



## WEIRD COIN

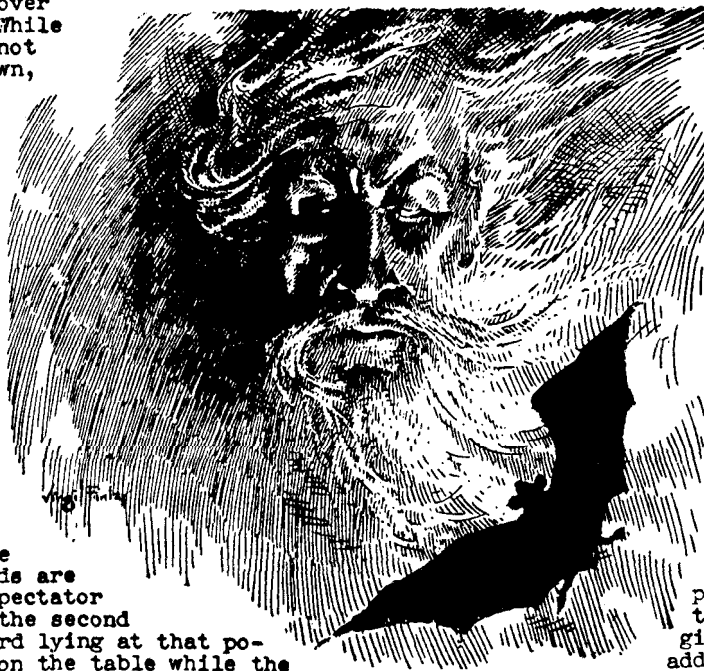
More often than not the very simplest kind of method applied to a very direct and uncomplicated effect makes the best table trick in a performer's repertoire. There have been a lot of reputations made with cute, close-up masterpieces passed by and over with undiscerning eyes. While that which follows will not win eternal fame or renown, it well may serve as a reliable talk-maker for others as it has me.

The magician writes a short prophecy on a slip of paper which is folded and held by a spectator. A half-dollar is borrowed and placed on the table, date side up. A deck of cards is shuffled, cut into two packets, and one of them is then dealt into four face down heaps. The date on the coin is checked and the heaps turned over. The values of the cards thus revealed correctly state the date of the half-dollar. Next the values of these four cards are added together and the spectator counts to that total in the second half of the deck. The card lying at that position is put face down on the table while the prediction paper is read. It not alone has foretold the name of the card thus picked, but its actual location in the deck!

The first part of the stunt was shown me by a miner in the North country of Canada. It was the only trick he knew, and to it I added the second part. At any opportune moment get four cards on top of the pack to correspond in figure values with the four figures of the date on a half-dollar of your own. The card you predict

is any one that happens to be on the bottom of the deck. Its position number is the total of the four date figures, i.e., 1914 -- 15. The prophecy reads, "The 15th card will be -----." A half-dollar is borrowed and switched for the

one you have which is put onto the table. It is easily done by having the known coin in left hand. Take borrowed coin with right, pretend to place in left, and then reach into pocket with right hand and take out the deck, leaving coin behind.



Dovetail shuffle deck several times keeping the bottom card and top four in place. Have spectator cut deck in two. Ask him, "Which shall we use?" If he picks the top pile he gets it. If he points to the bottom half you pick it up. Ask him to deal his pile into four face down heaps a card at a time. Idly shuffle your heap during this and set the bottom card at 15th from the top. When his piles are turned face up the arranged cards show and give the date correctly. He adds the figures and counts in the packet you have laid

down by now. The prophecy is read. A non-sleight variation is to say, after the deck is cut and spectator has his packet, "We'd better remove the Joker. Do you have it?" Each of you run over your packets face up and this allows you to simply count and cut the bottom card to its desired position. Then immediately place your packet face down over the coin and don't touch it again. Even if you've known and done the date and card idea, see how effective is this new setup.

**DEL CARTIER**

# NAME YOUR POISON

*suggests* **THE GREAT MERLINI**

If a real black magic magician was doing a card trick, he would have the card selected, returned to the deck, and then, without further monkeyshines, let the audience tell him how they would like to have it located. That's what you do in this one! Briefly, the effect is this. You allow a spectator to cut a shuffled deck at any place, remove the card to which he cut, note and replace it, and put the cut-off cards back on it. Then, without (apparently) doing anything at all, you finish the trick in any one of three ways as directed by the spectators. The chosen card either (1) turns face up in the deck, or (2) is found by spelling down to it in the usual manner, or (3) it leaves the deck entirely and is removed from your breast pocket! "Gentlemen," you say, "Name your poison!" They do and you give it to them. Here's how. (Note that what we have here actually is three tricks, any one of which can also be worked separately and alone.)

