

PART I

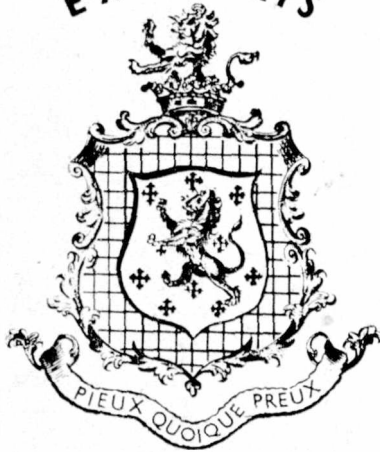
# A BOOK OF REAL MAGIC



ON WITH THE  
SHOW  
By J. F. ORRIN

"THE MAGIC WAND" OFFICE, LONDON, W.C.2

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# *On With the Show*

*A further Selection of Magical Experiments*

INVENTED  
DESCRIBED  
AND  
ILLUSTRATED  
BY

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## FOREWORD

The first care of a magical author should be to ensure that those who buy his books derive some practical benefit from the transaction. To this end, I have selected my first six items from my current repertoire. These effects have stood the test of many public performances and can be relied upon to create and sustain interest.

The rest of the effects in Part I have all passed the experimental stage but those in Part II are, frankly, untested. Nevertheless I feel satisfied that for the most part they will prove to be worth a trial.

To avoid possible misunderstanding it may be as well if I point out now that when I refer to "left" or "right" I mean the performer's "left" or "right" as he faces the spectators.

Having regard to the shortage of paper I have not "spread" myself to the same extent as in "Put It Over". Many readers, no doubt, will welcome this but in any case I have no choice.

And so————

On With The Show.

*On With the Show*

## ON WITH THE SHOW

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### *1. The Dissolving Napkin Ring*

This is a general utility effect which may be included in almost any programme without seriously jeopardising its chances of success. The apparatus is attractive without being fantastic. Its success is probably due to the fact that at the end of the experiment the performer offers most of the apparatus for examination.

#### EFFECT.

The apparatus consists of four coloured napkin rings made of bakelite or some similar material. They are impaled on a knitting needle, the ends of which pass through holes in the sides of a thin wooden frame. There is also a cubical wooden box, mounted on a small pedestal. It has no back and the front is hinged to form a lid which opens upwards. In the sides are slots, through which passes a second knitting needle.

One of the rings having been chosen, the frame which holds them is covered with a small curtain. The performer then succeeds in removing the chosen ring from the frame and passing it on to the knitting needle within the box.

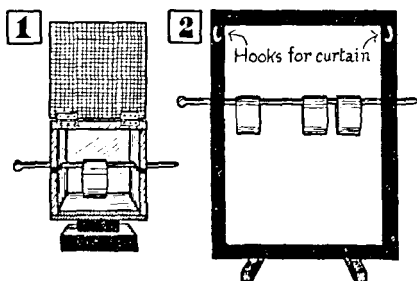
#### METHOD.

The devices employed are fairly simple. The choice of the ring is forced. I use colour-forcing cards for the purpose but there are other alternatives of which no doubt you are aware. The ring to be forced is prepared by sawing it through, at one point of its circumference, with a tenon saw. It will then be found that it can be "sprung" on or off a No. 9 knitting

needle without difficulty. By the way, I obtained my rings at one of Woolworth's Stores. The material of which they are made looks as if it might be rather brittle and I do not think it would be advisable to tempt the fates by using a very thick needle.

The curtain has a wire rod hemmed into one edge. The ends of the rod project slightly so that they can be inserted in two hooks, which are fastened either side of the frame, near the top. By this means the curtain can be hung in front of the rings when required. The curtain is double and in one side is a slit, large enough to accommodate the chosen ring.

The reproduction of the duplicate ring in the box is made possible by the box itself. The pedestal is just large enough to hold the ring and the latter can be pulled up into the box by a device which is illustrated in Figs. 3 and 4.



#### DIAGRAMS.

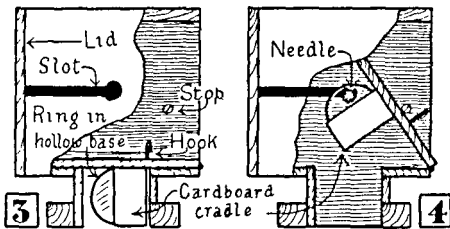
Figures 1 and 2 show the box and frame respectively as they appear at the conclusion of the experiment. Figures 3 and 4 are side elevations of the box. In Figure 3 we see the duplicate (solid) ring hidden in the pedestal but attached to the hinged base via a cardboard cradle. In Figure 4, the hinged base has



been pulled up by means of the hook which is provided for this purpose. A screw, driven into the side of the box at just the right spot, serves as a stop which ensures that the ring will be in the position required, viz., where a knitting needle, passed through the holes in the sides of the box, will also pass through the ring.

#### PREPARATION.

On a table to the left of the stage stands the frame, containing the knitting needle and the four rings. Behind the frame, folded up on the table, is the curtain. The cubical box, closed and loaded with the duplicate ring, is on a table to the right. Beside it is the second needle and the forcing cards, if used, are behind it.



#### ROUTINE.

First of all the performer exhibits the frame and rings and twirls one or two of the latter around the needle. He then replaces the frame on the table and walks over to the table on which stands the box. He opens this, rattles the needle inside it, inserts the needle through the holes in the sides of the box and close the lid. Having done this he starts to walk away from the table but suddenly "remembers" that he has not shown the spectators that the needle is a solid one.

He accordingly withdraws the needle from the box, bends it backwards and forwards between his hands and replaces it in the box. Before doing so, however, he inserts his left forefinger in the box from behind, grasps the hook attached to the hinged bottom and lifts the latter to its fullest extent. Thus, when the needle is replaced in the box it also passes through the duplicate ring.

The performer now walks to the centre of the stage and forces the choice of (say) the blue ring. He then hangs the curtain on the hooks in front of the frame so that the rings are hidden and proclaims his intention of removing the chosen ring. He explains that in order to do this without breaking the ring he must first render it invisible. He places his right hand behind the curtain, removes the blue ring and passes it through the slit in the back of the curtain. The left hand, held in front of the curtain, assists in this action. Next, the performer withdraws his right hand, with thumb and forefinger held apart as if they held the ring. He walks over to the box and places his hand in it from behind, simulating the action of placing the ring on the needle. He then turns to the spectators, affects chagrin at the absence of applause and chides them for their lack of faith in his powers. Nevertheless, he offers to prove that he has done what he set out to do. He removes the curtain from the frame and drops it on the table, afterwards taking the frame, containing the three remaining rings, down into the auditorium and requesting a spectator to examine it and, perhaps, try his hand at removing one of the rings. He then returns to the stage and taking hold of the ends of the needle projecting from the box, one

in each hand, removes the needle via the slits in the box and carries needle and ring down to the spectators in order that they also may be subjected to examination.

## *II. The Posy From Nowhere*

This effect features a novel method of disclosing hidden information, together with a surprise climax.  
EFFECT.

Six cards bearing pictures of flowers are displayed and one is chosen by a spectator. A wooden framework is shown. This contains two wire frames covered with tissue paper. The foremost frame is hinged by its lower edge to the front of the wooden framework and is covered with white tissue, while the other is hinged by its upper edge to the back of the framework and is covered with black tissue. At the outset the wire frames are in juxtaposition, one on each side of the upper half of the framework. The performer lets down the white screen and turns up the black one, thus showing that there is nothing between or behind them, afterwards replacing them in their original position, in which they are secured by small catches.

He then lights a cigarette and with its glowing tip touches the white tissue in five or six places. As a result, the tissue begins to smoulder but it does so in such a way that the smoulderings spell out the name of the chosen flower. The black tissue behind the letters burnt out causes these letters to show up black against the remaining white tissue. The spectator who chose the card is requested to confirm that the flower spelt out corresponds with that chosen by him, whereupon

the performer plunges his hand through both sheets of tissue (from the front) and withdraws a bunch of the flowers themselves.

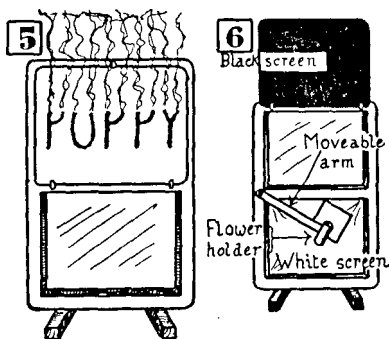
#### METHOD.

The choice of a flower is, of course, forced. I found that the word "poppy" was most suitable for the purpose and so prepared seven cards with pictures of poppies and five with other flowers, all cut from packets of seeds which I had to buy for the purpose. (My garden looks like the 11th of November.) To prepare for the force I place a tray flat on the table. On the tray I place six poppy cards, stacked with their faces downwards and near the rear edge. Having displayed the six cards bearing pictures of the various flowers (including, of course, the seventh poppy card), I shuffle them and then slap them down faces downwards on the table, just behind the tray. I then pick up the tray, spread the six poppy cards out and ask a spectator to choose one. The original cards are left on the table, which is slightly above eye level. This is a somewhat "cheeky" move but it proved the most successful of the several methods which I have employed from time to time.

The disclosure of the name of the chosen flower is brought about by painting the white tissue with a saturated solution of saltpetre (nitre). It is as well to make a cardboard stencil for this purpose as it is necessary that the letters should be so formed that the insides of the "O" and the "Ps" should not fall out.

The bunch of poppies which is to be produced as a finale is attached to a movable arm so arranged that it can take up a position behind either the upper or

lower half of the wooden framework, according to whether the paper screens are closed or open.



#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 5 shows a view of the apparatus while the white tissue is smouldering.

Figure 6 shows the position of affairs when the tissue paper screens are open to display the empty frame. The movable arm has been pushed down out of sight behind the white screen.

#### PREPARATION.

The wooden framework, with the screens in juxtaposition, and the bunch of poppies hidden in the holder behind the screens, stands on the floor in front of the table. On the table is the tray. The packet of six different flower cards is in the centre of the tray and the six poppy cards are stacked, faces downwards, near the rear edge. Beside the tray are a packet of cigarettes, a box of matches and an envelope.

#### ROUTINE.

The performer displays the six cards, showing them one by one and calling out the names of the

flowers. He then closes up the packet, drops it face downwards just behind the tray and picks up the latter in his left hand, at the same time spreading out the six poppy cards with his right. He picks up the envelope and, advancing to the spectators, invites one of them to select any card and place it in the envelope as soon as he has made a note of the flower which it represents.

While the spectator is sealing up the card the performer returns to the stage, picks up the wooden framework and places it on the table. He lets down the white screen with his right hand and then, with his left, pushes down the movable arm so that the bunch of poppies is transferred from behind the upper to the lower section of the frame. He is now free to fold up the black screen and show that the space between the two screens is empty. These movements are then reversed so that the apparatus is once more in the same condition as it was originally.

The next move is to collect the envelope and place it where it can be seen by the spectators. A cigarette is lit and in due course its tip is pressed lightly against the lowermost points of the five letters on the white tissue. Pencil crosses at these points will prove useful guides. As soon as the paper has ceased to smoulder and the chooser of the card has confirmed the name of the flower spelt out by the tissue, the performer thrusts his right hand through both sheets of tissue, withdraws the posy from its holder and displays it to the audience with a flourish.

### *III. The Rainbow Ribbons*

This is an improved version of an effect which I described in "The Magic Wand" some years ago. In its present form it has proved acceptable to almost every type of audience, including children.

#### EFFECT.

With the aid of an artist's palette, mounted on an easel, and three large tubes of "paint," the performer shows how an artist obtains various different colours by mixing the three primary colours, yellow, blue and red. He commences by taking the tube which is supposed to contain yellow paint and "squeezes" a long, broad ribbon of colour on the palette. He does the same with the blue tube, then removes the two streaks of "paint" from the palette. This he is well able to do since the "paint" really consists of lengths of ribbon. Explaining that yellow and blue, if mixed, will make green, he rolls the two ribbons round his forefinger and tucks them into his closed fist. When he opens his hand, the yellow and blue ribbons have vanished and in their place are two green ones.

This process is repeated, this time with a yellow and a red ribbon. These, on being removed from the palette and tucked into the hand, change into two orange-coloured ribbons.

