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SOLE . .

P.H.

Preface.

IN introducing this book, I should like to explain that I have simply tried to construct the funniest patter possible, and while most of the jokes are of my own making, the reader will doubtless recognise a few "chestnuts" which I have decided it would be a shame to omit. Nevertheless, he cannot fail to find heaps of new "wheezes" and "gags" which I hope will amuse him, and subsequently his audiences. While most of my readers will be experienced in the delivery of patter, there may be amongst them a few beginners who know little or nothing about this by no means difficult art. Accordingly I will try in a few words to explain the principles of HOW TO DELIVER PATTERN.

The great essential is clear and distinct enunciation. Be careful that every member of your audience can hear all you have to say. Do not hurry the patter. Try to drive home every joke or pun by properly regulated emphasis and pause. The very best patter falls flat if jumbled through anyhow.

The learner will do well to visit one of the well-known conjurer's performances. Such successful "patterists" as Charles Bertram, David Devant, etc., cannot fail to supply an object lesson in how to make the most of what they have to say.

Request of
 Harry Houdini
 April 1927

MR. WILFRED G. ZELKA, M.I.M.C.,
 1, AMERSHAM ROAD, NEW CROSS, LONDON, S.E.

S.T. 4/7/22



Introductory ... Speech.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I shall have the impertinence to worry you this evening by shewing you a few experimental demonstrations of prestigitatal and manipulative legerdemain—occasionally cullud conjuring tricks and sometimes beastly swindles. In order to test how far you will put up with me, I shall first turn back my sleeves and let you see that there is nothing in the way of cannon balls or rabbits concealed up them. Of course there is no "arm in that." Some people say I do this in order to display my clean cuffs. As a matter of fact I do it in order to show my lovely arms. A well-known beauty offered me fifty pounds for these arms, but I did not like to part with them; I have had them ever since I was a boy. Without further trespassing upon your obvious impatience for me to finish, let me shew you the first problem with which we have to deal this evening.



SOLE.

P.H.

THE BILLIARD BALLS AT FINGER TIPS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I shall ask you to notice that there is nothing whatever, in my hands. That is because I washed them this afternoon. My next trick being one with eggs, of course I require a billiard ball. If Mr. Dawson or Mr. Roberts would lend me one I should be much obliged. No? Well I shall have to procure one by magical methods.

What pervertors of the truth we conjurers are. But then to be a good conjurer you have to be a good liar. My friends tell me I have a natural ability in this direction. You see I am successful in grasping a red ball from the air. I hope you will not grasp how it is done! you might brain me. I always prefer a red ball, it is so much more handy than the white ones, for it is always on the spot. Conjurers' billiard balls always have the North Poles and the South Poles on them, just like the Globe; in fact the conjurers themselves are frequently "up the pole." Now let me show you something with this ball. I will pass it into my pocket, in other words, pocket the red. I am good at pocketing things, silver spoons for preference. To do this trick I give it a squeeze, exerting simultaneous pressure upon the two poles. This causes it to vanish, and it travels into my pocket, as I said. It is there right enough, together with my

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hundred guinea cheque for this evening's performance.

I now hold it between my finger and thumb, with my thumb on one side and my finger on the other. This prevents the ball from dropping to the ground. I make a weird little movement like this, is it not eerie? Doesn't it make you feel creepy? at any rate you see the queer result. We have two balls. Beg pardon, sir? That gentleman wishes to know if he really sees two balls, or if it is the result of his dinner! they are there right enough. I will hit them together so that you can see they are solid, and not Pommery phantoms. It is all fair and square—except the balls—they are made of ivory, from the teeth of a white elephant. White elephants always have red teeth, you know. Now kindly watch carefully and you will see the third ball appear. Again that mystic motion, and here it is. Three balls. Does that remind you of anything? it has a familiar look. Now for the last ball. It will have to be the last, as I have no more fingers to hold the balls. Perhaps some one will lend me one or two, however. Pardon, madam? That lady says she has nothing but thumbs. I am afraid they will be no use to me. Now for the exciting part. Would you mind waking that lady up, sir? she is snoring so loud that there is danger of her waking up the rest. One, two, three, and here you see we have a full hand of solid balls.

ay
ay

MOLE.

P.H.

