THE UNMASKING

OF

ROBERT-HOUDIN

Handcuff Secrets

BY

HARRY HOUDINI

Harry Houdini

Frontispiece

J-Doc-Hou

THE UNMASKING

OF

ROBERT-HOUDIN

Together with a Treatise on

Handcuff Secrets

BY

HARRY HOUDINI

FUNDACION JUAN MARCH
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Dedication

This Book is affectionately dedicated to the memory of
my father,
Rev. M. S. Weiss, Ph.D., LL.D.,
who instilled in me love of study and patience in research

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

PAGE 16.

Mr. H. Evans has written several articles since the publication of the 1st edition of this book, and has taken advantage of my information, giving me the credit for the same; and he informs me that he has corrected many mistakes appearing in his books. Up to the date of this 2nd edition I have not seen any of his corrections.

PAGE 35.

For 'La Magic Banche,' *read* 'La Magie Blanche.'

PAGE 49.

For 'Retinue' *read* 'Retine.'

PAGE 52.

Orange Tree first appeared in print in 1774 (not 1784).

PAGE 59.

The engraving of I. Fawkes belongs to the celebrated art dealer and connoisseur Alfred Vaughan of Brighton. In my collection I have the facsimile, and by accident the block was made from Mr. Vaughan's engraving before I had obtained mine from Mr. Evanion. I possessed only a photo of Mr. Vaughan's engraving, which he kindly allowed me to photograph.

PAGE 62.

(*a*) Christopher Pinchbeck, Jr., was buried in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Parish Church, March 22nd, 1783. Rough book reads 'died of age.' (*b*) William Hebb, of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Parish Church, was married to Martha Pinchbeck, July 5th, 1767. They had a son, Christopher Henry Hebb, born Jan. 28th, baptised Feb. 24th, 1772.

PAGE 63.

Isaac Fawkes died May 25th, and was buried May 28th, 1731.

PAGE 73.

By persistent search after minute details, I discovered in Naples, Italy, a relative by marriage to a great grand-nephew to the original Pinetti, and, through correspondence and certificates, this great grand-nephew, Vittoria Merci-Pinetti, who, strange to say, is now one of the foremost necromancers of Italy and tours every season. He informs me that his great grand-uncle, the celebrated Pinetti, did not marry the daughter of a carriage-builder, and had no offspring; and if, as Robertson claims in his book, he saw children of Pinetti, they must have been illegitimate, for in the family tree (which is certified, and there is no doubt as to its authenticity, as the Mayors of Orbitelle will testify to it) Joseph Pinetti Willedal, the magician son of Merci Luigi (landlord), was married to Clotilde Notoschi, Princess of Poland.

I consider my discovery of this information important news for the history of magic. The family-tree of this family is too long to publish in this edition.

PAGE 74.—Decremps died 1826.

PAGE 129.

I have since met a son of Phillippe, who corroborated the dates of the birth and death of his father. I met this son in Paris, in April, 1909, in poor circumstances—an old man, born in Dublin on Dec. 5th, 1837, whilst his illustrious father was playing to packed houses. His father's name was Jacques Noé Talon (not Phillip Talon), and as he was playing in Ireland he named his new-born son Edmond Patrick Talon. This son is still alive, and resides in Paris. He has given me a lot of original letters, which I hope in the near future to publish.

PAGE 139.

Herr Ernest Basch died on Jan. 28th, 1909.

PAGE 153.

Barney Eagle's daughter, known as Mme. Card, eventually travelled as a mesmerist.

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

PAGE 140.

V. Merci-Pinetti, great grand-nephew of the original Pinetti, can also go back into the past for five generations for magical ancestors. Vide 73.

PAGE 146.—The son mentioned is John Henry Anderson, Jr.

PAGE 176.

In 1837, at the birth of his son Patrick, in Dublin, Phillippe performed the Inexhaustible Bottle, and also had on the stage a barrel from which he treated the audience to all kinds of liquors in honour of his new-born boy. (Read correction for page 129). A book published in Philadelphia, Pa., *The Humorous Magician,* 1832, explains a method and gives an accurate description of 'a bottle that gives forth several different kinds of liquors.'

PAGE 181.

Sir David Brewster copied his material regarding John Carl von Eckeberg from Dr. Desagulier's *Scientific Encyclopedia,* of which I now possess original volumes, and the entire article was taken from this book.

PAGES 196—197.

Hermann's poster (p. 196) states that he played in opposition to R. Houdin on the latter's arrival in London. The bill dated May 6th, 1848 (p. 197), says '*April* 20, 1848,' so Hermann did the Inexhaustible Bottle weeks before Houdin arrived in England.

PAGE 211.— Beckmann is wrongly spelled.

PAGE 219.

The Pavilion alluded to is the Brighton Pavilion.

PAGE 221.

The creator of modern Second Sight is Adrian Coussmet, known as 'Albany,' a Parisian, who presented the modern system of Silent Code Signals in 1886. Mons. Albany, being a gifted entertainer (mimic, lightning-artist, whistler, etc.), was able to present the act in the most versatile manner known, originally with a man; and in 1893 appeared in Maskelyne and Cook's Egyptian Hall. Unfortunately he has discarded this line of business.

PAGE 238.

Herr Alexander Heimburger died July 25th, 1909, aged 91.

PAGE 270.

In mentioning 'persistent practice from youth up' to accomplish the feat of walking on your hands or feet on razor-edged swords, practice is only required for balancing on the hands, as the secret is fully explained, but caution is always essential.

PAGE 291.

At present date I have managed to find one of the Davenport Brothers, Ira Erastus, alive and well. He has read my original edition, and informs me that William Henry Davenport died in Australia on July 1st, 1877.

Ira Davenport writes a letter, after reading the 1st edition of this book: 'Jan. 19, 1909. We never, in public, affirmed our belief in Spiritualism. That we regarded no business of the public, nor did we offer our entertainment as the results of sleight-of-hand; nor, on the other hand, as Spiritualism. We let our friends and foes settle that as best they could between themselves. Unfortunately, we were often the victims of their disagreements.—IRA E. DAVENPORT.'

PAGE 307.

I resigned my membership of this organization in July, 1908.

PAGE 311.

The Anderson program was used in Hanover, Germany.

PAGE 316, L. 19.—*For* 1848 *read* 1849.

There was no Kaiser in 1848, so 'German Kaiser' should read 'King of Prussia.'

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is the natural result of the moulding, dominating influence which the spirit and writings of Robert-Houdin have exerted over my professional career. My interest in conjuring and magic and my enthusiasm for Robert-Houdin came into existence simultaneously. From the moment that I began to study the art, he became my guide and hero. I accepted his writings as my text-book and my gospel. What Blackstone is to the struggling lawyer, Hardee's "Tactics" to the would-be officer, or Bismarck's life and writings to the coming statesman, Robert-Houdin's books were to me.

To my unsophisticated mind, his "Memoirs" gave to the profession a dignity worth attaining at the cost of earnest, life-long effort. When it became necessary for me to take a stage-name, and a fellow-player, possessing a veneer of culture, told me that if I would add the letter "i" to Houdin's name, it would mean, in the French language, "like Houdin," I adopted the suggestion with enthusiasm. I asked nothing more of life than to become in my profession "like Robert-Houdin."

By this time I had re-read his works until I could recite passage after passage from memory. Then, when Fate turned kind and the golden pathway of success led me into broader avenues of work, I determined that my first tour abroad should be dedicated to adding new

laurels to the fame of Robert-Houdin. By research and study I would unearth history yet unwritten, and record unsung triumphs of this great inventor and artiste. The pen of his most devoted student and follower would awaken new interest in his history.

Alas for my golden dreams! My investigations brought forth only bitterest disappointment and saddest of disillusionment. Stripped of his self-woven veil of romance, Robert-Houdin stood forth, in the uncompromising light of cold historical facts, a mere pretender, a man who waxed great on the brainwork of others, a mechanician who had boldly filched the inventions of the master craftsmen among his predecessors.

Robert-Houdin in his prime, immediately after his retirement. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

"Memoirs of Robert-Houdin, Ambassador, Author and Conjurer, Written by Himself," proved to have been the penwork of a brilliant Parisian journalist, employed by Robert-Houdin to write his so-called autobiography. In the course of his "Memoirs," Robert-

Houdin, over his own signature, claimed credit for the invention of many tricks and automata which may be said to have marked the golden age in magic. My investigations disproved each claim in order. He had announced himself as the first magician to appear in regulation evening clothes, discarding flowing sleeves and heavily draped stage apparatus. The credit for this revolution in conjuring belonged to Wiljalba Frikell. Robert-Houdin's explanation of tricks performed by other magicians and not included in his repertoire, proved so incorrect and inaccurate as to brand him an ignoramus in certain lines of conjuring. Yet to the great charm of his diction and the romantic development of his personal reminiscences later writers have yielded unquestioningly and have built upon the historically weak foundations of his statements all the later so-called histories of magic.

For a time the disappointment killed all creative power. With no laurel wreath to carve, my tools lay idle. The spirit of investigation languished. Then came the reaction. There was work to be done. Those who had wrought honestly deserved the credit that had been taken from them. In justice to the living as well as the dead the history of the magic must be revised. The book, accepted for more than half a century as an authority on our craft, must stand forth for what it is, a clever romance, a well-written volume of fiction.

That is why to-day I offer to the profession of magic, to the world of laymen readers to whom its history has always appealed, and to the literary savants who dip into it as a recreation, the results of my investigations. These, I believe, will show Robert-Houdin's true place in the

history of magic and give to his predecessors, in a profession which in each generation becomes more serious and more dignified, the credit they deserve.

My investigations cover nearly twenty years of a busy

Frontispiece of "Hocus Pocus," Second Edition, 1635, one of the earliest works on magic. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

professional career. Every hour which I could spare from my professional work was given over to study in libraries, to interviews with retired magicians and collectors, and to browsing in old bookstores and antique

shops where rare collections of programs, newspapers, and prints might be found.

In order to conduct my researches intelligently, I was compelled to pick up a smattering of the language of

John Baptist Porta, the Neapolitan writer on magic. From an old woodcut in the Harry Houdini Collection.

each country in which I played. The average collector or proprietor of an old bookshop is a canny, suspicious individual who must accept you as a friend before he will uncover his choicest treasures.

As authorities, books on magic and kindred arts are practically worthless. The earliest books, like the magician stories written by Sir John Mandeville in 1356, read like prototypes of to-day's dime novels. They are thrill-

ing tales of travellers who witnessed magical performances, but they are not authentic records of performers and their work.

One of the oldest books in my collection is "Natural and Unnatural Magic" by Gantziony, dated 1489. It is the author's script, exquisite in its German chirography, artistic in its illuminated illustrations, but worthless as an historical record, though many of the writer's descriptions and explanations of old-time tricks are most interesting.

Early in the seventeenth century appeared "Hocus Pocus," the most widely copied book in the literature of magic. The second edition, dated 1635, I have in my library. I have never been able to find a copy of the first edition or to ascertain the date at which it was published.

A few years later, in 1658, came a very important contribution to the history of magic in "Natural Magick in XX. Bookes," by John Baptist Porta, a Neapolitan. This has been translated into nearly every language. It was the first really important and exhaustive work on the subject, but, unfortunately, it gives the explanation of tricks, rather than an authentic record of their invention.

In 1682, Simon Witgeest of Amsterdam, Holland, wrote an admirable work, whose title reads "Book of Natural Magic." This work was translated into German, ran through many an edition, and had an enormous sale in both Holland and Germany.

In 1715, John White, an Englishman, published a work entitled "Art's Treasury and Hocus Pocus; or a Rich Cabinet of Legerdemain Curiosities." This is

Frontispiece from Simon Witgeest's "Book of Natural Magic" (1682), showing the early Dutch conception of conjuring. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

fully as reliable a book as the earlier "Hocus Pocus" books, but it is not so generally known.

Richard Neve, who was a popular English conjurer just before the time of Fawkes, published a book on somewhat similar lines in 1715.

Germany contributed the next notable works on magic. First came Johann Samuel Halle's "Magic or the Magical Power of Nature," printed in Berlin, in 1784. One of his compatriots, Johann Christian Wiegleb, wrote eighteen books on "The Natural Magic" and while I shall always contend that the German books are the most complete, yet they cannot be accepted as authorities save that, in describing early tricks, they prove the existence of inventions and working methods claimed later as original by men like Robert-Houdin.

English books on magic were not accepted seriously until the early part of the nineteenth century. In Vol. III. of John Beckmann's "History of Inventions and and Discoveries," published in 1797, will be found a chapter on "Jugglers" which presents interesting matter regarding magicians and mysterious entertainers. I quote from this book in disproving Robert-Houdin's claims to the invention of automata and second-sight.

About 1840, J. H. Anderson, a popular magician, brought out a series of inexpensive, paper-bound volumes, entitled "A Shilling's Worth of Magic," "Parlor Magic," etc., which are valuable only as giving a glimpse of the tricks contemporary with his personal successes. In 1859 came Robert-Houdin's "Memoirs," magic's classic. Signor Blitz, in 1872, published his reminiscences, "Fifty Years in the Magic Circle," but here

INTRODUCTION

JOHN WHITE, *Author of* ART'S Treaſury, *and* Hocus Pocus; *or a* Rich Cabinet *of* Legerdemain Curioſities.

John White, an English writer on magic and kindred arts in the early part of the eighteenth century. Only portrait in existence and published for the first time since his book was issued in 1715. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

again we have a purely local and personal history, without general value.

Thomas Frost wrote three books relating to the history of magic, commencing about 1870. This list included "Circus Life and Circus Celebrities," "The Old Showmen and the Old London Fairs," and "Lives of the Conjurers." These were the best books of their kind up to the time of their publication, but they are marked by glaring errors, showing that Frost compiled rather than investigated, or, more properly speaking, that his investigations never went much further than Morley's "Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair."

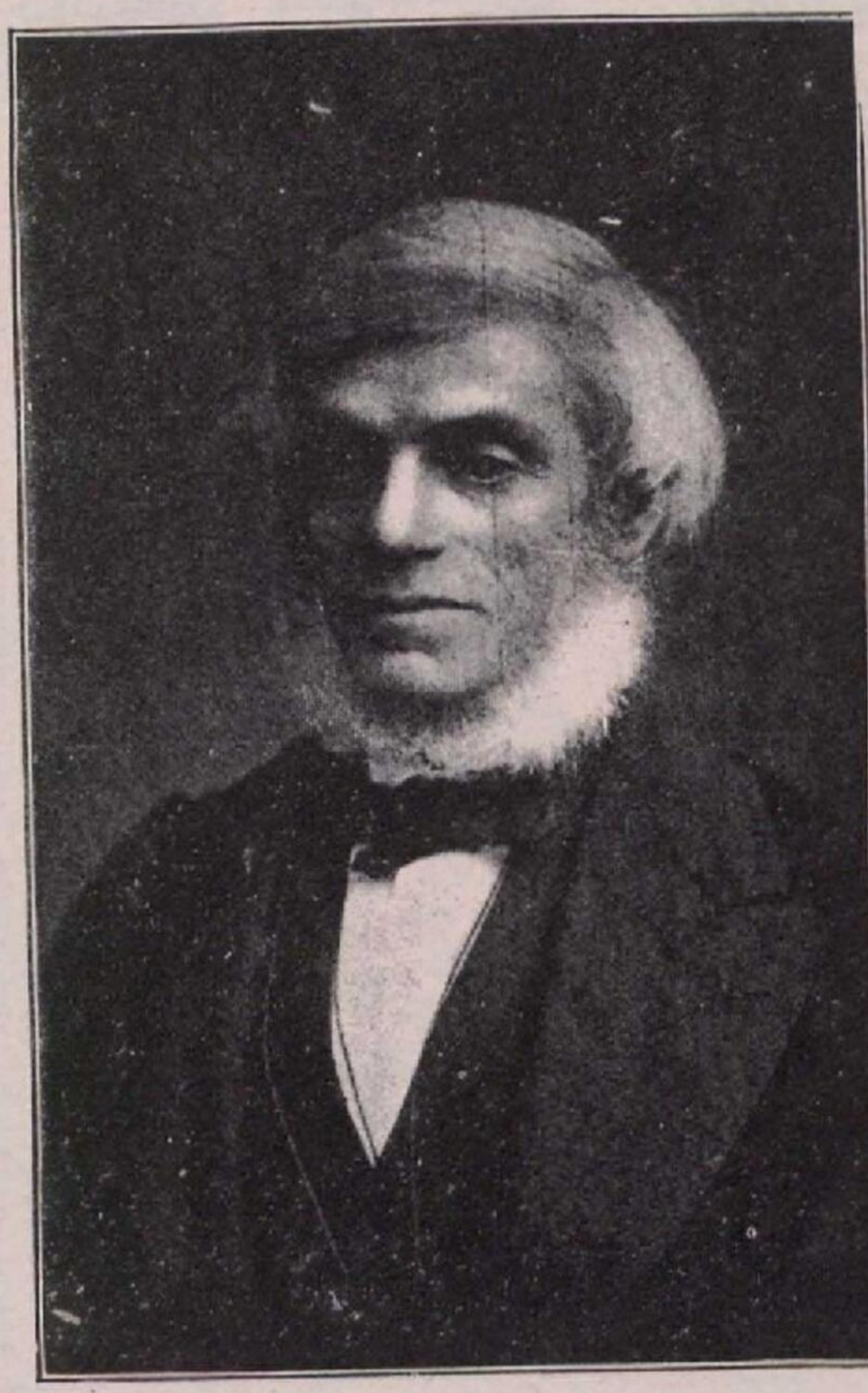
Charles Bertram who wrote "Isn't it Wonderful?" closed the nineteenth-century list of English writers on magic, but his work is marred by mis-statements which even the humblest of magicians could refute, and, like Frost, he drew heavily on writers who preceded him.

So far, in the twentieth century, the most notable contribution to the literature of magic is Henry Ridgely Evans' "The Old and the New Magic," but Mr. Evans falls into the error of his predecessors in accepting as authoritative the history of magic and magicians furnished by Robert-Houdin. He has made no effort whatever to verify or refute the statements made by Robert-Houdin, but has merely compiled and re-written them to suit his twentieth-century readers.

The true historian does not compile. He delves for facts and proofs, and having found these he arrays his indisputable facts, his uncontrovertible proofs, to refute the statements of those who have merely compiled. That is what I have done to prove my case against Robert-

Frontispiece from Richard Neve's work on magic, showing him performing the egg and bag trick about 1715. Photographed from the original in the British Museum by the author.

Houdin. I have not borrowed from the books of other writers on magic. I have gone to the very fountain head of information, records of contemporary literature, newspapers, programmes and advertisements of magicians who



Signor Antonio Blitz, author of "Fifty Years in the Magic Circle" (1872). Original negative of this photograph is in the Harry Houdini Collection.

preceded Robert-Houdin, sometimes by a century. It would cost fully a million dollars to forge the collection of evidence now in my hands. Men who lived a hundred years before Robert-Houdin was born did not invent

posters or write advertisements in order to refute the claims of those who were to follow in the profession of magic. These programmes, advertisements, newspaper notices, and crude cuts trace the true history of magic as

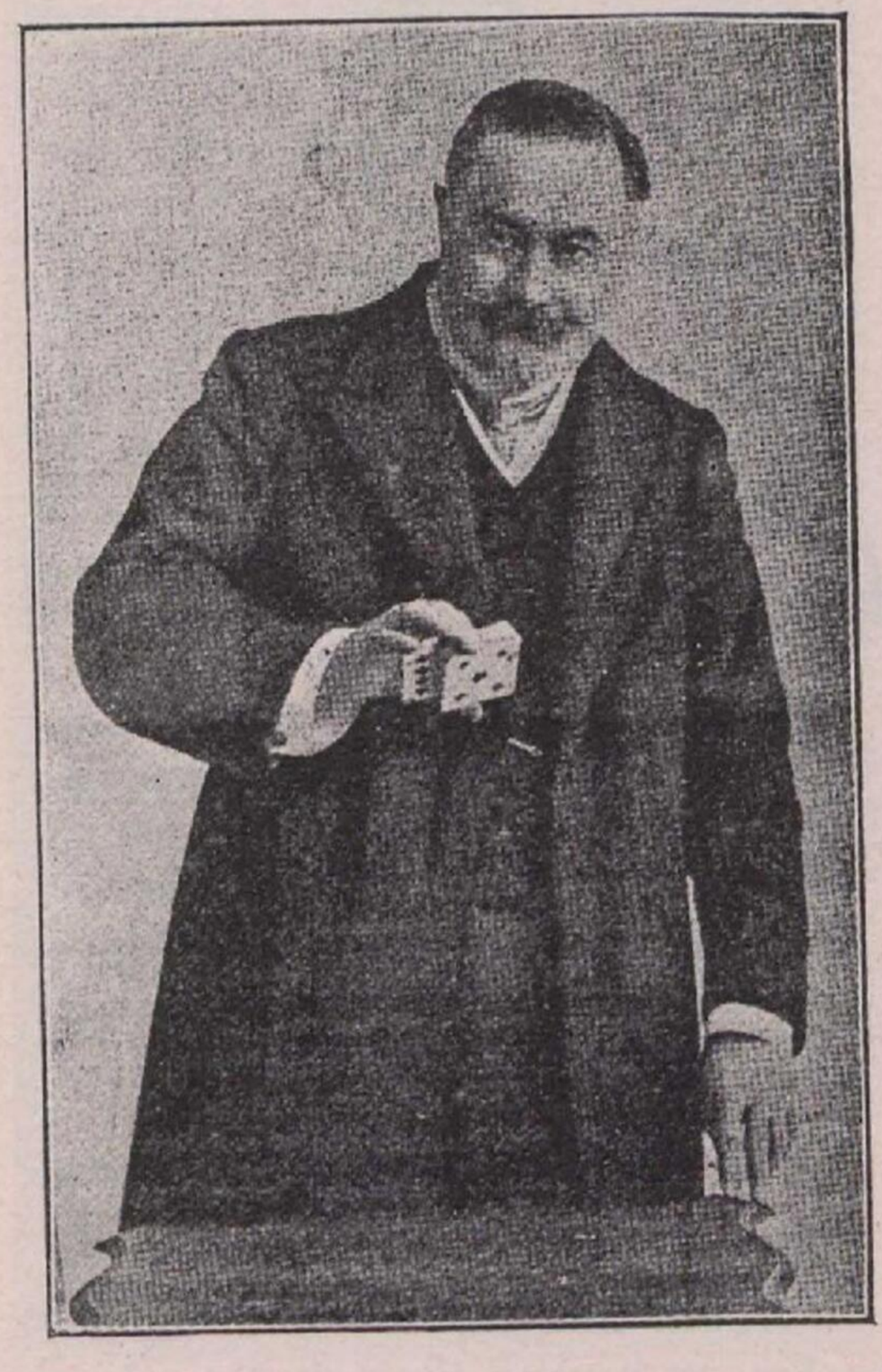
Philip Astley, Esqr.

Pub. by Alex. Hogg. & Co. Augt. 1.-1808.

Philip Astley, Esq., an historical circus director, a famous character of Bartholomew Fair days, and author of "Natural Magic" (1784). From the Harry Houdini Collection.

no romancer, no historian of a single generation possibly could. They are the ghosts of dead and gone magicians, rising in this century of research and progress to claim the credit due them.

Often when the bookshops and auction sales did not yield fruit worth plucking, I had the good fortune to meet a private collector or a retired performer whose assistance proved invaluable, and the histories of



Charles Bertram (James Bassett), the English author and conjurer, who wrote "Isn't it Wonderful?" Born 1853, died Feb. 28th, 1907. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

these meetings read almost like romances, so skilfully did the Fates seem to juggle with my efforts to secure credible proof.

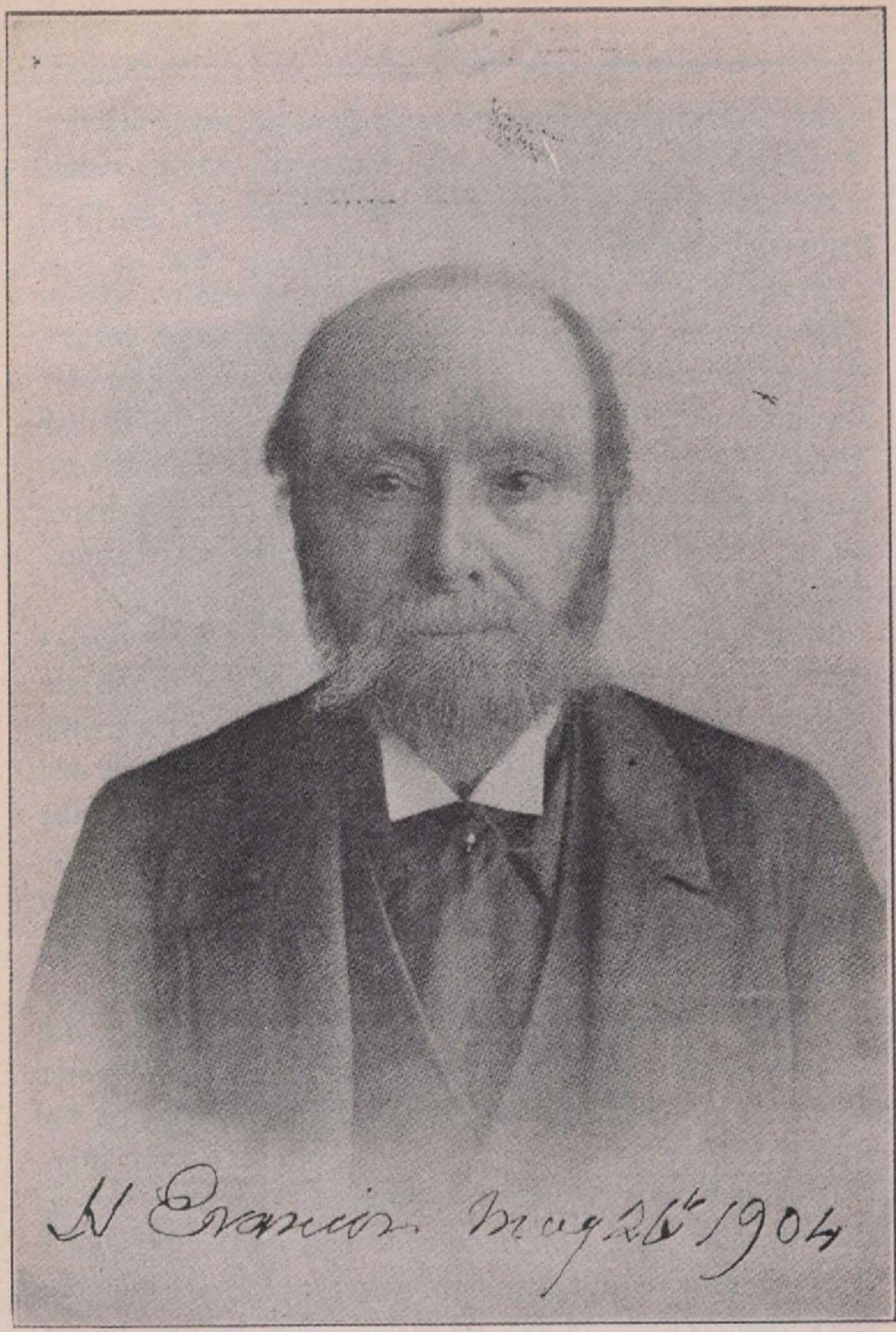
To the late Henry Evans Evanion I am indebted for

many of the most important additions to my collection of conjuring curios and my library of magic, recognized by fellow-artistes and litterateurs as the most complete in the world.

Evanion was an Englishman, by profession a parlor magician, by choice and habit a collector and savant. He was an entertainer from 1849 to the year of his death. For fifty years he spent every spare hour at the British Museum collecting data bearing on his marvellous collection, and his interest in the history of magic was shared by his excellent wife who conducted a "sweet shop" near one of London's public schools.

While playing at the London Hippodrome in 1904 I was confined to my room by orders of my physician. During this illness I was interviewed by a reporter who, noticing the clippings and bills with which my room was strewn, made some reference to my collection in the course of his article. The very day on which this interview appeared, I received from Henry Evanion a mere scrawl stating that he, too, collected programmes, bills, etc., in which I might be interested.

I wrote at once asking him to call at one o'clock the next afternoon, but as the hour passed and he did not appear, I decided that, like many others who asked for interviews, he had felt but a passing whim. That afternoon about four o'clock my physician suggested that, as the day was mild, I walk once around the block. As I stepped from the lift, the hotel porter informed me that since one o'clock an old man had been waiting to see me, but so shabby was his appearance, they had not dared send him up to my room. He pointed to a bent figure,



Last photograph of Henry Evans Evanion, conjurer and collector, taken especially for this book in which he was deeply interested. Died June 17th, 1905. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

clad in rusty raiment. When I approached the old man he rose and informed me that he had brought some clippings, bills, etc., for me to see. I asked him to be as expeditious as possible, for I was too weak to stand long and my head was a-whirl from the effects of la grippe.

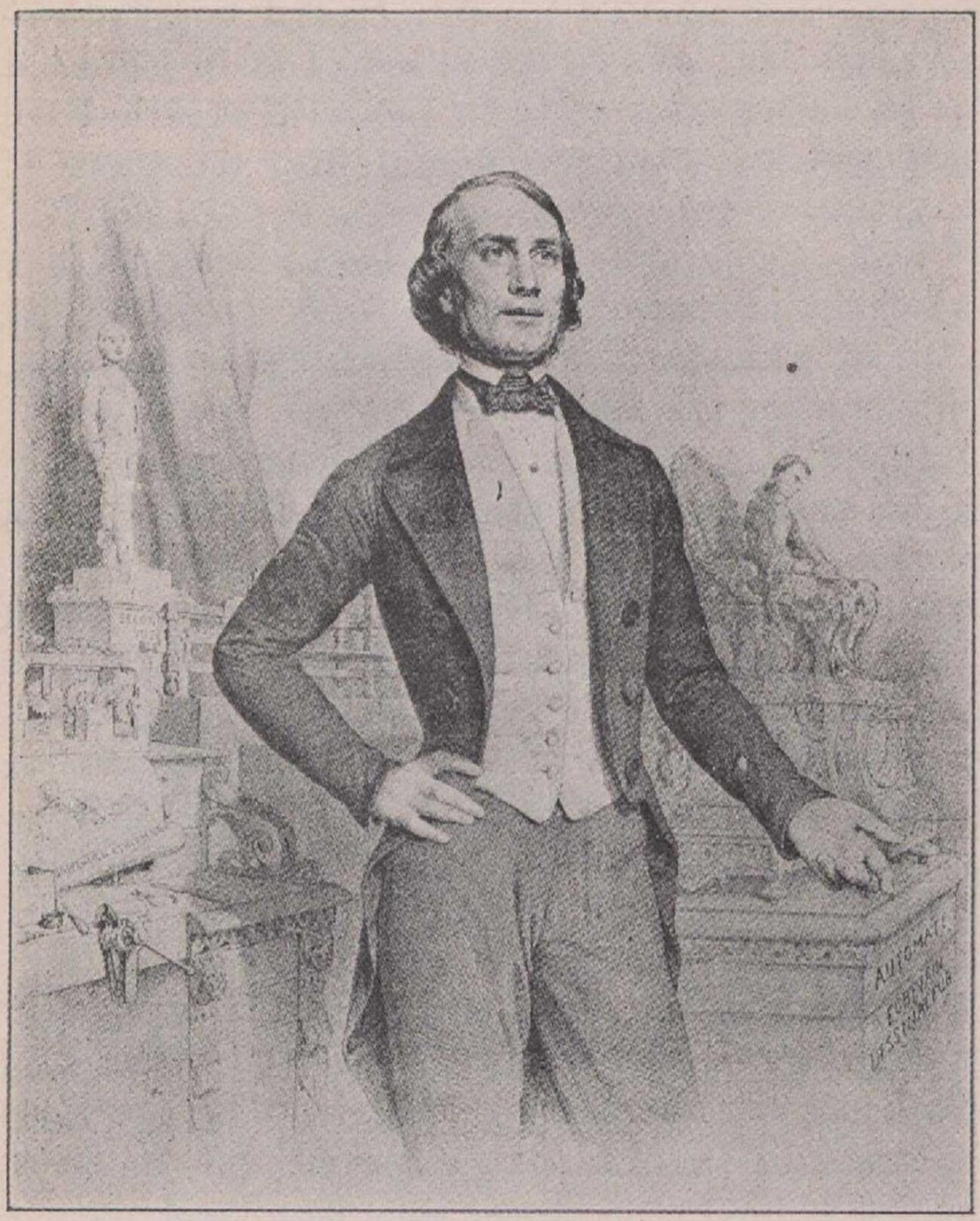
With some hesitancy of speech but the loving touch of a collector he opened his parcel.

"I have brought you, sir, only a few of my treasures, sir, but if you will call——"

I heard no more. I remember only raising my hands before my eyes, as if I had been dazzled by a sudden shower of diamonds. In his trembling hands lay priceless treasures for which I had sought in vain—original programmes and bills of Robert-Houdin, Phillippe, Anderson, Breslaw, Pinetti, Katterfelto, Boaz, in fact all the conjuring celebrities of the eighteenth century, together with lithographs long considered unobtainable, and newspapers to be found only in the files of national libraries. I felt as if the King of England stood before me and I must do him homage.

Physician or no physician, I made an engagement with him for the next morning, when I was bundled into a cab and went as fast as the driver could urge his horse to Evanion's home, a musty room in the basement of No. 12 Methley Street, Kennington Park Road, S.E.

In the presence of his collection I lost all track of time. Occasionally we paused in our work to drink tea which he made for us on his pathetically small stove. The drops of the first tea which we drank together can yet be found on certain papers in my collection. His



Very rare and extraordinarily fine lithograph of Robert-Houdin, which he gave only to his friends. It depicts him among his so-called inventions. His son, Emile, doing second sight, is behind him. The writing and drawing figure is on his left. On his right under the clockwork is a drawing which, on close examination of the original, shows the suspension trick. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

wife, a most sympathetic soul, did not offer to disturb us, and it was 3:30 the next morning, or very nearly twenty-four hours after my arrival at his home, when my brother, Theodore Weiss (Hardeen), and a thoroughly disgusted physician appeared on the scene and dragged me, an unwilling victim, back to my hotel and medical care.

Such was the beginning of my friendship with Evanion. In time I learned that some of his collection had been left to him by James Savren, an English barber, who was so interested in magic that at frequent intervals he dropped his trade to work without pay for famous magicians, including Döbler, Anderson, Compars Herrmann, De Liska, Wellington Young, Cornillot, and Gyngell. From these men he had secured a marvellous collection, which was the envy of his friendly rival, Evanion. Savren bequeathed his collection to Evanion, and bit by bit I bought it from the latter, now poverty stricken, too old to work and physically failing. These purchases I made at intervals whenever I played in London, and on June 7th, 1905, while playing at Wigan, I received word that Evanion was dying at Lambeth Infirmary.

After the show, I jumped to London, only to find that cancer of the throat made it almost impossible for him to speak intelligibly. I soon discovered, however, that his chief anxiety was for the future of his wife and then for his own decent burial. When these sad offices had been provided for, he became more peaceful, and when I rose to leave him, knowing that we had met probably for the last time, he drew forth his chiefest treasure, a superb book of Robert-Houdin's programmes, his one

Poster used by James Savren. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

legacy, which is now the central jewel in my collection. Evanion died ten days later, June 17th, and within a short time his good wife followed him into the Great Unknown.

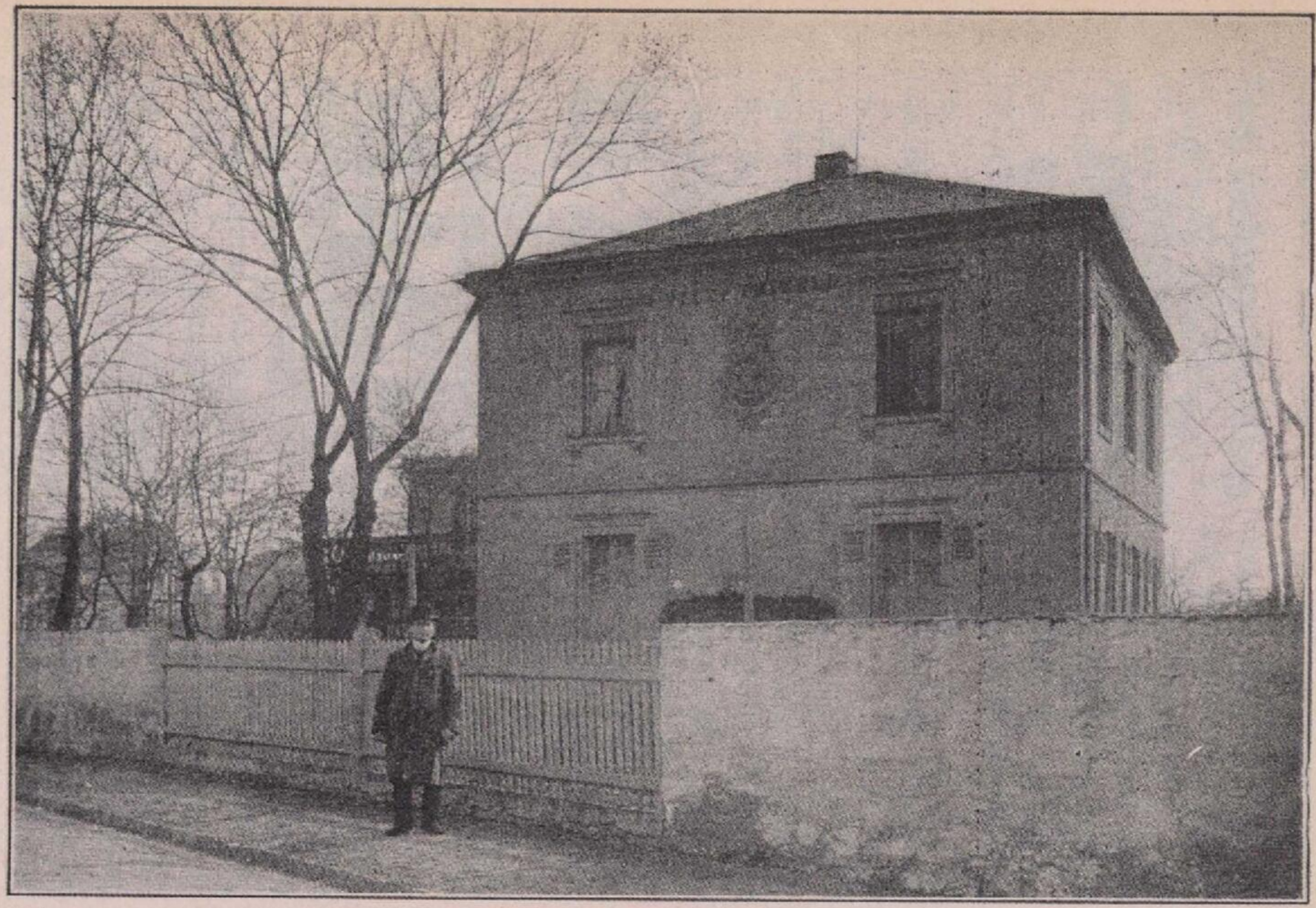
Even more dramatic was my meeting with the widow of Frikell, the great German conjurer.

I had heard that Frikell and not Robert-Houdin was the first magician to discard cumbersome, draped stage apparatus, and to don evening clothes, and I was most anxious to verify this rumor, as well as to interview him regarding equally important data bearing on the history of magic. Having heard that he lived in Kötchenbroda, a suburb of Dresden, I wrote to him from Cologne, asking for an interview. I received in reply a curt note:

"Herr verreist," meaning "The master is on tour." This, I knew, from his age, could not be true, so I took a week off for personal investigation. I arrived at Kötchenbroda on the morning of April 8th, 1903, at 4 o'clock, and was directed to his home, known as "Villa Frikell." Having found my bearings and studied well the exterior of the house, I returned to the depot to await daylight. At 8:30 I reappeared at his door, and was told by his wife that Herr Frikell had gone away.

I then sought the police department from which I secured the following information: "Dr." Wiljalba Frikell was indeed the retired magician whom I was so anxious to meet. He was eighty-seven years old, and in 1884 had celebrated his golden anniversary as a conjurer. Living in the same town was an adopted daughter, but she could not or would not assist me. The venerable magician had suffered from domestic disappointments and had made a vow that he would see no one. In fact he was leading a hermit-like life.

Armed with this information, I employed a photographer, giving him instructions to post himself opposite the house and make a snap shot of the magician, should he appear in the doorway. But I had counted without my host. All morning the photographer lounged across the street and all morning I stood bareheaded before the door of Herr Frikell, pleading with his wife who leaned from the window overhead. With that peculiar fervency which comes only when the heart's desire is at stake, I begged that the past master of magic would lend a helping hand to one ready to sit at his feet and learn. I urged



The Author standing in front of Villa Frikell at Kötchenbroda, Germany, where the master magician, Wiljalba Frikell, spent the last years of his life. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

the debt which he owed to the literature of magic and which he could pay by giving me such direct information as I needed for my book.

Frau Frikell heard my pleadings with tears running down her cheeks, and later I learned that Herr Frikell also listened to them, lying grimly on the other side of the shuttered window.

At length, yielding to physical exhaustion, I went away, but I was still undaunted. I continued to bombard Herr Frikell with letters, press clippings regarding my work, etc., and finally in Russia I received a letter from him. I might send him a package containing a certain brand of Russian tea of which he was particularly fond. You may be sure I lost no time in shipping the little gift, and shortly I was rewarded by the letter for which I longed. Having decided that I cared more for him than did some of his relatives, he would receive me when next I played near Kötchenbroda.

With this interview in prospect, I made the earliest engagement obtainable in Dresden, intending to give every possible moment to my hardly-won acquaintance. But Fate interfered. One business problem after another arose, concerning my forthcoming engagement in England, and I had to postpone my visit to Herr Frikell until the latter part of the week. In the mean time, he had agreed to visit a Dresden photographer, as I wanted an up-to-date photograph of him and he had only pictures taken in his more youthful days. On the day when he came to Dresden for his sitting, he called at the theatre, but the attachés, without informing me, refused to give him the name of the hotel where I was stopping.

Last photograph of Herr and Frau Frikell, taken especially for this work. Frikell died Oct. 8th, 1903, the day after this photograph was taken. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

After the performance I dropped into the König Kaffe and was much annoyed by the staring and gesticulations of an elderly couple at a distant table. It was Frikell with his wife, but I did not recognize them and, not being certain on his side, he failed to make himself known. That was mid-week, and for Saturday, which fell on October 8th, 1903, I had an engagement to call at the Villa Frikell. On Thursday, the Central Theatre being sold out to Cleo de Merode, who was playing special engagements in Germany with her own company, I made a flying business trip to Berlin, and on my return I passed through Kötchenbroda. As the train pulled into the station I hesitated. Should I drop off and see Herr Frikell, or wait for my appointment on the morrow? Fate turned the wheel by a mere thread and I went on to Dresden. So does she often dash our fondest hopes!

My appointment for Saturday was at 2 P.M., and as my train landed me in Kötchenbroda a trifle too early I walked slowly from the depot to the Villa Frikell, not wishing to disturb my aged host by arriving ahead of time.

I rang the bell. It echoed through the house with peculiar shrillness. The air seemed charged with a quality which I presumed was the intense pleasure of realizing my long cherished hope of meeting the great magician. A lady opened the door and greeted me with the words: "You are being waited for."

I entered. He was waiting for me indeed, this man who had consented to meet me, after vowing that he would never again look into the face of a stranger. And Fate had forced him to keep that vow. Wiljalba Frikell was dead. The body, clad in the best his wardrobe afforded,

all of which had been donned in honor of his expected guest, was not yet cold. Heart failure had come suddenly and unannounced. The day before he had cleaned up his souvenirs in readiness for my coming and arranged a quantity of data for me. On the wall above the silent form were all of his gold medals, photographs taken at various stages of his life, orders presented to him by royalty—all the outward and visible signs of a vigorous, active, and successful life, the life of which he would have told me, had I arrived ahead of Death. And when all these were arranged, he had forgotten his morbid dislike of strangers. The old instincts of hospitality tugged at his heart strings, and his wife said he was almost young and happy once more, when suddenly he grasped at his heart, crying, "My heart! What is the matter with my heart? O——" That was all!

There we stood together, the woman who had loved the dear old wizard for years and the young magician who would have been so willing to love him had he been allowed to know him. His face was still wet from the cologne she had thrown over him in vain hope of reviving the fading soul. On the floor lay the cloths, used so ineffectually to bathe the pulseless face, and now laughing mockingly at one who saw himself defeated after weary months of writing and pleading for the much-desired meeting.

I feel sure that the personal note struck in these reminiscences will be forgiven. In no other way could I prove the authoritativeness of my collection, the thoroughness of my research, and the incontrovertibility of the facts which I desire to set forth in this volume.

THE UNMASKING OF ROBERT-HOUDIN

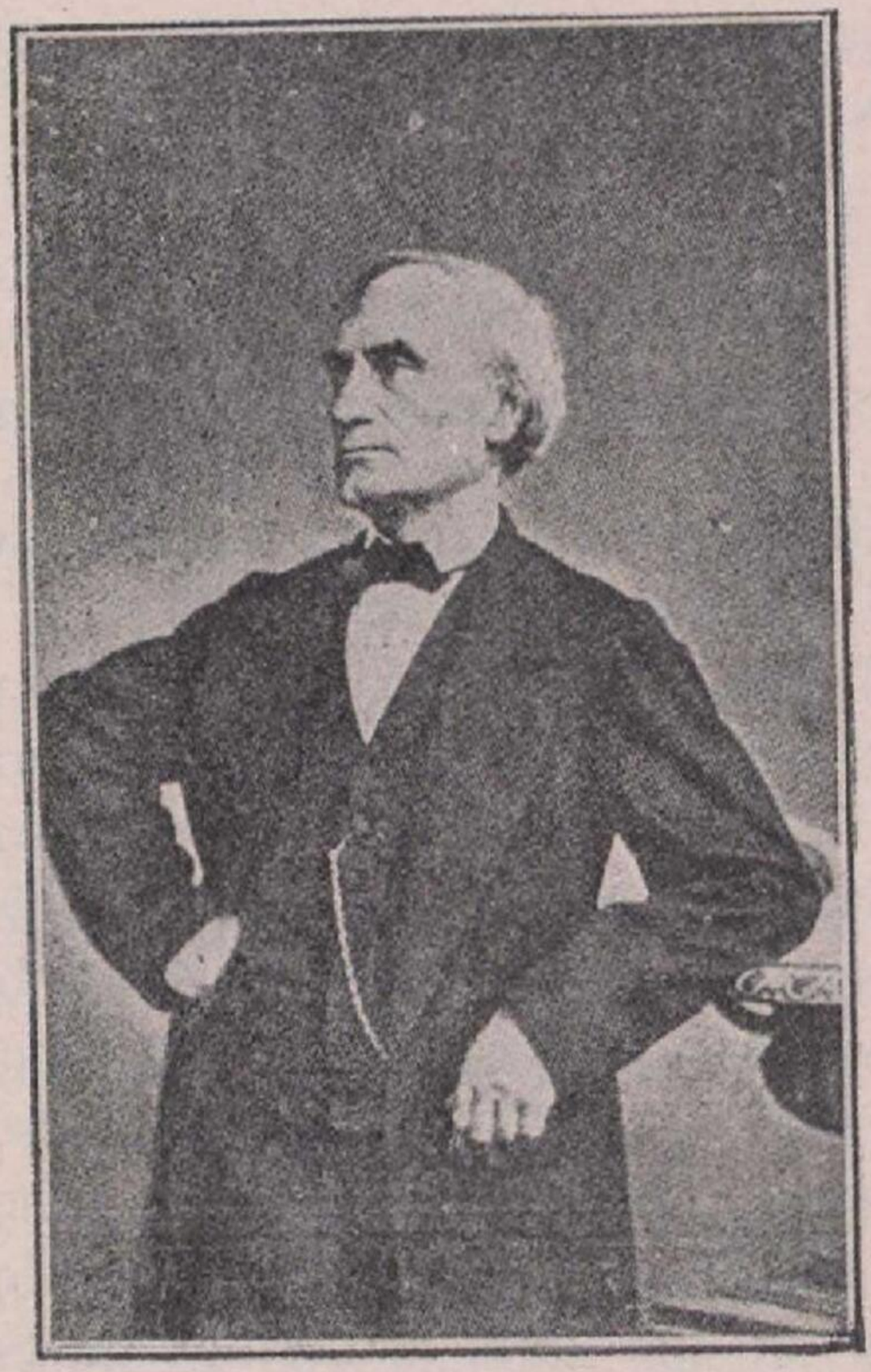
CHAPTER I

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ROBERT-HOUDIN

ROBERT-HOUDIN was born in Blois, France, December 6th, 1805. His real name was Jean-Eugene Robert, and his father was Prosper Robert, a watchmaker in moderate circumstances. His mother's maiden name was Marie Catherine Guillon. His first wife was Josephe Cecile Eglantine Houdin, whose family name he assumed for business reasons. He was married the second time to Françoise Marguerite Olympe Naconnier. His death, caused by pneumonia, occurred at St. Gervais, France, on June 13th, 1871.

Barring the above facts, which were gleaned from the register of the civil authorities of St. Gervais, all information regarding his life previous to his first public appearance in 1844 must be drawn from his own works, particularly from his autobigraphy, published in the form of "Memoirs." Because of his supreme egotism, his obvious desire to make his autobiography picturesque and interesting rather than historically correct, and his utter indifference to dates, exact names of places, theatres, books, etc., it is extremely hard to present logical and con-

sistent statements regarding his life. Such discrepancies arise as the mention of three children in one chapter and four in another, while he does not give the names of either



Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin. Photograph taken-about 1868. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

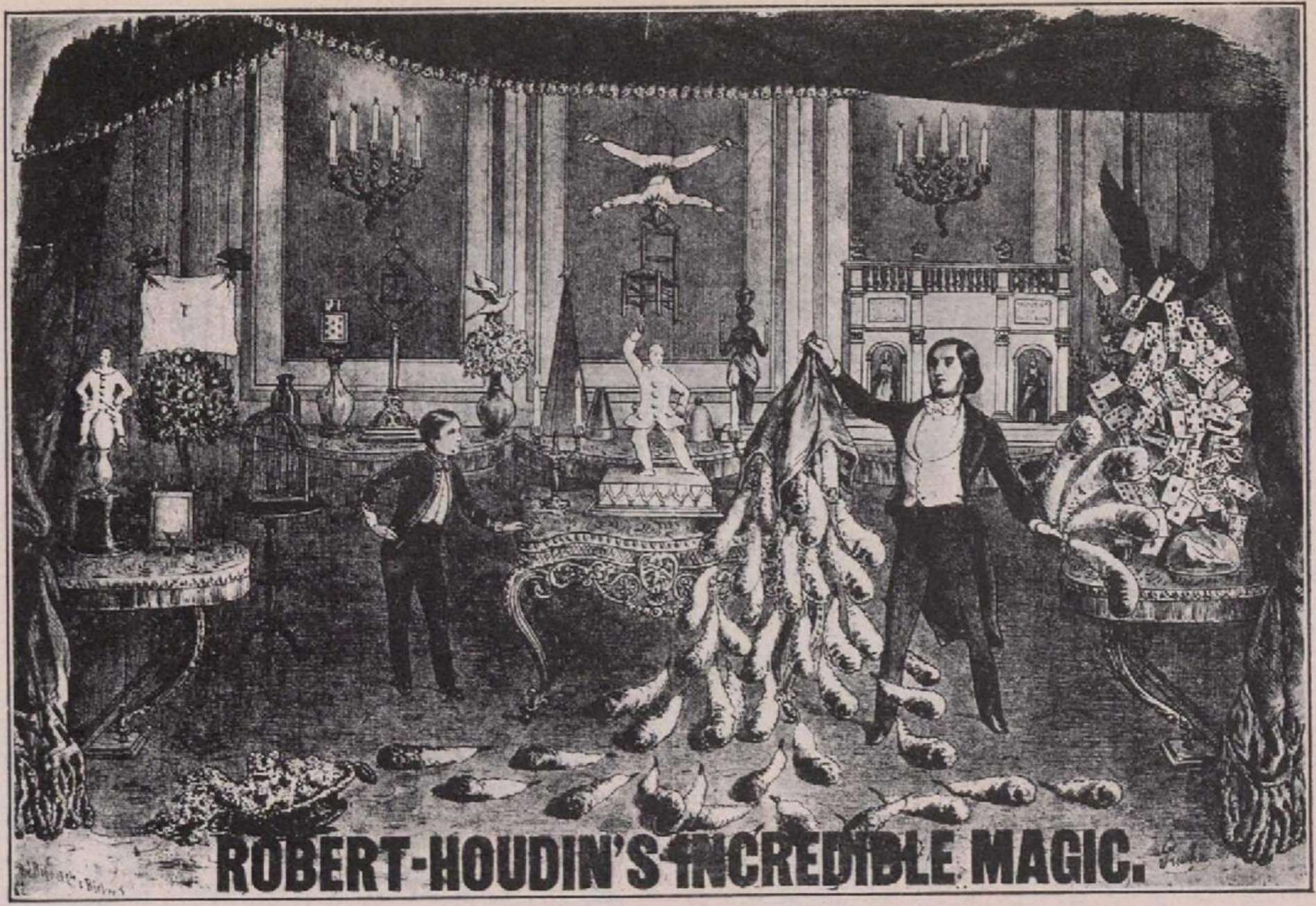
wife, though he admits his obligation to both good women.

According to his autobiography, Jean-Eugene Robert was sent to college at Orleans at the tender age of eleven, and remained there until he was eighteen. He was then placed in a notary's office to study law, but his mechanical

tastes led him back to his father's trade, watchmaking. While working for his cousin at Blois, he visited a book-shop in search of Berthoud's "Treatise on Clockmaking," but by mistake he was given several volumes of an old encyclopædia, one of which contained a dissertation on "Scientific Amusements," or an exposition of magic. This simple incident, he asserts, changed the entire current of his life. At eighteen, he first turned his attention to magic. At forty, he made his first appearance as an independent magician or public performer.

On page 44 of his "Memoirs," American edition, Robert-Houdin refers to this book as an encyclopædia, but several times later he calls it "White Magic." In all probability it was the famous work by Henri Decremps in five volumes, known as "La Magie Blanche Dévoilée," or "White Magic Exposed." This was written by Decremps to injure Pinetti, and it exposed all the latter's tricks, including the orange tree, the vaulting trapeze automaton, and in fact the majority of the tricks later claimed by Robert-Houdin as his own inventions.

In 1828, while working for M. Noriet, a watchmaker in Tours, Jean-Eugene Robert was poisoned by improperly prepared food, and in his delirium started for his old home in Blois. He was picked up on the roadside by Torrini, a travelling magician, who nursed him back to health in his portable theatre. Just as young Jean recovered Torrini was injured in an accident, and his erstwhile patient remained to nurse his benefactor and later to help Torrini's assistant present the programme of magic by which they made their living. His first public appearance as the representative of Torrini was made at Aubusson.



The only Robert-Houdin poster showing his complete stage setting. This lithograph was made in France. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

To=day, Thursday, July 3, 1845,

First Representation

OF

The Fantastic Soirees

OF

Robert=Houdin,

Automata, Sleight-of-Hand, Magic.

The Performance will be composed of entirely novel Experiments invented by

M. Robert-Houdin,

Among them being:

The Cabalistic Clock
Auriol and Debureau
The Orange-Tree
The Mysterious Boquet
Pierrot in the Egg
Obedient Cards
The Miraculous Fish
The Fascinating Owl
The Pastrycook of the Palais Royal

To Commence at Eight o'clock.

Box=office open at Half=past Seven.

Price of Places: Upper Boxes, 1 fr. 50 c.; Stalls, 3 fr.; Boxes, 4 fr.; Dress Circle, 5 fr.

Programme for the opening of Robert-Houdin's theatre in Paris. Reproduced from the American edition of his "Memoirs."

Torrini was an Italian whose real name was Count Edmond de Grisy. He was a contemporary of Pinetti. In all probability, during the long summer of their intimate companionship, Torrini not only initiated his fascinated young guest into his own methods of performing

Robert-Houdin's favorite lithograph for advertising purposes. Used on the majority of his posters and in the original edition of his "Memoirs." From the Harry Houdini Collection.

tricks, but also into the secrets of Pinetti's tricks. In his "Memoirs," Robert-Houdin makes no secret of the fact that both Comus and Pinetti, together with their tricks, were topics of conversation between himself and Torrini.

When Torrini was able to resume his performances,

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ROBERT-HOUDIN

Under the express Patronage of Her Most Gracious Majesty

THE QUEEN,

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE ALBERT,

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT,

THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE DUKE & DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE,

AND

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.

A GRAND

MORNING FETE,

INCLUDING

A CONCERT & DANCING,

IN AID OF

Baths and Wash-houses for the Labouring Classes,

IN GOULSTON SQUARE, WHITECHAPEL,

WILL TAKE PLACE

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY THE 19TH,

Under the above exalted Patronage,

AT WILLOW BANK, PUTNEY,

The Residence of ARTHUR WEBSTER, Esq.

Which has been most kindly placed at the disposal of the Ladies Patronesses.

THE CONCERT

Will combine the eminent Services of the following Artistes, who have most obligingly offered their assistance:

MADAME GRISI, MADAME CASTELLAN,
MADLLE ALBONI,
SIG. MARIO, M. ROGER. SIG. TAMBURINI, & SIG. LABLACHE.

CONDUCTOR - - SIGNOR COSTA.

A TENT WILL BE ERECTED IN THE GROUNDS,

IN WHICH

ROBERT-HOUDIN,

Who has also offered his services, will present

UNE SEANCE FANTASTIQUE.

The Grounds will be open from One o'Clock until Eight.

TICKETS FOR THE FETE,

THE NUMBER OF WHICH WILL BE LIMITED,

Can only be procured on the presentation of Vouchers from the following

LADIES PATRONESSES:

Duchess of Somerset.
Duchess of Richmond.
Duchess of Bedford.
Duchess Dowager of Bedford
Duchess of Buccleuch.
Duchess of Argyll.
Duchess of Montagu.
Duchess of Sutherland.
Duchess of Abercorn.
Marchioness of Salisbury.
Marchioness of Abercorn.
Marchioness of Waterford.
Marchioness of Downshire.
Marchioness of Exeter.
Marchioness of Aylesbury.
Marchioness of Clanricarde.
Marchioness of Bristol.
Marchioness of Bath.
Marchioness of Douglas.
Lady Saltoun.

Countess of Chesterfield.
Countess Dowager of Essex.
Countess of Jersey.
Countess of Eglinton.
Countess of Portsdown.
Countess of Malmesbury.
Countess of Desart.
Countess of Craven.
Countess of Wilton.
Countess Grey.
Countess of Morley.
Countess of Glengall.
Countess of Lichfield.
Countess Granville.
Countess Bruce.
Lady John Russell.
Viscountess Stopford.
Viscountess Palmerston.
Viscountess Canning.
Viscountess Ebrington.

Viscountess Jocelyn.
Viscountess Ashley.
Countess de Flahault.
Lady Ernest Bruce.
Lady Robert Grosvenor.
Lady Willoughby de Eresby.
Lady Stanley.
Lady Holland.
Lady Dufferin.
Lady Morley.
Lady Beaufort.
Lady Londesbro'.
Lady Graham.
Baroness Rothschild.
Madame Van de Weyer.
Baroness Lionel de Rothschild
The Lady Mayoress.
Hon. Mrs. Norton.
Mrs. Hall.

Single Tickets - - £2 2s. each.

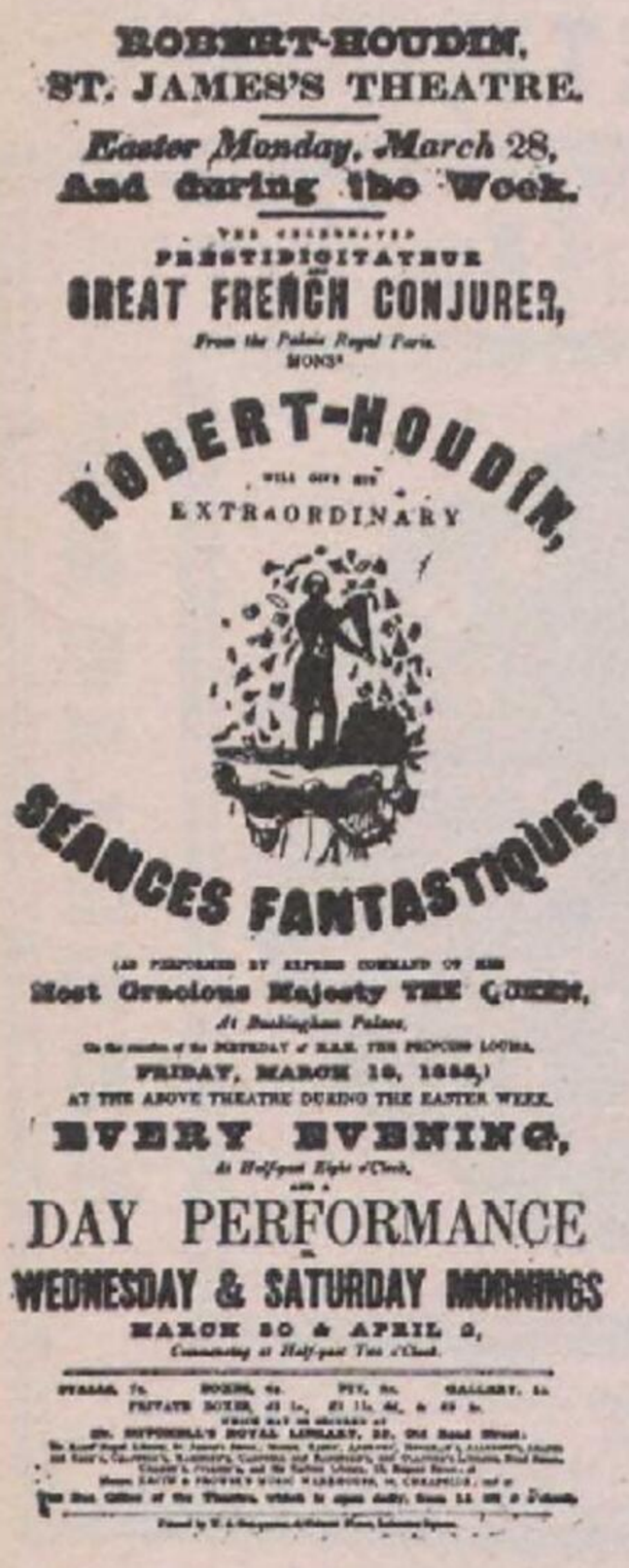
Additional Tickets, for unmarried Sons and Daughters of the same Family, £1 1s. each.

Vouchers will be exchanged at Mr. MITCHELL's Royal Library, 33, Old Bond Street

ON THE 12TH, 14TH, AND 15TH JULY.

A very rare, and possibly the only, programme in existence, chronicling Robert-Houdin's first appearance before Queen Victoria, July 19th, 1848. The original, now in the Harry Houdini Collection, was presented to James Savren by Robert-Houdin.

Jean-Eugene returned to his family in Blois. During the next few years he mixed amateur acting with his daily labor, leaning more and more toward the profession of public entertainer. But his ambitions along this line were nipped in the bud by marriage. Mademoiselle Houdin, whose father was a celebrated watchmaker in Paris, visited old friends in Blois, their native town, and became the fiancée of young Robert. As the new son-in-law was to share the elder Houdin's business and naturally wished to secure such benefits as might accrue from so celebrated a family of watch and clock makers, he applied to the council of state and secured the right to annex "Houdin" to his name, Jean-Eugene Robert, and thereafter was known only as Robert-Houdin.


ROBERT-HOUDIN,
ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.
Easter Monday, March 28,
And during the Week.
THE CELEBRATED
PRESTIDIGITATEUR
GREAT FRENCH CONJURER,
From the Palais Royal Paris.
M. ROBERT-HOUDIN,
WILL GIVE HIS
EXTRAORDINARY
SEANCES FANTASTIQUES
(AS PERFORMED BY EXPRESS COMMAND OF HER
Most Gracious Majesty THE QUEEN,
At Buckingham Palace,
On the occasion of the BIRTHDAY of H.R.H. THE PRINCESS LOUISA.
FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 1848,)
AT THE ABOVE THEATRE DURING THE EASTER WEEK.
EVERY EVENING,
At Half-past Eight o'Clock,
AND A
DAY PERFORMANCE
On
WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY MORNINGS
MARCH 30 & APRIL 2,
Commencing at Half-past Two o'Clock.
STALLS, 7s. BOXES, 4s. PIT, 2s. GALLERY, 1s.
PRIVATE BOXES, £3 3s., £2 12s. 6d., & £2 2s.
TICKETS MAY BE OBTAINED AT
MR. MITCHELL'S ROYAL LIBRARY, 33, Old Bond Street.
Printed by W. J. Golding, 4, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.

Poster used by Robert-Houdin during an Easter engagement at the St. James Theatre, London. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

His life between 1838 and 1844 was divided between reading every work obtainable on magic, and his duties in his father-in-law's shop, where he not only made and repaired clocks, but built and repaired automata of various sorts. His family shared with him many financial vicissitudes, and about 1842–43 his first wife died, leaving him with three young children to raise. Earlier in his "Memoirs" he speaks of having four children, so it is more

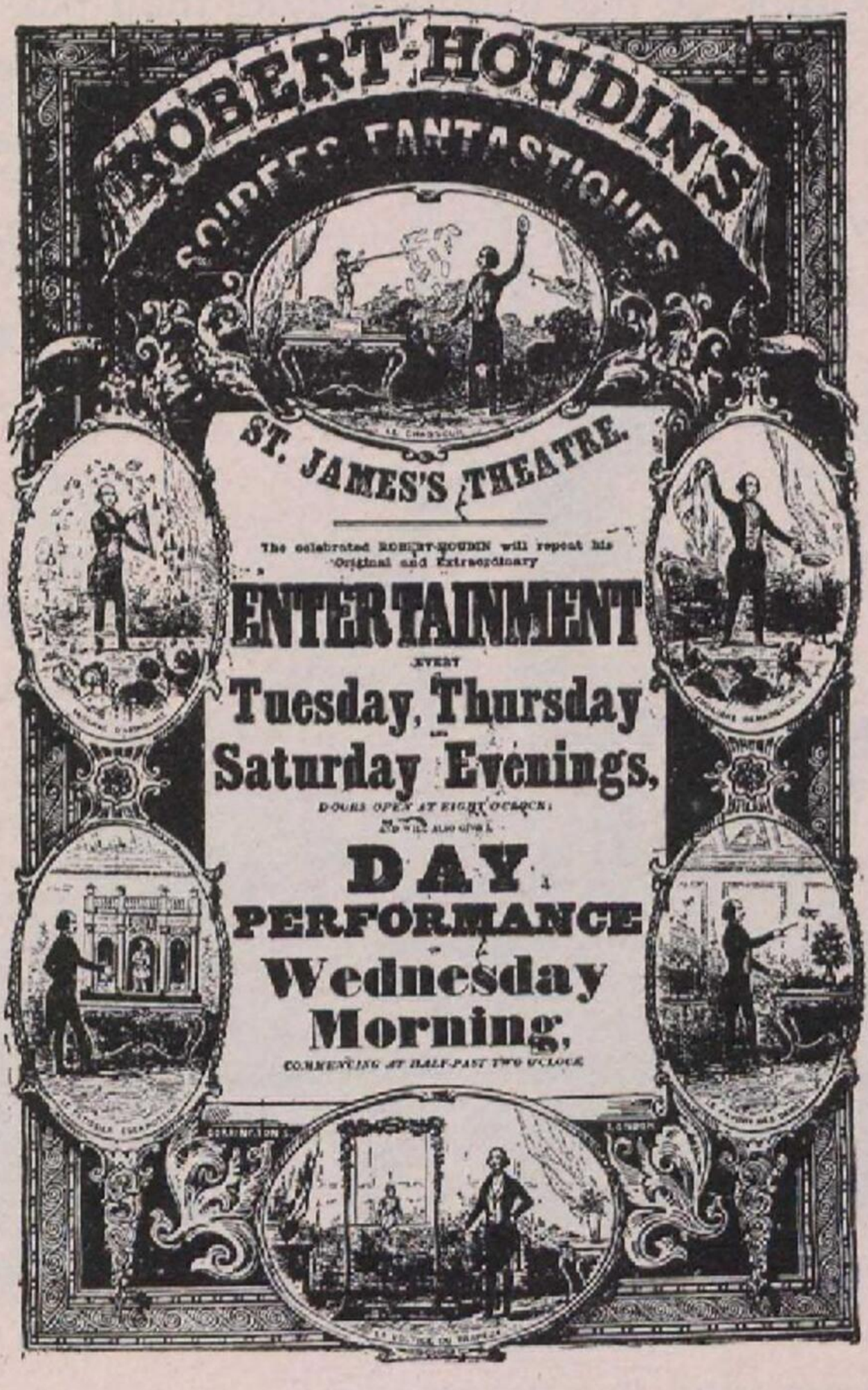
than likely that one died before his wife. He married again soon, and though he gives his second wife great credit as a helpmate he does not state her name.

By this time he had acquired more than passing fame

Robert-Houdin as he appeared to the English critics. Reproduced from the *Illustrated London News*, December 23d, 1848.

as a repairer of automata, and in 1844 he mended Vaucanson's marvellous duck, one of the most remarkable automata ever made. Doubtless other automata found

their way to his workshop and aided him in his study of a profession which he still hoped to follow. During these discouraging times he was often assisted financially by

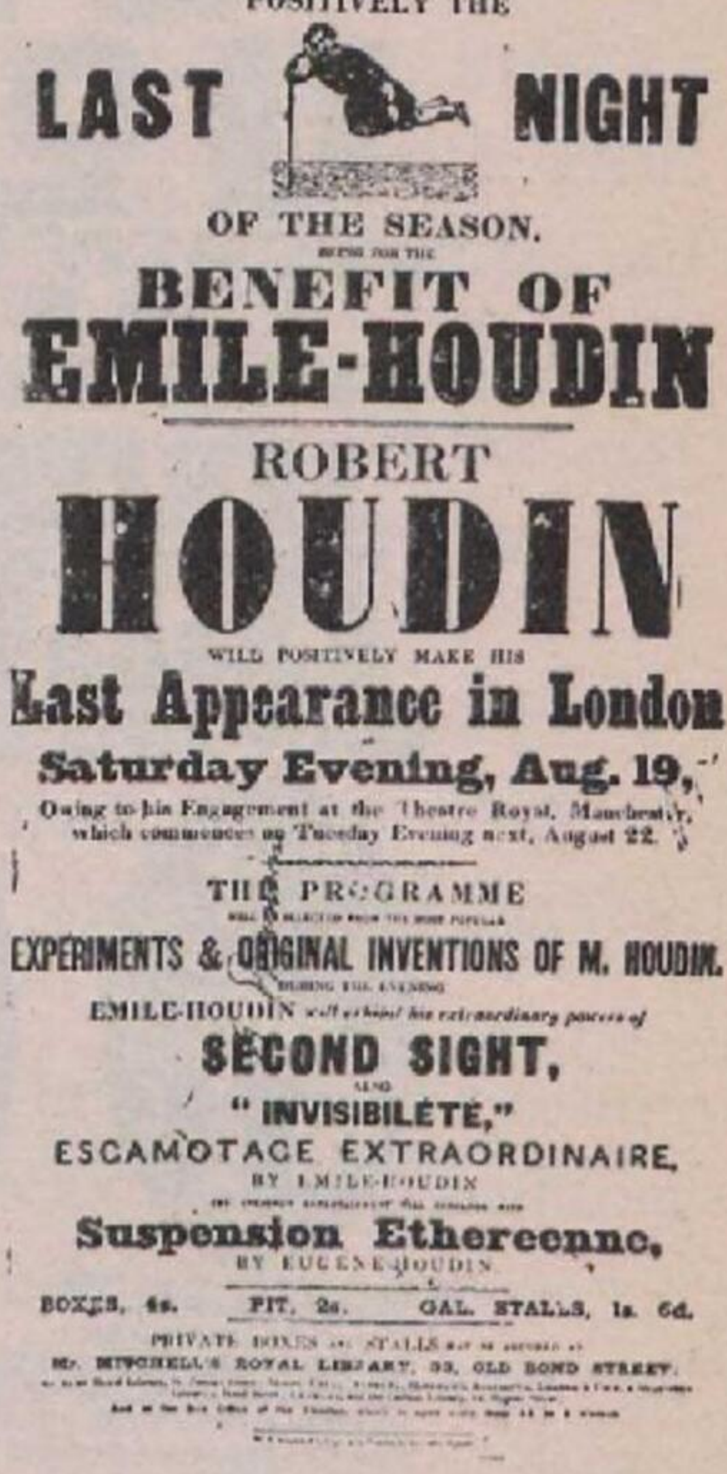


Poster used in 1848 in London by Robert-Houdin. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

one Monsieur G——, who either advanced money on his automata or bought them outright. In the same year, 1844, he retired to a suburb of Paris, and there,

he asserts, he built his famous writing and drawing figure.

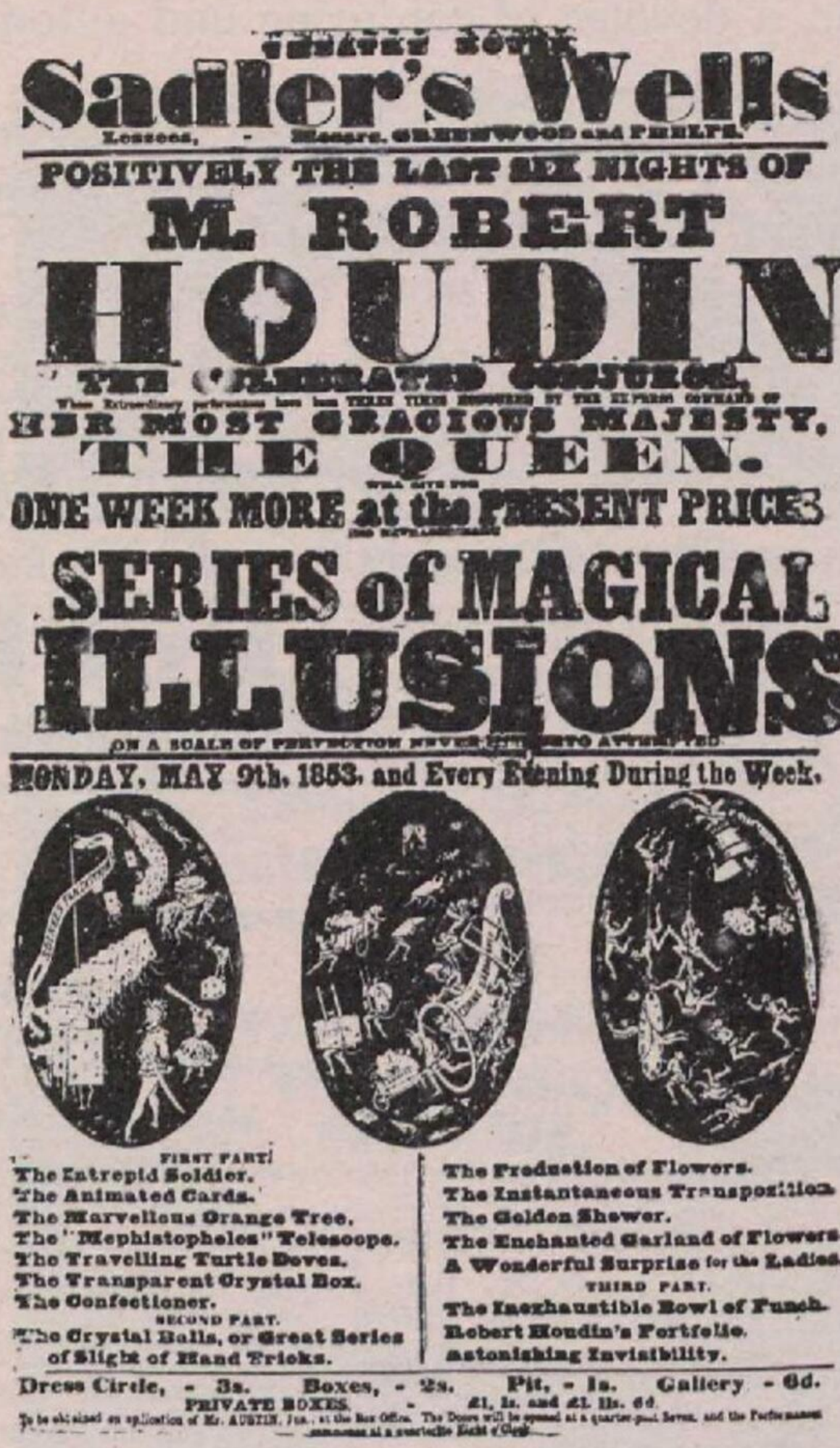
The next year, 1845, he was assisted by Count de L'Escalopier, a devotee of conjuring and automata, who advanced the money to fit up and furnish a small theatre in the Palais Royal. Robert-Houdin went about the work of decorating and furnishing this theatre with a view to securing the most dramatic and brilliant effects, surrounding his simple tricks with a setting that made them vastly different from the same offerings by his predecessors. He was what is called today an original producer of old ideas. On June 25th, 1845, he gave his first private performance before a few friends. On July 3d of the same year his theatre of magic was opened formally to the public. The programme of this performance is shown on page 37.


ST JAMES'S THEATRE.
Saturday Evening, Aug. 19.
POSITIVELY THE
LAST NIGHT
OF THE SEASON.
BEING FOR THE
BENEFIT OF
EMILE-HOUDIN
ROBERT
HOUDIN
WILL POSITIVELY MAKE HIS
Last Appearance in London
Saturday Evening, Aug. 19,
Owing to his Engagement at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, which commences on Tuesday Evening next, August 22.
THE PROGRAMME
EXPERIMENTS & ORIGINAL INVENTIONS OF M. HOUDIN.
EMILE-HOUDIN will exhibit his extraordinary powers of
SECOND SIGHT,
"INVISIBILETE,"
ESCAMOTAGE EXTRAORDINAIRE,
Suspension Etherenne,
BOXES, 4s. PIT, 2s. GAL. STALLS, 1s. 6d.
Mr. MITCHELL'S ROYAL LIBRARY, 33, OLD BOND STREET.

Poster for theEmile-Houdin benefit at St. James's Theatre in 1848. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

It will be noted that the famous writing and drawing figure was not then included in Robert-Houdin's répertoire, nor does it ever appear on any of his programmes. He exhibited it at the quinquennial exhibition in 1844, received a silver medal for it, and very soon sold it to the late P. T. Barnum, who exported it to America.

This question naturally arises: If Robert-Houdin built the original writing and drawing figure, why could he not make a duplicate and include it in his programme? Surely



Poster used by Robert-Houdin when he played at Sadler's Wells, London, in 1853. He never refers to this engagement in his writings because he was not proud of having appeared in a second-class theatre, while his rival, Anderson, held the fashionable audiences at the St. James's, where Robert-Houdin had worn out his welcome. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

it was one of the most remarkable of the automata which he claims as the creations of his brain and hands.

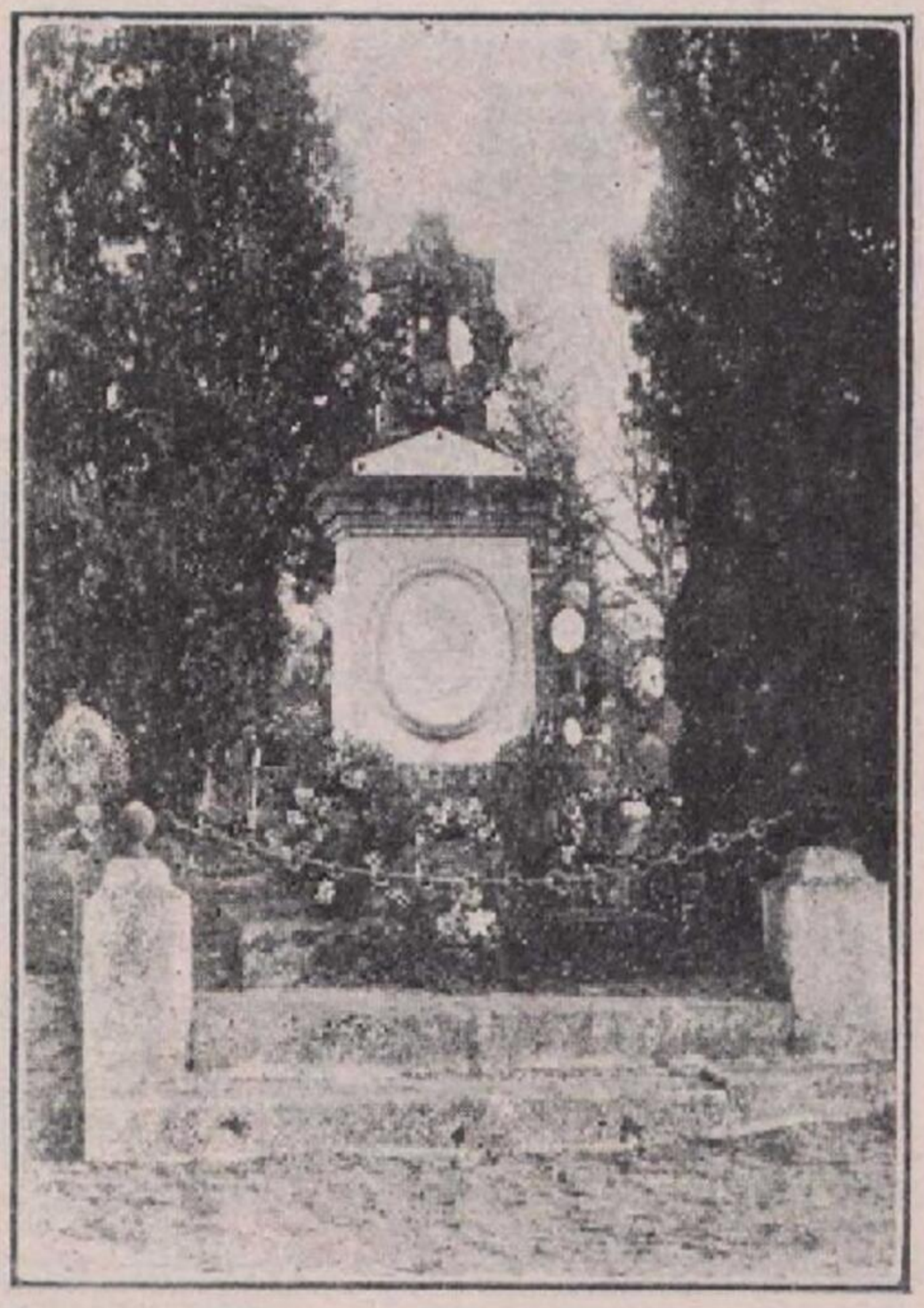
In 1846 he claims to have invented second sight, and at the opening of the season in 1847 he presented as his own creation the suspension trick. During the interim he played an engagement in Brussels which was a financial failure.

In 1848 the Revolution closed the doors of Parisian theatres, Robert-Houdin's among the rest, and he returned to clockmaking and automata building, until he received from John Mitchell, who had met with great success in managing Ludwig Döbler and Phillippe, an offer to appear in London at the St. James's Theatre. This engagement was a brilliant success and for the first time in his career Robert-Houdin reaped big financial returns.

Later Robert-Houdin toured the English provinces under his own management and made return trips to London, but his tour under Mitchell was the most notable engagement of his career.

In 1850, while playing in Paris, he decided to retire, and to turn over his theatre and tricks to one Hamilton. A contemporary clipping, taken from an English newspaper of 1848, goes to prove that Hamilton was an Englishman who entered Robert-Houdin's employ. Hamilton signed a dual contract, agreeing to produce Robert-Houdin's tricks as his acknowledged successor and to marry Robert-Houdin's sister, thus keeping the tricks and the theatre in the family. During the next two years Robert-Houdin spent part of his time instructing his brother-in-law in all the mysteries of his art. In July, 1852, he played a few engagements in Germany, including Berlin and various bathing resorts, and then formally

retired to his home at St. Gervais. Here he continued to work along mechanical and electrical lines, and in 1855 he again came into public notice, winning awards at the Exhibition for electrical power as applied to mechanical uses. In 1856, according to his autobiography, he was

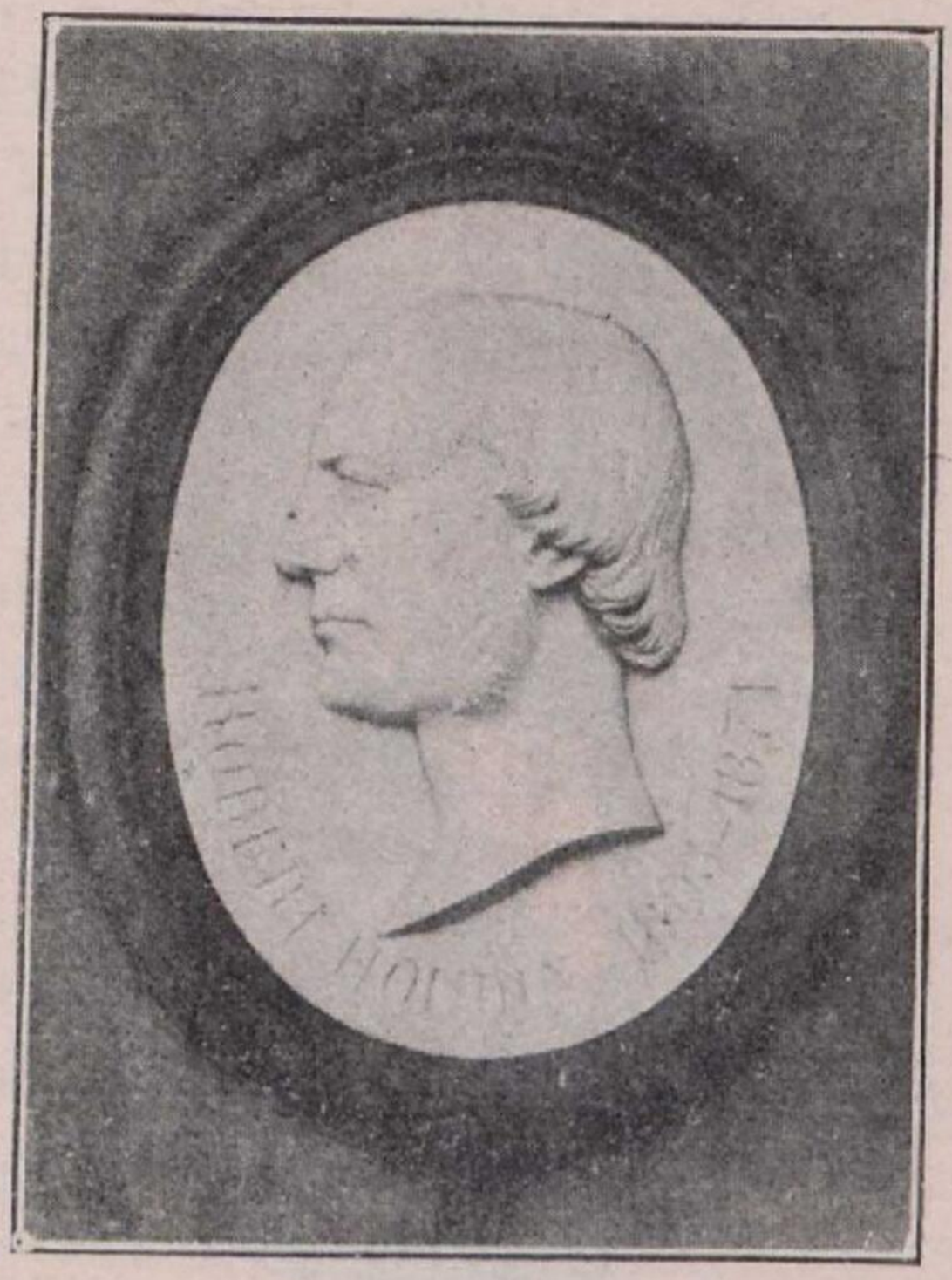


Robert-Houdin's grave, in the cemetery at Blois, France. From a photograph taken by the author, especially for this work, and now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

summoned from his retirement by the Government to make a trip to Algeria and there intimidate revolting Arabs by the exhibition of his sleight-of-hand tricks. These were greatly superior to the work of the Marabouts or Arabian magicians, whose influence was often held responsible for revolts. What Robert-Houdin received for

performing this service is not set forth in any of his works. He spent the fall of 1856 in Algeria.

From the date of his return to St. Gervais to the time of his death, June 13th, 1871, Robert-Houdin devoted his energies to improving his inventions and writing his



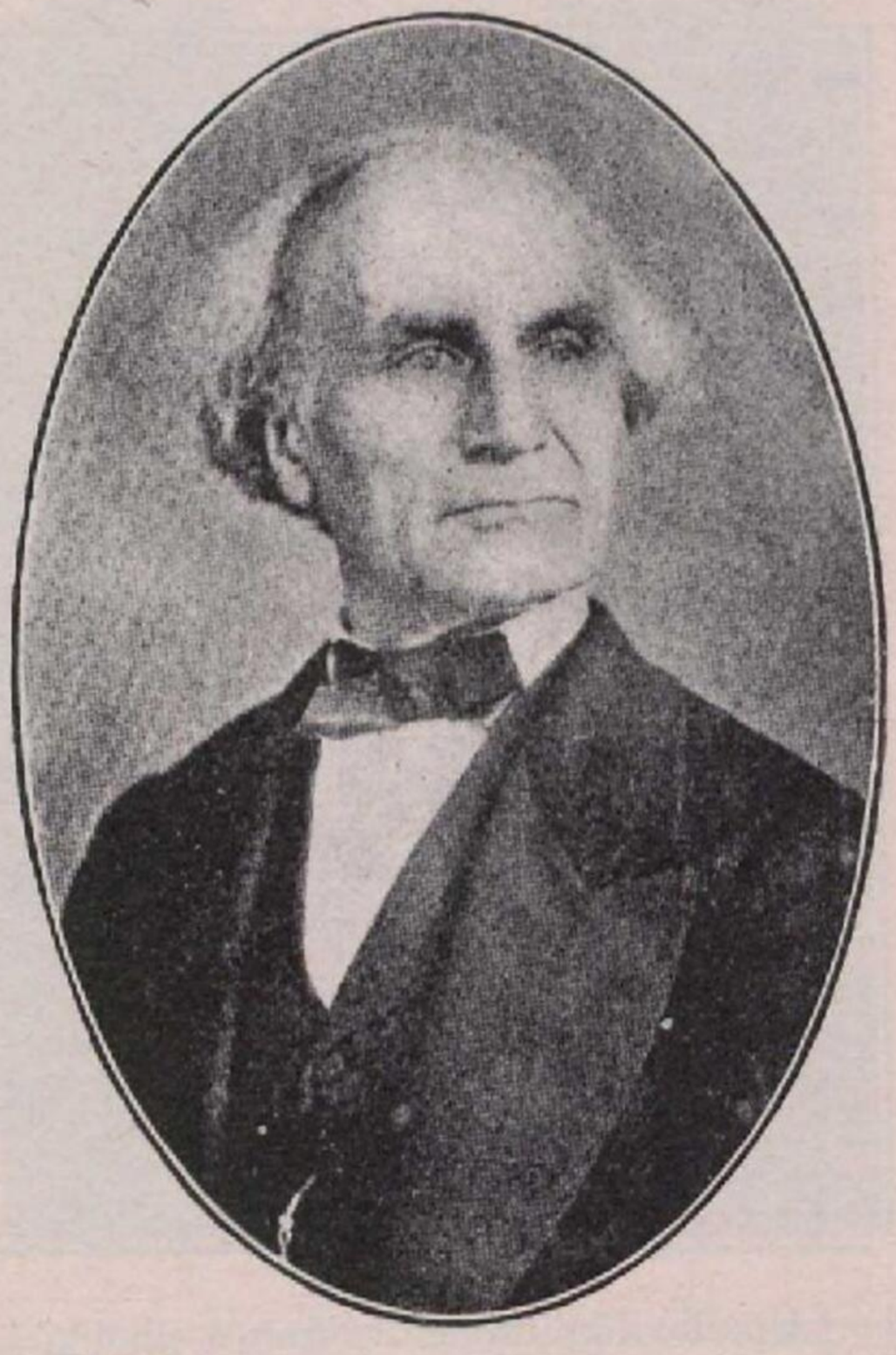
Bas-relief on Robert-Houdin tombstone. From a photograph taken by the author, especially for this work, and now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

books, though, as stated before, it was generally believed by contemporary magicians that in the latter task he entrusted most of the real work to a Parisian journalist whose name was never known.

He was survived by a wife, a son named Emile, and a step-daughter. Emile Houdin managed his father's theatre until his death in 1883, when the theatre was

sold for 35,000 francs. The historic temple of magic still stands under the title of "Théâtre Robert-Houdin," under the management of M. Melies, a maker of motion picture films.

During my investigations in Paris, I was shocked to



The last photograph taken of Robert-Houdin and used as the frontispiese for the original French edition of his "Memoirs," published in 1868

find how little the memory of Robert-Houdin was revered and how little was known of France's greatest magician. In fact, I was more than once informed that Robert-Houdin was still alive and giving performances at the theatre which bears his name.

Contemporary magicians of Robert-Houdin and men of high repute in other walks of life seem to agree that Robert-Houdin was an entertainer of only average merit. Among the men who advanced this theory were the late Henry Evanion of whose deep interest in magic I wrote in the introduction, Sir William Clayton who was Robert-Houdin's personal friend in London, Ernest Basch who saw Robert-Houdin in Berlin, and T. Bolin of Moscow, Russia, who bought all his tricks in Paris and there saw Robert-Houdin and studied his work as a conjurer.

Robert-Houdin's contributions to literature, all of which are eulogistic of his own talents, are as follows:

"Confidence et Révélations," published in Paris in 1858 and translated into English by Lascelles Wraxall, with an introduction by R. Shelton Mackenzie.

"Les Tricheries des Grecs" (Card-Sharping Exposed), published in Paris in 1861.

"Secrets de la Prestidigitation" (Secrets of Magic), published in Paris in 1868.

"Le Prieuré" (The Priory, being an account of his electrically equipped house), published in Paris in 1867.

"Les Radiations Lumineuses," published in Blois in 1869.

"Exploration de la Rétine," published in Blois, 1869.

"Magic et Physique Amusante" (œuvre posthume), published in Paris in 1877, six years after Robert-Houdin's death.

In his autobiography, Robert-Houdin makes specific claim to the honor of having invented the following tricks: The Orange Tree, Second Sight, Suspension, The Cabalistic Clock. The Inexhaustible Bottle, The

Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal, The Vaulting Trapeze Automaton, and the Writing and Drawing Figure.

His fame, which has been sung by writers of magic without number since his death, rests principally on the invention of second sight, suspension, and the writing and drawing automaton. It is my intention to trace the true history of each of these tricks and of all others to which he laid claim as inventor, and show just how small a proportion of the credit was due to Robert-Houdin and how much he owed to magicians who preceded him and whose brain-work he claimed as his own.

CHAPTER II

THE ORANGE-TREE TRICK

ROBERT-HOUDIN, on page 179 of the American edition of his "Memoirs," thus describes the orange-tree trick, which he claims as his invention: "The next was a mysterious orange-tree, on which flowers and fruit burst into life at the request of the ladies. As the finale, a handkerchief I borrowed was conveyed into an orange purposely left on the tree. This opened and displayed the handkerchief, which two butterflies took by the corners and unfolded before the spectators."

On page 245 of the same volume he presents the programme given at the first public performance in the Théâtre Robert-Houdin, stating:

"The performance will be composed of entirely novel Experiments invented by M. Robert-Houdin. Among them being The Orange-Tree, etc."

Now to retrace our steps in the history of magic as set forth in handbills and advertisements of earlier and contemporaneous newspaper clippings describing their inventions.

Under the title of "The Apple-Tree" this mechanical trick appeared on a Fawkes programme dated 1730. This was 115 years before Robert-Houdin claimed it as his invention. In 1732, just before Pinchbeck's death, it

appeared on a programme used by Christopher Pinchbeck, Sr., and the younger Fawkes. In 1784 it was included in the répertoire of the Italian conjurer, Pinetti, in the guise of "Le Bouquet-philosophique." In 1822 the same trick, but this time called "An Enchanted Garden," was featured by M. Cornillot, who appeared in England as the pupil and successor of Pinetti.

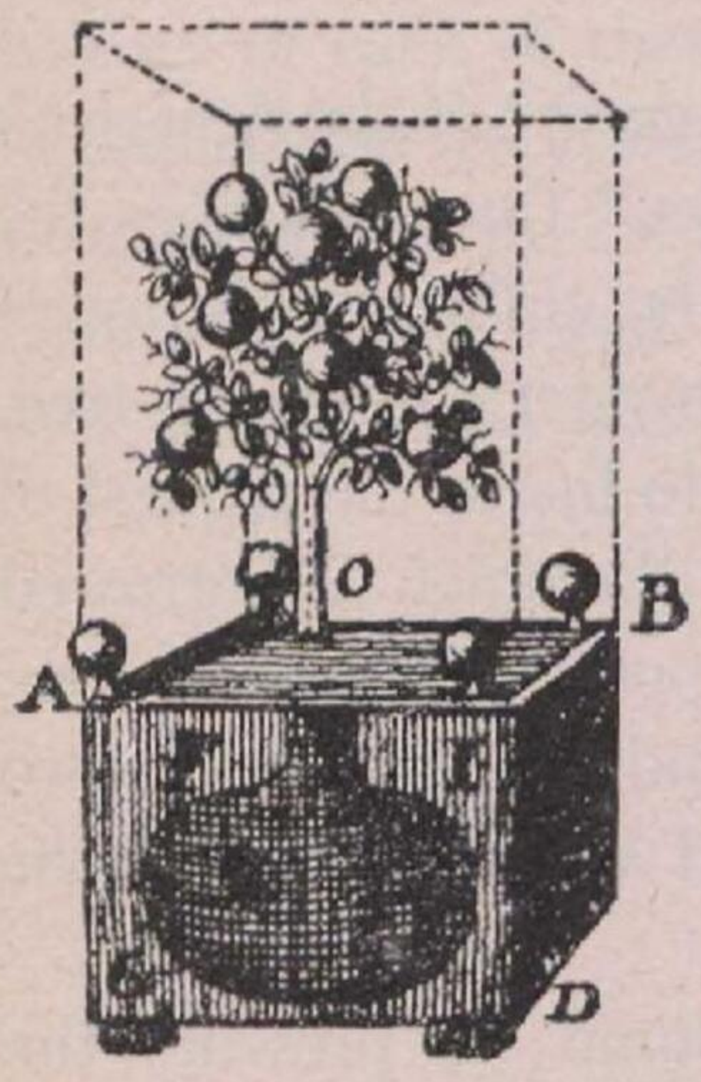


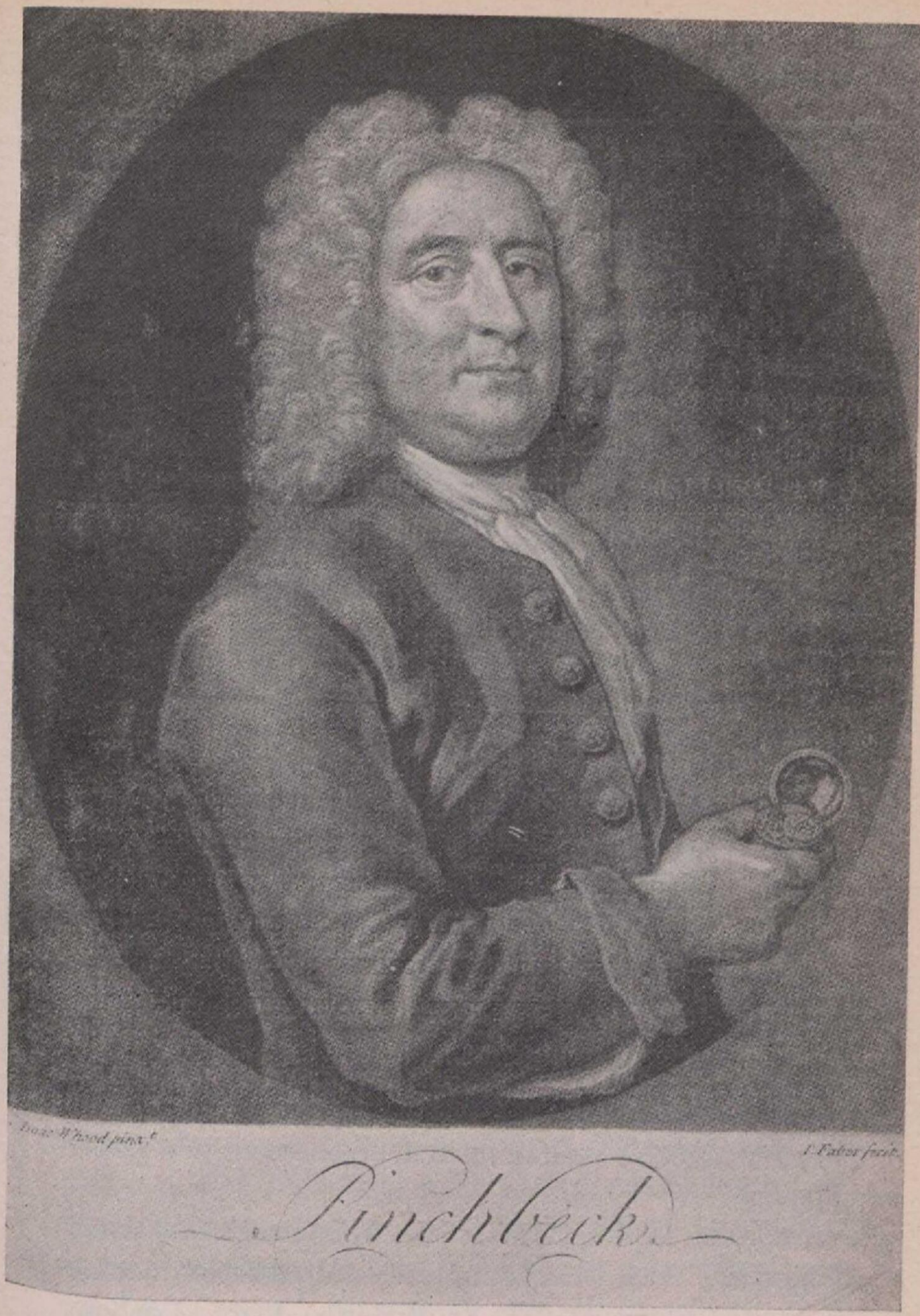
Diagram of the orange-tree trick, from Wiegleb's "The Natural Magic," published in 1794.

The trick was first explained in public print by Henri Decremps in 1774 when his famous exposé of Pinetti was published under the title of "La Magie Blanche Dévoilée," and in 1786-87 both Halle and Wiegleb exposed the trick completely in their respective works on magic.

That Robert-Houdin was an omnivorous reader is proven by his own writings. That he knew the history and tricks of Pinetti is proven by his own words, for in Chapter VI. of his "Memoirs" he devoted fourteen pages to Pinetti and the latter's relations with Torrini.

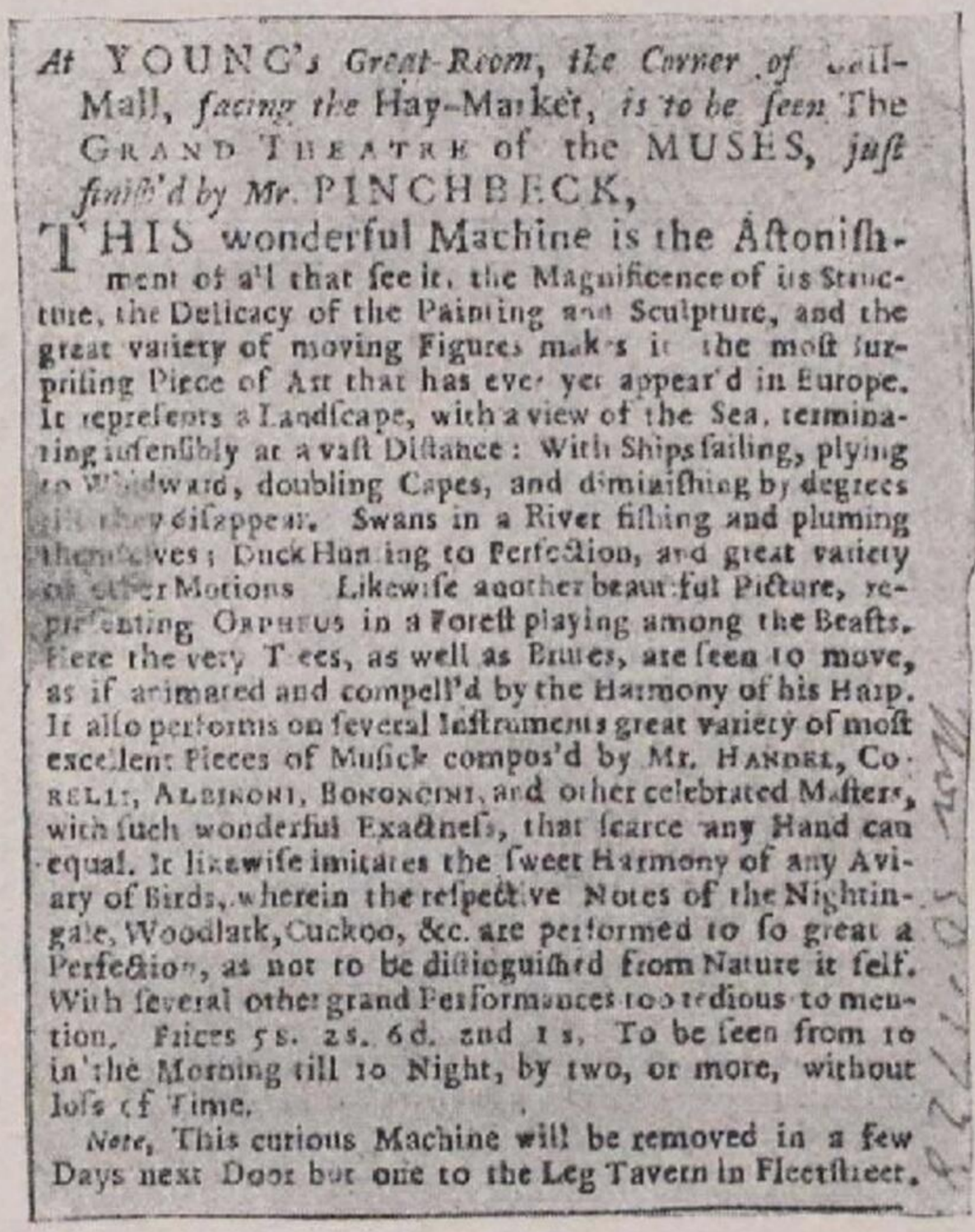
Now to prove that the tree tricks offered by Fawkes, Pinchbeck, Pinetti, Cornillot, and Robert-Houdin were practically one and the same, and to tell something of the history of the four magicians who featured the trick before Robert-Houdin had been heard of:

Unquestionably, the real inventor of the mysterious tree was Christopher Pinchbeck, who was England's



Christopher Pinchbeck, Sr. This is the oldest and rarest authentic mezzotint in the world pertaining to the history of magic. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

leading mechanical genius at the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. He was a man of high repute, whose history is not that of the charlatan, compiled largely from tradition, but it can be



At YOUNG's *Great-Room, the Corner of* Pall-Mall, *facing the* Hay-Market, *is to be ſeen* The GRAND THEATRE of the MUSES, *juſt finiſh'd by Mr.* PINCHBECK,

THIS wonderful Machine is the Aſtoniſhment of all that ſee it, the Magnificence of its Structure, the Delicacy of the Painting and Sculpture, and the great variety of moving Figures make it the moſt ſurpriſing Piece of Art that has ever yet appear'd in Europe. It repreſents a Landſcape, with a view of the Sea, terminating inſenſibly at a vaſt Diſtance: With Ships ſailing, plying to Windward, doubling Capes, and diminiſhing by degrees till they diſappear. Swans in a River fiſhing and pluming themſelves; Duck Hunting to Perfection, and great variety of other Motions. Likewiſe another beautiful Picture, repreſenting ORPHEUS in a Foreſt playing among the Beaſts. Here the very Trees, as well as Brutes, are ſeen to move, as if animated and compell'd by the Harmony of his Harp. It alſo performs on ſeveral Inſtruments great variety of moſt excellent Pieces of Muſick compos'd by Mr. HANDEL, CORELLI, ALBINONI, BONONCINI, and other celebrated Maſters, with ſuch wonderful Exactneſs, that ſcarce any Hand can equal. It likewiſe imitates the ſweet Harmony of any Aviary of Birds, wherein the reſpective Notes of the Nightingale, Woodlark, Cuckoo, &c. are performed to ſo great a Perfection, as not to be diſtinguiſhed from Nature it ſelf. With ſeveral other grand Performances too tedious to mention. Prices 5s. 2s. 6d. and 1s. To be ſeen from 10 in the Morning till 10 Night, by two, or more, without loſs of Time.

