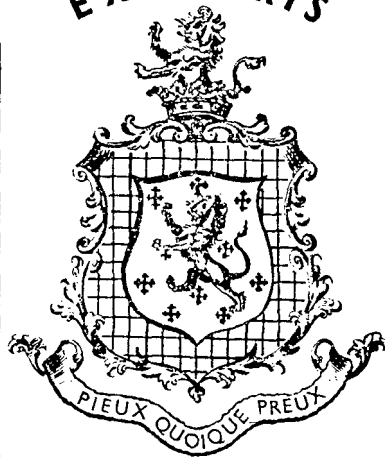


Tricks For The Few

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Tricks For The Few

by

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We hope that the magic in this, our first book, if such it may be called, will prove of use to any readers it may have. With this in view, we have confined it to effects requiring little or no special apparatus. What is required can be constructed by the conjuror. Any further comment or apology we do not make here.

THE AUTHOR

Another Card Rises.

It seems to be the custom when one introduces another form of the rising card that he apologize for his action by heralding his method as the long awaited improvement. Not to be different, we shall do the same.

We trust that the method to be described will be found useful, particularly by the impromptu card worker. It is one of the few methods that will meet the conditions once imposed by a friend, not too mystified at another form of the effect, when he asked, "Can you take a borrowed deck and have the card actually rise from the center without using thread or other apparatus?"

In effect, a freely chosen card is returned to the deck, which is shuffled by the performer. He then holds the cards by their lower end while the chosen card slowly rises from the others. The spectators may be on the sides as well as in front as the card actually rises from the center of the deck. The cards are immediately passed for examination and the hands shown to be empty.

The secret is simple enough, and well worth the little practice needed. The selected card is in the center of the deck with one card on each side of it projecting below the rest. The projecting ends are concealed and then pushed in, carrying the chosen card up and out at the top. Since the only finger that moves is hidden, there is no perceptible movement of the hands. The moves are as follows, with the face of the deck to the left palm.

The chosen card is brought to the top of the deck

by any method and the deck given a false shuffle, retaining the selected card in the top position. The shuffle may be a riffle, but should end with an overhand shuffle as it will blend into the following movements which will look like a continuation.

The right hand lifts off the top half of the deck. The fingers of the left hand draw back the top card of the left hand portion, leaving it projecting an inch or so from the end of the deck towards the body. The other half is then brought up to the left hand, the fingers of which slip the chosen card onto the lower half in line with the deck. The lower illustration shows the deck at this position. The next card on top of the upper half is slipped off in line with the projecting card, and finally the top half is replaced in line with the lower half.

This leaves the chosen card in the center of the pack with the card at each side of it projecting from one end. If the body is turned a little to the right, it will be found that the left hand can readily hide the projecting cards during the whole procedure, which soon blends into a series of natural movements.

The left hand grasps the lower end of the deck, the fingers hiding the projecting cards, and the right wraps itself around the left, except for the little finger which reaches under to push up the cards, as shown in the upper right illustration. As the two cards go into the deck they carry up the chosen card between them and out at the top. The thumb and pointer of the right hand can grasp the deck firmly by its edges and stop any tendency for the card in front of the three to rise with the selected one. The left upper illustration shows a view with the right hand removed after the card has risen half way.



With a little care and practice before a mirror, the movements can be executed with the audience on all sides. After the card has risen, the deck can be examined, since there is nothing but the cards.

Those accustomed to Erdnase moves may prefer the following method, which follows the motions of an overhand shuffle.

Throw the top half of the deck, including the chosen card, run one card on top of this, injog the next card, shuffle off the rest of the deck. Cut below injog, run the first card injogging it about half an inch, throw the next card, which is the one selected, square with the deck, injog the next and shuffle the rest square with the pack. This should take no more than five seconds. The deck is now set, but the projecting cards must be pulled out farther. To do this hold the deck as in the upper right illustration, but farther down in the hand. The left little finger and palm of the hand hold the projecting cards while the right moves the deck as high as it can be held in the left hand. The right hand must hold the deck rather tightly at the top so that the chosen card is not pulled down with the others. This last move can also be used with the first method to make the card rise higher.

Four Ball Bearing Mind Reading.

This is not an effect to be presented formally before a group, but rather to be used off-hand when an acquaintance calls on you.

