

Magical Notes

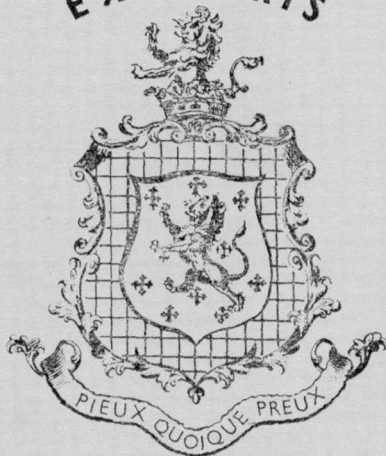
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. Notions .



PERCY NALDRETT.

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. Magical .

Notes ^{AND} Notions.

By Percy Naldrett.



*Printed and Published by Percy Naldrett at
Portsmouth, November, 1913.*

FORE-WORD.

In submitting this little volume to the magical fraternity I am complying with the wishes of numerous friends and correspondents who have been interested in my occasional contributions to the magical magazines. As most of the problems herein described have figured in my own programme I can vouch as to their being practical.

I have endeavoured to make the explanations as clear as possible without useless repetition of general principles, which I take it for granted the reader will be already familiar with.

A practical conjurer will find most of the ideas easily convertible to his particular style of presentation.

With sincere thanks to those friends who have assisted me by word or deed,

I am,

Yours fraternally,

PERCY NALDRETT.

Portsmouth,

November, 1913.

THE CHOCOLATE BOX MYSTERY.

A Pleasing item for the Drawing-Room.

This little combination requires very little practice and arrangement, as practically every magician is already in possession of the articles required for its accomplishment. The effect, briefly, is as follows:—

Six quite unprepared empty chocolate boxes are placed in a row upon a stand. Above each box is a number. A bundle of coloured silks are next exhibited. A spectator is asked to select a colour. The corresponding handkerchief is now vanished. A number is chosen; let us suppose, by way of illustration, that the chosen number is four. The performer removes the other boxes, showing each to be still empty, and a spectator is invited to open the remaining box, number four, and in it is discovered the missing silk. The plot simply expressed is this:— A chosen silk vanished and recovered from a chosen box.

REQUIREMENTS.

Seven small chocolate boxes, usually obtainable at a penny each. Six silks of various colours and one duplicate silk. An ornamental stand with figures attached, or a Jap tray with a piece of "slate paper" pasted over it; the figures can then be chalked upon the tray during the course of the trick and the tray when supported by a tumbler forms a very effective stand. Personally the latter arrangement is preferred as it helps to lengthen the trick and in a long drawing-room entertainment a few seconds stolen in this way are a great help, providing that the audience are kept interested in the proceedings.

The remaining accessories are a "forcing pack" to determine which number shall be selected, and a double velvet bag in order to force the required colour.

PREPARATION.

The duplicate silk is packed into one of the chocolate boxes, and the box is placed on your table, just in front of a "black art" pocket. The silks are placed over the loaded box, thus concealing it from view. The remaining boxes are stacked evenly along the front edge of the table.

PRESENTATION AND PATTERN.

"Ladies and gentlemen, science has made

remarkable progress during the last few years ; for instance, we have the telephone, telegraph, electric cars, Rag-time and Tango Teas. Some people contend that if we continue this remarkable progress, magic, in a few years time will be a thing of the past. However, I will endeavour to demonstrate that such is not the case. It may surprise you to learn that while studying chemistry in Germany at the age of three, I invented a system of wireless parcel post. The government appointed a commission to investigate my system, but after due consideration they declined to have anything to do with it on the ground that it might cause a slump in "Marconi" shares. That my invention is quite practical you will now have an opportunity of judging for yourselves.

"I have here six receiving stations—simply ordinary chocolate boxes—I should like a kind-hearted gentleman who is doing nothing more important to just select one and examine it thoroughly, just to see that it isn't made of india-rubber, or that it does not fold up in any way. Thank you sir ! I will just open the remainder to convince you that they are as innocent of deception as I am."

