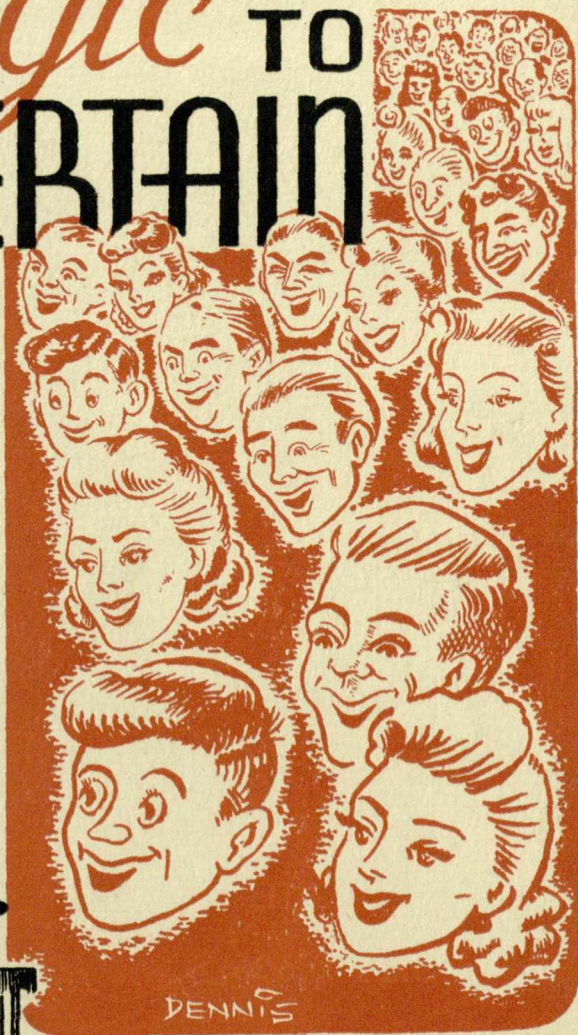
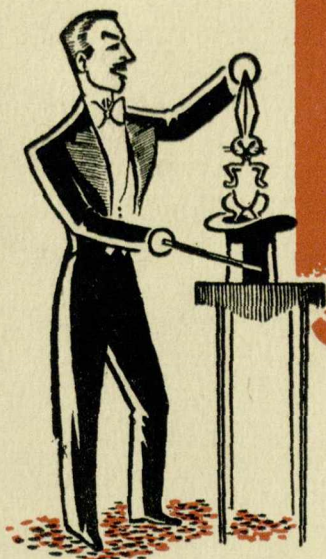


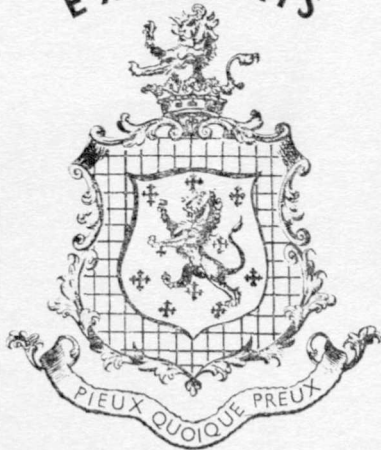
Magic TO ENTERTAIN

Eric C.
LEWIS



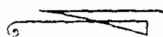
A
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MAGIC
Eric C. Lewis
TO ENTERTAIN

Illustrated by DENNIS

A
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PUBLICATION

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INTRODUCTION

MAGICAL friends, vastly puzzled, have sometimes asked me, "Why are your books always so popular?" Others say, "Fancy Goodlife wanting you to write him a book—as if you haven't written enough." Ah, well, a prophet is never honoured. But a profit always is, so perhaps that answers Question Two.

Question One can be just as simply, if more accurately, answered. My books are written from the standpoint of a practical performer and have in view the conditions required for public presentation on the concert platform. The average magical book seems to predominate in card tricks, small mental effects, or subtle whimsies suitable only for intimate work. Such effects are rare in my own writings, and subtlety and superfine cleverness are overlooked for directness of working and clarity of effect, always having in mind that it is the lay audience that we are to entertain.

So this book will, I feel, appeal again to the man who cannot do much with his hands regarding sleights and manipulations. It will appeal to those who can use their hands, but in the placing together of wood, cardboard, glue and other commodities in presentable magical apparatus. And once again it will appeal to the large number who like to *entertain* an audience.

ERIC C. LEWIS.

NORTHAMPTON, 1946.

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MAGIC TO ENTERTAIN

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAGICIAN'S COAT OF ARMS

I HAVE pleasure in introducing this item to commence this book as it will go "in memoriam" of a fine conjurer and a gentleman who died suddenly a year or so ago. Mr. Percy Ruston, of Northampton, was little known outside his own town, but in our acquaintance with him we found he had a very inventive and original mind. A short time before his untimely death he gave me the rights of two of his effects, both of which I intended to market, and the following is one of them. It is an effect capable of many variations, but it is here presented as the "Magician's Coat of Arms," with poetic patter written some years ago by Dan Bellman.

The effect is simple and direct. A scroll is shown ; it consists of two wooden rods with coloured ends, between which is stretched a sheet of paper in the style of the old-fashioned scroll. This sheet bears a picture of a plain golden-coloured shield. The scroll is rolled up and immediately opened, whereupon the shield is now "quartered" by crossed magic wands. Again the scroll is closed by rolling, and opened again ; this time two of the quartered segments are filled, one containing three billiard balls in the form of a pawnbroker's sign, and the other an egg. Finally, the scroll is rolled and opened and now the "coat of arms" is complete, bearing two dice and a playing card in the other two quarters, a blazing firebowl surmounting the shield, and a scroll underneath the shield, bearing mysterious Hindu symbols.

PATTER AND PRESENTATION IN RHYME.

Ladies and Gentlemen : Before you I stand,
A Wizard, as proved by this scroll in my hand.
'Twas presented to me by the "Miracle Square"
Though I can't make a rope stand up straight in the air !

I was told that unless I had earned a degree,
I must not perform tricks for the public to see ;
So to prove myself worthy to rank with the best,
In front of the Square I must pass a stiff test.
They gave me a scroll, which I quickly unrolled,
And found it bore naught but a plain shield of gold.

(Slowly roll scroll).

I *must* prove myself master of magical charms
To win my degree and complete coat of arms.

So I rolled up the scroll—no, that doesn't sound right,
For I only roll when I'm going home tight.

"I rolled the scroll up," is what I should say ;
Now it's rolled, I'd better get on with the play.

(Hold scroll in left hand while performing one-handed knot
with right hand with length of rope. The usual single-
handed knot is used as described in many text-books. The
knot is performed accompanied by the following) :—

I took up a rope in my trusty right hand,
And smiled at the audience, feeling quite grand,
Then I threw up the rope, caught one end in the air,
And right in the centre, a knot appeared there.

(Unroll scroll).

So again I returned to my Lyon's Swiss Roll—
I'm sorry, I mean I returned to my scroll—
And I saw, for achieving the almost imposs,
My shield had been quartered, with wands on the cross.

(Roll scroll).

I was well on my way to becoming a Knight,
It's on my gold shield here in plain black and white.
That's my favourite brand if the truth may be told ;
I'd have it more often, if I'd more of the gold.

I was passing my test, it was easy to see,
With an excellent chance of an A1 degree.

I'd be President yet of the Miracle Square

If I could just make a rope stand up straight in the air.

(Roll up scroll and place on table. Then perform the well-
known "Impossible Knot," that is, tying a knot in the
centre of the rope without letting go of the two ends.)

Next I took the rope, with one hand at each end,

And gave it a twist and a turn and a bend ;

And there once again we discovered a knot.

Some say that that's clever—some say that it's not.

(Pick up scroll and unroll.)

Once more to my scroll, which I quickly unfold,

To look once again at the shield made of gold.

Just a little improvement—it's easy to see,

In the Miracle Square I will get a degree.

Of the egg in the corner I'll just say a word :

I hope it's the nearest I'll get to the bird.

The sign of my Uncle, nearby you can see ;

It's blushing with pride to be on my degree.

(Roll scroll.)

I was showing my skill and was passing the test,

And proving myself just as good as the rest,

I could count my eggs before I had chicks,

But I hope soon to show the public my tricks.

(Place scroll down and perform a quick cut and restored
rope while pattering . . .)

I again took the rope and the centre I found,

And a nice pair of shears that had lately been ground.

A snip and the rope was cut neatly in two ;
An original thing for a wizard to do !
It's a waste of time cutting the rope, I declare,
For quickly the damage I mean to repair.
Two ends of the rope I tie in a knot
And say magic words, Bazooka, What Rot.
The magic has acted, the rope is restored ;
It would not surprise me if I was encored.

(Unroll scroll and display final picture.)

But now I am eager to look at my scroll,
To see if at last I've arrived at my goal,
Hurrah ! I'm successful ! I've got a degree,
In the Miracle Square I'm an R.S.V.P.
I'm really excited, but sad to declare,
I still can't make rope stand up straight in the air.

That, then, is a patter presentation, and is exactly as I first used this effect at a Leicester Magic Circle Dinner a year or so before the War. The patter can be cut, altered or made into prose to suit the individual performer's requirements. The combination of the three rope effects with the scroll proved successful.

THE SCROLL.

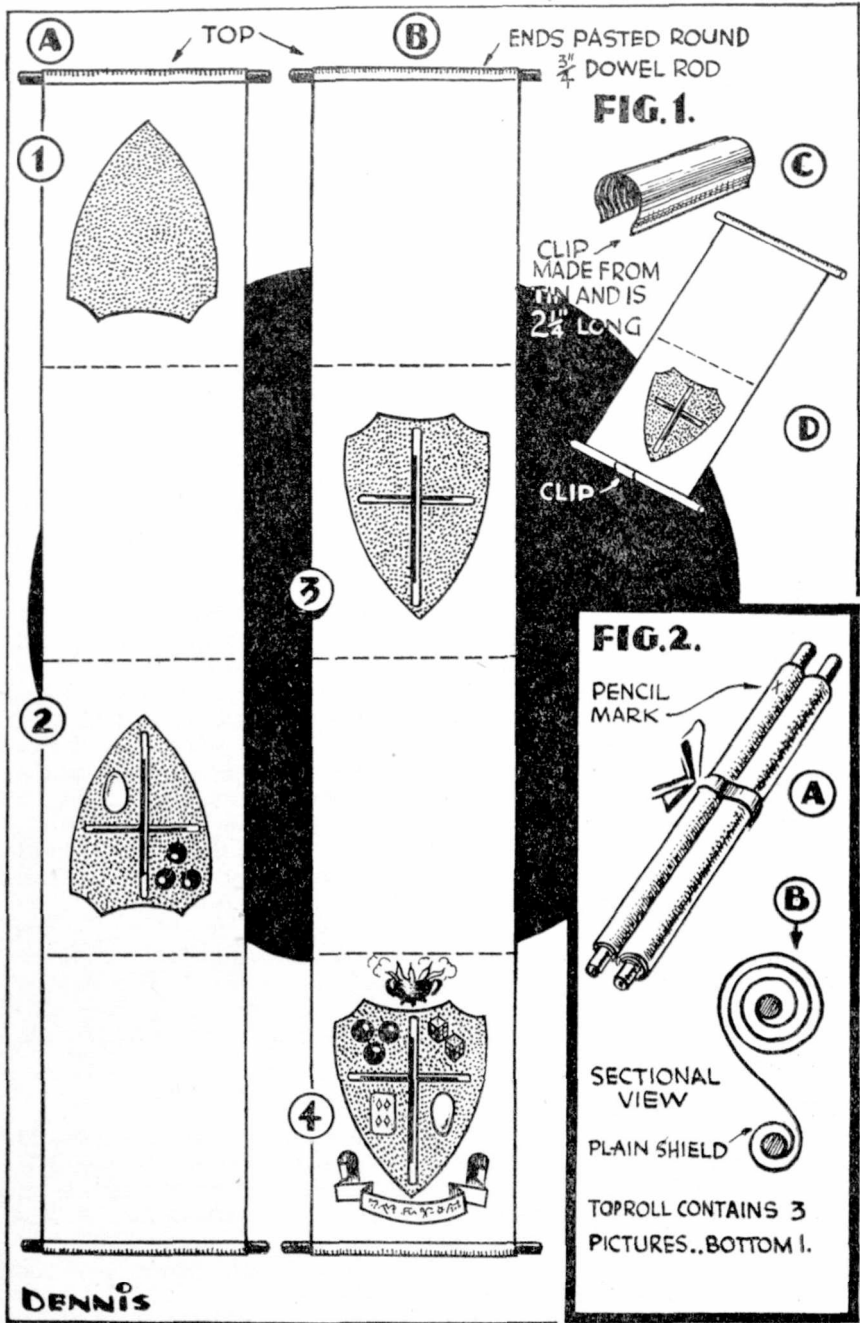
The sizes I give are those used in my own model and are about right for neat handling. First cut two fifteen-inch lengths of dowel rod about three-quarters of an inch thick, and enamel the ends for two or three inches. Then cut a long strip of thin tough paper eleven inches wide by six feet long. You may find it best to have eighteen-inch lengths, do the four drawings on them and then paste them together in the correct order. The finished strip should have two pictures on each side, and the pictures on the opposite sides are upside down to each other. Fig. 1 shows both sides of the strip, indicating which is top and which is bottom. Note that the drawings in Fig. 1A are both upside down. The shield should be painted bright yellow or in gold paint, and the other articles in colours—the billiard balls being red to suit the poetic patter.

The next thing is to cut a strip of thin springy tin about $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inches long and bend this to form a clip of the shape shown in Fig. 1C. Cover this on the outside by pasting a piece of paper similar to that used in the scroll over it. The size should be such that when the scroll is half-rolled around one of the rods, the clip can be easily pushed over the roll, and just as easily eased off with the fingers.

PRESENTATION.

The method of handling this apparatus is most important and should be followed exactly as described. First prepare the scroll by laying it flat, as shown in Fig. 1B, and then rolling the bottom rod upwards on top until it is halfway. Then fix this in place by pushing the clip into position. The result is shown in Fig. 1D. Then continue rolling the lower rod up until it is halfway up the remaining strip, leaving only one picture (plain shield) exposed on the underside.

Now reverse the scroll so that the unrolled rod is at the bottom, the rod with the three rolled-up pictures on it is at the top, and the



plain shield is now facing up, the correct way up. Finally roll the bottom rod forward and upwards until it meets the top rod. Tie a strip of red ribbon around the centre to hold the two rolls together until ready. It is well to put a small pencil mark on the outside of the scroll on top, so you know which is the correct way to hold the scroll to commence the routine. Fig. 2 shows the scroll rolled ready for performance.

First hold scroll in the right hand while left pulls tape bow undone and places tape aside. The right hand holds scroll closed in the meantime. The left hand now takes the lower rod and while the right grips the top rod firmly, the left hand lowers the bottom rod, allowing it to unroll to its full extent showing the plain shield of gold. Show scroll both sides.

The first change is made very neatly. With the left hand roll the scroll again, from the bottom, until scroll is closed as in Fig. 2B again, but immediately continue the rolling an extra turn, which automatically brings the lower rod on top, where it is gripped by the right fingers and the left hand then lowers itself, allowing scroll to unroll, but this time it is the opposite roll (the one bearing three pictures) which unrolls, now exposing the shield with the crossed wands. Allow it to unroll to its fullest extent as the clip prevents the scroll unrolling too much and revealing other pictures. Show scroll both sides.

This time the scroll is rolled up in a different manner. Bring it in front of the body and hold the top of the scroll in both hands, one at each end. Twist the top scroll towards yourself to wind up the paper. You will find this winds up the paper like a blind, the picture being rolled outside. When this is done, you have the two rods, each with two pictures rolled on them and with the clip fixed to the lower roll.

Take the centre of the roll in the right hand, the fingers curling over the clip, and ease the clip off the lower roll, transferring it to the upper roll, where it is clipped in place again. This is done secretly and under cover of patter. This sets you ready for the next change. Grip the lower roll from which you have just removed the clip and turn the whole scroll over so the roll with the clip is now below. Grip the roll with the clip in the left hand, and pull it downwards, allowing the upper roll to revolve in the hand unwinding the third sheet of paper and revealing the shield with quartered wands, billiard balls and egg. There is no stop to this picture, so you must reveal the shield and then stop unrolling the scroll.

The final change is a repetition of the first, and can be done very quickly if desired. Holding the scroll in the right hand at the top, the left fingers roll lower end upwards until it reaches the upper roll, and then an extra turn or two brings it on top, where it is gripped by the right fingers, and the left then allows the last picture to unroll to its full extent. Show picture, re-roll scroll and place aside.

No doubt this reads very confusing at first, but if the necessary scroll is held in the hand while reading, the moves will be found quite easy, and will prove natural. Perhaps I had better make it clear that when I say reverse the scroll I do not mean, obviously, turn the scroll end for end, but simply give a slight twist forward, bringing the lower roll to the top and the upper roll to the bottom. Smoothly worked and without hesitation, this reversal is quite unseen.

THE FIG LEAF CHEST

THIS effect I performed for the first time at Goodliffe's Private Theatre of Magic at Birmingham. There it aroused interest among conjurers because of the ingenious and effective production box used, and the comedy routine itself has since been found very successful for public performance.

The idea for this effect came from an old magazine article by Larsen and Wright, but not liking their method, the new production box came into being, and the routine was altered and modernised. Regarding the production box, of which I will speak more fully later, the underlying idea of this was that whereas most production boxes are shown empty, and then the load removed as the "production," what I wanted to do was to show a flat box all round, open a thin lid to show the interior empty, and then immediately re-open the box to reveal the inside full to overflowing; all this without any false movements. The box I describe later fulfils these requirements perfectly.

The Fig Leaf Routine depends upon the patter to make it logical and entertaining and this patter was written specially for the effect by Vidu. The action is simply as follows:—

The wooden chest is shown empty. A large "fig-leaf" cut from green paper with painted veins upon it is slipped into the box. Then the box is opened and a pair of lady's "panties" removed, followed by a silk dance frock, and finally a large leigh of flowers, which is draped round the neck in the style of a Hula-Hula girl. The following is the patter that makes this a successful effect:—

"Now seriously for the nonce: a friend of mine was a keen missionary among the blacks. He decided to hold a Hula-Hula dance for Heula-Heula girls in Heula-Hula, just off the coast of Hula-Heula.

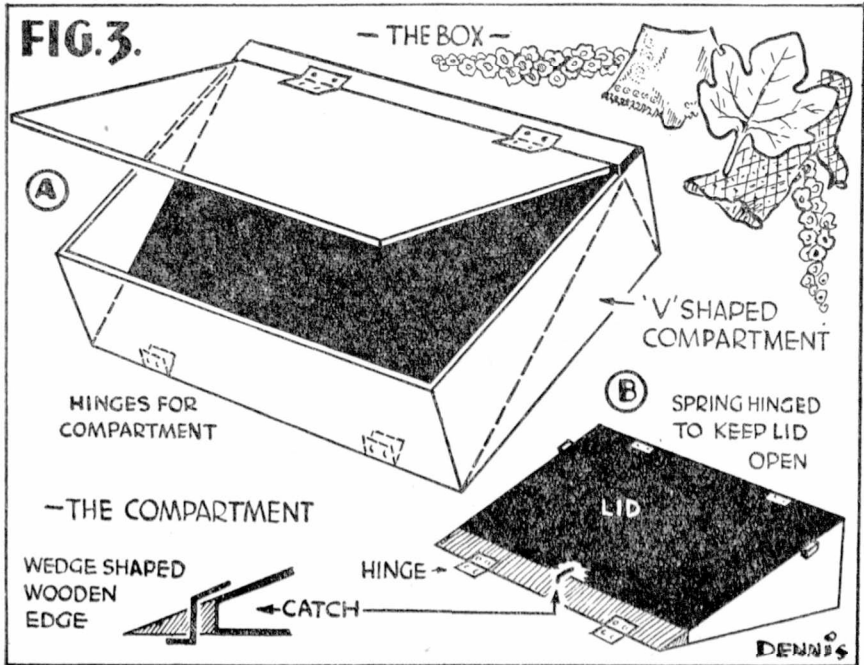
"The belle of the island was noted for the conspicuity of the absence of her dresses, so this missionary took her aside and told her she must dress properly for the dance, and what was she going to do about it?

