

# INSTANTO

INVENTED BY BILLY O'CONNOR  
THE "NEW ERA" CARD EXPERT

Down deep in the archives of magic, but not down deep in the minds of practical performers is the "Instanto" deck. First marketed by Billy O'Connor, who, a decade and a half ago came to America from England with his act of superior mysteries, it was a principle of card magic which embodied countless possibilities.

In itself the effect simply was to instantly cut at any card called for, a feat supposedly requiring no mean ability, but, nevertheless, in this day and age, one which gets immediate



response from the skeptics and readers of the modern magazines which make magic and magicians seem rather simple and childish, all due to our exposé "brothers". "Instanto" still is a perfectly practical principle. Modern times need modern adaptations. It is with that view in mind these words are written. Here is "Instanto" just as it always has been from its inception, together with a few uses in modern magical warfare. Where before, the performer made a direct point of finding instantly any card called for, it is now suggested that the very same principle be used "undercover" in connection with other tricks and effects.

First we'll take up the construction of the pack; the location moves, and then carry on with variations of procedure which we hope the reader will himself enlarge upon in turn.

Visualising the bare effect we see the performer rapidly and constantly cutting the pack that he holds. Someone names a card, only one additional cut is made, and the bottom card is shown to be the very one desired! This action with results is repeated indefinitely.

The deck is both arranged and prepared. From top to bottom, or, back to face, the pre-arrangement is the simplest possible - Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J, Q, K, of the same suit, over and over, the suits possibly running in the order Clubs, Hearts, Spades, Diamonds, to use the easily remembered key word CHASeD.

A number of these cards are prepared by a bit of trimming. Each Ace and deuce is unprepared. The threes, fours, and fives are cut slightly at the inner left end and bottom so they taper a bit to and around the corner.

All six and seven spots are unprepared, but the eights, nines, and tens throughout are trimmed to taper at the outer left end and top

so they taper a bit to and around the corner.

The Jacks and Queens are unprepared, but the four Kings are slightly concave trimmed at the center of their ends to make them "short" cards.

The Joker, at the bottom (face) of the pack, has a small paper clip or 1/16th of an inch tab attached to its near corner on the left side. The deck can be cut repeatedly between requests and showings, but just as a card is asked for, the "tabbed" Joker is cut to the bottom leaving the deck "set" for the next cut which reveals the card wanted. The tab eliminates any "looking" or "searching" at this most crucial moment.

The deck is held vertically, resting in the bend of the left fingers. Along the side he can see four grooves at the outer end, and four at the inner end. With his right forefinger, the performer can easily open the deck (from the outer left corner) to reveal any seven spot. With his left thumb he can, as easily, press downward at the outer left corner and, with the right hand, pick off the cards above this break to show any ten spot.

The outline of this card is dot marked to illustrate how the various "Instanto" cards are 1/16th of an inch trimmed. Some are trimmed at one end, some at the other. No card is trimmed at both. The semi-circle dots indicate cutting for Kings. All trimmed edges stay always at the same side of the deck.

At the inner end he likewise is able to open the deck at a deuce with his right thumb, and at a five with his left thumb. Then, by riffling the end of the pack he can show any Ace because of the "short" Kings "snapping" by. He doesn't have to pass more than one of these (he shouldn't need that) for the performer knows approximately just where the required Ace is.

When a King is named the same riffle at the end suffices. The "short" card which indicates the cut is thumbed onto the face of the upper portion of cards before raising the packet to show. For a three spot, find the deuce, but in dividing the pack slide the three from the back of the lower portion on to the face of the upper portion and exhibit. For a four spot cut a five as explained, but in dividing the pack slip the five from the face of the upper portion on to the back of the lower portion which leaves the four spot at the face of the upper packet to be shown.

A six is found by cutting at the seven and sliding one card on to the lower portion. The eight is likewise found by cutting to the seven, but this time the one card is slid on to the upper portion from the lower. To locate the nine, cut at the ten and slide one from upper to lower portions. Then, for a Jack, cut at the ten and slide one card from the top of the lower section to the bottom of the upper.

