

THE JINX



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"IN THE INTEREST OF MAGIC"

THIS ISSUE 1100



Usually the pleasure is all mine when putting together an issue, but not during hot weather. This is being written during some blistering days of August when the thermometer starts at 90 instead of stopping there. Two things pull me down; lack of enough sleep, and heat. The latter has been mentioned and the former is due to my becoming the substitute mother of an eight day old bird dog. Perhaps I can raise her as a pacifist and use her pointing ability as a new way to locate cards. Those two excuses are why I dug into my notebook to such lengths for this month. I'm starting a new idea with the October issue and think it will be acceptable. And by that time, the pup should be able to feed herself, and let me concentrate upon something besides a bottle and the warming of milk.

Vincent Dalban has written that he is offering for sale a set of postcard reproductions from photographs of old time magicians. S.W. Clarke, the well known magical historian supplied the originals and the reproductions are excellently done. The cost of these has been defrayed privately so that every cent received will go direct to the Maskelyne Memorial Benevolent Fund, founded after the death of J.N.Maskelyne as a permanent memorial to a great magician, and is designed to relieve distress amongst magicians. The subjects of the photographs are Bartolomeo Bosco, Comte, Ludwig Dobler, Robert Houdin and Philippe. For 75 cents you can obtain a set post-paid from Mr. Dalban, 32, Quinta Road, Babbacombe, Torquay, Devon, England. You'll appreciate the photographs and know you are helping someone in magic for whom the breaks have stopped coming.

Unethical activities taint magic to no uncertain degree. The public is aware of it only through satiation when a new effect makes its appearance though, and the perennial remark, 'All magicians do the same tricks,' is earned by the magi themselves. Walking Through a Ribbon is a late instance. Utopia Magicalis might be the name of a locality where all magicians would do their own tricks, and originators retain public performing rights. Such a hope however, is comparable to the inventor's dream of perpetual motion. Human nature made itself manifest long before magic became a tool for entertainment, and, being what it is, makes the immediate jumping on the bandwagon of a new effect an unextinguishable cause of action. I first saw Blackstone use it in Chicago. We all know that the stage version



Magicians in general are eager for publicity, but HUMDRUM, THE MYSTIC, knows one so modest that he even sends out anonymous checks.

grew up from the Die and Frame trick of a few years back, and it is an admirable application of the principle. Dr. Gordon Peck of Glens Falls, New York, than whom there is no more devout and conscientious amateur, (he revels in that standing, too) obtained it direct from Harry, with whom he isacloseasthis, and first presented it in New York City at the S.A.M. Hecksher Theatre show. Besides a truckload of illusions, Dr. Peck brought with him five assistants, an orchestra leader, and a stage manager formerly with Dante. A clean cut presentation made everybody present ribbon conscious and the dealers wasted no time writing advertisements about 'a hit at the annual show.' One well known leader of the rear file even put out blueprints. The question in my mind that has yet to be answered is, "Why do magicians wait until someone else does it, before taking it up themselves?" There are hundreds of catalogued tricks and published effects not being used by anyone. Yet the moment someone with imagination and vision takes an effect from these available to all sources, everybody jumps up and says, "It's great - I can use that." And what can be done about it? Nothing much. My answer is, "Develop a little pride along with your magical ability." What's yours?

Like the two embryonic business men who were rivals in the back yard lemonade game is the dealer situation. When asked why he kept his price at a nickle while his competitor had dropped to three cents one shrugged his shoulders. "The cat fell in his bowl a while ago," came the reply, "and he's trying to sell out before word gets around." When a dealer copies a trick at a lower price you can bet your last thumb tip that there is a cat in the lemonade somewhere. You seldom miss getting what you pay for when you stick to the reputable and settled depots. Sam Bailey's lamentable death has taken one from earth service and we can ill afford a loss like that. Appreciate them while they're around to treat you right.

I'll have to feed my pup now, and wonder if it will grow up to steal other dog's bones.