"She at once produced her linen chest, and as you can see it has a top and a side-bottom, or, in broken English, a side and a bottom. Keeping off the personal—er—side (point to bottom) I would like you to know that this is the Heula-Hula girl's linen chest. As you know, Hula-Hula girls have no drawers; just magnificent chests.

"Well, to be decently clad for the ball, Hula popped into the undergrowth and came back disguised as Sir John Anderson disguised as a Hula-Hula girl wearing a fig-leaf. And she popped the fig-leaf into the chest to keep it from the moth—as though that was necessary.

“ Then the missionary peeped into the box. ‘ Good gracious, goodness me,’ he said. ‘ You can’t wear that!’ ‘ Why not?’ asked Hula. ‘ It isn’t proper,’ said the missionary.

“ So Hula, who was rather thick with the local Witch-doctor, said the magic words Hula-Hula, Heula-Heula; and there were the missing drawers—oh, I beg your pardon (throw them aside hastily). A lovely dress and a gorgeous leigh of flowers. (Smell them.) Lor, how they smell! (Drape leigh around neck.) And so you see before you A Boria Bungleee Boo, which is basic Hula-Hula for a darned good conjurer awaits his well-earned applause.”



The routine is self-explanatory, and all that needs to be done is to give a description of the box with just a few notes. The leigh of flowers should perhaps first be mentioned. This is made by having about a hundred large spring flowers on strings. Take a length of green cord about four feet long, and tie the flowers to it by the strings along the whole length. Then tie the two ends of the cords together so you have a large circle of flowers. This is a good imitation of the regular leigh as worn traditionally by South Sea island girls. The flowers are folded flat and the best way to keep them in position is by hinging two flat pieces of card together like book covers, and have two tapes to tie them together. Fold the flowers flat, place between the hinged cards, and then tie the tapes into a bow.

Now for the box. Fig. 3 gives a good idea of this. Mine is 15-ins. long by 10½-ins. wide by 4-ins. deep. The box itself is bottomless and has a lid hinged about ¾-inch from the back. Instead of a bottom, the

box has a hinged V-shaped compartment which is shown in Fig. 3B. This compartment has wooden sides, wooden back, and a wooden wedge-shaped front edge; a bottom is made of tin, and the top is a lid spring-hinged at the back. The spring-hinges are made to keep the lid open. In making my model, I used coil spring as sold for cigarette-lighters, and found that four of them were necessary.

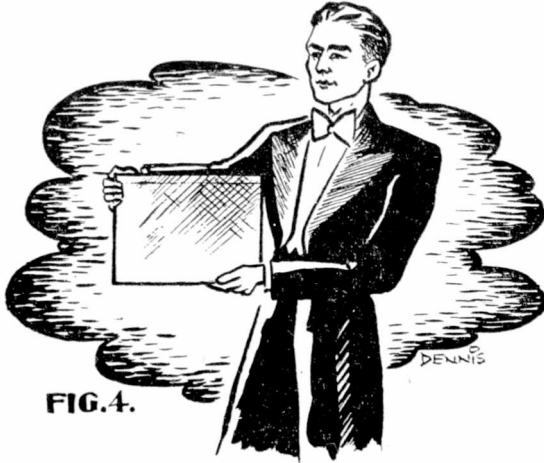


FIG. 4.

To keep the lid closed, a simple wire catch is made by drilling a hole through the wedge-shaped piece of wood along the front edge, inserting a stiff wire through, and bending this to an S-shape, as shown in the drawing. The lid can then be released from underneath by simply turning the end of the wire. The compartment also has two lugs on top to act as stops, and grooves are cut in the sides of the box to allow these lugs to slide freely. This compartment is loosely hinged inside the box, as shown in Fig. 3A.

To handle the box, open the lid, and the lid of the compartment, and place in first of all the "book" of flowers, then the silk dress (which should be bright and "jazzy"), and then a pair of "panties." Reach underneath the dress and undo the tapes on the book, preventing the flowers from expanding, and then close the lid, fixing it in place by turning the wire catch. Close the lid of the box and you are ready.

Patter as suggested, and show box empty. To do this, pick up the box and show it top and bottom. Then hold it at your right side, as shown in Fig. 4, with left side of box pressing against body and right arm along back of top edge and left fingers on lid ready to open box. Box is, of course, tilted as shown, so top of box faces the audience. It will now be found an easy matter to let the hinged compartment drop back as far as it will go, and then the left hand opens the lid to show the interior empty. The top of the V-shaped compartment now forms the bottom of the box.

Close the lid, and let the box turn flat again, bringing the bottom end forward, and as this is done the right arm pushes the compartment

back into the box. Pick up the paper fig-leaf and slip it into the box without opening the lid more than about an inch, and close box again. Finally, to produce load, twist the wire catch underneath which will cause the lid of the inner compartment to open and press against inside of box lid.

Now gently lift lid of box, and inner compartment lid will come up with it, allowing you to insert your fingers under the compartment lid and lift both lids open, holding them as one. This reveals the load now filling the box. It should be noted that the lid is only raised to a vertical position, and should not be laid right back, as, owing to the construction, the inner lid cannot lie right back, and would remain protruding vertically and so reveal the flap. The inside of the box and the compartment is painted dead-black, and the compartment flap is invisible against the inside of the box lid. The fig-leaf, of course, remains out of sight, hidden between the compartment flap and the box lid.



CHAPTER THREE

THE SPECTATOR KNOWS

NOW we come to a straight mental effect. This is not intended for the duffer (I do not mean you—the other man!) and needs a certain amount of address and showmanship to put over really well. It has been moderately successful in my own shows, but I am not a serious mentalist and that such an effect registers at all in my type of show speaks well for it. I imagine that the right person could make this into a mental miracle.

Let us visualise what happens, forgetting the mechanics of the effect, remembering that it is always the *effect on the audience* which matters. First, the performer introduces a pack of jumbo playing cards and invites someone on the stage to assist him. This person, whom we shall now call the assistant, is seated at a small table facing the audience and given the pack of cards to mix thoroughly. Meanwhile a small open frame to hold a single jumbo card is placed on the table in front of the assistant. This frame is illustrated in Fig 5A and is exactly like the popular type of photographic frame where the photograph is sandwiched between two sheets of glass and slid into the slots between two uprights. The frame in this case has no glass, and a card can be slid in from the top, back towards the audience.

The performer explains that everyone has the power to read another person's thoughts if he only concentrates properly. but to the beginner it is necessary to limit the thoughts until they get more experienced. He offers to prove this theory by practice.

The assistant is asked to select any one of the jumbo cards, keeping its identity absolutely to himself, while the performer steps down among the audience. This card is then to be placed in the frame, back to the audience, so the assistant can look at the face of the card and concentrate upon it. In the meantime, the performer shows a small blank white card with a hole about half-inch in diameter cut in the centre and has this examined. The purpose of this, the performer explains, is to limit the field of vision and so concentrate the direction of thought.

This card is handed to a spectator with the request that he holds the card about four or five inches in front of his eyes and looks at the head of the assistant on the stage through the hole. The spectator does this, and after a moment names, at the request of the performer, the card chosen by the assistant and placed in the frame. The card is removed from the frame and shown to the audience, proving that the spectator actually read the assistant's mind.

Again the assistant is asked to select another card and place in the frame, and the small "concentrator card" is handed to another spectator, who also succeeds in naming the selected card. This can be repeated a number of times if required.

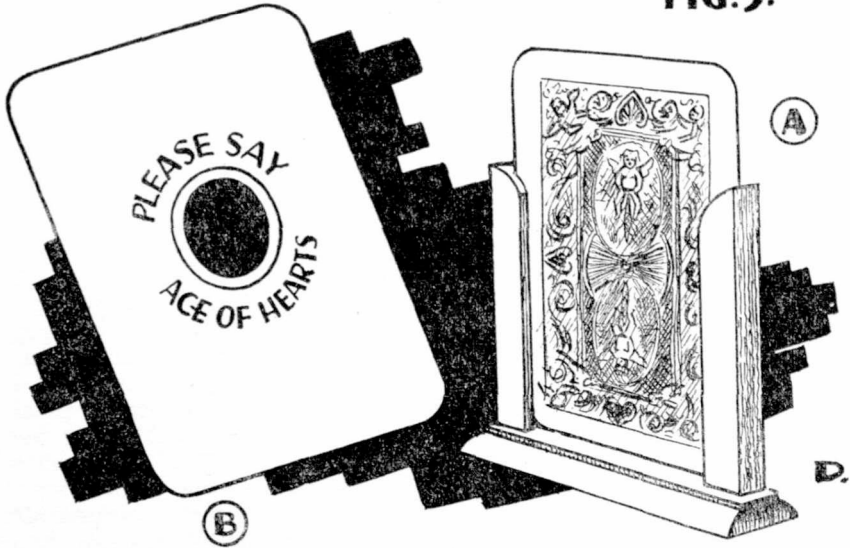
When I have performed this myself I often have a girl stooge in the audience (the assistant on stage being a man), and after having several spectators read cards I hand the "concentrator card" to this stooge. For a final experiment I ask the man to think of any card without taking it from the pack. Then the girl stooge stands up and peers at the man through the hole. There is no result, so I exhort the assistant to think harder, whereupon the girl gives a slight squeal and hurries out of the room. I reprimand the assistant for letting his mind wander, but thank him for his assistance before he resumes his seat. This is, of course, only a suitable finish for anyone who must introduce comedy, but I recommend that even the serious worker give it a trial as it adds further entertainment value.

The method cannot be claimed as an acme of subtlety, but, as pointed out, it is the effect that matters. And may I remind readers that the late Anneman once wrote that if it is necessary to take six persons into your confidence to fool the seventh, it is worth it if the effect is good enough. Not that I subscribe entirely to that view, but within reasonable limits I do. So in this effect you take certain spectators partly into your confidence, but even then, although they know how they name the card, they are still puzzled themselves by how you know, and how you conveyed the information to them.

First the pack of cards. There are only twenty-six of them instead of a full pack, and as they are jumbo cards, this is not sufficient to worry an audience. The selection of the twenty-six cards is important. You must use all the cards from Ace to King twice, one set of thirteen being red cards of both suits, and the other thirteen being black cards of both suits. For example they could be Ace Clubs, Ace Hearts, Two Spades, Two Diamonds, Three Clubs, Three Hearts, Four Spades, Four Diamonds, and so on.

The backs of the cards are fairly plainly marked so you know the suit and *colour* (it is not necessary to know exact suit, and marking for colour only makes the cards easier and quicker for reading). I use the regular bicycle pack of cards, and have the values marked by placing a red dot on the circles which surround the cupid riding a bicycle. The well-known clock-dial system is used for this, the position of the dot being at 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock and so on, there being no dot for a King. If the cards you have are blue backs, use blue dots, of course. For the colour it will be noticed that in the centre of the bicycle back is a small circle with a dot in it. Leave this centre dot untouched for red cards, and shade it out with red or blue for black cards.

You now need twenty-seven blank visiting cards about the size of playing cards, and these have a half-inch hole cut in the centre of each. One of these is left blank, but the other twenty-six each have writing in small capital letters around the hole as shown in Figure 5B. There is one card for each of the cards in the jumbo pack, one saying "PLEASE SAY ACE CLUBS," another saying "PLEASE SAY ACE HEARTS," a third saying "PLEASE SAY 2 SPADES" and so on right through the pack of twenty-six. These twenty-six small cards are then arranged

FIG. 5.

in one of the well-known "any card from pocket" index fekes. This is a small book to hold thirteen cards in order, with small tabs at the top so one can find any card easily. Arrange a pair of cards in each partition, placing the red card in front of the black card in each partition. So any of the twenty-six cards can be found easily by knowing the value and the colour. You can ignore the actual suit in your working as there is only half a pack, and if you find the right colour, you must have the right suit. This index, ready loaded, is in the right trousers pocket.

Most readers will have anticipated the working of the routine, but for the sake of those who are still plodding on (and you are wise to read right through an article instead of leaving off when you guess how it is done) here is the actual working.

The spectator on the stage selects a card from the jumbo pack while you give the blank card to someone to look at. The jumbo card is placed in the stand, and a quick glimpse gives you the value and colour. If you give the blank card to someone in the front row, you will not need a telescope to read the card as the marking is plain when you know where to look. Your hand is in pocket during this, and you immediately locate and palm the small card of correct value and colour from the index. Take the blank card in the left hand and place it in the right together with the palmed one, square them together (with the writing inside) and hold them as one card in the familiar double-lift method. Walk to another person, and on the way you can let other people glimpse both sides of the "concentrator card." Hand the card to the spectator by taking it from the right hand with the left, really taking the prepared card and palming the blank one. Show spectator how to hold card, and he will not fail to name the card.

Return to front row and have assistant remove card from frame, which you take and show to audience. Place this aside, and holding the small card in left hand, put right in trousers pocket again while another card is selected. Then repeat moves as before, but be sure that writing on cards is face to face while showing it again, and also be sure to palm off the first card when handing card to second spectator. The remainder is repetition of the moves and depends upon the performer's showmanship.

The standing with hands in pocket is quite natural, as apparently you have little to do with the effect, the whole thing being done by the assistant on stage and by the spectators, with yourself just supervising. Good cover is given for the palming of cards by the movement among the audience, and while selecting what appear to be suitable " subjects." This choice is, by the way, genuine, as it is well for you to choose types which you feel sure will " play " with you, and avoid " smart " fellows or " dumb " ones. On this score I always remember the advice I read somewhere to select men with tooth-brush moustaches. This psychology of this I leave to you, and how to adapt it to the ladies !



CHAPTER FOUR

THE "VISIBLE" RIBBON RESTORATION

SOME time ago I had a yen to restore a *wide* ribbon after it had been cut, and I experimented with several versions. One was quite successful and I sent it to the Linking Ring for publication. To my surprise it won the Caryl Fleming bronze award for that year. However, the apparatus was not easy to make and proved a little troublesome in working, the preparations having to be carefully made. In searching round for a trouble-free and effective method, I hit upon the one I am about to describe, which takes but a few seconds to prepare for performance. In addition, a large section is removed from the ribbon and destroyed; and the restoration is quick and snappy.

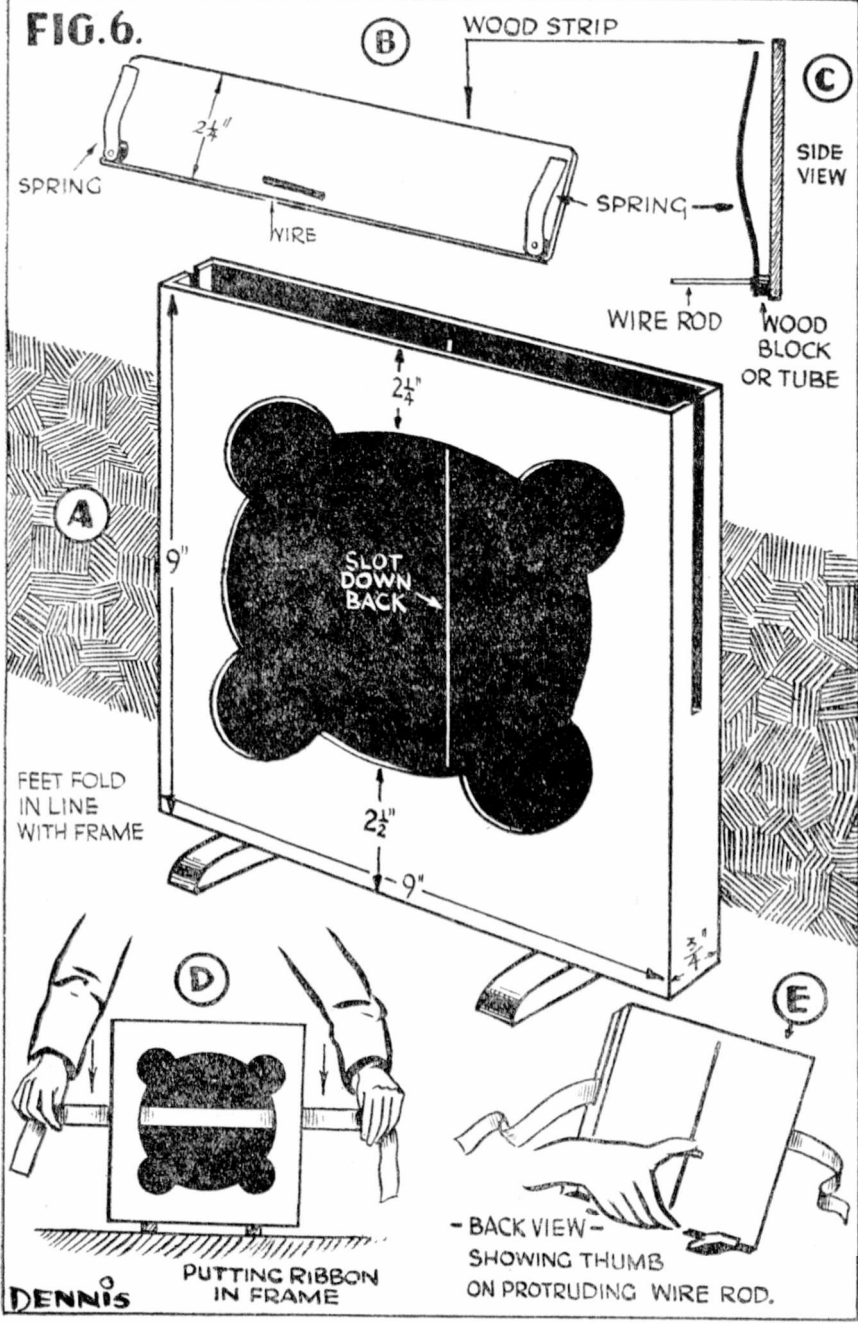
First let me describe the effect, which is an apparatus one. A cabinet with an open front is shown. This is about 9-inches high by 9-inches wide and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick. The front is cut away in a circular shape with fancy pieces cut away to give decorative value. The cabinet stands on two feet, which picot sideways to fold flat for packing. Fig. 6A gives a good idea of this cabinet. Notice that the sides have two slots, one in each side, from the top to about an inch below the centre. The inside of the cabinet is lined with black velvet or black flock-paper, and the woodwork is painted in light colours, preferably white with coloured decorations.

The cabinet is stood on a table facing the audience, while the performer exhibits a length of ribbon, two-inches wide and about a yard long. Holding this in each hand a few inches from each end, he stretches the ribbon taut in front of his body, ribbon being flat towards audience, and then, without touching the cabinet, lowers the stretched ribbon slowly into the cabinet via the two slots in the sides. Fig. 6D shows this taking place, and gives a good idea of the fairness and ease of handling. As the stretched ribbon is pushed down into the frame, the centre is seen to pass down through the opening in the frame until it is in the centre. The ends of the ribbon are then released.

Now the centre of the ribbon, showing through the hold in the frame, is cut away with scissors, cutting out a strip about four inches long. This leaves a short cut end of the ribbon showing at both sides of the hole. The cut-away portion of ribbon is then burnt, and the blazing ribbon dropped into an ash-tray to burn away.

The restoration is snappy and very surprising to the audience. Holding the frame in the right hand, the performer takes some of the ash from the ash-tray in his left hand, and then advancing nearer to

FIG. 6.



the audience, he suddenly slaps his left hand over the hole in the cabinet and immediately takes it away, when the ribbon is seen to be completely restored. Then taking one of the hanging ends of the ribbon with the left hand, he slowly withdraws it sideways from the cabinet, pulling the ribbon clear, and showing it restored.

