

OUR MAGIC

THE ART IN MAGIC
THE THEORY OF MAGIC
THE PRACTICE OF MAGIC

BY

NEVIL MASKELYNE

AND

DAVID DEVANT

WITH 86 FIGURES MAINLY PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTIONS OF
PREPARATION AND MANIPULATION



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PREFACE

IN writing this book we have fulfilled a purpose that has long been held in view, viz.:—the production of a work which may present our art in a truer light than is ordinarily shed upon it by text-books and treatises. We have long been impressed by the fact that, unlike other technical subjects, magic has received scarcely any attention upon its theoretical side; but has been allowed to drift along the course of progress, as best it may, unaided by the advantages that order and system could bestow. In any other calling, technical or artistic, the groundwork of the subject, invariably and as a matter of course, receives due attention on the part of those who follow that calling. Those who teach and those who study alike, are well aware that, unless the fundamental principles, the theory, of their subject be properly understood, there can be no chance of gaining any real knowledge, such as an expert must possess. Then, since magic combines both art and science, the folly that it can be studied apart from its theory, its very constitution, is too obvious to require comment. Therefore, in this book, we have attempted the task of setting before the reader a plain and straightforward statement of the facts, principles and reasoning essential to a proper understanding of our subject, so far as our ability will allow.

We do not, for a moment, suggest that what we have written herein represents the last word to be said concerning magic. On the contrary, we are well aware that our book is but the commencement of a new departure which, we hope, may lead to the full elucidation of our subject, in every particular. The ramifications and extensions of knowledge connected with magic are so vast in their scope that no single treatise can possibly include all that a skilled magician ought to know. Consequently, we can claim no more than the production of a book which, in our opinion, serves to indicate, rather than to exhaust, the manifold topics associated with the art, science and practice of magic.

One notable feature of this work, which should, we believe, serve to prove the faith that is in us, consists in our unhesitating disclosure of original devices, and the *modus operandi* of original experiments in magic. So far from feeling any reluctance towards letting the general public into the secrets of our procedure, we are most anxious to educate the public in such matters, in order that a proper understanding of our art may be disseminated among its votaries and patrons. The point is this. Tricks and dodges are of comparatively small importance in the art of magic. At the utmost, they display inventive ability, but nothing more. The effect—and the effect alone—produced by the use of such inventions, is the consideration of real importance.

For proof of this, we need only point out one well known fact, viz.:—that the very best audience a skilled magician can have is one composed entirely

of magicians. The reason for this should be self-evident. An audience of magical experts is bound to see the performer's feats in a proper light. Such an audience will very seldom be perplexed by what is exhibited, and will never attach great importance to "how it is done." Every member of such an audience will have his mind engrossed, almost exclusively, in noting the art with which the performer uses devices, known or unknown, to produce an intended effect. If his art be meritorious, the expert spectators will appreciate the performance highly, no matter how old, how new, how ingenious or how simple may be the technical devices employed.

It will be difficult, we fear, to bring the general public to that standpoint. The average man is so firmly impressed with the notion that magic consists merely in puzzles offered for solution, challenges to the spectator's acuteness, that many years must elapse before that erroneous idea can be dispelled. Some day, however, we hope that even the man in the street will have learned the fact that so-called "secrets" are, to the magician, little more than are, to the actor, the wigs, grease-paints and other "make-ups" with which he prepares himself for appearance before the public. The art of the magician, like that of the actor, depends upon matters far higher than mere appliances and processes. Just as the actor, in the exercise of his art, employs certain means for making himself resemble the character he represents, so the magician employs devices essential to the guise in which he appears. As it happens, the magician's aids in this respect are, necessarily, more

recondite than those of the actor. Owing to this fact, there has arisen the mistaken impression that the magician's art begins and ends in the devices he employs. Whereas, in fact, those devices are merely his working tools. His art does not consist in the things he uses, nor in the trade secrets and technical processes he has at command, but in the employment of those facilities with adequate efficiency. It consists in what he does with the things he uses, not in those things themselves. In the hands of a skilled magician, a magical experiment becomes something vastly different from what it would be if conducted by a novice. That needs no argument whatever. And it is just in that very difference that the art of magic is comprised. Those who hold the view that the tools of magic are synonymous with the art of magic do great injustice to the magician and to his art, alike.

