

Second Edition—A sequel to "Slow Sleights."

**MODERN**



**SLEIGHTS**

**BY E. BRIAN Mac CARTHY.**

LONDON :

*GEORGE JOHNSON, Magical Publications*  
*24 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.*

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# MODERN SLEIGHTS

BY

E. BRIAN MacCARTHY

*Author of "Slow Sleights"*



LONDON

GEORGE JOHNSON, Magical Publications  
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## PREFACE

As far as I know, all the items of this booklet are original. However, as there's "nothing new under the sun," I shall not blame Mr. Ghoschube, of Little-Gimmick, if he says he "saw it done in Poonah in 'o8."

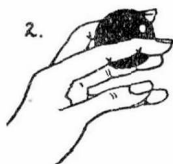
Doubtless Mr. Allfakes, of Trickbox Magna, will condemn the sleights, because he can do them all with the aid of wires, clips, and flesh-coloured paint, "it being so much easier that way." But is it?

E. B. MACCARTHY.

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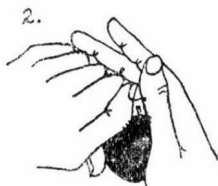
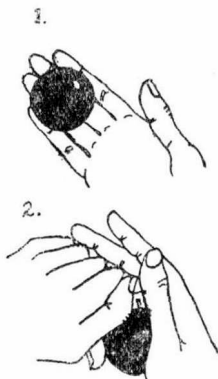
### A BILLIARD BALL FLOURISH



During the course of his routine, the performer throws a ball into the air, and catches it between the tips of the first and second fingers, as in Fig. 1. Actually, the ball is caught between the first, second, and third fingers, as in Fig. 2. If all the fingers are immediately straightened, the ball will be left as in Fig. 1. To hide the hanky panky from the audience, the ball is caught with a downward sweep of the hand, when it will appear as if the ball was actually caught between two fingers only. A very pretty flourish.

### THIRD-FINGER VANISH

The performer faces left. The right hand is held horizontal, palm up, waist high, and the ball is placed near the tips of the fingers, see Fig. 1. The left hand now appears to scoop the ball away by closing down on it. Actually, as the fingers of the left hand come in front of the ball, the right hand twists through  $90^\circ$ , bringing the back of the hand towards the audience. At the same moment, the third finger bends inwards, rolling the ball into the palm. See Fig. 2. Note that the first, second, and fourth fingers of the right hand must be kept as straight as possible during this movement, and should be opened wide apart. The left fingers have now closed as if containing the ball. This illusion is strengthened by the fact that the first, second, and fourth fingers of the right hand are opened in front of it, and no trace of the ball is visible. The right hand now makes a few passes in front of the left. The left hand then opens, and shows that the ball has vanished. This sleight should be executed fairly slowly. It is difficult.



## THE IMPROVED BALL TWIST-OVER

An acquitment. The performer faces left. Hands are held waist high. He has just vanished a ball, which remains palmed in the right hand, and he has just turned the left hand palm towards the audience. The right



hand passes across the left once, and the hand is about to do so again, when the performer pretends to hear some remark from the audience, and stops. He stops when the palmed ball is in a position immediately opposite the left little finger. (Note: the left palm is still visible to the audience.) He then turns both hands over from the wrist. As he does so, the left little finger hooks the ball out of the right palm, and rolls it

into the palm proper of the left hand. Fig. 1 shows the beginning of the action, and Fig. 2 the end, when both hands have finished turning (performer's view). The hands must turn together, otherwise the ball will be visible to the O.P. angle of view. At the end, the fingers of the right hand should be held straight and apart, and those of the left hand bent in a natural manner and slightly apart.

This is an improvement on the "Twist-Over Acquitment" in "Slow Sleights."

## THE FINGER-CLIP BALL VANISH

The performer faces right. The left hand is held flat, waist high, palm horizontal and facing upwards, with the fingers pointing towards the wings. The ball is placed on the left hand at about half-way along the fingers. At this moment, the first and fourth fingers of the left hand contract. The fingers should be kept quite straight, laterally inwards towards each other, contraction should be very slight, and gripping the ball between them. This should not be noticeable to the audience. The right hand now approaches from above, and apparently grasps and removes the ball. Actually, as the ball is covered by the right hand





closing down cup-shape upon it, the left hand turns back out to the audience, the turn being done from the wrist. As the first and fourth fingers are still gripping the ball, it remains in the left hand hidden by the fingers. This move is shown in course of operation in the diagram. The tips of the fingers of the cupped right hand should remain touching the forefinger of the left hand until the left hand has completed turning. The right hand now moves away as if containing the ball. The left hand now points at the right. In doing so, the second, third, and fourth fingers are bent slowly into the palm, rolling the ball in with them, leaving the index finger extended and pointing. It only remains for the right hand to "squeeze the ball into nothing."

