

TRAGIC MAGIC

by


HARRY
LEAT



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Harry Leat

TRAGIC MAGIC.

COMPRISING MAGICAL SKETCHES,
A NUMBER OF ORIGINAL TRICKS,
FORCEFUL ARTICLES, AND MANY
ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST
TO MAGICIANS.

BY

HARRY LEAT.

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WALK UP ! WALK UP !

Hi ! Hi ! Bang the drum; simply a thrum,
With a resounding whack to lure.
We'll study life, and view the strife,
Of a Prestidigitateur.

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INTRODUCTION.

A few weeks ago I accidentally got possession of a song book. It was published by a reputable firm, and the authors of the songs were in most cases well-known writers.

It contained all the latest songs, such as "Won't you come home, Bill Bailey." "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay." and many others not quite so modern; but one song impressed me immensely. It went somewhat as follows:-

It ain't gonna rain no more, no more,
It ain't gonna rain no more.
Old King Cole fell down the hole.
He ain't gonna reign no more.

Apart from the meteorological and historical news that it conveyed, it had the effect of calming my qualms about publishing certain rhymes that it is my habit to write. No-one is more familiar with articles of more or less solidity taking unto themselves wings, and flying perilously near my head, when I start to declaim in verse in the workshop; but, on looking through the rhymes that are printable, I have come to the conclusion that my efforts in composing equal the above even if they do not excel it. If the general public will stand a weather forecast in rhyme, then surely my conjuring friends and enemies will forgive my idiosyncrasy of arranging words in the order of least commercial value.

Yet I have a reason.

I find that it is possible at times to nail a thing home stronger by a rhyming arrangement of words than by plain straightforward talk; so I make no excuse for the inclusion of a few rhymes and verses which are nearly, but not quite, poetry.

Who knows. The day may come when I shall be a real poet, and see artistry and beauty in a performer lolling up against the proscenium. Again it may not. Anyhow, trying to write poetry is tragic, so some of it finds a place in

TRAGIC MAGIC.



“What is tragic in magic ?” You ask an old pro.

One who has tempted the fates.

With a shake in his voice, he replies “Don’t you
know ?

Simply a shortage of dates.”

“ MY HAT ! ”

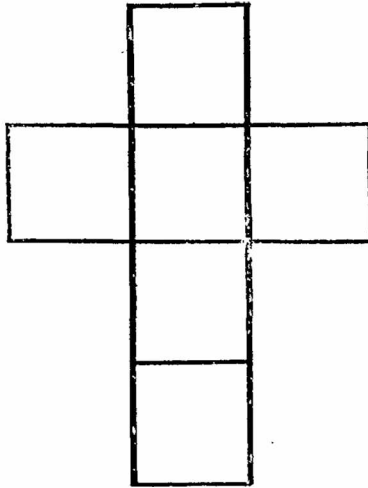
The simplicity of the following trick will be readily appreciated, yet the magic is there all the time.

A hat that has been shown quite empty is used for the experiment. Performer proceeds to explain that the hat once belonged to a rake, but unfortunately he died. The demise of the owner is illustrated by the production from the hat of a solid die about four inches square. This is casually thrown back into the hat, and the patter proceeded with. Without exactly calling out “ *Wine and Women*,” performer proceeds to illustrate the cause of his death by first producing a glass of wine, some cigars, and a large powder-puff. Finally a cross of flowers is produced, and then the hat is shown empty.

The trick may strike one as morbid, but I can assure you that it is not. We all know that it is not what you do or say, but the way you do or say it. To a certain class of audience I should not hesitate to work the trick seriously. To another class it could be made most effective by presenting it with the tongue in the cheek. To a lively audience the whole thing could be treated as a huge joke. Anyhow, I have pattered for the serious minded,

but added moves *that* will appeal to the other kinds of audiences.

A die is made of tin, and is spring hinged so that it will open out and hang flat. The illustration will show that in the flat condition it will form a cross.



The outside is, of course, spotted to represent a dice, but the inside is covered with spring flowers and conjurer's grass. This dice can be obtained from the Depots. When the dice is being closed, the spring flowers are pressed back, and a wineglass (full of wine, and rubber covered) is placed inside with some cigars, and a spring powder-puff. The die is fastened, and then placed in a suitable position for easy loading. A four inch die is an easy grip. The best method is to use a hat for a previous trick, and let someone hold it. After the trick, put it on the table or chair, and later pick it up with the die. This allows the trick to proceed without

interfering explanations. Then start the patter right away. At the end of the second verse you produce the die in its solid form, and containing the load. This is placed back in the hat, and the holding catch released after the leather lining has been pulled up. This enables you to produce the wineglass at the end of the third verse, and this you place on your table. The cigars are produced at the end of the fourth verse, the powder-puff at the end of the fifth verse, and finally the cross at the end of the sixth verse. Not one person in a thousand outside of magic will associate the cross with the returned dice, for they are in no way alike in appearance.

Need I add that if the performer drinks the wine, bites the end off of one of the cigars, and fools slightly with the powder-puff, all seriousness vanishes, and his tragic acting becomes more funny.

PATTER.

It is not always a crown that covers another,
 For Queens and Kings wear hats.
 An old-fashioned bonnet suits a grandmother,
 But a topper must go with spats.
 Here is a 'silk' that belonged to a rake,
 And it was always worn awry.
 It covered a head that had many an ache;
 But the wearer, alas, did die. (Die.)
 Many things helped to hurry the end,
 And each one weakened a link.
 Perhaps the most hard of all to fend,
 Was the cursed stuff called "Drink."
 (Wineglass.)

Of very many it takes its toll,
 For its lovers it will convoke.
 Here is the weed that kills the soul -
 A vice that is known as smoke. (Cigar.)
 Life's road, we know, is hard to trudge,
 For most of it is rough;
 But woman's smiles will make us budge,
 And pursue the powder-puff. (Powder-puff.)
 How could a man live with odds so great,
 And thoughts filled with remorse.
 So at the end - we dedicate,
 And add to that - a cross. (Cross.)





FAREWELL.

By the side of the grave two women stood.
It is not for us to condemn.
Yet many I know thought they should;
But we'll murmur a quiet requiem.

For there in the earth a body lay,
With a bullet wound in the chest;
Waiting for God to turn him to clay -
The One who knows what is best.

Grief may be great, but time heals all,
And the young their loves may renew.
Seldom to the dead our lives we enthrall;
So to the grave one may say "Adieu."

HIS START.

He had cut the photographs of magicians out of a catalogue, and hung them around the shop. When customers came in he spoke in familiar terms of the performers and their performances. Yet he did not know them. A barber averaging 12 hours a day in his shop had no opportunity; yet it was his one wish in life to be a conjurer, and know conjurers.

* * * * *

So he schemed.

* * * * *

He was young, and his wife was young; and the customers got interested when he told them he was going to shut the shop up, and take her to the theatre. His wife was full of excitement, but not with thoughts of enjoyment. When the shop was closed she heard him smash the lamp-glass, and watched the lamp being filled to the brim with oil, and saw it trickle over the sides on to the table cloth. What a mess! Yet she never uttered a word of complaint. She held the lamp whilst a thread was tied to the bottom of the burner. How her hand shook. At last she sought relief in speech, and timidly asked if the other end of the thread would be put through the letter box. No. It would not.

A postman might deliver something, and push the end of the thread in again. It was going through the key hole. When the wick was lighted, an impulse came to her to blow it out; but she dare not. That lighted lamp was to start her husband in a new life.

* * * * *

They appreciated the neighbours wishes that they would have a good time, and trudged away a couple of hours before the theatre doors would open. They purposely called on friends and publicans, and eventually were hard pressed to get into the theatre in time to see the commencement. As she looked at the programme she asked :- "What is '*The Still Alarm*:'" He had not expected a play of this description, but facetiously replied that it was a clock that was out of order.

* * * * *

As the play progressed it was torment. Why had he not looked to see what was on. Even a third rate company in Shakespeare would have been preferable. It gripped them, and made them see something that was not in the play. They saw a friend calling at their house. They could see him knocking quietly, whilst his other hand felt stealthily under the key hole. Then he thundered on the knocker, and a neighbour came out and told him the house was empty. Satisfied, he went away; but they could see him in their mind trailing a long piece of cotton which he gathered up secretly. When the end came

into his hand he looked at it. It was charred.

* * * *

Then the play held them again, for all was quiet. They found themselves wondering why. Then *clang*. The fire alarm rang out, and with a feeble cry she slipped to the floor.

* * * *

Outside of the theatre they soon brought her to. The burly attendant supposed she must have been in a fire at some time, and the play had kind of upset her like. Yes; yes. They agreed.

* * * *

Later, when she viewed the wreck of her home, she was quite calm. Nothing could have made her faint again. Woman's mentality is always difficult to define.

* * * *

Now they knew hundreds of folks connected with magic, but the insurance money had been spent, and he was back in another barber's shop. Not one of the wonderful plans had materialized. How strange it is that none of us are as clever as we think we are. The new shop did not pay, and only the evening before he had called on a conjurer living at Pimlico, and returned with some trifling pieces of jewelry that had nothing to do with magic. He did not realize on them, for she pleaded for their return. All right. That night they would go back when it was dark, and he would

wait whilst she passed the house, and quietly dropped the baubles in the letter box unnoticed.

* * * * *

As he waited for her in a public house, he heard the cry of "Fire." Soon he was one of the running mob; but the fire did not attract him. There were many open doors, and they fascinated him. The houses were good ones. Maybe they would prove the *open sesame* to another start in magic. Why not? Why shouldn't he have another try.

* * * * *

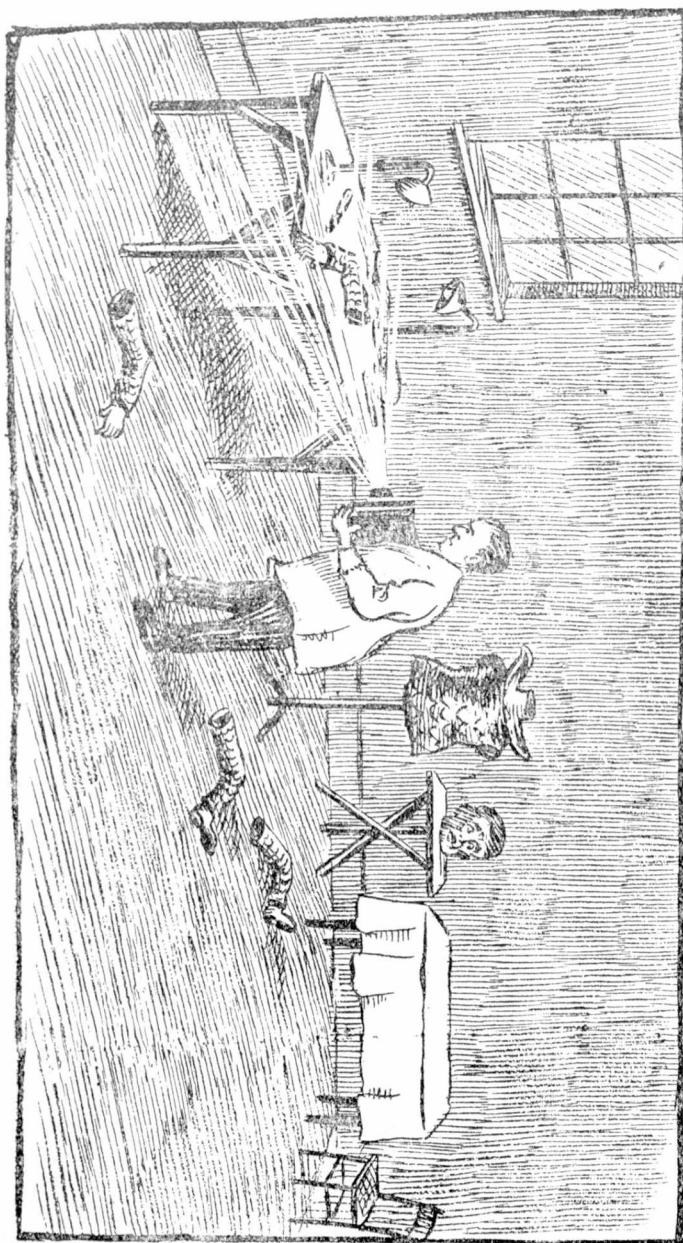
Three months afterwards she met him at the prison gates. She has met him there since, and would have continued to do so, only he preferred someone else.

* * * * *

He is a trifle old now, but is still looking forward to the time when he will start out as the World's Greatest Magician.



THE LUNAR RAYS.



THE LUNAR RAYS.

This sketch should prove very weird and thrilling, yet the effects are quite simple under normal conditions. Stock scenes, or plain drapes can be used, and as the working of the apparatus is human, it should prove as near fool-proof as possible.