Theo Annemann

In relation to the 'Solitaire King' effect in this issue is a card oddity which was shown me a few years ago by a professional gambler who used it as a form of solitaire. Shuffle any deck and deal off twenty-five cards, discarding the rest of deck. Turn these face up, lay them out in five rows of five cards each, and then move them around at will, until you have five complete poker hands consisting of straights, full houses or flushes, according to the way they may be arranged. There can be no pairs only or three of a kind only hands as all cards must be used. This can always be done regardless of what cards you have to work over. Sometimes it is easy and other times you'll spend an hour before you realize it. It is a fascinating puzzle and if you try it and get stuck, send me the names of the cards and a stamped envelope. If I can't figure it out, I know a fellow who can.

Lurking in my notebook is another cute bit of knowledge. Someone shuffles a deck and names any two different values. You fan the face up deck and invariably can show the two values side by side somewhere among the cards. The chances in favor of this are quite high and it has been used extensively as a betting proposition.

You can also spread a deck face down and have anyone turn over three cards, wagering that among the three will be an Ace, Deuce or Jack. It looks to the spectator as if only twelve cards out of the fifty-two can lose for them, but the percentage is computed differently and is high in your favor. Never let it be said I have advocated betting, but in case someone's mind turns that way, these two items are safe even money wagers.

In The Book Without a Name was an effect called 'Seven Keys to Baldpate.' It made use of a Yale or Corbin padlock and seven keys, only one of which would fit. The keys were to be mixed and each of seven people would pick one out and hold it in their closed fist. The performer would now pass from one to another and finally stop in front of one whose key would be tried and found to open the lock. I used a small size changing bag and extra keys in the method given. Robert Thrasher, of Elmira, New York, and I were together not long ago, and in talking about the effect evolved, not alone a better method, but a much improved effect from the standpoint of the audience. One needs only the padlock and eight keys, one of which fits the lock. These keys all look alike, but only seven are used openly. One of the dummy keys is used secretly. Have the real key with a ribbon tied to it. Hand the dummy keys to a spectator with the lock and have him try them. Then hand him the real key which opens the lock. Now hook the lock into his coat lapel and snap it shut. Remove ribbon from real key and toss it into a hat or bowl with the others. Really, though, you switch it with a simple coin move for your dummy key. And at this time, no one expects anything, most attention being on the lock in the lapel. Now have the keys mixed and picked out by seven people. Pass along and finally stop in front of one. Have the real key in your left hand finger palmed, take the key from spectator, make a change over palm and toss the real key to spectator with lock. He removes the padlock and all is well and can be checked.

I wonder how many passed up the shrinking dollar stunt that Max Holden described in the Linking Ring for May? It's an excellent table trick and new. By rolling a bill real hard between the hands it is broken down and appears to have become much smaller than an ordinary bill with which it is compared. The more it is broken up and the finer the wrinkles get, the smaller the bill looks, and the picture, figures and design appears smaller and is not distorted. It takes three or four times to do well, and the bill is

getting smaller all the while. I patter along about showing them a practical explanation of deflation. The dollar on the table is a pre-deflation dollar and the one you use is what happened. When Mr. Roosevelt decreed that the dollar drop to 59 cents, all members of the house and senate went out on the capitol steps with a pile of bills beside them, and worked night and day to make the dollar worth 59 cents. While gabbing about this, you keep rolling bill hard and unrolling to show how it gradually drops to about 90 cents, then 75 and finally to approximately 59 cents in size. It's silly but funny and an awfully interesting stunt. (English readers note: My apologies for the used up space here. I tried it with a ten shilling note and it doesn't work worth a hoot.)

For those who use the canary in the electric light bulb, I've thought of a variation which would be very effective. Instead of a bird use water. Have the bulb burning as usual and vanish a glassful of water, not the glass, just the water. You can use a Foo can or any preferable method. Instantly, and coinciding with the vanish, the light goes out, bulb is unscrewed and found full of water when broken. The contrast of water into a burning bulb is very strong and impressive. To fill a bulb hold it in a pail of water and with a pair of shears cut the tip off. The vacuum in the bulb causes it to fill itself and the small hole is then waxed over.