As a finale, the conjurer undertakes to show how the three colours can be combined to form the tertiary colour, violet. He "squeezes" ribbons from the three tubes, removes them from the palette and folds them in the centre. The folded end of the bundle is pushed into the thumb-hole of the palette, leaving the free ends displayed on the latter. He then picks up a fan and strokes the bundle of ribbons with it. When the

fan is removed, the ribbons have vanished and in their place is the bunch of violets.

#### METHOD.

The palette is made of plywood and is covered with black velvet. It is screwed or tacked to a light easel made from wooden laths.

The ribbons which are spread upon the palette are contained within the tubes. These tubes are merely pieces of cardboard or thin plywood cut to the shape of a paint tube. One side is covered with silver paper and decorated with a label to indicate the colour of the paint which it is supposed to contain. The tube is eight inches long and two inches wide and to the back is attached a piece of thin card folded in three, the centre portion being stuck to the tube. This is the container for the ribbon and if you will refer to Fig. 8 you will see how the ribbon is arranged. After the stage indicated in the diagram is reached, the part of the card marked "P" is folded over on to the ribbon. A thin rubber band is then passed round the tube at the point marked "x". It should be just tight enough to prevent the ribbon from sliding out of its own accord. If it is too tight it will interfere with the smooth withdrawal of the ribbon. The ribbons are twelve inches long and about an inch wide.

There are in fact seven of these tubes, one for each ribbon. When they are loaded they are stacked in the order—yellow, blue, yellow, red, yellow, blue and red, the last-mentioned being lowermost. I find it convenient to provide a shallow cardboard box divided into two compartments. The stack of tubes is at the outset in one of these compartments and as each tube is used it is dropped into the other one. The box is



placed just behind the easel and towards the side of the table on which the performer stands. There is no need to tell the audience that seven tubes are used and the provision of the box helps to conceal the fact.

The palette is provided with three needle points close to the upper edge. They point upwards and are used to assist the illusion of paint being squeezed from the tubes. To give this effect the performer takes one of the tubes and holds it in front of the palette so that the projecting end of the ribbon engages with one of the needle points. He then draws the tube down in front of the palette, gently pressing the top of the tube against the ribbon as he does so. The ribbon, being held by the needle, is thus drawn out of the tube and the effect is precisely the same as if a ribbon of actual paint were being spread on the palette. In fact, until the performer removes this ribbon the spectators are convinced that he is actually spreading paint.

For the change of the yellow and blue ribbons to green ones I use a fake which consists of a cardboard tube one inch long and five-eighths of an inch in diameter. It is covered with fine glass-paper to facilitate handling. It contains two rolled-up green ribbons and is hung on a hook behind the easel, together with a similar fake containing two orange ribbons. I obtain possession of the required fake in the left hand while I am spreading the ribbons on the palette with the right. Then I remove the ribbons from the palette, roll them round my left forefinger, remove them with the right hand and close my left fist round the fake. It is then a simple matter to push the roll of ribbons into the fake, thereby pushing the duplicate roll into the hand. Immediately afterwards the fake, now loaded

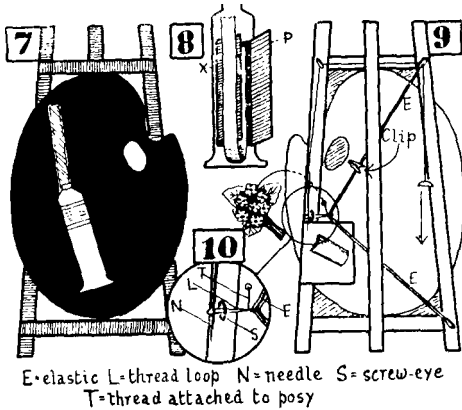
with the unwanted ribbons, is dropped into the right hand and palmed while the left is opened to disclose the green (or orange) ribbons.

To make clear the production of the bunch of violets I must refer you to Fig. 9 which gives a view of the back of the palette. When the performer has spread the yellow, blue and red ribbons on to the palette, he removes them, puts them together and folds them in two. He then, with his left hand, pushes the folded centres through the thumb-hole of the palette and with his right grips them in the crocodile-clip which is sewn to the elastic. The elastic is retained in the position indicated by a loop of twine which passes through a screw-eye and is retained by a darning needle. This latter is in turn attached to a thread terminating in a button which hangs behind the easel in a position convenient for grasping at the right moment. Also attached to the elastic is a length of thread which passes through a hole in the palette and to which is tied the bunch of violets. When the elastic is at tension, the thread is free and the violets can be tucked in the little receptacle behind the palette. When the darning needle is withdrawn, however, (by pulling on the button), the elastic straightens out, as a result of which two things happen: the ribbons are withdrawn through the thumb-hole out of sight and the violets are drawn round to the front of the palette.

This probably sounds very involved but it is not too bad, really. The main thing is to ensure that the thread which holds the violets is of just the right length to bring the flowers flat against the palette. Incidentally, I use artificial flowers for this effect and I found it necessary to bind the stalks tightly together.

Until I did that they were always getting in the way and preventing the easy passage of the posy from the back to the front of the palette.

To bring about the change, the performer, standing on the right-hand side of the easel, grasps a good-sized fan in his right hand. At the same time he secretly grasps the hanging button with his left. As the fan is passed over the ribbons, the button is pulled downwards and by the time the fan has completed its downward journey the ribbons have gone and the violets have taken their place.



#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 7 shows the apparatus as it appears to the spectators. One of the ribbons is being drawn from its tube.

Figure 8 gives a view of the back of one of the tubes (see text).

Figure 9 shows the apparatus as seen from behind and Figure 10 is a close-up view of the release mechanism.

## PREPARATION.

The palette and easel are prepared by pulling out the bunch of violets to its fullest extent, passing the loop of twine through the screw-eye and securing it with the needle. The violets are tucked into the flower holder behind the palette. The seven "print" tubes, duly loaded, are stacked in a box or tray behind the easel. The two colour-changing fakes, also loaded, are suspended on the hooks provided for the purpose behind the easel. On the table in front of the latter is a large fan.

## ROUTINE.

After a short address in which he explains that he proposes to demonstrate the mixing of colours the performer takes the first yellow tube, engages the end of the ribbon with the needle-point nearest to himself and spreads the ribbon on the palette. He returns the empty tube to the box, picks up a blue one and repeats the process, using the second needle-point for the purpose. He then, with his right hand, removes the two ribbons from the palette and at the same time obtains possession of the colour-changing fake (loaded with green ribbons) with his left. He rolls the yellow and blue ribbons round his left forefinger, removes them and tucks them into the fake held in his left hand, thus expelling the green ribbons. As soon as the yellow and blue ribbons are safely within the fake, the latter is allowed to drop into the right hand. The green ribbons are then unrolled and displayed. As these are put aside the fake is disposed of.

The process is repeated, using a yellow and a red tube and blending the ribbons of these colours into orange ones. Finally, the last three tubes are taken

one by one and their contents spread on the palette. The three ribbons are removed, folded in the centre and pushed through the thumb-hole of the palette where they are attached to the crocodile clip. The fan is taken in the right hand and opened, while the left grasps the hanging button. As the fan is passed over the face of the palette the button is pulled and—viola! “Vi’lets, lidy? *Lervely* vi’lets.”

#### *IV. Jim Pratt’s Cat*

Here we have a simple card discovery, served up in the form of a magical recitation. I usually work it with the aid of an assistant and although this is by no means essential the additional mystification which this procedure renders possible is well worth the trouble. The apparatus consists of a black cat, made from plywood covered with velvet. Behind it is a semi-circular chart, also mounted on plywood and bearing various signs as illustrated. The cat’s tail is movable and can be made to indicate any of these signs at will.

EFFECT.

The performer commences by going among the spectators and requesting two of them to select cards from the pack and retain them. The cards are not forced and if the choosers wish they may alter their minds and choose different ones. Returning to the stage, the performer proceeds to recite the story of Jim Pratt’s Cat, a creature of such outstanding sagacity that she is able to discover the values of cards secretly abstracted from the pack. At the end of this touching narrative the conjurer hands over the cat to his assistant while he himself goes into the audience to collect the chosen cards. Before he collects them,

however, he suggests that the choosers shall ask the cat to name their cards. This the cat does, by swinging its tail round the chart and indicating first the suit and then the value of the card in question.

The spectators cannot fail to be impressed by the following considerations :—

1. The cards are obviously chosen freely.
2. The assistant is out of sight while the cards are being selected.
3. No word is spoken by the conjurer to his assistant when he hands over the cat.
4. The choosers themselves may, if they wish, question the cat while the performer stands silently by.

#### METHOD.

I must first of all explain that the cat and chart together measure 17 inches long and that they are attached to a tray, the inside of which measures seventeen inches by six inches. When it is necessary to handle the cat, this is done by holding the ends of the tray in either hand. If you consult Fig. 12 which gives a rear view of the apparatus, you will see that the revolution of the tail can be controlled with the right thumb. The movement necessary is so slight that it is invisible from the front, so that the fact that the assistant is controlling the tail, though probably suspected, is not sufficiently apparent to destroy the illusion.

The diagrams should be sufficiently enlightening to make a detailed description of the mechanism unnecessary but perhaps I should mention that the wooden wheel works on a spindle to which is also attached the cat's tail, so that the two work in unison.

Also attached to this spindle is a pointer, the object of which is to indicate, by reference to a duplicate set of signs on the back of the apparatus, where the cat's tail happens to be pointing.

The method of notifying the assistant of the cards chosen is delightfully simple and makes me blush for shame every time I do it. I use a "self-shifting" pack. I have often had occasion to refer to this invaluable aid to lazy conjurers. It is the invention of Mr. Donald Holmes and has been described by him in one of his excellent books. It consists of twenty-six indifferent cards, each with a short duplicate immediately above it. If the pack is rifled and broken at any point the two cards below the break will be duplicates.

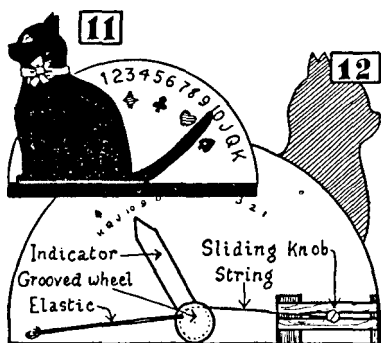
Between the back of the cat and the rear edge of the tray on which it stands is a space of three inches. There is thus room to accommodate three or four packs of cards, if need be. Actually there are only two, namely the self-shifting pack and an ordinary pack containing a short nine of clubs, the object of which will be apparent from the routine.

When two cards have been selected by spectators the performer passes the two duplicates to the top of the pack. Returning to the stage he places the pack face downwards behind the cat. Later on, as opportunity offers, he turns the two top cards faces upwards so that when the assistant takes charge of the tray, all he or she has to do is to manipulate the tail to indicate the faced cards. By that time, however, the performer has apparently removed the pack from behind the cat. Actually he has taken instead the ordinary pack and for a reason which will be clear from a study of the routine.

## DIAGRAMS.

Figure 11 gives a general view of the apparatus in operation but minus the tray, which is omitted for greater clarity.

Figure 12 shows the back of the apparatus and gives details of the mechanism. The elastic is fixed to the circumference of the grooved wheel but the thread is wound round the latter as indicated by the dotted line.



## PREPARATION.

The only preparation necessary is to ensure that the two packs are to hand behind the cat.

## ROUTINE.

The performer takes the self-shifting pack and advancing to the spectators requests two of them to select cards and retain them. He passes the duplicates to the top of the pack, returns to the stage and replaces the cards behind the cat. He then delivers the following recitation :—

## JIM PRATT'S CAT

There once was a man by the name of Jim Pratt  
Who had as a pet a most curious cat.



He also kept pigeons and chickens and rabbits  
And bowls full of goldfish to study their habits.  
He studied them all in his moments of leisure  
But Snowball, the cat, gave him uncommon pleasure.  
She didn't behave as most pussycats do  
And stay out all night making hullabaloo,  
But sat on the rug by the fire as she oughter  
And learnt lots of tricks which Jim Pratt says he  
taught her.

She soon got so clever and quick (so Jim said)  
She understood every word that he said  
But, stranger than this, by the sound of her purrs  
Jim Pratt very soon got to understand hers.  
Never was known such a marvellous creature  
She learnt all the tricks that her master could teach  
her.