EFFECT. Performer acts the character of a Doctor, Professor, or Experimental Chemist, and has just succeeded in making the various parts of a mechanical man - the body, head and four limbs of which are lying about. All is ready to assemble, and he is anxious to know whether he has been successful in his life-long experiments. A light metal support stands on the stage, and he hooks the body portion to it. Then he adjusts the head. By shining a certain light on it, it moves in a natural manner, and proves to be life-like. One arm is hitched on, and it immediately starts the most effective movements - obeying every order of the performer. A leg is attached, and this also moves naturally. Then the other arm is fitted, and finally the remaining leg. All limbs move seperately or collectively, but all the time the figure is fixed to the light metal support, and does not touch the ground. Finally the figure makes many noises, and almost speaks. Succes has crowned the efforts of

the Professor, but he must rest before putting the final touches to his automaton. He unhooks the figure from the metal support, carries it easily to a tressel table, lays it down and covers it with a sheet. Then he rests on a chair or couch, and goes to sleep. Then the rays of the moon shine into the room, and there is a movement beneath the sheet. Slowly the automaton uncovers itself, and assumes a sitting position. It is all very awkward at first, but presently the movements become fairly natural, and the figure seems to grasp the situation and becomes full of resentment. After walking about the stage, the automaton decides to kill the sleeping Professor. Speaking for the first time, it curses him; and then clutching at the Professor's throat tries to choke him. Then ensues a fight which for weirdness should eclipse the once famous sketch 'Humanity.' The only limit is that which the average audience can stand. During the struggle the Professor manages to get hold of some surgical knives which he plunges into the figure; but the automaton fights on. Then changing the tactics to save his own life, the Professor tries to unlimb the figure. He gets one arm off, and throws it away. That eases things, and he manages to unhitch a leg. Then he breaks away to get his breath before renewing the fight. The automaton sways slightly on the remaining leg, but, recovering its balance, springs or hops after the Professor. But it is the end, for the Professor fells the figure to the ground with a chair, where it lays in a grotesque heap. Then he faints and falls across the figure, and that makes a tragic ending for the curtain.

In designing this sketch I aimed at the most weird effects that a performer could show an audience. 'Sawing a woman in half' sounds tragic, but everything is left to the imagination of the audience. They see nothing, and know the box is empty at the cut on account of the insertion of the middle piece of glass. If a sheet of glass can be lowered through a woman, there is not much need to go any further and pretend to saw her in half. Much can be shown to an audience without being repulsive, and a performer might just as well show them something as to hint at it. Hence the idea of this sketch, which can be added to, or moderated, according to the producer's ideas. The *GRAND GUIGNOLS* became world famous, and there is no reason why the principles should not be applied to Magic.

WORKING. Unfortunately, the chief factor in this sketch is only too easily obtained; yet there is no reason why he should not have a good time, and really enjoy himself, for his labour is light. The real automaton is built round an ex-service man who has lost one arm, and one leg. He waits on the changing tressel, which is similar to that used in the change for the 'Floating Lady.'

In the body of the automaton that will be built before the audience, a small boy, or girl, is concealed. The average man should be able to lift a 40 to 60 lb. child with little apparent effort; so there is no need for him to become a Carmo before trying the lift. All the same, there is no reason why the body portion should not be in position on the metal sup-



THE AUTOMATON.

port. Then the performer has only to lift it off - a less suspicious move than lifting it up.

The head is made of papier mache, and modelled to match your assistant. This is an easy matter, for the human and paper face can be made up together. There is no need to follow too closely to the *Robot* style used in the famous play; but a weird make-up should be adopted for effect. I have often wondered why the author of '*R.U.R.*' never introduced magic into his weird play.

When the head is placed in position on the body, the child has the use of both hands to manipulate it. The eyes can roll, the eyelids close and open, and the lips part slightly. All the movements should be slow, for it is a serious sketch, and not a rollicking ventriloquial act. In fact, no movement of the head should be really convincing; and a doubt should be left in the minds of the audience. When an arm is placed in position, the child can insert its own arm into it quite a considerable distance, and move it in all directions. By pulling a cord inside the arm, the fingers could be made to move and form a fist, etc. When a leg is attached, the child allows one leg to slip out of the body down into the leg, and so give it movement. This is an easy matter, for the child has been sitting in a knees under chin position, and it will be a relief to eventually let both legs hang down through two traps in the bottom of the body. To pull them up again would be difficult, but this has not got to be done. As the limbs are being attached so they immediately move, for the child has control over the four limbs at once.

The child has had plenty of opportunity to make connections with the papier mache head, so that it could be operated by movements of the child's head and mouth. By that means the automaton would have every movement going at once if necessary. The limbs are light, and it would indeed be child's play to manipulate them.

When the performer lifts the figure from the metal support, it continues to move slightly, and a little restraint is needed before the limbs remain motionless on the tressel. Then when performer manipulates the sheet, the man automaton rolls the child automaton under cover, and takes its place. Then, as the sketch progresses, and the moon shines on him, he uncovers himself, gets up, and carries on in every sense of the word. Although he has but one real leg and arm, there are appliances made that will give movement to the false ones. Remember that the assistant is playing the part of a mechanical figure, so even his real limb movements should be erratic, and made more or less jerky on purpose.

I need hardly describe a realistic stage fight. It is a lovable kind of affair, composed chiefly of embraces, accompanied by grunts and groans caused by supposed shortage of breath. To the audience it is altogether different, and they will be thrilled when they witness arm breaking, leg twisting, kicking (for a cork leg will take a lot of that) and stiletto insertions. The impression on the audience should be one of great interest; for what they think they are watching is a struggle between an old

professor and a mechanical figure. It should prove thrilling, but not disgusting on account of the absence of half of the human element.

When the Professor has torn the arm and leg off of the automaton, he breaks away for effect. The evil looking figure stands and sways whilst preparing for a spring, and is eventually felled by a chair as already described.

A more mysterious sketch could hardly be produced with less apparatus and trouble. Two unskilled assistants plus common sense, two special suits of clothes, a changing table, and an iron support. The rest, and a useable scene, is stock at any hall.

The lighting should be studied, for much will depend on it. The light that the Professor shines on the parts he wishes to move is an ordinary torch-light concealed in an elaborate box, fitted with terminals, switches, flex, etc. That is all bluff from start to finish, but the entire sketch depends on it. The supposed mechanism concealed in each limb only works when subjected to this light. The trouble arises when the rays of the moon accidentally shine on the automaton, and, according to an old fallacy, imbues it with madness. No longer has the Professor any control - hence the fight for his own life.

To word the sketch would fill this book; so I shall confine the conclusion to a synopsis.

The scene opens showing the Professor's laboratory. Shaded green and violet lights on the table give a weird effect. On the white table top is an arm. The Professor is standing a few feet away,

shining his newly invented light upon it. As he does so, the arm moves. These movements are obtained by two threads running through the table top. When one is pulled the arm bends at the elbow (which is spring hinged,) and the other thread closes the fingers, and bends the wrist. These three actions are ample to start with, and so that they can be seen by all, the table can be tilted. Then the Professor speaks. Success has crowned his efforts, and as he pretends to adjust different portions of the limbs, he is explaining that the mechanism can be set to any action, which will continue indefinitely whilst subjected to the rays of his light. Then he assembles the parts, as already explained, making each work by shining his light on to it. By enlarging the rays more parts will work, and when spread over the whole figure, all of it will work at once. If the boy or girlie in the body has practised this with the Professor, then some good *catches* can be executed; for it goes without saying that the tiny operator can secretly see out of the body. An accidental (?) flash across the body would cause it to quiver momentarily, and would be more effective than the direct movements.

From the moment the sketch starts to the time when the Professor lifts the assembled figure off of the iron support, and places it on the changing table, there is plenty of action, for even in transferring the figure from the support to the table, the arms and legs slowly entwine round the performer in a most uncanny manner. Then comes the opposite action, and all is quiet for a few seconds whilst

the Professor rests; but it is soon broken, for the moonlight that has suddenly shone into the room upon the figure, starts another creepy action. As the sheet is slowly pushed off of various parts of the body, the weirdness would increase, and no extra effect would be gained by breaking it too quickly. Then the (man) automaton speaks, and strikes eccentric attitudes. He curses the Professor, and does the heavy in the orthodox tragic manner. Then the Professor is well awake, and realizing what has happened, rushes for his light box; but, unfortunately, in his excitement he causes a short circuit. There is a bright flash (acid tube — and a little gunpowder,) some smoke, and then the apparatus is useless. The automaton then starts to creep after the Professor, but suddenly stopping, he rises to his full height and screams :— “You — you have given me *LIFE*; but I — I will give you *DEATH*.”

Then the fight starts, and the Professor should lose ground all the time, until it would seem that a few more seconds would be enough to allow the automaton to accomplish his threat; but as he is being throttled across the table his hand clutches the knife, and after a tremendous effort he manages to sever an arm. He breaks away in a fainting condition, and then the automaton (if he happens to be an actor) gets the chance of displaying his ability. Apparently forgetting the Professor, he gazes at his arm upon the floor. He picks it up, and pushes it into position; but it falls to the floor. He tries again; and then, realizing what has happened, he

cries. Suddenly his sobbing stops, and fury takes its place. He rushes on the Professor, but the loss of an arm handicaps him. Anyhow, the fight continues, the automaton loses a leg and falls to the floor; but it is not all over. He manages to get up, and hops forward in a dazed manner. By this time the Professor has picked up a chair, which he smashes down on the automaton's head. (A folding chair can be carried, which has the back rung made of rubber tubing. The tubing is the part that strikes the head, and enables the action to be realistic.)

That is almost the end. The Professor leans over the crumpled figure on the floor, and realizes that a life's efforts have been wasted. He tries to lift the figure, but fails. He then collapses, and falls across the figure — remaining perfectly motionless.

That ends the sketch, and the audience will be left wondering whether he is dead.



AN IRRESPONSIBLE ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF MAGIC AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.



GATHERING LAURELS.

Why do so many conjurers strain after honours, they are not entitled to?

I am not referring to performers at clubs or societies, writers who attempt to produce books of miracles in lieu of workable tricks, compilers, or others of that ilk; but to front-rank performers who are not content with their success as showmen, or presenters of tricks and illusions. Sometimes I think it is caused by the fact that so many illusions are only presented, and not worked, by the performer. He evidently feels his position, and so takes every opportunity to claim other abilities.

Two instances will suffice. A well-known English conjurer and illusionist takes every opportunity to inform all and sundry that he is a skilled mechanic. Hence the illusions. Well, a few years back, in an unguarded moment, he said :— “I say, Leat; can you tell me how to rivet?” I described the various methods, and he thanked me. So can you wonder why I smile each time I read of his ability in the mechanical direction.

An American performer had a lot to say that his mechanical training had founded his act, and I got interested since he pressed the subject on every occasion. I asked Mr. A. Roterberg, of Chicago,

where he had received his training. He replied:—
“He has been hanging around my shop for some time, and was handy at opening packing cases, replacing broken windows, and doing various odd jobs. I guess he got his mechanical knowledge by trying to repair clocks, and a broken lock or two.”

It is all such obvious bluff that I wonder so many try to get away with it. At the best, a man who makes conjuring tricks and illusions has to be a Jack of all Trades, and there is no school, or works, where that is taught. It takes a man a considerable number of years to become a skilled mechanic, but he could become a showman in quite a few weeks if suited for the work.

I fail to see why a man should be ashamed of the fact that he makes a better introducer to some tricks or illusions than he made a clerk, or some other honest and intelligent worker. As I have said above, he evidently feels his position of just standing on the stage and talking; so he talks a little more when he is off of it, — and that is where he makes a fool of himself.





THE ELECTRIC LADY,

She stood on the box with the coil switched on,
 Whilst the crowd passed o'er the damp mat.
 "A bob in the glass, gents, One *sine qua non* —
 Fish it out like you would a dead sprat.

I gazed at the girl, and wondered her age,
 How came she to "gaff," I don't know,
 A pound per week I knew was her wage,
 For a chum was running the show.

That was thirty years back, in Stamford Street.*
 Since then things have not stood still.
 We should not speak if we happened to meet,
 For Marie now tops the bill,

*Stamford Street, Blackfriars. Known later as *The Road to Ruin*.

THE ACADEMY OF MAKESHIFTS.



Principal. (*Picking up Salmon tin with stone inside, and shaking it.*) "Pupils, attention to the bell. The lesson to-day commences with makeshift wax. What is the best makeshift wax, Jones?"

Jones. "Soap, Sir."

P. "Good."

Jones. "But it will not stick, Sir."

P. "Who the — who wants it to stick?"

Jones. "Very good, Sir."

P. "Yes; you can call it that, if you like. Now what on earth is the matter with you, Brown."

Brown. (*Crying.*) "Nail sticking up in the chair — boo-oo."

P. "Monitor; tell the grocer to see that all the nails are knocked down in the next lot of *Tate* sugar boxes he delivers. Now, Smith; what model are you working on?"

Smith. "A new rising card invention; Sir."

P. "And your improvement?"

Smith. "A chain instead of a thread. Will never break or let you down, Sir."

P. "Um — yes. Looks strong enough to elevate the *Art of Magic*, so do not like it. Remove the chain, and use rope. Have a

door mat for a back-cloth, and it will never be seen."

Smith. "Right; Sir."

P. "What do you mean by right? Right, indeed. Everything has got to be wrong here. Now, on my makeshift hand I will place —"

Smith. "Pardon me, Sir; but what do you mean by *makeshift hand*?"

P. "As you are a new member I will excuse you. I refer to my left hand. That isn't right, is it? What is all that dirt on your hands, White?"

White. "Makeshift gloves, Sir."

P. "Get some darker dirt. Can see your flesh through it. And what is that piece of linen?"

White. "This piece of linen, Sir, is the tail of a shirt."

P. "And what do you intend to use it as?"

White. "Handkerchief, Sir."

P. "Good. A very promising pupil. What is that piece of string round your neck?"

White. "A makeshift tie, Sir."

P. "Brilliant idea. Now, Blobbs, what are you contributing to our collection of ornaments."

Blobbs. (Opening paper parcel.) "Four brass bed knobs, Sir."

P. "Good; — um, bad. They look as though Oliver Cromwell had been at them. Still, the dents will not notice if you do not

spot lime them. Monitor; please put them in the 'Knobs On' department. Now, Dobson, what is a *Degree*?"