Speaking of a Foo can reminds me of a very funny comedy stunt in which it was secretly used. One was made to fit into a derby hat. As usual, the opportunity rises for the practical joker to pour water into the hat and stand by, waiting for the deluge. However, the hat is put on and taken off with nothing happening and the joke rebounds. It's very funny to watch because just the opposite to what you expect happens. Perhaps Frank Lane can use this at the next convention.

Why don't more magicians be up to date and timely? I've seen two different performers do a burglar card trick lately with the worn out 'cop and robber' talk. Use 'G-man' instead of 'cop' and make a modern manhunt of it. You'll get their interest quicker and they'll remember how you 'caught Dillinger' longer than just a card trick about burglars.

Magicians could learn a lot by digging into old magazine files. There are two tricks being used a great deal to-day, but no one is doing them as they were originally performed and the effects in those days were much better. The Vanishing Bird Cage is the first. The cage and bird were shown and vanished. Then the performer would explain that any fear for the bird was groundless because the bird disappeared first, followed by the cage. They both vanished so close together, however, that it appeared as one disappearance. After saying this, the performer would reach under his coat and his hand would come out holding a canary which would fly away. I've always thought this a pretty finish and remember trying to get Keating to use it at the time he was making Broadway extremely bird-cage conscious. The S.P.C.A. was interested and the usual 'to hurt or not to hurt' controversy raged. This finish would have been timely and a cute come-back, but Fred couldn't see it my way, or else was too tired to bother. I heard a short time ago that, while working on a picture, he did the cage vanish with a pigeon. It may have been ballyhoo (Fred had lobby photos once holding a parrot cage about the size of an Austin) but I know him well enough to guess that he might try such a thing. If he did, he must have looked like Lionel Strongfort in his prime, after the cage and pigeon were out of sight (?).

The other trick is The Cards From the Pockets. Performers invariably have the deck shuffled and then pull out the card called for. When Her-

bert Brooks introduced this stunt he tossed a deck out for a three card selection. Each spectator who took a card wrote his name on it and shuffled his card back himself. Brooks put the halves into his trouser pockets and had the three cards named. He reached in his pockets and drew out the cards, returning them to their owners for verification. Then he said that it was easy because he could find any card called for, and as cards were named, he produced them. The indexes were in the double pockets to start. The deck from which cards were selected was of normal size but taken back while the cards were being marked and changed for a narrow deck. In his pockets he could pull out the three marked cards and return them. The other cards called for came from the indexes. This was subtle because the locating of the three marked cards impressed that the same deck that was shuffled was being used. If you do the effect, try this version by the originator of the trick.

Others may have thought of this but I've never seen it in print and I thought of it through necessity. I don't suppose there is a reader who hasn't been handed something as a joke and asked to take it out of somebody's pocket. If the article is reasonably small like a pen, pencil, or watch, I can tell you a cute wrinkle. Just do a simple card location and pick on the goat-to-be to help. Have him shuffle the deck after returning his card and when you take deck you use your own method for getting the card to top or bottom. Now ask him to come over and stand beside you and your right hand drops to pocket and gets the article. He is on your left and you merely put the deck into his pocket with both hands, and leave the article there. Now have him name his card and you reach in with one hand and produce it. Take the deck out immediately and sit him down for another trick. He never knows what hit him when later, the article is found missing and you, with obviously empty hands, take it from his pocket. It's a good angle to know, anyway.



THE SOLITAIRE KING. (Annemann)

Some things come to light through accidental discovery and others by hard work after the conception of an idea. This is one of the latter. I play solitaire a lot and thought how effective it would be if one could play such a game and win at will. Obviously, the deck would have to be stacked. I wondered if I could take a commonly arranged deck according to one of the popular magical systems and win at one of the best known solitaire games. The game described below is known as 'canfield' and it can be beaten with a deck stacked in the 'Eight King' ditty set-up. Have any Jack at the bottom and go ahead. I went through the entire deck card by card when set in the Si Stebbins A-4-7-10 etc., arrangement but none would work out. After a few tricks at a card party with an arranged pack, it is a nice finish to say you'll show how you can always win at solitaire. False shuffle the deck and go ahead. There is one spot in the whole thing to watch out for and not miss. About the middle there will be two red sevens upon either of which a black six is to be played. Always put it on the right hand seven and you are safe. I am giving here instructions for the game itself.