A borrowed deck can be used, provided only that, during the course of a previous trick, you steal out any one card, slap a small dab of wax or diachylon onto its face at diagonally opposite corners, and place it back out in your breast pocket. That's the full extent of the preparation. Merlini always carries one card to match his own deck in that pocket so prepared, but uses a borrowed deck whenever the chance arises.

Now let's go. Take the deck after the spectator has shuffled it, and rub your saliva-coated thumb over the face of the bottom card. Then go into an overhand shuffle. The top card off makes a half turn as it goes into the left hand so that it is face up. Then, as the other cards are shuffled onto it, it is picked up on the bottom of the deck, face to face with the saliva card. The cards are shuffled alternately in front of and behind the stack in the left hand, so that at the shuffle's finish the impromptu double backed card you have just made remains on the bottom of the deck. If you like, this preliminary cheating can be gotten out of the way before you announce that you'll do a trick.

Now for the cut. Hold the deck squared on the left palm, out at the end of the hand on the fingers. The victim cuts anywhere, places the cut-off portion on your right palm and looks at the next card down. As he starts to replace it, tell him he'd better show it to one or two other people in case he should forget it. As he turns to do this, and as your right hand gestures toward the audience, your left fingers tilt up and tip the half deck they hold over on to the palm of the hand so that the double backer is now on top. The timing and misdirection here is perfect, and the gesture you make with your left hand and arm can even help to cover the tip over.

Then, let him return his card on top of the left hand pile. And immediately hand him the right hand pile, asking him to shuffle it so that you can't possibly know what the bottom card is. As he takes the cards and begins to shuffle, the attention is again all on him, and you reverse your previous move. You tip the half deck you hold back again on to the fingers,

your double backer and the chosen card going to the bottom. This is most naturally done by dropping the left hand to the side for just a second --- this puts the cards at right angles to the floor, edges up. Bring the arm up again immediately, but with the bottom side of the deck now uppermost. It's a cinch.

Now, he replaces his shuffled card on what he thinks is the chosen card. And you are all set to finish the trick BEFORE they think you have gotten well started and BEFORE they have begun to watch you closely. They do that now, and it is too late. Ask which of the three ways they want you to use in locating the card, and, in talking, bring your right hand over to square the deck. Forefinger goes on front edge, thumb on back edge, and the left little finger beneath the deck pushes that bottom, face-up, chosen card to the right just far enough so that you can glance down and catch a glimpse of the lower, right-hand index that is staring up at you. Your right hand covers this peek from every angle except your own. You now know what the card is.

**FINISH 1:** If they want to have the chosen card turn face up in the deck --- well, what could be simpler? You merely cut the deck once, "a magic cut", and fan through to find it face up in the center! There isn't any fairer looking, cleaner, reversed card method.

**FINISH 2:** If they want you to spell down to the card, tell those who have seen the card to spell MENTALLY one letter of the card's name for each card you deal. And warn them to keep their poker faces on and NOT to let you know when they finish spelling. Start dealing. And, since you know the card yourself, you naturally do a little mental spelling on your own! Now watch this misdirection. When you reach the last letter, drop that card, look up at your audience and say, "I have a feeling that you finished spelling on THAT card. Am I right?" Invariably, when this surprise hits them, they look at your face blankly and answer, "yes." That's when you tip the deck over again! You immediately say, "Then the next card should be the chosen one." Pick it off the deck, look at it yourself, and ask someone to name it. When they do, turn it slowly and show it! (Use this speller once and you'll never use any other. Advt.)

**FINISH 3:** But what if they want the card to leave the deck entirely? This is a barefaced swindle. Al Baker, seeing it, cracked, "But that's cheating. It's not fair to audiences! You're a crook!" You see, the card never does leave the deck, but it looks an awful lot as if it did. What you do is this. Tap the deck mysteriously once or twice, pretend to point out the invisible card as it leaves the deck and goes up the sleeve, into the outer breast pocket. All eyes naturally follow the pointing finger and are fixed immovably on the card you then remove from your pocket, the one that was there from way back before you ever started! That is when you make the check turnover, this time.

The pocket card is back to the audience. You look at it, and scowl disgustedly, and you say, (continued on page 760)

# MARTIN GARDNER'S PEN KINK

5610 Dorchester St.,  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Ted;

I've been having fun with this cute dodge lately. It's probably original. You notice someone's fountain pen, or automatic pencil. Ask to see it. Take it -- saying, "Nice looking," and nonchalantly appear to clip it inside your coat's inner pocket. He, the owner, naturally is going to protest. And you suddenly produce the pen or pencil from behind his neck with your right hand, remarking, "What are you getting worried about?"