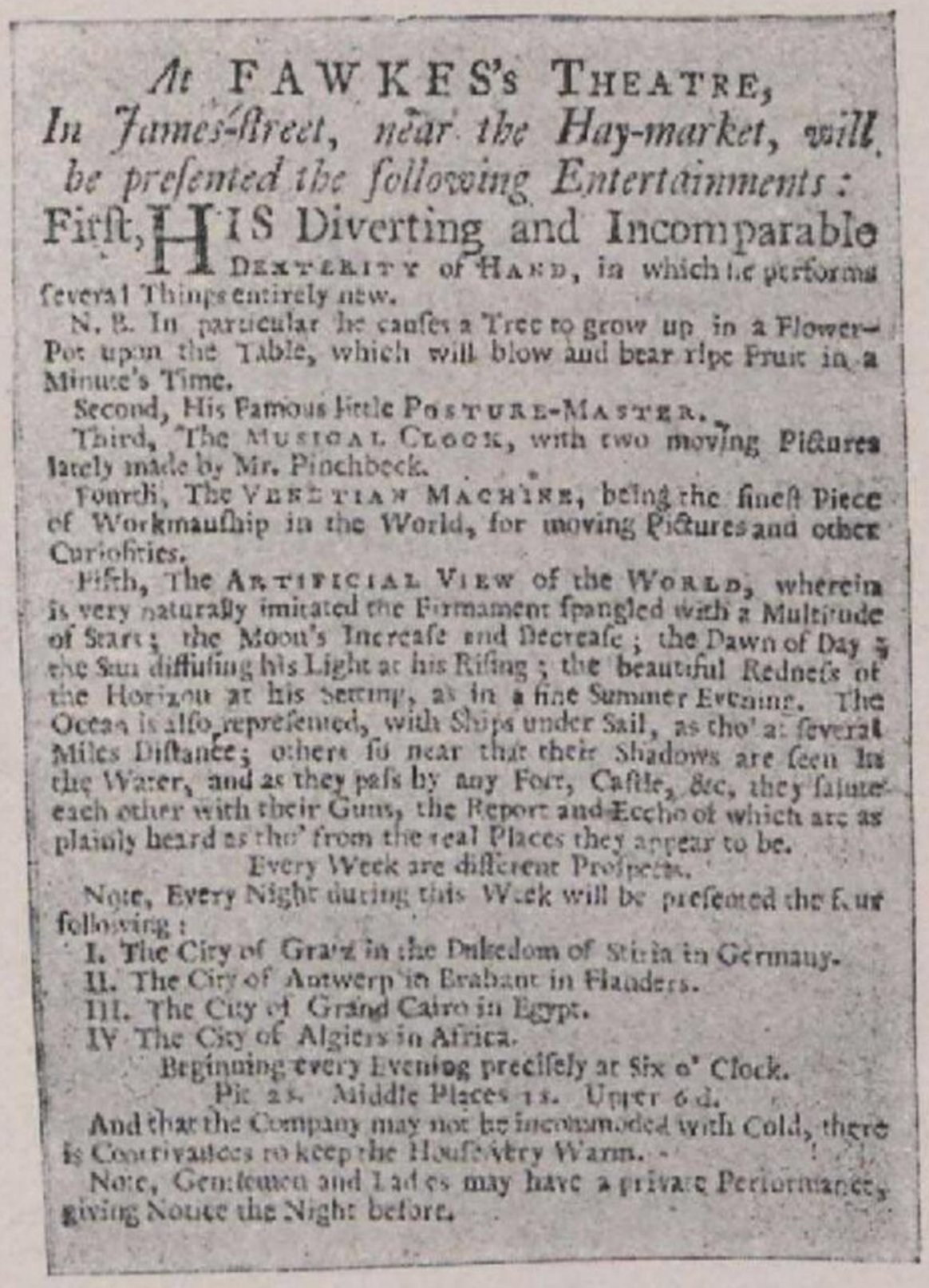
Note, This curious Machine will be removed in a few Days next Door but one to the Leg Tavern in Fleetſtreet.

Clipping from the London *Daily Post* of November 30th, 1728. Used by Christopher Pinchbeck before he joined Fawkes. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

corroborated by court records, biographical works, and encyclopædias, as well as by contemporaneous newspaper clippings.

According to Vol. XLV. of the "Dictionary of National Biography," edited by Sidney Lee and published in 1896 by Smith, Elder & Co., 15 Waterloo Place, London: "Christopher Pinchbeck was born about 1670, possibly

in Clerkenwell, London. He was a clockmaker and inventor of the copper and zinc alloy called after his name. He invented and made the famous astronomico-musical clock. In Appleby's *Weekly Journal* of July 8th, 1721,



At FAWKES's THEATRE,
In James-ſtreet, near the Hay-market, will be preſented the following Entertainments:

First, HIS Diverting and Incomparable DEXTERITY of HAND, in which he performs ſeveral Things entirely new.

N. B. In particular he cauſes a Tree to grow up in a Flower-Pot upon the Table, which will blow and bear ripe Fruit in a Minute's Time.

Second, His Famous little POSTURE-MASTER.

Third, The MUSICAL CLOCK, with two moving Pictures lately made by Mr. Pinchbeck.

Fourth, The VENETIAN MACHINE, being the fineſt Piece of Workmanſhip in the World, for moving Pictures and other Curioſities.

Fifth, The ARTIFICIAL VIEW of the WORLD, wherein is very naturally imitated the Firmament ſpangled with a Multitude of Stars; the Moon's Increaſe and Decreaſe; the Dawn of Day; the Sun diffuſing his Light at his Riſing; the beautiful Redneſs of the Horizon at his Setting, as in a fine Summer Evening. The Ocean is alſo repreſented, with Ships under Sail, as tho' at ſeveral Miles Diſtance; others ſo near that their Shadows are ſeen in the Water, and as they paſs by any Fort, Caſtle, &c, they ſalute each other with their Guns, the Report and Echo of which are as plainly heard as tho' from the real Places they appear to be.

Every Week are different Proſpects.

Note, Every Night during this Week will be preſented the four following:

I. The City of Gratz in the Dukedom of Stiria in Germany.
II. The City of Antwerp in Brabant in Flanders.
III. The City of Grand Cairo in Egypt.
IV. The City of Algiers in Africa.

Beginning every Evening preciſely at Six o' Clock.

Pit 2s. Middle Places 1s. Upper 6d.

And that the Company may not be incommoded with Cold, there is Contrivances to keep the Houſe very Warm.

Note, Gentlemen and Ladies may have a private Performance, giving Notice the Night before.

Advertisement from the London *Daily Post* during 1730, showing the orange tree as offered by the senior Fawkes, just previous to his death. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

it was announced that 'Christopher Pinchbeck, inventor and maker of the astronomico-musical clock, is removed, from St. George's Court (now Albion Place) to the sign of the "Astronomico-Musical Clock" in Fleet Street, near the Leg Tavern. He maketh and selleth watches of all sorts and clocks as well for the exact indication of the

time only as astronomical, for showing the various motions and phenomena of planets and fixed stars.' Mention is also made of musical automata in imitation of singing birds and barrel organs for churches, as among Pinchbeck's manufactures.

"Pinchbeck was in the habit of exhibiting collections of his automata at fairs, sometimes in conjunction with a juggler named Fawkes, and he entitled his stall 'The Temple of the Muses,' 'Grand Theatre of the Muses,' or 'Multum in Parvo.' The *Daily Journal* of August 27th, 1729, announced that the Prince and Princess of Wales went to the Bartholomew Fair to see his exhibition, and there were brief advertisements in *The Daily Post* of June 12th, 1729, and the *Daily Journal* of August 22d and 23d, 1729. There is still a large broadside in the British Museum (1850 c. 10–17) headed 'Multum in Parvo,' relating to Pinchbeck's exhibition, with a blank left for place and date, evidently intended for use as a poster. He died November 18th, 1732; was buried November 21st, in St. Denison's Church, Fleet Street.

"In a copy of the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, printed 1732, page 1083, there is an engraved portrait by I. Faber, after a painting by Isaac Wood, a reproduction of which appears in 'Britten's Clock and Watch Maker,' page 122. His will, dated November 10th, 1732, was proved in London on November 18th."

During one of his engagements at the Bartholomew Fair, Pinchbeck probably met Fawkes, the cleverest sleight-of-hand performer that magic has ever known, and the two joined forces. Pinchbeck made all the automata and apparatus thereafter used by Fawkes, and, in

A very rare mezzotint of Christopher Pinchbeck, Jr., combining the work of Cunningham, the greatest designer, and William Humphrey, the greatest portrait etcher of his day. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Fawkes, he had a master-producer of his tricks. Christopher Pinchbeck never appeared on the program used by Fawkes, save as the maker of the automata or apparatus, but directly after the death of the elder Fawkes, and a few months before his own, the elder Pinchbeck appeared with the son of his deceased partner, and was advertised as doing "the Dexterity of Hand" performance. This indicates that he was inducting young Fawkes into all the mysteries of the profession at which the two elder men, as friends and business partners, had done so well.

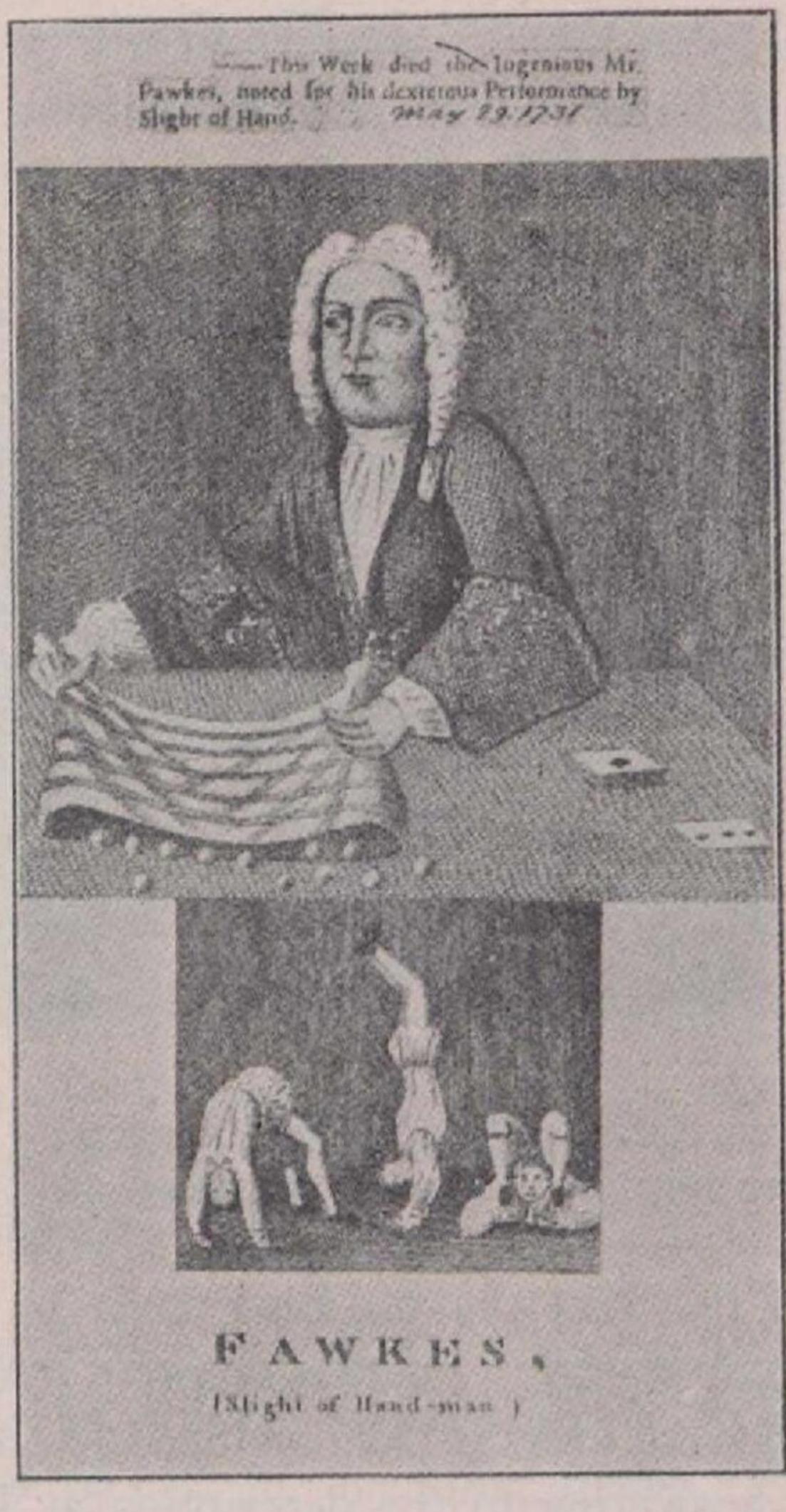
Christopher Pinchbeck was survived by two sons, Edward and Christopher, Jr. Edward, the elder, succeeded to his father's shop and regular business. He was born about 1703, and was well along in years when he entered into his patrimony, which he advertised in *The Daily Posi* of November 27th, 1732, as follows: "The toys made of the late Mr. Pinchbeck's curious metal are now sold only by his son and sole executor, Mr. Edward Pinchbeck."

This announcement settles forever the oft-disputed question as to whether the alloy of copper and zinc which bears the name of Pinchbeck was invented by Christopher Pinchbeck, Sr., or by his son Christopher, Jr.

All newspaper and magazine descriptions of the automata invented by the elder Pinchbeck indicate that his hand was as cunning as his brain was inventive, for they showed the most delicate mechanism, and included entire landscapes with figures of rare grace in motion.

"Christopher, the second son of Christopher Pinchbeck the elder," continues the biographical sketch, "was born about 1710 and possessed great mechanical ingenuity.

While the elder son, Edward, was made executor and continued his father's trade in a quiet, conservative fashion, the younger son struck out along new lines and



The best portrait of Isaac Fawkes' in existence. The original, now in the Harry Houdini Collection, is supposed so have been engraved by Sutton Nichols. It is said that there is only one more of these engravings extant. *See*

became even more famous as an inventor than his brilliant father had been.

"He was a member and at one time president of the Smeatonian Society, the precursor of the Institution of Civil Engineers. In 1762 he devised a self-acting pneumatic brake for preventing accidents to the men employed in working wheel-cranes. In *The Gentlemen's Magazine* for June, 1765, page 296, it is recorded that Messrs. Pinchbeck and Norton had made a complicated astro-

At the Cock and Half Moon Tavern in Chancery-Lane near Temple-Bar.

THE famous Mr. FAWKS performs his most surprizing Tricks by Dexterity of Hand, with his Cards, Eggs, curious India Birds, Mice and Money. Which Curiosities no Person in the Kingdom can pretend to shew like himself. Together with the wonderful Activity of Body perform'd by his Posture Master, being a Boy about Ten Years of Age, who far exceeds all that ever shew'd in Europe. Who Transforms his Body into such various Shapes, as surpasses human Faith to believe without seeing. Likewise the Italian Scaramouch Dance, with two Heads, four Legs, and but one Body, to the Admiration of all Spectators. Note, We have had the Honour to perform before his present Majesty King George, the Prince, and all the Quality of the whole Kingdom, with great Applause. Beginning every Evening precisely at 6 a-Clock.

N. B. Any Gentlemen or Ladies may have a private Performance any Time of the Day, giving an Hour's Notice.

An early Fawkes advertisement, clipped from a London paper of 1725. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

nomical clock for the Queen's house, some of the calculations of the wheel having been made by James Ferguson, the astronomer. There is no proof that Pinchbeck and Norton were ever in partnership, and there are now two clocks answering to the description at Buckingham Palace, one by Pinchbeck, with four dials and of a very complicated construction, and another by Norton.

"Pinchbeck took out three patents: the first (No. 892), granted 1768, was for an improved candlestick with a

spring socket for holding the candle firmly, and an arrangement whereby the candle always occupied an upright position, however the candlestick might be held. In 1768 (patent No. 899) he patented his nocturnal remembrancer, a series of tablets with notches, to serve as guides for writing in the dark. His snuffers (No. 1119) patented 1776, continued to be made in Birmingham

The Daily Poſt.

FRIDAY, January 21, 1726.

...S's and POWEL's Theatre, in the ... in James-ſtreet, near the Hay-Market, is to be ſeen the ... ving Entertainments, viz. 1726

FIRST, his ſurprizing Dexterity of Hand, far exceeding all that ever Perform'd in this Kingdom. 2d. The famous Poſture-Maſter. 3d. The Muſical Clock, that Plays variety of Tunes, on the Organ, Flute, and Flageolet; with Birds, Whiſtling and Singing as Natural as Life it ſelf. And 4th. Powel's Puppet-ſhow from the Bath; The whole Play of The Princeſs Elizabeth, or Riſe of Judge Punch: With the Comical Humours of Eſquire Punch, and his Footman Gudgeon. Perform'd by the Richeſt and Largeſt Figures that ever was ſeen in England. Concluding with an extraordinary Piece of Machinery, after the Italian Manner, repreſenting the ſplendid Palace of Diana; breaking into Double and Triple Proſpects, with all the Changes of Scenes and Decorations belonging to the Play. N. B. The Doors will be open'd every Day at Five o' Clock. And in Regard that Gentlemen and Ladies ſhall not be diſappointed, we begin exactly at Six, and none to be admitted after. Prices 2 s. 1 s. and 6 d.

A clipping from the *Daily Post*, London showing that Fawkes combined forces with Powel, the famous Bartholomew Fair puppet man. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

until the last forty years or so, when snuffers began to go out of use. In 1774 he presented to the Society of Arts a model of a plough for mending roads. Pinchbeck's name first appears in the London directory in 1778, when it replaced that of Richard Pinchbeck, toyman, of whom nothing is recorded.

"Christopher Pinchbeck, Jr., was held in considerable esteem by George III., and he figures in Wilkes'. London

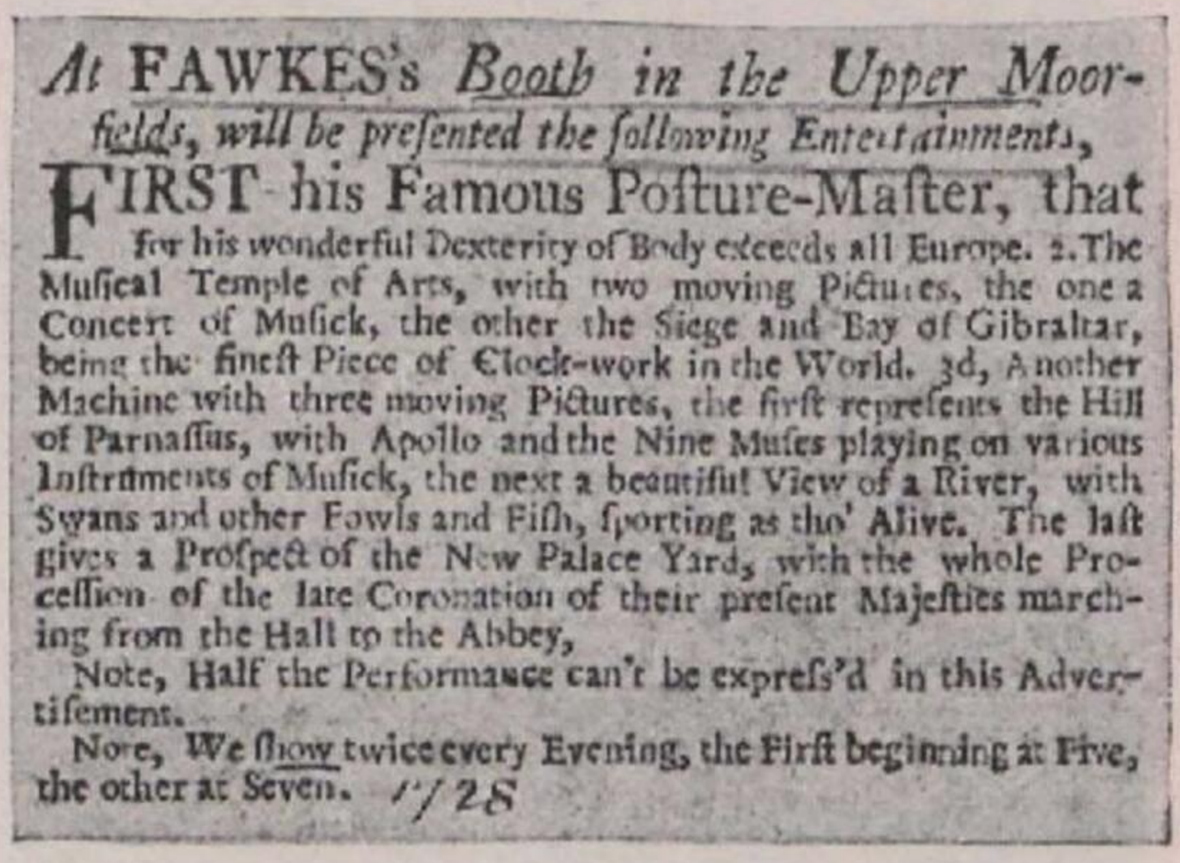
Museum (ii–33) in 1770 in the list of the party who called themselves the King's friends. He died March 17th, 1783, aged 73, and was buried in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. His will, which was very curious, is printed in full in *The Horological Journal* of November, 1895. One of his daughters married William Hebb, who was described as 'son-in-law and successor of the late Mr. Pinchbeck at his shop in Cockspur Street' (imprinted on Pinchbeck's portrait), whose son Christopher Henry Hebb (1772–1861) practised as a surgeon in Worcester. There is in existence a portrait of Christopher Pinchbeck the younger, by Cunningham, engraved by W. Humphrey."

The mezzotints of the Pinchbecks, father and son, herewith reproduced, are extremely rare, and when I unearthed them in Berlin I felt myself singularly favored in securing two such treasures of great value to the history of magic. S. Wohl, the antiquarian and dealer from whom they were purchased, acquired them during a tour of old book and print shops in England, and thought them portraits of one and the same person; but by studying the names of the artists and the engravers on the two pictures, it will be seen that they set forth the features of father and son, as indicated by the biographical notes quoted above.

Of the early history of Fawkes, whose brilliant stage performance lent to the Pinchbeck automata a new lustre, little is known. It is practically impossible to trace his family history. His Christian name was never used on his billing nor published in papers or magazines, and after repeated failures I was about to give up the task of discovering it, when in 1904, aided by R. Bennett,

the clerk of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Parish Church, Trafalgar Square, London, England, I came upon the record of his burial. This record, which I found after many days' search among musty, faded parchments, showed that his Christian name was Isaac, and that he died May 25th ~~or 29th~~, 1731, and was buried in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Parish Church,

The records further show that he was buried in the



At FAWKES's *Booth in the Upper Moorfields, will be presented the following Entertainments,*

FIRST his Famous Posture-Master, that for his wonderful Dexterity of Body exceeds all Europe. 2. The Musical Temple of Arts, with two moving Pictures, the one a Concert of Musick, the other the Siege and Bay of Gibraltar, being the finest Piece of Clock-work in the World. 3d, Another Machine with three moving Pictures, the first represents the Hill of Parnassus, with Apollo and the Nine Muses playing on various Instruments of Musick, the next a beautiful View of a River, with Swans and other Fowls and Fish, sporting as tho' Alive. The last gives a Prospect of the New Palace Yard, with the whole Procession of the late Coronation of their present Majesties marching from the Hall to the Abbey,

Note, Half the Performance can't be express'd in this Advertisement.

Note, We shew twice every Evening, the First beginning at Five, the other at Seven. 1728

Clipping from the London *Post* during 1728, showing the oldest evidence procurable of the original "Two a Night" performance. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

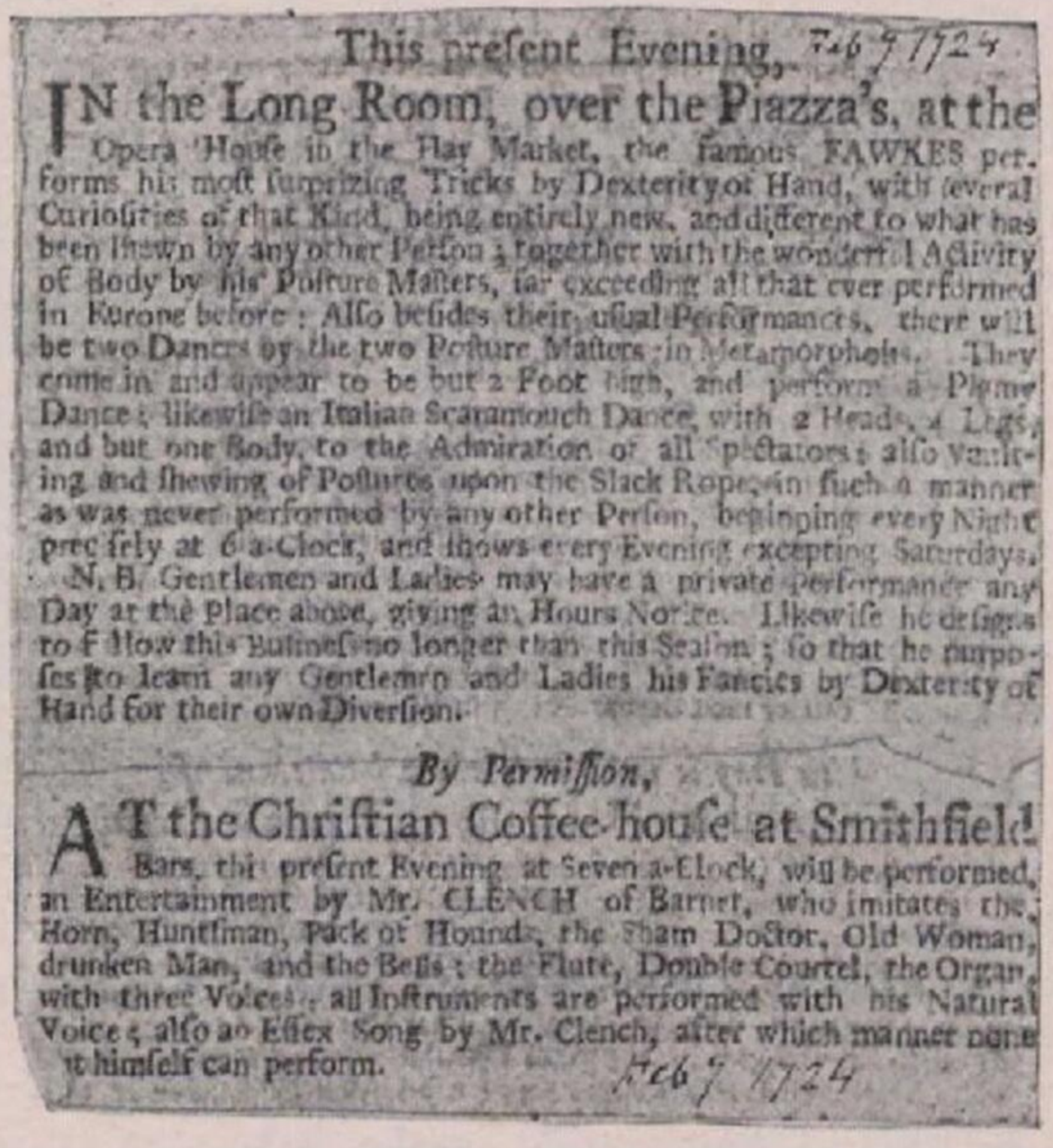
church vault, the coffin being carried by six men. Prayers were said in the church, candles were used, and the great bell was tolled. As the fees amounted to £6 12s., a goodly sum for those days, all signs indicate that the funeral was on a scale more costly and impressive than the ordinary.

Fawkes was worth at his death £10,000, which was considered an enormous sum in those days. Every penny of this he made performing at the fairs.

The earliest announcements of Fawkes' performance in my collection are dated 1702 and include advertise-

ments headed "Fawkes and Powel," "Fawkes and Phillips," and "Fawkes and Pinchbeck." Powel was the famous puppet man, Phillips a famous posture master (known to-day as contortionist), and Pinchbeck was the greatest of mechanicians. Fawkes seems to have possessed a singular gift for picking out desirable partners.

From this mass of evidence I am producing various



This present Evening, Feb 7 1724

IN the Long Room, over the Piazza's, at the Opera House in the Hay Market, the famous FAWKES performs his most surprizing Tricks by Dexterity of Hand, with several Curiosities of that Kind, being entirely new, and different to what has been shewn by any other Person; together with the wonderful Activity of Body by his Posture Masters, far exceeding all that ever performed in Europe before: Also besides their usual Performances, there will be two Dances by the two Posture Masters in Metamorphosis. They come in and appear to be but 2 Foot high, and perform a Plume Dance; likewise an Italian Scaramouch Dance, with 2 Heads, 4 Legs, and but one Body, to the Admiration of all Spectators; also Vaulting and shewing of Postures upon the Slack Rope, in such a manner as was never performed by any other Person, beginning every Night precisely at 6 a-Clock, and shows every Evening excepting Saturdays. N. B. Gentlemen and Ladies may have a private Performance any Day at the Place above, giving an Hours Notice. Likewise he designs to Flow this Business no longer than this Season; so that he purposes to learn any Gentlemen and Ladies his Fancies by Dexterity of Hand for their own Diversion.

By Permission,

AT the Christian Coffee-house at Smithfield Bars, this present Evening at Seven a-Clock, will be performed, an Entertainment by Mr. CLENCH of Barnet, who imitates the Horn, Huntsman, Pack of Hounds, the Sham Doctor, Old Woman, drunken Man, and the Bells; the Flute, Double Courtel, the Organ, with three Voices; all Instruments are performed with his Natural Voice; also an Essex Song by Mr. Clench, after which manner none but himself can perform. Feb 7 1724

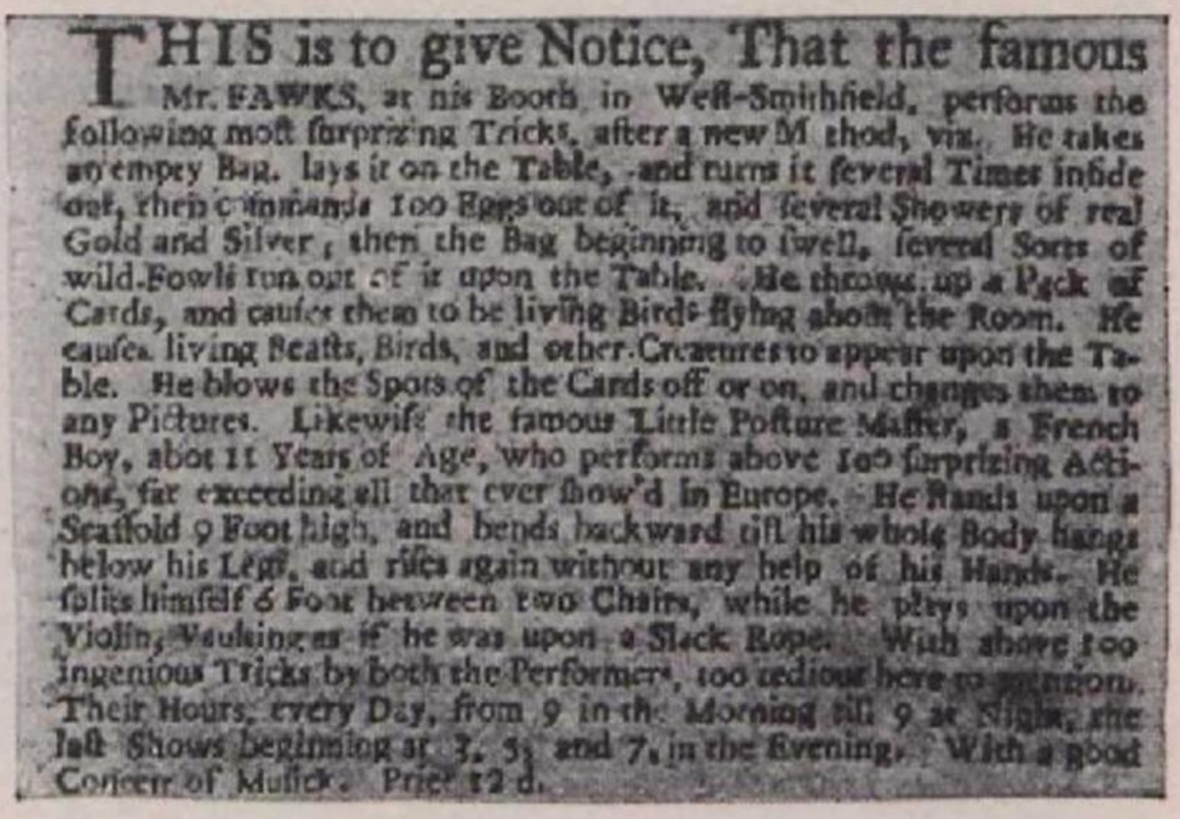
Clipping from the London *Post*, February 7th, 1724, in which Fawkes announces his retirement and offers to teach his tricks to all comers. Below this announcement is the advertisement of Clench, famous as an imitator and an instrumentalist.

clippings. By a peculiar coincidence one of these I believe offers the most authentic and earliest record of "two a night" performances in England.

In my collection are a number of other clippings from the press of the same year, in April and May, 1728, but none of them says "twice a night," therefore I judge

that the custom of giving two performances in a night was tried previously to April, 1728, and then abandoned, or after the first of May.

In the London *Post* of February 7th, 1724, Fawkes announced an exhibition "in the Long Room over the piazza at the Opera House in the Haymarket." At this time he also advertised the fact that he was about to retire and was exposing all his tricks. The clipping of that date from my collection has the following foot-note: "Likewise he designs to follow this business no longer



THIS is to give Notice, That the famous Mr. FAWKS, at his Booth in Weſt-Smithfield, performs the following moſt ſurprizing Tricks, after a new Method, viz. He takes an empty Bag, lays it on the Table, and turns it ſeveral Times inſide out, then commands 100 Eggs out of it, and ſeveral Showers of real Gold and Silver; then the Bag beginning to ſwell, ſeveral Sorts of wild Fowls run out of it upon the Table. He throws up a Pack of Cards, and cauſes them to be living Birds flying about the Room. He cauſes living Beaſts, Birds, and other Creatures to appear upon the Table. He blows the Spots of the Cards off or on, and changes them to any Pictures. Likewiſe the famous Little Poſture Maſter, a French Boy, abot 11 Years of Age, who performs above 100 ſurprizing Actions, far exceeding all that ever ſhow'd in Europe. He ſtands upon a Scaffold 9 Foot high, and bends backward till his whole Body hangs below his Legs, and riſes again without any help of his Hands. He ſplits himſelf 6 Foot between two Chairs, while he plays upon the Violin; Vaulting as if he was upon a Slack Rope. With above 100 ingenious Tricks by both the Performers, too tedious here to mention. Their Hours, every Day, from 9 in the Morning till 9 at Night, the laſt Shows beginning at 3, 5, and 7, in the Evening. With a good Conſort of Muſick. Price 12 d.

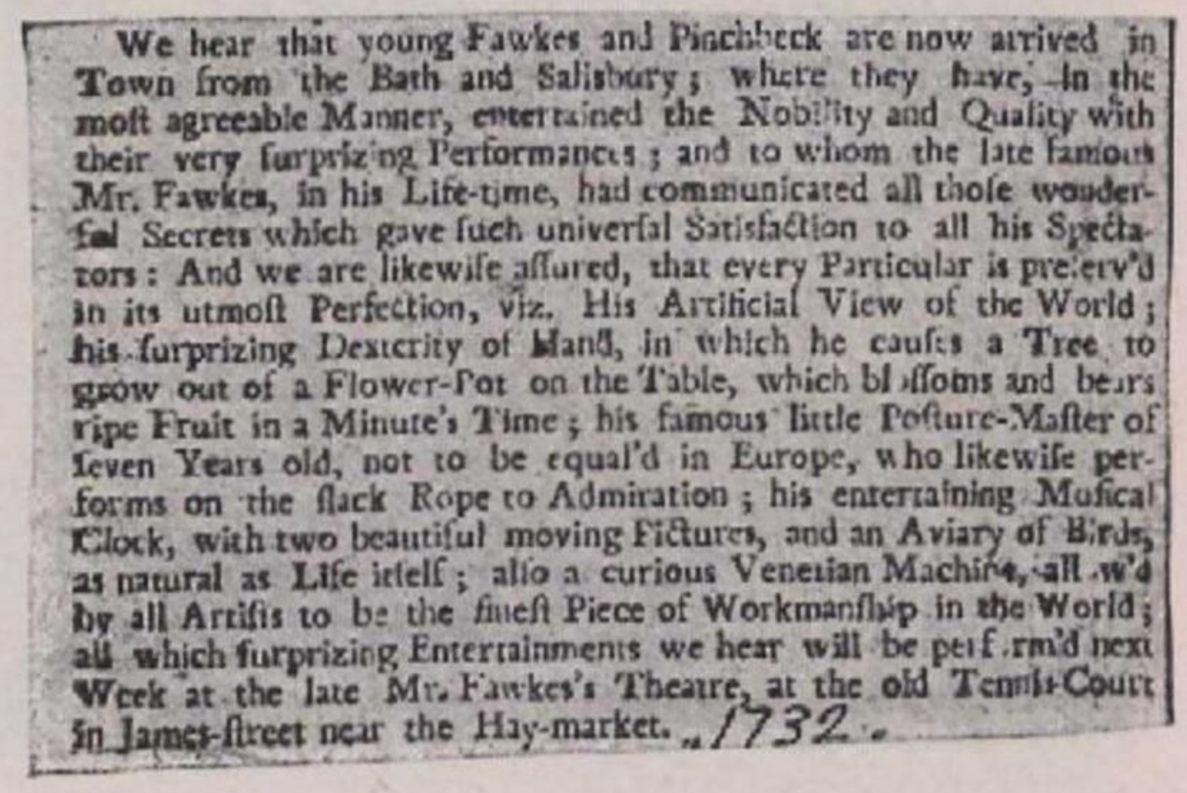
Clipping from the London *Daily Post* of August, 1735, in which Fawkes advertises his admission price as twelvepence. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

than this season; so he promises to learn any lady or gentleman his fancies in dexterity of hand for their own diversion."

When Fawkes was not in partnership with some puppet showman, he always advertised his own puppets as "A court of the richest and largest figures ever shown in England, being as big as men and women!" His admission charges varied, but 12 pence seemed his favorite

figure. About six years before his death he had his own theatre in James Street, near the Haymarket, in which he exhibited for months at a time before and after fairs.

I reproduce a clipping from my collection showing Fawkes' last program. Here it will be seen that his first trick was causing a tree to grow up in a flower-pot on the table, and bear fruit in a minute's time. In *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, that oft-quoted and most reliable periodical, of February 15th, 1731, readers were informed that the Algerian Ambassadors witnessed Fawkes' per-



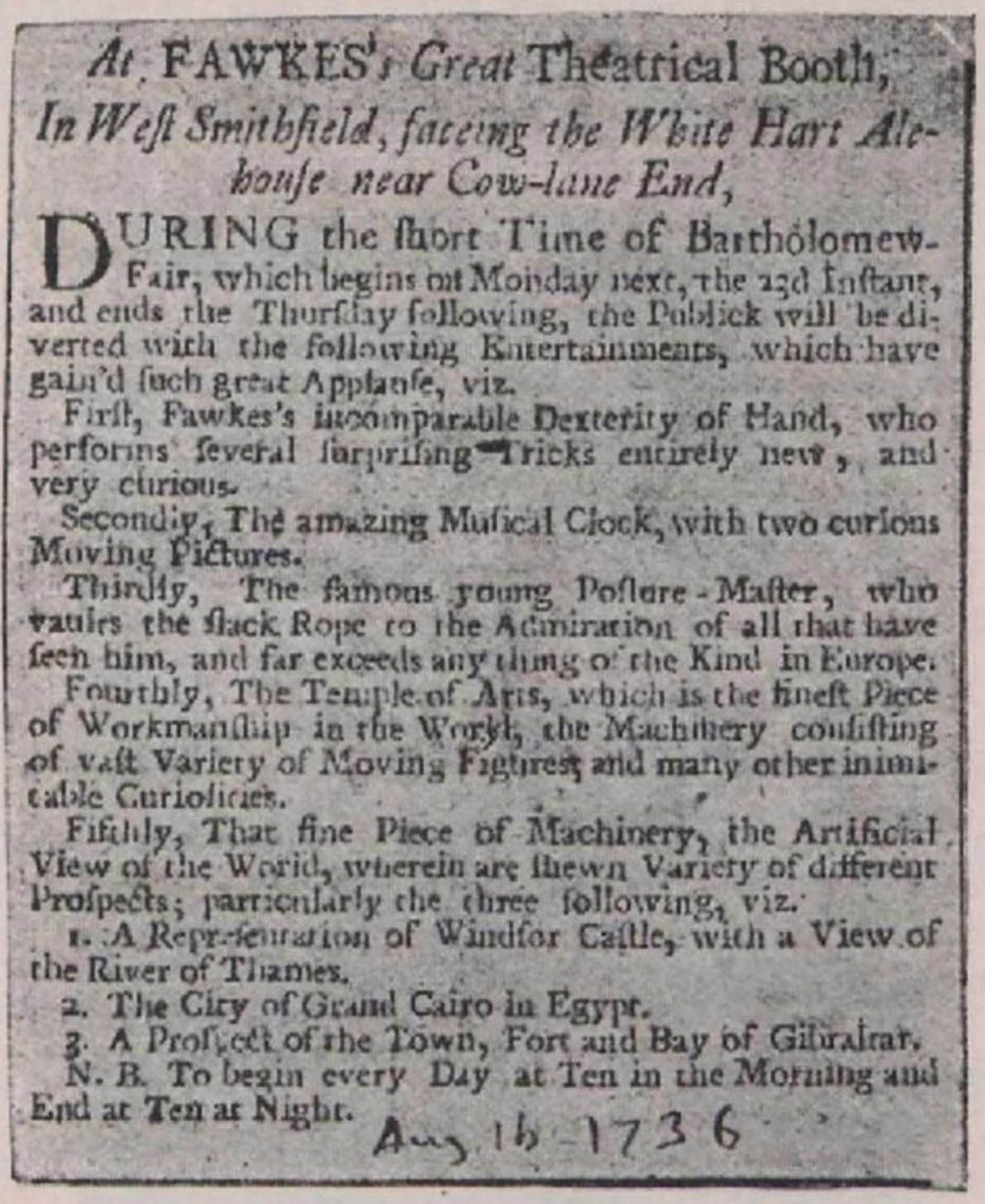
We hear that young Fawkes and Pinchbeck are now arrived in Town from the Bath and Salisbury; where they have, in the moſt agreeable Manner, entertained the Nobility and Quality with their very ſurpriz'ing Performances; and to whom the late famous Mr. Fawkes, in his Life-time, had communicated all thoſe wonderful Secrets which gave ſuch univerſal Satisfaction to all his Spectators: And we are likewiſe aſſured, that every Particular is preſerv'd in its utmoſt Perfection, viz. His Artificial View of the World; his ſurprizing Dexterity of Hand, in which he cauſes a Tree to grow out of a Flower-Pot on the Table, which bloſſoms and bears ripe Fruit in a Minute's Time; his famous little Poſture-Maſter of ſeven Years old, not to be equal'd in Europe, who likewiſe performs on the ſlack Rope to Admiration; his entertaining Muſical Clock, with two beautiful moving Pictures, and an Aviary of Birds, as natural as Life itſelf; alſo a curious Venetian Machine, all w'd by all Artiſts to be the fineſt Piece of Workmanſhip in the World; all which ſurprizing Entertainments we hear will be perform'd next Week at the late Mr. Fawkes's Theatre, at the old Tennis-Court in James-ſtreet near the Hay-market. 1732.

Clipping from the London *Post*, showing that young Fawkes collaborated with Pinchbeck and together they offered the orange-tree trick in 1732. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

formance. At their request he showed them "a prospect of Algiers, and raised up an apple-tree which bore ripe fruit in less than a minute's time, which several of the company tasted of."

Fawkes, too, had a son, and thus the partnership and the friendship which had existed between the elder Fawkes and the elder Pinchbeck were carried on by the second generation. All of the marvellous apparatus made

by Pinchbeck the elder, for Fawkes, may have been bequeathed by the latter to his son, but, in 1732, Pinchbeck the elder and Fawkes the younger were in a booth together, and Pinchbeck was advertised as doing "the dexterity of hand" performances. After Christopher



At FAWKES's *Great* Theatrical Booth,
In West Smithfield, facing the White Hart Alehouse near Cow-lane End,

DURING the short Time of Bartholomew-Fair, which begins on Monday next, the 23d Instant, and ends the Thursday following, the Publick will be diverted with the following Entertainments, which have gain'd such great Applause, viz.

First, Fawkes's incomparable Dexterity of Hand, who performs several surprising Tricks entirely new, and very curious.

Secondly, The amazing Musical Clock, with two curious Moving Pictures.

Thirdly, The famous young Posture-Master, who vaults the slack Rope to the Admiration of all that have seen him, and far exceeds any thing of the Kind in Europe.

Fourthly, The Temple of Arts, which is the finest Piece of Workmanship in the World, the Machinery consisting of vast Variety of Moving Figures, and many other inimitable Curiosities.

Fifthly, That fine Piece of Machinery, the Artificial View of the World, wherein are shewn Variety of different Prospects; parricularly the three following, viz.

1. A Representation of Windsor Castle, with a View of the River of Thames.
2. The City of Grand Cairo in Egypt.
3. A Prospect of the Town, Fort and Bay of Gibraltar.

N. B. To begin every Day at Ten in the Morning and End at Ten at Night.

Aug 16 1736

Clipping from the London *Post*, August 16th, 1736, when young Fawkes was playing alone. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Pinchbeck, Sr., died, young Fawkes started out on his own account. In 1746, according to an advertisement in my collection, a Fawkes and a Pinchbeck were together again, so the son of Pinchbeck must have joined the younger Fawkes for exhibition purposes. The accompanying clippings from contemporary publications trace the history of young Fawkes, and prove that the tree

which bore fruit in a minute's time was still on his programme.

For many years it was supposed that only one portrait of Fawkes was in existence, but it now seems that three were made. I publish them all, something which no one has ever before been able to do. One was taken from a Setchels fan published about 1728, although some

Reproduction of page 1226 of Hone's "Every-Day Book" in the Harry Houdini Collection. This is a portrait of Fawkes, engraved on a fan by Setchels in 1721 or 1728. Fans like these were distributed at the Bartholomew Fair.

authorities say 1721. It appeared in Hone's "Every-Day Book," page 1226. Another, I believe, was engraved by Sutton Nicols, as Hone mentions it in his description of Fawkes. In the fan engraving, it will be noticed that there appears a man wearing a star on his

left breast. It is said that this is Sir Robert Walpole, who was Prime Minister while Fawkes was at the height of his success, and who was one of the conjurer's great admirers. Hogarth also placed Fawkes in one of his engravings as the frontispiece of a most diverting brochure on "Taste," in which he belittles Burlington Gate. This makes the third portrait from my collection herewith reproduced.

According to an article contributed by Mons. E. Raynaly in the *Illusionniste* of June, 1903, the orange tree next appeared in the répertoire of a remarkable peasant conjurer, whose billing Mons. Raynaly found among "Affiches de Paris." This performer was billed as the Peasant of North Holland, and gave hourly performances at the yearly fairs at Saint-Germain.

It is more than possible that he purchased this trick from Fawkes or Pinchbeck, having seen it at the Bartholomew Fair in England.

He featured the orange tree as follows: "He has a Philosophical Flower Pot, in which he causes to grow on a table in the presence of the spectators trees which flower, and then the flowers fall, and fruit appears absolutely ripe and ready to be eaten."

His posters are dated 1746–47 and 1751.

The next programme on which the mysterious tree appears is a Pinetti handbill, dated in London, 1784, when the following announcement was made:

"Signore Pinetti will afterwards present the assembly with a Tree called Le Bouquet-philosophique composed of small branches of an orange-tree, the leaves appearing green and natural. He will put it under a bottle, and at

Masquerade and opera at Burlington Gate. Reproduction of Hogarth's engraving entitled "Taste," belittling the artistic taste of London. This caricature verifies the Fawkes advertisement, reproduced on page 64, for here the conjurer is pictured leaning from the window of the "long room" and calling attention to his performances. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

some distance, by throwing some drops of water of his own composition, the leaves will begin to change and the bouquet will produce natural flowers and various fruits."

Pinetti is one of the most fascinating and picturesque figures in the history of magic. His full name was Joseph Pinetti de Willedal, and, like Pinchbeck and Fawkes, he was a man of parts and readily made friends with the nobility. In fact, there is some question as to whether he did not come of a noble family.

He was born in 1750 in Orbitelle, a fortified town once claimed by Tuscany. What can be gleaned regarding his early history goes to prove that his family connections were excellent and his education of the best. One of his portraits, reproduced herewith, shows a half-crown of laurel decorating the frame, and on one side of the bust is a globe, while in the rear of the picture is a stack of books. This would establish his claim that he was once a professor of physics and geography. In fact, the legend beneath the portrait, being translated from the French, runs:

"I. I. Pinetti Willedal de Merci, Professor and Demonstrator of Physics, Chevalier of the Order of St. Philipe, Geographical Engineer, Financial Counselor of H.R.H. Prince of Linbourg Holstein, Born in Orbitelle in 1750."

As it has so often happened in the history of savants and students, there ran in Pinetti's blood a love of the mysterious with that peculiar strain of charalatanism which went to make up the clever performer in old-time magic. Evidently he resigned his duties as a professor for the more picturesque life of the travelling magician, and he is first heard from in this capacity in the French provinces

in 1783. His fame quickly carried him to Paris, where in 1784 he appeared before the court of Louis XVI. His arrival was most opportune, for just then all Paris

A wood-cut used by Pinetti during his engagement at Hamburg, Germany, in October, 1796. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

and, for that matter, all Europe had been aroused to a new interest in magic by the brilliant Cagliostro.

From Paris he went to London, playing at the Haymarket and creating a sensation equal to that which he made in France. Later he toured Germany, playing in

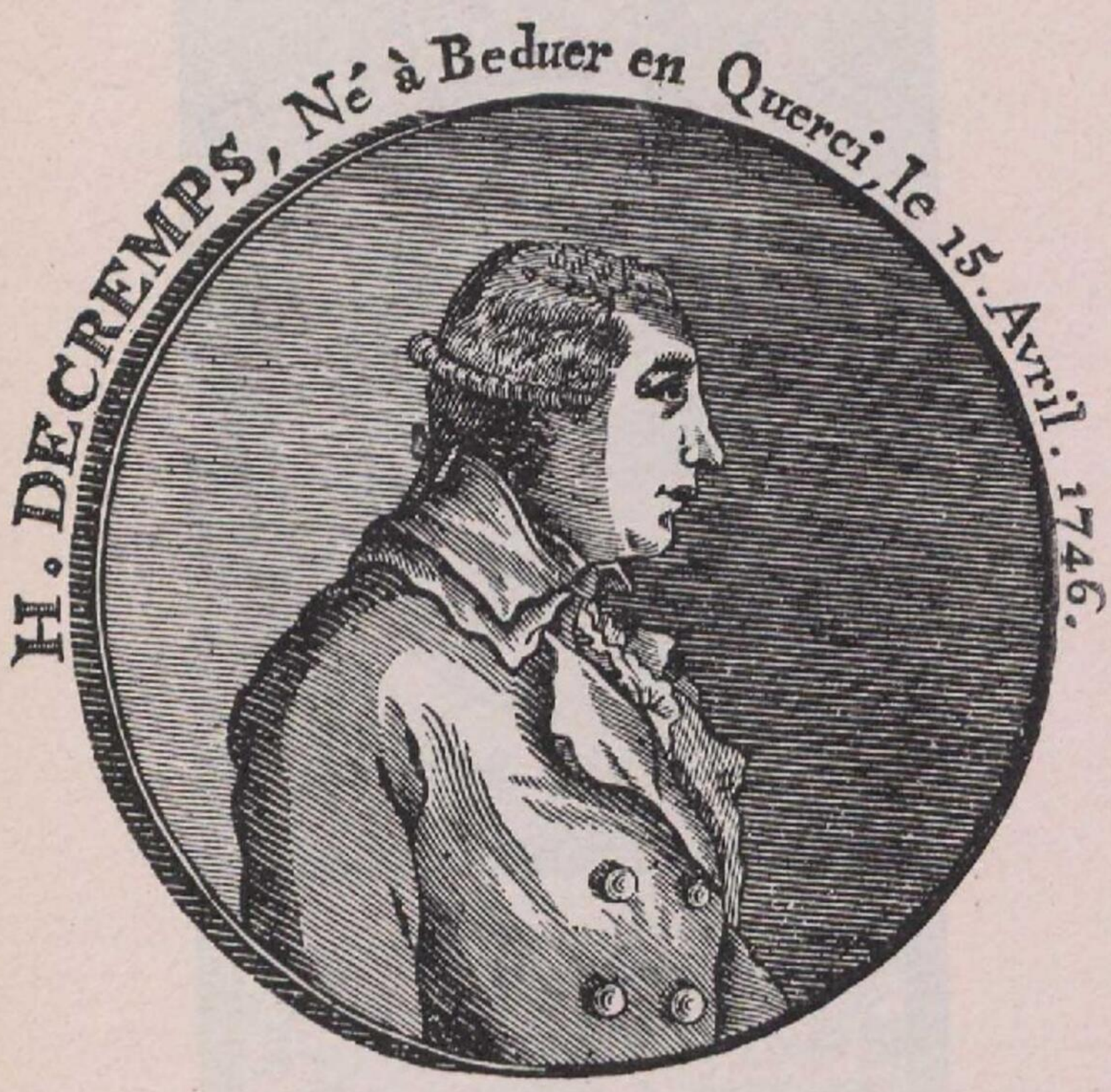
Berlin and Hamburg. Next he went back to his native land, Italy, but later returned to Germany for a second engagement. In 1789 he appeared in Russia and never

The only authentic portrait of Pinetti in existence, the only known copy extant being in the Harry Houdini Collection.

left that country. There he married a Russian girl, daughter of a carriage manufacturer. They had two children. Pinetti would have left enormous wealth, but

in his later years he became interested in ballooning, the sensation of the hour, and spent his entire fortune on balloon experiments. He died in Bartichoff, Volhinie, aged fifty years.

Pinetti was a man of rare inventive genius and almost



Henri Decremps, the French author who exposed and endeavored to ruin Pinetti, but succeeded only in immortalizing him. died 1826.

reconstructed the art of conjuring, so numerous were his inventions. For half a century after his death his successors drew upon Pinetti's inventions and répertoire for their programmes. Naturally such ability aroused bitter jealousies, especially as Pinetti made no attempt to con-

ciliate his contemporaries, either magicians or writers on magic. He issued one book, whose title-page reads:

"Amusements Physiques et Differentes Expériences Divertissements, Composées et Executées, tant à Paris que dans les diverses Courts de l'Europe. Par M. Joseph Pinetti de Willedal, Romain, Chevalier de l'Ordre Mérite de Saint-Phillipe, Professeur de Mathématiques et de Physiques, Protégé par toute la Maison Royale de France, Pensionnaire de la Cour de Prusse, etc., 1785."

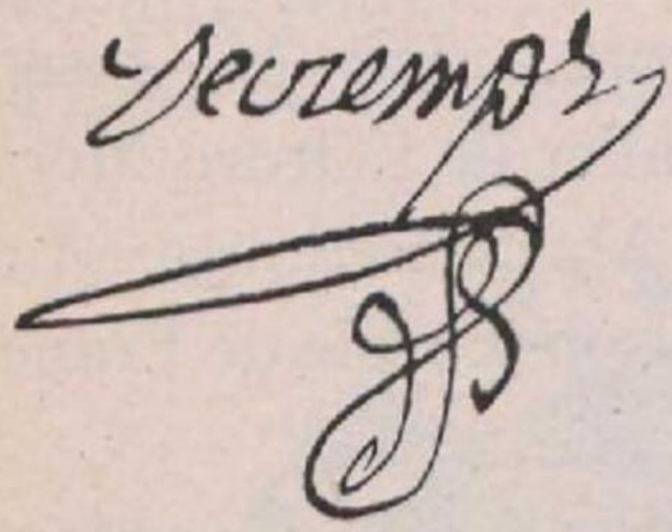
The work, however, was not a clear and lucid explanation of his methods and tricks. In fact some of his contemporaries claimed that he deliberately misrepresented his methods of performing tricks. Among these writers was Henri Decremps, a brilliant professor of mathematics and physics in Paris, who proceeded to expose all of Pinetti's tricks in the book referred to in the preceding chapter, "La Magie Blanche Dévoilée." This work was in five volumes and was so popular in its day that it was translated into nearly every modern language. The following explanation of the trick is taken from page 56 of the English translation, entitled "The Conjurer Unmasked":

"The branches of the tree may be made of tin or paper, so as to be hollow from one end to the other in order that the air which enters at the bottom may find its exit at the top of the branch. These branches are so adjusted that at intervals there appear twigs made from brass wire, but the whole so decorated with leaves made from parchment that the ensemble closely resembles nature.

"The end of each branch is dilated to contain small pieces of gummed silk or very fine gold-beater's skin,

which are to catch the figures of the flowers and fruit when the latter expand by the air driven through the branches to which they were fastened by a silk thread.

"The tree or nosegay is then placed on a table, through which runs a glass tube to supply air from beneath the stage, where a confederate works this end of the trick, and causes the tree to 'grow' at the prearranged signal."



Decremps's signature written by himself on the last page of a copy of his book now in the Harry Houdini Library.

Later it was described as being accomplished entirely by springs, and real oranges were first stuck on the tree by means of pegs or pins, and the leaves were so secured around them that at first appearance they could not be seen. Then a piston was used to spread all the leaves, another that forced the blossom up through the hollow branches, etc.

Pinetti's personality was almost as extraordinary as his talents. A handsome man who knew how to carry himself, acquiring the graces and the dress of the nobility, he became rather haughty, if not arrogant, in his bearing. He so antagonized his contemporaries in the fields of magic and literature that he was advertised as much by his bitter enemies as by his loving friends. Many of his methods of attracting attention to himself were singularly like those employed by modern press agents of theatrical stars. He never trusted to his performances in theatres and drawing-rooms to advertise his abilities, but demonstrated his art wherever he appeared, from barber-shops to cafés.

Perhaps the best pen pictures of Pinetti and his methods are furnished by E. G. Robertson in his "Memoirs." Robertson was a contemporary of Pinetti, and, like him, a pioneer in ballooning. His "Memoirs," written in the French language, were published in 1831. The following extracts from this interesting book tell much of Pinetti's life in Russia and of his professional history as tradition and actual acquaintance had presented it to M. Robertson:

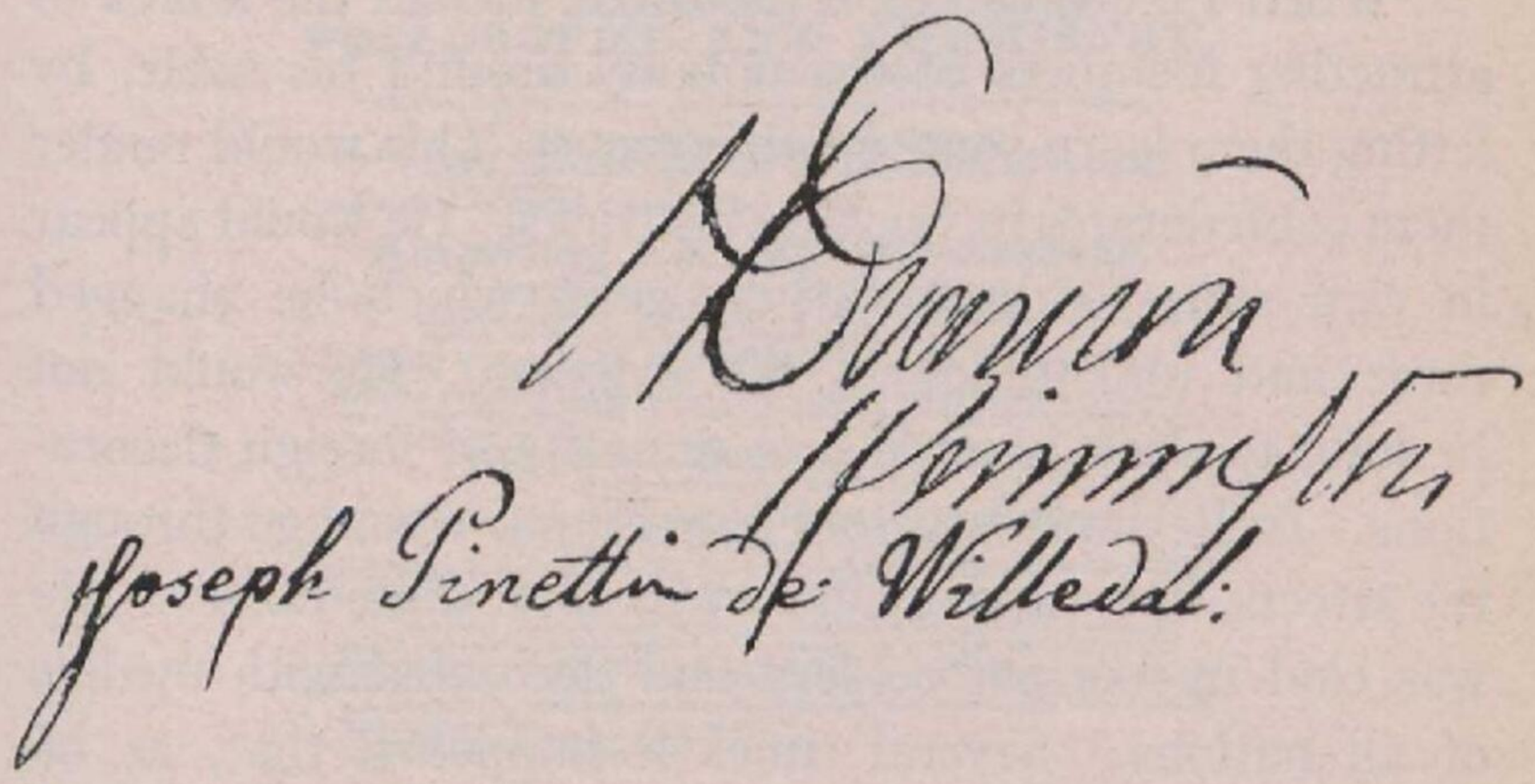
"Pinetti had travelled a great deal and for a long time had enjoyed a great European reputation. He had done everything to attain it. There was never a man that carried further the art of the 'charlatisme.' When he arrived in a town where he intended to give a show, he took good care to prepare his public by speeches, which would keep it in suspense. In St. Petersburg great and incredible examples of mystification and of prestidigitation were told about him.

"One day he went to a barber-shop to get shaved, sat down in the chair, had the towel tied around his neck, and laid his head back ready for the lather. The barber left him in this position to get hot water, and when he returned, guided by force of habit, he applied the lather where the chin should be, but he found feet, arms, hands, and body in a coat, but no head! Such lamentations! No more head! What could it mean? He opened the door, and, frightened to death, ran away. Pinetti then went to the window and called the barber back. He had put his head in his coat in such a clever way, covering it with his handkerchief, that the surprise and the fright of the barber were quite natural. Of course this barber

Frontispiece of Pinetti's book, "Amusements Physiques," published in Paris, 1785, one of the first treasures of the Evanion Collection purchased by the author.

did not fail to spread over the whole town that he had shaved a man who could take his head off and on to his wish.

"Pinetti met in a summer-garden a young Russian who sold small cakes. He bought a few cakes, bit into them, and complained of finding a hard substance. The youth protested, but Pinetti opened the cake before him and found inside a gold piece. The magician pocketed the gold piece, bought another cake, then a third cake, and in



Pinetti's autograph, written by him on the back of the frontispiece, reproduced on page 78. Original in the Harry Houdini Collection.

each case found a new gold piece inside. He tried to buy the rest of the cakes. The passers-by had in the mean time come round the seller, and everybody wanted to buy as well. The market seemed to be all right, a ducat for a kopeck! Twelve francs for a cent! The young man refused to sell any more, hurried away, and when alone opened the cakes that were left. He found only the substances of which the cakes were made—nothing else.

He had two left, so he hurried back to offer these to Pinetti. Pinetti bought them from him, opened them and showed in each one the gold piece, which the young man could not find in the two dozen cakes which he had spoilt. The poor boy bit his lips and looked at Pinetti with wondering, frightened eyes. This little adventure was advertised here, there, and everywhere, and was told in the clubs and in the society gatherings, and very soon the name of Pinetti gave the key to the enigma, and Pinetti was in demand by everybody.

"When Pinetti came on the stage, he had the knack of attracting members of the nobility around his table, by letting them learn some small secrets. This would render them confederates in working his tricks. He would appear in rich suits, embroidered in gold, which he changed three and four times in the evening. He would not hesitate to deck himself in a quantity of foreign decorations. In Berlin it was told how Pinetti would go through the streets, in a carriage drawn by four white horses. He was clad in fine embroidery and decorated with medals of all nations. Several times it happened that, as he passed by, the soldiers would call arms and salute, taking him for a prince. One day the King of Prussia rode out in his modest carriage drawn by two horses. Ahead of him drove the supposed prince. When the King witnessed the mistake made by his soldiers, he made inquiries as to the rank of this man to whom his men were paying such honor, then gave the Cavalier Pinetti twenty-four hours to get beyond Prussia's borders."

Whatever may be said of Pinetti's charlatanism, it must be admitted that he gave to the art of conjuring a

great impetus which was felt for several generations. It is not remarkable, therefore, that when the French magician Cornillot appeared in London in 1822 he announced himself as the pupil and successor of Pinetti. This was

Extraordinary Chemical Illustrations,
AND FEATS OF LEGERDEMAIN,

M. CORNILLOT,

PUPIL AND SUCCESSOR OF THE FAMED PINETTI,

Respectfully informs the Inhabitants of the Metropolis, that he continues to give Public Representations

Every WEDNESDAY,
At the Paul's Head Cateaton Street,
And every MONDAY, THURSDAY, and SATURDAY,
At the Great Room, in Spring Gardens.

OF AN

AMAZING ILLUSTRATIONS IN EXPERIMENTAL
PHILOSOPHY AND CHEMISTRY,
And FEATS OF LEGERDEMAIN,

Which have excited the admiration of the Connoisseurs in all the principal Towns of the Continent,

Amongst other entertaining Displays, will be the following :—

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN, where all kinds of Flowers and Fruits will be made to spring up and expand spontaneously, according to the wishes of the Spectators. This vegetative Display will close with a Marvellous and Novel Exhibition.

THE GLASS OF ARCHIMEDES, a most unaccountable Performance.

VARIOUS

Surprising Chemical Illustrations,

Representing Atmospheric Phenomena, Meteors, exploding Balloons, &c.

PINETTI'S MYSTERIOUS PENDULUM, which solves the most perplexing Problems, and discloses the secret Thoughts of the Beholders. M. CORNILLOT, by an improved Method, will produce some novel and astonishing electrical operations, by the aid of this Instrument.

THE GRAND TRIUMPH OF PINETTI.

IMITATION OF THE SUN, a brilliant Parhelion, which will resplendently illuminate the most extensive Theatre.

THE INCONCEIVABLE CHALLENGE OF COMUS, being a successive and continual increase of Objects placed in the hand of a Spectator.

THE GRAND TRIUMPH OF COMUS,

Brought to perfection by M. CORNILLOT,

OR, THE

AMAZING PERFORMANCE OF CAUSING A LIVING PERSON

To be found in a place where he or she had not been heretofore.

He will imitate Thunder so naturally, that it will be thought to proceed from the Clouds.

N. B. These Representations will be varied by Demonstrations of Electricity, Experiments with the Pneumatic Pump and new Feats of Legerdemain, which have not been represented in the preceding Exhibitions.

M. CORNILLOT will perform numerous other Feats and Evolutions of his own Invention, the Detail of which would far surpass the Limits of an Announcement: he has neglected nothing in his Preparations which can afford Entertainment to the Public, and he confidently hopes to merit the Honour of their Approbation.

Admission 2s. 6d.—Doors Open at 7 o'Clock. Performances begin at 8 precisely, and to finish at 10; after which hour, M. Cornillot will be at the service of such Ladies and Gentlemen as may wish to witness his Experiments in Private. Sept 1822.

W. WILSON Printer, Greville Street, Hatton Garden.

Reproduction of a handbill distributed on the streets of London in September, 1822. The orange-tree trick is on the bill under the name of "Enchanted Garden." From the Harry Houdini Collection

when Robert-Houdin was seventeen years of age, twenty-three years before he made his professional début, and on Cornillot's programme we find another version of the now famous and almost familiar tree trick. As will be seen from the accompanying reproduction of a Cornillot handbill, the tree now appears as "An Enchanted Garden," and, if the wording of the bill is to be

believed, Cornillot had improved the trick and was using more than one tree or plant.

Cornillot remained in England for some time and is classed among the conjurers of good repute. Another bill in my collection shows that he played at the Theatre of Variety, Catherine Street, Strand, in October, 1823. He was then assisted by several singers and dancers, including the famous Misses Hamilton and Howe, pupils of M. Corri. In his company was also an Anglo-Chinese juggler, who, in addition to feats of juggling, "swallows an egg, a sword, and a stone, a la Ramo Samee."

To sum up the evidence against Robert-Houdin in this particular trick: Four magicians of high repute gave public performances before Robert-Houdin knew and operated the orange-tree trick. Three eminent writers exposed it clearly and accurately. Robert-Houdin, as an indefatigable student of the history of magic, must have known of the trick and its *modus operandum*. He may have purchased it from Cornillot, or as a clever mechanician he had only to reproduce the trick invented by his predecessors, train his confederate in its operation—and—by his cleverly written autobiography—attempt to establish his claim to its invention.

CHAPTER III

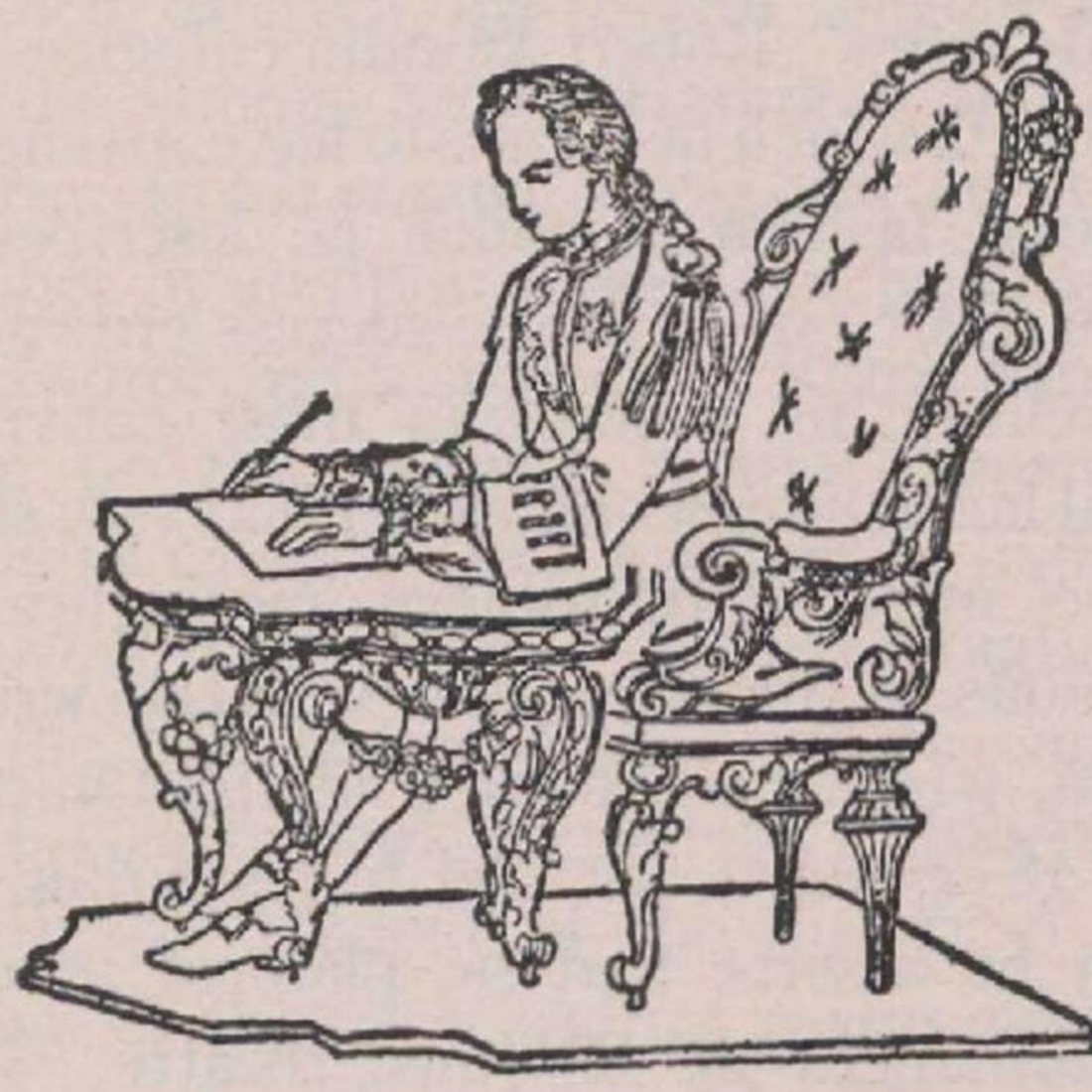
THE WRITING AND DRAWING FIGURE

IN his "Memoirs" Robert-Houdin eulogizes the various automata which he claims to have invented. The picturesque fashion in which he describes the tremendous effort put forth ere success crowned his labors would render his arguments most convincing—if stern historical facts did not contradict his every statement.

One of the most extraordinary mechanical figures which he exploits as his invention was the writing and drawing figure, which he exhibited at the Quinquennial Exhibition in 1844, but never used in his public performances, though he asserts that he planned to exhibit it between performances at his own theatre. This automaton, he says, laid the foundation of his financial success and opened the way to realizing his dream of appearing as a magician.

On page 196 of his "Memoirs," American edition, he starts his romantic description of its conception and manufacture. According to this he had just planned what promised to be the most brilliant of his mechanical inventions when financial difficulties intervened. He was obliged to raise two thousand francs to meet a pressing debt. He applied to the ever-convenient Monsieur G——, who had bought automata from him before. He described the writing and drawing figure minutely to his patron,

who immediately agreed to advance two thousand five hundred francs, and if the figure was completed in eighteen months, two thousand five hundred francs more were to be paid for it, making five thousand francs in all. If the figure was never completed, then Monsieur G—— was



Writing and drawing figure claimed by Robert-Houdin as his invention. From Manning's Robert-Houdin brochure.

to reimburse himself for the amount advanced by selecting automatic toys from Robert-Houdin's regular stock.

After liquidating his debt, Robert-Houdin retired to Belleville, a suburb of Paris, where for eighteen months he worked upon the figure, seeing his family only twice a week, and living in the most frugal fashion.

He employed a wood-carver to make the head, but the result was so unsatisfactory that in the end he was obliged, not only to make all the complicated machinery which operated the figure, but to carve the head itself,

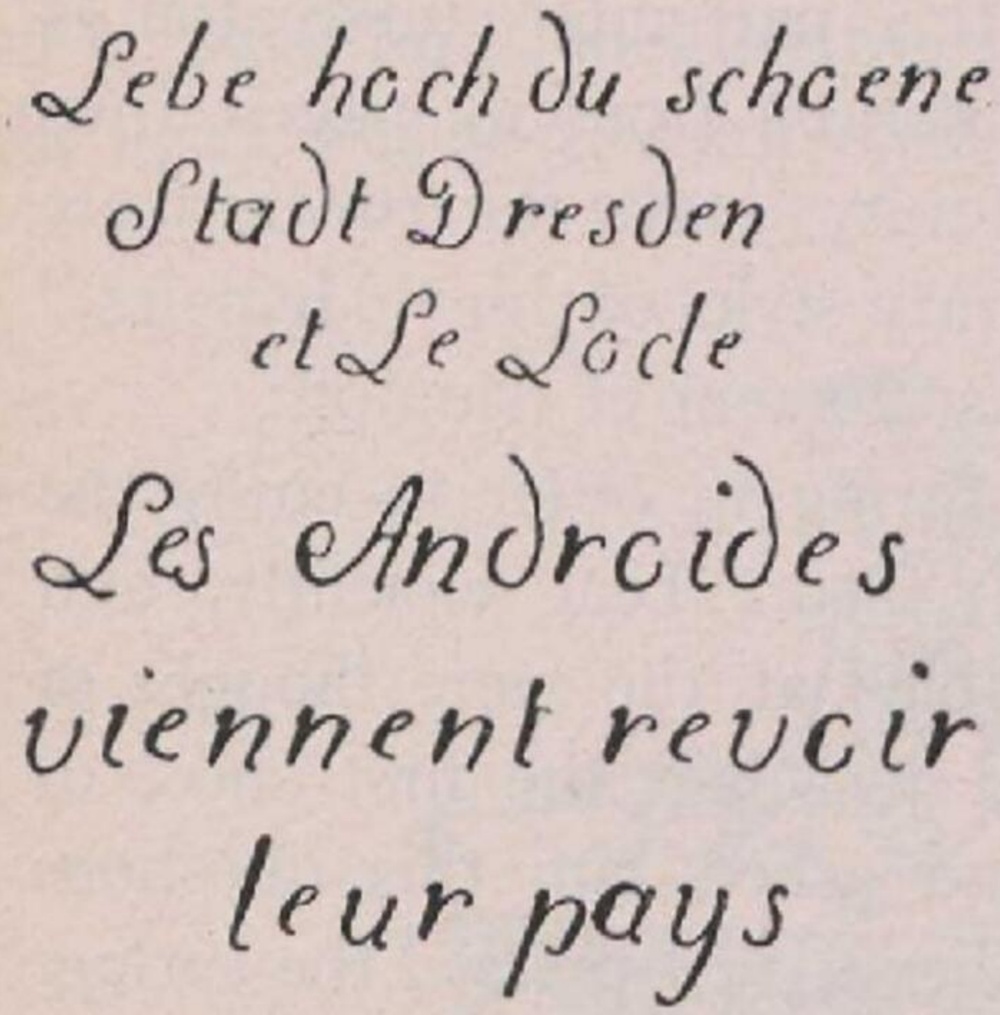
which, he adds, in some miraculous fashion, resembled himself. This resemblance, however, cannot be traced in existing cuts of the figure.

The chapter devoted to this particular automaton is so diverting that I quote literally from its pages, thus giving my readers an opportunity to take the true measure of the writer and the literary style of his "Memoirs." Here is his description of his moment of triumph:

"I had only to press a spring in order to enjoy the long-waited-for result. My heart beat violently, and though I was alone I trembled at the mere thought of this imposing trial. I had just laid the first sheet of paper before my writer and asked him this question: 'Who is the author of your being?' I pressed the spring, and the clockwork started—began acting. I dared hardly breathe through fear of disturbing the operations. The automaton bowed to me, and I could not refrain from smiling on it as on my own son. But when I saw the eyes fix an attentive glance on the paper—when the arm, a few seconds before numb and lifeless, began to move and trace my signature in a firm hand—the tears started in my eyes and I fervently thanked Heaven for granting me success. And it was not alone the satisfaction I experienced as an inventor, but the certainty I had of being able to restore some degree of comfort to my family, that caused my deep feeling of gratitude.

"After making my Sosia repeat my signature a thousand times, I gave it this question: 'What o'clock is it?' The automaton, acting in obedience to the clock, wrote, 'It is two in the morning.' This was a timely warning. I profited by it and went straight to bed."

Robert-Houdin injects a little humor into this chapter, for he relates that as Molière and J. J. Rousseau consulted their servants, he decided to do likewise; so early the next morning he invited his portress and her husband, Auguste, a stone-mason, to be present at the first performance of the figure. The mason's wife chose the question, "What is the emblem of fidelity?" The automaton replied by drawing a pretty little greyhound, lying on a cushion. The stone-mason wished to see the works, saying: "I understand about that sort of thing, for I have always greased the vane on the church steeple, and have even taken it down twice."



Specimens of penmanship executed by the Droz writing automaton in 1796 and 1906 respectively. From the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchatel, Switzerland.

When the work was completed, according to page 208 of the American edition of his "Memoirs," he returned to Paris, collected the remaining two thousand five hundred francs due him from Monsieur G——, to whom he delivered the figure, and two thousand francs more on an automatic nightingale made for a rich merchant of St. Petersburg. Incidentally he mentions that during his absence his business had prospered, but he fails to state who managed it for him, and here is where I believe credit should be given Opre,

the Dutch inventor, who was unquestionably Robert-Houdin's assistant for years.

In 1844 he claims to have borrowed the writing and drawing figure from the obliging Monsieur G—— to exhibit it at the Quinquennial Exposition, where it attracted the attention of Louis Philippe and his court, thus insuring its exhibitor the silver medal.

At this point Robert-Houdin deliberately drops the writing and drawing figure, leaving his readers to believe that it was returned to its rightful owner, Monsieur G——, but, unfortunately for his claims, another historian steps in here to cast reflections on Monsieur G——'s ownership of the figure. This writer is the world's greatest showman, the late P. T. Barnum, who purchased the figure at this same exposition of 1844, paying for it a goodly sum, and this incident is one of the significant omissions of the Robert-Houdin "Memoirs." Either Robert-Houdin sold the figure to Mr. Barnum for Monsieur G——, or such a person as Monsieur G—— never existed, for in his own book Mr. Barnum writes:

"When I was abroad in 1844 I went to Paris expressly to attend the 'Quinquennial Exposition'—an exhibition then held every five years. I met and became well acquainted with a celebrated conjurer, as he called himself, Robert-Houdin, but who was not only a prestidigitateur and legerdemain performer, but a mechanic of absolute genius. I bought at the exposition the best automaton he exhibited and for which he obtained a gold medal. I paid a round price for this most ingenious little figure, which was an automaton writer and artist. It sat on a small table, pencil in hand; and, if asked, for instance,

for an emblem of 'fidelity,' it would instantly draw the picture of a handsome dog; if love was wanted, a cupid was exquisitely pencilled. The automaton would also answer many questions in writing. I took this curiosity

The late P. T. Barnum, the world's greatest showman, who bought the writing and drawing figure from Robert-Houdin, and wrote at length of the French conjurer is his autobiography. Born July 5, 1810. Died April 7, 1891. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

to London, where it was exhibited for some time at the Royal Adelaide Gallery, and then I sent it across the Atlantic to my American Museum, where it attracted great attention from the people and the press. During my visit, Houdin was giving evening legerdemain per-

formances, and by his pressing invitation I frequently was present. He took great pains, too, to introduce me to other inventors and exhibitors of moving figures, which I liberally purchased, making them prominent features in the attractions of the American Museum."

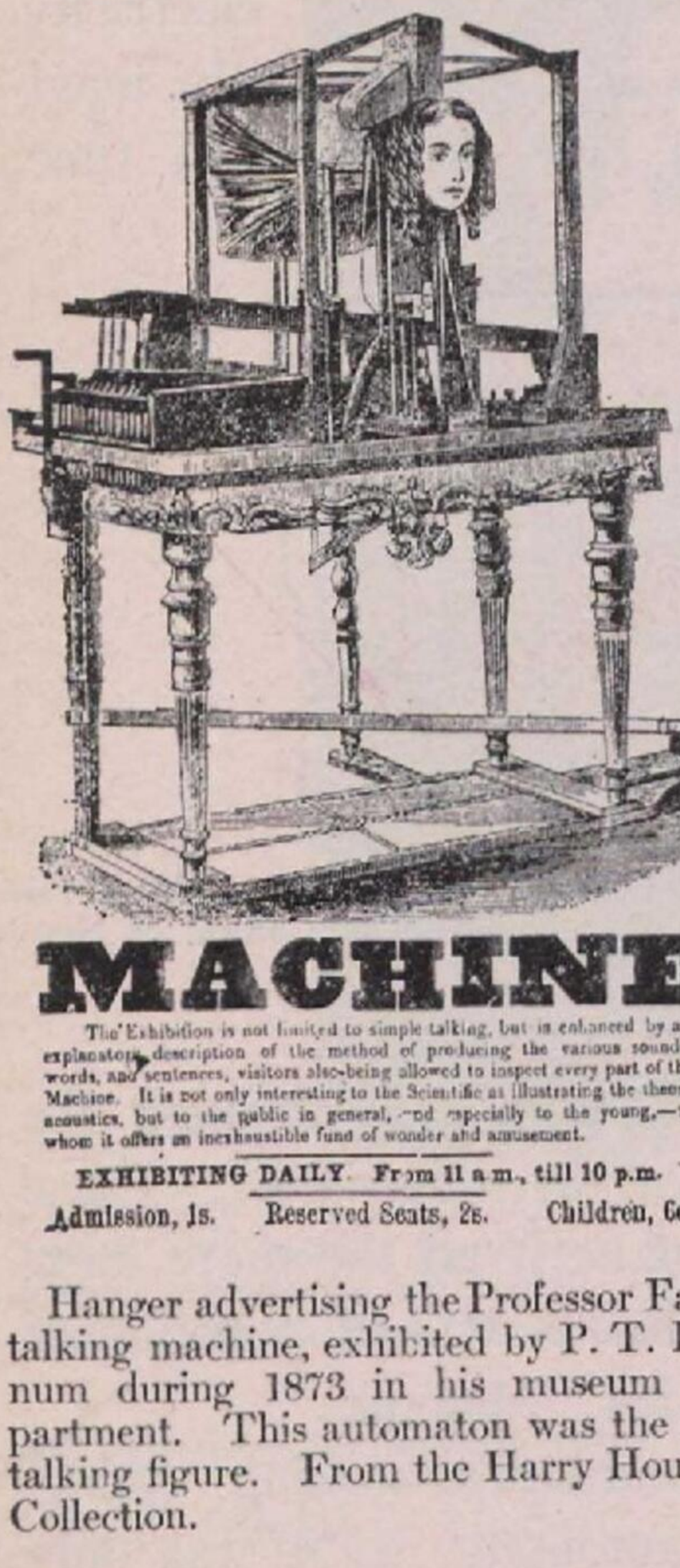
Barnum then continued to describe Robert-Houdin's greatness and his cleverness in the use of electricity. The showman was always a welcome guest at the magician's house, and he relates how, at luncheon time,

The figure of Cupid as executed by the Droz drawing figure. From the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchatel, Switzerland.

Robert-Houdin would touch a knob and through the floor would rise a table, laden with inviting viands. These details in the Barnum book make it all the more inexplicable that Robert-Houdin should omit all mention of the great showman's name in his "Memoirs."

Just at this time the amusement-seeking public seemed greatly interested in automata, so it was only natural that Barnum, great showman that he was, should scour Europe for mechanical figures. Soon after he purchased the writing and drawing figure claimed by

Robert-Houdin, he brought to America a talking figure invented by Professor Faber of Vienna, to which he refers most entainingly in his address to the public dated 1873:



Hanger advertising the Professor Faber talking machine, exhibited by P. T. Barnum during 1873 in his museum department. This automaton was the first talking figure. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

"The Museum department contains 100,000 curiosities, including Professor Faber's wonderful talking machine, costing me $20,000 for its use for six months; also the National Portrait Gallery of one hundred life-size paintings, including all the Presidents of the United States, etc.; John Rogers' groups of historic statuary; almost an endless variety of curiosities, including numberless automaton musicians, mechanicians, and moving scenes, etc., etc., made in Paris and Geneva."

It can be imagined how wonderful this talking machine must have been when Barnum gave it special emphasis, selecting it from the hundreds of curios he had on exhibition. As this talking machine is probably forgotten, I will reproduce

the bill used at the time of its appearance in London, England.

When Barnum was in London in 1844, with Gen. Tom Thumb, who was then performing at the Egyptian Hall, he first saw the automatic talking machine and engaged it to strengthen his show. Thirty years later Prof. Faber's nephew was the lecturer who explained to the American public the automaton's mechanism and also the performer who manipulated the machine.

Barnum always speaks of the talking automaton as being a life-size figure, but the pictures used for advertising purposes show that it was only a head.

The fate of both the talking automaton and the writing and drawing figure is shrouded in mystery. If they were in the Barnum Museum when the latter was swept by fire in 1865, they were destroyed. If they had been taken back to Europe, they may now be lying in some cellar or loft, moth-eaten and dust-covered, ignominious end for such ingenious brain-work and handicraft.

So much for the claims of Robert-Houdin. Now to disprove them.

The earliest record of a writing figure I have found is in the "Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines," compiled by Andrew Ure, M.D., and published in New York in 1842 by Le Roy Sunderland, 126 Fulton Street. On page 83, under the heading of "Automaton," is this statement:

"Frederick Von Knauss completed a writing machine at Vienna in the year 1760. It is now in the model cabinet of the Polytechnic Institute, and consists of a globe two feet in diameter, containing the mechanism, upon which

sits a figure seven inches high and writes, upon a sheet of paper fixed to a frame, whatever has been placed beforehand upon a regulating cylinder. At the end of each line it raises and moves its hand sideways, in order to begin a new line."

Portrait and autograph of Pierre Jacquet-Droz. Born 1721, died 1790. From the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

This does not answer the description of the figure which Robert-Houdin claims, but it is interesting as showing that mechanical genius ran along such lines almost a hundred years before Robert-Houdin claims to have invented the famous automaton.

The writing and drawing figure claimed by Robert-Houdin as his original invention can be traced back directly to the shop door of Switzerland's most noted inventor, Pierre Jacquet-Droz, who with his son, Henri-Louis, laid the foundation of the famous Swiss watch- and music-box industry.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, probably about 1770, the Jacquet-Drozes turned out a drawing

figure which also inscribed a few set phrases or titles of the drawings. In mechanism, appearance, and results it tallies almost exactly with the automaton claimed by Robert-Houdin as originating in his brain. The Jacquet-Droz figure showed a child clad in quaint, flowing garments, seated at a desk. The Robert-Houdin figure was modernized, and showed a court youth in knee breeches and powdered peruque, seated at a desk. The Jacquet-Droz figure drew a dog, a cupid, and the heads of reigning monarchs. The Robert-Houdin figure, made seventy-five years later, by some inexplicable coincidence drew a dog as the symbol of fidelity, a cupid as the emblem of love, and the heads of reigning monarchs.

The history of the Jacquet-Drozes is written in the annals of Switzerland as well as the equally reputable annals of scientific inventions, and cannot be refuted.

Pierre Jacquet-Droz was born July 28th, 1721, in a small village, La-Chaux-de-Fonds, near Neuchâtel, Switzerland. According to some authorities, his father was a clock-maker, but the brochure issued by "Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie" of the city of Neuchâtel, which has recently acquired many of the Jacquet-Droz automata, states that he was the son of a farmer and was sent to a theological seminary at Basle. Here the youth's natural talent for mechanics overbalanced his interest in "isms" and "ologies," and he spent every spare moment at work with his tools. On his return to his native town he turned his attention seriously to clock- and watch-making, constructing a marvellous clock with two peculiar hands which, in passing each other, touched the dial and rewound the clock.

At this time his work attracted the attention of Lord Keith, Governor of Neuchâtel, then a province of Prussia, who induced the young inventor to visit the court of Ferdinand VI. of Spain, providing the necessary introductions. Pierre Jacquet-Droz remained for some time in Madrid and made a clock of most complicated pattern. This was a perpetual calendar. For hands, he utilized artificial sunbeams, shooting out from the sun's face which formed the dial, to denote the hours, days, etc. With the money received from the Spanish monarch he returned to Switzerland to find that his son, Henri-Louis, had inherited his remarkable inventive gifts. He sent his boy to Nancy to study music, drawing, mechanics, and physics. During his son's absence in all probability he produced the first of the marvellous automata which made the Jacquet-Drozes famous the modern world over, namely, the writing figure.

Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz, son of Pierre Jacquet-Droz, and the superior of his father as a mechanician. Born Oct. 13th, 1752, died November 15th, 1791. From the Jaquet-Droz brochure, issued by the Neuchâtel Society of History and Archæology.

With the return of Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz from college commenced what may be termed the golden age of mechanics in Switzerland. Associated with father and son were the former's pupils or apprentices, Jean-Frédéric Leschot, Jean-David Maillardet, and Jean Pierre Droz, a blood relation who afterward became director of

the mint at Paris and a mechanician of rare talent. Jean Pierre Droz is credited with having invented a machine for cutting, stamping, and embossing medals on the face and on the edges at one insertion.

The output of this shop and its staff of gifted workers included the first Swiss music box, the singing birds which sprang from watches and jewel caskets, the drawing figure which was an improvement on the writing figure, the spinet player, and the grotto with its many automatic animals of diminutive size but exquisite workmanship. Years were spent in perfecting the various automata, and none of them have been equalled or even approached by later mechanicians and inventors.

Jean-Frédéric Leschot. Born 1747, died 1824. Portrait published by Société des Arts de Genève. Presented to the author by Mons. Blind (Magicus) of Geneva.

Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz was conceded to be the superior of his father, Pierre Jacquet-Droz. In a German encyclopædia which I found at the King's Library, Munich, it is stated that when Vaucanson, celebrated as the inventor of "The Flute Player," "The Mechanical Duck," "The Talking Machine," etc., saw the work of the younger Droz, he cried loudly, "Why, that boy commences where I left off!"

According to the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchâtel, and an article contributed by Dr. Alfred Gradenwits to *The Scientific American* of June 22d, 1907, the

writing and drawing figures are made and operated as follows:

"The writer represented a child of about four years of age, sitting at his little table, patiently waiting with the pen in his hand until the clockwork is started. He then sets to work and, after looking at the sheet of paper before him, lifts his hand and moves it toward the ink-stand, in which he dips the pen. The little fellow then throws off an excess of ink and slowly and calmly, like an industrious child, begins writing on the paper the prescribed sentence. His handwriting is careful, conscientiously distinguishing between hair strokes and ground strokes,

The Jacquet-Droz writing automaton. From the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

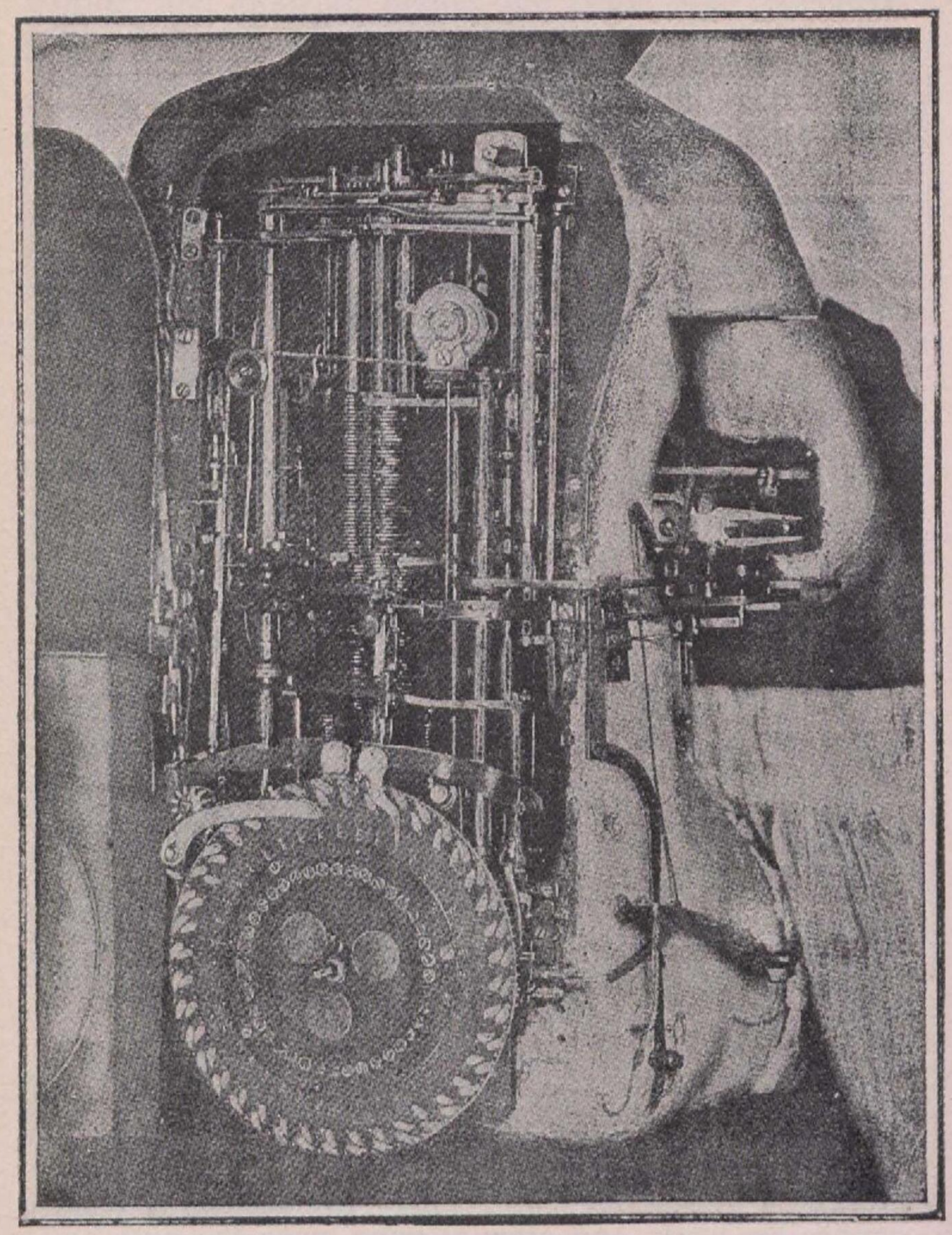
always observing the proper intervals between letters and words and generally showing the sober and determined character of the handwriting usual at the time in the country of Neuchâtel. In order, for in-

stance, to write a T, the writer begins tracing the letter at the top, and after slightly lifting his hand halfway, swiftly traces the transversal dash, and continues writing the original ground stroke.

"How complicated a mechanism is required for insuring these effects will be inferred from the illustration, in which the automaton is shown with its back opened. In the first place a vertical disk will be noticed having at its circumference as many notches as there are letters and signs. Behind this will be seen whole columns of cam-wheels, each of a special shape, placed one above another, and all together forming a sort of spinal column for the automaton.

"Whenever the little writer is to write a given letter, a pawl is introduced into the corresponding notch of the disk, thus lifting the wheel column and transmitting to the hand, by the aid of a complicated lever system and Cardan joints arranged in the elbow, the requisite movements for tracing the letter in question. The mechanism comprises five centres of motion connected together by chains.

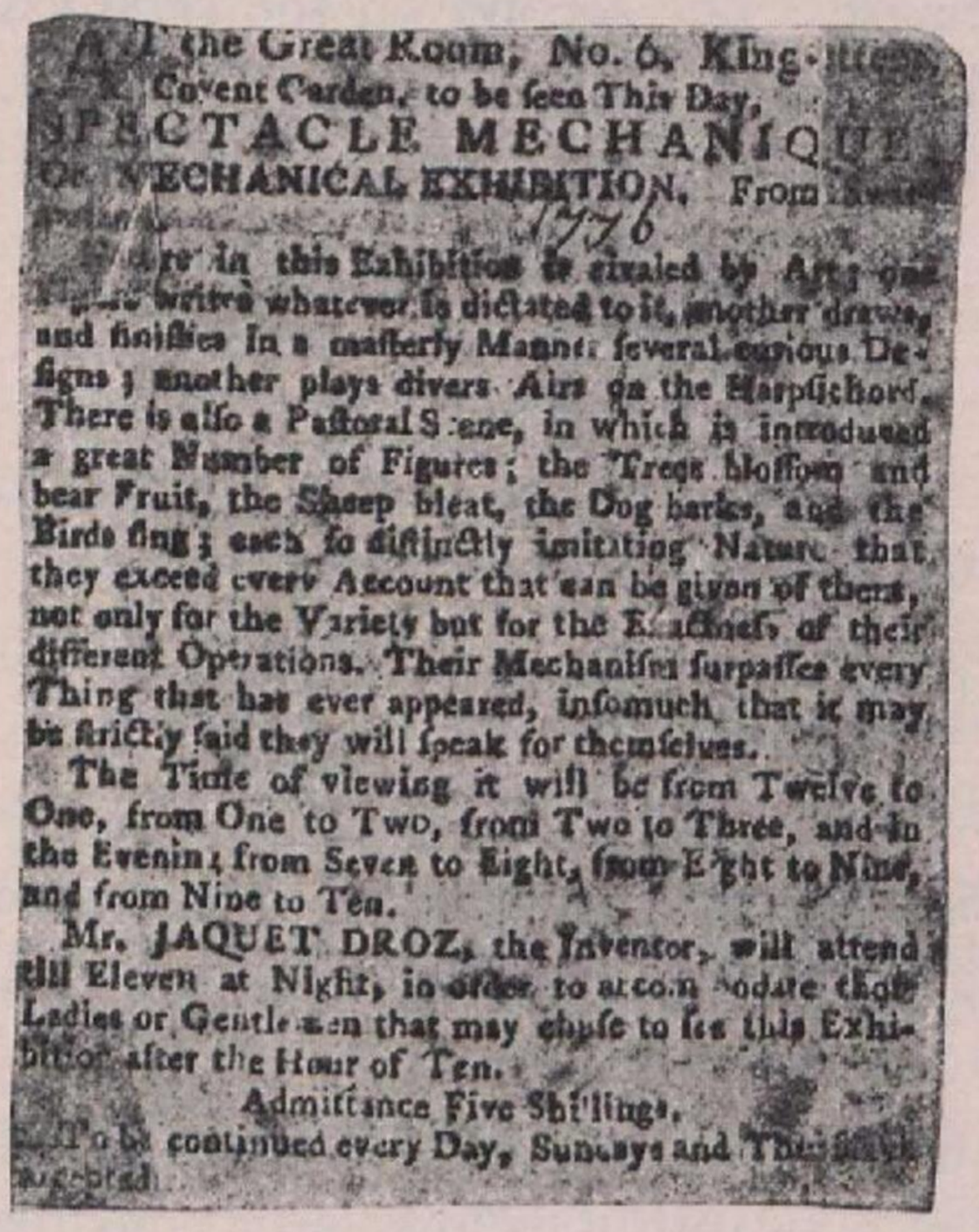
"In the 'Draftsman,' the mechanism is likewise arranged in the body itself, as in the case of the 'Writer.' The broad chest thus entailed also required a large head, which accounts for the somewhat bulky appearance of the two automatons. With the paper in position and a pencil in hand, the 'Draftsman' at first traces a few dashes and then swiftly marks the shadows, and a dog appears on the paper. The little artist knowingly examines his work, and after blowing away the dust and putting in a few last touches, stops a moment and then quickly signs, 'Mon Toutou' (My pet dog). The motions



View of the mechanism which operates the Jacquet-Droz writing automaton. From the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

of the automaton are quite natural, and the outlines of his drawings extremely sharp. The automaton when desired willingly draws certain crowned heads now belonging to history; for example, a portrait of Louis XV., of Louis XVI., and of Marie Antoinette."

The automata made by the Jacquet-Drozes and their confrères were exhibited in all the large cities of Great



the Great Room, No. 6, King-
Covent Garden, to be seen This Day,
SPECTACLE MECHANIQUE
OR MECHANICAL EXHIBITION, From
1776
...re in this Exhibition is rivaled by Art; one ...writes whatever is dictated to it, another draws, and finishes in a masterly Manner several curious Designs; another plays divers Airs on the Harpsichord. There is also a Pastoral Scene, in which is introduced a great Number of Figures; the Trees blossom and bear Fruit, the Sheep bleat, the Dog barks, and the Birds sing; each so distinctly imitating Nature that they exceed every Account that can be given of them, not only for the Variety but for the Exactness of their different Operations. Their Mechanism surpasses every Thing that has ever appeared, insomuch that it may be strictly said they will speak for themselves.

The Time of viewing it will be from Twelve to One, from One to Two, from Two to Three, and in the Evening from Seven to Eight, from Eight to Nine, and from Nine to Ten.

Mr. JAQUET DROZ, the Inventor, will attend till Eleven at Night, in order to accommodate those Ladies or Gentlemen that may chuse to see this Exhibition after the Hour of Ten.

Admittance Five Shillings.

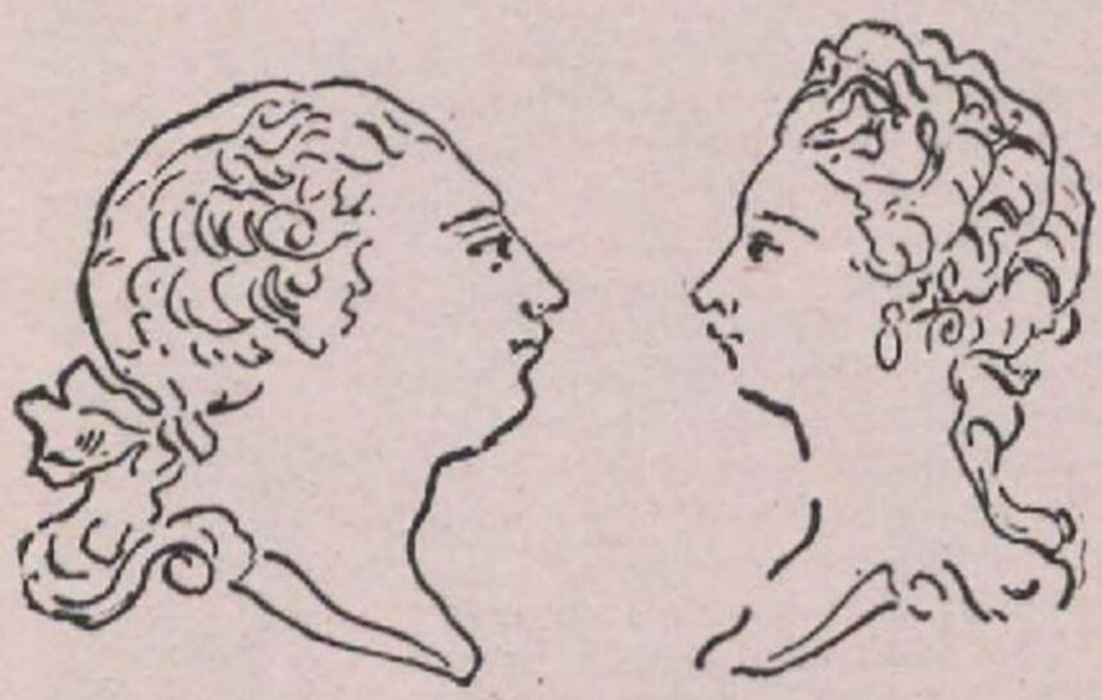
To be continued every Day, Sundays and Thursdays excepted.

Clipping from the London *Post*, 1776, advertising the writing and drawing figures, exhibited by their inventor, Mr. Jacquet-Droz. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Britain and Continental Europe. According to the programmes and newspaper notices in my collection, Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz acted as their first exhibitor. As proof I am reproducing a Droz programme from the London *Post*, dated 1776.

In support of this advertisement, note what the same paper says in what is probably a criticism of current amusements:

"This entertainment consists of three capital mechanical figures and a pastoral scene, with figures of an inferior size. The figure on the left-hand side, a beautiful boy as large as life, writes anything that is dictated to him, in a very fine hand. The second on the right hand, of the same size, draws various landscapes, etc., etc., which he



Heads of King George and Queen Charlotte, executed in their presence by the Jacquet-Droz drawing figure in 1774. From the brochure issued by the Society of History and Archæology, Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

finishes in a most accurate and masterly style. The third figure is a beautiful young lady who plays several elegant airs on the harpsichord, with all the bass accompaniments; her head gracefully moving to the tune, and her bosom discovering a delicate respiration. During her performance, the pastoral scene in the centre discovers a variety of mechanical figures admirably grouped, all of which seem endued, as it were, with animal life, to the admiration of the spectator. The last curiosity is a canary bird in a cage, which whistles two or three airs in

the most natural manner imaginable. Upon the whole, the united collection strikes us as the most wonderful exertion of art which ever trod before so close on the heels of nature. The ingenious artist is a young man, a native of Switzerland."

The inventory of Jacquet-Droz, Jr., dated 1786, quotes the "Piano Player" as valued at 4,800 livres, the "Drawing Figure" at 7,200 livres, while the "Writer" had been ceded to him by his father for 4,800 livres, in consideration of certain improvements and modifications which Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz made in the original invention. This shows that while the elder Droz did not die until 1790, his son controlled the automata previous to this date, for exhibition and other purposes.

During his later years Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz was induced to take the automata to Spain. His tour was under the direction of an English manager, who, possibly for the purpose of securing greater advertisement, announced the figures as possessed of supernatural power. This brought them under the ban of the Inquisition, and Jacquet-Droz was thrown into prison. Eventually he managed to secure his freedom, and, breathing free air once more, like the proverbial Arab, he silently folded his tent and stole away, leaving the automata to their fate. Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz died in Naples, Italy, in 1791, a year after his father's death.

The English manager, however, tarried in Spain. The figures were "tried" and as they proved motionless the case was dropped. The Englishman then claimed the automata as his property and sold them to a French nobleman. Their owner did not know how to operate

Under the Sanction of His Majesty's Royal Letters Patent.

PHANTASMAGORIA,

THIS and every EVENING till further Notice,

AT THE

LYCEUM, STRAND.

As the Advertisement of various Exhibitions under the above Title, may possibly mislead the unsuspecting Part o. the Public (and particularly Strangers from the Country) in their Opinion of the ORIGINAL PHANTASMAGORIA, M. DE PHILIPSTHAL, the Inventor, begs Leave to state that they have no Connexion whatever with his Performances. The *utmost Efforts* of Imitators have not been able to produce the Effect intended; and he is too grateful for the liberal Encouragement he has received in the Metropolis, not to caution the Public against those *spurious Copies*, which, failing of the Perfection they assume, can only disgust and disappoint the Spectators.

M. DE PHILIPSTHAL

Will have the Honour to EXHIBIT (as usual) his

Optical Illusions and Mechanical Pieces of Art.

At the LYCEUM, and at no other Place of Exhibition in London.

SELECT PARTIES may be accommodated with a MORNING REPRESENTATION at any appointed Hour, on sending timely Notice.

☞ To prevent Mistakes, the Public are requested to Notice, that the PHANTASMAGORIA is on the Left-hand, on the Ground Floor, and the EGYPTIANA on the Right-hand, up Stairs.

The OPTICAL PART of the EXHIBITION

Will introduce the PHANTOMS or APPARITIONS of the DEAD or ABSENT, in a way more completely illusive than has ever been offered to the Eye in a public Theatre, as the Objects freely originate in the Air, and unfold themselves under various Forms and Sizes, such as Imagination alone has hitherto painted them, occasionally assuming the Figure and most perfect Resemblance of the Heroes and other distinguished Characters of past and present Times.

