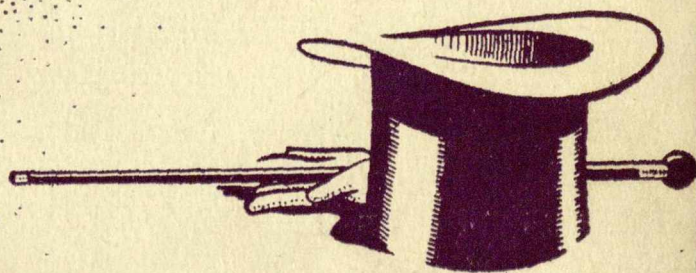


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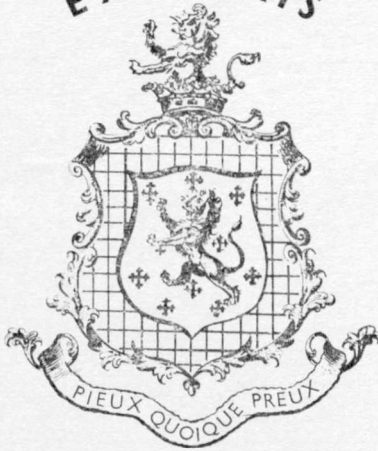
TRICKS
OF A
TROUPEUR

Jack le Dair



A GOODLIFFE PUBLICATION

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Jack le Dair's
TRICKS OF A TROUPER



TRICKS *of a* TROUPER

by

Jack Le Dair

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DENNIS

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY
CAPTAIN TREVOR H. HALL



1946

A
GOODLIFFE
PUBLICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife,
ANOTHER TROUPER,
Who suffered much at my hands
By watching these tricks for my benefit
at rehearsals.

First published December, 1946.

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INTRODUCTION

BY

CAPT. TREVOR H. HALL

“WHEN a successful magician writes a book which consists of detailed explanations of the tricks that have served him well, the result is pretty certain to interest and benefit his confreres.” The words are Paul Fleming’s and the occasion the Fleming Book Review of Hohn Booth’s “Marvels of Mystery,” but the quoted sentence might well have been written of this volume, and would have served as an admirable and complete preface for it. However, the talented author of this book has a unique advantage over John Booth, in that he is at the moment performing in public the fine routines described, whereas Booth had retired from professional magic when he wrote “Marvels of Mystery.” Thus, the way of the would-be performer of “Tricks of a Trouper” is magically smoothed, for he can first interpret the written word by reading, digesting and rehearsing, with the inestimable advantage of afterwards watching Jack Ledair bring each effect to life on the stage as an ideal object lesson in the routining and presentation of magic.

Of the individual contents of this book I need say nothing, for the magical world has already given its unanimous verdict. “Tricks of a Trouper” in serial form has been the featured attraction week by week of Goodliffe’s “Abracadabra,” which at this writing has achieved a circulation breaking all records in the history of magical journalism. The success of “Abracadabra” is the success of the serialised “Tricks of a Trouper,” and therefore there is no necessity for me to offer my best wishes to my friend Jack Ledair for the popularity of his book in bound permanent form.

The secrets of writing a readable magic book have much in common with the secrets of showmanship. Just as two men can present the same trick to an audience, one compelling interest and amusement and the other signally failing to do so, so can magical effects be described without or with that indefinable yet unmistakable spark of life which makes the reader dwell with infinite pleasure on the pages again and again long after he knows the descriptions almost by heart. Ponsin, Robert-Houdin, Hoffman, Sachs, Devant, Gaultier and Hilliard all infused their writings with this endearing element of human interest, this almost boyish enthusiasm for conjuring, which put them into the most exclusive of all magical libraries, the books the conjurer has by his bedside. That is where my copy of “Tricks of a Trouper” will be kept.

TREVOR H. HALL.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Introduction</i>	7
<i>Foreword</i>	9
CHAPTER ONE Cigarette Making	13
CHAPTER TWO Oscar The Duck	19
CHAPTER THREE The Colour Handkerchief Change	18
CHAPTER FOUR The (Stodare) Egg and Handkerchief Trick	20
CHAPTER FIVE The Three Cards and Celebrity Trick	23
CHAPTER SIX Two Proven Winners	25
CHAPTER SEVEN Topical Torn and Restored Trick	28
CHAPTER EIGHT Three Mental Mysteries	30
CHAPTER NINE A Variation for the Missing Ring	34
CHAPTER TEN The Ledair Colour-change for Thimbles	35
CHAPTER ELEVEN Another Flare-up	37
CHAPTER TWELVE The Miser's Dream	39
CHAPTER THIRTEEN The Giant Matches	42
CHAPTER FOURTEEN The Rice and Fountain Trick	46
CHAPTER FIFTEEN The Rising Cards	49
CHAPTER SIXTEEN The Card and Cigarette Trick	54
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN The £1 Note and Three Candle Trick	60
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN Mad Conjuring	64
CHAPTER NINETEEN New Fields	65
<i>A Trouper Sums Up</i>	68

FOREWORD

ANNUALLY, thousands of books are published and behind the labour which has gone in the writing of them lie a variety of reasons. The literature of magic, though in a class by itself, is no exception to this generalisation. My own reason has been the wish to pay my tribute, however small it may be, to the Art which has meant so much to me since my long-past youth.

When we commence to read a novel there is a reasonable chance that the hero and heroine will marry and live happily ever after. When we commence a book on conjuring we may know in general terms what the effect is, but we read to the end to discover the method. Looked at in one way, books on conjuring are the fairy stories of older people, but with one difference—the marvellous changes and transpositions in our early fairy tales were never explained. In the pages which follow I have tried to describe accurately and in detail several of the effects which I have presented—I venture to think with some measure of success.

So the following pages are handed over to the, I hope, tender mercies of the curious—anxious to know secrets; to the amateurs—anxious to emulate the professional conjurer; and to my brother professionals, so that they may see if their guesses were correct.

Finally, I must express my sincere thanks to my friends, J. E. Hammond, J. A. Revill and T. Waterman, for their permission to include tricks which they have originated, and also to my friend, F/L. H. L. Ellis, for the help he has given me in preparing the manuscript for the printers.

The old truism that of the making of books there is no end was in my mind when I was first asked to write about Magic and my connection with it. I felt that I lacked a facile pen which, if not essential, is a great help to any would-be author. Yet, in spite of this diffidence to follow in the steps of the many conjurer-authors, I realised the effort would be worth while if only to recall the pleasure and profit I have received from our beloved Art. I can only hope that, as I start writing with a smile, my readers, when they come to the last page, will also be smiling and feeling that this further addition to books on conjuring has been justified.

It is possible that my offering may be thought scrappy as I have made so few real records except for one memorandum book which I started in 1923. This book listed the tricks I performed at each theatre, and the time it took to do them. When the return date came I could refer back and try not to give exactly the same programme as before. I have never regretted starting that book, for it helped considerably to build a small

reputation, not only among Managers and Agents, but among the hundreds of magical friends, as the conjurer who never came back with the same programme. Let it not be thought for one moment that I have been the inventor of all the tricks I have performed. I most certainly have not. To some of them I have given a new twist or I have written new patter which helped to make the trick "go over" much better.

Some tricks which I worked on were, in my opinion, likely to prove the "best of all," but after a few shows I found that they did not suit my style and they were counted out. Yet, where I had real faith in a trick, I stuck to it until something presentable arrived. More often than not my faith was justified.

An instance of this justification was my Match Tricks with Giant Matches, which eventually turned out to be a big success. If I had allowed myself to be discouraged by my friends and agents, that act would have seen one performance only. I felt "here is something which has not been done on the stage before." Because it was different I was sure it would, with the rest of my show in magic, appeal to someone. It did, and ran for years bringing me many engagements at the London Coliseum, the Alhambra in Leicester Square and the Victoria Palace. These "dates" must have influenced the Maskelyne family in booking me, in the aggregate, over three years' work at St. George's Hall. Only the lack of sufficient new puzzles for return dates compelled me finally to lay it aside. Not forever though, as it will come out fresh again even in its original form to an ever-changing audience. So the obvious advice is that if you feel, in your bones, that you have something good stick at and to it; giving it a run until you are satisfied one way or the other.

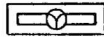
The principal idea of this book is to write about some of the tricks which I have performed during my career and to include patter here and there. Let me apologise in advance if the patter should include lines or gags which have been worked before by others. The excuse is that they fitted the situation so much better than anything else would have done. At this stage it is almost impossible to give the names of the originators, but I am grateful to them all.

I was first bitten by the magic bug when I was ten years old. An uncle of mine performed a trick with a piece of string, which, though apparently cut in the centre, was restored, when the cut ends were placed in the mouth and the opposite ends pulled. This effect so delighted me that I asked him to repeat it. Alas for him, he fell and I caught him spitting out the small piece from his mouth, prior to the second performance. Of course, not being a regular magician, he did not realise the importance of not repeating a trick; which advice is given in many books on magic. The fact that the present-day rope tricks are based on the principle employed by my uncle proves that there is nothing new under the sun.

Strangely enough, I did not stick to magic but had a craze for writing plays and performing them for the amusement of myself and the boys with whom I played. It was great fun. I wanted to be an actor, but my parents would not dream of it, as play acting at that period was an underpaid occupation. Music halls had not at that time risen to the position they later attained. Years after, my youthful ambition was

realised, and quite recently, during a long engagement at the Royal Theatre, Edinburgh, I played several parts in Quickies and Sketches. Incidentally, it was in the Summer Show at this theatre that I realised the benefits of changing my show as much as I could. I gave in all twenty-four different programmes, in which only ten items were repeated—a record of which I am very proud. In this connection I would be ungrateful if I did not refer to the generous help of magical friends and strangers who loaned me their apparatus to make the changes possible. Rather than omit one of them, I make this collective acknowledgment of my sincere gratitude.

To revert to my interest in magic, it was revived when at seventeen I met, on my return to my native Plymouth, a young amateur magician who was later to become a top-liner—Amasis, the Egyptian Magician. He showed a few coin and card tricks, and my fate was sealed.



TRICKS OF A TROUPER

CHAPTER ONE

CIGARETTE MAKING

THE series of effects which I shall describe below form a routine which I was still performing in 1945 with unvarying success. In the days when cigarettes were reasonably cheap I used to throw to members of the audience the cigarettes which came so mysteriously to my fingers. During my South African tour advertisers were even ready to give me cigarettes of the brand they advertised for distribution.

Let me first describe the preparations to be made prior to the presentation of the trick. A fifty cigar box was fitted as shown in Fig. 1 and placed on a small table which, during the performance, stood at my right side.

In my right hand vest pocket was a fountain pen from which the internal parts had been removed. One end of the pen was open and into this a cigarette was inserted. The same pocket also held a dozen loose cigarette papers in an A.G. cover. The left-hand pocket of my vest contained a bundle of sixteen cigarettes held together by two bands of music-binding paper. These transparent bands were about three-sixteenths of an inch in width, and to put them on easily I found it convenient to hold the cigarettes together by two elastic bands which were removed when the ends of the binding paper had been stuck together firmly.

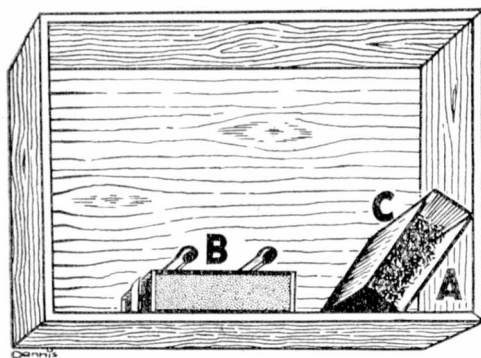
Lastly, there was hanging over my left hip pocket a dummy cigar bored throughout its length to take a cigarette easily. The cigar, pointed end upwards, was suspended from a tiny bag with an elastic mouth—bag and cigar were both naturally hidden by my coat tails. Another point about the cigar was that one end of the bored hole was blocked except for a hole rather less than one-eighth of an inch in diameter.

Now for the actual presentation. In the course of some introductory patter I took the cigarette papers from my pocket and dropped them in a shower into the box on my right. Then I picked up the box containing the tobacco at the same time inserting my right thumb into the thumb tip, occupying space A in Fig. 1. To show the right hand empty I momentarily placed the tobacco box in the left hand, and, at the same time, allowed the thumb tip to slip into the fork of the thumb. After showing the right hand empty I took the tobacco box and having formed the left

hand as a fist round the tip I poured the tobacco into it. Cigarette papers followed the loose tobacco and these were pushed in with the forefinger and then by the right thumb which, after one or two insertions, removed the tip. The fist remained closed and in such a position as to give no indication to my audience that it was now empty.

My right hand reached into my pocket to extract the fountain pen and took the opportunity of leaving the tip behind. The pen, open end uppermost, was pushed gently into the closed fist at the thumb end and my fingers caught and held the cigarette concealed in the pen, which had been tilted to eject same.

At this stage the fountain pen was gently withdrawn until its front edge was behind the cigarette which was then dramatically pushed out of the opposite side of my hand. The pen was then naturally returned to my pocket and taking the cigarette from my left hand I was able to show the hand empty.



Space *A* contained a thumb tip.

B.—A matchbox fastened to the cigar box—sandpaper side uppermost. An elastic band round the box held the matches in position.

C.—A small box containing a quantity of cigarette tobacco. This box was laid over the thumb tip to hide it from view.

Placing the cigarette in my mouth, I took a match from the box on my table, lit the cigarette and enjoyed a short smoke. Then followed a few sleights with the cigarette which are familiar to my brother magicians.

At the end of these sleights followed a subtle move—turning half left to my audience I pretended to throw my lighted cigarette into the air but, in reality, thumb-palmed it. The movement of my body made it possible for my left hand to secure, unnoticed, the fake cigar. Suddenly the palmed cigarette was produced from the air and the closed left hand was brought up at right angles to my body. The mouth of the cigar was upwards and into my apparently empty left fist I gently pushed the cigarette, the lighted end going in last. Once the cigarette was concealed in the cigar the latter was produced by drawing it from the lower side of closed fist, placing it in the mouth, and shewing both hands empty. It will be obvious to my readers that the tiny hole in one end of the fake cigar not only prevented the cigarette going right through it but also facilitated drawing air in it and so keeping the cigarette alight.

