



MAGIC FEATS

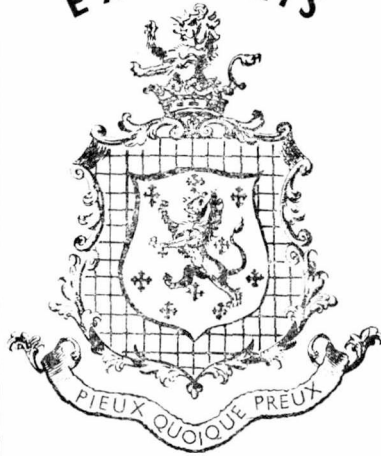
By

MAJIKANS

Illustrations by ROË

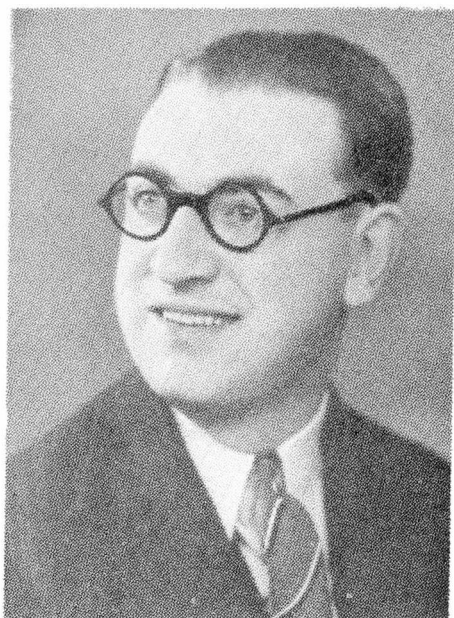
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MAGIC FEATS



Majukans

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A Miscellany of Practical Magic

by

Majikans

Illustrations by ROE

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A
GOODLIFFE
PUBLICATION

To
ENID
my partner
in life's
MAGIC

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FOREWORD

STOP me if you've heard it, but there is an old story of a young enthusiast who came up to an Old Timer and insisted on showing him his latest discovery, a move which bade fair to revolutionise the whole of card conjuring. Having demonstrated it, the youngster said, "Though I discovered it myself, I think that's good. What do you think? Don't you agree it's marvellous?" The Old Timer nodded his head. "It certainly is marvellous," he said; "it always was!"

In the following pages, an enthusiast (not now, alas, so young) has compiled a series of effects which have been thoroughly audience-tested and which are in some respect original. Where the effect isn't original, the working is.

Claiming originalty in these days is, of course, "asking for it." Whenever an author puts out a new book of tricks, there will always be found someone who says, "That! Good heavens, I worked that ages ago!" For that reason, I wanted to forestall all critics and entitle this book, "Tricks I Have Pinched." That, at any rate, would have been original. But the publisher demurred, and the book goes out under a title which has been my programme matter for many years.

For all Old Timers reading these words, however, the title originally intended still holds good. I hope they will agree at the close that my **selection** was good, at all events!

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MAGIC FEATS

CHAPTER ONE

“FROM THE POCKETS”

OF all branches of magic, perhaps the most fascinating and rewarding is the kind which uses small props and has the appearance of being impromptu. Even if a performer uses for his professional work magic of a more spectacular kind, small tricks are useful in that they can carry some of the glamour of the stage into his more intimate relationships with friends and prospective bookers. The importance of this class of magic can be exaggerated; its power of exciting interest, never.

TISSUE TEAR

THERE must be as many ways of tearing and restoring a sheet of tissue paper as there are of performing the pass. My only excuse for adding to the number is that I have found this version to be outstanding both in ease of working and in the appearance of fairness that it presents to the spectators.

The effect is that two large sheets of tissue paper, coloured respectively red and black, are shown back and front. The audience sees the whole of each side of each sheet, and nothing is concealed in the hands. The sheets are torn into small pieces and these are screwed into a ball. After the usual mystic palaver, the performer opens out the paper to show that the two sheets have been miraculously restored. Again the sheets are shown back and front.

Let me make it clear, before we proceed further, that after the sheets have been introduced, nothing is added and nothing is taken away. The effect is completely self-contained.

If this sounds too much like a miracle, that is because in the second paragraph above I described the *effect*, and not actually what happens. It is the effect which counts. If the effect is really as clean and convincing as I have described it, then it doesn't much matter if the method is as corny as the Die Box.

As a matter of fact, the method is rather subtle. The principal piece of deception lies in showing one side of one of the sheets of

paper twice and convincing the audience that they have really seen both faces. May I suggest that, in reading the instructions which follow, you take two sheets of paper, mark one side of one of the sheets to represent the fake, and work the moves in front of a mirror. I think you will surprise yourself by their effectiveness.

METHOD.

Four sheets of paper are used (as if you hadn't guessed), two of them being red and two black. Ideally, they should be about twelve inches square, but that isn't essential. Place a red and a black together and fold them, with the red inside, into halves, quarters, eighths, and sixteenths, until they are reduced to a three-inch square parcel. Fold the other pair of papers in exactly the same way, and then stick both packets back to back with a few touches of rubber cement. They should be stuck together at the spot indicated in Figure 1. If you are working a formal show from a table, the one set of papers should be opened out as shown here, but if you are working from your pockets, both may be left folded.

One worth-while wrinkle about this folding is to do it a little untidily. If the edges come too neatly together, you may find difficulty in getting your fingers in between them without fiddling. If they are staggered a little, they may be unfolded a lot more easily.

PRESENTATION.

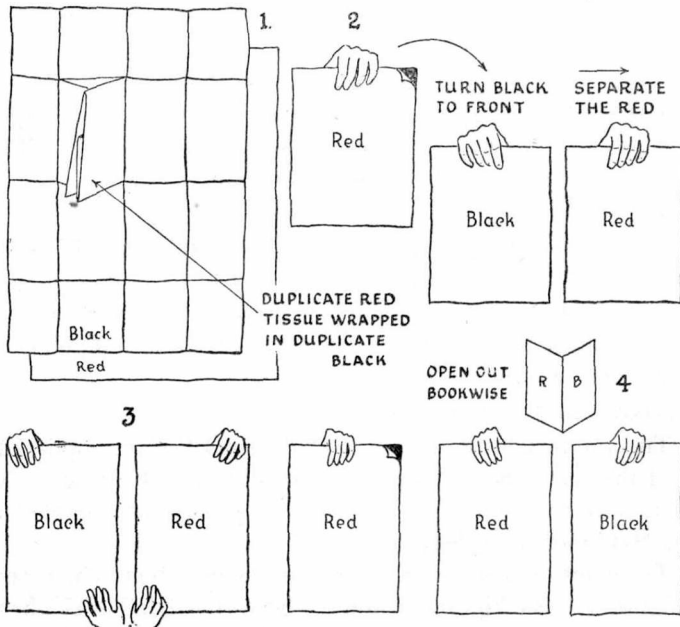
Hold the papers so that the audience sees a red sheet in front of a black, both being held at the top by the left hand (Fig. 2). Take the red sheet in the right, show the papers separately, then place the red behind the black so that the secret parcel goes between them.

The rest of the handling will be difficult to explain, but is in practice quite easy and natural. The right hand holds the papers by the upper right-hand corner and the left hand holds them by the lower left. The papers are then turned over, top to bottom, the top edge swinging forwards and down and the bottom edge backwards and up (see Figure 3), and the papers being brought with the red towards the spectators.

Releasing the corners, the right hand takes a fresh hold on the papers a little above the centre of the right-hand edge. The left hand crosses to the same edge, a little below the right hand, and the papers are swung edge-on to the audience, as the two thumbs separate them book-wise. This action brings the secret

parcel to the back of the black sheet as the red and the black are held side by side facing the audience. See Figure 4.

Now proceed with the tearing. Place both sheets together, the red one being in front, and tear down. Place torn pieces always in front of the main piece carrying the parcel, until the time arrives when they are only slightly larger than the parcel itself. At this point, bundle them together, using what remains of the black sheet



to wrap the other pieces in. You are then back where you started, with two parcels back to back, except that now one of the parcels consists of torn pieces.

Go through with the restoration, and show the restored sheets apparently back and front in a repetition of the opening moves.

If you haven't taken my advice and tried this out with sheets in hand, you will probably dismiss this as "just another paper-tearing trick," and full of difficult and suspicious moves at that. May I urge you again to try it out; that is the only way of convincing yourself that it is practical and clean.

IMPROMPTU COINS

HERE is a coin routine that has been a favourite of mine for many years. In plot and presentation, it is based on the *Multiplying Billiard Balls*, and since a great display of the coins is made as they are produced, it is suitable for stage presentation. Its great virtue, however, lies in the fact that no preparation is required, nor any fakes whatever; thus, it may be performed anywhere, at a moment's notice, and if need be with borrowed coins.

The coins I use are silver-plated pennies, deeply milled in order that they may be held securely by their edges. It is the depth of the milling which makes them preferable to half-crowns. When I have not had my special coins with me, I have still been able to perform the effect with borrowed half-crowns.

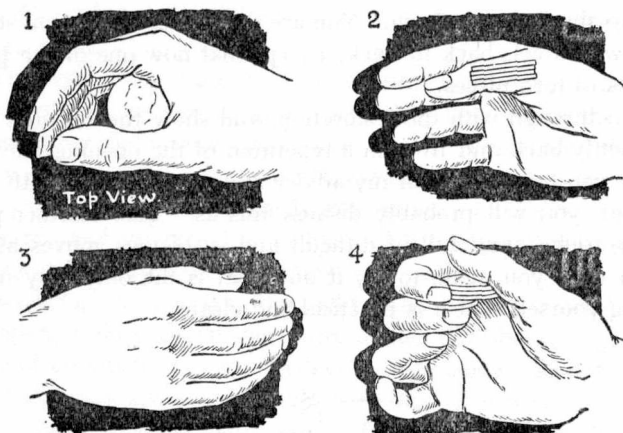
EFFECT.

