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HOW TO GIVE CONJURING & OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS AT HOME

CONTENTS.

A Conjuring Entertainment.
A Ventriloquial Entertainment.
Tableaux Vivants.
Charades.
How to Make Up for the Stage.
Thought Reading.
"Uncle Charles"—A Play.
Simple Mesmerism.
AND MANY EASY AND EFFECTIVE TRICKS.

JAMES HENDERSON & SONS,
RED LION HOUSE, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

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AND

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Fully Illustrated with Diagrams and Sketches.

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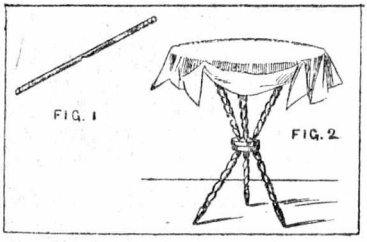
How to Give a Conjuring Entertainment.

CHAPTER I.

Sleights Necessary for Tricks with Coins.

There is no social accomplishment which any boy will find repay him better for the amount of trouble expended in its acquirement than conjuring. As a boy, he will find it a most interesting way of spending holiday hours, and when he grows into



manhood he will never feel that most uncomfortable of sensations—the being quite useless in a room full of people, almost every one of whom can do their fair share of entertaining the others, except himself, if he has taken the slight trouble—for when all is said and done, it is but a small trouble—to become a passable prestidigitateur.

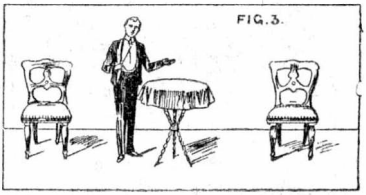
His friends may be good singers or players upon one instrument or another, but the conjurer will always come out on top when amusing in a drawing room is the sport on hand.

Without more ado, as my space is very limited, I will proceed to give a few principal directions, which, if carefully followed, will set my readers in a fair way to become some of the most mysterious of magicians.

In this short series of papers I must perforce confine myself to explaining a few good passes and tricks with coins and cards, and I may say that nowadays these are the most fashionable objects of manipulation amongst the very best of conjurers—in fact, all the hints I give have been obtained from the greatest living "fakirs," and are methods actually in use by themselves, so that in following them out my readers will know that they are practising not only good methods of natural magic, but the very best known.

For a start we will take coin tricks. The first and one of the few pieces of apparatus which the learner must have is a wand. This he can obtain at Hamley's Magical Saloon, High Holborn, London, for the sum of half a crown. There are various sizes, and each one should be governed in his choice by the size of his hand. For boys from 12 to 16 years' old one about $\frac{5}{16}$in. in diameter and about 12in. long (Fig. 1) will be about the thing. In the makers' lists will be seen advertised various trick wands for coin production, vanishing, &c. These are good in their way; but first learn to use a plain black wand, with silver-plated end pieces, which will suffice for all the tricks I shall now describe.

Having the wand, a table must be chosen. It might at first sight seem as though when beginning practice that a table would not be necessary. I am a great believer, however, in practising under all circumstances just as you would in performing before friends, the said friends being the only absentees from the practice,



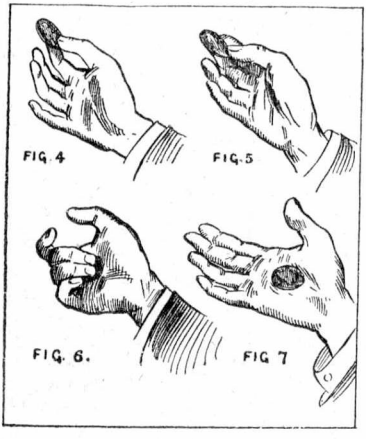
and their place taken by a mirror, so that the learner can watch all his own movements and criticize and improve himself at each practice. In almost every home is a round-topped gipsy table, or, failing this, a chessboard-topped table will do very well. A smooth coloured cloth tablecloth should be laid upon this, and allowed to fall about 6in. over the front edge, and about 12in. over the back. The cloth edge at the back of the table

is now raised and pinned up in two places to the cloth at the back edge of the table, so forming a little trough (Fig. 2) along the back of table out of sight of those who sit in front. A couple of chairs, set one at each side of the table, complete the arrangements (Fig. 3).

Now, before any tricks can be done, there are several sleights which the would-be conjurer must be able to make with ease and assurance. The first and most important of these is

The Palm.

The ordinary palm with a coin is as follows: A coin, say, a two-shilling piece, is taken, and, holding it between the thumb and first finger of right hand, the right hand is brought to the left, seeming to place the coin into the left hand. In reality, the coin is pressed by the fingers of the right hand into the palm of that hand, whilst the left hand is closed and moves away as though taking the coin, which, of course, has never moved out of the right hand. I advise my readers to take a coin in hand, and follow my descriptions movement by movement as they read them. Any coin will do, but a two-shilling piece is especially



good owing to its size and the fact of its "milled" edges (which copper coins have not) making it particularly easy to grip in the palm.

Hold the coin between first finger and thumb, as in Fig. 4. Now let the thumb slide the coin on to the tips of second and third fingers (see Fig. 5). Now remove the thumb, and bend the second and third fingers inwards. This will bring the coin into the palm of the hand (Fig. 6). By means of a slight contraction of the muscles of the fleshy part of the bottom of the thumb and those at the other side of the coin in that part of the edge of the hand which is below the little finger, the coin may be firmly gripped in the palm. The second and third fingers are now extended, and the coin remains held as in Fig. 7. Practise this over and over again until you can readily and without looking at your hand at all press the coin in and hold it as above described in the palm. It is quite easy, but it must be done so readily as to require no thinking about, and this facility will only be acquired by constant practice. As you sit reading a book, or, in fact, at almost any time, you can practise it until it becomes "second nature" to you.

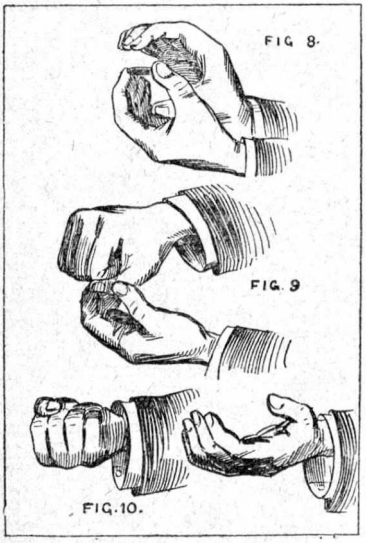
Now comes the part which is difficult.

The Pass.

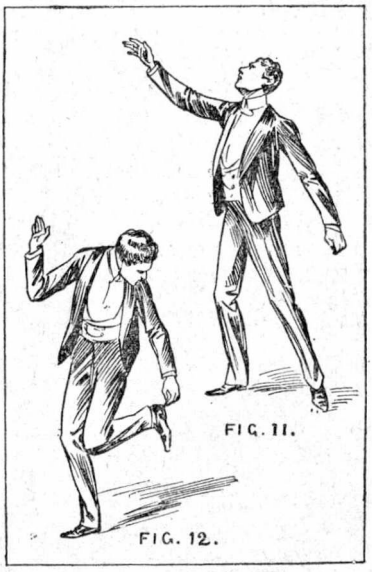
That is, to pretend to place the coin into the left hand, and yet to palm it in right without any one seeing that it is not really put into the left. First take the two-shilling piece, as in Fig. 4, and bring it over and actually place it into the left hand, close the left hand, and move it away with the coin in it. Do this two or three times in front of a looking-glass, noting exactly how you do it. Your object when making believe only to put the coin into the left hand must be that you shall see in the glass exactly the same movements and nothing more than you saw when you really did place the coin in the left hand. Once more take the coin between finger and thumb of right hand, and bring the right hand across in front of your body to the left hand; as you do so slide the coin on to the tips of second and third fingers. As the tips of the right hand fingers just reach the palm of the left, press the coin into the right hand palm, simultaneously closing the fingers of left hand, and move the closed left hand away about a foot towards the left. The right hand with the palmed coin drops naturally to right side, or picks up the wand or other object which may be required to continue whatever trick is in progress. The right hand must not move until the left has moved quite a foot's distance away. The learner will find that he will feel inclined to look at the right hand as it palms, and after it palms the coin. This must not be. The audience are much influenced by the movements of the conjurer's eyes. He must look at the coin in the right hand as the hand approaches the left hand. As the left hand closes and moves away, his gaze must follow the left hand. This is a most important point, for the conjurer's looking at the left unconsciously makes

the audience also look at the left, and diverts attention or suspicion from the right hand. If you intend to show a little palming and other passes, which are called "manipulations," before commencing a more important trick, you can show the pass with a coin as follows: Take coin in right hand, pretend as above to place in left, saying as you do so, "You see I have here a two-shilling piece." Throw it down on the table a couple of times to show that it is an ordinary solid two-shilling piece. Taking it up the second time, say, "I now place this two-shilling piece into my left hand—so." Really, you palm it in right hand. If at first, on following your practice in the glass you find that you can see yourself palming the coin, do not be discouraged; try and try again until you can scarcely see the palming. If you scarcely see it, knowing what you are doing, the audience will not see it at all, and you have the satisfaction of knowing that you can make the most important of all sleights with a coin.

Directly the closed left hand has moved away from the right hand, the



latter, with the coin palmed, picks up the wand from the table, and, pointing with wand at left hand, you say, "Now, if I wish that coin to leave my left hand, all I have to do is to tap the hand twice with my magic wand, and the coin most mysteriously vanishes into thin air, and disappears—so!" Tap the left hand with wand twice, and as you speak slowly open the left hand, so that just as you say "disappears—so," the audience see that the hand is empty. Take the wand in left hand and turn sharply round, as though you only just noticed it, and walk to some one in the audience, and say, "Why, here it is; it had flown all amongst your little curls." Whilst speaking, raise



your right hand, and, taking the coin from palm to between first finger and thumb, apparently draw it out of the spectator's hair. After the palm and pass are learned, the conjurer who would excel must always keep his hand in form by practice. A couple of good palming exercises are (1) to palm a coin, and then pick up a glass from a table and set it down again, the fingers and thumb holding the glass by its rim. (2) To palm a coin, and presently several coins, and place the whole of the fingers and thumb flat upon a table whilst the palm of hand holding the coin or coins and the forearm are held quite perpendicular, without allowing the coin or coins to fall out of the palm.

The French Drop.

The next sleight to be learned is the French drop. A coin is held between the thumb and first finger of left hand, and the right hand comes to the left, and apparently takes the coin. In reality, the coin drops into and remains in the left palm.

To make the sleight, take the coin in left hand, as in Fig. 8, and bring the right hand to take it, also as in Fig. 8. Now, as the right hand

closes, allow the coin to fall into the left palm, as in Fig. 9. The closed right hand moves away to the right, and in doing so turns over, so that the knuckles are downwards, as in Fig. 10. This is one of the most deceptive of sleights, and yet one of the easiest to make. The eyes of the performer must follow the right hand all the time. After pretending to take the coin as above, say, "I will throw this coin into the air," make a movement of the right hand as though throwing into the air, at the same time opening the hand. Look upwards as though watching the flight of the coin, and say, "See, there it goes; watch it closely. It is just passing that corner of the room. It will hit the ceiling, I fear; no, here it comes back. Here it is! Isn't it marvellous?"

Having watched the imaginary flight all round the room, just as you say, "Here it is!" bend down and pick the coin—of course, with left hand, which has it palmed—from behind your left knee, or raise your left foot and take it apparently from underneath the sole.

CHAPTER II.

Tricks With Coins.

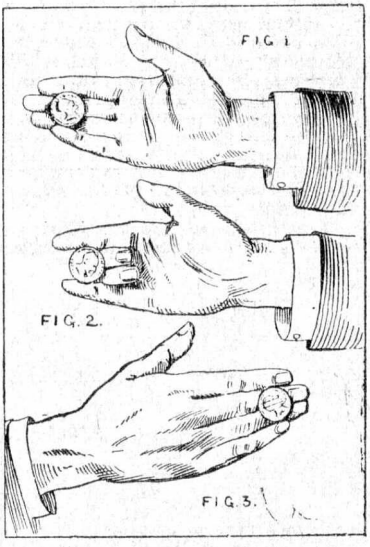
The up-to-date conjurer must be able to do the celebrated continuous back and front palm with a coin.

The feat consists in taking a coin in the hand, and with an upward jerk of the hand the coin vanishes, and the hand is immediately shown to be empty both back and front; yet the performer can instantaneously produce the coin at his finger tips. There are several methods. I will give a couple here. The first is that which Mr. Nelson T. Downs, the coin king, describes, as follows, in his book "Modern Coin Manipulation":

"Commence the trick by placing the coin on the front of the hand, gripping it between the tips of first and fourth fingers (Fig. 1). Next draw down the two middle fingers until the points rest behind the coin at its lower end. If you now exert with these fingers a slight pressure on the lower part of the coin, it revolves between the first and fourth fingers (Fig. 2), and as you carefully extend the two middle fingers, these stretch out in front of the coin (Fig. 3), which is now held in the same position as at first, except that it is at the back of the hand, and is quite invisible from the front, so that it seems to have vanished. To cover this movement, which should be executed with lightning rapidity, the performer makes a short movement with the hand as if about to throw the coin away. To make the coin reappear these movements are simply reversed."

This novel movement should be perfected with both hands.

To show the hand empty back and front, act as follows: Show the coin, slide it to position of Fig. 1, and vanish it to back of hand (Fig. 3). Turn the hand immediately over forwards, as it turns reversing the action so that coin is as at first, but the back of hand is seen by audience. Show the front again empty by reversing the coin to back of fingers, as the hand is once more turned over. Having shown the



hand back and front as many times as desired, make a grab in the air with the hand and catch the coin between first finger and thumb. There is no royal road to this trick. It is not very difficult; only practice, practice, practice will be necessary before it can be done neatly and with certainty; and no conjurer should attempt any trick which he is not absolutely confident of successfully bringing through.

Messrs. Hamley sell a prepared coin—a two-shilling piece, with a little loop of catgut attached to it. The loop of catgut is placed over the second finger, and by its means the coin is only thrown through from back to front of hand as required, without the least fear of its being dropped, as is apt to be the case in the former more difficult manner. I would recommend boys to use both these ways, and decide for themselves which to adopt

Catching Coins from the Air.

This trick is known under many different names, amongst others, "The Aerial Mint," "The Miser's Dream," "Coins into the Hat," and each performer has his own special manner of presenting it. The following will be found to be the best for the learner, who can afterwards add little fakes and effects to it as his own ingenuity may suggest. The only requisites are whatever number of coins are desired to be caught and a tall silk hat, more generally known, I expect, to my readers as a "topper." This latter it is best to borrow in the house where the trick is shown, as a man seeing the coins produced from his own hat is more easily convinced that there is no preparation about the hat than if the performer used one of his own. It is an important principle wherever possible to use things belonging to spectators in tricks, as it lends considerably to the wonderment of the audience that the objects used are those actually known to be free from preparation.

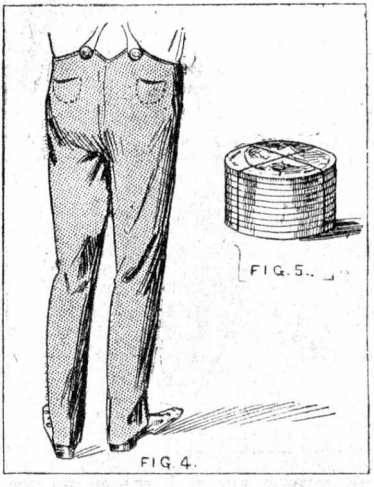
Two-shilling pieces are the best coins to use, and about 20 is a good number. As the average boy is not likely to always have 20 two-shilling pieces handy, I would advise him to buy 20 imitation ones, which at Hamley's cost about 4s. 6d. a dozen.

Half the coins should be tied into a pile with a piece of fine black thread (Fig. 5) and placed in what conjurers call the left pochette. The pochettes —for there are two—are small pockets sewn at the back of the trousers, just above the thigh, so as to be concealed by the bottom of the coat and yet easy of access to the hands when the coat is unbuttoned (Fig. 4). Most boys' mothers or sisters could put these on to ordinary clothes in a very few minutes. The size of these is just large enough to contain a billiard ball or similar small object.

The other half of the coins are tied together in a similar fashion and deposited in the other pochette.

The trick is shown as follows: Say, "Can any one present lend me a tall black gentleman's hat—I mean a gentleman's tall black hat—an ordinary silk hat?" Upon some one offering one, take it, then remarking, "I always like to use some one else's hat in case it should get spoiled in the course of the trick." Walking back to your position, just behind your table, you, on the way, secure unseen the packet of coins from the left pochette and hold them in the palm of your left hand. The right hand now brings the hat over towards the left, which takes it, as in Fig. 6, and its fingers press the 10 coins against the side of the inside of crown.

"Have you ever noticed," you continue, "that the air is impregnated with minute atoms of gold and silver? Why, look"—pointing with right hand—the palm of which is so held that every one sees it is quite empty—at an imaginary something in the air, just near you. "I do declare there is a two-shilling piece floating in this very room. There it is." As you say "There it is," make a grab with the right hand as though you caught something. "I have it. I will throw this two-shilling piece into the hat—so!" As you make a motion with the right hand, as though throwing the coin into the opening of the crown of hat, you, with the fingers



of the left hand, allow one of the coins it holds to fall. The noise of this striking the bottom of the crown makes every one believe that you really threw a coin in, and their opinion is confirmed by your immediately placing your right hand into the hat and picking the coin out, show it, and really throw it into the hat again. Once more take it out and pretend to throw it in again; but this time, as you make the movement of throwing, palm the coin, as described in the last chapter, and at the same time, with the left hand, allow another coin to fall to bottom of hat, the sound of which will prevent any idea being gained that you palmed the coin. Glance up suddenly to your right-hand side and exclaim, "Ah, there is another. Really this little-known treasury of the air comes in most conveniently.

When one is short of money one only has to catch it thus." Whilst speaking the right hand makes another grab in the air, and brings the coin from the palm to between the tips of first finger and thumb. This is not difficult. I cannot describe how it is done, but any one who has learned to palm a coin will find no difficulty with a little practice in bringing it to the finger tips.

Once more feign to throw it into the hat, but really palm it, the left hand dropping another coin as before to complete the deception. Again catch it in the air and feign to throw it up towards the ceiling, really palming it. The left hand, with hat, is quickly held just under the spot where it was pretended to

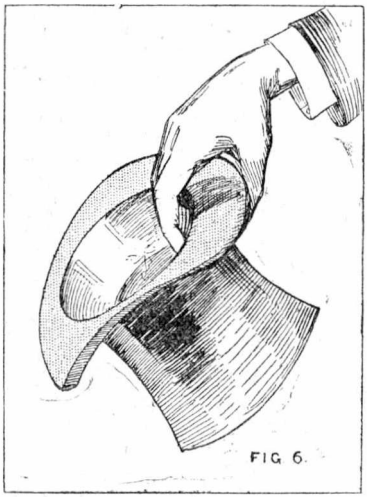


FIG. 6.

be thrown up, and the performer, looking upwards, as though following the flight of the coin up in the air and then downwards, and just as the glance comes down to the hat the left hand lets another coin fall. This is most effective if well done, but needs practice. It appears as though the coin were thrown into the air and as it fell dropped into the hat, it having, of course, in reality never left the right hand.

Catch the coin in the air again and pretend to put it into your mouth, and make a contortion of face and body, as though swallowing it. As the hand comes to the mouth the coin is palmed. This palm requires practice before a looking-glass, as it is not easy to make it appear that the coin is placed into the mouth, and there must be no mistake about the deception. Now say, "This one I will blow into the hat." Hold the hat just in front of mouth and blow, the left hand releasing yet another coin. The audience will laugh; and you remark, "It's so simple."

In some such way dispose of coin after coin until all the 10 have been released by the left hand. Now walk amongst your audience, picking out eight or nine of the coins and allowing them to fall in a shower back into the hat. Do this two or three times, the last time when just opposite a gentleman. In showering them back into the hat retain three or four in palm of right hand, and thrusting it quickly behind the flap of the man's coat, clink the coins in palm and withdraw the hand. It will appear as though you had taken them from behind the lapel of his coat. You must now pretend to cast these coins into the hat as follows: Bring the right hand containing them to the opening of the hat, with a sharp, downward movement, allowing the wrist to strike the edge of the opening. This will cause the coins in the hat to jump and clink together as though you had just thrown some in. The right hand, of course, never releases its coins. Go to a lady, and diving your right hand—carefully, of course—into the trimming of her hat, take the coins once more therefrom, and make another false throw, as before, into the hat. Catch the coins once again from, say, a handkerchief end, which may be sticking out of some one's pocket or from beneath a gentleman's cuff.

Walk back to your table, and, as you do so, unseen insert the second bundle of coins from the other pocket, breaking the thread as you do so. This makes up the number in the hat supposed to have been caught.

Take the coins out on to the table and proceed to use some of them for another trick, say the following:

Odds or Evens.

This is a very simple trick, requiring no skill whatever, and yet, if well worked up in the manner and talk with which it is introduced, appears quite marvellous.

Say, "I would ask a gentleman to assist me in a thought-reading experiment. This is not a feat of magic. It is merely an example of mind-reading. Now I will ask this gentleman to hold this hat." Give it to him, and see that he holds it at arm's length. "Next I will ask him or any one in the audience to take any number of coins they may choose from their pockets, and, after counting them, without my having any means of learning the number,

to place them into the hat." Let them do this, and when the coins are duly in the hat, turn to the assistant and say, "Now, sir, I want you to concentrate your thoughts upon the number therein. It is impossible that I at present know whether it is an odd or an even number. Is that so?" He must of necessity reply that you cannot know. "Now," you continue. "I will try the power of my mind to read this gentleman's thoughts as to whether there are an odd or an even number of coins inside the hat, which has so kindly been lent to me. If I find the number even, I will drop so many coins into this hat as shall make the total number odd. Whilst if I, on the other hand, discover an odd number in the hat, I will add so many more as shall make the number equal.

"Now, sir, think of the number—thank you—I have it." Look very mysterious, quickly seize some of your coins from the table, and cast them openly into the hat.

"Now, sir, please count and see whether I have read your thoughts correctly." Count, "One, two, three, four," and so on aloud as he takes the coins from the hat. If there be an odd number, you exclaim, "You see, ladies and gentlemen, I read his thoughts aright. He had placed an even number—twelve (or whatever it was, of course deducting the number you added) in the hat. If the total taken out is even, you exclaim, "You see, I was right there were an odd number—eleven"—or whatever it was, less your added ones—"in the hat."

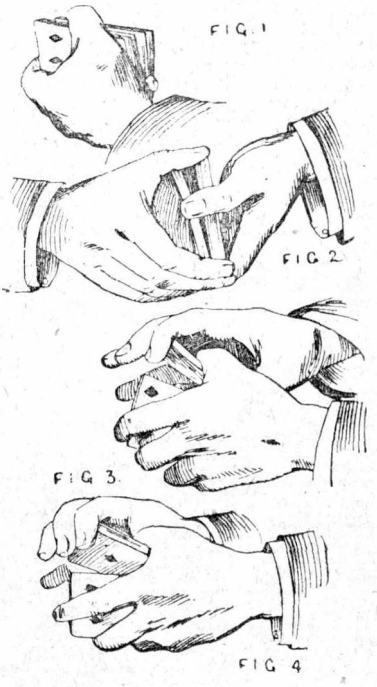
The whole secret is that you add an odd number always, because an odd number added to an even one makes an odd, whilst an odd added to an odd makes an even number result.

Should you repeat the experiment twice, add, say, only one or three coins the second time, so that it shall appear quite different from the number you added at the first attempt.

CHAPTER III.

Sleights of Hand Necessary in Conjuring with Cards.

Equally popular with coin tricks are those performed with cards. Almost every house contains a pack of cards, and this handiness has doubtless gone far to make card tricks so prominent a part of every performer's programme. A good conjurer should be able at a pinch to use any cards which may be tendered to him. At the same time there are some sorts more suitable than others, and my young readers, whose hands are not so big as grown men's, will find French cards or American gem cards the best. Hamley's, in High Holborn, sell the former at 1s. a pack, and the gems at 2s. The latter differ from ordinary packs only in that they are a trifle smaller and easier for a small hand to palm. Many conjurers use no



others than gems, as, unless closely examined, the difference in size is even undetectable. For the now fashionable back and front palming brought into such prominence by Howard Thurston, Paul Valadon, and other clever magicians, a specially suitable quality of card is that known under the name of "Steamboat." These cost only 1s. a pack.

Having now selected our materials we will proceed to their use.

The pass known as the "sauter la coupe" is the most important preliminary. Once this and the palm are acquired a vast range of tricks are open to the performer; in fact, few tricks require any other than these two sleights. Now there are several methods of making the pass, and I here give Charles Bertram's, which I consider far superior to any other.

The effect of making the pass is to invisibly make the upper and lower halves of the pack change places. As a rule, in practice it is used to bring a card which is chosen by some one and replaced in the centre of the pack to the top, so that the performer may read its suit and value, and have it handy for any further purpose of the trick, unknown to the audience.