This effect, being of a quick, surprising nature, makes a good opening effect, and the slapping action of the hand to cause the restoration of the ribbon has a dramatic and truly magical effect.

Probably the drawings will have explained the working to the wide-awake conjurer, but for clarity we give an exact description. It will be noticed first that the cabinet or frame has the hole cut in the front of such a size that the ribbon can easily be concealed in the edge of the frame. The sizes given are for a 2-inch wide ribbon, so it will be seen that the edge of the frame has a $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch clearance. Also down the centre of the back is cut a slot, and the black velvet which lines the frame is slit with a razor-blade to allow a stiff wire rod to run down it.

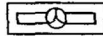
A sliding feke is necessary, and this is shown in Fig. 6B and 6C. This is a strip of thin plywood $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inches wide and long enough to slide easily up and down inside the frame. At each end is a curved piece of clock-spring fixed to a tiny block or (for preference) a short piece of fibre or metal tube, the screw which holds the spring passing through the hole in the tube. From the bottom edge of the fake slide at the back, is fixed a short length of stiff wire rod, at such a position that, when the slide is in the frame, the wire protrudes through the slot in the back of the frame. The front of the slide is covered with black velvet. This slide is inside the frame and the wire protrudes through the slot. The clock-springs hold the slide in place at any position in the frame, and yet it can slide up and down easily.

To prepare, pull the slide up to the top and as far out of the top of the frame as possible. The slot does not go right to the top, but stops short within about a quarter-inch from top to give rigidity to frame, but the slide will come out sufficient for preparation purposes. All that is necessary is to fix a strip of ribbon, to match the ribbon used in the effect, across the slide, fixing it at each end with two drawing pins. The pins are hidden by the sides of the frame when the slide is in central position. With the ribbon so fixed, push the feke down until it is just concealed by the top of the frame, and you are ready to work the effect.

When the ribbon is stretched taut, and lowered into the slots in the frame, the ribbon goes between the back of the slide and the springs, and so, as the stretched ribbon is forced downwards into the frame, the slide is pushed down with it. From the front the short length of ribbon on the slide looks like the centre of the ribbon, and the illusion is perfect.

Cut away a portion of the ribbon from the slide and burn it as described. Then hold the frame in the right hand with the thumb at the back engaging the protruding wire rod. The left hand pretends to take some ash from the ash-tray, and then, as the left hand slaps over the hole in the frame, the right thumb rapidly pulls the slide down into the bottom edge of the frame, where it is concealed from sight, and the actual centre of the ribbon left exposed. Withdrawing the ribbon to show it fully restored, brings the effect to its conclusion.

I may add for the sake of those who wish to build this effect for themselves, that the width of the frame at the bottom is a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wider than at the top, as otherwise the slide would not be pulled right out of sight. The slot at the back runs from within a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of the top and bottom edges, otherwise the back would be rather weak. The corners of the slide are best slightly rounded.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE WOOL AN' SCREEN

BALLS or skeins of wool are colourful and interesting articles with which to conjure, but very few effects with them are in the repertoires of magicians. The popular coin in ball of wool and my own modernised version is one of the few. There is the skein of wool that vanishes to appear in a Bakelite wool-holder all ready balled for use, as performed by Cyraldo. There is an effect wherein a ball of wool of a chosen colour changes into a jumper, which effect is, I believe, one of William Stickland's, and just one or two others. So if you want something different, think about the possibilities of a ball of wool. In this article I have some suggestions to make, and some practical effects.

Two practical ideas are given in this effect which are capable of use in other ways besides the routine given. A small two-fold screen with panels about 10-inches high by 7-inches wide is one property, and several small balls of various coloured wools is the other. The two-fold screen has small holes bored in the centre of each panel, and the holes are connected to the top edge of each panel by a slot. The screen is set on the table and opened. A small curtain is hooked over the front so that it can be slid aside on a rod when required, showing the interior of the screen. The whole set-up forms a kind of small cabinet with draw-curtain front.

A knitting needle is passed through the two holes in the screen and the curtains drawn to hide the centre of the needle. One of the balls of wool is then chosen and vanished. Upon sliding the curtain aside again to reveal the centre of the needle, it is found that the ball of wool is impaled upon the needle, and the needle with ball of wool can be removed from the screen via the two slots.

The working depends upon two principles. First, the ball of wool which appears upon the needle is not a genuine ball of wool. It is merely a spring ball as used for production purposes, which has been carefully covered with wool to appear like a ball of wool. Thus we have what is apparently a normal ball of wool, which can actually be squeezed quite flat. The possession of such balls of wool opens up a wide field for the ingenious conjurer, and such balls are far more convincing, even in straight production effects, than the more usual cloth balls.

In making the ball for this particular effect, the usual cloth spring ball is flattened and holes cut into the centre at each end. Then the wool is carefully glued bit by bit over the ball, winding the wool in different directions, but contriving to leave a small hole over the ends

of the ball where the hole on the ball proper was cut. This is the ball that appears impaled on the needle.

The screen is the next thing to describe, and I consider this is quite interesting and pleasant to work. In similar effects to this, using wooden rings, etc., it is usual to have a cabinet with various types of flap and release. In the present case, the beauty of the effect lies in the simplicity of the apparatus, that is, a plain two-fold screen, and the easy, automatic way the flap is worked.

One side of the screen is actually a shallow tray deep enough to hold a flattened spring woollen ball and this is covered by a flap, hinged at the back.—the hinging is best done with cloth strips glued in place—and is made so that it can either cover the shallow tray on one side, or be hinged across and lie flat on the board the other side. A simple wire catch must be arranged to fix the flap to the shallow tray side, or the compressed ball would force the flap open. This is not shown in the drawing to avoid complications, but anyone constructing the screen will soon see how this can easily be accomplished. All that is necessary is a bent wire pivotted to form a kind of tiny turn-button. This is not on the top corner where it would allow the bottom to bulge under pressure of the ball, but in the centre of the front edge.

A small wire protrudes from the top front corner of the flap, and a small hole and connecting slot is cut in both sides and flap so all will coincide. Finally a piece of stiff wire is made into a curtain rod to fix across the top front of the open screen. This stiff wire is arced slightly as shown in the plan (Fig. 7B). The wire is hooked on to the front edges of the screen by having two wire staples fixed each side. The ends of the curtain rod are bent downwards, and so the rod is hooked in place through the staples. Finally a small curtain of some limp heavy material is made by sewing a series of small rings along the top edge.

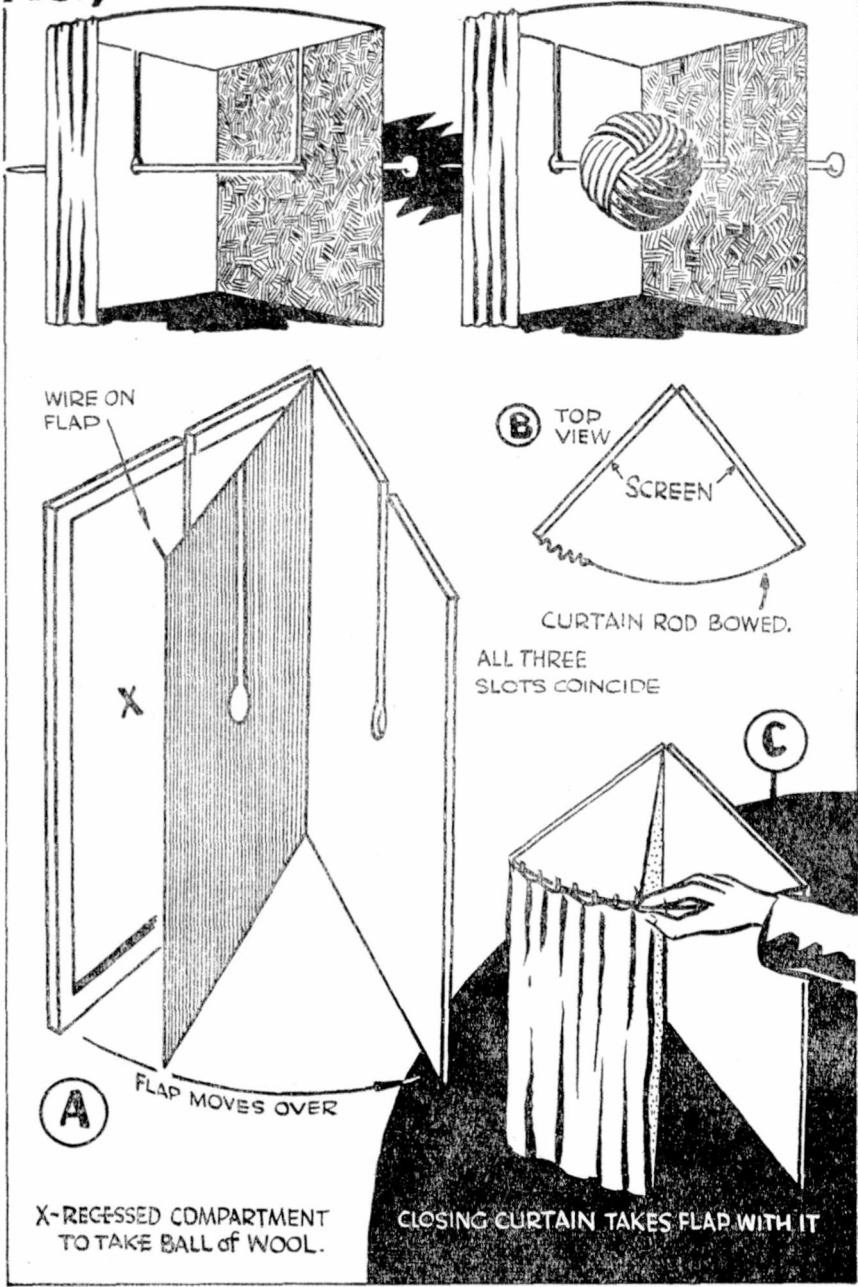
The principle is this: the screen is shown folded flat, after which it is opened, set on the table, and the curtain rod with curtain on it is hooked on the front. The curtain is closed by drawing it along the rod and opened by pushing it back again, closing the curtain towards the double side each time. To operate the flap, the right hand goes to the top edge of the curtain ready to draw it along the wire and the fingers at the same time grip the protruding wire from the flap. The left hand, steadying the frame, releases the catch, and then the curtain is slowly drawn across the wire, taking the flap with it as shown in Fig. 7C. This is the reason for the arc on the curtain rod; it allowing the flap to move across freely without pushing into the curtain. Thus the flap is transferred in an unsuspected and natural manner.

In working the routine mentioned, a spring woollen ball is imprisoned in the hollow side so that the holes in the ball coincide with the holes in screen and flap. The screen is erected as described, a large flexible knitting needle passed through the holes in the screen and the curtain closed. The passing of the needle through the holes, naturally causes it to go through the woollen ball, and when the curtain is drawn, taking the flap with it, the ball expands and is impaled on the needle. As soon as this is done, casually adjust the needle as though setting the apparatus neat, and pull along the needle a little so the impaled ball of wool is pulled to the centre of the cabinet.

Several balls of wool are shown, one of which is a duplicate in colour

FIG. 7.

DEZIS



of the spring one placed in the screen. This is forced and vanished, and then the duplicate revealed on the needle. The force and vanish may be left to the ingenuity of the performer or to his capabilities, but I describe the method I prefer.

Six spring balls, covered in wool, are required (only one having the holes in the sides) and all these are covered with the same coloured wool, say green. A small jap-box and a changing bag (the latter best made like a lady's knitting bag) are also required.

Load the ball with holes in the screen. Place four of the other spring balls into the compartment of the bag, and with the remaining ball place four other genuine balls of various colours. Show these five balls, and drop them in the bag one by one, seeing that the green one goes into the compartment. Shake the bag about to mix the balls, and ask someone to reach in and take one out. Holding the bag open for this, you have opened the pocket, and one of the five green balls is removed. If the ball is nicely made, the casual handling by a spectator will not reveal the fact that the ball is not genuine, as the springs are well covered and the lightness is deceptive, a ball of wool being light in any case. This chosen ball is placed down while the odd four from the bag proper are tipped on to the table. The jap box is shown in the usual manner, the flap allowed to drop open, and then the ball is placed in. While hand is still in box, finger through hole in base closes the flap. This allows you to hold the ball in the correct position for squeezing flat. A passing movement is made and the jap-box shown empty. Finally the ball is revealed on the needle.

If you like to go to the extra bother, you can have two compartments to the screen, one each side, with a green ball one side and a red the other. Have two duplicate spring balls, also red and green. Have one freely chosen, and the freely chosen one can be vanished and made to appear on the needle, working the curtain from whichever is the appropriate side of the screen.

Or you can, with the double version, repeat the effect, by making the chosen one appear, say the green one, then covering again, transfer the two flaps together, and bring the red one to view. Pick up the red one and colour change it to green either by sleight of hand or other means, and show the ball on the needle has also changed colour. Or strictly speaking, you have apparently transposed the balls. Or again you could—but why prolong the agony? There are lots of possibilities and combinations for the wide-awake performer with this set of equipment.



MORE WIZARDRY WITH WOOL

THE previous article dealt with a complete effect using a ball of wool, but I now wish to present a series of ideas with the intention of constraining the reader to develop something original of his own. I could very well describe some of the complete routines I have evolved, but let us see what you can do with the suggestions I am about to give. Various combinations of the principles described are possible, and quite probably some of the thoughtful readers may get a lead from which they will build something quite new and different. If this happens, I shall feel that the time spent in writing this article will have been justified.

In "The Wool an' Screen" we came across the principle of a "spring ball of wool." Other principles can also be adapted to the ball of wool, and the possibilities are endless. First, then, let us take the "shell." The shell has been used in all sorts of effects, but rarely, if ever, has it been applied to a ball of wool. Just see what can be done. Suppose you wish to dispose of a ball of wool. Throw it into the air, and it changes in mid-air into a bouquet of flowers. To do this, cut a small ball into halves, and then glue a tape hinge across one end joining the two halves together. This gives a ball which can be closed and look like a ball, but which can be opened out like an oyster. With the ball closed, wind green wool around it just as when making the "spring ball of wool," and when the glue is dry, carefully cut the wool with a razor-blade around the opening, but not at the portion where the cloth hinge has been fixed. In gluing the wool on to the ball, leave a length of about 18ins. dangling loose, and tie a small button to the end of this. A large bouquet of spring flowers on strings should then be packed inside, fixing the strings together at the end by winding around a small safety-pin and fixing the pin to the inside of the ball. Close the ball, imprisoning the flowers, and then wind the loose length of wool around the ball to keep it closed. This looks like a genuine ball of wool, but if the bead is gripped in the fingers and the ball tossed into the air, the loose wool will unravel, allowing the ball to open by the expansion of the spring flowers, and the expanding flowers will surround and hide the two halves of the ball.

It would be well to paint the inside of the ball green, and then if any of the ball shows slightly through the flowers, it will be disguised as part of the foliage. Although this would make a smart opening effect, it need not be used as it stands. It can be used as a vanish for the ball in a combination effect. Or again, a small knitting bag with draw-string top could be made in brightly coloured cloth, and with a pocket just like the egg bag. One could perform the egg-bag using

the prepared ball of wool and this knitting bag, and finish by changing the ball of wool into a bouquet of flowers as a finale. This would have greater appeal to the women in the audience than the usual egg and bag would. And the feminine element of an audience ought to be reckoned with—ask Woodward!

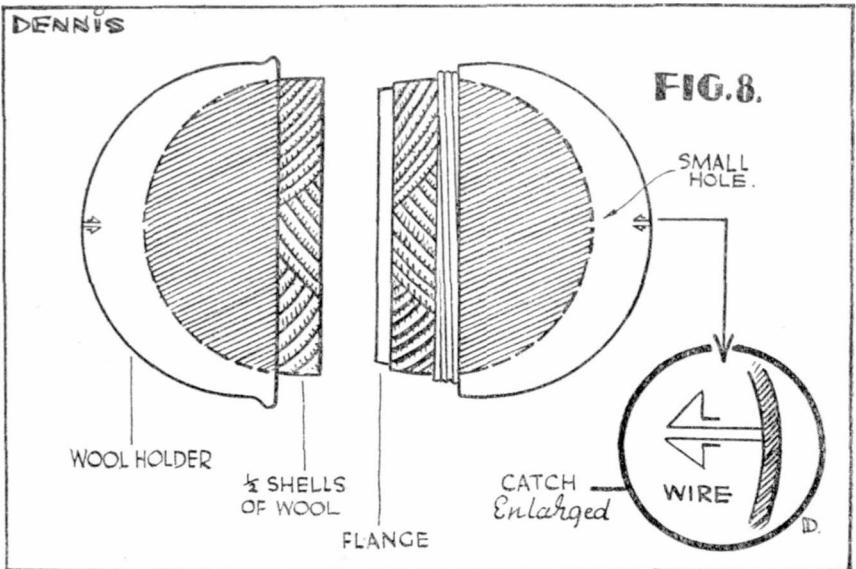
Need I tell you that multiplying billiard balls can be done with woollen balls, complete with colour-changes, using a shell covered with wool, and balls also covered with wool. The latter is necessary because a normal ball of wool, being soft and light, is not easy to palm and manipulate, whereas the covered solid ball can be handled quite nicely.

And for kiddies shows, Eric Wilson's famous Snowman can be dressed as an all-wool golliwog with sprung arms that will protrude when revealed. Then the tube can be shown empty, balls of wool produced like the multiplying balls and dropped into the tube, the latter finally being lifted to reveal the golliwog.

So far shells have been used in the orthodox way during this discussion, but now let us look at a couple of more unorthodox methods, and two which are capable of being built into some quite original and surprising effects. The first is concerned with one of the Bakelite holders for a ball of wool. As pointed out previously, this article has already been used to good effect by Cyraldo, but we have a quite different idea. Obtain a rubber or papier-mache ball which will fit snugly into the wool-holder. Cut this ball in two halves, and inside one glue a strip of cardboard so that it encircles the inside of the mouth and protrudes about an eighth-of-an-inch. This makes a flange which will fit into the other half of the ball, and hold the two halves together. This flange can be seen in section in Figure 8. In the centre of each half of the ball, drill a small hole, the size of which is governed by a catch about to be described. The catch is shown in the inset of Fig. 8, and consists of two lengths of spring wire bent to the shape shown. One of these catches is fixed in the centre of each half of the wool-holder in positions to coincide with the holes in the shell ball. Now if one half of the shell-ball is pressed into the holder, the point of the catch will pass through the hole, the two wires closing together in the action, and then they will expand when completely through, so holding the shell firmly inside the holder.

The inside of the ball and the insides of the holder are painted the same colour, while the outside of the shell ball is covered with wool, and cut around the join. Now what is apparently a ball of wool can be shown and placed in one half of the holder, the catch engaging. Then the other half is screwed in place, the other catch engaging on the other half of the ball. When the holder is again unscrewed, the shell ball comes apart, remaining in the halves of the holder, and apparently the ball of wool has vanished. So here is a good vanish for a large ball of wool.

But, of course, one need not just vanish a ball of wool with this. Inside the shell could be a ball of a different colour, and so when the holder is opened, the ball has changed colour. And again, one need not have a ball of wool inside the shell ball; any other small article can be used. Say an orange, and a transposition effect performed between a ball of wool and an orange, using a hat or some other equipment for changing an orange into a ball of wool.