Four coins are produced singly from the air and held on display. One by one, they are vanished again, and then produced once more. For a climax, they may be vanished from one hand, ostensibly being sent up the sleeve; they arrive in a tumbler held in the other hand.

WORKING AND PRESENTATION.

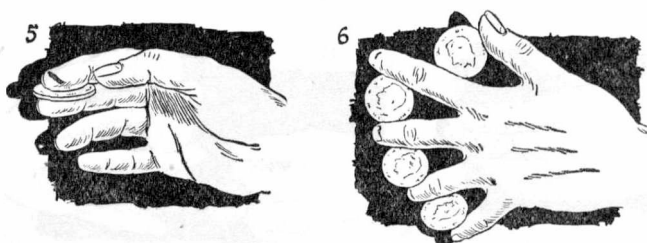
The production of the coins at the outset is accomplished by one of the methods described in Downs' "Art of Magic." Most readers will be familiar with the method, but for completeness' sake, it is described briefly here.

The coins are concealed in a pile in the thumb-crotch, as shown in Figure 1. As Figures 2 and 3 show, the hand may then be



shown back and front, and will appear to be empty. This is not recommended, however, since the routine involves none of the popular finger-flinging moves. The hand is merely held at shoulder height to the right of the body (left side to audience), and the coins produced singly in succession.

To produce a coin, the first and second fingers curl inwards. The first fingertip presses lightly against the stack of coins to secure them while the thumb relaxes its grip a little. The lowermost coin



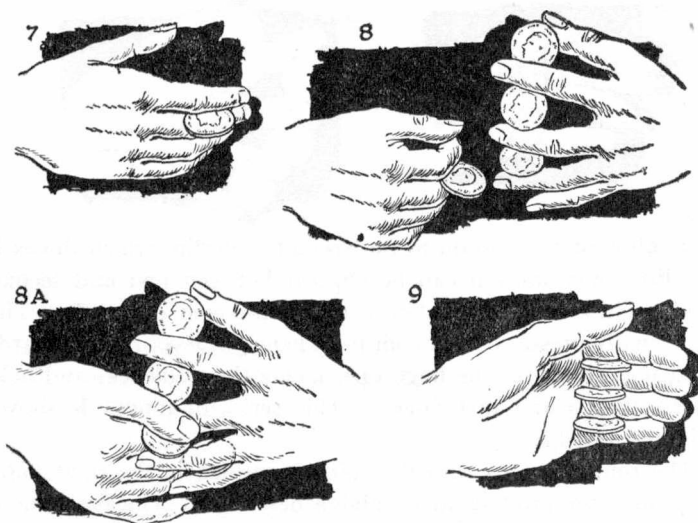
is thus allowed to drop on to the second fingertip, which draws it out a little way until it can be clipped between first and second fingers. These then straighten, carrying the coin outwards. The thumb finally presses on the coin from beneath, levering it upwards so that it is shown at the fingertips, facing the audience, and held between thumb and first finger. This series of moves is shown in Figures 4 and 5.

The routine opens with the coins concealed in the right hand in readiness for production as above described. The first one is plucked from the air and placed between the thumb and first finger of the left hand. The other three coins follow it, being placed between the other fingers, until all are held as illustrated in Figure 6. The left hand is held at a little below shoulder height, with its back towards the audience and the fingers pointing rather away from the audience. The coins between the fingers are about at right angles to the direction in which the fingers point so that they present their circular faces to the spectators.

The four coins having thus been produced and displayed, the performer proceeds to the second part of the routine. Having been shown empty, the right hand approaches and takes the coin from between the left third and little fingers. This is apparently thrown into the air, actually being pressed between the first and second fingers and gripped by them at the back of the hand—Figure 7. One coin has vanished.

The third and little fingers of the left hand naturally closed together when the coin was taken from between them. The right

hand now returns to the left in order to take the next coin for evanishment—the one between second and third fingers. Because care has to be taken to prevent the audience seeing the coin clipped at the back of the right hand, the left hand also moves a little backwards—very little, probably six inches—to meet it. As the thumb and forefinger take the second coin from behind, the coin concealed behind the right hand is transferred to the left, being clipped by its edge between the cupped third and fourth fingers of the left hand. Figures 8 and 8a reveal the action.



With the second and third coins, this action is repeated, and when the fourth coin has been stolen from the left hand, the three previously vanished are ranged in that hand in the manner shown in Figure 9.

Making the same throwing motion as before, the right hand vanishes the last coin, clipping it at the back between first and second fingers. And the second phase of the routine is completed.

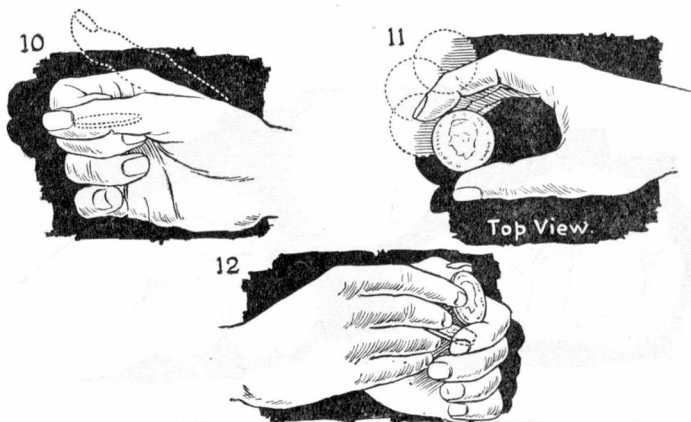
At this stage, the right hand may be shown empty back and front by the following process. The hand is held with the coin at the back and the thumb pointing upwards as shown by the dotted lines in Figure 10. The thumb then drops to the other position shown and the fingers curl inwards. The coin clipped between the first two fingers is thus concealed by the thumb. Resting on the edge of the coin, the thumbtip levers it round to the front of the hand in the action shown in Figure 11, bringing it to the front of the hand, which is then turned over to show the back. By a

reversal of this action, the front of the hand is shown again, and then the coin is produced.

Transferring this coin to the left hand in the position in which it was formerly held there, the right hand steals the next coin concealed in the left hand by clipping it between *second and third* fingers. The right hand then reaches out again and produces this coin. Figure 12 shows the steal.

The same manoeuvre is repeated with the remaining coins, until at the end the four coins are again held on display between the fingers of the left hand, and the routine is finished.

As a climax, the performer may use these four coins for the Coins in Glass (visible or invisible), or the Coins up the Sleeve,



falling individually into a rumbler held in the other hand, or for any other routine with which he is familiar and which he can perform competently. But left as it is the routine is entirely impromptu, and, as I have proved by countless performances, extremely effective.

TIME ON MY HANDS

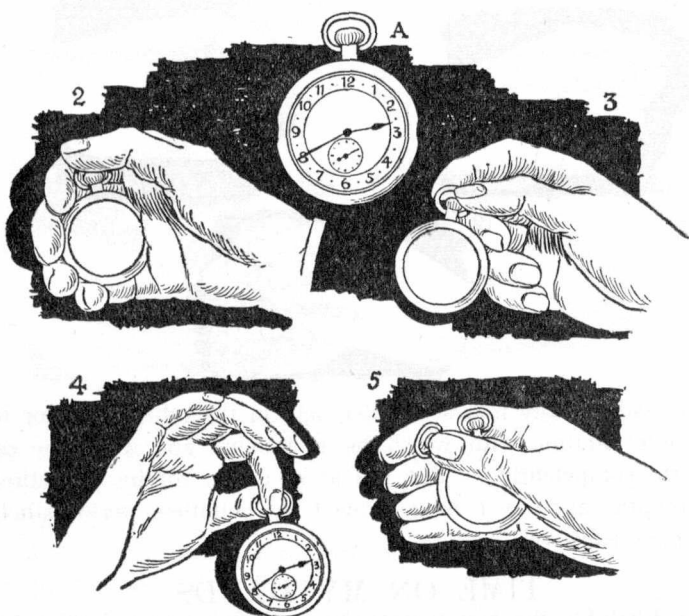
DESPITE the fact that many years have passed since Gus Fowler took his watch and clock act on the road, the production of watches from the air is still something of a novelty with the majority of audiences. There's no reason why this should be so, for faked nesting watches have been easy to get, and the effect has always been one with a fair measure of audience appeal.

This routine which I am about to describe is given principally because I feel that many performers may benefit from a knowledge of my handling of the shell watches, but for the benefit of those

who want a finished and complete effect, together with a satisfactory climax, details are also appended of the fake alarm clock which I use in conjunction with the watches.

The effect is that several watches are produced from the air and dropped into an opera hat. There they become transformed into a ringing alarm clock. As you will see, the plot is simple. I may assure you that the working, too, presents no difficulties to the practised performer.

Let me first of all urge on you the desirability of giving your shell watches a little preparation. Take five of them and mark them on their reverse faces in such a way that you will know the order in which you will ever henceforward nest them. On mine, I have simply scratched the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Nest them



in this order, place them together in a vice and gently file away two finger-holds at three o'clock and nine o'clock. Then bend back the D-pieces as shown at A in Figure 1. Don't overdo this.

Now you will find that the five watches may safely be held as one by the D-piece, and since this is the mainstay of this routine it is worth while ensuring that they nest snugly.

At the outset of the routine, the nested watches are held in finger-palm position in the right hand, faces being towards the fingers and the stem-wind pointing upwards. The performer

stands with his right side towards the audience, reaches forward with his right hand, and produces a watch at his fingertips. Actually, what faces the audience is the whole set of nesting watches. To produce them, two actions are employed. First of all the forefinger doubles up until its tip reaches the D-pieces of the watches, which are immediately held between the tips of forefinger and thumb. Then the other fingers curl inwards beyond the rearmost edge of the nest and swing the watches outwards. The actions are shown as seen by the performer in the Figures 2, 3 and 4.