In fact before long she said with a mew  
"I really believe I could teach you a few."\*  
She told Jim to pick up the cards from the table  
And mix them as thoroughly as he was able.  
Then when he had done so she said "Choose a card"  
"And don't let me see it but think of it hard."  
So Jim picked out a card (didn't let pussy see)  
While the cat sat and watched him, as you're watch-  
ing me.

Then suddenly gave a loud mew and said "Fine!  
"The card is a Club and the number is Nine."

(\*At this point the performer takes from behind the cat the pack containing the short Nine of Clubs. This he shuffles and fans and, holding the cards faces downwards, removes the short card. As he says "— and the number is Nine" he turns the face of the card to the audience.)

"I never before saw the like of that there."  
Jim Pratt was astounded and said "I declare!"  
He got so excited he called in his neighbours  
And asked them to witness his pussycat's capers.  
He told them to pick out some cards from the pack  
And look at them quickly and then put them back.  
The neighbours, of course, couldn't talk to the cat  
And the cat wasn't able to answer them back  
But Jim had a plan which he knew couldn't fail  
For making the cat pick the cards with her tail.  
He rigged up a chart, just like this, but more rough  
And the cat, without further ado, did her stuff.

At the conclusion of the recitation the performer explains that he proposes to ask the cat to repeat the performance which she gave in the story. The assistant comes forward and takes charge of the cat. (The performer has in the meantime faced the duplicates.) The performer goes down into the auditorium and requests the choosers of the cards to ask the cat to name them. This the cat does and the performer returns to the stage mid the plaudits of the spectators (let us hope).

### *V. The Spelling Sphinx*

In common with the "Rainbow Ribbons," this is an improved version of an effect described in "The Magic Wand." It is interesting inasmuch as I have attempted to perform single-handed, an effect which if tackled on conventional lines would require the services of an assistant behind the scenes.

#### *EFFECT.*

On the performer's table is a model of an Egyptian Sphinx. On its back is a small tray which supports a

tumbler. The performer invites a spectator to write any word on a piece of paper and fold it up. This is dropped into the tumbler and the latter is covered with a plate. There it remains until the conclusion of the experiment. The performer then displays a packet of "Lexicon" cards, runs through them to show that they are in alphabetical order and drops them into a receptacle behind the Sphinx's head. Standing well behind the table, he invites the spectators to watch the head. Slowly a card rises into view—then another and another. When each card has risen it is removed and placed in a slot in front of the Sphinx until there are four or five of them, according to the number of letters in the chosen word. They are, however, in alphabetical order. Now, for the first time, the performer removes the folded slip from the tumbler, unfolds it and reads the word written on it. The writer is asked to verify this, whereupon the conjurer rearranges the cards in front of the Sphinx. Needless to say, they now spell the chosen word.

#### METHOD,

I have a feeling that the description of this piece of apparatus is going to give me a headache but I shall do my best to lighten the burden by making the diagrams as informative as possible. First there is the little matter of reading the selected word and if any reader objects that the method suggested is too cumbersome I would refer him to the much simpler one described in connection with the earlier version of the effect. In that version, however, it was necessary to cover the tumbler with a handkerchief while in this the folded paper does not leave the spectators' sight

for one moment. (Not one?—Well, if it does the spectators do not realise it.)

The fact is that behind the Sphinx is a duplicate folded slip which by a crude but effective device can be shot up into the tumbler, which is bottomless. It is operated by pushing aside the wooden arm marked "M" in Figs. 14 and 15. The tray which supports the tumbler has a semi-circular hole to correspond with the bottom of the tumbler. Normally it is closed by a strip of wood, hinged at one end and supported at the other by a piece of wire attached to the arm "M". This wooden strip supports the paper slip on which the word is written but when "M" is pushed aside the hinged strip is released and the folded slip falls down behind the Sphinx. At the same time, the duplicate slip is carried up into the tumbler. The change is the work of a second and it is masked in the following way.

When the tumbler is placed on the tray in the first instance the side just touches the arm "M". The original folded slip is then placed inside. The performer, standing on the left-hand side of the Sphinx, grasps the tumbler with his left hand. At the same time he picks up a plate from behind the Sphinx and raises it aloft. At this very moment the tumbler is pulled towards the performer, thus pushing aside the wooden arm and changing the paper slips. The plate is then placed on top of the tumbler. If this is carefully timed the spectators will be prepared to swear that the folded slip never left their sight.

The performer's next care is to unfold the paper which has fallen behind the Sphinx and read the chosen word. This he does under cover of the ensuing patter.

He then displays the packet of "Lexicon" cards. He states that there should be twenty-six of them but to make sure he runs them over one by one, reciting a comic alphabet to relieve the tedium. As each card is named he passes it to the back of the pack. As he reaches the letters which make up the chosen word, however, he segregates them, so that at the conclusion these cards are together behind the rest. This sounds pretty simple but, believe me, you will find it the most trying part of the whole routine. To keep in mind the letters making up a particular word while talking about something else is no mean feat. Take a word like "wild" for instance. The last letter occurs near the beginning of the alphabet and if you are not careful you will find that when you get to the "i" you will suddenly realise that you have forgotten the "d" and it is too late to do anything about it. Still, it is worth the effort. The secret of success lies in memorising the comic alphabet so thoroughly that it can be recited without thought, thus leaving the conjurer to concentrate solely on the chosen word.

Once the necessary cards have been passed to the back of the pack the method of causing them to rise from the Sphinx's head is a matter for the discretion of the performer. The familiar wax and thread device may be invoked. My own method, which I have done my best to illustrate, consists in using the thread (the end of which is attached to the vest by means of a hook) to rotate a wooden roller, the ends of which are thickened and furnished with glass paper. As the roller revolves, the ends grip the card and push it upwards. When the pressure on the thread is relaxed the elastic pull rotates the roller in the opposite direction so that

it is all ready to push up the next card when the thread is pulled. The raising of the cards is thus brought about by the performer swaying backwards and forwards. He only uses his hands to remove the cards when they have reached their zenith.

To ensure an even pressure on the cards, the back of the holder is separated from the sides. It is hinged at the lower end and held against the cards by the pressure of a rubber band.

Returning for a moment to the cards, there are in fact twenty-seven of them. There are two letters "A", one at the front and the other at the back of the pack—and if you don't see why this is so, try out the routine using the word "pack." Another small point is that the spectator who writes the word should be asked to choose one in which no letter is used more than once.

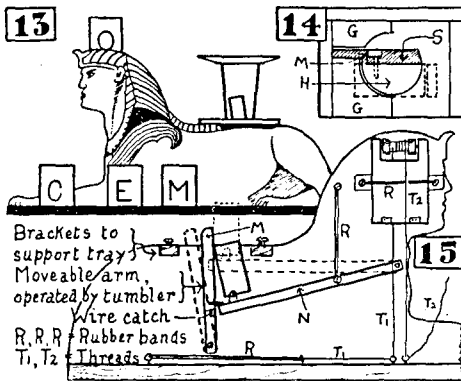
#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 13 shows the Sphinx in action. Three cards have risen and have been placed in front of the Sphinx and a fourth is in process of rising. On the back of the Sphinx can be seen the tray holding the tumbler, plate and folded slip.

Figure 14 is a plan of the tray. G, G are guides—pieces of thin wood shaped as shown and glued to the tray. Their object is to ensure that when the tumbler is pulled towards the performer it comes to rest at the exact spot necessary for the smooth working of the change. H is the hinged strip which retains the original folded slip in position so long as it is held up by the wire peg attached to the movable arm M. S is the slot through which the duplicate slip emerges when it is released by the operation of M.

Figure 15, a rear view of the apparatus, shows

how the duplicate slip is projected into the tumbler. It is held in a paper-clip attached to a second movable arm N. Normally this arm is kept in a horizontal position by the pull of a rubber band but a wire catch attached to M keeps it down, with the slip out of sight. When M is pushed aside, however, N flies up and resumes the position indicated by the dotted lines and the duplicate slip is projected through the slit in the tumbler tray.



Behind the Sphinx's head is the card-raising mechanism. At the top is the roller attached to the hinged back of the card-holder. It will be clear, I hope, that a pull on the thread T (2) will rotate the roller in the direction necessary to raise the rearmost card in the holder but when T (2) is released the rubber band attached to thread T (1) brings the roller back to its normal position.

#### PREPARATION.

The Sphinx stands on a table to the left-hand side of the stage. The mechanism is set so that the dupli-

cate folded slip is hidden by the Sphinx's body. The bottomless tumbler is on the tray and the plate rests on the table behind the Sphinx, together with the "Lexicon" cards, a folded slip of blank paper and a pencil.

#### ROUTINE.

The pencil and paper are taken into the auditorium. A spectator is requested to unfold the paper, write a word thereon and fold it up again. The performer takes it between the tips of his fingers, holds it high above his head and returns to the stage. He places it carefully in the tumbler, picks up the plate and executes the change as described above, finally leaving the plate on top of the tumbler. He then secretly unfolds and reads the folded slip which has dropped on to the table.

Next he picks up the "Lexicon" cards and shows them one by one, segregating the required letters as he does so. Having done this he places the cards in the holder behind the Sphinx's head and after appropriate "business" causes the cards to rise. As they are produced they are placed in front of the Sphinx.

The folded slip is now removed from the tumbler. A slight tug is necessary to withdraw it from the wire clip. The word which is supposed to be written on it is read out and the cards in front of the Sphinx are rearranged to form that word.

#### COMIC ALPHABET.

Here, for what it is worth, is the alphabet which I use. You may prefer to compose your own but it is a tedious job.

A is the ant, who works like a nigger,

B is the bee, just as silly, but bigger.



C is the cockerell, who upsets our slumbers  
D is the doe, who believes in large numbers.  
E is the earwig, who says "ear we go,"  
F is the flea whom we don't wish to know.  
G is the guinea-pig, minus a rudder,  
H is the hornet whose nest makes us shudder.  
I's the—er—'yena, who laughs fit to bust,  
J is the jellyfish, minus a crust.  
K is the kangaroo, looking so rummy,  
L is the lobster, who upsets our tummy.  
M is the monkey, who lives in a tree,  
N is the gnat—if you leave out the "g".  
O is for ostrich, who eats rusty nails,  
P stands for porkers, with nice curly tails.  
Q is the quail, very tasty they say,  
R is the robin with waistcoat so gay.  
S is the skunk, whom society bars,  
T stands for tadpoles and tiddlers in jars.  
U is the unicorn, such a queer creature,  
V is the vulture, who's ready to eat yer.  
W's the winkle we see on the shore,  
X is a letter I'd rather ignore.  
Y is the Wyandot—you know, a pigeon,  
Z is the zebra—and as I haven't yet hit upon a  
word which rhymes with pigeon we'll have to leave it  
at that.

## VI. *The Ghost Box*

The napkin rings used for the "Dissolving Napkin Ring" effect can also be pressed into service for this one. This is notable for two things. There is a rather startling vanish of the four rings quite early in the proceedings, a feature which renders the routine

very suitable for use as an opening item. Also there is used a rather novel production box, the designing of which kept me out of mischief for many a day. There is nothing very complicated about the finished article but you ought to see some of the unsuccessful models.

#### EFFECT.

Four coloured napkin rings, obviously solid, are placed in a paper bag. The lower half of one side of this bag is provided with a cellophane window so that the rings can be clearly seen within the bag. Nevertheless the bag, having been rolled up round the rings, is suddenly crushed and screwed up in such a manner that there can be no doubt that the rings have vanished.

Four cards, coloured to correspond with the rings, are then produced and a spectator is invited to shuffle them. They are placed side by side on a card easel with their backs facing the audience. The performer explains that he proposes to discover the order of the four coloured cards in a novel manner and for this purpose he exhibits a box, the front of which is covered with semi-transparent paper. On the box being opened, it is seen to be empty, with the exception of a thin wooden cross-bar which supports an electric light bulb. The battery and switch for operating this light are attached to the back of the box.

Having shown the box empty and closed it, the performer switches on the light, which can be seen shining through the paper front. Then, lifting the box by inserting his middle finger through a ring provided in the top of the box for that purpose, he makes a swoop through the air. Something is heard to fall

inside the box and as the latter is tilted forward this "something" rolls towards the paper screen, which is just sufficiently translucent for the spectators to see that the object materialised is a yellow napkin ring. The performer removes the ring from the box, shows the latter empty once more, closes it and turns round the first of the four coloured cards. It is seen to correspond with the colour of the ring produced. This process is repeated until the four rings have all been produced. As each one appears, the next card in the row is turned over. The rings have, in fact, disclosed the order of the shuffled cards by reappearing in that same order.