As each box is opened, exhibited, and finally closed, it is carelessly thrown down again upon the table near the rear edge. The sixth box is boldly

thrown right into the "black art" pocket and the bundle of silks is immediately lifted, disclosing the loaded box. This change is quite natural and exceedingly deceptive.

"I will now improvise a stand by means of this tray and a tumbler, so. Each box, you will observe, rests under a number, by which they shall in future be identified. It will be obvious to you that with such small receiving stations it would be impossible even for a magician to despatch a very bulky parcel, such as a motor car or an elephant, so this evening I intend to use a silk handkerchief. In order that I shall not be suspected of using confederates, I will get someone to select a colour haphazard for which purpose I have provided a number of tickets with the respective colours written upon them. Will you verify that statement, sir? Thank you! Now place them in this little velvet bag and I will ask a lady to be so good as to select one. Thank you madam. What colour? Green! Very well, that decides the colour. Now sir, would you oblige by selecting a card from this pack and the number of spots, if six or under, shall indicate the receiving station to be used. Four! Very good, sir. Now ladies and gentlemen, I think you will agree that up to this point there has not been the slightest loop-hole for deception. I shall take the

green silk,—the only green thing about my entertainment, by the way—and I shall stuff the corners through this tiny hole in the centre of the silk, this causes it to automatically disappear, or rather to start on its aerial flight. Watch! Did you see it go, neither did I, but it really has gone. I will open the receiving stations one at a time, so. Perfectly empty you see. Now for the remaining and selected box. Perhaps the gentleman who selected the card would kindly open the box himself. There it is you see, and thus ends my demonstration of wireless parcel post.”

FLASH PAPER IDEAS.

Being Several Novel Suggestions of use when arranging
a New Programme.

A shilling's worth of Flash Paper and an hour's consideration evolved the following little effects, the majority of which the writer has tried in public and found successful.

A Vanish for a Watch.

This startling vanish affords a welcome change from the orthodox methods of causing "the flight of time." A piece of flash paper containing a small quantity of Chlorate of Potash and powdered sugar mixed in equal parts, is made into a parcel as near the bulk of a watch as possible. The prepared package is placed on the servante or in some equally convenient position out of sight of the audience. A watch is borrowed

and wrapped in a piece of white tissue paper and at the first opportunity is exchanged for the flash paper parcel. This packet is placed in a tumbler containing a few drops of sulphuric acid. Nothing will happen for a few seconds until the acid has had time to soak through the paper and come into contact with the chemical, then there is a startling flash and nothing remains. The watch is disposed of according to the performer's fancy.

The Evolution of a Flag.

This is an exceedingly pretty experiment and depends, as in the foregoing trick, upon the exchange of packets. In this instance a silk Union Jack is rolled into a bundle and wrapped in flash paper, one corner being allowed to protrude. In presenting the effect, which is best worked in connection with some handkerchief or flag combination, three silks, Red, White, and Blue respectively are wrapped in a piece of white tissue paper; the exchange of packets is made and the prepared parcel is held to the flame of a candle. The corner of the flag is gripped and a smart jerk clears it from the blazing flash. The paper burns so rapidly that there is no danger of spoiling the flag. The foregoing makes a fine finish to the ever popular "Twentieth Century Handkerchief Trick."

An Idea for a Flash Bouquet.

Here is a suggestion worthy of a trial by those who have sufficient time to devote to experimental magic. The performer wraps a borrowed glove or other small article in a piece of paper and and throws it into the air. A burst of flame transforms the parcel into a bouquet of spring flowers. This, as stated, is only a rough idea and the only difficulty presenting itself is the fact that spring flowers, especially the paper variety, so easily catch fire. Some fire-proofing process seems to be necessary, and this would have to be done before the flowers were made, otherwise the result would perhaps not be quite satisfactory.