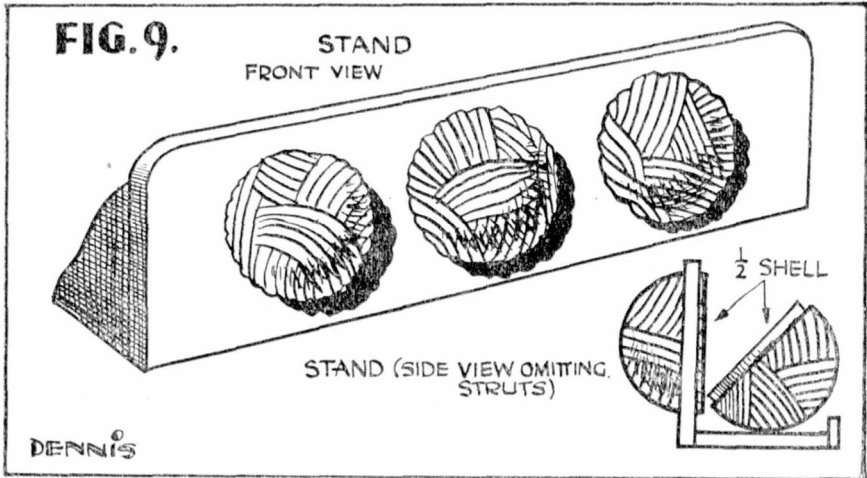


The article in the shell ball need not even be a spherical object—any shape of small object can be used. So this leads us on to a second piece of apparatus I want to describe. First I will describe this “prop” and then the use it can be put to in combination with the wool-holder and shell ball of wool.

Refer to Figure 9. Here is a plain board with struts at each side to hold the board in an upright position. In the front of the board are cut three large holes into which can be snugly fitted one half of the shell ball of wool. Along the back of the stand at the bottom runs a ledge with a strip of wood at the back of the ledge, of such a size that the other half of the shell ball of wool may be stood mouth upwards and at an angle slightly facing the hole in the board. The drawing should make this clear. However, although I have so far mentioned only one shell ball of wool, you will actually require three, each one covered with a different colour of wool. So three differently coloured half-shells are placed in the holes in the stand, where from the front they look like three balls of wool held in the holes, and behind the stand, resting on the ledge, are the other three halves of the shells, each behind its fellow.

Now what can we do with this? Here is what I had in mind when I evolved this apparatus. Borrow a watch, wrapping it in paper using the well-known coin fold, and switching the packet for a duplicate with pieces of broken watch. Place the duplicate in full view, and turn to pick up the stand with the balls of wool displayed. The hand with the packet palmed holds the stand at the back. Show the three balls in the stand and have someone freely select any colour they wish. When this has been named, set the stand down again. The left hand takes hold of the front of the chosen ball, and the right hand at the back allows the watch to slide out of the paper packet into the corresponding

shell, picks up the shell and pushes it into the other half from the back. This fits the two halves together. Without a pause the right hand pushes the now complete ball through the hole into the left hand, and then the right hand drops the paper on to the ledge behind the stand, where it remains out of sight. These movements are smoothly combined, and take but a second to do. The effect is merely that the chosen ball of wool was pushed out of the hole by the right hand, into the waiting left hand at the front.

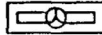


This "ball of wool" is then placed into the wool-holder, which is screwed down, and the holder placed in a conspicuous position. Now fool around with the packet which is supposed to contain the watch, dropping it, hammering it, or what you will. Drop the broken pieces of watch into a changing bag, box, or again what you will, and change it into a tangled mass of wool of the chosen colour. Then open the wool-holder and find the borrowed watch safe and sound in the place of the wool. So you have a novel effect, and one which is entertaining if well performed. I shall not describe methods of changing the watch-pieces into a tangled mass of wool—almost any form of changing bag or small production box can be used for this, having three tangled masses of wool loaded so the correct one can be produced at will. Think about this for yourself; you might strike something good.

Of course, another variation could be made by having a flower in each shell behind the stand, each with a ribbon and a wire hook tied to it. Then the effect can be performed with a borrowed ring instead, hooking the ring on the ribbon while removing the ball of wool. But this is not the only type of effect for which these two properties are useful; there are endless possibilities, and this article was designed to encourage you to think of them.

Before I finish this section, let me make one more suggestion. Balls of wool can be used in many ball effects, and they open up new possi-

bilities. Also skeins of wool can be used in the place of coloured silks in many effects by the aid of a little adaptation. So think around the ball and silk tricks you know, and I am sure you will find something fresh for yourself. It does not need any great power of thought to decide to push a couple of small skeins of wool through a paper tube and transform them into a jumper, instead of doing the dying silks, and it needs no great concentration to think of many other similar adaptations. If you will become wool-minded, and not woolly-minded, you will soon add some new effects to your collection.



CHAPTER SEVEN

MESSAGE FROM CONFUCIUS

IN 1940, Len J. Sewell, of Australia, wrote an excellent little book called "Magi Magic," in which a clever device for switching envelopes was described. In 1942, Mr. W. A. Gripper gave me his simplified version of this with permission to publish, and as this is too good to overlook, I am including a description in this book. Mr. Sewell's apparatus was rather bulky, and was rather obviously "apparatus," while Mr. Gripper's adaption, using a similar principle, is simple enough for anyone to make up, avoids the bulk of the original, and in appearance is perfectly normal, consisting merely of a large envelope with a "window" cut in it. In the following description I shall include the "gag" stunt which I have used with this apparatus. So first I shall delineate the construction and working of the envelope, and follow this with my "gag" working.

In essence, what takes place is this: a large envelope about 10ins. long by 7ins. wide (the exact size does not matter) is shown to have an oblong window cut from the centre. A piece of blank cardboard of a size to slip easily into the envelope is examined, and then slid into the envelope, the card plainly going inside, and its journey made visible by means of the "window." The card is initialled or otherwise marked through the "window." Later, when the card is removed, the front of the card still bears the marking, but the back now bears a message boldly written upon it. It will thus be seen that this apparatus will have a host of uses, and is well worth making up.

The illustrations explain themselves to a certain degree, but to make doubly certain, the necessary "feking" will be explained in detail. The envelope should be of fairly stout material and is unprepared except for the "window" cut in the centre of the address side. A sample envelope is shown in Fig. 10A, the shaded portion indicating the interior of the envelope seen through the window, and the dotted lines the shape of the envelope on the side opposite to the address side.

A special feke is necessary to fit inside the envelope and this is clearly illustrated in Fig. 10B. The construction is as follows: cut the non-address side neatly from a spare envelope and trim this to the shape shown in Fig. 10B. This should be made to fill the envelope completely. Now fix a band of very stiff paper around the narrow portion of the feke, this band being a fraction greater in width than the "window" in the envelope. Now cut another portion of paper from the waste envelope and fix this as shown to the centre of the band,

this portion matching the interior of the envelope. Turn the whole feke over, and securely glue two small squares of very thick cardboard on the extreme corners of the band. These are shown by the black squares in the diagram, understanding, of course, that they are actually on the rear of the feke ; they are also indicated clearly on the "end view" also illustrated. This prepared band should now be able to slide easily and smoothly up and down the narrow portion of the feke as shown by the arrows. The cards used in the effect should measure about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. less in all directions than this feke.

To prepare, write your message on one card. Reverse this and slide it under the band as shown by the large arrow in Fig. 10B. Have the band to the left of the narrow part as in the diagram. Insert the feke (with card under band) into the envelope and the result will be similar to that shown in Fig. 10C. If the feke has been carefully made, it will lie flat inside the envelope, and the envelope will look unprepared.

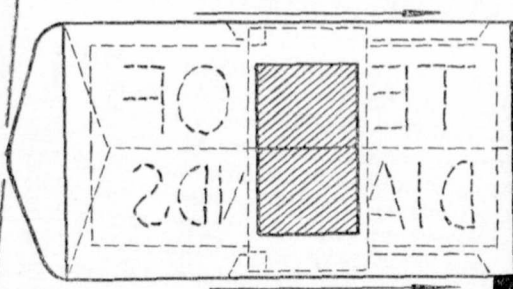
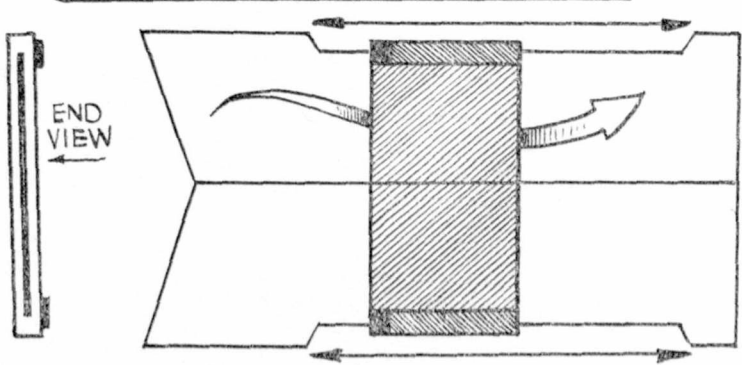
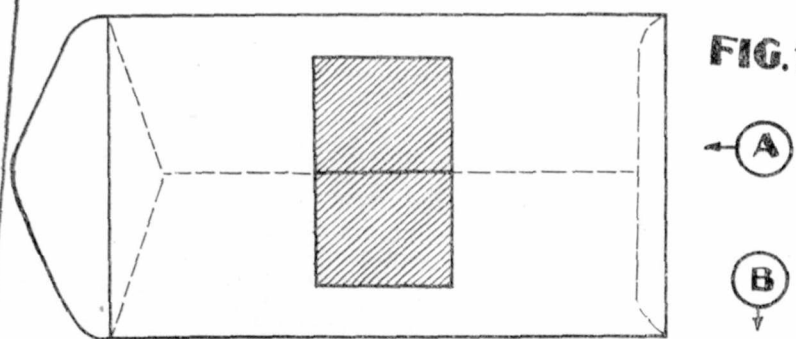
To use the feke, introduce first the card and the envelope, calling attention to the "window" in the latter, and poke a wand or pencil through it. Have the blank card examined and place it slowly into the envelope, making sure that it goes into the opposite compartment from the one which already contains a card. It will enter almost as far as the opening, when it will meet the thick cardboard squares on the band. Continue slowly pushing the card down, and the whole band will be pushed down with it in the direction of the arrows in Fig. 10C, gradually uncovering the blank side of the card already contained in the envelope. When the band comes to the end of its run, lift the card slightly away so that it slides over the cardboard squares, and push it right home. From the front and through the "window" the illusion of the card being slowly pushed visibly into the envelope is perfect.

Initial the portion of card showing, and when later the card is removed, it is the front one only that is drawn away, the envelope appearing empty again owing to the feke covering the original card and appearing as the back of the envelope. That, then, is the apparatus, and I have always found this to work smoothly and to be very convincing in action, as I am sure you will be when you make one up.

One of the many uses to which I have put this envelope gave the title to this article. The card is shown blank and placed inside the envelope as outlined above, and a spectator, who has been invited to the platform, puts his initials on the card. The envelope is then placed on a small easel, while the performer goes into the audience and persuades someone to select a card from a pack. The audience may see this chosen card if desired, but it is emphasised that on no account must the assisting spectator on the platform know the card.

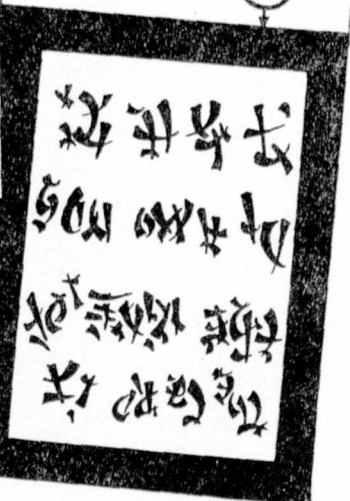
Returning to the platform, the performer, with suitable "business" calls upon the spirit of Confucius to write a message and name the chosen card. The card is removed, and written upon it is found a message—but written in Chinese ! The audience are allowed to see this distinctly, and it is shown to the assisting spectator with the request that he translate it into English for the benefit of the audience. When the spectator informs the performer that he cannot read Chinese, the performer merely makes hypnotic passes before his face, and then gets him to try again. This time the spectator slowly translates the message, the translation correctly naming the chosen card.

FIG. 10.



MESSAGE FROM
Confucius

DENNIS



This "gag" effect can cause quite a bit of fun in the hands of a good entertainer, and is quite simple in action. Fig. 10D shows the message which appears on the card. By turning this upside down the "message" will be readable by the spectator. The characters are feke ones designed to look like Chinese one way up, but giving rather scattered English lettering the opposite way up. One row of symbols is quite meaningless, being there to add to the confusing effect. If the message card, when reversed, is not *too* easy to read, the spectator will have to examine it carefully as you hold the card the correct way for him, and it will appear as though he is really translating the message.

The presentation should be clear. The card is forced in the first place. Then the message is shown to the audience and the spectator holding it the "Chinese writing" way up. Put card under arm while hypnotising spectator, then show it to him so he can read the wording. After he has read the message, the card can be again shown to the audience, reversing it in doing so, and the audience is no wiser.



Pages from my NOTEBOOK



Like many other conjurers, I keep a notebook of interesting facts and original ideas or twists which occur to me. Some of these notes often come in handy when working out new effects; others can often be developed into complete effects in themselves. So for a change, instead of giving you a completely detailed effect, this article will give a glimpse into my notebooks, of some of the various ideas that have been noted therein. Possibly you will find something useful. Some of the ideas I have already used, others have been awaiting inspiration to develop further; so now see what you can do with them.

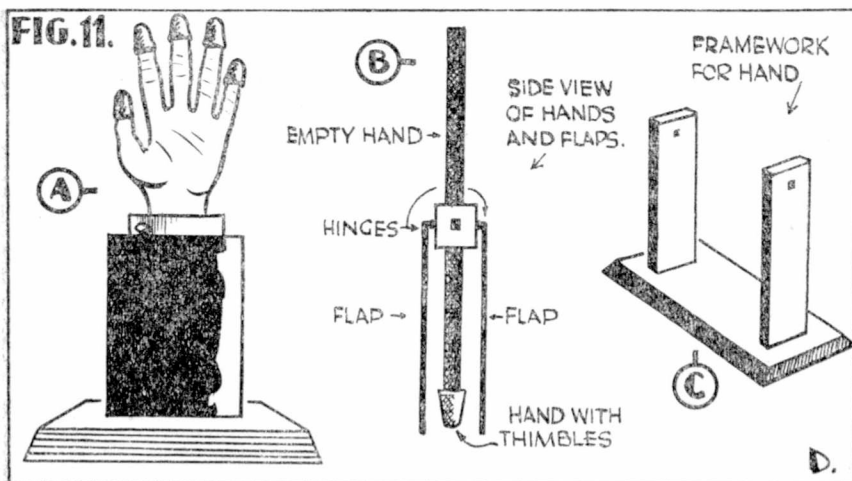


A THIMBLE PRODUCTION STAND

THIS is an interesting idea. On the performer's table would be a model of a cut-out hand and part of the arm. Size would be that of a normal hand. Thimbles are produced in a sleight-of-hand routine in the usual manner, then five of the thimbles placed on the fingers and thumb of the dummy hand, apparently to display them, while the remaining thimbles of the finale to the sleight-of-hand production are disposed of. The five thimbles are then removed and placed aside, while the dummy hand has a handkerchief draped over it. One by one the thimbles are taken and vanished, and when the hand is uncovered, the thimbles are seen to be back again upon the fingers and thumb.

The hand to produce this result is mechanical and a general view of this is given in Fig. 11A. The hand is cut from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. plywood, and the "arm" or "sleeve" is in the form of a flat upright box suitably painted. Fig. 11B shows the mechanics of the apparatus. In this drawing we have not included the framework but this is shown separately in Fig. 11C. The framework is simply a flat base upon which is mounted a pair of uprights, which form the two sides of the "sleeve." The uprights are painted black.

Referring again to Fig. 11B, which is a side view of the apparatus, it will be seen that in the centre is a strip of square wood (about an inch square) with a plywood hand mounted above and another mounted below. Two rectangles of plywood or tin are loosely hinged to the front and back of the square strip, along the centre. These flaps are of a size to fill the space in between the two upright arms of the frame, and the flaps are painted black both sides to represent the sleeves. The square strip is painted glossy white to suggest white shirt sleeves. The complete "feka" is then mounted on to the two upright arms of the frame, pivoting it in the centre of the ends of the square strip.



It is recommended that in pivoting the feke in place a square pin be used, and this mounted in square holes in the upright arms, the holes being large enough to allow the square pin to revolve. The reason for this is that if round pins in round holes were used, it would be difficult for the hands to remain upright, and they would tend to sway. With square pins in square holes, the hands will come to rest in an upright position and yet can be revolved at will.

To manipulate this apparatus, thimbles are placed on the fingers and thumb of one of the hands, and this is arranged so it is below and covered with the two flaps forming the "sleeve." Now if a handkerchief is held in front of the hand, stretched out flat, and then brought over the hand, it will be found a simple matter to push the upper hand downwards. This will bring the lower hand to the top, and the sleeve flap which was at the rear will come to the front, while the front flap will go up with the lower hand, and then drop down and cover the back, leaving the apparatus apparently just as before, but now with thimbles on the hand.

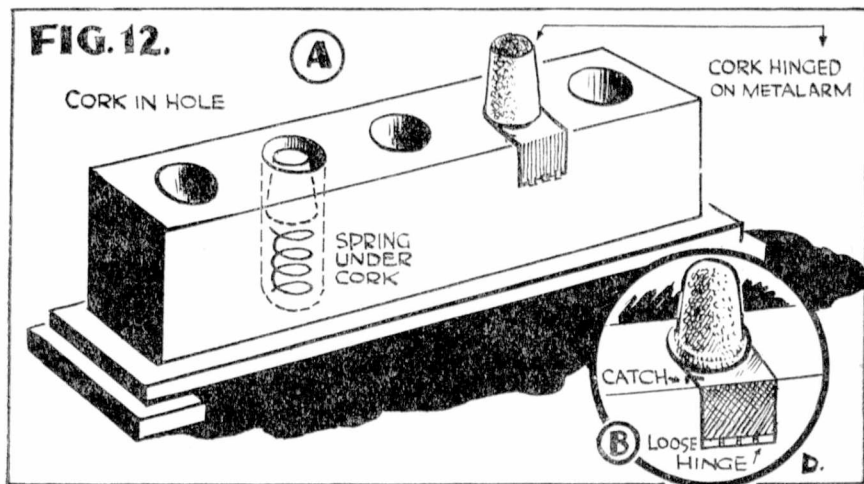
Obviously this hand can be used also to vanish thimbles, or to change the colour of thimbles. We leave you to work out some sort of routine or application of this useful apparatus.

THIMBLE VANISHING STAND

FOLLOWING the above, I have a note of an application of the coin vanish which I described in one of my earlier books, *Modus Operandi*, in which thimbles can be vanished. In the case of the coins, the stand requires careful making, though when made, it is a perfect illusion. Adapting this stand to the simple vanish of thimbles, makes construction easier. For this, we have a stand which consists of a block of wood along the top of which are mounted five corks. Thimbles are placed on the stand, pushing each one on to a cork. When required, the thimbles are removed one by one from the corks and vanished. The method is quite mechanical and requires no sleight-of-hand at all.

Again you must look at the drawings made to illustrate this apparatus. With mechanical effects, a single drawing will not only save many words, but also misunderstandings. So Fig. 12 will give you a clear conception of the shape of the stand and the mechanics. Five holes are bored into the top of the stand to the full depth of the block. The extra base of thin wood then forms a bottom to the five holes. The holes are large enough for the corks that are being used to slide easily up and down. Light compression springs are mounted under each of five corks and these dropped into the holes. The springs keep the corks above the block, but the cork can be pushed down into the holes out of sight.