This SPECTROLOGY, which professes to expose the Practices of artful Impostors and pretended Exorcists, and to open the Eyes of those who still foster an absurd Belief in GHOSTS or DISEMBODIED SPIRITS, will, it is presumed, afford also to the Spectator an interesting and pleasing Entertainment; and in order to render these Apparations more interesting, they will be introduced during the Progress of a tremendous Thunder Storm, accompanied with vivid Lightning, Hail, Wind, &c.

The MECHANICAL PIECES of ART

Include the following *principal Objects, a more detailed* Account of which will be given during their Exhibition: *viz.*

Two elegant ROPE DANCERS, the one, representing a *Spaniard* nearly Six Feet high, will display several astonishing Feats on the Rope, mark the Time of the Music with a small Whistle, smoke his Pipe, &c.—The other, called *Pajazzo*, being the Figure of a young sprightly Boy, will surpass the former in Skill and Agility.

The INGENIOUS SELF-DEFENDING CHEST—The superior Excellence and Utility of this Piece of Mechanism is, that the Proprietor has always a Safe-guard against Depredators; for the concealed Battery of *Four Pieces of Artillery* only appears and discharges itself when a Stranger tries to force open the Chest.—This has been acknowledged by several Professional Men to be a *Master-piece* of *Mechanism*, and may with equal Advantage be applied to the Protection of Property in Counting-houses, Post Chaises, &c.

The MECHANICAL PEACOCK, which so exactly imitates the Actions of that stately Bird, that it has frequently been thought Alive. It eats, drinks, &c. at command, unfold its Tail in a brilliant Circle, and in every respect seems endowed with an intuitive Power of attending to the Thoughts of the Company.

The BEAUTIFUL COSSACK, enclosed in a small Box, opens it when ordered, and presents herself to the Spectators in a black Habit; which, as soon as desired, she changes with astonishing Quickness into a most Elegant Gala Dress, compliments the Company, and dances after the Manner of the Cossacks; she will also resolve different Questions, *&c. &c.*

The SELF-IMPELLED WINDMILL, which is put in Motion, or stands still by the most momentary Signal from the Spectators, and in a Manner which apparently does away the Idea of all Mechanical Agency.

The whole to conclude with a superb OPTICAL and MECHANICAL FIRE-WORK, replete with a Variety of brilliant and fanciful Changes.

**** *Doors to be opened at SEVEN o'Clock, the Commencement at EIGHT.*

BOXES, 4s.—PIT, 2s.

YOUNG, Printer, Brydges Street, Covent Garden.

A de Philipsthal programme of 1803 before the writing and drawing figure came under his control.
From the Harry Houdini Collection.

UNDER THE SANCTION OF
HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL LETTERS PATENT

PHILIPSTHAL and MAILLARDET'S

Royal Museum,

FROM LONDON,

Will Open for Public Inspection,

At the ASSEMBLY ROOM, BRIDGWATER,

On FRIDAY the 22d. of MARCH instant,

And will Continue Open until Thursday next, the 28th when will positively be the last day

CONSISTING of the following most INGENIOUS PIECES of

Mechanism,

NEVER BEFORE WITNESSED IN THIS PLACE.

A SUPERB

Musical Automaton.

THE MECHANICAL

Drawing and Writing-Master;

An Old Necromancer,

A MOST

BEAUTIFUL GOLD BOX,

THE LITTLE SPANIARD,

A BEAUTIFUL SOURIE DO'R,

SET IN PEARLS.

AN

ETHIOPEAN CHENILLE DO'R,

BEAUTIFULLY ENAMELLED.

AND

A TARANTULA SPIDER:

Admittance, from Eleven to Five o'Clock, 2s.

The Admittance from 7 to 9 o'Clock in the Evening, will be 1s. only.

T. Poole, Printer, Bridgwater.

Poster used, March 22nd, 1811, by de Philipsthal and Maillardet during their partnership, on which the writing and drawing figure is featured. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

them, so their great value was never realized by his family. After his death, during a voyage to America, they lay neglected in the castle of Mattignon, near Bayonne. After changing hands many times, about 1803 they passed into the hands of an inventor named Martin, and were controlled by his descendants for nearly a hundred years. One of his family, Henri Martin, of Dresden, Germany, exhibited them in many large cities, and advertised them for sale at 15,000 marks in the *Muenchener Blaetter* of May 13th, 1883. After Martin's death, his widow succeeded in disposing of them to Herr Marfels, of Berlin, who had them repaired with such good results that in the fall of 1906 he sold them for 75,000 francs, or about $15,000, to the Historical Society of Neuchâtel. In April, 1907, the writing figure, the drawing figure, and the spinet player were on exhibition in Le Locle, Chaux-de-Fonds, and Neuchâtel.

So far we have traced only the original writing and drawing figure. This has been done purely to show that even if Robert-Houdin had been capable of building such an automaton, he would not have been its real inventor, but would merely have copied the marvellous work of the Jacquet-Drozes. Now to trace the figure which in 1844 he claimed as his invention.

With the fame of the Neuchâtel shop spreading and the demand for Swiss watches increasing, Maillardet and Jean Pierre Droz, apprentices or perhaps partners of Pierre Jacquet-Droz and Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz, removed to London and there set up a watch factory. About this time Maillardet invented a combination writing and drawing figure which was pronounced by experts of the day slightly inferior to the work of the two Jacquet-Drozes. However, it must have been worthy of exhibition, for it appeared at intervals for the next fifty years in the amusement world, particularly in London. At first Maillardet was not its exhibitor nor was his name ever mentioned on the programmes and newspaper notices, but later his name appeared as part owner and exhibitor. As the Swiss watches had created a veritable sensation and were snatched up as fast as produced, it is quite likely that he had no time to play the rôle of showman.

The figure first appeared in London in 1796, when the London *Telegraph* of January 2nd carried the advertisement reproduced on the next page.

Haddock had no particular standing in the world of magic, and it is more than likely that he rented the automata which he exhibited, or merely acted as showman for the real inventors.

EXHIBITIONS.

The Convenience of Day Exhibitions must be obvious to the Polite Circles, who are otherwise engaged the Evenings.

THE ANDROIDES,

No. 16, Norfork-Street, Strand,

Opens every Day at Half past Twelve o'Clock, and the Performance begins at One; and opens every Evening at Half past Six, and begins at Eight precisely.

THESE much admired Pieces of Mechanism, which not only imitate human actions, but appear to possess rational powers, consist of first,

THE WRITING AUTOMATON;

A Figure, about the size of a boy of four years old, which will be brought to a table, and set to write any word, words, or figures required, in a round, legible hand.—Second,

THE FRUITERY;

The Model of a neat rural Mansion, and contains the following Figures: first, the Porter, which stands at the gate, and on being addressed, rings a Bell, when the Door opens, the Duchess comes out, and any Lady or Gentleman may call for whatever Fruit they please, and the Figure will return and bring the kind requested, which may be repeated, and the Fruit varied, as often as the Company please. It will likewise receive Flowers, or any small Articles, carry them in, and produce them again as called for. As the Fruits are brought out, they will be given in charge to a Watch Dog, which sits in front of the House, and on any person taking away or touching them will begin to bark, and continue to do so until they are returned. The next Figure belonging to this Piece is the Little Chimney-sweeper, which will be seen coming from behind the House, will enter the Door, appear at the top of the Chimney, and give the usual cry of "Sweep!" several times, descend the Chimney, and come out with its Bag full of Soot.—Third,

The LIQUOR MERCHANT and WATER SERVER. These are on a Platform of about two feet square, which (as the former Pieces) will be placed on a Table. The Liquor Merchant stands at a small Cask, from which it will draw every kind of Spirits, Wine, &c. required.—The Water-server stands at a Pump, and will fill a Tumbler with Water, as often as called for.—Fourth,

THE HIGHLAND ORACLE,

A Figure in the Highland Dress, stands on a Time-piece, and gives the Hour and Minutes whenever asked, by striking its Sword on a Targe; it gives a rational Answer (by motion) to any Question proposed; it calculates Sums in Arithmetic, and gives the Amount instantly of any Number of Pounds, Yards, &c. at any given Price; beats Time to Music, &c.

The Table the different Pieces will be placed on, contains an ORGAN, on which the Proprietor introduces a few Notes; also, The MACHINE, or (Self-playing) ORGAN, will play occasionally several Pieces of Music, Airs, Country Dances, &c.

Mr. HADDOCK flatters himself THE ANDROIDES will be found more curious than any thing of the kind ever before offered to the Public, as the Principles of Action are entirely new. The Theatre is neatly fitted up, and every thing calculated to give satisfaction to a polite and discerning Audience.

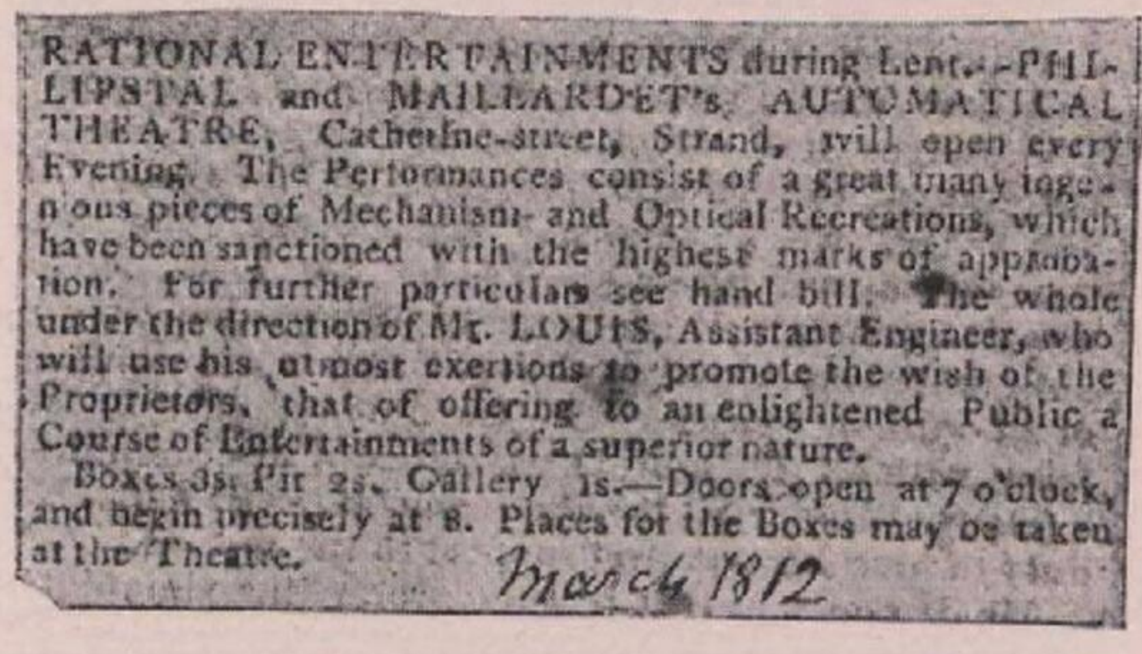
Boxes 4s.—Gallery 2s.

Admittance, after the Two First Parts, Half Price.

☞ The Exhibition lasts nearly two hours.

Haddock advertisement in the London *Telegraph*, January, 1796, in which he features the writing automaton as an androide. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

In quite a few works on automata, notably Sir David Brewster's "Letters on Natural Magic," Collinson is quoted as having interviewed Maillardet as the inventor of the combination writing and drawing figure. *The Franklin Journal* of June, 1827, published in Philadelphia, Pa., credits this figure to Maillardet and gives the following description: "It was the figure of a boy kneeling on one knee, holding a pencil in his hand, with which he executed not only writing but drawings equal to those of


RATIONAL ENTERTAINMENTS during Lent.—PHILIPSTAL and MAILLARDET's AUTOMATICAL THEATRE, Catherine-street, Strand, will open every Evening. The Performances consist of a great many ingenious pieces of Mechanism and Optical Recreations, which have been sanctioned with the highest marks of approbation. For further particulars see hand bill. The whole under the direction of Mr. LOUIS, Assistant Engineer, who will use his utmost exertions to promote the wish of the Proprietors, that of offering to an enlightened Public a Course of Entertainments of a superior nature.
Boxes 3s. Pit 2s. Gallery 1s.—Doors open at 7 o'clock, and begin precisely at 8. Places for the Boxes may be taken at the Theatre.
March 1812

Clipping from the London *Telegraph* in March, 1812, proving the partnership of de Philipsthal and Maillardet in an "Automatical Theatre." The Mr. Louis mentioned in the advertisement as assistant engineer later secured possession of the writing and drawing figure. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

the masters. When the figure began to work, an attendant dipped the pencil in ink, and fixed the paper, when, on touching a spring, the figure wrote a line, carefully dotting and stroking the letters."

The Robert-Houdin figure did not kneel, but this change could be made by a mechanician of ordinary ability.

The writing and drawing figure does not reappear on amusement programmes in my collection until 1812, when it was featured by De Philipsthal, the inventor of "Phan-

Theatre, Wakefield.

Mr. Louis's

ROYAL, MECHANICAL, and OPTICAL

Exhibition

Will continue open Four Nights longer only, with the Addition of a New Piece.

Monday, April 3, 1815, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday following, the 5th, 6th, and 7th.

And, in order to make his Exhibition still more worthy of the Public Patronage, the Proprietor begs leave to inform them, that, in Addition to the whole Selection already exhibited with UNBOUNDED APPLAUSE, he will introduce, every Evening,

A SUPERB MECHANICAL

Peacock

AS LARGE AS LIFE,

In its Natural Plumage!

Which imitates, so closely, the CRIES, ACTIONS, and ATTITUDES of that stately and beautiful Bird, that it is not unfrequently supposed to be an absolute living Animal, properly trained to act as an Amusing Deception.

Although no Description can properly illustrate these Wonderful Pieces of Art, yet to convey to the public an idea of their singularity, and of the imitative powers with which these Figures seem vested, the following explanation is submitted, and they are exhibited in the following manner:—

TWO ELEGANT AUTOMATA,

As large as nature, the one representing a beautiful POLONNESE, the other a little BOY.

Nothing can surpass the admirable construction of these Pieces. The large Figure seems almost endowed with human Faculties, exhibiting the usual feats of a Rope-Dancer, in the fullest imitation of life. The small Figure is invested with equally astonishing powers of action. To such ladies as are spectators it must be a very pleasing circumstance that these exertions do not excite those disagreeable sensations which arise from the sight of Figures fraught with life, performing feats attended with so much danger.

A Superb MUSICAL LADY,

Representing the BELLE ROXLANE, who plays with the greatest precision Sixteen Airs, every note proceeds from the pressure of the fingers and feet, on the appropriate keys, as a living person, with the motions of her head, eyes, and eye-lids, as directed to the keys.—The compact and well proportioned form, agreeable countenance, and easy unaffected air of this Female Figure, have been greatly admired, and considered by the very best judges as a happy combination of the arts of Design and Mechanism, which produces at the same time the appearance of respiration.

THE MECHANICAL
DRAWING AND WRITING MASTER,

A JUVENILE ARTIST. The figure of a Boy, who, with every action of real life will execute in presence of the company, specimens of Drawing and Writing, superior to the best specimens of the first masters: if this figure were destitute of motion it would be picturesque, but when, with the ease and elegance of a well educated youth, it unites the power of producing such perfect imitations of nature, as almost to sanction the Greek Mythology, when speaking of figures formed out of sordid clay, which, touched by Prometheus, started into life; and, extraordinary as the fable appears, it is equalled, if not surpassed, by the wonderful mechanism of this figure.

AN OLD NECROMANCER,

Which may fairly be denominated the British Enchanter, for few of the fabled tales concerning the arts of these wonder working sages, in their native groves of Druidical oak, where magic spells suspend from every bough, could go beyond the astonishing realities of this self-acting Automaton, who resolves the questions that are proposed to him, with the sagacious precision of an Oracle, without any aid from those diabolical spirits who were believed to assist the ancient soothsayers, for this sapient Sire's Decisions originate in a skilful combination of the mechanical powers.

The Little Spaniard:

This animated Dancer, whose movements are regulated by music, to which he keeps time with critical and scientific exactness. The astonishing agility of this Automaton, whose joints, &c. are formed with anatomical precision, is communicated by complex machinery which gives it the appearance of making herculanean strength, and inconceivable activity. The mechanism of this figure, which is seen, will give the spectators a correct idea of the mechanism of the others.

A BIRD OF PARADISE,

Which starts from a Superb Gold Box, warbles the most melodious notes, and returns to its concealment in the box. The effects of this piece of Mechanism may be said, without exaggeration, to be enchanting; and for delicacy of Workmanship, stands unrivalled.

To which will be added several Original, Astonishing, and Unparelleled Experiments in the

Science of Optics.

The Proprietor will introduce among a variety of Subjects, IDEAL PERSPECTIVE

PROSPECTS of the ELYSIAN FIELDS,

And other VIEWS. The effect produced, as if lightened by the Moon, in which different AERIAL SPIRITS and SHADES of great men will emerge and appear, being a master-piece of the Science of OPTICS, and of which the utmost effort of imitators have been unable to produce the faintest resemblance, &c.

The whole to finish with a series of brilliant Mechanical and Optical

Fire-Works,

A Louis programme of April 3rd, 1815, in which the writing and drawing figure is advertised as a juvenile artist. It also features a bird of paradise automaton which Robert-Houdin claimed to have invented thirty years later. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

tasmagoria." The nature of the inventions grouped under this title can best be judged from the reproduction of a De Philipsthal programme, dated 1803–04, and reproduced in the course of this chapter. All evidence goes to prove, however, that De Philipsthal did not control the writing and drawing figure exclusively, but that it was the joint property of himself and his partner, Maillardet. One of their joint programmes is also reproduced. Wherever De Philipsthal appears as an independent entertainer, the writing and drawing figure is missing from his billing. Later the writing and drawing automaton came into the possession of a Mr. Louis, who, as it will be seen from the billing, acted as assistant engineer to De Philipsthal and Maillardet. Louis evidently controlled the wonderful little automaton in the years 1814–15.

The last De Philipsthal programme in my possession is dated Summer Theatre, Hull, September 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th, 1828, when he advertises only "rope dancers and mechanical peacock," and features "special uniting fire and water" and "firework experiments." He must have died between that date and April, 1829, for a programme dated at the latter time announces a benefit at the Théâtre Wakefield for the widow and children of De Philipsthal, "the late proprietor of the Royal Mechanical and Optical Museum." This benefit programme contains no allusion to the writing and drawing figure, which goes to prove that it had not been his property, or it would have been handed down to his estate.

In May, 1826, an automaton was exhibited at 161 Strand, a bill regarding which is reproduced. This mechanical figure, however, should not be confounded

Theatre, Wakefield.

THE LAST WEEK

ROYAL MECHANICAL & OPTICAL

MUSEUM,

NOW CARRIED ON FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE

WIDOW and CHILDREN

OF THE LATE MR. PHILIPSTHAL.

Mrs. P. in returning her Thanks to the Public of Wakefield, for the flattering marks of Approbation with which her Exhibition has been received, begs to inform them it will be Open

On Monday, 27th, Wednesday, 29th of April,
And CLOSE on Friday Evening, the 1st Day of May, 1829.

To commence as hitherto, with the various interesting

MECHANICAL PIECES.

In addition to the great variety of objects already Exhibited with unbounded applause, the following will be introduced in the second part of the Evening's Entertainment; a new Historical Scene which took place during the Rebellion, about 177 years ago, representing the

EXECUTION

OF THE EARL OF DERBY.

Who was taken Prisoner by the Parliamentary Troops, and conveyed to Chester, sentenced to Death, and ordered for Execution at Bolton, where it took place in Churchi-Street; with a View of the Scaffold, surrounded by a Troop of Cavalry, with the Earl of Derby, his Chaplain, and the Executioner on the Scaffold, &c.—The above Tragic Scene has been exhibited at Bolton and Chester, with unbounded applause, and duly impressed the surviving Generations of those who then witnessed the Execution with a grateful sense of the blessings of Peace they now enjoy.

A REPRESENTATION OF THE LATE ERUPTION OF

Mount Vesuvius.

A VIEW TAKEN IN PARIS, REPRESENTING

THE THUILLERIES,

WITH THE BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER SEINE.

A VIEW OF

JERUSALEM,

With the Mount of Olives,

As seen from the Terrace of the Latin Convent of St. Salvador.—The View is from a Sketch made by Sir William Chatterton, Bart.

The Ancient GATE at Southampton,

Called Above Bar, built by Canute, soon after his Landing, in the year 1023.

VARIOUS INTERESTING VIEWS IN LONDON.

An Interior View of the Greek Church, St. Sophia at Constantinople.
A Panoramic View of Southampton.
Two Views of the interior and exterior of Netley Abbey.
A View of Chelsea Gardens, with the Ascent of a Balloon.
A fine View of Broad-Street, Ludlow.
A View of St. Mark's Church, at Venice.
A View of Hanover-Street, with St. Mary's Church in Perspective, at Tunbridge, in Somersetshire.
Westminster Abbey.

THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE LATE

Emperor Alexander.

AT VASILIOSTROPH, ON THE RIVER NEVA.

A FINE VIEW OF THE

Suspension Bridge

OVER AN ARM OF THE SEA AT MENAI,

CONNECTING THE COUNTY OF CARNARVON WITH THAT OF ANGLESEA.

Descriptive efforts can but imperfectly convey ideas of the ingenuity and marvellous combination of mechanical labour evinced in the unique and most powerfully efficient structure. The thousands of masses of brick which compose the multitude of united chains, riveted at their innumerable joints with the strongest bolts imaginable, present, notwithstanding, a most elegant and gracefully light appearance, while in fortunes of the utmost symmetry, these chains support, as they flow from two sets of noble conical abutments at either end of the arch, all the extraordinary combinations of mechanism which sustain the immense structure, and form its three great parapet avenues of admirable perspective, and expressive extent.

A GROTESQUE BALLET, REPRESENTING THE

FAIRIES' MIDNIGHT REVEL,

By some hundreds of fancy-formed Supernatural Beings, producing the most whimsical Spectacle

The Tragic Scene of Cornelia,

The Superior of the Roman Vestal Virgins, who underwent the awful sentence of being BURIED ALIVE, in the Reign of Domitian, the Eleventh Roman Emperor, A. D. 81.

THE

Marvellous Tomb Scene ! !

With the appearance of Her late Majesty the Queen, and the Princess Charlotte, of Saxe Coburg, &c. &c.

The Exhibition commences as usual with Two elegant

Automata Rope-Dancers,

IN FULL IMITATION OF LIFE,

And various other surprising mechanical Pieces. Also, a series of

HYDRAULICS

AND

HYDROSTATIC EXPERIMENTS,

Uniting Fire and Water.

The whole to conclude with a series of Variegated Artificial

FIREWORKS,

WHICH FOLLOW IN BRILLIANT SUCCESSION!

These Fire Works are composed of Optical and Mechanical Effects of great Beauty and Delicacy, and perfectly free from Gunpowder or any Smell.

Doors to be opened at Seven o'Clock, and the Performance to commence at half-past.

Tickets to be had of Mr. NICHOLS, Bookseller, where Places for the Boxes may be taken.

As the nature of this Exhibition precludes the Theatrical Role of Half-Price, Mrs. P. by the advice of her Friends, has reduced the Admission to the following Rate:—

Boxes, 2s. 6d.—Pit, 1s.—Gallery, 6d.

☞ Schools, and the Juvenile branches of Families under Thirteen years, to the Boxes, 1s. 6d. each, Pit, 6d.

RICHARD NICHOLS, TYPOGRAPHER, WAKEFIELD.

Poster announcing a benefit for the widow and children of de Philipsthal at Wakefield, in April, 1829, which proves that the writing and drawing figure formed no part of the estate left by the deceased showman. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

with the original and genuine writing and drawing figure. It seems to have lacked legitimacy and, from what I can learn from newspaper clippings, was worked like "Zoe," with a concealed confederate, or, like the famous "Psycho" featured by Maskelyne, it was worked by compressed air. This bill is interesting solely because I believe that this fake automaton exhibited at 161 Strand was the first figure of the sort foisted on the public after the Baron Von Kemplen chess-player, which is described in Halle's work on magic, published in 1784.

In 1901, while in Germany, I saw a number of these automaton artists, all frauds. The figure sat in a small

chair before an easel, ready to draw portraits in short order. The figure was shown to the audience, then replaced on the chair, whereupon a man under the platform

The Triumph of Mechanism.

NEW EXHIBITION
IN THE WESTERN EXCHANGE.

PROSOPOGRAPHUS,
THE
AUTOMATON
ARTIST.

THE ENTRANCES TO THE EXHIBITION
ARE IN
Old Bond Street & in Burlington Arcade;

Open from Ten o'Clock till Dusk.

Admittance to see the Performance, 1 *Shilling*.
Profile Likenesses, 1*s*. 6*d*. in addition.

The Proprietors conceive that an Automatical Figure, accurately effecting that which has hitherto required a powerful mental exertion, and a correct eye, needs no further introduction of its extraordinary quality, than an intimation of the fact, that it is

THE ONLY AUTOMATON
IN THE WORLD
THAT TAKES LIKENESSES.

Without further comment, the Proprietors merely add the information, that this Figure executes a Profile Likeness, in one minute, from any person who chooses to sit. The Automaton will, if required, take the Profiles of Busts of Public Characters, which are placed in the Room, and which will enable persons, who may doubt the possibility of any mechanical contrivance taking an accurate likeness, to compare them with the originals.

Innes, Printer, 61, Wells-st. Oxford-st.

Handbill advertising the fake automatic artist, exhibited also at 161 Strand, London, May 7th, 1826. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

would thrust his arm through the figure and draw all that was required of the automaton. The fake was short-lived, even at the yearly fairs, and now has sunk too low for them.

During this interim, that is between 1821 and 1833, the famous little figure seems to have been in the possession of one Schmidt, who, according to the programmes in my collection, exhibited it regularly.

In 1833 Schmidt is programmed in London, playing at the Surrey Theatre, when the writing and drawing figure is one of twenty-four automatic devices. A program, which, judging from its printing, is of a still later date, announces Mr. Schmidt and the famous figure at New Gothic Hall, 7 Haymarket, for a short period previous to the removal of the exhibit to St. Petersburg. The dates of other programmes in my collection can be judged only from the style of printing which changed at different periods of the art's development. Some of these indicate that the writing and drawing figure was on exhibition during the early 40's in London at Paul's Head Assembly Rooms, Argyle Rooms, Regent Street, etc.

It is more than likely, according to Robert-Houdin's own admission regarding his study of automata and his opportunities to repair those left at his shop, that at some time the writing and drawing figure was brought to Paris to be exhibited, needed repairing, and thus reached his shop. Whether it was bought by Monsieur G——, whose interest in automata is featured in Robert-Houdin's "Memoirs," and brought to Robert-Houdin to repair, or whether Robert-Houdin bought it for a song, and repaired it to sell to advantage to his wealthy patron, cannot be stated, but I am morally certain that Robert-Houdin never constructed, in eighteen months, a complicated mechanism on which the Jacquet-Drozes spent six years of

ADMISSION REDUCED,

Boxes, 2s.---Pit, 1s.---Gallery, 6d.

MORNING EXHIBITION ONE SHILLING EACH.

By Permission of the Right Worshipful the Mayor.

The Nobility, Gentry, and Inhabitants of Hull and its Vicinity are most respectfully informed that the Grand

MECHANICAL AND Magical Theatre,

(FROM THE GOTHIC HALL, HAYMARKET, LONDON,)

IS NOW OPEN EVERY DAY AND EVENING,

AND WILL CONTINUE SO FOR A SHORT TIME ONLY,

AT THE APOLLO SALOON,

Newly erected by Mr. Kirkwood, at the corner of Wellington-Street,

QUEEN-STREET, HULL.

THE AUTOMATA COMPRISE THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

The Juvenile Artist!

Whose astonishing Performances in DRAWING and WRITING (alternately) in the presence of the Company, defy all attempts at rivalship, as regard to their beauty and correctness of design and execution! (This exquisite and complicated piece of Mechanism was the labour of Six Years.)

THE MUSICAL LADY,

Who performs upon an elegant finger ORGAN, a variety of pleasing Airs. The fascinating sweetness of her Countenance, and lively motion of the Eyes, never fail in securing Admirers! She bows gracefully to the Audience, her bosom heaves, as if naturally influenced by the lungs, and every note is produced by the brilliant touch of her fingers, with the exception of flats and sharps, which are played by the feet!

THE ROPE DANCER,

Whose surprising Performances surpass, in agility, attitudes, and evolutions, every Professor of the Art! keeping correct time to the Music of the Machinery.

THE MAGICIAN,

Whose astonishing performances afford the greatest interest and delight, by the ingenious answers he returns to every question proposed to him! The construction of this wonderful self-acting figure has hitherto puzzled all the first-rate Mechanics in Europe.

THE

WALKING FIGURE,

Which moving entirely by its own powers, excites the greatest surprise, it having ever been held to be a thing utterly impossible, by any sort of Machinery, to produce a self-moving figure capable of supporting its own equilibrium.

A MAGNIFICENT CLASSIC VASE!

MADE FOR THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

A BEAUTIFUL BOLDEN SERPENT.

TWO SIBERIAN MICE.---AN EGYPTIAN LIZARD.

An Ethiopian Caterpillar. A Tarantula Spider.

A BEAUTIFUL HUMMING BIRD!

The Insects are composed of Fine Gold, richly embossed, set with real Pearls, Diamonds, and other precious Stones, and in the correctness of their movements often deceive the beholder.

The Visitors will be satisfied by the Performance of several Overtures, on a

SELF-ACTING PIANO FORTE.

THE STAGE PERFORMANCE WILL COMMENCE WITH

RAMO SAMMEE,

This little Figure will correctly inform the company the time by any persons watch,—he will also decipher writing,—he will also state the name of any card which has been drawn from the pack.

The Enchanted Dutch Coffee-House,

An elegant little Building, on the Travellers ringing the bell the door opens—the Hostess attends and provides him with any liquor he may call for.

THE CABINET OF SAFETY,

In which property of any description can be placed on the direction of the company, the contents will imperceptibly change the Glass drawer into another, or even behind the Glasses.

THE MAGIC HARP,

On Cards being drawn from the pack and returned thereto, they are placed inside the Harp, and will immediately appear when called for.

The Bottle of Sobriety and Inebriety,

Proving the inutility of a set of Decanters, when various Liquors can be produced by one.

THE MAGICAL TEA CADDYS,

Any Lady or Gentleman having a desire to take care of any Article, locks it up in one Caddy, yet on opening the other it is found there, although the Caddy is in the hand of any other person.

AN EXTRAORDINARY GLASS PILLAR,

Which will perform innumerable Feats.

EXPERIMENTS IN ELECTRICITY.

The English Artillerist, who will discharge a Cannon without the use of Gunpowder!

An entertaining Experiment with Two Electrical Vases;

The astonishing power of Electricity over the Vegetable kingdom, producing a Crop of Salad in one minute, before the eyes of the Spectators.

THE UNFORTUNATE MAGAZINE,

Immediately on being placed in sight of the audience, a Thunder Cloud will descend and take its station directly above it; heavy flashes of Lightning are observed striking down upon it, but the building being provided with a conductor they prove ineffectual; after a short time the conductor is removed, the Lightning becomes more vivid, once more strikes the building, it becomes ignited, and is consumed in sight of the audience.

Programme used by Mr. Schmidt in 1827, when he had possession of the writing and drawing figure. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

their inventive genius and efforts. Modern mechanicians agree that such a performance would have been a physical impossibility, even had Robert-Houdin been the expert mechanician he pictured himself.

To sum up the evidence: The writing and drawing

Splendid and Unrivalled Exhibition!

(For a Short Period, previous to its removal to St. Petersburgh.)

The Nobility and Public are respectfully informed, that

A MOST MAGNIFICENT AND COSTLY COLLECTION OF

Mechanical and Musical

AUTOMATONS!

IS NOW EXHIBITING AT THE

New Gothic Hall, 7, Haymarket,

ADJOINING THE LITTLE THEATRE.

TOGETHER WITH A

GRAND DISPLAY OF ANCIENT ARMOUR!

Which surrounds the spacious and elegantly decorated Hall.

Also a Model of a MAN OF WAR, of Ninety-Four Guns,

Of the most exquisite Workmanship, and Copper-Bottomed!

The WHOLE forming the most Instructive and Amusing EXHIBITION ever opened in this Metropolis!!

THE MECHANICAL PART

Of this truly wonderful and enchanting Assemblage, which has been honoured with the highest Encomiums and most distinguished Patronage, in PARIS and other parts of the CONTINENT, comprises the following subjects.—

THE JUVENILE ARTIST!

Whose astonishing Performances in DRAWING and WRITING (alternately), in presence of the Company, defy all attempts at rivalship, in regard to their BEAUTY, and CORRECTNESS of DESIGN and EXECUTION! This rich and complicated piece of MECHANISM is so wonderfully constructed, that the graceful motions of the youthful Figure, and its easy, elegant, and appropriate system of operations, will ever render it an object of the highest interest and admiration!

The Musical Lady!

Who performs, upon an elegant Finger ORGAN, a variety of pleasing Airs. The fascinating sweetness of her Countenance, and lovely motion of the Eyes, never fail in securing her Admirers! She bows gracefully to the audience; her bosom heaves, as if naturally influenced by the lungs; and every note is produced by the brilliant touch of her fingers, with the exception of *flats*, and *sharps*, which are played by the feet!

The Rope Dancer!

Whose surprising Performances upon the Tight Rope surpass, in *agility, attitudes*, and *evolutions*, every Professor of the Art! keeping correct time to the Music of the Machinery.

The Magician!

Whose inimitable Performances excite the greatest interest and delight, by the sagacious answers he returns to every question proposed to him! The construction of this wonderful self-acting Figure has hitherto puzzled all the first-rate Mechanics in Europe!

THE WALKING FIGURE!

This extraordinary Figure, which moves entirely by its own powers, in every direction, excites the greatest surprise, it having ever been held, by the most intelligent mechanical Artists, to be a thing utterly impossible, by any sort of machinery, to produce a self-moving figure capable of supporting its own equilibrium!

Also, a SIBERIAN MOUSE! set with Pearls.—An ETHIOPEAN CATERPILLAR! of richly enamelled Gold.—The TERRANTULAR SPIDER!—A beautiful HUMMING BIRD! that warbles the most melodious Notes.—An EGYPTIAN LIZARD! of exquisite workmanship, in fine Gold, &c.

THE WHOLE EXHIBITING, by their exact Imitations of ANIMATED NATURE, the most surprising Powers of MECHANICAL ART!!

N. B. The Visitors will have the gratification of inspecting the very curious and complicated MACHINERY, by which the various subjects in this extraordinary COLLECTION have been progressively brought to such inimitable Perfection!

Open from Eleven till Five, and from Seven till Ten in the Evening, brilliantly Illuminated.

ADMITTANCE, 2s. CHILDREN, 1s.—TICKETS FOR THE SEASON, 5s.

☞ Mr. SCHMIDT, the ingenious MECHANIC, who Superintends the Machinery, REPAIRS Musical Boxes, Watches, &c.

HAVELL and Co. Printers, No. 75, Newman-street Oxford-street.

Poster used by Mr. Schmidt in advertising the writing and drawing figure in London just before his departure for St. Petersburg, Russia. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

figure as turned out by the Jacquet-Drozes was known all over Europe. It is not possible that a man so well read and posted in magic and automata as Robert-Houdin

did not know of its existence and mechanism. And if Robert-Houdin had invented the same mechanism it is hardly possible that his design would have run in precisely the same channel as that of Jacquet-Droz and Maillardet, in having the figure draw the dog, the cupid, and the heads of monarchs.

In those days humble mechanicians, however well they were known in their own trade, were not exploited by the public press. Nor did they employ clever journalists to write memoirs lauding their achievements. And so it happened that for years the names of Jacquet-Droz and Maillardet were unsung; their brainwork and handicraft were claimed by Robert-Houdin, who had mastered the art of self-exploitation. To-day, after a century and a half of neglect, the laurel wreath has been lifted from the brow of Robert-Houdin, where it never should have been placed, and has been laid on the graves of the real inventors of the writing and drawing figure, Pierre Jacquet-Droz and Henri-Louis Jacquet-Droz and Jean-David Maillardet.

CHAPTER IV

THE PASTRY COOK OF THE PALAIS ROYAL

CONCERNING this trick, which Robert-Houdin claims as his invention, he writes on page 79 of his "Memoirs," American edition: "The first was a small pastry cook, issuing from his shop door at the word of command, and bringing, according to the spectator's request, patties and refreshments of every description. At the side of the shop, assistant pastry cooks might be seen rolling paste and putting it in the oven."

By means of handbills, programmes, and newspaper notices of magical and mechanical performances, this trick in various guises can be traced back as far as 1796. Nine reputable magicians offered it as part of their repertoire, and at times two men presented it simultaneously, showing that more than one such automaton existed. The dates of the most notable programmes or handbills selected from my collection are as follows:

1, Haddock, 1797. 2, Garnerin, 1815. 3, Gyngell, 1816 and 1823. 4, Bologna, 1820. 5, Henry, 1822. 6, Schmidt, 1827. 7, Rovere, 1828. 8, Charles, 1829. 9, Phillippe, 1841.

In 1827 Schmidt and Gyngell joined forces, yet both before and after this date each performer had the wonderful little piece of mechanism on his programme. In 1841,

four years before Robert-Houdin appeared as a public performer, Phillippe created a sensation in Paris, presenting among other automata "Le Confiseur Galant." In 1845, when Robert-Houdin included "The Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal" in his initial programme at his own theatre in Paris, Phillippe was presenting precisely the same trick at the St. James Theatre, London.

Of this goodly company, however, Rovere and Phillippe deserve more than passing notice, as both were the contemporaries of Robert-Houdin, and Rovere was his personal friend. Both also appear in Robert-Houdin's "Memoirs."

The trick appears first, not as a confectioner's shop with small figures at work, but as a fruitery, then again as a Dutch Coffee-House and a Russian Inn, from which ten sorts of liquor are served. Finally, in 1823, it is featured under the name that later made it famous, the Confectioner's Shop.

Haddock, the Englishman who had the writing and drawing figure in his possession for some time, featured the fruitery on his programmes dated 1796. One of his advertisements from the London *Telegraph* is reproduced on page 106, in connection with the history of the writing and drawing figure, but for convenience I am quoting here Haddock's own description of the fruitery trick, which was even more complicated than the famous Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal:

"A model of the neat rural mansion, and contains the following figures: First, the porter, which stands at the gate, and on being addressed, rings the bell, when the door opens, the fruiteress comes out, and any lady or

gentleman may call for whatever fruit they please, and the figure will return and bring the kind required, which may be repeated and the fruit varied as often as the company orders: it will likewise receive flowers, or any

Take Notice!

The Magistrates of Southwark

Have kindly given to Mr. BOLOGNA, *(of the Theatres Royal Covent Garden and Drury Lane,)* their Permission to Exhibit in the BOROUGH,

At the Great Assembly Room,

Three Tuns Tavern,

His Grand Mechanical and Automatical

EXHIBITION!

Which has for many Years been unrivalled,

AND SANCTIONED BY THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN,

Also received with the most flattering and distinguished Approbation.

Mr. BOLOGNA impressed with a deep sense of the many favors he has for Years received, from a liberal Public, avails himself of this opportunity, to offer an Entertainment which is quite distinct from that of a Theatrical Description, & from its harmless tendency, is peculiarly calculated to attract the Notice and Support of those whose religious Tenets forbid their Participation in Amusements of a more marked and decisive Character.

This Present FRIDAY, March 10th, 1820,

And Every Wednesday & Friday Evenings During Lent,

The Assembly Room has been commodiously fitted up for the Reception of the Public.

The Performances will commence with the following Curious Pieces of Animated Objects of

Mechanism Clockwork.

PART I.—*A Windmill.*

That will Grind out any Card chosen by the Company, with a Variety of Performances by Clock Movement, Deceptions with Boxes, Watches, &c.

2.—*A Cabinet of Peculiar Construction.*

By which will be Produced a Variety of Deceptions with Cards.

3.—*An Automaton Figure representing a Necromancer.*

Who will explain the Thoughts of any Individual in Company.

4.—*A Distiller who Stands by his Tun,*

From which, at Command, he Draws Eight Different Sorts of Liquor.

5.—*A curious Mechanical Fruiterer and Confectioner's Shop,*

Kept by Kitty Comfit, who will produce at Command, such Variety of Fruit & Sweetmeats as may be asked for.—PART II.

OMBRES CHINOIS; or, CHINESE SHADOWS,

In which the following Scenes will be introduced.

1.—The MAGICIAN's CAVE, wherein several Tricks & Metamorphoses will take Place.

2.—REPRESENTATION of a FOREST, in which will be introduced the most Wonderful species of Natural History. To each of the Quadrupeds the most perfect and beautiful Animation will be given.

3.—FISHING,—GAME-KEEPER,—and DUCK SHOOTING.

4.—A much-admired TIGHT-ROPE DANCER, with the HUMOUROUS CLOWN.

5.—A COMICAL KNIFE-GRINDER, *with a Song.*

PART III.—*The Whole to conclude with a brilliant and fascinating Course of*

Artificial or Mechanical Fire-Works!

Introduced in an appropriate Elegant Temple in a Garden Scene, pourtraying Innumerable Changes, an Invention alone sufficient to create Attraction.

Doors open at 7 and begin Half-past 7 o'Clock.—*Front Seats* 2*s.* 6*d.*—*Second Seats* 1*s.* 6*d.*

Tickets to be had of Mr. TAYLOR, at the Bar. T. Romney, Printer, Lambeth.

A Bologna poster of 1820 which features an automatic distiller who draws eight different liquors from one cask. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

small article, carry them in, and produce them again as called for. As the fruits are brought out, they will be given in charge of a watch-dog, which sits in front of the house, and on any person taking or touching them will

begin to bark, and continue to do so until they are returned. The next figure belonging to this piece is the little chimney-sweeper, which will be seen coming from behind the house, will enter the door, appear at the top of the chimney, and give the usual cry of 'Sweep' several times, descend the chimney, and come out with his bag full of soot."

In 1820, Haddock's programme, including the fruitery, appears with only a few minor changes as the répertoire of Bologna, a very clever conjurer who afterward became the assistant of Anderson, the Wizard of the North, and who made most of the latter's apparatus. On the Bologna programme, for a performance to be given at the Great Assembly Room, Three Tuns Tavern, the shop trick is described thus: "A curious Mechanical Fruiterer and Confectioner's Shop, kept by Kitty Comfit, who will produce at Command such Variety of Fruit and Sweetmeats as may be asked for."

The marvellous little shop does not appear again on programmes of magic until 1815, when Garnerin features it as "The Dutch Coffee-House." On the programme used by Garnerin in that year for a benefit which he gave for the General Hospital at Birmingham, England, it is featured as No. 10: "A Dutch Coffee-House, a very surprising mechanical piece, in which there is the figure of a Girl, six inches high, which presents, at the Command of the Spectators, ten different sorts of Liquors."

This programme is of such historical value that I reproduce it in full. It will show that this particular mechanical trick is by no means the most important feature of Garnerin's répertoire. In fact his fame is based on his

ballooning, and he is said to have been the inventor of the parachute. The ascension of the nocturnal balloon, also scheduled on this programme, is an imitation of the one which Garnerin arranged in honor of Bonaparte's coronation in 1805. On that occasion the balloon started at Paris and descended in Rome, a distance of five hundred miles which was covered in twenty-two hours.

Garnerin was a contemporary of both Pinetti and Robertson and was with them in Russia when Pinetti dissipated his fortune in balloon experiments. In their correspondence, both Pinetti and Robertson spoke slightingly of Garnerin, but the Frenchman's programmes all indicate that he was not only a successful aëronaut, but a magician who could present a diverting entertainment.

For the Benefit of the

General Hospital

This present TUESDAY, October 10, 1815.

AN

EXHIBITION

OF THE

WONDERS OF

Art and Nature,

BY

M. GARNERIN,

AND M. DE LA ROCHE,

IN THE GREAT ROOM, AT THE

SHAKESPEARE TAVERN.

Programme.

1.—TWO BEAUTIFUL FIGURES,

Of either Sex, playing on the FLUTE, which by the most skilful mechanical Combinations, perform on that Instrument, and execute either alone or together, any of the musical Pieces chosen, contained in a List. They stop, resume, or change Tunes, according to the wish of the Spectators. The Motions of the *Head, Fingers,* and *Eyes,* are plainly seen.

2.—THE THREE VASES,

That Light, Extinguish, and Re-kindle a WAX TAPER.

3.—THE CANARY FIGURE.

A Masterpiece of the most profound mechanical Combinations.

4.—*THE PNEUMATIC TINDER BOX.*

In the EVENING, at Half past SEVEN, in Addition to these wonderful Performances, will be shown a Variety of Tricks with Cards, and—5, the

Ascension of a Nocturnal Balloon,

Illuminated in Imitation of the one M. GARNERIN sent from Paris, on the Evening of Bonaparte's Coronation, in 1804, and which descended at Rome, a Distance of 900 Miles, in *Twenty-two Hours.*

6.—VARIOUS EXPERIMENTS UPON THE

PNEUMATIC MACHINE.

7.—*A FIGURE that DISCOVERS the THOUGHTS.*

This mechanical Piece is executed with great mathematical Accuracy.

6.—THE COLUMN OF MAGNETICAL GLASS,

For the invisible Ascension of a Card.

9.—*AN EXHIBITION OF A*

Clap of Thunder,

The Effects of which will be instantaneously presented on a Sheet of Paper.

10.—A DUTCH COFFEE HOUSE.

A Garnerin poster of 1815, advertising "A Dutch Coffee House," whose automatic hostess serves refreshments at command. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

In 1816 the elder Gyngell featured the trick on his programmes as "The Russian Inn," and in 1823 he changed it to "The Confectioner's Shop." These programmes are reproduced as the most convincing evidence against the claims of Robert-Houdin.

The Gyngell family is one of the most interesting in the history of magic. The Christian name of the founder of the family I have never been able to ascertain, though programmes give the initial as G. He was celebrated as a Bartholomew Fair conjurer. His career started about 1788, and his contemporaries were Lane, Boaz, Ball, Jonas, Breslaw, and Flocton. At one time Gyngell and Flocton worked together, and Thomas Frost in his book, "The Lives of Conjurers," claims that

THEATRE,
Catherine Street,
STRAND.

Mr. GYNGELL, Sen.

Respectfully informs the Public, the following Entertainments continuing to be honored with the most rapturous Applause, will be Repeated

This Present Thursday, February 15th, 1816,

And Every Evening till further Notice.

On which Occasion Mr. G. intreats at once to offer his most grateful Thanks for past, and solicits a continuance of future Patronage. As a Stimulus Mr. G. will introduce innumerable & unprecedented Novelties, never exhibited here. In particular

FIRST.

A PEDESTAL CLOCK,

So singularly constructed, that it is obedient to the Word of Command.—The Dial removed, it becomes a PILLAR; which, by the Power of Mechanism alone, will change, and produce any stated number of Black and White Balls, or both together.

SECOND.

Representation of a Russian Inn,

The Hostess of which will attend with any Liquor that is called for, and retire when requested. These, together with a Trunk of curious Construction, containing extraordinary Luggage, a beautiful Bureau, Ring Boxes, Caddies, Mills, &c. &c. &c. all so equally ingenious and beautiful, that it is impossible to say which is the most WONDERFUL. In short

Had Mr G. a Wish to insult the Understanding of his Audiences, by attempting to impose on them the Idea of MAGIC, the exquisite Powers of these Pieces would most assuredly assist him in the Plan; but a Friend to plain Truth, and averse to every Idea of CONJURATION, is his Wish to introduce them as what they really are.

Wonderful Pieces of Mechanism !!!

Mr. GYNGELL will open the Performance with Mathematical, Philosophical, and Uncommon

EXPERIMENTS,

To particularise every Part of this Performance would fill a volume. But twenty eight years elapsed in the service of the Public (during which time it has been his constant study to render his Performance more worthy their patronage) has enabled him to bring forward a greater variety, than any who ever attempted the Art.

Astonishing Sagacious Live Birds

The Sagacity of so wild a Creature as a Bird, is almost beyond Belief. The Manœuvres these Aërials will go through, might seem the effect of Reason, suffice it to say, they may justly be called, wonderful Little Birds, well worth the Attention of the Curious.

The Wonderful Performance of

THE LEARNED DOGS

In whom the proverbial Sagacity of the whole Species seems concentrated! Their Performance consists of Country Dancing, Waltzing, Playing at Leap-Frog, &c.&c. is of so varied and novel a kind; that, subjects less deserving, have occasioned most elaborate Panegyrics! But Mr. G. ever averse to *puffing*, would rather please, by exceeding the Promise of his Bill, than by a *contrary Plan, force a Disappointment on his Audience.*

Mr. GYNGELL will perform on that unrivalled Instrument for Sweetness & Brilliancy of Tone

The Harmonized Musical

GLASSES,

Which of all Harmony is indisputably the most exquisite.

OLYMPIC EXERCISES,

By Mr. GYNGELL, Jun.

The English Equilibrist ! ! !

Consisting of Balancing in a most astonishing manner.

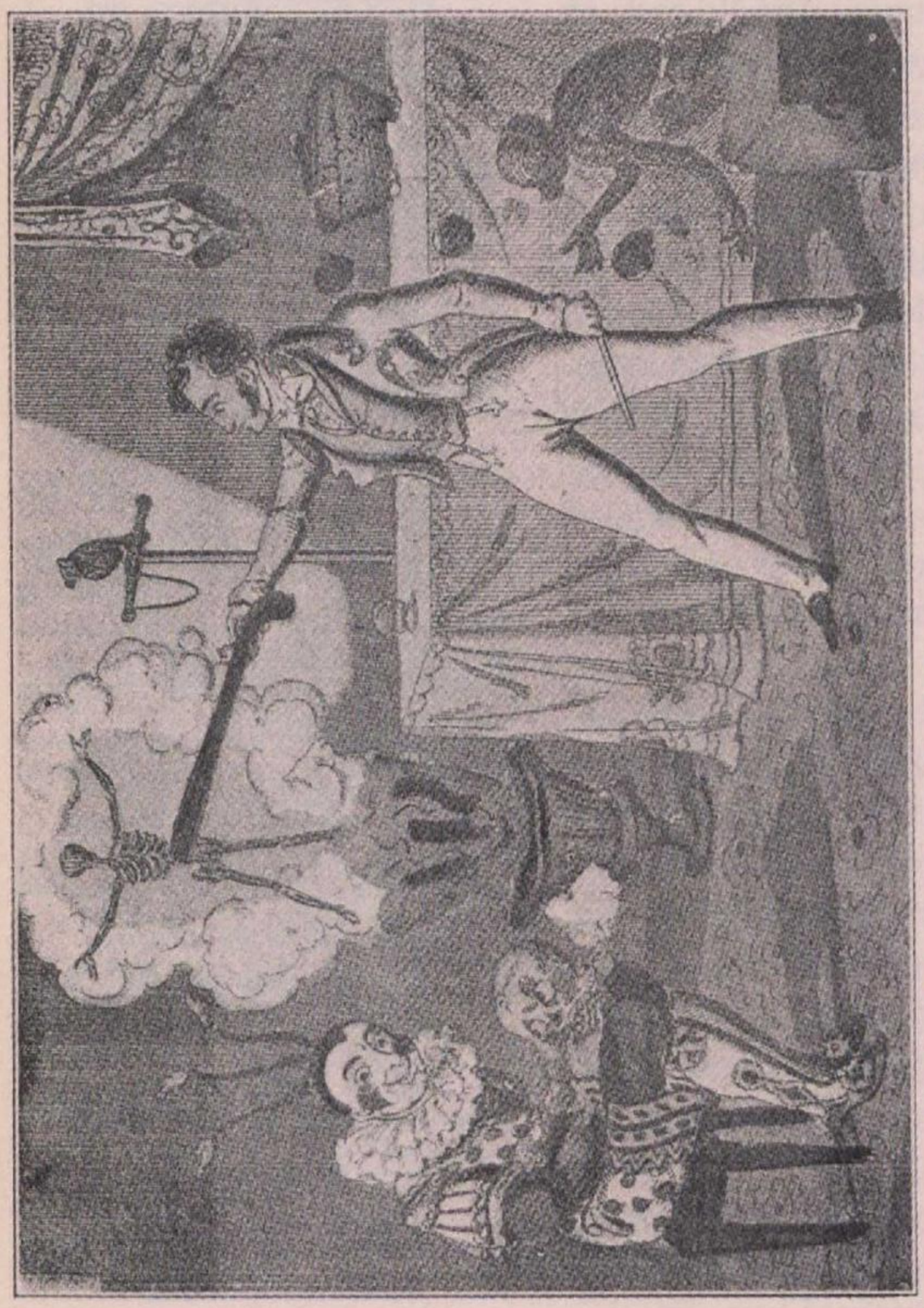
The Microcosm,

Or Les Ombres Chinois.

Consisting of a Variety of *Scenes*, with upwards of 100 moving Figures, accompanied with Dialogue and appropriate Comic Action.

YOUNG GYNGELL's Performance

A Gyngell poster of 1816, featuring the Russian Inn, with service of various kinds of liquor. From the Harry Houdini Collection.



The original Gyngell, a portrait reproduced from the book on magic written by this famous Bartholomew Fair conjurer. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

at Flocton's death Gyngell received a portion of the former's wealth.

Associated with him in his performances were his brother, two sons, and a daughter. The latter was not only a clever rope-dancer but a musician of more than ordinary ability and she often constituted the entire "orchestra."

On Gyngell's programme offered in 1827 he proves himself a great showman, for he features Herr Schmidt's "Mechanical Automatons, Phantasmagoria, a laughing sketch entitled Wholesale Blunders, his son on the flying wire, during which he would throw a somersault through a balloon of real fire, a broadsword dance by Miss Louise and Master Gyngell, and Miss Louise's performance on the tight rope, clowned by Master Lionel."

On a programme used in Hull, October 29th, 1827, a lottery was featured as follows: "On which occasion the first hundred persons paying for the gallery will be entitled by ticket to a chance of a Fat Goose, and the same number in the pit to have the same chance for a fat turkey. To be drawn for on the stage, in the same manner as the State Lottery."

According to Thomas Frost, Gyngell died in 1833 and was buried in the Parish Church, Camberwell. His children, however, continued the work so excellently planned by their father.

The programmes herewith reproduced I purchased from Henry Evanion, who secured them directly from the last of the Gyngell family, as the accompanying letter, now a part of my collection, will show:

DOVER, February 10th, 1867.

MR. EVANION:

DEAR SIR—Yours of the 5th inst. I received just as I was leaving Folkestown, and it was forwarded from Guilford.

I am sorry I have not one of my old bills with me, neither do I think any of my family could find one at home. I may have some among my old conjuring things, and when I return to Guilford I will look them over and send you what I can find. I was sorry I was not at home when you were in Guilford, for I feel much pleasure in meeting a responsible professional. I am not certain when I shall return, but most likely not for six weeks. I will keep your address; so should you change your residence, write to me about that time.

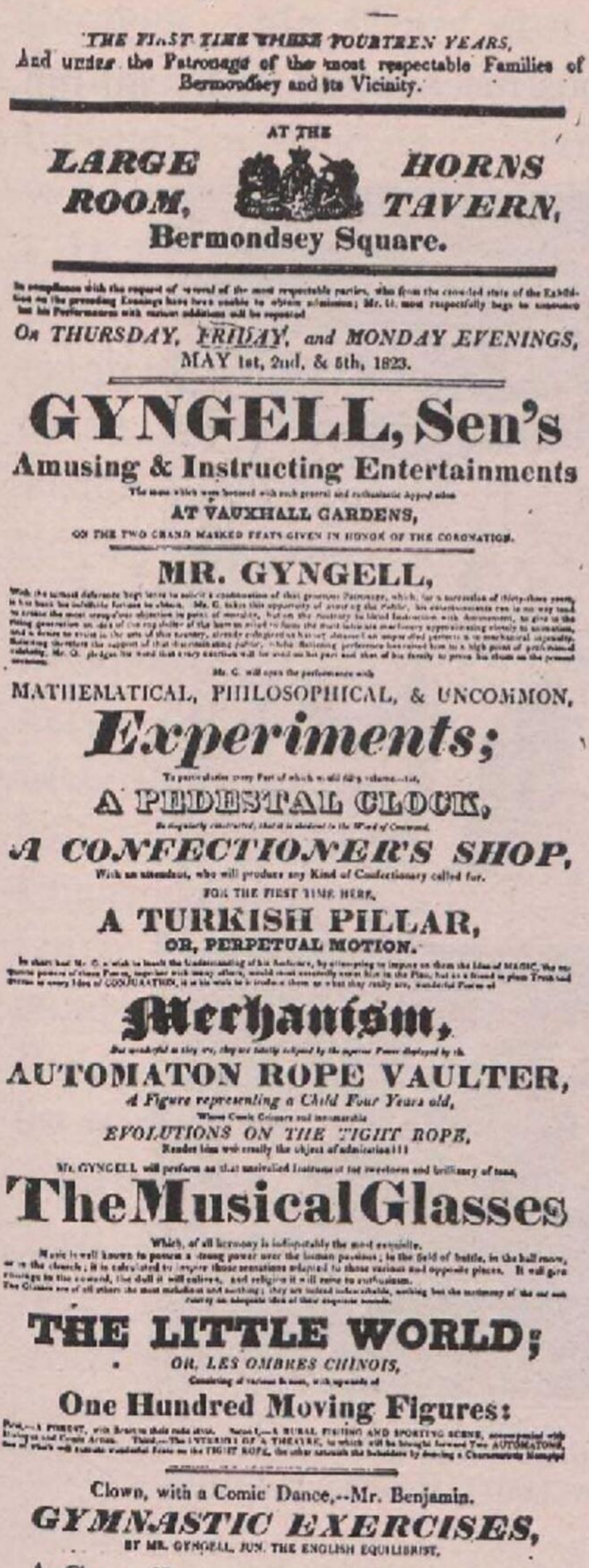
I was looking over some old papers some time last summer, and found a bill of my father's, nearly 60 years ago, when his great trick was cutting off the cock's head and restoring it to life again. And a great wonder it was considered and brought crowded rooms.

I was Master Gyngell, the wonderful performer on the slack wire; and now in my 71st year I am lecturer, pyrotechnist, and high-rope walker, for I did that last summer. My life has been a simple one of ups and downs.

I am, dear sir, yours truly,

J. D. G. GYNGELL.

The signature of this letter, "J. D. G. Gyngell," clears up considerable uncertainty regarding the names of the two Gyngell sons. At times the clever young tight-rope performer has been spoken of as Joseph, and at others as Gellini. It is quite probable that the two names were really part of one, and the full baptismal name was "Joseph D. Gellini." It was as Gellini Gyngell that he met Henry Evanion at Deal, February 20th, 1862, when the latter was performing as a magician at the Deal and Walmer Institute, while Gellini Gyngell gave an exhibition of fireworks and a magic-lantern display on the



THE FIRST TIME WHERE FOURTEEN YEARS,
And under the Patronage of the most respectable Families of Bermondsey and its Vicinity.

AT THE

LARGE ROOM, HORNS TAVERN,

Bermondsey Square.

In compliance with the request of several of the most respectable parties, who from the crowded state of the Exhibition on the preceding Evenings have been unable to obtain admission; Mr. G. most respectfully begs to announce that his Performances with various additions will be repeated

On THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and MONDAY EVENINGS,
MAY 1st, 2nd, & 5th, 1823.

GYNGELL, Sen's

Amusing & Instructing Entertainments

The same which were honored with such general and enthusiastic Applause when

AT VAUXHALL GARDENS,

ON THE TWO GRAND MASKED FEATS GIVEN IN HONOR OF THE CORONATION.

MR. GYNGELL,

With the utmost deference begs leave to solicit a continuation of that generous Patronage, which, for a succession of thirty-three years, it has been his indubitable fortune to obtain. Mr. G. takes this opportunity of assuring the Public, his entertainments can in no way tend to evince the most scrupulous objection in point of morality, but on the contrary to blend instruction with Amusement, to give to the rising generation an idea of the ingenuity of the human mind in forming the most intricate machinery approximating closely to animation, and a desire to excel in the arts of this country, already enlightened beyond almost an unprecedented period in mechanical ingenuity. Relieving therefore the support of that discriminating public, which flattering preference has raised him to a high point of professional celebrity, Mr. G. pledges his word that every exertion will be used on his part and that of his family to prove his claim on the present occasion.

Mr. G. will open the performance with

MATHEMATICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, & UNCOMMON,

Experiments;

To particularize every Part of which would fill a volume—viz.

A PEDESTAL CLOCK,

So singularly constructed, that it is obedient to the Word of Command.

A CONFECTIONER'S SHOP,

With an attendant, who will produce any Kind of Confectionary called for.

FOR THE FIRST TIME HERE,

A TURKISH PILLAR,

OR, PERPETUAL MOTION.

In short, but Mr. G. wish to benefit the Understanding of his Audience, by attempting to impress on them the Idea of MAGIC, the supposed powers of those Powers, together with many others, would most assuredly cause him to be Pitied, but as a friend to plain Truth and Reason in every Idea of CONTEMPLATION, it is his wish to let mankind know them as what they really are, wonderful Powers of

Mechanism,

But wonderful as they are, they are fatally eclipsed by the superior Power displayed by the

AUTOMATON ROPE VAULTER,

A Figure representing a Child Four Years old,

Whose Comic Grimace and inimitable

EVOLUTIONS ON THE LIGHT ROPE,

Render him truly the object of admiration!!!

Mr. GYNGELL will perform on that unrivalled Instrument the sweetness and brilliancy of tone,

The Musical Glasses

Which, of all harmony is indisputably the most exquisite.

Music is well known to possess a strong power over the human passions; in the field of battle, in the ball room, or in the church; it is calculated to inspire those sensations adapted to those various and opposite places. It will give Energy to the coward, the dull it will enliven, and religion it will raise to enthusiasm.

The Glasses are of all others the most melodious and soothing; they are indeed indescribable, nothing but the testimony of the ear can convey an adequate idea of their exquisite sounds.

THE LITTLE WORLD;

OR, LES OMBRES CHINOIS,

Consisting of various Scenes, with upwards of

One Hundred Moving Figures:

Part I.—A FOREST, with Scenes that make sport. Scene 2.—A RURAL FISHING AND SPORTING SCENE, accompanied with Dancing and Comic Action. Third.—The INTERIOR OF A THEATRE, in which will be brought forward Two AUTOMATONS, One of which will execute wonderful Feats on the LIGHT ROPE, the other astonish the Beholders by dancing a Characteristic Hornpipe

Clown, with a Comic Dance,--Mr. Benjamin.

GYMNASTIC EXERCISES,

BY MR. GYNGELL, JUN. THE ENGLISH EQUILIBRIST.

A Gyngell programme of 1823, advertising "A Confectioner's Shop," whose attendant will serve automatically any sort of confectionery demanded. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

South Esplanade. A fine notice of both performances was published in the Deal *Telegram* of February 23d, when the hope was expressed that Gyngell's collection, taken among those who enjoyed his outdoor performance, repaid him for his admirable entertainment. Gyngell was landlord of the Bowling Green Tavern at this time, and travelled as an entertainer only at intervals.

The next appearance of the trick is in a book published by M. Henry, a ventriloquist, who played London and the provinces from 1820 to 1828. During an engagement at the Adelphia Theatre, London, which according to the programme was about 1822, Henry published a book entitled "Conversazione; or, Mirth and Marvels," in which he interspersed witty conversation with descriptions of his various

tricks. On page 11 he thus describes the automaton under consideration:

"Illusion Third. A curious mechanical trick; an inn,

Reproduction of a rare old colored lithograph in three sections. This section represents Gyngell. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

from which issues the hostess for orders, upon receiving which, she returns into the inn and brings out the various liquors as called for by the audience, and at last waiting

for the money, which, having received, goes in and shuts the door. Mr. Henry says he has produced the inn in preference to palaces, though more stupendous and magnificent, thinking, as a certain author wrote, the heartiest welcome is to be found at the inn."

In the same year Henry issued a challenge open to the whole world, defying any performer to equal his manipulation of the cup and ball trick. He also employed as an adjunct of his conjuring performances Signor de Fedori of Rome, an armless wonder, who used his feet to play the drum, violin, and triangle.

A contemporary of Henry was Charles, the great ventriloquist, who varied his performance as did all ventriloquists of his day, by presenting "Philosophical and Mechanical Experiments" to make up a two-hour-and-a-half performance. Charles made several tours of the English provinces, and played in London at intervals. On a London programme which is undated, but which announces M. Charles as playing at Mr. Wigley's Large Room, Spring Gardens, the second automaton on his list is described as "The Russian Inn, out of which comes a little Woman and brings the Liquor demanded for." Two of his programmes dated Theatre Royal, Hull, April, 1829, now in my collection, carry a pathetic foot-note written in the handwriting of the collector through whom they came into my possession: "The audiences on both the evenings were extremely small, and the money was refunded."

By referring to the chapter on the writing and drawing figure, Chapter III, Page 113, a Schmidt programme of 1827 will be found, in which he features "The En-

chanted Dutch Coffee-House, an elegant little building. On the traveller ringing the bell, the door opens, the hostess attends and provides him with any liquor he may call for."

Schmidt seems to have confined his exhibitions to London and the provinces and was often connected with other magicians, including Gyngell and Buck. The latter was an English conjurer, best known as the man who was horribly injured when presenting "The Gun Delusion." This consisted of having a marked bullet shot at the performer, who caught it between his teeth on a plate, or on the point of a needle or knife. Some miscreant loaded the gun with metal after Buck had it prepared for the trick, and the unfortunate performer's right cheek was literally shot away.

In 1828 Jules de Rovere, a French conjurer, whose fame rests principally on the fact that he coined the new title "prestidigitator," appeared at the Haymarket Thea-

VENTRILOQUISM.

L. CHARLES,

PROFESSOR OF
MECHANICAL SCIENCES,
AND
FIRST VENTRILOQUIST,
from the Continent;
UNDER THE PRIVILEGE AND PATRONAGE OF
HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF PRUSSIA,
And Duke of Mecklenburg Schwerin;

Has the Honour to acquaint the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public at large, that he has just arrived from the Continent, and will perform during this and the ensuing Three Months of *January, February,* and *March,* at

MR. WIGLEY'S LARGE ROOM,
SPRING GARDENS,

His Mechanic and Ventriloque Performances every Day, commencing precisely at Three o'Clock, and Evening at Eight o'Clock,
except *Saturday* and *Sunday.*
Front Chairs, 3s.—Middle Seats, 2s.—Upper Seats, 1s.
N. B. The Room is particularly WARM by a new invented process.

TO THE PUBLIC.

The SIEUR CHARLES will remain a short period in London, where he intends to represent all the possible illusions of VENTRILOQUISM, of which the human voice is capable, when favoured by Nature and perfected by Art. He will explain all the Mysteries which were resorted to in former times to impose upon the weak and superstitious, under the name of ORACLES. This manner of speaking ought to be looked upon as a gift of Nature and of Chance rather than as an Art, since it is impossible to teach it but to those born with the necessary dispositions. Therefore it is proved, that he who professes this Art must possess those means which still remain unknown, notwithstanding the trouble the learned have taken to discover it.

The SIEUR CHARLES will perform the following Scenes.

Part. I. The modern Philosopher; or a Dialogue between two Men of Science and their Servant.....*Three Voices.*
II. Dialogue between a Sick Man, his Physician, a Friend, and Servant.....*Four Voices.*
III. The Wine Merchant and his Servant, whose voice will be heard from the bottom of a Cellar.....*Two Voices.*
IV. A Dialogue from a Window, with a person in the Street; when the window is open, the voice will appear still nearer. This experiment will appear most interesting.

THE VENTRILOQUISM will be preceded by several very amusing Performances, and Mechanical and Scientific Games, highly interesting: among which will be

1. A MECHANICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CLOCK.
2. The Russian Inn, out of which comes a little Woman and brings the liquor demanded for.
3. The Trojan Pillar, by which different bodies are altered in an imperceptible manner.
4. A most wonderful Mechanical Chest of Drawers.
5. A curious Travelling Trunk.
6. Three Bells, a Mechanical Game, which will astonish the Spectators.

And several tours d'addresse.

Printed by W. Clowes, Northumberland-court, Strand.

A Charles poster dated about 1829 in which the Russian Inn and its obedient little figure are featured. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

tre, London, and also toured the English provinces. A clipping from the Oxford *Herald* of that year includes this description of his automaton: "One of the clowns vanishes from the box, and instantly at the top of the hall a little lady, in a little hotel brilliantly illuminated, gives out wines and liquors to them who ask for them, without any apparent communication with the artiste, and yet the lady is only six inches high."

In the late 30's Rovere made his headquarters in Paris, and there he and Robert-Houdin met. The latter refers to this meeting on page 153 of his "Memoirs," when writing of the misfortunes which had overtaken Father Roujol, whose shop had once been headquarters for conjurers: "Still I had the luck to form here the acquaintance of Jules de Rovere, the first to employ a title now generally given to fashionable conjurers."

And after Rovere, Phillippe, who is by far the most important presenter of the Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal, as bearing upon Robert-Houdin's claims.

For Phillippe's early history we must depend largely upon Robert-Houdin's "Memoirs." According to these, Phillippe started life as a confectioner or maker of sweets, and his real name was Phillippe Talon. According to an article published in *L'Illusionniste* in January, 1902, he was born in Alias, near Nîmes, December 25th, 1802, and died in Bokhara, Turkey, June 27th, 1878.

Like many a genius and successful man, his early history was written in a minor key. According to Robert-Houdin his sweets did not catch the Parisian fancy, and he went to London, where at that time French bonbons were in high favor. But for some reason he failed in

London, and went on to Aberdeen, Scotland, where he was very soon reduced to sore straits. In his hour of

Reproduction of pastel portrait of Phillippe. Only known likeness of the conjurer in existence. Made for him by a Vienna artist. Original now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

extremity his cleverness saved the day. In Aberdeen at the same time was a company of actors almost as unfortunate as himself. They were presenting a pantomime

which the public refused to patronize. The young confectioner approached the manager of the pantomime and suggested that they join forces. In addition to the regular admission to the pantomime each patron was to pay sixpence and receive in return a paper of mixed sugar plums and a lottery ticket by which he might gain the first prize of the value of five pounds. In addition, Talon promised not only to provide the sweets free of cost to the management, but to present a new and startling feature at the close of the performance.

The novel announcement crowded the house, the pantomime and the bonbons alike found favor, but the significant feature of the performance was young Talon's appearance in the finale in the rôle of "Punch," for which he was admirably made up. He executed an eccentric dance, at the finish of which he pretended to fall and injure himself. In a faint voice he demanded pills to relieve his pain, and a fellow-actor brought on pills of such enormous size that the audience stopped sympathizing with the actor and began to laugh. But the pills all disappeared down the dancer's throat, for Talon was not only an able confectioner and an agile dancer, but a sleight-of-hand performer. From that hour he exchanged the spoon of the confectioner for the wand of the magician. The fortunes of both the pantomime and Phillippe, as he now called himself, improved. Quite probably he remained with the pantomime company until the close of the season and then struck out as an independent performer.

Another story which is gleaned from a biography of John Henry Anderson, the Wizard of the North, tells

how Phillippe started his career as a pastry cook in the household of one Lord Panmure, and I quote this literally from the Anderson book, because I believe it to be truth-

STRAND THEATRE,

OPEN EVERY EVENING.

Stalls 3s. Boxes 2s. Pit 1s. Gallery 6d.

PHILLIPPE'S

MODERN MIRACLES.

PART I.—Will comprise M. Phillippe's celebrated and unrivalled Tours de Physique, and astounding Feats of

MAGICAL DELUSIONS:

Including his peculiar and unequalled

METAMORPHOSES AND ASTONISHING DECEPTIONS.

The First Part will commence with

The Celebrated Cossack and Automaton Magician—A new mode of Printing—The Magic Crowns (*dedicated to Ladies*)—The Metamorphoses; or the Chemical Canaries—The London Hat Maker of 1945; or "What will be in a hundred years"—The Gallant Confectioner; or, Tom Thumb's Rival, and the Lilliputian Bar Maid—The Learned Peacock—The Flight of the Turtle Doves in the Sun—The voyage of Pope Leon—A New System of making Sweetmeats, bon bons for the Million, Gratis!—The Tailor Harlequin; the most intricate and perfect piece of Mechanism ever exhibited—"A Lesson for the Ladies," or a New Method of Making Coffee.

The First Part will terminate with the Admired Delusion; entitled the

GRAND DISTRIBUTION OF THE NATIONAL FLAG!!!

An Interval of Ten Minutes between each Part.

PART II.

THE NEW BALLET DIVERTISSEMENT,

RICHE D'AMOUR.

Le Duc de Lancy. Mlle CONSTANCE CHIARINI,
Le Marquise de Pompadour, La Petite PAULINE CHIARINI,
Regolard, (un Valet) ANGELO CHIARINI.

In the course of the Ballet, will be introduced LE MINUET OF LOUIS XV.

PART III—THE EXTRAORDINARY

AMERICAN BROTHERS

Will appear in their Unique Scene, entitled

OLYMPIC GAMBOLS, in which they will perform several of their most powerful FEATS OF AGILITY,

Which continue to be received nightly with the greatest admiration and astonishment, and hailed with thunders of applause.

PART IV.

A NIGHT IN THE PALACE OF PEKIN,

In which M. Phillippe will perform some of the most Extraordinary Tours d'Adresse, including his most brilliant and peculiar

INDIAN AND CHINESE FEATS!

And consisting of the most surprising Feats ever attempted by any European, entitled

The Enchanted Orange—The Mystic Sugar Loaf and Flying Handkerchiefs—Monsieur Mog and the Rose of England, from which will appear a Scottish Chieftain, in full Costume, who will dance the Highland Fling—The Magic Supper of Paraphanga-nouse; or, The Cook Bewitched!—The Hat of Good Fortune—Endless and Inexhaustible Profusion, including the Grand European Bazaar and Prodigious Distribution of Flora's Gifts.

The Entertainments will conclude with, EACH EVENING, the Astounding and Surprising Delusion, entitled

LES BASSINS DE NEPTUNE ET LES POISSONS D'OR

AND THE GRAND MENAGERIE!!

Unanimously pronounced to be the most inexplicable Tours de Physique ever executed, and which have Nightly been received with the most rapturous peals of admiration and bursts of astonishment.

Doors to be opened at a Quarter-past 7. Performance to commence Quarter to 8.

☞ *The above Programme is the most Novel Entertainment in London, and must be seen to be believed; the Public Press has pronounced it to be the most marvellous Performance ever executed, and baffles all description.*

M. PHILLIPPE will, *by Desire*, and in consequence of the immense overflows which have attended his MORNING PERFORMANCES, give a GRAND

Juvenile Entertainment,

EVERY THURSDAY MORNING,

COMMENCING AT TWO O'CLOCK.

Private Boxes, Stalls, and Places to be secured at the Box-Office of the Theatre, which is open from 10 till 5 daily; and at MITCHELL'S Royal Library, 33, Old Bond Street.

*** W. Johnson, "Savage Street Press," 60, St. Martin's Lane.

Poster used by Phillippe during his engagement at the Strand Theatre, London, 1845–46. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

ful, as material gathered from Anderson literature has proved to be:

"It was at this time that he came in contact with a person who afterward, under the designation of M. Phillippe, became celebrated in France as a magician. Phillippe (for so was he named in Scotland) was originally a cook in the services of the late Lord Panmure. Leaving that employment, he settled down and remained for a number of years in Aberdeen. He heard of the fame of the youthful magician, was induced to visit his 'temple,' and was struck with his performances; and having made the acquaintance of Mr. Anderson, he solicited from him and obtained an insight into his profession, and fac-similes of his then humble apparatus. Phillippe improved to such a degree upon the knowledge he thus acquired that, leaving England for France, he earned the reputation of being one of the most accomplished magicians ever seen in the country."

The date of his initial performance is not known, but he must have remained in Scotland, perfecting his act, for the earliest Phillippe programme in my collection is dated February 3d, 1837, when he opened at Waterloo Rooms, Edinburgh, and announced:

"The high character which Mons. Phillippe has obtained from the Aberdeen, Glasgow, Greenock and Paisley Press, being the only four towns in Britain where he has made his appearance, is a sufficient guarantee to procure him a visit from the inhabitants of this enlightened Metropolis, where talent had always been supported when actually deserved."

Evidently, however, Phillippe made rapid progress, for a programme dated Saturday, April 21st, 1838, shows that his last daytime or matinée performance in Waterloo

Rooms was given under the patronage of such members of the nobility as the Right Honorable Lady Gifford, the Right Honorable Lady H. Stuart Forbes, etc. In an

Phillippe and his Scotch assistant, Domingo. The latter became famous as a magician under the name of Macallister, introducing in America Phillippe's gift show. From a lithograph in the Harry Houdini Collection.

Edinburgh programme, dated probably 1837, he is shown as performing his tricks, clad in peculiar evening clothes, knickerbockers and waistcoat matching, with a mere suggestion of the swallow-tail coat. In his 1838 bill he is shown clad in the flowing robes of the old-time magician, and he advertises the Chinese tricks, notably the gold-fish trick, which demanded voluminous draperies.

According to Robert-Houdin, Phillippe built a small wooden theatre in Glasgow. Humble as this building was, however, it brought a significant factor into Phillippe's life. This was a young bricklayer named Andrew Macallister who had a natural genius for tricks and models, and who became Phillippe's apprentice, later appearing as Domingo, his assistant on the stage, wearing black make-up.

In either Edinburgh or Dublin Phillippe met the Chinese juggler or conjurer who taught him the goldfish trick and the secret of the Chinese rings.

Armed with these two striking tricks, Phillippe determined to satisfy his yearning to return to his native land, and in 1841 he appeared at the Salle Montesquieu, Paris. Later, the Bonne-Nouvelle, a temple of magic, was opened for Phillippe in Paris, and there he enjoyed the brilliant run to which Robert-Houdin refers in his "Memoirs."

Phillippe was an indefatigable worker and traveller, and one brilliant engagement followed another. During the 40's he appeared, according to my collection of programmes, all over Continental Europe, and in most of his programmes this paragraph is featured:

"PART III.

"An unexpected present at once gratuitous and laughable, composed of twelve prizes, nine lucky and three unfortunate, in which the general public will participate."

He also continued to distribute bonbons from an inexhaustible source, probably a cornucopia, calling this trick "a new system of making sweetmeats, or Le Confiseur Moderne."

During his first engagement in Vienna he had painted for advertising purposes a pastel portrait, showing him clad in his magician's robes at the finale of the goldfish trick. From this picture his later cuts were made. By some mistake he left the original pastel in Vienna, where I bought it at a special sale for my collection. It remains an exquisite piece of color work, even at this day. So far it is the only real likeness of Phillippe I have been able to unearth.

In 1845–46 he was at the height of his popularity in London, where he had a tremendous run. In June, 1845, we find him playing at the St. James Theatre, under Mitchell's direction, and on September 29th, under his own management, he moves to the Strand, where he is still found in January of 1846. During all this time he featured The Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal under the title of "Le Confiseur Galant."

As proofs that Phillippe used the pastry-cook trick both before and during Robert-Houdin's career as a magician, I offer several programmes containing accurate descriptions of the automaton, and also a page illustration from a current publication dated Paris, 1843, which shows the

confectioner or pastry-cook standing in the doorway of his house, while the key explaining the various tricks

1. Cuisine de Parafarnamus; 2. Le Chapelier de 1943; 3. Le Paon magique; 4. La Bouteille enchantée; 5. La Chaîne hydroustane; 6. La Tête infernale; 7. Le Chapeau merveilleux; 8. L'Arlequin savant; 9. Le Confiseur galant et le Liquoriste impromptu; 10. Le Bassin de Neptune ou les poissons d'or et la ménagerie prodigieuse; 11. Eclairage de tout le théâtre improvisé par un coup de pistolet.

Reproduction of a large lithograph showing all of Phillipre's tricks, including "Le Confiseur Galant" scheduled as No. 9. From the original lithograph dated 1842 now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

reads: "No. 9. Le Confiseur galant et le Liqueriste impromptu."

Robert-Houdin devotes nearly an entire chapter to the history of Phillippe and a description of his tricks and automata, yet curiously forgets to mention the pastry cook, which he later claims as his own invention.

Ernest Basch, formerly of Basch Brothers, conjurers, and the richest manufacturer of illusions in the world, claims that the original trick is now in his possession. Herr Basch is located in Hanover, Germany, where he builds large illusions only. The wonderful mechanical house passed to Basch by a bequest on the death of Baron von Sandhovel, a wealthy resident of Amsterdam, Holland. Von Sandhovel had bought the trick from the heirs of Robert-Houdin on the death of the latter, because he believed it to be the brain and handwork of Opre, a Dutch mechanician of great talent. Ernest Basch shares this belief, and with other well-read conjurers thinks that Opre was Robert-Houdin's assistant and built most of his automata, including The Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal, The Windmill or Dutch Inn, Auriel and Debureau, The French Gymnasts, The Harlequin, and The Chausseur.

Opre was a man of ability, but lacked presence and personality properly to present his inventions. So far I have found his name in three places only: On the frontispiece of a Dutch book on magic, published in Amsterdam; in Ernest Basch's correspondence about conjurers; and on page 77 of Robert-Houdin's "Memoirs," when he speaks of Opre as the maker of the Harlequin figure which Torrini asked Robert-Houdin to repair during their travels.

With such convincing proof, some of which was con-

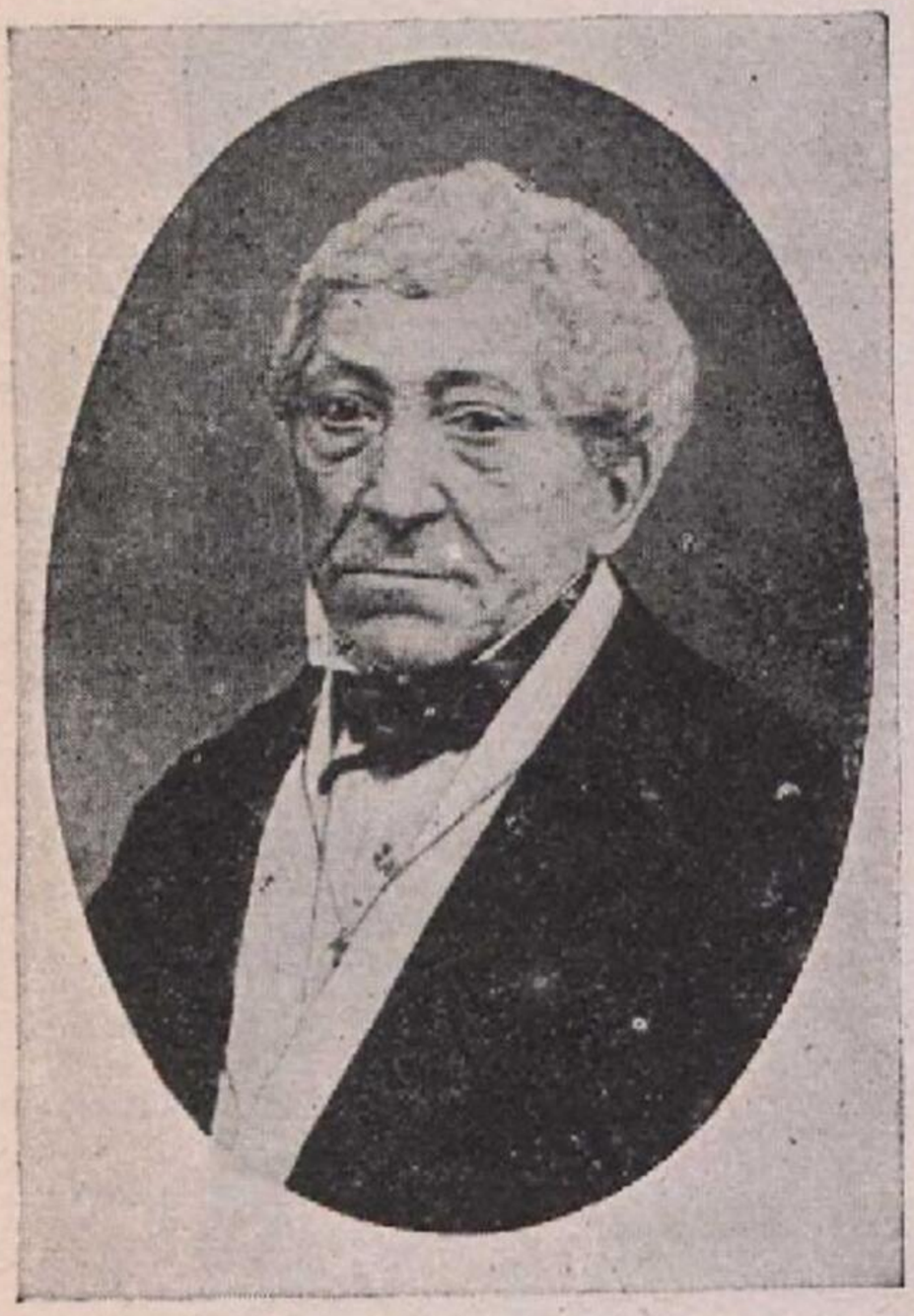
temporary, that other men had exhibited The Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal in its identical or slightly different

Ernest Basch and "Le Confiseur Galant," which he claims is the original Robert-Houdin "Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal." From a photograph in the Harry Houdini Collection.

guise, it was daring indeed of Robert-Houdin to claim it as his own invention.

The most direct information regarding Opre comes

through that eminent family of conjurers known as the Bambergs of Holland. At this writing, "Papa" (David) Bamberg, of the fourth generation, is prominent on the Dutch stage, and his son Tobias David, known as Okito, of the fifth generation, is a cosmopolitan magician, presenting a Chinese act.



David Leendert Bamberg, of the second generation of the Bamberg family. Born 1786; died 1869. The above daguerrotype was presented to the author by Herr Ernest Basch, and is the only one in existence.

According to the family history, traceable by means of handbills, programmes, and personal correspondence, the original Bamberg (Eliazar) had a vaulting figure in his collection of automata in 1790, fifty years before Robert-Houdin became a professional entertainer. This figure was made by Opre, to whom all conjurers of that time looked for automata and apparatus. David Leendert Bamberg, of the second generation, who also had the vaulting figure, was the intimate friend and confidant of Opre and was authority for the statement that Opre's son sold in Paris the various automata made by his father, which later Robert-Houdin claimed as his own invention. It may be noted that Robert-Houdin never invented a single automaton after he went on the stage in 1845, and as Opre died in 1846, the coincidence is nothing if not significant.

CHAPTER V

THE OBEDIENT CARDS — THE CABALISTIC CLOCK — THE TRAPEZE AUTOMATON

The Obedient Cards.

TO trace here the history of three very common tricks claimed by Robert-Houdin as his own inventions would be sheer waste of time, if the exposure did not prove beyond doubt that in announcing the various tricks of his répertoire as the output of his own brain he was not only flagrant and unscrupulous, but he did not even give his readers credit for enough intelligence to recognize tricks performed repeatedly by his predecessors whom they had seen. Not satisfied with purloining tricks so important that one or two would have been sufficient to establish the reputation of any conjurer or inventor, he must needs lay claim to having invented tricks long the property of mountebanks as well as reputable magicians.

The tricks referred to are the obedient card, the cabalistic clock, and the automaton known as Diavolo Antonio or Le Voltigeur au Trapèze.

The obedient-card trick, mentioned on page 245 of the American edition of his "Memoirs," as "a novel experiment invented by M. Robert-Houdin," can be found on the programme of every magician who ever laid claim to dexterity of hand. Whether they accomplished the effect

by clock-work or with a black silk thread or a human hair, the result was one and the same. It has also been worked by using a fine thread with a piece of wax at the end. The wax is fastened to the card, and the thread draws it up. The simplest method of all is to place the thread

Card trick as featured by Anderson in 1836–37. From a poster in the Harry Houdini Collection.

over and under the cards, weaving it in and out as it were, and then, by pulling the thread, to bring the different cards selected into view.

So common was the trick that its description was written in every work on magic published from 1784 to the date of Robert-Houdin's first appearance, and in at least one volume printed as early as 1635. The majority

of French encyclopædias described the trick and exposed it according to one method or another, and Robert-Houdin admits having been a great reader of encyclopædias.

The trick first appears in print in various editions of "Hocus Pocus," twenty in all, starting with 1635. The majority contain feats with cards, showing how to bring them up or out of a pack with a black thread, a hair-spring, or an elastic.

In 1772 the rising-card trick was shown in Guyot's "Physical and Mathematical Recreations," also in the Dutch or Holland translations of the same work. In 1791 it was minutely explained by Hofrath von Eckartshausen, who wrote five different books on the subject of magic. The fourth, being devoted principally to the art of the conjurer, was entitled "Die Gauckeltasche, oder vollständiger Unterricht in Taschenspieler u. s. w.," which translated means "The Conjurer's Pocket or Thorough Instructions in the Art of Conjuring." The title was due to the fact that in olden days conjurers worked with the aid of a large outside pocket. The five books, published under the general title of "Aufschlüsse zur Magie," bear date of Munich, Germany.

On page 138 of the third edition of Gale's "Cabinet of Knowledge," published in London in 1800, will be found a description of the rising-card trick as done with pin and thread, and the same book shows how it is accomplished with wax and a hair. This book seems to have been compiled from Philip Breslaw's work on magic, "The Last Legacy," published in 1782. Benton, who published the English edition of Decremps' famous work on magic, exposing Pinetti's répertoire, also described the trick. "Natural Magic," by

CONJURER UNMASKED

OR

the Art of Sleight of Hand

Reproduction of frontispiece in Breslaw's book on magic, "The Last Legacy." published in 1782. Original in the Harry Houdini Collection.

Astley, the circus man, and Hooper's "Recreations," in four volumes, published in 1784, expose the same trick.

As to magicians who performed the trick, their names are legion, and only a few of the most prominent conjurers will be mentioned in this connection.

The man who obtained the best effects with this trick was John Henry Anderson, who startled the world of magic and amusements by his audacity, in 1836, nine

J. H. Anderson's birth place as drawn by him from memory. The following is written under the sketch in his own handwriting: "A rough sketch of the farm house called 'Red Stanes,' on the estate of Craigmyle, Parish of Kincardine O'Neil, Aberdeenshire. The house was built by my grandfather, John Robertson, in the year 1796, and in it I was born on the 15th day of July, 1814. John Henry Anderson." Photographed from the original now in the possession of Mrs. Leona A. Anderson, by the author.

years before Robert-Houdin trod the stage as a professional entertainer.

Anderson was born in Kincardine, Scotland, in 1814, and started his professional career as an actor. He must have been a very poor one, too, for he states that he was once complimented by a manager for having brought bad acting to the height of perfection.

Anderson was first known as the Caledonian magician, then assumed the title of the Wizard of the North, which

John Henry Anderson, wife and son, from a rare photograph taken in 1847 or 1848. Said to be an especially good likeness of Mrs. Anderson and the only one extant. Photograph loaned by Mrs. Leona A. Anderson, daughter-in-law of the "Wizard of the North."

he said was bestowed on him by Sir Walter Scott. Thomas Frost belittles this statement, on the grounds that Scott was stricken with paralysis in 1830. However, Anderson became famous in 1829, so he should be given the benefit of the doubt. He was the greatest advertiser that the

VICTORIA ROOMS, HULL.

LAST WEEK

OF THE

GREAT MAGICIAN

PERFORMING IN HULL.

REDUCTION OF PRICES.

Front Seats of the Saloon, 2s.; Back Ditto, 1s.; Gallery, Sixpence only

THE EGYPTIAN ASTROLOGER

This Evening, Friday, May 18th; Saturday, 19th; Monday, 21st; Tuesday, 22nd; Wednesday, 23rd; Thursday, 24th; and Friday, 25th; will be positively the LAST NIGHTS the Magician can perform in Hull.

1838

ON EACH OF THE ABOVE EVENINGS

NEW MYSTIC WONDERS!

SPLENDID CHANGES! NECROMANCY!

BLACK ART! WHITE ART!

MYSTERY AND MAGIC!

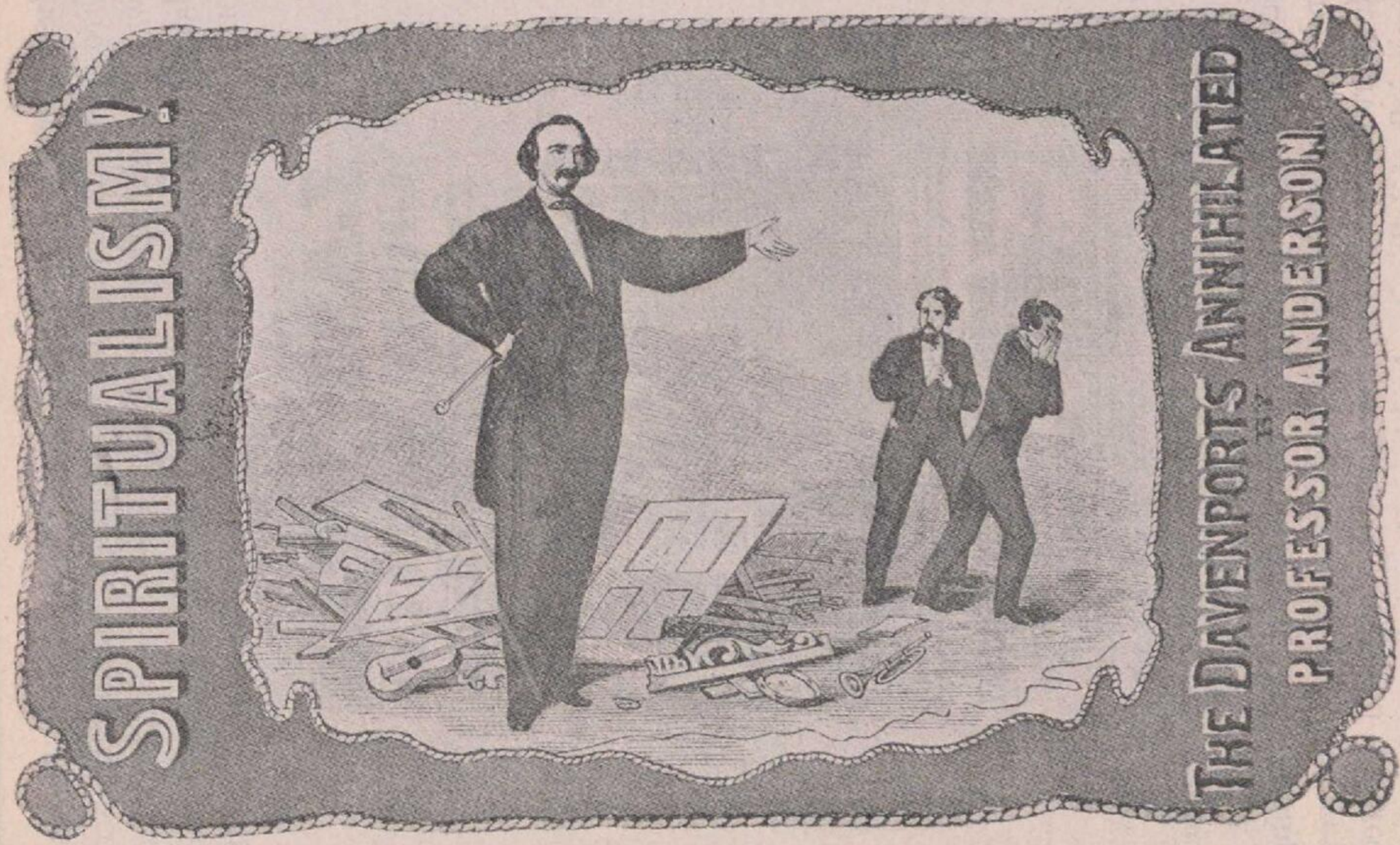
UNEQUALLED, UNPARALLELED! SO COME & SEE.

REMEMBER—NOT TWO LAST WEEKS.

Doors open at Seven o'Clock; Performance commences at Eight.—☞ All persons having claims against J. H. A. are requested to send in their Bills. [PRINTED BY ROBERT BROWN, 55, LOWGATE.]

Very rare poster of 1838 in which John Henry Anderson is billed as "The Great Magician." From the Harry Houdini Collection.

world of magic has ever known, and he left nothing undone that might boom attendance at his performances. He started newspapers, gave masked balls, and donated thousands of dollars to charities. He was known in every



Cover design of Anderson's book, exposing the Davenport Brothers; now a very rare book. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

city of the world, and, when so inclined, built his own theatres. He sold books on magic during his own performances, and would sell any trick he presented for a nominal sum. His most unique advertising dodge was to offer $500 in gold as prizes for the best conundrums written by spectators during his performances. To make this scheme more effective, he carried with him his own printing-press and set it up back of the scenes. While the performance was under way, the conundrums handed in by the spectators were printed, and, after the performance, any one might buy a sheet of the questions and puns at the door. As every one naturally wanted to see his conundrum in print, Anderson sold millions of these bits of paper. In 1852, while playing at Metropolitan Hall, New York City, he advertised his conundrum contest and sold his book of tricks, etc., and such notables as Jenny Lind and General Kossuth entered conundrums.

He was among the first performers to expose the Davenport Brothers, whose spiritualistic tricks and rope-tying had astonished America. Directly on witnessing a performance and solving their methods, Anderson hurried back to England and exposed the tricks.

To sum up his history, he stands unique in the annals of magic as a doer of daring things. He rushed into print on the slightest pretext, was a hard fighter with his rivals and aired his quarrels in the press, and he was a game loser when trouble came his way. Not a brilliant actor or performer, he yet had the gift of securing excellent effects in his *mise en scène*. He made and lost several fortunes, generally recouping as quickly as he lost. He was burned out several times, the most notable fire being

THE GREAT MAGICIAN,

From the Music Hall, Sheffield, Commercial Rooms, Leeds, and the Exchange Rooms, Manchester, will perform his Mystic Wonders, for a Short Time only,

IN THE VICTORIA ROOMS, HULL.

MR. J. H. ANDERSON,

THE GREAT CALEDONIAN MAGICIAN!!!

Desirous of gratifying the Ladies and Gentlemen of Hull, and its Vicinity,

Has the honour to announce his intention of Performing for A SHORT TIME ONLY, his MYSTIC WONDERS! he hopes the unqualified approbation which was bestowed on his exertions at Liverpool for seven-eight successive nights, Manchester for eighty nights, Leeds for fifty nights, Sheffield forty nights, Edinburgh one hundred and three nights, Glasgow sixty nights, Newcastle-on-Tyne twenty nights, will ensure him the patronage of the Nobility, Gentry, and Public of Hull.

Mr. J. H. ANDERSON has had the distinguished honour of performing before his late Majesty, at Windsor Castle, and before his Majesty Geo. IV., in the Pavilion at Brighton; and subsequently received letters by their Majesties' command, stating the Royal approval of each performance; together with others from the Marquis of Westminster, the Earl of Bradford, the Officers of the 1st Life Guards, the Duke of Gordon, and Sir Walter Scott.

From the many testimonials forwarded to Mr. J. H. A. he submits the following from Lord Panmure and others:—

BRECHIN CASTLE, March 24th, 1837.

Sir,—Our party here, last night, witnessed your performance with the greatest satisfaction; and I have no hesitation in saying, that you far excel any other Necromancer that I ever saw, either at home or abroad.

"PANMURE."

"To Mr. J. H. ANDERSON."

ROKEBY, September 1st, 1837.

Mr. J. H. Anderson highly gratified the party before whom he performed his Necromantic Feats, and Magical Exploits. He is the most accomplished Professor of the Art of Magic we ever saw; and beg to expre.. our high admiration of his talents, and thank him for his performance at Rokeby.

J. B. MORRET, Esq.
GEORGE CLIFFORD, Esq.
GEORGE MANBY, Coldstream Guards.

ON MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 30, 1838, & EVERY EVENING DURING THE WEEK.

The Magician's Entertainments will commence at Eight o'clock precisely.

PROGRAMME.

DYING AND LIVING BIRDS.

An entirely NEW EXPERIMENT. The Magician will produce Ten Canary Birds dead; the Lifeless Birds will be placed in a Cooking Pan and Baked; they will be made ready, when the Magician exclaiming arise! the Birds will obey their Master, and fly from the Pan alive.

MAGICAL PICTURE GALLERY!

In this Mysterious Book, representing a series of Pictures, will change at the command of the Magician to a Skeleton! to the 'Deil' in Tam O'Shanter!!! to a Nosegay!!!! Harlequin!!!!! Columbine!!!!!! Clown!!!!!!! Paul Pry!!!!!!!!

All the above Changes will appear from a Sheet of Blank Paper.

The Magician will Display the Wonderful Power of SECOND SIGHT!

A MYSTIC CABINET!

FEATHER-A-LA-MILITAIRE.

The Magician will borrow Half-a-Crown from a Gentleman, having marked the Half-Crown, the Necromancer will say "Change" the Half-Crown will change into a RED FEATHER, three feet long! the Half Crown is gone—a Basket of Oranges will be produced; the Magician will touch one with his Mystic Wand, WHEN THE MARKED HALF CROWN WILL BE FOUND IN THE HEART OF AN ORANGE!

CARD EXPERIMENTS.

TYPOGRAPHY, or HOW TO PRINT WITHOUT INK.

THE MYSTIC TARGET,

The Magician will command a Marked Card to fly at the rate of ONE THOUSAND MILES IN A MINUTE!

NAPOLEON'S TRICK!

This is a Trick invented by the Emperor Napoleon. Six Cards will be drawn from a Pack by Ladies and Gentlemen, concealing the same from the Necromancer. They may be shuffled by the different parties, after which the Magician will exclaim "Appear!" and the Cards will ***WALK FROM THE PACK!*** in short, he will make Cards do any thing but SPEAK! He will conclude his Card Tricks with

Easter La Coup — The De Roos System.

giving a LESSON to WHIST PLAYERS; or Publishing to the World the Nefarious System of Gaming, adopted by a CELEBRATED LORD! and the GAMESTERS of the HELLS in the WEST END OF LONDON.

"And hence, one master-passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's Serpent, swallows up the rest."—POPE.

CUTTING OUT THE CROWNS OF HATS.

The Magician will borrow the Hats of four Gentlemen, he will Cut out the Crowns of the Hats; (in this Trick Dice are used) with a single tap of the Necromancer's Wand the CROWNS ARE RESTORED.

CHINESE RINGS OF ENCHANTMENT.

The Rings appear to have neither Spring nor Joint, they may be examined, but the eye of Man cannot discover the Secret, yet all have a Joint, as will be shewn by the Magician linking together the IMPERVIOUS RINGS.

FIRING WATCHES FROM A BLUNDERBUSS!

The Necromancer will shoot any Gentleman's watch on a Target, without stopping or injuring the Watch at 20 Yards distance.

FLYING HANDKERCHIEFS.

The Magician will command any LADY'S HANDKERCHIEF TO FLY into a Locked Box! Change it to a Thousand French Beans, or to a Card! or BURN IT TO ASHES! He will command it from an ORANGE RESTORED!

Conclusion of Part First.—An Interval of Fifteen Minutes.

PART II. will commence with ***COOKING IN A HAT!*** The Magician will make in any Gentleman's Hat, a Pudding large enough to satiate the Appetite of a THOUSAND PERSONS!

HACTHING EGGS.

The Magician will borrow from any Lady a pair of Gloves, which he will burn! Two Eggs will be produced, one in the left hand of the Magician the other in the right; he will then ask the Lady in which of the Eggs her Gloves shall appear, and they will appear in the Egg which the Lady names.

A WATCH IN A LOAF.

The Magician will command any Gentleman's Watch to disappear. It will be found in a ***LOAF*** at any BAKER'S SHOP IN THE TOWN.

THE TWO LEARNED HALF-CROWNS.

Which will answer any question put to them, and dance at the word of command Any Lady wishing her fortune told, can have it read by the Half-Crowns, which will act as the oracle of Human Destiny.

ANALYZATION OF No. 1, 2, and 3 OF MORISON'S PILLS.

The Magician will borrow Three Handkerchiefs, one from a Lady and two from Gentlemen; three Large Boxes of the above named Pills will be produced; the HANDKERCHIEF CHANGES AT THE COMMAND OF THE MAGICIAN INTO THE PILLS; the Pills when Analyzed will appear in their GENUINE COMPOSITION. A FLOWER VASE will change into TIM BOBBIN, Esq. from whose enormous Mouth the Handkerchiefs will appear!!

BOTTLING HANDKERCHIEFS.

Handkerchiefs will be borrowed from three Gentlemen. The Magician will load his Mystic Gun, in which he will place the Handkerchiefs; he will fire at a Bottle containing Wine, the Bottle will be broken and the Handkerchiefs appear

A MENAGERIE IN A HAT.

The Magician will from any Gentleman's Hat command a Collection of BEASTS to appear as extensive as WOMBWELL'S MENAGERIE.

The EVENING'S PERFORMANCE TO CONCLUDE WITH

THE MYSTIC BASKET;

OR,

AN ORANGE CHANGED TO A LADY.

Front Seats 2s. Back Seats 1s. Children under 12 Years of Age, with Parties to the Front Seats, 1s. each. Parties wishing Bills or Tickets, or to Secure Seats are requested to send to the Victoria Rooms.

☞ Doors open at Half-past Seven, Performance to Commence at Eight—Concluding at Ten or Half-past.

A MAGICAL DYE.

Any Gentleman with a Head of Grey Hair that he wishes changed to a glossy Black, may have it transformed in ONE MINUTE! by applying to Mr. A. where specimens may be seen.—Private Performances and Lessons given in the Mystic Art.

Anderson billing of 1838, featuring obedient cards as "Napoleon's Trick."
From the Harry Houdini Collection.

New Strand Theatre,
OPEN FOR A SHORT SEASON ONLY!

Splendid intellectual & highly amusing Performances
MONDAY, FEB. 8, 1841,
AND EVERY EVENING DURING THE WEEK.

MR. M. JACOBS

THE JUSTLY CELEBRATED

Royal Ventriloquist,
MODERN MAGICIAN,
AND ENGLISH IMPROVISATORE,

Whose extraordinary and wonderful performances last season attracted many thousands of delighted spectators, and who was the subject of great praise and flattering notice of the whole of the London Press, will again have the honor to submit to the public, his unsurpassable soirées in **ANCIENT NECROMANCY, MODERN MAGIC,** and **VENTRILOQUISM.** The Entertainments are entirely new from those of last year, and form such a complete Evening's Amusement, that few would believe one individual capable of performing the vast materials here presented.

The Stage is fitted up with great Splendour;
THE APPARATUS IS COSTLY AND GORGEOUS,
(made expressly for the occasion)

The Ventriloquism will be introduced in a New Piece exceedingly well adapted to give scope to the various characters introduced—it is another—a greater variety of voices than has been attempted by any other Ventriloquist, since the days of Mons. Alexandre.

PART I.—AFTER THE OVERTURE

The performance will commence with a display of the most singular and surprising Illusions,—the following is a Programme:

The Vases or Cups of Divination,
WHICH TRANSFORM SMALL OBJECTS INTO LARGE ONES.
THE TRAVELLING CARD. THE BIRD OF PARADISE.
THAUMATURGIC CHAIN. ENCHANTED TUBE & GUINEA PIG.
BOUQUET OF DIAMONDS CONTRASTED WITH DATE & COUPER.
THE MAGIC PEDESTAL. GIGANTIC DICE.
VICTUALLING OFFICE, or CANDLE COOKERY.
CIRCASSIAN CANS. BUONAPARTE'S FEATHER,
PYRAMID OF BOXES. METAMORPHOSIS.
Blindfolded Magician.
FRENCH ROLL AND HANDKERCHIEF. MYSTERIOUS WALNUTS.
Opera Glass and Cards. The Rose and Wedding Ring.
MORRISON'S PILLS.

And a variety of other Illusory Entertainments, the whole of which are quite on a novel principle, and have never been equalled by any other Performer.

PART II.—OVERTURE,
After which a New Comic Piece in Ventriloquism, written expressly for Mr. JACOBS, entitled

THE LANDLORD AT HOME;
Or, Gout and Hoarseness versus Family Grievances.

Mr. Solomon Crusty, Landlord of the Bull and Bagpipe, and Father of a certain Family.—Mr. JACOBS.
Mr. Timothy Crusty, his son, in love with Dolly the Kitchen Maid, greatly against his father's wish and instruction.—Mr. JACOBS.
Pat M'Cloney, a tenant, from the Emerald Isle, for the rent-house of Mr. Crusty the elder.—Mr. JACOBS.
Harry Brodnox, occupying Apartments in a genteelish sundry, but, of course, by no means so aristocratic as we might be desired.—Mr. JACOBS.
Ned Sprightly, a member of the Fraternity, but a little more elevated in the world.—Mr. JACOBS.
Count Cracknevitch, a refugee Nobleman, and by no means a welcome visitor at the Bull and Bagpipe.—Mr. JACOBS.
Colonel Wilkins, a Yankee travelling for amusement.—Mr. JACOBS.
Bill Simpson, a wag of the old school, a little addicted to evening gossip.—Mr. JACOBS.
Jem Fog, a mysterious character, just outside the door.—Mr. JACOBS.
Dolly, the Kitchen Stuff, beloved by Mr. Timothy Crusty, and strongly suspected of being inclined to return the compliment.—Mr. JACOBS.
Miss Amelia Lucretia Crusty, daughter of Mr. Solomon Crusty, addicted to upsetting, and not easily pacified.—Mr. JACOBS.

