



Magic

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Magic

By BARROWS MUSSEY

Illustrated with photographs of the author's hands

By MARGARET HAWTHORN



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This book owes much to my friends in the magical fraternity, and most of all to Fulton Oursler, without whom it would certainly never have been written.

Neither can anything I shall ever write about magic be dissociated from the friendship and learning of John Mulholland.

B. M.



Magic



MAGIC, the scholars tell us, is the grandmother of religion and drama alike. At all events everyone, old or young, still loves to watch white magic—conjuring. And it is a rare person who has never wished he could amaze and amuse his friends with hocus-pocus.

But it seems like terrifyingly hard work to learn—which of course is the whole idea of conjuring.

To be a good professional magician certainly is not easy. On the other hand it is possible to make yourself quite an entertaining companion at parties with no more study than you would put on golf, say, or needlepoint. There are a great many tricks that amuse or mystify, or both, without requiring five hours' daily practice.

You can be quite an effective magician without knowing any difficult tricks; and then again you may be a master of manipulation, and yet be a terribly tiresome magician.

The mistake that a good many would-be magicians make is in concentrating their attention on the wrong thing. They not unnaturally suppose that tricks make the magician, and so they hastily memorize a series of small dodges, which they then get off with the sparkle and timing of a boy reciting from the third reader, stopping frequently to think how it goes next. A good many of the curmudgeons who don't like magic have suffered through performances of that kind. And the perpetrators are, apparently, the very ones who can never be restrained from showing their prowess on the slightest pretext.

Actually it is not the trick but the manner that makes the magician. If you can give comic recitations that are really comical, you are better equipped to be a good magician than you would be simply because you knew how to deal yourself all the spades in a pack of cards. The real skill you must cultivate in order to get any good out of

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this book is the skill of an entertainer. The book furnishes the tricks; you furnish the fun.

A trick, no matter how skillfully done, is a bore if its steps become confusing, or if the spectator does not know what is supposed to surprise him or when he is supposed to be surprised. Each trick must be clearly understandable, but without dragging, and it must have a plainly marked climax. Every motion you make must seem either logical or glaringly illogical; there can be no haphazard middle ground.

This means that you must be absolutely certain of what you are going to do, and must do it unhurriedly yet without hesitation. The slightest uncertainty on your part will communicate itself somehow to the audience, in the shape of discomfort or tedium.

This does not mean that you cannot keep them from knowing about accidents and failures; to carry these off with aplomb is one mark of a good magician. But unsure you must never be.

For that reason it is not true to say that any trick can ever be learned without practice. There are plenty of tricks that need no manual skill; but they must be fixed firmly in your mind, and there is scarcely any way of doing this except by practice—or perhaps rehearsal is a better word. You must know each step, and what you are going to say at each step, and—if for instance the actual trick consists of pressing a button—how to keep people's eyes somewhere else while you are pressing the button.

This brings me to speak of magical apparatus. A great many tricks, and some of the best, depend on devices seen or unseen that have been carefully prepared beforehand. Next to cameras, there is probably no way in which a person can spend more money than for magical properties. In this book, however, I am not going to help you part with your wealth. Beautifully-made apparatus offers a greater temptation to unrehearsed performance than the simple trick of skill and adroitness. Besides, if you are al-

ways ready to do your little act, without lugging around a trunk, so much the better. There are excellent books about magical apparatus (a list of them is appended to this volume), but here we are going to see what we can do with bare hands and a bare face.

It is customary in books of magic to give certain general rules for success, the most important being, "Never tell what you are going to do," and consequently, "Never do the same trick twice for the same audience." Those are primarily rules for avoiding detection, and even for this they are made only to be broken.

The rule I would give might have been enacted by the King of Hearts: Know what you are going to do, do it, and then stop; and let people know when you do stop.

People are naturally anxious to applaud, but can't if they don't know when is the right time. And they are anxious to be pleased, but they can't if you prevent them by making them uncomfortable.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to mention another rule that follows from this—always stop while they still want more. There is almost nothing more forlorn than a magician who has worn out his welcome—unless it be a writer of introductory chapters who has worn out his.

And so to magic.

WITH all the attention that has been given to after-dinner accomplishments, it is a trifle surprising that so little material is available on *during*-dinner tricks. Surely formal dinners are no less painful than the emptinesses that follow. If your dinner-partner is either very desirable or very monosyllabic, you may find that a trick or two will stand you in good stead.

Remember that good dinner-table tricks are scarce and difficult to do, because you are chained to one spot, and have to keep your hands above the table in plain sight, and because you have people close on both sides of you. There is also the difficulty that someone is sure to pipe up, "Oh, I didn't see that; *do* do it again!" Now this is something you must never do, because the people who were paying attention the first time will know what to expect, and will find out the trick. So you have either to worm out of it, which is ungracious, or to produce another trick. In this chapter are enough effects to arm you against such embarrassment.

Your first trick must serve as an opening wedge; it should appear to be mere trifling with something ready to your hand, so as to avoid any appearance of being eager to perform. For this purpose there is nothing better than

The Eternal Match.

Imagine the comic effect, when your neighbor wants a light for her cigarette, if you calmly take a burning match out of your coat pocket. More than that, when the cigarette is going, you put the match back in your pocket, still aflame; a few seconds later, as if absent-mindedly, you take it out, still burning merrily, to light your own cigarette; in all, the match may go in and out of your pocket four or five times, without ever being extinguished. You

do the thing perfectly casually, without saying a word about it, as though it were the most usual thing in the world. It is an ideal trick for "dead pan" comedy. For some reason mere repetition has a cumulative comic effect, and with your nonsensical match you should be able to produce shouts of laughter.

The trick itself is very simple to do. All you need is a few common wooden matches in your side pocket. When you want to begin, you take one of these matches, and strike it, still in the pocket, with your thumb-nail. The match will do no damage, because the flame is never in one place long enough to burn the cloth.

Having lighted the cigarette, you calmly replace the burning match in your pocket. This too is quite safe; you immediately smother the flame in a corner of the pocket (for this reason it is perhaps best to put the match in the trouser pocket, rather than the side pocket, which is likely to sag open, admitting air). You repeat with a fresh match as often as people seem amused.

Having begun on tricks with fire, you can go on with a series; the next may be

The Fireproof Hand.

In this trick you seem to have no fear of flame whatever. You hold your hand over a burning match, yet remain immune; you run a handkerchief through a candle-flame without disaster; finally you hold the lit match in your right hand, and extinguish the flame by blowing down your left sleeve.

A good way to begin is to take another lighted match from your pocket. "By dint of much study and hardship," you say, "I have at length been able to learn the secrets of the fire-eaters. For instance, this flame doesn't hurt my hand in the least." So saying, you run your hand through the fire, from finger-tip to root, and up and down the fingers. It looks rather painful, but as a matter of fact so long as you keep the match moving you can scarcely feel

any heat at all, let alone get burnt. "You can see that it isn't because of anything special about my fingers," you go on, "because I can do the same thing with a handkerchief." Either borrow a handkerchief, or take one of your own, twist it ropewise, and run it through the flame of the nearest candle. Keep the kerchief moving quite slowly, back and forth; no harm will come to it. But be careful about two things: don't use a handkerchief with perfume (which is highly inflammable) on it, and don't use a ten-dollar lace creation, because candle-flames are often sooty, and the owner of the handkerchief may not appreciate the new shadow tint.

Having finished your fire-resisting activities, you are left with a burning match in your right hand. You ought to be able to get quite a laugh when you put the match out by blowing down your left sleeve—the effect has a little the same inconsequent comicality as a Rube Goldberg cartoon. This is one of those trifling little tricks that you cannot dignify with speech; your face must do it all. You should survey the burning match for a few seconds with an air of puzzlement, as if wondering what to do about it; then, in sudden resolution, turn and blow vigorously down the other sleeve. Instantly the match goes out; you turn back to look at it, giving a slight nod of satisfaction, as who should say, "Well, I *thought* that would fix *that!*"

You will notice that I have omitted nothing except how to do the trick; that, however, is by far the easiest part, for you can make the match go out at the first try, whereas it may want some practice before you can make people think it funny that the match should go out. Hold the match near the unlit end, between first and second fingers, with the short end toward the inside of the hand. If you snap this short end with your thumb-nail, the jerk will extinguish the match. The only technical point of difficulty is to make the snapping movement as small and inconspicuous as possible, since the match is supposed to go out as it were by spontaneous extinction.

While you are playing around with lighted and unlighted matches and candles, you will probably have a chance to pull

The Leaping Flame.

To anyone who knows it, this is not really a trick, but a minor experiment in physics, but it is amusing just the same. The effect is that you hold a lighted match in each hand; one you blow out. You hold the lighted one *above* the unlighted one, whereupon the latter instantly takes fire again. Then you blow out the second one, and repeat the effect. By way of variation you can blow out a candle; if you hold a lighted match five or six inches above it, the candle will catch fire once more. The first part of the trick can be done only with wax matches such as are given out in books with cigarettes in the United States. The secret is that after the match is extinguished, a gray, smoky column of gas continues for a time to float up from the hot wax; if this column touches flame, it takes fire, and the match relights. The same thing happens with a candle, only to a much greater degree, so that you can hold your match several inches away.

Another joke with a match is so childish that its very silliness is pretty sure to cause hilarity. You throw a piece of match-stick into the air, and when it falls you apparently catch it balanced upright on the end of your thumb. A few abortive attempts before you finally succeed will add to the effect. You can make the trick even more ridiculous by delivering a speech on the art of balancing, telling how some jugglers balance one or even two balls on a stick; but this, you say, is nothing—even a trained seal can do that. When it comes to really difficult objects, however, such as matches—objects that are light and unmanageable—you have yet to meet your master.

During the course of this speech, you take the opportunity to break the match in halves. One half you exhibit in your right hand, while with the left first and second

fingers you are secretly sticking the end of the other half under the left thumb-nail. If you get this piece properly settled there, it will stay, projecting straight out from the end of the thumb. Bend the thumb, so that the fragment of match is in the palm and out of sight. When you are ready to have your incredible feat of skill actually work, toss the other piece into the air with the right hand. As the bit of wood comes down, you make a swoop at it with your left hand, and catch it in the fingers, at the same moment sticking the thumb straight up. There, apparently, is the flying piece of match, neatly balanced upright on the left thumb. Marvelous!

All the foregoing are more jokes than tricks. But with

Solid Through Solid

we come to a very pretty little trick, a trick that not one person in twenty will detect (see Plate 1). It is a fine impromptu beginning for a display of magic. If the conversation starts to drag, you have only to take two matches from the box on the ash-tray, show this trick, and the rest of the evening is yours. The effect is that you take a match in each hand, the forefinger on one end and the thumb on the other; you seem to pass the matches through each other at will, linking and unlinking the circles formed by finger, thumb, and match. The only "patter" you really need for the trick is, "Have you seen these new rubberized matches?" This may lead people to suspect that there is glue on the matches, but as a matter of fact there is nothing of the sort.

The left hand does all the dirty work. The match is placed so that one end is squarely in the middle of the thumb-tip, but the other end on the forefinger-tip so far over toward the second finger that the match is almost ready to slip off. Thus it is easy to lay the second finger against the match, clipping the latter securely between first and second fingers, so that the thumb can let go without the match's falling. The right-hand match slips through the gap thus opened next to the left thumb; the

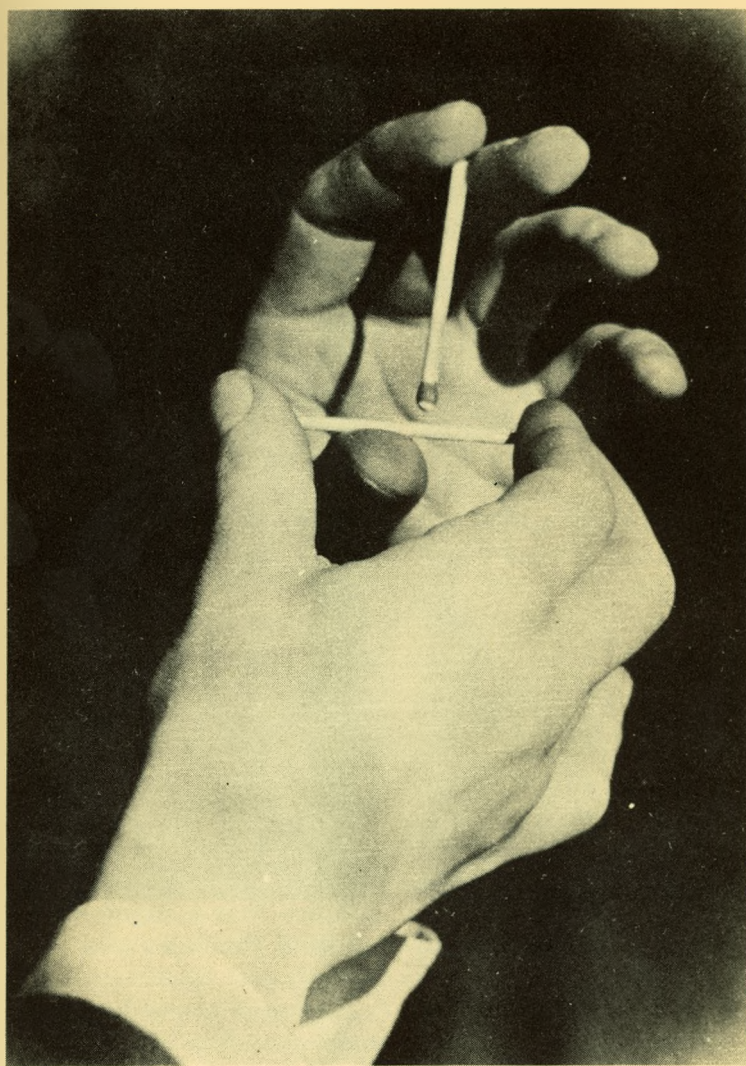


PLATE 1.—SOLID THROUGH SOLID (See Page 10)



PLATE 2.—THE MYSTERIOUS X-RAY CROSS (See Page 11)

left thumb returns to its position; the left second finger moves away from the match; and the two matches are linked! Keep the left hand in front, and the whole deception will be invisible. I may point out that everything here depends on proper angles of vision; so it is most advisable to try the trick a few times before a mirror. The same thing holds, indeed, for a great many tricks of manipulation.

Another puzzling little effect involving a match is

The Mysterious X-Ray Cross.

In this case the match serves merely as a convenient pencil to make a smudgy black line (see Plate 2). The trick makes quite an impression when used as an introduction to *The Effervescent Sugar* and *Television*, both described below. With a half-burnt match you make a black line on your palm; you draw a similar line, at right angles to the first, on the back of the same hand. You hold your hand behind you for a moment, to shield it from direct light, since only a small fraction of the spectrum can produce the effect you are after; when you bring the hand forward again, the mark has disappeared from the back of the hand, and is now to be found on the palm, crossing the other line!

The performance of the trick depends on the exact method of drawing the line on your palm. The line should be about three-quarters of an inch long, heavy and black. It must go diagonally from a point near the base of the little finger, inward and downward toward the center of the palm; it should lie in equal parts on both sides of the line or wrinkle that runs across the hand from between first and second fingers.

Then you make your second mark, on the back of the hand, in a similar position, but at right angles to the first mark, so that if the hand were transparent, the two lines would form a cross. From this point on, the trick is self-working. You have only to close your fist, folding the fingers down tight, but not curling them in. Put your hand behind you, and rub off the outside line against your coat.

It is difficult to explain, but will be evident on experiment, that the simple closing of the hand produces a cross-line, making exactly the same angle as the first one does with the wrinkle where the hand folds.

The trick called

Television

is an excellent follow-up for the *X-Ray Cross*.

You show both palms clean and bare. With a piece of chalk you make two marks on a table-top. "This," you say, "is the most highly developed form of television; it reduces the thing to fundamentals, and does away with all the elaborate apparatus. To take the process at its simplest, we want to send these marks from some sending-surface, such as this table-top, to a receiving-surface; my bare palm will do. If I rub the marks off the table-top, that is equivalent to sending them; my hand, being under the table-top, is directly in the path of the rays, and so it receives the lines in their original form."

In preparation for the trick, you must coat the nails of your left second and third fingers with chalk. This remains unnoticed because you show your hand open, and call attention only to the palm. To make the marks appear on the palm, you put your hand under the table, and close your fist; the nails, pressing against the palm, leave two marks. It is a good idea to experiment a little beforehand, so that you can draw on the table marks of the same shape and size as those that will appear on your palm.

By this time your neighbors at table will have seen about enough of match tricks. Perhaps you will wait for the next gap between courses, taking advantage of the general absorption in food to prepare for another trick. You can cause a lot of puzzlement and wasted effort by

Balancing a Glass of Water on Edge.

At first blush, this looks simple. You clear the table in front of you, removing any trifle that might jog your

elbow or put you out in your difficult feat. Then you take a tumbler of water about a third full, and tip it to quite an angle—perhaps sixty degrees—, where, after some jockeying, you balance it. Done with the proper amount of squinting, hand-trembling, and false starts, this gives the effect of a bit of real skill; but you can safely invite your neighbors to try it (yourself sitting well back, for the protection of your own shirt-front), for it is quite impossible by honest means.

The real secret of your marvelous sense of balance lies in a matchstick under the table-cloth. With it as a prop, you can balance the glass very nicely. If you want to repeat the trick, you will do well to shift the match around, under pretext of brushing crumbs from the table, lest people should get the idea that you are chained to one spot. Or tie a thread to the match.

Be sure to do some experimenting beforehand, because for success it is essential to discover the right angle of balance, and even more the exact amount of water to use.

If your neighbors have not spilled all the water, you pass on to

The Effervescent Sugar.

This most surprising trick is said to be a favorite of Hindu magicians, who do it with a fragment of pottery. They dress the effect up (as they do all the tricks they perform) with elaborate and impressive ceremony. First the performer gives the spectator a fragment of pottery, asking him to mark on it some symbol with which he has close associations. Then the spectator is to cast the potsherd from him into a river; then he is to hold out his right hand toward the water. He is to think intently of the symbol he has drawn. The wisdom of the East teaches the superiority of mind over Nature; if he but thinks intently enough of this symbol, it will return to him. And sure enough, when he looks at his right palm, there is the mark, exactly as he made it, drawn upon the skin!

You can, if you like, tell about this, and then offer to do the identical trick as a proof of the superiority of Occidental magicians. Or, if you prefer, you can give the sober scientific explanation printed below, pretending to expose your trick.

In front of you is the tumbler, with a little water in it. Produce or borrow a pencil (which should be soft, and is hence perhaps best carried with you, because you must not specify a "soft" pencil). Push the sugar-bowl toward your intended victim, inviting her to pick out absolutely any lump she likes. Then ask her to write her initial, a triangle, a cross—in short, some large, easily recognizable letter or design—on the side of the lump of sugar. Ask her to make the mark fairly black. While she is doing this, you must quietly dampen the ball of your thumb. If your glass contains ice-water, this is easiest done by rubbing your thumb on the outside of the glass, where the cold has condensed drops of water.

Now you ask for the lump of sugar, which you drop, design uppermost, into the water. In the process, however, you press your moist thumb against the design; and the design will be printed on your thumb. Now ask your victim to hold out her hand. Grasp it, your fingers above, your moist thumb pressing against her palm, and guide her hand over the mouth of the glass, where you release it and ask her to keep it until the sugar has dissolved. Of course this procedure has printed the design from your thumb on to her palm; but you must take every precaution to prevent this from being discovered yet. Now you explain: In dissolving the sugar gives off bubbles, as your audience can see. The bubbles rise to the top of the water, where they burst. But in each bubble that rises through the design, there is a minute particle of graphite. When the bubble bursts, it flings the graphite against the hand held over the glass. Thus in the course of a few seconds the bursting bubbles have outlined the design on your victim's palm—as she can see if she will look!

Mechanically, this trick is easy; your whole effort must be concentrated on preventing people from noticing that you touch the victim's hand. By keeping all attention focused continually on the sugar, you can make people forget any subsidiary details.

