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with compliments*

Magi

LEN. J.
SEWELL



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MAGI MAGIC

MAGI MAGIC

BY

LEN J. SEWELL

Past President West Australian Society Magicians
Past Member "Order of the Magi," Manchester
Founder Queensland Magical Society

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the past twenty-five years I have purchased practically every book on magic written in the English language—and read them from cover to cover—even the “Introductions.” You can thus realise I have some knowledge of how this “nerve racking” job should be attacked. It is also true that the Introduction is the part of the book that I generally read last of all, an idiosyncrasy, I believe, not peculiar to myself. Assuming therefore that you have read this personal effort I hope you are well satisfied.

Every trick herein described is thoroughly practical and has been actually performed in public. Most of the apparatus can be made at home without the aid of any special tools and at very little cost. Where it was considered necessary dimensions have been given and these have been taken from the actual apparatus at present in my possession. If I have fallen down on the job and not made everything quite understandable please don't hesitate to let me know — I can then clarify the position and do better next time.

LEN J. SEWELL

“MAGI MAGIC”

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MAGI MAGIC

Chapter One

THE TRICOLOUR CUBES

THIS item has not been noticed by me in print before, but I hesitate to claim it as original, for it seems a logical combination and extension of the various block tricks in existence.

In effect, three white blocks and three glasses of liquid, coloured red, white and blue are shown. The blocks are dropped one at a time into a square tube—a tall glass cylinder is also shown and covered with a cardboard tube. Into this the three glasses of liquid are poured in the order, red, white and blue. When the tube is lifted the liquids are seen to be stacked up one on top of the other, all separated. The cover is again lowered and on being lifted again all the colours have vanished, leaving clear liquid. The square tube is now lifted and the blocks are seen to have absorbed the colours, for they are now red, white and blue; these are unstacked and apparently shown on all sides.

The part of the trick dealing with the liquids is already well known so I will content myself by describing the block effect. The square tube must be of sufficient height to hold four blocks and it has already concealed in it a red block. Of the three blocks exhibited two of them are without guile but the third is a "half and half" block, two adjacent sides and the top being white, and two adjacent sides and the bottom being blue, as 15 of the total 18 sides are white it should be easy to convince the audience that they are all white! The square tube is placed on the table cornerwise and a genuine white block dropped into it—this, of course, slides down the tube and rests on top of the red one already there. Next the faked block is dropped in, care being taken not to expose any of the blue sides—the blue bottom, however, should be uppermost, and for this reason the block is

tilted backwards so that the white bottom and two white sides only are visible to the audience.

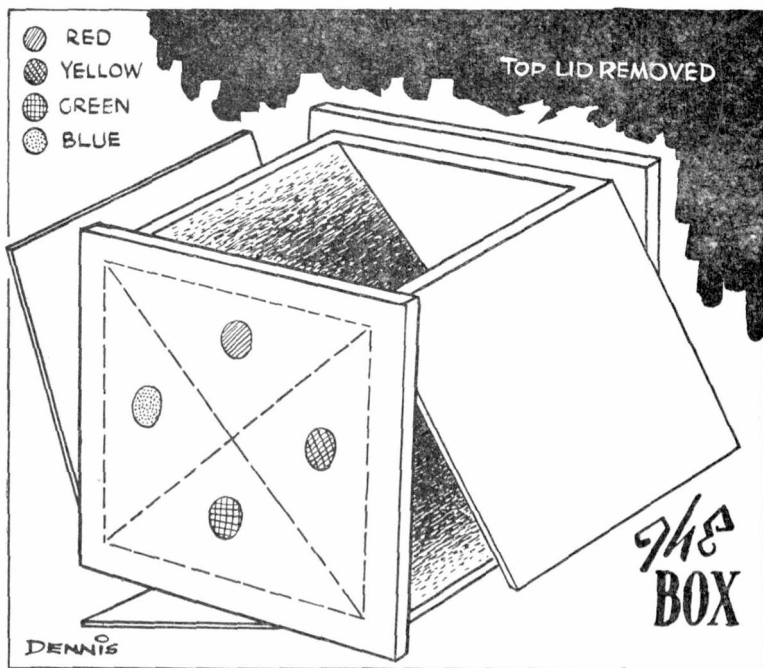
The third white block is now dropped in with great abandon, showing all sides! The covering tube is rotated through an angle of 180 degrees, thus bringing the blue face of the fake block facing the audience. In lifting the tube from the stack it is gripped and pinched just where the top block rests and the top block brought away with the tube, thus leaving a stack coloured red, white and blue in evidence. The stack is picked up with the left hand and the red block shown on all sides; next the white block is shown on all sides, using the right hand to exhibit each. This leaves the blue faked block in the left hand which just tilts it downwards, showing the blue top as well as the blue sides. If it is desired to show the square covering tube empty before and after the experiment, it should be an easy matter to conceal the red block behind some small object on the table and then after showing the tube empty, place it over the concealed block and place the whole lot into position. This procedure could be reversed to get rid of the white block which remains in the tube at the conclusion of the trick. If a black-art table is used, the matter is simplicity itself.

Chapter Two

THE ACCOMMODATING BOX

IN Mr. Sharpe's book, "Great Magic" (page 50), there is a trick which calls for the use of a box which will produce any specified colour handkerchief from five colours mentioned. The box in this case is a rather complicated affair and, although quite practical, would take quite a little constructing. Wishing to present Mr. Sharpe's effect on one occasion I have devised the simple box about to be described.

This box, however, only allows the choice of one of four colours, but in my opinion the trick suffers no disability from this fact. This box can be constructed from a piece of stiff cardboard and some strip adhesive paper, in about two hours. Looking at the sketch it will be seen that the box has four



hinged lids and the box itself (which is painted dead black inside) is divided into four diagonal compartments, each capable of holding a coloured silk handkerchief.

This box is loaded with four different coloured handkerchiefs, the lids closed down and held in position by means of an elastic band which encircles all four lids. To distinguish which lid to open when the wanted colour is called, the side of the box is marked in such a way that the performer can easily pick up the box with the required lid on top. The elastic band is then slipped off the front right hand corner of the lid and the lid lifted up to disclose the required colour handkerchief filling the box. The deception is so good that one might let the spectator take the handkerchief from the box without him being any the wiser. The elastic band is not taken completely off but remains on the box, thus keeping all the other three lids closed. The band is virtually pushed aside at the top just far enough to allow the required lid to be opened.