Left like this, the corks would simply rise above the stand and wobble about, so some form of stop and steadying arrangement must be added. This is NOT shown in the drawings to avoid complications, but here is what I do to accomplish this. The sliding corks are longer than another five which will be mentioned shortly. Ten corks are needed, and five are cut shorter by taking a slice off the bottom or *wider* end of the corks. Now a strip of very thin plywood is cut to lie flat on top of the bored block, and five holes are cut into this strip, exactly coinciding with the holes in the block. But the holes in the strip are



slightly smaller than the holes in the block, and are, in fact, the exact diameter of the bottom of the *shorter* corks. This means that the longer corks, being wider at the bottom, will not pass right through. Now drop the five sprung corks into the five holes, place the drilled strip of wood over the corks so they go through the holes, and then glue and pin the strip flat to the top of the stand. You will now be able to push the corks into the holes, and when they are released, they will rise until the holes in the strip stop them from rising further. Here I might point out that the tops of all the corks are rounded off in thimble shape. If this is not done, and the tops of the corks are left flat, they will not "feed" through the holes, and will sometimes wedge underneath and not come up as required.

The five shorter corks are mounted on short bent strips of tin, which are hinged behind the stand. One of these is shown in the drawing. The size of the bent strip and the position of the cork is such that when the strip is bent to bring the cork on top of the stand, the cork exactly covers the hole in the stand. Left like this, the sprung cork would push upwards and tip the hinged arm back, so a catch must be arranged to hold the hinged cork down and keep the sprung cork in the hole. An easy arrangement for this is to have the hinge on the arm very loose indeed, so it has a "headache"—that is, so it will wobble sideways a little. Then on one side of the arm on top of the stand, is fixed a tiny bent wire. This is shown in Fig. 12B. It will now be seen that if the hinged arm is bent upwards, and then pushed under this wire hook, it will be held firmly in place, the pressure of the spring cork holding it tightly.

To vanish thimbles, have the hinged arms all in place on top, and push five thimbles, one on to each cork. Stand behind the apparatus and pretend to pull off one of the thimbles, the fingers going in front and the thumb behind. At the same time push the arm sideways to free it from the hook and let the arm with the thimble drop behind the stand, allowing the sprung cork to come up in its place. The hand comes away as though holding a thimble, and then duly "vanishes" it. This is repeated with the other thimbles.

The stand can be arranged for as many thimbles as you wish, but five is suggested as it could be worked with the Thimble Production Stand previously described. Used with the large wooden thimbles, this method of vanishing is very effective and worth the small trouble required in making it.

PEN-CLIP CARD CHANGE

DIVING at random in my notebook, I see something that reminded me of an impromptu effect I worked some years ago, and which I dotted down for future use. When performing some close-quarter card effects, I wanted to display a single card back out in a conspicuous position where there was no chance of my doing any "funny business" with it. As I was working in a lounge suit, and wore a fountain pen in my outside breast pocket, I simply pushed the card under the clip of the pen, which left it plainly displayed.

Later on I was doing a version of "Everywhere and Nowhere" with cards and at one point I had double lifted a card with the intention of palming off the face card as the back card of the pair was thrown on to the table, so causing a change to take place. But the fountain-pen clip came to mind. So I held the two cards in my right hand in a position ready for palming one card, and pushed both cards as one sideways under the clip. Then the thumb gripped the face card, and as the hand was removed, the card was palmed away, leaving the rear card in place under the clip. The hand with the palmed card picked up the pack, adding the palmed card to the top, and later I was able to ask someone to remove the card from the clip, and for them to discover that it was now a different card. Somehow it was more impressive than merely throwing the card on the table.

A PEN-CLIP IMPROMPTU

STRICTLY speaking this is not impromptu, as it requires previous preparation, but the effect on the audience is that the trick is performed on the spur of the moment. The card change just outlined, brought to mind another effect in my notebooks, and one which I have used quite a lot. When someone asked to see a trick, I would remove my fountain pen, and display it, calling attention to the clip on the cap. Then I would apparently snap off the clip showing this in the right hand, while the left displayed the pen bereft of clip on all sides. Suddenly with a throwing motion, the clip was tossed towards the pen, when it vanished from the left hand, and appeared in place on the pen.

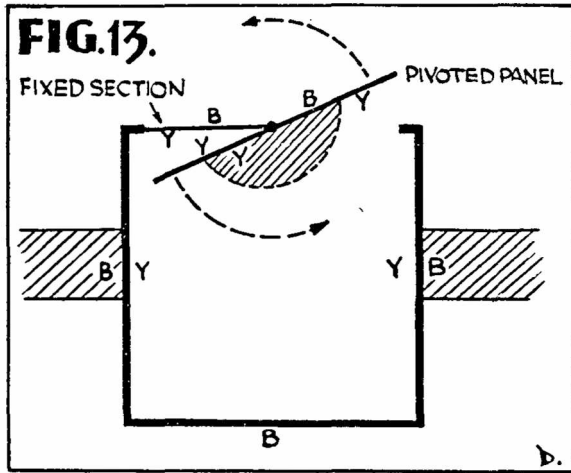
The pen I used was a Parker, but any pen of the type where the clip is built on to the pen can be used. The new Biro stylo which I now use would be ideal. The only snag is that one must have a duplicate broken-off clip, and I do not feel like buying another Biro for this. The point is, that the clip must *not* be of the removable type which clips around the cap of the pen, but of the type that either fits to the top of the cap by a small inlaid ring, almost invisible, or built into the side of the cap as with the Biro.

The pen is unprepared and is carried about in the normal manner. The duplicate clip, however, is tied firmly to a short length of strong flesh-coloured thread, which is in turn attached to a length of cord elastic. This is pinned up the sleeve so the clip hangs a few inches inside, out of the way and out of sight.

At an opportune moment, obtain this clip in the fingers of the right hand and finger-palm it. With the left hand, remove the pen and hold it by the end opposite to the clip, the clip showing on top. Bring the right fingers over the clip, and as soon as the clip is covered, make a slight up and down movement as though straining on the clip, and then with a jerk, pull the right hand away, displaying the duplicate clip. Under cover of the up and down movement, the pen was simply turned round so the clip was hidden underneath. The pen in the left hand is still held by the end, thumb on top and first and second finger underneath. Then as the clip is shown in the right hand, the left apparently shows the pen on both sides, using the well-known paddle move (or colour-change knife move), so keeping the clip hidden from

sight. This move will be familiar to most readers, and consists merely in the correctly-timed rolling of the pen as the hand is turned over. So the pen is shown back and forth. In due time, the right hand tosses the clip towards the pen, letting it slide back up the sleeve, while the fingers of the left hand turn the pen, under cover of a slight catching movement, to bring the clip on top in view again. Simple as this may sound, I can assure you it is a perfect little "impromptu" when neatly presented, and under apparently unprepared circumstances.

A PIVOT-FLAP SUBTLETY



HERE is an idea which I have never got down to using, but which is obviously practical. Next time I build a cabinet which uses a pivoted panel on the back, whether it is large or small, I shall add colour to give misdirection. Perhaps I had better explain what I mean. Usually when a box or cabinet has such a panel, the inside of the panel must be the same colour as the outside of the panel, or when the panel is revolved, there will be a noticeable difference. Here in my notebook is an idea I once struck which allows the outside of the cabinet to be, let us say, blue, and the inside painted yellow. Yet when the panel is revolved, the inside is still yellow. Yes, very misdirecting and it does not need much extra work to incorporate this improvement.

I am afraid you must have another look at the drawings to get this idea. Fig. 13 shows the simple addition which is made to the pivoted flap, or perhaps I should say, to the cabinet itself. This is shown as a top view, and it will be noted that as well as the usual pivoted panel, a thin panel is fitted between the side of the cabinet at the back and the centre where the other panel rotates. This spare section must be fixed to the side of the cabinet, but should not be fixed at the top

nor the bottom, and it should be cloth hinged to the centre of the pivoting panel. This allows sufficient play for the panel to revolve when required. The colouring is then done as shown, the "Y's" indicating Yellow and the "B's" Blue. So when the panel is closed flat (it is partly open in drawing), the outside of the cabinet is blue and the inside yellow. Fix anything to the back panel inside the cabinet, or have a shelf as indicated by the shaded semi-circle and stand the article on it, and when the panel is revolved in the direction of the arrows, the article goes to the back, leaving the inside of the cabinet yellow.

One snag is, of course, that the back is also yellow instead of blue, but if you have something concealed there, you will not want to show the back, anyway. But there is the idea---someone may be able to use it, or develop it.

· WANT A PRODUCTION BOX ?

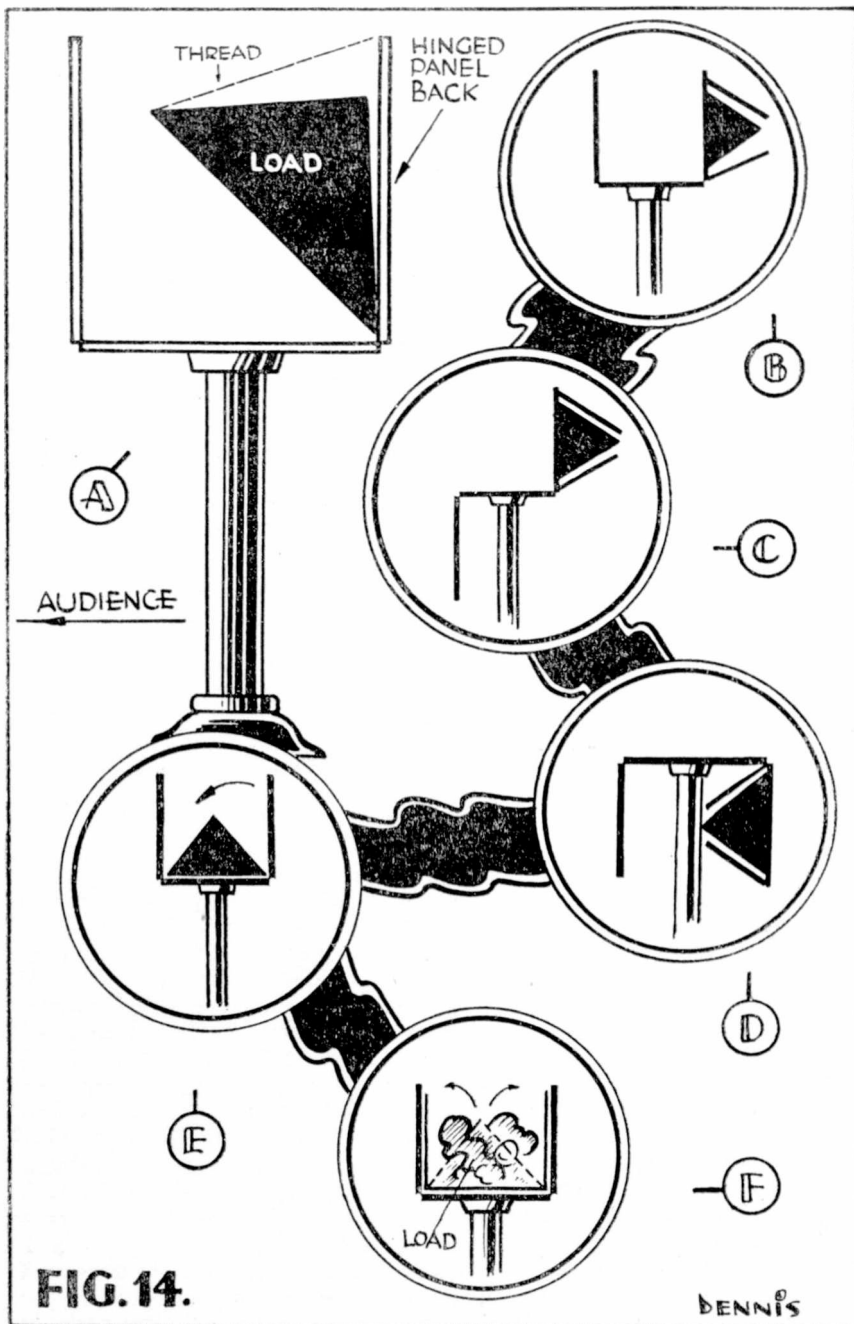
THERE is rather an unusual production cabinet in my notes which combines several known principles in an unorthodox manner.

The cabinet has four sides and a bottom, and is fixed on a pedestal. The cabinet is shown all round, then the four sides are dropped one by one starting with the front one, giving a clear view of the interior. With the sides hanging down, the cabinet is again shown all round. Finally, after the sides have all been replaced, and the load produced, the cabinet can be tipped up to show the interior with no load chamber visible. Not that the audience should know anything about load chambers, but this could be shown indirectly by finally tipping something from the cabinet.

I confess I have never built this particular item and it is just one of my "Notes," but I see no reason why it should not work perfectly well. Some day when I want a production box and I do not want to use the one described earlier in this book under the title of the "Fig Leaf Chest," I shall build it, and no doubt discover the mechanical snags which crop up. In the meantime, perhaps you will get in first.

The cabinet has four sides, arranged to drop down, and the rear of these sides possesses a panelled back cut across the centre horizontally and spring-hinged top and bottom. The cabinet should be quite square, and hinged at the inside bottom of this back panel is a square sheet of thin wood on the top of which is mounted a triangular load chamber. Better look at Fig. 14 if you cannot follow this. This load chamber has two triangular sides which are fixed, and two hinged flaps which close and fasten at the apex to form the triangular load-chamber. To manipulate this box, it is first necessary to fill your load chamber, fasten the top together, and then lift the hinged flap until the load chamber touches the inside of rear panel. It is held in this position by tying a short length of black cotton from the hinged flap to the top of the back panel. The moves to show the box empty and then make the production are shown in section in Fig. 14 from A. to F.

"A" shows the cabinet at the commencement, and it can be turned all round, finishing with the feke portion at the rear as before. The fingers now steady the cabinet at the back, at the same time pressing the load chamber back through the hinged flaps on the back, while



the other hand lowers the front. This is seen in "B" and "C." A catch should be arranged to hold the load chamber in place so you do not have to hold it all the time. The side flaps are then dropped (these are not shown in the diagrams), and then the back is dropped, leaving the cabinet as shown in "D." Again the cabinet can be turned all round, finishing with the prepared flaps at the rear.

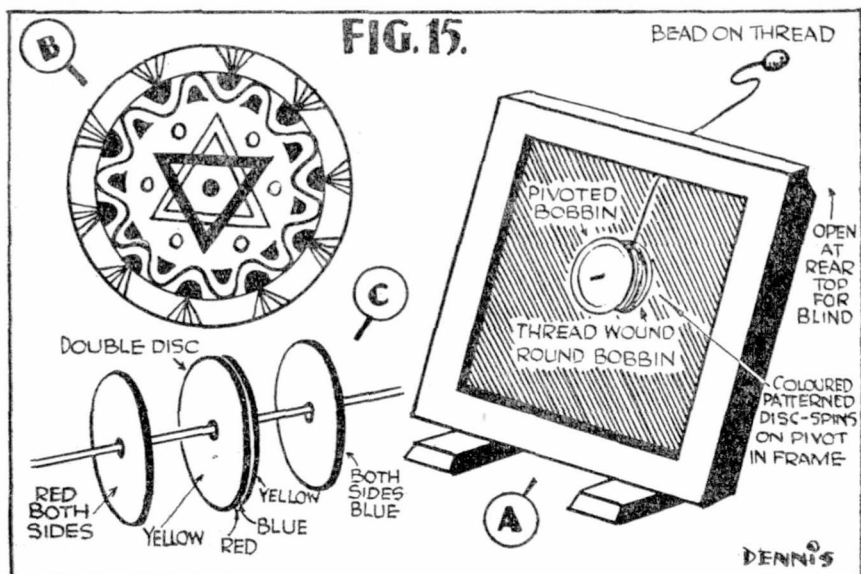
The moves are then reversed until position "A" is reached again, and then the thread is broken so the hinged load-chamber drops flat to the bottom of the box. Reach inside and undo the top of the chamber, folding the flap back against the side and giving access to the load. These two moves are seen in "E" and "F." The flaps folded against the side, and the two triangular sides of the load chamber, are invisible against the inside of the box.

SPINNING DISCS

A LONG, long time ago I had an idea with coloured discs, wherein one of three was made to vanish. Having no immediate use for it, down it went into my Notebook for future reference. Much later I was reading a book of Waller's and was intrigued by an effect he called "The Spinning Card." But not being an expert at spinning cards around the room and catching them again, and not being very keen on using the back-palm for a normal conjuring effect, I let the effect slide until, going through my note-book again, I came across this disc idea. From this I combined the two and had a very presentable effect which, unlike the production box just described, I built and used.

As Waller's book is out of print, I do not think there will be any harm in describing the part of his effect that I used, so we will do this first. A flat box-like frame was built about eight inches square. This had an open front with a three-quarter inch frame around it, an open top and a solid closed back covered with black velvet. In the centre of the back was a pivot on which rode a circular wooden bobbin an inch in diameter, and which was faced with black velvet. A six-inch plywood disc with a small hole in the centre was placed upon the pivot and fixed to the bobbin by means of two small pin-points which protruded from the back of the disc near the centre. A length of thread was wound around the bobbin behind the disc and then brought up the frame and out of the top, where it terminated in a small black bead tied upon it. The frame is shown in Fig. 15A. Finally a square of black velvet was placed inside the frame, covering the disc and hanging over the top at the rear, which was, incidentally, cut a little lower so that this hanging velvet could not be seen. Now if a handkerchief was draped over the "empty" frame, and then later the frame was gripped in one hand while the other gripped the handkerchief at the top, and through it the bead and velvet, the handkerchief could be pulled away, taking with it the velvet to reveal the disc and also the thread. As the thread was pulled, so the bobbin revolved, and the disc made its appearance in the frame, spinning. So much for Waller's ingenious idea.

My own application was as follows, and I have found it to be one which appeals to audiences of children as well as adults. You have probably been fascinated by spinning cardboard discs (see Fig. 15B) on



which have been painted various coloured designs. As the discs spin, beautiful patterns of colour are formed. This then was the basis of my idea. I would show three wooden discs with such patterns upon them, but each with a different predominating colour such as red, yellow and blue. These were placed on a rod one by one and spun to show the resultant patterns, and this is invariably greeted by the children with audible "ohs" and "ahs."

Waller's Spinning Frame was then introduced, being secretly prepared with a patterned disc to match one of the three, and covered with a handkerchief. After this, the three discs were shown again and one selected by the children by voting which they think the best. This one is placed on the rod and the other two placed one on each side, and all three are spun together. As they slow up, they are slid from the rod, and the chosen one has vanished, leaving only two discs. Upon removing the handkerchief from the frame, there is the chosen disc spinning proudly to show its chosen pattern.

The arrangement for vanishing this disc is very simple. My early model was made in thin plywood, but to-day I would make the discs of the $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch thick sheet plastic which can easily be obtained, as this is light, unbreakable and does not warp. Apart from the disc inside the frame, we need four other discs instead of the three we are supposed to have. Two of these, say the red and the blue, are painted both sides with patterns, each disc having the same pattern both sides. But the third disc has a yellow design painted one side and a red duplicate on the other side, while the fourth disc has the yellow design one side and a duplicate of the blue on the other.

The two prepared discs are then very lightly fixed together with two dabs of wax, the red and blue sides inside, so they look like a single disc with yellow design both sides. The edges of all the discs are black, and the double disc has one side marked so that the red and blue insides

can be correctly positioned during the handling of the apparatus. One side of the red disc and one side of the blue disc has four fairly strong dabs of wax upon them, this being concealed in the design. Fig. 15C shows the set-up.

All that it is necessary to do is to display the discs, spinning them ad lib. The yellow disc should be forced, and the best way to do this is to make it the *best* design when spun. Then spin the discs one by one, asking the children to applaud each one, and finally selecting that which got the most applause. Experience will show that in any case they will applaud about even for each one, so you can just say that you consider the yellow one got the most, and no-one will query you. This may sound saucy, but I can assure you that it works, not only in this effect, but in others where a similar type of force is required. In any case, making the yellow design the best, will give you confidence. The yellow disc is then sandwiched between the two other discs, pushed together, on the rod, pressing them together so the wax takes action, and spinning them together. As they slow down, take them in one hand, separating the centre of the feked pair of discs, and sliding what appear to be two discs, red and blue both sides, from the rod. The spectacular appearance of the spinning disc in the frame makes a fine conclusion to a colourful and entertaining item.