Having put the cigar into my mouth I was able to enjoy an inexpensive smoke till it became necessary to turn right to my table to flick off the ash. As the cigar was held in the left hand to do this I was able to obtain possession of the bundle of cigarettes from my pocket. The cigar

was passed to the right hand, my left hand being shown empty, and then put in my mouth. A few puffs of smoke were blown upwards and I "grasped"—if I can use such an expression—at the smoke with my left hand. The right hand now returned the cigar to my mouth and with both hands free I was able to cup them round the bundle of cigarettes. It was no difficult matter to break the bands surrounding the cigarettes and thus produce a shower of them.

The above description may make this very attractive series of effects seem much too difficult to attempt. If that is so, then I am paid a compliment by the nervous performer. The advice I would give, and it has been given countless times before by other conjurer-authors, is to read the directions until the sequence of moves is thoroughly understood. When the sequence has been mastered, practice is essential until all the moves can be made naturally and at the correct moment. Each and every movement of the hands and body, whether accompanied by patter or not, must seem natural to the audience. There can be such ease of movement and such an air of quiet self-confidence on the part of the magician that momentarily the audience believes his miracles. When this desirable result has been achieved by the conjurer he will be giving entertainment in its real sense and bringing wonders to a mundane world.



OSCAR THE DUCK

I NOW jump from the ancient to the modern to describe a trick which, I understand, originated in the States. The novelty of it appealed to me, so I purchased one from Davenport's.

It was a piece of apparatus representing what one might term a Futuristic Duck, with a feed-box below its beak. Three or four cards were selected, not forced, replaced in the pack and shuffled by the performer. The pack was then placed in the feed-box. Each of the persons who had selected a card was asked to name it and Oscar would at once dip his beak into the feed-box and bring the card into view.

I presented the trick exactly as the instructions stated but felt that there was something missing. So I first tried out the following addition. After the last card was produced by Oscar I walked towards the side entrance of the stage bowing to the applause, with Oscar also bowing. When Oscar was out of the sight of the audience I arranged for a double-backed card to be slipped into the back of the box. Walking back to the stage, I explained that Oscar would now produce any one card asked for. A card was named and I requested Oscar to produce it. Down into the box went the bird's beak to bring up a card which, being double-backed, obviously had its back to the audience. I removed the card from Oscar's beak, looked at it and said, "Quite right," and without showing it walked off, giving the audience a wink at the same time. It always got me off with a laugh.

I then introduced another variation, which was for Oscar to produce a Nap hand in any suit called for by the audience. The suit having been chosen, the pack was handed out again to be shuffled. Whilst this was being done I palmed five cards out of my trousers pocket, cards of the suit called for by the audience. These five cards were added to the pack when returned, and before placing it in the feed-box. This novelty made a grand finish to Oscar's performance.

My arrangement for the Nap Hand in the pocket was as follows: I split the four Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks and tens and pasted them back to back in the following order: Ace of Spades on to 10 of Hearts, King of Spades on to the Jack of Hearts, Queen of Spades on to the Queen of Hearts, Jack of Spades on the King of Hearts and, finally, the 10 of Spades on to Ace of Hearts. The corresponding cards of Diamonds and Clubs were arranged in the same way.

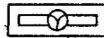
The prepared cards were arranged in my trousers pocket in such a manner that I knew by touch which suit was which. The Clubs-Diamonds set, with the Clubs to the rear, lay horizontally across the pocket while the Spades-Hearts set lay vertically in front of them. If Spades were called for I had simply to palm the front set with the Hearts nearest to the palm. If Hearts were called, I turned the cards in my pocket and palmed them out. The same procedure applied to the Clubs-

Diamonds. By adopting this method I was able to show any one of four Nap hands by extracting the appropriate set from the pocket.

The method of having the cards, which Oscar retrieves from the feed-box, selected is as follows: Three or four people each select a card from the pack and these cards are allowed to remain in their possession until the performer starts to collect them. The performer cuts the pack in halves and asks the *last* person to select a card to place his card on the lower half of the cut pack. The conjurer takes care that the little finger of his left hand is inserted between the two halves in order to keep the card located. If the cards are given a riffle on the edges nearest the spectator the latter will not appreciate that the pack is being kept in two parts. Going to the remaining persons who have selected cards, they are invited to place them in the pack, but the performer ensures that the cards are placed on the top of and next to the first card returned. The riffle is repeated for the benefit of each selector. While returning to his table the pass is made and the selected cards are thus brought to the top of the pack. Facing the audience, the waterfall or any other favourite shuffle can be performed so long as the position of the cards is not disturbed. The entire pack is dropped into the feed-box with their backs to Oscar and the top card or the first to be selected by the audience is the first withdrawn by the bird.

As patter was supplied with the trick on purchase, there is no need for me to repeat it except to mention that I reduced the preliminary introduction, thus getting more quickly to the point.

I should add that when I purchased the duck its name was Otto, but I changed this to Oscar because it always made him Wilde. In these days, as a tribute to Walt Disney's creation, the bird's name can again be changed.

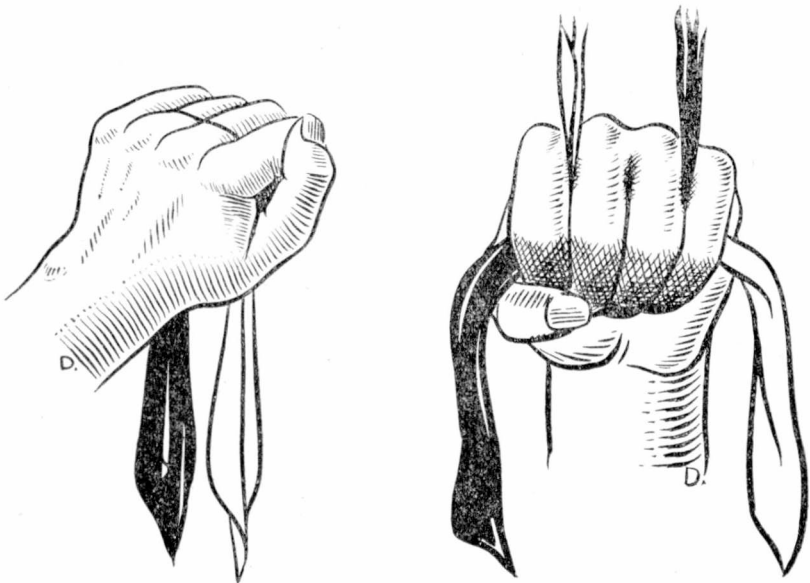


THE COLOUR HANDKERCHIEF CHANGE

A SHORT time ago I was shown the following effect, which to me was quite new and startling, and also to others who have seen it.

Much to my surprise, it had already been published. Two handkerchiefs of contrasted colours, are held by one of their corners : one between the first and second fingers and the other between the third and fourth fingers. The corners should protrude slightly from the closed fingers, towards the back of the hand. The two corners, when pulled up, appear to change as they pass through the fingers ; the right hand being shewn empty immediately the hanks. have passed through it. This trick is eminently suitable for a magical comperé.

What happened was that before pulling the handkerchiefs through, the hanks. were crossed over and the right hand closed. This was done by lifting the hank. nearest to the little finger by the bottom corner which crossed them, the fist closing over them before releasing it. I made a slight improvement by joining the two corners of the handkerchiefs by a flesh-coloured thread which lay across the back second and



third fingers. This enabled both hanks. to be entirely concealed at the corners, but easily capable of being drawn through the fingers. A pull of the thread and the startling change was made.

Patter : I was standing in a queue the other day behind two ladies. One was wearing an orange silk dress (lift the end of the orange silk) and the other wore a marvellous green frock (lift the end of the green silk). The lady with the orange dress said : " I do like your green frock ; I wish it were mine." The lady with the green dress replied : " That's strange, I like your orange dress and wish it were mine." So I said, " Excuse me, ladies, but why not change your dresses ? " One said, " What, here in the queue ? " I said, " Why, certainly ; watch this." (Pull the silks slowly through the hand.)



CHAPTER FOUR

THE (STODARE) EGG AND HANDKERCHIEF TRICK

I MAKE no apologies for including this trick, which, in spite of its age, was and still is a favourite of mine, because of one or two subtleties added by myself. More often than not I made this my opening trick.

Walking on to the stage wearing my opera hat and carrying my walking-stick, I opened the latter, which formed a tripod stand. On the stand so formed I rested my hat, mouth upwards and slightly facing backstage in order to conceal the contents from those sitting in the upper parts of the theatre.

On a table on my right, which had a well in it, was resting at the front a small tea plate and on this stood a tumbler and a real egg. Behind these articles was a brightly-coloured handkerchief, and at the back of the well, laid across the table, was the usual handkerchief for vanishing a glass, a double one with a circular piece of card sewn in the centre. By throwing this feke handkerchief over the tumbler and lifting both, the tumbler could be brought over the well and dropped into it. Retaining the card between the fingers, the impression is given that the glass is still under the handkerchief.

Inside my opera hat there was a small piece of elastic, fastened at one end to the centre of the crown and at the other to the side of the hat, about halfway up, making roughly an angle of 45 degrees. Into the space formed by the elastic I put a duplicate glass which contained another handkerchief which matched the one in view on the table. Between the glass and the hat was a third silk. In my right hand trousers pocket was a Stodare egg of the ivorine variety, which had a hole in its side (if eggs can be said to have sides) large enough to admit one of the handkerchiefs. To commence the trick, I put the real egg in the glass and laid the latter in the opera hat below the glass concealed there. Next, the handkerchief lying on the table was picked up and rolled into a small ball by the simple expedient of rubbing it in a circular motion between the hands. By commencing the rubbing of a knotted corner of the handkerchief it gradually disappeared into the left hand, which remained closed. The right hand was put into the right-hand pocket and the feke egg was palmed out. At this moment I pretended to hear someone say that the handkerchief had been transferred to the trousers pocket so the left hand was at once opened to show the handkerchief still there. Under cover of showing both sides of the handkerchief, the

egg was transferred to the left hand with the hole uppermost and the hank. thrown over it. By rubbing the handkerchief on the hole in the egg in a circular motion it gradually disappeared into the egg. When the hanky. was safely stowed in the egg the latter was secretly turned and the thumb kept over the hole. Or, it can be transferred naturally into the right hand so that the hole comes into the palm. The egg is displayed and one magical effect has been accomplished.

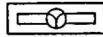
“Laying” the egg upon the table, I walked to the upturned hat and removed the glass containing the *handkerchief* but leaving behind the loose silk which was already there. The hanky. was removed from the glass, shewn, replaced and the feke egg put in with it. The glass was then placed on the table just in front of the well and the prepared double handkerchief thrown over it—the card disc being over the mouth of the glass. Remarking that before vanishing the three articles I would show the audience a juggling trick, consisting of balancing the glass on the edge of the plate, I raised the glass an inch or two from the table and at the same time lifted the plate at right angles to it. This enabled me to drop the glass and its contents into the well and come forward with the hanky. apparently covering the glass. Making an attempt to balance (?) the glass on the plate, I remarked: “To do this you must have a *clean* plate.” Apparently noticing some dust on the plate, I flicked the handkerchief and wiped the plate. I set both aside, crossed to the hat to produce the glass, handkerchief and egg, and took the opportunity of showing that the hat was empty. I returned to the table, laid the hanky. and glass down and proceeded to break the egg into it. This last move made the whole effect much more puzzling to the audience. It was mainly owing to the shortage of eggs that I ceased doing the trick.

To summarise, I will give some of the patter I used in conjunction with the various movements made during the trick.

“My next trick is a surprise item—it will surprise me if it works. The various articles used are more or less domestic ones, consisting of a glass, an egg and a handkerchief. Of course you all know what an egg is an egg is a chicken—not yet. I’ll commence by placing the egg in the glass and then putting both of them into the hat. The trick consists of vanishing this hanky. from my hands into the hat and bringing the egg back in its place.” (Here go through the procedure of pretending to vanish the hanky., securing the feke egg in the right hand and rubbing the hanky. until you are able to show the egg. The egg is laid towards the back of the table with the aperture downwards.) “And here is the handkerchief.” (Remove hanky. from the tumbler held by the elastic.) “I will now endeavour to vanish the three articles into the hat.” (Replace the hanky. in the glass which is on the table and the feke egg on top of the handkerchief, taking care not to expose the hole.) “But before doing so I would like to show you a juggling trick which consists of balancing the glass on the edge of this plate.” (Drop the glass in the well and try to rest the glass which is supposed to be under the handkerchief on the edge of the plate.) “To do this you must have a *clean* plate.” (Flick the hanky., wipe the plate and place both on the

table Walk to the hat and take from it the glass, handkerchief and egg in that order.) "And here are the glass, handkerchief and the egg." (Crack the egg into the glass.)

I would like to point out the subtlety of walking on the stage with my hat on, already loaded, thus making it quite unnecessary to show it empty. Also the "balancing" of the glass on the plate edge which made an excellent cover for the vanish of the glass and its contents and at the same time conveyed the impression that they were still there.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE THREE CARDS AND CELEBRITY TRICK

IT was at The Olympia, Plymouth, in 1897 that I first saw Prof. Fred Harcourt perform his Cards and Celebrity Trick which I later incorporated in my amateur programmes. Although the trick has been recorded at different times since Harcourt's death, there are very few conjurers now working it. I never learned the name of the original inventor, but Harcourt has always been associated with the trick.

Effect: A frame containing a sheet of glass, a piece of light brown paper and a wooden back was taken to pieces and laid face-upwards on a chair. These items were reassembled and laid face-downwards on a chair. Three cards were taken by members of the audience, placed in an envelope which was sealed and laid on the conjurer's table or handed to one of the audience. A number of small pieces of paper were handed to members of the audience with a request that they should write thereon the names of three living celebrities. The magician helped in this respect by naming a few. These slips were folded in four and placed in a bag and one was later selected by a spectator. The names of the cards were asked for, but on examination the envelope was found to contain three photographs of the selected celebrities. The frame, on being exhibited, was seen to contain the three selected cards.

Preparation and Presentation.

The frame was not so simple and innocent as it looked, for the brown paper had pasted to it duplicates of the three cards to be later selected. In showing the frame, it was held in an upright position with one end resting on a chair or table and slightly inclined towards the audience. The wooden back, paper and glass were removed as one lot and laid down—glass uppermost.

The frame was then shown to the audience and laid by the side of the glass, paper and wooden back. These were then reassembled—and left on the table face-downwards.