Evincing a measure of satisfaction at his good fortune in thus finding a watch, the performer brings it to his ear to listen to the tick. In reality, he stretches out his second, third and fourth fingers once more and brings the watches back into the finger-palm. Then he holds his cupped hand to his ear.

The forefinger is straightened again at this point; the thumb-tip withdraws beyond the inner edge of the D-pieces and pressing on the top one parts it from the others. This rearmost watch is pressed in a counter-clockwise direction, being brought to the position shown in Figure 5. When it reaches this point it can be clipped between the tips of the thumb and the forefinger and swung back into view.

It is then taken into the left hand between thumb and first finger, which take advantage of the finger-holds you have thoughtfully made for the purpose. The left hand is held with its fingertips pointing towards the audience. The watches, as produced, are placed between successive pairs of fingers, facing the audience and with the stem-winds on the outside of the hand.

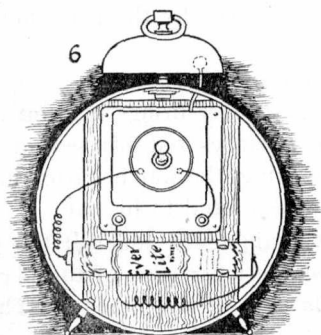
The right hand reaches out and produces the second watch. Incidentally, as each watch is produced and the whole nest held in full view of the audience, the performer can permit his right hand to be seen otherwise empty. That is another valuable feature of this routine.

The second watch is treated in exactly the same way as the first, being brought back into finger-palm position and carried to the ear before being transferred to the left hand. The same is repeated with the third and fourth watches when produced.

When you reach the production of the fifth watch, all the finger-spaces in the left hand are occupied. The watch is therefore placed in the palm of the hand, the stem-wind being clipped between first and second fingers, near their roots. The left hand, at this stage, thus presents three-quarters of a circle of watches, with

another watch at their centre. It is a picture that will be remembered.

The watch production routine finishes there. Some performers may wish to finish the routine with the same climax as I use—a ringing alarm clock. My clock, shown in Figure 6, was constructed in the shell of an old alarm clock from which the works were removed for the purpose. The gape is left in the back covering so that the watches may be dropped inside.



Using this clock, lay it face down in an open opera hat. Produce the watches, placing them in the left hand as above described. When the five have been produced, take them singly with the right hand and drop them into the hat. Take up the hat, walk forward, press the switch of the electric bell and produce the clock.

MY BILLIARD BALLS ROUTINE

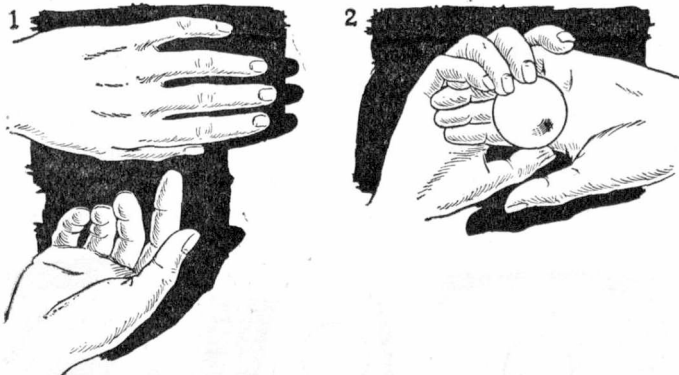
A RED billiards ball is produced from the thin air and multiplied to two. The two balls become three, and the three four. Then these balls are diminished in number, one by one, until only the original single ball remains. This ball changes in colour from red to green. The whole sequence is performed silently, with plenty of pantomime, and there are various pleasant sleights scattered throughout.

From the above description I know that this sounds like a score of other routines with which you must be familiar. My reasons for giving you this particular combination are that all the moves involved were taught me by De Biere, and because the whole is so beautifully smooth and worry-free. In any sort of a suit, with a minute's preparation, you can be ready to perform.

One fake is employed—an ordinary wire ball-holder. It is slung under the jacket at the left side, and holds the green ball. Two red balls are in the right trousers pocket, and the third red

ball, with its shell, is palmed in the right hand. The balls I use are $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. in diameter, but size is of secondary importance. Use balls that are as big as you can safely handle. The shell must be a good tight fit.

With ball and shell concealed in the right hand, face left and display the hands. The left hand, palm to audience, is held at shoulder height, with the fingers spread, and the right hand fingers are spread in the same way. Turn the back of the left hand to the audience, and then the palm again, and finally bring the right hand up to brush it. Transfer the ball to the left palm and turn this hand over immediately to show its back with fingers spread. The right hand withdraws fractionally, the fingers pointing to the left hand, and the hand turned so that the audience has an opportunity of seeing that it has nothing concealed in it. The position is shown in Figure 1.



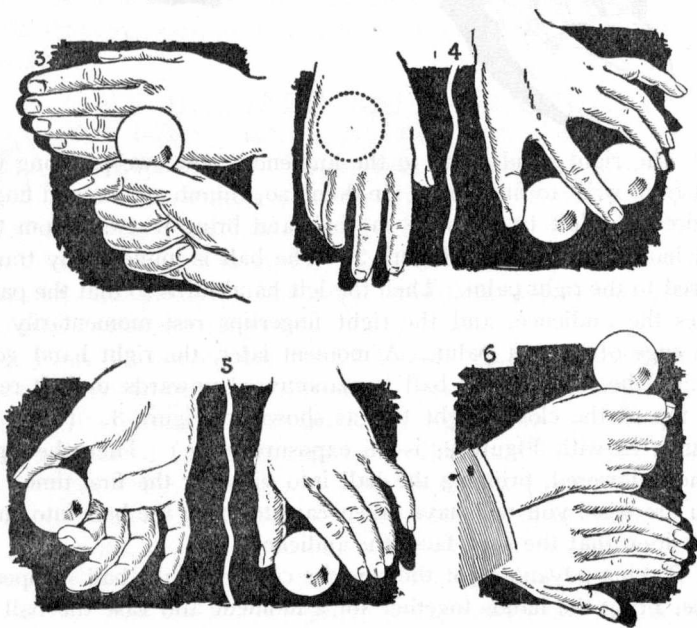
The right hand, back to the audience, now sweeps along the left from wrist to fingertips. In doing so, thumb and second finger encircle the left hand, seize the ball and bring it away from the left hand, as shown in Figure 2. The ball is immediately transferred to the right palm. Then the left hand turns so that the palm faces the audience, and the right fingertips rest momentarily on the edge of the left palm. A moment later, the right hand goes behind the left and the ball is manoeuvred upwards until it rests on top of the closed right fist, as shown in Figure 3. (This, of course, as with Figure 2, is an exposure view.) Then the right hand is lowered, bringing the ball into view for the first time. If you are wise, you will have taken care to bring the ball into such a position that the shell faces the audience.

Taking advantage of the surprise caused by the ball's appearance, bring the hands together for a moment and ease the ball in

the shell. Then take the ball between left thumb and forefinger in the position necessary for the classical multiplication of one ball into two. Holding the ball at the left of the body, again at about shoulder height, make the multiplication. Then swing the left hand in front of the body, keeping the shell towards the audience, so that the balls may be seen against a near background.

Swing the hand out again, and then advance the right hand to take the solid ball from between the left first and second fingers. The ball is only apparently taken, actually being twisted back into the shell. The right hand, seemingly holding the ball, makes a throwing movement towards the audience. The ball has vanished.

By gestures, indicate that you think you know where the ball has gone, and reach into the right trousers pocket. Securing one of the balls concealed there in the palm, bring the other out at the fingertips, and place this between third and little fingers of the left hand. This hand makes a brief swinging movement, and the two balls become three. Actually, of course, the second finger curls inward again and levers the solid ball from the shell. The three balls are held in the left hand as shown in Figure 3. Please notice, in this diagram, that the centre ball is held by second and third fingers jointly. In this routine, four balls are never held at one time in the hand, and this particular double-finger hold enables one to hold larger balls than would otherwise be manageable.



The fourth ball is now produced from beneath the chin.

Four seemingly solid balls have thus been produced, one at a time, from the air. Now proceed to vanish them. Still facing left, perform the throw vanish with the ball in the right hand. Throw it three times into the air, catching it as it falls. Simulate the same movement on the fourth "throw," actually transferring the ball to the palm, and spread the fingers. Next draw attention to the left hand. Make a throwing motion with this, levering the centre ball into the shell, so that now only two of the four balls are on view.

Indicate by your expression that you know where *this* ball has gone, and reach for it in the right trousers pocket. Leave the palmed ball there, but bring the hand out closed as though it contains a ball. Throw towards the audience, and show this hand empty.

There is now a ball (with shell) between thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and one between third finger and fourth. Reach for this latter ball with the right hand, and as you take it between forefinger and thumb, allow the other solid ball to drop from the left hand into right finger-palm. Transfer it to the palm proper, and deposit the visible ball just taken from the left between that hand's first and second fingers.

All is now in readiness for the amusing business of passing a ball through the knees. Drop both hands to knee level, backs to the audience. Swing the hands in towards the knees, at the same time curling the solid ball into the shell in the left hand and producing the palmed ball in the right between finger and thumb. Another throwing motion, and the right ball is vanished and the left hand holds two again. Repeat these two moves, and then the first of them again, so that when this lightning transfer of balls is over—and it's a very pretty and convincing bit of business, however old it is—there is a ball in each hand. Figures 4 and 5.

For this brief sequence, the body has been turned to face the front. Now it is swung to the left again, as the right hand throws the ball into the air and catches it between first and second fingers, held V-fashion. Should you feel uncertain of this business (which isn't really difficult), then merely throw the ball into the air two or three times. The left hand, in the meantime, is concealed by the body. It drops ball and shell into the jacket pocket and secures the green one from the clip under the coat. This it holds in the finger-palm.