On the magician's study table rest four large ball bearings in a row. Three are of one size, one somewhat larger. They are, from left to right to the spectator, a smaller one, the larger one, and the two other smaller ones. The performer tells the spectator to look at them, to think of any one, that he has free choice. The performer correctly names the one of which he is thinking. It is repeated, and the magician again names the correct one.

This is not a sure fire trick, but usually works and when successful is more than a little puzzling if presented in the proper manner. The secret is merely that most people will think of the third ball from the left, that is the first one to the right of the large one, the first time, and of the extreme left one the second time. There is considerable variation as to third choice, and it is best not to try it again, as a failure would disclose that it is mostly guesswork.

When starting, tell them that they have a free choice, but do not dwell on it too long. The whole effect is presented in a snappy, confident manner.

Passing Up The Pass.

That ever useful and ever used card sleight, the pass, has its limitations. Often repeated, the sleight, with its holding of the break, is finally detected by the spectator.

The following sleight is more easily executed than the pass, and it leaves the chosen card on top of the deck without altering the arrangement of the other cards. Immediately after the two halves are placed together the chosen card is on top and no break need be retained. Alternated with the pass, it will give variety and mislead the spectator who may become wary of the pass.

Though easily performed, some practice will be needed to execute the sleight quietly. The deck is held in the left hand between the thumb and the fingers, with the little finger over the lower right hand corner. The right lifts off the upper portion as the left extends the lower for the chosen card to be replaced. After the card is returned, the left forearm raises upward and the deck is turned left edge up as the right hand replaces the upper portion. While this is being done, however, the fingers of the left hand draw down the chosen card an inch or so to the back and right, and the little finger is pressed down, so that the front end and the left side of the card turn up, the card hinging on the inner right corner of the lower half. The top half is then replaced beneath the chosen card and the deck squared up, as no break is necessary.

A little practice before a mirror will show the proper angle to hold the deck.



This rear view shows the position of the hands and the cards just as the top half of the deck is replaced under the chosen card.

In Mid-Air.

To show the magical powers of his wand, the performer, with or without the aid of his favorite cabalistic phrases and passes, causes it to remain suspended vertically in mid-air before his audience. He gives a hoop to the spectators for examination and upon its return, he passes it over the wand to disprove any natural support. The hoop is passed over the self-suspended object simply, but once, and without any double or tricky moves, and then back to any unbelievers. This done, the magician takes the wand from its aerial position and continues with the next effect.

The wand is of the ordinary magical variety, found among the effects of any of those possessed of occult powers and is naturally enough suspended by a black thread or wire. The method of passing the hoop over the object depends upon the particular means of attaching the wand to the thread.

The thread is strung across the stage waist high a few feet back where it will not interfere with other numbers on the program. Or, if assistants are used, it can be set up immediately before the feat. The magician stands in front of the thread during the trick. The hoop is made of medium heavy wire, soldered or welded together, as it is genuine. It is painted white to make it more easily seen. At one end of the wand there is a thin black wire hook extending several inches beyond the end. The hooked part is slightly larger than the diameter of the wire used for the hoop.

The wand is hung on the thread by this hook, with the opening backwards, away from the audience.

The magician holds the hoop edge up, broad side to his audience, and just over the wand. As he calls their attention to his actions he hooks the under edge of the hoop under the hook and straightens the hoop out horizontally, the hook acting as a hinge. As the front edge of the hoop reaches the level of the hook, the thread will slip back and onto the hook again, but this time back of the hoop. The hoop is then simply passed down over the wand and off for re-examination.

The movement could be reversed, but the moves would be by no means as natural. The method could be applied to any other object, but with a wand or cane the moves are more natural. If levitating, as magicians would call it, an object that was broader and less long, the natural way to pass the hoop, if there were actually no physical support, would be from side to side, as over the floating lady. But with a long vertical object, the natural way is to pass the hoop down over it, as here.

Needless to say, a light colored wand is preferable as it is easily visible in a light, or perhaps one should say, darkness, which entirely conceals the black thread and hook.

With a little practice the wand will not even quiver as the hoop is passed under the thread if the surface of the hoop is smooth. The hook can be made to be taken from the wand which is then used for the rest of the program as any other wand.

Through The Five Spot.