A COMEDY IDEA

I THOUGHT this was funny once—perhaps someone may still think it is. The idea was to use one of those baskets with four traps in the bottom which will produce four bunches of spring flowers one by one. Each trap would be filled with the usual hodge-podge of coloured bits of springy paper (flowers to you), and in addition would be concealed in some way, probably behind a basketwork flap at the side of the basket, a small gadget to be described in a moment.

The performer would show the basket and tell the audience that it is a flower-basket. To prove this he magically fills it with spring flowers which he tips out, leaving the basket empty again. Then he would ask someone to name his favourite flowers and if the person said, let us say, "roses," then the performer would produce another bunch of spring flowers with a laconic "Roses!" and empty them out. "Anyone else name their favourite flower?" Someone does and whatever is named, spring flowers are produced.

Finally the performer would say, "I notice no-one said Orchids; you could have had those if you wished. . . . Orchids!" Whereupon he would reach into the basket, pull something upwards, and leave a green stalk about two feet or so high with a single spring flower mounted on the top. This, of course, was the gadget mentioned a moment ago, which would be concealed behind a flap, and is simply a steel spring ruler, green ribbon, and a spring flower.

Roars of laughter!

THE PASSING OF TIME

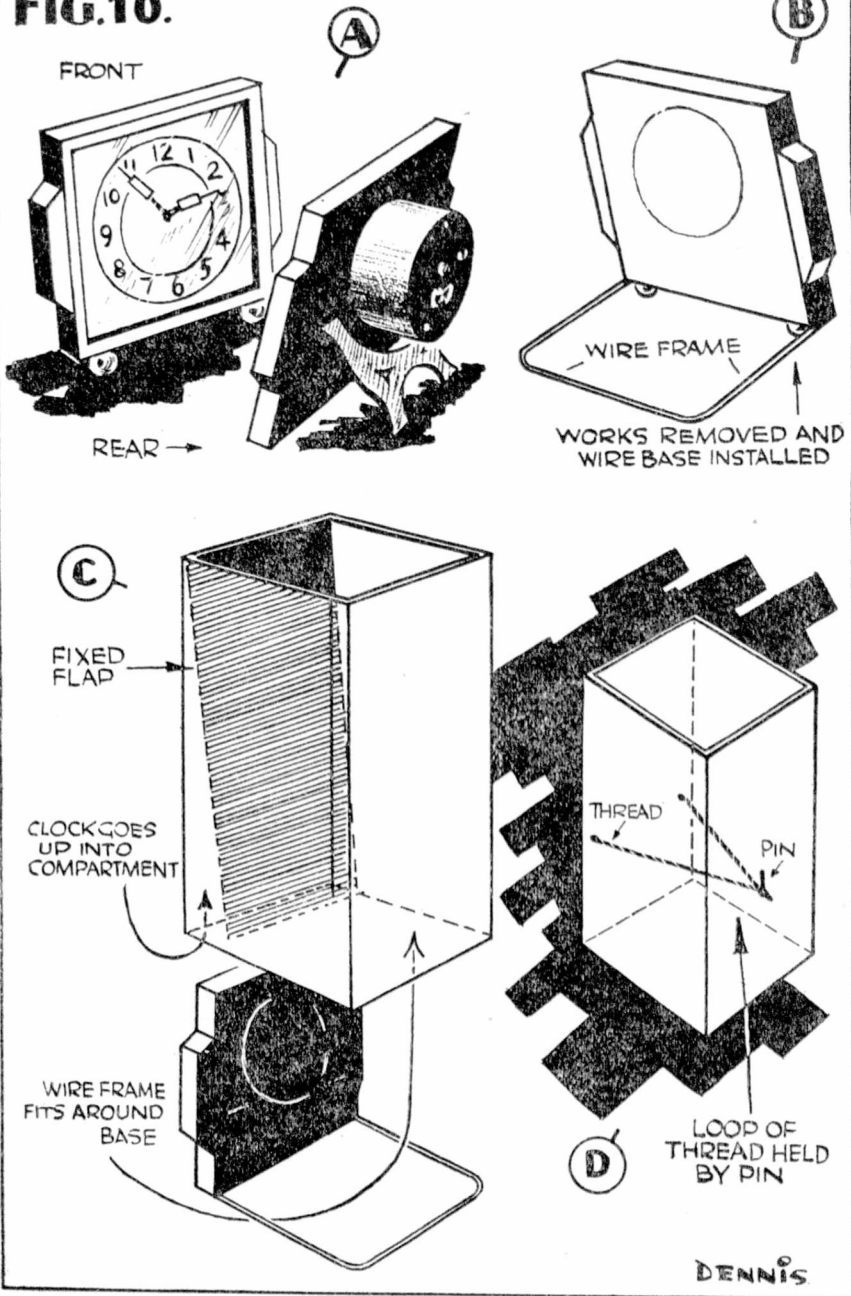
MANY, many years ago, Larsen and Wright produced their "Challenge Block Penetration," in which a solid, marked block of wood passed through a sheet of glass while covered by chimneys. This, and similar effects, enjoyed a vogue. Today they seem to have a revival, and the old methods are being resurrected and "improvements" in the way of little holes in the tubes added, and all sorts of things. But the block of wood still goes through the sheet of glass!

Of course, a block of wood is such a very convenient thing to use for this because it fits so nicely into the tubes, and the shells are so easily made, and they conceal themselves so neatly inside the tubes. So let us all use blocks of wood because it is so nice and easy—unless you want to be different. Then perhaps you will want to use some awkward-shaped article which cannot easily be imitated by a shell, and which does not so smoothly fit around the inside of the tube. How about a clock? Not another wooden cube with a paper dial stuck on to make it look like nothing on earth, and least of all a clock, but a real genuine clock of a shape which cannot be shelled.

I have before me a clock which could be bought before the War at Boots' stores and similar places for the sum of 5s. 11d. and which would probably run well for six months. So if you liked the clock you would get one each six months and have quite a collection to use in tricks. But if you can still get two clocks of this particular type, you can prepare for a very nice, and baffling, penetration effect. Perhaps I had better give you a drawing of my clock (the one that winds up) so you can see the type of thing required; so here it is in Fig. 16A. It has a square face $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inches square, and the main part is simply a shallow frame which is $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch deep, standing on two small ball feet. The actual "works" of the clock are in a round container at the back of the square face, and the clock stands sloping slightly backwards, resting on a hinged fancy strut from the back. From the front, only the square portion is visible, and the clock-case and strut cannot be seen, even when viewing it from an acute angle. So there is the basis of our method.

The first thing to do is to remove the strut and clock-case from the back of one clock, leaving the face and hands of the clock intact. You then have a flat clock $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inches square by $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch thick. This will not stand up, so you must now fix a rectangle of thin but stiff wire from the base as shown in Fig. 16B. This wire frame must be about the same size as the bottom of a wooden tube we shall be using. Perhaps I had better describe the two tubes next.

FIG.16.



With the usual cube penetration, the covering tubes must be a little more than twice the height of the cube. With the clock as described, this is not necessary, and the tube need only be half as high again as the clock. Both of the tubes are arranged with a fixed flap running down one side, similar to the ghost-tube principle. This is shown in Fig. 16C, and it will be seen that the feke clock can be pushed up from the bottom so the square face goes into the double side, and the wire base of the clock will fit around the bottom of the tube, where it will be invisible.

As I have said, both tubes are prepared in this manner, but one of the tubes has a further preparation which is shown in Fig. 16D. The flap is omitted from this drawing, but it will be seen that a small hole is drilled through the side opposite the flap. Then from the flap side of the tube, a triangle of thread is fixed and the loop passed through the small hole opposite, where it is held in place by a small piece of bent wire or a pin. If the genuine clock were now lowered into the top of the tube, it would come to rest on this triangle of thread, but if the wire hook were pulled out, the thread would drop and the clock would fall through the tube.

To describe the working we shall call the tubes, Tube C, which is the one shown in Fig. 16C, and Tube D, being the tube in Fig. 16D—the one with the addition of the thread loop. Prepare by placing the feke clock into the partition of Tube D, and fixing the triangle of thread into place. Both tubes can now be shown normal by handling them as one would a ghost tube.

Show the tubes and a sheet of plate glass. Then introduce the genuine clock, showing it all round, and winding it up. Pick up Tube D, handling this near the bottom with the little finger under the lower edge and retaining the dummy clock in place, and rest it on one hand, on the flat palm. Then show how the clock can be dropped through the tube, by dropping the genuine clock into the top, where it comes to rest on the triangular thread, and lifting the tube to reveal the dummy resting on the hand. Do not do this on a table, as the lack of "Bump" when the clock is dropped would be noticed. Place Tube D on the table, keeping it the same way up, and set down the "clock" while the sheet of glass is taken, tapped, proved perfectly solid and then put across the top of Tube D.

The prepared clock can now be stood on the glass and covered with Tube C, the clock going into the secret compartment and so "vanishing" it. Lift the whole apparatus carefully in the right hand, holding the lower Tube D with the forefinger on the pin ready to pull it out. Hold the left hand a little below the bottom of Tube D ready to catch the clock. Then with a "Voila!", pull out the pin and the clock drops through into the waiting hand, and the tube can be shown quite empty. You could very well have the compartment in Tube C of a size to cause the dummy clock to wedge in place, and this would make the final showing of the tubes easier and snappier.

HATS FOR THE KIDDIES

TO Cecil Lyle goes the credit for transforming sheets of coloured tissue paper into hats, and the effect is at present very popular, even though the hat produced rarely looks anything like a genuine hat. However, for many years I have found this to be an excellent item for entertaining children, building up a routine, and using something in the way of hats that will look the real thing. Instead of using what is intended to be a lady's hat, I change the papers into the well-known carnival paper hats which children and adults delight to wear at Christmas parties. In the routine as I present it, it is the build-up and entertainment value that matter. Away with clever conjuring. Away with pockets in the papers. Let us work boldly, getting our effects in the cleanest and quickest way. We are entertaining children, and clever-clever conjuring is not appreciated. Make the kiddies laugh and they will forget to worry about "how it is done." Besides, the practical performer who does several kiddies' shows every day during the season will appreciate the difficulty and trouble of preparing pockets in papers in which to conceal folded hats. If he can simply use the same hats each time by folding up and just using fresh tissue paper, he can pop from one show to another without worry. So here is my routine in all its crudity, and with all its entertainment value. I do not know from where I first got this routine so I cannot give full credit, but I know it was given to me many years ago and has since proved to be a valuable item.

You will require tissue paper of four varied colours. From two of the colours, fashion a paper hat of the type described, decorating with stars or other patterns. With two other colours, make another hat of a different pattern and design. But most important, both these hats should be made much smaller than usual, so that when placed on the head of a boy it will perch in a ridiculous manner on top. Then you will require a third paper hat which must be made up extra large, so that when it is placed on a boy's head it will completely cover it to the shoulders, and this should be made so as to incorporate all four colours of paper.

A giant spring bon-bon, or Christmas cracker, is also required. These could be obtained from Harry Leat before the War, but there are still a number about, stored in cupboards with owners who know not what to do with them. If you have one, you are lucky. If not, try to get one, or have a go at making one yourself. The cracker is

about two feet long and six inches in diameter, and will compress to a flat disc six inches in diameter and about an inch or a little over in thickness. You could make one by coiling some spring wire and covering it with coloured cloth, trimming the ends with lace and tying two ribbons in place to pull the cloth into regular "cracker" shape.

On the back of a chair you must conceal a servante. The one I use is a simple bag hanging on a wire frame and two wire hooks, its presence being concealed with newspaper draped over the chair back, some of which is used in another effect. A small clip is arranged on the servante to hold the collapsed Christmas cracker.

Fold the three hats into as small a space as possible, crumpling them into balls. The giant hat should be concealed on the body in a place from where it can easily be stolen. My habit is to tuck it up my waistcoat on the left side. One of the other hats is placed on the table and covered with two sheets of tissue paper which match it. On top of these is placed the other hat, and then the other two sheets of paper.

The routine is as follows. A boy is invited to help, and he is seated on a chair which is placed centre stage. Pick up the top two sheets of paper, finger-palming the bunched-up paper hat which was beneath, and show both pieces of paper on both sides, one in each hand. Stand on the left side of the chair and tear the tissue paper to pieces, bundling it into a small ball. Switch this ball for the one which is finger-palmed, displaying the bunched-up hat in its place in the left hand, finger-palming the pieces in the right hand. Make the boy put up his hand to hold the papers up high, and put the hat into his hand, adjusting his hand to an exact position (so you tell the audience). While doing this the right hand rests on the chair back and drops the pieces into the servante.

Whisper to the boy to put his hand in his lap, and then turn to pick up the other two pieces of paper, finger-palming the other hat at the same time. Notice that the boy has his hand in his lap, and tell him that he is surely not feeling tired yet, and bend over him to put his hand back into an upright position above his head. Again whisper to him to put his hand in his lap, and turn away to tear up the papers you have. Tear about twice and notice boy's hand. Again put his hand upright, and turn to tear paper again. Quickly switch papers as before, and notice boy. Look exasperated and put his hand in the air again, dropping pieces into servante under cover of doing this. This repeat business with the boy is a definite laugh-getter, and also acts as good misdirection for disposing of the pieces. The raising-arm gag can be used ad lib according to how you work, and much fun is obtainable.

Now comes due business of making magic passes and saying magic spells such as :

" Oh, whatamy, whichamy, chickamy, Oh !
Moonery, oonery, tickamy, toe !
Willery, tillery, gittery, go !
Witchery, itchery, knitchery, know."

which is all very good fun. Then the papers are opened and the resultant hats tried on. The appearance of performer and boy will cause more hilarity. During the adjusting on the head of these small hats, it is easy to steal the giant hat and hold it concealed in the left hand.

Take off the small hat and place it over the giant hat and screw small hat into a ball as though it is no good. Hold them both in the

FIG. 17.



right hand and go over to boy and try to make his fit better, using the left hand and resting the right on the chair back again. This gives plenty of opportunity to drop the small hat into the servante, retaining the large one. Now take his small one, screw it up and place with the other, holding them both together, and pressing them apparently into a compact ball, but really palming the small one and showing only the large one. Give the large one to the boy to hold up and make him hold his arm high as before, disposing of second hat into servante at the same time. Again the magic spell is repeated and the hat opened, displaying the large one. Place this over the boy's head.

To finish off the routine, take the hat from the boy's head with the left hand, while the right hand steals the bon-bon and loads it behind the hat. This easy, bold move is shown in Fig. 16. Ask the children if they know where you get the hats from, and whatever the reply, say quickly, "I get them from Christmas Crackers," and crumple the hat, allowing the cracker to expand in its place. So another kiddies' effect is concluded.

WHEAT FLAKES

THIS is conjuring with an unusual object, a packet of wheat flakes. Any popular brand can be used, and the colourful packet and general dressing make a nice display. The effect is very direct, and capable of silent presentation as well as with patter. It is best worked with an assistant for smart presentation, but can be performed single-handed if desired. We shall describe the effect as performed when an assistant is used.

Assistant holds in her hands a tray on which rest a glass bowl and a packet of wheat flakes. The conjurer first displays the bowl and replaces it on the tray. Then he takes the packet of wheat flakes, opens it, and pours the flakes into the bowl, filling the bowl and emptying the packet. The packet is placed aside, while a cloth is thrown over the bowl of flakes. A few magic passes, and the cloth is removed, revealing the bowl now perfectly empty. Taking up the packet, it is opened, and the wheat flakes are seen to have returned, filling the packet to the top. These are again tipped into the bowl, and the assistant takes it away.

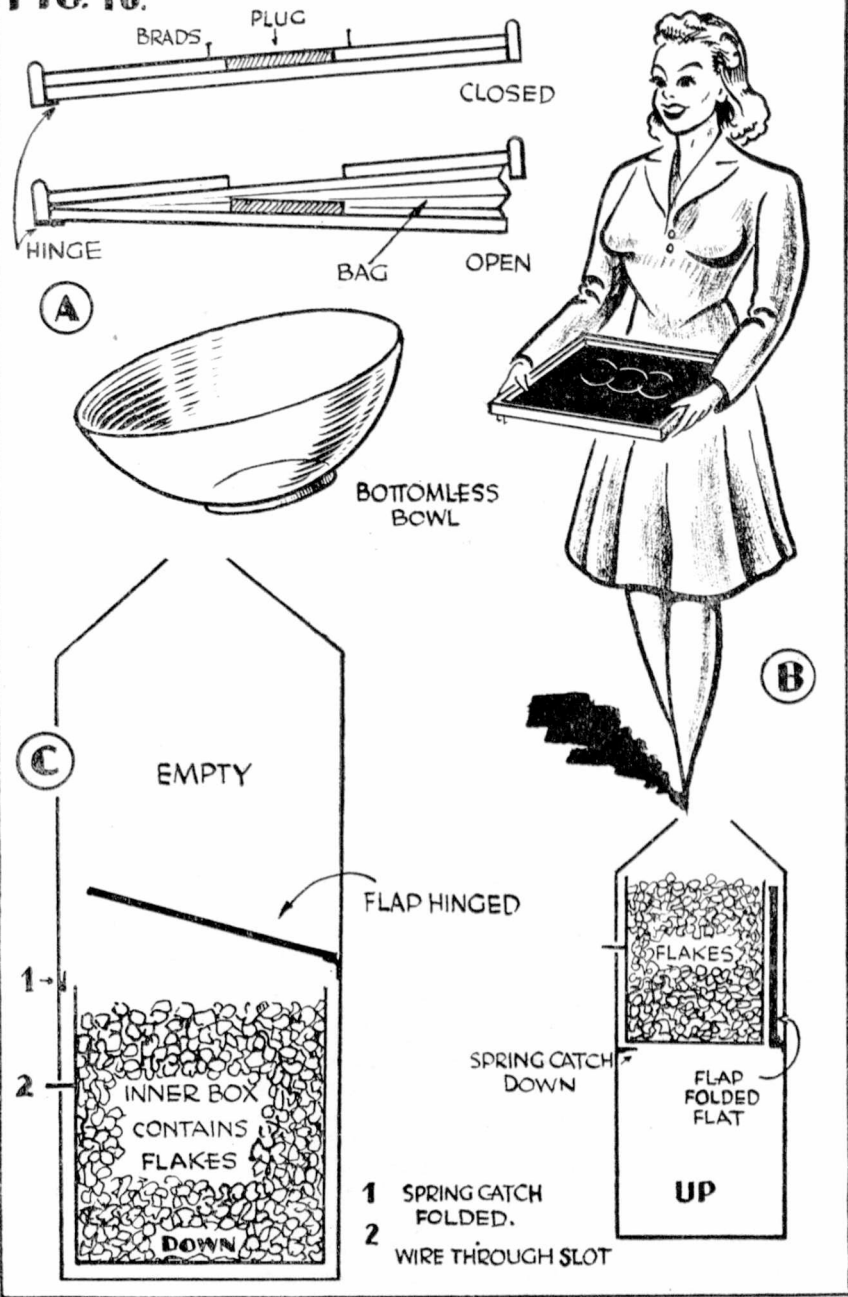
The result described is brought about in a purely mechanical way, and is suitable mainly for platform or stage use. The secret of the vanish lies in the bowl and the tray, and the wheat-flake packet is prepared to give two loads of wheat-flakes. I will describe these two items in order.