This sleight is most effective when performed very slowly.

### ONE-HANDED COLOUR CHANGE

The performer stands facing left. There is a white ball visible in the left hand. The right hand has a red ball palmed in it, previously obtained from a tube pocket. The right hand takes the white ball from the left hand, between its first finger and thumb. The left hand forms an open fist, palm down, thumb side of hand facing the audience. The right hand approaches the left, and puts the white ball in the front of the fist, half projecting visibly (Fig. 1). But, as it does this, the left second, third, and fourth fingers extend down and scoop the red ball into the left fist behind the white ball. The right hand then moves away. The position in the left hand is now this: the front half of the white ball is visible to the audience, and the red ball is hidden in the fist behind the white one.

The left hand makes a sudden movement down and up, and the white ball changes to red.

The move to accomplish this is illustrated by Figs. 2 to 6, which show the *underneath* view of the left hand during the move. Fig. 2 shows the position before beginning the move. Then, first, the thumb extends out of the way, while the first finger bends in, and forces the white ball as far into the palm as possible (Fig. 3). The thumb now bends over the white ball, and pushes it into the palm position,

gripping the ball all the time, and making it slide round the red ball (Fig. 4). This brings the tip of the thumb on to the red ball. The thumb and fingers together now slide the red ball over the white, Fig. 5; till it arrives as in

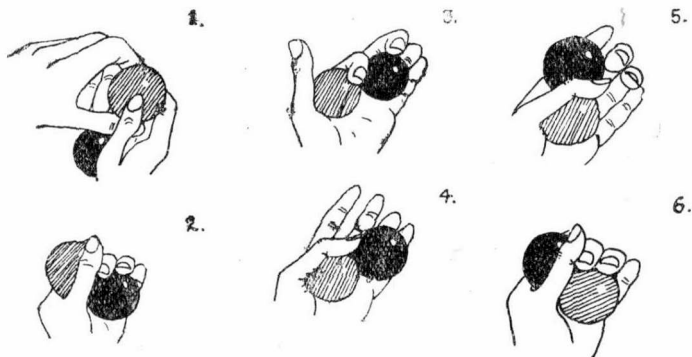


Fig. 6. The balls have changed places.

Actually, this move is extremely easy to do. It can be done in half of one second with very little practice.

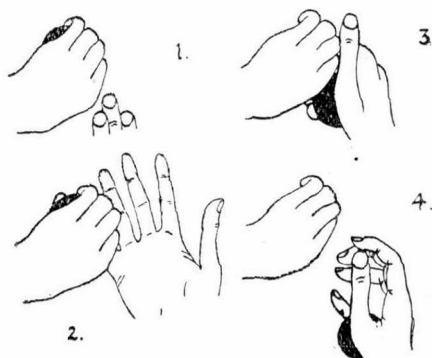
The red ball is now taken in the right hand and tossed into the air, the left being empty. To do this, the right hand approaches the left, and when covering the lower part of the left fist, the left hand turns over, the white ball being put into the right palm by the left fingers finger-palming it in. The red ball is taken by the right forefinger and thumb, meanwhile, and is finally thrown into the air.

A very surprising and deceptive sleight.

### THE IMPROVED DROP VANISH

The performer faces left. The ball is held in the right hand. The left hand is held shoulder-high, and is formed into an open fist (*i.e.* fingers only about half curved in). The back of this hand is towards the audience. The right hand places the ball at the bottom of the left hand, where it is held by the thumb, half of it being visible below the left hand. The right fingers now push the ball out of sight into the left hand, where it is gripped by a contraction of the fingers only (a sort of finger-palm). (Note: the left

thumb does not touch the ball, but is contracted into the palm, out of the way.) Fig. 1 shows this move completed. The right hand now rubs the back of the left fist. It then turns round for a moment to show the palm. In doing this, the little finger of the right hand is brought immediately behind the ball (but does not touch it). See Fig. 2. The



right hand now turns back to the audience again, by a twist of the wrist. As this twist is made, the left fingers, by an imperceptible movement, release the ball which is caught between the little finger and palm of the right hand (see Fig. 3). Now, without the slightest pause (but without hurry) the right hand moves downwards about nine inches. At this point, all its fingers are contracted to a certain extent, especially the little finger, which is pressing the ball into the palm proper. The hand immediately moves upwards again, extending the fingers as it does so. Fig. 4 shows the commencement of this. The hand then moves down again, contracting the fingers. It repeats this several times, the effect to the audience being that of magic passes at the left fist. But the real object is that of passing off the first contraction to catch the ball. The left hand may now be opened and shown to be empty.