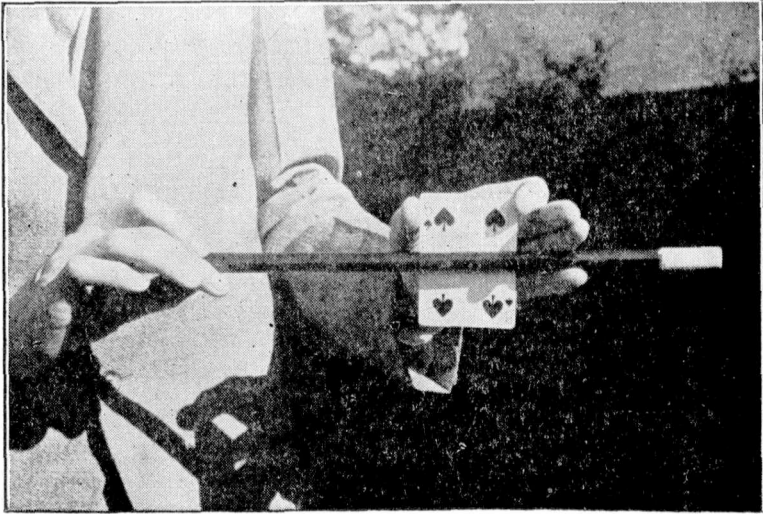
The magician is again talking, this time trying to convince his listeners that his wand is a crystalized phantom, whatever that may be, and that upon proper provocation it will pass through solid matter as though it were a ghost. But the audience need not take his word for it, as he will show them.

He holds up a card, let us assume the five of spades, in his left hand while the right picks up the wand, which he raps on the table to show its solidity, and places its center across the front of the card. He calls their attention to the fact that ordinarily one or the other would have to be severed to allow one to pass through the other, but a moment later the wand is seen to sink through the card and come out in back.



The wand, which is of wood, has a slot cut in it with a coping saw as shown in the drawing. The slot is a little longer than the width of a card, and is narrow enough so that two cards, in our case back to back, will wedge fast in it.

To start the experiment, the magician has a duplicate five of spades in his left pocket face outwards, so that it can readily be palmed face inward in the left hand. The duplicate need not have the same back design, but must be of the same size. He asks a spectator to remove the five of spades from the face of the deck, where it has been placed, and takes it in his right hand, transferring it to his left, which meanwhile has palmed the duplicate, and the two are



This shows the position in which the cards and wand are held. Note that the ring and little fingers of the left hand serve as a bearing on which the wand may turn.

placed back to back and displayed as one. They are held in the left hand with the thumb on the inner side and the fingers on the outer.

The wand is picked up in the right hand and rapped on the table without comment to show its solidity and imply that it is ordinary. The wand will sound solid in spite of the slot. It is placed in front of the card with the opening to the back and the slot to the magician's left, and is tapped against the card several times in illustration of the penetration to follow. The two cards are then slid into the slot, where they would stick, but the left hand continues to hold them, as the audience believe that there is merely the five of spades held behind the wand.

The ring and little fingers of the left hand are one on each side of the wand as shown in the illustration and serve as a bearing on which the wand may be rotated.

The magician turns to his audience and tells them, "It will be necessary that we temporarily suspend the laws of nature, and I will not repeat this. So watch!"

It will be no more than natural that during the first part of this speech the magician's hands will slowly lower almost to the waist, but the card is held vertical throughout. When he tells them to watch he turns again to the wand and card(s) and raise them shoulder high so that all may see better. But during the upward movement, the wand is given a quick semi-revolution, so that the other side and the face of the other five of spades is toward the audience.

The thumb and first two fingers of the left hand, though apparently holding the card(s) were actually

a fraction of an inch away, and the cards were actually supported by the wand, but this is never noticed as the shadows of the hand hide the small gaps. The rotating movement is covered up by the raising movement. It will be found to aid materially in giving the wand the requisite half turn, and the half turn only, to have the end of the wand held in the right hand slightly flattened, so that it can be handled as in the well known paddle trick.

Just before performing the solid through solid, the magician continues, "I know that you would like to see the wand as it is passing through, but it will go quickly. I shall push this side (he indicates his right side) through first, so if you watch carefully you may see it as it comes through."

The card is then withdrawn from the slot with a sliding motion of the wand, and those who watch carefully may see the card come through at one edge before the other. If the cards are withdrawn by a movement of the cards, the illusion, if any, is that of the cards going through the wand; but if the motion is confined to the wand and the cards held still, the appearance is that the wand melts through the paper.

