

# Magical Masterpieces

By

**Louis Nikola**

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## Introduction.

THE original inspiration to this volume was derived from the purchase of a second-hand cocoanut.

The explanation of this astonishing statement is that some years ago a private auction was made among a meeting of magicians of the remnants of the professional equipment of the late Charles Bertram, some few of which came into my possession. Among these was an odd lot—a very odd lot—consisting of two cocoanut shells, one whole and one broken into two portions and tied together with coloured ribbons, and a table knife. It was not an illuminating nor an attractive collection and it hung fire. Hastily conceiving a foggy idea of a possible “Devastated and Restored Cocoanut” I bid a shilling, and the auctioneer joyfully knocked it down to me. At the same function, David Devant secured another quaint lot, consisting of a crudely made tin boat, unpainted, and a thing that looked like a peashooter. Subsequent interchange of inspection of our mutual bargains revealed to Mr. Devant that the “peashooter” was a tubular support to be erected in the centre of the boat, and that my complete cocoanut-shell surmounted it, the whole forming an Indian “Hubble-Bubble,” a curious device producing an apparently endless stream of water from the upper receptacle to the lower. He pointed out to me that as my cocoanut properly belonged to his boat I should hand it over. An idea floated through my mind that as his boat belonged to my cocoanut he should hand over, but with the respect due from a young man to a Master, I gave way. To console me for the loss, Mr. Devant offered to explain the real use of the broken shell and the knife left in my possession. It seems that the course of Bertram’s trick was to borrow a handkerchief, exchange it for a dummy, chemically prepared after the manner of “flash paper,” which disappeared in a flash of flame when touched with the blade of the knife (previously heated). When it came to recalling the subsequent procedure and how finally the restored handkerchief was found within the broken shell, which had all the time been hanging in view of the audience by its network of fastening ribbons, Mr. Devant’s memory failed him and he then remarked that every magician with ideas and methods of his own should leave a record of them. At a later date my wife appropriated the table knife: she said it was a good knife, that we were short of knives and it would save buying half-a-dozen. The age-lorn segments of cocoanut shell and its weary ribbons languished for a year or two and then, tidiness overcame sentiment and I relegated them to the garbage bin.

That left me with the bare ambition of one day writing a book, as the sole return for the investment of my shilling. Those who are good at figures tell me that a shilling invested and left undisturbed for many years accumulates interest to a surprising extent. I hope it will!

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## THE DISAPPEARING CLOAK.

Have you ever seen the Demon King in a Christmas Pantomime walk down the stage centre entry throw off his cloak and smile sardonically as it dissolves into nothing? Almost nothing, that is. Unfortunately the last yard or so of the garment catches the eye as it leaks through a hole in the stage, which rather destroys the effect upon the imagination.

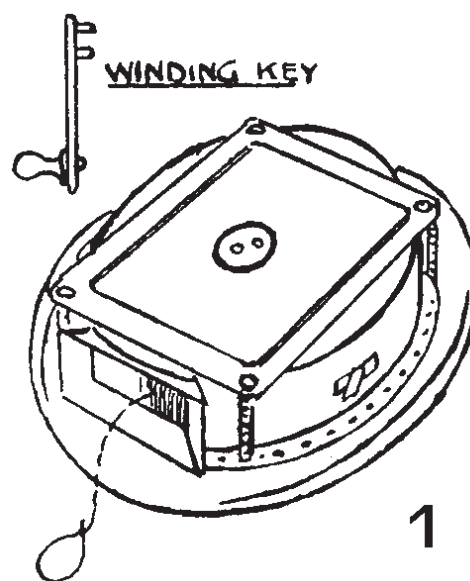
But if, being a magician, you could stride on like that, throw out your arms and your chest and simultaneously your cloak from off your shoulders and it disappeared in a flash, completely and utterly, it would be a magnificent entry, wouldn't it?

This is how to do it.

If you want to ponder on the problem before you read the solution, let me add that there is no stage trap or opening, no trick scenery, no nearby furniture and no assistant. The method is entirely self-contained.

The cloak is made as thin as possible to reduce bulk to a minimum. Nevertheless it is substantial enough to look like a cloak and not like a gossamer veil. It is cut on the pattern of an opera cloak, with a semi-cape, loose armholes and no sleeves. It is made of black silk or a fine black material resembling cloth in appearance and lined with bright coloured silk to fancy for the sake of display. In the centre of the collar band, inside, is sewn a small but strong metal ring. The neck of the cloak is reinforced by strong black tape to bear the strain that will be put upon this point. About a yard of strong black trick-line or dyed whipcord is attached to this, with a knot in the free end. Just before entering, the knotted end of the cord is tied to a loop terminating a similar cord issuing from a spring drum, the construction and concealment of which is dealt with presently. With a little practice a reef-knot can be tied almost as quickly as operating a snap-hook, and there are sound reasons for the preference.

Now as to the spring drum. This is a device that must be substantially made by a first-class mechanic. The external case is of brass, seven-and-three-quarter inches in diameter and two-and-a-half inches deep, with an opening provided with a funnel-shaped mouth in the side. Inside the case and occupying the whole of the interior is a reel with a powerful coiled spring within its centre. A key is inserted in the outside of the case to wind the spring and a ratchet-and-pawl hold it. The pawl is extended in the form of a lever protruding through a slot in the outer case, and when pressure is applied to this the reel is released and under the impulse of the spring revolves rapidly and draws the cloak instantly into the drum.



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But how, the reader will not unnaturally ask, is one to conceal this monstrous piece of machinery. On the authority of Edgar Allan Poe, I will submit that there is no more effective place of concealment than the one which is immediately within view. The performer carries (quite naturally, as he is wearing an opera cloak) a folded opera hat. The spring drum is about the size of the top of an opera hat, to which it is attached. (Fig. 1 ). More exactly, the hat is attached to the drum, the case of the latter being fitted with a suitably shaped overall framework designed to fit within the brim of the folded hat. The frame is perforated for stitching. The whole of the drum case and its external fittings are painted a dead black and the hat is at all times held in such positions as do not present it to direct view. So long as the hat is held flat against the black back-ground afforded by the cloak and subsequently when the arm is lowered, after the disappearance of the cloak, and the hat pressed against the thigh in such a way that the leg masks the depth of the drum, whilst the rim of the hat is still in view, there is small risk of the drum being seen, though the cover is so slight. However, the whole effect is essentially one for quick action and the spectators are given no time for detailed observation or thought. A white lining to the hat will aid in the conspiracy. A bright spot against a dark ground arrests the eye and at the same time tends to obscure the shadow behind. The red or purple lining of the cloak also serves a purpose in arresting the eye.

The whole thing is a quick surprise. The performer walks down stage from the entry, throws the cloak wide open by extending the arms, drops it off his shoulders and simultaneously pulls the trigger, which lies conveniently to the thumb of the hand that holds the hat. The right arm, with hat and drum, drops to the side and what little discernable movement there is in the rapidly disappearing cloak is masked by the body. The hat may be unostentatiously laid aside against the back of a chair or given to an attendant to carry away.

To put a finishing touch, a device may be added to permit of it being laid flat upon a table top or chair seat. This is a circular trap kept flush with the surface by elastic cord springs. It is free of bolts or catches and is entirely selfacting, sinking under the weight of the hat-fake.

## **THE DISAPPEARING WALKING STICK.**

An opening trick that attracts attention by virtue of a quick surprise is invaluable in immediately putting a conjurer on a good footing. Here is another introductory item of a less costly nature to produce.

A polished black walking stick with a plain nickel plated knob and a supply of black glazed surface paper (known in the paper trade as "black flint") are the main requirements.

First using the stick as a former, a sheet of the surfaced paper is rolled diagonally round it and the outer edge pasted down. The ends are trimmed off flush with the stick and a strip of tin-foil is pasted around the larger end, to represent the knob, and so complete a

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shell facsimile of the stick proper. A three-inch length of hard wood dowelling is glued into the ferule end, and the dummy stick can then be convincingly struck on the table top to give a suggestion of solidity. A thin ply-wood top is best for the purpose, and failing this, a tray of the same material, slightly raised from the surface of the table by four small button feet will act as a sounding board. The transforming card table described in a later section is well suited in this connection and was, in fact, used in my own performance.

The performer, after casually knocking the stick upon the table, opens out a sheet of newspaper and wraps the supposed stick within it. He then crumples the paper into a ball, throws it aside and reproduces the stick from his trousers pocket. This is accomplished by having a long tubular pocket sewn into the real pocket and extending down the trousers leg. If the opening to the subsidiary pocket is placed high up in the side of the regular pocket it will in no way interfere with the general utility of the latter.

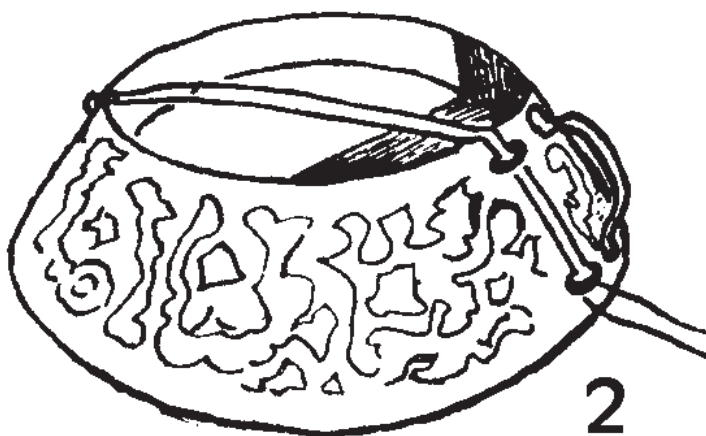
## FIRE AND WATER.

For a season it was considered the proper thing to do, as a matter of course, to open a conjuring performance by producing a blazing bowl of fire from a handkerchief. One magician started it, and where one magician leads, many follow. When the public had seen a dozen or two magicians in succession do it, the novelty wore off and the fire burnt itself out.

The regular fire bowl is a small, saucer-shaped affair, only six inches in diameter and a trifle over one inch deep, and is easily concealed under the arm, inside the coat.

Desiring a more ambitious production, I contrived a much larger bowl-nine inches across and four inches deep-that made its appearance flaming fiercely in accordance with custom, but prepared to yield a still further surprise. A lid was picked up from the table and placed on the mouth of this bowl, as an extinguisher, and when removed, water, with gold-fish swimming in it was poured from it into a glass globe.

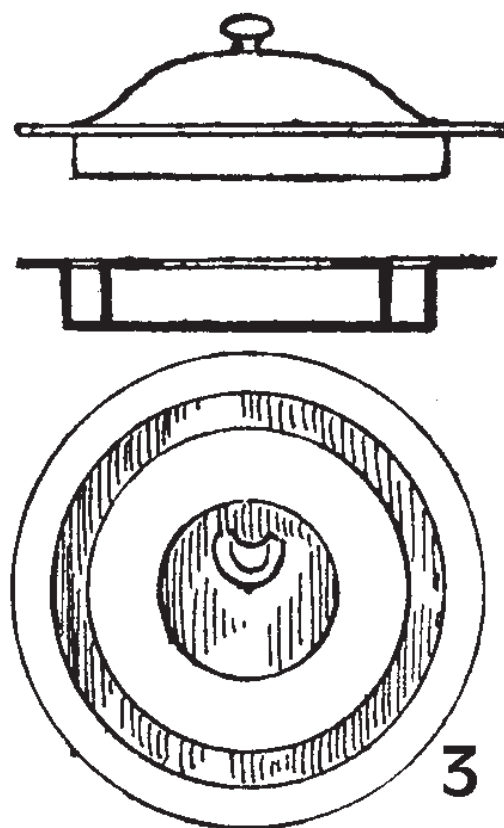
The bowl is of Syrian brass work, adapted. It is of a familiar Oriental design, larger at the bottom and smaller at the top. Across its greater diameter it measures nine inches, and at the mouth it is six inches across. On the outside a handle and two eyelets are fixed, as shewn in Fig. 2, and at a point opposite (barely visible from the view-point of the drawing) another eyelet is fixed, half-an-inch or so below the rim. A shelf extending almost, but not



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entirely across the top of the bowl, is sunk an inch below it, in the form of a shallow receptacle, one inch deep, partly cut away. This addition to the bowl proper must be soldered with water tight joints, and its object is to retain the liquid in the bowl when the latter is suspended sideways from the handle side. In this space the water with the gold-fish is contained.

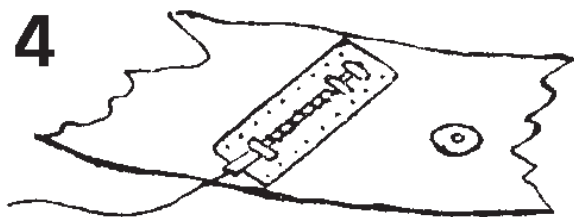
To provide for the fire, an additional receptacle (Fig. 3) fitting loosely within the mouth of the bowl and the fixed addition is provided. This is one inch deep and has peculiarities of its own. Imagine, inverted upon and soldered to the bottom of it, a smaller flat tin, 5-1/4 inches in diameter, with a 2-3/4 inch hole cut in its own bottom, and you have another liquid container that can be erected upon its side. The capacity in this case is quite small, but it is sufficient. A miniature trough, large enough to hold a small pellet is fixed to the bottom of this receptacle, a little above the line of the centre when held in a vertical position. A small piece of metal potassium is put in the trough and a little water and a little petrol in the tin itself. So long as this is kept upright, the liquid is retained harmlessly in the turned-over rim, but directly it is brought to the level, the water fires the potassium and the potassium ignites the petrol, resulting in a blaze.



To set the apparatus, the main bowl and the moveable top are prepared as described and a doubled length of black carpet thread is passed through the eyelet on the side opposite to the handle, tied, and brought back across the top and through the two eyelets beside the handle. The loose ends are tied off into two separate loops.

The load is suspended beneath the coat tails by means of the double thread.(Fig 5). Beneath the waistcoat is worn a belt of wide webbing, fastened at the side and not in the middle, according to custom. Attached to the front of the belt is a small spring bolt (see Fig. 4): to the left of this is a button and to the right, some distance away, a small ring. A thread attached to the free end of the bolt pin is tied to this ring and hangs in a loop between them and just below the vest, so that it is easy of access. One loop from the suspension thread is passed over the business end of the bolt and the other over the button. A fairly large cloth is required as cover. As it is shaken and held in front of the body, the fingers of the right hand come conveniently to the release thread of the bolt and pull upon it. The bowl swings round to the front, but is still supported by the thread attached to the button. Placing one hand beneath the cloth, the performer seizes the bowl by the handle and prepares to sweep the covering cloth aside. The instant the bowl is

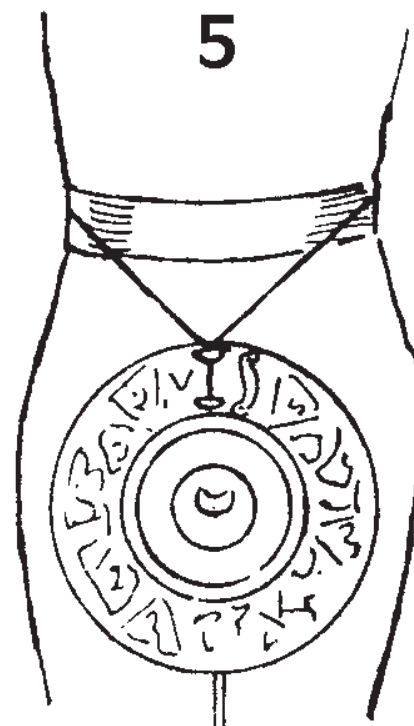
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brought to the level it bursts into flame and the cloth must be removed promptly. The fire burns through the connecting thread and leaves the bowl clear. The lid is picked up from a table and clapped on to extinguish the flames. This lid fits tightly within the fire receptacle and the latter is lifted and carried off within it.

The water and fish can then be tipped out through the opening.

The handle is added for convenience in working and should be kept out of the line of spectators' sight as far as possible. It is foreign to the design of the bowl.



### Catching a Card on a Knife-Point.

A consideration of the development of this trick may be useful, and some of the devices which led up to it may be preferred by some performers.

In the original trick a card chosen by a spectator was replaced in the pack, the pack shuffled and tossed into the air: as the cards scattered and fell, the performer lunged with a sword and apparently picked out from the falling shower the chosen card, which was exhibited impaled upon the sword point.

Apart from the procedure whereby the card appearing at the sword-point corresponds with that chosen by the spectator, the key to the phenomenon lies in the construction of the sword, which was not a genuine article. The blade was hollow and within it was a length of elastic cord. One end of the elastic was fixed to the handle end, the sword tip was detachable and fastened to the free end of the elastic, the tension of which was adjusted so that the sword tip could be pulled down to the handle and on release would be drawn back to its normal position. In the centre of the card to appear a small slit was cut with a pocket knife and the card pressed over the tip, the conical form of which prevented it coming off again except by force. Attached to the handle in such a way as to be masked by the hand holding the sword was a receptacle to hold the card, formed of a flat piece of tin, slightly larger than the card itself, with its longitudinal edges turned over to form grooves, these being sized to allow easy passage to the card in and out. To prepare for action, the elastic was stretched, the card and sword tip drawn down, the card slipped into the card



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holder and held there by pressure of the finger tips of the hand holding the sword. At the moment of striking out with the sword the pressure of the finger tips was relaxed and the card, being released, flew to the end of the sword with lightning-like rapidity.

In my young days I had a great fancy for this trick. I also had a fancy for pretty "props" and it occurred to me that a sword with a triangular tin blade lacked the elegance of a glittering steel dress-sword and my first step was to convert the latter. This was done by drilling a hole as near the extreme tip of the blade as possible and then turning the drilled tip at a right angle to the rest of the blade. (The temper of the steel must first be reduced on the portion to be operated upon, to permit this little job being carried out). A small metal cone was lathe-turned, centre-drilled for the elastic, and nickel-plated, to form a dummy sword-tip. The elastic passed down the side of the blade, on the side which, when the sword was at rest, was kept away from the spectators. The card receptacle (attached to the handle by bolts and nuts) retained its original form, but I bent it to a curve in the direction of its width to an extent that did not impair its efficiency but made it less awkward to hold. To avoid the necessity of retiring to fetch the sword just before use (as contemplated in the earliest form) some means of temporarily holding the card was necessary, and this I met by soldering a short stiff wire projection to the mouth of the scabbard, so that the card was automatically retained while the sword was sheathed.

In his book of card tricks ("Tricks With Cards"), Professor Hoffman described a similar trick in which a walking stick is used instead of a sword and the card caught upon the end of the stick. This is less striking in effect and less convincing, but it furnished the basis of the card and knife trick it is my ultimate object in this chapter to detail. First as to the walking stick idea.

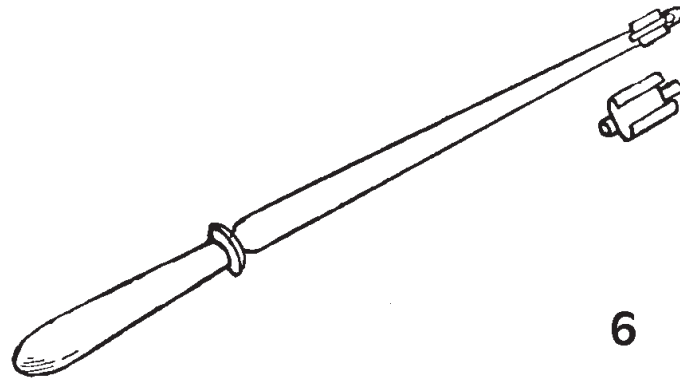
The stick is furnished with a detachable ferrule fitting over the usual fixed ferrule. The extra ferrule is provided with a wire eyelet as a guide for a thread. One end of the thread is attached to the performer's left suspender button and the free end is attached to the card, the ferrule eyelet being threaded on between. The length of the thread is so adjusted that when the stick is raised and thrust out at arm's length, the card is drawn up to contact with the ferrule. Prior to its appearance, the card is hidden beneath the vest and is drawn out in the act of raising the stick to plunge it into the shower of cards. A degree of delicacy in manipulation is necessary to avoid breaking the thread by too vigorous a sweep or, at the other extreme, to avoid by timidity an ignominious dangling of the card short of its destination.

Now for the knife. The advantage of this from the drawing-room performer's point of view is three-fold. First, it is more portable. Secondly, it savours less of preparation. Thirdly, it is more suitable for use in a small space. Flourishing with a sword with spectators close at hand carries some risk of poking somebody in the eye and as no data are yet forthcoming for a Slashed and Restored Eye Trick, the victim might consider it a pointless (or too pointed) joke.

A slender paper knife of the type illustrated is chosen. A minute clip is formed, to slip over the point as shewn in the diagram, Fig 6. On the side of this is soldered a quarter-inch

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length of fine copper or brass tubing, such as is used by model engineers. A thread passes through this in the same manner as with the ferrule eyelet in the walking stick device. It is then passed through a needle hole in the centre of the card to appear and is made secure by forcing the end through a notch cut in the edge of the same card. It is not necessary or



desirable to knot the end of the thread. To the opposite end of the thread is tied a piece of the finest cord elastic (black, of course) obtainable. The length of this elastic should be about six inches, and a loop is made in the unattached end, of convenient size to slip over the performer's suspender button on the right hand side. This elastic addition to the guiding thread obviates difficulties referred to in connection with the walking stick in the control of the thread and enables the card to be drawn to its site without hesitation, provided sufficient card has been given to the preliminary adjustment of the length of the pull. The card should be drawn well up to the knife point when the right hand, holding the knife, is raised to its full extent. At this point there should be a slight tension on the elastic, with a latitude for further stretching of the latter in the event of the performer exceeding his normal reach in the excitement of the moment.

So far we have only considered the bare mechanism of the trick. It remains to dispose of the machinery until it is brought into action.

The pull having been tested and finally adjusted, we had better retrace our steps to the initial preparation. The end of the thread is passed through the guide-tube of the clip and then through the central hole in the card from the back. Passing across the face of the card (if any nervousness arises that the thread will be seen, the risk may be entirely eliminated by using a court card, but an experienced performer will avoid deliberately shewing the thread by keeping the card in motion such time as the threaded face is exposed), it is secured by lodging it in the notch in the edge, as already explained. The clip is now drawn up the thread to the point where it penetrates the card and will then be lying in the centre of the back. To retain it approximately in this position the slack of the thread is wound round the card latitudinally, the whole is inserted into the right vest pocket, the card face outwards and so much of the pull hanging from the pocket as to permit the loop on the elastic to be attached to the trousers suspender button on the extreme right. The knife lays upon the table until required.

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A duplicate of the card is forced and returned to the pack. A very conscientious performer may palm it out: personally I prefer to take the trifling risk and have it shuffled into the pack. The chance of its appearing fully exposed on the floor when the cards are scattered is small and that of its being noticed, even if it does happen to be in view when interest is focussed on the knife, is still less. After shuffling, the performer takes the pack in the left hand, in the normal position, that is face down, and in turning to his table to pick up the knife, brings the left hand up to the right vest pocket and lifts out the duplicate threaded card and squares it up on top of the pack. First steadying the clip with the tip of the thumb holding the pack, with the other hand he slips off the coils of thread and allows the latter to hang down in a loop. When all is clear, he faces the audience, holding the pack in the left hand and the knife in the right. During the course of the ensuing explanatory patter, he casually brings the knife point up to the back of the pack and inserts it into the clip. Having secured this, he separates the hands again, carrying the clip away on the knife-point and allowing the thread to travel through the guide. Due care must be exercised at this point to keep the thread below the waist line so that it does not shew up against the shirt-front or white waistcoat. With an all black suit less caution is needful. If the cards are fanned before being tossed into the air, they will spread as they fall, and as in this case, the card that is "caught" is actually thrown with the others it naturally mingles with and comes from among them. Immediately the performer feels the pull of the card against the point of the knife he should extend his fingers and grip the thread alongside the handle of the knife. First exposing the card for a brief view, he approaches it with the left hand and with that hand performs a triple operation. First he presses the card over the clip and thread-guide and actually on to the knife blade, then, with a movement of a finger, he detaches the end of the thread from the notch in the card, leaving the thread free to be drawn clear away and lastly he removes the clip entirely, or, more correctly, he loosens it but does not immediately carry it away. Gripping it between thumb and fingers, that at the same time still grip the knife point, he holds it thus for a moment, as though to direct attention to the back of the card and the handle of the knife. Then he takes the knife daintily between thumb and finger of the right hand, carrying off the thread-guide with the left, and hands the knife with the card impaled boldly to the person who chose the card or any other interested spectator. The card is truly pierced by the blade and there is not a scrap of evidence to shew how it got there.

### **A Treacle Trick.**

An enterprising young magician once conceived the horrible idea of conjuring with a pot of raspberry jam.

Treacle in trickery can claim priority, but its use was surreptitious rather than flagrant and a cause, not an effect.

One of David Devant's earlier tricks ("Card Cricket") consisted in catching upon a previously examined cricket bat three chosen cards from a pack "bowled" to him. In the original method the bat was of the most primitive kind, being, in fact, nothing more than a piece of half-inch pine cut to shape. The cards were forced, and to get counterparts on to

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the bat, faked duplicates were prepared by backing them with indifferent cards having a sharp drawing pin pushed through the centre and projecting through the back, before the face card and the backing card were glued together. The backs of the prepared cards were further treated by covering them with material matching the table top, and there they lay, face down and pin points up. After shewing the bat it was laid upon the table momentarily, immediately over the row of cards, and by slight pressure upon the pins the cards were attached and subsequently picked up.

Now, even with the sharpest of drawing pins and the best of soft pine, there is always a conscious effort of pressure that the sensitive magician does not feel quite comfortable about. And so our friend of bygone days substituted for the drawing pins a spot of treacle. The fraternity of the day openly derided him. They said treacle was inartistic. He, however, claimed the reverse. He said it was the effect and not the means that mattered, and that by his method the cards were picked up instantly and undetectably, ensuring a flawless magical effect—and I am inclined to agree with him. As to objection on the ground of mess, he said: “a little care, a very little treacle, a wet rag, wipe the bat after use, throw away the cards and throw away the rag and there need be none.” He was a clean and careful performer and his method served him well, but treacle is not for all. I know magicians who have created havoc with a pint of water; what they would do if encouraged in the use of treacle is unthinkable.

### Card Cricket.

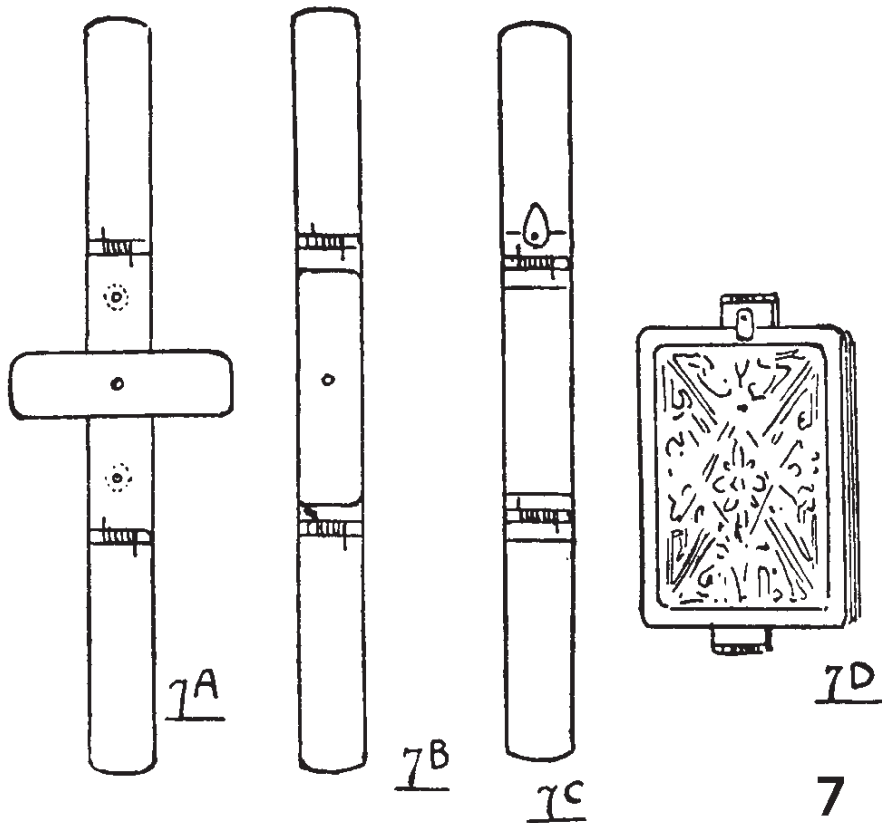
This section must be read in conjunction with the last, to which it is related, except in the matter of treacle; I thought it better to keep the treacle apart.

I devised a method for my own use of performing this trick, with the object of doing away with the necessity for laying the bat upon the table to pick up the cards.

A special fake holds the cards. It takes the form of a strip of brass, eleven inches long and one inch wide, divided into three and rejoined by spring hinges. The division is not exactly equal, the middle portion being four inches long and the end pieces three-and-a-half inches long. Rivetted to the centre of the main portion is another strip of the same width and three inches long. Between the two thicknesses is a washer and the rivet is not hammered up tight: sufficient play is allowed to turn the three-inch piece at right angles to the body of the piece, in which, three-quarters of an inch from both sides of the central rivet, and in line with it is drilled a small hole to permit the free passage of a drawing pin. A pin is put through each hole and the moving strip turned back as a cover. The object of this arrangement is to facilitate renewal of the pins whenever necessary. Fig. 7 illustrates the whole device. A shews it with the cover turned, exposing the pin-holes, the dotted circles indicating the positions of the pin-heads. B shews it with the cover closed, ready to take the cards. C shews the reverse and more particularly a minute turn-button rivetted to the upper arm. The appearing cards are made double, the backing cards being glued to the face cards to the extent of about half-an-inch from the long edges only. They thus take the form of flat tubes that can be slipped over the fake. D shews the

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fake set with cards ready for use, folded and held by the turn-button. The metal work is painted to resemble as nearly as possible the wood of the bat. Actually only the spring hinges are uncovered by the cards.



Corresponding cards are forced and returned to the pack. They are palmed out or left in the pack at the discretion of the performer and the pack shuffled. The fake set of cards is then added to the top of the pack, and as the performer in the course of conversation casually brings the centre of the bat over the pack, he presses the pins into the wood and carries off the fake. Having obtained it, he passes on the pack to a spectator with instructions for bowling. He keeps the side of the bat carrying the card fake away from the audience and takes an opportunity to turn the locking button, when the hinged arms under the impulse of the springs open and bring the three cards into line flat against the back of the bat. Standing ready for play he holds the bat in orthodox fashion and at the moment the pack of cards is thrown he makes the usual batsman's stroke, rapidly turning the bat under cover of the movement, and reveals the cards.

Individual performers may prefer their own methods of getting possession of the card fake and adding it to the pack. Part of my own arrangement is a special holder for suspending it behind the left thigh under cover of the coat tail. So by dropping the hand holding the pack to the side it can be secured in an instant.

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Fig. 8 shews the holder. A base-plate about an inch by half-an-inch carries a pin hook on one side, for attachment to the trousers, and a ticket clip on the reverse to grip the card-fake. It is extended below the clip in the form of a channel, about a quarter-of-an-inch deep and a quarter-of-an-inch wide, as a shield for the drawing pins protruding from the cards.



As a result of unconsidered literary allusions – not to the distribution of technical books to the general public, which are usually read only by those directly interested, but by playful reference by novelists, from Charles Dickens downwards some people have an inkling of the possibility of “forcing” cards. Therefore, with the object of making conditions in which any influence of choice might seem impossible, I devised a special process for use in connection with this trick. To facilitate description, we will distinguish the three feature cards, instead of by their face values, by the numerals, 1, 2, 3. These three cards, 1, 2 and 3 are removed from the pack and, together with two duplicate sets, are arranged in order – 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 1, 3, 1, 2, and the stack secreted in a clip upon the under side of a baize covered board, about 18 in. x 9 in. The pack is handed out for shuffling and when returned, laid upon the board. Meanwhile the stack is secured and palmed in the right hand. A spectator is invited to cut the pack into three heaps and to choose one of them. The indicated heap is pushed towards him with the hand containing the palmed cards and the latter added to the top of the packet. The same or another spectator is requested to deal from this packet three rows of cards upon the board, three cards in each row. Somebody is then asked to choose any row, counting the rows vertically or horizontally at discretion. This seems to give an extended choice: nevertheless, whichever way the rows are taken, any selected row yields a complete set of three cards – only their order varies with the choice. Thus-

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

The discarded rows are gathered up and bridged (bent) before being returned to the top of the pack, so that they can be subsequently palmed off. Three cards are now left upon the board, apparently the remainder from a process of elimination in which the performer has never handled the pack. Two spectators in turn are formally invited to choose each one card and a third is facetiously asked to “choose” the one that is left. These cards may, if desired, be long cards (the bulk of the pack being trimmed one-sixteenth of an inch at one end), so that after shuffling by each spectator in turn as he replaces his own card, the conjurer may, under pretext of a final shuffle, extract them, bring them to the top and palm off; but for reasons explained in a previous section, I think this elaboration is scarcely necessary.

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## Magic Photography.

A piece of photographic printing paper is taken from the manufacturer's packet, marked on the back, fastened into a photographer's printing frame, wrapped in newspaper and given into the custody of a spectator. A lady is now invited to think of a card, to concentrate her mind very intently upon it, and while doing so to gaze into a hand mirror. The performer now turns the mirror in the direction of the covered frame, for the purpose, he says, of reflecting the image of the lady's thought. The wrapping paper is torn from the frame, and there, in truth, is an enlarged image of the card. It is an actual photograph, newly printed, and unfixed, and is proved to be upon the marked paper.

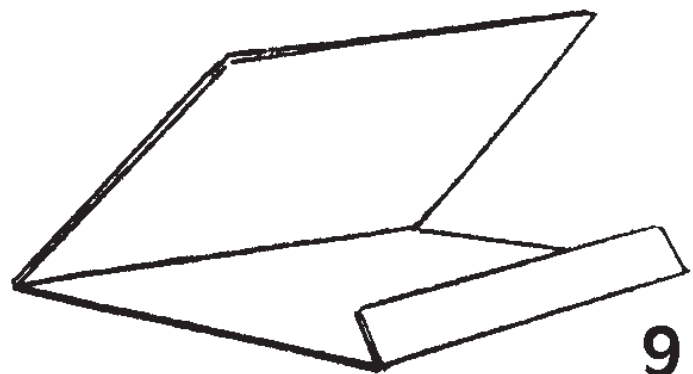
This description, in point of strict accuracy, is slightly misleading on two essential points; but it fairly represents the impression on the mind of the average observer.

The differences between fact and fancy are first, that the printing paper is marked after it is placed in the frame; and, secondly, that the lady looks into a pack to gain her inspiration to the choice of a card – subtle distinctions, the full significance of which is lost to the untrained critic.

I devised three successive methods to meet different conditions.

The first is rather elementary, but is nevertheless effective. It depends entirely upon the introduction into the packet of "P.O.P." of a sheet of fairly stiff white celluloid, polished upon one side and dull on the other, resembling one of the gelatine coated, sensitized sheets. If celluloid to the description cannot readily be obtained, some that is polished on both sides (which is more common) may be rubbed down on one surface with pumice powder. The exact size of the piece is important. The length must be the same as the length of the frame opening: the width should be about a quarter of an inch more than the width of the frame opening. If this celluloid flap be placed on the outside of the glass, between the latter and the frame, it can be adjusted so that it is gripped by the side edges, and masks whatever is behind the glass, while presenting in itself the appearance of glass with white paper behind. The flap can be dislodged from the frame by a push-pull movement—the push releasing one edge and driving the opposite one temporarily further into the rebate, the pull withdrawing it from this its last hold. To ensure freedom of action, the frame itself is trimmed on the usual bevel, with scraper and glasspaper, so that the advancing edge of the flap is unobstructed and guided up the incline. The rest, so far as the appearance of the photograph is concerned, is a matter of disposition and manipulation.

A special wrapping must be made to hold the printing sheets, the print and the flap. (Fig. 9). Cut a piece of cartridge paper a trifle larger than the



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sensitized sheets and another piece to fold over it like a book cover. The lower leaf should be an inch wider than the upper and folded in to form a lap. Under this lap, place first the flap, glossy side up; upon this lay the photographic print, face up, and on this the loose sheet of cartridge paper, the object of which is to conceal the photograph. Then place the stock of printing papers above these, but outside the flap, so that the latter forms a division between the printed sheet and accessories and the unprinted sheets. Shut up the cover and enclose it within the usual light-proof wrappings.

In presenting the experiment, first open the packet and the special wrapping. Lift the unprinted sheets and run through them, shewing that they are all blank. Lay them down again, on top of the others, and take the frame apart—shewing separately the wooden back, the glass and the frame proper. Lay the frame and the back on the table and retain the glass in the right hand. With the left hand pick up the papers, this time adding the three extra pieces previously retained in the flap. Turn the packet over and lay it on the glass in the right hand. With the left, separate the celluloid flap and deliberately shew it on both sides, representing it as one of the sensitized sheets. At the same time separate the photographic print, which is now face down next in order, and move it forward, roughly square with the glass. Under pretext of placing the sheet of paper displayed in the left hand (actually the flap) on the glass, place it beneath. Immediately carry off in the left hand all the surplus papers and drop them on the table, leaving in the right hand the glass, with the print above and the flap below it. Quickly square them up and lay them together in the rebate of the frame; replace and fasten down the back. Advantage is taken of the fact that with the bulk of papers in the hands, it is impossible for the spectators to follow the moves exactly; but they see (apparently) all of the papers blank in the first place, and after the frame is loaded they see a blank surface from the front and from the back, and the illusion is confirmed.

The back of a photographic printing frame is hinged in the middle, so that one half may be opened for the inspection of the print as it proceeds and this facilitates the deception. Opening it accordingly, the performer has the back of the paper marked. Naturally the mark goes on to the back of the prepared print, the existence of which the spectators have no reason to suspect. After completing the fastening of the frame again (each half of the back is provided with a separate spring bar for that purpose) and during the course of his subsequent remarks, the performer loosens the flap in readiness to drop out. The wrapping paper for the frame is on the table underneath the photographic sheets and their coverings, and in turning to get it, he holds the frame face down and drops the flap on top of the pile. It only remains to envelop the frame in the newspaper, with care to avoid a premature exposure of the photograph, and the first part of the trick is accomplished.

For the preparation of the photographic prints, it will be necessary to have a stock (large or small according to individual requirements) of negatives photographed in a camera from playing cards. It will break the photographer's heart, but tell him to make the negatives out of focus. The pictures are supposed to be of occult origin; therefore they must not appear too blatantly material. For the same reason, they should be underprinted, to present a somewhat ghostly appearance. Size is a matter of personal convenience, but I



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do not recommend anything smaller than "half-plate" (6-1/2 in. x 4-3/4 in. or the American equivalent, 7 in. x 5 in.) "Whole-plate" (8-1/2 in. x 6-1/2 in.) is more impressive.

We now have in the frame a photograph of a card ready to be uncovered. The point arises, how is it going to correspond with a card which a stranger has yet to think of? On the face of it the thing is impossible. The nearest that can be attained is to induce an impression that a card is thought of. One might force a card by one of the ordinary schemes, but such a procedure would be flabby, flat and featureless.

For this special purpose I evolved a pack that has since become associated with other tricks. It is so contrived that it can be shuffled and shewn all through as a mixed pack, and yet, wherever it is cut, it will always reveal the predetermined card. Twenty-six cards, all alike, are trimmed at one end, their length being reduced by one thirty-second of an inch. Half-an-inch of the opposite end is gummed or pasted on the back and thereby fastened to the faces of twenty-six cards of different values. A loose indifferent card is placed top and bottom. To shuffle the pack so prepared, pass the top card from the top of the pack into the empty hand, shuffle off at random all but the last card, which place on top. The entire pack may be deliberately riffled and presents the appearance of an ordinary pack, for the reason that the short face cards pass the finger tips without being exposed, while all the long cards are bent back and displayed. It is very necessary to clearly emphasize this preliminary exhibition of the cards. But I earnestly beg that no reader of this book will be so misguided as to say – "Ladies and gentlemen, here is an ordinary pack of cards: you see they are all different." It isn't necessary: it isn't tactful, but I have heard it said. A party of modern nudists let loose in Bond Street would be decent by comparison. If any guidance on my part is necessary, the formula to adequately advertise the inspection and to induce the desired frame of mind is – "To give special interest to this, I am going to try to photograph something that somebody simply thinks about; and, as a simple test, I shall presently ask somebody to think of one of the cards in this pack. I will shuffle the cards, and after shuffling, I would like you to glance through them to see that they are fairly mixed. Perhaps, as you marked the paper, madam, you will also think of a card; but don't think of one yet, because I am running through the whole pack, and, by seeing so many cards, you naturally have a confused impression on your mind. So that you have one clear and distinct impression that I can photograph, I want you to cut the pack, anywhere you like, and secretly look at the one card that you cut. Look at it intently, for a few seconds, to get it well impressed upon your mind."

To shorten the cards for the prepared packs, a paper cutting guillotine is the most satisfactory tool, and a printer or bookbinder will trim a packet in less time than it takes to adjust and cut a single card by hand. Alternatively, a photographic print trimmer is convenient for home use. A simple type intended for small prints will suit the purpose. A flat base is provided, with a pivoted steel blade at one side and a straight edge, as a guide for the paper or card, at right angles. By adding another straight edge to the base, at right angles to the first, and parallel to the blade, carefully adjusted in the first instance to the exact length of the card less the required trimming, any number may be successively cut with ease and certainty.

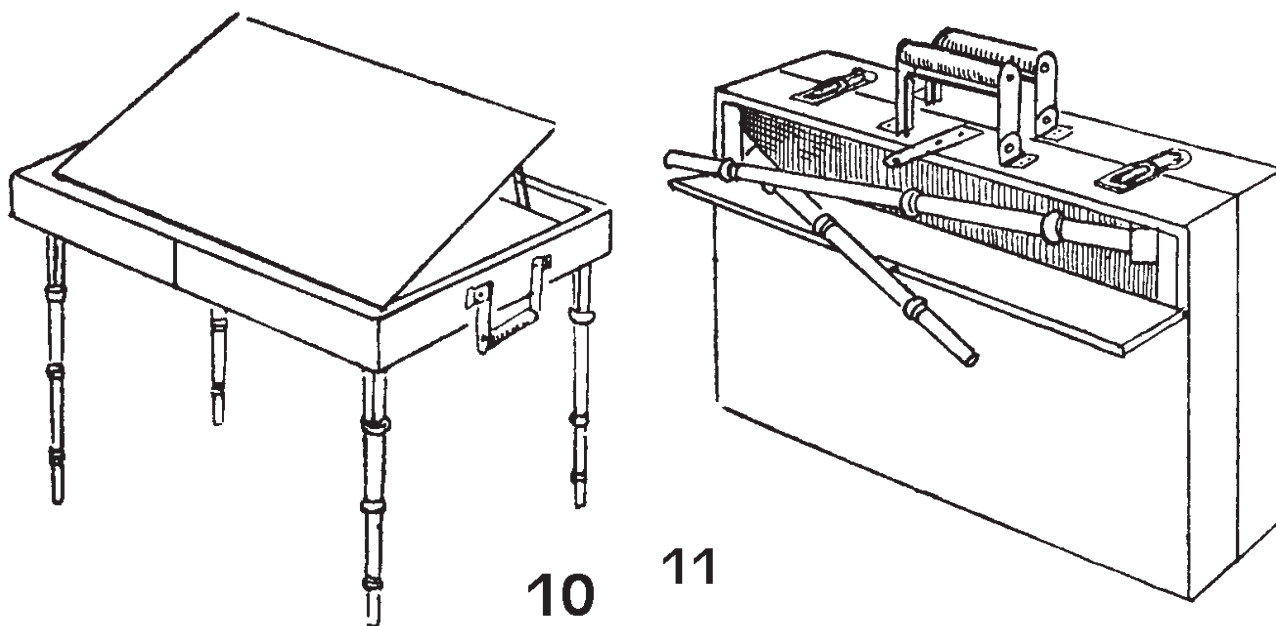
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A regular pack, to match the faked one, should always be kept in readiness for substitution in case of suspicion arising; but though I have performed the trick, off and on, for many years, and always been prepared for the emergency, I have never had the cards challenged. They are thoroughly convincing.

