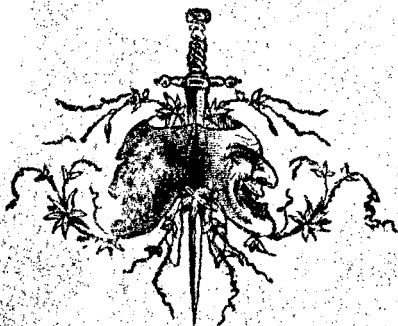


The
Beginner's
Guide
to
Conjuring



By ARTHUR OTTO

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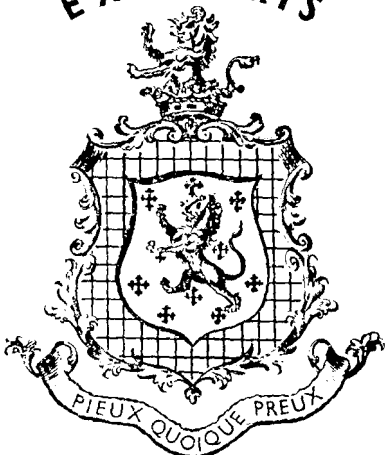
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THE
BEGINNER'S GUIDE
TO
CONJURING

BY
ARTHUR OTTO.



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THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CONJURING

INTRODUCTION.

I N presenting this little book to the reader I wish it to be distinctly understood that it is not intended for the magical expert or even the advanced amateur, but solely as a guide for beginners.

It will be my aim to simplify matters as much as possible; and, although several tricks are explained, it is my intention to give the reader an insight into the principles of the magic art, rather than an *exposé* of tricks.

With this understanding I will leave it in your hands, trusting that my effort *will not be in vain*.

CHAPTER I.

I THINK I am right when I say that there are many who would take up conjuring as a hobby were they not deterred by the very general impression that months, if not years, of practice are required for its successful acquisition. Now this is not strictly true. While I admit that sleight of hand in its more advanced form, such as the modern manipulation of cards and coins, requires long and assiduous practice (far more, in fact, than the average person is prepared to give), it is equally true that the elementary principles of sleight of hand and hundreds of effective tricks can be mastered by any intelligent person who has the time and inclination to give them a little practice.

Next to a glib tongue, confidence, blended with a little tact, is perhaps the most valuable asset for a conjurer, and, let us not mince matters, bluff takes a hand in the game.

There is an old saying which runs: "It is not what you do, but how you do it," and it is certainly true with regard to conjuring; the effect of a trick is exactly what you make it, nothing more nor less. Conjuring is one thing, showmanship is another, and it is the latter that makes or mars a trick. You may have mastered what is termed the mechanical part of a trick, but this in itself is

not sufficient to produce the necessary illusion. Magic is a play on the senses of your audience, if I may so explain myself. To illustrate my meaning: suppose you appear to place a coin in the left hand, when, as a matter of fact, you retain it in the right, you direct attention to the left hand both with your eyes and gestures striving to convey the impression that the coin is really there, in fact try and think so yourself; this is called *misdirection*, and you cannot pay too much attention to it.

Anyone will tell you that it is the quickness of the hand that deceives the eye; not so, it is rather a *matter of doing the right thing at the right moment*. Here is an instance:—

Suppose you have a pigeon in your breast pocket which you wish to introduce into a borrowed hat unobserved; you might conceal a small orange in your hand, then dip into the hat and produce it and let it fall on the floor; attention is thus for the moment drawn away from the hat, and in goes the pigeon with impunity. Yet another example: perhaps you have something concealed in your hand which you wish to pocket; the beginner will be on thorns till he has got rid of it; he need not be. There is no need to hurry; wait till you turn aside to pick up something from a chair or table, and then quietly dispose of it in the pocket; in the same manner you may get possession of anything.

Endeavour to be natural in your movements; don't be too quick, and on the other hand, don't be too slow; but try to strike the happy medium.

In the initial stages of practice it is well to work in front of a mirror, and when you can deceive yourself you may consider yourself perfect; but before attempting a public performance, it would be well to ask a few personal friends to witness and comment on your work, for more failures occur through attempting to give an entertainment before you are really proficient than from any other cause.

Passing on to the all-important question of patter, I would say that the learner should cultivate a style which suits him best. For the benefit of those who do not know what patter is, I may say it is the technical term for the running fire of small talk that the conjurer directs at his audience during his show, which serves to cover many a slip, and makes the performance more entertaining. Later on an example is given of patter; but, as I have said, it is best for the learner to fix up his own. If you are naturally witty, it should be of the humorous order; if not, on the lines of your ordinary conversation—for please do not attempt to be funny *if you are not*. You must never admit you have made a mistake if a trick goes wrong—and it will do in the best hands occasionally. You must endeavour, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, to conclude the trick in some other way from that you originally intended, or with a little tact switch off to the next item; but never acknowledge failure.

Conjuring tricks, roughly speaking, might be divided into three classes—viz., tricks that require

no apparatus, those that require simple accessories which you can easily make yourself, and others that involve the use of more elaborate apparatus too complicated for home construction, and which I should advise the reader to procure from a reliable dealer in magical apparatus. The cheapest is not always best, for badly made apparatus is dear at any price, and far too likely to go wrong at a critical moment. I would advise the amateur to be careful in his selection, and to *become acquainted with the secret of a trick before he invests in the apparatus*, as he may otherwise purchase a trick that does not take his fancy, or find it too difficult for his manipulation.

Secrets of the latest tricks may be purchased from lists issued from time to time, and by following these you may keep up to date and obtain secrets of many new and subtle tricks that require neither skill nor apparatus. It does not always follow that the most elaborate or complicated trick has the best effect, as in good hands a simple trick often produces a brilliant effect.

If there is one difficulty more than another the beginner has to contend with, it is the *knowall*. This is a young gentleman, usually in his teens, who does his level best to trip you up if he has a chance, and pretends to know how everything is done, and is not slow to air his knowledge; and, not content with this, he will handle your apparatus—in fact, in every possible manner make himself obnoxious. An individual of this type, as

a rule, knows as much about conjuring as the proverbial cow of a new shilling, and is actuated by a desire to appear exceptionally smart at your expense.

There are many ways to deal with such a person ; one is to ignore him altogether, another is to turn the tables on him, as he is usually so persistent that you are bound to give him your attention.

One trick to play on him is an old one known as the " Magic Whistle," which you can blow with impunity yourself, but when he attempts to follow your example, he is decorated with a sooty moustache for his pains. The trick can be purchased at a conjuring repository ; but do not play it on a man who is an athlete, or there may be trouble. The following will be found better still :—Addressing him, you say : " You seem to understand magic, sir. I am always pleased to find a smart young man to help me during my entertainment. Now, sir, may I ask you to take charge of this piece of paper ? " (tear off a small portion and hand it to him). " Hold it in one hand, so, at arm's length. You are quite sure you have it ? That's right ; then I will proceed." Here you introduce another trick, but keep requesting him from time to time to see that he has the paper still—" Hold it a little higher, sir." Thus you play with your victim till his arm aches, when the audience will begin to tumble to the joke. When you think proper, relieve him of the paper, saying, " Don't tell your friends how it's

done, sir." You can usually rely on his keeping quiet for the rest of your show; you have kept his fingers out of mischief, and at the same time effectually crushed him. You will find your audience, as a rule, have no sympathy with such a person, and are ready and willing to assist you in your efforts to amuse them. Perseverance is the keynote of success in conjuring as in every other art. You meet with little difficulties, but they are soon overcome, and your confidence will increase in proportion to your skill, till entertainment-giving will be a *real pleasure* to you.

You will find magic a fascinating pursuit, and it may be made a profitable one, as by giving entertainments in your spare time you might considerably augment your income.

The amateur magician is an ever-welcome guest at any social function he may attend; and when the company have had a surfeit of singing and the dramatic recitation has fallen flat, his efforts are usually much appreciated.

CHAPTER II.

WE will now deal with the dress, tables, wand, and other paraphernalia of the magician's outfit. The costumes worn by the modern conjurer are many and varied. Some appear in Egyptian, Hindoo, or Chinese costumes, the latter being the most popular of the three;

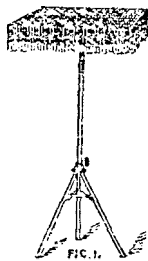
others don Court costume, while a few appear as "Mephisto," which is at once appropriate and picturesque. But the orthodox dress suit is easily first favourite by reason of its adaptability to the requirements of the conjurer. Still, if you are working what is technically called a "silent act"—that is, giving a show unaccompanied by patter—a Chinese robe is very effective; but it is only necessary for me to deal with the dress suit. When you mention a conjurer's coat, pockets are intimately associated with it even in the lay mind, and these pockets I will briefly describe.