For the Queen, the performer need only riffle to the King of the required suit and slide one card from the bottom of the upper heap to the top of the lower.

The time taken to describe these moves and

"mechanics" is somewhat discouraging when the reader hasn't a pack of the cards in hand. In actual practice the continual cutting with the repeated showing of called for cards bewilders the watchers and overbalances the weakness of the pack, namely that it cannot be shuffled or given for examination.

With that point in mind, and it is one that later day audiences have been educated to detect, we consider "Instanto" in the light of subterfuge rather than as an objective feat upon which all eyes and attention are centered.

#### RISING CARDS

It has been a dream of magicians, periodically fulfilled by devious and extremely complicated methods, to be able to cause ANY card called for rise from the pack. Probably one of the standard catalogue items most long lived (next to the thumb tip) is the rising card windlass, a vest pocket spring tension on a thread with a waxed button at its end. Despite various "new" hiding places for the reel, always advertised as the "ultimate", we think the original (and cheapest) the best for all around general and practical usage. Suppose we combine it with "Instanto". An apparently unbroken case is opened and the deck extracted. As the performer talks about people not liking to "take" cards, he is casually false shuffling and cutting the pack in his hands. Then he asks someone, for instance, to merely name a card aloud that he "might" have taken. The moment this is said he turns and asks someone else to call a card he "might" also have picked. It is during this short interval that the performer cuts his pack to bring the first named card to the BACK and thereupon attaches the waxed button in the approved manner.

Turning back to the first person his card is caused to rise. Detached it is placed back on the deck which is again given several cuts while the performer addresses the audience and asks them if that procedure isn't far better than inflicting them with his presence down amongst them and causing them to check their watches and wallets. This "stall" has enabled the deck to be cut to "normal" and once again to secure the second desired pasteboard. It rises. A casual, assured performer can get more out of this effect than a nervous amateur with his \$75 to \$200 piece of "stagey" apparatus.

#### ORVILLE MEYER'S LOCATION OF CONSEQUENCE

This is an "Instanto" twist of Annemann's original "Magic Thrust", now well known, with the newly available (Newly? Just not thought of before. Ed.) improvement which allows of the card being named rather than picked. The performer offers to "give a lesson" in magic. He gets an assistant and asks him to seriously contemplate for a minute and then name any card of which he thinks. The magician stands beside the spectator, both facing the audience. Showing an odd card picked at random from the deck, the performer lays it on top of the face down cards, gives them all to the person behind his back, and instructs him to put that face up card anywhere into the deck.

The cards are brought to the front and the performer fans them slowly and openly. The face up card is seen and removed together with the card against (or facing) it. The spectator names again the card he thought of. The two cards in the performer's hand are turned over

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We beg to attempt a quotation remembered somewhat from an English magician. It fits this situation very well. This prestidigitatorial pundit mouthed the words, " 'Tis better to have tried and dropped a ball, than never to have palmed at all."

There is no wreath nor piece of crepe on our door to-day, despite the death (or suspended animation? Ed.) of a wish that has been nibbling on our framework since the day when we heard of "Doc" A.M. Wilson's demise, and, out of sorrow, came the thought that we, not quite "dry behind the ears" professionally but well steeped in the magical lore of the printed page, might possibly get a chance to "carry on" the traditional Sphinx magazine in a manner that wouldn't let down "Doc's" battle cry for good and ethical magic.

Our offer to buy outright or control of The Sphinx Corporation was bonafied and sincere in the desire to perpetuate a magical monument. Last May \$4000 was deposited, to show good faith, in the Grand Central Branch of the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank of N.Y.C.

With John Mulholland in control it wasn't of much use to contact the minor stockholders. Except for one they were polite in their refusals to sell, either for sentimental reasons or because "it's up to John". Mulholland's letter is reproduced at the right. If, as he writes, more than \$4000 has been offered, we humbly kneel, for, after the past summer's array of paid advertising in comparison with that in contemporary journals, we seriously considered dropping the offer to \$3000 before the final try.