After replacing the glass in the frame, the paper, which lay plain side up, was casually dropped on to the glass; care being taken not to expose the pasted cards on the other and lower side of the paper. The wooden back followed, and the frame remained untouched until the exposure of the cards. The wooden back was held in position by a cross-bar, which turned on a central pivot, the ends engaging in small slots, on the inner side of the frame. The frame was very similar to those frosted ones

we used as children to buy for copying drawings. The dismantling and reassembling of the frame should be done very casually throughout, as though it had no special importance.

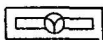
The envelope containing the three photographs sealed inside it was laid beneath a piece of writing paper, resting near the rear edge of the table. At the back of the table was a servante. When the cards were placed in the envelope and sealed, the hand containing it picked up the paper and the concealed envelope.

The envelope containing the cards was dropped into the servante—a move which is almost undetectable. In the absence of a servante I used a cigar box, placed toward the back of the table, the switched envelope being dropped behind it.

One of the audience was handed the envelope, or it was placed in a prominent position on the stage. The paper was torn into small slips, handed out and collected in the familiar changing bag; one compartment of which had slips of paper on each of which were the names of the three celebrities. Naturally these three names corresponded exactly with the photographs in the changed envelope.

Harcourt appeared to force the three cards by sleight of hand, but for those who do not feel confident of doing this I suggest the method in which the pack contains three sets of duplicates, each set divided by a nondescript card a fraction longer than the cards to be forced. The reader is referred, for a further use of this type of pack to my Rising Card trick. The bottom card of ordinary length at the base of the pack was different from the forced cards. The pack was cut into three parts, a move facilitated by the longer cards, and the three heaps laid on the table. Then the audience were asked to select a number between one and twelve, and the selected number of cards was counted off from each heap. The cards thus selected were placed at once in an envelope which was sealed. Incidentally, long cards can be made by pasting two cards together so that one overlaps the other—the length being increased and not the width. The use of thumb and forefinger make the cut quite easy of execution.

As the trick was one of those requiring a running explanation, no special patter was written, but this did not detract from the success with which it was always worked.



TWO PROVEN WINNERS

ANOTHER WAY OF FINDING A MISSING WATCH.

ALMOST every conjurer has his particular method of vanishing and reproducing a borrowed watch, so I am offering the following suggestion for its reproduction.

Having once vanished your watch, it will be necessary to kill a little time to enable the effect to be carried out. In my own working, I had the borrowed watch placed in one of those plated metal tobacco boxes of which the lid flies open in response to pressure on the central part. Pre-war, they were sold for 6d. each. When the watch was inside, the box was exchanged for a duplicate and the original taken off-stage by any of the usual subterfuges. I then dropped the duplicate box into the familiar Devil's Handkerchief—a double hank. with a slit in one side. Holding the handkerchief by its four corners in the form of a bag, the box was placed within, actually in the secret pocket.

Pointing to two small boxes on my left, I asked the owner of the watch in which of them he would like his watch to reappear. He would make his choice and then I would begin to swing the handkerchief in that direction, counting: "One . . . Two . . ." Before the count of three was complete, a voice in the audience would call very loudly, "Chocolates." At this, I stopped to look in the direction of the interruption, my hand holding the handkerchief dropping to my side until I felt that the box inside was resting on the floor; then I released three of the four corners. Appearing ready to overlook the over-zealousness of the chocolate-seller, I prepared to begin the trick again, only to discover (!) that the box had disappeared from the handkerchief. Then followed a conversation in which I appeared to be very annoyed at the interruption and the loss it had incurred, and finally demanded compensation for the owner of the watch in the form of one of the best boxes of chocolates. I opened the box apparently to examine the quantity and quality of its contents, only to find that it held no chocolates, but only the borrowed watch. The watch was returned to the owner, and that was the end of the trick.

Speed in getting the watch out front was, of course, of greatest importance, and in many cases, although I have worked quickly, theatre conditions permitted the vendor to be at the back of the theatre, strolling comfortably down and waiting for his cue to shout his wares. St. George's Hall in particular was an ideal theatre for this purpose. It appeared that I had scarcely borrowed the watch before it was safely back in the hands of its owner. It was amusing, sometimes, to watch the annoyed expression of many of the audience, who positively glared at the seller for interrupting my performance.

THE VANISHING VIOLIN BOW.

The following trick, which I performed for a few years, was suggested to me by Paul Vandy, the Magical Juggler. A feature of his act was that after each juggling trick he produced a real plate from behind his knee. He had a tail pocket full of the plates, but seemed to obtain them quite easily from their place of concealment. Many years after, when I had laid this trick aside, it was used by another conjurer, and still later "invented" and published, as being new, in an American periodical. As an opening trick it was a "winner," for it made the audience sit up. It interested and puzzled them.

Presentation : I walked on the stage and made a short opening speech which was customary then, but is no longer so, and the band started to play my music loudly and quickly. I stopped the band and asked the Conductor if he would mind me conducting and thus giving an idea of the tempo I wanted. I borrowed a violin bow from one of the musicians, tapped an orchestra light shade for attention and then conducted the orchestra. The tapping on the light-shade was not only a natural action on the part of a conductor but helped to create the illusion that the bow was a solid one. Appearing to notice the lender's alarm, I wrapped the bow in a newspaper and continued to conduct with this unusual baton. Casually I crushed the newspaper and threw it away. The band would naturally stop and the musician would ask for his bow. After expressing surprise, I would draw the bow from underneath my coat.

Preparation : The bow handed up to me was prepared by having wooden ends, the "horsehair" portion being made of white elastic and the "stick" being a paper tube. The bow produced from my coat was a real one, matching the papier-mache one as near as possible. I prided myself on the excellent bows which I made for this trick, and on more than one occasion when I went below stage to substitute the real one for the fake the violinist said : "It's all right, I still have the other one." They had not noticed the difference in the make, and I had to explain that the fake one had to be handled very carefully as it could easily be put out of commission. I still recall with horror the opening night when a man handed up my bow resembling nothing better than a whip, complete with lash. He had broken it in the centre, and as there was no time to do anything about it I let it fall back into the pit. The remainder of my act had to be done with the real bow down my leg, giving me the feeling, as well as the appearance, of having a wooden leg.

The top end of the bow was sawn off about an inch from the end and the lower part about one and three-quarter inches, leaving the

screwing portion intact. These two pieces, when fitted with the narrow white elastic to represent the resined hairs, were slipped into the ends of a prepared paper tube. The paper was pasted and then wound round a piece of tapered wood resembling a musical director's baton, which was withdrawn immediately to prevent it sticking.

To dry the bows I leaned them against a wall which made the tube bend slightly and so gave them the "sweep" of a real bow. When dry, the paper tubes were stained with a solution of Bismark brown powder, and methylated spirits.

Finally, when quite dry, the props. were varnished with a mahogany varnish, but the considerable trouble taken in their preparation was worth it for the sake of the excellent results achieved.

A roll of ceiling paper or wallpaper was found most suitable and it lasted for four or five weeks—that is, roughly, about sixty performances.



CHAPTER SEVEN

A TOPICAL TORN AND RESTORED TRICK.

A TRICK which I devised in connection with the well-known torn and restored card, and one which had topical interest, was performed by me at many theatres soon after hostilities commenced, and was very well received. I think it may be of interest to my readers.

I used a country scene as my background and on the stage was imitation grass on which rested a property anti-aircraft gun, pointing skywards. From the flies hung an aluminium-painted balloon with the usual carriage beneath it, but no attention was drawn to this until later on.

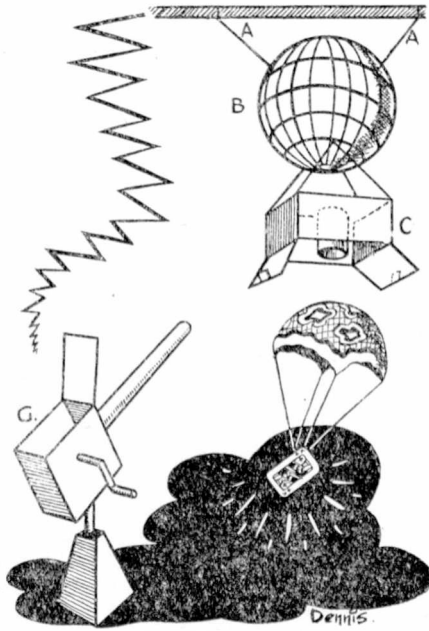
A card was forced and torn into eight pieces, one being retained as usual for identification purposes. The pieces I wrapped in a silk hank bearing a distinctive design, and this was pushed into the breach of the gun. I then donned a steel helmet, and shouted "ACTION STATIONS," which was a cue for Black-out. Spot limes moved all around the stage like searchlights, finally picking up the balloon, on which they remained focussed. Meanwhile, I dropped on one knee, and using a handle with a ratchet attached to give a machine-gun effect, and with the additional aid of a drummer, started firing.

The turning of the handle wound up a cord attached to a cartridge firing-pin, which exploded a powerful cartridge. This was the cue for another string to be pulled which released a trap in the balloon carriage. Out fell the silk, opening out like a parachute and floating gently to the stage with the restored card hanging from it. This was taken in its entirety to the person who had retained the piece. The card was removed by him and the corner fitted. This effect evoked tremendous applause, and was only taken out of the act to ease the baggage question.

The car hanging from the balloon had a trapdoor divided in two, springs being fitted, to ensure speedy opening. In the centre of the meeting edges of the trap were two pieces of flat metal, one on each and close to each other, and these were held together by means of a small bulldog clip. A length of stout black thread was attached to the clip, and a sharp pull in a downward direction pulled the clip clear and allowed the doors to open; the hank. fell out and opened itself.

To facilitate the release of the hank., I had a brass tube, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in. diameter and polished inside, in which the silk, the card and the neatly-coiled "ropes" were inserted. The bottom of the tube reached the floor of the carriage, on which the "load" rested. The suction caused

by the sudden opening of the trap, together with the weight of the card, ensured that the hank. fell free. It was a pretty sight to see the gaily-coloured handkerchief float gracefully to earth, and I am sure that some of my readers will be able to use the idea. I shall probably reproduce the effect myself. I have it in mind to insert the hank. in a large pistol, fire it at the roof of the theatre, and have the parachute float from there.



CHAPTER EIGHT

THREE MENTAL MYSTERIES

SCALBERT'S "MYSTERY OF THE SEVENTH CARD."

I HAVE always thought that this trick was one of the most ingenious to have been invented, using as it does a principle which I have not known to be employed elsewhere in magic. Some years ago a puzzle, somewhat similar in idea, was circulated in this country, Italy and Germany. The puzzle comprised a set of eight numbered cards with windows cut in them that enabled an operator to name a number chosen by a spectator. Those interested in the puzzle will find a description of it in W. W. R. Ball's "Mathematical Recreations and Essays."

To return to the Mystery of the Seventh Card. In the original version of the effect seven cards were chosen at random from a shuffled and unprepared pack. One card is turned up, and after an assistant, some distance away, has been given the names of the remaining six by a spectator, she names the seventh. It struck me at once that if the performer used a marked pack there would be no need for the seventh card to be turned over. The chosen seventh card would be laid aside face-downwards and the names of the remaining six given to the assistant, who would be able to announce the seventh. It seems to me that the magical effect would be increased when it is realised that the performer has not seen the seventh card, which on being turned over proves to be the one named by the assistant..

A PUBLICITY TELEPHONE TRICK.

My esteemed friend, J. E. Hammond, co-author of that excellent book "Magic of To-morrow," has kindly given me permission to publish the following trick in this series. It is eminently suitable for performing before the Press as a publicity stunt, or in a drawing room where a public telephone is available.

The effect is as follows: A pack of cards is handed to a member of the audience with the request that it be thoroughly shuffled. After the shuffle, the pack is cut as near as possible into two equal parts, and these are placed by the assistant into the inside breast pockets of the performer's coat—one in each pocket. The conjurer states that he will

ask for a number between 1 and 20 to be named by the audience, and having obtained it will slowly extract from the pocket the chosen number of cards. When the card corresponding to the chosen number is drawn from the pocket it is placed face-downwards on the table. Thus, no person present will know the name of the card so chosen. The performer then asks if he shall continue to use the same pocket or the other one to repeat the experiment. When the audience has decided the performer draws cards, one at a time, from the selected pocket, and on coming to the chosen card places it face-downwards beside the first card so chosen. Then the conjurer gives a telephone number to a member of the audience, requesting that the number be called and the person answering asked to name two cards. The telephone call is made and the enquirer is given the names of two cards. When the cards selected are turned up they are found to be identical with those given over the telephone.

The secret, in view of the astonishing nature of the experiment, is surprisingly simple. Prior to entering the room, the conjurer has made the telephonic arrangements—being certain that the person answering the 'phone will name the correct cards. The pack of cards calls for some attention. Let us suppose that the King of Clubs and 10 of Hearts are to be the chosen cards. These two cards are removed from the pack beforehand and placed, faces towards the body, in the upper left-hand *vest* pocket.

Duplicates of these two cards are placed in the upper right vest pocket, but the positions are reversed; that is, if the King of Clubs is next to the body in one pocket, the 10 of Hearts must be next to the body in the other. The obvious reason for this is that whether you use one or both breast pockets you are bound to get a different card. As you reach the selected number, your thumb dives into the vest pocket and withdraws the card nearest the body. To all intents the card is being produced from the appropriate breast pocket. The actual withdrawal is covered by the coat, which is held by the opposite hand—an action which is usual when a person is taking anything from an inside pocket. Knowing the position of the required cards, there is no need for the conjurer to glance into either of his pockets. The effect of the trick will be increased if it is carried through nonchalantly. There should be no groping for any of the cards.

There are one or two points in connection with the presentation of this easy, but very effective, trick that should receive attention. In selecting the cards which are to be chosen by the audience do not mix aces, sixes or eights, for the similarity of the words may give rise to confusion during the telephone conversation. The person giving the names of the cards must be in no doubt as to their identity and must speak clearly. For the assistant to shuffle the cards and cut them choose a young lady. The odds that she will be deaf or unused to speaking on the telephone will be very small. A last point, be sure the telephone will work. On one occasion the author, feeling uncertain of the telephone, planted a sealed envelope in the audience. When the time came to use the 'phone, and it would not work, I turned to a lady in the audience and asked her to open an envelope which she had unknowingly been sitting on. As the opened envelope contained the names of the two cards, the climax was a good one.