There are two pockets in the breast of the coat; each of them should be large enough to contain a small rabbit. The opening of the pockets is outward towards the edge of the coat (about one and a half inches away from it). These pockets are used for the production of bulky objects. There are also two pockets in your coat-tails, one on each side; these are technically known as "profondes." The mouth of each pocket should be level with your knuckles when the arms fall naturally to the side, and slope a little on one side; they are usually lined with some suitable stiffening material such as buckram, and as they are sewn on rather slackly, this serves to keep them open and ready for the reception of anything you may drop into them. Besides these there are two small pockets, known as "pochettes," sewn on the thighs, one on each thigh; the coat-tails hide them. They are just large enough to contain a billiard ball, a pack of cards, or any similar small

article which you may desire to get at quickly during the show. These are all the necessary pockets for a magician, and the amateur is not likely to require more. Although some conjurers have a complete battery of pockets all over them, those described are sufficient for any ordinary purpose. I may say here, that a very good entertainment may be given in an ordinary lounge coat, using the two outside pockets.

THE TABLES.—Time was when the conjurer used a large and elaborate table fitted with traps, pistons, and even electric appliances for working mechanical tricks, but it has long since become a thing of the past. The only tables now used by magicians are small round or square tables (except side or back table for storing apparatus)—little more than stands, in fact—which fix on telescopic metal legs, somewhat on the principle of a music-stand. These tables are usually used in pairs, one for each side of the stage, and if neatly upholstered in black or blue cloth with gilt or silver fringe they are an ornament to the stage.

Fig. 1 gives an idea of their appearance. One who is anything of an amateur carpenter could probably turn out a pair for his own use; but as they can be purchased quite as cheaply at a magical repository, it is a question as to whether it is worth the trouble. These tables are usually fitted with a "servante," which is the technical term for a detachable arrangement of wire and



network forming a sort of bag into which you can drop any article at will. They are of various patterns. Figs. 2 and 3 illustrate two of them. Fig. 2 is a table servante, and Fig. 3 is designed for attachment



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3

ment to the back of a chair. For the benefit of those who are working where the use of their own table is impossible, a good makeshift for one may be provided as follows:— Use an ordinary table which has a drawer in it.

Turn the side with the drawer in it towards yourself; and, pulling out the drawer some five or six inches, throw a tablecloth over the table. The drawer forms a handy servante. Another and even simpler way, where you cannot obtain a table with a drawer in it, is to cover the front portion of an ordinary table with books, &c., to the height of about three or four inches, leaving about four inches at the rear of the table uncovered. Now throw a thick tablecloth over the whole, and you have a good servante. I have found this an excellent device when giving an impromptu performance. A very useful accessory is what is termed the "vest servante"—that is, a miniature servante attached to a belt worn around the waist. The servante itself is in front of the body, hence any articles dropped in the breast of the vest are caught in the servante. In the improved pattern, pressure of the elbow on the

side causes the servante to open for the reception of articles, while if you cease the pressure it again closes flat ; this prevents any unsightly bulge in the vest that might otherwise exist.

While on this subject, I may say that there are also detachable pockets to fasten on the thigh with pin-hooks for those who do not care to have them sewn on the hip of their trousers. All these accessories are obtainable at a magical depôt.

THE WAND.—This is nothing more nor less than a light wooden rod, three-eighths to half an inch in diameter, and twelve or fifteen inches in length. It is usually made of fancy wood, or painted in imitation thereof. A couple of metal mounts one and a half inches from each end adds to its appearance. Fig. 4 shows the wand. There are many trick wands—one for the

production of coins, others
for producing balls, sweets,



FIG. 4.

and even cigars and cards ; but they are of very doubtful utility from a beginner's point of view. There are other sundry properties in a magical outfit I must not pass over. First, spring flowers. These are very useful in a variety of ways. They can be produced from a paper cone or hat, tambourine, &c., &c., and may be made up into bouquets. They are made in paper of various colours and sizes, and are mounted on a V-shaped spring, so that a hundred or so folded up and held together take up little or no room, and can be readily concealed in the hand. They can be purchased very cheaply, and a couple of hundred

are a good investment. Silk handkerchiefs will be required ; they should be of the finest silk obtainable, and about fourteen or eighteen inches square. The conjuring repositories stock them in several sizes and colours. They may be obtained so fine that they may be concealed (when rolled up) in the bowl of a pipe. Cards will be used, and the best cards for conjuring are the American cards (Squeezers or Steamboats), which are pliant, and lend themselves more readily to the manipulations of the conjurer than English cards, which are far too stiff. Good and reliable apparatus for the production and evanescence of silk handkerchiefs may be required, and I will describe what I consider is the best for each.

For the *production* of a handkerchief, "The False Finger." This finger fêke is made of metal or celluloid, and is generally painted flesh-colour in imitation of a natural finger ; it is hollow, and loaded with a fine silk handkerchief, and is worn between the first and second fingers of the left hand. The hands may be shown empty, and, if kept slowly moving, the fêke is absolutely invisible. The hands are then brought together, and the silk handkerchief is worked out of the fêke and shown. The handkerchief may be vanished by working it back into the fêke, which is then left in its former position between the fingers ; but I do not recommend you to do so. Some scores of fêkes have been designed for the production of a silk handkerchief, some practical, some worse than useless ; but none, so

far, in my opinion, are superior to the "Finger Fèke."

For *vanishing* a handkerchief you should obtain what is known as a "Pull Fèke," which is a small black metal cup to which is attached a length of black thread elastic terminating in a loop. The loop is attached to one of your brace buttons at the back, and the black cup is allowed to hang out at the armhole of the vest. When required for use, the cup is pulled down and placed in the waistcoat pocket. You show the handkerchief, then tuck one end in the waistcoat pocket, hence into the cup of the fèke, while you bare your arms. Now take the handkerchief, and with it the fèke, and, waving the handkerchief up and down, gradually work it into the fèke. When it is securely inside, release it, and the fèke flies under your coat. Continue to rub your hands together for a little while, then open them and show they are empty. This vanisher, though old as the hills, cannot be improved upon, although many pieces of apparatus have been designed for the purpose.

Before I close this chapter I would advise the student to acquire a natural use of the wand. Anything may be held unnoticed in the hand that grasps the wand, attention being drawn to the other hand, and in the act of placing the wand on the table the article concealed in the hand may be dropped into the servante. Again, you turn aside for a moment to pick up the wand from the table, which gives the disengaged hand an opportunity to gain possession of anything you may

require from the vest or pockets, or pick up a small article with the wand. In the next chapter I will deal with the elementary principles of sleight of hand, and describe some novel tricks.

CHAPTER III.

A KNOWLEDGE of palming is essential to anyone who would make a successful magician, although, as I have said elsewhere, there are tricks that involve little or no skill, but an acquaintance with the principles of sleight of hand will enable you to give an impromptu performance with cards, coins, balls and similar accessories, wherever you may be, which the performer who depends on apparatus alone cannot possibly do. First, let us take palming, which may be termed the *foundation* of sleight of hand.

WHAT IS PALMING ?

It is the art of concealing a coin, coins, or any other article or articles in the palm of the hand, which, when held with its back towards the spectators, appears empty and quite natural. To do this neatly some practice is essential, but it *can* be mastered by any intelligent person.

TO PALM A COIN.

The best coin to use is a half-crown, florin, or a specially made *palming coin* sold by dealers, as a coin with a milled edge is easily palmed, whereas

a penny, being less readily gripped by the palm, is liable to slip from the hands of a beginner.

In the *initial* stages of practice, lay the coin on your palm flat, then grip it in the palm by pressure against the edge (nearest thumb) with the fleshy part of the ball of the thumb; then turn the hand over with its back upwards without letting the coin fall. After practice you will be able to transfer the coin from the tips of your fingers to the palm. It is done in the following manner:—

The coin is held between the tips of the middle fingers and thumb of the *right hand*, as in Fig. 5; the thumb is then quickly removed, and the middle fingers press the coin into the palm, as in Fig. 6, where it remains, as in Fig. 7. Thus you have mastered the mechanical part of the sleight, and you will be able to present it in a finished manner as follows:—Take the coin between the middle fingers and thumb of the right hand, make an upward throw, palming the coin during the process (from a spectator's point of view it has vanished into thin air); follow the imaginary flight of the coin round the room with your eyes, then with the hand containing the palmed coin



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.

reach down and produce it from behind your knee or the heel of your boot. Now, holding the coin in the right hand, seem to place it in the left;

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but as the right hand moves towards the left the coin is palmed in the right, the left closes as if containing the coin, and moves slightly upward, followed by your eyes, while the right hand slowly and naturally drops to the side ; a rubbing motion is made with the left, which is ultimately opened and shown empty, while the right plucks the coin from a spectator's hair or elsewhere. A still simpler form of palming is the tourniquet.