Irony gives us a twinge and others a chance to chuckle, perhaps, for none answered directly the sentence in our letter, to wit: "I will be glad to further inform you of the aims and intentions for a continuance of the world's oldest magical magazine."

We thought it neglectful if not downright mean for we'd put all 33 of our ideas and suggestions into a 5 page mss. (20 copies - \$3.06) We only wanted to really show how we could build up the ads, streamline the reports, get along without M.U.M. which should be published by the S.A.M. for its members only anyway, and edit the magazine for quality of tricks. Even if we couldn't succeed on our quest,

the editor might have used one or even two of the suggestions. We want to see The Sphinx keep on being the oldest magical publication and our contribution would have been from the heart. But -- to paraphrase that age old cry of a Briton for his sovereigns, "The Sphinx is dead ---- long live The Sphinx!"

JOHN MULHOLLAND



October 5, 1940

Dear Ted,

In your letter of October fourth you enquire whether I will sell the stock I hold in The Sphinx Corporation. That stock is not for sale. Were I interested in the sale of my stock -- which I am not -- your offer is the lowest of the several received.

Sincerely yours

John Mulholland.

To The Amusement Co.

"INSTANTO"  
(continued from page 678)

and the spectator's card shows up!

There has been no selecting (and putting back) so that this method gets away from the overdone procedure, speeding up the effect and making it doubly miraculous. Through "Instanto" moves the named card is almost instantly cut to the bottom of the deck. An odd card is taken from the center, shown, and dropped face up on top.

The performer is standing alongside the person. He puts the deck behind that person's back with one hand, making the simple one-handed (Charlier) pass, cutting the deck at random. The spectator, behind his back, removes the top card (thinking it the shown face up card) and pushes it into the center. When the cards are fanned for all to see, the previously shown face up card is seen buried, and, naturally, the face down card against it is the one which was mentally chosen and named, not picked.

H.L. DENHARD'S THOUGHT ACROSS SPACE

Using the principle of tearing a twice folded billet in pieces to leave finger-palmed the center section bearing the written name of a card (Jinx No.6 and many times described since) plus an "Instanto" deck and a comely assistant as the "medium", one can play a passive (?) part in the transfer of a thought from a spectator to the lady.

With great display and aplomb the "medium" is blindfolded and seated facing the audience. A spectator is given a slip of paper and pencil. He writes the name of his thought of card, folds the paper and the performer tears it into bits onto an ash tray. The spectator burns the paper while the ~~trick~~ performer says that the possibility exists that it all isn't real telepathy and that the medium gets a clue from the spiral of smoke which comes from the ashes. During this talk he has reached into his pocket, opened the stolen center against an encased "Instanto" deck, brought them out together, and in toying with the pack as the few sentences are concluded, glimpsed the name of the card thought of, removed the deck from the case, and re-pocketed both case and paper.

As he cuts the deck (false shuffle if you can) a number of times he steps to the medium and reminds that she is securely blindfolded and no one, including the performer, knows of what the spectator is thinking. Now comes the showmanship angle, for the performer has simply cut the correct card to the top or bottom of the deck without, apparently, having paid the least bit of attention to the cards. The medium raises her hands above her head (which will throw off the wise ones who know about "looking down the nose". She fumbles around with the cards, dropping a few, and finally holds one up with its back to all. The spectator names his thought -- she has it.

Simple? Silly? In some ways, maybe, but remember that all of the "build-up" has been towards the medium. The performer is practically a non-entity (That will go hard with a few certain boys. Ed.) And he has not done anything with the cards other than to cut them a few times with no evident desire to look at the pack. Put all of those details together and you can fool some awfully smart magically-wiseacres.

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We start the "wind up" to all of this with the hope that we have not necessarily given you any definite tricks you can do with the "Instanto" deck but have "planted" the thought and realization of its possibilities to-day.