Remember, the right hand must turn from the *wrist* as it catches the ball (for a reason—well, look in a mirror). There must be *no pause*, the right hand moving *downwards* as it stops turning.

This is a very perfect sleight. It may be performed with the right hand holding one, two, or three other balls between the fingers. The diagrams give the performer's view of the moves, the ball being indicated from above.

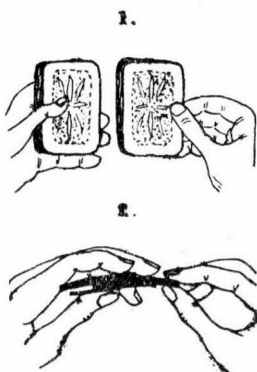
Please, oh please, do not try to present quickly. The moves must be made smoothly and evenly.

## THE PERFECT FALSE COUNT

I do not know if this method of false counting has been described before, in any case I have never seen it.

Fig. 1 shows how to hold the cards (performer's view).

Hold them vertically facing the audience, chin high. The little finger of the left hand supports the cards underneath and also helps to mask the false moves. The cards are counted one by one from left to right, the thumb of the left hand pushing the top card to the right each time. Each card, as it is advanced to the right, is pushed on to the face (*i.e.* with its side towards the audience) of the cards already counted in the right hand; and it is gripped between the tips of the thumb and first and second fingers of the right hand (see Fig. 1). The false move consists in pushing one card back from the right hand to the left, during counting.



To execute the move, the right hand, holding a bunch of cards already counted, approaches the left hand, to receive the card already pushed out by the left. The left thumb, which, while counting in ordinary fashion is only employed in pushing cards out, now closes down on the back of the cards in the right hand. The right hand now moves away, carrying with it the card visibly counted on to the face of its bunch of cards. But the left thumb, pressing down, retains the back card of this packet, and pulls it back on to the cards in the left hand. Fig. 2 shows this move being accomplished.

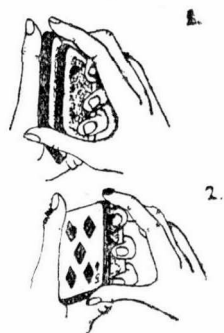
The cards mask the operation from the front. The left little finger masks it from below. Take care no corner of the card shows above the other cards as the single card is slipped back. This false count is invisible at two yards. Do it slowly and deliberately.

## THE INVISIBLE CARD CHANGE

*Effect.* A card is chosen and replaced in the pack, which is dropped into a glass; the bottom card of the pack facing the audience. The glass is covered with a handkerchief. When this is removed, the bottom card is seen to have changed into the chosen card.

*Method.* Have a card selected by a member of the audience, and returned to the pack. As this is done, slip the little finger of the left hand *under* that card, and square up the pack. Then return to the stage, holding the pack in the left hand (little finger still in position). Face the audience, and remark, "I would like you to notice the bottom card of the pack. It is the . . ." As you say this, you appear to turn the pack face to the audience.

What you actually do is this. The right hand approaches the left, and grasps the lower half of the pack between the tips of the first finger and thumb, exactly as if about to do the pass. It then lifts this half-pack about an inch (see Fig. 1). The fingers of the left hand now press the upper half in towards the palm. This causes the lower half to pivot about the right first finger and thumb (see Fig. 2). The right hand then slides the original lower half of the pack over and on to the original top half, so that the two halves of the pack come back to back. The original bottom card of the pack faces the audience, while the chosen card faces outwards on the other end of the pack. It will be seen that, with care, the right hand, held with fingers close together, completely masks the cards which are not turned over. To the audience, it appears as if the whole pack has



been turned over. The pack should be held in the left hand, nearly in a horizontal position, for the move.

The rest is easy. Put the pack into a tumbler, and, in covering with a handkerchief, give the glass a half-turn, thus bringing the selected card face towards the audience, ready for the denouement.