#### METHOD.

Apart from the box, the apparatus consists of a card easel, behind which is a stand to hold the rings. After the latter have been knocked together to show that they are solid, they are placed on the stand in the position indicated in Fig. 19. Behind the stand is a brown-paper bag measuring ten inches by eight inches and in one side is a window six inches by three inches. Also within the bag are four rings made from cartridge paper and painted to match the napkin rings. As they are only seen through the cellophane the absence of gloss is undetected.

When the performer, standing to the left of his table, picks up the bag, he does so by grasping one of its upper edges between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. At this stage the window is to the rear and its existence is unsuspected. The performer goes through the motion of placing the genuine rings into the bag, one by one. To do this it is only natural that the bag should be held (with the left hand) in

front of the card easel and rings. As each ring is picked up it is dropped into the nearest compartment of the stand, where it remains hidden. The right hand continues its journey, however, and apparently deposits the ring in the bag, repeating this manoeuvre until all of the rings have been dealt with. At this point the performer turns round the bag so that the dummy rings can be seen through the window. He does not call attention to them—indeed it would be inartistic to do so—but his patter is so arranged that the spectators have ample opportunity to realise the presence of the rings. The bag is then rolled up around the rings and almost immediately afterwards it is twisted up ropewise and tossed aside.

The card easel on which the coloured cards are displayed contains four duplicate cards, backed with velvet and arranged in the order in which the performer proposes to reproduce the napkin rings. In other words, the "Elusive Spot" principle is invoked. The shuffled cards are placed over the velvet-covered ones and when it becomes necessary to display their faces to the spectators the two cards are turned over together.

The box used for reproducing the rings is a rather weird contraption but it is a nice piece of apparatus to handle. The diagrams should tell you quite a lot about it. The rings are hidden behind two mirrors, one of which is fixed while the other is hinged where the top and the back of the box meet. The rings are accommodated on a wooden rod, slightly smaller in diameter than the rings. One end of the rod is attached to a wooden bracket but the other is free and there is a space slightly greater than the width of a ring

between this free end and the opposite side of the box. Thus if the box is tilted in the right direction, one ring (but not more) can be released from the loader.

To load the box, the hinged mirror is raised, the rings are slid on to the rod and the mirror is returned to its normal position. To release one of the rings, the performer picks up the box by inserting his middle finger in the ring provided, the hand lying flat on the top of the box. (The fixed end of the wooden rod is on the side remote from the performer.) First of all he tilts the box to ensure that the first ring is clear of the holder. Then he returns the box to a horizontal position. So far, the ring is clear of the holder but it is still imprisoned within the mirrors. To release it, the hand is turned with its back to the spectators. This brings the hinged mirror flush with the top of the box and permits the ring to fall on to the paper screen which covers the front of the box. As soon as the ring is free, the hand is turned over again and the spectators see the shadow of the ring against the screen—a truly ghostly reproduction. The turning of the box should be accompanied by a sweeping movement of the arm as if the performer were catching the ring from the air.

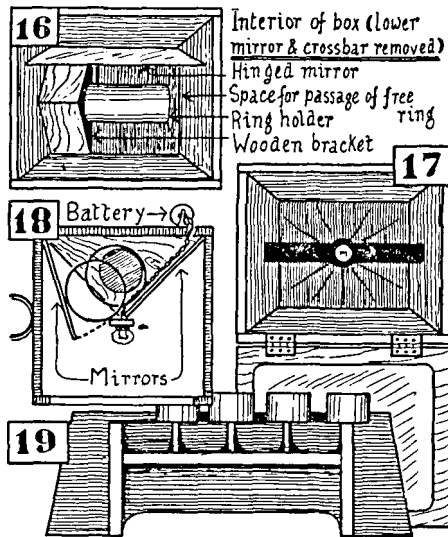
#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 16 is a view of the inside of the box as it would appear if the lower mirror, the crossbar and the bulb were removed. The hinged mirror is raised slightly to give a sight of the ring holder.

Figure 17 shows the appearance of the box from the spectators' point of view. The crossbar masks the edges of the mirrors.

Figure 18 is a side elevation showing the position

of affairs when the box is turned over with its top facing the spectators. Part of the ring by which it is held can be seen on the left-hand side of the diagram. The hinged mirror can be seen falling against the top of the box and releasing the free ring which is in the act of falling into the front of the box. A second ring, held



back by the ring holder, can be seen behind the free one. The battery is shown but the precise type and position of the switch I have left to the discretion of the experimenter.

Figure 19 is a rear elevation of the card easel and shows the rings arranged above their respective wells.  
**PREPARATION.**

The ghost box is loaded with four rings in reverse order to that in which it is proposed to reproduce them.

The velvet-backed cards are arranged on the easel, backs outwards, in correct order. The four duplicate rings are placed on the table in front of the easel. This table should be on the right-hand side of the stage. Behind the easel is the paper bag, loaded with four paper rings and with the window to the rear. Also on the table are the four unprepared coloured cards.

#### ROUTINE.

The rings are picked up one by one, knocked together and lodged behind the easel in the position indicated in Fig. 19. The bag is picked up by grasping its upper front edge between the forefinger and thumb of the right hand and brought over in front of the easel. The rings are apparently placed in the bag but are actually dropped into the wells behind the easel. The bag is then turned round to display the paper rings through the window. After a short interval (covered by patter) the bag is rolled round the rings and then screwed up ropewise and tossed aside.

The four cards are taken down to a spectator for shuffling and then placed on the easel side by side with their backs facing the spectators. The ghost box is displayed, opened and the light switched on. It is then closed and the performer, pretending to see one of the rings floating in the air, makes a swoop with the hand holding the box (the right hand) and goes through the motions of scooping up the ring. In doing this he contrives to turn the box over so that the first ring is released. He then opens the box, removes the ring and places it on the table in front of the first card. This is repeated until all four rings have been produced. Finally, the four cards are turned over, together with their velvet-covered duplicates, to show that their colour-order corresponds with that of the rings.

## *VII. The Diabolical Discs*

I have already recorded two methods of solving this particular problem but neither of them discloses the devices which I use myself and which I now propose to describe. For the benefit of those who have not read my earlier efforts I will describe the effect in detail. If you can put yourself in the place of an uninitiated spectator I think you will agree that it is baffling to a degree.

### EFFECT.

The performer exhibits a packet of thirty-six cards and invites a spectator to shuffle them thoroughly. He then displays three wooden discs to each of which are attached twelve cards, six on each side. He explains that the thirty-six cards are duplicates of those in the shuffled pack. The shuffled cards are then distributed amongst spectators in various parts of the hall, each helper taking about half-a-dozen cards. As soon as the performer has returned to the stage he suggests that his helpers should each choose one card from the packet which he holds. This having been done, he asks one of the helpers to state on which of the discs the duplicate of his card appears.

On a chair is a stand about a foot high, near the top of which is a spindle. Near the bottom of the stand is a fixed arrow, made of plywood. The disc indicated by the spectator is then placed on the spindle and rotated. When it comes to rest the arrow is pointing to one of the cards and this proves to correspond with the one chosen by the spectator. This is repeated until all the chosen cards have been named. After the first two or three cards have been discovered, however, the whole of the apparatus—the three discs and the stand



on which they spin—is handed out for examination. The discs are made of plain plywood with no decoration of any kind, and the cards are stuck flat on them. The most careful examination fails to reveal any means by which a counterweight could be attached to the discs.

#### METHOD.

The discovery of the chosen cards depends upon an old principle which is no doubt familiar to most readers. It must be admitted that the cards which are shuffled are switched for another set arranged in six packets of six cards each. Each of these packets contains a duplicate of one card from each side of each disc. Thus, by carefully arranging the cards on the discs the performer has only to be told on which side of which disc the chosen card appears to tell what it is. If it comes from packet No. 1, then it is the first card on that particular disc. A tiny disc of paper affixed to the disc serves to remind the performer which is the "first" card in the circle of six, (This spot gives those who examine the disc something to think about but very little to go upon.) When the cards are distributed, they are given out in packets of six, although the performer gives the impression by his patter that the exact number is immaterial.

Once the performer has ascertained the position of the selected card his only care is to counterweight the disc so that when it stops the arrow will indicate the card required. Various methods of doing this suggest themselves but most of them make it impossible to give the discs for examination. The method which I am about to describe, though very simple, was only arrived at after many fruitless experiments. The secret lies in

the method of gluing the cards to the discs. Only three sides of each card are actually stuck down and the counterweight is made so that it can be inserted between the free side of the card and the disc. From the illustration of this counterweight it will be seen to consist of a strip of metal. The straight end is filed to a knife edge so that it can be easily inserted between the card and the disc, the pressure of the former being sufficient to retain it in position. The opposite end of this strip is bent round so that it exactly fits the thumb. When not in use it is concealed in the hand by bending the thumb in towards the palm but it is only a matter of a moment to attach it to any one of the thirty-six cards. It is not, of course, attached to the *chosen* card but to the card on the opposite side of the disc which will ensure the latter stopping with the arrow pointing to the chosen card. This is best ascertained by actual experiment.



#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 20 illustrates a portion of one of the discs with the fake attached to one card. The small identification spot is shown below the five of diamonds.

Figure 21 shows the fake and Figure 22 indicates the method used in affixing the cards.

20  
21  
22

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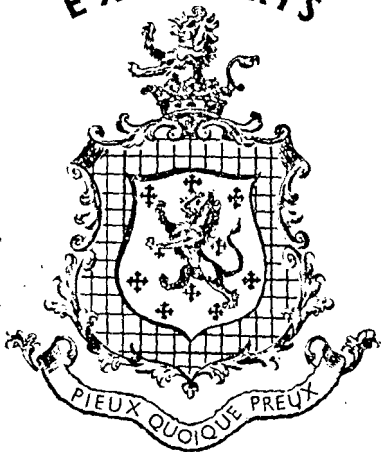
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Exigencies in connection with war-time publication have necessitated the transference of three effects from Part I to Part II. Pagination is continuous from Part I. The complete index appears at the end of Part II.



*On With the Show*

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ON WITH THE SHOW

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*I. The Soft Spot*

This is a glass penetration, the evolution of which has given me a good deal of harmless pleasure. I set out to devise a penetration of a sheet of glass which should be independent of any sort of frame. True, it involved me in other things which some critics might consider even worse than frames but the effect is so mystifying that I feel justified in putting it on record.

EFFECT.

On the performer's table is a screen and in front of this is a sheet of glass supported by a thin wooden crossbar. The glass is perfectly plain except that the edges are bound with passe partout tape and a disc of the same material, about the size of a halfpenny, is stuck near its centre. The conjurer commences by offering the glass for examination, explaining that although it seems to be quite the same as any other sheet of glass, really it is not so because near its centre is a kind of soft spot through which, in certain conditions, solid objects can be passed. The disc of passe partout marks the centre of the affected area. Having delivered himself of this "whopper," with tongue in cheek, the performer returns to the stage and replaces the glass in its support. He then takes a box of matches in (say) his left hand and brings it down behind the sheet of glass until it is opposite the spot. His right hand approaches the same spot, but from the front and, without any fumbling, simply takes the matchbox from the left hand and displays it to the spectators. This process is repeated with various other solid objects—a block of wood, a billiard ball, etc. At any stage

in the proceedings the sheet of glass may be examined by the spectators.

#### METHOD.

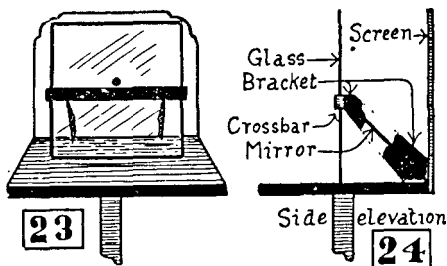
The avowed object of the screen, which is light in colour, is to throw into relief the various articles used, which are rather small and might not be too clearly observed otherwise. It fulfils this object satisfactorily but in addition it masks the presence of a mirror, which fills the space between the bottom of the screen and the wooden crossbar. As the screen is painted or decorated to match the table top and since the mirror is arranged at an angle of 45 degrees, any object dropped behind the mirror becomes invisible to the spectators.