We will assume that a card has been chosen and the performer asks

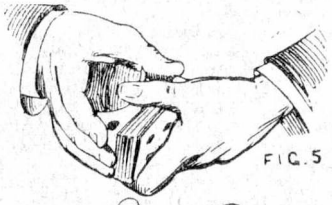


FIG. 5

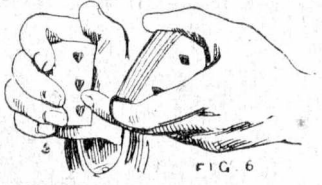
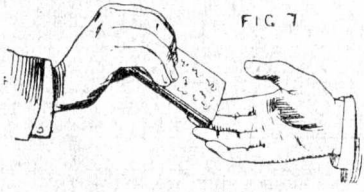


FIG. 6

FIG. 7



the chooser to replace it in the centre of the pack. He holds the pack face downwards in the left hand, and with the right hand raises about half the cards six inches or so from the rest. The chooser of the card places it face downwards upon those in the performer's left hand. The half of the cards in the right hand are immediately placed down upon it, and apparently the chosen card is thus lost in the centre of the pack. What happens, however, is this. Just as the upper half is set down on to the chosen card the performer inserts the little finger of his left hand on top of the chosen card at the end of the pack, nearest to his body. (Fig. 1.)

The right hand now comes to the pack as though to square up the cards. As the right hand approaches the left hand fingers are slightly opened. This allows the part above the little finger (which we may call No. 1) to fall open from the other (No. 2) about one inch at the top of the pack and about two inches at the bottom (the end nearest the body). Now the first finger and thumb of right hand grasp No. 2 half at the top and bottom of cards (Fig. 2). The first, second, and third fingers of left hand press against the back of No. 1 half, and so grip it between themselves and the little finger, so that by opening the fingers somewhat, the No. 1 half is brought downwards. At the same time the thumb of the left hand presses on the top of the centre of No. 2 half (Fig. 3). This levels it up, the first finger and thumb of right hand being the pivots, so allowing the No. 1 half to be slid in beneath it. The right hand squares up cards and the pass is finished.

The position of the cards and hands must be such that the audience see the back of the right hand all the time, the fingers being kept close together, forming a screen, behind which the left hand removes the No. 1 half and places it beneath the No. 2 half, unseen by the audience. As the chosen card was the top of No. 2 half, it is now, of course, at the top of the pack at your disposal.

This all sound difficult, but it is not. Take your cards in hand, follow these instructions movement by movement half a dozen times slowly, then try without the instructions

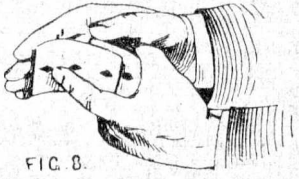


FIG. 8.

before a mirror and keep on at it for a few minutes each day, until at length it will come to you like "second nature."

The Palm.

Of almost equal importance with the above, the palm is, if anything, slightly easier to learn.

Take the pack in the left hand in just the position you would if about to deal cards. Bring the right hand down to it, placing the forefinger on the top edge and with the thumb raise about half an inch at the other end as many cards as it is desired to palm and slip in the little finger of left hand between the cards so raised and the rest.

By pressing with the fingers and thumb of right hand the raised cards will be bent into a somewhat circular shape (Fig. 5). Move away the left hand with the pack, but just

as it leaves the other cards, thrust out the second finger of left hand, striking the centre of the cards between fingers and thumb of right hand (Fig. 6). This will cause them to spring into the palm of the hand, where they are easily held. The hand may be half closed, bending the cards round inside it till they are almost double. It will not hurt them, as when released they spring out flat once more.

The movement away of the left hand with the pack must not be arrested in the slightest. The second finger does its little push as the hand moves away.

The right hand, with the palmed cards, must on no account move until the left is well away from it.

When the left has moved well away it may be brought back to the right hand when the latter grasps it, as in Fig. 7, and may in this position hand it to any one to be shuffled and retake it without the least fear of detection. In fact, this free use of the right hand whilst the card or cards are palmed helps largely in diverting the audience from any idea of the true state of affairs.

To Palm Cards from the Bottom of Pack.

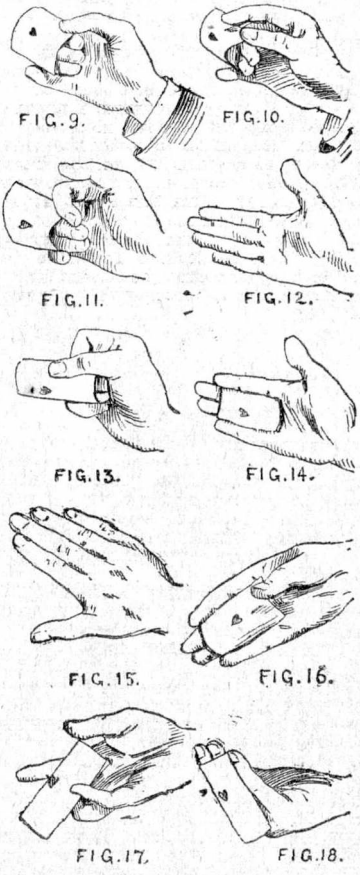
Hold the pack in left hand and bring the right hand to it as though to square up the cards. As it reaches the pack the first finger of left hand pushes forward the bottom card or cards so that their edges touch the fingers of right hand. The other fingers and thumb of the left hand draw away the pack, the first finger all the while pressing on the card or cards until they clear the pack and spring into the right palm (Fig. 8). The left continues its movement away with the pack, and the palm is completed.

The Back and Front Palm with Cards.

This is the latest sleight with cards, and it is the ambition of every conjuror to excel in this feat. It is really not difficult, but only requires determined practice.

Take a card between the first finger and thumb of either hand—one should be able to make this sleight equally well with either hand—allow it to fall across the back of fingers, and grip its other edge with little finger, between itself and third finger (Fig. 9). Now draw out first finger and pass it down the face edge at other side of card (Fig. 10), removing the thumb so that this finger presses it between itself and second finger (Fig. 11). Now, if the fingers are extended the card has disappeared entirely behind the hand (Fig. 12).

First make these movements slowly and carefully, gradually increasing the speed as facility comes, until they all blend into one instantaneous movement. Then when making the sleight, give the hand an upward throw, as though throwing the card in space, the card being thus sent to the back of the hand as



it moves. The effect is most startling and pretty.

Now, in order to immediately show "that you did not conceal the card at the back of your hand"—conjurers are allowed these little lapses from the strict truth so long as they confine them to their tricks—you turn it over forwards, and show the back empty.

As the hand comes over, the following takes place: The fingers are closed round to the palm and the

thumb grips the card, as in Fig. 13, and draws it into the palm of the hand, the fingers meanwhile sliding up the back of it and gripping its edges at the other end beween the first and second fingers and third and little fingers, as in Fig. 14. The turn of the hand is completed and the back of the hand is seen to be empty. As before, practise this part of the trick slowly at first, then more quickly, until it becomes one motion as the hand turns over to show the back (Fig. 15).

To instantaneously show the front of hand empty again, the hand once more turns over, this time backwards, and as it does so the thumb presses the edge of the card, as in Fig. 16, and slides it over the tips of the fingers (Fig. 17), to the back of hand once more, as in Fig. 18, and as the fingers straighten out it is completely hidden.

In this way the hand can be turned backwards and forwards to the audience as often as desired, and finally a grab is made with it in the air, and the card caught. This is effected by the little finger relaxing its grip and the thumb grasping the other corner of the card, so bringing it to the original position.

To Force a Card.

In very many tricks it is necessary to be able to ask some one in the audience to select a card, allowing them to think that they make a perfectly uninfluenced choice and yet compelling them unconsciously to take a certain card known to the performer.

To do this neatly and without creating suspicion is no easy matter and requires great coolness and self-confidence. Needless to say, both these qualities will increase with experience. The cards are held with both hands, faces downwards, and fanned out, as in Fig. 19, the performer having previously, by means of the above-described pass, brought the particular card to be forced to about the centre of the pack, and also having marked its position by retaining his left-hand little finger upon it after the pass was completed. As he holds the cards out towards the chooser, he commences to pass cards across from left to right rapidly, as though moving them by in this way to give the chooser a wide selection. As the hand of the chooser is extended to grasp a card, the performer passes across the one desired, so that it shall just reach his fingers as they reach the pack. It is the judgment and discretion with which this is done upon which the success of the "force" entirely depends.

Some people absolutely cannot be "forced," and persist in taking a card from one end or other of the pack. In such a case, do not show the least annoyance or disappointment. Merely say, "Thank you.

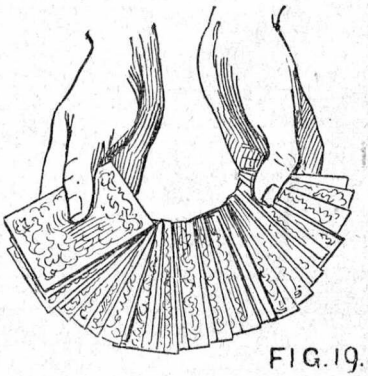


FIG. 19.

Now, sir, will you replace your card without my seeing it. Thank you."

As you move to some one else you make the pass, bringing his card to the top and get a sight of it, saying, "I can read your thoughts instantly. You chose a—— Isn't it wonderful? Now, perhaps, you will also choose a card"—offering the cards to some one else, who will probably at once take the desired card.

CHAPTER IV.

A Startling Discovery of a Chosen Card.

The performer invites the selection of any card from the pack. The chooser replaces the card in the middle of the pack, and performer proceeds to thoroughly shuffle the cards. The top and bottom cards of pack are now displayed, showing that the chosen one is actually lost amidst the rest.

As he concludes, "So you see your card is well shuffled into the others, and is not at the top or bottom of the pack," the pack is laid faces upwards upon the table, "But is that it?" Whilst saying "But is that it?" the performer has sharply tilted the table forwards, sending all the cards flying on to the floor, with the exception of the chosen one, which remains lying on the centre of the table.

The secret is that before commencing the experiment the wizard attaches to a waistcoat button a short length of black thread with a knot at the loose end. This knot is coated like a little pill with conjurer's wax

(3½d. a box at Hamley's, High Holborn). The wax ball is pressed against the before-mentioned button, the slack of thread hanging down in front of performer.

As the card is replaced in pack, the

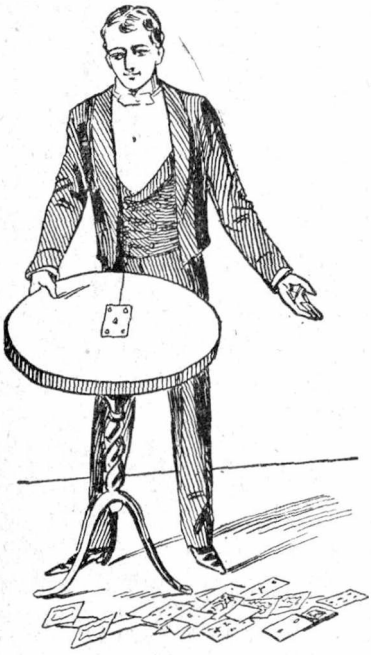


Fig. 1.

pass is made, bringing it to the top.

The performer "false" shuffles the cards ad lib., and on returning to his table secures the wax pellet, and presses it against the back of the top card. He displays face of pack, and then lifts off two cards from top together, as though only taking one, and, of course, only shows the face of the second one to audience.

The pack is placed on table, and when the tilt is given the waxed thread holds the chosen card in position.

The thread must be of such length as to just reach to centre of table when it is leaning forward a little.

Passing a Card Through a Handkerchief.

This is a very pretty little experiment, needing no great skill, as it only involves the pass and the palm, each to be made once.

The pack is handed to any one in the audience, with the request that a card be selected. The performer, taking the remainder, asks the chooser to show his card to the others present, the performer meanwhile turning his back by permission, in order that there may be no idea of his possibly seeing the card. He next desires the chooser to replace the card in the pack, he slipping his little finger on top of the card, as explained in the last chapter, and making the pass, so bringing it to the top. Whilst asking the loan of a handkerchief, the card is palmed, and the pack handed to the lender to shuffle. Taking the handkerchief with the left hand, it is lightly thrown over the right hand and forearm, so hiding the palmed card. After the shuffling, the assistant is requested to place the pack on the centre of the handkerchief over performer's hand. Now fold the handkerchief over the cards from front towards arm, and grasp and raise the pack with fingers and thumb of left hand, bringing up also the palmed card (Fig. 2). The right hand then gathers up the hanging ends of the handkerchief, and allows the pack to fall to the position of Fig. 3, when by giving it a slight jerk the card slides apparently "through" the handkerchief.

Telling a Chosen Card by Its Weight

is a very easy yet effective trick. Hand the pack to some one, asking them to choose any 12 cards. This done, request another person to chose one card out of these 12, emphasizing the fact that the 12 cards were chosen without your being in any way able to influence which were taken. As will be presently seen, the particular 12 cards taken have no effect at all so far as the trick is concerned; but one of the principal things in conjuring is to make much to the audience of details which are really nothing to do with the trick, and to quietly pass over the important parts when you are accomplishing your end, without drawing any attention to them whatever. Thus the audience look on the important parts as details requiring no scrutiny, whilst they are directed to use all their powers of observation to things which will in no way enlighten them.

Ask the chooser to show to the others and to himself, remember the card, and then to hand it to you—of course, face downwards. Take also the other 11, and, handing them all to some one near, but holding them in such a manner that every one must see that you could not obtain a sight of the faces of any of them, request that they be thoroughly shuffled. Whilst the shuffling is being done, address your friends somewhat as follows: "Now, it may

surprise you to know that I have lately discovered that I am possessed of an extraordinary faculty of weighing sensitive objects. Now, every card in a pack varies in weight just a trifle from every other one. You might very well consider that this difference would be so slight as to prevent any one discovering it without a most delicately-adjusted weighing instrument. Not so with me. When you (turning to the one

FIG. 2.

who chose the card) selected the card, I duly noted the weight, and so accurately can I judge these things that if you (turning to the shuffler) will now hand me the cards one by one, I will weigh them, and I have no doubt can thus tell the chosen card again by the difference in its weight from the others."

Taking the cards one by one, lay each first on the left hand, and then transfer it to the right hand, making a slight movement and gesture as though computing very exactly its weight; throw each aside until you come to the chosen one, when, as you place it on to the right hand, allow the hand to drop a few inches as though a much heavier weight was placed upon it than before, remarking, "Yes, this was the card; I distinguished it at once. It is distinctly heavier than any of the others." The secret, as is always the case with the best tricks, is very simple.

When the card is chosen, and you take it to the second person to shuffle with the others, you press firmly upon the corner at which you hold it with the nail of your thumb, so making a slight dent. When laying the cards first on left hand and then on right, "to weigh them," you have the opportunity to feel each end of the card, and so discovering the dent, know the card again, whilst it is so slight a mark that no one else will notice it. The trick is most effective if well acted up to—in fact, all conjuring needs clever make believe even more than skilful manipulation, though one is of no avail unless backed up by the other.

The manipulation any one can acquire with practice, but the acting part requires a lot of "head work" to arrange successfully.

If performing with one's own cards there is another method even more simple. It is to use marked cards. Now, it only needs one tiny dot half the size of a pin's head to be placed in the pattern on the back of a card for the performer to instantly read the suit and value. Choose a pack which has a distinct pattern in separate pieces of ornament running across the backs, similar to that in Fig. 4. If the dot is put close to the

FIG. 3.

first ornament near left hand corner, it shows the card is a heart; if near second from left, it denotes clubs; near third, diamonds; and if near fourth ornament, it is spades. Now, according to the position above at side, centre, or below the ornament,

one reads the value of the card. Look at Fig. 5. This shows positions and what they denote, thus Fig. 6 represents the three of hearts. If the dot had been half-way down the ornament on left side, it would have been the king of hearts, and so on.

Now, as each card in the pack is marked, and the performer has only to glance at the back to immediately read its value just as readily as if he saw the face of it, a most useful pack has been created by means of which all sorts of surprises for the audience may be devised.

A Thought-Reading Experiment

The cards may be shuffled, and half a dozen people each choose a card.

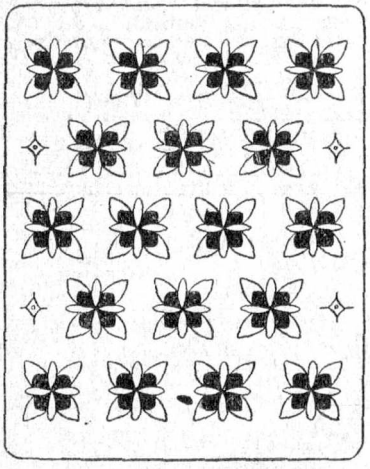


FIG. 4.

The performer then takes the pack, and invites each to slip his or her card in wherever they like, and another spectator reshuffles the whole; but the performer immediately, by merely looking along his wand held as a telescope, can inform each of the persons which card they selected. In order to make sure of this, the end row of ornaments at each end of the cards (Fig 6) should be marked as above—that is to say, there should be two dots, one at each end of every card, lest the chooser, in replacing it in the pack, should unwittingly cover with his finger the mark at one end; then the performer notes that at the other end as the card is brought to the pack.

To Catch a Card on the Point of a Sword

is a very effective trick, accomplished by means of some sleight of hand and a very ingeniously constructed trick sword. The latter may be purchased at a cost of a few shillings at Hamley's Magical Saloon, High Holborn. The effect of the experiment is as follows: A member of

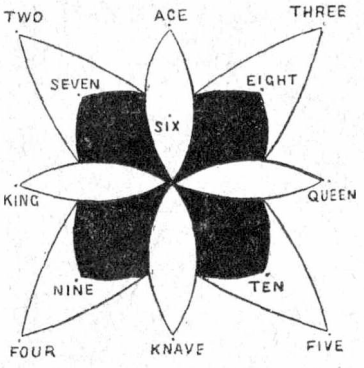


FIG. 5.

the audience draws a card from the pack, and duly notes its suit and value. It is immediately replaced, and thoroughly shuffled into the others. At the performer's request, the volunteer assistant throws the pack into the air, and as it comes down the performer plunges the point of a fine sword amongst the falling cards. One card is caught transfixed

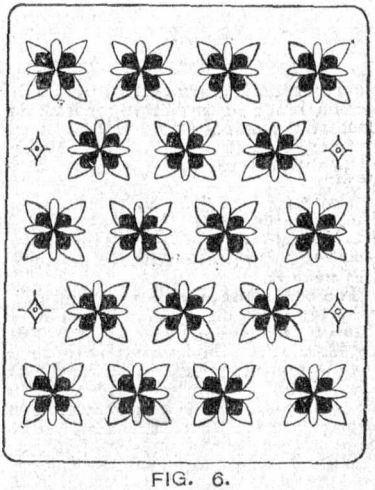


FIG. 6.

upon its point, and, needless to say, it is that which was previously drawn.

What has to be done is as follows: There is a small metal plate, with turned over edges, at one side of the handle of the sword, into which is slipped a duplicate card of one which

the performer places at the bottom of his pack ready for making the pass to bring it to the centre of the pack (Fig. 7). The card has previously been transfixed with the point of the blade of the sword, which is removable, and is attached to a piece of elastic that allows of its being drawn down to the plate in the handle.

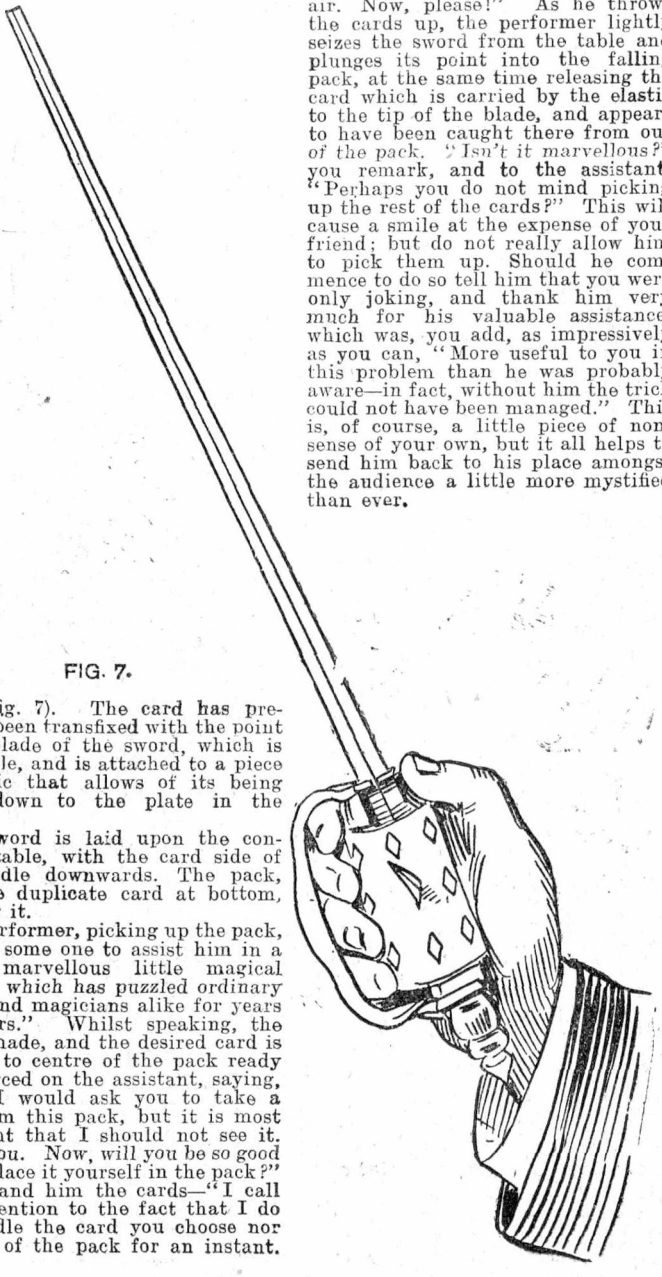


FIG. 7.

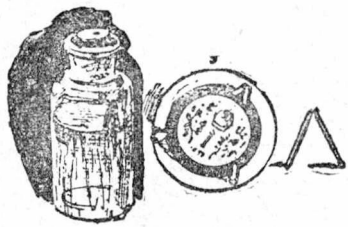
The sword is laid upon the conjurer's table, with the card side of the handle downwards. The pack, with the duplicate card at bottom, lies near it.

The performer, picking up the pack, asks for some one to assist him in a "most marvellous little magical problem which has puzzled ordinary people and magicians alike for years and years." Whilst speaking, the pass is made, and the desired card is brought to centre of the pack ready to be forced on the assistant, saying, "Now, I would ask you to take a card from this pack, but it is most important that I should not see it. Thank you. Now, will you be so good as to replace it yourself in the pack?" —here hand him the cards—"I call your attention to the fact that I do not handle the card you choose nor the rest of the pack for an instant. You yourself replace the card, and thoroughly shuffle the pack. Now comes the dangerous part. I want you to throw the whole pack into the air. Now, please!" As he throws the cards up, the performer lightly seizes the sword from the table and plunges its point into the falling pack, at the same time releasing the card which is carried by the elastic to the tip of the blade, and appears to have been caught there from out of the pack. "Isn't it marvellous?" you remark, and to the assistant, "Perhaps you do not mind picking up the rest of the cards?" This will cause a smile at the expense of your friend; but do not really allow him to pick them up. Should he commence to do so tell him that you were only joking, and thank him very much for his valuable assistance, which was, you add, as impressively as you can, "More useful to you in this problem than he was probably aware—in fact, without him the trick could not have been managed." This is, of course, a little piece of nonsense of your own, but it all helps to send him back to his place amongst the audience a little more mystified than ever.

Trick with a Bottle, a Coin, and a Match.

Surprising yet simple is a new match trick which is attracting much attention. It can be performed with a bottle, small coin, and a match.

Suppose you are sitting with some friends at a table. You break a match in the middle, without quite severing the two parts. This match you place over the mouth of a moderately wide-necked bottle. Upon the match you place a small coin, such as a halfpenny.



The trick then is to drop the halfpenny into the bottle without touching the match, the coin, or the bottle. Nobody who does not know the trick can do it, and one would be very unlikely to find out how by experiment.

The trick is performed by letting one or two drops of water fall upon the match at the spot where it is half-broken. The wood at once begins to swell, the two ends of the match to spread apart, and in a short time the coin will fall.

Profiles Made by Paper Wads.

A wad of dry paper made by crushing the paper loosely in the hand, will, under certain conditions of light, always throw the shadow of a grotesque human face in profile.

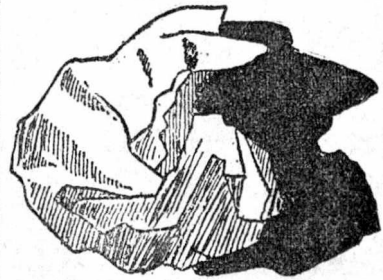
The process is simple, and the materials are easily obtained, an outfit consisting of a sheet of white cardboard, a pencil, and a very few small sheets of tissue, or very lightweight wrapping-paper.

