

EXCLUSIVE MAGICAL SECRETS

Will Goldston



The Famous
Locked Book
of Magic

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
HARRY HOUDINI,

WHOSE BRILLIANT MAGICAL WORK HAS EARNED FOR
HIM, BOTH AS A PERFORMER AND AS A WRITER,
THE ADMIRATION OF THE WHOLE WORLD,
WHOSE FRIENDSHIP HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF MY
MOST VALUED POSSESSIONS,
WHOSE WISE COUNSEL HAS HELPED ME
AT MANY IMPORTANT STAGES OF MY CAREER,
AND WHOSE NAME I HONOUR AS
THAT OF A GREAT ARTISTE
AND A GREAT MAN.

Will Goldston.

Introduction to “Exclusive Magical Secrets.”

BY PROFESSOR HOFFMANN.

IT seems peculiarly in accordance with the fitness of things that the author of the first English book dealing practically with conjuring should, after the lapse of some thirty-five years, be invited to write an introduction to the latest and most up-to-date work on the same subject.

The intervening years have seen many changes, and in no respect has progress been more marked than in relation to conjuring. When “Modern Magic” was produced, it might fairly claim to cover the whole ground so far occupied by the latter-day wizard. Since that date, however, the art of Magic and popular interest in Magic have grown, and grown, like the beanstalk of the fairy tale. The public appetite for information on the subject may be gauged by the fact that the first edition (2,000 copies) of the book in question was exhausted in a few weeks, and that twelve later editions have since been called for. If the demand had been founded on mere curiosity, it would speedily have died out, but such was clearly not the case. Hard-headed men, who had never performed a conjuring trick in their lives, came to realise that there was both pleasure and profit to be gained from the mystic art, and the keener intellects among them soon began to better the instructions of their teacher. Not content to use old methods, or to produce

old effects, they set to work to invent new ones, and a few years later enough material had accumulated to fill a second volume, which took shape as "More Magic." After a few more years yet other regions had been conquered by the wizard, and "Later Magic" was produced to keep abreast with the times. Meanwhile, a host of minor publications, serial and otherwise, were steadily adding to the literature of the craft, which at the present time has grown so abundant that it is difficult to keep pace with it, even for those professionally interested in the subject.

And now appears a further volume, which claims to crown the edifice. The author, Mr. Will Goldston, not content to draw upon his own stores alone, ample though they be, has by some potent spell induced several of the most noted wielders of the wand to impart to him, for use in this book, some of their choicest secrets. Chung Ling Soo, Grand Panjandrum of magicians; Houdini, the man who, like Love, "laughs at locksmiths," and whom no chains can bind; Servais Le Roy; Conradi; Chefalo; Oswald Williams and Chris Van Bern; wizards English, wizards German, wizards Italian, wizards French, have each given of their best.

From such an assemblage of *chefs* it is but natural to expect a feast of dainty dishes, and the expectation will not be disappointed. Some of the "tit-bits" the writer has been already privileged to taste. For others he waits, with what patience he may, till the complete work is published.

Among the items with which he has already made acquaintance may be mentioned, in the first place, three brilliant inventions of the versatile Harry Houdini—a rope, a box, and a handcuff trick, each amongst the most sensational of their kind. In the case of the first, a rope, securely knotted round the wrists of the performer, is drawn taut

by two volunteers at each end. They may pull as hard as they please. The medium stands within his curtained cabinet, with bell, tambourine, etc., at his feet. He cannot possibly stoop, or indeed move, without the knowledge of the holders of the cord, and yet the whole of the customary "manifestations" are produced. In the second case, the performer, prisoned in a box within a box, each metal-bound, locked and strapped, and massive enough to serve as a millionaire's plate-chest, gets free in a few seconds.

From Conradi, the well-known wizard of Berlin, we have an instantaneous and simultaneous "vanish" of four fish-bowls, previously produced from nowhere, with water and goldfish complete. Chefalo, an Italian conjurer as yet but little known in England, but already recognised as one of the coming men, contributes, among others, a particularly neat little pocket trick; just the thing, once shown, to set a dozen people making vain attempts to imitate it. Three knots are tied, in apparently the fairest possible way, in a piece of cord, but, as soon as the ends are pulled, dissolve into thin air. From the same quarter comes a highly ingenious mode of causing the appearance of a lady in a cabinet, just previously shown empty. Of this class of illusion there are several examples in this book, all good. In one of them, the distinguishing feature of the trick is that the cabinet is only just large enough to contain the lady, closely packed within it. In another, the invention of Oswald Williams, the lady is produced from a tea-chest, first shown empty, and then filled with tea from two smaller chests. The *modus operandi* is in each case comparatively simple, and any artist in search of an effective item for the "halls" might among these find just what he needs. In another illusion, of a more complex kind, a lady, seated in

a chair at the piano, and discoursing sweet music, is "levitated" with chair and instruments, all three being finally turned upside down and again righted without any interruption of the harmony.

Among tricks suitable for drawing-room use are a new and ingenious form of the "rising cards," and another by Merlin, even more startling, in which the chosen cards are made to appear, inch by inch, through the crown of a borrowed bowler hat. Chris Van Bern contributes two or three good items, one of them being the production from a hat, not only of a genuine umbrella, but of the stand wherein to deposit it. In another, a ball dropped from the performer's hands into a hat on the floor parts visibly into half a dozen smaller ones.

The principal item, however, and one which would alone lend special importance to the book, is the famous Expanding Cube, the *chef d'œuvre* of the lamented Buatier de Kolta. The description of the effect produced sounds like one of the romances of Baron Munchausen, but it is nevertheless what our American friends term "cold fact."

A die, some nine inches square, is taken from the performer's handbag and placed upon a low platform, under which stand lighted lamps, showing "all clear" beneath. At command the cube expands (in full view), not gradually, but instantaneously, to sixty-four times its original dimensions, and a lady steps from within it. There is no substitution, no optical illusion. The cube first seen and that last seen are the same. How is it done? Even if the cube be compressible, what about the lady? Who would not yearn to know the true explanation of such a miracle?

It was currently reported at the time of De Kolta's death that he had left instructions for all his apparatus to

be destroyed. Happily his wish, if such it was, was not carried out, and we have here a photographic representation of his working tools—a page of special interest, as showing with what simple appliances his ingenious contrivances were produced.

Such a book as this is clearly not one for profane eyes. As befits the unique nature of its contents, it is destined to receive the utmost honours of paper and print, and for the better guarding of its secrets it is to be furnished with a lock; a lock of such strange device that no one (save Houdini or a professional burglar) will be able to pick it. For the further preservation of its mysteries, each subscriber, before he is admitted within the veil, must sign a pledge of masonic secrecy.

This, by the way, opens up a question of some interest. The pledge will no doubt be honourably kept so long as the subscriber lives, but what is to happen afterwards? Books dealing with magic are not to be lightly handled, as witness the terrible things that followed profane use of another such volume, the mystic book of the wizard Michael Scott. The story is told by his namesake, Sir Walter, in the “Lay of the Last Minstrel.” By the command of the sage his book of spells was buried with him; a very proper arrangement, which we commend to the owners of “Exclusive Magical Secrets.” But the tomb is violated, and the volume falls into the hands of the “goblin” page, who rashly ventures to open it.

“A moment he the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read;
It had much of glamour might;
Could make a ladye seem a knight;

The cobwebs on a dungeon wall,
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nutshell seem a gilded barge,
A cottage seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth;
All was delusion; nought was truth."

Clearly a most rare and curious work, and a valuable addition to the library of any conjurer. It is not to be wondered at that the page seeks to pry into its secrets, but he pays dearly for his temerity. A buffet, dealt by no mortal hand, is his immediate punishment, but a deadlier vengeance is in store for him. A terrific storm is raised by the dead wizard, and a flash of lightning strikes down the profaner of his secrets.

"It broke, with thunder long and loud;
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud;
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!"

The moral is obvious. Let no one dare, unless he is a lawfully qualified subscriber, to pry into "Exclusive Magical Secrets."

Additional Notes.

BY WILL GOLDSTON.

PROFESSOR HOFFMANN refers to himself in the foregoing article as "the author of the first English book dealing practically with conjuring." It was because he was that, and because his name is to-day one of those most honoured by magicians all over the world, that I asked him to write an introduction to "Exclusive Magical Secrets." I will admit frankly that I am glad he consented to do so, and that I regard his expression of approval as a sort of hallmark to the volume. Professor Hoffmann holds a unique position among us. For more than a generation he has been recognised as an authority in all magical matters, and as a skilful and scholarly exponent of them. Very many of us derived our first lessons in the art of mystery from his published works. I myself did. This is one of the reasons why I am glad that he has written an introduction to "Exclusive Magical Secrets," and why I am proud that he has described the work as "the latest and most up-to-date." It is only mortal to like to be praised; and in magical matters praise from Professor Hoffmann is praise indeed.

But when the Professor wrote his introduction, he had seen only a part of the volume, and could deal only with that part. Both he and I felt that the contents as a whole ought not to be disclosed, even to him, until the day of publication. He had already subscribed for a copy, but was content to wait with the other subscribers for the

complete work. In these circumstances some additional notes from my pen, dealing with the contents as a whole, seem to be desirable. The Professor has written from the point of view of the friendly critic. From what point of view should I write? Only one is possible—that of the Master of the Ceremonies!

I will begin by saying that it was more than half-a-dozen years ago that the idea of producing "Exclusive Magical Secrets" first occurred to me. While glancing one day through my library, I realised that, although it contained a number of books which dealt with one or other of the departments of magic and explained some of the big secrets, it did not contain a single book which dealt with every department and explained all the big secrets. Was such a book possible? I asked myself the question, and answered it in the affirmative. Quick on that answer followed a momentous decision: I myself would produce the book.

More than half-a-dozen years ago! And it is only this evening that I have corrected the final proofs and fixed the date when the book is to be issued to its subscribers. But those years have not been idle ones. The task I set myself was bigger far than I had anticipated. Still, I can honestly say that I have not shirked it in any respect. "Exclusive Magical Secrets" does deal with every department of magic; "Exclusive Magical Secrets" does explain all the big secrets. So far from shirking the task, I have devoted myself to it eagerly. Indeed, it has been to me a pleasure rather than a task. For long it has formed one of the principal motives in my life. Indeed, when some months ago severe illness threatened that life, I fretted sorely because I feared that the book might never be produced. I wanted to leave something behind me that would keep my memory green

among magicians; and I hoped, and still hope, that "Exclusive Magical Secrets" would be that something.

Professor Hoffmann speaks of "Exclusive Magical Secrets" as crowning the edifice of magic. It is a good phrase, and one for which I am grateful to him. The Professor himself and many other magicians, whether performers, inventors, or writers, have raised the edifice to its present noble height. Pursuing the simile, I venture to suggest that "Exclusive Magical Secrets" may be regarded as the coping stone.

I have just referred to the labours of other magicians in the cause of the art. Now let me acknowledge that, in the preparation of this book, I have availed myself freely of the results of those labours. Everything that has been written in any way bearing on the tricks and illusions explained herein, I have made a point of reading. I have interviewed personally the greatest performers and the cleverest inventors of the day, and have obtained assistance from them in various ways. Some have given me valuable secrets of their own; some have passed on to me secrets they have acquired from others; some have shown me improvements of apparatus and new methods of performance which they have perfected. The best of all these are included in "Exclusive Magical Secrets."

It will thus be clearly understood that I do not claim to be the sole inventor of the hundreds of tricks and illusions described in the following pages. So far from that, my aim from the beginning has been to gather together from all sources everything new and big in magic that has not been fully explained before. But I wish to be quite honest in the matter. In many cases the explanations printed in this volume were supplied to me expressly for that purpose

by the inventors, and are acknowledged accordingly. But in other cases the origin of the particular trick or illusion is not clear, and acknowledgment has not been possible. Subscribers will, however, appreciate my desire to give credit to whomsoever credit is due. In this connection I would specially thank Harry Houdini, Professor Hoffmann, and Chefalo for their generous contributions to "Exclusive Magical Secrets." Subscribers will find them to be of exceptional value and interest.

I have of necessity devoted an immense amount of time to the preparation of "Exclusive Magical Secrets." A considerable proportion of this was expended in collecting what I may term magical material in the rough. I spared no pains as to this. I made several journeys myself to the Continent in search of promising material, and I employed agents, both there and in America, for the same purpose. Many more hours went in sorting out the great number of tricks and illusions thus gathered together, and in selecting from them such items as were worthy of inclusion in this volume. Then came the task of setting out those items in the best possible way—that is to say, so that the effect was clearly indicated and the explanation thorough and authoritative.

But I do not wish subscribers to think that my work in connection with the volume has been entirely confined to the collection and arrangement of items. I am, I venture to say, very well known in the magical world as an inventor of tricks and illusions. Many of the most famous performers come to me from time to time for new material. At the present moment no less than five of the most effective illusions being exhibited on the variety stage were invented by me. My name is not given on the bills, but I have no

complaint to make as to that. I sold the illusions outright to the performers, and have no further interest in them. I mention all this in order to emphasise the fact that it would have been impossible for me to produce such a volume as "Exclusive Magical Secrets" without including in it a great many tricks and illusions of my own invention. In every part of the book such tricks and illusions will be found. They represent, I am confident, the best fruits of my brain. It is not possible to "invent to order," but it is possible to "put by inventions." By this I mean that, although I have never sat down with the deliberate intention of inventing tricks and illusions for "Exclusive Magical Secrets," yet for years past, whenever a particularly good idea for one has occurred to me, I have noted it for this volume. What, however, I have often sat down to do is to bring an old effect up-to-date by inventing some new method of performance. That sort of invention can be done to order, and subscribers will find some striking instances of it in the following pages.

In speaking of the book as a whole, I feel that I am entitled to claim that it covers all the ground of present-day magic. Magicians of every style will find in it much matter of special interest and importance to them. Many subscribers doubtless confine their work to one particular department of magic. In perusing the book they will find that their department is dealt with fully, and the information as to it will be of immediate assistance to them. But I am hoping that "Exclusive Magical Secrets" will do more than this. It should not only help a subscriber in his particular department, but should help him to launch out into other departments. Too many magicians make the mistake of working in a groove. Other things being equal, the all-round man is the best man. One of the principal aims of

“Exclusive Magical Secrets” is to make every subscriber an all-round man.

Many famous magicians are included among the subscribers to “Exclusive Magical Secrets,” and it may be that some of them will feel that too much is given away in the book. Their argument will be that they have had to work very hard to obtain their own wide knowledge of magical matters, and that they do not quite see why the road should be made so easy to others. But making the road easy was my root idea in planning “Exclusive Magical Secrets.” I wanted to raise the level of magicians throughout the world by enabling them to improve the quality of their work. The “close corporation” belonged to the Middle Ages; knowledge and progress have taken its place in the twentieth century. The big secrets are set out in “Exclusive Magical Secrets” plain for all subscribers to read. Those of them who are, comparatively speaking, beginners will benefit more than those to whom I have referred in this paragraph as famous magicians. But even the latter class will derive great advantages from the book, however wide their previous knowledge of magical matters may be.

Subscribers will remember that in every preliminary announcement I emphasised the secret character of the book. Even here I wish to say a few words on the subject. The value of “Exclusive Magical Secrets” lies not only in its contents, but in the fact that those contents will reach a very limited public. It should be, and doubtless will be, a matter of honour among subscribers to keep the book secret. No stranger should in any circumstances be allowed to peruse it, and the tricks and illusions it describes should be shown to others only by way of performance. Quite

apart from the fact that this was made one of the conditions of subscription, it is obviously a wise precaution in the interests of every subscriber. The magician who has paid for the book would be foolish to reduce himself to the same level as the magician who has not!

I present "Exclusive Magical Secrets" to my subscribers in the confident hope that they will find it of great and continuous use to them. I have performed the work of preparation to the best of my ability, and do not think I have left anything undone likely to help to success. The tricks and illusions explained are the most famous and effective in existence, and the explanations are in every case thorough and complete. I should like once more to say that, in producing the book, I have had at heart the progress of magic. I should not have produced it at all if the making of money had been my only concern. The cost of the book has been so great compared with the receipts, that now, on the eve of publication, I find myself actually out of pocket. Yet I have from time to time been offered by performers large sums for the exclusive rights in some of the tricks and illusions described! But I do not regret the loss of those sums, for I feel that I shall be more than compensated for them by the honour which the production of "Exclusive Magical Secrets" will bring me.

I conclude these notes by expressing the sincere hope that all my subscribers will benefit practically from the book. May it increase the quality of their performances, their fame as magicians, and, in the case of those who are professionals, their incomes!



PART I.

Pocket Tricks.

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Pocket Tricks.

POCKET TRICKS form a separate and a most important class of magic. The section dealing with them is placed at the beginning of "Exclusive Magical Secrets." That is clearly its proper position. For are not the tricks performed by almost every magician at the beginning of his career pocket ones? And is it not success in the performance of them that convinces him that he has magical ability, and encourages him to persevere in his career? For these, and other sound reasons, I give pocket tricks pride of place here.

It would be difficult to overrate the importance to the average magician of a good repertoire of well-rehearsed pocket tricks. They are not out of place in the most ambitious of programmes, and they are absolutely essential for the occasional impromptu entertainment. At such an entertainment the magician has, as a rule, to perform without any apparatus, and at very close quarters with the spectators. He cannot hope to conceal "fakes" successfully, and must rely on genuine sleight-of-hand. If he is skilful at that, and—just as important—if he knows some new and effective pocket tricks, and can perform them neatly and quickly, he will both amuse and mystify his audience. Also he will score tremendously over the rival magician who can do nothing without the aid of a prepared platform, curtains, apparatus, and so on.

The words in the last paragraph, "if he knows some

new and effective pocket tricks," are important. There are many pocket tricks, but very few new and effective ones. Somehow or other inventors do not devote anything like so much attention to this department of magic as they do to the others. The result is that really original pocket tricks are very rare and, consequently, very valuable. Magicians should secure all they can, and should treasure them as among the most important of their magical possessions.

Magicians who have subscribed to "Exclusive Magical Secrets" have secured in the contents of this section a fine collection of original pocket tricks. I do not think a more valuable one has ever before been published. In preparing it I have been greatly assisted by my friend, Mr. George Wetton. He is, in the opinion of many competent judges, unsurpassed by any magician of any country as a performer of pocket tricks. Certainly I myself have never met his superior in this respect. Nor have I met anybody who can beat him at inventing ingenious tricks of this class. Some of the very best of those explained in the following pages have been given by him to me. Mr. Wetton is an enthusiast in the cause of magic, and neglects no opportunity of helping it and his brother magicians. It is in this fine spirit that he has so generously contributed to this section. But I owe him a personal debt of gratitude on this account, and acknowledge it here fully. Mr. Wetton is used to such acknowledgments! He is one of those of whom it may well be said, "They go about doing good." The good that he has done by his performances of magic for charitable purposes, by his support of every worthy association connected with the art, and by his personal kindnesses to magicians, is beyond estimation.

Many subscribers may be interested to know that several "star magicians" have informed me that they owed their first engagement entirely to their skill in performing pocket tricks. They gave a quick exhibition of magic of this sort in the two or three minutes allowed them by the managers or agents in question, and, as the result, were booked for an early appearance in public. If they had had to rely on an apparatus show, they could not have given a satisfactory one in the time, and would not have been booked. From every point of view pocket tricks should be cultivated by magicians. The practice of them is useful, not only on account of the direct results, but because it helps to train the hand and eye for bigger and more difficult tasks. And the performance of them has the very special merit that it shows the public that magicians can do good work right in the midst of their audiences and without any mechanical aid.

The Chefalo Disappearing Knots.

Although the article used in the presentation of this trick is merely an ordinary piece of string or cord, I have no hesitation in declaring the trick to be one of the most mystifying in the whole book, and I felt certain, when I acquired the secret, that it was one that many amateur magicians among my subscribers would thank me for procuring for them.

Possibly some of the professional subscribers may be inclined to pass over this trick as being unworthy of their notice, but I may remind those readers that the smallest trick that has ever been thought out can be made to appear to be a really great mystery if it is properly presented. As instances of what I mean, let me mention the egg bag, the billiard balls, the thimbles, and the miser's dream. All four tricks can be carried in one pocket, but with that fact the audience is not concerned. The point is that, when properly presented, those four tricks alone could make up at least one-third of an hour's conjuring performance. Therefore let no one despise the day of small things. This trick of "The Disappearing Knots" will be found to be as truly mysterious as anything in the book, and it has the merit of being ready for production at any time.

EFFECT.

The effect of the trick is as follows: The conjurer takes up a piece of thick string or thin cord about a yard long, and openly ties one knot in the centre. There is no trickery about the knot. The conjurer then ties another knot, also genuine, on the top of the first. Neither knot is drawn up tightly; their appearance is faithfully depicted in the accompanying illustrations. The conjurer holds the string

by the two ends, and shows the two knots in the centre. Then he ties another knot at the side of the other two, and the string then appears to be in an inextricable tangle. However, the conjurer, still holding the two ends of the string, gently shakes out the tangled mass of string, and, drawing out the two ends of the string, causes all three knots to disappear.

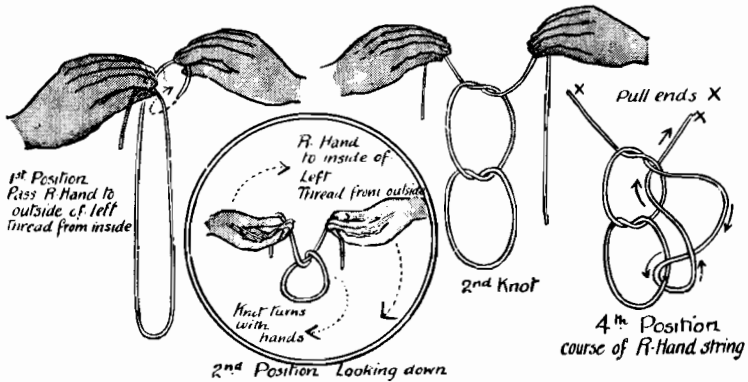
SECRET.

The secret of this trick consists mainly—almost entirely—in the manner in which the knots are tied, but in order to do the trick with absolute certainty of it coming out right at the end, the string or cord used must be very soft. When the first and second knots are tied, the string must remain in the exact position made by the tying of the knots. If the string is too stiff it “cockles,” and twists form in it, and the conjurer will then find that mistakes will be so easy that he will probably do the trick the wrong way, and end up with real knots in the middle. If sash cord is used, it should first be soaked in warm water and then dried. If it is then “worked” a little it will probably be soft enough, but if too stiff it can be soaked in a little benzine.

The procedure is as follows:—

Hold the string near the two ends between the thumb and first finger of each hand. Then advance the right hand slightly, and, bringing it round in front of the left, pass the right-hand end of the string through the loop from the back to the front. The first knot is thus tied. The string can be held up by the two ends, clearly showing the knot (not drawn tight) in the centre. Take care that the string does not twist up.

In tying the second knot the right hand must be brought behind the left, and the right-hand end is passed through



the second loop thus made from the front. (This passing of the right-hand end behind the left causes the first loop to turn round in the centre, and this turn is essential to the trick.) Two knots are thus fairly tied, but are still not drawn tight. The third knot presents the greatest difficulty, so far as a written explanation is concerned, but great help will be obtained from studying the illustrations, and, of course, no conjurer should attempt to learn this trick without having a piece of string in his hands and going through the movements as they are explained.

To tie the third knot the conjurer, keeping the right-hand end at the back, passes it straight through the bottom loop, turns it to the right, brings it back again, and then passes it right through the top loop. If the two ends of the string are then pulled out, the knots will disappear.

SPECIAL CAUTION.

In learning this trick the conjurer may probably find that, even after he has faithfully carried out the directions, there is apparently a mass of knots in the centre of the string. In all probability, however, this failure is not real, because it will be found that, with a little coaxing, the knots

will disappear as the string is pulled out. This apparent failure is due to the string being too stiff. The knots have disappeared, but owing to the string not being sufficiently pliable, the loops have not slipped through each other. If the loops made by tying the knots are allowed to turn or twist during the trick, in all probability the result will be failure, hence the necessity for using very soft string.

SUGGESTION FOR PATTERN.

This trick may well follow any of the numerous knot or "tying-up" tricks that are included in the usual repertoire of a good conjurer, and it may then be introduced as an explanation of how the last trick was done. It would make an excellent "follow" to the Indian sack trick, in which the conjurer escapes from a sack after the sack has been tied up by members of the audience. He can explain that the sack trick was done by means of his magical influence, which he exerted just as the sack was being tied up. Thus:

"In case you did not see how that was done, I will explain it, and in order that I may make my meaning quite plain, I will demonstrate it with this piece of string. It is, of course, impossible to escape from the sack when the sack is securely tied. What I do is to exert a certain curious magical influence over those who tie the knots. Thus with this piece of string I tie a knot. That is number one. I tie another knot, and by a simple piece of arithmetic I arrive at the conclusion that the second knot is number two. I now tie number three knot, and it is a well-known fact that three is a lucky number. Therefore, by means of the luck there is in that number, and the magical influence which, as a conjurer, I am supposed to possess, I cause all the knots to disappear—in fact, the knots are not there, and that is really how the trick is done."

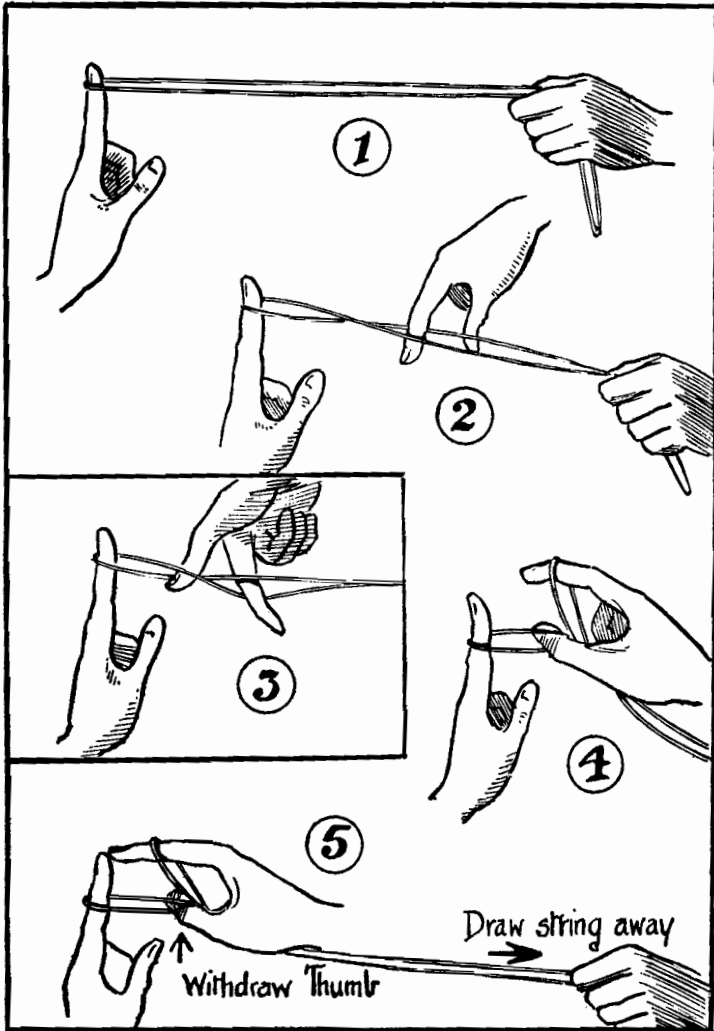
Presented in this way, the trick of "The Disappearing Knots" becomes an important magical experiment, fit for any drawing-room or stage performer.

A Loop of String and a Finger.

Although this trick is performed with a loop of string and the finger of a member of the audience, it will be found to be different from the usual string tricks, and anyone in the secret of the old tricks will not be likely to follow the movements of this one.

The conjurer begins by placing a loop of string over someone's first finger, as in the first of the accompanying diagrams. He holds the other end of the loop with his left hand. He manipulates the loop with his right hand, and finishes by placing the first finger of his right hand on the top of the finger of his volunteer assistant. Then he draws the string clear away from both fingers.

The secret is, of course, in the manipulation of the loop. The two sides should at first be parallel. With the first finger of his right hand the conjurer turns the right hand string over the other. Then, turning his hand round, he places his thumb in the loop formed between the finger on which the string is held and the point where the two strings have been made to cross (see diagram 3). The conjurer, still holding his hand in the same position, with the thumb in one loop and the first finger behind it outside that loop, turns his hand round, and places his first finger on the top of the finger holding the string. Then the conjurer pulls the string away with his left hand by merely taking away his thumb from the loop in which he placed it. The simplest way of learning is to go over the trick with a loop of string and the diagrams.



Caught with a Loop.

Some of my readers may possibly see in this little trick a resemblance to the well-known "pricking the garter" trick practised by racecourse sharps. In this trick, however, the means by which the unsuspecting assistant is caught or otherwise is much simpler than that employed in the "garter" mystery.

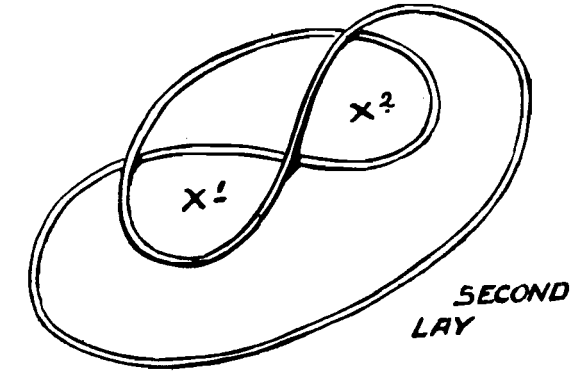
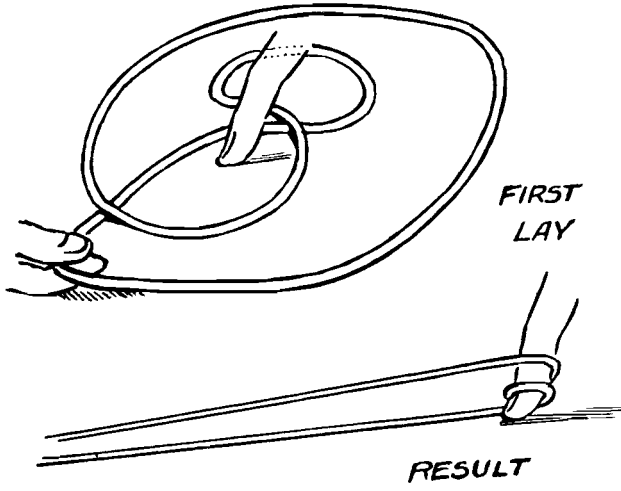
In this case one long piece of thin string is used. When the performer has become expert at working the trick with the piece of string, he can tie the two ends together. The string should be soft, so that it remains in the position in which the conjurer places it on the table.

The first "lay" of the string is shown in the top diagram. The easiest way to copy this in string is to begin with the loop in which the finger is not placed.

Calling attention to the figure 8 made by the string, the conjurer places his finger in the bottom loop and draws the string away until it is wound round his finger. Then he again makes a figure 8 with the string, and asks someone to do what he has done. The assistant may put his finger in either loop of the figure, but the conjurer will be able to draw the string clear away.

The trick consists in the making of the second "lay," which, it will be noticed, is slightly different from the first, although, if both are made quickly, one after the other, and the audience are not allowed too much time in which to make up their minds as to which loop shall be used in the trick, the difference will not be noticed.

An expert performer, who can put the string down quickly, can get a lot of amusement out of this trick; in fact, it should not be shown until it can be done quickly,



RESULT OF FINGER IN X! OR X?

and in each case the conjurer should call attention to the fact that he is merely making a figure 8 by twisting the string.

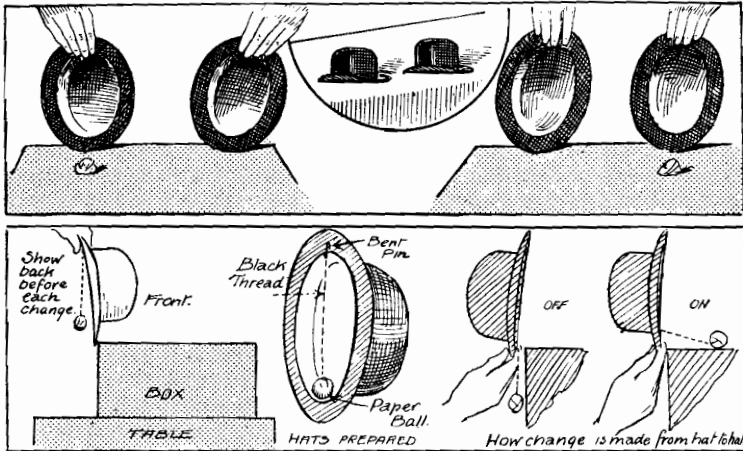
From Hat to Hat.

Invented by YETTMAN.

Here is another new pocket trick which can be performed anywhere and at any time, provided that the conjurer is able to borrow a couple of bowler hats. As will be seen from the illustrations, the trick may also need the presence of a box on the table, but this will not be necessary for a performer who has advanced beyond the first stages of his art. The trick can be done quite easily on an ordinary table.

Having borrowed the two hats, the conjurer screws up a little ball of paper and puts it on the table. He covers it openly with one of the hats, and puts the other hat beside it. On lifting the hats the ball is seen to have wandered from its place under the first hat to a hiding place under the second hat. If he pleases, the conjurer may make the ball of paper go back to its original place, and, as a final effect, travel invisibly to his pocket. Both hats are then returned to their owners, who will be as much in the dark as to "how is it done?" as I imagine my readers are now, unless they have stolen a glance at the lower set of the accompanying pictures.

There are, of course, two paper balls. Each is crushed up round the end of a short piece of black thread. The other end of the thread has a small bent pin attached to it. The thread must be a trifle shorter than the length from the



back to the front of the hat measuring from the edge of the lining.

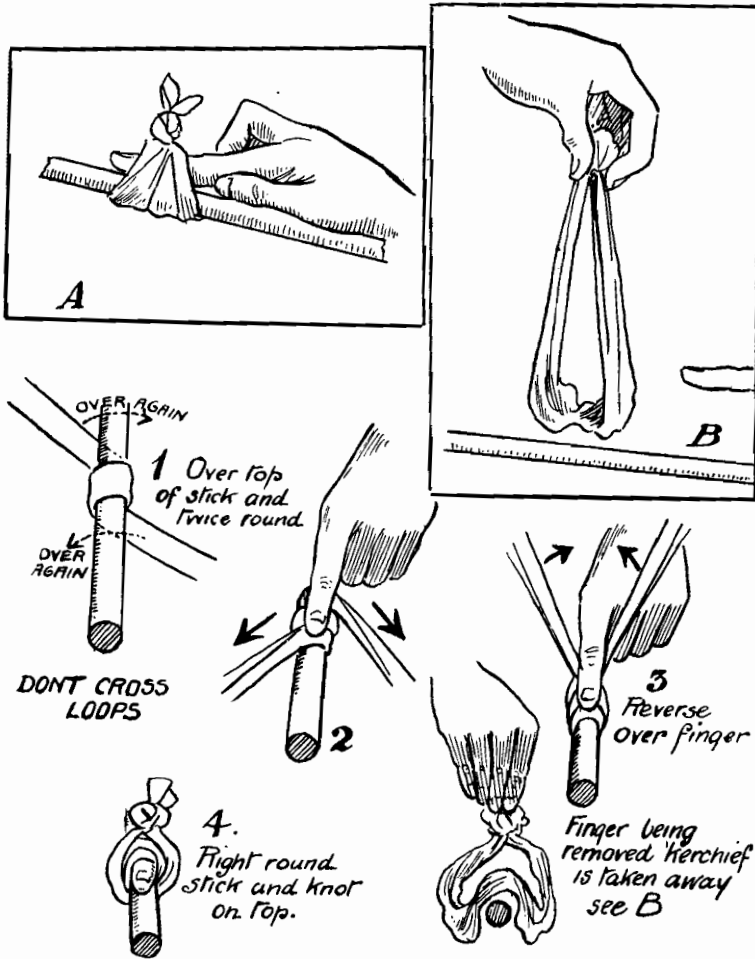
It will be seen that if the hat is held up with its crown facing the audience, and the pin on one of the pieces of thread is stuck into the edge of the interior of the crown, the ball will hang down behind the hat, and will thus be concealed. That is the main secret of the trick. The performer prepares both hats in this way. He puts the right-hand paper ball on the table, and holds that hat with the thread side downwards before placing the hat over the ball. He picks up the other hat, and holds it by the thread side so that the ball hangs down behind the hat. He places that hat on the table, and, of course, the audience see no suspicious movement of any kind, and are therefore unaware of the fact that in this simple way the conjurer has got a ball of paper under the left-hand hat.

By merely reversing the way of holding the two hats, the conjurer makes the ball travel invisibly from under one

hat to a spot under the second hat. For the final effect he first pulls out his trouser pocket and shows that it is empty, but he really has another little ball of paper concealed at the top of the pocket. The conjurer then picks up both hats once more to show that the ball is still under one of the hats, and then pushes back his pocket to its usual place. Once more he raises the hats, this time by the thread sides and with the crowns outwards, and in so doing contrives to get hold of the pins and draw them out. In this way he gets possession of the two paper balls, and going first to his left pocket (as though he had made a mistake), pulls it out empty. The audience are sure to tell the performer that it was to the other pocket that the ball of paper was to travel. In going to his left pocket the conjurer secretly conveyed to that pocket the ball of paper which had been used for the left-hand hat, and hid it at the top of the pocket. He did the same thing with the right-hand ball and pocket, but in this case he got down the ball which had been hidden there, and threw it out on the table, while at the same time he hid the ball with the thread in it at the top of the pocket. By doing the trick in this way the conjurer is able to allow anyone to examine the hats and the ball of paper at the end of the trick.

The Handkerchief and the Wand.

To my mind this little trick is one of the gems of the book. It is quite simple—it can be performed with objects borrowed from the audience; it is very effective, and extremely mystifying. It is not large enough to occupy an independent place in a conjurer's programme, but as a "fill-up" it is admirable. The amateur conjurer who



devotes most of his work to learning and performing pocket tricks will find this one of the best that has ever been invented.

The effect is as follows. The conjurer takes a stick and borrows a handkerchief. He asks someone to hold the stick

firmly while he binds the handkerchief round it. After he has put the handkerchief twice round the stick, the conjurer asks his assistant to place his finger on the top of the handkerchief while the two ends are being tied in a knot. The assistant does this, and the conjurer requests him to withdraw his finger. Then the conjurer gives a jerk to the handkerchief, and draws it away clear from the stick, although the knot is still intact.

Nothing could be simpler than the method by which this mystifying effect is produced. The conjurer places the centre of the handkerchief (which should be twisted up rope-fashion) on the top of the stick, and then brings up the end of the handkerchief. He repeats this movement, and takes care not to cross the ends of the handkerchief. In this lies the whole secret of the trick. Having put the handkerchief twice round the stick, the conjurer invites someone to place his first finger along the handkerchief, and to press down on the stick. The conjurer then passes the handkerchief twice round the finger and the stick, but in doing this he passes the handkerchief round the reverse way, thus really unwinding it from the stick. But for the assistant's finger pressed on the handkerchief the whole trick would be given away before its proper conclusion. The finger, however, keeps the handkerchief in place. The conjurer then ties a hard knot, asks his assistant to withdraw his finger, and, with a show of great dexterity, draws away the handkerchief.

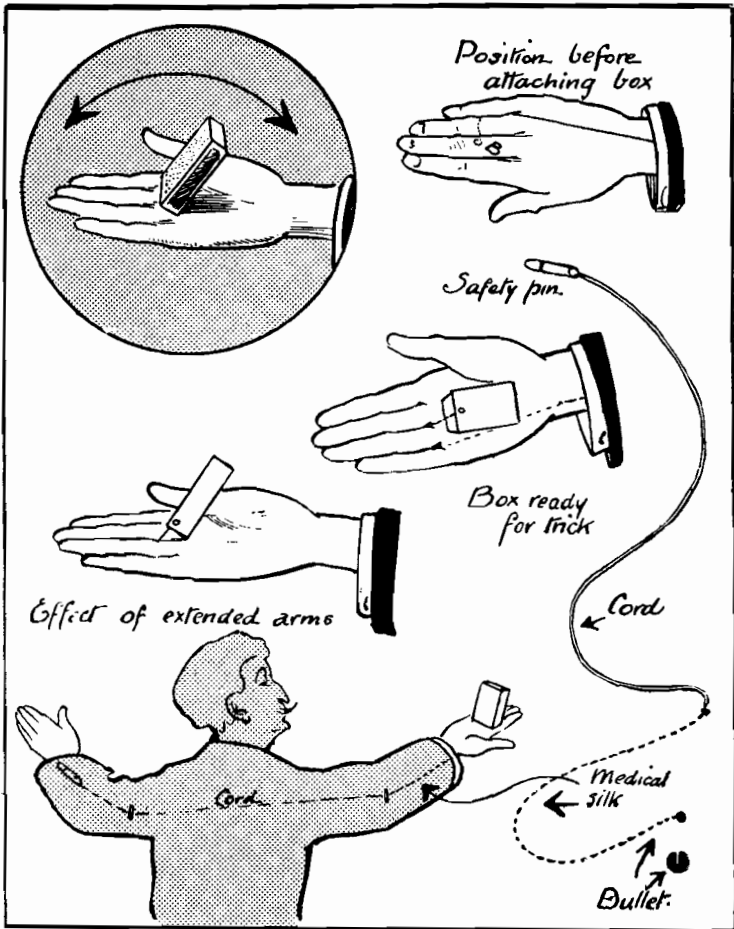
The performer who is going to use this little trick in his regular programme, can introduce it as a little experiment designed to prove that the magic wand really has magical properties.

The Mesmerised Match Box.

This little trick was invented by Ormonde Penstone and Dr. Owen Bowen. The effect of the trick is the rising and falling of an ordinary match-box on the palm of the hand. There would not be much in the mystery were it not for the fact that the hand of the performer and the match-box can be examined immediately before and after the trick; in fact, the match-box can be a borrowed one.

The conjurer takes the box, and, extending his right hand, places the box on the palm. Then he makes a few passes towards the box with his left hand, and the box slowly rises in the palm and assumes a vertical position. The conjurer then makes a few more passes in the reverse direction, and the box slowly goes back to its original position. The box can then be given out for examination, and the performer can also allow anyone to examine his hands. The secret consists in the use of a novel "pull," quite unlike any other that has ever been devised. It is made of a piece of strong medicated silk, such as used by surgeons. When this is placed on the hand it is practically invisible. One end of this thread is pinned to the left shirt sleeve. The other end has a small bullet attached to it. This end is carried up the left sleeve, across the back, and is dropped down the right sleeve. When the thread is in this position the bullet should be about four inches from the right cuff.

The conjurer, having borrowed a match-box, gives it out for examination, and also has his hands examined. Before he receives the box again the conjurer bends his left arm and keeps it close to him, and so causes the bullet to drop into his right hand. He quickly slips it round to



the back of the hand, and passes the thread through the second and third fingers. Then he puts the bullet through or between the third and little fingers, and holds it thus at the back of the hand.

The thread, in this position, is stretched across the root

of the third finger, but then, as it is practically invisible, the palm of the hand can be shown.

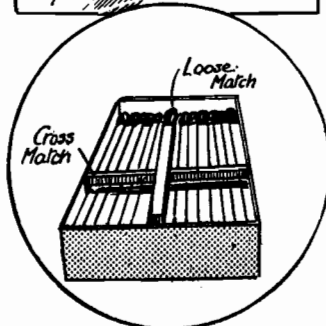
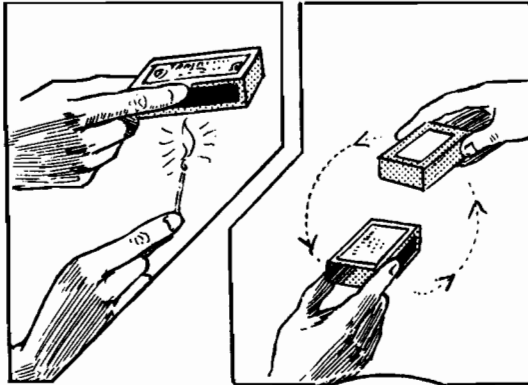
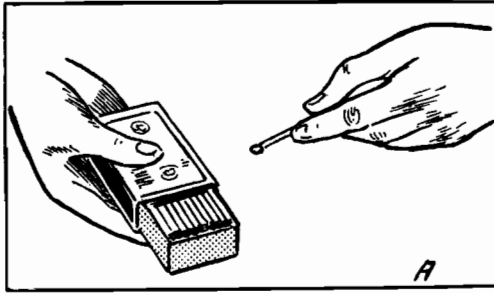
When he receives the box once more, the conjurer allows the bullet to be drawn back between the third and little fingers, but keeps it drawn up against the roots of the second and third fingers. Then he opens and closes the box once or twice to prove that there is no preparation about it. He is thus able to get the bullet into the box, and when this is done the trick is practically finished, for all that the conjurer has to do to make the box rise on his palm is to extend his left arm.

The effect is most mysterious. The thread, being at the back of the hand, cannot be seen by the audience.

When the box has been "mesmerised," the conjurer takes it and opens it once more, to prove that there is no trickery about the box. At the same time he extends his left arm as far as he possibly can without attracting attention to the movement, and thus draws the bullet up his sleeve to its original position. The conjurer can then allow anyone to examine his hands.

The Mystic Matches.

This is a capital little pocket trick. It can be introduced in an impromptu manner; in fact, it is best when it is done on the spur of the moment. The conjurer takes a match from a box full of matches, lights it, and holds it near the box for a second. He then takes the drawer from the box, and, turning it upside down, shows that all the matches have disappeared. After the audience have finished guessing where all the matches have gone, the conjurer lightly strokes the box, and immediately all the



SECRET

matches drop from it on to the table. The box can then be examined by anyone.

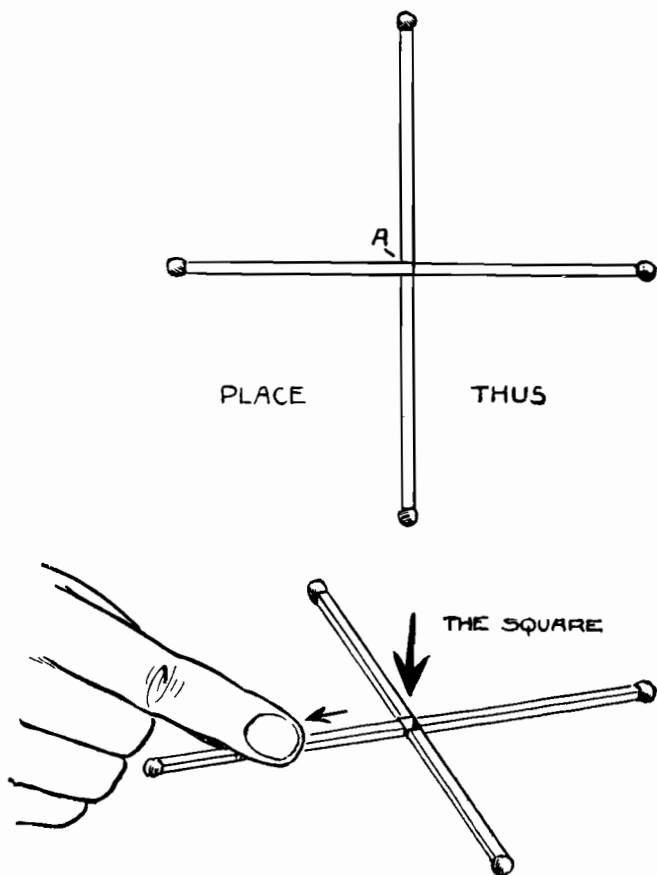
The whole secret consists in the use of a piece of a match which is wedged in across the box, and so keeps all the matches from falling out. One loose match is placed on the top, and it is this match which is taken out and struck. When the box is opened for this purpose, the audience can see there are other matches in the box, but as the little cross-piece is hidden (see illustration), the box does not appear to have been prepared specially for the trick. When the conjurer wishes to make the matches fall from the box, he merely pushes the piece of match on one side; it falls on the table with the other matches, and is never noticed.

A New Match Trick.

This is more of a puzzle than a trick, but the secret is so good that it deserves a place in this book.

Four matches are placed together in the form shown in the illustration, and the puzzle is: Can you make a square of these matches by moving only one match?

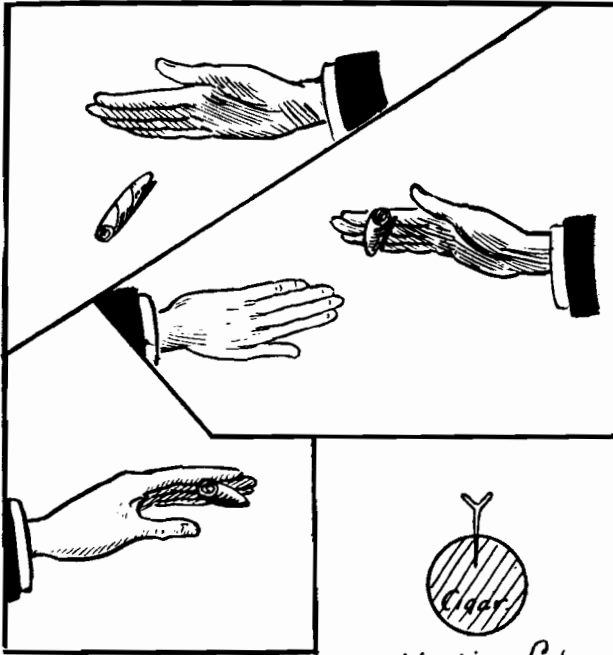
Anyone not in the know—and, to the best of my belief, even this small trick is, like the bigger things in this book, quite new—will probably give up the puzzle after a few attempts. Yet the answer is quite simple. It will be noticed that the matches are placed on the table in such a way that if one of them is moved to the edge of the other two, there is a small space in the centre of the ends of the matches. This space is as nearly square as the matches will allow it to be, and the puzzle is done. The majority of people will try to move one match and to blow on the



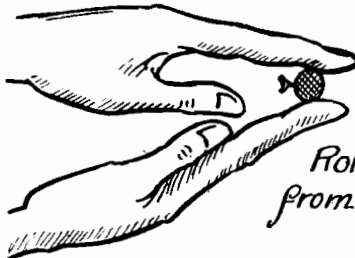
others in the hope of being able to make a large square with the matches.

The Animated Cigar.

This is an excellent little experiment for a smoking concert or a drawing-room. Borrowing a cigar—or using one of his own, if he finds anyone unwilling to help him



Holding fake



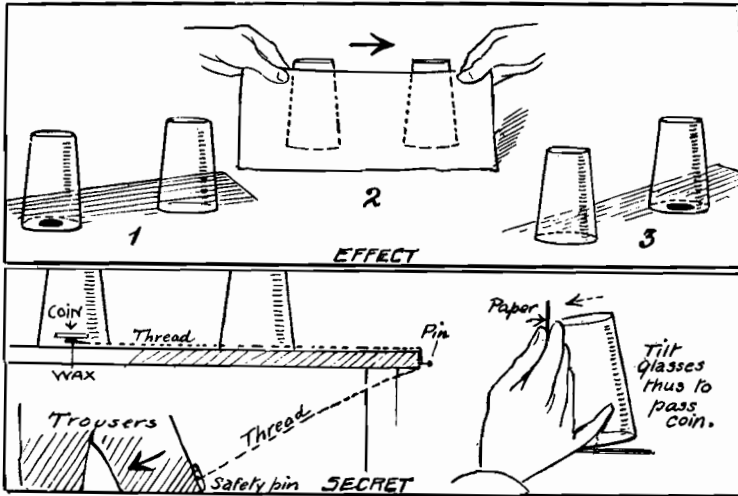
*Rolling Cigar
from hand to hand*

to this extent—the conjurer places it on the outstretched fingers of his right hand. Then he “puts on the fluence” with his left hand, and, turning his hand over, shows that the cigar has been apparently magnetized by his hand, for it remains clinging to his fingers. The conjurer then rolls the cigar between his two hands, and causes it to adhere to his other hand. It can be made to adhere to two of the fingers, and the hand can be held in any position during the trick. Finally, the conjurer returns the cigar to the owner, or, if it is his own property, proceeds to smoke it, thus showing that there is no special preparation of the cigar.

The only fake required for this experiment is a tiny little wire fork (see illustration). At the commencement of the trick the conjurer has this concealed between the first and second fingers of his right hand. When he borrows the cigar he gets this little piece of wire firmly implanted into it, and then grips the fork end of the wire between his fingers. The illustration shows how the cigar is rolled between the hand. The fake is so small and is so well concealed during the trick that its presence is never suspected.

The Coin and the Glasses.

The conjurer borrows a penny and two glasses. He places the penny on the table, inverts one glass over it, and places the other glass by its side. He then holds up a sheet of paper in front of the glass, but without entirely concealing them. When he drops the paper the audience see that the penny has travelled from one glass to the other.



The penny has the waxed end of a piece of thread attached to it. This thread is carried down the table, round a pin stuck in the end of the table, and is fastened by means of a safety pin to the performer's trousers. The rest does not require much explanation. All that the audience see until the paper is dropped is a slight movement of the glasses. This is necessary because the performer must tilt both glasses slightly (by pressing down with his first fingers and steadying the glasses with his little fingers) to allow the penny to leave the first glass and take up its position under the other glass. The movement of the penny is brought about by a slight movement of the performer's leg.

The Missing Sixpence.

The conjurer first borrows two half-crowns and a sixpence, and in so doing allows the knowing ones among his audience to see that he is going to perform with

unprepared coins. He holds one half-crown by the edge between the tips of his left first finger, second finger, and thumb, and places the sixpence upon it. He then covers the sixpence with the second half-crown, but does not allow this coin to touch the sixpence; there should be a clear space of about half an inch between the sixpence and the top half-crown.

The next move is to take all three coins between the tips of the first and second fingers and thumb of the right hand, and to extend the left hand, palm upwards.

Calling the attention of the audience first to the left hand and then to the coins, the conjurer asks his audience to watch, and at the same time drops one of the half-crowns into the palm of his left hand. After a moment's pause he drops the second half-crown, and shows his right hand empty. The sixpence that was placed between the two half-crowns has vanished. The conjurer then condoles with the owner of the sixpence on the loss of his property, and returns the two half-crowns to their owners. As the owner of the sixpence will fail to see the joke of losing his money so easily, the conjurer places his hand in his pocket and produces a sixpence.

The effect is produced in the following way. After the conjurer has placed the sixpence on the half-crown, the conjurer slants this coin slightly before taking up the second half-crown. In releasing the lower half-crown, on which the sixpence was placed, the conjurer allows the lower part of it to go first from his hand, and the half-crown therefore turns over in its descent and covers up the sixpence. In this way the sixpence is made to disappear. When the conjurer returns the two half-crowns he palms the sixpence for a moment, and then, placing his hand in his pocket, produces it.

PART II.

Drawing-Room Tricks.

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Drawing-Room Tricks.

THE question, "What is an archdeacon?" and the answer, "A person who performs archidiaconal functions," are historical. I have heard the question, "What are drawing-room tricks?" answered in a similar manner by "Tricks suitable for performance in drawing-rooms." That is precisely what they are. But many magicians do not realise this and, in the course of their work as drawing-room entertainers, they frequently present tricks NOT suitable for performance in drawing-rooms.

In most modern houses the drawing-rooms are small, and a performer has to work at very close quarters with his audience. He should consider how this affects his choice of tricks. Those that "talk" in any way will not do, however effective they may be when the performer is working on a platform at some distance from his audience, and when he can rely on the playing of a piano to cover any noise he makes. They are bound to give him away in an ordinary drawing-room. The audience hear the tell-tale click, and smile knowingly. They realise that some effect is about to be produced, and the effect in question accordingly loses all the advantages of surprise.

That matter of "talk" is the real difference between drawing-room tricks and stage tricks. The drawing-room entertainer must give a silent show. He is dependent on pure sleight-of-hand, or on a combination of that with

“fakes,” and small mechanical tricks that can be worked noiselessly. To that extent his choice is limited, but only to that. There are hundreds of tricks suitable for performance in drawing-rooms. He should select those of them which seem to him most effective and most likely to be successful in his hands. Some of the old tricks are always serviceable with the average audience. But the smart drawing-room entertainer must constantly be adding to his repertoire. This section of “Exclusive Magical Secrets” will enable him to do that for a long while to come. It includes the very best of the new drawing-room tricks, and gives examples of every style of effect. Indeed, it will enable an entertainer to do much more than simply add to his repertoire from time to time. From it, and it alone, he will find that he can compile several full and most attractive drawing-room programmes.

The work of many magicians is entirely confined to the class of magic dealt with in this section, and the drawing-room entertainer is an important member of the magical community. The name of Charles Bertram is doubtless familiar to all my subscribers. He was one of the cleverest of the performers of his period, and would have excelled in any department of magic. But throughout his career he devoted himself exclusively to drawing-room entertaining. He reduced that, or perhaps better, raised it, to a fine art. Performers of the present day are indebted to him in many ways. He greatly increased the popularity of magical entertainments in society circles, and he established a standard for such entertainments.

To be completely successful, the professional drawing-room entertainer requires something more than a good repertoire of tricks and the ability to perform them skilfully.

He must cultivate a society manner. Very often he is expected to mix with the guests, and to act as if he were one of them. Many society hostesses like the items of the entertainments they provide to appear to be quite impromptu. A magical performer engaged by them will not be introduced as a professional. When the time for his turn arrives, the hostess will call upon him with, "Perhaps Mr. So and So will now kindly give us a little conjuring," or something equally polite. His manner must be such as will warrant this suggestion that he is one of her guests.

Another important factor of success in this class of entertainment is patter. This, like the performer's tricks and his manner, must be suited to the drawing-room. All controversial subjects such as politics and religion should be severely left alone. The patter should, speaking generally, be in humorous vein, and should, of course, be based on the particular tricks given. Some entertainers make a practice of writing their own patter. This is a good plan, if one possesses the necessary wit and power of turning words. If not, the services of somebody who does possess them should be enlisted. There are several men who have special ability in this way. For instance, Bennett Scott, the famous musical composer, is a remarkably clever writer of patter. In his younger days he was a very successful magician, and much of his success was due to the highly humorous and original talk with which he accompanied the performance of his tricks. Although magic is no longer his profession, he still retains much of his former skill in the art and all of his former power of turning out fresh and amusing patter.

Three Card Tricks,

INCLUDING TWO NOVEL WAYS OF FINDING CHOSEN CARDS.

The discovery of one or more cards chosen by the audience forms the basis of the majority of conjuring tricks with cards. Unfortunately, the means by which these tricks are brought about are fairly well known, and the conjurer who aims at making his performance really deceptive must strike out a new line for himself or do the old tricks in a new way.

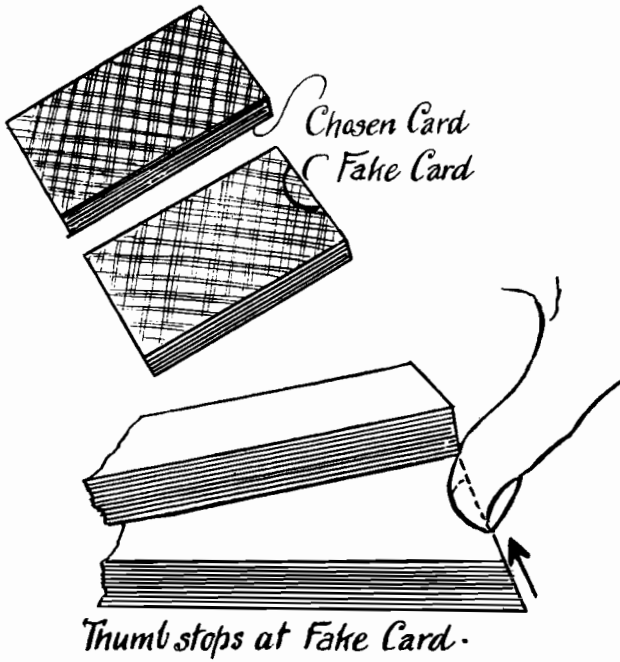
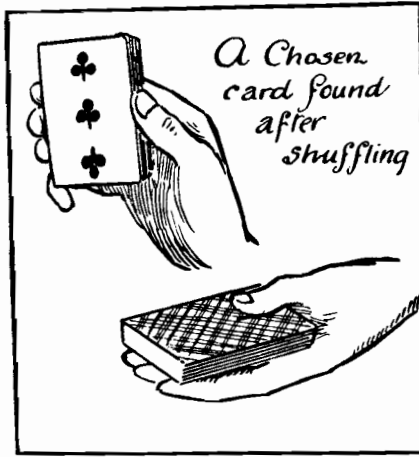
It will possibly rub some of my readers the wrong way to be told that the discovery of a chosen card by sleight of hand is by no means necessarily the best way of doing any such trick. It may be the best way when the audience consists mainly of conjurers, who can appreciate the delicacy of clever manipulations with cards and clever misdirection on the part of the performer. But most audiences are not of this kind; they consist of the general public, who care nothing for the means by which the trick is accomplished. To such an audience the effect of the trick is everything, and the conjurer who can produce a good effect by employing a simple but very subtle secret is likely to meet with greater success than the man who has to rely entirely on the manipulations of the cards, and who is all the time conscious of the fact that if by an unlucky accident he should make a slip—and the best performers are not infallible—the trick has failed, and must be brought to a tame conclusion. Sleight of hand is NOT everything in card-work. Perhaps my best way of demonstrating that it can be

superseded is to give away two secrets for discovering cards selected by the audience, and then to suggest how such can be used to good advantage. Before doing this, let me urge on my readers not to despise these secrets because they appear to be simple. All the best tricks have simple secrets—when you know them.

In the first experiment the conjurer can take a new pack of cards, break open the wrapper, give out the cards for examination, and ask anyone to shuffle them. Personally, I never believe in asking an audience to examine anything. If the conjurer desires that the audience should handle any piece of apparatus, the better plan is to arrange the trick in such a way that they have to handle the apparatus during its performance. They should not be asked to look at it; the fact that they are allowed to have it in their possession will convince them that there is no trick about it.

Having had the cards shuffled by the audience, the conjurer may invite someone to take a card and to replace it in the pack. He can then shuffle the pack, and show that the card chosen is neither at the top nor the bottom of the pack. He can then produce the chosen card in any way he pleases. Perhaps the most effective method of doing this is to spread out the cards in the hands, and ask the person who chooses a card to think of it directly he sees it. After a few mysterious moments—it is as well not to do these things too quickly—the conjurer immediately names the card.

The secret for this trick consists in one faked card. It has a small crescent-shaped piece cut out of one end (see illustration). This card can easily be added to the others when the conjurer receives the pack back from the audience.



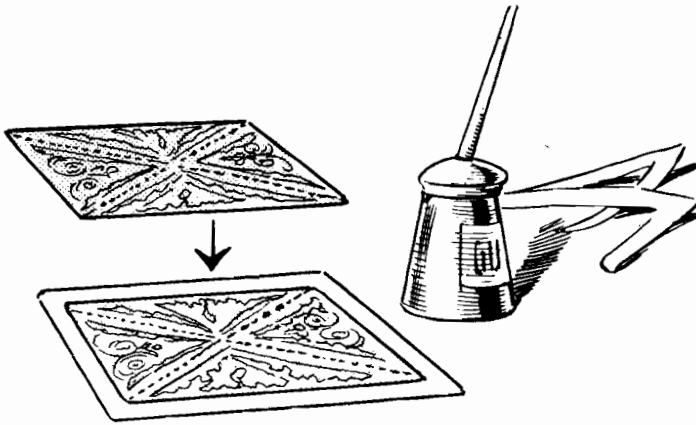
The faked card is kept at first at the bottom of the pack. After a card has been chosen, the conjurer gets it to the middle of the pack, and has the chosen card placed on the top of it. The pack is then squared up.

Holding the pack in the left hand, and lightly covering it with his right, the conjurer "riffles" the left-hand corner with his thumb while asking the chooser of the card to think of it. The conjurer then "riffles" the end of the pack with his right thumb, and it will be found that the pack will "break" at the faked card. This card will travel past the thumb, and the next card to it is the chosen card. The conjurer bends the pack slightly and gets a glimpse of it.

The second secret is equally good. In this case the faked card is made up in such a way that the whole pack, with the faked card in it, can be handed out to anyone to shuffle without the slightest fear that they will discover that one of the cards has been tampered with.

The faked card is easily made. The white edge of a card is first trimmed away, and the centre which is left is gummed on to the centre of another card. Thus the faked card will be slightly thicker in the centre than any other card, and the chosen card, replaced upon it, can be discovered quite easily by running the thumb along either end of the pack.

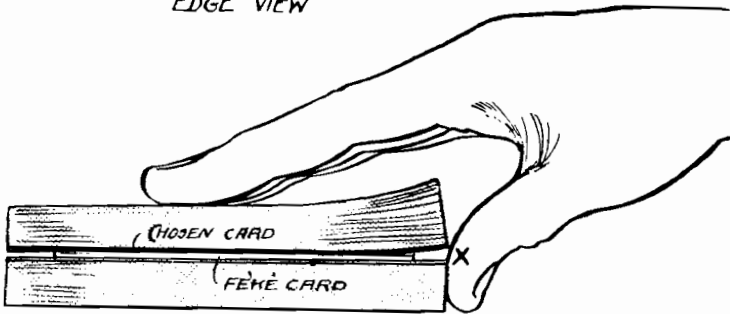
May I point out what an excellent means of doing the blindfold trick this secret affords? The conjurer can have the cards replaced on the faked card, and the pack immediately squared up. If he pleases, he can shuffle the cards, so long as he takes care not to disturb those immediately above the faked card. (If only one card has been chosen, either when this or the other faked card is



CARD CENTRE FIXED TO TOP OF CARD



EDGE VIEW



THUMB WILL STOP UNDER SELECTED CARD X

used, there is very little fear of the two cards being disturbed by an ordinary shuffle.)

Having had the cards squared up, and having shown, after the shuffle, that the cards chosen are neither at the

top nor at the bottom of the pack, the conjurer asks someone to blindfold him, and as he is not dependent upon the slightest speck of light for accomplishing the trick, he can even have his eyes covered with pads of cotton wool before the handkerchief is placed over his eyes. He then takes a small knife in his hand, and spreads out the pack on the table. The chosen cards are above the faked card. The position of the faked card is discovered by the touch of the fingers, and the cards immediately above it are pulled out to the edge of the table. The rest requires no explanation.

With regard to the use of the first faked pack, I may say that this gives anyone an easy way of producing any chosen cards from the pocket after the chosen cards have been returned to the pack, the pack has been returned to the conjurer and placed in his pocket. He can casually shuffle the pack before putting it in his pocket, and then ask the choosers of the cards if their cards are at the top or bottom of the pack. When the pack is in his pocket the conjurer merely has to run his thumb along the end, and the cards above the faked card will be the chosen cards. He turns this portion of the pack over and produces them one by one, or, if he pleases, he can leave the chosen cards in his pocket after he has removed the first card, and offer the pack to anyone to shuffle, and then put it back in his pocket. When the last chosen card has been taken out of his pocket, the conjurer takes out all the cards except the faked card, and goes on to the next trick. The use of a faked card is then not suspected.

This method of doing the trick is greatly superior to the old plan of bringing the chosen cards, by means of the pass, to the top of the pack before the pack is placed in the pocket. This new method has the advantage of being quite simple

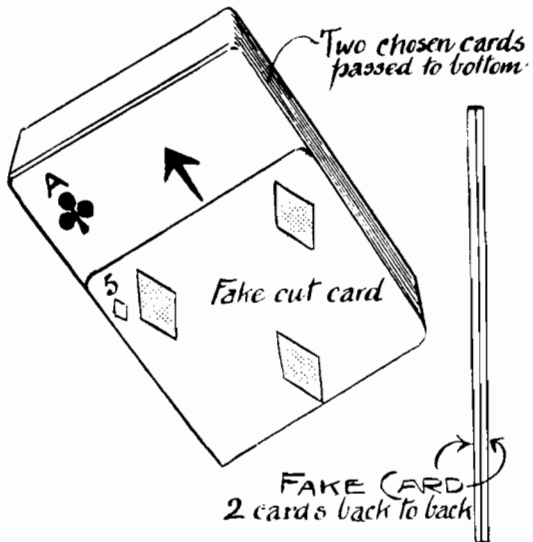
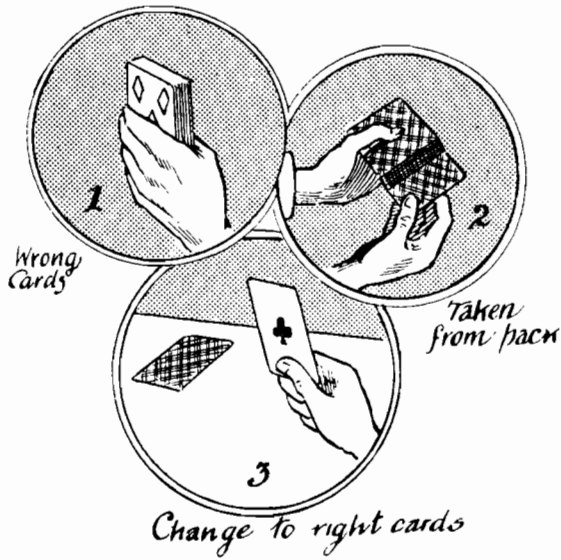
and much more effective than the old plan, which, although sleight of hand was used, did not permit the conjurer to show that the chosen cards were neither at the top nor at the bottom of the pack before the pack was placed out of sight in his pocket.

THE MYSTERIOUS COUPLE.

The effect of this novel and surprising trick is as follows. Two cards are freely chosen and returned to the pack. The conjurer shuffles the pack, and, holding it in the left hand, with the bottom card only visible, asks the first chooser if that was his card. The reply is in the negative. The conjurer deals this bottom card on the table, and, going to the second chooser, asks if the bottom card is his card. Again the reply is "No." From this point the patter is:—

"My trick is fairly simple, gentlemen. I will first ask what were the chosen cards—the king of hearts and the three of diamonds. (They may be any other cards.) Very well. I think you all saw me place the two bottom cards of the pack—the five of diamonds and the ten of clubs (if those were the cards used)—on the table. What I propose to do is to ask the cards on the table to change places with those cards which were chosen. When you heard that little 'click' (made by the 'riffle') the change took place, and if you now look at the cards you will see that the five of diamonds and the ten of clubs which I dealt on the table have returned to the pack, and that the chosen cards—the king of hearts and the three of diamonds—are on the table. There they are."

This little piece of magic is brought about by means of half a card, or rather the halves of two cards, pasted together back to back. The conjurer hides this fake under



the other cards when he has the two cards chosen. He brings the two chosen cards to the bottom of the pack, and keeps the faked card over one end. In holding up the pack for the first man to see, he keeps his hand in such a position (see illustration) that only the half-card is seen, and the junction between that and the real bottom card is hidden by the hand. When he turns the pack face downwards, and apparently draws out the card which has been shown to the member of the audience, the conjurer keeps hold of the faked card and draws out the bottom card, which is one of the two chosen cards.

The conjurer then turns the faked card over and repeats the process, and gets rid of the faked card in any way he pleases. The only part of the trick in which special care should be taken is in not allowing the two choosers of cards to take cards similar to those on the two sides of the faked card. However, it is a comparatively simple matter to have these two cards and the faked half-card at the bottom of the pack before the commencement of the trick, and then there is no chance of a mishap.

A New and Original Thought-Reading Trick with Cards.

To my mind the following card trick approaches very nearly to absolute perfection. The plot of the trick is perfectly simple; even a child can follow all that goes on; the trick can be done anywhere and without any apparatus; no secret preparation of the cards is necessary before the performance, and there is nothing to conceal at the end.

The trick, when properly presented, appears to be a miracle of thought reading. This is what happens.

The conjurer comes forward with a new pack of cards. He calls attention to the fact that the Government stamp is on the wrapper before he breaks open the pack, and holds out the cards, first to one spectator and then another, until some dozen cards have been chosen. During this time the conjurer makes no false move of any kind. He merely holds the pack to each spectator, invites him to take a card and to retain it. When a dozen or more cards have been selected the conjurer hands the pack to each person who has taken a card, and asks him to return the card to the pack himself and to shuffle the cards. When all the cards have been returned to the pack, the conjurer asks those who took cards to think of them, and then he quietly tells them of what cards they are thinking.

I imagine that most readers who have followed me so far will jump to the conclusion that the trick is performed with marked cards. Therefore let me point out again that the pack of cards is a new one, and that it is not tampered with in any way before it is opened. How then does this seeming miracle come about?

The secret is quite simple. There are no difficult moves to master, and practically nothing which can be given away during the progress of the trick. It is well known that all packs of cards belonging to one particular "brand" are packed in the same way. Open any pack of Steamboats—and these are excellent cards for the trick—and you will find that the cards are packed in this order: Spades, 2-10; Diamonds, 2-10; Hearts, 2-7, and Ace, King, Queen, Jack; Diamonds, King, Queen, Jack, Ace; Spades, Ace, King,

Queen, Jack; Clubs, King, Queen, Jack, Ace; Hearts, 8-10; Clubs, 2-10.

This order must be committed to memory, but it is not a very difficult task to do this. Various little aids to the memorising of the order will occur to one. For instance, it is easy enough to remember that you have to dig for diamonds. The figures 2 to 10 are not difficult to remember. Then comes the other red suit—hearts—and the order of these will be remembered easily by anyone who thinks that the previous order (2-10) is broken, just as hearts are often broken, that even a king can have only one heart. Then it will be found that the king of hearts is the twenty-sixth card in the pack—and that represents half the task. The hearts cards run down to the jack. Then come diamonds, running from the king to the ace, and spades (similar in a way to hearts) go up from ace to king and down to jack. Clubs are in the same order as diamonds from king to ace. Then the three other hearts, 8 to 10, and finally the clubs, 2 to 10—the same figures with which we began.

It is open to anyone, of course, to devise any plan for remembering this order, and in all probability the plan that the reader makes up for himself will be better than any we could devise for him, because the home-made plan is more likely to be imprinted on his memory than any which he learns.

But I fancy I hear the reader inquire: What has the order of the cards to do with the discovery of the chosen cards? Well, is it not an easy matter, when a card has been taken, and while one is walking away to another member of the audience, to turn up with the left thumb the corner of the card immediately above that which was taken, and so to get at the name of the card that has been

taken? The fact that the conjurer holds the whole pack of cards will be appreciated by anyone who tries this experiment, because the large number of cards helps to hide any movement of the conjurer's thumb, although, as a matter of fact, the necessary movement can be made without fear of detection if only a few cards are held in the hand.

It will be noted that the conjurer does not have each card returned immediately after the chooser has taken it. If this were done, it is quite possible that the chooser of the card would insist on putting it back in the wrong place—that is to say, not in the place which it originally occupied, and, of course, if it was not put back in that place it would upset the order of the cards.

I have given the order in which Steamboat cards are packed. It will be found that all cards of one kind are usually packed in one way. This order is easily ascertained by buying three or four packs of one kind and noting the order.

Conjurers who perform with the prearranged pack will find this trick very simple, and if they wish to get the effect of performing the trick with a new pack, I may say that it is quite an easy matter to steam a new pack of cards until the wrapper can be removed without breaking it. Then the cards can be arranged in the order to which the performer is accustomed, and the pack can be fastened up again.

After twelve or more cards have been chosen, the conjurer should not draw attention to the fact that from that moment he does not touch the pack, because if he were to mention that some of the wise ones might remember that when the cards were taken from the pack the conjurer held the pack, and it is just possible that when they saw

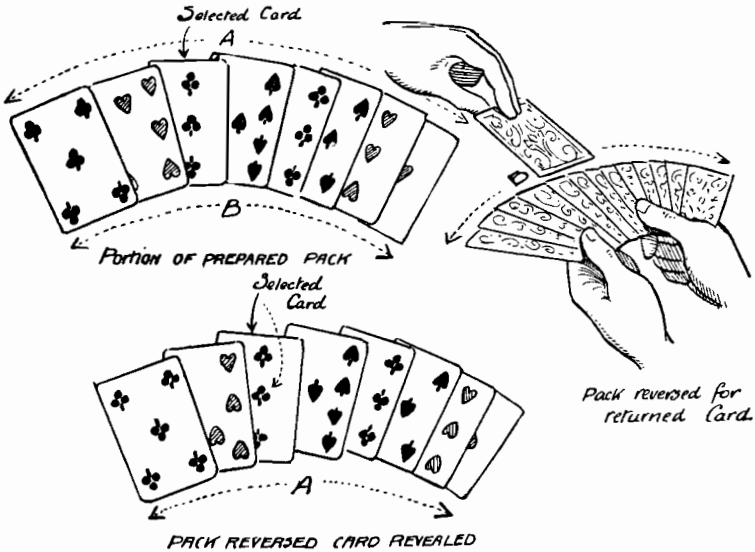
the trick the second time (most people will want to take the first opportunity of seeing it twice), they might possibly get near to the secret. When the cards are being returned to the pack the conjurer can give the pack up once or twice, and can hold it himself for the other cards. In the latter case he should commence to shuffle the cards directly each card is returned, and, of course, if anyone wishes to shuffle the cards the conjurer can at once give up the pack again.

An Entirely New Method for Discovering a Chosen Card.

When teaching conjuring, I used to find that the more advanced the pupil the more he appreciated a trick which was accomplished by some simple but very subtle secret. It was always the raw amateur who, when shown a really good trick which could be performed without any manipulative skill, used to complain: "Oh, that's too simple!"

For this reason I fear that this method of finding a chosen card will appeal only to the finished performer, the man who has had so much experience of conjuring, conjurers, and conjurers' audiences that he will perceive the beauty of being able to hoodwink any audience without using any sleight of hand at all. The conjurer holds out a few cards—about half the pack—and asks someone to select a card, look at it, and replace it. The conjurer immediately gives out the pack to be shuffled, and directly he takes it back again he is able to pick out the chosen card.

It will be understood, of course, that this is not a trick, but a method by which a trick can be performed. No conjurer would be content merely to find the card; he would want to produce it in an effective manner. I am merely



showing how the card is discovered under these conditions. There are countless ways of producing the chosen card afterwards.

To understand this subtle secret thoroughly, the conjurer should take a pack of cards in his hand, and draw from it the ace, three, five, six, seven, eight, and nine of spades, clubs, and hearts.

It will be seen that the cards with the odd numbers can be arranged so that single pips on the cards point in one direction. The aces' pips are obvious. In the three the centre pip gives the clue; the same with the five. In the seven and the nine the single pip in the centre of the card gives the clue, and in the six and eight the two centre pips on either side give the clue.

Now arrange the cards so that the pips giving the clue point all in one direction. If one card is chosen, and while

the chooser is looking at it, the conjurer quietly reverses the cards he holds, it will be obvious that when the conjurer looks at the cards again, after they have been shuffled by some member of the audience, he can easily pick out the chosen card, because the pip giving the clue will point in the opposite direction to that of all the "clue pips" in all the other cards.

When drawing the cards for the illustration, the artist chose the three of clubs, and it was returned to the pack after the pack—or rather, the cards used in the trick—had been reversed. Note the difference between the "clue pips" of all the other cards in the top row and those in the bottom row, and you will at once see how easy it is to detect the chosen card.

The Spelling Spirit.

Invented by DOUGLAS DEXTER.

This is a spiritualistic trick, in which the only apparatus visible to the audience is a small glass "bell," or shade, such as is used for preventing the ceiling from being blackened by a gas flame. This glass shade has a small loop of ribbon passed through it, and it is held up by passing the left thumb through the loop. The back of the hand is thus turned towards the audience, and that is an important item in the performance, although, of course, attention is not drawn to it.

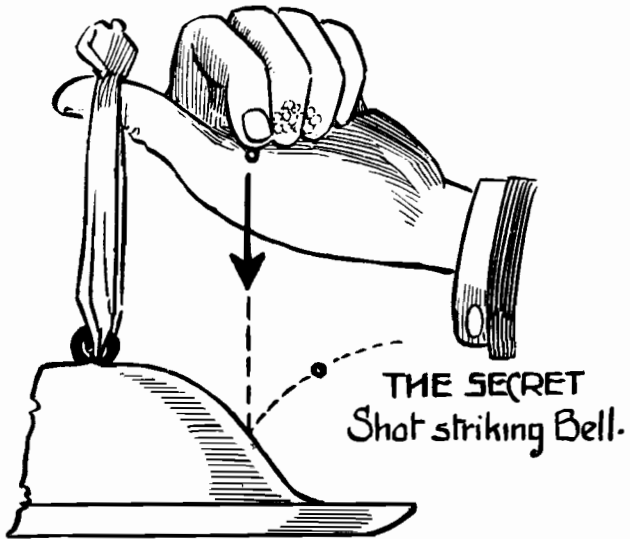
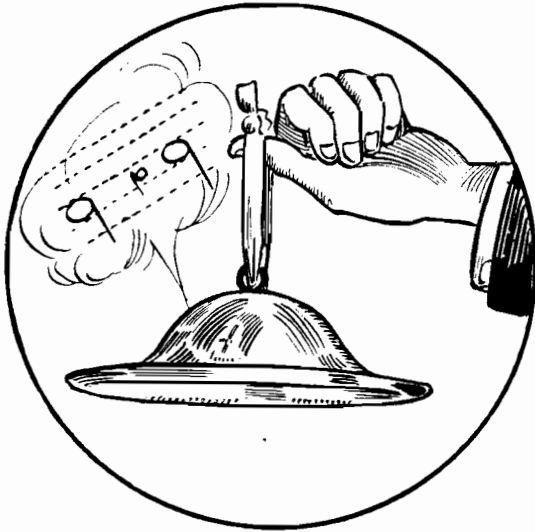
The simplest way of showing the trick is to use it as a means for discovering the name of a chosen card. The

glass bell or shade may be first passed round for examination. When he receives it again, the conjurer merely holds it on his left thumb, and announces that he will ask the spirits to tell them the name of the chosen card. As the spirits are rather slow with their spelling, he proposes to get at the name of the card by asking questions, and it is to be understood that three taps on the bell will mean "No," and one tap "Yes." We will suppose that the name of the chosen card is the queen of hearts. This card is, of course, known to the conjurer. He proceeds to speak to the imaginary spirits in the following way:—

"Tell us, please, is the card black?" (A pause, followed by three distinct taps.) "No? Then it must be a red card. Is it a heart?" (One tap, quickly.) "Ah, there's no doubt about that, is there? Now, let me see, is it a plain card or a court card? Plain?" (Three taps.) "Then it must be a court card. Perhaps it's the king of hearts?" (Three taps.) "No? The queen, perhaps? Is it the queen of hearts?" (One loud tap.) "Ah, that's right." (To the member of the audience who chose the card): "The spirits say, sir, that you chose the queen of hearts, is that right?" The card is immediately held up for all to see.

This, of course, is only one of many ways in which the trick can be exhibited. It can be used for telling the number on a "spirit slate," or the colour of a chosen counter, or the colour of a chosen ribbon or handkerchief, or the name of a celebrity whose photograph has been magically produced, and in a hundred other ways.

And now for the secret, which, like that of most good tricks, is very simple—when you know it. Before calling upon the "spirits," the conjurer gets possession, by means of his left hand, of a few shot. They can be taken out of



the pocket during the action of taking out the handkerchief and replacing it, or they can be taken from the left pochette, or they can be in a small box on a servante or hidden behind a handkerchief on the table. When the shot are in the left hand, the hand is closed and the thumb is extended, so that the glass shade may be held on it. When the taps are required, the conjurer releases the shot one at a time from his first finger. The shot are not visible as they fall, even from a few feet away from the performer.

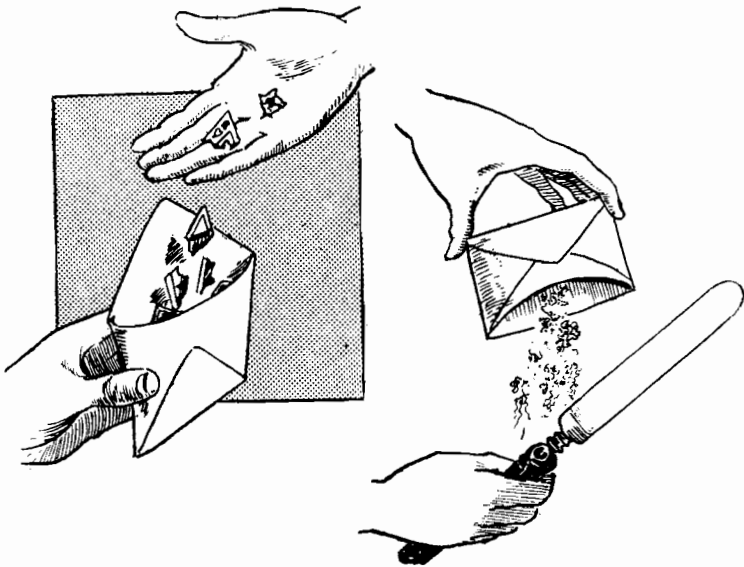
SPECIAL CAUTION.

It is practically impossible for this trick to fail, but the conjurer may possibly neglect to get all the credit to which he is entitled for a very clever performance. I refer to the possible "explanations" which some audiences are always ready to offer after a trick is done. If the conjurer who shows this trick is standing anywhere near a screen, or the door of a room, or a curtain, in fact, if he is standing anywhere near any spot where an assistant can be concealed, I fear that this trick will not get all the applause it deserves, for the kind audience will jump to the conclusion that the taps they heard were made by a concealed assistant on another glass. Therefore my special caution regarding this trick is: Take care that you stand in an isolated position when you exhibit it, and thus get all the credit you should receive for doing a first-rate trick.

The Changing Envelope.

I trust it will be noticed that I call this envelope "the" changing envelope, not "a" changing envelope. I do so because I am convinced that when once a conjurer is acquainted with the secret of this envelope he will never again use any other envelope in a trick which calls for a magic change of a piece of paper, or pieces of a card that has been torn up, etc., etc.

The construction of the envelope will be seen from the diagram, in which the parts are marked A, B, C, D. If the instructions there given are followed, it will be seen that one has produced a double envelope with two pockets. If, say, a little tobacco is put in one pocket (before the trick

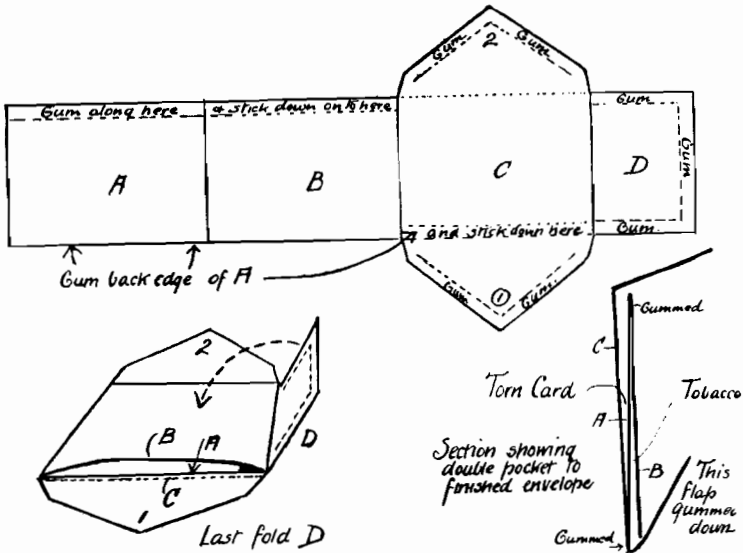


begins), and that flap is gummed down, the envelope can then be exhibited as though it were free from any preparation. Then, if some pieces of a torn card, which has been selected by a member of the audience, are put in the open envelope and the flap is sealed up in the usual way, all that the conjurer has to do at the conclusion of the trick is to put his knife in the bottom flap and slit it open. Out will fall the tobacco, and the pieces of card will be held securely inside the other pocket of the envelope.

This is undoubtedly the best changing envelope that has ever been thought out by a perplexed conjurer. Its superiority to any other lies in the fact that the envelope can be shown, with little fear of anything being found out, both at the beginning and at the end of the trick, and, as will be seen from the accompanying illustration, the construction of the envelope is so simple that anyone can make his own envelopes in any size he wishes.

This trick was presented to me some three or more years ago, and for a time I intended to put the envelopes on the market. I considered, however, that the secret was too good to be given away with a trick selling at, say, a couple of shillings, and so I reserved it for this book. I find, however, that an envelope somewhat similar to the one I have described, but of inferior construction, has lately been sold in the open market. If anyone doubts my statement that the envelope I have described is "the" envelope, let him make one according to these directions, and then compare it with any trick envelope that he can buy. I am confident of what the verdict will be.

I mentioned the putting of tobacco in the envelope because the "cigarette card and tobacco trick" is such a favourite with drawing-room and smoking concert conjurers,



but I suggest that even more effect could be got out of this envelope if it were used in a less hackneyed trick, as, for instance, that of putting a blank piece of paper in the envelope, having a sum set by the audience, having the same sum (?) added by another member of the audience, and then finding the answer written down on the piece of paper—or rather, to be quite accurate, on a piece of paper—in the envelope. It will be noticed that the audience would have to pull the envelope to pieces to discover the second piece of paper.

Automatic Chessmen.

By PROFESSOR HOFFMANN.

The idea of the trick to be presently described suggested itself to me some years ago, but I have only recently found time to mould it into practical shape. It is a complete novelty in point of effect, and as I find that the proposed working satisfactorily stands the test of experiment, I think it may be worthy of a place in "Exclusive Magical Secrets."

In effect, the trick is simplicity itself, but its very simplicity enhances the element of mystery. The appliances used consist of an ordinary chessboard and a king, queen,

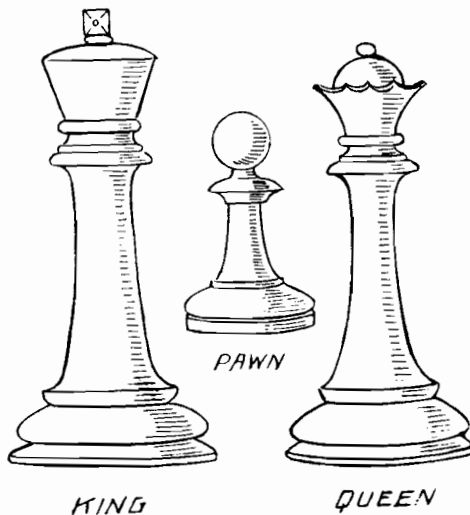


FIG. 1

and a couple of pawns (one black, one white) from a set of "Staunton" chessmen. The reason for preferring men of this pattern (illustrated in Fig. 1) is that they combine slenderness at top with special breadth of base, and, in the better qualities, are "loaded" in addition, these two facts rendering them exceptionally steady. Men of a top-heavy pattern, such as those known as the St. George's, would be much less trustworthy for the purpose of the trick.

To begin with, the white pawn (indicated by the letter P) is placed as shown in Fig. 2—*i.e.*; on what is known to

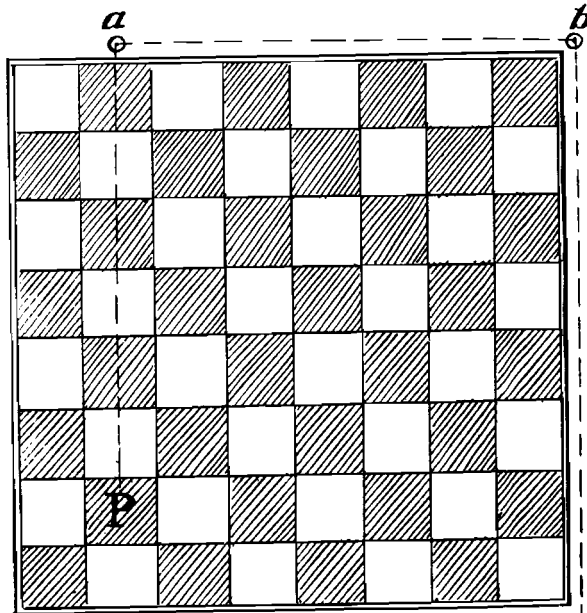


FIG. 2.

chessplayers as the queen's knights' pawn square. At the command of the performer, it automatically moves across the board, square by square, till it reaches the opposite side (the one nearest to the spectators).

For a second effect, the two pawns, black and white, are placed on squares diagonally adjacent in the centre of the board (see Fig. 3, in which the capital P represents the white and the small *p* the black pawn). They are now, in chess parlance, *en prise* to one another—that is to say, that whichever happens to have the move can “take” the other.

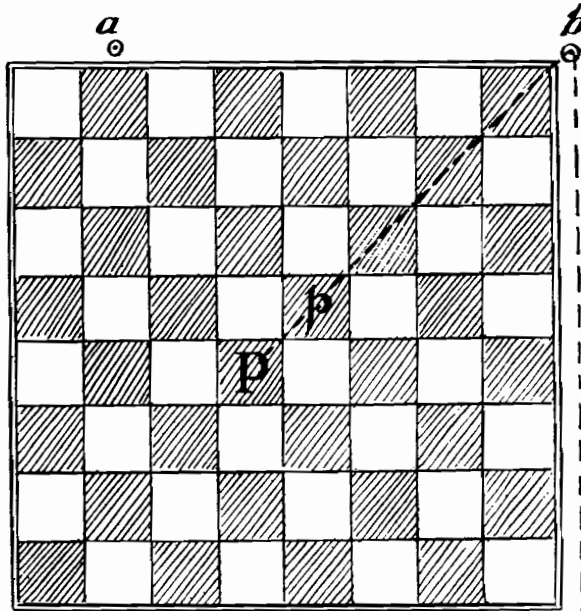


FIG. 3.

In this instance white is supposed to have the move, and the white pawn accordingly "takes" the black one, pushing it aside and moving into its place on the square it occupied.

For the final effect, the black pawn is removed from the board, and the white one, with king and queen of the same colour, placed as indicated in Fig. 4. The queen is supposed to be desirous of sending a message to the king. The pawn advances towards her to receive the message, and then, changing its course, passes onward till it reaches the king. The secret of the working once known, a performer of an inventive turn will find little difficulty in devising other effects for himself (see note on opposite page).

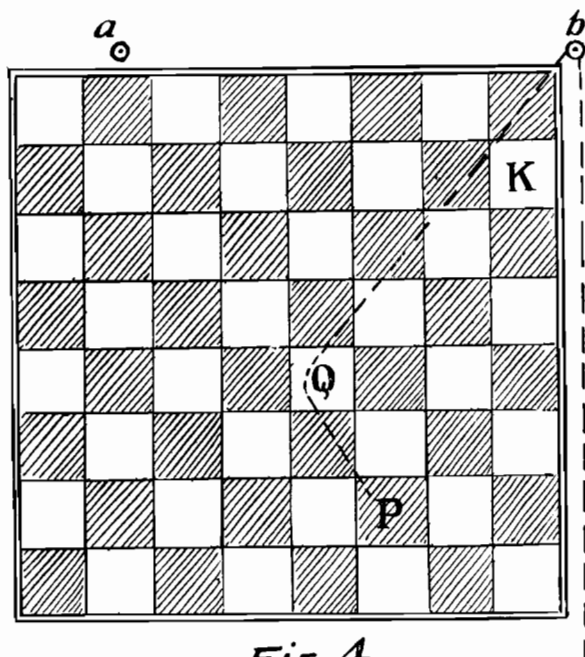


FIG. 4

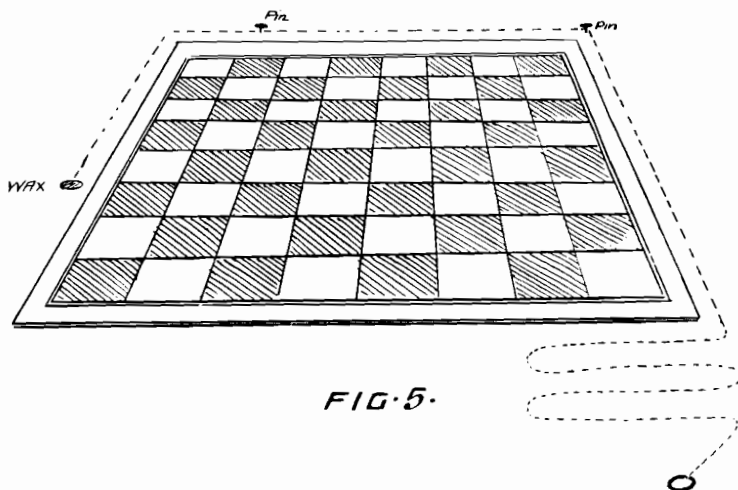
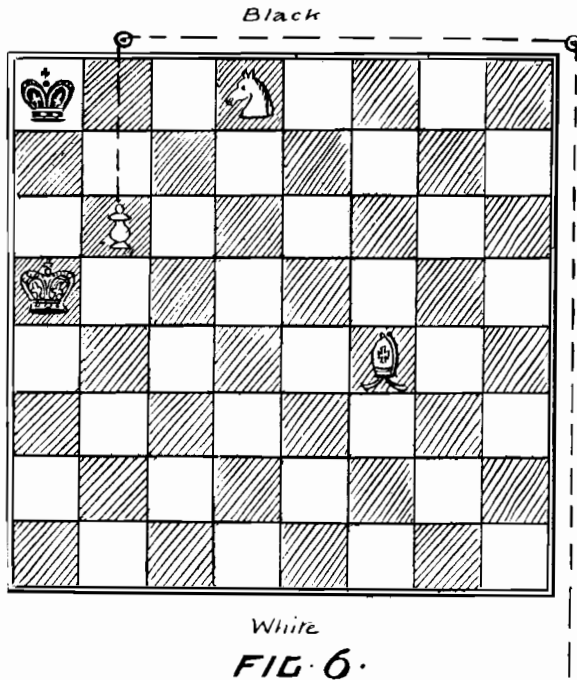


FIG. 5.

The motive power is supplied by a fine black silk thread, though this explanation is apparently disproved by the fact that the movement is in each case *away* from the performer. The precise arrangement of the thread will vary somewhat, according to the conditions under which the performer works. Assuming that he stands to exhibit the feat, and works with a table of his own, the thread, which may be about three or four feet long (the length most suitable must be ascertained by experiment), may, in the first instance, be laid upon the table beforehand (as shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 5) in such manner as to form three sides of

NOTE.—I am indebted to the illustrator of this article, Mr. Thompson, for the suggestion of a very effective variation, viz., an automatic “mate.” The white pawn is in this case placed on Q Kt. 6, the white king on Q R 5, a white knight on Q 8, and a white bishop on K B 4. The black king is on his Q R square, as shown in Fig. 6.

The pawn, at command, advances one square, giving check. The black king has only one move (to R 2), which the performer accordingly makes for him. The pawn then advances another square, becoming a queen, and mates.



a square, a shade larger than the chessboard to be used; the open side of the square towards himself. That end of the thread, which, in use, will be at his left hand, is made into a knot, which knot forms the core of a pellet of good adhesive wax. Any excess length of thread at the opposite end, to which is attached a little black metal ring, is taken up by forming it into a zigzag at the right-hand side of the table. Stuck into the table, at the points *a* and *b* in the diagrams, are two very small drawing-pins, blackened on top, or ordinary black-headed dress-pins, the thread

passing immediately outside of these. (Where the insertion of pins would injure the table, they may be stuck into the chessboard itself, or a couple of black shirt-studs, waxed on their under side, may be substituted for them.) To the lower edge of the performer's vest, at or near the centre, is sewn a lady's black dress-hook. At the proper moment the wax pellet is pressed against the base of the white pawn. The little ring before mentioned is slipped over the hook, and the slack of the thread taken up by moving aside to a convenient distance, under which conditions a very slight turn of the body to right or left will produce the desired amount of pull. When, by working the trick in this manner, the performer has once proved to the satisfaction of the spectators that his hands take no part in the operation, he may afterwards use them, discreetly, with impunity.

For the production of the second and third effects, the thread is slipped off the pin *a*, so that the pull thenceforth is directly towards *b*.

If the performer prefers, as he may do, to *sit* behind the table in exhibiting the trick, the arrangement of the thread will be somewhat different. In this case its non-waxed end should be attached (by means of a dress-hook or otherwise) to the inner seam of one or the other trouser-leg, and thence carried through a little ring (or the curled end of a black safety pin) attached in a corresponding position to the opposite leg. From this point the thread must travel up under the vest, and be brought out through the top button-hole, the wax pellet being pressed till needed for use against one of the lower buttons. The thread, arranged after this fashion, will not impede the movements of the performer in walking, while, when he takes his seat

behind the chessboard and draws it taut, the act of moving the knees little by little apart will give all the "pull" required, without any use of the hands.

If the performer is content to use ready-made patter, his oration may run somewhat as follows:—

"My next experiment, ladies and gentlemen, will be one in chessmerism. Perhaps you have never heard of chessmerism. In fact, I am pretty sure you never did, because it is a word of my own invention. What I am going to show you isn't exactly chess, and it isn't exactly mesmerism, but there's a little of both about it, so 'chessmerism' just hits the mark.