The firing of the flash paper in mid-air is easily accomplished by the aid of the potash mixture and a "flash tube" which must be wrapped up in the corner of the prepared parcel. The tube is snapped by the fingers in the act of throwing the parcel into the air. Flash tubes can be obtained very cheaply from all dealers in magical apparatus.

Other uses for this useful material will no doubt occur to the interested reader.

A "LIVE" RABBIT.

A very Realistic Effect to use in connection with any
Rabbit Trick.

Practically every magician, whether amateur or professional has witnessed Mr. David Devant's admirable vanish of a rabbit, wherein the animal ("wild animal" Mr. Devant calls it when bunny pops his head up over the servante. "Wild conjurer" I expect also fits the case) is apparently wrapped in a sheet of paper. It always struck me that the rabbit vanished too quickly after the wrapping-up process. To overcome this I devised the following expedient which convinces the audience of the rabbit's presence when the animal is really far away exploring the depths of a vest servante or profonde.

The apparatus is quite simple, consisting of a long rubber tube fitted with a small bladder at one end and a press-bulb at the other. They may be obtained very cheaply at the dealers under the

name of "plate-lifters." The tube is attached to a chair, the bulb being arranged behind the top rail and the bladder under a fancy velvet cover on the seat of the chair. Failing a velvet cover an ordinary newspaper will serve the purpose.

The rabbit is apparently wrapped in a piece of paper (really being dropped into chair or vest servante, according to the fancy of the performer and the size of the rabbit). The parcel is now laid upon the seat of the chair over the concealed bladder. The conjurer now lightly rests his hand upon the top rail and judiciously presses the bulb, thus imparting a life-like wobbly motion to the paper parcel, just as if bunny was trying to escape from his paper prison. After a reasonable amount of this by-play the parcel is crushed up in the usual manner. I have been very gratified by the comments of brother magicians who have witnessed this little interlude, and I trust that many readers will be able to press it into service.

FISHING FOR MONEY.

A novel addition to the Aerial Treasury Trick.

To "fish for money" in the ordinary sense is a common enough practice, especially among magicians, but angling for coins over the heads of an audience savours of novelty, and I think the following original effect will be acceptable to those readers who may be partial to coin effects.

A fishing rod of any description may be used, to the line of which is attached a small swivel. The fake consists of a small tin tube painted black, and of just sufficient size to take a folding penny comfortably. This tube has a small wire ring soldered to one end, to which is attached a piece of thin catgut or strong thread about three inches in length. The thread runs down through the tube and is attached to the centre section of a folding coin, for which purpose a miniature hole is drilled in the coin. The coin, of course, is to

be silver-plated. The coin is folded and pushed up into the tube from whence a jerk will dislodge it, the effect of the coin suddenly appearing in mid-air being quite startling. The coin is apparently taken from the line and thrown into a hat or other receptacle ; really the folding coin is pushed back into the tube and a coin previously palmed is thrown. If the performer desires he may use separate fakes, as in the well known Aerial Fishing for Gold Fish Trick ; in fact the writer works three tricks in sequence, viz :— Aerial Treasury with bowler hat, in the usual way, followed by the fishing rod effect and finishing with the catching of live gold fish, a sequence of effects which invariably meets with appreciation.

The folding coins are familiar to anyone who has dabbled in magic to the slightest extent, and they may be obtained from any magical dealer at the nominal price of six-pence each.

THE SUFFRAGETTE PROBLEM.

A Topical and Amusing Experiment suitable for any
occasion.

The magician brings forward a plate upon which are a number of balls of wool of various brilliant colours. The wool is placed into a velvet bag. A tumbler and a bordered "Excelda" handkerchief are given to a spectator with the request that he will examine both. A lady is persuaded to select a ball of wool from the bag. The ball of wool is wrapped up in the handkerchief which is then stuffed into the tumbler. The tumbler is placed in full view upon the table or a spectator may retain it. The conjurer now requests that names of well known people should be called out, and he proceeds to write them down upon small blank cards which he has provided for the purpose. The cards are thrown into a hat and thoroughly mixed, and a member of the audience freely selects one.