In two later methods of frame construction, one specially designed for stage use, with a large frame taking a print 15 in. x 12 in., it is possible to shew the paper on both sides and lay it quite openly upon the glass in the frame, without any exchange or subterfuge, and the illusion in these is as nearly perfect and smooth working as it is possible for any trick to be, and practically undetectable. These I am reserving for a small book of special revelations that I hope to prepare as a supplement to the present volume.

### A Transforming Card Table.

Tables that turn inside out and shut up into the similitude of a portmanteau have long enjoyed favour with magicians, but most of them have seemed to me rather futile arrangements, without utility, and too often indicating that the exhibitor is hard pressed for excuse to introduce them.

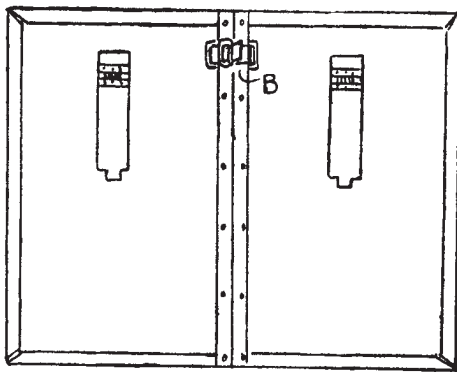


I designed a table of this class, on a different principle to those in common use, and with a specific purpose. It has a desk slope for the purpose of displaying card tricks (Fig. 10), and at the conclusion of the trick, it shuts up with the materials in use inside it. It does not have to be turned inside out or upside down, but is just lifted as it stands, upon the completion of the trick in progress: the top folds inwards along the central line, the underside of the table becomes the outside of the case, into which the legs recede. To a

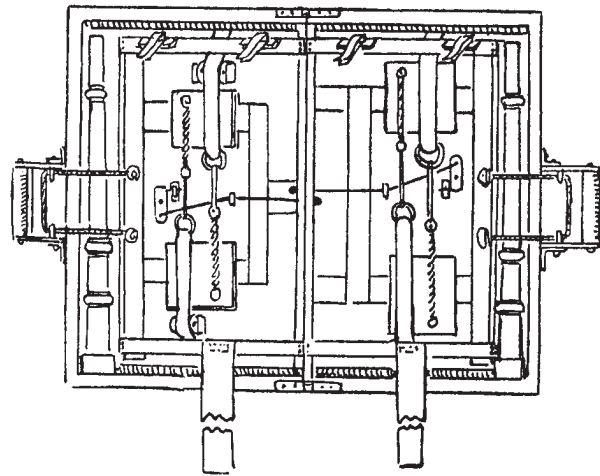
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small trick, lacking in "body," it forms a definite climax. I used it particularly in a trick involving a display of the "Mexican Turnover."

The table itself measures 30 in. x 26-1/2 in. and stands 24 in. high. This height is effectively increased by the rising of the desk-like panel. The main frame folds in the centre and forms a well, two inches deep, within which is a green-baize covered panel, itself folding across the centre, hinged to the front, so that it can be raised, and supported by struts, the length of which can be varied to suit requirements. Two pairs of struts are provided, a short pair for a desk-like slope, spring hinged to the back of the panel, and a longer pair, for an easel-like incline, hinged to the inside of the well. Either pair of struts can be used independently of the others. For inspection of the internal functions, we will



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remove this panel, as in fact it can be removed in the original, for access to the parts, for setting; the panel slides in and out of clips that are part of the hinges. It is in two sections, connected only by the baize covering on the front, but derives support on the lower edge from the hinge clips and on the upper edge by the tension of an elastic strap and buckle B. Fig.12. The two halves of the frame are hinged like a book, and a central bolt locks it in the open position. This bolt is attached to one of the sliding frames that lock and release the legs and is operated by the same control. An additional safety catch to give extra rigidity while in use, is provided on the outside: this is released by a separate projecting lever at the rear. Each half of the framework is closed in with plywood on the under side, forming a bottom to the table well, and the outside wall of the case when folded. Each carries duplicated actions for the folding of the legs within it. Every one of the four legs is fixed to a wooden bar, running along the ends of the inside of the frame. These are pivoted at the ends, and as they turn, they carry the legs with them. A flexible strap is wound round the bar and attached to a strong spiral spring, at tension, with a fixed point at a convenient distance. A sliding bar, with proper guides, impinges at each end against metal face plates fixed upon the leg bars, square with the legs themselves, and keeps the same at right angles to the table top when pushed in towards the centre, and releases them when withdrawn. These sliding bars are attached by cords to the handles hinged to the sides of the table. When the handles are pressed down, the cords are slackened and the bars can be

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pushed in. When the table is lifted by the handles, the weight of the former has the effect of pulling the handles outwards; these in turn pull upon the cords and the leg distending bars are drawn back. Two slots upon the outside of the case, with spring-hinged cover-flaps, permit the passage of the legs as they fly round. The cover-flaps have eyelets that pass through the plywood when they are folded back against the side of the case: these eyelets are fastened from the inside by pins fixed to small levers, that in turn are connected by thin cords to the opposite halves of the case, the effect being that as the table top closes, a strain is put upon them that gives the pull required for the release. Fig. 11 shews the legs receding into their recess and the cover-flap following up, and will give a good general idea of the method of folding. Fig. 12 shews the main features of the internal construction, so far as it can be shewn without a full set of detailed scale drawings. As the exact construction is a matter of more interest to a mechanic than to a performer I have not attempted more than a bare outline.

**Note to Fig. 12.**-The panel struts are shewn temporarily folded back to leave interior exposed. Their normal position is lying in the reverse direction.

## Dyeing Silks.

Thirty-five years ago "The Dyeing Handkerchiefs" was the most popular trick of the day. One worthy (?) magician was reported on one occasion to have shewn it twice in one performance. Towards the end of a rather weary hour, he said, desperately, "Well, I've got another ten minutes to hang out - I'll shew you the dyeing handkerchiefs again."

Its popularity killed it. Well performed it was a pretty trick: badly done it was a horrid bungle. In that happy period of magical boom, all kinds of people, blacksmiths, plumbers, bill-posters, coal hawkers and worse people rushed into the business. Two small urchins, who, both for their present need and their future good, should have been at school, were on the variety stage and had some very bright patter for it; brief, perhaps irrelevant the hypercritical might consider, but undeniably novel and surprising, and novelty and surprise are the spice of magic shows. It was in dialogue form, thus - "Whatcher gonna do now?" "Shove the 'andcherchers through the paper tube." "Wot's that for?" "Dunno, ask a pleecemun." Soon after, the long dying remnants were definitely dead.

In the fulness of time, "variety," too, died. And there are people alive to-day who bemoan its passing. In years to come, some fossilised old fool will be going around croaking that there are no comic songs or love songs like the comic songs and love songs of his day. "Where," he will say, "have they got a song like "Yes, we have no bananas to-day" or "Moonface, I yam moanin' for yew."

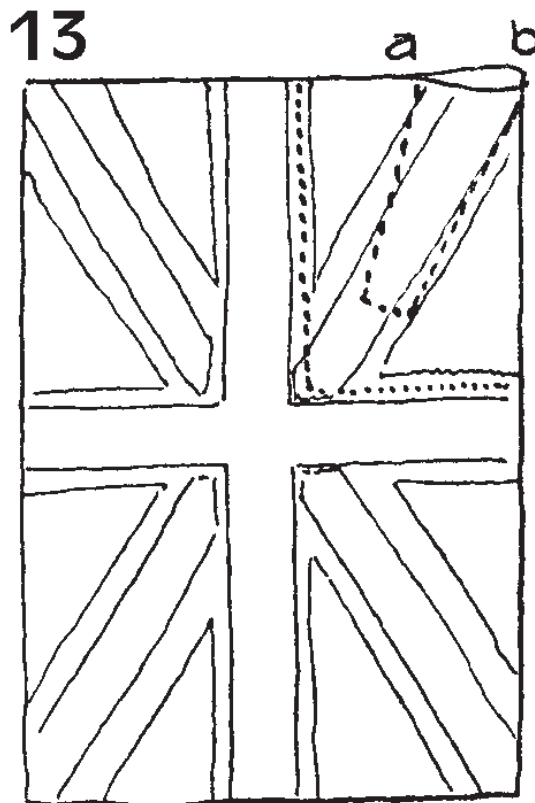
Recently I disinterred my deceased handkerchiefs and restored them to life. Perhaps others may care to do the same.

In my version, the first of the three silk squares is pushed through a rolled-up sheet of paper and comes out unchanged in appearance. The second comes out red and the third

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changes to blue. The three together are then pushed into the tube at one end and come out at the other remodelled to the form of the national flag.

The flag should be of good quality, fine silk. The size of my original is thirty inches by twenty. This is only a guide, but the general proportions are convenient. A true flag has twice the length of its breadth. For conjuring purposes a proportion of three to two gives greater value in effective display in relation to bulk. One fourth of this flag is double: that is, a section cut from another flag is neatly sewn over it. The stitching is carried all round the overlay except for a space equal to one half of the outer end to the extreme corner, leaving an opening to the pocket so formed, as at a-b, Fig. 13. A small button, to furnish a convenient grip, is sewn within the extreme corner b. Within the opening of this pocket is sewn a narrow, tapering bag as indicated by the dotted line in the diagram. The size of the bag is determined by the handkerchief carrier which it is designed to hold and which takes the form of a cardboard tube. The length and width of the pocket should be such that if the tube is placed within the upper half of this pocket, the lower half may be turned inside out within the tube.



The size of the tube is five inches long and two inches diameter. It is made by pasting several thicknesses of stout paper round a suitable former. Before it has dried hard, the tube should be slightly flattened. When set, two transverse slits are cut in the wall one inch wide and opposite to one another, midway between the ends. Through these are passed a piece of tape, which is adjusted to form a loop inside the tube of length sufficient to reach either end of the same. The ends of the tape are secured with adhesive to the outside. Next a number of slits, of between an eighth and a quarter-of-an-inch long and a similar distance apart are cut all round each end and the edges bent inwards to give a slightly turned lip. Finally the tube is covered with fabric to give durability. The best material for this purpose is tracing cloth, procurable from a dealer in draughtsman's supplies, but any thin, strong material will do. The outside of the tube should be smeared with liquid glue, with special care in application to the inside and outside of the turned in lips, and the fabric, previously cut to exact size, laid over and carefully pressed into smooth contact. The neat formation of the ends is important.

The size of tube given is on the assumption that the handkerchiefs used are, as is usual, of Japanese silk and eighteen inches square. It gives full freedom of action in the passage

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of the silks. If reduction of bulk is of greater consideration than facility, the tube may be made slightly smaller and as much as half-an-inch shorter.

Six handkerchiefs will be required, four white and one each of red and blue. Material purchased dyed is undesirable, as the dressing causes it to crease and retain creases. White silk should be obtained, washed and dried and then dyed. The handkerchiefs that are to be white should have the dressing washed out before use. Properly prepared silk squares can be obtained ready-made from dealers in magical apparatus.

To set the trick for use, the cardboard tube is first inserted into the pocket provided for it in the double corner of the flag. It is shaken down to the bottom to ensure the pocket being properly distended, but it is not retained in that position. It is carefully worked up to the mouth and the lower half of the pocket, and with it the surrounding parts of the flag pushed up into it. Previously, the extreme inside corner of the pocket is laid across the mouth of the tube so that the pull of the flag as it is gathered up will come against the end of the tube and not draw away from it. The bulk of the flag is then pushed into the tube and followed by the blue, the red and a white handkerchief, in that order.

Cartridge paper is a suitable material for the external tube, and fourteen inches by eleven inches is a convenient size for the paper. Two schemes are available for the disposal of the load. One is to lay it upon the table and mask it by the curled up end of the previously rolled paper: the other is to insert it into the vest opening from the top, leaving the open end just within reach of the thumb. In the former case, the handkerchiefs are neatly folded and laid upon the paper. When due for exhibition they are lifted, one by one, and opened out fully, then, held together by the corners, they are laid diagonally across the load at the same time that the paper is picked up. The paper is shewn, rolled into a tube and then the disengaged hand reaches for the handkerchiefs, picks them up in a bunch, concealing the load within the folds. A pretence is made of pushing the handkerchiefs altogether into the tube, but only so far as to give cover for the insertion of the load. At this point the performer changes his mind and suggests that it will be better to put the handkerchiefs in separately. This he proceeds to do. The first of the visible white handkerchiefs is pushed into the paper tube and also into the fake. The withdrawal of the white handkerchief at the opposite end effects the illusion of the visible handkerchief passing right through the tube and tacitly implies a clear passage. The remaining two white handkerchiefs are put through in turn and each pushes forward one of the coloured ones and takes itself a place within the fake.

When the triocolour is complete, the three handkerchiefs are gathered together and simultaneously pushed into the tube. When well within the fake, the paper tube is seized by the extreme edge between thumb and finger of one hand, thumb inside and fingers outside and the thumb securing the corner of the flag by the button affixed for that purpose. Then, gently tapping the tube on the other hand, the flag is slowly shaken out: when clear of the fake, the whole is given a final shake to settle the fake and its contents down into the bottom of its pocket and the paper can be drawn right away, leaving nothing to be seen but the flag, apparently amalgamated from the separate silks.

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In the alternative, where the load is carried within the vest opening, the procedure is first to open out the three handkerchiefs one by one and hold them together by the corners between first and second fingers of the right hand. After the paper tube is formed (which is done with the handkerchiefs in the hand, held as described), it is turned end on to the spectators to shew the inside, being held slightly forward in the left hand. At the same time the right hand recedes slightly till it comes close up to the vest and under cover of the depending handkerchiefs, the thumb is inserted into the vest opening and picks up the load by way of the flag corner stretched across the open end of the fake. The contents should have previously been pushed down half-an-inch or so, to provide free entry for the thumb. In raising the handkerchiefs to place them in the paper tube the load is carried up under cover of them and introduced as before.

## **Bunglo.**

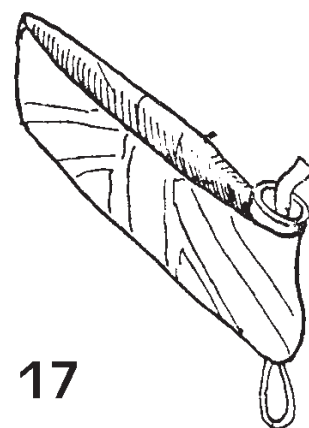
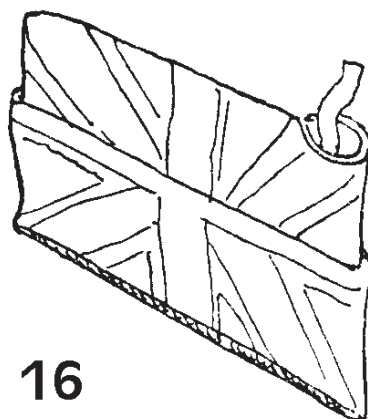
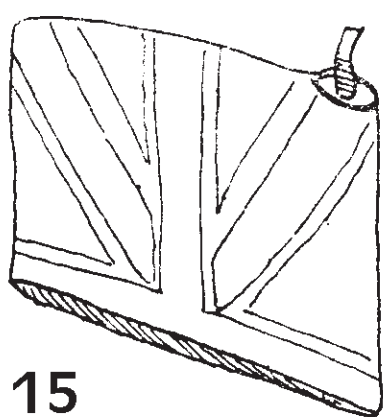
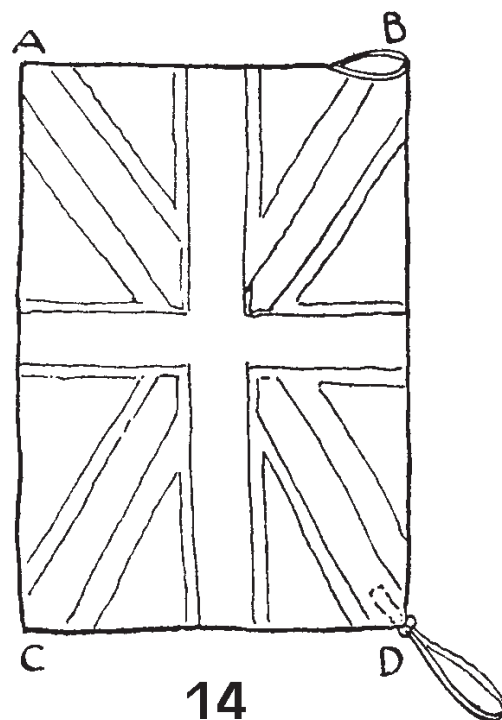
The real name of the thing was "Blendo," but – well, thereby hangs a tale!

In the last days of the "Dyeing Handkerchiefs" a young American magician came to London with a trick in which red, white and blue handkerchiefs tied together instantly changed, without cover, to a large flag. An enterprising dealer, having purchased rights from the inventor – a pleasing formality not always observed by dealers – placed it on the market under the name of "Blendo." It was not an inspiring title and after hearing a story in connection, it ever afterwards figured in my mind under the perversion "Bunglo," with which I have prefaced my explanation, without disrespect to the originator. The price of the trick was a guinea. In those days, before aerial bombing, poison gas and other refinements of modern civilization had disorganized trade and upset the world's currencies, a guinea was a substantial sum of money, consisting of a silver shilling and of a piece of gold of about the same size, with real purchasing power. The fame of "Blendo" reached the ear of an eminent amateur conjurer of the period, a man of substance and enthusiasm. He, one day, walked into the dealer's shop, guinea in hand, and said "I want that "Blendo" thing," "Yes" said the dealer, who was a notoriously clumsy demonstrator, "I'll shew you how to work it." "Don't bother," said the amateur, "I know the working, just pack it up," "Better see it," said the dealer, "it's already set: I'll shew you the effect and then I can shew you how to re-set it." As will be seen later, the flag is somewhat intricately folded into a bundle and concealed in one of the handkerchiefs. When the three handkerchiefs are tied together, by pulling a loop protruding from the flag bundle, the latter is instantly developed and the three handkerchiefs are drawn inside the flag, which is double. That is the intended development. What happened in this case was, the dealer braced himself for an effort, extended his arms and gave a frantic tug. Something stuck, then something gave – but in the wrong place. The dealer, with a look of dismay, stood with two hands full of fluttering silk remnants – half-a-guinea's worth in each hand. The amateur gave a wan smile and said sadly, "I don't think I'll have that trick, old chap." And so the dealer lost a guinea in hard cash and a guinea's worth of good stock in one fell swoop.

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The flag is double, that is, there are really two identical flags sewn together all round their edges, except for a small opening left at one corner, as at B, Fig. 14, into which a wire ring is sewn to keep the mouth permanently distended. At the opposite corner, D is a tape loop, about six inches long, outside, and a short tag inside, to which, in turn, is stitched one corner of the blue handkerchief.

Everything depends upon the setting. The end C-D is first pushed into the bag formed by the union of the two flags, being necessarily turned inside out (or outside in), in the process, until one half of the bag is folded within the other half and the corners C-D meet A-B. The tag at D and its attached blue handkerchief is pulled through the stiffened opening at B and the folded flag carefully smoothed out before going further, (Fig. 15). The bag is now folded over upon itself all round its opening like a trousers turn-up, in two successive



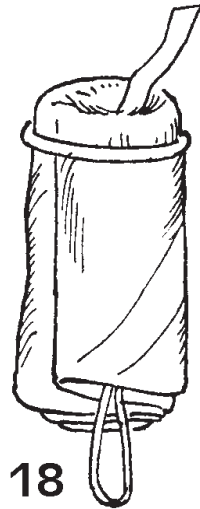
stages, as shewn in Figs. 16 and 17. Then it is tightly rolled up from left to right and the bundle finally secured by pushing the upper end through the wire ring, that corner being pulled out a bit to give sufficient slack to permit of this being done. See that the tape loop is accessible, and the load will present the appearance of Fig. 18. To avoid confusing the illustrations, the handkerchief which it has already been explained is attached to the tag is not shewn. The tag is sewn to the corner of the blue handkerchief and the latter is draped over the load and the two adjoining edges stitched together for a few inches to ensure the handkerchief hanging in folds favouring a safe cover. (Fig. 19).

This, together with a red and a white handkerchief, are laid upon a table until needed. To execute the trick, the three handkerchiefs are picked up, shewn to be separate, without



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directing too much attention to the blue one, then placed with corners together and joined by a knot. Then, one hand is placed beneath the blue handkerchief and the wire ring encircled with the thumb and finger and gripped securely. The other hand feels for the



projecting tape loop, gives it a gentle pull to dislodge the flag and start the handkerchiefs on their passage through the ring, and when all is felt to be clear, it is only necessary to extend both arms, and as the hands separate, the flag is opened out and the handkerchiefs are drawn inside it, out of sight.

### **Dyeing Silks Ne Plus Ultra.**

Having assimilated the contents of the two previous chapters, the reader is on the way to being equipped for a really pretty piece of work.

In effect, he starts with three unprepared squares of white silk, and uses only his bare hands in the transformations. One silk is pushed into the closed fist and pulled out unchanged. The hand is shown empty, closed into a fist, the second silk pushed through and withdrawn dyed blue, the hand being immediately opened and shown empty. The third silk is pushed into the closed fist for only an inch or two: with two fingers of the opposite hand, it is slowly drawn from the other side and actually appears to change colour as it is drawn through the hand – the white portion disappears at exactly the same rate as the red appears.

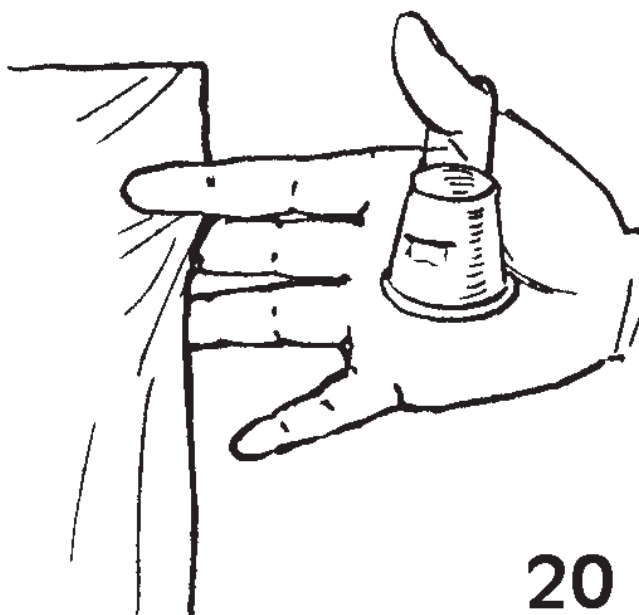
Then the red, the white and the blue silks are gathered together, pushed simultaneously through the hand and finally appear united and transformed into the National Flag.

## Magical Masterpieces

It will be necessary to consider in detail two devices for the colour changes of the blue and the red handkerchiefs.

The first is comparatively simple and has been developed with slight variations by different performers. Usually it takes the form of a hollow ball with two openings, or a tube. Personally I have preferred a bottomless cone-shaped receptacle cut off at the apex to leave a three-quarter inch opening and with a turned-over rim around the base. The length is an-inch-and-a-half and the diameter of the larger opening about an-inch-and-a-quarter. Slits are cut in the sides to accommodate the ends of a tape loop arranged as a pliable partition to prevent a handkerchief pushed in at either opening from passing right through. Two minute holes are drilled at the smaller end to take ends of a loop of fine gut. At the outset this contrivance is packed from the bottom with a blue handkerchief and laid behind the white ones on the table. In picking up a white, cornerwise, the thumb is inserted into the gut loop and the fake lifted under cover of the handkerchief. By means of the loop, the fake hangs down within the palm, so that the handkerchief can be shewn fully opened out with both hands extended, as in Fig. 20.

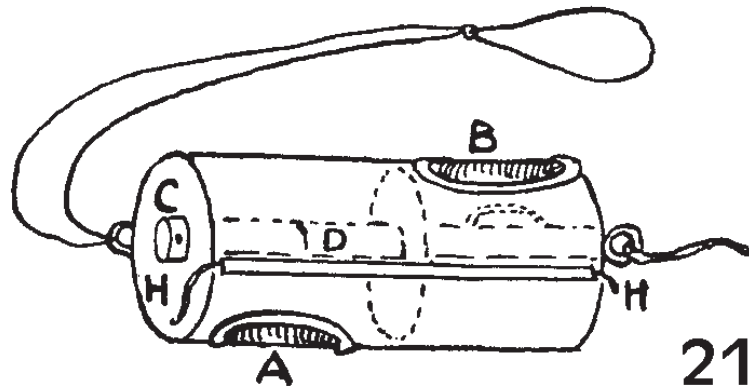
Shewing the left hand empty and closing it, the handkerchief is taken by one corner in the right and inserted into the fist, the fake being introduced at the same time, small end outwards. The white is pushed by the right hand first finger tip, bit by bit, into the fake. It naturally pushes the blue out, but the latter is checked from making a full and premature appearance by the grip of the left hand. Steadily the white is worked into the fake, the tape loop preventing it being pushed too far. When it is well in, the operating finger top follows it and, by bending, carries the fake forward and downward, round the left thumb and into the right hand, in which it is palmed by the turned-over rim. The right hand itself, by reason of its position, fully masks the operation, and to all appearance the white handkerchief is pushed into the left fist and remains there. It only remains to pull out the blue from the opposite side and open the now empty left hand, with very illusive effect. As the blue handkerchief is laid down, the fake is laid down with it and out of sight into a well or behind some other object on the table.



The second colour change is still more striking, but necessitates a little piece of mechanism. It consists of a metal container, tubular in form, and closed at both ends, one flat and one rounded, two inches long by one-and-a-quarter in diameter. Within it is a spindle, running throughout its length and carrying at its centre a fixed metal disc, which forms a partition, dividing the container into two compartments. In the wall of the tube

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are two openings, one for each compartment, and on opposite sides. In Fig. 21, A is the inlet and B is the outlet. The spindle at the outlet end is fitted with a wire bridge, beneath which a corner of a handkerchief may be passed, to give it sufficient temporary hold to allow it to be wound on to the spindle. To facilitate this, the spindle projects slightly through the flat end and the projecting portion is drilled to take a short length of wire used as a winding lever, C. At the inlet end, the spindle is fitted with a needle pointed hook, D bent in the opposite direction to the wind, so that a handkerchief placed upon it and given



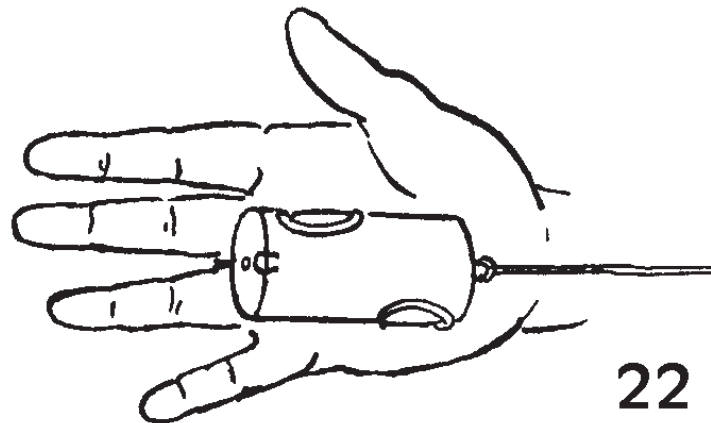
a partial turn will be caught by it and held fast in the unwinding. The rounded end of the device terminates in a metal eyelet, to which a length of cord elastic is attached, approximately twelve inches long, or more, according to the girth of the wearer. The elastic is passed through the strap of the waistcoat from above and thence is taken to one of the suspender buttons, where it is fastened by a loop. The tension should be such that the fake can be freely pulled round to the front of the body and will be drawn away under the coat when released and hang easily down behind. (This is my own arrangement. The general plan with cylinder pulls and the like, worked on the body, is to pass the elastic through a ring sewn to the side of the waistcoat, but the presence of a hard lump at this point is a trifling discomfort that can well be avoided. The fake, hanging down from the back, can be forgotten when it has served its purpose. It is less readily accessible in this position, true, but of this more anon. I have, in fact, contrived for more ready accessibility).

The apparatus as so far described is as it was marketed by the maker. I made two small additions to facilitate working.

The shape is not one that lends itself very well to palming, against the pull of the elastic cord, and the first addition, therefore is a fine steel hook H—Fig. 21, to assist in holding it without awkward contraction of the hand. The hook is not fixed, but the shank is extended the entire length of the cylinder and turns stiffly within a close fitting sheath soldered thereto for its accommodation. When the hook is turned outwards, it catches in the fork of the first and second fingers, while the pull on the elastic completes the support and maintains the whole thing in a horizontal position, in line with the palm of the hand (Fig. 22). At the same end as the hook, and opposite to it, is soldered a small wire loop, and through this is passed a loop of strong black thread between ten and twelve inches long, with a knot an inch or two from the free end, making a short loop on the end of the long

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one. When all else is set the large loop is put over one of the vest buttons, the thread passing across the vest, if wearing a black vest; or beneath the vest and over a button specially sewn for the purpose to the trousers, when a white vest is worn. The small loop furnishes a hold for detaching the main loop from the button, and continued pulling draws the changing device from its place of concealment. The use of the appliance will now be fairly obvious. It is set with a red handkerchief and the elastic and thread loops hitched over their respective buttons as already detailed. The white handkerchief is picked up, opened out, deliberately shewn on both side and the hands shewn clearly



empty. The handkerchief is then taken by one corner in the left hand and casually drawn through the right. As the fingers of the left hand seize the corner of the handkerchief, they also feel for and secure the small thread loop: and pull it clear of the button: the fingers of the right hand, as they close round the handkerchief, at the same time encircle the thread and as the left hand moves away to draw the handkerchief through the right hand, the changer is drawn into it and hooked into position as previously explained. The right hand is held wide open for a moment, then closed, and the corner of the white handkerchief with the left hand first finger tip tucked into the inlet of the changer and over the pin-hook. A tentative pull to make certain of attachment and then a steady continuous pull withdraws the red handkerchief and winds in the white. When the red is drawn clear and the white completely disappeared, the hand is momentarily opened wide, then closed to dislodge the hook and turn it, so that it will not catch in the coat as it flies back, and released. It is promptly drawn away under cover of the forearm by the elastic, leaving only the red handkerchief visible.

So far, the dyeing of the white squares is accounted for. Their transformation to the flag calls for only a trifling alteration in the arrangement of the subject of the last section. Instead of a tag, to which the blue handkerchief is permanently attached, a stiff gut loop is provided. This serves to lift the load from the vest opening, wherein it is concealed (after the manner of the load in "The Dyeing Handkerchiefs" chapter), and to take the three handkerchiefs bunched together and passed through it. A pull on the loop of the flag bundle draws the handkerchiefs inside and unfurls the flag, and the story is complete.

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## **The Great Lemon.**

Never was I so disenchanted as on the day I received the Great Somebody's Great Lemon Trick – all the way from America.

I read a glowing description of the marvel in a dealer's catalogue. It was marvellous. I read it again. It was magnificent. How could it be done – even for the price? It was ten dollars. Ten dollars. I read the description through again. I thought about it in my walks. I turned it over in my mind at meals. I dreamed about it. It must, I thought, be a miracle. It became an obsession. It gave me indigestion, insomnia and nerves. Finally, to escape, I collected my available capital and purchased ten dollars from the local bank. They cost me, to my chagrin, two pounds ten in good English money, and I dispatched the ransom to the U.S.A. It was the forerunner of even more exorbitant sums to be transferred from this unhappy country to the rapacious land overseas. With my two pounds ten, alias ten dollars, set afloat, my mind was at peace – but not for long. I caught a chill and my doctor told me to keep to my room for a few days. An insidious thing is a chill that keeps you to your room for a few days. Imprisonment gives you an insufficient outlet for physical and mental activity that the sickness is not enough to suppress. So I started fretting about that provocative coin and lemon again. How could it be done to comply with all the conditions set forth by the description? And finally I solved it. Worked it out in my own way. But, of course, I didn't expect it to be nearly as good as the ten dollar way. That was to be the revelation of a miracle of ingenuity. When, oh when, would it come? After many days, it came. Yes, at last, it came. All the way from U.S.A.

Alas!

In addition to what I got for my two pounds ten worth of dollars (and nothing shall induce me to reveal that ghastly secret), I found, according to the accompanying instructions, that I should need a trick table and a trained assistant. Fancy carrying furniture and a live man about to get a half-crown into a lemon! At a later date I sold the trick (with acknowledgments as to its source) to another performer for ten shillings, and my conscience smote me much at the time. I know not all that he said or thought, but what he said to me in his letter of acknowledgment was a model of tact and restraint. He said it was the last time he would ever purchase a trick without seeing it, and I am in sympathy with his decision.

To The Great So-And-So and his Great Lemon Trick!

Thus it comes about that my native modesty is for once cast aside, and I have no hesitation in offering this as the greatest of great coin and lemon tricks. No tables, no traps, no assistant, no swank, no nothink. Just low cunning and a neat little fake that you could, and do, hide in a matchbox.

Required to offer free choice of one or two lemons or a dishful. To make it quite clear that there is no kind of equivocation, you can offer choice between a lemon and an orange. The chosen fruit can be immediately and thoroughly examined and retained by a member

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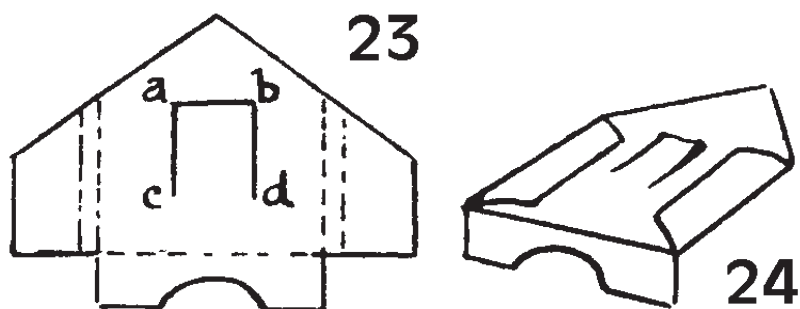
of the audience. Now, and not before, a coin is borrowed and marked before being handed up. The conjurer wraps it in paper, shewing it through the packet by the light of a candle. Holding a lens between the candle flame and the packet, to concentrate a beam, the packet disappears in a vivid flame. The lemon is taken back by the performer, who, shewing both hands empty, very cleanly and deliberately cuts it open, without a suspicion of a false move, and shews the borrowed coin embedded in the centre, from which it is removed by the owner himself and identified.

That is the problem I set myself to solve. That is what I expected, from the advertisement, to get and didn't.

Now for the solution.

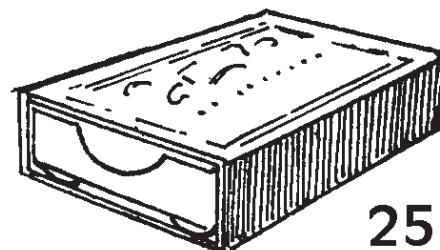
The main part of the secret lies in a specially designed tool for puncturing the lemon and forcing the coin into it.

This is formed quite simply by cutting a piece of hard brass to the pattern of Fig. 23, and bending across the dotted lines, the side pieces forward and over, to form grooves to hold a half-crown easily, and the end piece backward at a right angle. The lines a-b-a-c-b-d are cut through, and the tongue pushed forward from the back, to make pressure against a



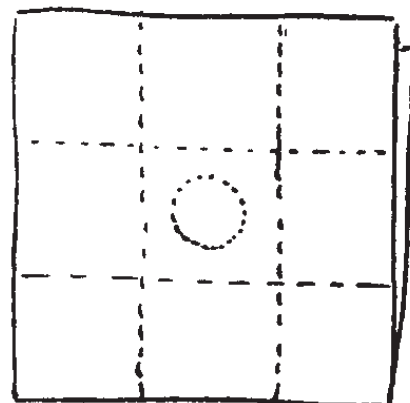
coin inserted in the grooves and prevent it dropping out. (Fig. 24). The margin of safety given by the spring tongue permits the fake to be used with equal facility in conjunction with either a half-crown, a two-shilling-piece or a penny.

For the concealment of this fake, a matchbox is prepared by cutting the drawer depth down to seven-sixteenths of an inch and inserting a false bottom in the case, leaving a clear three-sixteenth inch space for the fake to slide in and out. In preparation for use, the fake is inserted with the groove downward and the end piece pressing against the back of the drawer. The semi-circular cut in the turned-up end of the fake is to allow space for pressure upon the end of the drawer, to push it out. (Fig. 25).

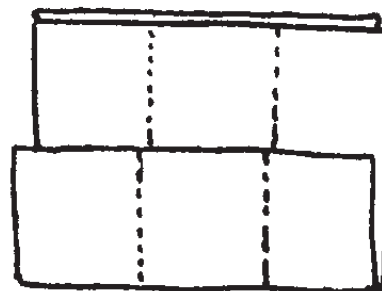


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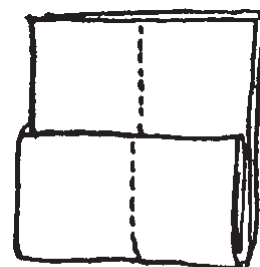
To use in conjunction with this arrangement, there will be required some slips of flash paper about ten inches long and five inches wide (or one-third of a standard size sheet) and some inch-and-a-quarter discs of the same material, made opaque by brushing with Indian ink. A slip of the paper is folded double and a disc inserted between the two thicknesses, in the centre, as indicated by the circular dotted line in Fig. 26. The straight dotted lines in the same figure indicate the direction and position of subsequent folds. When the borrowed coin is wrapped in the paper, it is first laid in the centre, over the hidden disc, Fig. 26. One third of the paper is then folded over on to the coin as in Fig. 27. Cross folds are made from the right and from the left, but in the reverse direction, Fig. 28 and Fig. 29, which has the effect of leaving the coin in a pocket, and the last fold is made again in the same direction, leaving the mouth of the pocket still open. To all but close, minute inspection, the coin is wrapped in the paper: really it is only in an outside fold, and by tipping the package (which can be quite naturally and imperceptibly brought about in the execution of the final fold), and relaxing the pressure of the fingers from the outside, the coin can be dropped out and palmed in the right hand. The crux of the situation is now reached and must be studied with some care. As it will simplify explanation and execution, it will be better to assume that the paper packet, ostensibly containing the coin is laid aside. If this is really done in actual performance, it must on no account be put out of sight, but placed where it can be plainly seen by the spectators. When skill has been acquired in the following moves they can be tried with the paper packet retained in the finger tips. For the time being we proceed with unincumbered hands.



26



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29

Picking up the matchbox with the left hand and transferring it to the right, as nearly as possible in the semblance of one movement the palmed coin is transferred into the groove of the metal fake and the drawer of the matchbox pushed out. That there may be no time lost in fumbling for a match, one is already put beforehand with its head projecting between the drawer and the case, so that it can be seized instantly, such delay as may be occasioned in transferring the coin being attributed by the spectators to the extraction of the match. As the drawer is pushed forward by the left hand thumb tip, the latter comes between the back of the drawer and the upturned angle of the fake and thereby the fake is pulled back to the extent of half-an-inch. Then, after lighting the candle and closing the matchbox, the fake is gripped and retained by the right palm as the box is carried away and laid aside by the left.

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The rest is comparatively easy. The paper packet is taken in the left hand and the arm well extended, clear of the body. The packet being held in front of the light shews a circular shadow, presumably the coin, really the blackened paper disc. The subsequent spontaneous flashing of the packet has yet to be explained, and is accounted for by a short strip of white touch-paper gummed to the wrapping paper in such position that it can be fired during the time that the packet is brought up to the candle flame to shew the form of the coin within. The slip of touch-paper need be only an eighth or a quarter of an inch wide and an inch or so long and until required can lie unnoticed flat against the piece of flash paper, to which only the extreme end is fixed. Just before bringing the packet up to the candle flame, the touch-paper is bent out at right angles and care must be exercised to ignite only its extreme tip. As soon as the train is started, the packet is moved from the front of the candle flame to the rear and a reading glass interposed. This, of course, is an amiable piece of bunkum, but it furnishes a plausible theory for the sudden annihilation of the packet and its contents by fire and diverts attention from the real part played by the candle in the ignition.

The performer now asks for the lemon, and receives it in his left hand. Transferring it to the right, he immediately reaches out with the left to pick up a fruit knife placed in readiness on the table, and as he does so he, by contraction of the right hand, smartly presses the lemon on to the point of the fake and drives the fake fully in. Impaling the lemon on the point of the knife (exercising proper care not to expose the side upon which the fake enters), he is free to shew both palms empty in turn, and then, with the utmost deliberation he cuts round the lemon in a transverse direction to that taken by the coin and fake until almost severed, then discarding the knife he tears the lemon apart, secretly pushing the coin further forward within the grooves of its holder at the same time, so that as the two halves of the lemon are pulled apart, the coin is plainly exposed and free to be drawn out to all intents from the centre of the fruit.

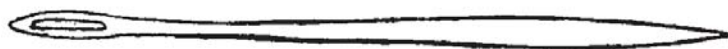
## A Ring and an Orange.

A borrowed finger ring is dissolved in a glass of water. The water is sprinkled on an orange previously threaded on to a length of tape, the ends of which are held by spectators. The orange is cut away, leaving the missing ring upon the tape.

The appliances (other than those which are purely household affairs) are so small as to bring this almost within the category of pocket tricks. They are a one-and-a-quarter inch disc of glass, and a six inch packing needle.

Some white tape, a few oranges, a jug of water and a tumbler complete the property list.

The packing needle requires a little attention. It is filed and ground flat at the business end into a spear point that will cut as well as pierce. (Fig. 30.)

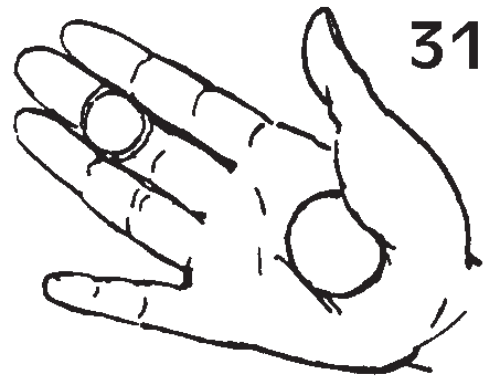


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The first essential is to get possession of the ring. The glass disc is palmed in the right hand, and the ring is held between the thumb and finger of the same hand. It is apparently dropped into a glass held in the left hand. The tumbler is partially masked by the fingers, so that the ring, although seemingly heard to drop, is not seen. As a matter of fact it is not even heard. It remains finger gripped in the right hand and the palmed glass disc is dropped in its stead (Fig. 31). Immediately transferring the glass to the right hand, the fingers, with the ring, are brought under the bottom. Water is now poured into the glass. The stream playing upon the disc, causes it to rattle in the bottom, suggesting again the presence of the ring. Just before covering the glass of water with the handkerchief, the performer casually holds it under the eyes of the nearest spectator for inspection. If the water is slightly agitated, to anyone taken by surprise, the ring, seen through the bottom of the tumbler, is taken to be in it; but without laying the position open to challenge, the covering is proceeded with and the tumbler, beneath the handkerchief, given into the keeping of a spectator.



The performer now has the ring, and is in a position to introduce it into the orange, and this is the function of the special needle. The palmed ring is first secretly slipped over the eye and then the tape is openly threaded into the latter. A dish of oranges is offered for choice and one having been chosen, the performer takes it and thrusts the needle through the centre. By a lateral movement in the early part of its passage, the opening is widened into a slit. The hand which holds the needle, by the eye end, holds also the ring, and follows up with the same, pushing it with the thumb right into the orange. The needle continues its passage through, drawing the tape with it, and having served its purpose, is removed. The ends of the tape are given to two spectators to hold between them.