Dobson. "Something showing how hot you are, sir."

P. "Come out to the line. Come out this instant. I'll show you how hot I am."

Dobson. "I apologize, Sir."

P. "Ye gods. That makes it worse. We never apologize when we make a mistake. At the close of this lesson you write the following one hundred times :- "*Degrees are meaningless and worthless letters placed after the names of conjurers, boys, herbalists, and other tradesmen.*"

Dobson. "I apologize, Sir."

P. "STOP IT. It's against the rules. What kind of example do you expect me to set to the pupils and other members of this Academy. Besides, politeness costs nothing, so we don't use it. Now, Smart, what is a badge?"

Smart. "A badge, sir, is a two thousand year old design, with an almost meaningless Latin quotation tacked on to it. It is surmounted with a three-and-sixpenny ruby (rampant,) and a safety pin.

P. "Wonderful, Smart; wonderful. A promising pupil."

Smart. "Yes, Sir; they promised me one, but they couldn't register the promise."

P. "Yes, Turner; what is it?"

Turner. " I have brought this handle for the collection."

P. "How pretty; how sweetly pretty. And china too. How came you to have the misfortune to break the ornament to which it was attached ? "

Turner. "My brother carelessly threw his boots under the bed when he was undressing, and — "

P. (*Shaking Salmon tin and stone.*) " Class dismissed."



THE FALLING TABLE.

This is an effect that slowly dawns on the audience, and in that respect it can be classed as a novelty.

Most conjurers know how a piston is worked. It is described in many books on magic. Well, I converted a tripod table stand so that the rod could be pulled up and down by an assistant. That is all, and at first blush it seems so childishly simple that you may wonder where any effect can come in. Well, here it is.

When the props are set, the assistant keeps the table top at a normal height, and there is nothing to arouse suspicion. Performer commences the entertainment, and — ever so slowly — the assistant lets the table top sink down to about the height of a chair. By the time it is down, performer requires to use it. Without showing the least concern, he lifts the top portion up with both hands, and then pretends to quickly screw it in position. Assistant now holds the thread taut, and the table top stops at its right height, and serves its purpose. All this should pass without any comment from the audience, for none of them are really sure of anything.

Performer continues, and again the assistant slowly, and secretly, lowers the table top. Soon the performer wants to place something on it, and this time he is a little more energetic in re-adjusting it. Not only does he appear to screw it more tightly, but he pretends to put his weight on the table top to test that all is well. Whilst this is going on, and even though it only takes a few seconds, the audience will start to enjoy the discomforture of the performer; but he is perfectly oblivious to the titters and suppressed laughter.

Assistant now is careful not to lower the table too soon. When performer goes to the table again, the fun really starts. He yanks the top up quickly, but before he can get to screw it, down it goes with a bang. He pulls it up again, screws (?) it tightly, and then tests it. It seems quite all right, but the final press sends it down with a crash. I can assure my readers that I am not suggesting that they should turn their act into a comedy one, or become a clown; but "a little trouble" with a table could be the most natural thing in the world; and the average performer would surely be lacking in sense of humour if he could not get his audience shaking with laughter by its inclusion.

Many moves will suggest themselves, and will rely on the attitude of the audience. One guaranteed burst of laughter can be obtained when performer — in all seriousness — fires a revolver for effect in a trick, and, the moment he does so, down drops the table top.

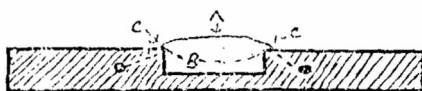
It should all be so accidental that the audience

will never dream that they are being fooled, until -

And this is where you get them.

Going to the table for the last time, you find it down; but you do not lift it up. Standing over it the performer commences hypnotic movements, and the table top rises to a normal position. Quickly touching the top with the tips of his fingers, the complete table rises off of the floor, and performer carries on with the usual manifestations.

These should conclude the performance, and my description, but a few words with reference to lifting the table may not be out of place. Personally I never wear a ring, so lifting the table by the old method was out of the question. The sketch will



A. CORD. B. DEPRESSED VELVET
C. HOLES FOR KNOTTED CORD.

show how a strong cord will lay flat on the table, and yet lift a little to allow the four fingers to slide beneath it. The wood of the table has been cut away slightly, and the velvet above it will sink when pressed with the fingers. By this means the fingers are quickly slipped under the cord, even though it does not stand up in an arched position in the first instance. It needs a strong cord loop to lift a metal tripod with top, and this cord will show passing over the back of the hand if performer is not careful in selecting his moves.

It will be noticed that only at the conclusion of the trick is the table pulled up, and then the performer secretly places his boot on a lug that protrudes sideways from the back leg to stop the table being pulled over. It is almost impossible to press a small lug with the toe portion of your boot without raising your heel. A side lug can be pressed without suspicion, but with absolute certainty.

If the performer has a light table with aluminium legs, then the strong cord can be dispensed with, and more intricate floating manifestations can be indulged in.

The laugh is with the performer at the end of his act, when the audience will fully realize that they have been gloriously sold.





SWINE OR SAINT.
(De mortuis nil nisi bonum.)

There is an old adage that runs :-
 "Never speak ill of the dead."
 Some when living received our shuns.
 Are they Saints when life has sped ?

We read on the stones in the yard,
 Virtues that seem rather odd.
 Surely lies should be barred.
 They will never deceive your God.

TRAGIC BLOTS ON MAGIC.

Before two glands in my throat decided not to function (incidentally reducing my alertness, but adding considerably to my weight,) I enjoyed nothing better than to light my pipe, and sally forth with the sole intention of upsetting Socialistic street meetings. Tooting Broadway was my happy hunting ground, and many have been the presents promised to me by organizers who lacked all sense of humour. Whilst engaged in these pleasantries, I often had to use the phrase — “Abuse is no argument.”

Abuse is *no* argument, but I was specially guilty of it on one occasion, not in politics, but after watching a conjurer train some pigeons; but in the following article I promise to keep within bounds.

Of course, when man (the super beast) trains certain animals he uses discretion. He is not likely to pit his weight against that of an elephant. A good looking horse is far too valuable to ill-treat; and a dog will do more by kindness (and aniseed) than threats. After that there is only about one way to train animals, and that is *via* the stomach.

I have seen four pigeons put into a room, and left there for 24 hours without food or drink. Then

the conjurer went in with a dish of water in one hand, and some seeds in the other. The birds feared him, and could not get far enough away. He tried to entice them, but he knew they would not come. On going out he purposely dropped one or two seeds, and a little water. The birds were ravenous, and fought for them. Well, I will not pile on the agony to this filthy business, but suffice to say that it continued until the birds came to him in a last effort to live: The swine had then tamed them, but only by inflicting terrible torture. After that they were never fed until they had "gone through the hoop" or, in other words, the proposed performance which would make an audience murmur "How clever." No Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals could ever get a look in during the training process.

I have seen quite a lot of this dirty business. There is a trick sold by many Depots entitled:- *The Flying Birdcage*, or *The Vanishing Birdcage*. This trick, I consider, is a blot on Magic. It has been on the market for more years than I have been associated with conjuring — possibly fifty or sixty years. There is a certain demand for them, and I sold some when with Munro's. Many Depots still have occasional sales; so it goes without argument that they are used.

Now the tale told when selling is this :-

"If you wait until the bird hops into a certain position - get him into your near left hand corner, with his tail pointing to your right hand, the cage will fold down upon him, leaving him in the middle where there is quite a lot of room, and then he will not get

crushed to death. The cage protects him in every way during its flight up the sleeve."

Doesn't it all sound kind and thoughtful? But just stop and think. The flight of a bird, on the wing, is visible. The flight of the cage is invisible. Therefore it stands to reason that the bird must be positively jerked away in a most un-natural manner. Flying through the air, rapidly propelled by its own wings, is one thing; but to be suddenly jerked a couple of feet, at a speed which is invisible to the eye, is quite another. Again, the performer has his act to study. He recites certain patter, and if — at the termination of it — the bird does not then happen to be in the right position, well — poor little sparrow. Once when a performer snatched his coat off to show that the cage was not hidden beneath it, a patch of red grew larger and larger on the underpart of his shirt sleeve. To obviate this risk in future performances, he had an under sleeve fitted, which was made of American cloth or rubber.

When a conjurer performs this trick, he generally invites a member of the audience to come upon the stage to assist him. Ninety-five per cent of the assistants would be amateur conjurers, or persons with a deep interest in magic. They go up to see the cage at close quarters. What do they find? They find that the cage is like nothing they have ever seen in any house or bird shop, but is identical with the cages offered by the Depots.

Could a trained acrobat—who is used to all kinds of tumbles and falls—stand being knocked aside by

a racing car at Brooklands? Would an average audience stand seeing the performer knock a bird off its perch with a heavy wand, *à la* a Base-ball player, and vanish it through the wings? **THEY WOULD NOT.** Yet under cover of the sleeve of the performer, much the same thing happens. The bird is jerked into eternity.

A performer once said to me :- "Which comes first. My living, or four-a-shilling birds?" My reply was :- "If the killing of defenceless birds is the limit to your cleverness, then you should be left to starve."

I notice that one catalogue advocates the use of a dummy bird. You see, they know, and are humane. I appeal to the Depots to cut the trick out. To the performers of the trick I say the same. Cut it out.

I once had to demonstrate the appearing birds in a bird cage — the cage where the birds are thrown up from loops of cloth which suddenly become taut. The first bird I released hit the top of the cage, and appeared dazed. The second bird's head was literally *bashed* through the wires at the top, and there the bird hung. The maker had made the springs too strong. When I asked him why, he explained that the audience must not be allowed to see the birds come up. No; of course not.

In Italy, to get the best results out of singing birds, they blind them with red-hot needles. In England, I have seen them burst the drums of a bird's ears, so that it could perch on a pistol, and not flinch when it was fired. No normal person

jumps when a pistol is fired on a cinematograph screen; and life is one long film to the stone deaf bird,

Only a short time back we had a Chinese (?) conjurer who did the fishing rod trick. When he caught the fish he held it in his hand for many seconds while it squirmed, and by the aid of the spot lime the audience could witness its writhings. Little did they know that the movement was caused by the pressure of the performer's thumb nail in the tail portion of the fish's body. Luckily some members of a Society knew the way to prevent its continuance.

Can any of my readers remember a triple act performed some years ago, where birds were used galore. The three performers marched up to a table, and showed three pots empty. Then they pulled bird after bird from the pots. Those that showed no signs of animation were handed direct to the waiting assistants, who hurriedly carried them off. Those that could walk were allowed to roam the stage. A sack full of birds was dragged on to the stage under cover of a flag or cloth, the bottom released, and the birds flopped out in a heap. You can remember it, of course. Now I wonder whether you think the same of the performers as I do?

Do not think that the different items I have pointed out infer that every conjurer who uses animals is a callous wretch. Nothing of the kind. Yet there are still too many who are careless, or will stoop to cruelty to attain a certain end.

So many people resent the truth. My different

exposures have been admitted to be perfectly true; yet some say I should not have printed them. What would you think if I told you that Ministers, Priests, Curates, Sunday School teachers, Church workers, and others working for religious causes, headed the Police list on charges of indecent conduct. It does not sound nice, and you would not believe me. Yet if you take the trouble to look up the statistics compiled by the Police Court authorities you will find that more persons connected with religious duties are charged with indecent conduct than, let us say, carpenters, electricians, railway workers, or other large sections of the community. As I say, it does not read nice, yet it happens to be true for all that.

So, with regard to Magic, let us all speak out, and deal with things as we find them. You need never fear a man who ill-treats animals. He is a coward anyway.

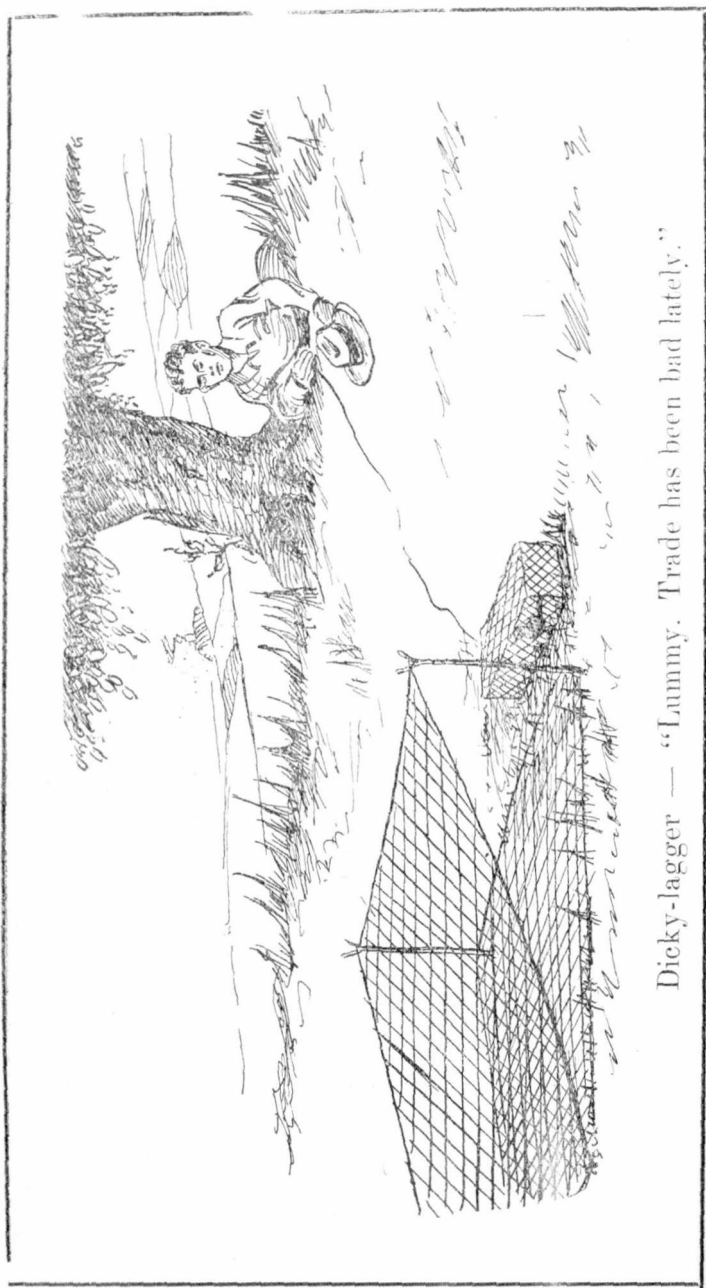


THE SACRIFICE.