The objects used are all provided with shells which can be easily removed when required. To produce the illusion the performer stands on the right-hand side of the table and takes one of the objects, together with its shell, in his right hand. Having displayed it and shown, without calling attention to the fact, that his hand is otherwise empty, he apparently transfers the object to his left hand. Actually, he palms the object and transfers the shell. This shell he passes behind the sheet of glass, tapping the latter from time to time, until the object reaches the "soft" spot. The right approaches the spot from the front and produces the palmed object and at the same time the shell is dropped behind the mirror.

I do not know how this will read to you but in practice it is a delightful effect to work. If you will make up a rough model and work it in front of a mirror, you will, I feel sure, be ticked to death with it. I was, especially when I tried it on my long-suffering family and saw them register blank surprise. Such a

thing happens only once in every two or three years. I didn't bother about shells either, but simply used "two of everything". The idea of using shells for greater effect occurred afterwards.

By the way, the horizontal support consists of two strips of wood; separated slightly at each end so that the pane of glass can be slipped between them. They are supported by two arms, attached to the screen at an angle of 45 degrees, which serve to hide the edges of the mirror. The reason for binding the edges of the glass with tape are two—firstly to protect one's fingers and secondly to show the spectators just where the glass is. It will be found necessary to pad the back of the mirror slightly to prevent "talking".



If it is decided to pass a handkerchief through the glass, two must of course be used. The one behind the glass is tucked into a box-like receptacle just below the upper edge of the mirror under cover of the right hand, which is held in front of the spot. In the right hand is a handkerchief ball containing the duplicate. A projecting corner is engaged with a pin-point attached to the crossbar for the purpose. As the silk behind the glass is tucked away out of sight, the right hand is slowly moved towards the spectators. The pin-

point pulls the handkerchief out of the ball and when the silk is all out it is flicked free of the pin-point and triumphantly displayed.

#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 23 shows the apparatus all ready for action.

Figure 24 is a side elevation. Part of the bracket is shown cut away to indicate the position of the mirror.

## *II. The Restless Matchboxes*

The matchbox routine here described is designed to exploit a small piece of apparatus which I evolved some time ago. It is a pedestal so prepared that it will apparently produce or vanish a matchbox at will.

#### EFFECT.

On the performer's table stand two pedestals and two rectangular tubes numbered I and II respectively. The latter are shown to be empty and tube No. I is placed on one of the pedestals. When it is removed, a pile of five matchboxes is revealed. These are again covered with No. I tube, while tube No. II is placed on the empty pedestal. One of the matchboxes is commanded to leave the pile of five and pass to the empty pedestal. When the tubes are lifted this is found to have come to pass. The process is repeated until there is only one matchbox left in tube No. I while the other contains four.

The performer then undertakes to cause the remaining matchbox to join the pile of four. This time, however, he does not cover the box with the tube but takes it in his hand and vanishes it. On lifting tube No. II the pedestal is seen to contain not five matchboxes, as anticipated, but only one. This box is taken

from the pedestal in the hand and vanished. Finally the two tubes are shown to be empty once more.

#### METHOD.

The diagrams indicate the mechanism of the pedestals. Pressure on a wire arm releases a collapsible matchbox which normally lies flat in the top of the pedestal. The top and bottom of the matchbox are solid but the front and two ends are made of linen suitably painted. To collapse the matchbox again it is only necessary to push it down with the fingers. An alternative method is to depress a small pin which projects from the back of the pedestal.

The cardboard tubes nest and there is a third tube which fits within the other two. As indicated in the diagram, it is provided at one end with a wire hook, while about an inch from the other end two black threads are stretched across the tube from corner to corner. The only other requirements are a small unprepared tray and four matchboxes.

To prepare, the four matchboxes are dropped into the hooked tube so that they rest on the crossed threads. This tube is loaded into Tube No. II, which is in turn nested in tube No. I. The dummy matchboxes are folded within the two pedestals and the tray lies on the table between them.

To commence, the performer picks up the tubes, separates them, leaving the matchboxes in No. II and shows No. I empty. To give point to this, No. II is passed through No. I, leaving the matchboxes and fake hooked to No. I in passing. No. II can then be shown empty in turn and while this is being done with the right hand the left turns No. I upside down (the third and fourth fingers preventing the boxes from falling

out) and places it on the right-hand pedestal. This is the only move in the whole routine which is at all difficult. A certain amount of practice is necessary in order to carry it out smoothly and the most should be made of the misdirection afforded by the display of tube No. II.

Before tube No. I is removed from the pedestal the dummy matchbox is released. This adds itself to the bottom of the pile of four so that the spectators imagine that they see five. While attention is centred on the unexpected appearance of the boxes the opportunity is taken to transfer the fake from tube No. I to tube No. II. This is done by passing No. II into No. I from below and withdrawing it from the opposite end, bringing the fake with it. The object of this move is to enable the tubes to be shown empty later on. The fake fits fairly tightly in the smaller tube (No. II) but not in the larger one. Needless to say, the fake and the insides of the two tubes are painted black. The pedestals are now covered with the tubes. The dummy matchbox on pedestal No. I is folded flat (by drawing down the pin at the back of the pedestal), while that on pedestal No. 2 is released. Thus when the tubes are removed there are only four boxes on No. 1 and one on No. 2.

Now comes a rather interesting move and for this the tray is brought into use. Imagine stand No. 1, supporting four matchboxes, on your right hand and stand No. 2, with one dummy box, on your left. Pick up the tray with your left hand and proceed to place the boxes on it one by one, counting as you do so—"One, two, three, four" from stand No. 1 and "five" from stand No. 2. As you say "five," you press the

dummy flat, bring away the hand as if it contained a box and go through the motions of placing it on the tray. Now count the boxes back on to the stands but this time put a genuine box on stand No. 2. Call this "one" and as you count "two, three, four, five" replace four boxes on stand No. 1—apparently. In actual fact, when you say "two" you simulate the action of taking a box from the tray and as your empty hand reaches stand No. 1 you release the dummy box by pressing the thumb against the wire lever. As you count "three, four, five" you place the three remaining boxes on top of the dummy. When you have finished, the appearance to the spectators is the same as it was before you started counting but it will be seen that you are now in a position to make a second matchbox pass from stand No. 1 to stand No. 2 by folding down dummy box No. 1 and releasing No. 2—under cover of the tubes, of course. Incidentally, tube No. 1 should be shown empty after each disappearance, otherwise the effect loses much of its point.

By repeating the routine described in the foregoing paragraph a third box is made to pass from stand No. 1 to stand No. 2 and a third repetition brings us to the stage where there is only one box on stand No. 1 and four on stand No. 2. A final count is now made but before the boxes are returned to the stands tube No. II is stood on stand No. 2 with the threaded end lowermost. (During the previous moves the threads had to be uppermost to permit of the passage of the tube over the boxes.) The four boxes are dropped into tube No. II and the imaginary one is "placed" on stand No. 1, i.e., the dummy box is released once more. This is apparently picked up



in the right hand (really pushed back where it belongs) and thrown towards tube No. II. The latter is lifted and there is one solitary box (dummy box). Remarking that this is hardly worth keeping now that the others have gone, the performer vanishes the last box and shows the tubes empty once more. "And so we are left," he says, "in the same position as when we started, with nothing in tube No. I" (showing it empty and passing No. II through it) "and nothing in tube No. II" (showing that empty too).

#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 26 gives a view of one of the stands as seen from the rear. The collapsible matchbox is expanded and one can just see the square of stripwood which holds it in this position and to which it is fastened by a small panel pin. Behind it projects the wire release.

Figures 25 and 27 are side elevations of the left-hand and right-hand sides of the stands, respectively. In each case one side of the upright has been removed to disclose the mechanism. (The sides consist of lengths of stripwood, three-quarters of an inch wide and one-eighth of an inch thick.) In Fig. 25 the dummy box (D) is expanded, being held in this position by pressure from the movable piston M (which is one-quarter of an inch square). The pressure is provided by a rubber band, R<sub>2</sub>, the upper end of which is fixed to the framework of the stand while the lower end is hooked to the piston. Also attached to the piston is a metal peg, P, which projects from the back of the stand and enables the performer to draw down the piston when the action renders this necessary.

Figure 27 shows what happens when this is done.

As the piston is drawn down, the notch, N, is brought below the level of the top of the stand and so engages with the catch, C. The latter is drawn into the notch by a rubber band, R<sub>1</sub>, which encircles the pedestal. The piston is thus locked and cannot be released unless the wire lever, L, is pushed away from the back of the stand. This action withdraws the catch from the notch leaving the rubber band, R<sub>2</sub>, free to push the piston and matchbox upward again. I might also mention that the whole of the standard, apart from the sides already referred to, is made from pieces of stripwood one-quarter of an inch square.

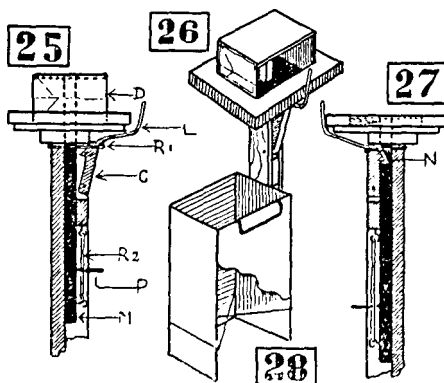


Figure 28 illustrates the loading fake. A portion of one side has been removed to show the threads. These are quite strong enough to hold the pile of matchboxes and yet enable the performer to show that the tube which contains the fake is apparently empty.

### *III. The Spelling Spider*

It is not often that I am called upon to entertain children but when it next falls to my lot to do so I shall certainly include this effect in my programme. It seems to me to be particularly suitable to a juvenile audience.

#### EFFECT.

In the centre of the stage stands a column of fourteen letters, at the base of which is a spider, supported by a silken thread. On a table to the right is a box with bars in front. This pet shelter, as the performer calls it, is taken to pieces, reassembled and covered with a cloth. Next, six cards are shown. Each one bears the picture of a pet—cat, dog, rabbit, canary, parrot and tortoise. A spectator is invited to select one of these cards and retain it. The performer now calls attention to the spider and explains that it will discover the name of the chosen pet by spelling out its name. The spider accordingly runs up the column of letters until it reaches the letter T. The performer records this on a slate and replaces the spider at the foot of the column. A few moments later the spider again runs up the column, this time stopping at the letter I. It continues in this way until it has spelt out TIBBAR, when the performer explains that although the spider is very good at most things it cannot get out of the habit of spelling backwards. When the selected letters are reversed they of course spell RABBIT. This proves to be the name of the chosen pet and on the box being uncovered there is the rabbit inside it.

#### METHOD.

Let us first dispose of the simpler elements. The choice of a pet is forced. One method of doing this is

suggested in connection with "The Posy from Nowhere". The pet-shelter has a double bottom. The upper floor is hinged so that it can be folded up against the back of the box. A spring rabbit is loaded in the base of the box and the hinged bottom is secured with a catch. When the catch is released the pressure of the rabbit pushes the movable bottom up against the back of the box. It is a comparatively simple matter to arrange the box so that the top and sides can be removed or unfolded to give point to the fact that the box is empty.

The spider-run will take rather longer to describe. It consists of a length of plywood, thirty-eight inches long by four inches wide. On this are painted the letters A, B, C, D, E, G, I, N, O, P, R, S, T and Y. It will be seen that from these letters the name of any one of the six pets can be spelt. The spider is attached to a silken thread which passes over a pulley at the top of the column. At the other end of the thread is a lead weight which slides up and down in a square tube. This tube runs the whole length of the lettered column. As the natural tendency of the weight is a gravitate towards the base of the tube it will pull the spider to the top of the column unless checked.

Projecting from the foot of the column is a metal fork which flanks the thread on either side and prevents the spider from rising. By pulling a thread, however, this fork can be withdrawn. The counterweight then falls until it is checked by one of a series of stops which are provided in the square tube. A very handy way of releasing the spider is to attach the thread to the chalk used to write down the selected letters on the slate.