Returning to the glass of water, the performer states that the dissolution of the ring is complete, and in evidence removes the handkerchief and again thrusts the tumbler under somebody's eyes for inspection. In confirmation, he deliberately pours the water back into the jug: the disc is held to the bottom by suction.

By cutting all round the orange it can be removed from the tape in sections, leaving the ring threaded thereon. It is first identified, then removed from the tape, wiped and returned to its owner.

### **A Ring and a Dove.**

This trick is only a memory. I saw it in my school days, done by a conjurer unknown to fame, who performed it elegantly. I have seen since many worse conjurers in high places and much worse tricks. Although I have often thought it would bear exhumation, I have no claim to include it here, except to offer one or two suggestions in regard to its revision.

## Magical Masterpieces

A finger ring was borrowed and locked in a trinket box. A dove was placed in a drawer box just large enough to hold it. A wine bottle was brought on the stage by an assistant, and after the two boxes had been proved empty, the bottle was broken open and the dove found inside with the borrowed ring tied round its neck. To the sophisticated magician, explanation is almost superfluous. The box in which the ring is locked is technically known as a "ring box." One end is pivoted and by pressure on the bottom a spring catch is released and another spring, or, more exactly, a pair of springs, force this end open, permitting the ring to drop out into the operator's hand.

A loose tongue of metal inside the lock simulates the rattle of a ring in the box when shaken, so that its presence may apparently be proved any time after it has been extracted. Unlocking throws the rattling gear out of action.

Once having gained possession of the borrowed ring, the performer passes it on to his assistant who, behind the scene, ties it with ribbon to the dove's neck and inserts the dove into the bottle and brings the latter on to the stage. Meanwhile, the attention of the audience is occupied by a duplicate dove which is shut in the drawer box. The drawer is double, and when opened for the second time, the outer drawer only is withdrawn. The inner, still containing the dove, remains behind in the case. The drawer box is an old fashioned appliance that was never very convincing and which a present day magician would regard with scorn. He will know of better ways of vanishing a dove. One which is little known is a double paper cone, that is two cones one within the other. The inner one is normal, the outer one is cut away around the line the fold would take if it were closed in the ordinary course. This device must be prepared beforehand: it cannot be made up in view of the spectators as such cones usually are. The dove is placed in it (the inside one of course) and the top folded in in the usual way, but the rim of the outer cone must be left clear. At a suitable opportunity, the inner cone with its prisoner is dropped on to a servante behind the chair or table and from that point the package kept with its apex to the front. In due course the empty shell is crushed into a ball and thrown aside.

The ring box is a perfectly good piece of apparatus, but I think if I were performing the trick I should discard it, and instead drop the borrowed ring into the neck of the bottle, first hammering it flat to enable it to go in. Needless to say, to save trouble with the owner of the ring afterwards, a substitution would be effected before hammering the ring out of shape.

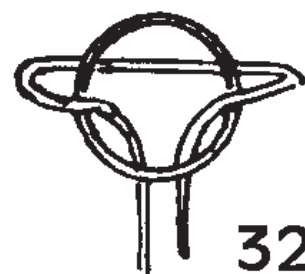
Our main consideration is the bottle. First there is a trick bottle made in metal for the purpose, opening half way down, with a jagged edge in a very poor imitation of a fracture: 100 per cent. tin in modern jargon. Forget it. A 100 per cent. monstrosity. I once saw a very good adaptation by an American manufacturer. The upper part of the bottle was of spun metal, painted black, and was fitted with an internal pressed screw thread corresponding to the screw tops of a standard make of glass jar. Provided with a stock of these jars painted black inside, the lower part of the bottle could be renewed on each occasion and the scheme was favourable to convenient loading.

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The more usual, and on the whole, the most satisfactory plan, is to use ordinary wine bottles from which the bottom has been removed. These can be procured from conjuring trick shops. A disc of blackened cardboard to jam into the aperture will serve as a substitute bottom. In conjunction with the bottles a wine container is supplied. This takes the form of an inverted tin funnel with a closed mouth, which is pushed up into the neck of the bottle from the inside and supported by a bit of wire soldered to the spout and bent over the lip of the bottle. A glass of wine poured from the bottle adds to the appearance of genuineness.

No assistant is needed and, according to this way of working, the bottle is in view from the beginning of the trick, before the ring is borrowed. The dove, as will be surmised, is already in place. The only point of importance is the attachment of the ring.

This is effected by a peculiar tie. The loop of ribbon coming from the dove passes out between the edge of the cardboard disc and the inside of the bottle and lies loose on the table. To attach the ring fairly and securely, it is only necessary to pass the loop through the inside of the ring and thence up and over the outside. Fig. 32 illustrates the tie.



Bottomless bottles will be met with again in another item (see "The Incurable Cigars") and it may therefore be useful to know how to prepare these bottles in emergency. Apart from cutting and grinding, which is too costly a process, and needlessly precise, the usual plan is to knock the "kick" in with a blow from a hammer. By holding the bottle submerged in a bucket of water, the spread of the vibrations is checked, and the liability of the breakage to extend beyond the immediate vicinity of the blow is reduced to a minimum. A sharp tap in the centre of the kick will give a central hole that can gradually be enlarged by chipping steadily all round it.

Another method is to file a nick all round the outside of the bottle with one edge of a three cornered file and then to draw a red hot poker round the line. It will probably break away at once, but if not, it can be plunged into cold water. The sudden change of temperature causes the glass to break in the usual way and, following the line of least resistance, the crack proceeds along the line already started.

### **With a Watch.**

At one of those select gatherings of magicians, where the members entertain one another with the Four Ace Trick and their latest inventions, and come on in turn with a look of grim determination to do the other fellows' Daggs, a clever performer presented a highly ingenious, though somewhat involved, trick with a chosen card, a canary, a top hat and other things. The card was placed in a gas chimney, the canary was put into a paper bag; the bag was blown to pieces by a revolver shot and the canary turned up in the gas chimney; the card appeared on the hat band of the hat. It would have been a good trick if it

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had stopped at that, but there were trimmings, appurtenances and side issues. I forget how it all ended. Perhaps it never ended. But, sitting in front, ready to pick up the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, I went away with an idea that in course of time became a watch trick.

I commenced with the canary appearing in the glass chimney in place of the chosen card. The canary was vanished from a handkerchief and the card reappeared in a nest of envelopes. As glass gas chimneys became a charge on my weekly salary, I cut them out and used a tumbler instead. Later, owing to the rise in the cost of living, I discharged the canary and substituted an (imitation) egg. Then one day it occurred to me that an egg and a playing card was a heterogenous mixture and sought for a consistent combination. A watch and its guard, or fob-ribbon, was the outcome.

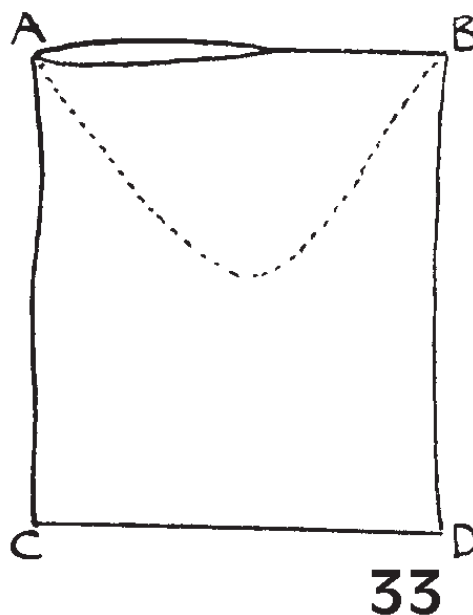
This watch trick differs from orthodox watch tricks, inasmuch as the interest does not lie in the adventure of a watch borrowed from a spectator but is a simple evolution with the performer's own watch. Removing it from his fob, he detaches the ribbon, drops the ribbon into a tumbler, wraps the tumbler in a handkerchief and, for additional security, as he says, in a further wrapping of newspaper. Next he shews a nest of three envelopes, separate and empty, encloses them one within the other and sets them in a conspicuous position at a distance from the paper parcel. To dispose of the watch, he gathers a handkerchief together by four corners and drops the watch into it. With due ceremony he shakes the handkerchief out and the watch disappears. The envelopes are opened and the ribbon is found in the smallest of the set. The watch is found in the glass.

Thus, it will be seen, a more or less new trick was evolved, different entirely from its beginning, in plot, in method and in material.

The general routine will easily be surmised by experienced magicians, but some of the details may be of interest.

There are two watches and two ribbons, with the usual snap hooks and duplicate charm pendants.

The vanish of the watch is managed by the use of a double handkerchief. Two handkerchiefs of exactly the same size are stitched together all round the edges except for a half of one side which is left for access to the interior. A line of stitching is then made from the corner adjoining the opening along the diagonal as far as the centre and from thence up the transverse diagonal to the corner laterally opposite to the first, as shewn by the dotted line in Fig. 33. This line of stitching prevents the watch from falling into one corner with a palpable sag. To facilitate instruction in the exact manipulation, the corners are lettered A, B, C, D. Pick up the handkerchief by



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corner A and insert the thumb tip into the opening. Gather up B, C and D so that the handkerchief hangs as a bag, but on no account mention the word bag: it is, in the circumstances, too suggestive. Drop the watch into the opening and let it fall to the centre. Grasp the handkerchief just above and draw it close around the watch so that the contour of the latter is plain. To simulate the vanish drop the corners B, C, D, but hold fast to A. Then seize corner C with the disengaged hand and raise it so that the line A-C is level. A being nearest the body and C advanced to the spectators. The effect of this is to roll the watch into corner B without betraying its movement. On no account must the handkerchief be held full face to the front at this stage. When the watch reaches B, the hand at C releases its hold and changes over to B, gripping the watch through the fabric. The handkerchief can now be freely shaken out.

The presence of the ribbon in the innermost of the nest of envelopes is accounted for by the fact that this envelope is duplicated and it was there from the beginning. The intermediate envelope is double. The face, complete with gummed flap in one piece is cut from an extra envelope and put into the envelope proper, as a partition, with the duplicate small envelope, containing the ribbon, between the false and the true front, and the two flaps gummed together. This can be shewn empty and fastened in the customary way: when cut open, access is given to the secret compartment for the removal of the contents.

In an alternative method of working the envelope nest that I have sometimes used, three unprepared envelopes are used and the first may be fastened by a volunteer assistant or nearby spectator. In this case a fourth envelope is used, half the size of the smallest of the trio and with its flap cut off. To save confusion, we will call this the pocket. In this the ribbon is placed and a dab of conjurer's wax fixed on one side. The pocket is concealed between the smallest of the three visible envelopes and the two larger ones. The small envelope is given to the person assisting, who is asked to ascertain that it is empty, fasten the flap and return it. When handed back, the performer places it on top of the pocket (waxed side up) and presses both into contact. He then passes the next two envelopes to the assistant for inspection and as they are returned one by one, encloses them in order. When later it is desired to produce the ribbon, the envelope is cut open, while the former is retained in position by pressure, and the contents of the pocket shaken out from behind the envelope as though coming from the envelope itself.

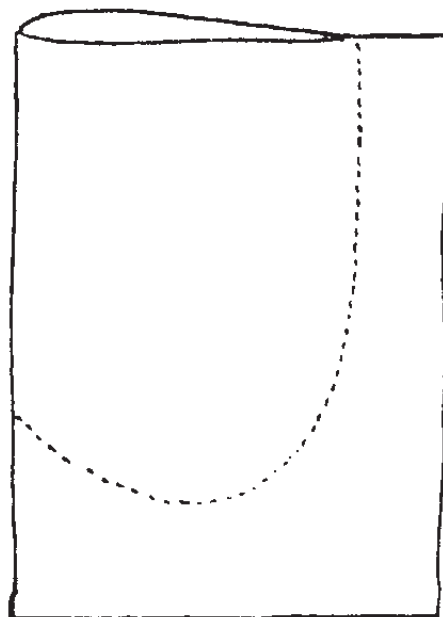
The tumbler containing the ribbon first shewn is boldly exchanged for a duplicate tumbler containing a duplicate watch. Hence the double wrapping. The first is to duplicate the external appearance of the two packages: the second is to provide cover for the exchange.

The particular change I am describing was devised for use in circumstances where one has spectators practically all round. It is pretty safe from any view point. A folded newspaper is used and is prepared by pasting together two double sheets, folding the double thickness on its original fold and partially pasting the two sides together to form a pocket. For reasons, the pasted margin is wide, particularly at the bottom. The dotted line in Fig. 34 is an indication of the relative proportions of pocket and pasted join. It is placed between the leaves of a loose double sheet and folded so that it can be picked up and

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opened out by a shake with one hand. The pocket will serve for many performances: the loose sheet is renewed every time.

The duplicate watch is placed in one of the tumblers, the tumbler wrapped in a handkerchief, and the package inserted into the mouth of the paper pocket. After the watch guard has been openly placed in the visible glass, the latter is wrapped in a handkerchief and held in the right hand, while the left reaches out for the paper. Placing the left thumb inside the concealed glass and the fingers outside the paper, both are gripped together and lifted from the table. With a shake of the left hand the paper is spread open and the right hand approaches to tear off a portion. Directly the hands are together, the right hand drops the visible glass into the pocket and brings the other into view in its place. Without pause, but as nearly as possible in the same movement the outside loose sheet of paper is torn along the fold, one



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leaf being in the right hand and the other, with the faked portion of the newspaper in the left. The left hand drops to its full extent, which brings the lower edge of the discarded paper, carrying the unwanted glass, within an inch or so of the floor. If dropped on its edge and allowed to topple over there is no risk of a tell-tale thud. On an ordinary carpeted floor, the thing is easy: on bare boards reasonable care must be exercised.

### The Nest of Boxes.

Some of the oldest tricks have a lasting fascination. There are many that have never been seen by the rising generation that in time will bear revival. The one in which a missing object appears within the innermost of a succession of boxes was always a source of delight; and with a nest of large size, that as the stack grows, towers above the performer himself, may become hilarious, besides providing a good, sound mystery.

The favourite object for treatment is a borrowed watch. Frequently the fate of the watch has been shared by a rabbit, and the watch appears tied round the rabbit's neck, with the rabbit kicking like blazes.

There is a method of working the rabbit and nest of boxes that has been very little used and is not widely known. The box is placed on the stage before the trick starts: nothing is taken off or brought on during the performance, and no trick table is used.

To clear the ground for the real object of this section, viz., the treatment of the nest of boxes, we will first consider briefly the disposal of the rabbit and the watch, for the sake of completeness. Any methods with which the reader is familiar may be used, but in case he

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has none, these must suffice: there is nothing new in this direction. A rabbit is a fairly substantial thing to get rid of and the choice lies between a table and a chair as a place of concealment.

With a table. The table top, either a portion of it, or the whole of it, according to size, is hinged at the front edge, and can be raised by lifting the back, under cover of a sheet of newspaper spread thereon. Beneath it is a box or pocket. The newspaper and table top are lifted together, with one hand; the other hand lifts the rabbit behind and drops it into the enclosure. The table top is quietly dropped and the two hands move away and proceed to wrap the paper round the supposed rabbit, the fingers of the hand inside the paper rattling against it to imitate the struggles of the animal. Finally it is crushed into a small ball and thrown away. It is not necessary to use a heavily draped table. If a cloth is used at all a three inch drop is ample. It is better to use a four legged table, without cover. The usual wooden framing that supports the top will give all the cover necessary if filled in with canvas and covered externally with black material. A slight sag in the centre will give adequate space for the rabbit and will be unnoticeable, because in shadow. In these circumstances all that strikes the eye of the spectator is the single thickness of wood of the table top, which projects well over the frame.

A chair with a solid back may be provided with a pocket servante of comfortable dimensions, into which the animal can be dropped under pretext of taking a sheet of paper from the chair back. This is a very simple and convenient scheme: its only disadvantage is that it can only be relied upon to be completely illusive with an audience of inebriates or half-wits. Modified, however, by the use of a frame backed chair, covered in with material to match hangings or scenery in front of which it is standing, so that there is apparently a clear view through, it is really effective. A highly amusing contretemps may be arranged if the rabbit can be induced to poke his head up over the back of the chair after he is supposed to have disappeared, but as this cannot be relied upon, it is better to prevent it. A special pocket servante is made for the purpose, with a safety flap that falls down and shuts the animal in.

Excellent as it is, the masked-in frame chair needs special stage arrangements and is not always convenient. I suggest another get-away that perhaps the reader may care to try. It is a modification of the newspaper fake explained in connection with a watch trick of a different type ("With a Watch") in a previous section, which should be read in conjunction. Two sheets of paper are laid over the chair back – an entirely open frame. The first is faked, being provided with a strong pocket on the rear (preferably with a foundation of calico or bookbinder's muslin) A loose sheet is laid over it. The loose sheet is lifted with one hand: the other hand places the rabbit behind it, drops it into the pocket, lifts the same, closes it with a snap fastening and lowers it on to the chair seat, while the loose sheet is gathered up into a hollow parcel and carried away as usual. Frankly, I haven't tried this, but I offer the suggestion for what it may be worth.

Now for the watch. A procedure that fits in with the other arrangements is the paper cone. A double sheet of paper is made up-two sheets pasted together on three edges and the fourth left open. This is rolled into a cone-shaped bag and the double edge separated,

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so that the watch, when dropped into the bag, falls between the two thicknesses of paper. The top is folded down and the package is given to an assistant (official or volunteer) to hold. After the rabbit has been dispatched, the performer takes the paper bag from its custodian, opens it out and shews it empty.

He crumples the paper up and throws it aside, but before discarding it, he clenches it closely round the watch, so that the latter breaks through into his hand. He palms it in readiness for the next stage.

We now come to the box-nest. The outer box is of substantial build, in varnished pine, of overall dimensions 14-1/2 in. x 13-1/4 in. x 10-3/4 in., corded and locked. It can be shewn all round and has no speciality, except that, in common with all the boxes inside it, the bottom is abundantly perforated with half-inch ventilation holes, if used for live stock.

In regard to this, it is an opportune moment to say that a live rabbit is not essential. A very presentable substitute is now obtainable from magical stores; a well made imitation, with little or no hard stuffing, that hauled out by its ears, after the manner of its unfortunate prototype, and judiciously shaken, looks very much like the real thing. A Teddy Bear or other popular toy effigy in season could be substituted.

There are nine inner boxes, graded in size from 13 in. x 11-1/2 in. x 9-1/2 in. down to 7 in. x 5-3/4 in. x 4 in. and the range may terminate with whatever size is adapted to the requirements of the intended inmate, to whose neck is tied a ribbon that extends an extraordinarily long loop, terminating in a snap hook, passing between the lid of the box and the box itself, at one end, and so through the next box and all the others (but not through the outside covering box). The inside nest (i.e., all the boxes except the locked outer case) are of thin, white wood, with simple flat lids. They are a stock line with manufacturers of trade packing materials and are sold for ordinary commercial purposes. To adapt them to their present usage, they are tied round with braid or tape. There is not space for thicker tying material, and for the same reason the lids are slightly scooped out in the centre, and the tapes are not tied: the ends are fastened with pins. For convenience, the tapes may be glued to the bottoms of the boxes.

The procedure is now fairly obvious. The outer box is casually shewn all round, unlocked, and the nest lifted out. The snap hook hangs out at one end and the palmed watch is attached to it. The other boxes are opened in turn and as each is lifted out, the hanging watch is carried with it. The hands can be shewn empty at any time. When the last box is reached and the animal lifted from the inside, the hanging watch is of course lifted from the outside, but that detail is not discernable from the front.

## **A New Method in the Smoke Trick.**

In the Smoke Trick an empty glass vase is covered with a lid: the conjurer lights a cigarette and puffs the smoke in the direction of the glass, wherein it is apparently seen to collect.



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A magician of distinguished pedigree included this trick one time in his programme and early in the run an audible undertone from the audience was heard, saying cheerfully, "You can do that with acid and ammonia." As a matter of fact, the voice was right: you can do it with acid and ammonia. The usual procedure is to place a little hydrochloric acid in the vase and moisten the lid with liquor ammonia. When placed together, the fumes of the two liquids combine to produce a dense vapour resembling smoke. It is a pretty effect, but being a common lecture room experiment, it is known to many people, which discounts the mystery. It has also the disadvantage that hydrochloric acid in a free state is a vicious thing. A drop on a coloured silk handkerchief, beloved by conjurers, or upon an immaculate dress suit, beloved by tailors, is ruinous. It is better, therefore, to keep hydrochloric acid for its more prosaic uses. It exerts a more purifying influence upon sanitary appliances than upon conjuring equipment.

Having occasion to introduce a smoke effect into a sequence, and with unhappy memories of misplaced acid in past life, I experimented to find a cleaner method and eventually arrived at one that is entirely convenient and more effective than the original.

The receptacle for the smoke is a stoppered spirit bottle or decanter. This is prepared by having the bottom cut out by a lapidary. The material for the smoke is amorphous phosphorus. Some touch-paper will also be required. Conjurers who use magnesium flash light powder, either for stage effects or for photography, will find suitable paper put up with the powder in the maker's packets. Otherwise it can be prepared simply by immersing blotting paper in a saturated solution of saltpetre. A piece about half-an-inch square is the vehicle for the phosphorus and another small piece is rolled round the end of a match, which is replaced in the matchbox. A dab of the phosphorus powder is taken upon a finger tip and rubbed on to the loose square of touch-paper. It is astonishing how very little is required to produce smoke sufficient to fill the bottle, and the density is greater than that of the acid-ammonia fumes. Experiment will best shew the quantity to use. The prepared paper is laid upon a tray, just behind the bottle. In presenting the trick, first remove and replace the stopper from the bottle in a casual way, just to indicate that it is closed by a stopper. Here is the advantage over the older method: no immediate action takes place, whereas formerly it was necessary either to immediately cover the receptacle with a handkerchief or hurry on with the lighting of the cigarette—and who does not know the perversity of matches on trying occasions? In this case a little deliberation is not a disadvantage: it serves to confound the oracle who may be bursting to disgorge himself of knowledge concerning acid and ammonia. The smoke is real smoke, produced by the slow combustion of the phosphorus and it is only necessary to explain the manner of igniting it. Lighting a cigarette in the ordinary way, the performer uses for the purpose the prepared match, and when the cigarette is properly alight and the match flame blown out he presses the opposite end (i.e., the touch-paper covering) against the glowing tip of the cigarette, in the way that a pipe-smoker presses down the newly lighted filling of his pipe.

The touch-paper ignited, he places the spent match on the tray that carries the bottle, and on to the phosphorus coated scrap of touch-paper deposited there, which is fired in turn. After a second or two he moves the bottle back a step, bringing it over the

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smouldering charge, to trap the rising cloud of smoke, while he proceeds with the pantomime of blowing smoke from his cigarette into the bottle.

It is optional whether the bottle is covered during the materialisation of the smoke and the revelation of it reserved as a climax or whether the gradual accumulation is left open to view. Personally, I am inclined to favour the first named procedure. Many things are better for something left to the imagination.

To make a proper finish to the trick, there should be a loose bottom to the bottle (two pieces of glass, one equal in size to the outside of the bottle and one an easy fit to the inside, cemented together to form a flange). By placing the little finger of the hand that grasps the bottle beneath this, they can be lifted together as one, the stopper removed and the smoke shaken out.

### **The Incurrible Cigars.**

The foundation for the combination of effects to which I gave the above title was furnished by Mr. Ernest Noakes' invention of the revolving trap and exchange of cigar boxes, which forms the central feature. A description of the mechanical arrangements of the first version was given by him in his book. I am now detailing a later arrangement, which is in some respects an improvement, being less cumbrous, both in appearance and in fact, and smoother in working.

The effect in brief is that a box of cigars is shewn and the cigars openly transferred to a square stoppered spirit bottle, of the kind belonging to tantalus sets, which is covered with a table napkin. A few small pocket articles are borrowed from members of the audience and nailed up in the cigar box. Eventually these are found in a Champagne bottle (from which wine has previously been poured) broken with a hammer; and the cigars are found re-packed in the nailed box. During the proceedings the performer has been calmly smoking a sample of the cigars and when he concludes by uncovering the spirit bottle, it is filled with smoke-ostensibly that from the cigar.

To co-ordinate this mixture and to present a complete picture before entering into mechanical details, I will give a rough outline of the monologue, which is amenable to expansion, contraction or such alteration as will suit it to any performer's own particular style, without necessarily departing from the suggested outline.

The performance opens in quite unconventional manner. As the curtain rises, the performer is "discovered" seated at a table, set out with comforts as aforesaid, reading the newspaper and smoking a cigar.

Becoming aware that the blind is up, he puts down the paper, looks out with an air of awakening comprehension, rises and speaks his piece:

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“Pardon me! I’m not really so happy and jolly as I look. The fact is, this is my birthday and my wife bought me a box of cigars “Dreadnoughts.” There’s a motto on the inside of the lid – “Honi soit que mal y pense.” I thought at first it referred to the coloured picture, but now I think it means the cigars. I gave one to a friend and asked him what he thought of it. He said he couldn’t offer any opinion on the cigars, as such. He said he was too full for words. Finally he suggested that I should use up the box for a trick. This is the result.

“For the time being I’ll put the cigars in this spirit bottle. The spirit has gone. So has my assistant.

“The emptied cigar box I will use as a safe deposit for any small articles I can borrow – a pair of gloves, a bunch of keys, any small thing you have in your pockets – anything but money. Don’t give me money. I worked for a private entertainment agency once and there was a clause in the contract – ‘Clients will please pay the Agent: on no account should an artiste be trusted with money.’ I will secure these little things with the nail that was used to nail down the cigars.

“And those cigars – I’ll cover them, if you don’t mind. There they are – gone but not forgotten. For your interest and my peace of mind, I will put the greatest possible distance between the box, the cigars and myself.”

(Performer places the objects referred to at extremities of stage and re-seats himself at table, pours out a glass of wine, picks up newspaper and continues smoking).

“I rather have the advantage over you.... because you don’t know what I’m going to do. On the other hand, I’m at a slight disadvantage too because I don’t quite know what I’m going to do myself. Anyhow, I’m doing myself as well as possible.

(Reads) –

“To-day’s weather – No, I won’t read that we’ve had it.... Court Circular – The Duke of Peckham rode yesterday in Kennington Park, accompanied by Lady Tinne-Pott, Lord Watt-Watt and an easterly wind.... Advertisement – Dr. Tibbles Tiny Tablets for the Tired: testimonial Mr. Lyons writes, ‘after taking two of your tablets, I feel almost as strong as my one-and tenpenny tea’.... Domestic – ‘a respectable young woman wants washing’: ought to be respectable enough to know better.

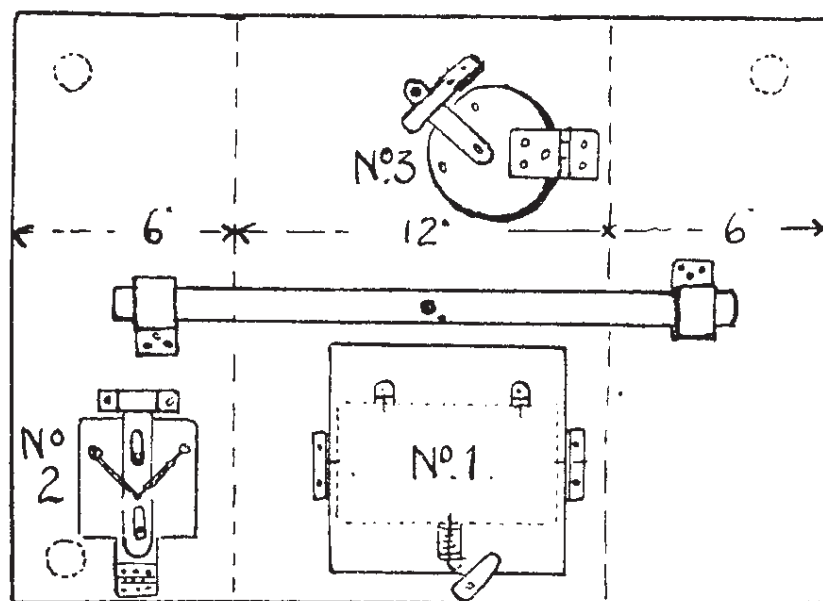
“There’s this about a newspaper, if there’s nothing in it, it’s useful to put something in. I’ll use it for the remains of the repast.”

(Spread paper on table, lift wine bottle on to it and break bottle with hammer).

“Here is your property – many thanks. The cigars have returned to their box.... and in the bottle is evidence that my effort to evade them has ended in smoke – the smoke from the cigar.”

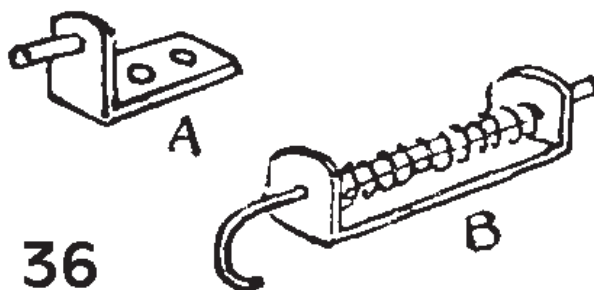
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The various transpositions are effected through the medium of a specially constructed table. A dimensioned plan of the under side of the table top is given in Fig. 35. and as there shewn is divided into three portions (along the dotted lines) and hinged. These measurements and the folds permit the table top and the rest of the apparatus to be packed into a small suitcase, and may be fitted with screwed legs, divided in the middle, to the same end. A solid table top can be used if extreme portability is not a great consideration, in which case a little extra area will give more freedom in use.



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There are three traps. No. 1 is a revolving panel of sufficient length and width to permit of carrying a cigar box temporarily fixed on each side. The panel is eight inches square and the size of the pair of boxes used in conjunction is—length, seven and a quarter inches; width, four and five-eighths inches; depth, three inches—all external dimensions. Two boxes exactly alike are required, one being filled with cigars and the other faked to resemble a full box. The faking is quite simple and consists merely of a false bottom of cardboard, a tight fit to the inside of the box, so that it may be raised to within an inch or so of the top and covered with a single layer of cigars. The reason for this is that the capacity of the spirit bottle is less than the capacity of the box, although the fact is not apparent to casual observation, and for the sake of full effect it is desirable to give the impression of a box full of cigars. Special fittings are necessary on both surfaces of the revolving panel for the attachment of the boxes. These are shewn in detail in Fig. 36. Each set consists of two small angle pieces with rigid pins projecting from the face (A) and one small spring bolt (B). Three holes in the box, two at the back and one in front, correspond with the fixed and the moveable pin. The



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latter is fixed at such distance from the former that the bolt may be pushed back by pressing the box against it and when the box is clear of the fixed pins it is lowered on to the surface of the panel and engaged with them, the spring pin following up in its own socket. The box is detached by a reversal of the same movement, i.e., it is first drawn forward till clear of the fixed pins, the rear slightly raised till clear of the brackets, and then pushed clear of the bolt. Upon the nice adjustment and easy working of this arrangement, on both sides of the panel, depends the attachment and detachment of the respective boxes without noticeable effort. A safety bolt is provided to rigidly lock the panel such time as its movement is not required.

Trap number 2 disposes of the cigars placed in the spirit bottle. The latter is of the usual square shape, with straight sides, and is prepared by removing the bottom. A lapidary will make a clean job of it by cutting through the sides, just above the bottom, and grinding the edges. The opening of the trap is a square of equal size to the inside of the bottle and short panel pins are driven into the table top, slightly projecting, to guide the bottle into exact position. The central portion of the one side of the trap is extended to form a short arm in one piece with the trap itself and it is to this that the trap hinge is fixed. The trap is self-locking by a spring bolt fixed to the under side and traversing the line of the centre from front to back. Here it terminates in a pin that passes through a slot cut in the trap arm and projects above the surface at a point adjoining the outside of the bottle when the latter is brought over the trap opening.

We are now in a position to consider the first stage of the procedure. While commenting upon the cigars, the performer first opens the box, casually shewing the visible layer, then turns the box with its back to the audience, removes the cigars one by one and drops them into the spirit bottle, which is standing towards the front of the table at a few inches distance from the revolving panel, and to the right of same, viewed from the front. As he does so, he depresses the false bottom till it lies flat against the real bottom. He then collects any small articles offered by the audience. The nature of the articles determines to some extent the manner of dealing with them. If watches, rings, pocket-knives, keys and the like are pressed on him, he must secure a handkerchief to complete the collection and take just so many as may be wrapped in it to make a bundle of suitable size for the available means of reproduction. If all soft goods can be obtained, e.g., gloves and handkerchiefs, so much the better; they can be dropped loosely into the box, make a better display and are easier to handle. The collection being complete, the box is secured in position upon the revolving panel, the under side of which carries the duplicate box, filled with cigars. The visible box is nailed down with a light nail or pin such as is often supplied with a cigar box. The nailing-up is more or less a pretence. The hole is well worn from previous use and the nail has a very slight hold. The lid of the box, following the usual construction, jams between end pieces and it derives its main security from these. The fit should be close enough to prevent the lid flying open as the box is carried round with the revolution of the panel, yet not so tightly that it cannot be pulled open without a violent struggle.

Now comes a tricky move that, if properly executed, will pass absolutely undetected, but which by faltering or ill judgment can be hopelessly bungled. The performer stands

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with the table on his left side; nearest to him is the cigar box and beyond it, a few inches away, the bottle filled with cigars. He takes a folded table napkin from the table and opens it out in front of him, the lower edge a few inches below the level of the table top. Saying, "I will cover the cigars," he makes a half-turn towards the table and brings his right hand, and with it the napkin, over in the direction of the bottle. The top edge of the napkin is kept taut between the two hands, and the left remaining more or less stationary, acts as a pivot, around which the right hand moves in a half circle. This brings the outstretched napkin well in front of the cigar box, and as it is carried past this (the left hand now following the right in its lateral movement) the right hand finger tips give a slight tilt to the front of the box and send it spinning with the panel into the interior of the table, while the duplicate box, filled with cigars, comes up to take its place. Steadily, without pause, the napkin is carried on to the bottle and draped over it. There must be neither haste nor hesitation.

The bottle has now to be lifted and moved to a side table. It is seized by the neck through the substance of the covering material and moved forward into contact with the release pin of the trap bolt. The latter is drawn and the trap falls, and with it the cigars. The disengaged hand goes to the table edge, as though to receive the bottom of the bottle, and the fingers passing beneath, press upon the hinged arm and re-close the trap. The bottle is lifted and carried away. It is empty, but to complete the story, it has yet to be filled with smoke. This presented some little difficulty. The acid-ammonia "smoke" familiar to magicians naturally came to mind, but it proved both troublesome in its application and unsatisfactory in its effect. As the outcome of experiments, I hit upon a method which is simple, clean and effective. All that is needed is a small supply of amorphous phosphorus and a piece of blotting paper about half-an-inch square. A finger tip is dabbed into the phosphorus and rubbed on to the scrap of paper. This is laid upon a metal tray to which the bottle is to be removed. It will be remembered that the story provides for the performer to smoke casually during his recital, also that the bottle is bottomless. A touch from the glowing cigar end sets the phosphorus smouldering: the bottle is placed over it and traps the clouds of smoke that form while other matters proceed.

The smoke effect has been described more particularly in a separate section, which should be read in conjunction.

After removing the cigar box to a distant part of the stage or room, the performer returns to the table, seats himself, pours out a glass of wine and proceeds with the frivolous discussion of the newspaper. This is to give time and cover.

Holding the newspaper spread before him in the right hand, the left hand passes beneath the table, opens the submerged cigar box, removes the contents and pushes them up through trap 3 into a bottomless Champagne bottle standing immediately over it. This only occupies a trifle of time, and when safely accomplished, he shifts his position and continues with the comedy long enough to divert suspicion. Trap 3 is a simple hinged trap, circular in outline, with a pivoted bolt fastening, opened and closed from the under side.

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And here we may leave the performer to the enjoyment of his drink and smoke, and the audience to the enjoyment of his gags and his impudence. The climax has already been revealed.

Bottomless wine bottles are supplied by the conjuring apparatus stores. A method of preparation is described elsewhere in this volume (Refer, "A Ring and a Dove"). As the bottle is smashed in the course of the performance, it must be replaced on each occasion and the receptacle for the wine is transferrable. A slight improvement on the usual container consists of a half spherical spinning provided with a flat bottom and a tubular neck, the extremity of the tube being screw-threaded and fitted with a corresponding screw-threaded collar. The container is pushed up through the neck of the bottle and secured from the outside by screwing on the collar.

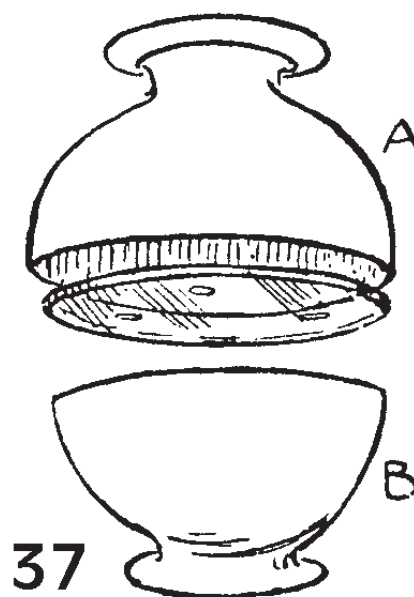
There are two other points to mention in regard to the table. About four inches below the top a piece of black material is stretched between the four legs, to form a bag or enclosure to catch the loose articles that proceed from the traps.

The cloth must be glued to the table top and neatly cut round the outline of the traps with a razor blade, but should present the appearance of a loose cover. The border must therefore be allowed to fall freely over the edge and hang as if casually thrown over. A nice discretion in artistic disorder must be exercised. It must not look slovenly at one extreme or too geometrically correct at the other. Above all, eschew tinsel braids and conjurer's fringes like poison.

### A Super Rice Bowls Trick.

There are two forms of the trick known as "The Indian Rice Bowls" in general use.

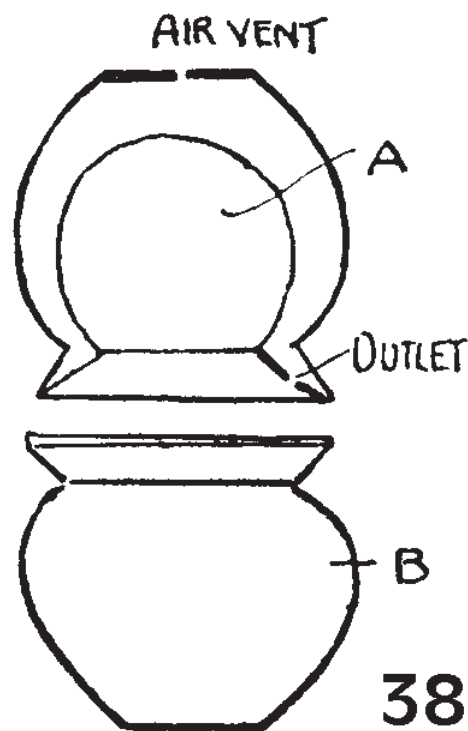
One consists of two earthenware basins and a flanged celluloid disc. Fig. 37. Basin A is filled to the brim with water. The disc is placed over it and, the brim of the bowl being previously ground to ensure close contact, is retained by atmospheric pressure and may be inverted and moved about with perfect freedom. One precaution is necessary, and that is to place a few grains of rice or a match-stick on the tray at the spot where the inverted bowl of water stands: otherwise even a drop of water accidentally finding its way beneath might cause suction and result in an untimely surprise when the basin came to be lifted. A better way is to make three indents on the inside of the disc with a round-nosed punch: these will form three excrescences upon the opposite face and permanently insure the required air gap. In operation, B is filled to the brim with rice and A placed over it, mouth to mouth. The basins are then inverted and after proper



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interval separated. The rice is now piled up on the celluloid disc and therefore overflows, giving the appearance of having doubled in quantity. The heap is carefully levelled off, leaving only just sufficient rice to cover the disc, and the basin, apparently full of rice, is covered with the empty basin. This in due course is again removed, the fake being removed with it, leaving the basin full of water.

In the second method, which is probably the original and actually of Indian origin, two spun brass bowls are used of characteristic Indian shape, and of these one is ordinary and the other of special construction, being formed with a double wall. In other words it has an inner lining, with space between the inner and outer walls giving capacity of about one-half that of the whole. See Section (Fig. 38). The space is filled with water by complete immersion in a larger vessel, there being an outlet hole close to the edge of the inside wall and an air vent in the outside, in the centre of the bottom. The latter, after filling, is temporarily stopped, which checks the escape of the liquid.



The operation in this case is as follows. B is filled with rice and covered with A, mouth to mouth. The basins are inverted; then the rice falls into A, which having lesser capacity, piles up above the level of the basin and when exposed to view appears to have increased in bulk. The whole of the rice is tipped out and both basins shewn apparently empty. They are replaced together, the water loaded basin uppermost, and the vent opened. The water then trickles from the upper to the under basin and is revealed as the climax of the experiment.

It occurred to me that by combining the two methods, a sequence little short of amazing could be obtained, as in fact has proved to be the case.

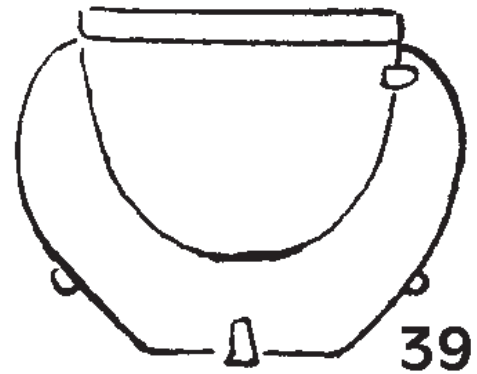
In its elementary form, applicable to small sized bowls, all that is necessary is a celluloid disc fake, similar to that used in connection with the earthenware bowls, but flanged upon both sides instead of upon one side only, in addition to the pair of metal bowls above described. The method of handling may be inferred from the more detailed description of the elaborated set that follows.

To be really impressive, the bowls should be of fairly large size. Just how large must be determined by personal taste and the market in oriental goods. First it is necessary to obtain two bowls of similar shape shewn in Fig. 42. These usually have a scalloped rim, which is useless for the purpose, and should be cut off, leaving a narrow upright collar about a quarter-of-an-inch wide. A spun half-sphere is made to fit one of the bowls and

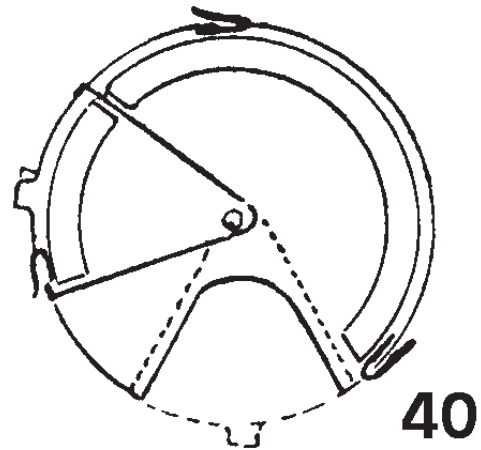


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soldered inside the rim as shewn in Fig. 39. The joint must be absolutely water tight. A one-eighth inch hole is drilled in this lining, as near the rim as possible, as an outlet for the water. A similar hole is drilled in the centre of the bottom, not of the lining, but of the bowl proper. Three small brass lugs, about a quarter-of-an-inch long and of the same width are fixed at equidistant points, projecting outwards. Three similar lugs, projecting inwards, are fixed to the other bowl. That completes the preparation of the bowls. It may be a guide in reproduction to mention that my own bowls are about seven and a half inches diameter at their widest point and about five and a half inches deep.