Lest anyone should ask you to repeat this trick, you can put a definite end to it with

The Vanishing Tumbler.

Pour out the remaining *eau sucrée* from the tumbler. Then get a sheet of newspaper. Like a great many other tricks, this one must be done before the spectators think it has begun; you must try to build up to a startling climax on which everyone is intent, but before that point is reached, the damage is done. The object in this instance is to make the tumbler disappear from under the newspaper; but you do not announce this at all. Instead, you put a coin on the table, and say that you are going to pull the coin through the glass. Press the newspaper down over the tumbler, shaping it so that it preserves the cylindrical form of the glass. Be careful about this, because that is the whole mechanical part of the trick. Now set the tumbler over the coin. On second thought, however, you decided that the trick may be dangerous, and that the audience must be protected; so you bring the tumbler over closer toward you, and shape your napkin around the newspaper. During this move, you work the bundle to the edge of the table, which permits the tumbler to fall into your lap; the deception should pass unnoticed, since the napkin-wrapped package (empty, but kept upright by the newspaper form) is immediately moved back and set over the coin. Now, you say, the difficult and dangerous part begins. You show your hands empty—no duplicate coins. You make a pass or two, as if to extract the coin. Then, suddenly, *wham!* you smash the package flat. The tumbler is gone!

You can reproduce the tumbler from under the table, if you like, by allowing it to slide from your lap down your

legs, which you stretch out for the purpose. If anyone happens to remember about the coin, you may point out that it did indeed pass through the tumbler, just as you intended.

One of the favorite tricks of Blackstone, the late Houdini, and various other professional magicians, is

The Traveling Pellets.

This is one of those "repeating" effects that are so comical if brightly done. You show three paper pellets; one you put in your pocket, the other two you hold in your left hand. Yet you open your hand, and out roll all three. Again: two in your hand, one in your pocket—open your fist, and out come three. You do it again and again. The first two or three times will not cause much excitement, but after the contrary pellet has returned for the fifth or sixth time, people begin to think its persistence is funny. After that, you must watch sharply for signs of weariness, so as not to drag the thing out too long.

To do the trick, you make *four* little pellets from bits of a paper napkin. Three you toss on the table; the fourth you nip between the tips of first and second fingers of the right hand, out of sight. With your right hand you pick up a pellet from the table, and drop it into your left hand, counting "one!". You do the same with a second, counting "two!", but at the same time you secretly let the hidden pellet fall in the left hand, which you immediately close. The third pellet you put into your pocket, counting "three!" It stays in the pocket just long enough to be caught between first and second finger-tips, as the hidden pellet was at the start of the trick. Then you take your hand out of the pocket, and with it, of course, the hidden pellet. Now everyone believes that there are two pellets in your left hand, and one in your pocket. So there is a surprise when you open your left hand, and roll out all three. You immediately put the first pellet back in your left hand, then the second (adding the concealed one), then the third into your pocket; this one you conceal and

bring out as before, ready to do the whole thing over again.

Using bits of the same paper napkin, you can turn to a trick that is well known in principle, but always effective if done with neatness and decision:

The Flying Spots.

Take a common table-knife—the straight-edged, plated sort, not the curved sharp steel kind—and six little bits of the paper napkin or newspaper. You wet the papers, and stick three of them at regular intervals along one side of the blade; the remaining three are stuck in exactly corresponding positions on the other side. Hold the knife in the right hand, toward the upper end of the handle, between the thumb on one side and the first and second fingers on the other. Now by a turn of the wrist you can show either side of the knife. In addition, you can roll the knife over with a twist of thumb and fingers; this is the essential move in the trick. The finger movement is always made secretly, the wrist movement always openly. The idea of the trick is that you remove the paper spots from the knife, a pair at a time, until all six are gone, so that you show both sides of the blade bare. Then, presto! all six are back again. With this foundation, you can make all sort of combinations—removing one paper and making it return, multiplying one paper into two, changing the colors, and so on. The mechanical routine is this:

Show both sides of the knife (wrist movement only) with all six papers in place. Make as if to remove the piece nearest the handle on each side, by sliding them both off at once between the left thumb and forefinger; roll the papers up into a wad, and throw them away. We say "them," because that is what the audience believes; as a matter of honest fact, you remove only the upper piece, leaving the one on the under side in place. Now you show "both" sides of the knife, with only two papers on each; this you do by combining wrist movement *and* finger

movement, thus presenting always the same side of the knife to view. The secret extra turn is marked by turning the knife with a considerable sweep of the wrist, so that the large movement distracts the eye from the smaller. You repeat this maneuver with all "six" (actually the upper three) papers in turn, ending by showing the knife apparently bare on both sides. With a wave of the hand (and a finger twist) you cause all six pieces to return; this time you keep the bare side away from the spectator, instead of toward him.

From this you will readily see how to execute the variations suggested above. In the case of color-changing, use confetti, and stick the knife up privately instead of openly. The trick has a great many names and a great many forms—the Jumping Peg Pencil, the Spot Sticks, the Magic Paddle—, but they are all the same fundamentally, and when you have mastered *The Flying Spots*, you can do any of the others just as well.

By the time you have got off all the tricks we have been describing, it will surely be time for coffee, at the very least. Unless you take your coffee black and unsweetened, you can continue with

The Floating Sugar,

which we have mentioned twice before. You must make sure that the coffee in your cup is the right depth—a matter to be found by practice—; then, while nobody is paying any particular attention, you gently drop a lump of sugar into the center of your cup, taking care that it shall land, and stay, on end. Now take another lump, and balance it with real care but apparent casualness across the upright lump, which is invisible in the brown depths. Your trick is ready: turn to your neighbor, saying, "Did you ever know that sugar will float in coffee?" Wait long enough for the point to sink in, then make haste to scuttle the floating lump with your spoon, stirring vigorously to dissolve the apparatus.

A puzzling and pretty effect that you can do at any time after the soup course is

The Ghost Echo.

The best part of the trick is the preliminary lecture you deliver on the subject of acoustics and sound-waves; the more you know about it, the more convincing you can be. After explaining the nature and properties of sound-waves, you finally come to the point of claiming that the waves are so tangible they can be caught and carried from place to place. In this state, of course, they are so faint as to be inaudible; but if magnified by being confined within a sounding-chamber, they become audible at once. The scientific members of your audience are likely—and very rightly, too—to doubt your statement. So you illustrate: you take a fork in your left hand; with your right hand you pinch the tines, which give off a musical sound; then you carry the inaudible sound between thumb and forefinger of your right hand, and deposit it in a tumbler standing before you. Immediately the tumbler begins to resound.

The trick does indeed depend on an acoustic principle, but not on the one you have explained. When you want the tumbler to resound, you have only to touch the butt end of the fork, which is still vibrating inaudibly, to the table; the table, acting as a sounding-board, magnifies the vibrations, and causes the glass to ring. Once you have set the fork in motion by pinching it, you must concentrate all your attention on your right hand, with its "imprisoned sound-waves," so as to distract the audience from the fork.

A trick that was sometimes used by the great English conjurer, Devant, is

The Coin in the Roll.

As a matter of fact, this effect has been a favorite publicity stunt of famous magicians since the middle of the

eighteenth century, if not earlier. They would buy a cake or roll, break it open, and, apparently astonished, would take a gold-piece from the center, followed by another gold-piece from the next cake, *ad infinitum*. In this form, and among ignorant people, the trick of course created a fantastic impression. But it is one that you can very easily duplicate, with the exception, perhaps, of the gold-piece. This difficulty too is avoided by borrowing a nickel; the nickel disappears under mysterious circumstances, only to reappear a few minutes later in a roll just fresh from the bread-basket.

Of course there are many ways of making a coin vanish, several of which I shall explain in the chapter devoted to *Coin of the Realm*; but there is one way peculiarly adapted to the needs of the man sitting at table. Borrow the nickel, and lay it on the table in front of you, close to the edge, while you put a roll in the middle of the table. Now the spectators see you pick up the coin with your right hand, and put it in your left fist, where it remains for a few seconds, and then disappears. That is, they see this if you are adroit with your trick. In actual fact, you put the tip of your right second finger on the nickel, and close your fist with a snap; this seems to shut the coin in your hand, but really zips it up your sleeve. You keep the hand firmly closed as if the nickel were there; pretend to put the imaginary nickel in your left hand, which you keep shut from then on. Now you explain that you are going to make this nickel—pointing to your left hand, and thus incidentally showing your right hand empty—disappear and travel into the roll. Go through the motions of throwing the nickel into the roll; this gives you the chance to drop your right hand below the table, so that the coin will fall from your sleeve into your cupped fingers. Show your left hand empty (holding the pose for at least three seconds, so that no one can fail to see what you mean), and then pick up the roll in both hands, thumbs against the top, fingers underneath. Press down with your thumbs,

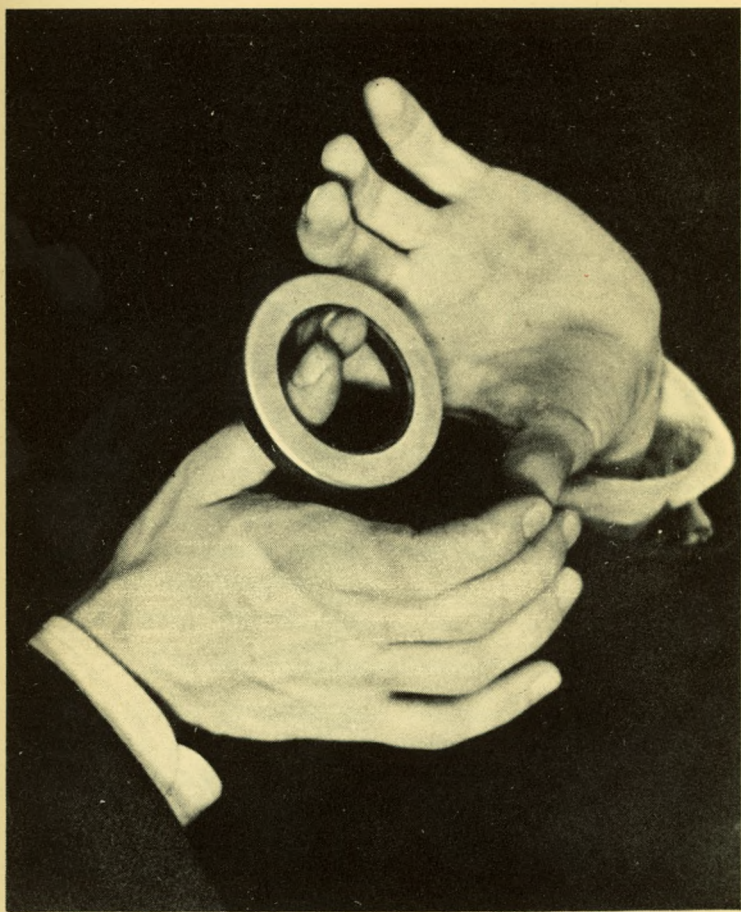


PLATE 3.—THE DEVILISH NAPKIN-RING PUZZLE (See Page 21)



and pull outward with the fingers; this breaks the roll across the bottom. You take the opportunity to jam the nickel into the crack as far as it will go; then push down with the thumbs, and up with the fingers. The top of the roll parts, revealing the nickel. This is really a first-class trick, and well worth practising until you can work it easily and without a hitch.

At a buffet supper, you can show how

To Balance a Paper Napkin.

First let the others try in vain for a while. Then you grasp the napkin at two diagonally opposite corners, and pull firmly and slowly, taking care not to tear the paper. This has the effect of loosening the crimp in the paper along a straight line between corners, and of tightening and stiffening it on each side. The napkin can then be balanced very easily on the finger-tip; it will stand upright, stiff and straight.

And finally there is

The Devilish Napkin-Ring Puzzle.

This is the problem: you put your two forefingers through a napkin-ring from opposite sides, and twirl the ring around for a few seconds; then you put your thumb-tips and forefinger-tops together. Apparently you have enclosed the napkin-ring in a circle from which there is no escape, unless you separate your fingers. Yet you drop the ring without moving your fingers at all (see Plate 3).

It looks easy. You can undoubtedly get almost everyone at table to try, and everyone will be confident. But they can twirl and twiddle and put their finger-tips together for a week, with scarcely a chance of solving the puzzle. So can you, unless you know how.

The preliminary twirls have nothing to do with the puzzle; they just make the trick look complicated. The essential point is to arrive at a position with the right forefinger at the bottom of the ring, the inside of the finger

toward the floor; and the left forefinger at the top of the ring, the inside toward the ceiling. In this position, you bring together the right forefinger and right thumb, and the left forefinger and left thumb.

Without hesitation, you reverse the position, putting the right forefinger against the left thumb, and the left forefinger against the right thumb. This forms a circle of the four digits, but the napkin-ring is outside the circle, and will drop to the table.

In theory there is nothing mysterious about this at all, but in practice anyone who tries it is sure to make the fatal mistake of either trying to get the final position without going through the preliminaries, or stopping after he has finished the preliminaries. Sometimes entire dinner-parties will be convulsed while all the guests twiddle their fingers inside napkin-rings, unable for the life of them to let the things go.

THIS chapter is about card tricks, and I think it is particularly well worth your study. There are such hordes of card tricks, and it is so easy for a novice to fall into bad company among them (after all, is there anything more horrid than a dull card trick dully done?) that guidance among the rabble is indispensable.

Card tricks demanding neither dexterity nor prearrangement are likely to be of the more tedious mathematical order; but there are some surprising ones that anyone with a little intelligence can do the first time he sits down to the bridge-table with them.

If it is a formal bridge-party, the hostess will bring out new packs of cards; this being the case, you are immediately set to produce yourself as

The Demon Card-Sharp.

Take the pack out of the case, calling attention as you do so to the government seal that proves it has not been tampered with. Ask a number of people each to cut a small packet from the top of the deck, taking care that no one but himself shall see the bottom card of his cut. Yet no matter how careful he is, you instantly tell him what card he has cut to, and you repeat this miracle all around the circle, without a second's hesitation.

People are likely to suspect marked cards; but really you are making use of a stacked pack that the obliging manufacturer has arranged all ready for you. New cards are packed in regular sequence, from ace to King or from ace to deuce of a suit together; a glance will show which order is followed. When the first spectator has cut of his packet, you quietly lift the lower left-hand corner of the top card remaining on the deck, and glance at the index. The next card above this in sequence, of course, is the one which

the spectator has cut. This you can repeat as long as there are any cards left. Then gather the packets up from the spectators in reverse order, so that the sequence of the deck shall be preserved.

This trick might well be shown as an example of how card-sharps always know where any given card lies. This in itself is invaluable to a card-player; but it would be better yet to make the cards come when and as wanted. This, too, you can do; when you have collected the pack in its original order, you show

The Poker Trick.

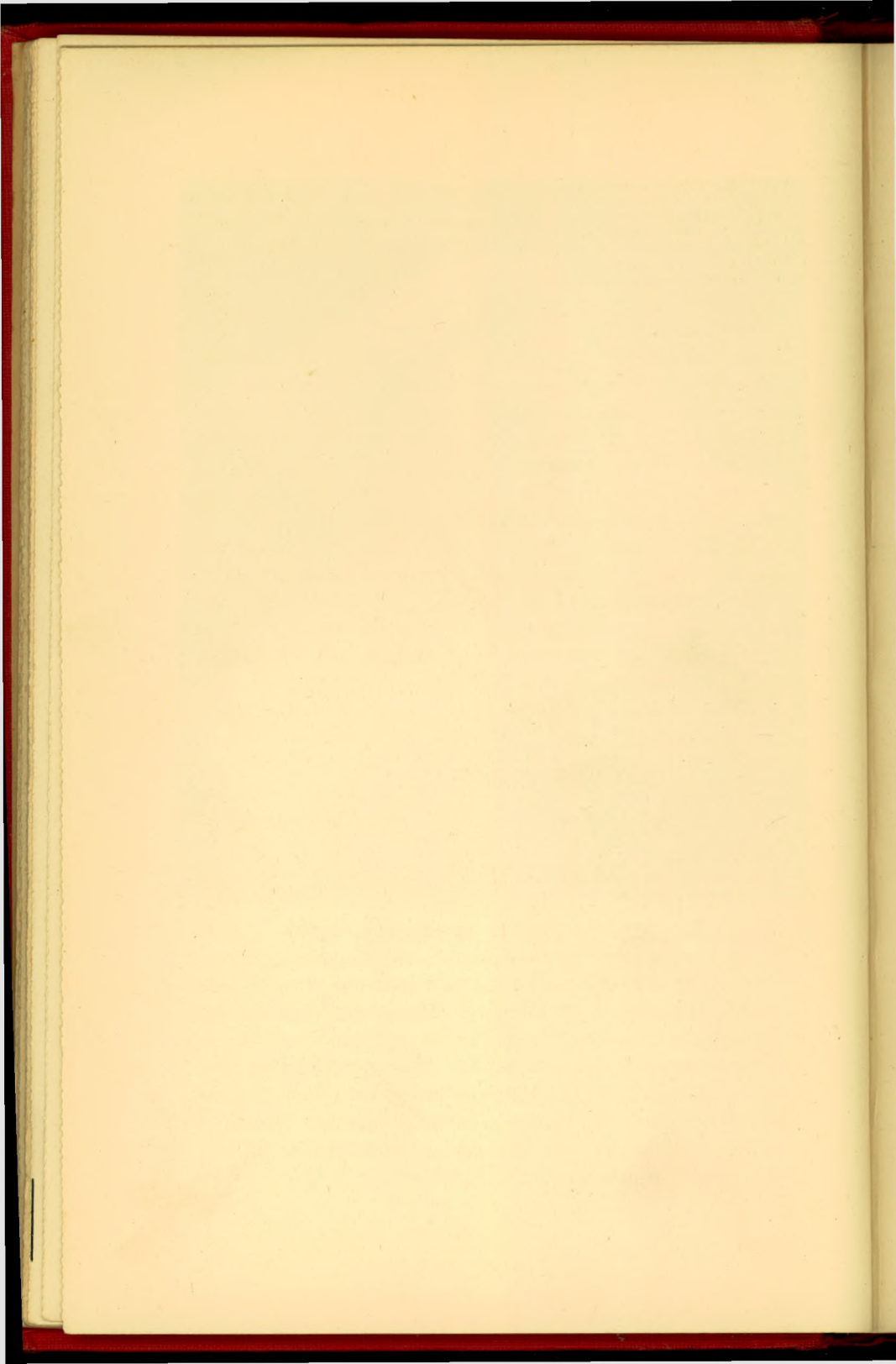
The effect of this simple trick upon a group of card-players is devastating. You deal six poker hands; the other five players stand pat on full-houses, but you draw a whole new hand, and get a straight flush! (See Plate 4.)

You do, we must confess, need a few minutes of practice before you attempt the trick. But the movement that needs practice is not at all hard to learn; its object is unnoticeably to slip the top card of the pack to the bottom. Hold the pack in your left hand, in dealing position. With the right hand you seize the cards by the ends, the fingers in front, the thumb at the back. Now the fingers of the left hand, pressing down on the top card, draw it off sideways, and so under the pack. The right hand acts as a shield for the movement of the left.

This move ("the slip," professional magicians call it) is only a detail, though an indispensable one, in the Poker Trick. The foundation of the trick is the regular sequence of the cards, which remains undisturbed after your previous trick. Give the cards to be cut by a spectator as often as he likes. (A person who does card tricks will have many occasions to be thankful for the fact that *cutting the cards has no effect on their arrangement.*) "Now that the cards have been thoroughly mixed," you say, hoping that no one in the company recognizes this for the black lie it is, "I will deal a six-handed game of poker to myself and



PLATE 4.—THE SLIP (POKER TRICK) (See Page 24)



any five other people who will sit in." You start off perfectly honest, dealing two rounds. After you have given yourself your second card, you hesitate, on the pretext of having given someone two cards at once, or of puffing at your cigarette, or any other convenient stall, long enough to slip the top card of the pack secretly to the bottom. Then deal another two rounds, and afterward slip another card to the bottom. The last round again is perfectly regular. Everyone looks at his hand, and everyone, having a full-house, will stand pat. You will also have a full-house, but it will be the lowest of the six. Therefore, pretending displeasure, you discard your entire hand, and draw the top five cards. These, coming in order from the middle of a suit, of course constitute a straight flush. It remains for you to boost things up, and to see that the raising is lively.