Place yourself in a position that will bring all the light from one side or the other. Avoid cross lights and lights directly above you. By getting a side light you will get a clear, distinct outline of good proportions.

If the work is done at night—which is the best time to get the clearest shadows—the most favourable results are obtained by taking your seat at the table a little to the right or left of a suspended light, care being taken to have no other light in the room. Place your cardboard on the table before you, take a sheet of the tissue paper, wad it loosely, not compactly, in the hand, and let it fall on the cardboard in any position that it will. The shadow cast by the wad,

when outlined by your pencil, will be found to be a human face of some kind, either exaggeratedly comical, characteristic, or quaint. They are sometimes beautiful, but always curious.

The silhouettes may be finished, if so desired, by supplying eyes, ears,



and other features necessary to complete the profile.

The same piece of paper may be wadded and used again and again, with ever-varying results. It will in

time, however, become too much creased and wrinkled to make a sufficiently sharp outline. If it should become torn or ragged, it should be discarded, and a new piece substituted, as the irregularities of the tear will often mar an otherwise excellent profile.

Boiling Water in a Paper Cup.

An experimenter has discovered that water can be boiled in a paper vessel. Out of a sheet of strong paper cut a disc about 6in. in diameter. Next take a piece of wire, not too thin, making at one end thereof a ring about 3in. in diameter, wrapping the other end spirally round a candle and keeping it in place by sticking a pin into the candle just below the lower end. By pressing the disc of paper into the hollow of one hand, it is given a bowl shape. In placing this bowl in the wire ring, care must to taken to

let its rim project about an inch above the support, as this makes it possible to pour into the paper dish so much water that the surface of the latter is slightly above the wire, this being absolutely necessary to the success of the experiment.

It is also necessary that the flame of the candle almost reaches, or even slightly touches, the bottom of the bowl. In a few seconds after lighting the candle, the water will begin to boil, the paper remaining intact because the water absorbs the entire heat of the flame.

The "Q" Trick.

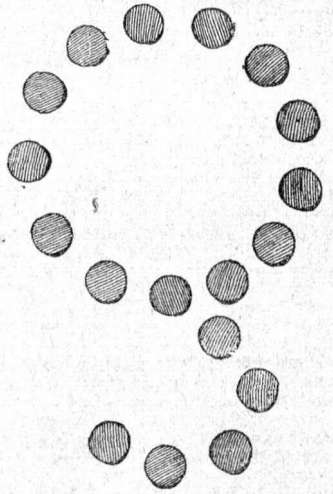
By means of a very simple arrangement you can appear to be possessed of considerable powers of thought-reading.

Arrange a number of coins, counters, or cards on a table as in figure in the shape of a capital Q with, say, five in the tail.

Ask somebody while you are out of the room to touch any number of the counters, coins, or cards he may decide upon, which must be above the number in the tail, beginning at the tail of the Q and counting up the left-hand side, and then to count backwards an equal number; but not to go down the tail. He will, therefore, have to count up the right-hand side of the letter.

When he has done his counting, walk straight over to the table on *which the counters are arranged*, and say, "That was the last counter you touched," and point to the fifth *counter from* the point of junction.

The reason is, of course, that as there are five counters in the tail,



which have not been recounted, the person counting must pass the point of junction by the same number.

If you make a second attempt at telling, alter the circle and the number in the tail, for if it be shown several times with the same size Q the spectators will possibly "tumble to the trick." And always remember that the distance of the last counter touched will be equal to the number in the tail.

The Sore Finger.

Take a champagne cork, and wrap a little piece of linen round it just as you would round a cut finger, and twist a piece of cotton round it two or three times, leaving the ends hanging. The linen must overlap the cork about half an inch at one end and about 1½in. at the other. Bend your first finger at the second joint, as in Fig. 1, and place against it the end of the cork, where the linen overlaps 1½in., taking care that the ends of the cotton lie on top, and grasp it into position with the thumb and other fingers, as in Fig. 2. Ask some member of the company if he would mind just tying the cotton for you. He will ask you how you hurt your finger, and one or two others will doubtless be interested, and also in-

quire "What is the matter?" to which you reply, "Oh, it's nothing; only a scratch. If you don't mind just tying this cotton, it will be right in a minute." Your friend will pro-


FIG 1

ceed to tie it very gently, so as not to hurt you. As he does so, you quietly draw away your hand, leaving the linen and the cork swinging from the cotton which he is tying. The


FIG 2.

effect is much more ludicrous than it appears in describing, if it be well acted up to. Of course, you carry the cork and linen and cotton in your

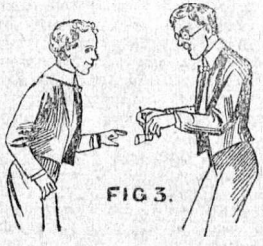


FIG 3.

pocket, and seize a suitable opportunity to slip it on to end of your finger unseen before offering to some one to tie.

The "Whispering Trick."

In that clever book, "Tricks with Cards," there is a very amusing experiment, which, as it requires no skill in sleight of hand, but is merely a catch, may well be included amongst my trifles

Commence by announcing that you will show the company a marvellous example of the effect of sympathy. You will show it to them one at a time in another room, lest the cross currents of sympathy in the one you are in should spoil the effect. Take one of those present into another room, and hand him or her a pack of cards, inviting the individual to choose any card and return you the remainder.

"Now, I shall tell the card you have chosen, but only in a whisper, and the remarkable sympathy effect is such, that, though I tell you the wrong card, you will still think I have named the right one."

Ask that the card be replaced, holding the pack face outwards for this to be done, so that the card is placed at the bottom of the pack. Immediately pass the pack behind your back in such a manner as shall leave no doubt whatever that you did not see the card.

Next ask the subject to give you his right hand, which you take in your left, so that you will be standing face to face but a foot or so apart. Look searchingly into his eyes for an instant, and then, leaning over a little towards him, say, in a whisper, "Your card was (here mumble so that nothing definite is heard)," making the mumbling in a very low voice. The subject will say, "I beg your pardon," or words to the effect that he did not catch what you said.

Still holding his right hand, step close up to him, and, bending your head, whisper in his ear, "I said your card was the ——," naming whichever it may have been. How do you know which it is? Why, quite simply. As you step close up to him, to whisper the second time, you pass your hand with the pack round his left side, and in leaning the head over to whisper in his ear, you see the last card behind his back, and give its title. Ask this victim to sit down, and invite another in from the other room, and go through the same with him. The fun now commences, for, of course, the first one sees how simply he was deceived when watching you dealing with the next, until you have a room full of people all in the know laughing at each fresh outsider being hoaxed.

Dancers in a Soap Bubble.

Here is a beautiful and simple experiment. Take an ordinary square wooden ruler, and cut off a piece about 30in. in length.

Next take a thin piece of wire, which must be somewhat longer than the longer portion of the ruler, and twist each of its two ends into a little ring. After this is done, nail the rings to the two ends of the longer portion of the ruler, and then place the smaller portion under the wire in the same position that a string of a violin is placed on a bridge.

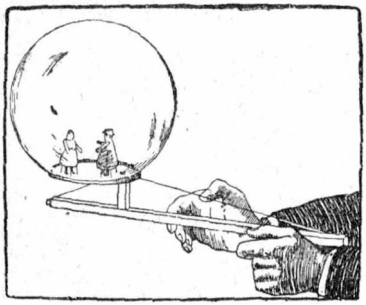
Now, if you strike the wire, it will give forth a sound, and this sound will change according to the pressure of your finger.

Next cut out of cork a few little figures. They must resemble dancers, and you can make them more pic-

turesque by giving them a coat of oil paint. Moreover, under each there must be three supports, which are to be stuck into the cork, and can be made out of little bits of wire. These miniature dancers are to be placed on a tin floor (the top or bottom of any common tin box will suffice for this purpose), the edge of which is to be nailed to the upright portion of the ruler in the manner shown in the accompanying picture.

The dancers are now to be dipped in soap and water, and the tin floor is to be moistened with the same fluid. Immediately afterwards the figures should be placed in position on the floor, and a large soap bubble should then be blown over them, and in such a manner that it will rest on the floor.

As a result, we have as beautiful a ball room as one could wish to see.



Moreover, we can have music and dancing, for if we strike the wire the vibrations will act on the tin floor of the ball room, and the tiny figures will begin to dance enthusiastically, and will continue to dance as long as we furnish them with music.

The Enchanted Knives.

Ask for a couple of ordinary table knives, and declare that if any one will take them and hide them wherever they like, you will instantly show where they are concealed. You offer that the garden or anywhere outside or inside the house will do; there is no restriction. The hider may go off alone, all the rest of company remaining in the room with you, so that there shall be no possibility of any one communicating to you where he has hidden them. There is only one condition—"he must hide each of the two knives in a different place." Saying, "Here you are; hide this one first, wherever you like, but don't be too long," you send him off with one. Directly he is out of the room and the door shut, plunge the blade of the second one into the fire or the flame of a gaslight, holding it till it is just too hot to hold with comfort. Care must be taken not to overheat it, as then the experiment would become brutal.

If the hider is a few minutes away, it can be plunged into the flame once or twice for a few seconds, so as to keep the steel just at right heat. The hider will return probably quite jauntily, feeling perfectly certain his secret place of hiding the first could not possibly be found under an hour's search. As he comes in you say, "Ah, have you hidden that one securely? Here is the second." Hold it out blade end, so that he must grasp the blade between his fingers. The shout of laughter which follows his instantaneous dropping of the hot thing ends the experiment, except the persuading the boy at whose expense the joke was played to reveal the first knife. Should he not take it in good part and refuse to disclose where the first knife reposes, it might give some trouble to find it. But, then, most boys are too good-tempered and fond of fun for any joke to be taken other than it was meant—good naturedly.

The Elastic Man

Requires a couple of poles about 9ft. long, a sheet or travelling rug, a pair of boots, and a couple of parcels about 1ft. broad and 9in. or 10in. through. The two ends of the poles are tied together with a string, which allows them to lay about 9in. apart. All these requisites are, of course, prepared beforehand, and lie to hand in another room.

Announce that "you have recently discovered yourself to have a most wonderful power of elasticity. You can stretch or contract your body to any extent you desire." Ask a couple of the company—one about about your own height and the other a

little shorter—to come into the next room with you for a moment. Fig. 2 shows how you re-enter the room, stretched to some 7ft. Speak in a very feeble voice to explain that when stretched like this you become very exhausted. Retire once more, and

FIG 1

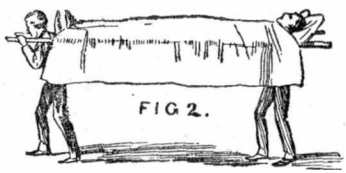


FIG 2.

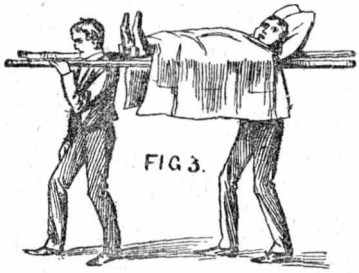


FIG 3.

return—about 3ft. long. Fig. 3 explains how you manage the shortening.

The second member who came out with you is left in the other room, and really takes no part, the idea of asking for two being that the audience are led to believe that he is the second bearer, but that owing to his lack of inches his head is concealed under the sheet or rug.

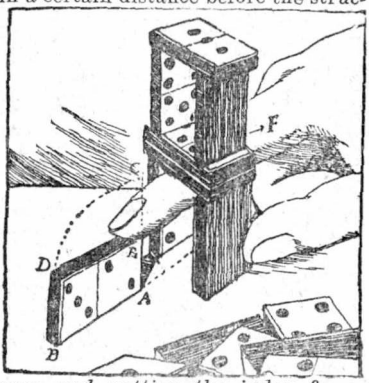
The Strolling Minstrels.

In a family whose members are musical a good deal of fun may be given by arranging a sheet of canvas across a folding door space between two rooms. On one side of the canvas are painted on a background of any colour which may be chosen three or more comic figures, such as those in illustration. A hole is cut in the canvas where the head of each figure should be. The singers are behind the canvas, and push their heads through these holes, as in figure, and sing a humorous song or a serious one in a humorous style. If some one of them has a deep bass voice, his head should be put through over the figure of the lady, and so on. The more ludicrous

the effect the greater will be the success of the item.

Domino Experiment.

Take two pieces and stand them upright, the two white sides facing one another. Place another horizontally over them, and a fourth one eyes upward on top of it. The task is to knock out the lower horizontal piece in such a way that the rest will not be disturbed. It is done by placing a piece in the direction A B in a certain distance before the structure, and putting the index finger on the edge of it. By pressing abruptly down with the finger we drive the piece in the direction of D C. If you have succeeded in measuring the distance correctly, the horizontal piece will be hit and driven to F, while the upper pieces drop on the two upright pieces, and form the same figure without being disarranged.



Two Match Puzzles.

Lay six matches upon the table, and, handing some one five more, say, "Add these five matches to those six so as to make nine." The six are laid as in Fig. 1, and the solution is in Fig. 2.

The very best of all like the above well-known one is an almost new

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4.

puzzle. Lay five matches upon the table, hand some one three more, and say, "Add these three to those five upon the table, and make a well-known quotation from Shakespeare." Most people will probably give it up very quickly, and you place the three as shown in Fig. 4. The onlookers will say, "Well, where is your quotation?" to which you reply, "There it is upon the table plainly enough, 'A little more than kin, but less than kind.'"

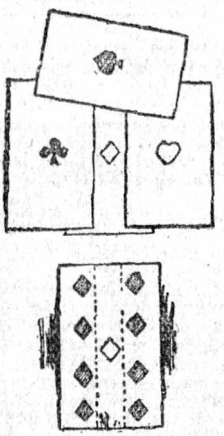
A Trick with the Dice-Box.

Our illustration shows the preparations for the trick. We hold the dice box in our right hand, together with two dice. The task is to throw the upper dice into the air and catch it in the dice box (not a very difficult trick). Much more difficult is the second part of the trick, namely, to throw the second dice up and catch it in the dice box without dropping the first dice out of the dice box. The only way to do it is the following: The second dice is not thrown up into the air and caught by the dice box when coming down; the fingers release their hold on the dice, and

hand and dice box make a quick downward motion, thereby the first dice will stay within the box, and it will not be difficult to catch the second one.

The Wandering Ace.

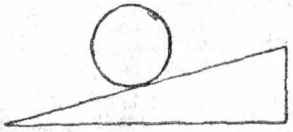
Place four aces on the table, as shown in the upper figure; shove them together, and mix them with the rest of the cards. Then give the cards to



somebody to hold. Have him look for the four aces, and, to the astonishment of everybody, one ace will be missing, and found in the pocket of the performer.

To Make a Roll of Paper Go Up Hill.

Fasten a piece of lead in the inside of a roll of paper, as shown in figure. Mark the location of the lead on the outside of the roll. Close both ends



of the roll with paper, and place it on the inclined board, as shown in figure. It will then roll up hill until the piece of lead is at the bottom, where it will remain without rolling down.

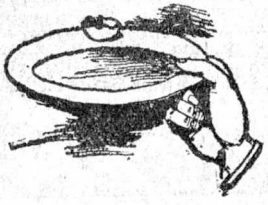
The Mysterious Steamboat.

Make the boat of strong cardboard, as shown in figure. The rudder turning about a pin as axle is connected with the sides of the boat by two pieces of thread of uneven length giving the rudder an angular position. A tub of water is the ocean, on which our little boat will steam about.

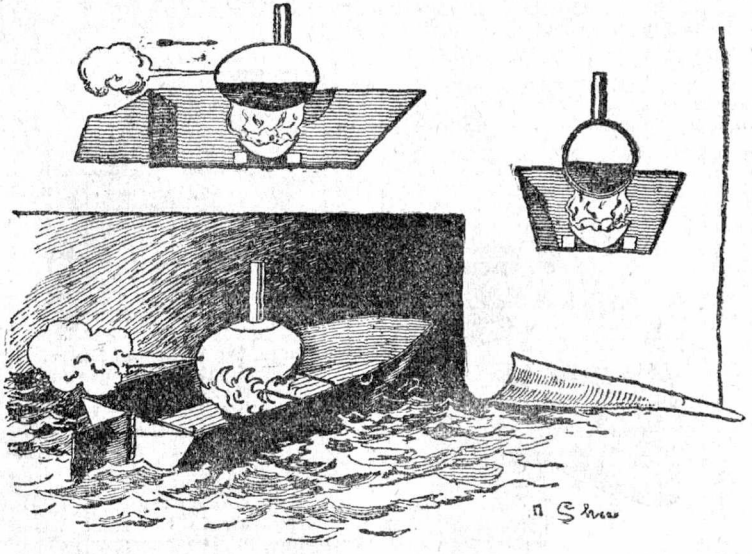
Two pieces of wire, bent as shown in figure, and fastened to the sides of the boat like hooks, have to carry an empty eggshell, the contents of which you have sucked out, leaving a little hole on one side, as shown in figure. The shell is filled with water up to the little hole, and represents the boiler, placed on the two pieces of wire, with the hole to the rear, somewhat above the rear wall of the boat. To heat the boiler, we use half of an eggshell placed on a piece of cork underneath the boiler, with a small piece of cottonwool in the centre. Pour some alcohol on the cottonwool, and set a match to it. The water will begin to boil in a few moments, and a fine stream of steam will leave the hole of the eggshell. The pressure of the steam on the air will move the little boat in the opposite direction—that is, forward—and we have a steamboat steaming without wheels or screws.

Revolution of the Earth.

Draw in the centre of a plate the picture of the sun, and wet the rim



of the plate with a little water. Place a piece of eggshell on the rim of the plate, and, tipping the plate slightly,



the eggshell will roll with a double motion—it will turn around itself, and move forward on the rim of the plate, as the earth revolves.

Swinging a Glass of Water.

Take an ordinary glass tumbler, placed on a round piece of cardboard and held firmly in place by cords, as shown in the illustration. Then about half-fill the tumbler with

water. Hold the string firmly and swing the tumbler round evenly and rapidly. Not a drop of the water will be spilt, owing to the fact that centrifugal force is driving the water towards the bottom of the tumbler.

The Dancing Wineglass.

Take two wine bottles of even size and close them with corks, as shown in the figure. Cut the top of the

corks in wedge shape. Take two table knives with heavy handles, and place them on the edges of the corks, as shown in the figure, their points touching each other. On the points of the knives place a thin wineglass filled with so much water that it balances on the tips of the knives.

Then carefully let a small metal ball or piece of money attached to a string down into the water without touching bottom, and you will see the glass sway down, and then up again, as soon as you remove the ball from the water.

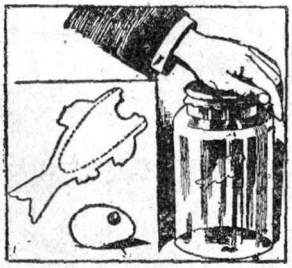
The experiment is best done with music, as the glass will appear to be dancing to the tune that is played.

The Obedient Fish.

A raw egg is blown out, after boring a small hole in both ends. One of the holes is carefully closed with a piece of wax. Draw two large eyes on the eggshell with lead pencil, as shown in figure, Then make a little bag of two pieces of red flannel, sewing them together along the dotted line. Put a few pieces of shot or a few small nails in the bag as ballast, and put the bag half over the eggshell, with the opening of the shell inside the bag. The edge of the bag is fastened to the shell with red sealing-wax, and the fish is ready.

Put the fish in a glass jar filled with water, covering the jar with stiff paper, which is tied with a piece of cord.

The ballast in the fish must be regulated in such a way that the fish



can swim on the surface of the water, but at the slightest pressure of the hand against the paper cover will sink to the bottom of the jar. By pressing slightly on the paper cover a little water will enter the fish through the small opening; the fish, getting heavier, will sink to the bottom. By releasing the pressure the compressed air in the shell forces the water out, the fish gets lighter, and rises in the water. Don't let the spectators see the little motions of the hand pressing on the cover, and the fish will appear as if obeying your command to rise or sink.

Magic Pills.

An entertaining little trick can be done with two pills made of bread. "One of the two pills I throw away," the performer says, "the other I put in my left hand, which I close. At the same moment the pill which I have thrown away will come back and join the other in the left hand."

And opening the hand, he shows the two little pills.

Solution: The whole trick lies in the right hand of the performer. Taking one of the pills, he shows it between the thumb and index finger, and under the pretext of throwing it away he slips it between the index and the middle finger by a slight pressure of the thumb, opening the hand with a slight motion of throwing (upper illustration). Taking the second little pill, he places it apparently alone in the left hand, but in reality also the other one held between the index and middle finger of the right hand, closing it immediately. Opening the hand, he shows the two pills. After a little practice this trick can be repeated several times without fear of detection.

How to Make Thunder.

Even on the clearest, calmest day thunder, artificial, it is true, yet strangely like natural thunder, can be manufactured by any one who will try the following simple, newly-devised experiment.

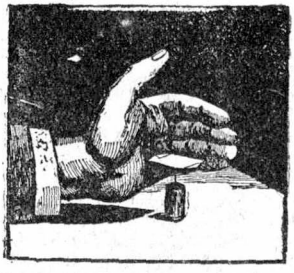
Get a piece of ordinary twine 2ft. or 3ft. in length, and place it around the back of your head, according to the manner shown in the accompanying picture. Next bring the two ends forward past the ears, or, rather, past the auricles. The ears must then be closed by keeping the fingers pressed firmly over them, and at the same time the fingers or hand must be pressed firmly over the twine at the point where it lies directly outside each auricle. Now ask some one to pull the two ends of the twine with his thumb and index

finger, and then, a firm pressure being meanwhile maintained, to let them slip slowly through the fingers.

At once an illusion of thunder will be produced. You will hear peal after peal, and the firmer the pressure on the twine the louder will be the sound. If a few knots are tied in the twine, a still more startling illusion will be produced.

The Paper Top.

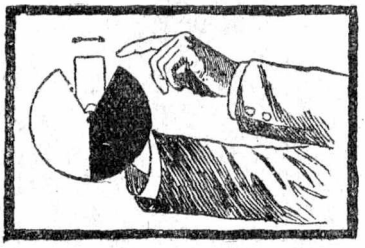
Who can make a top that will set itself in motion? Nobody? It can be done. Take a cork, a sewing needle, and a square piece of writing paper. Place the cork on the table and fasten the needle in it, point up, find the centre of the piece of paper by drawing the diagonal lines, and balance it on the needle after bending two opposite corners of the paper, one upward, the other down. Now for the trick. Hold your hand close



to the paper, as shown in figure. Before long the paper will set itself in motion, and will stop as soon as you remove your hand. This simple mechanical effect is produced by the warmth of the hand catching the corner of the paper that we have bent downward, which sets the paper top in motion.

Coloured Card Trick.

Take a piece of white cardboard, and, after you have painted half of it black, cut out a portion, as shown in the accompanying picture, and then, through the middle, stick either a long nail or a wooden peg,



which has a knob at the top, so that you may be able to turn it.

Now, if you hold a green card behind the place where you have cut out a portion, and then turn the cardboard, the green card will seem to be red, and, the more light thrown upon it, the redder it will appear. In like manner a red card will appear green, and a piece of blue paper will appear yellow.

Even more startling effects than these can be produced. For example, a figure with blue hair, a green face, and crimson clothes will appear behind the revolving cardboard as though it was altogether of natural colours, for its hair will be blonde, its face flesh-coloured, and its clothes greenish blue.

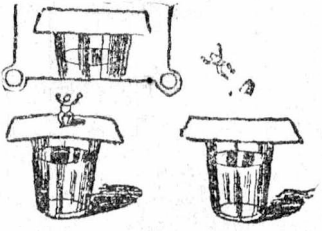
Similarly, if a blue flower with red leaves be placed behind the cardboard the flowers will appear yellow and the leaves green.

New Trick with Cork, Tumbler and a Card.

Here is a new and amusing experiment which any one can try, as the only materials required are a tumbler, a cork, some cardboard, and a small piece of paper.

If you place some cardboard over a glass filled with water you will notice after a little time that it has become raised, especially in the middle. If no such change has taken place, the reason is either because the rim of the glass was not entirely dry, or because the cardboard does not completely cover its surface, and, therefore, before beginning the experiment attention should be paid to these two points.

You may next place on it a small cork, intended as a seat for a little



frog, which you can easily cut out of paper. After a few minutes the cardboard will become depressed as the result of moisture, and this quick transformation will cause it to expand so greatly that the frog and cork will be sent flying into the air.

This simple trick is becoming a favourite in many homes, and never fails to evoke a good deal of laughter.

CHARADES.

Those who desire to give a successful charade entertainment will find it advisable to make careful preparations beforehand, as, unless the rendering is well thought out, the spectators cannot be expected to guess the word. Some people seem to think that a triumph has been achieved when the meaning is not detected. I do not hold this opinion. I think that the acting should be so pointed that no misconception is possible. Of course, there may be subtleties introduced, and words may be chosen that are so nearly akin to other words that difficulties arise. This is quite legitimate; but I consider that wilful or careless misleading is inadmissible—in fact, should the spectators fail to guess the meaning, owing to this cause, it may generally be taken that the acting or conception of the word has been faulty.