The dimensions of a box to allow of the use of four thirteen inch square silks are as follows: Height, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inch; depth, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inch; width $2\frac{1}{4}$ inch. inside; ends, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inch square.

Chapter Three

THE CHINESE ROLLING PIN

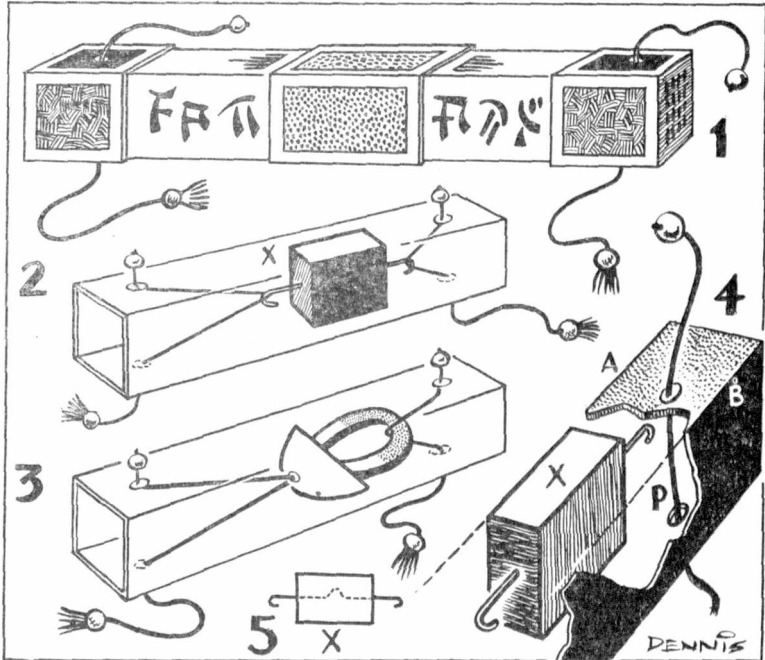
I HAVE called this item the Chinese Rolling Pin, although it is like anything but a rolling pin. In fact it looks like nothing whatever that I can think of. It is simply a length of wood, square in section, with a length of string running through each end, the ends of the string terminating in beads or tassels.

When I showed it to some magicians, they asked why it was made square, and on the spur of the moment I answered, "To keep it rolling off the table." By the association of ideas I suppose I arrived at a square rolling pin, because — being a married man — I know that the rolling pin spends about half its useful life performing this feat.

Continuing this association of ideas it is not hard to see how the Chinese were fastened on for the credit of this "invention" because they already have the name for doing things in a queer way; anyhow, the Chinese decoration on the apparatus looks quite good!

The origin of this little effect goes into ancient history, to the days when I once extracted from the depths of one of those mosquito net Christmas stockings a little piece of bamboo stick with a piece of string with a knot on each end threaded through each end of it. No instructions were given, but subsequent messing around with the strings proved that all was not as it seemed, for on pulling the left hand string the right hand string moved. If you pulled both ends of the right hand string both ends of the left hand string moved, and yet sometimes only the string actually pulled moved; generally the opposite to what you expected happened. Being even at that tender age an inquisitive person I proceeded to get at the works and found that the mechanism of the thing was that two pieces of string instead of going straight through the holes in the stick were doubled back inside the hollow stick and linked into one another. Recently I saw a similar effect described in Will Goldston's "Further Exclusive Magical Secrets," but in this case the stick could be pulled in halves to show that there were no connections. In this method, however, the manipulations of the two strings are somewhat

limited. In the version about to be explained anything can happen, as in the original version, and the apparatus can be pulled apart and given for examination; a spectator can even be allowed to pull the strings himself and the apparatus will work or not as the performer wishes. The basic principle is the same as in the primitive type I got in the stocking; but by means of a gimmick (handy word that) you are enabled to give everything to be examined at the pulling apart stage



of the trick. The apparatus is really a long square cardboard box with holes in either end, so made that it can be pulled apart in the centre (see Fig. 1), the right hand end being a snug fit for the sleeve which decorates the centre of the box.

Looking at Fig. 2 you will be able to see how the apparatus works—"X" is a sliding "gimmick" provided with two hooks which engage with the two pieces of string running through either end of the "Rolling Pin." When the gimmick is in the position shown in Fig. 2 the appearance to the audience would be that the string on the left hand side was a short one and that on the right hand side a long one, and to "prove" this the box is held in the left hand, one finger clipping the string as it comes out of the underneath hole on the left side, this will prevent the gimmick from shifting and the

long string can be pulled back and forth in a natural manner. By shifting the box to the right hand the operation can be repeated with the short string. Now, with the box still in the right hand and the finger still gripping the string underneath, take hold of the bead immediately above your finger (right hand one on top) and pull upwards. Immediately you do so the left hand string follows it upwards, and it so appears that the string runs right along the box. This manoeuvre can, of course, be repeated with the other string, by which time someone will begin to suspect that there is some connection inside the box, and at this point the box is tipped to one side and pulled apart. To do this the strings are manipulated until the gimmick rests at one end of the box, for it is in this position that the strings are unhooked.

If you look at Fig. 4 you will see that the gimmick "X" is narrower than the width of the box and in the position shown does not engage the string "P" in the hook. If, however, the gimmick was slid right up to the end so that the hook touches the end and the box tipped sideways, the gimmick would slide over from side "A" to side "B," thus when it is pulled back down the box again would engage the string "P" in the hook.

Such is the action of hooking and unhooking the strings. In practice it will be found that the action of unhooking one end in this fashion also releases the other end automatically, and all that remains to be done is to let the gimmick slide into the hand as you hand the two pieces for examination. When receiving the parts back after examination, see that you get the smaller piece first; receive it in the right hand and transfer it to the left, pushing it over the gimmick, which has been concealed in the left hand, and letting the gimmick slide right to the bottom and engage with the string. Now take the other side and fix it in position. It is then necessary to engage the string in this side with the hook, and this is how it is done. Arrange the string on the left hand side so that it hangs down half way on each side of the stick and the string on the right so that all of it hangs down on one side, the bead being close up against the other side. Now grasp the bead and simultaneously tip the box into a vertical position, pulling on the bead so that the string is pulled through to the other side. While this is happening the gimmick is pulling the strings inside the box at the other end.