THE TOURNIQUET.

The Tourniquet, or "French Drop," is a simple but elusive pass, and is presented as follows :— The coin is held by its opposite edges between the tips of the fingers and thumb of the left hand, as in Fig. 8. The right hand then approaches,

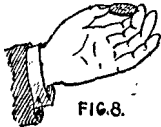


FIG. 8.

its thumb is passed under and fingers over the coin, seeming to clutch it, as in Fig. 9. It is really, however, allowed to drop in the left hand, which falls to your side, while the right hand, which is closed, moves away, and is supposed to contain the coin. When open, it is, of course, empty, and the left hand produces it



FIG. 9.

elsewhere. Though I have described the coin as held in the left hand, it may be held in the right, as either hand should execute the pass with equal facility. It is not at all essential to actually palm the coin in the hand that retains it in this pass ; it is rather a matter of concealing the

coin in the hand than palming, although the following palm is useful here.

THE FINGER PALM.

Strictly speaking this is not a palm, but it is very deceptive and easily acquired. The coin is laid flat on the second and third fingers of right hand, in the act of seeming to transfer it to the left hand. The first and little finger are raised, and the coin is nipped between them, as in Fig. 10; the usual business is gone through and the coin produced with the right. It is a useful sleight, as I will endeavour to show later on.



N.B.—These passes are also suitable for balls, or any similar small object.

A DECEPTIVE COIN PASS.

Secretly palm a half-crown in the right hand. Now borrow two half-crowns, requesting a spectator to hand them to you one at a time. Take the first coin and *actually* transfer it to the left hand. Now ask for the second coin, which you take with the right hand and appear to throw it in the left, which presumably contains two coins. As a matter of fact the second coin is palmed in the right hand; as it is palmed it strikes the coin already in the right palm; the click is supposed to be caused by it striking the coin in the left hand, which is at once closed, as the fact that the left hand contains but one coin must not be

revealed yet. After a little "business," open the left hand and show the single coin. Now, with the same hand, make an upward movement, seeming to throw the coin into the air, but really palming it; then with the right hand produce the two coins from behind the knee.

THE MELTING COIN.

PREPARATION.—You require some tin foil (such as sweets and cigarettes are wrapped in); cut from this a disc just a fraction larger than a half-crown. Now press the foil disc well over the half-crown and rub it with your fingers, and the foil will receive an exact impression of the coin. Peel it very carefully from the coin and do not crush it; now push open a matchbox about half way and carefully place the faked coin in the open end of the *case*, and stand this box of matches beside an unlighted candle on the table. Now take the real half-crown and mark it by scratching thereon a cross; next take a lemon and cut a slit in it and insert the marked half-crown. Place the lemon on a plate, together with a fruit-knife, and you are ready.

PERFORMANCE.—BORROW a half-crown, requesting the owner to mark it; place it on the table. Now pick up the matchbox, and, taking out a match, strike it and light the candle; then close the box, and the *foil* "coin" will be pushed out, and into your hand. Take care not to crush it. Now pick up the real coin with the other hand and seem to transfer it to the hand in which the

foil coin is concealed, really palming it, and showing the foil coin lying on the palm of the hand. Now hold it in the flame of the candle, and the coin will be seen to visibly melt away. Meantime, the *other hand* is engaged in transferring the coin from the *ordinary* to the *finger palm*. Now the empty hand takes the candle from its socket and transfers it to the hand concealing the coin, and you will find that you can hold the hand in almost any position without revealing the presence of the coin. Again take away the candle with the other hand; then, with the hand containing the finger-palmed coin, you produce it from the flame of the candle. Now pick up the lemon and impale it on the point of the knife, which is inserted in the slit already made, and ask a spectator (*not* the owner of the coin) to hold it on the point of the knife. Now take the borrowed coin and vanish it by palming; ask the spectator to cut open the fruit, and he finds the coin inside it. Ask if he sees *the* mark on it; he sees *a* mark (yours), and naturally replies, "Yes." Now take the coin from him, and exchange it for the original borrowed and marked coin, which you return to the owner. This trick is most effective, either for the drawing-room or the stage, and is certainly not difficult, but requires careful attention to detail.

AN EFFECTIVE COIN PASS.

This effective sleight can only be performed when wearing a lounge coat with an outside

breast pocket (handkerchief pocket). It is simple and deceptive. You appear to place a coin in the left hand, really palming it in the right; the right hand then grasps the left sleeve above the elbow and draws it back a little way. This brings the palm of the right hand in close proximity to the pocket in the breast of the coat, into which the coin is dropped. A duplicate coin might then be produced with the right hand from the trousers pocket.

THE INVISIBLE FLIGHT OF COINS.

PREPARATION.—Finger-palm a half-crown between the first and second fingers of the right hand, as already explained in this chapter. On the table are two china basins or rice bowls.

PERFORMANCE.—Show the bowls, taking care not to expose the coin. Now borrow a half-crown and a penny. Take the penny between the *tips* of the middle fingers and thumb of the right hand, seeming to drop it into one bowl. Really you deftly palm the penny and drop the half-crown hitherto concealed between the fingers (fingers must be lowered well into bowl while making the change). Now, with the empty hand, place a plate on top of the bowl, while the other hand transfers the coin from its palm to the finger-palm: Now pick up the visible half-crown, seeming to drop it in the second bowl, really, however, palming it and dropping the penny as above described. You also cover this bowl. Now it only remains for you to conclude the trick and

show the coins have changed places. It is advisable, when returning the coins, to exchange the half-crown turned out from the bowl for the palmed one (the borrowed one). You then run no risk of the owner noticing a difference in the coin.

THE WAND PRODUCED FROM A PURSE.

I shall now describe a trick that is most effective for opening an evening's entertainment—viz., the production of an ordinary solid wand from a purse.

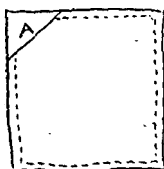
PREPARATION.—Procure an ordinary leather purse of the clasp variety. Now, taking a very sharp knife, cut a slit lengthways in the bottom of the purse; the cut must be a clean one, right through the leather. The purse is closed, and placed, with the slit *upwards*, in your left trousers pocket. Now, taking your ordinary conjuring wand, push it up the left sleeve. Till required, its lower end may rest in a tiny pocket of cloth sewn on the inside cuff.

TO PERFORM.—You secretly free the end of the wand from the little pocket inside the sleeve, then plunge the left hand into the trousers pocket. The act of lowering the arm causes the wand to drop down a bit, and you insert the end in the slit in the bottom of the purse. Quickly bring out the purse, and turn with your left side well towards the audience; then open the purse and draw out the wand with your right hand, remarking that it is the only thing your purse contains. Then quietly snap the purse, returning it to your pocket, and pass the wand for examination. Perform the

trick in an easy, matter-of-fact sort of way, as though it was the most natural thing in the world to take a wand fifteen inches in length from a purse two inches in depth. The effect is astonishing.

THE MAGIC SUGAR-BAG.

This is a very useful device for the evanescence of sundry articles, such as a watch, silk handkerchief, or anything similar. The paper used in making the bag is fêked as follows:—It consists of two separate sheets of paper, gummed together round the edges, as indicated by the dotted lines



in Fig. 11. The corner of *one* of the pieces is cut off, leaving an opening at A. When dry it is ready. It is advisable to make several of these for future use.

FIG. 11.

Take care, in making the bag (which is conical in shape), that the open space A is near the top. When made, the bag appears like Fig. 12.



FIG. 12.

It is used in the following manner:—Place your hand inside the bag, and pull back the top of the inner paper to the opposite side of the bag. The bag is now presented to a spectator with a request to drop the watch inside, which, of course, falls between the double sheets of paper. The top of the cone is now folded over, and is given in the custody of a spectator, who is asked if he can hear the watch ticking. "It is still going, sir?" "Yes." "Well, in a moment it will be gone." Then take the bag from him

and open the paper flat, and the watch has to all appearances) vanished.

To regain possession of it you simply crush the paper into a ball, tearing out the watch as you do so, which is retained in the hand while the paper is carelessly thrown aside. The watch is reproduced in any way your fancy dictates. In the case of a silk handkerchief it is not necessary to regain possession of it, as a duplicate can be produced elsewhere. The use of this cone in a handkerchief or flag trick is described in Chapter V.