He was a conjurer — *debonair*.
Used to the footlights trying glare.
She was his wife — simply sweet;
Just a little dress — rest delete;
And her hair grew most profusely,
But it hung a trifle loosely.

He always schemed for a devise,
To get her to make the sacrifice.
Would his hints be fructified,
If a little lotion she applied.
Yet it wasn't solely her affair,
“For the show” would she dye her hair?

AND SHE DID.
She tried some Henna.
What a chestnut brown.
OH! GEHENNA.



Dicky-lagger — "Lummy. Trade has been bad lately."

ALMOST MAGIC.

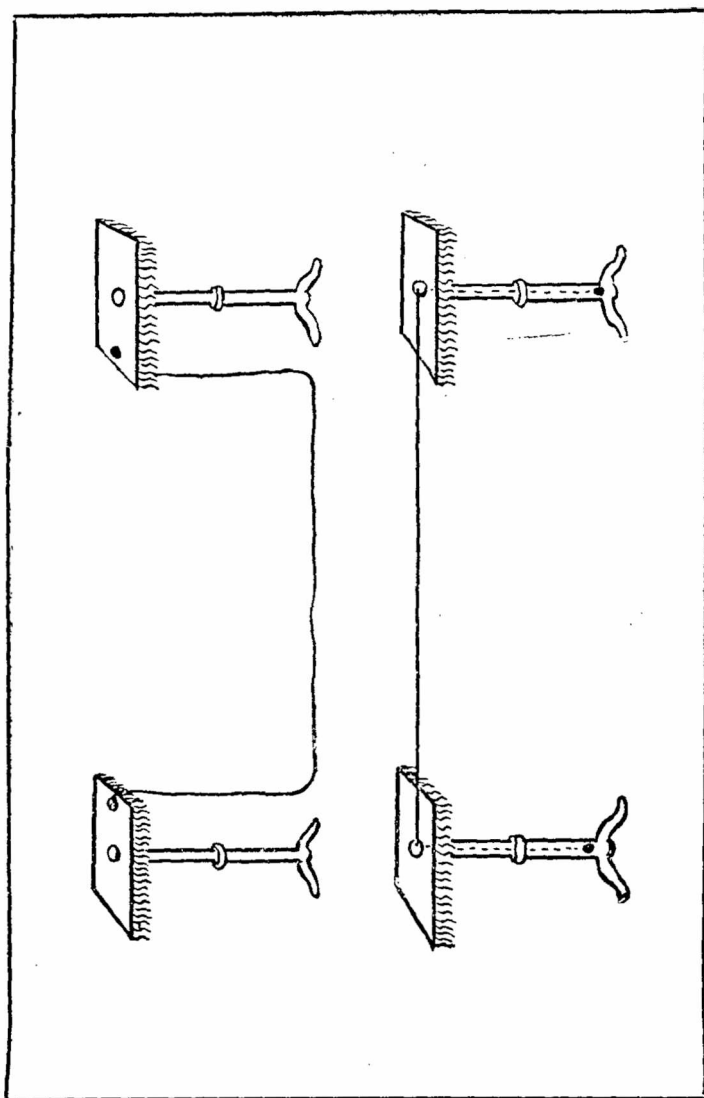
OR

THE RAINBOW WATERS.

When I wrote this trick up for THE MAGICIAN (Oct. 1915) under the pen name of Harry Watson, I had not the least idea that Mr. Billy O'Connor would get to hear of it, and wish to pay tribute to (to him) an unknown inventor in The Magic Wand of March 1924. It is all very nice of him, and I will not spoil it by telling him that I have never invented a trick in my life, am never likely to, and know of no-one connected with magic who has. Should anyone start tracing the trick back to Fred Wilkinson's famous rising cards, I will come and help them.

When I made a presentable trick of the idea, I gave it the title of "ALMOST MAGIC." When a performer can borrow a glass jug full of water, and a glass, and proceed straight away to pour out any drink he chooses without faking in any manner, he has got as near to real magic as he will ever get.

The following method is more simple than the one previously described, yet it has advantages. Fitting a thread across the stage with other threads



hanging from it, is not always as easy as it may read, and in drawing rooms is almost impossible.

I use two tables of the *all stem* variety (see illustration) and a single length of thread with a light weight fitted at each end. The thread is the finest black silk thread purchasable, and is quite invisible at a few feet distance. The centre of the thread has been prepared in places by being rubbed with powdered aniline dye. Each prepared section need not exceed two inches in length, for it is surprising how little dye is needed if the best is purchased. All that you have to do is to remember the order of the colours along the thread. At first I knotted the thread at each colour. The knots were invisible, but feelable. My weights consisted of one inch cork balls. I had split them in half, and imbedded about half an ounce of lead in each. When glued together again they formed ideal noiseless weights. Painted black, and attached to the correct length of thread, they are then ready for working.

In practise, the positions of the two tables were about six feet apart, and the length of thread would then be eleven feet. Now it will readily be seen that if the cork balls are placed one on each table, towards the edge, the thread is long enough to go *straight down* to the floor, lay flat on the intervening space, and go *straight up* to the top of the other table. Any trivial article on each table will hide the ball. This method of laying the thread allows performer to move anywhere round his two tables with the utmost freedom. He will tread on the thread

time and again, but it does no harm. It takes water to wash the colour off of the thread.

When performer wishes to work the trick, he secretly puts the cork balls into the legs, eases the thread, and all is ready. In working, the freedom of movement is perfect. When the glass is held right at the top by the thumb and second finger, the first finger can curl (pointing to the fork between itself and thumb) and press the crossing thread to the top of the glass. This enables the performer to move in any direction whilst actually pouring into the glass. In the old method, you could walk freely about the stage until you actually filled the glass. Then you had to stand suspiciously quiet. Present day audiences are intelligent, and when this stillness takes place half a dozen times or more you are giving chances. Again, by releasing the pressure on the thread when it is across the top of the glass, you can slide the glass along from one colour to another, and so make the colour change in the glass without a break in the pouring. This effect is truly magical. Very many colours can be rubbed on the thread, which is safely carried about if wound spirally round a piece of postal tube.

There is an idea that the wet thread will glisten. It would if given the chance; but the thread is drawn slightly across the top of the glass, or the back of the hand, and so gets robbed of its superfluous moisture, and makes all safe. Performer is not using a piece of string or rope, but a length of the finest silk thread. Aniline powder, soluble in water, is not always a fast dye when the water is

cold; and at no time is a large quantity used. A few minute particles will correctly colour a tumbler of water. You only want a *tint*, and never a solution that will dye or prove risky if slightly spilt.

PATTER. Ladies and Gentlemen. Before commencing my next trick, may I ask someone to be good enough to procure for me a plain glass and a large jug full of clean water. The reason for wanting clean water is that, in all probability I shall drink some. If it were only for my assistant it would not matter.

(Proceed with a short trick whilst glass and jug are being obtained.)

Thank you. You are quite sure this is pure water? (Taste) Yes, so it is. Any gentleman here know the taste of water? Not one? Well, never mind.

I propose to demonstrate to you how I intend to defeat the Prohibition Act. My cousin used to drink a little port wine, and when I say to her, " What's yours?" and she answers "Water please," I shall pour her out a little --- port. And my uncle, jolly good sort, when he winks his eye, and says, "Water--not much water," well, he gets--whisky. Any gentleman present know the taste of whisky? Now, now, don't all speak at once.

Of course Ma likes a glass of stout. She shall have it.

Then there is my friend Green, who only drinks Chartruse. By jove, that matches his name. I suppose they use this to dye grass with. But after all is said an done, there is no drink like a wet one, and genuine country beer cannot be beaten---like a couple of eggs in a glass of milk. Here's your very good health, and you, sir, would you return the glass and jug to whoever was good enough to lend it.



TWO EXTRACTS FROM
 “ *MORE MAGICAL EXPERIMENTS.* ”
 (October 1924.)

“As to the practice, which has recently grown up, of writing only when one is drunk, or of introducing plain lies into every sentence, they are quite unworthy . . . and can never permanently add to one’s reputation.”

—HILAIRE BELLOC.
(Caliban’s Guide to Letters.)

“In my next volume I shall foretell the End of the World, also I shall disclose the hitherto inviolate secret of how to lay flat on a clothes-line.

Fraternally yours,
 PERCY NALDRETT.”



ONE EXTRACT FROM
 “ *MORE COLLECTED MAGIC.* ”

“Musing thus I came down from the hills to an Inn that I know.

* * * * *

(Observe the little stars! And so it was that this book(let) came to pass.

PERCY NALDRETT.”

AN APPEARING SILK.

Most of us aim for the best effects, and the following is a simple improvement on a worthy piece of apparatus.

When working the false finger, the silk has either to be *waved* out with both hands — a lot of movement for so small a result, or it is pulled out — and looks something like a piece of rope until it is fully released. The very look of it suggests that it has been *packed*.

Unfortunately I forgot to draw an illustration for this trick when I was doing the others; but I think it can be made quite clear without. I made a metal false finger in two halves, — a front and back. The halves were hinged, and kept together by a spring catch. When worn, the first and second fingers naturally hid the crack running down each side.

The finger is fastened, and a silk tucked in in the usual manner. When the hands have been shown empty, the false finger is brought to the palm, and hidden by the fingers. The spring catch is secretly pressed, the finger flies open in two halves, and the silk expands and hides the faked finger.

The description may read tame, but the effect is real magic. When you have practised one thoroughly, try two — one in each hand. The effect will please you as well as the audience.

MAGICAL CURS.

I would like to draw attention to certain things that seem to be on the increase in magical literature.

It is quite common to pick up a book or journal, and after reading something that is specially meant to catch one's eye, we involuntarily say:- "I wonder whom that is meant for?"

Does it ever strike you that what you have read are the words of cowards hiding behind a cover. They have a grievance, and want to hit. They are afraid to come out into the light, because their grievance would not stand it; so they strike out in the dark, and trust to luck that they will score. I daresay you can picture the cowardly loons chuckling to themselves, and saying:- "That's a nasty one. He'll know it is for him."

In many cases they have not the ability to write in the original sense, so they resort to quotations from various writers — famous and otherwise. They mumble:- "Oh, they cannot have us for slander, for *we* have said nothing."

These people are despicable. They are slimy. They are minus the intestinal canal. They should be hounded out of Magic. If they have a real grievance they should speak straight out. Insinuations are coward's accusations, and a coward is always fearful of what the public will think of him. So he

resorts to slyness and cunning. He sees or imagines faults in others, but fails to notice his own — even though he knows he inherits certain traits he fears.

These are the writers we could do without. They should come out into the open, and name their opponent, or shut right up.

It is impossible to spare the space to name these writers in a general article of this description; but I must say that none of the above remarks apply to the regular writers of humorous articles. These writers ladle out amusing sarcasm with clockwork regularity (?) and are recognised mirth provokers. Unfortunately their number is too small.

And now a few words to the anonymous letter writer. Do for goodness sake stop it, or sign your name. If you unfortunately have not got one, then sign your mothers. Also add your address; then the argument will not be so lop-sided. You have my name and address, but do not take unfair advantage of it.

Not for one moment do I expect everyone to agree with me in the various points of view I adopt; but I do name my man when necessary, or leave him alone. So come out of the grass, you nameless ink slingers.

I like to hear from anyone who cares to write, and every correspondent gets an answer irrespective of the Society he belongs to, but if there is no name and address, well — it simply cannot be done, and the anonymous letter is valued as waste paper.

Remember. You must play the game before you can count the scores.

THE HYPNOTIZED ROOSTER.



I met her as I turned into the squalid street in Walworth.

“Hullo; is he in?”

“Yes; he’s in.”

“Then trade is bad, eh?”

“It is always bad. It has been bread and dripping and beer for the last two months.”

That was so. I knew the business, and the Saturday and Sunday trade paid the rent — sometimes. The takings for the rest of the week were small, and went in general expenses; so the staple diet was bread and dripping, and beer. Really I should have put beer first, for then it was an excellent stimulant for drowning one’s sorrows.

* * * * *

In the little back parlour we talked magic, and the conversation turned to old books, and the impossible tricks described. We both jogged each other’s memory, and we both stopped short when we came to the hypnotizing of a chicken. Curiously my fingers were clutching a square of billiard cue chalk; whilst he jerked his thumb in the direction of the back yard. Then in unison we exclaimed:—
“Bring it in.”

* * * * *

Judging by the look of the bird, I imagined it had seen better days; but nevertheless I held the rooster on the table, whilst he pressed its beak down and drew the chalk line away from it. Without daring to breathe we both let go, and to our complete astonishment the bird remained quite still.