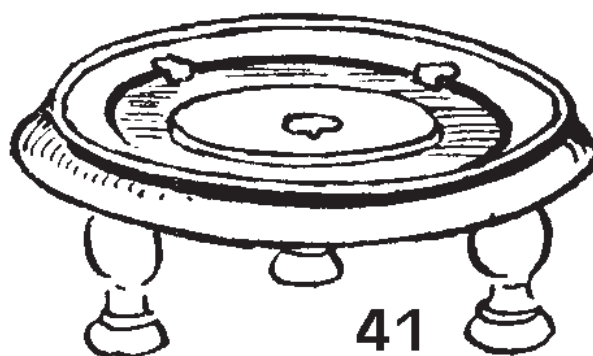
Now for the fake. This is of stout brass, circular in form and nearly half-an-inch larger than the diameter of the basins at the mouth. It is flanged upon both sides to accommodate itself easily to the inside of the basin rims. A segment is cut out of the disc, as in Fig. 40, and nearly one-half of the flanging is cut away (before being fixed) on one side, to make way for the moving of a shutter. The shutter consists of a segment of the same material as the body of the fake and is riveted to the centre thereof. It is provided with a lug, projecting beyond the circumference to enable it to be turned aside when necessary. Normally it lies in position covering the gap in the fake and is prevented from moving too far in that direction by butting against the end of the flange piece. Another lug projects from the fake itself at the point where it will be covered by the lug on the moving shutter when the latter is turned aside to the limit of its movement in the opposite direction – again checked by the corresponding end of the flange piece. Another arc of flanging is fixed to the shutter to assist in maintaining the position of the fake in relation to the bowl. Upon this side of the fake, three stout wire hooks are fixed, at the extreme edge, two on the body of the fake and one on the shutter, and they are so placed, that when the shutter is open, they are equidistant. The shape, direction and positions of these hooks is such that, when the shutter is open, if the double walled bowl is inverted over the fake and given a turn to the right, the lugs on the bowl will engage in the hooks. On the other side of the fake are three other hooks, but differently constructed. In this case they are formed of flat metal tongues set a trifle over a quarter-of-an-inch from the periphery of the fake and rivetted to the flange arc at one end, with a blocking thickness between to give the necessary space for the entry of the bowl lugs. These hook catches are fixed at the same points as the wire hooks on the other side and they point in the same direction. The result is that when the fake is properly placed between the two bowls, a turn to the right will detach the fake from one and attach it to the other, and vice versa. These are the essentials. To assist in effective and smooth working two accessories are desirable. The first is a small circular platform,



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supported on three legs, three inches high, to raise the bowls clear of the table surface (Fig. 41), and a large tray to carry the lot. The top of the miniature platform is recessed to take the projections of the flange arc and attachments and the centre rivet head. The tray has three metal rings in which the platform legs rest, so that the platform shall not slide about when slight pressure is brought to bear upon it. The importance of this will be seen later.

There is one other small point for consideration before embarking upon the performance and that concerns the plugging of the vent hole. In devices of this class it is generally recommended that a pellet of wax be used to stop the hole. It may be that a pellet of wax can be used to stop a vent hole, but my own experience is that wax in relation to a vent hole will do anything but stop it. I was once pledged to holy secrecy by a man who told me in confidence, as a very, very great favour of a



much better thing than wax. It had taken him years of patient research (he implied) to make this profound discovery. I am going to betray the confidence. He has gone to a happier land, where wax, vent holes, even rice bowls, are as things that never mattered. The idea is to place a strip of adhesive plaster over the hole and roll it neatly away with a movement of the finger tip at the right time. This sounds good and would probably work well if applied to a dry surface. As however, it is in the nature of things for vent holes to be or to become wet, either the stuff won't stick at all or it beguiles its trustee into a false belief and comes neatly away at the wrong time. The clean and safe method that I recommend is a tiny rubber stopper, made quite simply by cutting off a short piece of rubber cord. Rubber cord three-sixteenths of an inch thick is a stock line at most rubber stores and serves the purpose perfectly. I told my adhesive plaster friend about the rubber plugs, but he treated the idea with scorn and went his way. Soon after I heard that he was recommending rubber plugs to all his friends.

A square metal tank of a size to hold the two bowls will serve the double purpose of a packing receptacle and a water tank for filling. Without this one must have resource to a bucket, and it is not every theatre that has a bucket. There is the dressing room wash basin – perhaps – but they are seldom deep enough, and even if they are, it is unlikely that they have stoppers. True there are dressing room wash basins that have stoppers but they are very new basins in very new theatres. I can understand why performers write washing lists and execute coloured masterpieces in greasepaints on dressing-room walls, and I can understand why orchestral musicians write unfavourable comments upon my performances (or sometimes give explanatory diagrams) and messages to distant friends in my bandbooks, but I have never been able to understand why or if actors collect theatre wash-basin plugs.

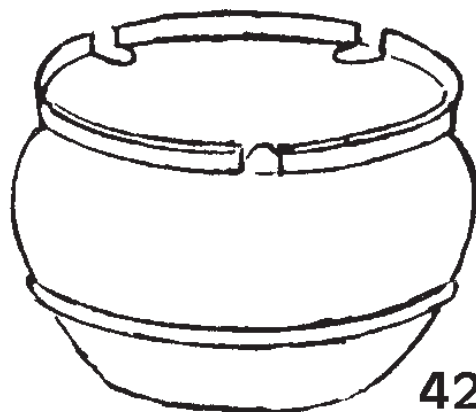
Submerge the double basin in the water tank and when the cessation of air bubbles indicates that the secret compartment is full, plug the vent hole, withdraw the bowl and

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carefully wipe it outside and inside. As an additional precaution against leakage, a plug can be inserted also into the outlet.

A bag of rice, quant. suff. completes the outfit.

The fake, blackened side upwards, is laid upon the little platform, fitting snugly into the recess provided for it; and the platform, two bowls, mouths downwards, and bag of rice are ranged in order on the tray. The bowls are lifted, one in each hand, and the insides deliberately shewn. It may here be mentioned that, in order to secure a firm grip on the tapering sides (which might otherwise be difficult) a wire ring is neatly soldered round the outside about an inch and a half from the bottom (see Fig. 42). If gently knocked together (with precaution against denting) the empty basin will ring, suggesting that the sound comes from both



rather than from only the one, and strengthens the visual impression that both are truly empty. The prepared bowl is replaced on the tray, mouth downwards, and the unprepared one put down mouth upwards. Rice from the bag is poured into it and smoothed off level. The prepared basin is lifted, the inside shewn again, and placed mouth to mouth with the bowl of rice. The two together are carefully lifted with both hands on to the platform, and in transit they are inverted. The rice, therefore, from the first basin falls into the lining of the other and when the now uppermost bowl is removed it overflows and leaves the remainder piled well above the original level, thus effecting the first apparent increase in quantity. The bowl of rice is taken with the disengaged hand, from the platform and laid on the tray, while the heap of rice is smoothed off level. Meantime, the other hand, which still holds the empty bowl, lowers the latter, mouth down, on to the platform, immediately over the fake and gives it a turn to the left until it is felt that the fake is gripped by the lugs. It is then lifted and brought over the bowl of rice. Both together are again raised to the platform and turned over on the way, as before. The upper bowl is slowly lifted off, resulting in a further overflow of rice and a bowl apparently full and piled up; actually a heap of rice lying upon the flat surface of the fake. This is not levelled off and the bowl is not removed from the platform, nor is there any repetition of the inversion to be done. The water-loaded bowl is lifted on to the other and is carried with a sweeping movement from front to back to push off as much as possible of the rice. This done, the tips of thumb and second finger close upon the projecting lugs of the fake and press towards one another, causing the shutter to open to its full extent. Just previously, the plug should be secretly removed from the outlet hole, and now a similar attention is given to the vent plug. Immediately the water begins to flow from its container into the lower bowl, the cutaway segment of the fake being devised to that end. With holes of the sizes given the time of discharge is small, but it must be well judged by trial and rehearsal and fitting patter arranged to cover the development. By giving the upper basin a turn to the right, the fake is unlocked from the lower bowl and locked on to the upper, with which it is lifted and carried away. It is momentarily laid upon the tray and given a turn to the

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left. A minute block or stud soldered to the tray at a convenient point as a stop against which to press the projecting lug of the fake will facilitate this. Directly the fake is clear of the bowl, the latter is inverted and the water poured from one to another repeatedly to give full effect to the display.

On a smaller scale, with bowls that can be completely spanned by one hand, all complications pertaining to the transfer locking fake can be dispensed with. Only a simple disc of stout celluloid, flanged on both sides is needed. One slight alteration in the above described routine becomes necessary. Before the flow of water can be started, the fake must be got rid of, and this is effected by lifting it, together with the, for the time being, upper bowl, ostensibly to shew that the rice has disappeared as quickly as it came. Bowl and fake are laid upon the tray and the bowl lifted, leaving the fake behind. The rice which covers it blends with the rice already scattered on the tray and masks it.

### Patter.

The necessity for saying something during an awkward pause in a conjuring show sometimes gives rise to the regrettable. Therefore, with the object of assisting those to whom the framing of suitable stuff to fill a gap of two or three minutes, without being completely fatuous, may present a difficulty, I append an outline for patter for the above, which may serve as a basis. It is based upon a similar story published in an old number of "Mahatma" in connection with a description of an early form of the rice bowls trick.

"I will shew you one of the much talked-of feats of the Indian Fakirs, usually shewn at the time of the annual planting of the rice crops.

"Rice is used and a couple of the brass bowls commonly used by the natives. These are real Indian bowls, made by the workmen of Benares. Every native carries one, and uses it for shopping, for cooking or for bathing. Not being large enough to lie in or stand in, the native fills it with water and puts it on his head – upside down. That effects an economy both of water and of time.

The rice is poured into one of these bowls, just as much as it will hold, and neatly levelled off, so that it is just full. It is then covered with the empty bowl, inverted over it, and the two bowls together are given to a native to hold on his head. If there is a native present, I shall be obliged if he will step forward."

(Suiting the action to the word, the conjurer raises the bowls above his head, being thereby enabled to make the necessary inversion unnoticeably, while the smile usually raised by the remark causes a relaxation of attention and favours the situation).

"Failing native assistance, I will place the bowls on this stand. Then follows an incantation. I will omit the incantation – having come of a respectable family – after which the upper bowl is slowly raised, and it is seen that the rice has increased and multiplied to

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such an extent that both basins are packed full – so full that it is impossible to separate them ever so slightly without the rice escaping and overflowing.

Again one of the basins is levelled off, leaving it just even full, and covered with the empty basin. They are handed out to a bystander, or set apart in an isolated position, as before, and after some more incantation the rice again doubles in quantity.

“Sometimes an opposite effect occurs and the rice disappears or diminishes so that a whole bowlful dwindles to a few grains.”

(Here the bowls are set in order and the air vent opened for the release of the water. The conjurer scoops up a handful of the loose rice from the tray, and proceeds) –

“In every handful of genuine rice there are three thousand, four hundred and seventy two grains. Would anybody like to count and see if this is correct?

“These manifestations are presented in the garb of a religious miracle and, according to native tradition, are said to forecast the state of the coming harvest. If the rice disappears or diminishes in quantity, it is supposed to predict a poor harvest or a famine, as the case may be; but with the miraculous increase, there is assured a bountiful harvest, the rice multiplying and overflowing to an apparently unlimited extent. This brings joy to the hearts of the onlookers and liberal alms to the fakir, who, like all fortune-tellers, and all good tradesmen, knows it is well to please one’s customers; so whether the first result be good or ill, it is always followed by a final phenomenon to modify or strengthen the first. More incantations follow. Extra strong ones, this time. Burra wallah incantations as they say in the East, Incantations With Knobs On as they might say in the West.

“And then, for the last time the bowls are separated, and, lo! the basin which a moment ago was empty is filled with water – signifying that the rainfall so necessary to a plentiful harvest will not be lacking.”

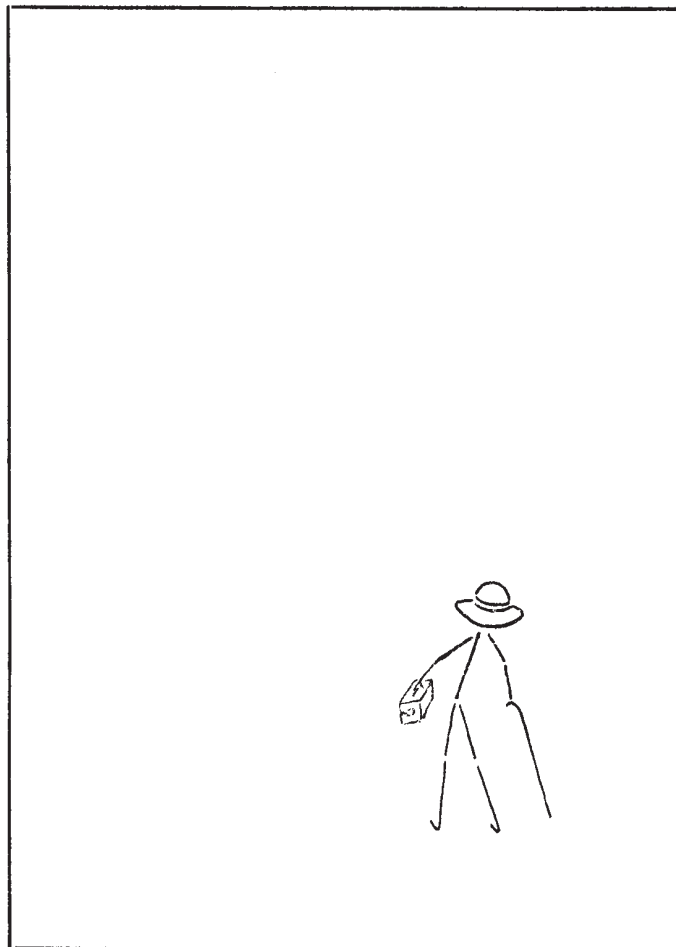
## **The Truth (?) about the Indian Rope Trick.**

Having made two visits to India, I should be lacking in my duty to the fraternity if I failed to record the result of my personal investigation of the traditional miracle.

One day an hotel servant informed me that a “trick wallah” (such was the undignified title assigned to the representative of Eastern Magic) awaited my pleasure without. After a hard life, waiting on the pleasure of others, the idea of becoming an aristocrat in this strange land, and engaging a magician to perform at my command, appealed to me strongly, and I engaged him forthwith, the more gladly as he only asked for his fee as many shillings as I, in my time, expected guineas. He gave me a good hour’s entertainment for the money, ingeniously contrived from such properties as an industrious person can collect from a day’s tour of domestic rubbish heaps. Then I asked him, “What about the Mango Tree Trick?” The Mango Tree Trick he informed me, was an

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affair of a higher power, and he recommended me to his uncle. Regardless of the cost, I duly engaged the uncle, and a venerable old gentleman, with another sack of castaway trifles, responded to the call. A very pleasant hour passed in the exhibition of exactly the same show that I had already seen (wherein I observed the similarity of habit between the wizards of the East and of the West); and then came the Mango Tree Trick complete – all except the mango. I asked about the fruit, but was told that it was not in season – from which one gathers that even the far-famed magic of the East has its limitations.



HOW I SAW THE GREAT INDIAN ROPE TRICK.  
(A door-nail sketch by the Author, in one  
of his less lucid moments.)

And then I enquired about the Great Indian Rope Trick. The old man shook his head sadly. "No," he said, he did not know any magician who could do it. "My grandfather," he said, "did it five hundred years ago, but no man ever since." I regard that, coming as it does from one of the most highly reputed magicians in India, as authoritative and conclusive. As distinguished variety artistes say in contemplation of their own talents in the advertising columns of *The Stage*, "'nuf said."

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## Transit of Wine.

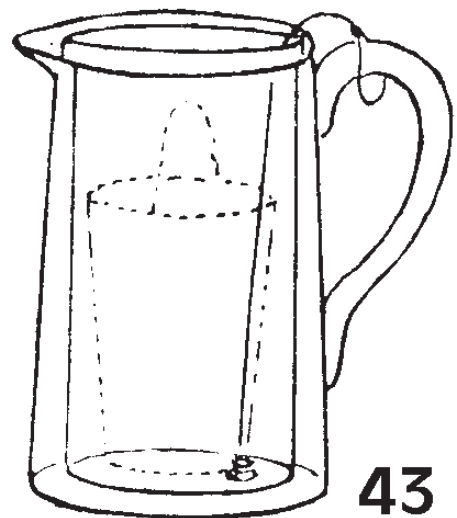
As far back as one can remember, there was an old toy consisting of a double-walled drinking glass containing a fluid between the inner and outer walls, the idea presumably being to show a vessel that could be inverted without the liquid escaping—a not very profound mystery. But an ingenious magician (Roy Enoc), got a brain wave and reconstructed the vessel (first a tumbler and later a jug) with a removable lining (to admit of re-setting) having a plug in the centre of the bottom whereby the fluid spread between the outer and inner walls of the vessel could be released and allowed to find its lowest common level. The effect from the front of the apparently diminishing fluid was highly mysterious and the trick achieved a well deserved popularity. The method of presentation in vogue was to put the jug (filled with “ink”) on the crown of a borrowed hat with an empty tumbler beneath. The level of the ink in the jug was seen to fall, and when the hat was lifted, the tumbler beneath was seen to be filled. The ink was introduced into the glass by way of a celluloid lining to the tumbler, lifted from a wire bracket on the back of the table under cover of the hat.

Some modifications in the plan of presentation may be of interest.

First, as to the construction of the jug. A common glass jug is used and a celluloid lining made to fit. A space of an eighth of an inch is permitted at the mouth of the jug and the lining at this point is strengthened and rendered a tight fit by a thickened rim of the same material cemented round it. In the bottom of the lining is fixed a turned metal flange with a central hole and a precisely fitting plug. The latter is attached to a piece of fine fishing gut brought up over the rim of the jug and tied to the handle. (Fig. 43).

The tumbler lining has a loop of gut or fine steel wire across the mouth so that it can be readily lifted.

In the first form in which I presented the trick, I wrapped the glass in newspaper and gave it to a volunteer assistant to hold. Another held the jug, and the liquid ostensibly passed from one to the other. The glass was loaded from the jug itself. The tumbler lining was easily concealed within the jug, the opacity of the ink completely masking it. The wire loop came conveniently to hand just inside the mouth of the jug. It was perfectly natural and easy to stand with the opened out sheet of newspaper in front of the jug, thumb in front and fingers behind and while directing attention to the empty glass to lift the lining and its contents by crooking the finger into the loop. The glass was then placed behind the paper and the inner vessel lowered into it as the paper was brought over and around it. The holder was instructed to keep it upright and keep it still. The holder of the jug was directed to keep the jug at arm's length, so that he did not get too close a view of the interior.



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Some tact and experience in the management of people is necessary in a case like this, but if successfully carried out the effect from the spectators' point of view is greatly enhanced.

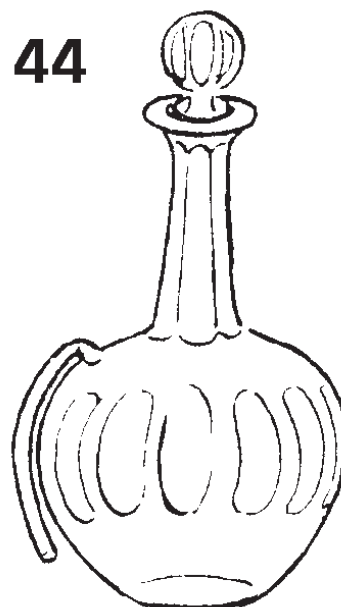
The reader will probably have remarked that the disappearance of the liquid is not complete, as of necessity the whole of it remains in the jug and he may account it a weak point. It may, however, quite plausibly be explained that the glass being of smaller capacity than the jug, it is necessary to stop the flow at the point where the glass is presumably filled.

At a later date, I sought to make a final and complete disappearance of the accumulation at the bottom of the jug. This I managed by drilling a hole in the side of the jug itself, close to the bottom, plugged with a rubber stopper. The hole was an eighth of an inch in diameter and the rubber plug a piece of three-sixteenths inch elastic cord. In the absence of a proper drilling tool, glass can be bored with a rat-tail file kept well lubricated with turpentine in which camphor has been dissolved.

A receptacle had to be provided for the escaped fluid and this took the form sometime of a hollow tray and sometime of a special table with a small round top about one inch thick. This, instead of solid wood, was of hollow tin. In both cases an aperture in the upper surface was provided at a point convenient to catch the liquid and obscured with wire gauze. The procedure was to begin with a folded newspaper under the jug to show, it was explained, that the liquid did not escape from the bottom. The flow was then started, and at the moment before the lowest level was reached, peremptorily ordered to "stop." The jug was then lifted and shewn to be dry and the newspaper unsoiled. The newspaper was not replaced, but after withdrawing the rubber plug, was opened out and held behind the jug, ostensibly to form a background to show more clearly the gradual disappearance of the remainder.

Ink, to my mind, not being a very pleasing beverage, I substituted alleged wine. A teaspoonful of salicylate of soda and a few drops of tincture of perchloride of iron in water give a very good wine colour.

Owing to the apparent bulk of liquid vanished from the jug, it became necessary to provide a receptacle of greater capacity than a tumbler for its destination, and the thing to use was clearly a proper decanter. To apparently fill an empty decanter with wine, I prepared a decanter by drilling a hole at the normal level of "full," that is an inch or two below the neck, and cemented into it a bent glass tube extending down the side and closed at its lowest extremity by a rubber plug (Fig. 44). The decanter was filled right up to the glass stopper with water containing salicylate of soda. A glass bead carrying a minute portion of perchloride of iron in solid form, placed conveniently at the neck, outside the





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stopper, was dislodged by raising the latter under the shelter of a covering cloth and the rubber plug to the outlet being withdrawn, the liquid sank from an invisible to a visible level, while the chemical combination gave it wine colour to complete the illusion.

A tray or hollow table top as already described is a necessary adjunct to accommodate the overflow. The glass tube is necessary to guide the flow to its proper place.

It has long been my intention to pursue this idea to the end of mixing two wines, say burgundy and sherry, from their own bottles into a jug and following their visible disappearance from the jug to reproduce them as above, separately decanted. I am afraid it is one of the things I shall leave undone. Perhaps someone else would like to do it.

## The Recipe for Diamonds.



*The Recipe for Diamonds .*

A comic wig, a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles of extravagant dimensions and a few thousand pounds worth of cut precious stones are the main requirements for the experiment, of which the performer gives the following account. Gems of inferior quality will do; ten shillings, wisely expended, will secure a brilliant display.

“I once attended a lecture, given by a learned professor, on the subject of diamonds and their production by artificial means. I will repeat what I can remember of it, together with some things that I do not remember; with the addition of a practical demonstration that I hope will add to its interest, and to its scientific value, I don’t think. The professor, apparently suffering from adenoids and a Teutonic origin, delivered himself of the following –

‘Ladees ad geddlebed, dis evedig I haf de odder ad der bleasure of bresnetig ad egsberibed id de zindedig vorbatiod of diabods. Diabods, as eferybody dose, iss bardigles of bure garbod, grysdalized by edorbous bressure bedeadh der grust of de erd. Id has log beed dode dat if we good broduce de bressure by ardifizial beads, we good bake diabods as eazily as ady udder sords of droubles. I byself hab wid beddy kides of garbod egsberibented, ingludig goal, yoke, dooth powder ad burred sugar. Der burred zugar he buch bestincht. By wife once a gake bade. De indernal bressure was indense, ad the sbezifig gravidy of der bixdure edorbous, ad wed dad gage did gool becub, de gondracdiod was bagdificed, ad a diabod was gombressed id de biddle. I broge a dooth od id, ad de dooth ad de diabod bode swallowed, so dat I gannod gomplete broof give, bud I gad shew der blace where der dooth was.

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Bud der best diabods was bade vrom gongealed wader. Heir iss bure wader, der stuff wad bodes flode od. Doo vlower bods gonstidudes der abbliances wad bakes a redord. I dode bean wud ov dose rude redords used by gabdrivers, bud a laboridory record wad iss used vor gebbigal disdilleryvigadiods. Der wader goes id der bottob wud. Zo. Ad ded I bour id vour drobs ov der gonteds of dis emdy boddle, which iss a zegred gombound, ad blace de odder bod od dob of der virsd bod ad thed durn theb ober zo thad der tob pod is ad der boddob ad der bottob pod der tote begubs, ad der wader which was id der tob pod drops dowd into der bottob pod, ad thed do it agade, zo, ad geep od doing it. Dis iss der wader to agidade ad der gebbigal do zirgulade. Der gebbigles dat gonsdidude der gobidadiod iss zumwod gobbligaded, ad der bore the bixdure iss upshaked, ded der gebbigles iss very egzided ad the bore diadods we gid.

Hier is diabods id blendy, goot diabods, all gud ad bolished. Dis wud iss doo garads, dis wud is vourdeed garads, dis wud iss a dab lod of garats, doo bedy do gound ad hier iss sub bore garrods!

**Translation.**— Ladies and gentlemen, this evening I have the honour and the pleasure of presenting an experiment in the synthetic formation of diamonds. Diamonds, as everybody knows is particles of pure carbon, crystalised by enormous pressure beneath the crust of the earth. It has long been known that if we could produce the pressure by artificial means, we could make diamonds as easily as any other sorts of troubles. I myself have with many kinds of carbon experimented, including coal, coke, tooth powder and burnt sugar. The burnt sugar he much bestinked. My wife once a cake made. The internal pressure was intense, and the specific gravity of the mixture enormous, and when the cake did cool become, the contraction was magnificent, and a diamond was compressed in the middle. I broke a tooth on it, and the tooth and the diamond both swallowed, so that I cannot complete proof give, but I can shew you the place where the tooth was.

But the best diamonds was made from congealed water. Here is pure water, the stuff what boats float on. Two flower pots constitutes the appliances what makes a retort. I don't mean one of those rude retorts used by cab-drivers, but a laboratory retort what is used for chemical distilleryfications. The water goes in the bottom one. So. And then I pour in four drops of the contents of this empty bottle, which is a secret compound, and place the other pot on top of the first pot and then turn them over so that the top pot is at the bottom and the bottom pot the top becomes, and the water which was in the top pot drops down into the bottom pot, and then do it again, so, and keep on doing it. This is the water to agitate and the chemical to circulate. The chemicals that constitute the combination is somewhat complicated, and the more the mixture is upshaken, then the chemicals is very excited and the more diamonds we get.

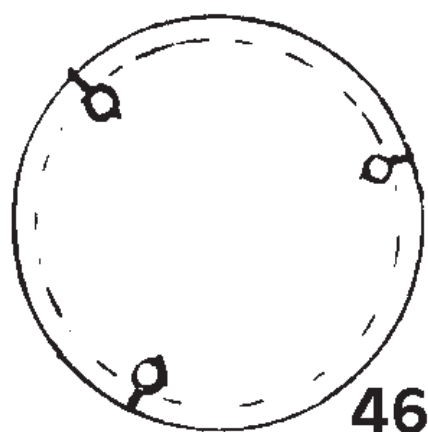
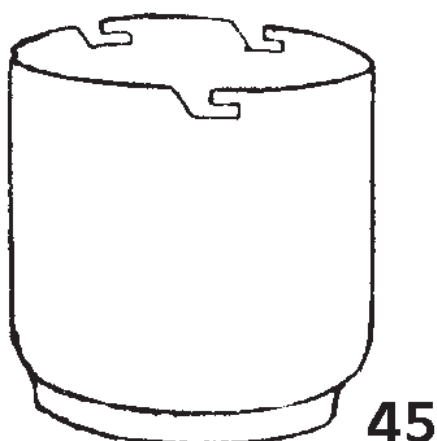
Here is diamonds in plenty, good diamonds, all cut and polished. This one is two carats, this one is fourteen carats, this one is a dam lot of carats, too many to count— and here is some more carrots!

The “laboratory-appliances” consist of three metal flower pot containers and a disc of stout celluloid, arranged on a plan derived from the standard version of the rice bowls

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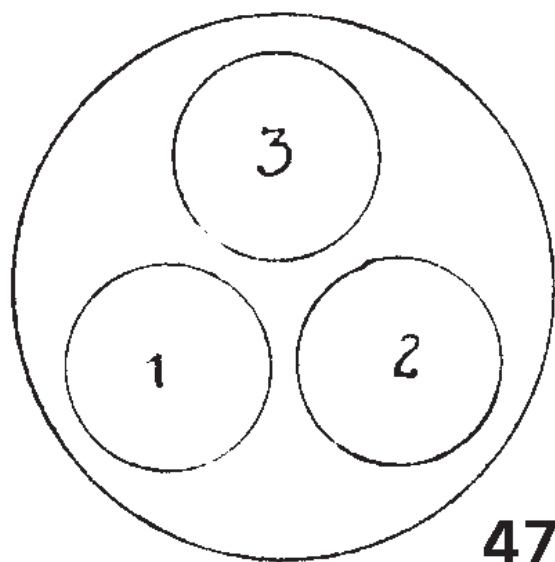
trick. As an illusion it is of questionable merit, being merely a vehicle for a quaint idea, but the broad comedy setting may be relied upon to disarm critical analysis, beside acting as a foil to more sober items.

The pots are straight sided, 4-3/4 in. high and 5-1/4 in. across. The first is thickened at the rim by bending and soldering to it, in close contact, inside, a length of one-eighth inch square wire. The augmented rim is then ground perfectly flat, so that it will hold the disc of celluloid to it by suction. The second pot has three bayonet slots cut in the rim, at equal distances apart (Fig. 45). The third pot takes no active part and is unprepared.



The disc is of thick celluloid, a trifle over 51 in. diameter, with a 3/16 in. flange turned all round on one side. On the opposite side are three metal blocks, bolted through, with horizontal pins projecting from them, to engage with the bayonet slots of pot No. 2. (Fig. 46).

Pot No. 2 is filled with "diamonds" and the disc locked in position. This pot is inverted on a tray, together with the others. They are placed in triangular formation, with Nos. 1 and 2 at the back and No. 3 in front (see Fig. 47). No. 2 cannot be shewn empty, and it is for this reason that a third pot is brought into play, to suggest by confusion of ideas what cannot in fact be proved. Pick up 1 in the right hand and 3 in the left: shew the insides and knock them together, without verbal comment. Lay down 3 (inverted) in the place of 1, transfer 1 from left hand to right and pick up 3 with the left hand: knock together 3 and 1. Put down 3 in position 1 (inverted). Put down 1, mouth upward, at position 3, and fill with water. Lift 2 and place it mouth to mouth with 1. Pick up both together and invert them, under pretext of shaking up the water. After carefully



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turning the locking pins clear of the slots, lift 1 clear of 2. Thus the water is carried off in the inverted bowl, leaving the gems exposed. They are spread upon a black velvet covered jeweller's tray, or otherwise displayed; and as a final surprise, three spring carrots are loaded into and produced from pot No. 3. The carrots should preferably be of the self-locking kind and can be tied into a bundle and suspended to a pin at the back of the table or tray, and raised into the mouth of the bowl in the act of turning the latter over.

If desired to complete the effect by getting rid of the water, to shew the three bowls unmistakably empty at the finish, this could be done by the employment of a tray-tank device, as described in connection with the Transit of Wine. In this case, an air tight plugged outlet would have to be provided near the rim for the release of the water, and consequently, the disc.

### **Off with his Head.**

It must be admitted at once that the title is a catch-line. A variation of a favourite rope trick, two ropes (tapes or braids) are tied round the performer's neck and apparently pulled through. Nothing is required but the rope—and the neck.

In combination with two or three other equally portable tricks, a cumulative effect is produced of something approaching partial dismemberment of the performer's person.

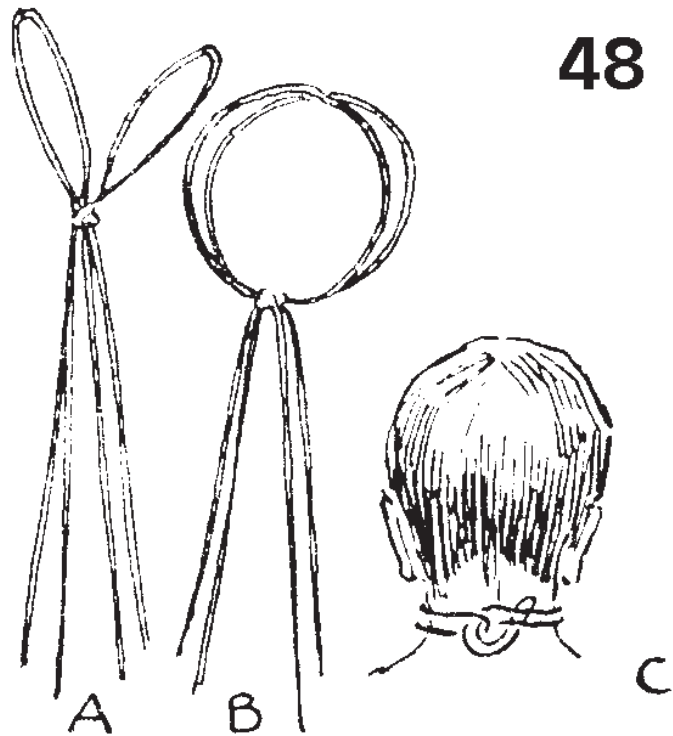
For the first phase, two long ropes are used. These, as first shewn, are held by the ends, separate and distinct, one in each hand, with arms outstretched. Bringing the right hand up to the left, the two ropes are gripped together in the left, and the right hand runs down the ropes, bringing them alongside until the approximate centre is reached. In this action, the right hand forefinger is secretly introduced between the two ropes and maintains a slight separation. With a rapid motion, the centre of the rope is thrown over the back of the head, and under cover of this movement, the disposition of them is altered so that instead of passing in continuous lengths behind the neck, each cord is doubled on its centre and both ends of one cord take the place of ends of two separate cords. At the bight, the cords are looped one within the other and given a slight twist, or pressed down between the neck and the collar for a temporary hold. The visible ends are now tied close up to the throat, in one or two knots, and the pairs of ends are given to bystanders to hold. The performer now places the fingers of both hands on each side of the knots and at the same time inserts one finger between the two lines of cords on its own side. Running the finger round to the back of the neck, he releases the loops, steps backward to free himself from them and at the same time opens out the two separate loops of single cords into one double loop. The illustration (Fig. 48A) shews the tied cords as they really are, B shows them opened out to confirm the impression of how they were and C the manner of looping the centres one within the other.

In the next demonstration, an endless chain is used, of a circumference of about thirty-six inches. This the performer hangs over his left wrist: then, raising the lower part of the loop, he lifts it over the wrist so that the chain (apparently) passes twice round. At

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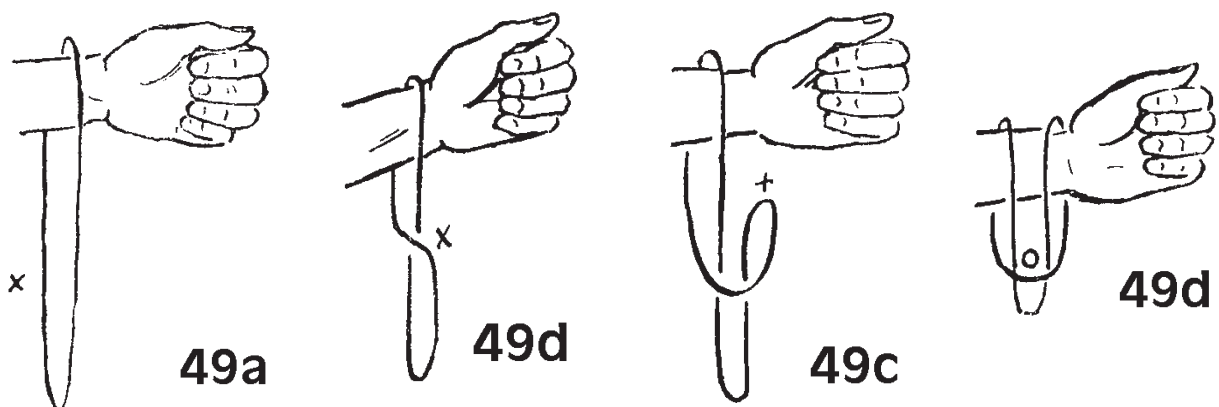
this point he allows somebody to grasp his hand so that it may be clear that the chain cannot be slipped over it. Then, after giving it a few test pulls, by which it seems to be fairly and securely wound round, he gives a sudden tug and it comes right away.

Here, of course, there is a subterfuge in the way of disposing the chain. To make this clear I have had the explanatory diagrams drawn in simple line, as though with a circle of cord, which makes the direction of the lay easy to follow; but cord is unsuited to exhibition, for precisely the reason I have used it for illustration. The links of the chain, on the other hand, are definitely helpful to the illusion, as they intermingle and disguise the falsity of the looping.



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Commencing with the band hanging over the left wrist in a single circlet, as in Fig. 49A, the performer approaches the right hand, palm upwards and catches it with the thumb on the side further away, at X, pulls this to the left and carries it over in front of the nearer dependence (Fig. 49B), gives it a twist upward and forward, to the left (Fig. 49C) and carries the loop over the wrist, so that it hangs as in D. By inserting the right hand fingers in Loop O (49D), the chain will withstand any amount of tugging, but if one of the two loops is released and the strain placed on the other, the chain slides freely over the wrist.

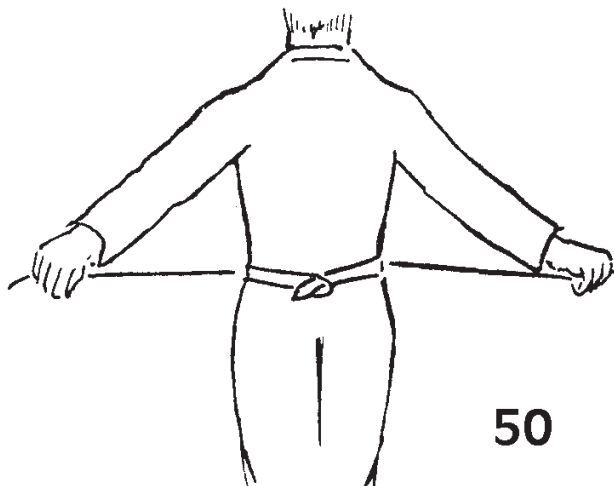


Taking next a single length of rope, long enough to go twice round the waist, with a few feet to spare, the performer holds it in both hands with the central portion outstretched horizontally before him, and the ends hanging down on the floor. Passing both hands behind his back, he carries it round the waist, brings the ends forward and crosses them in

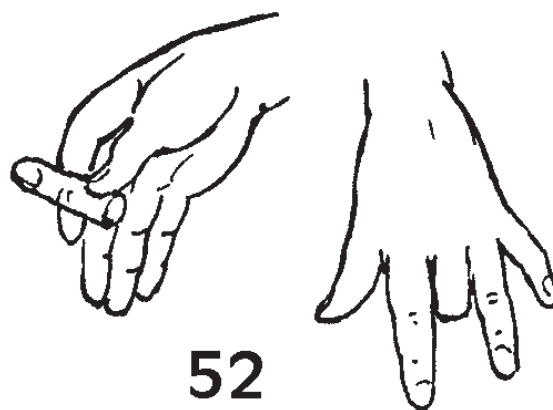
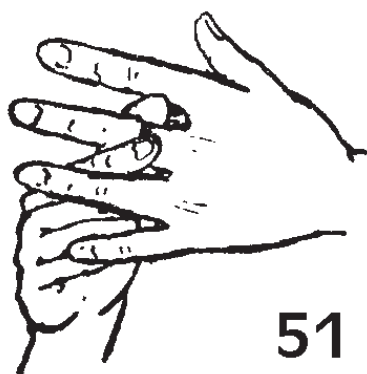
## Magical Masterpieces

the beginning of a simple knot. Then, after a pause, he pulls tightly upon the ends of the rope, or allows two helpers to do so, and the rope apparently passes through his body and, free of obstruction, the knot closes up and appears fairly in the middle of the rope.

This is the result of a deception in the manner of passing the rope round the waist. As it is carried behind the back, the fingers of one hand form a bight, round which the other hand folds its own part of the rope, so that the ends are not crossed, as the onlookers assume them to be, but the rope is merely looped together, as in Fig. 50. This can be made to hold with moderate security, but will yield to a strain. The knot that is started after the ends of the rope are brought round to the front again is naturally drawn tight when the ends are pulled.



But the finishing touch will give a momentary shock to the spectators. The performer explains that the phenomenon lies in his ability to sever himself at any point at will – but that it must be done quickly, or he might not be able to put the parts back! As he speaks, he illustrates his point by pulling off his second finger at the middle joint, lifts it clear of the hand, shewing plainly the mutilated stump and the separated portion, and quickly replaces it. This absurdity is managed by having a modelled wax finger, or the kind



sometime used to produce the effect of thrusting a finger through the crown of a hat. In place of the needle point provided for the working of that effect, a pin pointed hook is securely rooted into its base, by means of which it can be hooked to the back of the trousers, at the level of the finger tips as the right hand hangs by the side, and hidden by the coat tail. Just before he is ready, the performer secures and palms this. In approaching the left hand, he brings it into the position of the real finger, which he bends toward the

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palm, and holds the artificial member momentarily there, gives a jerk and pulls it away. (Figs. 51 and 52). To those watching, taken by surprise, the half finger visible on the left hand is surprisingly real looking. Bringing the hands together again, the performer straightens out the real finger and palms the artificial piece. As he displays the left hand and exercises the fingers to shew that all is well, the right hand sinks to the side and hooks the dummy to the trousers again.

## **An Extemporised Drum Production.**

Most conjurers who give performances at private parties have probably at some time been approached by an unsophisticated hostess who says: — "I want you to produce these from a hat or something," casually indicating an extensive heap of presents for guests, the smallest of which could not possibly, by any exertion of cunning or force, be crammed into any hat ever made, and of an aggregate bulk approximating that of a baby elephant. In the circumstance the hat is clearly unserviceable, and so one has to fall back on "something." The occasion is usually that of a children's party and the presents themselves being the main delight, no great artistic effort is necessary; the manner of their production counts for little with the immature recipients and many a rough and ready plan has served.

One Christmas week I took an engagement at the music pavilion of a holiday spa, and early in the week the manager came to me and said he expected a few hundred children to a special matinee, and he would like me to magically produce some presents. For a public performance something more than a haphazard impromptu was desirable and I was unprepared for anything of the sort, so I spent an uncomfortable day. Eventually I thought of a drum and evolved the contraption now described. It is not an achievement of which I am immoderately proud, but, although contrived as a makeshift, on more leisurely consideration I am not sure that it is not as good a version of the drum trick as many. A mechanical table for loading the drum, wherein the table top is of exactly the same diameter as the drum itself and the draping of the table is of exactly the same depth as the depth of the drum, and presents exactly the same contour, does not seem to me to be entirely illusive, especially when the table top visibly (and audibly) drops its level during the procedure to an extent exactly equal to the depth of its box-like form. As a lady once said on contemplating the spectacle, "Oo-er lookatit!"

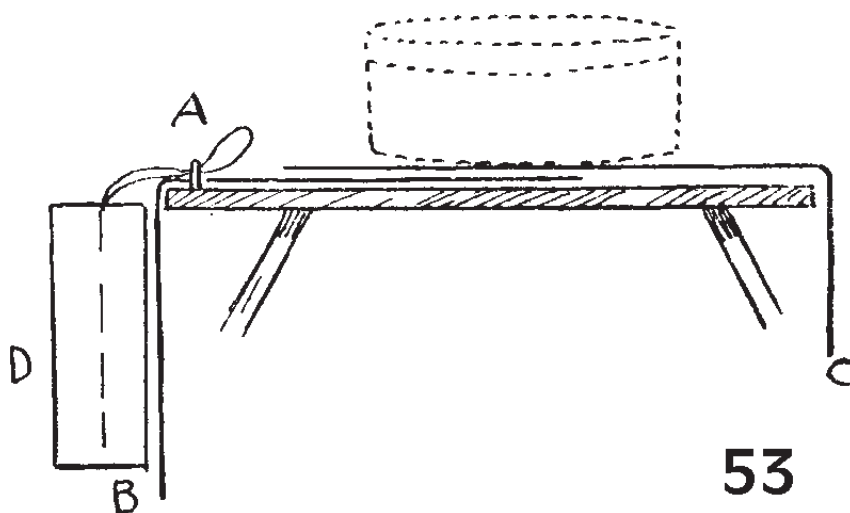
I obtained from a toyshop the largest drum I could get. It had sheet iron plates in lieu of skins. These I removed and discarded, leaving only the cylinder and the bands fitting over the ends. The toys I made into a firm drum-shaped parcel by pasting bands of stiff paper round them, covered upon the outside with newspaper pasted over, the whole fitting easily inside the drum cylinder. The load was tied round its circumference with thin string, in which, as a preliminary, two loops were formed by doubling it and tying two knots, the first about three inches from the bight and the second about an inch lower down. (For a more permanent appliance a loose fitting lining for the drum could be made, provided with a fixed bottom and a loose ring to hold a piece of newspaper stretched across the top.)