"You will remember that, some years ago, it was the fashion to try experiments with tables and chimney-pot hats, which were made to spin round and move about in a very surprising manner. The worst of it is that, if you teach your belongings to do that sort of thing, they get in the way of it, and there is always a risk that they may do it when you don't want them to. It isn't nice to find your hat begins spinning around when you are out with a young lady, or to meet your dining-table going up-stairs to the drawing-room. Nervous people don't like that sort of thing, but what I am going to show you wouldn't worry an infant.

"You will remember that when the table-turning business first began, the movements were put down to spirits, but the same sort of thing occurred even in strictly teetotal families, and finally, people came to the conclusion that they were due to animal magnetism. I dare say they were right, but, as Juliet, or somebody else, says, 'A rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet.' I call it chessmerism. *You* can call it what you like.

“I have here a perfectly ordinary chessboard and some perfectly ordinary chess-men. Anyone may examine them who likes. He won't find out anything, because there isn't anything to find out. If there was, I shouldn't make the offer. To begin with, I will place this pawn back here at the hinder part of the board, and compel it, by the force of my will (which is 40 horse-power, more or less), to move straight on, as pawns are usually moved, till it reaches the farther side of the board. According to chess rules, it would then become a queen; but I don't want a queen just yet, so I will put it back here in the middle of the board, and next to it I will put a pawn of the other colour. Now if this was part of a game at chess, whichever pawn had the move could take the other. We will suppose that white has the move, and I shall accordingly 'will' him to take the black one. You will notice that last time the pawn moved straight on. This time he moves 'slantindicularly,' pushing the black one away, and taking its place on the square which it occupied.

“Now, to give you a still further proof that these little pieces are not so wooden-headed as they look, I will put the pawn on this square, and the king up here in this corner, with the queen midway between them—so. We will suppose that the queen wants to send a message to the king. I shall order the pawn to go to her, receive the message, and then go on and deliver it. You will perceive that, after receiving it, he has to turn aside and start in quite a new direction. Now, pawn!

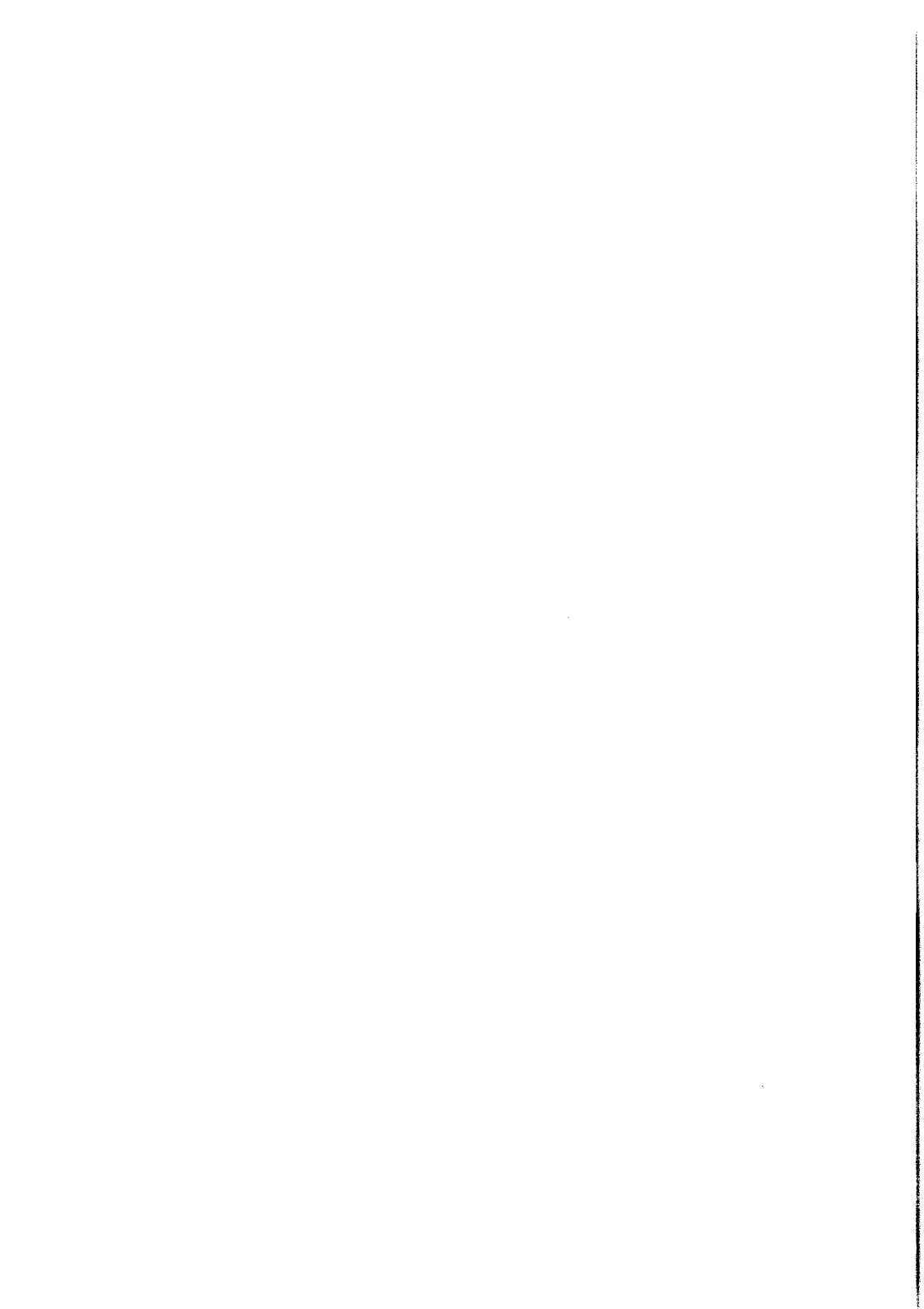
“Did you notice that the queen herself moved a little? She was getting impatient.” (This only to be said if the queen happens to shift a little.)

“I can't keep this up very long; the strain on the nervous system is too exhausting. So far, I have only been able to get satisfactory results with the pawns, which are light and active, and move about easily. Some day, however, I hope to make all the men do the same sort of thing, and then I shall be able to play a regular game at chess without touching the pieces. Meanwhile, we will proceed to something easier.”

PART III.

Stage Tricks.

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Stage Tricks.

THIS section of "Exclusive Magical Secrets" is intended primarily for those subscribers who are, or intend to be, on the vaudeville stage.

During the last few years magic has steadily grown in favour with the music-hall public, and almost every programme presented to them nowadays contains at least one magical item. As the result of this, a good stage magician is an important personage, commanding a high salary. Some of my subscribers are already good stage magicians, and are consequently enjoying those high salaries. Others are ambitious of joining the company, and for their benefit I preface this section with some words of advice.

Some performers on the vaudeville stage make the great mistake of presenting the same programme year in and year out. It goes very well on a first visit to a particular music hall. It is a novelty to the audience, and they and the manager appreciate it accordingly. But when, on his return date, the performer presents it again, it is no longer a novelty. The audience and the manager know just what is coming, and feel that they are not being quite fairly treated. There is good reason for this feeling. A stage magician should never stereotype his act. I do not suggest that he should at any time change it completely. That would be a very risky thing to do, for he would be giving up a certainty for a possibility. What I do suggest is that

he should be constantly making small changes in it. He should work on the general principle of cutting the weakest items, and endeavouring to substitute for them new strong ones. As a rule he can judge for himself which are the weakest items by watching the audience during his performance, and noting how their applause is distributed. But he should not rely entirely on that. Several stage magicians of my acquaintance are in the habit, when their turn is over, of mixing with their audiences, and getting opinions from them as to the respective merits of the items comprising their act. This is a good plan, especially when the magician is able to preserve his incognito, and thus to get perfectly free and honest criticisms.

Other performers spoil their acts by dressing them badly. I have seen some most excellent magical shows which failed with the public solely on this account. A magical act ought always to please the eye—that is to say, it should be a picture or a series of pictures. The performer should take care that he is supplied at every hall with appropriate scenery. I once saw a man give a show with a view of Trafalgar Square as the background. Not a single item in his programme had anything at all to do with Trafalgar Square, and the effect was absurd. For the ordinary stage magical act, the scenery should always be an interior, and as a rule a good drawing-room set looks best from the front. Another important factor is the choice of assistants. They ought not only to understand their business thoroughly, but also to look well and move gracefully. Awkward or badly trained assistants will discount the efforts of the most skilful performer. Another useful piece of advice occurs to me. Performers should not cumber the stage with boxes, cabinets, tables, etc., which look as if they form part of the furniture

of the show, but are not actually used in it. Audiences expect something to happen in connection with them, and are disappointed when the curtain goes down without anything in fact having happened.

The stage magician should make a point of studying his different audiences, and of adapting his show to their special requirements. The most successful performers of my acquaintance do this. For instance, if they are appearing at a town in the Cotton District, they will introduce a trick involving the use of reels of cotton, and will accompany it with various local allusions. Again, if they are working in the Potteries, they will give a trick with china vases, and will adapt their patter to it. Of course, there is a danger of overdoing this sort of thing, but a performer with experience, and with a finger, so to speak, on the pulse of his audience, knows just how far to go. As I have just pointed out, tricks may be localised. It is also possible to topicalise them. An old trick can be brought up to date and made very successful by introducing it with reference to some current event, and by making it appear to some extent to turn on that event.

Much that I said as to patter in introducing the drawing-room tricks section of this book, applies equally well to performances on the vaudeville stage. There is, however, a certain difference between the patter suitable for the drawing-room and that suitable for the stage. The latter should be broader and more direct than the former. In the drawing-room there is time to wait for a laugh and to hammer a point in. On the stage there is no time for that. The performer either gets his laugh at once or misses it altogether. Many very successful magicians give a silent show. Some do so because they are not good at patter, but

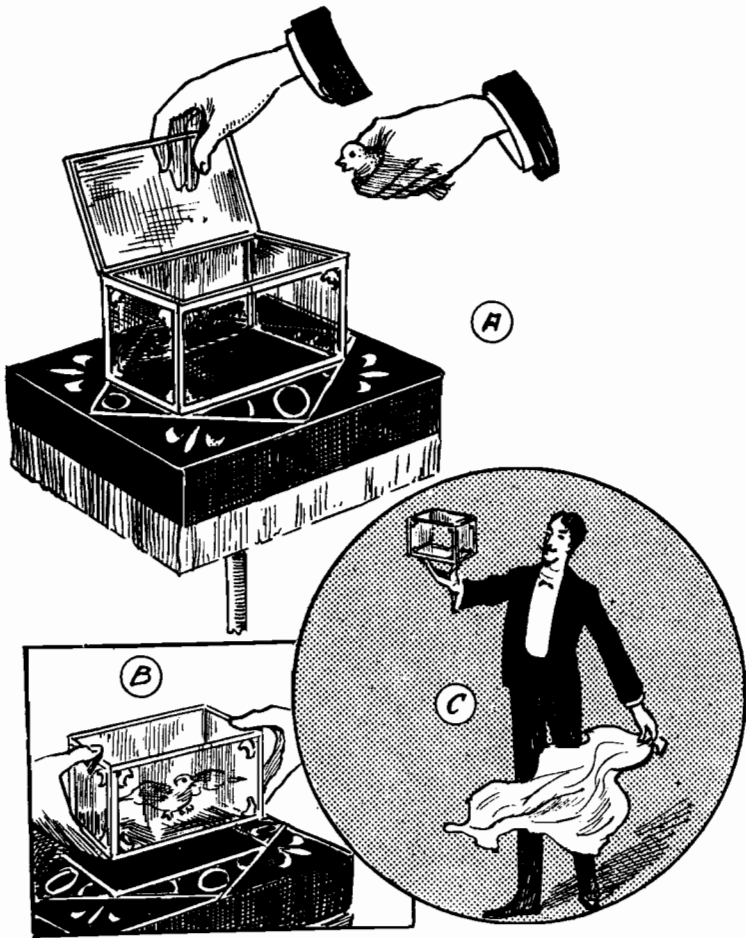
others simply because they think their act goes best without talk. There is much to be said in favour of both the silent show and the other sort. The average audience seems equally pleased so long as the performance is a good one. I may as well, however, offer some concluding advice to those of my subscribers who give silent shows. They should accompany their performances with as much appropriate action as possible. Their movements should always be graceful, and should be obviously concerned with the performance of their tricks. Never in any circumstances should they turn their backs on the audience. That last piece of advice is applicable to all magicians. If a performer turns his back, the audience always suspects he has done so in order to help him out of a difficulty.

The "W.G." Glass Casket.

Of all the tricks performed by magicians, none are more popular with any audience than those in which live animals take a part. Unfortunately, the number of these tricks is comparatively small, and therefore they have become hackneyed. People have learned from experience what to expect when they see a conjurer engaged in an object-lesson in cookery, or in a demonstration of the fact that if he pours water into an empty tub—it stays there. They know that the wizard's saucepans or frying pans will shortly be found filled with live animals of some kind, and that the pond which the conjurer has made in the tub will soon be tenanted—if a pond can thus be described—by live ducks. I think it will be generally admitted, therefore, that a trick in which a live animal appears, and in which that animal performs a really mysterious feat on its own account, must be an uncommonly good trick. I claim all this for the trick I am about to explain, and I do so because not only did I invent the trick myself, but I have had the pleasure of seeing more than one expert conjurer make the "hit of the evening" with this puzzling little illusion.

The conjurer comes forward with a small glass box, fitted with a lid. The sides, top, and bottom are all of glass, and it can be freely exhibited in such a way that anyone who knows something of a "mirror glass" will at once be convinced that no such secret is employed in the making of this piece of apparatus.

Having shown the box, the conjurer takes a small bird from a cage, places it in the box, and closes the lid. He then puts the box on the table, and covers it with a large



handkerchief. If he has a fondness for pseudo-scientific patter, he can then indulge in a few observations on the great strides that have recently been made in the study of the occult, and he can boldly state that it is now possible

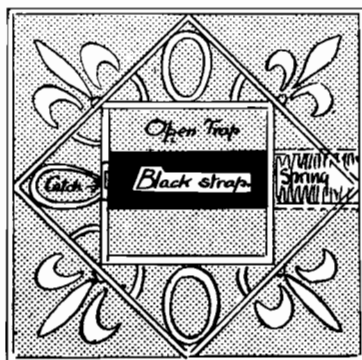
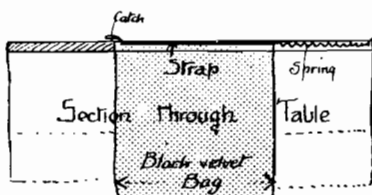
to dematerialise animals just as easily as it is possible to perform the same operation on a human being. All that is necessary in this work is to believe that the thing really happens, whether it does happen or whether it doesn't, because "when once you are convinced that a thing has happened, it does not matter very much whether it has happened or whether you merely think it has happened," and so on. Finally, the conjurer whips off the handkerchief from the glass box, and shows that the bird has disappeared. The performer then picks up the box and shows that it contains—nothing. There is not room for any mirror contrivance by which a bird could be hid. Of course, no good conjurer would dream of mentioning the word "mirror," but there may be some among his audience who have that popular idea that most good tricks are performed by means of looking-glasses. Therefore, the good conjurer, without saying anything about that theory, takes good care to dispose of it so far as this trick is concerned.

The secret of this telling illusion is simple, but the fact that the bird apparently disappears of its own accord, without any assistance from its owner, makes the thing quite inexplicable, even to those who know something of the art of magic.

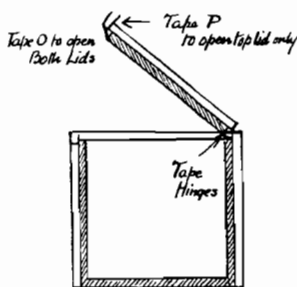
The glass box is in reality composed of two boxes, one inside the other. The outer box has no bottom, but both boxes have lids. When the conjurer begins the trick, he opens both lids at once. He is able to do this easily by means of a small tab of tape. The bird is really placed in the inner box, and the lids, which appear to the audience to be but one lid, are shut down. It will be fairly obvious then, that if the box is then placed over a trap on the table, and the trap is opened, the inner box, containing the bird,

will slide down, leaving the outer box on the table. The trap is fitted with a black velvet bag, so that the box makes no noise in its descent.

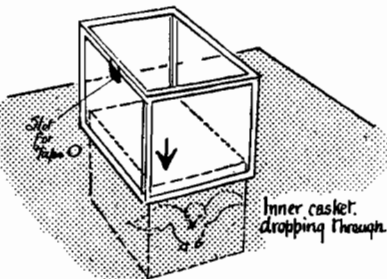
Before the performance commences, the trap in the table is partly covered with a broad black strap. Without this the inner box would slide away out of sight directly the apparatus was placed on the table. This strap is fitted with a small spring and a catch. The performer releases the catch when the box is covered, and the spring takes away the strap, leaving the trap open for the reception of the inner box. The illustrations will show the working of the whole illusion, and I may add that the trick is especially liked by lovers of animals, because it is quite impossible for the bird



Plan of Table



Section through Castles

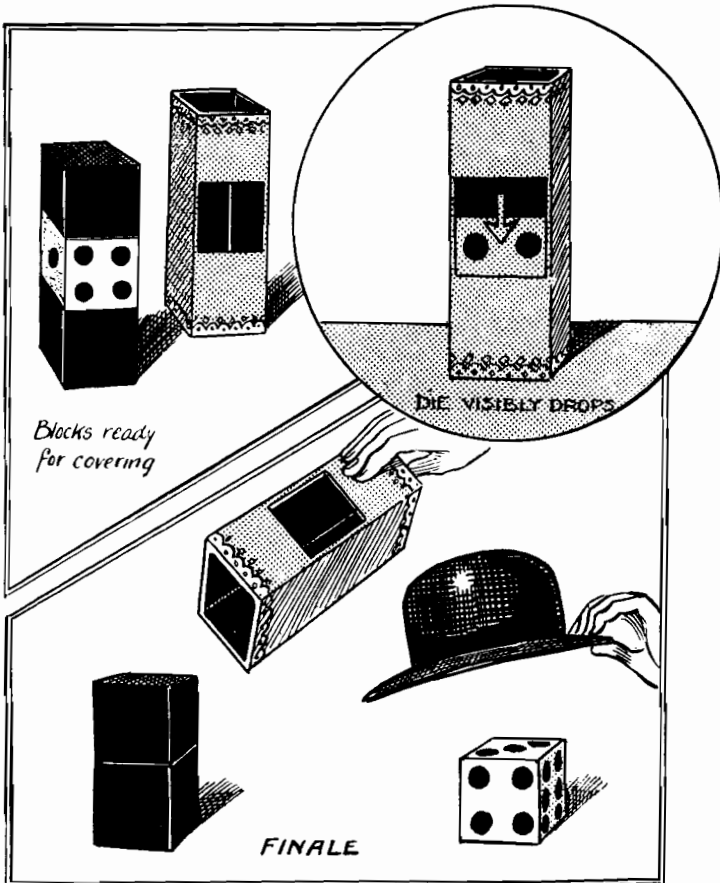


Inner casket dropping through

to be injured or to suffer the slightest inconvenience during the whole of the performance.

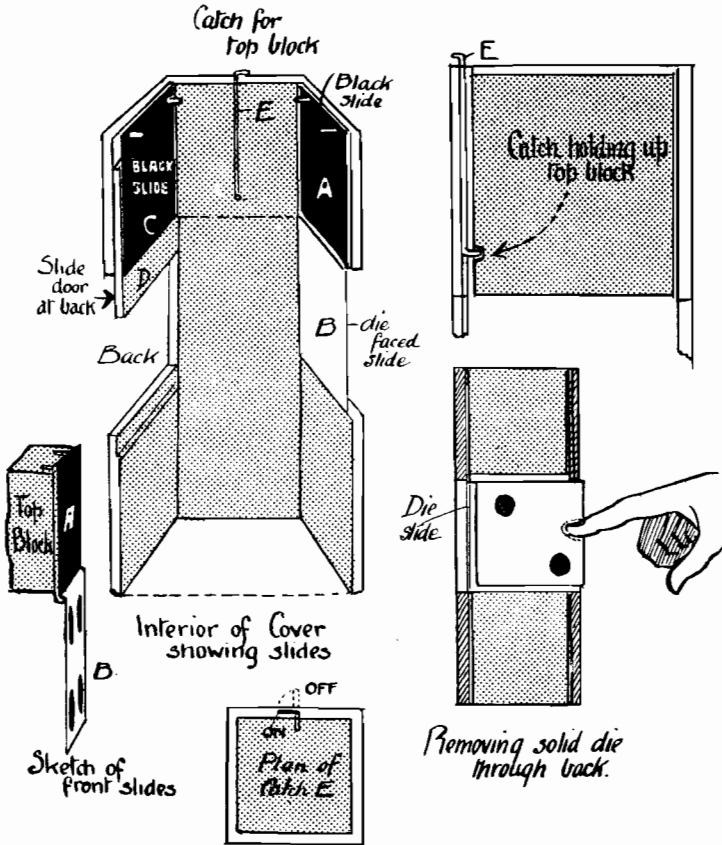
The Travelling Die.

The charm of this trick lies in the fact that it can be followed quite easily by the youngest member of the



audience, even though the performer does not say a word. Yet it is sufficiently mystifying to puzzle the adult members of the audience.

Two black cubes and a white die of a similar size are the principal articles used in the trick—from the point of view of the audience. The white die has black spots on it. The conjurer also shows a cover for the cubes and the die, and a hat. The latter may be borrowed.



Having stacked up the cubes and die, with the latter in the centre, the conjurer places the cover over them. The centre of the front of the cover is cut away, so that the audience can see the white die. The conjurer then places the hat on the table, and holds the cover with the die and cubes over it. Suddenly the audience see the die dropping in some mysterious way; simultaneously, the black cube above it also falls. Lifting the cover, the conjurer shows that the white die has gone, and, going to the hat, he turns it over and produces the die.

The cover is cleverly faked for the trick. The back has a secret opening (covered at first by a slide), through which the conjurer can get the die (see illustration). To hide the fact that the die has gone (after the conjurer has got it into the hat), the cover is fitted with a front slide similar to the face of the die. The cover is also fitted with a catch to hold up the top cube until the conjurer wishes it to fall. The slide is then made to fall to the bottom of the cover, and its place is taken by the top cube. The illustrations make everything quite clear.

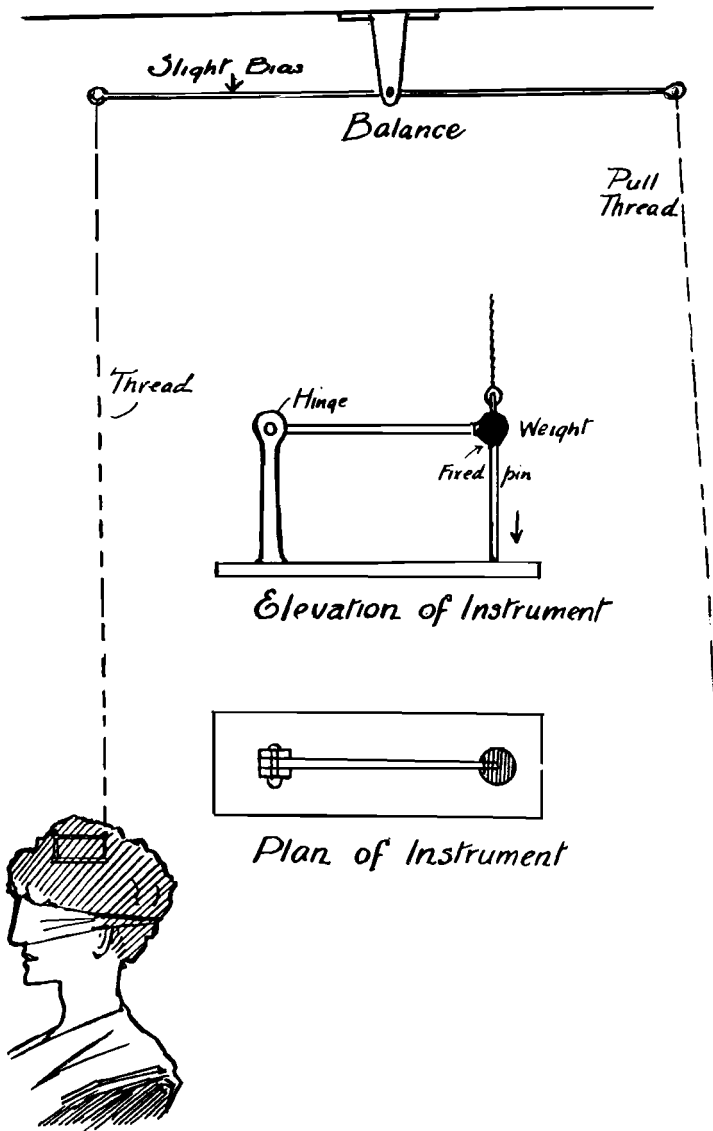
Silent Thought Transmission.

Nothing could be simpler than the method, presently to be explained, by which the performer conveys his thoughts to his blindfolded assistant seated on the stage. When performed in this way, the thought-reading experiment has all the appearance of a miracle, for there does not appear to be any means of communication between the performer and his assistant.

And yet there is one weak point in this method. There is, of course, a weak point in every trick, but in many magical experiments the skill of the performer can cover up the weak part of what he is doing. In this case no skill can conceal the defect if a member of the audience is sharp enough to detect it. However, this is seldom likely to happen. The average audience will be as impressed with the trick performed in this way as they would be if it were done by means of the most complicated method that has ever been invented.



In the present instance the performer goes down among his audience and borrows cheques, bank-notes, etc., and also asks members of the audience to write messages on pieces of paper. He takes the cheques, notes, and pieces of paper, and holds them up before his eyes, and simultaneously his blindfolded assistant seated on the stage



announces the numbers of the cheques and bank-notes, and reads the messages on the pieces of paper.

From the time that the performance is commenced until the end, neither the performer nor his assistant makes any sound. The performer makes no sign of any kind, and the bandage over the assistant's eyes is merely an ordinary handkerchief. If desired, the assistant's eyes may have pads of cotton wool placed over them before the handkerchief is tied.

Now glance at the second illustration, and the explanation of this seeming miracle will seem absurdly simple. A thin balance is erected in the flies. This has a thread attached to it. One end of the thread is so arranged that another assistant in the wings can easily manipulate it. The other end of the thread is attached to a little instrument which is concealed in the hair of the blindfolded assistant on the stage. This instrument, it will be seen, is merely a small piece of flat metal, with two pins or uprights of metal and a cross-bar. The cross-bar is hinged to one of the pins. At the other end of the bar there is a small weight, and to this weight the thread is attached. When the thread is pulled up a little way and then released, the weight drops on the second pin, and the assistant hears the noise.

The assistant in the wings is provided with a pair of strong field-glasses, and through a small hole in the proscenium he is able to read the numbers on the notes and cheques and the messages. He then communicates with the blindfolded assistant by means of the thread. By using the Morse code he is able to tell her every figure and word that he reads with the glasses.

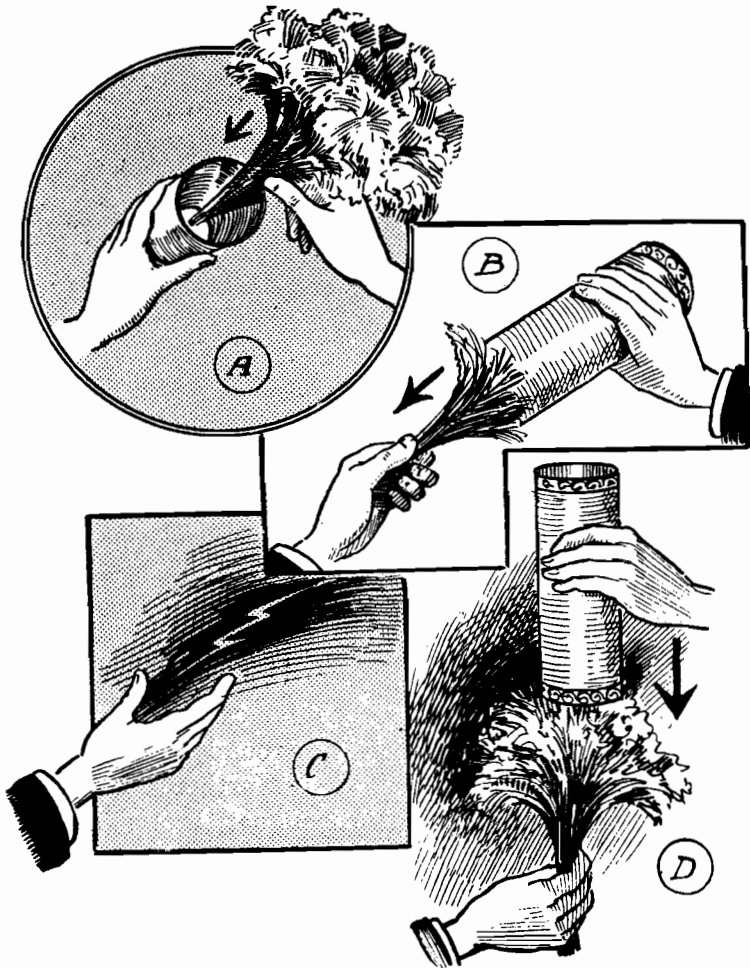
The Plume and the Tube.

It has been said that even the best of conjuring tricks has one weak point in it. This must be true, otherwise the trick would seem to be a miracle, and this is an effect which no trick ever has on a conjurer or on any adult who thinks for himself. The conjurer will get a clue as to how it is done, even though he may not be in the know entirely, and the thinking adult remembers that the age of miracles is past, and realises that the trick is, after all, only a trick.

The "weak point" theory came into my mind as I took up the illustrations to this trick, for I feel sure that the weak point in this trick is more apparent to the reader than it is ever likely to be to anyone who sees the trick well performed. The "weak point" will be obvious to the expert reader, but when he comes to put this lesson to good use he will find that he has obtained a very effective trick.

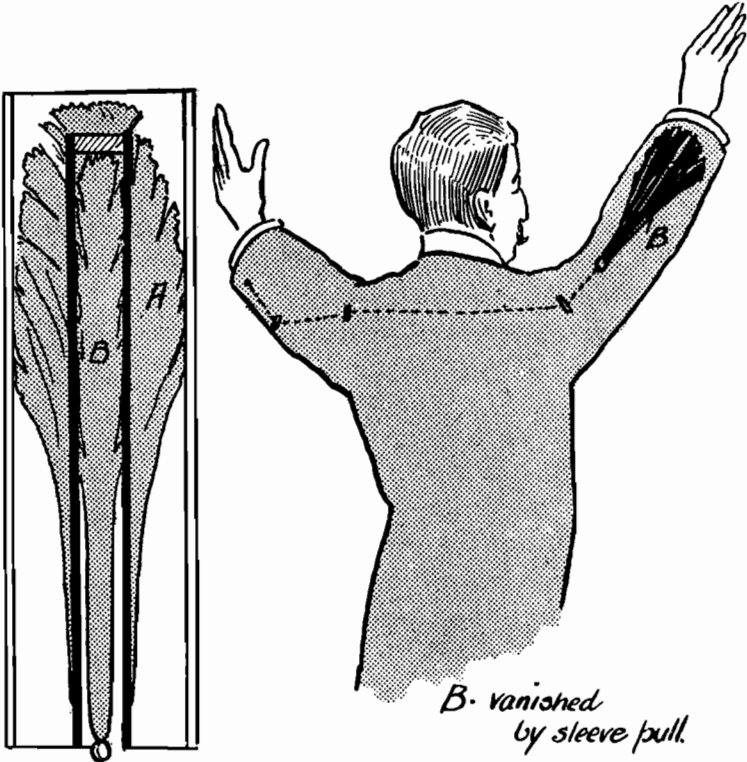
The only two articles used in the trick are a large plume or artificial bouquet and a tube of cardboard. The latter is quite unprepared, and the conjurer can rattle his wand in it to prove that it is "merely a round hole covered in with a cylinder of cardboard." In further proof of this statement the conjurer drops the bouquet through the tube, and then puts the tube on his table. He then holds the bouquet in his right hand, and makes a throwing motion with it. The bouquet immediately vanishes, and when the conjurer goes to the tube he shakes the bouquet from it.

The "weak point" to which I have referred is the dropping of the bouquet through the tube. Without this move the trick could not be done, and therefore it is up to the conjurer to make this move quite natural. The bouquet should be dropped through the tube carelessly. As a



matter of fact, all the bouquet does not drop through the tube. The bouquet is of a special kind, hollow in the centre. The hollow space is filled up at the commencement of the trick with another bouquet, and therefore the bouquet which the audience sees is a double one (see illustration).

The first part of the trick is now clear. When the bouquet is apparently dropped through the tube the outer bouquet is allowed to remain there, and the conjurer draws out the inner bouquet. The audience, suspecting nothing, see "a" bouquet pulled through the tube, and are led to think that only one bouquet is used. The end of the "inner" bouquet may be fitted with a small hook, so that it can easily



*Section through Tube
and double bouquet*

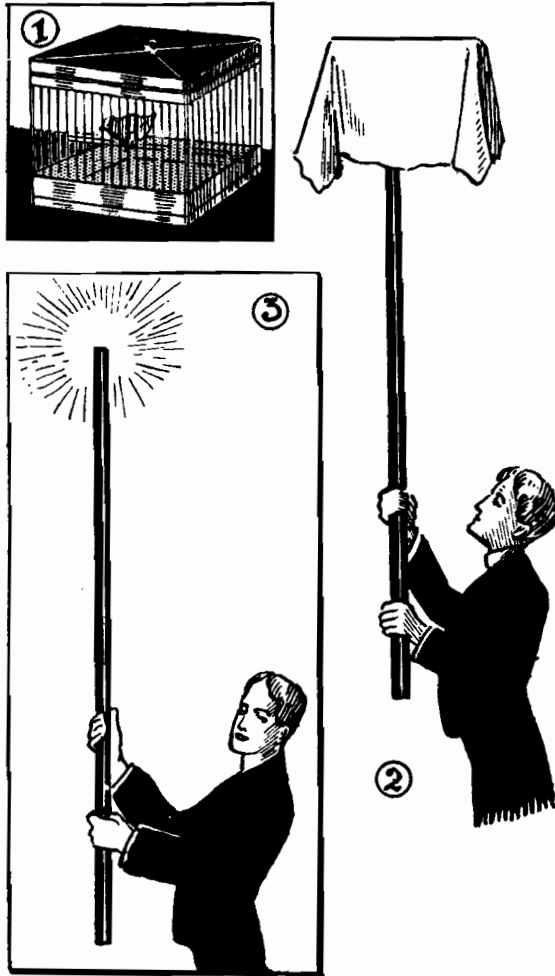
be fastened on to the end of a strong pull in the performer's sleeves. The end of this pull should be brought nearly to the end of the performer's sleeve. The length of the pull must be so arranged that when the arms are bent the cord of the pull is slack, but when the arms are extended the pull draws the bouquet up the sleeve and so out of sight. A piece of stout whipcord is an excellent thing for this pull.

A Bird Cage Illusion.

The conjurer has a small bird cage, containing a dummy bird. The cage is placed on the table and covered with a small cloth. The conjurer then places the cage, still covered by the cloth, on the top of a short pole, and holds it high in the air and well away from any "prop" or piece of scenery. He holds it aloft for a few seconds, and then gives the pole a slight shake, and in a second the bird cage, containing the bird, and the cloth have entirely disappeared.

The top of the cage is covered with the same material as that on the table, and on the top of the cage there is a simple wire fake made of two metal bars at right-angles with a small hook in the centre. Under the hook there is a small ring, and the fake is so made that it can be closed up like an umbrella (see illustration).

When the conjurer puts the cage on his table for a second or two, he holds the top of it—the fake—and allows the actual cage to fall into a trap on the table. The cage collapses as it falls, and as the top of it is similar to the top of the table, the cage is not seen. It is therefore only the fake which the conjurer covers with a handkerchief or cloth, and his only care in this part of the trick is to make sure that there are no draughts on the stage. If there are,



the handkerchief may blow on one side, and so reveal the fact that the cage is no longer there.

The pole used by the conjurer is hollow, and its interior is fitted with a strong spring. Before the commencement

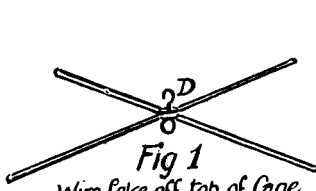


Fig 1
Wire feke off top of Cage

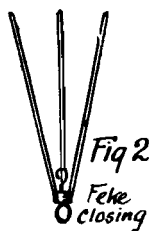


Fig 2
Feke closing

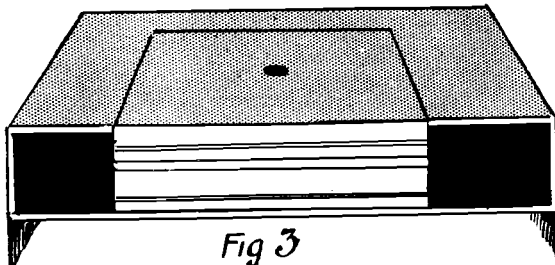
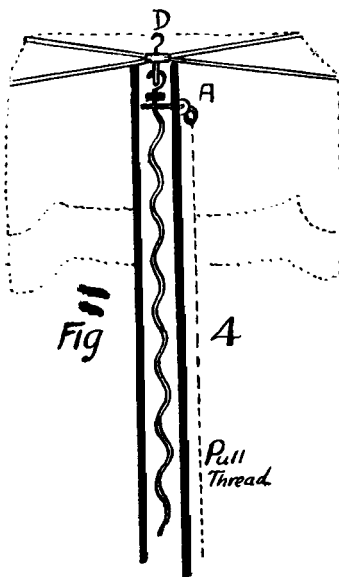


Fig 3



Fig

Fig

5

of the trick this spring is drawn out to its full capacity, and is held in its place by a small pin passing through the end. This pin has a piece of thread attached to it, and during the trick this thread hangs down within easy reach of the performer's hand. The end of the spring has a large hook attached to it, and thus, when the performer places the covered fake on the pole, he is able to get the ring on the under side of the fake into the hook in the pole. The handkerchief is fastened to the fake with a small clip.

To cause the disappearance of the "cage," all that the conjurer has to do is to pull the thread. This takes out the pin passed through the end of the spring, and the spring drags the fake and handkerchief into the pole, thus effecting the mysterious disappearance of a bird cage with a bird inside it.

The Animated Sketch.

Invented by MONTAGUE ALBERT.

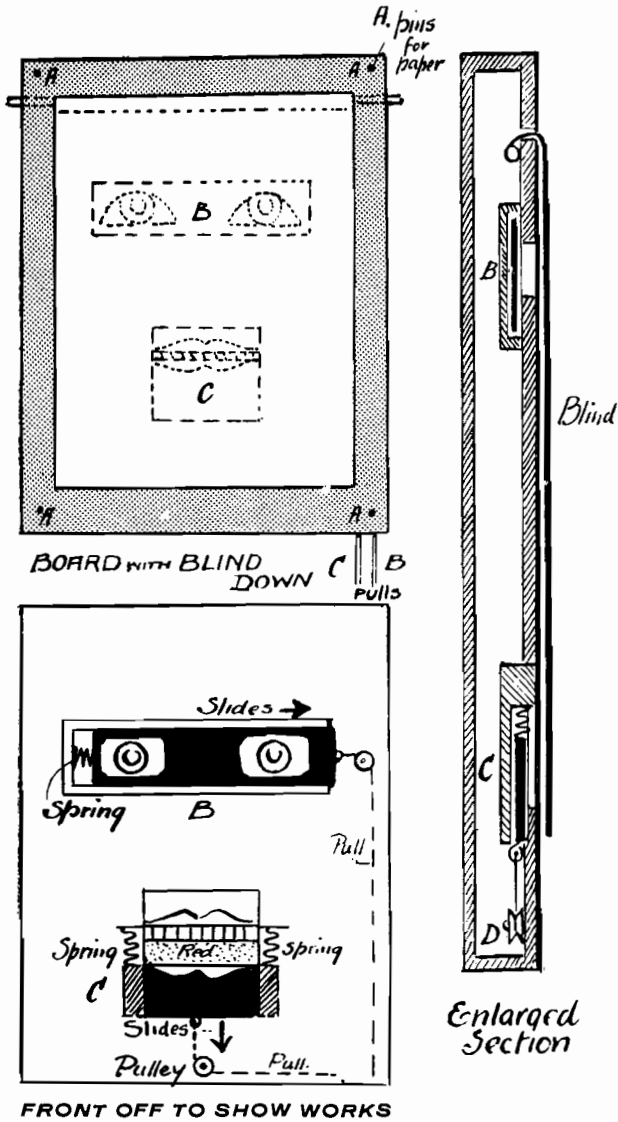
The conjurer should show this little illusion more as an amusing joke than as a complete trick, for it can hardly be considered to be either an illusion or a trick; it may, perhaps, be described as a trick "effect."

Having pinned a piece of white paper on a board, and placed the board on an easel, the conjurer draws a rough sketch of a lady's head. Then he applies a lighted taper to the eyes and mouth of the sketch, and the paper smoulders away at these parts. The eyes and mouth then move in a mysterious way, as though the sketch really was animated.

The board is first prepared by having a blind drawn over the top of it. Underneath the blind are a pair of mechanical eyes and a mechanical mouth. These are fitted with springs



Head is animated



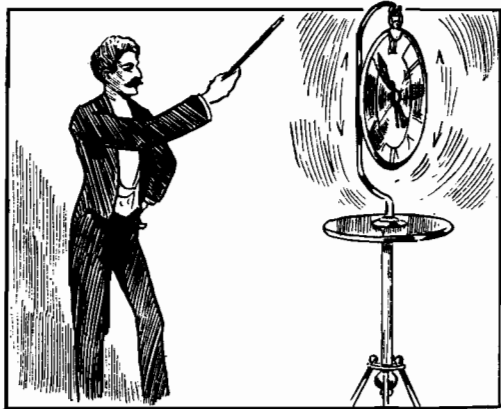
and two threads, so that when the threads are pulled the lower lip and the eyes appear to move. After each pull the springs carry the contrivance back again ready for the next pull. The working of the apparatus is clearly shown in the accompanying diagrams. The threads are carried down the legs of the easel and under the stage.

The paper on which the sketch is drawn is prepared in the necessary parts with a little saltpetre, which makes the paper smoulder away when a light is applied to it.

Two New Clock Tricks.

Two clock tricks in which a weighted hand is not used and the services of an assistant are not required will, I am sure, be welcome to all my readers.

The first method was invented by Roltare, a well-known American magician. The clock—which, of course, is the



usual glass face of a clock—is hung upon a small stand placed upon a glass-topped table.

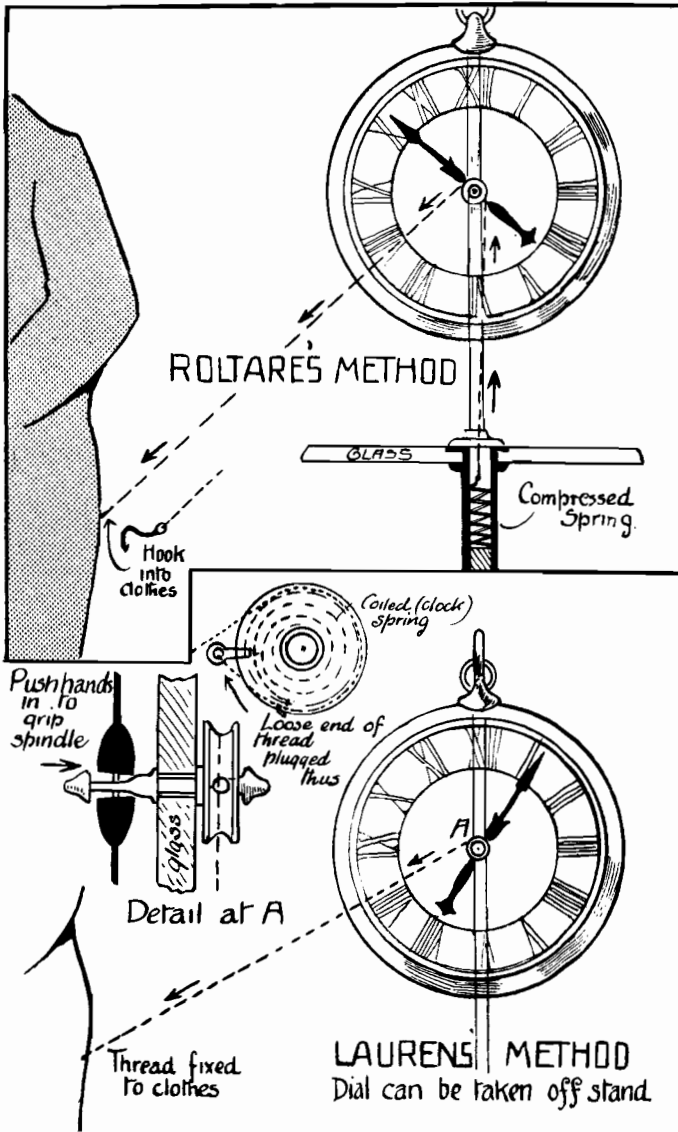
The effect of the trick is simple enough. The conjurer begins by asking the clock questions, and arranges with the audience that when the clock points to the right the “spirits” mean the answer to be “Yes,” and that when the hand goes round to the left the answer is “No.” Afterwards the hand can be made to tell the day of the week, the name of a chosen card, the correct time, etc., and, finally, the hand may be made to travel to any number desired by the audience.

In the centre leg of the table is a weak spring. A thread is attached to this, carried up behind the stand on which the dial rests, and over the spindle. A small hook is fastened to the end of the thread, and when the conjurer is ready to perform the trick, all he has to do is to hook the thread to his trousers. Then, if he steps away from the clock he draws out the thread, and this turns the spindle on which the hand is placed. By advancing to the stand or stepping away from it the conjurer can make the hand go to the required place, for the spring draws in the thread when the conjurer goes near the table.

The second method is somewhat similar, but has advantages which the first does not possess. It is the invention of Mr. Laurens, another American conjurer.

In this method the spring is concealed in the spindle of the clock. It is merely an ordinary clock spring coiled up. The thread is permanently fixed to the conjurer's clothes, and he attaches it to the clock at the last minute.

The special advantages of this method are that the clock can first be handed round for examination, and the hands can be swung round. When the conjurer has replaced the

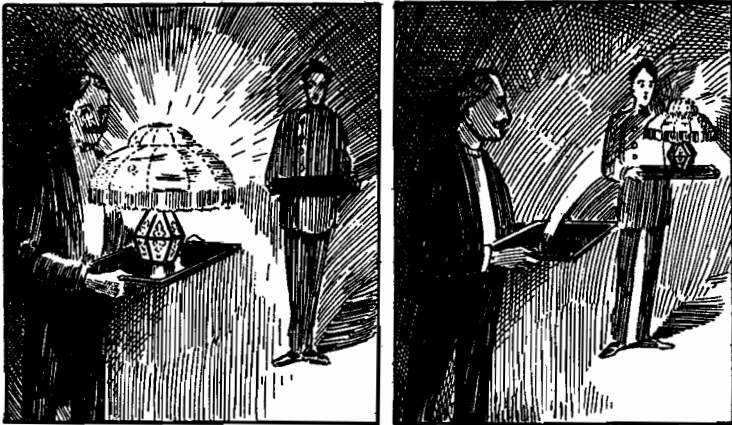


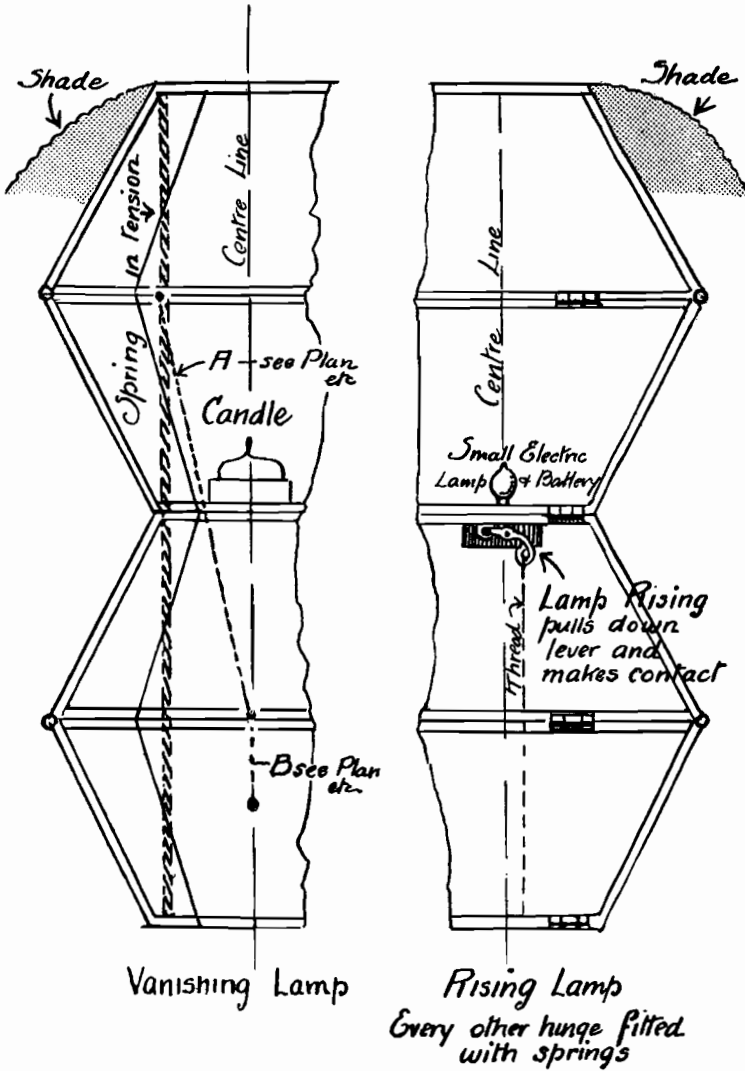
clock on the stand, all he has to do is to attach the thread to the coiled spring in the spindle or pulley, and push the hand inwards until it grips the spindle. The dial is then set ready for the trick, and the performer merely steps away from it or moves towards it to make the hand travel to the number desired. Both these methods of working the "clock dial" have the merit of being extremely simple and yet quite certain.

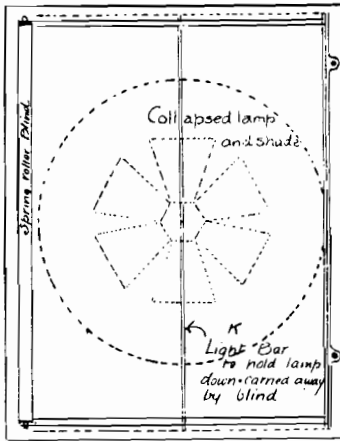
The Flying Lamp.

Any conjurer who is seeking for a trick which is brief and brilliant, short and surprising, safe and sensational (one could easily pile on the adjectives, for the trick is worthy of all of them), should make a note of this Flying Lamp. I have no doubt of what the opinion of every performer will be when he reads of this trick.

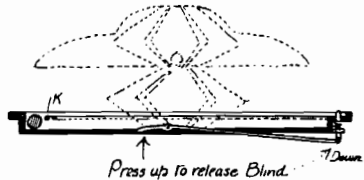
The conjurer walks on the stage bearing a lighted lamp on a tray. His assistant stands behind him bearing an



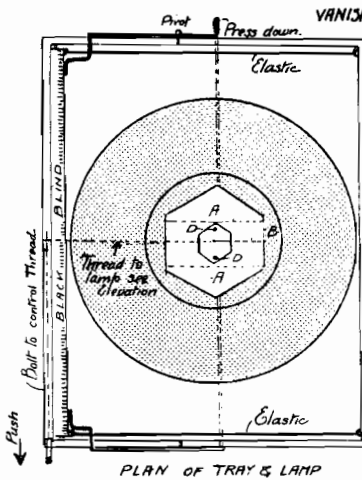




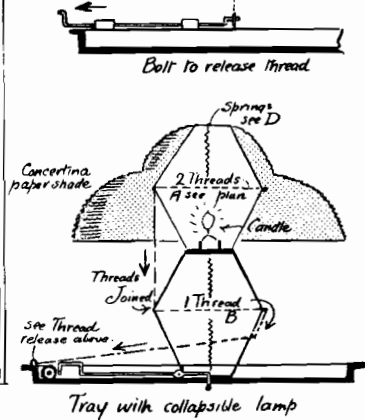
ARRANGEMENT AND DETAILS OF
RISING LAMP AND TRAY



Section showing Blind released
and lamp rising



VANISHING LAMP - GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
OF WORKING PARTS



empty tray. Suddenly the conjurer gives a slight shake to his tray, and instantaneously the lighted lamp upon it disappears, and is seen, still alight, on the tray of the assistant.

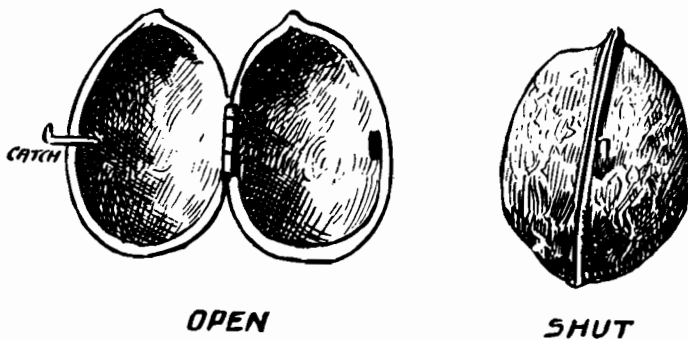
The effect is so sudden that the audience are almost made to believe that they see the lamp in its passage from one tray to the other. I need scarcely tell my readers that there are really two lamps.

It will be as well to regard the lamps separately. The first one—the lamp that vanishes—is made up of two “bowls,” which are really wire frames covered with paper. At the commencement of the trick the “bowls” are opened, and they are kept from collapsing by two weak springs in the centre. In the wire frame between the two “bowls” is a small piece of lighted candle. A stout thread is attached to the top “bowl,” passed through the centre of the second one, and is carried off to one side of the tray.

A reference to the illustrations on the previous page will show how the other lamp is made to rise on the tray.

Bertram's Walnut Trick.

A capital trick for a stop-gap is the following, which will always be associated with the name of the late Charles Bertram.



The conjurer borrows a sixpence, has it marked, and wraps it in a piece of paper. Going to a dish of walnuts, the conjurer takes up a few in his hand, and asks someone to choose one of the number. This particular nut is put on one side. The conjurer lights the paper containing the coin, and it disappears, with the coin, in a flash. Picking up a pair of nut-crackers, the conjurer breaks open the nut which has been set aside, and finds the missing sixpence, which the owner at once identifies as his property.

There are, of course, numerous ways in which part of this trick can be performed. If presented in the manner I have described, the conjurer conceals a sixpence of his own in his hand, and, when he is about to wrap the borrowed sixpence in the paper, substitutes his own sixpence and keeps the borrowed one in his hand. When he goes to the dish of walnuts he slips this sixpence into two "shells" made of thin copper and painted to resemble a walnut. These shells are hinged together, and they should have a small piece of nut inside them. When the conjurer has put the borrowed sixpence inside the "shells" he closes them, and they are kept closed by means of a small catch. In taking up the walnut chosen by a member of the audience the conjurer changes it for the faked nut, and then pretends to crack this—after he has burned the paper containing the other sixpence. I need scarcely say that this sixpence was really hidden in a fold of the paper—the usual trick fold—and that when the conjurer had contrived to let the sixpence slip from the paper into his hand, he put his hand in his pocket to get a match and left the sixpence behind in the pocket.

The Lemon and Bank Notes.

Many attempts have been made to get at the real secret of this very showy trick, but the one I made on behalf of the readers of this book was, I believe, the first successful one.

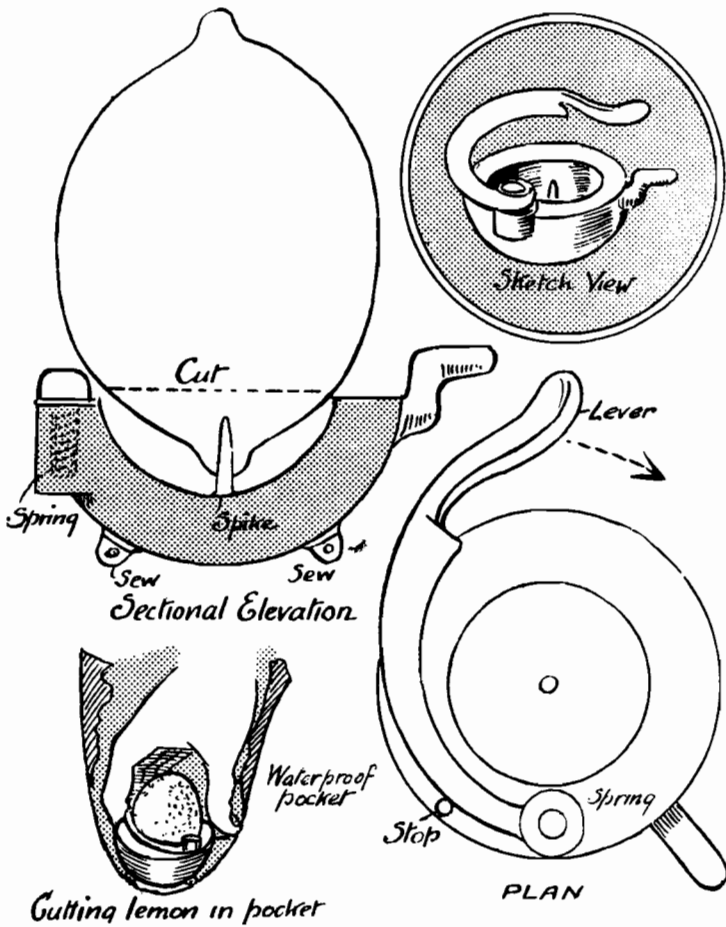
The trick is most effective because of its apparent simplicity. The conjurer borrows two or three bank notes, and asks the lenders to take notes of the numbers. If any difficulty is experienced in this part of the performance, the conjurer can distribute some small slips of paper and ask the audience to write their names on them.

The conjurer then takes a lemon, which has previously been examined, and holds it up for inspection. He places the papers or bank notes in a handkerchief, and gives them to a member of the audience to hold. He then picks up the lemon, and, taking the handkerchief, strokes the lemon for a moment with it. Then he suddenly flicks away the handkerchief, and shows that the notes and papers have disappeared. Taking a knife, he cuts open the lemon, and the notes or papers are discovered in its centre.

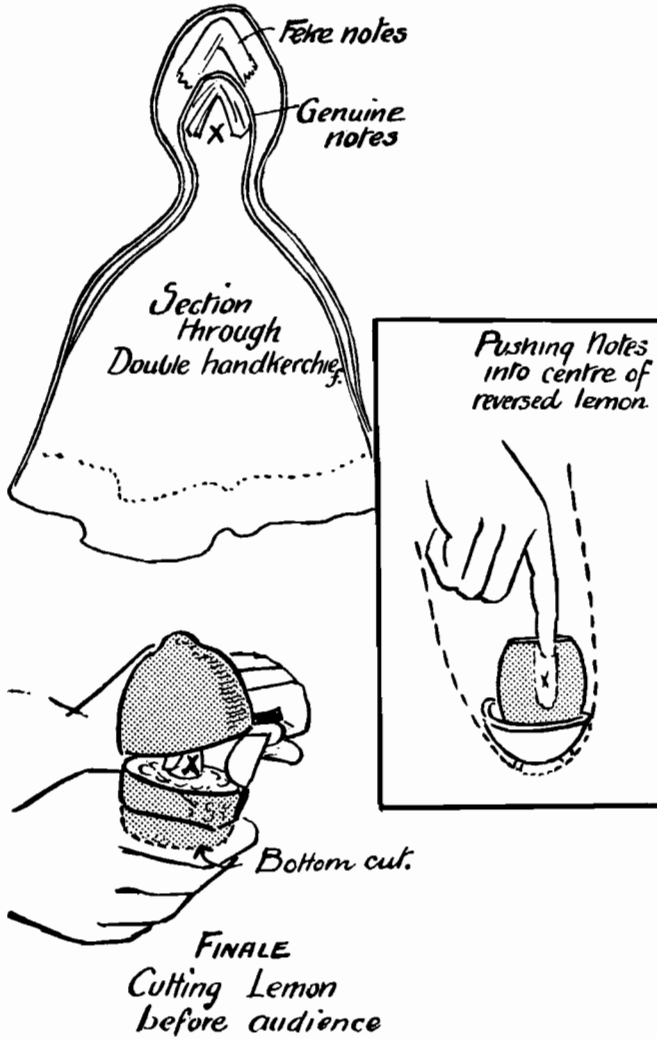
So much for the effect of the trick on the audience, but I need not tell my readers that the audience do not see all that they think they see. This is what really happens.

Having shown the lemon, the conjurer places it in his trousers pocket for a moment while he is collecting the bank notes or papers. When he has obtained all that he requires, he folds them up into a narrow strip, and takes out his handkerchief. This handkerchief is a double one, and a few pieces of stout paper are sewn into the centre of it. In placing the papers under the handkerchief, the





conjuror really palms them, and gives the pieces which are sewn into the handkerchief for a member of the audience to hold. The conjuror then places his hand in his pocket to get at the lemon. Before he has arrived at this stage of



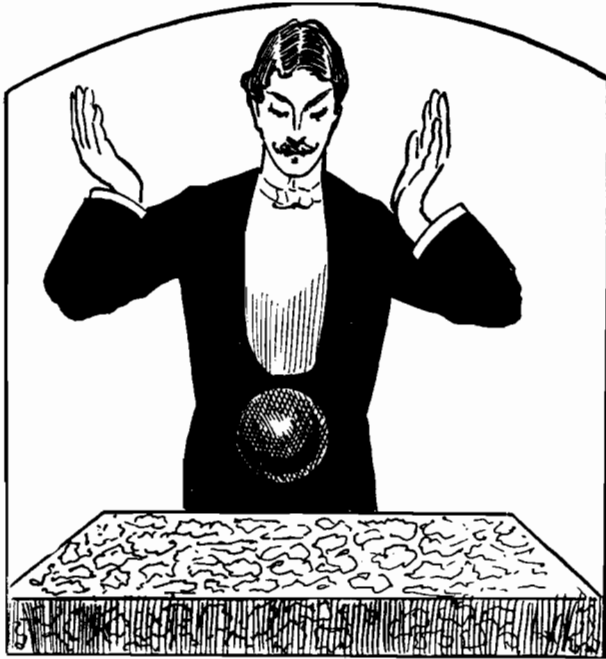
the trick, however, the conjurer, using a small piece of apparatus in his pocket, has cut the end off the lemon. He quickly stuffs the papers into the lemon, and then takes out the lemon and the piece which has been cut off, and shows them together as the one original lemon. He then cuts the lemon, but takes care that the knife passes round the cut already made—that is to say, the knife does not really cut the lemon, but merely divides it at the part where it has been cut. All that remains to be done is to take out the pieces of paper, and if any inquisitive person wishes to inspect the lemon, he is at liberty to do so.

The small piece of apparatus referred to is a small “cutter.” The construction of the thing is clearly shown in the illustrations. At the base of a small metal cup is a spike, into which the lemon is forced, so that it may be held securely while it is being cut. A semi-circular blade is then brought round to behead the lemon, which is then reversed in the pocket, so that it may be ready, in position, for the reception of the papers. Directly the papers have been stuffed into it, the conjurer takes the small piece that has been cut off and holds it on the top of the other, and brings them out together as one lemon.

The trousers' pocket in which the lemon cutter is placed should be lined with rubber, so that none of the juice of the lemon can escape.

The Dissolving Ball.

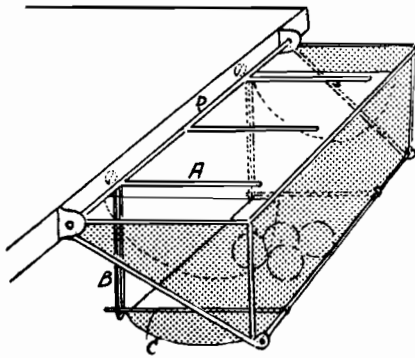
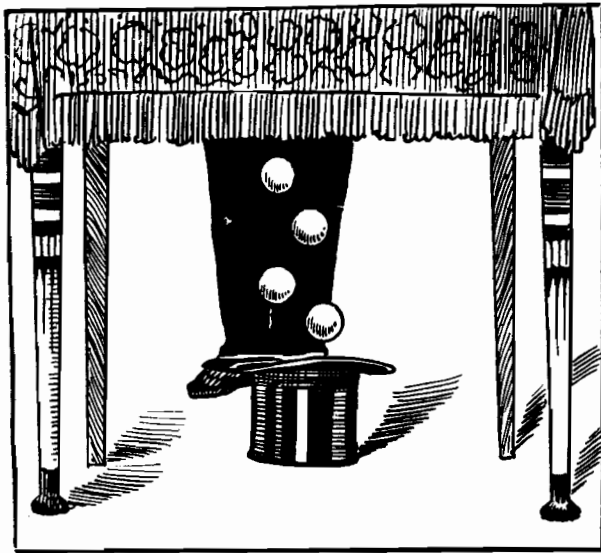
This is one of the many inventions of Mr. Chris Van Bern, a conjurer who seems to delight in thinking of fresh effects. “The Dissolving Ball,” as I have named the little



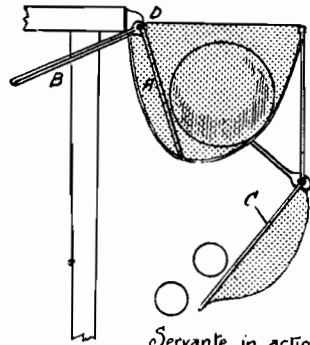
experiment, is not intended to be shown as an important item in the programme, but should be introduced as a little "interval filler"—short, sharp, and surprising.

The conjurer takes a large solid ball, and tosses it about the stage to prove that it is really solid. Finally the conjurer lets the ball drop behind his table, when, to the surprise of the audience, it does not reach the ground, its place being taken by a number of much smaller balls, also solid.

The small balls are concealed in a specially constructed servante at the back of the table. This servante is so made that it easily catches the large ball when it is dropped, and



Servante at Rest



Servante in action

the weight of the ball releases a catch, which allows the smaller balls to fall on the floor of the stage. The construction of this servante is plainly shown in the accompanying diagrams.

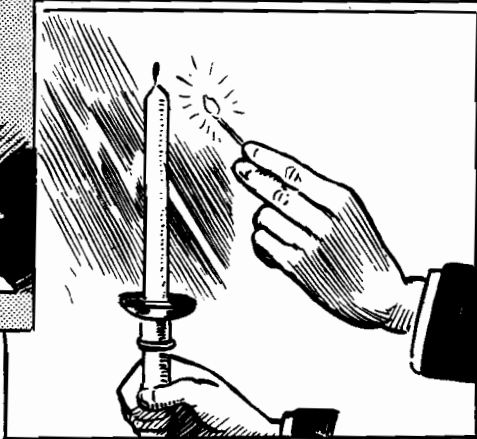
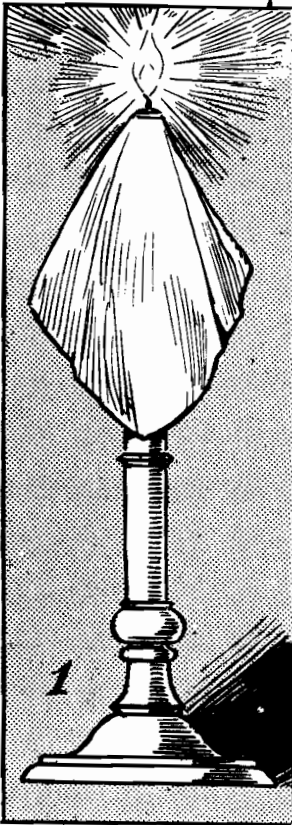
Chefalo's Candle and Handkerchief Trick.

A novel effect with a handkerchief is seldom met with, and therefore I considered myself fortunate when I was able to secure the following from the inventor, Chefalo, the famous Italian magician.

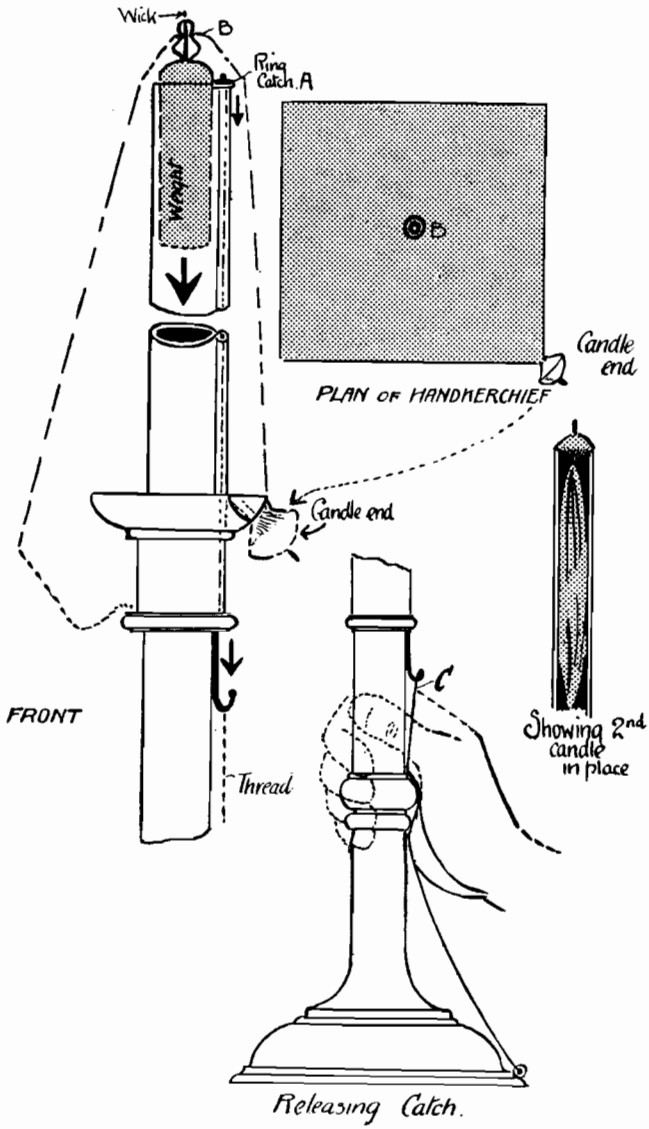
The effect is instantaneous. The conjurer holds a lighted candle, with a handkerchief placed over it. There is, of course, a hole in the centre of the handkerchief. After looking intently at the handkerchief and candle for a few seconds, the conjurer suddenly blows out the flame, and instantaneously the handkerchief disappears. The wise ones among the audience will jump to the conclusion that the handkerchief disappears in some way into the candle, and then the conjurer, as if in anticipation of this suggestion, quietly lights the candle and goes on with the next trick.

The explanation "in the candle" does not seem to apply, but nevertheless it is the right one. The handkerchief goes into the candle, because it is fastened in the first place to a small weight, which, at the commencement of the trick, is held at the top of the candle. I need scarcely say that the candle is a hollow one, and that there is only a small piece of real candle at the top.

It will be noticed that the weight is held at the top of the hollow candle by means of a small ring, which passes over a catch. A thread is attached to this catch, and is



carried down the candle to the base and then up again. The end is tied with a small loop, and is passed over a little wire hook at the back of the candle. When the conjurer wishes to perform the trick, he blows out the candle,



and at the same time presses his thumb over the thread. This releases the catch, and the weight draws the handkerchief down into the candle.

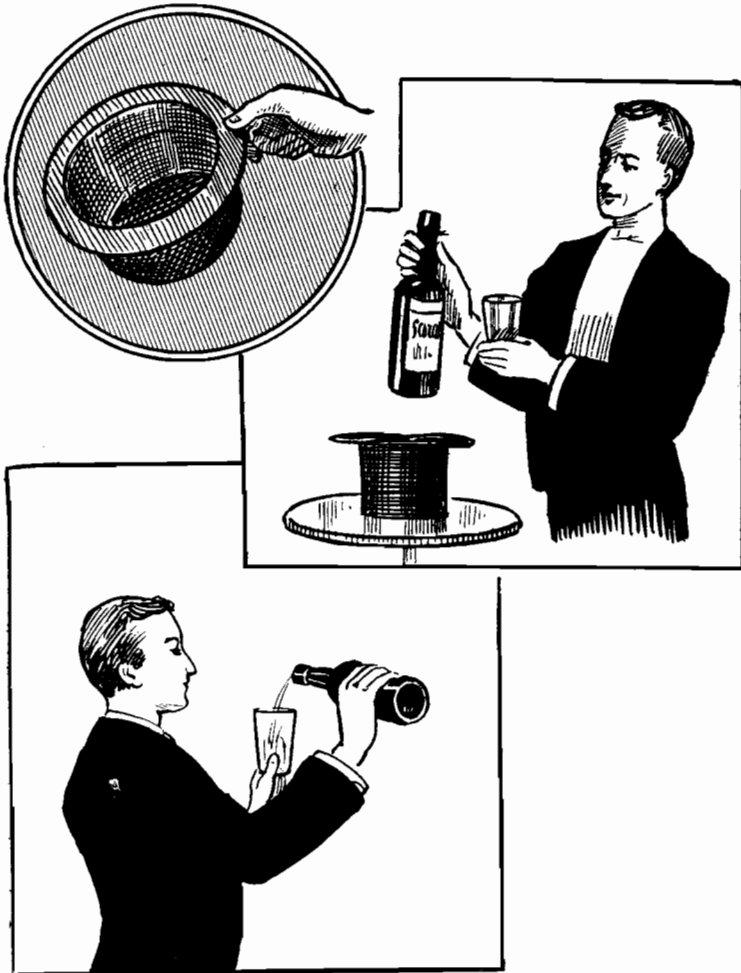
How comes it, then, that the performer is able to light the candle at the end after the handkerchief has vanished? The explanation is to be seen in the little piece of candle attached to the corner of the handkerchief, which was at the back of the candle at the commencement of the trick. The handkerchief is so arranged on the weight that this corner is the last to disappear, and therefore it draws the little piece of candle on to the top of the hollow candle.

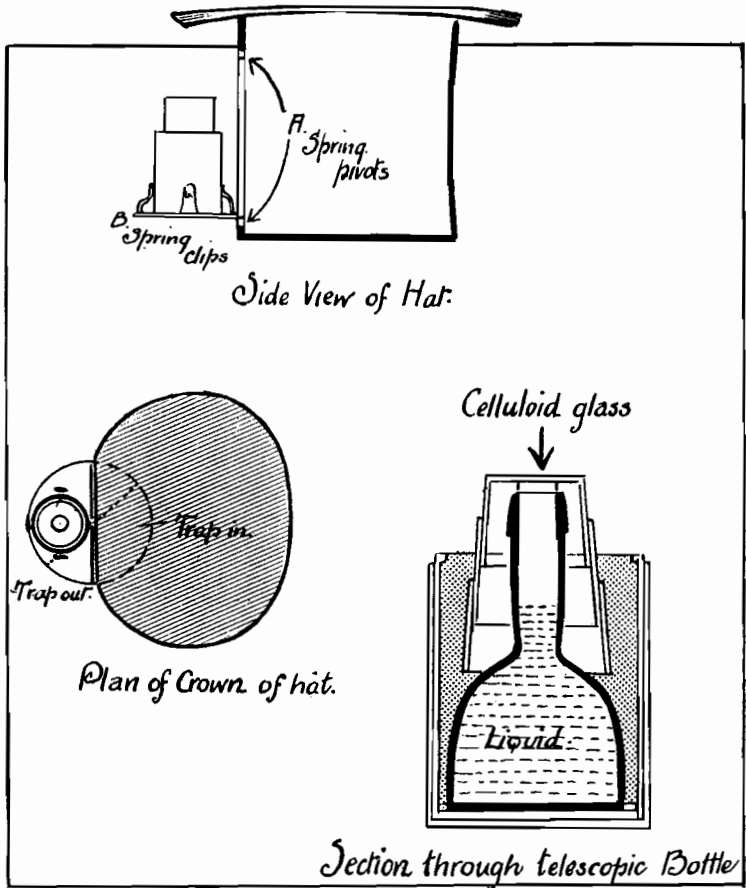
The Accommodating Bottle.

Having shown an empty opera hat, the conjurer places it on the table, and, without going near any piece of furniture and without making any false move of his hands, produces from it a bottle of whisky and a glass. To prove that the bottle is not empty, he pours some of the spirit into the glass.

This seeming miracle is accomplished by means of a special hat, which, as will be seen from the accompanying illustrations, is fitted with a trap, which works on spring pivots. To show the hat empty the conjurer opens the trap, and so gets the faked bottle and glass outside the hat. A pressure of the thumb sends the bottle into the hat again.

The bottle is made after the fashion of a telescope. The top half holds a little coloured water. The remainder of the bottle is made in two pieces and slides over the top, so that when the whole bottle is put together it appears to





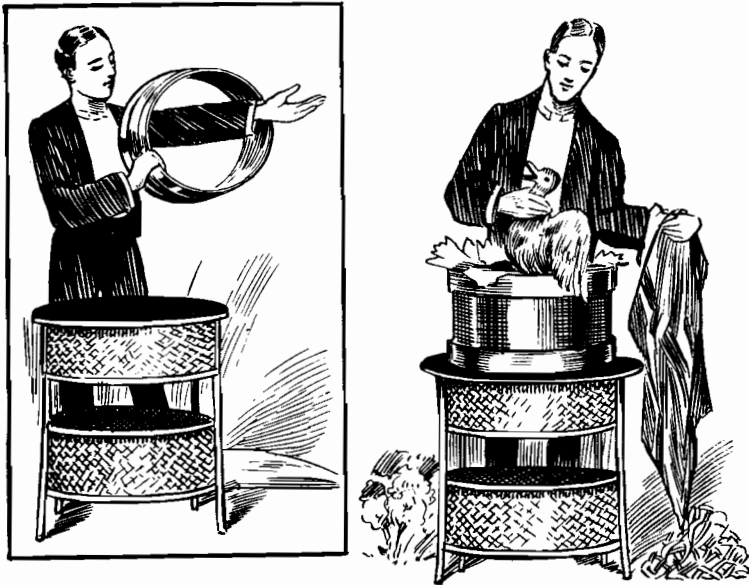
be an ordinary bottle. The glass is made of celluloid—to avoid any “talking” in the hat—and at the commencement of the trick the glass is merely inverted over the end of the bottle. When the conjurer has taken out the glass, he merely grasps the neck of the bottle, and the bottle assumes the shape of an ordinary bottle as it is removed from the hat.

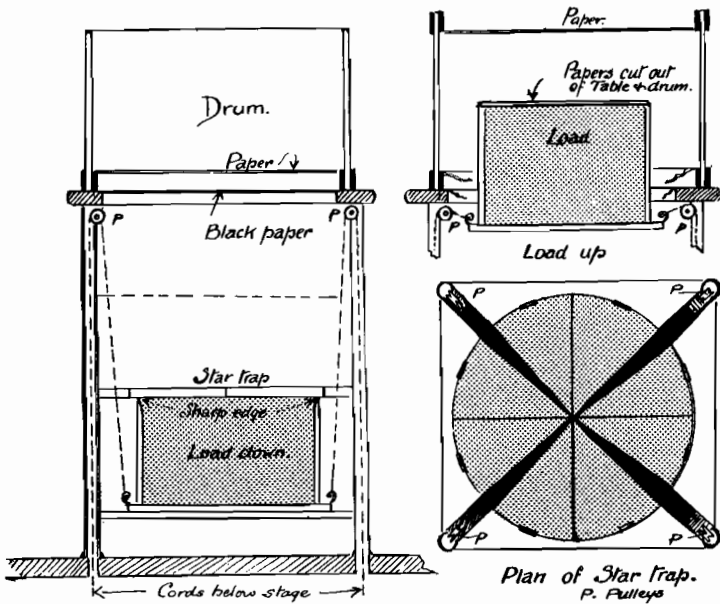
Loading the Big Drum.

This is a new and very ingenious way of getting a load into a large drum.

The conjurer first makes his drum in the usual way by clamping two sheets of paper over the ends of a short metal cylinder, and then tearing off the surplus paper. The load, consisting of flags, ducks, etc., is immediately produced.

A special table is used for the purpose (see illustration). It will be seen that the lower part of the table is so large that a good load can easily be concealed there. Between the lower part and the upper part is a large space, and the





only problem is that presented by getting the load from the lower "compartment" of the table into the drum.

This is managed quite easily. The top of the table is really a light frame covered with black paper. Cords are attached to the base of the load; they pass upwards and then down the legs of the table to an assistant beneath the stage. The top of the lower compartment of the table is composed of a star trap, which opens directly the cords attached to the load are pulled. The top of the load is thus brought up to the top of the table, and as the load is contained in a cylinder with a sharp edge, it easily passes through the paper top of the table and so into the drum.

The conjurer first fastens one of the pieces of paper on the drum. He then turns the drum over, and in the act

of fastening the second sheet he allows the sheet to mask the space between the top of the table and the compartment underneath. During the moment that the paper remains in front of the table, the assistant below the stage pulls the cords, and thus gets the load into the drum. The rest of the trick needs no explanation.

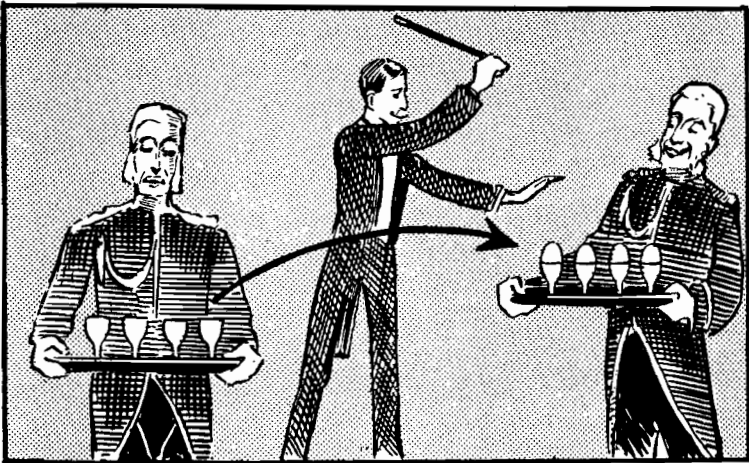
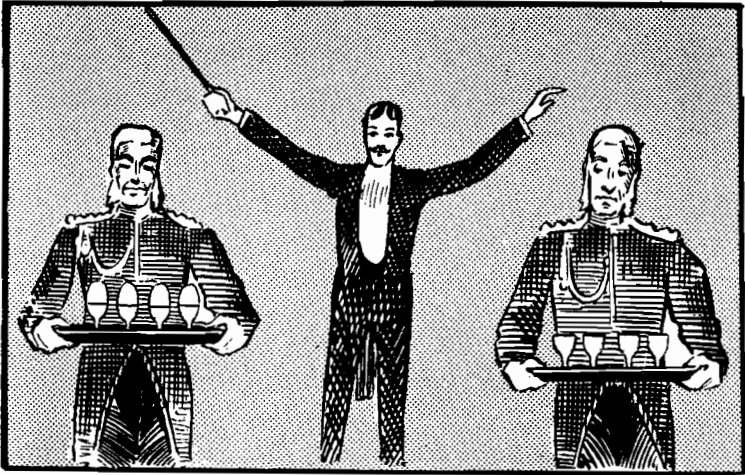
The Travelling Eggs.

Invented by WILL GOLDSTON.

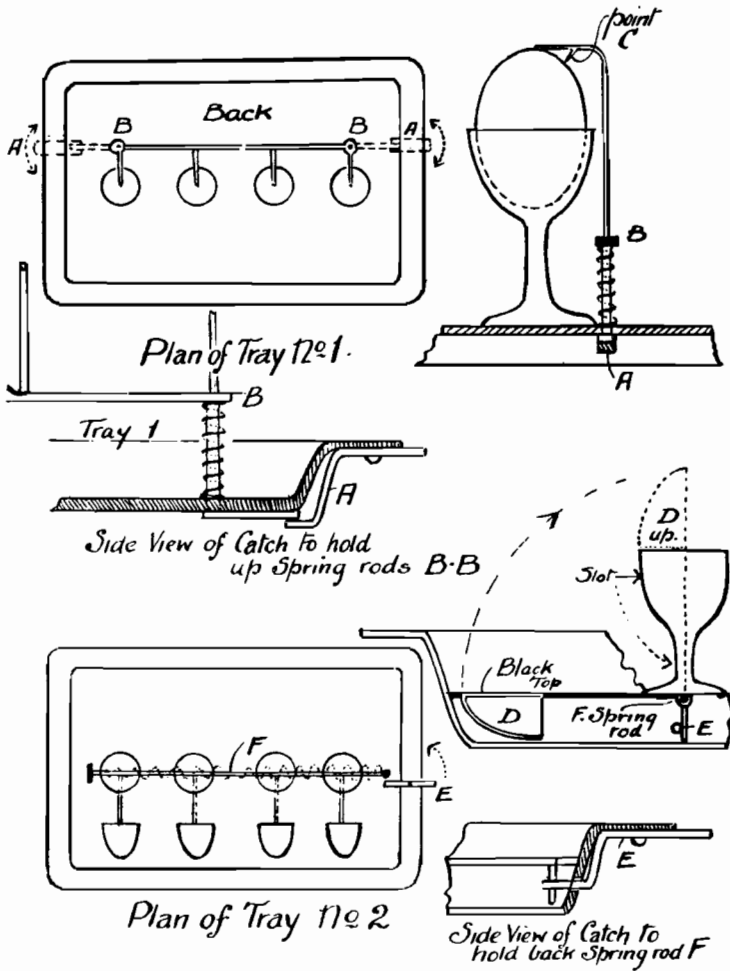
A welcome change in any performance is one in which the conjurer appears to take no part—or very little part. One of the advantages of a trick of this kind is that it enables the performer to “let himself go” in the matter of patter. Having nothing whatever to do with the actual working of the trick, he can devote all his attention to the amusement of his audience. The present trick will give him plenty of scope in that direction, because the principal articles used in the trick are eggs, and there is no limit to the number of jokes that can be made around eggs.

The conjurer’s two assistants come forward with two trays. On one tray are four egg-cups containing four eggs; on the other tray are four empty egg-cups. With a wave of his wand the conjurer causes the four eggs to travel invisibly to the four empty cups.

The four eggs are not real eggs, but they have all the appearance of real eggs. They are really made of very thin rubber, and are inflated in the first place in the same way that one inflates a toy balloon, namely, by blowing into it



and fastening the opening with thread. At the back of each egg is a little pointed rod attached to a spring rod, and all four rods are in turn attached to one rod which



runs along the width of the table. The assistant holding this tray merely has to pull slightly on one end of the rod, and all four "eggs" are punctured at once, and so disappear.

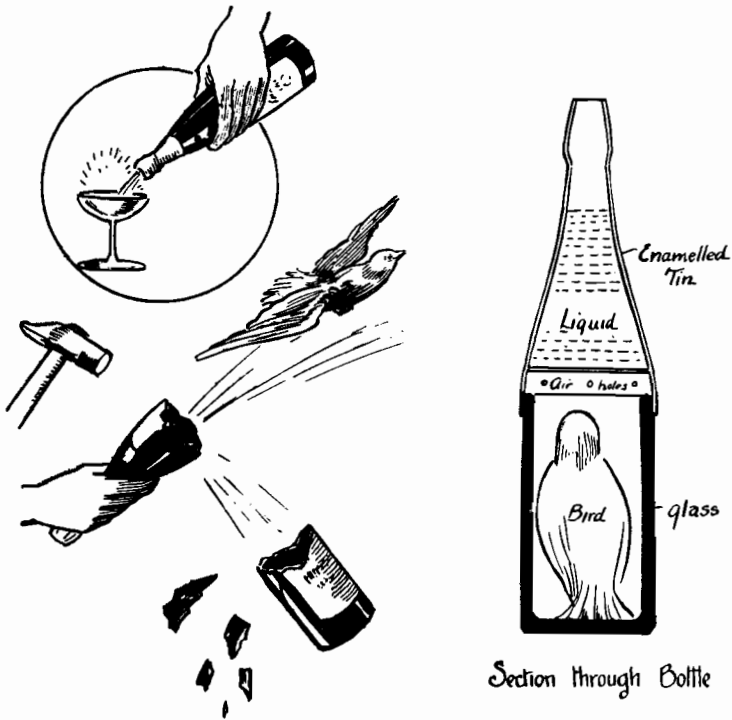
The eggs which appear suddenly in the cups are really only the halves of half-shells. (The complete half-shells might be used, but in that case the cups would need to be specially made.) A reference to the diagram will show that each shell, marked D, is fastened to a spring rod, and at the commencement of the trick the rods and shells are hidden on the table, because their upper surfaces are covered with black velvet which matches the top of the table. The four shells and rods are attached to one rod, and the assistant works this by slipping it along for half an inch, thus releasing the spring rods and causing the shells to come up to the cups.

The "New" Dove Bottle.

Every conjuring beginner has heard of the dove bottle, a weird-looking article that has very little resemblance to the real thing, especially when it is "broken" at the conclusion of the trick to release the dove.

The "new" dove bottle is glass—that is to say, part of it is glass, and as the glass portion of the apparatus is easily renewed at the conclusion of each performance, the bottle is greatly to be preferred to the old-fashioned dove bottle made of metal, the "breaking" of which was always a weak part of the trick, because it was quite obvious to everybody that the bottle was not really broken, but was merely taken to pieces.

The upper part of this "new" bottle is made of metal, and it is fitted with a false bottom, also of metal, and therefore the upper part will hold any liquid that the conjurer cares to use. Into this upper part an ordinary jam-jar,



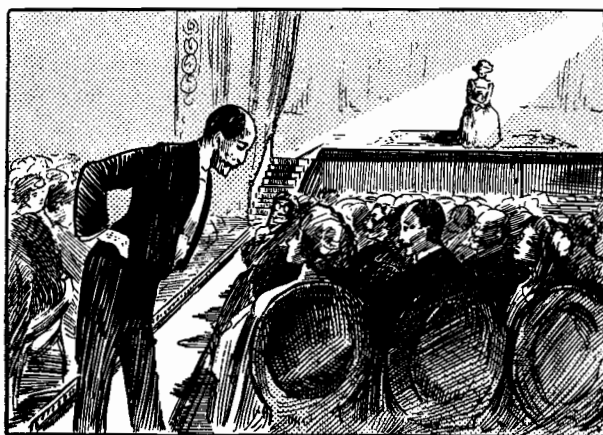
Section through Bottle

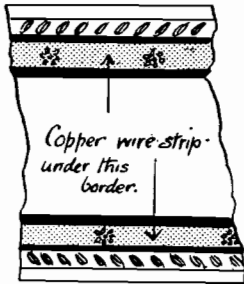
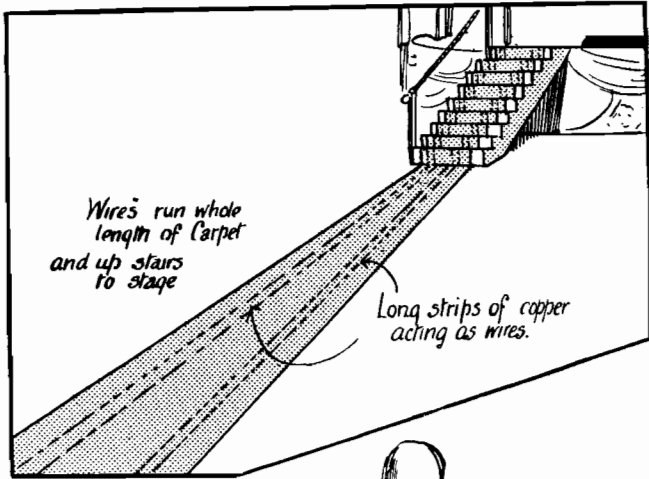
painted black, fits snugly, and it is this jar which the conjurer taps and breaks with his hammer when he wants to bring his trick to a brilliant conclusion. In five minutes, if need be, the conjurer can be ready for another performance with the same bottle, because in the interval he can take away the broken pieces of the jar and fit another jar to the top of his bottle. The old dove bottle trick performed in this way becomes really puzzling. The junction of the metal and glass is easily masked by a showy label.

The Latest Thought-Reading Trick.

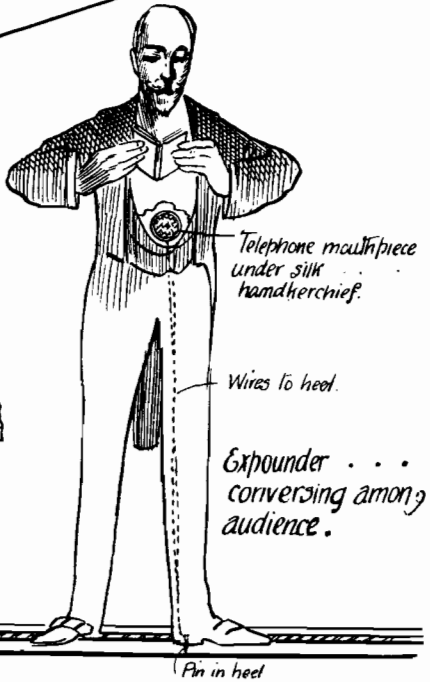
A thought-reading trick in which the "thoughts" need not be confined to such everyday things as the dates of coins, numbers of watches and bank-notes, etc., is something of a novelty. Moreover, when, as in the present case, the two performers do not speak to each other or make any sound or sign, I think it will be generally admitted that the trick is far above the ordinary thought-reading experiment.

In the trick under notice, the performer is assisted by a lady, who is first blindfolded and led on to the stage. She sits on a chair, and remains motionless during the whole of the experiment. The performer then goes down to the audience, and asks various members of the audience to suggest any questions that they would like him to "convey" to his assistant. These instructions are written down, so





Type of Pattern on Carpet

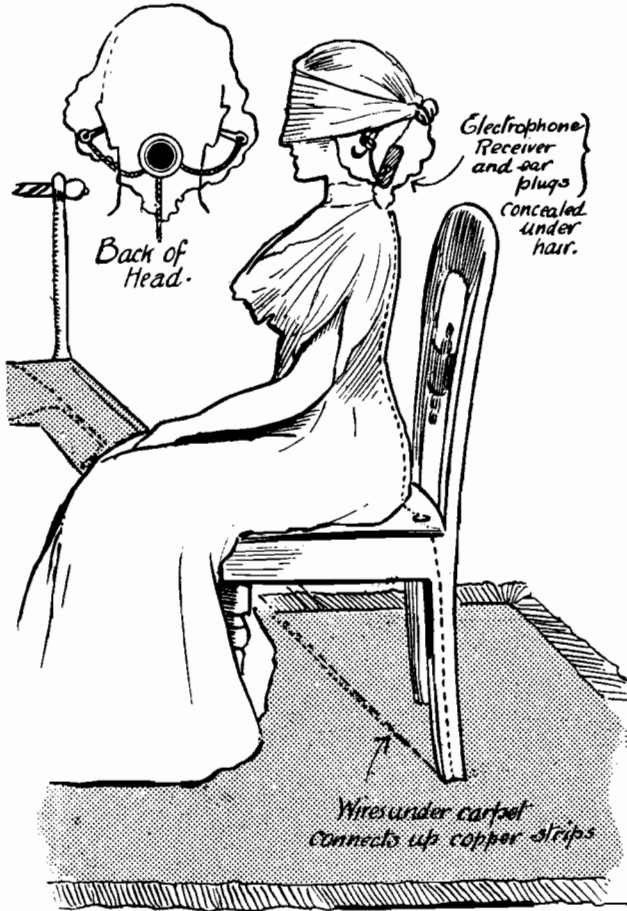


that there shall be no mistake about them. Then the performer turns round, makes a few passes with his hands towards the blindfolded lady on the stage, and presently she answers all the questions that have merely been whispered to the performer.

The preparations necessary for the carrying out of this illusion are rather complicated, but the working of the thought-reading experiment is beautifully simple, and, as it is carried out in silence, it produces a very weird effect on an audience.

The chair on which the lady is to sit is fitted with a small electrophone, and when the performer is blindfolding her he contrives to put two small ear-plugs to her ears, where they are concealed by her hair. The wire connection of the electrophone passes behind the lady, through a hole in the seat of the chair, down the leg of the chair, and then under the carpet. This wire is connected with strips of copper placed under the carpet of the "run down," or steps leading to the auditorium, and then under the carpet in the hall itself. The performer has the mouthpiece of a telephone concealed at the bottom of his waistcoat, where it is hidden by a small handkerchief tucked into his waistcoat. The wire to this mouthpiece passes down the performer's leg, and is carried through the heel of his boot. The end of it is sharpened, so that when the performer stands over the places on the carpet where he knows the strips of copper are laid, he makes a connection between himself and his blindfolded assistant on the stage. When he is receiving his instructions from members of the audience and writing them down, he takes care to whisper them—apparently to make sure that he has got them down correctly. This whispering, however, is clearly heard by the

*How medium listens to
conversation
through Telephone*

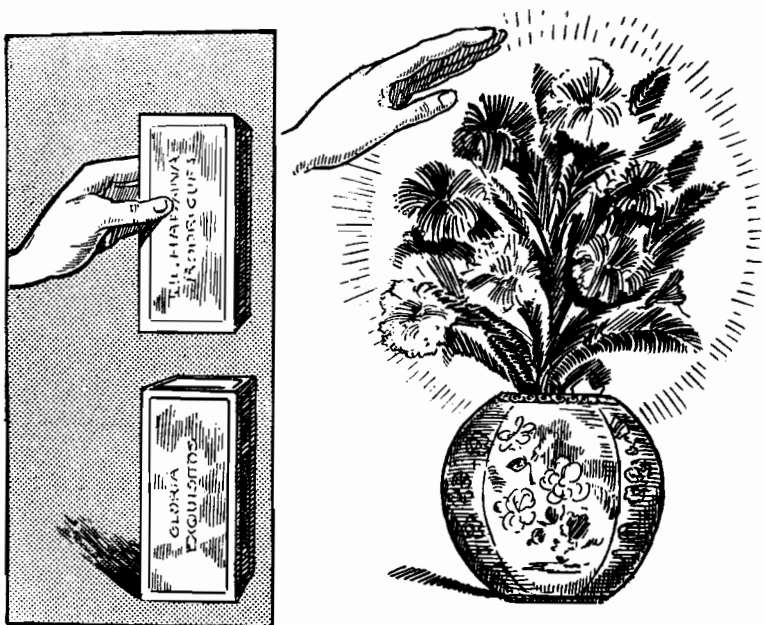


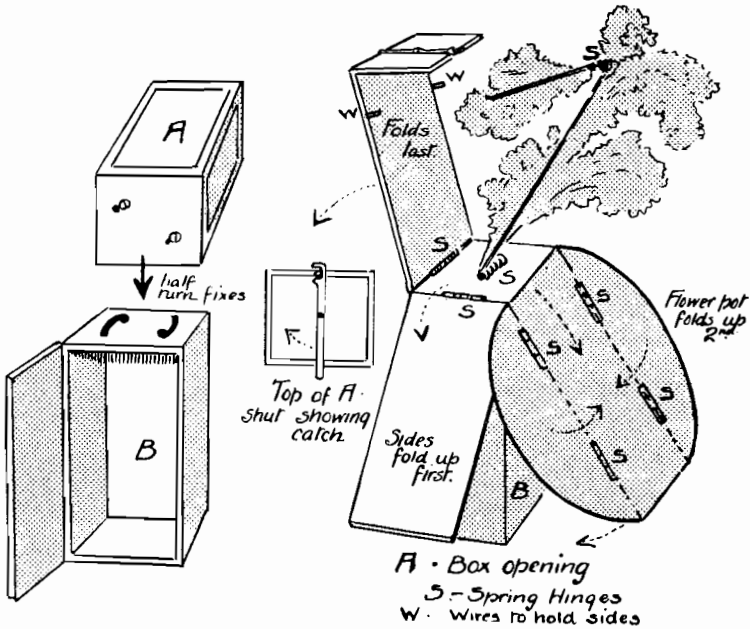
assistant, who is thus able to perform the most wonderful feats of thought-reading.

When the performer is ready for his assistant to begin her part of the work, he gives a sign—such as a slight cough or the snap of his fingers. The passes he makes with his hands have nothing to do with the trick, and, as a matter of fact, they are not seen by the assistant, because the bandage over her eyes is a genuine “blindfold.”

Two Mysterious Cigars.

This is another of the many quick change effects invented by the inimitable Mr. Chris Van Bern. The conjurer





produces a couple of cigar boxes, and talks glibly of the way in which cigars are made, the effect of a bad cabbage crop on the shipments of real Havanas to this country, and so on. Then he continues:—

“It is not generally known that if you get cigars that are really very bad indeed, you can see the cabbage leaf in them, and can identify it as being the real, home-grown British cabbage. The cigars I have here are of that kind, and as I cannot smoke them, and have no fear that there will be a rush for them, I do not mind exhibiting them. There they are, and you can now see the cabbage.”