To the audience it looks as if the action of pulling the right hand string was causing these strings to work. When the gimmick arrives at the bottom a slight tilt is given to the box and the string hooked on, and all is ready for further manipulation. In Fig. 3 I have given a method of presenting the same effect, using an ordinary horseshoe magnet and piece of steel, instead of the hooked fake—this works quite satisfactorily—in fact it is easier to manipulate than the first method, the disadvantage is, however, that the apparatus cannot be given for examination, although the box can be pulled apart.

The dimensions of the Rolling Pin for the first method are: Length, 15 inch x $\frac{3}{4}$ inch square inside. The gimmick is made from sheet lead melted down and cast into a block $\frac{1}{2}$ inch x 1 inch x $\frac{5}{8}$ inch, and covered over with black velvet so as to make it slide easily and noiselessly.

In Fig. 5 it will be noticed that the wire forming the hooks has a small kink in the centre of the lead casting, this is to prevent the hooks turning round and getting in the wrong position should the wire not adhere to the lead as I have found to be the case in the course of experiment.

Dimensions for the magnet method are 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long and 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ inch square inside.

Chapter Four

TELEVISION

HERE I am about to describe a piece of apparatus that has now been marketed in a small way in Australia, so I will let the voice of advertisement speak for itself.

“Performer introduces the subject of television and explains that recent experiments perfected by him enable him not only to project the image of a person or an article to a distance, but to do this despite the fact that the object to be televised is in a dark room or cabinet and absolutely invisible to the naked eye! This, he says, is made possible by a combination of television and the infra-red ray.

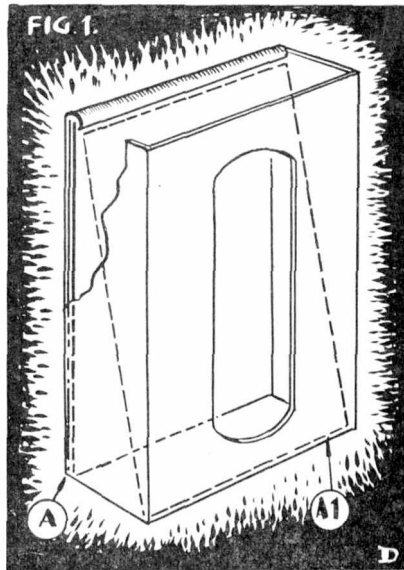
“To demonstrate this new invention, the performer introduces an empty faro box, an ordinary pack of playing cards, and a small television mirror. The faro box is shown to be empty, and the pack of cards after being thoroughly

shuffled by a member of the audience, is placed into it. Performer then explains that the only power needed to conduct the experiment is that generated by the human body, and that a touch of the human finger upon any card in the box will result in the image of that card being immediately visible in the television mirror. To demonstrate how the card is to be touched, and to overcome any suspicion that the top card in the pack might possibly have been seen by either a member of the audience or the performer himself, the performer presses his finger through the slot in the faro box and pushes the top card out. He then hands the faro box to a spectator and tells him to make contact between his finger on the back card. Performer stands some distance away (2 feet or 50 feet, as preferred) and, glancing into the mirror, sees that the card touched by the spectator is (say) the Joker. Spectator pushes card into view and it is found to be this identical card. Mirror is then handed to spectator and performer (or another spectator) takes the box. Spectator looks into the mirror and sees (say) the Ace of Hearts. Back card is pushed up and found to be the Ace. Another spectator takes mirror and can see nothing in it. This is not surprising, for when the new back card is pushed up into view, it is found to be blank.

“Self-contained (after cards are put into box the performer need not touch it again, as it will work in spectator’s hands). No sleight-of-hand. No difficult moves. Ordinary pack of cards, freely shuffled by any member of audience. Box shown empty at close quarters.”

At the outset let me say that this is more or less an adaptation of a trick explained by Ernest Noakes many years ago. The “bare bones” of the trick is that a pack of cards is shuffled and in some manner the performer is able to name the top four cards in any manner he pleases. In this instance the cards are named under the pretext of looking into a small mirror, which incidentally has very little to do with the trick. The mirror used is about the size of a penny and is double faced, and on one of its faces is stuck a very small picture of a playing card, say the nine of clubs; the use of this will be explained later on.

The main source of mystery lies in the faro box which can be best described as a metal box with a slot cut in one side. A glance at Fig. 1 will disclose that on one side of the box there is a bent over lip, this lip is bent over just wide



enough to hold underneath it, loosely, four playing cards shown at "A." The back of the last card is painted to match the inside of the box. In my case it was backed with a piece of nickel foil to match the nickel plated box. Behind this fake card are concealed three other cards in known order, the first could be, say, the King of Diamonds, next the Nine of Clubs—or a duplicate of whatever card you have stuck on the small mirror, and finally a blank face card. The balance of the pack is placed in the box in the ordinary way. To perform, the cards are tipped out of the box into spectator's hands and the box can be seen apparently empty through the rather wide slot in the top side of the box. While the spectator is shuffling the cards the box is tipped diagonally, so that the four concealed cards slide into a position shown at "A1." As the length of this diagonal is greater than the length of the cards the cards fall out of the lip at the top and are free to fall back against the face of the box with the slot cut in it; thus the four cards are transferred from one side of the box to the other—after a little practice the move becomes almost mechanical. Having got the cards in this position the rest of the pack is replaced. Under the pretext of showing how you want the cards pushed up, you stick your finger through the slot and push up the faked card and insert it somewhere in the pack without, of course, showings its back.

You now show the mirror and pretend to look into it and call out the next card to be pushed up by a spectator. In this case it is the King of Diamonds. You next turn the mirror over and ask someone to hold his hand out palm upwards, and then place the mirror on his hand and ask him to call out what card he sees on the mirror. Seeing the small card he of course obliges. The next card to be pushed up is the blank, so you turn the mirror over again and place it on the next person's hand and of course he says he can see nothing, which proves he is right as the blank card rises from the back. Such is the mystery of "Television."