The glass bowl is bottomless. You can get the bottom removed from any suitable glass bowl by a glass-cutter without any difficulty. The shape of bowl suggested is shown in the drawings (Fig. 18). Also illustrated in Fig. 18A, is a side section of the tray. This tray has a hole cut in the centre about the size of the hole in the bottom of the bowl, and three small brads are tacked around the hole to position the bowl over the trap correctly. Filling the underside of the tray is a flap which is hinged to the front edge, and this has around its three free sides a cloth bag which holds the flap about two inches below the tray, and which forms a totally enclosed compartment. This bag is pleated so that the flap can be folded flat to the underside of the tray. In the centre of the flap, on the inside, is a wooden disc or "plug," which will fill the hole in the tray when the flap is closed, so giving a flush surface to the tray. The tray is painted in mainly black and silver to conceal the presence of the trap. The tray top should be black, and there should be two or three interlaced silver rings painted on, one of these rings encircling the trap. As a result, something like a black-art well is formed when the trap is open.

Before describing the packet, let us look at the handling of the tray and the vanish of the wheat-flakes. The assistant holds the tray with

FIG. 18.

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the hinged edge of the flap towards the audience, and she holds it in such a manner that her arms run along either side of the tray, and the fingers go underneath, controlling the action of the flap. (Fig. 18B.) On the tray rest the bowl and a cloth. The bowl is displayed and placed on the tray directly over the hole, the bowl then being filled with wheat-flakes. As soon as the bowl is covered with the cloth, the assistant tilts the tray very slightly forward, the brads preventing the bowl from sliding, and then she allows the flap underneath to drop. The wheat-flakes fall through into the compartment under the tray, and a slight movement of the tray will help to spread them out. When the cloth is removed, the bowl is seen to be empty and can be removed and replaced.

The packet of wheat-flakes must be carefully prepared. First, the packet must be strengthened by glueing thin card or thin plywood inside. Halfway up the back on the inside must be a spring-hinged strip of thin plywood or stiff cardboard about an inch or so long and a half-inch wide. This is attached in such a manner that it can be raised flat against the box in tension against the spring, and when released will drop to a right-angle to the box. The springing need only be of the lightest type. On the opposite side to this sprung "catch" must now be hinged a "false bottom" to fill the whole of the interior of the box, so that, when this is down, the box is divided into two equal compartments. Fig. 18C should make all this clear.

An extra box which consists of four sides and a bottom must be made from cardboard of a size to slide easily up and down inside the carton, but it is about half an inch less in height than half the height of the box. From the back of this box must protrude a stiff short wire. A slot is then cut up the centre of the back of the carton, so that when the small sliding box is placed inside the carton the wire protrudes through the slot. By the aid of this wire the inner box can then be raised or lowered at will. Fig. 18C shows this box inside the carton in both positions.

The inner box is filled with wheat-flakes and slid to the bottom. To do this, the spring-hinged catch is folded up flat against the inside of the carton, so it lies flat between the outside of the box and the inside of the carton. The bottom of the carton must be left so that it can be opened and give access to the interior for folding this flap when required. The cardboard "false bottom" is then folded down over the top of this inner box, and the remainder of the box filled with wheat-flakes.

With this box the double load is possible. First, the carton is shown full of flakes, and then they are emptied into the glass bowl, tipping the packet upside down. Pressing on the sides of the packet will hold the hinged false-bottom in place and prevent the other flakes from dropping out also. With the carton again the correct way up, after having casually shown the inside empty (the difference in depth is not noticeable), the pressure on the sides is released and the wire pushed up in the slot, raising the inner box. This is raised high enough for the small sprung catch to drop into place, and then the wire is released so that the inner box slides down slightly and rests in place on the catch. The hinged false bottom folds naturally to the side between the box and the inside of the carton as the box is raised. So when the carton is again opened it is apparently full of wheat-flakes again, which can be poured from the carton.

It now remains for the performer to combine the two pieces of apparatus as described in order to obtain a smart, rather unusual, effect.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE "GRADUAL" CARD FRAME

IN 1938 I was in correspondence with Mr. Conny Steffensen, of Copenhagen, and he sent me an idea by Mr. Aage Rasmussen with permission to use as I desired. This was an addition to the familiar prop of younger days, wherein a card was made to appear in a small picture-frame after having been covered by a handkerchief. The principle of the old frame was simply that of a black velvet flap which covered the card, and which was pulled away under the handkerchief. Because I have found this to be very practical and of use in a number of other effects, producing pictures, messages, etc., I have decided to include this here for your use. The drawings in Fig. 19 are made from those sent to me by Mr. Rasmussen, and the description is that made by Mr. Steffensen. The latter, of course, wrote the description for Mr. Rasmussen because of his command of the English language. I am not a Danish student.

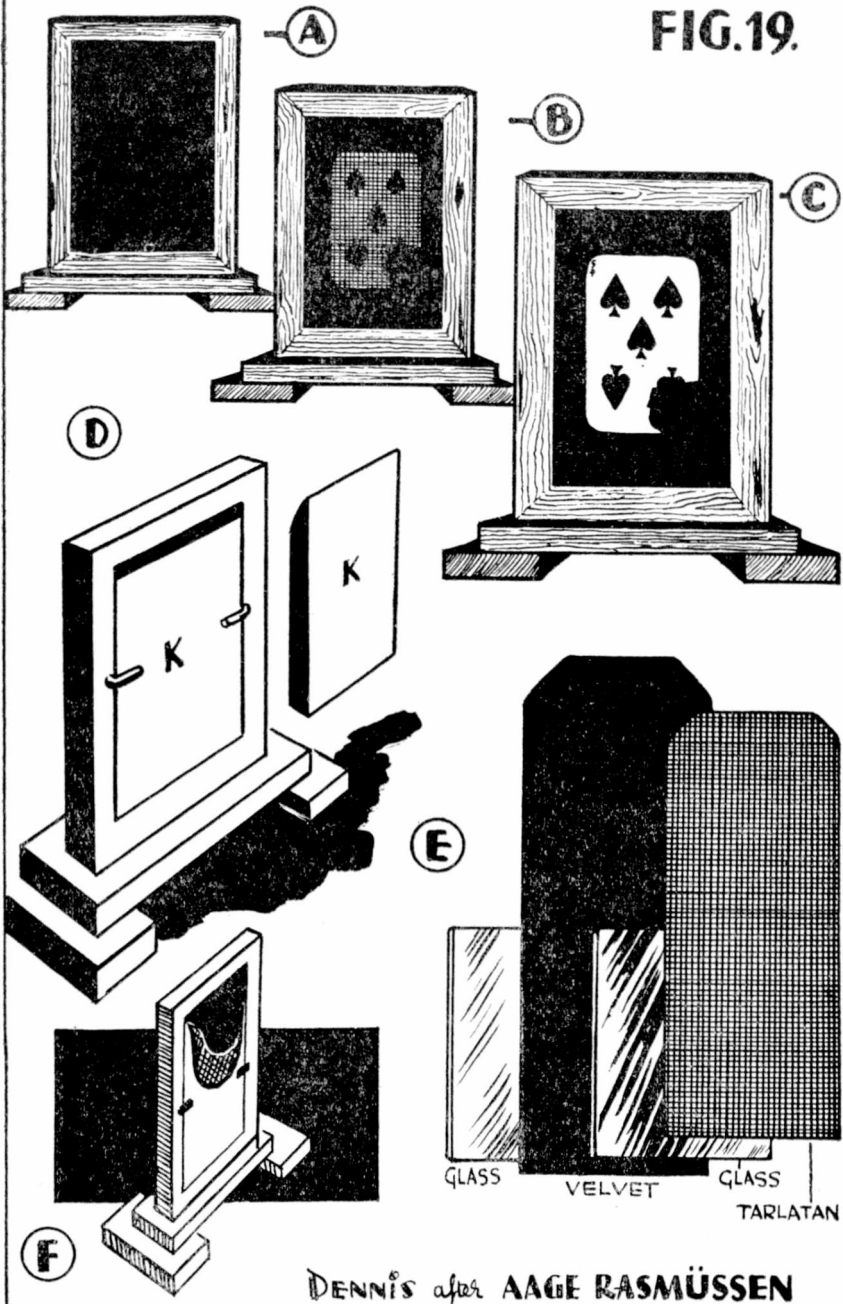
"The effect is as you see in Fig. 19, A, B and C. First you show an empty frame and cover it with a handkerchief. When you remove this, you see through it a mist of a card (or a ghostly card). The frame is again covered, and when uncovered again the card can be seen clearly. A spectator may be allowed to remove the card from the frame.

"You can use the frame for the torn and restored card effect (as illustrated) or you can do it this way: From a pack of cards a spectator selects one (forced) and returns it. Then the pack is placed in full view on the table or a stand, and the chosen card is by 'television' transferred to the frame. The disappearance of the card from the pack is made by means of a card whose back has been treated with diachylon or wax. Get the chosen card on the back of the prepared card, which is at the back of the pack. Let the spectator cut the pack, and when you square it secretly press the pack so the chosen card adheres to the back of the prepared one.

"The frame is shown in Fig. 19D and is of the photographic type. The opening on the back is longer and broader than that on the front. You also need two sheets of thin glass and a back made of plywood covered with black sateen or velvet. These three pieces are a little shorter than the *back* opening of the frame and the plywood backing piece is rounded off along the top edge.

"Two flaps are necessary—one made of sateen or velvet, and the other of tarlatan (see note later). About three layers of tarlatan will be necessary to make the flap. The velvet flap is placed on one of the

FIG.19.



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sheets of glass, then the other sheet placed on top, followed by the tarlatan flap, the card and finally the wooden back. This stack is then placed into the frame and held in place by the two clips.

"The frame, completely prepared, is shown in Fig. 19F, which shows how the velvet and tarlatan flaps hang from the back, these being of different lengths so they can be obtained one by one without fumbling. To operate, cover the frame with a handkerchief, and when you uncover it remove the velvet flap with it, revealing the card showing dimly through the tarlatan flap. The next time, remove the tarlatan flap to reveal the card plainly. If you use a large handkerchief, it will not be necessary to dispose of the flaps as they can remain concealed in the folds. This is best suited for use with giant cards, and it is best to use a black card, which gives a very fine effect."

That, then, is Mr. Steffensen's description, which is ample. I might, however, add a note about the "tarlatan." This is a black net material similar to that used as a veil on some kinds of ladies' hats. Hair-net is not suitable as this is too flimsy; the correct type is fairly stiff and has a squarish open mesh. It will need two or perhaps three thicknesses sewn together to give the "dim" effect. You must experiment with this, using whatever type of net you can get.





I have in my possession an excellent prop known as a Ring Pull. This is illustrated in the heading and consists of a nickelled circular case containing a very strong spring reel upon which is wound strong thin fish-line. At the end of the line is a cleverly-designed catch which can be opened by pressing on the sides, and which will spring shut to hold whatever is passed on to the catch. Fitted to the circular case is a protruding arm which carries the thread, and which will hold the catch in place when the line is pulled in. The action of releasing the line so that the reel winds up the line causes the catch to fly into place and automatically opens the catch to release whatever is held upon it. By another ingenious arrangement, it is not necessary to touch the reel to release the spring. All that is necessary is to pull the line out steadily for the desired length and press a catch into place on the case. Now if the end of the line is pulled to undo the reel slightly more, the catch is released and the line will fly back.

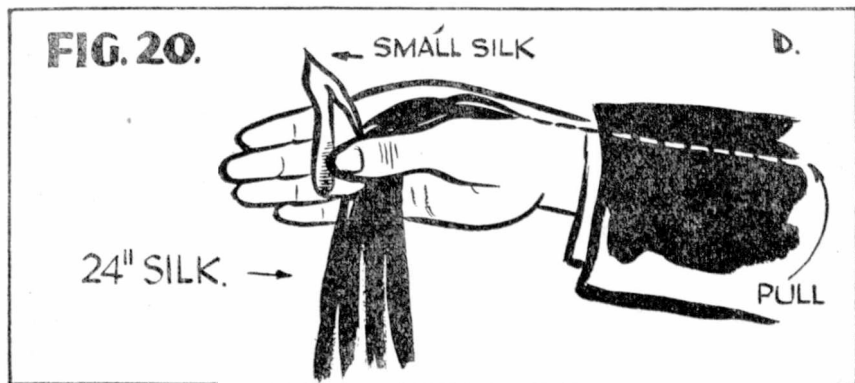
So powerful is the spring that, if the reel is placed inside the trousers pocket, and the line passed up under the coat at the back and down one of the sleeves, any small article fixed to the hook can be pulled clean up the sleeve, down the back of the coat and into the pocket. This apparatus has been described in detail in Prof. Hoffman's books, and was sold extensively before the War as a "ring pull," the idea being that a borrowed ring, placed in one hand, vanishes and appears upon any finger of the opposite hand which has been placed in the trousers pocket. Like many such pieces of apparatus, this reel has plenty of uses besides that for which it was sold, and for the sake of those who have a reel, or who may be able to obtain one now, I would like to give you three different ways in which I have used mine.

THE DIMINISHING HANDKERCHIEF

THIS is not such a clever trick, but it makes a very good "gag" or quick stunt for opening a show. I designed it in the first place for compere work. In brief, a 24-inch silk handkerchief slowly and visibly shrinks in the hand until it is only about a 9-inch silk. My presentation for compere work was to come on waving a silk at the retiring artist as though waving good-bye. Then I would explain that this was not a mark of disrespect, but a compliment and a privilege,

because waving handkerchiefs wears them out so. I would then offer to demonstrate, and holding the large silk by one end I would wave it about, and it would slowly shrink until eventually it was opened out to show it was now only nine inches square.

To do this, the Ring Pull was in my left trousers pocket and the cord down my right sleeve in the regular manner. One of the corners of the 24-inch silk was attached to the end of the pull and the silk held by this end in the right hand, hanging over the thumb. A small 9-inch silk of the same colour as the large one was doubled, and held in the same



right hand as though it was the top corner of the large silk, so I apparently held only one large silk. The arrangement is shown in Fig. 20. Here the 24-inch silk is shaded and appears a different colour from the small one, so as to make the arrangement clear. Also in practice, the hand would be lightly closed around the silks instead of being open as in the drawing.

The diminishing effect is caused by casually displaying the large silk, partly spreading it and letting it drape again. Then the left hand is put in the pocket to hold the pull firmly, while the right stretches out, tugs the cord slightly and so releases the catch on the pull. Then, under cover of the waving movement, the large silk is allowed to slide slowly over the thumb and up the sleeve, where it is pulled right up and down the back. As the last bit goes up the sleeve, one of the corners of the small silk is released, leaving only this small silk displayed, which is then opened out to show its size.

At this point, the large silk lies partly up the sleeve and partly down the back towards the pocket, and if you are using this as an opening effect, it will stay safely in place during the remainder of the show. Although this is a simple idea, I can vouch for its practicability and value, especially as a comperé item.

CLIMBING AND VANISHING KNOT IN SILK

AN uncanny effect can be produced by the aid of the Ring Pull, a silk and a small feke. A knot, plainly tied in the centre of a silk and pulled tight, slowly climbs up the silk and eventually vanishes.

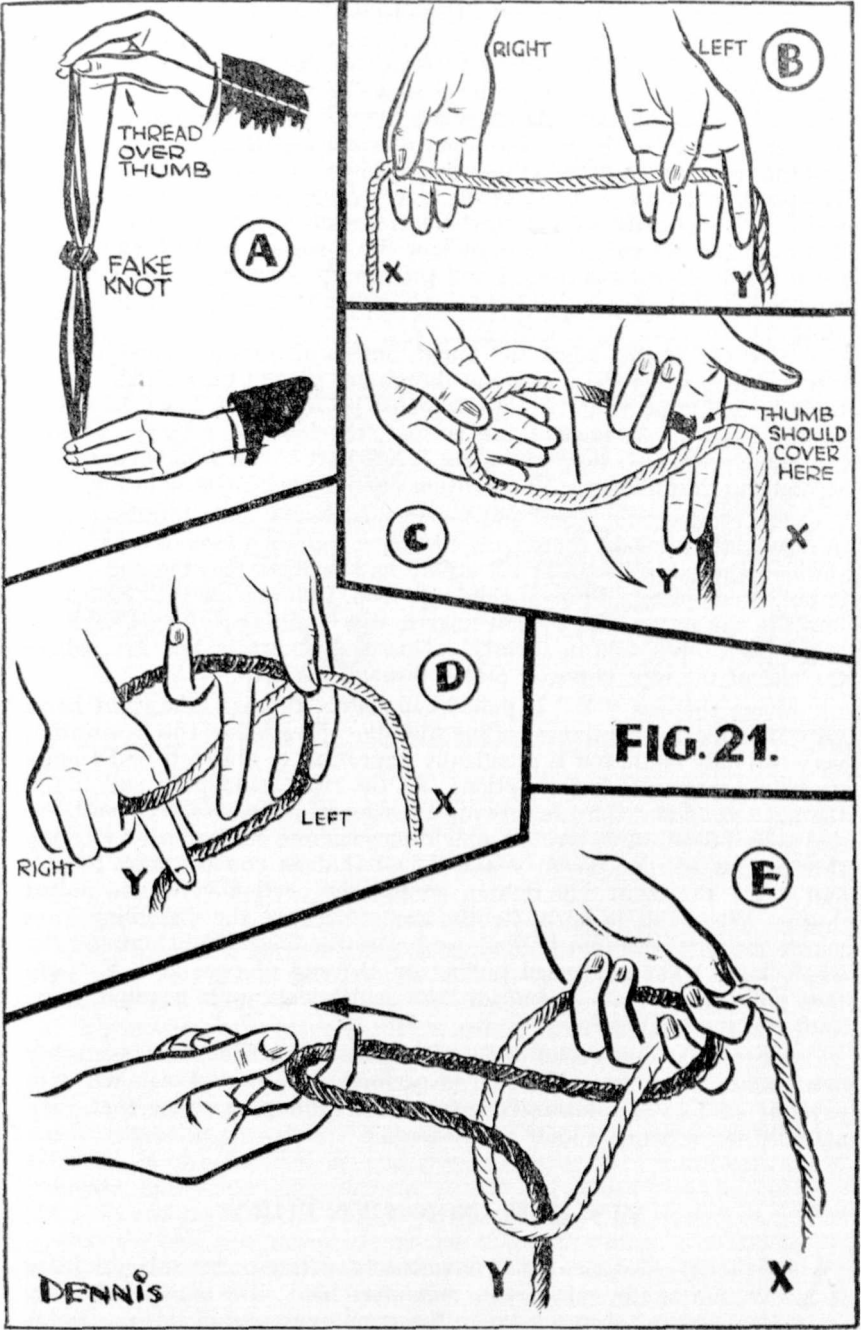
The feke is a strip of soft metal about 2-inch long by an inch wide. Glued around this is some of the same coloured silk as the handkerchief to be used, and this covering silk is bunched and shaped in such a way that it imitates a knot. The end of the pull line is fastened to this. To work, this feke is palmed in the right hand, while the silk is taken and a feke knot which will "dissolve" tied in the centre of it. The freedom allowed by the ring pull will allow this to be done without restricting the movements. The right hand, with the feke palmed, is now placed over the dissolving knot and while apparently pulling the knot tight it is "dissolved" and the right hand presses the feke lightly around the centre of the silk, where it forms a dummy knot which will slide easily up and down.

The left hand should now grasp the feke knot and the centre of the silk, holding them firmly, while the right hand, with the pull cord over the thumb, slides to one end of the silk. This action pulls out more of the cord, and at the same time releases the catch on the pull in the pocket. When the end of the silk is reached both the end and the cord are grasped tightly, and the left hand then slides down to the lower end, holding the silk stretched upright as shown in Fig. 21A. If the pressure of the right thumb on the pull cord is released, the feke knot will be pulled up the silk, and this movement is controlled by pressure of the thumb so the knot climbs slowly. As soon as the knot reaches the top, the right fingers release the end of the silk and drop to the side, allowing the feke knot to slide completely up the sleeve, while the left hand shakes out the knotless silk. If the feke is squeezed flat as soon as it is free of the silk it will slide up the sleeve easily.