A good line of patter is for the conjurer to welcome his "known" assistant with: "I am very sorry, but I have to ask you a very personal question. Are you married?" If the lady says no, he then goes on: "Splendid. I am going to teach you how to go through your future husband's pockets. You'll find this very useful. Will you please feel in this pocket? (She does so.) You are sure there's nothing there. (A pause.) My wife went through them last night." Should the lady prove to be married, then the line of patter is that she is just the type of assistant you need because she is used to searching pockets.

Recently I decided to include this trick in a charity show and made arrangements with the local police for the telephone call before proceeding to the hall. My rash assumption that a telephone would be available proved incorrect. I hastily wrote the names of the cards on a slip of paper which I placed in an envelope which, unobserved, I thrust into the pocket of an overcoat hanging within sight of the stage. I was on tenterhooks lest the owner of the coat should decide to leave early, but fortunately he remained and, unknown to himself, contributed to the success of the trick.

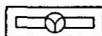
A PREDICTION.

My very old friend James A. Reville, of Sheffield, has given me permission to publish this effect in which is used the late Theo Annemann's 203rd Force, given by that talented magician in his book "SH-H-H It's a Secret." Naturally no claim for originality is made by Reville, except for the manner in which the force is used.

In case any of my readers are not acquainted with the device, I should say that it consists of a double-back card, which is placed on the top of a pack with backs to match it. The cards to be forced are put immediately below this card with their faces upwards.

The performer walks forward carrying two slates under his left arm and having the arranged pack in his right hand. Having laid the pack down, he announces his intention of making a prediction, and suiting the action to the word he writes the names of the cards to be forced, one name on each of the slates which he lays down so that the writing cannot be seen. Picking up the cards and handing a knife to the spectator, the conjurer requests him to insert it at any chosen moment between the edges of the cards which are riffled for that purpose. When this has been done, the performer lifts off the upper portion of the pack and shows the knife resting on the chosen card. He then turns the upper part of the pack over and lays it, faces upwards, on the lower portion. To show that this action is reasonable, he remarks to the assistant, "I wish to point out to you that had you inserted the knife higher up you would have chosen one of these cards," and fans the cards. The fact that these cards are all different can be made clear to other persons near. As this is being done he removes the upturned cards until he comes to the first card with its face downwards which he asks the assistant to extract. Note that this card will be the card which was the lower of the upturned two at the beginning of the trick. As the assistant is extracting the card, the conjurer takes the opportunity of slipping the double card and the other card to be forced below the exposed cards, holding this part of the

pack in his right hand. The lower half can then be handed for inspection and shown to be made up of different cards. When the cards in the right hand are turned face downwards and replaced the same procedure can be adopted for the selection of the second card. It is preferable to show each card after its selection and to prove that the prediction written upon the slates has been a true one. If desired, the pack can be shuffled in a normal manner before the trick is performed so long as the prepared card and the two underneath it are not disturbed. Obviously, if this shuffle is done near the spectators they must not be allowed to see that two cards are facing upwards—or that the top one is double-backed.



A VARIATION FOR THE MISSING RING.

(RINGS AND BOXES).

ONE of my favourite tricks was with the borrowed finger-rings and the Nest of Boxes. It is a very well-known effect, and was featured, of course, by Chung Ling Soo. Briefly, the effect is as follows: A number of ladies' rings are borrowed, dropped into the barrel of a pistol, and the pistol fired at a box hanging high over the centre of the stage. The box is lowered and opened, only to find within another box, and another in this, and so on, until about six boxes stand on the conjurer's table. The last and smallest of the boxes is opened, and out of it are taken three small posies, to each of which a ring is attached. These are handed back to their respective owners.

In the routine as often worked, the conjurer then proceeded to another trick, but was interrupted by his assistant, who explained that yet another ring had to be returned. It was eventually found attached to the neck of a rabbit produced from a drawer-box. A comedy element was introduced by finding that the rings were too big to pass into the muzzle of the pistol. This was soon put right by flattening them with a small hammer, to the great delight of the onlookers, and the uneasy amusement of the owners. These rings were, of course, duplicates, but they added greatly to the entertainment value of the trick. In my case, I had standing at the side of the stage, and close to the edge of the side curtain (or "leg," as it is called), a music stand to which was fastened a small frame with a piece of drawing paper in it. At the back of it hung a small buttonhole with a loop of ribbon attached.

Directly the rings were handed back to the assistant for their return to the lenders, I offered to do some quick colour sketching, and bringing the frame centre-stage proceeded by means of coloured chalks to draw what I hoped looked like a large bunch of flowers. At the appropriate time, my assistant would announce the loss of a ring. I promptly asked him if the lender had received a buttonhole, and, receiving a negative answer, I plunged my hand through the paper and produced the buttonhole with the ring attached.

While the stand had been at the side of the stage, an assistant had slipped the ring up the loop of ribbon, made a slip-knot, and let it hang there. I found that, with the rabbit idea being overdone, this version introduced a pleasant surprise at the close. The trick in detail has been described so many times that it is unnecessary to give further details here; my main idea being to show that a variation is always welcome.

THE LE DAIR COLOUR-CHANGE FOR THIMBLES.

ONE is almost scared these days to claim that one invented such-and-such a sleight, but I have every reason to believe that the following colour-change with a thimble is original with me. In order to perform this sleight, two thimbles are required of contrasting colours, say a red and a blue.

Commence by thumb-palming the blue thimble in the right hand, the red being on the tip of the forefinger of the same hand. The left hand is shown empty, palm upwards, and the red thimble is pressed into its centre. Apparently by means of this pressure, the left hand pivots over until the back of the hand is facing upwards and the red thimble concealed. Under cover of this, the second finger of the right hand enters the blue thimble and straightens out, bringing the blue thimble side by side with the red. The left hand now closes around both thimbles, gripping the blue one but not the red. The second finger is folded back into the hand, and the forefinger withdrawn with the red thimble still on its tip. Drawing the right hand back a distance of two feet very smartly, the red thimble is thumb-palmed and the forefinger jabbed again into the left fist. It is withdrawn again with the blue thimble adorning its tip. The left hand is now shown empty, and if the thumb of the right hand rolls the red thimble into the palm (the hand meanwhile closing, with the exception of the extended forefinger) it will be found that the blue thimble is perfectly concealed in the right hand.

Though the right hand is drawn back quickly, it must be with a rhythmical movement in order to conceal the palming of the red thimble. The fact that the forefinger does not have the thimble on it is never noticed. The above description may seem involved, but I am sure that the conjurer who reads it carefully and carries out the moves slowly will grasp the principle. Speed and the necessary rhythm come with the practice devoted to this effective change.

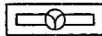
MORE ABOUT THIMBLES.

The late Oswald Williams was a great believer in the mass production or mass use of certain articles, and this gave me an idea which I put into practice and which caused a lot of favourable comment. Opening the act with the eight thimble routine, which is familiar to most conjurers,

I dropped these into a small vase and proceeded to my next trick. Suddenly I "discovered" that I had eight more thimbles of a different colour on my fingers. These were also dropped into the same container. My next trick having been presented, the same thing occurred again. Right through the act I kept finding thimbles which were all tipped into the vase. When I tipped up the vase out came a very large thimble, which was as big as the container itself.

Had I stopped at this effect I think I would have been wise, but no, I must make a thimble ladder on the lines of the well-known coin ladder. This ladder was a piece of apparatus standing about six feet high, with glass steps. The thimbles which I had produced were poured into a larger receptacle which was placed on the top of the ladder. By releasing a mechanism, the thimbles started pouring down the glass steps into another container. The thimbles, being of various colours, made a nice cascade, when they did not bounce all over the stage, to be flattened by the feet of the stage-hands who had not the time nor, possibly, the inclination to pick them up. However, as nice as I thought the effect was, it seldom got a hand, so back it went into store, and is likely to remain there. Still, it must be admitted that I *had* tried to build up a thimble act, with a novel finish, and even now I do not regret the expense and the labour involved.

The loads of thimbles which so mysteriously and persistently appeared on my fingers were obtained in a variety of ways. Some were concealed on my person, while others were beneath the table tops at each side. While lifting a table slightly forward or backward I was able to insert my fingers into the thimbles. In two cases I had holes drilled into the table tops at the back edge, and these were concealed by different pieces of apparatus standing in front of them. It was an easy matter to plunge the fingers into the thimbles and withdraw them. Their disclosure to the audience came later.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

ANOTHER FLARE-UP.

MY old and esteemed friend, Tom Waterman, A.I.M.C., has very kindly given me permission to publish a very slick opening trick which he has presented with more than satisfactory results; indeed, it is an item which he has kept in constant use ever since it was worked out. Basically, the effect is old. A tissue strip is destroyed and restored. The value of this routine is that the end is achieved quickly and showily. In Tom's own words: "The methods of burning and restoring a paper strip are legion. Most of them have come my way, and have been experimented with. Some of the gadgets used were ingenious, some were inspiring, some were simple. My method is in the last category. It is, at any rate, quicker than any other I have come across; and although the reproduced paper is faked, the preparation takes very little time."

Attached to one end of the strip to be restored is a small piece of sheet lead, only a little larger than a lighter-flint. This is easily done by sticking the piece of lead about three-eighths of an inch in from the end of the strip, turning the end up over it, and gumming down the edges of the pocket so formed. For convenience in handling, it is also advisable to double and gum down the other end of the strip. To the outside of this second end apply a good dab of seccotine or similar adhesive, and let it dry. Pleat the strip in the usual way, and you are almost ready.

Almost. Moisten the ball of the thumb, press on the gummed paper, and cover the pleated strip with a metal thumb tip. I'm sorry about that tip. In fact, I held it back as long as possible, for had I mentioned it in the first place, you would probably have turned to the next trick. Having come this far, I hope you will stay with me to the end. . . .

Attach a match-lighting fake under the left lapel. If you have not such a fake, then use a folder of "Pullmatches"; they serve the purpose almost as well. Now, with thumb tip and match fake in position and the strip to be burnt in your hand, you are really ready.

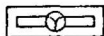
Hold the strip of paper at one end between the right finger and thumb. The left hand withdraws a lighted match from the fake, sets fire to the hanging end of the strip, and throws the match away, leaving the left hand empty.

When the flame is as near to the right hand as is comfortable, bring the hands together, the left below the right, grasp the tip in the left hand,

and carry on straight down while the right moves straight up. The leaden weight will ensure the unpleating of the paper, while the opposite end sticks to the thumb until it is grasped by the forefinger. The tip, of course, is palmed in the left hand at the conclusion of the trick.

The effect to be aimed at is the sudden appearance of the restored strip, so the quicker the hands are moved the better. Drawing the paper out from between the hands is all right for the ordinary torn and restored strip, but it is not nearly as effective as the above method.

Finally, do not crumple up the strip after its restoration. Place it on one side with the tip underneath, and after the show pleat it again and replace it in the thumb-tip. You are then ready to do it again, as the faked strip will last many shows with a minimum of care.



THE MISER'S DREAM.

I WOULD not consider this book complete if it did not include the above trick, which has proved such a popular and fascinating effect with my audiences. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been published for many years and, as there have been many magicians of my acquaintance who have not seen it performed, I make no apology for its inclusion. Over forty years ago the late T. Nelson Downs, the American King of Coins, came to this country and created a great sensation with his act which was devoted entirely to coins. Downs was the first of the great specialists, and he was closely followed by others, such as the late Howard Thurston in cards, Stilwell in handkerchiefs, and Gus Fowler with clocks and watches.

The routine which follows is not meant to be compared with that of Downs, if that is recalled by any of my readers. It is my attempt to present a series of effects in such a manner as to emphasise to my audience the desirability of being able to make money easily, and not to give a spell-binding display of digital dexterity. The emphasis throughout is on the entertainment value, and the patter which is given later assists greatly in attaining this end. Downs' during his turn did a number of sleights and frequently included a coin ladder similar to that which I have mentioned in connection with thimbles. Following the Downs' sensation, there appeared on the market a large number of fakes, such as spiders, to enable the persons unwilling to practise to perform the necessary front and back palming of coins. In my opinion, these fakes were cumbersome and, once in use, they had to be disposed of, which was an even harder task. In my case, I relied solely on sleight of hand to perform the manipulation required, and I never regretted the months of practice which were necessary. For a detailed description of the methods I must refer my readers to Downs book, "Modern Coin Manipulations," and a number of booklets published by Mr. Ellis Stanyon.

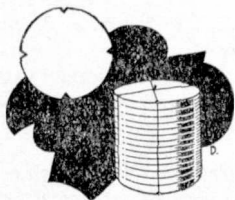
My present method is to have twelve or thirteen silver-plated pennies or real halfcrowns lying loose in a small pocket in the left-hand tail of my evening dress. As I reach over the footlights to borrow a hat, sometimes planted with the drummer, I take it in the right hand and pass it at once to the left, which by this time has extracted the coins and finger-palmed them. By resting the brim of the hat on the fingers of the left hand the coins were concealed, but the audience was still able to see that there was nothing in the left hand palm. Seizing the hat, I turned it completely over and brought the coins inside the hat. In this position

the coins were next the leather band and ready to be dropped singly each time I pretended to throw a coin into the hat with my right hand.

At other times when I began my programme with this trick I walked on the stage holding a closed opera hat with the coins held by the left hand against the brim. All that remained was to flick the hat open, insert the saucer and commence the production. I only use the back palm twice in the course of the coin production because, if overdone, it is likely to be detected. It was varied, however, and this is made clear in the notes which I have inserted in the patter.

On other occasions I have found it necessary to tie the dozen pennies or halfcrowns in a bundle with a much weaker thread than that recommended below. This enabled me to perform the trick at any time during my programme, for as two separate threads were used I had less to get rid of and they did not impede the dropping. Many of my readers may think this an unimportant detail, but if they try it they will readily see the difference which it makes.

At the end of the production I lift out the saucer and show the handful of coins which has been magically caught in the air. Reaching into the air, I produce two showers of coins, twenty-nine in each. This sudden appearance of over fifty coins calls for a detailed explanation.



Beneath my dress vest I wore a black elastic belt of about three inches in width which held the bundles of coins on either side of my body ready for me to secure them. I have often wondered why the elastic belt is not more widely used, as it will hold billiard balls or other small articles, without fear of dropping out prematurely. The top and bottom coins of each bundle were cut smoothly with a file at

four points, as shown in the diagram. The coins were then tied with a piece of No. 24 black cotton, which could be easily broken by pressing the coins on the side. Once they were loose in my hand they could be showered into the hat.