VENTRILOQUISM is a gift or art by which persons who possess it can so modify the voice as to make it appear to the audience to proceed from any distance and in any direction, but the *sine qua non* of ventriloquism, and it is in this that Mr. J. particularly excels all others, is to vary the intonation as well as the distance, and thus produce a conversation apparently proceeding from different individuals. Some faint traces of this gift are to be found in the writings of the ancients; and it is the opinion of M. de la Chapelle, who in the year 1772 published an ingenious work on the subject, that the responses of many of the oracles were delivered by persons thus qualified, to serve the purposes of priestcraft and delusion. The first ventriloquist we read of whose name has transpired, was Louis Brabant, valet de chambre to Francis the First, who by a cunning use of this extraordinary gift obtained the hand of a rich and beautiful heiress, a long account of whose feats may be found in a book written by Brodoux, a learned critic of the 16th century. The French have had many ventriloquists, the principal of whom was Mons. Alexandre, who exhibited in this country some years ago, and who has been generally acknowledged to have brought ventriloquism to the greatest perfection. There have been many professors since his time, and some of them of considerable celebrity, but it has been generally acknowledged by the public, and the metropolitan and provincial press, that none have come near this great master except Mr. Jacobs, whose imitations in some respects excel those of his renowned predecessor.

TO CONCLUDE WITH AN
EXTEMPORARY SONG!
In which Mr. J. will premise upon any subject given him by the audience after the manner of the
ITALIAN IMPROVISATORI!!

As this power is seldom heard in England, it may be necessary to observe that Mr. J. receives six or seven subjects from his audience, and without the slightest delay turns them into poetry, singing them to the tune of *Le Petit Tambour*, or some other popular air. It is impossible to imagine the humorous effect this song occasionally produces, and as a proof of the difficulty of the undertaking, it may be stated that ANY [illegible]

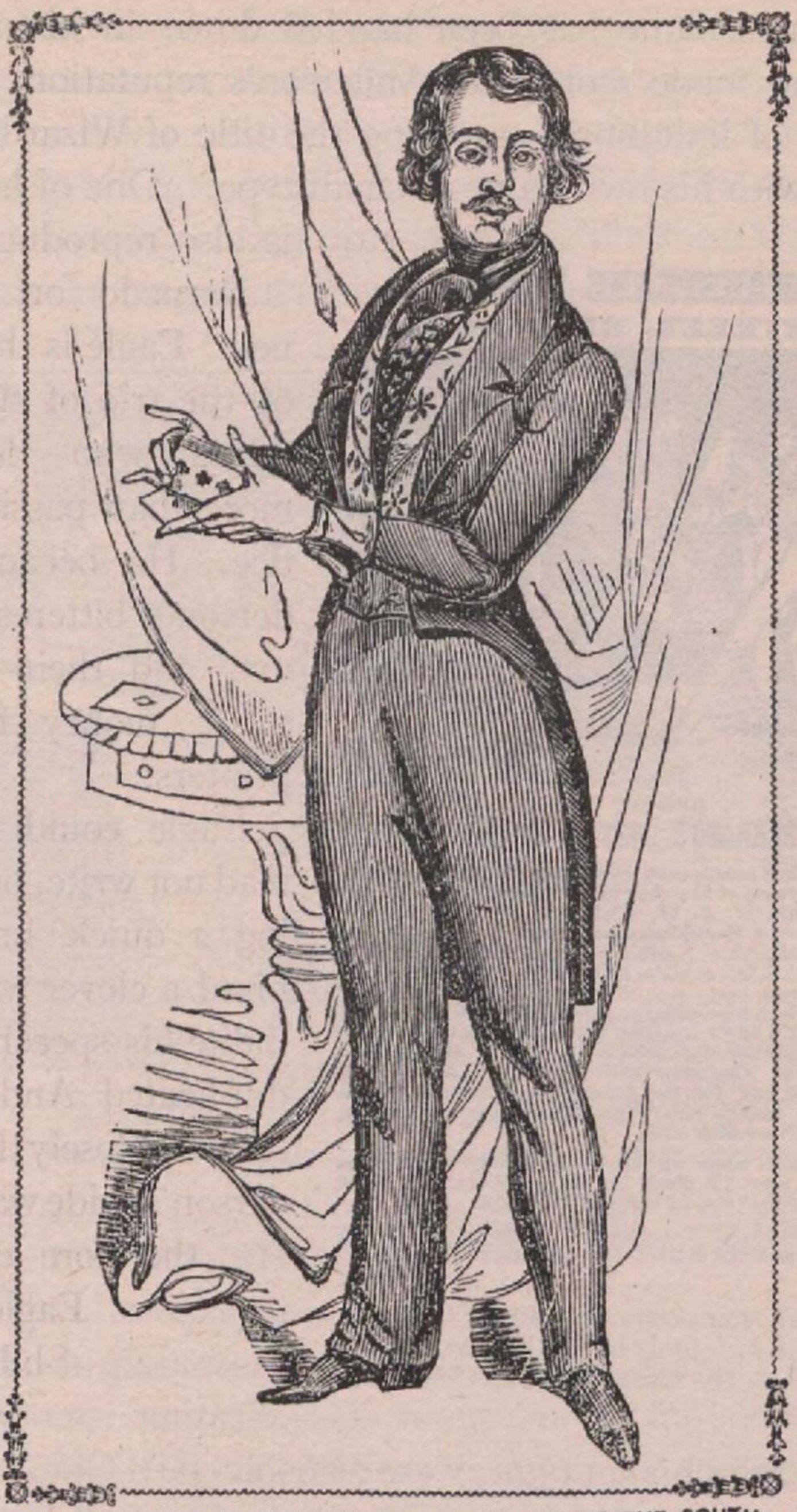
Jacobs poster, featuring "The Travelling Card." From the Harry Houdini Collection.

that of Covent Garden, London, in 1856. He was liked in spite of his eccentricities, but when he died, February 3d, 1874, his fortune was small.

Anderson had numerous imitators, including M. Jacobs, "Barney" Eagle, and E. W. Young, all of whom used the rising- or obedient-card trick. They copied not only his tricks, but the very names he had used and the style of his billing. All three of these men were professional magicians before Robert-Houdin appeared, and Anderson was his very active contemporary.

A Jacobs bill is here reproduced, showing the card trick featured among other attractions. The lithograph of Jacobs used in this connection is an actual likeness and I believe it to be as rare as it is timely.

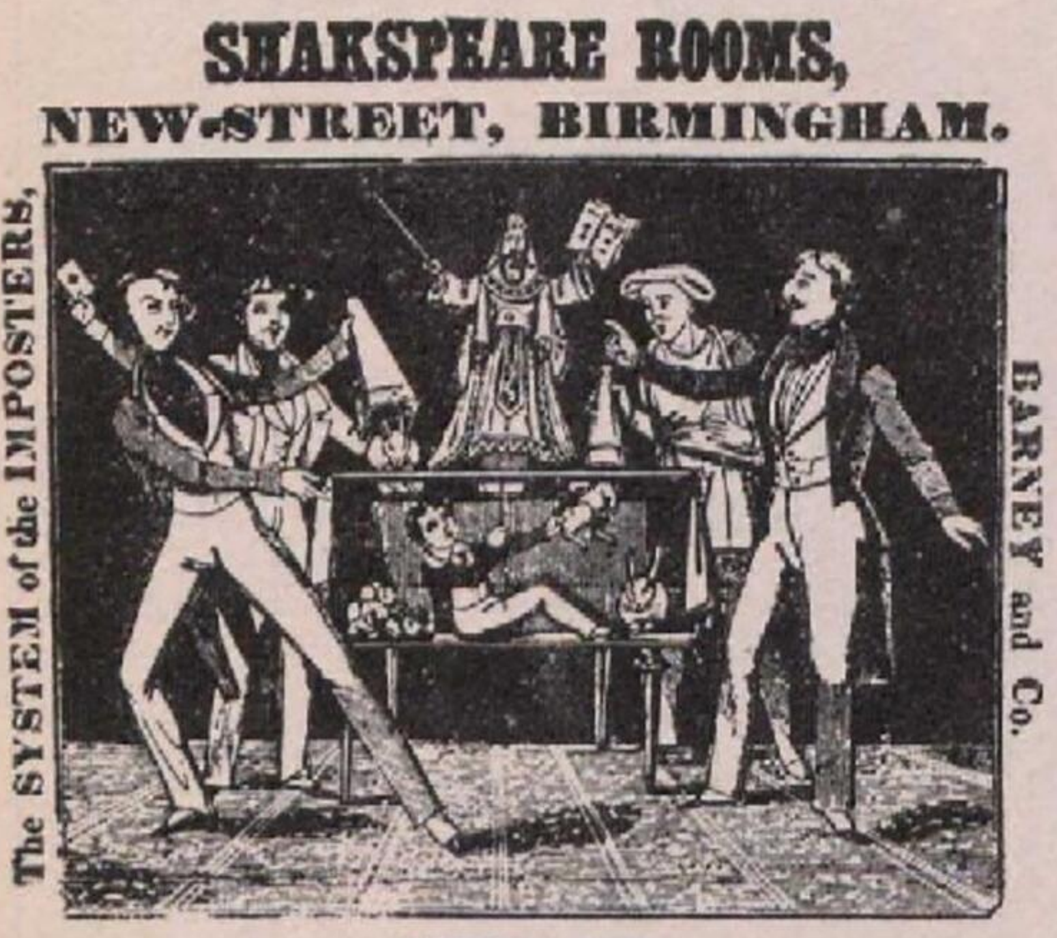
Lithograph used by E. W. Young, who copied all of John Henry Anderson's billing and featured the obedient-card trick. This setting shows how cumbersome was the apparatus employed by magicians before Wiljalba Frikell proved that he could score with apparently no apparatus. Original in the Harry Houdini Collection.



MR. BARNARDO EAGLE, THE ROYAL WIZARD OF THE SOUTH.

Frontispiece from Eagle's book, in which he exposes Anderson's gun delusion. Said by Henry Evanion, who knew Eagle, to be a fine likeness. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Young's name has been handed down in history because he made money on Anderson's reputation, by the boldest of imitations, assuming the title of Wizard of the North with his own name in small type. One of his bills is also reproduced.



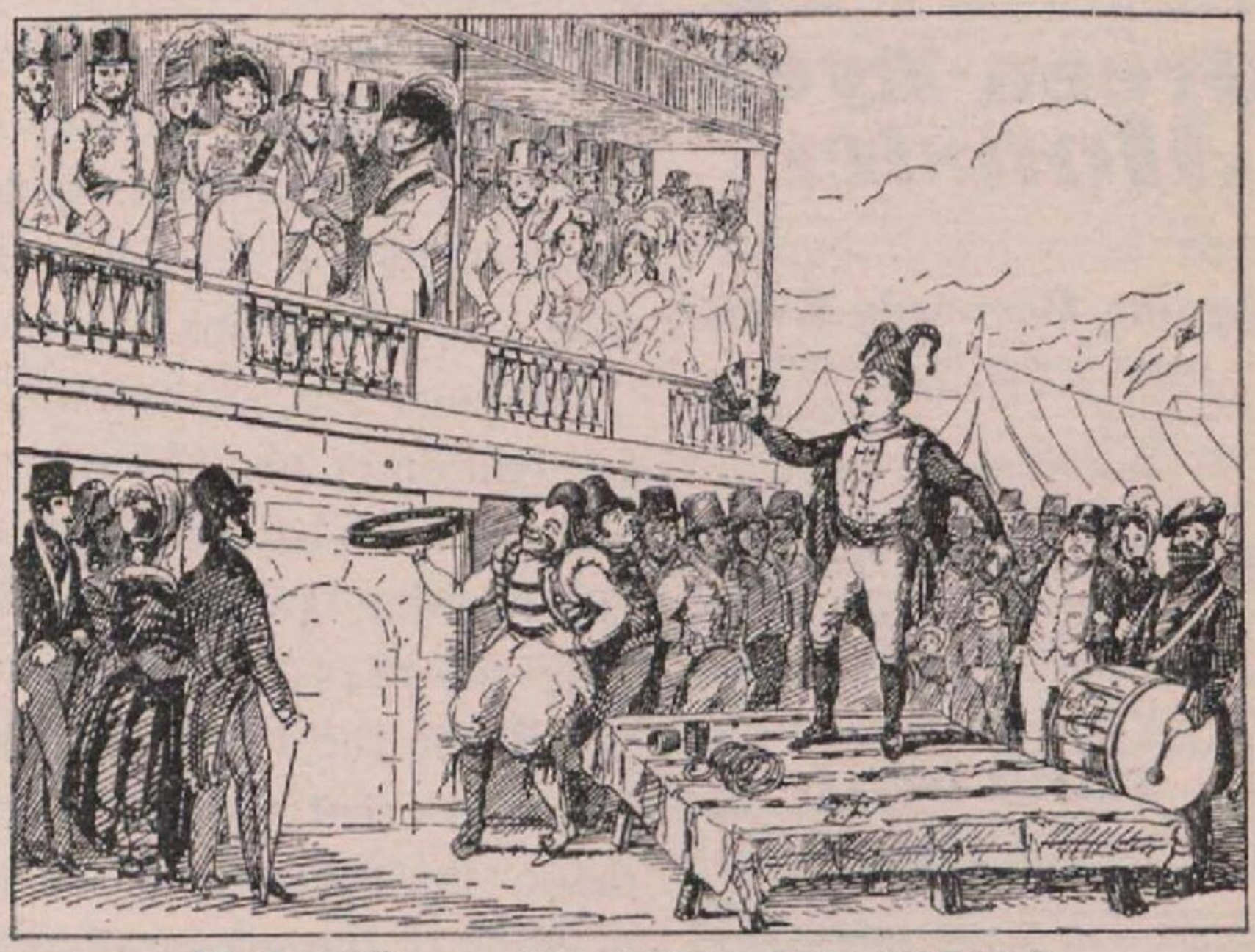
An Anderson poster, exposing "Barney" Eagle's tricks. Only bill of this sort in existence. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Barnedo or "Barney" Eagle is the man of the trio of the imitators who deserves more than passing notice. He became Anderson's bitterest enemy, and their rivalry made money for the printers.

Eagle could neither read nor write, but having a quick brain he hired a clever writer to indite his speeches and duplicated Anderson's show so closely that Anderson's pride was hurt. He therefore decided to expose Eagle, and thousands of bills, constituting a virulent attack upon his imitator, were distributed. One of these is reproduced. It is so rare that I doubt whether another is in existence.

As Eagle had advertised that he was patronized by

royalty, Anderson had another bill printed, showing Eagle playing before the King at the Ascot race-track, and an assistant passing the hat in mountebank fashion. In revenge, Eagle had a book published, in which he exposed Anderson's best drawing trick, The Gun Delusion, in which the magician allowed any one from the audience



"BARNEY" ALIAS THE IMPOSTOR WIZARD

OBTAINING ROYAL PATRONAGE ON ASCOT HEATH RACE COURSE.

Window poster issued by Anderson to belittle his imitator "Barney" Eagle and show how the latter secured royal patronage. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

to shoot a gun at him using marked bullets. These bullets were caught in his mouth or on the point of a knife. This trick became as common as the obedient-card trick.

In the face of such overwhelming evidence, Robert-Houdin's claim to having invented the obedient-card

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

Sig. B. Eagle

AND THE

Last Night of his Engagement!

Theatre, Wakefield.

The following Extract is from the *York Courant* of October 25, 1838

"BERNARDO EAGLE.—On Tuesday evening, this surprising Illusionist commenced his performances at the Royal Circus, in Blake Street, in this city, under the Patronage of Earl de Grey and the officers of the York-shire Hussars. We were glad to observe the Circus to be numerously and highly respectably attended, and the more so as the rapturous applause bestowed upon many parts of the performance, proved it to be the astonishing abilities of the Artiste. In one part of the exhibition, a most appalling attempt was executed,—we allude to that in which one of the Hussars fired a pistol at Signior Eagle's head, when he caught the bullet in his mouth. This is one of the most surprising illusions that can be witnessed. Being unadvised, as it is, in a way so as apparently to preclude the possibility of deception, and at the moment when the piece was pre-viewed, there was a suppressed and astonishing sensation on the part of the audience, which was instantly changed into an enthusiastic burst of applause at the successful completion of the trick. After this Signior E. came forward, and in a most manner expressed his thanks for the kind patronage with which he had been honoured, and the officers then rose, and to the public applause of Earl de Grey and the officers, the assembly shortly afterwards retired, the Band playing the National Anthem, and the Audience standing up and cheering heartily. Last evening the entertainment was repeated in a numerous and respectable company, when it again met with great applause."

On FRIDAY Evening, Nov 9th, 1838,

Will be presented the Prize Comedy of the

Green-Eyed Monster.

Baron Speyenhausen....Mr Lockwood ... Arnsdorf, Mr Morley.... Marcos, Mr. Mather
... Kranz, Mr J. Smedley.... Servants, Messrs. King-hall and Wakefield
Lady Speyenhausen, Mrs. Lockwood .....Amelia, Mrs. Short ... Louise, Miss Smedley

AFTER WHICH

Signior Bernardo Eagle

WILL COMMENCE HIS SECOND

GRAND DISPLAY OF ILLUSIONS.

PART FIRST,

The Enchanted Cards—The Card of Divination—The Ladies Thoughts discovered by Cards—the astonishing Feat of Sauter la Coup, or how to win and get back a Hundred by Gamesters.

The Walking Cards,

He will place a Pack of Cards against the wall, and command them to come up Perpendicular, one by one to a considerable height: this is considered to be one of the best feats ever attempted with Cards.

The Enchanted Orange.

THE MAGIC WINE BOTTLE,

THE EXTRAORDINARY GOBLET OF BACCHUS WITH THE ENCHANTED WATER.

THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE PIG,

Which will appear on the Table and instantly vanish before the Eyes of the Audience And on this occasion Mr. E.

Will change a Quantity of Copper, taken out of any Gentleman's Pocket, into Silver, the real Coin of the Realm.

A LADY'S HANDKERCHIEF will be found conveyed to the centre of a LEMON

THE CHEST

OF DOCTOR MICHAEL NOSTRADAMUS, THE FRENCH WIZARD:

The wonderful Illusion performed with this Chest must be seen to be believed.

THIS PART WILL CONCLUDE WITH

A Grand CHINESE EXPERIMENT,

NINE SOLID STEEL RINGS,

Between the Parts of the Illusions he will recite an Italian Tale, entitled GINEVRA DONATI, likewise a laughable Story, as recited by him on several occasions at the PICKWICK CLUB, in London, with great applause, shewing the adventures and curious accidents that happened to a Gentleman that was troubled with an impediment in his speech.

PART SECOND.

MUSICAL CLOCK WORK.

He will play an extraordinary Tune on a Gentleman's Watch, and then he will change, by word of command, the Watch into a PIEBALD MOUSE, ALIVE.

THE ENCHANTED EGGS.

He will command Six new-laid Eggs to drop from the ceiling of the Room, then change themselves into BEAUTIFUL WHITE MICE.

He will likewise make one of the Eggs dance a Waltz, and then JUMP JIM CROW, Correct in Music, he will then introduce his enchanted little Man, who will play many funny little tricks with the Ladies.

THE ART OF GARDENING.

He will sow common Parsley Seed in a flour pot and command it to grow to an excellent Crop before the Eyes of the Audience.

He will borrow a Lady's Handkerchief, and cut it in pieces, burn it to ashes, and then command it to be found in the centre of a Loaf in any part of the Town the Company choose to mention

Supper for All,

He will fry Pancakes in a Person's hat without the aid of fire, for all those who choose to eat them.

The Peformance will conclude with

THE GUN TRICK

In which he challenges any Sporting Gentleman in the Town to load a Fowling Piece with Powder and a Bullet, and fire it at his head, and he will catch the Ball between his Teeth

A "Barney" Eagle poster on which the obedient-card trick is featured as "The Walking Cards." From the Harry Houdini Collection.

trick is nothing short of farcical.

The Cabalistic or Obedient Clock

There might be said to exist a very reasonable doubt as to the exact date at which Robert-Houdin produced the cabalistic clock which he included among his other doubtful claims to inventions.

On page 250 of the American edition of his "Memoirs" he has the Cabalistic Clock on his opening programme for July 3d, 1845, but in the appendix of the French edition he states that the clock first made its appearance at the opening of the season of 1847. In nearly all his statements he is equally inaccurate.

The mysterious clock might be termed the obedient clock, for the trick consists in causing the hand or hands to obey the will of the conjurer or the wishes of the audience.

The hands will point to a figure, move with rapidity,

or as slowly as possible, or in time to music. In fact the performer has full control of the hands—he can make them do his every bidding.

The mysterious clock is a trick as old as the obedient-card trick, if not older. It was explained according to various methods in books before Robert-Houdin's appearance on the stage. In fact, the majority of old-time conjuring books explain mysterious clocks carefully.

Before electricity was introduced, magnets were employed, but the earliest method was to make use of thread wound about the spindle of the clock hand, and that method is still the very best used to-day, owing to its simplicity. The clock, on being presented to the audience, may be hung or placed in the position best suited to the particular method by which it is being "worked."

It shows a transparent clock face, such as you see in any jewelry shop. Some magicians utilize only one hand, which permits the easy use of electricity or magnet, while others employ two and even three hands. When more than one hand is used the hours and minutes are indicated simultaneously and, if cards are pasted on the clock face, the largest hand is used to find the chosen cards.

The clock may be placed on a pedestal, in an upright position, or hung in midair on two ribbons or strings. It can be hung on a stand made expressly for the purpose, on the style of a music stand, or it can be swung in a frame. In fact, as stated before, it is usually placed so as to facilitate the method of working.

When the cabalistic clock is taken off the hook or the stand on which it is placed, and handed to one of the spectators to hold, the latter places the hand on the pin

in the centre of the glass face, and revolves it. The arrow or hand is worked by a counterweight, controlled by the

M. Jacobs, magician, ventriloquist, and bold imitator of John Henry Anderson.
From a rare lithograph now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

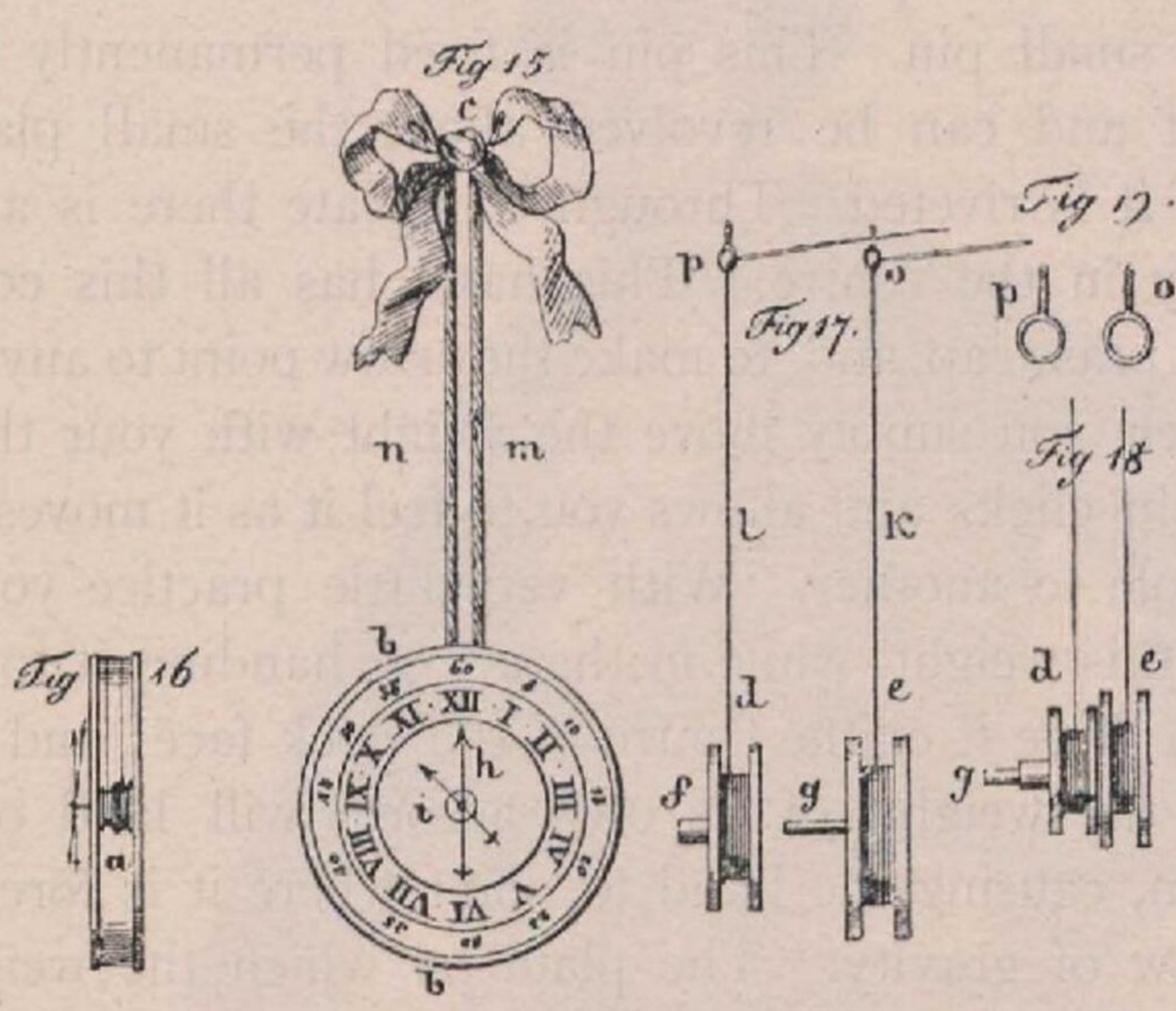
performer, who has it fixed before he hands it to the innocent spectator. The clock can be purchased from any

reliable dealer of conjuring apparatus, in almost any part of the world.

For a clock worked by counterweight the hand of thin brass is prepared in the centre, where there is a weight of peculiar shape which has at the thin or tapering end a small pin. This pin is fixed permanently to the weight and can be revolved about the small plate on which it is riveted. Through this plate there is a hole, exactly in the centre. This hand has all this covered with a brass cap, and, to make the arrow point to any given number, you simply move the weight with your thumb. The pin clicks and allows you to feel it as it moves from one hole to another. With very little practice you can move this weight, while in the act of handing it to some one to place it on the centre of the clock face; and when spun, the weight, of its own accord, will land on the bottom, causing the hand to point where it is forced by the law of gravity. The plate on which the weight is fastened is grooved or milled, so that it answers to the slightest movement of your thumb.

When the clock is on the stage and the hand moves simply by the command of the performer or audience, it is manipulated by an assistant behind the scenes, either by the aid of electricity or by an endless thread which is wrapped about the spindle and runs through the two ribbons or strings that hold the clock in midair. Some conjurers work the clock so arranged as to make a combination trick; first by having it worked by the concealed confederate; then, taking the clock off the stand and bringing it down in the midst of the audience. But for this trick you can use only one hand.

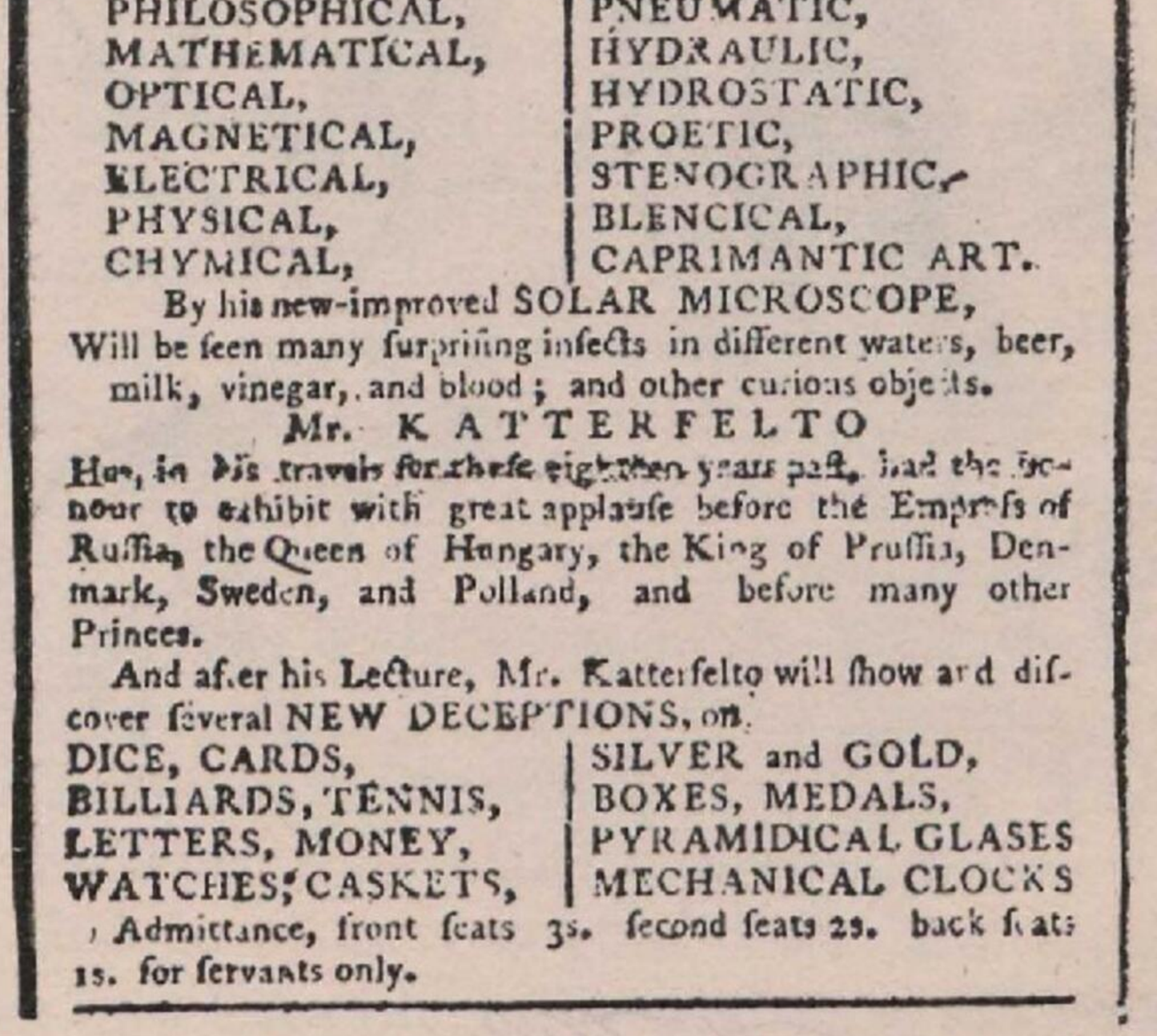
Years ago when I introduced this trick in my performance, I called a young man on my stage and asked him to place the hand on the spindle. It would then revolve and stop at any number named. But first I made him inform the audience the number he had chosen,



The above diagram exposes the magic clock trick, as offered in the time of Hofrath von Eckartshausen, a German writer on magic in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Fig. 15 shows the clock in position for the trick, hung against the rear wall or "drop." Gaily-colored ribbons hide thin leather tubes through which run two sets of stout silk thread or catgut, connecting with the hour and minute hands. The thread then passes through the two iron rings, *p* and *o* in Figures 17 and 19, which are screwed to the ceiling; thence to the hidden confederate, who manipulates the clock hands as the hour and minute are announced by magician or spectator. Fig. 16 shows the two faces of the clock, with the fine connecting rod around which the string is woudn to manipulate the hands. This mechanism is hidden by a flat brass band which encircles the edges of the two transparent faces. From Eckartshausen's "The Conjurer's Pocket," edition of 1791.

which gave me time to fix the weight with my thumb. I then gave him the hand, but he was a skilled mechanic, and possibly knew the trick. Instead of holding the clock by the ring at the top, which was there for that

purpose, he grasped the dial at the bottom, causing the number 6 instead of 12 to be on top. When the hand started to turn, of course it would have stopped at the



1782.

Great WONDERS! WONDERS! WONDERS! WONDERS! and WONDERS! are now to be seen in a very warm Room, at No. 22, Piccadilly, This and every day this week, from eleven in the morning till four in the afternoon, and precisely at seven clock, every evening this week,

MR. KATTERFELTO will show a variety of new surprising Experiments in Natural and Experimental Philosophy and Mathematics, and his whole regular Course of Philosophical Lectures are delivered in Twelve different times, a different Lecture and Experiment every day, and every evening at 7 o'clock. His various Experiments are as follow, viz.

PHILOSOPHICAL,	PNEUMATIC,
MATHEMATICAL,	HYDRAULIC,
OPTICAL,	HYDROSTATIC,
MAGNETICAL,	PROETIC,
ELECTRICAL,	STENOGRAPHIC,
PHYSICAL,	BLENCICAL,
CHYMICAL,	CAPRIMANTIC ART.

By his new-improved SOLAR MICROSCOPE,
Will be seen many surprising insects in different waters, beer, milk, vinegar, and blood; and other curious objects.

Mr. KATTERFELTO

Has, in his travels for these eighteen years past, had the honour to exhibit with great applause before the Empress of Russia, the Queen of Hungary, the King of Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, and Polland, and before many other Princes.

And after his Lecture, Mr. Katterfelto will show and discover several NEW DECEPTIONS, on

DICE, CARDS,	SILVER and GOLD,
BILLIARDS, TENNIS,	BOXES, MEDALS,
LETTERS, MONEY,	PYRAMIDICAL GLASES
WATCHES, CASKETS,	MECHANICAL CLOCKS

Admittance, front seats 3s. second seats 2s. back seats 1s. for servants only.

Newspaper clipping of 1782, showing that Katterfelto used the cabalistic clock.
From the Harry Houdini Collection.

wrong number. I managed to escape humiliation by pretending I was afraid he would break the clock by letting it fall, so took it away from him, holding it myself.

Reproduction of rare engraving of Johann Nep. Hofzinser, who invented the clock worked by a counter-weight, and who was one of the world's greatest card tricksters. Original in the Harry Houdini Collection.

The mechanic walked off the stage winking at me in the most roguish manner.

Robert-Houdin worked The Mystic Bell trick in connection with The Clock. This was manipulated in the same way. The bell was worked with thread, pulling a small pin, which in turn caused the handle to fall against the glass bell. Naturally, having electricity at his command at that time, he made use of that force whenever it suited his fancy.

I am positive that Robert-Houdin presented the electrical clock, because T. Bolin, of Moscow, visited Paris and bought the trick from Voisin, the French manufacturer of conjuring apparatus. The trick which Robert-Houdin presented, according to his claims, was with the clock hanging in midair to prove that it was not electrically connected, but the truth of the matter is that the strings which held the clock suspended in midair concealed the wires through which his electrical current ran.

In my library of old conjuring books the thread method is ably described by Hofrath von Eckartshausen, mentioned earlier in this chapter. In fact in the pictorial appendix of this work he gives this trick prominence by minutely illustrating the same. He makes use of two hands, and to make the trick infallible he explains that the best way would be to use two glass disks, have them held together by a brass rim, and your threads will work with absolute certainty. The spectators imagine that they are seeing only one glass clock.

Johann Conrad Gutle, the well-known delver after secrets of natural magic, also explains several cabalistic clock tricks in his book published in 1802.

I am reproducing herewith a number of programmes describing the effect of the trick and proving that it was no novelty when Robert-Houdin "invented" it. In fact the trick was so common that only the supreme egotism

Reproduction of a triple colored lithograph. This section features Breslaw in stage costume. Original in the Harry Houdini Collection.

of the man can explain his having introduced it into the pages of his book as an original trick. The mysterious clock worked by the counterweight, which has been

described, is credited as having been the invention of Johann Nep. Hofzinser.

In an advertisement, published in the London *Post* of May 23d, 1778, included in my collection, this announcement, among others of much interest, will be found:

"PART II.—Breslaw will exhibit many of his newly invented deceptions with a grand apparatus and experi-

Katterfelto, the bombastic conjurer, who is famous for having sold sulphur matches in 1784, before the Lucifer match is supposed to have been discovered. Reproduced from a rare copy of "The European Magazine," dated June, 1783, now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

ments and particularly the Magic Clock, Sympathetic Bell, and Pyramidical Glasses in a manner entirely new."

In 1781, while showing at Greenwood's Rooms, Haymarket, London, Breslaw heavily advertised, "Particularly an experiment on a newly invented mechanical clock

will be displayed, under the direction of Sieur Castinia, just arrived from Naples, the like never attempted before in this metropolis."

There is every reason to believe that Katterfelto, the greatest of bombastic conjurers, used the electrical clock in his performances, as he made a feature of the various late discoveries, and in his programme of 1782 he advertises "feats and experiments in Magnetical, Electrical, Optical, Chymical, Philosophical, Mathematical, etc., etc." Among implements and instruments or articles mentioned I found Watches, Caskets, Dice, Cards, Mechanical Clocks, Pyramidical Glasses, etc., etc.

Gyngell, Sr., the celebrated Bartholomew Fair conjurer, whose career started about 1788, had on his early programmes, "A Pedestal Clock, so singularly constructed that it is obedient to the word of command." On the same programme (Catherine Street Theatre, London, February 15th, 1816) I find "The Russian Inn," "The Confectioner's Shop," and "The Automaton Rope Vaulter." This programme is reproduced in full in Chapter IV.

Without devoting further space to Robert-Houdin's absurd claim to having invented this clock, we will proceed to discuss his claims to the automaton rope walker, which he called a trapeze performer.

The Trapeze Automaton

Though "Diavolo Antonio" or "Le Voltigeur Trapeze" was not a simple trick, but a cleverly constructed automaton, worked by a concealed confederate, it was a common feature on programmes long before Robert-Houdin

ROBERT-HOUDIN,

ST JAMES'S THEATRE.

LAST THREE PERFORMANCES

The celebrated M. ROBERT-HOUDIN will give his Incredible Delusions and Extraordinary

FANTASTIQUES

AT THE ABOVE THEATRE

MODERN

LA VOLTIGE DU TRAPÈZE.

MIRACLES.

ON

TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 6,

Last Day Performance

WEDNESDAY MORNING, March 7

COMMENCING AT HALF-PAST TWO O'CLOCK,

AND

FAREWELL REPRESENTATION

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 8

DOORS OPEN AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.

PRIVATE BOXES, ORCHESTRA STALLS, AND TICKETS, MAY BE SECURED AT
MR. MITCHELL'S ROYAL LIBRARY, 33, OLD BOND STREET,
Mr. Sams' Royal Library, St. James's Street; Messrs. Keith's, Hookham's, Allchorn's, Andrews', Leader and Cock's, Hammond's, Chappell's, and Olivier's Libraries, Bond Street; Cramer's, and the Carlton Library, 12, Regent Street;
And at the BOX OFFICE of the Theatre, which is open Daily, from Eleven till Five o'clock.

PRINTED BY W. J. GOODWIN, 5, FRITH STREET, SOHO SQUARE.

Copy of a poster used by Robert-Houdin to advertise his trapeze performer. This proves how accurately he duplicated the Pinetti figure, even to the arrangement of floral garlands. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

claimed it as his invention. Yet with the daring of one who believes that all proof has been destroyed, he announces on page 312 of the American edition of his "Memoirs" that he invented "The Trapeze Performer" for his season of 1848. In the illustrated appendix of his French edition he states that the figure made its first appearance at his Paris theatre, October 1st, 1849. He thus describes the automaton:

"The figure is the size of an infant, and I carry the little artist on my arm in a box. I put him on the trapeze and ask him questions, which he answers by moving his head. Then he bows gracefully to the audience, turning first this way, then that; suspends himself by his hands and draws himself up in time to the music. He also goes through the motions of a strong man, hangs by his head, hands, and feet, and with his legs making the motions of aërial telegraphy."

Decremps in his exposé, "The Conjurer Unmasked," published in 1784, thus describes the automaton and its work: "Our attention was next called to observe an automaton figure, that vaulted upon a rope, performing all the postures and evolutions of the most expert tumblers, keeping exact time to music. By seeing Mr. Van Estin wind up the figures, and being shown the wheels and levers contained in the body of the automaton, caused us to believe it moved by its own springs, when Mr. Van Estin thus explained the deception: 'To make a figure of this kind depends a great deal on the proportion and the materials with which it is composed: The legs and thighs are formed out of heavy wood, such as ash or oak; the body of birch or willow, and made hollow, and the head,

Reproduction of an illustration in "Aufschlüsse zur Magie," by Hofrath von Eckartshausen, showing the automatic rope vaulter as exhibited in 1784 by Pinetti. Original in the Harry Houdini Collection.

for lightness, of papier-maché. The figure is joined by its hands to a bar of iron, that passes through a partition, and is turned by a confederate; the arms are inflexible at the elbows, but move freely at the shoulders by means of a bolt that goes through the body; and the thighs and

Mr. BOLOGNA, Jun's 1757.

Mechanical Exhibition,

At the Sans Pareil Theatre, Strand.

~~Wednesday, March~~ 18.

Mr. Bologna, Jun. respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, that his Mechanical Exhibition will Open

This Present Evening, ~~FRIDAY, MARCH~~, 1812,

And continue Open Every Wednesday and Friday during Lent, at the above Theatre,

where will be exhibited the following Objects of an Evening of Amusement.

CLASS I.

The Two Automaton Rope Dancers,

From Petersburgh, whose Feats of Agility were never equalled and cannot be surpassed, will perform together as a Style of Rope Dance hitherto unknown in this Country.

The Swan of Oblectation

Will swim round a large Tub of Water, and at the Word of Command impede its Progress, and pursue any Course that may be pointed out. The Mechanical Powers of [illegible] allowed to be the most complete of the Art, it will perform a Variety of Tricks with Cards, &c.

THE MERIDIOUS

Mechanical Windmill,

Will go and Stop at the Word of Command.

The CONJUROR from Constantinople

Will perform numberless Deceptions with Cards, Watches, Figures, &c. in a manner so truly surprising that none can discover the Method of any Operation, however they may be disposed to do so.

CLASS II.

PIECES OF MECHANISM, CALLED,

LILLIPUT ISLAND; or Little World

Or Automaton Shadows,

Taken from the Justly Admired Ombres Chinois.

Scene 4. A Game Keeper and his Men.
The Sports of Hunting, Fishing, &c. accomplished in a peculiar and uncommon Manner.
A Forest of Wild Beasts of full Dimensions.
With the natural and performing of Wild Beasts

Scene 5. The Magician's Enchanted Cavern.
Wherein is displayed the Power of Magic, in various astonishing Metamorphoses.
The Horse-power Knife Grinder.
And various Comic Figures.
ALSO A HORNPIPE BY FANCY,
Round the Rock Salt Man.

In Scene 6th will be introduced, An

ELEPHANT.

CLASS III.

A Grand Display of Experiments in

HYDRAULICS.

Called Fire and Water,

Upon an improved Principle, combining the two opposite Elements FIRE and WATER, in the course of this wonderful Performance they will act in concert together, an unparalleled instance of [illegible] by intense study and persevering application to produce Elemental union, which Mr. B. has at length accomplished at an Expence.

CLASS IV.

The whole to conclude with a Brilliant, Elegant, and fascinating course of

FIRE-WORKS,

Presenting unfathomable Changes, plain or color and plain ug, burning Temples, Groves, &c. &c. without the smallest Appearance of Gun-powder or Smoke; an Invention alone sufficient to create attraction.

The whole of this the Production of Mr. BOLOGNA, Junior.

Doors open at 6, and begin at 7. Boxes 4s. Pit 2s. Gallery 1s. Second Price at Half-past Eight.
No Money returned. Vivant Rex et Regina. T. Ramsay, Printer, London.
Places for the Boxes to be taken of Mr. Colins, at the Theatre, from Ten till Three o'Clock.

A Bologna bill of 1812, featuring the automatic rope dancers. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

legs move in the same manner at the hips and knees, and are stayed by pieces of leather to prevent them from bending in the wrong way. The bar is covered with hollow twisted tubes, and ornamented with artificial flowers, so as no part of it can be seen to turn; the confederate

by giving the handle a quarter of a turn to the left, the automaton, whose arms are parallel to the horizon, lift themselves by little and little, till they become vertical and parallel to the rest of the body; if in following the same direction, the other part of the body moves forward; and by watching the motions through a hole, he seizes the instant that a leg passes before the bar, to leave the automaton astride; afterward he balances it by jerks, and causes it to take a turn around, keeping time with the music as if it was sensible of harmony.

"N.B.—Three circumstances concur here to favor the illusion: First, by the assistance of a wire, the confederate can separate the bar from the automaton, which, falling to the ground, persuades one it loses itself by real machincry. Secondly, in winding up the levers shown in the body, confirms the spectators in the idea that there is no need of a confederate. Thirdly, the tubes that are twisted around the bar, except where the automaton is joined to it, seem to be the rope itself, and being without motion, as is seen by the garlands which surround them, it cannot be suspected that the bar turns in the inside, from whence it is concluded that the figure moves by its own machinery."

According to one of de Philipsthal's advertisements, page 103, the trapeze automaton which he featured was six feet in height. But Pinetti programmes show that he had a smaller figure known as the rope vaulter. This is probably the trick exposed in Decremps' book.

On page 108 will be found a Louis programme of 1815, on which a figure is thus featured:

"TWO ELEGANT AUTOMATA

"As large as nature, the one representing a beautiful POLONNESE, the other a little boy.

"Nothing can surpass the admirable construction of these Pieces. The large figure seems almost endowed with human Faculties, exhibiting the usual feats of a Rope-Dancer, in the fullest imitation of life. The small Figure is invested with equally astonishing powers of action. To such ladies as are spectators it must be a very pleasing circumstance that these exertions do not excite those disagreeable sensations which arise from the sight of Figures fraught with life, performing feats attended with so much danger."

By referring to page 113 the reader will find a Schmidt programme, dated 1827, on which the figure is featured as follows:

"THE ROPE DANCER,

"Whose surprising performances surpass, in agility, attitudes, and evolutions, every Professor of the art, keeping correct time to the music of the machinery."

A Gyngell programme, dated 1823, which is reproduced in the chapter devoted to "The Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal," page 125, reads as follows: "Two automatons, one of which will execute wonderful feats on the tight rope, and the other dance a characteristic hornpipe."

As Gyngell figured in the amusement world from 1788 to 1844, the little figure must have been tolerably well known to the magic-loving public of England by the time Robert-Houdin appeared in London in 1848.

A magician named York, who appeared in London in

UNDER THE SANCTION OF

His Majesty's Royal Letters Patent.

THEATRE OF ARTS,

Newly erected in the CIRCUS, HULL,

Conſiſting of an extenſive APPARATUS of the moſt ingenious MECHANICAL WORKS, and HYDRAULIC, AEROSTATIC, and OPTICAL EXPERIMENTS, by

Mr. De Philipsthal,

Of the LYCEUM, Strand, LONDON. Author of ſeveral Inventions of which he has his Majeſty's Letters Patent, and who begs leave moſt reſpectfully to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and Public of Hull, that he has fitted up the above place of Amuſement in an elegant manner, for exhibiting his Philoſophical Experiments and ingenious Productions of ART, never before ſeen in this Place, and which in point of Novelty and inſtructive Recreation, merits the attention of all Ranks, and particularly of the Amateurs of the Arts and Sciences It is impoſſible to convey an adequate idea of the ſingularity of this Entertainment, it being completely original, and honoured with the Patronage of the Royal Family, and the Nobility in London, Scotland, Ireland, and lately in Manchester.

The firſt opening will be

On MONDAY Evening November 10, 1806,

And EVERY EVENING until Saturday next, with the following intereſting Objects,

SELECT INGENIOUS PIECES IN

MECHANISM.

Although no deſcription can properly illuſtrate theſe Mechanical Pieces of Art, yet to convey to the Public an idea of their ſingularity, and of the intuitive Powers with which they ſeem inveſted, the following explanation is ſubmitted:

Two Elegant Automats,

One of which a Beautiful FEMALE FIGURE, as large as life, performs as a ROPE DANCER in perfect imitation of *La Belle Eſpagnole*, ſo juſtly celebrated throughout Europe:—the other is an Elegant LITTLE PAILASSE, whoſe apparent Naiveté and Powers of Action are equally aſtoniſhing.

Both theſe Pieces of ſurpriſing Mechaniſm ſeem almoſt endued with Human Faculties.

The Mechanical PEACOCK,

A moſt finiſhed Piece of Artificial Animation——which imitates, ſo cloſely, the Cries, Actions, and Attitudes of that ſtately and beautiful Bird, that it is not unfrequently ſuppoſed to be an abſolute living Animal, properly trained to act as an amuſing deception upon the Public.

The Magnetic Clock,

Newly conſtructed, is ſupported on two Cryſtal Columns, and ſurmounted by a characteriſtic Figure of Shakeſpeare's FALSTAFF, which will amuſe and divert the Company, by diſcovering their Thoughts, &c. on an Alphabetical Dial Plate, furniſhed with a ſelf-moving Index.

The Senſative WIND-MILL,

Which regulates its motion by the apparent Impulſe of a Word from any Spectator—and ſeems to obey the Wiſhes of the Company by a poſitive Gift of Intuition.

SELECT EXPERIMENTS IN

HYDRAULICS,

A GRAND

DISPLAY OF WATER-WORKS,

The Water riſes from the front of the Stage, and after forming into many delightful Fountains, &c. is conjoined with

FIRE OF DIFFERENT KINDS,

And the two hoſtile Elements furiouſly roll together to the Cieling of the Theatre, the Water alſo elevates to the ſame height a Luſtre with Candles burning.

FIRE-WORKS PLAYING,

Beſides many other truly beautiful Experiments, without any Offence even to the moſt delicate.

To which will be added ſeveral Original Experiments in the Science of

OPTICS,

OF WHICH HE IS THE SOLE INVENTOR.

Accompanied by a tremendous Storm of

Thunder, Lightning, &c. &c.

The whole to finiſh with a ſeries of Brilliant and Beautiful MECHANICAL and OPTICAL

FIRE-WORKS,

Diſplayed in the Centre of a Tranſparent Arbour.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

The Hull and Sculcoates Dispensary.

J. F. THIODON'S

Mechanical and Picturesque

Theatre of Arts.

FOR A FEW NIGHTS ONLY.

M. THIODON has the honor to announce to the Ladies and Gentlemen and the Public in general, that he has completed the Piece which he has had in hand for ſeveral months past, representing the So-called

View of the NORTH POLE,

and hopes it will merit the approbation of an indulgent Public.

The firſt repreſentation of this Piece will be appropriated to the benefit of the Hull and Sculcoates Dispensary

On Monday, January 3rd, 1825,

AND CONTINUE EVERY EVENING DURING THE WEEK,

(SATURDAY EXCEPTED)

M. THIODON will commence with his wonderful and novel display of

Mechanical and Mathematical

FEATS OF

Dexterity.

A detail of theſe Experiments, which will excite the ſurpriſe of the Spectators cannot be conveyed in the limits of a Hand Bill

AFTER WHICH, THE FOLLOWING PIECES WILL BE PRESENTED

FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THE VIEW OF THE CITY OF

Stockholm,

CAPITAL OF SWEDEN.

In this View will be ſeen a number of Veſſels under Sail ſome of them will ſaloote, and be anſwered by the Forts on Shore

AFTER WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED THE BEAUTIFUL SCENE OF THE

Voyage of Captain Parry to the

North Pole:

His passage through the Frozen Straits, amongst the

FLOATING ICE.

On the Shore will be ſeen Esquimaux, with their Sledges drawn by Dogs.—Bears purſued and killed by Sailors. At Sea will be repreſented Esquimaux Women in their native Boats, alſo the *Landing of the Sailors from the Discovery Ships, Fury and Hecla.*

THIRD PART—THE CITY OF

Amsterdam,

THE CAPITAL OF HOLLAND.

This View is taken from the Old Ramparts The View of the Bridge is on the River Amstel. The Town is built upon Piles driven into Morass To this scene will be a beautiful representation of the Mast ex Concours.

An Aquatic Exhibition on the River.

A Mast, or Pole, is ſurmounted with ſeveral Trophies of Victory, the Ascent of which is difficult, by being made ſlippery but after numerous Efforts, a Person is seen to gain the Top, and bear away the Prize.

FOURTH PIECE—THE WONDERFUL AND UNRIVALLED

AUTOMATON,

On the Flying Rope;

THE ONLY ONE OF THIS CONSTRUCTION IN THE KINGDOM, and forms a more extraordinary Novelty from the circumstance of its not being fastened to the Rope by the Hands, like others hitherto exhibited. The Rope will be in continual Motion, and the Figure will act perfectly easy, and in a graceful attitude, while on the String, and perform the most surprising Evolutions, scarcely to be distinguished from a LIVING PERFORMER, as it moves with the utmost Correctness, without any apparent Machinery

TO CONCLUDE WITH A

Storm at Sea!

Accompanied with its characteriſtic Phenomena—Agitation of the Waves—Clouds, which by degrees obſcure the Sky—Lightning, Thunder, &c.—Veſſels beating againſt the Tempeſt, ſtruck by Lightning, and finally engulphed in the Deep—Boats endeavouring to ſave themſelves from the neighbouring Rocks, altogether a faithful Repreſentation of Nature, in one of her moſt Tremendous Aſpects.

A de Philipsthal programme of 1806 on which both the automatic tight-rope performer and the magnetic clock were featured. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

A Thiodon bill of 1825, in which he claims the invention of a figure that could be lifted on or off the stage or pole. This was twenty-five years before Robert-Houdin claimed the same invention. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

1844, the year before Robert-Houdin made his professional début, featured under date of January 29th "two automatons, one of which will execute wonderful feats on the Tight Rope, and the other dance a characteristic Hornpipe."

Bologna announced for his performance at the Sans Pareil Theatre, Strand, London, under date of March 18th, 1812, "The Two Automaton Rope Dancers from St. Petersburg, whose Feats of Agility were never equalled, and cannot be surpassed, will perform together in a style of Excellence hitherto unknown in this country."

De Philipsthal also featured a pair of automatic tight-rope performers from 1804 until his death; and in the early 30's the figures were exhibited by his widow. By referring to Chapter III. a De-Philipsthal programme of 1806 is reproduced as evidence.

From 1825 to 1855 J. F. Thiodon played London and the provinces, advertising on his programmes:

"FOURTH PIECE.—The Wonderful and Unrivalled Automaton on the Flying Rope. The only one of this construction in the Kingdom; and forms a more extraordinary Novelty from the circumstances of its not being fastened on the Rope by the Hands, like others hitherto exhibited. The Rope will be in continual Motion, and the Figure will sit perfectly easy and in a graceful attitude while on the Swing, and perform the most surprising Evolutions, scarcely to be distinguished from a Living Performer, as it moves with the utmost Correctness, without any apparent Machinery."

From this overwhelming evidence it can be argued beyond doubt that if Robert-Houdin even constructed the

automaton he merely copied figures presented by both his predecessors and his contemporaries, and he was fully aware of the existence of several such automata when he advertised his as an original invention. They were made by many mechanicians.

In the illustrated appendix of the French edition of his "Memoirs" he goes further; he deliberately misrepresents the mechanism of the figure and insinuates that the automaton is a self-working one. This is not true, as it was worked by a concealed confederate, as described above by Decremps.

Robert-Houdin even used the garlands of flowers to hide the moving bars as Pinetti and others of his predecessors had done. The truth was not in him.

CHAPTER VI

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE BOTTLE

WHILE Robert-Houdin claims to have invented "The Inexhaustible Bottle" for a special programme designed to create a sensation at the opening of his season of 1848, in the illustrated appendix of the original French edition of his "Memoirs" he states that it had its premier presentation December 1st, 1847. These discrepancies occur with such frequency that it is difficult to refute his claims in chronological order. Perhaps he adopted this method intentionally, to confuse future historians of magic, particularly concerning his own achievements.

In order to emphasize the brilliancy of this trick, Robert-Houdin turned boastful in describing it. On page 348 of the American edition of his "Memoirs," he states that the trick had created such a sensation and was so much exploited in the London newspapers that the fame of his inexhaustible bottle spread to the provinces, and on his appearance in Manchester with the bottle in his hand the workmen who made up the audience nearly mobbed him. In fact, the description of this scene is the most dramatic pen-picture in his "Memoirs."

The truth, sad to state, is that the bottle trick did not create the sensation he claims for it in London, nor did the press eulogize it. It was classed with other ordinary

tricks, and twenty London papers bear mute testimony to this fact. In a complete collection of press clippings regarding his first London appearance, only four of the London papers mention the trick. *The Times*, the great conservative English paper, in reviewing Robert-Houdin's performance in its issue of May 3d, 1847, ignored the trick entirely. The four London papers which made mention of the bottle trick, and then only in a passing comment, were *The Chronicle*, *The Globe*, *The Lady's Newspaper*, and *The Court Journal*. Any one acquainted with the two last-named periodicals will know that they rarely reach the hands of the humble artisans in Manchester. *Punch*, London's great comic paper, gave the trick some space, however.

The trick of pouring several sorts of liquors from the same bottle has been presented in various forms and under different names. To prove the futility of Robert-Houdin's claims I will explain the mystery of this trick, which is of an interesting nature.

To all intents and purposes the bottle used looks like glass; but it is invariably made of tin, heavily japanned. Ranged around the central space, which is free from deception, are five compartments, each tapering to a narrow-mouthed tube which terminates about an inch or an inch and a half from within the neck of the bottle. A small pinhole is drilled through the outer surface of the bottle into each compartment, the holes being so placed that when the bottle is grasped with the hand in the ordinary way, the performer covers all but one of the pinholes with his fingers and thumb. The centre section is left empty, but the other compartments are filled with a fun-

nel which has a tapering nozzle made specially for this purpose.

The trick is generally started by proving to the audience that the bottle is empty. It is then filled with water, which is immediately poured out again, all this time the five pinholes being covered tightly with the hand or fingers which are holding the bottle. When a liquor is called for, the performer raises the finger over the air-hole above that particular liquor, and the liquor will flow out. When a large number of liquors may be called for, the performer has one compartment filled with a perfectly colorless liquor, which he pours into glasses previously flavored with strong essences. Certain gins and cordials can be simulated in this fashion.

Various improvements have been made in this bottle trick. For instance, after the bottle has yielded its various sorts of liquors, it is broken, and from the bottle the performer produces some borrowed article which has been "vanished" in a previous trick and then apparently forgotten. This may have been a ring, glove, or handkerchief, which will be discovered tied around the neck of a small guinea-pig or dove taken from the broken bottle.

This is accomplished by having the bottle especially constructed. Its compartments end a few inches above the bottom of the bottle and the portion below having a wavy or cracked appearance, is made to slip on and off. The conjurer goes through the motions of actually breaking the bottle by tapping it near the bottom with a small hammer or wand, and the appearance of the guinea-pig or lost article causes surprise, so that the pretended breaking of the bottle passes unnoticed.

Again, this bottle can be genuine, with no loose bottom at all, and a small article can be inserted, but this makes a great deal of trouble, and the effect is not greatly increased. In doing the trick thus, I was always compelled to have an optician cut the bottom from the bottle, and then at times even he would break it.

To explain further how the article is "loaded" into the bottle, the performer borrows several articles, for example a ring and two watches. He will place the ring and watches into a funnel at the end of a large horse-pistol, and shoot them at the target. The two watches appear on the target or in a frame or any place that he may choose. In obtaining the articles, he may have wrapped them up in a handkerchief which he has hidden in the front of his vest. Alexander Herrmann was exceptionally clever in making this exchange, his iron nerve and perpetual smile being great aids in the trick.

The performer now places the duplicate handkerchief on the table in full view of the audience, and walks to another table for a gun. While reaching for this gun, he places the original articles which he borrowed behind his table on a servante, so that his hidden assistant may reach for them, place the two watches on the "turn-about target," tie the ring on the neck of the guinea-pig, shove him into the bottle, and insert the false bottom. The trick is then ready in its entirety.

The magician calls for something to use as a target, and the assistant responds with the revolving target or frame. When the conjurer shoots, the two watches appear on the target or in the frame. This part of the trick is accomplished by having the centre of the

target revolve, or, if the frame is used, by having a black velvet curtain pulled up by rapid springs or strong rubbers.

While all this is going on, some one has brought on the stage the loaded bottle, and as no attention is called to this, by the time the watches have been restored to the owners the conjurer introduces the bottle trick, pours out the various liquors, and eventually breaks the bottle and reproduces the borrowed article tied about the neck of the guinea-pig or dove.

Many names have been given to this trick. The old-time magicians who remained for months in one theatre had to change their programmes frequently, so for one night they would present the bottle without breaking it, and on the next they would break the bottle, so as to vary the trick.

This bottle trick originated in "The Inexhaustible Barrel." The first trace that I can find of this wonderful barrel is in "Hocus Pocus, Jr., The Anatomie of Legerdemain," written by Henry Dean in 1635 (Second Edition). On page 21 is described a barrel with a single spout, from which can be drawn three different kinds of liquors. This was worked precisely on the same principle as was the inexhaustible bottle trick centuries later, by shutting up the air-holes of compartments from which liquors were not flowing.

Its first public appearance, according to the data in my collection, clipped from London papers of 1707 and 1712, was when the "famous water-works of the late ingenious Mr. Henry Winstanly" were exhibited by his servants for the benefit of his widow; and the exhibition included

a view of "the Barrel that plays so many Liquors and is broke in pieces before the Spectators."

In 1780 Dr. Desaguliers presented in London a performance entitled "A Course of Experimental Philosophy wherein the Principles of Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, and Optics are proved and demonstrated by more than 300 Experiments."

In the course of these lectures he produced a sort of barrel, worked by holding the fingers over the air-holes. He also exposed the real source of strength of the notorious strong man of his day, John Carl von Eckeberg, who allowed horses to pull against him, permitted heavy stones to be broken on his bare chest, and who broke heavy ropes simply by stretching or straightening his knees. These lectures and exposés made Dr. Desaguliers so famous that he has been given considerable space in Sir David Brewster's "Letters on Natural Magic," published in London in 1851, in which book the various deceptions used by strong men are fully described. In fact the book is one that should be in every conjurer's library.

The old Dutch books explain the barrel trick, and in 1803 Charles Hutton, professor of Woolwich Royal Academy, translated four books from Ozanam and Montucla, exposing quite a number of old conjuring tricks. The barrel trick will be found on page 94 of Volume II.

The first use of "The Inexhaustible Bottle" by modern conjurers I found in an announcement of Herr Schmidt, a German performer, who for a time controlled the original writing and drawing figure, as will be found by reference to Chapter III., which is devoted to the his-

tory of that automaton. The programme published in that chapter is dated 1827, and does not include the famous bottle, because it was no longer a novelty in Herr Schmidt's répertoire; but the advertisement reproduced herewith, dated 1821, schedules the bottle trick thus: "The Bottle of Sobriety and Inebriety, proving the inutility of a set of decanters, when various liquors can be produced by one." Thus Schmidt antedated Houdin's offering of the trick by more than a quarter of a century.

Next the bottle turned up in 1835 in London, where it was presented by a German who styled himself "Falck of Koenigsberg, Pupil of the celebrated Chevalier Pinnetty," and who introduced the programme with which Döbler made such a sensation in 1842.

FOR SIX NIGHTS ONLY,

viz. MONDAY, the 7th of January, and the FIVE following Evenings; FRIDAY, the 11th, is fixed for

Mr. Schmidt's BENEFIT,

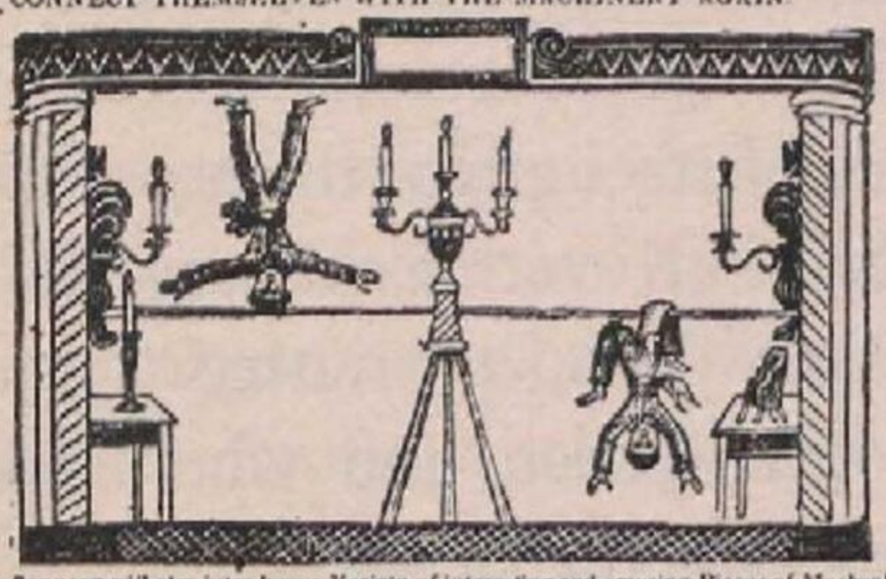
and SATURDAY is decidedly the LAST NIGHT of the Performance.

MECHANICAL & OPTICAL THEATRE

At the Music-Hall,

Albion-Street, Leeds.

MR. SCHMIDT most respectfully acquaints the Ladies and Gentlemen of LEEDS and its Vicinity, that after many Years' labour he has completed some AUTOMATAN ROPE DANCERS, as large as Life, which go through a Variety of Evolutions on the Tight Rope. To Men of Science they must appear impossible, for though they are actually connected with the Mechanism, they disengage themselves from it, and balance themselves in various positions, WITHOUT THE USE OF THEIR HANDS, AND INSTANTLY CONNECT THEMSELVES WITH THE MACHINERY AGAIN.



Mr. SCHMIDT will also introduce a Variety of interesting and amusing Pieces of Mechanism, never before exhibited in Leeds.

RAMO SAMMEE,

This amusing little Figure will correctly inform the Company the Time by any Person's Watch; he will also decipher Writing, and answer any Question proposed to him.

The Dutch Coffee House,

An elegant little Building; on the Travellers ringing the bell the door opens—the Hostess attends and provides him with any Liquor he may call for.

THE CABINET OF SAFETY.

In which Property of any description can be placed on the direction of the Company; the contents will imperceptibly change from one drawer into another, or even behind the glasses.

The Bottle of Sobriety and Inebriety,

Proving the inutility of a set of Decanters, when various Liquors can be produced by one.

THE MECHANICAL TEA CADDYS,

Any Lady or Gentleman having a desire to take care of any Article, locks it up in one Caddy, yet on opening the other it is found there, although the Caddy is in the hand of any other Person.

AN EXTRAORDINARY GLASS PILLAR,

Which will perform Innumerable Feats.

EXPERIMENTS IN ELECTRICITY.

The English Artillerist, who will discharge a Cannon without the use of Gunpowder!

AN ENTERTAINING EXPERIMENT WITH TWO ELECTRICAL VASES,

The astonishing power of Electricity over the Vegetable Kingdom, producing a Crop of Sallad IN ONE MINUTE, before the Eyes of the Spectators.

THE UNFORTUNATE MAGAZINE,

immediately on being placed in sight of the Audience a Thunder Cloud will descend and take its station directly above it; heavy flashes of Lightning are observed striking down upon it, but the Building being provided with a Conductor they prove ineffectual; after a short time the Conductor is removed, the Lightning becomes more vivid, once more strikes the Building, it becomes ignited, and is consumed in sight of the Audience.

The whole of the Valuable and Splendid EXHIBITION of MECHANICAL and MUSICAL AUTOMATA will be exhibited as usual:—The Musical Lady; The Juvenile Artist; The Rope Dancer; Magnificent Classic Vase; The Magician; The Walking Figure; A Tarantula Spider; An Egyptian Lizard; Two Siberian Mice; A Golden Serpent; A Beautiful Humming Bird; Self-acting Piano-Forte. The whole of the Evening Amusement will conclude with the extraordinary

DANCE OF WITCHES,

Of which the following is a brief description:—A Grotesque Ballet, representing the Sorcerer's Anniversary or a Dance of Witches, with various Evolutions, Gambols, Dances, and Exercises, by some hundreds of fancy-formed Figures, producing the most whimsical Spectacles, &c. &c.

Open from One o'Clock till Four, when the AUTOMATA will be exhibited as usual—Admission 1s. 6d. each: Children 1s. The AUTOMATA will be exhibited in the Evening from Seven o'Clock till Half-past Eight, when the Visitors take their Seats, and the Curtain will rise for the Stage Performance.

Admission for the whole Evening's Entertainment—ONE SHILLING EACH.—A BAND WILL ATTEND.

J. STOREY, PRINTER, BRIGGATE, LEEDS.

A Schmidt programme of 1821, featuring the "Bottle of Sobriety and Inebriety." From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Mr. Falck opened at the Queen's Bazaar, Oxford Street, London, November 8th, 1835. Before opening, however, he gave a private performance for the press, and received quite a number of notices. A half-column clipping in my collection, dated November 4th, 1835,

NATURAL MAGIC!

MR. FALCK,

Of Konigsberg, Pupil of the celebrated Chevalier Pinetty, has just arrived in England, and will exhibit his surprising deceptions,

NOW UNRIVALLED

IN NATURAL MAGIC,

AT THE

Queen's Bazaar, Oxford Street.

AMONG THE NUMEROUS FEATS EXHIBITED
WILL BE FOUND THE FOLLOWING:—

The Enchanted Bread—The Walking Rice—Paying a Tavern Keeper—The Enchanted Egg—The Calculation of Money—The Lost Ring—The Exchange of Wine—The Enchanted Dice—The Card in the Pocket—The Present, or Gift of Flora—The Wine and Dessert—besides Surprising Deceptions with Cards, &c. &c.

The Performance to begin daily ~~at Twelve till half-past One;~~ and at Three till half-past Four.

ADMITTANCE ONE SHILLING—CHILDREN SIXPENCE.

Geo. Nichols, Printer, Earl's Court, Cranbourn Street, Soho.

Poster used by Falck of Koenigsberg in 1835, featuring the trick of exchange of wine. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

which I think is cut from *The Chronicle* or *The Globe*, mentions the trick among other effects like "Flora's Gift," "The Card in the Pocket," etc., and adds that the "exchange of wine was so that if once in Mr. Falck's company, we should not wish to exchange it, for he poured

Waterloo Rooms.

Il est Agreeable et Plaisant de S'Instruire en S'Amusant!

THE LAST

Splendid, Brilliant and Fashionable

DAY PERFORMANCE

WILL TAKE PLACE ON

SATURDAY 21st APRIL, 1838,

Under the High and Distinguished

PATRONAGE OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY GIFFORD,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

Lady H. Stuart Forbes,

&c. &c. &c. Original

ON WHICH OCCASION Mr. Edinburgh

Monsr. PHILLIPPE

WILL SELECT

The most INTERESTING, ATTRACTIVE and

SURPRISING FEATS

FROM HIS EXTENSIVE STOCK OF

NECROMANTIC, MAGICAL & DEXTERICAL

DEMON-STRATIONS!

La Gaieté est la Santé de L'ame la tristesse en est le poison.

Programme.

PART I.

THE MYSTERIOUS BOTTLE,
A CURIOUS OPERATION,
THE DEVIL WILL PERFORM.

9 or 10 Handkerchiefs will be seen flying at the rate of a 1000 Miles in Two Seconds!!

A LESSON FOR LADIES,
Or New Way to Make Sponge Cake!

WINGS AGAINST WHEELS, OR THE
FLYING WATCH!

A TRAGIC SCENE turned to an AGREEABLE SURPRISE,
or a Pigeon's Flight to the Sun!

The BIRTH of FLOWERS.

The Infernal Bottle,

PORTUNATUS'S LAST.

This Part will conclude with

MY GRANDMOTHER'S CAP.

PART II.

THE UNPARALLELED,

JUPITER & VULCAN FIRES!

REPRESENTING

The SUN—STARS—a PEACOCK,
The Emblems of FREE-MASONRY, &c. &c.

PART III.

A NIGHT IN THE
PALACE OF PEKIN!

In which Monsr. PHILLIPPE will appear
AS THE GREAT
CHINESE MAGICIAN,
IN FULL COSTUME,

And will perform some of the most Extraordinary

Indian and Chinese Feats!!!

Ever Attempted by any EUROPEAN.

Monsr. P. will speak the FRENCH LANGUAGE in this Part,

INTERSPERSED WITH

"Le Cordonier Modèle,"—"Les Rose volans,"—"Les Metamorphoses d'Arlequin, ou les Lapins Enchantés,"—"Les Aventures d'Atlantic,"—"Le GRAND TOUR du Bassin de Neptune ou

LES POISSONS D'OR!!.

AND CONCLUDE WITH

The GRAND and SUBLIME FEAT in imitation of the Renowned SWISS PATRIOT

WILLIAM TELL.

By actually Firing a BALL into an ORANGE placed on the Head of DOMINGO!!!

PART IV.

The whole to conclude with a variety of

FIGURES PHANTASMAGORIQUES!

REPRESENTING

TIME with his SCYTHE—PATTIE'S MILL—SATAN'S HEAD—JUNO and JUPITER—The HOSPITAL DOG—The MAGICIAN whose Head changes 24 times—The TWO WARRIORS—A BARBER in the act of operating—The SUN—ECLIPSE of the MOON—NAPOLEON'S TOMB—BURNING of ROYAL EXCHANGE—HARLEQUIN in a BOTTLE—ZIG ZAG—QUEEN MARY QUEEN VICTORIA—the CROWN—The EMBLEMS of SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, and IRELAND.

ON MONDAY APRIL 23rd
Monsr. P. takes his BENEFIT.

Poster used by Phillippe during his Edinburgh engagement in 1838, featuring "The Infernal Bottle." From the Harry Houdini Collection.

three sorts of wine, Port, Sherry, and Champagne, out of one bottle. Then he put them together, and from such a mixture produced sherry in one glass, and port in another."

From this notice it will be seen that Falck had "The Inexhaustible Bottle," and had some method of returning all the liquors not drunk back into the bottle and then pouring out two different kinds of liquor.

Perhaps he resorted to chemicals, but one thing is evident—the bottle was used for six different kinds of liquors at one and the same time.

Phillippe from 1836 to 1838 featured "An Infernal Bottle" trick, also "The Inexhaustible Bottle" trick. The trick also was seen on pro-

grammes used by John Henry Anderson, the Wizard of the North, in the same years. According to these programmes Phillippe and Anderson showed the bottle empty, filled it with water, and then served five different liquors.

On April 30th, 1838, Anderson thus announced the trick on a programme used at Victoria Rooms, Hull:

"Handkerchiefs will be borrowed from three gentlemen; the magician will load his mystic gun, in which he will place the handkerchiefs; he will fire a bottle containing wine, the bottle will be broken and the handkerchiefs will appear."

Programmes in my collection show that Anderson presented the trick, serving various sorts of liquors, when he played London in 1840, but little attention was drawn to the wonderful bottle. In 1842 Ludwig Döbler, Germany's best-beloved magician, came to London and featured what he termed "The Travelling Bottle."

Ludwig Leopold Döbler was born in Vienna in 1801. He was the best-beloved magician who ever trod the stage. He started life as an engraver of metals, but his fancy turned to necromancy. He gave his best performances in his native city. In 1841 he was touring Holland, and in a letter now in my possession, which he wrote to a director and editor in Vienna under date of March 15th, 1842, he informs his friend that he has sent all his baggage to London from Amsterdam, and is on a visit to Paris. He regrets that he has not all of his apparatus with him, but has given several performances, and mentions the fact that "to-morrow I am engaged to give a performance in the private parlor of Rothschild and then by the Count

"THE GREAT WIZARD OF THE NORTH,"

Performing his celebrated *trick* of

POURING FOUR DIFFERENT LIQUIDS FROM ONE BOTTLE.

Reproduction of a political cartoon in *Punch*, published during Anderson's London engagement, April, 1843, proving that the "Inexhaustible Bottle Trick" was used by Anderson before Robert-Houdin was a professional entertainer. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Montaliset, minister of the King's mansions." He also informs his friend that he expects to visit Paris the next season and build his own theatre. He states a fact most interesting to all magicians, namely, that he has rented

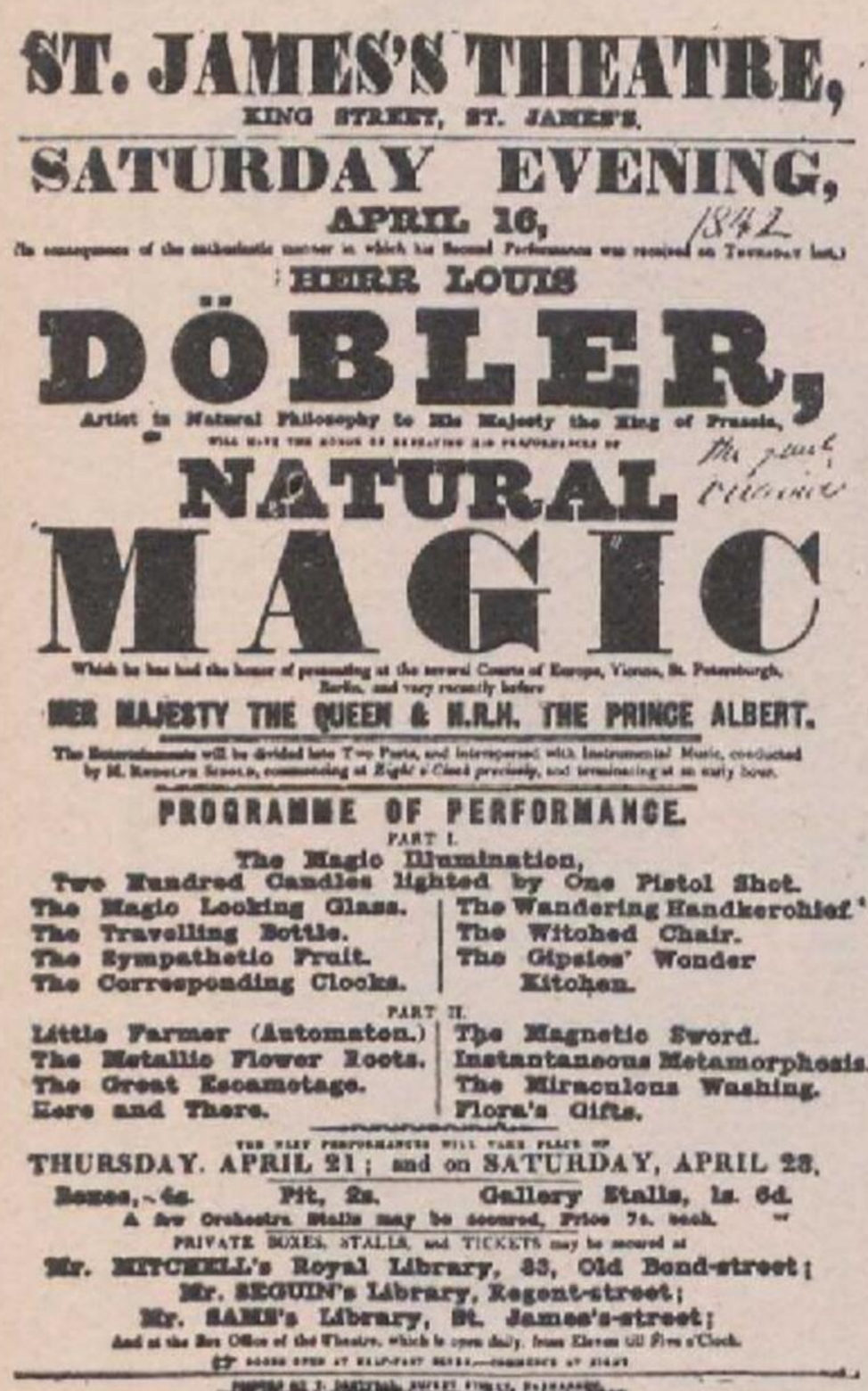
Ludwig Döbler in his prime, taken about 1839. The original of this rare picture was discovered by the author in a small print shop in Moscow, Russia. It is now a part of his Collection.

the St. James Theatre in London for two thousand francs ($400) a night, or more than $2,400 rent for one week. Döbler drew such big audiences and made so much money that he refused to give private perfomances,

only breaking this rule when presenting his show before H. M. Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort.

He played the provinces, then went over to Dublin, where, although unable to speak English, he was a veritable sensation. In 1844 Döbler played a return date at the St. James Theatre, London, and this time he had Anderson as a rival at the Théâtre Royal Adelphia.

Döbler amassed a fortune very rapidly; in fact he retired in 1847, and never again appeared on the stage. He always explained his early retirement by saying: "The public loves me, and I want it to always love me. I may return and be a failure, so it is best to know just when to stop." He died in a little village near Tunitz, on April 17th, 1864, when one of God's noblemen was laid to rest.



ST. JAMES'S THEATRE,
KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S.
SATURDAY EVENING,
APRIL 16, 1842
HERR LOUIS
DÖBLER,
Artist in Natural Philosophy to His Majesty the King of Prussia,
NATURAL
MAGIC
Which he has had the honor of presenting at the several Courts of Europe, Vienna, St. Petersburgh, Berlin, and very recently before
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN & H.R.H. THE PRINCE ALBERT.
PROGRAMME OF PERFORMANCE.
PART I.
The Magic Illumination,
Two Hundred Candles lighted by One Pistol Shot.
The Magic Looking Glass.
The Travelling Bottle.
The Sympathetic Fruit.
The Corresponding Clocks.
The Wandering Handkerchief.
The Witched Chair.
The Gipsies' Wonder Kitchen.
PART II.
Little Farmer (Automaton.)
The Metallic Flower Roots.
The Great Escamotage.
Here and There.
The Magnetic Sword.
Instantaneous Metamorphosis.
The Miraculous Washing.
Flora's Gifts.
THURSDAY, APRIL 21; and on SATURDAY, APRIL 23.
Boxes, 4s. Pit, 2s. Gallery Stalls, 1s. 6d.
PRIVATE BOXES, STALLS, and TICKETS may be secured at
Mr. MITCHELL's Royal Library, 33, Old Bond-street;
Mr. SEGUIN's Library, Regent-street;
Mr. SAMS's Library, St. James's-street;

A Döbler programme from the Evanion collection, dated 1842, now in the possession of the author.

"The Travelling Bottle" alluded to by Döbler in his programmes was nothing more or less than "The Inexhaustible Bottle." The following excerpt from the London *Chronicle* during Döbler's engagement at the St. James Theatre, April, 1842, is illuminating:

"DÖBLER—ST. JAMES THEATRE.—Among the illusions that more particularly struck our fancy was one entitled 'The Travelling Bottle,' where Herr Döbler, filling a common bottle with water, transformed this water into a collection of wines of all countries, amicably assembled

Döblers Strauschen

seinen Verehrern und Verehrerinnen gewidmet.

Junger Landsmann! Wunderkräfte
Gabst du unsern Augen kund,
Noch im Winter, wo die Säfte
Schlummern, warfst du Blumen bunt,
Aus mit vollen Händen, gierig
Fingen sie die Damen auf,
Diese Aufgab schien uns schwierig,
Du gebotst der Dinge Lauf.

Und so ging's mit andern Künsten,
Die der Wundermann gethan,
Alle überwog die kühnsten
Schaustück, Keins ward satt daran.
Mit den Ringen, mit dem Spiegel,
Schuss, und mit der Flasche Wein,
Niemand brach das Zauber Siegel
Das Geheimniss, es blieb dein.

Denn kaum war dein Hut entleeret
Von den Sträußchen sonder Zahl,
Hat man neue dreist begehret
Und es blieb dir keine Wahl,
Als den Zauber zu beschwören
Und der Hut war wieder voll,
Und der Jubel scholl in Chören
Und das Haus schien völlig toll.

Deinen Ruhm bringst du nach Jahren
Doch gewiss zu uns zurück,
Wenn die Welt du durchgefahren
Überschaut mit Magiers Blick.
Dann empfangen wir dich wieder,
Lassen dich auch nicht mehr aus,
Bis du deine Kunst legst nieder,
Und bestellest hier dein Haus.

*Döblers Vorstellungen brachten sich in ununterbrochener Reihe auf 60 im Josephstädter Theater.

Döbler's farewell programme in verse, used when he played his last engagement in the Josephstadter Theatre, Vienna. Original given by Döbler personally to Henry Evanion; now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

FLORA'S GIFTS.

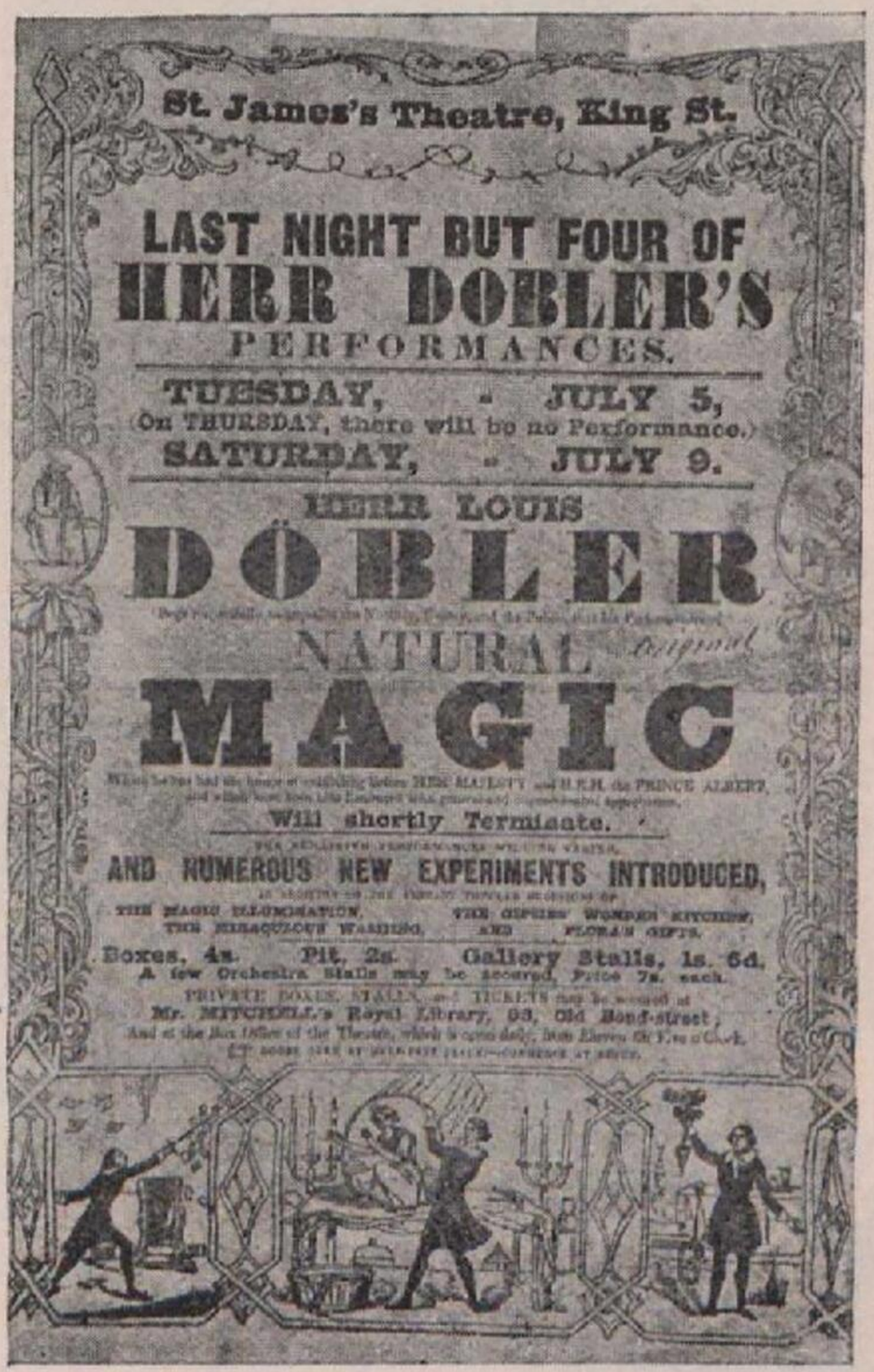
HERR DOBLER

Ludwig Döbler in his prime, offering his most popular trick, "The Creation of Flowers." From a rare lithograph in the Harry Houdini Collection.

together in one receptacle, and he fills out first a glass of sherry, then one of port, then one of champagne, and so on."

The critic then describes how the bottle was broken, and the borrowed handkerchief was found inside the bottle.

Probably because of the prominence which Herr Dö-


St. James's Theatre, King St.

LAST NIGHT BUT FOUR OF
HERR DOBLER'S
PERFORMANCES.

TUESDAY, - JULY 5,
On THURSDAY, there will be no Performance.)
SATURDAY, - JULY 9.

HERR LOUIS
DÖBLER

NATURAL *Original*
MAGIC

Will shortly Terminate.

AND NUMEROUS NEW EXPERIMENTS INTRODUCED,

THE MAGIC ILLUMINATION. THE GIPSIES' WONDER KITCHEN,
THE MIRACULOUS WASHING, AND FLORA'S GIFTS.

Boxes, 4s. Pit, 2s. Gallery Stalls, 1s. 6d.
A few Orchestra Stalls may be secured, Price 7s. each.

PRIVATE BOXES, STALLS, and TICKETS may be secured at
Mr. MITCHELL's Royal Library, 93, Old Bond-street;
And at the Box Office of the Theatre, which is open daily, from Eleven till Five o'Clock.

Döbler programme with illustrations of his tricks, used during his engagement at the St. James Theatre, London. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

bler gave to this trick it attracted more attention when Anderson presented it during his London run of 1843. He announced it as "Water vs. Wine, or Changing Water

into Different Liquids—Sherry, Port, Champagne, Gin, Milk, Rum, and Water."

The London *Sun* of April 18th, 1843, says:

"Mr. Anderson, besides the feats by which his reputation was established in his former exhibitions in the metropolis, performed with perfect ease and success some of greater difficulty than those by which Herr Döbler astonished the world, such as serving several kinds of wines from the same bottle."

The Morning Advertiser (London) of the same date said:

"With the utmost ease he produced from an empty bottle wine, water, port, sherry, and champagne, and immediately afterward, under a blaze of wax and gas, he broke the same bottle and produced from it half a dozen cambric handkerchiefs, which had pre-

BOWERY THEATRE

Boxes.....25 Cents. Pit.....12 1-2 Cents
Seats in Orchestra Boxes.....50 Cents
Private Boxes for Families.....Five Dollars
Box Book open from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M.
PROPRIETOR.....THOS. S. HAMBLIN

The Doors will open at **Half-Past 7,** and the Soiree commences at 8 o'clock.

OBSERVE!—There is no Theatrical Exhibition with these Entertainments.

NIGHTLY JAMMED!

THE GREAT WIZARD

MACALLISTER!

Continues his **Triumphant Career,** and nightly exhibits his **Grand and Original** Experiments in **MAGIC, MECHANISM, ELECTRICITY, CHEMISTRY &c.,** in his Gorgeous Temple of Enchantment, before

AMAZED THOUSANDS!

'Men of Mighty Words and Little Deeds!'

Who claim the sole right to the name of **WIZARD,** try in vain to convince the world of their greatness!—They may well writhe under the exposure of their **FREE TICKET SYSTEM,** by which they seek to obtain an audience, while the daily announcement of **OLD TRICKS** under **NEW NAMES** show the strait to which they are driven! They have learned to their cost, that

"Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread."

For the first time here, **Macallister** will perform his

GREAT LIGHT FEAT

AND INSTANTLY

Illuminate the Interior of the Theatre

AT A PISTOL SHOT!

By Request, will be repeated the

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

AND THE

"GREAT GUN FEAT!" or, FEAT A LA Wm. TELL.

Macallister will introduce the Wonder of the World, the far-famed and original

MAGIC BOTTLE

2 2

KINDS OF LIQUOR

OUT OF MACALLISTER'S

INTERMINABLE

BOTTLE!

The only man in the world that can produce over Five kinds of Liquor from one and the same Bottle.

This experiment has been performed for the past 12 years by Macallister, throughout Europe, and was originally introduced to the American Public by him, during his First Engagement in the United States, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, in 1840.

Wednesday Evening, August 11, 1852

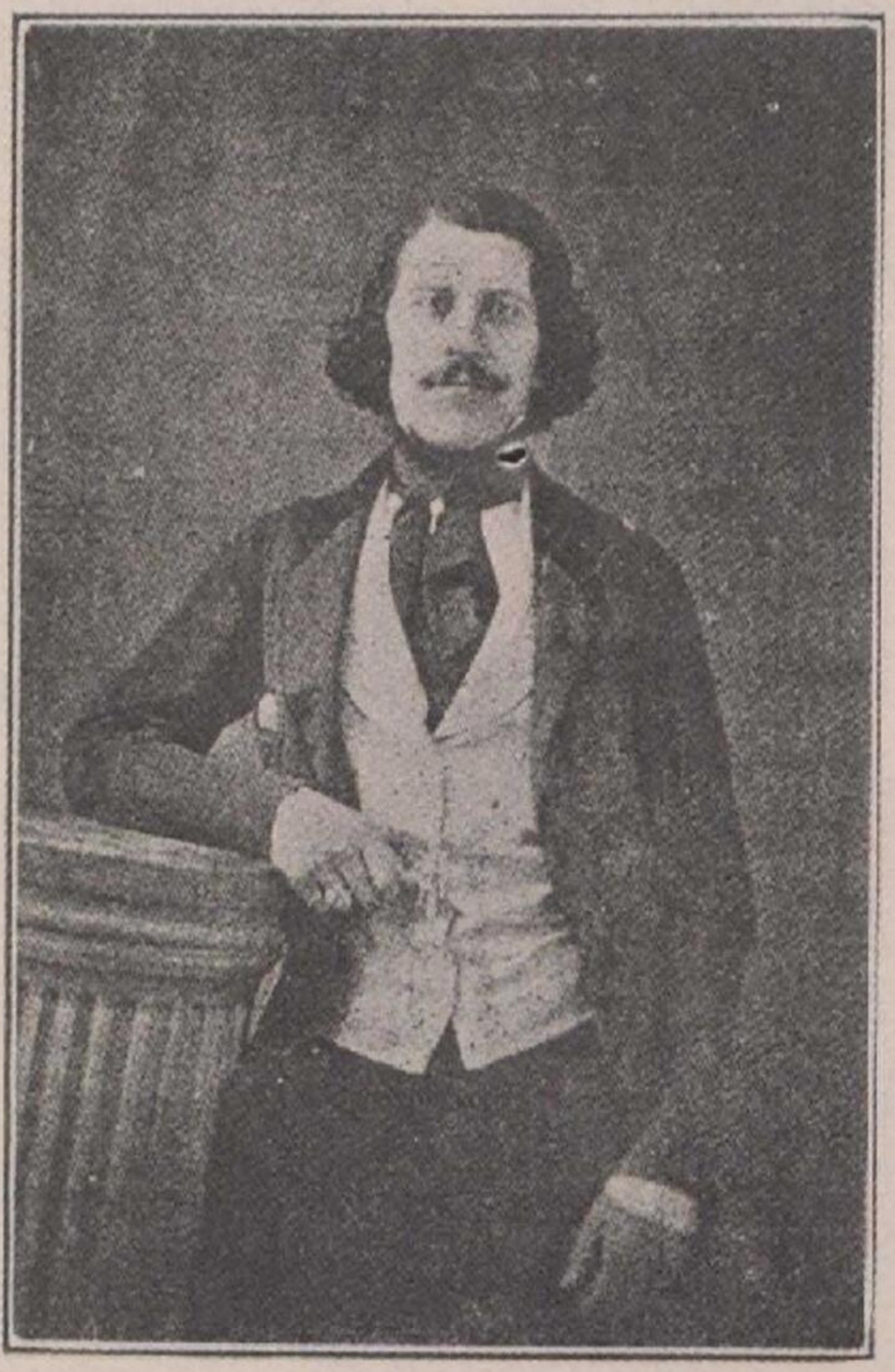
Will be given the Mysteries of the

ENCHANTED PALACE

Programme used by Macallister at the Bowery Theatre, August 11th, 1852, during his second engagement in New York City. Featuring the "Magic Bottle" from which twenty-two kinds of liquor could be drawn. Careful reading will unearth Macallister's ill-will toward Anderson. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

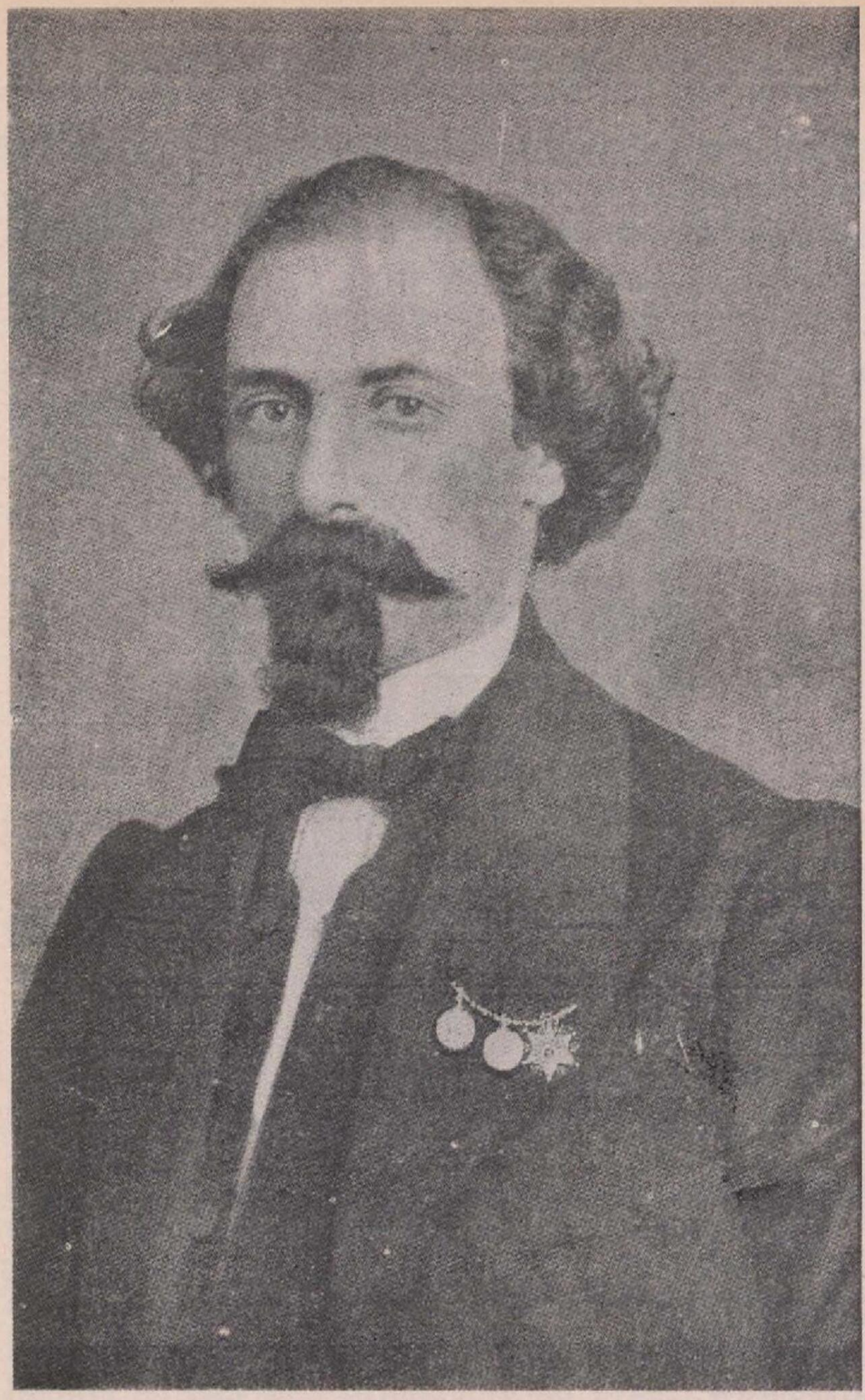
viously been deposited under lock and key at a considerable distance."

Macallister, the Scotch brick-mason, who became the pupil and assistant of Phillippe, as described in the chapter on "The Pastry Cook of the Palais Royal," also



Andrew Macallister as he appeared during his engagement in the United States.
From the Harry Houdini Collection.

claimed the bottle trick as his invention. I have been unable to obtain any of the early programmes used by Macallister, but I am reproducing the one he utilized during his engagement at the Bowery Theatre, New York City, in 1852. This was not his first appearance in



The original Compars Herrmann, who was Robert-Houdin's very active rival during the latter's first engagement in London. Best portrait now in existence, and only one showing Herrmann in his prime. Original photograph loaned for this work by James L. Kernan, of Baltimore, Md., U. S. A.

New York, however. In December, 1848, and January, 1849, he played at the same theatre, and announced that he had just concluded a successful engagement at the Grand Theatre Tacon, Havana, Cuba.

Although Macallister claims to have invented "The Inexhaustible Bottle" trick, it is more likely that, having been connected so long with Phillippe, he knew the secret several years before Robert-Houdin appeared in public. But as Macallister also claimed to have invented the peacock and the harlequin automata, both of which are recognized as the inventions of his predecessors, his claim cannot be given serious consideration.

He advertised to produce twenty-two kinds of liquors from one bottle, and therefore he must have utilized the essence glasses in connection with the bottle.

What must have been Robert-Houdin's feeling when, on arriving in London in 1848, he found another magician, Compars Herrmann, heavily advertised at the Théâtre Royal, and already offering each and every trick included by the Frenchman in his répertoire. Even the much-vaunted bottle was in Herrmann's list of tricks. No one seems able to tell where Compars Herrmann obtained the tricks he used, but he must be given credit for never advertising them as his own inventions. His record in this respect was clean throughout his life as a mysterious entertainer.

The programme presented by Herrmann at the Théâtre Royal during Robert-Houdin's opening week at the St. James Theatre is herewith reproduced. Herrmann remained some time in London, playing at the Adelphia, then at the Royal Princess, and finally at the Surrey

Theatre. A bill used by Herrmann at the Princess is reproduced on page 232. It evidently proved satisfactory to the public and he used it without change for many years.

Probably the most notable warfare waged over the

THEATRE ROYAL,

HAY-MARKET.

Mr. B. WEBSTER, Sole Lessee and Manager, Old Brompton.

FAREWELL

MORNING

PERFORMANCE.

MATINÉE

MAGIQUE

Commencing at Two o'Clock.

THE

WONDER OF THE WORLD!

THIS MORNING.

SATURDAY, May 6th, 1848,

M. HERRMANN.

(OF HANOVER)

PREMIER PRESTIDIGITATEUR OF FRANCE,

AND THE ACKNOWLEDGED

FIRST PROFESSOR OF MAGIC IN THE WORLD,

Respectfully announces to the Nobility, Gentry and the Public in general, that he will give his

LAST

Morning Performance,

Previous to his departure to the provinces, and will introduce

Six New Extraordinary Tricks,

NEVER BEFORE EXHIBITED!

L'Album Hanoverien; The Hanoverian Album.
Les Chapeaux Diaboliques; The Diabolical Hats.
Le Coffre infernale; The Infernal Chest.
Le Vase d'Armide; ou, l'horlogerie de Geneve; Armida's Vase; or, The Geneva Clockwork.
La Multiplication des Indes; Indian Multiplication.
Les Mysteres de Paris; The Mysteries of Paris.

L'ESCAMOTAGE,

De Madame HERRMANN,

As performed some weeks since at the Theatre Royal, Adelphi.

MADE. HERRMANN

Will also exhibit her extraordinary powers of

SECOND SIGHT;

OR,

ANTI-MAGNETISM

By divining, with Closed Eyes, any objects that may be submitted to this proof, which has astonished the most scientific.

PROGRAMME.

Le Valage des Cartes; Illusions with Cards.
Le Metoir des Dames; the Lady's Looking Glass.
LA BOUTEILLE INEPUISABLE; THE INEXHAUSTIBLE BOTTLE.
Robin le Sorcier, (*piece mecanique*); Robin the Sorcerer.
La Poche Merveilleuse; the Marvellous Pocket.
Les Noces de Cana; the Nuptials of Cana.
Satan et son Menchoir; Satan and his Kerchief.
Les Colombes Sympathetiques; the Sympathetic Doves.
LE CADRAN MATHEMATICIEN; THE MATHEMATICAL CLOCK.
Le Timbre Isole, (*piece mecanique*); the Isolated Clock Bell.
Le pain de sucre Magique; The Magic Sweetcake.
Plusieurs tours de Cartes nouveaux et de magie blanche; New Illusions with Cards and White Magic.
La naissance des Poissons rouges, executie en habit de ville; The Birth of Gold Fish; performed in an Evening Dress.

GRAND NEW ILLUSIONS

FROM INDIA,

Le SUSPENSION ETHEREENNE

BY ETHER.

LA DOUBLE VUE!

Or, Second Sight,

BY

MADAME HERRMANN.

WITH VARIOUS NEW

ILLUSIONS WITH CARDS

AND

MAGIE BLANCHE!

AND

A CONCERT,

IN IMITATION OF VARIOUS BIRDS,

BY

M. HERRMANN.

Stalls and Boxes 5s. Pit 3s. Gallery 2s

Doors open at Half-past One; the Performance to commence at Two o'Clock.

Billing used by Compars Herrmann when he played in opposition to Robert-Houdin on the latter's arrival in London. This shows that Herrmann duplicated all of Robert-Houdin's tricks. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

honor of having invented this trick arose between Robert-Houdin and Henri Robin, who were contemporaries.

Robin, whose right name was Dunkell, was of Holland birth and died in Paris in 1874. He was at his prime

THEATRE ROYAL,

HAY-MARKET.

Mr. B. WEBSTER, Sole Lessee and Manager, Old Brompton.

THE

WONDER OF THE WORLD!

POSITIVELY

The Last Two Nights!

THIS PRESENT

Thursday, & Saturday,

April 20th, and 22nd, 1848.

M. HERRMANN.

(OF HANOVER),

PREMIER PRESTIDIGITATEUR OF FRANCE,

AND THE ACKNOWLEDGED

FIRST PROFESSOR OF MAGIC IN THE WORLD,

Respectfully announces to the Nobility, Gentry and the Public in general, that he will give TWO

SOIRÉES MAGIQUE

AT THIS THEATRE, on THE ABOVE EVENINGS,

when

Positively the only occasions he can appear in London this Season.

M. HERRMANN

Will introduce several

New and Startling Illusions!

Which he has recently imported from China & various parts of Europe.

MADE. HERRMANN

Will also exhibit her extraordinary powers of

SECOND SIGHT;

OR,

ANTI-MAGNETISM

By divining, with Closed Eyes, any objects that may be submitted to this proof.

PROGRAMME

FOR

This Evening, Thursday, April 20th.

La Volage des Cartes; **Illusions with Cards.**
LE BOUTELLE INEPUISABLE; **THE INEXHAUSTIBLE BOTTLE.**
Ludroin Mercure; **Mercury.**
Arlequin le Diable a quatre, *(pièce mecanique)*; **Harlequin, the Devil,**
L'Epee Magique; **The Magic Sword.**
L'Escamotage de la Lune et du Soliel; **the Juggler of the Moon and the Sun.**
LE CADRAN MATHEMATICIEN; **THE MATHEMATICAL CLOCK.**
Les Colombes Sympathetiques; **The Sympathetic Doves.**
Le Riz Enchante; **The Enchanted Rice.**
La Cafetière du Grand Mogul; **The Coffee Pot of the Grand Mogul.**
Le pain de sucre Magique; **The Magic Sweetcake.**
Le foulard Serpent; **The Snake-like Handkerchief.**
La Borne Magique; **The Magic Stove.**
La naissance des Poisson rouge, executie en habit de ville; **The Birth of Gold Fish, performed in an Evening Dress.**
Les Sieurs tour des Cartes nouveaux et de magie blanche; **New Illusions with Cards and White Magic.**
Le Billet de Salomon; **Solomon's Note.**
Les Tabatieres Enchante; **the Enchanted Snuff Boxes.**
L'Obeissance des pieces de monnaie; **the obedient Money.**

GRAND NEW ILLUSIONS

FROM INDIA,

Le SUSPENSION ETHEREENNE

BY ETHER.

SUSPENSION ETHEREENNE.

LE DOUBLE VUE!

Or, Second Sight,

BY

MADAME HERRMANN.

WITH VARIOUS NEW

ILLUSIONS WITH CARDS

AND

MAGIE BLANCHE!

