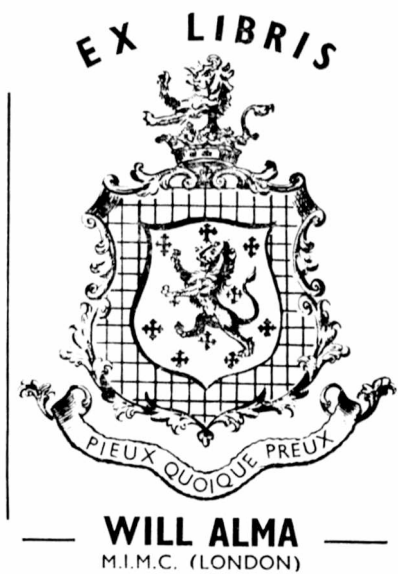


A TRIP TO SPOOKVILLE

Thayer-Andrade



"A TRIP TO SPOOKVILLE"

The State Library of Victoria
"ALMA CONJURING COLLECTION"

Under the above title it has been our endeavour to compile and construct a series of practical smooth running effects of the Semi-Spiritualistic order, there being a keen desire among performers for increased developments along this line.

We have used as the basis for this special arrangement a little cabinet being of a somewhat reduced version of Koller's celebrated "Cassadaga Propaganda" an item which enjoyed a very successful career at the hands of its most able master.

The cabinet under our present consideration, however, is quite devoid of trickery, and may be submitted for close inspection at various occasions during the course of progress. The effects as outlined with order of presentation are as follows:-

1. Introduction - A Trip to Spookville.
2. Animated Bell and Tambourine.
3. The Dancing Handkerchief.
4. A Message on the Slate.
5. A Wonderful Spirit Writing Test (with Committee).

As the outstanding feature of this series consists of the final test, in which three gentlemen from the audience are allowed to take part in the proceedings, and whereby a really surprising and remarkable climax is reached, it is our idea to deal largely with this feature. Therefore, the several preceding tests are more along general lines, and each performer will, no doubt, choose to add, or eliminate, in accord with his own liking, and time and length of program required.

Upon examination of the cabinet, it will be found that the front is hinged to open down, for the purpose of showing the cabinet empty. When closed, however, the diamond shaped opening still gives a view into the cabinet. For best results the cabinet should be placed about center, and fairly back stage, considering in particular the effects with bells and dancing handkerchief.

The cabinet may rest upon any plain stand or tabourette, but perhaps a better effect is obtained if a sheet of glass across the backs of two chairs is used.

The effect with Bell, Tambourine, etc., is brought about by the use of a fine silk thread, running across the stage and operated by two assistants, one at either side. This thread may first be lying along the floor at the rear, during which time the chairs are placed in position, and the cabinet brought on and exhibited.

After this it is an easy matter for the thread to be brought up in position, and resting near or over the top of cabinet. The instruments, such as a small hand bell, a tambourine, a small horn, etc., are each prepared by having a small hook attached so that when placed into cabinet from above, the hook is merely caught over the thread running across, and the two assistants are thereafter responsible for the various effects that follow.

A little wrinkle or two will oftentimes occur, for instance - in placing, say the bell inside the cabinet, the second time after the thread has been secured to the hook, the bell may be placed in cabinet through the small opening from the front. After a little jingling around inside, it is very effective to have the bell finally jump out through the front, and on to the floor, instead of out of the top as it had done previously. Another effect with the horn, is to have it "blow" during which time it is jumping around in the cabinet. This is done by having one of the assistants blow a duplicate horn in the wing, or directly in the rear of back drop, where the cabinet rests. Little side stunts of this nature add much to the effect, and should always be worked in whenever possible.

Next comes the Dancing Handkerchief. This is a case where each performer will find a chance to exert his traits of originality. Take an ordinary gentlemen's white cambric handkerchief, and tie a firm knot in one extreme corner. Now, if you hold this handkerchief with a firm grip, and with finger and thumb near the knot, you will find that by exerting a sort of muscular pressure one way and another, that you can cause the knot to nod back and forth, from one side to the other, lie down, stand up, refuse to lie down and so forth. In fact it will appear to become almost as if it were alive, and these little effects can be made very amusing with a little practice.

Now with a thread across the stage, try tying a knot in your handkerchief, so that the thread runs through the knot, and you have at your command an effect that will place any audience in an uproar. The correct mode of procedure would, of course, be to borrow a handkerchief from the audience, then do the knot stunt, and with hypnotic passes cause the handkerchief to take on life. Head nods first one way and then the other - you strike it to one side, and it refuses to lie down - you get angry and give it a sharp slap - it now appears as dead - then place it in the cabinet through the front opening.

The music starts. Soon the handkerchief is seen to slowly show its head through the window - it looks first to one side and then to the other (easily done by the assistants operating the thread). Music hits a lively air at which the handkerchief jumps entirely out of the cabinet on to the floor, and dances a jig to the music.