THE MAGIC MATCHBOX .

This is a splendid pocket trick. You require an ordinary safety matchbox of the kind that has a *similar* label on *either* side. Now slide out the box and empty out the matches; then push the bottom in a little, but so that you do not break it, and leaving a sufficiently deep space on which to gum a row of matches. To all appearance the box is now quite full of matches. Slide the box into its case, and put it in your pocket. Do not say what you are about to do. You may require to light a cigarette. You should have a match concealed in your hand, and, taking out your trick box, open it and seem to take a match from it. Strike it on the box, which you hold open with the prepared side upwards, and light your cigarette, drawing attention to the fact that the box is full of matches. Now close it and turn it completely over; then again open it and show the empty box. You may slide the box out of

the case, there being no doubt that it is empty ; but do not show the bottom of the box, or you will give the trick away. If you desire to give the box for examination, you place it back in your pocket, and, in response to a spectator's request to allow him to examine the box, you take from your pocket an ordinary empty matchbox similar in appearance to the trick box.

THE BALANCED CONE.

This is a trick of the juggling order rather than a conjuring trick. To the spectators it appears to be a *difficult* feat, but is in reality *simple* enough, only requiring a little practice. Use an oblong piece of fairly stout paper about 18 in. by 12 in. From this you construct a cone or sugar-bag, and you can then balance it on your nose, narrow end downwards, with comparative ease.

When sufficiently expert, a very pretty effect may be produced by setting fire to the open end of the cone, and it will burn down to within an inch and a half of your nose, the ashes retaining the form of the cone

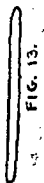
THE TRAVELLING BALL.

EFFECT.—Performer produces a ping-pong ball, which he causes to appear and disappear in a variety of places. It is taken in the left hand, from which it vanishes, and is found in the right. As the performer would like everyone to see "how it is done," he holds his hands some distance apart, and the ball slowly and visibly passes from one

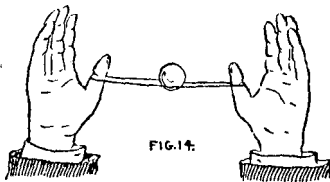
hand to the other. This may be repeated at will, and at any moment the ball may be examined.

PREPARATION.—For this effective little trick you require an ordinary ping-pong ball and a loop of very fine silk thread or “conjuring thread,” about twelve or fourteen inches in length, as Fig. 13. Slip the loop over the top button of your coat, and palm the ball in your right hand.

TO PERFORM.—With the right hand held with its back to the spectators, draw attention to the empty left hand. Now make a quick turn to the right, and, as the right hand passes the palm of the left, the ball is secured in the palm of the left hand, which hand then demonstrates the right to be empty. This is called by magicians the “change over palm,” and, if properly executed, is both simple and deceptive. The left hand now produces the palmed ball from behind the knee; now seem to place it in the right hand, palming it in the left, which then reproduces the ball from under your waistcoat. Now take the ball in the fingers of the right hand, seem to place it in your mouth, really palming it, pushing out your cheek with your tongue. Go through a studied pretence of swallowing the ball, and produce it from the back of your head. Seem to take the ball in the left hand (the tourniquet), palming it in the right, close both hands, ultimately open them, and show the ball has changed hands. Take it in the left hand and throw it in the air once, twice, thrice; at the third throw you really palm the ball, which appears



to vanish into space, and the left hand produces the ball from behind the knee, while the right thumb is slipped through the loop of the thread, disengaging it from the button. You then remark that you fear the audience do not exactly see "how it is done," and you will endeavour to enlighten them by making the transit of the ball from one hand to the other visible to all. Now the left hand places the ball between the fingers of the right hand. As you do so, the left thumb is also slipped through the thread-loop. The hands are then held upright some distance apart till the loop is taut, as in Fig. 14. A track is thus formed, and the fingers of the right hand carefully place the ball on the thread. Now, by slightly and quite imperceptibly lowering the left hand, the ball will



slowly run on the double threads over to the left hand, the fingers of which then receive it. Of course, it desired,

the ball will run back again to the right hand, or may be caused to stop halfway at command by bringing the thread to a level, and then go back or resume its journey by lowering the right or the left hand as the occasion demands. The slower the movement of the ball the more effective the trick, as then, at a short distance, the ball simply appears to float from one hand to the other. Now, with the left hand, vanish the ball by palming it while seeming to throw it in the air, the right hand

meantime quietly dropping the thread, remarking, "Now I am left with nothing as at first."

You will find a ping-pong ball is easily palmed, and numerous passes will suggest themselves to you.

THE MYSTERIOUS CANDLE AND TORN AND RESTORED POSTAL ORDER.

EFFECT.—Performer produces a lighted candle from his pocket, which he places in a candlestick. He now shows a postal order, remarking that it is impossible to duplicate it, as each order has a numbered counterfoil, which he tears off and asks a spectator to retain. He then burns the order, scattering the ashes over the candle, which he breaks in half, and inside is found the postal order, which the spectator is asked to examine, and finds it to correspond with the counterfoil he has retained, both in number and amount. The spectator may break the candle himself if desired.

PREPARATION.—Procure a wax candle. Hollow it out nearly to the top, leaving nothing, practically, but a thick wax tube, just leaving a little solid wax and the wick at the top. Now draw out the wick, and insert in its place an easy-striking wax vesta, which you secure with a little melted wax. Now purchase two postal orders of the same value, and consecutive numbers. (The smallest amount for which a postal order is issued is 6d.) Tear off the counterfoil of one, and, rolling up the order, insert it in the hollow candle, filling up the open end of same with melted wax. Now

place the other order on the table, with the counterfoil torn off the order in the candle, concealed under it. Now place the fêked wax candle in your breast-pocket. Just over the pocket sew on your coat a piece of rather fine sandpaper or emery-cloth.

TO PERFORM.—You show the postal order, tearing off the counterfoil, saying, "I will ask you to retain this, as you are well aware it is impossible to duplicate it." As a matter of fact the counterfoil just torn off the order is exchanged for the *duplicate counterfoil* torn off the order in the candle, which hitherto has been concealed beneath the order (this is an easy matter under cover of the postal order), and it is this *duplicate* counterfoil that is handed to the spectator. The postal order, with its original counterfoil concealed behind it, is now held up for all to see, but so that the number is hidden. You now find that you require a candle, which you state you always carry about with you, already lighted, in your pocket; so, placing your hand in your inside breast-pocket, you take out the candle. As you do so, bring the vesta in contact with the sandpaper, producing the candle alight. Now hold the order, with its counterfoil still concealed behind it, in the candle flame, and of course both are destroyed. Now load the ashes in a pistol and fire at the candle, or scatter them over it; then, taking the candle, break it in half, or let a spectator do so (it is best to ask the person who has the counterfoil to do this), and the postal order is

discovered inside, and is found to correspond with the counterfoil in every particular. The trick has a brilliant effect if well led up to with appropriate patter and business.

WATCH-BENDING EXTRAORDINARY.

EFFECT.—The magician borrows a watch, and, taking it between his fingers, he bends it backwards and forwards, till the owner trembles for the fate of his watch ; yet it is returned to him uninjured.

TO PERFORM.—The astute reader will guess that the watch is not really bent, of course. You borrow a watch. It must be a gold or silver one ; those with the black oxidised cases are of no use. Now hold it between the fingers and thumb of both hands with its back to the audience, and go through the motions with your fingers of bending it backwards and forwards. At a very short distance it will appear as though the watch is actually bent, the illusion being simply perfect, as a trial will show. A similar effect may be produced with a bright silver coin, preferably a five-shilling-piece.

I am aware that this is not a new effect ; but, as it is an easy trick for beginners, and as it forms an admirable introduction to any watch trick, this description may not be out of place.

MAGICAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

EFFECT.—An ordinary postcard, quite plain and free from preparation, is sealed in an envelope

by a spectator. The performer then distributes twenty or more slips of paper, with a request that each person who has one shall write the name of some celebrity, statesman, author, actor, or monarch on his slip. This done, all the slips are collected in a paper bag and are well mixed together. Now anyone is requested to dip his hand in the bag and take one slip; he is then requested to call out the name written on it. Suppose, for example, it is Mr. Joseph Chamberlain; anyone is then requested to open the envelope, and on doing so a perfectly finished photo of the celebrity in question is found on the card.

PREPARATION.—You require a photo-postcard of the required celebrity and a blank postcard of the same size. Seal the photo-card in an envelope and place it in your breast-pocket. The ordinary card and a second envelope is placed on the table. Now you also require an oblong paper bag, such as used by confectioners. This is fêked by pasting a single sheet of paper in an upright position in the centre of the bag, thus dividing it into two separate compartments. Now have forty little slips of notepaper; on twenty of them write the name of the celebrity whose photo is on the postcard; place the slips in one compartment of the paper bag, then place the bag and the remaining twenty papers on the table.