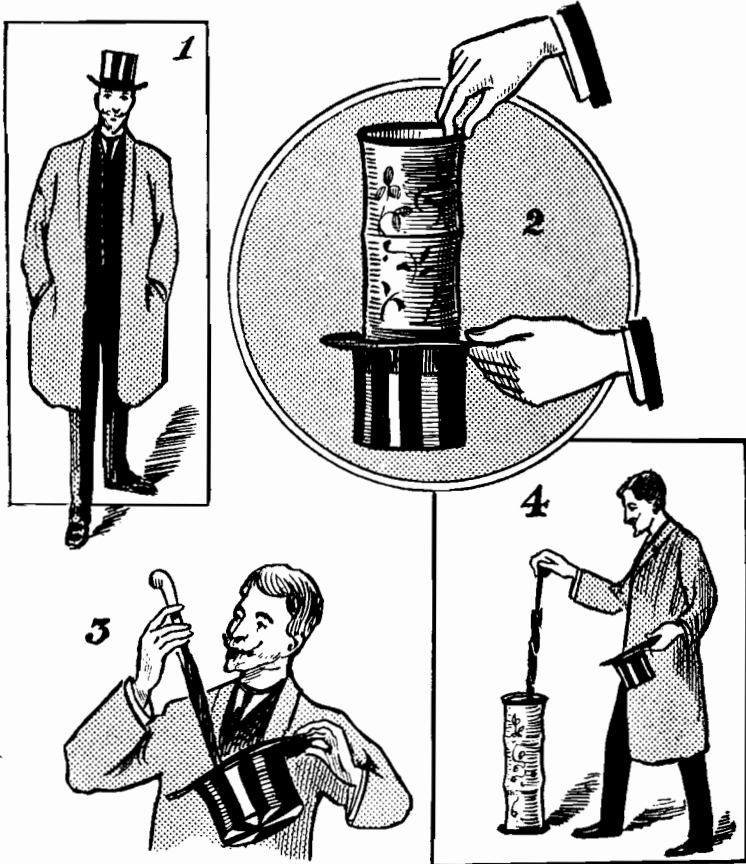
With this the conjurer shows—not a cabbage, but a large bowl filled with a growing plant.

The construction of the boxes is responsible for this effect. The bottom box serves as a stand for the other, the sides of which fall away when a spring is released. The front side is fitted with two flaps, which open, and are painted to resemble a large bowl. The flowers are of the spring variety. If worked at a reasonable distance, the trick is very effective.

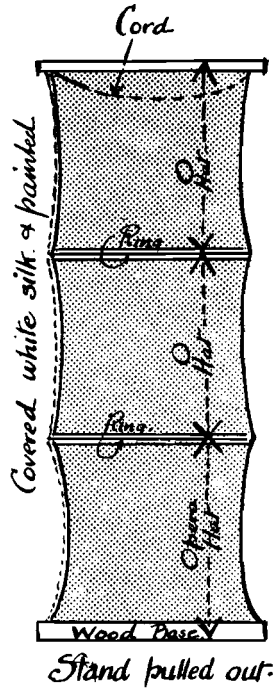
The Magical Production of an Umbrella and an Umbrella Stand.

This is another of the inventions of Mr. Chris Van Bern. The conjurer saunters on to the stage wearing his silk hat. He removes the hat, and produces from it an umbrella. Being at a loss to know what to do with the umbrella, he goes again to the hat and produces a large umbrella stand, with a solid base, which he places on the stage. Then he puts his umbrella into the stand, puts down his hat, and proceeds with his performance.

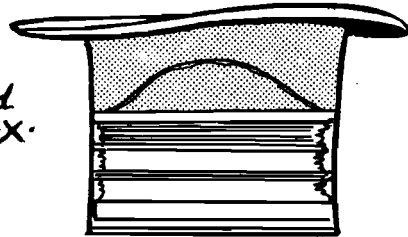
The umbrella is concealed down the right trouser leg and under the waistcoat. The conjurer holds his hat in such a way that the umbrella appears to come from its interior (see illustration). The umbrella stand is constructed from three old opera hats joined together. They have the brims cut away, and the frames are covered with white silk, which is painted with a blue design in imitation of the familiar china umbrella stand. The umbrella stand, with a wooden base, is then shut up and put into the performer's silk hat. As will be seen from the illustration, the



“stand” goes into a very small space. The top of the stand should have a small ring attached to it to facilitate the work of getting it out of the hat. The opera hats can be purchased fairly cheaply second-hand, and the whole apparatus can be made for a few shillings. To anyone not in the know, this passes as a very marvellous production trick.



*Position of concealed
Umbrella. X·X·*



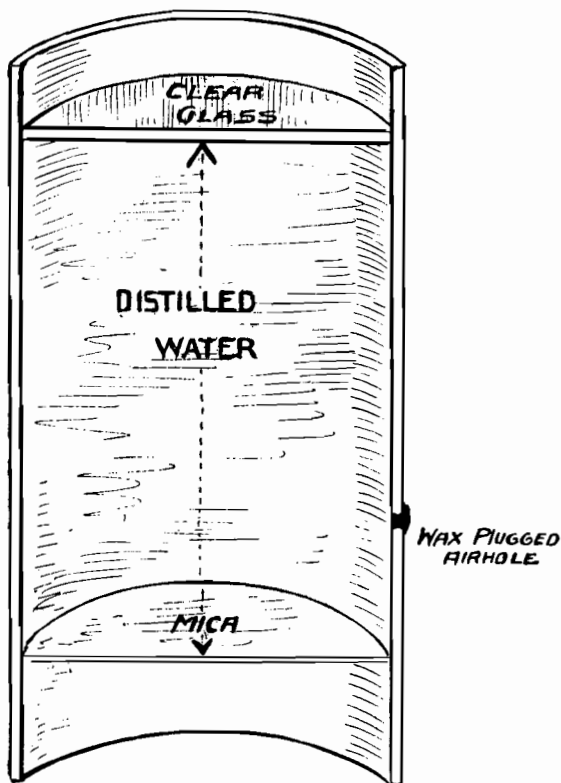
*Collapsed or concealed
in silk hat.*

The Crystal Cylinders.



Nothing could be simpler than this trick, which may be said to be an improved version of Germaine's water-jar trick.

In this case the conjurer shows half-a-dozen glass cylinders standing on a board placed across two chairs (or two iron stands), and to demonstrate that the cylinders are empty he holds an electric lamp behind each one. After



SECTION THROUGH TUBE

all have been shown in this way and returned to the board, the conjurer again picks them up, and proceeds to pour water from them into a large tub on the stage.

My readers will have guessed probably that the water was in the cylinders in the first place. It was kept from coming out by means of mica tops, which adhered by suction. The other end of each cylinder was kept permanently closed by means of a piece of mica fitted into the cylinder, but this piece had a small hole in it. At the commencement of the trick each hole was closed with wax, and when the conjurer wished to produce the water he merely scraped off the wax with his finger nail. This admitted the air, and so the other piece of mica was automatically pushed off the cylinder and the water was released.

The Best of all Handkerchief Swords.

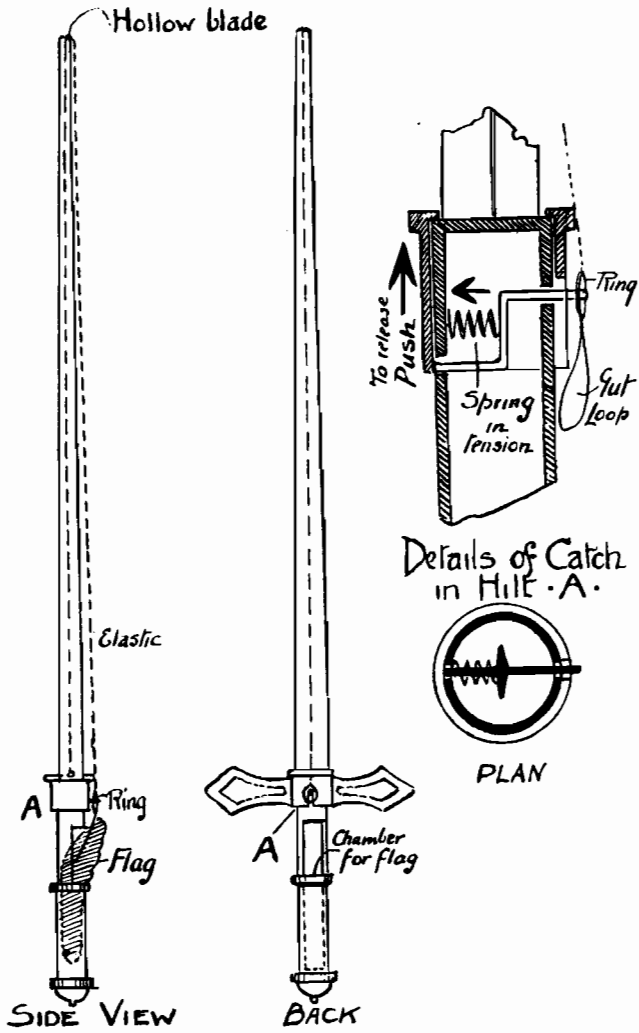
The effect of this handkerchief sword will, of course, be known to my readers, but the method by which it is obtained will be new to them.

The blade of the sword is hollow. A piece of stout elastic is fastened near the hilt of the sword, carried up through the blade, and then down outside the blade to the hilt again. At the end of the elastic a small brass ring is attached, and below the ring a small loop of catgut is tied. The ring is passed over a simple catch at the top of the hilt, and the loop of catgut, with the flag stuffed into it, is placed in a little receptacle at the base of the hilt. By merely pushing up a small slide with the thumb the catch is released, and the flag is taken instantaneously to the point of the sword.

Conjurers will appreciate the simplicity of the working



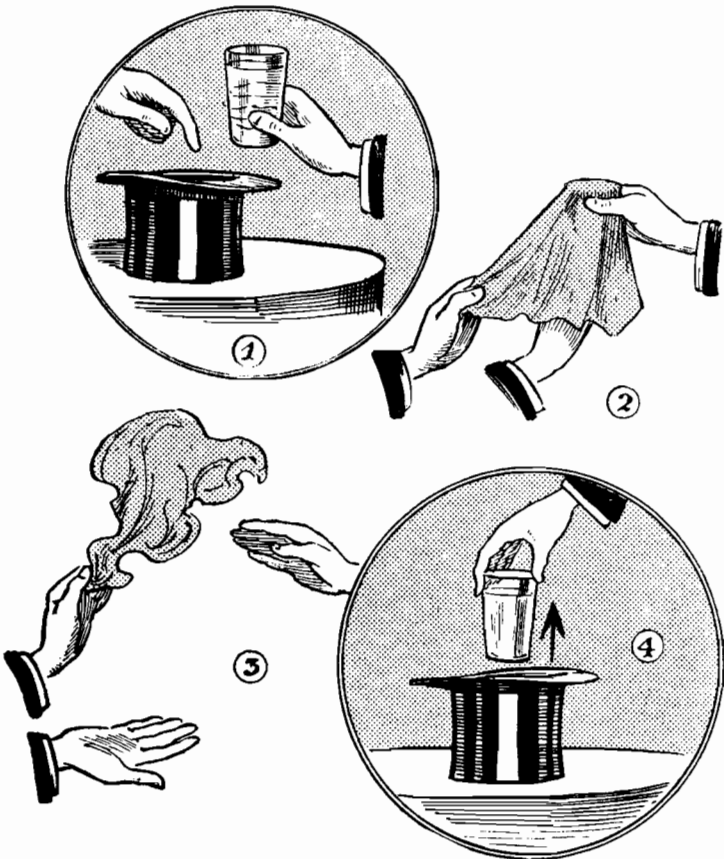
of this sword. There is practically nothing to get out of order, and yet the effect is better than that to be got out of any sword with a more complicated method of working. After the sword is "set," one slight movement of the thumb works the trick.

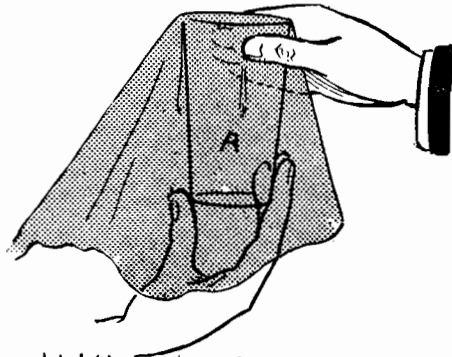
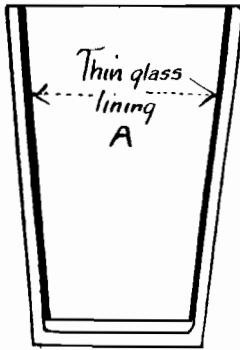


The Glass of Water and the Hat.

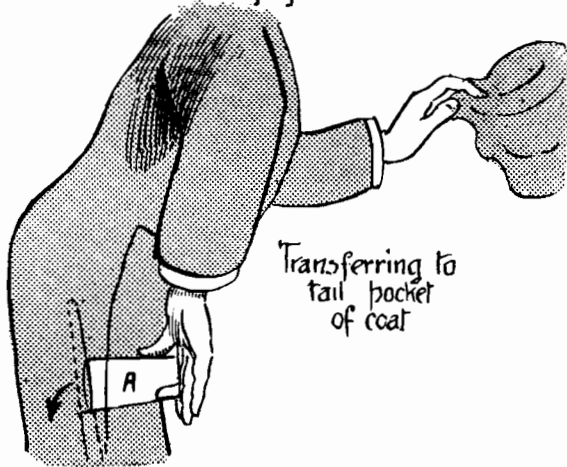
This is one of the creations of Mr. Chris Van Bern, to whom I am indebted for the secret.

The principal article used in the trick is a glass of water, but there is also a silk hat on the table. The conjurer first





Holding glass under cover



Transferring to
tail pocket
of coat

places the glass in the hat, but, as an afterthought (for which excuse is made in the patter), takes out the glass, and in doing so covers it with a large handkerchief. The audience can plainly see the outline of the glass under the silk, and are therefore properly surprised when the conjurer flicks away the handkerchief and shows that the glass has

really vanished. Going back to the hat, the conjurer removes the glass, still full of water.

The glass is not merely an ordinary glass; it is all that, and more. The "more" consists of an outer covering of thin glass, and it is this which the conjurer removes from the hat. As he takes it out, he keeps his hand over the bottom part of the "covering," and thus nobody notices that the glass is without water. At the same moment the conjurer throws a handkerchief over the "covering," and as the audience can see the shape of the glass, and the conjurer takes the precaution of handling it very gently, as though it really was a glass of water, no one suspects that half the trick is then done.

When the conjurer wishes to vanish the "covering" (apparently the glass), he holds it with his right hand, and with his left shakes out the large handkerchief. Under cover of this handkerchief the conjurer palms the "covering," and slips it into his right-hand *profonde*.

This is not intended to be shown as a complete trick, but as a short and extremely surprising "effect" between more important items in the programme.

A Palm from a Walking Stick.

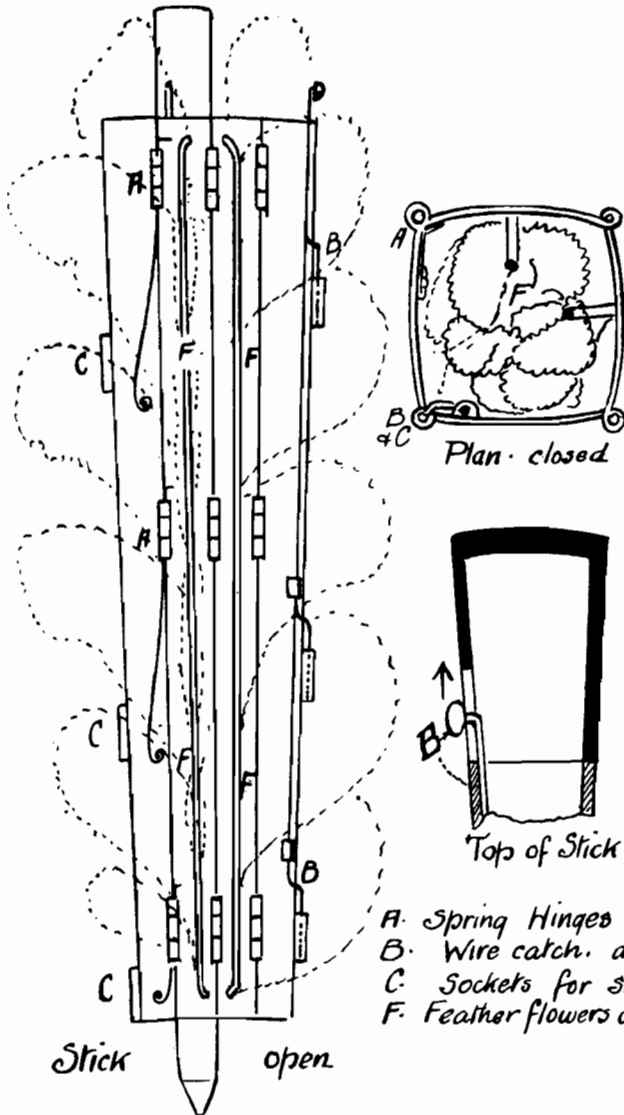
Invented by WILL GOLDSTON.

This is one of those "quick change" effects which always brighten up any conjuring performance; indeed, a little thing such as I am about to describe often creates a greater impression than an important illusion.

The performer comes on with a walking stick in his hand. After twirling it in his fingers for a few moments, he suddenly puts it into an empty plant-pot, and immediately the stick is transformed into a large palm tree.

The secret is entirely in the stick, which is really made of four pieces of metal hinged together and painted to resemble wood. One of the four pieces is fitted with spring hinges, which, when released, throw out the other three sides, and all four close up flat. The performer has the catch entirely under his control, because it is concealed in the handle of the stick.

Some little imagination will be necessary from anyone who would consider the stick in full blossom as a palm, because the effect of foliage is produced entirely by means of feather flowers. These are easily concealed in the stick at the commencement of the trick, and when the stick is opened they expand. The illustration of the interior of the stick should make the working of it quite clear to anyone.

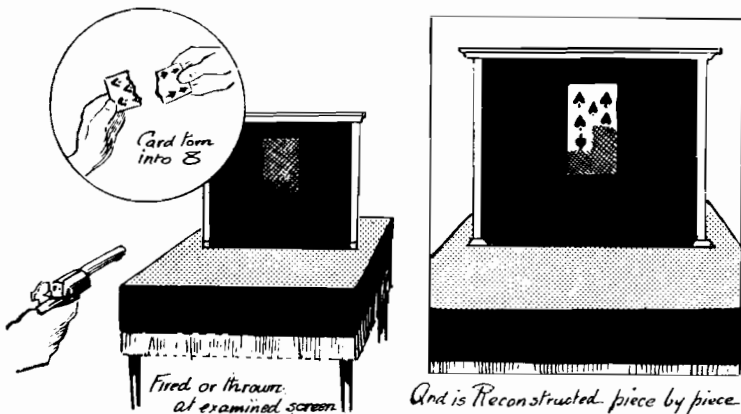


A New Restored Card Trick.

Invented by MONTAGUE ALBERT.

The superiority of this "restored card" trick to any with which I am acquainted lies in the fact that the receptacle for the card is first examined by the audience.

In this case the receptacle is merely a small metal frame, with a piece of black velvet stretched over it. After the audience have seen it, the conjurer places it on his table and has a card selected from the pack. The card is, of course, forced. The conjurer tears it up, or has it torn up, and places the pieces in his pistol. Then he fires eight times at the frame, and the card is reconstructed piece by piece on the frame. If he prefers, the conjurer may throw the pieces of card at the frame, and, if he wishes to make the card trick extremely convincing, he can ask a member of the audience to keep one of the pieces of card before he throws the remainder at the screen. In that case the whole



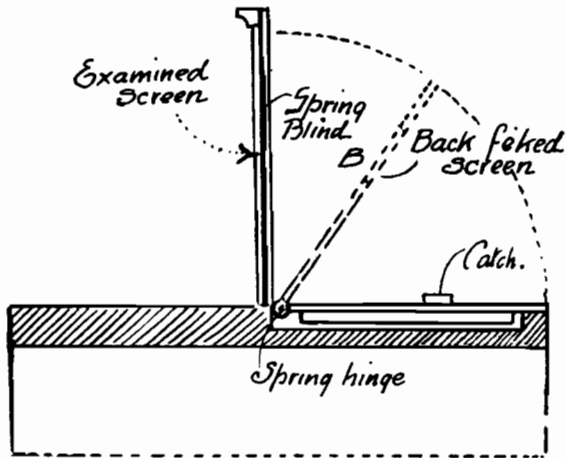
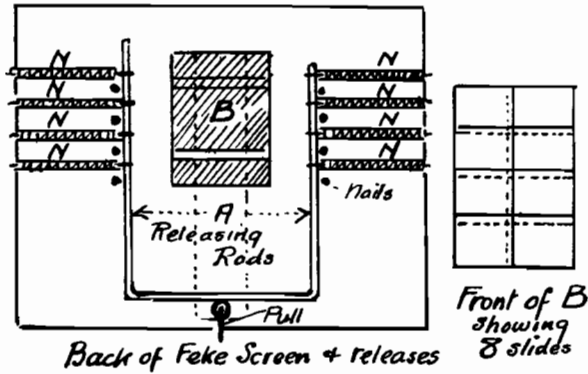
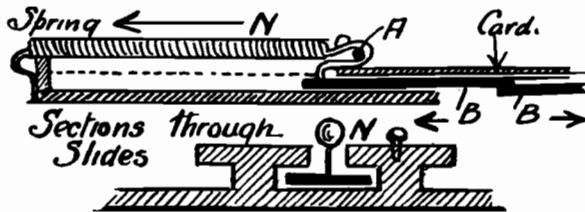


Table and fake screen in Section.



Back of Fake Screen + releases

Front of B showing 3 slides



Sections through Slides

of the card is not reconstructed on the frame. The piece held by the member of the audience is found to fit exactly into the part of the card on the frame.

I need not go into the details of forcing the card or "allowing" a member of the audience to choose a corner. The secret with which my readers will be mostly concerned lies in the screen.

After the screen has been shown to the audience, it is dropped into the metal stand on the table. At the same time the conjurer releases a little catch at the back of the table, and thus gets another screen behind the one which the audience have seen. The examined screen is then caused to fly up into the frame (by means of a spring roller attachment), and so the second screen is visible to the audience.

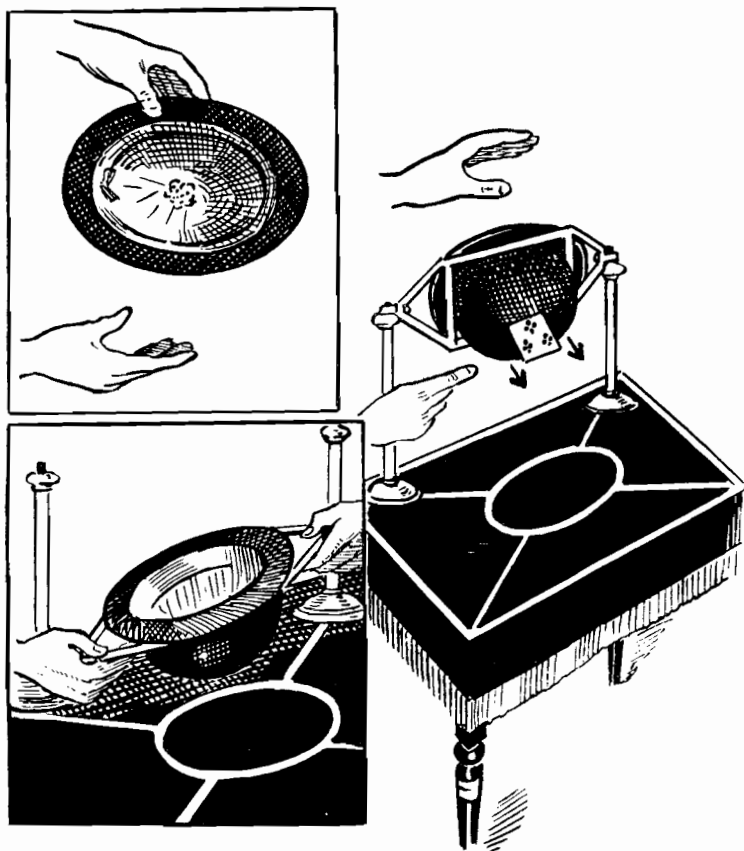
In this second screen is a small space in which a card, similar to the chosen one, is concealed. The card is really hidden by eight slides, which are connected at the back of the screen by means of springs, and the U-shaped rod (marked A in the diagram) holds them all in position. It will be noticed that the slides are not all of the same length, and this arrangement secures the releasing of the slides one at a time.

The U-shaped rod A is attached to a pull, which passes through the centre leg of the table, and so is carried off the stage.

The Cards through the Hat.

Invented by MERLIN, the Famous Card Conjurer.

It has often been said that the only drawback to card tricks is that they are all alike. There may be a strong family likeness among many of them, for certainly in most



card tricks two or three cards are selected by members of the audience, and are returned to the pack. The conjurer then produces the selected cards in some surprising way.

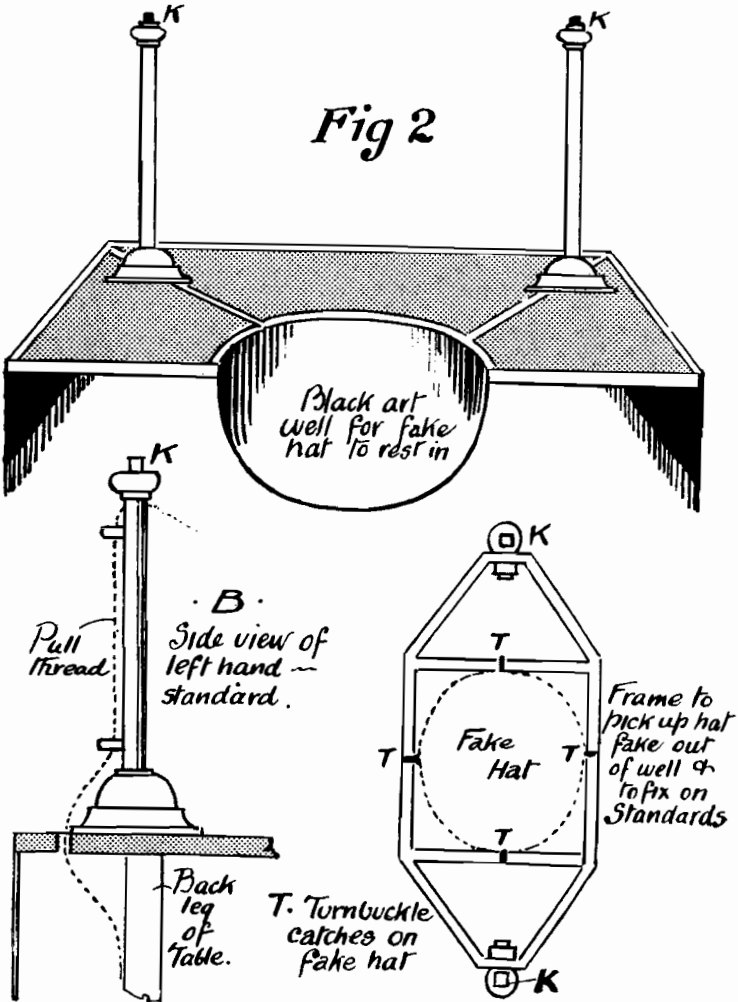
It will be seen that the inventor of a new card trick on these lines has but one course open to him. He has to think out some novel and surprising way of producing the selected cards. Merlin, the famous card conjurer, has

succeeded admirably in thus inventing an entirely new card trick, for not only does the appearance of the selected cards come as a surprise, but the method of their production is itself a mystery. It will be seen that, in this trick, there are two mysteries, and the solution of one will not help in the least to the solving of the other.

The effect of the trick is as follows. The conjurer comes down to his audience and asks three persons to choose a card apiece. The cards are returned to the pack, and the conjurer borrows a hard felt hat of the "bowler" variety. He places the hat in a small metal frame or rack (see illustration), and then, by means of the rack, suspends the hat between two standards on the table. The cards are then placed in the hat, and the conjurer tilts the frame in such a way that the audience can see the crown of the hat. When the conjurer calls for them, the chosen cards make their way slowly right through the crown of the hat. When the last card has appeared, the conjurer takes the hat from the rack and returns it to the owner. The hat is an ordinary hat, and the owner is not a confederate of the conjurer.

The best way to get at the working of this trick is to study the accompanying illustrations. In the centre of the table is a large "well," which contains the fake necessary for the trick. This fake is the crown of another hat, with a small metal case inside it. The construction of the case is shown in the diagram. The case holds three cards, threaded in such a way that when the assistant off the stage pulls on the thread the three cards issue separately from the slit in the crown of the "fake." The method of threading of the cards is similar to that often used to accomplish the rising card trick.

Fig 2



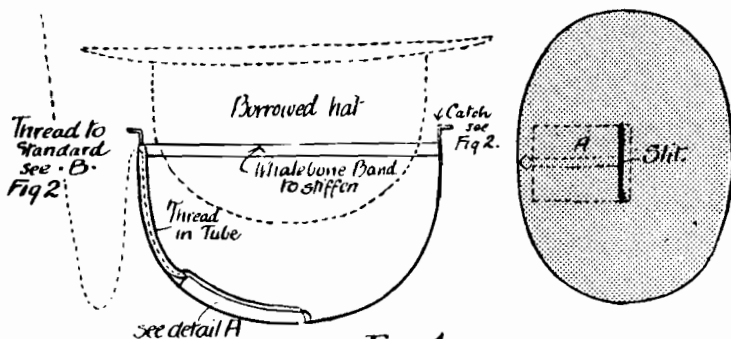
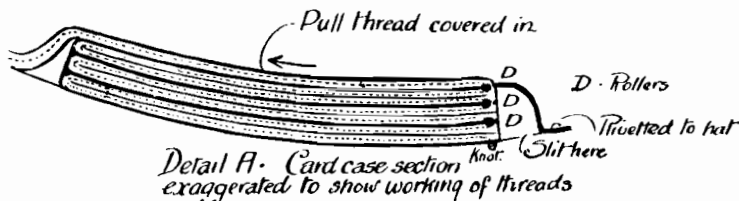


Fig 1
Section & Plan of Fake hat crown.



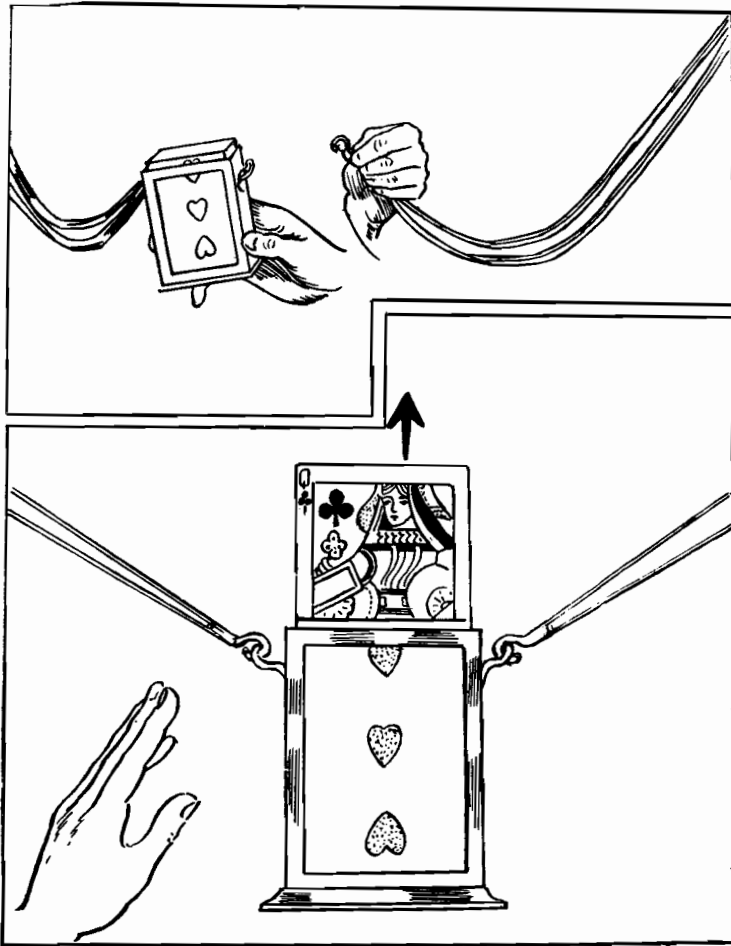
The three cards are, of course, "forced" cards. A fastidious performer might like to keep the cards in view, however, so that he could get at them and palm them off while he is returning to the stage with the pack. The palmed off cards would then be slipped into the profonde, and at the end of the trick the conjurer would then be able to show that the three selected cards, which apparently went through the hat, really did leave the pack, since they are no longer there. However, that is a small matter, and most conjurers would be quite content to force the cards and have them returned to the pack, and would not trouble to get them away.

When the conjurer has had the cards "selected" in this way, and has borrowed the hat, he puts it into the frame, and in so doing gets the fake from the well in the table on to the outside of the hat. The fake is provided with four turnbuckle clips, which enable the performer to lift the fake out of the well while he is engaged in fixing the hat into the frame. The thread attached to the cards is carried down the back of one of the standards on the table, and thence off the stage to an assistant. It will be seen that the hat frame has two slots in it, so that it can easily be dropped over the two standards. The frame is also pivotted, so that the performer can swing it at any angle, and thus show the crown of the hat to the audience. The edge of the fake is stiffened with a band of whalebone, so that it grips the borrowed hat.

The Rising Cards with the Swinging Houlette.

This method of performing the rising card trick is undoubtedly one of the best ways of exhibiting the illusion on a stage. It is hardly suitable for presentation in a drawing-room, although if the room is not too small, and the conjurer is allowed proper time for his preparations, there is no reason why it should not be done in a room. The services of a good assistant are required.

I take it that all my readers will be familiar with the rising card trick. Three or more cards are chosen by the audience, and are returned to the pack. The conjurer then causes the selected cards to rise into the air from the pack.

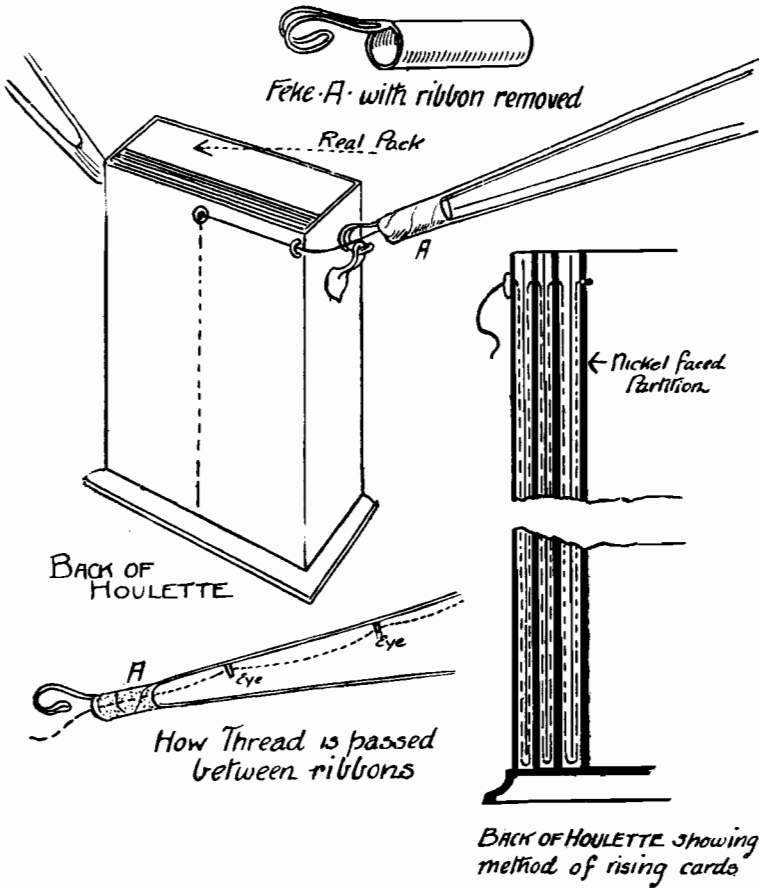


In the following method the conjurer has to begin by forcing three cards, and the simplest and safest way of doing this is to use a forcing pack of three cards only, arranged alternately thus, say, king of diamonds, three of hearts,

nine of spades. The conjurer gives this pack a false shuffle, so as not to disturb the arrangement of the cards, and hands it to someone to cut. No matter where the pack is cut, the three cards above or below the cut must always be the same three cards. There may be one or two indifferent cards at the bottom of the pack, so that when the cards are held face to the audience the forced cards are not seen.

Having made these preparations, the conjurer takes the cards from the member of the audience who selected three cards, and, returning to the stage, places the pack in a small glass box. (This box is known to conjurers as a houlette, but there is no need to call things by their trade names when speaking to an audience.) The conjurer then proceeds to suspend the box in the air by hooking on two pieces of ribbon which hang at the sides of the stage. When the box with the cards is thus hung up in the centre of the stage, the conjurer calls for the names of the cards, and while he repeats the names of the cards they rise from the houlette, which may be swung backwards and forwards all the time.

Knowing that the cards are forced, my readers will not need to be told that the cards which rise from the houlette are not the cards which the member of the audience chose, but are three other similar cards. These are arranged in a small metal case at the back of the glass houlette, and they are threaded in the way usually employed in the old-fashioned rising card trick. Three extra cards are used. A thread is passed through one of these near the top. One end is fixed there; the other is carried down the back of the card. One of the cards that is to rise is then placed on the thread, and the thread is then brought up the back of this card and over the top of another indifferent card.



It is carried down the back of this, and another rising card is placed on it, and so the process is continued until the thread is arranged in such a way that by pulling it the three cards are made to rise one by one from the pack.

In the present trick the thread is carried out at the back of the houlette. It is then passed right through a small

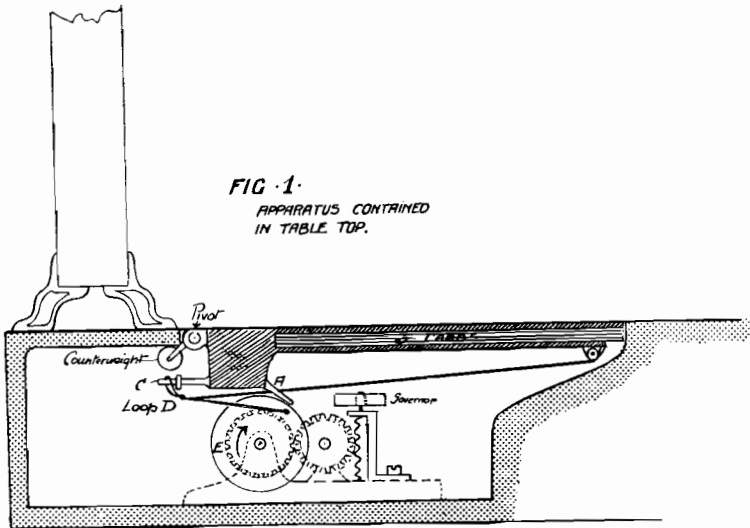
eyelet on the right of the houlette at the back. The ribbon on this side is really composed of two pieces of ribbon, with several little "eyes" sewn inside (see illustration). The thread is thus passed through the ribbons to the assistant at the side of the stage. The assistant's work merely consists in pulling the thread at the time required, and the cards rise from the pack. If the thread is pulled out so that there is plenty of "slack," the houlette need not have the faked ribbon hooked to it until the performance is in progress; but some conjurers would not care to run this risk, but would have the one side hooked on (the side with the faked ribbon), and would be content to hook on the other ribbon in view of the audience. After a little practice with a competent assistant, this method of performing the rising card trick cannot go wrong, and it is impossible for anyone to see how the motive power is applied to the cards.

The Best Rising Card Trick.

Invented by MONTRAVILLE M. WOOD.

When my readers have mastered the details of this rising card trick, I feel sure they will agree with me that the title I have given to it is well deserved. It is different from any other rising card trick, and I am confident that the difference will be appreciated.

The whole charm of the trick, when performed in this way, lies in its simplicity. Everything is done so fairly and openly that there does not appear to be any way by which the cards are made to rise. Conjurers who are acquainted with the hundred and one ordinary methods for performing the rising card trick will, I think, be just as



puzzled when they see this trick performed for the first time as any other members of the audience. Note what happens.

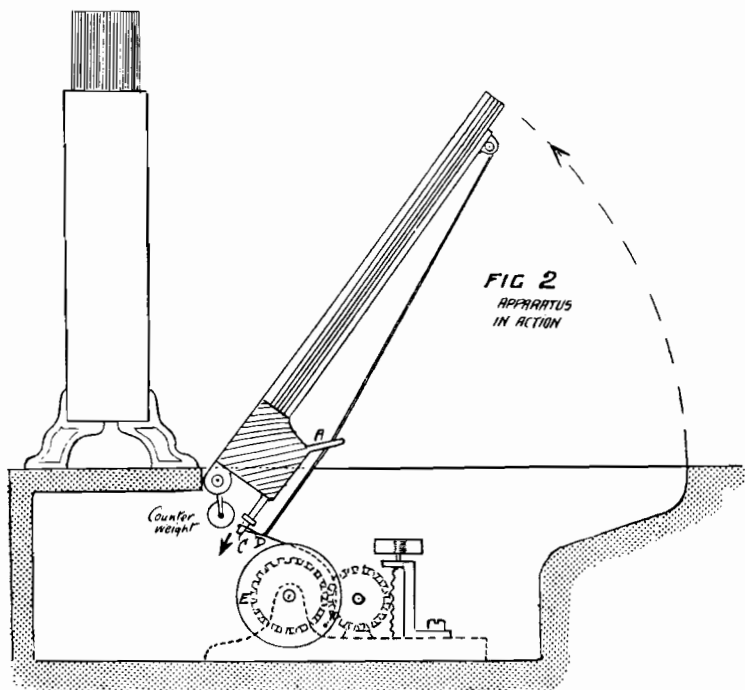
The audience select three or four cards and replace them in the pack. Anyone may shuffle the pack. The conjurer brings forward a little metal "houlette," or box, and asks someone to drop the cards into the box. They do so. The conjurer places the box on his table and walks away from it. Then he commands the selected cards to rise, one by one, from the pack, and they obey him.

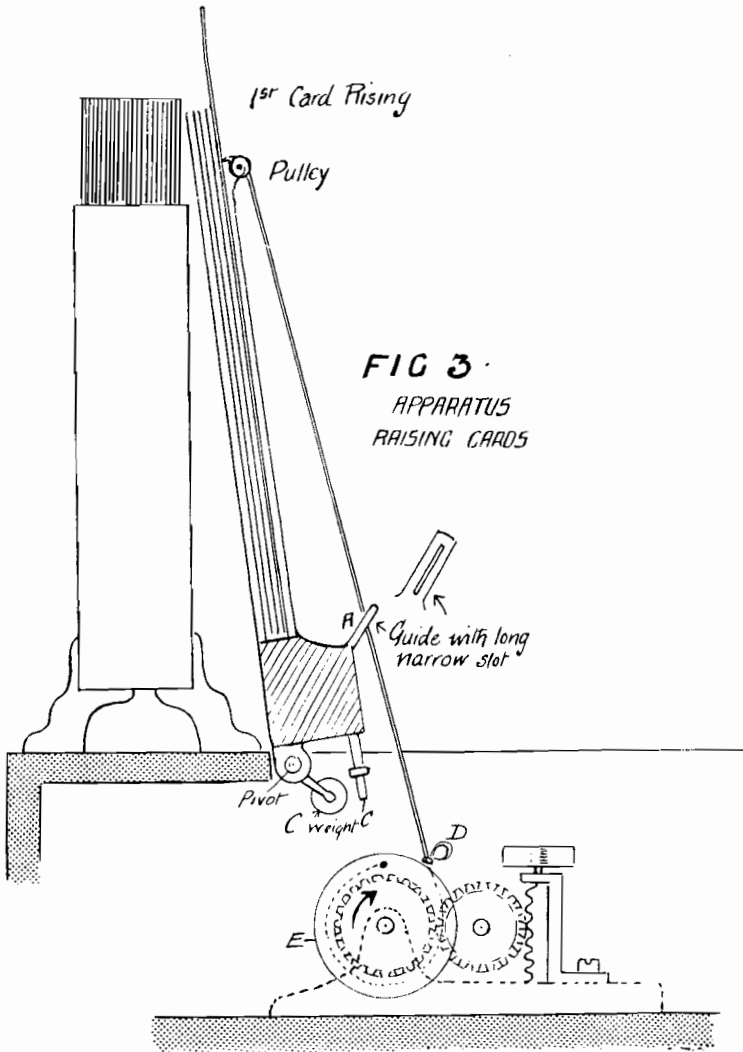
While the cards are rising the performer can stand where he pleases. He can walk round the table while the cards are rising. He does not need any assistant, and he can do the trick just as easily in a drawing-room as on a stage. I know of no other rising card trick which can be performed under such conditions. Now for the explanation.

The whole secret is in the table, in which there is a hidden

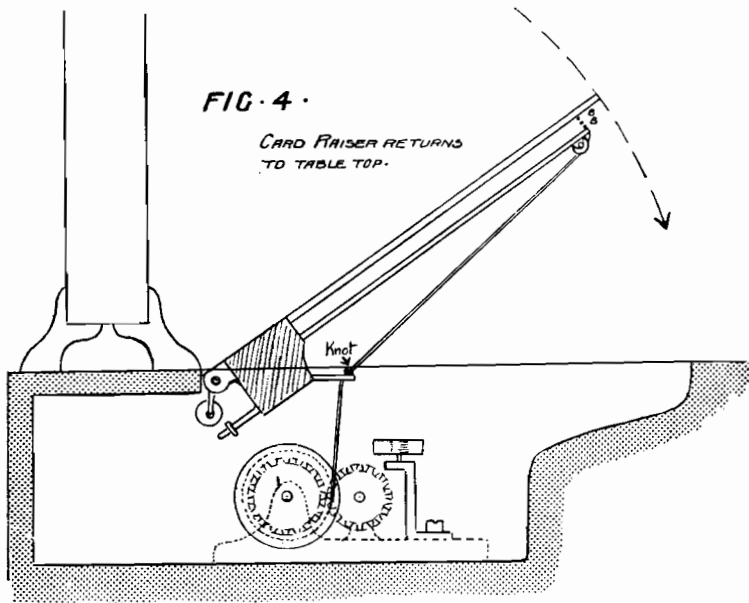
piece of apparatus. First of all, the cards which are to rise are forced in the usual way. Duplicates of these cards have been previously placed in the apparatus concealed in the table. These cards are "threaded" in the old way; that is to say, when the thread is pulled the cards are carried up one at a time by means of the thread.

Fig. 1 shows the mechanism of the apparatus. It will be seen that the "card raiser" works on a pivot, with a counter weight below it. When the conjurer places the houlette on the table, he easily depresses this counter weight through the cloth, and thus causes the "raiser" to come up below the cards. He also sets a little piece of





clock-work mechanism going. Fig. 2 shows how this draws up the "raiser." Note the little loop in the thread. When



the "raiser" is in position, this loop slips off the "raiser," and so the thread is ready to be wound up round the wheel, and the cards are forced to rise.

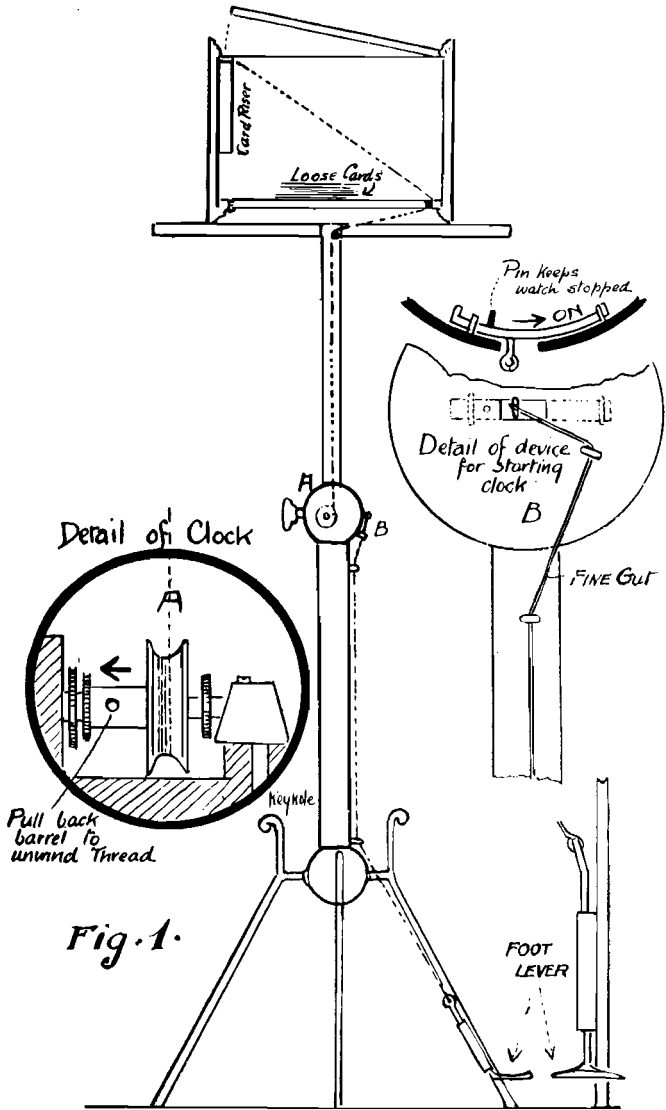
Now note in Fig. 3 the little guide, marked A, through which the thread passes. When the last card has risen, the thread is still pulled down until the thread is stopped by means of a knot in it. The knot is so large that it will not pass through the guide (see Fig. 4). The conjurer stops the clock-work mechanism at this point, and the apparatus sinks down into the table again by means of the counter weight at its base. Then the conjurer can lift the houlette once more from the table and show it, and place it on one side. If necessary, he can use the table for the next trick.

The Rising Card Box.

Invented by WILL GOLDSTON.

This is another version of the rising card trick. It differs from the others in that, after three or more cards have been chosen and returned to the pack, all the cards are placed in a glass box. The lid of the box is then closed, and the box is placed on a small glass-topped table. Yet, when the conjurer calls for the selected cards, the lid of the box mysteriously opens, and the cards rise one by one from the interior. After the first card has made its appearance, the lid remains open till all the cards have risen from the box.

The conjurer can begin by taking the glass box from the table and opening both the top and bottom of it, and pushing his hand right through, thus proving that there is no mechanical apparatus concealed in the box. For all that, however, there is a little piece of apparatus concealed in the front of the box. It is a small metal "card riser." This is a simple arrangement of little sheets of metal, the same size as a card, with tiny rollers on the top. This "riser" takes the place of the ordinary arrangement of threaded cards, and the cards which are to rise are placed in this metal "riser" exactly as they would be in the usual threaded cards. The thread passes over the little rollers, and thus the process of making the cards rise is facilitated. The box is made of frosted glass, and the card "riser" fixed to the front of the box is not seen by the audience. If by any chance anyone in the front row of the stalls should see a darkish shadow in the front of the box, they will take it to be the pack of cards which the performer places in the box after the three cards have been chosen and returned to the pack. By the way, in placing the cards in the box, the

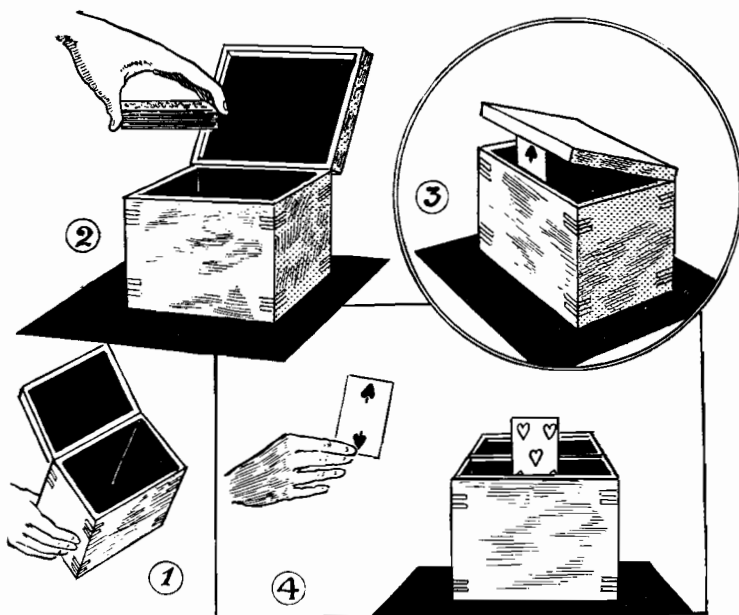


conjurer opens the bottom of the box and then reverses it before he places it on the table. All this time, of course, the thread is allowed to be slack.

A glance at the accompanying illustrations will show the setting of the thread. It passes from the top of the "riser" to the bottom corner of the box opposite to it, and is then carried down the leg of the table to a little clock concealed in a fitting half-way down the table. This fitting appears to be merely a joint at which the table can be raised or lowered. This clock is of very simple construction, as will be seen from the illustration of the works. After it is wound up a small pin is inserted to keep it from going. The end of this pin projects slightly from the leg of the table. A thread is fastened to the pin, and is carried down the leg of the table nearly to the floor of the stage. It is attached to a small foot-lever, and thus the conjurer can start the clock which winds up the thread at any moment he pleases. The advantage of this arrangement is that the conjurer can move the table during any part of the performance, and can work the trick without any assistance. I should add that when the first card has caused the lid of the box to rise a little way, a powerful spring raises the lid for the rest of the distance until it is wide open.

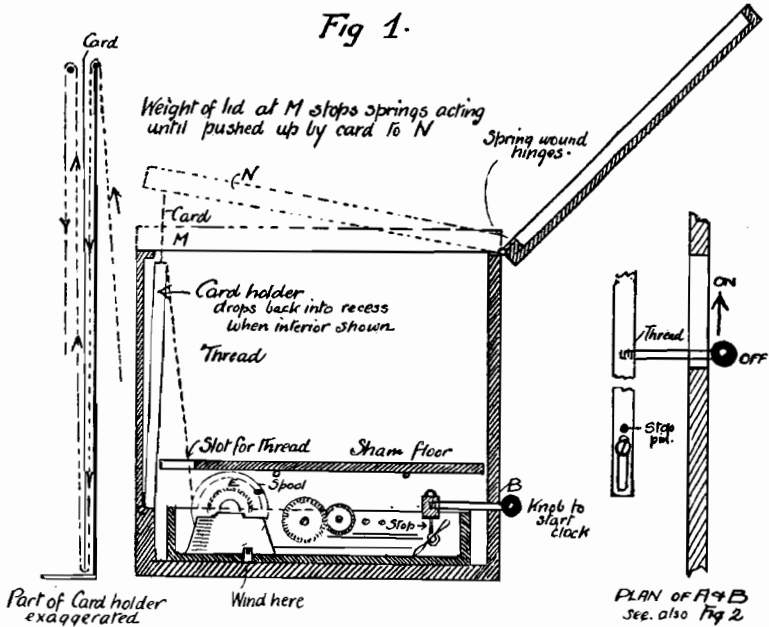
Cards Rising from a Closed Box.

The inventor of this trick desired to go one better than the ordinary rising card trick. With that end in view he contrived a way of making cards rise from a pack after the pack had been placed in a box and the lid had been closed. His problem was to make the lid of the box open



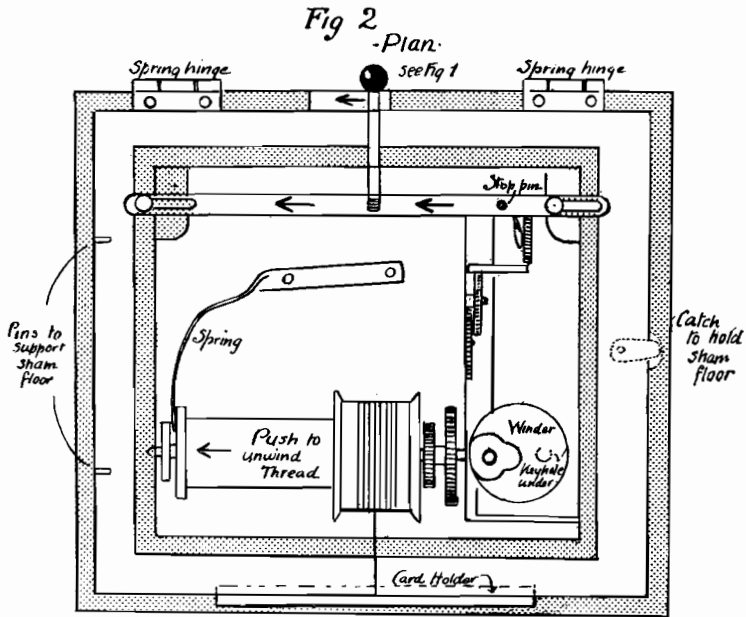
automatically and the cards rise from the interior, and I think when my readers have mastered the details of the working of the trick in this form they will agree that the inventor solved the problem most satisfactorily.

The inventor produced two boxes. One has the top and bottom made of glass, and both top and bottom are hinged. The conjurer is thus able to show the audience the whole of the interior of the box, and to allow them to see right through the box. The other box is a plain wooden one. It can be opened and held up to the audience, but it cannot be handled quite so freely as the first box. The actual working details of the mechanism which causes the



cards to rise and open the lid of the box are practically the same in both cases, the main difference being in the position of the clock-work which makes the cards rise. In the case of the first box, the clock is in the back of the box; in the second, it is well concealed under the bottom of the box.

I need not go into details regarding the selecting of the cards by the audience; my readers will understand that for the trick under notice the cards must be forced. Cards similar to those that are forced are placed in a little holder concealed in the front of the box. An examination of the detailed illustrations of the working of the wooden box will



show that the cards which are to rise are threaded in the old-fashioned way, but that instead of the thread being pulled by the performer or his assistant, it is wound on a spool by means of a clock-work piece of mechanism concealed under the sham floor of the box. A small knob at the back of the box is connected by a rod with the mechanism, and the conjurer can start or stop the clock-work with one movement of his thumb.

When the conjurer wishes to show the interior of the box at the beginning of the trick, he holds up the box in the way shown in the illustration, and the card holder is then concealed in a recess in the front of the box. The conjurer then closes the lid, and has cards chosen from the

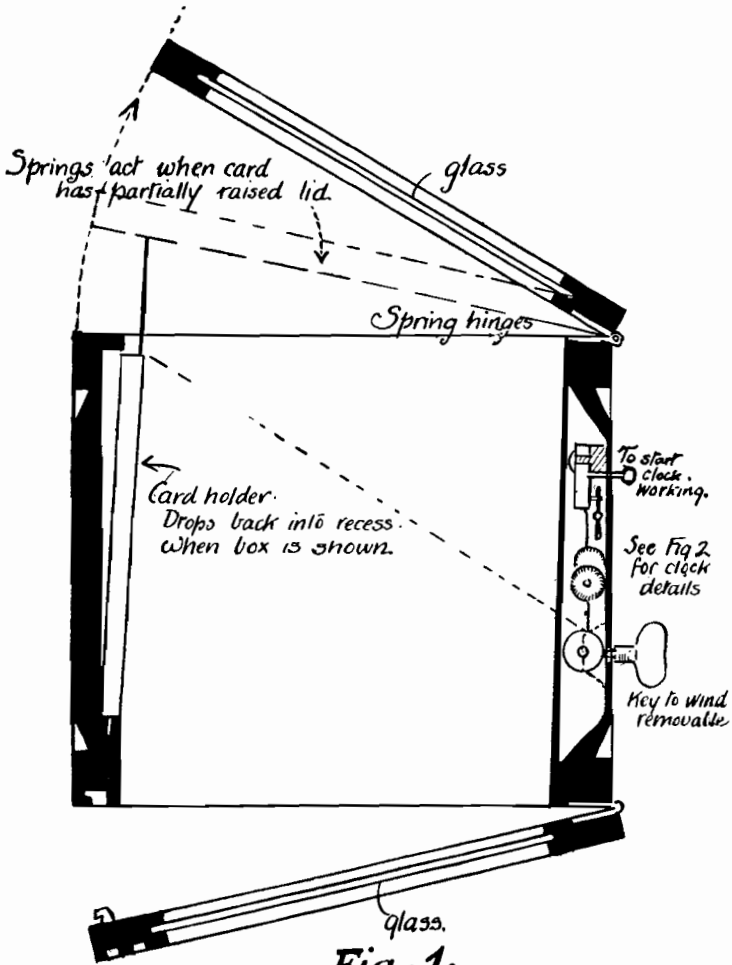
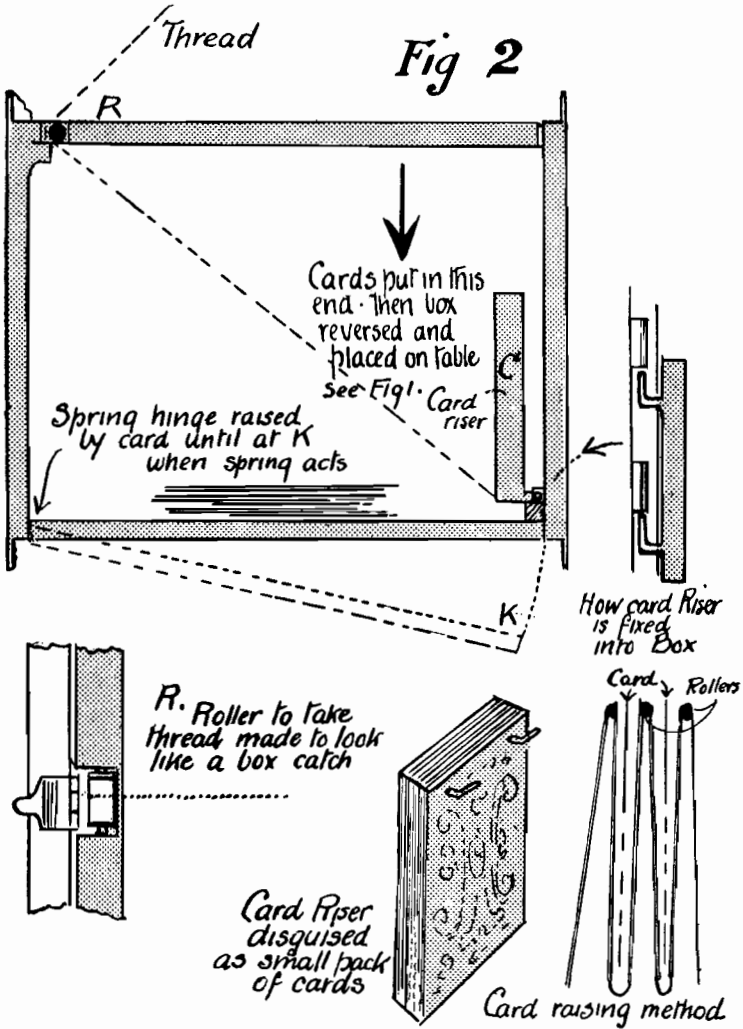


Fig 2



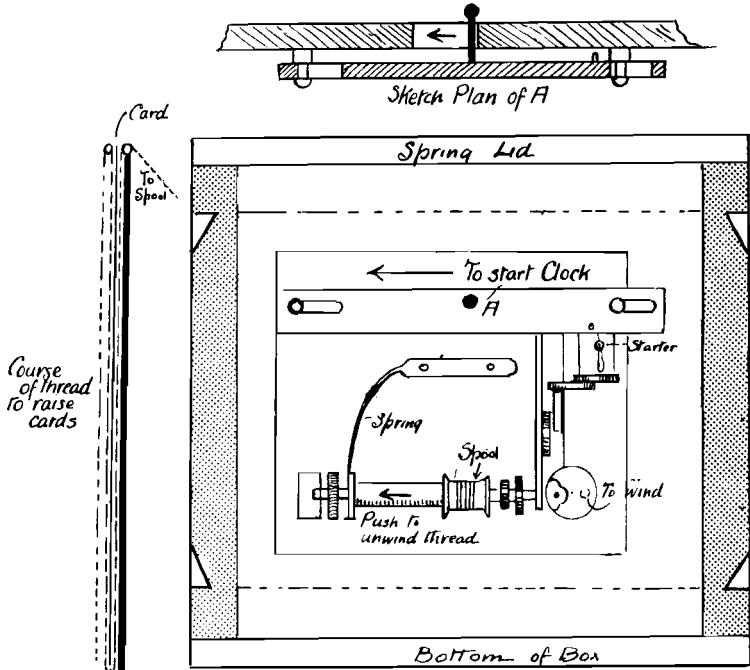


Fig 2. Back of box removed.

pack and returned to it. The cards are then put in the box, the lid is closed, and the conjurer sets the clock working. The first card forces the lid open a little way, and it is carried the rest of the way by means of two spring hinges.

The glass-topped box is worked in the same way, but the mechanism is in the back of the box. The thread from the card holder is thus carried from the front across the box to the back, but the top and bottom of the box can be opened with the thread in position without any fear that the trick will be given away. The thread is practically invisible in such circumstances. A grey thread is the best to use.

A Complete Watch Act.

NOW EXPLAINED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

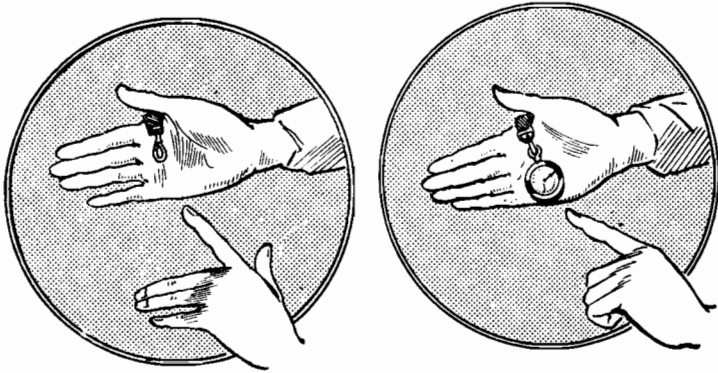
The following explanation of a well-known watch and clock act will, I am sure, be regarded by many conjurers as one of the tit-bits of this volume. There is really enough material in this act to make at least an hour's conjuring entertainment, but most performers would prefer to present it in the shortest possible time. Possibly some readers will like to select various items from this act, and, of course, there is no reason why this should not be done.

I will describe the items separately, leaving my readers to arrange them in any order they please.

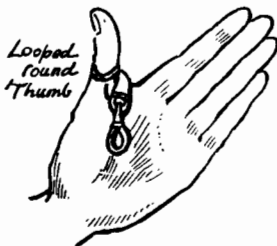
A WATCH PRODUCTION.

The performer shows his right hand, with a fob hanging down on the palm from the thumb and first finger. Suddenly a watch appears on the end of the fob, and the performer takes it off and openly places it on the table. He continues the movement until he has produced a large number of watches.

The fob is a double-ended one, and it is fastened to the thumb by means of a loop. At the commencement of the act the end of the fob hanging behind the hand has a watch on it; the other end of the fob is hanging on the palm of the hand. Making a grab in the air, the conjurer contrives to swing the watch round into his hand, and he brings up



the left hand to take it off the fob. The audience have seen the watch apparently produced from nowhere at the end of the fob; what they have not seen is the movement of the performer's left hand in going to the bottom of his waistcoat and getting a watch from that place. He palmed this watch in his left hand and brought his hand up to the right, and apparently took the watch from the fob and put



Palm



Back

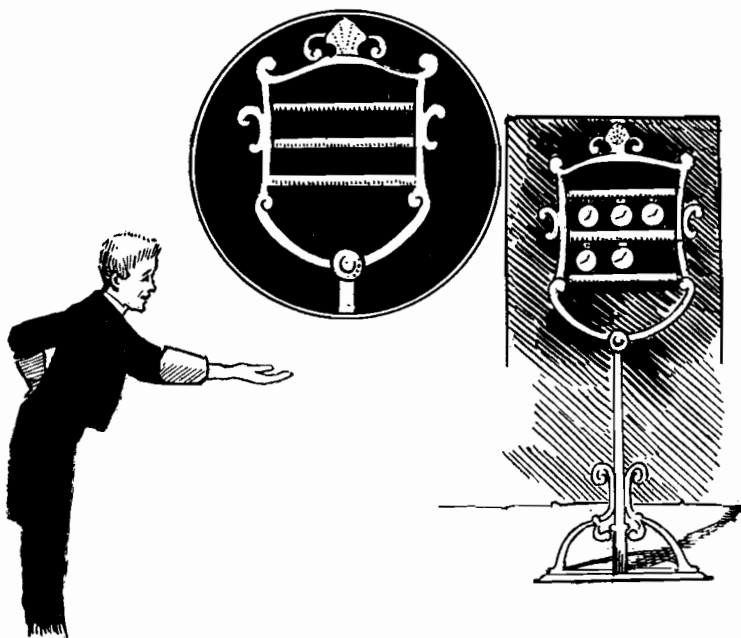


Securing another watch while producing first.

it on the table. What he really did was to swing the watch to the back of his hand again, show the empty end of the fob, and produce simultaneously the watch that he had palmed in his left hand. By continuing these moves the performer is able to produce a quantity of watches.

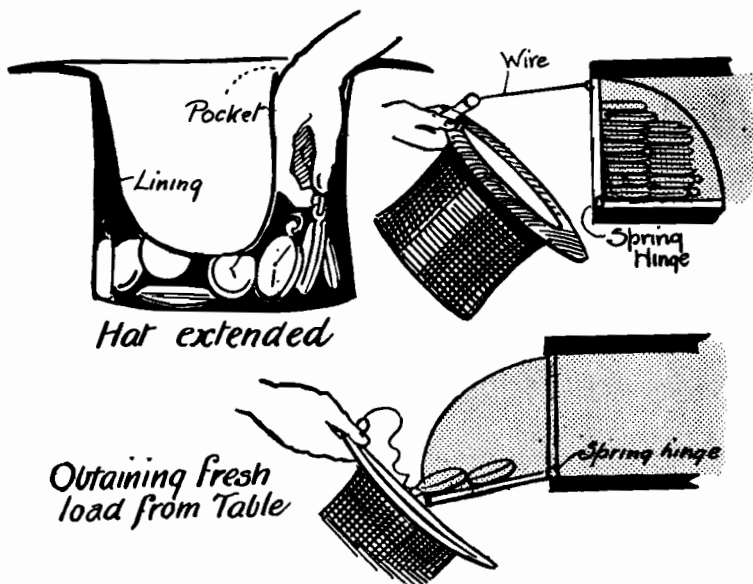
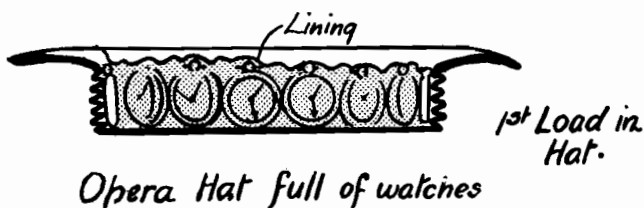
WATCHES ON THE SHIELD.

The performer shows a small shield resting on a high stand. The shield has three metal bars running across it. Picking up a watch, the conjurer throws it at the shield, where it duly appears, hanging from one of the bars. He continues to do this with nine watches.



The disappearance of the watches from the performer's hand can be effected in a variety of ways. Some of them can be dealt with by means of the old French drop or tourniquet pass, and can then be dropped into the performer's





profonde and pochette, or can be concealed on a servante; others can be got rid of by means of a black art table fitted with several small wells.

The duplicate watches are, of course, concealed on the stand. The stand has a black cloth similar to that on the stage, and behind each bar is a series of small pockets, each big enough to hold a watch. The watches are kept in their

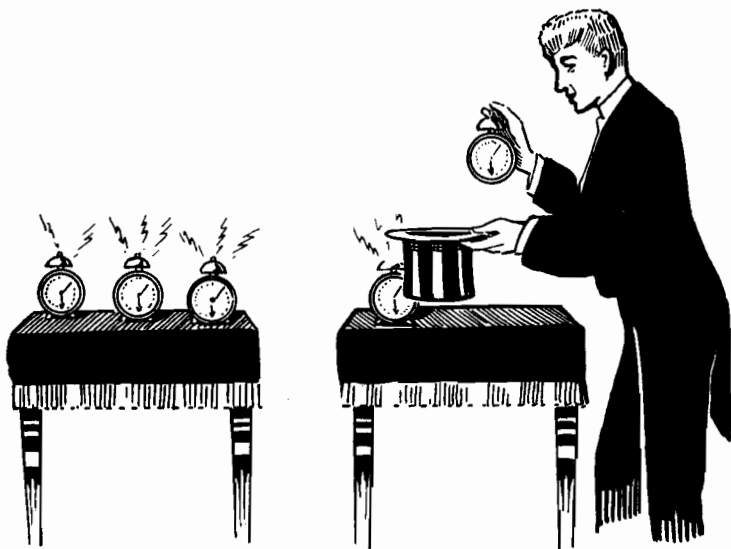
positions partly by means of curved nickel bars (see illustrations), and partly by threads running along the bars. When the threads are pulled the watches drop one by one, and are seen hanging from the bars.

SCORES OF WATCHES FROM AN EMPTY OPERA HAT.

This is the effect that the conjurer produces, but, as a matter of fact, the hat is not quite so empty—if there can be degrees of emptiness—in the first place as it seems. The hat can be shown in its crushed-up form, and most people will take it for an empty hat, but, as a matter of fact, it is fitted with a false lining, and between this and the hat proper a number of watches are concealed. The performer merely finds the opening to the false lining when he has extended the hat, and takes out the watches one at a time. In the act of taking out the last watch, the conjurer gets the hat near the back of his table, and immediately he has it out of sight is able to load the hat with watches by means of the special servante which is concealed in the table. This servante is really a kind of drawer, kept closed in the first place by means of a spring hinge. The conjurer takes hold of a wire attached to the drawer, and pulls it down. The watches slide into the hat. The load can be secured with one hand.

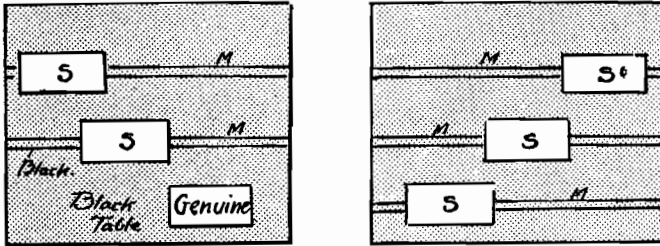
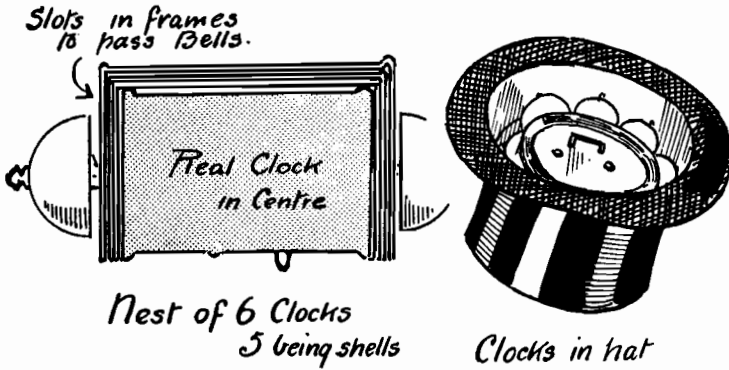
PRODUCTION OF SIX ALARM CLOCKS.

The production of six alarm clocks from an empty hat is not a new effect, but the production of six clocks that will ring undoubtedly is a novelty.



I need not go into the numerous ways of getting the load into the hat; the main difficulty is this: How can one get six practical clocks into the hat? The problem is not so difficult when you discover that only one of the clocks is a real one; the remaining five are really cases which "nest" in the hat in the usual way. Slots are cut in each case to give a free passage to the bells when the clocks are produced from the hat.

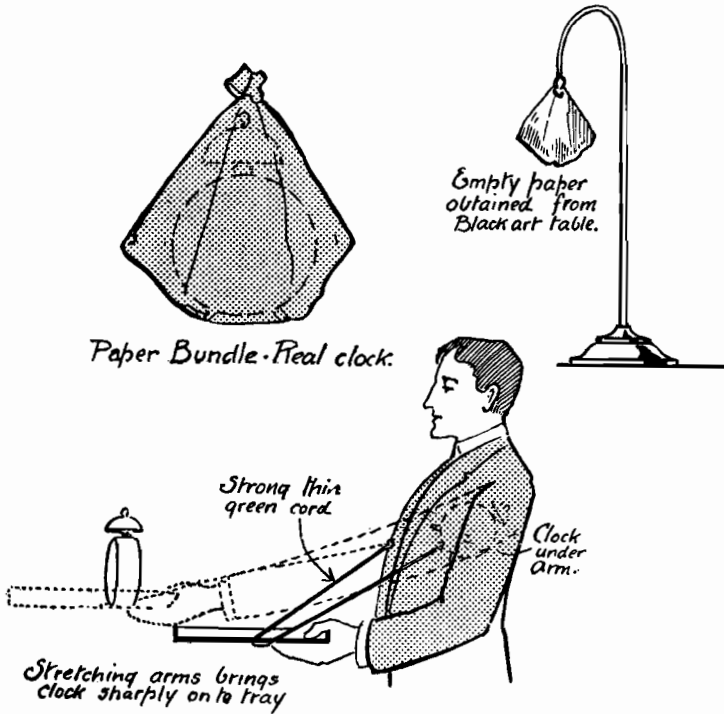
The real clock is made to ring in the usual way. When the other clocks are produced they are placed on the table, and concealed in the top of the table are metal bands, connected with electric switches. These are set ringing by an assistant under the stage.



Plan of the Two Tables
S. Clock shells · M. Metal strips connected to switches

THE FLYING ALARM CLOCK.

The conjurer takes one of the alarm clocks from the table and wraps it in a paper bag. He hangs the parcel on a hook on a stout rod standing in the centre of the stage; his assistant stands with a tray at the side of the stage. Firing at the paper parcel, the conjurer blows it to atoms, and



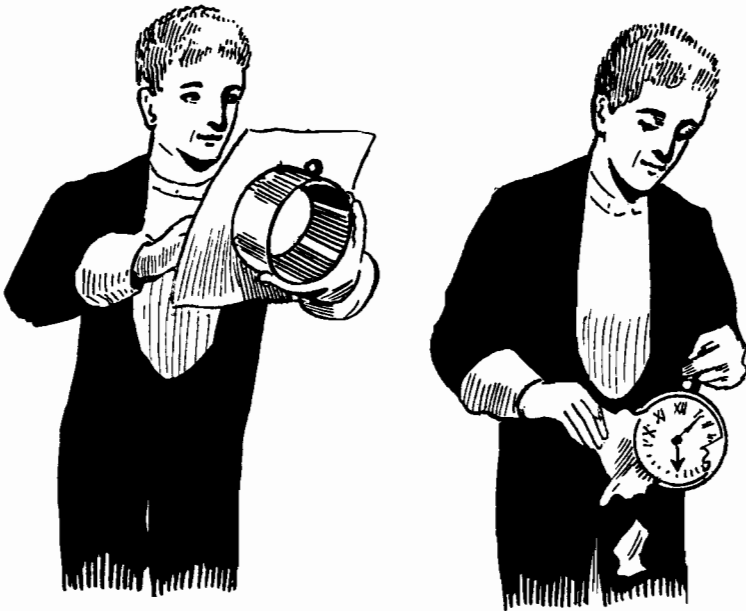
then points to the assistant's tray; the audience see that the clock has arrived there.

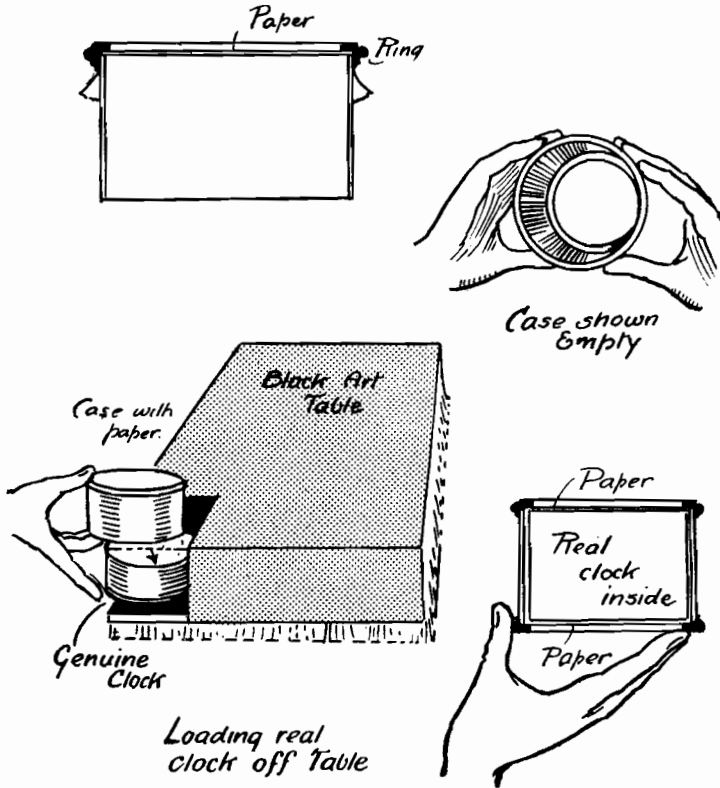
The parcel containing the clock is, of course, substituted for another parcel—an empty paper. The simplest way of effecting this change is to use the well of an art table or a servante on a chair. The explosion of the revolver blows the paper to fragments. The assistant has the clock which is to appear under his arm. This clock has a long piece of

thin green cord (or fish line) attached to it. The other end of the cord is passed through a hole in the tray, up through another hole, and is fastened to the assistant's arm. By merely stretching out his arms he causes the clock to appear on the tray.

MAKING AN ALARM CLOCK.

The conjurer shows the outer rim of the case of an alarm clock, and covers it with a sheet of white paper. He fixes the paper by means of another rim of metal, slightly larger, which he presses over the paper. He treats the other side





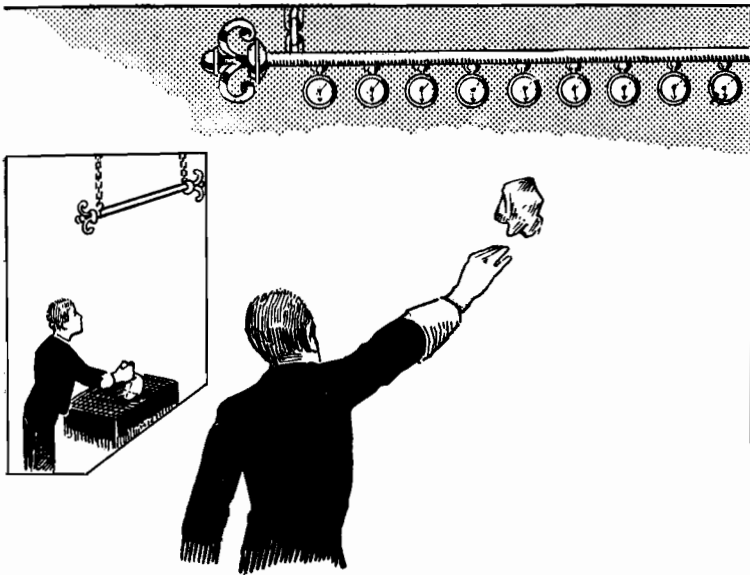
of the rim in the same way. Finally he tears away all the paper, and shows a real clock, and, getting a bell from his pocket, he fits it on the clock and starts it ringing.

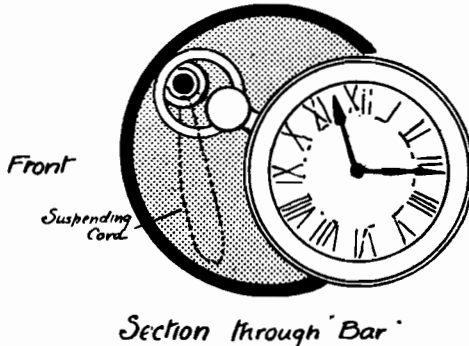
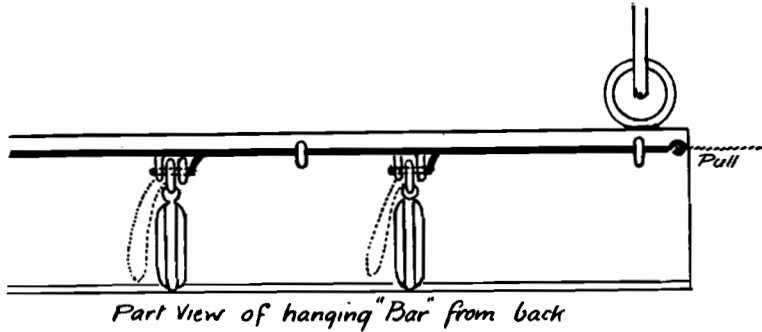
The trick is really done after the first piece of paper has been placed in position. The performer places the clock on the top of a black art table, and, as the performer takes it up again, he slides it over a real clock on a servante at the corner of the back of the table, and picks up the two together. He then fastens the second paper on the rim. The rest needs no explanation.

WATCHES BY INVISIBLE POST.

Taking a number of watches from a table, the conjurer wraps them in a piece of paper, making a large bundle. He suddenly throws this parcel at a bar or trapeze hanging in the centre of the stage, and simultaneously the watches are seen hanging from the bar.

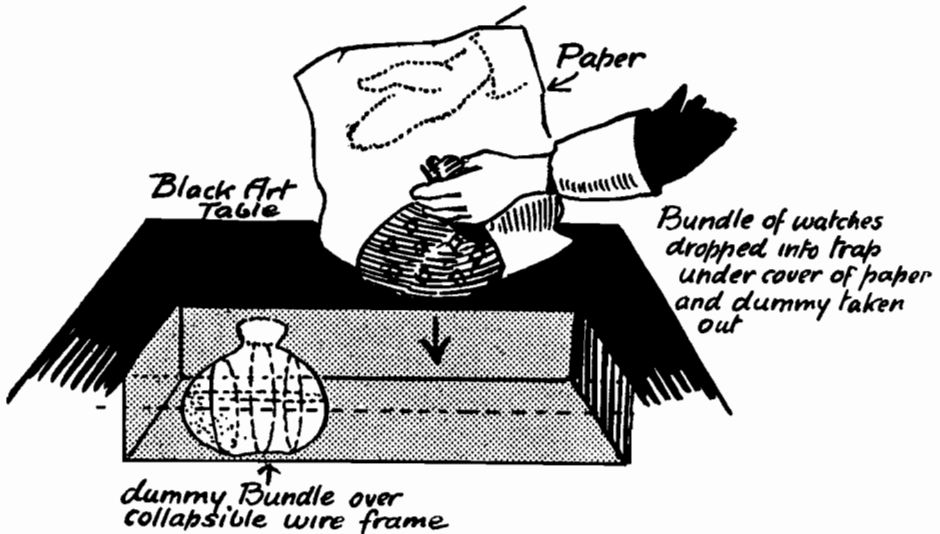
In making the parcel the conjurer naturally has to use several sheets of paper, and in packing up the last he holds it for a second in front of the parcel of watches, while he lowers them on to a servante at the back of his table—or drops them into a trap in the table—and at the same time picks up a dummy parcel filled out with a little wire frame,





which can be closed by pressing it with the hand. He makes this parcel collapse while he throws it at the hanging bar.

The bar is much larger than it appears to be from the front. A rod is fitted to the back of it, and the watches are placed on horizontal hooks in the rod. These hooks engage in little staples in the bar, and consequently, when the rod is withdrawn slightly, the watches fall. They would drop to the floor if they were not attached to the staples of the bar by means of threads, and, therefore, directly the rod

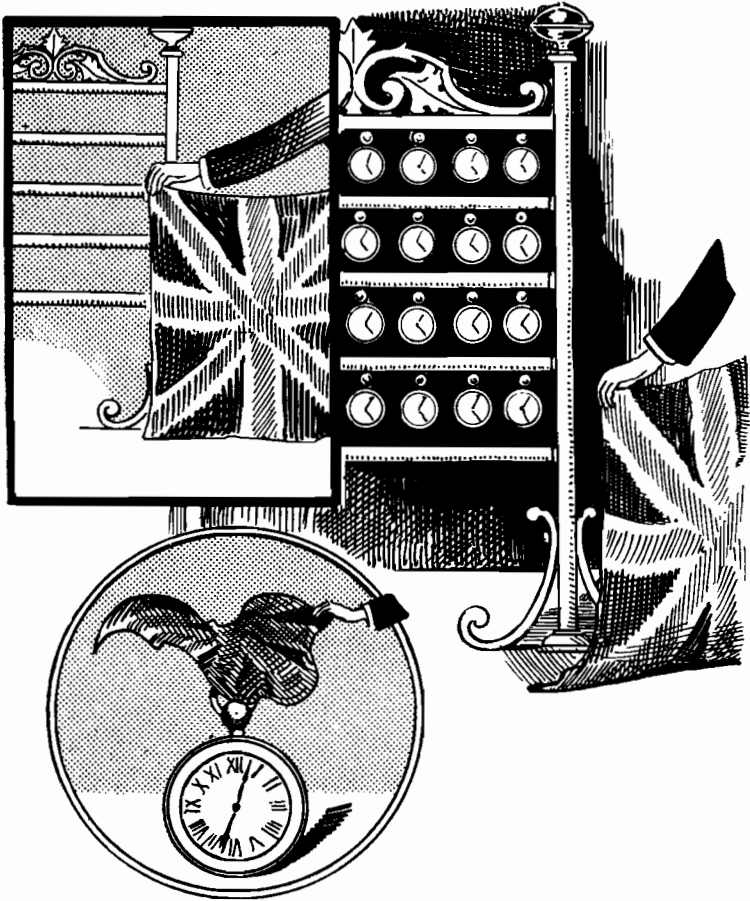


is pulled out an inch—by means of a thread carried out to the wings—all the watches appear hanging from the bar.

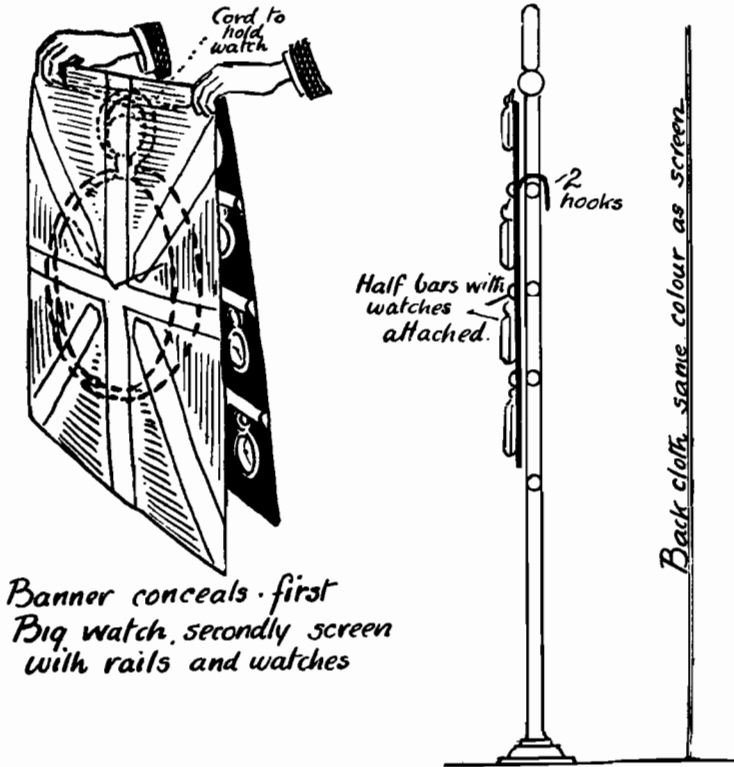
A WATCH AND CLOCK PRODUCTION.

This makes a very fine finish to a watch act. The performer points to a large empty stand on the stage, and, picking up a Union Jack, holds it for a moment in front of the stand on which about a couple of dozen watches immediately appear. The flag is placed for a moment on a table, and when the conjurer removes it a very large clock is seen on the table.

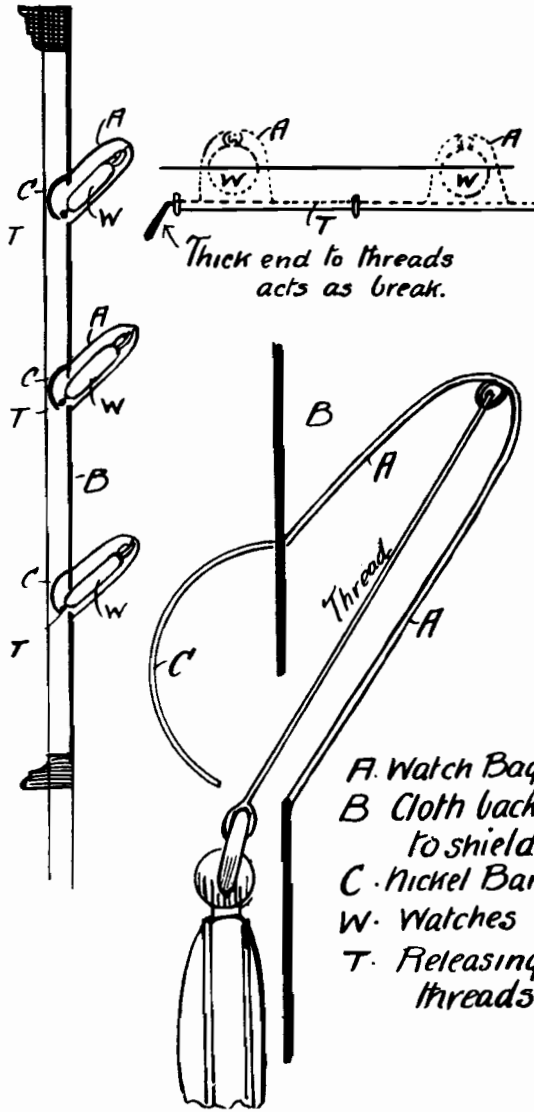
The flag is a double one, and the clock and all the watches are concealed in it. The clock is merely held by having a cord passed through the ring at the top. The conjurer holds both ends of the cord when he is holding the top of the flag



(see illustration). The screen by which the watches are to be produced is backed with cloth similar to that of the back cloth of the stage. The screen has metal bars—or, rather, half-bars—with watches attached, and the screen covers one side of a Union Jack. The screen with the watches and



bars are masked by the second Union Jack, and the big clock is held between the two. Thus the performer can show both sides of the flag when he brings it on the stage. The flag at the back is fitted with two hooks, and when the performer wishes to produce the watches, he merely hooks the flag on the stand, thus showing the watches. The audience see also the half-bars across the screen, and suppose



that they are looking at the stand as it was at the beginning of the performance. Directly the watches have been produced, the conjurer casually places the flag on a table (with a very thin top), and when he whisks it away leaves the clock on the table.

The Stool and the Prophet.

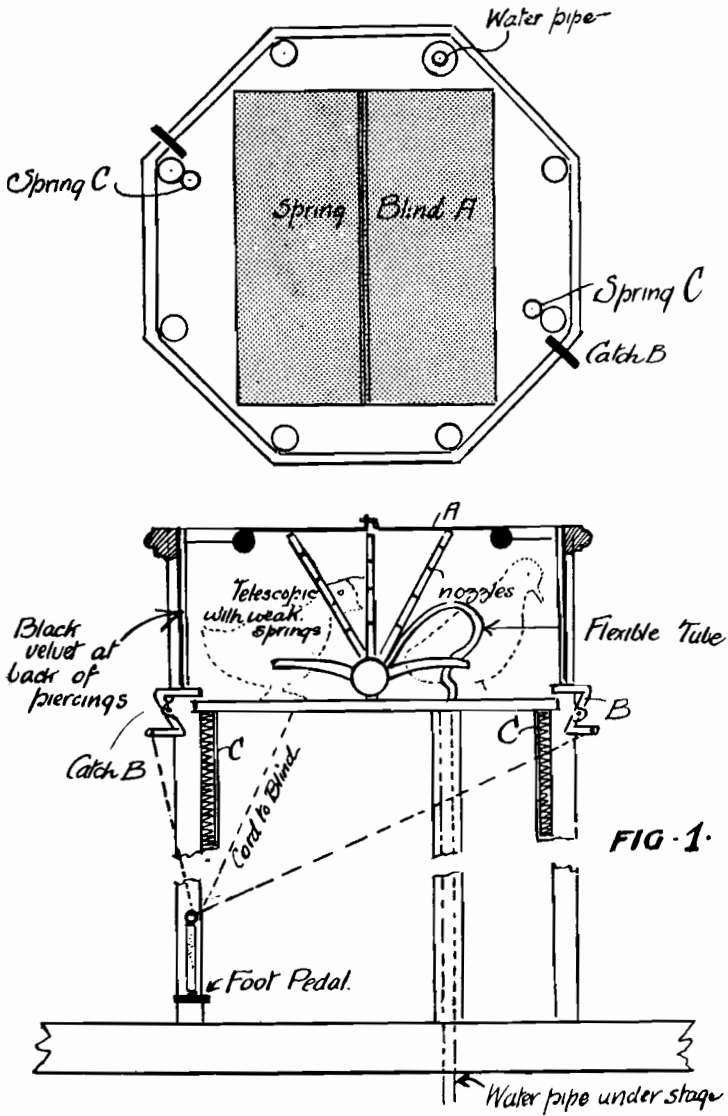
Invented by WILL GOLDSTON.

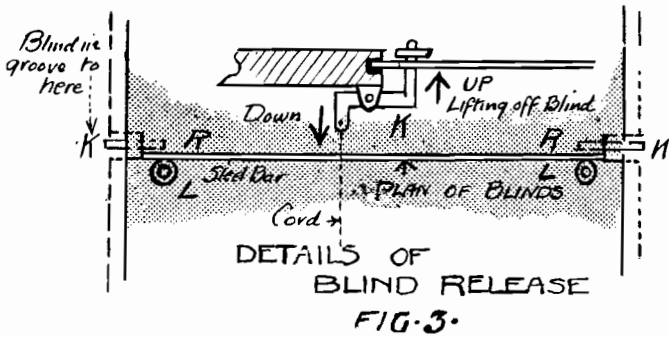
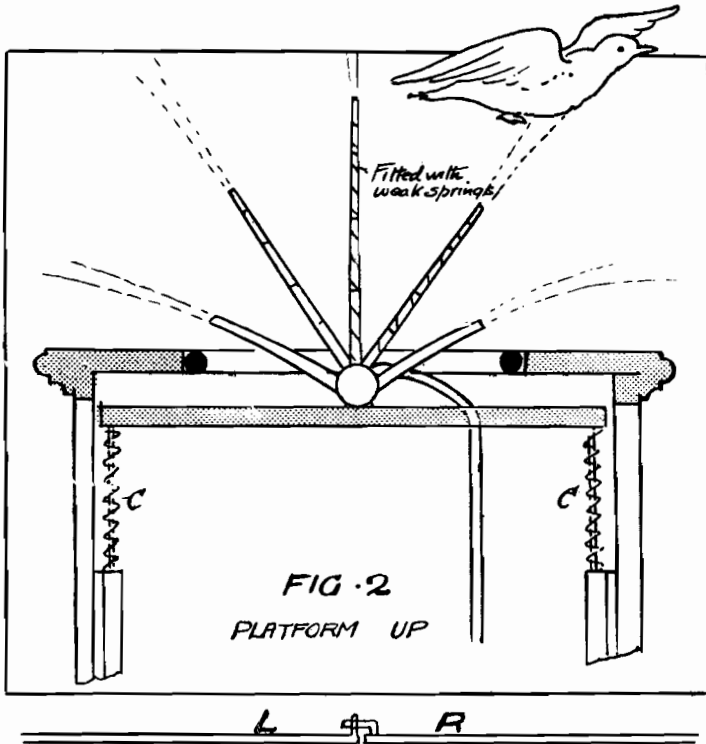
The performer, dressed in Eastern costume, points with his wand to a small stool in the centre of the stage. Then, waving his wand over the stool, he causes a fountain of water to shoot out from the stool, and a number of birds suddenly appear and fly away through the fountain.

A glance at Fig. 1 will show how beautifully simple is the working of the illusion. The top of the stool is covered with a black spring blind, and one of the legs of the stool is in reality a water pipe connected with a pipe beneath the stage.

There are five small tubes through which the water passes in the stool. These tubes are telescopic, and around each one is a weak spiral spring. When the blind on the top of the stool is closed, these little tubes are prevented by the top of the blind from extending, but directly the blind is drawn the springs carry the tubes upwards. At the same time the birds are released from the top of the table.