We were experimenters who did not know what to do next. We stood looking at the bird until we tired of it. Then we pushed it over, and broke the spell. I held the bird again, and then we accidentally made a discovery. When he attempted to draw the line, he held the chalk wrong, and only the paper cover rubbed the table. Before he could make good his mistake, I had released the bird, and it remained quite motionless. So it only needed the action, and chalk was unnecessary. Just something bright or white pulled away from the beak did the trick.

* * * * *

Then without further ado, we left the shop to look after itself, and carried the bird to the Saloon Bar of the nearest hostelry. Needless to say we were known there for our entertaining ways, but the rooster attracted everyones attention. After a few appropriate words, silence was obtained, and many passes were made over the bird. Then I held it on the table, whilst he made the move with a nickelled tipped wand. Brazen as we were, we were both thinking of one thing. Would we get the same result in a crowd, and what form would the jeering take if it failed. Well, I released my hold, and lo,

the bird remained motionless. Then the title of a certain illusion was repeated, *and completed* by every member of the audience. It was :- "Well I'm —"

* * * * *

We did a few other items to amuse the audience, and they seemed delighted. Although we did not get a fee, or any actual coin of the realm, we only had to spend a pleasant evening. Our presence was appreciated for more than one reason; and it reminded me of Hydro work.

* * * * *

That night he forgot her beer, so she must have retired on bread and dripping.

* * * * *

He might have made a show of the bird, but he found that it behaved in a mysterious and cunning manner. Accidentally by the aid of a mirror, he caught the bird raising its head, and craftily watch his every movement. The moment he looked at the bird it would immediately drop its beak on to the table, and remain motionless. So the hypnotic effect was lost, and cunning took its place.

* * * * *

Time passed, and I called again. He had money, but no rooster. He explained that he had advertised the bird in a certain magical paper of which Max Sterling was the Editor. No names no pack drill; but a well-known conjurer in Leeds purchased. Other buyers came along, but roosters were cheap, and 25/- each showed a big profit.

* * * * *

The rooster came back from Leeds.

* * * * *

Later, the Editor regretted the insertion of the ad. and explained that he endeavoured to keep the advertising columns as nice as possible.

* * * * *

Yet there is one thing I do not know.

Did any money go back to Leeds ?

* * * * *

Now listen. On one quiet Sunday afternoon I intend to smuggle a bucket of water into the parlour, and cut glass in it with a pair of scissors. Then, maybe, I'll write another serial.



OH !

When you till your mental soil,
A secret you should know.
It will not cause turmoil;
Just hoe.

But when in trade pursuit,
And business wish to grow;
The secret you'll commute;
Don't owe.

“CHOCOLATES ON THE BRAIN.”

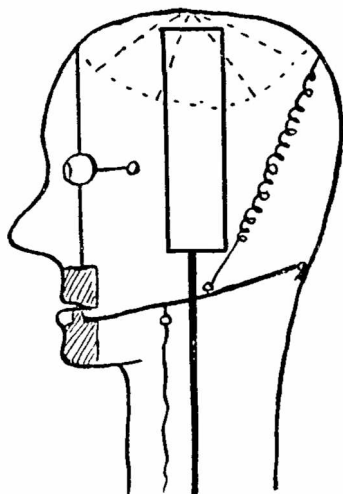
An inexpensive, yet weird effect with a ventriloquial figure can be obtained by cutting a star-trap in the top of the head. In a boy figure all the cuts would be hidden by the hair until the star-trap was released; and then from a tin box concealed in the head a spring box — representing a box of chocolates — could be pushed up and expanded on the top of the head. In a head with only the jaw, and possibly an eye movement, there is plenty of room to fix the narrow tin holder without going to the expense of having a special head made. A spring box covered to look like a box of chocolates (complete with ribbon and bows) is also a simple matter, and can easily be fixed to a wire so that it can be pushed up when required.

The effect is the thing that counts, and it is an uncanny surprise to the audience when the performance terminates with the figure proving that it has literally “Chocolates on the Brain;” and the way it does so is weird enough to leave a lasting impression. Part of the art of showmanship is to make an audience remember your act, and a startling surprise will help to achieve that end.

The illustration will give some idea of the position

of the fake. If a minor effect will serve, then leave the head alone, and bring the spring box up from the back of the figure *a la* the Card on Candle. By curving the spring arm it will clear the manipulating hand.

I will just gallop through a miscellaneous dia-



logue, to give an idea of how the final stunt can be worked up to. Reading vent. dialogues always remind me of watching a cinematograph picture without music; but as dialogues are appreciated I will not make excuses for adding one to each book I write.

F. (*Singing*) On the Racer at Wembley, it made me go quite trembly, —

P. That is quite enough of that. Haven't I told

- you I will not stand for Limerics.
- F. That wasn't a Limerick.
- P. No ?
- F. No, of course not. Wembley isn't Ealing or Gloucester, is it ?
- P. No.
- F. You are very *no-ing* to-night. Have I got to sit here and make the place look untidy. It is always the same. You say:- "Give a good show to-night, Arch-i-bald." and when I kick off all merry and bright, down comes your damper.
- P. Well, maybe it is my fault. I'm a little bit upset. I nearly got run over to-day.
- F. Good
- P. *GOOD ?*
- F. Goodness gracious.
- P. My nerves are unsteady. (*Shake jaw movement*)
- F. Er-er-er. Lummy, you are shaky. You are radiating my lip. Pull yourself together. Do you know, I've had nothing to eat since breakfast.
- P. That will not matter so long as you had a good breakfast.
- F. It was only toast.
- P. That is wholesome.
- F. Yes, if you get enough of it. I only got a professional scrap.
- P. You only got a "professional scrap." ?
- F. Yes. One round and a half.
- P. Dear, dear. What made you miss your lunch ?
- F. Well, Sam Isaac had shut when I had finished

exploring. You see; I popped into an old curio shop this morning.

P. Whatever for. Eggs ?

F. Well, guv'nor; we're running short of jokes, so I thought I might find a few old ones that had been forgotten.

P. And did you ?

F. No; no jokes. A revue company cleared them all out last week.

P. So you lost your lunch, and wasted your time.

F. Not exactly. I discovered an original manuscript sheet of music.

P. By jove.

F. No. Mozart.

P. (*Takes a deep breath — indicating disgust.*)

F. That's the way. I'm glad to see that you have gone in for deep breathing. It will lengthen your life. I knew an old chap who foolishly stopped deep breathing, and he then died at 148.

P. Died at 148 ?

F. Yes. 148 — Old Kent Road.

Will someone lend me a penny ?

P. Certainly not. No-one here will lend you a penny.

F. No ? Dear me. Not a mere d.

P. Have you seen the Pied Piper ?

F. No; but I'm glad he got the money.

P. (*Shakes figure.*) Stop it.

F. Your knocks are obnoxious. I wish my father was here.

P. Hang your father.

- F. (*Pausing.*) Well, as a matter of fact, he was.
- P. (*Casually removes a photograph from one pocket to another.*)
- F. THE lady, guv'nor ?
- P. Um — er — yes.
- F. You are not on your oath. May I look ?
- P. I have no objection. (*Shows photograph.*)
- F. My word. In outdoor costume, too.
- P. Excuse me.
- F. Lummy. Like our kettle.
- P. Now that is an insult.
- F. No insult, Sir. They are both beautifully-furred.
- P. That is quite enough of that.
- F. (*Shouting*) They are all mad. All mad.
- P. Who ?
- F. Folks in the lunatic asylum.
- P. Tut, tut.
- F. I endorse those sentiments. Do you know, I went to a Concert the other evening and heard a Ventriloquist.
- P. A Ventriloquist.
- F. Yes, you know. One of those gentlemen from Oxford with a companion from Hoxton.
- P. Are you being personal.
- F. Oh; don't say that. Yes, I heard a Ventriloquist; and when I got home I had a most horrible dream.
- P. You don't say.
- F. I do say. It was an awful—terrible dream, an excruciatingly—
- P. Yes, yes. What was the dream all about.
- F. I dreamed—I dreamed that—they made me —

they made me—

P. Yes, yes.

F. They made me go—

P. Yes, yes.

F. And listen to him again.

P. Look here. That is very unkind and personal.

You are the last one I should have expected it from. We have been together for a number of years, and—

F. Sing 'em " My Old Dutch " Go on. (*Sings.*)

" We've lived together now nigh forty years."

P. Now, you know I'm not forty. That reminds me, it is my birthday next week. Um. What are you going to give me.

F. WHAT AM I GOING TO GIVE YOU.

P. Yes; what are you going to give me.

F. I know what I'd like to give you; but—

P. Yes,

F. But I'm not big enough.

P. That is enough of that. What are you going to do when the summer months arrive?

F. A bit optimistic, aren't you.

P. I asked you a question. What are you going to do?

F. I shall study engineering.

P. Good. Machinery is wonderful now-a-days. Machinery will do anything.

F. Oh no it won't. They have never yet got a machine to make a pair of hand sewn boots.

P. Please stop it.

F. Shall I change the act and make a noise like a rainbow,

P. What awful nonsense. A noise like a rainbow !

F. Yes; a chum of mine from the States said:-
"Can you hear the rain, Bo ? "

P. Will you stop it. I cannot stand those wretched
puns any longer.

F. May I refer to shirts ?

P. Of course you can.

F. It will not be considered broad humour.

P. Not unless your tale is too wide, I mean, long.

F. My tale, or the shirts.

P. You wanted to talk about shirts. Now cut it
short.

F. Be cold in the winter if I did. I bought a "Ubic"
shirt last week.

P. Oh, yes. Very good shirts. "Ubic" is, I believe
an abbreviation for "ubiquitous" —evident-
ally.

F. Um ?

P. Ubiquitous—here, there,—everywhere.

F. Indoors,—outdoors, at home and abroad.

P. Exactly.

F. Yes. I guess you are right. You ARE right.
(*Pause*) I'm wearing mine inside-out now.

P. I notice that you have not been looking quite
up to the mark lately. Anything wrong.

F. Anything wrong? I should say so.

P. What is it? You can confide in me.

F. It's my girl. You just hark.

I'm in a whirl; I've got a girl;
And she'll drive me insane.

To cut it short, she has one thought,
It's "Chocolates" on the brain.

Her face is easy, a style quite breezy,
And her I try to please.
Yet she won't talk, when out we walk.
She always looks Rowntrees.

- P. I wonder if you will ever improve.
F. She's got Cocoa on her boko—
P. I say, old fellow; you are getting impossible.
F. It is all right. Someone laughed.
P. Oh, very well then. Go on.
F. She's got Cocoa on her boko;
I feel I'd like to die.
It would be bliss if we could kiss;
She murmurs "Let us Fry."
Peters Nut Milk, smooth as silk;
With all the makes she wrestles.
Dear little bird, only say the word,
While your head on my chest Nestles.
An angel fair, with golden hair,
A voice from 'up aloft.'
Do not tarry me. Darling, marry me.
(*Figure sobs.*)
P. And what did she say?
F. "Was yours a hard or soft."
But ne'er a smile to make worth while;
I cannot bear the strain.
She will defy, and so I cry,
She's got Chocolates on the Brain.
(Whilst on the last line, Performer quickly pushes
up the spring box representing a box of Chocolates,
and so a startling climax is obtained.)

A VENTRILOQUIAL SUGGESTION.

Ventriloquial acts offer great scope for novel effects, yet quite a number drag out their existence in the old sweet way. I have an idea that I would like to see put into practise, and it is the reversal of the positions of the performer and figure. At present the performer is mostly the gentleman, and the figure the broad humour merchant. Change over, and you will see the great scope the idea opens out.

Imagine a darkened stage, with a well dressed figure of a boy at a table, (apparently having gone to sleep whilst reading a book) and then a burglar breaking in through a window or door, or coming into view from behind a screen. Switching on the light, he notices the boy. Quickly clutching him, he threatens him if he utters a word. Then the performer's skill would get the chance of a life-time. He would talk husky and illiterate, and the figure would be faultless.

Many ways are now open for the carry on. The boy could mistake him for a friend having returned from a Fancy Dress Ball; or they could indulge in cross-talk, and lead each other 'up the garden' in quite a novel manner before divulging the where-

abouts of the keys of the safe, or confiding that the jewels are paste.

By this method, the performer would get greater scope for personal movement, and would be able to present an act a trifle different from the ones we are accustomed to. Most of our greatest ventriloquists are positively glued to the figure throughout their performance. One or two have arranged otherwise, and to them all credit is due.



DANCING.

When I hear people talk of the Blues, Camel Walk, Bunny Hug, Twinkle, Fox Trot, and other dances, my mind goes back to the Can-Can and *THE MUSCLE DANCE*. Why? Because Chung Ling Soo (Robinson) once told me how he ran a side-show at Coney Island founded on the latter dance.

It all happened before he joined a magic show, and he was hard pressed when the brain wave came rolling along his mental beach.

All he had outside his small tent was one bill showing a female performing the Muscle Dance, and a notice "FOR GENTLEMEN ONLY." His patter, if not edifying, was to the point; and, after hunching the small boys away, he would explain that his performers would go through their dance without a stitch on. He had much more to say about the performers being *In puris naturalibus*, but I have no wish to bring the blush of shame to the cheeks of any hardened conjurer, so shall not repeat it. Anyhow, it all sounded well worth a dime, and in they trooped.

Then, acting on the *SAFETY FIRST* principle, he explained that the show was arranged simply for the amusement of his audience; and if any of them

thought it was not worth the money charged, he would immediately refund the price of admission.

That got everyone in good humour, and a small curtain was drawn aside. What the audience saw were three mussels without their shells, threaded on a cotton crossing a small stage. An unseen hand actuated the cotton, and so the mussels danced.