If you happen, like the author, to dislike bridge, the poker trick is a very adequate form of protection.

If, on the other hand, you are already playing bridge, and you want a breathing spell between rounds, you can make use of the red and the blue packs for one of the best card tricks in existence,

The Coincidence.

I am indebted for this trick to Mr. John Mulholland, of New York.

Pick up the red pack and (secretly) one blue-packed card, which you put at the bottom of the pack long enough to find out what the card is. Then cut the pack so that the blue card shall be about one-third of the way down from the top. Run through the pack (taking pains to hide the blue back among the reds) and quietly slip to the top the red card corresponding to the blue one you have hidden.

Now the effect proper begins. Bear in mind that this trick may confuse the spectators unless each step is made perfectly clear; take plenty of time to explain everything you do, and make sure the person helping you follows directions exactly.

Ask your bridge partner, or whoever your victim is, to take the blue pack, and shuffle it, and then to remove one card, and, *without* looking at it, to put it face down on the table. As he does this, you take a card (the red one that you had picked out), and put it likewise face down on the table without looking at it. "Each of us has picked out a card at random," you say, "and nobody knows what either card is. We will trade cards; you stick my red card into your blue pack, and I will stick your blue card into my red pack." In sticking in his blue card, be sure to put it a bit more than half-way down in the pack, so that it will be comfortably below the blue card you already have. "Wait," you go on, "we had better leave our cards sticking out." With this, you run through your pack as far as the first (and, of course, supposedly the only) blue card, which is really the one you planted at the start. Pull the card part-way out of the pack. Once again you emphasize the haphazard choice of cards; then show the blue card, saying, "You happen to have given me the ———; what did you get from me?" The victim turns up his red card. It is the same as the blue one you have just displayed!

If you are absolutely obliged to do this trick again, you can do so by getting a glimpse of the blue card left in your pack, and cutting it up toward the top; the trick then proceeds as before.

One of the best two non-sleight-of-hand card tricks I have ever seen is

The Whispering Queen.

The other, *The Treacherous Voice*, is described later. *The Whispering Queen* depends about ninety per cent on the dramatic talents of the exhibitor, although the trick is puzzling enough in itself.

You announce that most ladies (those present excepted, of course) are talkative, and the Queen of Hearts (*vide Alice in Wonderland*) unusually so. This trick is to be a practical demonstration of the fact. The cards are thor-

oughly shuffled, and the Queen of Hearts, the heroine of the tale, is removed. Then three cards are taken from the pack, careful precautions being taken that no one shall see them. To make assurance doubly sure, the cards are slid face-down half-way under piles of books, or the carpet, or anything else that will hold them flat. Then the Queen is put to work. She is slid face up under the first card, so that she can see what it is. You take her back; you hold her to your ear for a moment (here is an excellent chance for comedy, if you are gifted that way), while she tells you what she has seen; thus instructed, you announce publicly the name of the first card. The same thing happens to the second and third cards, and there is no intrinsic reason why you cannot expand the trick to include five or a dozen. Furthermore, all the things that people suspect—reflection from the face of the Queen, marked cards, a stacked pack, etc.—are sure to be wrong. The trick is too good for that.

Shuffle the pack, and then run through it, find and remove the Queen of Hearts. You do want the Queen, of course, but the real purpose of the search is for you to memorize the bottom three cards of the pack in order. Lay down the pack, and ask for someone to help you. Expand upon the fact that you are not going to touch the pack during the experiment, that this is not a trick but a genuine property of the cards, and so on. Ask your volunteer to cut the pack into two piles, and then to point to one of the piles. This looks fair enough; but whichever half he points to, you leave the original bottom half on the table, to be used. Ask him to count the cards face down on the table. When he tells you the number, you consider doubtfully for a second, then say you guess that number will probably be about right. (The counting serves a purpose, for it brings your three memorized cards to the top, in the order you learned.)

Ask your assistant to remove the top card from the packet, taking most particular care that no one shall see it; and tell him to place it face down half-way under some-

thing, as above mentioned. Have him repeat this with the other cards, and then let him slide the Queen underneath, giving her to you after each card. Each time, after some stalling and whispered conversation with the Queen, you name the card in question; this is easy, of course, since you have known the three memorized cards from the beginning. As mentioned above, there is no reason why the trick should be limited to three cards, if you can remember more, though you must be very careful not to wear out your friends. A clever lady of my acquaintance, not a magician, but accustomed to post-mortem discussion of bridge-hands, frequently performs the trick with fifteen cards. It requires considerable social charm, however, to carry off so many.

Every child knows the "twenty-one card" trick, wherein three heaps of cards are dealt out three times, and a card noticed by a spectator is at long last found to be the eleventh in the pile. This is the prototype for a large number of equally stupid tricks that have brought mathematical card effects into well-deserved ill repute. Nevertheless, there *is* a good mathematical card trick. It is

The Row of Ten Cards.

This trick is no harder than *The Whispering Queen*; I learned it from the engineer of a lake steamer, in the intervals when he was not firing the boiler with cedar slabs.

The trick is good because it is simple, easy to understand, and because it looks like clairvoyance, not like mathematics. You lay out ten cards, running in order from ace to ten-spot, face down on the table. Then you turn your back, or leave the room, while somebody moves any number of cards from one end of the row to the other. You come back; without hesitation you turn over a card, and lo! the spots on the cards are as many as the number of cards that were moved! You do it again and again. Then, to show that the trick is real mind-reading, you tell the spectator simply to *think* of how many he is *going* to move next

time. You look him in the eye for a moment, then tell him you know already that *after* he has moved the number he was thinking of, the —th card will show that number! And sure enough, you hit it unfailingly.

Lay your ten cards out in order, face down, beginning with the ace at the left, so that they lie like this:

A 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Now explain that when you leave the room, or turn your back, the audience may move as many cards as they like, from the *left* and of the row to the *right* end, *without in any way disturbing their order, or that of the rest of the row*. It makes no difference whether they are moved one after another or *en bloc*, but they must always go strictly in order and from left to right. By way of showing people what to do, you move three cards yourself, so that when you are through they lie so:

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 A 2 3

Go away, and allow the audience to move as many as they like. When they call out that they are through, come back, and turn over the fourth card from the right-hand end of the row. The number of spots on it will indicate how many cards were moved. Add the number of spots on this card to four, its position in the row (reckoned from the right-hand end); put the cards back, and have the audience move again. Thus, suppose three cards had been moved the first time by the audience: three (number of spots on card you turned up) plus four (its position in the row) equals seven. Next time, turn up the seventh card from the right-hand end. As before, the spots show the number moved.

Add the number of spots on this new card to seven (position in row), and have the audience move again. If the sum is over ten, count the left end card as ten, the right end card as eleven, and so begin going up the row again. In any case, to find the place in the row at which the card stands whose spots give the number moved, add the number moved the previous time to the place (counting

from the right-hand end) occupied by the card you turned up that time. Thus the mind-reading finish is explained, because you always know in advance the eventual position of the card that will indicate the number moved. But the effect is greatly enhanced by asking the spectator to think of how many he is going to move, and then telling him that such-and-such a card will show that number when he has moved the cards.

Your original turning up of the fourth card was the result of adding three, the number you yourself moved "by way of illustration," to one, the position of the card you would have looked at the very first time of all.

Another fine trick that has a mathematical look, but is really just a matter of underhanded work on your part, is

Penny Telepathy.

This is really a combination card and coin effect. You borrow a cent, which you give to some spectator for safe keeping. Then another spectator deals the pack face down into four piles. During the entire course of the trick you do not touch the cards. After the spectator has dealt the four heaps, you have the spectator who is acting as treasurer read off the date on the coin. Then the dealer turns up the piles of cards. The bottom cards of the four heaps form the same number as the date on the coin!

This trick is good because it is simple, both in effect and execution, and because you appear to take no part in it. Card tricks in particular are more surprising when the audience themselves perform all the necessary operations, since trickery on your part seems impossible.

The only prerequisite for this effect is the possession of a cent. Your first step is to make sure privately of the date on the cent; the date must have no zeros. Suppose the date is 1917. With the sham (but not phoney) casualness that you must take care to acquire if you want to do much with card tricks, you glance through the pack—as if to make sure, for instance, that all the cards are facing the same

way—and sneak out an ace, a nine, another ace, and a seven, slipping them to the top of the pack in that order. Put the pack down on the table; you do not touch it again during the trick.

Hold the cent concealed in your right hand by loosely closing your fist, leaving thumb and forefinger carelessly outstretched. Ask someone to lend you a cent. You receive it between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. Immediately you turn and hand it to someone else. The audience, not knowing what to expect, are not watching sharply enough to see you exchange the coins. You make the exchange by putting your own coin into your left hand, while you retain the borrowed cent between thumb and forefinger; with your left hand you give the second spectator "the" coin. Pocket the borrowed cent at the first chance. Of course every essential point of the trick is now done with; but the audience thinks it is just about to start. So far, you have hardly said anything except to borrow the coin, and to ask someone to take care of it.

Now you call for another volunteer; him you ask to take the cards, noticing that you never handle the pack at all during the trick. He is to cut off part of the pack, and is to take what he has cut (this means the top half), and to deal the top four cards in a row face down on the table, and then the rest of the packet consecutively on top of the four. (Of course this brings your four cards on to the table, and the dealing out of the remainder is just a stall to keep his mind off them.)

Now you recapitulate (always a good plan when the proceedings have lasted any length of time). "In this trick you do everything yourselves; you hold the cent; you have dealt out the cards, which I haven't touched at all. Now will you please read out the date of the coin? Nineteen-seventeen? And will you please turn over those four piles of cards? Remember, you're the first person to touch them since we've known the date." With this the four piles are turned up, revealing the 1917 on the bottoms.

Another trick you can use if you don't like to play bridge is

The Sensitive Finger-Tips.

If you are doing it at a bridge-party, you can show it as another example of how card-sharps win; if simply at a social occasion, you might perhaps tell the fairy-story of the true princess, who was black-and-blue because there was a pea under the twelfth mattress on her bed. Then you point out that she was really made of coarse stuff, because the pea must have been at least a quarter of an inch in diameter; why, even you can do better than that! With this you pick up the deck (the more thoroughly it has been shuffled, the better), and start feeling the bottom card. You explain that by dint of daily practice you have come to the point where you can distinguish all the cards by feeling the ink. You prove your statement by naming card after card, although the face of the pack is away from you and toward the audience the whole time.

Take a pack someone has just finished "making" for the next hand—or any pack that people are sure has been shuffled—and hold it in your right hand, the four fingers at one end, the thumb at the other, the back of the cards toward your palm (see Plate 5). Hold the pack upright, facing away from you, so that you are the only one who cannot see the bottom card. Now you explain about your delicate sense of touch. As you talk about touch, you hold out your left hand, palm up. This calls attention, without any word from you, to the fact that the hand is empty. If you said, "You see I have nothing in my hand," the result would be, a. that you would insult your audience's intelligence; b. that people would think you were burlesquing a stage magician; c. that they would think there was probably something in your hand after all.

Thus having shown that you are palming no mirrors, you pass your left hand across the front of the pack. One or two more feels, as if in uncertainty, and you name the



PLATE 5.—THE SENSITIVE FINGER TIPS (See Page 32)

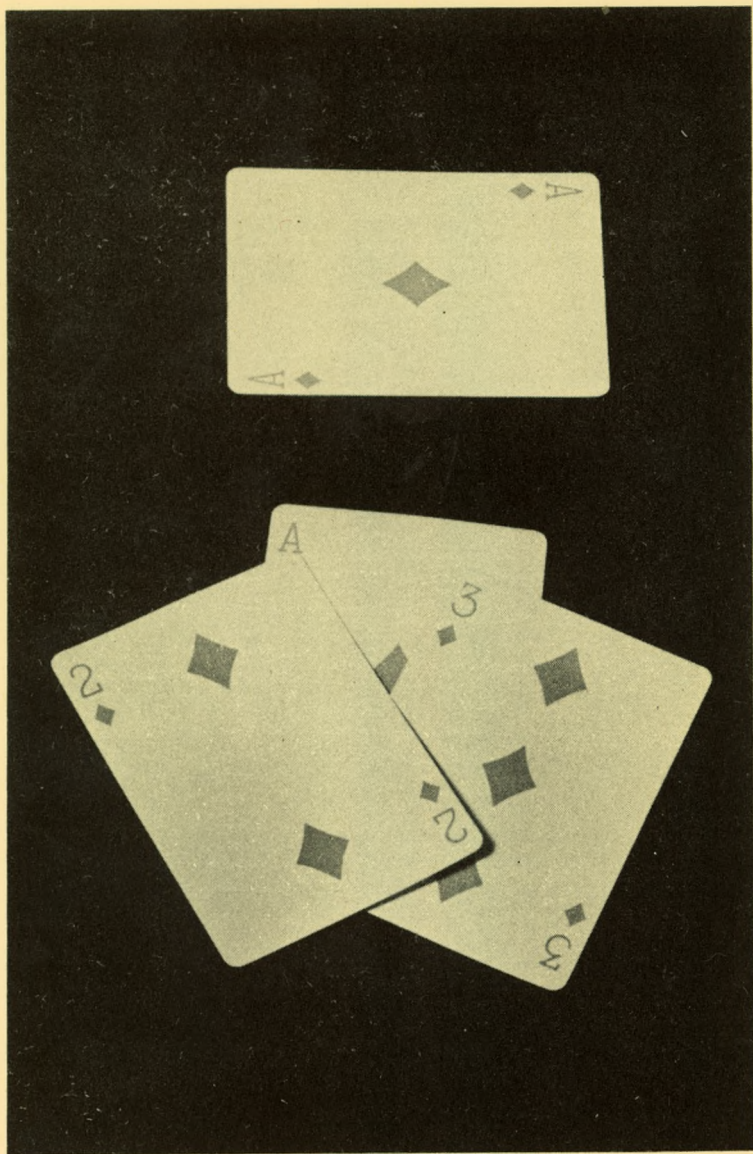


PLATE 6.—THE ASTRAL ACE (See Page 33)

card. The secret is simple, but all the better for that. Hold the pack below eye-level, fairly close to the body, and rather to the right. When you pass your left hand over the front card, the pack is largely hidden; under this cover you squeeze the ends of the pack, causing the cards to bend toward the palm. The squeeze is immediately relaxed, but in the second that the pack is bent, you can catch a glimpse of the index on the lower left-hand corner of the front card. You must study to hold the cards as high as possible, and to use as slight and momentary a bend as you can manage.

The Astral Ace

is one of the prettiest of impromptu effects with cards. You show the ace, deuce, and three of diamonds, and challenge people to catch the ace. You put it on top of the pack, give it a flip, and presto! it is at the bottom of the pack. You can pass the pack out for examination; of course there is no second ace.

To do the trick, you must first put the real ace of diamonds at the bottom of the pack. Then you take the ace of hearts and arrange it behind the deuce and three, which overlap each other in a V-shape, in such fashion that only the point of the heart shows. This point might equally well be the point of a diamond, and people will accept it as such (see Plate 6).

After the trick is done, shuffle the cards before handing them to the audience, so that the ace of hearts is mixed in with the rest.

For many years bar-room sharpers kept themselves in pocket-money with a variant of

The Siamese Aces.

The way they did it necessitated an *entente cordiale* with the barkeep, but as I explain it here, you can work it single-handed, and you will find it one of the best card tricks you could wish for.

Baldly stated, the effect is that the two black aces are put in different parts of the pack; yet when the cards are dealt out one at a time, the aces invariably come out together.

Pick out the two black aces; at the same time, take occasion to memorize the top card of the pack. Toss out the Siamese Twin Aces on the table for people to look at. Cut the pack into three heaps. Put one ace on top of the original top heap, that is, on top of the memorized card. Put another heap on top of that. Put the second ace on top of that, and crown the structure with the third heap. Obviously, as you point out, the two aces are separated by a good third of the pack; yet when you deal the cards off, the aces come out together.

The secret is largely in the way you deal the cards. Hold the pack back to palm in your left hand, the fingers curled across the face of the cards, the back of the hand upward. With your right second finger and thumb you draw the cards one by one from the bottom of the pack, throwing them face upward on the table. You keep this up perfectly honestly until you have dealt out the card you memorized. Then the next card is the first black ace. But instead of dealing it, you draw it back about half an inch with your left third finger, so that you can deal the card above it. Go on this way, still retaining the ace, until the other ace turns up; then deal the ace you have been holding back.

Now we come to the longest entry in the whole catalogue of card tricks: that showing

How to Find Chosen Cards.

There you have the first half of a good ninety per cent of all card tricks; the second half lies in the effective revealing of your discovery, a subject that you will find in the next section.

Most card tricks, as aforesaid, require you to have control of a card that someone has selected without your see-



PLATE 7.—THE FORCE (THE SLIP) (See Page 35)

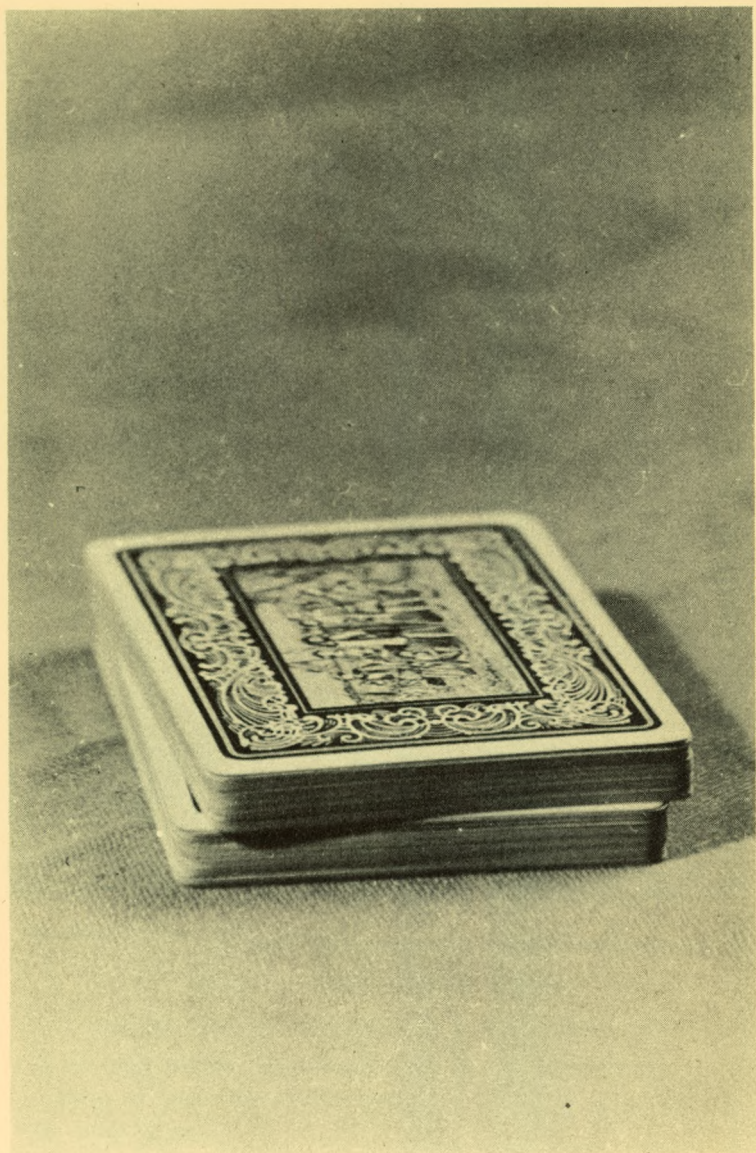


PLATE 8.—CARD LOCATION (THE STEP) (See Page 36)

ing its face. You can do this either by secretly compelling him to take a particular card known to you (a process known in the profession as "forcing"), or by giving him free choice, and then somehow keeping track of the card he takes. Forcing as professional conjurers practice it requires skill and a decided knack; but the method called the "slip" does very well under ordinary circumstances, and it is so useful that I feel obliged to explain it.