TO PERFORM.—You pass the blank postcard and envelope for examination, request a spectator to seal it in the envelope, which he then

hands back to you. Now go to your table to fetch the slips, and while your back is momentarily turned towards your audience exchange the envelope for the one in your pocket, which you place in a prominent position on the table (it is best stood upright against something). Now pass round the twenty blank slips, requesting each person to write the name of a celebrity on their slip. Now take the bag, and, holding it so that the empty compartment is open, collect the slips one at a time ; then mix them up. As you do so you fold the extra paper sheet over against the other side of the bag, so that when a spectator plunges his hand in the bag he is bound to take one of your own slips. You then say that, to avoid any suspicion of confederacy, you will ask anyone to dip their hand in the bag at random and take out *just one* slip. This done, you announce that you propose to introduce your new process of photography, which eclipses anything yet attempted in the same line. You then proceed to discourse on the usual photographic processes and the time it takes to produce a finished picture, but with your magic process you can get lightning results. You will give them an illustration ; but first you will introduce a little experiment in thought-reading. The gentleman who has the slip will, after looking at it, place it in his pocket ; this done, you take the envelope from the table, and, holding it with the right hand against his head, with the other you seize his wrist. You then announce that the name of the celebrity is

So-and-So, and that if your instantaneous process of "thought-photography" has been successful, a finished photo of the celebrity will be found on the postcard. "Will the gentleman open the envelope and see if you have been successful?" He does so, when you inform your audience that you propose at some future time to make your secret public property, but NOT YET.

This is a splendid trick, and simple withal, and is equally effective for the drawing-room or stage; but, if performed in a drawing-room, it should only be before a large audience, or the unpleasant act may leak out that the name of the celebrity whose photo appears on the card was not written by one of the audience, in which case the result would be a frost.

A CURIOUS TRANSFORMATION.

EFFECT.—Performer brings forward an orange, which may be examined; he then borrows a handkerchief, with which he covers this fruit. A boy is asked to hold a basin or plate under the handkerchief, and you will count "One—two—three"; at "three" you will drop the orange, which you promise to the boy if he is quick enough to obtain it before it disappears, the only conditions being that he does not smash the plate, and will agree to eat it—the orange, not the plate—on the spot. All this is done, when the boy finds he has a large onion in place of the luscious fruit, and you remind him of his part of the agreement.

PREPARATION.—Take a fairly large and round

onion ; now wind orange-coloured wool around it till the onion is completely hidden, and it has the appearance of an orange.

PERFORMANCE.—If it is desired to have the orange examined, it is a real one that is given for examination, which is exchanged for the fêke one ; but it is not at all essential.

You introduce the alleged fruit and obtain the loan of a handkerchief, with which you cover it. Now you work off the wool through the handkerchief, which is not a difficult matter. Next you obtain the assistance of a boy, and request him to hold a basin under the handkerchief, pattering meantime as described in the effect. Now drop the onion, but retain the wool by grasping it through the handkerchief, and the onion, of course, drops into the basin. Before returning the borrowed handkerchief you must secretly obtain possession of the wool and pocket it. It is as well to secure a real orange from your vest, which you conceal in your hand, and produce it from the boy's coat ; you may then give it to him by way of compensation for the disappointment—a happy conclusion, from his point of view.

This trick is more suitable for a juvenile audience than one composed of adults ; and with the former it always has a good reception, as there is plenty of room for genuine fun.

THE MYSTERIOUS PAPER BANDS.

EFFECT.—The conjuror introduces three endless bands or large rings of paper. Now, taking a

pair of scissors, he proceeds to cut one of them through the centre of its width, and, as a natural result, gets two separate rings. He then cuts the second ring in precisely the same manner ; but instead of having two separate rings, he has two linked together. He repeats the operation with the third ring, with the result that he gets one very large ring twice the circumference of the original one. The effect is very fine.

PREPARATION.—Have three strips of paper, each about twenty-six inches in length, and an inch or an inch and a quarter in width. The first ring is made by simply pasting the opposite ends of the paper together. In constructing the second ring, you give the strip of paper two twists before you paste the ends together ; while in making the third, only one twist is essential prior to joining the ends. The construction of the rings understood, there is little left to explain, as the trick practically works itself. Proceed as follows :—

TO PERFORM.—You come on with the three rings looped over your left arm. Now, remarking that the rings are quite unprepared, ask, if you cut one of them through the centre of its width, what will be the result. “Two rings.” You reply, “Quite right.” Here you cut the first ring to show they are quite unprepared. “Here they are. Now watch me very carefully ; I will cut the second ring in the same manner, and I get rather a different result.” Do so, and you get two rings linked together. “I will now proceed to cut the

third ring in precisely the same way"—do so—"and the result is more surprising still."

This is a splendid trick. An explanation of it has already appeared in print; but, as it is such a simple and effective trick, I am sure my readers will appreciate it, and I need not apologise for describing it.

With this trick I will bring the chapter to a conclusion.

CHAPTER IV.

NO book on conjuring may be considered complete unless a portion of it is devoted to card tricks.

The lady or gentleman who cannot play, recite, or sing may learn a few card tricks and become the "lion of the evening" at a party. In this, as in other branches of the magic art, there are many tricks that require no skill or sleight of hand for their performance, and often produce an effect equal to the most elaborate sleight-of-hand trick—this, of course, largely depending on how the trick is introduced. But still, I would advise the reader who may desire to be anything of a card-conjurer to master the elementary sleights explained hereafter, as he will find that, having attained proficiency in them, he can arrange tricks of his own.

I shall not go into the more difficult and most

intricate moves, but simply deal with the rudiments of sleight of hand as applied to cards.

First, I will take the sleights, after which I will explain a few tricks as an illustration of their application.

THE PASS.

This sleight is considered one of the most important of the numerous sleights with cards. I shall presume that a spectator has drawn a card and noted its suit and value. You hold the pack in the left hand, saying, "Replace your card in the pack, sir, please." The right hand then approaches and opens the pack like a book for the spectator to replace his card. This he does,

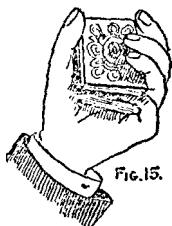


FIG. 15.

which leaves the card on top of the lower half. The pack is then closed, but the little finger of the left hand is slipped between the upper and lower halves of the pack, as in Fig. 15, marking the position of the card. The right

hand is then brought over the pack, grasping the lower half between the thumb and second

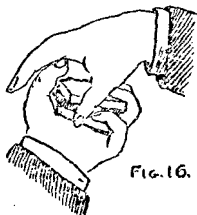


FIG. 16.

and third fingers, pressing the inner edge of the cards into the fork of the thumb, as shown by Fig. 16. Now, under cover of the right hand, you raise the top half slightly, and at the same moment the outer edge

of the lower half is also raised until it clears the top half, when, by simply closing the left hand,

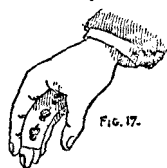
the pass is complete. Thus the card which was placed in the middle of the pack is now on the top. Take a pack of cards and practice it; it is not really so difficult as it may appear, and in time you will find you can execute it with lightning-like rapidity. In fact, in expert hands the pass is practically invisible. But in the initial stages of practice, neatness, rather than speed, should be aimed at.

There are many other methods of making the pass, all with one end, but the one I have explained is the best for all practical purposes; so we will pass on to a sleight which comes next in importance—viz., the palm.

THE PALM.

The palm with cards is entirely different to that with coins. A card, or several of them, can be neatly concealed in your hand, which is apparently empty, and it is not at all a difficult matter. I will endeavour to explain the palm, together with a practical application of it. Suppose that a card has been selected and returned to the pack, and that you have brought it to the top of the pack by means of the pass. The pack is held in the left hand, the top card (the one to be palmed) is pushed by the left thumb about half its width off the remainder of the pack; the right hand then approaches, and is brought over the pack, and the card is gripped between the first joints of the fingers and fleshy portion of the thumb, as in Fig. 17. The right hand may then move away with

it, and the card may be disposed of in any way the conjurer may think fit, though the usual



procedure is to take the pack in the hand containing the palmed card, and hand it to be shuffled.

This can be done with impunity, without fear of betraying the presence of the palmed card—in fact, it serves to disarm suspicion. And here I would say, when you have a card palmed, do not hesitate to bend your hand, as the more it is bent the less likely is anyone to suspect that there is anything concealed in it. When you take the pack back, the card may be again left on it or disposed of as you please. It forms a pretty introduction to a series of card tricks to palm off five or six cards and produce them from your elbow or behind your knee.