Charades are of two kinds—dumb charades and acting charades—but the above remarks apply to either.

In dumb charades, the meaning has to be conveyed by action alone, without the help of words. Therefore, the greatest care must be taken to keep

the idea well before the minds of the spectators all through. For example, suppose that the word "money-lender" is selected. The word would be split so that the first charade represented "money" and the second "lender," and the third the whole word, "moneylender."

The stage manager should announce before the commencement of the performance that the charade represented a compound word; that there would be two constructive charades—by that is meant charades which show only part of the whole—followed by the representative charade—that which shows the complete word.

The First Charade.

To represent the word "money," the characters might be gathered round a table on which were piles of coins, bank-notes, and cheques. Every one should look fascinated, to convey the idea that they were consumed by a mad longing to possess the riches.

An alternative representation would be to have a pile of coins on a pedestal—to represent an altar—with the characters grouped round in attitudes of devotion. This conveys the idea that Money is the god of many.

The Second Charade.

The word "lender" would be very well represented by the arrival of the various characters to borrow from the occupant of the room shown as the stage. One by one the borrowers should hurry on to the stage and pass across to the good-natured owner of the room. Then an animated dumb-show conversation should be carried on by the pair. The borrower should seem to beseech, and the lender to graciously grant. The desired article having been handed over, the borrower departs, offering profuse dumb-show thanks, and the lender sits down with a sigh. No sooner has borrower No. 1 departed than borrower No. 2 arrives, and the willing lender hastens to comply with the request.

The same thing should be repeated until the good-natured lender has to seek a seat on the floor, as everything has been lent.

The Third Charade.

The whole word, "moneylender," should be represented by showing the interior of a moneylender's office. The philanthropic saviour of the distressed is seated at his table, which should be covered with papers, waiting for the arrival of those who need and can pay for his assistance.

Ostensibly protruding from one of the drawers of the table there should be a paper with "Only 250 per cent." written on it in bold characters.

The confidential clerk enters, and a whispered conversation is carried on in dumb-show. The moneylender questions, and the clerk replies to his satisfaction and then withdraws. A moment later a young man is ushered into the sanctum. He has a newspaper in his hand, and nervously approaches the table. The moneylender half-rises, bows, and waves him to a seat. The young man drops his hat, stick, and gloves—anything to show uneasiness—and sinks into the chair with a weary sigh. The moneylender smiles bewitchingly, and the young man regains some confidence. He points to the philanthropist's advertisement, and explains in dumb-show what he wants.

An animated conversation follows, and then the moneylender places a paper before him and hands him a pen with a most insinuating smile. The young man seizes the pen and signs. Then he is politely conducted to the door.

A pencil and a small slip of paper should then be handed to each of the spectators, so that the word may be written down, unless they have been provided beforehand—which is the better plan when there are several charades to be performed.

A little thought will enable anybody to work out a series of charades on the lines indicated in this example. They can be made as difficult or as simple as desired, and they will be found an extremely popular form of entertainment.

Acting charades partake more of the nature of a play, and necessitate the learning of parts. They are very amusing; but, as they need more care and attention to detail, they are not so suitable for an evening's entertainment. At any rate, they cannot be organized on the spur of the moment.

To those who desire to get up a series of acting charades, I can thoroughly recommend the excellent books published by Mr. S. French, 89, Strand, London, W.C.—especially the two volumes entitled "Comic Charades," by Stanley Rogers. They will find in them a capital selection from which to choose, and a very good programme can be arranged.

In conclusion, I need only add a word of warning. In acting charades it is not necessary to lay stress upon the word being represented when it occurs in the text. The rendering of the piece as much as the words should convey the idea of the charade to the minds of the spectators, and the undue accentuation of the word is both inartistic and irritating.

TABLEAUX VIVANTS.

Probably there is no form of entertainment that gives so much pleasure in return for so little labour as a well arranged tableau vivant. Of course, the grouping of the figures has to be carefully thought out, but beyond this very little labour devolves upon the stage manager, and the most charming effects can be produced very simply.

When the performance is to take place in a room in which there is no proper stage, it is always advisable to avoid tableaux which require scenery of any kind. For this reason exteriors should not be chosen, as trees, flowers, and buildings cannot be reproduced without extensive scenery, and any attempt to make furniture play the part only ends in failure and disappointment. The question of costume is, as a rule, an obstacle to the selection of many tableaux, though it is by no means as serious a difficulty as the question of the scenery. For instance, toy helmets, Oriental shawls, and table cloths can be pressed into the service, and look very effective in the dim, religious light of the "stage." Nevertheless, it is wiser to choose subjects that can be acted in modern dress whenever possible.

I propose to give a few hints that may be of use to the uninitiated stage manager, and to follow them with a few suggestions for tableaux that are easily staged and effective.

The stage manager will require a good deal of tact to avoid giving offence, but he should make his authority felt from the outset, and he should insist upon having his ideas carried out to the letter. It must always be remembered that a tableau is arranged to look well from the front, and, therefore, the stage manager should study his effects from a distance while the rehearsals are taking place. It is desirable to have at least two or three rehearsals in the room in which the performance is to take place, and the positions should then be allotted to the various characters, so that there may be no shifting or uncertainty at the last moment. Unless this precaution is taken, and if any eleventh-hour changes are permitted, the picturesque effect of the whole is almost certain to be marred by some trifling detail that escapes the notice of all concerned. Nothing is more mortifying than to realize that a badly-placed chair, a wrongly-turned figure, or an unfortunately-placed candle has spoilt the picture. These are little things, but they are the sort of things that are not detected until the curtain has risen and alteration is impossible. However, catastrophes of this kind are very easily avoided by a little forethought: and method should be the stage manager's motto. The more frequent the rehearsals on the actual stage the better; but if it is inconvenient to have many, the stage manager will find a rough ground plan a great help. The position of everything that is to be on the stage should be marked on the plan, however roughly drawn, and it is well to add the distances between the various objects.

A plan of this kind is, literally, a key to the stage, by the aid of which the stage manager can easily arrange the tableau without undue delay.

So much for the management of the stage furniture—and for the present purpose the characters are included under the heading "furniture"—but before this stage of the proceedings is arrived at, the stage manager has many things to attend to and arrange.

First, there is the all-important question of subject. This I shall have to deal with later in more detail, so I can proceed at once to some of his other duties. When the subject has been decided upon, there arises the delicate question of "casting" the picture—that is to say, the assigning of the parts to the various actors. No doubt in many instances the actors and actresses will rebel against the stage manager's decision, and he will require all the suavity of which he is master to induce them to see things from his point of view. If he can succeed in doing this without making them his enemies for life, he may consider himself a born stage manager, and he will do well to apply for a post at Drury Lane, or elsewhere, without delay. The chances are, however, that he will earn the deadly hatred of every one concerned, but he must not mind such a trifling consideration, and if he succeeds in getting his cast into a sufficiently

subdued frame of mind to carry out his injunctions, he may consider that he has triumphed.

These remarks may quench the ardour of many would-be stage managers. But the truth must be told, and it is well to understand at once that a stage manager's lot is not a happy one. Still, great are his rewards, and, at the moment of triumph, he will feel that his self-sacrifice has not been in vain.

I shall suppose that the stage manager has got his cast together, and reduced them to a state of obedience, either from fear or affection—most likely the former. It will then be his duty to coach each of the characters separately before attempting to group them: and if he has not already earned their hatred, he will then.

It is important to remember that positions which seem natural at close quarters often look perfectly ridiculous from a distance. The general rule is that a position on the stage should be rather exaggerated so as to give the proper effect from the front. But, of course, the stage manager must use his discretion, and he should study the poses from a distance before finally deciding upon them.

The arranging of the poses is the most difficult task that falls to the lot of the amateur stage manager. Every detail has to be taken into consideration, and he will probably find that the character has views of his or her own regarding them, which cannot be adopted. Then begins the trouble! And unless the stage manager has the eyes of a lynx, he will find that his efforts are being frustrated surreptitiously, and unless his hide is rather tougher than that of a rhinoceros he will scarcely survive all the nasty things that are said about him.

I might become reminiscent; but I won't, because I have a stern duty to perform—the task of arming the young stage manager, cap-a-pied, for the fray he is entering so guilelessly and cheerfully.

He must hammer away at the poses until he is satisfied; and then he can begin his grouping. Generally speaking, it is well to allow about a week or ten days for the preparation of a simple tableau. The rehearsals should be frequent, but not lengthy, and no detail should be deemed beneath notice. It is these minute points—in the little finishing touches—which help out the general effect in everything that is put on the stage. The spectators do not realize what it is that pleases them; but they would very quickly notice faults if the trivial things were neglected. To be told that his effects were lifelike may be taken as the greatest compliment a stage manager can receive. In plain English, this means that the details were perfect—though probably the spectators have missed the point altogether.

The stage manager must be a person of many qualifications. He must possess an inexhaustible store of patience—and, more than this, he must be able to work out a clear idea of each of the characters. In fact, he must be able to take any part intelligently, in order to show a character what he wants done. No doubt this will be rather a trying ordeal, but one of the chief qualifications required by a stage manager is entire freedom from self-consciousness. Let him throw himself into the work with enthusiasm, and he will probably succeed in carrying the others along with him.

As I am writing for the guidance of those who, presumably, have had no experience in these matters, I do not hesitate to go into detail, and I hope that by the aid of these hints the novice may be able to carry a set of tableaux to a successful close.

One more word of advice to the stage manager, and I shall have done with him—and done for him all I can. A note-book and pencil should be his constant companions. Everything that he desires to remember should be jotted down; for the last directions, upon which so much depends, have a way of slipping the memory at the critical moment. Many hints will be required; and the list of "properties"—which should include everything that is to be on the stage when the curtain rises—ought to be most carefully compiled.

As I have already remarked, the stage manager's lot is not a happy one, and the actors and actresses should do all in their power to lighten his burdens. They may do so, but it will not do to trust to them. He must, like a good general, see everything; and probably his pencil and note-book will be required to make lists of the "properties" wanted by each character.

As regards the "make-up" of the characters, the stage manager must use his discretion. If he can secure the services of an experienced hand so much the better; but if he is thrown on his own resources, he cannot do better than make up all the characters himself. By this method he makes sure of uniformity, and there are general rules which apply to certain types of character that can be followed with safety. But as this subject is dealt with at some length elsewhere, it is unnecessary to go into detail here.

The advisability of having music during the performance is often dis-

cussed by anxious amateurs. It is a difficult question to answer; but I think it is safe to say that, provided suitable music can be found, an accompaniment is a great help, especially if the services of a violinist are obtainable. The power of music as an addition to pictures, and to give point to the situation is great. But the selection must be most carefully made; and it is far better to have none than to introduce an accompaniment which is not in perfect harmony with the "motif" of the tableau.

The general effect may also be very much enhanced by a reading illustrating the picture. Suppose, for example, that the scene is taken from a novel, the interest will be greatly increased by the reading of the passage illustrated. Here, however, it must be borne in mind that the extract must be short, as the characters cannot be expected to remain motionless for an indefinite period.

The reader, who should be stationed in the wing, and hidden from the spectators, should read distinctly, and with dramatic effect. It is impossible, on occasions like this, to read fast—to listen to rapid reading aloud is most fatiguing. The reader should pronounce every word clearly; and he should modulate his voice so as to harmonize with the accompaniment and with the idea of the tableau.

Elementary as these hints are, they will, I hope, be serviceable. I think they are sufficiently explanatory for the purpose, and I shall now proceed to the question of suitable subjects.

Hints on the Selection of Subjects.

Given a stage and scenery the supply of subjects that may be treated as tableaux vivants is almost inexhaustible. But when the performance is to take place in a sitting room, without a stage or any facilities for producing light effects, the aspect of affairs is changed, and judgment and forethought will be needed to make the pictures appear well from the "front." I have already warned the stage manager against the selection of exteriors and elaborate costumes, and to these may be added pictures that require any special lighting—such, for example, as a moonlight effect.

Bearing these three things in mind, and remembering that without proper stage adjuncts the success of the tableau depends upon the graceful posing of the figures alone, the amateur stage-manager should still be able to work up a good, varied, and interesting programme; and for his comfort I may add that he will experience no difficulty in finding suitable subjects.

Tableaux may, broadly, be grouped under three heads. First, there are those which are based upon well-known pictures; secondly, those which illustrate a passage from some book or poem; and, thirdly, those which are either invented or copied from other tableaux that have been seen.

If the first method is the one selected great care must be taken over the details of the picture. The stage-manager should secure a copy of the picture and make a list of everything shown in it, so that he may collect all the necessary "properties." If he can see the original painting so much the better, as he will then be able to follow out the actual colour scheme; but if not, he cannot do better than obtain a good engraving.

The second method calls for a considerable amount of inventive genius, imagination, and the power of conceiving a clear idea of the scene from the printed description. It is the duty of all who adopt this plan to endeavour to represent the author's notion of the characters. This is a serious difficulty, and it may be found almost impossible to cast a picture, just because there is nobody available capable of taking one of the parts properly. Still, if scenes from stories can be successfully cast, this is a most effective method of arranging tableaux, and is certainly worthy of the careful attention of the stage-manager.

The third method is probably the one which will commend itself most strongly to the majority of those who are getting up a gallery of pictures; and given two things—a person possessed of inventive powers and artistic temperament, and a varied assortment of articles that may be used as stage properties—there is no better. The imagination of the inventor of the tableaux is unhampered, and he has a very wide range of subjects from which to choose; and, above all, the strongest recommendation is that he can arrange the pictures to suit the cast at his disposal.

I certainly recommend those who are arranging tableaux to adopt this method; and to aid them as far as possible, I shall now describe a few very easily staged and effective pictures capable of being altered to suit particular circumstances.

"That Awful Boy."

This tableau consists of a series of three pictures. The necessary characters are a girl, a young man, and a boy. The girl is the boy's grown-up sister, and the young man is her

sweetheart; the boy, needless to say, is "the awful boy." The scene is a drawing room, and the time evening—the hour of the sweetheart's visit. The room should be prettily furnished but not overcrowded. The essentials are a settee, on which the lovers sit, and a table covered by a cloth which reaches nearly to the ground, or some other suitable arrangement, as a hiding-place for the boy.

The first tableau shows the girl seated reading, and apparently unconscious of the approach of her lover, who is just entering, while from under the table protrudes the boy's head, a fiendish grin of delight on his face.

The second tableau shows the happy pair seated side by side on the settee. The boy has by this time emerged from his ambush, and is crouching down, prepared to spring. The fond lovers are, of course, all unconscious of his presence.

The third tableau shows the effects of the spring. The lovers have started apart, and the awful boy is beating a hasty retreat, showing that he has learned the wisdom of discretion.

Provided the stage is not too strongly lighted, no make-up is required for this tableau; and the costumes worn should be evening dress by the girl and her lover, and an Eton suit by the boy—though, of course, morning dress may be substituted if preferred.

"Ruined."

This is a tableau of a tragic nature in three pictures, for five characters. The scene is a sitting room with a card-table in the centre of the stage, and a second table, on which are decanters and glasses, at the side.

The first tableau shows four men playing cards, while a woman stands and watches from a distance with evident anxiety. On the card-table there should be four candles in tall candlesticks, and it is important that the candles should be long and freshly lighted, to show that play has but just commenced.

The second tableau shows the room later. The four men are still there, but the woman has gone. The candles have burned low, and the place is disordered. Cards are scattered on the floor round the table, empty bottles are lying about, and four empty glasses are on the table. Three of the men have risen from their seats, and have moved towards the door. The picture shows them turned to wish the fourth man—their host—a mocking good-night. The man still sitting is gazing at the littered table in a sort of stupor, a wild expression on his face. His shirt-front is crumpled and his hair disordered. And here the contrast can be brought out, showing that the others are perfectly callous, by representing them with well-ordered linen and smooth hair.

The third tableau shows the room a few minutes later. The three guests have departed, but the host is still there. He has fallen forward, and his head rests on the table, while in his right hand he holds a revolver. Three of the candles have been extinguished, and the fourth is flickering. Just within the doorway stands the woman with a candlestick in her hand.

For the first tableau no make-up is necessary. In the second and third tableaux the host's face should be powdered. The men should wear evening dress. The woman should also wear evening dress in the first tableau, and in the third she should wear a dressing gown and have her hair loose over her shoulders.

"Our Social Evening."

This is a tableau in one picture, representing various degrees of weariness. The scene is a drawing room in which the guests are listening to a recitation by the local humorist, who is standing in a prominent position. The utterly bored expressions of the audience should be made to strongly contrast with the intensely self-satisfied expression of the reciter. Some of the guests may be taking surreptitious naps, while others are stifling yawns, and others are looking vaguely for the points of the reciter's jokes. In fact, any expression of boredom will do, so long as it is not overdone.

The hostess's courteous attention and animated expression will give point to the whole thing. The only danger to be guarded against is exaggeration. Remember that the guests cannot show their disgust to one another; it is only the spectators who are privileged to see the true state of affairs.

Evening costumes should, of course, be worn.

THOUGHT-READING.

A very effective exhibition of thought-reading may be given by any one who can obtain the services of an intelligent accomplice, upon whose quickness reliance can be placed. It will be necessary for the thought-reader and his accomplice to hold a consultation and arrange the system of signals before the performance takes place, because the whole success of the undertaking depends upon a clear understanding of the significance of the signs. A good system, and one that is not likely to be easily detected, is to arrange that the accomplice shall lay his right hand on the crown of the thought-reader's head, and direct his movements by the pressure of certain fingers.

For example, when the thought-reader has been banished from the room in which the spectators are collected, the accomplice will briefly explain what he is prepared to do. Naturally, the task set to the thought-reader will be the finding of some article that has been chosen or the moving of something from one place to another. The following is a fairly comprehensive little speech, which will serve the purpose very well:

"Ladies and gentlemen, my friend, Mr. Smith, is prepared to show the wonderful powers of which he is possessed for your benefit. A great deal of nonsense has been talked and written about thought-reading by the ignorant and by those who are too narrow-minded to have anything they do not understand a moment's consideration. In addition to showing you the wonderful power of mind he possesses, Mr. Smith hopes to vindicate the fair fame of the science which he has studied very closely and with such remarkable results.

"I ask you to select a task for him to perform, and I hope that when you have seen Mr. Smith's demonstration you will be converted to a belief in the possibility of thought-transference. I ask you to watch most carefully, and to maintain silence during the performance. If you can detect any chicanery we will at once relinquish the claim we have set up and are prepared to maintain by demonstration on behalf of thought-reading as a great and practically unexploited science. But I feel confident that you will be impressed by the honesty of our methods, and that you will be compelled to acknowledge that the science of which my friend is such an able exponent is deserving of credence and respect.

"I do not seek to influence you in your choice of a task, but I beg of you to select something that will test Mr. Smith thoroughly."

It is more than probable that the accomplice will be able to influence the selection of the test—at any rate, he must not sanction the choice of anything that he knows the thought-reader cannot perform. For instance, he might suggest that a vase should be taken from one place and put in another, or that something should be taken from one person and given to another. When the test has been decided upon, the accomplice should request one of the spectators to conduct the thought-reader into the room, explaining that he does so in order to render collusion impossible.

Then, when the thought-reader has entered, the accomplice should place his right hand on the crown of his head, as already described, and direct him by means of the pre-arranged system of pressure telegraphy to the chosen object. It is important that the accomplice's hand should be placed firmly upon the head of the thought-reader. The palm of his hand should touch the crown of his confederate's head, and his fingers should be extended and lie flat on the top and at the sides. By following out this method the slight contractions necessary when conveying the signals are not likely to be observed. The simpler the system of signals the better, but there should be no doubt in the minds of the thought-reader and his accomplice as to their meaning.

The following is a good system which seldom fails, and is not likely to be detected. The right hand of the accomplice being on the head of the thought-reader, behind whom he stands, a gentle pressure of the thumb means that the thought-reader is to turn to the right. A pressure of the little finger means turn to the left. Pressure of the

palm of the hand means advance. The pressure of the first finger means drop on left knee. The pressure of the second finger means go down on both knees. The pressure of the third finger means drop on right knee. The tightening of the entire hand means that the right object has been touched, or that the movement has been correctly made, as the case may be; and the relaxing of the usual grip means that the thought-reader is to rise from whatever position he may be in and stand.

As long as the pressure continues the thought-reader must keep on doing what the signal orders, and

directly it ceases he must stop and wait for the next signal.

Now supposing that the spectators have decided that the thought-reader shall fetch a footstool from one corner of the room and place it before a certain lady. The accomplice will inform them that silence is imperative, and request them to think hard of the task they have set the thought-reader to perform. He will then ask some one to summon the performer, of whom he will take charge in the middle of the room.

The thought-reader, even if he receives the signal at once, should not be in too great a hurry to act. It is far more effective to feign uncertainty, and wrestle in the dark, as it were, with the ideas that come crowding into his mind. He may draw his hand across his brow, seem utterly perplexed, sigh deeply, and even ask those present to keep their attention fixed upon the task he has been set. After a time he will begin to move towards the spot indicated by his accomplice's signals, and eventually he will pick up the footstool and deposit it before the lady at whose feet he has been told to lay it.

To avoid confusion, I will briefly show how these directions should be given by pressure telegraphy.

When the accomplice takes charge of him the thought-reader is standing in the middle of the room. When he feels the pressure of his accomplice's thumb he will turn to the right slowly, and directly the pressure is relaxed he will stop. Then the pressure of the palm of the accomplice's hand will drive him forward, and, turning now to the left and now to the right, to avoid the furniture, in obedience, of course, to his accomplice's directions, he will eventually reach the corner in which the footstool is lying. In answer to the pressure of the first finger, he will drop on his left knee, and begin to grope about. He must touch the objects slowly, and directly he feels the tightening of the entire hand on his head he will take the footstool in his right hand. If he feels the grip again he will know that he has taken the footstool properly, or that there were no special directions as to the method of carrying it; but unless the signal is given he must try his left hand or both hands until "all correct" is telegraphed in the manner already explained—a tightening of the grip.

Then, in obedience to the relaxing of the grip, he will rise and, following the various signals, make his way across the room to the place where the lady is sitting. The pressure of his accomplice's third finger will bring him to his right knee, and he will deposit the footstool where indicated. It is of the utmost importance that he should move slowly, so that his accomplice may have an opportunity of seeing what he is doing, and have plenty of time to give the necessary signals and save the situation.

Naturally, this trick seems almost idiotic when the explanation is given in so many words, but to those who do not know how the works go round the illusion is complete, and a very effective little thought-reading entertainment can be given without much fear of detection. A great deal of the success of the entertainment depends upon the acting capacity of the thought-reader. He should move sleepily, assume a vacant expression, and display signs of great fatigue, ending in a total collapse at the close of the performance, to carry out the idea that the mental effort is prodigious.

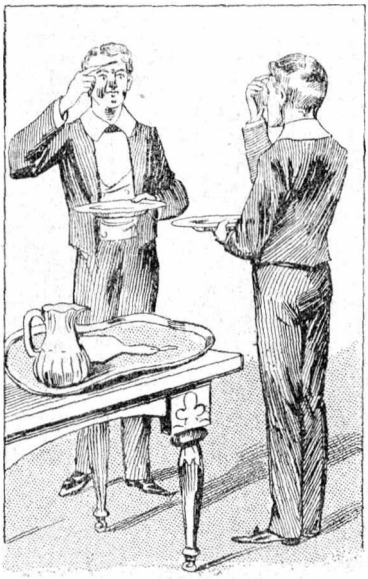
SIMPLE MESMERISM.

The paraphernalia necessary for this trick are: Two soup plates a jug of water, a hand mirror, an accomplice, and a good-tempered, obedient subject. The mesmerist must withdraw from the room in which the seance is to take place in order to make his preparations. He will then take one of the plates and coat the bottom of it with blacklead. When the blacklead is dry he should arrange all his "properties" on a tray, and cover them with a napkin. The tray should then be carried into the room in which the seance is to be held by the accomplice, who must prevent any tampering with the magician's arrangements. The accomplice should act up to the mesmerist in every way. For instance, when he enters the room he can ask for a small table on which to place the tray. Then he can keep all inquisitive gazers at bay by saying that they must keep their distance, lest they negative the charm that the operator has cast over the things before them. He can explain that, although he is only an assistant, his master has endowed him with certain mystic properties which tney do not possess, and that his touch is harmless, whereas theirs would defile. This sort of thing can be prolonged until the curiosity of the spectators is thoroughly aroused, and then the mesmerist should enter.

He must act his part very carefully. He should walk in slowly, look dreamy and exhausted, and ask his accomplice to lower the lights a little. This done, the accomplice should explain that his master possesses marvellous powers over many people, and is able to mesmerise a very large percentage of those who come under his eyes. Then he should add that the strain, mental and physical, on the operator is very great, and request those present to maintain absolute silence during the performance. And then, turning to the mesmerist, he should say, "Sir, everything is prepared."