## Magical Masterpieces

I selected a thin topped wooden table, without cover, and drove a headless nail into the top, one inch from and in the centre of the rear edge. Being a stage table I treated it with the contempt it deserved. With a felt covered card table or wicker or bamboo table borrowed in a private house a "push-pin" such as photographers use could be used without leaving noticeable mark. A cherished rosewood or mahogany drawing-room what-not or touch-me-not could not of course be used, but owners of such treasures seldom tender them for base uses.

Two double sheets of newspapers complete the equipment.

The arrangement and manipulation are as follows:— Reference to the lettered sectional diagram (Fig. 53) will assist explanation. A is the nail or pin. B is a sheet of newspaper laid across the table, with enough of it hanging down at the back to form a screen for the load. This sheet of paper is pierced by the pin, which keeps it from slipping. C is the other sheet



of paper, laid over the first but further forward, so that it hangs over the front edge of the table. D is the load, suspended behind the first sheet of paper. (Note that the large loop passes over the pin as the means of suspension and the other protrudes to provide a ready hold for lifting.) The cylinder and hoops of the dismantled drum lie upon the papers.

Take up the hoops and drum body and shew them. Lay the cylinder upon the table and pull out from the front the sheet of paper C. Fasten this in position over the upper end of the drum, in the usual way. Then turn the drum over, using both hands and indirectly shewing the empty interior. Next shift the left hand (if working with the table to the left or with the right hand if working with the table to the right) from the side of the drum to the rim, fingers inside and thumb outside, and by turning the wrist bring the covered side to the front and the open side to the rear. Let the rim rest upon the table top, and as the right hand seizes the second sheet of paper (B) by the front edge, draw the drum backwards until the left hand is within reach of the loop. Catch this upon the second finger and simultaneously raise both hands, lifting the load off the pin with the one hand and drawing the paper clear of the same with the other. The direction of the pull carries the



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paper neatly off the pin without tearing and at the same time covers what is going on behind. Still using C as cover, lay the drum flat upon the table again, open side up, lower the load gently into it and let the paper fall easily over the whole. If this is carried out in one steady unhesitating move—there is no need for haste—it is a perfectly natural sequence of action with ample cover. The remaining loose rim is sprung over the paper and the superfluous portion torn off all round to complete the formation. Both sides of the drum can now be shewn, all evidence of place of concealment has been removed and subsequently the paper of the drum head and that of the inner container can be broken through together and the contents developed.

In the case for which the trick was devised, the number of souvenirs to be distributed was rather large and discretion had to be exercised in their choice. Fortunately I was able to obtain a quantity of those cunning trifles turned out by non-trade unionist Orientals—a paper cigar that, when you pull the end, expands into a circular fan. These offer commendable advantages—a tremendous lot of them can be packed into a small space and make a big show when expanded, which pleased me immensely, and they were very cheap, which pleased the management even more.

For the convenience of the attendants distributing these, as they were produced they were showered into deep baskets. In the bottoms of the baskets were already several times the quantity contained in the drum. The development of a large number of articles in rapid succession is confusing and observers quickly lose count and the fact that far more are distributed than were visibly produced is unlikely to be noticed, far less to provoke criticism.

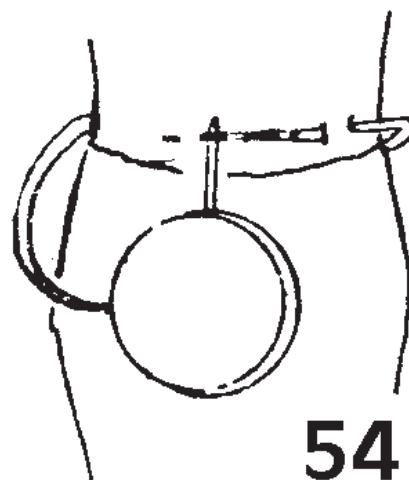
## **Another Drum Load.**

The usual magical drum of the depots is from six to eight inches in diameter and two or three inches deep. The size, in conjunction with the ample cover afforded by newspaper sheets, in making it up, make it amenable to an effective body load, based upon a basket of flowers production described by Robert Houdin.

The drum frame is provided with a loosely fitting inner receptacle, like a cake tin, for packing the articles to be produced—usually soft goods. To adapt it to the present treatment, two small holes should be drilled in the side, about a quarter of an inch apart and about midway down. Through these a piece of black carpet thread is passed and the ends tied together to form a loop. The length of this loop should be a matter of a few inches only. At a point one-quarter the circumference of the container, from the first pair of holes, is drilled a second pair, and through these is threaded a similar but longer loop. The actual length of this must be determined by experiment, as it varies with the size of the can, the girth of the performer and his own convenience. As a rough guide, a loop of eighteen inches length may be taken for a preliminary trial. A stout needle, carrying a loop of thread, of somewhere about the same length is also necessary. The needle is worked into the back of the waistcoat in two stitches, with a space of an inch or so between, as shewn in Fig. 54. The Drum load is suspended to the needle by threading the small loop thereon,

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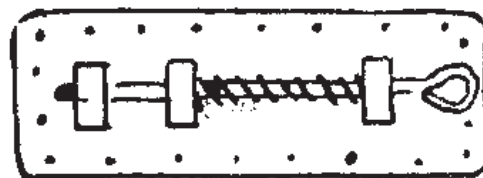
between the stitches. The loop from the needle is brought round the waist, on the right hand side, and passed over the lower waistcoat button before the button is fastened. The long loop from the drum load is carried round the waist, on the left side, and passed over the same button after it is fastened. The suspended load is masked by the coat tails, and when released by pulling on the thread that withdraws the needle, swings round to the front of the performer and remains suspended by the long loop. To prevent the needle falling into view, it is passed through the vest in a separate safety stitch before connecting up the load, leaving a few inches clearance, so that it can be drawn clear of the suspension point without being drawn entirely away from the vest.



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To present, the drum frame is first shewn and a sheet of newspaper fastened over one end. It is turned round, shewing the empty interior, and under cover of the extended paper sheet, the load is released and allowed to fall into position behind the drum. In fastening the second sheet of paper over the open end and pressing the external band into position, the load can be forced through the side first covered, and by raising the completed drum, the suspending loop is lifted clear of the vest button. The superfluous paper is trimmed off as usual and the construction is finished. The container is newspaper covered, so that when in position inside the drum, its face presents the same appearance as that of the one it has displaced and the drum can be freely shewn on both sides.

Although the simple needle arrangement described is useful for trial, and works well enough for occasional use, for frequently repeated performances it is not altogether convenient. For practical service it can desirably be replaced by a spring bolt working on a metal base plate, as shewn in Fig. 55. The plate is perforated round the edge, so that it can be sewn, either directly to the edge of the vest, below the strap and buckle, or to a belt worn beneath the vest.



55

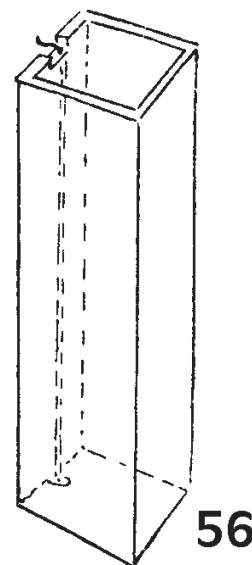
### Optical Delusion.

Among the early inventions of the prolific Selbit were sets of four wooden blocks carrying upon one side numbers or letters that, after being covered with a close fitting cover, repeatedly changed their positions.

The first model, it is interesting to recall, used only a single, undivided shell, but subsequent modifications led to the use of a divided shell, or in other words a separate shell for each block. The apparatus has gone through various forms but has now settled

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down to a general standard of construction, The blocks are of solid wood, cubical in form, painted black and numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 on one side only in painted white figures. The shells are of thin wood, loosely fitting, similarly painted and numbered back and front. The cover is of wood, fitting easily over the shells, with a groove cut throughout the length of the back, centrally, afterwards filled in by a narrow fillet of about half the thickness of the material removed. Before being filled in, a wire rod is inserted in the space provided: the lower end is bent at a right angle, cut off to about a quarter of an inch and filed to a chisel edge.



The upper end of the wire is bent in the opposite direction and cut off to half an inch, to form a small trigger, convenient for operation by a finger tip of the hand lifting the cover. According to whether this trigger is turned in or out, the shells are either left over the blocks when the cover is raised, or retained within it and carried off (Fig. 56). The arrangement of the figures, as the trick is ordinarily sold, is more or less haphazard. A tall easel with four ledges and a set of numbers, like those on the blocks, on cards, goes with the apparatus and the hypothesis is that any position allocated to the cards will be reproduced by invisible movement of the blocks themselves.

The following arrangement is carried on a consistent story, with a logical sequence of effects, exhibiting a fresh development at each stage.

The only variation in the usual numbering of the blocks is that No. 2 has its figure duplicated on the back. The arrangement of figures upon the shells is entirely different to that usually employed. The fronts of the shells are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and the backs 4, 1, blank, 2 (the two being upside down in relation to the other figures). The shells are placed over the blocks with the 1, 2, 3, 4 sides upside down. The stack as seen from the front and back now stands thus: —

<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

The line of patter and routine of effects can best be gathered from the following: —

“It has been said that seeing is believing. I will shew you that you cannot always believe the evidence of your eyes.

“For the purpose of an interesting optical illusion, I have had constructed these four wooden blocks — numbered upon one side. These blocks are perfectly plain, quite solid and as heavy as a home made cake.” (Take off cover, showing blocks in numerical order.

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Lift number 3 and those above, show back of 4. Drop the stack on four and lift 2 and 1 together in left hand. Lift 3 in right and shew back. Put down 2 without shewing and shew back of 1). "In conjunction with the blocks I use also a wooden cover, which exactly fits. This is for the double purpose of hiding the numbers for the time being and of shewing you that the blocks cannot move from their positions.

"To effect an optical illusion, I use also a duplicate set of numbers painted on cards. These I will arrange upon an easel in exactly the same order that I have stacked the blocks beneath the cover."

(Lift cover, with shells, showing stack of blocks and replace.)

**1**  
**2**  
**3**  
**4**

"I daresay you have noticed that if you gaze at any bright object for a length of time, it becomes fixed upon your mind. For instance, if you look at the sun on a bright day and then turn your eyes away to some dark place, you apparently see the image of the sun shining in the shadow. If you look intently at these numbers for a few seconds, while I turn the whole pile upside down" (the easel, meanwhile being held in the hands, is inverted accordingly) "when I remove the cover from the blocks you will apparently see those upside down also." (Remove cover leaving shells over the blocks.)

**4**  
**3**  
**2**  
**1**

"I will restack the blocks and cover them again." (A little confusion of ideas occurs here. The performer first inverts the pile bodily and then quickly re-stacks the blocks in reversed order, thus:—

**4**  
**3**  
**2**  
**1**

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The general impression is that the blocks have been restored to their original order, but a little reflection will show that this is not so. However, he does not give the spectators too much time to think about it, but replaces the cover and proceeds: —

“This time I will attempt a little more complicated re-arrangement of the numbers. Instead of turning the whole pile bodily upside down, I will invert each number individually — like this and when you have looked at these again for a few seconds, and I again show you the blocks, it will seem that each block has turned a somersault on its own account.”

(While speaking, the cards upon the easel are disposed in accordance with the words and when the cover is lifted from the blocks the shells are taken off with it, leaving the blocks exposed in order corresponding)

1  
2  
3  
4

“For the last time, I will re-arrange the blocks in their proper order.”

(Lifting the upper three blocks from the stack, he turns the 4 right way up, showing the back incidentally. He lowers the stack on to the 4, lifts 1 and 2 together, shews back of 3 and replaces it upright, lifting off 1 with the right hand he turns it, to show the back, and while attention is upon it, turns 2 the right way up without exposing the back. 1 is finally dropped in its proper order on top of the pile. In picking up the cover, he turns it round, so that when placed upon the blocks, it brings the hitherto unrevealed sides of the shells to the front).

“This last time, instead of arranging the numbers in any special order, I will leave their final disposition to pure chance. With that object I will shuffle these cards. I will shuffle them two or three times and quite slowly, so that you can see that they are thoroughly and fairly mixed. After shuffling, I will place the cards upon the easel in just whatever order they may have been left by the shuffle, and this last time I will try to give additional interest to my illusion by producing a new effect. I will turn one of these cards right round with its face the other way-so.” (Here one falls as if by accident: performer picks it up and absent-mindedly replaces it upside down)

While the performance is thus interrupted, I will take the opportunity to explain the shuffle in detail. It is a perfectly fair shuffle, but as it follows a pre-arranged plan and the cards at the outset are invariably picked up in a pre-determined order, the result is always the same.

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The cards are picked up in order 4, 1, 3, 2 (proceeding front to back, face outwards). The course of the shuffle is – top card in one hand and remaining three in the other, place second card above first, third card below and first card above. Repeat this routine twice, i.e., in all three times. This leaves the cards face down in the hands in order from the top, 2, 3, 1, 4 and in this order, they are placed on the easel. 3 is the card which is turned round, exposing a blank, and 2 is the one which is accidentally (?) dropped and replaced upon the easel in inverted position. The easel now shows: –

2  
.  
1  
4

“I am sorry I dropped that one. I put a shilling on a horse the other day and it fell off!

“If you will look intently at these cards in their new order, and get the impression fixed upon your mind, as before, when I finally uncover the blocks, you will see that they again correspond.”

Which they do.

“One of the cards I turned round: you will see that the corresponding block is turned round also.... I see that one of my cards is upside down-that was an accident, but it is interesting to notice that the same effect is reproduced by this other block.

“In conclusion, I wish you clearly to understand that I do not pretend that these blocks really change their positions. The cover fits so closely that any movement of the blocks is quite impossible and all that I show you is an optical illusion produced by looking at the cards. Now that I have taken the cards away, you can see for yourselves that the blocks are really in exactly the same order in which I placed them at the commencement, and that order they have never changed. K.I.D. Isn't worth the trouble, is it?”

While speaking, he places the cover over the blocks, lifts it again at the conclusion, shewing the blocks in their original order.

## **The Power of Suggestion.**

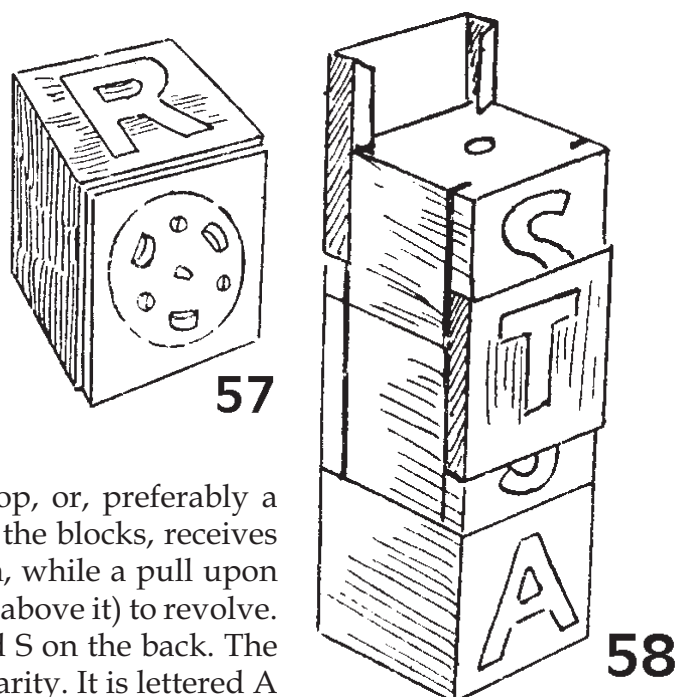
Collateral with the four numbered wooden blocks dealt with in the last section, is a similar set of blocks bearing the letters A, R, S, T combinations of which form the words Arts, Tars Tsar, Star, Rats.

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The trick is usually worked with a cover and shells in conjunction with an easel and duplicate letters on cards in a similar way to the set of numbered blocks, of which it is a variation.

Since, however, the disposition of the blocks can be indicated by naming the appropriate word, the easel is no longer necessary and it seemed a good opportunity to attempt a re-dressing. The method to be described is entirely different in principle to its predecessor, and the close fitting cover is entirely dispensed with. All that is necessary is to hold a banner in front of the stack of blocks or drape a large handkerchief over it name the word to be, pull the cover aside and the anticipated change is revealed as a substantial fact.

Of the four blocks, the bottom one is the prime mover. The block proper has an additional quarter-inch thickness of wood added to the bottom with an intermediate disc of about two inches diameter and one sixteenth inch thick forming a sort of pulley around which a thread may be wound. On the under side of this is fixed a circular metal plate having a central pin and three small wheels, equidistant and concentric with the periphery. A small hole in the table top, or, preferably a drilled bearing plate in a tray carrying the blocks, receives the pin and keeps the block in position, while a pull upon the thread will cause it (and those piled above it) to revolve. The block is painted R on the front and S on the back. The block immediately above has no peculiarity. It is lettered A on the front and T on the back. The two blocks above have each slots cut upon the sides a quarter of an inch deep and half an inch from the front and back respectively. A metal shield covers the face of one block and another covers the back (Fig. 58). Each shield is bent round the sides of the block and into the grooves and is made so that it will slide up and down from one block to another. At the outset, both shields are over the top block. The block itself is painted S on the front and R on the back. The front shield is painted T and the back shield A. The second block is painted S on the front and R on the back. In their preliminary order, they read from the front



T  
S  
A  
R

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They are not, however, immediately shewn in that order. In readiness for use, they are stacked thus--

**A.T.**

**R.S.**

The performer, introducing the trick, says, casually, "These four letters by re-arrangement will form several words, for instance, Arts" (He lifts the right hand couple and places them on top of the other two – the T block must be countersunk in the centre of the top to admit the base pin) "or Tars" (Shifting the 1 to the top-S must also be countersunk) "or Tsar (He shifts the S intermediate to the T and A).

"Psychologists tell us that concentration upon an idea will give it practical effect, so let us put the Tsar out of sight and out of mind" (cover) "and think of Arts."

The covering cloth is held in front and during the instant that the blocks are hidden, a pull is given to the thread and a half revolution brings into view

**A  
R  
T  
S**

Under pretext of adjusting the stack, the shield at the rear is pulled down from the top block over the second.

"Even Arts give way to brighter ideas, so think of a Star."

Covering again, another half revolution brings into position

**S  
T  
A  
R**

which is exposed to view in due course. A further adjustment of the stack gives opportunity to draw the second slide from the top block to the second, thus setting the scene for the final change.



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“Stars run their course and fade like other things, so let us try again. Will anybody suggest a word that we have not already had?”

There is but one word complying with the condition and the temptation is irresistible. “Rats” shouts an aspirant to fame. “The same to you, Sir!” says the performer, uncovering the blocks for the last time

**R  
A  
T  
S**

By the employment of an assistant, the performer may have both hands free for unrestrained management of the covering cloth. By using a stiffening rod and handle for the latter, after the style of a banner or flag, so that it can be operated with one hand, he may pull the thread himself. If preferred, he may dispense with the thread altogether and turn the pile of blocks with his thumb tips when draping them with an unstiffened cloth. The wheels in the base, allow the stack to turn easily enough for this purpose. The only necessary addition is to cover adjacent surfaces of the blocks with black cloth so that they do not slip one upon another.

### **A Message from Mars.**

An example of the gentle art of “twisting.”

Take an old trick (in this case the Slate trick), substitute a different device (a sheet of paper between two pieces of glass, all held together in a double frame) and you have given it a new aspect. Abolish the hackneyed routine (the traditional “Spirit Writing,” the answer to a sum or the revelation of a card) and replace it with a new theme (fortune telling), give it a good catch title, and you have a substantial novelty. “A Message from Mars” looks well on the bills.

The apparatus consists of a light wooden frame suspended by two cords. The frame is double; that is to say it consists of two frames hinged together, and carries two sheets of glass with a thin sheet of white card between. The frame is taken down, opened, the various parts shown, replaced, rehung, and covered with a sheet of newspaper. A selection is made by the audience of a question from a so-called “Book of Fate,” and a frivolous reply subsequently appears upon the white card between the glasses.

Two points have to be explained: the appearance of the writing and the method of controlling the choice of the question.

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As to the first, a combination is made of two known devices, producing together a more convincing effect than is attained by the use of either alone. To conveniently put them into effect some peculiarity in the construction of the framework is necessary. The dimensions may be varied to suit individual requirements, but here are the exact measurements of my own frame, the size of which was designed to fit easily in the bottom of a suitcase.

The outside measurements of each frame are  $18\frac{1}{8}$  in. x  $12\frac{1}{2}$  in. Each frame is  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. thick and  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. in all. Each frame is rebated inside to hold the glasses, and the peculiarity is merely a difference in the size of the openings. The opening of one frame, which we will call the front, is  $16\frac{3}{8}$  in.  $10\frac{3}{4}$  in. This is rebated to take two pieces of glass,  $16\frac{7}{8}$  in. x  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. The opening of the other frame is  $16\frac{1}{8}$  in.  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. and is rebated to take one piece of glass  $15\frac{5}{16}$  in. x  $10\frac{11}{16}$  in.

As, at first sight, all this may convey to the reader only an uninteresting complexity of figures, it may be explained, parenthetically, that the gist of the whole thing is that provision is made for a certain flap, hereinafter detailed, to take up a position inside and outside the frame, in turn.

Two sheets of glass,  $16\frac{7}{8}$  in. x  $11\frac{1}{4}$  in. and a sheet of thin white card or stiff paper of the same size complete the acknowledged parts of the apparatus. Upon one side of the card is written in exaggerated script, with charcoal, crayon, or brush and ink, the message to be produced.

There is an additional part which, although seen, the spectators are not conscious of. It takes the form of a flap fake, and is made by cutting a third piece of glass  $15\frac{5}{16}$  in. x  $10\frac{11}{16}$  in. This piece of glass is preferably of the kind known as white opal, but in lieu thereof a piece of common glass painted white upon one side and its edges, will serve. Upon one side of the opal glass, or upon the painted side of the substitute, a piece of newspaper is pasted, and trimmed neatly to the edge. The size of this is such that it will lie within the rebate of the frame having the smaller opening which, as the apparatus hangs, is the back, or, inside the actual opening of the frame having the larger, and designated the front.

The two frames are hinged together at H H (see sketch), are fastened with a side-hook and pin at F, and are provided with screw-eyes at E E, by means of which they are attached to hooks depending from the suspension rod.

The method of procedure to hide and reveal the writing is as follows: — the apparatus is set by laying first one sheet of glass in the rebate in the front of the frame, then the written card writing uppermost, next the second sheet of glass, and then the flap, newspaper-covered side down. The frame is then closed up and fastened, and presents from both sides the appearance of clear glass with white paper behind. This is suspended in readiness for presentation. When taken down, it is shown on both sides, then opened, all the glasses removed together and laid upon an open newspaper (consisting of at least three sheets, placed in readiness upon the table) with the fake undermost. The parts are then shown separately and replaced in the following order: first the frame, then a sheet of

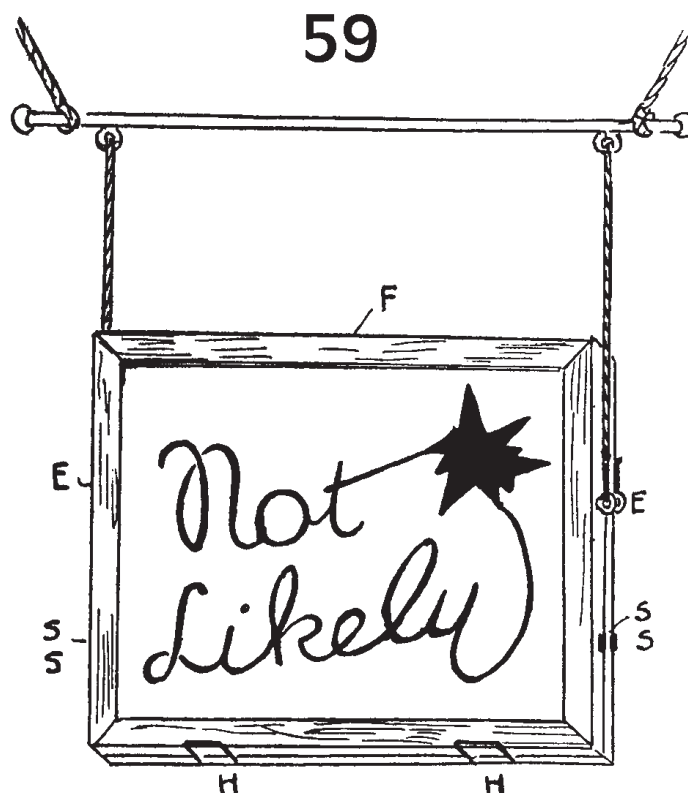
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glass: next the written card. This lies with the writing downwards and a trifling manipulation, being the second of the two devices used to complete the deception, comes into play. The card is lifted with the fingers of one hand and the thumb beneath, from the edge nearest the operator; by a simultaneous twist of the wrist and raising of the forearm the card is lifted and by a reversal of the same double movement is lowered again on to the first sheet of glass just transferred from the table to the frame, without turning the card. To an uncritical observer this gives an impression of a view of both sides, which is confirmed by the apparently same view before and after the dissection and re-assembling of the frame. Upon the top of the card is placed the second sheet of glass and the frame is closed and fastened.

The frame is then lifted from the table and casually shown on both sides; as the fingers of each hand are placed beneath the frame to grasp it by the ends, the flap left lying upon the newspaper is lifted also and pushed into the opening of the front of frame, to temporarily cover the writing. The frame is then laid down for a moment and lifted again in such a way as to expose the back only, leaving the flap upon the table. Then the frame is attached to the suspension hooks, the written side to the rear. Two sheets of newspaper are removed from beneath those lying on the table; one is hung over the frame and the other left upon the top of the fake, which is thus completely shielded from observation or left in readiness for bodily removal at a later period.

To reveal the writing all that remains to be done is to revolve the frame at the points of suspension, under cover of tearing down the newspaper, and to facilitate this, the screw-eyes E E, Fig. 59, are placed about an inch above the exact centre of the ends, so that normally the frame hangs with the " front " exposed. During such time as it is inverted and reversed, it is temporarily held in that position by the lateral pressure of the vertical suspension cords. Round headed nails driven into the frames at S S—S S will be found sufficient check. The weight of the frame pulls the cord taut between and acts as a brake.

In the interval between the covering of the frame and the exhibition of the message, the audience is permitted the choice of a question which shall be reasonably consistent with the answer in readiness. To this end a book is prepared, of from 150 to 200



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pages, and purporting to be "Napoleon's Book of Fate." It is indeed based upon the interesting pamphlet published under that name, subject to such chicanery as will convert it into a tool for yet another unreliable oracle. Each page is numbered and each page carries one question.

The questions and their numeration run thus:

1. What is the aspect of the seasons, and what political changes are likely to take place?
2. Inform me of any or all particulars which relate to the woman I shall marry?
3. Will the prisoner be released or continue captive?
4. Shall I have to travel by land or sea, or to reside in foreign climes?
5. Shall I be involved in litigation, and if so, shall I gain or lose my cause?
6. Shall I make or mar my fortune by gambling?
7. Shall I attain a good old age?
8. Shall I obtain my wish?
9. How can I improve my condition?
10. Shall I be eminent and meet with preferment in my pursuits?
11. Will it be my lot to experience great vicissitudes in this life?
12. Does my dream portend good luck or misfortune?
13. Inform me of all particulars relating to my future husband?
14. Shall I ever grow rich?
15. What shall I do to better myself?
16. Will my reputation be at all or much affected by calumny?
17. Shall I ever be able to retire from business with a fortune?
18. Shall I live long?
19. Shall I win a prize in the Sweep?
20. How can I secure honour and respect?
21. Shall I ever find a treasure?
22. Shall I have many children?
23. Shall I die young?
24. Shall I ever recover from my present misfortunes?
25. Shall I rise by my own merit?
26. What is my greatest need?
27. How many children shall I have?
28. After my death will my children be virtuous and happy?
29. Will my beloved prove true in my absence?
30. Shall I have a large family?
31. Shall I live to an old age?
32. Shall I get what I want?
33. Advise me in regard to my future?
34. What shall I have for supper?

These thirty-four questions are then repeated in the same or in changed order throughout the book. Some it will be found are but paraphrases of others, and other groups though different in substance are agreeable to the same reply. The greater number

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are of literary interest only and are, in their present application, mere padding and to give a specious appearance to the "Book of Fate."

Six message cards may be prepared for alternative use, or a selection may be made:—

"Only the good die young"

which is the answer to 7, 18, 23, 31, and their repetitions under subsequent numbers.

"Never meet trouble half way "

is the answer to 2, 13, 22, 27, and repetitions.

"Wait and See"

answers 1, 6, 24, 28, 34, and repetitions.

"Eat less"

answers 9, 15, 20, 26, 33, and repetitions.

"Everything comes to him who waits: keep on waiting"

answers 10, 17, 21, 24 and repetitions.

"Not likely!"

answers 8, 14, 19, 25, 32 and repetitions.

(The blot is caused by a technical fault in transmission.)

A set of counters is used in conjunction with each message, bearing all the numbers of its related questions and their repetitions. They are spread openly upon a tray.

The book is handed to one person and a second person is invited to choose a numbered counter, openly exposed on a plate. The number is announced, the corresponding question is turned up in the book and read out. The frame is uncovered, and the answer is revealed.

As the story is an essential part of the trick I give some lines of patter:—

"The development of 'Wireless' has led to speculation upon the possibility of communication between planets, and already we hear of efforts to signal from the Earth, and of unusual disturbances which, being unaccountable, are attributed to Mars. Aided by the researches of Marconi and fortified by the enterprise of Woolworth's, I have constructed an elaborate apparatus in sixpenny parts for the purpose of receiving

## Magical Masterpieces

messages. This is it; a wooden frame conveniently holds the components. A sheet of glass, a sheet of paper, and another sheet of glass. Nothing to get out of order – unless the glass gets bent. These are simply and securely put together in the frame, the paper between the glass, so that you can see clearly from both sides, while the paper is completely insulated from outside forces. As no force will come from anywhere else, it is reasonable to assume it will come from Mars. It is a scientifically established fact that if you eliminate the impossible, whatever is left, however improbable, is it, unless it can be proved to be something else.

“This is a sort of aerial. When the frame is hung up, it remains in suspense, awaiting any awful possibility. To avoid shock I cover it with a sheet of newspaper. The choice of a paper needs discretion. Never use a Sunday paper.

“One would naturally expect a world so distant and different from our own to benefit us by unusual knowledge. There is a record of a lady who visited Mars in the spirit and returned to earth with a design for a new blouse. It differed from other blouses in the flounce not being tucked into the trousers, and now is known as a jumper. I have discovered that the principal industry of the Martians, apart from blouses, is fortune-telling, and Mars, being outside the jurisdiction of the London County Council, now is an excellent opportunity for any anxious enquirer to put a test.

“This is the book of words. There are nearly two hundred pages of questions, compiled from the original “Napoleon’s Book of Fate” – but you mustn’t ask anything that is not in the book – that is, not in public. To be quite impartial the question shall be a matter of chance. Here are a number of numbered counters; that is, counters with numbers on them. Just look them through to be sure it’s a genuine assortment – no duplicates or common continental varieties as the advertisements of sixpenny packets of rare foreign postage stamps say. Then take one, but like cake, don’t take more than one piece at a time. What number sir? twenty-three! Now turn up question No. 23 in the book and read it, please.

“‘After my death will my children be virtuous and happy?’ No sooner is the question spoken if only in a whisper, than the reply comes straight from Mars, with all the precision and the discretion of any ancient or modern oracle: – ‘Wait and see.’”

## **Marvellous Addition.**

An old catalogue of conjuring tricks contained this startling announcement: –

“A large cardboard slate is given for examination and cleaned, back and front; it has no frame but is suspended by a cord through two holes in the slate itself, thus avoiding any suspicion of mechanism. The audience are now asked to call out several rows of four, five or six figures, which the performer writes down on the slate with a piece of chalk, as they are called out. Any member of the audience may contribute a row. He now rules a line underneath the bottom row, and going some distance from the slate, he commands the spirits to add the sum together and immediately write the total at the bottom, when

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instantly the addition appears written in chalk at the bottom, on the slate. This marvellous trick can be performed with the greatest ease and the effect is unequalled. The performer does not suggest a single figure, but leaves the selection entirely to the audience, who may each choose a single figure, several figures, or a complete row, as they may feel inclined! Price 7/6."

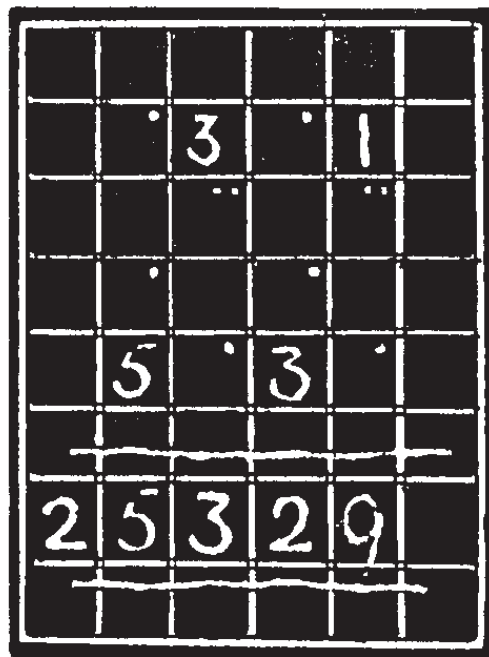
Following the alluring description, the price, 7/6, comes as a shock. Even the most fatuous of bargain seeking magicians knows that he can't expect to buy a cast-iron miracle for 7/6, and so he sits tight on his seven shillings and sixpence and wonders where the catch is. Far be it from me to betray the manufacturer's guilty secret. I only commend his frankness in including a word of description that one less honest might have tactfully ignored, and suggest that the reader re-read the advertisement and focus a Sherlock-Holmes-like intellect on that trifling little detail "he rules a line underneath the bottom row." Why this meticulousness? There is a rumour that the performer in setting the stage forgets the "ruler" — strangely inconsistent in so careful a man — and that an assistant brings it on at an opportune moment — a fat slab of wood that the performer shamelessly plumps down (rather inconveniently, too, on a dangling bit of cardboard) over the very spot where the row of figures of the total is to appear.

The trick is not good enough for the stage and too stagey for the drawing-room. However, as the Scotsman said, when told there was no place where he could get a seven course dinner, with wine, liqueur and cigar all in for one-and-sixpence, the idea is fine.

It appealed to me so strongly that I tried several schemes to bring it to fruition. One that I actually used for a time, both in the form of a blackboard on an easel for the stage and in miniature form on a slate for a handbag show was as follows: —

The device is partly mechanical and partly arithmetical, bolstered up by brazen effrontery.

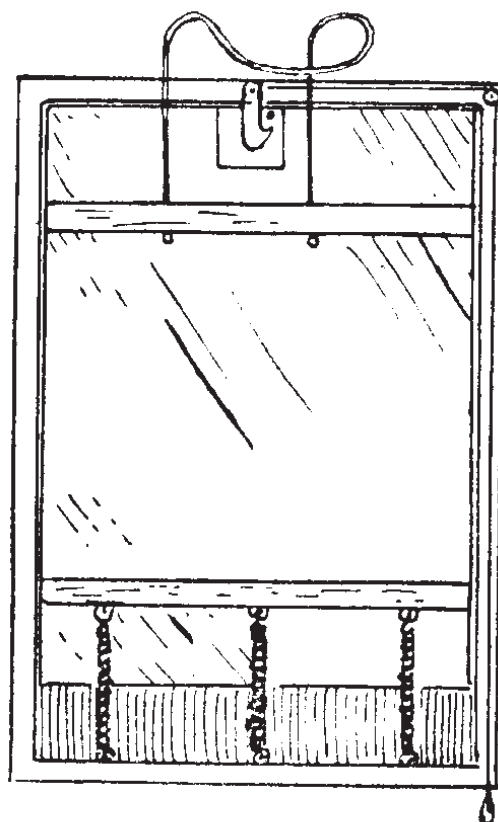
The board is not solid but is built up on a frame with a backing of three ply and a face of the same material. The latter is divided by white lines into 48 spaces each about 5 in. x 4 in. The third and fifth of the second row and the second and fourth of the fifth row are cut out. The seventh row (which will ultimately carry the sum) is similarly cut away. Between the facing and backing boards is a sliding panel shorter than the space it fills by the width of one figure row and moving easily up and down. Spiral springs accelerate its fall and a lever catch retains it at the height of its travel when set for the trick. This panel, of course, is painted black and white lined to resemble the missing spaces. Fig. 61 illustrates the face of the board and Fig. 62 the



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reverse side with the backing removed. A loop of thin, strong fishing line attached to the top edge of the sliding panel protrudes through holes in the frame to facilitate setting. The lever catch has the usual bevelled striking face and spring action to pass and retain a connecting stud fixed in the panel framing. A line passes along a groove in the top of the main frame, over a guarded pulley in the corner, down one side and out at the bottom. Here it is tied to a finer line which passes through a screw eye near the extremity of the easel leg and thence to an attachment on the trigger guard of a dummy pistol.



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The board is prepared by writing four figures in the open spaces first mentioned in the description and the total-to-be on the bottom row and is then "set" by drawing up the panel till it locks on the spring catch. The total is arrived at by the employment of an old numerical trick, which it is the object of the peculiar arrangement described to disguise.

If to any given row of figures are added rows of nines the sum will correspond with the row of figures first written less the number of added rows and the then subtracted figure placed in front. For example, if you write

**7432**

with the plan in mind of adding two rows of nines, take 2 from the unit end and put it on the other, thus

**27430**

and your subsequent addition becomes

$$\begin{array}{r}
 7432 \\
 9999 \\
 9999 \\
 \hline
 27430
 \end{array}$$



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In the pictured illustration I have put figures which if in line would read

**5331**

and the total

**25329**

which it will easily be seen conforms to the rule.

To facilitate explanation I will describe the procedure with these figures in view, but of course, in actual performance they are out of sight.

Begin by asking the audience to call out a number of figures, distinctly, and as quickly as possible. Square No. one is not used. Place the chalk in readiness on square two and wait for a definite response. Tap on each of the three remaining squares of the row and let it be manifest that the figures written are the figures called out. The second square on the second row you fill in rather hurriedly with a figure of your own (for guidance there is a small dot in the right hand top corner, to indicate that this figure must total with the one above it, 9). The next square (3 in the illustration) is available for public use, as anything written upon it will be automatically substituted with the final appearance of the total, so make a definite pause for a clear pronouncement. The next square (one dot) must balance with the figure above so hurry in your own figure. The next (1 in the illustration) is a "free" square. On the next row, commencing with the second square the first figure is free. The next has two dots indicating that the figure here must balance with the one second above. The next is free and the last carries two dots; so proceed accordingly. The next row proceeds (one dot) balance with figure above; free space; (one dot) balance with figure above; free space; the last row, (5) free; the next, (one dot) balance with figure above; (3) free; last (one dot) balance with figure above.

Draw a line beneath the figures boldly across the next row of squares, miss a row for the total and draw two bold lines across the last row. Pick up the pistol (a loose ledge across the pegs to support it and chalk is a convenience), load it with the chalk (don't use a pistol that discharges through the barrel, or there will be trouble) and retire from the board to a distance sufficient to take up the slack in the line, fire the pistol and the release simultaneously.

It is needless to caution the reader that the trick demands considerable tact. It has been well tested and has had a good run and I can guarantee it as practical and sensational.

A hint or two may be helpful. Let the first row be deliberate and definite, after that assume a little impatience if the figures do not come over. Try to work up a little excitement. If you can get a number of figures called out close together, you may select those that fit or re-arrange their order to the same end and so avoid putting down your own. Even alteration of figures on the moving panel may be avoided by this means. If utterance is confused or indistinct, take advantage of it. If it is emphatic and at the same

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time fortuitous make the most of it. If the “house” is thin and timid, you have no alternative and obvious excuse for writing figures yourself, but put your tongue in your cheek and protest.

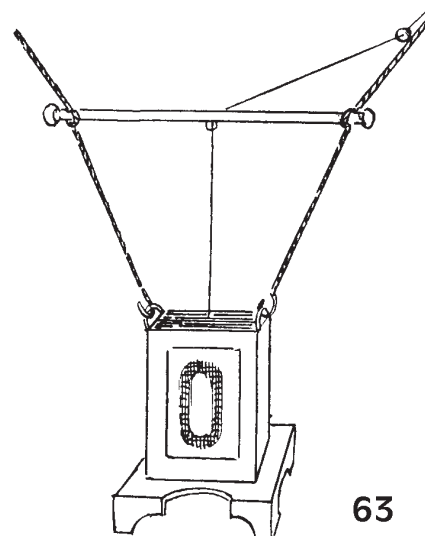
The construction of the “slate” is practically the same. It is lined into two-inch squares. No setting or release cords are necessary. The trigger projects directly through the end of the frame and to “set” it is only necessary to place it upside down and jerk the panel into position with a sharp blow against the palm of the hand.

No pistol is used in this version. Throw the chalk into the air and catch it on the slate. The sweep of the slate is complete cover for the moving figures.

### A Magic Spell.

An old effect can often be converted to a novelty by the simple process of attaching a new story to it. Here is a case in point.

The noticeable properties consist of a packet of lettered cards (in size about 8 in. x 6 in. or larger or smaller according to taste) and a skeleton case (8-1/2 in. x 6-1/2 in. x 2 in.) to hold it. The case is provided with a suitable base and has metal loops at the upper, open end, so that it can stand upon the table or hang from cords (Fig. 63) For the accessibility of the cord ends, it is convenient to connect them to an intermediate trapeze bar. Subsidiary appliances will be detailed in the description of the working. The effect is best indicated by the patter immediately following:—



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“This is a little invention of mine to meet difficulties in spelling. Simple minded people think that a dictionary is a book to ‘tell you how to spell words.’ Once I wanted to spell physic and I looked all through the f’s and couldn’t find it. Afterwards I learned that I should have looked under P-h-y. That shews that a dictionary isn’t really what it pretends to be, because you can’t find a word in it unless you know how to spell it first.

“These cards represent the letters of the alphabet. I will shuffle them as well as the size permits. This is a framework to hold them. It is really a box with no sides and a hole where the top ought to be. It holds the cards together and permits you to see them at the same time.

“Spell tree” (Cards rise accordingly) TREE

“Spell bough” “ “ “ BOUGH

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"Now, cow" " " " COUGH

"That's my mistake—I forgot to alter the differential gearing."

"Spell no" (Cards rise accordingly) NO

"Now with the different gearing" KNOW

"Good! Spell nose" KNOUGHSE

"I'm sorry! The gears have got a bit mixed but all machines have their little drawbacks.

"There is a little town in Wales that rejoices in the name of—

Llanferpulgwingilfgogerichwerndrobwellthllantisilliogogoch. I'll do it again to show you that it wasn't an accident—

Llan-fer-pulf-gwin-gilf-gogerich-wern-drobwellth-llanti-silli-ogog-och.\*

*\* I have spelled this to some extent phonetically for the reader's guidance in reproduction. Few members of the audience are likely to know better, but a little instruction from a friendly Welshman is desirable.*

If you dare me, I'll do it again. I am told that the name describes in Welsh, the exact geographical situation of the town, with a short summary of its history, details of geological formation, and rules of the local trades unions. It takes a strong man three weeks to learn to say it, and three strong men one week to spell it. I tried it on the machine one day, and I'll show you what happened. I will suspend the affair in the centre of the stage to give you a better view—and the word requires a lot of space. Now spell Llanferpulgwingilfgogerichwerndrobwellthllantisilliogogoch!"