Undoubtedly, we must admit that great progress in the art has been made during recent years. Both in artistry and in social standing the modern magician stands upon a place far higher than that occupied by his predecessors of two or three generations ago. The average magician of to-day has been educated at a public school and is, socially, qualified to rank with members of any other profession. He knows some Latin and, perhaps, a trifle of Greek; and, on occasion, can speak French without giving his audience the cold shivers. So far as they go, these facts are eminently satisfactory, but more is requisite for the equipment of an artist in magic. The young gentlemen who constitute the

vast bulk of rising magicians have not yet shaken themselves free from the trammels with which their less favoured predecessors were hampered. They have not, as a rule, learned to understand the art of magic as it really is, nor to recognise the nature of its constitution. In so far as they are true artists depends upon their instinctive leaning towards refinement and appropriate procedure. They go the right way to work because they feel it to be the right—not because they know it to be right. As to explaining why any particular course of action is right, that is beyond the powers of almost any among them. This is where the rising generation lacks understanding, the simple reason being a lack of proper training in the theory and constitution of the art they profess.

We hope this present book may serve, at least, to provide a clue, by which those who blindly grope in the ancient labyrinth which they falsely regard as "The Art of Magic," may be led to a standpoint from which clearer views can be gained.

N. M.
D. D.



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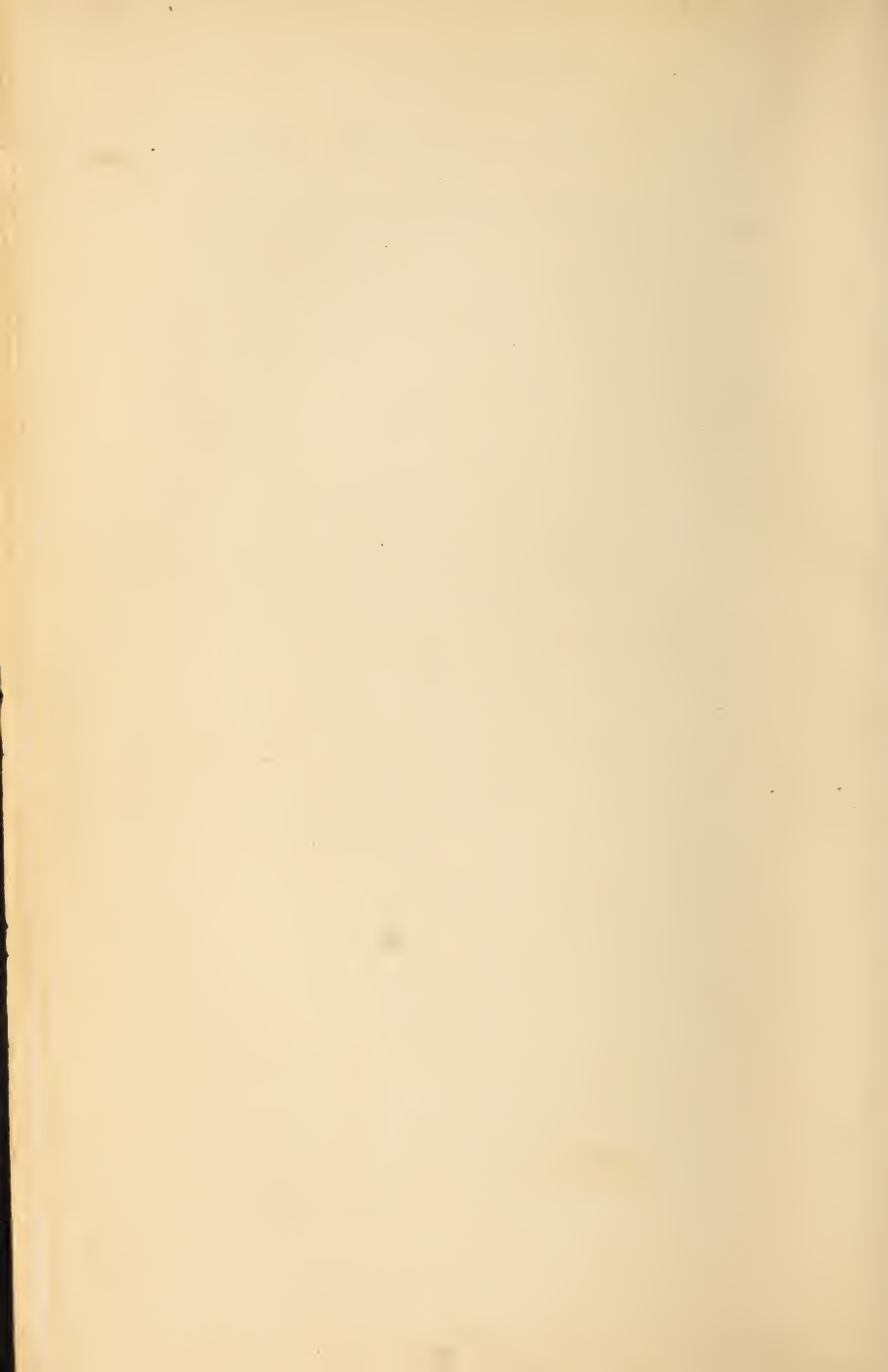
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PART I
THE ART IN MAGIC