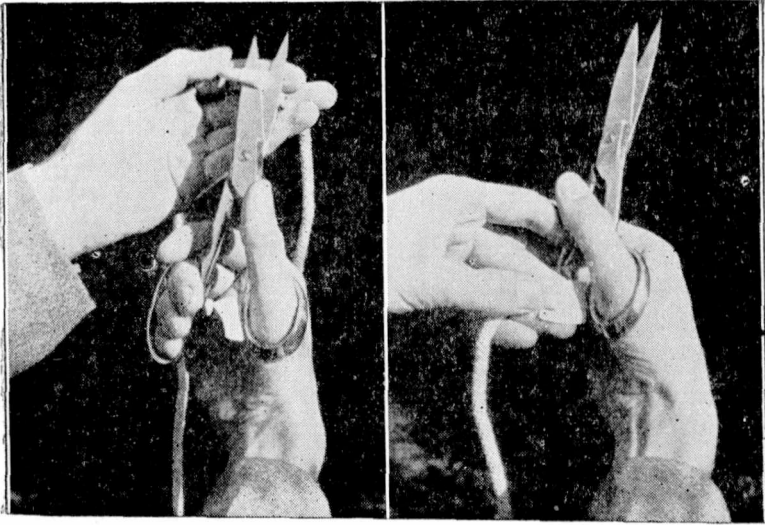
The duplicate is palmed off and the card returned to the deck, which may casually be left where the audience can examine it. Unless the wand has been switched for a normal one, no direct offer of the card for examination should be made, as it might lead to suspicion of the wand and a request to examine it.

The Cut Is Restored.

The effect of this can hardly be said to be new, since it is nothing but a well known effect and routine, but the materials used are somewhat different and will prove useful to the conjuror who does not possess the apparatus requisite for the other methods.

The rope is tied in a circle, and the magician apparently cuts the rope in the center. The ends are held clearly separate to dispel any suspicion that an extra loop has been cut. The ends are brought together and after the usual hokus-pokus the rope is restored. Again the rope is cut, the ends knotted, both knots cut off, the rope is found restored, and it is passed to the audience for examination.

Nothing is used but the rope, scissors, and two small inch and a half squares of white adhesive tape. Common white sash cord or similar white rope is most suitable. The ends of an eight foot length of the rope are fastened together with one of the pieces of tape. Around the center is placed a fake knot of an extra piece. The scissors to be used are on the table so that the handle projects back toward the magician. The second piece of tape is fastened by its sticky side to the under side of the upper handle of the shears, so that when they are picked up it is extending into the hand sticky side up, as shown in the illustration. The use of adhesive tape for a cut and restored rope has been suggested by magical writers before, but anyone who has tried to palm a piece knows that it is not easily handled. By attaching it to the handle of the scissors in this manner it is accessible when wanted and easily concealed.



The left illustration shows how the adhesive tape is concealed on the handle of the scissors while the rope is cut. In the right picture is shown the tip of the rope as it is placed on the adhesive before it is pulled from the scissors.

The performer starts by tying the last turn of the fake knot to further the impression that it is the end of the rope. The right hand picks up the shears and cuts through the rope, really the adhesive joint. With a little care, the right hand can easily conceal the square of tape hanging on the handle, while the left hand throws the rope out lengthwise to show that it was actually cut. The left hand keeps hold of one end of the rope and places it on the adhesive so that it extends to the center of the square and pulls it free from the scissors. The adhesive, of course, is then concealed from the spectators in the left hand.

The right hand lays down the scissors and gathers up the rope, placing the two ends tip to tip. The square of adhesive is then wrapped around the tips under cover of coiling the rope around the left wrist or any similar movement. With a little practice it is easy to make a joint which is invisible at a few feet. The adhesive left from the first cut keeps the ends from fraying and greatly aids the manipulation. Upon uncoiling, the rope is apparently restored.

The rope is cut again, tied in a knot, the knots switched, the tips cut off to be rid of the tell-tale adhesive, the fake knot cut off, the real one either cut off or untied, and the rope passed for examination.

The Spook Silk.

In this effect the performer spreads a white handkerchief over his left fist and pushes it down a little with his right forefinger. He then takes a silk handkerchief and slowly passes it through the handkerchief. All the edges of the handkerchief are in full view so that the audience is convinced the silk actually goes through, and not around, the handkerchief, which is immediately passed for examination. Only one silk is used for the effect.