This, as might well be expected, proves too great a strain on the capacity of the machinery, and in a heroic effort the whole of the cards rise in rapid succession and scatter over the floor.

Two complete alphabets will be required, together with additional vowels and consonants to make up the words used in the first stage of the effect. These words are arranged in due order upon the top of one set of cards and the bulk of the pack can be convincingly shuffled without disturbing their order. Their subsequent movement is caused by a piston table. In the centre pillar of the table a metal rod moves up and down under the control of a thread manipulated by an assistant off the stage. The upper part of the rod has attached to it about six inches of clock spring with a short cross-piece, about an inch wide, at its free extremity, carrying a pair of short needle points. These are adjusted to bear lightly against the rear card and are set at an upward angle so that their pressure in the upward movement carries the adjacent card (Fig. 64).

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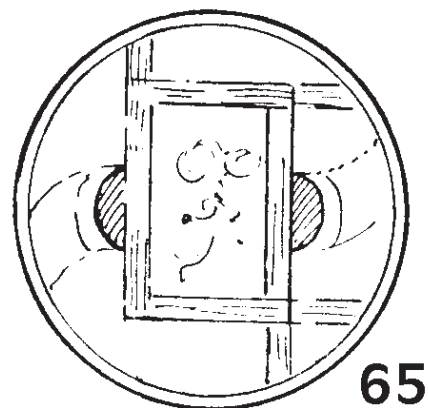
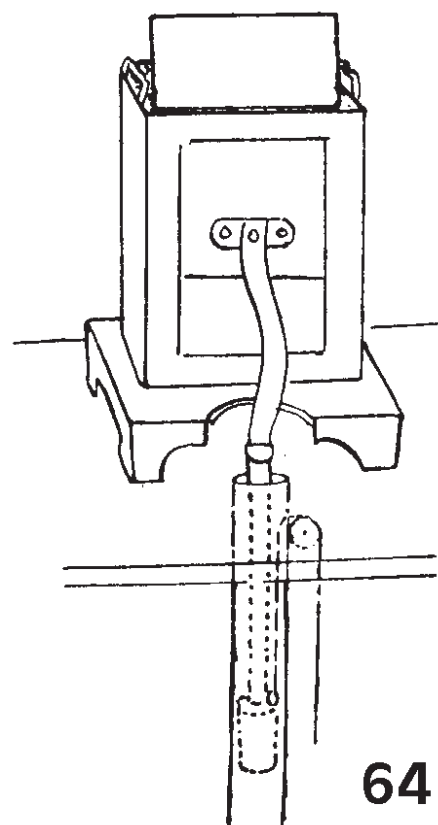
This piece of apparatus can be dispensed with in an alternative method. In this case the cards to rise do not form part of the original pack but are threaded alternately with indifferent cards as in the primitive rising card trick. The prepared stack is inserted in a black linen envelope glued to the underside of the table top or passed through a slit in the table cloth, in either case just so much of the cards being left projecting in a convenient position to grasp and add to the main pack momentarily laid upon the table.

In the final development a more elaborate preparation is necessary. The entire pack has to be exchanged for another, threaded as described hereafter, and this is effected by the use of a prepared tray or a similar device constructed in the table top itself. The normal bottom of the tray is thickened to the depth of the pack of cards. A well is cut to carry a complete pack and covered with a metal flap painted or covered on both sides to match the surface of the tray or table top (Fig. 65). It is natural in hanging the card holder to remove the cards and lay them down for the time being. When lifted again both packs are seized together (a convenient finger recess being cut as part of the well to facilitate this). Under cover of squaring up the cards they are reversed, the first packet is allowed to fall back into the well with the cover over it and the substituted pack is carried up to the holder. All that remains to be done is for the assistant off stage to pull the thread quickly hand over hand until all the cards are expelled.

There is still one other alternative, which simplifies the arrangements somewhat, and that is to thread up the preliminary words with the bulk and let the whole of the action take place from the swinging position; but I think it is more effective to vary the methods, especially if there is plenty of stage space available.

For the system of stringing the cards I am indebted to Mr. George Heller. In use I have found it more practical than any hitherto published. It is as follows:—

All the cards except the top and bottom are prepared by cutting a tiny slit in the middle of the upper edge. The bottom card is similarly slit on both upper and lower edges. The top card needs no preparation.



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Fix the thread in the lower slit of the bottom card, pass the thread up the back of the card into the upper slit and back again leaving a small loop of thread in the slit. Bring the thread down behind this card, lay the next card in position, pass the thread up, loop in the slit of that card and back again, as before, and down the back of the card.

Lay the next card in position and repeat the process to the end of the pack. There is thus a double length of thread between every two cards; the pull first raises the rear card, the loop in the slot of the next forming a temporary hold for the thread, and continued strain disengages the loop and leaves the thread free to pull on the next card.

The loose end of the thread passes upwards and through an eyelet in the centre of the trapeze bar, through a small guide ring worked into one of the suspension cords and thence side by side with it up to the point of suspension, through screw-eyes in the overhead batten and down again to the hand of the assistant off stage. This arrangement permits the apparatus to be set swinging, which, to the imperfect reasoning that fortunately most people bestow on a conjurer's activities, seems to negative the possibility of a connecting thread.

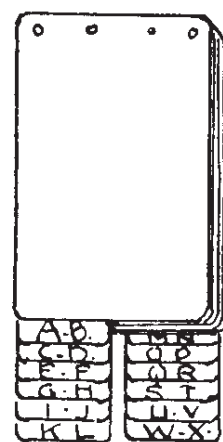
Drawing-room entertainers working single-handed can adapt the performance with the exercise of a little personal ingenuity. A hidden miniature electric motor having a winding wheel attached to the shaft can be used to pull the thread for the final effect. A liberal amount of the loose thread arranged in over-lapping coils, with due provision against an unpropitious tangle, will give a desirable interval between the switching on of the motive power and its manifestation, while a small cork ball at the extreme end of the thread, just sufficiently large to stop against the necessary guide eyelet close to the winding wheel, will stop the motor automatically. A clock-train beneath the table top, fitted with a convenient start and stop lever, will function in the preliminary stage.

### Reading by Touch.

The device known as a "card pocket" (really a pocket card holder) may be applied to the production of a different effect to that for which it is primarily intended.

The device takes the form of a book, about 4 in. x 2-5/8 in. with 12 leaves, bound at one end. At the open end the leaves are extended in half-width tags, stepped, each about a quarter of an inch beyond the one above. The first six of these tags are at one side of the leaves and the last six leaves are tagged upon the opposite side. The twelve leaves together with the outside covers give thirteen spaces and each will hold two cards. (Fig. 66).

When applied to its customary purpose a sequence of playing cards of each of two suits is inserted in the divisions and a second holder similarly loaded with the sequences of the other two suits. One set is



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placed in each trouser pocket. A pack of cards is freely shuffled, cut into equal parts and a half placed in each pocket. The conjurer now offers to find by feeling any card called for and pick it out. The cards demanded are, of course, taken not from the pack shewn to the audience, but from the duplicate pack conveniently sorted and easily found by running the thumb over the stepped tags.

To give a new aspect to the feat, it is only necessary to substitute letter cards for the regular playing cards. Have some alphabets done by a printer in good bold block letters on visiting card stock. One holder only will be needed, two letters being placed in each of the thirteen compartments.

Any simple word suggested by the audience can then be spelled out. Owing to the limitations of the pack, it is stipulated that choice should be confined to words not containing repeated letters.

## **Patriotic Drill.**

Inspired by an item in Hatton and Plate's book, I produced an item under the above title. Nine billiard balls (three each of red, white and blue) and three basins are used. The three red balls are ostensibly placed in one basin, the three blue in another and the three white in the third. After appropriate command, the balls are shewn to have apparently re-arranged themselves in tri-colour groups, one red, one white and one blue being found in each basin.

This little trick was picked out for favourable comment by the magical journals: also on occasion it was picked out for unfavourable comment by some more candid observers and by a newspaper. I mention this to shew, first, that what appeals to the magician does not always appeal to the public and, secondly, to shew where the trick may fail and how it may be made a success.

Its appeal to the magician is on the point of its simplicity and its subtlety. Nothing beyond the visible objects are used. There are no fakes and no duplicate balls. To follow the procedure, assume the basins to be numbered 1, 2 and 3. Take a red ball by the finger tips and place it in basin No. 1. The hand carrying the ball goes right into the basin with it and when, and not until, the hand is well within the basin, the finger grip is released and the ball allowed to fall with an audible sound against the bottom of the basin. The fingers immediately grasp it again and withdraw it to the palm. Continuing the action, the hand with the ball secreted in the palm leaves the basin and reaches for a white ball. This is ostensibly placed in basin No. 2. Actually a substitution is made. The palmed red ball is dropped in the basin and the white one palmed in its place. A blue ball is taken and apparently placed in basin 3. Here a similar substitution is effected. The blue is palmed and the white left behind. The disposition of basins and balls is now as follows:—

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Basin 1 is empty.

Basin 2 contains one red ball.

Basin 3 contains one white ball and a blue ball remains palmed.

Proceeding in similar manner, a further set of three balls is distributed. A red ostensibly placed in basin 1 is exchanged for the blue. Now note carefully, as herein is the key to the arrangement. Instead of following the regular routine and taking next a white for basin 2, instead a blue is taken and apparently disposed in basin 3. The former plan of substitution is followed: the blue ball is palmed and the red deposited in the basin. A white is taken and apparently placed in the second basin, which was missed in the round: really the white is palmed and the blue put in its stead.

The position is now:—

Basin No. 1 contains 1 blue ball

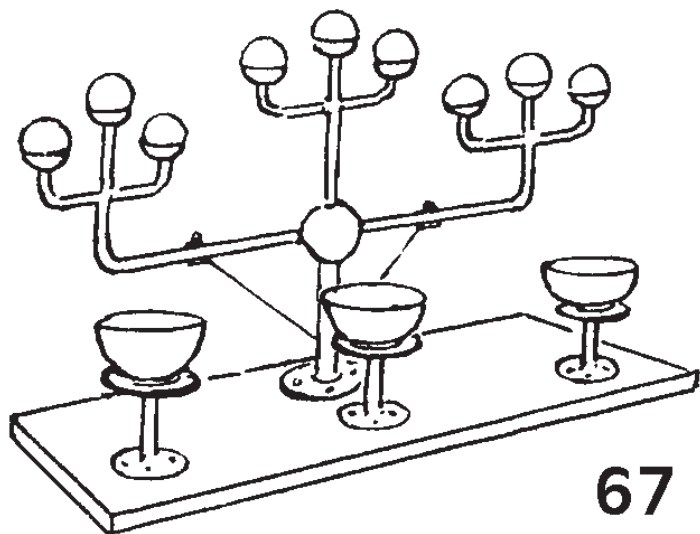
Basin No. 2 contains 1 red and 1 blue

Basin No. 3 contains 1 white and 1 red

The third and final deal is straightforward. The remaining red ball is lifted into basin No. 1 and the palmed white is placed in with it. The remaining white and blue are respectively dropped into basins 2 and 3.

It will be seen that although (if the movements have been effectively carried out) the impression has been created that each basin contains three balls of one colour, in fact they contain each a complete set. The trick is done and it only remains to work up the due atmosphere of mystery before displaying the result.

To be convincing it is desirable to use real billiard balls. The click of solid ivory is more satisfying to a billiard player, who knows perfectly well that the small wooden balls used by most conjurers are not billiard balls, and to mask a regulation size ball with one hand requires great care. It is not merely a matter of skill in palming: it is a question of angles. A wide angle from side or gallery seat may give a glimpse that is fatal to illusion. It is imperative that the back of the hand in which a ball is palmed should be dead square to the front all the time, and to ensure this I designed a nine armed stand, like an elaborate candelabra, with cups to hold the balls (see Fig. 67) and miniature platforms on pillars to raise and isolate the basins.



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At a subsequent period, to simplify the trick and save bulk in packing, I dispensed with this big stand and used a rack something like a cruet stand. This was the cause of the trick's failure. The candelabra was expressly designed to impel the active hand to move always in the same plane. The latter device did not so well favour this necessary condition.

These details refer more particularly to a stage exhibition of the trick. For private performances such cumbrous arrangements are neither necessary nor desirable and all conditions may be satisfied by the use of small balls. Still ivory is better than wood, and bagatelle balls are suitable.

A writer of one of the magical papers suggested an interesting variation of materials – three paper bags and balls of crumpled tissue paper. A good idea.

Chung Ling Soo told me of an interesting variation of method he devised for this trick. The balls were temporarily covered with silk, stretched tightly over the surface, tied and trimmed off like dye-bags. Three balls of each colour could thus be clearly shewn together and dropped into their respective basins without any jiggery-pokery. Under cover of the basins, the silk coverings were, stripped off, and, unmasked, the balls assumed their true colours, i.e., the desired group of red white and blue in each basin. I have not seen the trick worked in this way, nor have I tried it, so I cannot say how far it is effective. Extreme care would be necessary in colour matching and I imagine some difficulty might arise on account of the difference in texture between ivory and silk.

However, it is unlikely that the problem would be so great as that old one of trying to paint a thumb tip. "What is the best flesh tint?" says the persevering magician to the painter. "There aint no such thing" says the artist, or words to that effect. You can never paint sheet brass to look like human skin. You may get silk to look like ivory, but it won't look exactly like.

## **Flying Colours.**

This is a similar effect to the last, to which it makes a fitting climax. Nine silk squares are shewn, three each of red, white and blue, and tied together by their corners in groups of their own colour. The bundles are placed apart and subsequently appear with the colours redistributed into tri-colour groups. I tried many ways of producing this effect, some bad, some not so bad.

The first had the merit of extreme simplicity any fool could do it – and it suited me admirably.

You provide yourself (really, I hope you will do no such thing: I only put it this way to dodge a morass of grammatical complications) with a duplicate set of handkerchiefs and three mirror vases. A mirror vase is a glass vase with a metal partition, nickel plated and polished on both sides, placed vertically within so that the half of the vase is reflected and the conjurer thinks that it looks empty. Nobody else thinks so.



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You tie together a red, a white and blue handkerchief, roll them into a bundle and place it behind one of the mirror partitions. Prepare two other sets of handkerchiefs and the other vases in the same way. Set these in a row, the loaded compartments to the rear, and hope for the best.

Shewing the nine other silk squares, tie together the three red and place them in one of the vases, the three blue in the second and the three white in a third. It should be noted that in making up the concealed bundles each should be folded to shew only one colour on the outside, and as each group of silks is openly tied it should be placed in the vase containing the bundle showing the corresponding colour. As you deposit each group in its appropriate vase, you give the latter a half turn, bringing the substitute bundle into view. The trick is now done and it only remains for you to tell the audience you are going to do it. Afterwards you can shake the handkerchiefs out proudly and mentally bracket yourself with Master Homer of pie fame.

The only thing I liked about this trick was that it made possible the use of material in a new shape. Instead of squares, I used broad strips of sash ribbon.

In the later version next described, I had to revert to the commonplace squares of silk, as the methods do not adapt themselves readily to strips. No trick vases or other apparatus are needed. The various changes are self contained in the handkerchiefs. The first two groups (consisting respectively of three white and three blue) are placed in ordinary drinking glasses stood to the left and right of the performer. The third group (red) he holds in his hands fully displayed in tri-radiate form. Giving these a quick shake they make a visible change: the three red handkerchiefs tied together become a set consisting of one red, one white and one blue, similarly tied. Withdrawing the bundles in the glasses and shaking them out they also are found to have changed in the same way. Each change is differently arranged and we will consider the composition of each individually. Commencing with the visible change, this depends mainly upon the construction of one trick handkerchief. This is made double. Two squares of red silk, of the same size, are sewn together all round the four sides, in order that one corner may present only a single thickness of material, for the purpose of tying, before stitching at the point, the corner of one of the squares is folded in to a distance of about three inches and sewn across so that when the bag eventually formed is turned inside out a similar corner of single thickness will appear. At the opposite corner a distended opening is formed by cutting away the extreme point and sewing in a stout wire ring of one-and-three quarter inches diameter. Tie to the corner prepared for that purpose a blue and a white handkerchief and pull them inside the double-red by turning the latter inside out. Over the corner of the blue that projects, sew red silk to cover it on both sides. To hide the white corner, when setting for actual performance, before turning the red lay the white on the blue, double this white upon itself, to reduce its length, and fold the blue loosely round it. To work, pick up the trick handkerchief and two unprepared red ones, and in passing them from hand to hand to shew them separate, keep the former in the background and shake only the unprepared, one of them twice, to give the impression that all three are fairly and freely shewn. Hold them with arms uplifted, the faked red corner in the right hand, the free corner of one of the unprepared in the left hand and the third handkerchief

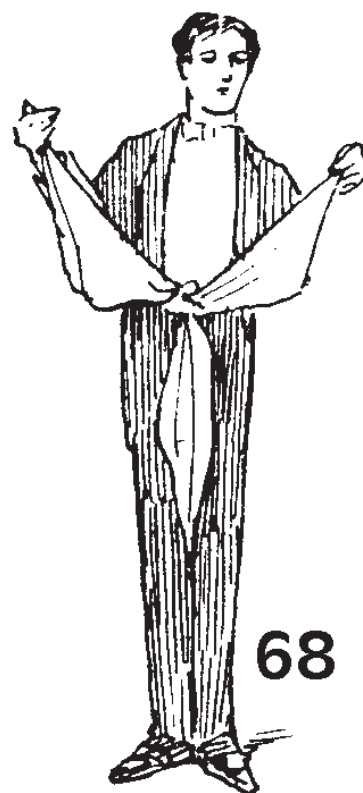
## Magical Masterpieces

hanging down from the central junction. To effect the change, release the left hand hold, give a sharp shake with the right, jerking the ring half-way down the blue handkerchief and immediately seize the ring with the left hand, draw it quickly over the other part of the blue, across the knot and continue to pull until the two single reds are swallowed by the double one and the white falls out of the folds of the blue. The change can be instantaneous. Fig. 68.

The other changes are variations of the same principle and not being visible are carried out in more leisurely fashion.

For the white group, commence by sewing two white squares together all round the edges, leaving one corner of single thickness as before. In this case, however, the folded corner of the superimposed handkerchief is not to be folded inside, but turned down outside when stitching. The double thickness of material is not for any direct purpose of deception but only to ensure opacity; as fine silk, in white, will without this precaution, allow colour beneath it to shew through. Having, then, made the white handkerchief of double thickness, fold it diagonally and stitch together the edges where they meet, so forming a triangular bag. Tie to the single thickness corner a red and a blue handkerchief. In the corner of the red, diagonally opposite to the tied corner, fold a small cork ball, cover it with white silk and tie or sew. An india-rubber band ("thread-band" No. 14 or No. 16) is looped over the white corner just beside the knot. Fold the blue handkerchief loosely inside the red, then fold the red zig-zig fashion into three in the direction of its diagonal, fold the loop into the elastic band and adjust so that the white ball hangs clear of the red. Now turn the triangular white bag inside out and the coloured handkerchiefs will be concealed within the white. Two unprepared white squares complete the set. To work, shew the three white handkerchiefs with the same precaution and manipulation as with the red, tie them together and roll into a bundle, commencing with the two unprepared handkerchiefs side by side, taking the knot as it comes and steadily folding the material round and feeling for the white ball. When this is reached, dispose it so that it can be seen and quickly gripped when required, but with due care not to expose the coloured silk. Finish wrapping round the loose end and push the bundle into a glass. When its turn comes for display it is only necessary to seize the white ball and shake the bundle out. The double white will fall over and cover the loose white and the two coloured will be drawn from the elastic loop by the weight of the whole.

The third group – the blue – is of practically the same construction and handled in the same way. In this case, however, it is not necessary to make a double handkerchief. The blue fabric has sufficient density to mask the colours concealed within it. The basis of structure, then, is a blue handkerchief folded diagonally and sewn along the adjoining sides to form a triangular bag. To present a tying corner on both inside and outside an



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extra triangular hemmed piece must be sewn in. Equipped with an elastic band, as in the previous set, the fake is complete. A white and a red handkerchief are tied to it and it is set and manipulated as already instructed.

### **“On the Line” (or The Congress of Ypres).**

When a magician digs out an undeveloped idea, finds in it a new principle, and by his ingenuity converts it into a priceless gem: when that same production can be copied without trouble or expense and is immediately pounced upon universally by leading lights and the riff-raff of the second-hand trade and hawked around, till the erstwhile novelty becomes a weariness to the flesh, he must feel that life is hard.

Such was the sad but glorious fate of Edward Victor’s “Sympathetic Silks.”

“On the Line” springs from the same stock, but is never likely to achieve the same popularity, which may be something in its favour. The title is not really appropriate. I set it down unthinkingly, as the relic of an earlier version of the same trick in which I caused the handkerchiefs to appear tied together by lateral corners, presenting a quaint representation of a line of washing. (The effect in that case was produced by substitution). The diagonal tie imposed by the present method deprives the title of its point.

Seven handkerchiefs are used and all but one are already tied together by opposite corners. They are then folded upon the transverse diagonal so that the unconnected corners are exposed and the knots lie buried in the folds. The last handkerchief of the group and the unattached handkerchief have the two sections of a press button sewn into their appropriate corners, so that they may be connected imperceptibly. The whole of the handkerchiefs are picked up together and held by their upper corners: they are casually passed one by one, from one hand to the other, separating them to an extent sufficient to suggest that they are separate, but with due care not to expose the knots. The last handkerchief, being free, can be fully separated: at the outset it is placed at the beginning of the row, opened out to display the design and then passed behind the others to the end. The next in order, being tied by only one corner, can also be spread open, though not separated from its neighbours. After running over the others the separate handkerchief is again encountered at the end of the row and shaken out with a slight flourish. Thus it is shewn twice, well apart, and fosters the idea that all are separate. The trick is entirely one of misdirection and is favoured by the somewhat eccentric designs and colours of the handkerchiefs. These are printed silk handkerchiefs of the “knot” era, of good quality and rather loud in a gentlemanly sort of way; and were chosen with a view to conformities (more or less) with the descriptions of them given in running them over – all working as dope to lull the spectators’ critical faculties –

“For this experiment I have several silk handkerchiefs, in various tasteful colours. All of these were specially designed, by various eminent artists – all of whom have since died. These were the last things they did. They did these and then they expired. Here’s a nice, dainty combination puce and ginger. This one’s a Whistler – a nocturne in brick and slate.

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Here's another, in Salmon and Gluckstein. This one is a Constable—look's more like a policeman, doesn't it?"

In gathering up the lot into a loose bundle, the press button is joined up and the chain completed. Subsequently the silks are opened out on the diagonals, in line with the knots, and displayed as tied end to end.

Sometimes I have performed this trick in conjunction with a rope trick, in which six knots disappear from a long rope, alleging that the knots pass from the rope to the handkerchiefs—an intriguing proposition!

### **Transposing Milk and Sugar.**

This novel trick was invented by Selbit. I give an explanation of the original before passing on to a modification that has served me well.

Three accessories of the tea table are set upon a separate table—a jug of milk, a basin of sugar and a slop basin. The conjurer picks up the slop basin and tips the sugar into it. He shews the sugar basin empty and pours the milk from the jug into it. He shows the jug now empty and proceeds to turn the sugar out of the slop basin into the jug. Thus by the use of a third receptacle and commonplace procedure he has effected a transposition of the milk and sugar. To restore these things to their fitting places, he covers the sugar basin (containing the milk) with the inverted slop basin and the milk jug (containing the sugar) with a table napkin. Upon uncovering the basin and the jug, the milk and sugar are found as they should be.

The trick is effected by the use of two jugs and two false tops—one to the sugar basin and one to one of the jugs. Ordinary earthenware crocks are used and a hole is drilled in the bottom of the basin designated the slop basin, which is a size or two larger than the other. A small sheet metal tray, with narrow turned-over rim, half an inch deep, is made to fit easily in the top of the sugar basin. In the centre is soldered a wire eyelet and it is enamelled white inside and out. A loop of white cord elastic is passed through the eyelet.

The fake is placed, inside down, in the slop basin, and with the assistance of a bent wire hook the elastic loop is drawn through the hole and secured from the outside of the basin by passing a pin through the loop. Before fixing it, however, the space between the tray and the bottom of the basin is packed tightly with cube sugar. The basin so prepared is placed mouth down on the table. A similar fake is made to fit in the mouth of one of the jugs and packed with sugar-cubes. The jug itself is filled with milk. This is disposed of out of sight behind the table as presently explained. The duplicate jug is filled with milk and placed in view on the table, side by side with the loaded slop basin and the sugar basin filled and piled up with sugar. The table is covered with a suitable tea cloth and is fitted with two wire brackets, rubber or fabric covered, to silence them. In one is placed the faked jug and the other awaits the jug to be exchanged.

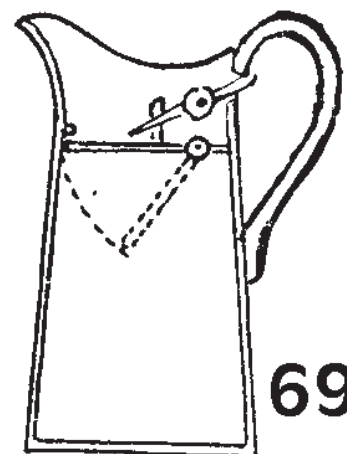
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The sugar basin and the slop basin are lifted simultaneously one in each hand, and the sugar quickly tipped out from the one into the other. The fake in the slop basin is covered and hidden by the sugar. The milk is now poured from the jug into the sugar basin. Then the sugar is poured out of its temporary receptacle into the jug. The slop basin is replaced mouth down on the table. Quite naturally a quantity of loose sugar cubes are scattered on the table and to collect them in the jug the conjurer lowers it behind the table. With one hand and apparently sweeps the sugar with the other hand into it. Leaving the jug just seen in the empty bracket, he brings up the faked jug in its place. To effect the required transposition, it only remains to place the inverted slop basin over the sugar basin, withdraw the pin and leave the piled up tray of sugar when the slop basin is removed, and to carry off the false top and its contents from the jug in the folds of the covering napkin.

### The Topsy Turvy Tea Table.

This is a fancy title covering essentially the same effect as the last. The apparatus is slightly more elaborate and is designed to do away with the exchange of jugs, to make the trick self-contained and to eliminate that bugbear of the touring magician – breakages.

The principal item to be explained is the jug. Like the other receptacles, this is made in electroplated ware. A section is shewn in Fig. 69. An inch and a half or two inches (according to the size of jug used) from the mouth is fitted a hinged flap, controlled by a lever pivoted through the wall of the jug and connected to a trigger on the outside. The inside lever passes under a bridge fixed to the top of the trap and is depressed as the outside trigger is raised and vice versa. The flap itself is made in two thicknesses of metal, the upper one about  $\frac{3}{16}$  of an inch smaller all round than the other. They are fixed together with screws with a piece of thin leather between. There is a narrow shoulder round the inside of the jug, so that by pressing upon the trigger from the outside, the flap shuts close enough to make the shut off as nearly watertight as is necessary for the purpose. Before performance, the jug is filled with milk just above the level of the trap, and covers it completely. When pouring milk from the jug to the basin only half of it is poured out: the other half is kept in reserve, but the jug is given the appearance of being emptied by closing the trap and turning the jug upside down. By judicious control of the trigger action the shut off may be made gradual so that the flow of liquid becomes less and finally ceases as though diminishing in quantity till down to the last drop.

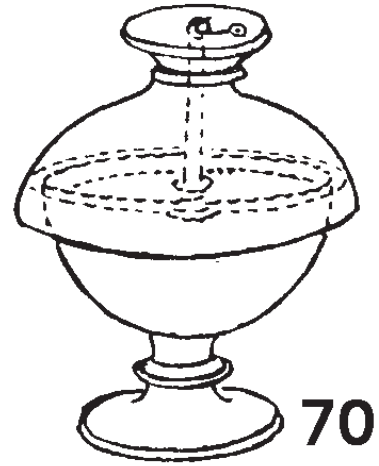


Keeping the trigger depressed, the sugar is now tipped into the jug. Most of it falls on the table, but a little pile collects in the fenced off space and gives the appearance of a jug full. There is, in this version, no need to cover the jug to mask the change: it may be made visibly. By releasing the trigger and giving the jug a shake, the sugar will fall to the bottom and the milk will splash up above the mouth of the jug. When subsequently it is desired to

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pour out the milk the trap is held half open – allowing space for the milk to filter through but holding the sugar back.

The sugar basin side of the trick in this version differs only from the original in the method of locking the fake to the inside of the slop basin. In place of the elastic band attachment, a bolt passes through the bottom of the fake and through a hole in the slop basin, to the bottom of which is loosely riveted a hook of the type known as a side-hook. The end of the bolt is flattened and drilled through, making an eyelet for the hook to fasten into. The exact length of the bolt and the tension can be adjusted by means of a milled nut working on a screw thread at the opposite end to the eyelet. (Fig. 70.)



The principle of the jug could be usefully applied to any similar charge e.g., berries to coffee, malt to beer, etc.

Real milk (diluted) and real sugar can be used for occasional performances but have certain disadvantages for repeated performances. For instance, milk goes sour or curdles and sugar becomes unpleasantly sticky. Also, I have recollections of the rapid disappearance of a few pounds of sugar into the interior of Lockhart's Elephants during a brief lapse of attention on my part. On another occasion a similar effect was engineered between the turns by "The Eight Upside Down Girls" or some similar organisation.

So for the sake of convenience, cleanliness and economy I latterly used substitutes. Imitation sugar cubes can be made by running a mixture of melted paraffin wax and plaster of paris into tin troughs to form bars of the right thickness and cutting up into cubes. Milk can be counterfeited by adding to water some brands of disinfectant, such as Jeyes Fluid, Compound Tincture of Benzolin or Stern oil. The last is the most satisfactory and is very cleanly. It is used as a lubricant for cutting tools in machine shops and can be obtained from dealers in engineers' supplies.

Having been asked for the "patter" on one or two occasions, I append it: –

"If the audience will now step on the stage, we will take tea. I direct your attention to the sugar and the milk. The milk is the only deception about the trick. The sugar has been paralysed by the public anarchist. I will commence by turning the sugar out of the sugar basin into the slop basin – termed in ultra select circles, the residue vase. Then I will pour the milk out of the milk jug into the sugar basin. The milk jug, being then empty, I will use it in turn as a receptacle for the sugar." (After spilling the same all over the tray) "I nearly dropped some of that, didn't I? We now have the sugar in the milk jug and the milk in the sugar basin. It's a good game – I don't know who's won yet.

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“Mathematically, we may express this thus. As the milk is to the sugar, so is the sugar to the milk. If both become one another, each to each, then neither being either, but the one being the other, therefore the milk is the sugar and the sugar is the milk, which is absurd.

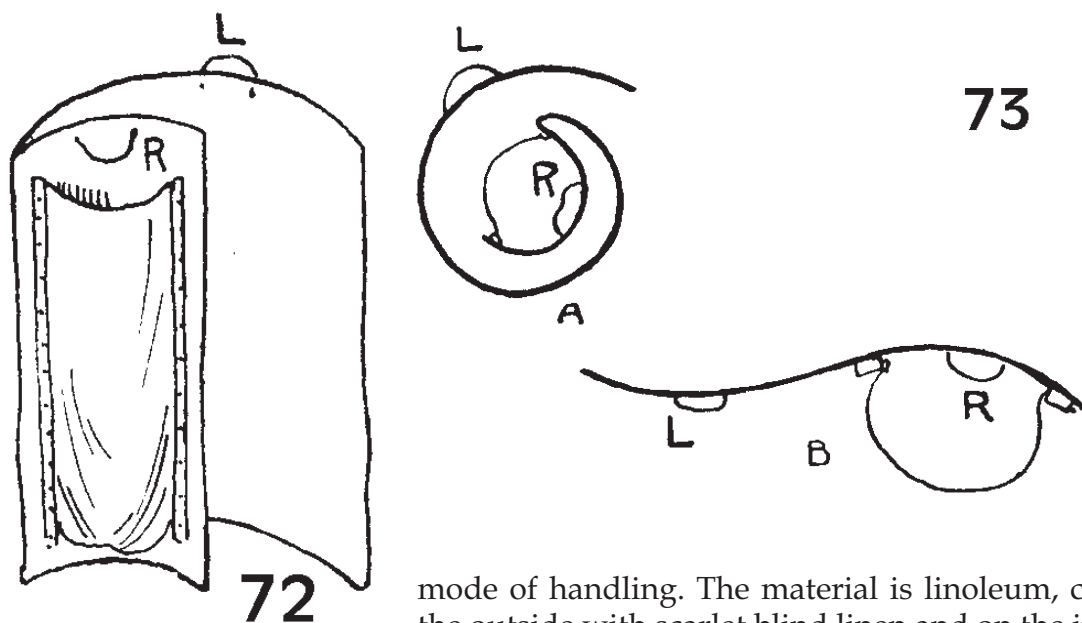
“Change!

“The equilibrium of the tea-table is restored. The sugar has returned to the basin and the milk has returned to the jug.”

### Under The Pillar Box.

This item figured in my programme as “The Glad Eye.” A model of a pillar box is extemporised in view of the audience from a shallow top and base of turned wood and a rolled-up sheet of stiff canvas between. A letter, purporting to be an assignation, is posted and when the pillar box is lifted a large celluloid doll of the “Kewpie” model is discovered, scandalously dressed, in a sash ribbon and a staggering edifice of a hat.

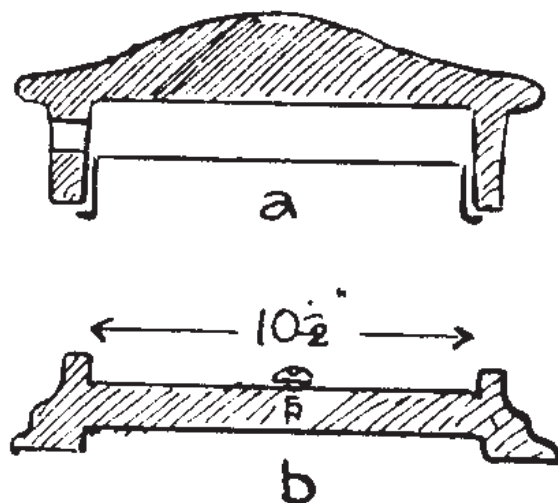
Surprising as it may seem, the doll, which is a quite substantial and fairly bulky affair, is contained all the time in the canvas cylinder that forms the body of the pillar box even though it is opened out flat and deliberately shewn. This is effected by a simple fold and



mode of handling. The material is linoleum, covered on the outside with scarlet blind linen and on the inside with black lining fabric. The length is fifty one inches and the width thirty inches. Fifteen inches from one end the canvas is cut half through (and strengthened with a linen hinge) and folded back on itself, as illustrated in Fig. 72. To this portion is attached a pocket of size sufficient to easily accommodate the doll. To explain the subtlety of the moves whereby the roll can be demonstrated apparently empty is a little difficult. Perhaps the most helpful way will be to consider a bird's-eye view of the fold as shown diagrammatically in Fig. 73. At A the roll is closed; at B it is open. L and R

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represent string loops, placed as handles, grasped by left and right hands respectively, and in the following instruction may be regarded as reference covering the areas which they control. A studied routine is followed. R is swung round to the right and opened out flat under cover of L. When R is fully extended, and not before, L is spread. The position is now as at B, with the doll pocket behind. In closing, an exact reversal of this procedure is followed. L is swung over to the right, so that it forms a screen to R, and then R is folded to the left, bringing the doll back again from the outside to the inside. The turned wooden base is fourteen inches in diameter, turned with a rim to keep the cylinder within bounds and fitted with a round headed screw projecting from the centre (Fig. 74B). The latter is to receive a spring catch fitted to the base of the doll to prevent an accidental overthrow. The top is of corresponding size, shaped to the pattern of a street pillar box and provided with a letter slit. A shallow tin pan fits into the rim, to box-in the space, and to prevent the letter actually falling into the pillar, where its presence is not desired. (Fig. 74A,)



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The doll is of celluloid. It is fixed to a light wooden base by a central wire rod bolted thereto, and is surmounted by a hat of outrageous proportions. Its trimmings comprise some gargantuan blooms, the head of a feather dusting brush and three towering plumes in a tasteful colour combination, namely red, green and yellow. The plumes are not merely decorative. They serve a useful purpose in giving height to the figure. Being made up on whalebone stems, they bend over when the doll is pressed upside down into the pocket and erect when freed from restraint. Behind the doll, supported on a separate upright, is a steel plate bearing two swinging arms and stops arranged to fold upwards in line with the body or fall by their own weight to a nearly horizontal position. The centre of the sash crosses the "tummy" and is tied in a big bow behind; the loops of the bow are sewn to the steel arms, the object of which is to ensure an effective spread. A keyhole plate in the base, fitted with a spring catch, locks it over a domed screw head in the bottom of the pillar box.

The reader is now in possession of the structural and manipulative essentials, but as the material is somewhat heterodox, he may feel some perplexity as to how it may be satisfactorily accounted for. The story ran as follows:-



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“People on the stage are commonly supposed to receive numerous letters from admirers in front. I’ve been on the stage for 20 years, and I’ve only had one. It came this morning” (taking letter from pocket and reading) “The lady concludes her letter by saying ‘Tuesday \* is my night off. Will you meet me under the pillar box at 10 minutes to nine?’ I have made what I consider an appropriate reply – ” (exhibiting a large ‘property’ letter bearing the laconic inscription ‘NOT ARF’ he refolds it and replaces it in its envelope) “And if you will permit me to make a little necessary preparation I will despatch this, and hope for the best.”

*\* The day and time are adapted to that at which the performance is occurring*

The rest of the performance takes place to musical accompaniment. The pillar box is assembled, the letter posted and in due course lifted to exhibit the arrival.

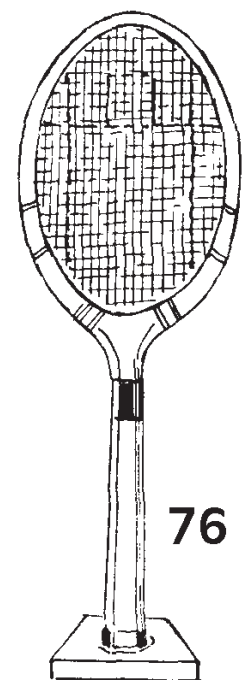
For the enlightenment of American readers, I should explain that “not arf” is a contraction for “not half,” an English idiom registering an emphatic affirmative. Judging by imported samples, I do not doubt that America has equally efficient expressions of its own, appropriate to the circumstances.

In Australia, acting under local advice, I substituted for “not ‘arf” the words “Fair Dinkum ” which I was told meant the same thing, but I doubt it. Australian idiom never did seem convincing to me; hereditary prejudice, no doubt. New Zealand was frankly perplexed.

However, my Australasian and American friends must decide these little difficulties for themselves. We have enough troubles of our own in this country.

## Tricky Tennis.

A number of tennis balls and two rackets figure in this effect. Of the rackets, one is to all appearance the usual implement of play and the other is avowedly a stage property, being an overgrown specimen over four feet high. I say “high,” because it stands upright upon a substantial base from which that part representing the handle is erected. Its purpose is partly decorative, to give breadth and local colour, and at the same time it provides in convenient form the necessary support and background for a net bag, such as tennis balls in bulk are carried in. At the outset a quantity of tennis balls are turned out of this string bag on to a table and the empty bag hung by a wire hook to the stringing of the giant racket. The performer then takes the real racket and standing with his back to the audience at as great a distance from the first (set well up stage) as space permits, takes the balls one by one, feeds them to the racket and makes the motion of playing them. Each time he does so, the ball disappears and



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a moment afterwards visibly drops into the net-bag without any visible transit across the intervening space.

To produce this effect, both rackets are subjected to a considerable amount of faking, and to facilitate reproduction of the apparatus and to explain its working at the same time, it will be well to proceed as with instructions for making.

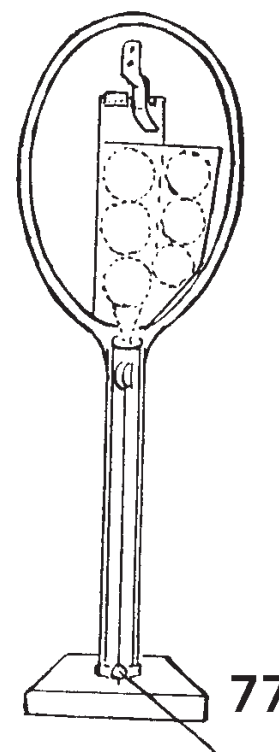
As a starting point, procure a tennis racket. Later this will take its proper part in the performance. First it has to serve as a model. Lay it on a sheet of paper and carefully trace round it with a pencil. Then line the paper with one-and-a-half-inch squares over the area of the outline. Take a larger piece of paper, joining sheets if necessary, and reproduce the squares of the first drawing, but with three inch sides. This forms the basis for enlargement of the original outline to twice the size or four times the area. Number both sets of squares on the latitudinal and longitudinal lines, and by noting the points of intersection on the tracing and reproducing them on the larger squares, it is easy to reproduce the outline in correct form and proportions. Having now a full sized drawing of the required structure take it to a machine sawyer and instruct him to cut the frame on a band-saw and to shape a separate handle, using the original racket as a guide. The frame should not be cut away at the point where it is fixed to the handle, but should be continuous. The handle can be slotted at the point of juncture. Ash is a suitable material for the frame and ash or birch for the handle.

While the woodworker is grappling with his task you can make a series of calls upon ironmongers. Explain yourself as well as you can. You will need all your powers of oratory, persuasion and tact. Ironmongers as a class are unimaginative and have little sympathy with weaknesses of human nature. Lifelong association with hardware engenders callousness towards ambition and indifference to Art. If you tell him you are a conjurer he will treat you with scorn. If you say you want to make an out size in tennis rackets with wire netting he will only think you are a lunatic, and of the two evils it is well to choose the least. What you really want, if you can find it, is a flat fire screen or other similarly constructed article, with a plain, square mesh of stout wire that you can trim down to represent the stringing. If you cannot get what you want you must have resource to a wire worker and get it specially made. Incidentally, to the obvious compassion of neighbours, I have been contemplating the latest thing in garden fences—a galvanised iron wire mesh with three-inch squares. This is rather larger than is desirable, but in default of more suitably proportioned wirework, a piece of that kind of material would do.

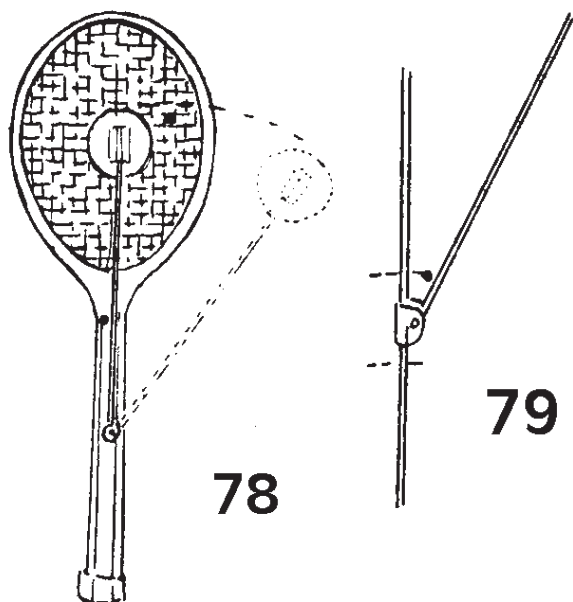
A plywood backing must also be provided for the racket, and if it be ordered from the sawyer at the same time as the frame he will temporarily fasten both pieces of wood and cut them together, which will ensure a perfect fit. A square trap must be cut, with a fretsaw, in the plywood backing, of size sufficient to freely pass a tennis ball. The backing is then secured to the frame by screws, with the wire netting between and the superfluous wire trimmed off. The trap must be hung on a very freely working hinge and the wire-work at this point must be cut out and the severed portion attached to the trap. When all is fitted, and before finally piecing together, the wire-work should be painted some

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bright finish—white, aluminium or gold—and the backing covered with a neutral colour, or, if it is to stand in front of drapery, with material to match. Behind the backing is built a hopper to hold tennis balls, shaped as shewn in Fig. 77 and partitioned as indicated by the dotted line. In line with the centre of the racket is a metal rod, arranged to move behind the pillar (or “handle”) under the impulse of a fine line trailed off stage and pulled by an assistant. The upper end of this rod passes through the base of the ball holder and terminates in an inverted cone, slightly cupped on its base. The partition to the hopper allows only one ball to pass at a time. This falls on to the piston end and is lifted by it when the line is pulled. A piece of flat steel spring suitably bent, is fixed immediately above the trap, which presses against the ball when it is lifted to the level of the trap and displaces it with sufficient bias to roll through. The return of the piston rod is ensured by a spiral spring. The action is repeated until all the balls in the hopper have been delivered.