The move is an easy one, and it does not appear to the audience that any sleight has been employed.

## THE MYSTERIOUS TWELVE

*Effect.* Twelve cards are counted off the pack, and the pack is set aside. Four cards are removed from the twelve. The remainder are counted, and are found still to be twelve. Four more cards are removed. The remaining cards are again counted, and are found to be fourteen—"Plus this one up in the air," remarks the performer, "making fifteen."

*Method.* Using the false count previously described, first count off twelve cards from the pack. Re-count them slowly in front of the audience to prove that only twelve cards are used. Now, apparently, count off four. Actually, slip one card back on the counts of "two" and "four"; thus really removing two cards only. Put these back on the remainder of the pack which was set aside. (Square the cards up on the pack, or the audience may see that there are only two). Now ask how many cards remain. The audience will say, "Eight." The performer says, "No." Count the cards, but slip one back on the fourth and eighth "counts," thus counting the ten cards as twelve.

Offer to show the trick again. Once more apparently remove four cards (actually two). Ask how many remain. The audience will say "Eight" or "Twelve." "No," says the performer. Count the cards, but slip one back on every second count. In this way, you will count the eight cards as fourteen. Transfer the pack to the left hand, and palm off one card in the right. Do the reverse palm and produce it from the air, remarking, "And if you count the one up here in the air, fifteen."

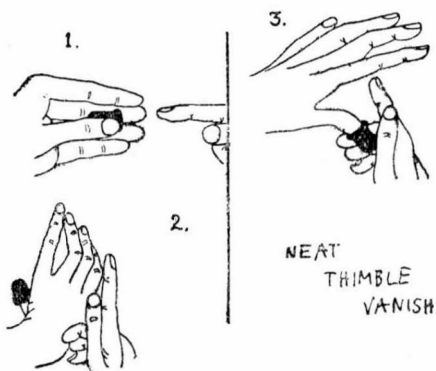
*Patter.* This should concern the effect of magic on simple arithmetic. Such is my presentation.

There is a possibility that the audience may notice that certain cards appear more than once during counting. Take

care not to have an ace among the cards, if you can help it, as it shows up very distinctly. The performer may count the cards with their backs to the audience, but this is unusual, and might cause comment. On the whole, it is probably better to risk the chance aforesaid.

### A NEAT THIMBLE VANISH

Stand facing the audience, thimble on the right forefinger, the hands with their backs to the audience, waist high. Insert the thimble in the left hand and grip as in Fig. 1. Now swing the body to face left, and bring the hands shoulder high, keeping both hands with their backs to the spectators.

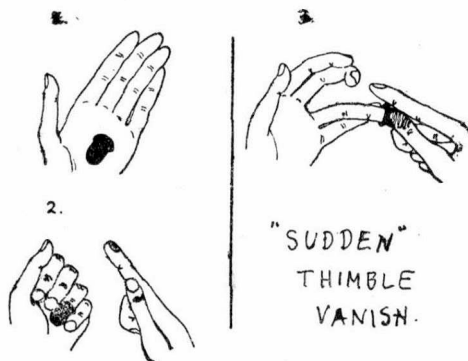


While doing this, contract the left thumb slightly inwards, which will make it insert itself in the thimble. Then contract the thumb, with thimble upon it, as far inwards and upwards as possible, so that the thimble is behind the left palm. Hold the right hand just below the left, with index finger pointing, and the other fingers slightly curled up. Now open wide the fingers of the left hand (to show that the thimble has apparently vanished), still keeping the thumb contracted so that the thimble remains hidden behind the left palm (see Fig. 2). Then turn the left hand round to show its palm completely empty. As you do this, extend the left thumb, so that the thimble is brought into the curled-up fingers of the right hand, see Fig. 3. The right hand fingers contract very slightly, and palm the thimble

off the left thumb, while the left hand completing the turn is seen to be empty—the right hand pointing to the left. The left hand must turn round smoothly; there must be no check at the moment the thimble is transferred. Pay attention to the angle of view while practising. Present very slowly.

### THE "SUDDEN" THIMBLE VANISH

Stand facing the audience. Openly place a thimble on the palm of the left hand (held waist high in front of you) as in Fig. 1. Close the fingers of the left hand over the thimble, so that it is apparently in the fist. Actually, the third finger goes into the thimble, so that the left hand appears as in Fig. 2, from above.