Patter for The Miser's Dream.

I shall commence my performance by showing you how I make money without working for it. For this purpose I use an opera hat, a pair of hands and a great deal of hope. I also use this saucer, in order that you will hear the coins fall as I drop them into the hat. The coins float about in the air. Please keep your seats—the silver collection will now take place.

Here's one floating in the air—I'll let it float so that you can all see it. That will be far enough. (Produce palmed coin and apparently throw it into the hat but retain it in the palm.) All you do is simply look for them and collect them. (Repeat production) (Looking up at the curtains.) Would you mind dropping off those curtains. (Hold out the hat and let a coin drop into it, and at the same time lower coin in the right hand in position to back palm it. Swing round to the right, raising hand and, reversing the coin to the back of the hand, show the palm empty. Again reverse the hand to show the back of the hand but with the coin palmed in the ordinary way spread the fingers open. Once again close the fingers, reverse the hand and coin, then produce the latter which is thrown apparently into the hat.) During the coin manipu-

lation the patter continues : I recently asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he would like to know how this trick was done. He replied, No thank you—you just make them, I'll take them. (Aside.) Pay as you squirm. (Continue productions.) I once performed this trick at a very well-known hotel in Scotland. Whilst doing it I accidentally dropped some of the money on the floor and three of the waiters were injured in the rush. A very nice hotel that, which I can highly recommend—the er-er—what was its name? (Take saucer from hat and glance at it.) Oh yes, the Waverley Hotel, Edinburgh. I'll pass this one through the hat. (Here push the coin against the crown of the hat, finger palming it and allowing a coin to drop inside the hat. Pretend to throw one behind the body and catch it in the hat.) Perhaps you would like to examine one of these coins ; if so, I'll pass this round. Take a quick look at it—it does not take long to go round. (Stand on the left of the stage facing the audience and pretend to throw the coin after the manner of a boomerang, following it round with the eyes until it apparently drops into the hat.) This one I will pass into the right knee and remove it from the left. (Place the coin at the side of the leg, back palm the coin, turn the hand round and make an ordinary palm with the fingers wide open. Produce the coin from the left leg. A little more painful, through both knees and into the hat. Another one here and another here. (The last one is produced from behind the ear, and openly dropped into the hat.) Well, I haven't done so badly after all. I have collected more than I would have done if I had passed the hat round. (Shake the hat and rattle the coins.) No doubt you would all like to be able to do this, but you would soon get tired of putting out your hand as many times as I do. There is a way, however. Instead of catching them one at a time, collect a lot together, give them a good squeeze and you will save a lot of time. (Whilst saying this, you are holding the hat in the right hand close to the body and near the coins under the elastic belt. Secure these coins and palm the bundle, passing the hat to the left hand. Reach up with the fingers as wide open as possible and pretend to catch several coins. As you reach in the air to collect the coins make a slight left turn, which, now that the hat is in the left hand, will enable you to secure the second bundle of coins at the left side. Now comes a very important move. In showering the first, load as soon as the last coins are falling into the hat follow them down with the right hand behind the hat. This will enable you to drop the bundle from the left hand into the right. Continue the move naturally until the hand is in the air for the collection of the second lot. Close the hand and break the thread and again shower the coins into the hat. It is the speed of this second load that creates so much surprise. I feel sure that very few of the audience have detected this move, unless they have watched me very carefully for several times. A concluding remark might be : That's all it is—reach out and get them and your fortune is made.

THE GIANT MATCHES

(The Theatre and Music Hall rights of the following act are strictly reserved by the author.)

IT was in 1922, when searching for a novelty to include in my programme, that I had the idea of using giant matches to demonstrate match tricks and puzzles from the stage. After some consideration, I built a board 4ft. 6ins. square, covered it with linoleum and painted it dead black, and erected it on a stand so that it was held at a height of 10ins. from the stage. Each of the matches I used was about 10ins. long and 1in. square in cross section, with a leather head coloured red, and with two drawing-pins so fixed that the match could be pressed to the board and remain fixed there. The side of each match on which the drawing-pins were fixed was flattened to ensure that, once placed in position, the match remained there.

My routine opened with two or three of the following puzzles :—

A. Four matches were set up as in Fig. 1. The problem was to move one match and so form a square. The solution was accomplished as in Fig. 2, the right-hand match having been drawn outward until the space enclosed by the ends of the four matches formed a square.

B. Three matches were set up to form a triangle, as in Fig. 3, and the problem now was to remove two matches, add one, and so to form another triangle. For this, it was necessary to move two matches to another part of the board, where they were placed as in Fig. 4. Then the third match was taken and added to them, to form again the triangle given as Fig. 3. This was a mere catch, of course, and its solution always raised a laugh.

C. Having placed out the matches, as in Fig. 5, the question was posed : How to move the inverted match from its central position without touching it. To do this, I moved the left-hand match (M) to the position in Fig. 6.

Then followed several puzzles, of which the three given below were, in my opinion, the best of the many possible.

The Bottle of Wine.

I told the story of the man who bought a number of bottles of wine and stored them in a cellar. The audience was asked to regard my board as the plan of the cellar and each match as a bottle of wine. It will simplify the description if I give the number of matches used to show the locations of the bottles.



FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

The audience was thus shown that the bottles were stored in such a way that they counted to nine along each wall—thirty-two bottles in all. Then the story continued: The owner had to go away on business and left in charge an untrustworthy butler. During his owner's absence, the butler stole four of the bottles, one from each of seven. (Fig. 8.) To hide his theft, this canny butler removed one bottle from each heap of six and placed it on the next heap in a counter-clockwise direction. He thus achieved the result shown in Fig. 9, where nine of the bottles are still to be found along each wall.

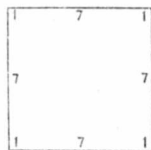


FIG. 7

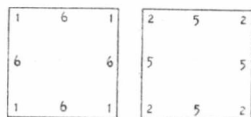


FIG. 8

FIG. 9

Presumably, this satisfied the owner on his return, for he neglected to fire his dishonest servant, and when he went away again the butler found himself newly tempted. A further four bottles were filched, again from the centre heaps, leaving the depleted stock as shown in Fig. 10. Working again in a counter-clockwise direction, the mathematical butler placed one bottle from each centre heap on one of the corner ones. Fig. 11 shows the placement of the stock after this latest operation. Nine bottles may still be counted against each wall.

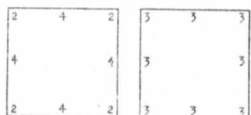


FIG. 10

FIG. 11

A third departure of the owner and a third theft by the butler left the cellar as shown in Fig. 12. The third rearrangement of the bottles (Fig. 13) restored the count of nine to a side.

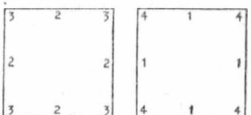


FIG. 12

FIG. 13

Sheep Sharing.

The story in this problem was that of a farmer possessing seventeen sheep who wished to give half of them to his eldest son, a third to the second, and a ninth to Junior. The conditions laid down were that in the sharing there was to be no killing of sheep, no halves, quarters, or any similar fractions. On the surface, the solution is of course impossible. The farmer overcame his difficulty by borrowing a sheep from a neighbour, making the flock one of eighteen animals. He then proceeded to give his sons nine, six and two sheep respectively—seventeen sheep in all. The remaining animal was then returned to the lender, and everybody was happy. On my board, each sheep was represented by a match, and I illustrated the story as I told it by removing the proportions as named.

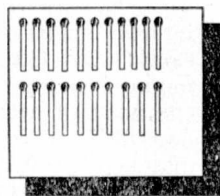


FIG. 14

Match Subtraction.

Two rows of matches were laid out on my board, as shown in Fig. 14, the number used being immaterial, so long as there was one more in the top row than in the other. I did not draw attention to this fact, and took care that the matches were not arranged in so orderly a fashion that this fact would be noticed.

After having been blindfolded, I asked an assistant to take a stated number of matches from the top row. When this had been done, he was further requested to take from the bottom as many matches as were now left in the top. His next step was to remove all the matches remaining in the upper row. I then gave him the number of matches still on the board. The simple mathematical secret is that the final number is always one less than the number first taken from the top row. For example, if three were removed, the answer would be two; if one, the answer would be nil.

Match Geography.

This series of match puzzles concluded with a comedy item: "How to make the names of different towns and places, using only four matches." The four matches were stuck upright on the board, about two inches apart. As the names of the following places were mentioned, I made the appropriate moves as described.

DUBLIN. Two matches were taken from the board and laid on top of the other two. (Doubling.)

ALTRINCHAM. Move the four matches about the board into any odd position. (Altering 'em.)

TRURO. Four matches set in a perfectly correct row. (A true row.)

ROTTON ROW. All the matches were set askew.

PRESTON. One of the matches was removed from the board and then pointedly pressed on it.

OLDHAM. Two matches were held high in the air. (Hold 'em.)

TURNHAM GREEN. Green limes were turned on the white matches.

ABERDEEN. Two matches were placed partly in the right trousers pocket.

BURY. The four matches were put into a box or miniature coffin.

CLAPHAM. Turning to the audience, I remarked: "My last is without matches; I leave you to guess. Clap 'em."

This signal for applause never failed.

Match Spelling.

The following novelty is not difficult and will almost certainly interest many of my readers. As the doggerel given below is recited slowly, the letters are transposed. For quick working, it is best to mount each letter on a square of wood cut to the exact size to take it. At the back of each piece of wood, two pins are affixed, exactly as was described for the matches. Alternatively, the letters may be painted as matches on a black cardboard background and four hooks arranged on the board on which to hang them. I am reminded that in his "Art of Illusion," John Mulholland uses the anagram principle employed here as the basis for a clever magical effect.

Here, then, is the doggerel:—

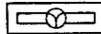
*A V I L E old woman on E V I L bent
Put on her V E I L and out she went.
" L E V I, my son," she said on her way,
"What shall we do to L I V E to-day?"
The son replied, "You do as you please;
I'm going to eat some I V E L cheese."*

Match Marionettes.

The match interlude in my show culminated in a marionette theatre in which all the performers were matches with red hands, red feet and red heads. My proscenium measured 8ft. by 4ft., and the dolls included a performer on the horizontal bar, a skeleton dancer, a chair balancer and two trick cyclists—one on a unicycle and one working on a tight-rope.

The finale in this miniature music-hall show was a magician who presented what the late David Devant called the perfect illusion. This unusual exponent of our art opened a long box, and after showing it empty, closed it again. The figure then mounted a pedestal about three inches high which stood beneath a trapeze. At a given signal, a flag opened from the trapeze to conceal the magician from view, and when a moment later the flag dropped to the stage the magician had vanished. He reappeared in the box already examined.

To produce this illusion, the box was made on the principle of the Inexhaustible Box, so that when tilted back and then forward the duplicate match conjurer was loaded into it. The trapeze was not so innocent as it looked, for between the ropes was sewn black velvet, invisible against a back ground of the same material. At the bottom of the trapeze was a flag painted with a large question-mark. When the flag was lowered, the match was drawn up behind the trapeze and out of sight.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE RICE AND FOUNTAIN TRICK.

AS far as I can recall, I first performed this trick in 1912, when it was given to me by Mr. Burdin, of Coventry, for my exclusive use. During the 1914-18 War, however, when I was in France someone sent all the details to Hamley's, I understand at a fee, and that firm put the trick on the market. I gathered subsequently that the apparatus was made of metal which was much too thin to stand the strain of compressed air, and, in consequence, the trick did not prove a best-seller. The trick deserved a better fate, for as a Garden Party or Circus effect it cannot be equalled, and it can be performed with an audience all round the conjurer and nothing can be discovered during the working.

Effect: A hollow cylinder of 6in. diameter and a canister of 5½in. diameter stood on a tray on the performer's table. The canister had the word "Rice" painted on it and, like the cylinder, stood about twelve inches high. First the cylinder was shown to be empty, and the canister, which contained rice, was pushed up through the bottom end to further convince the audience. The canister was lowered again and removed from the tube, which was then put over a celery or sweet glass into which was poured the rice. When the tube was removed the glass was found overflowing with rice. The top of the rice was smoothed off level and at once a fountain of water shot up in a spray, playing for fully a minute.

Preparation: Hanging inside the canister was a tank which will be described later. A cord was attached to the tank, and at the opposite end of the cord was a hook which was engaged to the top edge of the canister. The tank was covered with rice. During the process of showing the tube empty the hook was automatically transferred to the edge of the tube and the tank was ready to be placed in the celery or sweet glass. Once in the glass, it was an easy matter to flick the hook over the top, letting it drop into the glass where it was soon covered with the rice.

The tank was made of brass or copper, a good one-sixteenth of an inch thick, and the whole about the size of a half-pint glass. At the sides of the tank, both near the top and the bottom, three pieces of bent wire were soldered at equal distances to keep the space clear between the tank and glass, so that when the rice was poured in it easily covered all traces of any extra "ingredient." A small tap or valve, such as used in toy locomotives, was soldered to a piece of thin brass or copper tubing which reached to the bottom of the tank. The lower end of this tube was cut, as shown in the illustration, to admit of the entry and passage of the

Cross section of the tank showing :

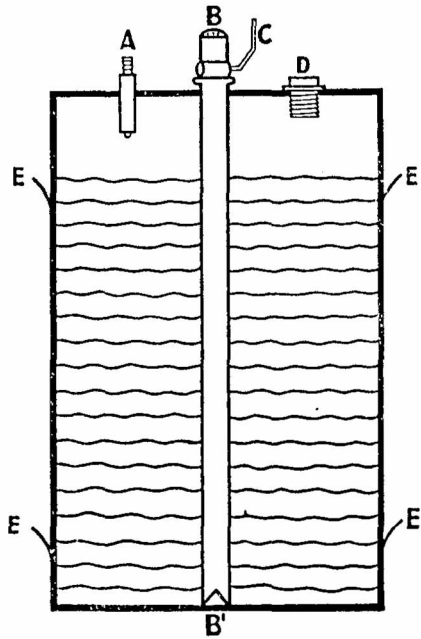
A—Valve through which the air is pumped.

B—Spray. 'B' cut to allow water to enter.

C—Arm which is pushed over when the rice is smoothed and so permits the water to escape.