THE DYEING HANDKERCHIEFS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

(By the way, you will notice I always put the ladies before the gentlemen, in addressing you. As a matter of fact the ladies are always after gentlemen nowadays.) I want to show you how to change colour. I do not mean how to blush, but how to cause other things to change colour. That gentleman says his wife's hair would beat any conjurer he ever saw at that, but that has nothing to do with the trick. I will demonstrate with the aid of these three valuable silk handkerchiefs. I paid a penny each for them. They are white. At least they were once. To prevent you imagining I have some connection with the nether regions, I also use this piece of pulpified rag—paper. I form this into a roll. A paper roll, not a sausage roll. There is quite enough mystery about the trick without that. It is simply a round hole surrounded by paper. I am now going to give these handkerchiefs "the push," in other words push them through this tube. I shall then dye, do not look so cheerful, not die myself, but dye the handkerchiefs. I do this with magic dye, which I procure from Perth. In fact I am going to show you how the Perth Dye works. It is doing it's duty like a man, or rather unlike a man. Here we have the first handkerchief changed in colour, the second altered in hue, the last a different shade. The tube is no longer of interest, as there is "nothing in it."

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THE SLIDING DIE BOX. †

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have stood my other problems so well that I think I might venture to show you a trick that was a great favourite with my old friend Professor Gone-dotty, who died a hundred years ago. Beg pardon sir? I cannot have known him? You are evidently unaware of my connection with the torrid zone. I make use of this opera hat it is rather out of fashion at present, being a spring hat. It contains an actor's breakfast—that is to say, nothing at all. It never has much in it, as I wear it myself. I put it on the table. Now look at this solid die or dice. Rather large to play dice with sir? Yes, but if you are losing you hit the other man on the head with it, and then the fun begins. Winning is rather dangerous work with this die. I will make this die pass into the hat either visibly, or so that you can see it. Which do you prefer sir? Have a good look sir—the gentleman is trying to find his voice. Oh, visibly? Then in that case I place it in the hat, so. Judging by the lack of applause, so unusual when I occupy the stage, you do not think much of that trick. Well I do not think much of it myself, but then they say that thinking is not my strong point. I will try and do something else with the die. You think all this silly, well conjuring is silly all round. I am silly for doing it, but you are much sillier for watching. I must do something clever with this thing or die in the attempt.

MOLE.

P.H.

Let me show you this tea caddy; that is if you are enough awake to notice it. It has two compartments and ~~two~~ ^{four} doors. That is the ~~only~~ ^{only} door, that is sixpence extra. You see the doors are hinged; this enables them to work backwards and forwards. Is it not hingenious? I put the die in this compartment and then do a trick with it that I would like to do with my mother in law. First I shut it up, and then I cause it to disappear. First of all, however, I wish to show you this cover. You will not discover anything suspicious about discover. I place it upon this table for a moment, where you can all see it, unless you are looking the other way. Now to cause the die to leave the tea caddy, and pass under the cover. You will be able to see it go if you have a very strong imagination. Achebazooka! Now let me show you that the die has really left this department.

(The performer here introduces the sliding business. After finishing with the die box he may proceed.)

When the lady who has just fainted from excitement, has been removed to the infirmary, I will show you that the die has really passed under the cover. Here it is! I enjoyed doing that trick so much that I should like to make the die do something else. I will make the die pass into the hat. Great excitement at the rear and murmurs of "marvellous." I do not know whether I ought to do it, as those people behind the lady with the hat, look like pulling it off in their endeavour to get a view of this exciting feat. However, I will risk it, as it will not hurt me. I must repeat the same magic word, Achebazooka which is Arabic for shift. You see the cover is empty and here inside we have our spotty friend.

THE TORN AND RESTORED PAPER.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to show you a little experiment in finger manipulation. This, I may say, has nothing to do with picking pockets. That is a branch of magic not suited to the stage, and which leads to still another branch—the handcuff escape act. Many of you will see how this is done. At least some will say they see how it is done, which of course is the same thing. It is quite ordinary, in fact so very ordinary as to be extraordinary. I tear the paper in half. It is certainly a ripping trick. I will put the halves together and tear off the ends. What annoys me is that there is a fresh lot of ends staring me in the face. Please notice I really tear the paper. But then I can see you have so much confidence in me that you would take my word for the whole trick. I dare say you would much sooner do so. I really would not deceive for worlds—if there was any risk of you finding me out. I have now quite ruined the character of this innocent piece of paper by thus pulling it to pieces. Now to restore it by legerdemain. You see I am a legerdemainiac. I squeeze the paper as hard as I can. That is the worst of this trick it is too much like work. However, it never fails to work, except when it goes wrong, and you see we have the paper restored to its former condition. You can be quite sure that I have not deceived you—I give you my word—as a conjuror.

MOLE.

P.H.