The name written upon the card is duly announced and upon the handkerchief being removed from the tumbler the selected name is found embroidered in bold woollen letters upon the fabric.

REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION.

To prepare for the trick it is necessary to embroider upon a duplicate handkerchief, in wool of a very brilliant colour, the name of some celebrity—in the present case, Mrs. Pankhurst—The spare wool should be left hanging to the handkerchief, as it adds to the effect. This handkerchief is stuffed into a small tumbler and is placed on a Jap tray, near the rear edge, and is covered with a bowler hat. The velvet bag is one of the double variety, or a “Velvet Changing Bag” may be utilised. One side of the bag is loaded with a few balls of wool all of the colour to match that on the prepared handkerchief. The balls of wool of assorted colours when tilted from the plate are allowed to fall into the empty side of the bag. When the spectator is invited to choose a ball the side of the bag containing the duplicates is presented, thus ensuring his selection to be in accordance with the performer’s wishes. No matter what names the audience call out the magician writes down “Mrs. Pankhurst” upon each card. If the audience is at all numerous

there is no danger of the conjurer getting into a fix, as such a well known name is certain to be called out two or three times. If the reader is at all doubtful, or not inclined to take even such a remote risk, he can give pencils and cards to various spectators for them to write names upon, in which case the conjurer deftly changes these for a pack all alike, and thus accomplishes his object. It will now be clear to the reader that in spite of the apparent fairness of everything, both the name and the ball of wool are actually "forced" upon the audience.

The Jap tray, by the way, is placed upon the table so that the rear edge of tray is just in front of a "black art" pocket. After the selected ball of wool and handkerchief are stuffed into the tumbler the conjurer apparently places it upon the table, at the same time picking up the hat and cards to make room for it. What really happens is that the performer drops the tumbler into the "black art" pocket and the hat being immediately lifted with the other hand discloses the prepared glass. A gentle tap on the edge of the tray with the first glass greatly assists the deceptiveness of this easy and natural change.

The remainder of the trick is obvious as it only remains to disclose the chosen name on the handkerchief.

SUGGESTED PATTERN.

“I think my next experiment will prove of great interest to the ladies, as I intend to make use of these very pretty balls of worsted and this white handkerchief, together with this innocent tumbler. This handkerchief, although to outward appearance is quite an ordinary article, is really possessed of magical qualities. I obtained it from Messrs. Cook’s of Ludgate Circus—I asked them to supply me with one of their famous magic carpets, but unfortunately they were out of stock, so they sent me this handkerchief. Its magical powers I will presently demonstrate to you. Meanwhile I should be pleased if some good natured lady, who has nothing to talk about for a few moments, would kindly tip these balls of wool into this dainty little bag. Thank you so much! You did that quite artistically. Now perhaps you will select one, haphazard. Green! What a brilliant colour. Now, please, wrap it up in this magic carpet—handkerchief I mean—and stuff it into this tumbler. This is not the first time you have ever stuffed, is it? I thought not, you do it so well. I will place it in full view upon this,—this what-you-might-call-it—that’s French for table. Oh, yes, I speak German also, I had an uncle once, who was a professor of languages. He was a cabby!

Now please call out the names of any celebrated persons, and I will write them down on these blank cards. Please don't call out any fictitious name such as Bill Bailey or Mrs. Grundy. Lloyd George! Thank you, the success of the trick is now insured. Horatio Bottomley! Very good, that precludes any chance of trickery. Mrs. Pankhurst! Thank you, comment is unnecessary.