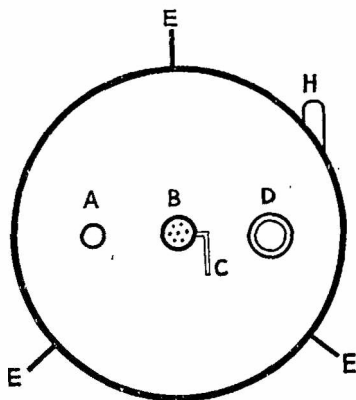
D—Plug for inserting the water.

E—Wires which keep the tank away from the sides of the glass and so allow the rice to cover it.



Plan of the top of the tank. The letters refer as in Fig. above.

H—Is the ring to which the cord and hook are fastened.



water. At the upper end the brass tap had a small cap which was perforated several times like the nozzle of a watering can. It must be added that the tube was placed into the dead centre of the top of the tank. At one side of the top was a screw plug, by means of which the tank was filled with water to within half an inch of the top. On the opposite side of the top was a bicycle valve, also soldered in securely to permit air to be pumped in under pressure. As my readers will have realised, the principle is that used in the disinfecting sprays employed in cinemas and theatres. For my spray I used a .22 empty cartridge case, in which I was able to drill the necessary holes.

I need hardly emphasise the fact that all the soldering must be perfect to stand the strain of the compressed air. If the pressure inside the tank is too great the valve rubber will burst and let the performer down. This rubber should be changed occasionally to prevent just this accident happening. The pressure required is rather a matter of experiment. One further safeguard can be made by sticking a thick piece of rubber to the bottom of the tank so that no tell-tale noise occurs when it is lowered into the glass.



THE RISING CARDS.

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ONCE again I am greatly indebted to my friend J. E. Hammond, who has already contributed a valuable item to this book. He was very largely responsible for the following version of the Rising Cards. I have added details based on the experience gained by performing this trick hundreds of times. Such details have overcome the snags I had met.

The Rising Cards is probably the most popular of all card tricks and the number of methods which have been devised to produce the effect of chosen cards rising from a houlette, glass tumbler, box or even the hand is legion. Yet despite the variety of method, the essential feature in any one is the manner in which the cards are made to rise. Briefly, in the following method, four freely chosen cards rise from a closed box which may be stood in an isolated position.

As the cards used are not all they seem, I will first describe the pack from which the four cards are to be chosen and then the cards which actually rise.

The first pack consists of four sets of duplicates, ten in each set. These are separated by three long cards which are different and the bottom card of all is different from all the others. In other words, eight different cards are to be found in this forcing pack. To commence, the performer lays out this pack into four heaps, taking care that the audience sees the bottom card of each heap. Four members of the audience are each asked to select any number between 1 and 10 and cards are counted off and placed face downwards until the chosen number is reached. In each case the chosen card is shown and placed aside. The rest of the forcing pack is now "switched" for an ordinary pack minus the four chosen cards. This unprepared pack is fanned and the four selected are pushed into it, one by one, at different points. Normally, I name each card as it is pushed home, and then hand the pack to a member of the audience to shuffle. While the pack is being shuffled I show the box from which the cards are to rise. The box is seen to be empty, and when the cards are returned to me I drop them inside it and place the box where it can be seen by every member of the audience.

Throughout this time the hinged lid of the box has been kept open for a reason which will be given later. When I am ready to proceed the lid of the box is closed and I call on the first card chosen to rise. No sooner are the words spoken than the card begins to push up the lid, which, at a suitable moment, I throw back to take out the card.

The lid of the box is again closed and the second card, usually the Four of Spades, is asked to rise. When the card has risen and been taken from the box it is found to be the *Five* of Spades. This card has a loose pip stuck lightly in the centre with the aid of a small piece of soap. Holding the card at the sides by the thumb and second finger of the left hand, the forefinger from behind gently pushes the centre of the card forward so that it bulges slightly. The forefinger of the right hand flicks the pip off and the card has immediately changed to the Four of Spades. This has never failed to evoke a loud laugh. It is worth mentioning that by employing this simple device a Seven can be changed to a Six, an Eight to a Seven or a Three to a Two. I recommend the use of the black rather than the red suits as the removal of the unwanted pip is more apparent.

The third card, usually a court card, rises with its back to the audience, but when this is pointed out and it is asked to turn round, it does so.

My last card also provides a surprise. On being told to rise the card obeys, but is found to be the first chosen card again, the Nine of Spades, and is told to go down and send up the correct one, the Seven of Clubs. This is done at once without me going near the box.

As my readers will have realised, there has been added to the effect of the rising cards a change, a reversing card and a "falling" card. This variety in the results produced in the course of one trick immeasurably improves it in presentation, but makes the description correspondingly more difficult.

PREPARATION.

We will assume that the audience has chosen the following four cards in the order given: Nine of Spades, Four of Spades, Queen of Hearts and the Seven of Clubs. Naturally, you may choose which cards you like to force, but in the following version the second card should be a Four and the third card a Court one. All the cards I use measure $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. x $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. Before passing to the necessary work on the cards, two strong silk threads are needed: one 38 in. in length and knotted at one end, and the other 34 in. long and unknotted.

The Nine of Spades is slit cleanly with a razor or sharp knife, as shown in Fig. 1, and the shorter thread is put into the slit so that about one inch is left protruding from the top of the slit and on the face of the card. A Seven of Clubs is threaded with the longer thread through the quarter-inch slit, as shown in Fig. 2.

Three fulcrum cards, which may be of any suit, are cut as in Fig. 3, the top curved portion acting as a guide to the threads. The lower curve clears the threads from the bottom of the box and thus avoids friction, which would occur if the card rested on their bottom edges throughout their width. The Queen of Hearts is a spring hinged flap card, which, when the flap is down, appears to be the back of a card.

In Fig. 4 I give the manner in which the eight cards are threaded, and for the sake of clarity I have shown them edge on and apart from each other, though it will be obvious that during the trick they are close together. An important point to note is that the slack of the longer thread is retained between the Seven of Clubs and the first fulcrum card.

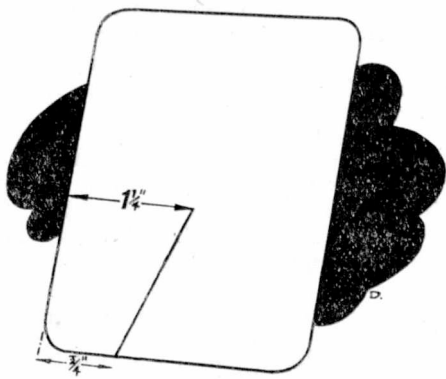


Fig. 1.

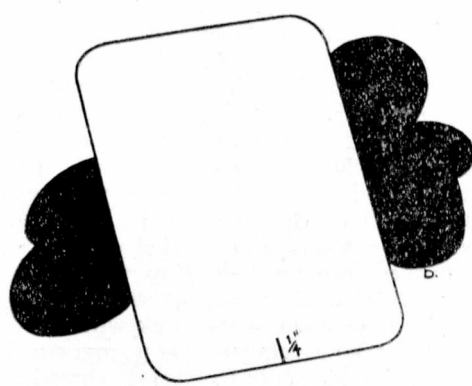


Fig. 2.

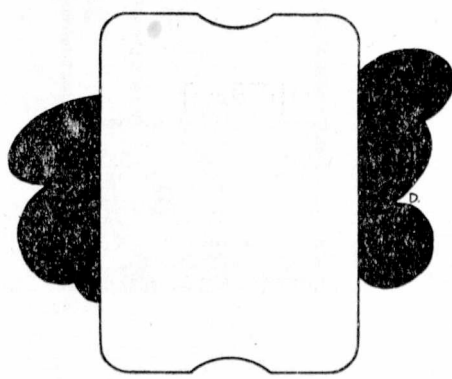
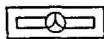


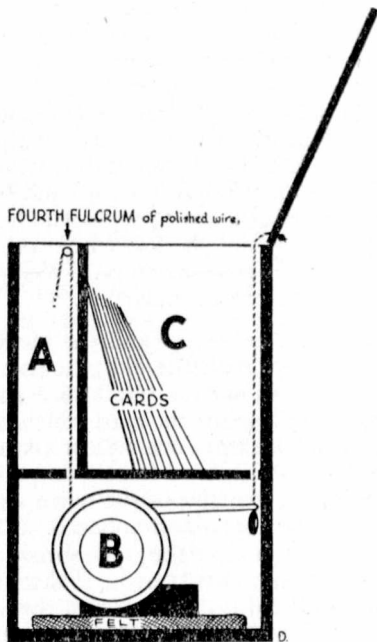
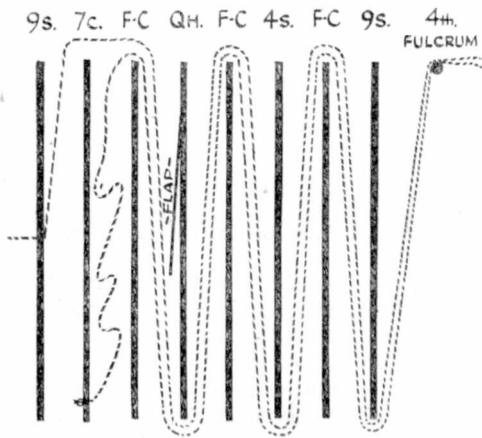
Fig. 3.

The fourth fulcrum is a polished wire over which the threads run down to the winding mechanism. After the last card has risen and been taken from the box there will remain inside the slit Nine of Spades in front of three fulcrum cards, as all the rising cards but this one are dropped into the space containing the pack.

It now remains to describe the box. This I do not propose to do in detail, for if any of my readers decide to build a similar one they will be better guided by the general lay-out. The salient features are that the box will need to be about 3 inches by $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in cross section and about $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. The interior should be painted a dead black and the exterior to your own taste, but preferably with the edges distinctively marked, say, in white. Either a plastic material or wood may be used.

As will be seen from Fig. 5 below, the box is really one of three compartments: A is that containing the cards which are to rise; B contains the winding apparatus, and C the shuffled pack. Of the last, it may be added that it is desirable to have two small strips of wood glued vertically to the back to prevent the threads becoming stuck. As the thread passes downwards it will go through a hole which is centrally situated so that the cards are made to rise evenly. The clock-work mechanism should run at the correct speed, but an equally important factor is that it must be noiseless. Absence of sound can be obtained by mounting it on felt. The box should be so made that the winding mechanism can be taken out for winding, cleaning and adjustment. The last important point is that the performer stands at a distance when the cards rise and only stops their movement by throwing the box lid back. A strong thread is fastened to a lever connected with the mechanism, the other end is passed through a small hole in the bottom corner of the lid. When in the opened position a knot is tied on the outside. A small piece of wood is pushed into the hole, thus tightening the thread but permitting it to be capable of movement whether the lid is open or shut. If one wanted to commence the trick with the lid closed a pull on the knot would draw the mechanism lever up and stop it from working. The act of opening the box draws in the surplus thread and when closing the lid sufficient thread is left inside which sets the winding mechanism in motion.





THE CARD AND CIGARETTE TRICK.

I AM including this trick because of the many compliments paid to me for my execution of it, and also the better reason that I consider it the best sleight of hand card trick of them all. It has been one of my most popular tricks, despite the fact that I have been presenting it for over forty-six years! Perhaps it is a case of liking old friends best. Levante complimented me by saying that my version of this effect was the best he had ever seen.

For the benefit of the newcomers who may not have seen it (and I have met some who have never seen the Miser's Dream) the effect is as follows: A spectator is invited to take a card, tear it into eight pieces and retain one. The remaining seven pieces are wrapped in tissue paper and placed in an envelope which is laid down in full view of the audience. A cigarette is borrowed, placed in the mouth and lit. The conjurer blows smoke on the envelope, which, when opened, discloses tobacco. After the cigarette has been smoked for a few seconds, it is torn open and a playing card is taken from it. The card so found proves to be the one selected, minus the piece held by the spectator, who is invited to fit the piece he holds into the gap and to show the card and piece to those near by. Incidentally, I have met at least three people who have retained the card and the piece for several years as souvenirs—proving that to them, anyway, the trick has been a great mystery. Well performed, the effect will enhance the reputation of any magician.

Now for the preparation necessary and the method of working. To prepare the cigarette, remove with the aid of a pair of pointed tweezers half of the tobacco, which should be put into a small envelope of the business type. Take a duplicate of the card which is to be forced on the spectator, and tear out a piece from one side or corner equal to about an eighth part of the card. Roll the card tightly and insert one end into the empty part of the cigarette, gently push it down and thus force out all but a small portion of the remaining tobacco. Trim the end of the cigarette with a pair of scissors, putting any shreds with the rest of the tobacco in the envelope already mentioned. Take a piece of tissue paper of about 5 ins. by 4 ins. and fold it into four and then fold down the three top corners diagonally. Into this folded paper insert the torn piece of playing card face-down on the paper and place both in the left-hand vest pocket. If the folded parts are placed nearest the body there should be no difficulty in easily gripping it with the fingers when you wish to remove it. The envelope is placed in the inside breast pocket on the right

side. The prepared cigarette is placed in a shallow pocket in the right tail (if in evening dress), the bottom of the pocket being at finger level—when the arm is extended downwards. If the performer is dressed in a dinner suit, the right side outer pocket should be used to hold the cigarette. In the right-hand trouser pocket is a box of matches. With the pack of cards, the card to be forced on top, in the right vest pocket the performer carries everything required for the trick-on his person.

As to presentation, approach the spectator and ask him to select a card and tear it into halves, quarters and eighths. While this is being done, drop the cards into the left trouser pocket and pick out the piece of tissue paper containing the portion of the playing card. Open out the paper, but keep the piece of card firmly gripped between the first two fingers and thumb, the latter being nearest the body. To facilitate the change of the torn piece later, I have found that by keeping the third and fourth fingers on the thumb-side of the tissue and pressing the paper back slightly I can gain more easy access to it. Having taken all the torn pieces from the assistant, you remark: "You are quite sure you will remember the card?" and bring the pieces behind the paper, adding the extra torn piece to the *bottom* of the others. Then say: "Perhaps you had better take one of the pieces to identify the card." As this is said, the pieces are fanned out with the lowest piece foremost and this is practically pushed into the fingers of the spectator. With practice and confidence you can almost invariably take a chance and he will accept it without any semblance of a force. The piece *can* be dropped into his open hand.