The blind is worked by means of a foot pedal near the bottom of one of the legs (see Fig. 1). The same movement which causes the blind to spring back also releases a small platform, which, being pressed up by springs, rises to the





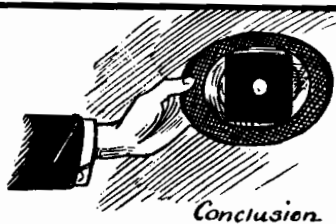
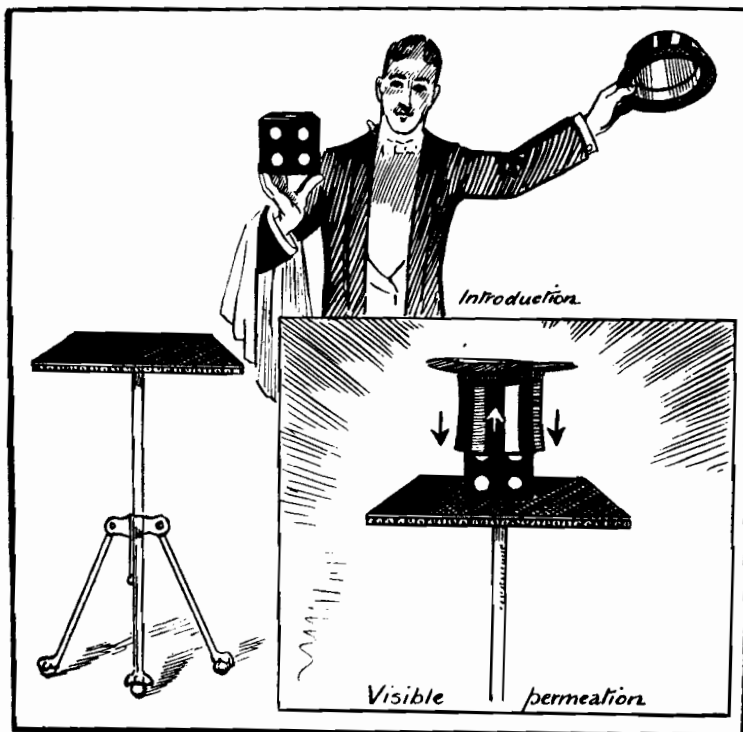
top of the stool. Thus all the audience see when the fountain is playing and the birds have flown is the stool, with the nozzles of the fountain projecting from the top.

Fig. 2 shows the appearance of the stool when the spring platform is up, and Fig. 3 shows the details of the catch and release of the blind. The two sides of the blind run in grooves; to the free end of one half of the blind is attached a small ring, which passes over a small pin on the other half of the blind. If one end of the catch K be pulled down, the other end lifts the ring off the pin, and the two sides of the blind, working on spring rollers, go back immediately, and the interior of the stool is also opened. This is an ideal illusion for a silent performer.

The New Die and Hat Trick.

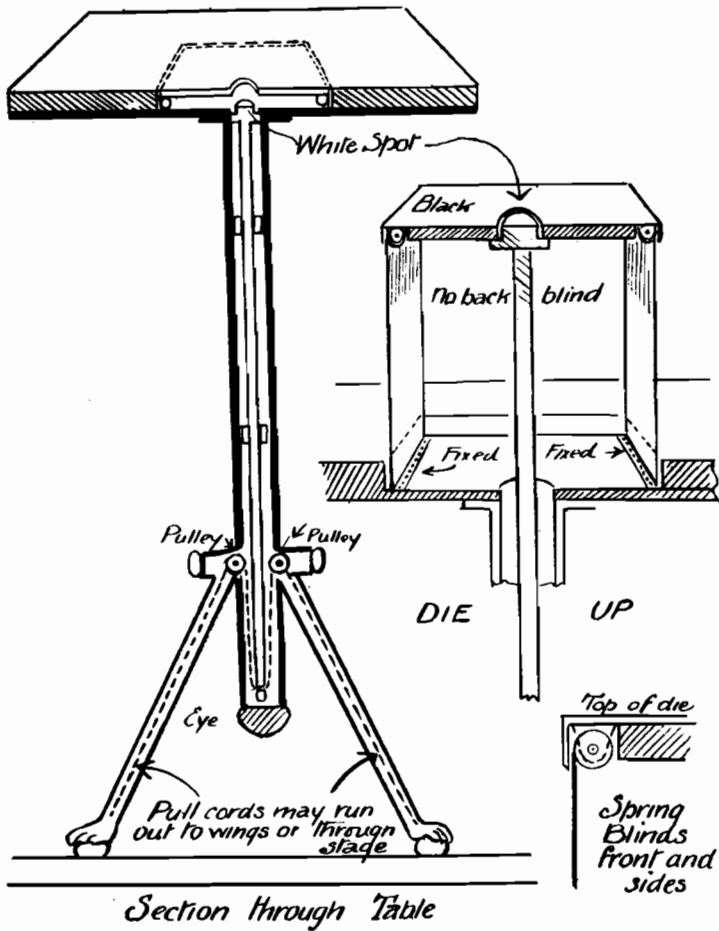
Having shown a solid die and an empty silk hat, the conjurer places the die on the table and rests the hat, crown downwards, on the top of it. Presently the hat begins to sink, and when it rests on the table the conjurer picks it up and takes the die from the interior of the hat. The top of the table is quite blank.

Unknown to the audience, there is another die—a sham one. The front and sides of this die are in reality roller blinds fixed to the top of the die, and this top is controlled by a rod that goes through the centre of the table, and can be pulled up from the wings or below the stage (see illustration of a section of the table). Thus, when the hat is on the top of the sham die, and this die is slowly lowered, the

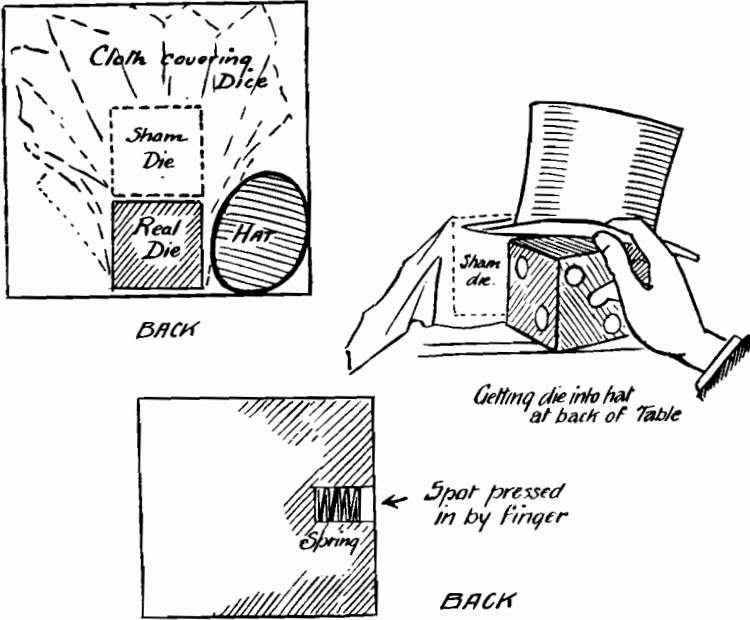


spring blinds roll upwards and the hat sinks. The white spot that would show if left on the table is attached to the centre rod, and thus it can be lowered out of sight.

There are two ways of getting the die into the hat.



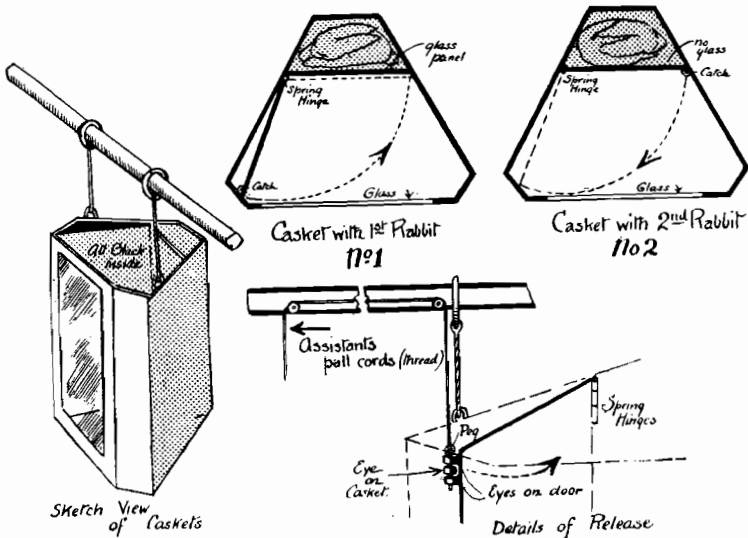
After showing the die, place it on the table and show the hat, and simply pass in front of the table. In doing so slip the die into the hat. Simultaneously the assistant can cause the sham die to rise, and the performer places the hat on the top of the sham die.



The other method, which is here illustrated, is to throw a handkerchief over the real die, and leave it for a moment while showing the hat. The performer can then return to the table, secretly pick up the die by putting the second finger into the movable spot in the centre (see illustration), and take off the cloth and show that the die is still there. Of course, by this time the sham die has been brought up into position, and it is this which the audience see while the conjurer quietly gets the real die into the hat, and then places the hat, crown downwards, on the top of the sham die.

The Changing Rabbit.

Invented by CHEFALO.



Two assistants, dressed as Chinamen, come on to the stage carrying a long bamboo pole on their shoulders. Suspended on the pole are two glass boxes. The performer places a white rabbit into one of the boxes and fires his revolver at it, when it immediately travels invisibly to the other box.

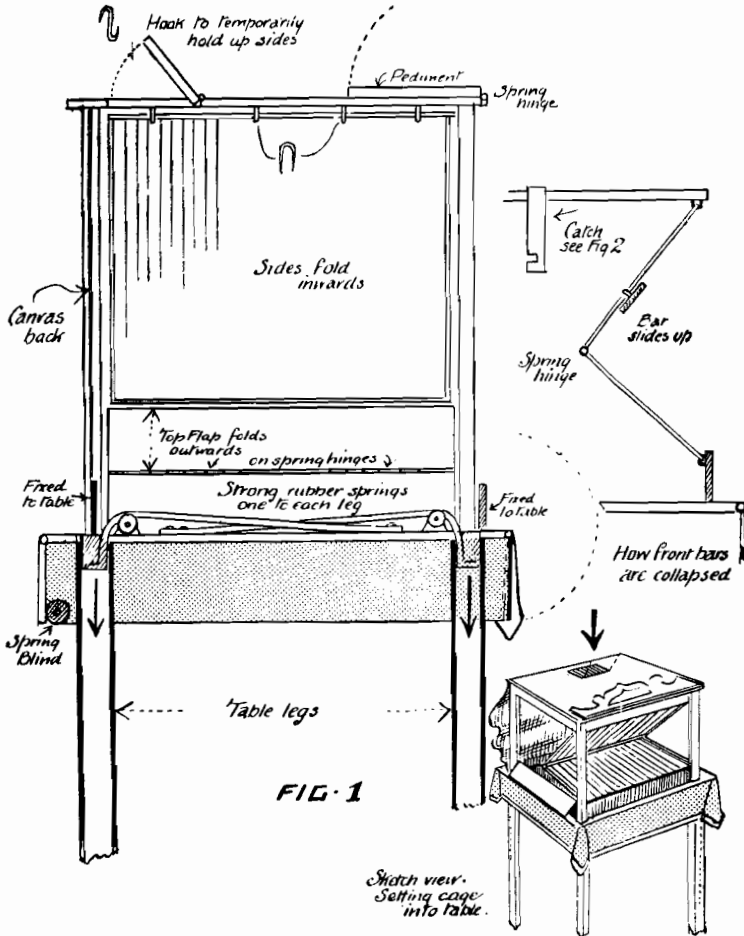
The construction of the caskets is shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The conjurer places a white rabbit in No. 1 box, but behind the glass panel, so that it is kept at the back of the box. Another white rabbit is already concealed behind a spring black velvet shutter in No. 2 box.

Threads are connected to the catches in the boxes, and are carried down the poles to the assistants. When the performer fires, one man releases the shutter of No. 1 box and the other assistant does the same with the shutter of No. 2 box. Thus one rabbit is immediately hidden and the other exposed, the latter coming at once to the front of the box.

The Magical Production of a Large Aviary.

Invented by MONTAGUE ALBERT.

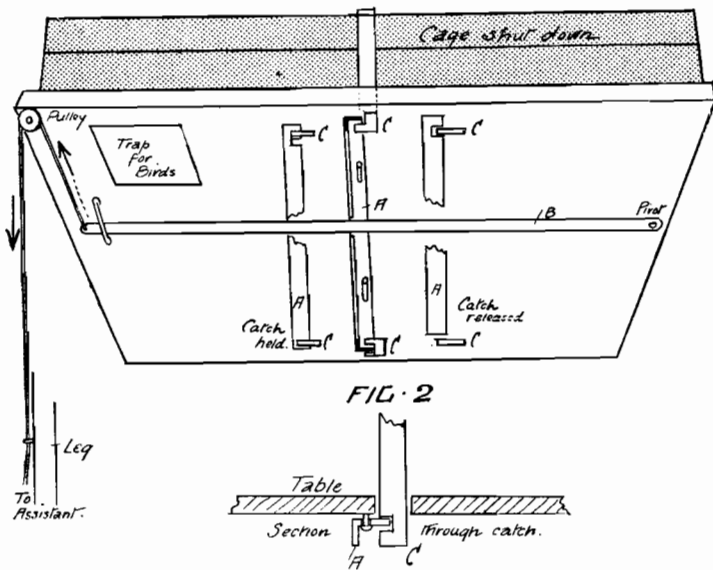
This startling effect will, I think, be something of a "puzzler," even to those who know something of the ways in which magical effects are produced. The conjurer comes on to the stage with a large cloth on his arm. He merely

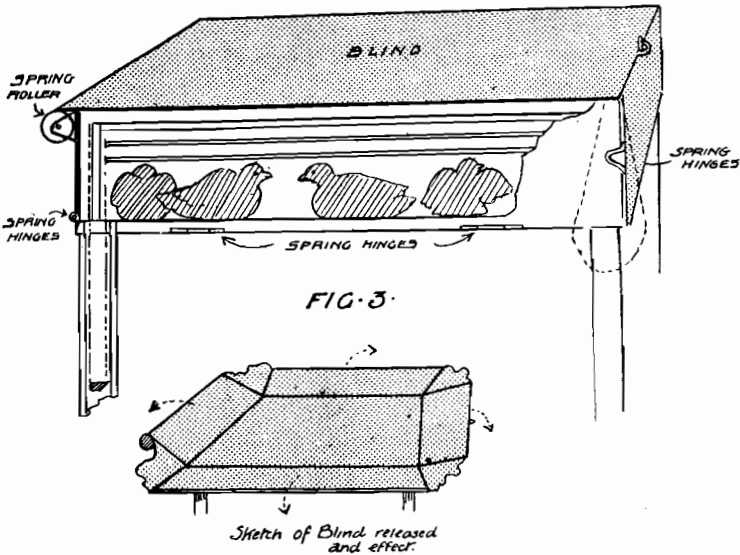


waves this cloth in front of his table, and immediately a large aviary, full of live birds, is seen on the table. The top of the table is very thin, and there does not seem to be any place of concealment for the cage or the birds.

And yet both the cage and the birds are in the table all the time. Fig. 1 shows how the sides of the table are made to fold inwards. The little bar in the centre of the front conceals a spring hinge; the front of the cage is thus made to divide in half and fold up. The back is made of canvas. The four posts of the cage are sunk into the hollow legs of the table, and they are caused to rise when required by means of strong rubber springs, the action of which is clearly shown in the illustrations.

When the cage is shut up it is held in place by means of one catch under the table (see Fig. 2), and the whole thing





is covered with a spring blind (see Fig. 3). When the blind is released the cage rises suddenly, and the sides of the table fall away, thus making the table top seem to be exactly as it was in the first place (see Fig. 3).

The birds are, of course, placed in the cage before the performance, and immediately the cage is released they come up through a trap in the table and fill the cage. It will be noted that the cage must be a fixture—that is to say, the cage cannot be lifted away from the table.

The action of the sides of the table is similar to that of the sides of the table made for the production of a large bowl of water. The sides are first stood up, as it were, on their hinges, and are kept in place by a blind stretched across the top of the table. When this blind is released, the sides fall down and the cage springs up into position. The top

of the table—which is then the bottom of the cage—is thus slightly lower than the faked top in the first instance, but the small difference in the height of the table is not likely to be noticed by anyone.

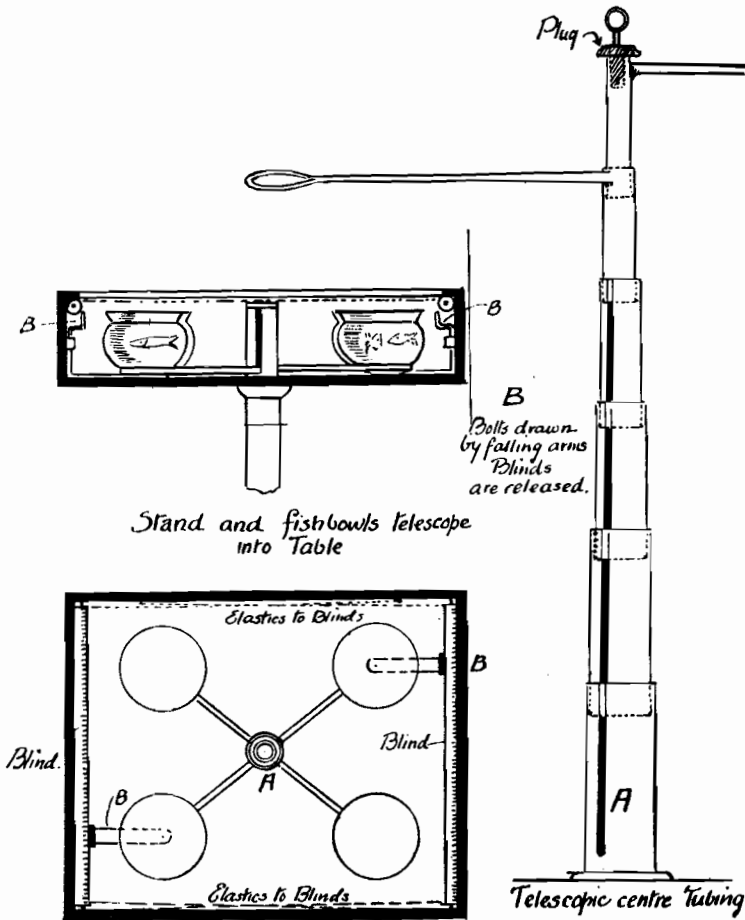
The New Fish Bowl Trick.

Invented by CONRADI.

The old fish-bowl trick is so well known, even to the most unsophisticated audiences, that only a very inexperienced performer would ever dream of presenting it. The trick in its new form, however, will come as a great surprise, even to those acquainted with the working of the trick in its old form.

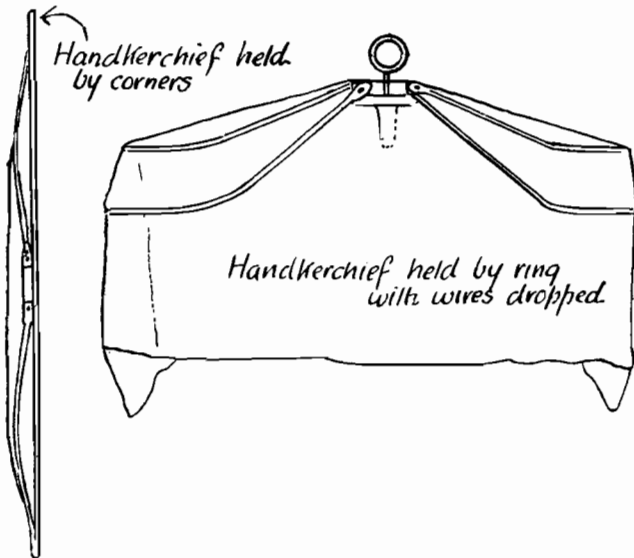
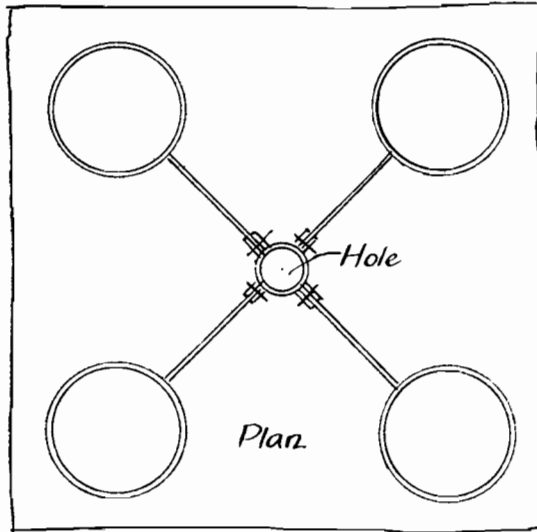
The conjurer first produces four bowls of goldfish, and I will not insult my readers' intelligence by telling them how to do that. As the performer produces each bowl, he first holds it up so that all may see that it contains real water and live fish, and then places it on a small stand on his table. The exact appearance of this stand is shown in the accompanying illustrations. Each bowl rests on an arm of the stand, and when all four have been produced, the conjurer covers the bowls and stand with a large handkerchief, and then apparently removes the stand and bowls from the table. Then he gives the handkerchief a shake, and shows that the bowls and the stand have entirely disappeared.

The secret is partly in the stand, partly in the table, and partly in the handkerchief. The centre rod of the stand is telescopic, and thus the four arms of the stand drop when the conjurer desires them to disappear. The falling arms



touch two bolts and release them. These bolts are attached to two blinds, worked by elastic, and the blinds are thus drawn quickly over the top of the table, and hide the bowls and the collapsed stand from view.

The top of the centre rod of the stand is fitted with a ring, and when the conjurer throws his handkerchief over



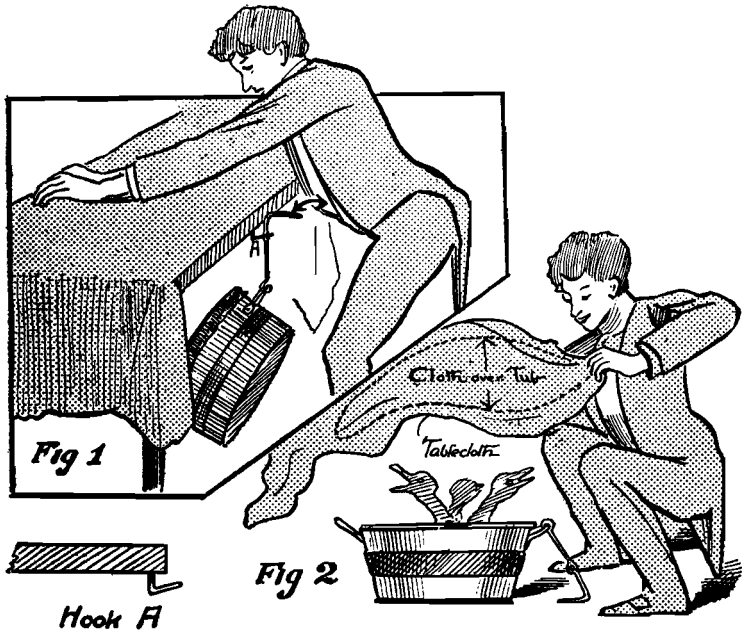
the stand this ring comes through a small hole in the centre of the handkerchief. A small metal ring is sewn to the edges of this hole in the centre of the handkerchief, and four wires are attached to the ring. These wires can be spread apart when the conjurer is placing the handkerchief over the stand, and thus the handkerchief takes the shape of the stand, but when the stand has been made to collapse and is hidden in the table, these wires in the handkerchief fall naturally into line, and the handkerchief can be screwed up into a very small compass.

The working of this trick is really far more simple than it would appear to be from these explanations. To get the proper amount of effect from the trick it should be worked very quickly, but without any appearance of undue haste.

The Chefalo Duck Tub.

The secret of the duck tub trick, as performed by Chinese magicians, is fairly well known nowadays. In this trick the same effect is produced by a conjurer in ordinary evening clothes. He merely snatches the cloth from the table, shakes it out, and—there is your tub with three or four live ducks swimming in the water.

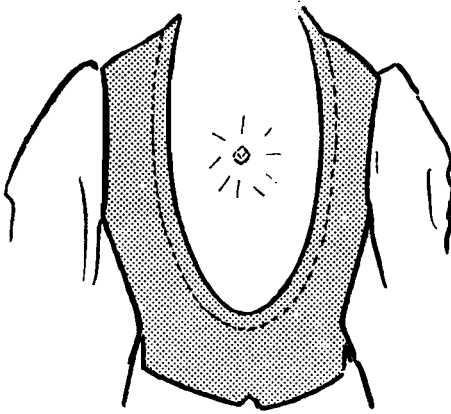
The tub is fitted to the under side of the table, and is covered with some of the material of which the tablecloth is made, in case it should be seen before the right time. Attached to the tub is a long hook, and the tub is fixed in such a way that this hook comes up to the hinder edge of the table. The conjurer engages this hook in his waistcoat, which is bound with a leather strap, and so pulls the tub from its hiding-place. The moment he bends slightly the



tub is stood on the floor, and the hook comes away from the performer's waistcoat and rests on the floor behind the tub.

The trick is thoroughly practical; in fact, it is one of the best things in the repertoire of Chefalo, the famous Italian conjurer, from whom I acquired the secret. In snatching the cover from the tub, the conjurer need be in no fear that it will be seen, because it is of the same stuff as the tablecloth which the conjurer holds in his hands.

There is no reason, of course, why the "load" under the table should consist of a tub with ducks. A drawing-room conjurer, for instance, could use the idea in many ways. How often is one of these performers nearly "stumped" when he is suddenly asked by the hostess to produce a quantity of presents for the children in some magical way.



*Fig 3
Leather strap sewn
round waistcoat opening*

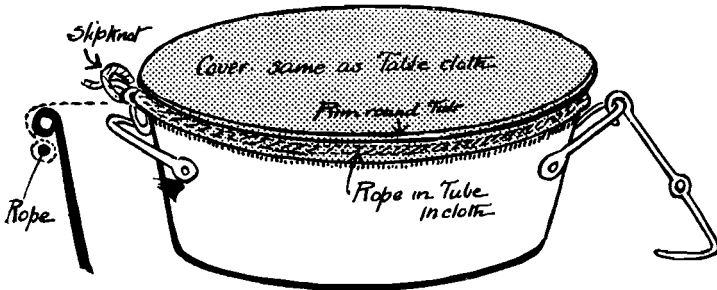
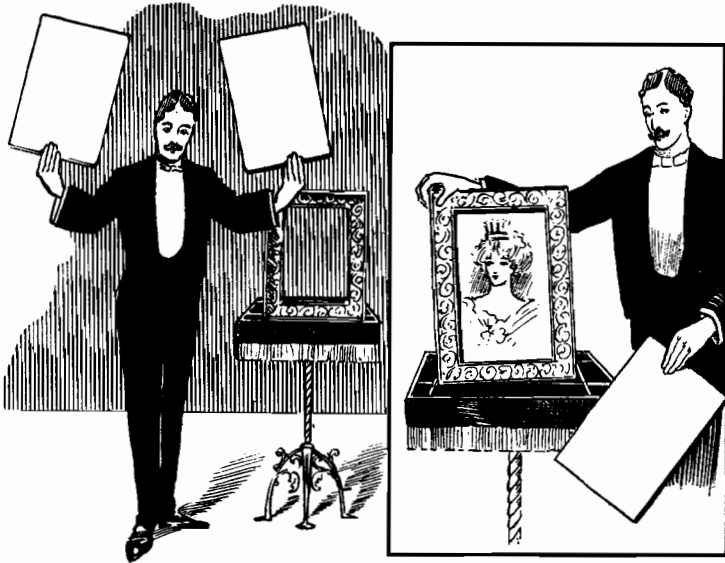


Fig 4 · Details of Duck Tub

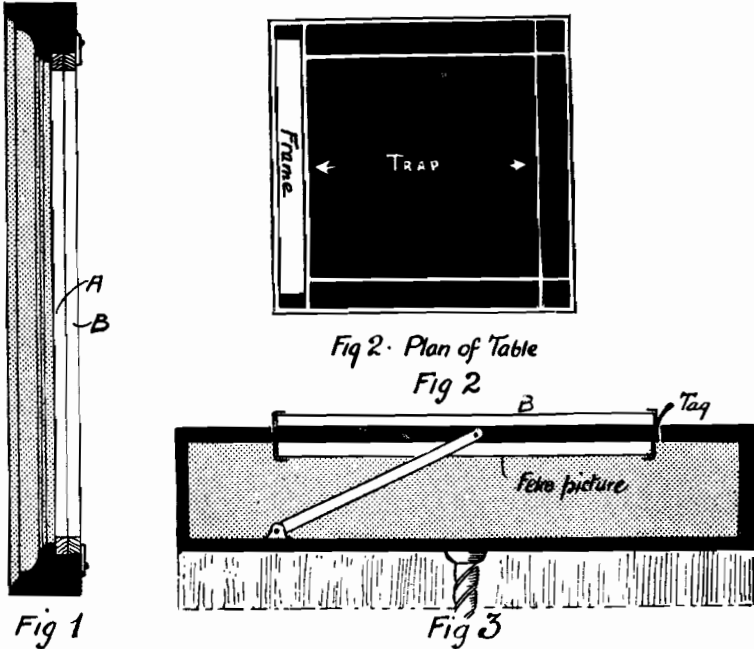
A table with a tablecloth can always be borrowed, and the necessary fitting at the back can be made very quickly. The trick requires some little practice, of course, but I know of no trick worth performing which does not call for a certain amount of skill on the part of the performer. Even a penny cannot be palmed neatly without practice!



The New Spirit Pictures.

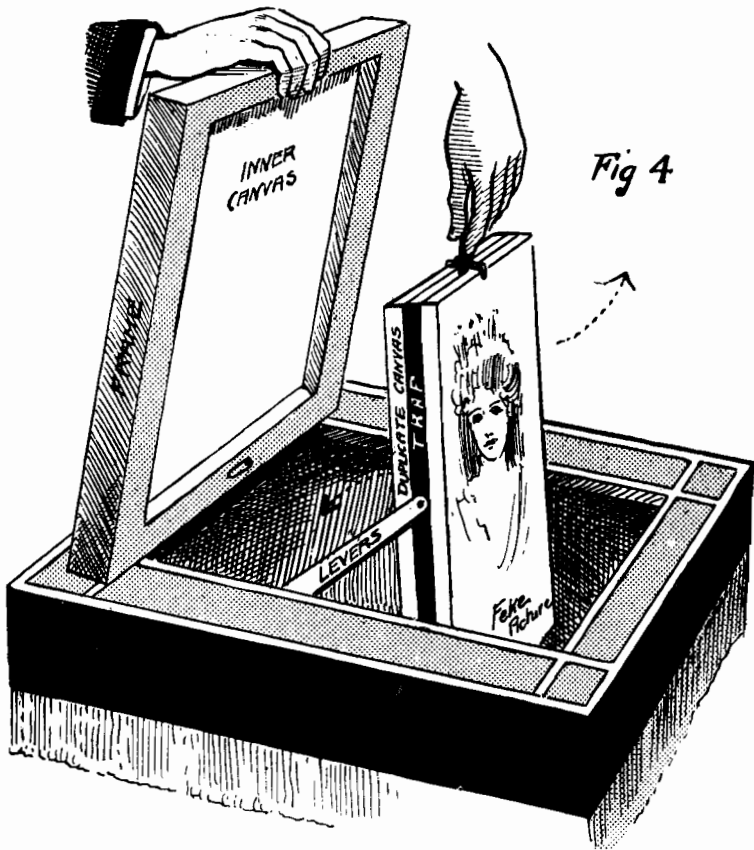
The great advantage of this form of the well-known "spirit paintings" illusion lies in the fact that it can be presented equally well in the drawing-room and on the stage.

The performer commences by handing round a small gilt frame and two blank canvases for examination. When he receives them back from the audience he fastens the two canvases in the frame, and invites someone to select a picture from a number of titles of pictures. When the performer removes one of the canvases from the frame, he shows that the selected picture has been mysteriously produced on the canvas remaining in the frame. If necessary, the frame can be made to fit into a slot in the table, so that it will stand up without any support from the performer.



The main secret of this clever trick, which, by the way, is the invention of Mr. Montague Albert, consists in the substitution of one of the blank canvases for one with a picture on it. I need not tell my readers any of the many ways in which the title of this picture can be "forced" upon the member of the audience, who believes that he has a free choice in the matter.

The picture to be produced is placed under a trap in the table (see Fig. 2 for plan of table). The working of this trap is shown in Fig. 4. It will be seen that after the conjurer has placed one canvas in the frame he holds the frame in a perpendicular position, and places the second canvas over the trap in the table. Under the picture there



is a small tag. The conjurer takes hold of this tag, and in so doing lifts up the picture, the top of the trap, and the plain canvas. There are two pieces of stout wire, with the ends bent at right angles, at each end of the trap. These wires hold the plain canvas and the picture in position as the conjurer, by means of the levers attached to the trap, turns them over (see Fig. 4). When they are reversed, the conjurer places the picture against the canvas in the frame

and fastens it there. The plain duplicate canvas is now under the trap in the table.

Having had the picture chosen, the conjurer asks for a little "spirit music" while the picture is being developed on the canvas, and he then takes the plain canvas from the frame and shows the picture there.

From Decanter to Wine Glasses.

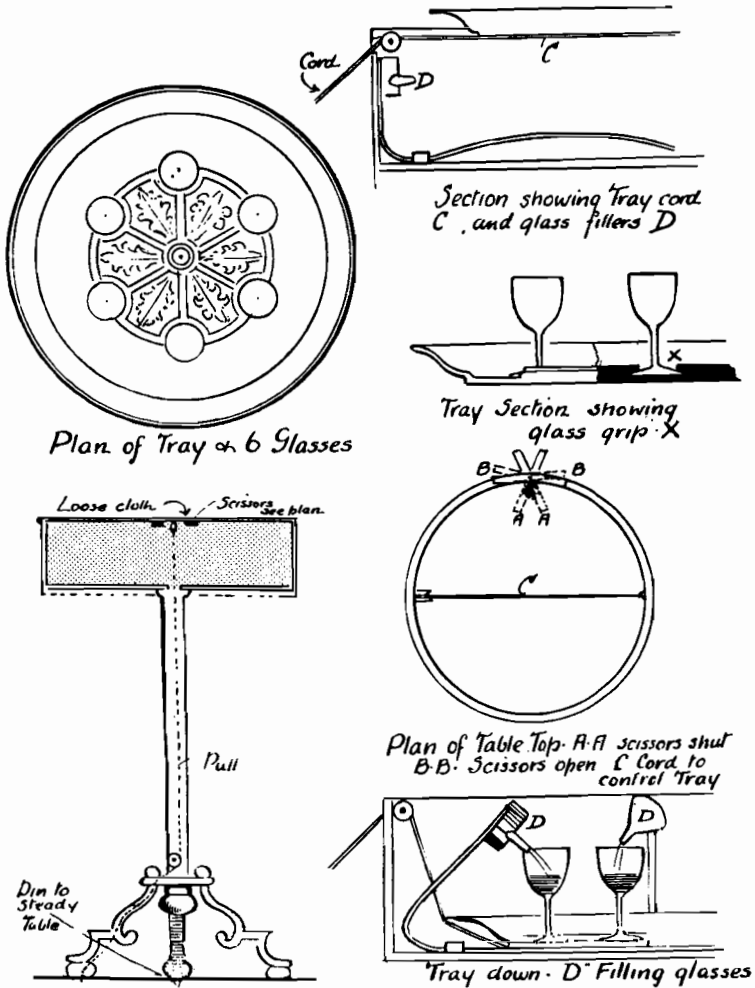
The conjurer calls attention to a tray with six empty wine-glasses upon it. He places the tray on a table, and puts a large cover, similar in shape to a lamp-shade, over the glasses.

He then calls attention to a decanter of wine on another table, and this he covers with a cardboard cylinder.

With some remark as to the uselessness of servants to magicians, the conjurer then raises both covers, and shows that the wine has travelled invisibly from the decanter, which is now empty, to the wine-glasses, which are now nearly full.

The top of the table is covered with a piece of loose cloth, and the tray of glasses really rests on a cord and a kind of scissors-like fake at the back of the table. When the cover is over the glasses the conjurer opens the "scissors," and, at the same time, the cord—which is really a loop passing across the table and under it—is allowed to sink down. It will be seen that this cord is connected with a pull, which passes down the leg of the table and so through the stage.

When the tray with the glasses upon it is thus lowered into the table, it rests on a strip of spring steel, which bends under the weight of the glasses and brings forward a number

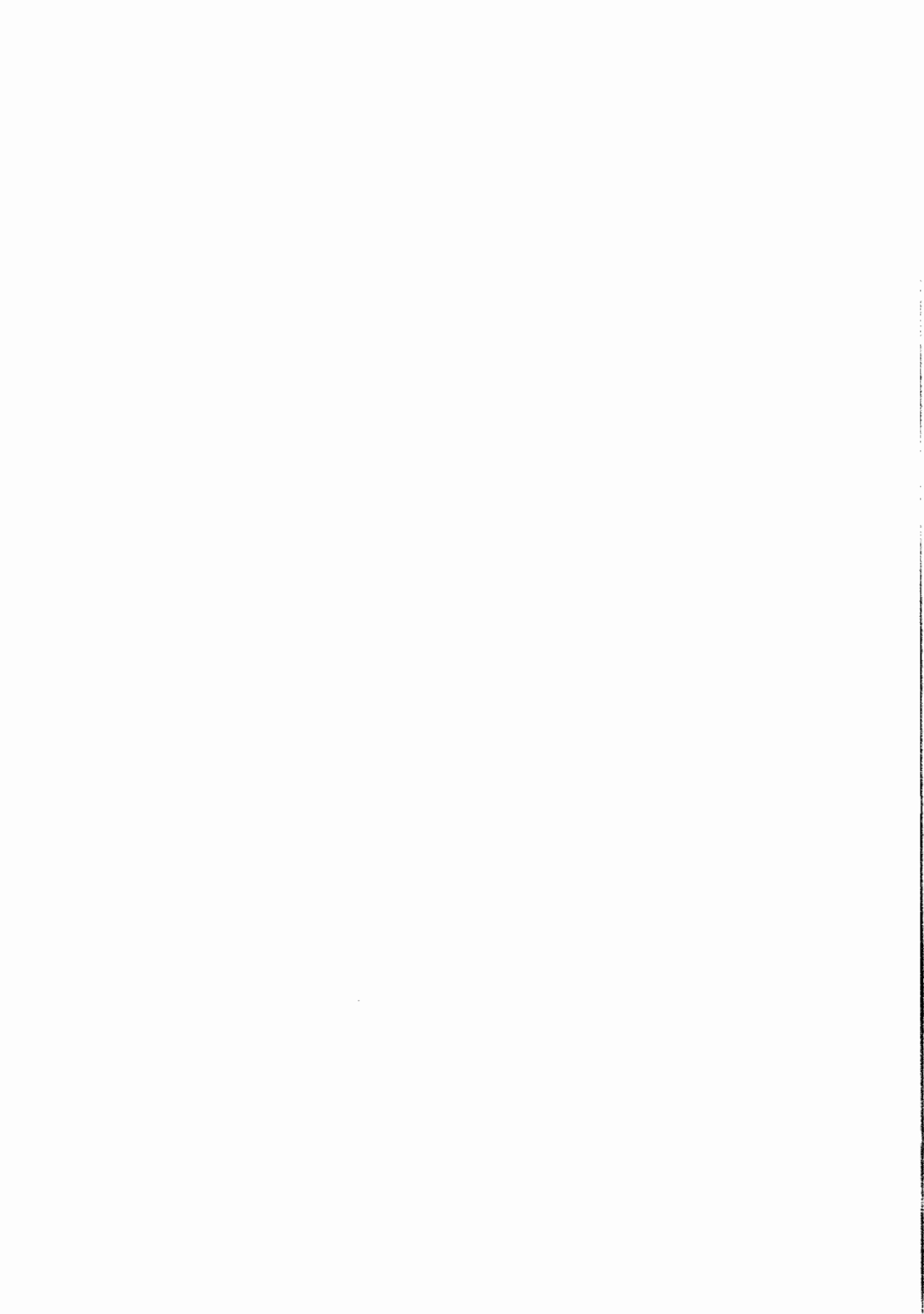


of metal holders, each filled with wine. As the glasses are held securely to the table by a simple "grip" attachment, and as they are always in the same place, it is an easy matter

to arrange the metal holders inside the table so that they shall be in the exact position required for the purpose of the trick. In other words, when the holders are brought down by means of the weight of the tray, they shoot out little streams of wine into the glasses.

The filling of the glasses takes very little time. Directly that time has elapsed the assistant under the stage pulls on the cord, and this raises the loop, and so gets the tray back to the top of the table. The conjurer himself then closes the "scissors" at the back of the table, and thus gives a second support for the tray.

The disappearance of the wine from the decanter is a very simple matter. A small hole is drilled into the bottom of the decanter, and this hole is placed directly over a tube in the centre leg of the table. The stopper of the decanter fits so well that it is impossible for any air to get into the decanter, and thus the wine does not run out. Moreover, the stopper is hollow, and has a small hole at the top. At the commencement of the trick this hole is covered with a tiny piece of wax. When the conjurer is going to do the trick he scrapes off the wax with his finger nail, just as he places the cover over the decanter. The pressure of the air then allows the wine to escape into the table, and when he raises the cover the conjurer is able to pick up the decanter and show that it is empty.



PART IV.

Chinese Magic.

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Chinese Magic.

DURING the last few years Chinese magic has become very popular in this country and the United States. To a considerable extent this is due to the work of Chung Ling Soo. Of all the Chinese magicians, both past and present, he is perhaps the greatest. His remarkably artistic performances have earned him fame and fortune, and have taught us that Chinese Magic is a separate and very effective form of the art. It has many distinctive features. First, there is its incidental presentation of Chinese scenes and Chinese costumes. The picture is novel to our eyes, and we appreciate it on this account as well as on account of its actual charm and beauty. Then there is the manner of the performer, bland and impassive, typically Chinese. And then there are the tricks and illusions, picturesque as the stage setting, and as typical of the performer as he of his native country.

Chung Ling Soo started the vogue in Chinese magic; others have helped him to keep it flourishing. These others are not, however, all natives of the Celestial Empire—or rather, Celestial Republic. A few weeks ago I watched a turn of Chinese magic at a certain music hall. I am personally acquainted with the performer, and know him to be an Englishman born and bred. But he played the part of a Chinese magician admirably. His make-up and costume were perfect, and the scene was a fine reproduction of the corner of a Peking garden. So far as the audience in general were concerned, he was a native of China, who

had journeyed from that country in order to entertain them with its magic. Indeed, at the end of the turn I heard two men talking together to this effect. "Wonderful that he should have come all those thousands of miles just to give us a show," said one of them. "It is," replied the other; "and a good show too. I didn't know that the Chinese were anything like so clever at magic."

Some people may object to an Englishman impersonating a Chinaman in this way. I myself do not, so long as the thing is done well. In the case I have just mentioned it was done well. I recall another, however, in which it was not. The performer was a capable magician, but he evidently knew very little about China or the Chinese. His dress was a bad imitation of the real thing, his face did not even remotely resemble the Mongolian type, and the stage-set, although Chinese in character, was not artistic in several of its details. I have little doubt that many others in the audience besides myself perceived all this, and that the effect of the show was thus discounted.

The one necessary thing about these impersonations is that they must be artistic. Granted this, I have no hesitation in recommending any of my readers who may feel inclined to give a Chinese show to do so. This section will supply them with ample material. The magic in it is purely Chinese in style, and the tricks and illusions explained are all effective. Information about Chinese costumes and scenes can be fairly easily obtained, and the "make-up" can be based on photographs of Chinamen. I may add that a Chinese show is specially suitable for a magician who does not patter, but who has a good stage manner.

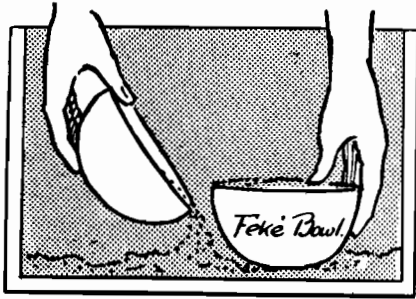
The New Rice Bowls.

Invented by CHUNG LING SOO.

The superiority of this version of the rice-bowl trick to any that has hitherto been published will be apparent to anyone who glances at the accompanying illustrations, for hardly any explanation is necessary.

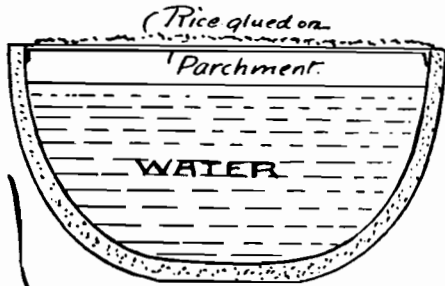
It will be seen that the old mica or glass fake is not used in this version of the trick. The faked bowl is nearly filled with water, and then a piece of parchment is glued on to the top of it. A little rice is glued on the parchment, and the bowl is then placed in a box of rice ready for the trick.

The performer brings on two ordinary bowls, and, under cover of the necessary movement made in filling them with rice, changes one of the bowls for the faked bowl, which he brings up and places mouth downwards on his table. He fills the other bowl with his hand, and places the faked bowl over it. Then he inverts the bowls and proceeds, as in the old-fashioned method, until he wishes to produce the water. Then, instead of sliding a fake away, all he has to do is to puncture the parchment cover with his first finger, and pour out the water. The torn parchment, with the rice glued to it, will sink to the bottom of the bowl, and, being covered with rice, will not be noticed.

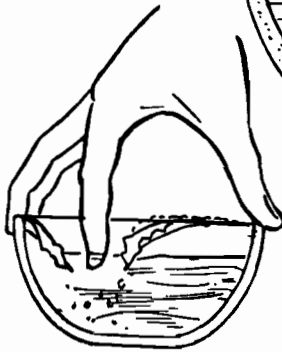


Rice to water
change
Details

Changing Bowls



Section through
feki bowl.



Breaking parchment.

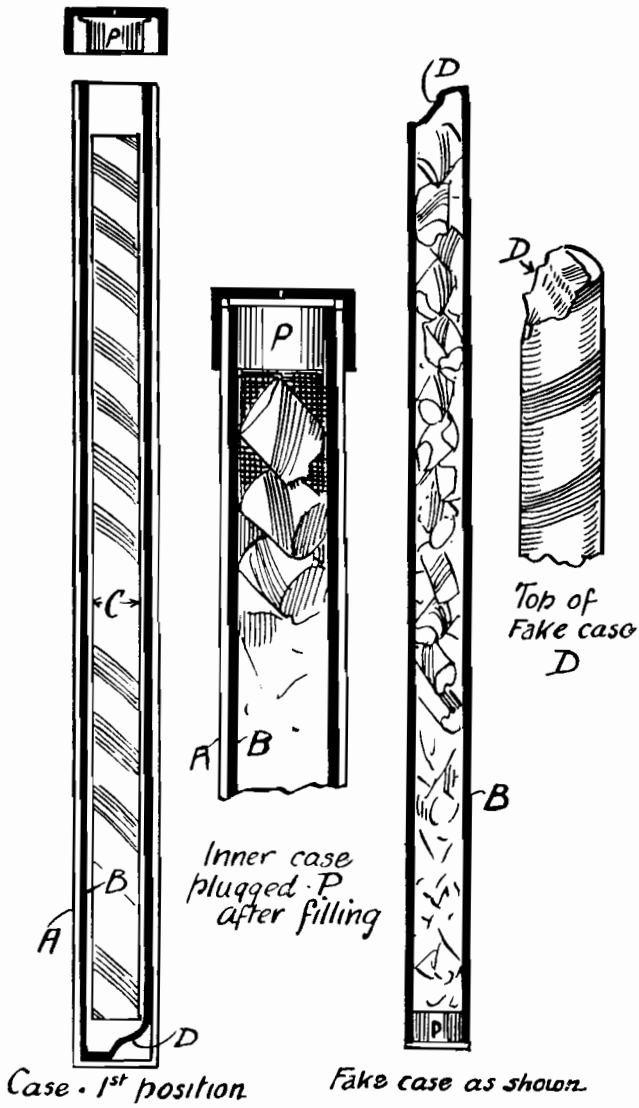
The Sugar Stick Trick.

Invented by CHUNG LING SOO.

Here we have a trick sufficiently mystifying to puzzle any ordinary audience, and yet a trick that is easy to perform, and—a point that will be appreciated by all conjurers—a self-contained trick.

The conjurer comes on with a large sugar stick in one hand and a cardboard tube in the other. He shows that the sugar stick exactly fits into the tube or case. He then takes out the sugar stick and breaks it up into small pieces, all of which, with the exception of one, he throws into the tube. A moment afterwards the conjurer takes the sugar stick, completely restored, except as regards the one piece which was not put into the tube, and, going up to his table, and taking this piece, he shows that it exactly fits on to the sugar stick.

The effect is produced by very simple means. The stick which is broken up is genuine enough, except that the end has previously been cut off irregularly and replaced. The breaking of this piece therefore is only pretence on the conjurer's part. The tube or case has a lining which is exactly like the sugar stick, but the end of this false stick is cut off irregularly, so that when the loose piece of sugar stick is placed on the top it makes a perfect join. Therefore all the conjurer had to do was to break up the stick and put the pieces into the tube and then draw out the dummy stick with the pieces inside it. The whole trick depends therefore on a dummy lining to the tube, this dummy lining being an exact match of the sugar stick.

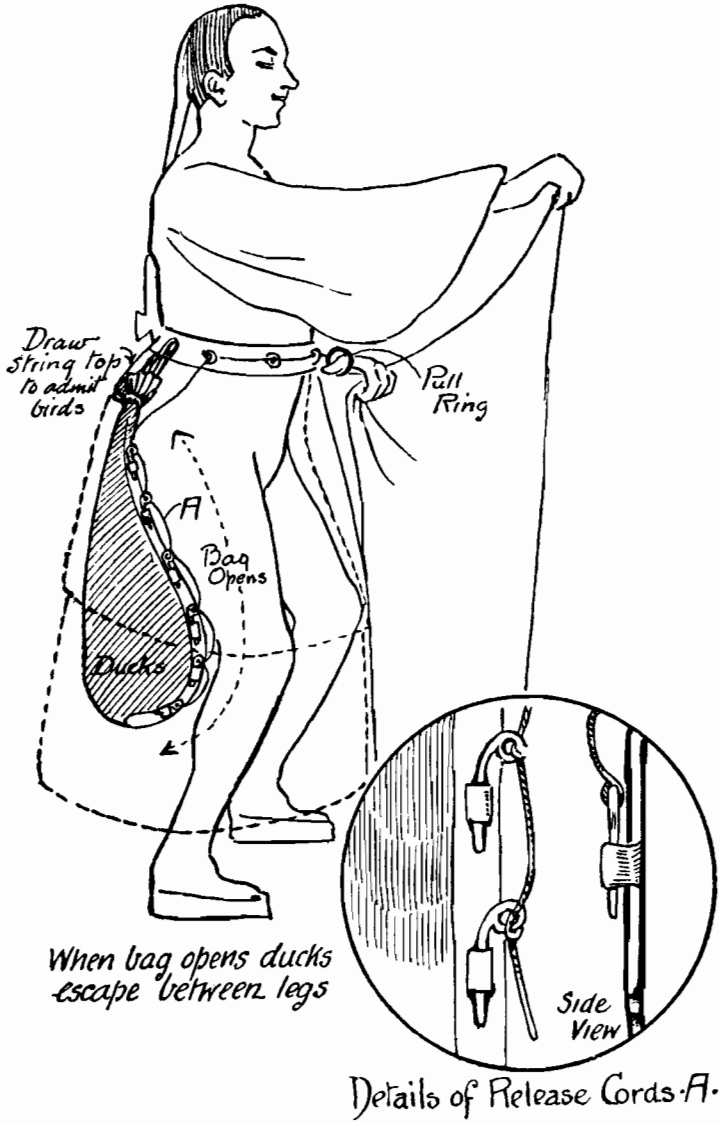


Chefalo's Chinese Duck Production Act.

The production of a number of live ducks from a large cloth is a fairly common trick with conjurers who give exhibitions of Chinese conjuring, but the method I am about to explain for producing this effect is new and original. It is the invention of Chefalo, the famous Italian conjurer.

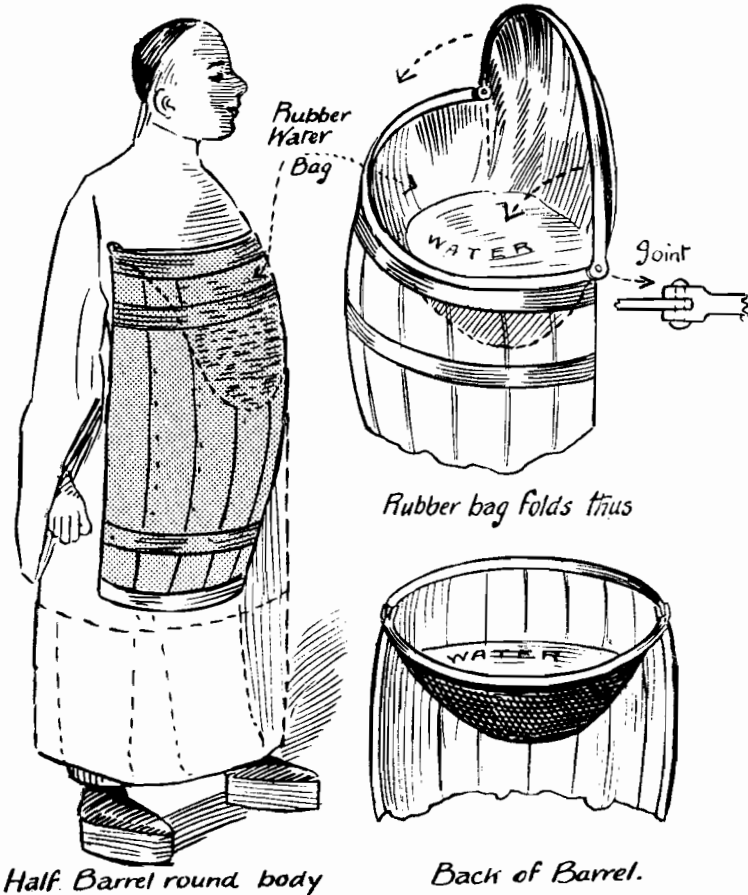
The ducks are, of course, concealed in a large bag which the Chinese costume hides. The top of the bag is fitted with an ordinary string, by which it can be closed when the string is drawn tight. The bag is divided down one side—that nearest the performer—and the divided portion is held together by means of a number of small metal pins, each of which fits into a kind of large "eye." One string is attached to all these pins, and the end of the string is then passed through two or three small rings at the performer's waist. A large ring is fastened to the end of the string, and so keeps it from slipping away through the little rings.

When the illusionist is manipulating the cloth from which the ducks are apparently to be produced, he gets his left thumb into the large ring at the end of the string and pulls it. This takes all the metal pins out of the "eyes" in the bag, and so the whole side of the bag becomes unfastened at once. The ducks fall out on to the stage, and the performer steps back a pace, and thus allows them to be seen.



The Production of a Barrel of Water.

This is a trick specially adapted for Chinese conjurers. The performer stands on the stage, waves the usual cloth in front of him, and immediately produces a large barrel of water. To prove the presence of the water, the conjurer dips a jug into the barrel, fills it, and returns the water to the barrel.

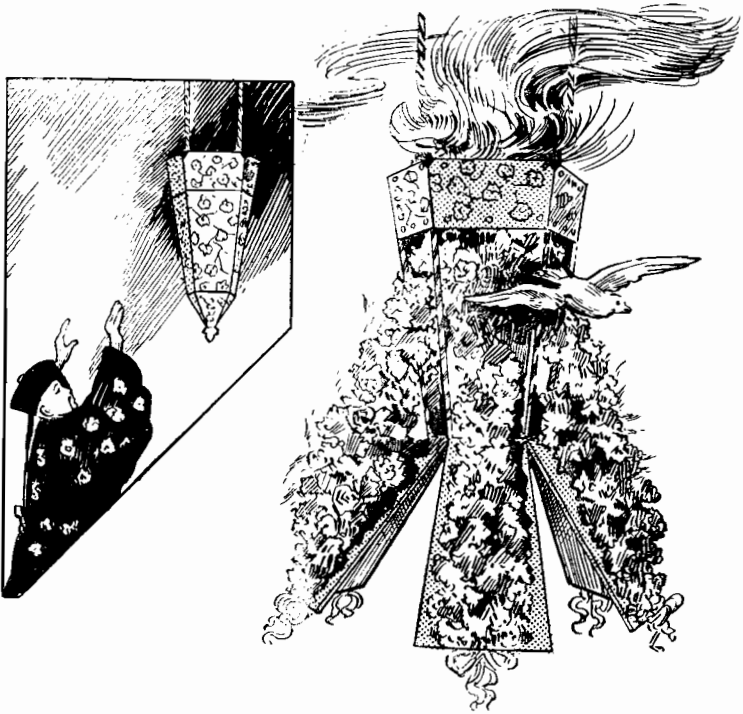


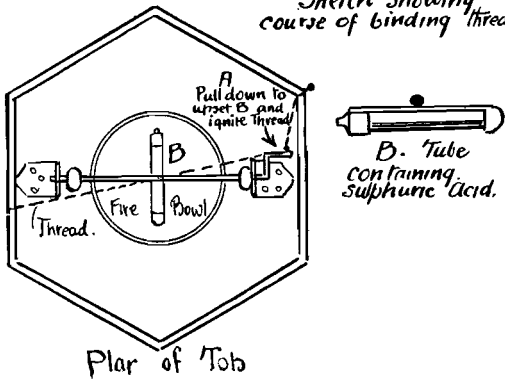
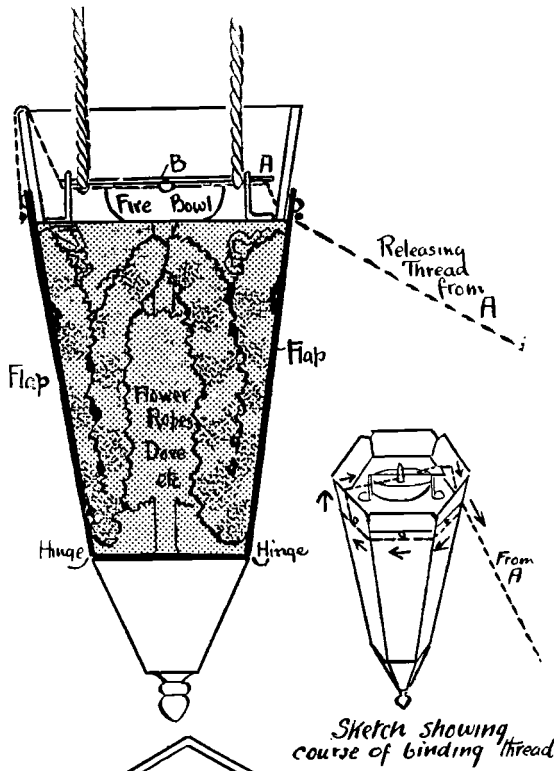
The barrel is really only half a one, which therefore fits round the conjurer's body; it is easily concealed by his cloak. The top of the barrel is a circular rubber bag, hinged in the centre.

Before the conjurer loads himself with the barrel, he pours a little water into the bag, and closes one half over the other. After he has produced the barrel, he opens the bag, and is thus able to ladle out the water with a jug. The closing of the bag in the first place prevents the water from being spilled, and also enables the performer to keep the barrel close to his body.

The Chinese Pagoda.

This is a fine spectacular trick for a Chinese performer.





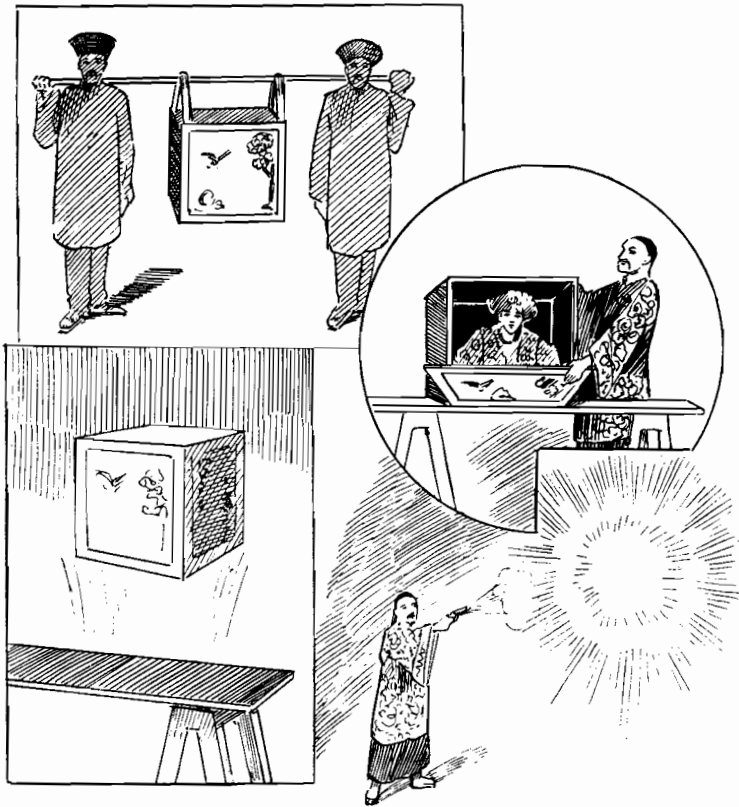
A pagoda is hanging in the centre of the stage. The performer approaches and waves his hand towards it. Suddenly the whole appearance of the pagoda changes. The sides fall away, revealing large masses of flowers, and birds fly from the centre. Flames and smoke rise from the top of the pagoda, and the whole thing is transformed into a very weird but fascinating object.

The construction of the pagoda is very simple, and the illustrations tell more plainly than any words can exactly how the whole thing should be made. It will be seen that the whole effect can be produced by the pulling of one thread. This releases the sides of the pagoda, which fall away, showing the flowers within, and also releasing the birds. The fire is merely our old friend the "fire-bowl" over again; it is fired by the breaking of a glass tube containing sulphuric acid. The whole thing is so simple that, with the accompanying illustrations before him, any stage carpenter could construct a very effective pagoda.

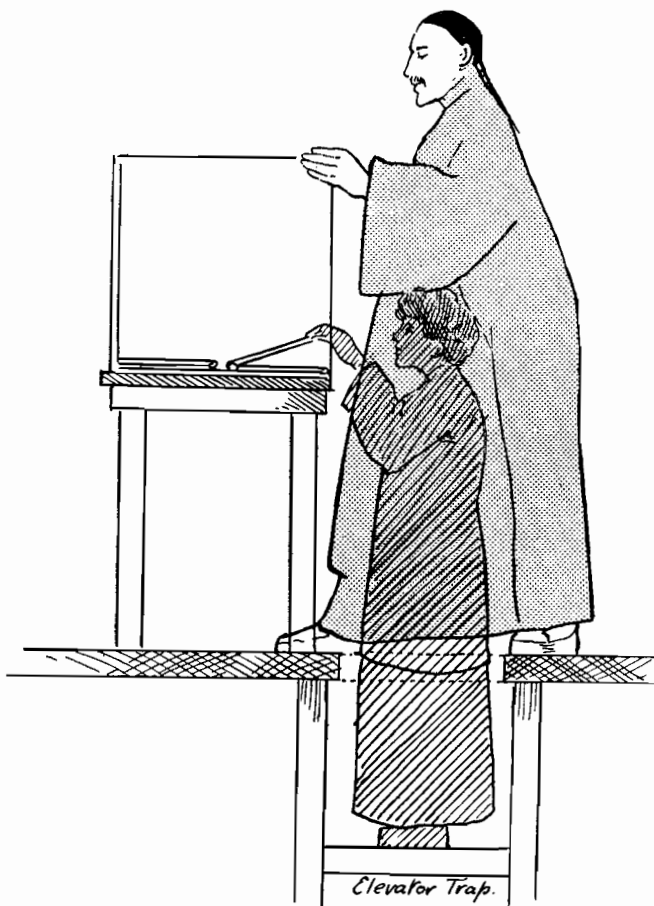
The Tea Chest Mystery.

Here we have an extremely ingenious illusion, in which several effects are produced. Two of the conjurer's assistants come on to the stage bearing a large empty tea chest. The chest is placed on a board, supported on two trestles, and the conjurer's assistant, dressed in Chinese costume, gets inside the box. The lid is closed, and the box remains for a moment on the board. Slowly the box rises in the air, floats for a moment, and then disappears in a flame.

To understand the working of the illusion, it is only necessary to study the accompanying illustrations. The box

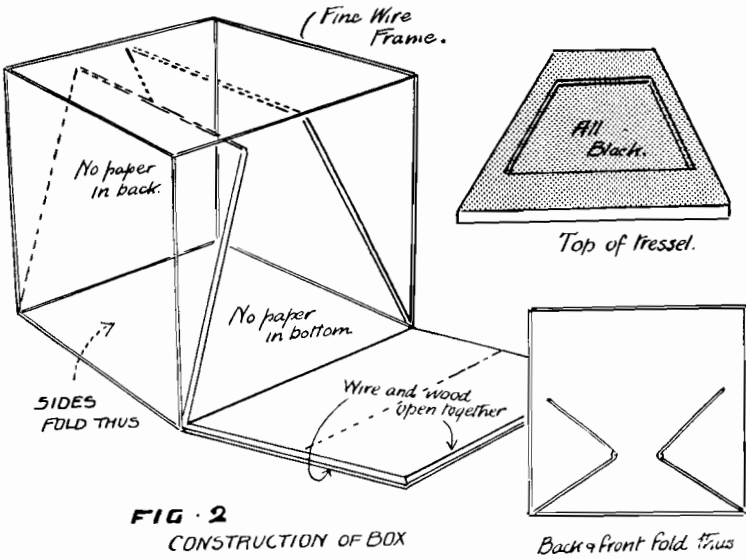


(see Fig. 2) is really in two parts. The outer part is a wire frame, painted black, and covered with painted flash paper. The "shell" of paper covers the top, front, and sides. The back and front of the box are hinged in the centre, and thus fold up into a space equal to half their width (see Fig. 2). When the front of the chest is opened, the wire frame and the wooden front are held together as one. Then the lady gets inside, and immediately folds up the wooden front



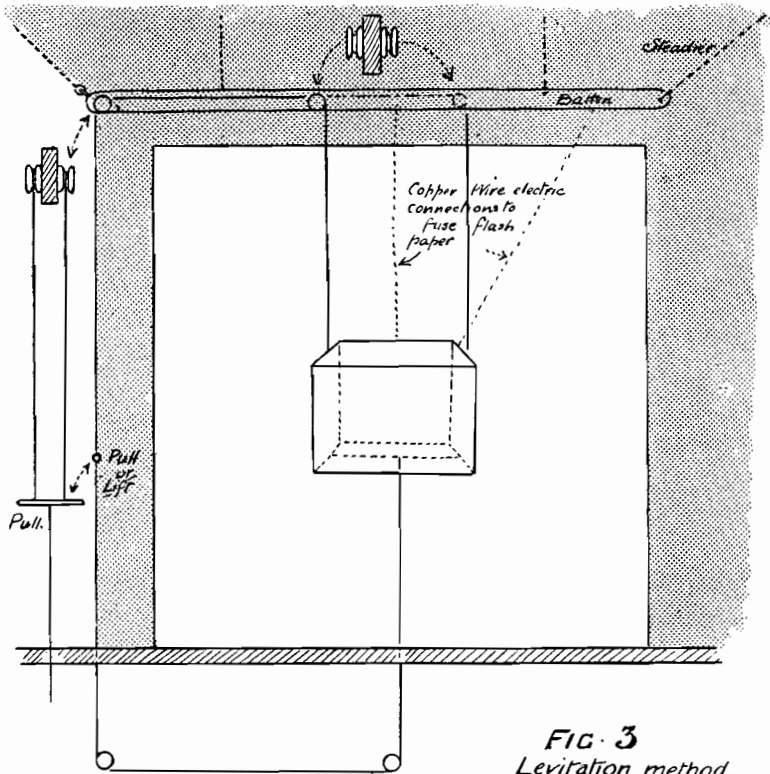
*FIG. 1. Ladys escape down trap
through robes of Performer*

(the movement being concealed by the paper front), folds up the back, and the two sides fall in, one on the top of the other. The wooden box, in its folded state, goes into a little recess in the board. The lady then makes her way



out of the back of the box and into the performer's Chinese robe, and so down an elevator trap to the regions below the stage. If necessary, she can then make her way back again to the wings in readiness to appear at the conclusion of the illusion.

The levitation of the box (really a frame with paper on it to resemble a box) can be managed in several different ways. The accompanying illustration (Fig. 3) shows one of them. In this case the effect is brought about by means of two wires carried over two pulleys attached to a batten, and then brought down to the wings. The usual "Aga" attachment can be used if it is preferred, but it is not an easy matter to dispose of it when the flash paper has been fired. This effect, by the way, is produced by means of copper wire electric connection, which ignites the flash

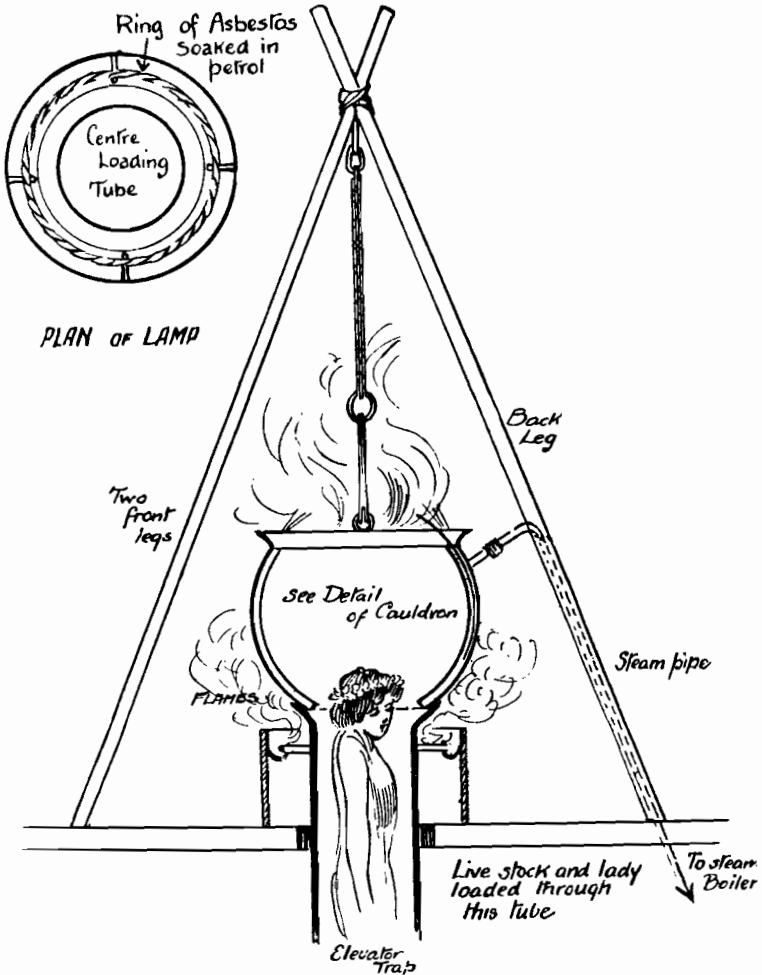


Pulleys are porcelain fixed.

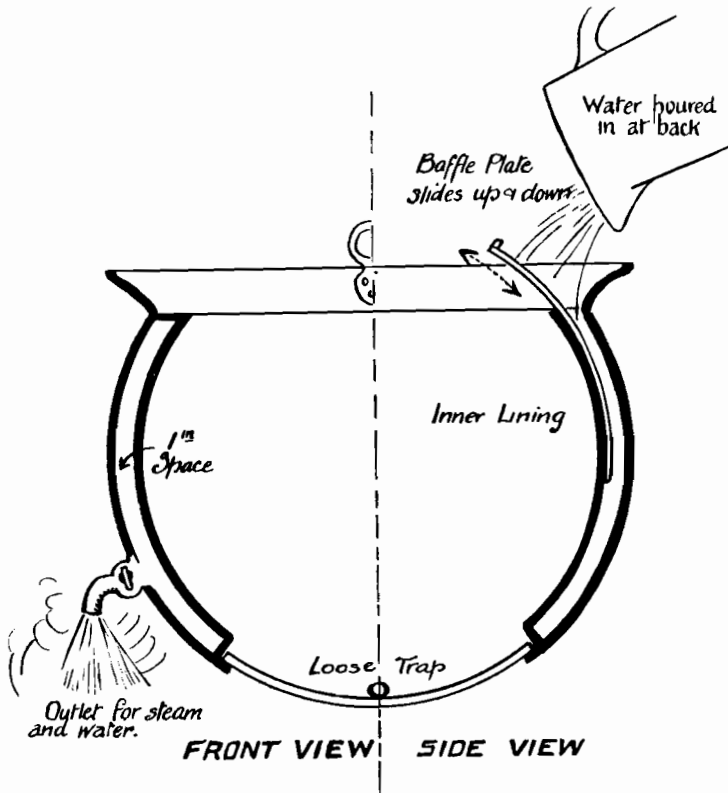
paper. If the method of levitation illustrated here is employed, the wire frame is merely allowed to fall near the back of the stage, where it is invisible.

The Magic Cauldron.

A huge cauldron, suspended from the centre of three poles, stands in the centre of the stage. The conjurer fills



up the cauldron with water, lights a fire under it, draws off the boiling water by means of a tap, and then produces a quantity of live stock, rabbits, ducks, etc., from the boiling



cauldron. Finally, the conjurer's assistant emerges unharmed from the centre of the steaming cauldron.

The construction of the cauldron is shown in the illustration. It will be seen that the bowl is fitted with an inner lining, and that it is between the outer cover and the lining that the water is poured. So that there may be no escape

of water when the water is being poured into the cauldron, a baffle plate is slid over the top.

The fire is a ring of asbestos soaked in petrol. The centre is taken out, and thus, when the fire is under the cauldron, a tube is pushed up through the stage to the top of the cauldron. Through this tube, which is not seen by the audience because of the fire, the various loads are handed up to the performer, and finally the lady makes her way up through the tube by means of an elevator trap. The steam, which is drawn off by a tap, comes partly from the water which has been poured in between the lining and the cover, but mostly from a boiler under the stage. The steam passes up through the back leg of the tripod from which the cauldron depends, and thence through a short length of pipe to the cauldron. When once the cauldron and tripod have been placed in the right positions, the working of the whole illusion is extremely easy.

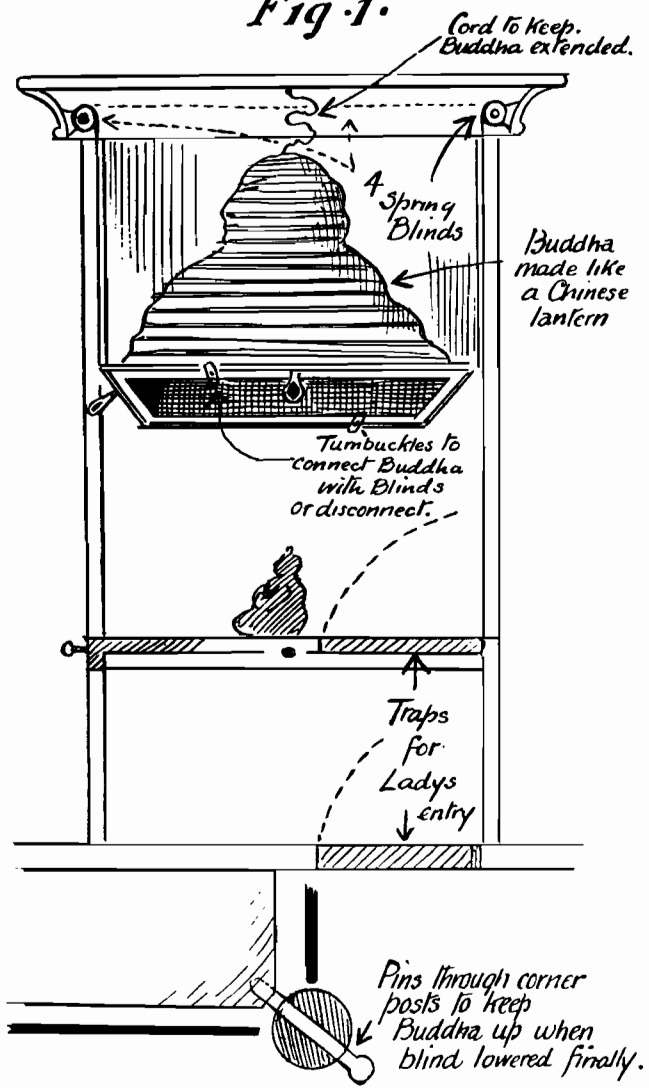
The Buddha Mystery.

A light skeleton cabinet is shown on the stage, with a small green jade figure of Buddha in the centre. The performer's assistants, suitably robed, come on and bow to the figure. Then they rise and pull down light curtains all round the cabinet.

When the curtains are raised the whole of the interior of the cabinet is filled with a large statue or figure of Buddha.

Again the blinds are drawn, and when they are raised again the statue has vanished, and its place has been taken by a young lady, who steps out to receive the applause of the audience for a very ingenious illusion.

Fig. 1.



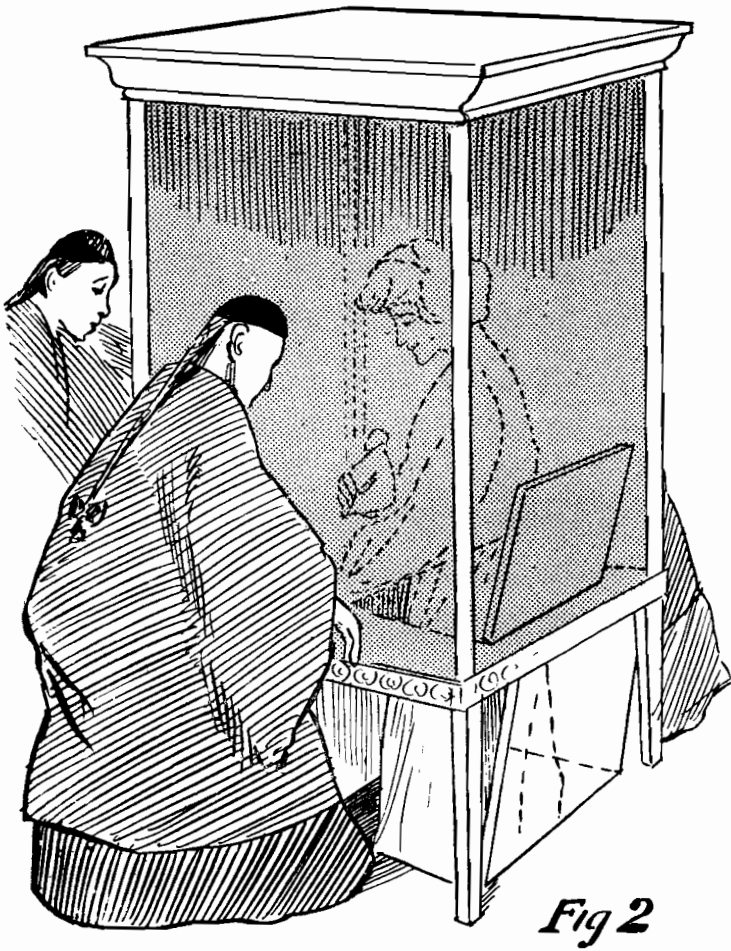
*Fig 2*

Fig. 1 shows the main secret of the illusion. A large figure is made to collapse in the manner of a Chinese lantern. This is hidden in the roof of the cabinet. It can be connected with the blinds and pulled down with them, or be

held in the top until required by means of pins in the corner posts. In any case, as the blinds for covering the cabinet are drawn downwards, it is quite an easy matter to pull down the figure with them, and when the figure is to be raised the assistant can easily push it up and secure it at the top.

The lady enters through a trap in the stage; she is well concealed during her entrance by the large gowns of the assistants.

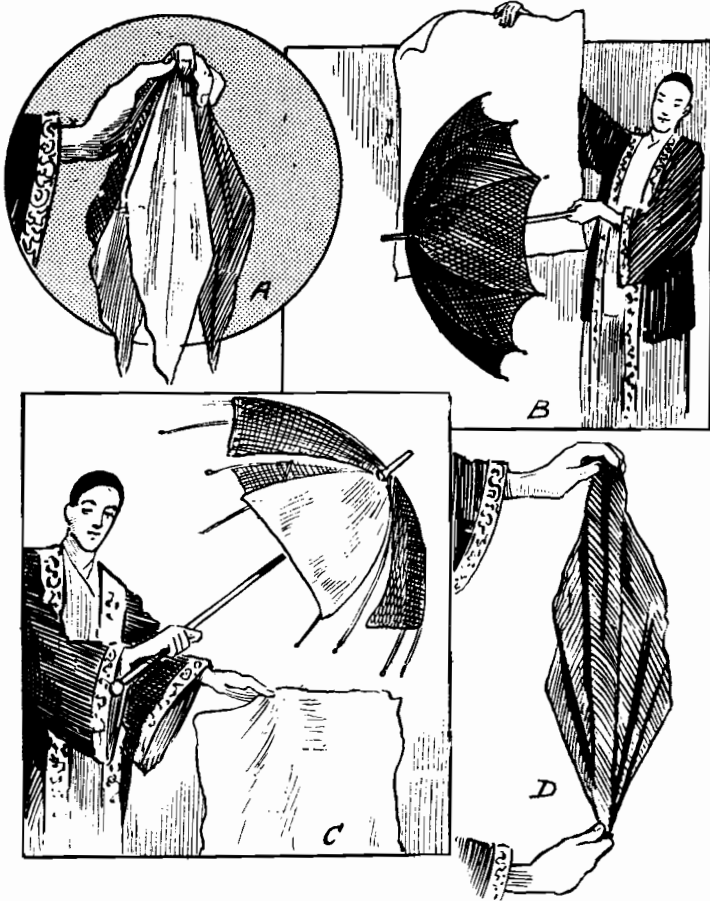
The Umbrella and the Handkerchiefs.

Improvement by YETTMAN.

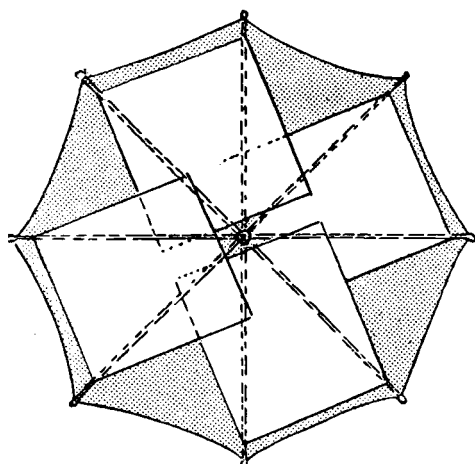
Here we have an old effect produced in an entirely new way. The advantages of this method of performing the trick will, I am sure, be appreciated by all magicians.

The conjurer shows four coloured handkerchiefs and an open umbrella. He closes the umbrella and wraps it in a sheet of paper. The handkerchiefs he places in a small tube made of paper. When the two paper parcels are opened the audience see that the cover of the umbrella has vanished from the frame, and that its place has been taken by the handkerchiefs. Similarly the handkerchiefs have changed mysteriously into the umbrella cover. The umbrella and the cover are wrapped up, and this time, when the parcels are opened, the umbrella is restored with its cover complete, and the handkerchiefs are in their original condition.

The old methods necessitated a changing apparatus for the handkerchiefs and something of the kind for the umbrella. This new method is more desirable, because the handle of the umbrella does not go out of sight of the audience for more than a second, and the handkerchiefs can be wrapped up in a tube made of any ordinary sheet of paper.



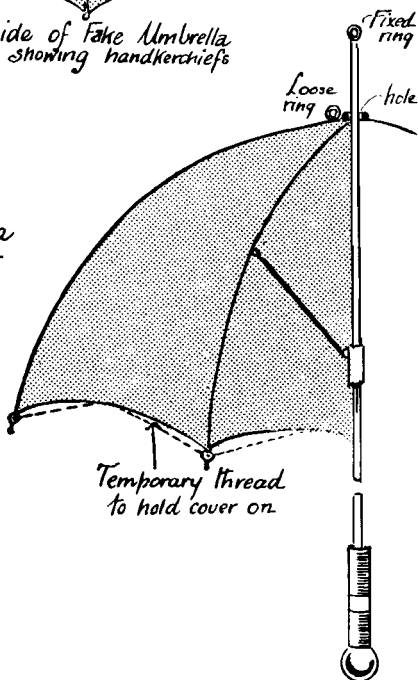
To come at once to the explanation of "how it is done," the reader will notice in Fig. 1 that the umbrella has a loose cover, with a ring at the top. Inside the cover are four handkerchiefs sewn securely to the ribs. The other handkerchiefs—those which the performer first shows to the audience—are made up with an umbrella cover on the same principle as that employed in the well-known "colour

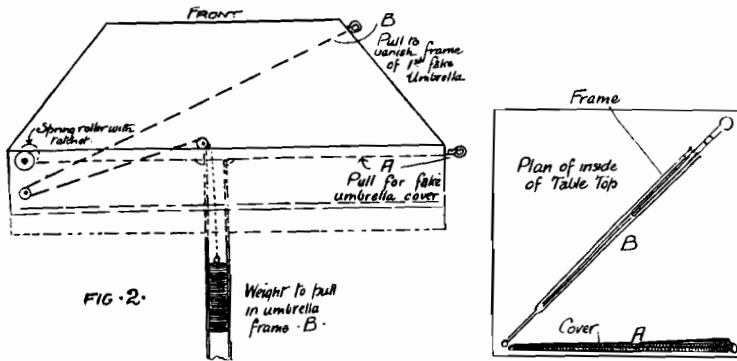


*Inside of Fake Umbrella
showing handkerchiefs*

1st Fake
Umbrella

Fig 1

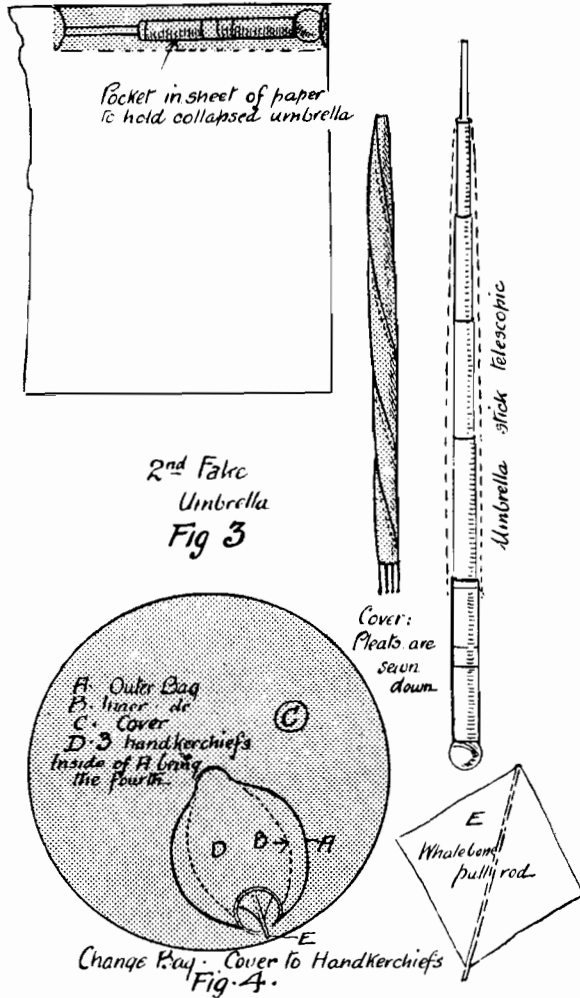




changing handkerchief," which are made to change colour by being turned inside out and outside inwards. In the present case one handkerchief is made into the form of a bag with the other handkerchiefs and the cover of the umbrella attached. Thus this parcel can be made to appear either as the handkerchief or the cover of the umbrella by merely turning it inside out.

When the performer has wrapped up the umbrella, he stands near the table (see Fig. 2), and by means of the snap-hook at A attaches the cord of the pull in the table to the ring of the cover in the umbrella. Then he releases a little catch, and the pull, working on the principle of a spring blind, draws the cover of the umbrella into the table. Therefore when he unwraps the umbrella the cover has gone, and the handkerchiefs are in its place.

To restore the umbrella and change the cover to the handkerchiefs is the work of a moment. The second change from the cover to the handkerchiefs is merely a reversal of the first, but the umbrella has to be managed in a different way. The performer uses a fresh sheet of paper, and stands near the spot marked B (see Fig. 2). The snap-hook at that



point is attached to the ring at the top of the umbrella frame, and at the same time an assistant releases a weight in the stem of the table. In this way the whole umbrella is drawn into the top of the table (see Fig. 2). Only for a fraction

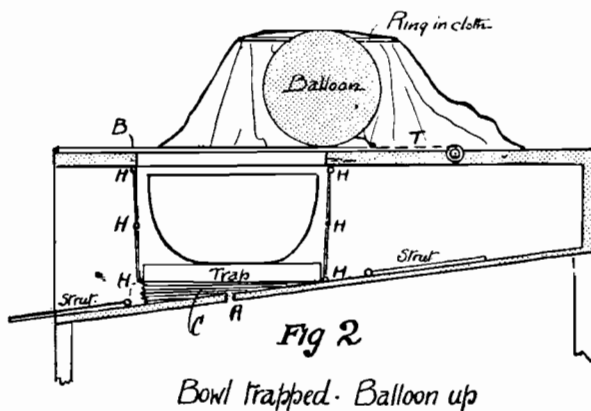
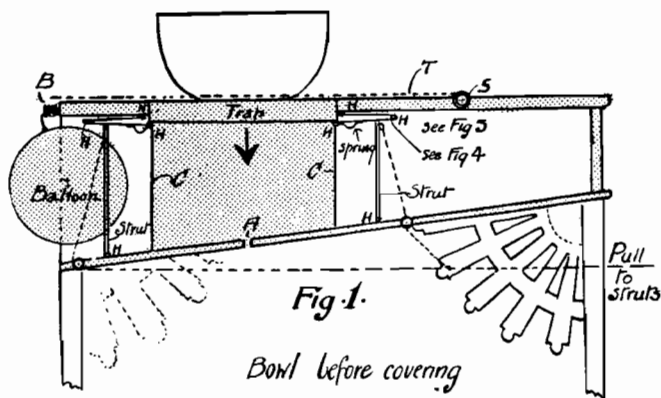
of a second does the umbrella go out of sight of the audience, because concealed in this piece of paper is a telescopic umbrella (see Fig. 3). The performer draws out this umbrella, thus bringing the trick to a very effective conclusion.

A Bowl of Water and Some Confetti.

Invented by YETTMAN.

The effect of this trick is as follows. The performer shows a quantity of confetti carefully arranged in three divisions—red, white, blue. He takes some of each and places it in a bowl of water. Then he places his hand in the water and takes out dry confetti of the colour chosen by the audience. As a final effect, he places a cloth over the bowl. The audience see the bowl as the conjurer holds it well away from his body. Then he quietly throws the cloth into the air; the bowl of water has vanished.





A: Airhole B-Blind S-Spring roller T-Thread
H-Hinges C-Cloth bag

The confetti part of the trick is easily managed. Three packets of confetti, red, white, and blue, are wrapped in tissue papers of corresponding colours, and melting candle grease is poured all over them. The packets thus keep out

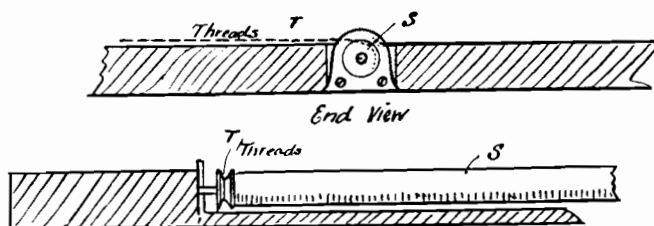


FIG. 3.

the water, and when the conjurer secretly introduces them into the bowl while he is also openly putting the confetti into it, he can easily get hold of the packets as the colours are called for by the audience, because the packets float on the top of the water.

The disappearance of the bowl is explained in the accompanying illustrations. It will be seen that, when the bowl is placed on the table, it stands over a trap, and when it is covered by a cloth the bowl sinks into the table, and its place is taken by a large toy balloon, which resembles the bowl. The performer has a thumb fake, with the edge slightly sharpened, and therefore, when he wishes to cause the disappearance of the balloon (which the audience take to be the bowl), he merely has to draw his thumb across it. By having balloon to resemble the bowl, the performer can show it under the cloth right up to the last moment of the trick.

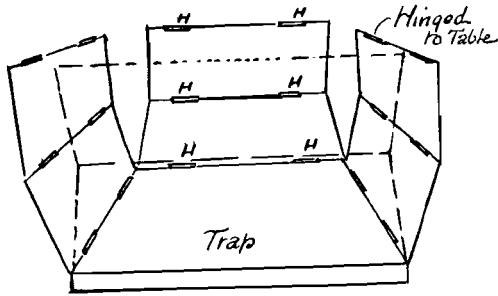
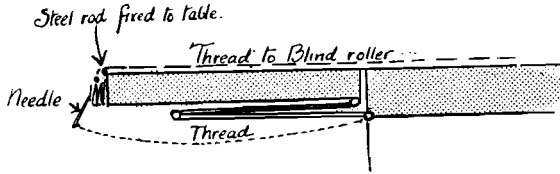


Fig. 4.
Sketch of Trap and 4 side Flaps
H. Hinges



Release for blind. Fig. 5.
Falling trap draws needle out

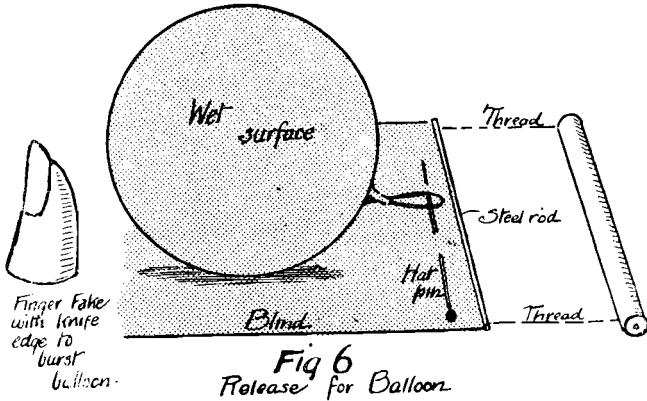
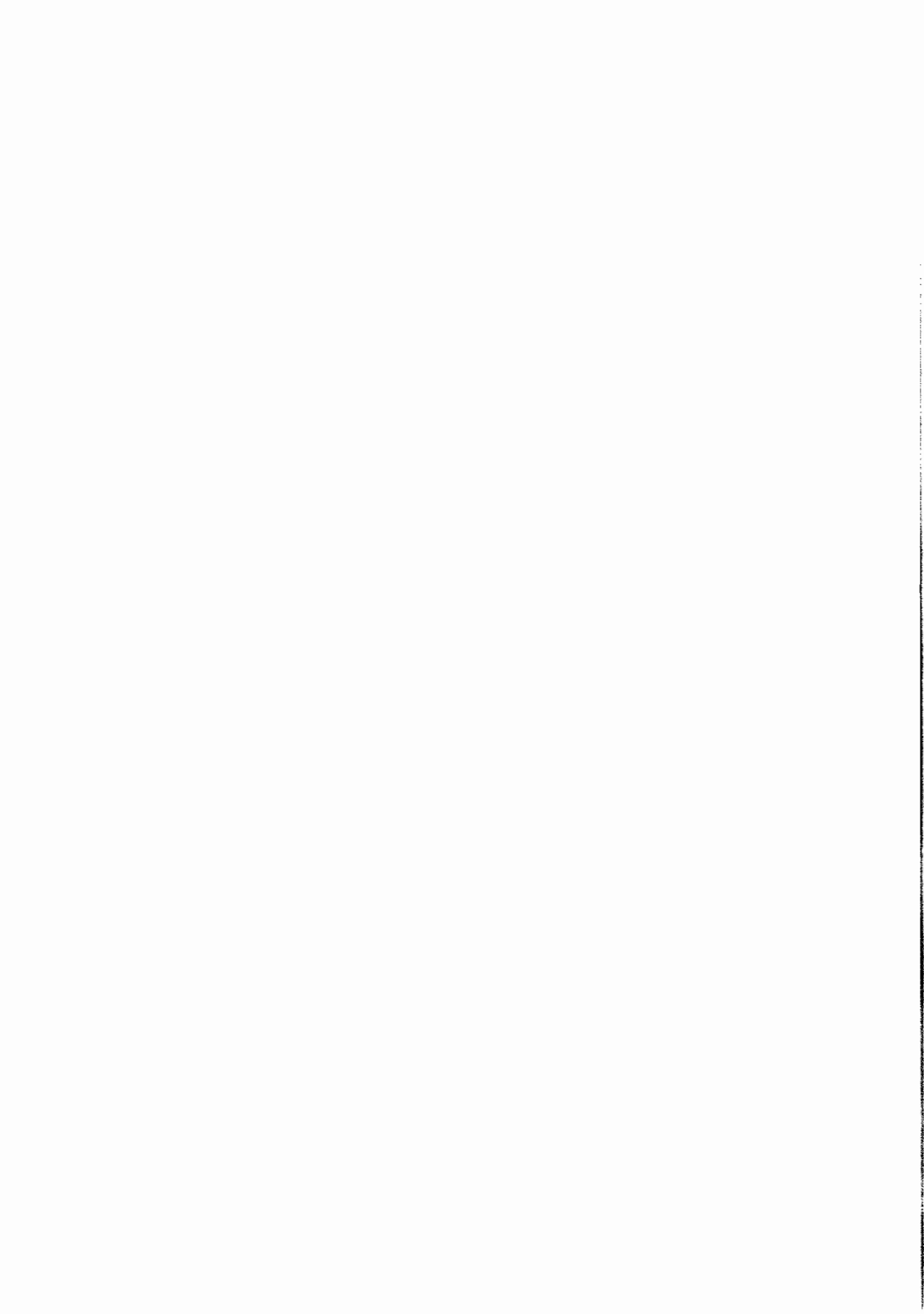


Fig 6
Release for Balloon

PART V.

Magical Tips.

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Magical Tips.

IN ordinary parlance a tip is a piece of special information from a private source as to some sporting event. I use the word here in the same sense with regard to magic.

The tips in this section are all pieces of special information from private sources. Some of them are based on my own experience, and the rest on the experience of other practical magicians. All will be useful to the readers of this book, particularly to such of them as are at the beginning of their careers as magicians.

It does a man good as an occasional exercise to find out for himself the way to do things. But there is a limit to labour in this direction. A man should, as a rule, be doing things instead of simply finding out the way to do them. Especially is this the case in the practice of magic. There the ideal conditions are that the magicians should know everything and the audience nothing. A magician can, as a matter of fact, get to know practically everything there is to know about his particular class of work, but not if he always insists on finding out for himself. It is an old saying that there is no royal road to learning. Is there a royal road to magic? I say without hesitation that there is. The man who avails himself of the experience of the best magicians of the day by studying their advice and following it intelligently, is on the royal road to magic.

It is in such matters as are dealt with in this section that the advice of experienced magicians is most valuable to the young student of the art. Without it he will

constantly find himself checked in the course of his work by difficulties, big or little. All these difficulties have been met with before and been overcome by magicians of longer standing than himself. They have in effect done the spade work, and he should make a point of benefiting by their labours whenever possible. Of course, many experienced magicians object to imparting the results of their experience to others. But some of them are more generous, as will be gathered from the contents of this section.

As an instance of the value of a magical tip, I may mention the phrase "silk thread," found in so many works on magic. I do not know who it was who first used the phrase, but I do know that he was badly misinformed. There is no such thing as silk thread. It is quite true that if a customer asks for it the average shopkeeper will accommodate him. But the article supplied will not be silk thread; it will be simply a form of cotton. This is not suitable for the requirements of magicians. The tip I give my readers is, that what they want for the purposes of their tricks is not silk thread nor cotton, but the material known as "tailor's twist." It is sold on reels, and can be obtained at a reasonable price from any tailor's house. The difficulty about cotton is its weakness. Magicians using it constantly find that it breaks at an important part of the trick in which it is being employed. Tailor's twist, on the other hand, is very strong, and can be absolutely relied upon.

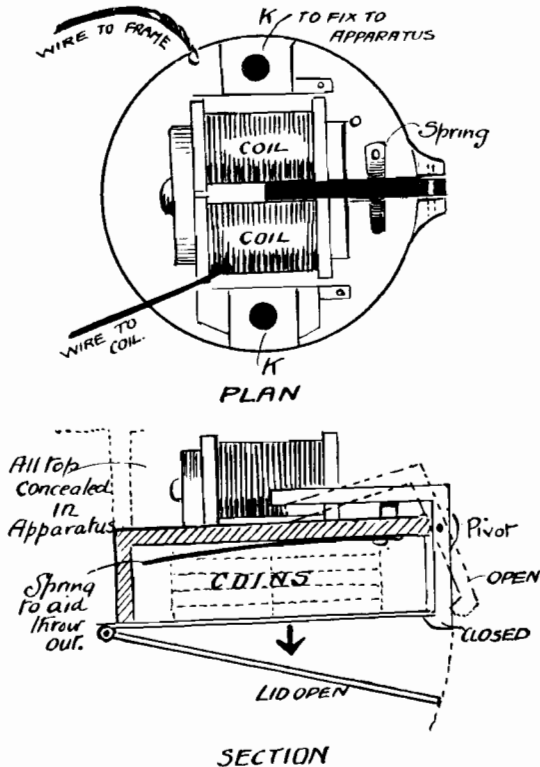
Another tip given in this section will be very useful to magicians who perform original tricks and illusions. Naturally, they do not want their productions to become common property. But in the ordinary way risks of this happening attend every performance. The audience cannot find out anything essential about the *modus operandi*, but

the scene-shifters and fly-men can, and, as a matter of fact, often do. I myself know of several cases of stage hands being bribed by rival magicians to discover and disclose to them the secrets of novel acts. I have also definite information that on one occasion such a rival magician got himself smuggled into the flies, and thus managed to do his spying at first hand. Those of my readers who desire to keep their effects secret, even from the stage hands, will find in this section full information on the point.