AND

A CONCERT,

IN IMITATION OF VARIOUS BIRDS,

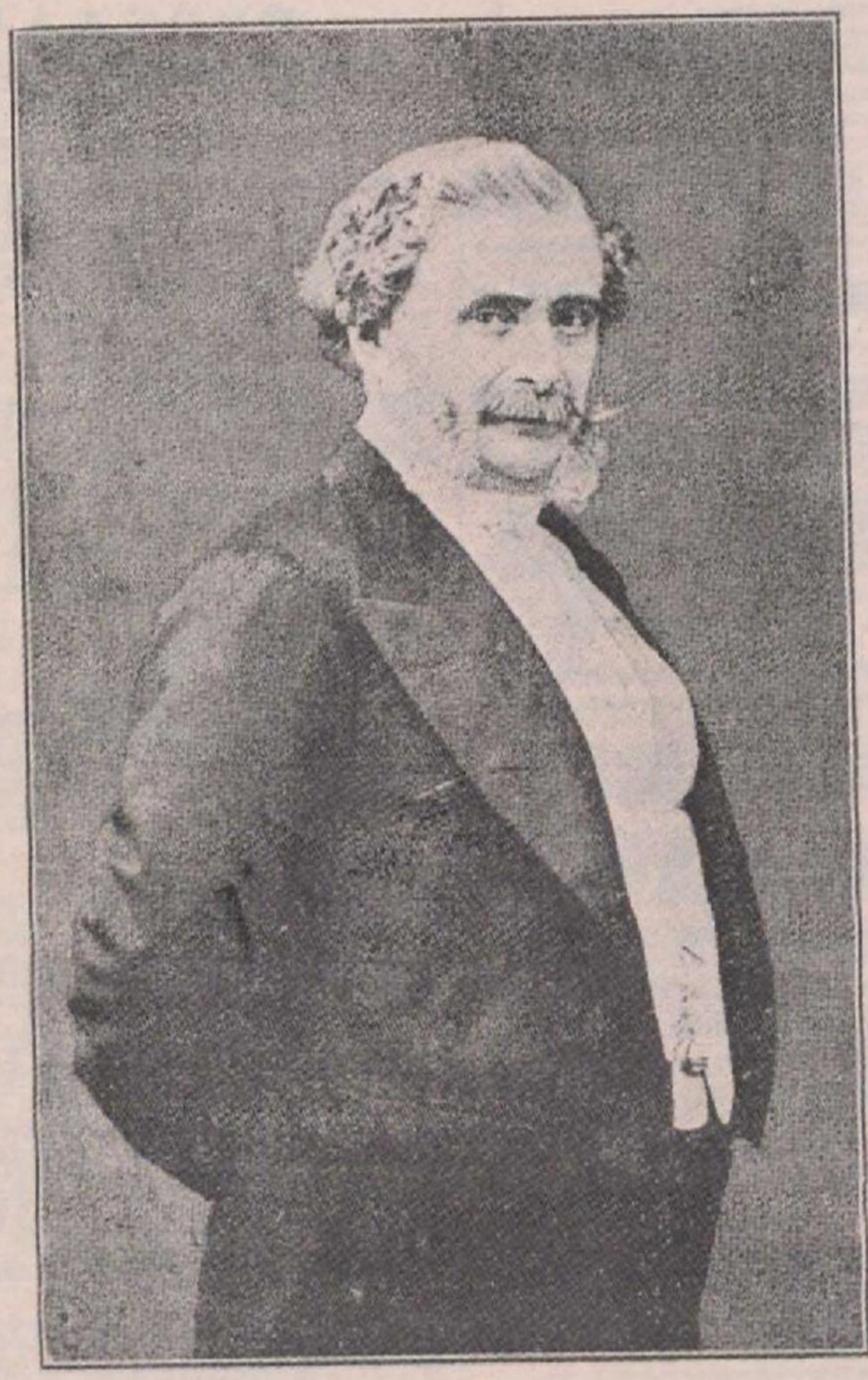
BY

M. HERRMANN.

Stalls & Boxes 5s. Pit 3s. Galleries 2s. & 1s.
Second Price at Nine o'clock.
Doors open at Half-past Seven; the Performance to commence at Eight o'Clock.
Private Boxes may be had at the Box-office, at the Libraries of Mess. Sams, Mitchell, Lowe, Hookham, Andrews, Bailey, & Adamthwaite.
Tickets and Places to be had of Mr. J. T. ARCHER, at the Box-Office, which is open daily from 11 till 4.

A Herrmann programme dated April, 1848, showing that Herrmann presented the inexhaustible bottle two months before Robert-Houdin appeared in London.

about 1839–40, when he toured the Continent. He was popular in London, Paris, and both the English and French provinces. A polished man, famous for the elegance of his speech and manners, he conducted his performance



Henri Robin, generally conceded to have been the most polished conjurer in the history of magic. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

and all his business in a quiet, conservative fashion. In both Paris and London, he had playhouses named temporarily in his honor, Salle de Robin, and at one time in

London he also appeared at the Egyptian Hall. He published his own magazine, *L'Almanach d'Cagliostro*, an illustrated periodical which was quite pretentious.

Robin presented all the tricks and automata that Robert-Houdin claimed as his original inventions, and in the famous controversy, Robert-Houdin came out second best. Robin proved that he had used the bottle trick before Robert-Houdin did, by showing back numbers of his magazine, whose illustrations pictured Robin performing the trick at his theatre in Milan, Italy, July 6th, 1844, or three years before Robert-Houdin presented it in Paris.

Robin, however, never wrote an autobiography nor any exhaustive work dealing with the history of magic, while Robert-Houdin did. The latter set forth his claims over other magicians so skilfully that for more than half a century the intelligent and thoughtful reading public has been deceived and has accepted his statements as authoritative. According to an article published in *L'Illusionniste*, scientists to this day, in explaining the law of physics as operated by the use of air-holes in the inexhaustible bottle, refer to it as the "Robert-Houdin bottle," when in reality the honor of its invention belongs to some obscure mechanic or magician whose name must remain forever unsung by writers on magic.

CHAPTER VII

SECOND SIGHT

EVIDENTLY second sight was the foundation-stone of Robert-Houdin's success. Reading between the lines of his autobiography, one finds that this was the trick which carried him into the salons of fashion and royalty. Before he introduced second sight into his répertoire, his tricks were so commonplace that they did not arouse the interest of the court circle, whose approval furnished the seal of success.

This trick of second sight he claims body and soul, as the favorite child of his brain. He even goes as far as to relate a story to prove that the trick came to him in the form of an inspiration. I quote directly from the American edition of his "Memoirs," page 255:

"My two children were playing one day in the drawing-room at a game they had invented for their own amusement; the younger had bandaged his elder brother's eyes and made him guess the objects that he touched, and when the latter happened to guess right they changed places. This simple game suggested to me the most complicated idea that ever crossed my mind. Pursued by the notion, I ran and shut myself in my workshop, and was fortunately in that happy state when the mind follows easily the combinations traced by fancy. I rested my head in my hands, and in my excitement laid down the first principles of second sight."

Then, picking up the long idle quill of Baron Munchausen, he proceeds to explain the methods by which he perfected the trick and trained his son. To the layman these methods read most entertainingly. To the experienced conjurer or his humblest assistant they appeal as absurd and impossible, a sheer waste of time, of which

Robert-Houdin and his son Emile, presenting second sight. Here the bell is used as it was by Henri Robin. From an illustration in the original French edition of the Robert-Houdin "Memoirs."

a man who reproduced the tricks of his predecessors as rapidly as Robert-Houdin did, would not be guilty.

He claims to have trained the eye and memory of his son, by leading the latter past shop windows, and after allowing him one glance, demanding the names of articles seen at this single glance. When the boy could mention forty things after passing the window, his education was pronounced good. Robert-Houdin also tells in his

Robert and Haidee Heller from photographs taken at the time that they were presenting second sight according to the Robert-Houdin method by an electric code. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

"Memoirs" of spending hours with his son in poring over an enormous collection of coins, medals, etc., which severe lesson helped them both in future performances. To the conjurer, this tale is farcical. Not only was there no need of forcing the boy to become a coin expert, but the task was one which could not be accomplished in the brief time which Robert-Houdin allowed himself for perfecting the trick.

The only knowledge required about coins is to recognize a coin when you see it. Some one may hand a coin of peculiar stamp, and the operator must signal to his medium the metal and all he knows about it. Of course, if both know the various coins, then they can understand each other with less signaling than if the coins were unfamiliar to either.

Inaudi, the French calculator, can look at a blackboard filled with numbers for a few seconds, then turn his back upon them and add the entire amount that he has just seen and memorized. But let the reader understand that Inaudi is peculiarly gifted by nature, while second sight is a trick in which the person on the stage known as the medium is assisted by words, signs, prearranged movements, or articles or figures in rotation, which to the layman have the appearance of being unprepared. At a familiar cue, however, the operator touches articles that have been memorized, a ring, a watch, a scarf-pin, a lady's fan, an opera glass, all in rotation. At a snap of the fingers the medium will know that the articles are to be named in consecutive order, and only after the snap of the fingers or another cue agreed upon.

Robert-Houdin presented the trick for the first time

NEW STRAND

THEATRE.

SOIRÉES

MYSTÉRIEUSES

DE

ROBERT HELLER.

These elegant and original Performances will be given at the above Theatre

EVERY EVENING,

Commencing at 8 o'clock.

A MORNING PERFORMANCE

EVERY MONDAY AND THURSDAY,

AT HALF-PAST 2 O'CLOCK.

On each occasion will be presented the following inexplicable experiments, invented and performed by Robert Heller.

PART I.

The Cabalistic Clock	La pendule Cabalistique
The Obedient Dove	La colombe Obéissante
The Fans and Cannon Balls	Les eventails et les boulets de Canons
The Plumes of Feathers	Les plumes
The Basket of Flowers	La corbeille de Fleurs
The Marvellous Orange Tree	L'Oranger

PART II.

The Mysterious Port-folio	Port-feuille mysterieux
The Mystic Boquet	Le bouquet mystique
The Wonderful Balance	L'equilibre
The Automaton Cook	Le cuisnier automate
The Safety Casket	L'écrin de Sureté
The Magic filtration	La filtration magique

PART III.

THE SECOND SIGHT | LA SECONDE VUE

OF ERNEST HELLER.

ESCAMOTAGE OF ERNEST HELLER WHO WILL VANISH FROM THE EYES OF THE AUDIENCE.

The Inexhaustible Bottle	La bouteille Inépuisable
The cornucopiæ	La corne d'abondance

From which Fans, Toys, Bonbons, Journals, &c. will be showered upon the audience in the greatest profusion.

Doors to open at half-past 7, and at 2 for the Morning Performance.

PRIVATE BOXES - - - £1 1s. & £1 11s 6d.

Stalls 3s.; - Boxes 2s.; - Pit 1s.; - Gallery 6d.

The Box Office open from 11 to 5 daily; where Tickets and Places may be secured.

(Gye & Son, Printers.) (Marshall & Gobbin.)

Programme used by Robert Heller in 1851–52, when he was about eighteen years of age. Probably the only programme of this date in existence. Now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

at his own theatre, February 12th, 1846. Unquestionably at this time he employed the speaking code, wherein the answer is contained in the question asked of the medium by the performer. As he describes scene after scene in which he and his son participated, it is almost possible for a conjurer or any one interested in magic to follow his code. Apparently the amusement-loving public became familiar with his speaking code, for three years later, according to the illustrated appendix of the French edition of his "Memoirs," he adopted a code of signals, which he states was especially arranged to confuse those whom he terms his "fearless discoverers."

A mysterious bell was used in this connection, but he admits that it mattered not whether the bell struck or was silent, his son could name the object under consideration or answer the question. While Robert-Houdin asserts that he did not employ electricity for working his silent code, investigations make it almost certain that this was the method used. It is known throughout the world of conjuring that in 1850–51 Robert Heller (William Henry Palmer) reproduced Robert-Houdin's entire répertoire of tricks, with the exception of the suspension, and all worked precisely by Robert-Houdin's methods. In the second-sight trick, which he first presented with a young man as the medium, then later with Miss Haidee Heller, the medium was seated on a sofa fully equipped with wires and electric batteries. Heller's second sight was worked with both the speaking and silent codes. His confederate was concealed behind the scenes watching Heller through a peep-hole, or possibly he used another, seated in the audience, and had the wires strung under his chair, arranging

MELODEON

FOR POSITIVELY

TWO WEEKS ONLY.

MONDAY, MAY 15TH,

FIRST NIGHT OF

ROBERT HELLER

THE FAMOUS

SOMATIC CONJURER,

PIANO-SOLOIST AND CAUSEUR,

WHO HAS JUST COMPLTED HIS

365TH PERFORMANCE IN NEW YORK,

☞ Being a career of success which no other Conjurer has, at any time, accomplished in that city.

PROGRAMME No. 1

PART 1.—MAGIC.

WONDER I.....HELLER'S CABALISTIC CLOCK
WONDER II.....THE ÆRIAL BELL
WONDER III.....INFERNAL PILLS, from a celebrated Patent Medicine Warehouse in the *Netherland*
WONDER IV..... THE WITCHES' POLE, with singular developments in Cartomancy
WONDER V.....ANIMATED DOLLARS, with Life and Intellegence Manifested
WONDER VI.....HELLER'S ARABESQUE RINGS
WONDER VII.....THE DEVIL'S PUNCHBOWL

PART II.—MUSIC.

No. 1.....GRAND FANTASIA on Airs from the "Somnambula" of Thalberg, performed by ROBERT HELLER, on Steinway's Grand Pianoforte.
No. 2.....Mr Heller's Laughable Description the Piano-practice of a Boarding School Young Lady.—Illustrated. The Young Lady by Robert Heller.

PART III.—MYSTERY.

NO. 1.

HELLER'S SECOND-SIGHT MYSTERY

Invented by him, performed by him only, and which has made his celebrity from his first appearance in public, being frequently designated as

HELLER'S SUPERNATURAL VISION.

No. 2.—THE PLUMES OF VICTORY

TO CONCLUDE WITH

PART IV.—INSTRUCTION.

PARLOR MAGIC, or Tricks Made Easy, every person in the Audience being not only shown the Tricks, but *taught publicly* how to do them, so that they may go and start out as conjurers for themselves and achieve as great a fortune as has fallen to the lot of ROBERT, HELLER.

Poster used by Robert Heller during his Boston engagement in 1853. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

the signal button so that it could be easily reached on the arm or front part of the seat. The receiving instrument was attached to the sofa on which the medium was seated. The latter would be silently informed as to what was being shown and would answer all questions. As proof that these statements are not mere hearsay, the Heller sofa can now be seen in the possession of Mr. Francis J. Martinka, of New York; and Dr. W. Golden Mortimer, who once presented "Mortimer's Mysteries," a show on the style of Heller's performance, furnishes the information that when Heller died in Philadelphia, November 28th, 1878, he engaged the dead magician's chief assistant, an expert electrician named E. J. Dale, who had acted as secret confederate, assisting the medium.

After travelling with Mortimer some time, Dale eventually returned to England, and retired from the profession. He opened a large shop in London under the firm name of H. & E. J. Dale, Manufacturing Electricians, 4 Little Britain, E. C., in October, 1882.

It was the easiest thing imaginable for Robert-Houdin to have his theatre arranged with secret confederates and wires back of the scenes, where a man with powerful opera-glasses could stand. The place being small, he could look all over the room and see the minutest article.

When not making use of the talking code, the simplest method employed by second-sight artists is to have a confederate in the audience, with either an electrical push button or a pneumatic bulb, who gives the medium the signal. This is received by a miniature piston, which requires only a small hole in the stage, while the medium has a matching hole in the sole of his shoe. This allows the

piston to touch the sole of the foot whenever the confederate presses the bulb or pushes the button.

From this array of facts it will be seen that second sight is and always has been a matter of well-drilled phrases or signals, prearranged rotation of articles, well-built

The author at the long-neglected grave of Robert Heller, in Mt. Moriah Cemetery, Philadelphia, U. S. A. From a photograph in the Harry Houdini Collection.

apparatus or well-trained confederates, but never a feat of actual thought-transferrence.

Some of Robert-Houdin's ardent supporters insist that in claiming the invention or discovery of second sight, the French conjurer was merely an unconscious plagiarist,

having stumbled upon, quite by accident, a trick which he did not know that others had offered before him.

Such a statement is illogical and absurd. Books of magic to which Robert-Houdin had access and which he admits having read describe the trick in a more or less crude form. Pinetti, whose tricks were fully described to Robert-Houdin by his old friend Torrini, used the second-sight mystification with excellent effect. Robert-Houdin could not have been ignorant of its existence as a trick. In making the claim to its discovery in his "Memoirs" he simply trusted to the ignorance of the reading public in the history of magic.

According to programmes and newspaper clippings in my collection, Philip Breslaw was the first conjurer to feature second sight in his performance. Breslaw was a clever German who so established himself in the hearts of amusement-loving Englishmen that he remained in England for forty years, dying in Liverpool in 1803. In 1781, while playing at Greenwood's Rooms, Haymarket, London, he announced as Part One of his entertainment:

"Mr. Breslaw will exhibit his new magical deceptions, Letters, Medals, Dice, Pocket pieces, Rings, etc., etc., and particularly communicate the thoughts of any person to another without the assistance of speech or writing."

Pinetti comes next as an eminent presenter of second sight. Between these two well-known conjurers there may have been various unimportant, unchronicled performers who made use of Breslaw's trick, but they have no place in the history of magic.

The trick appeared on a Pinetti programme at the Royal Haymarket, London, England, December 1st, 1784,

almost sixty-two years before Robert-Houdin presented it as his original invention.

The London *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* of

HAY-MARKET.

By PERMISSION of the LORD CHAMBERLAIN,
Signor and Signora PINETTI's
Moſt grand, aſtoniſhing and inimitable
NEW EXHIBITION,
AT the Theatre-Royal, in the Hay-Market,
TO-MORROW, December 2,

Signor PINETTI, Knight of the Order of Merit of St. Philip, &c. &c. with all due deference informs the publick, that he is juſt returned from Windſor, and that he will, by the above permiſſion, open again this Theatre on Thurſday next, and with his Conſort, will exhibit moſt wonderful, ſtupendous, and abſolutely inimitable, mechanical, phyſical and philoſophical pieces, which his recent deep ſcrutiny in thoſe ſciences, and aſſiduous exertions have enabled him to invent and conſtruct:- among which Signora Pinetti will have the ſpecial honour and ſatisfaction of exhibiting various experiments of new diſcovery, no leſs curious than ſeemingly incredible, particularly that of her being ſeated in one of the front boxes with an handkerchief over her eyes, and gueſs at every thing imagined and propoſed to her, by any perſon in the company.

Signor Pinetti being moſt anxious and ambitious of receiving the countenance and ſanction of this great and diſcerning nation, in his endeavours it ſhall be his conſtant ſtudy ſtill to find out means which may enable him to preſent, at intervals, moſt curious, ſurprizing, and intereſting original pieces before the publick during his ſhort ſtay in this kingdom; never copying, but ever producing only what is of his own invention and diſcovery, and in the diſplay of which pieces, having been honoured with a written teſtimony of his Britannic Majeſty's approbation, ſigned with his own hand (beſides being poſſeſſed of certificates of the like nature from ſeveral other Sovereigns) humbly hopes and ſolicits for the continuance of that patronage and encouragement, which he moſt gratefully acknowledges to have already ſo impartially and amply experienced from the Britiſh nation.

His excellent and humourous interpreter will continue with him during his ſtay.

Boxes 5s. Pit 3s. Firſt Gal. 2s. Upper Gal. 1s.
Places for the boxes to be taken of Mr. Rice at the Theatre.
Doors open at Six, and begin at Seven.

Clipping from the London *Post*, December 1st, 1784, in which Pinetti featured second sight. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

December 1st, 1784, contains the above advertisement, reproduced from my collection.

The talking code employed by Pinetti was not original with him, as it dates back to the automaton worked by a concealed confederate who controlled the piston for the mechanical figure or pulled the strings to manipulate the dancing coins or moving head. It was novel only in its application to the supposed thought-transferrence by a human being instead of an automaton.

This code is described by various reliable authors. On page 388, Volume III. of Hooper's "Recreations," edition 1782, it is stated that the confederate worked the apparatus from another room. "By certain words, previously agreed on, make it known to the confederate," is the advice given to would-be conjurers.

Beckmann in his "History of Inventions" relates that he knew an exhibitor of a "talking figure" whose concealed confederate was cued to answer certain questions, the answers being given in the manner of putting the question, also by different signs. These instructions will be found on page 311 of Volume II., edition of 1817.

Decremps undertook to expose Pinetti's method of working the second-sight trick in his famous book, but in this attempt he scored one of the few failures which marked the bitter fight he waged against Pinetti. In his book "La Magie Blanche Dévoilée" (White Magic Exposed), first edition, 1784, he offers on page 40 "Les Cartes dévinées, les yeux bandés" (The Divination of Cards with the Eyes Blindfolded). In this feat Decremps explains that Pinetti would allow cards to be drawn, then a lady (Signora Pinetti) would appear on the stage, would be blindfolded, and would name all the cards that were drawn. Decremps explains the prearranged pack of

Young Master M'KEAN,

Since his arrival in London, has had the honor of performing (on Friday, Dec. 23rd, 1831,) before their

Most Gracious Majesties & Prince George.

His Grace the Duke of Argyle.
His Grace the Duke of Gordon.
His Grace the Duke of St. Albans and Duchess.
Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland.
The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Coventry.
The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Errol.
The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Belfast.
The Rt. Hon. the Earl and Countess of Morley.
The Rt. Hon the Countess of Essex.
The Rt. Hon. Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence
The Rt. Hon. Lord Augustus Fitzclarence.
The Rt. Hon. the Viscountess Faulkland.
The Rt. Hon. Lord and Lady Dever
Sir Edward, Sir Arthur Berkeley, & Lady Paget.
Admiral Sir Manly Dixon.
Admiral Lukin.
Admiral Daker.

And many others of the Nobility of the United Kingdom.

☞ The HIGHLAND YOUTH's Figure is erect, his Features particularly handsome, and of his age considered remarkably tall.—He daily gives increasing satisfaction to the most distinguished characters.

*** The Highland Youth is a native of Inverness.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

His Most Gracious Majesty WILLIAM IV.

The Wonderful DOUBLE-SIGHTED Phæno-menon:

Master M'KEAN, only 8 Years old!

ONE OF THE

GREATEST PRODIGIES of the Age!

Has just returned from the Pavilion at Brighton:

To which place he had the honor of a Special Command, and is again exhibiting his most astonishing Powers!

At the Egyptian Hall Bazaar, Piccadilly.

IN addition to his performance before their MAJESTIES and their Court, this extraordinary Child, since his arrival in Town, has had the honor to exhibit his surprising talent before several of the Nobility of the highest rank, whose admiration and astonishment have been uniformly expressed in the strongest terms.

The faculty which he possesses has defied the research of all the Medical men, by whom he has been seen—a faculty, which enables him to distinguish colour, read either print or manuscript, tell the hour of the day on a watch, or declare any other fact as precisely as the cleverest sighted person, although his eyes are at the time completely blindfolded, and his back turned to the object of examination.

Among his other surprising performances, may be mentioned the following:

He will read in English, Latin, French, or Italian. Any one present may insert names or figures *ad libitum*, and he will instantly pronounce the same, and tell the name of each figure separately, and their value together. A piece, or pieces of money, keys, or trinkets of any description may be produced by any of the company, and he will instantly tell how many there are—whether composed of

Gold, Silver, Brass, or Copper!

The date and value of the Coins, and describe every other article very minutely, even should there appear a spot upon them. He will also describe the dress of any person, and in what position they sit or stand. MASTER M'KEAN will ask the favor of any Lady or Gentleman in the company to speak softly within themselves, so that they may not be heard by those who sit on the right or left, and he will instantly repeat them, although at one hundred yards' distance. Should there be 100 Watches produced, and each differently set, he will tell the hours and minutes indicated by each, and perform many other ASTONISHING FEATS, which must be seen to be credited.

Hours of Exhibition are 11, 1, 3, and 5. Admission, 1s. 6d. each;—Children half-price.

☞ Parties may have a Private Exhibition at their own Residence, after 6 o'clock in the Evening, of an hour's notice, on moderate Terms.

Bath, Printer, 24, Fenchurch Street.

Reproduction of front and back of original handbill distributed on London streets in 1831, to advertise Master M'Kean. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

cards for this trick, also outlining the manner of giving the medium the cue for certain phrases. For instance, while explaining to the audience that he will not speak at all, in the very sentences addressed to the spectators he informs the medium which cards have been selected.

Pinetti's code must have been clever, as Decremps was unable to explain the entire second-sight act. He has omitted the principal part of the mystification, that is, naming the articles held up for the performer to see.

That the card trick was only one test of his second-sight performance, and that Pinetti's medium did not retire after naming the cards, are facts shown by the following clipping from one of his announcements:

"Signora Pinetti will have the special honor and satisfaction of exhibiting various experiments of new discovery, no less curious than seemingly incredible, particularly that of her being seated in one of the front boxes with an handkerchief over her eyes, and guess at everything imagined and proposed to her by any person in the company."

Third on the list of second-sight performers, according to the data in my collection, was Louis Gordon M'Kean, who created a sensation at the Egyptian Hall Bazaar, Piccadilly, London, in 1831, or fifteen years before Robert-Houdin, according to his claims, "discovered" second sight. Young M'Kean was featured as possessing double, not second, sight, and one of his bills is reproduced on page 212.

Another programme in my collection, dated the Théâtre Scarboro, Friday evening, August 4th, 1837, announces "For a limited engagement of three nights the Three

Talented Highlanders and most extraordinary Second-Sighted Young Highlanders."

These lads, I believe, were three brothers, one the original M'Kean, or the latter working in conjunction with two other boys trained to the tricks in order to secure more impressive results. The trio appeared

Decoration on the broadside used to advertise a young Dutchwoman who created a sensation in the early part of the eighteenth century. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

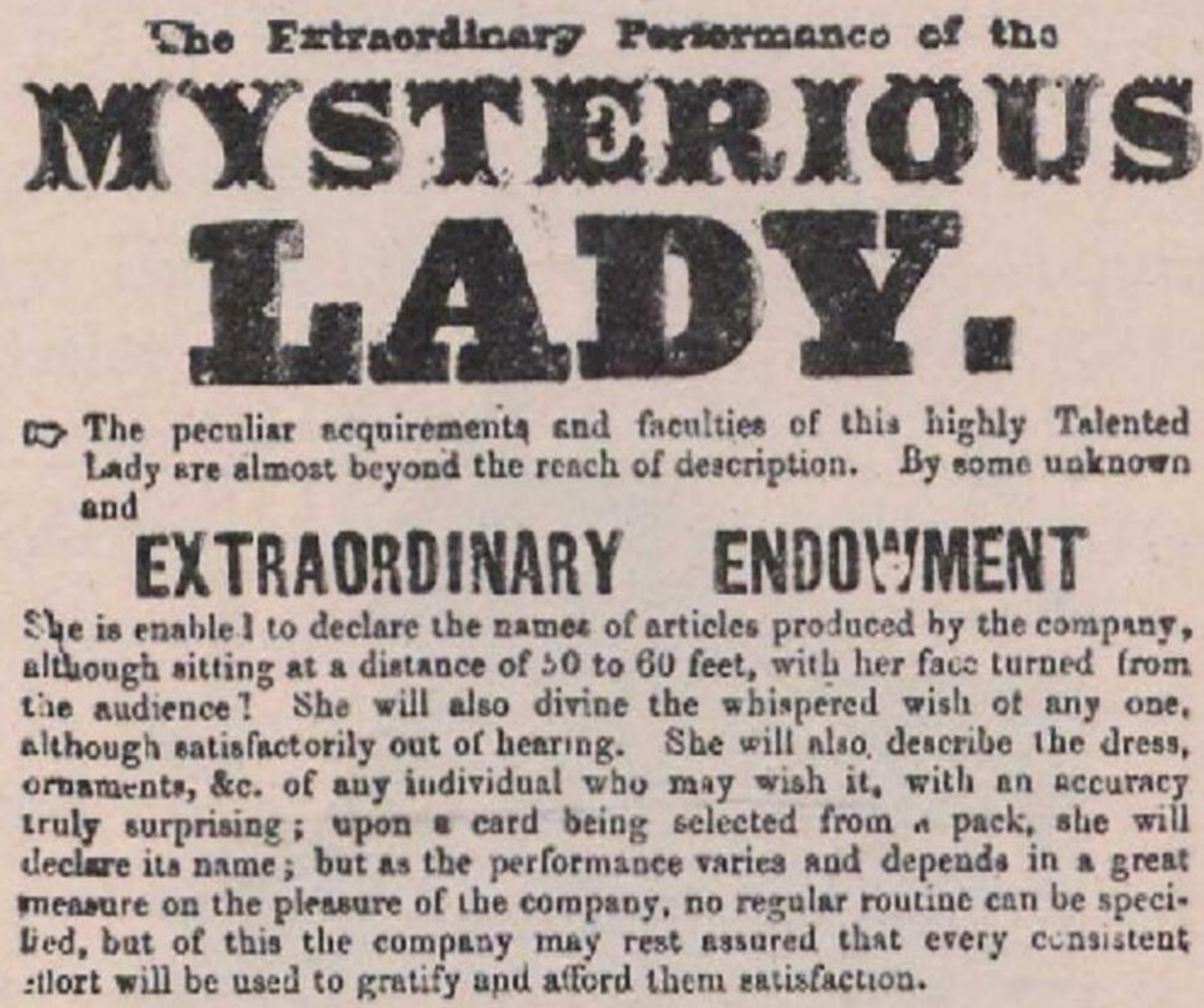
eight years before Robert-Houdin became a professional entertainer.

Holland also contributed a successful performer of second-sight tricks, the medium in this case being a Dutchwoman who created a profound sensation while

touring Germany in the early part of the eighteenth century. The billing used at the yearly fairs is an enormous poster which would be unintelligible if reduced to a size suitable for reproduction.

It is now a part of my collection and reads as follows:

"The Holland Maid, Twenty Years of Age, from Amsterdam, whose powers, both in her residence there and in all other places to which she has gone, have excited


The Extraordinary Performance of the

MYSTERIOUS

LADY.

☞ The peculiar acquirements and faculties of this highly Talented Lady are almost beyond the reach of description. By some unknown and

EXTRAORDINARY ENDOWMENT

She is enabled to declare the names of articles produced by the company, although sitting at a distance of 50 to 60 feet, with her face turned from the audience! She will also divine the whispered wish of any one, although satisfactorily out of hearing. She will also describe the dress, ornaments, &c. of any individual who may wish it, with an accuracy truly surprising; upon a card being selected from a pack, she will declare its name; but as the performance varies and depends in a great measure on the pleasure of the company, no regular routine can be specified, but of this the company may rest assured that every consistent effort will be used to gratify and afford them satisfaction.

Reproduction of original billing matter used by the mysterious lady who offered second sight in the United States in 1841–42–43. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

great astonishment and much applause, and she will also in this place endeavor to obtain the same tribute of public applause. She will after the exhibition place herself before the eyes of all the spectators on the outside and gravely stand thereon and at all times give an answer of assurance to any one present to whom her judgment in all questions gives the most accurate response. She contrives also by her acuteness to discover and reply to the

least thought, not until then explored. She guesses the age of every one, whether they be married or not; how many children they have, of what sex, and whether they be living or dead at the present time, etc. She does the like for any one having a chance in the lottery, as to what is its number, and what will be its share of gains. She

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY.

Reproduction of the cut used on the mysterious lady's handbills, distributed in America in 1841. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

also guesses at every one of the most different sorts of coin, and even at the year with which they were stamped. She guesses at every number which any one shall secretly set down, even though it amount to upward a million. She moreover tells exactly whether any one be in the

Army, under how many Monarchs he has served, in how many battles he has been engaged, and whether he has ever been wounded and how many wounds he has received. By throwing the Dice, she will every time exactly tell the very number of spots which may have been determined on."

This wordy announcement is signed by W. Sahm, of Holland.

In my collection there is also an interesting handbill advertising the tour of "The Mysterious Lady" who offered second-sight tricks in the eastern part of the United States in 1842–43. Her name was never stated on the programmes, but the latter, together with a clipping dated Boston, February 20th, 1843, will suffice to prove my claim that she was offering second-sight before Robert-Houdin did, and therefore could not be copying his trick. She also appeared in England fully a year before Robert-Houdin "discovered" second sight.

Henri Robin and his wife featured second sight in Italy just when Robert-Houdin first offered it in Paris. It is barely possible that they antedated Robert-Houdin in the production of this trick, for I have in my collection a brochure entitled "Album des Soirées de M. et Mme. Robin," which contains an engraving of the couple offering second-sight, a short poem in honor of Mme. Robin's remarkable gifts as a second-sight artist, and a poem generally eulogistic of M. Robin's talents dated distinctly February 7th, 1846. Robert-Houdin presented second-sight for the first time, according to his own "Memoirs," on February 12th, 1846.

To prove the utter folly of Robert-Houdin's claims to

Second sight as offered by M. and Mme. Robin, in which Robin employed the bell and the goblet. From the latter she sipped liquor, claiming it tasted like the wine secretly named by a spectator. Robin's stage was equipped with electrical appliances. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

having trained his son's eye and memory by patient effort so as to have a mutual transferrence of thought, I will next show that animals had been trained for years to do tricks by secret signals before the alleged "discovery" of second sight.

Two rare old bills in my collection advertise the marvellous "mind-reading" performances of a goose and a blindfolded dog respectively. The first, dated 1789, announces that a Mr. Beckett, a trunk-maker of No. 31 Haymarket, is exhibiting "a Learned Goose, just lately arrived from abroad.

"It performs the following tricks: performing upon cards, money, and watches, telling the time of the month, year, and date, also the value of any piece either English or foreign, distinguishing all sorts of colors and (most prodigiously and certainly unbelieving to those who know the intellects of a goose) she tells the number of ladies and gentlemen in the company or any person's thoughts; any lady or gentleman drawing a card out of the pack, though ever so secret, the Goose, blindfolded at the same time, will find out the card they drew. Admittance two shillings each person."

The second bill features Don Carlo, the Double-Sighted dog, which gave an exhibition of his mysterious skill at the Pavillion by special command, before King William and the royal family on December 17th, 1831. This dog was blindfolded and could present almost in duplicate the second-sight tests offered by the Highland lad who five days later gave a similar exhibition before the royal family at the same place.

This proof regarding the use of animals as "mediums"

is offered not to belittle the human mediums, but to prove that from start to finish, from the day that Breslaw offered the trick to the present moment, when a number.

To the Public in general, and those of real Knowledge Particularly.

To be seen from Ten in the Morning, till Four in the Afternoon

At Mr. BECKET's, *Trunk Maker*, No. 31. HAY-MARKET.

After all that has been produced in the World, sagacious of the Animal Species, such as the Learned Pig, the Dancing Dogs &c &c. and which have been accepted, and acknowledged with Truth, as WONDERS; but in the same time, of natural intellectual Faculties who could believe, (except seeing,) that the most Stupid and Insensate of the FEATHER'D CREATION could be brought to such a degree of Sagacity, Sapience, and Wonderful astonishing Learning, of Human or Animal Tricks, as the Prodigious

GOOSE,

Vido *& Crede*

Lately arrived from Abroad.

When a proper and just Reason is brought before a candid and discerning Public, to invite them to see, and be themselves witnesses, of the almost incredible Doing of such a Being; (for no one could have imagined it possible or probable;) a particular attention is claimed from them — Agitated as the mind of man generally is, for distinguishing real Wonders from Impositions, or not much deserving notice Exhibitions, here he will most surely find, and acknowledge to have seen, what was never seen in the World before. A Sagacious

LEARNED GOOSE

Who Performs the following Tricks, viz. Performing upon Cards, Money and Watches; telling the Day of the Month, and the Month of the Year, as also the value of any Piece, either English or Foreign; distinguishing all sorts of Colours; and (most prodigiously, and certainly unbelieving to those who know the Intellects of a GOOSE.) he tells the number of Ladies and Gentlemen in the company; or any Person's thought; any Gentleman or Lady drawing a Card out of the Pack, though ever so secret the Goose blindfolded all the same time will find out the Card they draw,

It is out of the compass of a Bill, to enumerate all the Tricks she does besides.

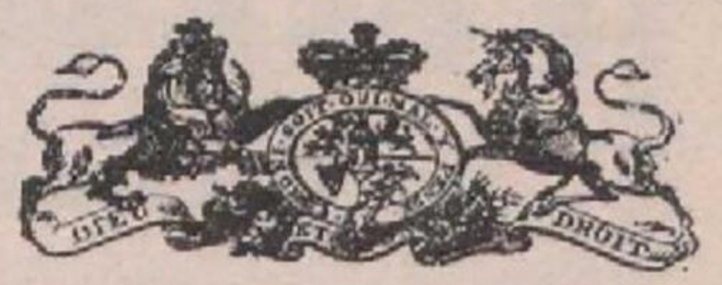
Admittance, Two Shillings each Person.

Rare poster announcing the performance of the learned goose, one of the first of the second-sight animal artists. Traced from the original poster in the British Museum by the author.

of skilful so-called mind-readers still mystify the public, some sort of speaking or signal code has been used. Rob-

ert-Houdin used both the speaking and the signal code, but so did Breslaw, and all evidence points to the fact that Robert-Houdin merely improved upon the trick employed by Breslaw, Pinetti, and others among his predecessors in magic, by utilizing the newly found assistant to the magician, electricity. In his tiny theatre it would have been entirely feasible to have had electric wires run from all points of the auditorium to the stage, thus doing away with both the speaking and ordinary signal codes, even the pneumatic tube. For this improvement, and this alone, should Robert-Houdin be given credit. Nearly all magicians improve or redress tricks or apparatus handed down to them by their predecessors, but Robert-Houdin was not willing to admit that he owed anything to his predecessors.

THE DOUBLE-SIGHTED
Beautiful Dog,
DON CARLOS,
IS NOW EXHIBITING IN THE
Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly,
UNDER THE IMMEDIATE
Patronage of the KING & Royal Family.



THIS astonishing Animal is from New York, whose sagacity and docility have been the surprise and admiration of all who have witnessed his performances, particularly at BRIGHTON, where Mr. HANINGTON had the honour of exhibiting, on the 17th of Dec. 1831, DON CARLOS' wonderful abilities, by special Command before

His Most Gracious Majesty William IV.
AND ROYAL FAMILY.

At the Pavilion; on which occasion his Majesty and the Royal Family were pleased to express the approbation and delight they experienced, at his most extraordinary performances. A visit to this half-reasoning Dog will amply gratify the lovers of Nature's works. This very extraordinary and handsome creature is a Spaniel of the true Spanish breed, and in addition to his wonderful faculties, is of so mild and tractable a disposition, that he may be managed by a child with perfect ease and safety. His acquirements consist chiefly of Performances with Cards, wherein he displays the greatest precision. He will also select the handsomest Lady in the Room, according to his judgment (which is seldom questioned), eldest or youngest Person, or any question put by the Company, and the Gentleman most partial to the Ladies.

DON CARLOS IS NOW FOR SALE:

His price is Fifty Guineas. The present owner of this beautiful animal would be happy to let him accompany him to America, for which he will shortly embark, but DON CARLOS' particular objection to a sea voyage is the only reason for his parting with him.

The Proprietor of DON CARLOS, begs to inform the Nobility and Gentry, that he is in readiness to attend Parties at their own houses, on moderate charges.

Also to be seen (alive) a fine

BOA CONSTRICTOR,

From the Island of Java, and two small Specimens of **Crocodiles,** from the Banks of the Nile, perfectly harmless.—Together with the

Beautiful Canary Bird, (Tiposabe),

Who will perform a variety of amusing Tricks; likewise the MAGICAL DANCING FIGURES.

☞ **Admission to the whole 1s.**

N.B. The Purchaser of DON CARLOS will be instructed to perform him as well as his present Master. Open from 10 in the Morning till 9 at Night.

BUCK, Printer, 63, Fenchurch Street, City.

Billing used for Don Carlos, the double-sighted dog. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUSPENSION TRICK

IN chapters XVI. and XVII. of the American edition of his "Memoirs," Robert-Houdin states that he closed his theatre during the months of July, August, and September, 1847, and devoted his time to producing new tricks for the coming season. He chronicles as the result of these labors the following additions to his répertoire: "The Crystal Box," "The Fantastic Portfolio," "The Trapeze Tumbler," "The Garde Française," "The Origin of Flowers," "The Crystal Balls," "The Inexhaustible Bottle," "The Ethereal Suspension," etc.

Had these inventions really been original with the man who claimed them as the result of his own brain-work and handicraft, three years would not have sufficed to bring them to the perfection in which they were presented at that time. It is not always the actual work that makes a trick a success, nor the material from which it is constructed, but it takes time to plan a new trick; and then after you have worked out the idea, it takes more time to make it practical. The same piece of apparatus may have to be made dozens of times, in as many shapes, before it is presentable. Therefore, when Robert-Houdin claims to have invented and built with his own hands the tricks mentioned in the list given above, it is time to prove the improbability and falsity of his statements.

WATERLOO ROOMS, EDINR.

For a Few Nights only.

UNDER THE IMMEDIATE PATRONAGE OF

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT, & THE ROYAL FAMILY,

And as represented by Command at the Palace of St James', and

AT ALL THE COURTS OF EUROPE.

This Great Artiste—Professor of Professors in the Art of Magic, Inventor of the Inexhaustible Bottle, the Suspension Chloroforeene, the Magic Punch Bowl, the Second Sight, and a great number of other Tricks, is a Member of the Society of Encouragement in Paris, and the only Conjuror who has received National Rewards of Merit for his Unparalleled Tricks, Magic Transformations, and Surprising Automatons, which have astonished and delighted the Scientific Men of every Country—will not, in consequence of numerous Engagements, be able to remain more than a limited period in Edinburgh.

ROBERT HOUDIN!

OF PARIS,

THE CELEBRATED

French Conjuror,

Proprietor & Manager of the Palais-Royal Theatre, & late of St James' Theatre, London,

WILL GIVE A SERIES OF

MAGIC SOIREES FANTASTIQUES!!

COMMENCING ON THE EVENING OF

Monday, June 14, 1852.

General Programme,

FROM WHICH A SELECTION WILL BE GIVEN EACH EVENING.

The Garland of Flowers
The Confectioner of Palais-Royal
The Magic Supper
The Instantaneous Metamorphosis; an impossibility realized
The Iron Crown
The Marvellous Orange Tree
The Genius of Roses
The Prolific Book
The Mysterious Dahlia
The Magnetized Cards
The Remarkable Equilibrium
The Cabalistic Drying
The Sportsman and Cupid
The Instantaneous Impression
The Crystal Balls
The Column and Glove
The Birth of Flowers
Diavolo Antonio (Mechanic Piece)
Invisibility, or Disappearance of the Son of Robert Houdin
The Sympathetic Turtle Doves
The Enchanted Cravat, producing Feathers, &c., &c.
The Sugar Loaf
The Second Sight, without any Question
The Fascinating Owl
The Magic Portfolio
The Ball of Lambs' Wool
Auriol (Mechanical Piece)
The Gymnastic Exercise of an Automaton
The Ariel Clock
The Suspension Chloroforeene
The Young Savoyard (Mechanic Piece)
The Transparent Casket
The Inexhaustible Bottle
The Glass of Wine, or the Secret of a Contrabandist
The Miraculous Fishery
The Orange, Lemon, and Walnut
The Unlimited Multiplication of Sovereigns
The Bell-ringer (Mechanic Piece)
The Flower Basket
The Neapolitan Harlequin
The Feather and Cannon Ball
The Great Escamotage
The Emperor Nicholas
The Two Lemons
The Phœnix Pocket Handkerchief
The Magic Tableau
The Magnetic Sword

THE WONDROUS PUNCH BOWL,

An entirely New Trick, producing BON-BONS and PUNCH, ad libitum.

Doors open at Half-past Seven: Performance to commence at a Quarter-past Eight o'clock.

Admission—Stalls, 3s; Reserved Seats, 2s; Back Seats, 1s; Gallery, 6d.
Family Tickets, admitting Four to Stalls, 10s 6d.
Children under ten years of age, to Reserved and Back Seats, Half-price.

A GRAND MORNING PERFORMANCE

ON SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1852, AT TWO O'CLOCK.
Doors open at Half-past One.

Tickets and Places may be secured at the Rooms, from 11 till 3 o'clock; at Mr Wood's, 12 Waterloo Place; and at all the Musicsellers.

JAMES BRYDONE, PRINTER, 17 SOUTH HANOVER STREET.

A Robert-Houdin poster on which his complete repertoire appears, under date of June 14th, 1852. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Inventions are a matter of evolution, but as the tricks which Robert-Houdin presented in his new répertoire were not new, he was able to offer them as the result of three months' work. To the expert mechanician or builder of conjuring apparatus his claim is farcical. The

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE,
KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S.
THE CELEBRATED
ROBERT-HOUDIN
WILL GIVE HIS THIRD
DAY PERFORMANCE
ON
WEDNESDAY MORNING
NEXT, JUNE 7,
Commencing at Half-past Two o'Clock precisely,
AND ALSO CONTINUE HIS EXTRAORDINARY
1848
SOIRÉES
FANTASTIQUES,
ON THIS
TUESDAY, THURSDAY,
AND
SATURDAY EVENINGS,
Commencing at Half-past Eight o'Clock.
In consequence of the Funeral of the Princess Sophia, there will be no Performance on Tuesday, June 6th.
THE PROGRAMME
Will comprise the following original Experiments,
INVENTED BY M. ROBERT-HOUDIN.
Part I.
Les Tourneries Sympathiques ..... The Sympathising Turnboxes.
L'Orange Merveilleuse ..... The Wonderful Orange-Tree.
Le Coffre de Sureté ..... The Safety Casket.
Les Poules Magiques ..... The Marvellous Fowls.
Jardin et Bouteau ..... Jardel and Bouteau.
&c. &c. &c.
Part II.
Les Oranges et les Boules ..... The Pear and Cannon-Balls.
Le Pendule aux Dragées ..... The Silk Handkerchief with Sixpence.
Les Pendules Coloriques ..... The Calculating Clock.
Les Bijoux ..... The Trinkets.
Le Guéridon de Robert-Houdin ..... Robert-Houdin's Portfolio.
La Bouteille Inepuisable; The Inexhaustible Bottle;
OR
Liqueuriste Impromptu, Liqueurmonger Extempore
&c. &c. &c.
Part III.
SECONDE VUE,
DECAMOTAGE DE ROBERT-HOUDIN FILS.
HORIZONTALE
SUSPENSION ETHEREENNE.
BOXES, 4s. PIT, 2s. GAL. STALLS, 1s. 6d.
PRIVATE BOXES, ORCHESTRA STALLS, AND TICKETS
MAY BE SECURED AT
MITCHELL'S ROYAL LIBRARY, 33, OLD BOND STREET,
And at the Box Office of the Theatre, which is open Daily from 11 to 5.
Printed by W. J. Stevenson, 5, Princes Street, Leicester Square.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE,
KING STREET ST JAMES'S.
The fast-rising and Interesting Performances of
ROBERT-HOUDIN
(MEMBRE DE PLUSIEURS SOCIETES SAVANTES.
From the Théâtre de Palais, Palais Royal, Paris.)
Having been received with the most enthusiastic Admiration, he will have the honour of repeating
HIS EXTRAORDINARY
1848
SOIREES
FANTASTIQUES,
AUTOMATIC PRESTIDIGITATION, MAGIC, & ORIGINAL EXPERIMENTS
INVENTED BY M. ROBERT-HOUDIN,
AT THE ST JAMES'S THEATRE,
ON
TUESDAY, THURSDAY,
AND
SATURDAY EVENINGS,
Commencing at Half-past Eight o'Clock
PROGRAMME FOR THIS EVENING
Part I.
Les Oranges et les Boules ..... The Pear and Cannon-Balls.
Le Pendule aux Dragées ..... The Silk Handkerchief with Sixpence.
Les Pendules Coloriques ..... The Calculating Clock.
Les Bijoux ..... The Trinkets.
Le Guéridon de Robert-Houdin ..... Robert-Houdin's Portfolio.
&c. &c. &c.
Part II.
Jardin et Bouteau ..... Jardel and Bouteau.
Les Pièces ..... The Purse.
Les Tourneries Sympathiques ..... The Sympathising Turnboxes.
Le Poules Magiques ..... The Marvellous Fowls.
L'Orange Merveilleuse ..... The Wonderful Orange-Tree.
La Bouteille Inepuisable; ou, la Liqueur The Inexhaustible Bottle; or the
Liqueurmonger Extempore.
&c. &c. &c.
Part III.
SECONDE VUE.
DECAMOTAGE DE ROBERT-HOUDIN FILS
SUSPENSION ETHEREENNE.
Persons Servant's Fees Suspended in Pendulums by Atmosphere &c. Change the names of Concealed Holes
The Entertainment will be divided into Three Parts, commencing at Half-past Eight, and Terminating before Eleven o'Clock.
PRIVATE BOXES, ORCHESTRA STALLS AND TICKETS
MAY BE SECURED AT
MR MITCHELL'S ROYAL LIBRARY, 33, OLD BOND STREET,
And at the Box Office of the Theatre, which is open Daily from 11 to 5.
Printed by W. J. Stevenson, 5, Princes Street, Leicester Square

Poster used by Robert-Houdin during his first London engagement, featuring suspension. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

majority of the tricks mentioned require skilled hands and infinite patience, if they work in a way that will completely deceive the public. Particularly is this true of the first suspension apparatus such as Robert-Houdin must have used. This included a steel corset or frame for the subject, and both the corset and the supporting rods had to

be strong, invisible to the audience, and still be perfect in mechanism.

Robert-Houdin, with characteristic ambiguity, does not refer to a complicated mechanism, but lays stress on his ability to keep his tricks up-to-date and in line with popular movements of the hour. In writing of the suspension trick, he gives the impression that but for the sensation created by the use of ether as an anæsthetic he would never have thought out the new trick. His own words as presented on page 312 of the American edition of his "Memoirs" are reproduced in this connection:

"It will be remembered that in 1847 the insensibility produced by inhaling ether began to be applied to surgical operations; all the world talked about the marvellous effect of this anæsthetic and its extraordinary results. In the eyes of the people it seemed much akin to magic. Seeing that the surgeons had invaded my domain, I asked myself if this did not allow me to make reprisals. I did so by inventing my ethereal suspension, which I believe was far more surprising than any result obtained by my surgical brethren. This trick was much applauded, and I am bound to say that my arrangements were excellently made. This was the first time that I tried to direct the surprise of my spectators by gradually heightening it up to the next moment, when, so to speak, it exploded."

While Robert-Houdin, in his "Memoirs," claims to have invented the trick for the season of 1847–48, in the illustrated appendix of the French edition he states that the first production of the trick, with improvements, was in October, 1849. The improvement consisted of working the trick with a stool upon a platform, when, previous to

this date, he had used only the ordinary platform and rod.

During the course of researches covering many years, during which I visited national libraries in various countries, the first trace of the suspension trick was discovered in the writings of Ian Batuta, who flourished about the thirteenth century. He mentions two conjurers who performed before the court of the Mogul in Delhi. One of the men assumed the form of a cube and rose into the air, where he remained suspended. The other man then took off his shoe, struck it against a rock, and it also rose and hung in midair, close to the suspended conjurer or human cube. On being touched on the neck, the cube descended to the ground, and the conjurer resumed his natural form.

The historical verity of this tale cannot be determined, and it may be classed with the familiar story which crops up periodically, describing the ball of cord thrown into the air for a youth to climb into the clouds. Once out of sight, the youth is said to draw the cord up after him; then presently a leg falls from the unseen heights, then another, followed by an arm, a rib or two, and so on until the entire body is scattered upon the ground, the head coming last with the neck standing upward. At the command of the magician, the body seems to crawl together, so runs the tale, and eventually the youth stands up to be examined by the astonished populace.

These stories belong in the very first of the travellers' tales. In 1356 Sir John Mandeville, called by some authorities "the Father of English Prose," after travelling thirty-four years, published a book detailing some of his marvellous "witnessings." Though many of his stories

Reproduction of an engraving in an old German Encyclopædia in the Harry Houdini Collection, which credits to the Chinese the trick of climbing into the air and having the body fall down piecemeal and being set together again.

are absolutely impossible, yet so popular did his works become that, barring the Scriptures, more copies and manuscripts of the books containing his various "Magician Stories" have been handed down to posterity and exist to-day than any works of his contemporaries. Still, Mandeville did not mention this suspension trick, which is sometimes attributed to the Chinese and sometimes to the Hindoos.

In Cologne, Germany, I purchased an encyclopædia, published in 1684, from which I reproduce a double-page engraving, which shows the Chinese magicians doing the tricks previously accredited, in the stories of travellers, to Hindoo conjurers.

In "Lives of the Conjurers," Thomas Frost describes the suspension trick as offered about 1828 or 1829 at Madras by an old Brahmin with no better apparatus than a piece of plank with four legs. This he had formed into a stool, and upon it, in a little brass socket, he placed a hollow bamboo stick in a perpendicular position. Projecting from the stick was a kind of crutch, covered with a piece of common hide. These properties he carried with him in a bag, which was shown to all those who desired to witness his exhibition. The servants of the household then held a blanket before him, and, when it was withdrawn, he was discovered poised in midair about four feet from the ground, in a sitting posture, with the outer edge of one hand merely touching the crutch, while the fingers deliberately counted beads, and the other hand and arm were held in an upright position. The blanket was again held up before him, and the spectators caught a gurgling sound, like that occasioned by wind

The Brahmin suspension as shown in an illustration found in Robin's l'Almanach de Cagliostro.

escaping from a bladder or tube. When the screen or blanket was again withdrawn, the conjurer was standing on the ground.

The mystery was supposed to have been solved when Sheshal, commonly known as "the Brahmin of the Air," exhibited the trick in 1832 in Madras. It was observed that his stool was ornamented with two inlaid stars, and it was suggested that one of these might conceal a socket for a steel rod, passing through the bamboo, and that another rod, screwed to the perpendicular one and concealed by the piece of hide, might be connected with a mechanism of the same metal, passing up the sleeve and down the back, and forming a circular seat. This conjecture probably was not far from the truth, for while Frost is by no means the greatest of authorities on magic and magicians, in this particular instance I believe that his explanation of the trick is correct.

The next authentic early information I have gathered regarding suspension concerns that wonderful performer who called himself Ching Lau Lauro. Presumably he was a Chinaman, and from the programmes in my collection he evidently appeared first in England, in 1828, when he was engaged to perform between scenes of various plays, including "Tom and Jerry," at the Coburg. I reproduce on page 231 one of Ching Lau Lauro's programmes.

About 1833, or possibly a year earlier, he cut out some of his singing, and introduced the suspension with which he closed his performance. At this time he gave the entire programme. According to his programmes, in some places he excluded the public from the gallery, so I judge that his suspension was accomplished by the use

Five Nights only.

AT THE NEW ASSEMBLY ROOMS,

QUEEN-STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON

The celebrated CHING LAU LAURO,

Naturalist, Ventriloquist, Melodist, Hercules, Stiffner, and the first Prestidegetateer in Europe, Magico, Mechanician, Professor of the most brilliant and valuable Mechanical, Electrical, Pneumatical, Optical, and Magical Transformations, Metamorphoses, Illusions, and Amusements, whose wonderful Performances have caused the greatest sensation and admiration wherever they have been exhibited.

C. L. L. has had the distinguished honour of Performing before their Majesties, in the Pavilion at Brighton, and subsequently received a letter, by their Majesties' command, stating their Royal approval of each Performance, which letter, together with several others from the Earls of Denbigh, Bradford, Marquis of Westminster, &c. &c., may be seen at Mr Parke's, High street of which the following is a copy of Mr Hudson Taylor's —

Brighton, October 2nd, 1830.

Sir,

By their Majesties' commands I have to state that your various Performances at the Pavilion, on the 19th of September, 1830, were approved of by their Majesties

Ching Lau Lauro,
New Haven Hotel.

I am Sir your obedient Servant
H. TAYLOR

The Nobility, Gentry, and the Public of Wolverhampton and its vicinity are respectfully informed that

CHING LAU LAURO,

LATE OF VAUXHALL GARDENS AND DRURY-LANE THEATRE,

Will have the honour of appearing before them

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday,

March the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1834,

To display his unrivalled Talents in a complete series of Amusements, combining—

PART I.

THE CHEST OF ARCHIMEDES,

AND

The Column of Rosbach;

These self-acting pieces of Mechanism were executed by the celebrated Catalani, and intended as a compliment to the Cabinet of Curiosities at Paris, but unforseen circumstances causing the dissolution of that superb establishment, before the completion of these Master-pieces of Art, they were disposed of and Mr C. L. L. is happy to have it in his power to gratify the Public with such admired pieces of Apparatus.

A Game at Whist, Time Flies, the Wax Candles Enchanted

ELEPHANT OF KNOWLEDGE,

Vulcan's Forge, Miraculous Printing!! Flying Watch,

MAGIC BOTTLE,

APPLES OF BEELZEBUB,

MAGIC EGGS, LOYAL METAMORPHOSE, &c. WITH A VARIETY OF ILLUSIONS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION

PART II.

VENTRILOQUISM.

CHING LAU LAURO has the honour to announce that, previous to his return to London to resume his Professional Engagements, he has been induced to present his novel and popular SATIRICAL LECTURE, and NOVEL DIVERTISEMENT, entitled

ROGUERIES OF NICHOLAS.

Imitations of the Feathered Creation, such as the Thrush, Blackbird, Nightingale, Sky Lark, &c.

Also portraying a variety of Eccentric Scenes and Characters drawn from Nature, introductory of

His Surprising Powers of Imitation,

ORIGINAL ANECDOTES, INCONCEPTIBLE CHANGES OF COUNTENANCE, and extraordinary Illusions in ALIOLOQUY, (erroneously termed Ventriloquy,) explaining its Agency in producing the numberless

MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENA, WONDERS, AND DECEPTIONS.

PART III.

Feats of Strength,

IN THE CHARACTER OF A CHINESE BUFFO

GYMNASTIC EXERCISES.

And will conclude his wonderful Entertainments by

Sitting in the Air upon Nothing!!!

At the same time playing with the GOLDEN BALLS, &c.

A Quadrille Band will be in Attendance.

Door to be opened at Seven o'Clock, and the Performance to commence at a Quarter before Eight.

FRONT SEATS, 2s.—BACK SEATS, 1s.—CHILDREN HALF PRICE to the Front Seats only

TICKETS to be had at Mr PARKE'S, High-street.

A Grand Entertainment will be given on Friday Morning, at half-past Twelve o'Clock.

William Parke, Printer, Wolverhampton.

Ching Lau Lauro handbill featuring suspension in 1832. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

of the iron rod from the back, which would have been in plain sight from the gallery. The stage would not permit the suspension to be worked out of range of the gallery gods.

When Robert-Houdin went to London in 1848 he found

PRINCESS'S THEATRE

Mr J. M. MADDOX Sole Lessee and Manager, Duchess Street, Portland Place.

BY

GENERAL REQUEST

HERR.

HERRMANN

THE ACKNOWLEDGED

First Professor of Magic in the World

Will give SIX MORE of his

ENTERTAINING

SOIREES

MYSTERIEUSE

And MAGIQUE,

BEING POSITIVELY

THE ONLY NIGHTS HE CAN REMAIN IN LONDON,

In consequence of his many Provincial Engagements)

MONDAY Evening, August 21st, 1848,

TUESDAY, 22nd, WEDNESDAY, 23rd,

THURSDAY, 24th, FRIDAY 25th,

And SATURDAY, 26th,

BEING FOR THE

BENEFIT of M. HERRMANN

And his Last Appearance.

The Entertainments, Each Evening, will be varied with

NEW & WONDERFUL ILLUSIONS

IN EXPERIMENTAL MAGIC.

MADAME HERRMANN

Will perform Astonishing Feats in

ANTI-MAGNETISM

AND

CLAIRVOYANCE;

BY POWERFUL SIGHT.

In the course of the Evening, amongst the many Extraordinary

Illusions performed by M. Herrmann,

WILL BE

The INEXHAUSTIBLE BOTTLE,

Producing, at the command of the Audience,

ALL KINDS OF LIQUEURS.

The Juggler of the Sun and Moon.

The Magic Sword, or the Skilful Player at Blind-Man's Buff.

The MYSTERIOUS CLOCK and its isolated Bell. (Mechanic.)

The July Column, or the Docile Card. (Mechanic.)

The Philanthropic Banker.

A Chinese Metamorphose.

The Fantastic Glass.

Pierro the Magician. (Mechanic.)

The Marriage at Cana.

The Disappearance of * * *

The SYMPATHETIC DOVES

The Miracle of Flowers. (Mechanic.)

The HANDKERCHIEF of SATAN.

The Multiplication of Guinea Pigs.

The Flower Garden.

The Universal Thought.

The Miraculous Production of Plumes.

The Enchanted Vases.

The Puzzled Choice, or four in one.

ARMIDA's CHALICE, or the GENEVA CLOCK WORK.

The Mysterious Chest.

SUSPENSION BY ETHER

The Incomprehensible Handkerchief

PRODUCING IN THE HAND

VASES FILLED WITH

Gold Fish!

This extraordinary Feat is executed in a plain Evening Dress and must be seen to be believed.

Dress Circle, 4s. Boxes, 3s Pit, 2s Gallery, 1s

Doors open at half-past Seven. Commence at Eight.

Half-price at Nine o Clock.

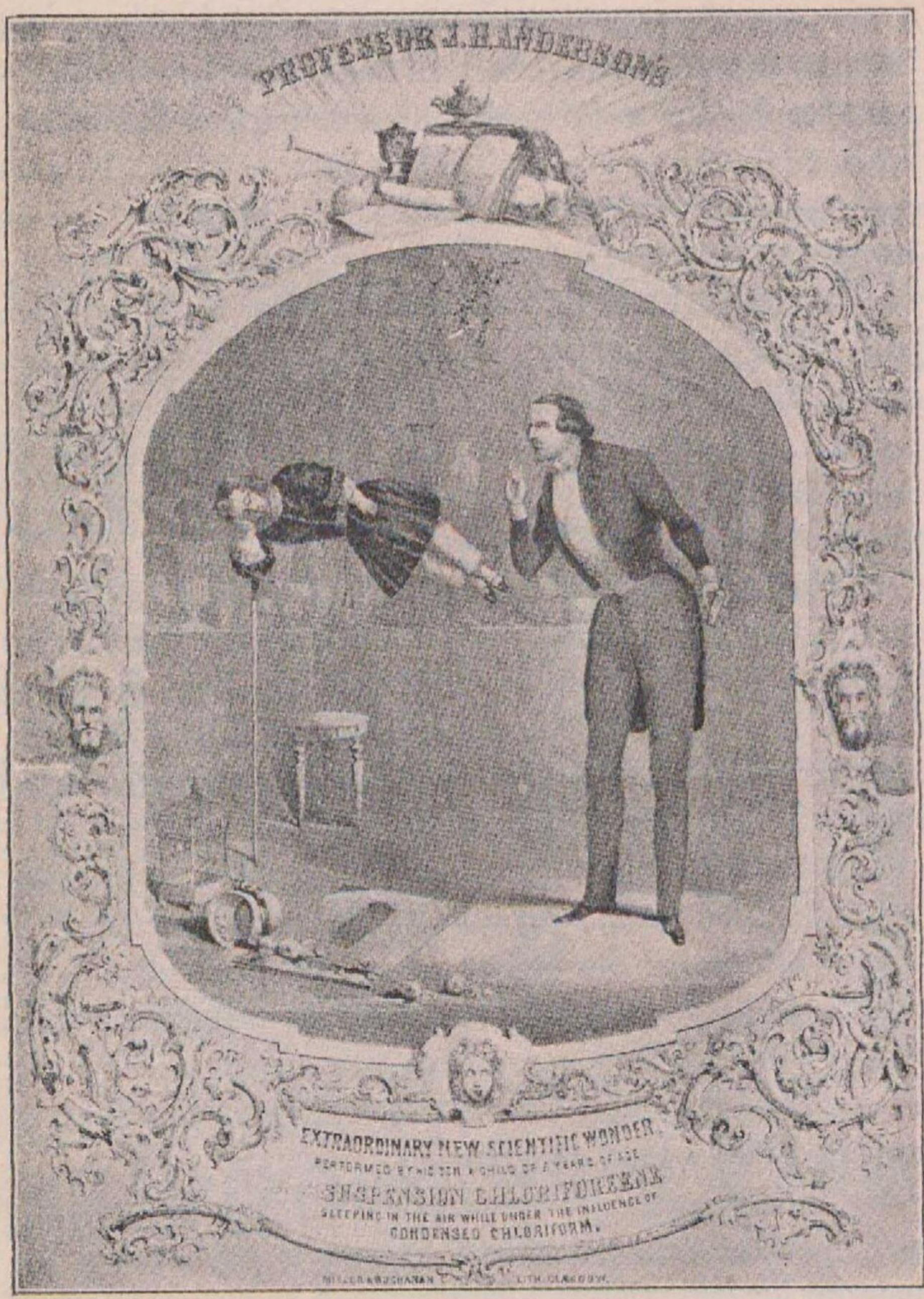
A Compars Herrmann programme of 1848 in which suspension is featured.
From the Harry Houdini Collection.

in the field of magic a clever rival, Compars Herrmann; a few months later came John Henry Anderson, the Wizard of the North. Both of these men presented the suspension trick in precisely the same manner claimed by Robert-Houdin as his original invention of 1847. Neither Anderson nor Herrmann claimed the honor of having invented the trick, and it is more than likely that the mechanician who made their apparatus for the suspension trick made the one used by Robert-Houdin also. Herrmann, like Robert-Houdin, called the trick ethereal suspension. Anderson gave it the title of "Chloriforeene Suspension," as the reproduction of an Anderson lithograph on page 234 will prove.

During precisely the same period of time a brilliantly successful German conjurer, Alexander, was presenting the same trick in America, where he remained as a professional entertainer for ten years. In my collection, together with corroborative handbills and programmes, there will be found this statement from Alexander:

"The suspension was at first produced by me in 1845 or 1846, after reading in an Oriental annual, edited by several officers of the Indian Army, the trick of a fakir who made a companion sit in the air by using a bamboo stick. My trick had no success, because the sitting was too near the ground. I then made him stand in the air, and the effect was marvellous."

My meeting with Alexander, of which this correspondence was the result, marked an era in my search for material for this volume. Having read in a small book on magic, dated 1896, that a man named Heimburger, who had travelled in America as "Alexander the Conjurer,"



"Suspension Chloriforeene," as presented by Anderson and his son, from a lithograph used by him on his return from the Continent, December, 1848. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

was living in his native town of Münster, in Westphalia, I determined to secure an interview with him if possible.

On March 17th, 1903, while playing in Cologne, I boarded an express train and arrived in Münster bright and early. From the city directory I learned that one Heimburger resided in Krumpentippen, 16. Hailing a passing droschke I was scon carried to my destination, where a bright-faced German girl opened the door and ushered me, without formality, into the presence of the man to whom I desired to pay my respects.

An old man, bent with years, snow-white of beard and gray of head, came forward slowly to greet me. Finding that he was quite deaf, I raised my voice and fairly trumpeted my mission, adding that I felt especially honored to stand in the presence of the only magician who, up to that date, had ever appeared at the White House, Washington, by request of the President of the United States, my native land. Alexander had been asked to entertain President Polk and his guests on several occasions, and the fact that I knew this seemed to please the old conjurer and pave the way to a pleasant and profitable interview.

In a few moments we were sitting side by side, and he was adding to my store of information by relating the most fascinating experiences, stories of fellow-magicians long since dead, and tales which he could corroborate by his own collection of bills, programmes, etc., his diary, and his personal correspondence. He had known Robert-Houdin, Frikell, Bosco, Count Pererilli, John Henry Anderson, Blitz, the original Bamberg of Amsterdam, Compars Herrmann, and many lesser lights among the old-time magicians. Robert-Houdin had told him per-

sonally that being pressed for time he had entrusted the writing of his "Memoirs" to a Parisian journalist.

As he warmed up to these reminiscences, he held me spellbound. Had he risen from the grave to tell of his

Mrs. Leona A. Anderson, daughter-in-law of John Henry Anderson, as she appeared with him in the suspension trick about 1868. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

contemporaries, he could not have riveted my attention more securely.

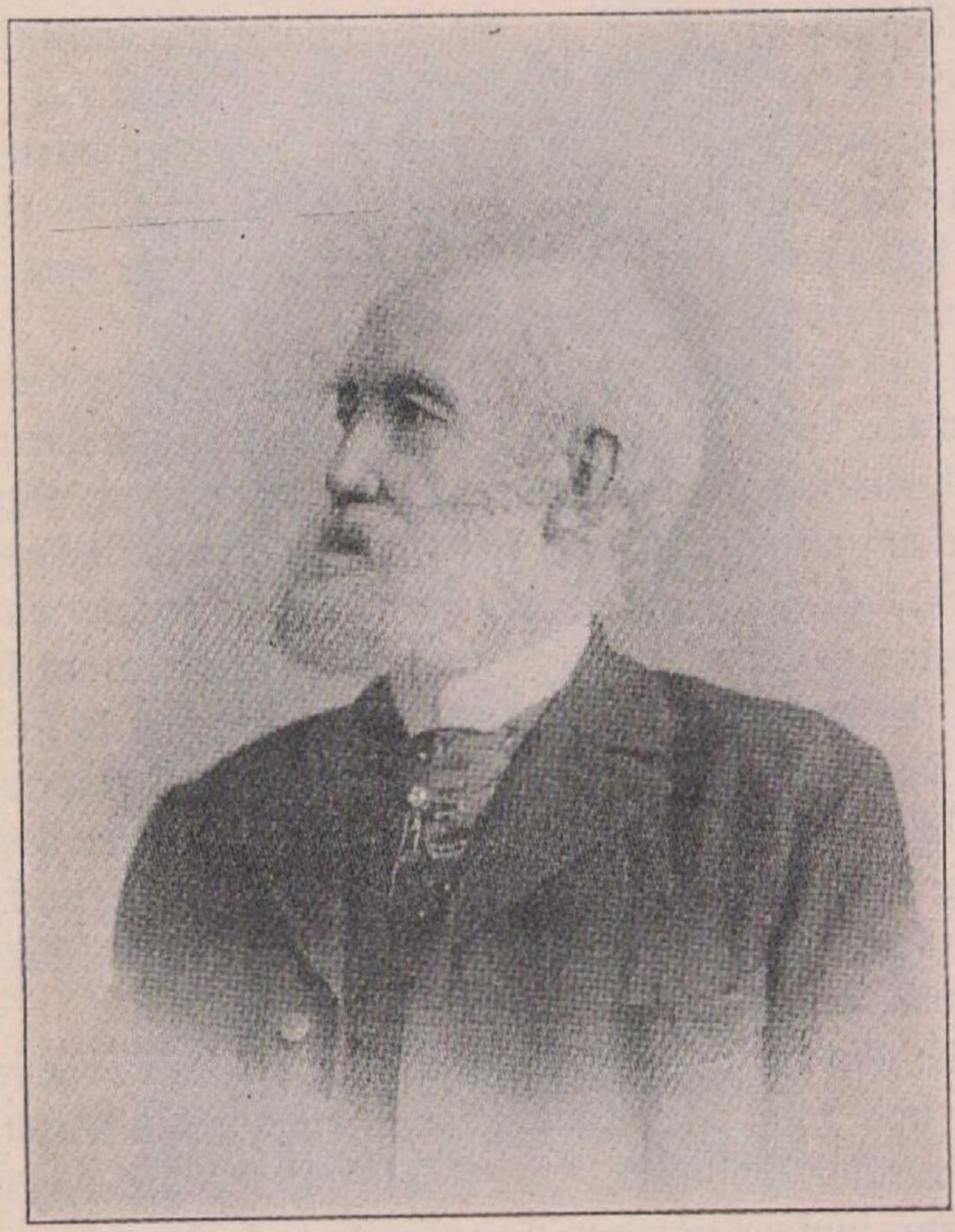
Here was a man of eighty-four, whose memory quick-

ened at the coming of one interested in his beloved art, whose eye brightened with each fresh detail of a long and successful professional life, and who, in fifty years of retirement, had not only written a book, but had kept in touch with the world of magic, giving me information which the most exhaustive encyclopædia could not yield, answering questions on topics never yet discussed in dusty parchments and fading scripts. It was like having the history of magic unrolled before my eager eyes, in a living, palpitating, human scroll.

It had been my intention to remain but a few hours in Münster, but the old master held me as if hypnotized and the hours fairly drifted past. Letter after letter, clipping after clipping, token after token, he spread before my fascinated eyes; and I allowed him to speak without question or interruption of any sort. Early in our interview he had remarked that he was beginning to feel old and that only the impetus of my presence was responsible for his unusual strength of speech. For over seventy years he had been collecting books on conjuring and kindred topics, which he was able to read in English, French, Spanish, and German.

The dinner hour found us still engrossed in conversation, and Frau Heimburger extended a most hospitable and cordial invitation for me to join the family circle. But my hunger was purely mental, and the true savor of the meal was the reminiscent chat of Herr Heimburger, who, from his post at the head of his household, looked as hale and hearty as if he had found the Elixir of Life which so many of his charlatan predecessors claimed to have "discovered."

In 1904 I paid the old master a second visit. To his professions of pleasure at meeting me once more, he added the gift of several rare programmes now in my col-



Alexander Heimburger, a veteran conjurer who presented the suspension trick in 1845–46 during his American tour. From a photograph in the Harry Houdini Collection. died July 25, 1909.

lection, and when our hands met in a farewell clasp he told me that he had set all things in order and was ready for the coming of the Grim Reaper. Soon after that visit,

however, I received a card with the following melancholy message:

MY DEAR FRIEND—Have not been very well of late, and have been expecting my last days. All preparations have been made and Death the Visitor arrived, but instead of calling for me, he has taken away my beloved wife. I am not capable of writing more. God be with you. From your old friend,

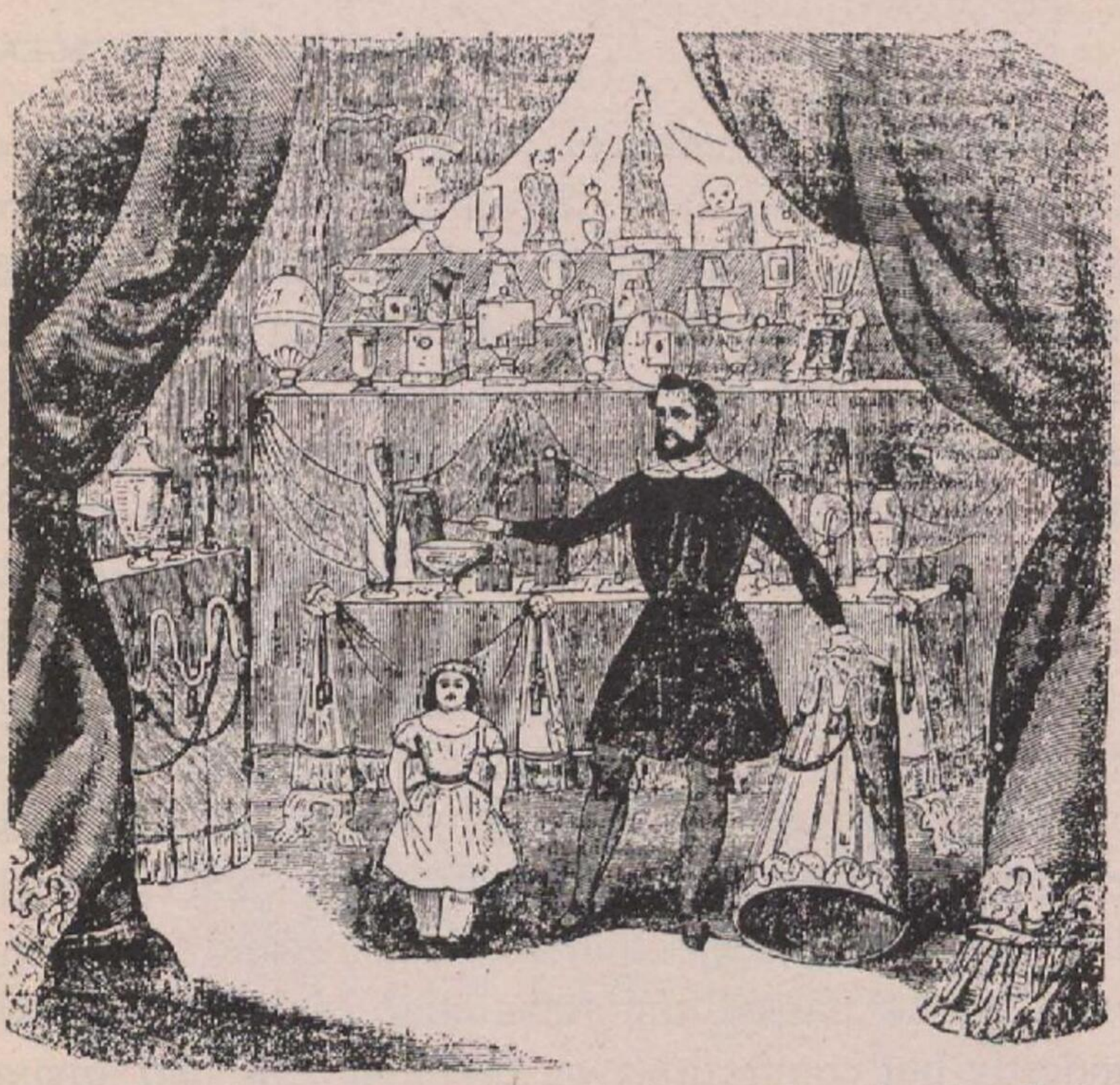
ALEXANDER HEIMBURGER.

Alexander Heimburger or, as he was billed, Alexander the Conjurer, was born December 4th, 1818. From 1844 to 1854 he toured North and South America, returning to his native country with the intention of there following his calling as a professional entertainer. But his fame had preceded him, and, as his fortune was large, his souvenirs and tales of travel many and interesting, he was taken up by the world of fashion and lionized. This practically closed his career as a conjurer, for in those days magicians occupied no such reputable position in the professional world as they do to-day, and to have returned to his stage work would have closed the doors of aristocracy to him. He married one of Münster's prettiest girls, who bore him six children, two sons and four daughters. So he passed the remainder of his days, living modestly but comfortably on the money he had amassed in America, entertained by a large circle of appreciative friends, and well content to live thus, far from the madding crowd in which the professional entertainer must move.

While the recollections of his public career and his meetings with other magicians, as well as notable men in other walks of life, were fresh, he wrote his book, "Der Moderne Zauberer" (The Modern Magician), which he

claims, with much justice, is rated as one of the gems of German literature, as well as the best book ever written by a conjurer. It is built from extracts from his diary and is on the style of Sig. Blitz's book, but is far more diversified and interesting.

His scrap-book also told a most romantic tale of vicissi-



Alexander Heimburger, known in conjuring as Alexander the Conjurer, from a quaint illustration in "The North American," published in Mexico.

tudes. A half-page article in the New York *Tribune*, dated October, 1845, showed Alexander arrayed in a Chinese costume, and producing huge bowls of water, flowers, and various sorts of heavy articles. This proves conclusively that Ching Ling Foo was not the first con-

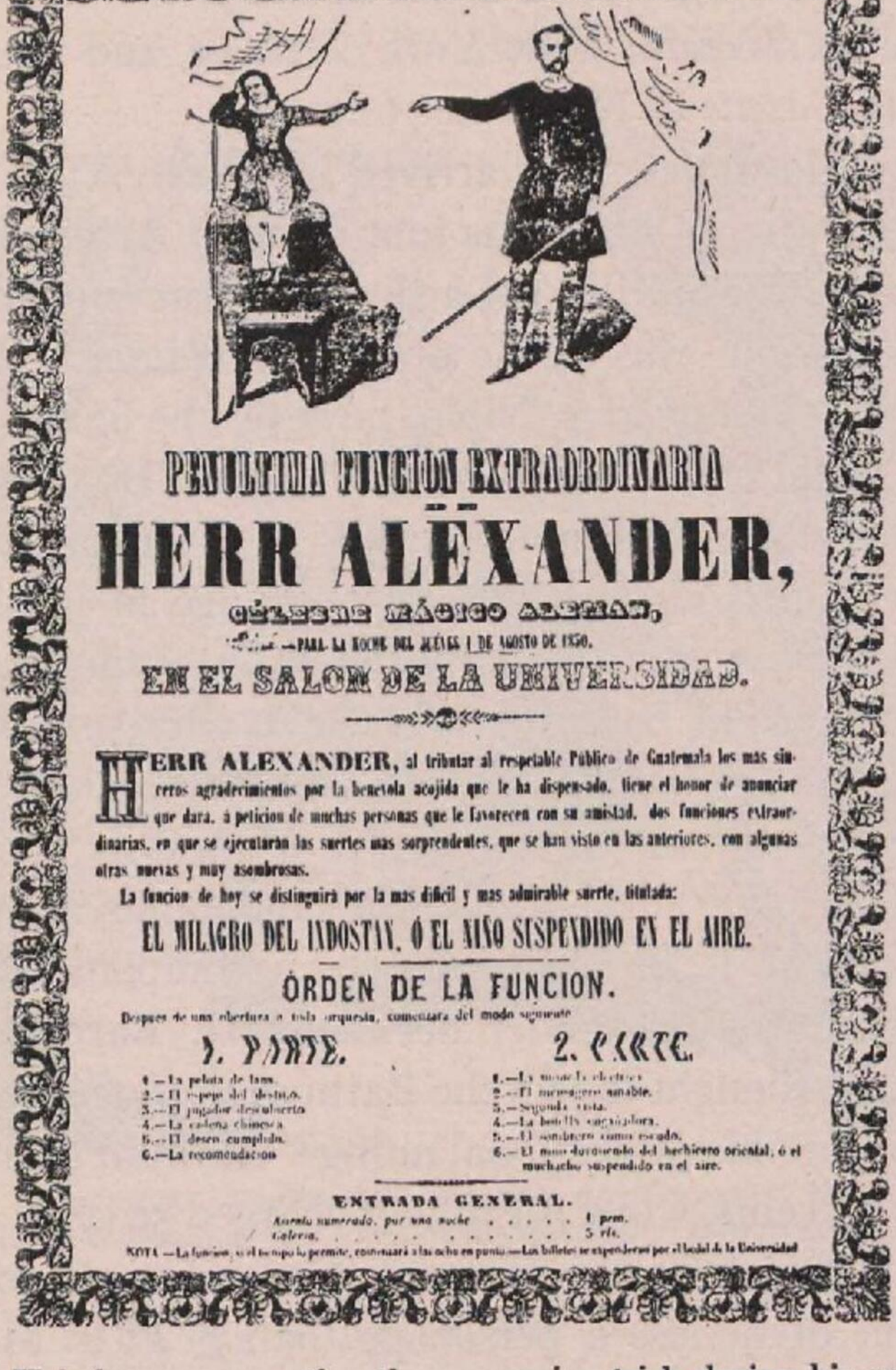
jurer to offer this Chinese trick in America, as it is generally supposed. Alexander added that all the old-timers would change their programmes by introducing the Chinese tricks, and, to verify his statement, readers need only to see the following files in Astor Library, New York City: New York *Herald*, New York *Tribune*, and New York *Evening Gazette* of November 6th, 1845.

Herr Alexander had arrived in New York almost penniless, after a disastrous tour of other American cities. He tried to hire Niblo's Garden, but was informed that the auditorium was never opened in winter. Through the intercession of Mrs. Niblo, however, he finally secured it at a rental of twenty dollars per night. He opened to a small house and for three nights did not even pay expenses, but the fourth night witnessed a change in his fortunes and for three months he played literally to standing room. Then because he had no new tricks to offer, and his pride forbade his presenting his old répertoire until receipts grew lighter, he closed his New York season.

While playing in Saratoga, Alexander was approached by the late P. T. Barnum, who was accompanied by Gen. Tom Thumb. Alexander declined Mr. Barnum's offer because he thought to join the Barnum staff of entertainers would injure his professional rating. Barnum's admission fee was 25 cents, while Alexander charged 50 cents and $1.

About this time the fame of Alexander attracted the attention of no less a personage than S. F. B. Morse, of telegraphic fame; and Alexander had on his programme one trick which mystified Morse, who honestly believed that the conjurer had discovered some new law of nature that might be of service to scientists.

Alexander called this trick "The Spirit Bell," and, worked by one method or another, it has been used by many magicians. Some employ a thread and hook,



PENULTIMA FUNCION EXTRAORDINARIA

HERR ALËXANDER,

CÉLEBRE MÁGICO ALEMAN,

PARA LA NOCHE DEL JUEVES 1 DE AGOSTO DE 1850.

EN EL SALON DE LA UNIVERSIDAD.

HERR ALEXANDER, al tributar al respetable Público de Guatemala los mas sinceros agradecimientos por la benevola acojida que le ha dispensado, tiene el honor de anunciar que dara, á peticion de muchas personas que le favorecen con su amistad, dos funciones extraordinarias, en que se ejecutarán las suertes mas sorprendentes, que se han visto en las anteriores, con algunas otras nuevas y muy asombrosas.

La funcion de hoy se distinguirá por la mas difícil y mas admirable suerte, titulada:

EL MILAGRO DEL INDOSTAN, Ó EL NIÑO SUSPENDIDO EN EL AIRE.

ÓRDEN DE LA FUNCION.

Despues de una obertura a toda orquesta, comenzara del modo siguiente

1. PARTE.

1.—La pelota de lana.
2.—El espejo del destino.
3.—El jugador descubierto.
4.—La cadena chinesca.
5.—El deseo cumplido.
6.—La recomendacion.

2. PARTE.

1.—La moneda obediente.
2.—El mensagero amable.
3.—Segunda vista.
4.—La botella sorprendente.
5.—El sombrero como escudo.
6.—El muy durmiendo del hechicero oriental, ó el muchacho suspendido en el aire.

ENTRADA GENERAL.

Asiento numerado, por una noche . . . . . 1 pes.
Galeria, ... 5 rls.

NOTA.—La funcion, si el tiempo lo permite, comenzará á las ocho en punto.—Los billetes se espenderan por el Portal de la Universidad

Alexander Heimburger presenting the suspension trick during his engagement in Brazil. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

causing the clapper to strike by pulling the thread which runs through an innocent-looking ribbon on which the

bell hangs. Others use an electric magnet. Herr Alexander placed his bell on top of a fancy case which he could set anywhere, and the bell would ring at command. The secret was a small bird, trained to jump from one rung of a tiny ladder to another, at word of command or the waving of a stick or wand which the bird could see from its point of imprisonment. Every time that it jumped from one rung to another, it would pull down a step which was so arranged that by the smallest overweight it would release a catch, which in turn would throw the hammer against the glass. When the bird stepped off, the hammer would again come back to its original position and be ready for the second blow. This bird he bought from a street fortune-teller, who had trained it to go up different steps of a ladder and select envelopes containing variously printed fortunes.

Alexander enjoyed personal acquaintance with President Polk, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Calhoun, and their fellow-statesmen in the United States. Through his friendship with President Polk he carried to the West Indies and Brazil letters so influential that the aristocracy in these countries opened its doors to him. He was welcomed at the palace of Dom Pedro, and has in his possession letters from both the King and his consort, dated 1850.

So much for the history of a man who was brave enough to admit that he developed the suspension trick from principles laid down by humble Indian fakirs.

The crudest method used for accomplishing the suspension trick consisted of a steel corset, an iron rod painted to resemble wood, and a platform. The steel

rod was fitted into a special place in the corset, also in the platform. This method was improved, first to make it a self-raising suspension, then eventually with a steel rod from the back of the stage, eliminating the use of both rods under the arms.

Spectators and reviewers commented on the rigid, almost painful, carriage of Robert-Houdin's son during the performance, which they laid to the effect of ether. Unquestionably Robert-Houdin used this crude corset-and-rod method of working the trick.

The fumes of ether which reached the audience, he admits, were caused by pouring a little ether over hot irons in the wings.

But whatever the method employed by Robert-Houdin to secure the effects of "suspension éthéréenne," he was merely introducing a century-old trick, which other contemporary magicians were also exhibiting. The name of the real maker of the apparatus may never be known, but some clever mechanician supplied Robert-Houdin, Compars Herrmann, and John Henry Anderson with precisely the same method of working the trick, at precisely the same time. Robert-Houdin alone was audacious enough to claim the invention as his own.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISAPPEARING HANDKERCHIEF

SUPREME egotism and utter disregard for the truth may be traced in all of Robert-Houdin's writings, but they reached a veritable climax when he indited chapter XVI. of his "Memoirs." During the course of this chapter he described the so-called invention and first production of the disappearing-handkerchief trick.

According to the American edition of his "Memoirs," page 303, he received a command to appear before Louis Philippe and his family at St. Cloud in November, 1846. During the six days intervening between the official invitation and his appearance before the royal family, he arranged a trick from which, he states, he had every reason to expect excellent results. On page 305 he goes even further in his claims and announces:

"All my tricks were favorably received, and the one I had invented for the occasion gained me unbounded applause."

He then gives the following description of the trick and its performance:

"I borrowed from my noble spectators several handkerchiefs, which I made into a parcel, and laid on the table. Then, at my request, different persons wrote on the cards the names of places whither they desired their handkerchiefs to be invisibly transported.

"When this had been done, I begged the King to take

three of the cards at hazard, and choose from them the place he might consider most suitable.

"'Let us see,' Louis Philippe said, 'what this one says: "I desire the handkerchiefs to be found beneath one of the candelabra on the mantelpiece." That is too easy for a sorcerer; so we will pass to the next card: "The handkerchiefs are to be transported to the dome of the Invalides." That would suit me, but it is much too far, not for the handkerchiefs, but for us. Ah, ah!' the King added, looking at the last card, 'I am afraid, M. Robert-Houdin, I am about to embarrass you. Do you know what this card proposes?'

"'Will your Majesty deign to inform me?'

"'It is desired that you should send the handkerchiefs into the chest of the last orange-tree on the right of the avenue.'

"'Only that, Sire? Deign to order, and I shall obey.'

"'Very good, then; I should like to see such a magic act: I, therefore, choose the orange-tree chest.'

"The King gave some orders in a low voice, and I directly saw several persons run to the orange-tree, in order to watch it and prevent any fraud.

"I was delighted at this precaution, which must add to the effect of my experiment, for the trick was already arranged, and the precaution hence too late.

"I had now to send the handkerchiefs on their travels, so I placed them beneath a bell of opaque glass, and, taking my wand, I ordered my invisible travellers to proceed to the spot the King had chosen.

"I raised the bell; the little parcel was no longer there, and a white turtle-dove had taken its place.

"The King then walked quickly to the door, whence he looked in the direction of the orange-tree, to assure himself that the guards were at their post; when this was done, he began to smile and shrug his shoulders.

"'Ah! M. Robert-Houdin,' he said, somewhat ironically, 'I much fear for the virtue of your magic staff.' Then he added, as he returned to the end of the room, where several servants were standing, 'Tell William to open immediately the last chest at the end of the avenue, and bring me carefully what he finds there—if he does find anything.'

"William soon proceeded to the orange-tree, and, though much astonished at the orders given him, he began to carry them out.

"He carefully removed one of the sides of the chest, thrust his hand in, and almost touched the roots of the tree before he found anything. All at once he uttered a cry of surprise as he drew out a small iron coffer eaten by the rust.

"This curious find, after having been cleaned from the mould, was brought in and placed on a small ottoman by the King's side.

"'Well, M. Robert-Houdin,' Louis Philippe said to me, with a movement of impatient curiosity, 'here is a box; am I to conclude it contains the handkerchiefs?'

"'Yes, Sire,' I replied with assurance, 'and they have been there, too, for a long period.'

"'How can that be? The handkerchiefs were lent you scarce a quarter of an hour ago.'

"'I cannot deny it, Sire; but what would my magic powers avail me if I could not perform incomprehensible

tricks? Your Majesty will doubtless be still more surprised when I prove to your satisfaction that this coffer

Reproduction of a very rare pastel portrait of Cagliostro. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

as well as its contents was deposited in the chest of the orange-tree sixty years ago.'

"'I should like to believe your statement,' the King

replied with a smile; 'but that is impossible, and I must, therefore, ask for proofs of your assertion.'

"'If your Majesty will be kind enough to open this casket they will be supplied.'

"'Certainly; but I shall require a key for that.'

"'It only depends on yourself, Sire, to have one. Deign to remove it from the neck of this turtle dove, which has just brought it to you.'

"Louis Philippe unfastened a ribbon that held a small rusty key with which he hastened to unlock the coffer. The first thing that caught the King's eye was a parchment, on which he read the following statements:

"'This day, the sixth of June, 1786, this iron box, containing six handkerchiefs, was placed among the roots of an orange tree by me, Balsamo, Count of Cagliostro, to serve in performing an act of magic which will be executed on the same day sixty years hence before Louis Philippe of Orléans and his family.'

"'There is, decidedly, witchcraft about this,' the King said, more and more amazed. 'Nothing is wanting, for the seal and signature of the celebrated sorcerer are placed at the foot of this statement, which, Heaven pardon me, smells strongly of sulphur.'

"At this jest the audience began to laugh.

"'But,' the King added, taking out of the box a carefully sealed packet, 'can the handkerchiefs, by possibility, be in this?'

"'Indeed, Sire, they are; but, before opening the parcel, I would request your Majesty to notice that it, also, bears the impression of Cagliostro's seal.'

"This seal, once rendered so famous by being placed

on the celebrated alchemist's bottles of elixir and liquid gold, I had obtained from Torrini, who had been an old friend of Cagliostro's.

"'It is certainly the same,' my royal spectator answered, after comparing the two seals. Still, in his impatience to learn the contents of the parcel, the King quickly tore open the envelope, and soon displayed before the astonished spectators the six handkerchiefs, which, a few moments before, were still on my table."

While the use of the Cagliostro seal really formed no part of the trick, its possession by Robert-Houdin goes to show how indefatigably he collected conjuring curios and how quick he was to utilize any part of his collection, and score thereby a brilliant showing.

Cagliostro seals were by no means rare. This prince of charlatans had seals, like adventures, in great variety; and in this connection, it is not out of place to tell something of Cagliostro and thus explain why the parchment bearing his seal created such a sensation at St. Cloud.

Cagliostro has no match in the annals of magic. Not a conjurer in the sense of being a public entertainer, he yet mystified and bewitched his thousands. Something of a physician, more of an alchemist, and altogether a charlatan, he left behind him a trail of brilliant chicanery, daring adventure, and ignominious failure and undoing unequalled in the history of Europe.

Cagliostro was born Joseph Balsamo, in Palermo, Italy, June 8th, 1743. His parents were in humble circumstances and he started his career as a novice in the Convent of Benfratelli, from which he was expelled for incorrigibility. Then he plunged into a life of dissipa-

tion and cleverly planned, ofttimes brilliantly executed crimes. He fled Palermo after forging theatre tickets and a will, and duping a goldsmith out of sixty pieces of

Reproduction of a rare portrait of Seraphinia Feliciani, Comtesse de Cagliostro, wrongfully called Lorenzo in the Encyclopædia Britannica. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

gold. At Messina he fell in with an alchemist named Althotas, a man of some learning who spoke a variety of

languages. These two adventurers travelled in Egypt, and when Althotas died Cagliostro went to Naples and Rome, where he married a beautiful girdle-maker named Seraphinia Feliciani. This woman shared both his triumphs and his disgrace. In 1776 they arrived in London, where he announced himself as the Count di Cagliostro. The title was assumed, the name was borrowed from his mother's side of the house. Here for the first time Cagliostro announced himself also a worker of miracles or wonders.

He exhibited two mysterious substances, "Materia Prima," with which he transmuted all baser metals into gold, and "Egyptian Wine," with which he claimed to prolong life. His wife, who was just past twenty, he declared was more than sixty, her youthful appearance being due to the use of his elixir. He founded a spurious Egyptian rite in connection with the Masonic order which has been recognized as a blot upon Masonic history, and he claimed thousands of Masonic dupes. All over the Continent he and his beautiful wife travelled, now healing the poor for nothing, now duping the rich, but always living in a most picturesque, voluptuous fashion. He dipped into spiritualism and mesmerism, but wherever he went his converts followed after.

In 1789, while in Rome, he was seized by that invincible power, the Holy Inquisition, and was condemned to death. Later Pope Pius VI. changed the sentence to life imprisonment. Confinement made him more daring than ever. He asked for a confessor, and when a Capuchin monk was permitted to enter his cell in this capacity Cagliostro endeavored to choke him and escape in his robes. The

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TEMPLE OF ART, SCIENCE, AND MYSTERY!

GRAND SOIREES FANTASTIQUES.

FOR A FEW NIGHTS ONLY,

AT THE LARGE ROOM,

New Experiments! Great Novelties!!

PROFESSOR MONS. TESTOT,

Parisian Enchanter and Emperor of all the Wizards.

OPINIONS OF

THE PRESS.

At the Musical Hall, Bold Street, Monsieur Testot, most justly the clever st Magician of the day, has been displaying his astounding feats. The dexterity, the coolness, and the astounding nature of his tricks are beyond description. He must be seen to be appreciated. He may be termed the "Wizard of all Wizards," and we defy the most acute observer to discover the manner in which he performs his astonishing accomplishments. Were his abilities more known, and were he at all inclined to puff—a failure in his profession, we are sure the Egyptian building in Liverpool would not hold his audiences.—LIVERPOOL MERCURY.

OPINIONS OF

THE PRESS.

THE GREAT MAGICIAN.—Monsieur Testot, the Celebrated Magician, has during this week been amusing numerous full with most astonishing sleights of hand feats, and has gained high approbation from the crowds that have been brought together. The Public will observe from an advertisement in another column, that Monsieur Testot is preparing his first and last visit to Exeter, no doubt on the score of the attention of many respectable families in the town and neighbourhood who have been so highly amused with his deceptive.—WESTERN LIBERAL GAZETTE.

M. T. is lately returned to England, after visiting Germany, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Naples, France, Belgium, &c., giving his Exhibitions before the Courts of Berlin, St. Petersburgh, Vienna, Brussels, Paris, &c., and surprising all by his

Newly Invented & INCOMPREHENSIBLE FEATS.

MONS. TESTOT, (Professor of Recreative Philosophy, from the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, Paris,) begs to present himself to the most extraordinary Professor of the Art that has ever yet appeared in this country. These extraordinary feats being widely different from any other, as also by their wonder and mystery, and riveting the eyes of the Spectators intent upon penetrating the mysterious delusions presented to them. Encomium is unnecessary, as the world-wide success that has crowned the exertions of the "FRENCH ENCHANTER," with the opinions of the Press, at once proclaim the wonderful talents and high talents, as well as the strictly moral tendency, of this system of entertainment. The sensations caused in the town and cities on the Continent, and in England, by his almost incredible Feats, has gained for him the appellation of "THE INCOMPARABLE."

The Performances of Mons. TESTOT, have been honoured by the approbation of the Crowned Heads of Europe, and whilst they afford delight to the Lovers of

RECREATIVE PHILOSOPHY,

Their Strictly MORAL TENDENCY ever wins the generous patronage of the Clergy, and the approbation of those entrusted with the Education of Youth.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE, DIVERSIFIED EACH EVENING.

PART I.

THE SYMPATHETIC BOX

Magic Method of Painting, without Ink or Press,

THE LOST RING DISCOVERED, & DEAD BIRD RESTORED TO LIFE.

THE INVISIBLE POSTMAN, AND ENCHANTED ROSEBUD

UNDISCERNIBLE FLIGHT.

THE

CELEBRATED LOAF TRICK,

In which Articles borrowed from the Spectators, may be found in any Loaf selected from any Baker's Shop in Town.

Grand Multiplication, or the way to get rich.

THE DECEIVING DICE BOX

PYROTECHNIC CANARIES,

Or, Astonishing Transformation.

CAGE of CANARY SEED. Mystical Disappearance.

THE WITCH PIGEON.

SECRET CONCEALED, IN THE APPLES OF DELIZEUS

The Necromantic Cabinet.

THE LADIES' TRUE LOVER'S KNOT.

INCENDIARY, Or, Wax Candles.

M. TESTOT will divulge the thoughts of persons, in the Candles first lighted in the Room.

MIRACULOUS WATER.

OR

MAGIC BOTTLE,

Which will command any card chosen by the Audience. M. TESTOT will, amongst other feats which astonish the Literati of Modern Athens, display

The Wonderful Dancing and Speaking Honey.

Which will answer any question which the Company may propose, correctly accompanying any piece of Music, and divine the thoughts of any individual, with many other experiments.

PART II.

SURPRISING CHANGES of SUGAR AND COFFEE.

The Enchanted Handkerchief Box.

PLUMB & MAGNUM

OR,

Marvellous Metamorphoses,

Dexterous management of Cups, Balls, Birds, Flowers, &c.

Admission.—Front Seats, 2s. Second Seats, 1s. Back Bitto, 6d. Children and Schools Is. to Front Seats. Doors open at Half-past Seven, and to Commence at Eight precisely.

☞ Tickets and Places may be secured at the Room. Private Parties Attended, and Lessons given in the Magic Art.—Six Select Tricks for one Pound.

GERRISH, PRINTER, MARY ARCHES STREET, EXETER.

Very rare Testot handbill printed about 1800, presented by Testot to Henry Evanion. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

monk fought for his life so effectually that it was he, and not Cagliostro, who escaped. Cagliostro was literally buried alive in a subterranean dungeon, as punishment for his final offence, and his wife immured herself in a Roman convent, where she died in 1794.

In Paris, perhaps, Cagliostro enjoyed his greatest

Free Masons' Lodge, Myton-Gate.

MORE NEW PERFORMANCES.

For THREE NIGHTS Longer.

Mons. Felix Testot,

Impressed with a due sense of gratitude to the Public for the patronage evinced towards the Performances during his stay in Hull, and begs leave to solicit a continuance; and trusts, that the Selection he has made for their Amusement, will meet with the same Approbation they have already so liberally bestowed upon him.

On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Evenings,

October 19, 20, *and* 21, 1826.

Among other NEW FEATS, Mons F T. will introduce that Wonderful Feat of Illusion,

THE NE PLUS ULTRA OF THE

Cabalistic Art.

The Company will be requested to favour M. F. T. with a loan of a variety of articles of any description —such persons as have not lent any thing will have an opportunity to command him to return all the articles but one, making their own choice to their respective owners. He will then cause the remaining articles to disappear, and be found immediately, wherever the Company may require, that is to say,

IN ANY PART OF THE TOWN.

The execution of this Illusion in London caused a sensation of the greatest delight and surprise, the article having been momentarily conveyed from the Adelphi Theatre to the great Gun in St. James's Park, which Gun is night and day under the immediate charge of a Sentinel. It also caused the greatest astonishment and delight in Oxford, where the articles borrowed were immediately conveyed from the Exhibition Room, to the top of University Church, and was repeated four successive evenings in different and almost inaccessible places. Also in Edinburgh, by the articles being conveyed to the top of Nelson's Monument.

THE WICK PIDGEON.

HE WILL INTRODUCE THE NEW AND EXTRAORDINARY

Transformation of a BIRD

INTO A CHILD!

GROWING INTO

A LADY!!

With many other experiments, which have been announced in a former bill.

Mons. F. T. will conclude his performance with his amazing EVOLUTIONS with Hoops, Balls, Daggers, and Four China Plates, which have gained him so much applause since his arrival here.

Doors to be opened at Seven o'Clock, and the Performance to commence precisely at Eight

FRONT SEATS, 2s.—SECOND SEATS, 1s—GALLERY, 6d.

John Hutchinson, Letter-Press and Copper-Plate Printer, Silver-Street, Hull.

Testot programme, featuring "Cabalistic Art" in 1826. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

triumphs of charlatanism, and it is not remarkable that the appearance of his seal in the midst of Robert-Houdin's trick should seem almost uncanny to the royal family.

But to return to the disappearing-handkerchief trick. Robert-Houdin did not invent this trick. It was pre-

sented by a number of conjurers before Robert-Houdin was known in the world of magic. Robert-Houdin simply employed the trick familiar to both his predecessors and contemporaries and redressed it to tickle the fancy of his royal patron.

In England this trick was known among old conjurers as "The Ne Plus Ultra of the Cabalistic Art." In 1826 one M. Félix Testot, who claimed to be a compatriot of Robert-Houdin, presented the trick in the British provinces, and one of his bills I am reproducing because it shows that the trick he offered the provincial Britons and the trick which Robert-Houdin offercd the royal family at St. Cloud were identical. It also proves that London had seen the trick; and what London had seen, Paris, including Robert-Houdin, had heard of.

A programme used by "The Celebrated Mr. Marriot, Professor of Recreative Philosophy," in 1831, contains word for word the announcement of the trick used on Testot's bill, which goes to

TO THE

Charitable.

CATHERINE

Langan

Respectfully informs a humane Public, that having been induced to leave a comfortable situation in Dublin, for the purpose of coming to Liverpool to reside with a near relation, and being unexpectedly in a deserted and destitute situation in a Land of Strangers, she has been under the necessity of seeking a temporary Asylum in a Cellar in Sir Thomas's Buildings, and has no other hope of being able to return to her friends in Ireland but through the kind interposition of the humane and charitable. She has, at the recommendation of several persons who have felt an interest in her unfortunate situation, prepared to announce a BENEFIT at the House of

MR. WOODS,

THE

Duke of York Tavern

CHARLES-STREET,

ON MONDAY,

Tuesday and Wednesday Evenings, the 25th, 26th and 27th July, 1831,

WHEN THE CELEBRATED MR.

MARRIOT

PROFESSOR OF

RECREATIVE PHILOSOPHY,

Magical Illusions

Metamorphosis and Transformations,

Has kindly offered his services, assisted by

Young SPRING.

The first Part will introduce the New and Extraordinary Transformation of the

Dead Bird restored to Life!

The Invisible Postman.—The Magic Method of Printing, without the use of Ink or Press.

THE MAGIC BOTTLE;

Or, MIRACULOUS NOTE.

Which will, at command, return any Card chosen by any of the Audience.

A New Method of Coining Money,

OR THE WAY TO GET RICH!

A Bushel of Rice and a Bushel of Coffee, will exchange their Possessions at the word of command.

Mr. M. will, amongst his other Feats, astonish the Audience with his wonderful

Dancing and Speaking Money!

Which will answer any Question the Company may propose, and will correctly accompany any Piece of Music, and define the thoughts of any Individual, with many other experiments.

Mr. M. will introduce that wonderful Illusion,

The Cabalistic Art.

The Company will be requested to favour Mr. M. with the loan of a variety of Articles of any description, and will, at the word of command, cause them to disappear, and be found at any where the Company may require, in any part of the Town. The execution of this Illusion alone in London, caused such a sensation of the greatest delight and surprise, having been conveyed from the Adelphi Theatre, to the Great Gun in the Park; which Gun is night and day under the immediate charge of a Sentinel.—It also caused the greatest astonishment in Oxford, where the Articles borrowed were immediately conveyed from the Exhibition Room, to the Top of the University Church, and was repeated four successive evenings; and also at Edinburgh, where the Articles were conveyed to the Top of Nelson's Monument.

SIG. MARRIOTT

Will perform several favourite AIRS on his much-admired

Treble Scale of Musical Glasses.

The Performance to commence each Evening at Seven o'Clock.

ADMISSION TWO SHILLINGS.

Marriot programme featuring "Cabalistic Art' in 1831, or fifteen years before Robert-Houdin claims to have invented the disappearing handkerchief trick. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

show that a popular test was to have articles passed from the Adelphia Theatre to the gun which was being watched by a sentinel.

February 22d, 1833, found a Mr. Jefferini at the Royal Clarence Theatre, Liverpool Street, King's Cross, Liverpool. He agreed to make "an article fly at the rate of five hundred miles an hour, from King's Cross to the Centre of Greece."

The original Buck featured on his programme a similar trick which he called "The Loaf Trick." On a bill dated October 26th, 1840, it is announced as follows: "Watch in a loaf. The magician will command any gentleman's watch to disappear. It will be found in a loaf at any baker's shop in Town." The senior Ingleby changed

ROYAL CLARENGE THEATRE,
LIVERPOOL STREET, KING'S CROSS.
Under the immediate Patronage of several Families of Distinction.

On FRIDAY and WEDNESDAY, Feb. 22 & 27, 1833,
M. JEFFERINI, of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells Theatres, begs most respectfully to inform the Gentry and Public, that he has engaged the above Elegant Place of Amusement, for a limited period, and intends commencing on FRIDAY, 22nd of February, with an entire new Entertainment, in Two Parts, introducing new Songs, Illusions and Experiments, to be called

CORNUCOPIÆ: COMICALLITY
Or, SKETCHES FROM REAL LIFE.

PART 1.

...

SONG.

ILLUSION.

...

ILLUSION.

...

SONG.

PART 2.

...

ILLUSION.

...

ILLUSION.

...

SONG.
FINALE.

Mr. SHARP,
THE CELEBRATED VENTRILOQUIST,
From the CITY THEATRE, will Display his Inimitable Powers.

In the course of the Entertainment,
M. JEFFERINI,
Among other Feats of
THAUMATURGICS
Will Perform several astonishing
IMPOSSIBILITIES,
He will change in sight of the Audience
A Decanter of Port Wine into Pure Water.
Will make an article Fly at the Rate of
500 MILES A MINUTE
from KINGS CROSS to the Centre of GREECE, and produce from a
BOTTLE OF WINE
A LIVING PIG.

The Evening's Performance to conclude with M. JEFFERINI'S
CLASSICAL STUDIES
OF THE ANCIENT MASTERS.
In the course of which Mr. J. will Introduce several new Features from the Works of CANOVA and others.

Doors Open at Half-past 6½, Performance to Commence at Seven o'Clock and conclude by Eleven.
BOXES Drawing-circle 3s. Upper-circle, 1s. 6d. PIT, 1s. GALLERY, 6d.
Half Price to the BOXES only, at Half-past Eight o'Clock.
The Privilege Orders will be admitted on FRIDAY and WEDNESDAY;
And may be had of most respectable Shopkeepers in the Neighbourhood.
W. Glendinning, Printer, 30, Hatton Garden.

Jefferini handbill, dated 1833, in which he announces that any article will be made to fly 500 miles a minute.

the trick somewhat, sending out to any market for a

shoulder of mutton, which, on being cut, would yield up a card previously drawn by some spectator. He thus describes his trick in his book "Whole Art of Legerdemain," published in London in 1815:

"TRICK FOUR.

"To cut out of a Shoulder of Mutton a Card which one

Only known portrait of the clever English conjurer, Buck. From an engraving in the Harry Houdini Collection.

of the Company had previously drawn out of the Pack.

"Having desired a person to draw a Card out of several which you hold to him, and to remember it, which he promises to do, you tell him it shall be in a shoulder of mutton which you will send for.

"Accordingly you desire a servant to go to the butcher's and bring one. When brought, it is examined,

Emperor of all Conjurors.

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales

LYCEUM, STRAND.

No Performance Wednesdays or Fridays during Lent

Mr. Ingleby,

THE GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD,

In his Profession,

Respectfully informs the Nobility, Gentry, and Public in general, that in Consequence of his superior Excellence in the Art of Deception, he has had conferred upon him the Title of "EMPEROR OF ALL CONJURORS," by a numerous Assemblage of Gentlemen Amateurs, particularly through the amazing Trick of CUTTING THE FOWL'S HEAD OFF, and Restoring it to Life and Animation! for no Man knows the real way but himself. He is now, therefore, at the Head of his Profession, and all Competitors reminds him only of the following Fables:—"*The Ass in the Lion's Skin*," "*The Ox and the Frog*,"

Nights of Performance this Week,

MONDAY, Feb. 29, 1808,

Tuesday, *March* 1, Thursday 3, and Saturday, 5.

PART I.