Now I will thoroughly mix the cards in this hat, and will get this sympathetic looking gentleman to take one. The name sir? Mrs. Pankhurst! As I suspected. Probably another plot. But we must proceed with the experiment in spite of the possibility of bombs. Here is the name, darned upon the handkerchief. Magic fabric, but not proof against the schemes of a resourceful suffragette."

If one of those little exploding arrangements, sold by Munro's, Duke Street, Adelphi, under the name of "The Devil among the Tailors" is placed under the prepared tumbler, a fine effect is obtained as a tremendous report is heard when the tumbler is lifted, just after the conjurer has mentioned "bombs."

THE LEVITATION OF A PIECE OF PAPER.

A Weird and Puzzling Problem.

This effect is by no means new, but judging by the number of magicians who confess ignorance of the methods employed, it should be of sufficient interest to be included in this volume. To whom the credit of its invention is due I am at a loss to say, but I believe the effect, or one very similar, has been popular with and for a long time in the programme of that able member of the Inner Magic Circle, Mr. G. H. Charlton.

Judging from the advertising columns of the American magical magazines, that country fairly teems with various forms of the trick. The method described here, however, will be found as convenient as could be wished.

In effect the magician crushes up a piece of tissue paper into a ball and drops it into an opera hat. Passes are made over the hat and the paper

is observed to float slowly up into mid-air. The conjurer now proves the absence of tangible support by waving the closed hat in all directions around the suspended paper, finally reaching the climax by passing a solid hoop over and around the paper. When accompanied by appropriate music the effect is uncanny in the extreme.

The secret is very simple, the whole trick depending upon a length of fine black silk thread.

REQUIREMENTS.

A piece of extra superfine machine silk about a yard in length, according to the height and reach of the performer, a piece of tissue paper about fifteen inches square, an ordinary wooden hoop costing a penny, and a hat—opera hat for preference.

PREPARATION.

One end of the thread is attached to a loop of fine wire, large enough to fit over the performer's ear. The other end of the thread is attached to the top rail of a rather high-backed chair; if performing on a platform or stage, one of the wings will probably be more convenient, but much depends upon the height of the performer. The wire loop is laid on the seat of the chair in company with the piece of paper and the hoop.

PRESENTATION.

The performer enters from the "prompt" side, with the closed opera hat under his left arm. He proceeds somewhat as follows :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, I will next show you a mysterious effect with a piece of paper. I am very fond of mysterious things, in fact, when a boy, I was very fond of sausages. For the purpose of the demonstration I shall make use of this hat and this small piece of paper."

Here the conjurer picks up the hoop and the loop of wire together, and puts the hoop over his head allowing it to hang on his neck. The wire loop is slipped over the right ear which will be on the side away from the audience. The paper is now exhibited and crushed round the centre of the thread which should be just taut. The paper is to be entangled with the thread. The conjurer now slackens the thread and drops the paper into the hat. The performer now has full scope for showmanship by making passes over the hat; stepping slowly back causes the paper to rise. It is useless to make these passes in a matter-of-fact sort of way as though the levitation of a piece of paper was a common occurrence, it being essential, if the full effect is to be realised, for the conjurer to really imagine that the passes cause the paper to rise.

Having raised the paper to a sufficient height the performer closes the hat and waves it above and below the ball, taking care not to jerk or disturb the thread. The hat is replaced under the left arm, and the right hand takes the hoop from over the head. The hoop is passed in every direction round the paper as far as the thread will allow. This hoop passing movement will come readily to the reader upon actual experiment, the effect to the audience being that the hoop proves the impossibility of support. The hoop is replaced over the head, and the paper allowed to sink back into the hat which is held in readiness.

The thread is broken, or the wire loop slipped off the ear and a bow brings the experiment to a conclusion.

It is not advisable to continue talking while the actual levitation is taking place as it tends to distract the attention of the audience away from the paper. This is one of the very few effects in which the attention of the audience should be allowed to concentrate upon the performer and his movements, to the exclusion of all else.

THE TRANSFORMATION TUMBLER.