OUR MAGIC

CHAPTER I

THE REAL SECRETS OF MAGIC

BEYOND doubt, the attractiveness of magic is largely due to its "secrets." Not only to the general public, but also to the professional magician, the secrets of magic represent the most fascinating branch of the subject. They are, among all classes of society, a popular topic for conversation. They have given birth to whole libraries of literature and are responsible for a mass of chuckleheaded opinions—greater in number and variety, perhaps, than have ever resulted from the discussion of any other subject under the sun.

Unfortunately, however, notwithstanding the constant attention devoted to this theme, the real secrets of the magic art have received but scant consideration. Their true nature—indeed, their very existence—may be said to have been almost entirely disregarded by the public, and too frequently overlooked by professional magicians. The prevalent idea is that the secrets of magic consist in tricks and dodges, connected with the manipulations and the apparatus employed in the art. To most people, the

“secret” of any magical presentation means simply “how it is done.” It is assumed that, when once the devices used in producing a magical effect have been discovered, the secret of that effect is revealed. The trick has been found out and, therefore, nothing remains to be learned. A more erroneous view has never been conceived. Not only so, it is a view that cannot be justified on any rational ground, as we propose to show in the following pages.

The real secrets of magic are not merely trade secrets. They are not workshop devices, connected with manipulation and mechanism. They are not ingenious dodges which, when learned, enable their possessor to accomplish all that a skilled magician can do. They are not tricks and puzzles devised for the bewilderment of the public. Far from it. They are of an order far higher than elementary matters of that description, and far removed from the popular conception of their nature. Our present object is to disclose these secrets—to explain the real basis of the magic art, and the principles upon which magical effects actually depend. In short, we intend to show, not only the tricks which magicians use, but also the essential factors which underlie the whole art and practice of magic. It will be found that, so far from being bound up in jugglery and paraphernalia, the true art in magic is purely intellectual in character, and comprises an infinitely varied range of interest.

It is essential in the first place that a just conception be formed of the scope and intention of this present section of our work. “The Art *in* Magic”

is a very different thing from "The Art of Magic." The latter term may embrace an immense number of diverse considerations. The former relates to one side only of Magic; a side which has never received the attention it deserves. Our immediate aim is the elucidation of those fundamental principles which, being reduced to practice, justify the claim of Magic to be classed among the Arts—not, of course, among the mechanical arts, but among the Fine Arts—the Arts with a big A. We wish to demonstrate the causes which, irrespective of technical skill and knowledge, determine the relative success or failure of individual aspirants to fame in pursuit of our art. It is evident that such matters are well worthy of consideration by every magician—even one of the most practical, or most commercial type. Indeed, it may be said, with some show of reason, that the man who cannot explain the principles involved in such questions as these, cannot claim to understand the inwardness of the magic art. It is that inwardness which governs a performer's ultimate success or failure. Therefore, it must be well to investigate the actual agencies which dominate the successful practice of magic. This we will now attempt, to the best of our ability. In doing so, however, we must direct the reader's attention to things which do not lie upon the surface of our subject. We must deal with points which are not exactly obvious to the man who, for the first time, looks into a book dealing with magic. We must, for the moment, lose sight of such details as "sleights" and "fakes" and confine our attention to broad principles which, superfi-

cially, may seem to be mere abstractions, of no especial importance to practical men. But, as we proceed, we hope to show by means of practical illustrations the really important nature of the matters we are discussing.