There are twenty-eight cards in the tableau of this game and they are laid out as follows: There are seven cards in the first horizontal row, the first six from left to right being

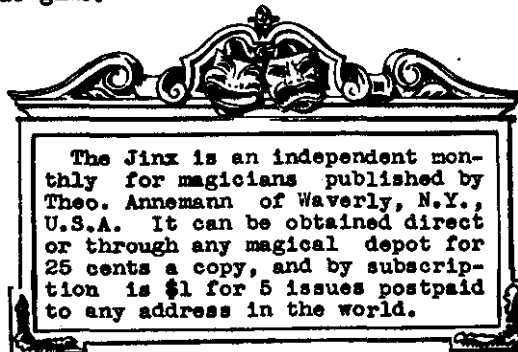
played face down and the seventh face up. There are six cards in the second row, the first five being placed face down and overlapping the five cards directly above in the first row, and the sixth card is placed face up. The third row has five cards with the last one to the right face up. The others are face down and all overlap the cards in the row above. Continue in the same manner with the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh rows, the last card of each row being placed face up and the other cards of each row being face down. The last or seventh row has only one card, face up, being the bottom card of the column to the extreme left.

The object of the game is to build the suits separately and in sequence from ace to king, in spaces to the top of the tableau. These are called foundations. To play, remove any aces which happen to be exposed face up and place at the top to form the foundations. Follow with deuces, threes and so on in same suits if the cards are available. When any card that is face up in the tableau is played on the foundations or moved to another position, the card immediately above it in the same vertical column must be turned up, and becomes available for play.

Plays must then be made in the tableau in descending sequence and in opposite colors, black on a red and a red on black. All cards in each vertical row are moved at one time. As many moves as possible should be made as it is to the player's advantage to turn face up as many cards in the tableau as possible. A move once made cannot be recalled and a red seven for instance once played on a black eight spot cannot be removed to the other black eight spot once the original play has been made. Vacant spaces at the top of the columns can be filled only with kings.

When all possible moves have been made in the tableau, the play proceeds from the stock in hand. Cards are turned face up in groups of three and the top card of this one pile is always available for play under the above rules. When no more plays can be made in tableau or from stock face up on table, the next three are placed face up on top of it. The stock is gone through as many times as possible until there are no more possible plays. The stock is never shuffled but picked up, turned face down and gone through again as before. Do not reverse the three cards when taken from stock but take them off in solid groups of three.

Personally, I think this an excellent stunt at card parties and places where cards are in evidence. It is always a simple matter to leave the room for a few minutes and stack one of the decks taken away with you. My book 'The Book Without a Name' gives a mechanical and fast set up method for the 'Eight King' system. It is different from the usual card stunt. It makes use of a game which everybody knows is difficult to win, and it serves the purpose of convincing watchers that you are a great card man. Cold decking a solitaire game is nothing. I only claim the originality of the effect and the discovery that the 'Eight King' stack will beat this particular game.



I don't think I'll have to apologize for this version of the trick because it can now be performed from a stage or platform with regular size cards, and in a novel manner that will hold constant interest. This method also makes it appear fairer than ever and seems to make impossible any chicanery.

The performer asks for four volunteers who are to stand in line. The deck is handed one and he is asked to run through and take out the first ace he sees, show it to no one, and hold it face down on outstretched hand. The second person is then given deck to take out another one and do likewise. The third person does the same, and the fourth gets the last ace. Shuffling the deck, the performer covers each ace with three face down cards.



Now he turns up a card at random from deck, and asks that the one holding the ace of the same suit step to one side and cover his cards with his free hand. The performer picks up the cards of the remaining three persons, drops them on deck, shuffles, snaps a rubber band around them all, and tosses deck into the audience. He asks that the person getting deck stand, go through them, and everytime he finds an ace to toss it in the air. Everybody watches but nothing happens. There are no aces in the deck so it is tossed back.