The two tips to which I have just referred are both very valuable ones. The section contains a number of others equally valuable. As a whole it will, I think, do much to smooth the path of my readers. By its aid they will be able to avoid many of the accidents and inconveniences experienced by the average magician. Indeed, it should do much to make their magical work a uniform pleasure instead of an affair of worries. They will be profiting by the experience which their predecessors have gained by much toil and thought.

An Electric Coin Ejector.

This little piece of apparatus is intended to be used in conjunction with the coin ladder. It is connected by two wires to an electric light switch. When the current is turned on a short circuit is caused between the coils, and



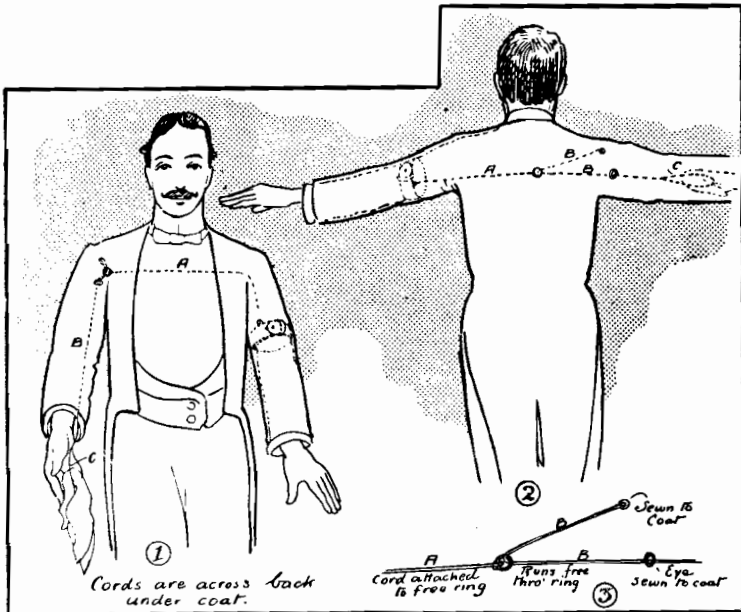
the arm, being depressed, opens a catch at the bottom of the ejector and releases the lid. The spring inside the coin box assists in ejecting the contents.

The Best of all Pulls.

The description I have given to this "pull" is, I think, the right one, for I cannot imagine that any conjurer, once acquainted with this secret, will ever care to use any other kind of pull when he wants to "vanish" a handkerchief.

The great advantage of this pull is that it leaves the hands and arms quite free up to the time that the pull is being used, and that it does not require any peculiar movements of the left arm to cause the pull to work.

A glance at the accompanying illustrations will show clearly the construction and method of working. A small cord is fastened by a strap to the left arm just above the



elbow. The free end of this cord has a small curtain ring attached to it, and the length of the cord is such that when it is extended the ring end comes to the centre of the performer's back when his left arm is extended. Another cord is sewn to the inside of the right shoulder of the performer's coat. The other end of this cord is passed through the ring on the other cord, and is then carried down through an eyelet or small ring in the right sleeve and so to the performer's cuff. The end of this cord is fitted with a small loop of cat-gut.

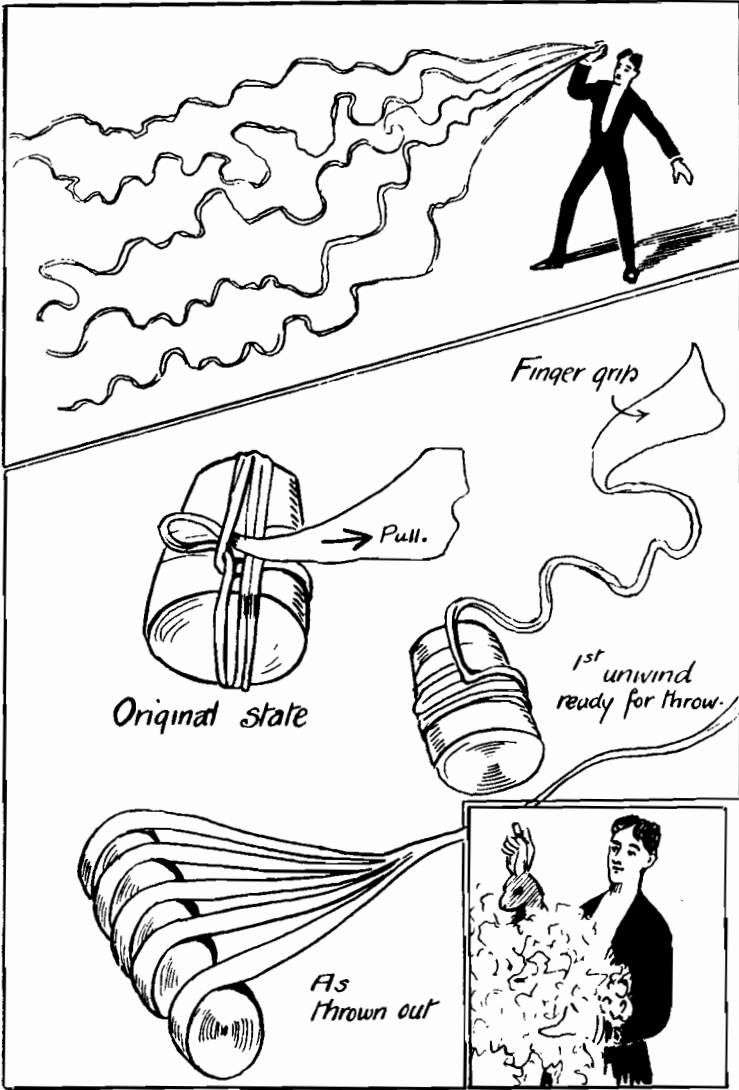
It will be seen that the small ring on the left cord is free, but that directly the performer extends his left arm the ring is pulled towards that side, and carries the other cord with it. Thus the handkerchief can be made to vanish without any movement of the right arm.

For simplicity of working and reliability and general effectiveness, this pull is not surpassed by any piece of mechanism I have seen, and it has the additional merit of costing practically nothing.

The Best Throw-out.

My claim that this throw-out is the best that has ever been devised can easily be proved by one experiment. Every conjurer knows that the fault of the ordinary throw-out is that it will not spread properly, and so does not afford proper cover for the final production.

The "Best" throw-out is a different thing altogether. It is composed of five separate coils of paper, joined together at the outer ends to a strip of fairly stout paper or a small piece of calico. When the coils are in readiness, the one piece at the end is wound round them twice, and then

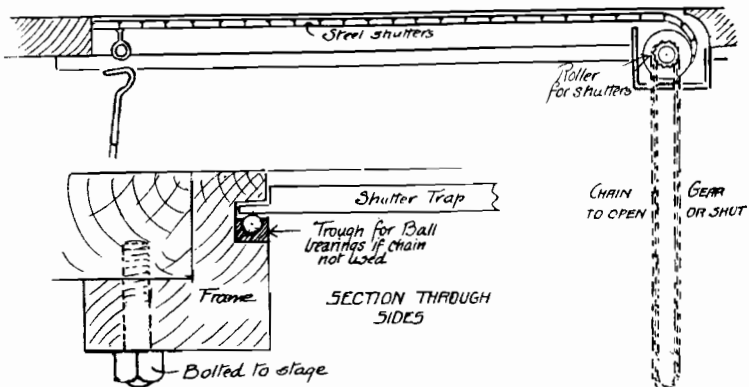


fastened in the way shown in the illustration. It will be found that when the five coils are unwinding in the air they make a brilliant display, and directly the conjurer gathers up some of the paper towards him he can easily get hold of such a large bunch that any production from a pocket is a very simple matter. The "Best" throw-out therefore serves two purposes—it is a showy thing, and it assists the conjurer in his next trick.

The "Shutter" Trap.

The special advantage of this trap is the rapidity with which it can be worked. The mechanism is similar to that of the steel shutters used in some shops, but the trap is made of slats of wood. A "tongue" projects from both sides of the slats, and the tongues run in two grooves made in the frame, which is fitted into the stage.

The trap can be worked in two ways. If a chain gear is attached, a man below the stage can open or close the

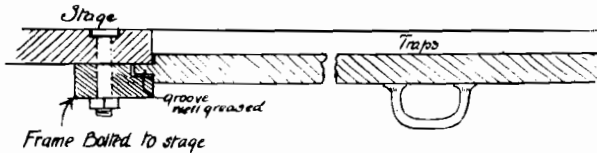
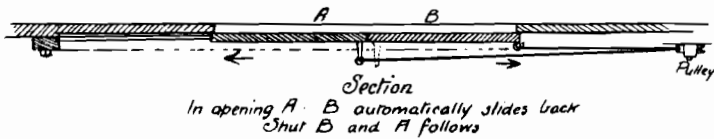
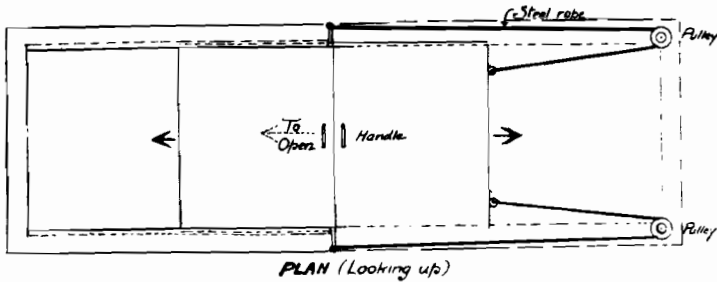


trap by merely turning a wheel. The other method necessitates the making of a small ball-bearing trough in the groove in which the trap glides. The trap will then run backwards or forwards so easily that it can be pulled with a hook.

A Double Trap.

A glance at the accompanying illustrations will show that this double trap can be opened or shut with one operation. Open A, and B must follow suit; close B, and A will come back to its original place.

At the top of A are fastened two steel cords, which are

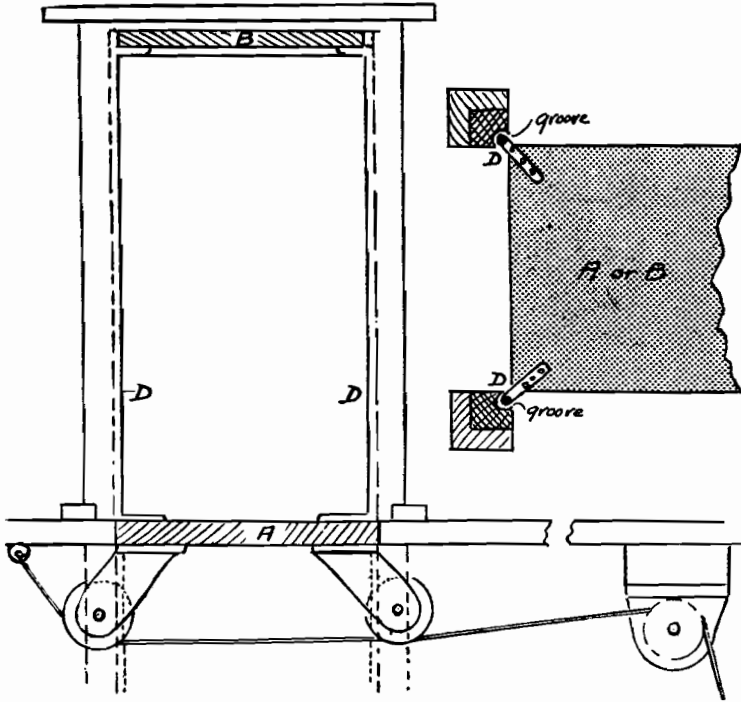


taken over two pulleys, and are then brought back to the trap B and secured there. The grooves in which the traps run are well greased. The working of the two traps is perfectly simple; the mechanism of the cords and pulleys can be understood by anyone who will look at the plan.

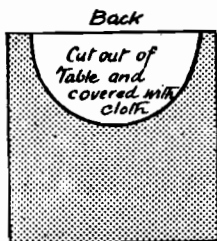
The Elevator Trap.

Illusionists who appreciate clean work will not be slow to recognise the superiority of this kind of trap to any others when certain effects are to be produced. The elevator trap is not suitable for every illusion, but of what trap can it be said that it "will do for everything"? The elevator trap is the best of all traps to cause the appearance or disappearance of an assistant on or from a square table with four legs. It is the best because it enables the performer to dispense with all "cover" except that below the table top. He need not worry as to whether the people at the sides of the hall or the back of the gallery will get a glimpse of anything which he would prefer they should not see, because when once the "change" has been made (with the minimum amount of cover from the table downwards), there is nothing to be given away.

The accompanying diagrams show the working of the elevator trap. On the stage is a small table with four legs, which connect through the stage with four wooden stanchions fixed under the stage. Two platforms, marked A and B in the diagram, connected together by corner iron rods, slide up and down in grooves in the stanchions (see Fig. 2). The two platforms are raised by means of a steel rope passing under them. One end of this rope is fixed to

*ELEVATOR TRAP**FIG. 2. Trap fully raised.*

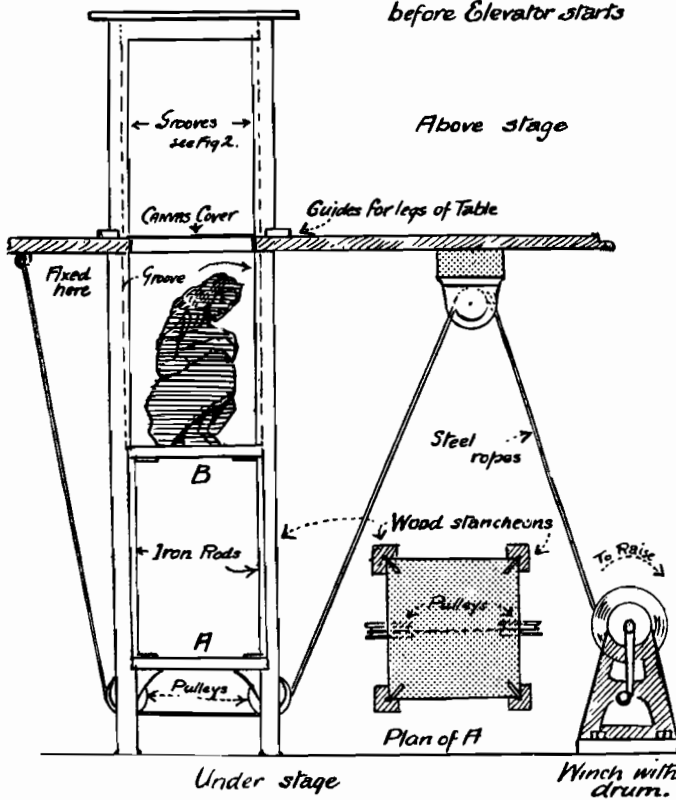
a point under the stage; it is then passed round pulleys under the platform A, and is carried from there up to another pulley fixed to the under side of the stage, and then down to a winch. It will be obvious that when the winch is turned the trap must rise. When the trap has been raised to the right height, the lower of the two platforms is on a level with the stage and the upper is immediately

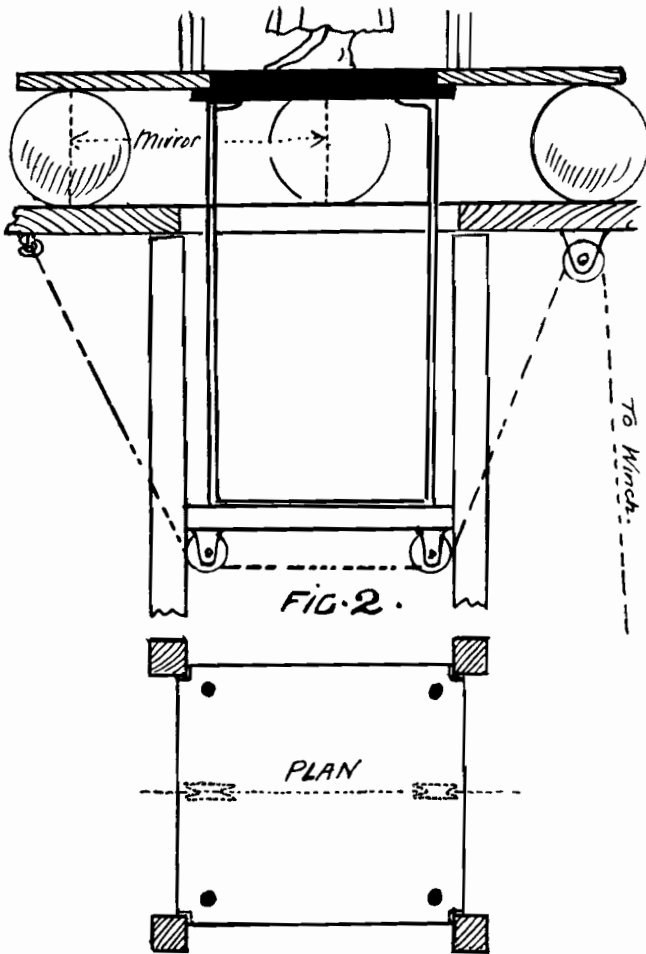


PLAN of Table Top.
N.B. Star trap can be used in place of cut out.

ELEVATOR TRAP.

FIG. 1. Position before Elevator starts

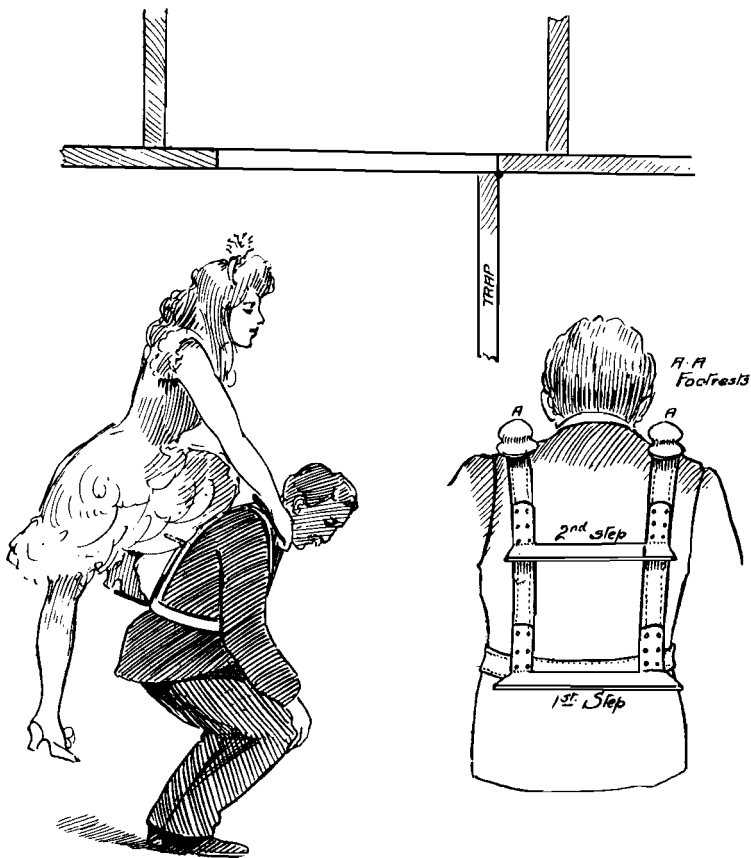




below the table top. The legs of the table are grooved to admit of the trap being raised in this way. Fig. 2 shows the appearance of the trap when it is raised to its right height. To enable the trap to pass through the stage, a

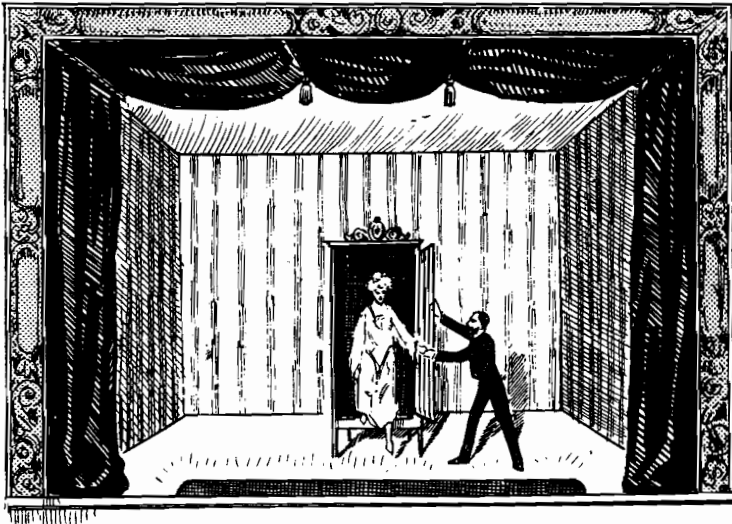
square hole is cut out below the table and covered with a piece of canvas. The back of the table on the stage is also cut out and covered with a loose piece of cloth, so that the assistant, standing on the upper platform of the trap, may pass upwards to the top of the table. If the performer prefers, he can have a star trap cut in the top of the table.

The "W.G." Step-Ladder for Trap.



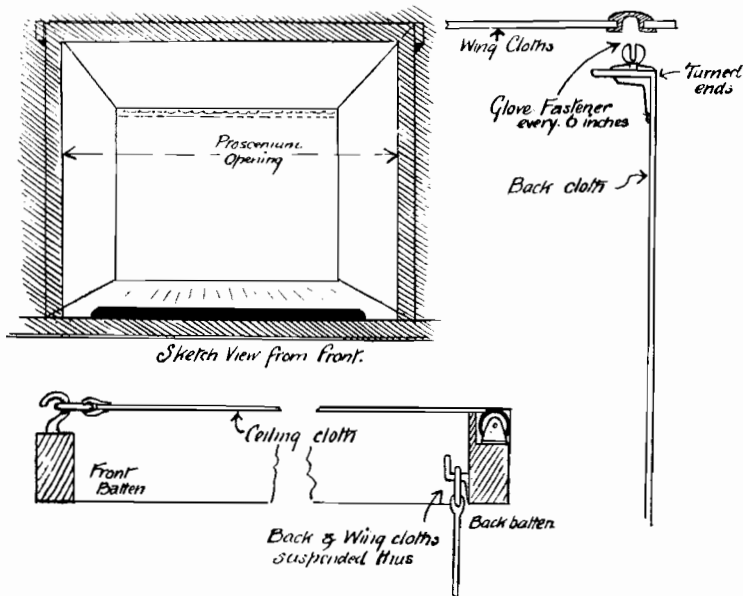
Conjurers' assistants who are accustomed to work with traps will, I think, appreciate this little device of my own. I imagine that most assistants have discovered at times that to run up a step-ladder and get through a trap quickly is not an easy matter. It occurred to me to have two steps of a ladder fitted to a man's back, and to have two foot-rests on his shoulders. The man can easily stoop to allow the girl to get on to the lower rung of the ladder, and, at the same time, she can steady herself by holding on to the man's shoulders. When she has got to the foot-rests on the man's shoulders, he grasps her feet, and so helps her to remain in that position until she has passed through the trap.

How to Protect One's Secrets during a Performance.



Every prudent illusionist wishes to prevent the stagehands, fly-men, and others from seeing just "how it is done" while the performance is in progress, and I therefore give here a simple method for "boxing in" the stage so that it is impossible for anyone in the flies or at the wings to see what is going on on the stage.

The picture shows how the stage should have the three sides enclosed, and a temporary "ceiling" drawn over the top of it. The cloths are fixed very easily. Battens are placed in the flies at the back and front of the stage and across the wings. The wing cloths and back cloth are hung by hooks to three battens. Each wing cloth is fastened at



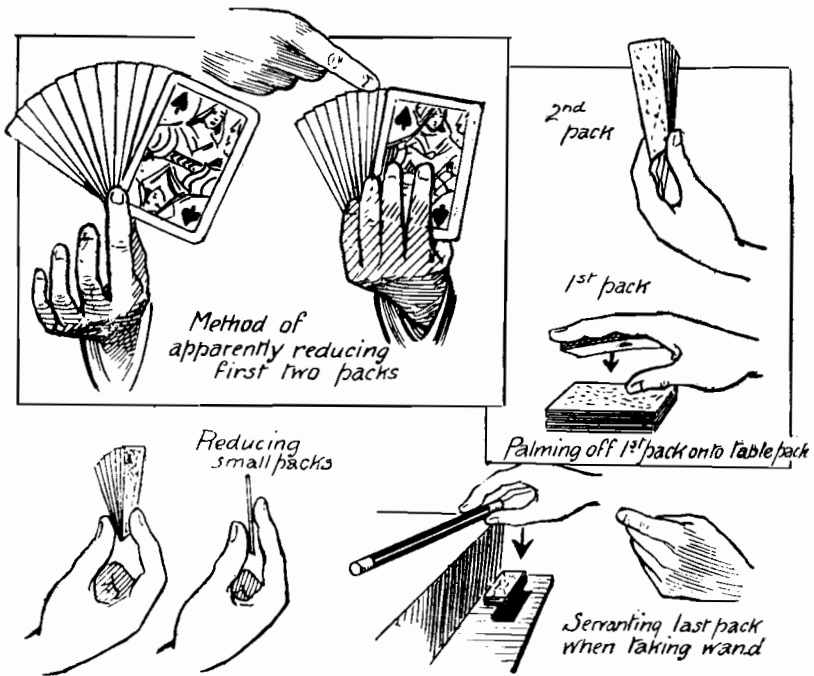
the edge by means of glove fasteners to the edge of the back cloth, so that it is impossible for anyone to peep in at the corners. A spring blind ceiling cloth is drawn over the top and hooked on to the front batten. Exits and entrances are made through a small space close to the proscenium.

Martin Chapender's Diminishing Cards.

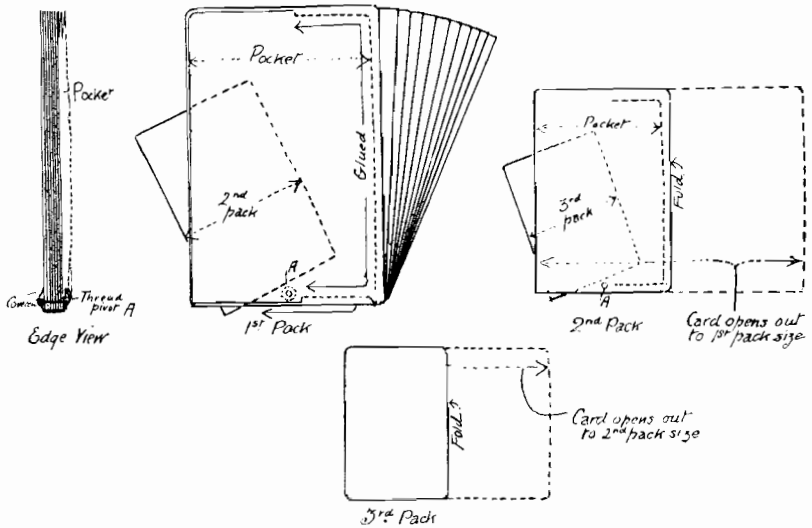
Many attempts have been made to get the correct method by which Martin Chapender used to perform the trick of the diminishing cards. After the death of this brilliant young conjurer, the actual set of diminishing cards which he always used came into my possession. The cards are before me as I write, and therefore my readers can rely upon the accuracy of the following descriptions.

The distinguishing feature of the trick was the fact that it was apparently done with one hand. The first set of small cards were of the usual "Patience" size. There were nine of them, and they were fastened by a piece of thread passed through the lot in the centre of the lower edge. Glued on to the hindermost card was a full-sized card (the queen of spades), hinged across the centre. At the back of the other half of this full-sized card was a small pocket, made of card and linen. Inside this pocket was the second set of diminishing cards, and inside the pocket of that set was the smallest set.

In picking up nine cards with which to do the trick, Chapender was careful to put the queen of spades in front.

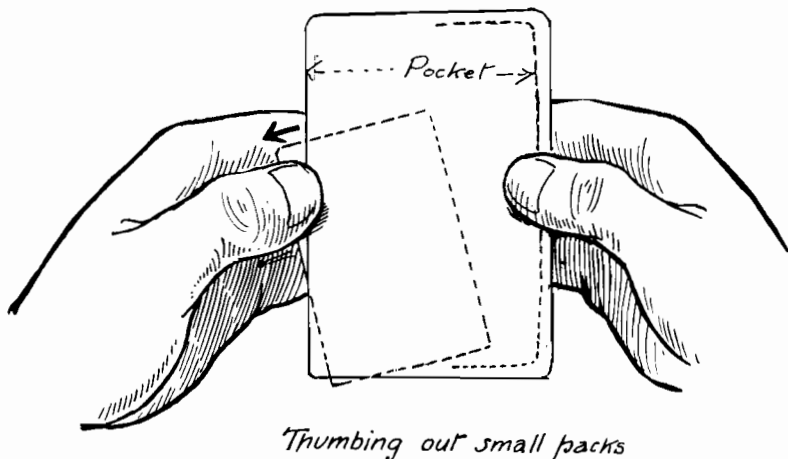


The folding card of the largest was opened out and the packet placed at the back of the unprepared cards. Then Chapender would call attention to the queen of spades in front, and also to the fact that he used only one hand in the trick. He would then apparently square up the cards with his right hand, but what he really did was to palm off the unprepared cards. As the audience still saw the queen of spades in front, they did not suspect that any change had taken place. Then Chapender would turn the back of his left hand to the audience, fold up the queen of spades, and show the first set of small cards, which were



fanned out so that the pocket at the back containing the other two sets was under the left thumb. He then worked the second set out of the pocket with his thumb, opened the folded queen of spades on that set, and proceeded in the same way. The third set was afterwards produced. This set, being the last, had no pocket at the back.

I should add that the first lot of palmed cards were secretly placed on the table. Chapender would pick up some of the other cards to show how the cards were decreasing in size, and in replacing them on the table he would add the palmed cards to them. The second set was got rid of in the same way. The third set was apparently placed in the left hand, but retained in the right. The right hand then picked up the wand, and in so doing dropped



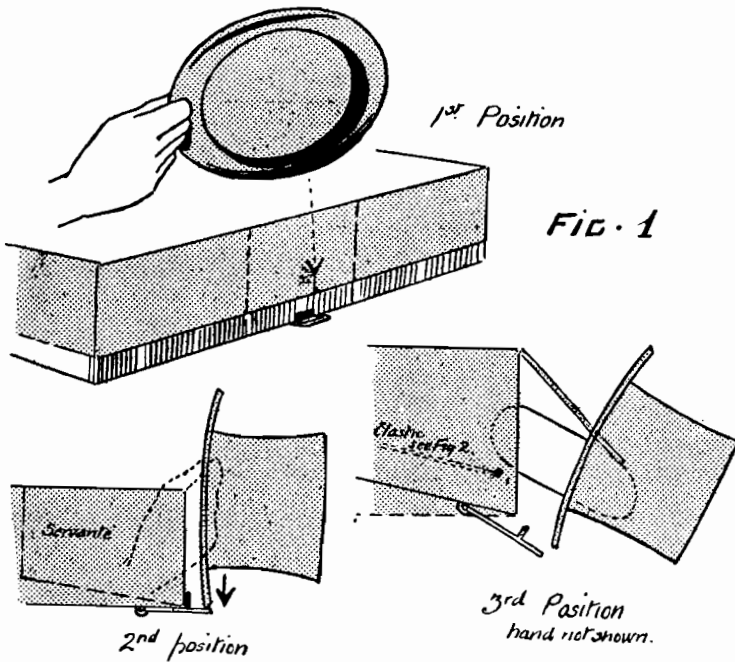
the smallest set on the servante. Having touched his left hand with the tip of his wand, Chapender would show both hands empty.

The "M.A." Automatic Servante.

This servante is designed for the purpose of projecting a "load" into a hat. The servante is made to slide under the table. It is kept in place by a lid, which is masked by a piece of the cloth on the table. The cloth is cut to allow the lid to open.

Fig. 1 shows that the conjurer merely places his hat on the catch which holds the lid of the servante in its place. This action opens the lid, and the load is shot into the hat. The lid falls back into its original position.

The servante is really a box with an inclined floor. A piece of stout elastic is stretched across the mouth of it, and when the load is placed in the servante, this piece of elastic is pushed back by the load. The lid is closed down and



held by the catch until the hat is pressed on the catch, when the lid is released and the elastic drives the load into the hat. The lid then falls by its own weight on to the elastic, which deadens any noise, and the piece of cloth follows it. The servante is in the front of the table.

Methods for enabling a Performer to change Places with his Assistant.

In many illusions the effect depends upon a well-worked change of places between the performer and his assistant.

The simplest method of producing such a change is for

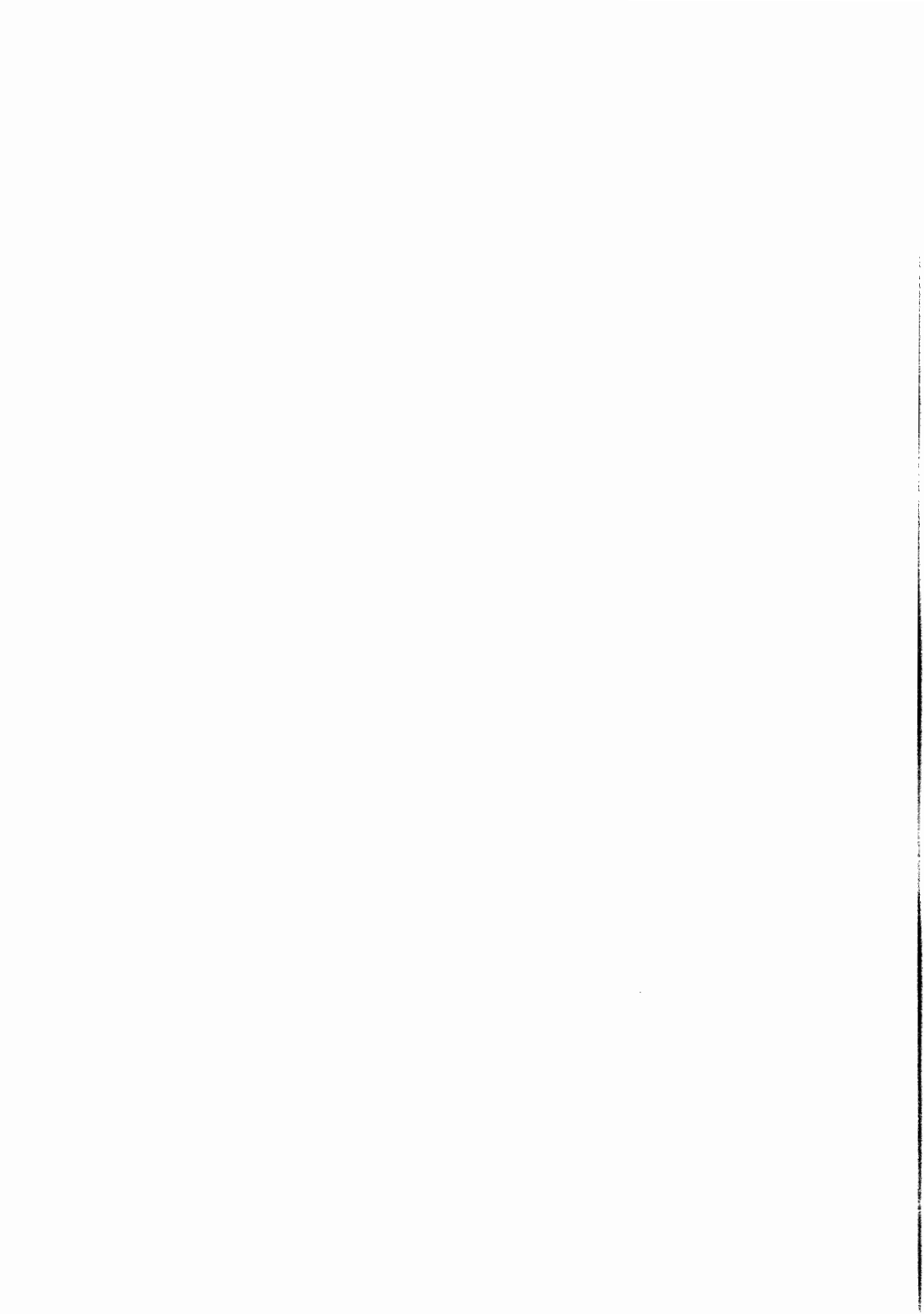
the performer to secure an assistant who closely resembles him in appearance. If the two men are of about the same build and complexion, and are dressed alike, they may change places on the stage constantly without anybody on the other side of the footlights being the wiser. With an assistant who does not in ordinary circumstances look like the performer, fancy dress is a useful help. Only the other day I saw a good instance of this at a variety theatre. In the course of his show the performer made up in fancy dress. Then he announced that he wanted a pistol for his next trick, and called off the stage to his assistant to bring one. There was no response. The performer, with an assumption of anger at the delay, then stepped into the wings to get the pistol himself. A moment later he returned—at least the audience thought it was he; in reality it was the assistant, who, made up in similar fancy dress, had been waiting in the wings for his cue to enter.

Another good method is the following. The performer has two assistants on the stage. They open a sheet lengthways, so that it is spread out between the audience and the back part of the stage. Directly they do this a third assistant comes up through a trap behind the sheet. As a preliminary to the illusion the performer is to be wrapped up in the sheet. He steps behind for the purpose, but the moment he is hidden from the audience he slips down the trap. The two assistants now proceed to wrap up the third assistant. But the audience, of course, imagine that the sheet is being rolled round the performer himself, and are vastly surprised when it is unrolled later on and somebody else steps out.

PART VI.

Harry Houdini's Tricks.

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Houdini.

THE history of the development of every art is, in effect, the history of the achievements of a few supreme artists. These men were not content to work on the lines of their predecessors or contemporaries, but struck out new lines for themselves. Within them all was that gift of the gods which we mortals call genius. Aided and inspired by it, they perceived new possibilities in their art, and realised those possibilities by fine creative work.

The art of magic has had its supreme artists. One at least of them it still has. I allude to Harry Houdini. It can truthfully be said of him as regards magic that he has made and is making history. His magic is something quite new; it is the product of his individual genius, and it constitutes a distinct and striking development of the art. His act was a novelty when he first produced it; it remains a novelty to-day. The details of it vary constantly, for Houdini is prolific of ideas. But so far as basic principles are concerned, it never varies. And it is in those basic principles that the secret of Houdini's new magic lies. Wonderful magic! It mystifies the public generally, and it also mystifies his brother artists. Many of them have tried to duplicate his act, but not one has been successful. For a dozen years he has been performing it all over the world, and millions of people must have witnessed it. Yet his secret is still undiscovered; his methods are still his own, and only his own. Harry Houdini has been described as "The Magician of the Twentieth Century." It is a good

description. For his magic was born with the century, and has grown up with it. And the spirit of the century is in him—"Progress, always progress!" The phrase typifies the twentieth century, and it also typifies Harry Houdini.

Houdini was born in the United States in 1874, and made his first appearance in public as an entertainer in 1883. Then, and for some years afterwards, he appeared as a contortionist and trapeze performer. Later he worked as a locksmith, and it was in the course of that work that he began to study the principles which he now employs as a magician. But probably most of the subscribers to "Exclusive Magical Secrets" are already acquainted with these and other particulars of Houdini's career, for biographical notes concerning him have frequently appeared in the press of late. Information about the man himself as a personality has not, however, been so widely published. For instance, few know that he is one of the finest athletes of the day. He has essayed many branches of sport, and has excelled in them all. In the early venturesome days of aviation he established two notable records. He was the first magician in the whole world to fly, and the first man in Australia to do so.

As a showman, using the word in its best sense, Houdini is unrivalled. I know no other public performer who can grip a vast miscellaneous audience by the power of personality as quickly and thoroughly as he can. It is a rare gift, and must have helped him tremendously during his career. But without that, and even without his wonderful escape act, he would still have been a notable magician. I have seen him give several sleight-of-hand performances in private, and have been amazed by his neatness and skill and by the big effects he got from quite simple tricks. Discriminating

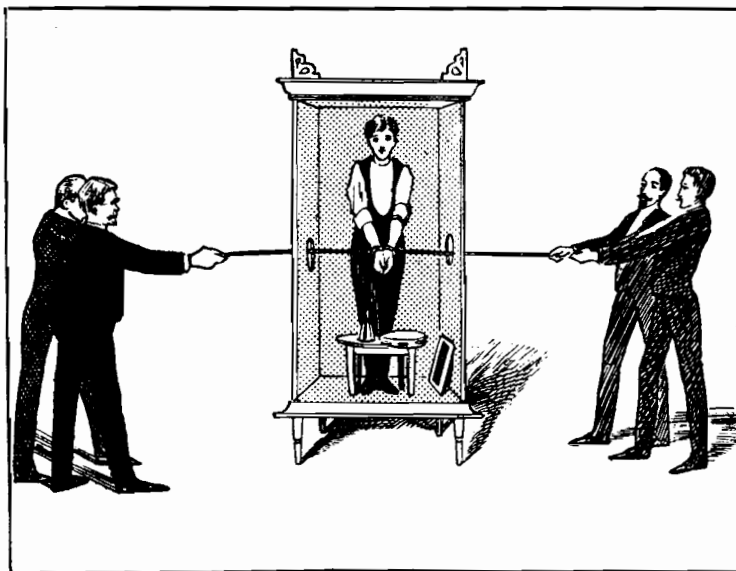
managers would jump at the chance of booking such a turn, even if presented by an absolutely unknown man.

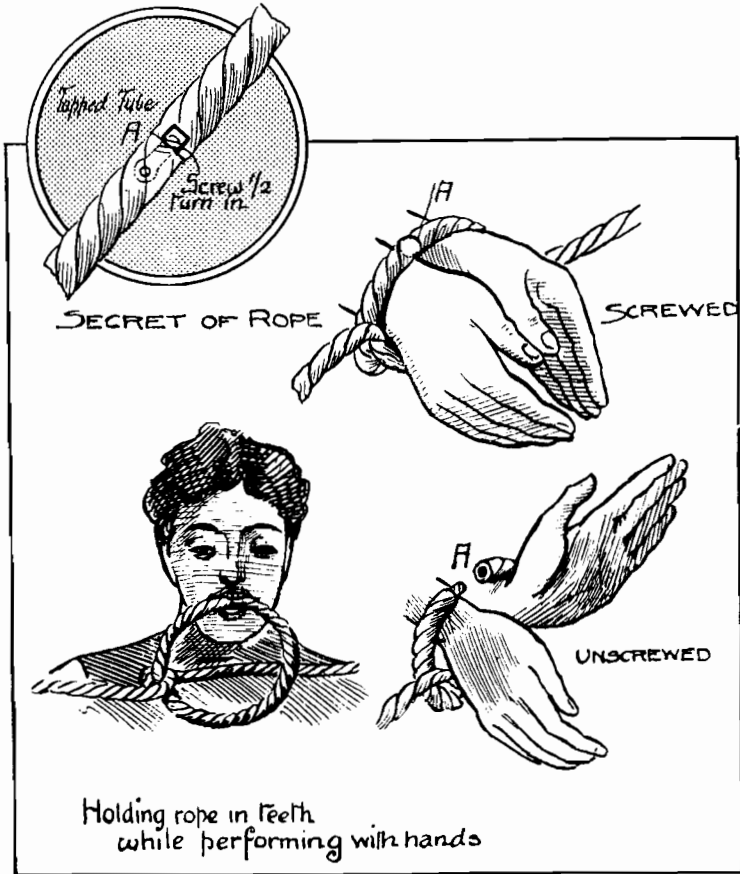
"Exclusive Magical Secrets" is, however, chiefly concerned with Houdini as an inventor. The tricks he has contributed to this section are typical of the style of magic he has made his own. They are all ingenious and effective, and are explained very graphically. In connection with them, it may be interesting to subscribers to know that Houdini has invented every trick performed by him throughout his career as a magician, and has constructed with his own hands every necessary piece of apparatus. Mechanical skill and the creative faculty very seldom exist together. But in the case of Houdini they do, and to a remarkable degree.

Houdini's Rope Tie.

THE FINEST METHOD EVER DEvised FOR ENABLING A SINGLE-HANDED PERFORMER TO GIVE A SPIRITUALISTIC SÉANCE WHILE HE IS HELD BY FOUR MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE.

If I were asked to say which is the best trick in this book, I should be in doubt as to what answer to give. I should probably say that there were at least a dozen best tricks, and in that dozen I should certainly include the one which I am about to explain, by special permission of Houdini, the great Handcuff King. The effect of this illusion, when worked by the inventor, is absolutely





miraculous, and yet the apparatus required is simple, inexpensive, and portable. An amateur could work this trick, if he knew the secret, as well as the professional performer, and yet the trick is worthy of a place in any programme, no matter who the illusionist may be—I make no exceptions.

The effect is as follows. A small cabinet is examined; in it are placed a small stool, a slate, bell, tambourine, etc.,

etc. An examined rope is then tied tightly round the performer's wrists. The centre of the rope is used for this purpose, and the two ends of the rope are carried out through holes in the sides of the cabinet, and are securely held by four members of the audience (see illustration). All the customary manifestations, including bell ringing, tambourine playing, writing on the slate, etc., etc., are then produced (the front of the cabinet being curtained, of course), and yet, when the committee go to examine the knots on the performer's wrists, they find them still intact. There is absolutely no clue to the way the mysteries are produced, and, as there is no secret about the little cabinet or the platform on which it stands, the performance can be given equally well in a drawing-room, provided the performer can fit up a few rods on which to hang curtains, and can arrange to have the committee at a distance from him. This last qualification is necessary, because the temptation to look inside the cabinet might be too great for the average man if he were close to it.

The secret, like the secret of all good conjuring tricks and illusions, is beautifully simple. The centre of the rope is "tapped"—that is to say, it is first divided in half, and in the centre of one half a small screw is fitted, while in the centre of the other half a metal "thread" is fitted. Thus the two pieces of rope can be screwed together, and if the faking is properly done the join cannot be seen, and the rope will stand examination.

When the performer is going to have his hands tied, he arranges matters in such a way that he gets the join of the rope just between his wrists, and, of course, on the top of the wrists (see illustration). When the front curtain of the cabinet is drawn the performer holds the rope at the

join with his mouth, and, using his teeth for the purpose, unscrews the two pieces. He is thus enabled to get his hands free, but while they are engaged in producing the manifestations, the performer takes care to hold the two ends of the rope in his mouth, so that the committee who are holding the two ends of the rope outside the cabinet may not suspect any hanky-panky. When the manifestations are over, the performer puts his hands back in the noose and screws up the rope again with his teeth.

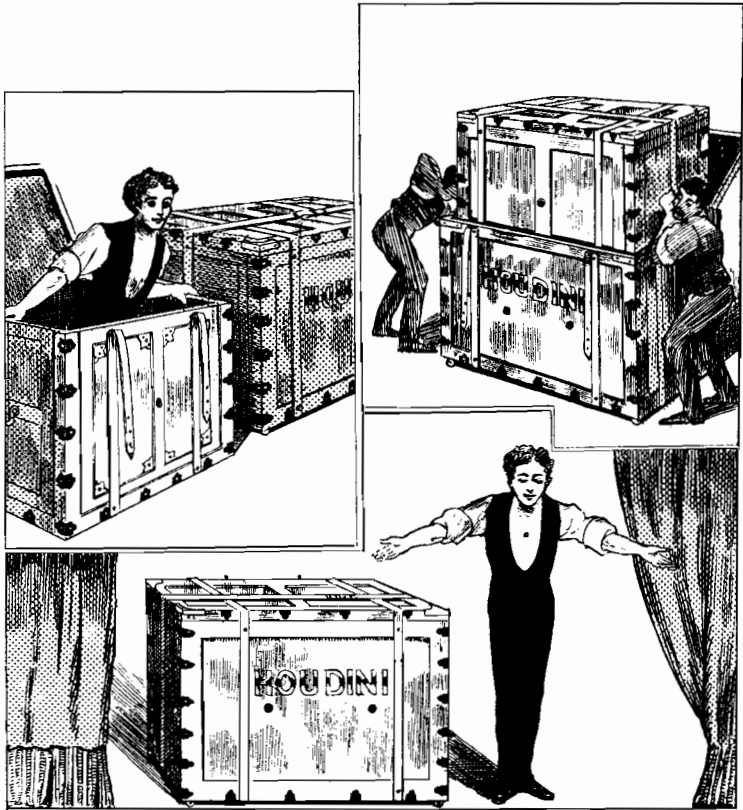
That is all the explanation required for one of the finest tricks I have ever seen, and, in reference to this secret, I think I may fairly say that if the book contained nothing else it would be well worth the money.

Houdini's Escape from Two Boxes.

INVENTED BY HARRY HOUDINI, THE HANDCUFF KING, AND
NOW DESCRIBED, FOR THE FIRST TIME,
WITH HIS PERMISSION.

It has been truly said that the best trick is one in which the effect is so plain that no words are required to explain what is happening, and in which the working of the trick is so simple and yet so mystifying that the performer can display the trick without the slightest fear that anyone in his audience will fathom the mystery.

Very few tricks come under this heading, but I think the present illusion may fairly be included among them. It is one of the most mystifying of Harry Houdini's many illusions, and yet the youngest member of the audience can follow the illusion. At the same time, the most brainy member of the audience is not likely to arrive at any satisfactory explanation of the mystery.



The effect is as follows. The illusionist calls attention to two boxes, and invites any members of the audience to examine them. When these members of the audience are satisfied that the boxes are "quite ordinary," the performer gets into one of the boxes, and his assistants lock it and strap it. The box with the performer inside is then lifted up and placed in the other box, which in turn is also locked and strapped. If the members of the audience wish to take

all precautions against trickery, they are at liberty to lock the boxes and strap them, or, if they wish, they can bring padlocks and chains and fasten the boxes in any way they please. In spite of all these precautions against escape, the performer manages to get out of both boxes, and immediately afterwards the boxes can be examined. I need scarcely say that the performer has a screen pulled out in front of the boxes while he is making his way out of them.

To heighten the effect, the performer can have both boxes placed into canvas bags, and the bags may be laced up and tied (see illustration).

Now for the secret, which, although simple, is extremely ingenious. The planking of the backs of both boxes is divided into three parts. The middle part is fastened to the lower by means of two stout rods (see illustration). These rods pass through the centre of the middle plank, and the holes for the rods are so large that, but for the upper plank, the middle plank could be easily lifted off the rods.

The middle plank is held up against the top plank by means of three spring catches connected by one rod in the centre of the plank. Just beneath the centre catch is a large air-hole. (There are several similar air-holes in the boxes.)

I must now direct the reader's attention to the illustrations. He will see from these that when the performer takes a key of the shape shown in the illustration, and pushes this upwards in the air-hole of the box, he is able to depress the springs of all three catches, because they are connected together with a rod. When the springs are depressed, the performer pulls out the plank towards him, and so gets it quite free from the upper plank. The conjurer then slides

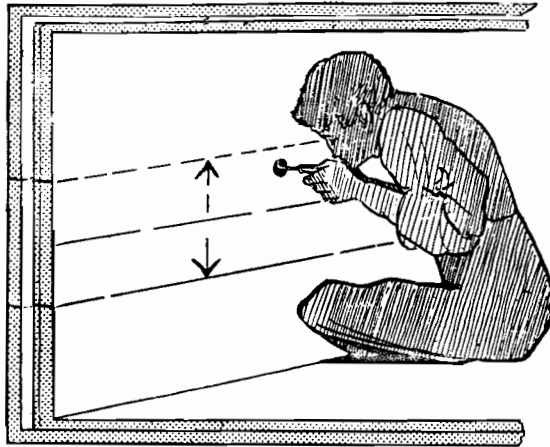


Fig 1 - Unlocking secret panel

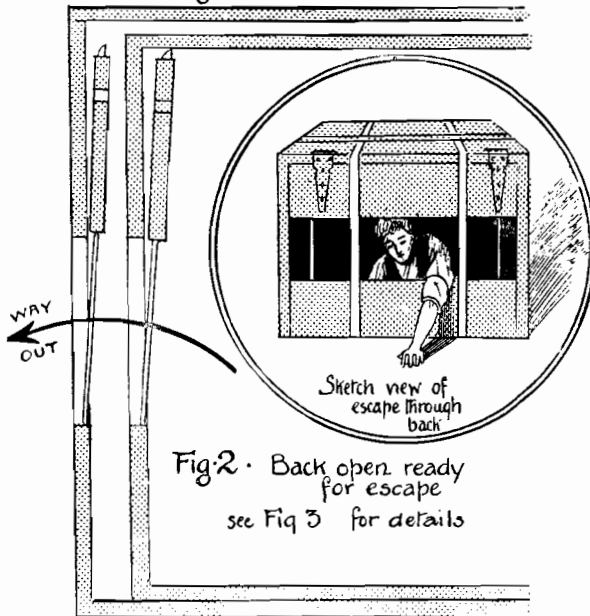
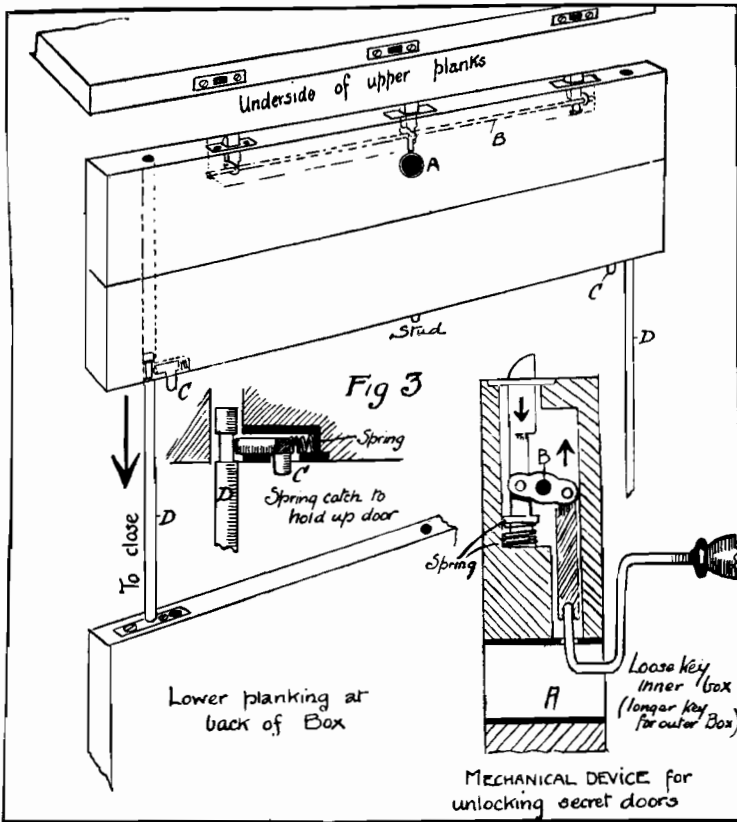


Fig:2 · Back open ready for escape
see Fig 3 for details



the middle plank upwards and inside the box, and so makes a space at the back of the box sufficiently large to enable him to escape. If the boxes have been placed in canvas bags, the conjurer unfastens the laces and replaces them after he has closed the trap door.

The performer is provided with two keys, a short one for the inner box and a longer one for the outer box. Directly the first box is in the second the performer gets

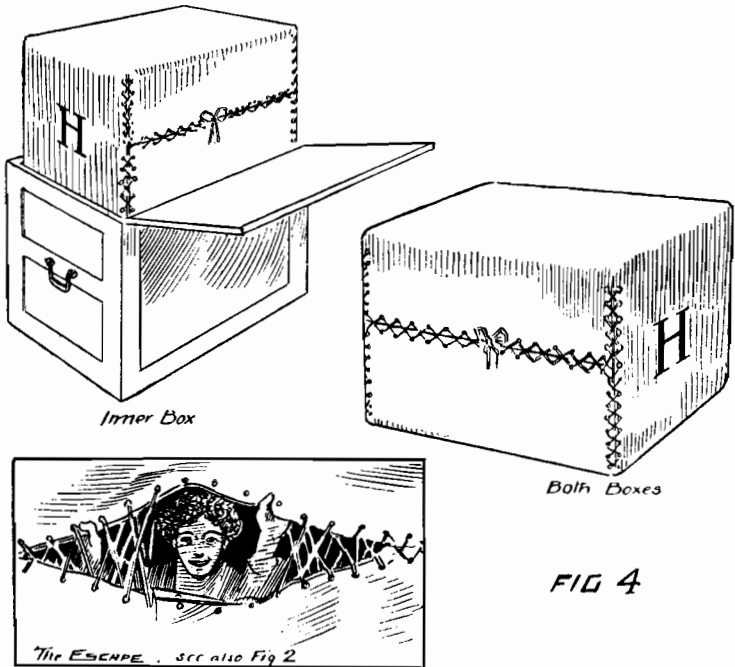


FIG 4

to work, and has the middle plank of the inner box removed before the outer box is closed. He is therefore able to make his escape within a few seconds of the screen being placed in front of the boxes.

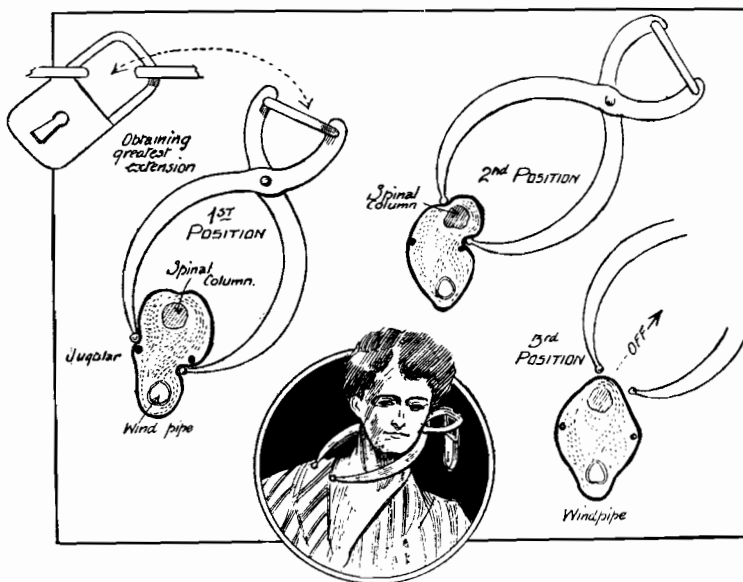
I should have said that the two trick air-holes of the two boxes are flush with each other. Directly the performer is out of the boxes he draws down the two middle planks, and then closes the boxes. The planks, being fitted with spring catches and running on rods, are held quite firmly, and there is absolutely no clue at the end of the performance—nothing that the most inquisitive individual can fasten on to as being “something to do with it.”

I am greatly indebted to my friend, Harry Houdini, for

his kindness in explaining the secret of his boxes to me, and for lending me the boxes for the purpose of illustration. The accompanying drawings were made from the actual boxes used by Houdini himself, who tells me that he had three words in his mind when he was planning this trick—secrecy, speed, and practicability—and that unless a man has a set of “findable” trap doors he cannot duplicate this trick. I imagine that very, very few men of mystery could build a box trick in which the second box could be roped and placed in a canvas covering. I recall one well-known performer whose trick boxes could not be examined—partly because the straps that fastened them were broad straps of rubber!

Houdini's Ice Pick Release.

Invented by HARRY HOUDINI.



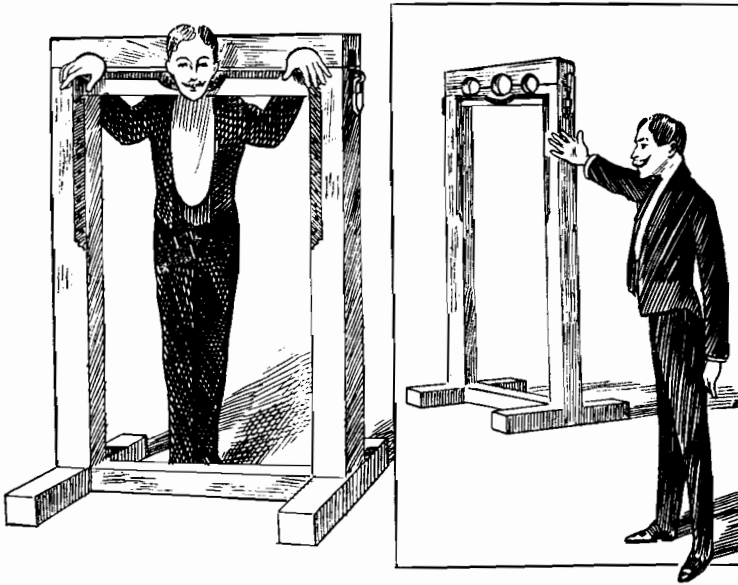
The performer has an ice pick padlocked on to his neck in the way shown in the illustration. A screen is placed in front of the performer, and in a few seconds he emerges with the ice pick, still padlocked, in his hand. Everything can be examined both before and after the performance. Mr. Houdini told me that when he used to present this release, he was in the habit of inviting the audience to bring their own rivets, and to put a red-hot one into the pick themselves. This little piece of showmanship no doubt added considerably to the effect of the trick.

It will probably surprise my readers to know that the pick is not faked in any way. The only preparation required is to be seen in the points of the pick. These are finished off with two small balls, so that the persons fitting the pick round the neck of the performer shall not hurt his neck; at least, that is the excuse the performer gives for having the pick made with those little balls on the points. As a matter of fact, they are there because the performer does not want to hurt himself when he takes the pick from his neck.

The illustrations show how he goes to work. It will be noted that he works it from the right-hand side. First of all he gets the thing over the windpipe, then he gets the right-hand side of the pick over the jugular vein, and then round the spinal column, and so off the neck. The padlock is quite genuine, but it must not fasten up the two ends close together; it should be fixed in such a way that the performer can get the greatest amount of space when he is getting himself free from the pick.

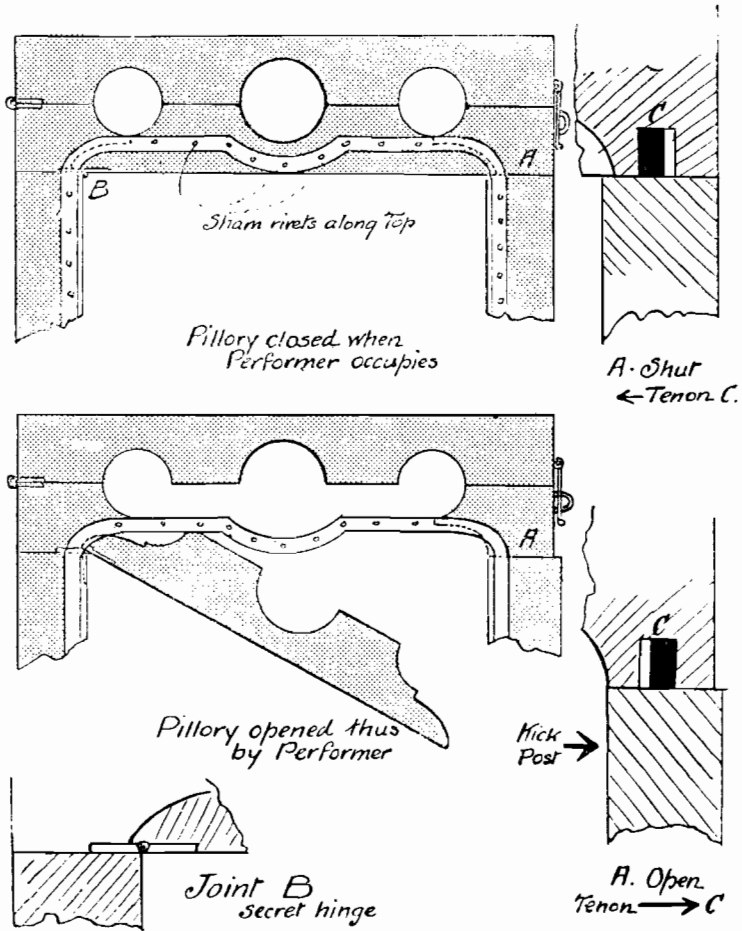
The Houdini Pillory Illusion.

A performer who makes a speciality of marvellous



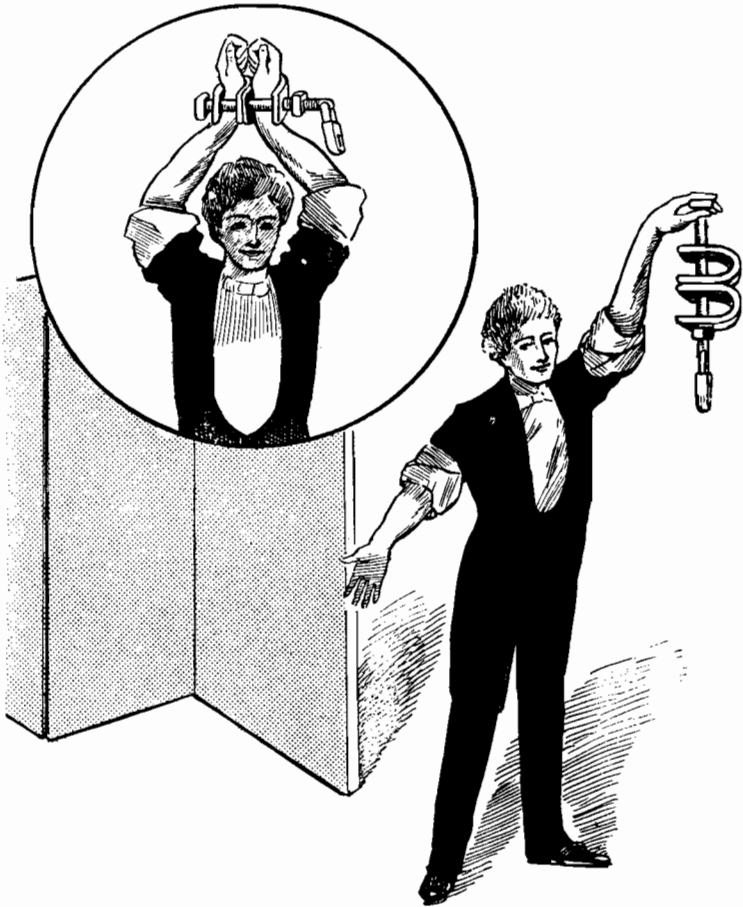
“escapes” will find this a very puzzling trick. A kind of pillory is placed on the stage, and the performer is secured in it in the way shown in the illustration, the top being raised to allow the performer to place his head and hands in the holes made for them. The top of the pillory is then closed and padlocked. In a moment, after a screen has been placed in front of the pillory, the performer is free and the pillory is in the same state that it was in when the audience last saw it.

It will be noted that the pillory is strengthened with straps of metal both at the back and front. These pieces of metal are really to hide a false joint in the woodwork, which allows the lower half of the woodwork to drop from a hinge concealed in the opposite corner (see illustration). The performer merely has to kick the left post. In so doing

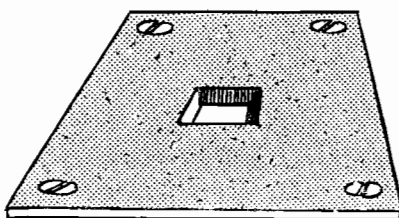
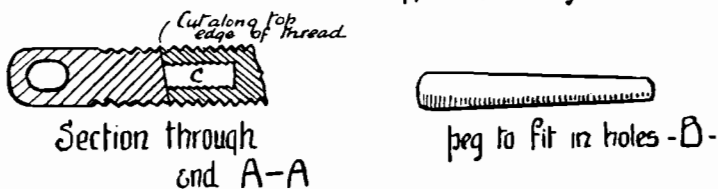
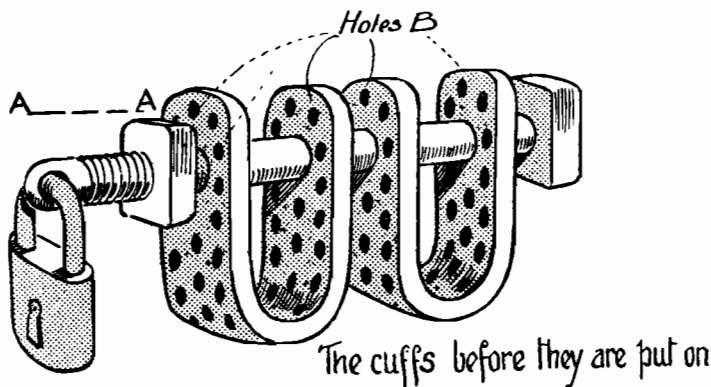


he shifts the joint, which is on a loose tenon. This allows the lower half of the top of the pillory to drop down, and the performer escapes, closing the joint again immediately afterwards. The rivets on the metal bands are only dummies—the heads of rivets.

The Houdini Challenge Handcuff.



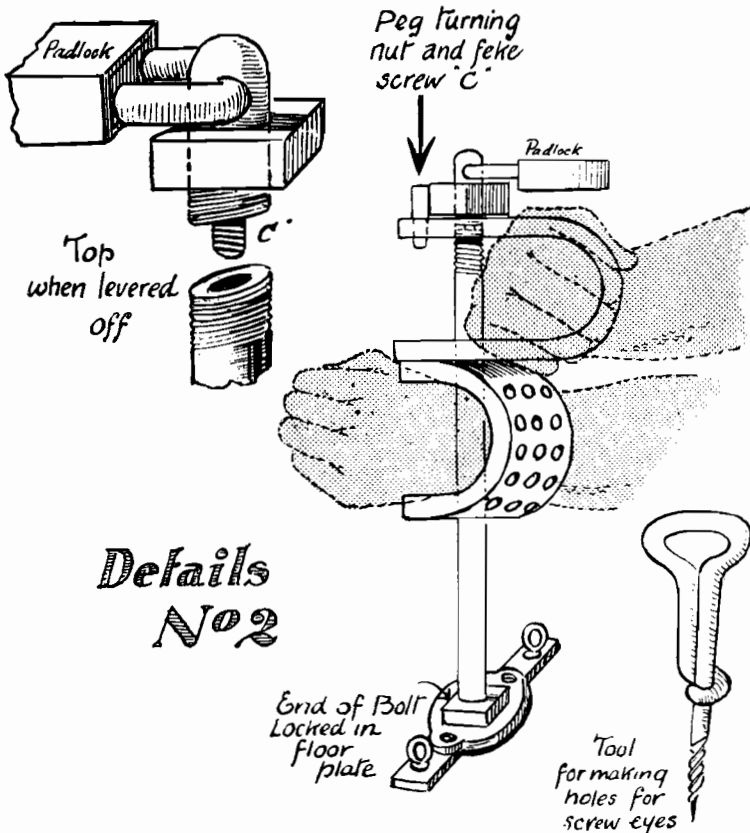
The handcuff which I am about to describe is the one that Houdini used to call his "challenge" handcuff. He was in the habit of leaving it in the vestibule of every hall in which he was performing, so that anyone might examine



Iron plate screwed to floor
Details - 1.

it. In order to prevent the consequences that might follow if some evil-disposed person tampered with the handcuff, Houdini performed with a duplicate of the one which he publicly exhibited.

The form of the handcuff is plainly shown in the illustrations. It will be seen that a large nut was on the end



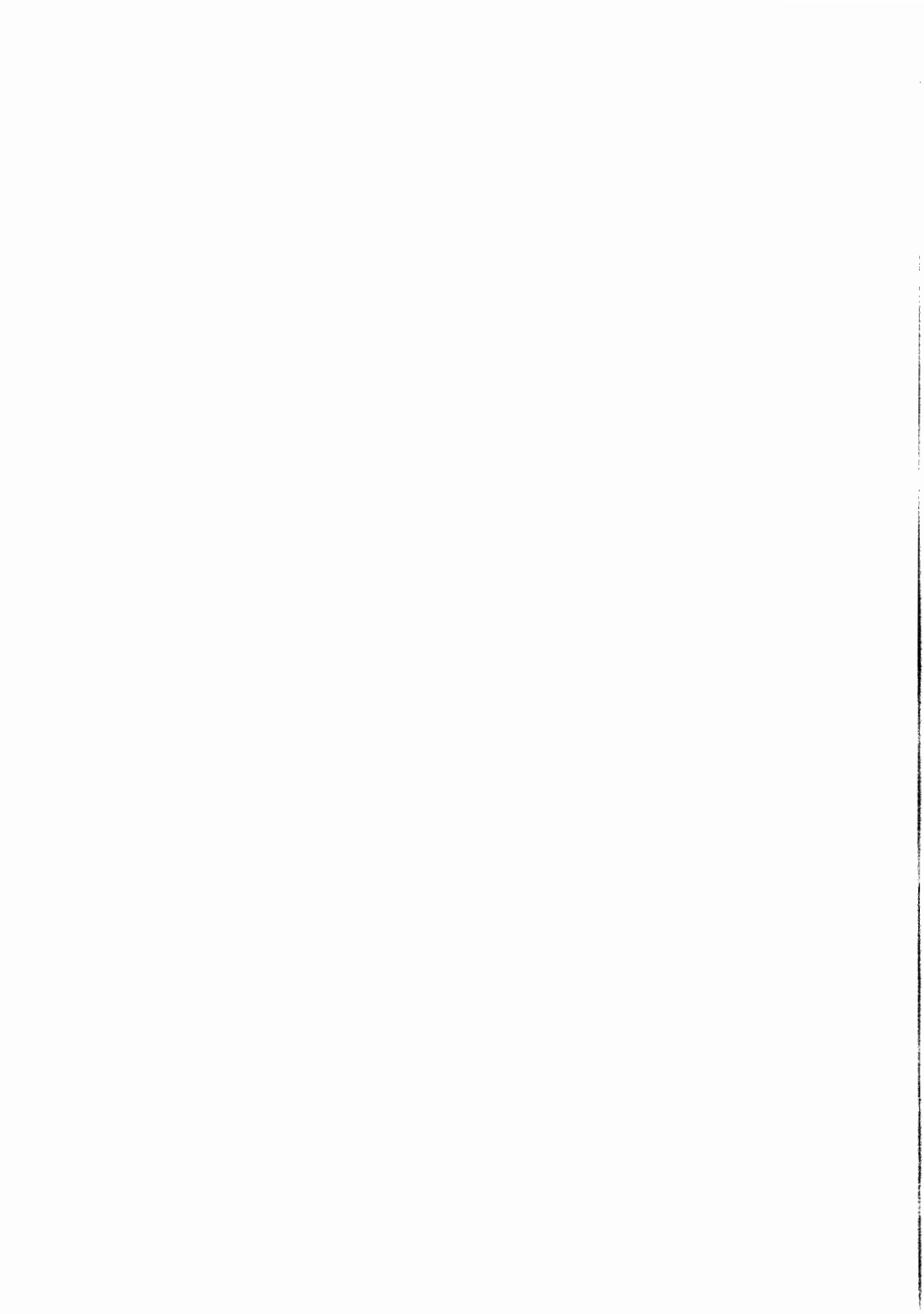
of the iron bar on which the cuffs were placed. To get out of the cuffs, Houdini inserted this nut into a space in an iron plate which was screwed to the floor of his cabinet. Thus the bar was held fast while the performer worked on the faked screw C (see details 1 and 2), and then levered off the top. To enable him to do this a peg was dropped into a hole at the top of the cuff, and by means of this he was able to turn the nut at the top of the bar.



PART VII.

Buatier de Kolta.

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Buatier de Kolta.

SUBSCRIBERS to "Exclusive Magical Secrets" will, without doubt, regard the explanation of Buatier de Kolta's famous "Expanding Cube" as one of the most valuable features of the book. I propose to introduce it by a few notes as to the history and achievements of De Kolta. The material on which they are based has been supplied to me from absolutely reliable sources, and the greater part of it has never before been made public. De Kolta was so great a figure in the magical world that any information relating to him is of interest to all magicians. No further excuse is needed for the insertion of the following biography.

Buatier de Kolta's real name was Joseph Buatier. He was the son of a prominent silk merchant of Lyons, in the south of France, and was born in that city in the year 1848. The Buatier family is one of the oldest and most respected in that part of France. At one time it owned a castle, known as "The Buatier Castle." The building still exists, but it is now used as a hospital. Buatier's mother also belonged to one of the old French families. He thus began life with the advantage—and it is an advantage—of coming from good stock on both sides. The Buatiers, in the person of Auguste, the brother of Joseph, and other more distant relatives, still occupy honourable positions at Lyons.

Joseph's early life was the usual one of a child of well-to-do parents in France. His first years were spent with a nurse in the country. At the age of six he was placed at a small boarding school. From that, at the age of

sixteen, he was transferred to the principal college of Lyons. It was at this college that, for the first time, he saw a conjuring entertainment. He often stated in after life that that entertainment determined his career. From the hour in which it took place his one ambition was to become a magician.

But years were to pass before that ambition was realised. His parents intended him for the Church, and presently placed him at a seminary for training priests. At this seminary, on one of the fête days, he gave his first magical performance. According to his own account, it was not a very skilful performance, and the most successful parts of it, from the point of view of the audience, were the blunders made by a little boy who was assisting him. As part of the performance, Buatier gave a "Growing Plant" trick. His apparatus consisted of a table, a platform underneath, and a table cover, which reached the edge of the platform only, and thus showed a space under the table quite free. A trap was constructed in the table and the cover. It may be remarked that this trap was on the same principle as all those he used through his long career as a magician. The boy who was assisting him on this occasion was placed on the platform, and was instructed by Buatier to push the plant up through the trap very slowly. Instead of doing this, he literally shot it up into the air the moment that Buatier had made his speech to the audience and sown the seed in the flower-pot. A little later, when Buatier was working the time-honoured trick of the watch in the loaf of bread, the boy again gave the show away. This time he actually crawled out and showed himself to the audience. Buatier was so angry with him that he picked up the loaf and hurled it at his head. The performance thus ended

with the discomfiture of the magician, but with the hearty laughter of the audience.

At the age of twenty-one he left the seminary. By this time he had abandoned all idea of entering the Church. His father deeply regretted this, but made him an allowance sufficient to maintain him in comfort. At about this time he was an intimate friend of Eli Laurens, who is now one of the most celebrated painters in France, and who, even then, possessed considerable skill in the art. Influenced, perhaps, by this friendship, Buatier took lessons in painting. He continued the study of the art for a year or two, and made good progress in it. But then an event happened which changed the whole plan of his life. That event was an accidental meeting with De Kolta.

De Kolta was a Hungarian of noble birth. Several of his relatives held important ministerial or diplomatic positions. He himself was the ne'er-do-well of the family. At an early age he struck out for himself as a showman or entertainer in a small way. He was a man of somewhat striking personality, with many eccentricities of dress and manner. He was in the habit of wearing at the same time two or three pairs of trousers, and an even larger number of waistcoats and coats. Even in the matter of socks he was equally wholesale in his ideas, and, as the result of this, he was obliged to wear boots of an enormous size. The absurd reason which he advanced for thus overclothing himself was that he would suffer less damage in the event of a collision or a fall!

The circumstances of the meeting of Buatier and De Kolta were as follows. De Kolta was at Lyons with a small company of travelling players. One evening he happened to go into a café, and was attracted by the laughter of a

group of students at one end of the room. He approached them, and found that they were being entertained by Buatier with card tricks. De Kolta watched the performance for a few minutes, and was very greatly impressed by its skill. As soon as a convenient opportunity occurred, he entered into conversation with Buatier. This conversation was the beginning of an intimate friendship between them. De Kolta soon succeeded in persuading Buatier that there were the makings of a great magician in him, and that he, De Kolta, could materially help him to become one.

A few weeks later—on the 19th November, 1870, to be exact—the two started on their travels. The Franco-German War had just broken out, and they felt that for the time being Italy would be a better field for their work than France. They made the journey on foot, and experienced many hardships before they got to the other side of the Alps. Once there, however, things went smoothly enough. Buatier acted as the performer and De Kolta as the impresario. They gave their show at such halls as they could hire in the different towns through which they passed, and, failing this, at the roadside inns. Buatier's first performance on a full theatre stage took place at Leghorn. In this city, also, he secured several remunerative engagements for fêtes, etc. During these early days in Italy card tricks entered largely into Buatier's programme. The programme was by no means a set one. Buatier was beginning to develop his rare inventive faculties, and was constantly contriving and presenting new tricks. While De Kolta was hurrying about interviewing the mayor, the principal schoolmasters, and other people in the town likely to provide an engagement, Buatier would stay indoors practising and experimenting for the next performance.

At last they reached Rome, and it was there that Buatier got his first big lift in the profession. He met one day, at the Cathedral of St. Peter, the Superior of the Lyons seminary. The Superior now proved a very good friend. Learning from Buatier that he was not doing particularly well at his magical work, he secured him an engagement to give a private show before some important personages of the Church. The show was a very great success. It took place at one of the principal palaces in Rome. In after years Buatier often referred to the magnificence of the apartments in this palace. At the time this magnificence so impressed his youthful mind that he was very nervous when he began the show. But, realising what a great chance it was for him, he soon pulled himself together, and managed to perform every trick without a slip. The audience, most of whom had never before seen a conjuring entertainment, were delighted.

This performance proved the turning-point in Buatier's career. Many more remunerative engagements followed at Rome. In a very short while Buatier found himself in the front rank of magicians in Italy. But he did not for long confine himself to that country. In turn he toured through Spain, Germany, Russia, and Holland, with continuous success. His association with De Kolta lasted for some years. It is not clear exactly how or when it ended. But end it did, and when, in 1876, Buatier produced his famous "Flying Cage," he was performing alone as Buatier de Kolta.

The rest of the history of Buatier is, in effect, a record of the marvellous illusions produced by him, and of the favour they found with the public. The "Flying Cage," and its subsequent development, the "Human Cage,"

secured him engagements all over the world, and for a long time figured prominently in his repertoire. Next may be mentioned "La Cocoon." This illusion, which was fully explained in the "Magician Annual, 1908-9," was presented by Buatier at the old Egyptian Hall with great success. Afterwards he took it to the London Pavilion, and showed it there for a season of seven months. It was while he was in London with this illusion that he gave his first command performance before Queen Victoria. During a subsequent visit to London he presented "La Cocoon" at the Royal Aquarium, and embellished it by a series of tableaux vivants illustrating the production of silk. These tableaux vivants were doubtless based on the intimate knowledge of the silk industry he had gathered during his youthful days at Lyons. Buatier had somewhat of a surprise in connection with "La Cocoon" during one of his first visits to the United States. At Philadelphia he witnessed a show given by a prominent American magician, and afterwards went behind the stage. There he saw a duplicate of his "Cocoon" apparatus. He inspected it closely, and then said to the American magician: "That is my patent." The other replied, with a smile: "I bought the apparatus in London last year. There is nothing in your patent to prevent my showing it in America." This was in truth the case, and Buatier had the mortification of finding himself forestalled in America with his own invention.

Throughout his career Buatier suffered from the jealousy of other magicians. A very bad instance of this is recorded in connection with his illusion called "The Picture." After months of hard work spent in perfecting it, he produced it at Lisbon. It was a tremendous success at the first performances, but afterwards it fell flat. The reason for this

was subsequently explained to Buatier. Some rival magicians had managed to obtain access to the room where the apparatus of "The Picture" was kept. They had then drilled holes in the case containing it, and had thus learned the secret of the illusion. This secret they did their best to make common property, with the result that in a very short time "The Picture" was no longer a mystery to the people of Lisbon.

The illusion called "La Femme Enlevée" (that is to say, "The Vanishing Lady") was one of Buatier's greatest triumphs. It was first produced at Paris in 1886, and made an immense sensation there. The "Figaro" and other Paris newspapers devoted leading articles to it, and for a while it was one of the principal subjects of talk in that city. From Paris he took it to Berlin and London, and most of the big cities in the United States. It was received everywhere with acclamation. Indeed, one may say, without exaggeration, that "La Femme Enlevée" was the most successful illusion ever produced by Buatier or any other magician.

"The Flower Trick" is now in the repertoire of almost every magician, amateur or professional. Manufacturers probably sell every year thousands of these spring flowers. The trick was invented by Buatier. The secret of it became common property in a very curious way. While Buatier was performing the trick at the Eden Theatre in Paris, a draught from the back of the stage scattered a number of the flowers among the audience. Some of them were secured by magicians who were present, and in a few days these magicians were duplicating the trick. But it is doubtful whether even at the present day the full process employed by Buatier is generally understood. The flowers employed

in the trick are usually done up in boxes of a hundred or less. This necessitates several loadings if a quantity is to be produced. Buatier's method of loading and holding enabled him to produce as many as a thousand flowers at one time.

"The Ladder" (subsequently called "The Miracle") is another illusion associated with the name of Buatier. It was first produced at the old Hengler's Circus, and was very well received by the London public. Shortly, the effect was as follows. A ladder, about 18 feet high, was placed upon the platform, with a surrounding balcony. Buatier, dressed as a fireman, ascended the ladder, and disappeared the moment he reached the top. The illusion was, however, very difficult to work, and did not remain long in Buatier's repertoire. But it was much discussed in the London press as duplicating, to some extent at any rate, the effect of the famous "Indian Rope Trick."

Many other items from time to time figured in Buatier's programme. "The Fall of China," which was first produced at the Wintergarten, Berlin, was a great success. So also was "The Magic Carpet." This illusion, which was explained in the "Magician Annual, 1909-10," was first produced at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square. "La Danse des Millions" was a magical sketch in French, and is especially interesting as being the forerunner of the magical sketches of the present day. In the course of the sketch Buatier introduced a number of tricks and illusions. The performance was, in fact, a full magical entertainment. "The Magnet," which was produced by Buatier in the United States, was a variation of the old Levitation Act. It was a success in America, but, for some reason or other, Buatier did not include it in his European programme.

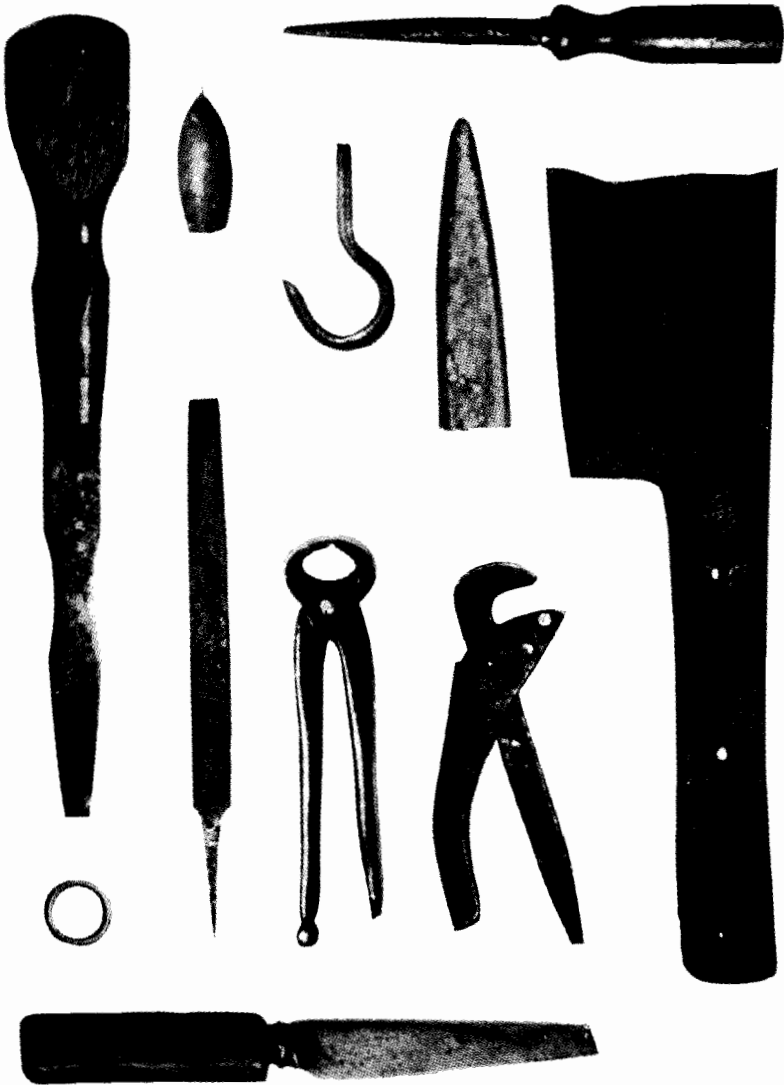
It has been said that some of Buatier's illusions were more successful when performed by others than when performed by himself. There is a certain amount of truth in this. At any rate, there is no doubt that several magicians made their reputations entirely through effects originated by him. The fact is that this great magician lacked the quality of showmanship. He was always prepared to admit this. Once, when referring to this point, he said: "But, after all, does it matter much? If I do what I set out to do, is not that sufficient? It may be that others who talk more achieve less." There was reason in the words. But Buatier forgot that, if these others were working with his material, they might perhaps achieve as much as he could, in addition to talking more. It is possible, however, that he had in his mind the thought that some of his illusions could not be duplicated by other magicians, because, although those other magicians might know part of the secrets involved, they could not discover the whole.

Buatier never bought a trick or an illusion throughout his career. All his great effects were invented and worked out by himself. Many of these were, as has been intimated above, borrowed or stolen by others. Buatier seldom sold an illusion. Indeed, I believe I am correct in stating that the only one he did sell was the "Tricolour Flower Changing" effect. For this he received the sum of 1,800 francs.

Buatier differed in his methods from other performers in one important particular. He did not have the usual magician's stock-in-trade of screens, pistols, wands, draperies, furniture, etc. On the contrary, he worked with a bare stage—seldom even a carpet. There was a similar simplicity in his mechanical work. In writing of this

recently I remarked that present-day magicians, who were assisted by skilled mechanics and well-equipped workshops, would smile if they could see Buatier preparing one of his illusions. His tools were of the simplest character—worth perhaps two or three shillings at the most. His favourite one was an old knife, with a reel, which did double duty as a handle and as a screwdriver—and maybe on occasion had to do other duty as well. The rest of his tools were of a similar home-made sort. It was too much trouble for Buatier to go out and purchase an article—it was easier for him to make it. Yet, simple as was his kit of tools, he was able to do more with it than anybody else of his day armed with the very best implements. With that knife and that screwdriver, and a few planks of wood, he prepared illusions that baffled not only the general public, but also his fellow magicians. He had no particular workshop. He used every room in the house for the purpose. The floor and the various articles of furniture were always littered with bits of apparatus, either in a finished form or in a state of preparation. His mind was always busy. One invention at a time was not enough for him. Always he had at least half-a-dozen in some stage or other of working. Readers of “Exclusive Magical Secrets” will doubtless be interested in the photographs of the actual tools used by Buatier, which are reproduced on the opposite page.

Buatier was essentially a versatile man, and was constantly breaking out in some new direction. Once when he was in New York, card flipping or throwing was in great vogue, and everybody was trying to throw higher than everybody else. Buatier easily beat all records. He invented a pistol made of wood, and secreted it in a bouquet of flowers. Assisted by this, he was able to throw cards



A PHOTOGRAPH OF
THE TOOLS USED BY DE KOLTA

over lofty buildings. As the pistol was hidden, it was not generally known that he used mechanical means. A trick—and a good trick!

From time to time Buatier employed his inventive powers in matters other than magical. He was one of the pioneers in aeroplane construction, and produced several effective working models, which have doubtless helped towards the recent great progress in the art of flying. Another of his inventions was an automatic buffer. Yet another was an improvement in the turbine engine. It is possible that, if Buatier had been a keener business man, he might have made a large fortune out of these inventions. But he consistently refused to exploit them, or to allow others to exploit them for him. The fact is that his one consuming interest in life was magic. These excursions into other fields of work and thought were but pastimes.

Buatier produced many clever illusions in the course of his career. But, without doubt, the cleverest of them all was "The Expanding Cube," which is explained in the following pages. It was one of the latest of his inventions, and may well be termed the coping stone of the magnificent magical edifice built by his hands and brain. A melancholy interest attaches to "The Expanding Cube." It was not only one of the latest of his inventions, it was absolutely the last illusion which he presented in public before his untimely death in America in 1902.

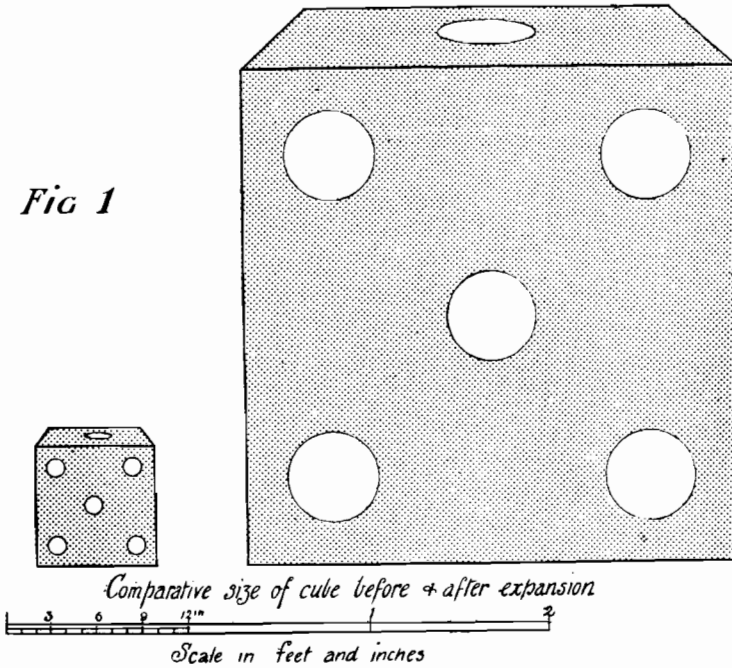
Buatier de Kolta's Expanding Cube Illusion.

Few illusions have aroused so much controversy among magicians as the one I am about to describe.

Few magicians, even among those who claim to know something of the secret of the Expanding Cube, can give an accurate description of the effect of the illusion. I have heard, for instance, that Buatier de Kolta used to put a small die on his stage, wave his hand over it, and cause it to expand slowly. I have heard also that when the cube was in its enlarged condition the top would be pushed up, and the magician's wife would make her appearance at that spot; in another version of the mystery it was stated that after the cube had suddenly grown to an immense size, it would as suddenly collapse and disclose the magician's wife standing on the stage.

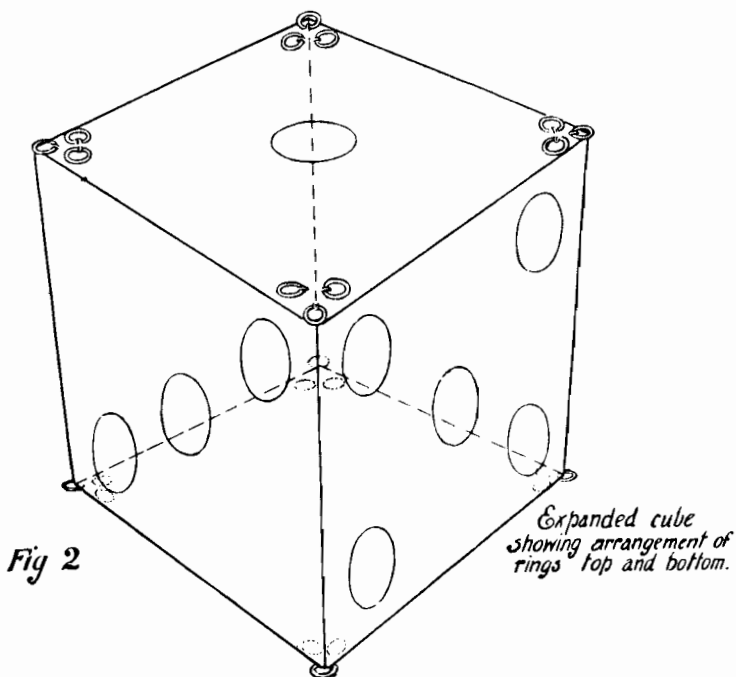
All these stories of the illusion are incorrect. Although I never had the great pleasure of seeing De Kolta perform this illusion, I understand, from those who had that privilege, that he presented it in the following way. To begin with, he would bring on a small leather bag, and inform the audience that the bag contained his wife. Then he would put the bag on a chair near the wings, and go on with another trick. During the performance an assistant would pass near the chair once or twice, and each time De Kolta would say, "Be careful, please; that bag contains my wife."

In this way the audience would be impressed with the idea that in some mysterious way the magician had contrived to hide his wife in the bag, and so a good deal of wonderment would be aroused when the magician went to the bag and

Fig 1

took from it a small cube. This would be placed by the magician in the centre of a low platform, and before the audience could realise what was going to happen, the cube would suddenly expand to one many times the size of the original. The expansion was brought about so quickly that the eye could not follow the movement. De Kolta would go towards the wings and bow, as though the illusion had ended. Then he would go back to the low platform, and, with the help of an assistant, lift up the die and so disclose the presence of the lady who had been concealed inside it.

It will be seen, therefore, that there were two great effects, the expansion of the cube and the appearance of



the lady, and it is probably because there were two illusions in one that the Expanding Cube has never been imitated by any illusionist. No man has succeeded in fathoming the secrets of this illusion, which remains to-day to puzzle admiring magicians just as it puzzled those who saw it when it was first presented by its brilliant inventor.

Here I must break off to correct a report that has been current in magical and other circles for many years past. I refer to the story that when De Kolta died all his apparatus was destroyed in accordance with his wish, expressed shortly before his death. I have seen that story repeated in many papers. It is quite untrue. Buatier de Kolta's original

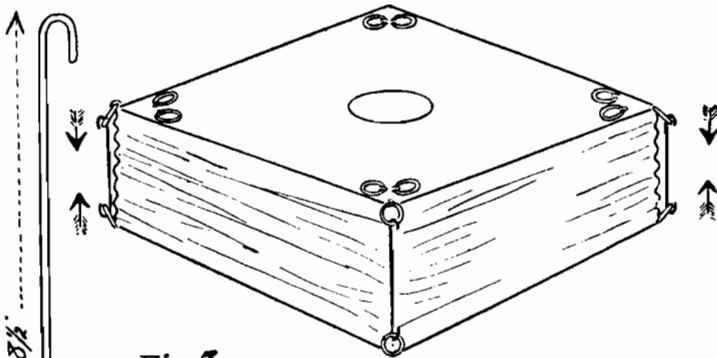


Fig. 3. First compression, top to bottom, showing temporary holding clips.

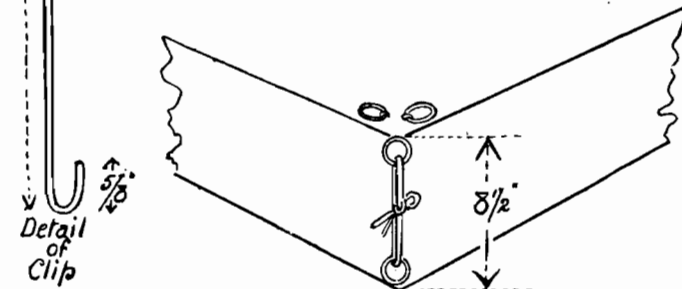


Fig. 4. Cords are now substituted for clips at each corner.

Expanding Die—the actual apparatus that he used—has been for some years in the possession of Mrs. Will Goldston, who presented it on the music-hall stage in 1910. All the illustrations here reproduced are from drawings made specially from this original apparatus, and therefore the reader may be assured that the drawings and explanations are correct in every detail. On page facing 312 will be found a picture of the tools used by De Kolta in making all his

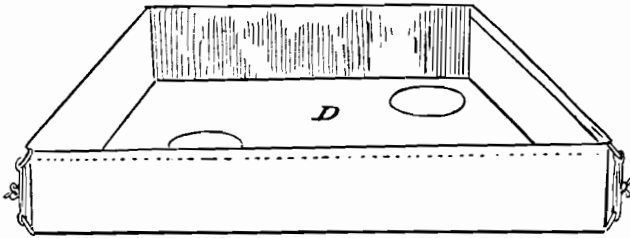


Fig 5

Flattened cube is turned over and loose back flap 'D' folded inside.