Then the mesmerist, advancing wearily to the table, should make sundry mystic passes over the tray and mutter to himself. It does not much matter what he says, provided the onlookers do not hear, but if he can string together some odd words, and pronounce one occasionally in an audible tone, so much the better. He should then slowly lift the napkin from the tray, and hand it to his accomplice, preserving absolute silence while doing so. Next, he should lift the articles one by one, muttering excitedly all the time, and taking care not to expose the bottom of the blackened plate.

The mirror should be laid, face downwards, on the tray after the



most fantastic passes have been made over it. This is done, of course, to draw the attention of the spectators to it, because it has nothing to do with the trick.

Next he should raise the jug solemnly, and gaze into the water, repeating weird charms, before pouring some into each of the plates.

Then, drawing himself up majestically, the mesmerist should allow his eyes to wander slowly round the room.

Of course, the details of the acting must be left to the mesmerist. He

can do anything he likes, and as long as it is not overdone, there can hardly be too much of it. Having thoroughly impressed those present by the solemnity of his preparations and movements, he will address them, in a hollow, far-away voice, to the following effect:

"Ye who have come to witness the wonders that I am about to perform, remember that I command silence. My slave—— Ah, pardon me, I had returned to those far-off ages in which I was taught all I know on the banks of the Nile. My friend, I should have said, has told you about the power I possess. Behold, I am willing to display it. Will one of your number advance and submit himself to my will?"

Then, having secured his victim and placed him in such a position that his face can be seen by the spectators, the mesmerist will resume:

"Sir, you must take this plate in your left hand, holding it by the edge, and keep your eyes fixed upon me. What I do, do after me: and look neither to the right nor to the left, neither up nor down, but straight at me. Disobey me at your peril!"

The victim, of course, has been given the blackened plate, and the mesmerist, taking the other in his left hand, stands in front of him.

Preliminary passes can then be made, all of which the victim must imitate exactly, or incur the mesmerist's displeasure. Then the mesmerist should dip the first finger of his right hand into the water, rub it on the bottom of the plate, and draw a line across his forehead.

Stage by stage the victim does the same. But there is this difference—a long black line is left on his forehead, whereas the mesmerist's is unmarked.

The ornamentation can be prolonged as much as the mesmerist chooses: lines may be drawn on cheeks, chin, and nose until the unfortunate victim's face is completely disfigured.

Then, laying his plate on the tray—of course, the victim does likewise—the mesmerist will say in a commanding voice, "Be still!"

He will then make some weird passes, and mutter volubly. After this he will gaze into the victim's eyes, and say:

"Sir, how do you feel?"

Probably the victim will say he feels all right; but his reply is of no consequence, for the mesmerist must cry, in a tone of exultation:

"It is done! I have succeeded! Lights, slave, lights!"

The accomplice will immediately turn up the lights, and the mesmerist, handing the mirror to the victim, will say, "Gaze into the depths of this mystic glass, and see yourself as you are!"

And then, unless the victim loses his temper, the seance comes to an end.

HOW TO MAKE UP FOR THE STAGE.

To make up for the stage, really well, requires an immense amount of practice—in fact, theatrical make-up has become a fine art. But there is no reason why the amateur should not learn to produce very good effects by adhering to certain generally accepted and elementary rules that have become canons of the art. The object of the present article is to supply the necessary information as simply and concisely as possible, and to guide the novice on his way.

Anybody can paint his face before a mirror and completely alter his appearance; but work of this kind is not worthy of being dignified by the name of make-up any more than the crude patches of colour daubed here and there by a child on a sheet of white paper can be called a painting. The science of make-up has, first and foremost, to take into consideration the effect that the strong lights of the stage will produce. Until this fact is grasped, and a clear understanding of the effect required attained, the art of make-up is still unconquered.

How to Start.

The first thing that should be done, before starting to lay on the colour, is to wash the face with tepid water. Sponge gently, and dry thoroughly without rubbing, so as to avoid roughening or reddening the skin; then smear the face and neck with cocoa butter, and wipe once more with a soft towel. These preliminaries done, the make-up may be commenced.

All the requisites should be arranged on the dressing-table beforehand, and everything that is likely to be wanted should be put ready within easy reach. The lights should be arranged so that no shadow is cast on the face. And, needless to say, the actor or actress must have a clear conception of the part he or she is going to make-up to.

Amateurs are very likely to fall into the fatal error that make-up is a comparatively minor detail. This is quite an erroneous idea, and one that any experienced actor would dispel at once. The fact that you are cast for an old man part or an old woman part does not mean that the generally laid down rules can be blindly followed. Old men and old women differ as much on the stage—at least, they should—as in real life, and the actor or actress should study the part as carefully when thinking out the make-up as when learning the words. This advice should be taken to heart and acted upon, for unless the make-up is in harmony with the character half the effect is lost.

Actors and actresses study their parts for make-up with the utmost care, but the rash amateur follows some elementary rules he has been taught without attempting to conceive a notion of the characteristics of the part he is called upon to play, just because he happens to have been cast for the part of a man of sixty. Naturally, the result is disappointing. How could it be otherwise? The greatest care and forethought should be given to the make-up, and it may even be necessary to try half a dozen different effects before a satisfactory result is obtained. Waste of time, dirty work, and other slighting epithets are applied to make-up by the inexperienced amateur; but, alas! such wholesale condemnation as this only proves that the young actor or actress has not studied the question at all. And the sooner they begin to study the better.

There is no better school than the theatre. Make-up on the professional stage has been brought to perfection, and you have only to see some celebrated actor or actress in several parts in order to understand the importance attached to the successful carrying out of an idea by those whose experience gives weight to their opinions. I venture to think that the complete disguise—so complete that in many cases even a well-known actor or actress is almost unrecognizable—aimed at on the professional boards should be the most potent advocate for the importance of make-up. And if the skilled actor, with all the subtleties of his craft at his fingers' ends, deems make-up of such vital importance, surely the amateur cannot afford to neglect it.

My advice, therefore, before proceeding to give a few more detailed hints on the making up of the various features, is to go and study the leaders of the "profession" in their great parts. Try to discover how the effects are produced, and then, when you have done the best you can in this direction strive to obtain like results when you come to make-up for your next performance.

Requisites.

And now comes the all-important question of materials. Of course, the substance used will be the grease-paints, which have come into vogue, and are in every way superior to powders. These grease-paints are most carefully manufactured from chemically pure fat and purified colours, free from lead. They are very easily applied, very soft to the skin, and contain nothing likely to produce irritation or soreness. In the course of manufacture all impurities are extracted, and they are, therefore, practically harmless to the skin. The colours generally used are: Flesh tint, chrome, blue black, red, white, and carmine.

The special uses of these colours will be made clear by the following table:

THE FLESH TINTS are prepared in numerous shades to meet the requirements of those cast for all sorts of parts. Each shade has a distinctive number by which, for the sake of convenience, it is referred to without any other description. For example, when told that the face should be "2½," you are meant to understand that flesh tint No. 2½ should be used for the ground work.

The numbering is as follows:

1. A very pale tint, suitable for ladies.

1½. Another pale tint, suitable for female servants.

2. A very serviceable shade, suitable for either male or female characters.

2½. The most commonly used tint for male characters.

3. A slightly darker tint, which will be found very useful for making up a florid complexion.

3½. A still darker tint, useful for producing a slightly sunburnt appearance.

4. The darkest flesh tint made. To be used for making up soldiers and sailors. Gives the appearance of a ruddy, sunburnt complexion.

5. A yellow, which produces a sallow appearance, and is therefore useful for making up old male characters and Chinamen.

6. A darker yellow than the above, with which it may be used.

7. A brown for making up mulattos.

8. A reddish brown, which may be used to make up Indian characters.

9. A reddish brown, clearer than the above, and suitable for a deeply sunburnt complexion.

10. A light brown, which is very useful for lighting the face.

CHROME should be used for sallow complexions, and for lighting purposes.

BLUE BLACK gives the effect of an unshaven chin, and is useful for enhancing the high lights and giving depth of the eyes.

RED must be used very sparingly, except for burlesque characters and clowns. It is useful, however, for the lips.

WHITE is chiefly used for lighting the face in ordinary pieces; but is of great use for statuary, and forms the ground work of a clown's make-up.

The above are what may be called the body colours, which are used on the face to produce broad effects. In addition, fine sticks for lining purposes are prepared in the following colours: Black, brown, lake, blue, and small white.

BLACK must only be used when a very strong effect is required. It is useful at times for the eyelids and eyebrows, as well as for deep lines.

BROWN is very commonly used for wrinkles, and gives a soft effect.

LAKE is a very useful colour. It is used for producing wrinkles, and is very effective for blotches and other similar disfigurements.

BLUE is to be used for the veins principally; but is also useful for deepening the eyes.

SMALL WHITE is constantly wanted for toning the wrinkles and lighting purposes.

CARMINE may often be used as a substitute for rouge, and for the lips.

These are colours that are required, and with them all ordinary effects can be produced. But there are a few other things that will be found necessary.

Cocoa butter, spirit gum, nose paste, joining paste, a hare's foot, a few soft towels, rouge, and crape hair are among them.

COCOA BUTTER, as already stated, should form the foundation of the make-up, and it will be required again when the grease-paints are to be removed.

The best way of taking off make-up is to smear the face with cocoa butter, and wipe it with a soft towel. Then wash in tepid water, and dry the face gently.

SPIRIT GUM is absolutely necessary for securing false moustaches and whiskers in place.

NOSE PASTE enables the actor to actually increase the size or alter

the shape of his nose; and also, indeed, of other features.

JOINING PASTE is required for securing the wig in position on the forehead.

A HARE'S FOOT is necessary for putting on rouge.

SOFT TOWELS are absolutely necessary, as any roughness in texture of the towel will render the skin irritable and sore.

ROUGE, or a substitute, is always necessary on the stage, as the strong lights make any face look positively ghastly.

CRAPE HAIR, of a colour to suit the wig, may be used for whiskers and moustache.

In addition to all these things, there are sundries which are wanted to complete the making-up outfit for various parts—accessories which cannot be dealt with in detail here. Suffice it to say, that a pair of scissors, a hand mirror, and a needle and thread are indispensable.

The Lighting of the Face.

One of the most important sides of make-up is the arrangement of the lights on the face. The fact that certain of the paints mentioned in the preceding section are used chiefly for lighting purposes probably conveyed nothing to the mind of the average reader. But no other term could be used to express the same meaning, and now a full explanation must be given.

The mere laying on of the colours is, comparatively speaking, simple. It is the arranging and contrasting of the lights and shadows, so as to produce a given effect, that is difficult, and it is only when a thorough mastery over this branch of the art of making up has been acquired that success can be hoped for.

Every face can be completely altered by changing the natural lighting. To appreciate this fact, which is one of the irrefutable and fundamental truths of the art of successful make-up, it is only necessary to note how different a face looks in various lights. Let a person sit in a dim light—say, before a fire—and then move into bright artificial light or daylight, and observe the change. What the light, falling upon the face, does in this case is exactly what the painter, the actor, and the actress must endeavour to do by laying on contrasting colours in given positions.

The painter relies upon the judicious arrangement of high lights and low lights for his effects, and the make-up artist, who works upon a face instead of a canvas, must follow his example. And, indeed, although make-up is destined to last but a few hours, the adept must be an artist of no mean order in his own particular province.

If a living face, even off the stage, is so dependent upon lighting for its expression, how much more must the actor or actress study light effects? They practically become moving portraits, and as such they are dominated by the laws that bind the portrait painter. In other words, the rules as to high lights and low lights —which may be translated light and shadow—followed by the painter of a picture, especially of a portrait, apply to make-up, and should be carefully studied.

For example, the high lights on the cheeks of a thin face in life fall on the cheek bone and the jawbone, and consequently the intervening space is in shadow. To represent this on his canvas the portrait painter slightly deepens the flesh tint on the cheeks, and lightens that on the cheek and jaw bones. The result is that the bones are brought into prominence, and the cheeks depressed; and thus a thinness is given to the face. The stronger the contrast the more exaggerated the thinness. And in this way a haggard, wasted, emaciated appearance may be given by simply intensifying the contrast. On the other hand, a plump or fat face is produced by putting the high lights on the cheeks and the low lights on the cheek and jaw bones. To increase the appearance of fatness, the shadows on the bones are deepened, and the high lights on the cheeks brought into stronger contrast with them.

Other examples might be cited without number, but they all turn upon the same principle, and so need not be dealt with in detail until the various features come under consideration later. However, I cannot pass on without warning the beginner of the difficulties he will have to grapple with and overcome before he can hope to master the art of lighting successfully: of all branches of art portrait painting is the most subtle, and of all branches of the art of make-up the arrangement of the lights is the most difficult.

A clear conception of the appearance of the character must be gained, and to this the actor or actress must make-up. It is very often a tedious business—even expert professionals devote a long time to their make-up—but it is essential, and labour spent on repeated failures need not be grudged if the desired effect is produced in the end.

And here let me give a very sound maxim, based on the opinion of many old and experienced actors: Never over make-up; rather underdo than overdo.

In future I shall avoid the use of the terms high lights and low lights as much as possible; and, for the sake of convenience, I shall simply say "lighten" when I mean a high light, and "darken" when I mean a low light, unless a fuller explanation seems necessary.

Some Important Maxims.

And now, before proceeding to a detailed consideration of each of the features, it will be well to give a few of the important rules that should be borne in mind during the process of making up, and when cleaning up at the end of a performance:

1. Never allow any detectable line of demarcation between two colours to remain. The colours should blend with one another, and be shaded off gradually, so that a harmonious appearance is given to the whole face. The only exception to this rule is that the line of blue black, put on to give the appearance of an unshaven chin or cheek, should be clearly defined, but not harsh.

2. No wrinkles should remain as lines. When the lines have been put in they should be toned by rubbing downwards with the finger until only a shadow remains. Then, if desired, the wrinkle can be deepened by "lightening" the surrounding portions of the ground colour.

3. Do not shave immediately before making up, as an irritated skin—and however carefully the razor is used the skin is sure to be irritated—is in a condition to absorb the paint, and may become inflamed and tender.

4. On no account forget to smear the whole face and neck with cocoa butter before commencing operations. This is a precaution which should not be neglected for two reasons: First, the cocoa butter forms a sort of mask, which closes the pores and excludes the grease-paints; and, secondly, it makes a good surface upon which to build the make-up.

5. Sponge the face with mildly tepid water before making up, and dry gently with a soft towel. Hot and cold water are equally bad. Hot water opens the pores, and renders them more receptive, and cold water shrivels the skin and gives a bad surface for working upon.

6. Never be in a violent hurry to remove the make-up. Remember that the skin is tender and that rubbing with a rough towel will do more harm than good. Use a soft towel and rub very lightly.

7. To remove the make-up, smear the face again with cocoa butter, and wipe gently with a soft towel.

8. When all the paint has been removed in this way, tepid water may be again used, and the face should be dried by patting rather than by rubbing.

If these maxims are borne in mind and carefully acted upon, much trouble and probably a good deal of suffering will be avoided.

The Making of Features.

And now for a detailed consideration of the make-up of the various features.

The Forehead.

The shape of the forehead may be altered to suit any particular part by the arrangement of the lights. A prominent forehead may be made to look receding by "lightening" the lower part, above the eyebrows, and "darkening" the upper part, especially immediately below the hair line. A receding forehead may be made to look prominent by the reverse process.

And whatever the effect desired the same rules apply. The part which is to be brought into prominence should be "lightened," and the part that is to be toned down should be "darkened."

When a high forehead has to be lowered, or a broad forehead narrowed, the wig will be of assistance. In the former instance the wig should be fixed low on the brow, and kept in position by spirit gum; in the latter, the sides of the wig should be brought well forward over the temples. If they do not come sufficiently far a strip of crape hair of the proper colour, which must be carefully combed into the wig so that no join is apparent, may be added to each side.

The junction between the wig and the skin must first be most carefully painted out with the shade of flesh tint used elsewhere on the face, and then powdered freely. Thus a good surface is prepared, which may be treated as required to carry out the general effect of the make-up.

The lines or wrinkles on the forehead are of two kinds, horizontal and perpendicular. And the curve and number of these lines very materially alter the character of the face. As a rule, youthful faces should not be lined, except to give the appearance of worry or thought. Old faces, especially when making up to the part of a mentally strong old man, may be freely lined.

A deep perpendicular line between the eyebrows, coming almost from the bridge of the nose, and supported by one or two lighter lines on either side, makes the face look strong, and perhaps, taken in conjunction with the other details of the make-up, gives a stern or hard appearance, as the case may be.

Straight horizontal lines are also strengthening, as also are those which seem to curve slightly downwards towards the centre of the forehead from either side.

Curved lines, on the other hand, especially those which arch towards the hair, tend to weaken the face, and are always used when making up the part of a lunatic.

When making up an old character, it is often advisable to give a sunken appearance to the temples. This effect may be produced by "darkening" the temples and "lightening" the surrounding ridge of bone.

If necessary, not only the apparent, but the actual shape of the forehead can be changed by the use of nose paste. In this case the part to be altered will have to be built up, coated with cocoa butter, and painted in harmony with the rest of face. But the employment of nose paste requires great skill, and the amateur—at any rate, the novice—is strongly advised to rely upon the arrangement of the lights for his effects.

The Nose.

In principle the treatment of the nose resembles that of the forehead; the effects are produced by accentuating the contrast between the high lights and the low lights. And although comparatively little make-up is required to alter a nose, that which has to be done must be done extremely carefully.

A nose may be lengthened by "lightening" the ridge from bridge to tip, and very slightly "darkening" the sides. If in addition to being lengthened, the nose has to be made thin, the low lights on the sides—especially on the sides of the nostrils—should be deepened until a satisfactory result is secured.

To raise the bridge, or produce what is commonly known as a Roman nose, the bridge should be "lightened," and the ridge along the lower part of the nasal bone "darkened," towards the tip. The stronger the contrast between the lights, the more marked is the effect, so that a very hooked nose can be produced very easily. But, if the employment of lights only does not give a satisfactory result, nose paste may be used with impunity. In this way a false bridge must be built up, and toned into the general scheme of the make-up by the use of the proper shade of flesh tint.

A Grecian nose—the most striking contrast to a Roman nose—may also be produced by the judicious management of lights. A Grecian nose is one that joins the forehead, without depression or bridge, and continues in a straight line to the tip. The strictly classical Grecian nose is generally found in combination with a low, rather receding forehead—a fact which should be borne in mind when making up a nose of this type. If the natural nose is prominent or high-bridged, nose paste may be required for the building up of the depression above the bridge. When this has been done, a high light, commencing on the forehead and most carefully blended into the surrounding colours, is laid on and carried down to the tip of the nose.

The typical Jewish nose—that is, one with rather a curved nasal bone and drooping tip—is produced by "darkening" the upper part of the ridge very slightly; "lightening" the middle part; "darkening" the lower part; and "lightening," very slightly indeed, the under part of the tip. Jewish noses are frequently wide, and this effect can be produced by "lightening" the sides. Great care must be taken when making up a nose of this type, otherwise harsh contrasts will completely spoil the effect.

A prominent nose may be depressed by "darkening" the ridge and "lightening" the sides, and the same scheme of lighting, accentuated, will produce a low, broad nose.

To produce ecentricities in the shape of the nose, and noses of abnormal size, the aid of nose paste will be required, and the amateur—certainly the inexperienced amateur—will be wise to avoid the risk of producing a merely grotesque effect, without the faintest resemblance to any real nose, by giving subtleties of this kind nothing more than his interested consideration. But that wonders can be done in the way of nose production those who saw Sir Charles Wyndham as Cyrano de Bergerac will readily admit.

On the nose itself few, if any, wrinkles need appear, but the lines which come from the base of the nostrils are most important, and give more character to the face than any others. However, they may be more aptly dealt with in connection with the mouth and lips.

Of the lines on the nose itself only those commencing near the inner corners of the eyes, arching towards the bridge, and continued downwards towards the tip, need be dealt with. They should be put in very carefully, but they are most expressive, and should always be used to accentuate a shrewish or miserly appearance. The effect produced by these lines is a gathering up of the nostrils, which may be further enhanced by "darkening" the sides of the nose immediately above the nostrils.

The nostrils require very careful making up. To lengthen or to widen

them carmine should be used sparingly; and to make them smaller—either narrower or shorter—the nearest flesh tint should be carried on.

The Eyes.

The make-up of the eyes is of the utmost importance, and is proportionately difficult. The eyes have been called "the windows of the soul": the made-up eyes may well be described as the key to the whole face. Unless they are successfully treated all the care devoted to the make-up of the other features is but so much labour wasted, for no amount of skill can counterbalance carelessly or inartistically made-up eyes—and yet the eyes themselves are not touched!

This may sound almost paradoxical; and yet it is perfectly logical, for the expression and the apparent size of the eyes can be entirely changed by the treatment of the eyelids and the surrounding flesh.

To make the eyes appear prominent the lids should be "lightened," and to make them appear deep-set the lids should be "darkened."

This is the general principle applicable to the use of the flesh tints mixed with either blue, brown, or lake, but more striking effects can be produced by the use of one of the above colours without the flesh tint.

For example, if it is desired to merely give depth to the eyes and enlarge them, a fine line of blue should be drawn on each lid close to—in fact, blended with—the eyelashes.

A very deep-set appearance is given by putting brown on the entire lids. And a positively hollow-eyed appearance is produced by "lightening" under the eyebrows and along the edge of the bones beneath, which form the eye sockets, in conjunction with the brown on the lids.

To produce a remarkably prominent-eyed appearance, the method is to "lighten" the lids to the very eyelashes. And if, in addition, the hollows beneath the eyebrows are "lightened" and the edge of sockets below "darkened"—the "darkening" being carried into the cheek—a bulging appearance is given to the eyes.

The "lightening" of the lower lids near the lashes and the "darkening" of the base of the lids produce an unwholesome, puffy appearance generally associated with the eyes of men who have what is termed "lived their lives."

No feature helps out the make-up of a "run-to-seed" or delicate character so much as the eyes. It is wonderful to note how completely the mere "lightening" of the eyes alters a face. And when the eyes are made-up in perfect harmony with the cheeks the effect is marvellous.

It should be borne in mind that the brightening of the cheeks—by which is meant the use of carmine or rouge—especially well up to the cheek bones—has the effect of making the eyes brilliant.

The only thing that can be done to the eyes themselves is the use of belladonna. A drop of belladonna enlarges the pupils, and makes the whole eye brilliant; but as satisfactory results can be obtained without it, and as it is not advisable to take liberties with such sensitive organs, its use must be deprecated. Nevertheless, the apparent size of the eyeballs can be increased by whitening the eyelashes and whitening the lids immediately above, then on the upper lid, and below on the lower lid. By this means the white of the eyes is carried on into the lids, and a brown line drawn between the white and the flesh tint, and supported by a blue line, will represent the lashes of the enlarged eyes.

The lining round the eyes is most important. What are commonly known as "crows' feet"—that is to say, lines coming from the outer corner of the eyes towards the temples—give a great deal of expression to the face. If light, they suggest thought and maturity; if heavy, age and illness; and in the make-up of old characters they are of the utmost importance.

Lining under the lower lids—and especially a deep line coming from the inner corner of the eyes—has the general effect of strengthening the face. But put on properly these lines can be made to give an appearance of weakness.

The upper lids require no lining, except when it is desired to enhance the prominence of the eyes by showing folds on the lids—thus expressing expanse of surface.

One word of warning must be given in connection with the make-up of the eyes. The organs are so delicate that the greatest care must be taken to keep the paints outside the lids. The lashes are intended by Nature as a sort of fence to protect what are the most easily injured organs of the human frame, and when making up the face for the stage, everybody should respect her provision. The tiniest fragment of dust becomes a mountain in the eye, and may cause serious trouble; and, in the same way, unless care is taken to keep them away from the delicate parts, the grease paints will cause inflammation and entail the most excruciating agony.

The Cheeks.

The make-up of the cheeks is a comparatively easy matter. The two most important effects to be produced are thinness and fatness, and these can be obtained by the arrangement of the lights alone.

A thin-cheeked face is made by "darkening" the cheeks and "lightening" the surrounding bones. By this method the cheek bones and the jaw bones are brought into prominence, and the cheeks are thrown back, so that an appearance of hollowness is given to the sides of the face.

A plump-cheeked face is made by the reverse process. That is to say, the cheeks should be "lightened" and the surrounding bones "darkened." The cheeks are thus brought into prominence, and the bones thrown back, an arrangement of lights which at once gives a rounded appearance to the face.

The more strongly-marked the contrast between the lights, in either case, the greater the effect of hollowness or plumpness, as the case may be.

Faces, thin even to gauntness, may be produced in the way described, simply by strengthening the contrast; but sometimes it is necessary to resort to plumpers, which are inserted into the mouth, when an abnormally fat face is required.

Except for very old characters, the cheeks require no lining. Great age, however, is often expressed by inserting parallel lines running from the cheeks downwards over the jaw bones and across the throat. These lines require to be put in with the greatest care; and any novice who is called upon to make up a very aged part will do well to make several experiments before deciding upon the final lineation.

There is one general rule as regards the cheeks which everybody about to appear behind strong lights should bear in mind. The footlights will make the face absolutely ghastly unless some artificial colour is used on the cheeks; and therefore, unless the nature of the part is such that ghastliness is desirable, rouge or carmine should be used in all cases.