THE FLYING KNOTTED HANDKERCHIEFS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me show you still another of those ridiculous impossibilities that would be so easy were they not so frightfully difficult. The principle part in this trick is played by a handkerchief. Of course I could use any other article just as well, but at present a handkerchief is what I hanker chiefly after. I use three in all, and these two I am going to first of all marry, in other words I am going to fasten them together. I will make them race to see which gets fastened first. The result, you see, is a tie. That is what makes it such a knotty problem. I am going to put them in this glass cylinder, but first I turn them round. This is the moment where the fluence begins to set in, just when I turn the handkerchiefs. In fact it is the turning of the tied. You can see right through this cylinder. I hope you will not be able to see through me so easily. It is the very transparency of the lamp chimney that makes it so opaque. I will place this cylinder containing the handkerchiefs upon this table. I always feel sorry for that table, as it has four wooden legs, poor thing. The remaining handkerchief I shall imprison in the other cylinder. It is just like the first except that it is a different one. The chimney is by no means out of place when I am talking, because it is a gas chimney. I will cause this handkerchief to vanish instantly, so

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that it will travel across the room at the rate of four hundred miles an hour. I am glad you all appear to believe me so implicitly; were you to disbelieve me you might be led into thinking I was not speaking the truth. When I command it to do so, the handkerchief will pass into the other cylinder. If you keep your eyes firmly fixed on it, they will suddenly drop off, as there will be no handkerchief for them to stick to. Pass! You see the tube is empty, and there are no trap doors concealed from your view in it. If there were, you would of course see them. Now I must show you that something very sad has occurred in the other tube. For here where the first two handkerchiefs were so friendly, the second one has come between them.

THE AERIAL TREASURY,
OR SHOWER OF COINS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I shall now make a collection. Please do not make for the door sir, I do not mean a collection that will make any member of the audience poorer. I mean one that will not make any of you poorer—or richer; that, however, is a minor detail. What I am going to do is to collect the money that is magically floating about in the air. I have to dematerialise it some time before the performance. There is quite a company of it

MOLE.

P.H.

floating about. Of course the difficult part is to first of all float the company. I will use this hat for a cash box, as it will be quite safe. I pick a coin out of the air, so, and drop it in the hat. That was half a crown, making seven and sixpence in the hat altogether; of course there was a crown in the hat before we started. Here is more money. It is my beautiful silvery voice that gets it there. I will pass these also into the hat. I hope they are good pieces, as I should not like to be caught passing bad money. Still they come! In the words of the popular ballad "let 'em all come." I never get tired of this trick, and have an hour's practice every morning. I hope you appreciate the sight of all this wealth. I have a few constables to see me home safely. Fifteen offers of marriage this week. A clergyman asked me to take the collection at his church yesterday. This coin is a Queen Ann farthing; there are only two more existing, and as both are lost, this is rather rare. I must not produce any more, or I will spoil the market. The hat is getting quite full. I shall have to stop soon. The man with the biggest head makes his fortune quickest at this game. The shower of money still falls. I hope it does not stop raining before I have made my fortune. They say money talks. Well I know some people who make every penny count. You know it is funny how we conjurers vary. When you are a wizard, some nights you feel as if you could not "wiz" for nuts; other nights you feel that you can "wiz-(h)-ard." There is another final bunch of coins hanging over my head; you can see it in the shape of a little blue cloud. Something like what you see

over a cabstand when the harness goes wrong. I will pop it in the hat. I think it has stopped raining now, and fortunately I have quite enough money for my tram fare home.

THE DRUM THAT CANNOT BE BEATEN.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will next show you a trick that is really remarkable if I do it. It is also queer if I do not do it. As you may be tired of conjuring I will construct a drum and give you a little music. I use these two golden rings. I had them silvered to keep the gold from wearing off—I mean from wearing. They are Zulu wedding rings, just imported from the wilds of Charing Cross. How would you like to get married with one of these, ladies. I heard a lady at the back say she would not care about the ring if she could only go off. One of these rings fits over the other. In this case it is the larger ring that fits over the smaller. Thus, when a pair of these rings are the same size, it is the smaller that fits over the larger. If you put this one over the other, it gives you a fit. Before putting the rings together, however, I am going to sandwich in this bit of paper. You see I am a sandwich man. In this way I succeed in constructing a drum. It is a sort of Thomas Thomas, or Tom Tom. I

MOLE.

PH.

will now give you a solo. Dear me, it has hardly any sound. In fact it is solo that you cannot hear the solo. However, you will not miss much, as I am no good as a musician, though my friends tell me I know how to blow my own trumpet. I am so annoyed with this unmusical drum that I will give it a good punishment. They say that hanging is capital punishment, so I will hang the drum, on this stand. I will then take my wand and give it a hard knock. I have broken its heart, and it seems to be bleeding ribbon; I must remove this; there seems to be a lot; yards and yards, front yards and back yards. I shall be able to have a bargain sale. Would any lady like a yard or two?