A Novel Accessory of Exceptional Utility.

The conjurer comes forward carrying a tray upon which is seen a glass of ink. In order to prove the genuineness of the ink the performer casually passes it in front of several members of the audience, inviting them to dip their fingers in if they feel at all sceptical. Having satisfied the spectators on this point the glass of ink is covered with an unprepared tube made of cartridge paper. A canary is taken from a cage and placed into a paper cone or "sugar bag" which is made up in front of the audience. A transposition now takes place, for upon removing the cover the canary is seen in the tumbler; the bird is replaced in the cage and the conjurer cuts off the point of the cone and the ink runs out into the glass.

The most important piece of apparatus used in this experiment is a tumbler with a clear

celluloid lining to fit comfortably in it. This lining, instead of having the usual bottom, has a horizontal partition across it about an inch and a half from the top. This partition must be waterproof. The inside space under the partition must be blackened with Indian ink. A duplicate canary is inserted in this cavity and the fake is then carefully lowered into the tumbler. A little real ink is now poured upon the top of the partition and at even close quarters it is impossible to detect anything unusual. A child's rubber air-ball or "squeaker" to be obtained at any toy bazaar, is filled with ink and secured with a piece of silk thread. This bladder may be carried in the profunde or any other convenient pocket, and is to be loaded into the cone at the first favourable opportunity. The canary is taken from the cage and placed into the cone on top of the bladder, and the top of the cone is folded over and secured with a pin.

In taking the cover from the glass the conjurer nips the celluloid lining with his fingers and brings it clear away from the glass. If the table possesses a "black art" well of just sufficient size to fit the celluloid lining the fake may be dropped into it without fear of splashing, thus allowing the cover to be casually knocked over

thus indirectly demonstrating its innocence. The performer now removes the canary from the tumbler and taking a pair of scissors he cuts the bottom off the cone—of course cutting the bladder as well—allowing the ink to run into the tumbler.

If the reader desires to perform the trick exactly as described he would do well to bear in mind that a rather large tumbler is necessary to allow the bird to drop from the fake freely. This may also be facilitated by cutting a section away from the back of the celluloid lining.

The possibilities of this idea are endless ; for instance a glass of ink might be transformed to an egg, and the egg could be broken to prove its genuineness. The celluloid fake should be made by someone experienced in this line, as the fake must necessarily be strong and reliable. The fault of amateurs in working celluloid is that they use too much cement and have not the patience to allow it to dry properly. If too much cement is used the fake will warp and congeal.

The writer presented this idea to the Servais Le Roy Co., and as we go to press we note that the Le Roy Co., have listed the tumbler at a very reasonable price, in their *Magical Monthly* for September, 1913.

THE LIGHTNING NK AND WATER CHANGE.

A Startling Chemical Effect worthy of a place in any
Programme.

This wonderful effect, though often demonstrated in the laboratories of our Secondary and Technical Schools, is not such a favourite among magicians as it deserves to be; probably this is because of the unsatisfactory results obtained by some experimenters. To whom the credit is due for adapting this chemical effect to a magical performance, the writer has been unable to ascertain, or he should certainly have been associated here with the trick. The writer is a firm believer in the maxim, "Credit where Credit is due," and for this reason he has always avoided describing proprietary tricks, and has confined himself to explaining in this little volume either items original with him, or tricks of which the originators are

unknown. If magicians would take full advantage of the facilities for registration of magical effects offered by the magazines it would save much of the disputing that at present takes place.

But to return to the effect in question; the conjurer exhibits a glass of ink, afterwards covering it with a handkerchief or flag. A glass of perfectly clear water is given to a spectator to hold up in full view of the audience. At the command of the magician the water changes instantaneously into ink, the change being so sudden that it is necessary to warn the holder of the glass to be careful, or there is a great risk of his dropping the glass in his astonishment.

The other tumbler, when uncovered, is found to contain the water.