The Chin.

The apparent shape of the chin may be altered simply by the rearrangement of the lights, just as in the case of the forehead. To make a chin appear prominent, the lower part round the chin bone should be "lightened," and a shadow put under the lower lip. The more intense the shadow and the lighter the high light, the more exaggerated is the effect; so that a protruding chin can be produced very easily.

A receding chin is made by putting a high light under the lower lip and darkening the lower part of the chin very slightly. When producing this effect the greatest care must be taken to avoid over "darkening" the lower part of the chin, otherwise a grotesque appearance is given to the face.

A square, broad chin is made by "lightening" the whole chin—save for a slight shadow under the lower lip—and producing the high light on either side towards the jaws. To increase the effect the jaws should be darkened a little.

A narrow chin is produced by the reverse process, only the central section of the chin is "lightened," and the low lighting of the jaws is continued to meet the patch of high light.

The characteristics of a square, prominent chin are strength and obstinacy. Clear definition of the feature betokens strength, but exaggeration shows a tendency to obstinacy.

A receding chin is indicative of mental or physical weakness, as a rule; and in conjunction with a weak mouth and forehead it denotes lack of stability and even insanity.

To give an unshaven appearance to the chin, throat, and jaws, blue should be used. And here it should be borne in mind that this is the one exception to the rule that no line, as a line, should be allowed to remain on the made-up face—and even here the line of the beard and whiskers should not be too noticeable.

The only lines that need be dealt with under this heading are those on the lower part of the chin. Some chins have a deep dent on the point, dividing them, as it were, into two halves. This dent should be put in by the use of either brown or lake, and the chin on either side should be "lightened." To put in the deep line which crosses many chins, nearly parallel to the lips, but with a slightly downward tendency towards the extremities, brown should be used sparingly, and little or no "lightening" is necessary, unless the effect is to be made very marked.

The Mouth and Lips.

The mouth is commonly called "the grave of beauty"—by which is meant, I suppose, that pretty mouths are rare—and it is often the grave of the make-up artist's hopes. To successfully make-up a mouth to any extent without interfering with its mobility is a performance of which the artist may be proud.

One of the most difficult tasks is

to lengthen the upper lip—that is to say, to give an appearance of greater depth from the mouth to the base of the nostril than there really is. To do this—and I am afraid my directions will only be useful in so far as they supply the principle—it is necessary to "lighten" the entire lip. The mouth should be closed tightly and the lip protruded so that an arched and strained surface is exposed. All that is then visible between the nose and the compressed lip should be "lightened"—including any of the red lip that may be showing. By doing this the whole upper lip is brought into prominence, and when the mouth is relaxed the lip, seeming to protrude, looks longer.

To shorten a long lip a high light should be put along the mouth and under the nose, and a low light placed between them. This treatment has the effect of depressing the middle of the lip, and, consequently, apparently lessening the distance from the mouth to the nose.

A wide mouth may be shortened by continuing the flesh tint used on the cheeks for a little way over the lips. The lips should then be rouged and the new corners most carefully worked up.

A narrow mouth may be lengthened by extending the rouge of the lips into the flesh tint on either side.

The shape of the lips may be entirely altered by the use of rouge or flesh tint as required. For example, if it is necessary to make the lips look fuller than they are, rouge may be used with impunity; and if it is necessary to make them thinner, the flesh tint used elsewhere should be carried over the red of the natural lips.

The lines about a mouth are many and expressive. The most important are those which come from either corner and run downwards towards the jaw bone, and from the bases of the nostrils downwards into the cheeks.

The lines from the corners of the mouth may give a hard, a strong, a sad, or a sardonic expression, according to the direction they take. In general terms the characteristics of the lines are as follows: Bold lines, generally only one on either side, coming from the corners directly downwards, denote strength; if the extremities of the lines tend towards the chin, an appearance of sadness is given; two or three diverging lines, running downwards, give an appearance of hardness; lines, generally one on either side, with an upward curve, produce a rather sneering expression; while a sort of crow's foot on either side gives a humorous expression to the face.

And almost the same general rules, as regards the expression produced, may be applied to the lines from the bases of the nostrils.

In old characters the mouth is often puckered into many seams, which should be put in by the brown lining-stick, and accentuated as required by "lightening" the surrounding flesh-tint.

A prominent mouth is produced by "lightening" the lips round the mouth and "darkening" above the high light on the upper lip, and below it on the lower lip. And a sunken mouth — the fallen-in mouth of old age—is produced by the reverse process. That is to say, a low light is round the mouth and a high light is placed above on the upper lip and below on the lower lip.

A toothless appearance may be produced by blacking out the teeth with black enamel.

The appearance of an unshaven upper lip is produced in the same way as the unshaven chin, by the use of blue.

Eccentricities, such as a one-sided appearance, can be produced by carrying on the rouge in the direction required and cutting short the natural lips, by the use of flesh-tint. But these are heights of the art of make-up to which the amateur should not attempt to climb until he has had considerable experience.

Wigs, Whiskers, Beards, and Moustaches.

It is not always necessary to wear a wig, but when one is required, it should be of good quality and fit perfectly. Nothing so completely upsets the make-up as a badly-fitting wig. Good wigs are expensive, but rather than accept ill-made articles, the amateur will do well to hire—which can be done at a very small cost—all the wigs necessary from one of the costumiers, such as Clarkson or Fox.

Whiskers, beards, and moustaches may be made of crape hair with safety; but, on the whole, amateurs will find it more satisfactory to hire them with the wigs.

The wig should be put on from the forehead backwards, and well drawn down to the nape of the neck, so that none of the natural hair shows below it. Care should be taken to fix the wig firmly, so as to prevent slipping; and for this purpose nothing is better than a line of spirit gum on the forehead. When the wig has been put on and fixed, the line of junction must be removed by the use of the proper flesh tint—that used elsewhere on the forehead—and powder.

Spirit gum will also be found useful for fixing the hair on the other parts of the face. The gum should be put on and left for a moment before the moustache, whiskers, or "imperial" is applied, and then the hair should be pressed with a soft towel until it has stuck to the skin.

It is not often necessary to remove a moustache for theatrical purposes, though the sacrifice on the altar of Duty is regarded by many young amateurs, whose lip supports a little down, as inevitable. As a matter of fact, I believe that the compulsory shaving is a very great delight to many a youthful hero on the amateur stage; still, there must be many who will rejoice to learn that the cherished moustache can be saved. Unless it is a very large one, it can be done away with completely by the use of one of the pastes sold for the special purpose of hiding hair, if the actor is cast for a clean-shaven part. And by the use of grease paints the colour of the moustache can be made to suit the part if a moustache is worn by the character.

Concluding Remarks.

In dealing with the important art of make-up, I have avoided types of characters and confined my remarks to the treatment of the various features. Many advisers class their hints under the heads of "Youth," "Maturity," "Old Age," and so forth, and describe a typical face, which has to serve as an example for the entire class. I cannot but think that this is a mistaken principle, and I hope that my method will prove more useful to the amateur—above all, to the novice.

I have endeavoured to bear in mind that such hints as I can give will be of use to no one but the novice; and, therefore, I have not hesitated to deal with the most elementary truths and rules in some detail. My aim has been to show the effect produced by certain lines, lights, and shadows. If I have succeeded in presenting my matter clearly, I believe that those who turn to these hints for guidance will find them more practical than studies of typical faces representing the seven ages. Everybody will admit that faces vary so much that no one can be taken for any other—except in very rare instances, cases of mistaken identity are found only in novels. I hold that the characters in the numerous plays that have been written vary just as much as individuals; and, that being so, I cannot see how any set rules can be applied to their appearance on the "weight for age" system. Therefore, I think that the usual method of classification according to years is absurd. It gives no real help to the novice—who most needs help—and it conveys an entirely wrong impression to the mind.

My endeavour has been to show the effect of the various lines, lights, and shadows, and I hope I have succeeded. With the help of their own ingenuity and by exercising their powers of conceiving a part, those who require assistance will be able to apply the general rules I have enunciated to the needs of the particular case with which they are grappling.

NUMERICAL SECOND SIGHT.

Of late years the fascinating and, to many, seemingly inexplicable subject of discernment of things through mesmeric influence has aroused a widespread interest, and has given rise to many theories as to the manner in which such exhibitions are carried on. To the great majority it must be a matter of amazement and wonder to sit and to watch two persons, connected by no means visible to the human eye, give a lucid and descriptive account of certain articles which they do not see, neither have in their possession, yet we know that by some means or other—generally a secret to the performers themselves—they have the power of communicating invisibly all information of which it is requisite that each should be aware.

Until recently it was thought that such exhibitions were carried on entirely by mesmeric power, but modern research and investigation have brought to light the fact that in almost every case there has been some other force at work, either a code of actions, a system of speech, or an understanding of time, so that by the existence of a certain definite arrangement between two persons it is a matter of comparative simplicity to initiate mysteries incomprehensible to the outside world.

Now, in this article it is my intention to deal only with a very short branch of clairvoyance, and that is what is known as numerical second sight. The possession of a knowledge of this will enable the young entertainer, after a very brief space of time, to give a really mystifying and interesting entertainment, and to those who may follow our articles on ventriloquism I recommend a study of this as making a pleasant variation in an evening's performance.

Before proceeding to give a key or solution to the means whereby such an exhibition may be conducted, I shall state briefly the nature of the entertainment, for which two persons acting in co-operation are necessary. For the sake of convenience let us suppose their names to be Professor X. and Miss Y. For their apparatus they are furnished with a blackboard or slate and a piece of chalk. Drawing attention to the simplicity of these articles and the impossibility of their use as a means of communication between himself and his medium, Professor X. then addresses his audience somewhat as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—With your kind permission Miss Y. and myself will endeavour to bring to your notice an exhibition of numerical second sight, and we trust that during the 15 or 20 minutes we occupy on this stage you will give us your closest attention, paying particular care to the fact that I hold absolutely no communication whatever with the young lady. In order further to increase the difficulty of my task I will consent to be blindfolded by any member of my audience. I would also have you notice that neither myself nor Miss Y. makes use of signs with either the hands or feet, and I think you will agree with me that such restrictions as these will prove to you our faculties differ from those usually exercised.

"Now, I will ask my medium to borrow from among the audience certain articles, such as bank-notes, coins, postal orders, or other documents bearing numbers. Suppose, for example, one gentleman submits a bank-note with five figures on it. Miss Y. will request each of any five persons in the hall to select a figure of the number, and to remember the order in which the figures occur. As soon as she claps her hands, but without making any other sign, I will write down on my board the exact number on the bank-note."

Now, this apparently difficult and mystifying feat is really very simple when you know how to do it. First of all, a system must be agreed upon, and for this purpose I place the following simple and easily-learned device before the student: It is decided beforehand by Professor X. and Miss Y. that the subjoined system of communication shall be used—namely, that the first letter of the initial word in every sentence shall represent a certain figure, so that although Miss Y. addresses no remark to Professor X., what she says to her audi-

ence really constitutes the key to the matter. However, should she pass a remark which is not intended to indicate a number, Professor X. will pass it over if said in a tone lower than that usually employed by the lady. Experience has taught me that the following table is as good as any code that can be thought of, and that the letters selected give a very wide scope for framing applicable sentences:

Let 1 be represented by			"t" or "o."
2	,,	,,	"e" or "d."
3	,,	,,	"f" or "g."
4	,,	,,	"h" or "a."
5	,,	,,	"k" or "l."
6	,,	,,	"m" or "p."
7	,,	,,	"n" or "i."
8	,,	,,	"r" or "s."
9	,,	,,	"b" or "w."
0	,,	,,	"y" or "j."

Suppose a coin bearing the date 1873 be handed to Miss Y. The following remarks would indicate the number to Professor X.:

1. "**T**his is an easy number to tell, sir."

Gentleman: "Oh! Why?"

8. "**S**urely you can see, there are so few figures."

Gent.: "What has that to do with it?"

7. "**N**ot very much, certainly, but it all helps."

Gent.: "I don't quite see that?"

3. "**F**ortunately not." (Claps he hands.) "The number is up, you see."

(The key-letters are printed in black type.)

Of course, Professor X. takes no notice of anything his medium may say after she has clapped her hands, so that the number of sentences she uses between the time of the acceptance of the coin and the clapping of her hands will indicate the number of figures there are, while the first letter in each separate sentence indicates what that number is. The plan of having more than one letter for each figure is a double safeguard, for should by any chance a member of the audience notice that the same figures—e.g., 555, were met by Miss Y. with remarks beginning with the same letter—though this is extremely improbable—she has the choice of an alternate letter.

To give a good entertainment in this numerical second sight without a hitch requires a certain amount of patience, perseverance, and practice—those three essential "p's" of the entertainer's art—but there is really no difficulty at all when once the table here given is thoroughly committed to memory; so that within a few hours from reading this short article many should be able to give a good exhibition of numerical clairvoyance.

THE PRACTICAL VALENTINE VOX.

To the average boy it is doubtful if there is any more enviable acquirement than that of the ventriloquial art, with its many possibilities of fun and frolic, and the unquestionable advantage which its possessor has over other less fortunate individuals.

Now, in writing a series of articles on this interesting and universally fascinating subject, one main object must be kept in view, and that is to provide such instruction and advice as will be open to all, and enable, not a few, but many to become masters of the art of ventriloquism.

Let it be said here, at the very commencement, that we hold out hope not alone to those gifted by Nature with all the powers which lend themselves so readily to ventriloquy, but to all who care, by the exercise of diligence, patience, and perseverance in the subjoined instructions, to follow out consistently the advice given. It is surprising, when one comes to consider it, the number of misconceptions and fallacies concerning this subject which have arisen and have been allowed to exist even in so enlightened an age as our own.

The prevailing idea that the ventriloquist can throw his voice, undoubtedly is due in a great measure to Mr. Cockton's amusing but impracticable work of "Valentine Vox." Why things utterly impossible of accomplishment should have taken so firm and general a hold on the public mind it is difficult to say; yet there are many who are thoroughly convinced the ventriloquist is born, not made, that he is the possessor of peculiar organs essential to the work, and that the art, once brought to perfection, the voice can be thrown in any direction.

Now, all this is totally wrong, and it is with the intention of encouraging readers of this paper in the study of an acquirement both interesting and entertaining that this series of articles has been written.

I.—Any One May Become a Ventriloquist.

It may be of encouragement to all desirous of pursuing the study of ventriloquism, and who, either on account of their own modesty or because of no great belief in their own powers and capabilities are consequently somewhat dubious of the result, to know that every boy who is the possessor of a sound throat and healthy lungs may, with the requisite amount of patience and practice, excel as a ventriloquist.

This series of articles was not written especially to supply instruction for those gifted by Nature with good ears and tractable voices; on the other hand, our object is to give everyone the same chances of taking up a profitable and healthy form of amusement. We say healthy, firstly because experience has taught us it is so, and secondly on account of the only too prevalent but erroneous idea that ventriloquism is injurious. We shall do well, then, now to consider briefly

II.—The Advantages of the Study

An examination of the subjoined exercises will reveal the fact that primarily they are so drawn up as to admit of a gradual development of the respiratory organs. Beside the benefit which should result from a regular training of the lungs, the throat, and the ear, there is the consideration—important to most boys—that out of ventriloquism, as well as endless fun and entertainment, is to be made a deal of money.

After following conscientiously the course of instruction here given, with the outlay of a few shillings in the purchase of the necessary apparatus—this will be dealt with in a subsequent article—there is no reason at all why the young ventriloquist should not ensure for himself, especially in the winter months, a handsome return as the result of his labours.

Particularly is this so in many parts of London, where there is usually a demand for ventriloquial talent from the clergy of the surrounding neighbourhood, and from others who provide amusement for the general public. For bands of hope, treats, concerts, &c., the services of the young performer will be constantly requisitioned, and although, of course, he ought not at

first to expect a very handsome return, he will find it often possible to earn two and even three half-guineas a week in this way. Then, again, after a time the ventriloquist may expect—providing his performance is smart and up to date, which consideration will largely rest with himself—frequently to find a place on the programmes of local concerts, in which case he will, as a rule, receive good remuneration.

In summer months, when chances of engagement are not so many, such things as bazaars and garden parties should be looked out for; but in all cases we are assuming that such engagements are accepted in the ventriloquist's spare time, and interfere in no way with his school or business work. In a short time the student will find the labour and energy formerly expended have been amply paid for, not only by the fees received but by the enjoyment derived from so delightful a pastime.

III.—Practical Hints and Suggestions.

In following a course of instruction such as this, there is one mistake into which, unfortunately, many are liable to fall. Not going so far as to lose sight of the fact that there is much work to be done before even a fair amount of success may be expected, yet there are some who are not satisfied to progress step by step, thoroughly mastering one exercise before the next is entered upon, but who wish to run before they can walk. For the aspirant to ventriloquial powers there is no more fatal step; the secret of success lies almost entirely in a progressive mastery of the various processes. Not less than an hour or three-quarters of an hour a day should be devoted to the work, and afterwards, as things become more interesting and engrossing, the time may well be increased. Once again it must be urged that no exercise be attempted unless the difficulties of the previous one have been thoroughly overcome.

As far as is possible, all technical terms will be avoided in dealing with the various positions in which the organs of the throat must at times be placed; only such advice as the youngest boy can understand will be placed before the learner, yet on his part there must be unremitting patience and perseverance.

The course will not follow that given in most books on the subject, in which, unfortunately, there is, as a rule, a deal of irksome and trying practice to be gone through before any more interesting portion is touched. In the first place, previous to the beginner's learning the means whereby he can articulate the voices for the ventriloquial figures, he will be called upon to attempt what is, perhaps, the secret of the making of a successful ventriloquist—namely, control of facial movement.

By this the student has to be able to utter almost as clearly and distinctly as he is capable of so doing in his natural voice all words he will have to place in the mouths of his ventriloquial figures in answer to any question he may seem fit to direct to them, or other remarks they may make. It is a curious thing, but it will be found that utterances of commonplace occurrence will appear most ridiculous when put in the mouth of one of the automata, and this should be constantly borne in mind, for on the management of dialogue the success or failure of a performance often depends.

Speech without bringing into play the muscles of the face once conquered, the proper mode of breathing will be dealt with in order to prepare for the attempts upon the "near" and "distant" ventriloquial voices. On the former are based such illusions as are generally produced by dummy figures representing well-known characters. These are so made as to admit of the performer's moving the mouth of the figure, and for all intents and purposes, when the student has acquired the "near" vent. voice, it will be almost an impossibility to detect the deception practised upon the ear by the sound of the voice appearing to proceed not from the ventriloquist, but from the wooden or papier-mache representation.

When the "near" and "distant" voices have been acquired, a number of imitations will be explained; then will follow the necessary information of the manner in which to produce an easy ventriloquial sketch by means of a screen, with suitable dialogues and hints for outdoor work. In conclusion, a concise and lucid account of "How to Give an Entertainment" will be set forth; and the combination of these should give the ventriloquist a sure and certain foundation upon which to work.

Exercise I.—Control of Facial Movement.

A glance at the mirror when one is conversing will reveal the fact that certain sets of muscles are brought into play. Their movements can be clearly seen, even apart from the working of the lips, so necessary in ordinary speech. Now, in ventriloquism a different order of things has

to be observed, and all sounds and words emitted from the mouth without any indication that the performer is speaking.

A few moments reflection will convince the beginner of the importance of this being observed, for it is by the illusion produced when the performer's face is motionless, while the mouth of the automaton is moving, that the ear is so easily deceived.

Stand erect before a looking-glass; keep the shoulders well back, and the lungs supplied with a good quantity of air. Next draw the chin slightly in, so that the under lip is almost immediately beneath the upper teeth, and about a quarter of an inch below them. This will impart a certain stiffness to the face, which in time soon becomes unnoticeable, but it is the right position for enabling the performer to control his face. Now, keeping the muscles perfectly rigid, commence with the following letters of the alphabet, mastering each lot before going on with the next:

1. a e i k q r x z o u n
2. c d g h j l y t
3. m p s v b f w

With the latter some difficulty will naturally be experienced at first, while a few it is utterly impossible to articulate properly without facial movement. In such cases, other sounds, corresponding as near as possible, must be substituted—e.g., as soon as the "v" is mastered, it will have to be used instead of the troublesome "b," thus the sentence:

"Give the boy the book," would have to be spoken as—

"Gif the voy the vook."

For "f," "h" may usually be used; for "p," "hf;" for "m," "ng." The rest can easily be accomplished after a few days' practice.

At least half an hour at a time should be spent on the face exercises, and that very frequently. The looking-glass will soon show the more difficult words, and these will require the greatest care. When sufficient practice has been done with the face directly towards the mirror, turn sideways, and go slowly through the alphabet in the same manner. As soon as the learner has satisfied himself that he has conquered the initial difficulty, he should try sentences—short at first, but as proficiency is obtained longer ones should be tried. After a week or 10 days of this any conversation should be possible without the slightest relaxation of the muscles.

Exercise II.—Breathing.

We are supposing by now that Exercise I. has received adequate attention. The next matter with which we shall concern ourselves is breathing. While speaking in the ventriloquial voice, the lungs must be kept full, and the air expelled in short, sharp jerks as the words are spoken, between which fresh supplies of breath should be drawn in through the nostrils.

A good method of developing lung power is to be out of doors early in the morning, taking in as much air as you can, and expelling it very slowly. Besides being an aid to ventriloquism, this will be beneficial to the general health.

Our previous exercises were intended to prepare the student for a more interesting part of the study. This is the acquisition of those voices so invariably associated with all kinds of ventriloquial exhibitions, from those given at small club concerts to the most elaborate entertainment of its kind possible to be witnessed. The ventriloquist; although owing his name to the possession of the true ventriloquial or "distant" voice, yet more frequently rests and relies for his reputation on the skill he displays in the manipulation of his automata or figures.

It will not be out of place to give here a fuller description of these and the part they play in the repertoire of the public exponent. A small figure, with a head made generally of a pulp of paper mixed with glue, and having body and legs often of the same material, is used by the ventriloquist for the purpose of carrying on a dialogue. According to the make of the figure, and the skill of the manufacturer, these will be found to work in different ways. In some cases the head has a hole at the back sufficiently large as to admit the insertion of the hand.

Through this the performer, when requiring the doll to speak, presses a small plate fixed on the mouth in the same position as the tongue lies. Now, the mouth being cut away from the face, and working on a small hinge either of metal or of leather below the chin, moves downwards under the pressure of the hand, and upwards when the force is relaxed, thus giving the figure the appearance of human facial movement.

Other methods there are of bringing about the same result, and these will be described in a future article; but in order to convey a general idea of the working of the "doll," the foregoing is sufficient. As the face of the figure generally presents a most ludicrous and comical appearance, it can easily be imagined what amusement is caused when this stolid-looking being commences a funny conversation.

For beginners the two usually used are the old man and old woman.

These may be obtained from almost any magical depot in London for about 15s. each, fully dressed, having arms, body, and legs; but later on will be explained how equally serviceable dolls may be had for a much less sum. It is not recommended that the learner should at once go and purchase vent. figures. Let him first of all acquire at least the "near" vent. voices before laying out any money; this being done, he will be more ready to face the little difficulties which their manipulation at first presents.

Having said so much about the figures, we may now proceed to the study of the "near" vent. voices—that is, those voices used only with the automata.

Exercise III.—The Old Man's Voice.

This is to supply speech for old men who have partly lost command of their vocal organs. The sound most resembles at first a "grunt," and so has frequently been termed the "grunt" voice. As it comes from the back of the throat and the chest, it will be understood that it has a deep tone. It may easily be effected as follows: Fill the lungs with air and with the tongue lying flat in the mouth and the vocal chords unstrained make a grunting sound, using not the front, but the back of the tongue. If the breath be expired only when the sound is made, a deep sepulchral tone will be struck, and this is the basis of the old man's voice. A little practice will soon produce this; then in place of the "grunt" substitute short, easy words.

It will be noticed that such words when spoken will appear to proceed from an uneducated person. This is as it should be, as no amount of talent or patience could make one speak in a refined manner when the sound comes from the back of the throat.

Exercise IV.—Old Woman's Voice

There is no more useful, and perhaps to the great majority of students, easily mastered voice than that given to the old woman, or, as it is more commonly called, the "theek" voice, because on the same principle are supplied those sounds which give speech to the figures of the little boy, the little girl, and the baby. Thus with modifications the "theek" voice may be adapted to four different persons.

It has a sound similar to that produced by a reed instrument, and most resembles the name given to it—namely, "t-h-e-e-k." It is produced by a compression of the larynx—the windpipe—speech being made in a high falsetto tone. Press the tongue tightly against the roof of the mouth, and in the falsetto voice say "t-h-e-e-k, t-h-e-e-k," prolonging the sound of the "e. The great object is to produce a thin, squeaky tone, and but little practice will discover to almost every one that he is the possessor of this falsetto voice, while perseverance will soon bring it to a state of such perfection that a rapid change may be made from the natural or the "grunt" voice to it. A good method of practice is to get a screen, and supposing an old woman were behind it, to say in your natural voice:

"Good morning, madam. How are your children to-day?"