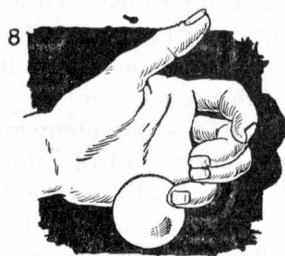
With fingers curled, the left hand now comes up to the right and transfers the green ball to the right palm proper as it takes

the red ball between the finger and thumb. This ball is held up for a moment, the right forefinger pointing to it, and the left hand is clearly seen to be otherwise empty. A few moments ago, this hand was known to have held a red ball, but in my experience, because perhaps of the speed of the action, and perhaps because of the flourish just performed with the ball in the right hand, the audience seem to have forgotten.

Returning its ball to the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, the left re-secures the green ball in the transfer-palm and immediately turns with its back to the audience and its fingers spread. The right hand closes into a fist, the red ball resting on the top, cupped in the thumb-crotch. Bring the right hand above the left, and touching, both at about shoulder height—see Figure 6.

Now, open the right fist allowing the ball to drop to the third finger, which remains curled for a moment to arrest the fall of the ball and press it into the palm. Immediately open the right fingers wide. Less than a second later, close the left hand as though it had caught the ball.

Remove the right hand and point to the fisted left. Work the left fingers a little, curl the thumb inwards and press the ball as far as possible out of the top of the fist. It is the green ball, of course. Clip it firmly with the little finger against the palm, and open the fist and turn the hand towards the audience in one move. Figures 7 and 8.



That concludes the routine. Four red balls have been produced. They have been vanished again down to the last ball, and this has been colour-changed to a green ball. As described here, it probably reads rather difficult, but that is largely because great care has been taken to give every move in detail. On your first run-through you will probably find that it doesn't work too smoothly, but I assure you that smoothness and ease will come with a little practice.

I have used this routine for years, and for a long time opened my show with it. I hope you will have as much success with it as I have.

IMPROMPTU THIMBLES

IT is an advantage to the amateur and semi-professional stage performance, which can yet be performed, on demand, magician to have items suitable for platform, and even full under intimate circumstances. If, in addition, the item or routine is genuinely impromptu, so much the better. My impromptu routine with thimbles fulfils all the conditions. Four thimbles only are used. Carried in the pocket, they may be secured at a moment's notice, and the performer may go straight ahead with a demonstration that completely mystifies laymen and causes even experienced magicians to scratch their heads a little.

Here, to whet your appetite, is the effect you are going to produce. Four thimbles are produced singly from the air and placed as produced into the left fist. With a flourish, they are vanished. Immediately, however, the left hand is closed again into a fist. The right fingers are thrust one after the other into the fist, and as they re-emerge a thimble adorns the tip of each of them. Once again they are made to vanish, but this time each in turn disappears from the right hand fingertips. Instantly, they are seen to be on the tips of the left fingers.

The routine needs to be performed with zip and adroitness, but it presents no difficulties, even to the man not accustomed to performing with thimbles.

It is necessary that the thimbles should nest; since this applies to all thimbles I have come across, except some special sets specifically made for magicians, you will have no trouble in securing suitable articles.

Let us suppose that you are going to perform this item under strictly impromptu conditions. Have the four thimbles, nested, in your right trousers pocket. Go to the pocket with your right hand, insert the tip of the forefinger into the first thimble and transfer this to the thumb-palm. Secure the three remaining thimbles on the tip of the second finger, and you are ready.

With the right side towards the audience and the fingers of the right hand curled inwards, raise the left hand to shoulder height, showing it empty, and then close it into a fist, back towards the audience. Reach into the air with the right hand and produce the thumb-palmed thimble on the tip of the forefinger. Affect to

place this thimble into the left fist, actually thumb-palming it again in the standard move just before the forefinger enters the fist.

Produce the same thimble a second, third and fourth time, appearing to place it in the left fist every time it is produced. Four thimbles have thus, to all appearances, been taken from the air and deposited in the left hand. With a rubbing, squeezing movement, the left hand appears to grind the thimbles away to nothingness, turns over and shows itself now to be empty.

Now the left fist closes once more and the right forefinger is plunged into it to secure the first of the vanished thimbles. The move made here is a reversal of the vanish. Just before entering the fist, the right forefinger secures the thumb-palmed thimble, pushes it into the fist and draws it out again. This may seem rather bold, but if the hands are held pointing upwards to the rear instead of squarely before the audience, nothing will be seen.

As the thimble is withdrawn, two other things are done simultaneously. The performer transfers his glance from his hands to the audience and smiles, and straightens the second finger of the left hand, carrying it into the right fist and depositing the remaining three thimbles there. The timing should be practised until perfection is reached, for the value of the misdirection is considerable. In point of fact, the second finger could carry the three thimbles into the fist in just the same way as the forefinger had inserted the single thimble, and in all probability nothing would be noticed; but I have found that the move I have described is preferable.

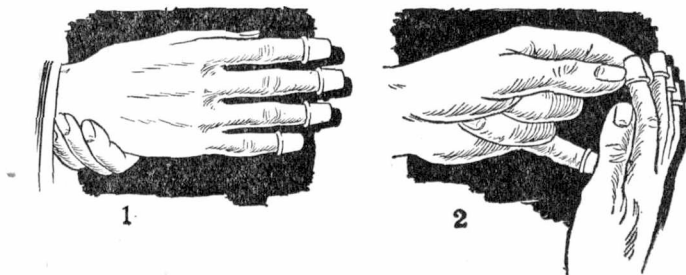
As soon as the second finger has entered the left fist, the right hand may be turned with the palm to the audience, for there is nothing concealed in it. The second finger is withdrawn, with a thimble on its tip. Then the third finger, and after that the fourth, enter the fist and collect a thimble apiece.

That concludes the second phase of the routine. The third phase opens with one thimble on the tip of each of the outspread fingers of the right hand. With the back of this hand towards the audience, the performer grasps the right wrist with his left hand, thumb above and fingers below. The fingers as they curl around the wrist are partly concealed by the right cuff—a matter which is not of great importance at this stage, except insofar as it gives misdirection for the moves that follow. (See Figure 1.)

With an upward, downward and upward wave of the right hand, transfer the thimble from the forefinger to the thumb-palm. One thimble has vanished. Release the wrist with the left hand

and, using the thumb and forefinger, take the thimble which adorns the right little finger and transfer it to the tip of the forefinger. As the thimble is placed on the forefinger, allow the left little finger to steal the thimble from the right thumb-palm (see Figure 2), curl this finger inwards and immediately resume the grasp on the right wrist.

This time the hold must be rather different than the first. Instead of the four fingers encircling the wrist, the little finger, still curled into the palm, goes behind.



Another wave of the right hand causes the new thimble on the forefinger to vanish (into the thumb-palm). The left hand comes up again to transfer the thimble from the third finger to the first, and in placing it thereon, manages to secure the thumb-palmed thimble on the tip of the third finger. This time, when the wrist is held, two fingers go behind. Then the same series of moves is repeated for the third thimble.

The fourth thimble is dealt with rather differently. Again it is vanished from the forefinger, going into the thumb-palm; but this time the left hand has not the excuse of transferring another thimble to the forefinger in order to secure the just-vanished thimble. Instead, immediately after the vanish, the performer looks at the audience again. As he does so, he releases his right wrist from the grip of the left hand and carries this hand away, collecting the thumb-palmed thimble on the left forefinger as he does so. In the same movement, the left hand is turned with its back to the audience, formed into a fist and brought to shoulder height.

The right hand is shown back and front, and then held against the left, fingers pointing upwards and palm towards the audience. Then it withdraws, turning about as it does so. The forefinger is extended. The left forefinger straightens, showing the first thimble. The right hand shows two fingers, and the second of the thimbles in the left hand is shown. The same actions are repeated with third and fourth thimbles, and the routine is over.

If you try this routine over, I think you will find that it has novelty and entertainment value. No time should be wasted in its execution. From the production of the first thimble to the final reproduction of the four, the whole affair should move forward swiftly. Presented in this way, it creates on the audience an impression that the performer is able at will to cause to appear and to vanish any number of thimbles. It is an effect I have cherished for years.

THIMBLES AD LIB

THIS is an effect which gives the impression that the performer is possessed of quite uncommon digital ability, and it is secured by the employment of an ingenious and very illusive fake. It may be that I have not yet devised a routine which exploits it to the full, but I can assure the reader that it is a gadget which will give him quite a fair amount of fun.

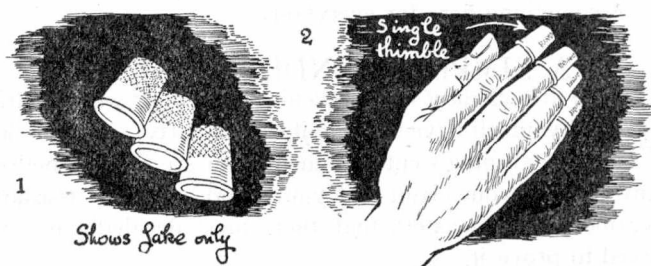
The effect for which it was designed is as follows. The performer reaches into the air with his right hand, and suddenly there appears a thimble on each of his fingertips. These are taken, bunched, in the left hand, which deposits them in a hat or other receptacle (the pocket, at a pinch). The right hand reaches again into the air, and four more thimbles appear. One of them, more elusive than the rest, disappears and reappears. All four are then taken by the left hand, in the same way as their predecessors—and the production proceeds in the same way for as long as the performer feels the spectators will stand for it.

The fake consists of three thimbles stuck together—see Figure 1. How they are attached to one another will depend of course on the material of which they are made: metal ones should be soldered; mine, which are of celluloid, were fixed with acetone. They have to be fixed in the same relative positions as they would occupy on the tips of the second, third and little fingers, and the best way of going about the job is to place them on these fingertips, relax the fingers in a natural curve (see Figure 2) and then pencil-mark the thimbles with the free hand. One further thimble is required.

This fake set of thimbles was left in the *Abracadabra* office for the artist to make drawings from them, and they deceived John Ramsay by their naturalness when Fabian ran through the above routine. Johnny just thought Fabian a lot cleverer than he had previously supposed.