The net bag that is hung to the face of the racket is permanently distended by a wire ring of size sufficient to permit the trap flap to open freely into it, and, of course, is hung immediately over the trap.



The mechanism of the racket proper is very simple — an umbrella rib and a pin! Pivot the eyeletted end of the steel rib to a small bracket and attach the latter to the racket handle, just above the grip (Fig. 78). To save the trouble of making a special bracket, an umbrella rib broken off at the fold as indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 79 will provide its own hinge and may be fixed to the racket handle with staples. The free end of the pivoted rib has attached to it a disc of tin covered with painter’s canvas on the back (i.e., the side that is next to the racket) and painted white. The outside is painted a dead black. A pin driven into the handle prevents the rib swinging beyond the centre.

In addition to the devices described, a well table will be required, outlined in white squares on a black ground with openings for as many balls as are required to be dealt with. The balls are laid out on the table top, each in front of a well (an umbrella ring or similar check should be provided to keep each ball in position). The racket until required is laid down, in a not too conspicuous position, with the black side of the disc upward. In action, the performer stands with his

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back to the audience, facing the racket stand (with the net hung in position) and the table within reach of his left hand. Until such time as the racket is brought into play he holds it level. Under cover of his body, he turns it with the white side of the disc up, pulls down the rib so that it is masked by the body as the racket is brought into view. Reaching out with the left hand, he apparently picks up a ball, but directly it is masked by the hand, he jerks it forward into the table, partly closes the hand as though encircling it, and makes a throwing movement in the direction of the racket. Simultaneously, he operates the pivoted rib with his right thumb and swings the disc up to centre of the stringing, immediately after (with a forward movement) lowering the racket to the level. In the momentary glimpse the spectators get of the white disc it passes for the ball they have just seen. In one instant it has flashed into view, in the next instant it has gone, as though it had disappeared en route for the net, wherein its arrival is duly timed and its re-appearance effected as already explained.

When the last of the balls has passed, the performer turns the racket and lays it down upon the black topped table with the blackened side of the disc upwards.

## **Aerial Angling.**

Catching fish in the air is one of the unique effects in magic.

The performer is provided with rod and line a tin labelled "Bait" and a glass globe of water. First baiting the hook, he swings the line over the heads of the audience and a small goldfish suddenly appears at the end. This he removes from the hook and drops into the water. Rebaiting the hook, he makes another catch and then another – usually three in all. The fish swim sedately in the globe, obviously real, and apparently unconcerned by their unusual origin.

The fish that are dropped into the water are not the same as those which appear on the line. They are contained in three compartments of a hollow metal handle fixed to the rod. Each compartment is closed by a half-round shutter which slides round the fixed portion. The imitation fish are merely profiles of golden coloured silk with a stiffening wire at the end of the tail, which serves both as a weight to steady the "fish" in its open position and as a roller to coil it upon for concealment in a small metal container consisting of a piece of tube a trifle over an inch long and a quarter of an inch in diameter. The tube is filled with an eyelet at the upper end for attachment to the hook and a smaller eyelet at the lower end, whereby the nose of the silk fish is connected to it with a short length of fine line. Three such dummy fish, rolled up and inserted into their containers are placed in the bait box. One is attached to the hook (not a regular fish-hook but a simple hook of spring wire bent up close to the shank, so that the "bait" cannot be shaken off) and the line played. A sharp jerk shakes the silk fish out of its holder and it quickly unrolls. Swinging about in the lights of the theatre it looks for all the world like a wriggling fish. Meanwhile with all attention turned in expectation on the line, the performer has ample opportunity to open one of the compartments in the handle and drop one of the living fish into his left hand. Seizing the dummy in his right, he removes it from the hook, retains it in the same hand, while

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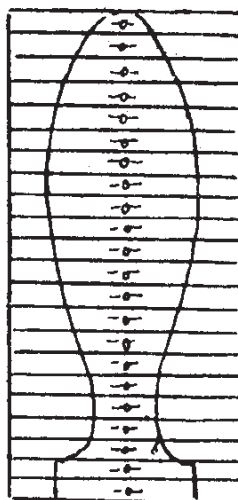
making a presence of transferring it to the other, thereupon showing the real fish and dropping the latter into the water. With the hand containing the dummy, he reaches to the bait can, leaves it behind and takes out another, repeating the process until the supply of bait and fish is at an end.

Excellent as the trick is, it still leaves something to be desired. After the first thrill of surprise the spectator is apt to become critical and to view the bait box and elaborate procedure of baiting the hook with suspicion.

To obviate the necessity of renewing the fake for each catch, I contrived one that can be re-set without substitution. It folds like a Venetian blind and can be closed and replaced in its holder without awkward moves or suspicious fumbling. Just so much care is required as would naturally be exercised in unhooking a real fish, and no more.

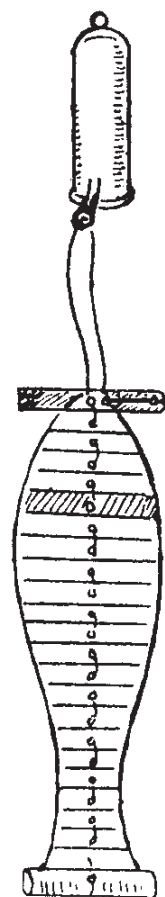
Being on a small scale, it must be made with care and accuracy. Proceed as follows:-

On a scrap of draughtsman's tracing cloth pencil a central vertical line and twenty-four transverse lines, three-sixteenths of an inch apart. Then pencil in the outline of a fish on each side of the central line. Very carefully pleat the material on the transverse lines. Mark the creases well by close pressure and open out again. Measure on the central line a further series of divisions midway between each of the pleat lines and with a leather punch, punch holes at each intersection (Fig. 79). Good, clean punch holes are essential: pierced holes will not do. The shape can now be cut out for the outline. The nose and the sixth pleat (being the widest section) have to be stiffened, for which purpose sections of thin tin are cut, drilled and gummed over the fabric.



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Ordinary tin plate is too thick for the purpose and the minute quantity necessary can conveniently be cut from the very light weight stuff from which tobacco canisters are made. Silk of the finest texture and most suitable colour obtainable is gummed over both sides of the shape and trimmed off. A piece of thin strip lead is cut, double the width of a pleat and folded over the tail to give it weight and rigidity. It is drilled to correspond with the line of holes. With a darning needle a length of fine line or thin gut is now threaded through the holes, one end is fastened off to the tail, the other passes up through the nose, through the eyelet at the lower end of the container and back again to the nose, where it is fastened off. (Fig. 80.) By sliding the nose down the line the pleats will be drawn together, and the fish folded into a small compass for



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insertion into the holder. The latter has to be slightly larger than in the case of the rolled silk, being approximately an inch and a quarter long by three eighths of an inch diameter.

At a later date I modified the construction by extending the nose piece into the form of a bar, as illustrated. This does not look so pretty in the sketch or upon close inspection of the actual thing, but if the extended ends are painted a dull black, they are unnoticeable as the dummy fish swings about, and it offers several advantages. It gives greater durability, it is more manageable for folding, it guides the folded shape more easily into the container and by carrying the fastening off knot at the end instead of in the centre it obviates a tendency to jam.

The operation of the fake in use is to grip the container between the thumb and forefinger of right hand, approach the left hand (in which is the real fish) and place the first and second fingers of that hand one on each side of the line and draw the nose of the dummy fish down. When fully folded, push the dummy back into the container with the assistance of the thumb, and bring the real fish into view, continue the movement of the left hand as though gently unhooking the fish and throw it into the water.

The freedom of manipulation afforded by this arrangement permits of four fish being used without unduly prolonging the procedure. Three are contained in the handle of the rod and one can be carried in a rubber pocket (formed of one half of a folding tobacco pouch) placed inside the usual *profonde* where it exists or temporarily pinned inside the coat tail in the absence of a permanent pocket. A fish taken from the pocket at, say, the third cast, makes a variation from the continuous repetition of the same movement.

All fish will live for some time out of water. I am not prepared to say how long gold-fish will survive or what their opinion may be on the subject of a temporary change of element, but both out of consideration for their feelings and to ensure their appearance in a lively condition, the rod should be loaded as shortly before use as possible.

### **Hoffmann's Bullet Trick.**

Professor Hoffmann (in "More Magic," p. 437), describes a bullet trick that is undoubtedly the best in its class. A marked bullet, sawn nearly through, is fired from a pistol on to the end of a piece of dangling ribbon, also marked, suspended from a convenient support. More completely convincing than its predecessor, the trick in which the performer professedly catches a bullet fired directly at himself, it has none of the element of risk historically associated with that tragic feat.

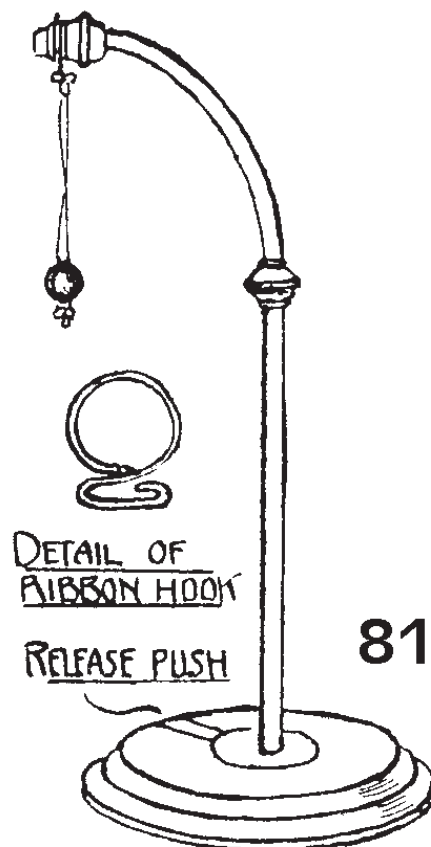
Hoffmann's bullet trick is, I believe, universally appraised among magicians for its ingenuity, but it has seldom been seen; probably for the reason that, as contrived by its inventor, it needs an assistant to pull a release line to effect the appearance of the bullet. The trick is perhaps too small for the theatre, while drawing-room entertainers do not want tricks that necessitate taking an attendant; and the stage or platform arrangements in

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concert halls and banqueting chambers seldom offer the facilities for the setting of such tricks.

By devising an automatic version of the apparatus, I have dispensed with the need for an assistant and made the trick possible of performance in practically any surroundings.

The support for the ribbon is, for convenience in packing, made in two parts, a rod and a base the former screwing into the latter. The "rod" is really a tube, half an inch in diameter and a little over two feet high. The upper end is curved: an ornamental collar encircles it at the beginning of the bend, and a similar spinning forms an ornamental knob at the end. The latter has a loosely hinged cap, closing the opening, and in the space within is room for the bullet – a ball bullet five-eighths of an inch in diameter, or a shade over. Beneath the opening is a hook, to hold the ribbon (Fig. 81.) Within the tube is a cane, moving freely up and down. To allow it to run easily in the curved portion, it is given extra flexibility at this part by a number of saw-kerfs, cut half through at a distance of a quarter of an inch apart. The lower end of the cane terminates in a metal cap. The length of the cane is such that a movement of half an inch will push out the bullet from its hiding. The source of power and the means of transmitting it are both photographic appliances, an "antinous release" and a "self-timer." The antinous release is a flexible metal tube carrying within it a stranded steel cable that is pushed out at one end by the operation of a metal plunger at the other. This is the device familiar to photographers for shutter operation. The self-timer is a device to enable amateur photographers to share the penalty of their victims. It is made to grip the plunger of the release and to shoot the latter at a pre-arranged number of seconds after setting, so that the photographer can recede to a distance to pose in the picture and leave the camera shutter to itself for automatic operation.



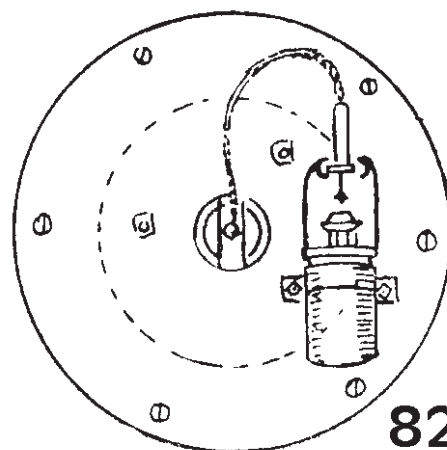
Here, then, is an invaluable aid to the magician.

The base into which the ribbon support is screwed, is an inverted shallow metal pan, 8 inches diameter, enamelled black, to look like a disc of solid wood. In the exact centre of the inside of this, the end of the antinous release is fixed and at a convenient distance, the self-timer.

There are several makes of timers, mostly mechanical, i.e., "clock-work." They are almost silent, but not quite. For that reason I chose a "Kodak" self-timer, which is on a different principle to others, controlled by an air valve, and is positively silent. It consists

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of a small cylindrical piston chamber with a powerful spring piston working within it. The latter is pushed down to its lowest point, and there it will remain indefinitely, held by an internal catch. A clip is formed on an arched bracket attached to the piston chamber, which grips the plunger of the antinous release, which is bent round to meet it Fig. 82 shews the internal arrangements of the base, as seen from the under side. A minute release catch protrudes from the outside of the piston chamber, and this is so disposed in fixing it to the base that it can be operated through a hole in the latter, by pressure on a metal tongue lying flush with the top of the base on the outside. This is so far invisible that nothing could be seen even if I



illustrated it; I must therefore invite the reader to take my word for it. Certainly its concealment leaves nothing to be desired, and I can guarantee its reliability of action. The timing is variable by means of an adjustable collar on the plunger and if set for twenty, thirty or forty seconds, and the performer, after all the preliminaries, presses the external tongue, he can take his gun, walk away, and timing his actions and patter accordingly aim at the support. In twenty, thirty or forty seconds, as the case may be, the internal release will act and the bullet will be shot out of its container. The hinged cap at the end of the ribbon support quivers slightly just before discharging its contents, and if watched closely, and the gun fired at the same instant, the report will correspond with the appearance of the bullet. A thin wooden or metal rim screwed to the under side of the base strengthens it and encloses the fitments.

With regard to the gun, either a pistol or a rifle may be used. For the former I use, in preference to the type of pistol recommended by Professor Hoffman, which is undesirably heavy and unnecessarily elaborate, an old-fashioned muzzle loading pistol, of rather large size, of a very plain and cheap type. The regular barrel is cut off and (the stump being first plugged and pinned) replaced with a six inch length of 4 in. bore tubing jammed over the stump. No charge is used, only a percussion cap to make a report, the performer explaining that the pistol has been loaded beforehand, to save time.

A rifle makes a more imposing show. This is practically a dummy. An air gun has its regular barrel cut off and replaced by 3/4 in. bore tubing, as before. The report is produced by a miniature safety pistol, firing small blank cartridges, fixed to the side of the rifle, adjoining the trigger of the latter.

The pistol recommended by Professor Hoffmann is an old type of conjurer's pistol, converted from a cumbrous weapon suggestive of a highwayman's professional equipment. It carries a ramrod, sliding in a lesser barrel below the main barrel. The main barrel is plugged and whatever is placed in it remains there, independent of the firing. The nipple is connected through to the lesser barrel, which takes the charge and is the real source of the explosion. Such an arrangement is not entirely devoid of risk. If, for instance, from absentmindedness or other cause, the ramrod were returned to its cavity before



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discharging the pistol, it might be uncomfortable for somebody. Then again, if the plug was insecurely fixed and wore loose with age, a serious accident might result. It is unlikely that an intelligent mechanic would fix such a plug in such a way that it could wear loose; moreover, powder fire causes rust, and it is not in the nature of rusted joints to wear loose.

Still, it is said to have happened. Better not give it a chance. Little, if anything, is gained in illusion.

It only remains to explain the general procedure. The automatic release is set for use, the gun is loaded with cap or cartridge and a plate is provided with some ribbons of different colours and a bullet. In a get-at-able pocket a duplicate bullet is carried. Lead bullets of the required size can be obtained from fishing tackle shops. They must be sawn about three quarters through and the two halves forced slightly apart so that a ribbon can be easily introduced into the slit. The ribbons, about eight inches long, are knotted at each end, and a small shot or other pellet enclosed in the knots to prevent them being forcibly drawn through the hook by the weight of the large bullet.

The plate is handed out with the request that the bullet shall be marked with a pocket knife, and a ribbon selected and marked with a pencil. While this is being done, the performer gains possession of the duplicate pellet and secretes it in his fingers. Taking the plate back, he picks up the marked ribbon, and at the same time secretly abstracts the marked bullet, leaving the duplicate on the plate in its place. He runs the ribbon through the slit of the concealed bullet, draws it through as far as one of the knots and fixes it by pressing the two halves together. He then puts the ribbon through the hook at the extremity of the tubular support and, under cover of the fingers, introduces the bullet into the cavity. Then he drops the substituted bullet into the gun barrel, puts in a piece of tissue paper over it, as a wad, and rams it down with a ramrod. All is now ready. He presses upon the tongue that puts the time release into action, walks to a distance for shooting, takes aim, and keeps on the alert for the signal to fire. In due time the air valve discharges its piston, the piston operates the cable release and, through the medium of the cane, pushes the bullet out of its cavity. Its weight causes it to fall, and the two ends of the ribbon are instantly reversed.

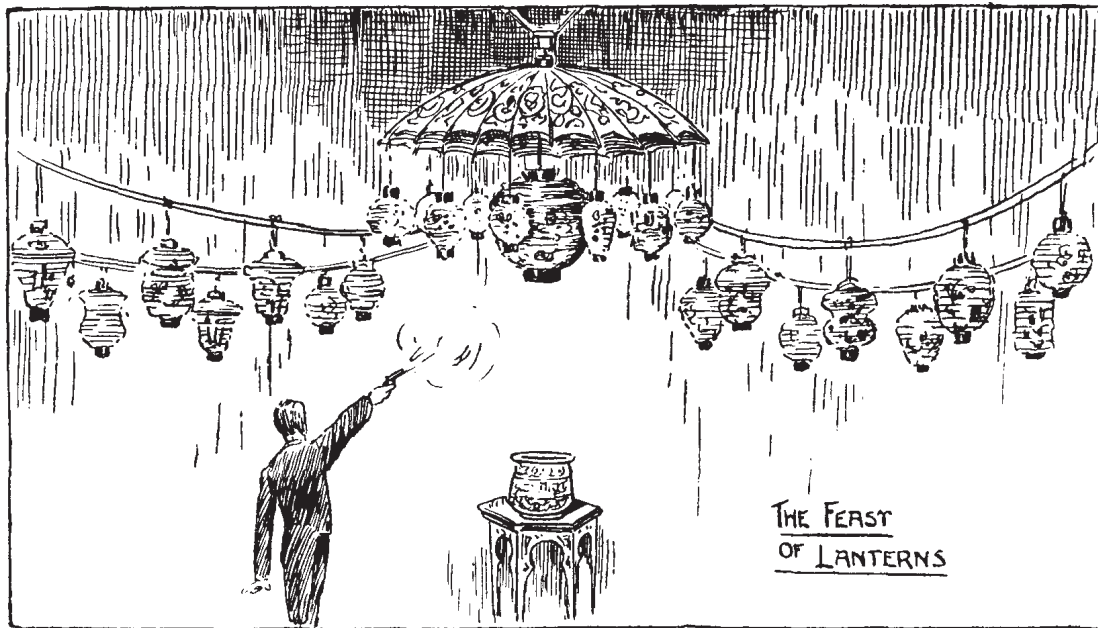
By careful trial and repeated rehearsal, the performer should be able to time the denouement to a second or two. To prevent an awkward pause and sustain a sense of interested expectancy, while waiting for the bullet to announce its appearance, I use a series of broken phrases, that can be interrupted at any point without detriment, thus —

“Steady, please, in the front row.... The other night I shot a man’s ear off.... Quite an accident.... I warned him to move his ear.... He moved.... the wrong ear.... I’ve got his other ear at home, now!.... Bang!

The performer walks back to the stage, holds a plate beneath the bullet, with a pair of scissors daintily cuts the ribbon off close to the hook, and passes the plate out for identification of the contents.

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## The Feast of Lanterns.



The Buddhist festival of Bon, in China, is the occasion of a lavish display of the paper lanterns peculiar to the country and has come to be known to foreign visitors by the appellation of "The Feast of Lanterns."

The title is a pretty one, conjuring up a spectacle in the imagination, and was early appropriated by conjurers for attachment to any trick involving the production of half a dozen or so lighted Chinese lanterns.

This is a more ambitious attempt to justify the Bill Matter, a highly spectacular effect that practically fills the stage.

The stage is set with a hanging target and a Syrian brass palm-pot standing upon an oriental coffee stool. The interior of the pot is shewn to be really and unquestionably empty. Six pails of water are poured into the pot, from which is immediately produced in rapid succession: four lengths of wide silk sash ribbons; these are attached to the target in centre of the stage festooned off to the four corners and attached to the wings. Twelve large lighted lanterns follow which are hung to the festoons. Finally, the performer shoots at the target, which changes to a 6 ft. Japanese tent umbrella with another dozen or so full-size lanterns hanging from it. The disappearance of the target is absolute.

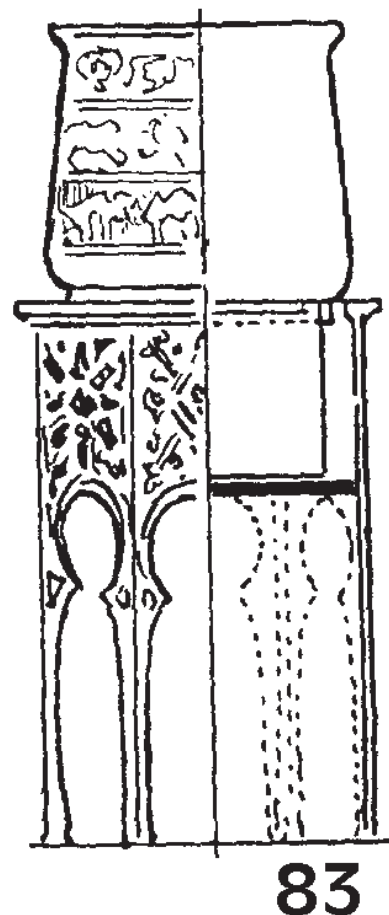
There are two separate devices to be detailed; the production of the lanterns from the water and the transformation of the target.

First, as to the lanterns. The receptacle for the water is approximately 12 in. internal diameter, and of similar height. A circular hole is cut in the bottom, of equal diameter to

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the inside of the pot at its narrowest point, this being the mouth. A stout brass hoop is soldered to the newly made opening and a similar hoop made to fit loosely over it. The inside of the pot is painted a light brown and a sheet of thin brown wrapping paper to match is stretched between the two hoops, drum-head fashion, to replace the bottom. A cylindrical lining of galvanised iron is made to fit easily within the pot and eight inches deep. See sectional diagram, Fig. 83.

The stool or tabouret is hexagonal in shape, with partly enclosed sides, of a common oriental pattern. It is faked by cutting a circular aperture in the top, considerably larger in diameter than the outside hoop of the palm-pot. Another pair of hoops similar to the first is made to fit within this opening and a sheet of thin paper suitably corresponding in colour with the decoration of the stool itself, is stretched between them. Within the enclosed upper part of the stool is a galvanised iron tank, occupying the whole of the interior, and within that is a circular wooden float lying at the bottom and free to move up and down within the tank. The mouth of the tank is of such size as to allow the outer hoop of the palm-pot to be pushed into it. The pair of rings holding the strained paper that represents the tabouret top fit easily over it. The pot lining is packed with the lanterns and ribbons and covered with a piece of thin rubber or mackintosh sheeting, secured with an elastic band.



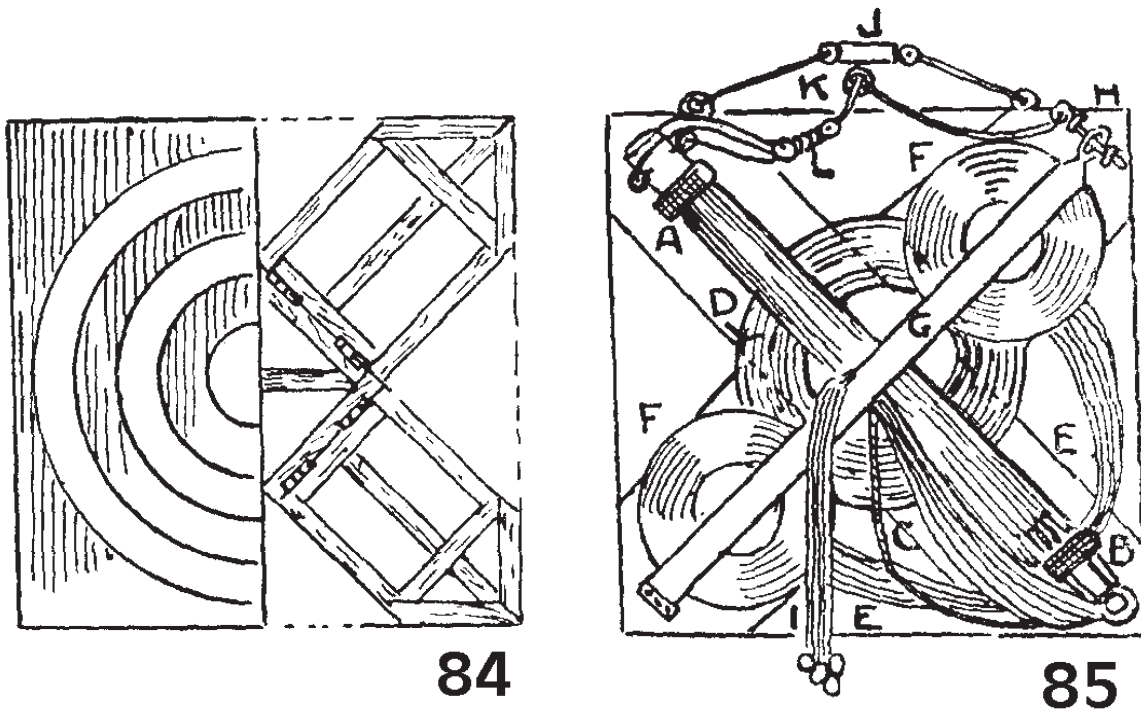
The action is as follows:— At the beginning the load is within the tank. Placing the pot on the tabouret cuts through the paper top and makes a connection between the pot and the hidden water tank. As water is poured into the pot, the paper bottom is torn away by the weight and as the water rises in the tank, the platform and the load float thereon until they are raised partly into the pot. The rubber cover is stripped off and being attached to a large flag first produced, is carried away under cover of it. As the load is developed the weight of the container diminishes and it is raised still further by flotation. Before the last lantern is lifted out the container is assisted by hand to its limit and jammed into the bottom of the pot, an external rim around the outside being provided for the purpose. A tap at the rear of the tank, within the stool, near the bottom, allows the water to be drained off after the show.

The lanterns themselves have the usual wooden tops and bottoms removed and substituted by imitations made of black linen, sewn to a wire ring in the case of the top and to a blackened tin disc in the case of the bottom. All but the lowest disc of the stack, which is provided with a candleholder placed centrally, are perforated, the holes ranging in number from one to eleven and the candle-holders set at successive points round the centre, so that the lower candles may pass through the bottoms of all the lanterns above

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and permit of all being lighted at the same time. The wicks are moistened with turpentine to ignite readily. A striking surface from a safety match box is glued near the top of each lantern end spare matches provided, so that should a light fail at any time, it can be renewed.

As to the target, a reference to Fig. 84 will most quickly explain it. There is a square centre panel and four spade-shaped sections hinged to it. These five pieces are all of a light wooden framework covered with m/m plywood. A square of black velvet is stretched



from point to point, with an edging of black tape tacked to the edges of the woodwork and sewn to the velvet to give an appearance of thickness. Rings of white material are sewn to the surface of the velvet to represent a target.

Fig. 85 shews the method of setting and stringing the target and its hidden developments.

At A and B are two stout iron hooks, loosely hinged to the wooden framework, so that they lie flat against it when not in use and drop to that position by their own weight when the target collapses. Under these are tucked the ferrule and the handle ends of the sunshade. They secure the sunshade and the sunshade maintains the rigidity of one diagonal of the target. The handle end terminates in a metal loop and a stout cord C connects it to the centre panel of the target framework. Between this and the folded sunshade is a giant lantern, D, bottomless (the original bottom is substituted by a band of black linen as with the other lanterns) and weighted at its lower end with a heavy wire ring. It is attached at a suitable point to the cord connecting the sunshade. (It may here be

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mentioned that for convenience in packing, the several connections and the attachment of the lanterns to the ribbons depending from the sunshade are made by means of snap hooks.) Three thin cords (equidistant) are attached to the sliding collar operating the umbrella ribs, taken up and through holes in the cover, out beyond the ferrule, where they are knotted together and to a metal ring. If now the umbrella is suspended by this ring, and the target allowed to drop, its weight opens the sunshade, the target folds compactly and the large lantern falls over and hides it. This understood, the remaining details are more easily worked out in construction than imparted by description. Ribbons, E,E, are attached to the ribs of the umbrella at regular intervals, each terminating in a snap hook for the attachment of a lantern. The lanterns have the wooden tops replaced with folding fabric rims supported by wire rims as previously described, and the bottoms are remade of fabric and card discs weighted with thin sheet lead.

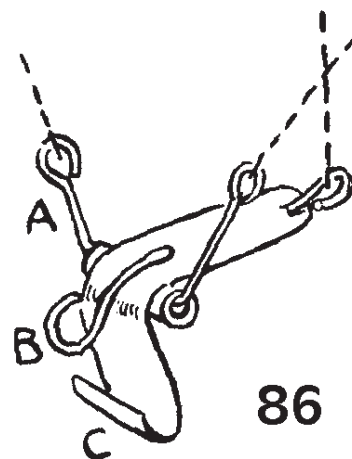
In setting, the lanterns are laid upon the two target sections not already covered by the umbrella, F,F, and a broad band of ribbon, G, permanently attached at the lower left-hand corner, passes over them and is temporarily fastened at the right-hand top corner. The fastening takes the form of a stout wire bolt which is inserted through two metal rings in the target corner,\* and one sewn to the end of the ribbon; this is clearly depicted at H. The ribbon is at tension and while holding the two stacks of lanterns serves to maintain the rigidity of the second diagonal of the target. To facilitate description and to avoid complication of the diagram, one ribbon only is shewn, lying across the centre of the lanterns. In actual construction two broad ribbons are used, set upon each side of the diagonal instead of directly along it. These grip the lanterns on the sides rather than on the centres, where the bulk is greater, and so prevent slipping.

*\* As a measure of safety, instead of fixing these two rings directly to the target itself, they are better soldered to a metal plate, the latter being pivoted to the target. This will ensure always a direct vertical pull.*

Four other lengths of ribbon, I, of a decorative character, are attached to the handle and from thence pass under and over the tension ribbon holding the lanterns and hang down behind the target. They terminate in metal rings for the attachment of the ribbons produced from the palm-pot.

Now with regard to suspension. What I will call a safety loop (of cord) is attached to the two top sections of the target frame, J, and if lifted by this, all is rigid and secure. If, however, the weight is thrown on to the left-hand point of suspension (the umbrella ferrule) and the wire bolt, H, at the right-hand corner withdrawn, the whole thing is released and expanded. Fig. 86 shews the release hook in detail.

A, is a bracket, held by the suspension cords; B, is the main, umbrella-supporting hook soldered to a tilting hook, C, swinging freely upon the bracket and having an extended arm terminating in a wire loop to which is attached the



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release cord, C. The two cords from A, pass through pulley blocks attached to an overhead batten and thence along through a double block down to the wings. The vertical release cord follows a similar course.

About an inch of light brass tubing running upon a wire bearing is fixed in the centre of the safety loop of the target (J, Fig. 85), to obviate friction, and the target is hung at this point over the hook C (Fig. 86). The cord from the ferrule of the umbrella is connected to the ring K (Fig. 85) to which is also attached a cord from the bolt H. The cord from the bolt is shorter than the cord from the umbrella, to ensure the bolt being withdrawn, and between the suspension ring and the umbrella a spiral spring, L, or heavy elastic cord is intersposed as a precaution against undue shock. A similar shock resistant is let into the cord connecting the umbrella handle and the target centre. Ring, K, is put over hook, B. All is now ready.

At the signal of the shot an assistant in the wings pulls the release cord, C. This tilts the safety loop off the hook, C. Hook B takes the weight, the target collapses and the final display opens out automatically. A pull on the double cord is then necessary to raise the umbrella to an effective height.

The relation of diagonal to square and of circumference to half-diameter produces a most astonishing effect. The target is only about two feet square, and, being black, looks smaller at a distance. The sunshade is nearly six feet in diameter, and it seems incredible that it could have been concealed behind the target.

To give full effect to the concluding spectacle all the lanterns should light up at the moment of the appearance of the sunshade. (Those first taken from the water should be blown out before being hung. This for two reasons, first as a precaution against fire, the second to shew that the lights are actual flames.) The final illumination is effected by wiring up the umbrella and its dependent lanterns, the connecting ribbons and the festoon ribbons with miniature flex and flash lamp bulbs. The lamps are wired in parallel and a flex follows the line of suspension from the umbrella to the wing, where they are fed from a storage battery and controlled by a switch. The necessary connections can be made by small flat plug-and-socket connectors. Lamps from the festoon ribbons can be concealed within short lengths of double (tubular) narrow ribbons hanging from the main ribbon and carrying the necessary hooks for suspending the lanterns. These hooks however, are not at the ends of the depending ribbons, but higher up. Dummy hooks are placed at the ends of the ribbon, where the lamps protrude and hang down inside the lanterns when they are attached to the real hooks.

## **The Junior Feast of Lanterns.**

The production of lighted Japanese Lanterns from a receptacle of water is both such a truly mysterious and pretty effect that for long I wished to make a compact version of it, suitable for a handbag show. A miniature of the previously described apparatus on even the smallest scale would obviously be too bulky and eventually I devised the following. A

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straight-sided brass jardiniere about six in. high and of similar diameter is adapted as a self-contained apparatus by the simplest of expedients.

The constructional dimensions follow the load of lanterns, and this is of standard size, ordinarily sold by magical depots as a hat production. Six Chinese Lanterns of simple barrel shape, 5 ins. diameter, have the veneer-wood bottoms and rims with which they are turned out by the lantern maker, removed and replaced by bottoms and rims of tin.

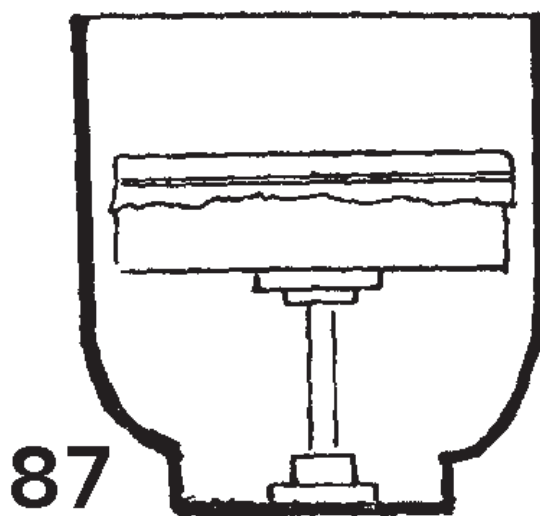
The bottoms are perforated with 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 holes respectively to provide clearance for the light holders when the lanterns are arranged in a stack. Miniature candles such as are used as Christmas tree decorations or tapers supply the lights. Better still, there are special match-tapers for melting sealing-wax. They are a couple of inches or so long with the wick ends prepared as match heads and are put up in boxes like matches. They can be snipped off from the bottom, with scissors, to the required length and by virtue of their highly inflammable ends will ignite with rapidity and certainty. Otherwise, the candles or tapers used must be touched with turpentine when trimming for the same reason. When stacked, the wicks are all exposed in proximity and a small match (placed in readiness on the uppermost lantern, with a strip of striking surface from a match box glued thereto) will fire the lot.

The lanterns are contained in a shallow round tin, like a cake tin and as it is impractical to make the lanterns fit the tin, the tin is made to fit the lanterns. It is approximately 5-1/4 in. diameter and 2 in. deep. A circular piece of oiled silk is stretched over the top and secured by a flat elastic band providing a sufficiently water-tight compartment.

The jardiniere (Indian brass-ware offers suitable stock to select from), is chosen for its capacity to take the lantern container inside it with a free space all round. It is not fixed directly to the bowl, but is supported on a pillar erected from the bottom, as shewn in sectional diagram, Fig. 87. The pillar is threaded at both ends and screwed into flanges soldered to the outside bottom of the container and the inside bottom of the bowl respectively. The lower joint is fixed and the upper is left free to unscrew, for convenience in setting.

The bowl cannot be shewn empty, but by the peculiar arrangement of the internal equipment, it rings freely when casually tapped upon the outside, which gives an impression of emptiness.

Before use it stands inverted upon the table. It is picked up, given a fillip or two with the finger, and water poured in from a jug, sufficient in quantity to reach half way up; running over the oiled silk container cover, it



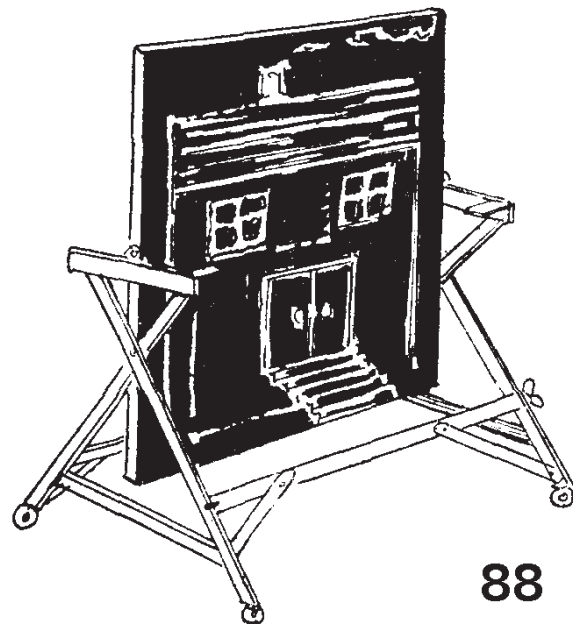
## Magical Masterpieces

leaves the lanterns partly submerged but dry. Reaching into the bowl, the cover is quickly removed and is crumpled up small in the hand, the match struck and the lighted lanterns developed.

The illusion is as much aural as visual. The spectators unconscious process of reasoning is as follows:—Here is a pot, it is upside down, presumably empty, unless there's something underneath. This conjurer chap picks it up. No, there's nothing under it, nothing drops out. I suppose it is empty. He flicks it, rings like a bell—must be empty. Pours water in—two objects cannot occupy the same space. Yes, certainly empty. Hallo-fire! Paper lanterns—all alight, too—they couldn't have been in the water. Must have been a catch somewhere. Rather a good trick. If the water's still there, how were the lanterns dry too! if the water isn't there, where did it go to? Yes, decidedly a good trick, I'll give it a hand.

### The Housing Problem.

This is an elaborate mechanical piece, having for its basic idea the evolution of a house from one brick. It stands thirty inches high and in plan is thirty inches square, so that its cubic bulk presents an imposing appearance. It is a substantial looking structure, a representative model of a modern suburban villa, with recessed porchway, four gabled roofs, bay windows with balconies, half timbering and self-contained internal lighting. It is produced upon, and in fact folds into a board two inches thick but bevelled at the edges and painted black, so that at a little distance it appears to be only half that thickness. The board is pivoted on a trestle stand, after the manner of a swinging mirror and can be turned to shew both sides and finally brought to the level. One side of the board is painted in representation of a child's crude drawing of a house in chalk lines. The other side is lettered in imitation of a builder's sign. At the outset, the drawing faces the audience, but is draped with a cloth to avoid anticipation.



A subsidiary device is an ornate gilt casket standing on a side table or carried on by an assistant.

The performer waves his hand in the direction of the casket and the lid slowly opens and an object, wrapped in silk or fine linen, mysteriously rises from it. Gravely unwrapping it, and handling with mock care—



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"This," he says, "is a precious stone. It was known to the early Britons by the name of brick, and was used for building houses in bygone days, when men built houses.\*

*\* The sting of the house famine is not so keen as it was in 1929 when I produced this, but jibes at the jerry builder will get sympathetic hearing for many years to come.*

"The London County Council, in a praiseworthy effort to revive a lost art, have designed something like this –" (uncovering drawing).

"In the erection of a magical structure, I will commence by placing a brick at the bottom. (The early Britons, in building a house, always commenced by placing a brick at the bottom.)

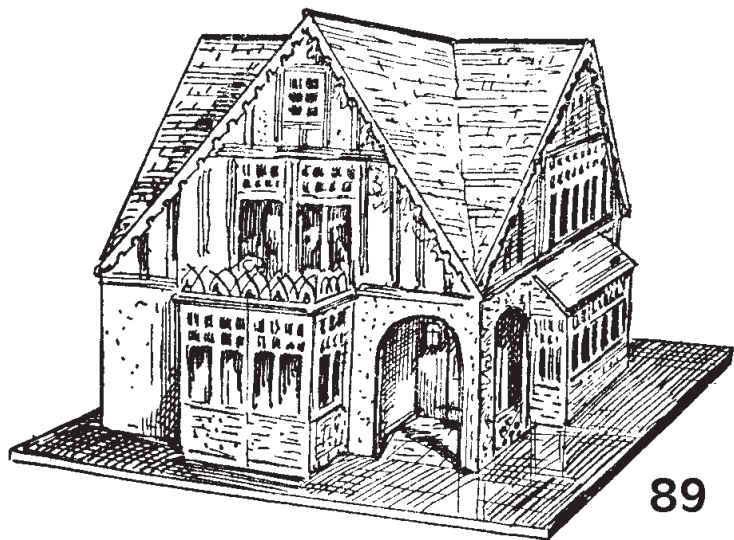
"Having laid one brick, with the optimism of an enterprising builder, I will erect a sign –"

While speaking, he raises the board to the level, lays the brick in the centre and, aided by a stage attendant, supports it while revolving the board backward to display the inscription on the reverse

HOUSE  
TO BE  
SOLD  
GUARANTEED  
FOR TWO YEARS.

Allowing just time to read the alluring advertisement, the board is swung back to the level and almost the entire area is occupied by the house. The stand is wheeled round and all four elevations shewn, each complete in every detail.

"And already we have a house from one brick. If any of you are looking for a house, I'm sorry you can't have this one, because it is already occupied; and if you watch, you will shortly see a new sign in the window." (Fig. 89.)



As the band plays "Home, Sweet Home," the stage lights are dimmed and lights appear in the house, first in the porch, then in each of the ground floor windows in turn: these go

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out in the same order and a moment afterwards a light appears in one of the upper windows. It is a double window, with two blinds, and they fall in turn.

The Golden Casket can be disposed of in a few words.