We presume that everyone will agree to the recognition of magic as an art. As a matter of fact, magic embodies both art and science. Ordinarily, the phrase "the art of magic" is used as including everything that relates to the subject, from any point of view whatever. Therefore, since our present inquiry relates only to the art side of magic, and has no concern with its science, we have been careful to choose for this section a title which avoids the loose terminology commonly employed. Then, magic being admittedly an art, let us investigate the real nature of the Art in Magic; for, upon that investigation depends the disclosure of the real secrets of magic.

CHAPTER II

THE THREE DEGREES IN ART

HERE we come into contact with a difficulty which has taxed the powers of many great minds to the utmost. Before we can talk sensibly about "Art" of any kind we must first define the true meaning of that term. We must decide as to what, in our opinion, art really is. Fortunately in this instance, we are not in danger of encountering the obstacle that so many able intellects have failed to overcome. We are not called upon to define the meaning of art in the abstract. We have only to define what is meant by "Art in Magic." To that end, we may evoke the aid of both authority and common sense.

It was, we believe, Robert-Houdin who said that a conjurer is in reality "an actor playing the part of a magician." There is only one fault in that statement. He should have said "a *great* conjurer." Because, as we all know, there are many conjurers who only play the part of some other conjurer. That, however, is a matter with which we shall deal forcibly later on. For the present, we will accept the broad principle expressed in Robert-Houdin's definition of a conjurer. That definition may not be—and is not—accurate in relation to what a conjurer always *is*; but, beyond doubt, it is accurate in the sense of defining what a conjurer always *should*

be. A real modern magician, then, is essentially an actor. He *must* be so, or as the sole alternative, he must be a duffer. Both authority and common-sense unite in compelling us to that conclusion. To all intents and purposes, the real art of the magician is identical with that of the actor. The magician's methods, of course, are widely different from those of the actor; but, whatever difference there may be in method, the principles involved are identical in both cases.

From the time of Aristotle to the present date, the consensus of opinion has decided that all art is based upon imitation. Most of the authorities have "flown off the handle," in trying to decide what constitutes art in the abstract; but all agree that the basis of art is imitation—either the imitation of something that actually *exists*, or of something that *might* exist, in circumstances imagined by the artist. With this knowledge in our possession, and fortified by the exercise of our own judgment, we realise the fact that a display of skill given by a magical performer should imitate, and, thus, convey to the spectators, the impression of effects produced by supernatural powers. Herein, we may justly say that we stand upon sure ground—and here we may rest, so far as primary considerations are concerned. We have no need to be led out of our depth by trying to define that Will-o'-the Wisp "Abstract Art."

Now, artistic judgment may, to a great extent, be gained by study and experience. Similarly, physical adaptation may be developed by early and systematic training. And the acquisition of either of

those essentials may be considerably facilitated by means of accurate knowledge. Such knowledge may be either theoretical or practical; but, of the two, the theoretical must, in the long run, prove to be the more valuable. It, necessarily, conducts the student to the bed-rock of his subject; whereas, the study of practical details only leads to a knowledge of isolated facts. By means of the latter form of study the student may learn what to do, in order to produce certain effects. But, however much attention he may devote to the acquisition of that detailed knowledge, he will never ascertain therefrom the *reasons* which underlie the processes he employs. He will only learn the "how" of his work; the "why" will remain obscure. In short, he will never really understand his business. Everything he does will be done blindly. Every new departure he endeavours to make must be subject to conclusions arrived at by means of "trial and error." Any little variation upon his usual practice will represent a subject of extreme doubt. He can only *think* that what he proposes to do will produce the result he desires. He can never *know* what he is doing, because he does not understand why the things he does are successful.

