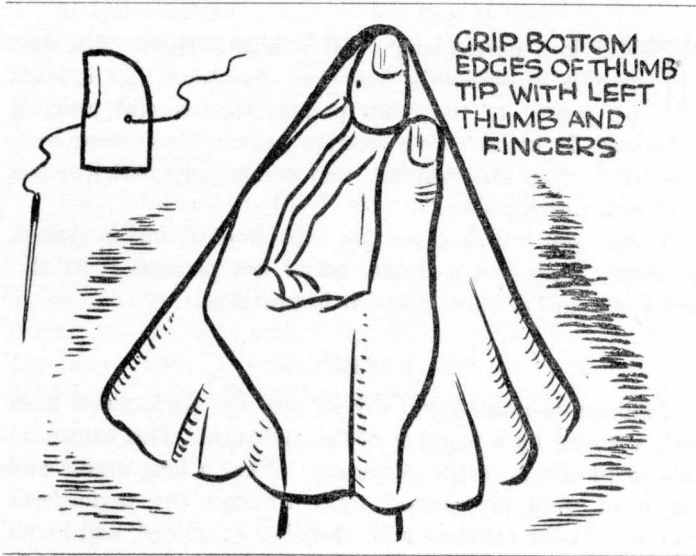
METHOD.

The first part of the trick is well known to conjurers the world over, though few have the taste to try it out for themselves. The pins are actually driven into the knee. Good, clean short pins are required, and a bottle of antiseptic to prevent any germs which may enter the tiny wound from harming you. A vicious-looking mallet is also required to give added effect.

The pins are driven in just above the knee. Take care not to drive them into a vein, as some slight bleeding may occur. The whole operation is, surprisingly enough, completely painless.

For the second part of the trick a small thumb tip with a hole bored right through its centre, and a handkerchief are required. This small hole may throw a shadow on to the thumb which will be seen at a distance. It can be neutralised by painting the inside of the tip around the area of the hole with white paint, so that the edges of the hole are whitened.

Put the tip in the breast pocket with the handkerchief so that it can be gained by the left thumb when required.



PRESENTATION.

Give the pins to the audience for examination. On receiving them back, dip them into the bottle of antiseptic. Sometimes the pins are produced already sterilised. In my opinion, this is a mistake, as they cannot be examined until after the trick, and the audience may imagine them to be made of rubber whilst they are being driven into the knee. The sterilising of them before the audience gives an added air of genuineness.

Place them on the trousers leg just above the knee, so that they stick into the cloth, and invite a member of the audience to drive them into the knee with the mallet. Be ready to let your knee give way a little if the blow is too hard.

At the conclusion allow him to extract them, and hand them out to the audience for examination.

Now hand out the needle and wool for examination. On receiving them back, thread the wool through the needle and dip them into the bottle of antiseptic. This is only a blind, as they are not really pushed through the thumb!

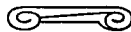
Take the handkerchief from your breast pocket with your left hand, securing the thumb tip on the thumb, and transfer the handkerchief to the right hand. Drape the handkerchief over the left thumb, at the same time moving the thumb sufficiently far out of the thumb tip so that the hole is clear of the thumb itself. Grip the bottom edges of the thumb tip with the left thumb and fingers.

The audience should get the impression that they see the shape of the left thumb through the handkerchief.

Pretend to have great difficulty in making the needle go through the thumb, and make a show of controlling intense pain. Finally pass the wool slowly right through the thumb. As you remove the handkerchief, slip the left thumb into the thumb tip.

Show the needle, wool and handkerchief for examination, and show your hands empty back and front.

Whilst the handkerchief, etc., are being examined, seize an opportunity to get rid of the thumb tip, and allow your thumb to be examined.



This book was published by Goodliffe, Editor and Publisher of *Abracadabra*, which is rapidly becoming famous as the only magical weekly in the world. Each 16-page issue contains up-to-the-minute news of magic and magicians ; new tricks and routines by such well-known writers and performers as Jack Le Dair, Eric Lewis, Victor Farelli, Wilfrid Jonson, etc. ; hints, tips and wrinkles ; constructional advice for those who make their own props ; reviews of magical acts, tricks and books ; and a great deal else of interest and value to the magician.

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