A man's inside coat pocket is on his right side and approached with his left hand. You have the pen in left hand as you look at it, and turn your body a bit to the right as you apparently put the pen into your inside pocket. Your left side being quite a bit towards the spectator he cannot see any possible motion of your coat as you actually put the

pen horizontally across the right side of your chest and tip it down the right coat sleeve.

The right arm hangs naturally and the right hand fingers, naturally curled, catch the pen as it drops through the sleeve. You swing back, and this bit of moving is practically imperceptible, and catch the owner as his indignation begins. Your right hand comes up to his left shoulder and the pen is produced just as his demand for a return of the object starts.

This principle has been used before with coins, but I've never seen it with pens or pencils, which, after all, are natural objects to be put in the inner pocket. TRY IT THE NEXT TIME SOMEONE ASKS YOU TO AUTOGRAPH SOMETHING.

Cordially yours

*Martin Gardner*



Philadelphia's (Pa.) Greater Magic Show. S.A.M. #4. The Plays and Players Theatre, Sat. March 29th, 1941. Reviewed by Robert Houdin, Jr. -----

The show, amazingly enough for a magic show, started on time.

It got off to a bad start with ELMER ECKAM who presented Blendo, production of bouquets, mis-made flag, etc., finishing with the rice bowls. Stock magic, presented in a stock way. Guilty of all the faults of the average magician, slowly paced, repetitious patter, constant use of the word 'now'. Aimed at a juvenile intelligence, probably a good children's magician. Time: 25 minutes.

"BALLOONS" BONNERT presented a novelty act, which, if it had run five minutes might have been amusing. He tied ballons into various shapes to represent a man, a scooter, a sea-saw with a boy and girl on it. After five minutes he had "shot his bolt" (or balloon? Ed.), the fifteen minutes following were the longest this reviewer ever spent. Time: 20 minutes.

JOHN MULHOLLAND followed, fortunately, and took the bad taste out of our mouths. A gentleman, presenting magic for ladies and gentlemen. Takes his time without stalling. He did the one-to-eight thimble routine. Vanished thimbles at finish. Next, a card trick in which a selected card is returned to the deck, deck torn in half, then one-half in quarters. He dealt through one of the segments of a deck until stopped by the audience, same with other segments. Finally, the three pieces turn out to be the selected initialled card. Finished with a beautiful clean-cut performance of the linking rings. Admirable in every respect. He was called back for an encore and did an impromptu coin routine. The only criticisms, and they are carping, are, the thimbles talked when he sleeved them, and in the encore he missed a coin in trying to sleeve it. In regards to the presentation, it is unfortunate that Mr. Mulholland's stage smile is so unconvincing. It is a mechanical grimace which does not convey conviction. Time: 25 minutes.

ROBERTA and MARION (Byron) opened the second half of the performance with a stage full of apparatus. Nice, is a complete description. They

performed capably, but it was just nice. It, the act, lacked punch. A typical example of magic overlapping occurred. With as many tricks as they had, it would have been in the audience's interest not to repeat the linking rings right on top of Mr. Mulholland's routine. Their's suffered by comparison. Incidentally, it was interesting to see how much more effective it was to see girls handling silks, trouble-wit, rag pictures, etc. Somehow it affects my risibilities to see a hulking bruiser of a man, delicately doodling with fragile, diaphanous silks. Time: 25 minutes.

AL FLOSSO followed with one of the funniest twenty-five minutes I've ever enjoyed. Brash, brusque, talkative fast moving magic presented in carnival style. A swell performer. Standard effects done in a you-be-damned manner that brought continual belly laughs. No criticisms. Time: 25 minutes.

MIACO brought the show to an enjoyable close with a sweet, sleight-of-hand act. A clean performer, he did a gloved card fan production, a silk trick or two, billiard balls, lit cigarette productions and finished with a salt transposition from hand to hand. Extremely well done. The only criticism is that his manner of presentation is a sort of combination of Cardini and Albenice. Time: 15 minutes.

AL BAKER m.c'd capably, did a nice vent routine, but seemed a little tired.

The high spots of a better than average magical evening, were Mulholland's linking rings, Al Flossos's patter, and Miaco's manipulations.



CARTOON  
NO.  
37

## EDITRIVIA



The Parent Assembly No.1 of the Society of American Magicians held a special meeting on March 25 at N.Y.'s Barbizon-Plaza Hotel. In accordance with Article I, Section 3, M. Ill. President Trepel arranged the party to discuss and review the action of the National Council in reference to the "Sphinx". Readers of the last Jinx (No.131) will know about the actions of the Council in awarding the M.U.M. contract to "Genii". In fact there were plenty of Jinx issues present at the meeting, for it was only through this honestly "independent" journal for magicians that certain letters, "state" papers, and views might be circulated immediately and verbatim. That such things were published caused no little annoyance in some circles within the great circle of the society. And while we cannot give the sources of our information, we will say that no one within the jurisdiction of the Parent Assembly furnished us with or let us peek at any "state" papers. We would not jeopardize the standing of any local member with whom we might occasionally be seen. That's plain decency, if not common sense.