On the other hand, the man who has gained a knowledge of the broad principles which constitute the foundation of the art side of magic must, necessarily, possess a great advantage, in such circumstances. He knows the reason why each effect he has already produced has been successful. He can follow the manner in which each of his previous de-

vices has operated, in influencing the minds of spectators. Similarly, from his knowledge of basic principles, he will be able to deduce the proper manner of presentation, and the probable effect of any new conception. The same principles which govern what he has already done also govern what he is about to do. Therefore, being acquainted with the "why" of the matter, he is not afflicted by doubts concerning the "how." Putting the whole thing in a nutshell, it simply comes to this—the man not only knows his business; he also understands it. He knows the technique and understands the art. As to the great value—and the commercial value—of the understanding, we think, there can exist no possible doubt.

As already stated, there is a kind of art which imitates things imagined by the artist. There is another kind of art which imitates things that actually exist. There is also a third kind—that which imitates neither things imagined by the imitator, nor things that exist; but merely imitates the imitations of others. These three varieties may, respectively, be described as High Art, Normal Art, and False Art.

We will now turn our attention to the systematic discussion of the three phases of art thus defined, and endeavour to arrive at sound conclusions thereon in relation to the Art in Magic.

The subject of false art in magic, when rationally investigated, presents no difficulties, in the way of either doubt or obscurity. In magic, as elsewhere,

false art is the art which imitates art. It is an imitation of an imitation. An illustration of this may be given by means of a familiar analogy in connection with painting. Pictures painted by the great masters are frequently reproduced by students and by professional copyists. Many of the copies thus executed are, in all practical respects, facsimiles of the original pictures from which they were copied. Yet nobody, in his sober senses, could possibly regard those copies, however faithful they may be, as works of true art. We have all seen copies of invaluable masterpieces offered for sale. We have all noted the insignificant price at which such copies are sold. We have all been struck by the small value of the copies as compared with their originals, the latter being, very often, so precious, that money could not buy them. The reason for this discrepancy is obvious. The originals are works of high art. The copies are works of false art; except, of course, that they have the merit of honesty. They are, admittedly, nothing more than copies.

As in painting so also in magic. To produce a magical effect, of original conception, is a work of high art. It imitates the exercise of magical powers, by means and in a manner conceived by the artist who produced it. To reproduce a magical effect, exactly as already conceived and executed by an artist in magic, is false art. It merely imitates the original imitation; and, in actual value, is just as worthless as a painting copied from another painting. Any weakling may be taught how to do that

kind of thing; and, having learned his lesson, may earn an income equivalent to the value of a weakling's work.

Yet, in spite of the truth of the foregoing statements, many of those who practise magic, either as a means of livelihood or as an intellectual recreation, appear to be entirely ignorant of the very existence of such facts as those we have reviewed. In all probability, those men would feel highly offended were any doubt cast upon their claim to be regarded as artists. Yet, in all they do, they prove themselves to be mere mechanics. They can do just what somebody else has already done—and they can do nothing more. Such men are not artists. They cannot be; since, in all their works, the only kind of art displayed is the false art, which is an imitation of real art.

The class of man above indicated represents a type that must be very familiar to all. The methods adopted by such men are of common knowledge. Suppose, for instance, Mr. Artist produces a novel and successful effect. No sooner has he done so than Mr. Copyist becomes on the alert and forthwith proceeds to haunt the place wherein Mr. Artist's performances are given. By means of persistent observation, aided perhaps by accident, by means of purchase from some other imitator, or, it may be, by means of bribery and corruption, Mr. Copyist eventually acquires the knowledge and equipment requisite for the reproduction of the novel effect. That end having been attained, one might think that Mr. Copyist would need to gain nothing more at

Mr. Artist's expense. Generally, however, that is far from being the state of the case. Although he has become possessed of the technical requirements connected with the effect he seeks to reproduce, Mr. Copyist, even then, is not content to take off his coat and do a little meritorious work. Having got what he wanted in order to reproduce the effect at all, he might surely be expected to infuse some spice of originality into his reproduction. But, no! He will not trouble himself, even to that slight extent. He does not mind expending his time in gathering the crumbs that fall from another's table; but he has a rooted objection to expending energy in making his own bread. So he continues to attend Mr. Artist's performances until, in course of time, he has learned by heart every word Mr. Artist says, every inflection of Mr. Artist's voice, and every movement and gesture Mr. Artist makes. Then, and then only, is Mr. Copyist prepared to set to work on his own account. And when his reproduction is exhibited, what is it? Generally speaking, it is but a pale reflection of the original work of art. At the best, it is merely a slavish imitation; and, as such, has no artistic value.