Voilà tout.



A MAGICAL SKETCH

Entitled

"THE MISER" or "THE MORE YOU HAVE—"

Not so long ago *Propounded Problems* used to irritate me. I had to read them as it was part of the business; but when smug conjurers used to write such idiotic piffle as:- "Get an empty Cigar Box, a shilling pipe, and then consider the possibilities," I could only think of the uselessness of it all.

Later, I got into communication with a propounder of problems, but of an entirely different type. The one or two problems that got to me direct compelled thought, and were delightfully ingenious in their construction. The propounder of these problems was Mr. Arthur Ainslie. What led up to the suggestion need not be gone into here, but I am indebted to him for the plot. The method of working he left entirely to myself to design. I consider this sketch so genuine and so possible under normal conditions, that I have no hesitation in giving all the working details.

EFFECT. Performer commences the sketch by telling a story about a man who started to save money. This man had a small purse, and he thought

that if he could fill it he would be quite satisfied. Performer proceeds to illustrate the story by showing a small empty purse, and then magically fills it. To prove that the contents is genuine the money is poured out on to a tray. As it is being poured back, the saving problem is encountered. The purse has increased in size, the money does not fill it, and the saving effort has to be continued. Again the purse is magically filled, and when poured out on to the tray makes a splendid show. When the coins are again returned to the purse, it is noticed that the purse has increased in size a second time, and the half full purse is very disappointing. Performer now lays the purse on a plain wooden table, and proceeds to catch coins in a hat or basin. (This portion of the sketch is entirely at the discretion of the performer, and is only introduced to divert attention from one special move. Performer can go right through with the Miser's Dream with all its digital dexterity; or he can confine it to one single shower of coins.) Once again the purse is picked up, and the coins from the hat are poured in, which fills the purse to the brim. The purse is now a lumpy affair, and when again emptied on to a larger tray, proves that the materialization of coins has been genuine — so much so that performer has to get an assistant to hold the tray preparatory to pouring the coins back into the purse; but directly the assistant is about to return the coins to the purse it changes in performers hands to a sack.

All the produced coins are now poured into the sack, but they make a poor show at the bottom.

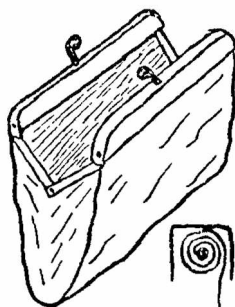
The mouth of the sack is closed, and rolled round in imitation of a postman's sack, to prove that only the bottom is full. It is allowed to unwind, and when the mouth of the sack is opened, it suddenly and mysteriously fills itself. (Read on, and have no fear that you will bump into a catch, or learn that stage traps will be required, or that you will have to wear special cloaks. You will soon find out that it is all in the sack.)

Performer now gets the assistant to help him lift the sack on to the table, for it is unmistakably heavy, and then the contents are turned out of the sack. It is indeed a Dream of Wealth, for besides loose money galore, there are bags of coppers, silver and gold, and many notes.

Performer and assistant stand at either end of the table, and each pulls out a drawer. They quickly proceed to put the bags of money and notes into the drawers, and are scraping in the coins when a million pound note is discovered. This note is an enlarged version made of rag, and measures about five feet long by about three feet wide. Two canes are fixed in the front corners of the table, and the note displayed. Immediately there is a jingle of money, and the note falls to the floor, disclosing the crouching figure of a Miser on the table. He looks dazed, and rises slowly. Then, seeming to awake, he looks about him; and on seeing some money on the table he drops and clutches it. In so doing, he rolls on his back and with his head hanging down in front of the table, dies the usual tragic death.

Apart from the scope the sketch gives for manipulations, it contains surprises, and terminates with an unexpected illusion — all of which can be varied to suit the style of the performer.

WORKING. None of the apparatus is on the costly side, and the real working consists chiefly of dexterity. To commence, performer has an old fashioned purse which has been faked so that some

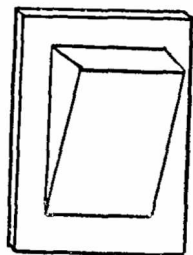


of the cloth sides can be wound up round two pieces of wire which are concealed in the metal frame mouth, which is of the channel variety. The purse is shown, and turned inside out to prove that it is empty. When turning back, palm in a tied roll of coins. Presently release, and shake up to prove that they have suddenly materialized in the purse. By secretly pressing up the bottom of the cloth of the purse, the purse appears to be quite full.

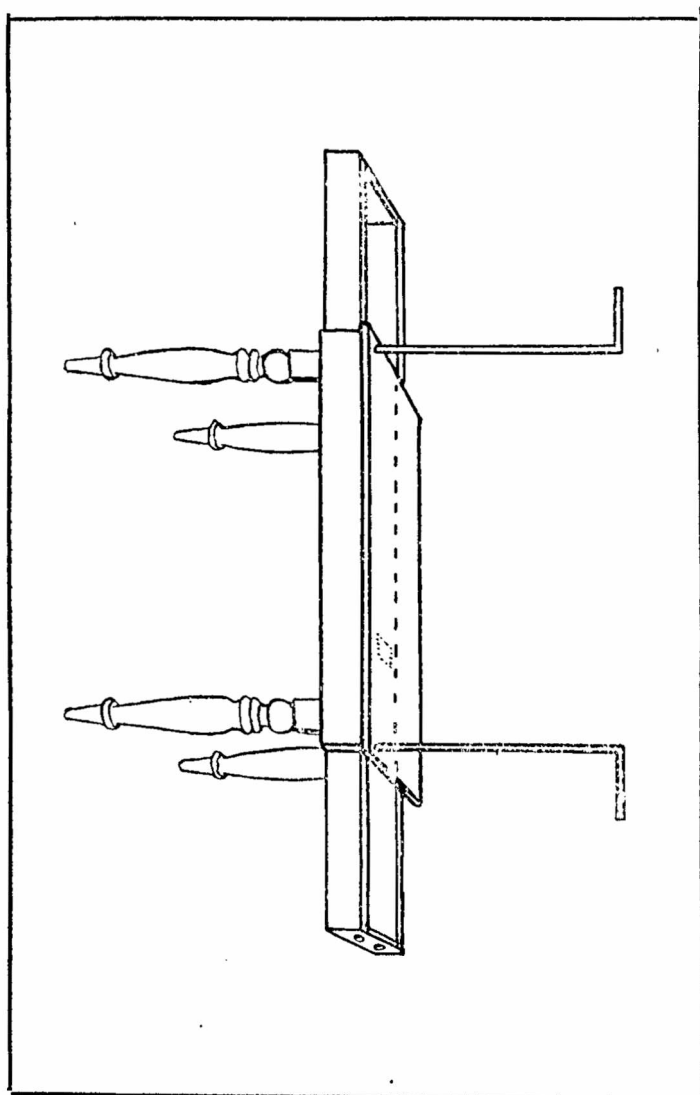
Performer is aiming continually at contrary effects, for at first he wishes to convince that the purse is full; then, later, almost empty. To describe every move in detail is unnecessary, for a performer with a knowledge of the Miser's Dream will grasp the

ideas without, and it is obvious that this sketch is not intended for a beginner.

These coins are then poured out of the purse on to a small tray to prove that they are genuine. This gives the performer an opportunity to secretly pull the purse longer. When this is done, the cloth at the ends of the purse will gape open, but this can be hidden by careful holding. The coins are poured back, and then the increased length of purse is noticed. A second load has now got to be palmed into the purse, and this is easily accomplished by having a big load hanging from a nine or ten inch piece of thread, which is safety pinned to the arm hole of the waistcoat. This load will hang in safety down performer's side, being hidden under his coat; but if he holds his arm in the correct position, and leans to one side, the load will work like a pendulum, and swing secretly to performer's hand. It is then



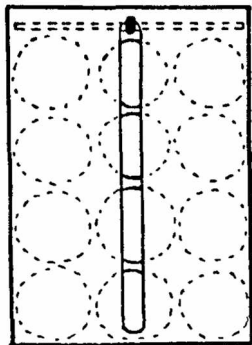
an easy matter to get it into the purse, and release. The purse can be again made to look full to overflowing, and the contents poured on to a tray. This tray is faked, and has a calendar pocket at the back. It is quite an easy matter to drop the small faked



purse into this pocket, and take out a much larger one which is not faked in any way. As the purses have been screwed up, or crunched up in a casual manner to prove that they are empty, the swop will not be noticed until the coins are poured back, and the purse found to be larger, and only bottom full.

On the stage you have a table, the finish of which can be determined by the user; but the style must be of the large drawer at either end, and these work on the drawer box principle. A girl or boy is dressed up as a Miser, and is concealed in the table top. Disguising the thickness is too well-known for me to detail. The drawers pull out easy enough from under the assistant, for they have no back sections. This leaves him resting on the false bottom of the table. The drawers cannot be closed until assistant is out and on top of table. At the back of the table is a shelf servante containing a few extra bags of coins, and in the table top is a small flap trap, containing a load of coins large enough to fill the purse got from the back of the tray. In front of this trap performer lays the bottom full purse, and in such a position that when he picks it up he will secretly pull the load of coins, by means of a wire loop, into it; but before doing that he performs any kind of money catching act he likes. After catching the coins in any receptacle suitable for the setting, performer picks up the purse and load, and pours the caught coins on top of the load — so filling the purse. Performer has now a purse so full that it takes two hands to hold, and going towards a large tray, he calls assistant to help him. This large tray

is faked, for it has a false bottom filled with spring bags, which — when released — will represent bags of money. One end of the tray is open, and assistant takes care that he does not expose the opening.



Again, he must come on to the stage carefully, for on his back is a faked purse held in a clip. Now the large load is poured out on to the faked tray, and whilst performer stands sideways letting hands full of coins shower on to the tray, he exchanges the purse behind assistant's back. This is a proved deceptive move. Both purses are alike outwardly, but the second one is loaded with a sack. Part of the sack is stitched to the inside of the purse, and with a swinging move the purse is turned upside down. This has the effect of emptying out the sack, and at the same time allowing the purse to hang down inside the mouth of the sack. It is a simple stunt to work, but a difficult one to describe, and an impossible one to illustrate. The size of purses is best left to the judgment of the performer, but

the last purse (from the assistant's back) should have a mouth at least 10 inches across.

The open end of the tray held by the assistant is now put into the sack, and the coins scraped down into the sack by the performer. At the same time the assistant works the sliding rod at the bottom of the tray, and pushes out the closed spring bags. Then he carefully goes off the stage with the faked tray, and the unwanted purse on his back.

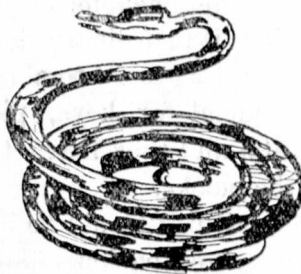
Performer now winds the sack round, to prove that bag is only bottom full, and in doing so he must manipulate the metal mouth of the purse hanging inside into an upright position. He then unwinds, and stirs the contents up. What he really does is to release the bundles of spring money bags. Then he calls the assistant on again, and both hold the open sack by the mouth, and lift it on to the table. The coins at the bottom will make it bump solid enough. The contents of the sack is then turned out on to the table, and servante loads are secretly lifted up and added to it. These added bags are the ones that will be cut open, and the contents showered down to prove that bags are full of genuine money. The spring bags are left alone.

Performer and assistant now pull the drawers out at either end of the table, and proceed to fill them from the accumulated wealth on the table. This move proves to the uninitiated that the table is a genuine one.

Then the million pound note is discovered. It is displayed by means of the two canes erected at the front corners of the table; and immediately this

cover is up, the Miser lifts the back portion of the table top up, gets up, and by standing on the wooden servante lets the top portion of the table down again, and crawls quickly into position. Meanwhile performer and assistant are pushing the full drawers back — a rather deceptive move. Then the note is snatched away, and the Miser disclosed. He appears dazed, and rises slowly, but never stands erect. Then he seems to remember, and dropping, clutches at the loose money remaining on the table top. He then laughs in an hysterical manner, and dies *a la* Svengali.

When the note is pulled down, the stage assistant immediately retires with it; and performer retires later, so that by the time the Miser collapses the stage is unoccupied. This would prove a more artistic finish than if performer bowed off in the usual manner.



L I G H T .

Whenever I read about Spiritualism, listen to discussions, or watch seances, I always think of the old hymn I was taught as a child :- "*We are but little children meek.*"

What interests me most about Spiritualism is this:- We find learned men of undisputed intelligence, who have read all there is to read about spiritualism, and who have names and dates at their finger tips, men who have witnessed most of the exhibitions of *mediums*, and who are well versed in magic, go into hysterics about a musical box which starts and stops itself by invisible forces, and which winds itself up by unseen hands. Of course, if this is really due to psychic phenomena, how delightful it would be to adopt it to ordinary clocks, etc. How entertaining it would be to go to a railway station — search every official for keys, pieces of wire, windlasses, etc, etc; and then listen to the psychic forces winding the clocks.

How truly wonderful it would be if — after examining our host's cook, parlour-maid, and guests; and pulling his wireless to pieces, — we found that a dropped handkerchief rose and floated round the

room, which was filled with good red light. Would the same forces (of course under test conditions) put a lady's hat on straight? If so, spiritual force has the looking-glass industry at its mercy.

Imagine getting the spirits to *raise the wind* on a warm June night. Assuming that all the fraudulent mediums, who control frost-bitten spirits, were at home or in prison, how lovely it would be if the genuine ones exerted themselves, and produced blocks of ice for commercial use.