The ordinary way of having a person select a card is to spread the pack out fanwise. This is all right if the choice is to be free, but for forcing you must work differently (see Plate 7). Hold the pack in dealing position in your left hand, but with the fingers curled well over on top of the pack. Put your right thumb at the near end of the pack, and your right fingers at the far end. Pull up and back with the right fingers, thus rapidly riffling the front end of the pack. Ask someone to stick in a pencil anywhere he wants as the cards flash by. You break the pack at that point, letting him take the card under the pencil—apparently. Really, he gets the card that was on top of the deck a moment before. When the pencil goes in, you stop riffling, and stretch out your left arm, carrying the lower half of the pack toward the "forcee," while the upper half remains in the right hand. After a trial or two, you will find that by pressing on the top of the pack with the left fingers, you can carry away the top card—the one to be forced—, which thereupon drops on the lower half of the pack, and is taken for the original card under the pencil.

You can do many tricks with the force. One of the most striking effects of a cabaret performer I used to know was to pass among the crowd, allowing people to select cards; scarcely had they touched a card when he would name it. He continued to do it after someone had shuffled the pack, with a strange deck—under any circumstances.

You can come quite close to duplicating the trick; all you need do is sneak a look at the top card of the deck each time just before you have a card selected.

You can introduce the *Coincidence* trick, described above, by writing the name of a card on an old score-card, and giving it to someone to put in his pocket; then you force the corresponding card. Again, after a card has been freely selected, and discovered by one of the methods described below, you can force it on the drawer, to his no little surprise.

For the discovery of a freely selected card, you have a large choice of methods. One is the "bridge." Give the pack a concave bend, lengthwise; then fan the cards, and offer them to someone for selection. While the victim is looking at the card he has drawn, you give the pack a convex bend. Thus the chosen card, when replaced, is bent—"bridged"—in the opposite direction from all the rest of the pack. In giving the cards an old-fashioned overhand shuffle, it is easy to locate the selected card; at the finish of the shuffle, you simply cut to the bridged card, thus bringing it to the top of the pack.

Another method, which has a stunning effect if skillfully done, takes place with the pack lying on the table, and you at some little distance. Square the pack up fairly well, and put it on the table. "I won't touch the cards at all," you say, "Will you just lift off part of the pack, and look at the bottom card of your cut, and then put it back on the pack? Thank you, that's fine. Now you looked at the card you wanted, didn't you—I didn't make you take any special one? And I haven't had my hands on the cards at all. All right—" and you go on with your trick. Evidently in this case you cannot manipulate the cards; so you count on the spectator to do it for you. The fact is that if you hurry him a little, he is quite sure to replace his packet carelessly, leaving a step at the sides or ends of the pack (see Plate 8). It is simple, then, to pick the pack up, and to cut it at the step, thus bringing the chosen card to the bottom. This very brazen move can be masked only by almost lackadaisical carelessness.

Probably the best-known of all ways of finding a chosen card is that of glancing at the card above the chosen one when the latter is being replaced in the pack. In fact, it is so well known that people are always likely to suspect you of using it, no matter what the trick. Nevertheless, if properly disguised it comes in handy sometimes. The least obvious way to do it is to glance at the *bottom* card of the pack. Hold the deck in your left hand. With the right hand, draw out the under half of the pack, extending the left hand with the upper half for the drawn card to be replaced on. Then drop the packet in the right hand on top of all. Naturally, when you run through the pack the chosen card is the one below the original bottom card of the pack. You will find particularly good use for this when we come to the wonderful *Spelling Trick*.

Now someone has chosen a card, and replaced it, and you have found it. The easier half of your task is behind you. So far your operations have been technical; from now on they are dramatic. Your problem is

How to Disclose the Chosen Card.

On your success in this depends the effect of the trick; the most astounding skill in discovering selected cards is next to useless if you cannot sell your knowledge effectively.

In the following tricks, you are supposed to have found the chosen card, and to have brought it to the top of the deck.

A sensational finish, good if the cards are too old to matter, is to fling the whole pack into the air, and catch the chosen card from among those that come fluttering down. The essential secret of this trick is that you spit on your fingers. The chosen card is resting on the top of the pack; you throw the pack up from the waist with a short jerk, darting your hand back out of sight behind your leg in order to conceal the card, which sticks to the wet fingers. For an instant you stand dramatically posed, looking upward; as the cards shower down, you make a stab among

them, and emerge clutching the chosen card. Naturally the audience has no idea that you have been clutching it for some three seconds beforehand.

A less spectacular trick, but one both easy and puzzling, is to have your victim name a number. You announce that the chosen card will be found at that number from the top of the pack. Since you have just brought the card to the top, this must be classified as a deliberate untruth; and when the cards are counted down on the table by way of a check-up, it stands revealed as such. You must act as daunted as possible, but suggest that you have one more try. With that you sweep on to the top of the pack the cards which have been counted off. This move, obviously, places the original top card (the chosen one) at the designated number. Your chief concern for the moment is to prevent this fact from occurring to the spectators. You square the pack up exactly, riffle, hold the cards up to your ear to listen as they flick by, and in general imitate Heifetz tuning up. Finally you hand the deck to your victim, telling him to count once more. If you have played your part well, he and everyone else will be much surprised at your success.

If you have ever seen a magician of any pretensions, you must surely have seen

The Rising Cards.

Chosen cards rise spontaneously from a deck standing in a goblet. This is probably the oldest card trick there is, but it has lost nothing with age. The various stage methods do not belong in this book, but the self-service version which follows is amusing enough for you to add to your repertoire.

Have two cards chosen. Keep track of both by means of the bridge, and finish your shuffle by bringing both to the top of the deck (see Plate 9).

The first card you cause to rise "by static electricity"—it clings to your right forefinger as you raise the latter



PLATE 9.—THE RISING CARDS (A) (See Page 38)



PLATE 10.—THE RISING CARDS (B) (See Page 39)

above the pack. The second card rises spontaneously from the pack held in your hand.

Hold the deck in your left hand, the back of your hand and the face of the pack being toward the audience. Stretch out your right forefinger, and close the other fingers; rub the forefinger vigorously on your clothes, to generate electricity. Lay the forefinger across the top of the pack, pointing accusingly at the audience. Two or three times you slowly raise your right hand, expecting the chosen card to adhere to it; finally, under cover of the pack, you extend your little finger, which, pressed against the chosen card, supplies the "electricity" necessary to make the card rise, clinging to the forefinger.

To make the second card rise, without even the help of static electricity, take the pack upright in the right hand, facing forward, the thumb near the bottom on one side, the third and fourth fingers near the bottom on the other; first and second fingers rest against the back of the pack (see Plate 10). Hold your left hand above the pack, and call for the card to come up. It will add to the suspense if your command is not immediately obeyed, but has to be repeated once or twice. When the card is to rise, you merely push it with the right first and second fingers alternately. Be careful to keep the pack facing squarely to the front, since people are supposed to believe that the card comes from the middle of the pack, not from the back.

These are some of the ways of producing a card you have discovered. Next on the program are some tricks in which discovery and production are more or less indissolubly joined. First comes

The Treacherous Voice.

This really superb effect is the invention of the late Leopold Figner, a leading experimenter and writer on card tricks.

Putting on the air of a scientist explaining his work to lay friends, you point out that the ordinary person is quite

unable to control his voice; no matter how carefully he may speak, a trained ear can always detect anything that may be on his mind. As an experimental demonstration, you turn your back while someone selects a card from a pack; the card is mixed into the deck, and the subject starts dealing out the cards, naming them as he does so—all this while your back is turned. Evidently there is no chance for sleight-of-hand, forcing, marked cards, or reflectors ("shiners"); yet you unfailingly tell the subject when he has named the drawn card. A more mystifying effect can scarcely be imagined.

Like all the great mysteries, this is especially great in its simplicity. While you are delivering your preliminary harangue on psychology, you run through the pack, and quietly remove the four sevens and the four nines; put one set on top and the other on the bottom.

Now you give the pack to your subject (if you can execute a riffle shuffle without disturbing the eight cards, so much the better). Call attention to the fact that this Experiment is not a trick at all, let alone one of manipulation; you are not going to lay a finger on the cards from start to finish. From this point on, you actually do not. Ask the assistant to deal the top four cards face down in the row on the table. (These, you will remember, are all sevens or all nines, as the case may be.) Have him deal the rest of the pack in order on the four. The last four, the top cards of the four piles, are of course the other set that you fixed. Tell the assistant he must be very scrupulous in following directions, and turn your back. He is to remove a card from the middle of one of the piles, to show it to the audience (complete silence, please—this is a psychological experiment of the most delicate sort!), to place the card on top of any pile he likes, and to gather the piles up in any order he likes. (This proceeding brings the chosen card between a seven and a nine, whereas all the other sevens and nines are together in pairs.) The deck is then to be cut repeatedly. Now, absolute stillness—the whole

success of the demonstration depends on your being able to catch every shading of your assistant's voice. The assistant is to deal the cards out face up, calling out each card aloud as he does so. All this time, you are standing with your back turned. When you hear a card called out between a seven and a nine, you let the assistant go on for a second or two, then stop him, telling him his card.

One of the most popular of card tricks is

The Spelling Master.

The effect has almost as many forms as the *Four Ace Trick*, but the fundamental idea is always the same: a card is chosen, under conditions of varying difficulty (in the author's favorite method, a spectator merely *thinks* of a card as the pack is spread before him); the pack is shuffled, and the spectator is asked to spell out the name of his card, dealing one card for each letter of the name. On the last letter, what should turn up but the chosen card!

You begin by memorizing the top card of the pack. Have a card drawn, and then hold out the upper half of the pack in your left hand for the card to be replaced, while with your right hand you withdraw the lower half, to replace it on top of the chosen card. This is simply the "card-above-selected-one" dodge described a few pages back; only now you know the card below instead of the card above. Before going on, you can even give the deck an old-fashioned overhand shuffle; ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the two cards will stay together.

By this time some obnoxious person is likely to suspect—or if not, you pretend he does—that you have snaked the chosen card out of the deck. Nothing will do but that you must prove you are above such deceit.

Take the pack in your left hand in dealing position, but face up; run the cards one behind the other (i.e., in unchanged order) into your right hand, asking the audience to satisfy themselves that the chosen card is still there, although they will please take care to give no sign when

they see the card; they will also please notice that you are not watching their faces. (This last for the excellent reason that you are too busy watching the cards.)

When you see the key card (the original top card), you know that the chosen card is next. Suppose the chosen card proves to be the ace of spades; beginning with the ace itself, you start spelling mentally, one letter of the name for each card that passes—A-C-E-O-F-S-P-A-D-E-S. When you have passed "S," you stop, ask if the card is still in the pack, and carelessly place all the cards at the left of "S" at the front of the deck.

Give the pack to the spectator, asking him to name his card. Be very careful indeed not to let on that you know it already. Have him deal one card for each letter of the name. Sure enough, out comes the ace of spaces on the final S!

Another very good—and very easy—effect is

The Spot Location.

Somebody has free choice of a card, which he looks at, and replaces in the pack. You do not stir a finger in any way that might possibly be considered suspicious. Ask the spectator to name a number between five and ten. Without hesitating for an instant, you turn up a card that has the number of spots mentioned; then you count off this number of cards, and there is the selected card. This trick has even been used with good effect by professionals on the vaudeville stage.

Pick out a six, a seven, an eight and a nine, of indifferent suits. Put the seven on top of the pack, with the six directly under it; also the eight on the bottom of the pack, with the nine next above it. Have someone draw a card and show it to everybody except you. You turn your back while he is doing this—ostensibly to prevent your peeking, but really to allow you to count off the top seven cards of the pack, which you retain in order, but keep separated from the rest of the deck.

Turn back, and obligingly cut the pack so that the spectator can put his card in the middle. In this trick, however, the "middle" means between the seven cards you have counted off and the rest of the pack. You must make it seem as if this uneven splitting were due to clumsiness, not to intention. Square up the pack, so that everyone can see there is no jugglery. In fact, you can even invite people to pay particular attention to your hands—a step that would of course be fatal in most tricks.

Ask someone to call a number between five and ten. For some occult reason, people are very likely to answer "Two," "Five," or "Ten," and for some still more occult reason this always raises a laugh when you repeat, "*Between* five and ten." The most usual number then picked is seven. In that case you simply turn up the top card, the seven; then you count off seven cards from the pack, and the seventh is the chosen card. If six is called for, pick up the top two cards, holding them together so that they look like one, a six-spot; deal off six cards, and turn up the sixth. When eight is the number, draw the bottom card, the eight. Then deal off eight cards from the top. In the case of nine, draw the second card from the bottom, show it, then *count that as "one"* in dealing from the top.

One of the most useful principles in magic is that known as

The "One-Ahead" Gag.

This is a godsend not only in card-conjuring but in mind-reading. A simple example among card tricks is one that will serve as a good follow-up for *The Demon Card-Sharp* as described above. Somebody cuts the pack into several piles, and you go right down the row, naming the top card of each pile.

Sneak a glimpse of the top card of the deck; then hand the cards to a volunteer, to be cut into six or seven piles on the table. Say the top card is the ace of clubs; it will, of course, fall at one end of the row of heaps. Start at the

other end. Point to the top card of the first heap, and say, "The ace of clubs."

Picking up the card to verify your statement, you see that it is, perhaps, the nine of diamonds. Touch the second heap, and name the top card as the nine of diamonds. On looking at this card, you discover it to be the three of clubs; and so on down the row. Of course you never show the cards you pick up, until you have them all together; by that time no one can accuse you of lying, because you do indeed hold precisely the cards you have named.

Thus, in order to name any succession of cards, questions sealed in envelopes, or the like, you need only know the name and location of one; starting from the other end, you go through the list, and each time your apparent check-up on yourself reveals the next object.

The Cards in the Hat

is a most surprising trick. You borrow a hat, and hand out a deck to be shuffled. Then you drop the cards into the hat, and shake them up vigorously for some minutes. If you shuffled them by hand, you might control the cards, but now they are turned every which way, in utter confusion. Yet you reach into the hat, and call out the name of a card, which you then proceed to bring out; this is followed by another and another. Apparently you can fish any card you want from the mess in the hat.

The motive power is a paper-clip. Before you begin, you put by five or six cards which you have memorized in order. An easy order to remember is one going up by threes, alternating red and black suits, in the order symbolized by the word CHaSeD (clubs, hearts, spades, diamonds), thus: Ace of clubs, four of hearts, seven of spades, ten of diamonds, King of clubs, three of hearts, etc.

These cards you fasten together with the paper-clip, putting the long end of the clip on the front, so that you can tell which side is which. The bunch is on the top of

the pack. When you put the deck in the hat to show what you intend to do, you leave the bunch inside, afterward handing the rest of the cards out to be shuffled. When you drop the pack into the hat the second time, you should if possible contrive to stick the clipped packet under the sweat-band; this makes your task easier, though it is not absolutely essential. Then, no matter how violently you shake up the hatful of cards, you can easily fetch out the clipped packet, and, after a feel of the clip to make sure you are starting at the beginning, name and produce your prearranged cards.

The Piano Trick

is said to be performed in many countries, and under widely varying titles. It seems to be ancient, yet it is so puzzling in its winsome simplicity that no amateur should exclude it from his collection. According to Mr. Thomas Nelson Downs, originator of the famous magical act, "The Miser's Dream," and the greatest coin sleight-of-hand expert of modern times, it was performed at private entertainments by the late Imro Fox, who is responsible for the odd title.

Evidently this originated from the position of the fingers in the trick. A spectator is requested to place both his hands on the table-top, as if it were the keyboard of a piano and he were about to play. The performer places two cards in each of the spaces between the fingers, until he reaches the space between the thumb and forefinger of the second hand, in which he places only one.

As he places the first pair of cards in position, he is careful to say, slowly and impressively, "Two cards. Even!" With the next pair, he says, "Two more cards. Even again!" Every time he puts two cards in position, he reiterates the words, "Two cards. Even!" emphasizing the fact that two cards, an even number, are used each time. When he reaches the last space, and inserts merely one card, he says, "Only one card this time. Odd!"

The reason for this extraordinary emphasis on what is

so very palpable will appear presently. The performer proceeds next to reverse the operation, removing the cards, two by two, and continuing to remind those watching him, each time, that he takes away "Two cards, even!" In two piles he heaps the cards, side by side, as he removes them. When he reaches the last card, he holds it impressively above those two packets, and says:

"We have here two heaps of cards, each of them containing an even and equal number of cards. Whichever pile I add this remaining card to will thus become an odd pile instead of an even pile. Which shall it be?"

The spectators having indicated their choice, the performer lays the last card on it deliberately, and turning, says boldly and distinctly:

"According to all the rules of mathematics and the facts of nature, that should now be an odd pile. But I can upset those rules and laws by passing my hands over the cards—so!"

And sure enough, when the astonished spectators count the cards they find the magician's command has been obeyed. The cards are even, there are eight in the pile.

There is no secret operation employed in this; the entire effect is automatic and dependent on a misapprehension on the part of the spectators. On all, there are seven pairs and one extra card. Three pairs are placed in one pack, three in another, and the remaining seventh pair is split between them. That makes seven cards in each packet, but the audience has not counted, and believe each pile contains an even number, a delusion which the magician has nourished and encouraged by a constant repetition of the words. As a matter of fact, they always accept his statements passively, having no inkling of what is to come, and therefore having no cause to suspect. It is obvious that the adding of the last card to either pack will make it even.

We will wind up our chapter with what looks—or should look—like a feat of real dexterity:

Balancing a Pack of Cards on the Back of Your Hand.

You make several attempts to balance the pack on end on the back of your hand, but the cards keep toppling over, and you have to try again and again. At last you manage to get them balanced just right, and there they stay, neatly upright, until finally you get careless, and they fall down.

It is hardly necessary to say that the feat is impossible by fair means. Your preliminary failures are simply build-up, to make the thing look hard. In rearranging the fallen cards for the last time, you manage to clip two or three on edge between the knuckles of your second and third fingers, thus forming a sort of buttress at right angles to the pack. Of course you face squarely forward, so that the buttress does not show. When you have balanced the cards long enough, you relax your hold, and let everything fall together into one grand ruin that tells no tales.

It is hard to find good coin tricks for the casual performer. This seems strange enough; all the old magic books used to begin with a chapter on coin tricks. But most coin tricks require apparatus, and those that do not need equipment need sleight-of-hand. Real sleight-of-hand with coins is equalled in difficulty only by the finest piano-playing. The work of such magicians as T. Nelson Downs, once world-famous as the "King of Koins," is more astounding when you know how they do it than when you don't. For instance, when Mr. Downs made sixty coins disappear from his closed fist, that was merely a diverting illogicality; but if you knew that they disappeared because he had noiselessly palmed the whole stack in the innocent hand so carelessly spread against his knee, that approached the incredible. Of course it requires many years of practice before one can even begin to do such feats; still, we have succeeded in bringing together a number of effective tricks that can be performed without much difficulty.

The first is very simple, though not altogether easy:

The Flying Coin (First Method).

It is also a rarity, being the only case within our knowledge wherein the quickness of the hand actually *does* deceive the eye.

The effect could not be more simple and direct. You lay your hands on the table about eight inches apart, palm up, with a coin on each palm. In a flash you turn your hands over, and slap them down on the table. Of course there should be a coin under each hand. But when you pick up your hands there are two coins under one, and none under the other.