The two basic moves with this fake, for vanish and for production respectively, are as follows. Thimbles are on all four

fingertips, the fake set being on fingers 2, 3 and 4, and the single unfaked thimble on the forefinger. All except the forefinger are folded into the palm, the second thimble being thumb-palmed and taking the other two with it. As these three fingers straighten out again, the forefinger curls inwards and deposits its thimble in the one already thumb-palmed. This thimble should not be pressed in tightly, as that makes for difficulty in reproduction later; it is just placed in sufficiently firmly to be safe.



For production, an exact reversal of these moves is employed. The forefinger first secures its own thimble, and then the other three fingers fold into the palm to secure theirs. The four thimbles when produced are displayed as shown in Figure 2.

Little more need be said. At the outset, the four thimbles are concealed in the right palm. Reaching into the air, the magician finds a thimble on each of his fingertips. He apparently takes these in his left hand, but actually, as his right hand travels across his body, the four thimbles are deposited once more in the right palm. The left hand simulates placing into hat or pocket the four thimbles it has just apparently taken, and the right finds another four thimbles to follow them.

If you can thumb-palm a thimble, you can work this effect; and if you can work this effect you can pass for an expert.

QUICK TRICKS AND DIVERS DEVICES

DIFFERENT readers will assess the items which constitute this chapter in different ways. A friend to whom I demonstrated the Stripper Fan declared that it was one of the most valuable wrinkles he had come across for a long time. Another performer will think little of it and plump rather for Penny from Heaven. It is all a matter of taste, but I am convinced that there is something here for everybody.

A SIMPLE BLINDFOLD SYSTEM

YOU are off duty for an evening, and your wife or girl friend and yourself have been invited to a party. At some juncture of the evening's entertainment, you are asked whether there is any truth in your claim that your mind and your assistant's are in harmony. You assert that there most decidedly is, and you proceed to prove it.

Madame is sent from the room, and in her absence someone chooses a card. The pack is in his hands when he makes his choice, so that, without saying anything at all, you persuade everyone present that the card is definitely of his own choosing. He shows his card around, returns it to the pack, and shuffles thoroughly. Then he places the pack on the table.

Someone is now deputed to fetch and blindfold Madame. He guides her to the table, sets the pack in her hands and retires. Slowly she goes through the pack, showing each card in turn and dropping it face upwards on the table. When the selected card turns up, she is about to drop this just as she did the others, but in the nick of time feels the impact of the performer's will, holds the card aloft and confidently announces that this was the one chosen.

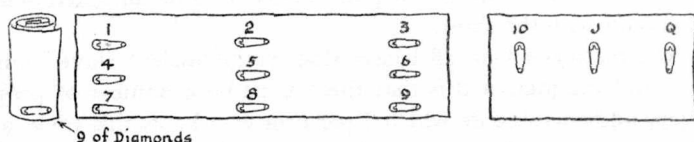
Any experienced performer will affirm that an item of this nature frequently produces an effect quite out of proportion to its value as a feat of conjuring. There are perhaps a score of ways in which the information can be signalled to the medium, and I have no wish to try to balance the advantages and disadvantages of one against another. But my method, which has stood me in good stead over a number of years, is quite simple and so seemingly innocent that the means employed has never been suspected.

It is the blindfold which serves as the signalling agency. Mine is made of black sateen—black for effect, and sateen because it thus has two quite different surfaces, one dull and the other

shiny. The glossy surface indicates red cards ("Bright—Red") and the plain surface indicates black cards ("Dull—Black").

Two safety pins are used in conjunction with the blindfold. One of them is large and the other small. The large pin indicates Hearts or Clubs ("Big-hearted"—"A Large Club"), and the small pin indicates, of course, one of the other suits.

The value of the card chosen is signalled by the position which the pin occupies on the blindfold, and for that I refer you to the drawing. Please notice that the King is coded by sending the pin *with* the bandage, and not attaching it at all. Note, too, that the head of the pin is always to the left or the top. If, when the blindfold reaches Madame, the head points downwards or to the right, it means that she is holding it upside down.



Now let us see, with a couple of examples, how this code works. The card that has been chosen is, let us say, the Nine of Diamonds. The performer takes the blindfold from a pocket, folds it with the glossy side outwards and the right-hand edge exposed. Taking the small pin from another pocket, he attaches this to the 9 position and sends the blindfold out to the medium.

Suppose, next, that the King of Clubs has been chosen. The blindfold is folded with its dull side outwards, the large pin is placed with it, and both are sent in this condition to his assistant.

In this way, then, the medium gets her information. She knows what card to look for, and is able to see it when it turns up because she has taken the elementary precaution of ensuring that she retains downward vision when the blindfold is fastened about her head!

ESCAPE INTERLUDE

YOU know the old wisecrack about a little hocus-pocus used in the course of an effect: "This is about as useful as the sprig of parsley on a portion of fish—it doesn't do anything, but it looks good!" In telling you this, I am robbing Goodliffe of his last remaining gag. It is surprising, however, what a tremendous difference a little bit of dressing can make.

The interlude I am about to describe is a case in point. This is the way it goes. I have quite an impressive length of chain, a couple of padlocks and a steel ring about four inches in diameter. Chain, padlocks and keys are given into the keeping of a member of the audience.

On my instructions, he passes one end of the chain around one of my wrists, pushes the arm of the padlock through two links of the chain so that the wrist is as tightly encircled as possible, turns the key and removes it. Then he does the same with the other wrist. About eight inches of chain hangs between the wrists.

When everyone is satisfied that I am securely bound, the ring is put into my hands. Then I turn my back for a few seconds, and when I turn back once more, there is the ring dangling on the chain between the wrists. The padlocks have to be unlocked before I can go on with the show.

As a matter of fact, all I have done is the ancient Slave Bangle Trick; and the joke of it is that there must be a number of people in every audience before which I perform who know this trick, and perhaps have done it, *but do not recognise it*. A duplicate ring is up the right sleeve, over the arm. When the back is turned, the first ring is tucked up the waistcoat and the duplicate is brought over the hand and on to the chain.

STRIPPER FAN

MANY performers who do not specialise in card manipulations yet slip into their acts a brief series of card fans. It is generally a very modest little display and constitutes no more than a pleasant and colourful interlude between a couple of tricks. Such performers are unready to give the time necessary to perfecting the weave which is the essential preliminary to the double giant fan.

Here, for their benefit, is a method which eliminates that difficulty. Use a pack of strippers. Set the cards alternately head to foot. The slight shaving from the edges of the cards will have no effect whatever on the pack as far as the formation of the usual small fans are concerned. Then, when the time arrives to form the double giant fan, grip the pack by its long edges between the fingers and thumb of the left hand at one end and the fingers and thumb of the right hand at the other, and strip the pack for about two-thirds of its length.

The pack is thus automatically set for the fan, and you will be credited with incredible dexterity in being able to draw the cards so neatly and casually into position.

PACK SWITCH

EVERY magician knows the old method of switching packs by placing the original pack in the inside jacket pocket, and then, in appearing to recover it, taking the duplicate pack from the upper pocket of the waistcoat. It's a useful dodge, and is the basis of many fine card feats. Unfortunately, however, it is only practicable when one is working in lounge suit or dinner jacket. The pockets of the white vest worn with tails are simply not big enough to accommodate the duplicate pack.

Try this manoeuvre. Have the duplicate pack in the inside jacket pocket. When apparently placing the original pack in this pocket, just drop it into the arm-hole of the coat. It will rest comfortably in the sleeve and, provided you show reasonable care, can remain there quite safely for the rest of the act.

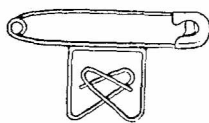
JUMBO FAN PRODUCTION

IT is common enough to see an entertainer with cards open by fanning his pack, closing the fan, and then producing a smaller fan from behind the right knee. It's just a smart bit of by-play which, coming at the very commencement of his act, sets people in a good mood. But I have never seen it used by any other performer than myself, using Jumbos instead of cards of the usual size. And there's really no reason why not.

Fasten a clip (see inset) to the back of the trousers, at such a height that Jumbo cards held in the clip will be completely concealed by the coat. Load the clip—it should be rather to the right of the body—with about a dozen Jumbo cards.

Enter, holding the remainder of the pack of Jumbos, and fan them between the hands. Say, "I have here a pack of cards." Transfer the hold on the cards to the left hand, so that the right is free. Carry the right hand behind the back, secure the hidden cards, and in one movement carry them down to knee-level. In this action, the performer should, when the cards have reached knee-level, fan and produce them, with the words—"And a few more down here."

This business is amusing enough with normal cards. Try it with Jumbos, and you will discover just how funny an audience thinks it.



PENNY FROM HEAVEN

SOMEWHERE in his writings, David Devant describes a vanish of a coin in which, with an upward throw, you left a threepenny-piece on the top of the head. I believe Anneman used the same location for the disposal of his Swami gimmick. He just left it in his thick head of hair, to be combed out after the show.

One day, I was messing around with the Devant idea, and made the staggering discovery that if, after depositing the coin on the head, you bent the head forward a little, the coin would fall off! And with Newton and Pythagoras and all the other principle-finders through the ages, I cried "Eureka!" Hence the following experiment.



EFFECT.

Four pennies are borrowed and held in the right hand. Then they are transferred one at a time to the left hand, which is closed into a fist. The performer commands one of the coins to disappear, and when the hand is opened this is found to have happened. The coins are ranged on the open palm of a spectator, when suddenly the one which had vanished takes its place amongst them.

The coin really appears instantaneously as the spectators watch, and they haven't a clue as to where it came from.

WORKING.

Only three pennies go into the left fist. I place the first two in quite openly, and do the same with the fourth. The third one is palmed in the right hand in the action of transferring it.

In explaining what has been done, stroke your head with the right hand and leave the palmed penny on your hair. The gesture

is quite an innocent one, if done casually, and there is simply no danger of the coin's presence on the head being suspected; all attention is on the closed fist. Without making any open display of the fact, you may now allow the right hand to be seen empty.