All spirit phenomena seems so useful — so beneficial to mankind. What could be more servicable than a bell floating round a room of its own accord, or — I should say — supported only by psychic forces. What could be more entertaining *and useful* than to watch diminutive black "paws" or pseudopods crawling over a luminous slate.

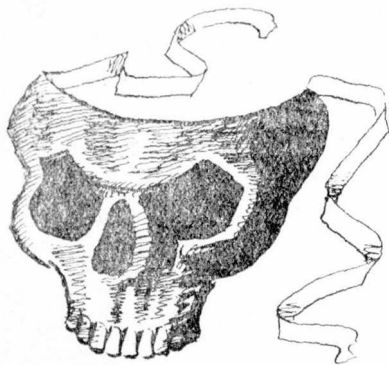
It would surely help to uplift mankind to watch a table float round the room without the aid of strings, wires, pieces of black thread, or any mechanical contrivances. It is a great recompence to the seeker after the unknown, (and after paying the fee, wasting his time in waiting, and gurgling forth hymns written by mere humans who wanted the money) to watch the gyrations and evolutions of a luminous bracelet. Of course one can see other phenomena equally wonderful. Quite. Sometimes more so.

I know you are laughing at me, but please cast out that little devil "*Doubt*." Spiritualism is all so helpful; so wonderful; so true. Would not you, dear reader, sit in a disused cellar, and wait for

hours, seeing nothing and hearing no sound but the voices of those who said they could. "*Not Pygmalion likely.*" Oh; very well then; you know best. But wouldn't you really like to get a message from some dead relation, and then write books about it, which would sell like hot-cakes. Wouldn't you like to tour the world, and lecture about it for ever so many thousands of jimmy-o-goblins. No? Oh; you are dense. You need the *LIGHT* — badly.

Now go to sleep, children; but always remember there is *one* born every minute, and you will meet many as you journey through life. You will always recognise them. They have no brain of their own, but an open mind all the time.

(If anyone says:- "What Price Harry?"
they will be severely censured.)





Up, cowards, and at 'em.

THE VANISHING PAIL OF WATER.

Here is a trick that would suit a man with equal nerve to Van Hoven.

The stage is set for whatever performance is to be given, and when the conjurer walks on he has to go round a pail of water which has been left near the footlights, and directly in his path. The pail is full to the brim.

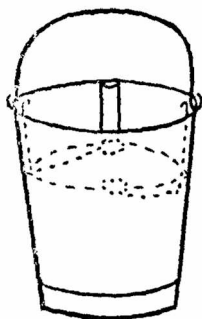
The performer commences a trick, and without showing any annoyance stops it to carefully lift the pail, and put it a trifle more up stage. He then proceeds with the trick, only to stop it again to lift the pail of water on to a chair. The first trick is then finished, and the second one commenced — only to be interrupted by the performer gingerly lifting the pail from the chair on to the table. He again stops to lift the pail off of the table, and places it on the stage. In fact, that is to be the gag right through the show, and it will be surprising the state of anxiety the audience will get into — either to see you spill some water, or that you should not. Some will laugh, whilst others will hold their breath; for a pail of water is an awkward thing to handle.

Well, to cut it all short, performer gets to his last trick, and bows off without doing anything whatever with the pail of water. Now it is a hundred to one that the audience will not be satisfied, and insist on an encore. Performer obliges almost hurriedly, and does a genuine trick — interrupted again by shifting the pail to different positions. Carefully rubbing the handle of the pail with a silk handkerchief is bound to make the audience most curious; or putting a little wedge under the bottom to ensure it keeping level, will start them guessing all manner of things. These interruptions must be done quickly, and not allowed to spoil the run of the proper tricks more than can be helped. After the encore, performer again bows off. Now it should be a thousand to one on a call. Then it is as well to start an ordinary trick, but stop it quickly, and pick the pail of water up, and pretend to drink from it. This action need not be prolonged. Then suddenly performer pretends to throw the contents over the audience; and that is the climax — for no water leaves the pail. It is shown quite empty.

From start to finish the moving of the pail of water causes hilarity, but — unlike many of these comedy stunts — it terminates in a real effective trick. The water really vanishes, and in a most simple manner. Use a new pail, and get a false bottom fitted about one third from the top. This false bottom is fitted with two spring flaps, which are actuated from both sides of the pail where the handle joins the lugs. On the top of one of these spring flaps is a flattened metal tube running up

the side of the pail — from the false bottom to the brim. This is for the air to leave the bottom chamber when the water in the top part of the pail is allowed to run into it. The sketch shows the position of the releasing rods, and the two spring flaps.

Now it will be seen that although the pail looks full to the brim, and performer apparently strains when he lifts it, it is only about one third the weight it should be. When he picks it up finally, and lifts



it to his mouth, he presses both rods where he is gripping the handle on either side close down to the top of the pail. The water then runs quickly, and silently, into the bottom section. The hole that the water enters is right against the side of the pail, and this obviates any noise. Again, as the water falls the air escapes up the air tube, and there is no bubbling or gurgling. Whilst in the attitude of drinking, performer is really watching the water escape to the bottom chamber; and the tilting of the pail will ensure the last drops going down. When this is accomplished, performer releases the

spring flaps, and both the intake and air escape holes are safely closed. Lowering the pail, the grip is altered to suit a throwing action; and after that the pail is shown empty. If it is kept on the move the false bottom will not give itself away.

The faked pail is not an impossible article to carry to one turn shows. It is capable of no end of fun without encroaching on your patter, for you never want to speak about it. Every action with it causes suspicion or mystery, and curiosity is aroused to the highest pitch.



In olden days they had *taking* ways;
But fashions change with the morrow.
Don't go without for the sake of a shout;
All can be got — if you borrow.

TREASURED TESTIMONIALS.

(Copy Telegram.)

"LEAT, LONDON. COME AT ONCE. CAUGHT IN
MY OWN TRAP. HURTS."

(Copy Postcard.)

"Dear Leat. I know a lot, but you know it all. Yours
sincerely, SEW."

(Copy Telegram.)

"LEAT, LONDON. MONKEY DIED LAST NIGHT.
CAN YOU DEPUTIZE. OWING CLERK."

Express Letter.)

"Dear Leat, Business has been great. Will now have one
of your 3/6 boxes. Issy Will Yams."

(Unstamped Letter.)

"To Harry Leat. Your *Silencers* work. No need to send
another. Jay Ezler."

(Copy Letter.)

"Dear Harry, Since witnessing your dazzling performance,
I have been unable to see any other.
H. R. H. George Five."

(Copy Telegram.)

"LEAT, LONDON. DO MY SHOW TO-NIGHT. HAVE
FALLEN OVER BOTTLE INVISIBLE INK.
De. VANT."

IT IS TRAGIC MAGIC WHEN

you start unmasking dead men.

* * * *

writers suffer from "I" strain.

* * * *

parsons are skitted at St. George's Hall.

* * * *

leading showmen lack manipulative skill.

* * * *

you think conjuring started when you did.

* * * *

Oswald Williams does not reply to Playfair.

* * * *

writers get an attack of Sussex Inn-digestion.

* * * *

you claim that all manufacturing rights can be reserved,

* * * *

you think your knowledge can go beyond your experience.

* * * *

leaders of Magical Societies set the members a bad example.

* * * *

conjurers suffer from "shooting" pains, and take a "shot" at every trick.

* * * *

a performer goes bankrupt; but more so when he makes a practise of it.

THE MAGIC CIRCLE.

If any of my readers are not interested in the ungentlemanly behaviour of the Council of the Magic Circle towards Mr. Wilford Hutchinson, and their interference with my business, they need not read the following.

Very many pages have been purposely added to this book to allow for side-tracking, and nothing has been left out of the book to make room for the following.

I find there are a few conjurers in England, America, and other countries who are quite uninterested in the Magic Circle Society, especially as they failed to prove that they had any right to interfere in the sale of The Sign of the Zodiac design. On the other hand, very many have thoroughly enjoyed the showing up that I have given the Council of the Magic Circle, and tell me that every word printed was thoroughly deserved.

Some little time ago, I received a letter from a member of the Council of the Magic Circle. The writer is a real good fellow, and liked by all who know him. The following is an extract from it:—

"And now, let me ask you as a member of a Society in which there are many good fellows (and one or two unpleasant ones, not to be avoided in *any* gathering,) to be satisfied with the slating you have given us in *THOUGHTFUL MAGIC* and the book under discussion. Were I a dealer and maker and author I should be dashed annoyed at Magical Societies. Many improvements are needed, not only in the M. C., but *in others*; but the difficulty is how are you going to set about it. The little hits, and the big hits, have marked the individual member, and in the majority of cases it is undeserved; not only that, it takes away from your merry little conceits, and gives your otherwise excellent books an unpleasant flavour. Well, you've placed on record your slating of the M.C., and speaking *unofficially*, you've won on points; so why not let it rest. If discussion arises in the future - you can say with Harry Weldon "What did I do to Colin Bell." or rather "What did I do to the Magic Circle? I'll learn 'em."

First of all it will be noticed that the sender of the letter considers I have won. Now it is impossible to *win* an unjust cause. Therefore he is admitting that the Council of the Magic Circle deserved the slating they have received; but why should any of their actions expose them to public corrective criticism?

The writer asks ME how I am going to improve Magical Societies. Well, I should suggest that they first of all ceased to make claims they could not substantiate, or if, by accident, they did make a false claim, they behaved in a gentlemanly manner and admitted their mistake. I should also suggest that they never interfered in another man's business, for as a rule he will not take it lying down.

Needless to say, I have explained to the writer that any unpleasant flavour arises from the people who caused me to write and draw attention to their

rudeness. When men get on the Council of the Magic Circle it does not allow them to say they possess something they do not, and (on the bluff) try and injure others.

With reference to the "unpleasant members." I have been informed by other members of the Magic Circle, that not only did they exist, but that some of their conversation would be a disgrace to the tap room of a back street beer house. If this is so, it seems strange that the moving spirits of the Magic Circle, who set out to elevate the "Art of Magic," seem to fail to control this section, but yet have time to butt in and interfere with the legitimate business of other people, which does not concern them in the least.

The Council of the Magic Circle have a lot to say that the letter they sent to Mr. Wilford Hutchinson was written in good faith, but I am telling them point blank that they are talking nonsense. I printed The Sign of the Zodiac on silk, and that was all that Mr. Hutchinson offered for sale. The Magic Circle Society never have held, and never will hold any right over that.

* * * * *

Have you ever watched how the employees of a firm behave. By doing so you can generally tell whether the heads of the firm are gentlemen or ill-mannered upstarts. The lower rung is mostly guided by its leaders, and any man who attempts to lead should understand his responsibility.

* * * * *

There has been a little incident in connection

with this Magic Circle controversy that may interest my readers. To me it has been one of the most tragic happenings I have encountered in Magic. I think it is common knowledge that Percy Naldrett works for a printer, and that he prints the *Conjurers Chronicle*. Incidentally I may mention that I got him this work, and many other jobs; and why I do so is to prove that my friendship for him was just a little stronger than mere talk. Of course no-one likes it made public that they are indebted to anyone, but we will not worry over that now.

Well, Naldrett had great objections to printing a certain article that was sent to him by Mr. Hutchinson. He seemed to be under the impression that I was responsible for the article, and he wrote me a most insulting letter. Well, I am a man of the

world, and I make allowance for where a man lives, or the people he may have to listen to, or associate with. During a mental storm we are apt to act in a regrettable manner.

There were many things I could have done, but I was content to wait for a while. I did not have to wait long. In a few days another letter came from Naldrett, and it was a most abject apology. He had found out his mistake, recalled all he had written, and sincerely trusted his unkind remarks had not hurt me as he thought they must have done.

That should, and would have ended the matter, but three words he had written on the top of the letter fascinated me, and made me think. They were:— "PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL." The insulting letter bore no stipulation. The apology did.

So I reached for my address book, and opened it at "N", and put a thick ink line through his name and address. I knew I should never want them again.

(In my next book I am dealing with the fraud and deceit associated with Magical degrees.)



A magical book on a bookstall is like a magdalen re-visiting Piccadilly.

COUNCIL OF THE MAGIC CIRCLE.

Since my various books have been published, I have received many letters asking who formed the Council of the Magic Circle before and after the 3rd. March 1922. In response, I now give the following extracts from *The Magic Circular*, Vol: XVI.

The Council met at Headquarters on February 28th. 1922. Present:-Mr. Sydney W. Clarke(in the Chair) Messrs. Alexander, Blyth, Denham, Donn, Frueth, Hocking, Hurling, Johnson, Marr, Minns, Oldridge, and Seymour. Messrs. Dexter, Ivey, Sayer, and Staff sent apologies for absence.

The Council met at Headquarters on 4th. April, 1922. Present:- Messrs. Nevil Maskelyne (President), Alexander, Blyth, Clarke, Culpitt, Dexter, Donn, Frueth, Hocking, Hurling, Ivey, Johnson, Marr, Minns, Oldridge, Seymour, and Staff. Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. Devant, Denham and Sayer.



IMPRESSIVE.

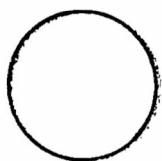
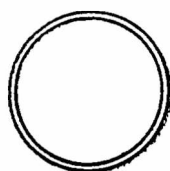
In a certain suburban Magical Depot (defunct) they set out to impress. In the parlour of the house a few magical items were displayed, but the great asset was the telephone; and this was used on any and every occasion.

The proprietor of the Depot worked at an ordinary business some little distance away, so it was the assistant in charge who worked the stunt.