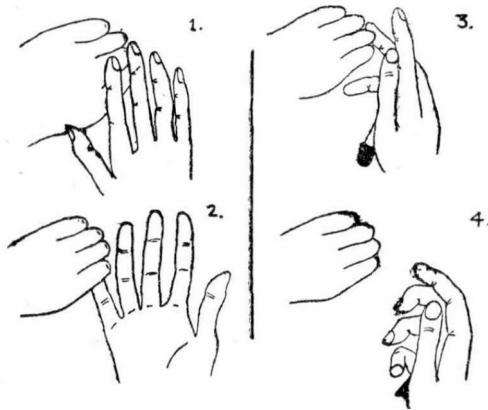


The right hand, held as shown in Fig. 2, now taps the left, smartly twice, thrice. As the right hand approaches to give a fourth tap, the left is suddenly opened at the word "Go," and the thimble *has* gone. But, as the hand opens, the third finger, in straightening, brings the thimble into the right hand, between the right thumb, first, and bent second fingers, where it is gripped and retained (see Fig. 3). The left hand straightens right out and moves outwards away from the right, so that you finish with the thimble in the right hand, which is pointing to the empty left palm. The opening of the left hand and the transference of the thimble must be done in a continuous and very quick movement.



## A LITTLE-FINGER VANISH

The performer faces left. There is a thimble on one of his right hand fingers. The left hand is held shoulder-high, and is formed into an open fist (*i.e.* the first and second joints of the fingers are bent, but not the third). The back of the left hand is towards the audience. The right hand then approaches from below, and places the thimble just inside the left, where it is gripped by the first and second fingers. The right hand withdraws, and proceeds to rub the back of the left (Fig. 1). It then turns over for a moment



to show its palm. At this instant, the little finger is inserted just inside the left hand and into the thimble (Fig. 2). The right hand immediately drops, turning over as it does so. All the fingers bend inwards at this moment (Fig. 3) and the thimble is brought into the ordinary palm position by the little finger. During this manipulation, the right hand should have dropped to about nine inches below the left.

The hand now comes up again, the fingers extending the while, leaving the thimble palmed as in Fig. 4; as the right

hand approaches the left the fingers straighten right out, and the hand stops just short of the left. If the above series of movements is executed smoothly, the effect to the audience is that a magic pass has been made at the left hand. Continue by making one or two more magic passes (contracting and straightening the right fingers), and finally open the left hand and show it empty.

The bringing of the thimble on the little finger to the palm and leaving it there is pure knack, and can be acquired with little practice.

It will be observed that this sleight can still be performed if there are also thimbles on the first, second, and third fingers of the right hand.

### THIMBLE THROUGH THE HAND

The performer stands facing half-left. The thimble is upon the right forefinger. The hands are held shoulder high, both with backs towards the audience. The thimble is inserted in the left hand and is held by the fingers being curled round. The left thumb bends up into the fingers and secretly inserts itself into the thimble. The right hand now strikes the back of the left three times. At the third tap the thimble appears on the tip of the forefinger, having apparently passed through the left hand on to the right.

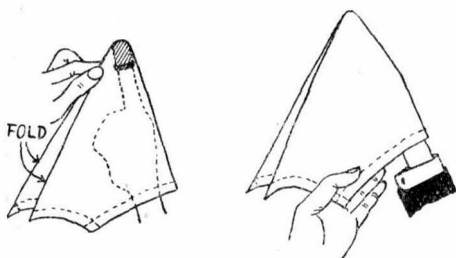


At the first tap, or stroke, the left thumb bends down, and puts the thimble in the right hand thumb-palm (as shown in the diagram) where it is gripped. The thumb then quickly bends back again out of sight. On the second tap, nothing happens. At the third, the right forefinger bends and straightens again very quickly, bringing the thimble out of the thumb-palm so that it appears on the tip. After *each* tap, the right hand should rest on the left, for a fraction of a second, as on the first stroke. A slight pause is necessary for the thimble to be placed in the correct position for the thumb palm.

The reason for facing half-left and not full left is to make the angle right, as will be found by experiment. Otherwise the thumb-palming of the thimble would be visible to the O.P. side of the audience. One great advantage of this sleight is that it can be performed when the other three fingers of the right hand have thimbles on them.