The explanation of this miracle reminds us that not so many years ago a magician could demonstrate his supernatural powers by so simple an expedient as showing a few electrical experiments. None of his audience knew much about electricity, nor, for that matter, did the magician, and the ringing of a bell hanging by a wire was just as good a proof of the powers of his magic wand or the dexterity of his fingers as was the production of a string of sausages from the coat collar of the local mayor.

For the only thing that lends an air of mystery to the penetration, apart from the presentaion, which, of course, is most of any trick, is the ignorance, even among magicians who work with them, of the extreme compressibility of a silk. The disillusioning truth is that the silk goes through the handkerchief, between the threads.

Lest the reader become convinced that we are dreaming too wildly, we will say a word about the silk, which, though it appears to be an ordinary thirteen inch square, differs in a few matters. It has no hem, and is somewhat diamond shaped, but since

it is always held by the points it appears no different than any other. Such a handkerchief, if made from light silk, can be pulled through a hole slightly more than a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. An ordinary handkerchief of a reasonably coarse weave and firm material can have such a hole opened up between the threads without tearing.

One corner of the silk is threaded through the eye of a short piece of a darning needle, filed to a dull point. This is used to start the silk through the handkerchief. Once that it is through, the needle can be removed if the magician is working so near that his audience might notice it, but if it is painted the same color as the silk, it is scarcely noticeable.

The silk is not held by the first corner all the time as it is pulled through. To do so would show that the silk is under tension and drawn to a fine rope, which would suggest, if not actually disclose, the true explanation, as no true spook would need so much force to pass through a mere handkerchief. Instead, the right hand reaches up into the left fist and pulls the silk through inch by inch, so that the portion visible to the audience is expanded to normal size. Alternately the right hand can tuck the silk into the upper side of the handkerchief, but care must be taken to keep the silk from doubling up and catching in the hole.

After the silk is pulled free, the fingers of the left hand roll the handkerchief around the opening a little to work the threads back into position and the silk is laid aside as the handkerchief is casually given for examination. The penetration can easily be worked in with other handkerchief effects in a series.

Over The Telephone.

[By Charles W. Nyquist]

The trick wherein a spectator telephones the performer's assistant miles away and is promptly told the name of a previously selected card is one of the most spectacular effects at the command of the parlor magician. Its neglect in recent years is probably due to its being absurdly simple in operation and the fact that one of the common methods is quite widely known, but the performer who uses it knows that it is remembered by most spectators for months after all other tricks are forgotten. We will remind you of a couple of standard methods and then give you our method, which we hope you will try.

The simplest method, of course, is to force a card previously agreed upon with your assistant. This can be done by at least one hundred and one different methods from the Svengali deck to the common overhand force, but if the performer does not announce his effect beforehand he can increase the effect by using a force which is not sure and performing a different trick if the wrong card is selected.

At times a bright spectator attempts to check up by calling the same number a day or two later and asking what card he drew. The assistant may think that the performer is repeating the trick and name the same card, disclosing the secret. To eliminate this danger and allow the effect to be repeated in the same evening, agree with the assistant to vary the cards in the successive performances in some prearranged order, such as the 8-K-3-10 arrangement.

Another standard method, but one which is too generally known, consists of having a list of names, one for each card. The same assistant is asked for by the one name or another, the name telling him the card selected.

Our method is limited to places where a second telephone is available, such as in hotels and apartments or homes with an extension telephone in the kitchen or bedroom. The person to be called is preferably someone known to the spectators. We will assume his name to be Jones. Another assistant, a party whose absence will not be noticed, is needed. He is out of the room when the performer is ready to do the trick and calls Jones in the second telephone. He warns Jones to be ready and then leaves the phone, receiver hook up, for a moment and quietly approaches the room in which the performance is being held. A card has been selected by someone, and the performer asks the selector to name it out loud. If he does not name it out loud enough for the assistant to hear, the performer repeats it so that the assistant can hear it. The assistant immediately returns to his phone, names the card for Jones who is waiting, and both he and Jones hang up. A moment later the spectator calls up Jones on the other phone and is told the name of the freely chosen card.

This may seem simple, but no one ever thinks of a second telephone. The one in the room in which they have been all the time is the only one they consider and with a remote assistant (Jones) known to them it completely fools them, as they look for something complicated.

You Do As I Do — As I Do It.

[By Charles W. Nyquist]

There have been several methods of performing this popular card effect, but we believe that this method is quicker and more logical from the standpoint of the spectator. It combines three simple moves in a manner which is undetectable.