The stops in the tube are made from pieces of wire, bent in the form of a square S. They slide in holes in the sides of the tube and are operated by pressure of the thumb. There are five of these, so spaced that when they are in action they will check the weight when the spider is on the letters T, I, B, A and R respectively. At the commencement the first four of these (which are in reverse alphabetical order) are in the "closed" position pictured in Fig 31 (Position 1), while the one appropriate to the letter R is in the "open" position (Position 2). When the spider is first released it will stop at the letter T. Before it is released again the "T" stop is pushed aside (to position 2), thus leaving the tube unobstructed from the top to the "I" stop. When the spider, on its second trip, has indicated the letter I, the "I" stop in turn is pushed aside. This continues until the letter A is reached, by which time all the stops are in position 2. For the final letter, R, the appropriate stop is pushed into position 1.

I trust that the foregoing does not sound too complicated but no doubt the diagrams will help out. I am relying upon these a good deal, especially for the explanation of the release of the spider.

Have you guessed the reason for spelling the chosen word backwards? The reason is that if it were spelt in the normal way, every one in the audience would know the answer as soon as the first letter had been discovered and the subsequent journeys of the spider would lose much of their point.

If you decide to construct this effect you will find it worth while to make the letter column in two sections, with pegs and slots, for easy transport.

## DIAGRAMS.

Figure 29 gives a general view of the spider column.

Figure 30 shows the square wooden tube at the back of the column in which the counterweight has its ups and downs. The pulley over which the weighted thread runs can also be seen. To the right of the wooden tube one can just discern the uppermost stop—in the "closed" position,

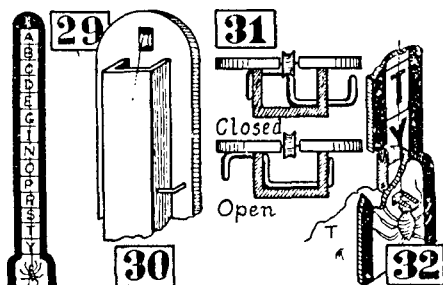


Figure 31 shows, in plan, the operation of the wire stops.

Figure 32, which illustrates the base of the column, with a section removed for greater clarity, indicates a simple form of release. A piece of springy metal, bent at right angles and forked at one end, is screwed to a wooden block. The fork projects through a slot in the base of the column, just below the letter Y and so holds the spider down. A gentle pull on the thread, T, is sufficient to withdraw the spring and release the insect.

*Correction.*—I regret to observe that in sketching the apparatus I have given the impression that the distance between the bottom of the letter Y and the

floor is about four inches only. It must in fact be at least seven inches, otherwise the falling weight will foul the release mechanism. Sorry.

#### *IV. Bisecting a Belle*

Sometime ago I described an effect in which a loop of ribbon, passed through a hole in a wooden disc, and thence round the performer's neck, was released by two members of the audience pulling on the ends of the ribbon. I have since improved upon the original notion, which is thereby elevated to the position of a concert illusion.

##### EFFECT.

A tripod supports a wooden crossbar. The ends of this crossbar are provided with fittings for the purpose of holding a wooden disc. This disc, which measures twelve inches in diameter, has a hole, one-and-a-half inches in diameter, in its centre. The disc is handed for examination and placed on the tripod. Two members of the audience, at opposite sides of the hall, are asked to hold the ends of the ribbon. The centre is folded into a loop, pushed through the hole in the disc and pulled out at the back. The loop thus formed is passed over the head of a lady assistant. This time it does not stop at her neck, however, but is pulled down until it is round her waist. The spectators who hold the ends of the ribbon are now invited to pull gently upon it. This of course has the effect of shortening the loop and drawing the assistant close up against the disc.

The performer then points out that there are two ways of releasing the lady, either by relinquishing the ends of the ribbon or pulling the loop clean through

her middle. As he is a conjurer, he proposes to choose the latter alternative. The ribbon holders are requested to pull the ribbon tighter still, with the result that the loop is pulled through the hole in the disc, having apparently passed through the lady's body. The disc is then removed from the tripod and handed to the assistant, who takes it down to the auditorium so that any who wish to examine it again may do so.

#### METHOD.

It will be seen from the diagram that the wooden crossbar is hollow and contains a spindle around which is wound a duplicate loop of ribbon. When the genuine loop is pulled through the disc it is attached to the slotted end of the spindle and as the duplicate loop is unrolled it rolls up the genuine one—and vice versa. The effect to the spectators is precisely the same as if the genuine loop were being pulled backwards and forwards. The duplicate loop really consists of two pieces of ribbon, fastened together with a dress-fastener. This is concealed by the performer's hand until the loop has been passed round the assistant's waist, when of course it is hidden by her body. In due course, the spectators who hold the ribbon pull on the ends and the lady walks towards the tripod until she is held tightly behind the disc. When the time comes for her to be released, she puts her hands behind her back, unfastens the dress-fastener and draws her hands round to the front of her waist, bringing the ends of ribbon with them. As the last of the duplicate ribbon is rolled up, she releases the genuine ribbon by flicking the loop free from the slot in the spindle, thus permitting it to fall to the stage in front of the disc.



## DIAGRAMS.

Figure 33 shows the disc held in position in front of the crossbar. The "door" of the crossbar is open and part of the duplicate ribbon has been unwound, thus winding up an equivalent length of the genuine ribbon, which can be seen projecting through the hole in the disc.

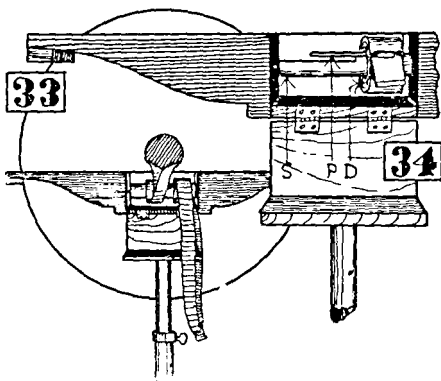


Figure 34 gives the mechanism in greater detail. The spindle *S* is seen with the duplicate ribbon *D*, wound round the right-hand end. Part of the opposite end of the spindle is cut away and a prong, *P*, consisting of a length of stripwood, one-quarter of an inch wide by one-eighth of an inch thick, is tacked to the thick end of the spindle, with its free end projecting over the cutaway portion. Over this prong the loop of genuine ribbon is passed before the duplicate ribbon is pulled out.

## V. *Dressing a Lady*

This is, appropriately enough, a very suitable finale for a concert programme. The principle employed has been already described by me elsewhere under the title of "The Magic Brantub."

### EFFECT.

A three-fold screen, after having been shown back and front, is folded up to form a triangular box and placed on a stool. From this box the performer extracts four miniature ladies' dresses of different colours and displays them on a black velvet screen. One of these is selected by a spectator. The performer takes the chosen dress and replaces it in the folded screen. A few seconds later he removes the screen from the stool and there is a large doll, dressed in the chosen frock.

### METHOD.

The loading device is an application of the background principle. The velvet banner, used later on to display the frocks, masks the presence of a triangular box which is of a size to fit snugly within the folded screen and is covered with velvet to match the banner. The screen is so made that its sections can be folded backwards and forwards. On one side it is decorated with some bright material but the reverse side is painted black. The three sections of my own model measure twenty-four inches long by eight inches wide.

To prepare for the presentation the triangular box is loaded with a large doll, dressed in the frock which it is proposed to force. This doll must be fastened to a baseboard sufficiently weighty to ensure that it will stand on its own. Above the doll are packed the four dresses. The loaded box (which is bottomless) is stood

on the stool in front of the velvet banner. The top of the stool must be slightly above the level of the bottom of the banner. It must, too, be covered with velvet. The screen is then arranged on the stool as shown in Fig 35 so that it covers the loading fake. The performer first removes the screen from the stool, opens it out and shows it back and front. In doing so, his his body partially eclipses the loading fake and thus helps to prevent its presence being detected—though at a few yards the illusion is perfect, anyway. Having thus displayed the screen, the performer, standing on the left of the stool, replaces the screen on the stool in the same position as before. He then rotates the whole contraption, that is screen and loaded fake together, through an angle of 120 degrees in a clockwise direction, at the same time folding the two free sides of the screen towards each other. These two sides are then tied together by means of tapes which are attached to them, midway between the top and bottom, for that purpose. The rotation of the apparatus will be facilitated if the doll is provided with a hook by means of which it can be hung to the inside of the fake. Having accomplished this, the performer picks up the stool, with the screen and fake still on it, and replaces it on the stage away from and to the right of the velvet banner. He can now produce the four dresses and display them against the banner.

When one of the frocks has been chosen (forced), he returns this to the screen, tucking it into a cavity provided for this purpose in the back of the doll. After appropriate "business" he removes screen and fake together, revealing the doll dressed in the selected frock.

## DIAGRAM.

Figure 35 shows the screen as it appears at the commencement of the experiment. A portion has been



removed to show the position occupied by the loading fake.

## SOME MAGICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I am devoting this section to effects of a somewhat simpler nature than those dealt with in Part I. As I have already admitted, none of them has been tried out but I have done my best to visualise and cope with any snags which are likely to be encountered.

Of the twelve effects described, seven depend in whole or in part upon a substitution. You probably have your own favourite methods of switching but there is no harm in my mentioning my own. It is now many years since I eschewed Black Art tables and draperies generally. As a consequence I have had to evolve a substitute for the servante and Black Art well. This consists of a card easel, fifteen or sixteen inches long. It folds flat for packing, but when expanded it resembles a triangular prism lying on one side. The back is open and the inside is padded to prevent "talking". Attached to the rear of the front portion are two or more hooks which serve to support various objects. The front of the easel is covered with black velvet and is provided with a ledge for the support of cards and other small objects.

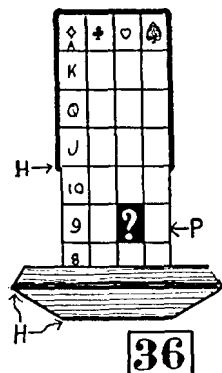
To effect the change of one object for another, the duplicate is concealed on the hooks behind the easel. Over these is draped some object, usually a handkerchief, which is to be used in the effect. The object which it is desired to switch is taken in the hand, being held between the second and third fingers. With this hand the performer picks up the handkerchief. As he does so he drops the unwanted object behind the easel and with his thumb and forefinger grasps the duplicate which is brought away together with the handkerchief.

## VI. *The Curtain of Cards*

In "Ring up the Curtain" I described a card curtain which could be expanded in the hands. The one here described is much simpler in construction but quite effective.

### EFFECT.

A card having been chosen and shuffled back into the pack, the latter is returned to its case. A silk handkerchief is tucked into the hand and vanished. The performer explains that it is on its way to the case, which it will shortly occupy,



dislodging the cards in the process. He picks up a tray with the avowed object of catching the evacuated cards on it. Giving this a shake, the pack suddenly appears, hanging down in the form of a curtain. One card is missing, however, and this proves to be the one chosen. The card case is opened and is found to contain, in place of the pack, the silk handkerchief with the chosen card wrapped inside it.

### METHOD.

As indicated in the diagram, the card curtain folds into the tray. It is made from a complete pack, but the front of the duplicate of the forced card is covered with black paper bearing a white question mark. The back of that part of the curtain which forms the bottom of the tray when the curtain is folded up (P in Fig. 36)

is decorated to match the rest of the tray. A simple catch serves to release the pack at the appropriate moment.

After a card has been chosen and shuffled into the pack, the latter is switched for a hollow pack containing duplicates of the silk and chosen card. It is this hollow pack which is placed into the case. Incidentally, I bought one of these packs twenty-five years ago, complete with case, for eighteenpence. I wonder where it is now?

Figure 36,—In this I have endeavoured to picture the card curtain unfolding itself in front of the tray. It will be seen that the duplicate of the chosen card, in this case the nine of hearts, is covered by a black card bearing a mark of interrogation. H, H (and again H) indicate hinges. The lowermost section consists of only one row of cards—the four deuces.

## *VII. The Discriminating Dart*

### EFFECT.

A spectator chooses a card, places it face downwards on a tray and counts eleven more cards on top of it. He then mixes the twelve cards together and returns them to the tray, which is held by the performer. The latter returns to the stage and attaches the cards, still faces downwards, to a wooden disc, which is mounted on a spindle. He then invites the chooser of the card to assist him further. He hands him a dart, rotates the disc and asks the spectator to throw his dart at the spinning disc. When the latter comes to rest the dart is seen to be sticking in one of the cards. One being removed, this proves to be the one originally selected.