Point with the right forefinger to the left fist and command one of the coins therein to disappear. Then open the fist and count the three remaining coins on to the palm of a spectator. Hold his fingertips gently with your left fingers—simply for the purpose of keeping his hand under control and in the position in which you want it—and point with the right forefinger to the three coins, asking him to watch closely.

Then simply bend the head forward. The coin will drop and find its place amongst the others on his hand. Its arrival is so unexpected that it is a good plan to hold his fingertips firmly at the moment that the coin falls, otherwise he is likely to drop the lot.

For those occasions when a few fellows are gathered around you in a corner and you are demonstrating pocket tricks, this little impromptu stunt will be found a winner.



CHAPTER THREE

“ SOMETHING TO SEE ”

THE reader will have gathered from the foregoing pages that my taste in matters magical leans principally towards sleight-of-hand work and effects with small props. There are few performers, however, who do not include in their acts “ something to see ” in the way of apparatus, and I am no exception to the general rule. I think it is important, however, that it is far preferable to make such items distinctive, either in the props used or in the plots for which they are employed, than to use the customary run-of-the-mill stuff.

Four items are included in this chapter, two of them being for children’s shows (at which I have used them with considerable success), and two for adult gatherings. If you have a work-bench and a few tools, you will not find any of them beyond your ability.

EXAMINED SPIRIT LAMP

A SMALL table lamp is presented by the performer for examination. The shade is taken off and the bulb removed. There is apparently nothing to be found, and the lamp appears to have no electrical connections. But the performer replaces the bulb and the shade and, holding the lamp in his hand, invites members of the audience to ask questions of the “ spirit controls ” of the lamp. Giving one flash for “ No,” two for “ Yes ” and three for “ Maybe,” the lamp answers the questions.

At any time the lamp may be re-examined, but since nothing is added to it and nothing taken away, nothing will be found amiss.

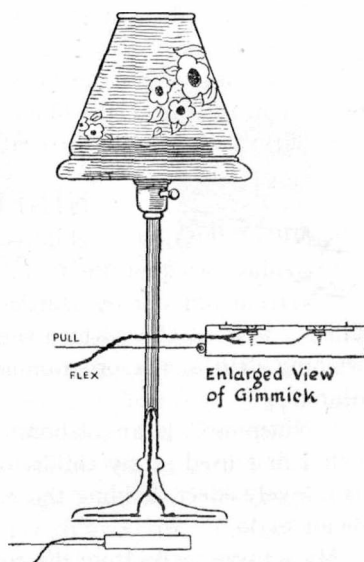
Given the necessary materials, you will not find much difficulty in making up this simple and effective prop. Any ordinary table lamp will serve; I suggest that you follow my example and obtain one of the popular mock-Jacobean ones. The value of using such a model is that it is instantly recognised as one available in the shops, and thus suggests that there is no preparation about it.

Obtain a brass plate of no great thickness and a little smaller in diameter than the base of the lamp, and cut it across its centre. The two resulting plates are to give you your connections when the lamp has been faked. Solder to each plate your wire leads, carry these up through the lamp’s centre column, and solder the other ends to the lamp-holder. Then fix your semi-circular plates to the foot of the lamp and glue over the whole of the base of green baize. All the preparation of the lamp is thus completely enclosed. (See Figure 1.)

Another necessary fake is made as follows. Secure a small block of ebonite; the exact size is of no importance, but it must be small enough to be concealed in the hands, and it is an advantage to have it rectangular, so that when you come to use it in the routine, you will instantly be able to tell, by the feel alone, just how it lies in the hand. My block is two inches by one inch by about a quarter.

It is drilled and tapped on one of its faces to take two small brass screws. To fit these screws, two small brass plates are made; these are also fitted with two very short brass pins. The arrangement is shown quite clearly in Figure 2. Don't at this stage, fasten

At first glance, the drawing may seem incomplete, since the artist failed to make proper allowance for the effect of reduction on his drawing. But the contact points are there if you look for them.



the screws tightly, for you have to insert beneath the plates connections from a pocket torch battery.

Obtain a length of flex about three feet six inches in length. This will probably be longer than you actually need, but that, as you will see, will be an advantage. Solder the wires to the two terminals of a small flat pocket battery. Attach the other ends of the flex to the little ebonite fake.

The only remaining piece of apparatus is a simple pull. This is fixed in any way that appeals to you provided that it will carry anything under the coat and out of sight when it has fulfilled its purpose.

Place the battery in your hip pocket. Carry the ebonite fake up inside the jacket to a spot near the armpit, where it hangs from

a simple ring. Fix the elastic pull in the way you have chosen. And you are all set to go. (Figure 3.)

By the time the lamp has been examined, you have secured the ebonite block and concealed it in your hand. Place the lamp on the same hand, keeping the fingers very slightly cupped so that the pin-points on the brass plates of the fake will not pierce the green baize at the base of the lamp. Whenever you want the lamp to light, straighten the fingers ever so little; the pin-points will thus penetrate the baize and connect with the brass plates at the base of the lamp. The circuit having thus been completed, the light will go on. Relaxation of the fingers will turn it off again.

With a very little practice you will find that the movement of the fingers necessary to operate the light can be so slight that it is virtually imperceptible even when one knows what to look for. At the close, of course, the block is released and the pull carries it out of harm's way under the coat.

NINEPINS

ONE of the best of children's effects is the good old Bonus Genius, whether in its original form or in the advanced version put out by Burtini under the title of "Wandering Willie." It is an effect which suggests its own plot, and has been a winning item in the programmes of many successful children's conjurers.

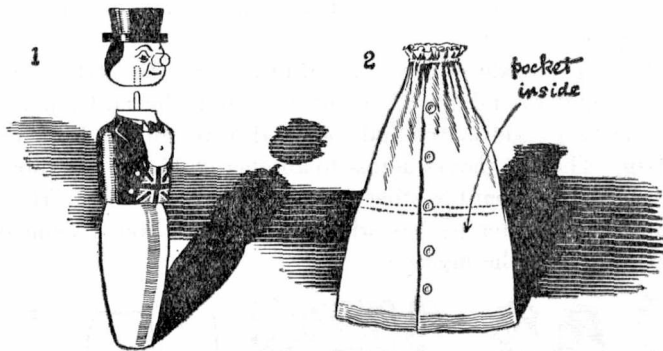
"Ninepins" is an elaborated version of the Bonus Genius which I first used in my children's performances many years ago. It is a lovely effect, holding the interest throughout, and not at all difficult to do.

My set was made from the component parts of a children's set of ninepins which I purchased for a few shillings. The skittles were turned jobs in the shape of dolls, each one being different from the rest. I knew the fellow in the shop and was able to persuade him to swop one of my skittles for a duplicate of one of the others from another set. Thus, I had a set of eight different dolls and a duplicate of one of them. ("Ninepins," by the way, is a conjurer's title to the effect; if I had had to give it a name to my audiences, it would have had to be called "Eightpins," for ostensibly that is the number of skittles used.)

One of the duplicate skittles had to be faked, for this was to be used in the same way as the Bonus Genius. With a fine saw I cut off the head of one of the duplicate dolls, drilled a hole into the head, upwards from the neck, and another hole into the body,

downwards from the neck. A pin was fitted into the headpiece and made a loose fit in the body. Figure 1 will show the result; the pin can be made of a small piece of dowelling the diameter of which will depend on the size of the dolls.

A cloak, as shown in Figure 2, has to be made for the doll. Its length should be such that when the "neck" of the cape rests on the doll's shoulders the base of the doll is quite concealed. Cord elastic should be sewn into the neck of the cape; the pocket should be big enough to conceal the detached head of the doll.



All of this may seem to be purely academic to you if you feel that you will not be able to secure a set of skittles suitable to the purpose. This difficulty may be overcome, however, if you have a friend with a wood lathe. With very little trouble he will be able to turn out for you ten (it may as well be ten, to justify the title) duplicate dolls from broom-stael. In painting the dolls afterwards, you can give them different coloured coats and hats. Provided each is distinguishable from all the others, that is all that really matters.

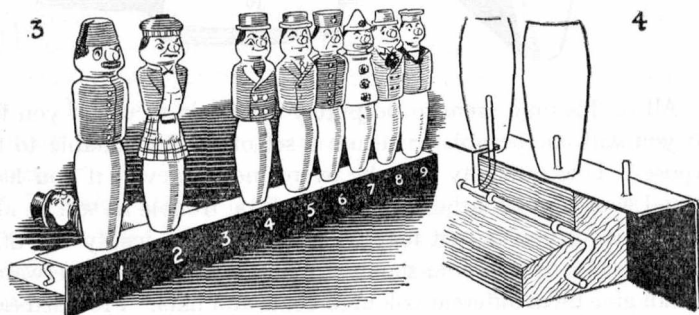
Now you need a stand on which to display the dolls. Mine was made from a twelve-inch length of wood, square in section, and faked for the reappearance of the duplicate doll. I made it the easy way, and drilled a hole through the block from one end to the position of the fourth doll, after that using a spindle with a simple handle at the point where it emerged from the block. If I were making the prop again, I should make it as it is illustrated here. Along the front of the block are painted numbers 1—8 (or nine, as the case may be), under the positions which the dolls will occupy. Figures 3 and 4 will, I think, give you more information regarding the essential features of the stand than I could do in many words.

Other items needed in addition to those detailed above are a card large enough to conceal the stand and skittles when stood in front, a changing bag and a number of counters. My counters are squares of postcard. One compartment of the bag is loaded with a number of counters all bearing the figure 4. The other compartment is empty, and the remaining counters, with mixed numbers, lie beside it on the table.

WORKING.

The presentation should now be fairly obvious. The lever at the end of the stand is swung so that the duplicate doll is out of sight at the back of the stand. The Bonus Genius duplicate stands in its place.