FORCING A CARD.

This is the art of causing a spectator to draw the particular card you wish, and yet make him believe he has had a free choice. Of course, there are “forcing packs” to be obtained at a magical dealer’s. These consist of only two kinds of cards. For example, half the pack is Three of Hearts and the other half Queen of Clubs, and although these are most useful to the beginner, it is far better to be able to properly force a card from an ordinary pack. Genuine forcing is performed in the following manner:—The card (or cards) to be forced should be placed in the centre of the pack. Now place the little finger of the left hand beneath

this card at the end of the pack nearest yourself, which keeps the pack slightly open (the other end, nearest the audience, is closed). Now step forward ; spread out the cards like a fan, holding them with both hands, fingers beneath and thumbs above, still keeping the little finger of the left hand against the card in question. With the two thumbs keep the cards moving sideways, from left to right, sliding one over the other as you offer them to a spectator to select a card. As the spectator's hand approaches to take a card, still keep the cards on the move, sliding one against the other. Now, as his open hand gets near, and just at the moment his fingers close, the card is pushed forward from beneath by the little finger of your left hand, and the remainder of the pack grasped tightly and suddenly withdrawn, which leaves the card desired within his hand.

Of course, this requires some careful practice ; but it is of no use practising with a person after he is acquainted with the secret, as it is almost impossible, even for an expert, to force a card on such a person. The correct way is to walk down among the audience and say, "I should like someone to take a card." Walk towards a certain person, your eyes fixed on him ; but before you reach him, *suddenly* turn aside to another spectator and say, "Please take a card." He, being taken by surprise, has drawn your card before he really had time to think much about it, and yet he will afterwards declare that he had a free choice.

Perhaps the best way to practice forcing is to

have ready some simple trick which you can perform when a spectator takes *any* card—not your desired card. You can then have a pack always in your pocket, and ask everyone you meet to select a card. You, of course, try to force one, but if you fail, he does not know it, and you complete your *simple* trick; whereas, if you succeed, you know that you are improving. After a time you will be surprised at your capacity to force a card, and will find that you succeed nine hundred and ninety-nine times in a thousand.

If, by any chance, in an entertainment, you should fail to force your card, appear to take no notice, but say, "Thank you, sir; will someone else take a card?" and so get your desired card forced. Then, of course, also perform some simple trick which does not require any particular card to be taken.

Having explained the pass, palm, and force, I will now describe a simple trick having these three sleights combined:—

PREDESTINATION OF THOUGHT.

EFFECT.—The magician writes something on a slip of paper, which he asks a spectator to place in his pocket or purse for safety. He then introduces a pack of cards, which is shuffled. The spectator is now asked to look at his card, then to remove the paper from his pocket and see what is written on it. He does so, and the name of the card he chose is written. The card is then

returned to the pack, from which it disappears, and the performer takes it from his pocket.

PREPARATION.—On the table place a slip of paper and a pencil. You are also provided with an ordinary pack of cards; take note of the top card. Suppose it is the “queen of hearts.” In your breast-pocket you have a duplicate of this card.

TO PERFORM.—Write on the slip of paper the name of the card, then fold it and request a spectator to place it in his pocket. Now take the pack, and, palming the top card, let the spectator shuffle the pack. Now again take the pack and leave the palmed card on the top; then make the pass, bringing it to the middle of the pack, and force it on the spectator. Now ask him to see what is written on the paper in his pocket; then say, “Will you return your card to the pack, sir?” Make the pass, bringing it to the top, and, palming the card, let him shuffle the pack. Ask him if he is convinced that he has shuffled the card with the pack. “You are sure you have not made a mistake, sir? Well, just put your hand in my breast-pocket, and see what you can find.” The spectator removes the card. He can then search the pack, only to find it missing. You have meantime disposed of the palmed card.

This trick is merely given as an example of the three sleights, as already explained; it is, however, very effective and simple to work after you have mastered the three sleights.

AN INEXPLICABLE CARD TRICK.

EFFECT.—You show two cards (which may be selected); a spectator then returns them to the pack, which he shuffles, the performer not going near him. The cards then disappear from the pack, and the performer produces them from his trousers pocket—previously shown empty.

PREPARATION.—Take a “nine of spades” and a “ten of clubs” and place them in your right trousers pocket; push them in the top of the pocket (towards the abdomen), and you will find you can pull out the lining of the pocket without revealing the presence of the cards, the pocket being apparently empty; the pack is placed on the table, on top of which you have a “nine of clubs” and a “ten of spades.”

TO PERFORM.—Palm the two cards from the top of the pack, then replace them after the pack has been shuffled; now force the “nine of clubs” and the “ten of spades” on one person; before he has time to look very closely at his cards hand him the pack, requesting him to return his two cards and shuffle to his heart's content. Let another spectator shuffle as well. Now show your pocket empty, and pull out the lining, then push it back again; touch the pack with your wand, then show your hand empty, and take from your pocket the “nine of spades” and “ten of clubs” and show them, and these will be taken for the “ten of spades” and “nine of clubs.” Then challenge anyone to search the pack for duplicate cards.

Strange as it may seem, this subtle ruse never fails, as the drawer always gets confused about the cards. *Strange but true.* If the performer lacks the necessary skill to force the cards he may simply show them in the first instance, but it adds to the effect if they are forced.

THE FLYING CARD.

EFFECT.—A card is selected by a spectator and returned to the pack; the conjurer takes the pack and places his foot upon it. Now the gentleman who selected the card is requested to name it. On the name of the card being called it is seen to fly from the pack some distance towards the person who selected it.

PREPARATION.—For this old but effective trick you prepare as follows:—Cut a little slit in the centre of two cards; now connect them with a short piece of elastic or a split guttapercha ring; then glue three or four more cards on the back of each, and your apparatus when dry is ready.

TO PERFORM.—You introduce this fêke in the middle of the ordinary pack. Now allow a spectator to freely select any card, force any one of the others. Now open the pack so that when the gentleman replaces his card it will be between the fêke; let him just insert the card, but push it down yourself, for, feeling the resistance of the elastic, the gentleman may tumble to the secret. Now, grasping the pack as tightly as you are able place it under your foot in a position that the card will spring towards the gentleman who drew

it. Count "one, two, three"; at three you raise your foot slightly, and the elastic will cause the card to spring from the pack for some distance. This has a very good effect if performed well.

THE HYPNOTISED CARDS.

EFFECT.—The conjurer shows the bare palm of his hand, which he places flat on the table, now he takes several cards, and one at a time he pushes them under his hand (between hand and table) till he has a circle formed quite a foot in diameter. He then raises his hand, and to the amazement of every one the cards rise with it. He now commands them to disperse, and they fall from his hand, which together with the cards are free for examination.

PREPARATION.—Take a rather fine and long needle, and push it through the thick skin at the base of the middle finger. That is all the preparation required.

TO PERFORM.—You place the first card between the point of the needle and fingers, the second between the eye and palm of hand (the needle should point upwards in a line with finger), the third and fourth cards are then placed between the hand and the first two cards; the remainder are then arranged in a similar manner, so that they bear on one another, the two first cards being the foundation. You proceed in this way until you have formed quite a large circle. When you raise your hand the cards will rise with it, and you can pass them right under the eyes of your audience without any risk of detection.

Finally, when you wish the cards to fall, you merely press on them with your finger tips. I am aware this trick has been explained before, but it is included in this little book, as it is one that can be easily performed and is very effective.

A SIMPLE CARD TRICK.

EFFECT.—Two cards are shown or may be selected; one is placed on the table and one in the trousers pocket of the performer; now, at command, the two cards change places.

PREPARATION.—In your right hand trouser pocket place a “king of diamonds.” If you push it in the top of the pocket (as explained in connection with the “Inexplicable Card Trick”) it will add to the effect.

TO PERFORM.—You show a “king of diamonds” and a “five of spades;” if sufficiently expert you will force them. Show the trousers pocket empty. Now taking the “five of spades,” place it in your pocket; on second thoughts you seem to change your mind and take it out again, really taking out the *duplicate* “king of diamonds,” and, without exposing the face of the card, place it on the table; now take the visible “king” and place it in the pocket; after a little patter turn up the card on the table and show it to be the “king,” then remove the “ten” from your pocket. If desired, though not essential, you can again show the pocket apparently empty, by pushing the duplicate “king” it contains in the top of the pocket when pulling out the lining.

MECHANICAL CARDS AND FÈKES.