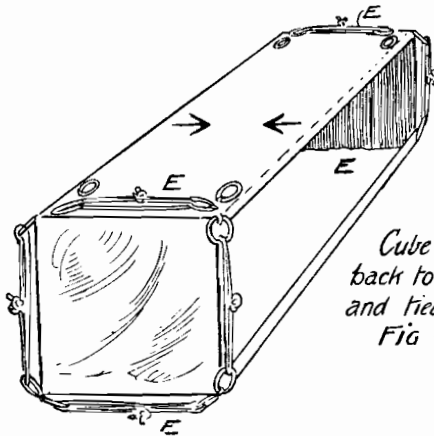


Fig 6

Cube is next compressed back to front (see arrows) and tied at E·E·E·E as in Fig 4.

illusions and tricks. These tools are also in the possession of Mrs. Will Goldston. It will be noted that the tools are of the rough-and-ready kind, but the hands that worked with them were directed by one of the finest brains that the magical world has ever known. The actual workmanship of the original Expanding Cube is probably not so

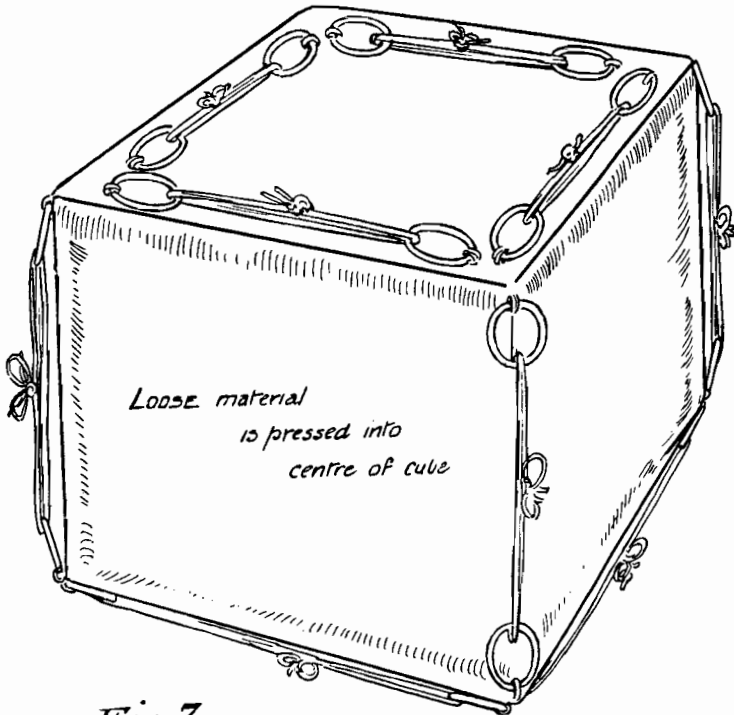


Fig 7
Shows cube finally compressed and temporarily tied with cords.

highly finished as one would get nowadays from a highly-skilled maker of illusions, but the important part of the illusion—the apparatus that brings about the effect—is as perfect now as it was when it left the inventor's hands. On one occasion I tested the cube after it had been put on one side for nearly two years. It worked perfectly, and I cannot imagine in what way it could go wrong provided that proper care is given to every detail of the trick. A

careless performer would soon find that the illusion was not suitable for him, because, with improper handling, the cube will not expand. But I must not keep my readers in suspense any longer; they will be eager to read the first explanation of this illusion that has ever appeared in print.

Roughly speaking, the principle of the illusion may be summed up in a very few words. The large die is made of silk, stretched on a frame of telescopic rods fitted with strong spiral springs. The die is compressed, held together by a strap of special make, and then covered with a piece of silk similar in colour and markings to the one on the outside of the die in its enlarged state. This outer cover and the cube are held in place by two large hat-pins, connected with cord, and with a long piece of cord attached. An assistant pulls out this cord at a certain cue, and the die springs suddenly into being. The illusion is worked so quickly that it is impossible for the cutest spectator to see how the effect is produced. The experienced magician is as much in the dark as the rawest amateur when this illusion is being presented, and I may say that I have shown the first part of it—the expanding cube—in a room to a very old student of magic without his having the slightest idea of how the cube was made to grow so suddenly. He was within a few feet of the apparatus at the time, but he knew nothing of the secret.

The easiest way to understand the working of the cube is to begin at the wrong end and work backwards. Fig. 1 shows us the small die as it is when shown to the audience, and the cube as it is when expanded. The drawing was made to scale; as a matter of fact, the larger one is sixty-four times the size of the cube in its collapsed condition.

Fig. 2 shows us the expanded cube, and, as I have said,

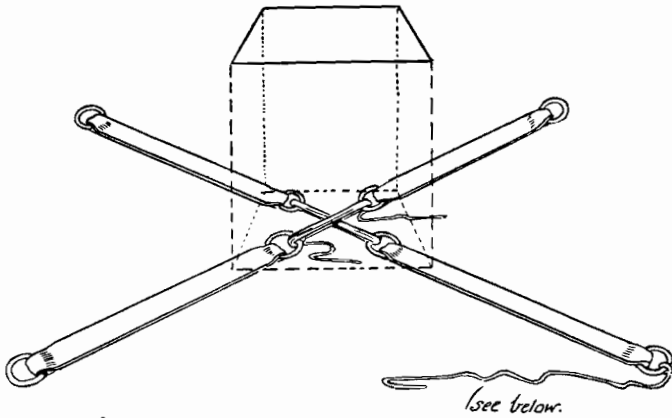


Fig 8 *Cube laid on for final strapping*

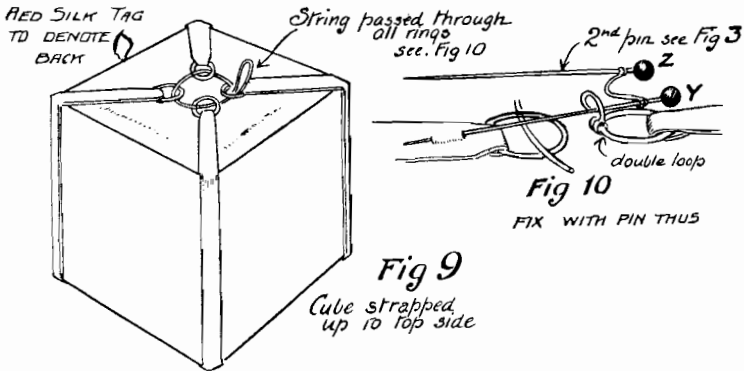


Fig 9 *Cube strapped up to top side*

the best way to understand it will be to go through the processes of putting it back into its collapsed condition. The cube is composed of silk, with spots of white silk sewn on it. These spots are, of course, to imitate the spots of a solid die. The cube is really a framework of collapsible rods, covered with spiral springs, and the whole is covered with silk. Note that there are three rings at each of the

corners, for these rings play an important part in the illusion. There are thus twenty-four rings in all.

Fig. 3 shows the cube after the first compression. To get it into this condition the performer merely presses it down from the top, and fastens it at each corner with the four special wire clips—merely pieces of stout wire with the ends bent down to form hooks. These wires are passed through the rings at each corner, so that the cube can be held in place until the performer has time to tie the cube at the corners (see Fig. 4).

The back of the cube in its expanded condition is a piece of loose silk. This piece, or flap, marked D in Fig. 5, now has to be pushed inside the cube out of the way. This flap of silk has a pocket made in its inner side, for a purpose which will be explained when we come to Fig. 13. The cube can now be pressed in the opposite direction until it assumes the shape seen in Fig. 6. Once more the wire clips are used to hold the corners in position until they can be tied. Then the cube is compressed from back to front until it assumes the appearance shown in Fig. 7. The third set of rings is used for this final tying-up of the cube. Any loose silk must be pushed into the inside of the cube to make the whole thing as taut as possible.

All this tying-up of the cube is only the first step in preparing it for expansion. The cube is really tied so that it can easily be handled and kept in position for the final process. In Fig. 8 we see a sketch of the straps by which the cube is finally secured. Note the arrangement of the rings, so that the straps can easily be moved in any direction. The rings at the end of the straps assist in securing the release of the cube; this will be made clear in a later sketch. The cube is placed cornerwise on the four straps, and is

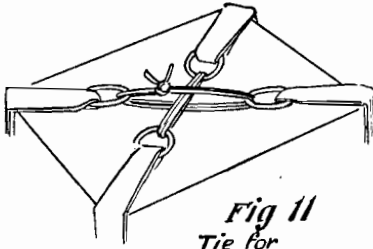


Fig 11
Tie for
reverse of cube
to tighten up

After this process
temporary strings
are removed.

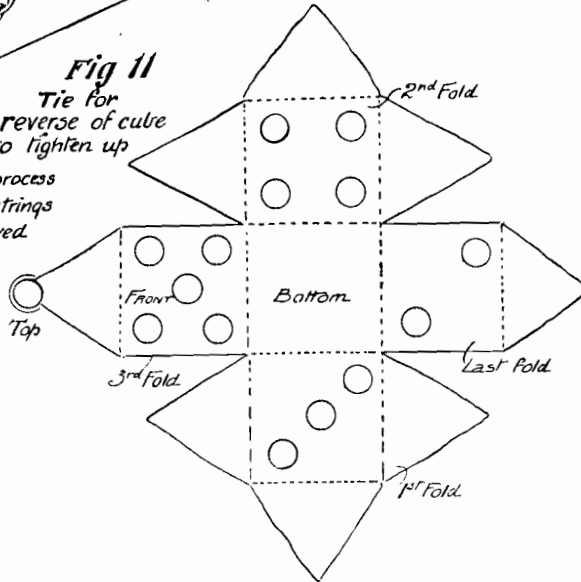


Fig 12
Cube cover shown when flat.

then fastened up in the way indicated in Fig. 9. The straps are drawn round and to the top of the cube, and the loose cord attached to one ring is passed through the other three rings and twice round its own ring, and is then finally secured by passing a hat-pin through a loop made in the end and into the opposite strap, as shown in the drawing (see Fig. 10). Note in Fig. 9 the tab of red silk at one side of the cube; this tells the performer that that side must be placed at the back before the cube is allowed to expand.

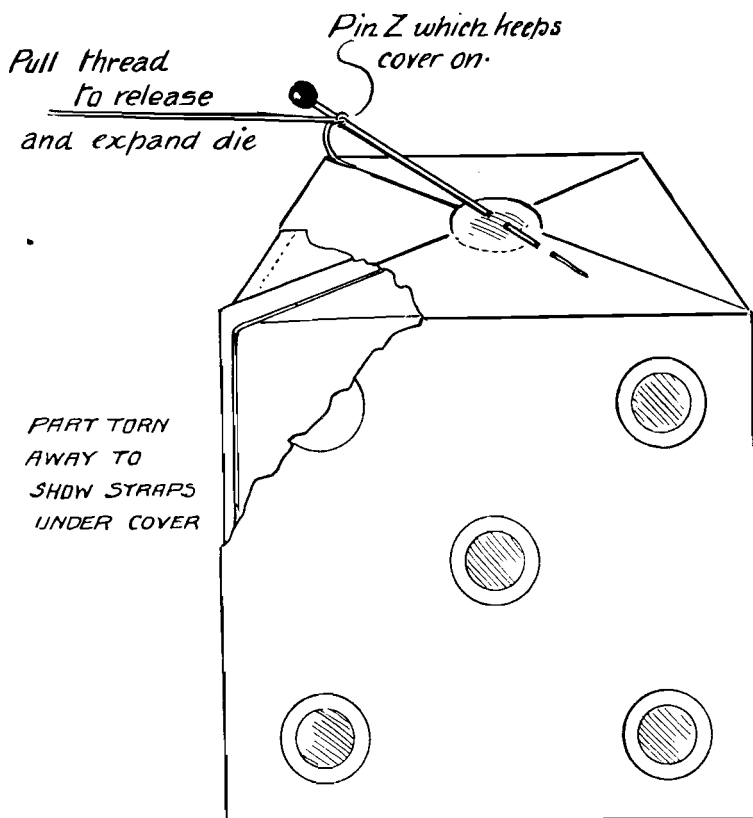


Fig 13

The cube is now turned over, and the cords on the other side are drawn up tight in the manner shown in Fig. 11. All the cords at the corners may now be removed from the rings, and in order that the performer may be certain of having got all the cords away, he should count them. If

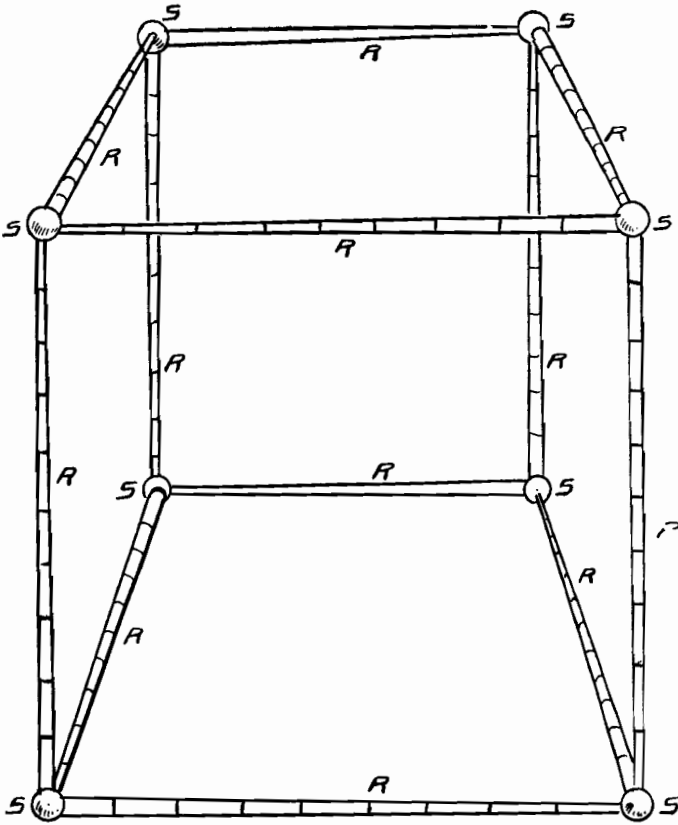


Fig 14

Extended cube in skeleton showing telescoping tubes R. Joints S are fixed. See details on Figs 15-16

any mistake is made, and one cord is left in the cube, the illusion will fail.

The closed cube must now be covered with a small cloth similar in material and colour to the outer one, and representing a small die. This cover is shown, laid out flat,

in Fig. 12. In Fig. 13 we see how the cover is put round the cube and held in place by a hat-pin. The number which is in front (in this case 5) must be the same as that which is in front of the cube in its expanded condition. The second pin (Z) is passed through the centre spot at the top, and as this pin is connected with that which holds the under straps together, and both pins are fastened to a cord, it will be seen that when this cord is pulled both the strap and the cover come clear away together, and allow the compressed cube to expand. The straps and cover remain under the large cube, but are afterwards put into the pocket in the flap at the back.

We must now turn our attention to the frame of the cube, and see the construction of the rods. Fig. 14 shows the expanded cube in skeleton form. It is made up of telescopic rods fixed at the corners.

In Fig. 15 we see how the rods are held together. A string, with knots in it, is passed all through the rods. The knots prevent the springs, shown in Fig. 16, from drawing any one part of the rod out too far. Fig. 16 shows the spiral springs round one of the rods. These simple springs are the chief motive power in the illusion. Figs. 17, 18, and 19 show the three stages of the skeleton frame as it is compressed again in readiness for the illusion. It was thought that these sketches of the cube without the covering would make everything quite clear to everyone. The illusion, like all good illusions, is quite simple "when you know it." The cord which releases the cube is pulled by an assistant, who passes near the cube just as the performer places it on the platform. The assistant raises her hands as though she was amazed at what happened; at least, that is what the audience believes, but as a matter of fact her

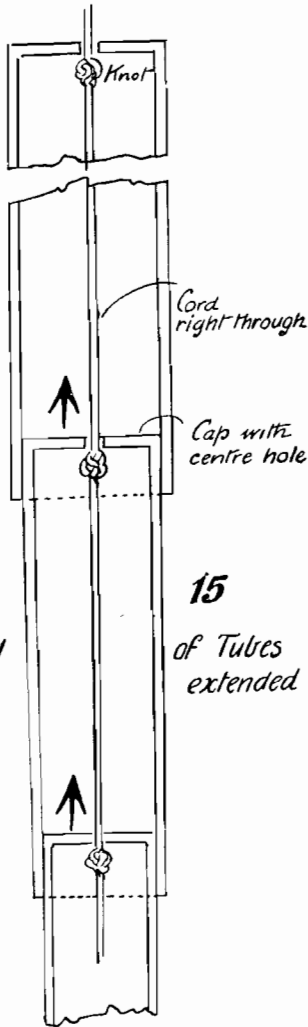


FIG
Detail
as

15
of Tubes
extended

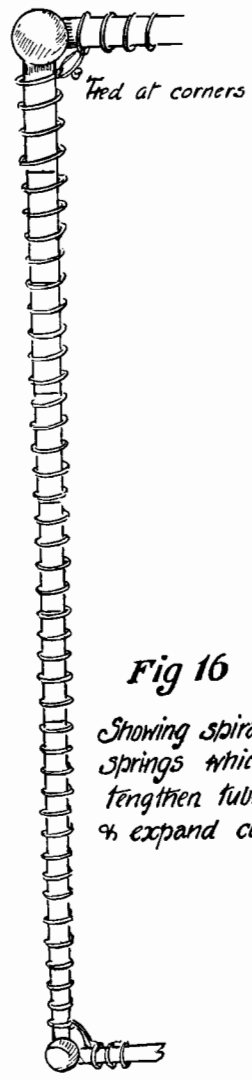


Fig 16

Showing spiral
springs which
lengthen tubes
& expand cube

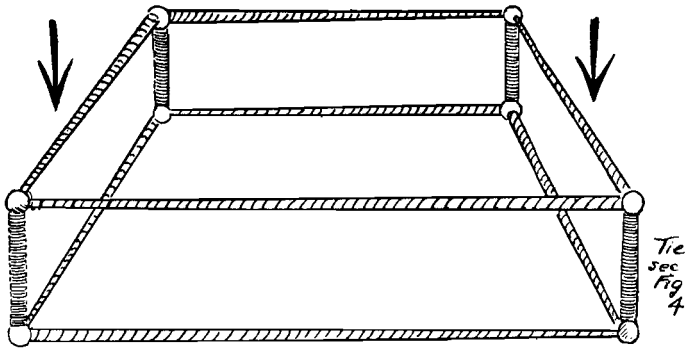


FIG 17. Skeleton cube showing 1st compression.

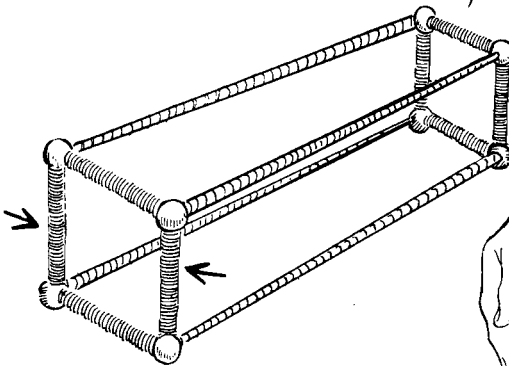


FIG 18. 2nd Compression.

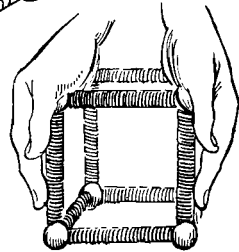
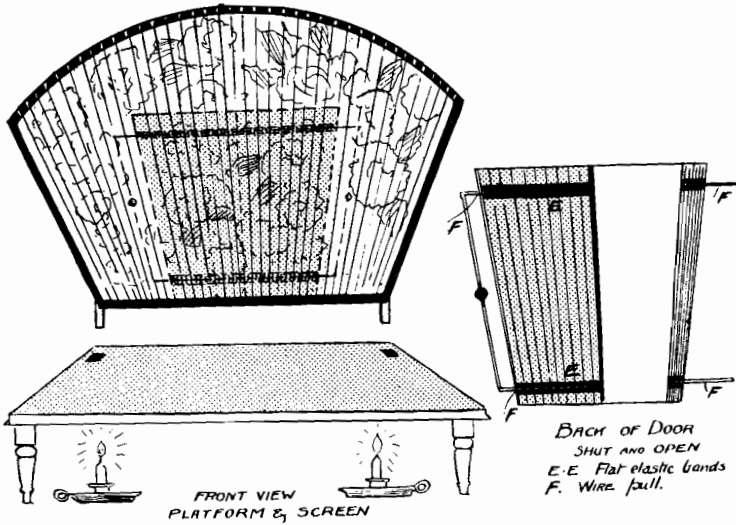


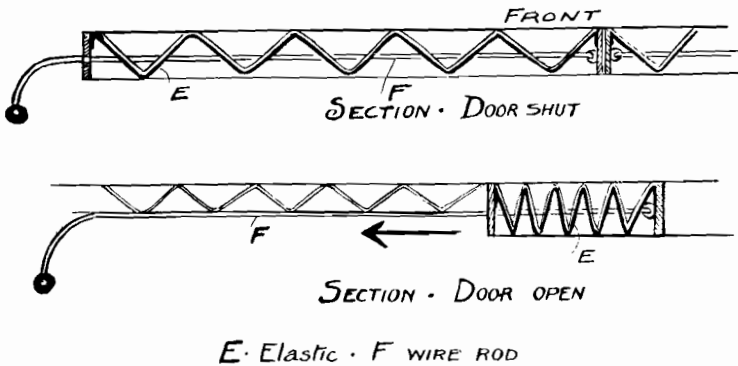
FIG 19. Final compression.

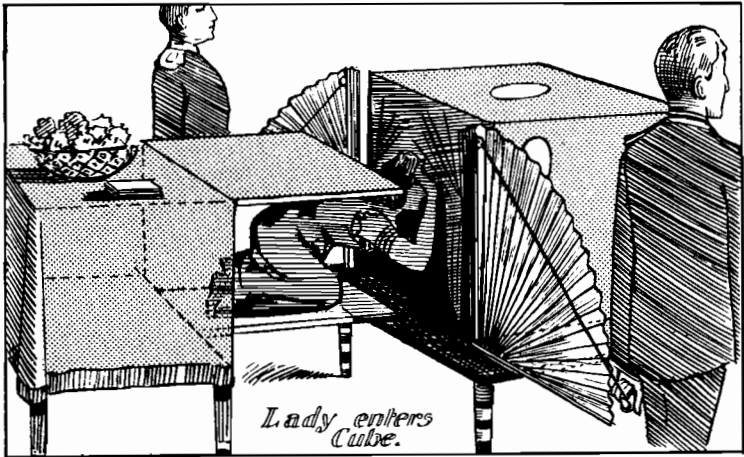
hands are raised before—a small fraction of a second before—the cube is made to expand, and the assistant, with the same movement of the hands, pulls the cords and releases the cube.

Now for the appearance of the lady under the cube. De Kolta had two methods for producing this effect. The



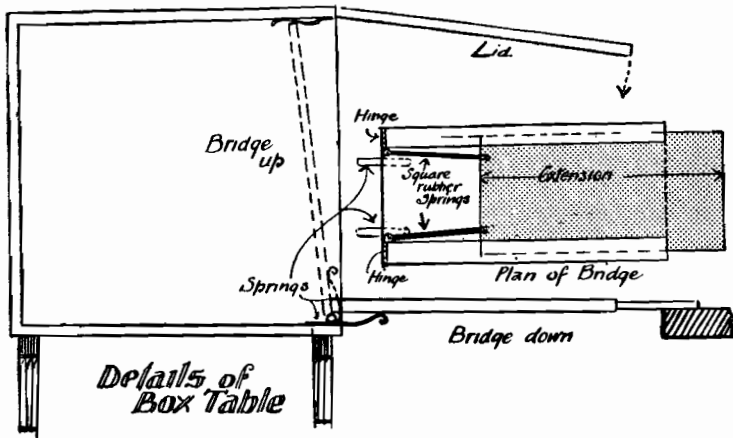
lady was concealed in a table placed at the back of the stage ; the top of this table was really a box. The lady stepped from the table on to a little temporary bridge, and so on to the back of the raised platform. The bridge then closed itself up, and went back on its own account into the table.





In the first of the two methods De Kolta had a large fan-shaped screen at the back of the platform. This screen was fitted with a secret door, working on pieces of flat elastic. The cube in its expanded condition completely hid this door, and thus an assistant at the back of the stage was able to open the door by means of the wire pull (F in the drawing) without being seen. The lady then entered the cube from the back, and immediately picked up the loose cover that had been used for covering the die in its compressed condition, and hid them in the secret pocket in the back flap of the die. De Kolta and an assistant then raised the die, disclosing the lady.

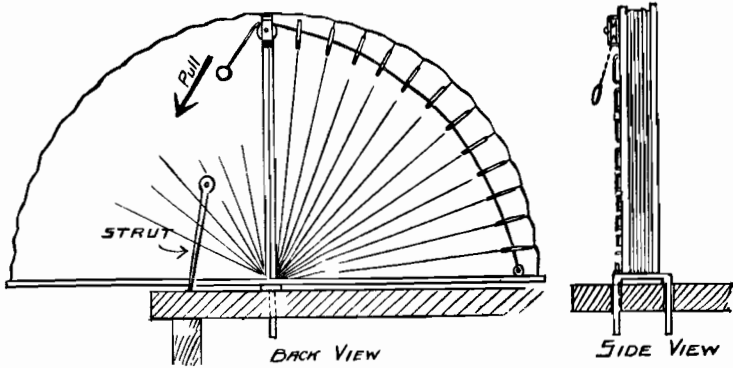
The second method for getting the lady under the die was similar to the first as regards the table and the working of the bridge from the table to the platform, but there was a considerable difference in the arrangement of the screen at the back of the platform.



The second method, which was a great improvement on the first, called for the services of two assistants, who took up their places at the back of the platform. Two large fans were fixed into the back of the platform; the stage setting of this part of the illusion is clearly shown in the accompanying illustration.

Directly the cube had expanded the assistants drew up the two halves of the two fans, and thus allowed a clear passage for the lady from the table to the cube. The sketch of the detail of the fans makes this move quite plain. It will be seen that the fans were securely fixed into the platform, and that the assistants closed up the halves of the two fans by pulling on two cords. The cube itself hid the lady from view while she was making her way inside it.

Lastly, we must look at the sketch showing the details of the box-table. The lid of the box was the side of the table. The lady pushed up the lid and then pushed down the bridge, by means of which she was able to pass across into the cube. This bridge was attached to the box by

Detail of Fans

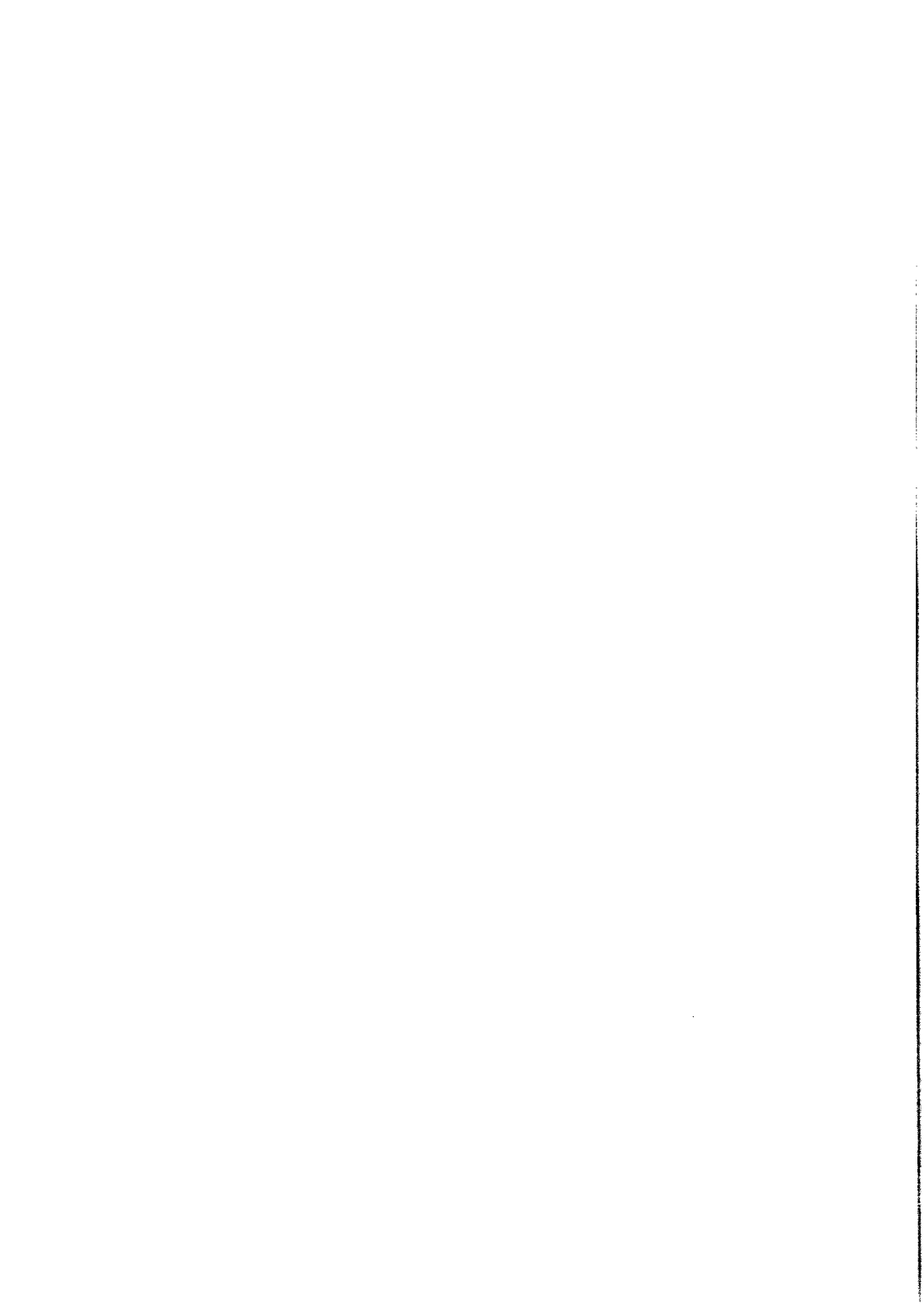
means of very strong spring hinges. The weight of the lady kept the bridge down in the required place; but as the table was some little distance from the cube, the "bridge" would not have reached to the cube if there had been no way of extending it. The extension, as will be seen from the accompanying plan, was composed of a board sliding in grooves. The lady pushed out this board until it touched the platform, and then knelt on it. Her weight kept the "extension" in place, but directly she had passed on to the platform the "extension" was drawn into the bridge by means of two square rubber springs, and the bridge, carried upwards by the spring hinges, passed into the table, and the lid closed down over it, leaving the table exactly as it was at the beginning of the experiment.

And thus the great illusion of the expanding cube was accomplished.

PART VIII.

Comedy Tricks.

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Comedy Tricks.

THE average audience like a magical show to astonish them. But they also like it to amuse them, and they are disappointed if it does not do so. Comedy tricks may be described as those expressly designed to create amusement. Laughter is the best of medicine for everybody, and the magical entertainer who succeeds in making his audience laugh heartily is then and for ever after the man for their money. He can be sure of doing so by including in his programme some comedy tricks. If they are good and are well performed, the laughter is inevitable. In fact, I have little hesitation in saying that every magician who is in the habit of presenting them would admit that they are the most popular items in his repertoire.

But how few magicians do present comedy tricks! The truth is they form a class of magic about which little information has been published. It is not touched upon at all in the great majority of works on the art, and is dealt with very inadequately in the others. Consequently, even when a magician has realised the desirability of including comedy tricks in his programme, he has been prevented from extending his repertoire in that direction by the double difficulty of finding good tricks and of ascertaining the best methods of performing them.

The contents of this section will remove that double difficulty from the paths of my readers. I flatter myself that in compiling the section I have made the first real attempt to deal adequately with comedy tricks, and I also

flatter myself that I have succeeded in that attempt. The tricks I describe are all of a thoroughly amusing nature, and are all up-to-date. None of them have ever before been explained in print.

The fullest information as to methods of performance is given. Those of my readers who wish to specialise as comedy conjurers can at once form a full programme from the section. And those of them who wish simply to relieve their ordinary entertainment with two or three certain laughter-provoking items, will find many such items here from which to select. My own experience as a magician, and my observation of the results obtained by other magicians, enables me to say confidently that light relief of that sort is almost always both effective and desirable.

I will conclude this introduction with a few words of general advice as to comedy tricks. Rudyard Kipling in one of his poems refers to "the doctrine of the utterly absurd." That is the doctrine for the comedy conjurer. Let him aim at the utterly absurd (consistently, of course, with magical effect), and every time he achieves it he will also achieve success with his audiences. Carlton was an early convert to this doctrine. And how well it has served him! I referred just now to the possibility of some of my readers wishing to specialise as comedy conjurers. I would recommend all such to study the methods of Carlton. Another clever comedy conjurer from whom much is to be learned is Chris Van Bern. His methods are different from those of Carlton, but are equally effective. Careful observation of the work of these two artistes will be a liberal education to every beginner with comedy tricks. The man who gets a clear understanding of their respective methods, and who

assimilates the best of both, will find that he has laid a secure foundation for his own success in this particular class of magic.

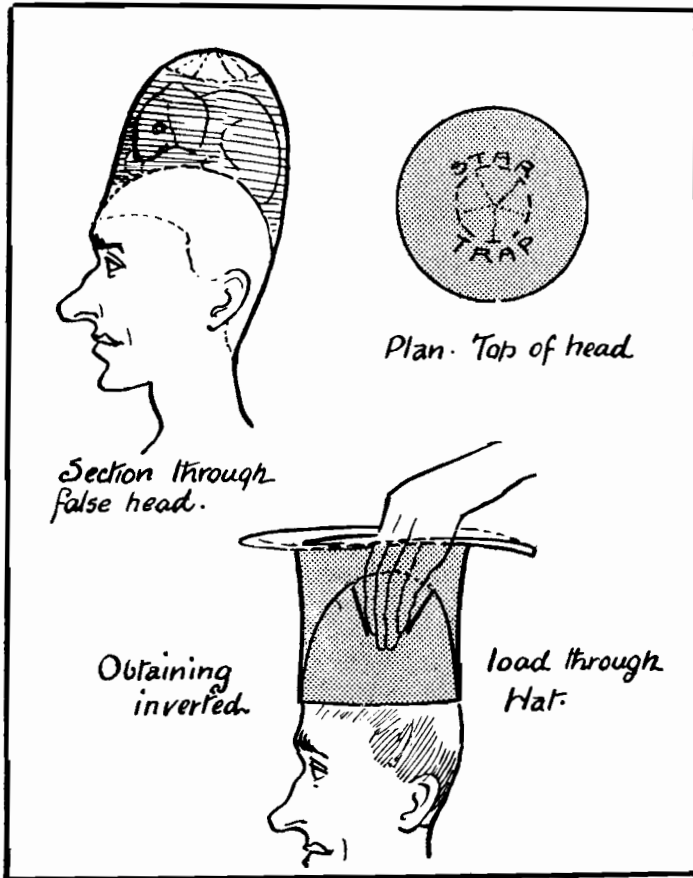
Some performers of comedy tricks make-up more or less grotesquely for the purposes of their entertainments. Carlton is one of these, and his incongruous personality undoubtedly assists him to obtain the laughter of his audiences. But others, like Chris Van Bern, are very successful in ordinary dress. Whether to make-up or not to make-up is a question to be settled by each performer for himself. Personally, I am rather in favour of ordinary dress, and would recommend it to my readers. Another respect in which comedy conjurers differ is as to the use of patter. Some score with talk as absurd as the tricks they present, and others with the silence that is golden. Then again, is the performer to laugh with his audiences, or is he to preserve a consistent gravity? My own preference is for the latter alternative. The contrast between the serious face of the performer and the funny effects his hands are producing always appeals to me. But all these matters are for individual choice. My readers know their own capabilities, and will doubtless have due regard to them when deciding on the best methods of performance of comedy tricks.

A Novel Hat and Rabbit Trick.

Invented by CHEFALO.

This is more of a pleasant little diversion than a complete trick, although in good hands it could certainly be worked up into a very puzzling performance. The conjurer must be provided with a comic assistant, dressed in the style





depicted in the illustration. After a few humorous remarks upon hats in general, and the one he is holding in particular, the conjurer holds up the hat and thus shows that it is minus the crown. He then places the hat upside down on the assistant's head, and, placing his hand inside the hat, produces a live rabbit.

This laughable effect is produced by a kind of "false head" arrangement on the top of the assistant's ordinary head. The "false head" is bald and very high, and is fitted in the centre with a star trap. Inside the head a live rabbit is placed, and when the conjurer places the hat on the assistant's head, all he has to do is to open the trap in the "false head" and draw out the rabbit. During this operation the assistant should look as though the process of having a trick performed on his head was giving him intense pain.

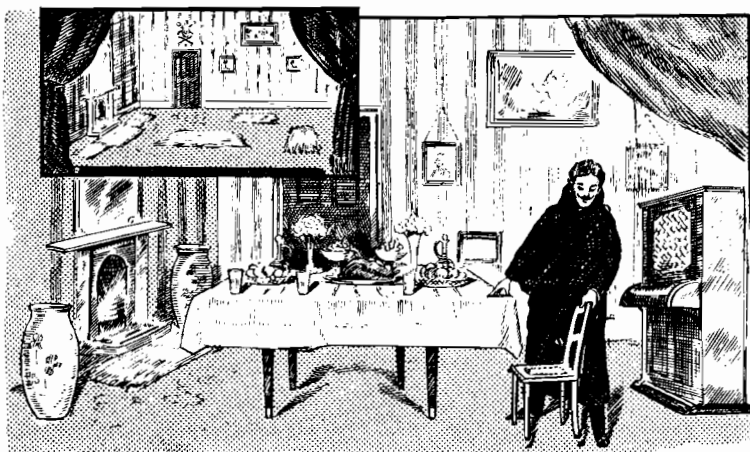
Furnishing a Flat.

A COMPLETE ACT OF ILLUSIONS AND SURPRISES.

A very good sub-title for this act would be, "Or the Three Years' Hire System Superseded," since the furniture that the magician produces for his flat seems to come from nowhere. Perhaps that is hardly true, for when the conjurer walks on to the stage the floor is not quite bare. A number of handsome rugs are disposed at different places on the floor; the scene is the interior of a sitting-room.

Having made his bow, the conjurer picks up one of the rugs and immediately converts it into a large table, nicely laid for supper. A second rug is changed into a piano, two other rugs are changed into two large vases, and finally the conjurer produces a chair from nowhere and sits down to supper.

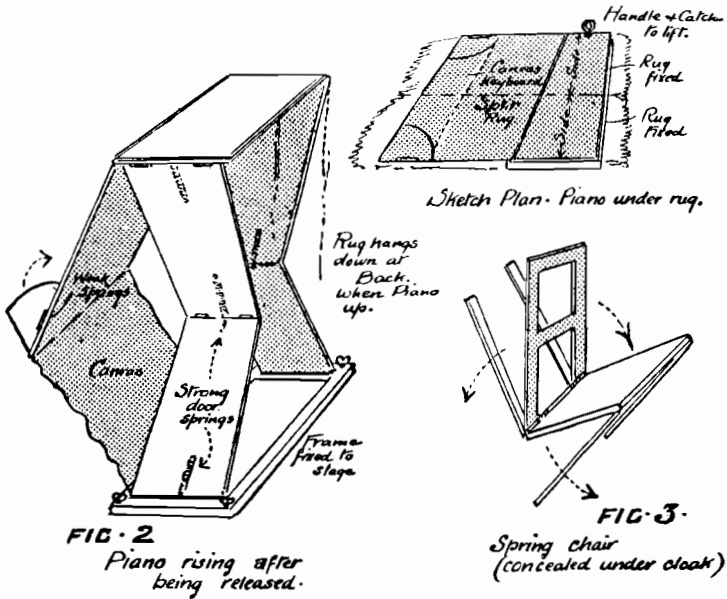
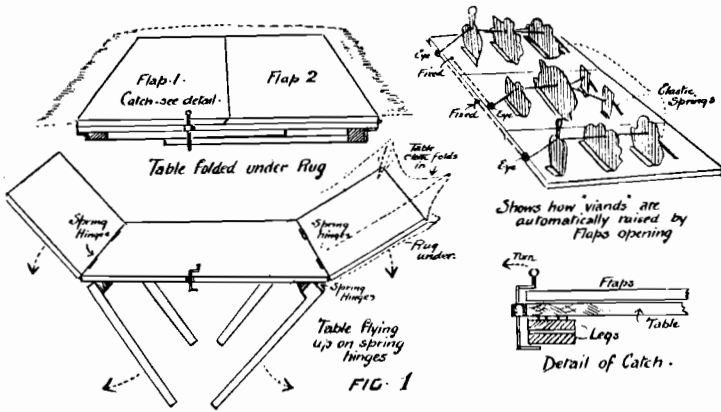
The secrets are well concealed by the rugs, which are by no means ordinary rugs. Fig. 1 shows the construction of the table, which is hidden by the first rug. It will be



noticed that the size of the rug is the size of the centre board of the table, and that two flaps—together the same size as the centre board—fold over the centre board. The legs fold under the table, and these and the flaps are fitted with spring hinges. The flaps and legs are held in their place by means of one small catch, which the conjurer can easily manipulate with one movement of his thumb. The cloth on the table is folded under the two flaps before these are held down by the catch.

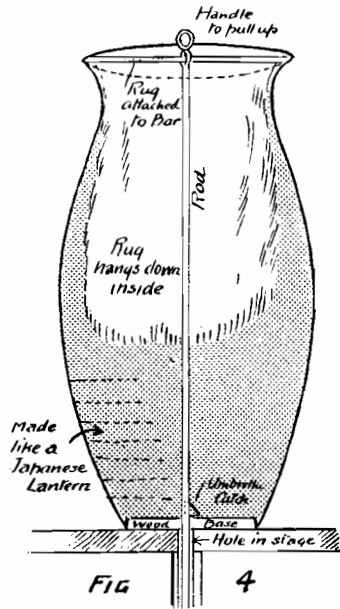
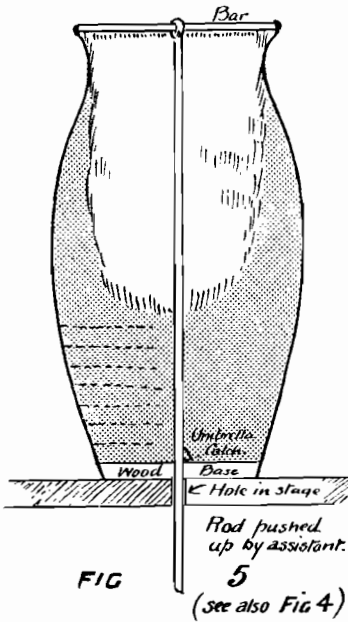
The various dishes on the table are made of papier mâché, and are fitted with elastic springs, the construction of which is shown in the diagram on Fig. 1. These dishes are held down flat by the flaps on the table, but the moment the flaps are released the "dishes" rise in their places. The rug which concealed this trick-table is, of course, fixed to the under side of it, and remains hidden there after the table has been produced.

The two sides of the piano are of wood; each side is divided in half, and fitted with strong door springs. The



remainder of the "piano" is mostly canvas stretched on a frame. The base of the frame is fixed to the stage, and the rug which conceals the whole structure is divided in half. The diagram shows how the "piano" rises in position, and how the "keyboard," made entirely of canvas, comes into position through the action of some weak springs. When the "piano" is in position, the rug hangs down at the back.

Fig 4 shows the working of the first vase. The main secret is in the rod, which is fitted with an umbrella spring catch. This is passed through a hole in the stage. When the performer takes up the rug which conceals the vase, he also grasps the ring at the end of the rod and pulls it upwards. When the catch at the other end of the rod has



passed through the stage, it is obvious that the catch prevents the rod from sinking back through the hole in the stage. The vase is really a kind of large Japanese lantern, made of canvas and painted to resemble a vase. It is fitted with a wooden base, and is of such a size that when the rod is pulled out in the way shown in the diagram (Fig. 4), the vase is held taut by the rod, and thus appears to be solid. The rug hangs down inside the vase.

The second vase appears before the conjurer takes hold of the rug. The construction of it is similar to that of the first vase, but the rod is pushed up through the stage by an assistant.

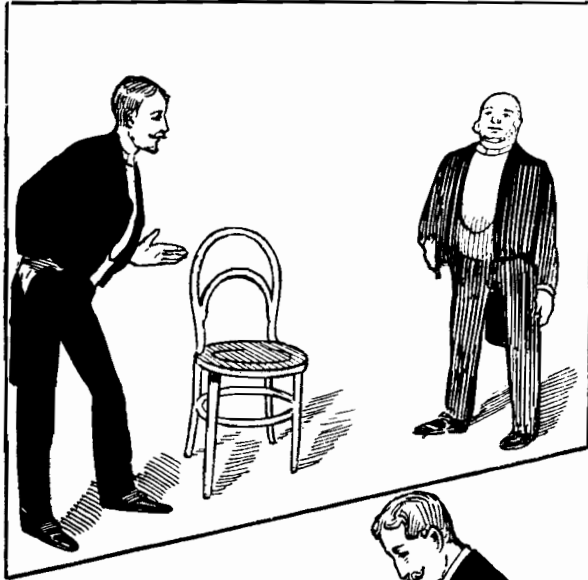
The chair is made to fold up (see Fig. 3), and is concealed under the performer's cloak. It is held in position by a simple catch similar to that of the table. The chair can be produced instantaneously, and, if well made, will appear to be quite solid.

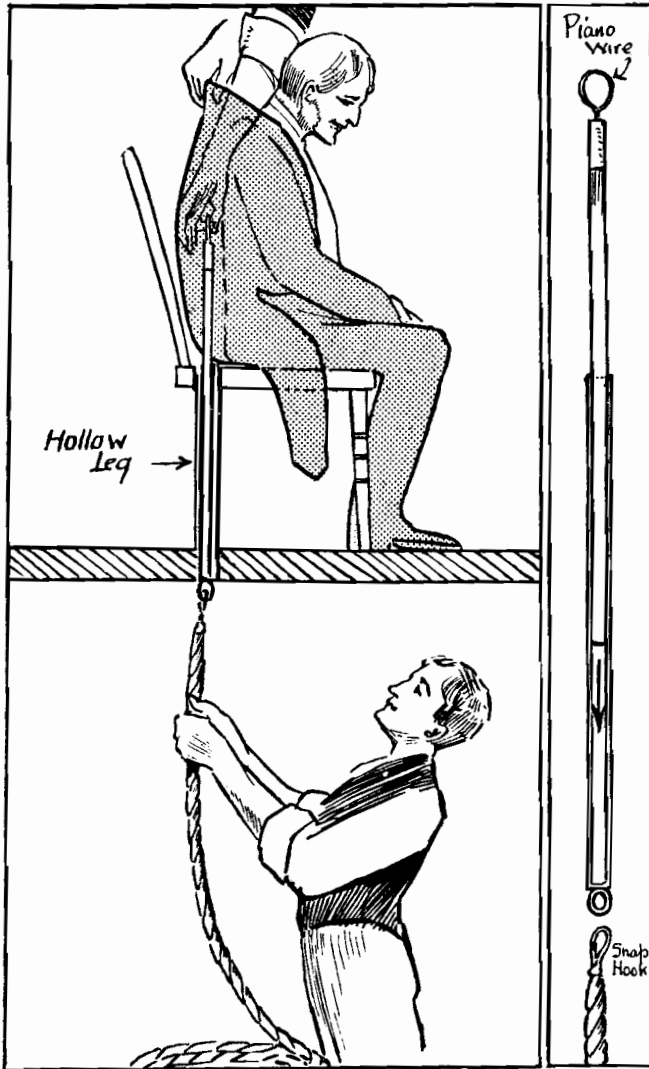
The Mysterious Production of a Coil of Rope.

Invented by CHEFALO.

Really good "comedy" tricks are rare, and this is one of the best of them. The effect and the method by which the effect is produced have never before been described in print.

The conjurer asks for the assistance of a member of the audience, and when a nice unsuspecting individual finds his way to the stage the conjurer thanks him profusely,





FEEDING ROPE THRO' STAGE

DETAIL OF STICK

and politely bows him to a chair, "so that you may see the trick in comfort."

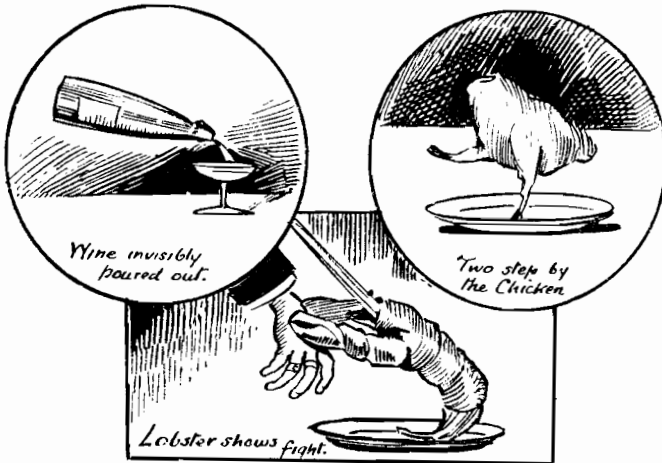
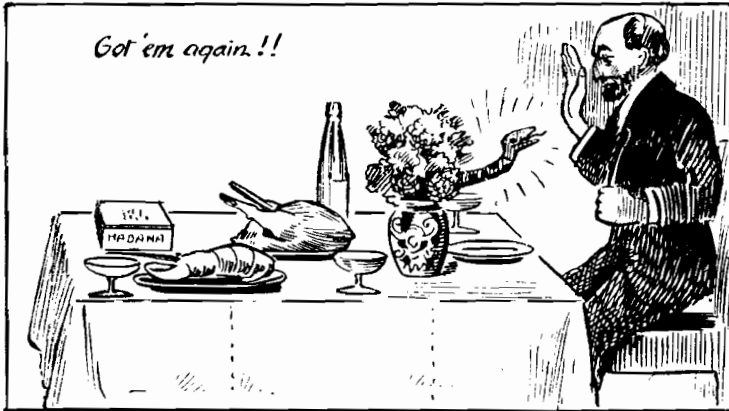
"Pardon me," says the conjurer, with the air of a man who has just made a little discovery, "but you seem to have something under your coat. May I take it away? I think there must be something; there looks to me to be a kind of bump in the middle of your back. Perhaps it's the hump. You don't happen to have the hump, do you, sir? Anyway, before we go on to the trick, I hope you will allow me to remove it."

So saying, the conjurer puts his hand, which he shows to be empty, under the coat-collar of his assistant, and proceeds to draw from this hiding-place a long piece of rope. The audience are always highly amused as the rope falls in a coil on the stage. At the end the conjurer thanks his assistant, who is left none the worse for his adventure.

The secret of the trick lies partly in the chair, the right leg of which is hollow. A small stick, with a wire ring at each end, is passed through the hollow leg by an assistant under the stage, and when the conjurer pretends to "feel for the hump," he really arranges the volunteer assistant's coat so that the top of the hollow leg comes under the coat. The assistant under the stage manipulates the rope, one end of which has a large snap hook attached to it. The assistant snaps the hook on the stick when the conjurer is ready to begin the performance, and then pays out the rope as it is required. At the conclusion of the trick the stick can be dropped down the leg of the chair, and thus through the stage out of sight.

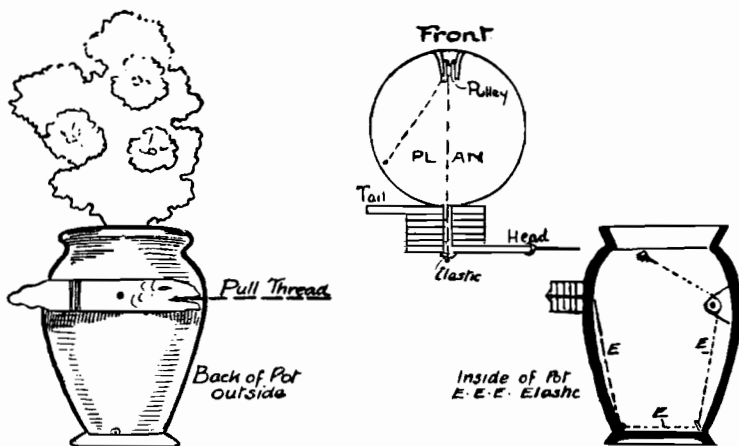
A Weird Dinner Table.

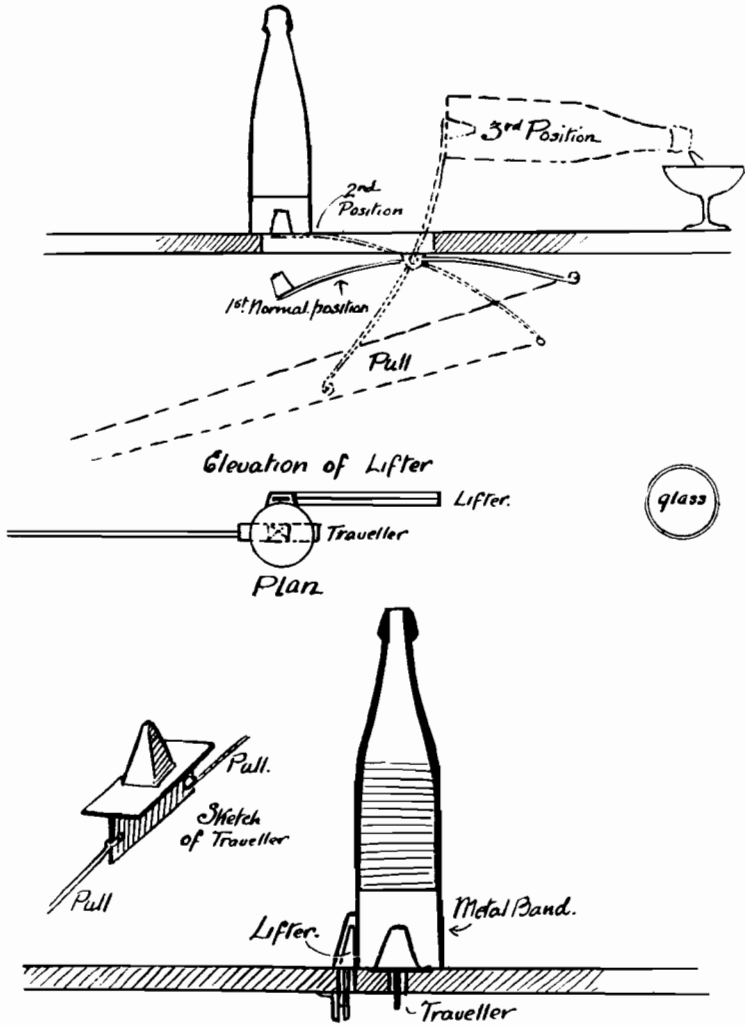
The performer sits down to dinner, and the audience enjoy the following laughable effects. First the wine pours itself out into one glass, and the moment the performer raises this to his lips the wine vanishes and reappears in



another glass. Then the lobster raises itself on the dish, and begins to use its claws as though it were protesting at its position. A snake shoots out from a flower-pot, the chicken on the dish begins to dance, and finally the cigar box opens and throws the performer a cigar.

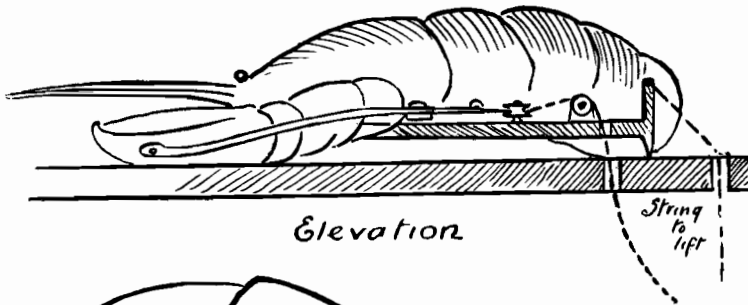
The explanations of how these effects are produced will be fairly clear to anyone who studies the illustrations. The snake is made on the same principle as the ordinary toy snake, but a piece of elastic is passed right through the interior of it. The elastic is then carried through a hole in the flower-pot, down one side, across the bottom, and up the other side; the length is necessary in order to give the right movement to the snake. Finally the elastic is passed over a little pulley at the side of the pot, and is permanently attached to the top of the pot. The snake is folded up by means of hinges, and remains on the outside of the jar until it is pulled out by a thread. It appears to come from the interior of the jar, and when the thread is released the elastic



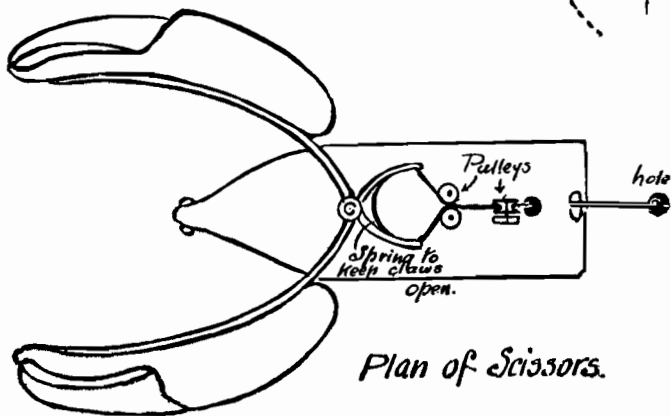


carries it back to its original position, but it appears to have gone back to the interior of the jar.

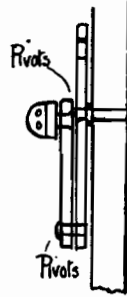
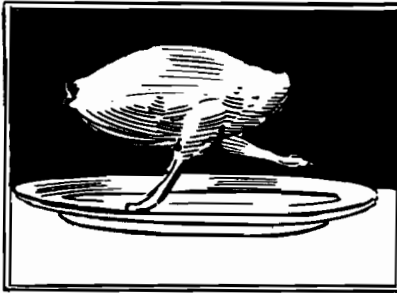
The bottle moves about on the table by means of a little "traveller" running in a slot in the table top; the bottle is pulled each way with threads. Concealed in the top of the table is an arm of metal, one end of which fits into a pocket at the back of the bottle. This arm works on a pivot in the table in such a way that when a thread attached to the end of the arm is pulled the bottle is raised by the arm, and a little liquid in the neck of the bottle pours into the glass. The diagrams show exactly how the thing is worked.



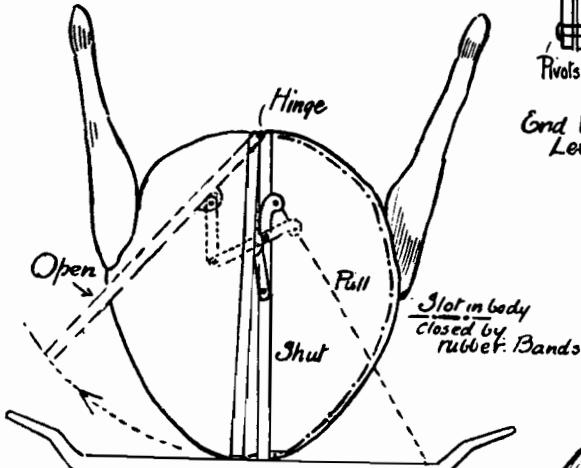
Elevation



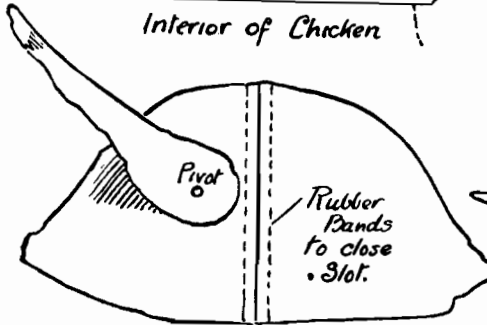
Plan of Scissors.



End View of Levers



Interior of Chicken



Chicken reversed. Legs are pivotted and worked with springs.

The claws of the lobster really resemble a pair of scissors, and they are made to open by means of two threads passed over two pulleys at the side of the lobster. Another thread causes the lobster to rise on its tail.

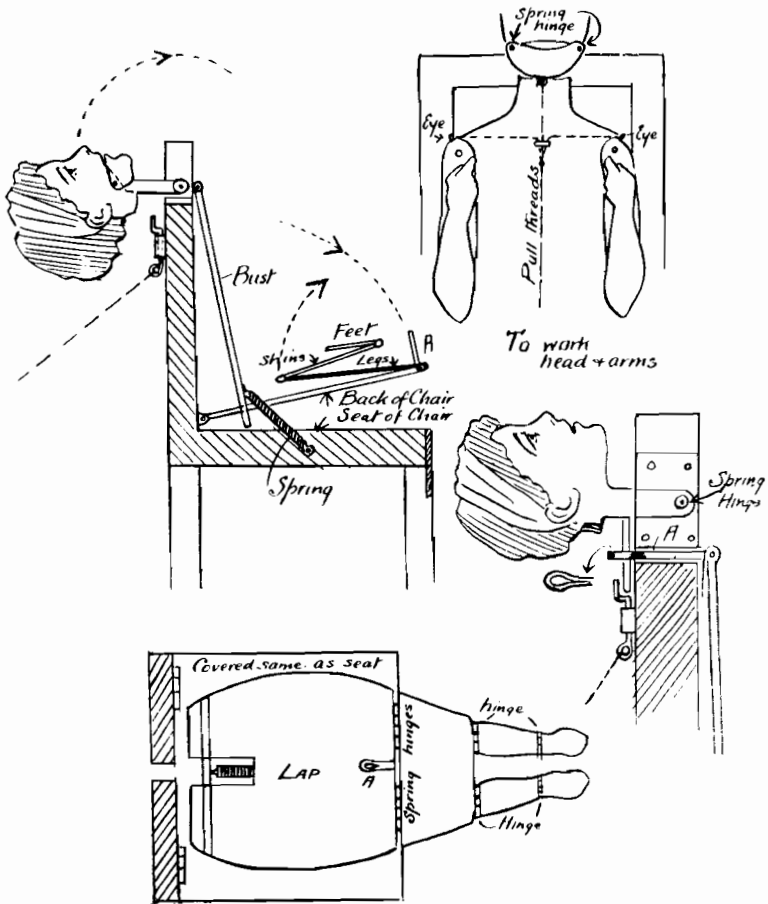
A string attached to the interior of the chicken causes two little levers to open out. The working of these is shown in the diagram. Two rubber bands are placed round the chicken, and so close the slot through which the levers pass when the string is pulled. The pulling of the string causes the chicken to turn over, and it is then supported by means of a small rod in the centre. The legs of the chicken work on two pivots, and two threads cause all the movements of the legs.

The Production of a Girl on a Chair.

Within the past few years magicians seem to have been especially fond of tricks with chairs. We have had the chair that has converted itself into a travelling bag, the multiplying chair, and so on, but I think the following trick will come as a surprise, even to those who have learned something of the tricks I have mentioned.

The trick is really one of those instantaneous effects which bewilder and delight an audience, although some of them may possibly be able to think out a way by which the effect is obtained. The performer shows a small chair, and, without covering it in any way, causes to appear thereon a large figure of a girl. The hands and mouth move in a lifelike manner.

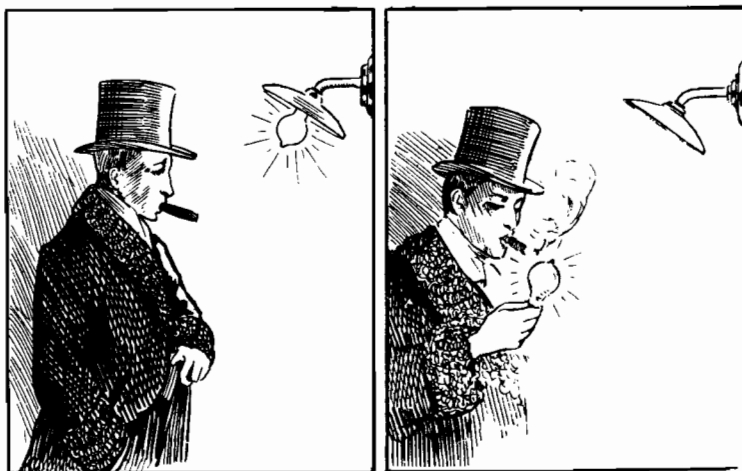
A close study of the illustrations will show anyone how to make the figure. The feet and legs of the lady fold up

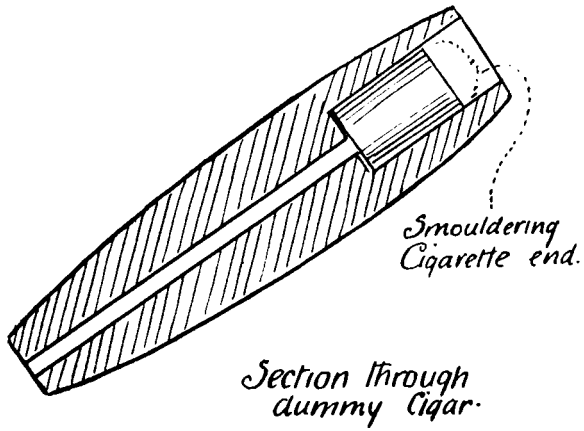
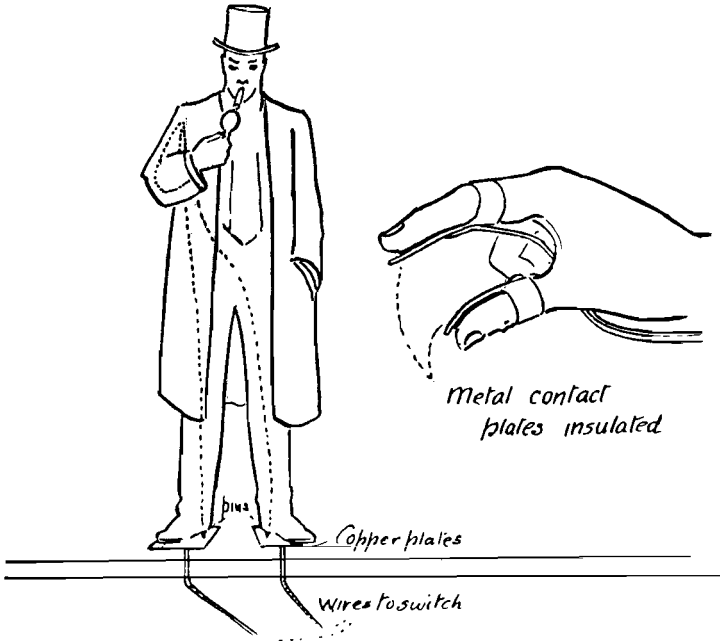


on to the lap, which is then raised and placed over the bust. The whole upper part of the figure is then pressed back to form the back of the chair, and as the underside is covered with silk to match the upholstery of the chair, the parcel is not seen by the audience.

It will be understood, of course, that the joints are made on spring hinges. When the figure is folded up, a bar (marked A in the illustration) is passed through a slot in the top rail of the chair. This bar has an eye end. The head of the figure, being also on a spring hinge, is pressed right back behind the chair until a pin can be passed through the eye at the end of the bar. Thus the whole figure is kept in place by that one pin or bolt, and by means of a cord attached to it, and carried out to an assistant at the back, the working of the main part of the trick is controlled. As will be seen in the illustration, the head and arms are worked by means of another thread, which is also passed out to the assistant at the back of the stage.

A Novel Cigar Lighter.





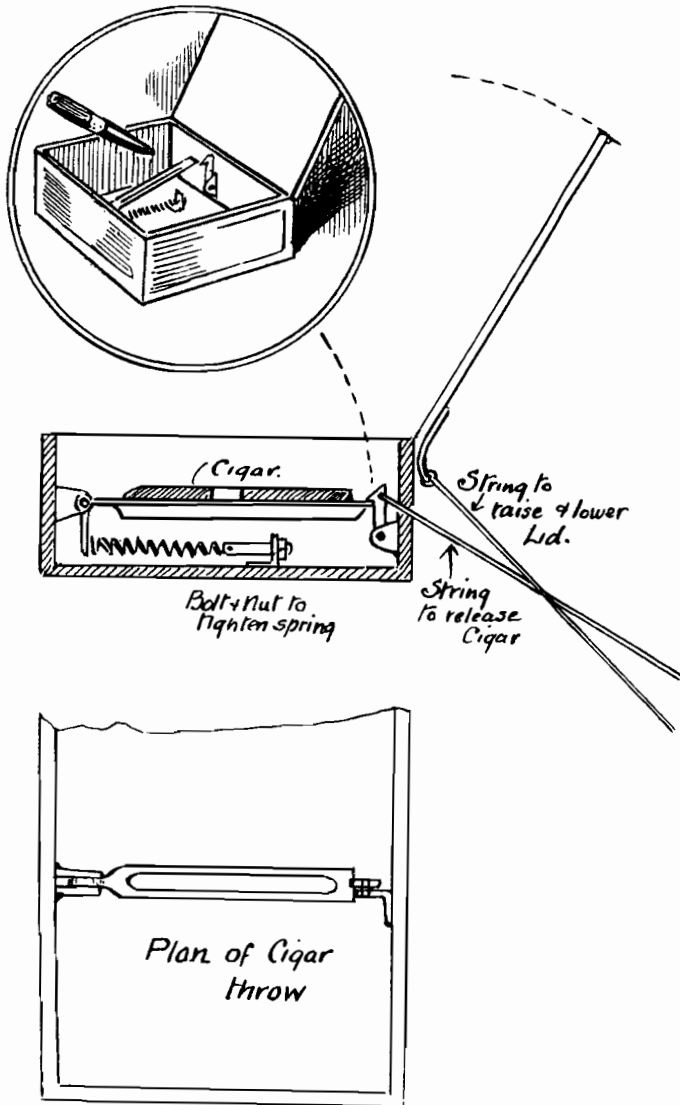
How can a man light his cigar from an electric light? That is one of the problems to be explained here. The other is: How can a man take the light from the fitting and still keep the light going while he holds the electric lamp in his hand?

The answers to the questions are quite simple—when you know them. When the performer walks on to the stage he stands on two copper plates hidden under the carpet. Two wires connect these plates to a switch. The performer has two wires concealed in the legs of his trousers and under his coat. The wires are brought down the sleeve to the performer's hand, and are attached to two insulated plates, which clip on to the performer's first finger and thumb. The other ends of the wires are brought down behind the boots, and are attached to two metal points there. When the points rest on the copper plates a circuit is made, and the contact of the fingers with the lamp produces the light.

The cigar is a faked one. The top of it contains the smouldering end of an Egyptian cigarette, which will keep alight until every scrap of the tobacco is burnt out.

The Lazy Smoker.

The performer picks up a cigar box and puts it down again; apparently it is quite empty. Directly he has put it down the lid of the box opens and shuts again. The performer looks at it curiously, and again the lid of the box opens and shuts. This business is continued three or four times, and then suddenly a cigar jumps out of the box and is caught between the performer's teeth.



The lid of the box is worked by means of a thread by an assistant. The cigar is lying on a small piece of metal inside the box. This piece of metal is attached by a spring hinge to one side of the box, and is held down by a catch with a thread attached. A pull on the thread releases the catch; the cigar is thus sent flying upwards, and is then easily caught by the performer.

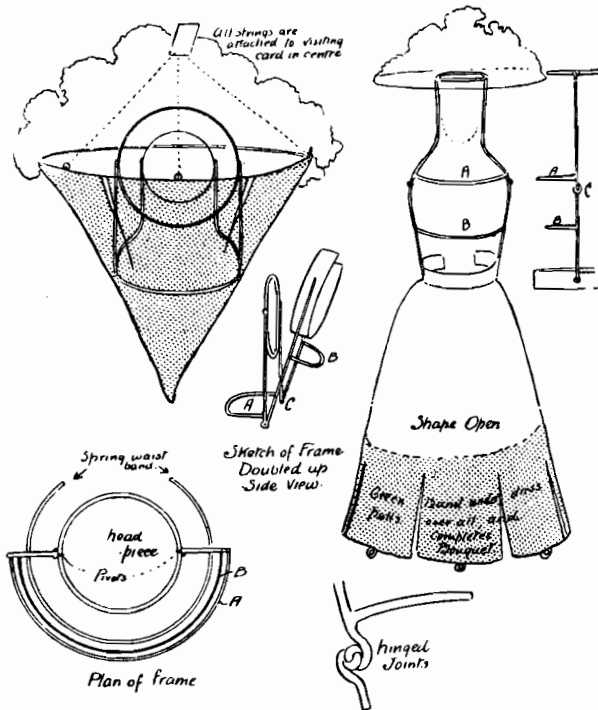
A Mysterious Bouquet.



This bouquet is really quite an illusion in itself, and it may well be introduced with a little patter, but the audience are not prepared for the effect which is suddenly produced, namely, the transformation of the performer into a beautifully gowned young lady.

The performer can begin by asking the audience to use their powers of imagination, and to try and think that he is a young lady with a beautiful soprano voice. Here he can attempt a few bars of a song in a high falsetto voice.

“Then,” continues the performer, “having brought down



the house, I come on and bow, and receive the bouquet which the management kindly arranged to have handed up to me at my expense." Here he stoops down and receives a large bouquet from the conductor of the orchestra, and before the audience can think of what is likely to come next the performer is dressed in the latest Parisian "creation," and has a large picture hat on his head.

The bouquet is responsible for this sudden transformation, and the working of it is shown in the accompanying diagrams. The strings holding the wire frame together meet at the visiting card in the centre of the bouquet. One pull at the card releases the strings, which, attached to springs in the frame, drag the whole thing out into position, and the performer merely has to clip the waist-band round his waist.

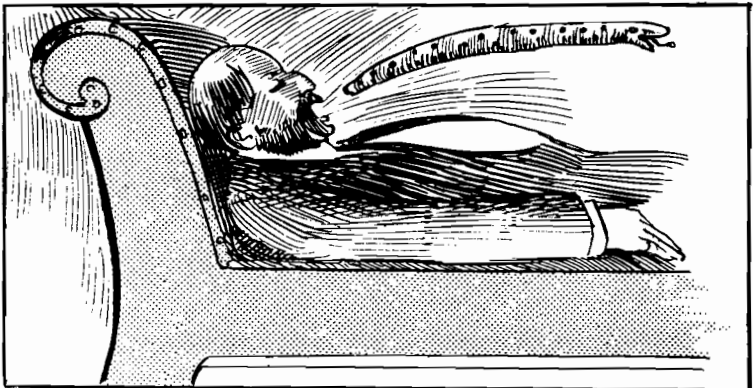
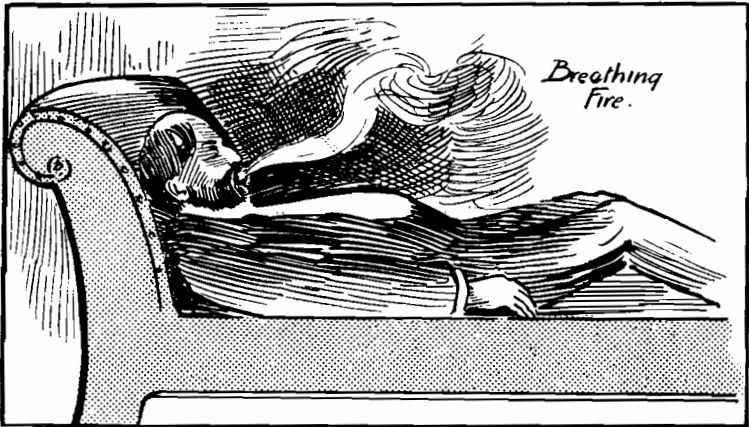
A Curious Dream.

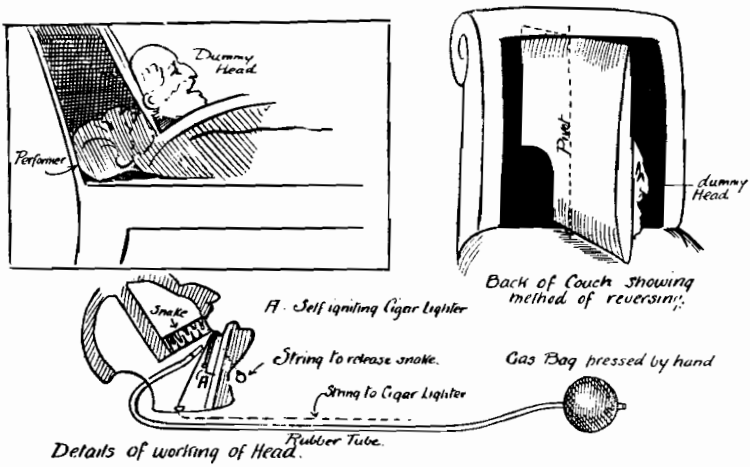
The performer lies on a couch and pretends to be asleep. Presently volumes of flames issue from his mouth, and at last a large snake jumps out of it.

Directly the performer places his head on the couch he gets it on the top of a revolving trap, which instantaneously swings round, and so hides the performer's head and causes a dummy head to appear. The movement can be concealed by means of a cushion, which the performer holds for a moment, as though he was about to place it under his head, but decides not to do so.

The flames are caused by means of a small bag of gas, with an indiarubber tube attached. This tube is passed up the side of the couch and into the dummy head. The performer works the thing himself by merely pressing on the

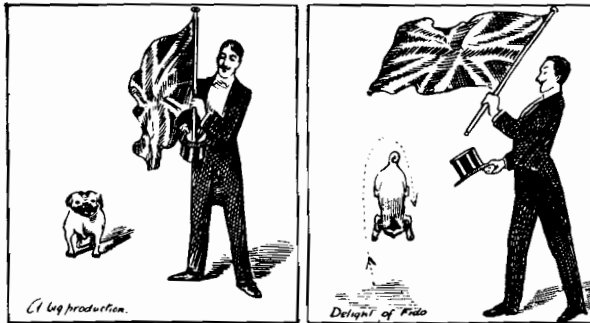
bag with his hand. Inside the mouth of the dummy head is a cigar lighter, with a thread attached, and this too is worked by the performer himself, who also causes a spring snake to jump from the mouth of the dummy head by pulling on a thread attached to the bar which keeps the snake compressed.

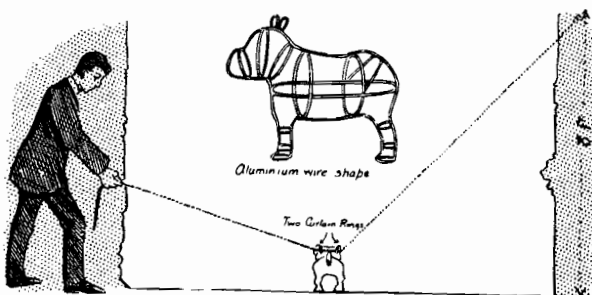




The Acrobatic Dog.

This is another amusing animal. At the end of each good trick he shows his delight by turning a somersault on the stage. The audience can see, of course, that the dog is not the real animal, but their delight in him is none the less on that account; in fact, it is likely to be even

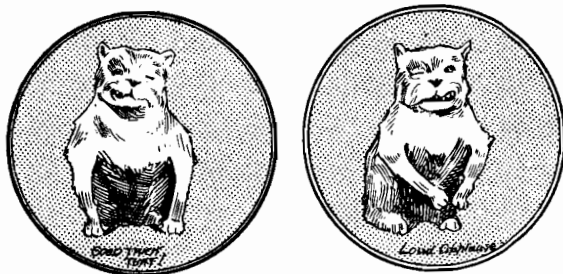


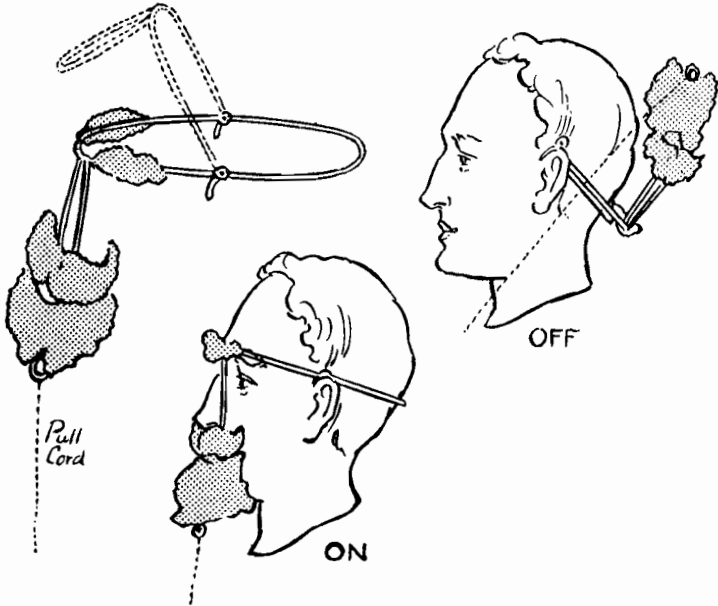
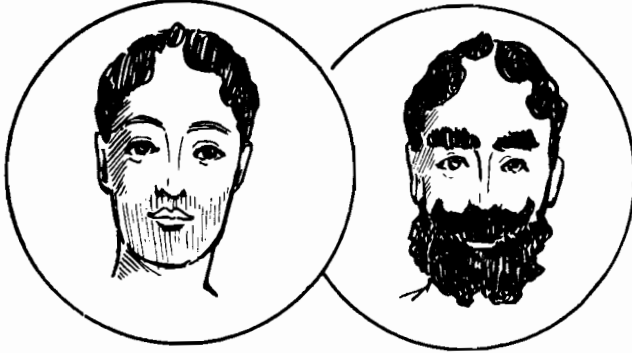


greater than it would be if the dog were real, because so many people have an objection to performing animals. This particular dog requires neither licence nor dog biscuits. He is only a "shape," made of aluminium wire covered with cloth. Behind his ears—and therefore hidden from the audience—are two small curtain rings. A thread is passed through these rings, and is worked in the same way as the thread to the dancing handkerchief.

The Winking Cat.

This kind of cat may be relied upon to make even a real cat laugh. At the end of each trick it winks one eye, laughs, and applauds by tapping its two front paws together. The working of this ingenious novelty is shown in the accompanying illustrations.





PART IX.

Quick Changes.

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Quick Changes.

IT is quite likely that very many of my readers know nothing at all about quick changing, except what they have from time to time observed from the front of the house. As a matter of fact, it is a subject about which very few people know much. There are no books dealing with it, and, with few exceptions, the articles on it that have from time to time appeared in the press have been remarkable only for the careful way in which they have avoided giving any exact information. The people who have distinguished themselves as quick-change artistes have made a point of keeping their secrets to themselves. One cannot blame them for this. Their secrets are in a way their stock-in-trade. If they pass them on to others they are inviting rivalry.

But I myself am not a quick-change artiste, and therefore I do not fear rivalry. And having acquired some of the most important secrets connected with the act, I place them at the service of subscribers to this book. I do so, not to enable them to give the act as an act, but to incorporate the principles of it in their production of illusions, for quick change has a good deal to do with a large proportion of illusions. For instance, a very common effect runs somewhat on the following lines. The performer of a vanishing illusion has an assistant carefully made up as his double waiting in the wings. In the course of his act he goes off the stage for a moment, with a plausible excuse

to the audience. A moment later he apparently returns. But it is not really he; it is his double. The double enters the cabinet from which the disappearance is to take place. As he does so the real performer comes on to the stage. In the few seconds between his exit and entrance he has assumed the guise of a uniformed attendant. Now he draws the curtains round the cabinet, and a little later he throws off the uniform and discloses himself to the audience as the actual performer. They wonder how it has all been done. Part of the secret lies, of course, in the construction of the escape from the cabinet, but an equally important part lies in the quick-change ability of the performer. The few seconds spent by him off the stage were absolutely essential to the full effect.

Another instance of the application of quick-change principles to magical illusions is the following. The performer directs the attention of his audience to an empty cabinet. A lady assistant presently steps on to the stage and enters the cabinet. The performer then draws the curtains round it. The audience are allowed to inspect the cabinet when thus enclosed, and to convince themselves that there is no possible way of escape from it either by trapdoor or otherwise. At the conclusion of this inspection the curtains are drawn aside and the cabinet is opened. The lady has gone, and in her place is found a man. Again the effect is simply the result of quick change. The lady and the man are one and the same person. The female costume is reposing on a secret shelf just under the roof of the cabinet. The male costume, which was worn under the other, is now the only one that the audience see. Of course, there was something more than this mere change of dress. There was also the alteration of the hair and complexion.

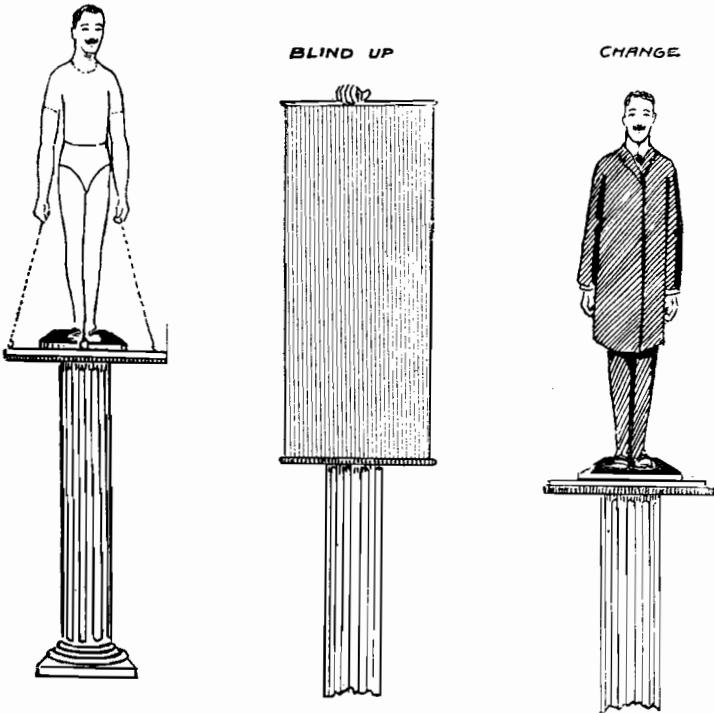
But this was part of the general quick change, and depended on the same principles.

It is explained in the following pages how this and similar effects can be obtained. The secrets are very simple when you know them. But they can be put to the most effective use. As I write this, the names of various prominent quick-change artistes of the past and present occur to me—Biondi, Bernardi, Fregoli, Aldrich, and R. A. Roberts are prominent among them. All achieved or are achieving fame and fortune from the act, and all worked or are working on the same principles. It is possible that this section may help some of my readers to follow their example. The quick-change act, whether given by itself or as an adjunct to a magical performance, is always a good card with the public when well played.

Some Quick Changes.

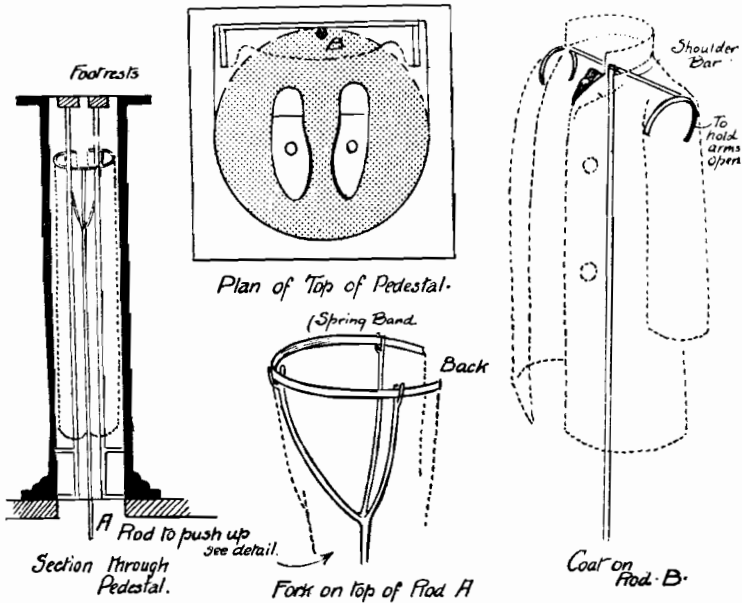
One of the most remarkable quick changes is that which is performed on a pedestal. The performer is dressed in white tights, and therefore apparently has no means of concealing any trick clothes about him. He merely holds up a blind in front of him for a second; when he drops it he is fully dressed in coat and trousers, collar, tie, etc.

Nothing could be much simpler than the secret of this change—when you know it. The performer has no trick



suit concealed about him; it is in the pedestal on which he stands. This pedestal is connected by means of a rod to "below." An assistant under the stage works most of the change by merely pushing up two rods. The first of these is a forked rod, on which the trousers are hung. The performer stands on two rests on the top of the pillar, and, when everything is ready, the assistant pushes up the rod, and so carries the trousers right over the performer's legs and up to the waist, where they clip on and are held securely.

The coat is also pushed up in the same way. It is held on a wire frame to keep the sleeves open. When it is raised to the right height, the performer can easily slip one arm into a sleeve while he is holding the blind with the other



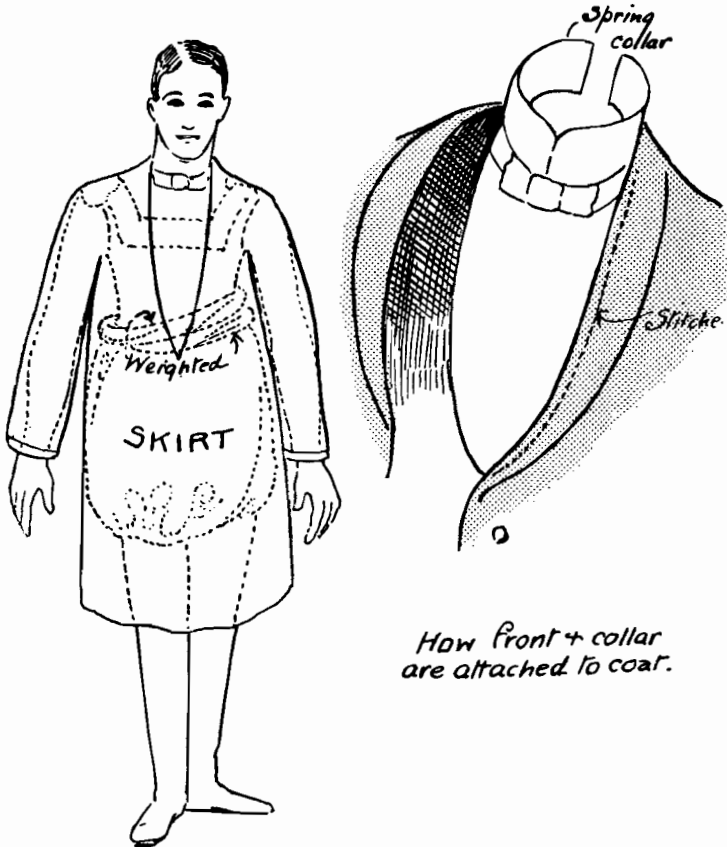
hand. Then he can change hands, and can so get the other arm into the other sleeve.

A change which is much simpler and almost as effective is that in which the performer, dressed in an overcoat and ordinary evening clothes, is suddenly changed into a lady in full evening dress.

The diagram gives the working of this change. The collar is opened at the back; it is, of course, a spring collar.



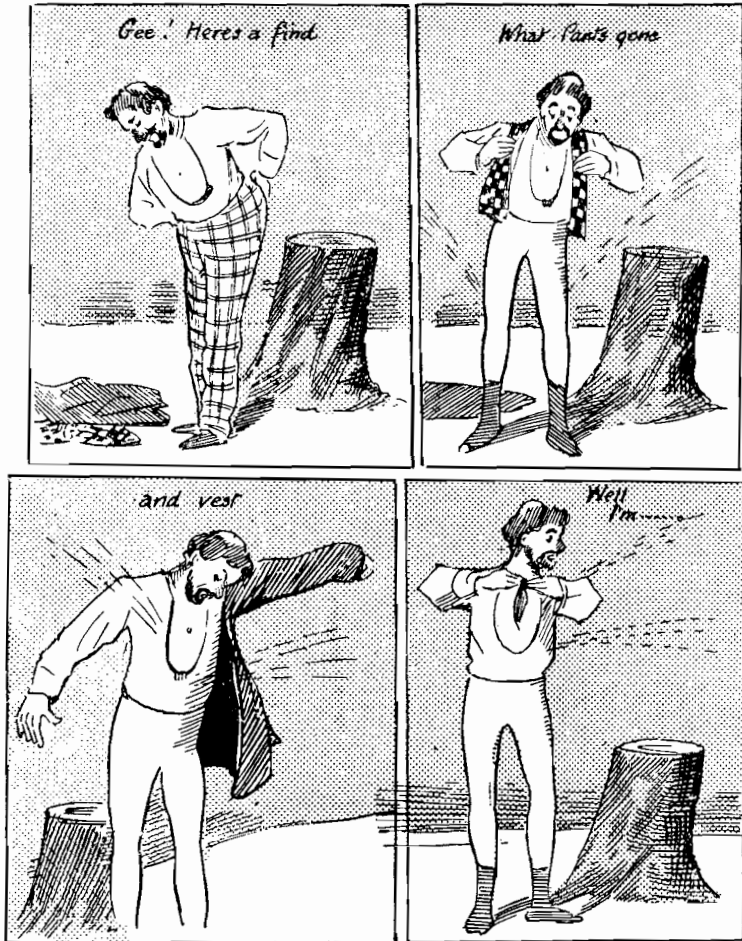
The shirt front and collar are sewn to the left lapel of the overcoat, and therefore, when the performer quickly removes his overcoat, he also takes off the rest of his evening suit, with the exception of the trousers, which are quickly hidden by the falling skirt he has had concealed under his overcoat.



How front + collar are attached to coat.

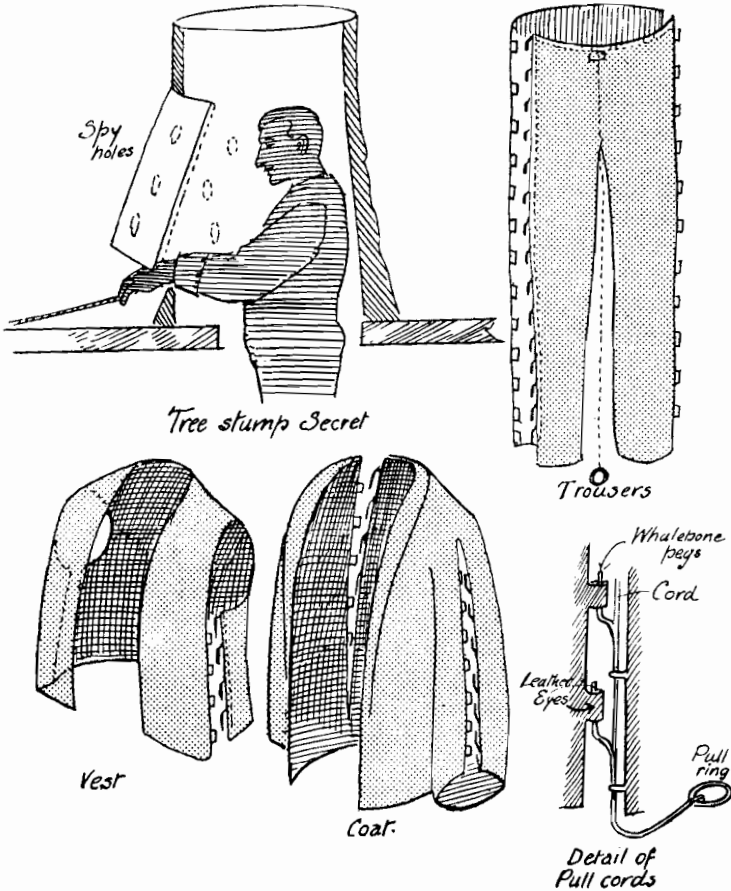
Ladies dress under coat

This skirt is weighted so that immediately it is released by the coat being unbuttoned, it falls down to the floor. The upper part of the dress is, of course, hidden in the first place by the shirt front. Simultaneously with the removal



of his overcoat, the performer puts on a wig, and the transformation from man to woman is complete.

Loud laughter will greet the performer who presents the following series of quick changes. The performer, dressed as a tramp, comes on, and finds a new suit of clothes on



the bank of a river. He removes his own clothes, throws them into the river, and begins to put on the new suit. The trousers suddenly disappear while he is buttoning up the waistcoat, and when he is putting on the coat the waistcoat disappears. Finally, while he is adjusting his tie the coat goes, and the performer is left with no clothes.

The changes are fairly easy, because they are all worked by an assistant concealed in the tree-trunk on the stage. This trunk is fitted with spy holes, and at the base of it there is a little spring flap, through which the clothes are pulled.

All the clothes are made on the well-known "strip suit" plan. Numbers of whalebone pegs on a continuous cord, and a number of corresponding eyes made of leather, explain most of the mystery. One sharp pull takes all the pegs out of the eyes, and the garments can then be pulled off the wearer. To all intents and purposes each garment is ripped up suddenly, and the same cord which does this part of the work also takes the whole of the garment out of sight.

Quick Change Effect.

Another clever quick-change effect is produced by the performer coming on in pierrot costume, and transforming it suddenly into ordinary evening dress.

This effect is produced, of course, by the sudden vanishing of the pierrot costume, and to understand how this is done the reader should study Figs. 1, 2, and 3. First of all, the coat is connected with the trousers by means of elastic straps (A in Fig. 1). The trousers are laced up at the sides

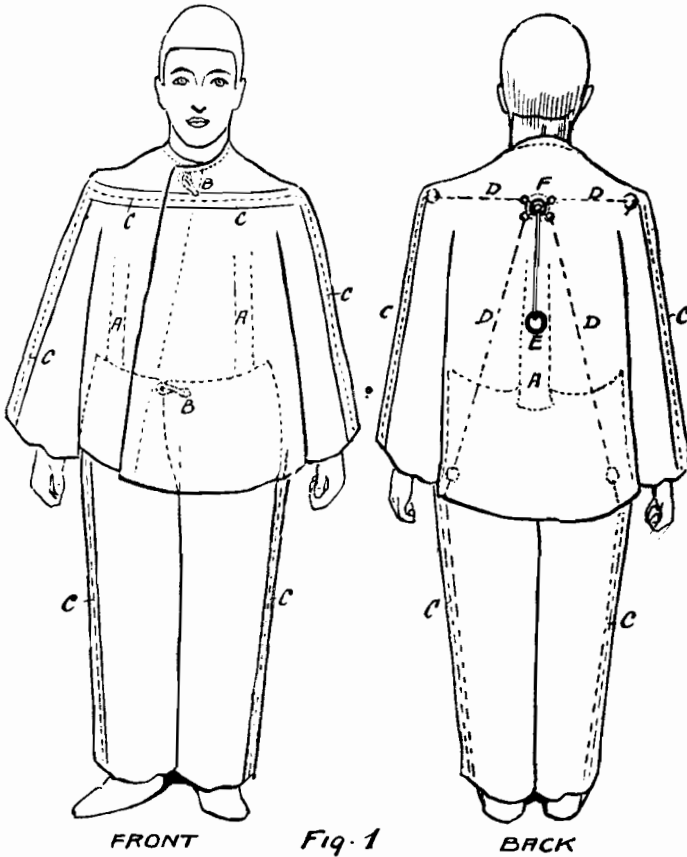
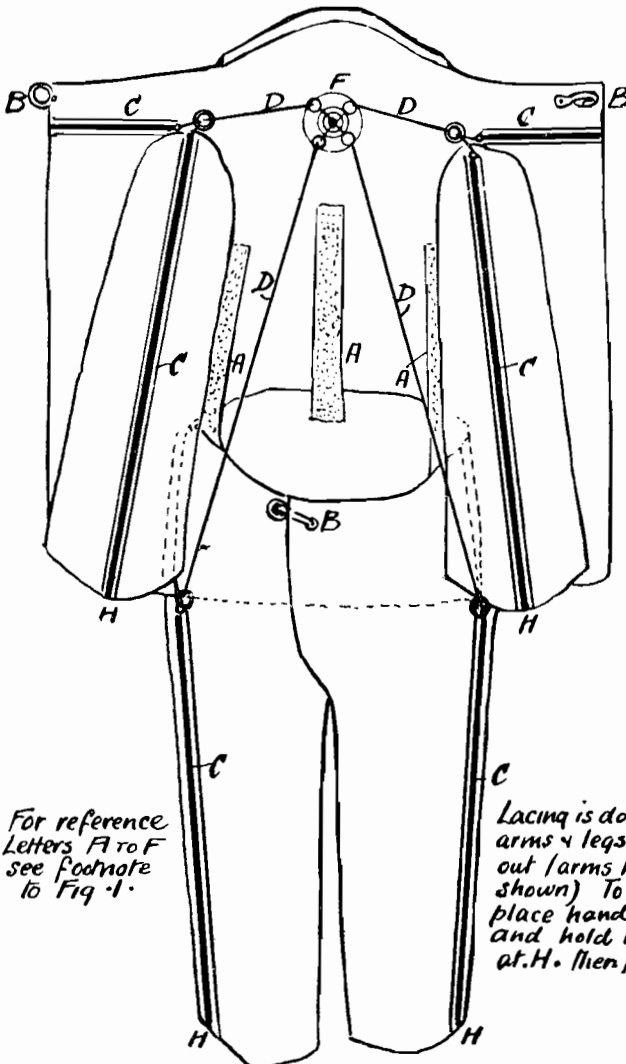


Fig. 1
 "A" :- elastic straps connecting coat to trousers. "B" :- Snap hooks + rings
 Direction of lacings. "C" :- "D" :- Inside pull cords. "E" :- Single
 outside pull cord. "F" :- Hole in coat and guide eyes (inside)

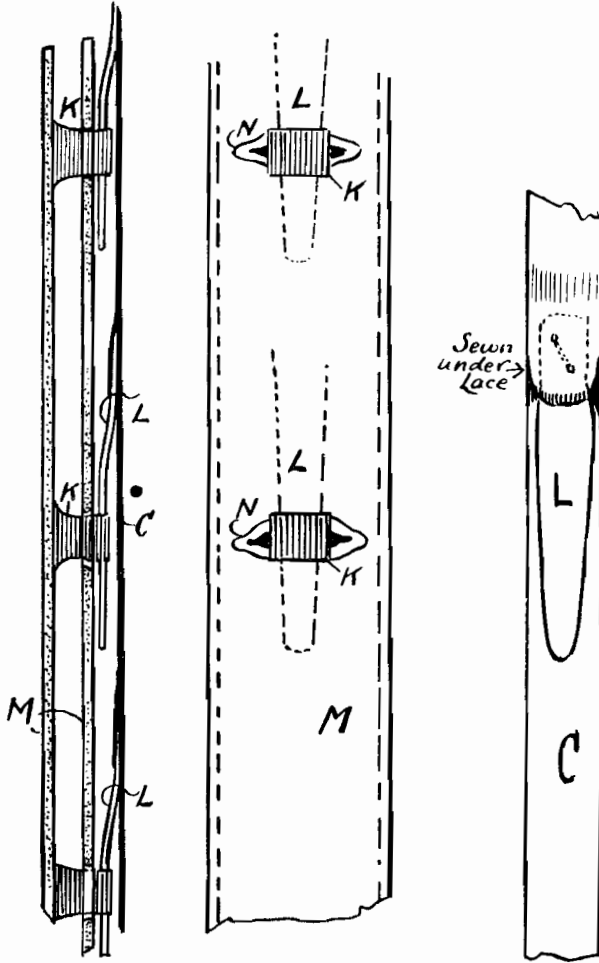
in the usual way of trick change trousers. The laces are connected with other cords, which pass up the performer's back and over a little "guide" mid-way between his shoulders (see Fig. 1). These cords are joined at that point, and the one cord is taken through a hole in the back of



For reference
Letters A to F
see footnote
to Fig. 1.