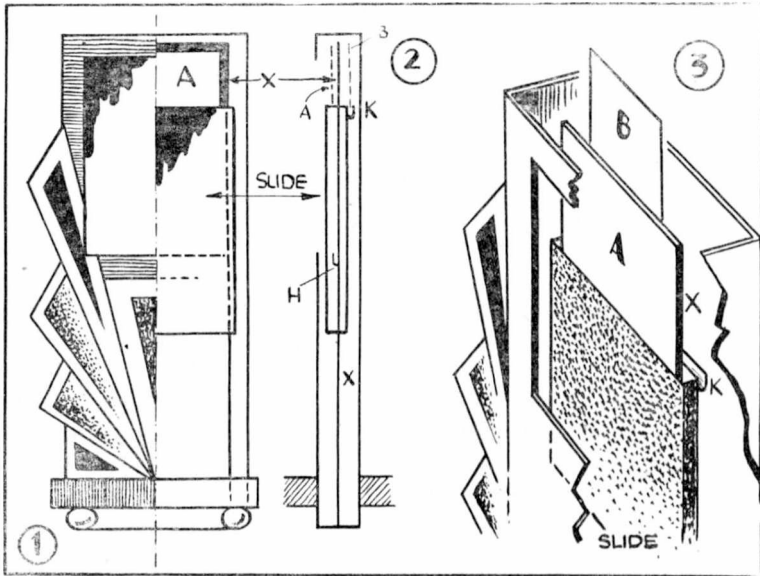
Chapter Five

THE SPOOKY FRAME

THERE are possibly better effects in which the frame to be described could be used but the one given here will serve to show the possibilities of this piece of apparatus, which I venture to say is simple and most illusive. The trick, as presented to the local Magical Society was as follows: First of all a plain white envelope and a stiff piece of cardboard a little smaller than the envelope were examined—the card was found to be blank on both sides and was sealed up in the envelope by the spectator. Without exchange, it was slid into The Spooky Frame. The spectator was next asked to call out a number between 1 and 16. As soon as called it was written down plainly on the front of the envelope just placed in the frame. A square of cardboard was next shown, which was divided up into 16 different coloured squares, after the style of a checker board. Counting from the top left hand corner, the number named was counted to and the spectator asked to remember colour arrived at. The envelope was then taken from the frame, and, without exchange, given to the spectator to open; on doing so he found inside that the card had changed to the colour selected and written across it were the words "Your lucky number must be (the number called) and your lucky colour (the colour counted to)."

After a good deal of deep thinking you will come to the conclusion that the envelope is changed in some manner and that the colour is forced—you are right—the colour is forced

by means of a now fairly well-known forcing board (described by E. E. Noakes in "Rainbow Waves" in "Further Expert Magic") where, no matter what number is called between 1 and 16, the performer can always make the desired colour turn up at that number according to how he holds the board up to the audience. The exchange of the envelope is carried out right before the spectator's eyes by means of the trick frame which I will now proceed to unravel.



The general design of the frame is as shown on the left hand side of Fig. 1, the colour scheme being Yellow, Blue, Green, Black and Orange, giving a futuristic touch in decoration. The frame consists of three main parts: (1) The Frame Shell; (2) The Sliding Fake; (3) The Fixed Fake, "X."

The frame shell is the decorated frame which holds the works. The sliding fake is a sleeve of thin cardboard covered on the front side with black velvet and having a tin clip "K," Figs. 2 and 3 running along the top edge at the back.

The Fixed Fake "X" (Figs. 2 and 3) is a piece of stiff cardboard faced with black velvet and having a tin clip "H" (Fig. 2), half way up. To set the apparatus, the duplicate envelope with the coloured card with writing on it is slipped into the clip "H" of the fixed fake. The sliding fake is now pushed down over the fake and envelope and is held in position (by friction) in front of the duplicate envelope. Thus, when

viewed from the front, the frame seems to be empty, the audience seeing only the back velvet slide, which they take to be the back of the frame. If now we take the envelope and card to be changed and insert it into the top of the frame, it is an easy matter to slip it into the top of the clip "K" of the sliding fake. Keep on pushing and the sliding fake will be pushed downwards as shown on the right hand side of Fig. 1. This exposes to view the duplicate envelope "A" the top of the sliding fake for the time being stimulates the bottom of the envelope; for this reason it should be noted that the top of the sliding fake should be clean cut and have no ragged whiskers of velvet sticking out. In reality the audience see both envelopes at once, but thanks to the top bar of the frame shell they are not aware of this fact. The illusion is perfect and I have made the exchange within five or six feet from the spectator without him noticing anything suspicious.

The following dimensions will help those wishing to construct this frame for themselves: For an envelope measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $5\frac{3}{4}$ inch — Total Height, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inch, Width of frame outside at top, $4\frac{1}{8}$ inch, Thickness of frame shell, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch Width of Sliding Fake, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inch, Depth of Sliding Fake, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inch, Thickness of Sliding Fake, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, Height of Fixed Fake 11 inch, Width of Fixed Fake, $3\frac{5}{8}$ inch, Size of window, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inch x 5 inch.

In order to accentuate the illusion it is advisable to colour the vertically shaded portions in Fig. 1 a light yellow so as to act as a sort of "blinder" for the black art effect. The apparatus is rather hard to explain by words but I have done my best to illustrate the mechanism of the apparatus in Fig. 3, which gives a very exaggerated view of its "innards." The fixed fake "X" need not be attached to the frame itself as I find it easier to adjust the envelope and fake if this fake is withdrawn first and the sliding fake put over it, and then the whole affair dropped into the frame shell.