At the finish, pick up the handkerchief and start to return same to owner, untying the knot as you do so. One assistant lets go his thread, which drags free from the handkerchief.

A few trials along this routine will give you the necessary tips enabling you to present a perfect little comedy with this one feature alone "THE DANCING HANDKERCHIEF".

While upon the subject we might mention a simplified method by which you can obtain nearly the same effect but in which a duplicate handkerchief is used. Have the duplicate handkerchief already prepared with knot tied, and thread running through - thread ends to the assistant. Handkerchief concealed from sight in cabinet, having been placed in cabinet through front opening.

Borrow a handkerchief and proceed with the knot and hypnotic manifestations as already stated. At the desired time, place the handkerchief in cabinet from top - the other handkerchief jumps out and does the jig stunt to music. Cabinet change must again be made at the finish, unless you have previously arranged to borrow a "plant" handkerchief.

Following handkerchief effect your next move is to invite three gentlemen upon the stage to assist in your final experiment - "The Marvelous Writings". Have three chairs in readiness, and also a small table on which are the necessary props, consisting of a fruit jar, bottle of ink, pen and pen-holder, tablet, sundries, etc., After the gentlemen are upon the stage and seated, you must present one or two little tests of a preliminary nature in order to consume a little necessary time for a reason that will appear later.

An effect that is well adapted for this purpose is a slate writing test of some sort - or any other test such as the Master Secret of the Swami, or Spirit Answer, or any other good stunt of a like nature.

In any case the desired result is attained through use of the Spirit Cabinet, the Slates, Pad, or Envelopes being placed inside the cabinet in order that the desired result be accomplished by means of its supposed mediumistic influence.

As stated before, this has been done in order to steal a little time, so that the final effect that is to come shall prove the feature climax, in all that is strange and wonderful. It is to be remembered that the three gentlemen who have come upon the stage are all strangers to you, and are in no wise confederates, or helpers.

It is the idea of this effect to produce ink written messages upon blank sheets of paper, which the committee men have themselves initialed and torn from an ordinary note tablet, and which papers are never out of sight for one instant. Yet - when these same sheets are later removed from an ordinary fruit jar, placed in the cabinet for mediumistic developement, said writings prove to be in exact accord with events that have transpired during the time that the gentlemen have been upon the stage - one sheet even bearing a detailed personal description of one of the three gentlemen, which upon being read aloud is found to tally exactly in every detail, such as approximate

~~age, height, weight, complexion, color of clothes, jewelry, lodge-
emblems worn, articles showing in pocket, etc.~~

Now to explain the mystery. First of all the papers that are used for the writings have been prepared beforehand. In other words, the writings have been done with a chemical solution, which as soon as dry becomes perfectly invisible upon the paper. However, as soon as a certain chemical reaction is brought to bear, the writing immediately developes.

First - the chemical preparation. We supply herewith a quantity of a crystal substance known as BLUE STONE. Dissolve a small amount of this in water until you obtain a very pale blue solution. A little experimenting will show you just the proper strength needed. With this, and using a rather coarse pen, you write whatever you desire to produce.

A fairly good grade of ordinary writing tablet paper is the best to use. Experiment with both the strength of the solution, and the grade of paper until you obtain the proper action desired. For developing the writings, use merely the fumes of strong ammonia. There are numerous other formulas for use with invisible writings, but the one given herewith has the advantage in that it is more quickly developed, and does not give off that offensive odor which is so apparent in nearly all others.

When you invite the gentlemen upon the stage, and after they are seated, your assistant who is stationed where he can size up the victims, makes a detailed survey of the one you have decided upon - which may be the one sitting on the right, left or center, as the case might be. With the tablet at hand, he writes a description with blue stone solution on one of the first three pages.

Let us say that you have decided upon the "center chair" your assistant writes a description on the second page, and lets dry before closing the page. We might say that the other two pages have been prepared beforehand, as it is not necessary that more than one of these gentlemen be given the personal description test. (For instance - you can have one of the parties select at random any verse in a book, using a force selection on the order of our Spirit Verse Books, while with the other you can merely let him select a card from a pack, using any force arrangement that you wish to make use of. These are details where you have a wide range, and where you have it in hand to work out something along your own way of doing.

Of course, the two other sheets have been written in to fully harmonise with whatever "force" tests you desire to use. After the gentlemen have first taken seats on the stage, the time taken up with the slate writing test is so that your assistant will have time to prepare tablet sheet with the personal description of the party sitting in the center chair.

During the progress of the slate writing test, the performer finds that he requires a sheet of newspaper, in which to wrap the slates, and

not seeing one handy, the paper is handed to him and laid on the table. Hidden between the folds of this paper lies the prepared tablet and from where it is later obtained without giving rise to the least thought or suspicion.