Before concluding this chapter I might briefly say there are many inexpensive tricks and mechanical cards designed with the intention of enabling the beginner to imitate the expert—some are good, some are worse than useless. There are numerous changing cards, cards that appear torn and restore themselves, cards that change from one suit to another, and, in fact, so many kinds are there that space will not allow me to detail them here; they may be found fully described in the catalogue of the magical dealer. A very useful piece of apparatus, by the way, is the card servante, for changing one pack of cards for another. It is usually made to attach to the back of a chair. A trick known as the "Diminishing Pack of Cards" is very good indeed, but the beginner must carefully practice before he can exhibit it in a proficient manner.

CHAPTER V.

I NOW propose to give a general description of an entertainment. A model programme will be given, accompanied by appropriate patter as a guide for the amateur in the arrangement of others. But, first, let us briefly deal with the preliminary arrangements of your stage, properties, &c.

It is best, where possible, to have a pair of tables, one on each side of the stage; also a table nearly at the back of the platform, on which may stand your apparatus, a couple of chairs, one on each side and slightly in front of the tables. Both tables and chairs might be fitted with servantes (*see* Chapter II.), and a chair cover or antimacassar should be thrown over the back of each chair. See there are no lights behind you, and, where possible, have a dark background, it is preferable to any other. You should have a list of the tricks you intend to work, and in the order of presentation, accompanied by a note of every property or item used in the performance. This should be concealed behind something on the back table. It serves as an aid to the memory, for in a long programme there is much to remember, and an experienced performer, if giving a lengthy show, does not disdain such an inventory. If possible, arrange for a pianist to accompany you, it adds greatly to the effect of many tricks. Slow dreamy waltz music is appropriate for most items, while a patriotic air should be played during the presentation of a flag trick. Every single item should be carefully rehearsed, and the patter committed to memory. The following tricks are very effective, and require, comparatively, but a small amount of practice :—

“ The Wand Produced from Purse ” (*see* Chapter III.).

“ Dresdin's Flag Dyeing Trick.”

“ Hildyard's Jug, Tub, and Dove Illusion.”

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"The Smashed Watch."

"The Card Nailed to the Door, Card Frame and Hildyard's Discovery of a Chosen Card" (presented in combination).

Hildyard's "Burnt and Flying Handkerchief."

"The Billiard Ball Trick."

"Table Lifting."

Hildyard's "Indian Plant Illusion."

"The Rice Bowls."

"The Tambourine Trick."

The above programme may be presented in about one and a half hours, or may be made to last two hours, according to how you time your patter.

Open with "The Wand Produced from the Purse" and a little introductory patter something like the following:—"Ladies and gentlemen, with your kind permission I will introduce a series of experiments in ~~legerdemain, or~~ natural magic. First, I will do the tricks, and after, I will show you how they are done (*aside*), a long time after, though. Before I proceed I shall require my magic wand, which I always carry about with me in my purse (*take out purse, open it, and produce wand—see Chap. III.*). Quite a solid piece of wood, is it not, sir? (*handing it to a gentleman*). But, honestly, it is not as ordinary as it appears; in fact, without its aid it would be impossible for me to present the tricks I propose to show you." Now introduce Dresdin's "Flag Dyeing Trick," patterning as follows:—"Will someone kindly examine this white handkerchief and small glass?"

Thank you, sir. Quite ordinary articles, are they not? The handkerchief cost exactly three-three farthings, the glass fourpence; the extravagant prices are, I think, a sufficient guarantee that there is no deception. The glass is transparent—you can see through it; so you will through the trick, if you look long enough. I shall place the handkerchief in the glass and pour a little ordinary wet water on it from this jug. What I am about to do is to subject it to my magic dyeing process, which, for rapidity and finish, is unequalled. Observe I add a little red ink from this bottle. The contents of the glass are now naturally—or, rather, artificially—red; but I want combination colours. How am I to get them? Nothing simpler! I will add a little blue ink from this other bottle, and cover the glass with a handkerchief. Presto, change! Let us see if I have been successful. I will remove the handkerchief and you will find, sir, that the handkerchief we placed in the glass is transformed to our national flag—the Union Jack (*pianist plays 'The Red, White, and Blue'*), dyed with the grand old combination colours that *never run*." We now pass on to Hildyard's "Jug, Tub, and Dove Illusion," in which the flag plays an important part. The following patter is effective:—"Observe that I have here an ordinary sheet of paper. From it I construct a cone, or sugar-bag (*the trick-cone described in Chap. III.*). Now, madam, I will place the flag in the paper bag; take charge of it for me, if you please; thank you. We will

close the top of the bag. You are sure that you have it, madam? Quite right? then everyone else is satisfied. Now, sir, will you examine this small tub—just a small, common tub, sir, I think? I don't know if you are an authority on tubs, sir? And this jug is full of water, I think—pure water—the kind supplied by the town council—always supposing you have paid the water-rate. Quite right? Then I will place the tub on the table and pour water into it. (*Here the birds fly out, spreading out a duplicate flag between them. Go to the lady, take paper bag, open it out, and show it empty, remarking,—‘Truly, the Union Jack will go anywhere!’*”) We will now introduce “The Smashed Watch,” the patter for which may run on the following lines:—“For my next experiment I shall require the loan of a small lady's or gentleman's watch, or a lady's or gentleman's small watch. Thank you, sir. Luckily, the gentleman doesn't know me, or he would not have lent me the watch. You would recognise your property in the event of ever seeing it again, sir? Is it a good time-keeper? No? It gains somewhat? Then I will endeavour to regulate it for you, sir; so, with your permission, I will wrap it in this piece of paper and place it in the jar. Now, I propose to regulate it by the aid of the kitchen poker (*seem to smash watch*); it is an infallible method. Rather a striking process, sir, is it not? It would be safe to wager that a watch won't either gain or lose after this. (*Look in the jar.*) I am afraid I have been a little too severe, sir—

quite a nasty jar. (*Turn out pieces.*) Good gracious! what have I done! I've been killing time with a vengeance! Well, sir, to avoid further trouble, I think I will wrap the pieces up for you. The watch will go again yet—wherever you may carry it. You hold me responsible for the damage? That's unlucky. (*Bring forward loaf.*) What is this to do with it? Oh, a lot. I will show you that a watch and a loaf are intimately associated. You see, a watch is an invention, bread is a necessity, and necessity is the mother of invention; so the loaf is the mother of the watch. (*Here the remains vanish, and the watch is found restored in the loaf.*) I don't think your watch is any the worse for its strange experience, sir, do you? It is wonderful how time flies!" Next follows "The Card Nailed to the Door," "Card Frame," and Hildyard's "Discovery of a Card," presented in combination, with the following patter:—"For my next swindle I shall use this pack of cards. They are quite an ordinary pack—anyone is free to examine them. Now I want someone who is a good shuffler to shuffle them. That's right, sir, shuffle to your heart's content; I don't mind. Now will you select a card, sir? Thanks; and you, madam; and you? Now I will take the cards in rotation—or suppose I take two first. Return yours, sir, and yours, madam; now shuffle the pack. Ah! ladies are usually fairly good shufflers. You are convinced the cards are in the pack? Now, note this little frame. It is quite empty; I will cover it so, and

place it down. Your card was the — (*snap cards*); that was your card leaving the pack, sir. (*Uncover frame.*) Here it is. And now for the next card. I will throw the pack at the door (*on which a card appears*). That should be your card, madam. It is? Then I am successful so far. There is one more card, I think. Return it yourself. See, it is simply impossible for me to remove it. Now shuffle the pack, sir. Now I will tell you how it's done. It is done by a highly developed sense of touch, enabling me almost instantly to find any card. I will show you what I mean (*hold pack behind you and produce card.*) That is yours, I think; don't tell your friends how it's done, will you, sir?" Our next item is Hildyard's "Burnt and Flying Handkerchief," for which this patter goes well:—

"Here I have three handkerchiefs; one is red, the other ^{white} ~~green~~, while the third is blue. I make this interesting remark in case anyone here is colour-blind, as it would be a pity to miss the effect. The blue and red are tied together, the ~~green~~ one is separate from the others—all this in case you don't see it. Now, sir, I will hold one end of the two tied handkerchiefs; will you hold the other end? Or you hold one end and I will hold the other. Or perhaps it is better to roll them up into a compact little bundle. Note that I do not exchange them. Kindly take charge of them, if you please. [Now I propose to burn the ^{white} ~~green~~ handkerchief; and as I find that if I set fire to it it usually burns better I will do so.

Soo expensive.

Janie's white one.

*Twenty-four
Recovery
handkerchief.*

7/10

The red with one long, one short tail.