It can be used, as it was when Billy O'Connor first started presenting it, for the cutting of any number of cards called for, i.e., 12, 18, 26, 34, etc. Knowing that the suits are together and that the values are likewise in order, it doesn't take a gigantic intellect to quickly compute the card at which you must cut. We'll grant that the possibility of doing this feat for ever and again undoubtedly enhanced the advertisements, but a repetitious check-up (even the second time) would prove disastrous to most of us. Our own climax, when using the deck for some underhanded purpose which doesn't disarrange it, may be the result of jaded simplicity but it works without too quick moves. Ask a nearby spectator to name a number from 1 to 52, while you're cutting. Getting it, turn to someone else and ask him, "31. How many of the cards in the deck would be left, sir. By the way, there's a Joker somewhere among them." The moment he names the figure requested, hand him a bunch and then walk back and hand the rest to the first person. "Count your cards." They do, and you are right.

In short, you use the second person's mental calculation as the stall for your own figuring and cutting. He gets the lower half instantly, and the poor fellow who was first comes last. The audience remembers how fast you hand out the LAST section AS the spectator names the number, and when both parties count and find you correct the audience remembers later that you instantly cut the number of cards mentioned by TWO people, instead of one.

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There probably isn't a reader who does card tricks, even occasionally, who isn't, right now, applying this deck to one or more of the effects he uses in his program. Some won't work out to advantage, but a great many will. It is awfully nice, in too many cases, to be able to secure the card you want, OR EVEN ITS DUPLICATE FROM ANOTHER DECK, when you need it. Can you imagine a "Do As I Do" when the other fellow holds a fair deck and you hold "Instanto"? He cuts when you cut, several times to get everyone used to it, then he takes out a card from the middle of his deck and places it at the face of the pack while you apparently do the same -- but don't. He names his card and then you ask him to show it. Just that interval enables you to locate what he has named and make a pass so that you follow his showing by letting everybody that you picked out the same card! It should be worth something to get away from that hackneyed and utterly ridiculous exchanging of decks back and forth.

There are certainly a few of the old timers who will remember when "Instanto" came into being and very possibly fix up a deck and do it exactly as per the directions. There may be amateur magi to-day who have secured such a pack and present it via the instruction sheet. While not deprecating such performances, for solid success in this business lies entirely in personality and showmanship, the purpose of this article will have been defeated if those who make up a pack of cards merely use it to show "Name any card. Look. Here it is." We've tried hard to show that the deck is not a trick in itself. Use it as a PART of other tricks you now perform. And then see how those tricks are improved and brought nearer perfection.

# PLAYING CARD SQUIGGLES

Our previous contests, puzzles, and what-not quiz propositions never did have enough popular appeal to make them worthwhile. For some reason magi are immune to such things. They just want to read and do the tricks inside the covers of what they buy and have no inclination for figuring out something which is of no use before an audience.

But, with a prayer, we try again, using an idea which should be a novelty item for every magus even if he doesn't tell us about it.

"Squiggles" is quite an appropriate appellation for the making of pictures, sketches, drawings or as you will, on the faces of playing cards so as to logically and coherently make use of the suit spots thereon. The use of the index spots is not necessary, but it will help. Also, as one will realize when he starts to conceive, the more spots on a card the more ingenuity needed. It is within the realm of possibility to make up an entire deck of cards which have been "squiggled".