The meeting evidently was "forced" by ten or more members (constitution rights) who were of the opinion, and hope, that matters could be remedied in favor of "Sphinx". It lasted three hours. Like the Aesop fable about "The Mountain in Labour", (it rumbled, in days of yore, and was said to be in labour. Multitudes flocked together from far and near and made wise conjectures as to what it would produce, when, out popped a mouse!) it ended in a paltry performance.

Officially, the free-for-all picnic was "to clarify the 'Sphinx-M.U.M.-Genii' matter". Actually, to us, it must have been like a wake and funeral cortege for some members, of 1 out of 28 assemblies, who wouldn't accept the perfectly legal findings and actions of their National Council. That this was a given right is not to be denied, but, after a tiresome discussion replete with arguments, no one would make a motion to reopen the contractual award case before the National body.

We doubt that such a move would have changed the status quo. Not enough votes nationally could have been mustered to kick the accredited and hard working representatives in the pants as did the Parent Assembly alone when a vote of confidence for the Council was requested, and promptly moved "to be tabled". Imagine tabling a vote of confidence! Later, when asked for a gain, the vote was much less than unanimous.

The Mahomet-like editor of the "Sphinx" was

NAME YOUR POISON  
(continued from page 758)

"I muffed this one. I'm afraid it's the wrong card!" Look at your victim. (We'll say that his card was the eight of hearts.) And you ask, "Your card was the nine of hearts, wasn't it?"

He promptly looks sorry for you and says, "No, it was the eight." But, by that time, your hand has dropped the pocket card on top of the deck, squared it, and squeezed it slightly. The waxed face makes it adhere to the chosen card. (Personally, I use wax for magicians, a simple double lift for laymen) Your face lights up. "Oh, I'm sorry," you apologise, "I did get the

present. After several journeys from the room he was given permission to have his secretary attend the proceedings and supply necessary information. She proceeded to take notes, etc., of the doings, and, we'll dare to say, they were the only "minutes" of the evening. The editor said that the "Sphinx" still could take M.U.M. as a separately bound insert to be included with the magazine for members only. (A year back we pointed out here that that could be done, but, in such a case, the price of \$1.80 per member to the S.A.M. should be lowered commensurately with the editor's assertion that the S.A.M. membership list is only a small part of the general "Sphinx" circulation)

Then came another Aesop fable, re-enacted some 2000 years after its writing. With 3 hours of exhaustive damnations and curiously inept queries and conclusions behind, and there seemingly being no hope for a "Sphinx-M.U.M." love fest at the cost of overthrowing the Council's decision, the editor of "Sphinx" gave his directly asked for views on the matter. And this paragon of peregrinations not given to most (thank goodness!) prestidigitateurs gave the members to believe that "Sphinx" was quite well rid of M.U.M., that in the March issue of that publication he had written that after May 1st, it (M.U.M.) would not be carried, and that nothing he ever had written since taking over the magazine had resulted in so many letters and voices of commendation!

Even the "Sphinx" supporters who had "made" the meeting said "Aye" at a motion to adjourn.

There are some things nice to remember about people who truly appreciate magic for its own sake. Fulton Oursler, editor-in-chief of Liberty magazine, saw fit to mention the art two weeks in succession on his editorial page. Once it was a thank-you to the Society of Osiris for his election to honorary life membership - and next it was plaudits for Keith Clark, and Sydney Ross, both of whom he saw in one night at N.Y.'s Rainbow Room. Would that more nationally recognised writers and editors could see fit to mention magic and magicians in so gracious and compelling a manner. Two such lines are of more worth to all of us than six pages of "How Houdini the Mystic Escapes From a Cream-Puff." --- -- Maybe you've heard it before, somewhere, but it was a chuckle to us. Mrs. Houdini told it at a West Coast convention of magi. Florenz Ziegfeld and Charles Dillingham, great B'way producers, were pallbearers at Houdini's funeral. As they carried the coffin of the famed handcuff and escape wizard out of the church, Dillingham leaned over and said, "Ziggie, I bet you \$100 he ain't in there!" Gabbatha!

*Theo Ammann*

right card after all!" And you turn it up!

The effect of this on an audience is distinctly upsetting, and it is a simple matter to turn the deck now for the last time and get rid of your impromptu double backer by reversing the face-up bottom card. The misdirection in all three finishes on this trick has been very carefully worked out, so please, before you go out in public with it, put in some practice time on your timing. The principle of the turned-over deck is one of the subtlest and most useful principles in card magic and should not be kicked around in such a way that the layman gets wise. It's such a simple device that they can't forget it.