The quantities given here have been obtained by personal experiment, and the results have been carefully checked by interested professional chemists. The time elapsing before the change takes place can be varied at will, the best result being obtained at a space of ninety to one hundred and thirty seconds—quite long enough for the conjurer to deliver a reasonable amount of patter and sufficient to lead the audience into believing it impossible for chemicals to play any part in the effect.

The success of the trick depends upon the careful and conscientious preparation of the following stock solutions :—

- A. *5 oz. of distilled water.*
1 scruple of Iodic Acid Crystals.
- B. *4 drams of Sulphurous Acid.*
4½ ozs. of distilled water.
- C. *5 grains of Starch finely powdered.*
4 ozs. of distilled water.

To use :—

Place in tumbler :—

- 1 dram of A.*
- 3 drams of C.*
- 3 ozs. of distilled water.*

Place in another tumbler :—

- 2 drams B.*
- 14 drams of distilled water.*

Pour contents of one tumbler into the other.

Time taken to change, 40 seconds.

The Iodic Acid Crystals can be obtained from Messrs. Baird & Tatlock, Laboratory Furnishers, of Cross Street, Hatton Garden, E.C., at two shillings per ounce. Half an ounce is sufficient for thirty to fifty shows, so that compared with the great effect the materials are very cheap.

The Starch solution should be freshly made as it spoils very quickly, it is also essential that the starch be crushed up and boiled, afterwards being filtered through blotting paper.

The Sulphurous Acid (not Sulphuric) may be obtained from any chemist.

The remaining part of the trick, the change from ink to water is accomplished by the time honoured black silk lining being fitted to the interior of the tumbler. When the covering flag is removed this silk lining is gripped by the finger and thumb and brought away with it.

THE "EUREKA" SLATE.

A Convincing Method of Working a Popular Trick.

The performer exhibits a slate which is then marked on both sides with identifying numbers or letters of the spectators' own choosing. The slate is then wrapped up in an unprepared examined cloth. A word is chosen from a book and upon unwrapping the slate the chosen word is found boldly written upon it in chalk. Such is the effect as seen by the audience.

Before explaining the method employed to bring about such an apparently impossible result, the writer desires to mention that he invented (?) this idea some few years ago, but was surprised upon reading "Spirit Slate Writing," an exceptionally clever treatise by W. E. Robinson, to find the idea therein explained; the present writer must therefore take a back seat as regards precedence. However, the secret is apparently still

very little known among magicians, and that is the justification for inserting it here.

The secret is beautifully simple. Only one slate is used, and the usual thin slate-coloured flap. The flap has a semi-circular piece cut away from one of the top corners. The slate is prepared by writing upon it the word it is intended to use. The flap is then super-imposed and a chalk mark made along the semi-circular edge where it joins the slate. This mark which completely hides the junction, may be made before the performance, or it may be made in full view of the audience, according to the discretion of the conjurer. The flap is best made of thin zinc covered with slate paper.

The conjurer picks up the slate and asks for an identifying letter to be called out, at the same time he casually makes a semi-circular mark in the corner of the unprepared side of the slate. This is quite natural and excites no comment as it is obviously done to isolate the mark and thus leave the remainder of the space for the "spirits" to disport themselves upon. Let us suppose that a spectator calls out "R." The conjurer writes that letter in the corner provided inside the line, and then turns the slate over, the flap being held in position by the fingers. Another spectator

calls out "D," which the conjurer writes in the reserved corner—as the slate is flap side up this last letter is written on the slate proper. If the flap is thin and accurate in fit it is quite safe to hold the slate so that the spectators may mark it themselves, provided of course that they mark it in the proper corners. He would be a very ill-mannered person who would do otherwise, but such things have a knack of happening when least expected. The slate is laid flap downwards upon a table with a black covering—a black Jap tray will do excellently. The magician now exhibits the handkerchief or other wrapper, which may very well be borrowed. The handkerchief is held by the teeth and the left hand, which leaves the right hand at liberty to pick up the slate which is then gracefully wrapped up and given into the custody of a lady until the end of the experiment.