The worst is now over. Wrap the pieces in the tissue paper and apparently drop them into the envelope, but in reality push the small parcel into the palm of the left hand, which holds it. Seal up the envelope and, turning the body half left, drop the envelope on the floor or place it in a prominent position. The half-turn left affords you an opportunity of dropping the parcel of pieces into the left hand tail pocket which corresponds with the one in the right tail containing the prepared cigarette. You now request the loan of a cigarette, which is either handed to you or thrown on to the stage. Meanwhile you have turned right, ostensibly to look for someone who will part with one, and the right hand drops to the tail pocket and picks out the prepared cigarette.

This cigarette is held palmed by allowing the open end of the cigarette to rest between the second and third fingers at the first joints, both fingers being close together. The other end at which the tobacco is should be touching the centre of the palm. On receiving the borrowed cigarette, take it lightly between the thumb and forefinger of *each* hand, holding it horizontally, as though reading the name of the brand. The crooked position of the second finger of each hand allows the cigarette to rest upon them. When about to make the change, look naively in the direction of the person who loaned the cigarette. With a slight sweep of the hand the borrowed cigarette is pushed into the palm until out of sight, and the outer end of the palmed cigarette is gripped by the forefinger and thumb. This grip slightly loosens the hold on the palmed cigarette and, if the second and third fingers are drawn into the palm, an inch or so of the faked cigarette is left protruding. When the hand is brought smartly to the mouth, the lips grip the prepared cigarette and

practically extract it from the hand, which at once dives into the pocket for the matches. The box of matches is withdrawn, but the borrowed cigarette left behind.

Lighting the cigarette, you pick up the envelope but commence to cough. A knowing look in the direction of or at the person who was generous will always raise a laugh. Blow smoke on the envelope and return the cigarette to the mouth. Open the envelope and pour out the tobacco; tear the envelope into two pieces and throw them on the floor as a bait for the curious. In my experience they frequently "fall" for this and naturally learn nothing. Then follows another climax. Rip open the cigarette which has been causing so much coughing, extract the card and, after having asked for its name, show it. Approach the spectator and ask if you may be allowed to show the piece to the audience. When it is evident the piece retained fits the space in the card, return piece and card to the spectator.

The moves in this trick follow one another quite naturally, and if well timed with the patter which follows the effect will prove a feature in your show. As the moves are logical, it remains for the performer by assiduous practice to give them that air of naturalness which spells success.

In the early part of those forty-six years I mentioned above, nothing would do for me but a table with a well in which to drop the borrowed cigarette as I picked up the matches. The same well also permitted me to drop the parcel of torn pieces behind the envelope as I leaned it against a glass standing near. All these were good moves, but in my opinion the later ones were better. Now with experience I am able to do the trick comfortably and undetectably on the edge of a run-out where everybody has a clear view of the stage—which is another reason for its inclusion.

The patter, with the moves shown in parentheses, follows. "For this trick I require a card taken from this pack" (fan pack) "all of which you will see are quite different, especially the Aces. Would you like one of our free samples, sir?" (Force card.) "Thank you. Please note the name of the card and hold it up so that the rest of the customers can see it." (This is essential to prevent any possible denial later.) "Now please tear the card in halves, without destroying it. Never mind, just tear it. Place the pieces together and tear again—just once more please. A ripping trick, isn't it? Thank you." (Take the pieces and, adding the extra one while looking him in the face, continue: "You are quite sure you will remember the card? Perhaps you had better take a piece." (Force the piece belonging to the cigarette in the card.) "Don't lose it please." To the audience, continue: "A freely chosen card has been torn into eight pieces, one of which has been retained for identification. The remainder I will wrap in this piece of sneezing paper—tissue paper. These I place in this envelope." (Apparently do so, but palm in the left hand, and seal the envelope, which you put in a prominent position.) "This trick is usually called card hatching; that is to say, I am going to hatch the card, without sitting upon it, back to its original state. This takes a little time, but to hasten matters, by simply blowing the smoke of a cigarette upon the envelope, it has the effect of joining the pieces together again much more quickly. I should be obliged, therefore, if

someone in the company would lend me a cigarette." (Turn half-right and secure the prepared cigarette from the right-hand tail pocket.) "Thank you, sir." (Inspect the name and naively look at the person lending the cigarette, and smile. Effect the switch and put the faked cigarette in the mouth.) "I have matches, thank you." (Place right hand into the right-hand trousers pocket, leaving the real cigarette behind and producing the box of matches. Light the cigarette. Pick up the envelope, then commence to cough violently, looking intently at the cigarette and at the person who lent it.) "I hope the other four were alright, sir." (Blow smoke on the envelope and open it.) "The trick is now completed. We have the card fully restored with the exception of the one piece retained." (Open envelope.) "Instead of the card, I have here the tobacco of the cigarette." (Pour tobacco from the envelope, tearing the latter up and throwing the pieces away.) "Now I'll see what I have been choking—smoking." (Open the cigarette and roll out the card.) "And here is the card fully restored with the exception of one piece. Would you please allow me to show it, sir?" (Take piece from the spectator, fit it, show it to the audience and then return it to the spectator.) "Does that fit alright, sir?" (Turn to the audience.) "Quite right."

I have had some experiences with this trick which may interest my readers. So many people are wise to the wiles of conjurers who ask them to select a card. Others, more awkward and not "sporty," do their utmost to queer the conjurer by trying to get a card from another part of the pack. The top card is frequently sought for. This is easily overcome by letting the awkward cuss retain the card which he has chosen while proceeding to another and more helpful person. In music-hall work, where one is timed to a minute, it is not possible to run around trying to force a particular card. To combat this, I usually have a few duplicate cards in the pack to work on. With this safeguard one does not feel too uneasy if a card is taken one or two away from the desired one. One method I have adopted is to have a "short" duplicate about the centre of the pack, the others being on the top. When I make the pass to bring the top to the centre I use the short card to find the centre. Thus a short card, a duplicate, is brought to the top. Then I have a few chances of getting it away. It simply means a pack of short cards if one wants to work the trick 52 times.

I remember presenting this trick at the New Empire, Cardiff, on one occasion when an amusing incident occurred. The theatre, as some of my readers will recall, has a most elaborate run-out from the stage to the auditorium, which played an important part in the trick. The spectator I approached proved to be one of those awkward persons conjurers meet when trying to force a card. In this case, he tried every way he knew to avoid having his choice made for him, even to the extent of trying to snatch the pack from my hands. Thinking quickly, I spread the cards out on the platform of the run-out and asked the awkward spectator to take any one he wished. He did so, and a quick glance through my pack enabled me to bring the card I wanted him to select to the top of the pack. This would have enabled me to force the desired card on a more obliging member of the audience, but noticing that my opponent had not yet looked at the card I held my hand out for it, and for some unknown reason he handed it back without a murmur. Possibly

he felt nervous and defeated, so I asked him did he remember the name of the card, and while speaking I made the change. He replied, "No," so I answered that the idea was that he should take a card and remember its name. He took the card from me, looked at it and then proceeded to tear it up as I instructed and the trick went on as usual. Some of the audience who witnessed the incident could not restrain from chuckling when the trick was finished. Had the awkward customer looked at the card, of course I would have had to perform some other small trick with it. Incidentally, if one is stuck, one could after having performed the trick go to the spectator and ask him to tear *his* card in two, then in four, eight and sixteen pieces, and conclude by saying: "Well, the card is not of much use now, so you may as well throw it away."

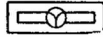
Whilst on the subject of forcing, I cannot refrain from mentioning an incident which occurred on my return journey from South Africa. We—that, is, several of the artistes on board—were nearing home and were feeling either bored or homesick. To enliven the proceedings, I suggested a little party all to ourselves. Spirits being only 7s. 6d. per bottle at the time, we indulged in a few glasses and the party became a merrier and a happier one. After we had a few songs, I got out a pack of cards and forced it several times on Florence Oldham, now well known on the Radio and the Halls. A comedian of very small stature who sat on a chair, dangling his legs, said, rather contemptuously I fear: "Oh it's all done by forcing." I ignored him and went on with a few more tricks. Finally, I brought the card Miss Oldham had been selecting to the *top* of the pack, and turning to the comic asked him to pick out a card. He at once took the *top* card and found to his surprise that it was the same card I had been playing tricks with on Miss Oldham. He threw the card down in disgust and never bothered me again. I had taken what was a million to one chance of him selecting the top card, and it had come off. It was a sweet revenge for his previous attempt.

On another occasion when I had forced a card and held the pieces in my hand, I found, to my horror, that it was a picture card; whereas the one I intended to force was a small-value spot card. To quote the late Syd Walker: "What would you do, chums?" When I asked for the name of the card the spectator gave it, but it was not the one I wished to force. I opened the card with its back to the audience, showed that a piece was missing and went to the spectator and showed him that it fitted. Handing the card back to him with a whispered "Sorry, a slight mistake," appealed to know if the piece fitted. He agreed, and I retired to splendid applause.

One consolation to bear in mind is this. Maybe, only one or two persons near the spectator who was assisting may have noticed that something had gone wrong. The remainder of the audience, possibly 2,000 people, did not know. As a conjurer once said to me when speaking of audiences as a whole: "What do they know about magic?"

I have had explosive cigarettes thrown up to me, and, being ignorant of this at the time, they did not have the desired effect. Looking back I can well imagine the expectancy of the donors of such practical jokes waiting for something which did not happen. On one particular occasion, I smoked one of these cigarettes on the way home. There was not a

soul in the street that I was passing through when a fairly loud explosion occurred. I must say that I did have the best laugh at the time, as no doubt the joker was still sitting in the theatre wondering why nothing had happened. Just one further point, with only a few favourite brands of cigarettes going the rounds, if I found that mine coincided with their's I always managed to drop the cigarette paper at their feet when I tore it off. More than once I have seen them bend down and pick it up for closer examination.



THE £1 NOTE AND THREE CANDLE TRICK.

THIS trick, which I worked for many years, was an exceedingly popular one and never failed to bring forth a lot of applause. In its original form, I understand it had been invented by Herr Dobler, but, as will be seen, many additions and improvements have been made. In Dobler's day "Fivers" were the lowest value notes which could be borrowed, and the first conjurer I saw performing the trick employed a small piece of writing paper upon which was written something by which it could be identified. It was then rolled into the shape of a cigarette, switched for a duplicate which was placed into a boy assistant's mouth. He was handed a box of matches to light it and secretly told to blow out each match he lit. These unsuccessful attempts to light the cigarette caused a laugh, till finally the conjurer would light a candle and pass it to the boy to save matches. As the "cigarette" would not burn, the conjurer took the paper from the boy and said to the person who had written on it: "I don't know what you have written on the paper, but it doesn't seem to burn well." He would then open and pretend to read it, knowingly smiling at the writer. In its open state the paper would be burned, and the ashes squeezed into the flame of the still-lighted candle. Whilst this comedy was going on, the conjurer inserted the real piece of paper into a piece of candle prepared for the purpose. This hollowed piece of candle reposed in his right-hand trousers pocket. After displaying a candle, the conjurer cut it into three pieces, of which one was chosen. This chosen piece was exchanged for the prepared portion and the paper "discovered—by cutting small pieces from the closed end until the paper made its appearance.

With the advent of ten shilling and one pound notes in the 1914-1918 War I saw an opportunity of reviving the trick, and not only using notes but introducing three candles instead of one. With three candles I could give not only a choice of piece but a choice of the complete candle. To do this, a three-branch candlestick was necessary—each holder on it being painted a distinctive colour: red, white and blue. The choice was then made by colour.

In my version the selected or borrowed note was placed into the barrel of a revolver and fired at the selected candle. This candle was then cut into three pieces and the note was found in the chosen portion; it being identified either by its number, or initials written on it, or both.

At the time I was performing this trick, my daughter Edna was acting as my assistant and I used to "shoot" the note off stage in a small Bakelite tube which was in the barrel of the revolver. This was done as I approached the table and she caught it in a cloth, extracted the note and inserted it into a hollowed piece of candle. This piece of candle was put in the end of a special tray which was on a table, placed close to the edge of a side curtain. In this position I was thus able to secure it quite easily and make the necessary change. This phase of the effect puzzled many a conjurer, and, in fact, over twenty members of the Northern Magical Society of Liverpool came in a body to see the trick. One of the members present was H. C. Mole, part author of that very excellent book "Magic of To-morrow." It apparently gave him an idea for making a pistol in which the piece of hollowed candle was already placed and the note was actually inserted into it to be later extracted. The Mole-Edgar pistol appeared and so popularized candle tricks that I was compelled to withdraw the trick from my act. Later, my daughter left the act, and when I wished to revive the effect I did so after collaboration with Mr. J. E. Hammond, of Liverpool, who devised a pistol, which was an improvement on the Mole-Edgar idea.

When using the Mole-Edgar pistol one had to lift the piece of candle out of the pistol by means of a shaped piece of tin. The disposal of this piece of tin was not quite so easy as it seemed. Hammond and I made a pistol with a weak spring in its barrel that was compressed when the piece of candle was set in. A small stud, below the barrel, working on the bayonet catch principle, held it in position. After the note had been inserted in the candle piece in the barrel the pistol was taken in the right hand by the muzzle end, and in asking for the choice of the candle the stud was pushed to one side and the spring caused the faked piece of candle to be neatly delivered into the right hand.

After firing the pistol at the only piece remaining in the candlestick, it was laid on the table beside it. At the same time, the selected piece was taken from the candlestick by the left hand and at once placed in the right, thus helping to conceal the piece containing the note. Then comes a most remarkable move for making the exchange—a move for which full credit must be given to Mr. Hammond.

Whilst feeling in the left-hand trousers pocket for the penknife to cut up the piece to produce the note, the pieces of candle in the right-hand were moved around, bringing the fake piece to the top. On bringing the hand from the trousers pocket empty the faked piece was placed in it and the right hand went to the right-hand trousers pocket which really contained the required penknife. The piece of candle was left in the pocket and the knife withdrawn. On paper, this move may not seem good, but times without number I have performed it without being detected; even when teaching the move to a conjurer.

The patter I used for this trick was as follows:—

"In this trick I represent a banker, and for this purpose I would like a deposit of 10s., £1, a postal order or paper money to any value. If anyone present is the lucky possessor of one, would they please hold it up and I will collect it." (Here the performer walks forward with a slate and piece of chalk.) "Before I touch the note I want you to call out its

number and I will write it down.” (The number is called out and is written on the slate, which is placed in a prominent position on the stage in the view of all and sundry. The performer collects the note, which he passes to another member of the audience for the latter to initial. This done, the conjurer, holding the note above his head, returns to the stage.)