Chapter Six

MIGRATORY COINS

FOR a long time now the effect described under this heading on page 705 of "Greater Magic" has been one of my favourite pocket tricks. In working it without fakes, however, as has been my practice up to reading the new method, there is a rather risky move. Even in the new method there is an awkward move; but after a little experimenting I have hit upon an idea that seems to overcome it. The awkward part is when picking up the shell penny under cover of the envelope or card—it is hard to lift it naturally and there is a tendency to "talk." This is my practice at present. First of all paint the face of the shell penny with a solution of "Seccotine" and water and let it dry. You will now find that if the finger tip be moistened and pressed on to the shell it will adhere to the finger quite strongly and can be lifted off the duplicate penny without any trouble. When using this method the envelopes should be held in a special manner to facilitate picking up the shell. With the palm facing downwards, place the middle finger of the right hand under the envelope and the first and third fingers on top; the bottom edge of the envelope being about level with the knuckle joint. Place over the pennies in the usual manner and as you cover the shell penny corner, press down and lift the shell with the tip of the underneath finger and then transfer it to the required corner, a slight pressure on the edge of the shell as it is deposited on the table is sufficient to detach it from the finger, and the trick can be proceeded with in the usual manner.

Chapter Seven

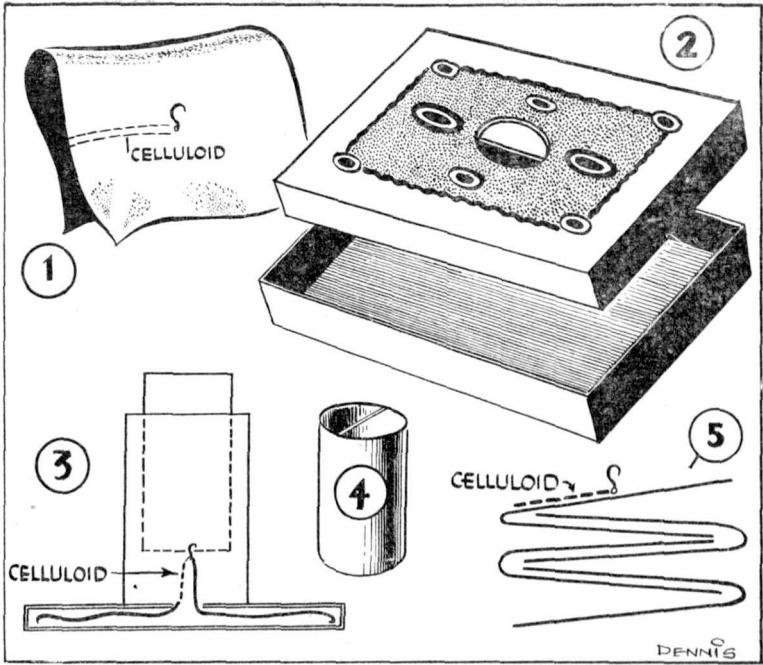
THE SILK CULTURE

THE production of silk handkerchiefs from a couple of metal cylinders does not savour much of a novelty and in the effort which follows I may be accused of "conjuring for conjurers." When, however, I explain that both tubes are shown empty simultaneously and can be examined

if necessary, that they do not have to be loaded, that the handkerchiefs produced could not be packed again into one of the tubes, and that they are produced one by one in an uncrumpled state all nicely ironed, I think you will agree that it might be just as well to continue reading on!

In effect, the performer shows two metal tubes resting on a thin tray—they are both lifted up and a clear view given through them simultaneously. The larger tube is placed on the tray and the smaller one nested within it. Performer now describes the slow but perfect methods of spinning silk as practised by the humble silkworm. He goes on to describe how nowadays many substances are manufactured by the aid of “cultures.” A small piece of some particular ‘culture’ is subject to some special process and it begins to grow and grow until it is hard to stop it. He next exhibits a small piece of silk about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch square which he declares is a piece of silk culture. This is dropped into the inner tube—he looks into the tube and says something must be wrong as it usually works much quicker than this, and thereupon lifts the centre tube a few inches and lets it fall back again. After a few seconds he dips his thumb and forefinger into the tube and produces a silk handkerchief. This is followed by many more, all in an uncrumpled state, the tubes again being shown empty at the conclusion of the production.

The origin of the principle employed in this effect is to be found in the plebian packet of automatic cigarette papers—the type of pack where pulling one paper out automatically leaves a part of the next paper projecting for the next time. Well, that is what happens in this effect. The silk handkerchiefs are all neatly packed in the shallow tray (Fig. 2) in the same interleaving manner as the cigarette papers (see Fig. 5). Instead of being pulled out of a slot running the entire length of the tray as in the case of cigarette papers they are pulled through a $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch hole in the centre of the top of the tray. This size hole will be found correct for 12-inch squares of silk. The next problem is how to get the handkerchiefs out of the tray into the tubes. This is accomplished by faking the top most handkerchief of the “load” and one end of the smallest diameter tube. This tube has a piece of wire soldered diametrically across the end as shown in Fig. 4, while the handkerchief, which should be of a dark colour, has a thin strip of springy celluloid about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide and six inches



long fastened to one end as shown in Fig. 1. In the end of this strip which is over the centre of the folded hank is fixed, at right angles to it, a small hook. This hook is of sufficient length to protrude through the hole "X" in the top of the tray and so engage with the wire cross bar fixed to the inner tube. It will now be seen that if this tube be lifted up a few inches the hank will be drawn out of the tray (see Fig. 3). On releasing the tube it falls back, but the hank, by reason of the strip of celluloid, remains where it was pulled to within easy reach of the finger and thumb. Thus is started the seemingly endless production of handkerchiefs. The handkerchiefs are withdrawn with a mild jerk which is sufficient to drag the following one into position.

The bottom of the tray measures $8\frac{1}{4} \times 13 \times \frac{5}{8}$ inch and is in reality a baking tin purchased from the chain stores. The top portion is of stiff cardboard made to fit tightly into the bottom portion, thus making a hollow tray. A tray of this size will comfortably hold 40 12 inch square silk handkerchiefs. In regard to handkerchiefs for all production work I have found that the best way to make them is to procure a few yards of silk and have it hemstitched into the required

number of squares, then slit down the centre of the stitching to separate the squares. By this method you do away with the usual bulky hem around the outside which takes up considerable space and often catches on the edge of production devices.