In effect, the performer borrows two packs of cards with unlike backs. We will assume a red and a blue backed deck. One is given a spectator with instructions to do exactly the same as the performer. Each shuffles his pack well and freely cuts it at any location. The card at the cut in each pack is removed and placed crosswise on the pack of opposite color. Both decks are given a complete cut, leaving the cards protruding from the center as in the lower right illustration. When the cards are removed and turned over they prove to be alike, as, for example, two six of spades.

The method: A card, in our case the six of spades, is stolen from the face of the spectator's red pack to the face of the performer's blue deck. The blue six of spades is located and the two brought together, with the red one in front of the blue. The two are lifted as one and the red six of spades switched with the indifferent card at which the spectator cuts. The rest is misdirection.

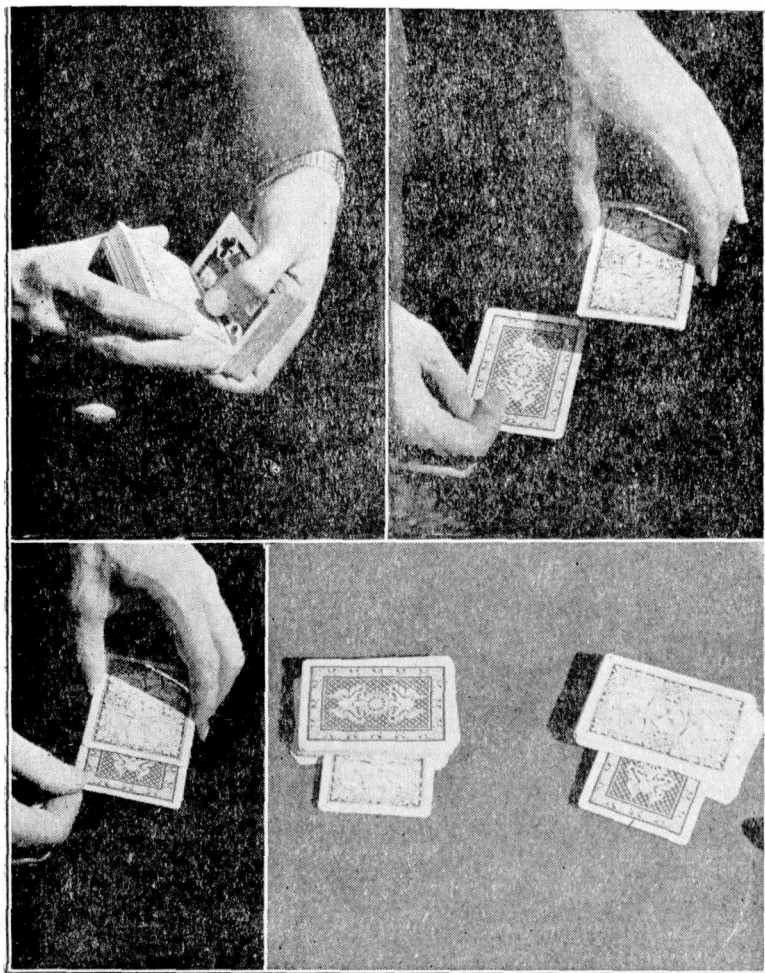
The details of this explanation should be followed with cards in hand as they may otherwise seem quite complicated.

The card on the face of the spectator's deck is

stolen just before the performer hands him the deck. The blue deck is in the left hand, back to palm, and the right hand brings up the red deck so that the left fingertips touch the face card as in the upper left illustration. The backs of the decks are turned to the spectators, and as the right hand moves away to hand the spectator the red pack, the card on its face is slipped to the face of the blue pack. This move resembles the well known slip, and is done in the brief moment in which the performer looks over the borrowed decks.

The spectator is told to remove the joker from his deck as the performer starts to do the same with his pack. While discarding the joker, the performer locates the blue backed card to match the red backed one on the face of his deck. Both are brought to the top of the deck with the blue one on top. This is not difficult as the spectator is also looking through his cards for the joker. A little care must be used to conceal the back of the one red card in the blue deck, but this is easy if both decks have white margins as do most standard cards. The most difficult part of the trick is now accomplished while the spectators have not been watching too closely as they have not realized that the trick has started.