The remaining part of the trick is familiar to every magician, the required word being forced in the manner most convenient to the reader. The writer prefers the old magical addition method, total of the sum indicating the page at which a book is to be opened and loaded dice or the number of spots on a chosen playing card determines the position of the freely (?) selected word.

If performing the above twice at the same

hall, or before the same audience, it is advisable to reverse the process by giving the slate for examination first, adding the flap to it in the act of wrapping the slate up. The word in this case is written beforehand on the flap.

The effect in either case is certainly as perfect as could be wished and no doubt this reminder will cause many neglected slates to be once again brought into use.

AN EGG, HANDKERCHIEF, AND MILK COMBINATION.

A Laughable Series of Surprises in which the
Performer's Assistant Plays an Important Part.

In this instance the writer will adhere to his usual custom, and describe the trick exactly as he has been in the habit of performing it. The reader can then adapt or convert it to suit his own purpose.

In the writer's own programme this trick always follows the production of a borrowed watch, together with a rabbit, from a nest of eight boxes (an experiment too well known to need description here). In the act of taking the rabbit from the last box, the conjurer simply tilts the box over with the bottom toward the audience.

This quite natural and apparently accidental movement serves the double purpose of allowing the spectators to see that the box is not one of bottomless variety, and leaves the table prepared for the combination of effects about to be described. I will now give a brief outline of the trick which invariably "brings down the house."

Having finished the experiment with the rabbit and boxes the performer expresses a desire for refreshment. His assistant therefore brings forward a small tray containing a small jug of milk, an egg, and a tumbler. The conjurer breaks the egg, which should be of a reliable brand, into the tumbler, and adds the milk from the jug. He now steps to the front of the platform to demonstrate the innocence of the jug to the spectators. At this point a titter goes round the audience, which the conjurer feigns not to understand, but as the smile develops into a roar of laughter he turns round and discovers that his assistant has consumed the contents of the tumbler and is wiping his mouth with a coloured silk which he has taken from his vest pocket. The conjurer is naturally annoyed to find himself deprived of the refreshment, but proceeds to recover the milk by magical means. He thereupon stuffs the egg-shell and the coloured silk into the empty jug which he then places upon the table, the assist-

ant meanwhile taking up a position a little to the rear of table. After a little by-play the performer pats the assistant smartly on the head and withdraws the silk, perfectly dry, from his mouth. The jug is then taken up and is again full of milk, which is poured into the tumbler! Everything is thus accounted for with the exception of the egg; another tap upon the assistant's head, and the egg, perfectly restored, is seen to protrude from his mouth. The conjurer takes the egg, breaks it into the tumbler of milk, and retires to partake of his well earned refresher.

The above is one of those problems with ordinary household articles that are acceptable now that the age of miracles, as represented by the violently suggestive tin caddies and cannisters of our boyhood days, has ceased.

A duplicate jug of milk is placed on the servant and the assistant places this on the table behind the box. The assistant has, vested, a hollow ivory egg containing a duplicate silk; the hole, by the way, is in the end of the egg, not the side as is usually the case. The performer has a duplicate real egg vested which in the last stage of the trick is exchanged with the hollow one. The performer really places the first jug right into the box which he immediately places aside, thus

disclosing the duplicate jug. This change is practically identical with that employed in the "Chocolate Box Mystery," and the "Suffragette Problem. The assistant takes the first opportunity afforded of slipping the prepared egg into his mouth.

The element of comedy in the foregoing effect is rather broad and must be carefully treated if presented in a drawing room, but for stage or platform use the fullest play can be given to it, as it is admirably suited to a public audience.

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PERCY NALDRETT will be pleased to explain any point that may not be clear to the reader; enquiries should be addressed to:—

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