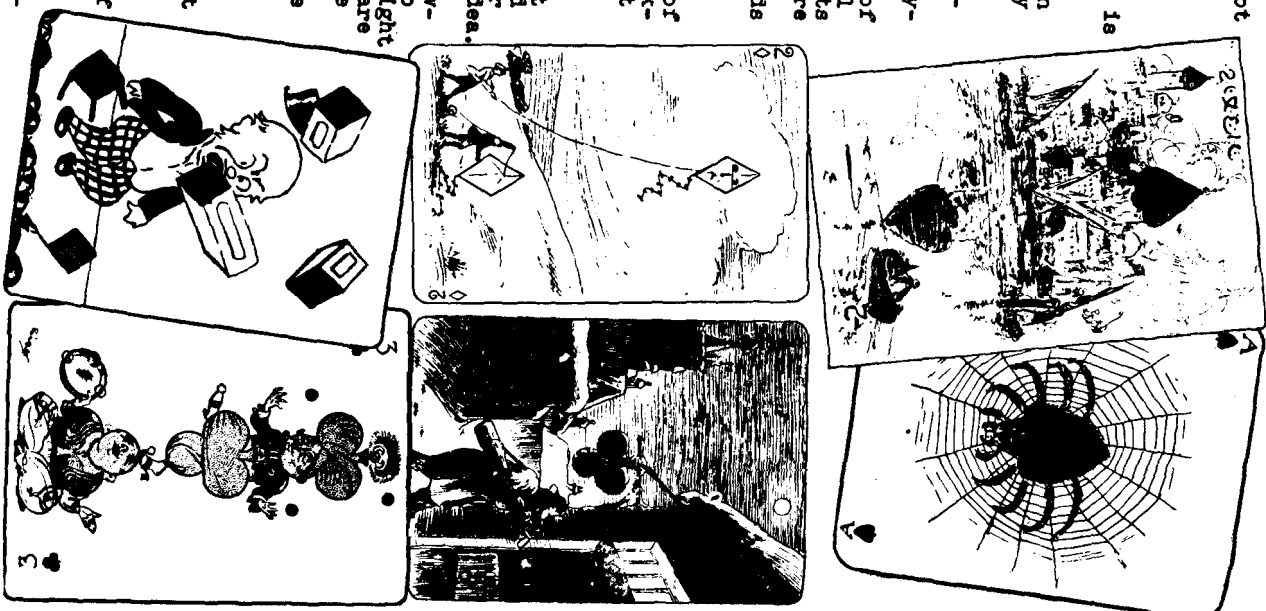
We like the thought as much as that hobby of many magicians, the acquisition of decks of cards bearing the signatures of their co-workers. So here's the proposition. If it doesn't work out you can rest assured that we'll shy off all such things for a long, long time.

Dig up some old cards, set them up against something and stand away. Distance helps, and if you squint your eyes a little and use your imagination no little, maybe you'll get an idea.

Sketch it out as best you can. Art in drawing doesn't mean a thing to us for we have to screw a ruler down before we can draw a straight line. The IDEAS will win. What? Well, there are thirteen (13) prizes. The first is a complete file of *The Jinx* from No. 1 through No. 100. That's \$30 out of the cash register for there are but few of such left idle.

Prize number two is a 100 issue subscription to start at the date of the contest's closing - high noon on April 19th, 1941, just six months from now, in case you're a procrastinator who likes to think about things for five months and twenty-nine days before going into action. It also will give a lot of magic club members time to compare pips and try secretly to outdo each other.

Prize number three is a 50 issue subscrip-



tion to start as will the number two prize but it will last only half as long which may be just as well for we'll no doubt be filling up blank spaces and short columns with stray "squiggles" for a long time.

From four to thirteen includes the next ten awards. They're not so good, but the subscriptions will last long enough at least for the lucky man to find out who won the first three tickets. It's a 16 issue sub for the ten, if you want to pin us down.

There are three judges, each one an amateur squiggler, picked by us because they would otherwise give stiff competition. That's one of the strategic moves we have learned from the present U.S. administration. In alphabetical order they are April Lamarque, L. Voshburgh Lyons, and Clayton Rawson. Separately, and alone, they will mark their respective 13 choices from all entries. All such contributions of worth, whether bearing one, two or three marks, will be handed over to a final judge for THE final selection. Automatically and mandatory he will arrange the array of squiggles as per the number of check marks on each, and then have the job of determining the "ties".

NO JUDGE WILL KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON WHO HAS SUBMITTED ANY PARTICULAR SKETCH OR DESCRIBED IDEA. Therefore, it is POSITIVELY NECESSARY that YOU make your drawing, or write your description with any perfunctory sketch, on ONE side of a CLEAN sheet of paper or card and send it to THE JINX, Waverly, New York, U.S.A., together with an accompanying sheet of paper bearing your name and address.

The purpose of all this is merely to see what happens. There's nothing to buy, and you don't have to clip off part of a jinx cat and attach it to your entry. You don't even have to read or like *The Jinx*. If such a person wins a prize he can use it as a gift to someone for whom he has no especial liking.