## THE ELUSIVE HANDKERCHIEF THIMBLE

For this, a freshly laundered handkerchief, one that has some stiffness in it, is required. It should be thick and opaque. The thimble should be of the same colour as the handkerchief, so that it does not show through. To perform, place the thimble on the index finger of the right hand, then drape the handkerchief over it. Arrange it so that a fold occurs as shown in the diagram, and grip the fold between the first finger and thumb of the left hand, as also shown. If the handkerchief is gripped like this, the fold acts as a sort of "prop" to the part of the handkerchief projecting



upwards, and it will be found that the right hand can be withdrawn slightly and the thimble thumb-palmed with hardly any movement of the handkerchief. (What little there is, will be covered by walking from one spectator to another). To present the trick, drape the handkerchief over, and when ready, approach one member of the audience and ask him, or her, to feel that the thimble is still there. Then go to someone else, meanwhile thumb palming the thimble, and ask this spectator to feel the thimble. He, or she, cannot do so. Then to someone else, meanwhile bringing the thimble back. Move about the room thus, and half the spectators can feel the thimble, while the other half cannot.

## A THIMBLE VANISH FROM HANDKERCHIEF

This should follow the "Elusive Handkerchief Thimble," as the same position of the handkerchief and the hands is apparent. After someone has felt that the thimble is on the finger, thumb-palm it, and let someone else try. This spectator cannot feel it. Here, let the thimble drop from the thumb-palm to the fist in the right hand. Now remove the left hand from its position gripping the top of the handkerchief, and pull the handkerchief off the right hand, but in seizing the handkerchief, the left hand goes underneath it, as shown in the previous diagram. The thimble is allowed to drop from the right hand into the left, the handkerchief is drawn away, and the right hand is displayed quite empty.

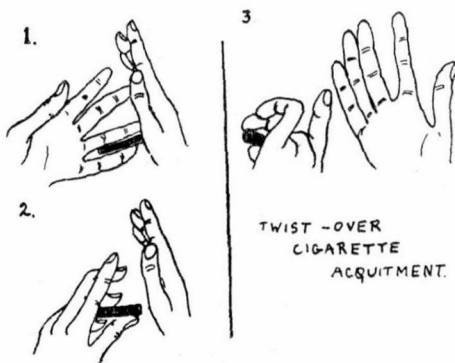
## A THIMBLE CONSTANTLY PASSES FROM HAND TO HAND

Two similar thimbles are required. While doing a sleight with one, the performer secretly obtains the other in the right hand, from a clip or an elastic loop, and thumb-palms. To execute the sleight, stand facing the audience, the visible thimble on the left forefinger. The hands are held in front of the knees, backs to the audience, with all the fingers except the index fingers curled into the palms. Both arms are swung to and fro across the body, and suddenly, (1) the visible thimble on the left forefinger is thumb-palmed, and the second finger tip immediately inserted into it as the forefinger straightens out again, (2) the right forefinger bends in and produces the palmed thimble on its tip. The hands immediately become stationary to let the audience appreciate the change. Both hands then swing upwards and to the left, the right hand comes in front of the left, and the left forefinger and thumb remove the thimble from the right forefinger. As this takes place, the left second finger unbends, and deposits the thimble on it in the right hand thumb palm. The hands now separate, the left hand puts the thimble in it on its index finger, and the hands take up their position to repeat the sleight.

Note: the thumbs should always be held well in, to prevent a (side view) glimpse of the thimble between the index fingers and the thumb. Perform slowly.

## A TWIST-OVER CIGARETTE ACQUITMENT

After a vanish, the cigarette remains thumb-palmed in the right hand. The performer faces to the left. The left hand is shown empty, the fingers of both hands being wide apart. The right hand is, of course, back to the audience, and is held just below the left. The right hand is raised slightly, so that the cigarette may be grasped between the third and fourth fingers of the left hand (see Fig. 1). Both hands now turn over, the left moving a little before the right. As this happens, the left hand moves slightly downwards, behind the right palm, and all the fingers (except the first finger, which remains straight throughout the sleight) bend inwards till the cigarette touches the thumb (Fig. 2).



The cigarette is then grasped at the end between the thumb and second finger. Continuing the turning round of the hand, the little finger is transferred from behind the cigarette to a position in front of it, so that it lies up against the third finger.

The hands complete the turning round, separating as they do so, and the final position is shown in Fig. 3. The right hand is displayed to the audience, and the left hand is pointing to the right, from above, with the cigarette clipped between the thumb and second finger and hidden by the curled-up fingers.

All diagrams show the performer's view from above. The position of the cigarette is indicated in black to make the diagrams clear. This acquitment may be used for a lighted or an unlighted cigarette.

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