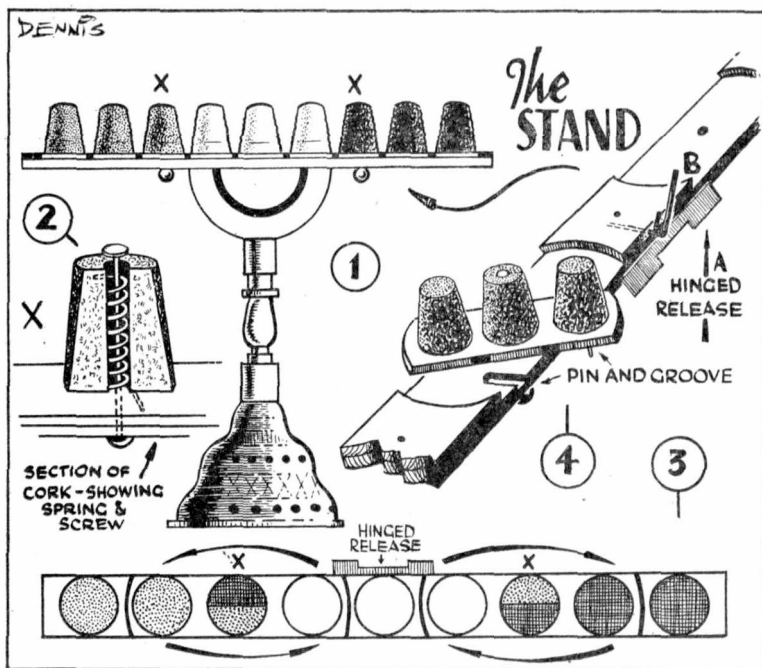
Chapter Eight

THE PATRIOTIC THIMBLES

THIMBLE tricks generally resolve themselves into a series of intricate sleights, all very nice for the performer, who probably revels in them, but not so nice for the man in the back row who probably can't see a thing! In the effect which follows I have tried to overcome this difficulty, inasmuch as nine thimbles are used at once and they are displayed on a fancy stand so that they can be clearly seen. If the reader is able to magically produce nine thimbles (3 red, 3 white, 3 blue) all well and good; if not, just start off with the nine thimbles already in the stand. In this case the thimbles are placed on the stand in three groups of three—3 reds, 3 whites, 3 blues, as in Fig. 1. To present, the thimbles are taken off the stand and the stand shown casually back and front—the 3 reds are now replaced on the first three pegs, then the three whites and finally the three blues. While handling the thimbles they should be shown on all sides to emphasise the fact that they are quite ordinary—that is, most of them—because two of them cannot be shown openly, but more of this anon. The stand and thimbles are now covered with a silk handkerchief—a touch with the magic wand—and upon uncovering, the thimbles are seen to have sorted themselves out in a most patriotic manner as they are now seen to be in three groups of red, white and blue alternatively, a la "Patriotic Billiard Ball Trick." The thimbles can again be removed and this time all can be shown back and front. To complete the sequence the thimbles are dropped into a small metal bowl and shaken up; and out comes a giant tri-colour thimble in their stead. In explanation, I must tell you that ninety per cent. of the trick in this case is in the Thimble Stand and for your enlightenment I must explain that the stand herein depicted, was made from nine corks, a piece of

soft stick, 9 inch x $\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, a couple of pieces of a toy building block set and the bottom half of a broken humming top; perhaps you will recognise them in Fig. 1.

However, the main interest is in the top cross piece—the pegs to hold the thimbles in position are small corks glued to the cross piece. The cross piece, however, is faked by having two small turntables fixed to it as shown in Fig. 4. The motive power for turning the tables is concealed in the third and seventh corks which are fitted with light spiral springs as shown at Fig. 2. The cork is bored with a cork-borer and a spring of a little less diameter than the hole inserted, the top of the spring is fastened to the top of the cork while the bottom is fixed to the fixed portion of the cross bar. A machine-thread screw is passed down the centre of the spring and screwed into the cross bar and serves as a spindle for the turntable to revolve upon. Thus if the turntables are pulled round half a revolution and released, they will fly back to their original positions. As springs are somewhat unreliable a pin stop and grooves for it to work in as shown in Fig. 4 are provided to prevent the springs from turning the table too far. If we now look at Fig. 3 we shall be



able to see the reason for these turntables. The first and second thimbles are ordinary red ones, the third is red in front and blue behind, the next three are ordinary white ones, the seventh however is blue in front and red behind, the last two being ordinary blue thimbles. Thus with only two thimbles out of the nine faked you should be able to convince everyone that they are all genuine! In considering Fig. 3 let us imagine that the turntables were secretly turned round half a revolution before the thimbles are placed in position. If we now release the turntables they will fly round as indicated and the thimbles will appear in their new sequence. By having the turntables arranged so that one revolves clockwise and the other anti-clockwise it is possible to arrange a small hinged release, "A," which releases both at the same time—this release is held in position by the small lever arm "B," which simply has to be pushed over to one side in the act of covering over with the silk handkerchief, to release the turntables.

It will be noted that I have stated that all thimbles can be shown both sides at the conclusion of the trick—this is accomplished by a little sleight of hand. Thimbles 3, 5 and 7 are removed and placed on the first three fingers of the left hand in such a manner that when viewed from the front the red half of the fake thimble is shown on the forefinger, the white on the second finger, and the blue on the third finger. If the hand is now given a flourish and turned over, the red, white and blue sequence will be still in evidence, but the blue thimble will now be on the forefinger instead of the red, a fact which I have found is not noticed by the average audience. To show the rest of the thimbles, back and front, simply pick up the stand and twist it about all sides with much abandon, because there is nothing to hide!

The change to the giant thimble is quite a simple arrangement. Simply a cardboard thimble made to fit the mouth of a small metal bowl—the mouth of the thimble is closed up except for a small round hole large enough to allow a thimble to drop in easily. The interior of the big thimble is painted dead black and the mouth of the thimble is covered with black velvet, leaving, of course, the hole open. Under these conditions the bowl can casually be shown empty before placing the small thimbles therein as the interior just looks black. As soon as all 9 thimbles are placed in, place the hand over the mouth and shake up well then insert finger into hole in big thimble and make the production.