The selected person steps forward and shows his cards. They are all aces!



Of course, three extra aces are needed. Take a deck and trim the cards, using one as a pattern, so as to make a short deck. The three extra aces are ordinary, and are substituted for the aces of like suit in deck. You now have a deck with three long aces and the three short aces are in right trouser pocket with faces to body. A rubber band is in the same pocket. The fourth or odd ace in the deck has a quarter inch black pencil mark along center of both side edges if using a fairly new deck. If an old one, put a dot on each side of card on the white margin of back. It is only necessary to know which spectator gets this odd card. You can note when it is missing from deck as you pass the cards along each time by a glance at edge of deck, or watch the face down cards each time as you give deck to next person.



While the last person is finding his ace, you drop hand to pocket and palm the aces there. Take deck back with left hand and add the aces to the top. At this point no one expects anything to happen and you have very subtly convinced the audience and your assistants that only four aces are in the deck. That's what makes the effect appear so open. At the start you had a card on the bottom of the same suit as this to be selected ace, and it stays there throughout the removal of the aces. Now three aces have been added to the top and you give the deck a dovetail shuffle, keeping the bottom card and three top cards in place. Explain that three cards from the deck will be given each assistant, and deal the three aces onto the odd ace you have noted. The others are also given three cards each.

Now give the deck an overhand shuffle which brings the bottom card to top, and at the same time remark that one of the four persons must be chosen. Just say, "We'll make it a matter of chance by turning up a card at random, (you finish shuffle and turn up top card), and the suit of this card will select the man. Will the person holding the ace of this suit please step over there and hold his cards tightly between his hands?" Again you have been fair because no one knows who has which of the aces except the assistants themselves.

Have the remaining three piles returned to the deck. Undercut just below this set of twelve cards and shuffle off on top. Now it is an easy matter to repeat this, but the thumb and fingers simply cull out the three longer aces this time and drop them on top. While you are doing this second part you thank the three volunteers and dismiss them. Your right hand palms the three top aces and goes to pocket for the rubber band. Fastening the deck it is then tossed into audience. As far as you are concerned the trick is over.

When the audience assistant has failed to find an ace, the deck is returned and the selected spectator comes forward and shows his cards. The deck is now a complete one and the long aces are gone so that there isn't a trace of anything to find, should it ever be necessary to let deck be looked over.

I've found this an unusually good program effect and it can be sandwiched in at any time. If one doesn't want to use cut cards there is another way out. Each time you take back a set of four from the three in line, it is dropped on top of deck and you apparently shuffle deck a little. You really run three cards off to the bottom which leaves the ace on top. After this has been done for the third time the three aces will be on top together and you can give it an extra dovetail shuffle leaving them there. As you dismiss the three lift the three from the rear with thumb, push them slightly forward and with fingers at front tip them into palm. This is done at a moment when you are letting the spectators go and is effectively covered. With this method no tampered with cards are needed. Only three extra aces are used.

One trial, I think, is all that is needed to convince the reader that the effect is good. The action of having four spectators in line and handling the deck as well as holding the cards is strong. The tossing of deck into audience for a spectator there to stand and toss out the aces is novel enough to keep the audience watching for something to happen. And when everything is over they remember clearly that there couldn't have been more than four aces in the deck and that they really did get away from the deck through no apparent skillful handling by the performer. In fact, they remember very little of what the performer did because attention is always on the assistants.



WANTED - A Card Routine without cards!

For a long time I've had an idea that such a routine can be built up. It would be a novel act, as can be imagined, but I haven't had the time to work much on it. One effect could be as follows; The magician pretends he has a deck in hand which he removes from its case. Pretending to shuffle them he spreads them in front of a spectator for a selection. This person enters into it all, pretends to take one and is cautioned by the performer not to let anyone see it. It is put back and performer allows spectator to shuffle the deck! Putting the deck in his pocket the performer now asks spectator to name his card. When the spectator finally names a card, the performer reaches into pocket and actually pulls out that pasteboard! Everything at pretense until the finish. There can be a lot of comedy in a routine of this sort, so see what you can do with it. I know the idea has possibilities.