In view of the speed with which you move, there is only one possible way of transporting the flying coin—by

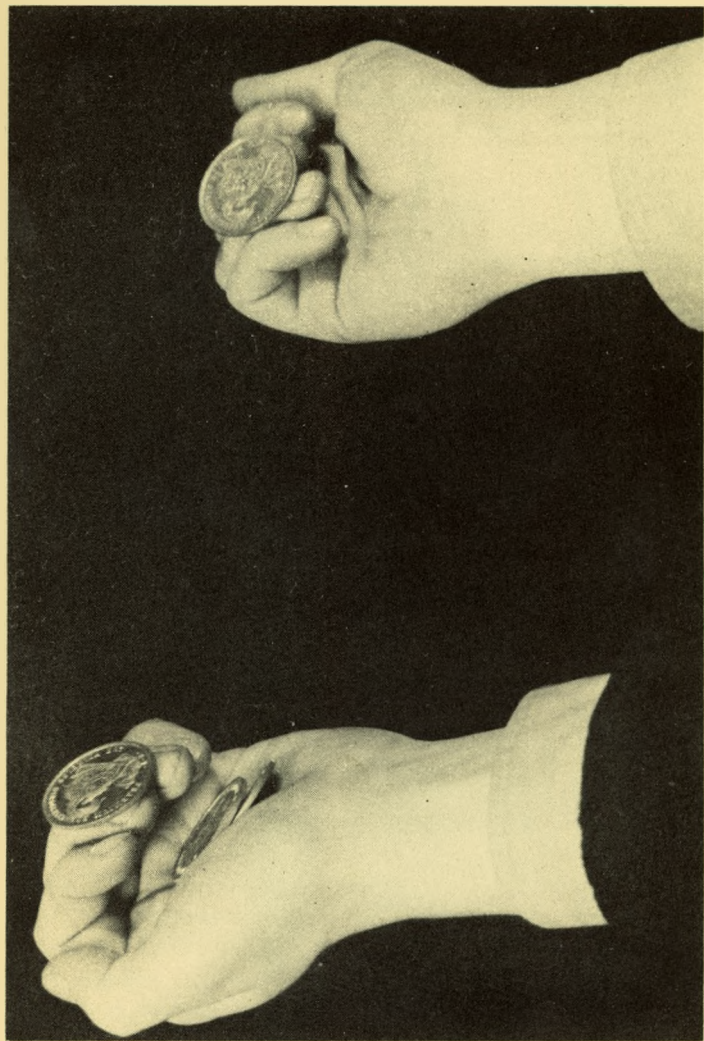


PLATE 11.—THE FLYING COIN (SECOND METHOD)
(See Page 49)

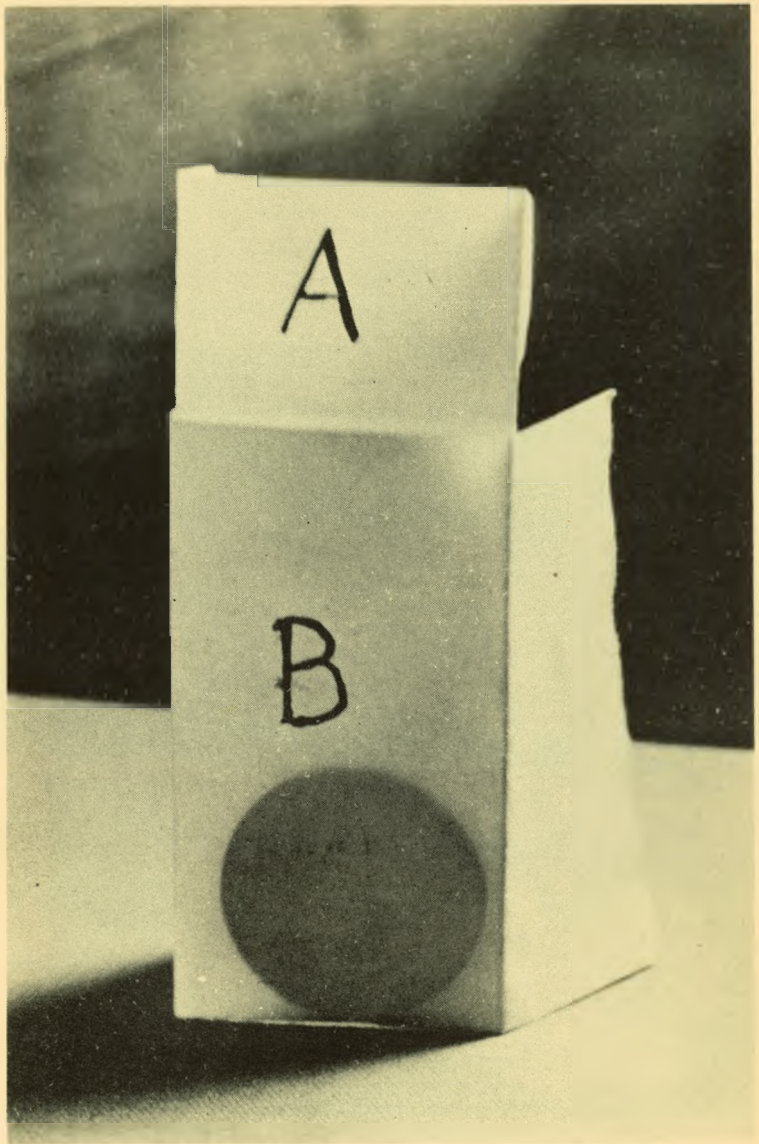


PLATE 12.—THE COIN FOLD (See Page 50)

throwing it. In turning your hands over, you move your right hand a fraction of a second sooner than your left, and with a little more swing, so that the right hand coin is catapulted across, to fall under the left palm with the other coin. When you have mastered the trick perfectly, the two coins will not strike together, but in any case the slam of your hands on the table drowns out any minor noises.

After two or three trials, you will not find this trick very hard, but there are two special faults to be guarded against: you must not move your hands closer together as you turn them over, and you must not shift them sidewise in an effort to bring your left hand down where your right hand was.

The trick is too soon over to give much leeway for talk. About all you can or need say is, "See—one cent in each hand!" Wham!

Having done this version, you may do well to follow up with

The Flying Coin (Second Method).

The second method looks as if it were merely an elaboration of the first; but in point of fact the two tricks have almost nothing in common (see Plate 11).

You use four coins, all alike—say quarters. Take one in each fist. Then you ask someone to put one of the remaining two coins on the second finger-nail of each fist. You turn your hands over suddenly, as in the *First Method*. This time you meet with an accident. The two outside coins fall clattering on the table. This is a bad beginning, but you have another try.

Click! From your left hand you pour three coins; only one remains in the right.

As you will have guessed, the accident is the key point of the trick. When you fail, two coins do indeed clatter on the table, but they are not the two outside coins the audience thinks they are. Just as you start to turn your hands

over, you let the left-hand outside coin slip into the left fist; at the same time, you open your right hand just enough to let both coins slip out and fall on the table. The swing of your hands is confusing to the eye, so that people do not notice where the two coins come from; and since both fists are bare, the spectators assume the quarters must simply have tumbled off. But when one quarter is placed on the outside of each fist, you already have three in one hand and one in the other. Make quite a fuss of getting set for the second effort, measuring the distance, getting the coins balanced just right, and so on; you want to give people time to forget your failure.

Just as most card tricks are composed of the selection of a card and its discovery by the performer, so the vast majority of coin tricks consist of a disappearance and a reappearance, and there are many ways of doing each part of a given trick.

One of the easiest ways of making a coin disappear (magically) is what conjurers call

The Coin Fold.

You wrap up a coin carefully in an ordinary piece of paper. The coin is obviously there; it rings when you bang it on the table; its shape is visible through the paper. And then you touch a match to the paper, which burns to a crisp. The coin is gone (see Plate 12).

As the name indicates, the trick is in how you wrap the coin. If you follow our directions with a piece of paper in your hands, you should have no difficulty in understanding the method.

You want a piece of tolerably stiff paper (letterhead paper is fine) about six inches square; this you fold in two, but not in equal halves; one part should be about an inch wider (measured from crease to edge) than the other. The wider part we will call A, the narrower, B.

Put the coin in the fold, approximately at the middle. Now the natural way to fold would be over upon B.

But that is the trick; you fold the paper approximately in thirds, the coin being enclosed in the middle third, by turning the open ends of your first fold *back upon A*.

This leaves the extra inch of A sticking up, as it were, from within a surrounding sheath of B. Now if you were to turn this inch over on B, the coin would still be shut in on all four sides.

But again you turn it back on A, and thus the coin is enclosed on only three sides. When you tip the package open-side down, the coin will slide out into your hand.

Before you do this, you should press the paper around the coin, so that the visible impression remains; then take the packet by the open side in your right hand, and bang it on the table, to convince people by the sound that the coin is still there. Now take the packet by the opposite side with your left hand, letting the coin slide quietly out into your right. Reaching into your pocket for a match to light the paper, you leave the coin behind.

The Barefaced Coin Vanish

is even simpler, and if rightly done correspondingly more effective, than *The Coin Fold*. Timid, truthful people should not attempt it; they are bound to come to grief; but the bold and brazen will find it one of the finest tricks ever made.

For impromptu performance, you show a quarter. You pass it from hand to hand once or twice, whereupon it disappears without a trace. It is soon discovered to be in your right-hand trousers pocket. Again it disappears from your hand, and this time it reappears under your foot.

This routine involves two coins, although only one is shown at a time. Both are in your right-hand trousers pocket. Take one out, and start passing it from hand to hand, at about knee level, with gestures of elaborate manipulation. As if accidentally, you drop it, so that it falls just in front of your left foot. You pretend to pick it up, but really you give it a flip with the second finger that sends

the coin under your left shoe. You instantly close your hand as if you had scooped up the coin; then you go on passing the alleged coin from hand to hand; finally you leave "it" in your left fist. After a few seconds' interval, you show that the coin has vanished. Of course now you are chained to the spot, because you dare not take your foot off the coin. So you say that the coin usually flies home. With this, you produce the duplicate from the trousers pocket. By means of *The Pass* (described in the section after this), you make the duplicate disappear, slapping your left hand against your knee as if to make the coin pass down your leg. You pick up the left foot, and there is the wandering coin.

Sleight-of-hand is ruled out of this book. But it is almost impossible to do coin tricks without some form of the sleight called

The Pass,

so I am including a method so simple mechanically as to be no sleight at all, though the eye-work and unaccustomed co-ordination may give you a little trouble at first.

The one thing to be borne in mind is that this movement must look exactly as if you were putting a coin in your left hand by means of your right. As a matter of fact, the coin remains in your right hand, but you must not look at, nor even think of, your right hand after the left fist is closed with its supposed contents. Your eye must follow the coin from right hand to left; then it must follow the left fist as the fist moves away, leaving the right hand stationary with its outstretched forefinger pointing at the left hand (see Plate 13). All this is the important part of the pass, the part that must be tried over and over until you can do it convincingly, until you almost believe it yourself.

The mechanical part is ridiculously simple. Hold the coin flat between thumb and second finger; as you move the right hand toward the open left, you bend finger and thumb, so that the coin comes to lie flat against the back



PLATE 13.—THE PASS (See Page 52)

of the end joint of the second finger. Thus it is out of sight from the front. The pointing forefinger touches the left palm, and the left fingers immediately close on nothing, a nothing that the audience take for the coin. Then be sure to *keep your right hand still*, and to *move the left hand*; for the eye naturally follows anything in motion, and you distinctly do not want anybody looking at your right hand.

Remember that your right hand is *empty*; keep it hanging loose, as though nothing were in it.

There is an effect even bolder than the *Barefaced Vanish*, which you can use with great effect when you are performing for a lone spectator. The trick has no name; it is just another

Brazen Coin Vanish.

As aforementioned, this effect can be used for only one person at a time; but it is so surprising that you will have many occasions to use it.

By means of the pass, you seem to put a coin in your left hand, while it stays in your right. Reach out with your right hand, and grasp the spectator confidentially by the shoulder, pulling him closer so that he may watch your left hand more sharply. Keep the left fist shut, keep your eyes riveted to it, and keep right on talking. You will need all your nerve, for you simply leave the coin sitting on your victim's left shoulder. Letting go of the shoulder, you gesture with your right hand, "So far, you see, we have simply shut the coin in this fist; it can't go up the sleeve, because I will pull it up—no chance for it to get out anywhere"; thus, without saying anything about it, you have shown that your right hand is empty. Then, and not until then, you cause the coin to vanish. Stand there with both hands extended and empty for a few seconds. Then you begin a search of the victim's clothing for the missing coin. In the process you can pick up the improvised epaulette, to find it later under a lapel, in a pocket, or in some other convenient but unlikely spot.

Effects of penetration form a fairly substantial category of coin tricks. One of the simplest and best is

The Porous Handkerchief.

The effect is that you put a coin under a handkerchief. You explain that handkerchiefs are so flimsy nowadays, you don't know what the cotton business is coming to; why, you can pull a half-dollar right through the mesh without ever knowing the difference.

And that is just what you proceed to do.

Hold the coin in the right hand, upright between thumb and forefinger. With the left hand throw the handkerchief (which should be opaque) over the coin. Now you apparently take the handkerchief, and with it the coin, in the left hand, nipping the coin through the cloth between forefinger and thumb, which are held horizontal so that the upper half of the coin will stick up above them. In fact, however, you let the coin slide down into the right palm; the handkerchief still retains the shape of the money. Bring out your right hand. In stroking down the handkerchief, you contrive to leave the coin behind the deceptive semi-circle of cloth, the left thumb holds the coin in its original position, except that it is outside instead of inside the kerchief. You can even hold the handkerchief up to the light, showing the coin is still there. But a few gentle tugs will bring it right "through" the cloth.

As a variation, you can make the coin disappear completely. This you do by holding the handkerchief up shoulder-high; in the process of stroking it down, you quietly drop the coin into your breast pocket.

The juggling feat known as

The Coins on the Elbow

is apparently very hard to do, but really you can learn it in three or four trials.

You use ten or twelve coins. Half-dollars or quarters are the best size, though any coin may be used. You bend

your left arm, the palm of your hand toward you, until your fingers touch your left shoulder, and your forearm extends out in a straight line. At the elbow you balance your stack of coins. When everyone has seen that the coins are there, you make a sudden grabbing motion, and catch every one of the coins in a neat little stack in the palm of your left hand.

There is a little knack to this trick, which is easily got. You bring the left hand down and out, toward the floor, sharply, suddenly, and with considerable force, at the same time making a complete turn of the hand, and grabbing. You will find the coins in your hand in an instant.

Try the trick the first time with one coin, then with a few. And take the advice of an old hand at the coin-trick business, and practice this over a bed. It is a well-established rule of physics, known to every magician, that dropped coins always roll under the radiator in the corner.

To tell the truth, there are not many coin tricks that vary the monotony of incessant appearance and disappearance, disappearance and appearance. For that reason the following two tricks are still able-bodied, though no longer young.

The first one,

Right or Left,

depends for effect largely on how it is dressed up. Give a man a nickel and a dime, and have him shut the dime in his right fist, the nickel in his left. Tell him to decide on one of the coins, and to hold it to his forehead while he calculates mentally what it would amount to in six months at interest compounded monthly, 10% on the nickel or 5% on the dime, as the case may be.

While he is doing this you leave the room, so that you have no way of knowing which coin he picks on. Yet you come back and tell him what the answer should have been on the very coin he chose.

The secret is that the blood will drain from the hand

which is held to the forehead, while the other hand maintains its normal color. Thus the chosen coin is the one housed in the whiter of the two hands. The answer for the dime is \$.12762815625; for the nickel, \$.08857805. If you have as much difficulty as I did in figuring those out, you had better write down the sums in your notebook, and consult them while you are out of the room.

The Warm Coin

is harder for you, but less strain on the audience, than the last trick. You have a dozen or fifteen coins of the same denomination, which you lay out on a table, a metal tray, or a marble mantel-top. In your absence the audience is to pick out one coin, mark it, and pass it around so that everyone may see the mark. Then all the coins are to be thrown together into a hat, and shaken up. You return, fish around in the hat for a moment without looking in, and come forth with the marked coin.

The answer this time is physics, not physiology: the coins, lying on the marble mantel-piece, are all cold, except for the marked one, which has grown warm with handling.

The Incombustible Handkerchief.

The effect is that you hold a lighted cigarette against a handkerchief, without any damage to the handkerchief. Curiously enough, this is done by hiding a quarter under the cloth; if the fabric be stretched taut over the coin, and the cigarette be then pressed against it at that point, the quarter will absorb the heat, and there will be no harm to the handkerchief except possible smudges of ash. This does not sound possible; but try it on an old handkerchief, and you will see.



PLATE 14.—A RAPID RELEASE (See Page 57)

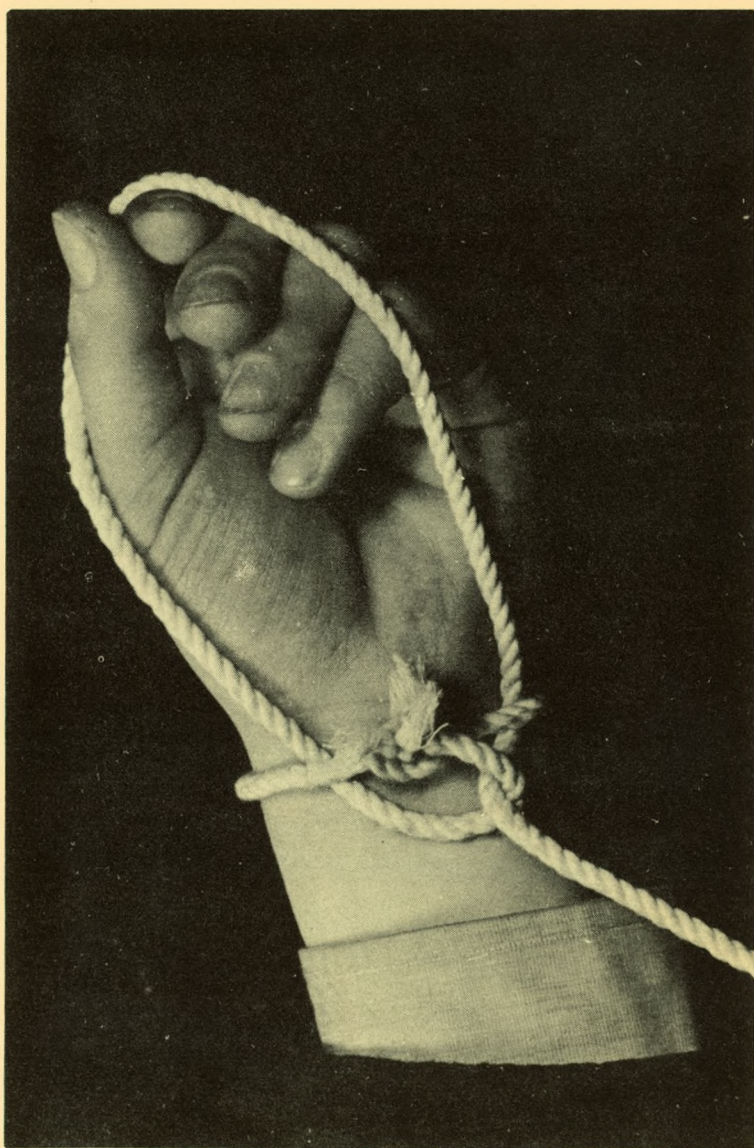


PLATE 15.—TO CONJURE UP A KNOT (See Page 58)

I. STRING

EFFECTS of escape have a perennial fascination for the great public. Houdini, a great escape artist, was the most famous of all magicians. His name even crept into one edition of the dictionary—“*Houdinize, vb., to escape.*” Though you perhaps—and very sensibly, since it is difficult and dangerous—do not care to fool with a handcuff act, you may want to do a few simple rope escapes. The following will be found within the ability of anyone who cares to experiment with them.

A neat series is begun with

A Rapid Release.

Take a piece of rope three or four feet long, and have someone tie an end of it around each of your wrists. The knots can be sealed, if anyone should insist. Take another rope, five or six feet long, pass it between your arms inside the improvised handcuffs, and have someone hold the ends. You play with the rope for a second, tug, and it comes away free, despite the other cord, which still joins your hands. The knots are quite undisturbed.