Chapter Nine

THE 20th CENTURY THIMBLES

THE 20th Century Routine has been applied to Billiard Balls, Blocks and Liquids, but as far as I can remember I do not think it has been applied to thimbles. Here is a way of working it with Red, White and Blue thimbles. In effect the performer shows three thimbles in his left hand, meanwhile displaying his right hand (back and front) fingers wide apart, quite empty. A red thimble from the left hand is placed on the right forefinger, a white on the second finger, and a blue on the third. Hand is again shown back and front. The left hand is meanwhile closed to form a fist. The second finger with the white thimble on it is pushed into the fist and leaves the thimble therein. The left hand is opened and shown back and front, but the thimble has vanished. A wave of the right hand the missing thimble is back on the second finger again. When I explain that the effect is brought about by means of a "pull" vanisher for the white thimble and a white "shell" thimble fitting over the real white thimble, the solution to the problem becomes fairly obvious. In the beginning the "shell" thimble and white thimble are shown as one, and as already set out placed on the second finger, the hand is shown front first, and as it is turned over to show the back it is momentarily closed as if to press the thimbles more firmly on the fingers, but in reality to thumbpalm the "shell" white thimble, leaving the real white in view on the second finger when the back of the hand is displayed. While this has been going on, the left hand has quietly obtained possession of a thimble "pull" from the left hand side of the coat or vest—the hand is held fist-like with the pull concealed. The right hand approaches, pushes the white thimble into the pull, which is allowed to carry it away at an appropriate moment. The left hand is shown empty back and front and then, under cover of a flourish of the right hand, the thumb-palmed shell is regained on the second finger to complete the effect.

The thimble "pull" can be constructed from a piece of elastic and a rather large wooden thimble with a hole drilled

through the top for the knotted elastic to be threaded through. It will be found that a smaller thimble can be jammed into this and will not fall out during its passage to oblivion. The thimbles used were of the celluloid variety and the shell thimbles can easily be constructed by scooping out the inside until it just fits over the next size smaller thimble. The scooping process is a rather tedious job while it is hard as purchased, but if the thimble be filled with *Amyl Acetate* or *Acetone* for a few seconds and emptied out again it will be found that the inside can be scooped out with a pen knife as easy as if it were a piece of soap. After an hour or two the thimble hardens up again.

Chapter Ten

THE CUBE OF CONFUCIUS

I INTRODUCE the item under the above title with some pleasure because for many years it was but a "pipe dream" and, thanks to a happy inspiration, is now an actuality. The apparatus for this trick has been marketed in Australia in a small way by one or two manufacturers, and in order to describe the effect I can hardly do better than quote the words from one of their advertisements—

"This is undoubtedly the finest magical invention for many years, and will bewilder laymen and magicians alike. Briefly, the effect is as follows:

"The performer introduces to the audience a box decorated in Oriental fashion. This, when opened, discloses an interior designed as an Eastern temple. Upon the floor of this temple stands a solid wooden block ($3\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch), covered with peculiar hieroglyphics. This is removed and shown to the spectators, who may quite freely examine it. Through the block is bored a small hole, and performer explains that it was used as a prayer block, being visible in the temple throughout the day, but, by some strange means, completely disappearing each night, when it was found in the high priest's house, securely suspended upon a brass rod. Performer then shows a small casket or box, without either back or front, which he states is a model of the priest's house, austere in its simplicity, without furniture

or decoration, except for a brass rod right through the centre of the room and extending, through two holes, out through the walls. This rod is removed, and may be examined. At the front of the casket is a thin blind which hangs down, as performer explains, when the priest retires for the night. The rod is replaced, the blind lowered, and the casket either suspended from two ribbons, or placed upon a table or stand. The block is put back in the temple, the door is closed — immediately re-opened—and the block has vanished! The blind of the casket is lifted, and there, upon the brass rod, is the wooden block! The brass rod has to be withdrawn in order that the block may be removed and shown to be SOLID!

NOTE !

“The block upon the brass rod is of wood ($3\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch) and is shown and proved to be SOLID. There are no shells, no spring blind effects, no wells, no black art principles, no servantes.

“There are no false or difficult moves. The solid block is taken from the temple, examined, returned to the temple (it does not go near the casket), and the door is closed. The casket is shown empty from all sides, the blind is lowered, and the casket hung up. Yet the wooden block has flown from the temple into the casket! There is no sleight of hand, and no body work. No drapes to the table.

“The effect is worked upon an entirely new principle! When we say this, we really mean it. A NEW PRINCIPLE entirely! In the re-appearance of the block there are no strings to pull, no buttons to press, no work of any kind to do—the effect is entirely AUTOMATIC, and it cannot possibly fail!

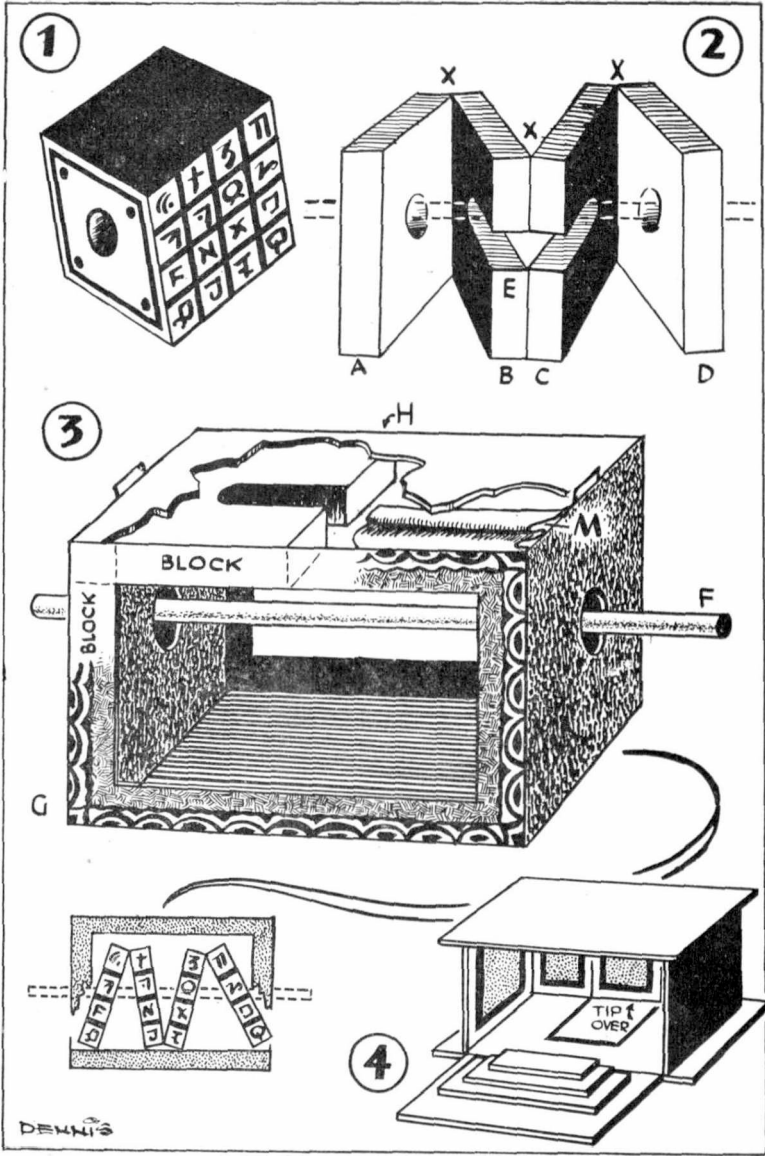
“When the principle is explained to magicians, the amazement shown is equal to that created by the working of the effect itself. It was first presented by Mr. Sewell at a meeting of the Western Australian Society of Magicians, on July 17, 1933, and completely bewildered an audience consisting of several ex-professional magicians, numerous semi-professionals, and at least one performer of over twenty years' stage experience.”