Having introduced his army of little men, the performer takes up the counters and the changing bag from the table, hands the counters to a child in the audience and asks him to drop them in the bag. Then he moves across to another child and has him make a "selection" from the other compartment of the bag. He shows around the counter he has withdrawn, which, by a coincidence, happens to bear the figure 4.



Therefore, the performer takes the fourth doll from the stand and stands it momentarily on another table. In front of the dolls remaining, he erects the covering card (which, for effect, should be covered with doll's house paper), and with his free hand operates the lever which brings the duplicate doll to the vertical in line with the others.

Now the Bonus Genius routine is worked with the faked doll and his cloak, and there can be no need for me to go into details of the tremendous amount of fun which these can evoke. When all possible fun has been squeezed from this part of the routine, and no one seems to know what can have happened to the vanished doll, the board is removed from in front of the stand to show that he has found his way home.

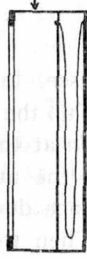
RISING MUSIC

FOR the performer who, like myself, is an instrumentalist as well as a magician, this item, simple and bold in effect and easy and worry-free of execution, will prove a winner. It will appear to be something exclusive to himself, and audiences will be found to appreciate the way in which he capitalises on his ability in the two spheres.

The man who has no musical ability need not be discouraged by the above remarks, for provided there is a reliable pianist present, he can use the effect, too. It will inevitably lose something of the *personal* appeal which it has in the hands of the other fellow, but it is still sound and attractive magic.

The effect is quickly described. The performer displays about a dozen display cards which consist of the front covers of sheet music stuck on to stiff board. One member of the audience chooses a tune. He holds the card aloft so that the audience may see which is the piece he has chosen, but keeps it secret from the performer. Then he mixes all the cards together and returns them to the performer.

FRONT
COMPARTMENT



STRONG
THREAD

↑
REAR
COMPARTMENT



COMPLETE FRONT

The design is cut out of a single piece of board—music shows through front.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	6	7	8	9	10	

Dropping all the cards into an open-fronted and quite innocent-seeming decorative houlette, the magician asks his audience to concentrate on the chosen tune. He takes up his instrument (or, if he is not an instrumentalist, asks the pianist to be ready to read his mind) and in a few moments, after a few false starts, the thought-reading succeeds and the music of the chosen piece begins to flow forth. Simultaneously, a card in the houlette begins to rise and is presently seen to be the card of the selected tune.

METHOD.

Let us deal first of all with the easiest matter—the houlette. This is a very simple affair, having a secret compartment at the back ready threaded for the raising of one card. The thread goes off stage to a waiting assistant. When the performer places the cards into the houlette, he drops them in in ones and twos and threes, and the chosen one goes alone into the rear compartment.

The performer needs, therefore, to know which was the tune selected, and since, where the houlette is concerned, no force is necessary, I have found it best to work on the principle of the stacked deck. Here is a list of the music I have used:—

F unicula
A fter the Ball was over
C hinatown
E mpty Saddles
T ea for Two
I n a Monastery Garden
O Sole Mio
U nderneath the Arches
S leepy Lagoon
L ast Round-Up
Y our Tiny Hand is Frozen
B ecause

The initial letters of these pieces, as you will see, form the word “ facetiously,” with the letter B added to make up the dozen. The numbers are stacked in this order, with *Funicula* at the back and *Because* at the face. They are displayed to the audience singly, without altering the order, and then turned face down and given a short series of haphazard-seeming cuts. Then they are fanned for a selection to be made, and cut at the point of selection. A mere glimpse of the number at the face will then tell the performer all he wants to know. Should the card at the face be *O Sole Mio*, for instance, he will know that the chosen number is *Underneath the Arches*, for the letter u follows the letter o in his keyword. Then he just has to take care that the latter piece goes into the rear compartment of the houlette after all the cards have been shuffled and returned to him.

(Incidentally, it is worth noting that although the list is a well-mixed one—a few classics, some hill-billies, and several popular sentimental numbers—every one of the numbers will be instantly recognised by an average audience. This is a most

important point. It's not a bit of use using music which you feel you do rather well, if the audience will not recognise it instantly.)

There is no reason at all why others should use this particular list. The sensible thing to do is to press into service whatever sheet music you have available, and find your own keyword.

For the performer who is not himself an instrumentalist, a different system is recommended. I suggest that he puts a short pencil stroke near the top edge of the back of each card, the position and the direction (horizontal or vertical) of the stroke indicating a number. The pianist is given a series of numbered extracts from the pieces of music used. The performer then merely has to code a number to the pianist and take care that the card with the right mark goes into the rear compartment of the houlette, in order that the feat may be accomplished. He need never know the nature of the music chosen until the pianist begins to play and the appropriate card rises in the houlette.

How to code the number? I'm all for bold methods. I suggest that, in asking the audience to concentrate on the chosen music, he says: "It is essential for the success of this experiment that at least *one*"—or *four* or *ten*, as the case may be—"person in the audience should concentrate on the music chosen and will me to read his thoughts."

It is far better to give the pianist a direct cue of this sort than to use a subtler system which might lead to confusion and subsequent embarrassment. And the pianist will not have learnt your secret. Though he realises that somehow you have obtained knowledge of the music chosen, he does not know how, and is as baffled as the rest regarding the means employed to cause the chosen sheet to rise.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

ANOTHER effect which will have a special appeal for the children's entertainer, "Traffic Lights" may even find its place in the show given for the less sophisticated kind of adult audience. It is colourful, surprising and somewhat off the beaten track, all of which are good qualities in any trick.

EFFECT.

On the stage stands a small replica of a traffic light standard. In the openings through which the red, amber and green lights usually shine, there are tucked three silk handkerchiefs of appropriate colours. The performer removes these singly and places them in a bunch on his table while he takes up a large foulard and drapes this over the standard.

Then he takes up the foulard again and holds them by their corners in the right hand. A wave of the hand towards the light standard, and the silks have vanished. When he removes the foulard, they are found to have returned. Little lights go on in the apparatus, and red, amber and green lights glow all at once through the apertures.

This is an effect which gives the audience something unusual to look at, and is largely mechanical in working. Still, it gives the performer a measure of satisfaction in that it calls for the exercise of some skill.

APPARATUS.

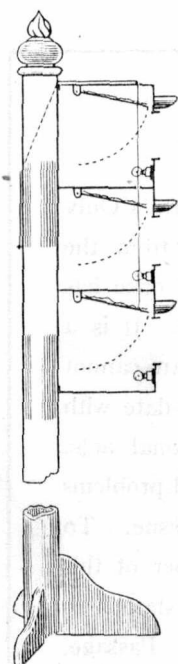
The actual standard is a matter of no importance, and the thing to do is to use some item which you already have and find no difficulty in transporting. The box arrangement at the business end is the only feature that need be described here. It should be about five inches wide, fifteen inches long and four inches deep. Its length should be divided into three equal sections. The main part of the box consists of sides and the bottom; the front, which resembles a lid, we shall deal with later.

Three hinged flaps are fitted into the box in the positions shown. To one side of the flaps and near to the free end is attached a length of cord, which passes through one end of the box and ends in a substantial knot. The knot is secured by a simple clip on the outside of the box. The illustration shows the flaps in the "closed" position. If the knot on the cord is released from the catch, the flaps drop of their own weight, presenting their surfaces squarely to the audience. A crumpled square of red silk is attached to the upper surface of the top flap, and similar squares of amber and green silk are attached to the other flaps.

In the lid of the box must be made three circular holes, each about 2½ ins. in diameter, and each being positioned at about the centre of the compartment which it is to cover. Three simple cowls are fitted to the holes. Beneath the holes are fitted flashlamp bulbs; the leads from these travel along the inside of the lid and emerge at what will be the top, where they are connected to a flat flashlamp battery with a simple switch.

Before we deal with the vanish of the silks, let us see how the lamp standard works. At the outset, the flaps are up and the knot at the end of the cord which joins them is caught under the clip. In the three apertures which face the audience, the silks to be used are seen.

The performer takes each visible silk in turn and lays them aside. Then he drapes a foulard over the box at the head of the standard. As he does so, he releases the knotted end of the cord from its catch, so that the three flaps fall to reveal their coloured surfaces. When, later in the effect, the magician removes the foulard again, he operates the switch attached to the battery, and the spectators receive the impression not only that the silks have returned, but that they have been magically lighted up.



Now for the vanish of the silks. For this the simplest of all pulls is used, which consists of a length of cord, tied at one end to the left arm just above the wrist. From there the cord travels up the sleeve, across the shoulders and down the right sleeve, to terminate in a watch-hook which is engaged on the right cuff until it is required. The length of cord should be such that no inconvenience is caused the performer if he keeps his arms just slightly bent. With the arms outstretched to their fullest, the hook should be carried to a point half-way between the elbow and the shoulder.

A set of fake silks is required, too. This consists of three silks which have been diagonally halved. Held by one corner, they resemble three whole silks, but haven't the bulk that three such silks would have. This makes for greater ease in working. A loop of catgut is attached at the corner.

This fake set of silks lies behind a piece of apparatus on the table. When the performer has taken the three silks from the standard, he places them on the table beside the fake set while he takes up the foulard. It is the faked set which he takes up on his return. The catgut loop which fastens the three silks together is engaged on the hook at the end of the pull, the performer stretches both arms suddenly and simultaneously, and the silks are carried at lightning speed up the sleeve.

The End

ANOTHER MAGIC FEAT

Since February, 1946, *Abracadabra*, the World's Only Magical Weekly, has been issued regularly from the office of the Publisher of this book. Never once has it been absent; never once has it been late. It is a magazine which the really "live" magician cannot afford to be without, for it keeps him up-to-date with news, reviews of books, tricks and professional acts, articles on presentation and other professional problems—and four or more new tricks in every issue. To secure a specimen copy of the current number of this lively twenty-page magazine, send 8½d. in stamps to Goodliffe Publications, 6, Colonnade Passage, Birmingham, 2, England.