Both decks are given several riffle shuffles, the performer taking care that his two top cards always fall back on top. The performer then removes the bottom half of his deck and drops it on the table, telling the spectator to "Cut the deck and place the top half on the table." The spectators never notice but that the performer also placed the top half on the table. While the spectator is busy following these directions, the performer lifts his two like cards from the top as



though they were one, taking care not to show their face. He drops the rest of his deck onto the half on the table, the spectator doing the same.

The two cards are held together in the left hand as in the upper right illustration. The right hand takes the red card at which the spectator cut and places it below the cards in the left hand. The order of cards from top to bottom is the blue six of spades, the red six of spades, and the indifferent one. The spectator thinks that there are only the two selected ones. The left fingertips pull back the indifferent card slightly and the right pulls the red two of spades forward so that about half of its back shows, as in the lower left illustration. The right hand then squares up the cards on the table. This provides a reason for placing the cards together for a moment in the left hand. Of course, this "reason" is not explained in words to the spectator.

The right hand takes the projecting red card and drops it on the blue deck. The left hand places its two cards on the red deck, as though they were one, thus getting rid of the extra red card onto the red deck and leaving everything so that it can be examined.

Turning the cards crosswise to the rest of the decks and giving each pack a complete cut is just misdirection and provides a subject for patter about the two decks having been treated alike and that therefore the two cards should be the same. The whole trick can be done in less than a minute, and is much more easily performed than explained.

This trick will be worth your time to learn it, as the seeming complexity of the true explanation makes it absolutely baffling.

The Brass Bottle.

The magician is telling his audience a tale.

"In the 'Arabian Nights,' you will remember, there is told the story of the poor fisherman. This fisherman, it seems, had been having very poor luck, and on the day of our story drew up nothing in his net except a heavy brass bottle sealed with lead."

At this point the performer calls attention to a brass bottle with a metallic stopper.

"Finally he opened it, and from its mouth arose a cloud of smoke extending up to the heavens. The cloud then formed into a huge jinni who had been imprisoned in the bottle by Sulleyman centuries before as punishment. The jinni threatened to kill the fisherman but graciously gave him the choice of the means of his death. The jinni explained that when he was first imprisoned he had said to himself that he would bestow great riches on whomsoever should free him, but that as the centuries passed he swore to himself that he would slay the person that should release him from the bottle.

"You will remember that the fisherman, who had been blessed by Allah with greater wisdom than that of the jinni, tricked the evil spirit into returning into the bottle and how he finally released the spirit again, whereupon the jinni directed him to the lake of the four colored fish.

"Of course, we all know that it was just a story, and that the jinni did not really reach up to the sky. Some may even doubt the whole story. But here we have an old bottle that was given me by an Arab who claimed that it is the original brass bottle that the

fisherman drew up from the sea. I don't believe it, but — I'll let you see for yourself."

The magician removes the stopper from the bottle and a small cloud of white smoke comes from the mouth. Gradually the cloud increases and a tiny grayish white imp is seen to be in the midst of the smoke. First the head appears, and then grotesque hands and his body, which merges at the bottom with the cloud of smoke. The imp turns his head with its red eyes, first at the magician and then back at the audience.

"You know perfectly well that so small a spirit could not have threatened to take the life of the fisherman. The Arab claimed that this is the original jinni, and that he is slowly withering away as his diet does not suit him. Even now he is too weak to speak so that I don't know what to feed him. He will come up once in a while for a few moments, but that is all."

But already the imp is sinking down and in a moment he is lost in the mist of smoke, which slowly recedes. The magician replaces the stopper, and turns to his next effect.

The bottle may be of brass, but most conjurors will find that it is more convenient to paint a glass one with bronze paint. For the bottle does not really come from the bottom of the sea, nor from an Arab. The cloud of smoke may be produced by the time-tested process of hydrochloric acid and ammonia fumes, which form white clouds of ammonium chloride when they meet. Concentrated solutions should be used for best results.

The little jinni, or imp, for this is a real imp bottle, is made of paper, gray blotting paper with red

eyes, and mounted on a wooden stick and operated by black threads, a la rising cards, preferably by an assistant out of sight. If the blotting paper is dampened with ammonia, the jinni will appear to be forming out of the cloud as the fumes mix with the hydrochloric acid fumes arising from the bottle. The weight of the wooden stick withdraws the imp when the threads are released, the lead foil covered cork is replaced and the poor, mal-nourished imp rests until the next performance. Any magician who wishes to construct one of these can readily design the threads for the turning of the head to suit the bottle used.