Mr. INGLEBY, and his meritorious Family,

FROM DUNDEE, SCOTLAND.

Will go through his MATHEMATICAL and PHILOSOPHICAL Recreations and Amusements, by

DEXTERITY OF HAND,

Such as was never before attempted

He has had the Honor of performing before most of the Nobility in Great Britain, with unbounded Applause.

Mr. INGLEBY will break any Gentleman's Watch in 20 Pieces, and make it while under the Word of Command. He will take two new laid Eggs, the whole Company shall examine them, and any Person in the Room may break them, and a Child shall come out of one, and a set of Harness out of the other.

He will allow any Gentleman in the Room to take a Pack of Cards and shuffle them; he will then put his Foot on them, and command the Card any part of the Pack, and lay them on the Floor; he will then put his Foot on them, and command the Card he drew, from under his Foot to the top of his Head. He will allow any Gentleman in the Room to hold a Pack of Cards in his Hands, and after thinking on any particular Card, throw the whole of the Cards at the Performer, who will catch the Card so thought on in his Mouth. In short, Mr. INGLEBY can command Cards to do any thing but speak.

HIS PIXIDES METALLURGY,

An Operation never before attempted by Mankind; which follows:—He gives to any Person in company a written Paper together with a Box containing a quantity of Metals, which are of many different kinds of metal, of various forms and sizes; he then desires them to take out of the Box what Metals they think proper, which being done the Paper may be opened, and there will be found written therein, a correct account of the number of Metals taken out, what they are, and the quantity of metal each Metal is made of. This is looked upon to be the greatest performance in the known world. He will if required, put the Room in such a situation, as the Husband cannot know his own Wife, nor the Wife her Husband, though they sit together!

An Operation in Popsomance,

Mr. INGLEBY will discover the most Thoughts of any Person in Company, without asking a single Question. He will also communicate the Thoughts of one Person to another, without the assistance of Speech or Writing. Any Gentleman may

CUT A FOWL'S HEAD OFF,

Or any other Animal under the Size of a CALF, and by one Word it shall be made perfectly Whole—For no Man knows the real way but himself.

Mr. INGLEBY will exhibit different Evenings with one Fowl, and the one Evening there shall be a Bullet shot into his inside, and any Gentlemen may take a knife and cut it out; at the same time, he may cut his Head, Legs and Wings off, and by Mr. INGLEBY blowing his *Virtue Breath* upon them, he will be made whole and do as well as ever.

HE WILL ALSO EXHIBIT THE

STICKS OF FANCY,

Which no Man can do but himself; with a great Variety of other Deceptions too tedious to mention.

Mr. INGLEBY has got into such an active Art of Gunnery, as no Man had, or ever shall have, but himself, while he lives. He will allow any Gentleman to fetch his own Pistol, which he will perform with rather than he gave, and will then permit any in the Company to mark a Ball, and he will let him shoot it out of the Piece, which he will catch upon any Article, though it were as small as a Needle.

PART II.

TIGHT ROPE DANCING,

By the amiable and justly styled "INTREPID HEROINE,"

SIGNORA BELINDA;

Who will exhibit with Baskets, Pictures, and Wooden Shoes, the wonderful Equilibrisms with placed on the Rope. She will also perform Blindfolded, in a Manner never attempted by any other Performer.

Ingleby handbill, dated 1808. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

and then ordered to be put down to roast. After performing some tricks, you recollect the shoulder of mutton, which is immediately brought half-roasted, and after cutting it for some time you at length find the card, and produce it.

"Explanation:

"Having forced a card on one of the company, your confederate has an opportunity, when the mutton is sent to be roasted, of conveying a thin duplicate of that card folded into a narrow compass into the fleshy part near the shank, which can be casily done by means of a sharp penknife.

"This trick, though remarkably simple, has created universal astonishment at the Minor Theatre, where it was frequently exhibited by Mr. Ingleby."

The method of performing the trick was so familiar to conjurers of Robert-Houdin's time and earlier that Henry Evans Evanion was able to describe it to me from actual witnessings. Acting on his explanation, on my return to America I offered the trick, without any great

Frontispiece from Ingleby's book, "Whole Art of Legerdemain," said to be an excellent likeness of the conjurer-author. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

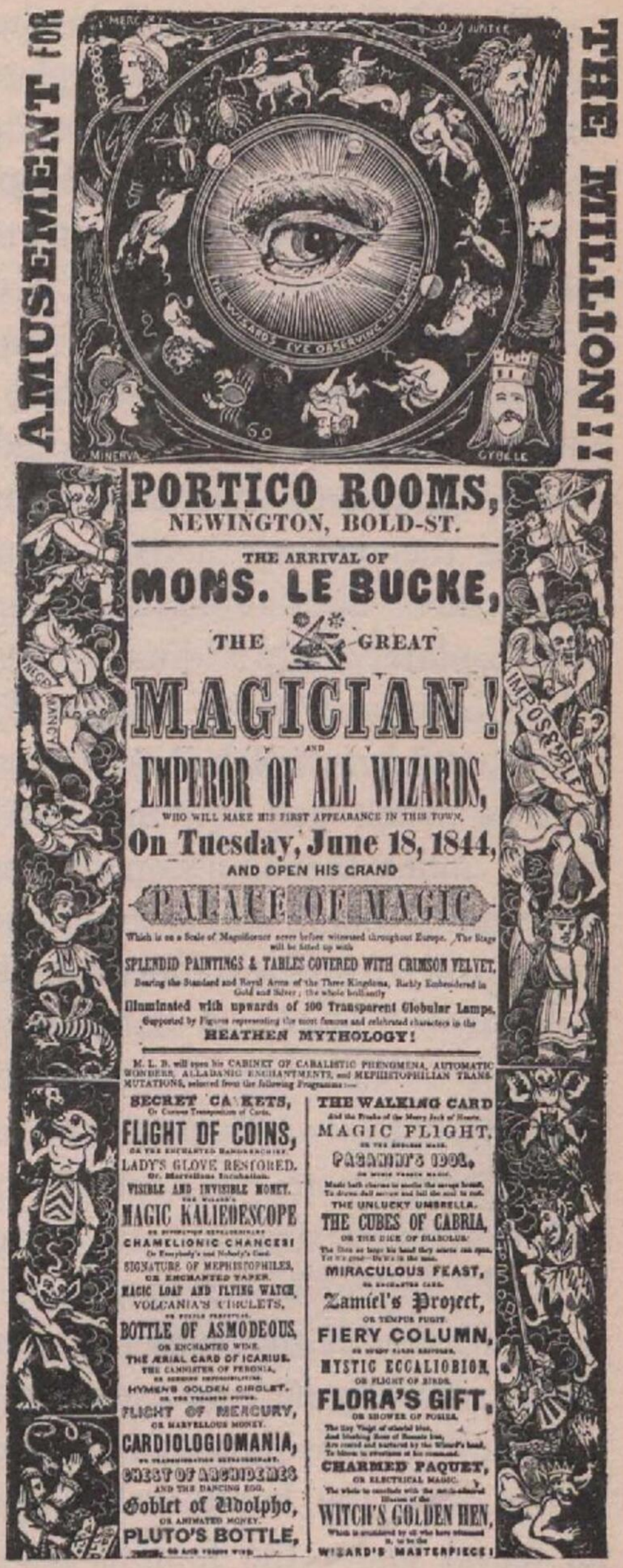
amount of preparation and without a hitch, at a matinée entertainment given by a secret organization. I will describe precisely how this was done, and allow my readers to judge of the similarity of the trick offered years ago by

humble travelling magicians whose names have been written most faintly in the annals of conjuring, and the much-vaunted trick "invented" by Robert-Houdin for the entertainment of his sovereign.

The hall in which the matinée was given was located in Harlem, Borough of Manhattan, New York City, and I had decided that the handkerchiefs which were to make the flying journey should be "desired" by some one present to appear under the top step of the winding staircase in the Statue of Liberty, which is located in New York Harbor. This meant a half-hour ride from the hall to the boat in a Subway train; then a run across New York Harbor to the Statue. These boats left the dock on the hour and the half-hour, so I timed my performance to fill just half an hour, starting with some sleight-of-hand, the egg-bag trick, and swallowing a package of needles and bringing them up threaded, which latter trick was introduced into magical performances in Europe by K. K. Kraus in 1816.

Just before 3:30 o'clock I borrowed three handkerchiefs and tied them together for easier handling. I had three handkerchiefs, similarly tied together, under my vest, and just at 3:30, I switched the two sets of handkerchiefs, so that the handkerchiefs furnished by the spectators were under my vest and the bogus handkerchiefs in my hand. First I dropped the bogus handkerchiefs on the table-trap, picking up the opaque glass cover with which they were to be hidden, and, by a carefully rehearsed bit of carelessness, dropped and broke it. Then, leaving the bogus handkerchiefs on the table trap, I stepped toward the wings, apparently to secure another glass bell

or cover. To all intents and purposes, I did not pass from the view of the audience, for fully half of my body was on the stage, but as my assistant handed me a new glass cover, he deftly extracted the real handkerchiefs from under my vest. Then, while I returned to the stage with my patter and description of the flight the handkerchiefs were about to make, my assistant, with the handkerchiefs in his pocket, walked unnoticed from the door, and, once out of sight, ran madly to the Subway station. There he boarded an express and reached the boat landing just in time to catch the 4-o'clock boat. At the Statue, my brother and a tinsmith were waiting for him. The



Reproduction of a rare Buck handbill, dated 1844. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

handkerchiefs were placed in the tin box, securely soldered, and then this box was placed inside a second iron box, which was locked. The "plant" was then taken upstairs and hidden under the top step.

In the mean time, with my thoughts following my assistant every step of his trip, I was playing out my end of the game. The audience was supplied with blank cards on which they might write the name of the place where the handkerchiefs should reappear. This, of course, took some time, and when the cards, each folded to hide the writing thereon, were collected in a hat, I shook them up thoroughly, and then turned them out upon a plate, deftly adding, on the top, three cards which I had concealed in my hand. This was sleight-of-hand purely, and I next picked out those three prepared cards on each of which was written "Can you send the handkerchiefs under the top step of the Statue of Liberty?" Explaining that I had in my hand three cards chosen at haphazard, I wished the final choice to be made by a disinterested party. A baby was finally chosen to select the card. Naturally, I refused even to take the slip of paper from the baby's hand, and one of the lodge members read the question.

Murmurs of surprise and incredulity echoed from all over the hall. The test was too difficult! I then announced that if the audience would select its own committee, making sure to pick out men who could not be bribed, I would accompany them, and we would surely return with the handkerchiefs, sealed in double boxes, as found under the famous stairway. As an elaborate course luncheon was to be served, the committee had

time to act, and away we went, leaving the lodge to its feast. So much time had been lost in selecting the committee that we reached the wharf just in time to catch the 5 o'clock boat. On landing I received a prearranged signal from my assistants that all was well, and as I watched my committee dash up the stairs I knew that their quest would be rewarded.

When the committee and the writer returned to the lodge-room, a mechanic was required to pry open the box. There lay the identical handkerchiefs furnished by my spectators, who could hardly believe their eyes.

On other occasions I have asked my audience to select a spokesman, who in a loud voice would announce the point at which the handkerchiefs would be found, and then my man, waiting just outside the door, would mount his bicycle and pedal like mad for the hiding-place, naturally outstripping any committee appointed. But the first method, that of selecting the place beforehand and having all arrangements made, even to the three prepared cards, is safest and is probably the one used by Robert-Houdin to deceive the French monarch. I doubt if he even had three different cards prepared, as he claims. I believe he exaggerated his feat, for that would have been taking long chances.

For this trick I claim not an iota of originality. I simply fitted it to the time, the place, and the audience, and that I believe is all Robert-Houdin did when he "invented" the disappearing handkerchief trick for the amusement of his sovereign.

CHAPTER X

ROBERT-HOUDIN'S IGNORANCE OF MAGIC AS BETRAYED BY HIS OWN PEN

STATEMENTS in Robert-Houdin's various works on the conjurer's art corroborate my claim that he was not a master-magician, but a clever purloiner and adapter of the tricks invented and used by his predecessors and contemporaries. Whenever, in these books, he attempts to explain or expose a trick which was not part of his répertoire, he betrays an ignorance which would be impossible in a conjurer versed in the finer and more subtle branches of his art. Neither do these explanations show that he was clever enough as a mechanic to have invented the apparatus which he claimed as his handiwork. He states that practice and still more practice are essential, yet no intelligent performer, amateur or professional, can study my collection of Robert-Houdin programmes, handbills, and press notices without realizing that his répertoire contained little or no trace of what should be the foundation of successful conjuring, sleight-of-hand. Changing his fingers over the various air-holes of the inexhaustible bottle was as near as he ever came to sleight-of-hand, even when he was in the height of his success.

According to the press notices he had a pleasing stage presence, and also dressed and set forth his tricks richly, but it must be borne in mind that then, as often to-day,

the man sent by an editor to criticise a conjurer's performance knew little or nothing about the art and could not institute comparisons between different magicians. To-day Robert-Houdin would shine as an exhibitor of illusions or mechanical toys. A pistol shot, a puff of smoke—and his confederate or assistant has done the real work behind the scenes.

His lack of finesse as a sleight-of-hand performer is nowhere more clearly shown than in his own writings. On page 37 of his French exposé of the secrets of magic, entitled "Comment on Devient Sorcier" (page 51 of the English translation by Professor Hoffmann, "The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic"), he thus naïvely describes his masterpiece of coin-palming:

"I myself practised palming long and perseveringly, and acquired thereat a very considerable degree of skill. I used to be able to palm two five-franc pieces at once, the hand, nevertheless, remaining as freely open as though it held nothing whatever."

An amateur of his own day would have blushed to admit that he could palm but two coins. Men like T. Nelson Downs, "The Koin King," think nothing of palming twenty five-franc or silver dollars, or forty half-dollars, and even this record has been broken.

Even two writers who contributed to the translation and editing of his works, R. Shelton Mackenzie and Professor Hoffmann (Angelo J. Lewis), and who have drawn rich royalties for the same, apologize for his flagrant misstatements, which, they realize, any man or woman with but a slight knowledge of conjuring must recognize.

His first contribution to the history of magic was his

"Memoirs"; and while he does not feature exposures of tricks in this work, he offers, in passing, explanations of tricks and automata presented by other magicians. For the most part these explanations are obviously incorrect, and so prove that he was ignorant of certain fundamental principles of the art in which he claimed to have shone.

In the introduction of the American edition, published in 1850, Mr. Mackenzie, the editor, thus apologizes for one of Robert-Houdin's most flagrant mistakes in tracing the history of magic:

"One error which M. Houdin makes must not be passed over. His account of M. de Kempelen's celebrated automaton chess-player (afterward Maëlzel's) is entirely wrong. This remarkable piece of mechanism was constructed in 1769, and not in 1796; it was the Empress Maria-Theresa of Austria who played with it, and not Catherine II. of Russia; it was in 1783 that it first visited Paris, where it played at the Café de la Regence; it was not taken to London until 1784, and again in 1819; it was brought to America in 1825, by M. Maëlzel, and visited our principal cities, its chief resting-place being Philadelphia; M. Maëlzel's death was in 1838, on the voyage from Cuba to the United States, and not, as M. Houdin says, on his return to France; and the automaton, so far from being taken back to France, was sold by auction here, finally purchased by the late Dr. J. K. Mitchell, of Philadelphia, reconstructed by him, and finally deposited in the Chinese Museum (formerly Peale's), where it was consumed in the great fire which destroyed the National Theatre (now the site of the Continental Hotel, corner of Ninth and Chestnut Streets),

and, extending to the Chinese Museum, burnt it down on July 5th, 1854. An interesting account of the Automaton Chess-Player, written by Prof. George Allen, of this city, will be found in 'The Book of the First American Chess Congress,' recently published in New York."

Signor Blitz, in his book "Fifty Years in the Magic Circle," corroborates the Mackenzie correction, by telling how he saw Maëlzel in Havana, Cuba, where the famous German met his professional Waterloo, first in small audiences, then in the death of his faithful confederate, Schlomberg. Finally, broken in health and spirit, Maëlzel sailed from Havana for Philadelphia, but death overtook him at sea. His body was consigned to the ocean's depths, and his few effects were sold to liquidate the cost of passage and other debts.

That Robert-Houdin should make an error concerning a world-famous automaton the history of which could be traced through contemporary periodicals and libraries, is almost inconceivable and proves the carelessness with which he gathered and presented facts.

His inability to grasp the principles on which other performers built their tricks is shown most clearly when he attempts to describe and explain the performances of the Arabian mountebanks whom he saw during his stay in Algiers. These tricks have been handed down from one generation to another, and now that Arabian conjurers and acrobats are imported for hippodrome and vaudeville performances in all civilized countries, the tricks described by Robert-Houdin are familiar to the general public. They are also copied by performers of other nationalities, and can be seen in circus side-shows

and at fairs, as well as in the better grade of houses. Having worked on the same bill with genuine Arabian performers, I know just how the tricks are accomplished.

Robert-Houdin undertakes to explain these tricks in chapter XXII. of the American edition of his "Memoirs." So long as he quotes reliable authorities like the *Journal des Sciences*, the explanations are correct. Directly he attempts an independent exposure, he strikes far from the correct explanation.

On page 424 he states:

"In the foliowing experiment, two Arabs held a sabre, one by the hilt, the other by the point; a third then came forward, and after raising his clothes so as to leave the abdomen quite bare, laid himself flat on the edge of the blade, while a fourth mounted on his back, and seemed to press the whole weight of his body on him.

"This trick may be easily explained.

"Nothing proves to the audience that the sabre is really sharpened, or that the edge is more cutting than the back, although the Arab who holds it by the point is careful to wrap it up in a handkerchief—in this, imitating the jugglers who pretend they have cut their fingers with one of the daggers they use in their tricks.

"Besides, in performing this trick, the invulnerable turned his back on the audience. He knew the advantage to be derived from this circumstance; hence, at the moment when about to lay himself on the sabre, he very adroitly pulled back over his stomach that portion of his clothing he had raised. Lastly, when the fourth actor mounted on his back, he rested his hands on the shoulders of the Arabs who held the sabre. The latter apparently

maintained his balance, but, in reality, they supported the whole weight of his body. Hence, the only requirement for this trick is to have the stomach more or less pressed in, and I will explain presently that this can be effected without any danger or injury."

In this explanation Robert-Houdin is entirely wrong.

A Rannin lithograph, showing him doing the sword-walking act which Robert-Houdin claimed to have been a fraud. Rannin is still working in Germany, imitated by many, equalled by none. From a photograph in the Harry Houdini Collection.

The real secret of lying on top of a sharp-edged razor, sword, or sabre rests on the fact that the performer does actually lie upon it in a perfectly motionless position. Were he to move but the width of a hair, backward or

forward or sidewise, the weapon would slice his body, resulting in instant death or horrible mutilation. I have watched cheap performers of this class of work, in dime museums or fairs, walk up a ladder of sharp swords which I had previously held in my hand. They would place the foot down with infinite precision and then press it into place. This position will not result in cutting, but let the performer slip or slide and the flesh would be cut instantly. I have also seen an acrobat, working in a circus, select two razors in first-class condition, place them on a socket with the edges of the razors uppermost, and with his bare hands he would do what is known as a hand-stand on the keen edges of the blades. This trick of absolute balance is acquired by persistent practice from youth up.

Again Robert-Houdin errs wofully in comparing the sabre-swallower to the swallower of broken bottle-heels and stones. Sabre-swallowing is one trick, swallowing pebbles and broken glass belongs in quite a different class. And when I say this I do not mean powdered glass, but pieces of glass first broken, then chewed, and finally swallowed.

On page 426 Robert-Houdin puts the two tricks in the same class, as follows:

"When the trick of swallowing bottle-heels and pebbles was to be done, the Aïssaoua really put them in his mouth, but I believe, I may say certainly, that he removed them at the moment when he placed his head in the folds of the Mokadem's burnous. However, had he swallowed them, there would have been nothing wonderful about this, when we compare it with what was done some thirty

years back in France by a mountebank called 'the Sabre-Swallower.'

"This man, who performed in the streets, threw back his head so as to form a straight line with his throat, and really thrust down his gullet a sabre, of which only the hilt remained outside his mouth.

"He also swallowed an egg without cracking it, or even nails and pebbles, which he caused to resound, by striking his stomach with his fist.

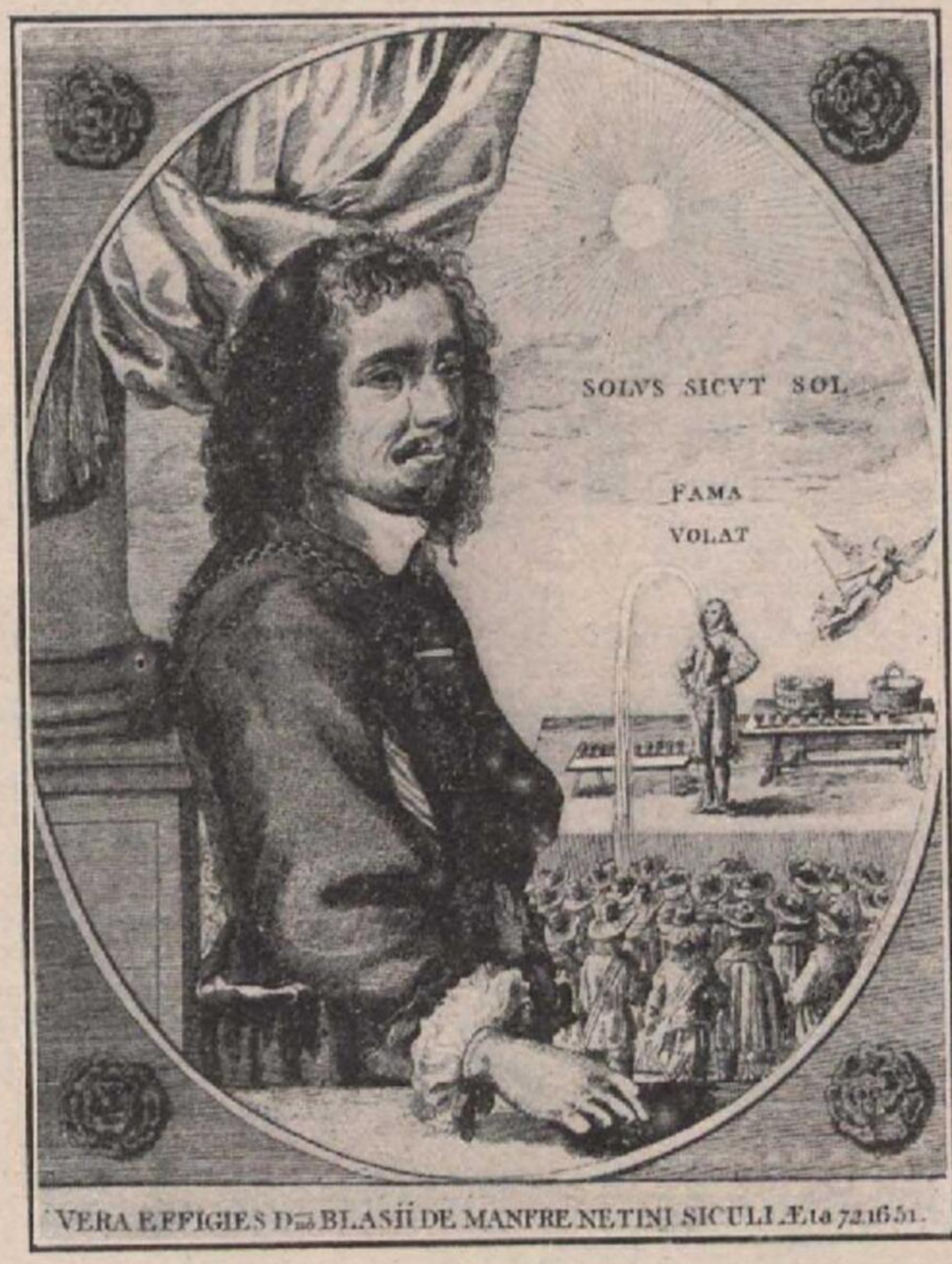
"These tricks were the result of a peculiar formation in the mountebank's throat, but, if he had lived among the Aïssaoua, he would have assuredly been the leading man of the company."

The sabre-swallower never releases his hold on the weapon. The pebble and bottle-heel swallower does—but brings them up again, by a system of retching which results from long practice. The Japanese have an egg-swallowing trick in which they swallow either small-sized ivory balls or eggs, and reproduce them by a retching so unnoticeable that they could easily show the mouth empty.

This trick dates back to the offerings of that celebrated water-spouter, Blaise Manfrede, or de Manfre, who travelled all over Europe. This man could swallow huge quantities of water and then eject it in streams or in small quantities or fill all sorts of glasses. In fact this one trick made him famous. *The European Magazine*, London, March, 1765, pages 194–5, gives a most diverting description of his trick, taken from an old letter, and here quoted:

"I have seen, at the September fair in Francfort, a man who professed drinking fifty quarts of water in a

day, and indeed proved that he was capable of executing what he pretended to. I saw him perform frequently, and remember it as well as if it was but yesterday. He said he was an Italian; he was short and squat, his



Blasius de Manfre or Blaise Manfrede, from a rare old woodcut in the Harry Houdini Collection.

chest, face, forehead, eyes, and mouth very large. He pretended to be fifty years old, though he did not seem forty.

"He was called the famous Blaise Manfrede, a native of Malta. At Francfort he frequently performed three times a day: for, besides his performances twice a day

on the public stage (which nobody approached without paying), he attended private houses when called upon by great people.

"He called for a large bucket of fair warm water, and twenty little glass bottles, flat like cupping glasses, so that they could stand topside turvy. Some of these he filled with water, plunging them into the bucket with a good deal of ceremony, and usually swallowed two or three to wash his mouth and gargle his throat. He threw up the water again immediately, to shew the spectators that he had no drugs between his teeth, whence he could be suspected to derive any advantage.

"After this plausible prelude, he made an Italian harangue, which I cannot acquaint you with the merits of, because I am a stranger to the language. . . . After his harangue he usually took off two dozen of his little bottles, which he filled from the bucket, and a moment afterwards returned the liquor through his mouth. But what is most extraordinary is that this water, which he threw out with violence, appeared red like wine. And when he had discharged it into two different bottles, it was red in one and russet like beer in the other; as soon as he shifted the bottles to the contrary sides, they changed their complexion respectively to that of wine or beer, and so successively so long as he continued vomiting; in the mean time, I observed that the water grew less discolored in proportion as he continued to discharge. This was the first act. Then he ranged his two dozen of bottles opposite to him on a table, and exposed to everybody's view. Then he took an equal number of bottles, plunged them anew into the bucket, swallowed them too, and returned

them in water very transparent, rose-water, orange-flower-water, and brandy.

"I have smelt the several odours of his liquors; nay, I have seen him set fire to a handkerchief dipt in that which smelt like brandy, and it burnt blue like spirituous liquors. . . . Nay, he frequently promised at Venice to give the water back again in milk and oil. But I think he did not keep his word. In short, he concluded this scene with swallowing successfully thirty or forty glasses of water, always from the same bucket, and after having given notice to the company by his man (who served as an interpreter) that he was going to disembogue, he threw his head back, and spouting out the fair water, he made it spring up with an impetuosity like that of the strongest *jet d'eau*. This last feat delighted the people infinitely more than all the rest, and during the month he was at Francfort numbers from all parts came to see this slovenly exercise. Though he repeated it more than once a day he had more than four hundred spectators at a time. Some threw their handkerchiefs, and some their gloves upon the stage, that he might wet them with the water he had cast up, and he returned them differently perfumed, sometimes with rose-water, sometimes with orange-flower-water, and sometimes with brandy."

Another famous juggler and water-spouter was Floram Marchand, whose picture is herewith reproduced. Judging from his dress, he antedated Manfrede.

Bell's *Messenger* of July 16th, 1816, tells of a sword-swallower whose work is extremely pertinent to this discussion, and the clipping is quoted verbatim:

"The French papers give a curious account of one

James de Falaise, a Norman, about fifty years of age, living in the Rue St. Honoré. It is said that this extraordinary man will swallow whole walnuts, shell and all, a tobacco

FLORAM MARCHAND.

Water Spouter & Juggler.

Floram Marchand. From an old, undated English publication in the Harry Houdini Collection.

pipe, three cards rolled together, a rose with all its leaves, long stalk, and thorns, a living bird, and a living mouse, and, lastly, a live eel. Like to the Indian jugglers, he

swallows the blade of a sabre about thirteen inches long of polished steel. This operation he performs very slowly, and with some precaution; though he evinces no symptom of pain. After every solid body that he swallows, he

Position taken by the subject in the Indian basket trick before he is covered by the sheet.

always takes a small dose of wine expressly prepared for him. He does not seem to make any effort to kill the living animals that he takes in his mouth, but boasts that he feels them moving in his stomach."

In my collection is the handbill of a stone-swallower who exhibited at No. 10 Cockspur Street, London, charging an admission fee of half-a-crown.

These performers actually swallowed the water, stones,

Indian fakir seated in the basket after the subject has been "vanished."

pebbles, etc., and retched them up again so cleverly and at such carefully selected instants that the audience did not know that the disgorging had been accomplished.

Swallowing glass was a different matter, and the mod-

ern human ostriches have all wound up at city hospitals where surgeons have removed broken glass, knife blades, and other foreign matter by means of an operation.

I quote the above instances simply to prove that the stones were actually swallowed and then disgorged, and not hidden, as Robert-Houdin claims, in the folds of the Mokadem's burnous.

In this one chapter alone Robert-Houdin quotes six authorities in explaining the tricks he witnessed, which fact only strengthens my belief that he borrowed his tricks, as well as his explanations, from able and graphic writers on the art of magic.

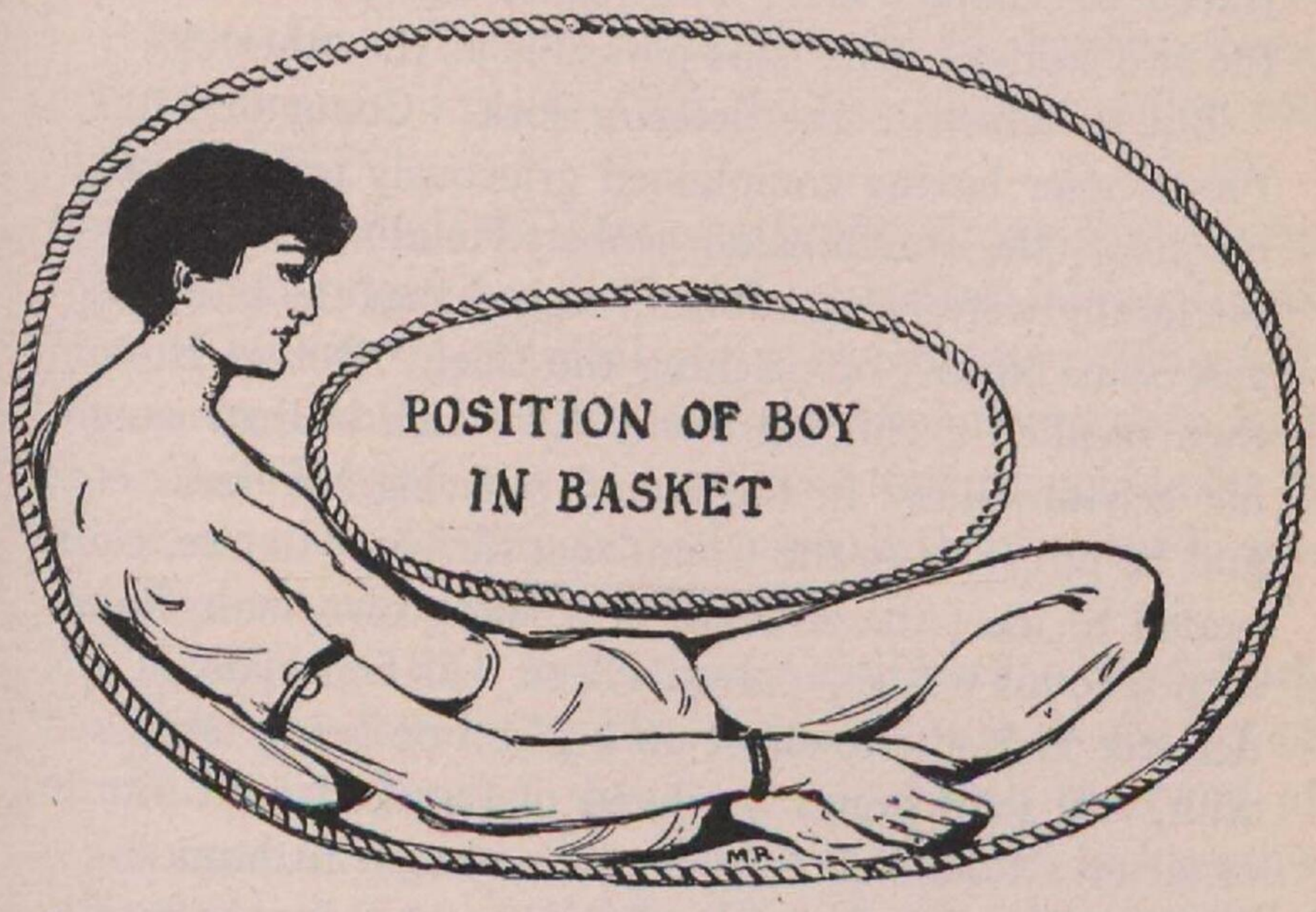
The next work descriptive of the conjurer's art offered by Robert-Houdin was "Les Secrets de la Prestidigitation et de la Magie." Under the title of "The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic; or, How to Become a Wizard," it was translated and edited by Professor Hoffmann and published in 1878 by George Routledge & Co., London and New York.

Absolutely no originality is displayed in this book, and the majority of the tricks explained can be found in French books of a similar character which appeared before Robert-Houdin turned author. The proof of this statement can be found by reading any of the following works upon which Robert-Houdin patently drew for his material:

"Nouvelle Magie Blanche Dévoilée et Cours Complet de Prestidigitation," in two volumes, by J. N. Ponsin, published in Paris in 1853; "Grande Initiation au vraie Pratique des Célèbres Physiciens-Prestidigitateurs," Paris, 1855; "Nouveau Manuel Complet Sorciers, les

scènes de Ventriloquie exécutées et communiquées par M. Conte, Physicien du Roi," Paris, 1837; "Anciens et Nouvaux Tours d'Escamotage," of which there are innumerable editions; "Le Manuel des Sorciers. Recréations Physiques, Mathématiques, Tours de Cartes et de Gibecière; suivre, des Jeux de Société," Paris, 1802.

His third work, "Magie et Physique Amusante," trans-



Position of the "vanished" Hindoo while concealed in the basket. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

lated by Professor Hoffmann under the title of "The Secrets of Stage Conjuring," and published in English in 1881, is marred by an almost continuous strain of misstatements, incorrect explanations, and downright falsification.

On page 17 of the American edition Robert-Houdin

starts his dramatic tale of inventing a detector lock by which he protected a rich neighbor, M. de l'Escalopier, from robbery, and incidentally in return secured funds with which to open his theatre in the Palais Royal. In his "Mémoirs" Robert-Houdin states that the opening of the theatre was made possible by the invention of the writing and drawing automaton whose history has been traced in chapter III. The reader can choose between the two stories. One is as plausible as the other.

But to return to the detector lock. Count or M. De l'Escalopier having complained grievously to his humble neighbor, the watchmaker Robert-Houdin, that he and his family were being robbed, begged that the latter suggest some means of catching the thief. Robert-Houdin then recalled a childish device by which he had caught his school-fellows in the act of pilfering his desk, etc., and he proposed to the Count that the same device, elaborated to meet the strength of a full-grown man, be attached to his wealthy patron's desk. As first planned, the detector lock was to shoot off a pistol on being tampered with, and then brand the hand of the thief with nitrate of silver. Count de l'Escalopier objected to branding a man for life, so Robert-Houdin substituted for the nitrate of silver a sort of cat's claw which would clamp down on the robber's hand and draw blood. The Count deposited ten thousand francs in his desk and caught the robber, his confidential servant, red-handed. The ten thousand francs he presented to Robert-Houdin as a reward for stopping the thefts.

A charming tale this makes, but, unfortunately for Robert-Houdin's claims to originality, the detector lock

was not a novelty in his day. The lock which would first alarm the household by setting off a pistol and then brand the thief's hand, is described by the Marquis of Worcester in his book "Centurie of Inventions." As locks and locksmithing form my hobby, while in England I purchased the entire set of patent-books, to add to a collection of locks and fastenings from every known country of the world. In the introduction of the first book of patents for inventions relating to locks, latches, bolts, etc., from A.D. 1774 to 1866, the following quotation will be found:

"The Marquis of Worcester in his 'Centurie of Inventions' thus describes the first detector lock invented, A.D. 1640, by some mechanical genius of that day: 'This lock is so constructed that, if a stranger attempts to open it, it catches his hand as a trap catches a fox, though as far as maiming him for life, yet so far marketh him that if suspected he might easily be detected.' "

It appears that to this lock was fitted a steel barb which, if a certain tumbler was overlifted in the act of picking or otherwise, was projected against the hand of the operator by a spring. I have seen such a lock as this in the collection of Hobbs, Hart & Co., London, who have had it in their possession many years. In every respect it answers the description of the invention claimed by Robert-Houdin as his own.

Chapter VII. of "Secrets of Stage Conjuring" is devoted to Robert-Houdin's very incorrect explanation of the famous Indian Basket Trick. Even his own translator, Professor Hoffmann, takes issue with Robert-Houdin, as will be seen by reading his foot-note on page 104:

"We will not venture to question the fact vouched for by so high an authority as Robert-Houdin, that the Indian Basket Trick may sometimes be performed after the

THE JUSTLY CELEBRATED

RAMO SAMEE,

CHIEF OF

The Indian Jugglers,

Having finished his Provincial Engagements, will, commence

On MONDAY, JULY 16,

And, for a short period, go through the whole of his

Extraordinary Feats of Strength and Agility,

AT

222, PICCADILLY,

Consisting of a Series of Evolutions with

FOUR BRASS BALLS

THE SIZE OF ORANGES,

His power over them is almost miraculous, he causes them to describe every possible circle: RIZONTALLY, PERPENDICULARLY, OBLIQUELY, TRANSVERSELY, ROUND HIS ESS, UNDER HIS ARMS, and ABOUT HIS HEAD, in large and small Circumferences, with lightning rapidity, keeping the whole in motion at the same time. This being the grand result of short, activity, quickness of the eye, and rapidity of action. Those who have not witnessed it, cannot form an idea of its excellence.

SEVERAL FEATS OF BALLANCING.

In which he will introduce the

Building a Canopy with his Tongue

ON THE TOP OF HIS NOSE.

AND REMOVING THE SAME WITH SURPRIZING INGENUITY

ALSO, THE

Spinning of a Top on a Point as fine as a Needle,

AND

BALANCING THE SAME ON HIS CHIN,

In this Situation makes it Bow to the Audience while revolving on the before-mentioned Point, and afterwards, by the word of command, restores it to the same Equilibrium and Steadiness, as when first Spun.

THE

WONDERFUL FEAT WITH LARGE KNIVES.

AND

SWALLOWING A STONE THE SIZE OF AN EGG:

Also, his manly Activity in

Throwing a Large Ball the size of an 18-pound Shot

To different parts of his Body, with the greatest ease; he places it between his Feet, and by giving a sudden spring, throws it over his Shoulder, from whence it alights on the head of his Arm, and from thence to several other parts of his Frame: but finally, with a masterly jerk, throws the Ball round his Head, without the assistance of his Hands; after several other achievements, he will conclude with

SEVERAL NOVEL FEATS.

The Performances to commence every Day at One o'Clock, and every Evening at Eight o'Clock.—Admittance 2s. each.—Children Half-price.

Oxberry & Co. Printers, White Hart Yard, Drury Lane.

A Ramo Samee handbill, featuring his stone-swallowing act. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

manner above described, but we doubt very much whether such is the usual or customary method."

Robert-Houdin states that the child is placed in the basket, and the Indian fastens down the lid with leather straps. To facilitate this operation, he rests his knees

For Six Nights only.

BY PERMISSION OF

The Right Worshipful the Mayor.

In the Large Room, opposite the Custom-House,

IN WHITEFRIAR-GATE.

The Inhabitants of HULL and its Vicinity are respectfully informed, that

On Wednesday Evening, Aug. 26, 1818.

And Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday Evenings following,

The Indian

Jugglers

Will exhibit their unrivalled Performances.

These extraordinary Indians are Natives of Seringapatam, and have been exhibiting for some time past in the Metropolis, before many of the Nobility, who unanimously pronounced them to be the first Masters of the Art in this Kingdom.

Amongst the numerous Performances the following may be noticed:

Various Deceptions with Cups and Balls;

CHANGING SAND TO DIFFERENT COLOURS;

A SERIES OF

EVOLUTIONS

With Four hollow Brass Balls, about the size of Oranges.

The power of the Juggler over these is almost miraculous; he causes them to describe every possible Circle—horizontally, perpendicularly, obliquely, transversely, round his Legs, under his Arm, about his Head, in small and large Circumferences, with wondrous rapidity, and keeping the whole in Motion at the same time. This being the sole fruit of Effort, Activity, quickness of Eye, and rapidity of Motion, no one who has not witnessed it can form an idea of its excellence. This part of the Performance will be accompanied with Music

STRINGING BEADS WITH HIS MOUTH,

At the same time turning Rings with His Fingers and Toes.

Wonderful Feat with Large Knives,

TOGETHER WITH SEVERAL

Feats of Balancing,

In which one of the Indians has a School Boy's common Peg-top, which he commences to spin with great velocity in his hand, and from thence conveys it on a point as fine as a Needle, which is balanced on his Chin, and in this situation makes it bow to the Company, while revolving on the before-mentioned point, and afterwards restores it by the Word of Command, to the same Equilibrium and Steadiness as when first spun.

Erecting a curious Pagoda on the top of his Nose,

AND REMOVING THE SAME WITH SURPRISING INGENUITY.

His manly activity in throwing a Large Ball, the size of an Eighteen-pound Shot,

To different parts of his Body, with the greatest ease; he places it between his Feet, and throws it over his Shoulder, when it alights on his Arm, and then with the greatest facility throws it on the back part of his Neck; and after displaying a variety of Gambols of this sort, he finally, but with a masterly jerk,

Throws this Ball of Twelve Pounds round his Head,

Without the assistance of his Hands; and several other Achievements, too numerous to mention in the limits of a Hand Bill

Handbill used by the original Indian jugglers in England during 1818, in which the sword-swallowing trick is featured. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

against the basket, and the bottom of the latter thus being turned toward the audience, the boy slips out through a cunningly contrived trap and quickly conceals himself under the robe of the magician, whose attitude favors this concealment.

As the basket trick is the Hindoo magician's most wonderful offering, a truthful account of his methods of performing the same may be interesting. In the first place, Robert-Houdin's explanation is impossible and unreasonable because the Hindoo magician does not wear flowing robes in which the child could be concealed. Every Hindoo performer I have ever seen wore short trousers and was barefooted.

The correct method of performing the trick, which has been handed down through generations of Hindoos, is as follows: The boy subject is placed in a net in which he is firmly tied, after having had his big toes and thumbs fastened down with bandages. Then, with many a grunt and a groan, he is lifted into the basket. The subject, however, pretends that the basket is too small, so he is really seated on one side and keeps his back in the air. This is done to give the appearance eventually that it was impossible for him to crouch down or around the basket. The lid of the basket is now placed on his back, and a large sheet is thrown over the entire apparatus, which conceals from the audience every movement made by the subject.

Now commences the Hindoo "patter," in reality yells, groans, and incantations, while the magician and his assistant strike the basket with swords or canes, stamp on the ground, gnash their teeth, etc. Gradually the

cover of the basket sinks until the basket seems empty, to the spectators at least. The fakir now takes off the cover of the basket, leaving the sheet over it, however. Then he jumps into the presumably empty basket, stamps all around, and takes out the net in which are found the turban worn by the subject and the thumb tie. To prove further that the basket is still empty, the fakir seats himself in the basket, as shown in the illustration. The lid of the basket is now replaced, and under this friendly cover the sheet is taken off and the basket tied up.

Now commences the true Hindoo magic. The magician is a real actor. He apparently adjures Mahomet. He gets very angry and with fierce looks, ejaculations, and muttered curses he grabs up a sword or cane and jabs it through different parts of the basket. During all this time the subject, who is something of a contortionist, is wriggling about on the bottom of the basket, keeping out of reach of the sword, and in fact often guiding its thrusts between his legs, as every movement on the part of the fakir has been carefully thought out and rehearsed in advance.

By this time the fakir has convinced his audience that the basket is empty. To be sure he has not allowed any spectators to come too near him or the basket, nor has any hand save his touched it, but his clever acting almost persuades even an intelligent or sceptical onlooker that the basket is empty.

With the lid of the basket replaced, this time above the friendly sheet, and the basket tied, he resumes his weird incantations. He screams and runs back and forth, playing on a small instrument with a hideous tone

which is a cross between the whistle of a locomotive with a cold, and a sawed-off and hammered-down flute in which has been inserted a tin whistle. As this nerve-racking music holds the spectators under its awful spell, the basket begins to rock, the contortionist-subject gradually raises himself inside the basket, and when the noise is at its height he straightens up in the basket and raises it with his back as far as it will go. To the uninitiated it actually appears as if he had returned to an empty basket in his original position. The trick is a marvellous deception, but only a Hindoo can exhibit it with success, for no white person would ever indulge in the screechings, imbecilities, and contortions which are the spectacular and convincing features of the trick.

Sometimes the trick is varied. Instead of the subject being found in his original position he is seen running toward the crowd as from a distance. This is accomplished by having two subjects, one in the basket and one hidden on the outskirts of the crowd, who are "doubles" or at least who show a marked resemblance and are dressed exactly alike.

The earliest programmes of Hindoo jugglers in my collection are dated 1818. The "Mr. Ramosamee" featured on this bill later split his name thus, "Ramo Samee," and was engaged to perform alone between the acts of "The Broken Heart" at the Garrick Theatre, London. From Ramo Samee, Continental and British magicians learned the trick of juggling brass balls.

On page 135 Professor Hoffmann, in a foot-note, commends Robert-Houdin for the very impartial manner in which he approaches the question of spiritualism and

spiritualistic manifestations, in his day a comparative novelty: "In default of absolute certainty, he wisely reserves his opinion. Where, however, as in the case of the Davenport Brothers, he had an opportunity of personally observing the alleged 'phenomena,' he has neither difficulty in penetrating nor hesitation in denouncing the imposture. We venture to believe that any of the so-called spiritualistic manifestations which had come under the test of Robert-Houdin's examination would have met a similar fate."

With this commendation I cannot agree. Robert-Houdin once had all the leeway he wished at a most remarkable manifestation and made no attempt to hide the fact that he was baffled by the "phenomena." The "Memoirs of Marquis de Mirville" contain a Robert-Houdin letter in which he admits that he could find no explanation of tests just witnessed. The letter, translated from "Die Magie des XIX. Jahrhunderts von Uriarte," 1896, published in Berlin, Germany, by Heusers Verlag, is herewith quoted: "I returned from the séance as greatly astonished as it was possible for me to be, and I am thoroughly convinced that it was entirely out of the possibility, and no chance whatever, that it was either by accident or practised trickery to produce such wonderful materializations. Robert-Houdin, May 18th, 1847."

He further shows his ignorance of séances as offered in his times, by his attempt to describe the methods employed by the Davenport Brothers, to whom he devotes chapter XIII., which might be described as a chapter of errors.

These picturesque American entertainers, the Daven-

port Brothers, hailed from Buffalo, N. Y., U. S. A. Ira Erastus was born September 17th, 1839, and William Henry, February 1st, 1841. They fairly startled the

The Davenport Brothers in their prime, from photographs furnished by them to the contemporary press, now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

world by their so-called manifestations of spiritualism during the 60's, and were alternately lauded and reviled for their performances.

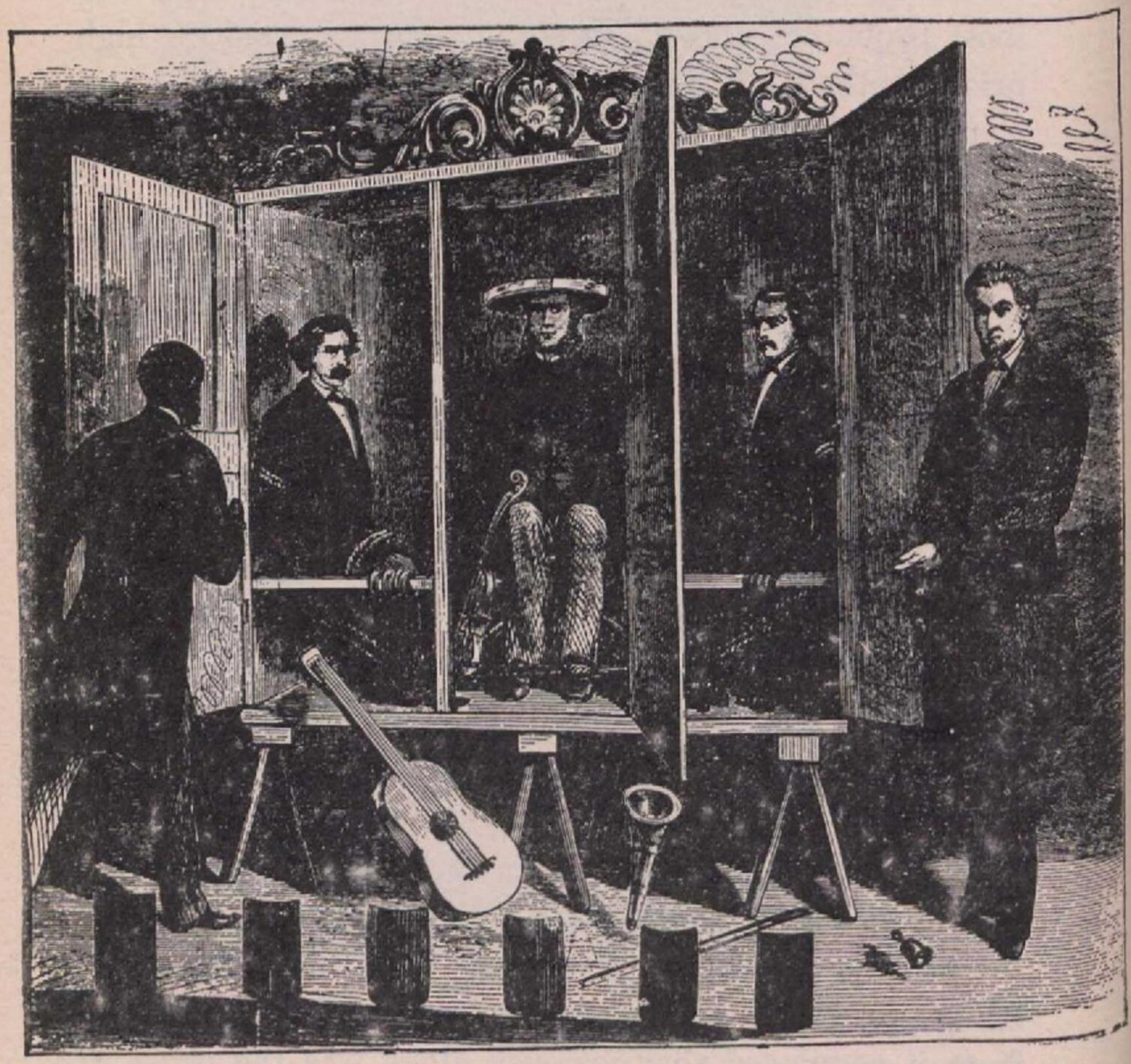
Both were below medium height, rather handsome men, and, as will be seen from the accompanying engraving, looked much alike. Their career, which started in America, ran from about 1853 to the early 70's. They made a trip to Europe in 1864, remaining until August, 1869. Both married abroad; Ira a daughter of France, Mlle. Louise Toulet, and William Henry a Polish girl, Miss Matilda Mag. On the whole, their foreign tour was most profitable, though in some cities they paid a high price for their notoriety. In England they waged bitter warfare with John Henry Anderson, Tolmaque, and Professor Redmond.

On the occasion of their Paris opening at the Salle Herz they claimed that the hoodlum element mobbed the theatre and broke up their performance at the instigation of Henri Robin, who was playing in opposition. Hamilton, who had succeeded to the management of Robert-Houdin's theatre, in a letter published after witnessing their initial performance announced that he shared this belief; but as Robert-Houdin and Henri Robin were bitter rivals, I believe Hamilton's letter was the result of two things: first the intense ill-will he harbored against Robin, and second, as he had Robert-Houdin as his mentor, he was really ignorant of the Davenport methods and therefore not in a position to defend them. The letter, which is given in full, appeared in *Gazette des Étrangers*, Paris, September 27th, 1865:

"Messrs. Davenport: Yesterday I had the pleasure of being present at the séance you gave, and I came away from it convinced that jealousy alone was the cause of the outcry raised against you. The phenomena pro-

duced surpassed my expectations, and your experiments were full of interest to me. I consider it my duty to add that these phenomena are inexplicable; and the more so by such persons as have thought themselves able to guess your supposed secret, and who are, in fact, far indeed from having discovered the truth. Hamilton."

After their return to America the Davenport Brothers



The cabinet trick offered by the Davenport Brothers. From an old print in the Harry Houdini Collection.

retired from public life, purchased a farm, and rested on their laurels and a corpulent bank account. One of them is said to have admitted that all their work was skilful manipulation and not spiritualistic manifestations. Nevertheless, their names will live so long as spiritualism is talked of or cabinet effects tolerated by the public.

The trick as offered by the Davenport Brothers consisted of their being tied hand and foot at opposite ends of the cabinet, which was hung with musical instruments, bells, etc. The two men slipped in and out of the ropes without delay or apparent damage to the ropes, and musical instruments were played with arms presumably in bondage.

Robert-Houdin, in attempting to expose the trick, makes two flagrant errors. First he claims that "by dint of special practice on the part of our mediums, the thumb is made to lie flat in the hand, when the whole assumes a cylindrical form of scarcely greater diameter than the wrist"; and second that the Davenport Brothers had trained themselves to see in the dark.

As releasing myself from fastenings of all sorts, from ropes to strait-jackets, has been my profession for twenty years, I am in a position to contradict Robert-Houdin's first claim positively. I have met thousands of persons who claimed that the rope, as well as the handcuff trick, was accomplished by folding the hand together or making the wrist larger than the hand, but never have I met men or women who could make their hands smaller than their wrists. I have even gone so far as to have iron bands made and press my hands together, hoping eventually to make my hands smaller than my wrists, but this has

failed, too. Even if the entire thumb were cut away, I believe it would still be impossible to slip a rope that was properly bound around the wrist. You may take any cuff of the adjustable make, or a ratchet cuff, place it about a small woman's wrist, and you will find that even

ST. GEORGE'S HALL,

LANGHAM PLACE.

RETURN

OF THE

BROTHERS DAVENPORT

AND

MR. FAY.

THE BROTHERS DAVENPORT and Mr. FAY have the honour to announce that, after a tour of three years over the greater part of the Continent of Europe, they have returned once more, and probably for the last time, to this Metropolis, where they will give a few *Séances* previous to their departure for the United States.

During their European tour they have given *Séances* in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, St. Petersburgh, and nearly every great Continental Capital; and have had the honour of appearing before their Majesties the Emperors of France and Russia, the Royal Family of Prussia, and great numbers of the most Distinguished Personages in Europe. Many thousands of persons of the highest rank and intelligence have witnessed the astonishing experiments given in their presence.

Throughout the Northern American States, from 1853 until their first visit to England in 1864, they were seen by hundreds of thousands of persons.

In England, their first *Séance* was given in private, to a most distinguished party of men of science and letters, who gave their most unequivocal testimony to the excellence and perfection of their experiments.

Two *Séances* of the BROTHERS DAVENPORT and Mr. FAY will be given at

ST. GEORGE'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE,

On THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 23rd,

And SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 25th, 1868,

at Eight o'clock.

STALLS, - 3s. BALCONY, - 2s.

ADMISSION, ONE SHILLING.

Announcement used by the Davenport Brothers on their return to London, England, after their tour of the Continent in April, 1868. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

she will be unable to slip her wrists. I do not mean by this any hand-cuff that will not come to any size, or the common cuffs which when locked will lock only to a certain size, but I mean a cuff that can be locked and adjusted to any size of wrist.

In rope-tying, the principal trick is to allow yourself to be tied according to certain methods of crossing your hands or wrists, so that by eventually straightening your hands you have made enough room to allow them to slip out very easily. It is not always the size of the wrist that counts. It is the manner of holding your hands when the knots are being tied.

The gift of seeing in the dark, with which Robert-Houdin endowed the Davenports, is equally preposterous. Professor Hoffmann defends Robert-Houdin by citing instances of prisoners who had been confined in cells for an indefinite period and who had learned to see in the dark. This is quite true, but they did not alternate daylight and darkness. Eminent opticians and oculists inform me that the faculty of seeing in the dark cannot be acquired by parties like the Davenports, who spent most of their time in the light.

While the Davenports were pioneers in rope-tying and cabinet séances, had Robert-Houdin been the clever sleight-of-hand performer and inventor he claims to have been, these tricks would have been clear and solvable to him. But as he obviously joined the ranks of the amazed and bewildered masses, making only a futile attempt to explain the performances, he convicts himself of ignorance regarding his own art.

A man who has made a fortune in the world of magic

and who desires to hand down to posterity a clean record of his attainments will be clever enough and manly enough to avoid any attempt to explain that which he does not understand. By his flagrant misstatements regarding the tricks of his predecessors and contemporaries, Robert-Houdin, however, convicts himself of ignorance regarding the fundamental principles of magic, and arouses in the minds of broad, intelligent readers doubts regarding his claims to the invention of the various tricks and automata which he declares to have been the output of his brain, the production of his own deft hands.

CHAPTER XI

THE NARROWNESS OF ROBERT-HOUDIN'S "MEMOIRS"

THE charm of true memoirs lies far beyond the printed pages, in the depth and breadth of the writer's soul. The greatest of all autobiographies are those which detail not only the lives of the men who penned them, but which abound in diverting anecdotes and character studies of the men and women among whom the writer moved. They are not autobiographies alone, but vivid, broad-minded pen-pictures of the period in which the writer was a vigorous, respect-compelling figure. Memoirs written with a view to settling old scores seldom live to accomplish their ends. The narrowness and pettiness of the writer, which intelligent reading of history is bound to disclose, destroy all other charms which the book may possess.

At personal exploitation Robert-Houdin is a brilliant success. As a writer of memoirs he is a wretched failure. Whenever he writes of himself, his pen seems fairly to scintillate. Whenever he refers to other magicians of his times, his pen lags and drops on the pages blots which can emanate only from a narrow, petty, jealous nature.

Even when he writes of his own family, this peculiar trait of petty egotism may be read between the lines. He mentions the name of his son Émile, apparently because

the lad shared his stage triumphs. His other children he never mentions by name. The second wife, who, he grudgingly admits, stood valiantly by him in his days of poverty and disappointment, he does not honor by so much as stating her name before marriage. Rather, he refers to her as a person whom he was constrained to place in charge of his household in order that he might continue his experiments and his work on automata. A less gracious tribute to wifely devotion was never penned.

But it is in dealing with contemporary magicians or those whose handiwork in bygone years he cleverly purloined and proclaimed as his original inventions, that the petty jealousy of the man comes to the surface. Whenever he desires to claim for himself credit due a predecessor in the world of magic, he either ignores the man's very existence or writes of his competitor in such a manner that the latter's standing as man and magician is lowered. Not that he makes broad, sweeping statements. Rather, he indulges in the innuendo which is far more dangerous to the party attacked. He never strikes a pen-blow which, because of its brutality, might arouse the sympathy of his readers for the object of his attack. Here, in the gentle art of innuendo and belittling, if not in the conjurer's art, Robert-Houdin is a master.

In writing his "Memoirs" he deliberately ignores Compars Herrmann, Henri Robin, Wiljalba Frikell, M. Jacobs, and P. T. Barnum, all of whom he knew personally. He might have written most entertainingly of these men, but in each case he had an object in avoiding reference to the acquaintance. P. T. Barnum knew the true history of the writing and drawing figure, as reference to

chapter III. of this book will show. Frikell was the pioneer in dispensing with cumbersome stage draperies. Robert-Houdin claimed this innovation as the product of his own ingenuity. Compars Herrmann was playing in London when Robert-Houdin made his English début under

Wiljalba Frikell in his youth, showing the peculiar costume worn by conjurers at that time. The author secured this portrait a few weeks before Frikell's death and sent it to the veteran conjurer, who was amazed to learn that this print was in existence. Now in the Harry Houdini Collection.

Mitchell's direction, and was presenting, trick for trick, the répertoire claimed by Robert-Houdin as original with him. Henri Robin disputed Robert-Houdin's claim to having invented the inexhaustible bottle, and proved his case, as will be seen by reference to chapter VIII. Jacobs

was one of Anderson's cleverest imitators and a rival of Robert-Houdin in the English provinces.

The adroit manner in which Robert-Houdin flays Pinetti, Anderson, and Bosco would arouse admiration were his pen-lashings devoted to men who deserved such treatment. Under existing circumstances—his debt to Bosco and Pinetti, whose tricks he filched remorselessly, and the fact that Anderson's popularity outlived his own in England—his efforts to belittle these men are unworthy of one who called himself a man and a master magician. The truly great and successful man rises above petty jealousy and personalities. This, Robert-Houdin could not do, even when he sat pen in hand, in retirement, with the fear of competition removed.

It seems almost incredible that Robert-Houdin should ignore Henri Robin in his "Memoirs," for Robin was one of the most interesting characters of that day. He still stands in magic's history as the Chesterfield of conjuring, a man of many gifts, charming address, and broad education. Even in his dispute with Robert-Houdin regarding the invention of the inexhaustible bottle, he never forgot his dignity, but proved his case by that most potent of arguments, a well-edited magazine published under his direction, in which an illustration showed him actually performing the trick in 1844, or a full three years before it appeared on Robert-Houdin's programme.

Robert-Houdin was indebted to Robin for another trick, the Garde Française, introduced by Robert-Houdin in October, 1847. Henri Robin had precisely the same figure, doing precisely the same feats, in the garb of an Arab. An illustration from Robin's magazine, *L'Alma-*

nach Cagliostro, shows Robin offering this figure in March, 1846, or a year and seven months before it was presented by Robert-Houdin. Yet the only reference made by Robert-Houdin to this popular and gifted contemporary is in "The Secrets of Stage Conjuring" where he remarks slightingly that Robin spoiled Mr. Pepper's business by giving a poor imitation of the latter's ghost show.

Again, in ignoring Herrmann, he proves his narrowness of mind, his utter unwillingness to admit any ability in his rivals. Compars Herrmann was no ordinary trickster or mountebank, but a conjurer who remained in London almost a year, playing the very best houses, and later scoring equal popularity in the provinces. He was decorated by various monarchs and was famous for his large gifts to charities. Even the present generation, including theatre-goers and students of magic, remembers the name of Herrmann, when Robert-Houdin is forgotten or would be but for his cleverly written autobiography.

Wiljalba Frikell, to whom should go the credit of cutting out heavy stage draperies, never claimed the innovation as a carefully planned conceit, but as an accident. His paraphernalia were destroyed in a fire, but he desired to live up to his contract and give a performance as announced. He therefore offered sleight-of-hand, pure and simple, with the aid of a few tables, chairs, and other common properties which were absolutely undraped. He was also compelled to don regulation, severely plain, evening clothes. The absence of draperies, which naturally aid a conjurer in attaining results, created so pleasing a sensation that Frikell never again draped his stage nor wore fancy raiment. Had Robert-Houdin told the

truth about his so-called innovation, he must have given Frikell credit, wherefore he conveniently ignores Frikell completely.

It is entirely characteristic of Robert-Houdin that he did not openly assail Pinetti in the pages of his "Memoirs." With cleverness worthy of a better cause, he quotes the bitter verbal attack as issuing from the lips of the friend and mentor of his youth, Signor Torrini.

The major portion of chapter VI., pages 92 to 104 inclusive, American edition of his autobiography, is devoted to assailing Pinetti's abilities as a conjurer and his reputation as a man. Granted that Pinetti did put Torrini to shame on the Neapolitan stage, such revenge for a wholesale duplication of the magician's tricks might be termed almost human and natural. Had a minor magician, amateur or professional, dogged the footsteps of Robert-Houdin, copying his tricks, the entire répertoire upon which he depended for a livelihood, thus endangering his future, I doubt that even the author of "Confidences d'un Prestidigitateur" would have hesitated to unmask and undo his rival.

In fact, by reference to the editorial note, foot of page 421, American edition of Robert-Houdin's "Memoirs," it will be seen that in 1850 Robert-Houdin appealed to the law for protection in just such a case. An employee was sent to prison for two years, as judgment for selling to an amateur some of his master's secrets.

But in attacking Pinetti, Robert-Houdin goes a step too far and falsifies, not directly but by innuendo, when he permits the impression to go forth that Pinetti was hounded and ruined both financially and professionally

by Torrini, as is set forth on page 104. He pictures Torrini as dogging the footsteps of Pinetti through all Italy and finally driving him in a state of abject misery to Russia, where he died in the home of a nobleman, who sheltered him through sheer compassion. Robert-Houdin

Bartolomeo Bosco in his prime. From an engraving in the Harry Houdini Collection.

must have known this was absolutely untrue, for he quotes Robertson, who published Pinetti's true experiences in Russia. Pinetti took a fortune with him to Russia, acquired more wealth there, and then lost his

entire financial holdings through his passion for balloon experiments, as is set forth in chapter II. of this book.

Then, to show his own inconsistency, after picturing Pinetti in his "Memoirs" as a charlatan, a conjurer of vulgar, uncouth pretensions rather than as a good showman of real ability, Robert-Houdin is forced to admit on page 25 of "Secrets of Magic" that later conjurers employed Pinetti programmes as a foundation upon which their performances were built! Even here, however, Robert-Houdin fails to acknowledge an iota of the heavy debt which he personally owed the despised Chevalier Pinetti.

Robert-Houdin devotes the greater part of chapter X., American edition of his autobiography, to belittling Bosco, a conjurer whose popularity all over Europe was long-lived. First, he pictures Bosco as a most cruel creature who literally tortured to death the birds used in his performances. Here, as in his attack on Pinetti, Robert-Houdin throws the responsibility for criticism on the shoulders of another. His old friend Antonio accompanies him to watch Bosco's performance, and it is Antonio throughout the narrative who inveighs against Bosco's cruelty and Antonio who insists upon leaving before the performance closes, because the cruelty of the conjurer nauseates him.

At that time no society for the protection of animals existed, and, even if it had, I doubt whether Bosco's performance would have come under the ban. Certain magicians of to-day employ many of Bosco's tricks in which birds and even small animals are used, but the conjuring is so deftly done that the public of 1907, like that of 1838, thinks it is all sleight-of-hand work and that the birds are neither hurt nor killed. Even in Bosco's

time the bird trick was not in his répertoire exclusively. All English magicians employed it. Apparently the head of the fowl was amputated, but often in reality it was tucked under the wing, and the head and neck of another fowl was shown by sleight-of-hand. Quite probably the Parisian public did not consider Bosco cruel. Robert-Houdin and his friend Antonio, being versed in sleight-of-hand and conjuring methods, read cruelty between the deft movements. Certain it is that the name of Bosco has not been handed down to posterity by other writers as a synonym of cruelty.

The animus of Robert-Houdin's attack on Bosco is evident at every point of the narrative. Now he accuses him of bad taste in appearing in the box-office. Again he suggests that the somewhat impressive opening of Bosco's act savors of both charlatanism and burlesque, when in reality the secret of showmanship consists not of what you really do, but what the mystery-loving public thinks you do. Bosco undoubtedly secured precisely the effect he desired, because Robert-Houdin devotes more than a page to a most unnecessary attempt to explain away what he considered Bosco's undeserved popularity.

Bosco was not only a clever magician, but a man of many adventures, so that his life reads like a romance. This soldier of fortune, Bartolomeo Bosco, was born of a noble Piedmont family, on January 11th, 1793, in Turin, Italy. From boyhood he showed great ability as a necromancer, but at the age of nineteen he was forced to serve under Napoleon I. in the Russian campaign. He was a fusilier in the Eleventh Infantry, and at the battle of Borodino was injured in an engagement with Cossacks.

Pierced by a lance, he lay upon the ground apparently dead. A Cossack callously roamed among the dead and dying, rifling pockets and belts. When he came to the form of Bosco, that youth feigned death, knowing that resistance to the ghoul meant a death wound. But while the Cossack robbed the Italian soldier, the latter stealthily raised his unwounded arm and by sleight-of-hand rifled the well-filled pockets of the ghoul, which fact was not discovered by the Cossack until he was far from the field of the dead and dying, where he had left one of the enemy considerably better off, thanks to Bosco's conjuring gifts.

Later Bosco was sent captive to Siberia, where he perfected his sleight-of-hand while amusing fellow-prisoners and jailers. In 1814 he was released and returned to his native land, where he studied medicine, but eventually decided to become a public entertainer. He was not only a clever entertainer, but a good business man, and he planned each year on saving enough money to insure a life of ease in his old age. But events intervened to ruin all his well-laid plans. The sins of his youth brought their penalty. An illegitimate son, Eugene, became a heavy drag upon the retired magician, who was compelled to pay large sums to the young man in order to prevent his playing in either France or Germany or assuming the name of Bosco. In a German antiquary's shop at Bonn on the Rhine I found an agreement in which Bosco agreed to pay this youth five thousand francs for not using the name of Bosco. This agreement is too long for reproduction in this volume, but unquestionably it is genuine and tells all too eloquently the troubles which beset Bosco in his old age.

Eugene was said to be the superior of his famous father in sleight-of-hand, but he was wild and given to excesses. Women and wine checked what might have been a brilliant professional career. Disabled, poverty-stricken, and

Only photograph of Madame Bosco, given to the author by Mrs. Mueller, Madame Bosco's niece, at the funeral of Wiljalba Frikell.

respected by none, he soon disappeared from the conjuring world, and according to Carl Willman in the "Zauberwelt" he died miserably in Hungary in 1891.

In the mean time, Bosco and his wife lived in poverty in Dresden, where the once brilliant conjurer died March

2nd, 1863. His wife died three years later and was interred in the grave with her husband in a cemetery on Friedrichstrasse. There was nothing on the tombstone to indicate the double interment, and I discovered the fact only by investigating the municipal and cemetery records

The author at the grave of Bosco. From a photograph in the Harry Houdini Collection.

Here I also learned that the grave had merely been leased, and as the lease was about to expire the bones of the great conjurer and his faithful wife might soon be disinterred and reburied in a neglected corner of the

graveyard devoted to the poor and unclaimed dead. To prevent this, I purchased the lot and tombstone, and presented the same to the Society of American Magicians, of which organization, at the present writing, I am a member.

A man of noble birth and brilliant attainments was the original Bosco, and his name became a by-word all over the Continent as the synonym, not of cruelty, but of clever deception, yet never has posterity put the name of a great performer to such ignoble uses. For who has not heard the cry of the modern Bosco, "Eat-'em-alive"?

To-day I can close my eyes and summon two visions. First I see myself standing bareheaded before a neglected grave in the quiet cemetery on Friedrichstrasse, Dresden, the sunlight pouring down upon the tombstone which bears not only the cup-and-balls and wand, insignia of Bosco's most famous trick, but this inscription: "Ici repose le célèbre Bartolomeo Bosco.—Né à Turin le 11 Janvier, 1793; décédé à Dresden le 2 Mars, 1863." The history of this clever conjurer, with all its lights and shadows, sweeps before me like a mental panorama.

The second vision carries me into the country, to the fairs of England and the side-shows of America:

"Bosco! Bosco! Eat-'em-alive Bosco. You can't afford to miss this marvel. Bosco! Bosco!"

Follow me into the enclosure and gaze down into a den. There lies a half-naked human being. His hair is long and matted, a loin cloth does wretched duty as clothing. Torn sandals are on his feet. The eulogistic lecturer dilates upon the powers of this twentieth-century Bosco, but you do not listen. Your fascinated gaze is fixed on various hideous, wriggling, writhing forms on

the floor of the den. Snakes—scores of them! Now the creature, half-animal, half-human, glances up to make sure that attention is riveted upon him, then grasps one of the serpents in his hideous hands and in a flash bites off its head. The writhing body falls back to the ground.

You grip the railing in a sudden faintness. Has your brain deceived your eyes, or your eyes your brain? If you are a conjurer you try to convince yourself that it is all a clever sleight-of-hand exhibition, but in your heart you know it is not true. This creature, so near a beast, has debauched his manhood for a few paltry dollars, and in dragging himself down has dragged down the name of a worthy, a brilliant, a world-famous performer.

Of the twentieth-century Boscos there are, alas, many. You will find them all over the world, in street carnivals, side-shows, fair-booths, and museums, and why the public supports such debasing exhibitions I have never yet been able to understand. I have seen half-starved Russians pick food from refuse-barrels. I have seen besotted Americans creep out from low dives to draw the dregs of beer-barrels into tomato cans. I have seen absinthe fiends in Paris trade body and soul to obtain their beloved stimulant. I have heard morphine fiends in Russia promise to exhibit the effect of the needle in return for the price of an injection. But never has my soul so risen in revolt as at sight of this bestial exhibition with which the name of Bosco, a nobleman and a conjurer of merit, has been linked.

Even more despicable than his attack upon Bosco is Robert-Houdin's flaying of John Henry Anderson. In this he is both unmanly and untruthful. Hinging his

STRAND THEATRE,

Will be Opened on TUESDAY, Dec. 26th,

And CONTINUE OPEN DURING THE HOLIDAYS, with the

IMPROVED "SOIREES MYSTERIEUSES"

PROFESSOR J. H. ANDERSON

("THE GREAT WIZARD OF THE NORTH,")

Who has returned from a Professional Tour through DENMARK, NORWAY, SWEDEN, RUSSIA, PRUSSIA, and GERMANY, and had the distinguished honour of performing before the whole of the

MONARCHY of Northern EUROPE!

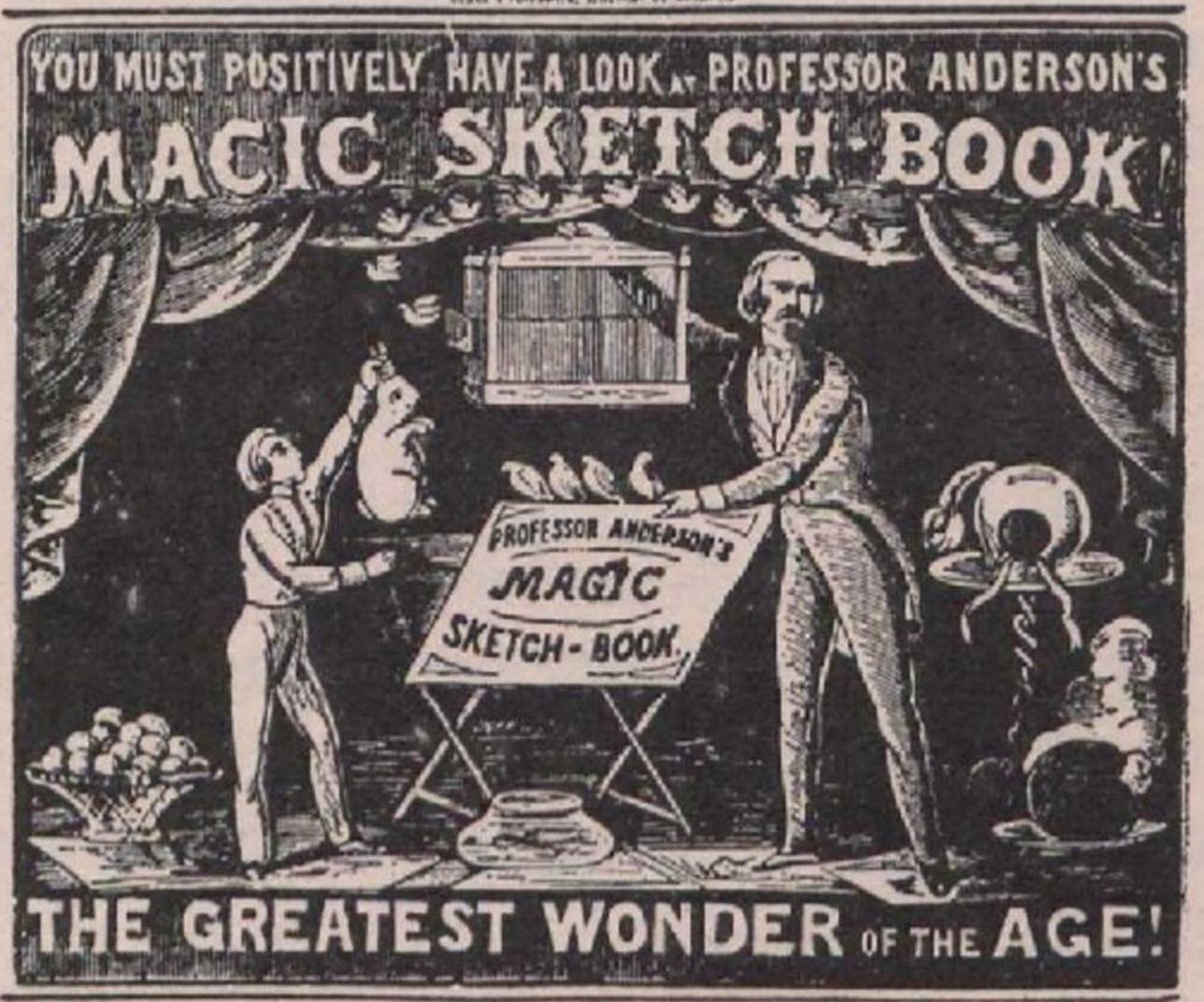
On TUESDAY EVENING, Dec. 26th, 1848,

HE WILL MAKE HIS APPEARANCE, AND GIVE HIS

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT,

Illustrative of the Fallacy of Magic, Necromancy, Witchcraft, and Demonology

As performed by him in the Christianborg Palace in Copenhagen, before the late KING CHRISTIAN VIII., in the Palace at Stockholm before OSCAR I. and ROYAL FAMILY of Sweden; he also had the honor to appear before the KING of PRUSSIA and his COURT, in the Royal Palace of Potsdam. HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY NICHOLAS of RUSSIA, to signify his respect for the British Nation, ordered that one of the Imperial Theatres in Petersburg should be given gratuitously to Professor J. H. ANDERSON for his Performances, he being the First British Artist who visited his Capital, and through LORD HUTCHFIELD, the British Minister, he recommended Professor J. H. ANDERSON to appear in the Winter Palace, where he had the distinguished honor to perform before THE EMPEROR, IMPERIAL FAMILY, THE COURT, and the whole of the CORPS DIPLOMATIQUE then resident in St. Petersburg. In the Palaces of the above Kings he has performed before them, and their Courts. He holds valuable Presents and Testimonials from ALL THE CROWNED HEADS OF NORTHERN EUROPE. His name is known from the Parks of the Thames to the Neva. In all Countries his success has been unparalelled, and he has been acknowledged to be the GREAT MASTER of the CABALISTIC ART! surpassing all other Professors, Ancient or Modern.



ROYAL PROGRAMME OF SCIENTIFIC WONDERS:

PART I.

The ENCHANTED HANDKERCHIEFS,
With Numerous INVISIBLE CHANGEABLE BOTTLE and MYSTIC CANDLE, with the ANIMATED "MOUCHOIR."

The MYSTIC VOLUME;
Or, the ASTONISHING NON-EFFECT OF PRESSURE.

GRAND MECHANICAL AMALGA.

Professor ANDERSON'S SCRAP BOOK

SCRAPS EXTRAORDINARY.

The MYSTIC BREAKFAST.

The Learned Doves, the Broken Ring, Dissolving Orange, and Enchanted Walnut.

CHILD of the AIR; or, "Jack in the Box."
"Jack in the Box," MASTER ANDERSON.

CHAPEAU DE LA DIABLE.

Conclusion of Part 1st, an Interval of Fifteen Minutes.

PART II.

SECOND SIGHT; its Fallacy illustrated.

Grand HYDRAULIC EXPERIMENT.

The MAGIC BANK, a Fishing extraordinary.

EXTRAORDINARY ELECTRIC EXPERIMENT,
That of sending SIX WATCHES through any Gentleman's Body

Grand POT-POURRI of HANDKERCHIEFS.

The whole to conclude with the LAST NEW WONDER of Professor ANDERSON'S

SUSPENSION CHLOROFOREENE,
(By Master JOHN HENRY ANDERSON)

He will cause his Son to inhale a small portion of Chloroform, sufficient to send him to Sleep. He will then display the Extraordinary Effect of the Drug, which has baffled the whole of the Medical Profession of Russia, Prussia, Germany, and every Country which Professor ANDERSON has recently visited. THE CHILD WILL SLEEP IN THE AIR, HIS ONLY SUPPORT A WALKING STICK.

Anderson's opening programme at the Strand Theatre, Christmas week, 1848, showing that he duplicated the tricks offered by Robert-Houdin, who, in his "Memoirs," claims that Anderson's programme was stale and uninteresting by comparison with his own.

attack on his surprise at the press methods and advertising adopted in England as opposed to the less spectacular means employed in France, he insinuates that Anderson's entire success was built not upon merit, ability, originality, or diversified programmes, but solely upon sensational advertising. On page 325 of the American edition of his "Memoirs" Robert-Houdin writes thus of his competitor:

"On my arrival in England a conjurer of the name of Anderson, who assumed the title of Great Wizard of the North, had been performing for a long period at the little Strand Theatre.

"This artist, fearing, doubtlessly, that public attention might be divided, tried to crush the publicity of my performances; hence he sent out on London streets a cavalcade thus organized:

"Four enormous carriages, covered with posters and pictures representing all sorts of witchcraft, opened the procession. Then followed four-and-twenty merry men, each bearing a banner on which was painted a letter a yard in height.

"At each cross-road the four carriages stopped side by side and presented a bill some twenty-five yards in length, while all the men (I should say letters), on receiving the word of command, drew themselves up in a line, like the vehicles.

"Seen in front the letters formed this phrase:

THE CELEBRATED ANDERSON ! ! !

While on the other side of the banners could be read:

THE GREAT WIZARD OF THE NORTH.

IM BALLHOFS-SAAL.

Dienstag, den 25. Januar 1848.

Neue und ausserordentliche

VORSTELLUNG

im Gebiete der

NATÜRLICHEN ZAUBEREI,

mit Hülfe der Experimental-Physik, Mechanik, Electricität, Hydraulik und des Galvanismus,

gegeben von dem

grossen nordischen Zauberer

Professor **J. H. ANDERSON** aus London

bekannt in England unter dem Namen:

„THE GREAT WIZARD OF THE NORTH."

Herr Professor Anderson schmeichelt sich mit der Hoffnung, dass seine Productionen, welche in LONDON, PETERSBURG, BERLIN, STOCKHOLM, COPENHAGEN und zuletzt in HAMBURG die ehrendste Anerkennung fanden, sich auch der Theilnahme des hiesigen hochverehrlichen Publikums erfreuen werden.

Programm.

Erste Abtheilung:

1. Zwei fliehende Schnupftücher.
2. Die wunderbare Mühle und der gelehrte Ägyptier.
3. Ein neues Zauberspiel, genannt die ausserordentliche Metamorphose.
4. Der Todte wird lebend, der Lebende stirbt. (Neu.)
5. Ein schnell zubereitetes Frühstück.
6. Zum Erstenmale! Ausserordentliches Experiment: Herr Professor ANDERSON wird 6 Uhren durch den Körper eines der Anwesenden passiren lassen, ohne dass derselbe Indigestionen bekommt.
7. Ein grosses Manöver mit 12 Schnupftüchern.
8. Aus dem Hute irgend eines Anwesenden entwickeln sich auf den Wink des grossen Zaubrers Tausende von Blumen-Bouquetts, Tausende von Flaggen aller Nationen, Schnüren, Puppen ect. sowie ein vollständiges zweischläfriges Federbett.

Zweite Abtheilung:

1. Banknoten und Preussische Thalerscheine halten die Feuerprobe.
2. Die gehorsame Flasche.
3. Die sprechenden und tanzenden Thaler.
4. Das Wasser wird lebend.
5. Die schnelle Wäsche. Ein guter Rath für unerfahrne Hausmütter.
6. Die ägyptischen Wunder.

Preise der Plätze:

Erster Platz 16 Ggr. Zweiter Platz 8 Ggr. Gallerie 4 Ggr.

Cassen-Oeffnung 6 Uhr. Anfang 7 Uhr.

Entrée-Billets sind am Tage der Vorstellung im Ballhofs-Saale bei Herrn Evers, zu erhalten.

Handbill used by Anderson in Hanover Germany, January, 1848, when Robert-Houdin claimed that he was playing in the English provinces. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

"Unfortunately for the Wizard, his performances were attacked by a mortal disease; too long a stay in London had ended by producing satiety. Besides, his repertory was out-of-date, and could not contend against the new tricks which I was offering. What could he present to the public in opposition to the second sight, the suspension, and the inexhaustible bottle? Hence he was obliged to close his theatre and start for the provinces, where he managed, as usual, to make excellent receipts, owing to his powerful means of notoriety."

In the first place, Robert Houdin insinuates that when they played in opposition John Henry Anderson's répertoire was stale and uninteresting. Is it possible that Robert-Houdin could not read Anderson's bills, or were his statements deliberate falsehoods, emanating from a malicious, wilful desire to injure Anderson?

What did Anderson have to offer in opposition to Robert-Houdin's much-vaunted Suspension, Second Sight, and Inexhaustible Bottle? Consult the Anderson programme, reproduced, and you will find that the great Wizard of the North duplicated the French conjurer's répertoire. "The Ethereal Suspension" of Robert-Houdin's programme was "Suspension Chloroforeene" on Anderson's. Second Sight appeared on both bills. "The Inexhaustible Bottle" had wisely been dropped by Anderson because he had been using it in one form or another for ten years preceding the date of Robert-Houdin's appearance in London, as is proven in chapter IX. of this book.

Therefore, if Anderson's programme was passé and uninteresting, so also must have been the one offered by Robert-Houdin!

STRAND THEATRE.

Positively the Last Night of
PROFESSOR
ANDERSON'S
ASTONISHING SOIRÉES MYSTERIHUSES,

ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE
Legitimate Wonders of the Nineteenth Century!
NEW WONDERS OF DEMONOLOGY, WITCHCRAFT, AND MAGIC!

This Evening, THURSDAY, Jan. 11th,

HE WILL MAKE HIS APPEARANCE, AND GIVE HIS 1848

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT,

Illustrative of the Fallacy of Magic, Necromancy, Witchcraft, and Demonology.

He performed by him in the Christianburg Palace in Copenhagen, before the late KING CHRISTIAN VIII; in the Palace at Stockholm before CHARLES X. and ROYAL FAMILY of Sweden: he also had the honor to appear before the KING of PRUSSIA and his COURT, in the Royal Palace of Potsdam, HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, NICHOLAS of RUSSIA, to signify his respect for the British Nation, ordered that one of the Imperial Theatres at Petersburg should be given gratuitously to Professor J. H. ANDERSON for his Performances, he being the First British Artist who visited his Capital, and through LORD BLOOMFIELD, the British Minister, he commanded Professor J. H. ANDERSON to appear in the Winter Palace, where he had the distinguished honor to perform before THE EMPEROR, IMPERIAL FAMILY, THE COURT, and the whole of the CORPS DIPLOMATIQUE then resident in St. Petersburg. In the Palaces of the above Kings he has performed before them, and their Courts. He holds valuable Presents and Testimonials from ALL THE CROWNED HEADS OF NORTHERN EUROPE. His name is known from the Banks of the Thames to the Nava. In all Countries his success has been unparalleled; and he has been acknowledged to be the GREAT MASTER of the CABALISTIC ART: surpassing all other Performers, Ancient or Modern.

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PART I.

The ENCHANTED HANDKERCHIEFS,
With Boo-koos INVISIBLE, CHANGEABLE BOTTLE and MYSTIC CANDLE, with the ANIMATED "BOUCHON."

The MYSTIC VOLUME
Or, the ASTONISHING NON-EFFECT OF PRESSURE.

GRAND MECHANICAL ANALOGA.

Professor ANDERSON'S SCRAP BOOK.
SCRAPS EXTRAORDINARY.

The MYSTIC BREAKFAST.

The Learned Doves, the Broken Ring, Dissolving Orange, and Enchanted Walnut.

CHILD of the AIR; or, "Jack in the Box."
"Jack in the Box," MASTER ANDERSON.

CHAPEAU DU DIABLE.

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SECOND SIGHT; its Fallacy Illustrated.

Grand HYDRAULIC EXPERIMENT.

The MAGIC BANK, & Fishing extraordinary.

EXTRAORDINARY ELECTRIC EXPERIMENT,
That of sending SIX WATCHES through any Gentleman's Body.

Grand POTPOURRI of HANDKERCHIEFS.

The whole to conclude with the LAST NEW WONDER, or Professor ANDERSON'S
SUSPENSION CHLOROFOREENE,
(By Master JOHN HENRY ANDERSON).

He will cause his Son to inhale a small portion of Chloroform, sufficient to send him to sleep. He will then display the Extraordinary Effect of the Drug, which has baffled the whole of the Medical Profession of London, France, Germany, and every Country which Professor ANDERSON has recently visited. THE CHILD WILL SLEEP IN THE AIR, HIS ONLY SUPPORT A WALKING STICK.

Poster used by Anderson during his closing week at the Strand Theatre, London, January 11th, 1848. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

Second, John Henry Anderson was not in London when Robert-Houdin arrived there in May, 1848. He was on the Continent, and a bill reproduced will show that he was in Germany in January, 1848, and did not open at the Strand Theatre until December 26th, 1848. Then it was Robert-Houdin who had just returned from the provinces, not Anderson. Anderson had been playing the capitals of Europe. Robert-Houdin had been in Manchester, England.

Robert-Houdin again skilfully twists the truth to suit his own ends. He actually states that Anderson, returning from a tour of the provinces, used a new poster, a caricature of the famous painting, "Napoleon's Return from Elba":

"In the foreground Anderson was seen affecting the attitude of the great man; above his head fluttered an enormous banner bearing the words 'The Wonder of the World'; while, behind him and somewhat lost in the shade, the Emperor of Russia and several other monarchs stood in a respectful posture. As in the original picture, the fanatic admirers of the Wizard embraced his knees, while an immense crowd received him triumphantly. In the distance could be seen the equestrian statue of the Iron Duke, who, hat in hand, bowed before him, the Great Wizard; and lastly, the very dome of St. Paul's bent towards him most humbly.

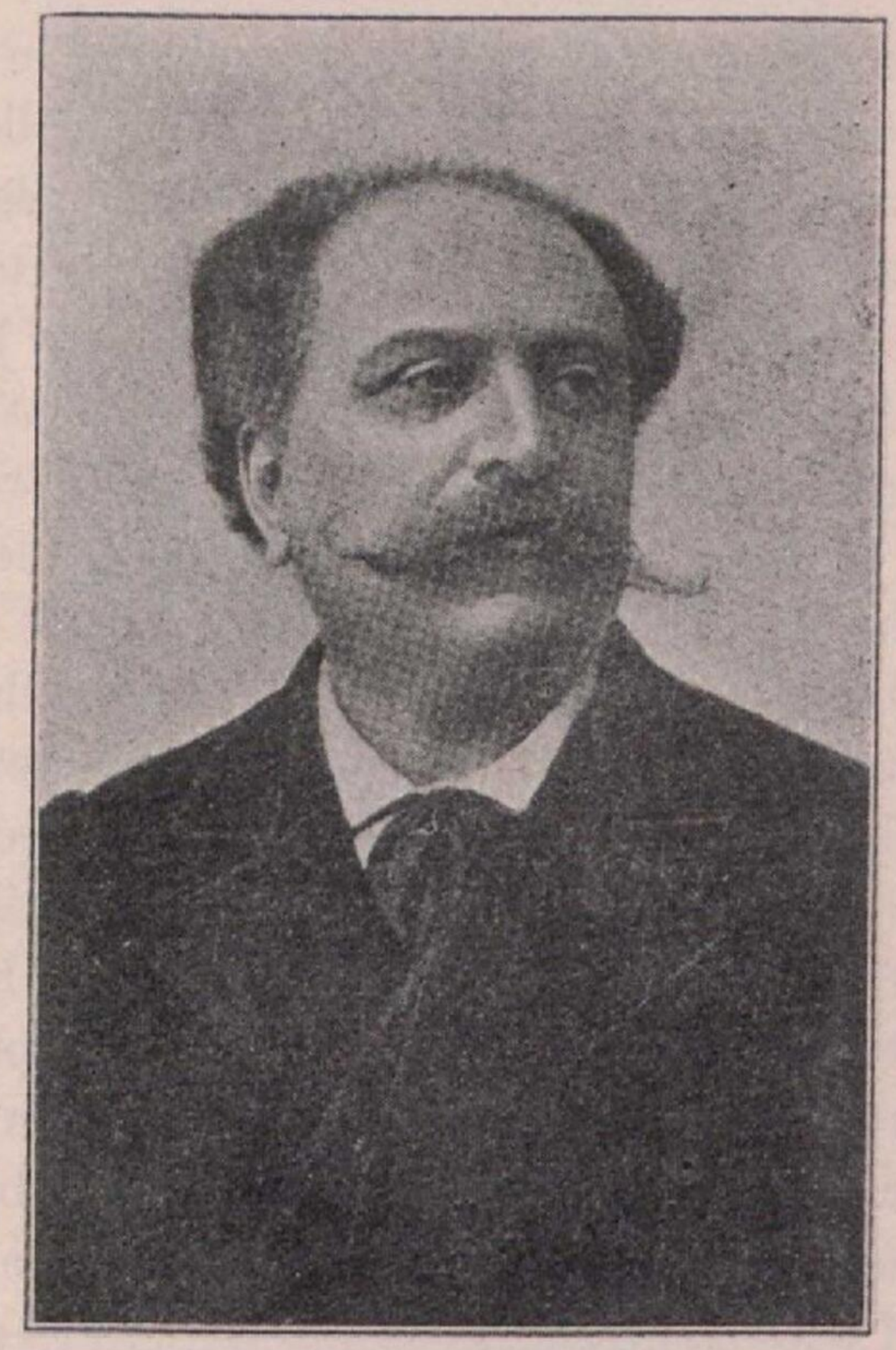
"At the bottom was the inscription,

RETURN OF THE NAPOLEON OF NECROMANCY.

"Regarded seriously, this picture would be found a puff in very bad taste; but as a caricature it is excessively

comic. Besides, it had the double result of making the London public laugh and bringing a great number of shillings into the skilful puffer's pockets."

Reference to my collection of Anderson programmes



Eugene Bosco, son of the original Bosco. From the Harry Houdini Collection.

and press clippings proves that while on the Continent his performances had created such a sensation that, according to the ethics and etiquette of his profession, Anderson was quite justified in assuming the title of "The Napoleon of Necromancy" and in depicting even kings

and noblemen admiring his abilities as a conjurer. But, alas, Robert-Houdin had played only before English and French monarchs, not before the other crowned heads of Europe, including the Czar of Russia and the ~~German Kaiser~~! King of Prussia!

It required weeks and months of browsing in old book- and print-shops, national libraries, and rare collections on my part to prove that Anderson had really played these engagements, when his bitter rival, Robert-Houdin, his heart eaten with jealousy until his sense of honor and truth was hopelessly blunted, was claiming that Anderson had just returned from a trip in the English provinces.

It will be noted by reference to the Anderson programme that he had been engaged only for the Christmas holidays, but despite Robert-Houdin's claim that he was a failure and was obliged to close and seek new fields of conquest in the provinces, Anderson's engagement was extended. He remained at the Strand until January 11th, 1849, then after a brief provincial tour he actually returned to London and played to big receipts. Again and again he appeared in London. Far from being the unpopular, forgotten ex-magician pictured by Robert-Houdin, he performed with great success at the St. James Theatre, London, in 1851. Robert-Houdin appeared in London for the last time in 1853, but in 1865 "the despised and forgotten Anderson" was there again, creating a furor in his exposure of the Davenport Brothers.

Robert-Houdin might have been justified in criticising Anderson's sensational advertising methods, for these were entirely opposed to the more elegant and conservative methods employed by the French conjurer. But

certainly he was not justified in picturing his rival as one who had passed his prime, whose popularity had waned, whose répertoire no longer attracted the public.

John Henry Anderson as he appeared in his later years. From a cut in the Harry Houdini Collection.

For, in addition to duplicating Robert-Houdin's entire répertoire, Anderson offered tricks of which Robert-Houdin knew nothing, and for years to come he constantly recon-

structed his programmes, keeping them strictly up-to-date.

Anderson did die a poor man, but this was not because the amusement-loving public had wearied of him. A popular performer, like so many of his class he did not know how to invest his huge earnings. It is known that he gave $20,000 to various charities, while no record of Robert-Houdin's charities exists. He was burned out several times. He lost money through a bad contract made for his Australian tour. Certain investments dropped in value because of the Civil War in the United States, during which England sympathized with the South. Finally, during his American tour after the Civil War, Anderson played the Southern States, then steeped in bitterness toward the North, and was unfortunate enough to bill himself as "The Great Wizard of the North." This roused the Southern prejudice to white heat, he was almost mobbed, and was finally driven from that section of the country. He went into bankruptcy, November 19th, 1866, and died at Darlington, County Durham, England, Feb. 3rd, 1874. His remains were interred, in accordance with his dying request, at Aberdeen, Scotland.

So ends the true history of Robert-Houdin. The master-magician, unmasked, stands forth in all the hideous nakedness of historical proof, the prince of pilferers. That he might bask for a few hours in public adulation, he purloined the ideas of magicians long dead and buried, and proclaimed these as the fruits of his own inventive genius. That he might be known to posterity as the king of conjurers, he sold his birthright of manhood and honor for a mere mess of pottage, his "Memoirs," written by

the hand of another man, who at his instigation belittled his contemporaries, and juggled facts and truth to further his egotistical, jealous ambitions.

But the day of reckoning is come. Upon the history of magic as promulgated by Robert-Houdin the search-light of modern investigation has been turned. Credit has been given where it belongs, to those magicians who preceded Robert-Houdin and upon whose abilities and achievements Robert-Houdin built his unearned, unmerited fame. The dust of years has been swept from names long forgotten, which should forever shine in the annals of magic.

Thus end, also, my researches, covering almost two decades of time, researches in which my veneration for old-time magicians grew with each newly discovered bit of history; researches during which my respect for the profession of magic has grown by leaps and bounds. And the fruits of these researches I now lay before the only true jury, the great reading public. My task is finished.

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HANDCUFF SECRETS

PREFACE

IN publishing this book, revealing as it does, clearly and concisely, the various tricks performed, and artifices used, by many of the so-called Manacle Monarchs, Handcuff Kings, and Jail Breakers, I do so without intent to offend those performers who work on thoroughly legitimate lines. Doubtless, however, those performers who issue lying challenges at Jail Breakers and Handcuff Kings, those who feebly endeavour to imitate, those who make fictitious statements and offers of large sums of money to any one who can produce police regulation handcuffs from any part of the universe from which they cannot release themselves, those who evade the critical tests (which might crop up in such challenges) by fraud and colossal lying, those are the individuals who may have something to say against the divulging of their various methods of hoodwinking a credulous public; nevertheless, in the following pages startling revelations of the *modus operandi* of such performers are to be found.

You will doubtless have seen announcements of some so-called Handcuff King who issues such a challenge as mentioned, couched in sensational phraseology, and perhaps you have paused and wondered that "such things

could be," and you would have wished to test him, sceptical as to the genuineness of the challenge, but you refrained from doing so. Had you, however, done so, and sought permission to step on the stage as a member of the committee to apply your tests, it would be very probable you would not have been allowed to appear before the audience, unless you had the common ordinary handcuff alone, and not special irons, the manipulation of which might baffle him, and if you persisted in your desire to test him, you would in all probability be escorted off with the accompaniment of very forcible language, and you would find yourself promptly ejected through the nearest exit by some one of more physical prowess than yourself, amid derision and taunts, as such a type of performer hesitates at nothing to gain his ends, and only permits on his stage those with the common ordinary manacles, and confederates who have already been "planted" amongst the audience and supplied with handcuffs and other irons by the performer and his assistants.

Confederates? Impossible that such could be the case —that the performance could be repeated night after night, with a change of committee each time, without exposure, but as the original Handcuff King of world-wide experience, I think I may be accepted as an authority, and I know for an absolute fact that it is so, having met such adventurous, would-be imitators in various parts of the world.

In speaking of confederates, it is quite admissible to have a few pair of handcuffs given to some persons in your

audience beforehand, as it is quite possible that no one might have brought any, and if there were no cuffs present you could not perform, unless you introduced some of your own on the stage, which would weaken the performance considerably, and it is always well to be ready for such contingency; but this act does not prevent others of your audience acting on committee—and my remarks relative to confederates are, where none are allowed on the stage, except confederates—herein chiefly lies the imposition.

To my present knowledge no reliable work has been written, exclusively dealing with this subject, but I have come across some flimsy leaflets, here and there, which aim at explaining some methods adopted, but the attempts at revealing the secrets are so vague, vapid, and unfinished, that no one could grasp at the writer's meaning, not even those who have already been initiated in some of the mysteries of the subject under consideration. This book is purposely written for the benefit of professionals, amateur magicians, and those desirous of becoming adepts in entertaining and mystifying their friends, etc., with escapes and tricks with handcuffs and other fetters. I also explain a way in a lucid manner to present some startling, novel illusions and deceptions hitherto unpublished, such as the strait-jacket, lock-picking and files for same, American and Continental handcuffs, etc.

I shall not delve into the very deep intricacies of some of the great modern feats of handcuff manipulations, and jail-breaking, as accomplished by myself, but shall explain a way in a simple fashion how my performances have been

initiated, and plagiarized by those self-styled world's greatest Manacle Kings, Handcuff Monarchs, Jail-breakers, and dealers in material for the craft, so that you at least will find a storehouse of information in these pages to enable you with a little practice and patience to give a very creditable and mystifying performance.

The numerous illustrations interspersed through these pages are taken in most instances from photographs, and will, I hope, enhance its usefulness, as they enable the reader at once to follow with quick perception the detailed explanations given.

HARRY HOUDINI

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HANDCUFF SECRETS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IN writing this book on handcuff tricks and allied mysteries, I simply do so as a great many people imagine you must have exceptionally rare talent to become a handcuff king, but such is not the case. The primary lesson is, to learn to use both hands with equal facility, as—if I may use a proverbial expression—one hand washes the other, but in this case one hand releases or unlocks the other. The method adopted by me to acquire this end was, when at table I practised to use the left hand persistently until I could use it almost easily as the right.

In addressing your audience do not become bombastic or overbearing in demeanour, but speak as you would to critical friends, thereby gaining their confidence and sympathy and, no matter what may worry or trouble you, never let your audience detect any irritability or ill temper, but always display a bright and pleasing manner. Nothing is more offensive to an audience than a performer to appear surly and bad tempered. He is there to please the public, and to do so he must be on the best of terms with himself and, I may add, in the best of humour.

You will notice that some of these tricks are very simple —but remember it is not the trick that is to be considered, but the style and manner in which it is presented.

I do not *deliberately say* that the following methods given are precisely the same as I have used on opening the handcuffs or in performing the various other sundry acts, but I speak with absolute confidence when I assert these are the methods that can be, and have been, used to imitate my performances without much outlay, and with little practice.

I wish to instruct, rending aside the veil of mystery surrounding many tricks which constitute the stock-in-trade of certain performers—many of mushroom growth—and in doing so I do not wish to harm any person, as I claim to have the honour of having placed on the market an act or performance by which many an individual is now making a livelihood, whilst I am about to retire.

It may come as a surprise to many to know that in the British Isles the variety of make of handcuffs is very limited —seven or eight at the utmost. In America, however, the number reaches about 175 (or more), while on the Continent padlocks are added to the ordinary list of manacles. So one would need be an expert of " picklocks " to get along outside the United Kingdom. For the present let us confine ourselves to discuss the British types of handcuffs.

Having practised sufficiently to make both hands of equal use, the novice should commence by performing tricks requiring little or no practice, and so I shall explain the easiest methods of getting out of the handcuffs or manacles with which you desire to perform.

The methods described are those chiefly used by the so-called World's Greatest Handcuff Kings, and are so easy of

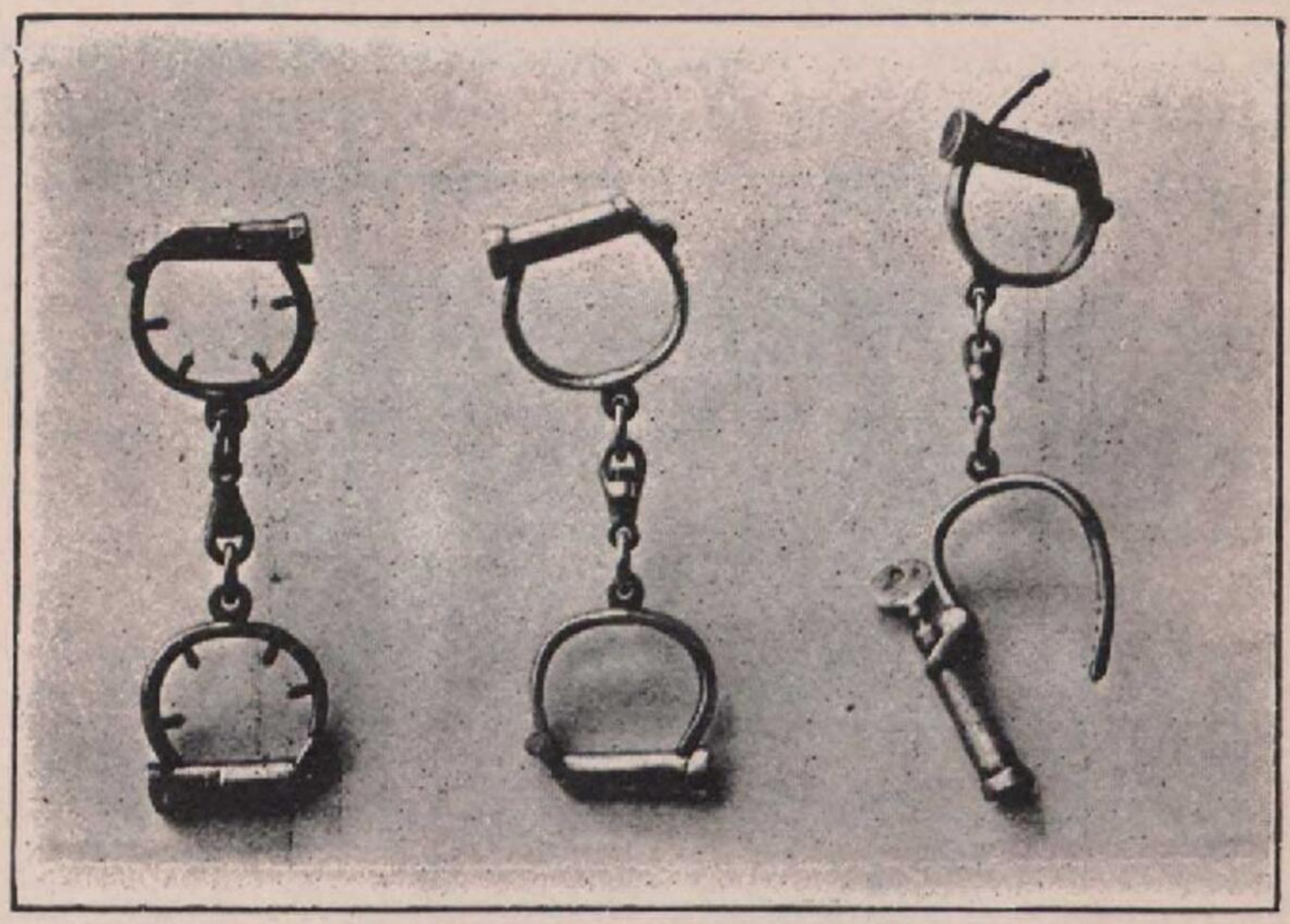
duplication that I wonder why many more of these " kings " are not in evidence.

The easiest cuff to work with is the

ENGLISH REGULATION,

as illustrated below.