The method is simple, once one understands it, although at first glance the trick appears quite impossible. You get hold of the long rope—the one whose ends the spectator is holding—and push a loop of it through the circle of cord knotted around your right wrist. The loop is pushed through from the inside out toward the hand; then you pull the loop up to the front, pass it over the hand and down the back. A tug pulls it out of the circle at the back of the hand, and so frees it (see Plate 14).

The trick can be done on exactly the same principle if

instead of the handcuff-cord you use a handkerchief, wound once or twice around both wrists together.

While your wrists are still tied with the cord, you go on

To Conjure Up a Knot.

You cause an ordinary overhand knot to appear in the center of the cord, although it seems quite evidently a physical impossibility, for you neither cut nor untie the cord. The average scientist will pronounce it contrary to the laws of nature, and quite out of the question.

The secret is a clever bit of manipulation of the rope. You turn your back to hide the trick; as soon as you are facing away from the audience, you seize the center of the cord in your right hand (see Plate 15). You twist the cord twice around, forming a loop in the center of the rope. Holding your left hand before you, palm upward, you now thrust the loop you have made under the cord around your left wrist. As it emerges on your palm, you pass your left hand completely through the loop. Reaching to the back of your left hand, you push the loop under the cord on the back of the wrist, just as you did before on the other side. As the loop comes through, it has formed itself into a large knot, which can be drawn tight, when it will be found to fit exactly in the center of the rope. This may sound difficult, but in reality it is very simple, and will be found so after a little experimenting.

Asking someone to untie your wrists, you use the same cord

To Conjure Away a Knot.

Your volunteer assistant ties a single loose overhand knot in the middle of the cord, then knots the ends together with a number of hard knots. Evidently, even if by fancy poking and twisting you could get a knot into the rope around your wrists, it is impossible to remove this one from the endless loop; there are no circles around wrists to go through, no loopholes for you to work with.

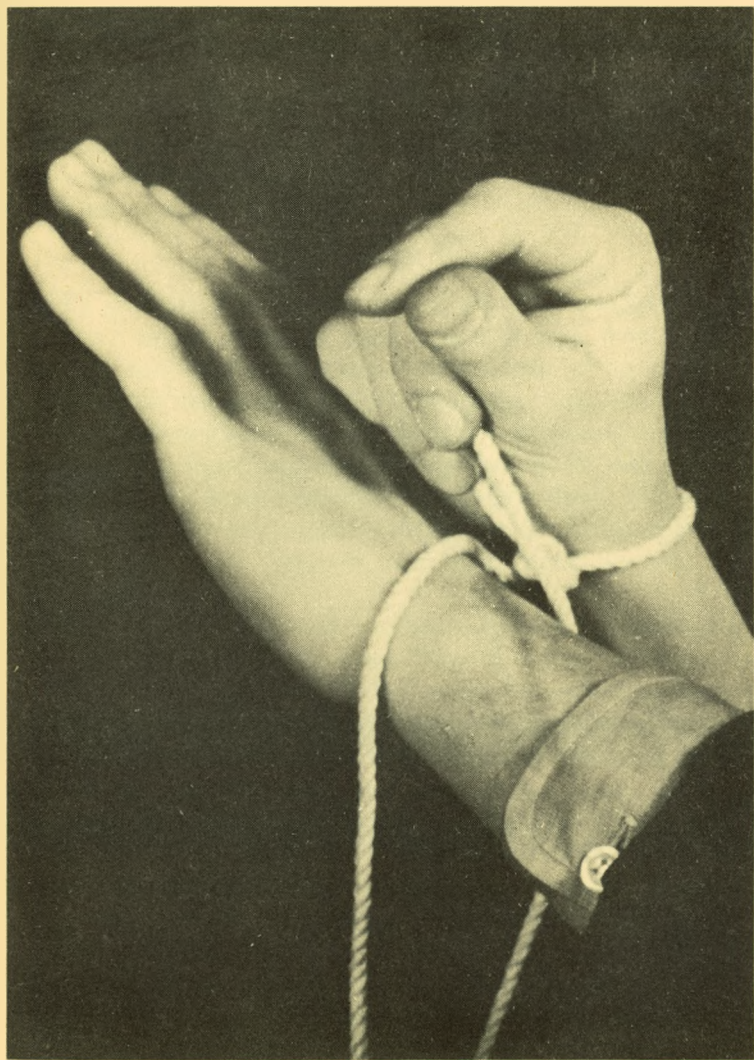


PLATE 16.—THE KELLER TIE (See Page 59)



Nevertheless, in four or five seconds you remove the knot!

This time the scientists are right. It is impossible to remove the knot. Nor do you try. Instead, you loosen the knot still more, then slide it up until it forms a part of the hard knots at the end, and pull it tight, so that it is indistinguishable from the rest.

Then you pass on to

The Kellar Tie.

To perform this famous feat of the great magician for whom it was named, you want a piece of rope about three or four feet long (see Plate 16). The center of the rope is tied around the right wrist by spectators; then the hands are brought behind the back, the left wrist placed over the knot on the right, and the rope knotted on the left wrist. Presently you reach out with your right hand, and clap your assistant on the back, thanking him for his kind help; you whirl around instantly, and your hands are tied as before.

Sash cord that has been handled until it is soft and pliable is best for this experiment. When it is first tied around the left wrist, see that it is tied with the ordinary square knot. While this is being tied, stand facing the audience, with those who are tying your wrists in front of you. After the knot has been tied, bring your hands behind you, placing your right wrist over the knot. Then turn around so that your hands and back are toward the spectators. But in the moment that elapsed between the time your hands were behind you, and the time you turned round, the trick was done. In that brief interval, before your right hand is placed over the knot, you must give the right end of the rope a turn around the knot, and then place the right wrist over it. If you now hold your hands firmly, you will find the audience does not discover that you have taken in enough slack to release yourself when the second knot is tied. You can release yourself instantly, and tie yourself again by simply picking up the slack.

Magicians are also rather fond of another release,

The Thumb Tie,

which was introduced in the Occident by a Japanese conjurer bearing the uncomfortable name of Ten Ichi. Ten Ichi used a method entirely different from the one I give here; but this will be found the best for amateur use on impromptu occasions (see Plate 17).

You loosely close both fists, and lay them together, the two thumbs being side by side. You run a string under the thumbs at their roots, and invite a spectator to tie your thumbs together by knotting the string up tight in as many hard knots as he likes. You ask to have a hat put over your hands; hardly is it in place when you reach out with your right hand, as if to settle the hat more firmly. But you duck your hand under again, and the thumbs are tied tighter than ever. Someone holds a cane, one end in each hand. You make a pass at it, and the cane passes between your hands, which remain tied as before. Yet finally you beg to have the cord cut, because it is so tight it is stopping the circulation.

The critical moment is just before the spectator ties the string, after you have put it in place. As you will see if you put your hands in the position above described, your forefingers lie against your thumbs, underneath; as you turn to the spectator, you slip your right forefinger-tip between the string and the right thumb, thus ensuring yourself enough slack so that you can release yourself instantly whenever you like.

Another trick done with the wrists tied to the ends of a cord is

The Slave Bangle.

You show a ring or bracelet about four inches in diameter (which you can buy at the Five and Ten); you whirl around, making a complete revolution, and when you face front again, the ring is on the string, and the string

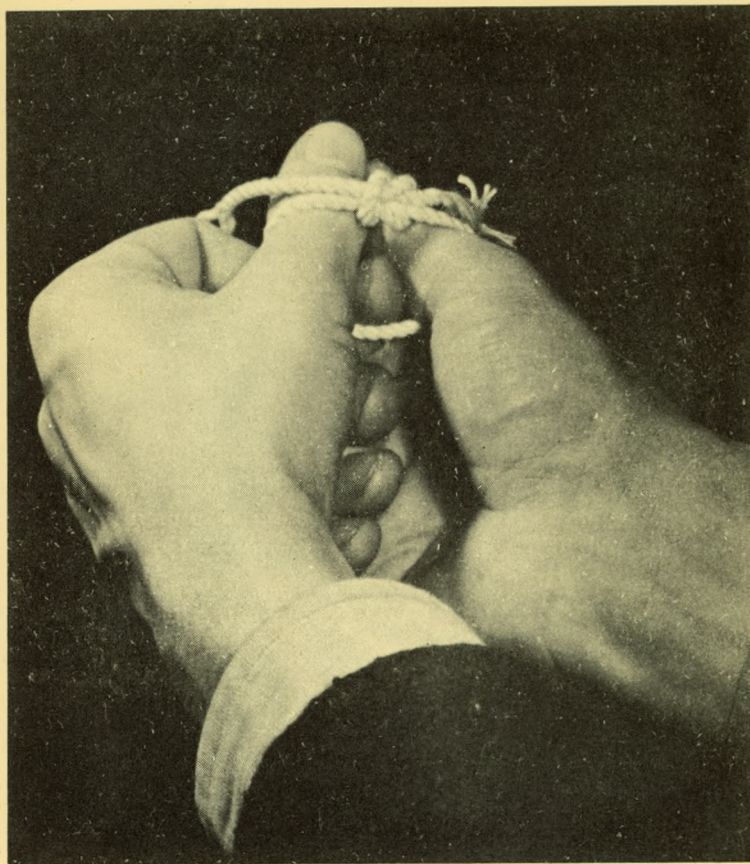


PLATE 17.—THE THUMB TIE (See Page 60)

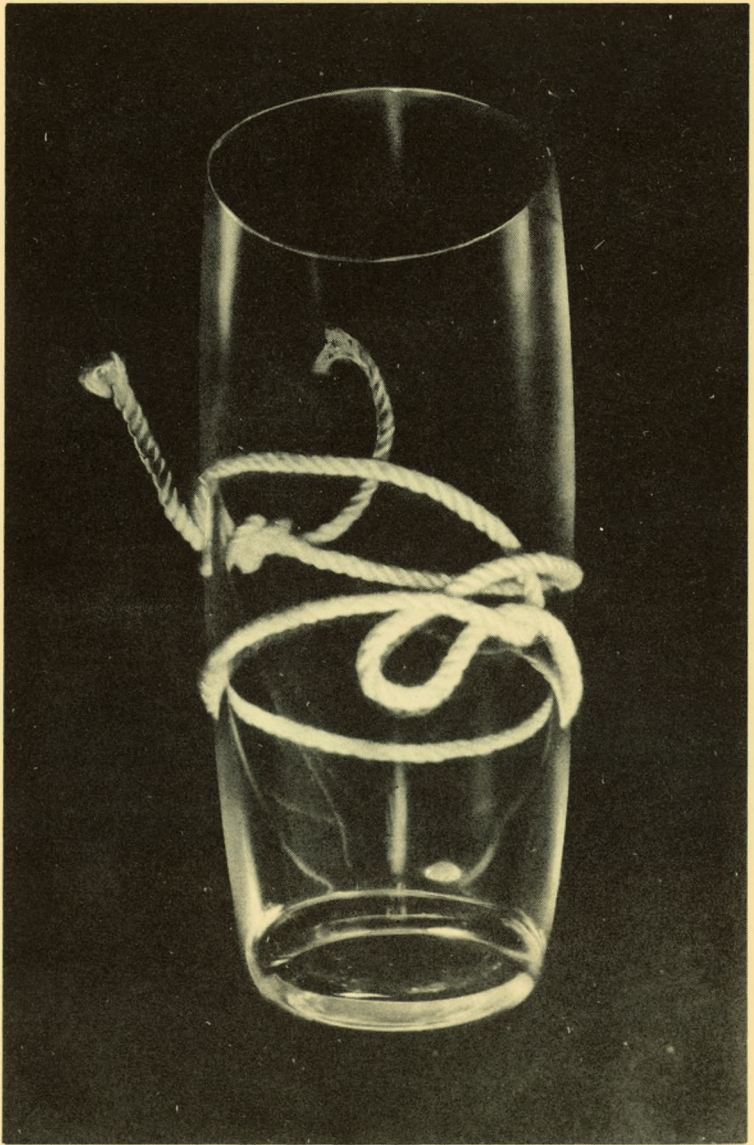


PLATE 18.—THE DEMATERIALIZED LEG (See Page 61)

is still securely knotted to your wrists. The string has to be untied before the ring can be got off.

When you go to the Five and Ten, buy *two* rings. One of them you put on your wrist, and slip up your sleeve to the elbow, before you start the trick. While your back is turned to the audience, you drop the first ring into an inner pocket, at the same time shaking the second down your sleeve, over your hand, and on to the string.

Another good trick that comes under the string and knot class, although performed with a napkin, is

The Dematerialized Leg.

Twisting a napkin or large handkerchief ropewise, you wrap it twice around your leg, and tie the ends. Of course it must be impossible to remove the napkin without undoing the knot. Yet you give a yank, and the napkin comes right through your leg as if nothing were there (see Plate 18).

Only apparently do you cross the napkin behind your leg. Instead, you bring each end forward on the same side on which you carried it back; the napkin is caught at the back by nipping the loop, thus formed, of one end within that of the other. Of course a pull by the knot in front brings the whole napkin away, still tied in a circle. For the sake of plainness, the illustration shows the trick performed with a cord on a glass cylinder.

A string effect which, like most of those that follow, is on the borderline between trick and puzzle is

The Perambulating String.

You hold out your left forefinger, the hand being palm up, and hang a string over it. Then you turn your hand over, holding out your second finger. Carefully keeping always to the right the end of the string marked A, wind both strings around the two fingers, winding away from yourself; you make several turns; but on one occasion, you wind only string B around, leaving A behind during

that turn. Now if you unwind the two strings together, the string will at the conclusion be found looped over the second finger, instead of over the first.

The Jumping Rubber Band

is similar in effect, but different in principle. Put an ordinary elastic band around the first and second fingers of your left hand (see Plate 19). Let everyone see that it is around the first and second fingers; call special attention to the fact that you have a regular rubber band around first and second fingers. In explaining this, you pull at the elastic with your right hand, first from the front of the hand, then from the back. A third time you pull, this time from the front; but before you let the band snap back, you close your left fingers, so that all four fingers go inside the band, although from the back it seems to encircle only the first and middle fingers. If now you open your left hand, the elastic will be snapped with bullet-like speed around the third and fourth fingers, leaving the first two fingers bare.

As an introduction to a series of knot tricks,

Threading the Needle

is amusing.

Wind a cord around your left thumb, starting from below, coming up between the thumb and the root of the forefinger, over toward yourself, down the outside, and so on. Give it five or six turns, progressing toward the tip of the thumb. Finally you make a loop of the right-hand end, which you hold between left thumb and forefinger. Now you take the hanging left end, the one that passes down between thumb and root of forefinger (see Plate 21). You announce that you are going to thread this end through the loop you have made, with a speed that will make greased blue chain lightning look as if it were going backward. You stab at the loop; in fact, you never let go of the end you are holding, but still the cord appears threaded through the "eye." After unthreading it, you can repeat the effect several times.

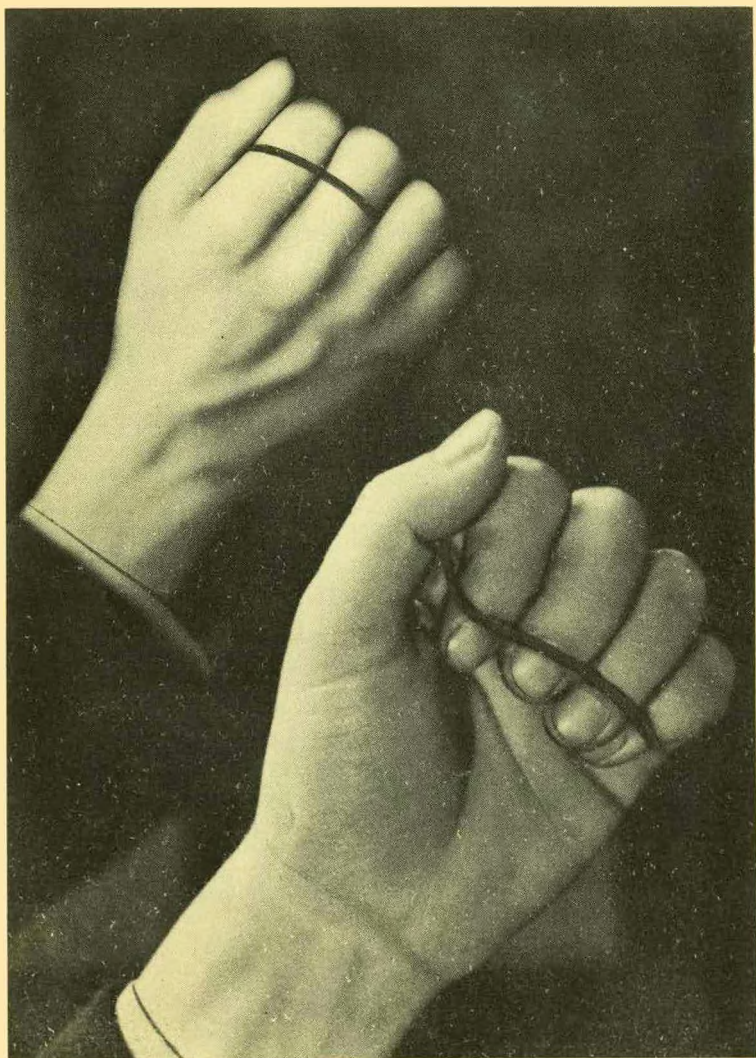


PLATE 19.—THE JUMPING RUBBER BAND (See Page 62)

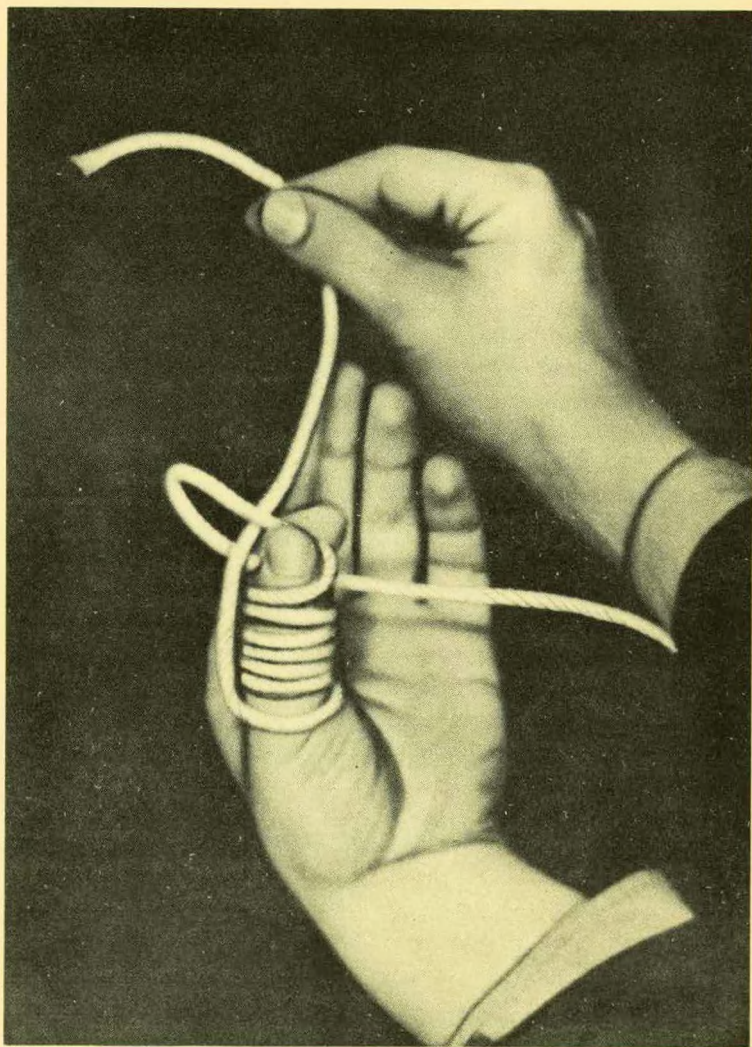


PLATE 20.—THREADING THE NEEDLE (See Page 62)

Owing to the peculiar arrangement of the string on the thumb, you do not need to let go of the piece you hold in order to get in into the loop. You have only to let the string slip up between left thumb and forefinger into the loop, thus unwinding a little from the rear end of the coil around the thumb. As you will see when you try it, the needle can be threaded as many times as there are turns of string around the thumb.