The foregoing is not my handiwork (my pen could never rise to such dizzy heights), but in all modesty I say that it represents a true statement of facts. Now let us tear aside the veil of mystery. First of all, two blocks are used, one quite solid (Fig. 1) and the other also solid except that it is

split into four sections and hinged together with black cloth hinges. (X). Besides being hinged it also has two slots "E" cut in the centre of the two inside sections "B" and "C" (Fig. 2). The purpose of these slots will be seen on looking at Fig. 2. The fake block is stowed away in the framework of the house Fig. 3, the two slotted sections in the top and the sides with the holes in them either end. The upper sections are kept in position by means of a pin inserted through the hole "H" in the framework, which also coincides with a hole in the edge of one section of the block; the end sections rest upon the solid base of the house "G." If we now insert the rod "F" through the two holes in the ends of the house you will see that it also threads the two end sections of the fake block upon it. If now the pin in the hole "H" is pulled out the top sections will fall downwards, the slots in the centre of the sections allowing them to fall right past the rod. At the same time, the action of these two sections falling drags the two end sections from their hiding place in towards the centre and the block folds up and appears solid. This action it must be said, takes place behind a small silk curtain "M" (Fig. 3) which is lowered in front of the house before the pin is pulled out. Should the block not close up completely it is an easy matter to pinch it together just as you raise the curtain to show the transposition. So much for the appearance of the fake block for the time being.

The vanish of the solid block is brought about by means of a glorified "tip over" production box as shown in Fig. 4. In order to obviate side angle vision the box is made much bigger than the block to be vanished. In my case, it was made large enough to hold the high priest's house, which provided an excuse for so large a box being used. In the beginning the trick was introduced with the house and solid block inside it, with the fake block concealed, all neatly packed in the box which is later to be designated as a temple. The house and blocks are withdrawn—the solid block is given for examination and put back into the temple in the centre of the floor just on top of the "tip-over" section, and in the act of closing up the front of the box the tip-over section is also actuated; thus is the solid block carried behind the temple out of sight.

Since I made up this effect I have been shown the secret of Thayer's "Mystery Pagoda Cabby," and this apparatus



(which by the way is described in "Greater Magic") would perhaps serve better to vanish the block than the box described. It was in fact this method that I used when last showing this effect and I thought it made for much easier working. The back and front of the block are decorated with small white and coloured squares, so that the black line separating them effectively masks where the fake block joins up; the squares are decorated with some "Chinese" symbol which serves as a "peg" on which to hang the little story that goes with the trick. The top and bottom of the block are painted black so as to mask the black cloth hinges and the little black cavity formed by the slots being taken out of the two centre sections. The ends just have a panelled design on them with a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hole bored through the centre. These holes are made on the large side; while the penetrating rod is kept fairly thin. This is necessary to facilitate the easy falling and sliding of the ends of the fake block, which might otherwise become jammed on account of the ends becoming tilted sideways as they are pulled in towards the centre.

Here is a short specification of the apparatus:

Block (solid): $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Block (fake): Four slabs $\frac{7}{8}$ inch \times $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch square, hinged together as shown.

House: Tin box with two open sides, $9 \times 3\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ inch with $\frac{7}{8}$ inch wood insert in one long side.

Rod: Nickel-plated 12 inches long, $\frac{3}{16}$ inch diameter.

Tip-over Box: $10\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches (inside measurements) made from $\frac{1}{4}$ inch timber.

PATTER SCHEME

I shall call your attention to a model of a Chinese temple, also to a model of the high priest's house, wherein on all but special occasions he kept the mysterious Cube of Confucius securely locked up by means of this metal rod which passes right through the walls and cube. It is of course, impossible to remove the cube without removing the rod. The cube as you will observe is made of wood and quite solid. Upon its sides are some curious markings, and I am told that in by-gone days the cube was regarded as a prayer block, and worshippers from far and near came to place their hands on the block and pray, believing that their prayer would be

answered. Each square is of special significance—for instance, if a lady desired a rich husband she rubbed this square; if a wife wanted a son this square was rubbed; for twins this was the one—you will notice it has been very little used, it's quite clean. If a husband wished to get rid of his mother-in-law, this was the one to be rubbed—you will note the big dent, it has nearly been rubbed away! On special days the cube was kept in the temple where all might benefit by its influence. At night the door was closed and the high priest retired to his house, usually in a high place, and like a respectable citizen pulled down the blind before retiring. If out of curiosity or evil intent anyone opened the temple during forbidden hours, they would find the cube vanished, for the high priest, believing in the slogan "Safety First," always secretly extracted the cube and had it safely locked up in his own house. Here we find the cube safe and quite solid as before.



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