A few suggestions are reproduced here. Once you have started you'll find it very difficult not to stop until the entire deck has been made into "picture" cards.

We'll often print some of the results, nameless, of course, but they will be our own personal fill-ins having nothing to do with the final results. That judge will be selected later, from among unimpeachable magi.

## — EDITORIAL —

There's an object lesson in the reading of the news clipping (Boston American, Sept. 13, 1940) reproduced at the bottom of this page. Elwin ("Le Conjuror") T. Shaw's technique for making biased reporters and columnists interested might well be followed by many others. --- The Walter Gibson just incarcerated in the N.Y.C. bastille for advertising a Seventh Day Adventist meeting by motoring through the city's streets with a picture of Hitler, IS NOT magic's Walter Brown Gibson, alias Maxwell Grant, confident biographer of The Shadow. Just thought we'd put it down to squelch those ever-present "boys" who haven't enough engagements to keep them from being "busybodies." --- The J. Karson "Hypno Tricks" publication is worth its rather stiff price to those who really wish to include a series of hypnotic tests in their program. Some are not new, but for the most part the various stunts and secrets are of value by being true professional procedures. Everyone knows the old way, "Now you are sleepy, etc.," but the new way is the magician's way whereupon a 15 minute routine can be injected into a program with no waste of valuable time.

Dante's show closed in N.Y.C. on Oct. 20th, for a few weeks to make plans. The Nora Bayes theatre is a tentative reopening spot, but, for the moment, nothing is definite. We feel that the Dante show affected us, and others as well, because of a simple reason that only a few of the present day magicians realize. There never was any recapitulation of what had been done preparatory to the culmination of a trick. The performer went through his moves and took it for granted that his audience was watching and remembered what had been done and shown. The climax then took place without a disastrous delay during which the magician talked over what he had done and where everything was supposed to be. There are a lot of people who get bored at this wait, and many who are a bit "miffed" at the supposition that they haven't seen what was done. It's well worth the time to check up on your own act. The time saved will allow of a couple of more effects being added.

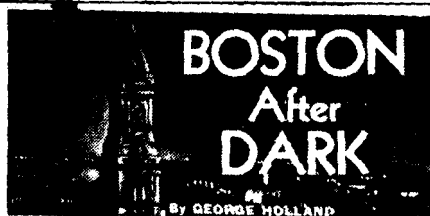
Does someone know of a magician advertising in the United States before Dec. 25, 1837? Robert Doidge recently added to his collection a broadside of a Monsieur P. Desage, Professor of Magic -- American Museum -- 5th & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia for that date. --- Fulton Oursler is also eager to learn who wrote a book novel entitled "Zig-Zag, The Magician". It was published just after the turn of the century.

Incidentally, Mr. Oursler still has several mss. he wrote when 11 years old. One was a collection of "cases" which Sherlock Holmes completed, but which "Dr. Watson" did not consider (or perhaps for which he didn't have time) as important as those he related to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Another of the writings was a story about a magician whose pieces of apparatus kept disappearing whenever he needed something during a performance. That last plot intrigues us no end. It seems like a sort of poetic justice.

Martin Gardner has sold a variation on the magnetic pups which was such a rage. It seems impossible for this not to "click" to the tune of excellent royalties. Not too risque the theme is "The Goose That Failed". It is very funny to let the little man with top hat and cane sneak upon the unsuspecting (?) lady who never fails (thanks to good old Alnico) to swing around with a "rolling pin" arm and knock his hat off. An extra hat is supplied in case she "bats" the first one too far. Gardner's new work, "After Dinner Magic", will be completed in time for Xmas buying. Ireland will publish.