Having provided yourself with a set of these manacles you get duplicate keys for same. With one solitary exception,



The Common English Regulation

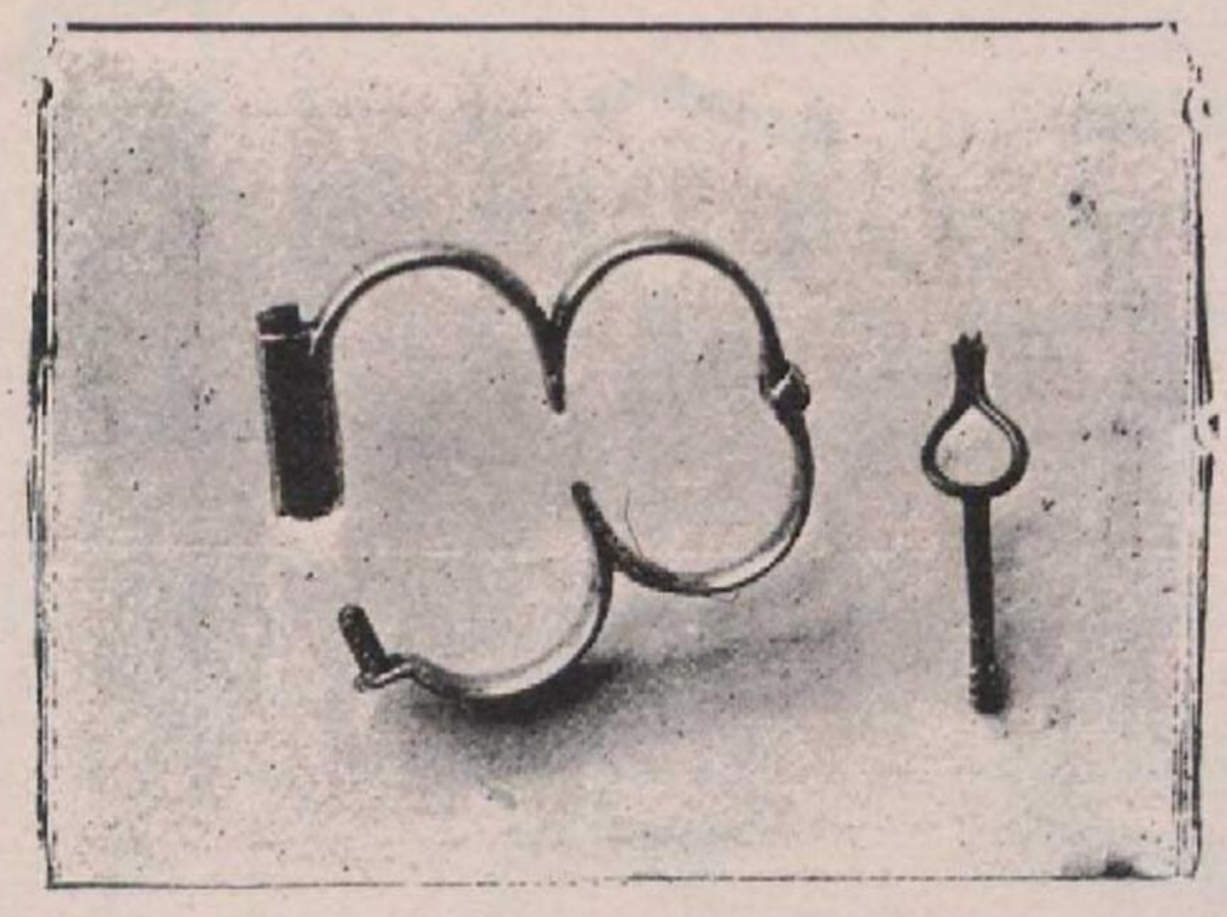
all these cuffs have spring locks and are manipulated by screwing the key in to open, but they close on pressure with a snap. The exception is what is styled " Plug 8," to which I shall allude later on.

For performance. You must adopt the best method suitable to you for concealing your duplicate key. Either in some getatable pocket or in shoe, drapery of cabinet, etc., etc. You may have difficulty in getting handcuffs from your audience, so you must prepare for this emergency by having

some of your own secretly beforehand " planted " by your assistant with some confederates in audience.

As each comes on you examine the irons and satisfy yourself they are of the regulation pattern, as it is with regulation handcuffs alone you guarantee to free yourself.

Having examined the cuffs, you allow your committee to lock them on you, all present being satisfied you are securely locked. You enter your cabinet, and obtaining possession of your duplicate key, you simply unlock cuff and again conceal



" Plug 8 "

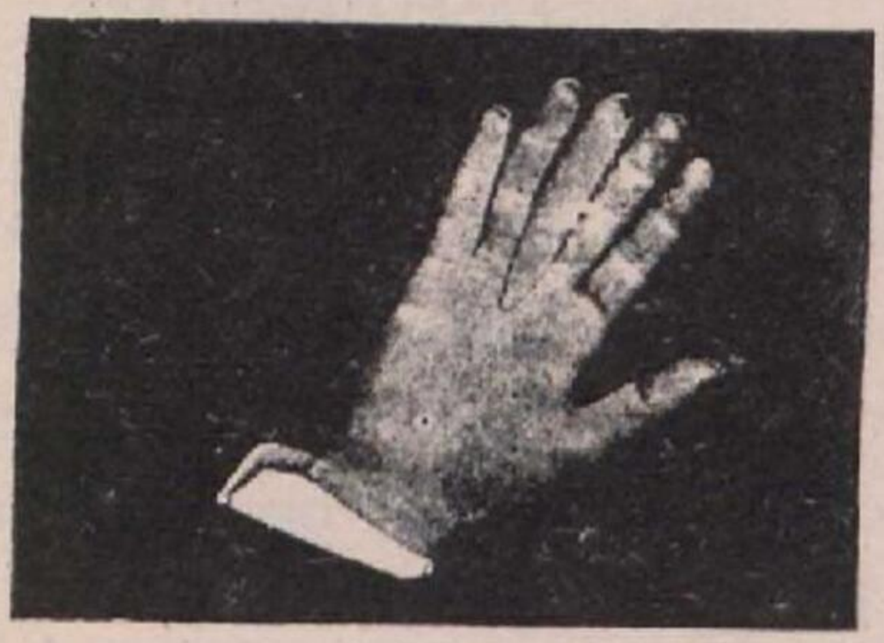
key. There are, however, some cuffs larger than others, and in this case you slip one hand from cuff, then it is easy to procure your key and open both.

The Irish 8, similar in appearance to Plug 8, but has no screw or plug. It locks with a snap on the same principle as the ordinary English Regulation. It is used by the Royal Irish Constabulary. The cuff is opened in a different manner to the English Regulation cuff, as you would find it difficult to get key in with fingers unless you had a very slender wrist to enable you to stretch out one hand as far as possible,

thereby bringing cuff further up arm, so that fingers of the other hand which hold key would come close to keyhole. Should you be unable to do this you unlock by placing key in your mouth, and it is advisable to have handle of key covered with rubber to prevent injury to your teeth.

The best way to have cuff locked is with the keyhole upwards. I do not detail all the methods adopted, but simply the principal ones. As you advance, your own ingenuity will come to your assistance.

It was a master brain, of whom I have no record, that invented the hollow false finger to produce or vanish a silk



False Finger, with Key concealed

handkerchief. With the aid of a false finger you can present a most pleasing handcuff trick, and still easy as it is of execution, the better you will think of it. You can allow your wrists to be handcuffed with the cuffs; your sleeves are turned up; your hands are now placed into a small bag, and in full view of the audience you escape from the handcuffs, and bring out the cuffs from the bag, opened.

As per illustration, you will note the false finger, which is made of metal, easily purchased from any reliable dealer in magical apparatus; you have concealed your second key of cuff; all that is required of you is to allow yourself to be

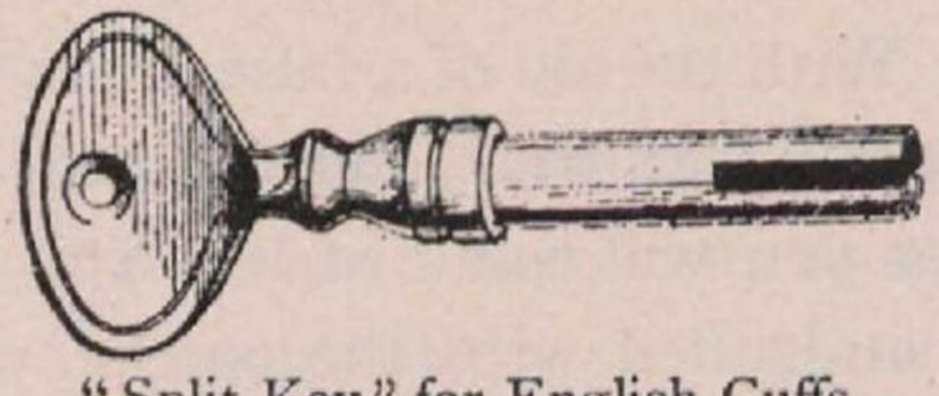
handcuffed, with your cuff ; beforehand you place the false finger in position, and under cover of the friendly bag you obtain the key and unlock the handcuffs.

I once knew a certain amateur who had a novel method of concealing his " handcuff opener," and could be searched.

False Finger to conceal Key

First he would take his friend into his room, and ask him to turn his back until he had stripped nude " a la Houdini." While this friend's back was turned, Mr. Amateur had his " gag " made with a small pin soldered on in a hook shape, and this he would slyly insert on his " audience's coat," where it would hang " concealed."

Now being ready he would ask his " audience to run



" Split Key " for English Cuffs

about " and search him. This was done, nothing could be found, the amateur was handcuffed, and the " audience " would again turn around so that he could not see " how it was done " ; this naturally brought the " gag " back again to the amateur, who would use the instrument that he had hung on his unsuspecting victim.

He tried the game with me one day, but alas and alack, when trying to pin the key on my coat tails, on his informing me to " turn about," I " turned " with such speed that Mr. Key flew off its " hanging on place " and fell ignominiously on the floor with a " dull, sickening thud," as the novelists say.

CHAPTER II

OPENING SEALED HANDCUFFS

IF you wish to have handcuffs sealed it would be well to try and have a pair rather large so as to slip the hands. You can then easily open the cuffs by giving it a sharp blow with the keyhole downwards. Strike the cuff where the hinge and keyhole are on the heel of your shoe or against the floor and it will spring open. I once used a plate of lead fastened to drawers at leg above knee, sewn in to prevent it slipping away. This was bent to shape of leg so that it was not perceived. I struck the cuff on where plate of lead was fixed. This method, however, was rather uncertain.

On reference to the illustration, you will see how and where I hit the cuff to open it.

A certain handcuff king who served eight years in prison for various offences claims to be able to open all his cuffs by striking them on an anvil, and it is true he has opened several pairs that way while they were on his hands. Once, however, he missed and struck the anvil with his fist, nearly breaking it—not the anvil, but his fist.

Should you use your own cuff a good idea is to have a

1. Snips or Come-along. 2. English Regulation Cuff without Chain

trick cuff made—(The Irish figure 8 design snap lock already referred to above). By removing the strong spiral spring and inserting a weak one, you can, by merely striking it against your limb above knee, jar the cuff open. To show how long it will take, you first of all lock the cuff on wrists of one of your committee with the keyhole *upwards* and give him the key asking him to unlock the cuff. It will take him a considerable time to do this. You now ask him to lock the cuffs on your wrists, but this time take care to have the *keyhole underneath*. (See page 10.)

When cuff is fastened, and having satisfied your committee

that you are securely locked, you enter your cabinet or go behind screen, and striking the cuff sharply at hinge down on your limb, it will spring open—instantly to appear with

Cuffs with Keyhole underneath

manacle opened, and you will find this the best effect you can produce with a single pair of handcuffs.

In addition to the cuff with weak spring already alluded

to there is a prepared cuff that *pulls open*. This cuff will lock and unlock the same as the usual type of cuff, but the catch bolt has been filed away to look like a V. This cuff opens by pulling it apart as easily as it closed.

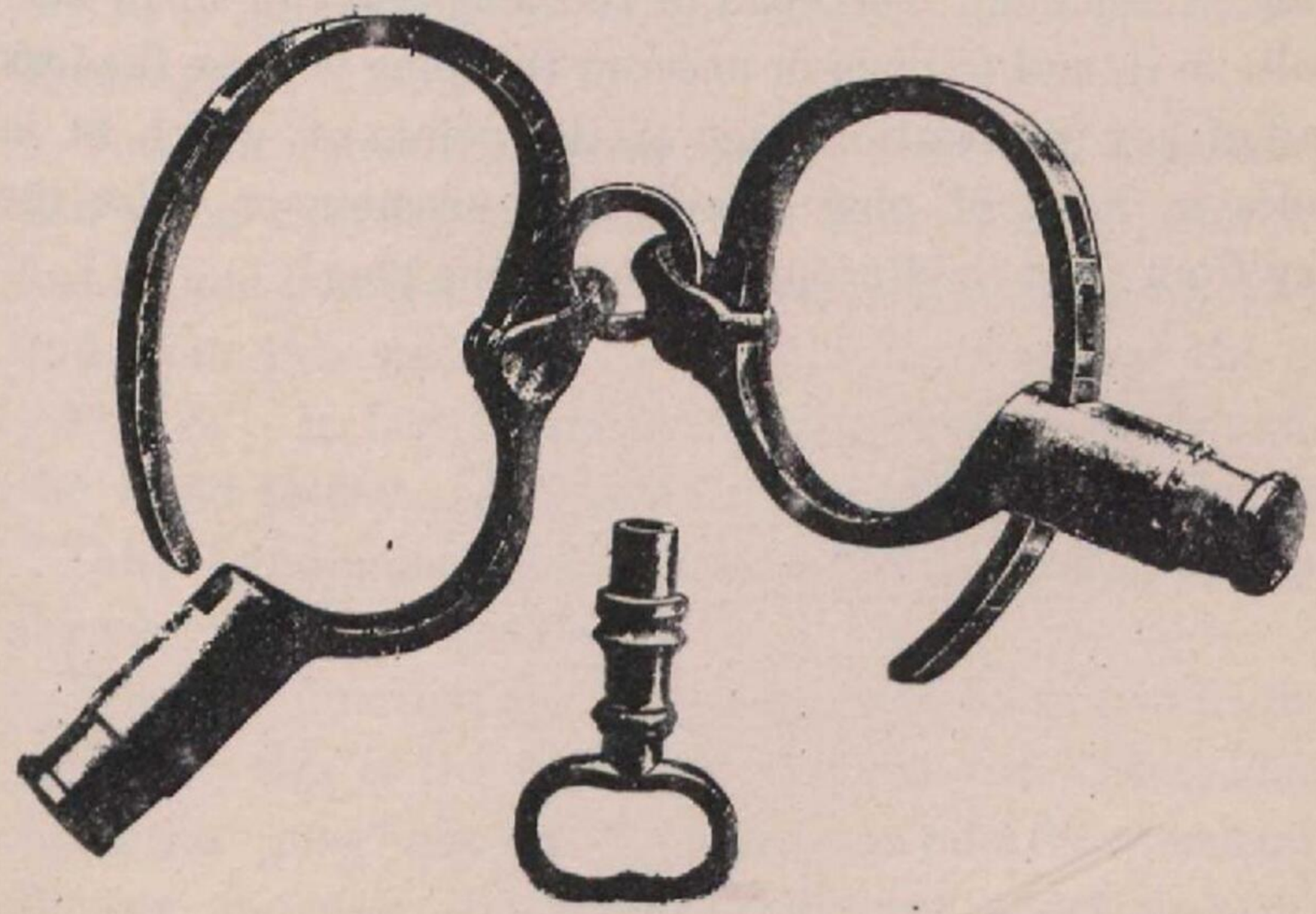
This is very useful for rapidity when you wish to leave curtain of cabinet open and you remain in full view of audience while hands are locked behind your back.

The Snips or Come-Along as shown on page 9 when placed on the wrists of a prisoner, make him walk along as meek as a lamb by the constable simply twisting the wrist, no matter how strong the arrested may be.

Illustration on page 9 shows the English Regulation cuff minus a chain.

THE MASTER KEY

to open any of the foregoing locks except Plug 8 is shaped as shown on page 14.



Cuff manufactured by A. Stotz

When using the key one or two turns suffices to catch the thread of screw, then pull and cuff opens.

A cuff that resembles an English Regulation is one used in South Germany and is made by A. Stotz in Stuttgart. It is of the ratchet pattern (see illustration page 11); the screw of this is reversed, i.e., instead of the ordinary method of opening, which is done by turning screw from right to left, this one opens by turning from left to right, and is known as the female cuff or bastard thread.

THE "PLUG 8" HANDCUFF

has a metal plug which screws into keyhole to prevent insertion of a key when locked. It differs from the Irish 8 as it has no spring and does not lock with a snap. It is fitted with a screw instead of the ordinary spring, consequently it cannot be pulled open, but must be unscrewed by first removing plug at keyhole. The head of the plug has two small keyholes in it, and to open or unscrew this plug you use the fork end of key (illustration page 4), the points of which fit in holes in head of plug screw, then unscrew or twist the key from right to left and out comes the plug.

CHAPTER III

BLUNDERS OF SOME "HANDCUFF EXPOSERS" AND LIGHT THROWN ON SOME PERSONAL FOREIGN FIGHTS

HEREWITH is presented the "Plug 8 Handcuff." This is an extraordinarily broad one, was used in South Africa during the Boer War, and they say the cuff is used on the Kaffir diamond thieves. No matter how heavy the manacle may be, the locking arrangement is generally the same. This cuff is made by Hiatt, of Birmingham, Froggott of Boardsley, and the one time handcuff maker Fields. Strange, but almost all of the English cuffs are made in Birmingham or its vicinity.

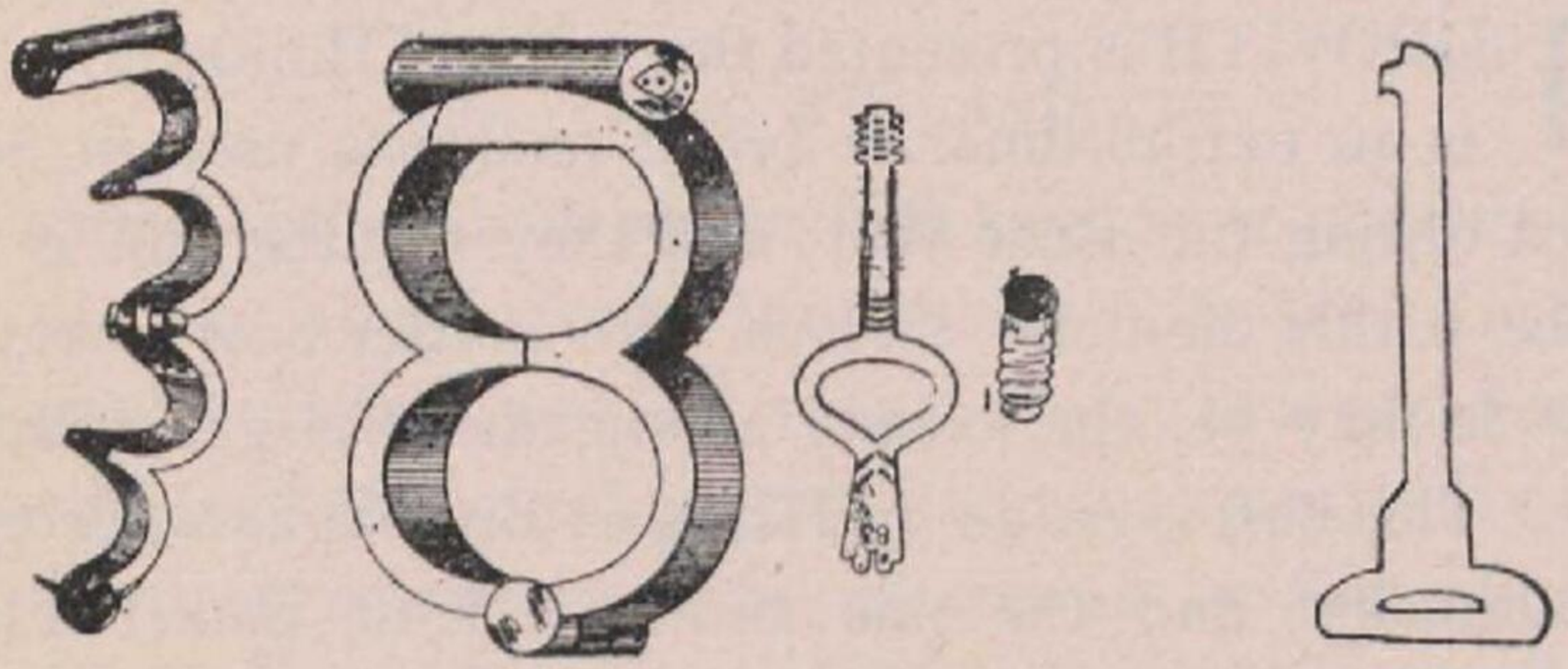
You will notice that when open it resembles a double W, and when closed it resembles the figure eight; after it is locked you insert a small steel plug in the circular keyhole, and from this steel core or plug, I have named the cuff "Plug 8." In fact I have really named every single cuff in the world to-day. And all of my imitators have taken my "Tales" and names bodily, and without pretence of knowing why the cuff is so called.

You will note that the key to the Plug 8 has two teeth at one end; this is the end that unscrews the "Steel Plug." After this "plug" has been removed, you take the other end of the key, and insert it into the keyhole, and unlock the cuff by

turning the key in various directions. Some are female cuffs, which turn from left to right, whilst others are the Regulation right to left "unlocking cuff." It is very easy to make a master for these cuffs, as all work on the same principle.

One "Would-be author" in Germany, who resides in Altona, and who is said also to be a magician and has written several pamphlets on magic, has endeavoured to write a pamphlet explaining my handcuff secrets.

If his magic pamphlets are as insipid as the handcuff



"Plug 8," showing Cuff open, closed, key, steel plug, and master key that will unlock almost any Plug 8 Cuff.

pamphlet, then I wonder how he ever managed to have a publisher accept his manuscript. I have had some very bad printed matter handed to me of foolish "piffle" and "Tommy Rot" explaining the handcuff trick, but Herr H. F. C. Suhr certainly is the limit; in fact only one man ever explained it in as bad a shape, and he is an Englishman who sells some kind of monthly catalogue, which he puts before the public as a monthly paper. Suhr in his pamphlet, "Magische Tandeleien," stumbles, blunders, and gropes in what is to him "Egyptian Darkness," and being unable to shed any light on the subject, his statements are of such a nature that he somewhat resembles a man with a mania to

publish a book and it matters not what he puts into it as long he can fill it up. Among various statements, Suhr, in a grandiloquent manner, informs you that "Harry Houdini, the American Handcuff King who came to Germany, does not merit his sensation. His work is simplicity itself. The only thing new that he brought over (for all he did was to warm up some old soup and hand it to us) was the boastful American Bluff Advertising Methods ; in this he excelled us Germans. He was heralded as 'Wonderful,' but the finish of this man after all we Germans proved how simple his work was, was that he could not get any more work, all his existing contracts were cancelled, and he had to sneak out of Germany back into England."

In answer to this I say he is either making a deliberate and malicious misstatement, or is in blissful ignorance of what has actually happened.

I arrived in Germany, September, 1900, opened at the Central Theatre, Dresden, broke all records for paid admissions ; opened at the Wintergarten, Berlin, for October, made such a sensation that the Management paid the Roanachers Establishment in Vienna a full month's salary in order to prolong my engagement another month ; left for England and remained three months, returning to Germany for almost two solid seasons. Broke all records in 99 per cent. of the cities I visited, and in Essen Ruhr played to such a sensational business that Manager Schultz actually had the front doors torn down, so as to enlarge the holding capacity of the Colosseum. Never before or since have they ever played to such business. With "Corty Althoff" I played to such a phenomenal business that he kept raising my salary so as to keep me longer, as thou-

sands and thousands of marks were placed in the banks to his account, which he will publicly make statement was due to my "drawing powers," as all of his horses were condemned in Gelsenkirchen, he had only three horses, and in Germany a circus without horses is no circus; my act is therefore solely responsible for his large "gate receipts." These statements are simply made to prove that Suhr is prejudiced and I wish my statements to be positively true. After the Wintergarten engagement, I played return dates at increased salary at Dresden and Berlin, and in Hamburg, Leipzig, Frankfort-on-Main, Magdeburg, Dortmund, Bochum, Osnabruck, Cologne, Mannheim, etc., etc., created my usual sensation. All this time the German magicians were trying to copy my act, and all of them had one cuff and two keys. This is the method that Suhr describes; "obtain the one English cuff, and use two keys." In the "Conjurers' Monthly Magazine," September issue, you will find a full explanation of their method of opening handcuffs. If I am not mistaken, Suhr, in a later book, actually displays his ignorance by illustrating the "Tower Double Lock Ratchet Cuff," and states with serious words "That this is a Chinese handcuff"! *

* Since this book has been written, the following letter will explain why Mr. Suhr wrote his articles regarding myself:—

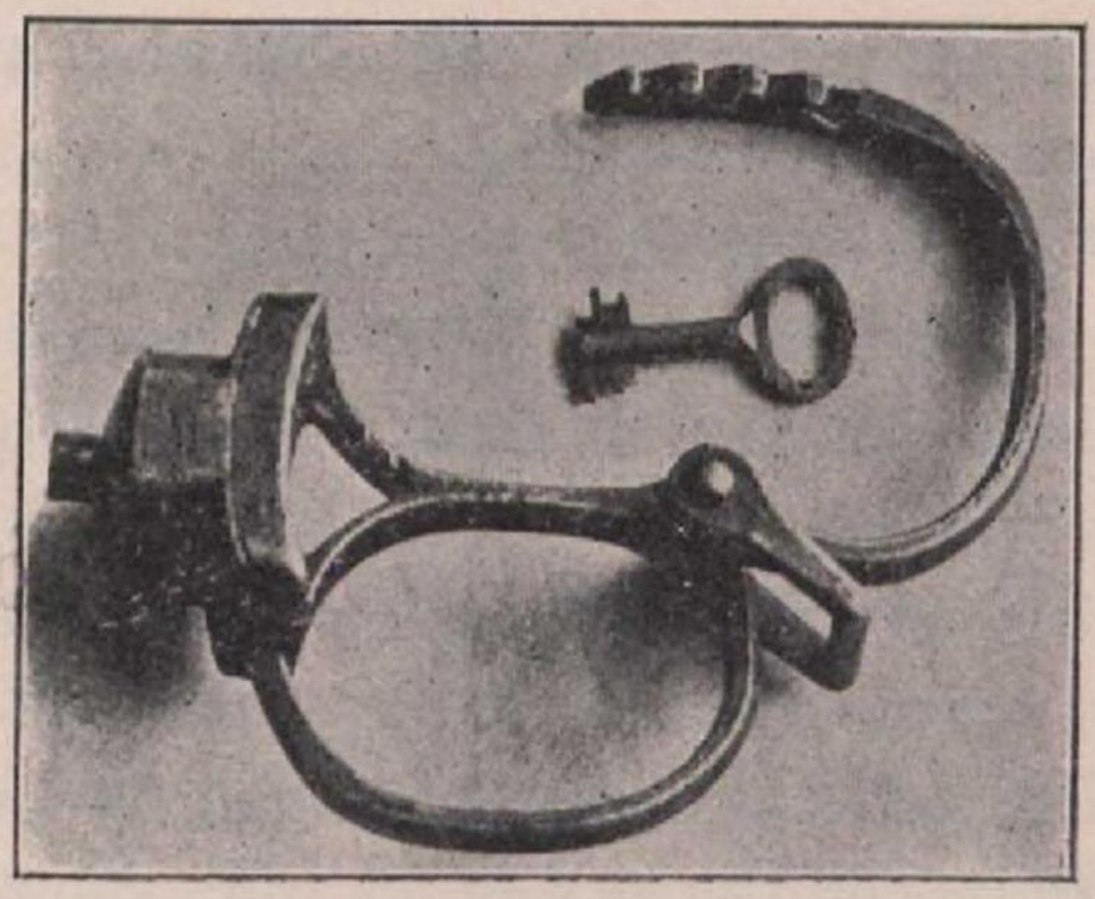
AN APOLOGY AND ITS ACCEPTANCE

"ALTONA (ELBE), GERMANY,
"*June* 15, 1908.

"MY DEAR MR. HOUDINI,—. . . I would like you to know I have often and deeply regretted the derogatory statements which I made concerning you and your methods in my book 'Magische Tandelein,' and take this means of personally retracting these statements, which were written from hearsay information; for at that time I neither knew you nor was I familiar with your work. . . .—H. F. C. SUHR.

The above extract from Herr Suhr's letter is self-explanatory. In

Hilmar, another German "handcuffer," came on the stage in the Wintergarten, Berlin, and tried to "do things to me," but he reckoned without his host. He claimed he could do things that no American could, and I placed a common pair of German cuffs on him, and he actually cried and shed real tears for me to release him. Herr Carl Willmann took the spear up against me. I could neither



The Cuff from which the German Handcuff King Hilmar failed to escape
(Wintergarten, Berlin, November, 1900)

speak or write as good German as I do now, and he made this friendly (?) statement to me in a letter which is in my possession: "You can't write or speak German; well, if the German's money is good enough for you to earn, you

addition, it is an example of the exhibition of the proper manhood, where a man endeavours to right a wrong. During my long and strenuous career I have always endeavoured to do what was right, and whenever I made any mistakes I have done all I could to rectify them. Often when I have worked hardest to elevate a principle or help others my motives and endeavours have been misconstrued. Still, *time rights everything*! I am glad to extend the hand of friendship to Herr Suhr, and hope in my coming tour through Germany to personally meet the man who so bravely acknowledges his convictions.

ought to learn the German language." He challenged me through his "Zauberwelt," and offered 40,000 marks against my 20,000, if I would release myself from a handcuff that he had in his possession. Being in England at the London Alhambra, I was unable to call his bluff until I returned. I wired him that I was coming bright and early, and he informed me on my arrival that he had only allowed a certain time limit for me to accept. He showed me the handcuff, which was of the Ratchet type, and on seeing the manacle, I immediately offered him £100 ($500.00) if he could again get his "Moneyed-man" to make an appearance. But Herr Carl Willmann would not accept, and I think since calling his bluff, he has no longer been so boastful.

He has treated me very nice since that time, but the truth must predominate. One morning I visited his establishment, being received by his son John, who challenged me to unlock the lock of his front shop door. John Willmann personally locked the door after I had stepped outside, and in less than two minutes I walked into the shop, having unlocked the door.

I noted the make of the "safe" they were using, and offered to "try" to open that also, but he was not willing until "father was in."

In Cologne on the Rhine I had a lawsuit against the police, which lasted one full year, and was successful in obtaining a public apology "by Command of Kaiser Wilhelm," as it had been stated that I was misrepresenting to the German Public. The case was appealed and fought in all the highest courts in Germany, but I won in each instance.

After all my battles in Germany, I think that I earned a

good rest, and am glad to say on my next visit I was treated very fine, and hope again to play engagements in that country, as the work is now easy, and the public are a good-natured sort of people, and treat you as a personal friend.

I will illustrate the cuff that held Hilmar, as I know that the cuff is seldom seen out of Germany.

A new British handcuff has recently been patented, which is supposed to be the invention of a police sergeant in Sheffield.

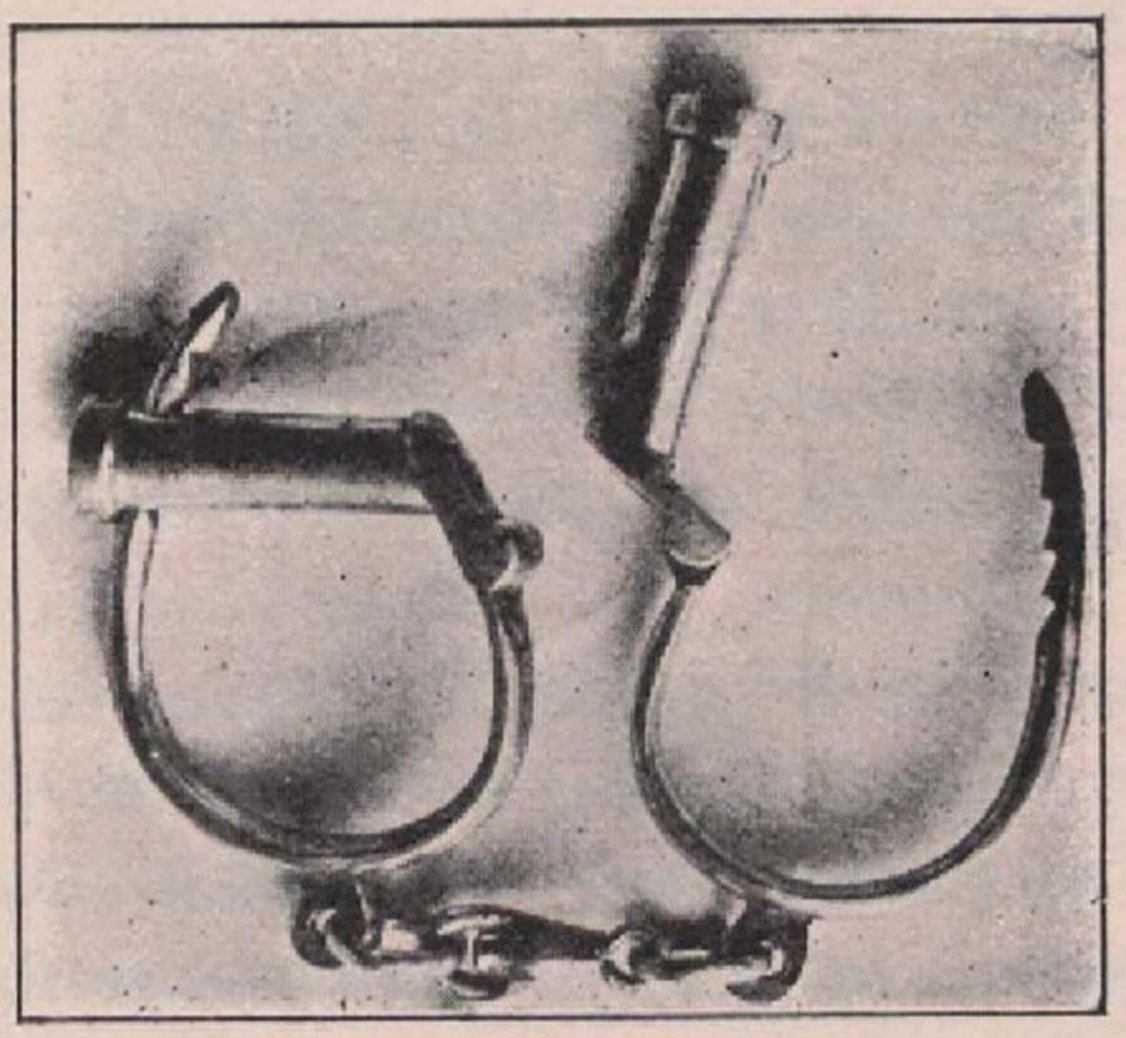
While he may claim to be the inventor of this style of lock in a cuff, I know positively that Nathaniel Clarkson, of Halifax, and Detective-Sergeant Arthur Maine, of Leicester, had handcuffs like this in their possession several years ago; even before Sergeant Brookes had thought of the invention.

When playing in the Empire Palace in Sheffield, I was challenged by Sergeant Brookes to escape from his invention, which up to that time he had not patented. As a Sheffield reporter happened to be at the performance that evening, I will only quote a few extracts from the newspaper.

The sergeant remaining in the audience sent his boy on the stage with his cuff, and instructed the bright lad to refuse to put the handcuffs on me unless I would allow them to be locked on my wrists behind my back. I consented to this, and escaped in a fair and square manner by opening his cuffs. Extract from the "Sheffield Daily Independent," Monday, May 2, 1904: ". . . There was not even standing room, and excitement ran high as Houdini's turn approached. . . . Some eight men walked on the stage, but the first pair of handcuffs Houdini selected he looked at

carefully. He then turned to the audience, and said he had been expecting this for some time.

"Turning to the young fellow from whom he had obtained the manacles, Houdini said: 'You are Inspector Brookes's son?' This was not denied. . . . Walking to the front of the stage, Houdini suddenly wheeled and said, 'These are Inspector Brookes's handcuffs,' and he (Houdini) decided to have them on first. Houdini objected at first to having



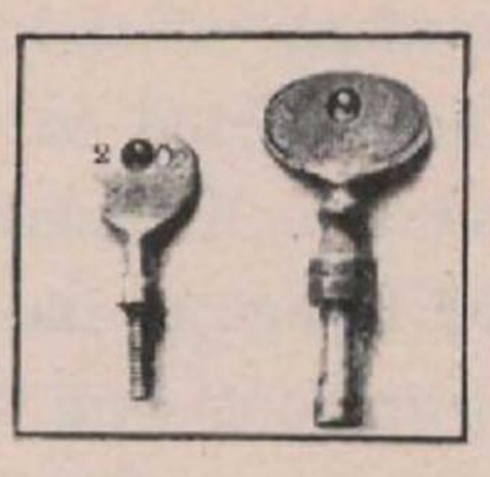
"Scotland Yard Adjustables"

them fastened behind, but a man in the audience easily recognized (as Inspector Brookes) shouted, 'Put them on behind, or not at all.' Submitting his hands to be fastened behind, in about three minutes he came out free, with the handcuffs undone."

From illustration you can see that they are shaped on the style of the cuff that I have named "Scotland Yard Adjustables."

The new key, instead of being threaded inside of the

barrel, is threaded on the outside of the barrel. The difference is easily seen in illustration, where the old style key is placed alongside the new key.



This invention is really better than the old regulation, as the majority of the old time cuffs you can open with a shoe string; by simply making a loop in the string, you can lasso the end of the screw in the lock and yank the bolt back, and so open the cuff in as clean a manner as if opened with the original key.

During my engagement at the "Establishment Yard" in Moscow, Russia, several officers stepped upon the stage to act as a committee, and one of them was very arrogant, and would insist on standing in the centre of the stage, thereby obstructing the view of the audience. In my politest Russian I asked him to step aside, but instead of so doing, he demanded how I, a common menial, dare even address him. I honestly did not know what he meant, and again asked him to step aside, and this time omitting "please." The officer became enraged, and planted himself right down in the midst of the footlights, refused to budge, and commanded me to go on with the performance.

By this time I knew that he was someone of high rank, from the way the rest of the folks about bowed, scraped, and fawned to him; so I thought that the best thing I could do was to inform the audience that unless this officer stood aside, I would refuse to go on with the show.

The officer only grinned, so I had the cabinet carried down stage, so that if the curtain was rung down, it could only come down to the top of my cabinet, and the siege started! There were many officials of high rank in the audience, and soon they started to protest, thinking that the show had been cut off. Eventually the manager was sent for, and explained things to me as best he could, but I remained obstinate, and insisted that unless this officer stood aside, I would not go on with the show.

It was explained to me that people working for a living, and especially performers, are not looked upon in a favourable light, as the majority of Russian men act simply as guides for their acts, and generally employ all kinds of women to sing in their troupes, and instead of being paid a salary by the theatrical managers, they have to pay for the privilege of having their troupes work the cabinets. Their cabinets are on the order of the Western wine-rooms, only on a very much higher scale.

In Russia the well-to-do folks come to dine in the cabinets, and if they do not wish to see an act on the stage or have missed a turn, they pay to have the act go through its performance in the cabinet.

The audience in the "Establishment Yard" was now aroused to fever pitch, and it was only on my explaining to the officer that in America I was rated as a millionaire, that he profusely apologized to the audience and to me, and stepped aside. This officer was the means of obtaining a performance for me at the Palace Kleinmichel, where I appeared several times in the presence of the Grand Duke Sergius (who was assassinated several years ago), and we became quite friendly. During one of my entertainments

the Grand Duchess assisted me in the rôle of Second Sight Artist; all this helped to make a name for me in Russia, which will not be forgotten for some time to come. Naturally this caused a great deal of jealousy amongst the Russian magicians, and one after the other started in to run down my performance. Robert Lenz claimed that he did the trunk trick thirty years ago, and because his wife was so much fatter, larger, and more awkward than Madame Houdini, he claimed that his trick was superior. He started in to do a lot of exposing, and one bright morning I arose and found all over the streets of Moscow bright red posters, reading, "Roberta, the Celebrated Exposer, will show you how to escape from all handcuffs, and from all locks."

I awaited his opening, and then saw his show. Of all the false representations and schemes for obtaining money under false pretence, "Roberta the Celebrated" took the bun, biscuit, and bake-shop.

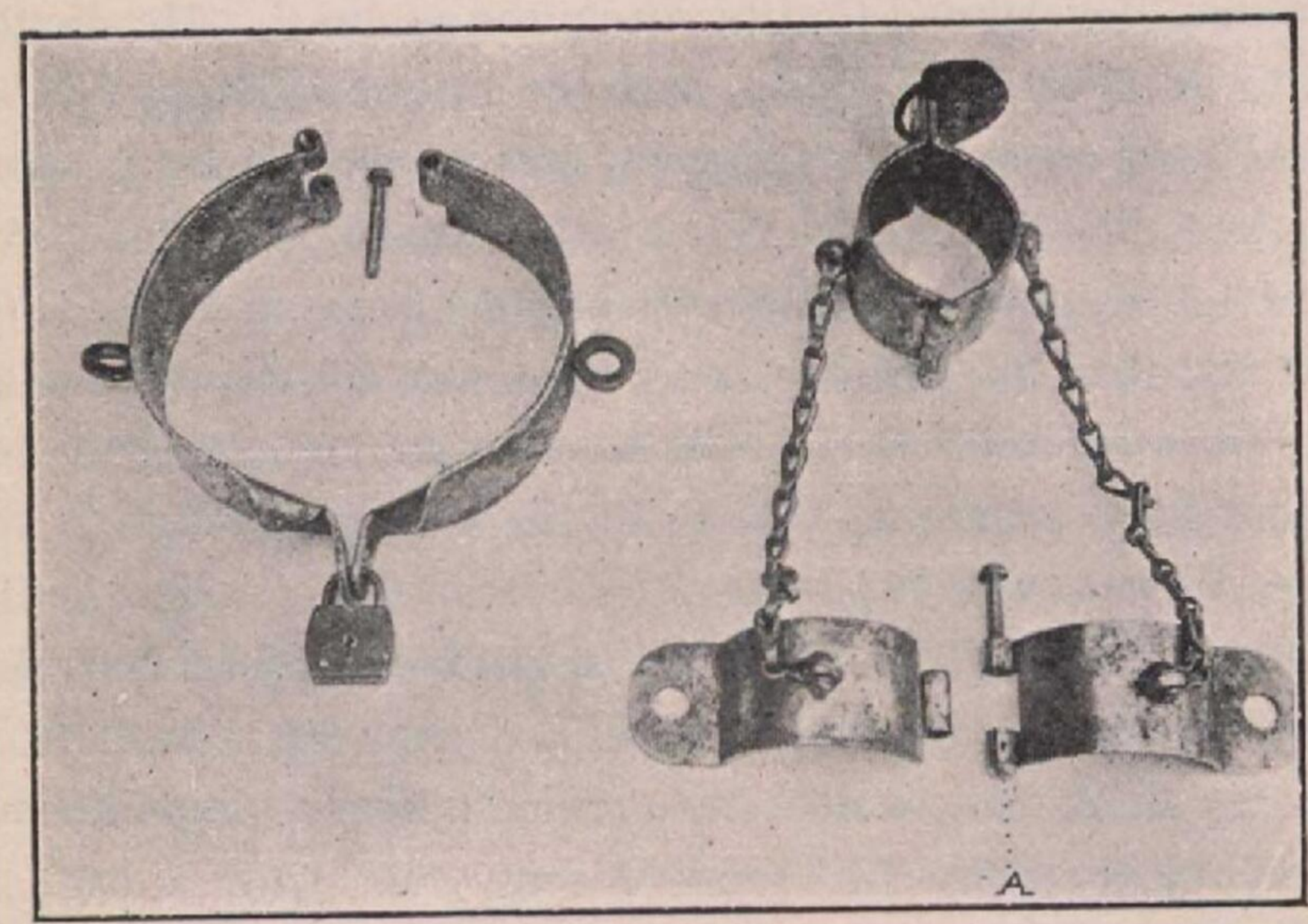
He did not even know what a handcuff key looked like, and his entire exposure consisted in removing a rivet from all his manacles, which had been specially prepared for the purpose.

In illustration you will note that the neck-cuff or collar is open at the hinge, and the "false" rivet is shaped like a screw; this is also shown on the handcuff.

On the cuff the dotted lines "A" show where the rivet is held, and the false screw or rivet is screwed down tight with a good pair of pliers, so that with the bare hands or fingers no one can unscrew this bolt.

Naturally you can allow anyone to bring along as many locks as they desire, and you can make your escape. All you have to do is to take out your pliers, unscrew the bolt,

and close it up again. With this arrangement, you can build a large cross, or gallows, and allow the committee to lock you with as many locks and chains as they wish to bring along, but be sure that they run the chains through the staple or place prepared to hold the locks. The collar which I invented and used years ago, when being compelled to give two or three performances, was one that even fooled the best magicians in the world. It was made of



light metal, and the fake part of it could not be moved either with the fingers or instrument. The secret was in the hinge, as I had a steel pin placed in the rivet (which was hollow), and this pin could only be moved by using a strong horseshoe magnet, which would pull it up to the top and allow the hinge to open. This method defies detection, and I can honestly recommend it to anyone wishing to make a good set of " fake " handcuffs, or make what is known as a " spirit collar."

CHAPTER IV

A FAKE OR SPOOF MANACLE

WHILE on the subject of prepared cuffs or those that are not standard or Regulation, I would like to call my reader's attention to a cuff that is being sold in England only to amateur magicians at the present time. It is sold for a sum equal to $6 (25 shillings), and is not worth that many farthings, as it is not a practical cuff; still it is being sold as "the greatest and most wonderful cuff ever invented." In my opinion (and I may allow myself the modesty of calling myself an "expert") this cuff is absolute rot. It cannot be opened with a key, and the instrument that you note illustrated at bottom of cuff can only be used to force a screw into the lock proper, or force the lock so that the regulation method of opening may be retarded, until the screw has been loosened. The seller of the cuff informs you to offer £1000 ($5000) to anyone who can escape from this cuff, but, alas, in a humorous way he forgets to inform you wherefrom you are to obtain this sum of money to offer. The lock proper is in the centre of the cuff, and what appears to be, or what ought to be, the keyhole is only a screw stop.

To open this cuff you can use either a long needle, a pin, a steel knitting needle, or anything that you can insert into

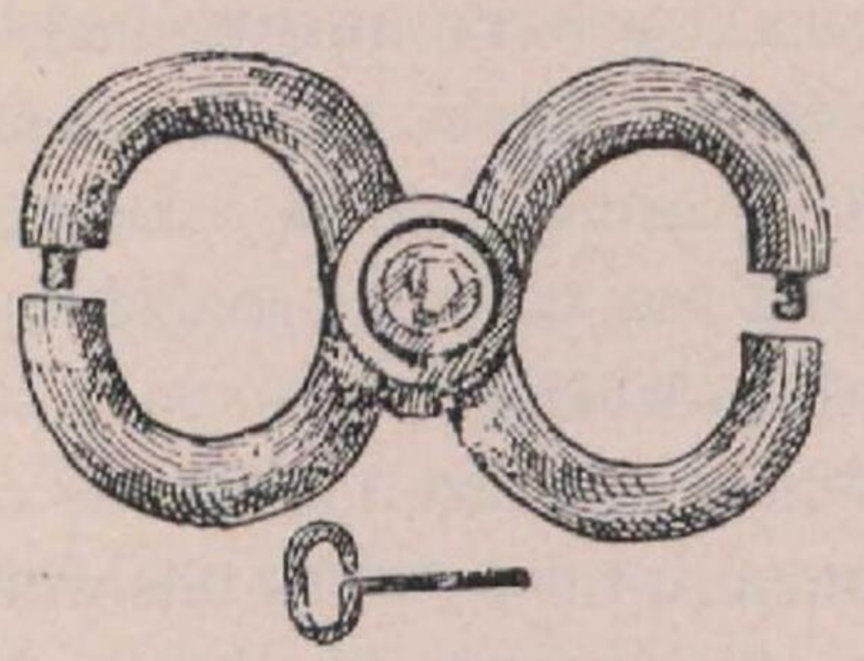
the lock, which, as stated before, is concealed in the centre of cuff, and by insertion of the pin it releases the lock, opening the cuff. And proper care must be taken so that the cuff is locked with the pin hole towards your fingers, for if the pin hole is towards your body, you are supposed to be unable to get out.

So that the reader can see just exactly what directions are sold with this cuff. I will reprint them verbatim :

" As stated, the secret lies in the special pair of faked handcuffs supplied herewith. Before giving secret it is advisable to take special warning to thoroughly master the working of the handcuffs, both opening and shutting, before placing them on your wrists, and I would further caution customers to always thoroughly test them just previous to each performance, to see that they are in working order. They should not, of course, be kept in a damp place, where they would be likely to rust.

" Secret : The handcuffs are sent out set as they should be at the commencement of each performance. The method of performing is as follows : You take the handcuffs and exhibit to the audience, telling a similar tale to that on catalogue, and drawing special attention to the immense strength and rigidity of same, allow some gentleman to place them on his wrists, close them with your thumb and fingers (you must not lock them on him), but holding them in position while you allow him to try various movements, such as taking an article from any of his pockets ; he will then see the difficulty of such operations. You then remove the cuffs from his wrists, and place them on your own ; but (this is a most important point to observe) in one of the grooves on the centre of one side of

the cuffs you will observe a small hole ; this must always be facing the audience when on your wrists, or if the hands are held up, uppermost. Of course, you must not look for the hole, but as the handcuffs have a large number of marks on one side different to the other, you will know at a glance on which side the hole exists. Having now the cuffs on your wrists, call attention to the fact that you have only one key, allow the audience to place this firmly in the keyhole, and give it about two turns to the left, at the same time pressing the cuffs together ; this will lock cuffs.



Fake or Spoof Manacle

Now allow them to bind tape round the portion nearest the keyhole and over the keyhole itself ; then apply sealing wax and mark same. The cuffs are now securely locked, and any person may be allowed to examine same. The performer now retires to his cabinet or tent.

" Have concealed either in the top of your boot or in a little special pocket in the bottom of trouser leg (one in each leg preferable), you will find you are easily able to obtain possession of a fake ; taking it between the fingers and thumb of right hand, and holding it by the wooden handle, now with the assistance of the fingers of the left hand you will find with very little practice you can easily

place the steel pin in the little hole in groove; hold it in that position while you place the left cuff between your knees and press the cuff to (they will not open easily unless they are pressed in this way); now press little fake, and while pressed fully down give a side strain either way and open cuffs; come forward, showing cuffs opened, with seal and tape intact; take back key, place in lock, close cuffs, which really now lock of themselves, but give key a turn to make believe key locks them. To reset for working, place fake in hole, press and open cuffs, place key in keyhole, looking down hole from opposite end, to be sure that it is working correctly; give about two complete turns to the right. This, if properly done, should allow cuffs to close within a little less than one-sixteenth of an inch, but should prevent them locking.

"Caution: When cuffs are locked, be careful never to have the key turned to the right, as this will strain the lock. This may seem rather a long description, but you will see (with cuffs in your hands) in a few minutes the working, which is quite simple. The real lock, of course, is secretly contained in the centre, that which is in the keyhole being only a screw stop. If you close the cuffs in the ordinary way, then with key give it one or two turns to the right, the lock is slightly strained apart, and the cuffs will not then open, even with fake, until key has been turned again to left. Placed on a person's wrists in this position, you could defy him to release himself, even though he had and knew how to use the fake."

I think it may further interest the reader to have presented some of the various artifices relative to fake handcuffs and rivets I met in my travels. I will only explain

them as detected by myself, and as all bear improving, you can change the methods to suit your convenience. In Germany there is a man who calls himself Kleppini. He is either a crazy man or a handcuff man on the style of the once well-known Cherry Sisters, who were such wretchedly poor actresses they drew a large salary and large crowds simply to see how really bad they were. (James Owen O'Conner, I am told, used to have a wire netting spread across the stage, so that the egg, fruit, and vegetables could not reach him. Boys circulated amongst the audience selling material to throw on the stage, etc.) This Kleppini belongs to this category. He has a shirt-front jammed full of medals, and a very large stage "diamond" star hanging on a red ribbon; across his collar he has in golden letters reading, "The Champion of all Champions of Handcuff Kings." The last time I saw him in Dortmund, Germany, he had four medals pinned behind his back.

He has been closed in innumerable places, and one manager hires him simply to cause a lot of talk, pays him his salary, and then allows the audience to jeer at him. Strange to say, in Stockholm this man finished his engagement, and now there is nothing too bombastic for him to say or do. His handcuffing trick is to allow you to bring along your own locks, and you can hang these on his Chinese manacles.

His Chinese manacles were nothing more nor less than a common set of hand and foot irons, on which you could hang your own locks.

Kleppini's secret was to take a pair of strong cutting pliers and file, cut away the original rivet, and replace it with a new rivet.

In case anyone would bring a handcuff instead of a lock, he would with great presence of mind say, "Pardon me, sir, but will you please wait with your cuff until the second part of my entertainment, then I shall only be too pleased to accept your handcuffs." Naturally the party bringing the cuff would wait. Kleppini would do his act, and down would come the curtain. The committee would be dismissed, and whoever brought a cuff would simply have to

CAPT. E. D. BEAN

Capt. E. D. Bean, inventor of Police Restraints bearing his name. Died December 13, 1908. Capt. Bean personally gave me the reproduced photo, also facts and dates. This is the last photo of him, taken especially for this book.

grin at the manner in which they had been "taken in" by a most illiterate man.

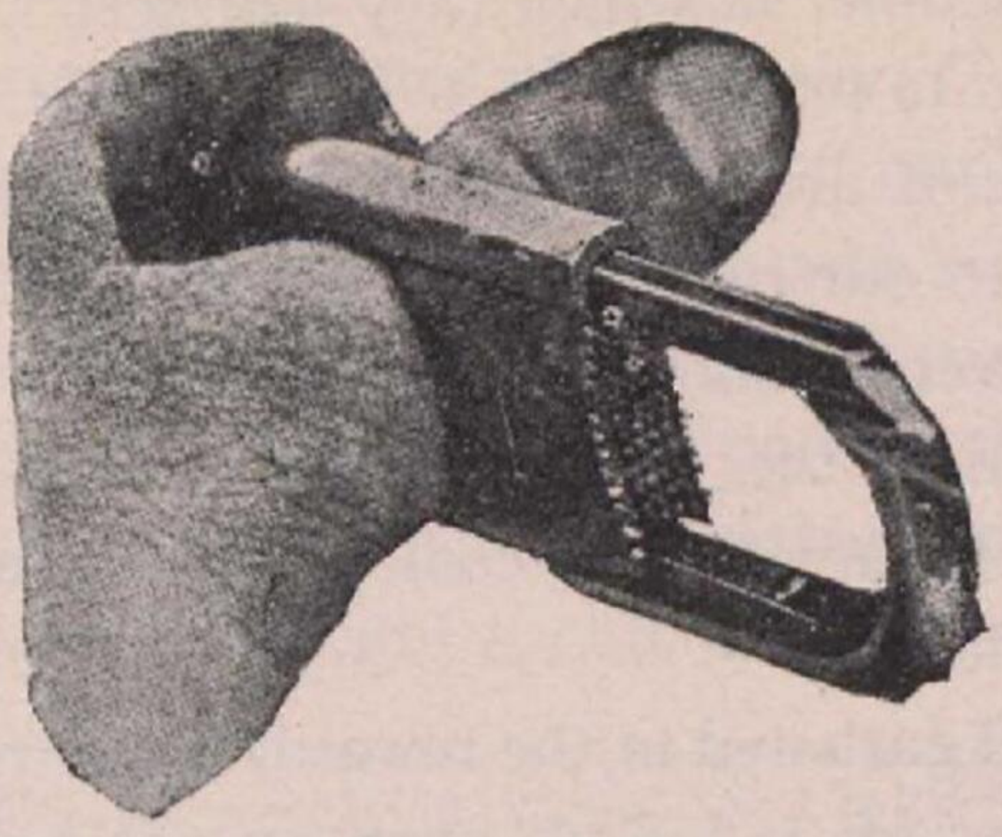
The handcuff article would never be complete without introducing to our readers Capt. E. D. Bean, the inventor of almost every police equipment now in general use; also inventor of the world-famous Bean Giant Cuff; he offered $500 to anyone who could release himself from this, even with a key.

After I had gathered in the reward, it was reduced to $50, and now the cuff is looked upon as not being invincible, with the exception of certain makes that are being used by the United States Government, and several pair now being used by my brother, Theo. Hardeen, who at present is touring Great Britain.

Captain E. D. Bean was born in Hollis, Maine, July 29, 1838. He gained his rank as captain during the Civil War in the United States, 1861–5. Was on the police department service over ten years, and during all this time worked faithfully perfecting all the restraint implements for the use of the police department, and through his efforts the handcuff became a practical police instrument.

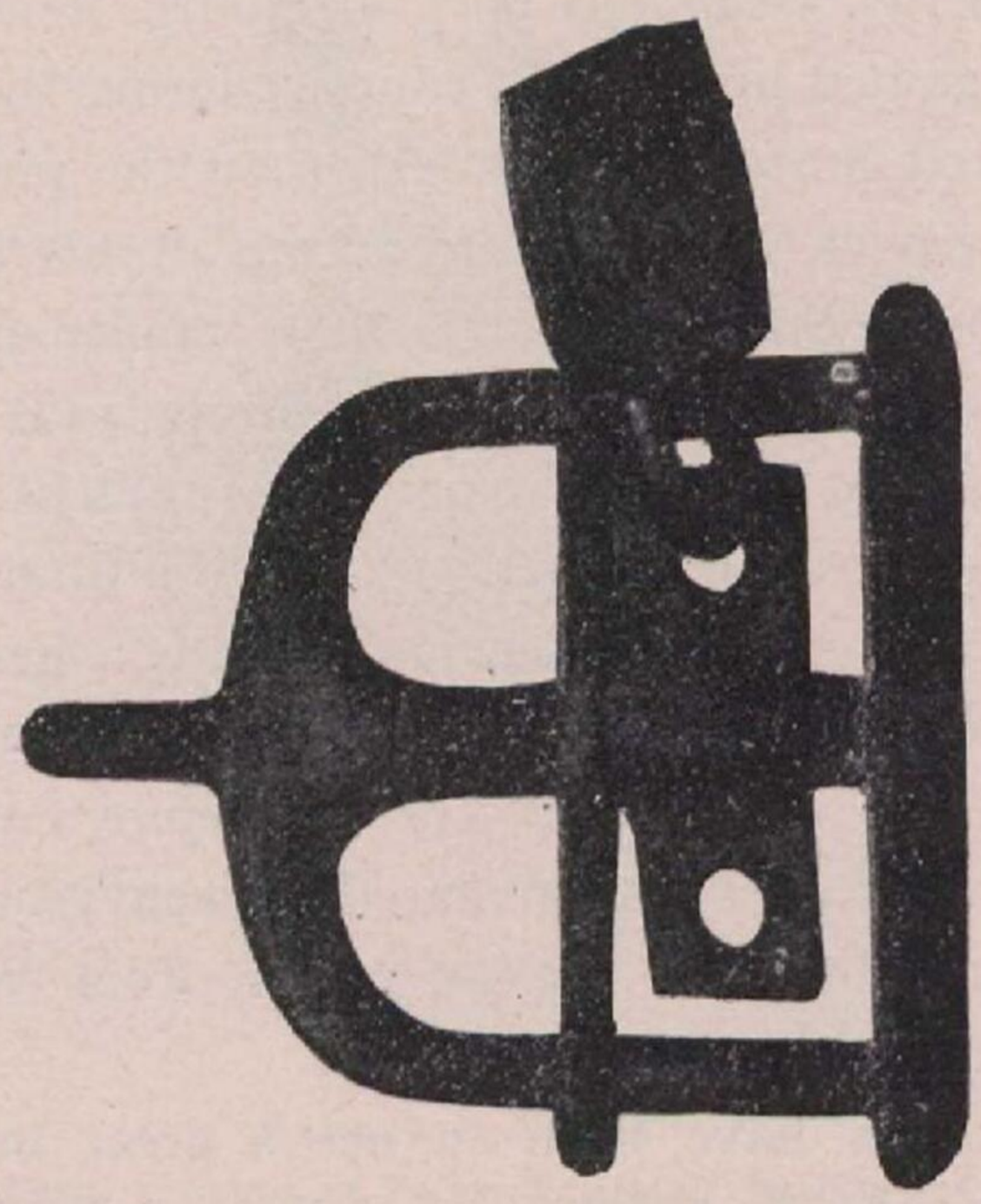
The lightest restraint in actual use is the thumb cuff, and from illustration you can see just exactly what it is, and how it is used. Mr. P. C. Holland, the great criminalogist of Chicago and editor of "The Detective," informs me that this thumb cuff was invented sixteen years ago, and that the inventor died on his return from Washington, after having had his patent granted.

Thumb-screws have been in use a great many years, and were the most frequent in use at the Spanish Inquisition, and at the French Bastille.



Thumb Cuff

In freeing yourself from the old-time thumb-screws it is not a difficult matter to open the smaller locks used with a common lock-pick.



Thumb-screw used in the Bastille, Paris

CHAPTER V

AMERICAN MANACLES

I SHALL now illustrate and describe some of the best-known makes of manacles now in use in the United States of America.

Illustration No. 1

This is a photograph of a pair of handcuffs invented by Herman Ahrend, April 27, 1880, and are made by a firm in Newark. The leg-irons are of the "A. Rankin," Philadelphia pattern. The two form a unique manacle to fasten the hands and feet together.

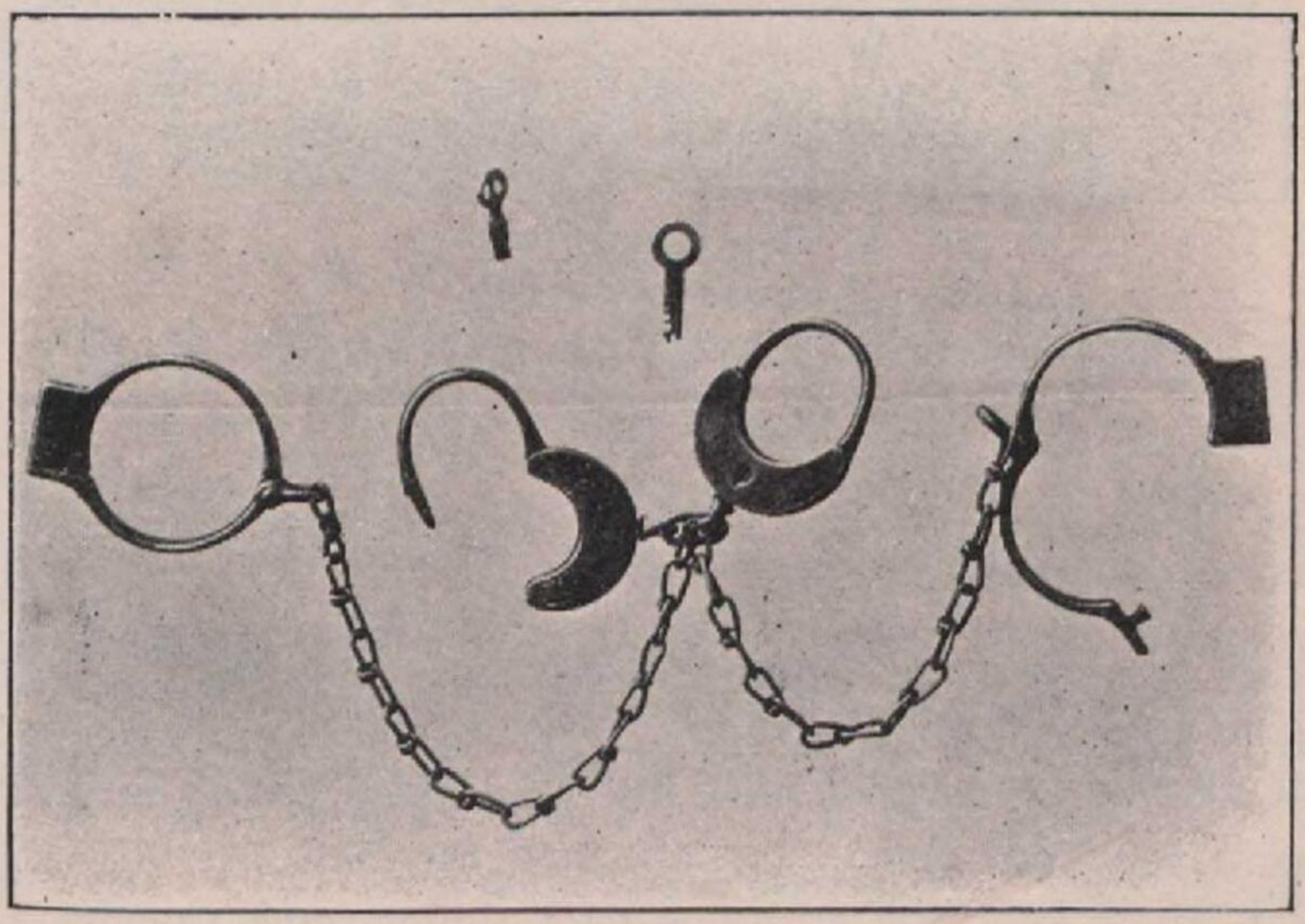


Illustration No. 1

Illustration No. 2

There are dozens of different patterns of ratchets or cuffs that are adjustable to any size wrists ; the most in service are (A) the Tower and Lyon Double Lock, (C) the Cobb 1900 Cuff, (B) the cuff called Pinkerton Detective Cuff (I suppose it is called by that name because Pinkerton,

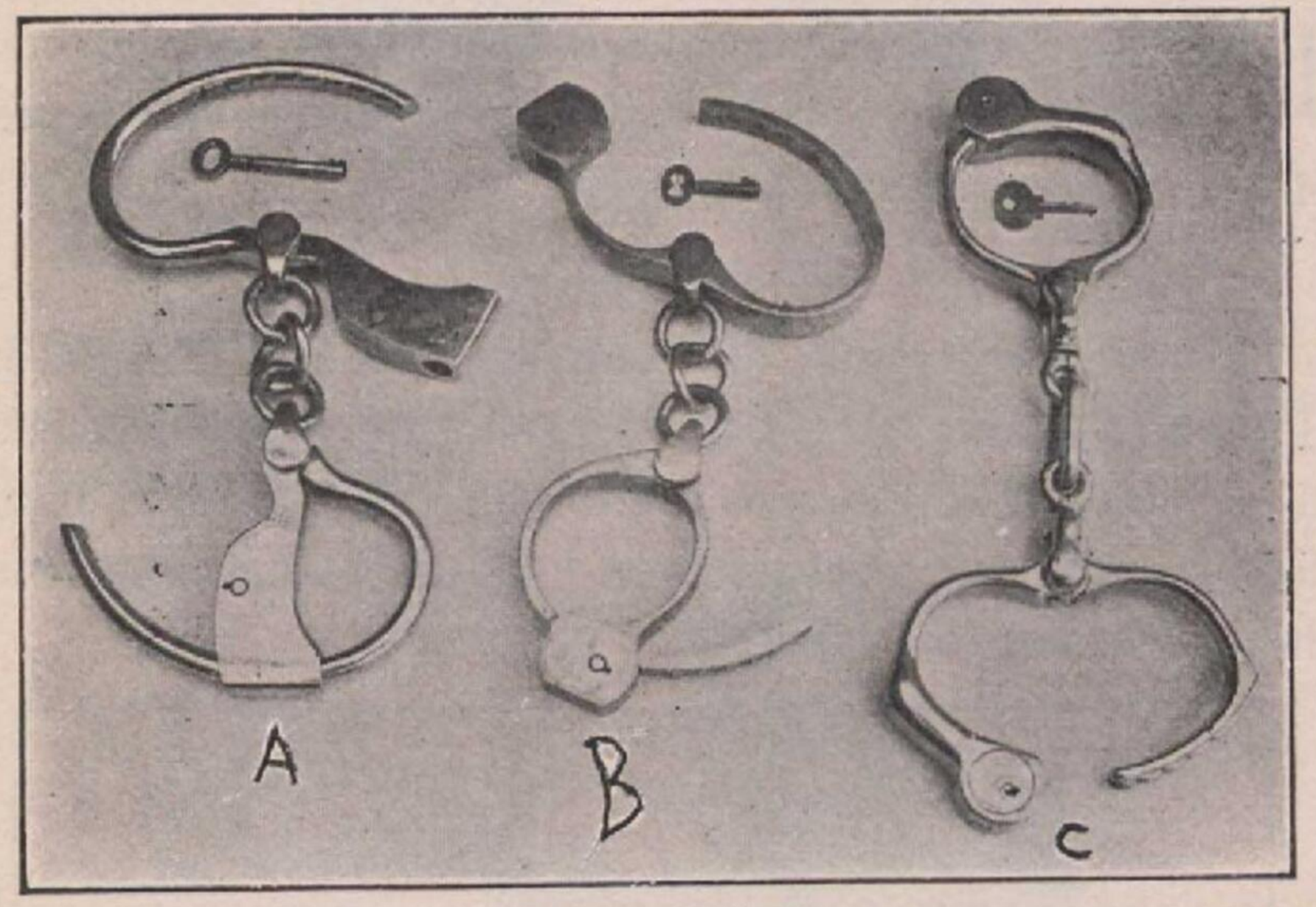


Illustration No. 2

the famous detective, never had anything to do with it), and of all the cuffs that I have ever had the fortune to be locked in, they are the limit. I wish all cuffs were as easy to manipulate as this cuff. The early ratchets were invented about 1862 by William V. Adams, and I often meet with this cuff ; W. Kimball's Handcuff was placed on the market (and never sold) in 1860 ; some officer in Newark has a very fine pair ; he informed me that he takes pride in having held all the handcuff kings and queens that came his way. I beat it in less than two minutes ; it is

a fairly secure cuff. In 1861 A. Delestatius brought out a cuff which looks something like A. Rankin's, but Rankin did not patent his cuff, with a few improvements, until 1862.

The majority of the ratchet cuffs can be opened by a small piece of apparatus as shown in illustration No. 3, which consists of a strip of fine steel about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide, with a knob on the end. This is inserted

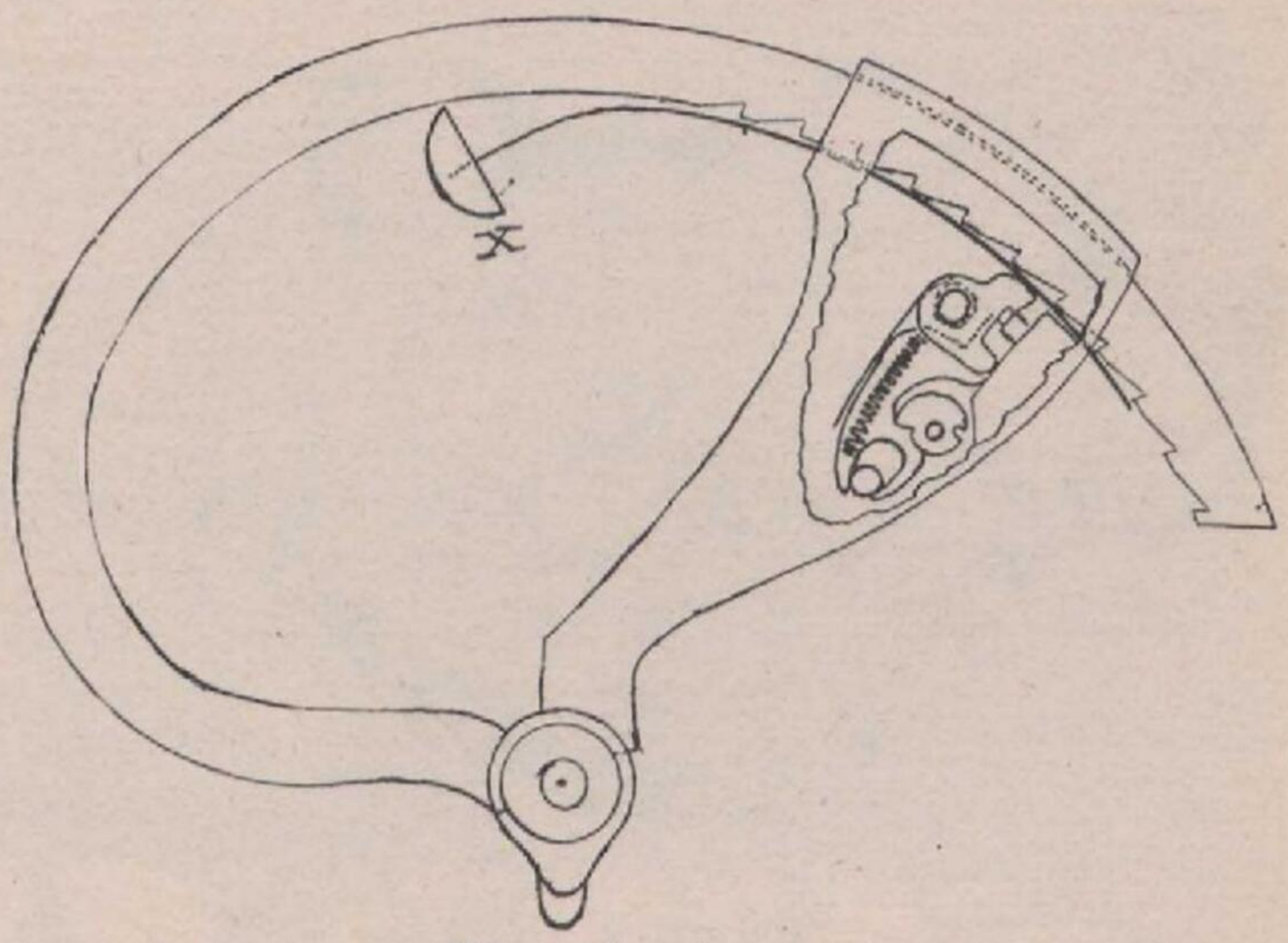


Illustration No. 3

through the handcuff where the lock snaps, X showing position of apparatus when inserted in cuff. On the double lock ratchets when they are double-locked, this steel is useless.

This double lock ratchet handcuff is also the most dangerous handcuff, for if you break the key or anything on the lock, the cuff must be cut off from the wrist. It cannot be forced back with the above steels; still the old-time ratchet can be opened with the spring steel, as it only locks once.

One good key, which may be called a master key, will, however, open almost all double-lock ratchets.

Illustration No. 4

The cuffs shown in this illustration are : (D) Boston Bean Prison Cuff, (E) The Bean Giant, and (F) the Bean Prison Leg-iron. The above cuffs are the inventions of Capt. E. D. Bean, of Boston, who at one time offered $500 to

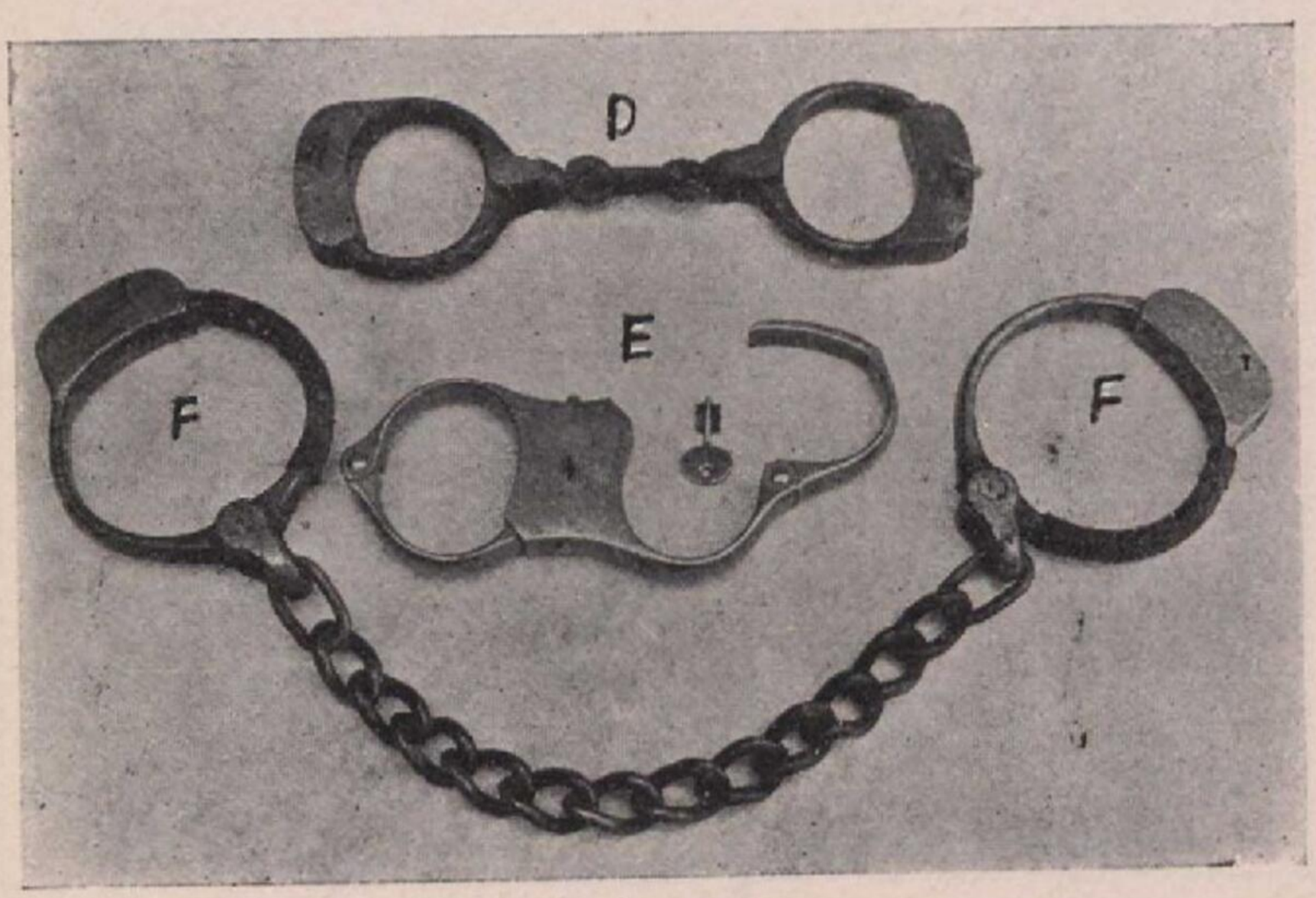


Illustration No. 4

anyone that could escape from the cuff, with or without the key ; slipping the hands were barred. I escaped from this cuff in less than ten minutes, and now if it takes me twenty-five seconds, it appears a long time.

The Boston Cuff requires a piece of spring-like apparatus, as in illustration No. 3, but with a double tooth. To open the " Bean Giant " you must make use of an extension key so as to reach keyhole, or have a key fixed securely in your cabinet, where you can get at it easy.

It is a cuff much used by fraudulent spirit mediums. All these handcuffs that can be opened by the aid of a piece of

spring steel are very useful, inasmuch as they can be brought up to performers with keyholes plugged, sealed, and soldered, and, as a result, the release from same is most mystifying and creates excitement.

Illustration No. 5.

(G) American Army—requiring two keys to open. (H) American Prison Adjustable Leg-irons. These are one of the few irons that are double-locked. (I) The "Guiteau"

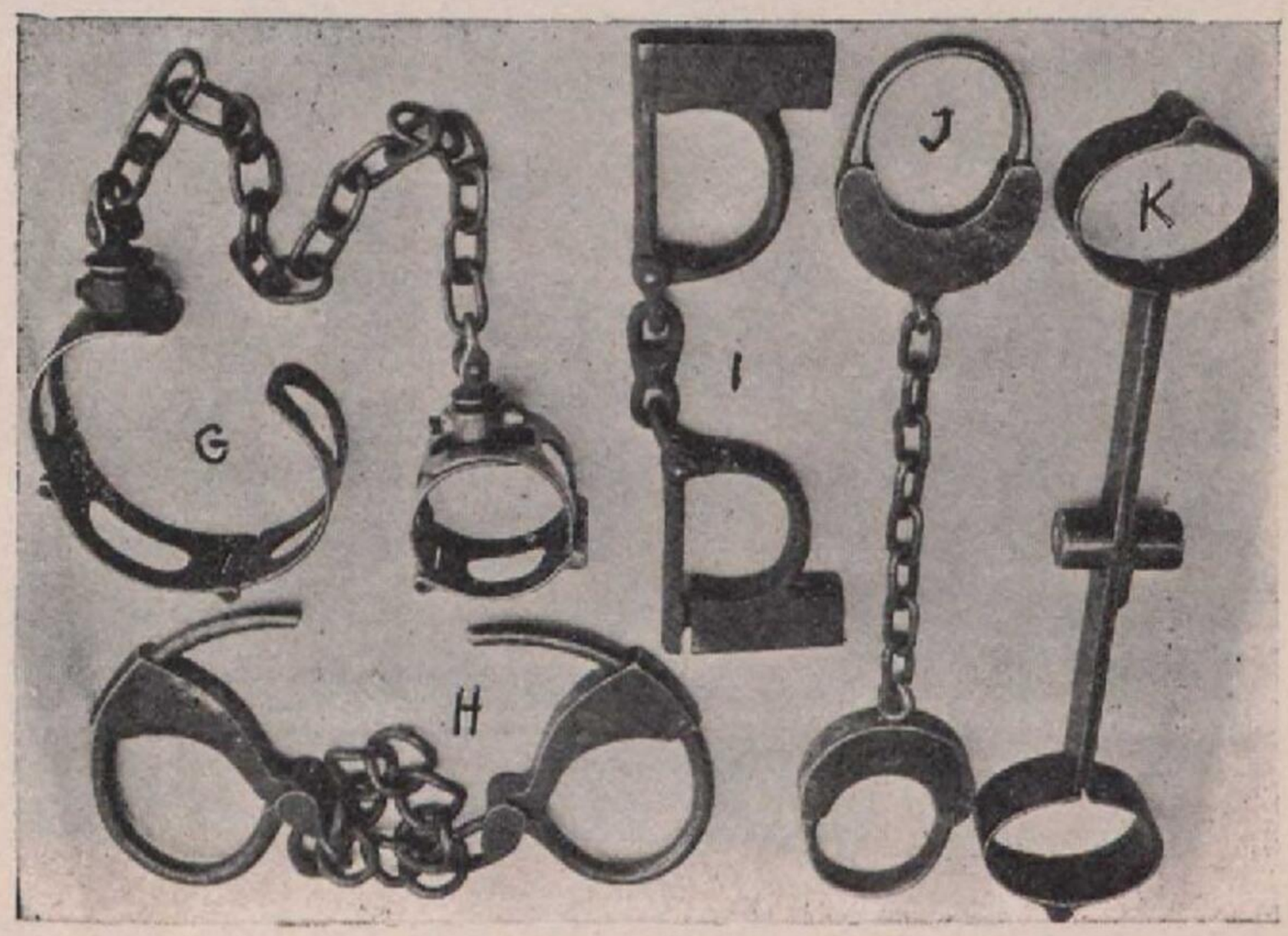


Illustration No. 5

made by Rankin & Co., Philadelphia. Such was the style of cuff which I have been informed was used on Guiteau, the murderer of President Garfield, who was afterwards hanged for this crime. It is a formidable cuff, and very difficult, as it requires a key within a key to open. In the year 1900 I visited the maker of these cuffs, and asked him to open them, but he failed to do so; I, however, succeeded. These cuffs, made rigid by having a bar of iron fixed so

that a cuff was on each end of the bar, were used during the Civil War on those who had received bounty money and had run away; hence they were designated "The Bounty Jumper." They are very scarce. Although they lock easily, few understood how to open them, and hundreds of them had to be broken off the prisoners' wrists. (J) The Jersey Cuff. (K) The Lilly Iron. This cuff was invented

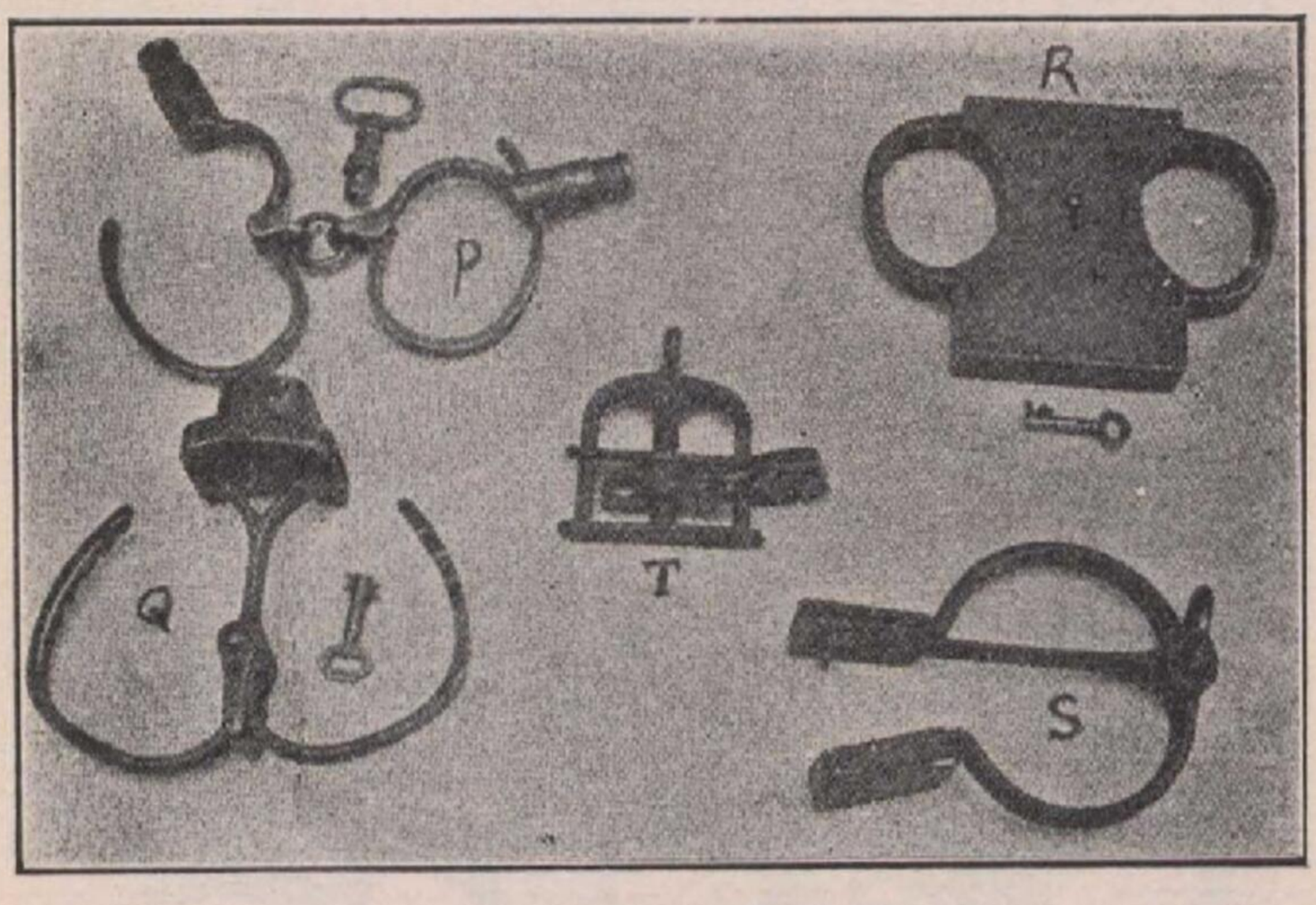


Illustration No. 6

by Captain Lilly, U.S. Army. He was the first man that ever put them on, and, through a strange irony of fate, he died with a pair on him. It is a Regulation cuff—now obsolete in the Army—but is in use at present in the U.S. Navy.

Illustration No. 6

(P) Is a South Germar Cuff resembling the English Regulation.

(Q) The Berliner. This is made in four styles, and also made with a belt for strapping hands to sides of the body.

The escape is made by working your hands with the belts, on down the legs and over the feet, then you step out.

(R) Is the Houdini Bell Lock Handcuff (my invention); a bell rings when the cuff is locked or unlocked.

(S) Spanish Manacle used on prisoners about 1600 when sentenced to be burned to death.

(T) Thumb-screw used in the Bastille, Paris.

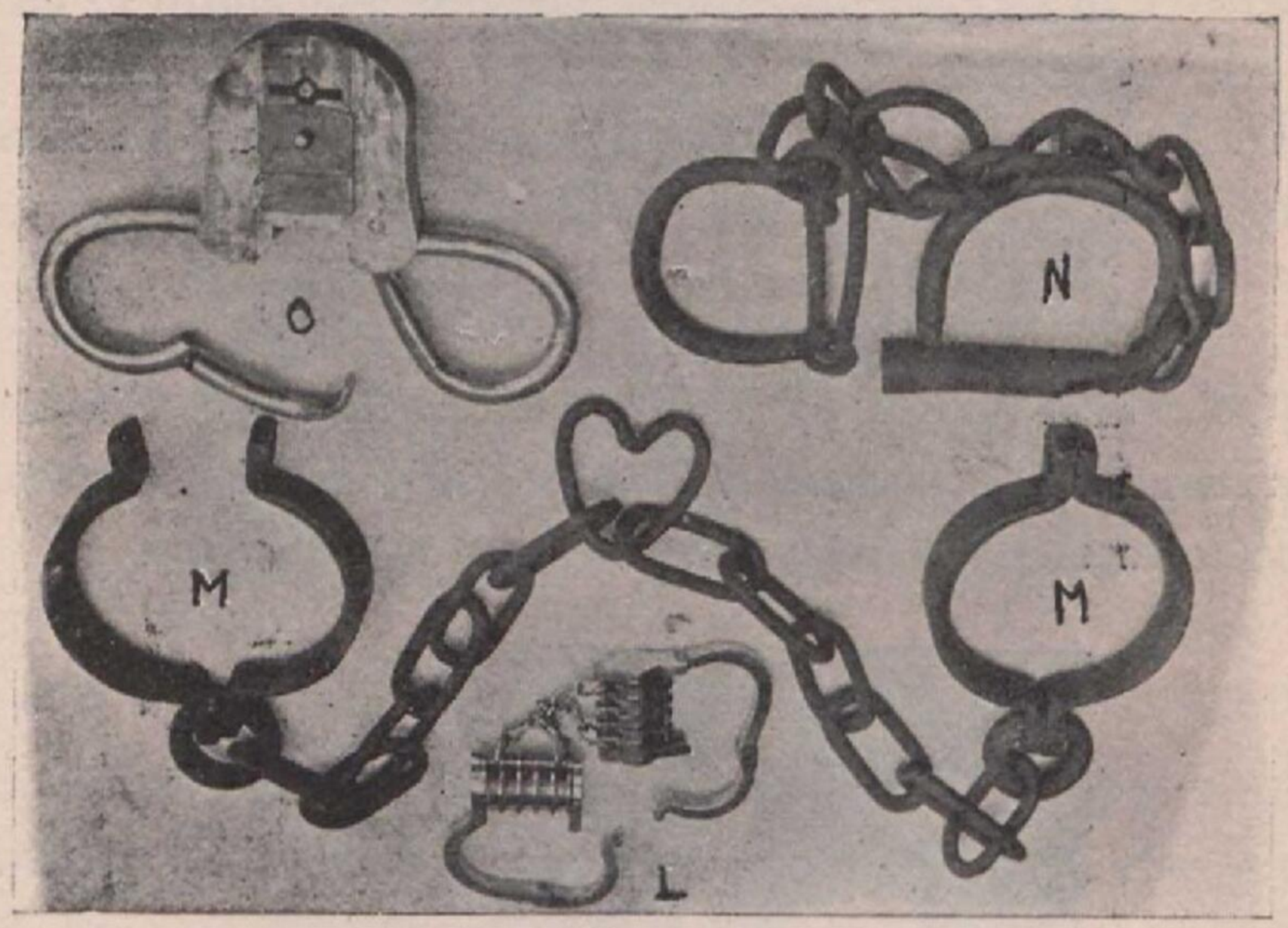


Illustration No. 7

Among the Continental makes may be mentioned (L) the French Cuff with letter lock. (M) Russian Leg-irons as used on murderers. These irons are not locked, but *riveted* on to the culprit's ankles. The device of a heart in centre denotes that the wearer is a life prisoner. In Russia there is no capital punishment. Murderers are rewarded with life sentence down in the Siberian mines. The different crimes are designated by various devices, viz.: a spade, club, or diamond on the centre of chain. The prisoners are *posi-*

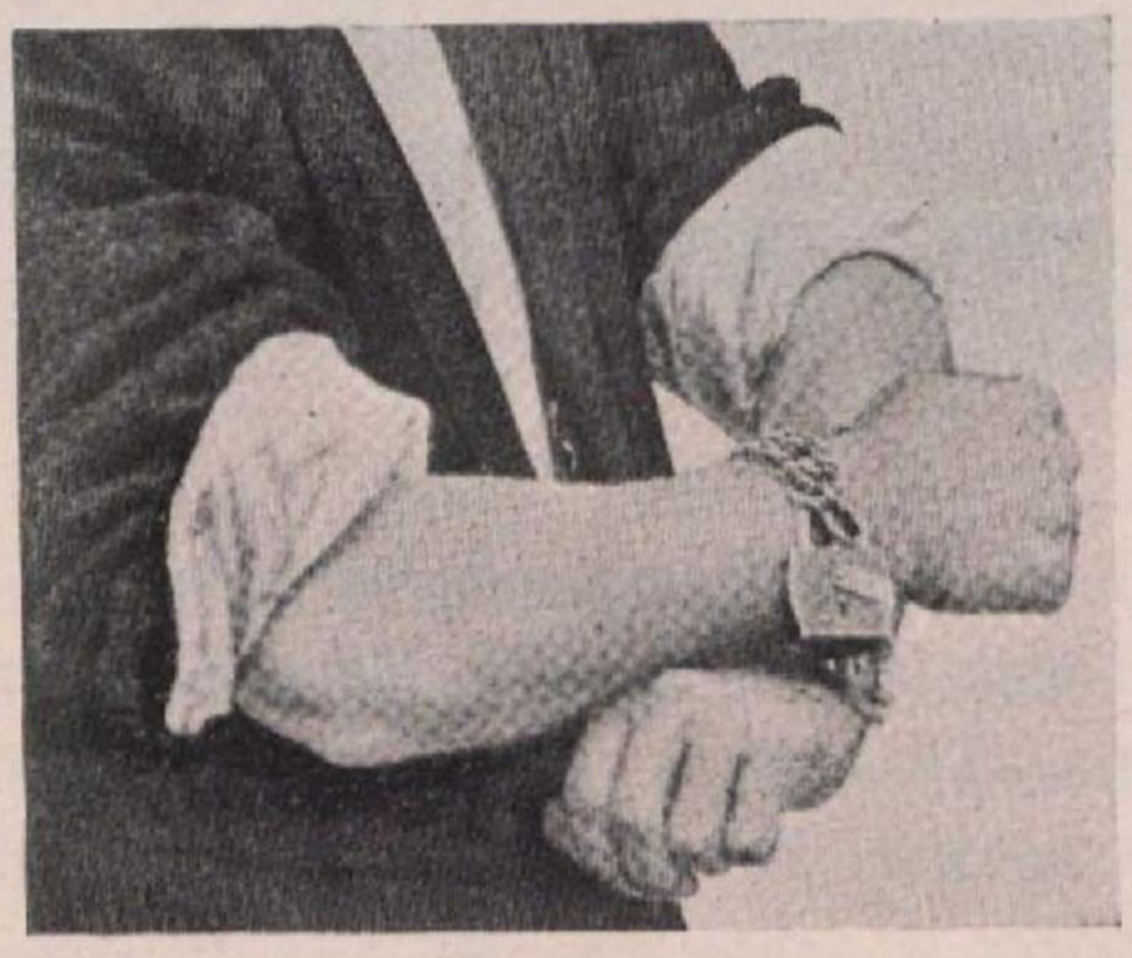
tively riveted to a coal car down in the mines and are never separated from the car until death sets him free by taking the wearied soul from the tortured body ; they sleep alongside the track on which the coal cars run.

(N) Egyptian Hand and Leg-iron. The original from which this photograph is taken is hundreds of years old. When these irons were made, locks were very scarce and expensive in Egypt—these were made by the smith to lock with a wedge.

(O) The latest Russian Manacle, 1902, one of the most complicated locks ever used in a handcuff.

THE GERMAN TRANSPORT CHAIN

Just at this juncture it is not out of place to describe the German transport chain, which is used by the German police almost exclusively for transporting prisoners.



The way the transport chain should be fastened on the wrist

The chain has two rings, one for each hand, one being located at the end of the chain and the other in the centre. One lock is utilized for securing both hands. In the illus-

tration you will note that the chain entwines both wrists, which rest one above the other.

After the chain has been fastened on your wrist, as in the

Pulling the first hand out by sheer strength, using the teeth as an aid

illustration, the first movement is to bring the arms akimbo, thereby causing one hand to lay lengthwise on the other, i.e. the fingers of both hands pointing towards the elbows, and by sheer force of strength you extricate yourself from the chain, one hand at a time.

Freeing the second hand with the aid of the one that was first slipped out of the chain

CHAPTER VI

FRENCH LETTER CUFF

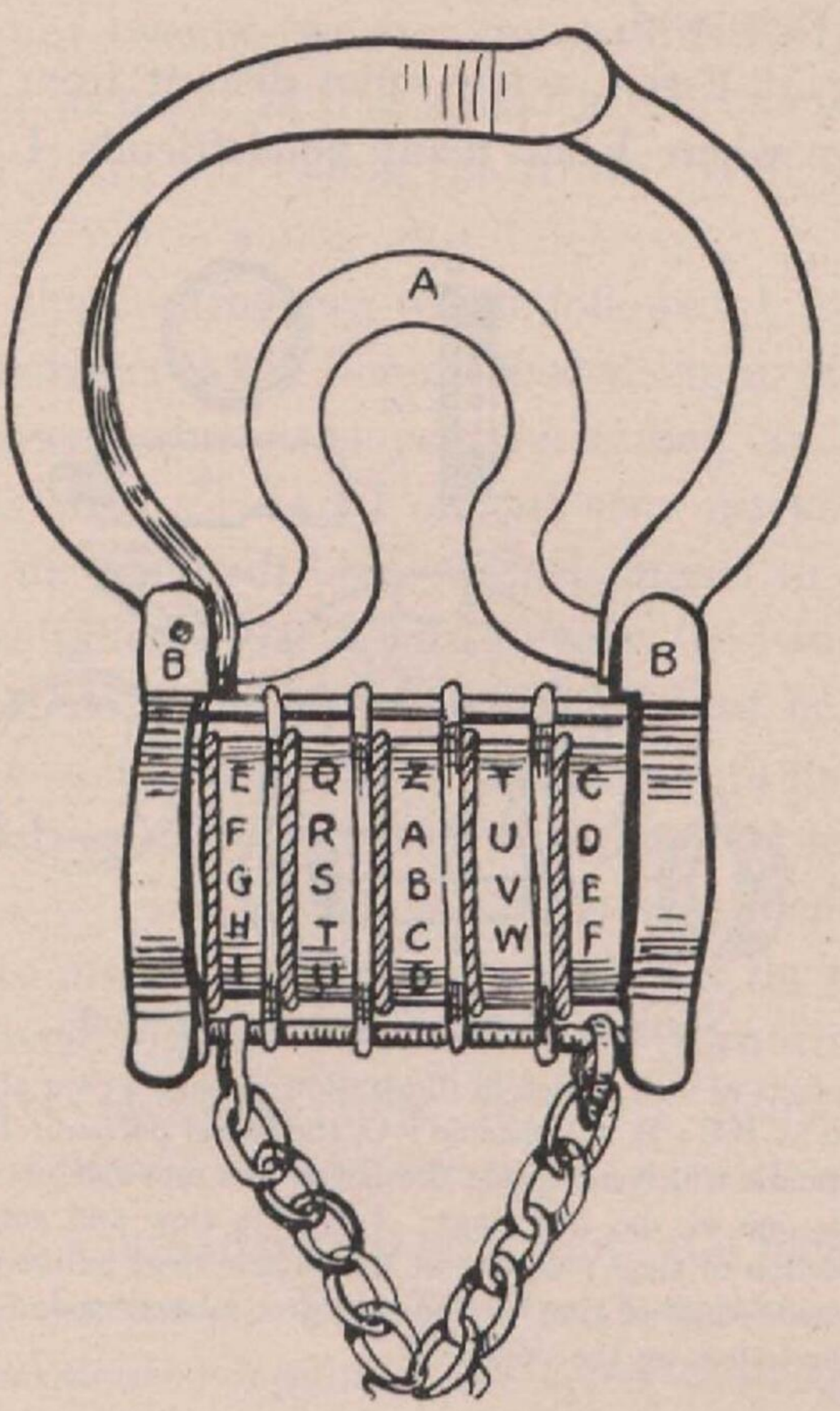
TO open the French letter lock (see page 43) get a strong spring, insert it between the two ends of the cuff at BB in the illustration, which will keep both ends on a tension all the time, and gradually move the letters until you hear a slight click. This you continue to do, until all the letters forming the word or cipher have been found, and then the lock is automatically opened by the pressure of the spring. The finer the workmanship, the harder is the lock to open; but I have never seen any with five or six letters that I have failed to open.

This mention of the French letter cuff reminds me of one of the most exciting and amusing incidents of my Continental tour, which I trust will interest my readers.

You will recall that I mentioned an eccentric handcuff performer who calls himself Kleppini. This man, with the French letter lock, interrupted my engagement with the Circus Corty Althoff in June, 1902, and brought about one of the most interesting contests that ever fell to my lot.

We were touring Holland, when a friend sent me a bill and newspaper clipping, announcing in huge, fat type that Kleppini was about to appear at Circus Sidoli, in Dortmund,

Germany, after returning from Holland, where he had defeated the American, Houdini, at his own game. Kleppini further claimed that I had handcuffed him, only to see him



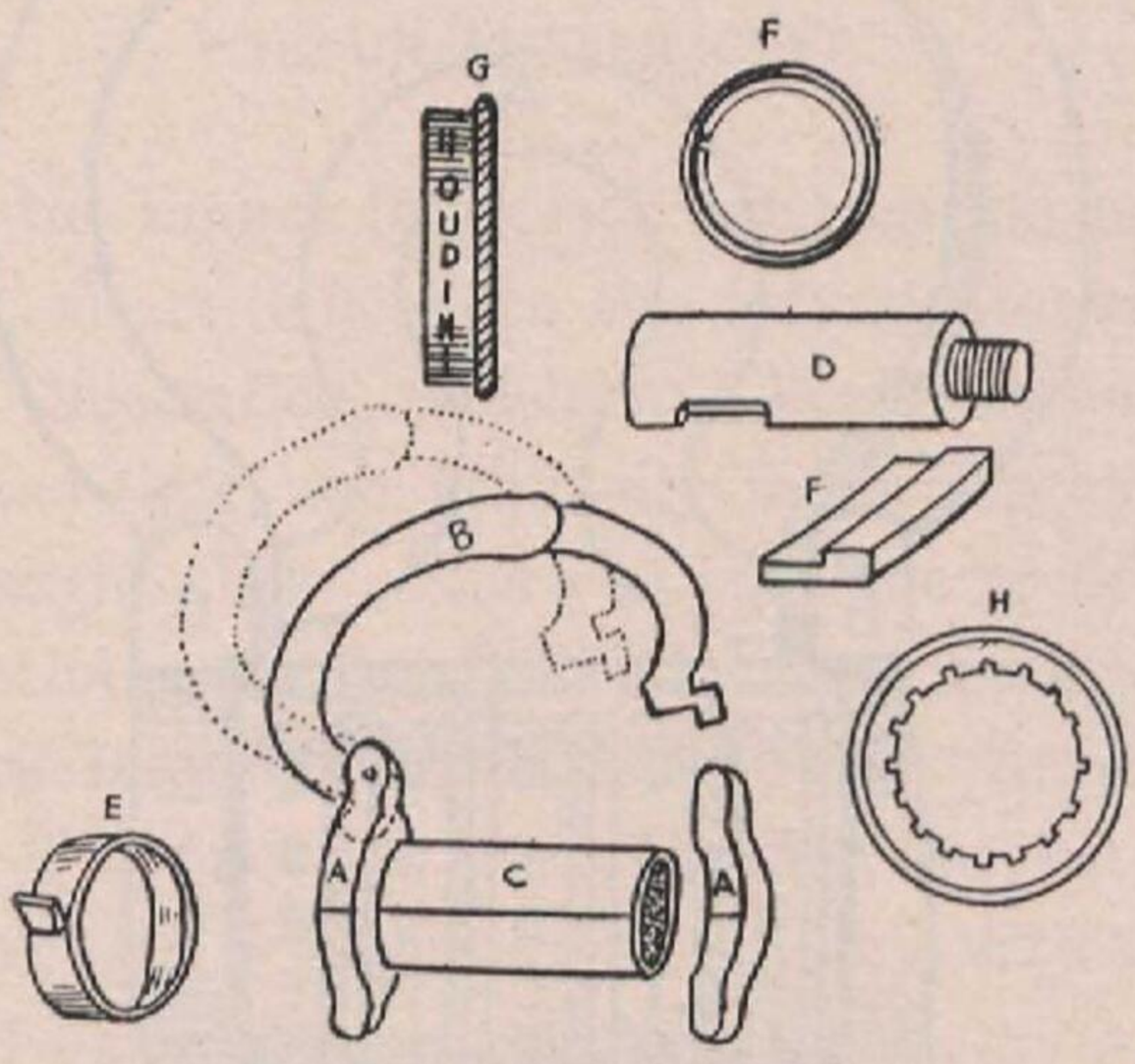
Method of opening the French Letter Lock, strong spring A, in place between both ends of cuff at B B

escape, while I had met with defeat when handcuffed by him.

This was more than pride could endure. I had a heated

argument with my Herr Director, Althoff, who at first refused to allow me to follow up Kleppini and force him to retract; but when I said it was leave of absence or quit for good, he yielded, granted me five days' leave, and I left at once for Dortmund.

Arriving at Essen, a few miles distant from Dortmund, and a town where I had many good friends, I first visited



Sections of the French Letter Cuff

AA, ends of lock, which in illustration on page 43 are alluded to as B B; B, the shackle; C, the barrel portion; D, the spindle which fits inside the barrel in a movable position; E, one of the five rings; F F, side view and enlarged section of rings; G, one of the outside rings lettered; H, inside view of ring G, showing grooves corresponding to the letters on the outside.

a barber and had him glue a false moustache on my lip, and so fix my hair that I looked like an old man. Then with my small grip filled with "handcuff-king-defeaters," I was off to Dortmund and the circus, where I found the attendance very light.

Kleppini appeared, making his speech in which he claimed

to have defeated me. Instantly I was on my feet, crying "Nicht wahr," meaning "Not true." He asked how I knew this, and I said I was in the know, whereupon he finally offered to wager that he was right. With that I took a flying leap of twenty-two feet downwards to the centre of the ring or menage, as it is called in Germany, and cried, "You say I am not telling the truth. Well, look! I am Houdini!"

During the controversy which followed I told Kleppini and his manager what honest folk thought of performers and managers who employed misleading and untruthful advertising matter; and I offered 5000 marks if Kleppini would let me handcuff him. Also I offered to escape from his Chinese pillory. He tried to evade the issue, saying he would look me up later, but I insisted that he deposit the money before he started, as I had mine with me.

Herr Director Sidoli refused to make good his advertisements and to back Kleppini for the sum mentioned, so I returned to my seat, and the audience left the circus building in droves, disgusted by the misrepresentations.

The next morning, June 18, Herr Reutter, business manager of the circus, came to my hotel with a proposition that I should engage myself one night for a duel with Kleppini, which I refused. Herr Reutter then asked me whether I would handcuff Kleppini if the latter challenged me, and I replied that this I would certainly do. So he begged me to remain one day longer, not allowing anyone to know of my presence in town, however. As I had been working steadily since leaving New York, I was in sad need of rest, so I waited all day in my room, having all meals sent to me. On the morning of June 19 I arose with the lark—to

face huge bills announcing : " Houdini challenged and will appear at the Circus Ceasur Sidoli this evening. Kleppini will allow himself to be handcuffed and will immediately free himself."

I was more amused than angry. I simply polished my various handcuffs, oiled the mechanism and waited.

Kleppini sent for me. I refused to go to him. He called at the hotel. I would not receive him. Manager Reutter then came to me and asked me what cuffs I intended to lock on his star. I said he was at liberty to choose the cuff to be used, and pointed to the twelve cuffs laid out for his inspection.

There was one pair of French letter cuffs that caught his fancy, and I permitted him to examine them closely. Reutter then inquired in a peculiar tone, as if feigning indifference : " What letters or word opens this cuff ? "

I perceived his trick at once, and securing his promise that he would not tell Kleppini, I replied, " Clefs," which means keys. At the same time I showed him just how to work them. He fell into the trap, and asked me whether he might take these cuffs for Herr Director Sidoli to examine them before the performance, and I told him he was quite at liberty to do so, provided they were not shown to Kleppini. This promise also was given, and he departed, keeping the cuffs in his possession four hours. Of course I knew that during this time Kleppini was familiarizing himself with the cuffs, but I still had a trick up my own sleeve.

That night at the circus I occupied a box seat, and when Kleppini threw out his daring challenge, I entered the ring with my bag of cuffs. I said that I had no objection to his

advertising his willingness to let me handcuff him, but I did object to his stating he could get out until he had made good. The audience was with me, and I told him to take his choice of the twelve cuffs. As I anticipated, he sprang like a tiger on the French letter cuff. He had taken them closed, and ran with feverish haste into his cabinet. He

Engelberto Kleppini

remained within about three minutes, whereupon I cried: "Ladies and gentlemen, do not let him tell you that the cuffs have been locked. They are open. He will return and say he opened them."

This brought him out of his cabinet waving the cuffs like a crazy man, and crying, "I will open these cuffs. I challenge Houdini to lock them on me. I'll show him that it is us Germans who lead the world."

As he had tried the cuffs in the cabinet, he was positive that he could beat them. And I was just as positive that the opposite conditions would prevail. He now started to goad me into locking them on quickly, pressing me all over the circus. So violent were my efforts, that my heart beat like a trip hammer, and my face turned pale from exertion. From this Kleppini gathered that I thought myself even then defeated. So he walked to the centre of the ring, with the handcuffs locked upon him, and cried: "After I open these handcuffs, I will allow Madame Kleppini to open them. She is very clever in this branch of work, and she will open them in five seconds."

I smiled grimly and took the floor.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you can all go home. I do not lock a cuff on a man merely to let him escape. If he tries this cuff until doomsday, he cannot open it. To prove this, though the regular closing time of the circus is 10.30, I will allow him to remain here until 2.30."

He went into his cabinet at nine o'clock. When the big ballet feature came on at 9.30, he was not ready. At 11, almost the entire audience had gone, and Kleppini was still in his cabinet. Herr Director Sidoli became enraged, and instructed his servants to "out with Kleppini," and they lifted the cabinet up bodily and threw it over. Kleppini ran like a hunted animal into the manager's dressing-room. The rest of the show might have gone on, but the audience rose as a man and went out.