Next you may show

The Lasso Trick.

For this you want a piece of common clothes-line eight or ten feet long. You coil it and toss it out two or three times; no fake here. But on the next try, the rope proves on being flung out to have a series of knot at various points along its length. You seem to have more than the skill of a cowboy.

The trick is in how you coil the rope when you want to make the knots. One end, which we will call A, you hold in your left hand. Your left hand is thumb up, and the length of the rope hangs straight down. With your right hand, *thumb pointing toward the front*, you pick up a couple of feet of rope, and coil it, bring the thumb up over toward you, so that the coil passes back upon itself, so to speak. Thus:



This you repeat until the whole rope is coiled up. Even now, if you flung the coil out, holding on to A, nothing

would happen. But you grab B through the center of the coil with your left finger, and hold on, letting A go. When you throw out the rope, the end B, passing through a succession of loops, makes as many knots as there were coils in the rope.

Next we come to a number of extremely confusing effects that are on the borderline between puzzles and tricks. The first and easiest is

Two Canes.

Take a cane, and wind a piece of string three times around it; then put a second cane on the first, and wind one end of the string in the opposite direction from the first three turns, three times around both canes. Then tie the end of the string together. Apparently the two canes are separately and severally looped within the string. You can even make a bet on it. But if either cane be withdrawn, the string slips off the other one also.

For

The Scissor Trick

you require a cord about a yard long, whose ends are tied together. Pass a loop through one of the handles of a pair of scissors, and attach the cord to the scissors by passing the rest of the cord back through that loop. Then put the cord through the other handle of the scissors, and have someone hold the string (see Plate 21). The problem is to remove the scissors without untying or cutting anything. Other people try it until they become convinced it is impossible. At length you spread a handkerchief over the scissors to hide your operations; a few pulls, and the string comes away free.

To detach the scissors, you take the loop of string at the point where, catching itself, it is looped around the scissor-handle (A in the figure), and draw it through the second handle (B in the figure); then you put the scissors through

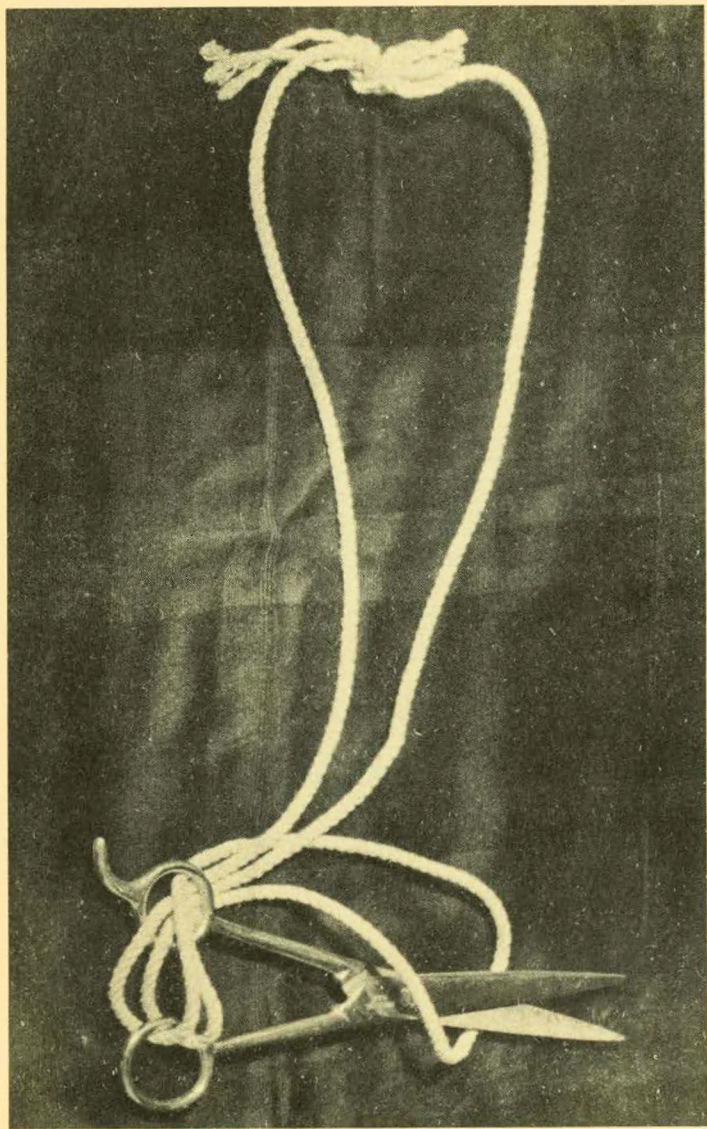
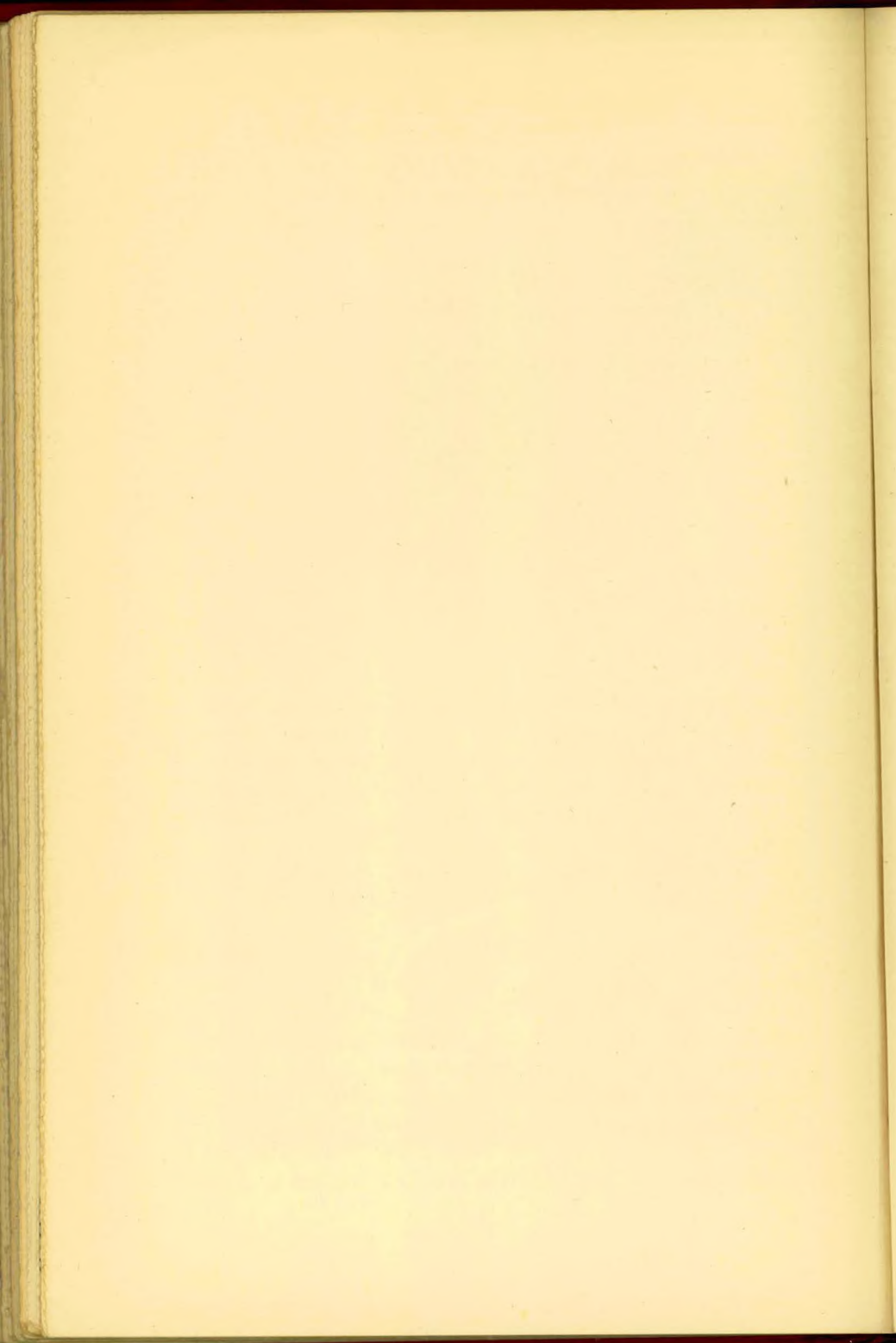


PLATE 21.—THE SCISSOR TRICK (See Page 64)



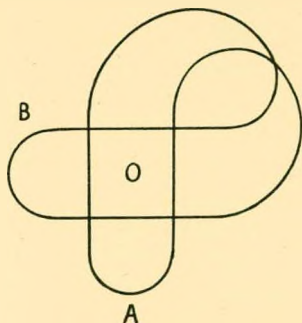
the loop, and they come away free. Be careful not to twist the loop before putting the scissors through.

Perhaps the prettiest of all the string tricks is

The Snare,

for which you use the same endless loop of cord as for the scissor trick.

You lay down the string in the peculiar position shown here:



so that the two ends of the loop cross each other, forming the square space O; then you ask someone to put down his forefinger in that space. You challenge him to say whether or not his finger will catch the string when you draw it away by the loop A. Depending on how you lay down the string, you can make it either catch or not catch the finger, and it is difficult for anyone (including yourself, unless you pay sharp attention) to tell which will happen.

Hold the endless string stretched by means of a hand in each loop, the knuckles being downward. The left hand puts down its loop (B) on the table, and keeps the two parallel parts of the loop about two inches apart. The right hand goes back toward the body, and thus lays down its loop (A) at right angles across B, forming the square O. Here is the tricky point: if you keep the right hand always palm up, you will give the cord a twist before O is formed, and the

spectator's finger *will* catch the loop when you pull A. But if you turn your right hand *palm downward* as you lay A over B, there will be no twist, and when you pull A the spectator's finger will *not* catch any loop.

This trick is a favorite swindle of French race-track sharpers, and so is

The Snail.

This time your string does not have the ends tied together; for ease in handling, it is better to use a leather shoelace. Fold it in two, but not in equal halves; one end should be a couple of inches longer than the other. Putting the loop in the middle, you lay the double string down in a spiral, taking care that A, the longer end, is the inner of the two strings. Now you say, "I have laid this string down perfectly openly, so that everybody could watch me. You are at liberty to study it all you like. It is simply a double string laid in a regular spiral, with the loop in the middle. I would like to challenge anyone who thinks he can best me at this simple little puzzle. I am going to draw away the string, holding both ends at once; can you put your finger in the right loop so that your finger will catch the string when I pull?"

The advantage of this trick over *The Snare* is that here the cord is always laid down the same way, yet the spectator can *never* catch the loop, unless you want him to.

Of course the real center loop is the one around which you first coiled the spiral. The spectator will probably succeed in putting his finger in that loop. If he does, you take A, which projects beyond the other end, B, and carry it one more turn around spiral, so that A is now outside B; then you seize A and B together, and pull. The string will come away clear.

If, on the other hand, the spectator, by accident or design, misses the real center loop, you have only to grab A and B together as they lie, without any preliminary turn.

Different as the two tricks appear, *The Snail* is really

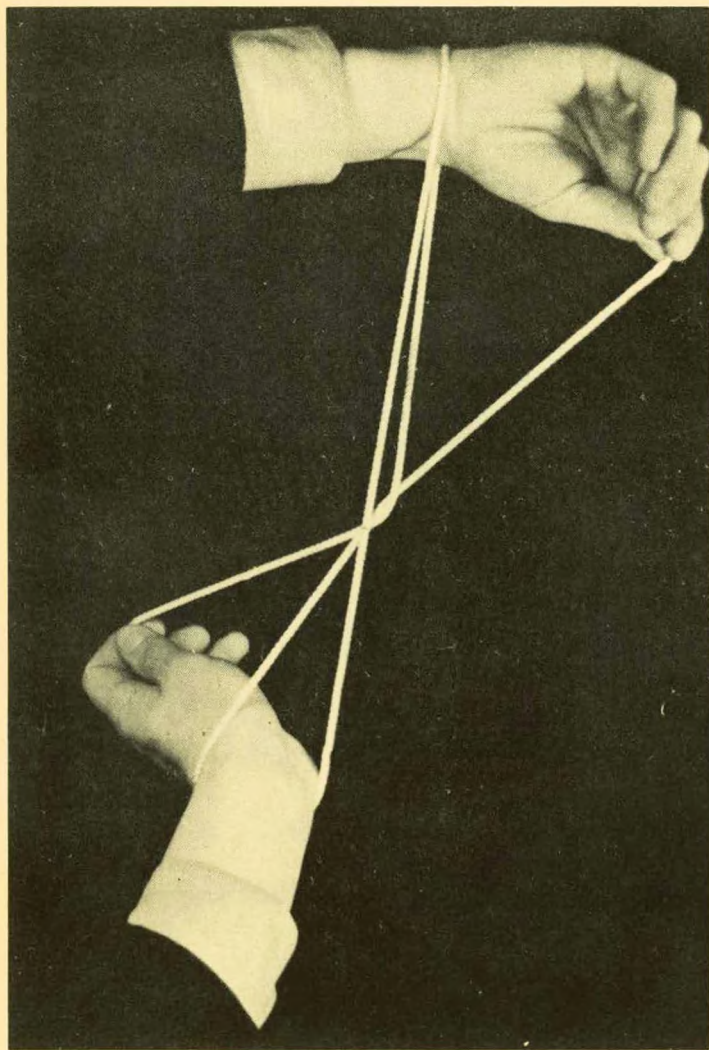
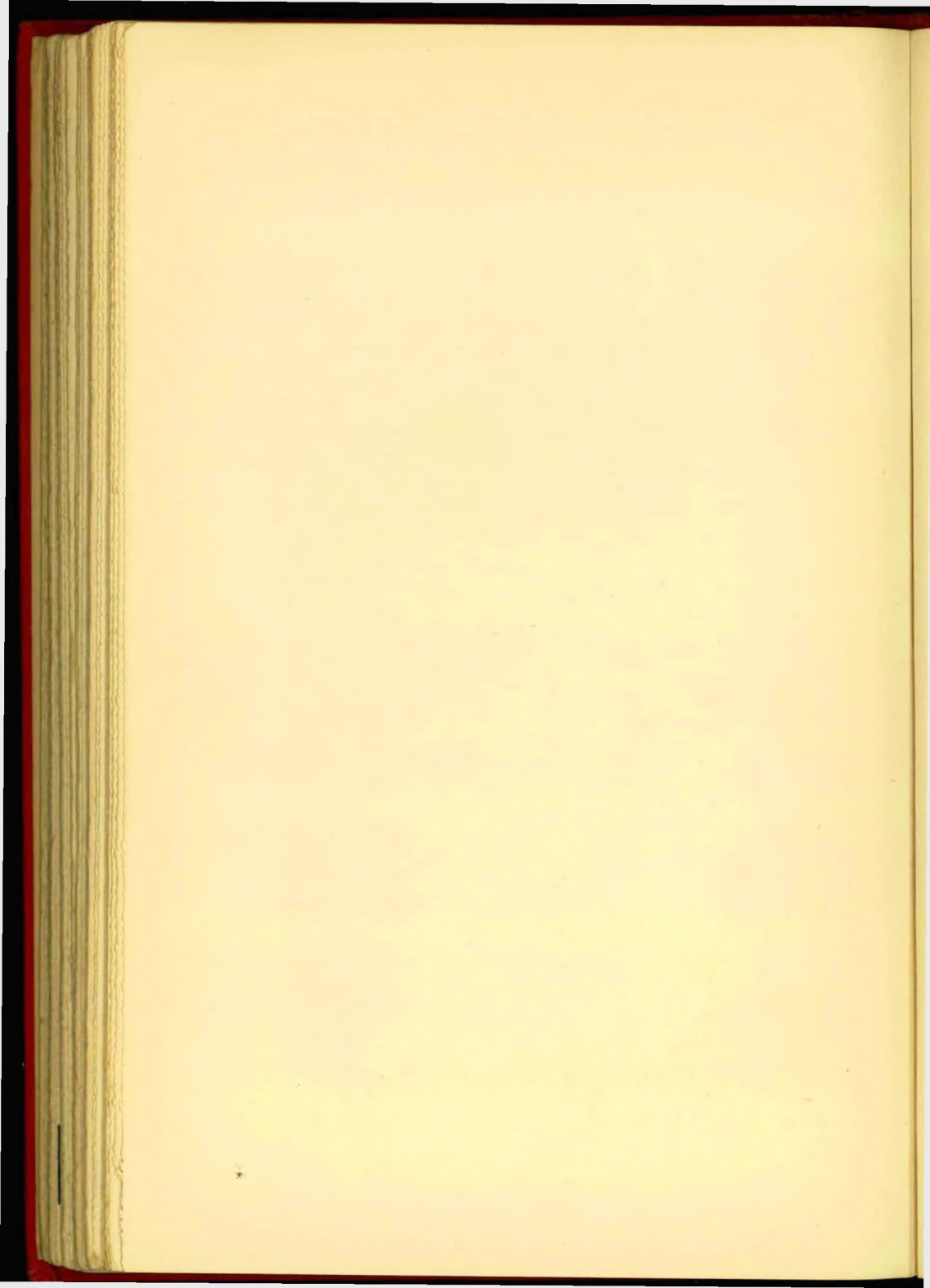


PLATE 22.—TO MAKE TWO KNOTS AT ONCE (See Page 67)



identical with *The Perambulating String*, described some pages back.

To Make Two Knots at Once

you need a string about four feet long; hold one end in each hand, keeping the knuckles upward. With your right hand, throw about two and a half feet of the cord over your left wrist, thus forming a loop fifteen inches long that hangs down outside your left wrist. Pass the right hand, still holding its end of string, through the loop in an outward direction; bring the hands apart to the limit of the loops that imprison them (see Plate 22). Now revolve the left wrist toward yourself, under the strings, and back to place again, thus giving the cords a half-turn around one another. Exchange ends of the string, taking in your right hand the end formerly held by the left, and *vice versa*. Slip your hands out of the loops, and pull; two knots are formed in the middle of the string.

2. FIGURES

This section is devoted to some of the more baffling tricks depending solely on mathematics. These are tricks, however, not puzzles.

First comes the easiest—and surest—of the many ways of doing

The Book Test.

This astonishing feat is a favorite with many professional conjurers.

You hand out an ordinary telephone book (or dictionary), and also have someone hold a sealed envelope. Next you produce a piece of paper, or a slate, and ask people to call out any three figures. These you write down. Then, picking on a victim who looks as if he could add a column of figures straight, you ask him to reverse the figures, and to subtract the smaller number from the larger.

Now he is to reverse the answer, and to add the new number to the said answer. The result, let us say, is 1089. You have the man holding the phone book turn to page 10, and count to the 89th name. When he does so, the man holding the envelope is asked to open it, and there is the very name that was in the phone book!

The secret lies in an ingenious sort of forcing. The answer to the subtraction and addition is *always* 1089. Try it, and you will see. For instance:

	653
Reversed	<u>356</u>
Smaller subtracted from larger	297
Reversed and added	<u>792</u>
Answer	1089

There is one thing to be watched. If but two figures come in the subtraction, be sure to add a zero at the left, as for instance 069.

A good follow-up trick for the above, even though it is not mathematical, and so does not strictly belong here, is

Thoughts Read and Told.

Distribute a number of slips of paper, one to each member of the company, asking them each to write a question, and after having written it, to fold up the paper into a small pellet and drop it into a hat that you borrow from a spectator. When all the papers have been written, folded up, and dropped into the hat, walk back to the platform, and drop the hat on the table.

Now reach in the hat, take out a pellet, and hold it to your forehead. Close your eyes, and pretend to be reading it; presently you read the question aloud. One of the spectators admits that he wrote such a question, and you give him some humorous answer, and reach for another question. Proceed in this way until all the questions have been answered, and each one read with perfect accuracy.