**METHOD.**

A changing tray is used. This is loaded with eleven similar cards (let us say fives of spades) and one indifferent card. The back of the latter is marked so that the performer can easily distinguish it.

From an ordinary pack the five of spades is forced on a spectator, who is then requested to count eleven more cards from the pack and mix the twelve cards thoroughly. He places these on the tray and the performer, returning to the stage, apparently slides them into his hand. In actual fact he obtains the prepared packet of cards from the loaded tray and it is these which he attaches to the disc. (The method of attaching them is a matter which I am sure I can leave to you.) When the spectator throws his dart, it will probably strike one of the fives of spades. If so, the performer, after revealing it, remarks "Isn't it curious that you should have hit that very card, instead of one of these others?" As he says this, he turns over the one indifferent card, leaving the spectators to deduce—if indeed they entertained any doubts on the matter—that the remaining cards are also different. Should the spectator happen to hit the indifferent card, so much the better. The performer lays it aside and says "Now let me try." He then throws the dart and of course hits one the fives of spades. In this event the effect should be tremendous.

***VIII. A Triangle Variation***

Readers of "Our Magic" will have been charmed by the effect therein described under the title of "The Triangle". It is not always possible to include a black-board and easel in one's props., however, and for those



who wish to present a simplified version of the effect the following routine may appeal.

**EFFECT.**

The performer invites a spectator to think of any card. He then divides the pack into two portions, pointing out that the card selected must be in one or the other of them. He invites the chooser to run through the cards and hand him the half which contains the card he thought of. The performer wraps this in one end of a length of ribbon and hands it back to the chooser. The other half of the pack is wrapped in the other end of the ribbon and handed to a second spectator. The performer then takes charge of the centre of the ribbon and "wills" the chosen card from one packet of cards to the other. In due course the two packets are unwrapped and the mentally selected card is seen to have obeyed the performer's order.

**METHOD.**

Two packs of cards are each divided into two packets of twenty-six, which we will call A and B. The cards in packet A of the first pack correspond exactly with those in packet A of the second pack and of course the same applies to the packets B. Packets A and B of the first pack are concealed behind a card easel on hooks convenient for switching. They are side by side and the performer must remember which is which. The ribbon, which should be three or four inches wide, is draped over the easel, so that one end hangs over A and the other over B.

The other pack is taken down into the auditorium and there divided into two. When a card has been mentally selected, the chooser ascertains which half contains his card and hands this to the performer, who

returns to the stage to wrap it up. If it happens to be packet A, he takes hold of that end of the ribbon which covers the duplicate packet B and so switches the two. Packet B is wrapped up and the ribbon handed to the chooser of the card. The ribbon must be of such a length that this can be done without dislodging the other end of the ribbon from the easel. The performer next takes the original packet B from the spectator, returns to the stage and picks up the other end of the ribbon, in so doing switching packet B for the original packet A. This latter is wrapped in the ribbon, handed to a second helper and the trick is finished as far as manipulation is concerned.

Should the chosen card be in packet B, the procedure is the same, except that the performer starts at the other end of the ribbon.

### *IX. The Writing on the Slate*

This is a prediction effect, which will appeal I trust, to slate workers.

#### EFFECT.

The performer introduces a slate, scribbles on one side so that it cannot be used and writes on the other. The writing is not shown to the spectators but the slate is dropped into a paper bag. Twelve cards are counted from the pack by a spectator. The performer divides them into four packets and places them on a card easel with their backs to the audience. A spectator chooses one packet and the rest are discarded. The three cards in the chosen packet are then placed side by side on the easel. As an afterthought the performer turns them over so that they face the audience. The spectator then chooses one of these—let us say the

eight of hearts. The performer then removes the slate from the bag. On it is written "You will choose the eight of hearts."

#### METHOD.

Here, by combining two principles, the performer manages to convey the impression that he has successfully predicted a card chosen freely from among twelve. To prepare for the performance, the conjurer takes a slate and writes on one side "You will choose the king of clubs". On the reverse side he writes "You will choose the two of spades". Each side is then covered with a flap. A packet of twelve cards is then arranged, consisting of the king of clubs, the two of spades and eight of hearts, repeated four times. These cards are concealed behind a card easel.

To present the effect, the performer shows that both sides of the slate are blank, scribbles on one side so that it cannot be used and writes on the other "You will choose the eight of Hearts". Without showing this to the audience, he places the slate in a paper bag. He then has twelve cards counted out and shuffled by a spectator and at a suitable opportunity switches them for the prepared packet. This is divided into four heaps, each of which, unknown to the spectators, contain the same three cards. The four heaps are placed side by side on the easel and one is chosen. The remaining heaps are placed aside and the three cards in the chosen heap are separated and placed side by side, just as the four heaps were. (This method of obtaining the choice of a card is necessary because the easel is not long enough for the twelve cards to be spread out all together—or so the performer says, and he ought to know).

When the three cards have been separated as indicated above, it "occurs" to the performer that they might just as well be placed with their faces to the audience and he accordingly turns them over. By this means he makes it clear that the chooser is in fact being given an absolutely free choice. He also implies that if he had thought of turning the cards over earlier in the proceedings the faces of the remaining nine cards would have been open to scrutiny. When the final choice has been made the slate is removed from the paper bag, if necessary minus one flap, and the side bearing the required prediction is shown. There is a two-to-one chance that the scribbled-on side can also be shown but if it cannot—well, that's just too bad.

### *X. The Lazy Young Dog*

Do you remember the old schooboy riddle "Why is a sheet of foolscap like a lazy young dog?" The answer is, "A sheet of foolscap is an ink-lined plane, an inclined plane is a slope up and a slow pup is a lazy young dog." Feeble, of course, but nothing is too feeble for me to use for a magical effect, as you probably know.

EFFECT.

The performer exhibits a round office ruler, wallops it on his table, just to show fair play, and wraps it in a sheet of foolscap. He then vanishes a silk handkerchief, reciting the above-mentioned riddle as he does so. At the conclusion he tears open the roll of foolscap and extracts therefrom the vanished handkerchief, which now bears the picture of a puppy. The ruler has vanished and as far as I am concerned remains so. An excellent comedy ending could no doubt

be provided by arranging for the vanished ruler to drop from the flies on to the performer's head, but I leave this to your indiscretion.

**METHOD.**

The handkerchief is draped over the card easel, behind which is a dummy round ruler, made from black glazed paper and containing a charm silk bearing the picture of a puppy. After the genuine ruler has been shown and rapped on the table the handkerchief is picked up. Under cover of this move the ruler is switched for the dummy. This is wrapped in a sheet of foolscap and placed aside while the handkerchief is vanished. The foolscap and dummy ruler are together torn across the centre and the duplicate silk removed, care being taken not to expose the black paper. Finally, the foolscap and its contents are screwed up and tossed aside.

## ***XI. Painting a Picture***

**EFFECT.**

Three or four coloured silks having been produced, the performer displays half-a-dozen cards bearing pictures, executed in colour. One of these is chosen. A sheet of cartridge paper is shown on both sides, rolled up and secured with a rubber band. The handkerchiefs whose colours correspond with those used in the chosen picture are pushed into the paper tube. They emerge from the other end bleached white and on the paper being unrolled there is found painted on it an enlargement of the picture chosen.

**METHOD.**

Behind the card easel is suspended a roll of cartridge paper, on the inner side of which is painted the

picture to be forced. The coloured silks are draped over the easel. Within the tube is a colour-changing fake loaded with three white silks. After a picture has been "chosen", a sheet of cartridge paper is exhibited and rolled up. In picking up the first coloured silk the empty tube is switched for the one behind the easel. The necessary coloured silks are pushed into the tube (and the colour-changing fake) and the white ones are extracted from the opposite end. The fake is disposed of in the usual way. In conclusion, the paper is unrolled and the picture displayed.

## *XII. The Homing Silk*

This little effect is suitable for an encore. The action is quite straightforward, fairly rapid and leads to a novelty climax.

### EFFECT.

A cubical red box is shown and from it is taken a red handkerchief. The performer explains that the box has a peculiar attraction for the silk and that the latter will return to the box on the slightest provocation. He places it in another box, similar in shape to the first one, but white in colour. He then asks a spectator to say "Go!". When this is done, the white box is opened and shown to be empty and the handkerchief is produced from the red box.

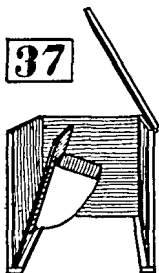
The performer explains further that the handkerchief can be made to vanish without being covered but in that case it is necessary for a large number of people to shout "Go!" very loudly. He holds the red silk at his finger tips and works the audience up to give as big a shout as possible. As they comply, he strokes the red silk with his hand, thereby causing it to turn

green. He looks at it pointedly, says "Thanks very much—I will," and retires.

#### METHOD.

First of all it is necessary to provide two boxes with hinged bottoms. Attached to the underside of each of these movable bottoms is a receptacle large enough to hold two silks. The boxes are coloured red and white respectively and at the outset the red one is prepared by placing a colour-changing handkerchief in the hidden receptacle. The handkerchief in question can be changed from red to green, or vice versa, by drawing it through the closed hand. At this juncture the red side is outermost. An unprepared red silk is placed in the box proper and the latter is placed on the table, lid uppermost.

The performer commences by removing the unprepared silk from the box and showing the latter empty. He does this by tilting it over towards the spectators, taking care that the loose base is kept flush with the bottom of the box. He then closes the box and returns it to its original position. Next he shows the inside of the white box in the same way, replaces the latter on the table, lid uppermost, and places the red silk inside. In doing this, it is a simple matter to pull the hinged base up against the front of the box and tuck the silk into the receptacle. In due course this box is shown empty (by tilting it over towards the spectators) and the duplicate silk is extracted from the receptacle in the red box. The final effect, in which the red silk, instead of being vanished, is turned into a green one, needs no



explanation. Its success will depend upon the degree of showmanship possessed by the performer.

Figure 37 illustrates one of the boxes. One side has been removed so that the hinged bottom and the handkerchief holder can be clearly seen.

### *XIII. Belling the Cat*

This is a bedtime story with magical illustrations. It should prove popular with very young people.

#### EFFECT.

The performer calls attention to a cut-out figure of a black cat and tells the story of the mouse who wanted to bell the cat. When he reaches the point where the old mouse said "Yes, but who is going to bell the cat?", he continues, "What the wise old mouse meant was that no one could tie the bell round the cat's neck without getting close enough for the cat to gobble him up. But that was because he wasn't a conjurer. If he had been, he would have known how to tie a bell on the cat without going anywhere near it. As I *am* a conjurer, I will show you how it is done."

Having delivered himself in this strain, the performer exhibits four lengths of ribbon of different colours. Each of these is enclosed in a matchbox, the boxes are mixed up together and one of them is chosen by a spectator. On being opened, it is seen to contain (say) the yellow ribbon. A small bell is placed in the box with the ribbon and the box is closed. The cat's head is then covered with a handkerchief.

Standing some distance away from the cat, the performer waves the matchbox in the air and then opens it. The box is empty, the ribbon and bell having



disappeared. On the handkerchief being removed from the cat, it is found that the bell is tied round its neck with the chosen ribbon.

#### METHOD.

Our first concern is the forcing of the ribbon. For this purpose four matchboxes are used, three of which are prepared as follows. Two strips of book muslin, the same width as the inside of the matchbox drawer and about four inches long, are sewn across at the points marked X and Y in Fig. 38. The free ends, AB and CD, are folded over at right angles. A and B are glued to the inside of the matchbox cover and C and D to the bottom of the drawer inside. When this has been done it will be found that the drawer can be pushed out at either end of the cover for three-quarters of its length. The muslin is painted to match the inside of the drawer.

Having decided that the colour to be forced is (say) yellow, a roll of yellow ribbon is placed in one side of each of the faked matchboxes and the latter closed. After the performer has displayed the four ribbons of different colours, he says, "I will put the ribbons in these four matchboxes." He picks up the unprepared box, removes the drawer and holds drawer and cover apart, thus indicating, without making too much point of it, that they are unprepared. While still talking, he closes this matchbox, puts it down and picks up one of the faked ones, pushing the empty end of the drawer three-parts of the way out and turning it towards the spectators for a brief moment. As the first box was shown to be obviously unprepared, the spectators are not likely to be over-meticulous in the matter of the remainder. Three of the coloured ribbons

are now placed in the empty ends of the prepared matchboxes but the yellow ribbon is placed in the unprepared one.