Lacing is done with
arms & legs inside
out (arms here thus
shown) To reverse
place hand inside
and hold last peg,
at H. Men pull thro.

Fig 2. Inside of Suit showing pulls



M-M - Leather straps sewn to suit.
K - Glassic eyes . 3 or 4 inch intervals
N - Buttonholes inner straps . do do
L - Whalebone pegs on lace . C. do do
 • Fig 3. Details of Lacing .

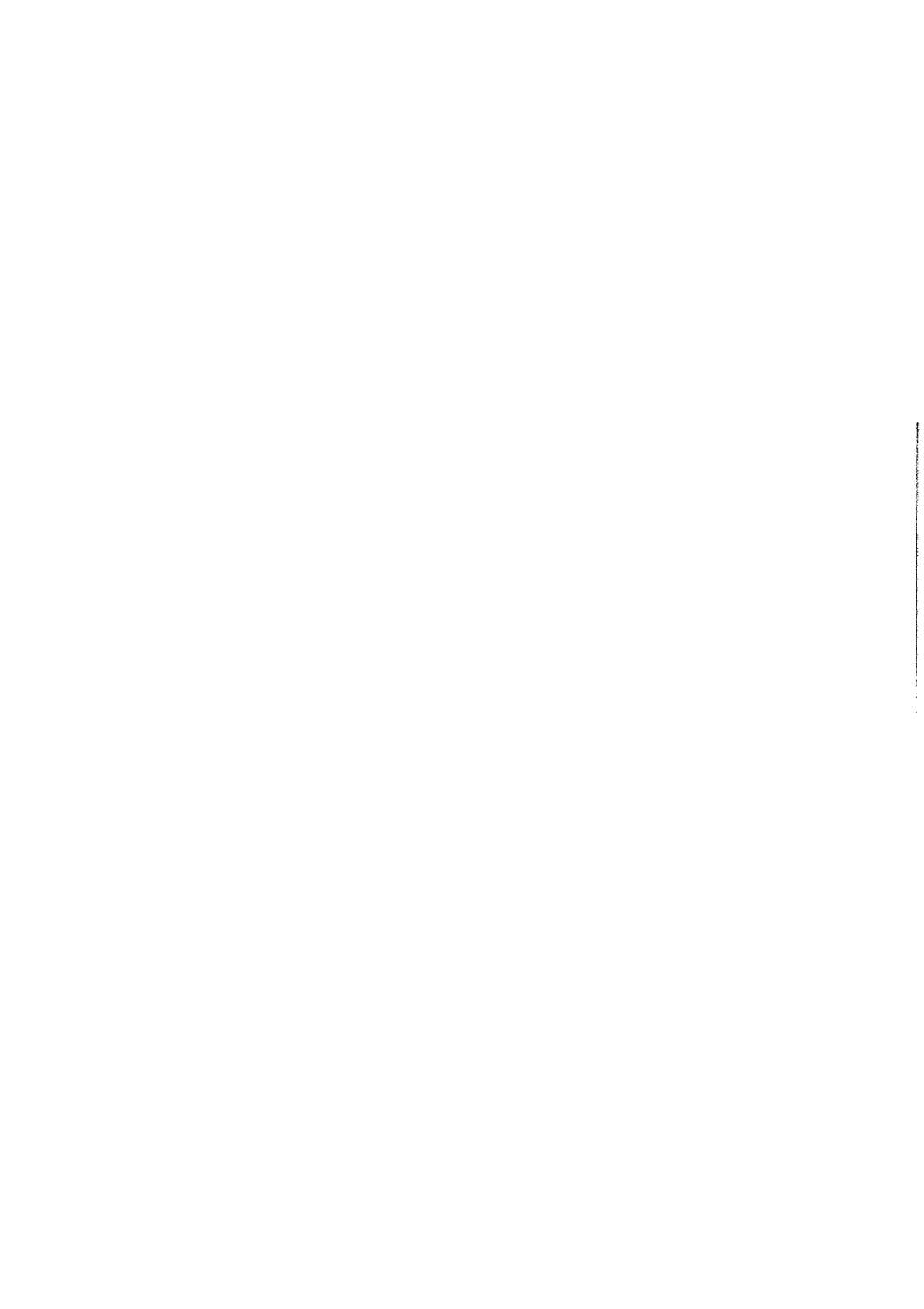
the coat and hangs outside. A ring is attached to the end of the cord, which is pulled by an assistant.

The sleeves of the coat and legs of the trousers are laced up when the garments are inside out. Fig. 3 gives full details of the lacing. It will be seen that this is accomplished by means of leather straps sewn to the suit, and that elastic eyes are sewn to the straps at intervals of three or four inches. Little whalebone pegs keep the coat and trousers together, and as the pegs are all attached to a cord, one pull will release all of them simultaneously.

PART X.

Automata.

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Automata.

AS far back as the history of magic extends, we find that automata were constructed and exhibited. The effects of the oracles of ancient Rome and Greece were produced to a large extent by ingenious apparatus. But it was not until the seventeenth century of the present era that automata of the highest degree of skill were constructed.

About the year 1650 a Frenchman named Camus produced a marvellous coach. Horses were harnessed to it, a coachman was on the box, a footman and a page were in their places behind, and a lady was seated inside. When a spring was touched, the coachman smacked his whip and the horses proceeded in a natural manner, drawing after them the carriage. After executing various evolutions the coach stopped. The page then descended and opened the door, and the lady alighted. A moment or two later she re-entered the coach. The page put up the steps, closed the door, and resumed his station. The coachman whipped his horses, and the carriage was driven back to its original position. It is recorded that this extraordinary piece of apparatus was exhibited before the King of France and other monarchs of the period.

Another automaton of similar character was the Duck of Vaucason. It was of the size of life, and so perfect an imitation of the living animal that all the spectators were deceived. It executed, says Brewster in his "Letters on Natural Magic," all the natural movements and gestures.

It ate and drank with avidity, performed all the quick motions of the head and throat which are peculiar to the duck, and, like it, muddled the water which it drank with its bill. It produced also the sound of quacking in the most natural manner. In the anatomical structure the inventor exhibited the highest skill. Every bone in the real duck had its representative in the automaton, and its wings were anatomically exact. Every cavity, apophysis, and curvature was imitated, and each bone executed its proper movements. When corn was thrown down before it, the duck stretched out its neck to pick it up, swallowed, and digested it.

But the automata which have most interested the public have been the various writing and drawing figures. Perhaps the earliest of these was the writing figure invented by Frederick Von Knauss in the year 1760. In that notable book, "The Unmasking of Robert Houdin," Harry Houdini gives a full account of this and later inventions on the same lines. Particularly interesting is the passage in the book which deals with the automata constructed by Pierre Jacquet-Droz and his son Henri-Louis, the famous Swiss mechanics, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Houdini states that years were spent in perfecting them, and that they have not been equalled or even approached by later mechanics and inventors. He also suggests that Robert Houdin and other magicians of a later day who produced automata as part of their show, did not actually invent them, but copied the figures constructed by Pierre Jacquet-Droz and his son.

Speaking generally, however, the secrets of automata have been well kept by their inventors. So much so that it has always been a difficult matter for a magician to secure an effective figure for his performances. During recent

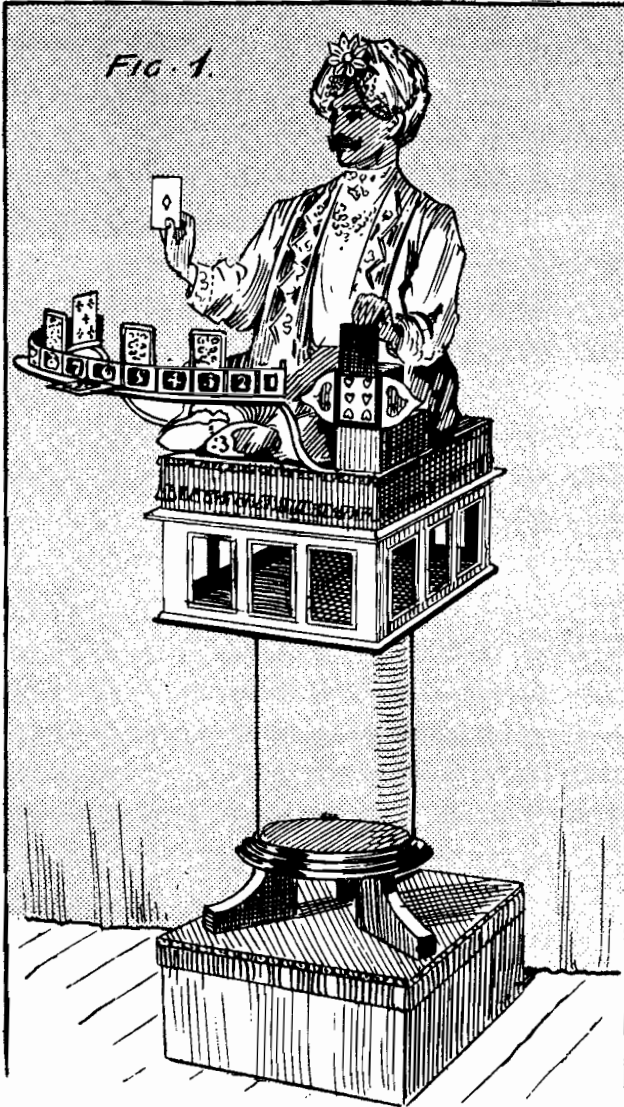
years I have known several men who have expended much money and time in attempting to secure such a figure, and who have failed to do so. In this section of "Exclusive Magical Secrets" a remarkable automaton is fully described. The sketches illustrating it have been drawn from the actual apparatus, which is the property of A. W. Gamage, Ltd. With the aid of these sketches, and of the accompanying letterpress, those of my subscribers who have some skill in mechanical work will be able to construct the automaton themselves. If they have not that skill, they can easily obtain the assistance of a practical man. In that case, however, they must not allow him to discover the whole secret. They can avoid this by doing one or two essential parts of the work themselves.

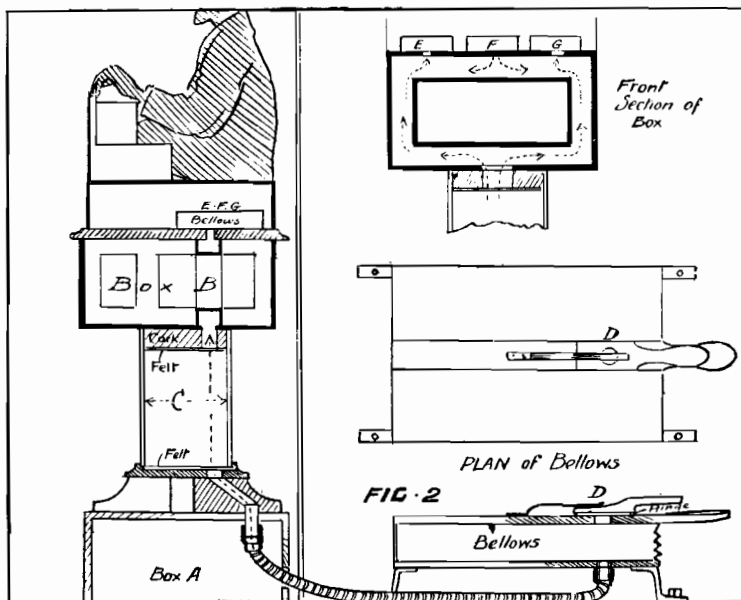
The Whist-Playing Automaton.

Strictly speaking, none of the figures which are known to the conjuring world as automata rightly deserve that description. The meaning of the word "automaton"—I quote from Webster's Dictionary—is, "A self-moving machine, or one which has its moving power within itself." Now, as common sense tells us that a figure which plays whist or draws a picture must be actuated by some unseen motive power, it follows that these figures are not automata in the strict sense of the word. A figure which plays whist cannot possibly have its "moving power within itself."

However, the word "automaton" has for many years been applied to certain machines which imitate the movements of human beings, the "moving power" which causes the figures to work being hidden—more or less cleverly, according to the skill of the maker of the automaton. The word "automaton" is not usually applied—at any rate, by conjurers—to a "self-moving machine," which can be made to perform the same actions over and over again. One would hardly give the name "automaton" to such a thing as a model of a mill which is made to "work" by the dropping of a penny into the machine. This particular kind of toy, which so many people believe to be of recent invention, was thought of and produced some two thousand or more years ago, and automata—not quite the machines which conjurers refer to when they speak of automata—were known many years before the first "penny-in-the-slot" machine was made.

I now propose to explain the working of a whist-playing automaton of modern construction, and if readers will study

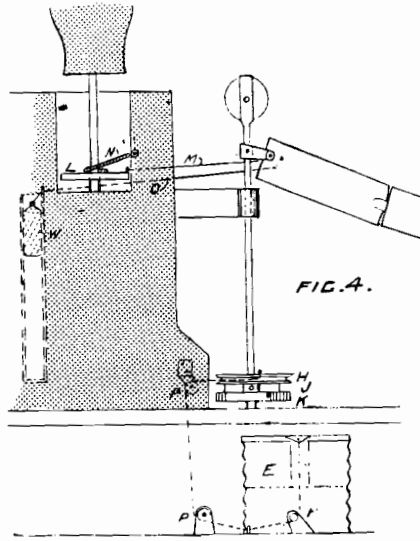
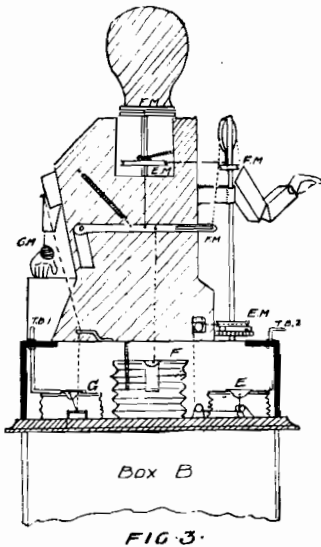




the illustrations with the letterpress, I think they will be able to form a clear idea of how a figure, apparently without any assistance from anyone, can be made to play whist.

Fig. 1 is an illustration of the automaton as seen by the onlooker. The figure is shown raising a card with the right hand, and with the left hand lifting the lid of a box, which discloses another card. In actual practice these actions are parts of a separate programme or performance, but for the sake of saving needless repetition, they are shown on the same sketch.

The right hand is really engaged in a game of whist with cards dealt haphazard, and placed in the rack before the figure. The left hand is disclosing a card chosen by a member of the audience—an entirely different performance.



Three features are to be noted about the stand which supports the dressed figure. First, there is a clear way between the three supporting feet. Secondly, the cylinder is of clear glass, and the top and bottom ends are covered all over with baize. Thirdly, the box under the figure has pierced sides, and is demonstrated to be empty. Despite the apparent absence of human connection, the figure will play a hand of cards correctly against a bona-fide opponent; its hand stopping over the right card and lifting it from the rack, so that it can be clearly seen, before the hand drops the card into the tray in front of the rack.

Examination of Fig. 2, however, reveals the secret of the motive power. An assistant behind the back cloth can so manipulate a specially constructed pair of bellows that he controls the figure's actions by means of air expansion

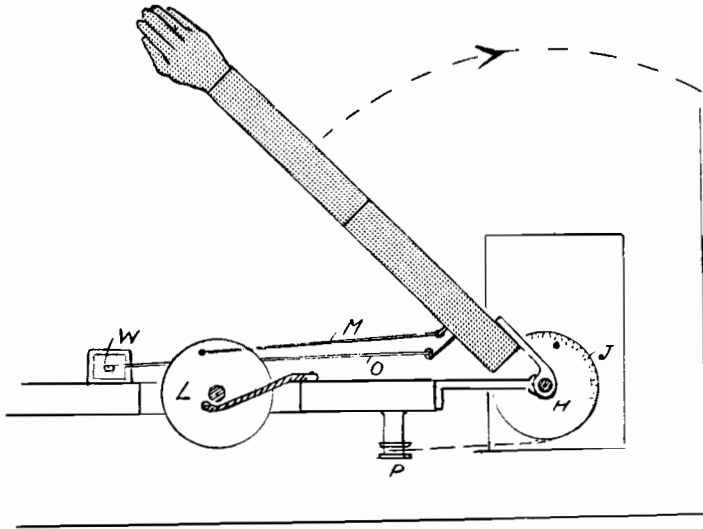


FIG 4^A PLAN

and suction. By compressing or raising the bellows he forces or withdraws air through the flexible tube concealed by box A, through the back foot of the stand, and thus imperceptibly into the glass cylinder (the air penetrating the baize), round an enclosed channel way in box B (this channel appearing to be merely a bracing piece), and finally into the small bellows fixed under the seat of the figure, E, F, G. These three bellows work the interior mechanism of the figure in a manner which will be explained.

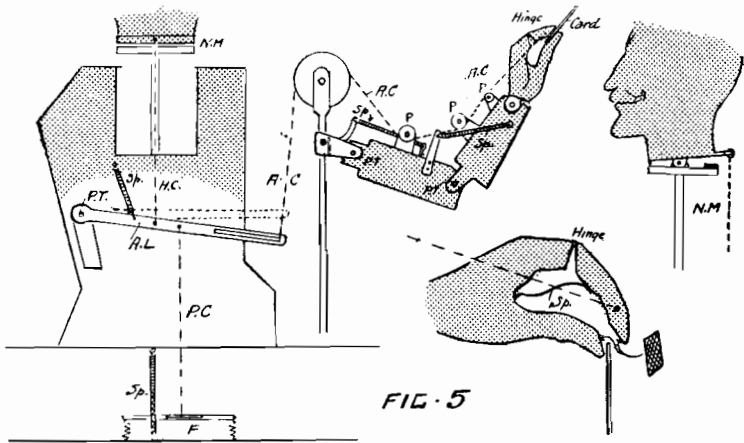
The large bellows have on the top a valve D, normally closed by a spring, as seen in sketch. The underside of valve piece is covered with thick felt, which closes air-hole, and in this condition bellows cannot be used without having

some effect on the figure. This fact has an important influence on the working of the figure. If the valve is open all the air escapes, and the bellows can be used without affecting mechanism; this is also an important point.

Fig. 3 shows the back of figure stripped of drapery, and this diagram gives a clue to the functions of the three minor bellows concealed in seat under figure, E, F, and G. It is now understood that air from the large bellows controls the three. Now E and F influence the right hand of figure, which has a separate performance, so G is temporarily put out of action by the turnbuckle rod T B 1, which holds the bellows down and prevents air having any effect on it. But E and F have reverse actions, E working by expansion and F by suction; therefore F bellows are raised to their fullest extent and held in position by a spring, which is shown more clearly in Fig. 5. The filling of E with air causes it to turn arm and head together, marked on diagram E M. The suction on F causes it to raise arm and hand with card picked up, and also to tilt head backwards. See Figs. 4, 4a, and 5 for these movements.

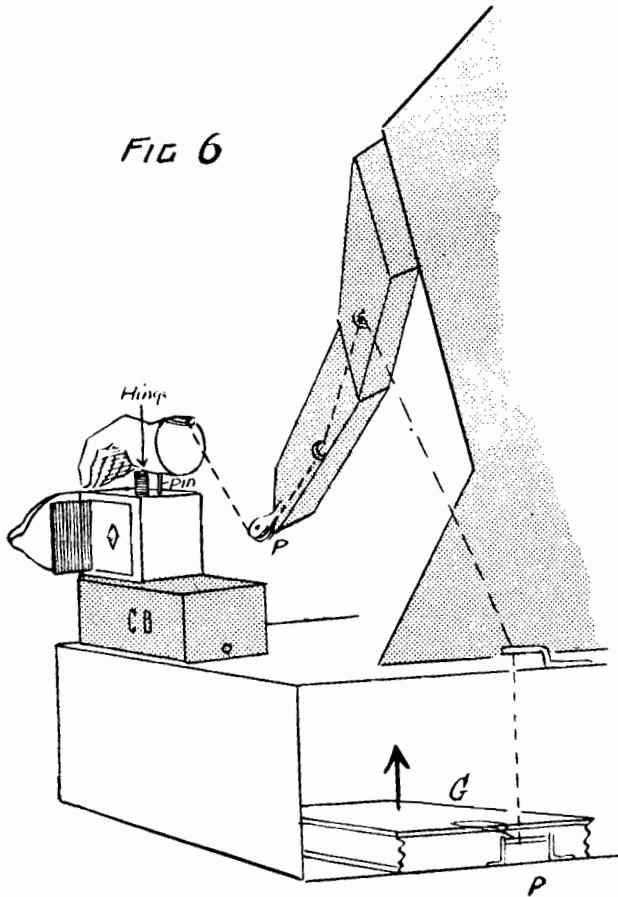
When the chosen card act is being performed, E is put out of action by turning T B 2 and locking down bellows, and G is released. These bellows then work the left hand, G M. As it happens, the movements in this latter act have no suctional working, so there is no necessity to lock down F. For details, see Figs. 6 and 7.

An examination of diagrams 4 to 7 will now disclose the exact working of figure. Assume that the figure is to play a certain card. The assistant behind can see the rack and mark the position. He opens valve and raises bellows. He then allows the valve to close, and slowly presses bellows down. The air passes into E and raises it, and this pulls

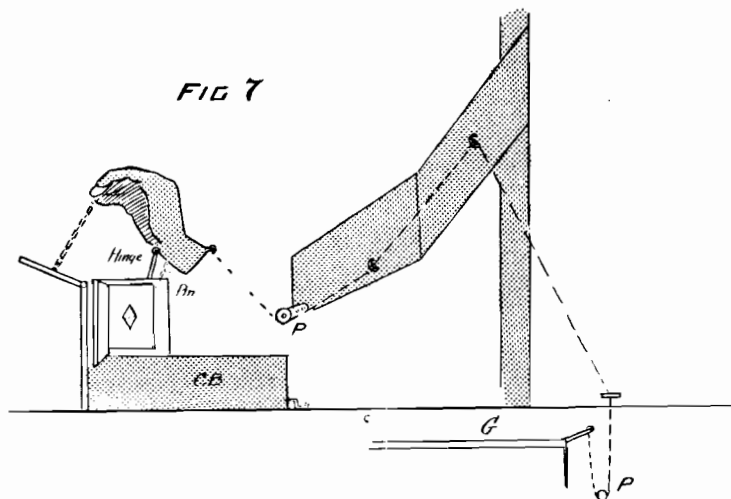


on a cord which runs over various pulleys until it partially encircles the wheel H. The wheel commences to revolve, carrying with it the rod which has the right arm attached. The movement of the arm correspondingly draws on the cord M, which is attached to a disc L holding the neck spindle, and causes the neck also to revolve in the same direction. When the hand is immediately over the card the assistant stops the bellows, and the ratchet J drops into the toothed disc K, and locks the arm in the required position. (See Figs. 4 and 4a.) The cord O, the weight W, and the spring N are to return the arm and head to their normal position at the left-hand end of the rack, but these do not come into operation until the second part of the movement shown in Fig. 5 is completed.

The raising of the arm and hand with card is a distinct and separate movement. (See Fig. 5.) To commence with, the assistant opens the valve and lets down the bellows. He then closes the valve and pulls up the bellows. This



exhausts air in F, and attached cord P C commences to operate as follows. It first depresses the lever A L, thus pulling on the arm cord A C. This, running over the main wheel at top of arm rod and under and over the various pulleys P, acts on the hinged fingers and closes them on the card,



the serrated surface of thumb and fingers providing a grip. As the cord shortens it lifts the arm at the wrist, elbow, and shoulder joints until the face of the card is exposed to the audience.

The cord P C, in pulling down lever A L on pivot P T, also draws on head cord H C, and pulls head backwards as arm is raised. (The letter P in all diagrams denotes a pulley.)

The entire movement now accomplished, the assistant opens the valve of the main bellows, and bellows F and lever A L then rise by aid of the springs S P. The arm is thrown down by the various springs which have been in compression, the fingers open, and the card drops into tray. As the arm cannot return to its starting point because it is held by the ratchet, the bellows must be raised (with valve open), then shut and pressed down until the arm reaches the extreme limit of the rack. The ratchet is then free, and the arm

(Fig. 6) pulls on wrist, and causes pin to enter top of case and stop revolving cards, as shown in Fig 7, and, simultaneously, the fingers, by means of an attached chain, raise front door and disclose the card to the audience.

To recommence the trick, the assistant opens the valve and drops bellows. When the hand drops and closes down, the pin is withdrawn, and cards are free to revolve until signal is given for the next stop.

All the foregoing explanation makes it clear that the man at the bellows is a very responsible person in the successful presentation of the automaton, and he must be sure of timing correctly. If, for instance, he overshoots a card in the whist playing, he has to release "all," bring the hand back to the starting point, and commence the movement over again.



PART XI.

Juggling.

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Juggling.

JUGGLING is one of the most ancient of the arts, yet even to-day it is very little understood. The public generally expect a conjurer to deceive them. They do not expect this of a juggler—that is to say, they imagine all his effects are the result of sleight-of-hand, perfected by years of practice. But, as a matter of fact, many jugglers are as great deceivers as conjurers. Their effects are obtained by mechanical means, and not by pure sleight-of-hand. As an instance of this I may mention the knife-throwing act. Of course, a certain amount of dexterity of touch is required for the successful performance of this, but the juggler is greatly assisted by the fact that the handles of the knives are all weighted, so that on falling they, and not the blades, reach the hands first.

This section deals with mechanical effects used in juggling. I should be very sorry to deprecate in any way the employment of sleight-of-hand where such employment is useful. But I have long held the view that a performer is quite entitled to use a fake when by its means he can get his effect easier and more certainly than by mere skill of eye and touch. The impression on his audience is precisely the same. Indeed, from their point of view, the fake method is better than the other one, because when it is used they are never disappointed by witnessing the failure of a feat. I myself have on several occasions observed the attitude of an audience towards a juggler presenting a programme composed partly of effects depending on sleight-

of-hand and partly on others depending on fakes. On every occasion I have noticed that the latter received the most applause. This was, of course, due to the fact that they were showier than the others. The difficulty about sleight-of-hand effects is to make them showy. Some of them which are the result of the greatest skill, and can only be performed after an immense amount of practice, appear from the front to be quite commonplace when compared with the startling and brilliant results produced by carefully prepared fakes.

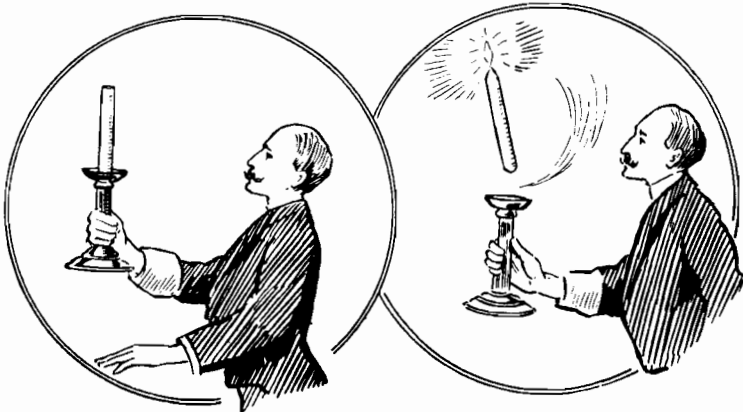
From the point of view of the performer the matter is one of expediency. Is he to succeed at once by the assistance of mechanical means, or is he to practise for years and then perhaps not achieve success? Probably most of my readers will be in favour of the former alternative. Of course, the views I am expressing in this article are not such as I would present to the general public. To them I could not, and would not, speak so freely. But I feel that all subscribers to "Exclusive Magical Secrets" are, so to speak, "in the know." As magicians, they are accustomed to deceiving the public by means of fakes, and even if they have not studied juggling, they have doubtless guessed that similar deception takes place in connection with it.

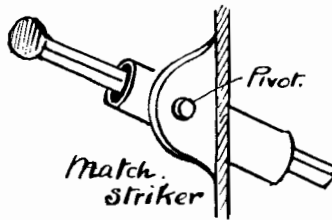
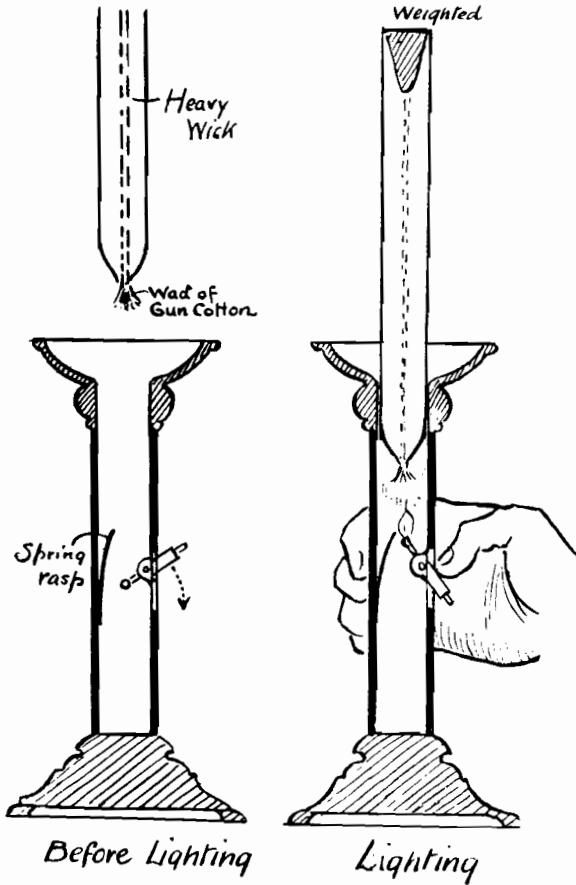
Every juggling trick explained in this section can be mastered with a few days', or at most a few weeks', practice. All of them are very effective, and, if properly performed, will win the applause of any audience. I have selected them from a very large number, and am confident that they include the best and latest effects.

The Self-Lighting Candle.

The old trick of the candle that lights itself on the stage is now so well known that it is high time some new version of the mystery was introduced. No doubt many jugglers would have used some method other than that generally known if they had been able to discover a really good way of getting the effect. With this explanation before him, anyone may now do the "self-lighting candle" trick without any fear of overhearing the remark, "I know how that's done."

The effect is as follows. The juggler comes on with a candle stuck into a candlestick. He removes the candle, and puts it back again upside down. Then, suddenly giving the candlestick a little jerk, he causes the candle to rise from the candlestick, and while it is in mid-air a flame is seen on the end of the candle, which then falls back to its proper place in the candlestick.



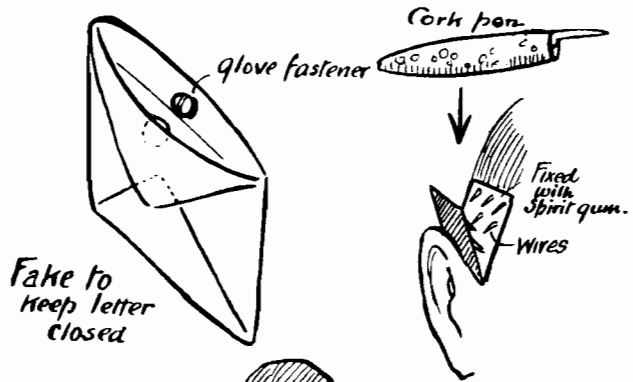
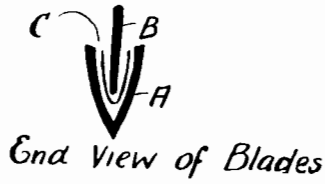
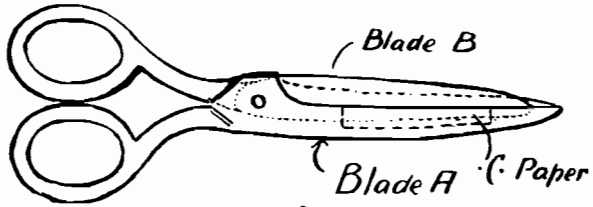


That is the actual effect produced on the onlookers. To accomplish it one must use a faked candle and a faked candlestick. The latter is hollow. About half-way down is a small roughened piece of metal. Opposite this is a small tube working on a pivot and jutting out from the side of the candlestick. This tube holds a match, and when the performer presses down on the tube, the match strikes against the piece of roughened metal on the other side. The wick of the candle is frayed out, and a tiny wad of gun-cotton is stuck into the centre. This ensures immediate ignition when a flame is put to the wick, and this is exactly what happens when the performer presses down the tube and strikes the match. (By holding his hand round the candlestick, the performer hides the end of the tube which projects from the candlestick.) The wick of the candle should be rather thick and heavy, so that there may be no chance of a failure when the match is lit.

The base of the candle is loaded with a little lead, and thus, when it is thrown in the air, it falls with the heavy end downwards. With a very little practice the juggler will find that it is an easy matter to throw up the candle in such a way that it falls naturally into the candlestick. Of course, the candle must be thrown directly the match has been struck, otherwise the flame, being imprisoned in the centre of the candlestick, will go out.

A Juggling Feat with an Envelope, a Pair of Scissors, and a Pen.

This is a good "comedy" experiment for a performer who uses an assistant on the stage. In the course of the



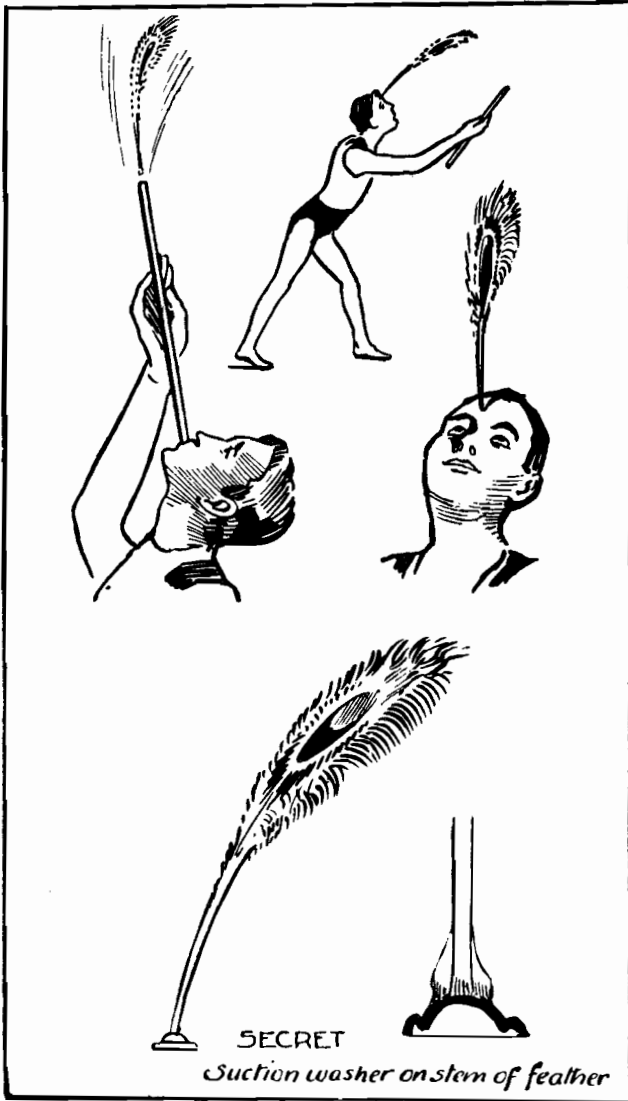
performance the assistant brings a note to his master, who throws it up in the air, and, picking up a pair of scissors, cuts open the envelope while it is in the air. He then takes out the letter, reads it, scribbles a reply, and, throwing the pen in the air, catches it behind his ear in the position usually favoured by the pen of the clerk. He gives the answer to the note to his assistant, who takes it off the stage, but as he gets near the wings the performer takes the pen from his ear and throws it at his assistant. The pen sticks into the assistant's back.

The envelope containing the note is faked with a glove fastener in the way shown in the accompanying illustration. This keeps the envelope closed, although it is without a flap. The scissors are specially made for the trick. One blade goes right into the other and holds the flap of the envelope. When the scissors are opened the flap falls out on the stage.

The catching of the pen behind the ear is done by means of a small card fixed with spirit gum behind the ear. The inside of this card has a few small wires projecting from it, and these hold the pen securely. The last part of the trick—throwing the pen at the assistant and sticking it into his back—is easy enough, because under the assistant's coat there is a large pad of cork.

Balancing a Feather.

This is a very ingenious way of balancing a feather on the forehead. To get the maximum amount of effect out of the trick, the performer begins by showing a small metal tube. He drops a feather into the tube, and putting the tube to his mouth and raising his head, blows the feather



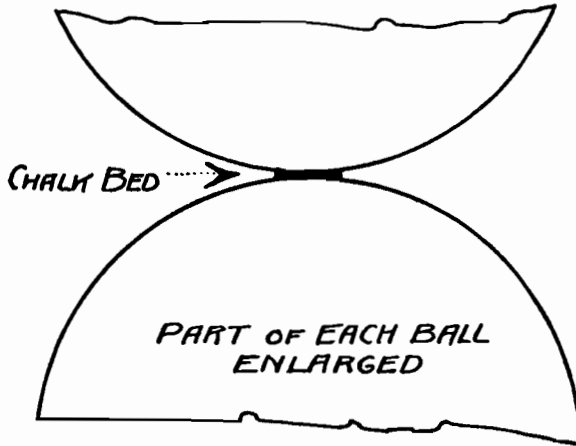
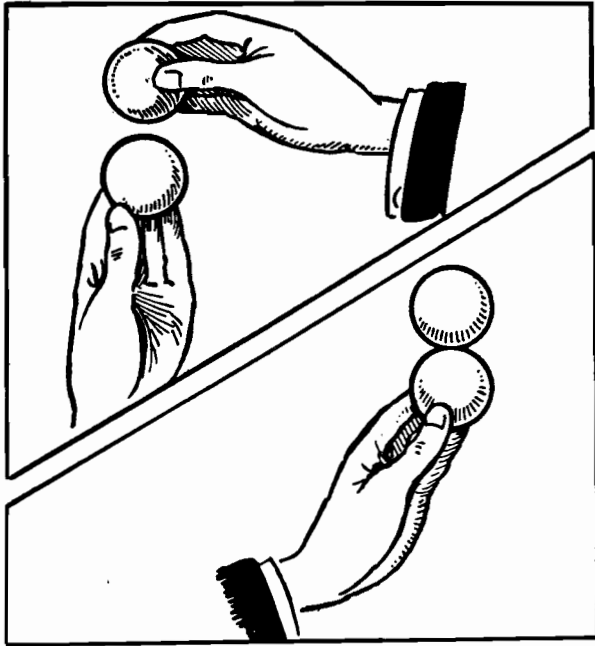
into the air. When the feather falls, the performer moves his head quickly, so that he gets his forehead directly under the feather, which he balances on his forehead. This fine effect is produced by means of a suction washer on the bottom of the feather, and a little loading with lead to make the feather fall properly. As the feather falls on the forehead the suction washer spreads out, and the feather is thus fixed firmly to the forehead, although it has all the appearance of being balanced there.

“ The ” Billiard Ball Balance.

Many attempts have been made to discover the secret by which a well-known performer manages to balance one billiard ball on the other. Various devices for faking the balls have been explained, but the descriptions of such things have doubtless had little interest to those who know that the trick has been done with balls that were not faked.

With the aid of the secret I now give away for the first time, anyone who will give a little time to the practice of the feat can learn how to balance one ordinary billiard ball on the top of another ordinary billiard ball, and the balls may be examined both before and after the performance.

The whole secret consists in the use of a little piece of chalk. The performer takes two balls from the table, and invites anyone to look at them; but while the people are thus occupied the performer is quietly scraping a little chalk from the piece which, unknown to his audience, he had previously picked up in the room. Even if he should be seen to pick up the chalk, no harm is done, for it is the most natural thing in the world for a man to have a little piece

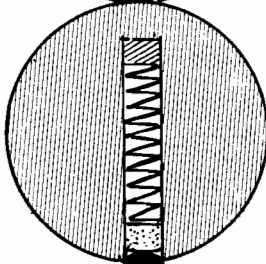
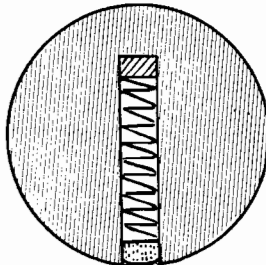
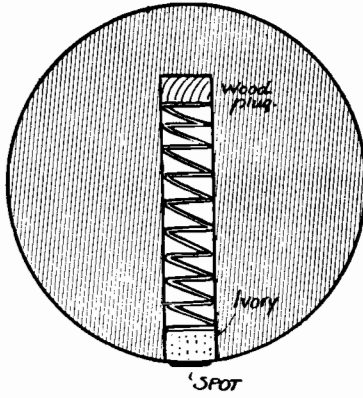


of chalk in his hand when he is playing billiards. The juggler scrapes away a little of the chalk with his finger nail, and when he is going to balance one ball on the other he quietly lets the powdered chalk drop from his hand on to the lower ball. He stands a little distance from his audience while he is doing this, on the plea that if they get too close to him he gets nervous. He masses this powdered chalk up into a little heap until it forms a bed on which the upper ball can rest. Having performed the trick, the juggler tosses the balls into the air, so scattering the chalk, which is practically invisible. The balls can then be examined by anyone. It should be understood that even in this form the trick is not simple. A good deal of practice is necessary before the balance can be accomplished, even with the aid of the chalk "bed."

A Billiard Ball Balance.

The effect of this little trick requires no elaborate explanation. The performer takes a billiard cue and two balls, and after balancing one ball on the top of the cue, balances the second ball on the top of the first. Any spectator who may be acquainted with the old-fashioned method of faking the balls—the method which necessitates a small hole being bored through the balls and a wire being run up from the cue through them—will be pleasantly surprised to see "something new."

Both balls are faked with two springs, details of which are illustrated. The spring of the first ball is depressed by the weight of the ball when the ball is placed on the top of the cue. The second ball is faked in the same way, but in this case the ball is the "spot" ball, and as the "spot"



*How weight
depress* *of Balls
the springs*

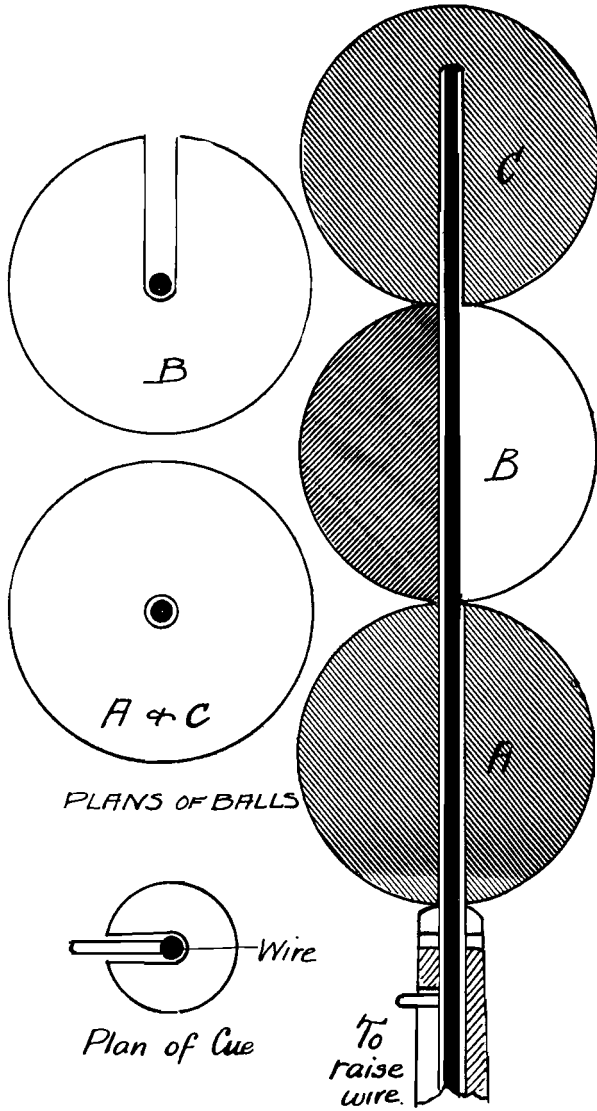
is the end of the spring, the juggler can easily find it and place it in position on the top of the first ball. When the balls are not being balanced, there is nothing unusual in their appearance.

A Fine Balancing Feat with Billiard Balls.

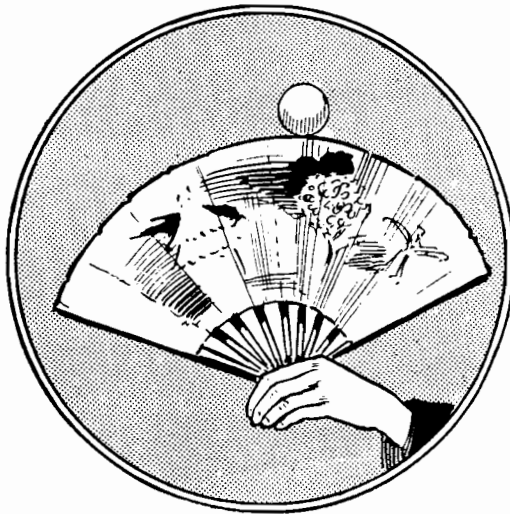
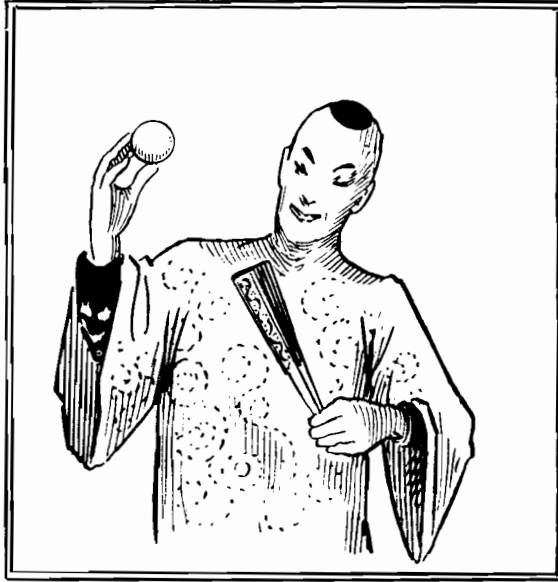
This effect was created by Mr. Chris Van Bern. It seems to me to be so good that I do not know whether to call it a juggling feat or a conjuring "experiment." It will appear to the audience to be juggling, pure and simple, but the secret employed is so subtle that I feel it belongs to the conjurer rather than to the juggler.

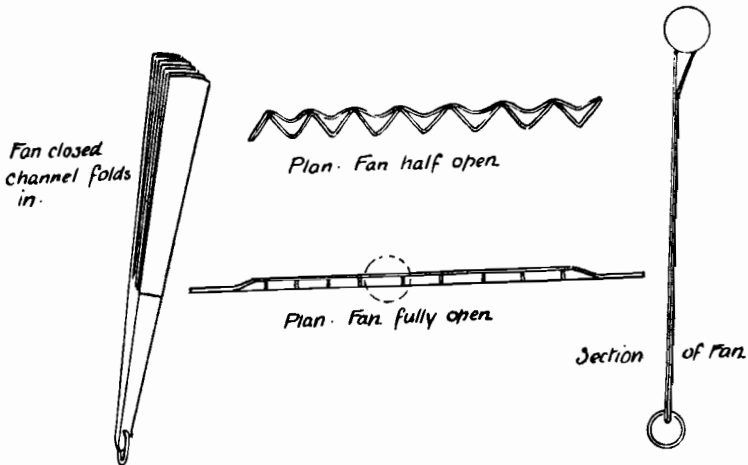
The effect is very surprising. The conjurer takes three billiard balls, two white and one red, and balances them one on the top of the other on the top of a cue, the red ball being in the middle. Holding another cue in his right hand, he knocks away the red ball, and the uppermost white ball falls down on the lower white ball, and remains balanced on it.

All three balls and the cue on which they rest are faked. The two white balls have a small hole drilled right through them. The cue is fitted with a small wire in such a way that by pushing upwards on a small stud in the cue the performer can raise the wire, which thus passes through the centre of the balls. The red ball is prepared in another way. There is a hole in the centre, but a minute part of the ball is taken right out from the centre hole to the edge. When the conjurer puts this ball on the top of a white one, he is careful to keep the cut out part of the ball away from the audience, but in knocking away the red ball he has to hit it at the cut out part, when the ball naturally slips out of the wire, and the top white ball falls on the first white ball.



The Billiard Ball and the Fan.





Some extremely critical jugglers may consider this little trick to be a trifle too good. The feat appears to be very difficult, almost impossible, and yet the juggler can present it as though it was the easiest experiment in his repertoire. The wise performer, however, will not allow the simplicity of the trick to be noticed by the audience, but will purposely fail with it two or three times before showing it properly. In any case, however, the trick is intended only as a little piece of by-play—a “fill-up” during an interval between two more important tricks.

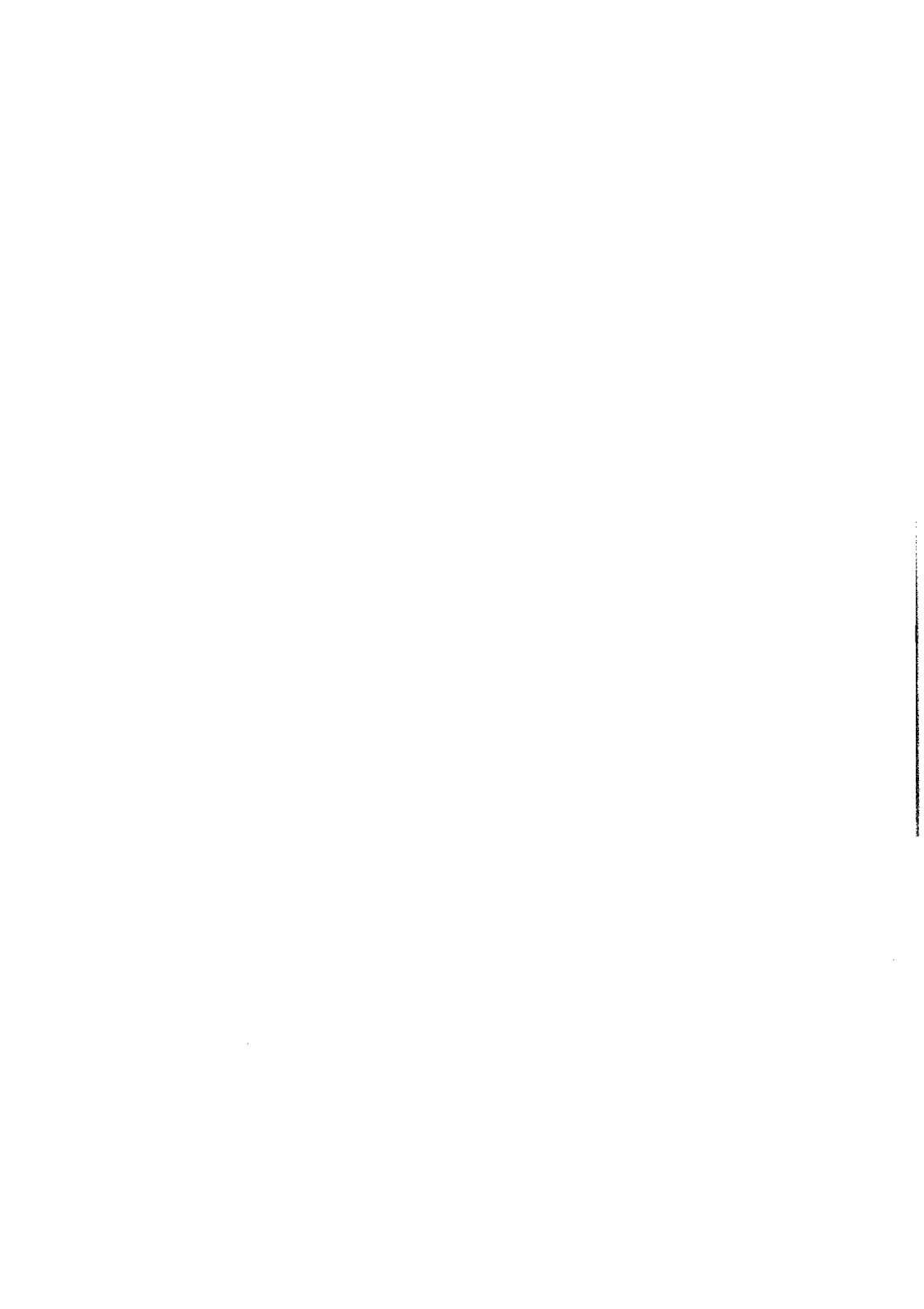
The juggler opens a fan, balances a billiard ball on it, and, gently moving the fan, causes the ball to run backwards and forwards on the top edge of the fan.

Attached to the top of the open fan is a little strip of stiffened cloth, quite invisible when the fan is folded. When the fan is opened this extra piece makes, with the top of the fan, a kind of little channel, and on this the ball is easily balanced. It goes without saying that the performer keeps the faked side of the fan nearest to him.

PART XII.

Stage Illusions.

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Stage Illusions.

THIS section will be regarded by very many of my subscribers as the most important in the book. From the £ s. d. point of view, and possibly from others as well, they will be right. There can be no doubt that the quickest and surest way for a magician of the present time to achieve financial success in his profession is to specialise in stage illusions. The variety theatres of this and other countries enjoy big revenues, and pay correspondingly big salaries. Practically all of them include one or more magical items in their programmes. But these items must be showy in character. Sleight-of-hand performances, however skilful they may be, will not by themselves satisfy the requirements of a variety theatre audience. They must be supported by bold and picturesque effects, and these can only be obtained by well-planned illusions.

It is not too much to say that nowadays a magician cannot hope to make a really big income unless he specialises in stage illusions. Consider, for instance, who are the performers who draw salaries running into three figures a week. There are not many of them. Horace Goldin, David Devant, Chung Ling Soo, Carl Hertz, Servais Le Roy, and Howard Thurston, together with two or three more, exhaust the list. Now consider the class of performance they give. It can be summed up in the one word illusions. To illusions, and only to illusions, they all, without exception, owe their phenomenal success. Of course, they have individual skill

as performers and individual qualities of showmanship. But the fact remains that the continued success of the illusions they have presented, whether at variety theatres or elsewhere, has been directly responsible for the progress of their salaries to the present princely rate.

The magicians whose names I have just mentioned have all done much fine original work. I have seen and admired it, and so doubtless have my subscribers. But it will be interesting to recall the names of some of their predecessors in the creation and production of illusions. Fawkes, who flourished during the first half of the eighteenth century, was the first of the great English illusionists. Among the effects produced by him was the "growing tree" one. Others since his time have claimed to be the originators of this. But there is indisputable evidence that at many performances Fawkes caused a tree to grow up in a flower-pot and to bear fruit. A little later, Pinetti, an Italian magician, produced some notable effects. But it was not until well into the nineteenth century that illusions began to assume the foremost place in magical performances. Robert Houdin, Ernest Basch, Professor Anderson, the Boscoss and the Herrmanns helped towards this. So in comparatively recent years did Harry Kellar, Buatier de Kolta, and the Maskelyne and Cooke combination. Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States all supplied great illusionists and great illusions. The public learned to appreciate this class of magical performance. Finally there came a time when they preferred it to all others.

That time is the present time. The public want illusions, and it is the business of the magician to supply that want. In former days performers were hampered in their work by small and badly-fitted stages, but now things

are very different. The stage and fittings of a modern variety theatre are adequate to the requirements of the biggest and most complicated illusions. Performers can give a free rein to their invention. However ambitious their conception may be, they will, so far as stage exigencies are concerned, be able to realise it successfully.

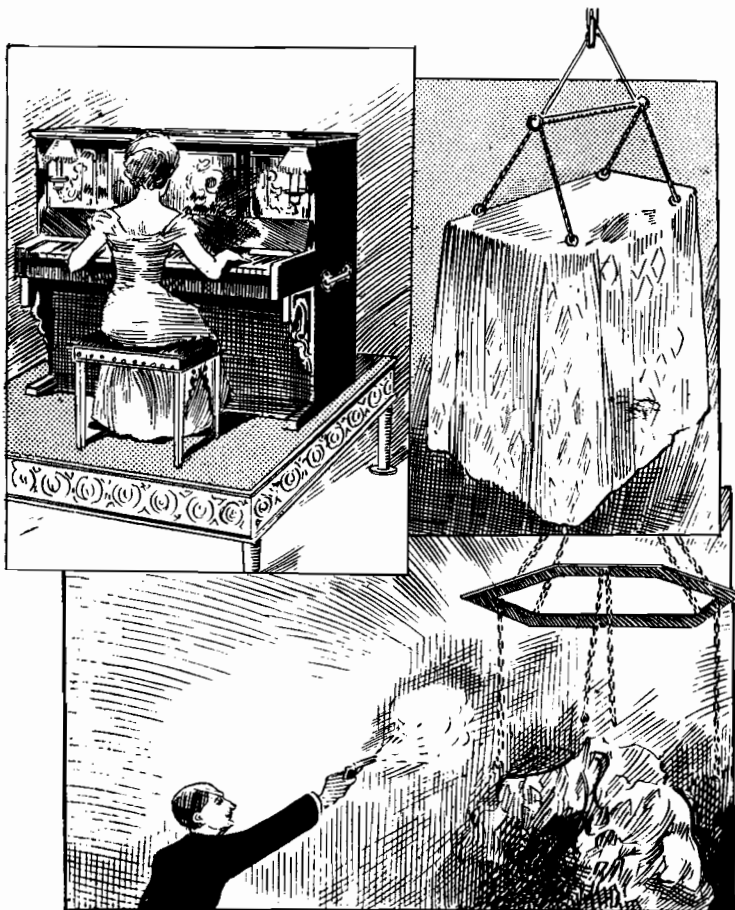
To those of my readers who have not yet essayed the production of stage illusions, a few words of advice may be useful. First, they should study diligently the methods of the leading performers of this class of magic. Then they should secure original illusions of a novel and varied character. For the present, and for a long while to come, they will have ample material in the contents of this section. A finer collection of stage illusions has never before been published. Not only the comparative beginners among my subscribers, but also the most experienced and best informed of them, will find it useful. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that even the greatest magicians of the day, even those who have become rich and famous by the presentation of stage illusions, will discover in this section much that is new to them, and that they will be able to turn to account.

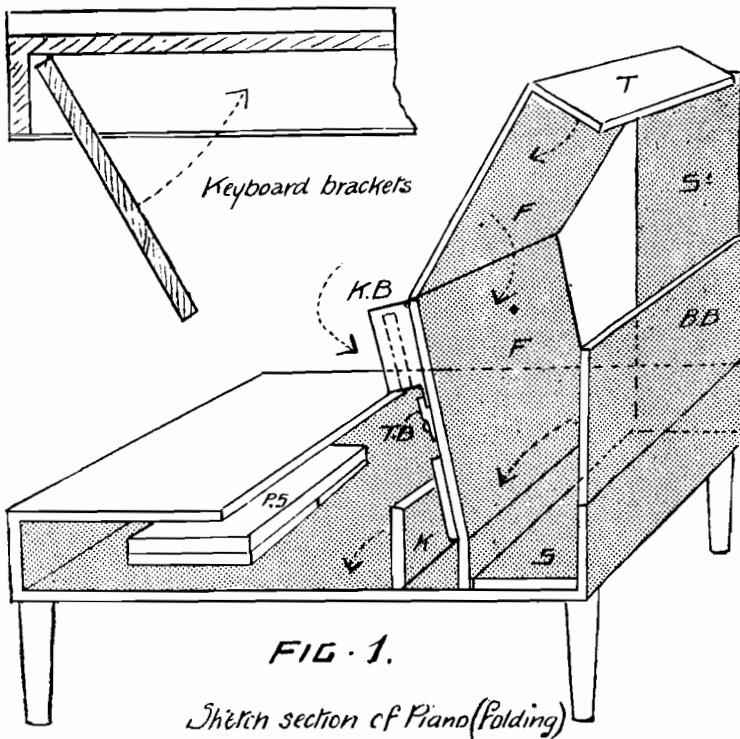
A final piece of advice to the comparative beginner. The illusions explained in the following pages are of various degrees of magnitude. Choose first for performance those of a simple character. A friendly offer to all subscribers: If you decide to include in your programme some of the illusions in this section, but experience any difficulty as to construction of apparatus, mode of presentation, etc., I shall be pleased to help you. Write to me, care of "The Magical Department, A. W. Gamage, Ltd., Holborn, London," with full particulars of your difficulty.

The Disappearing Piano

(TO SAY NOTHING OF THE PLAYER).

This is one of the most effective illusions of modern times—and, therefore, of all time. A lady seats herself at





an upright piano on a platform, and plays for a few moments. An iron frame is let down from the flies, chains are fixed to the piano and stool, curtains are draped round the piano and lady, and both are hoisted up into mid-air. The platform is wheeled away. The performer fires at the piano, and the curtains drop. The piano and the lady have both disappeared.

The above description is of the effect as seen by the audience. What really happens is as follows.

The iron frame let down from the flies is a sham one, and the chains and hooks are not really attached either to

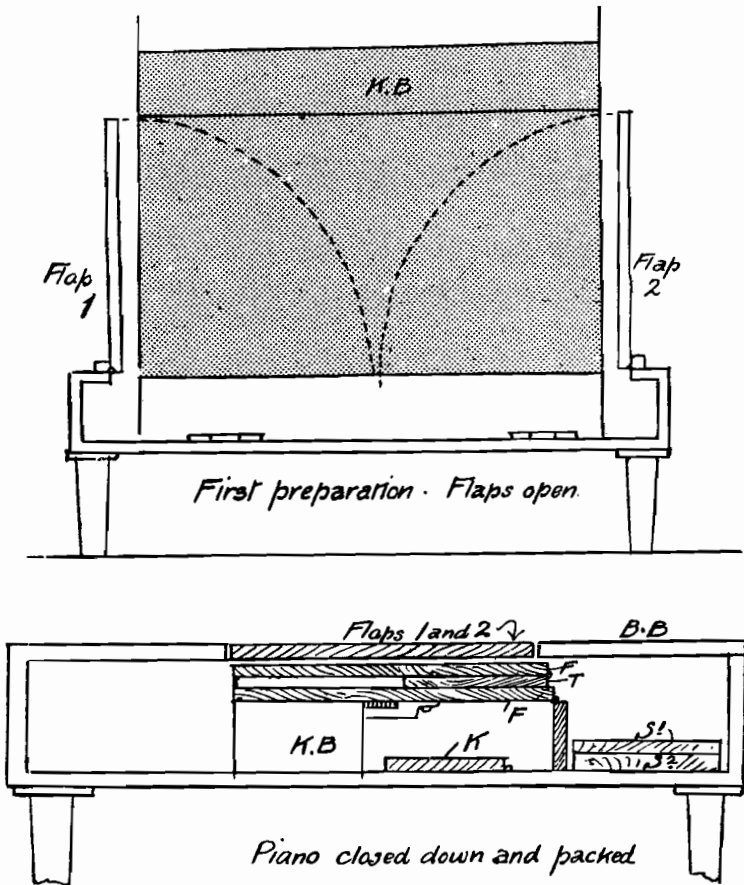
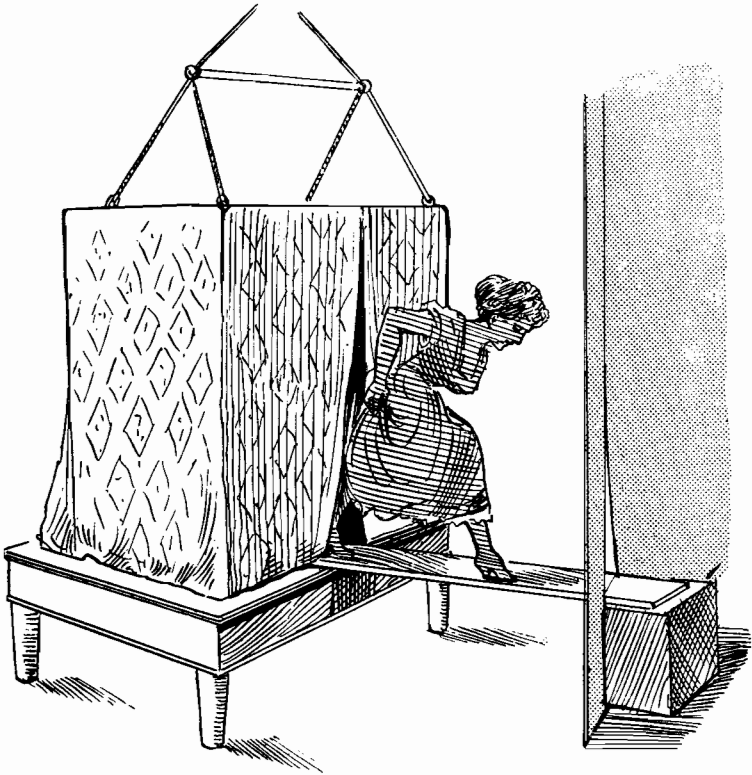


FIG. 2.

the piano or the stool. Under cover of the curtains the lady folds up the piano and stows it away into the floor of the platform in the way shown in Fig. 1. First of all, however, the lady raises the flaps 1 and 2, as shown in Fig. 2, and then drops the floor support K. The next move

*FIG. 3*

is to double down the keyboard (marked K B), and fasten it with a turnbuckle (marked T B). The lady then folds the front of the piano (marked F F) and the top T, and having placed the stool (P 5) under the front of the platform, the lady can now shut the front part of the platform flat down (see Fig. 2, section 2). She then folds down the sides, S 1 and S 2, lowers the flaps 1 and 2, and finally closes back the support B B. The arrows in Fig. 1 indicate the

directions in which the parts are folded. I should add that the sconces and candles, etc., are packed away with the stool.

The top diagram of Fig. 2 shows the front view of the platform, with the side flaps raised ready for folding the piano into the platform. The lower section in Fig. 2 shows the appearance of the platform when the whole of the piano has been stowed away. The distinguishing letters are the same as those in Fig. 1.

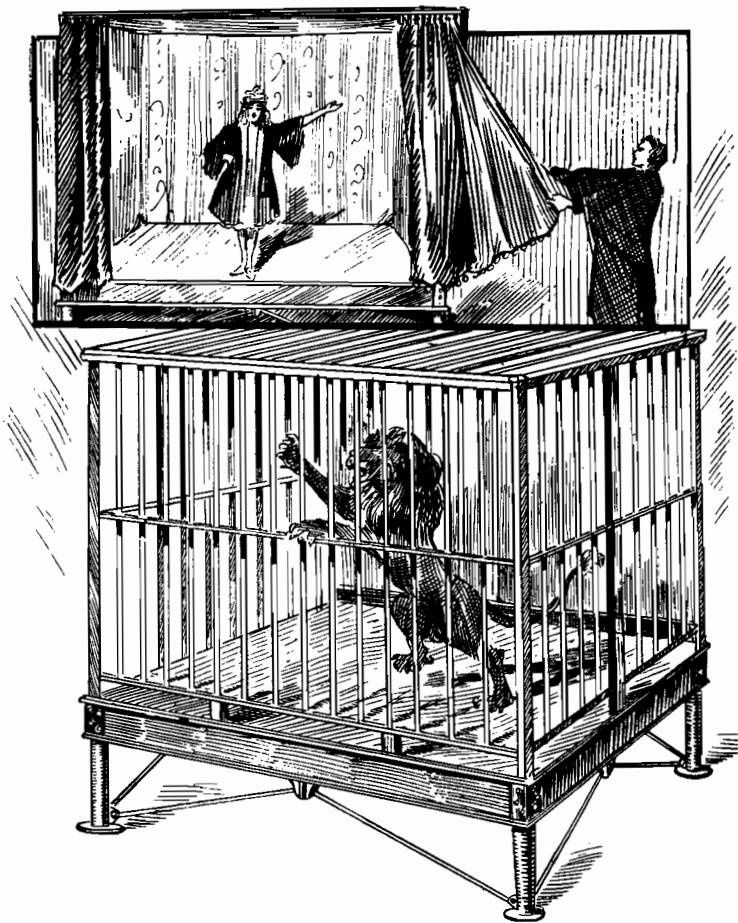
Fig. 3 shows how the lady escapes. After she has shut up the piano she steps out at the back of the curtains and on to a bridge, which is pushed out from the back cloth. The lady thus gets through the back cloth without being seen by the audience, and the bridge is afterwards withdrawn. The platform is wheeled away before the curtains and frame (apparently the piano and lady) are hoisted into mid-air.

The Lady and the Lion.

The most sensational illusion described in the book. That, I think, will be the general opinion of "The Lady and the Lion."

The performer shows a draped cabinet, raised well away from the stage. A lady steps into the cabinet, and the curtains are drawn. In a few seconds all the curtains are drawn up into the flies, and in place of the cabinet the audience see a large cage containing a live lion. The lady, of course, has disappeared.

The plan and section of the cage are shown in Fig. 1. The front bars of the cage E are fixed in the roof, being



held in position by the front of the flooring D, which is raised against the back of the cabinet. Note the partition in which the lion is hidden. The flooring D is held back by a strong rope R, which passes through the back cloth.

The plan shows how, after the cage has been curtained in, the lady passes out through a spring door A in the

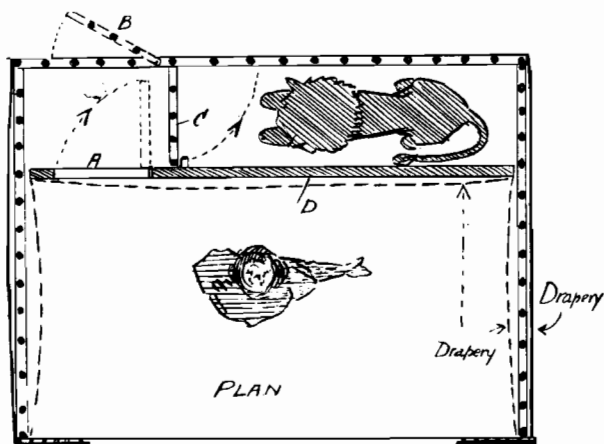
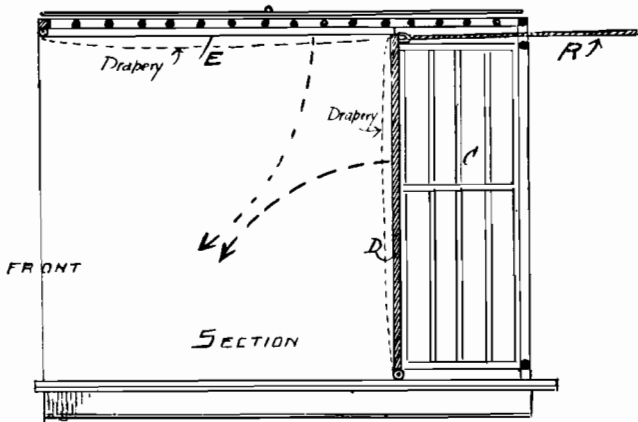
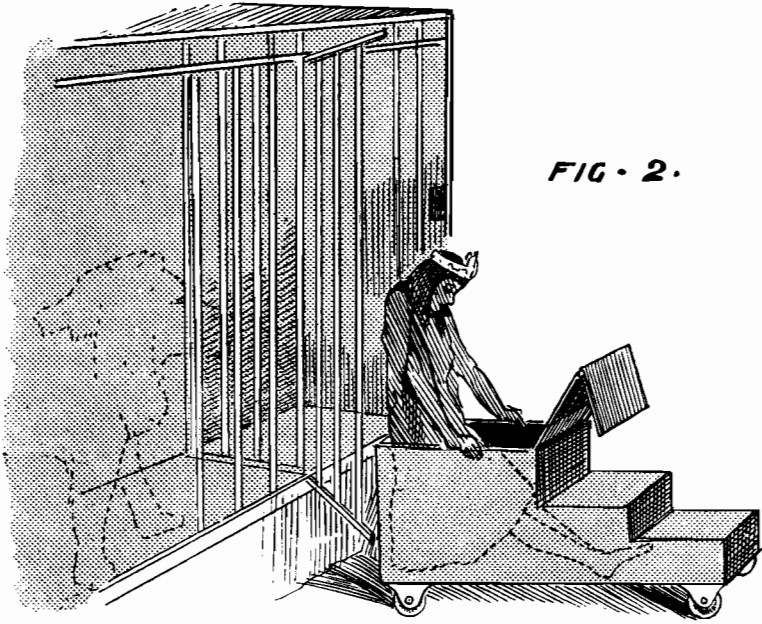


FIG. 1.



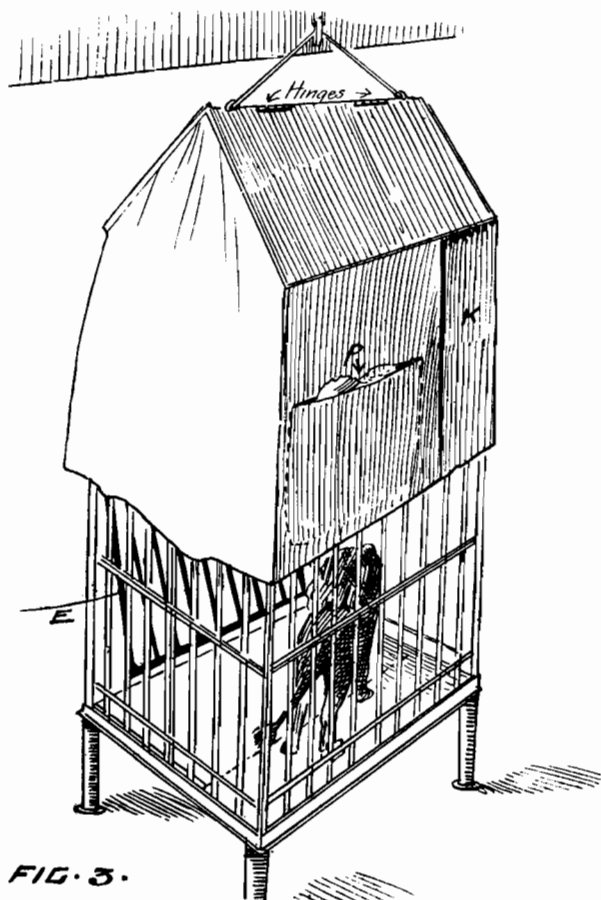
flooring, and then goes through the door B at the back of the cage. The lion is kept in its partition by the iron door C.

When D is released it falls to the bottom of the cage and forms part of the floor. The front bars E immediately



drop down into position, the gate C returns against the back by means of strong spring hinges, and the lion thus has the whole cage to himself.

Before this happens the lady gathers up the inside drapery—which is very light—and places it in a pocket at the back of the curtain. (See Fig. 3, which also shows how the curtains are hoisted into the flies. Fig. 2 shows how the lady escapes by getting into some steps, which are afterwards wheeled away.)



The Revolving Piano.

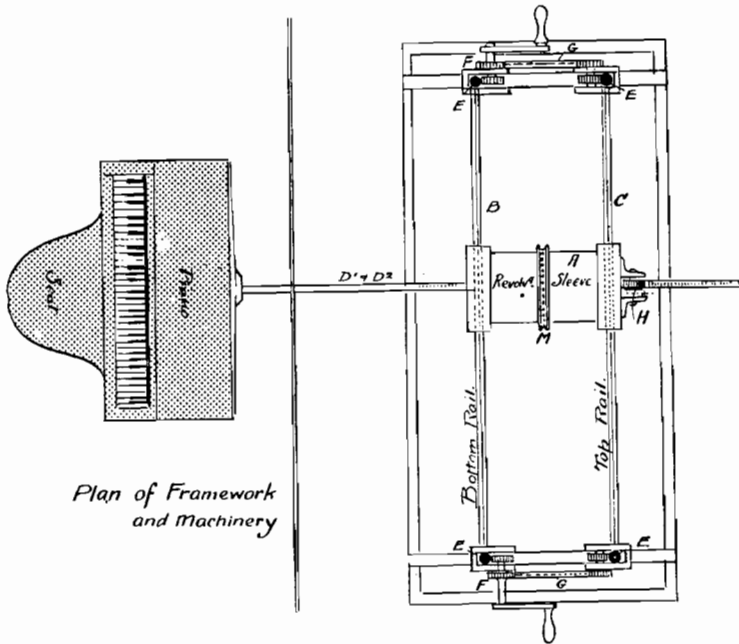
The performer directs the attention of the audience to a piano, at which a lady is sitting. The lady begins to play the piano, and the piano and seat rise together to the music. When they are in mid-air the piano moves backwards and forwards and across the stage; finally, the piano revolves until the lady is upside down. Then the piano rights itself and descends gracefully to the stage.

The piano is of very light wood, and only two octaves in the centre of the keyboard are playable. In this way the weight of the interior is reduced to a minimum, and there is no iron frame. The seat for the lady is attached to the piano, and has foot and waist straps to hold her in position. At the back of the piano there is a back cloth with a lined pattern on it. The pattern is designed in such a fashion that cuts can be made in various directions without disturbing the appearance of the cloth. Behind the cloth there is an iron trolley (shown in the two illustrations) fitted with the machinery for moving the piano.

The principal feature is a cylinder (A), through which run two heavy round rods of steel (D1 and D2), the ends of which are fitted into the iron frame at the back of the piano. The front of this cylinder rests on a bottom rail (B) by means of two wheels, and, at the back, these wheels are fixed on the top of the cylinder, and bear up against the top back rail (C), thus securing a balance. By means of these wheels and rails the piano can be run backwards and forwards (see Plan).

To cause the rising and falling movements, the track rails are fixed on castings (E), with screw gear boxes attached,

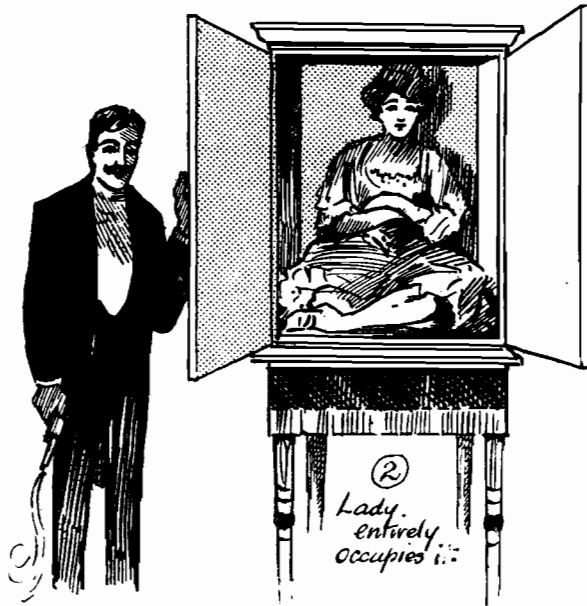
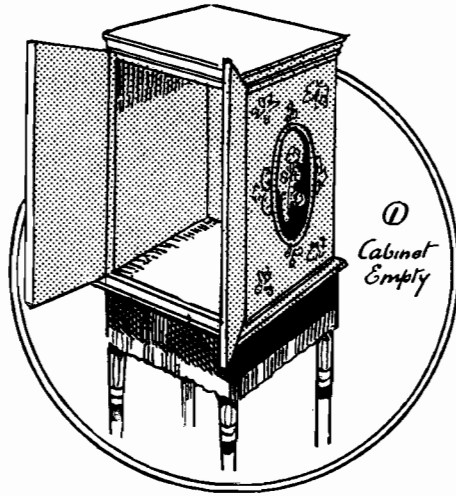




so that they can be wound up by handles (F). A cycle chain (G) connects the top and bottom rails, and thus a simultaneous movement is secured.

In order that the piano may be run out and drawn in, the back ends of rods have a toothed rack attached. There is also a toothed wheel (H) attached to the cylinder. Thus, by having a chain gear on this toothed wheel and turning it, the rods can be run out or drawn inwards.

The final effect—the revolving of the piano and lady—is obtained in the following way. It will be noted that the cylinder runs into two belts, which contain ball bearings (K). The centre of the cylinder has a loose chain gear (M, N),

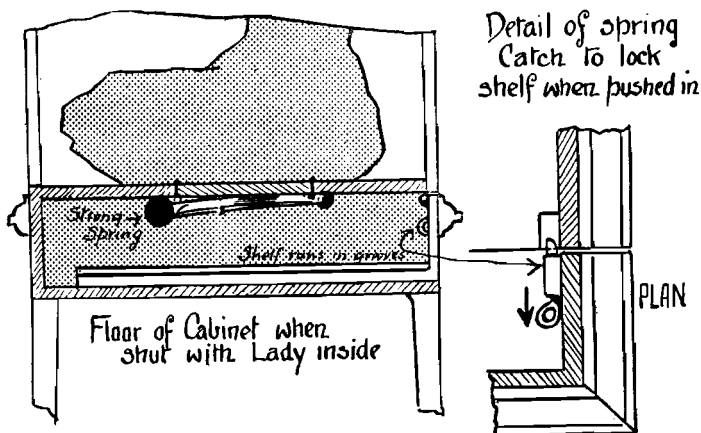
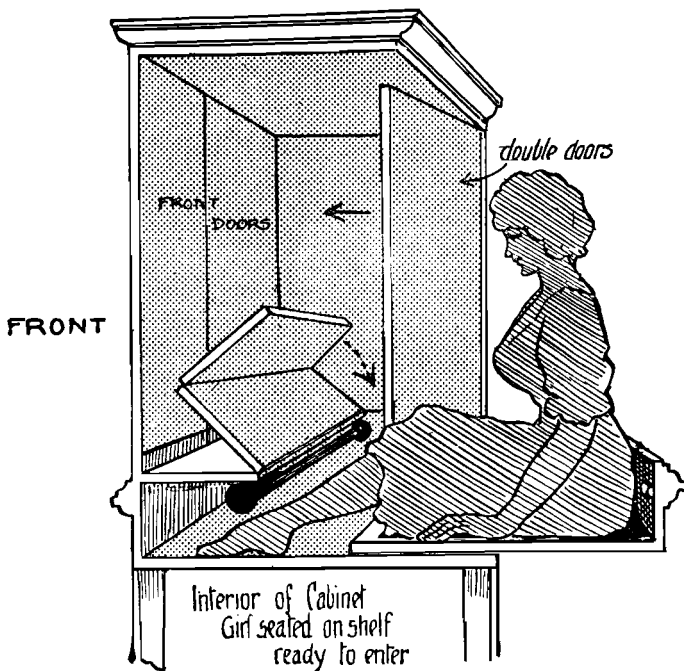


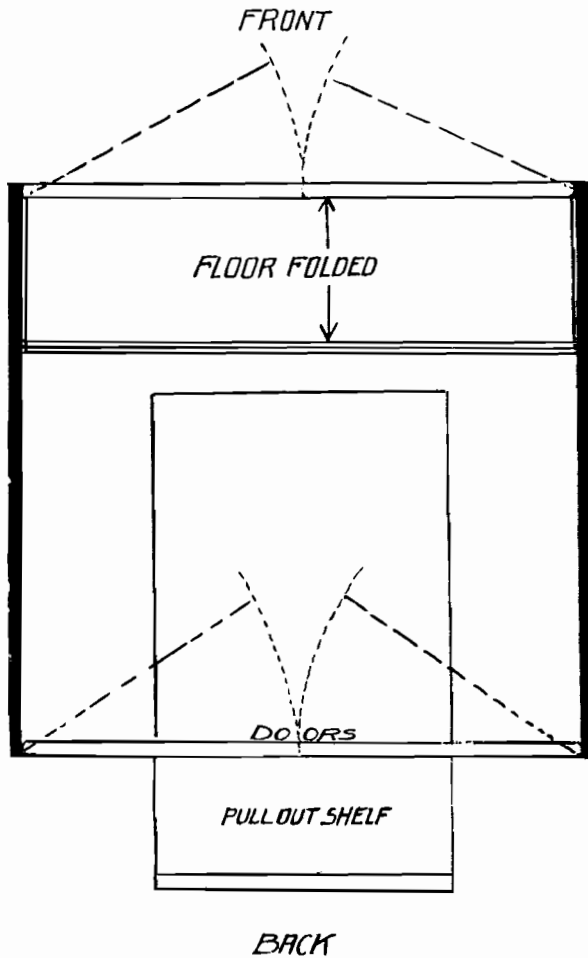
The performer first opens the two front doors, and shows that the interior is empty. He then closes the doors, and immediately wheels the cabinet round so that the audience can see the back of it and both sides of it. Replacing the cabinet once more in its original position, the illusionist again opens the doors and discloses his lady assistant. The mystery of the illusion is enhanced by the fact that the lady occupies the whole of the small interior; in fact, she is in a sitting position when discovered, and her legs are crossed in front of her. This fact is not lost on any audience, who naturally appreciate the difficulty that the inventor of the illusion overcame, namely, that which I have heard described as "filling a pint pot twice over." Where can the extra pint be hidden? In other words, where can the lady be when she is not huddled up in the cabinet?

The illustrations explain the mystery very well. At the commencement of the performance the lady is seated on a small sliding shelf at the back of the cabinet. The back of the cabinet is fitted with two doors similar to those in front, and these doors open inwards.

But this does not explain all the mystery. The shelf at the back would be seen if it were large enough to support the assistant in a sitting position. The illustration shows that, at the commencement of the trick, she is sitting on the shelf, but that her legs, from the knees, are already in the cabinet, and are hidden by means of a false floor to the cabinet.

When the conjurer is going to turn the cabinet round, the lady puts her hands under this false floor, and, with the help of the spring arm attachment, lifts part of the floor upwards. The floor is hinged in three pieces, and when the back piece is raised the floor is made to fold backwards.





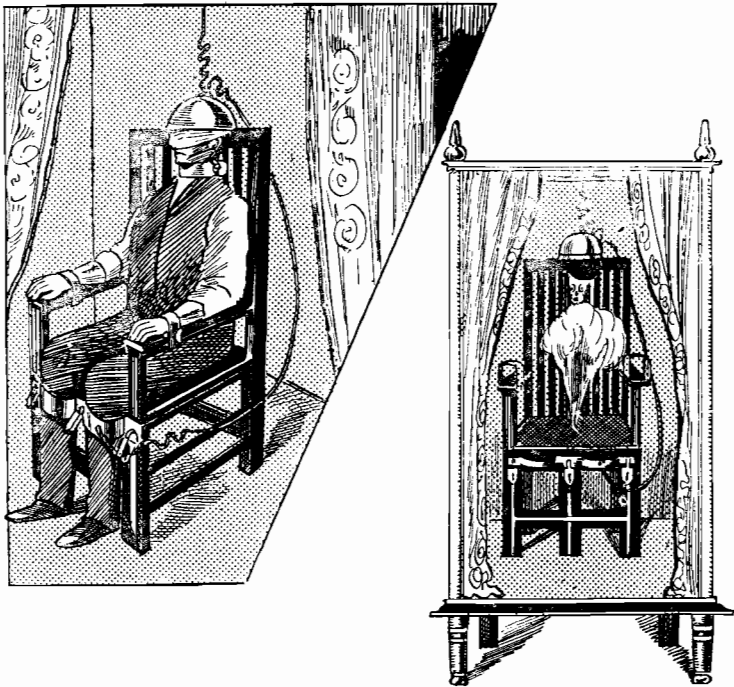
PLAN OF CABINET

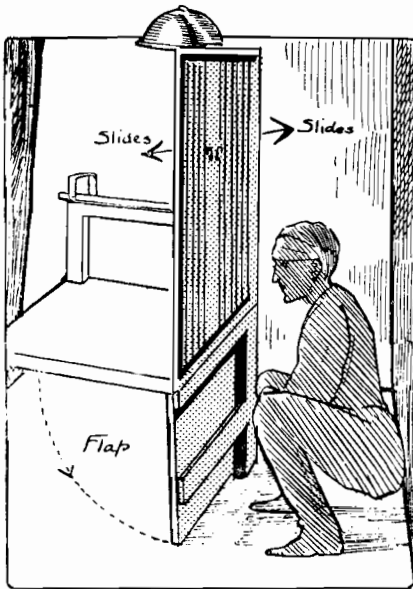
The doors at the back of the cabinet can then open inwards, and when the lady is inside she closes the back doors behind her and replaces the floor. The performer, in turning round

the cabinet, pushes in the shelf which supported his assistant. The shelf runs in grooves and on a metal plate, and when it is pushed home it fastens automatically with a spring, and thus the illusion is accomplished.

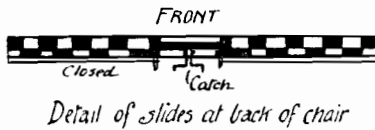
The Electrocution Chair.

This is a very effective illusion. A man is placed in a large chair, which can be examined by members of the audience. His hands are fastened by means of large staples to the arms of the chair, his legs are padlocked down in front, a large steel cap at the back of the chair prevents

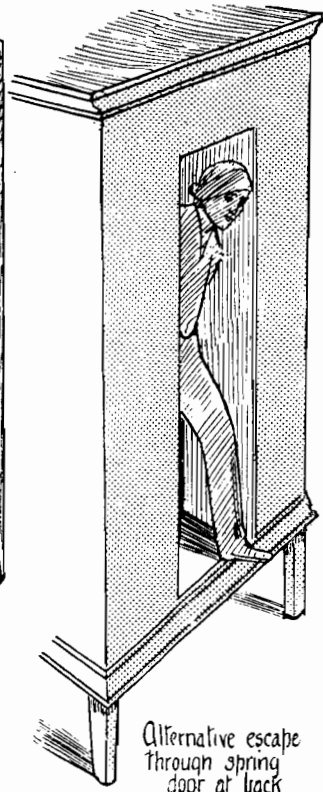




One method of "escape"



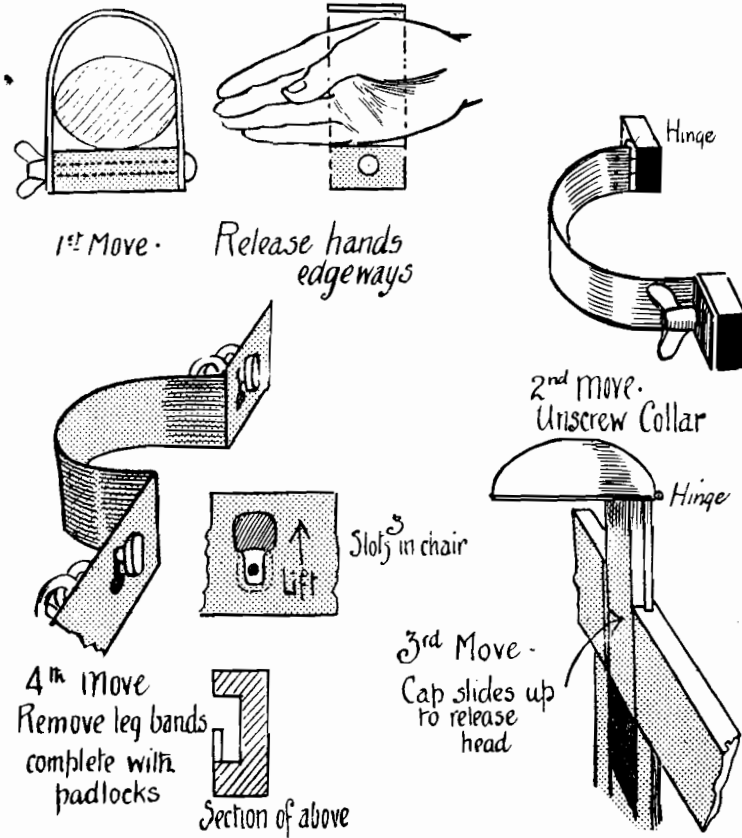
Detail of slides at back of chair



Alternative escape
Through spring
door at back

him from moving his head upwards. A steel collar is passed round his neck and screwed down to the chair.

While he is in this helpless position, an electric wire is attached to the steel cap, and the curtain of the cabinet in which the chair is placed is drawn for a second. Suddenly it is withdrawn, the audience see a flash of a flame and smoke, and—wonder where the man has gone to. That he has managed to free himself from his manacles and get



clear away in that short space of time seems incredible, but nevertheless he has most certainly disappeared.

The illustrations explain the mystery. It will be noticed that the staples which imprison the hands are not quite so effective as they seem. The hands merely appear to be held securely. By raising his hands edgewise the conjurer is able to get his hands free. He is thus able to

unscrew the collar and release himself. The legs come right away from the chair by the mere act of lifting them up (see illustration). By merely pushing upwards with his head he is able to get free from the steel cap, because the cap was attached to a sliding panel at the back of the chair.

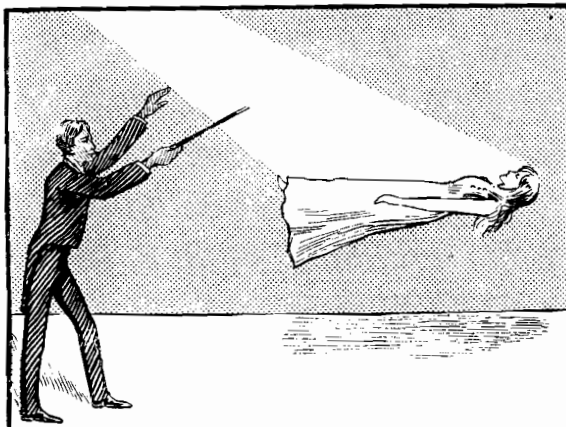
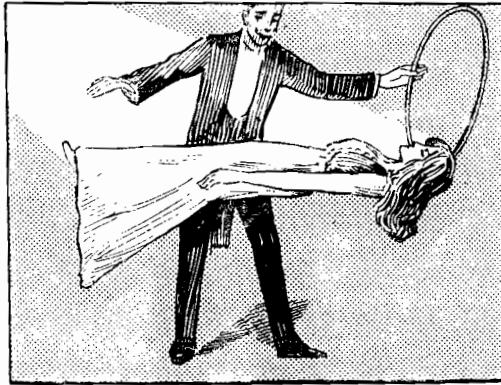
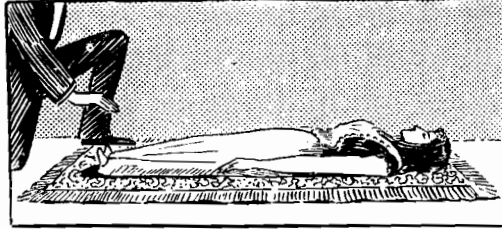
The final disappearance of the performer can be effected in two ways. Under the seat of the chair there may be a flap, which, being let down, seems to be the back of the cabinet, because it is of the same colour. The performer can therefore crouch down behind this, and if there is a curtain, also matching the back of the stage, on the back of the chair, he can be sure of being invisible.

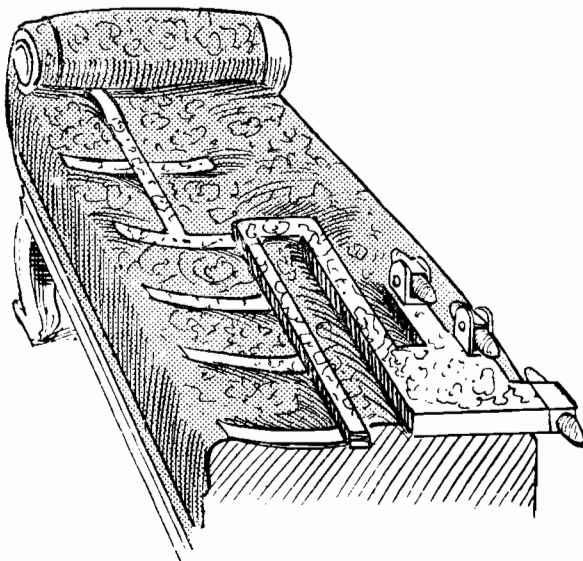
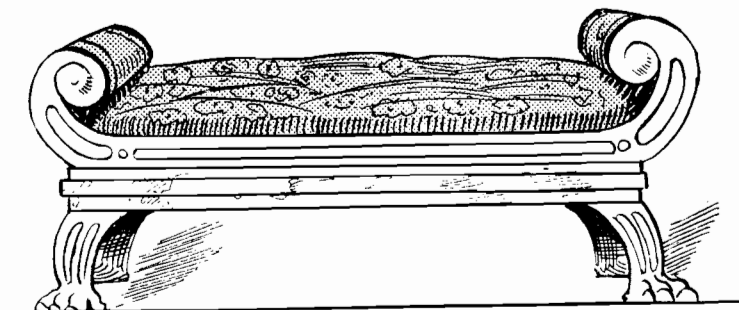
The other method of disappearance is to have a door at the back of the cabinet. The performer steps away from this and through another concealed door in the back cloth on the stage (see illustration).

Kellar's Floating Lady.

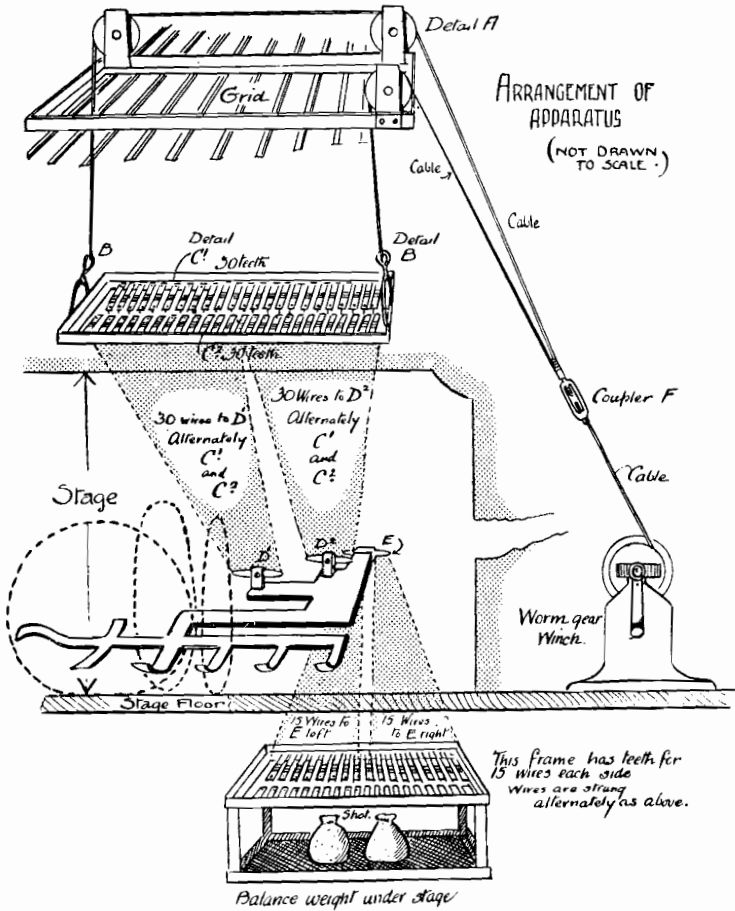
In this form of the levitation trick, the performer is enabled to walk away from the lady when she is in mid-air. I am not sure that there is a very great advantage in being able to perform the illusion in this way, because the audience are not supposed to know that, in the other methods, the performer or his assistant must stand near the lady when she is rising. However, for the sake of completeness, I give this version of the trick.