After stating your business, the assistant would immediately ring up the proprietor. The line would be engaged, but you quickly gathered from the conversation that the Exchange operator would ring up when all was clear. The assistant would return and converse, but presently the Phone bell would ring, and he would then get through to the proprietor. He would tell him all the particulars, or whatever the business was, and apparently receive instructions. Yet the moment you wished to talk direct, the line would be cut, and the Exchange operator would not take a scrap of notice.

The reason for this was that the Phone was just a dummy, fitted with an electric bell which was operated from five or six different secret places scattered over the room.

It eventually became a huge joke in the magical world at that time, for the assistant kept on working the stunt to impress, and was the last to know that the secret had leaked out.

*A circle**More
circles**Sign of the
Zodiac**The magic circle.*



*Ladies Night in the
"Sign of the Zodiac" Society.*



Pa's night (Part I.) Pa's night (Part II.)



THE *World Wide Circle.*

Are you a member?

FORTY YEARS IN & AROUND MAGIC.

BY
HARRY LEAT.

THE SPHINX.—Harry Leat's latest work is a book you will enjoy reading. I'll bet a farthing, yes several of them, that if you start reading this book you will not lay it down until you have finished it from cover to cover.

CONJURERS' CHRONICLE.—We strongly advise you to get a copy of this book to read, to laugh, also to learn something of Magical History.

THE MAGIC WAND.—First, and perhaps best, it is impossible for the average reader to peruse it without laughing. There are stories that some of us may deplore.

THE MAGICAL OBSERVER.—Then we go on ; smiling here catching our breath there. The various stories are told regardless of the offence some of them will cause in certain quarters.

THE LINKING RING.—"Forty years In and Around Magic" by Harry Leat will make you smile, and open your eyes. He is the most outspoken magical writer of to-day and he keeps you entertained from beginning to end.

THE MAGICIAN.—We congratulate Mr. Harry Leat on having got there ; his book is certainly both interesting and amusing ; the greater your interest in magic and magicians the more you will like this book. One paragraph lures you on to the next, and so you go merrily reading on, until you look up and find you've finished the book, and had a very jolly evening. Mr. Leat knows how to tell a good story ; he writes in a nice, breezy, chatty way, and gives one the impression that he could have said a lot more if he liked.

PRICE 2/6.

POST FREE 2/9.

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK.

It seems incredible that there can be any controversy about the existence or performance of this trick. The trouble seems to be that investigations are not made correctly, or in the right quarters.

Although I have been unable to travel in India, I have done the next best thing, and carried out careful investigations here. These investigations have not been easy, and many times positively dangerous,

An exceedingly well-informed friend of mine has a lodger, whose married brother knows a female who has a son working in a shipping office. The said son knows a steward whose father knows a man who had been to India, and whilst there he met a man who has seen the Indian Rope Trick. I should have attached very little importance to this discovery, had it not been for the fact that the man assured everyone that he had not seen the trick worked once, but TWICE. Now a man who has seen a thing twice knows what he is talking about; so I eagerly listened to all details.

They were truly wonderful.

Well, the end of the investigations resulted in my friend assuring me (through the letter box) that his informants were NOT sanguinary perverters of the truth, and that the man who saw the trick was NOT suffering from delirium tremens or tie-douloureux.

I had ricked my shoulder, so I kept both bolts shot.

Thoughtful Magic.

BY

HARRY LEAT.



CONJURERS' CHRONICLE.—The book that has caused such a sensation with its originality.

THE MAGICAL OBSERVER.—"Thoughtful Magic" should certainly have a big sale, the pages being full of spicy matter which is more than value for money. The writing is in a breezy fashion. On some pages the author seems in a devil-may-care mood.

THE SPHINX.—"Thoughtful Magic" by Harry Leat. What shall I say in review? It is the most original book of tricks, the most sarcastic comment on the Greats, the most ironical expressions of feeling towards a magical society that has ever appeared in a magic book. The magic is good, real good and deserving of praise, for it is so different from the ordinary run of tricks. I like the easy conversational style and heartily commend it to every lover of magic tricks.

PRICE 4/6.

POST FREE 4/9.

EAST IS EAST.

East is East, and West is West,
And I always think the West the best.
I've been to both, and given shows,
And found the East assails my nose.

At a Mother's Meeting, I'll not forget,
A smell that was not Violet.
No rose leaves pressed, or neatly squashed.
But the nauseous smell of the great unwashed.

It is quite possible to be overcome.
By "Stitched up for the Winter," effluvium.
It recalls the tales of the awful skunk,
Where hunters do an undignified bunk.

You wonder how I've travelled so far,
To write of things so unpopular.
No need with the East to claim a link,
The East End of London supplies the stink.

MAGIC OF THE DEPOTS. - 1924.

THE SPHINX.—Harry Leat has added to his laurels with "Magic of the Depots—1924." Opening with his characteristic plain matter-of-fact speech, void of flourish or self-praise, he gives us selections from the best of ten dealers and manufacturers. The 96 pages of explanations in text and illustration make up a library in itself. I beg to assure my readers the book is not a catalogue or a price list, but a genuine collection of real tricks generously contributed by dealers and manufacturers, each of whom is an active and successful performer. Mr. Leat is to be congratulated on having so many friends who are willing to divulge their secrets for the delectation of the magic world at large.

CONJURERS' CHRONICLE.—We regret space prohibits us from giving details of the contents, but we should like to say that the reader is getting a full hundred per cent. value for his money.

THE MAGICAL OBSERVER.—"Magic of the Depots—1924." We all want a useful book, at all times, and here is one. We are presented with fifty-one secrets at about one penny a time; and it is all good stuff that is given; ingenious secrets and cutely made props., and what is better still, if you like it you can have it by return from the dealer. This is the second venture of Harry Leat's with a Depot book, and we venture to say it will go quicker than the first; because we now know the value of such a publication.

As usual the Introduction carries a special charm of its own, and we have Harry at his best, saying what he thinks and meaning what he says—yes, every word of it.

Ten first-class and well-known dealers give an average of five tricks apiece. One seems to vie with the other as to quality, and this is not to be wondered at. The book is put out for a worthy purpose, and it is therefore up to all concerned to give of their best.

One word more. The production is really splendid, with a cover of helio, grey and gold. The print is clear and clean, and the contents make the "Depot—1924" indispensable to all magicians.

THE MAGICIAN MONTHLY.—When two or three magicians get together and start talking about their favourite subject—magic—someone is sure to ask the question: "What's new?" In this book Mr. Leat answers that question and answers it thoroughly well. He has been to the trouble of going to ten well known magical depots and obtaining from them news of their latest and best tricks. He describes these clearly, tells you exactly what the effect of each trick is and how it is worked, and the magician who can read this book without wanting to perform a good many of the tricks described in it doesn't live.

Mr. Leat has a lively pen, but he curbs his natural desire to chatter all during the book, and even refrains from writing patter when the patter is obviously there—at the back of his head. He made up his mind that the book should be all tricks and it is. But of course there is an Introduction, and here the author lets himself go.

The conjurer who cannot decide from reading Mr. Leat's description of a trick if it is likely to suit him has missed his vocation. It was a happy thought on the part of the author to put all this much-needed information into one book, and we are very grateful to him.

PRICE 4/6.

POST FREE 4/9.

TEMPERAMENT.

We all know the conjurers who spit out their spite on their assistants, who are always complaining to the Managers, and who are thoroughly detested by the stage hands and others not exactly under their employ. Some people say they are Temperamental. Why not speak the truth, and say they are suffering from an attack of bad temper.

Take an instance of a thing that has to be done, The artiste will say:—"I do not feel in the mood at present." The worker will say:—"I do not want to do it.", and the naughty child will say:—"I shan't do it." In each case temper is shown, yet some foolish people are so impressed that they call it genius. They cannot recognise temper in an artiste, and condone it by saying that he is "highly strung."

Ill-temper is generally caused by self-obsession, and there is precious little cleverness in being peevish

A man of moods is a curse not only to himself, but to everyone around him.



FORTHCOMING BOOKS.

This is the sixth book I have written and printed in eighteen months, and the most gratifying part is the fact that four of them have been entirely original. I have others in preparation, but before announcing them, I have the U. S. A. Depot Magic book to publish. This is now in the press, and will be ready in quite a little time. It will be a very valuable and interesting book, and should be prized as a novelty; for I will let you into a secret and tell you that no other American Depot book will be published by me at any future date. For the reason — well, read the book. I am only printing a number I think I can sell quickly, for I do not want to finance the holding of reserve stocks of books other than my own.

I find I have enough copy for a Part 2 of Tragic Magic, but its publication relies on the reception given to this book. I have endeavoured to make magical books entertaining, but a pioneer's work may not always be appreciated. Consequently the style of my future books rests on the success or failure of this one.

BATTERSEA.

A friend of mine has the ambition to be able to say that he had visited every Music Hall and Theatre in and around London; and to that end he suggested I should accompany him to the Battersea Palace of Varieties. Being new ground I agreed.

When we got to Battersea, we strolled into the vestibule, and found the Box Office unattended. The first house was making headway, so we pushed the doors open and saw part of the show. Then we found an attendant, and asked where the booking clerk could be discovered. Someone called out "Carrie," and then a girl (with a face smothered in grins) issued us tickets for the second row of the Stalls, centre seats numbered 18 and 19. We were then free to wander round the neighbourhood, and inhale the odours from the Fried Fish bars, Saveloy and Peas Pudding Emporiums, Stewed Eels and Mashed shops, together with the pungent smell of sausages and onions sold at a minor restaurant. Singly we could have stood it without flinching; but collectively they conquered. We retreated, and sought two old friends — Barclay and Perkins, — and whiled away the time in their company.

We returned to the *Palace* in ample time for the second house, but was surprised to find the Stalls quite empty with the exception of a girl and young man. They were occupying seats numbered 18 and 19 in the second row, and were evidently deadhead friends of the programme seller, who remarked:—"Sit where you like."

We did, and had no occasion to disturb them.

Diversified Magic.

BY

HARRY LEAT.

THE SPHINX.—"Diversified Magic" is Harry Leat's latest contribution to magical lore. Diversified rightly describes the contents of the book. The variety is great, the quality superior, the originality genuine. Of the twenty chapters it is difficult to say which is the most interesting, and of the tricks and other effects, which is the best. The Organ Pipe Pagoda, and the Eclipse Ventriloquial Figure are alone worth more than the price of the book. Mr. Leat's introduction is full of matter for serious thought and consideration. The patter for the tricks, and the dialogue for the vent. figure are lively, and fit the effects just right. Thirty cuts illustrate the various items, making it easy to understand their mechanism. Your money will be well spent in purchasing "Diversified Magic."

CONJURERS' CHRONICLE.—In "Diversified Magic" Harry Leat has again delivered "the goods" and given us what he sold us, that is :-- "Tricks that have not yet been placed on the market or shown in public, yet practical effects." We think quite a number will be shown in public before long by enterprising magicians. We fear that in most books one is apt to skip the "Introduction" or "Foreword," but not so with the introduction to this work, which covers three and a half pages, and we commend every true magician who means to make magic entertaining to read this.

The Organ Pipe Pagoda is a splendid climax, and should give the organ pipes a new lease of life. The "Eclipse" Ventriloquial Figure in our opinion is correctly named as a novelty, and a laughter maker. The effect is surprising, new, and easy to work. The dialogue also contains some good lines; in fact, to a ventriloquist it is worth more than the price of the book. . . .

The book will, in our opinion, give general satisfaction as it contains new practical items, and not "dream" effects. We heartily commend it to our readers.

THE MAGICAL OBSERVER.—"Diversified Magic." This book is out of the common in more ways than one. It offers excellent original magic, and it gives personal opinions of the author that many will read more than once.

"Diversified Magic" is highly entertaining, outspoken, and decidedly clever. . . .

By the way, do not miss reading the introduction. It is rich. In the books of Mr. Harry Leat we find something different from any others, and for this reason we, and many more, wait with just a little impatience for his next work.

THE LINKING RING.—Mr. Harry Leat has given us another book on Magic, this time "Diversified Magic," and real good it is. One of the titbits of the work is a new ventriloquial figure that will cause a bit of a sensation wherever it appears. Here are some of the excellent items within its pages. . . .

In addition, there are the crisp articles which one associates with the name of Harry Leat. There is an Open Letter to a member of the Magic Circle who sneers at literature that is not produced something like "*OUR MAGIC*." Don't miss this book. You will get your money's worth of original stuff. The print and get-up is excellent. . . .

THE MAGICIAN'S MONTHLY.—The other day we read an inspiring article on the advantage of wearing out—instead of rusting out—and we immediately thought of the wonderfully energetic Mr. Harry Leat, who never seems happy unless he is engaged in a spell of hard labour for the benefit of magicians. And the very next day after reading the article a copy of "Diversified Magic," Mr. Harry Leat's new book, reached us from the author. How he contrives to think of all these things, and how he finds time to puts his thoughts on paper we do not know, but—there is the evidence—a nice, neat, well-printed book, with thirty-three illustrations, the author's fourth book in eight months. How does he do it? Is there any other writer on magic who works at this rate? Has Mr. Leat an inexhaustible store of ideas from which. . .

But we must not continue to ask ourselves questions; if we do, the author will be sending us another new book before we can get this notice into print. In all seriousness we greatly admire a man who works; real workers are, unhappily, very rare nowadays.

If you are as wise as you ought to be, you will get this book, and make the contents your own. Mr. Leat writes in a nice easy and cheerful fashion. His novelties are real novelties; his explanations are clear; and he gives you plenty for your money. The price is the book's fault; it is too cheap.

PRICE 4/6.

POST FREE 4/9.



:: THE END ::

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