O. W.: "Children! You wretch, I haven't got any; and I'm a single woman, too. Oh, you horrid man, you ought to be scragged fer hinsultin' ov a virtious woman like me!"

P.: "Very well, madam; now please calm yourself."

O. W.: "Yes, I will, sir; and I oughter be 'appy considering as 'ow I buried me old man yesterday."

(O. W., Old Woman; P., Performer.)

In a day or so it will be found quite easy to change from the one voice to the other, and when the ventriloquist is able to do this he may now make a start with a pair of knee figures (so called because, as a rule, they are held on the knee, the old man usually on the right, the old woman on the left). But before dealing more fully with the manipulation of these figures and the best kind to use, we shall deal with one or two more voices.

Exercise V.—Little Boy's Voice.

The observant reader will have noticed that when a child speaks, he almost invariably does so in a high pitch, with a slight nasal twang. For a little boy, then, the theek voice is used, only in a higher pitch, the sound being directed through the nose. A good hint when using the figure of the little boy is for him to be made to repeat his words. This renders the illusion more natural. The following dialogue may be used with the screen:

P: "Georgie, where are you?"

L. B.: "Please, sir, I'm here, sir."

P.: "What are you doing?"

L. B.: "Please, sir, I'm trying to look, sir."

P.: "What do you mean, you young rascal?"

L. B.: "I'm trying to look, sir, because I can't see!"

P.: "Can't see! Why can't you see?"

L. B.: "Because I lost my eye, sir, looking for work."

P.: "I shall have to speak to your father if you are rude."

L. B.: "I ain't rude, sir, I'm Georgie. Besides, you can't tell the old 'un, 'cos 'e ain't in."

P.: "Where is he, then?"

L. B.: "Just gone out to get his face sandpapered."

Exercise VI.—The Coster's Voice

Of late years the figure of the coster, as manipulated by such expert exponents as Fred Russell and Lieutenant Walter Cole, has become very popular. No up-to-date series of articles could be termed complete without setting forth the means whereby the lingo of the irrepressible 'Arry may be acquired. Just one word of caution, however. Do not on any account imagine that because you are introducing the figure of a coster to your audience you may be vulgar. A good deal of fun may be got from the "lush-'er-up-wiv-welks-an-ottentot-o'-fourpenny" boy without one word of vulgarity being used.

In all things be refined, especially in your jokes, although in true keeping with the character of your figure it is impossible to be refined in the ventriloquial speech. There is little difference in acquiring the coster voice from that of the old man, but the variation lies in the peculiarity of sound and the increased length of the vowels; thus, for instance—forcing the words to the back of the mouth, keeping the tongue still, and the mouth slightly open — the sentence "Now, cocky, who do you think you are getting at?" would sound as "Nah, cawky, 'oo der yer fink yer agittin' at?"

Frequently in using this voice the muscles of the back of the throat where the act of swallowing takes place may be moved backwards and forwards to give the right twang to the words.

Most other voices, such as those of the nigger, little girl, child, Irishman, parson, German, &c., may be learned on either the "grunt" or the "theek" principle.

Vent. Figures.

Enough has already been said to explain the function of the papier-mache figure used in almost every ventriloquial entertainment. Various kinds are adopted, but as far as knee-figures are concerned, the difference lies mainly in the principle employed for the movement of the mouth. As was explained above, these are most frequently worked by the performer placing his hand in a hole at the back of the figure's head and pressing a plate connected with a spring in order to give the necessary movement to the mouth. Others are worked from a cavity in the body, where there are connections with the moving mouth; but although the principle is somewhat different, the result is much the same.

Very good ventriloquial figures, reasonable in price and thoroughly sound in construction, may be obtained from Messrs. Spiers and Pond's Stores, Ludgate Hill, London, and from them all particulars may be had on application. Of course, second-hand ones are often to be picked up. (See current copies of the "Exchange and Mart.")

Having proceeded so far, the student should now purchase either one or two knee-figures (which will cost about fifteen shillings each) and begin practice with them. A cheaper method, however, is to buy the heads alone (new five shillings each), to start with preferably those of the old man and old woman. Any boy with a little ingenuity can make a dummy body and get his sister to dress it. One so made will serve the purpose equally as well as a more expensive article.

Other methods may be adopted. Some ventriloquists screw their heads on a square piece of wood, fitting into each corner a brass rod. A similar piece of wood at the bottom will serve for a stand, and if the rods are draped in a suitable manner, the student will be the possessor of very presentable though inexpensive apparatus. Or, again, small size-tubs varnished or painted white will stand for bodies, the heads being screwed on the top of the tub. A little thought will suggest various other ways, and but a small outlay of capital should suffice to equip the ventriloquist with all he requires.

Whilst giving a performance, the old man should always be kept on the right of the entertainer, with the old woman on the left. In addressing himself to the figures, the performer should turn his face towards the one he addresses; similarly, in making reply the doll must be made to turn his head in the direction of the performer. But supposing the old man were to speak to the old woman, he would have to look towards the old woman, who would in reply turn towards the old man. During this operation the ventriloquist must gaze straight ahead, as it would spoil the illusion were he to watch the doll when it is speaking.

A little confusion will naturally result at first in the manipulation of the automata, but practice will quickly produce perfection.

Up to the present sufficient instruction has been given to enable the student to give at least a drawing room entertainment. But thus far, though at times we have called him such, he cannot lay claim to the title of ventriloquist; for the true ventriloquist is he, who, having learned the secret of the "distant" voice, can produce the illusion of making sounds appear to proceed from a direction different from where they really emanate.

Now, to do this is truly to become a ventriloquist in the right and proper sense of the word, and very little reflection will convince the student of the great merit and advantage which this voice possesses over all others, and the bewildering results which may be obtained on the stage during an exhibition of the ventriloquist's powers.

Of course, it must not be imagined from what has been said that the "distant" voice once learned the ventriloquist will be able—to use a popular term—to throw his voice in any direction as he would a stone, and that voice-throwing experiments in railway carriages or on the tops of omnibuses will meet with much success or sympathy; on the other hand, to be perfectly frank, we would advise the ventriloquist to use his art more for entertaining than for mystifying or frightening purposes.

Undoubtedly a great deal of fun may be got from a judicious exercise of the "distant" voice, but such pleasantries should only be indulged in when circumstances are particularly adapted to the occasion.

The whole basis of the "distant" voice is what has been well named the "bee drone," and so called because of its resemblance to the droning of a bee, and it is the acquisition and practice of this drone which will bring the "distant" voice to perfection. After a time the humming noise will appear to proceed from a distance; this is on account of the fact that the "bee drone" places the ventriloquist's organs in the right position for "distant" ventriloquy.

Exercise VII.—The Bee Drone

From the unnatural and unusual position in which the practice of the bee drone will place the vocal chords, the necessity should be borne in mind of gentle and regular exercises. Any straining after effect will only produce disappointment, and very probably a sore throat; while, on the other hand, a little care will give to the ventriloquist a sure and sound basis on which to build every kind and variety of different ventriloquial illusions. Follow out carefully the subjoined instruction.

Fill the lungs as full of air as possible, and standing perfectly erect—preferably in the open air—exhale very slowly, and make a retching noise, as if attempting to vomit, as far at the back of the throat as you possibly can. Having placed the muscles in this position, now make the sound of "ah," slowly forcing the breath through the throat; in a very short time the sound will be recognized as bearing a distinct resemblance to the drone or humming of a bee; repeated and frequent efforts will bring about a regular and sustained sound, and the long "ah, ah" continued until the supply of air in the lungs is exhausted will appear exactly like a droning coming from a distance. It is well to remember that the further back in the throat the drone is made the more distant will it appear to be; and if the sound be nearly shut off by the placing of the tongue against the top of the palate, so as to prevent an easy escape of the breath, the "ah" will then reach the ear of one standing by as a drowsy hum coming from a long way off.

Such an exercise may naturally seem at first wearisome, and though the possibility of over-exertion should be strictly guarded against, yet when one bears in mind the fact that this is practically the whole foundation on which the ventriloquist builds his powers of illusionment, it will readily be seen that the time spent is warrantable. Should a light dryness or soreness of the throat be experienced after practice, the finest thing to take is an egg beaten up in a cup of hot coffee, the liquid being sipped gradually. This, besides being relieving, will strengthen and refresh the voice; personally, we think it a great advantage to take this also before giving an entertainment.

Having once and for all completely mastered the drone of the "ah," substitute the vowels in turn, after which try words and sentences.

Another method of obtaining the "distant" voice is by the compression of the throat, the tongue at the same time being forced back as if an attempt were being made to produce suffocation. Now speak, and it will be found that the articulation of the words is like that which would proceed from a man who was being tightly grasped by the throat. This smothering of the sound will produce almost identically the same result as the bee drone, but we advise the former method of acquisition as the better and sounder, though that once learned, the other may well be attempted, as the change to it from the bee drone gives a rest to organs previously in use. The advantage

will be much appreciated when giving a somewhat lengthy performance. Especially is this latter method useful in bringing before your audience such an illusion as that of a man being shut up in a box and calling to be let out, so no harm will be done by an acquaintance with both.

An open door, an open window, or the chimney will provide an excellent means of using the "distant" vent. voice. The success of the illusion of making voices heard from outside depends not only on the skill which the ventriloquist exhibits in using the distant voice, but also to some extent on his ability as an actor. We do not mean to say that before the student is qualified to give a drawing room or stage entertainment he must of necessity know something about acting, but it is largely on the manner in which he sets to work to give an exhibition of his "distant" vent. powers that the success of the deception rests. He should, if making the voice appear to come from the roof, direct his attention—and consequently at the same time the attention of his audience—upwards by a movement of the hand and a turning of the face towards the roof. Then the audience, expecting to hear the sound come from above, will naturally be the more easily deceived, and to all intents and purposes, if the distant voice be used, the illusion will be so real that the ear will be mistaken as to the whereabouts of the sound.

IMITATIONS.

Exercise VIII.—Bluebottle.

Although these imitations can hardly be classed, in the strict meaning of the word, under the head of ventriloquism, yet there are a number of simple and amusing imitations which the young ventriloquist will find of service, as they serve the purpose of making a variation in his performance, and of giving his vocal organs that opportunity of rest which a lengthy programme would require. Some vents. make a practice of opening with these, or by combining two or three together, work up a sort of little sketch—e.g., a shepherd calling his dog which is barking in the distance, while between can be heard the bleating of the lambs and the baaing of the sheep; or, again, the hailing of two ships at sea. Similar ideas will suggest themselves, and these should be carefully worked up by the student.

Perhaps the most easily learned is that of the imitation of a bluebottle. As you walk on to the stage or into the room, turn suddenly round, and as if surprised, stand listening intently for the buzzing sound, which may be effected by closing the lips tightly together, leaving only a very small aperture through which to force the air. This must pass through with a buzzing noise. A handkerchief held in the hand for the purpose of catching the bluebottle will heighten the effect of the illusion, and if the sound be made to cease when the handkerchief is dabbed down, and is heard again upon the hand being raised, much amusement will be caused from the performer's inability to catch the insect.

Exercise IX.—Sawing a Piece of Wood.

By means of this imitation the following device may be used, and will be sure to meet with the approval of your audience. You may inform them that you will endeavour to show the difference between the *British workman working by the hour, and the same man working on piece work. Taking nothing with you except a chair, place it in the position you would were you going to saw off one of the legs, and with your face slightly turned from the audience make the sound of sawing by placing the tongue a little forward between the upper and lower teeth, drawing in and forcing out the air quickly and strongly, so that the harsh grating noise of the saw moving through the wood is heard, while at the same time the right hand is raised and lowered as if the action were really taking place.

Exercise X.—Kettle Boiling.

This is easily accomplished by forcing the sound in a low droning tone through the mouth, while the tongue quickly touches and leaves the roof of the mouth as if the letter "l" "l" were being continually articulated, a hissing noise like that of escaping steam being obtained by keeping the tongue against the roof of the mouth, the air passing out at the sides of the mouth and through the teeth.

Exercise XI.—The Banjo.

A pretty imitation, and one easily acquired, is that of the banjo, and if the performer be dressed like the irrepressible nigger, holding his hands in the position he would were he holding a banjo, at the same time imitating the twanging of the instrument, the illusion will be rendered perfect. Tang-lang, tang-lang, said smartly, by the quick movement of the tongue against the palate, will convey the idea of a banjo being played.

* Show the energy exercised in the sawing in one case, and the laxity in the other.

VARIATIONS OF THE "DISTANT" VOICE.

Exercise XII.—The Man on the Roof.

A very good opening to an entertainment may be made by holding a conversation with an imaginary person supposed to be on the roof. If the stage has doors leading on to it, all the better; on the other hand, if the entertainment is taking place in a small room the chimney might come in useful; but for the voice from above, the stage is better. As you walk on, use the distant voice, making it appear by your actions that it comes from the side close at hand. Some such short dialogue as the following might be suitable:

Performer: "Hello, my man, what are you doing here?"

D. Voice: "I want ter come in, guvnor."

P.: "You can't come in here."

D. V.: "Then I shall come in at the window."

P.: "No, you won't."

D. V.: "I'm going on the roof, then."

P.: "All right; tell me when you're up there."

Performer, standing with chest well thrown out and lungs full of air, speaks in the distant voice, forcing the sound as much as possible against the roof of the mouth. With the head thrown well back, the throat extended and perfectly rigid, and he says, in the ventriloquial voice:

"Hello! I'm up here on the tiles."

P: "What are you doing?"

D. V.: "Eating the tiles."

P.: "Nonsense! What's your name?"

D. V.: "Ain't got no name."

P.: "Where do you come from?"

D. V.: "Ain't got no come from."

P.: "I'm not going to talk to you. Good night."

The distant voice answers "good night," and dies away in the distance.

How to Manipulate the Figures.

We will suppose that the young ventriloquist, having studiously availed himself of the exercises, has mastered at least one or two of the "near" vent. voices and the "bee drone," and has, besides, possessed himself of two figures—for the sake of convenience, say, the old man and old woman, as these are generally the most easily worked.

With the old man on the right knee and the old woman on the left (if they are knee figures), the performer, as if taking no notice of the "dolls," may begin addressing his audience, prefacing his entertainment by a few necessary remarks. A good opening may be made by the old man's interrupting, and making some sentence of the performer appear ridiculous. Here the old woman may join in with some equally absurd observation; and the true success of the thing will lie in the performer's practical acknowledgment that in verbal bouts with his automata the laugh is generally against him. About a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes may well be spent on this part of the programme.

Great care, of course, must be exercised in keeping the muscles of the face perfectly rigid whilst the "doll" is speaking; also the error of moving the mouth of the wrong figure should be strictly guarded against. Even the most expert ventriloquist may make this mistake, and it can easily be imagined what fun there is when the old man begins talking in the woman's voice. Should a slip be made the performer must rest on his own ingenuity and presence of mind to rectify it; he might do so by making the old woman remark:

"I say, sir, what der yer want ter go chucking my voice into the old man's mouth for?" or some other device as would make it appear to have been done on purpose.

So far the ventriloquist should be well qualified to give a really respectable entertainment either in a drawing room or on a stage; the former will be a splendid preparation for the latter. Remember always to place the greatest possible distance between yourself and those whom you are entertaining, as the greater the distance the more real the deception.

Bear in mind that practice brings perfection, and though these articles have been written in the simplest manner possible, yet there are some points which, of necessity, will require energy and perseverance to grasp; but even the more difficult are not such as to prevent any one becoming, in the course of a few weeks, a practical Valentine Vox.

In our previous articles we dealt with all those points necessary to the making of a ventriloquist, and the student should by this time be ready to give a praiseworthy entertainment; but even when he is master of the essentials of ventriloquy, there is much he has yet to learn as a public entertainer. Lack of space has permitted us so far to deal only with ventriloquial instruction; here we shall give the necessary information which it is requisite to know for entertaining purposes, and we shall therefore consider briefly the subject

of dialogues, songs, &c., and give such hints as will enhance the value of the young ventriloquist's performance.

I.—Dialogue and "Patter."

The importance of this will readily be seen when we consider upon what the really successful ventriloquist bases his reputation. In nine cases out of ten it is not the man who has command over the greatest number of voices, and who introduces into his repertoire the largest number of figures—though, of course, all this in a large way helps—that rises to the top of the tree. It is the man who, having a good command over such things as we have already instructed the student in, is above all smart with his "talk" or "patter."

Seldom the real success of a performance lies so much with the voices and automata, as with what the ventriloquist has to say and the way in which he says it. A deal of time will have to be spent on the preparation of dialogue, which must be worked up to suit your audience; that is to say, that what you would use for one class of people would not be suitable for another, so you must of necessity have at your finger-ends, so to speak, a large fund of amusing matter.

We will suppose that a young ventriloquist is about to give an entertainment with the figures of the old man (O. M.), the old woman (O. W.), the little boy (L. B.), and the coster (C). P. represents performer.

P.: "Ladies and gentlemen"——
O. M.: "And other animals."
P.: "I have come here this evening for the purpose of"——
O. M.: "Making a fool of yerself."
L. B.: "'Ear, 'ear!"
O. W.: "Now, Tommy, be quiet."
L. B.: "'Taint nateral."
P.: "I trust"——
C.: "Don't yer trust. Pay cash down."
O. M.: "'E 'aint got any."
P.: "I was just saying"——
O. W.: "Well, don't say it again."
P.: "I was just saying"——
L. B.: "Why does a chicken cross the road?"
C.: "Ter git ter the uvver side, ov corse."
L. B.: "Wrong. Ask old tin whiskers."
P.: "Are you talking of me, my lad?"
L. B.: "Yas, tin whiskers, I is torking of you. Why does a chicken cross the road?"
P.: "I'm sure I don't know."
O. W.: "'E don't know nuffing."
C.: "Not 'arf, 'e don't, neither."
P.: "Well, why?"
L. B.: "'Cos it don't want ter stick where it is."
P.: "Rather weak, Tommy."
L. B.: "End of the week?"
C.: "'E's finkin' ov screw day."
O. W.: "I say, sir, shall I sing?"
P.: "Sing, madam? Certainly."
O. M.: "Carry me out!"
Old woman sings; coster interrupts.
C.: "Turn the water off!"
L. B.: "Give 'er some neck oil, guv'nor."
P.: "Silence, sir!"
L. B.: "Yer shouldn't pull the string."
P.: "Now, look here. Who can tell me a narrative?"
O. M.: "What kind of an anermal's that?"
P.: "It's not an animal. It's a tale."
L. B.: "Oh, our cat's got a narrertiv, only it's curled up."
C.: "I'll tell yer a narrertiv. Did yer ever 'ear abaht owr farver and 'is cows?"
P.: "No."
C.: "Well, my ole man 'ad two cows. One night a fief came and pinched a cow."
P.: "What did your father do?"
C.: "'E went ter ther priest, and ther priest told 'im ter go 'ome and pray fer ther fief ter come back."
L. B.: "And did the thief come back?"
C.: "Yas, and pinched the uvver cow."

Keep on somewhat in this style, varying your dialogue as often as you can, introducing where applicable a song or comic recitation. As regards jokes, &c., the best plan is, when you hear a funny saying or a good pun to jot it down in a note-book kept specially for that purpose. Most jokes and funny stories nowadays are common property, and may legitimately be picked up from comic papers, &c. You must cultivate the habit of never being at a loss for something to say, so that when you make an apparently commonplace remark one of your figures immediately takes it up and makes fun out of it. You should not have the slightest objection to being ridiculed by your automata, for more interest is aroused by their saying something funny about you than if you said it about them, so that in the mouth of one or more of your figures you must be ever ready to put a scathing or witty remark.

Always affect ignorance of any conundrum you are asked, and give what will be exactly the opposite to the answer held by your figure. A wealth of good jokes is always to be found in such journals as "Scraps," "Snap-Shots," "Nuggets," "Comic Life," &c., and from them you can draw most of the material for your "patter." Familiar anecdotes, such

as that of Washington and the trees, may be turned round to the amusement of the audience, whilst a general source of fun is produced by parodying such verse as "Excelsior," "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "Casabianca," &c.

II.—Songs and Recitations.

An exhibition of the "near" vent. voices, even if the performer were particularly smart with his dialogue, would soon fall rather flat, and to obviate this it has become a common practice to introduce an occasional song or comic recitation, both perhaps parodies, although in the former case a good song well sung by a ventriloquial figure never fails to win appreciation and applause.

Now, the young ventriloquist who does not shine as a singer need not lose heart, for it is not to be expected that the learning of a song for a ventriloquial figure will require that care and skill which a professional vocalist would give to it; on the other hand, the greater difficulty often lies in the selection of a song which will suit the general range of the voice, and which is destitute of words requiring much facial movement. You should make it a practice not to let your figure sing more than one verse and the chorus, for not only is a song apt to become rather tiring, but while singing it the ventriloquist has a considerable strain upon his vocal organs.

After you have been at work with your dialogue for about seven minutes one of the automata might suggest that he or she, as the case may be, should sing a song. After a little argument and banter from one of the other figures, you announce to your audience that the "doll" is about to oblige with —— (give the name of the song). Then, if you have an accompanist, give her the previously-arranged signal, and after she has played the introduction, your figure may begin.

While singing, the ventriloquist should look unconcernedly round as if nothing were happening, glance occasionally at the supposed singer—thus to the end of the song. Follow the single verse with the chorus—preferably of a well-known and popular song—and at the conclusion a humorous touch may be put on by a somewhat rude and uncalled-for remark coming from one of the automata.

The following are all well adapted to ventriloquial purposes, and possess the additional advantage of being parodied easily: "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" (for O. M.), "The Longshoreman" (sailor), "The Diver" (sailor), "Schneider, How You Vas?" (for German), "Poor Old Joe" (O. M.), "The Baby's Lullaby" (little girl), "Take Me Home Again, Kathleen" (little boy), "Mrs. 'Enery 'Awkins" (coster), "The Lads in Navy Blue" (sailor), "The Old Folks at Home" (nigger), "Simon the Cellarer" (O. M.), "Who's that a-calling?" (O. W.)

The student should rely upon his own ingenuity for good parodies of such little recitations as "Little Jack Horner," "Jack and Jill," "Old Mother Hubbard," &c., or books of humorous verse are to be obtained through almost any bookseller. Much humour and fun are to be found in that written by Mr. Alfred H. Pearce, entitled "Jocund Jingles." It will be sent post free for 2s. 9d. from the author, "Northern Weekly" Offices, Bolton, and will prove a source of endless fun and use to the young ventriloquist.

III.—The Public Entertainer.

We have almost reached the end of our studies, and we hope by now that it is with confidence and self-reliance that those who have followed these articles carefully, working in a conscientious spirit, with a real interest in ventriloquism, make their debut on the public stage. Let us watch an old hand at the game, see what he does, and how much we can learn from him. If he is fulfilling an important public engagement, he will of course, be attired in the orthodox dress suit, which at the present day is obtainable at a price far from prohibitive. Not only is he so dressed for the sake of appearance, but he knows if he is using large ventriloquial figures worked at a distance by means of strings, the long tails of his dress coat will be of great service, as one or more of the strings will most probably be fastened to the back of his waistcoat, and within easy reach of his right or left hand.

His figure or figures he neatly packs in a portable manner, taking with him such music as he requires for the occasion, the songs by this time having been rehearsed again and again. He knows before going on exactly what he intends saying, and he will make it his first duty on his arrival to find out how long he has in which to say it. He will perhaps discover that he has more or less time than he bargained for, in which case he will have to alter his programme slightly.

We will suppose the management are allowing him half an hour for his "show," or "turn" as it is generally called. One thing he does on his arrival is to seek out the accompanist, unless he has his own with him, lay

before this gentleman or lady his music, point out any peculiarity he wishes observed, and arrange when his songs are to be sung.

The official programme is his next thought, and glancing down it he finds he has ten minutes or a quarter of an hour to spare. Boots are removed, giving place to patent shoes; figures are unpacked and got in working order; then with the rest he awaits his turn. Punctually to the minute he walks on the stage, bows to the audience, and makes a few introductory remarks. The first five minutes are spent on an exhibition of the "distant" vocal powers, voices coming apparently from the roof, the floor, behind doors, curtains, &c., at the will of the performer. Next the ventriloquial figures are brought forward, smart dialogue ensues for five minutes, then a song, more dialogue, a recitation, and another song, the whole of this part occupying a quarter of an hour. Ventriloquial imitations will add five minutes more, while in conclusion a half hour's successful entertainment may be brought to a close by an amusing conversation with two or more imaginary persons behind a screen.

Such a programme as we have thus briefly outlined is rather longer than that generally gone through, but we quote it as a good example on which to frame shorter or even longer ones, as occasion demands. At the end the entertainer thanks his audience for their attention, bows and withdraws. In the case of an encore being given, the ventriloquist should give more of that part of his programme which aroused the most enthusiasm.

Let the young student remain calm, confident, and self-reliant, exhibiting all those traits which are the keynotes of success; then when fame as an exponent of his art comes to him, as it inevitably does to all who persevere, he will not for a moment regret those hours he spent in the pursuit of a branch of study as interesting as it is entertaining.