The colour changes to red. Red tape. It must be something to do with the War Office. Talk about centipedes, there are hundreds of feet here. Exactly seven hundred and thirty yards. If anyone doubts me they can measure it. No answering challenge from the drapers' assistants. That finishes the ribbon. Now we have a few handkerchiefs. I may say I get all my linen and clothing by these magical methods. This suit of clothes was once an egg. I do not think these are good washing handkerchiefs, as the colours might run. This last, however, is made of the colours that never run. (Union Jack.) I am sorry that I could not give you the music but it is obvious that in more ways than one this drum cannot be beaten.



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THE CHINESE RICE BOWLS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I am determined to make you miserable somehow, I will show you a trick that is a great favourite with some of my friends. They tell me I am wonderfully clever to be able to do it, but I do not think so, however. I hope you will. I use these two china washing bowls, though they are rather small for washing in. Still, such things do not worry me in the least. I am going to fill one these with rice. This rice was presented to me by a Hindu fakir. At any rate you can see that there is no fake about the rice. I place the other bowl on top, and wave both bowls in the air. I do this in order to create currents. Currants go so well with rice. This rice has taken a great fancy to Ireland. In fact when we remove the top bowl we see it has become very fond of Dublin. It has doubled to such an extent there is twice as much as there was before. I only want one bowlful, however, so I will sweep this away. I now place on the other bowl. This is where you have a chance of seeing exactly how it is not done. I would pronounce the magic word, only I have quite forgotten it. No matter, it has nothing whatever to do with the trick. Pass! That will do just as well, and you see we have the rice converted into water. At least I think it is water, though this is a substance of which I am not a judge. Perhaps some gentleman will inform me if this is the genuine article.

MOLE.

P.H.

THE EGG, GLASS, AND TUMBLER TRICK.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like some gentleman in full possession of his senses to examine this egg. Is anyone answering that description present? Ah, here is a gentleman that took great interest in the last elections. He ought to be a judge of eggs. Will you kindly back me in my assertion that this egg is all right? But you will not doubt its bona fides—that is the sort of egg that speaks for itself. I will put it on the table for a moment. Of course the egg is quite fresh—in fact I have just laid it—on the table. Now will some lady scrutinise this handkerchief? Will you madam. I declare the lady is counting the stitches. To save you all trouble madam, let me tell you there are ninety five. I hemmed it myself, and they took me a minute each, so I know. Now please look at my hands. Not that they are in any way worthy of your attention, but in order that you may see that they are solid meat, and not tin imitations like some conjurers use. Now let me show you that I fairly place the egg in this tumbler. The egg is an Irish one. I never use French eggs, as I scorn the foreign yolk. I may say it is not the first time by many that I have had Irish in the glass. I cover the tumbler with this other handkerchief. I do this in order that you will have a full view of the glass. I think I shall give up using Irish eggs. They are always worrying me to give

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them Home Rule, or something of the kind. Now I am going to rub this handkerchief very hard. I exert a good deal of pressure. In fact, it is this trick that has produced the mighty muscles on my arms. I like doing this trick with eight fingers and two thumbs, so I use both hands to it. If I only used the left hand, say, the right would be left, which is as absurd as the trick, which is saying a good deal. The trick consists in making the handkerchief pass into the glass. The egg will lend itself to my hands. That will be excellent, or rather egg shell lent. That pun sometimes does a trick all by itself. It sometimes produces eggs from the pockets of the audience. Watch closely, for the more watching you do the less you will see. Keep one eye on the glass, one eye on my hands and the other eye on me. Here in my hands we have the egg, while as you see the handkerchief has arrived in the glass. It went in a second. I hope it was not travelling on a third class ticket.

THE FLAG TRICK.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude my performance this evening, with this trick. No one seems anxious to prevent me. I use three pieces of sneezing paper; that is "tissue" paper. I must not talk, as I am forgetting the trick. I will not forget it again, however, and I am

MOLE.

P.H.

sure you never will, once you see it. I am going to burn these papers. I generally light them first as I find they burn better. I brought my own matches as I was told that the audience here was matchless. I now give the papers a little rough treatment, as I tear them—to ribbons. (Throw out coil, followed by flag staff).

That, ladies and gentlemen, concludes my performance, and I hope you will forgive me.

THE END.



Adams Brothers, Printers, Daventry, Northants.

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