. . . . . .

At midnight, by which time I had left my place in the box, and was standing guard over the dressing-room door, I permitted Madame Kleppini to join her husband, at his

request. About one o'clock the manager asked Kleppini if he would give up, and Kleppini begged me to enter the room and release him, which I refused to do without witnesses. We then sent for the Herr Director Sidoli, Herr Reutter, and a reporter. At last Kleppini said he had the word "Clefs," and I laughed.

"You are wrong. If you want to know the word which opens the lock, it is just what you are—'fraud.'"

And with this I grabbed his hands, quickly turned the letters till they spelled "fraud," and as they fell into their respective places he was freed.

The locks, you see, were changeable, and it required only a short moment for me to change the word. When he went into the cabinet, he tried the cuff, and it responded to the word "Clefs." While locking them on him, I changed the word to "fraud," and he, even with his eagle eye, failed to recognize that he had been trapped.

The next day, however, being a boastful man, and unwilling to acknowledge defeat, he actually circulated bills stating that he had defeated Houdini and won 5000 marks; but the newspapers guyed him unmercifully, and published the true facts.

CHAPTER VII

LOCK PICKERS

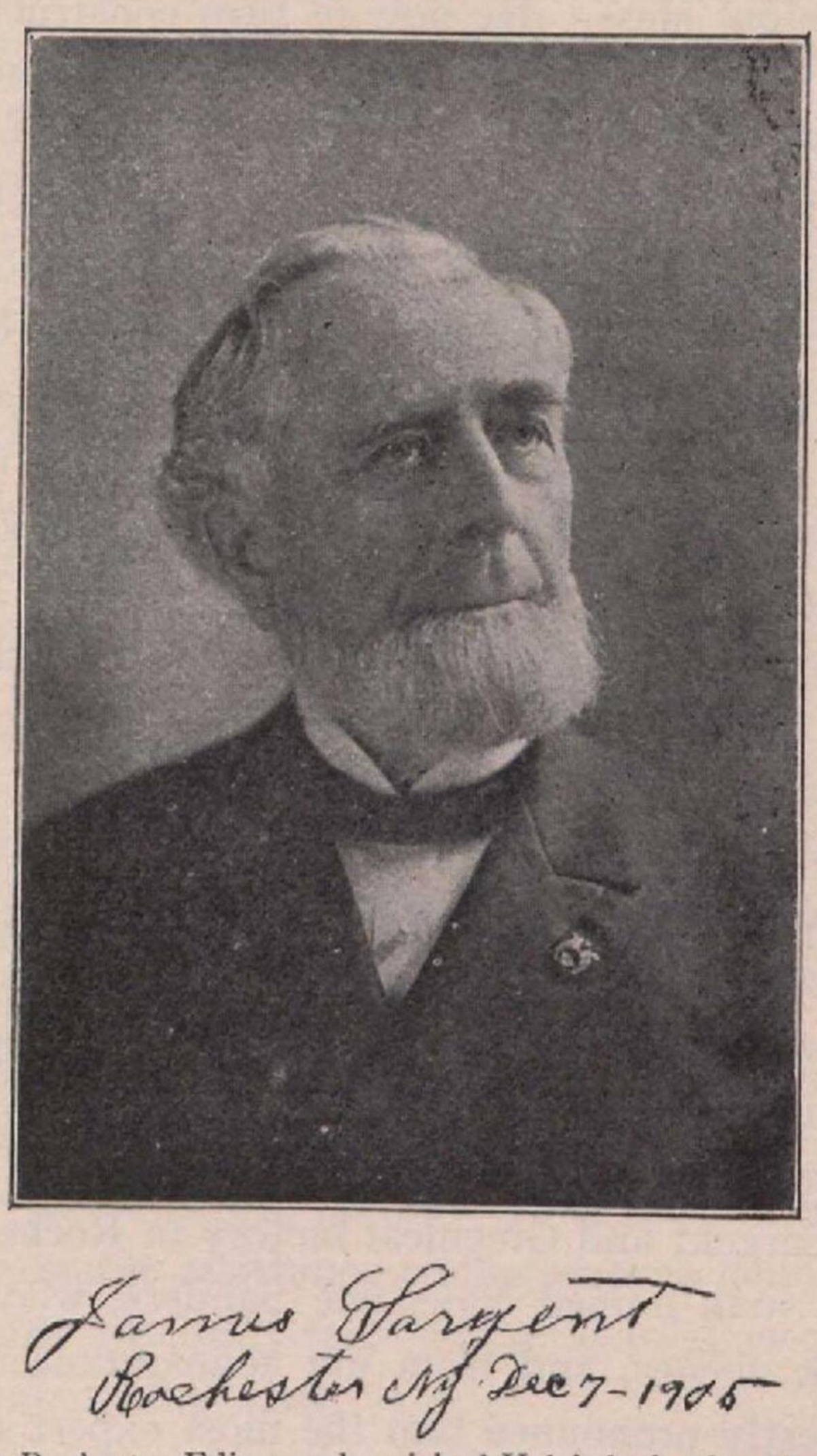
IN my many years of travel all over the world I have met and had lengthy talks with the world's best lock pickers. By this I do not mean men who have a second key, but simon-pure lock openers; so I am in a position to describe just what can be done with lock pickers.

America has had, and still possesses, the best lock pickers in the world.

For thirty years (from 1821 to 1851) Messrs. Bramah and Co. exhibited a padlock in their shop in Piccadilly, London, to which was appended a sign as follows: "The artist who can make an instrument that will pick or open this lock will receive two hundred guineas (about $1000) the moment it is produced."

Mr. A. C. Hobbs, of America, having obtained permission from Messrs. Bramah and Co. to try his skill in opening said lock, all arrangements were made, on July 23, 1851. The lock was enclosed in a block of wood and screwed to a door; the screws were sealed, leaving only the keyhole and hasp accessible to Mr. Hobbs. When he was not operating, the keyhole was covered with a band of iron and sealed by Mr. Hobbs, so that no other person should have access to the keyhole.

After spending more than sixteen days in preparation and fifty hours in the room with the lock, on Saturday,



James Sargent
Rochester NY Dec 7-1905

The Rochester Edison, who picked Yale's lock after Hobbs (who was considered the greatest lock-picker that ever lived) failed to accept Yale's challenge to pick this lock. Yale had previously picked Hobbs' lock.

August 30, 1851, Hobbs fairly opened and locked the lock for the committee, and received the reward of two hundred guineas.

Hobbs also picked Chubb's lock in London at the Crystal Palace in 1851, and previous to this he picked Newell's lock in Boston, Mass. He now in turn constructed a lock which was picked by Linus Yale, also an American, and Yale in turn, years after, had his lock opened by James S. Sargent, the inventor of the present day time locks.

Sargent took nine hours to pick the Yale double dial bank lock on October 13, 1869, and it had been agreed that he was to be allowed forty-eight working hours to accomplish this. He received $1200 for the task, and the "New York Times" of October 14, 1869, had a very good account of this match.

Mr. Sargent's photo is published in this article as he is the grand master of all the historical lock pickers. He is now a resident of Rochester, N.Y., and, although a very old man, possesses all his faculties, which were brought into play in several long chats we had together. He presented me with several of his lock pickers, and I shall describe the original and only method he used for opening the safes of his rivals, and so winning the various sums of money which were wagered against his skill.

At the Sargent and Greenleaf factory in Rochester, N.Y., there is a man named Valentine Sanders, who is a very clever lock opener, and from my acquaintance with him, I can honestly pronounce him the most expert safe opener in the world to-day. But bear in mind we have lots of other good men, although I have not met them all.

When in Wolverhampton, England, I met Mr. A. E. Price (the son of George Price), who is manufacturing fireproof safes. To Mr. Price, snr., belongs the credit of inventing really fireproof safes. Mr. Price, jnr., treated me

handsomely, and presented me with an autographed copy of his father's work, "Price on Thief and Fireproof Depositories and Locks and Keys, Wolverhampton, 1855."

This is the only book in the world known to treat exhaustively of the subject of locks and lock picking.

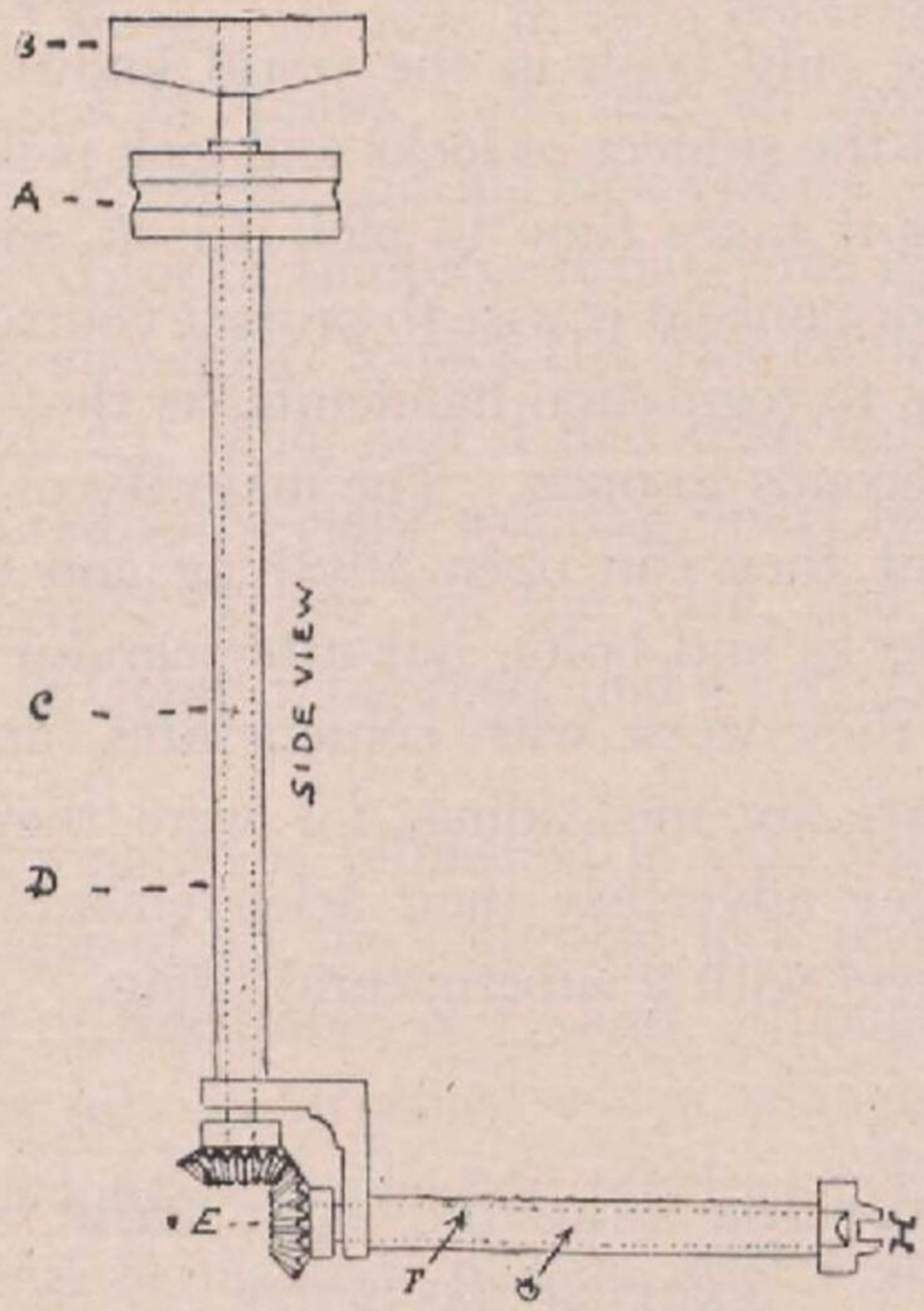
Remember it takes time to pick a lock, so when giving a public performance it is wise to protect yourself by limiting your abilities to regulation handcuffs, as these usually only take a few seconds to open. The majority of my imitators advertise that they can open anything and everything in the way of locks and bolts, but after careful investigation I find that they work with confederates, and that their advertisements are misleading, for were they able to do half what they advertise, their achievements would place them on a level with a supernatural being.

INSTRUMENT FOR REMOVING PLUG FROM "PLUG 8" ENGLISH HANDCUFF

Sometimes it is very essential to remove the plug, for with the plug in the cuff the regular lock opener cannot be inserted, so herewith are presented two instruments which will be of valuable assistance to the embryo handcuff king, when the cuffs are firmly fastened, so as to allow absolutely no movements of the wrist.

The instrument depicted on page 54 is used for removing the plug when the handcuffs are fastened in front, and the plug cannot be reached with something in the mouth, i.e. when the keyhole is facing downward, for it is easy enough to remove the plug when the keyhole faces upwards without this instrument.

Modus operandi : Place the instrument into the mouth so that the teeth hold the wooden wheel A ; the part marked



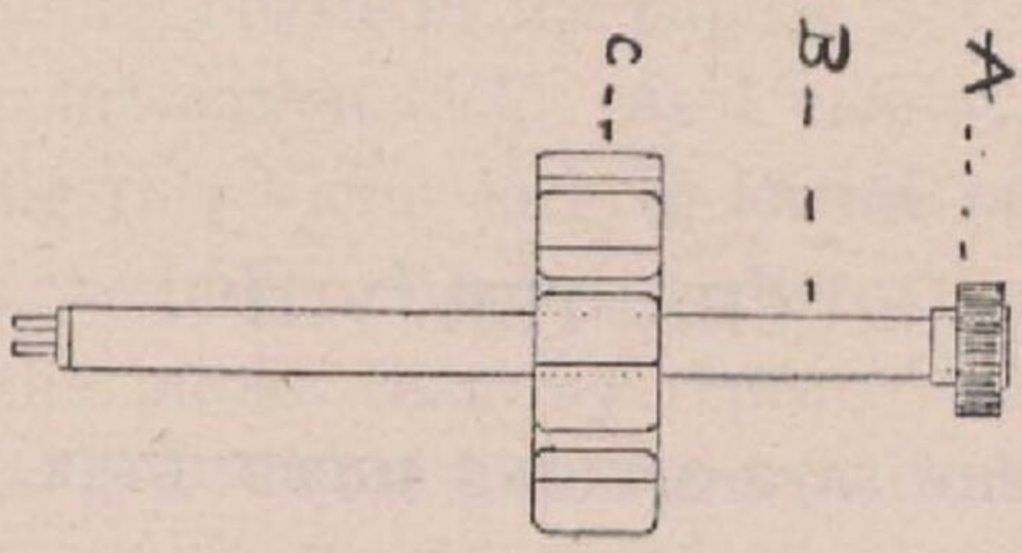
Instrument used for removing the plug from the "Plug 8" English handcuff when hands are fastened in front

H is now placed into the two small holes on top of the plug of the cuff, and with the tongue turn the cog-wheel B ; by turning B the brass rod C is caused to revolve inside of the cylinder D, which in turn causes the two cog-wheels E at the end to revolve, thereby revolving H (which is fastened on rod G inside of cylinder D), and turning the plug in any desired direction.

When the handcuff is locked on the hands behind the back, the instrument depicted on page 55 is used.

Modus operandi : As you have use of only one hand, take

hold of the instrument and guide the two points on the end into the respective holes on the top of the plug of the hand-



Instrument used for removing the plug from "Plug 8" English handcuff when the hands are fastened behind the back

cuff; holding the index finger at the stationary point A, with the thumb turn the side wheel C, which, being firmly fastened to the cylinder B, causes the two end points in the holes on top of the plug of the cuff to revolve in any desired direction, thus making it possible to remove the plug.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SAFE-OPENING MICROMETER

AS Sargent utterly failed to make Hall accept his various open challenges, and as Hall resorted to unfair and sharp practices, Sargent now determined to retaliate and prove his ability to the world by making public his method of opening safes, and we herewith reproduce his letter, which was published at the time of this bitter controversy, and so allow Mr. Sargent to speak for himself.

"Having failed to induce Joseph L. Hall and Co., of Cincinatti, to submit their Victor combination locks, as sold to and used by bankers, to a fair public test as to whether I could pick them or not, I appealed with no better success to such bankers in the North-west as were using these locks, to give me an opportunity of demonstrating their utter worthlessness, which the maker of the locks would not extend. The two banks in this city using the Victor lock have declared that it would interfere with their business to have their locks tested (perhaps it would not interfere with their business to have their locks picked by some professional burglar), and the county banks using this lock, evidently thinking that if the city banks regarded these locks safe, they were good enough for them, and so have failed to secure the trial desired. As soon as Hall

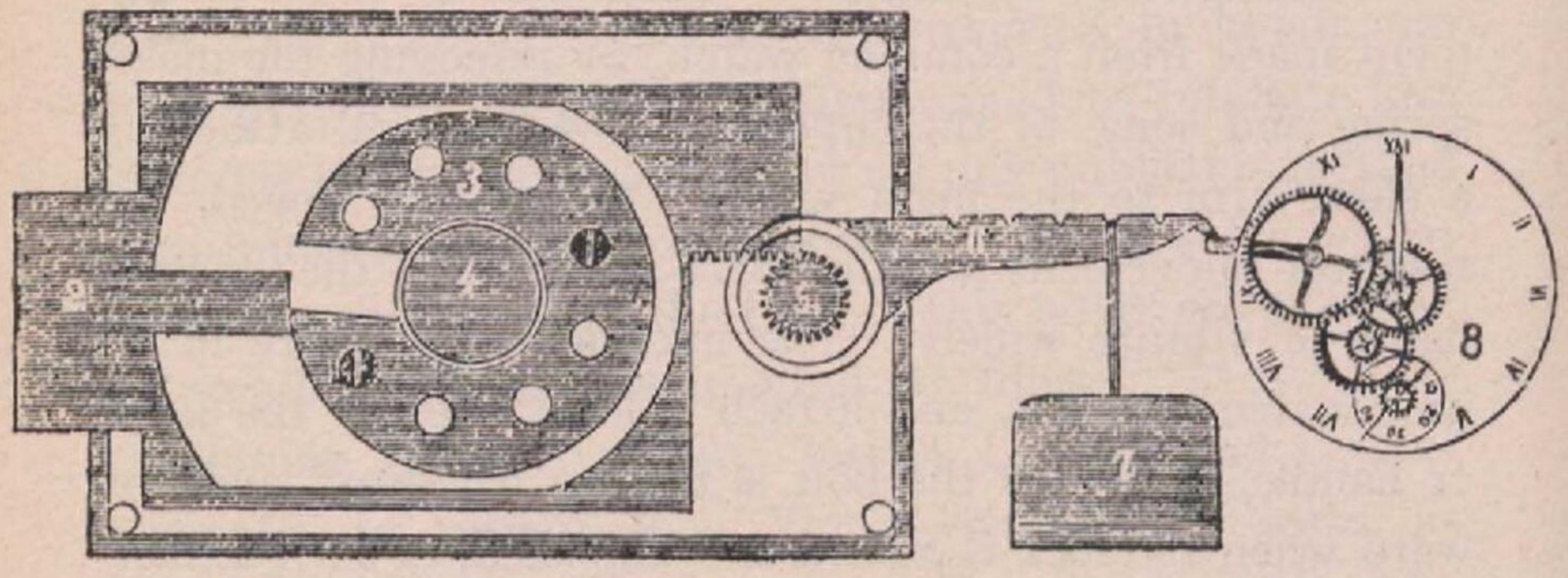
and Co. were satisfied that I could not induce any of the banks using their locks to allow me to pick them in public, they made flaming boasts in the papers that I cannot pick their Victor combination lock. As I cannot prevail upon any bank using this Victor lock to let me pick it, for the satisfaction of the public, I have no alternative left in order to convince the public that my repeated declarations of ability to pick this Victor lock were made in good faith, but to divulge the secret of how this lock can be picked.

"I can pick it by using the 'micrometer,' or an instrument made from a common watch, by removing the mainspring and some of the superfluous wheels, and attaching a short arm to the main wheel. When so arranged, the slightest movement of this arm will cause the second-hand to vibrate widely. The micrometer I secure in an immovable position, and attach a long lever to the knob or handle, by which the bolt is thrown backward and forward when the lock is locked and unlocked, in such a manner that one end of the lever will rest upon the arm of the micrometer. In order to render a description of the mode of picking the lock more intelligible, I introduce the following diagram, which represents, in its essential features, the inside of a Hall Victor combination lock, as it would appear if the dial and front of the safe were removed when the lock is locked.

"In the diagram, 4 represents the hub around which the combination wheels revolve in which the spindle of the dial enters; 3 represents the combination wheels; 2 represents the bolt with what is technically called the fence behind it, extending toward the centre of the lock; 5 represents a cog-wheel, connected with a knob or handle

on the outside of the safe, by which the bolt is thrown backward and forward; 1 represents the case containing the lock.

"When proceeding to pick the lock, I attach the lever (6) to the knob or handle on the safe which is connected with the cog-wheel. I then attach a weight (7) to this lever of sufficient size to turn the handle as far as it will go, and draw the 'fence' firmly against the combination wheel, and hold it in that position. I then adjust the micrometer



This instrument was used by Mr. James Sargent, the inventor of time locks, to open all the combination locks of his competitors. In the hands of the average person any safe lock can be opened which is not doubly protected by counterweights or magnetically loaded. Even false notches seem to be no safeguard against this instrument

(8) in such a position that the end of the lever (6) will rest upon the arm of the micrometer. I then have a perfect telegraph from the edge of the wheels, via the point of the fence, through the cog-wheel and handle, along the lever and down through the wheels of the micrometer to the second hand, by which I make the Victor disclose to me the secret numbers to which it is set. As I turn the combination wheels from the spindle of the dial, any inequalities in their surface will cause the fence to move either back-

ward or forward, and this will turn the cog-wheel, and the turning of the cog-wheel will cause the lever (6) to rise or fall, and the slightest movement of the lever will be registered by the micrometer. These combination wheels vary in number in the different locks, one of Hall's locks having twelve. Now it is a fact that human ingenuity has never been able to construct a machine which will make two of these wheels exactly alike.

"Now we will suppose a dozen of these wheels in the lock, each one of a different diameter. The weight drawing the fence back against the wheels, it is evident that the fence would be resting against the wheel having the greatest diameter. The first thing to be done, therefore, is to find out which one of the wheels the fence is resting against. This is an easy matter. Any person familiar with combination locks can turn the first wheel, or the last of any of the intermediate ones, at pleasure. Turning first one and then another, always bearing in mind which one I am turning, I finally come to the wheel against which the fence is resting, and the moment I turn the slot in that wheel opposite the fence, the fence, which is constantly under the influence of the weight, except when setting the combination, is drawn into the slot. It will not go in far, of course, before catching on the next highest wheel, for they are all very nearly alike. It may not drop the thousandth part of an inch, or the tenth part of the thickness of a piece of writing paper, but that little allows the cog-wheel to be drawn over by the weight correspondingly, and the lever, of course, falls in proportion, and the indicating hand on the micrometer tells the tale. I care not how small the distance which the fence is drawn into this slot, for the

distance is multiplied by the length of the lever, and multiplied again by the wheels of the micrometer until its indicating hand will vibrate perceptibly. I then know that one wheel is in the position it will have to be in when the lock is unlocked, and turning to the dial, I read the number to which that one wheel is set, and make a minute in my book and proceed. The fence is now resting upon the next highest wheel, and I keep turning one wheel after another as before, until I find out which one that is, and its combination, keeping the slots of the ascertained wheels toward the fence at each trial, so that the fence will rest on the other wheels. In this way I proceed, picking up the several combination wheels in the order of their diameters, until I have ascertained the number to which every wheel in the lock is set, and then I unlock the lock in the same manner as the man who locked it up. It is not necessary to do the work at one sitting, for the combination of one wheel may be ascertained one day, another the next, and so on, and in the meantime the lever and micrometer can be removed without leaving a scratch to show that they had been attached. Octagonal or irregular shaped wheels, of course, render the work no more tedious and require no more skill. The results of the micrometer are certain and its indications unerring. I first brought it into use in Philadelphia in 1860, for the purpose of testing the security of various locks, and by experiments with it and other appliances I have strengthened my lock when I found weakness in others.

"I may say, in conclusion, that I am able and willing to pick one of Hall's Victor combination bank locks before any committee of bankers who will give me a trial on one

of these locks already in use, which has not been altered for the purpose, or different in construction from those now or heretofore sold by Joseph L. Hall and Co. I have come among you after twelve years' constant experimenting with bank locks and safes, and am willing to demonstrate to you their weak points, that you may guard against them, and enjoy the largest degree of security possible. It is certainly a poor policy for you to deny me the opportunity of demonstrating to you the worthlessness of these Victor locks, behind which you place your money and the money of your depositors, for by encouraging and facilitating trials of locks and safes, discarding such as are shown to be worthless, you stimulate manufacturers to improve and perfect their work. The progress which safe manufacturers are making is such that the lock is, or soon will be, the only point at which the integrity of the safe can be assailed. How foolish, then, to secure the safe with a lock which can be picked with a machine which any operator can carry in his vest pocket. The skill of professional burglars has so far proved equal to the skill of lock and safe makers, and it requires no gift of prophecy to predict that the time is not far distant when every cracksman in the land will be as familiar and expert in the employment of the micrometer as they now are in the use of the jemmy and slungshot. More anon.

"Respectfully yours,

"JAMES SARGENT.

"ROCHESTER, N.Y."

CHAPTER IX

SKELETON KEYS

IT is sometimes very hard to judge a lock from the outside, and one can almost judge a book from the covers as he can judge the intricate works of some locks from their encasements.

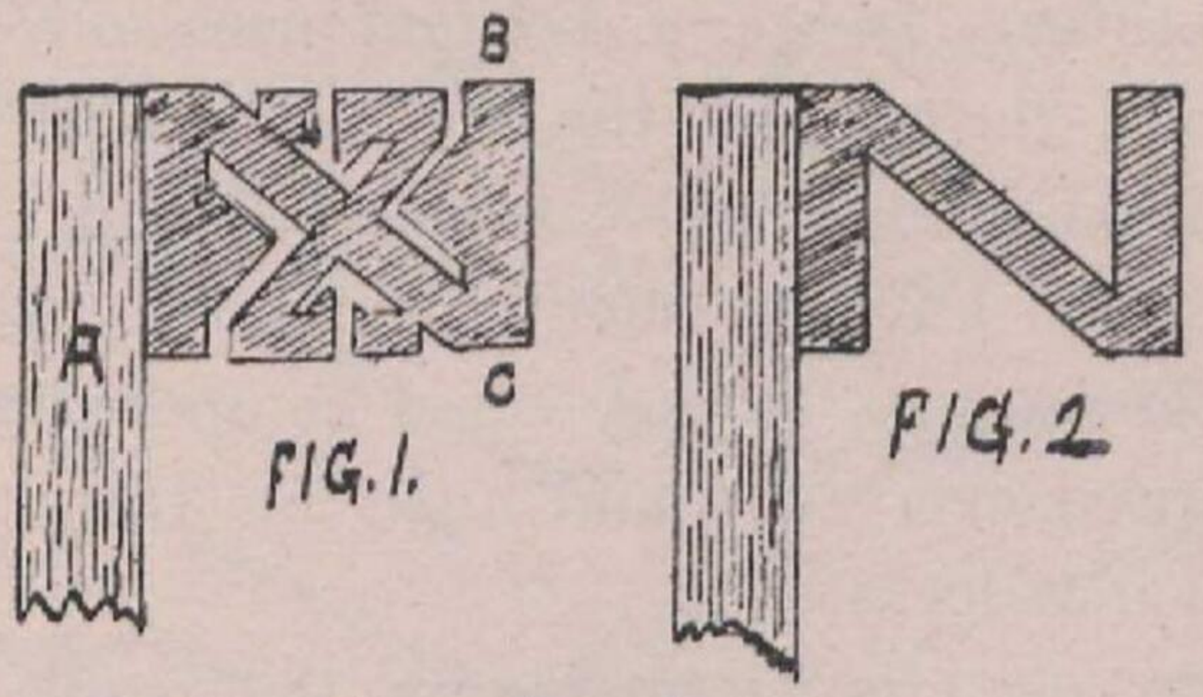
In France almost all locks are extra secure, and in Germany I have seen some very intricate looking locks that were positive misrepresentations, for anything inserted into the keyhole would lift the catch or bolt, and you could open the lock.

At times I would see a very fine-looking Bramah lock on some cell, and upon closer examination it would turn out to be a clever imitation, "made in Germany."

SKELETON KEYS SOMETIMES CALLED MASTER KEYS FOR WARD LOCKS

Such keys are made for opening a set or series of locks each of which has a different make of key so that one key will not open another lock in the set, yet the holder of the master or skeleton key will open all. In old locks with fixed wards, this was done by making the wards of a slightly different form, and yet such that the skeleton would pass them all.

It was always possible to find the shape of the wards by merely putting in a blank key covered with wax and pressing it against them. When this was done it was by no means necessary to cut out the key in the complicated form of ward as in Fig. 1, because no part of that key does



Illustrations Nos. 1, 2

Fig. 1 shows the original key, as used by the purchaser of the lock
Fig. 2 shows the skeleton key required to open the same lock

any work except the edge B C farthest from the pipe A, and so a key the shape of Fig. 2 would do just as well; and a small collection of skeleton keys, as they are called,

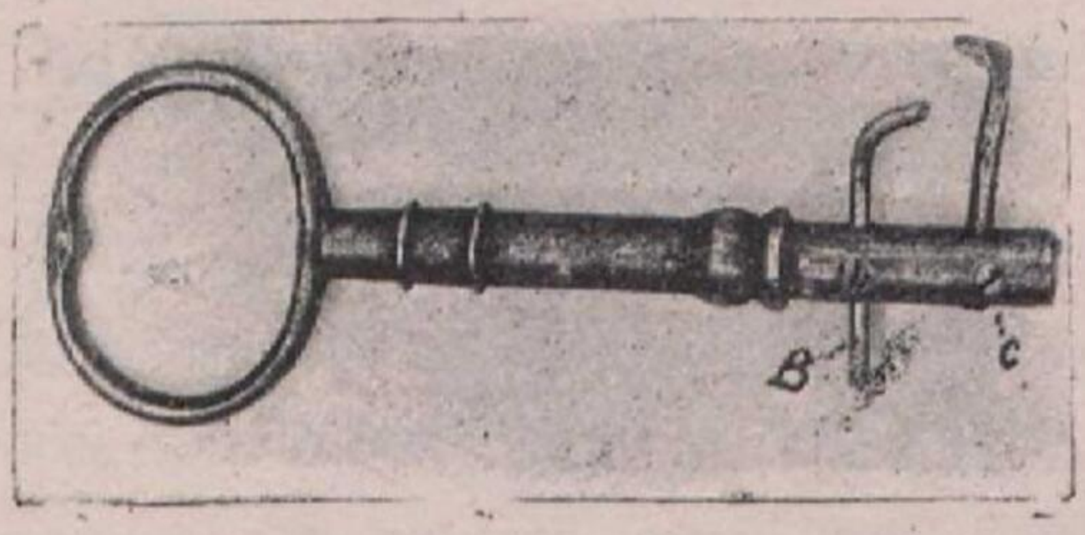


Illustration No. 3

of a few different patterns were all the stock-in-trade that a lock picker required.

In the accompanying illustrations some ward lock pickers most in use are shown. There is one which is adjustable, shown in illustration No. 3. The bits fit in holes in the

shank of the key and are secured by screws so that you can regulate them to whatever size you require for the lock you wish to open.

Illustration No. 4 shows some simple yet very useful lock pickers, and while a number of them look very much like each other, they are of different sizes so as to lift the tumblers and throw back the bolt. The four marked X are the ones I used in my celebrated lawsuit at Cologne, and with which I picked hundreds of three and four lever locks almost as quick as they could be opened with a key, for I practised every day and night for three months on these particular locks.

The locks used in Germany on the regulation transportation chain, are of a peculiar three or four lever pattern. The post in the keyhole prohibits a strong pick from entering, so I made several different shaped lock pickers, from piano wire.

This was thin, and very stiff, for I knew, in order to win my lawsuit, I would have to open any lock that was placed before me, and started in to practise. The best practice I could obtain was to procure a position as a repair locksmith in some small shop. In Berlin I knew a locksmith, Mueller, who has a shop in Mittle Strasse, and he was more than willing that I should work for nothing, and commenced repairing locks for him. He soon discovered that his thirty-five years of experience as a locksmith was nothing as compared to my trick in opening locks, and he soon had a thriving trade for his young man to open locks. In order that I should know the exact heights of the various locks used on the police chains, he ordered a great gross, and soon exchanged them for another great gross of other

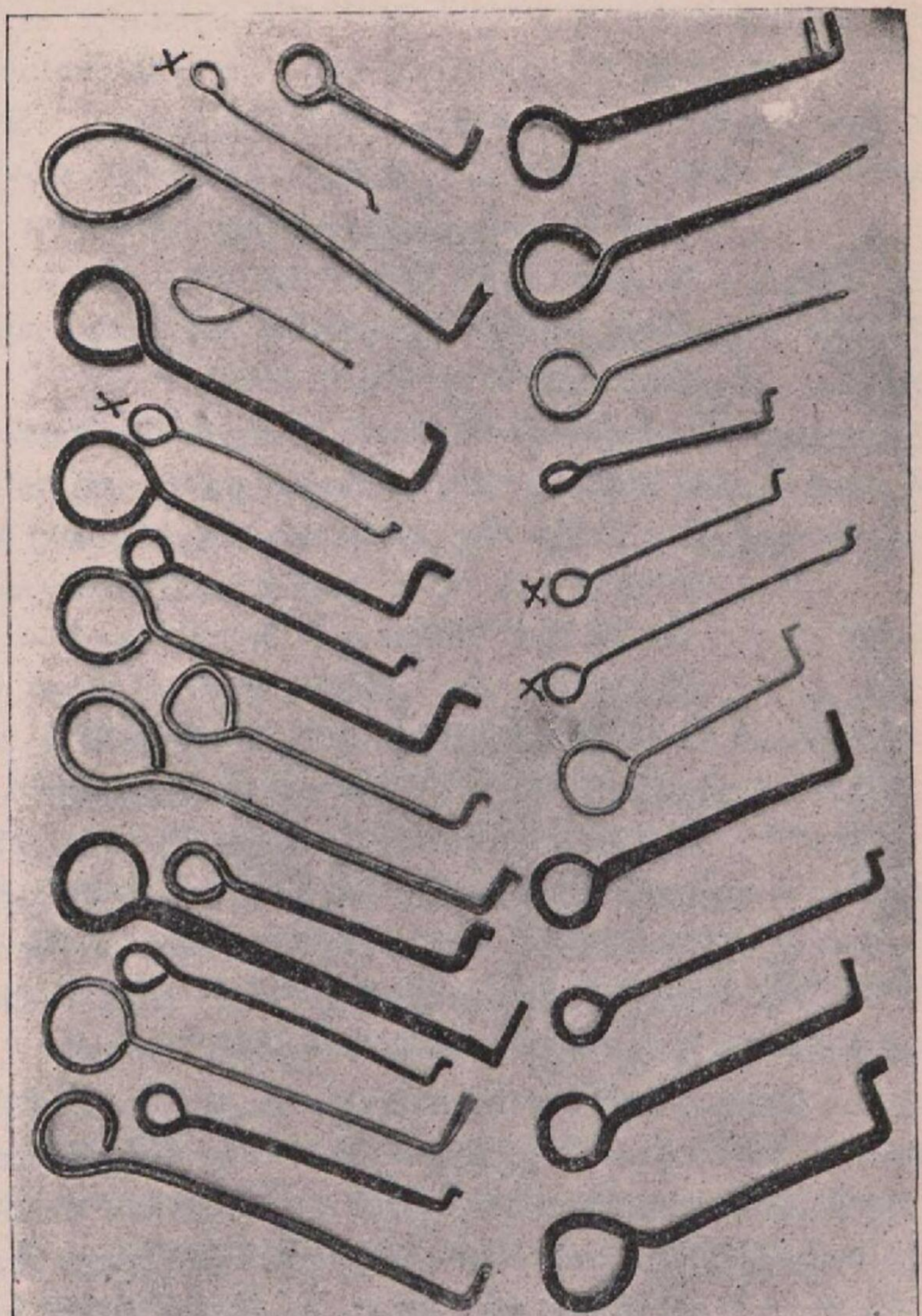


Illustration No. 4.

An assortment of lock-pickers of use for opening simple two and three lever locks.

patterns, etc. In this way I would pass six to ten hours daily picking locks, and soon, with the assistance of the four marked picks, I could open any lock that contained the five or six Chubb levers. The "gateways" were never made close, as is the case in the very fine lever locks, so it became a very simple matter for me to open each and every lock which was made on that principle, and very handy that experience was in court.

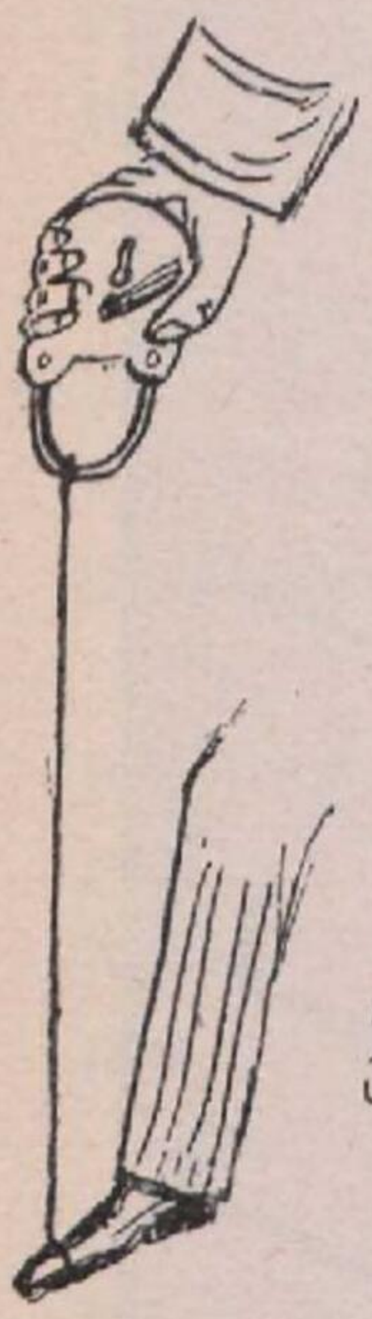


Illustration No. 5

I found I could facilitate matters by taking an ordinary elastic garter and fastening it to the clasp of the padlock and looping the other end to my foot, as is shown (see illustration No. 5), so that by stretching the elastic and holding the lock in the left hand, I would have a pull on the clasp. Now by inserting the lock picker, I could lift one lever after the other until all were of the proper height, when the elastic, like a faithful servant, at the proper time pulled the clasp back, which, freed from the bolt, thereby caused the lock to open.

In my German book, which was translated from this one, the police prohibited the publication of the reproductions of the lock pickers illustrated, and the following illustrations have been omitted from the German edition: pages 65, 69, 70, 71, 73, 76, 77, 78. It was teaching people how to become burglars, so the police stated.

CHAPTER X

THE COLOGNE POLICE SUED FOR LIBEL

FOR the benefit of the reader who may be interested in my lawsuit against the Cologne police department, I republish certain facts and details that now belong to the handcuff history.

. . . . . .

The police of Germany are very strict in matters of false billing or misrepresenting exhibitions to the public, and so when the Cologne police claimed that I was travelling about misrepresenting, and that my performance was a "swindle," and when Schutzman Werner Graff published a false story in the "Rheinische Zeitung," which put me in a very bad light, as a man of honour I could not overlook the insult.

Claiming that I had been slandered, I asked for an apology and a retraction of the false stories, which all the press of Germany had copied, but was simply laughed at for my trouble.

I engaged the best lawyer of Cologne, Herr Rechtsanwalt Dr. Schreiber, Louisenstrasse 17, and commenced suit.

The first trial occurred in Cologne, February 19, 1902. I charged that Schutzman Werner Graff had publicly slan-

dered me, whereupon, as answer, Herr Graff told the judge and jury that he was willing to prove that I was misrepresenting, and that he could chain me so that I could not release myself. I permitted myself to be chained by Herr Transport Police Lott, and, to show how easy it was, in the presence of the judge and jury, I released myself.

After a four days' trial I won the lawsuit, and the Cologne police were fined, and were to publicly apologize to me, "In the Name of the Kaiser."

Instead of so doing, they took it to the higher court, "Strafkammer." At this trial they had specially manufactured a lock, which was made by Master Mechanic Kroch, which, when once locked, could not be opened, not even with the use of the key.

The police asked that I should show my ability to open this lock after it had been locked.

I accepted the challenge, and walked into the room selected by the jury where I could work unhindered, and in four minutes re-entered the court-room, and handed the judges the prepared lock *opened*.

Again I won the lawsuit, and again it was appealed from, but this time to the highest court in Germany, "Oberlandesgericht," and there the learned judges again gave me the verdict from which there was no appeal.

Below is a free translation of the apology as printed in the German papers :

"IN THE NAME OF THE KING.

"BE it known that the artiste, known as HARRY HOUDINI, of America, New York City, against the Cologne Police and Schutzman Werner Graff, for slandering.

"The Royal Schöffengericht, the third 'Ferienstraf-

kammer,' found Werner Graff guilty of slandering Houdini, and the Oberlandesgericht also finds that the Royal Schöffengericht was justified in finding Graff guilty of the charges. Werner Graff is guilty of 'Openly Slandering' Houdini, for being the chief instigator of the article which he caused to be inserted in the 'Rheinische Zeitung,' July 25, 1901, number edition 170, and the head-lines which read 'Houdini, the world famous Handcuff Releaser.' Being found guilty of the above charge, Werner Graff is fined 30 marks in money,

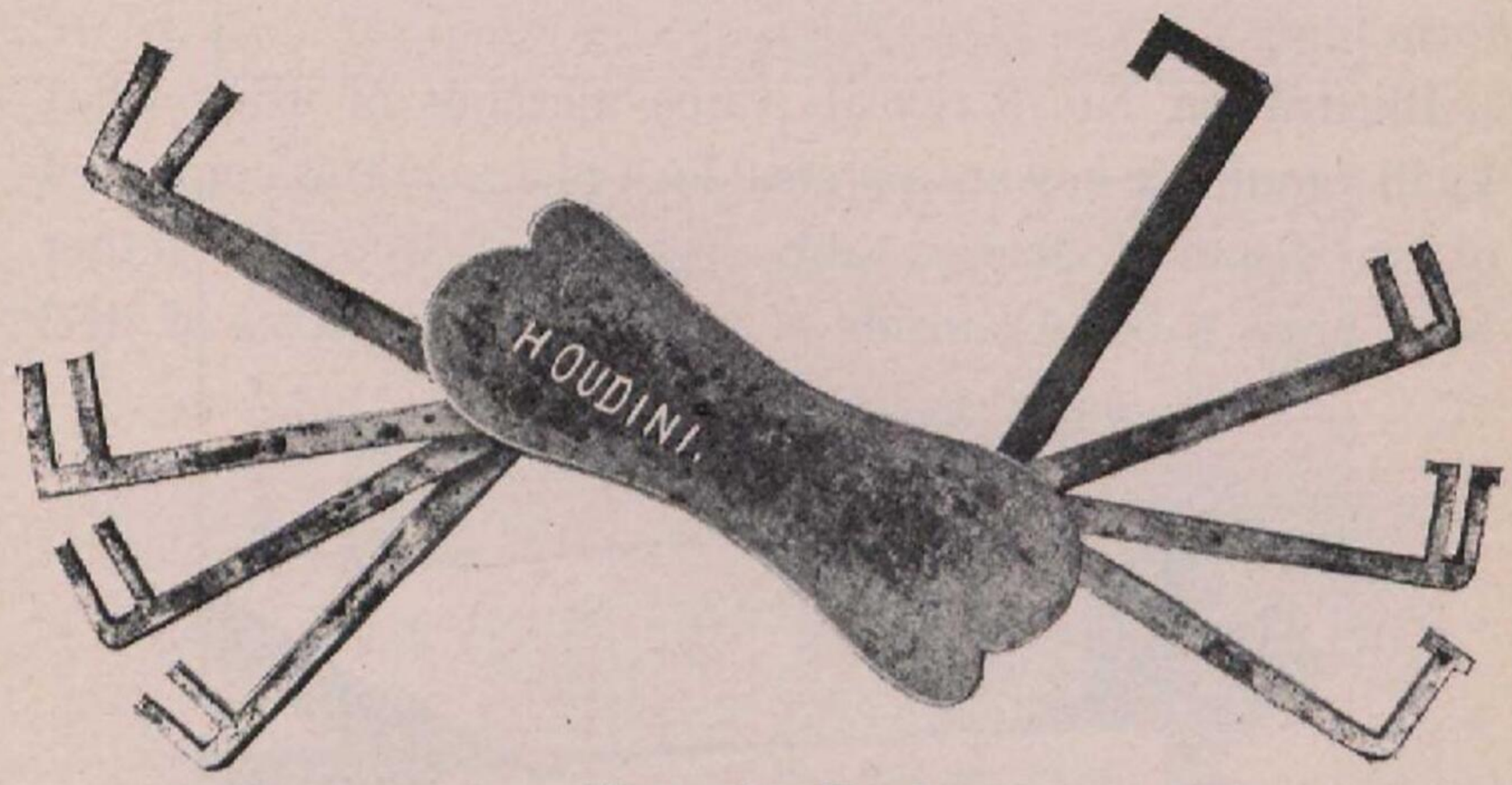


Illustration No. 6.

and should he fail to pay the sum fined, he will serve a day in prison for every 5 marks; and is also fined to pay all costs of the three trials.

"Houdini has the right to publish the verdict one time in the Cologne newspapers at the cost of Schutzman Werner Graff.

"For the rightful writing of this verdict, we sign as responsibilities, Köln, Oct. 24, 1902, Stock Sekretar.

"Gerichtsschreiber des Kgl. Amstgericht Abtlg VI.—9.

"Signed for Houdini,

"Rechtsanwalt Dr. Schreiber, Köln."

In illustration No. 6 you see a very useful appliance. It is a set of lock pickers, which fold into a handle as do the blades of an ordinary pocket knife. With this I have opened thousands of ward locks on doors in Germany. Such an implement, if in the possession of a burglar in that country, would be a very dangerous thing.

Illustration No. 7 represents a set of eight steel blades which also fold up into a handle. This can be of use to make keys as required, or carry a number of keys in a compact form.

Illustration No. 8 reveals three methods of using what I call a multiple key or universal lock picker. It is composed of two pieces of steel suitably shaped and secured together by a brass tube (A), inside of which the two pieces of steel

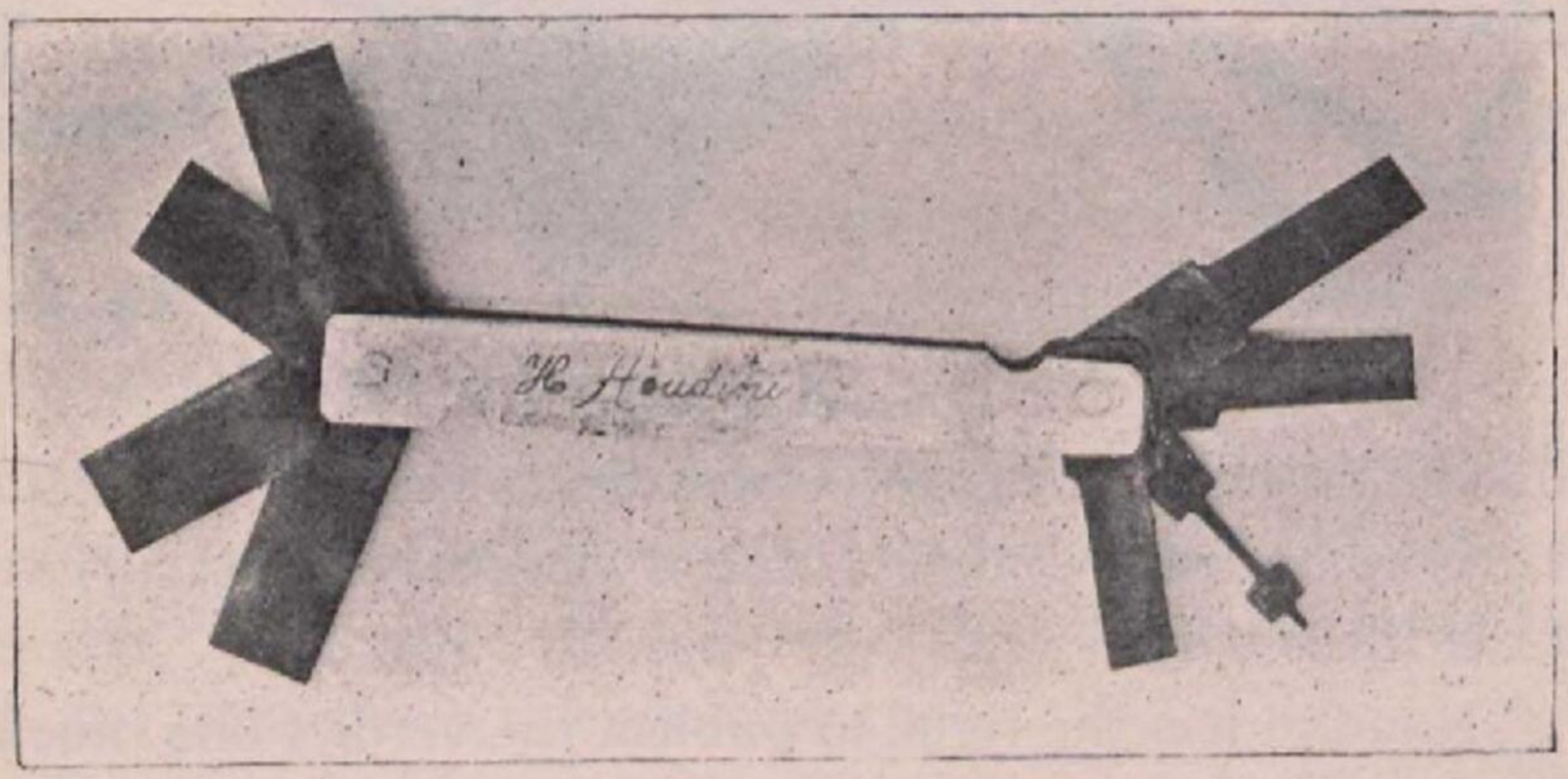


Illustration No. 7.

slide, so that, by adjustment, it can be made to fit a great many styles of locks. When the sliders are turned sideways, they can easily be moved, but when turned into the positions shown in the illustration, they lock firmly. This picker is a very interesting one, as it was originally the property of a

criminal in Germany who is now serving twenty years for house-breaking. I was in Berlin at the time of his trial and

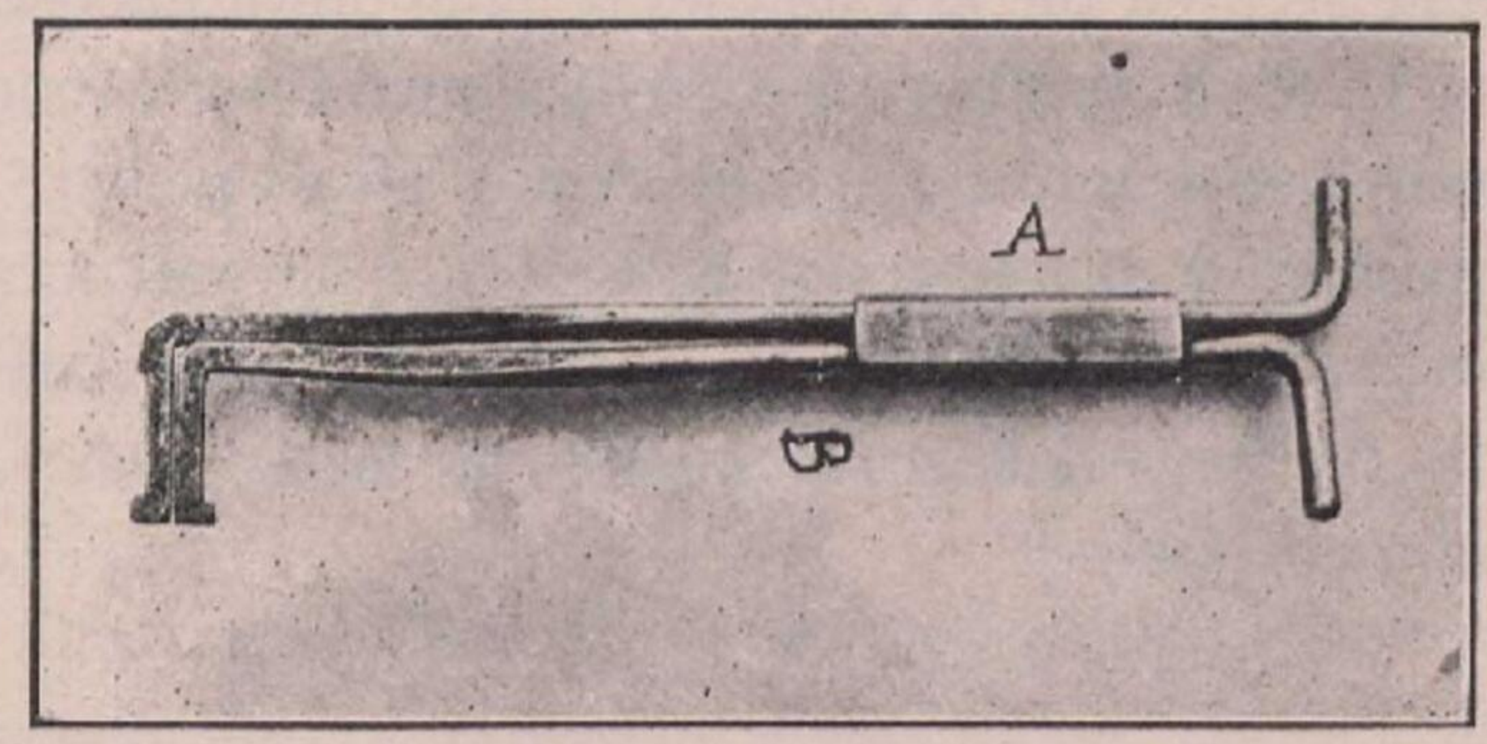


Illustration No. 8.

B shows the form of the universal lock-picker for opening ordinary latch-lock fastenings. C shows the universal lock-picker adjusted for opening rim locks. D shows the universal lock-picker adjusted for opening ward locks.

had many interviews with him. When he was searched they could find nothing concealed on him.

His method of concealment was to tie a strong piece of silk thread round his neck, and at the other end of the thread he secured the key and let it hang down his back.

After I had given my police performance I was brought to him, as he had a notorious reputation as a lock picker. I had the opportunity of conversing with him on several occasions afterwards, and finally he gave me the lock picker and told me how he concealed it. I handed it to the police, who allowed me to keep it.

CHAPTER XI

MORE LOCK-PICKING IMPLEMENTS

IN Illustration No. 9 I show sundry little pieces of wire pokes, also a powerful combination pliers and wire cutter (C). When opening or closing this pair of pliers the lower pins or rivets, as shown in the illustration, travel in

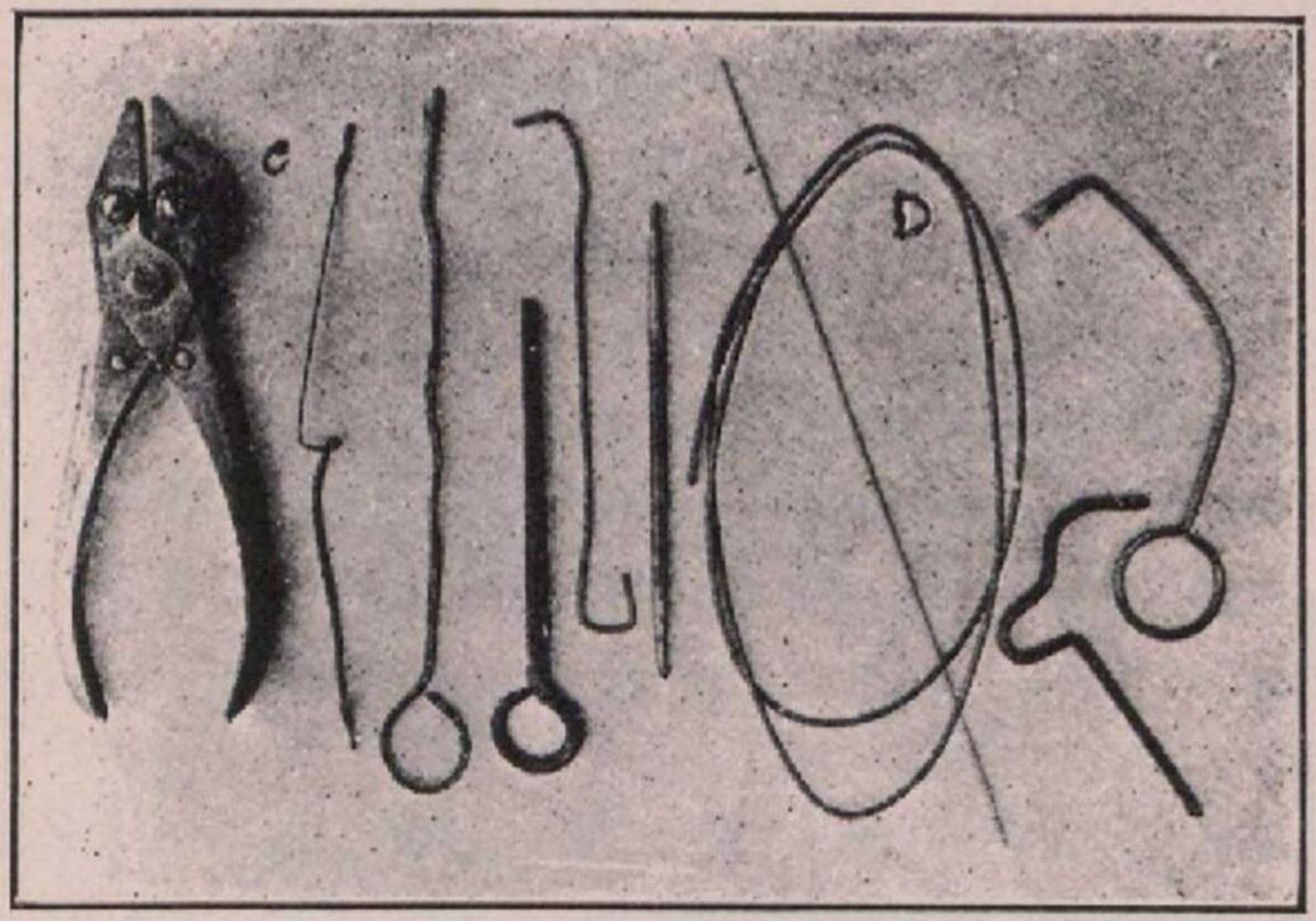


Illustration No. 9.

slots in two planes of steel in the upper part of the handle, and so enable a person to cut very thick wire as easily as paper. In this illustration there is also a piece of malleable steel wire (D), which, with the aid of the pliers, can be twisted or bent into any shape and snipped off to any

required length. This is always useful for immediately making such special lock pickers as are required.

Illustration No. 10 shows lock pickers which will give you an idea as to how the wards are placed in the French locks.

In no country have I found so many expensive locks in use as in France; almost every door is equipped with a six-lever Chubbs or Bramah lock. Crooks would have an exceptionally hard time to pick such locks, so they resort to the quicker and easier method of forcing the doors with heavy chisels.

The lock pickers or keys marked xx and x were taken from a French murderer, whose speciality was robbing churches.

He was a daring criminal, and was caught by the merest accident. He had laid plans for a cool and premeditated murder of one of the Geld-brief trager in Berlin, which class of postmen only carry money, sent by mail, and sometimes are entrusted with large sums.

This man, Olschansky, sent through the mail to himself 100 marks (about $25), having previously hired a small room in a street where the house was almost empty of lodgers.

The room was on the top floor, and when the postman arrived Monday morning, he found Olschansky awaiting him, and to all intents and purposes, Olschansky was just seated at his morning lunch (which all Germany partakes of about 10 o'clock), consisting of bottled beer and sandwiches.

Olschansky offered the postman a bottle of beer, but gave him no glass. He was thus compelled to drink out of

the bottle, and as the bottle was raised to his lips, Olschansky raised a heavy board and drove the bottle down the postman's throat, stifling him, and then immediately struck him over the temple, and kept on hitting the stunned man until he had beaten the life out of his body.

He took all the money from the leather bag carried by the postman, locked the door, and left the building.

But he forgot to pay the beer man, and instead of going about his business, he went to pay his bill, as he was an honest man. This man noticed blood stains on Olschansky's shirt cuff.

Olschansky paid him with a 20-mark gold piece, and this was his undoing.

In the afternoon the murdered postman was discovered, and the beer man, Gastschenkwirth, reported to the police that 20 marks were paid to him by the man who had not enough money the day before to pay for his food and drink, and had asked for credit.

A search was at once instituted for Olschansky, and with the system of registering each lodger with the police, by all hotel and boarding-house keepers, Olschansky was found, and in his possession were the two keys herewith illustrated.

I happened to be at the Police Presidium next morning, and spoke to Olschansky, who looked more like a caged wolf than a man, and had very little to say.

But two weeks later, when found guilty, he had plenty to say, and informed the police of the various churches he had robbed, how he obtained keys for the doors, and showed he was a far more dangerous criminal than was at first suspected.

After he had been executed I asked for the keys found in his possession, and obtained them. I have found that

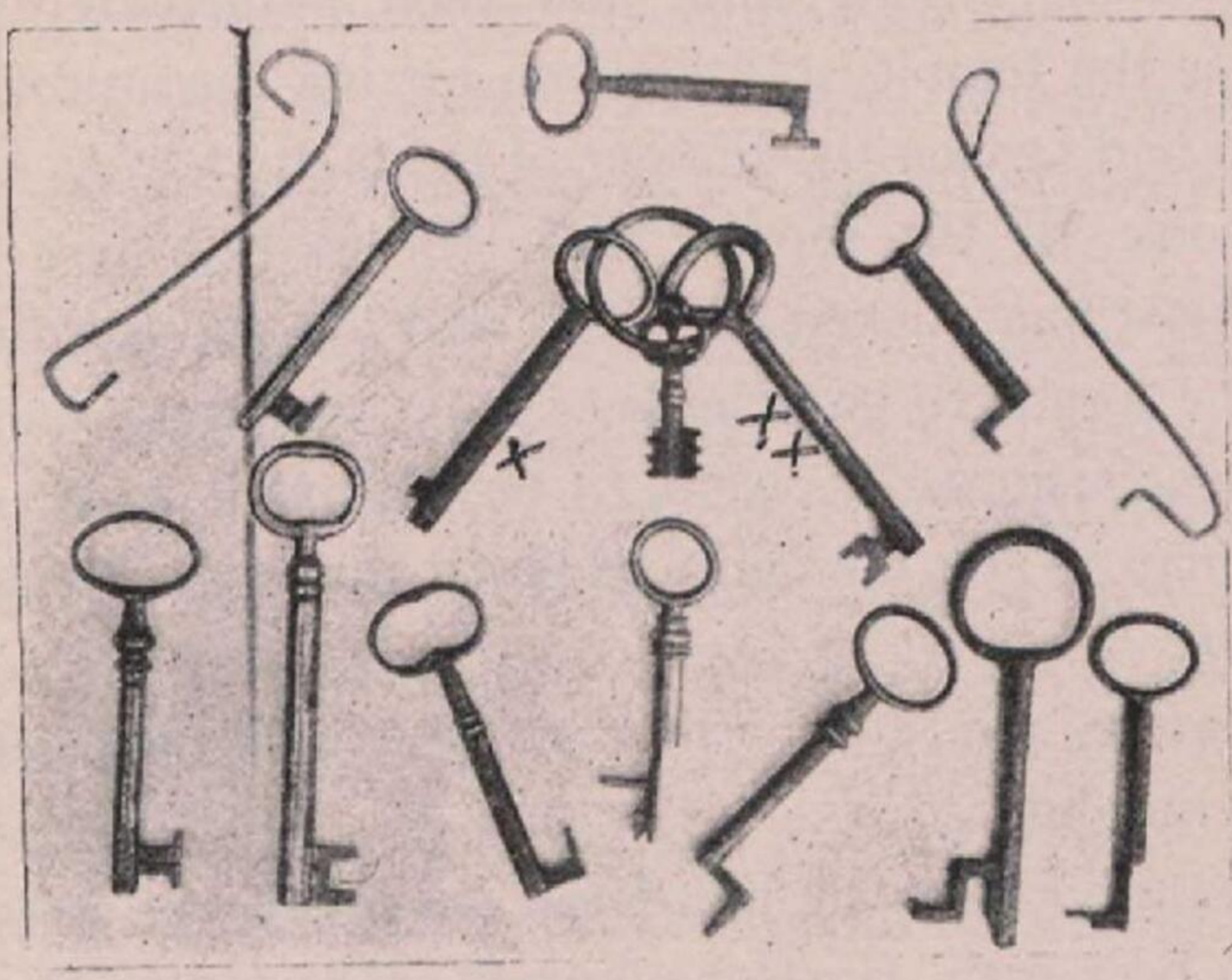


Illustration No. 10.

they will open almost every church door in Germany where they do not use padlocks, and the key marked x seems

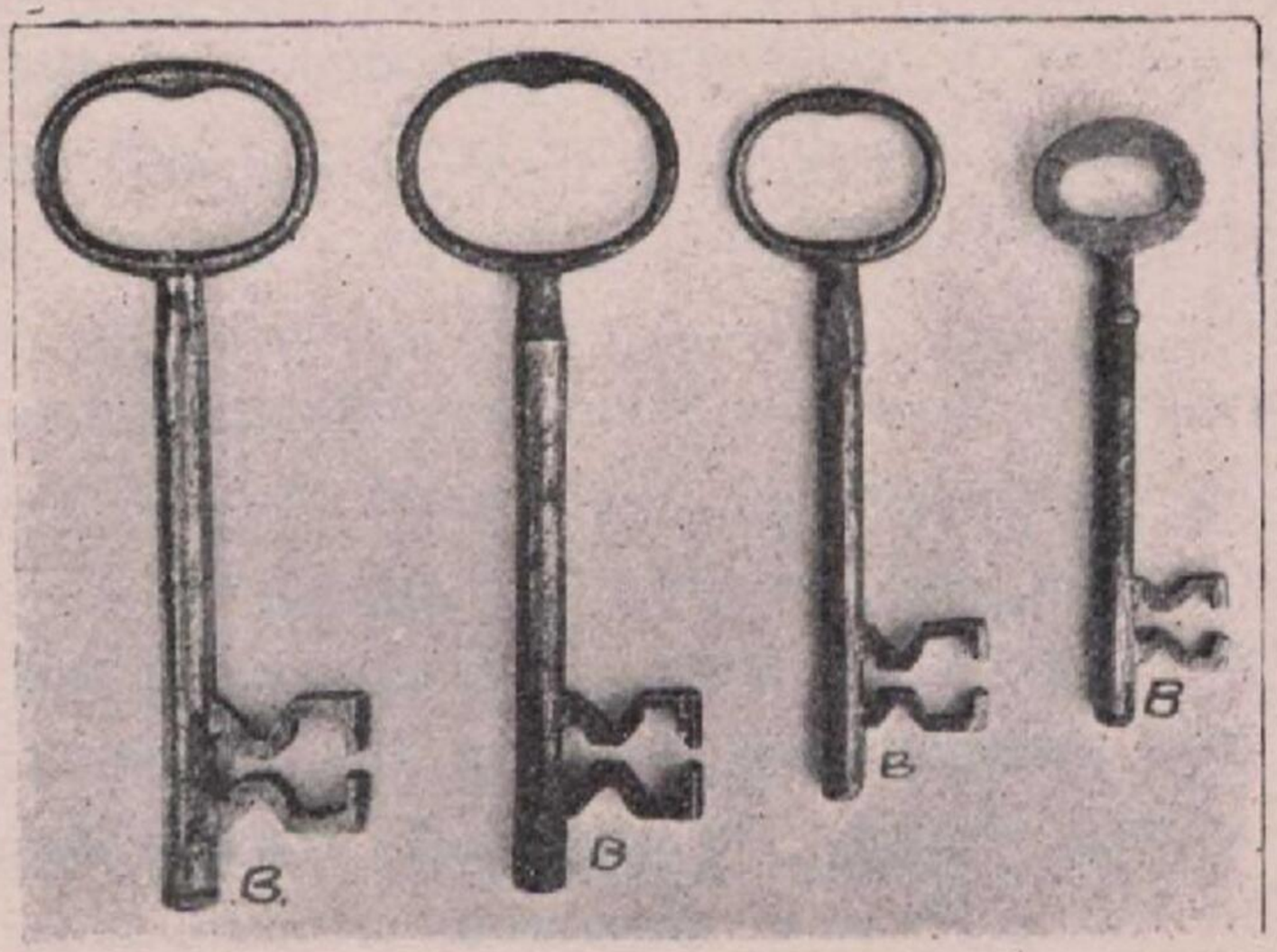


Illustration No. 11.

to be a kind of a master key to the spurious Bramah safe locks.

Illustration No. 11 shows a set of master keys useful on the English rimlock. Previous to the year 1778, when Baron invented the now well-known tumbler lock, the majority of locks used in England were of such a nature that at the present date they would be called "jokes."

With the above illustrated three sets of pickers, there are thousands, yes, tens of thousands, of locks in England that can easily be opened. Naturally it will take some practice, which when once acquired is seldom lost.

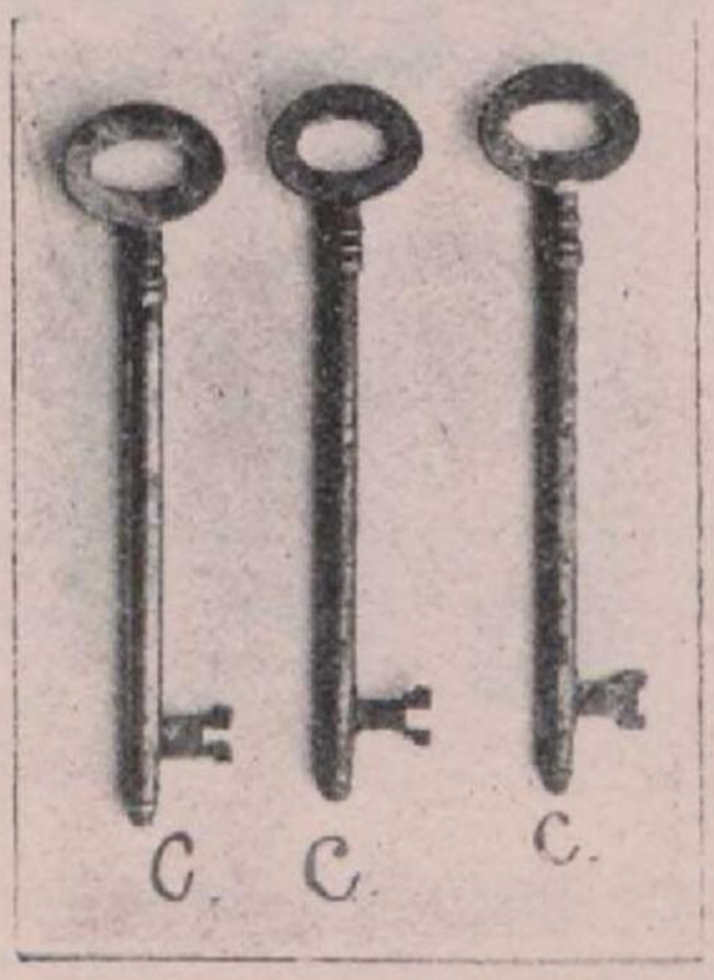


Illustration No. 12.

Illustration No. 12 shows some master keys for an American lock greatly in use in Great Britain. A majority of office doors are fitted with this master-fitting key.

Illustration No. 13 shows different size master keys for the common ward locks. Note how they vary in size, and with the seven illustrated, few locks of the ward lock construction would be impregnable.

The handcuff manipulator who imagines that he can go

abroad with a few false handcuff keys and make a success has only to give it a trial, and he will find out to his sorrow that an unskilled performer will not be tolerated very long. The Germans, particularly, are like a flame in the pan, a quick flash and then oblivion !

Once in Dortmund, Germany, the landlord of the hotel at which I was stopping came and asked if I would do him a great favour.

A guest who had hired a room by the year was gone for

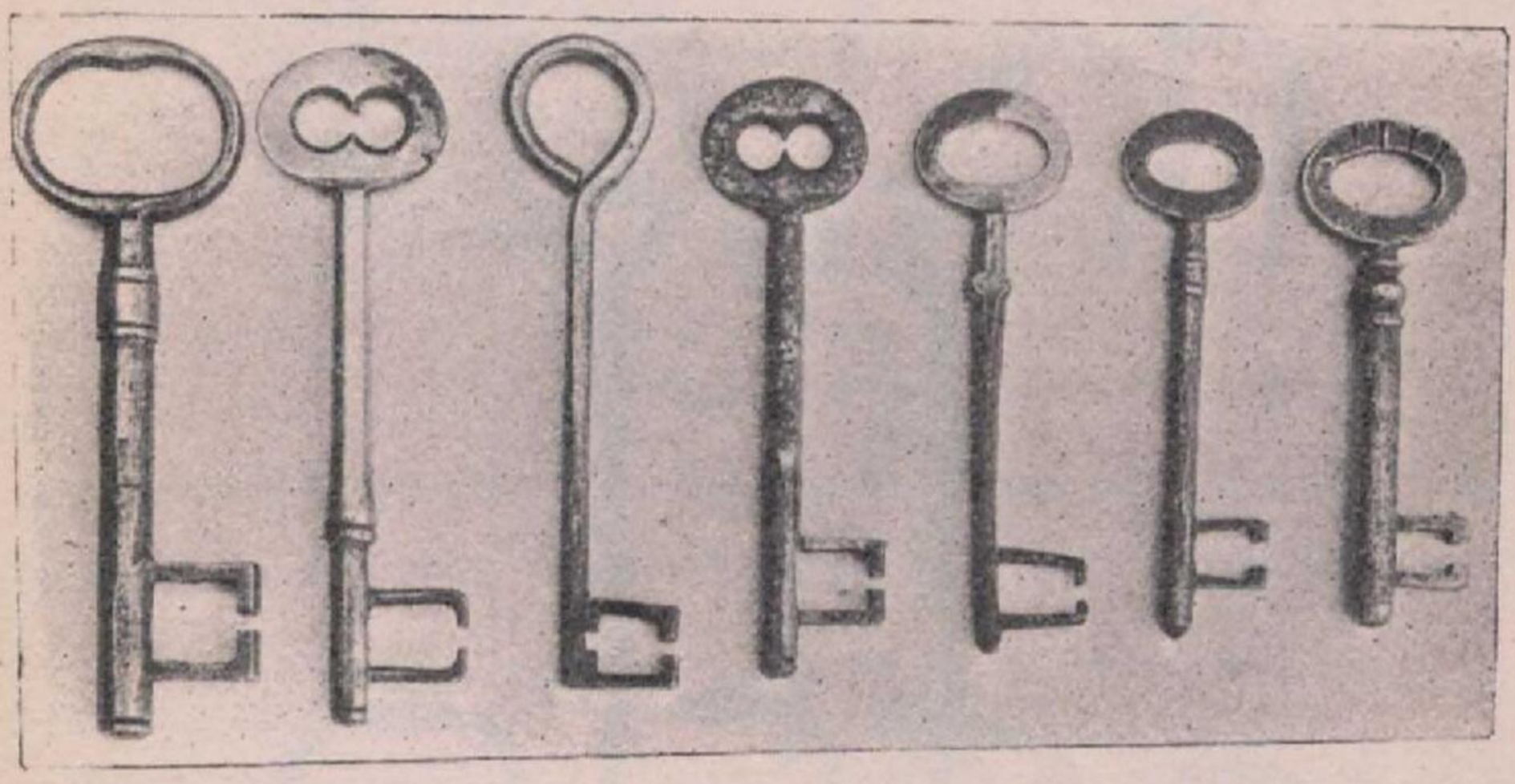


Illustration No. 13

a business trip to Nuremberg and would not be back for several months.

This guest had taken the key of the room with him, and as there happened to be a rush at the hotel, Mr. Thrifty Landlord wished to make double revenue by letting this room to a transient guest.

Of course I was not aware of the fact, and to oblige the landlord, at his request I opened the lock of the door, and as he wanted a key to the door, I went to the hardware

store and purchased a blank key, which I intended to cut to fit this lock.

Being an old-fashioned hotel they had no master keys, and I really went to a lot of trouble to oblige my host.

The next morning I read a three-column article headed, "Houdini Exposed. Buys up all the keys in town, and no wonder he opens all doors." Then the bright editor told a very interesting story of how he happened to be in the shop and saw Houdini looking over all the blanks, and buying several thousands of them; when in reality I bought one blank, for which I paid 5 cents (about 20 pfennigs). Ever since that time I shun hardware shops as I would a pest-house.

CHAPTER XII

THE STRAIT-JACKET RELEASE

THE word strait-jacket alone conjures to mind pictures of violent maniacs and thoughts that trend to gruesome channels.

The origin of the presentation of this release on the stage occurred to me during the season of 1894-5, while touring the Canadian provinces, where I went to fulfil an engagement with Marco, the magician (James Dooley, of Hartford, Conn.), but the company fared disastrously because a man had assumed the name of Markos and the preceding season toured through the same territory and gave so poor a show that the audiences went away complaining, and when the real Marco Company arrived they sparingly patronized us, but as they left we could hear remarks all over to the effect that "This is not the same Marco we had here last time." The name of the bogus Markos was, I believe, Skinner, and the people said it was actually one well earned and appropriate for the kind of a show he presented to them.

Our show closed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and I thereon determined to proceed by myself and give the whole show. While in St. John's I met a Dr. Steeves, who then was in charge of a large insane asylum, and received an invitation from him to visit his institution, which I accepted. After showing me the various wards, he eventually showed

me the padded cells, in one of which, through the small bars of the cell door, I saw a maniac struggling on the canvas-padded floor, rolling about and straining each and every muscle in a vain attempt to get his hands over his head and striving in every conceivable manner to free himself from his canvas restraint, which I later on learned was called a strait-jacket.

Entranced, I watched the efforts of this man, whose struggles caused the beads of perspiration to roll off from him, and from where I stood, I noted that were he able to dislocate his arms at the shoulder joint, he would have been able to cause his restraint to become slack in certain parts, and so allow him to free his arms. But as the straps were drawn tight, the more he struggled the tighter his restraint encircled him, and eventually he lay exhausted, panting, and powerless to move.

Previous to this incident I had seen and used various restraints, such as insane restraint muffs, belts, bed-straps, etc., but this was the first time I saw a strait-jacket, and it left so vivid an impression on my mind that I hardly slept that night, and in such moments as I slept I saw nothing but strait-jackets, maniacs, and padded cells! In the wakeful part of the night I wondered what the effect would be to an audience to have them see a man placed in a strait-jacket and watch him force himself free therefrom.

The very next morning I obtained permission to try to escape from one, and during one entire week I practised steadily and then presented it on the stage, and made my escape therefrom behind a curtain. I pursued this method for some time, but as it was so often repeated to me that people seeing me emerge from the cabinet after my release

with hair dishevelled, countenance covered with perspiration, trousers covered with dust, and ofttimes even my clothes being torn, remarked, "Oh, he is faking, it did not take all that effort to make his escape," eventually I determined to show to the audience exactly what means I resorted to to effect my release, and so did the strait-jacket release in full view of everybody.

CHAPTER XIII

METHOD OF ESCAPE

THE two accompanying illustrations show a front view and a back view of strapping on a strait-jacket,

Illustration No. 1.

Front view of strait-jacket. This strait-jacket is the prison jacket used in Frankfort-on-Maine. Photo taken by police department before my test.

such as is used on the murderous insane. It is made of

strong brown canvas or sail cloth, and has a deep leather collar and leather cuffs ; these cuffs are sewn up at the ends, making a sort of bag into which each arm is placed ; the seams are covered with leather bands, attached to which are leather straps and steel buckles which, when strapped

Illustration No. 2.
Back view of strait-jacket.

upon a person, fit and buckle up in back (see Illustration No. 2). The sleeves of this jacket are made so long that when the arms of the wearer are placed in them and folded across the chest (see Illustration No. 1), the leather cuffs of the sleeves, to which are attached straps and buckles, meet

at the back of the body, one overlapping the other (see Illustration No. 2). The opening of the strait-jacket is at the back, where several straps and buckles are sewn, which are fastened at the back as is shown in Illustration No. 2.

The first step necessary to free yourself is to place the elbow, which has the continuous hand *under* the opposite elbow, on some solid foundation, and by sheer strength exert sufficient force at this elbow so as to gradually force it up towards the head, and by further persistent straining you eventually force the head under the *lower arm*, which results in bringing both of the encased arms in front of the body. (It is very important that these instructions be followed closely step by step, and when placing the arms across the chest sufficient care must be observed to simply place one arm on top of the other, and not have them interlocked.)

Once having freed your arms to such an extent as to get them in front of your body, you can now undo the buckles of the straps of the cuffs with your teeth, after which you open the buckles at the back with your hands, which are still encased in the canvas sleeves, and then you remove the strait-jacket from your body.

There are various different kinds of strait-jackets, made from different materials, some being entirely made of leather, and, of course, the more inflexible the material the more difficult and longer the time necessary for making your release.

In 1901, Count Schwerin, then chief of police of Hanover, Germany, had his warders place me in a strait-jacket from which it took me one hour and twenty-nine minutes to effect my release. The pain, torture, agony, and misery of that struggle will forever live in my mind.

There is a peregrinating impostor in Germany who escapes from a strait-jacket from which any child could make its escape. He has it made of pliable white canvas, with very long sleeves and short body, though when strapped on him it seems as if he were firmly secured, and in making his escape he goes through fantastic gyrations and eventually wriggles out of his fastenings.

The American imitators, as a rule, improvise a strait-jacket that they can pull over their heads. Of course, these latter two are trick strait-jackets and should not be confounded with the genuine ones.

CHAPTER XIV

HISTORICAL LOCK-PICKING CONTESTS WITH JAMES SARGENT AS THE CENTRE FIGURE

ON September 27, 1869, James Sargent caused an open letter to be published challenging the Yale Lock Manufacturing Company to a lock-picking contest and specifying conditions as follows :

"To the Yale Lock Manufacturing Company, No. 1 Barclay St., New York.

"Gentlemen,—Believing as I do that throughout this country the bank locks made by you and those made by Sargent & Greenleaf, of Rochester, N.Y., are more generally depended upon than any others, and having been engaged for many years in trying to raise the standard of burglar-proof security, pointing out and condemning that which is faulty, and more firmly establishing that which is good, I believe it is no more than fair and right that we should show our confidence in the work we are making by taking a small portion of such risks as we are asking capitalists to assume every day. I have, therefore, drawn up, at the suggestion of several moneyed men, the following proposition, which I trust will meet your approbation and be satisfactory to the public. What I propose is a test of our respective locks on

terms as follows: We will choose a committee of five responsible bankers or brokers, two to be chosen by you and two by myself and the fifth by these four, and provide two suitable rooms for the trial. You place in one of the rooms two safes, one secured by your best Double Dial Combination Bank Lock, the other by your Double Treasury Permutation Lock. In the other room I will place two safes, the door of one secured by my No. 1 Magnetic Combination Lock and the other by my No. 1 Automatic Combination Bank Lock, recently adopted by the United States Treasury Department. The locks for the test shall be those already on safes heretofore sold to customers, or now in the salesrooms of parties using our locks. Each party shall place in the hands of the committee the sum of four thousand dollars ($4,000), making eight thousand dollars ($8,000), one-half ($4,000) to be paid to the party first opening both of competitor's locks without injury to lock or safe, and the remaining half ($4,000) to be paid to the party first opening both of competitor's locks without injury to locks or safes. Each party to lock his own lock on a combination of his own choosing, handing the same, sealed, to the chairman of said committee, to be unsealed in the presence of both parties, and only when the trial is concluded. The lock shall be set on true combinations, so that the committee can open them on those combinations after the trial, and (without knowing the combination) the committee and both parties concerned shall see all the locks opened and closed when the trial commences, to know that they are in good working condition. And there shall be a report of the arrangements given by the committee at the commencement of the trial in the New York daily papers, and at the close a full report,

including the result ; and should there be any unfairness on either side, the committee shall report it. The time for each to operate on his competitor's locks shall be limited to forty-eight hours, or eight hours per day for six successive days. Each party to have the privilege of choosing assistants, but only two persons shall have access to each room at the same time during the trial. As soon as any one of the locks is opened, the numbers on which it was opened shall be written and handed in a sealed envelope to the committee, who shall note the time of receiving it, and report this time immediately to the party whose lock is picked, and to this party only. All other information in regard to the test, received by the committee after the trial commences, shall be kept secret by them till it has ended.

"This proposition will remain open five days for your acceptance or rejection, then, if accepted, the trial will commence the following week. I would respectfully ask that an answer to the above be made through New York daily papers.

"(Signed) JAMES SARGENT."

To the foregoing letter the Yale Lock Manufacturing Co. made the following reply :

"TO JAMES SARGENT, ESQUIRE, NEW YORK.

"Sir,—Newspaper publications of yours of recent date, having evidently been intended to shake the confidence of the business community in bank locks of our manufacture, we will willingly afford you an opportunity to demonstrate your ability as an expert in lock picking, although we beg leave to take exception to those parts of the article referred

to in which, perhaps inadvertently, you seem desirous of conveying the impression that your locks and ours stand upon an equality in the market.

" If you will accommodate us with a trial, we will select from the business community of this city two responsible gentlemen, you may select two others, and the four thus chosen shall select a fifth, the whole five to constitute a committee to see that the following conditions and arrangements are properly carried out :

" We will deposit with the committee the sum of $5,000, you to do the same, and the whole amount ($10,000) shall be paid over to you if you succeed in *picking* our lock without injury to it or to the safe to which it may be attached.

" We will provide for the trial a safe now in use or in stock, having on it one of our *No.* 1 *Double Dial Combination Locks*, which safe shall be placed in a room to be selected by the committee. After the lock has been inspected by yourself, and you are satisfied that it is in its normal condition, we will set each of its two dials on a combination of our own choosing, and hand to the committee, in a sealed letter, the numbers of the combinations, which letter shall be opened in the presence of both parties after you shall have completed your attempt. If you shall have been unsuccessful, the lock shall then be opened by one of the committee, in accordance with our ordinary printed directions for the same, and by means of the combinations named in the above-mentioned letter.

" Prior to commencing the trial, and in the presence of the committee (who shall be acquainted with the combinations on which the lock is set) we will lock and unlock the lock, to

demonstrate to the committee that it is in working order, and that it yields readily to the combinations.

"These preliminaries having all been complied with, we will place the lock at your disposition for the space of one week, making no restrictions as to the number of hours in which you may operate on it, only requiring that the test shall be strictly a picking one, and that no violence shall be used either with the safe or the lock; the latter to remain uninjured at the close of the trial.

"We will allow you to choose your own assistants, only one of whom shall be with you at any one time.

"It is further to be understood that at the expiration of the allotted time, should our lock have proved superior to all your attempts and still remains unopened, the deposit of $10,000 in the hands of the committee shall be declared forfeited to us and be paid over to us by the committee.

"Thus far, our challenge has had reference only to our No. 1 Double Dial Lock. We now offer to submit our No. 2 Single Dial Lock to the same test, should you fail of success with the No. 1.

"It is a notorious fact, though you avoid its mention, that a lock may be proof against picking while it is ridiculously weak in other respects. Few bankers would feel it much of a consolation to be told, after having been robbed, that the lock they relied upon could not have been picked, though it was easily forced.

"We therefore offer further to submit a challenge for a competitive trial between our locks and yours. Each lock to be subjected to the ultimate test of a burglar's tools and a burglar's privileges. To this end we propose that the committee shall provide a suitable room for each trial, and

each party furnish a lock of his own manufacture and such as he has been selling for at least three months, and see that it is properly attached to the door of a safe to be provided for the purpose. The locks then to be inspected by the committee, and each to be locked by its maker and the combinations handed, under seal, to the committee, as specified above for the picking trial of our No. 1 lock.

"When all is ready, we propose that each party, with two assistants only, shall have access to his competitor's lock, with such tools as he may select, and be allowed ten consecutive hours in which to operate upon the lock, using any means he may please to force or break it open; his efforts being strictly confined, however, to the lock and not to be directed against the door or the safe.

"As a pecuniary inducement for your acceptance of this challenge, and as a guarantee of our good faith in it, we propose that each party stake a sum of $2500 upon the result; depositing that amount with the committee, and that the total ($5000) be paid over to the party who first succeeds in breaking his competitor's lock.

"We will hold the above proposition open for your acceptance or rejection for five days from date, and await your answer through the daily press of this city.

"(Signed) YALE LOCK MANUFACTURING CO.

"October 2, 1869."

I present a clipping from the "New York Times" of October 14, 1869:—

"The Bank Lock contest which has been carried on in the New York papers for some weeks past culminated yesterday in Sargent's picking the Yale Double Dial Bank Lock and

winning thereby the $1200 staked upon the result of the trial.

"After Mr. Sargent published the statement that the Yale locks could be picked, parties interested in the sale and in the use of these locks desired to have the matter settled by actual demonstration. Accordingly, Mr. John B. Yale, treasurer of the Yale Lock Manufacturing Company, and Mr. Sargent, arranged for a test. Mr. Yale selected on the committee to superintend the trial Mr. John Farrel, of the firm of Herring, Farrel & Sherman, safe makers, using the Yale locks, and Mr Sargent selected Mr. R. A. Ballou, general manager of the American Steam Safe Company, using the Sargent locks, and they two selected as the third member of the committee, and umpire, Geo. H. Wyckoff, Esq., cashier of the New York Co. National Bank. The committee took care to see that everything was fairly done and with the view of determining the facts in regard to the lock.

"THE RESULT APPEARS IN THE FOLLOWING REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

"We, the undersigned, having been appointed a committee to superintend a test of the Yale Double Dial Bank Lock against picking, and to report the result, hereby report as follows :

"In accordance with the provision of an agreement between Mr. John B. Yale, of the Yale Lock Manufacturing Company, and Mr. James Sargent, proprietor of the Sargent Bank Lock, signed and witnessed, on the 13th inst. a Yale Double Dial Bank Lock taken from the stock on hand for use, was fitted at the Herring Manufactory to a fine burglar-proof safe, and placed in a room on 14th St., in this city and,

after Mr. Yale had himself set the lock on a combination of his own choosing, one thousand dollars ($1000) furnished by Mr. Yale, and two hundred dollars ($200) furnished by Mr. Sargent, with the understanding that the $1200 was to be Mr. Sargent's if he should pick the lock within forty-eight working hours, and Mr. Yale's if he should not do it, was placed in the safe by the committee, and the door was then closed and locked by Mr. Yale in the presence of the committee and others. The operation upon the lock was commenced at 12 o'clock noon, yesterday, and continued till 5 o'clock p.m., when the operators (Mr. Sargent and one assistant) left for the night, and the safe was placed in the care of the watchman till 8 o'clock this morning, when the operators returned and resumed their work. At 11 o'clock this morning they had completed their undertaking, having in about 8½ hours picked the lock and opened the safe without the slightest injury to either the lock or the safe. The picking was fairly done and the money was awarded to Mr. Sargent.

"(Signed)

"JOHN FARREL, of Herring, Farrel & Sherman;

"R. A. BALLOU, General Manager Am. Steam Safe Co.;

"GEO. H. WYCKOFF, Cashier New York County National Bank."

TO THE PUBLIC

"Office Hall's Safe and Lock Co.,

"Chicago, Jan. 28, 1870.

"Having exhausted all fair means to induce Mr. James Sargent to attempt to open our "Victor Lock," and having, through permission of A. Vance Brown, Esq., president National Bank of Commerce, sent him a challenge on the

20th inst. to operate on either of our locks on safe furnished said Bank on terms which all disinterested parties will consider perfectly fair and honourable, and to which he failed to respond, he waits until the bank has withdrawn permission to have the locks tested, and then comes out in flaming style, proposing to try his skill on these identical locks. In order not to leave him another *hole through which he might wriggle*, we again made application to National Bank of Commerce, and also the Fifth National Bank of Chicago, for permission for him to try their locks. The result of our application will be seen in the subjoined letters :

"National Bank of Commerce,

"Chicago, January 28, 1870.

"To Joseph L. Hall, Esq., of Hall's Safe and Lock Co.

"Dear Sir,—I must beg to decline your request to allow the locks on safe of this bank to be subjected to a trial of picking. The controversy between yourself and Mr. Sargent can be conducted and concluded in some manner that will not involve inconvenience to anyone. As before indicated to you, I have no reason to question the security of your *Safe* or *Locks*.

"Respectfully,

"A. VANCE BROWN,

"President Fifth National Bank, Chicago."

"Jan. 27, 1870.

"Joseph L. Hall, Esq.,

"President Hall's Safe and Lock Co., Chicago.

"Dear Sir,—Your request that we allow the test of an expert upon the Hall Victor Lock upon the safe purchased of you by this bank, we feel obliged to decline. We have

no reason to question the *entire safety* of the safe with the *locks* thereon.

"Yours respectfully,

"ISAAC G. LOMBARD, Cashier."

"In his *windy* article which appears in the morning dailies, he makes no allusion to our acceptance of his challenge in which we proposed to submit an exact duplicate of the locks on safes referred to, on which he might operate for thirty hours, subject to the same conditions and arrangements as proposed by himself. Nor does he in any way allude to the fact that we accepted his proposition to put our locks, either our 4th class "*Victor*" or our "*Four Wheel Chronometer*," up against his *best* "*Automatic*," in a mutual test on the precise conditions as named by him, save that the trial should not come off until after the 22nd of February next. We have meant *business* in this matter from the beginning, and make the foregoing statement, that the public may not be misled by *false* impressions, or by his LOUD BUGLING, *after* the *coast is clear*. Our President (Mr. Hall) having returned to Cincinnati last night, Mr. Sargent's communication will receive his attention in due time.

SARGENT TO BROWN

"Hall's Safe and Lock Co.,

"Chicago, Jan. 28, 1870.

"A. Vance Brown, Esq.,

"President National Bank of Commerce.

"Dear Sir,—It was my intention to say nothing to the public about the treatment I have received from you from the beginning of this Lock controversy, nor should I have

done so but for the letter you gave to Hall, and which was published in the *Post* of to-day. Now for the facts. On the 21st you accepted my proposition, in the presence of one of your directors, and others, to allow me to test the Hall VICTOR Bank Lock on the vault door of your bank, by picking, and if I succeeded in so doing, you to give me the picked lock and to purchase from me one of my best Bank Locks, to take the place of the one picked. This test was to take place on Monday, 24th, at which time I appeared at your bank prepared for the trial; when lo! I was shown a telegram from Hall to you dated at Cincinnati, requesting a postponement of the test until his arrival. You also, on the 20th inst., offered to put up $500 that said lock could not be picked, and when asked by one of your directors if you would put up your own money, or Hall's, you said, "MY OWN, whether Hall will back me or not, and if the lock can be picked I won't pay Hall for the safe." Now, Sir, on the arrival of Hall, why this sudden change of base, this going back on all your previous statements? I am still ready to test the lock according to either of the previous agreements.

"Respectfully yours,

"JAMES SARGENT."

SARGENT TO THE WORLD

"I have deposited with the First National Bank of this city, as the subjoined receipt will show. One Thousand Dollars, which I hereby offer as a reward to Joseph L. Hall, or any other man who will pick, in thirty hours, without injury to the lock or safe, any one of the nine locks on the following safes:

"Four locks on the National Bank of Commerce.
"Three locks on the Illinois State Savings Institution.
"Two locks on the Fourth National Bank; or
"Three to be put on safe in Manufacturers' National Bank, or one to be put on the vault door of the First National Bank.

"Should the party desire it, I will take any one of the locks chosen apart, and let them examine it, and take measurements of every piece before trial, and then put it together in his presence and the presence of the committee, three of which may be chosen—one by myself, one by Hall or any other man, and the two so chosen to choose the third party; the one chosen by me shall set the combination lock, lock and unlock it in the presence of the committee, to show it is in good working order, they not knowing the combination on which it is set.

"'First National Bank, Chicago,
"'*Feb.* 2, 1870.

"'Received of James Sargent one thousand dollars, to be paid to any person who may pick his bank lock according to the terms of his above-published offer, or, if not used, to be returned to him in five days from date hereof.

"'(Signed) L. J. GAGE, Cashier.'

"As bankers who are now using Hall's best twelve-wheel double-dial *Victor* bank lock on their safes dare not give me a trial, for fear I will pick them, I now offer to the National Bank of Commerce, or the Fifth National Bank of Chicago, *one hundred dollars* to allow me the privilege of a trial by picking either one of the Hall locks on their

safes, and, if I succeed, they to give me a certificate of the fact. I will furnish them with a good fire and burglar-proof safe during the trial, so their business will not be interrupted. If this will not satisfy bankers and the public, what will?

"Any communications, for the next five days, may be addressed to the care of Pratt and Covert, 86 Washington Street.

"JAMES SARGENT."

CHAPTER XV

HANDCUFFS, KEYS, AND INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SAME [1]

1.—Heavy Early Tower Cuff.

THE first handcuff invented or patented by J. J. Tower. It is a simple ratchet lock, and the one key will unlock the leg-irons as well as the handcuffs. The keyhole is on the bottom of the manacle instead of the side. Patented May 26, 1874. Patent number 151,452.

2.—Ankle-irons, Early Tower.

Same instructions as No. 1.

3.—Regulation Double Lock Tower Cuff.

Known as the Tower and Lyon double lock handcuff. This key is a most important key; thousands of this style have been placed on the market, as they are really a secure cuff. It is the joint patent of J. J. Tower and H. W. Kahlke, patented December 15, 1879. Patent number 22,751. This cuff can be double locked, and to unlock it will only require a double lock to release the bolt. Care should be taken of this key, for if anything is broken in lock it must either be cut off wrists or lock prised open, which is next to impossible, as the cuff is machine-made (see p. 34).

4.—Regulation Double Lock Tower Leg-iron.

Same principle as above cuff, but used only for the ankles (see p. 36).

[1] Unless otherwise stated, when Patent number is mentioned, it is the American Patent number.

5.—YALE PRINCIPLE GRAND MASTER KEY FOR ALL PURPOSELY ALTERED CUFFS.

This key is to be used on the double lock cuffs that have been changed, so that the original key cannot open. This key will open all regulation cuffs, but use it only for cuffs that have been tampered with.

6.—H. W. KAHLKE'S FLAT RATCHET CUFF.

7.—ORIGINAL LEG-IRON, ALSO INVENTION OF H. W. KAHLKE.

8.—UNIVERSAL OLD STYLE BEAN CUFF.

Invented by E. D. Bean, patented November 28, 1882; patent number 268,171. Bean has invented quite a number of various police equipments, but this is the first cuff that he placed on the market. The key marked 8 is for his original handcuff, and will also unlock the leg-irons.

9.—DISCARDED OLD STYLE BEAN LEG-IRON.

Same as No. 8 (see p. 36).

10.—IMPORTANT BEAN FLAT KEY.

It is also a Bean key, made thinner, and the teeth are a little longer, as the cuffs vary.

11.—NEW REGULATION BEAN CUFF—extra heavy (see p. 36).

12.—IMPROVED BEAN LEG-IRON.

Same key as No. 11.

13.—EXTRAORDINARY BEAN GIANT HANDCUFF.

The justly celebrated Bean Giant. For many years Capt. Bean offered a reward of $500 to whomsoever could escape

from this cuff, with or without the key, if he (Bean) locked the cuff himself on the person's wrists. Houdini, the original Handcuff King, is the only one who has ever claimed the reward, and he had to release himself with the cuffs locked on his wrists behind his back, and the keyhole away from his fingers. You will note that this key is a long one, as it is impossible to reach the handcuff lock with the regulation key ; and with the aid of this extension you are enabled to reach the keyhole with ease and facility. This cuff was patented Nov. 1, 1887, number 372,510. Properly presented, this is a good trick for exhibition purposes, that is, to carry a cuff of your own and show to the public how difficult this handcuff is to escape from, by locking it on one of your committee's wrists, giving him the original key and asking him to unlock cuff (see p. 36).

14.—Handcuff known as "Pinkerton," or "Lightweight Detective."

15.—Ratchet Cuff, Invented by W. V. Adams.

The first ratchet ever patented. Invented and patented by W. V. Adams, June 17, 1862. Patent number 35,576. This cuff looks like the double-lock ratchet, but the keyhole in cuff is finer, and the key barrel is larger and made specially thin. There are lots of this class about. Turn key half way and cuff opens.

16.—Inventor Ahrend's Cuff, known as Romer's.

Handcuff patented by Herman Ahrend and assigned to Romer, of Newark. Patent number 226,949 ; April 27, 1880 (see p. 33).

17.—CUFFS OF PADLOCK SHAPE, CALLED ROMER'S LEG-IRONS.

Same style as No. 16, but used exclusively for the ankles. This manacle is shaped like a padlock and looks like two padlocks chained together. Very common.

18.—HOUDINI MASTER KEY FOR ALL COMMON REGULATION ENGLISH HANDCUFFS.

The above cuffs are of British origin, and the principal manufacturers are Hiatt, of Birmingham; Frogatt, of Bordesley; and at one time the Providence R. I. Tool Co. made this style. The key in this set being split allows you to really unlock almost any cuff of this pattern, as you simply insert key, give it sufficient turns to catch hold of thread on bolt, and pull. This split key is the invention of Harry Houdini, who patented it in England, and is the best master ever used on any style cuff (see p. 6).

19.—WIDE MASTER KEY FOR 95 PER CENT OF ALL BRITISH LEG-IRONS.

Can also be used for extra heavy handcuffs. There are thousands of these cuffs about, as they are the cheapest made, and are used all over the world. Same as 18, but larger bore.

20.—ENGLISH HANDCUFF, LATEST PATENT.

This cuff is not sold to everyone, but only to police, and you must prove that you are an official. The firm of Hiatt refuses to sell to handcuff kings and dealers, and this key sent in set is positively the first one in America. Wrap the thread with cloth so that it will not wear out, as you will note that the thread is on the outside of the key (see p. 21).

21.—Improved Master Key for English Plug Eight Cuff.

There are at least eight different sizes of this cuff, but the Improved Master will unlock all. This cuff is also known as a Slave Iron. There are two varieties of this cuff, one known as the Boar Cuff, which is twice as heavy as the regulation. Key 21 has two teeth on top, thus you will require to remove the plug before it is possible to insert the key proper. Some of the plugs unscrew to the right and some to the left. When cuff is being locked on you, watch which way the key is being turned (see p. 14).

22.—Same as Above, called the Boar Cuff.

This has a barrel in end of key. Unlocks same as 21, but cuff is much heavier. Same keys will unlock leg-irons.

23.—Scotland Yard Fixed Cuff.

This cuff is used in Scotland Yard Detective Department to defeat handcuff manipulators. To use key insert until peg is reached, turn half, then pull. Cuff looks like regulation English.

24.—Known as the Lilly Iron.

Invented by Sergeant Lilly, of the United States Army, who never patented them, and, strange to say, he died with a pair of them on his wrists, suffering from delirium tremens. While this is not a regulation handcuff, it was adopted at one time, and can now be recognized as such. The key is simply a square, which unscrews or screws up the manacle. This is the only lock to the cuff (see p. 37).

25.—Novel W. H. Kimbal Handcuff.

The split-screw key, No. 18, will pull this cuff open. Cuffs are generally in possession of private or retired detectives. Patented August 7, 1860. Patent number 29,495.

26.—Old Delestatius Handcuff.

Patented December 10, 1861, and the key No. 18 will also open this cuff.

27.—Well-known Rankin Cuff.

Same key will unlock the leg-irons. Patented February 26, 1866, number 52,745. A very common cuff, and frequently produced. To unlock this cuff you must press down key and keep on turning as far as possible, then pull cuff open.

28.—New Rankin Leg-iron.

No. 27 key will also unlock this iron (see p. 33).

29.—A'Cheney Handcuff.

Patented April 1, 1871, patent number 113,499. To unlock this cuff you allow it to go clear to the bottom, then you turn key half way round, the oblique end of bolt is presented, and another half turn opens lock, allowing it to be drawn open. Rare cuff, and never placed on market.

30.—So-called Oregan Boot, New Style.

31.—The Real A. P. Baldwin Leg-iron.

Patented July 25, 1876, patent number 180,311. Requires two keys or lock to unlock. Key given unscrews the square plug, the three-cornered gag assists in making length of band longer or shorter.

32.—Handcuff called the Bottle Neck.

(Robert H. Daley Cuff). Was manufactured by Marlin Fire Arms Co., patented December 2, 1879, number 222,252. Cuff is not made any more, but there are lots in use. Key must be inserted once, turned half way, forced down and another turn, which allows the cuff to pull apart. The key must remain in lock to open, but will lock without key.

33.—Extra Fine Iver Johnson Handcuff.

This cuff has been remodelled since 1906. Originally it was same key as Bean's No. 8. The key used on the new cuff will be seen is a barrel key. Patented November 18, 1884. Patent number 308,075. To unlock simply insert key and turn half way.

34.—Handy Thumb Cuff.

Called handy because the cuff can be carried in a vest pocket. Patented by Frank McDonald, of Boise City, Idaho, January 3, 1888, number 375,945. It is stated that the inventor went east to place this cuff on the market, in 1888, and died on his return. The cuff has so far only been in very few hands, but now that the patent has expired a firm is making them, and they can be purchased in almost every police equipment establishment. As it is impossible to make use of the key in its original state, use Bean Giant extension, so that you can hold key in mouth to open (see p. 32).

35.—A. F. Hyatt's Chain Cuff.

Patented by A. Frank Hyatt, a well-known detective. Cuff is used all over the West. The lock is in the buckle,

and is a very fine manacle; can be used for hands or feet. Patented April 3, 1888, patent number 380,441.

36.—New English Style Cobb Cuff.

Also called Improved Bean Cuff. Bean, however, had nothing to do with this cuff except deny being its inventor. Patent granted to Cobb, May 2, 1899, patent number 623,984. There are two keys—one is for the cuff sold in England, and the other for the American cuff. The only difference is that the teeth vary, one being longer than the other.

37.—Ditto, called American Cobb Cuff.

Same instructions as for No. 36 (see p. 34).

38.—Cummings Handcuff.

Patented July 4, 1899, patent number 628,139. Key must be inserted and turned half way round.

39.—Universal L. F. Maltby Handcuff.

Patented Nov. 12, 1901, patent number 686,626. This cuff has a number of varieties. Five have been placed on the market so far. Several shapes are used in key. One cuff has two keys; on one side you use the two-pointed key, and the other side use the key proper. In order to note the cuff being used, always ask to unlock cuff for you. Watch style key being used. In fact, do this to all cuffs.

40.—For the Maltby Dead Lock Handcuff.

This is the key for the dead lock in the double-locked Maltby, which has two separate locks, one on each side of cuff.

41.—Fine Maltby Cuff, Small Size.

42.—King Master Key for Maltby Handcuffs.

For all styles not covered by the above keys.

43.—Important Special Maltby.

This key will fit a special Maltby that is in the office of the Chief of Police in St. Louis, Mo.

44.—Nelson A. Burdick Chain Cuff.

Patented September 15, 1903, patent number 738,983. Key used is like the regulation Bean, but has smaller teeth.

45.—Government Judd Cuff.

Patented by Henry Judd, August 2, 1904. The key sent is to be forced down on the plug in keyhole as far as possible, turn to the left half revolution.

46.—All Insane Restraints.

This key is for insane belts, crazy cribs, leather bootings, wristlets, etc. etc. Several devices are patented, some with buckle locking, others with small padlocks. This set of keys embraces the large as well as the small buckle locks. To open this lock you simply insert key and push. This throws out the pin and buckle is open. You now undo the strap. When the belt is made use of, the most reliable way to escape is to pull straps down over your feet and walk out of it. This will allow you to work lock with key in your mouth. This is important, especially if your hands are encased in a leather muff and you are unable to use your fingers.

47.—Locks on Buckles, on Restraint Belts and Fastenings.

48.—Latest Special Key for Houdini's Fixed Bean Giant.

Originally in the possession of Detective-Sergeant Driver, of Chicago, who presented it to Gay, who in turn sold it to a dealer.

49.—One Special Key for Tower Ratchet, with Extra Heavy Post.

This key can also be used on any ratchet where the post has been changed for a heavy one instead of the thin original.

50.—Very Poor Imitation Ratchet Cuff, Made in Chicago.

The cuff looks like a regulation ratchet, but the keyhole is slanted, and poorly constructed. Almost anything will open cuff.

51.—Extra Large Leg-iron at Police Head-quarters, New York City.

52.—Regulation Key for Civil War Handcuffs.

English pattern cuff made in the United States.

53.—Thumb Cuff.

Owned by traveller of Tower & Lyon, who carries this cuff to defeat handcuff manipulators. Extension must be used on this key, as you must use your mouth to make use of key on thumb cuff.

54.—Handcuffs in Buffalo Police Head-quarters.

55.—Elberfeld Cuff, known as the Berliner.

This key will fit the regulation size handcuffs, transport chain, and Germany belt cuff.

56.—Wide Berlin Handcuff.

Key is extra large, and will fit leg-irons or handcuffs (see p. 38).

57.—Original Restraint Belt.

This is a very important key.

58.—Restraint Belt Key of Different Style.

Not as important as 57.

59.—Left-handed Ratchet Cuff.

To unlock this cuff, which is a common ratchet, you insert key and turn to the left half way, which opens lock. A very simple lock.

60.—Dortmunder Prison Handcuff.

This is the heavy handcuff used in the Dortmunder Prison.

61.—Nova Scotia Leg-iron.

Found in Nova Scotia by Houdini in 1895. Key turns half way. Scarce.

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