For those who do the Linking Rings, and also for those who don't, the following two methods of presentation may be of great importance. One performer picked up the set and started his talk by saying, "You all have no doubt heard of the ancient Chinese mystery, the linking of solid metal rings. Many of you have seen small sets of these rings in the various toy shops, rings which contained slots or openings, and rings which were already linked together. Tonight I want to show you the REAL Chinese type of rings which have the faculty of passing through each other. All I was able to obtain after great difficulty are these eight single rings made of an unknown metal mined in a country of many mysteries." So saying he deliberately "drop counts" them from hand to hand as usual, and GOES AHEAD!! The second method is more devastating. "Most people insist that the rings I use cannot be solid," says the performer. "Look and listen." He lets the rest hang on his arm while he dangles the two solid singles together. "That clear, bell-like ring guarantees that not even a crack exists. Now look and listen again." The magician puts one of the solids on his arm and picks up a ring with a slot cut in it AT LEAST ONE INCH LONG. He swings these together and gets a "clank" "clank" sound. "It would be impossible," he repeats, "to use such a broken ring, for you would know about it immediately." So finishing, the magician tosses the ring back upon the platform and forgets it. But, of course, HE HAS ANOTHER KEY RING AMONG THE REST! Gabbatha!!

*Theo Ammann*



**BOSTON After DARK**  
By GEORGE HOLLAND

YOU MEET THE NICEST PEOPLE among magicians . . . They're all boosters—for one another . . . Occasionally, an unusual flareup of temperament, or of jealousy, disturbs the ranks of the magi and the recent mild protest by Gullit Gullit, at the Mayfair, against the alleged lifting by Dr. Giovanni of the "ring on a stick" trick was one . . . These exceptions are so infrequent as to prove the rule that the hocus-pocus boys are living examples of Equity's famous slogan: "All for one—one for all!"

NIGHT CLUBS LIKE TO BOOK a first rate magician . . . Before his engagement is finished, the place will have enjoyed the patronage of every magician with the price of a dinner within traveling distance . . . This

patronage is "velvet" as magicians are not habitual ring-siders and visit the gay spots only (as a rule) when one of their number is working.

A LETTER AT HAND FROM Elwin T. Shaw, who works under the professional name "Le Conjuror," and resides in Everett, demonstrates the interest the magicians have in the whole fraternity. . . . In its closing paragraph, moreover, the feeling of fellowship which prevails in the magic ranks, is indicated clearly.

"I READ WITH INTEREST what you wrote regarding Gullit Gullit and Dr. Giovanni," writes "Le Conjuror" . . . "Re the 'ring on the stick' trick that the marvellous Gullit Gullit claims the good doctor stole from him . . . Are you sure that you have not misunderstood the situation? (Answer: No.) . . . 'The ring on the stick' trick is one of the oldest in magic, and is considered by most magicians to be one of the classics.

"ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO Jean Huggard wrote a book 'Closeup Magic' which held a routine for this trick, and it states that Dr. Giovanni used the routine to good results . . . The late Nate Leipsic was very proud because he exchanged the secret for his 'ring on the stick' trick with Ten Ichl for Ichl's famous 'thumbie trick' . . . The ring trick is a great favorite with Hindu magicians.

"COUNT VON LUCKNER TELLS in his book of learning the trick while visiting India . . . I saw the Count perform this trick in New York at a magic show a few years ago . . . As for 'Gullit Gullit'—did you know that his name is the Egyptian's patter line corresponding to what we American magi might call 'hocus pocus'? —having imitators, the enclosed advertisement clipped from a recent magic magazine shows how many Giovanni will have"

(NOTE: THE AD SHOWS A gentleman stooge being stripped of suspenders, wrist-watch, wallet and fountainpen by another gem who advertises that he can teach aspiring "amateur pickpockets" how to do the stripping.) A contest between Gullit Gullit and Giovanni would be very interesting, but my money would ride with Giovanni."

AND NOW COMES THE UNUSUAL ending of "Le Conjuror's" note . . . "With best regards," he closes, "and with thanks for the plugs you have given Gullit Gullit and Dr. Giovanni and others of our profession, I am etc." . . . Can you imagine a motion picture leading man writing his thanks for such boosts as may have been given his rivals? . . . Or a Broadway comedian? Or Joan Bennett inditing her thanks for a bit of praise about Hedy Lamarr?