(Catch ashes.) I will scatter the ashes in the air, sir, if you have no objection.] Now, just grasp the red projecting corner of the bundle, sir, and I will hold the blue; when I count one—two—three, give a sharp pull. One—two—two-and-a-half—don't be too precipitate, sir!—three; and the green one is restored, and has found its way between the red and blue handkerchiefs. You're not cross, are you?" Now present the "Billiard Ball Trick":—"Ladies and gentlemen, for my next experiment I propose to evolve something from nothing, proving the fallacy of the theory that of nothing nothing comes. Observe that my hands contain nothing but what soap and water will remove, and that I have nothing up my sleeves but my arms—I can't help having them; they were a birthday present. By this simple act of placing them together I produce a silk handkerchief. Again observe my hands are empty; yet, taking the handkerchief between my fingers, it takes the form of a billiard ball. I swallow it (*a matter of palming*), and here it is under my vest. Now, watch me very closely, or I am afraid I shall deceive you—and I do hate to deceive people. It multiplies to two, then three, now four balls. Now they gradually dissolve, one at a time, till I am left with one. A pass, and the red ball has changed to black, you see. Now once again it is red. I take it so, and I am left with nothing, as at first." We now pass on to "Table-Lifting":—"Kindly examine this small table. It appears to be an ordinary one; but I will be

James E. B.
Billiard Ball!

Walter H. H.
Billiard Ball!

frank with you—it is not. This table is haunted. You don't believe? Fortunately I can prove it to you. I rub my hands together, so; this is to generate animal magnetism, without which communication with the spirits is impossible. Now I place my hand on the table. Spirits, come! And, you see, it rises with my hand. You try it, sir, when you get home. Simply place your hand on the table and say 'Spirits, come!' If they don't come at once, keep on calling till they do. I once knew a man who tried this experiment as follows:—He saw a bill in a tailor's window which read: 'Hands wanted on trousers.' He placed his hands on a pair at the door, he walked away, and the trousers followed his hands. A policeman placed his hands on his shoulder, he followed the policeman, and it was three months before he again tried spirits of any kind. Perhaps someone would like to take this table home with them and practise? You may have it for fifty pounds. It is easy enough to get in touch with the spirits. It will only take you twenty years, more or less, to make a good medium. There is a medium in everything, you know, even in dealing with spirits—especially special Scotch." Now for Hildyard's "Indian Plant Illusion"—an astounding novelty, yet easy to perform. The patter should be after this style:—"Allow me to draw your attention to this oriental flower-pot. Will any lady or gentleman please examine it for themselves? Quite free from preparation; in fact, as guileless as I am myself, to all appearance. But I won't

deceive you—there is more in it than meets the eye. It was given me by an Indian fakir, and has a charm peculiar to itself. I will fill the pot with mould ; now, with my magic wand, I will make a little pit in the mould in which I will place some seeds. Will you examine them, sir ? Thank you. Now for a little warmth to force their growth. I strike a match and drop it in the pot. Notice that red flash ? That is the seed bursting into life. A little growing music, please. Now for some water. See, the buds are gradually appearing ; watch it carefully. Now the growth is very rapid ; we shall soon have a fine plant. What would horticulturists give to learn this secret ! Rather a contrast to rose culture, is it not ? You think perhaps the plant is an artificial one ? No, I assure you. I will cut it to pieces and throw it about ; some may like to take them home as souvenirs. If you place it in the ground there is no doubt in a few days you will have a forest. Nothing is impossible to a magician ; you have had ample proof, I think.” We will now take the “ Rice Bowls ” :—“ Here are two ordinary empty bowls and a bag full of rice. I will fill one of the bowls with rice—observe it really is full. I will level the rice off flush with the top of the bowl, and place the second one upside down upon it. Now a little music, please. I remove the top bowl, and the rice has doubled in quantity—in fact, sufficient to fill both bowls. Once again I place the bowls together. Presto, change ! I remove the top bowl, and pure water has taken

Rice
Bowls

the place of the rice. The water is quite genuine —it anyone doubts it, I will be pleased to throw a little over them—the rice I have in my pocket ; and another mystery remains unsolved."

Tambourine Trick
We now present our concluding item, "The Tambourine Trick," which is very effective :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, here are two nickel-plated rings. They were gold, but, my natural modesty forbidding me to use such costly properties, I had them plated. They appear ordinary enough, but they possess some extraordinary properties. There are different kinds of rings—prize rings, political and party rings, engagement rings (which sometimes come off rather easily), and wedding rings (which are, or ought to be, a fixture)—and these rings—one hardly knows what to call them. They are like overgrown serviette rings. One is slightly larger than the other ; so, according to Euclid, one must be slightly smaller than the other. Now observe, I place them together with a piece of paper between them—to be correct, the cover of *Answers*, which answers my purpose admirably. Now, I should like to borrow a little music ; I will return it later on—oh ! keep your seats ! I am not going to sing to you ; I'm merely going to give you a solo on my tambourine. I may say, I am a born musician. I came into the world with an ear for music (so does a donkey) ; but, not having had the advantage of a musical education, I've had to confine my efforts to the tambourine. Now for the solo. (*Rap it with your knuckles.*) Isn't that lovely ? The applause

having subsided, I will do it again ; in fact, I will repeat it. What ! no applause ! I fear you have little appreciation of good music. (*Here you again beat the tambourine, and with studied carelessness push your finger through the centre of the paper.*) This is unfortunate ; however, perhaps it is just as well. (*Produce the silk handkerchiefs.*) What are these ?—silk handkerchiefs—all colours, you see—a red, a yellow, a green, and a blue one. Here is a white one—you are laughing ; it is unkind of you. It was white once ; now the white is subdued a bit—someone at the back said dirty, I think ? Rather a rude remark, as they are ‘ Liberty ’ silk squares. There must be a silkworm concealed somewhere in the tambourine. (*Now produce flowers.*) I hear the lady at the piano is playing ‘ The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring ’ ; but these bloom *with* a spring, if you only knew it. Only one more ; this is ‘ The Last Rose of Summer.’ I’m not sorry—(*pulling out end of ribbon*)—what is this ?—the spring of the tambourine, perhaps. (*Here pull the ribbon out slowly at first, then faster, pianist playing lively music.*) This is interesting ; my arm is beginning to ache. (*Now spin it out on your wand.*) That’s better ! I think someone must have cut off the other end of it. At last—what a relief ! (*Pick up the bundle of paper ribbon, producing from it a rabbit, which is obtained from breast pocket.*) What have we here ?—a rabbit, I declare ! Well, madam, I think I had better rabbit (*wrap it*) up in paper for you, and you can take it home

with you. Ladies and gentlemen, this will conclude my entertainment. Allow me to thank you for your kind attention, and also to thank those who have assisted me ; and I will ask you one favour before you go, and that is, don't tell your friends how it's done."

My readers will understand I give the above as an example of the lines on which you should run your show ; it can be modified and altered to suit all requirements.

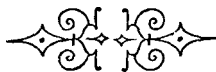
I would like to say here that there are several novel tricks which are good enough to find a place in any programme, and I don't think it needs an apology if I mention a few. I will divide them into two classes—first, tricks that require little or no apparatus ; and, secondly, tricks that require more or less elaborate apparatus. In the first class I may include : Hildyard's " Paper Tube, Ribbon, Flowers, and Flag Trick," Hildyard's " Thumb Tie," " The Twentieth Century Handkerchief Illusion," " Cards, Hat, and Paper Cone Illusion," Hildyard's " Book and Flags Illusion," " Japanese Fans and Bouquet," " Egg and Confetti Shower," Hildyard's " Card Miracle," " The Card in the Cigarette," and many others too numerous to mention. The above tricks require but the simplest accessories, and where anything is required to be made, it is such that you can *make yourself* or have made for a small outlay.

In the second category we might mention such effective tricks as : " The Gold-Fish Angling Illusion," " The Wandering Bottle and Glass,"

Hildyard's "Birdcage and Flag Illusion," "The Guinea-Pig Saucepan," "The Air Balloons from the Hat," "The Magical Supper," &c., &c. These and similar tricks I would advise the reader to purchase from a reliable dealer in apparatus.

In conclusion, let me warn you not to make the fatal mistake of attempting to crowd too many tricks into one programme. If you have an extensive *repertoire*, arrange into separate programmes; thus, if you are called on to give an entertainment again at the same place, you have something fresh to show them. With a little thought you can arrange a programme to suit almost any class of audience. As it is hardly likely that a programme of tricks suitable for a juvenile audience would find favour with adults, and *vice-versa*, you should arrange your programme accordingly. With these remarks I will leave you, with my best wishes for your success as a conjurer.

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