The matchboxes are next shuffled about and placed in a row on the table. The performer asks that one be chosen, opens it and tips out the yellow ribbon. If the unprepared box is chosen he will, of course, open the box in such a way that it can be clearly seen that the box and cover are unprepared and contain nothing but the yellow ribbon. If one of the faked boxes is chosen, however, he simply pushes the drawer three-parts out (taking care that the end containing the yellow ribbon is the one to emerge) and turns the box upside-down so that the ribbon drops on the table. He then turns the box towards the spectators for a moment—just long enough for them to see that it is apparently empty (the other ribbon is hidden behind the muslin strip) but not long enough for them to appreciate that the bottom of the drawer is not all “on the level.”

The yellow ribbon is now replaced in the box, together with a small bell. In picking up (from the card easel or elsewhere) the handkerchief to cover the cat's head, this matchbox is switched for an empty one.

It only remains to explain the appearance of the ribbon and bell on the cat's neck. Assuming for the sake of illustration that the cat's neck measures three inches across, a band of black velvet is made, six and one-half inches in circumference and the same width as the ribbon. One half of this is covered with yellow ribbon, complete with bell. This band is passed round the cat's neck and is kept taut by a wire arm one inch long, which projects behind the neck. Before the change, the section of the band to which the ribbon is

attached is out of sight behind the cat. The uncovered half passes across the cat's neck but as the cat itself is covered with black velvet the band is invisible. A small hook is attached to the band just where the ribbon ends. By pulling this hook across the front of the cat's neck the band is dragged round and the ribbon is thereby brought to the front. The most convenient way of doing this is to engage the handkerchief with the hook and in removing it to do so with a steady pull.

#### DIAGRAMS.

Figure 38. This shows the two strips of muslin ready for glueing into the matchbox.

Figure 40 shows the completed fake but with one side of the drawer and cover removed to expose the interior.

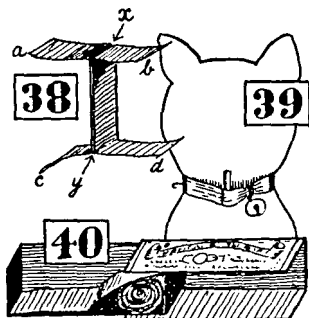


Figure 39 gives a rear view of the cat's head. The ribbon and bell can be seen attached to the velvet band. Part of the uncovered section of the latter can be seen at either end of the ribbon. The wire arm does not show up too clearly in this figure but remember that it juts out at right-angles to the cat's neck and so holds the

band away from the latter. The object of this is to give a little extra length to the band and so allow a small margin to cover the *edges* of the figure.

#### *XIV. Just Chance*

I have recently come across several references to an effect bearing the above title but so far I have not read a description of the *modus operandi*. The idea is a good one and I have amused myself by considering what method I should adopt to bring about a similar effect. If perchance I have hit upon the same idea as one of my confreres I tender my apologies in advance.

##### EFFECT.

The performer exhibits four envelopes with flaps tucked in, and asks a spectator to mix them up. He then places them in two piles of two each (if two can be called a pile) and produces three pennies. One of these is placed on the first pile head upwards and another is placed on the second pile with its tail uppermost. The performer hands the third penny to a spectator and asks him to toss it, explaining that if it comes down "heads" he is to have the two envelopes on which the penny rests with the head uppermost, and vice versa. In due course the penny is spun and comes down (say) "tails". The two envelopes beneath the penny with its tail upwards are accordingly handed to the spectator. The remaining two envelopes are then separated and placed side by side, each with a penny on it—one "heads" and one "tails". The third penny is spun by the spectator a second time and as before he takes the envelope indicated by the toss of the coin.

At the conclusion, the spectator is invited to open

his three envelopes. They are all empty, while the one with which the performer is left contains a Treasury note.

#### METHOD.

There is little to explain as the effect depends simply upon the judicious use of two double-faced pennies. The envelope with the note inside is marked so that the performer can identify it after the shuffle. In arranging the two pennies on the packets of envelopes he bears in mind that the third penny is double-headed and that the result of the toss will be heads. He then switches the double-headed penny for the double-tailed one and in arranging the unprepared pennies on the two envelopes left to him takes care to ensure that the "tails" penny is on the empty envelope.

The fact that the first toss of the coin results in "heads" while the second gives "tails" should be sufficient to put the knowing ones off the scent.

### *XV. Making a Wand*

This is a harmless little novelty for which stock props can be pressed into service.

#### EFFECT.

The performer invites attention to his wand, a neat affair of polished ebony with nickel tips. He explains that he made it himself and offers to show the audience how he did so. He shows a length cut from a white curtain rod and places it in a long envelope. He then takes a black handkerchief and pulls it through his hand "to squeeze the black out of it." Anyway, it emerges white and the imaginary black in the performer's hand is blown in the direction of the envelope. When this is opened the white stick is seen to have

changed to a black one. This is replaced in the envelope and laid aside while the performer picks up a sheet of silver paper. He tears two small pieces from this, rolls them up and vanishes them, apparently throwing them in the direction of the envelope. Finally, the performer opens the envelope again and extracts therefrom a real magic wand — a neat affair of polished ebony with nickel tips.

#### METHOD.

The white stick first shown is really a black stick covered with a tube of white paper which is left inside the envelope when the black stick is extracted. The handkerchief is of the type which can be made to change colour by pulling it through the closed fist.

The silver paper (and when I say silver paper *I do* mean silver paper and not tinfoil) rests over a card easel behind which is a duplicate envelope containing the finished article, i.e., a neat affair of polished ebony, etc. In picking up the paper, the original envelope (which, it will be remembered, contains the black stick and the discarded white shell) is switched for the duplicate. Two pieces of silver paper are torn from the sheet and vanished (see "Aunt Kate's Conjuring," etc.). The finished article is removed from the envelope and the latter tossed into the auditorium.

## XVI. A Queer Coincidence

Conjurers will probably scoff at this effect (and quite rightly, too) but to the uninitiated it is quite puzzling.

#### EFFECT.

A small box contains three dice, side by side. A spectator is asked to arrange the dice in any order

while the performer's back is turned and then to tie up the lid of the box with strings which are attached to the box for this purpose. The performer then asks a second spectator to think of a number, double it, etc. (see below) and announce the answer. The dice box is then opened and the numbers on the visible sides of the dice are added up. The total is exactly the same as that called out by the second spectator.

#### METHOD.

As the diagram will show, the greater part of the bottom of the box is pivoted so that it may be opened when required. The movable portion fits fairly tightly between the battens to which the strings are attached so that it cannot open unless pressure is applied to its free edge.

When the performer asks a spectator to arrange the dice in the box he turns his back, holding the box in the palm of his hand. The spectator does not therefore handle the box, though he is able to arrange the dice in it and later tie up the lid. The dice having been arranged and the box tied up, the performer returns to the stage and places the box on his table. With his thumb he pulls down the bottom of the box and leaves the backs of the dice exposed—or at any rate sufficiently so for him to deduce the numbers on them. He then asks a second spectator to make the following calculations:—

- (a) Think of a number.
- (b) Double it.
- (c) Add forty-two to it.
- (d) Halve the result.
- (e) Take away a certain number.

(This will vary according to the arrangement of the

dice. The particular number to be subtracted on any occasion is ascertained *by adding together the spots on the backs of the dice.*)

(f) Take away the number first thought of.

The result of these operations will give a number equivalent to the total of the spots on the faces of the three dice. Why? . . . Well, well, well . . . you surprise me.

41



Figure 41 shows the box with the hinged bottom opened to reveal the backs of the dice. The strings with which the lid is secured can be seen encircling the box. These strings are actually threaded lengthwise through the two battens attached to the bottom of the box.

## XVII. *Bluebeard's Bride*

I do not know to what extent the story of Bluebeard can be regarded as suitable fare for children. Youngsters on the whole seem to me to be a pretty bloodthirsty crew and the question as to whether it is wiser to pander to this tendency or suppress it I leave to those who specialise in the entertainment of juvenile audiences. Anyway, here is the story, which concerns one of Bluebeard's wives (a somewhat plump young lady named Fatterma) who seems to have been singularly unmoved by the fate of her predecessors. When shown their heads hanging in a neat row, she is understood to have said "How quaint—but they must have been a poor lot to lose their heads over a mutt like you." You see, she had been married to Bluebeard for a matter of some months and the prospect of view-



ing brightly-hued face-fungus across the breakfast table for an indefinite period was beginning to look somewhat bleak. However, rightly or wrongly Blue-beard took umbrage and a large scimitar, severed Fatterma's head and shut it up in a box, remarking "that'll learn yer" or words to that effect. But when later he opened the box to exhibit its contents to a fellow collector, he was mortified to discover it gone. Dashing up to the spare bedroom where he had left the body, he found that that too had been spirited away. At that moment he heard mocking laughter from the next room. Striding in he was met by Fatterma, still hale and hearty, who greeted him with the remark, "Hello, whiskers. Any knives or scimitars to grind?"

#### EFFECT.

On the table is a box containing a doll. This is removed and placed in one of two square tubes which have been previously proved empty. To illustrate the story, the performer severs the doll's head with a cardboard scimitar. He places the severed head in a small box and leaves the trunk in the tube. In due course the box is opened and shown empty and the tube is seen to be in a like condition. The doll, with head restored, is recovered from the second tube.

#### METHOD.

For the reproduction of the doll, the Organ Pipe principle is used. The two square tubes nest and the doll remains suspended on a hook in the larger tube after they have been shown empty in the usual way.

The evanishment of the original doll involves rather more preparation. The box which houses the doll is lined with black velvet and the back is movable. A

hook attached to the centre of this engages with the doll's waistband so that when the latter is removed from the box by pulling it forward, the back comes with it, though to the spectators the box is just as it was before. When the back has been pulled forward as far as it will go, the doll is removed from the hook and stood on top of the box. To render it self-supporting it is attached to a wooden base. In the top of the box is a hole, slightly larger than the base support of the doll. To prevent the latter from falling through before its time it is twisted slightly so that the corners of the base rest on the edges of the opening.

While still on the top of the box the doll is covered with the empty tube. At the same time it is twisted round so that it can pass through the hole but of course it is not allowed to *fall* through. It is gently lowered by the hand which is not occupied with the tube. You see now the reason for providing the box with a sliding back.

The doll's head does not take part in this exodus but remains in the tube. It is only lightly attached to the body by means of a loose peg and is provided with a hook which the performer takes care to pass over the upper rear edge of the tube before the doll is lowered into the box.

The tube is now removed from the box and placed on the table. This must be done as if it still contains the doll. The next move is to sever the doll's head. A cardboard model of a scimitar is inserted in the top of the tube and pushed backwards and forwards with a sawing motion, after which the doll's head is unhooked and removed.

The vanish from the box need not give much

trouble. I suggest a box with a hinged bottom which is pushed up from within before the head is deposited in the box. The head thus passes straight through the box into the performer's hand.

The box is transferred to the other hand and shown empty, the hinged bottom having been permitted to resume its normal position in the meantime. A box of the type illustrated in Fig. 37 but without the handkerchief-holder would be very suitable for this purpose.

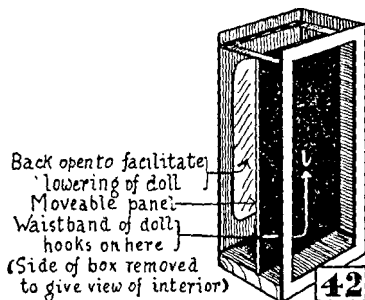


Figure 42 gives a view of the interior of the doll's box, one side having been removed for this purpose. Actually the whole of the interior is dead black, being entirely lined with velvet, but for obvious reasons it is not so shown in the illustration.

## TAILPIECE

In writing this book I have kept strictly to the business in hand, neither deviating to the right nor to the left but conscientiously resisting the temptation to indulge in reminiscence or other inanity. Had times been normal I should at this point have recorded a selection of those random thoughts which are so pleasant to write down and yet do no harm to anybody, since the choice of reading or skipping them rests with the reader. That pleasure must be reserved for some future occasion, not too far distant, let us hope. In the meantime there is plenty to do. In helping to provide entertainment for troops buried in outlandish places the amateur magician finds a useful outlet for his energies and while this need exists books must take second place.

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