Internally, it is large enough to take the brick in its wrapping and allow free movement up and down. In the bottom are two spring flaps with an upward impulse of sufficient strength to raise the brick. When, however, the brick is pressed down and the lid closed over it, the lid being hinged at the back opposes the lifting power of the springs. Extruding from the back of the lid, is a fixed lever arm, to the end of which a fine line is attached. This passes through a hole in the table top, down to and through a screw eye near the lower end of one of the legs and thence off stage to the hand of an assistant; or, alternatively, through a hole in the bottom of a tray to a lever pivoted to the under side and operated by the attendant carrying it. In either case a slow, steady pull regulates the balance between the spring pressure and the lid resistance, with the effect already described.

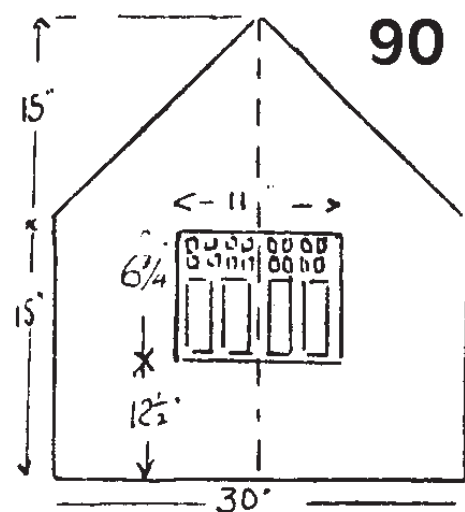
The brick itself, though its part is a small one, is not an idle passenger. It houses the electric battery that supplies the current for the lights. In size, it follows the true dimensions of the real thing (9-1/4 x 4-1/4 x 2-1/2). It is made of thin wood, canvas covered and painted. The side which in use is kept under can be bodily removed such time as is necessary for battery renewal. Contact plates and clips are provided for connecting up the battery and these contacts are in electrical connection with two metal plates on the outside.

These plates have studs, corresponding to keyhole slots in a pair of similar plates on the house itself, so that when the brick is attached thereto, as described in due order, the battery is automatically connected into the wiring circuit.

For the main walls of the house, it is first necessary to prepare four panels of 4 m/m plywood, 30 inches square, by scrimming on both sides with unbleached calico and drying under pressure to ensure flatness.

(Scrim is an open mesh blind material taken unto themselves by stage carpenters to glue over the shaped plywood profiles of wing pieces, etc. The fabric is rubbed down on the glued surface and the glue drawn through with a hot, wet cloth. Plywood so strengthened possesses enormous strength and withstands hard usage. The process has come to be known as "scrimming." In the present case a finer surface material is desired. "Scrimming with calico" is really a confusion of terms.)

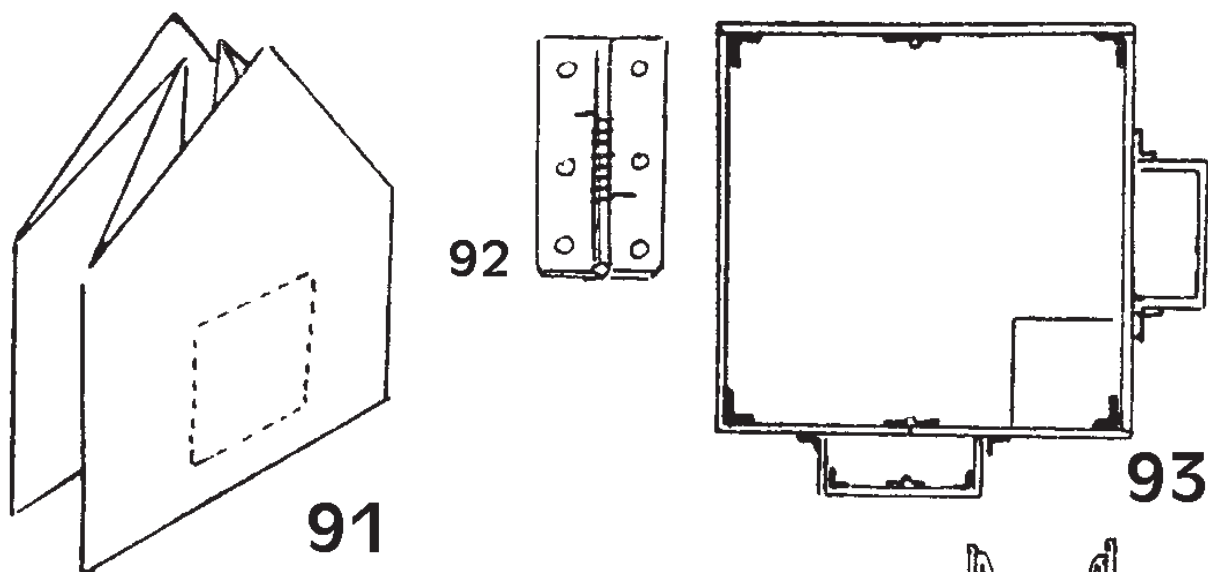
These are cut to the size and dimensions of Fig. 90 of which two are preserved intact for the front



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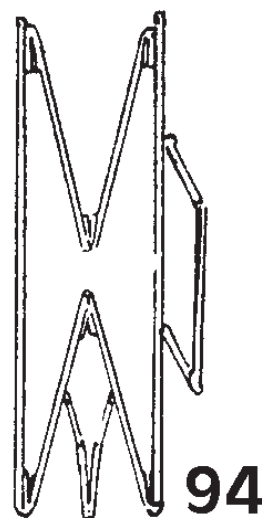
and back walls and the other two are divided down the centre to make folding sides. Fig. 90 represents one of the divided sides, in which an opening 10-1/2 in. x 6-1/4 in. is cut for the upper window and a centrally divided overlay as shewn is cut for the window frame. Between the overlay and the main opening, a piece of tinted celluloid or gelatine is fixed. In the back wall a trap is cut, 10 inches square, and hinged at the bottom to fold inwards. Two keyhole plates are let into the outside surface of the trap, to take the studs upon the brick. When the structure is complete, thin wire flex is taken from these plates to the lamps and switching contacts.

The two main walls and the halved side walls are spring hinged together to fold as shewn in Fig. 91. Piano hinges, running the full length of the folds are best, as they brace up the edges of the sections and help to prevent warping. Spring hinges are made by taking the hinge apart, cutting away (in the case of a butt hinge) the centre knuckle or in the case of a piano hinge) several knuckles at judicious intervals, and inserting springs to fit the spaces. The springs are wound on a pin, of similar gauge to the hinge pin, fixed in the chuck of a lathe or wheel brace temporarily held in a vice. Steel piano wire of about 20 S.W.G. is suitable in the present case. Fig. 92 is the details of the spring formation.



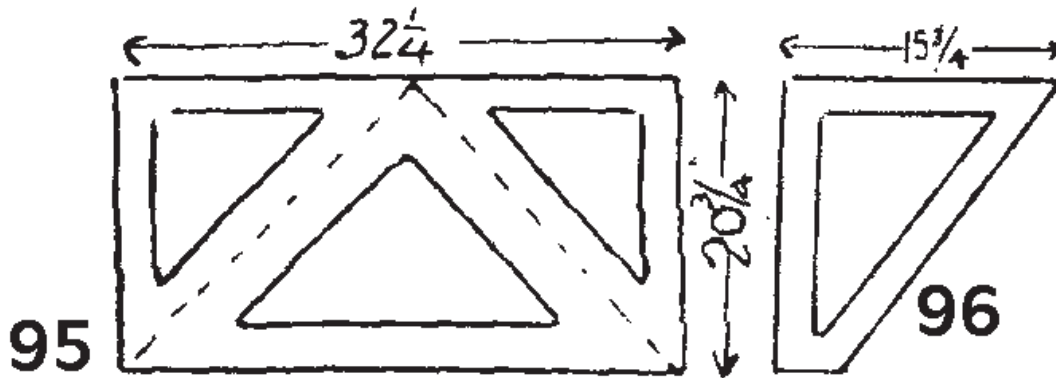
The folding of the walls is as shewn diagrammatically in plan Figs. 93/94, being a section through the thickness of the wood. Note how the hinges are blocked up on fillets to give space between.

For the roof principals, two sheets of stout aluminium 32-1/4" x 20-3/4", from which three triangular portions of superfluous metal are cut out, to remove unnecessary weight, leaving a framework as shewn in Fig. 95, are hinged together along the upper edge, which will form the ridge. To the free lower edge of each, another piano hinge is rivetted and these are in turn fastened to the inside of the main walls by nuts and bolts. Four flap frames of the same material

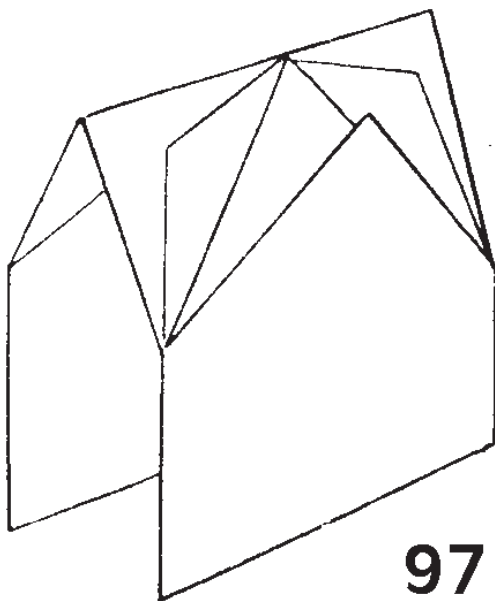


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are cut to the shape and dimensions shewn in Fig. 96, and hinged to the main roof. The roof sections are covered with red compressed fibre, fixed by bolts and nuts along the edges. This constitutes the main fold and is now as in Fig. 97



The outside walls are painted cream colour and the overlay window frames and timbering are fixed before the sections are finally joined up. This will obviously apply also to other details of construction that have to be explained.



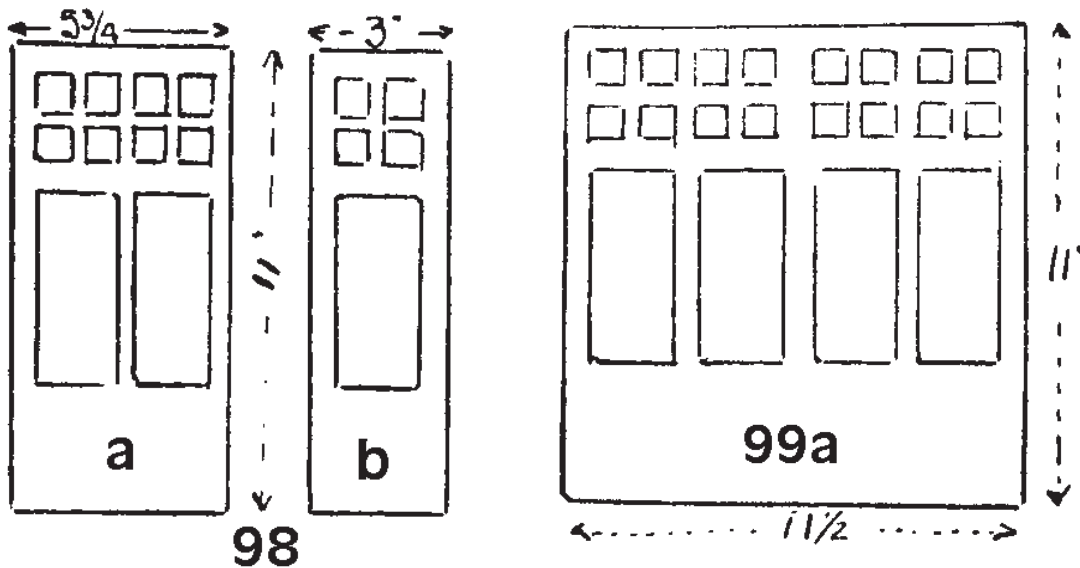
The open porchway seen in the sketch of the finished model is cut in the two adjoining sides. This is backed by calico covered card or 1-1/2 m/m ply wood hinged to one another and on the inside angle of the walls to fold between them. Two strips of card or 1-1/2 m/m ply wood equal in width to the porch pillar are similarly calico covered and hinged to the pillar angle to complete its square and give the appearance of solidity. A diagrammatic illustration of the porch fold is shewn in Figs. 93/94. A folding flap floor of zinc or copper is hinged to one of the inside porch walls.

The lampholder for the porch light is attached to the centre of a cord slung across the porch angle, so that it falls on a loop into the recess when shut and is drawn up when open.

The front bay window is in four sections, two to the dimensioned sketch of Fig. 98a, and two to Fig. 98b. A length of Meccano lattice girder is fixed to the top of each and they are spring hinged together and to the front wall. A bracket on one side of the wall itself carries a lamp holder, a circular hole being cut behind it and in corresponding position on the adjoining fold, to form a recess for it when the house is folded. The window is "glazed" in the way previously mentioned.

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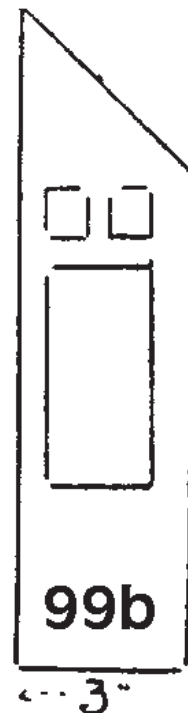
It will be obvious that the bay folds outwards as the walls fold inwards (Refer plan Figs. 93/94). A roof to the bay, in two pieces, hinged together in the middle and at the ends to the side walls of the bay, folds down between the latter. This roof, although out of sight behind the balcony is necessary to mask in the light.



The side bay is somewhat differently constructed. The front is in one piece, to the pattern and dimensions of Fig. 99a, and the sides as Fig. 99b. The three are spring hinged together, and to the wall, to fold flat against it, as shewn diagrammatically in Fig. 93/94. The roof is of copper or zinc, spring hinged to the front. A lamp holder is fixed to a spring hinge on the wall behind the bay and a hole cut in the wall into which the lamp recedes under pressure when the bay is folded.

The sign-board is really a shallow box, whose internal dimensions are 40 in. x 33 in. x 2 in. The framing is 1 in. thick and the bottom of 3 ply, scrimmed. A second frame of 2 in. x 1 in. scantling is built round the upper edge, the width at right angles to the main frame and a moulding fixed in the angle. Fig. 100 shews the section of the built up framing, which is designed to subdue the flagrant thickness of the board. Twin guide rails are provided on the inside of the frame and corresponding runners are set on brackets fixed to the moving wall to keep it in bounds.

The back wall of the house is now hinged by tee hinges to the well of the sign-board. A spring-hinged covering flap of scrimmed 3-ply is fitted to the opposite end of the board to cover in the roof section and an additional flap of 1-1/2 m/m plywood, aluminium-framed and scrimmed on both sides, is hinged to the back wall of the house



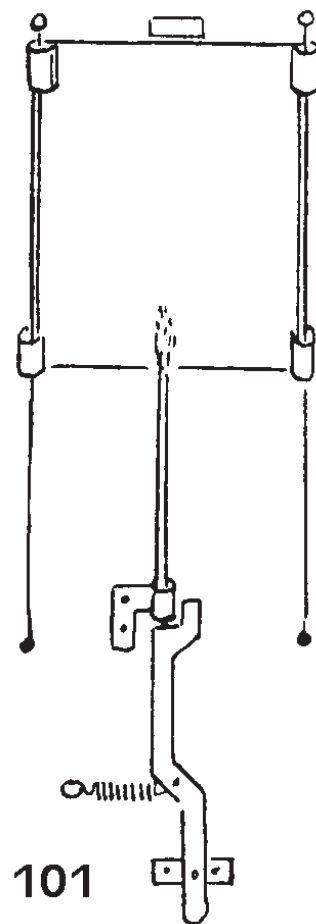
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midway between the ridge and the base, so that it will fold over to cover the house when closed and fall down to uncover the gable-end when erect. On this side it is painted cream colour to match the wall when folded over it, together with the then exposed lower portion of the wall itself. The opposite side and the whole of the sign-board is painted a dead black. Over the folded surface is scrawled the child's idea of a house referred to in the early part of this description, the white lines being artfully disposed to follow and disguise the outlines of the folds and crevices. The light to the upper window is attached to the end of a flat steel strip hinged to the inside of the roof, so that it folds in the space between the folded walls when shut. A cord from the strip to a convenient point near the centre fold of the front wall draws it up to an effective nearness to the window pane as the wall moves forward.

Wires of miniature electric flex pass from the battery connectors in the back wall trap, down the back, through a hole in the end of the main frame along the outside (beneath the moulding) and round to the side, where they join up to the switch contacts; and the return leads, retracing the same route, branch off along the inside walls of the house to the four lamps. The lamps are small four-volt lamps (not flash lamp bulbs), and are fed by two No. 126 batteries connected in series. The four switch contacts are of the kind used on the spits of changing electric signs, and consist of slightly curved narrow strips of phosphor bronze, tipped with silver. These are controlled by a very simple device – a sliding bar, the depth of the frame, and carrying on the face next to the latter four narrow strips in relief, and of lengths adjusted to the times of illumination. As these strips pass over the contact springs, the extra thickness supplies the pressure to operate the switch.

It only remains to explain the action of the blinds. There are two of these and they take the form of a metal mask with a half hinge soldered to each vertical edge, whereby it is threaded to guide wires fixed to the inside wall. Extending from the centre of the lower end is a vertical steel rod, which passes through another half hinge fixed as a guide to the inside wall at the level of the window sill. A shaped steel lever arm, illustrated in Fig. 101, pivoted near the lower end and normally kept vertical by a return spring, supports the end of the mask rod when the mask is raised. When the lever is moved aside by lateral pressure against the lower end, the rod slides gently down the incline and the mask falls with it. Two projecting pins on the switch bar "timed" to engage with the levers, one after the other, as the bar nears the end of its travel, produce the final effect. All that is necessary to re-set the blind action is to push the masks up: the levers automatically return to place.

The movement of the bar is effected by a spring motor let into the extreme corner of the frame. This carries a winding wheel, suitably geared, and a thin cord connects it with the switch bar.



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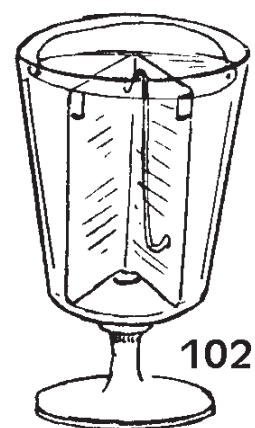
When the brick is “laid” upon the board it is really locked into position on the trap. When the board is turned over to display the sign, the performer and his assistant remove their hold from the brick to the sides of the folded house. By lifting the back wall to a right angle in relation to the base, the entire house automatically opens out the trap carrying the brick falls inside and the wall flap turns over and covers the opening. The two people standing one on each side mask the side view of the development.

## The Rajah’s Pearls.

“These pearls were once the property of the Rajah of Hitchykoo. They formed a necklet which became broken; and the Rajah, to amuse himself one evening after dinner, attempted to re-string them. Finding the task more difficult than he anticipated – after dinner – in a facetious mood, he issued a proclamation that he would give the pearls to any man who could re-string them. It sounds easy, but there was a catch in it. His Highness imposed the conditions that the job should be completed within 30 seconds, and that only one hand should be used. That, of course was impossible, but I was able to produce the effect by means of a trick, and claimed the reward.”

The pearls are loose in their case, and as he speaks, the exhibitor picks them up, a few at a time, in his finger tips, and drops them into a drinking glass. When all are transferred from the case to the glass, he breaks off a suitable length of cotton from a reel, holds it by one end and slowly lowers it into the tumbler, withdrawing it again with the pearls apparently threaded upon it. He brings the ends together and the necklet is complete.

As the performer truly says, there’s a trick about it. The pearls are changed and the trick is mainly in the glass. An ordinary mirror glass could be used, but I have always felt that this was far from completely illusive and designed a special form for the purpose. An ordinary tumbler may be adapted, but an ale glass with a foot is better. A clear celluloid lining is first made to fit the inside. For the mirror I have used the principle of the V mirrors long endeared to the big illusionist. From sheet brass an angular section, with covered top, is made to enclose approximately one quarter of the area of the celluloid lining and reach from the bottom to within half an inch of the rim, at which point the lining is subsequently trimmed off. This is nickel plated and highly polished to give a reflecting surface and is fixed into the lining by a pin or metal screw through the bottom and bent lugs at the top. The lining is cut away at the bottom to give free access to the vertical compartment formed by the bent partition and in this space the string of pearls is stowed. A steel wire soldered to the roof of the enclosure, bent over the rim and down behind the glass, terminating in a crook convenient to the finger, enables the fake to be held rigidly in place when the glass is moved and even permits it to be inverted if desired.



A loop of fine wire from side to side of the rim, bridging the mouth, furnishes ready means of lifting the contrivance bodily out of the glass. (Fig. 102.)

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After the last instalment of the loose pearls has been dropped into the open part of the receptacle, the empty case is transferred from the right hand to the left (assuming that the glass and table are upon the performer's left-hand side) and passed momentarily in front of and across the tumbler as it is laid aside at the back of the table. In that instant, the fake is lifted by crooking the finger below the cross wire and carried away under cover of the pearl case and disposed of either into a pocket servante attached to the rear of the table or behind some object on the table. As the lining is lifted out with the loose pearls, the string of pearls slides out of its container and settles down in the bottom of the glass. A difficulty arises in the sound of the falling pearls as they are dropped into the glass, as the dead thud against celluloid is conspicuously unlike the ring of glass. To overcome this defect as far as possible a disc of brass (silvered and polished with the rest of the metal work) is attached by a wire bracket to the front of the mirror plate near the bottom. It is cut and set so that it does not make contact at any but the point of attachment and therefore gives some sort of a ringing sound as the pearls fall upon it. It does not truly imitate the sound of falling on glass, but is less aggressively false than the direct contact with celluloid.

The last touch of illusion is provided by the cotton. The unwinding of cotton from a reel is a presence. On the right wrist, hidden by the cuff, is a small spring drum of the type sometimes used for the rising card trick. For the usual "invisible" black thread a white thread is substituted and the end (furnished with a small pellet) is secured just before picking up the reel of cotton. The pellet is transferred to the fingers holding the reel as the hands approach and as they are separated the thread is drawn not from the reel but from the drum in the sleeve. The thread is truly lowered into the glass, but the moment the finger tips reach the pearls, the grip on the thread is relaxed and it flies back into the winder. This, as the late beloved Pellisier used to say, is very clever. The first discernible end of the string of pearls is seized and slowly lifted out to the tune of breathless suspense. Both ends of the string are provided with hooks, and, after shewing the glass clearly empty, the performer completes the necklet by interlocking the ends and returns it to its case.

## **Aqua Vitae.**

"According to an ancient legend, there exists in a remote part of Florida a wonderful natural spring, called the "Fountain of Life," supposed to possess great virtue in restoring life. A spurious imitation is sold by chemists, under the name of Florida Water, and is commonly used for profane purposes in connection with teeth, but it has none of the potency of the original. Here is some of the real thing, and I will shew you the effect upon these faded flowers."

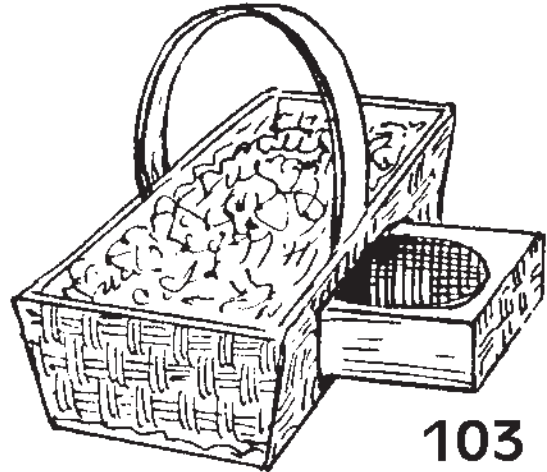
The performer has a basket filled with dried flower petals and leaves, with which he fills a glass bowl. Sprinkling it with water from an ornate vessel, he covers it with a cloth and allows a few seconds for the development of the prodigy. Upon uncovering the bowl, it is filled with fresh blooms.



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As with many of my tricks I made this in two sizes, one for public and one for private use. In the former case the bowl was nine inches in diameter and in the latter, five inches. The rest of the apparatus takes its size from the size of the bowl. Two bowls are used and the basket is faked to house one of them and deliver it in exchange for the other.

A glance at Fig. 103 will give almost all the information needed. As will be seen, the basket is longer and deeper than the bowl and the central portion is occupied by a drawer which can be pulled out from the back. This drawer has a loose bottom which rises and falls, and is kept within bounds by a rebate, or a baffle with circular opening, fixed at the top and bottom. The second bowl is filled with flowers: to prevent immediate exposure of these, they are covered with a circular piece of cretonne, of a pattern chosen for its resemblance to dried flowers when cut into pieces; and to the ground piece a quantity of such shreds are sewn in ragged formation. This is laid over the



flowers and tucked into the bowl all round them, so that they are completely covered. The bowl so prepared is pushed into the drawer from below, pushing the moveable bottom up with it. The drawer is closed, and in this condition the basket can be shown on all sides. The basket proper, duly partitioned at the sides of the drawer and roofed above the same, so that the contents of both are independent, is filled with loose cuttings of cretonne to resemble dried flowers.

Just prior to showing the trick, the basket is placed in the required position on the table, casually showing, without remark, the back. The drawer is secretly withdrawn, a proper stop being provided, of course, to prevent its being withdrawn entirely away from its case. The empty bowl is filled with cuttings from the basket and apparently laid upon the table behind it. Actually it is laid upon the top of the drawer, above the concealed bowl. Simultaneously the basket is lifted from the table, leaving the previously concealed bowl in view. The first bowl sinks with the falling bottom, and the moment it is clear for passage, the drawer is pushed in and the basket laid aside elsewhere, casually displaying the back again in transit. The bowls have now been exchanged, but the appearance is practically unaltered. After the bowl is covered, the cretonne mask is removed with the covering cloth and crumpled up within it.

Thus a new, and true magical effect—the restoration of life.

### **Squeezed to a Jelly, or Good Enough to Eat.**

The idea suggested itself by the quaint mistake of an intelligent foreigner, alert for the acquisition of colloquial English. Overhearing an attentive hostess say “Do have an

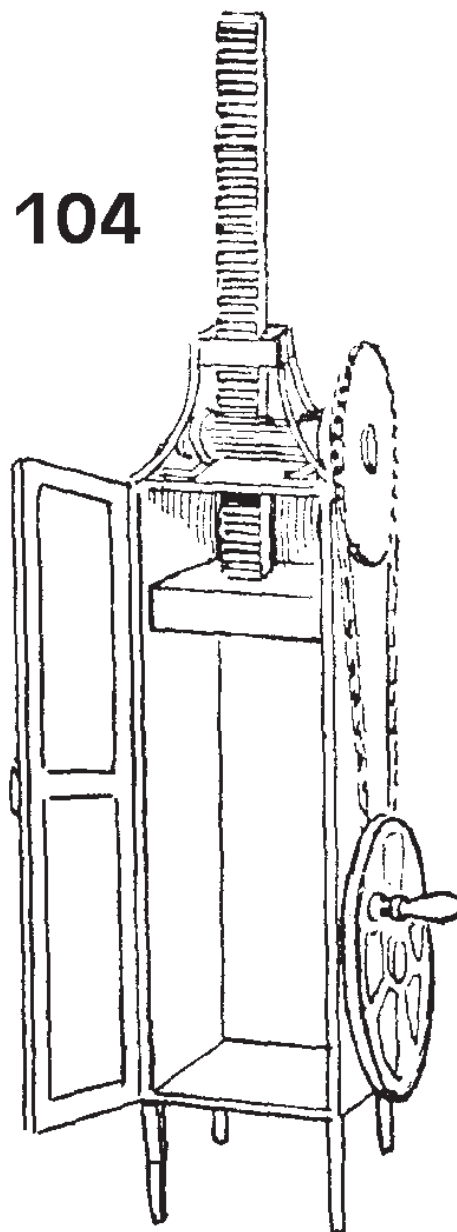
## Magical Masterpieces

ice—let me press you!" he stored the expression for future use, and later entreated his dance partner — "Do let me squeeze you to a jelly," to which the lady replied, "Not if I know it!"

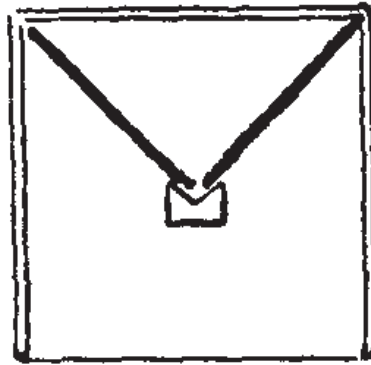
The machinery suggests a cross between a torture chamber appliance and a fantastic creation of Heath Robinson's. There is a narrow, upright cell, raised from the floor, with a heavy plunger working up and down within it, under the control of external driving gear. The plunger rod carries at its lower end a massive looking square ram, fitting close to the walls of the cell, and is itself rack faced. It passes through a hole in the roof and is under the immediate control of a pinion. The pinion is on a common spindle with a sprocket wheel, connected by an endless chain to a winding wheel at the side of the apparatus (Fig. 104).

After the action of the rammer has been demonstrated, it is raised to its highest point, and a lady, daintily dressed in pink and white, enters the cell. A large dish is placed on the floor of the cell, upon which she stands. The door is shut and the crushing machinery set in motion. Slowly, slowly the plunger is seen to descend. To all appearance the lady is having a tough time of it. Then, when the plunger will move no further, the door is opened. There is nothing to be seen of the little pink and white lady, but on the dish beneath the ram is a pink and white jelly on the dish.

To the sophisticated in such matters, half a dozen words of description is sufficient — a Proteus Cabinet camouflaged as an engineer's brain-storm. It need be only two feet wide, and built of solid framing with plywood panels, painted to resemble metal. Mirrors extend from the two inside rear corners, where they are hinged, to the centre, and here their meeting edges are hidden behind the plunger rod. When the apparatus is first shewn these are folded against the side walls, which they are backed to match. When the lady enters the cell and the door is shut upon her, she steps back close up to the hind wall and pulls the mirrors over her. A triangular section is cut out of the ram (which is only a shell) so that it may pass the mirror enclosed section. The gap is filled in during the preliminary demonstration of the working of the machinery, by a hollow block that slides freely backwards and forwards, like a drawer, inside the ram itself. The block in turn, being hollow, provides accommodation for the accessory jelly, stored until required in its own container.



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When the plunger is down and the mirrors out, the latter, of course, project a reflection of the sides on the plane of the back (Fig. 105) and the cell appears to be empty.

### **What Happened to Smith Minor, or the Sad Fate of a Naughty Boy who wouldn't Wash behind his Ears.**

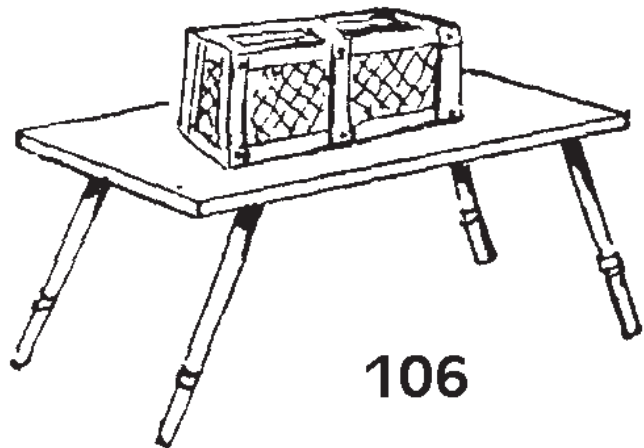
So runs the Bill Matter.

There are many magicians skilled in the art of making ladies disappear. A magician who can vanish a lady could just as easily vanish a lanky youth or gawky man, dressed as an overgrown boy, and the man who disappeared could quite easily leave behind a rabbit in his place. Thus many an old cabinet, box, tent, palanquin or other old trick languishing in store might come out newly clothed.

The characters are a large or small boy, a policeman, a white rabbit and a brown rabbit. The sketch is appended.

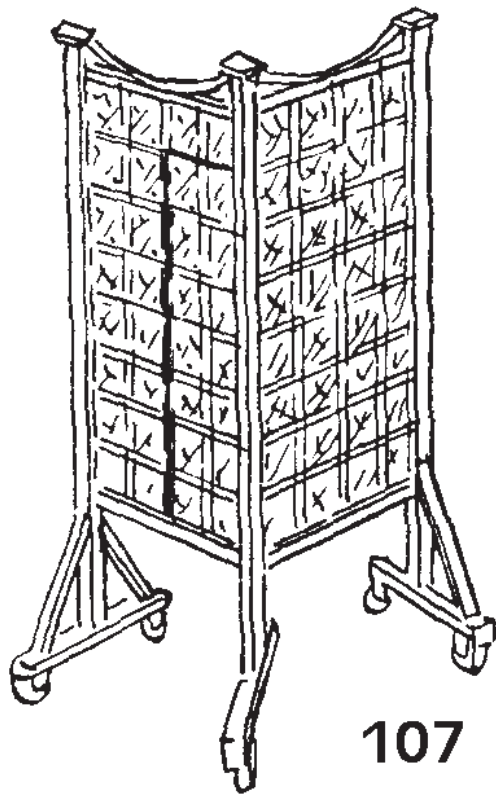
But if it is desired to construct special apparatus, here is a suggestion for a simple device to meet the case.

In the centre of the stage is a washing stool, upon which stands a rabbit hutch, crudely made from remnants of a packing case and wire netting. The roof opens like a box lid and the front consists of two doors opening outwards. Accessories are a garden table and chair of rustic woodwork and a two-fold screen.

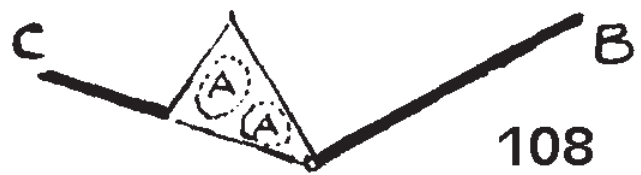


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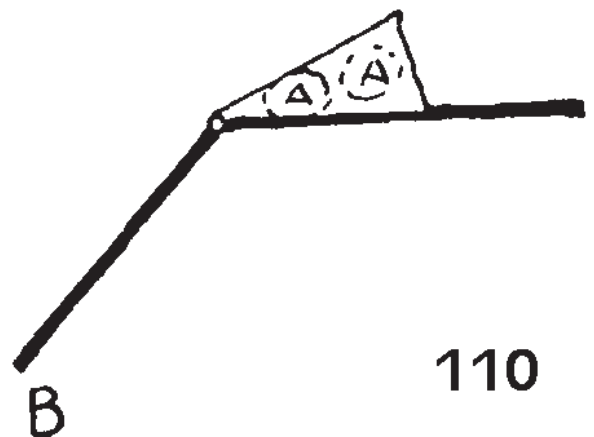
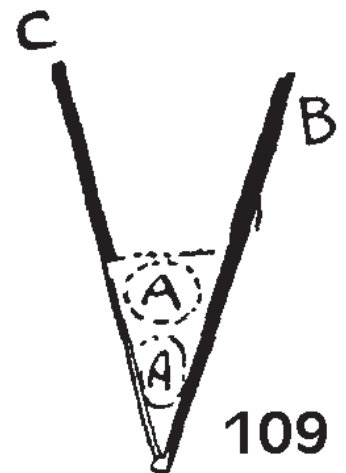
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The screen, to be in keeping with the other furniture, should be of square lattice framing, after the style of pergola work, backed with material of floral pattern. This design also favours that part of the construction which it is necessary to disguise. As will be seen when reading the sketch which follows, two men in turn stand upright in the hutch (the lid being turned up to allow them to do so), the screen is wheeled in front to mask operations, and when moved aside in each case the man has



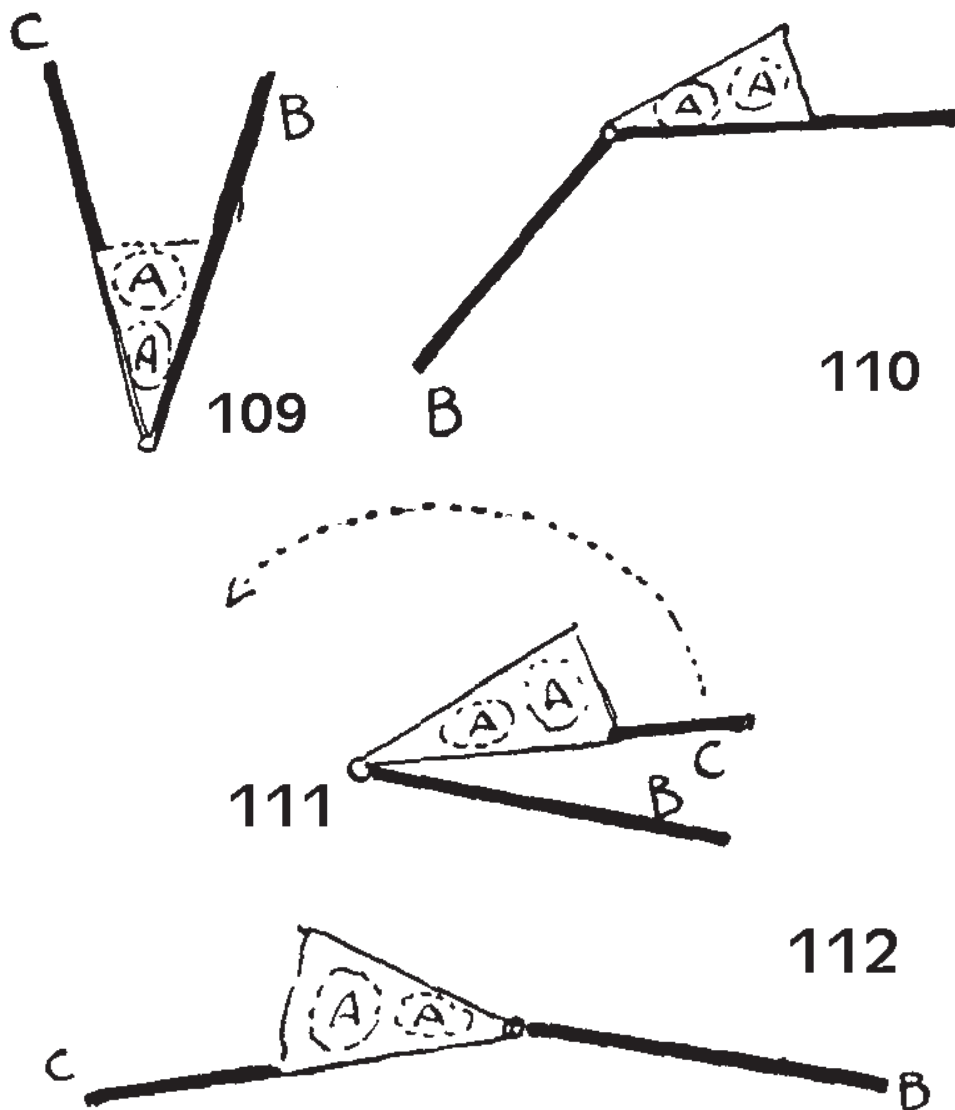
apparently changed into a rabbit.



The screen is built on two stout frames, connected by two-way hinges and runs on ball castors. A portion of one section is cut away to the height of a man and the space filled in by a wedge shaped box, formed of two panels externally decorated to match the screen and distended by a triangular top and bottom. The remaining side is open. At the junction of the two panels, the box is hinged to the same support as the main hinges, and stops are provided so that the receptacle can be swung to bring either face flush with the rest of the screen surface. Into this space each man steps in turn, the first sideways, with his front and back adjoining the panels, and the second with his back to the first, with his shoulders adjoining the panels. By the method of turning the screen it may be shewn on both sides after each disappearance. To comprehend this, let Fig. 108 represent an end view of the folds, in diagrammatic form, seen from above. Assistant steps down from stool into space A. The exhibitor seizes the screen at B, pulls it aside, into the position of Fig. 109. At this point the

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moveable part of the panel is pushed through and the screen moved further round to the position of Fig. 110. In replacing screen in front of hutch, this movement is reversed. With the help of a stage attendant, the screen can be quickly turned round and shewn on both sides. Taking Fig. 110 position as a start, pull B round and close up to C (Fig. 111); bring C round in the direction of the dotted line and the position becomes as Fig. 112.



If any difficulty is experienced in visualising the effect, it can easily be tested by making a simple cardboard model.

And now to the story.

“Everybody knows that conjurers can turn naughty little boys into rabbits. But nobody has ever seen a conjurer turn a naughty little boy into a rabbit. And nobody has ever seen a rabbit that has once been a naughty little boy. Or they may have seen a naughty little boy

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disguised as a rabbit and not known about it. As a matter of fact, between ourselves, most of the rabbits that come out of conjurers' hats at Christmas time have once been naughty little boys. Only the conjurers don't say anything about it.

"Occasionally I get little boys who have been extra naughty, brought to me by their parents, asking me to turn them into rabbits. I've been saving them up for some time and I am going to turn one into a rabbit at every performance as long as the supply lasts.

"Before getting a rabbit – whether you buy your rabbit from a shop or make it out of a naughty little boy, you must provide your rabbit with a hutch. I made this one. I got the idea from a little book called 'How To Make Everything At Home, or Happy Week-Ends For Father.'

"And now let me introduce you to Little Willie Smith – a very flagrant offence."

(Enter Smith. – Smith is a long youth in short pants and the rest of his clothes correspondingly historic, disordered hair, the expression of an amiable cod-fish and conspicuously dirty knees. The skirt of his coat is well above the waist line, the sleeves reach to about midway between the elbow and the wrist, and tied to the upper arm is a large tag, addressed – – – Theatre).

"This little man – I regret to say – persistently refused to wash behind his ears. All kinds of punishment have been tried, and all sorts of threats. In the last extremity he has been sent to me, and I am to turn him into a rabbit for his own good, and as a warning to all little boys who won't wash behind their ears.

"Get into the hutch."

(Smith mounts by way of the chair and stands upright in the hutch, roof and doors being opened for that purpose).

"Have you anything to say before I turn you into a rabbit?"

(Smith replies by putting out his tongue.)

"All right, my lad!

"We will draw a screen over the painful scene that follows."

(The screen is temporarily wheeled in front of the hutch and when taken away, all that is visible within the hutch is a small white rabbit of not quite impeccable whiteness. Attached to the foreleg is a large tag, addressed – – – Theatre.)"

"Behold, Smith!

"There is only one end for a conjurer's rabbit, and that is this."

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(The conjurer seizes the rabbit, rolls it up in a newspaper and crushes it into an empty paper ball. The methods involved in this part of the performance have been dealt with in a previous section. At this point, a policeman enters the hall from the back, marches down the gangway and mounts the stage).

Policeman, — "Ere, wot's all this?" (Exhibits rabbit). "I see this young feller drop down in Blank Street. He comes up to me, sez his name's Smith Minor and he bin turned into a rabbit, havin' bin a boy by birth, and arsts me the way to Theatre. Havin' taken out me book and made a note o' the circumstance I brings 'im along. It's my opinion you're exceedin' your licence. I want to know all about it, and I warns you that anythink you say will be took down in writin' and used as evidence against you."

Conjurer, — " You want to know all about it, do you. Well, step up into this little house and I'll tell you."

(Policeman does so).

Conjurer, — "Ready? THEN GET OUT YOUR NOTE-BOOK."

(Wheels screen in front. When removed, the policeman is no longer visible, but his helmet occupies the hutch. The conjurer removes the helmet and, turning it over, produces from it a brown rabbit dressed in minature policeman's uniform.)

"Carry on with the note-book, old boy, while I shew you the rest of the story."

(Conjurer continues by wrapping policeman-rabbit in newspaper and vanishing, as before. Afterwards, looking round, he notices the policeman's helmet on the floor.)

"Here, George! — Run up to Blank Street, and IF YOU SEE A LITTLE POLICEMAN RUNNING AROUND WITHOUT A HAT, GIVE HIM THIS!

Curtain.