Next comes the effect as viewed by the audience and the committee alike.

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The performer in a few brief words describes the nature of the unusual mediumistic manifestations that he will endeavour to produce. Picking up the letter tablet, he passes it to the first party, requesting him to initial, or autograph his name at the top or bottom of the sheet, then to remove the sheet from the tablet - likewise the other two gentlemen to proceed in the same manner.

The performer then introduces an ordinary quart size fruit jar and unscrews the cap. Taking the three sheets from the gentlemen, he rolls them loosely, with the writing on the inside, and inserts them into the fruit jar. This leaves an open cavity down the center of the jar into which space a bottle of ink is gently lowered, by means of a string tied around the neck. No particular reference is made to the bottle of ink, however, other than to suggest that "by means of this bottle of ink and pen, our unseen friends should be able to advise us of their immediate presence."

So saying, the performer removes the cork from the bottle of ink and lowers same into the jar, followed by a pen in penholder. The cap is screwed on, and the jar deposited for the time being in the little Spirit Cabinet.

Next the force tests are accomplished with the two parties who are not implicated in the person description test. As we said previously one of these can be a book selection of a certain poem, made by a person inserting a card between the pages of a book in any location desired, and the book held by the party in a closed condition, until the proper time arrives to verify.

Party number three is asked to choose a card from the pack, and without looking at it, place it for the time being in his pocket. In order to add a little extra strength to this particular detail, gentleman number two may be given the pack and he may spread same for party number three to make his selection - the performer apparently having nothing to do with this matter.

While perhaps a little risky, many performers owe their success to taking just such a chance, and which nine times out of ten turns out to be to the performer's best interests in every sense of the word.

In this case he would merely hand the party a full deck of "forcers" and by careful attention and verbal instructions to the party in question, the proper deception would be successfully carried out - the performer immediately taking back the deck at the opportune moment. So much, therefore, for this part of the proceedings.

~~It now only remains to open up the surprise packet, so to speak, and to shoot the finish.~~

In the meantime, the bottle of ink has had time to work a little over-time - for the "bottle of ink" happens to be merely a blackened ink bottle, containing liquid ammonia, which fumes upon coming into contact with the invisible writing, and suffices to bring out the writing in very strong and clear relief.

The papers are each passed to the respective gentlemen immediately upon being removed from the jar.

Gentleman number one is asked to read what is now on his paper. This is what he finds:-

"You will on the evening of (date) while in your right mind, and of your own free will, be impelled by some prevailing spirit to insert a card in a book, between the pages 192 and 193, and the article to be found there will be a poem written by Mr. Webster P. Huntington, entitled "UNDER WHICH GOD". "

The book is then opened and the selection verified.

Gentleman number three is next called upon to read what his paper contains. It reads as follows:-

"Sir - Before an audience of your fellow citizens, you will be asked to select a card. Although your choice will be freely allowed between the numbers "one" and fifty-two - the Ruling Power of Destiny will guide you to take the Queen of Hearts, a card which denotes that you have a very charming disposition, and this charm only becomes the more manifest, because you are very susceptible to the charm of a certain blond lady."

The party then removes his card from pocket - The Queen of Hearts.

The finishing climax will come when Gentleman number two reads his message. However, as this is the final detail, it is necessary to put as much ginger into its delivery as possible, and for this reason it would perhaps have a better effect if the performer reads the message himself.

Something along the following should comprise the main gist of this offering.

"Dear Sir:- To the All Seeing Eye of the
Unseen - the Power of All that IS And Is
To Be - BEHOLD !! The Voice of your own
Image Greet's You!! The eyes of those here
assembled shall bear witness to these Words
of Wisdom! "Know all men by these presents"
Your age - about 45 - Rather strong in
stature, and very close to 160 pounds in
weight. You have a ruddy complexion - and
were it not for the nose glasses that you
wear, your features would much resemble those
of your Father. You hair is nearly half
grey, but your moustache is much darker. You
have on a dark brown suit, fancy vest, and
tan shoes, and the emblem that you wear denotes
that you are an Elk. The white handkerchief
in your breast pocket was a present last
Christmas, and unless you get home earlier
tonight than you did last night, there is
likely to be a break in the Family..... "
..... GOOD NIGHT"

Of course, the above specimens of "readings" are not really
intended for use in this act as actually stated, as a different
set of conditions will be found to exist at every performance
that will require special handling. However, it is hoped that
the foregoing instructions will enable you to take your pattern
along these lines, and perfect for yourself an act that will
prove an asset to both your reputation and pocket book as well.

We can supply with the complete outfit, everything that
is required with the exception of the Ammonia.

We are unable to send liquids through the mails, and
also it is best for the individual to purchase his own
Ammonia, double strength and as he needs it, so that fresh
Ammonia may be used each performance. In this manner the best
results are always obtained.

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