This trick is another form of the one-ahead gag, whose

acquaintance you made among the card tricks. Your task is to discover the contents of one slip. You can have a friend in the audience, with whom you have an understanding before the performance begins. The confederate agrees to write a certain question. The confederate's question is the last one collected, and when he drops it into the hat, you manage to get it under the sweat-band, where it will not get mixed up with the other questions.

A better way, if you are adroit enough to manage it, is to sneak one question out of the hat, and open it while your back is turned to the spectators, or while you are gone for a table or chair to set the hat on. This question you stick into the sweat-band.

Then, of course, you reach in, and take out the first pellet that comes to hand. Holding this to your forehead, you read aloud, not what is on that paper, but what was on the paper you opened, "When will I get a vacation?"

"I didn't know they had vacations for the unemployed," let us suppose you answer, and then you open the paper, apparently to verify your own reading. Of course there is an entirely different question on the paper, and you take note of that, while you say again aloud, "Right. 'When will I get a vacation?'" Smoothing this out, you lay it on the table, taking another pellet from the hat, and pretend to read that. What you really read is the question you have just seen on the paper before. Afterward you open the other paper, and learn what is written on that. You keep this up until all the questions have been read except the one hidden under the sweat-band, which you pretend to read last, naming the question that is on the pellet before you.

Back to our arithmetic. First comes

The Predicted Sum.

Magicians have devised many ways of doing this trick, but none simpler or better than the following; indeed, this

seems to me superior to some methods that require apparatus running into many dollars.

Before you begin, you give someone a folded piece of paper to hold. Then you ask people to give you different numbers, which you write down on a card. You make not the least effort to suggest numbers, and you write down exactly what you are told. At the finish you write your initials on the card, so that there is no chance for substitution when you take the next step, that of asking someone in the company to add up the figures. When the total is announced, you have your original folded piece of paper opened, and there is the sum in a large, bold hand.

Three steps of preparation are necessary.

1. Decide what the total of the figures is to be; let us say it is 61.
2. Write that total on a piece of paper, and fold the paper.
3. Write your initials on the lower left-hand corner of the card.

To work the trick, you simply keep adding up the figures in your head as you put them down, until the total has reached 52 or more. Then stop. Under pretext of writing down your initials (which are already on the card, hidden under your left thumb), put down the number necessary to bring the total to 61. For instance, suppose the spectators give: 7, 9, 4, 8, 3, 9, 6, 5, 3; that comes to 54, so you write down an extra 7, and your part of the trick is done.

If you are quick at figures, you can make a real knock-out of the trick by doing it with two-digit numbers.

Another trick of much the same effect, but easier in execution, is

Embarrassing Questions,

for the knowledge of which I am indebted to my old friend Mr. Albert Boni.

You pick on someone—preferably a lady, for the sake of

the merriment you can cause—, and ask her to think of, for example, the year in which she had her first proposal; then to add mentally the year in which she began wearing long dresses; then to add the number of years ago she had the proposal, and finally the number of years ago she began wearing long dresses. Any mildly embarrassing or amusing date will do, so long as the number of years ago is eventually added to it. After intense concentration, you name the total, although the victim has not said a single word.

In the case just supposed, you used two dates. Therefore the total is simply twice the present year. If you use more dates, multiply the present year by the corresponding number. The reason is evident: the year anything happened, plus the number of years ago it happened, equals the present year.

The Canceled Digit

is a sticker. Ask someone to write down any number he happens to think of, however large. Now tell him to multiply it by nine. When he has done this, tell him to cancel one digit from the result. Ask him what figures remain; as soon as you hear them, you name the digit he struck out.

All you need to know is the sum of the digits remaining after one has been canceled. Given this, you *subtract it from the next larger multiple of nine*. The result will be the digit you want. For instance:

He puts down	36425
and multiplies by	9
	<hr/>
which gives	327825
He cancels	8
which leaves	327 25
Added together, these give	19

The next multiple of 9 to 19 is 27, and 19 from 27 leaves 8.

Another personal-question trick is

Telling a Person's Age.

Tell someone to think of the number of the month of his birth, counting January as 1, February as 2, and so on. He is to multiply by 2; add five; multiply by 50; add his age; subtract 365; add 115. The month of his birth will then be told by the first figure, and his age by the last two figures.

A mathematical trick that anybody can learn, and almost nobody can figure out, is

The Watch Trick.

Take out your watch; ask someone to think of an hour, and to consider that he has counted up to that number. Tell him you will tap on the face of the watch with a pencil, and that he is to stop you when the hour he is thinking of, plus the number of times you have tapped, comes to twenty. Surprisingly, he always stops you at the very hour he thought of.

There is just one thing to remember in working this trick: the first seven taps may be anywhere, but the eighth must be on the hour of twelve, and from then on you must go backward around the dial, 11-10-9-8-7, until you are stopped. You will always come out on the selected hour.

3. THIS AND THAT

The Penetrating Colors

is an excellent "divination" effect. Give a box of crayons to the spectators. Turn your back. Ask them to remove all the crayons, to pick out one, and to put the rest out of sight. The selected one they are to put in the box, which they are to close and give to you. You receive it in your hands behind your back. "Each color sends off light-waves

of a peculiar vibration-frequency of its own," you say, "and that is what distinguishes the colors from one another. Like X-Rays, these rays penetrate solid matter. They penetrate the box; they penetrate me;" (here you turn around to face the audience, still keeping the box with its crayon behind you) "of course no one can see these rays, but I can feel them; they are getting stronger and stronger; I haven't seen that crayon, but I don't *need* to see it to tell you that the box contains a green crayon!"

The peculiarity of this trick is that it can be done only with crayons. As soon as you have turned to face the audience, so that the box is out of sight behind your back, you quietly lift the cover, seize the end of the crayon with the right hand, and rub your thumb-nail against the tip. Then you close the box again.

As your speech grows more and more dramatic, you bring your right hand out in front to make oratorical gestures. Let there be no mistake about its being empty. But a glance at the mark on the thumb-nail will tell you the color of the chosen crayon, and you can wind up your speech with a smashing climax.

For

The Damnable Dice Puzzle

you need three dice, which you can generally find in a game-box, if the family are non-garablers.

Laying the three dice one against the other in a row on the table, you challenge anyone to pick them up with his thumb against one end of the stack, and his forefinger against the other end, and to drop out the middle die without letting the other two fall. No one who does not know the method can possibly succeed.

When you are about to do the trick, you spit copiously on finger and thumb; this gives enough suction so that the dice will cling during the fraction of a second necessary to drop the middle die.

Putting aside the dice you have so conveniently dropped, you go on with

Fading 'Em.

It is hardly likely that a spectator will trust you if you offer to fade *him* with the dice, so you are constrained to fade the dice. The trick was at one time a favorite of a well-known Japanese magician. Since the greatest strong point of Oriental magicians is their presentation, I will describe how he did it.

He began by throwing two dice on the table, and then asking you to count the spot on the upper sides of both. Perhaps there were a four and an ace, making five. When you had finished counting, he slowly lifted both dice from the table, and showed you that the spots on the two bottom faces, opposite those you had just counted, amounted to eight. Then he put the dice down with the first two faces, the one and the four, uppermost. This done, he would ask you to give the two dice a single, gentle tap with your finger-tip, and then to look at the under side again.

Upon doing so, you were astonished to find that your tap had added a spot; instead of totalling eight, the spots now amounted to nine.

Again the Japanese would throw the dice upon the table. Perhaps this time the two sixes came uppermost. Again he would show you the opposite sides, which had nine spots; again he would carefully replace the dice on the table, the two six-spots uppermost. Stepping back a few feet, he would ask you to blow gently upon the dice, seven times, and then to turn them over.

A new surprise awaited you, for on looking at the opposite sides you discovered that you had blown away seven spots; instead of the nine that had been there, there were only two left.

The secret of this effect, which as a matter of fact is centuries old, is as follows:

Dice are so made that the number of spots on one side,

plus the number of spots on the side directly opposite, always amounts to seven. Naturally, if there are two dice, the total of the spots on any two pairs of opposite sides is fourteen. This, the foundation of the trick, you must keep in mind as you throw the dice.

You find, let us say, that the total of the spots on the two upper faces is five; pick up the cubes between thumb and forefinger.

Since $14 - 5 = 9$, there are evidently nine spots on the lower sides, but that is the last thing you would think of telling anyone. Instead, you roll the dice together through a quarter-turn, by raising the thumb and lowering the forefinger. Then you show the audience the sides thus brought undermost, which are really two of the side faces, and may, for instance, add up to eight.

The next move is to return the dice to the original position, and then to ask a spectator to tap once upon them. He may now look at the under side, where he will find nine spots instead of the eight he expected.

Remember that in some cases spots must be subtracted, not added. If you begin with twelve, for instance, and the false total is shown as nine, though the true total is two, you must ask the spectator to blow on the dice so that seven spots will come off, instead of there being any added.

Again, it may happen that the true and the false spots will come to an equal total. Thus, when the upper total is ten, the sides against the thumb are double-five; and the false total will be double-two, four, while the true total will be three-one, also four. In this case, no magical addition or subtraction is possible, and you will have clumsily to drop the dice, so as to start over again with another total.

One of the most popular tricks among modern magicians is called

The Chinese Paper-Tearing Trick.

This has innumerable forms, from the familiar torn and restored cigarette-paper to a mechanical device that en-

ables you to destroy and restore a whole newspaper. The very best method of all, however, for amateur use, is quite a recent invention.

You are most likely to find the necessary material on hand at church fairs, Hallowe'en parties, and the like. What you want is about four feet of crepe-paper ribbon and a pair of scissors. Put the scissors in your coat pocket, and come forward with the ribbon. Hold it out at length, so that people can see what it is—just a plain piece of ribbon.

Now take out the scissors, and start cutting the ribbon into pieces. Let it be very plain that there really are a number of separate pieces. Roll them all up into a neat roll. Put away the scissors. Then you start to unroll the cut pieces. But what has become of them? The end you pull on reels off and reels off and reels off—the ribbon is whole again!

The trick depends upon one insignificant-seeming fact—the ribbon is made of *crepe* paper. Crepe paper is crimped into thousands of little folds. When you pull it across the grain, it stretches.

In cutting the ribbon, you first fold it in half, and cut it at the middle. One half you bunch up in your left hand as much as possible, while you go on busily cutting the other half into halves, quarters, eighths, and sixteenths. Finally you wad the little bits into a mass in your right hand, but roll the full half up as neatly as is possible without betraying that it is not cut small.

Put the scissors into your right coat pocket, and leave the little pieces there at the same time. Now you stop, holding the bundle of ribbon aloft, and explain that everyone has seen this strip of paper cut into dozens of pieces, but you are going to restore it just the same. With that, you start unrolling the half in your hand, an inch or so at a time. But you unroll it by a series of short, strong tugs, each tug stretching the ribbon to the very limit. By the time you have unrolled the whole thing, you have stretched

the half to twice its length, so that it is as long as the original ribbon.

Tricks with handkerchiefs are in much the same case as coin tricks—there are great numbers of both, but very few suitable for impromptu performance by a non-professional. However,

The Appearing Handkerchief

fulfills both requirements. It can be done in two ways, by catching the handkerchief out of empty air, or by snatching it from a candle-flame. In either case, the prime requisite is a handkerchief of thin silk. For the sake of the trick, we will assume that you are in the habit of carrying such a handkerchief in your breast pocket; many men do, especially with evening clothes. Before you start to do your trick, you get out the handkerchief, and roll it into a tight ball. If you are not going to use the candle, hide the ball in the bend of your left elbow, covering it over with folds of the sleeve.

Rub both hands together; look at the palms; spread the fingers, and in general do your best to impress upon people that your hands are empty, without saying much about it. Pull up your right sleeve by tugging at the inside of the elbow with your left hand; then pull up your left sleeve in the same way with your right hand. This, of course, enables you to grab the wadded-up handkerchief. Keep your eyes steadily on your open left hand, and do your best to forget all about your right hand for the moment. The force of imitation is one of your strongest allies in magic, and if you can forget your right hand, it is quite sure that your audience will forget also.

Make a snatch in the air with your left hand. You open the fist, peering in hopefully; nothing there.

Again. Nothing.

Again. This time, keep your fist half-closed as if it contained something that was more than a fistful; look pleased; then go through the motion of putting this fistful into

your right hand. Now your right hand is supposed to contain something, and it does. You bring out the handkerchief.

If you are doing the trick by means of the candle, your chief property must be a box of safety matches. Instead of hiding the rolled-up handkerchief in your elbow, you push the drawer of the match-box out half-way, and stick the ball into the rear half of the case thus left vacant. After going through the "empty-hand" business described above, you pick up the match-box, take out a match, and light the candle. In putting down the matches, you close the box, which shoves the handkerchief into your left palm. There you keep it until you are ready to snatch it from the candle-flame.

With the handkerchief thus magically produced, you can do several things, the first of which shall be

The Lightning Knot.

Supposing the corners of a handkerchief to be lettered in order A, B, C, D, you secretly tie a tight little knot in B, beforehand; then pick up the handkerchief by A, taking care that B hangs behind the rest of the handkerchief so that the knot is out of sight. Run one hand down the hem, and thus get hold of the knot, unobserved, while apparently simply showing the handkerchief four-square.

Hold the knotted end of the handkerchief concealed between first finger and thumb; put corner D between first and second fingers. Now snap the handkerchief as you would a whip, letting D shoot out. Try this a couple of times, explaining that you are going to make a knot by magic. "By snapping it this way," you explain, "I curl the end around, and so give it a chance to knot itself up."

The first several attempts meet with no success; but finally you snap out corner B, and hold on to corner D, and there is the knot, tied hard in the very corner. "Whoops! Almost missed it!" as you say.

Driving a Pin Through Your Head

is neither so difficult nor so unpleasant as it sounds. Apparently you hold the point of a common pin to your forehead, steadying the pin between your right thumb and forefinger; you give it smart slap with your left hand, and instantly reach to the back of your head, where you catch the pin on the way out.

Before showing the trick, you push the pin cautiously through a bit of the skin of your forefinger, deep enough so that it will cling there crosswise, point up, without drawing blood. Put the point of the pin to your forehead. Make a couple of preliminary taps with your left hand, as if taking careful aim; when you deliver the real slap, spread the right thumb and forefinger, thus carrying the pin out of the way of the blow. Instantly you yank your right hand behind your head, too fast for anyone to see the pin, which you then produce from the back as if it had gone clean through.

Another popular piece of bloodless mutilation is

The Enchanted Thumb.

You simply seize your left thumb with your right forefinger and thumb, and pull off the first joint, separating it entirely from the second joint; then you replace it, and your hand is as sound and whole as ever.

The best part of it is that there is no false thumb, no trick apparatus—it is all just a clever optical illusion.

This is how to render the trick: Stand directly in front of a mirror. Hold your left hand with the palm upward at about the belt-line. Keep the thumb and fingers together. They must not be stretched apart.

Bend the first joint of the left thumb in, so that the thumb-nail is pointing directly at your body.

Hold your right hand so that the palm faces away from the body, the fingers toward the ceiling.

Bend the right thumb so that the thumb-nail is pointing directly to the right.

Bring the two thumbs together, at right angles; the right thumb resting on the first finger of the left hand, covering the place of joining with the first finger of the right hand.

Now the illusion is that you have seized the left thumb between the right thumb and forefinger.

Slide the right thumb down on the left forefinger as if it were a track. Slide it back, and the trick is done.

All this sounds very complicated, but if you will read the directions carefully you will find that the trick works itself.

It might be added, if difficulty is experienced in holding the thumbs in the necessary position to perform this trick, that it can be overcome by practice; the stiffness in the thumb joints will disappear, and you can do the trick with great ease.

A trick that might almost as well be listed among the escape effects is

Alexander Herrmann's Turned Vest Trick.

You invite up an assistant, whom you ask to remove his coat, and also to empty the pockets of his vest. Then you tie his hands behind his back, and announce that you are going to turn his vest inside out without untying his hands. This you proceed to do; your assistant is no wiser afterward than are the rest.

Unbutton the vest; then draw it back down the man's arms until it is bunched together at the wrists. Next pull the lower right-hand corner through the left arm-hole, following this with the lower left-hand corner, and thus finally pulling the entire vest through the arm-hole. Straighten the vest up again on the shoulders, and you will find that it is inside out.

The Afghan Bands

shall be our next trick. You show three strips of newspaper, each about two inches wide and as long as you can get out of a double-page sheet. These you pin into circles, using two pins, side by side, for each one. Then you take a pair of scissors, punch a hole between the two pins, and cut the bands in two, lengthwise, thus of course making two bands out of each.

The first pair comes out quite normally, two separate rings. But the second band perversely comes out in one great long loop; and the third one does indeed produce two rings, but they are linked.

It must have been a most ingenious man who figured out this trick; no one else could have devised—or stumbled upon—anything so perfect in its simplicity. The first ring you make normally, with a normal result; in making the second ring, you give one end of the strip a half-turn before pinning the ends; before pinning the third, you give one end a full turn. No other trickery is required.

While you have newspapers around is a convenient chance to show

The Christmas Tree.

The effect is that you roll several sheets of newspaper into a tube, tear a hole in the center, and draw out a newspaper Christmas tree seven or eight feet high. It looks rather tricky, but as a matter of fact it is easy to make.

Take an ordinary newspaper, and fold it once in half, crosswise. Slit the whole paper down the crease; this gives you a dozen or more long and narrow sheets of paper, enough for several Christmas Trees.

Roll up one of these sheets into a tube, neither tight nor loose. When only four or five inches remain to be rolled, insert another strip, rolling it into the bundle as if it were still the same piece, and keeping on rolling until only a few inches of the second sheet are left. Start the third sheet on

this; go on until the roll is composed of five or six sheets, and roll the last sheet flush. The result is a thick tube of paper.

Pinch one end of the tube flat, and make a tear about one-third the length of the tube. Then pinch it in the opposite direction, and make another tear like the first. This divides the end of the tube into four equal sections or ears, as it were. Fold these back against the outside of the tube. Then seize the inside of the tube, and pull up the paper; the Christmas Tree will rise gracefully before you, telescoping out of the tube. Give the bottom of the tube a twist so that it will not unroll, and you can leave the thing standing around as a permanent monument to your art.

The Clinging Cane.

Take an ordinary cane, one with a crook at the end, and balance it across the palm of your hand. You hold the hand up, fingers upward, palm away from you. The hand is almost perfectly upright, and there seems every reason why the cane should fall. But it does not; it clings to the palm as if glued. You move the hand about, and tilt the cane up and down; still it sticks.

No glue is necessary. The weight of the crooked end does the trick. First find the exact center of balance of the cane. Grasp it at that point; then open your hand. But instead of letting the crook hang straight downward, you tilt it back toward yourself, which gives the cane a tendency to roll upward and toward the hand; consequently even the slightest projection, such as the thumb-muscle, is enough to support it.



HAIL AND FAREWELL

I must bid you good-bye; you have finished reading my book, and I am grateful for your patience. I have taught you, I hope, some tricks you will enjoy, and whose accomplishment required no great labor. It is possible that you have caught a taste for the art, and would like to pursue it further; if you have, you will want instruction more advanced than I have given. As a parting gift, I have the pleasure of listing a few books where you will find all I could tell you, and a great deal besides.

Illustrated Magic, by Ottokar Fischer. Translated and edited by Barrows Mussey and Fulton Oursler. New York: The Macmillan Company. *Complete, and marvelously illustrated.*

Modern Magic, by Professor Hoffmann. Philadelphia: David McKay. *An old book, but still the great standard work.*

Later Magic, by Professor Hoffmann. New York: E. P. Dutton. *The best of the three sequels to Modern Magic.*

The Modern Conjuror and Drawing-Room Entertainer, by C. Lang Neil. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott. *A very thorough book, illustrated with many photographs.*

There are numerous special monographs on card tricks, coin tricks, handkerchief tricks, and so on. To these the student will easily find his way when he has arrived at the point of needing them.