THIMBLE ROUTINE

BY

BOB DRIEBEEK

IN his very fine book "Magic Feats," Majikans gives to the magical fraternity a most illusive fake. It consists of three thimbles stuck together (see Figure 1) and is designed for the immediate and simultaneous production of four thimbles. The author explains that he has not yet devised a routine which will exploit this fake to the full. Several alternative possibilities suggest themselves, of course, and here is a routine which I have worked out.

Stand with your right side to the audience and the fake concealed in the right hand. The concealment is as Majikans suggests: the loose thimble is nested (not too tightly) in thimble A (see Figure 1 again), and this is thumb-palmed. As you point with the right forefinger to the empty left palm, let your other fingers curl into the palm and insert the tip of the second finger in thimble B.

Now turn the right hand over, straightening the fingers and allowing the tips of the second, third and fourth to travel behind the left hand (Figure 2). The fake is thus carried into a different concealment, and the palms of the hands are shown empty. It is probable that you already use this move with a single thimble.

FIG. 1.

3 Thimbles glued - or soldered together, X is a loose thimble that fits in A.

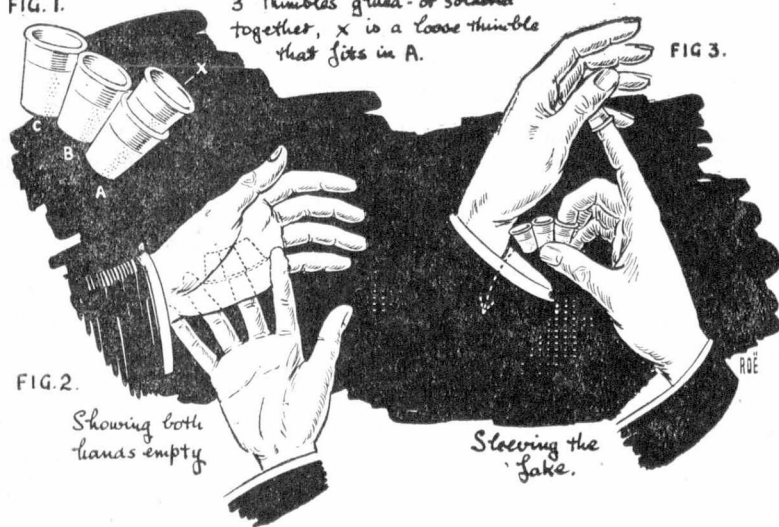


FIG. 2.

Showing both hands empty

FIG. 3.

Steering the fake.

A reversal of these moves brings the fake back into the thumb-palm and at the same time the left hand is turned over so that the spectators see the back. They have thus seen both sides of both hands. You are now ready for the production of four thimbles as Majikans describes. First the right forefinger secures the loose thimble, and immediately afterwards the other three fingers fold into the palm to secure theirs. The audience will already credit you with uncanny digital ability.

Declare now that you will place the four thimbles, one after the other, into the left fist. Maintaining your position with your right side to the

audience, show clearly once more that you have four thimbles on your right fingertips, and then curl the second, third and fourth fingers into the palm together.

Your left hand should be at least at shoulder height and with its palm towards the audience. Strike the left palm with the outstretched right forefinger. At this moment ease your third and fourth fingers out of the fake, so that it is held only by the second finger. All fingers save the forefinger, should remain curled inwards. If you find the move at all difficult, there is no reason whatever why the thumb should not assist. In any case, the thumb comes into action a moment later, to turn the fake on the fingertip so that thimble C points backwards.

With the forefinger strike the left palm once more, and at the third stroke drop the gadget into the left sleeve (Figure 3). Again the thumb may assist. Instantly close the left hand over the thimble on the right forefinger. Do be careful from here on to keep your other fingers curled inwards, for the audience believes you still have a thimble on each fingertip.

Still with its thimble on the top, withdraw the right forefinger rather quickly from the left hand and instantly thumb-palm it in the right, straightening the forefinger again as soon as this is done. Performed smoothly, this is quite a deceptive move; the thimble is invisible during that fraction of a second after it leaves the left fist.

The effect, so far, is that you have placed one of the four thimbles into the left fist and left it there. Insert the tip of the second finger into the thumb-palmed thimble, straighten the finger, and saying "Number Two," push the thimble into the fist. Withdraw the finger very deliberately, leaving the thimble behind. There follows a very bold move, and one not easy to describe—especially to one using a foreign language.

While saying "Number Three," quickly insert the naked tip of your fourth finger into the left fist, withdraw it with the thimble on it and immediately afterwards insert the third finger. The move, which takes only a fraction of a second, should be performed at such an angle that the audience can't exactly see what happens. You just need to raise your right elbow a little and turn the hands a little backwards towards the horizontal. It calls for some practice, but it is not really difficult. You *must* give the impression that the third finger merely places its thimble in the left fist.

Now the spectators may be allowed to see all your right fingertips and assure themselves that only one thimble remains, and that the one on your little fingertip. Withdraw the third finger, and saying "Number Four," put the thimble on the little finger into the left fist, leaving it there. Say, "There is really no space left, as my hands are rather small," and give the thimble a final "poke" with the right forefinger, at the same time bringing it out as before and thumb-palming it in the right hand.

You may then open the left hand, finger by finger, and show that the thimbles have gone.

* * * * *

All this should have taken less than a minute and a half. But you have not finished with thimble work when you disclose that the four thimbles have vanished. The thumb-palmed thimble is reproduced on the tip of the right forefinger, and while you do this you lower your

left hand, allowing the fake to drop from the sleeve into the cupped fingers. The right side is still towards the audience and the left hand disposes of the fake in the jacket pocket.

Show some sleights with the reproduced thimble and finally vanish it by thumb-palming. Reach into the right trousers pocket to recover it, and at the same time secure three nested thimbles on the tip of the second finger, which with the third and fourth fingers, you should keep curled inwards.

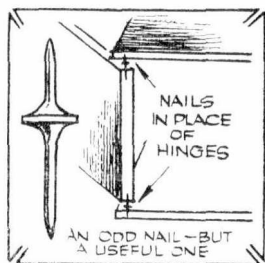
You are then ready to continue with Majikans' excellent (and perhaps unsurpassed) impromptu thimble routine, "Thimbles Ad Lib."

Nails, Magicians, For the use of

BY

FRANK SINCLAIR

USED in flower boxes as supplied to wholesale markets are nails of an unusual type. Their purpose is to hold the wooden cross-pieces which keep the flowers in position in transit; but I have found another use for them which will be of particular interest to the magician who makes his own props. The drawing herewith shows the peculiarity of the nails: they are double-ended.



Sometimes it is not easy or convenient to use hinges. Even if the hinges can be fixed, they must sometimes appear rather clumsy. These nails, at top and bottom of a door (see illustration again), can serve as a pivot and make the hinges unnecessary. I have used them for this purpose very successfully.

Rising Cards and The Tippler

IT was quite a long time ago that Louis Histed invented his "Victory" Rising Cards, and the principle was adapted for the "Wysted Rising Cards" that won the *Abracadabra* £100 Competition. The "Victory" effect has never been described in print, however, and we are happy to announce that it has now been released and is to be published in these pages. We saw, and were greatly impressed by, an early model of the prop.

In describing in *Abra* his Little Tippler, and the other effects using the same principle, Robert Harbin set many inventive minds thinking of uses to which they could put this clever and very original idea. Lord Amwell has thought up an excellent plot for the Tippler, and Harold G. Beaumont, working on very different lines, has devised a wonderful effect for children's shows.

The Victory Rising Cards and both of these new and entertaining Tippler routines will be published

In Next Week's Issue

Harrogate's Convention will be the Best Ever

POPCORN

BY

NORMAN CONQUEST

IN preparing to describe this routine I am tempted to say, don't work it unless it is your sort of trick. If it isn't, you won't like it at all. If it is, you have a winner. And because of the room it can't help taking in the bag, it's got to be a winner.

EFFECT

A plastic beaker is filled with Quaker Puffed Wheat (adv.) from a Quaker Puffed Wheat (adv.) carton, and secured with tissue paper and a rubber band. Why? Don't ask me. Does there have to be a "why"?

A beaker of different colour is filled with confetti from an oblong box with a lid, and similarly sealed. But this is not done without difficulty, due to a recalcitrant box-lid. The box stands on the table with the lid opening towards the customers, and when the lid is opened they see the word CONFETTI on it. But the thing won't stay open for more than a second.

After three or four tries, it does seem to stay up and you move away to get the beaker, which is just out of reach. As you approach the box with the beaker, down goes the lid again. Open it once more, and this time it does stay up. Fill and seal the beaker and close the lid. Now it refuses to stay down; every time you close it it comes up again. And this business is something you play up as circumstances dictate.

Now you command a transposition. Open up the popcorn beaker and find it to be full of confetti. Open up the confetti beaker, and it bears a white silk bearing the inscription POP. Shove the silk back and incantate some more. Have another look, then, and find that the word has changed to BANG. Bung it back, cover it with confetti, re-seal, abracadabra, and here at last is the hoped-for pop-corn, which is poured back into the carton.

That's it. It works. But first of all, do you like it? If so, read on—and good luck to you.

THIS IS HOW

The puffed wheat packet (a nice, colourful, if somewhat bulky, object) has three compartments. There is an upper compartment filled with pop-corns—and don't forget the grease-proof paper. And there are two lower compartments, side by side and open at the rear. Under cover of the box itself during the routine, the pop-corn beaker goes in one compartment and the confetti beaker comes out of the (bottomless) other one. Remember the old Karl Germain Dove Change? This is a descendant thereof.

Now the confetti box. When opened, the lid leans forward just a little beyond the vertical. It would fall right forward but for being checked by a thread or narrow ribbon at one end, or both. A slight surreptitious touch on either thread causes the lid to drop shut. A third thread runs from the lid through an eyelet to a boot button or summat (I use a boot button but my junk box is probably years older than yours and there may not be such things nowadays); anyway, a pull on the boot button (or summat) gives you a remote-control collapse of the lid and hoots of joy from in front.