UNCLE CHARLES

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JOHN ROBINSON . .
KATE ROBINSON . . . *Uncle Charles's niece and wife of John Robinson.*
JOHN ROBINSON, JUN. (*aged ten*). *Their eldest son and heir.*
CHARLES ROBINSON (*aged eight*). *Their second son.*
KATE ROBINSON (*aged seven*). *Their daughter.*
MARY . . . . . *Maid-of-all-work at Laburnum Villa.*
CHARLES SMITH . . *Kate's uncle.*
CHARLES SMITH . . . *The Rate Collector.*

SCENE—*Dining Room at Laburnum Villa.* TIME—*Christmas Eve. Act* I., *Morning Act* II., *Evening.*

ACT I.

The Dining Room at Laburnum Villa. The family are at breakfast. Sundry signs of the festive season are to be seen — a small Christmas tree on sideboard, some decorations in holly and mistletoe. Sofa near fire.

ROBINSON (*whose temper is not improved by the expenses of the festive season*). Now, Kate, I tell you, once for all, you must have no silly sentimentality. Christmas presents are off—clean off! I can't afford them.

KATE (*fearful of a scene*). Children, you may leave the table. (*Aside.*) John, dear, please think of the children. Remember, they are expecting Santa Claus.

ROBINSON (*hotly*). Santa Claus be —— [*Postman's knock heard.*

KATE (*relieved by the diversion, claps her hands*). Now, children, run for the letters. Run, run, run! A penny for the first to reach me with a letter!

[*Exeunt children excitedly.*

ROBINSON (*severely*). A penny for the first to reach you! Extravagance, Kate—extravagance! Do you know I still owe those beastly rates? I have written to ask the collector to call. Must be civil to these people when you want them to do you a favour. He must wait a bit.

[*The rush of the children and sounds of squabbling heard from without.*

KATE (*sadly*). John, I think you are very inconsiderate. You nearly swore before the children—on Christmas Eve, too! (*Enter children with several letters.*) Come along, Kit—come along You'll be first.

[KIT *rushes to her mother, and the boys follow.*

JOHN (*indignantly*). She never went to the door at all. She took one of my letters.

CHARLES (*equally indignantly*). And one of mine.

ROBINSON (*mutters*). Just like a woman! They do nothing, and pull off all the prizes!

KATE (*laughing*). Is this true, Kit?

KIT (*not in the least ashamed*). Yes, mum. They had too many; so I thought I'd help them to carry them.

ROBINSON (*grunts*). Trust a woman for an excuse.

KATE (*reprovingly*). Oh, John! (*To the children.*) Well, Charlie and John, you should always give way to a girl; shouldn't they, John?

ROBINSON (*disgustedly*). So you say. Don't you think it might be advisable to sort our letters?

[*The children deliver up the letters and wander off to play on the hearthrug while their parents open the letters. Kate sorts letters, and hands him several.*

ROBINSON (*wearily, tossing aside envelope after envelope*). Bills! All bills! (*Watches his wife.*) Not a bit of sympathy! Bleed the beast — that's a woman's creed as regards men. Nice state of affairs!

KATE (*who has been reading her letter*

with great interest). Oh, John! Who do you think this is from?

ROBINSON (*sourly*). Don't know.

KATE (*excitedly*). Uncle Charles!

ROBINSON (*puzzled*). Uncle Charles! Who is Uncle Charles?

KATE (*still excited*). Why, mother's brother, of course—Uncle Charles Smith! I haven't seen him since I was a tiny girl, when he used to dance me on his knee. He's coming to stay with us——

ROBINSON (*angrily*). Absolutely impossible! I can't afford to have visitors.

KATE (*with determination*). But he must come! Listen to this.

ROBINSON (*sarcastically*). Must come! Who, I should like to know, is the master in this house?

KATE (*taking no notice of this outburst*). The letter is written from the Carlton Hotel—(*John shows signs of awakening interest*)—and Uncle Charles says, "My dear little Kate"—— If Uncle Charles saw me now he wouldn't call me "little," would he, John?

ROBINSON (*not forgetful of the fact that to stay at the Carlton means the spending of money*). Do go on, Kate.

KATE (*innocently*). I thought you didn't care?

ROBINSON. Of course I care. What a silly woman you are! How do you get such stupid fancies into your head?

KATE (*resignedly*). It is strange, dear. Well, I will read the letter: "My dear little Kate,—I cannot think of you as anything except the little girl I used to play with long ago. (There! Now I am putting my foot in it; for, of course, you don't think it is long since you were the little girl I remember.) How the time flies, Kittie! Only the other day—(that's better!)—you were a little thing in short frocks, and now you have a house and three children of your own. Of course, you don't remember me. I remember you very well, you little dark-eyed witch! You used to twist me round your tiny little finger. I expect Mr. Robinson—(I am going to call him Nephew John, and he must call me Uncle Charles)—is your devoted slave? Quite right, too! Well, my child, since you would not wait for me, I am still a lonely old bachelor, and you will still be my little tyrant." (*John shows signs of weariness and disgust, which warn Kate to hurry on or explain. She decides to explain*). Uncle Charles, you know, John, went to America. He has made a great big fortune, and always said I should be his heiress.

ROBINSON (*absently*). Did he?

KATE. Yes, dear. He is such a dear! Of course, I don't remember him a bit, but he used to send me such sweet presents. I am sure I shall recognize him.

ROBINSON. Do get on with the letter

KATE (*resuming letter*). "I arrived yesterday morning, and wired to your mother for your address. Her reply has just arrived, and I am writing to say that I will come down and see you to-morrow afternoon."

That, of course, means to-day.

"If you can put me up I will stay over Christmas with you. Don't make any fuss about me. A man who has spent twenty-four years in the wilds is not over particular."

ROBINSON. That's no reason why he should throw our poverty in our teeth.

KATE (*reprovingly*). How can you say such a thing? Uncle Charles never hinted any such thing.

[*The children gather round to hear what all the fuss is about.*

ROBINSON. Well, do get on with the letter! Children, go and play up stairs. [*Exeunt children reluctantly.*

KATE. I have nearly finished. He says: "Wire if you cannot receive me. I have sent a few toys for the children by carrier, and I am bringing myself for you.—Ever your loving uncle, CHARLES SMITH." Now, John, isn't this delightful? Dear Uncle Charles will spend Christmas with us. Of course, we can receive him—(*turning to letter*). The spare room will be ready. I'll go and see about it at once.

[*Exit Kate. John sits with his head on his hands, lost in thought.*

ROBINSON. Charles Smith! Charles Smith! Why, that's the name of that rascally rate collector. Well, if Uncle Charles is rich, he may help me out of the present difficulty. Unless he does, I don't know what will happen. Poor little Kate! She must think me a beast. So I am; but I'm worried.

Enter MARY *with tray.*

ROBINSON (*aside*). Here's my opportunity to give Mary a little timely instruction. (*Sternly.*) Mary!

MARY (*pertly*). Yes, sir.

ROBINSON. Mary, your mistress's uncle, Mr. Charles Smith, is coming to stay with us for a few days. You must be particularly attentive to him.

He is a gentleman of exalted position from America.

MARY (*dropping tray and grabbing her cap*). Lord 'ave mercy on us!

ROBINSON. He will want many things done for him which I—(*with a grand sweep of the hand*)—dispense with, and you must be very careful to do all he wants, willingly and quickly. He is a very rich gentleman, Mary.

[*John slowly rises from the table and proceeds to the hearthrug with a stately stride.*

MARY (*aside*). That's 'is game. I see, old stuck up. It's the money 'e's after. [*Makes a contemptuous face behind his back.*

ROBINSON (*pompously*). You understand, Mary?

MARY (*demurely*). Yes, sir.

[*Mary starts to clear table.*

ROBINSON (*aside*). I think I have shown Mary how she is to behave. I flatter myself I have done it in a dignified manner. (*Arranges his tie before the glass, pulls down his waistcoat.*) Yes; blood will tell! Now I must instruct the children. (*Pauses to reflect.*) A little shyness—melting into confidence—complete surrender. That will do; very pretty, and quite natural. And—yes, by Jove!—I'll send Uncle Charles a wire to say he'll be very welcome.

[*Exit Robinson, slowly. Mary watches, pretending to remove the breakfast things all the time.*

MARY. Poor mistress! That's 'is game. Nephew John—(*pointing to herself*)—Uncle Charles—(*pointing to easy chair*).

[*Executes a fancy scene in dumb show. Nephew John is shown bowing and scraping before Uncle Charles. Finally she embraces the chair affectionately.*

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—*The dining room at Laburnum Villa. Evening. Firelight only in room.*

MARY (*dressed in her Sunday best, discovered preparing for Uncle Charles's arrival. She lights the gas, draws the curtains, and makes up the fire, and while so employed she expresses her views with considerable force*). If ever a body 'ad good reason to be dead sick of a man's name it's me. "Uncle Charles! Uncle Charles! Uncle Charles!" Why, I've 'eard nothing else since nine o'clock this morning, and if I was a very angel I'd be upset. "Do you think Uncle Charles will like this?" (*Imitates the master with much sarcasm.*) "Do you think Uncle Charles will come early?" "Now, children, remember you are not to worry Uncle Charles." "Mary, kindly bear in mind that Mr. Charles Smith is a gentleman of means and position. You must treat him with the utmost deference." With the utmost deference, indeed! What I can say is, if Uncle Charles 'eard all this 'e'd be that sick 'e wouldn't come at all; and if 'e gave me a sovereign it'd be poor pay for all the worry I've 'ad since this morning. (*Thumps cushions on sofa.*) I would—— I'd like to give that old woman in trousers a bit for 'imself! "Mary," says he, "mind you put on your new black dress this afternoon." As if I didn't know what to put on in the afternoon! "Perhaps, sir," thinks I, and I longs to say as much, "you'd be more 'appy if you came and put on my black dress yourself?" Now, if there's one thing I 'ate it's a man that pokes 'is nose into a kitchen without a proper invitation. Down 'e comes to my kitchen and gives me lessons in waiting at table! 'E give me lessons! Ugh! the very recollection makes my stomach turn! Well, now, this is an opportunity not to be wasted. I'll just try the old woman's game on this minute. (*Mary gives dumb-show representation of waiting at table, accentuates all her master's mannerisms, and gives an exaggerated imitation of his voice.*) "Soup, sir?" (*Moves stiffly and with squared elbows round the table.*) "Fish, sir?" Nonsense is what I call it! See here, my man—(*addressing portrait of her master on the mantelpiece*)—I've waited at better tables than you'll ever sit at. That I 'ave, though I says it! (*Postman's double knock. Mary starts.*) There, my nerves is that shaken I'm like a kitten, all of a tremble. There'll be something to take in.

[*Exit hurriedly to open door.*

Enter ROBINSON, *dressed for the occasion. He is wearing overcoat and hat.*

ROBINSON (*brushing his coat*). There, now, I think I have arranged everything for the proper reception of Uncle Charles. I've told the children how to behave; I've instructed Mary in her part; I've excused Kate—that is, I've given her leave to kiss Uncle Charles without reserve. One must be dutiful to one's relations. And then, as Uncle Charles is rich, I feel that it is incumbent upon me to sacri-

fice my own feelings. I do not think a married woman should kiss any man except her husband. But this is an exceptional case, and as Kate is to be Uncle Charles's heiress I should be wilfully injuring her prospects were I to allow my feelings on the subject to influence me. Yes, John Robinson, you have risen to the occasion. (*Looks at himself in the overmantel with a satisfied expression.*) And now, my boy, you must put the finishing touch to the business. It will look well—I have no doubt of that. Uncle Charles will be impressed. Dear Uncle Charles! I feel quite a warm affection for him already. Now I will start. My purchases will be made in a very short time, and then from some well-chosen position I can watch for Uncle Charles's arrival. Good effect! Rather! Bet Uncle Charles thinks well of me when he sees my little contribution towards the children's happiness. John Robinson, my boy, you are a born diplomatist—a loss to the public service, sir!

[*Flourishes the brush and starts for the door.*

Enter MARY, *hurriedly, with telegram in her hand.* MARY *and* ROBINSON *collide.*

ROBINSON (*severely*). Why don't you keep your eyes open, Mary? You have given me a great shock.

MARY (*aside*). I'd like to give 'im a greater. (*Aloud.*) Beg pardon, sir. Telegram, sir.

ROBINSON. A telegram! Give it to me quickly. (*Tears open envelope.*) There is no answer. But, Mary, before you go, I wish to tell you that should any letters come for Mr. Smith while he is here you will take them to him on the silver salver. You understand?

MARY (*aside*). Silver! — plated! (*Aloud.*) Yes, sir. [*Exit Mary.*

ROBINSON (*reading telegram aloud*). "Will be with you almost as soon as this arrives. Many thanks for invitation.—Charles Smith." What a waste of words! Let me see. (*Counts words slowly.*) Sixteen words, without the address. I could have done it for sixpence. But these rich men never think of the expense—lucky dogs! Dear Uncle Charles! Coming at once! Then I must be off. (*Flourishes the telegram in one hand, the clothes-brush in the other, and goes out quickly. His voice heard in hall.*) Tell your mistress, Mary, that Mr. Smith is coming at once. I hope she will be ready to receive him. And mind you make yourself smart.

MARY (*in hall*). Yes, sir; certainly sir. (*Enters, with look of disgust on her face.*) What I'd just like to do is to dirty my face and apron. That I would! And I'd do it, too, if it wasn't for the mistress. The poor mistress! Anybody would feel sorry for 'er. Fancy being tied to a thing like that for life! (*Sighs.*) Well, well, it may be lonely for a body that 'asn't any one to care for 'er at all, but single blessedness 'as its advantages. (*Moves about room giving final touches.*) Well, I suppose this'll do. Oh, that old woman! I'd like to—— (*Shakes her fist.*) I would!

QUICK CURTAIN.

SCENE 2.—*The same room. Kate and her three children are seated around the fire. Kate is somewhat nervous, and the children have been chilled into a state of imbecile silence and self-consciousness by their father's instruction.*

KATE (*trying to appear cheerful*). Now, children, I am sure you will like Uncle Charles. He has been in all sorts of wild places, and he'll tell you all such stories of his adventures. Why, John and Charles, you won't be able to sleep, I'm sure. And, Kate, when I was a little girl like you, Uncle Charles used to take me on his knee, and play post horses. Oh, it was such fun! (*Tries to laugh.*)

KIT. But, mum, dad says Uncle Charles must be treated—— How was it, John?

JOHN (*who has been carefully instructed*). With a proper amount of deference.

CHARLES. What's that mean, mum?

KATE (*concealing her pain behind a laugh*). Oh, it means that you mustn't worry him, dears.

KIT. But, mum, if he's going to play post horses——

[*Loud knock at front door. Kate starts to her feet, presses her hand to her side, and sits down again. The children become silent.*

Enter MARY.

MARY. Mr. Charles Smith, ma'am.

Enter SMITH, *a grey-haired man in rather shabby black.*

KATE (*rises from her seat and advances to meet him*). Well, Uncle Charles, this is a pleasure. Your letter came as a great surprise. I am vain

enough to feel flattered that you have remembered me through all these years.

MARY (*aside*). The poor mistress! Where's that old woman, I wonder?

[*Exit Mary. Smith looks decidedly puzzled and alarmed. The children sit and stare at him. Kate leads him to hearthrug.*

KATE (*nervously laying her hand on his arm*). Now, Uncle Charles, you must make yourself at home. These are my three children. This is John. He is getting a big boy, isn't he? This is Charles. (*Laughs.*) He was named after you. And this is Kate. I was a little thing like that the last time we met. I've been telling the children, Uncle Charles, that I used to sit on your knee. Do you remember the games of post horses?

SMITH (*showing signs of fear*). I'm afraid I don't, madam.

KATE (*laughing nervously*). How could you? Very silly of me to expect you to remember such trifles. But then, you see, a child is different, Uncle Charles. I remember the games, but I am ashamed to say I did not remember you—your face, you know—in the least. I am sure I should have passed you in the street without recognizing you.

SMITH (*producing a large handkerchief. Mops his brow. Aside*). By Jove! Is the woman mad?

KATE (*playfully*). Of course, I'm too big to sit on your knee now, Uncle Charles?

SMITH (*aside*). Poor woman! She's daft, I suppose. The children look scared, too. Very sad. Don't know anything sadder. Poor Mr. Robinson! Well, I suppose this accounts for his arrears. I really feel very sorry for them all.

KATE (*laughing*). Why, Uncle Charles, what are you muttering about? And you haven't answered my question.

SMITH (*aside, nervously*). I hope she doesn't get violent. I must humour her, of course. (*Aloud.*) Question, my dear madam? I—er—I forget what you asked. (*Laughs uneasily.*) I have a very bad memory.

KATE (*patting his arm*). There, now! Why, I said I supposed I was too big to sit on your knee now. Wasn't that naughty of me?

SMITH (*aside*). Good heavens! Is that the kind of mania she has? What am I to do? A confounded shame to leave me alone with this woman. I must say something. (*Aloud.*) Oh, of course not, my dear madam. Only too happy to oblige, of course!

KATE (*breaking into an hysterical laugh*). You were always such a dear old tease. (*Aside.*) How very strange-mannered he is! I wish I could say something to put him at his ease. (*Aloud.*) John will be here directly, Uncle Charles. He is very anxious to meet you.

SMITH (*aside*). No doubt.

KATE. Do you know what he said? Of course not! Well, really, Uncle Charles, I should blush to tell you—I really can't confess.

SMITH. Pray don't distress yourself, madam. (*Aside.*) The woman's mad, without a doubt. I'll willingly accommodate Mr. Robinson, if only he'll come in and save me from this. Upon my soul, I'd rather pay the money out of my own pocket than endure this much longer! Think I'll make a bolt for it.

KATE. Come now, Uncle Charles, make yourself at home. Come, sit down beside me on the sofa, and let us talk about old times. Children, you can run and play up stairs, if you like.

SMITH (*excitedly*). Pray, madam, don't send the children away. I must be off myself. (*Aside*). To be left alone with this woman—this mad woman—is more than I can stand.

[*Exeunt children hurriedly, delighted to get free.*

KATE (*seating herself on the sofa and drawing him down beside her*). Be off! Ridiculous, Uncle Charles. Why John would simply pulverize me. He'd say I had been rude to you, or something of that sort. I'm sure I haven't. Have I?

SMITH. By no means, madam. Really you have been too kind. (*Aside.*) I must keep my head!

KATE (*aside*). How very strange he is! Why should he call me "madam"? I must be really nice to him. (*Laughs aloud.*) Now, Uncle Charles, I'm going to be the old Kate. You shall just take me on your knee, and you must call me "Kit;" and John says you may give me—a kiss!

SMITH (*frenzied*). Great heavens! (*Aside.*) What is the meaning of this? I'm off.

[*He starts up and tries to escape, but Kate catches his hand and draws him back.*

KATE. Uncle Charles! Would you leave me? (*Aside.*) I believe the man is distraught. Living so long in those wild places has affected his brain. Poor fellow! I must be very nice to him.

[*She puts her arm round his neck and gently gets on his knee.*

SMITH. Madam! Madam! I'm a married man. You are mistaken. (*Aside.*) What shall I do?

KATE. Married? Uncle Charles, you gay deceiver, you told me in your letter that you were still a lonely bachelor! And because I am anxious to be your own old Kit you get cross. Cruel, cruel Uncle Charles!

[*Tries to laugh, and breaks into tears.*

SMITH (*aside*). What in the name of goodness am I to do? If she goes on crying she may become violent. I must play the part of this Uncle Charles, and comfort her. (*Aloud.*) There, there now! Kit, you must dry up those tears, and look into old Uncle Charles's face and laugh. (*Kate slowly recovers and kisses him. Aside.*) Not so bad at the consoling game after all. By Jove, if Mrs. Smith saw me! (*Shudders.*) If I could only get at that door I'd make a bolt for liberty, and summon Mr. John Robinson for his rates. But I wouldn't tell Mrs. Smith about this experience. Not much!

KATE. Oh, now you are becoming a nice Uncle Charles! Really, I was getting quite frightened of you.

SMITH. Were you, madam—I mean Kit? How funny! (*Aside.*) I am very frightened of you.

KATE (*shyly putting her arm round his neck.*) But I'm not now! (*Laughs.*)

SMITH. You don't seem to be.

[*They kiss each other again, and while they are thus engaged the door is opened silently, and Robinson enters, without attracting their attention, and lays small parcel on table.*

ROBINSON (*aghast at the sight, aside.*) Well, upon my life, if it wasn't that I feel I should be interfering with Kate's prospects, I should strongly object to this. (*Peers at them.*) By Jove, they seem to be very happy! Suppose I must make my presence known.

[*He coughs. Kate starts up from Smith's knee.*

SMITH (*overcome, aside*). It's as I feared! This was a deeply-laid plot. The woman makes love to me, then the husband surprises us, and finds me kissing his wife. The scoundrel! Under the circumstances I had better propitiate him.

ROBINSON (*reprovingly.*) So I've caught you! What have you to say for yourselves?

KATE (*laughing*). Here's Uncle Charles, John. He's been so kind to me. He looks upon me still as his own little Kit. Don't you, Uncle Charles?

ROBINSON. So it seems.

SMITH (*aside.*) Great heavens! Is the woman really mad? Perhaps she is. I'll sympathize with the scoundrel, and get out of this as quickly as possible. (*Aloud.*) Pleased to meet you, sir. Thank you for your invitation. (*Whispers.*) I'm sorry you have so much trouble. Rely upon my help in every way.

ROBINSON (*puzzled, aside.*) Kate must have told him. Very good of her to save me the unpleasant task. Dear little Kate! Dear Uncle Charles! (*Aloud, with dramatic emphasis.*) Well, I suppose I must forgive you both.

SMITH (*aside*). By Jove, I'm well out of this. The woman must be mad, and he understood my allusion.

ROBINSON. Uncle Charles, I'm delighted to see you.

SMITH (*aside.*) Is he mad, too, or is he playing the game to humour her? I must keep up the make-believe, too, I suppose. (*Aloud.*) My dear nephew, I am delighted to meet you. I hope we shall be good friends in the future.

KATE (*aside*). Dear me, what can the matter be? That funny look has come into Uncle Charles's face again. I must warn John. (*Aloud.*) I have been trying to make Uncle Charles feel quite at home. (*Whispers.*) He's rather peculiar; be careful not to offend him. It must be that horrid climate, or something.

ROBINSON (*slightly alarmed*). Oh, yes! Uncle Charles, I've been longing to meet you, and I'm proud to welcome my wife's uncle to my house.

SMITH (*aside*). I doubt it!

ROBINSON (*aside*). What on earth does Kate mean? I believe she's right. I must say something pleasant? What the dickens shall I say?

KATE. We must all be the best of friends. (*Loud knock at front door.*) Who is that, I wonder? Oh, I suppose it is the carrier with the box of toys you sent. It was so sweet of you to think of the children.

ROBINSON. Yes, indeed, it was. (*Points to small parcel on table.*) My

humble contribution to their happiness.

SMITH (*aside.*) That's why he can't pay the rates.

Enter MARY.

MARY. Mr. Charles Smith! (*Aside.*) Another of 'em!

ROBINSON (*angrily*). Bad luck to that scoundrelly rate collector! You know all about it, Uncle Charles?

SMITH (*vaguely*). Sir!

Enter UNCLE CHARLES SMITH, *a jolly-faced individual with a loud voice. Exit Mary.*

UNCLE CHARLES. Well, Kit, after all these years we meet again!

[*He takes her in his arms and kisses her.*

ROBINSON (*excitedly*). You insolent scoundrel! How dare you kiss my wife! Uncle Charles, this is the rascally rate collector about whom Kate has told you.

SMITH (*collapses on to chair*). Goodness alive! Here's a nice mess!

UNCLE CHARLES. Insolent scoundrel! Rate collector! What the deuce do you mean, sir? Explain how it is that I am invited to come and stay here, and publicly insulted the moment I arrive. Your telegram reached me at the Carlton, and I came as soon as I could. But I did not expect to find myself in a private lunatic asylum. Kate, I recognize you, though you were only a little child when we played post horses together, or I should have thought I had come to the wrong house. Can you explain?

KATE (*weeping*). I'm afraid I can't.

UNCLE CHARLES (*haughtily*). Then I will wish you all good day!

SMITH (*struggling up from chair, aside*). I must do it! (*Aloud.*) Stay, sir; I think I can explain. I was asked by Mr. Robinson to call on business. Our names are identical, and when I was announced this good lady mistook me for you. I can see it all now. I admit I thought she was not sound—you understand?—and I tried to humour her. Then when you came in, sir, I thought it was all a plant to avoid the payment of the rates. Later I thought you were both—er—deranged. Now I see everything. You, sir, I suppose, are the Uncle Charles? I am the rate collector!

KATE. } The rate collector!
JOHN. }

SMITH. Yes; the rascally rate collector.

UNCLE CHARLES (*laughing heartily*). Spoken like a man, Mr. Smith. Well, this is the best joke I've heard for a long time. Mr. Smith, I shake hands with you. Kate, I kiss you again. Nephew John, I forgive your hasty outburst. And I hope we'll all have a very merry Christmas.

CURTAIN.

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