I might mention that the pull should be held firmly in the pocket for this, and the left hand is not free to hold it. So the pull must be fixed to the pocket. Alternatively, the pull need not be in the pocket at all, but fixed firmly to a belt around the waist and in a position on the left hip. The ring-pull I have has two loops for threading on a belt.

Perhaps this would be a good place to describe my own method of tying a dissolving knot in a silk or rope. Although nothing directly to do with a Ring Pull, the knot will be useful to anyone who essays to attempt the climbing knot effect just described. There are many dissolving knots and any one could be used, but every conjurer who has seen my way of handling this has been favourably impressed, and I have performed it slowly and repeatedly under the noses of Scoutmasters and other knot "experts" to their complete bewilderment. So you might like it. I would also be glad to demonstrate this knot to readers any time they meet me, should they be interested.

To make the manipulation clearer, I will explain it as used with rope. The moves are exactly the same if using a twisted silk, but not too clear when illustrating. First, hold the rope near the centre in both hands, palms upwards and about six inches apart, as shown in Fig. 21B. Note how the rope goes right over all four fingers of the right hand, but only



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over three fingers of the left hand and then down between the forefinger and second finger. Also how the tips of the thumbs press lightly on the rope on the fingers.

The right hand should now throw the "X" end of the rope over the left hand so that it crosses the other end where it passes between the first and second fingers. At the same time the third and fourth fingers of the left hand double back into the palm taking part of the rope with it, and the right thumb presses the two crossed portions of the rope together. The position is now as shown in Fig. 21C. A small loop has been formed which is held lightly by the right fingers, while the rope crosses in the fingers of the left hand. To show how the ropes are crossed, one of the ropes in the drawing is shaded and the thumb is removed. It must be understood that in practice the thumb covers the part where the ropes cross.

Now the second, third and fourth fingers of the right hand curl up into the loop while the finger and thumb are pushed through the *top* of the loop and grasp end "Y" a few inches below the left hand, as shown by the arrows. As soon as this is done, the folded third finger of the left hand opens out, so grasping the "X" part of the loop between the second and third fingers. The position should now be as seen in Fig. 21D.

The right second, third and fourth fingers now open to release loop of rope while the right thumb and forefinger pull up a loop of rope "Y" through the larger loop. Then slowly and deliberately, the end "Y" is pulled completely through the large loop, sliding over the right forefinger in the action, and the left fingers, still retaining the same holds on the crossed ropes, fold in slightly. This is all shown in Fig. 21E, where the end of the rope is nearly pulled through the loop.

When the end "Y" is pulled completely through, the right hand grips the rope and continues pulling slightly. Now follow this description very carefully because it is practically impossible to illustrate and I must go by a purely verbal description. As the right hand pulls end "Y," the left second and third fingers nip the rope which passes between them and pulls it downwards through a bight you will find has formed. Holding this portion of rope down, you will find that as you continue to pull end "Y" the bight will tighten around the portion you have pulled down. When this is fairly tightly formed, release the dissolving knot which has now been loosely made and close the fingers lightly round the whole knot. The continued pulling on the end of rope at "Y" will then pull the knot into a compact form, which looks quite genuine. The knot can then be displayed.

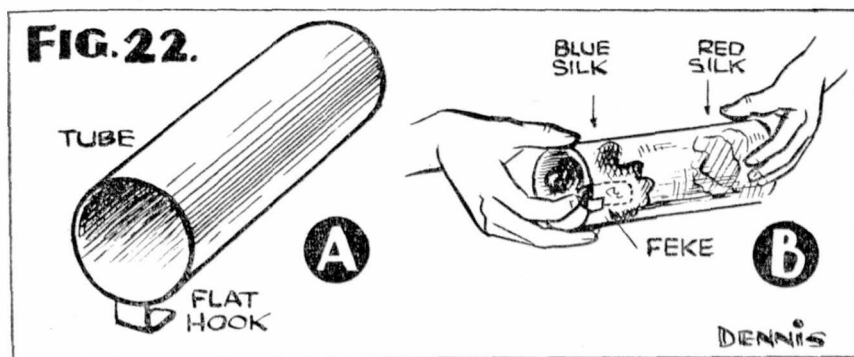
All this has taken a lot of describing, but the whole thing, smoothly done, takes but a second or two to perform, and even if watched with extreme care by spectators they would be willing to swear that they actually saw a genuine knot slowly formed.

VISIBLE 20th CENTURY

ANOTHER effect in which I have used the Ring-pull is this quick-fire version of the 20th Century handkerchief. The ring-pull is only a minor part, but it adds to the startling nature of this particular method. Here is what the audience see. The performer shows three

silks, each about 18-inch square and coloured respectively dark blue and red. Also a smaller bright yellow silk about 12-inch square. Then, taking up a glass straight-sided lamp chimney, he bunches up the larger silks and pushes one into each end, so forming a coloured "plug" at each end and leaving a space empty in the centre of the tube. Next he takes the yellow silk, drapes it over the centre of the glass tube, and holds the glass tube between both hands. With a quick wave of the hands the yellow silk is seen to magically pass inside the glass tube between the two larger silks, and, if desired, the tube may be handed to a spectator to remove the three silks, and no-one will be the wiser as to how the yellow silk passed inside.

A small metal feke is required in addition to the ring-pull. This consists of a metal tube about two inches long and about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. To one end is soldered a small flat hook which



will hook easily over the glass in the lamp chimney. The feke is painted blue and preferably covered with blue silk to match the blue silk used. Other colours than those mentioned could, of course, be used, but the dark blue gives good cover.

To prepare, a duplicate yellow silk is pushed into this feke, folding in such a manner that when it is pushed out of the tube it will immediately open up. This is laid on the table with the blue silk and the other two so that it can easily be obtained when picking up the silks.

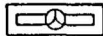
The ring-pull is arranged with a loop of flesh-coloured thread at the end, and this thread is passed around one of the fingers of the right hand.

The operation is as follows: The chimney is shown and the large red silk taken, bundled up and tucked into one end. Then the blue silk is taken, finger-palming the tube, and this is displayed. Then this blue silk is also bundled up and plugged into the opposite end of the chimney, and while doing this the feke is introduced into the inside of the tube and hooked over the side of the chimney. It must be arranged so that the blue silk presses around the tube, but does not extend too far inside the chimney beyond the feke. If the forefinger were now quickly pressed into the feke tube from the outside the yellow silk would be forced out inside the glass chimney, where it would expand, appearing between the two silks.

The chimney, so prepared, is placed down for a moment while the yellow silk is shown. This is stroked by the right hand, which passes the thread loop over the silk. Holding the silk in the right hand, the left picks up the glass tube and drapes the yellow silk over the centre. Then the hands hold the chimney at either end, the thread passing along the back of the tube to the right hand and up the sleeve to the pull.

Hold the chimney so that the right forefinger is ready to be plunged into the tubular feke, and so that the thread is gripped between the little finger and the palm. The freedom given by the ring-pull will allow all this to be done without any trouble, whereas the ordinary elastic pull would be on tension all the time and make this difficult. By stretching the arms slightly forward, the pull will release the catch on the ring-pull and then the pull-cord will only be held by the pressure of the little finger on the thread.

At the right moment, swing the hands up and down, release the pressure of the little finger so that the small yellow silk will fly up the sleeve, and push the forefinger into the tube so that the duplicate yellow silk is shot into the centre of the chimney. The miracle is thus effected, and if you wish someone else to remove the silks, simply slide out the feke tube and palm it away as the tube is handed out.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE DART-BOARD MYSTERIES

THIS book was commenced with an effect given me by the late Mr. Percy Ruston, of Northampton, and I think it fitting that the book should conclude with another. Again the ingenuity of Mr. Ruston is made manifest, and if any reader will go to the trouble to make the necessary apparatus and work carefully on the routine he will find he has a masterpiece. I worked with Mr. Ruston on this effect, and the mechanical dartboard which resulted is thus our joint idea. Full credit, however, goes to Mr. Ruston, because the initial idea was his, as was the working out of the routine. My own help came in the perfecting of the mechanical part of the dartboard.

The effect is a triple one, and the first two effects, although they use the dartboard, do not take advantage of its mechanical nature and, furthermore, neither are original. They are simply adaptations of well-known effects, applied to the dartboard in order to give a necessary build-up for the finale.

EFFECT ONE.

The performer shows displayed upon the stage a large dartboard complete with a dart. The dartboard is not quite of normal design ; it is the usual circular shape with radiating wires, and the triangular shapes of alternate red and black. Also the outside has the usual " double " circle. The number of divisions, however, is only thirteen instead of the usual twenty, and the wires which form the " treble " are omitted. On the outside, the numbers indicate playing card denominations from Ace to King. It is pointed out that as there are only two colours on the board, red and black, that only two suits will be used from the pack of cards, Clubs and Diamonds. So if a dart was to be thrown at the board and to fall in the red segment with number 3 on it, the card would be the Three of Diamonds, and so on.

Producing a pack of cards, the performer runs through it to select a card, and reverses this in the pack without letting the audience see what it was. A volunteer spectator then takes the dart and throws it to the board, and note is made of what value and suit of card is indicated by the throw. This gives a free choice of thirteen cards only. But sometimes Mr. Ruston would use two separate darts—the first one selecting a colour and consequently the suit, while the second dart would indicate the value. Thus the range is enlarged to twenty-six cards, which is much better. Then upon fanning out the pack of cards to find the single reversed card, it is found that the very card selected by the

throw of darts was the same as that selected by the performer in the first place, and which he reversed.

Dealing with the methods as we go along, I may as well explain now that this effect is brought about by the use of a version of Dai Vernon's "Brainwave Deck," first published in "The Jinx." A full description is not in order here as variations have been in print many times, but, briefly, the faces of all the cards are roughed with roughing fluid, then the cards are placed together in pairs, face to face. The arrangement is such that, in this case, the Clubs and Diamonds face one way through the pack, starting with Ace and finishing with King, and the remaining suits the other way. So prepared, the pack fans to show backs on both sides, but at any point any one of the pairs can be separated to show a single face card.

Suppose, then, that the Eight of Diamonds was selected by the throw of the dart, the pack would be taken, showing only one side, and then the cards slowly fanned counting the cards until the eighth card is reached, and this pair would be separated and the Eight of Diamonds would appear face out. A pencil mark indicates where the Diamonds leave off and the Clubs begin, so if a Club was chosen the cards would be fanned to the marked card and the counting commenced from there.

EFFECT TWO.

The performer shows a blank visiting card (or may borrow someone's card) and on the back of it writes something in pencil. Again the two darts are thrown, and upon showing the card it is found that the card chosen by the throw of darts was successfully predicted by the performer.

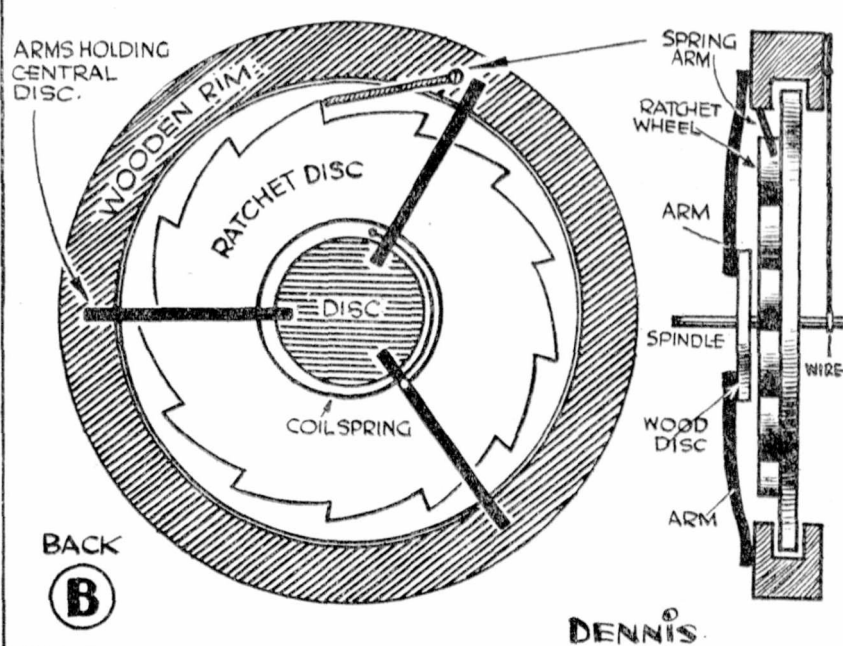
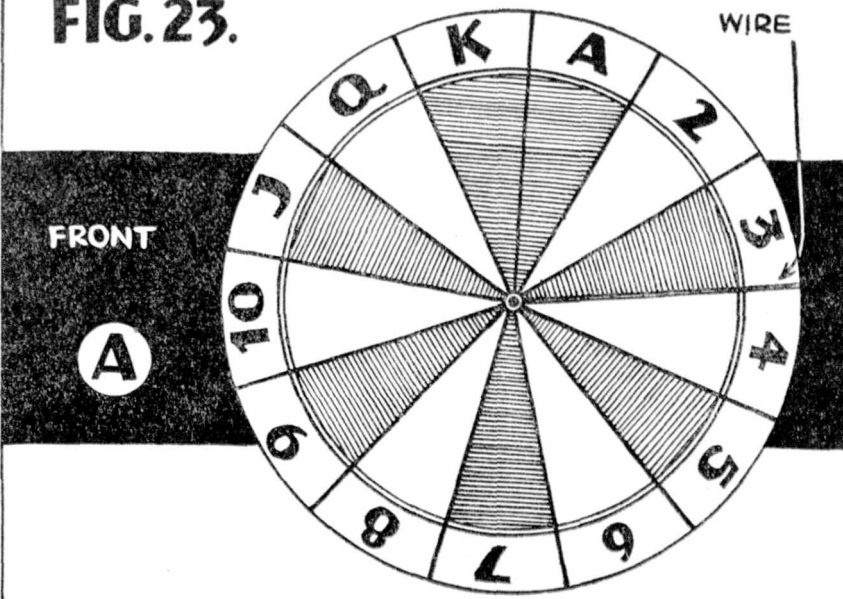
Again a well-known method is used, and it once more helps to build up the routine. One merely uses a "nail-writer." A visiting card is taken, and while the hand goes to a coat pocket to obtain a propelling pencil the thumb nail collects the "feke." One pretends to write upon the card, but as the lead is not fully projected from the pencil no mark is made. Then when the first dart is thrown to indicate a card value, this is written on the card with the "writer," and the suit then marked after the second throw.

EFFECT THREE.

So far, any unprepared dartboard with the correct markings could be used, but for the finale we require the mechanical dartboard. This time a large slate is shown and a prediction boldly marked upon it.

Now for the first time it is shown that the dartboard revolves upon a central spindle, and also that the inside section marked red and black revolves independently of the rim, giving card values. Thus, if spun, the two sections travel at different rates, and if a single dart is thrown on to the spinning board one still has the chance of one out of 26 cards, according to whether the dart falls on red or black sections, and where that red or black section stops compared with the outside rim. So a dart is thrown into the spinning board, and when it stops the card so selected can be named. Then, upon showing the slate, it is found that the performer has again predicted the fall of the dart.

FIG. 23.



Now comes the task of describing this dartboard. Unfortunately, I do not have the actual dartboard in my possession. I helped Mr. Ruston build this and have all the original drawings in my possession. But, after his death, Mr. Ruston's effects were disposed of and I did not manage to get this board. However, with the aid of the drawings and my memory, I think I can describe the board sufficiently for anyone who essays to make this apparatus. This may sound formidable in description, but I can assure readers that it is not too difficult to make, and that the resultant apparatus works beautifully.

Fig. 23A shows the front of the board. Apart from the fact that the centre revolves independently from the rim, only one point must be mentioned about this, and that is that the radiating lines dividing the reds and blacks, and the values, must be painted in a strong black line. Then a stiff black wire extended from the *pivot* (not the board) along to the revolving rim, where it is fixed. This wire travels round. In the position shown the board will "force" a 3. One could make the wire adjustable to any of the divisions and so vary the "forced card." This wire should be painted black and is indistinguishable from the dividing lines.

Fig. 23B is more elaborate to illustrate, and shows the full mechanism. This should be referred to in conjunction with Fig. 23C, which is a side section. The centre section, as will be seen, has a ratchet edge, or, as illustrated, could be a plain disc with another ratchet disc glued on the back. To make this work independently from the rim, a smaller disc of wood is fixed to the centre by means of three radiating arms. The inner disc then revolves on the spindle and the outer rim revolves on the three arms which are fixed to the centre separate disc.

Fixed to the rim is a short spring arm to engage in the ratchet. As there are thirteen divisions to the ratchet, it will be seen that the purpose is to bring the red and black divisions level with the divisions on the rim which give the values. To ensure this, a very light coil spring is fitted to the ratchet disc, wound two or three times around the centre, and is then fixed to the underside of one of the three radiating arms. This tends to pull the ratchet disc back on to the spring arm.

The action is as follows: In actual fact, the central red and black disc does not revolve quite freely and independently of the outer rim, but when the board is shown, if the spring arm is held back, it can be shown that the centre section appears to be separately pivoted. Now let the spring arm go back, and revolve the disc, spinning it by the outer rim. This will spin slightly faster than the inner disc, and wind up the coil spring slightly and then centrifugal force takes the disc around with the spring still slightly tightened (hence the weakness of the spring).

Throw a dart forcibly on to the central part of the spinning board and allow the board to slow up. The rim travels ahead of the central board and does so until the dart catches the wire, and then both travel together. As the board slows up, stop it entirely with the hand, and the slight jerk helps the ratchet to take action and brings the divisions level and the dart appears under the figure 3. It should be mentioned, and this is important, that whereas the outer rim revolves quite freely on the spindle, the inner disc is a light friction fit, so it does not revolve quite so easily.

All this has been hard going, and I only hope I have made it clear. The experimenter who tries this will have to play around with it to get it right, as we did, but when once it is correct it will remain so and prove sure in action.

It will be noted that this forces only the value and the suit may be either red or black. This is looked after by means of the slate, which is a flap slate. On the slate is already written "THREE OF CLUBS," and covered with the flap. In making the prediction, "Three of Diamonds" is written on, and then, at the finish, either the slate is shown with the actual prediction or the flap is left in place to show the other prediction.



AU REVOIR !

HAVING now toiled through the intricacies of something like twenty-five conjuring effects I must say "au revoir." It is always a feeling of relief when I write "conclusion" to a book. The hours of typing, the examining afresh of mechanical operations, the tying of myself into knots while I try to draw my own hands in action, and the dozen and one tediums of writing a book are finished. But, then, so is the thrill of creative writing and the feeling of pleasure in that yet further of my effects and the results of my experiments are being given for the benefit of the Fraternity.

So, though I say "au revoir" now, I already feel the straining at the leash and the desire to again involve myself in the production of yet another book on magic.

ERIC C. LEWIS.

"MAGIC TO ENTERTAIN" was the second book to be serialised in *Abracadabra*, the only Magical Weekly in the World. The first was Jack Le Dair's "TRICKS OF A TROUPER," the gold-mine of practical magic opened up by a man who has spent the greater part of a busy lifetime on the music-halls. This, too, has since been published in book form, and is available from the publisher of this book for 7s. 9d. (\$1.50) post paid. But if you would keep abreast of all that is best in the world of magic, you should subscribe to *Abracadabra*. Each week its twenty pages bring new tricks and gags, new angles on presentation, reports of magical affairs, reviews of books and current music-hall magical acts, and everything calculated to interest the *live* magician. Send, enclosing 8½d. (15 cents) in stamps, to the publisher of this book, Goodliffe, 6, Colonnade Passage, Birmingham 2, England. He will be glad to send you a specimen copy and advise you how to keep in step with all that is best and newest in magic.

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