The illustrations show that the trick can be done either from the floor or a couch. The sketch of the principal fake on the couch gives an exact idea of how the thing should be when it is complete without the wires. Very



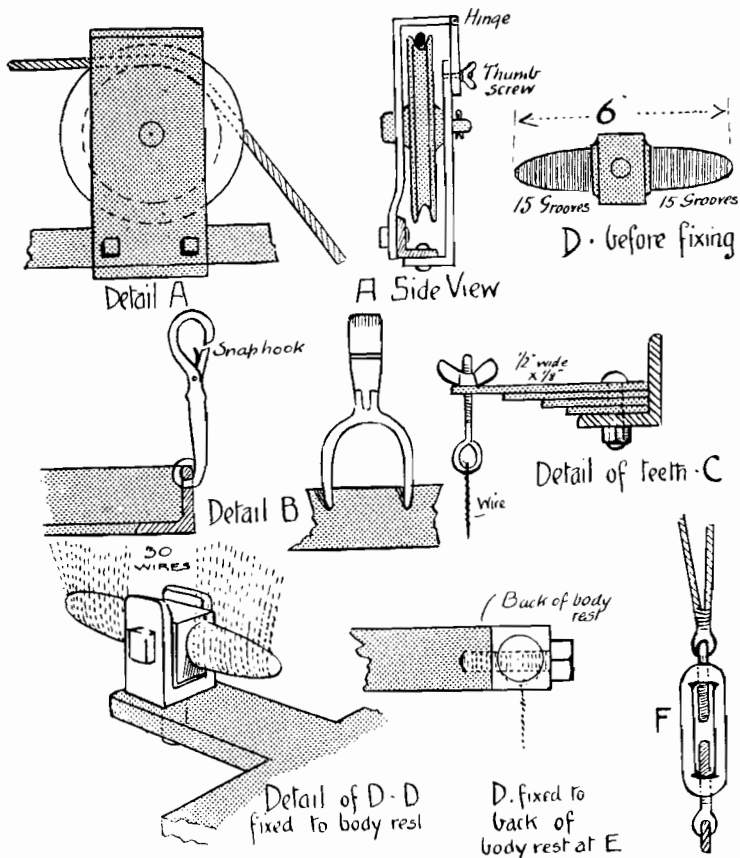


fine piano wires are used, and in order to make them sufficiently strong, it will be seen that sixty wires are necessary to take the lady upwards. They are arranged in two lots of thirty each. One set of ends is attached to a



kind of frame work, which is supported from the grid of the stage. The other ends are fastened to two large metal pegs at the back of the frame on the couch.

Now, if the wires were merely raised, the lady on the frame would swing about in mid-air, and the feet end of



the apparatus would slant downwards. To make the illusion complete, a counter-weight is arranged under the stage. It will be seen that two other lots of wires, fifteen in each lot, are attached to another metal peg in the frame, and are carried down through the stage. They are attached to a frame beneath the stage and two or three bags of shot are put on the frame to balance the weight of the lady when she is being raised in mid-air.

It will be seen that the back part of the frame on which the lady reclines is made on the Aga principle, but is of slightly different form. The conjurer is enabled to pass a hoop over the lady, and swing it quite clear of her. The direction of the hoop is shown by the dotted hoops drawn in the sketch. The various other details regarding the fixing of the wires are also shown in the accompanying illustrations, which, as they show the apparatus in working order, will be perfectly clear to all my readers.

The Tea Chest and Tea Boxes.

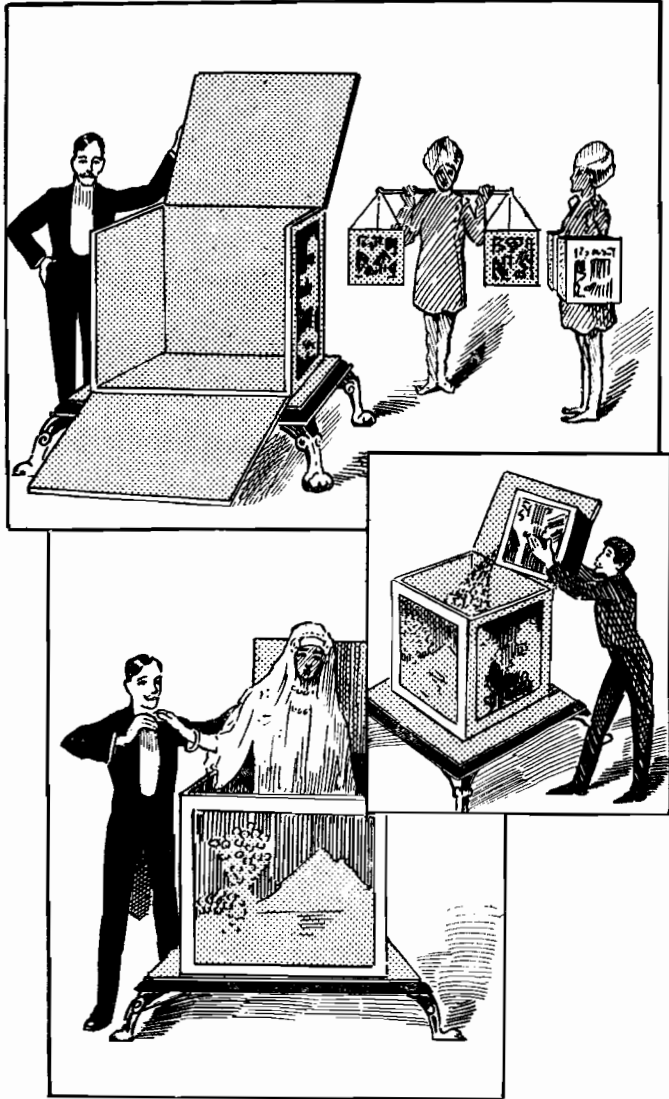
Invented by OSWALD WILLIAMS.

This illusion has all the qualities of a first-rate mystery. It is showy, puzzling, effective, and yet very simply worked.

The performer exhibits a large tea chest on a small platform. The chest can be wheeled and turned about to show all sides of it. The lid is opened and the front let down, thus showing all parts of the chest.

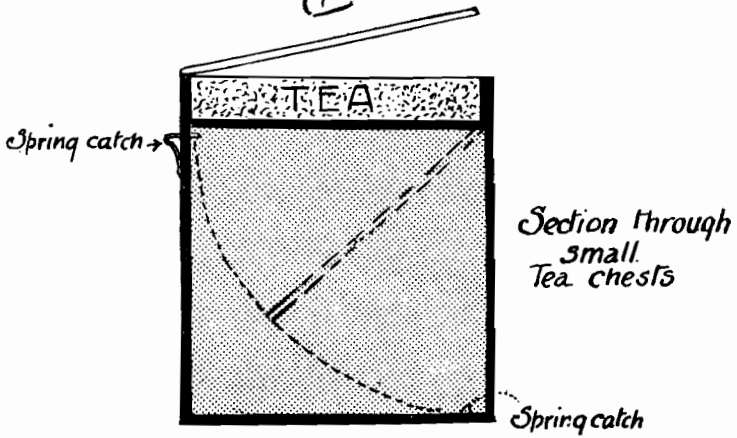
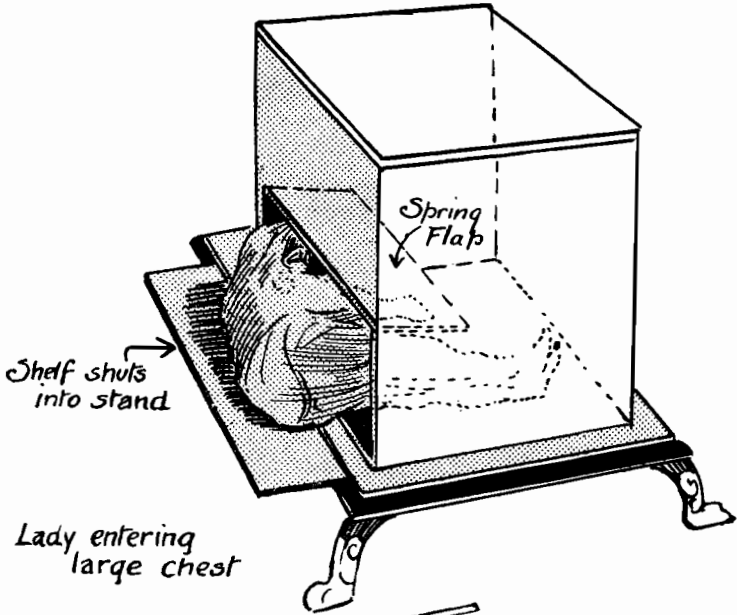
Two assistants, dressed as Indian attendants, and carrying smaller chests of tea on yokes (see illustration), now march on to the stage. The performer, having closed the front of the big chest, takes each of the four chests from the assistants, and shows the audience that each chest is full of tea. He then empties the contents of each chest into the big chest on the platform.

Once more the performer has the big chest on the platform wheeled about the stage, showing all sides of it. Then, suddenly opening the lid, he gives his hand to a dusky maiden, who steps from the chest. All the tea has vanished.



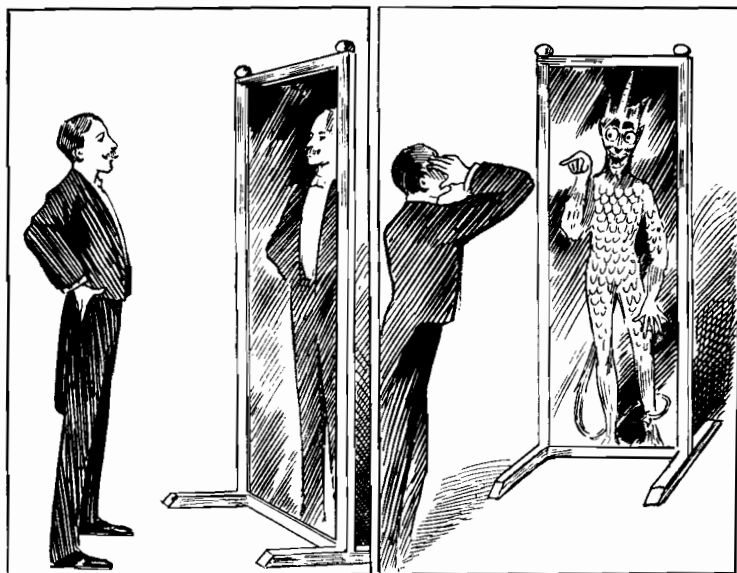
The "faking" of both the big chest and the small chests is a very neat piece of work. Each of the smaller chests has a kind of false bottom fitted near the top, and working on a hinge. It is held in its place near the top of the chest at the beginning of the trick by a small spring catch, and a small quantity of tea is spread over the false bottom. Thus the chest appears to be full of tea. When the conjurer is going to empty the contents of the chests into the big one, he depresses each spring catch directly the small quantity of tea has left the chest, and then presses the false bottom against the side of the box, where it is securely held by another small spring catch (see illustration). Thus the performer can show each small chest full of tea just before he pours the tea into the big chest, and can show each of the small chests quite empty after this operation.

We now come to the faking of the big chest and the platform on which it stands. This platform has a secret shelf fitted inside it. While the attention of the audience is engaged with the small empty chests—the performer being very careful to show that, although they were formerly full of tea, they are now empty—the performer secretly pulls out this shelf from the platform. The "dusky maiden," crouching down, slips out from a hole in the back cloth on to the shelf, and as half the back of the big chest is made up of a spring flap (see illustration), she has no difficulty in getting inside the chest. The slightest touch with the performer's foot pushes the secret shelf into the platform again, and as the spring flap naturally closes directly the lady is in the big chest, the illusion is then practically over. The small quantity of tea that really goes into the big chest is never noticed.



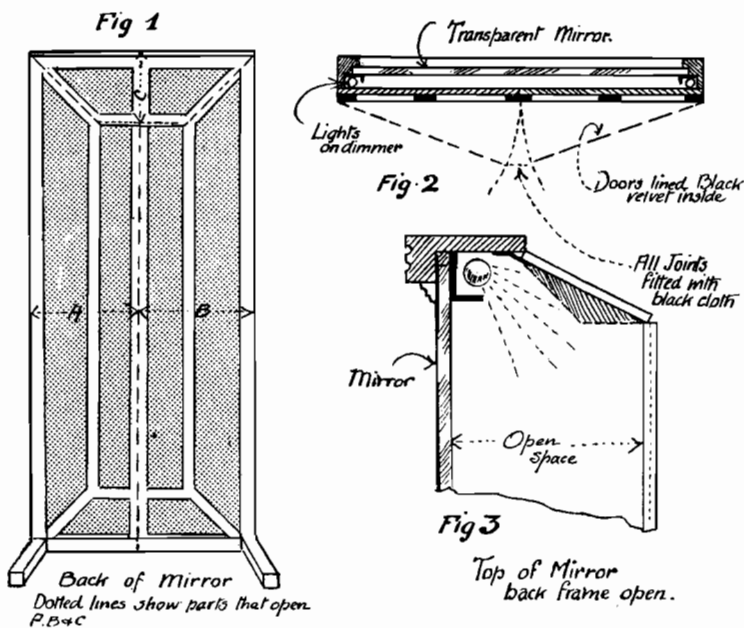
The Mirror Illusion.

The effect of this illusion is as follows. A member of the audience is invited to look into the mirror and see his



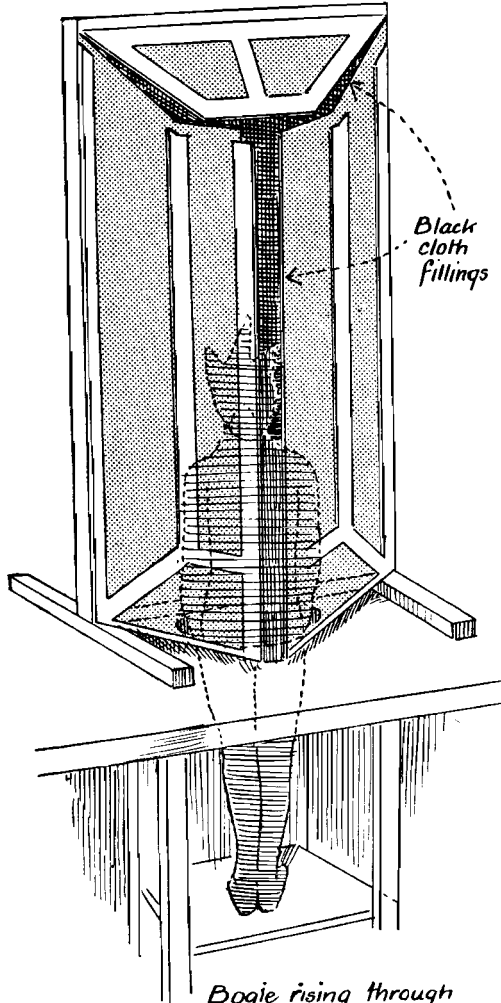
reflection there. While he is watching it the reflection slowly changes to that of a weird figure.

The main secret of this illusion is in the mirror, which is composed of platinized glass. This is an ordinary mirror—to all intents and purposes—when it is illuminated by means of reflected lights, but when it is lit in a special way, which will presently be explained, the glass becomes transparent.



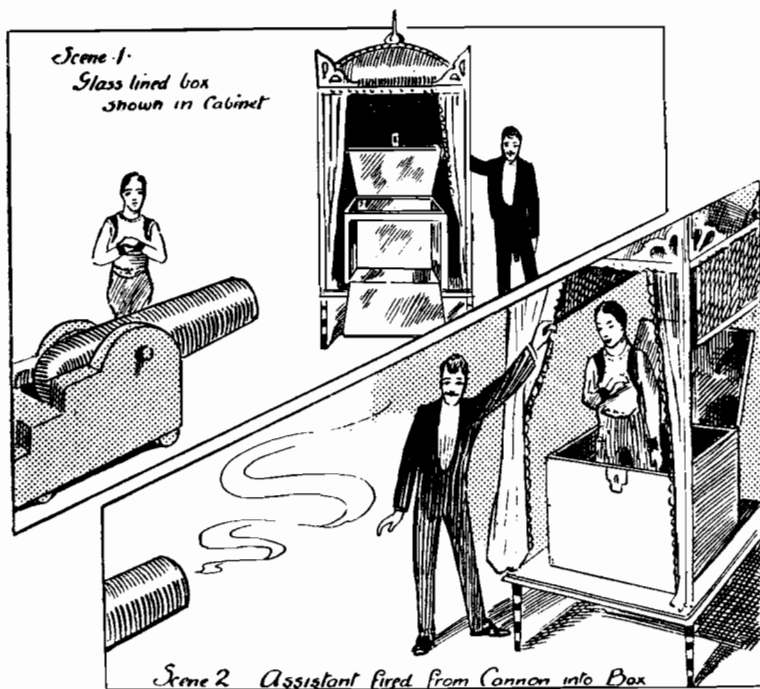
The back of the mirror opens (see Figs. 2 and 3). The figure appearing in the glass is brought up an elevator trap behind the mirror (see Fig. 4). The frame of the mirror is large enough to accommodate a number of small electric lights, and when these are turned up gradually, by means of a dimmer, the peculiar light necessary for the illusion is produced. The light should be brought to bear directly on to the back of the glass, but as this is impossible the lights are placed in the frame, and thus the effect is produced.

FIG. 4.



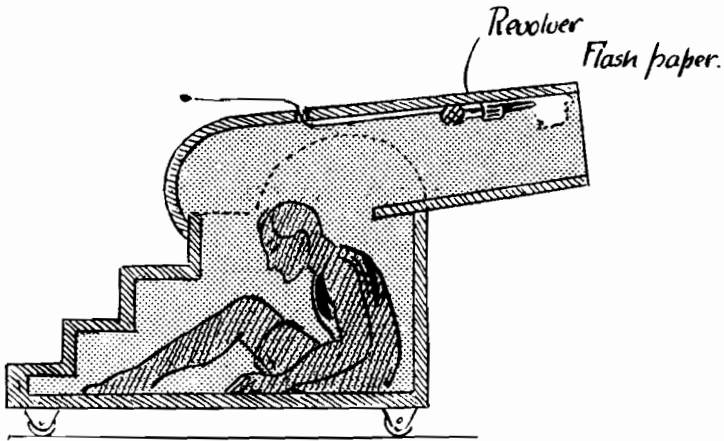
Bogie rising through trap, inside open doors behind mirror.

The Cannon and Crystal Box.

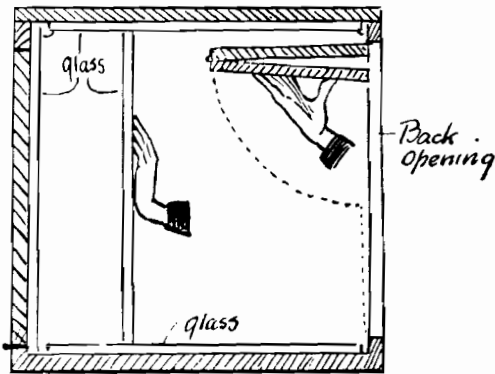


This illusion is worked with the aid of "double" assistants, and to cause a complete illusion they should make themselves up together in front of one glass.

The performer first calls the attention of the audience to a large box standing in a small curtained cabinet. The box is obviously empty. The performer lines the box with sheets of plate glass, placing a piece of glass at the back, another in the front, and other pieces at the ends, on the bottom of the box, and on the interior of the top. The box is then closed and the curtain of the cabinet drawn.

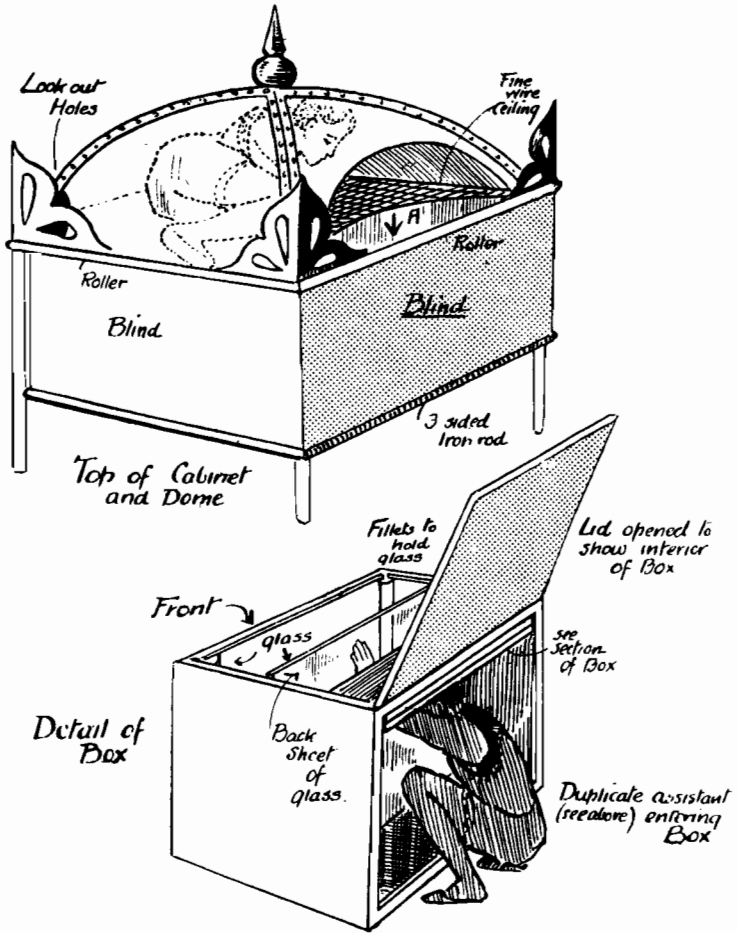


Assistant No 1. concealed in Cannon



Section thro' glass lined Box

One of the assistants then comes on the stage, and the performer loads a cannon with him and fires. The cannon is immediately wheeled round, and the audience see no assistant there. The curtains of the cabinet are drawn, and the assistant steps out of the glass-lined box.



First, with regard to the box. It will be seen that the back of the box is divided into half and hinged. Therefore the second assistant, who is concealed in the dome of the cabinet, merely has to get down and push the back of the box inwards. This pushes the sheet of glass which was at

the back of the box also inwards, and so the assistant gets into the box. The illustration shows how the assistant is hidden in the dome of the cabinet, and how he gets from his hiding-place to the box when the curtains of the cabinet are drawn.

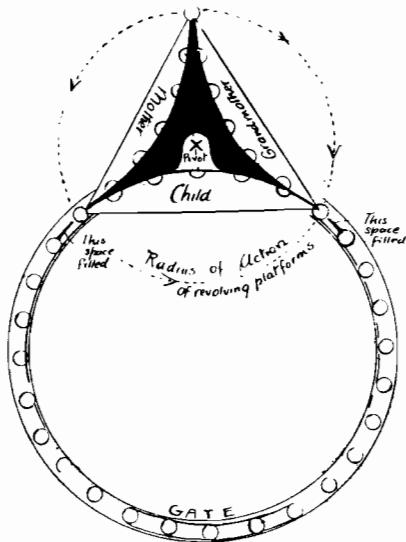
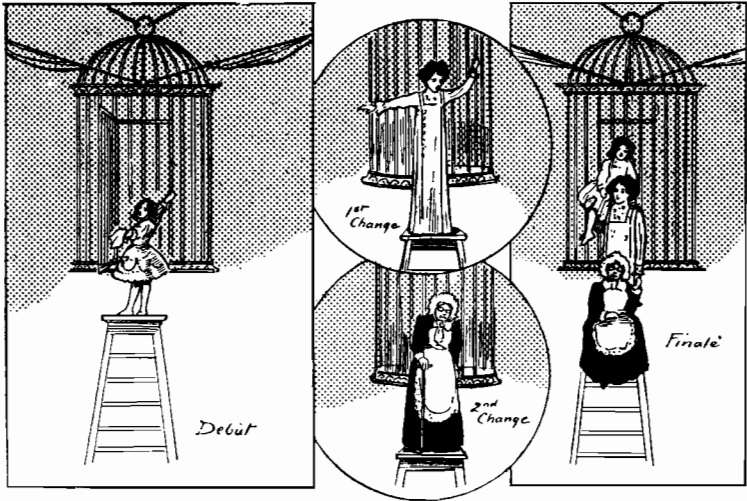
The first assistant never leaves the cannon. After he has been loaded into the cannon, he finds his way down into a secret receptacle in the steps of the carriage of the cannon. He remains hidden there till the end of the illusion.

The Three Graces.

A large cage hangs in mid-air in the centre of the stage. A young girl walks up a flight of steps and passes into the cage. A pair of wing-shaped curtains descend in front of the cage for a second. When they rise the child has gone, and her place is taken by a young woman.

Again the curtains descend, and again they are raised. This time the young woman has aged considerably. If he wishes to do so, the illusionist can bring the performance to a good conclusion, and at the same time prove that the changes have not been due to any quick changes of costume, by dropping the curtains once more. When they are raised the old woman, the young woman, and the child appear at the door of the cage.

The simplest way to understand the secret of this illusion is to look at the illustration of it. The fake at the back of the cage is triangular in shape, and revolves on a pivot, which is really one of the bars of the cage. At the commencement of the trick the fake is backed with cloth that matches the back cloth of the stage, and the back of each partition of the fake is arranged in the same way.



Plan of Cage showing revolving back bars



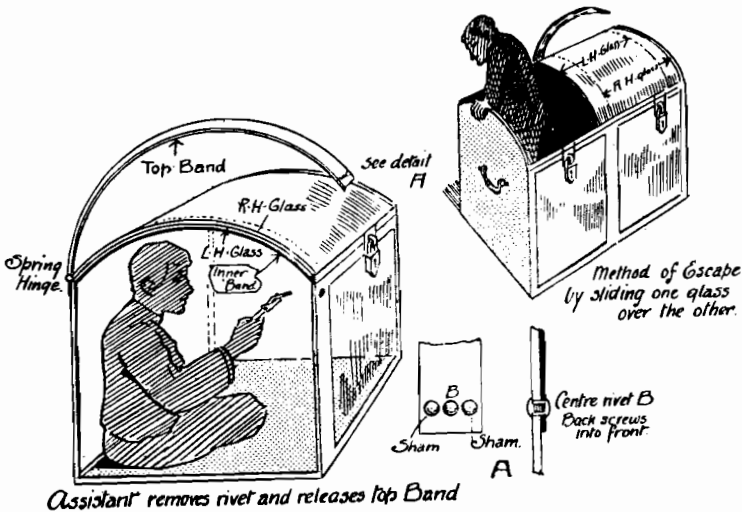
Back of Cage assistant ready to appear

Will Goldston's Glass Box Illusion.

An audience is always impressed by any piece of apparatus which is made of glass, doubtless because it seems impossible that there can be any trickery in such an object. People may argue to themselves, when they see a box trick, "Well, we cannot see how the thing is done, but there must be some trick connected with the box." But it does not seem possible that there can be any trickery with a box made of glass, such as the one under notice.

The box is as large as an ordinary trunk. A man gets inside it, and the box is fastened with padlocks. A screen is then placed in front of the box, and in a few moments the imprisoned man is free.

An examination of the pictures will show that the secret to the mystery is in the broad brass band in the centre of the box. This band is apparently used merely to hold the



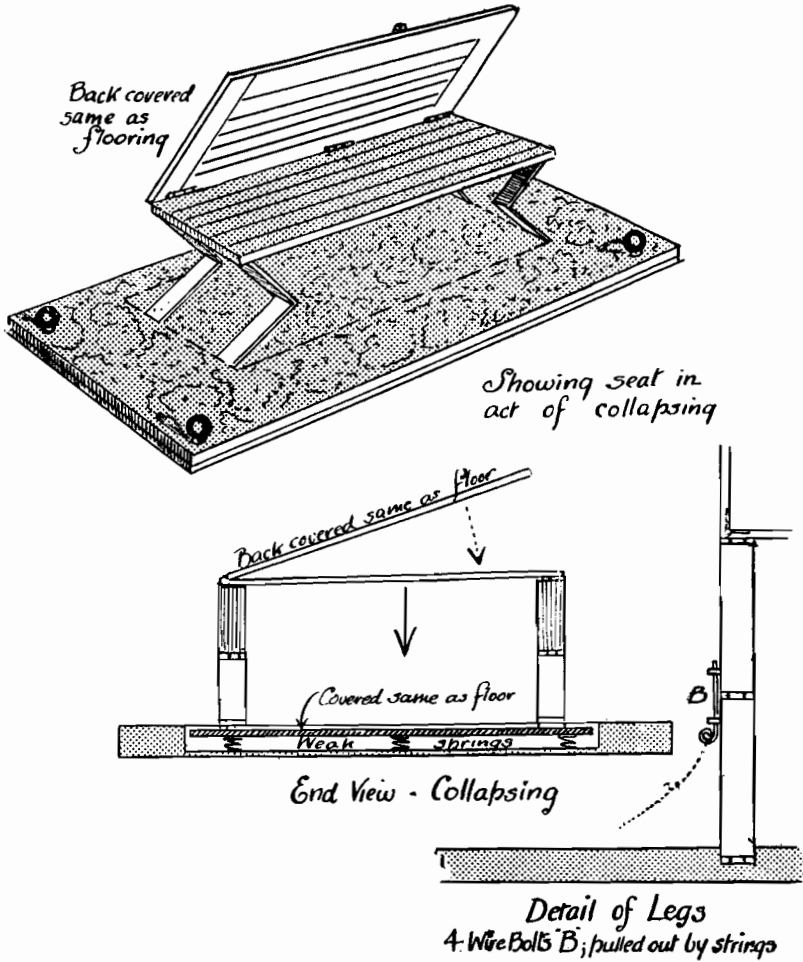
box together, but it serves another purpose. It is apparently held in place in front of the box with three rivets, but only one of these—the centre one—is “practical,” the other two are mere dummies. When the performer is hidden from view he takes out a small screwdriver and unfastens the centre rivet, which, by the way, “back screws” into the front—that is to say, the thread of the screw is the reverse of the thread of an ordinary screw. Therefore, if any person were to try and unscrew the rivet in the ordinary way he would merely tighten it still more.

Having unscrewed the centre rivet, the performer is able to raise the band, because at the back it works on a spring hinge, although it appears to be securely fastened there. Having raised the band, the performer slides one half of the top of the glass over the remaining half, gets out, slides back the glass, and fastens down the band again. The box is then apparently in the same condition as it was when the audience examined it, and there is absolutely no clue to the manner of the performer’s escape.

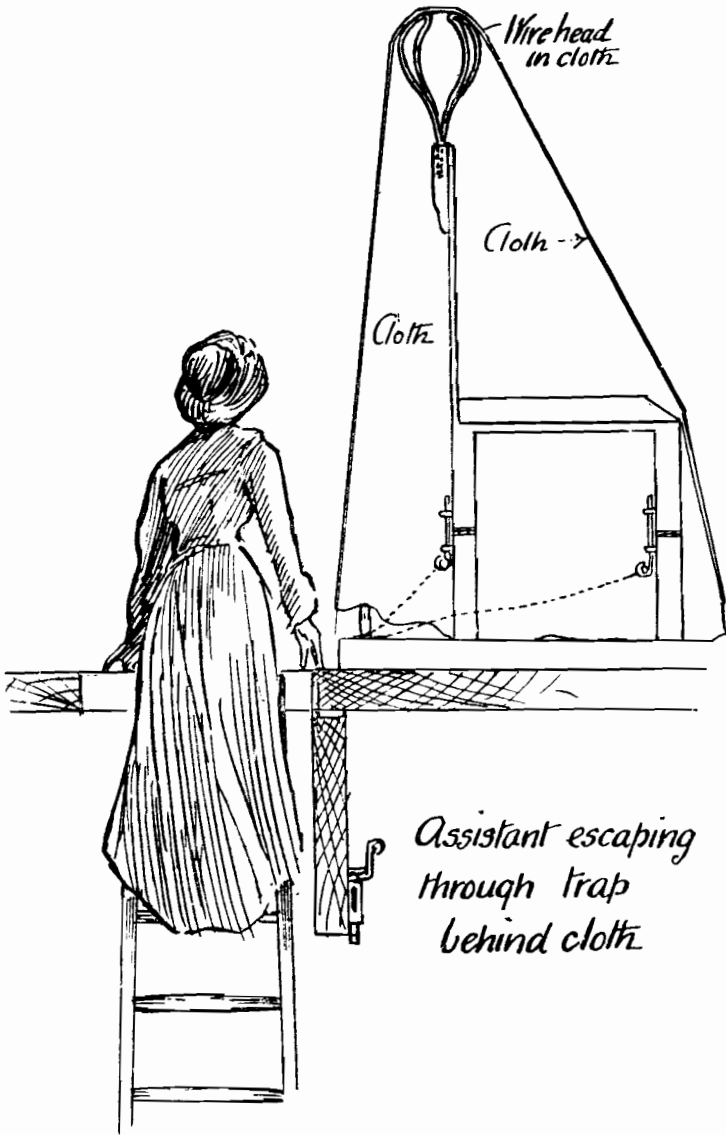
The Swing Illusion.

A garden seat stands on a large board in the centre of the stage. Ropes are attached to the sides of the board, so it may be hauled up in the air at the right moment. The lady assistant enters and sits down. The performer covers her with a cloth, and the board, with the seat and the lady upon it, is hauled upwards. Suddenly the performer snatches away the cloth. The seat and the lady have vanished together!

Directly the assistant is covered with the cloth she manipulates a frame “head” in the cloth, and slips down



under cover of the cloth and through a trap in the stage. There is then only the seat to be disposed of, and this is easily managed. The second illustration shows how the seat collapses. At the commencement of the illusion, the legs of the seat are held in place by means of small bolts,

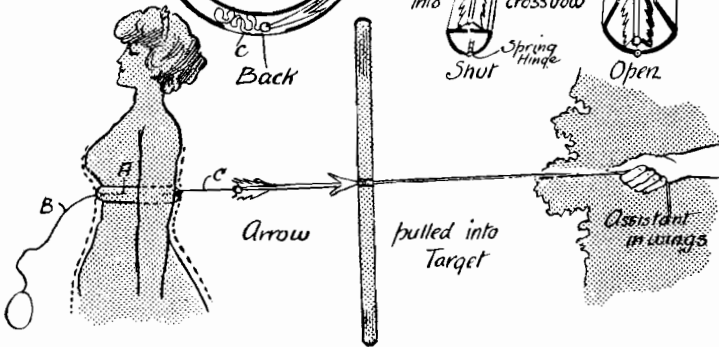
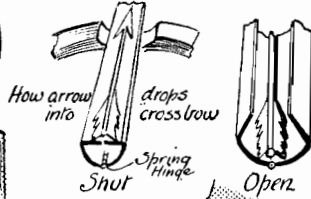
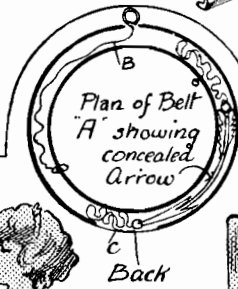
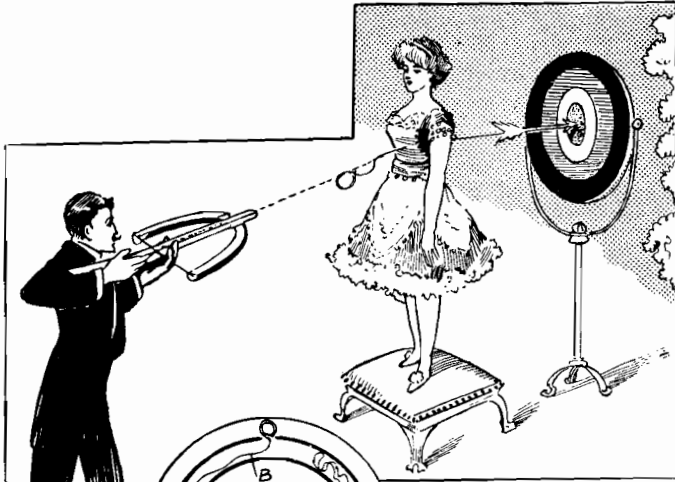


to which threads are attached. Directly these threads are drawn the seat collapses, and as the whole thing is made of very thin wood, and the back of it is covered with the same cloth that is used to cover the board, the seat in its collapsed condition is not seen. To the audience, of course, the great mystery of the illusion lies in the fact that the disappearance is effected in mid-air, and that the seat and the lady apparently vanish together.

The Target Illusion.

The performer's assistant stands on a stool on the stage with a large target behind her. The performer takes a cross-bow and arrow, and fires it at the lady. The arrow, which has a piece of cord attached to it, apparently passes through the lady and hits the target. To prove the genuineness of the feat, two other assistants take the two ends of the cord and pull it backwards and forwards apparently right through the body of the lady.

This effect is produced mainly by means of a belt worn by the lady, a flexible arrow concealed in the belt, and a faked cross-bow. The illustration of the plan of the belt, which is hollow, of course, shows that there is a piece of cord in it with a ring at one end. When the performer apparently shoots the arrow, this cord is drawn out towards him by means of a piece of thread, and, at the same time, the flexible arrow is drawn out of the belt and towards the target by an assistant in the wings. The arrow never leaves the cross-bow, but the illusion is performed so quickly that that is the effect produced on the minds of the audience.



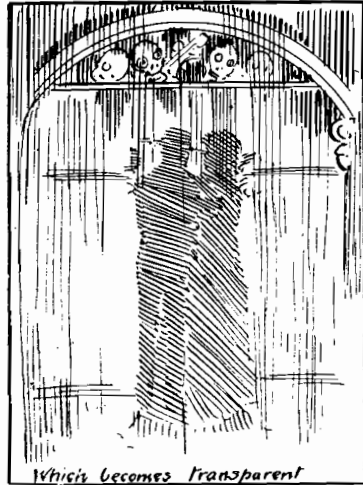
Vendetta.

The scene of this illusion is that of the tragic ending of Miss Marie Corelli's novel, "Vendetta."

Two characters—a man and a woman—walk on to the



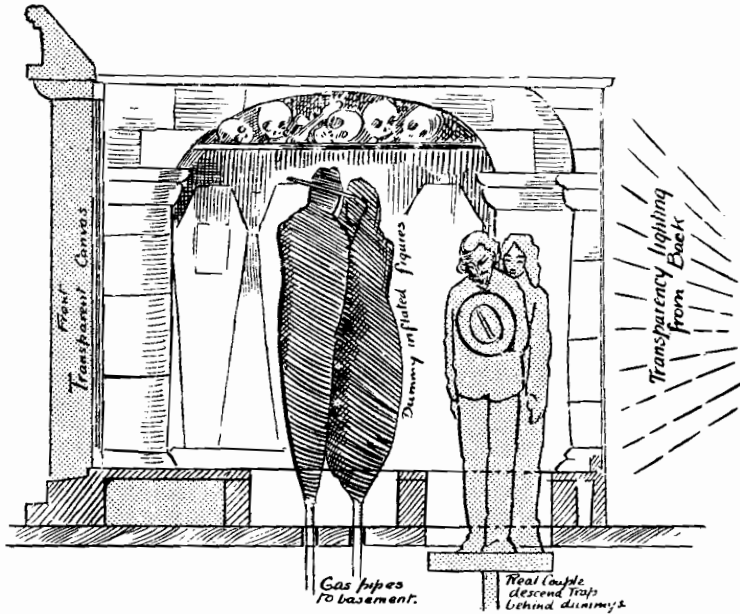
Entering the Vault



Whisper becomes transparent



Vault collapses



stage, and, after a short conversation, enter a vault at the back of the stage.

The dark interior of the vault is suddenly rendered transparent, and the audience can see the man and woman apparently in earnest conversation. With a terrific crash the whole of the vault suddenly collapses, and simultaneously the couple, who were apparently buried in its ruins, appear in the centre of the auditorium, and make their way back to the stage.

Strong lights behind a sheet of black gauze at the entrance to the vault make it transparent, but from the moment those lights are switched on the audience are deceived. The figures they see at the entrance to the vault are not those of the man and woman who a moment before.

were on the stage. The visible figures are mere dummies, with indiarubber skins and bodies of air. The air is got into the skins by means of gas-pipes and a pair of bellows beneath the stage.

These figures in their normal state are nearly flat. When the man and woman enter the stage, the dummy figures are blown out to their full extent, and they are then so large that the man and woman can conceal themselves behind them. The living figures remain in that position until a trap in the stage opens and takes them below. The gas-pipes, with the other figures—which are, of course, deflated—are quickly drawn down beneath the stage. The rest of the illusion is merely stage carpentry, and needs no explanation.

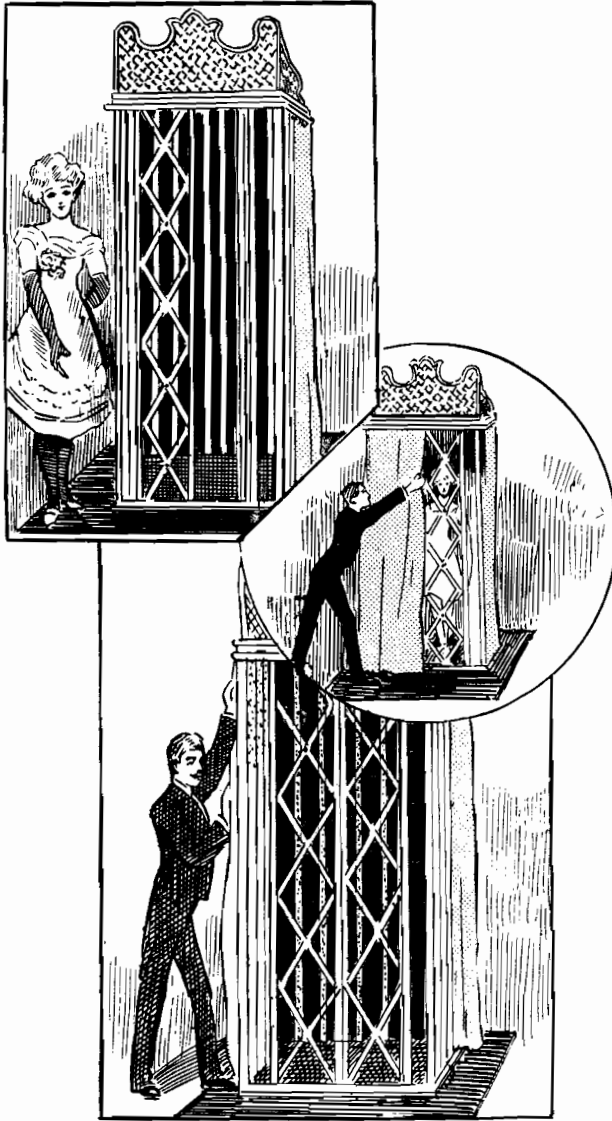
The Mysterious Iron Cage.

Invented by WILL GOLDSTON.

I remember I was very proud when “The Mysterious Iron Cage” was first put together under my directions. I freely admit that I am still proud of having given this illusion to the magical world, for, looking at it quite dispassionately, I still regard it as an excellent puzzle.

The effect is that of a disappearance of a girl from an iron cage, which may be freely examined by the audience before the performance. The cage is fitted with three blinds, one in front and two at the sides.

After the conjurer has introduced his assistant, he opens the front of the cage and bids her enter. He then draws all three blinds, and in a remarkably short space of time—

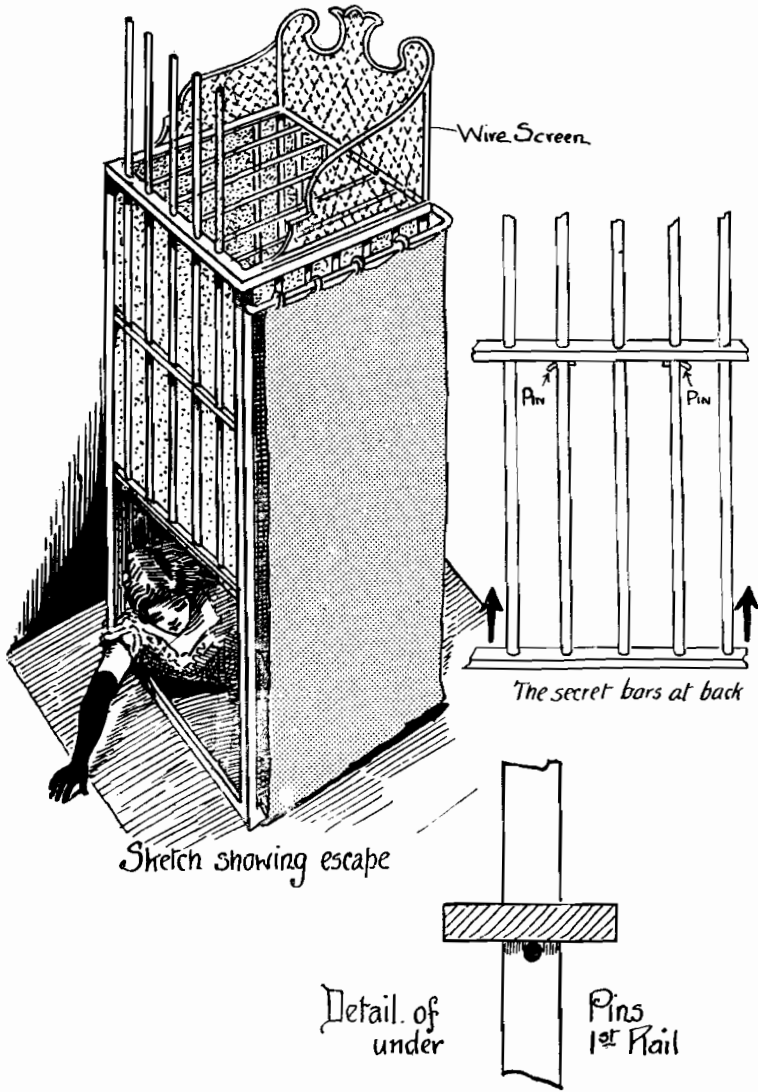


so short, in fact, that the audience barely have time to form an idea of what the effect is to be—he draws up the blinds again and shows the cage empty. As the cage has been standing on a piece of carpet—previously examined—all the time, any theory that the audience may have formulated as to the use of a trap in the stage is at once dispelled, and, as a fact, no trap is used. The whole secret is in the construction of the cage.

The illustrations give away the secret. It will be noticed that on the top of the cage, in front, there is a piece of ornamental metal-work, which, however, unknown to the audience, also serves a useful purpose, as will presently be seen.

Two of the vertical bars at the back have holes drilled in them at points just under the top horizontal bar, and two stout iron pins are pushed through these holes. Thus when the cage is being examined by the audience, anyone who attempts to push up the vertical bars will find them firmly fixed. The assistant, however, merely has to push out the pins in the two bars to render her escape an easy matter. Directly this is done all the vertical bars, being fixed to the bottom horizontal bar, can be pushed through the top bar, leaving a clear space at the bottom of the cage. The tops of the bars are not seen by the audience, being hidden by the ornamental metal-work on the top of the cage.

Directly the assistant has made the preparations for her escape, she slips out and steps on to a board which is pushed out for her benefit from the back of the stage. Another method of escape consists in having a trap in the stage at the back of the cage. The assistant is assisted down the trap directly she has escaped. In either case, of course, she fixes the two pins in the bars of the cage before she



leaves, and thus, if necessary, the cage can once more be examined by the audience at the end of the performance.

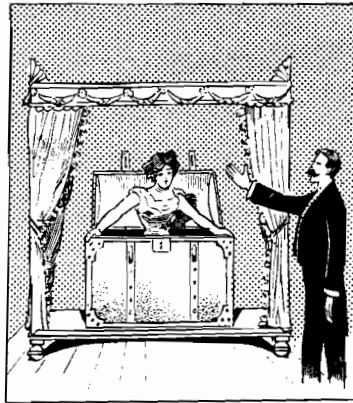
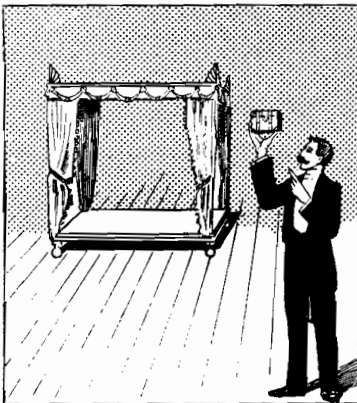
The Growing Box.

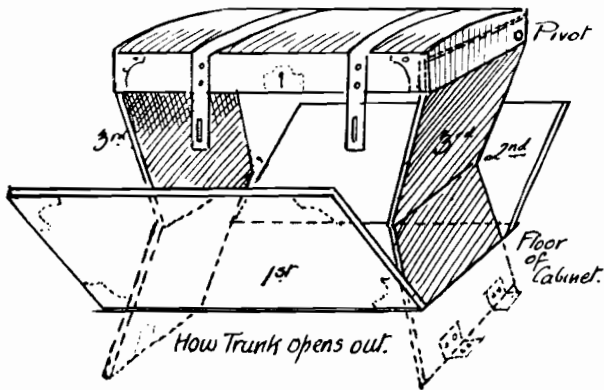
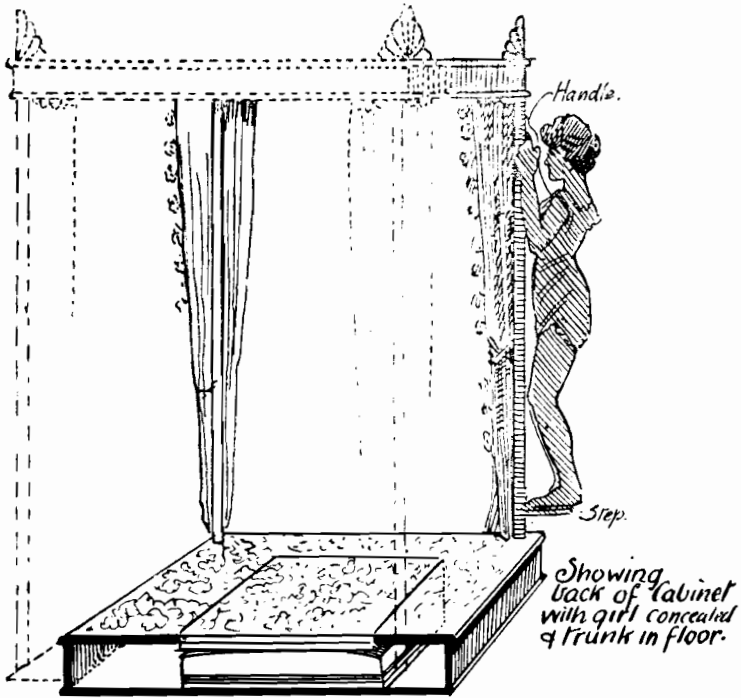
As Performed by the late IMRO FOX, with Improvements
by CHEFALO.

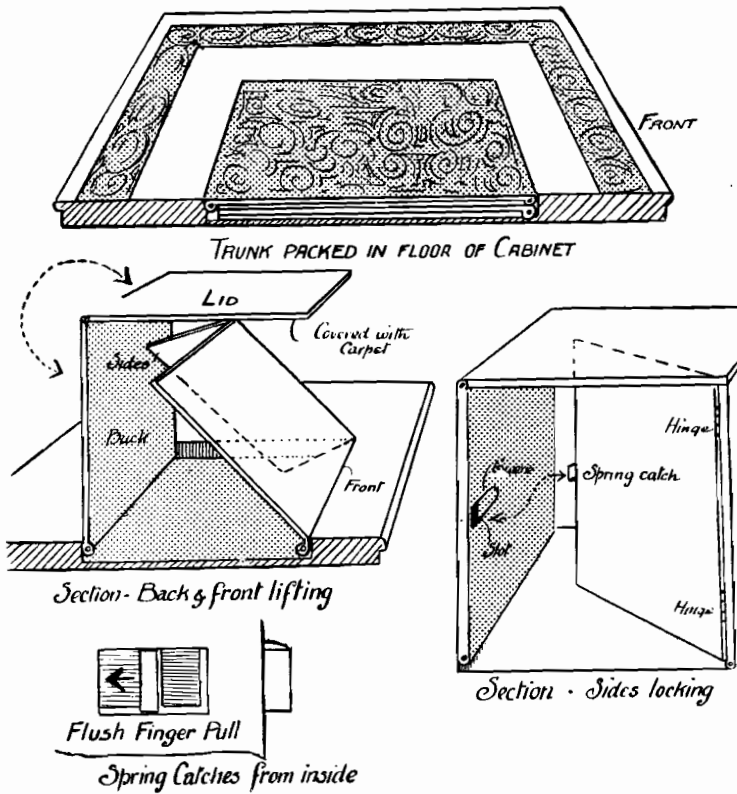
Possibly some conjurers will see a similarity between this illusion and Buatier de Kolta's famous Expanding "Cube," but, as will be seen by comparing this with the other illusion, the two have very little in common.

In this case the conjurer draws attention to a small raised platform, with a post at each corner and two cross-pieces at the top. A curtain is draped at each of the posts. The illusionist then holds up a small box, places it on the raised platform, and draws all four curtains.

After a moment the performer opens the curtains, and the box is seen to have grown into a large trunk, and when the lid is opened a smartly dressed assistant steps out.







The secret of the trunk is disclosed in the illustrations, which show all the working of it. The trunk packs up bit by bit until it lies flush with the top of the platform, and it is quite impossible to detect the whereabouts of the trunk, even at a short distance from it.

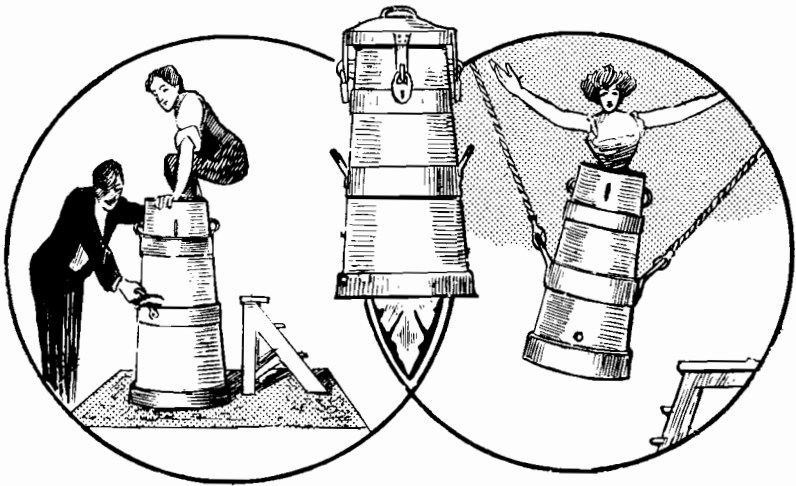
The assistant stands on a step behind one of the back curtains, and keeps herself in that position by holding on to a handle at the top of the upright. Directly the front curtain and the two side curtains are drawn, the assistant

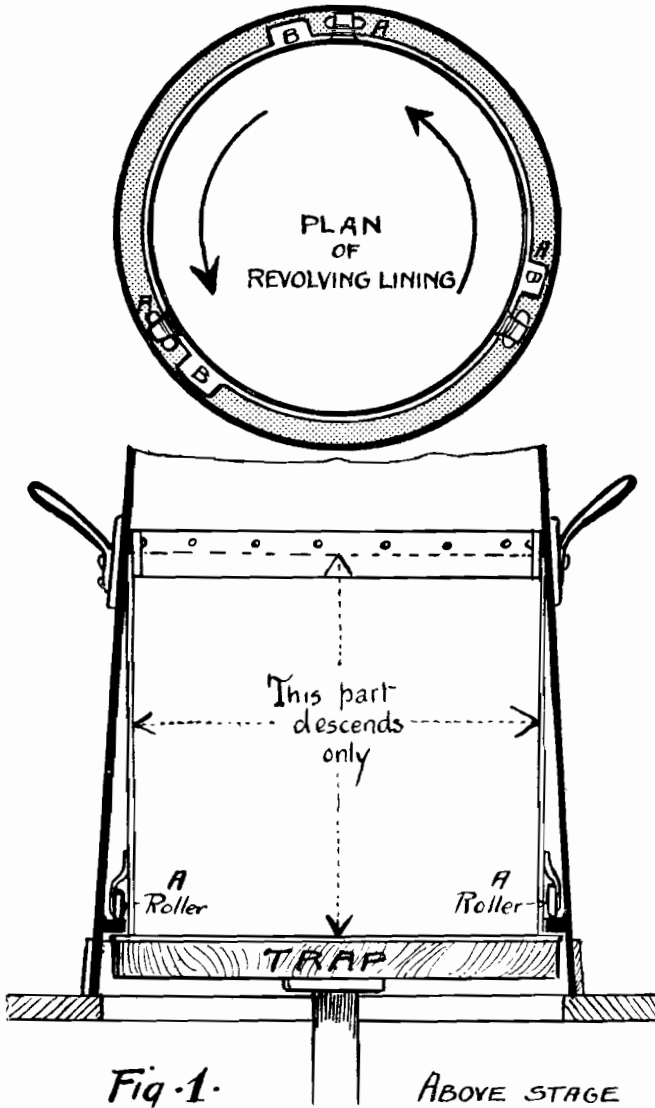
steps into the cabinet, raises the trunk, and gets inside with the little trunk.

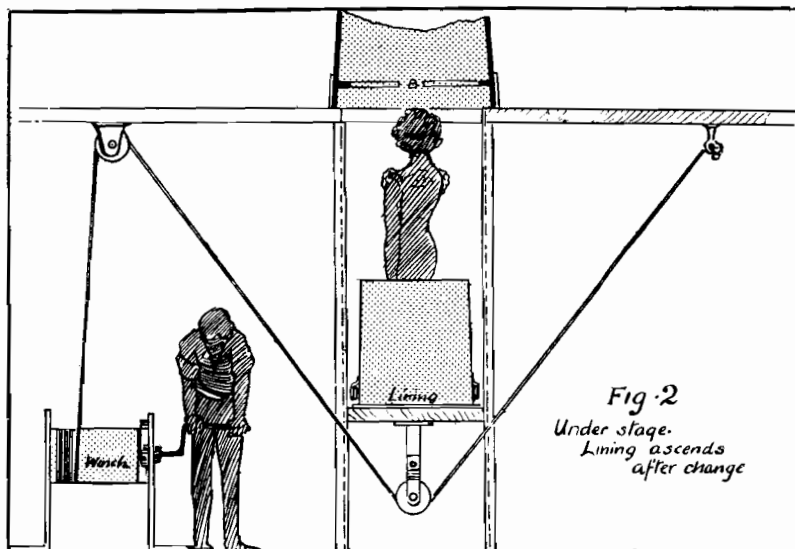
Canned Goods.

This illusion is one of the many illusions which seem much better when they are performed than when they are described on paper. In every trick and illusion, it is the effect on the audience, and only this, that matters. If, as frequently happens, the effect is brought about by simple means, so much the better.

In the present instance a very old principle—that employed in the old-fashioned plug-box—is employed, but as the main object in the illusion is a milk-can which will stand examination, the illusion is, to all intents and purposes, quite new.







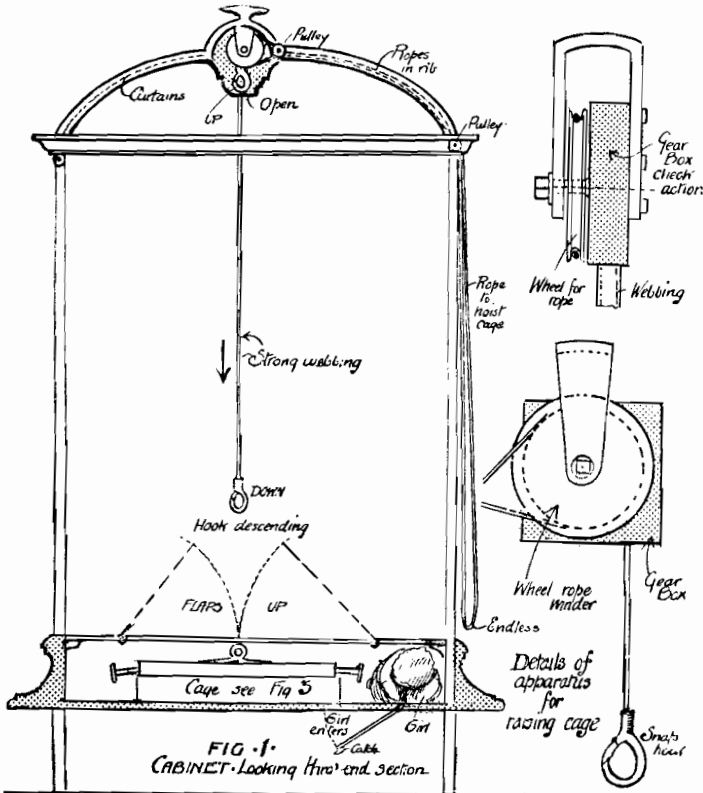
The best way to present the illusion is to employ a male assistant, and to get him into the can. The lid is put on and fastened by means of padlocks. The can is then raised to the centre of the stage and the lid removed, when out steps the lady assistant in full evening dress. The man has disappeared.

There is an inner lining (see Fig. 1) to the can. This inner lining is released by simply turning it round. This lining then drops through a trap in the stage, and the male assistant gets out and the lady steps in. The lining is then hoisted back into its place, and, being turned once more, is attached as before to the can. The can is then raised into mid-air, and the performer does the rest. The illusion is one that should be performed very quickly and with a good deal of bustle.

The Pretty Bird.

(To say nothing of two or three dozen birds.)

The performer calls attention to a large metal skeleton frame standing on a thin, raised platform. There is absolutely no place in the frame or stand in which anything substantial could be hidden, and the performer demonstrates this fact by putting a long pole through and through



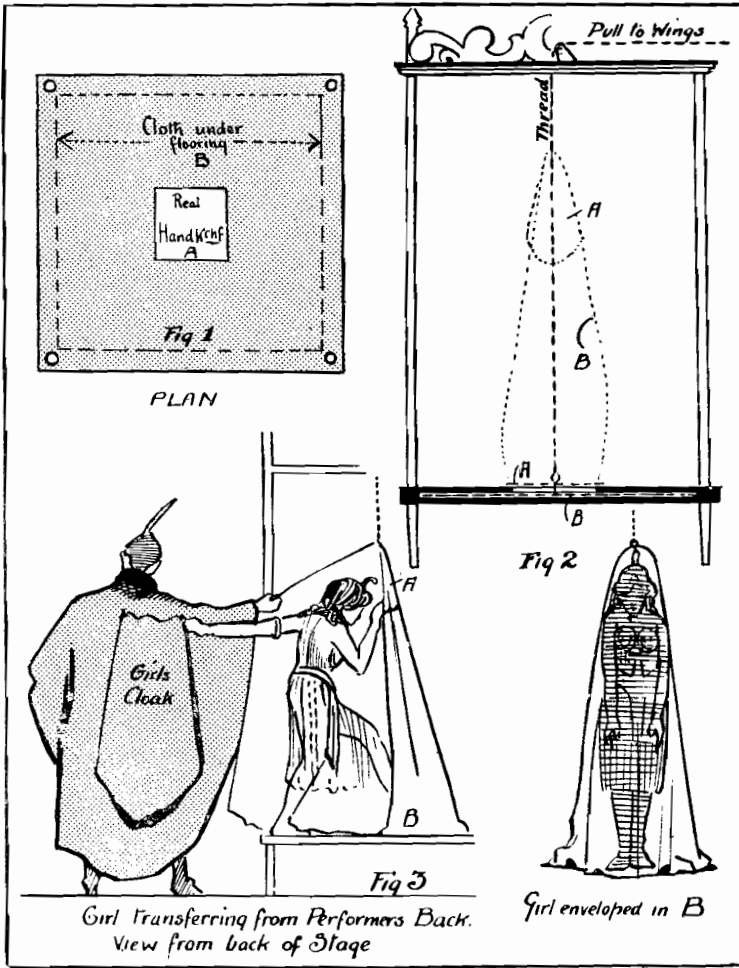
the stand. Four curtains are drawn for a second. When they are drawn on one side the frame is seen to be filled with a large hanging cage, and in the cage are some birds and the conjurer's assistant.

The cage itself is similar in construction to the familiar small folding bird-cage, and at the commencement of the illusion is folded up and concealed in the platform. The birds are, of course, placed in the cage before it is closed. The assistant is also hidden in the platform, but as she lies with her head towards the audience, the side of the platform facing the audience can be fairly thin. The ordinary members of the audience, unacquainted with conjurers' methods, would never believe, unless they were taken behind the scenes, how narrow such a platform can be.

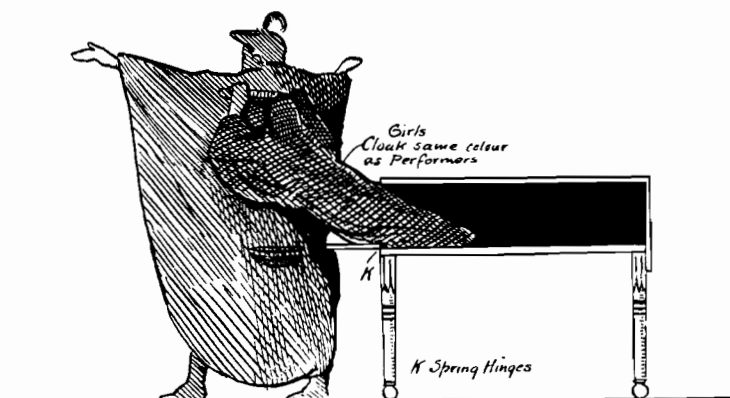
Directly the curtains are drawn, the assistant works the illusion herself. She begins by getting inside the cage (see illustration). She then pulls the cage to the top of the frame by means of a rope, which runs over a pulley at the top of the frame and through a rib in the dome of the frame. It is connected in the centre of the dome with a hook. The action of the whole thing is similar to that of a blind. When the hook at the end of the rope has been lowered, the assistant fastens it to the top of the cage, and then hauls the whole thing up again. The rope is really a piece of strong webbing. The curtains for the top of the dome are concealed in one of the ribs of the frame.

The Girl and Handkerchief Illusion.

The performer commences this illusion by showing a white handkerchief in the centre of a small cabinet, all four



sides of which are open to the audience. The handkerchief gradually grows, and then the cloth slowly rises from the cabinet floor. Suddenly the performer pulls the cloth away, and discloses his assistant standing in the centre of the



Girl loaded on to performers back from Table

cabinet. There is no "cover" other than the cloth, and the cabinet is raised from the floor of the stage.

This effect is produced partly by means of a "loading table" placed near the cabinet. The girl, enveloped in a cloak similar to that of the performer, is in this table at the commencement of the illusion. The small handkerchief is really attached to the cloth from which the assistant is to be produced. This cloth is placed between the double floor of the cabinet, but there is a large hole in the upper floor to admit of the cloth passing through when a thread attached to it is pulled from the wings. It will be seen that the cloth is merely attached by a hook on the end of the thread.

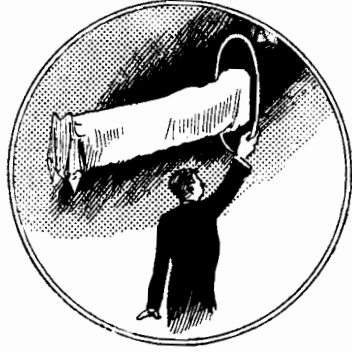
After the performer has called attention to the handkerchief in the cabinet, he makes a few mysterious passes over it, and it rises slowly from the floor. The thread to which it is attached passes out at the top of the cabinet, over a small pulley there, and then out at the wings.

The end of the "loading table" is fitted with spring hinges. A glance at the illustration will show how the assistant emerges from the table and gets on to the performer's back for a moment. When the cloth has been pulled up the performer takes hold of one edge of it for a second or two, as if to call attention to the nature of the cloth. In this way he makes a perfect screen between himself and the cloth, and the girl simply steps from her hiding-place on the performer's back to the cabinet. It will be understood, of course, that she leaves her cloak hanging on the performer's back. The performer's cloak was fitted with a small wooden "platform" and a rail, so that the girl was able to get a foothold and to steady herself until the performer was ready for her to step away from him to the cabinet.

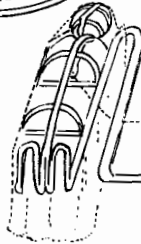
Watch Her Go!

This is one of the many versions of the famous Aga illusion, and, in my opinion, one of the best. Not only does the lady rise in the air and float about mysteriously while hoops are passed over her, but she also sways about and rises and falls while in mid-air.

One glance at the accompanying illustration shows that the lady herself takes only a very small part in the performance. After she comes on the stage, she steps on to a table, where the illusionist makes the customary passes in order to send her to sleep. The illusionist then covers the lady with a cloth, and in that moment the first part of the illusion is performed—unknown to the audience, of course. The lady slips through a trap into the table, and her place

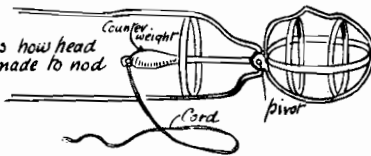


Wire dummy
substitute for
assistant



Cord to control head

Shows how head
is made to nod



Counter weight

Cord

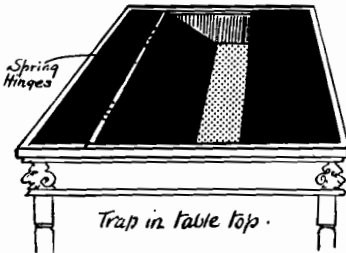
Pivot

Back
Cloth

Screw

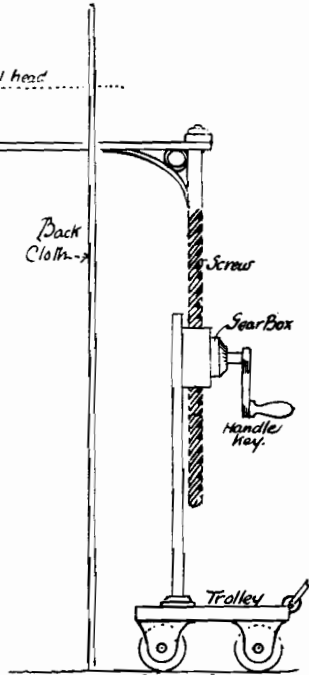
Gear Box

Handle
Key



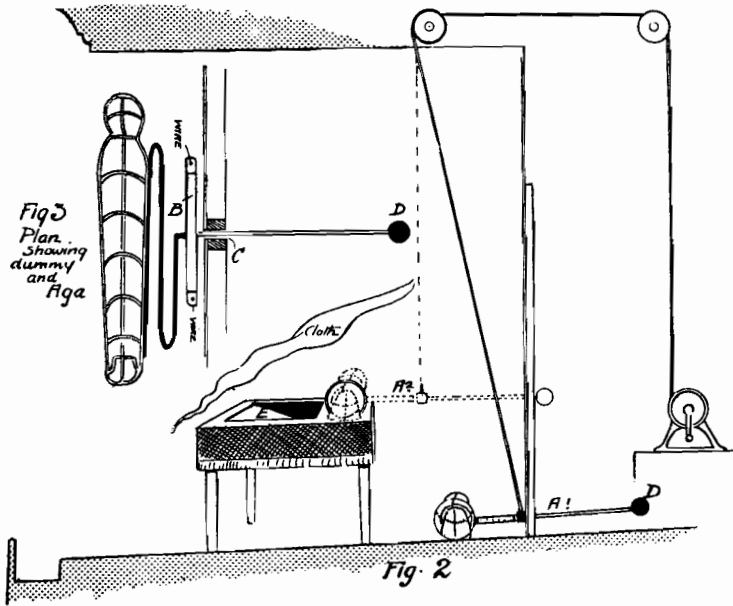
Spring
Hinges

Trap in table top



Trolley

Apparatus for moving
dummy vertically & horizontally

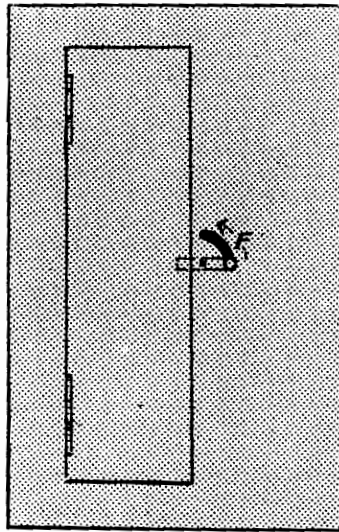
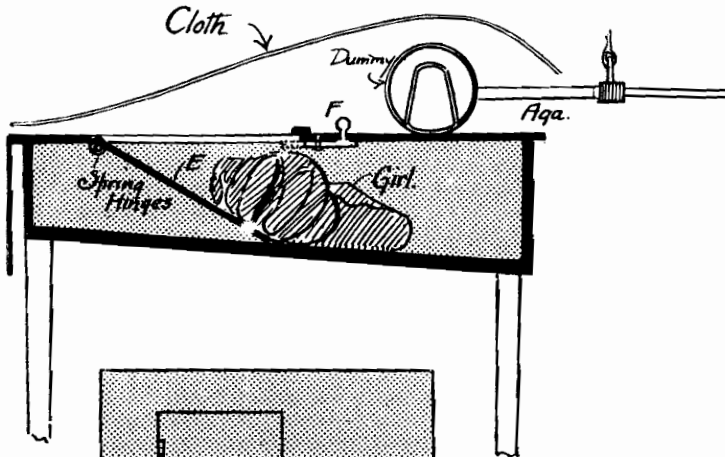


is taken by a wire fake, covered with black cloth, and fitted with a simple little device for causing the "head" to nod when it is required to do so.

The trap in the table is fitted with a spring flap, and the lady herself opens the catch with the hand that is hidden from the audience. Afterwards the trap closes by itself.

At the commencement of the performance the wire dummy is lying close to the back cloth, but as it is covered with similar cloth it is not noticed. Fig. 2 shows how this dummy is lifted on to the table, and how the exchange with the lady is made.

After the dummy is covered with the cloth it is lifted up by means of the usual attachment, and it is a very simple matter to make so light an object sway about in the air.



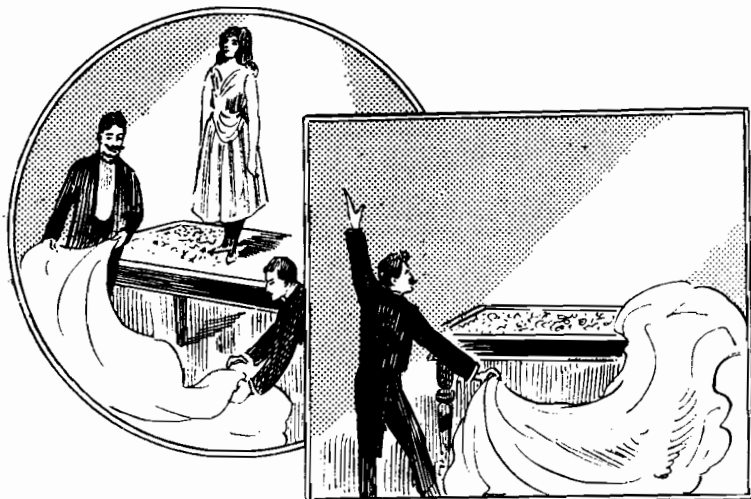
*Plan of Table and release
for Trap*

Fig 4

When the illusionist wishes to bring the performance to a brilliant conclusion, all he has to do is to withdraw the cloth quickly, and as the fake is drawn at the same time towards the back cloth, it is not seen, and the lady appears to have vanished into thin air.

Gee Whiz!

The following method for enabling the conjurer's assistant to escape from an ordinary table—or a table which appears to the audience to be quite ordinary—I understand is the invention of Gustave Fasola, the Indian magician,

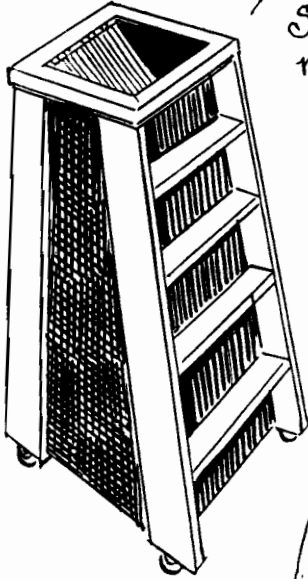


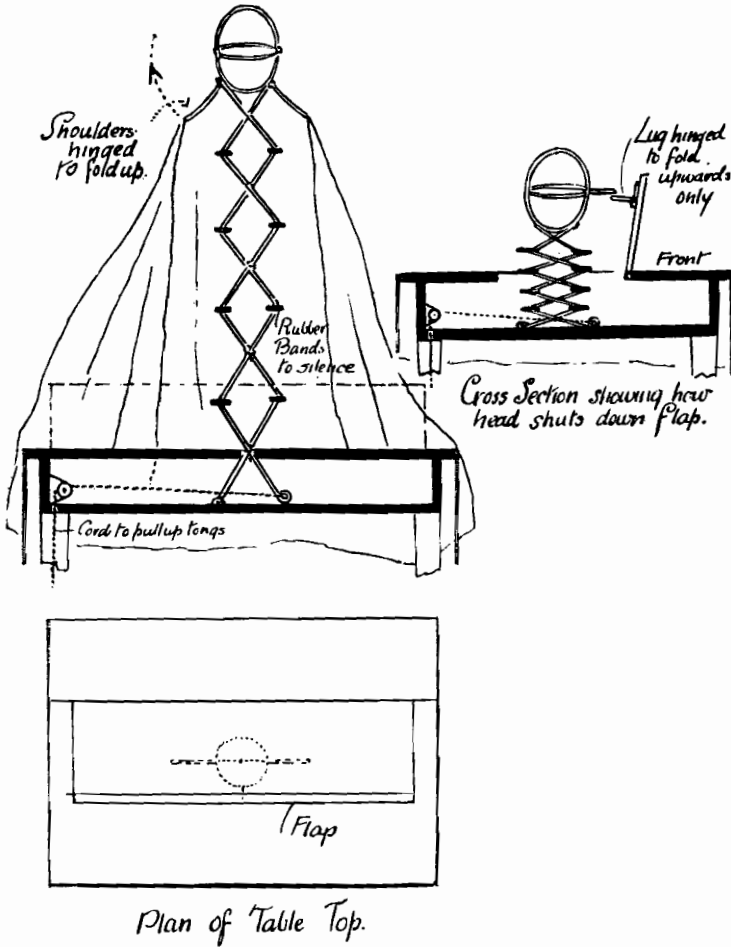
and I am indebted to him for permission to publish the details of the working of the table in this book.

The table appears to be free from any preparation, and the illusionist can show, by rattling a long pole under it, that there is no apparatus concealed anywhere under the table. The assistant gets on the table, and is covered with a large sheet. The conjurer fires his revolver, and the sheet falls to the table. The lady has gone.

The illustrations give the thing away very clearly. In order to get on the table, the assistant has to use some steps. The audience can apparently see right through these steps,

Details of
Steps and
method of
Escape





but, as a matter of fact, they are lined with cloth which exactly matches that of the back of the stage. The steps are therefore a kind of box without a top.

When the assistant gets on the table, the conjurer and another assistant throw the sheet over her, and the conjurer

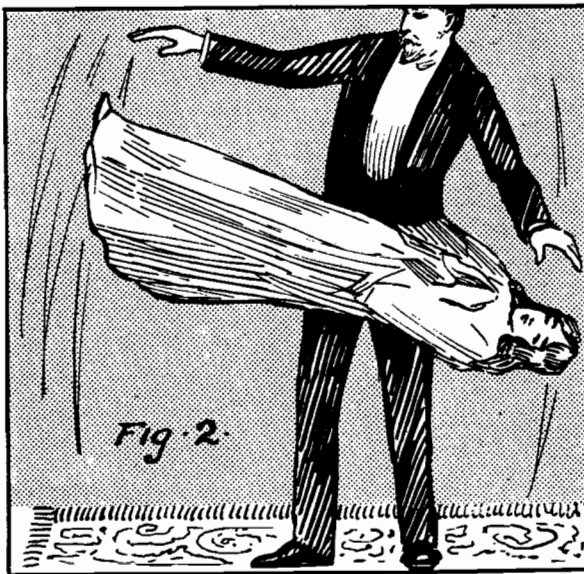
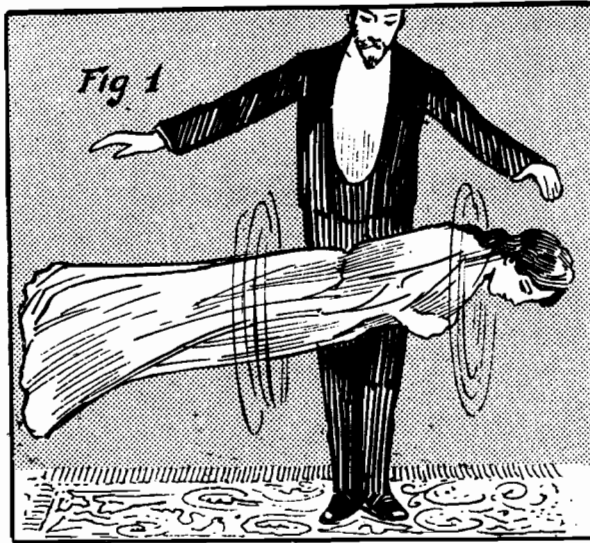
draws a small cord near one side of the table, which raises a wire frame made on the principle of a pair of lazy tongs. The top of the frame is semi-circular, and just below this part two small rods project. These rods are to represent the shoulders of the lady under the sheet.

When the sheet has been properly arranged around the frame, the lady slips out at the back and gets into the steps. The conjurer fires his revolver, the cord holding up the frame is released, and so the frame drops into the table and the sheet falls to the ground. The hinges of the frame are covered with rubber bands, which make the shutting up of the frame quite silent.

There is one other ingenious little detail to which I wish to call attention. When the frame is caused to rise from the table, it opens part of the top of the table (see illustration). When the frame descends, a small piece of the wire projecting from the head of the frame engages on a lug fastened to the underneath part of the little trap in the table. This lug is hinged to fold upwards only (otherwise the frame could not rise from the table). By striking on the lug the projecting pin causes the trap to close again, and the appearance of the table at the end of the performance is the same as at the beginning.

The Lady who Revolves in Mid-Air.

The illustration of the effect of this illusion explains all that the audience see. Figs. 3 and 4 show what the audience do not see. Fig. 3 gives us a sectional view of the stage and basement. The lifting apparatus is of the usual kind, but a novelty is the gear box K, the handle of which turns the flexible tubing A.



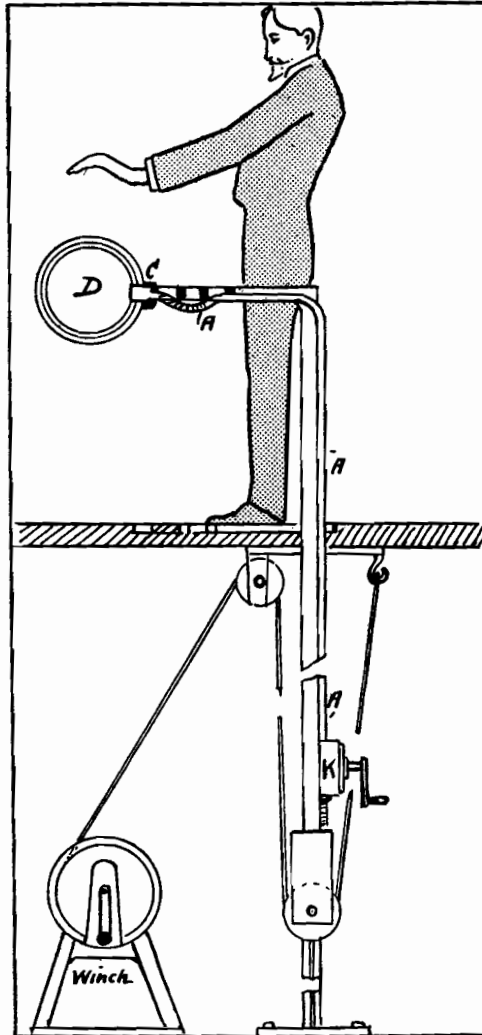


Fig-3.

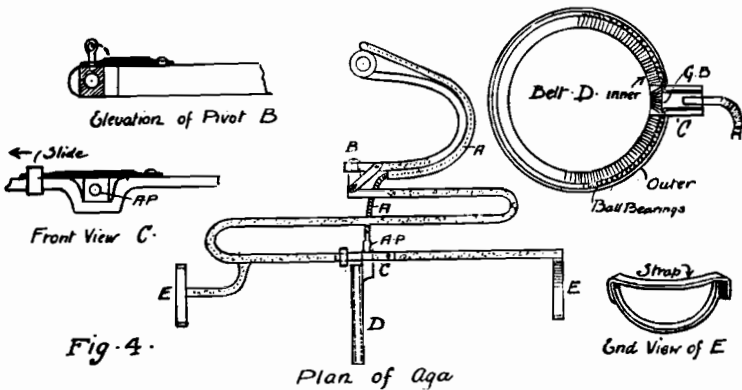


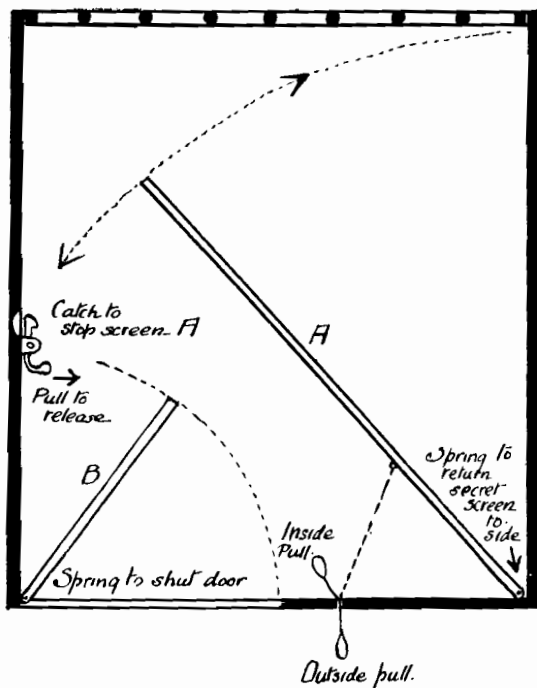
Fig. 4 shows all the details of the apparatus above the stage. The girl first lies on a rug on the stage. The frame is raised sufficiently to allow the gear box G-B to drop into the slot C, when a turnbuckle is slung over and a slide makes all secure.

The plug A-P, at the end of the flexible tubing A, is then inserted, and this connects the belt with the machinery below the stage. The belt D is double, the inner one turning in the outer casing on ball-bearings. The inner belt is corrugated, and thus fits on the small wheel on G-B. Consequently, when the flexible tubing is turned, the inner belt revolves.

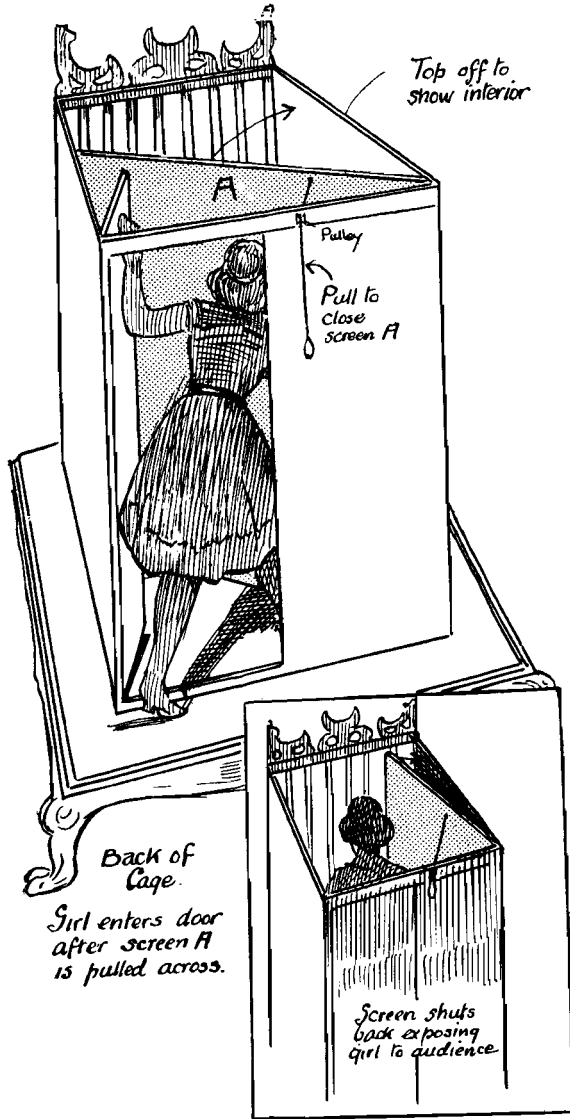
In place of the usual head and foot attachments to the frame, there are straps (E) to facilitate the revolving movement of the assistant. The frame is pivotted at B, and thus, when a catch is removed, the assistant, if properly balanced, can be made to swing up and down.

Chefalo's Cage Cabinet.

The particular feature of this illusion is the manner in which it can be presented. It is usual to have a "cover" of some kind in any trick in which there is a sudden appearance or disappearance of a living being, but in this case no "cover" is necessary.



PLAN OF CABINET SHOWING
HOW SECRET DOORS WORK



The conjurer shows a small cabinet standing on a raised platform. The front of the cabinet is fitted with a door made of stout iron bars. Without covering the bars in any way, the illusionist causes a girl to appear in the cabinet.

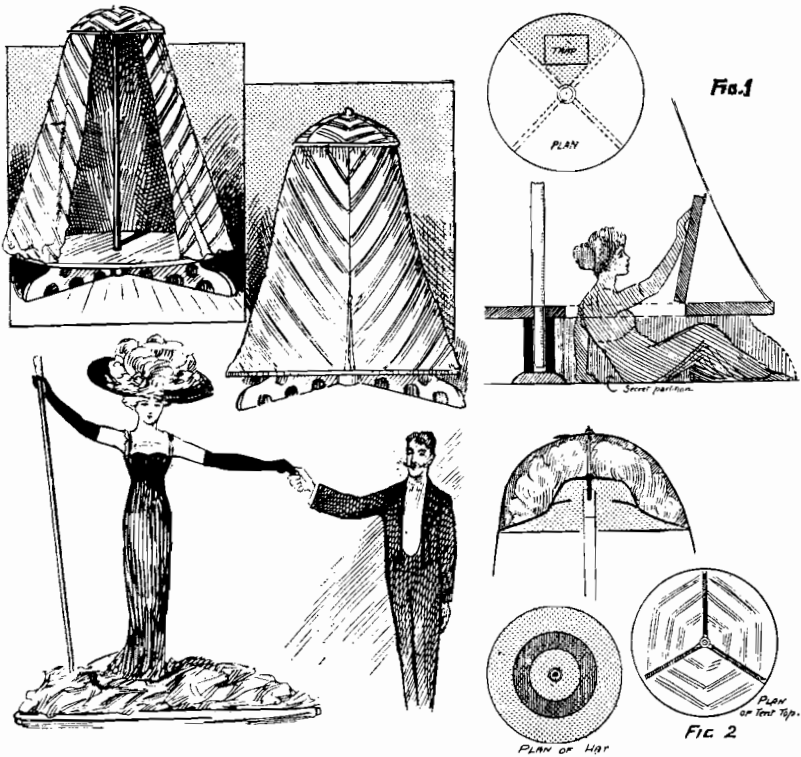
At the outset the girl is standing at the back of the cabinet. Half of the back of the cabinet is a door which opens inwards. The right-hand side of the cabinet is fitted with an extra "side," attached by hinges to the back of the cabinet, and a thread runs from this side through a small hole and over a pulley at the back of the cabinet.

When the conjurer has called attention to the cabinet, the girl pulls on this cord, and thus draws one side of the cabinet across the back (see illustration). The movement is not seen, because the whole of the interior of the cabinet is black. With this screen in front of her, the girl can easily enter the cabinet from the back without being seen, and when she has to make her appearance she merely pushes the side back into its original position.

The Merry Widow Illusion.

To Mr. Oswald Williams is due the credit for inventing this very effective illusion, and I thank him for permitting me to include the explanation in this volume.

A small circular platform is placed on the stage. A tent pole is placed in the centre of the platform, and a bathing-tent is fixed to the pole. There does not seem to be much scope for any mysterious "production" in such a structure, but presently the performer draws the curtains of the tent round the platform, instantly draws them down, and the audience see a smartly dressed lady wearing an enormous



Merry Widow hat and holding a gaily decorated stick in her right hand.

The fact that the illusion is "self-contained" will appeal to every magician. The lady is concealed at the commencement of the performance at the back of the raised platform. In Fig. 1 the reader will see an illustrated explanation, showing how the lady manages to hide herself and to emerge easily from her place under the platform.

In Fig. 2 the reader will see the plan of the top of the tent, and will note the clever way in which the enormous

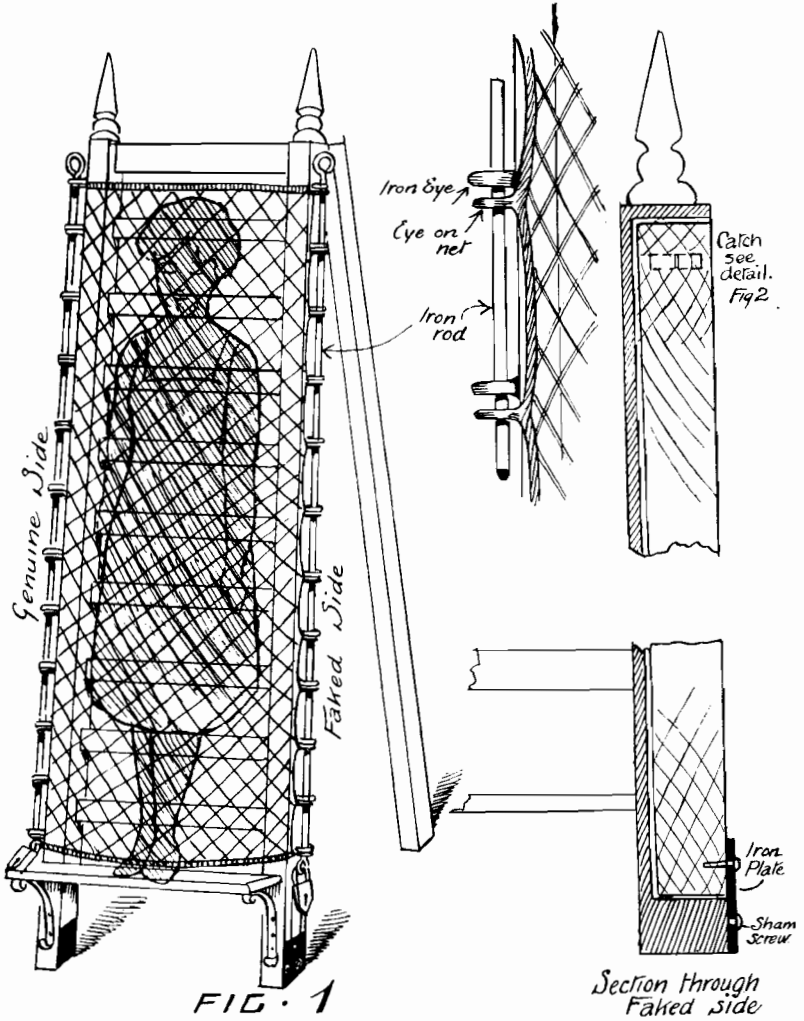
hat is concealed in that place. To perform the trick, therefore, the lady merely opens the trap in the platform, comes out, closes the trap, puts on the hat, and takes the pole from the centre of the tent as the curtains are drawn.

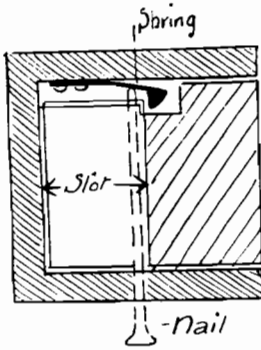
There is no reason, of course, why the illusion should not be worked by means of a trap in the stage. The careful performer, however, will probably prefer the method of the inventor. Many illusions are worked with traps in the stage, and if the stage is not a very large one, probably the same trap has to be used again and again. It has often occurred to me that at least a few members of an audience must "get wise" when they see each illusion placed in the same position on the stage. The presentation of an illusion like the Merry Widow, which can be placed in any position so long as the trap in the platform is at the back, will therefore help to set those wise members of the audience guessing "how it is done," and will also help to confuse their minds with regard to the methods employed in other illusions which are dependent on traps for their presentation.

The Servais Le Roy Illusion.

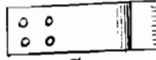
The illusion which Mr. Servais Le Roy kindly contributes to this collection is concerned with the mysterious disappearance of a girl under very unusual circumstances.

A small step-ladder is placed on the stage. A girl stands on the lowest rung of the ladder, and a net is securely fastened around her by means of two iron rods, which pass through the net and rings on the ladder, and are securely fastened with padlocks at the bottom of the ladder. A curtain is drawn around the girl, and in a few seconds is

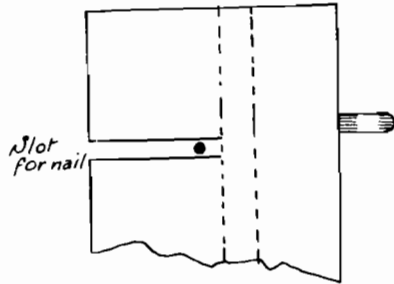




PLAN at catch.

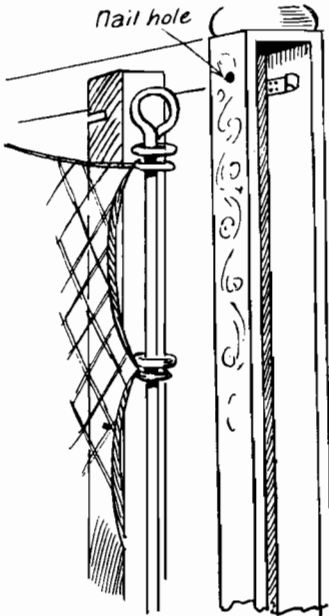


Catch.

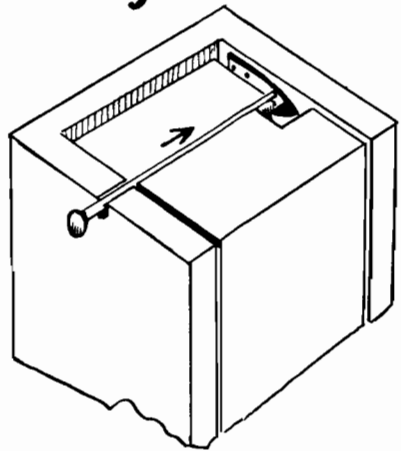


Top of inner post

Fig. 2.



Fake freed.



Sketch View.
Working of catch.

drawn back again, when the ladder is seen without the girl. Simultaneously the girl appears at the bottom of the hall, and comes running up to the stage.

The explanation is beautifully simple. The whole of one side of the ladder is faked in such a way that it can be lifted bodily away from the main portion. Thus the rod which secures the net to the ladder is not removed from the eyelets through which it passes, but is attached to that part of the ladder which is removed.

The construction of the top of the faked side of the ladder is shown in the illustrations. It will be seen that the part of the ladder which is to be removed is held in place by means of a catch. (See illustration showing the plan of the catch.) This catch, it will be noted, cannot be unfastened by anyone unacquainted with the secret. The lady on the ladder has to insert a long nail—which she has concealed about her—into a small hole at the top of the ladder. This nail presses back the catch and enables her to remove the side of the ladder. This is the work of a moment, because directly the side of the ladder is replaced the catch holds it securely, and the lady's share of the work is over. She passes down through a trap in the stage, and so gets to the back of the hall in readiness to run up the hall when the performer draws aside the curtain.

Final Notes.

By WILL GOLDSTON.

I DO not know that I have anything in particular to say in these final notes. It is in a spirit of pure light-heartedness that I pen them. "Exclusive Magical Secrets" is no longer an idea; it has shape and substance; it can stand and testify for itself; it is a book. And I am pleased both with it and with myself as the author of its being!

I remember years ago meeting a certain famous novelist. With some difficulty I persuaded him to talk about his books. One of his remarks impressed, and still impresses, me. It was this: "My books are my children. I love them. Is it not natural for a father to love his children?"

Was the remark egotistical? Perhaps; but pardonably so. Every good book is to some extent endowed with the individuality of its author, or it could not be a good book. In that sense it is his child. There can be no doubt as to the truth of this. Nor can there be any doubt that the individuality of a great writer continues to exist through his books rather than through the men and women who bear his name. Does, for instance, Dickens live to-day by his sons and daughters or their sons and daughters? Emphatically no! He lives by his books—the children of his brain.

In pure light-heartedness! "Exclusive Magical Secrets" is one of my literary children, and the favourite of them. I do not pursue the Dickens analogy any further. He is one of the gods of the world of letters; I belong to the mortals. Yet I allow myself to believe that for a while,

even if it be only a little while, I shall live among magicians as the author of "Exclusive Magical Secrets." Am I right? You who read this page, and have read the many pages that came before, can answer the question. Please do so. Please tell me whether I have achieved my aim—that is to say, whether in "Exclusive Magical Secrets" I have produced a good book, a book that was wanted, a book that is individual in tone, yet general from the point of view of usefulness to its readers.

I have endeavoured to make every explanation in the book absolutely plain. But it is possible that I may have failed occasionally. If any subscriber meets with a difficulty in any section, I shall be happy to do my best to elucidate it for him. It is open to him either to call on me or to write to me. I regard the subscribers to "Exclusive Magical Secrets" as in a way my personal friends. It will be a sincere pleasure to me to be of service to them.

No longer do I write light-heartedly. I have a last solemn injunction for my subscribers. It relates to the undertaking signed by all of them as to the secret nature of "Exclusive Magical Secrets." That undertaking was in the following terms:—" *I hereby undertake that if I am accepted as a subscriber to the book, I will not disclose the contents of the book to anybody except by performance of the tricks described, and will not re-write or re-publish any part thereof.*"

Very earnestly I ask all subscribers, as a matter of honour among themselves, to keep to the strict letter of this pledge. I do not anticipate that any of them will wilfully depart from it. But carelessness or accident might cause a breach. Let there be no such carelessness or accident! Let "Exclusive Magical Secrets" remain the exclusive property of its subscribers!

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