“A £1 note, number so-and-so, with the initials XYZ on the back.” (Here look at XYZ.) “Pardon me looking at the back, sir, but sometimes there is some interesting writing there. Only last week I had one on which was written ‘Will ye no come back again.’” (At this stage fold the note in half and then again, and, starting at the smaller end, roll it into the shape of a cigarette.) “Now that I have the money I must introduce you to the bank. Here it is.” (Show the pistol.) “Not one of the Big Five, but I hope you will hear a good report about it.” (Push the note into the candle concealed in the barrel.)

“I am now going to invest the money in a new firm which I have called ‘The (*local*) Lighting Company.’ There it is” (point to the three candles) “working overtime. This Company has three branches or candles, each one having below it a different colour—red, white and blue. I should like the owner of the note to select the candle I am to fire at—by means of the colour beneath it.” (We will suppose blue is chosen.) “In order to avoid confusion, I will remove the other two.” (Do so, and extinguish them.) “It also saves them.” (The pistol had been previously laid on another chair or table, mouth of barrel upstage, so as not to show the candle and note inside.)

“I will now cut this candle into three parts and give you the choice of one of them by the same colour process.” (Remove penknife from the right trousers pocket, cut the candle into three pieces and replace the knife.)

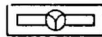
“Now, sir, please select the piece that I shall fire at.” (The two unselected pieces are either laid aside for future use or thrown to the audience. The pistol is seized by the muzzle end, the catch released, leaving the faked candle piece in the hand whilst pointing with it in the direction of the candlestick. It is then reversed into its firing position and the trigger pulled. The performer walks to the table and simultaneously lays the pistol on it as, with the left hand, he lifts the piece of candle from the holder. The switch, as previously described, is made.)

In cutting the piece of candle, do only a small bit at a time, as though afraid to cut the note, and look on the stage as though it has been lost, saying naively: ‘A pound note, wasn’t it.’” Finally the note comes into view and the effect is enhanced if it is left in the piece, so that the man who loaned it can extract it for himself; the performer, however, must not let the piece of candle leave his hand.

In an earlier presentation of the trick in its original form I had a spot of bother one evening at The Theatre Royal, Dublin. I used, at that time, a small brass tube, as Bakelite was then unknown to me. The tube had one end closed and soldered, but, with the aid of a pair of tweezers, an ordinary note was easily extracted by my daughter. Judge my terror when I was handed a £5 Bank of England note made of linen which I had the utmost difficulty in pushing into the tube. Finally, I got the note in, but my daughter could not get it out, so that I had to

give the trick up and send the note back by an attendant, who thought it was a great joke and all part of the trick.

On occasions I have had a 6d. postal order rolled up with the note and have given it to the depositor as "interest" from the "bank." More than once managers have entered into the spirit of the trick by allowing me, at their expense for the sake of an advertisement on the Monday night, to include as much as a £1 order. Needless to say, there was no difficulty in borrowing notes after the first night.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MAD CONJURING

IT is many years since Van Hoven delighted English audiences with his mad antics, but if ever his successor comes along here is an idea which he may find useful. So far as I know, the effect, which is essentially one for the stage, has not yet been used. Simply expressed, it is that the conjurer should perform a trick when seated at the top of a pole. I can hear the reader say "up the pole," not so much with a sense of astonishment but in the sense in which the phrase is more commonly used. If performed, it would have to be done in the farcical manner and its success would depend entirely on the method of presentation. A sucker trick done under these exacting conditions would be doubly effective.

A pole, in reality a steel tube, between six and eight feet long with a small seat at the top would be inserted, through a hole in the stage, into an arm below stage level. If a suitable counterweight were attached to the arm, the pole could be kept erect. The bottom of the pole could be fitted with a bayonet catch or a coarse screw for engaging the mechanism under the stage. At a given moment, the arm could be moved away and the performer, jumping from his perch, would catch the pole before it fell to the stage.

It is worth remembering that Carl Hertz used this principle when he made a chair, on which a lady assistant was seated, levitate. In the Hertz effect a double prong passed through the stage into the two rear legs of the chair.

NEW FIELDS

BROADCASTING MAGIC.

MAGIC has been one of the few branches of entertaining which have, relatively speaking, been unaffected by the coming of wireless. The comedian, the singer and the instrumentalist have been and are being brought daily to the millions listening-in. The magician remains unheard, even in Saturday night's "Music Hall." Since modern magic appeals so predominantly to the eye, this exclusion, even in the form of a running commentary, is not surprising.

Some years ago, in the weeks just prior to Christmas, the methods for performing a number of small and simple tricks were described from a studio. Presumably there was the hope that many a youthful enthusiast would write out or remember the directions given and, at a later date, carry these directions into practice. As all those listening-in were naturally "in the know," one cannot but feel that if any budding conjurer got away with any of the tricks he did so because of parental admiration and forbearance.

In 1944 the B.B.C. gave a review of magical history, reminding amateur and professional conjurers of many a famous name of the past—but of little else. The name of Devant means little to the young man of to-day, unless it be as a French adverb whose correct use he had some difficulty in mastering. To his elders, the name brings memories of a suave performer of miracles whom they never tired of seeing. They recall the ball that rolled uphill and the golf ball which was always holed in one. There is, I feel, little that broadcasting can do for the magician, unless it be to revive and renew sentimental memories. The amateur conjurer cannot get from the above type of programmes the help that an amateur singer can from the broadcast of a professional. There is the other side, of course: a comedian's gags are less secure on the air than a magician's tricks.

More recently a card trick was broadcast on a Transatlantic tie-up, the performer being in this country and the spectator being in the States.

For this to be genuine and appreciated by those listening-in, the spectator must unconsciously disclose the name of a key card before the conjurer can name the one chosen.

In the spring of 1945, the B.B.C. included a conjurer in one of its weekly programmes, "Navy Mixture." Over a period of months the Radio Twister has, week by week, described how to do a number of tricks or solve a number of puzzles. Cards, coins and matches have been used, and there have been given a number of very simple mathematical puzzles. This successful feature proves the avidity with which a studio audience and the listening-in public welcome a change from singers, comedians and orchestras. Much of what has been termed "Pocket Magic" is suitable for this type of presentation, and I can think of many a publicity item which the late Theo Annemann gave us in "Jinx" that could be broadcast.

There is, however, one fact to remember. The listening-in public numbers millions, and once a secret has been disclosed, even if it is not recalled in detail, a subsequent performance would doubtless be met with: "Oh, I heard that on the wireless." The successful broadcasting conjurer of the future will have to solve the problem of how to broadcast magic without disclosing secrets.

TELEVISION.

Early in 1945 a prominent daily paper announced the imminent return of regular television broadcasts, not only from the Alexandra Palace but from four regional stations in England and one in the south of Scotland. This announcement should prove of interest to amateur and professional magicians, for, within limits which are worthy of consideration, a new avenue is open to them where they may display their talent. The unavoidable drawback of broadcast conjuring, that it cannot be seen except by the studio audience, is overcome.

In 1938-39, the official range of reception from the "Ally Pally" service was thirty miles, but in actual practice good results were obtained in many directions from the transmitter up to fifty or sixty miles. After the War, and I am writing before the piping days of peace have come, the reliable range can confidently be expected to increase, due to technical improvements. When the anticipated regional transmitters or relay stations are erected and working, most of the populated areas of the British Isles should be covered. Unless there is any general inflation, I am informed, the future cost of sound and vision receivers should be about the same. The new sets should give better results.

As the technique of televising improved before the War, actors' make-up was gradually modified, and the excessively bright lights and green grease paint of the early days had practically disappeared by 1939. Colours and unusual make-up were mainly employed to ensure detail in reception, and, as detail in transmission and reception improved, the actor gradually became more normal in appearance. Reception was, of course, in monochrome but with a range from darkest black to lightest light, as in photography.

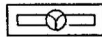
Colour television has already been demonstrated by Baird, and although it will introduce a complication to both transmitting and

receiving equipment it can be expected to follow "black and white" television. In this respect the development of television will follow the lines along which the cinema came from its earliest days to current technicolour. It is unlikely that colour television will be used to any great extent immediately peace comes, but there is just the possibility that it may be incorporated in the newest receivers.

In general, television is very similar to the cinema, and in the post-war years it will give results equal to the cinema, at least on a small screen in the home. Incidentally, a small screen viewed from an armchair three or four feet away is equivalent to the large cinema screen 30 feet distant. Pre-war screens of approximately 10in. by 8in. or 10in. by 12in. will be supplanted by newer ones measuring 18in. by 12in. Close-ups are usual and movement has the same speed as viewed in the cinema.

My magical friends may have wondered at this short excursion into the realms of science. Yet these same realms of science will impinge very closely on the future realms of entertainment. There is here a new sphere in which the magical fraternity should have an honoured place and in which, if its members are progressive, they will be welcomed. With sight given to the listening thousands, the conjurer will come into his own. We listen to an operatic singer rather than criticise his looks and physique, but we must see the conjurer to judge his prowess.

My own view is that the televising of magical effects will call for much additional forethought on the part of the magician. The absence of colour will, in some measure, circumscribe the effects which would otherwise be successful. Despite this, however, there are a host of good magical effects which do not depend on colour for their success. It will be as well to remember, too (what is more important) that the viewer at a set will see a programme on a two-dimensional screen. The occupant of a stall at the local music-hall lives in a three-dimensional world. An understanding of and an adaptation to the restrictions imposed by this new medium should present no insuperable difficulties to the modern magician. I cannot but feel that television offers us an opportunity to bring our Art attractively and more often to the thousands interested in it throughout the length and breadth of the country.



A TROUPER SUMS UP.

SO many writers have traced in detail the origin, rise and growth of magic that there is no need for me to repeat or enlarge on the historical aspects of my craft. As I write in 1945, after several years of war, the magic of Great Britain has undergone changes and has felt the impact of war conditions and restrictions. The difficulties attendant on travelling have affected the music hall magician who, when all is said and done, has been the backbone of the art. This is not to belittle the many talented amateurs throughout the country in whose lives conjuring, however important, plays a secondary role. In war or peace, the vaudeville conjurer has to face his audiences twice nightly—not to mention those at the matinees. In the early years of the war there were the often-recurring air raids, and in later days the advent of the buzz-bomb and the rocket. Many theatres and music halls were damaged by enemy action, and the facilities for giving sorely-needed amusement curtailed. If this were not enough, there have been times when Britain's fortunes of war have been at a low ebb and the task of amusing, entertaining and mystifying has been far more difficult. That morale has been maintained is an intangible tribute to those troupers who have surmounted their individual difficulties and carried on.

For myself, the travel restrictions the war entailed made certain programme changes essential. Luggage, always a problem, became an Old Man of the Sea. The bulky hampers, tables, elaborate props and apparatus had to be dumped. In one sense, magic in war-time became rather pocket magic. Yet with the dispensing of luggage there had to be no let-up in the entertainment and magical value of the effects one presented. Tricks performed with simple articles light in weight yet had to pull their weight. Realisation of this led to another result of real value. Presentation which had always required careful consideration became a matter of paramount importance. Glances, voice inflection and gestures had to be studied so that the maximum results were obtained. Incidentally, coupons were no less valuable to the conjurer than to other members of the public. So, in 1945, my programmes included such effects as the Miser's Dream, Cigarette Making and the Cigarette and Torn Card, all of which are described in the foregoing pages.

Patter, too, became increasingly important. The elaborate display of a succession of stage illusions and the production of ducks and rabbits or the vanishing of young ladies were not there, but the joke or witticism more than took their place. In the dark days of the war there was a double recompense to hear laughter from the other side of the footlights. And the wise-cracking comedians have not had a monopoly of this.

In my opinion, the war was also indirectly responsible for another change which should be considered by magicians when they are planning their programmes. Let me put it this way. Between the two wars,

and at an accelerating pace since 1939, the application of science to everyday life increased far beyond the limits which we older people may have thought possible. Newspapers and periodicals familiarised the man-in-the-street and the boy-in-the-school with the marvels of science. The wireless-set and the aeroplane, which were wonders to us when they first appeared, are not wonders to our children. They have grown up with these marvels and, in consequence, are older in outlook than were their elders at the same age. The lesson in all this for the conjurer is not to play down to youthful audiences and under-estimate their intelligence. What tricks he should do for a children's party should not unduly harass the thoughtful magician.

My advice would be to strike the happy medium. Some very simple effects should be included for the tiniest tots present, but better and more complicated ones should follow for the older children and adults. The better trick will keep the adults quiet and interested, trying to puzzle out the *modus operandi* and the element of magic will still thrill the youngsters. A child of four or five years may not know a Knave or a Queen as such, but if the former pushes up the lid of a closed box the effect becomes a novel kind of Jack-in-the-Box. Children, unlike many of their elders, will not have heard of the late Nelson Downs, but they are aware of the uses to which money can be put. They may even have heard their parents speak of the difficulty of coming by any large quantity of it. To see a gentleman catch coins with his hand from the air, or cause them to fall in a shower from the same hand, may make them doubt their parents' statements, but the experience will certainly thrill them. That type of trick wherein the performer explains how a magical effect is produced but yet manages to leave his audience even more bewildered and mystified is a sure winner with any audience, young or old.

I HAVE come to the last page, and if my readers are smiling I am relieved in more than one sense. Though this short book is finished, I am not, and many of those interested in magic may see me perform an effect which I have described in these pages. Though I have taken reasonable care in the wording and explanations, there may perhaps be some things which are confusing. If such there are, and you bring a copy of these pages to my dressing room, I will do my best to make any point clear and will also autograph your copy.

JACK LE DAIR.



“ TRICKS OF A TROUPER ” ran serially in the first seventeen issues of *Abracadabra*, the ONLY Magical Weekly in the World. Since it first began publication in February, 1946, *Abracadabra* has won its way into the hearts of magicians all over the world. Its weekly ration of new tricks, gags, entertainment angles, reviews of current music-hall magical acts and news, is always eagerly awaited. A specimen copy may be obtained from the publisher of this book: GOODLIFFE, 6, COLONNADE PASSAGE, BIRMINGHAM 2, ENGLAND. The subscription rates are : For 52 weeks, 36s. (\$8.75) ; 26 weeks, 18s. (\$4.40).