On several occasions we have made an experiment which is always interesting. That experiment has been tried upon copyists, clinging to the skirts of various arts, including magic. It consists in saying to Mr. Copyist, at the conclusion of his performance, "I had only to close my eyes, and I could almost have believed it was Mr. Artist who was performing." Thereupon, Mr. Copyist has, invariably, assumed an expression of smug satisfaction, and has given thanks

for the great compliment (?) paid him! If he could only have realised what was passing in the mind of the person to whom his thanks were addressed—but, there! his mental calibre, of course, forbids any such exercise of intelligence. Yet, one cannot help coveting the blissful ignorance and the sublime impudence which enable such a man to pose as an artist. The possession of an intellect so obtuse, and a hide so pachydermatous, must confer upon the possessor a degree of self-satisfaction unknown to men of real ability.

Some may, possibly, think we have been too severe upon Mr. Copyist. It must be remembered, however, that no useful purpose can be served by mincing matters, when endeavouring to uphold any just cause. If magic is to be raised to its proper level among the fine arts one must not withhold the statement of any truth, however disagreeable it may be, that may help to drive home the essential points which distinguish real Art in Magic from the false art, so often met with in the practice of magic.

Leaving, for the present, the subject of False Art, we will proceed to the more agreeable considerations connected with True Art in Magic. Of this, as we have already seen, there are two kinds—Normal Art and High Art. Those definitions, of course, do not represent qualities that are capable of hard-and-fast classification. In the nature of things, that is impossible. The range of art, from its highest grade to its lowest, includes every possible degree of merit. Except in general terms, one cannot say that, within such and such limits, Normal Art is contained and,

beyond those limits, we have on the one hand, High Art, and on the other False Art. There is an almost imperceptible gradation, throughout the entire scale, between each particular degree and those adjoining it. One can only generalise, when dealing with the principles of any form of art; and, speaking broadly, say that High Art is situated near to the top of the scale, Normal Art near the middle, and False Art near the lower end. It is the normal or average degree—approximating to the central position of the scale—that will next claim our attention.

When discussing False Art in Magic, we had no difficulty in providing a definition of its nature. When we say that False Art is the art which imitates art, we are merely stating a truism, and one that is equally applicable to all arts alike. But, when we proceed to define Normal Art in Magic, we find the task somewhat more difficult. In painting, for example, it is easy enough, and accurate enough to say that Normal Art is the art which imitates Nature. We can all understand that the normal artist, in painting, is he who transfers to his canvas a transcript of what he himself has seen in Nature. In Nature, however, there is no magic, because the very essence of Magic is that it, apparently, sets the laws of Nature at defiance. "Natural Magic" is really a contradiction in terms. It may mean almost anything, according to the sense in which it is used. Therefore, apart from art of some kind, magic has no existence. Then, the point is, how can the normal artist in magic reproduce the normal effects associated with magic without, at once, becoming a false artist—one who

imitates art? It is a very pretty question, involving an interesting problem. The answer to that question and the solution of that problem, cannot fail to provide a valuable mental exercise for all magicians who respect their profession and value their art.

At the first glance, it may appear that, at this stage of our investigation, we have encountered a difficulty of considerable magnitude; or, possibly, an insurmountable obstacle. A very little reflection, however, will show that such is by no means the case. The difficulty is more apparent than real. The principles which govern the normal practice of other arts will be found, absolutely, of equal validity in the Art in Magic. This may readily be demonstrated by amplifying the analogy, already employed, between magic and painting.

In painting, the normal artist makes a picture, representing something, or a combination of many things, that will reproduce the effect of actually looking upon the work of Nature. He does not create anything; he merely imitates things, which already exist, *on* canvas. The things he paints resemble, more or less, things which others have painted. As a rule, such resemblances, in normal art, are inevitable. The important point, however, is that the things he paints do not imitate paintings made by others. The various things which enter into the composition of his picture are the common property of every artist. Everyone is at liberty to combine those details, in any manner he may think fit, to produce whatever effect he chooses. But, so soon as any painter copies a particular combination,

or a particular treatment of such details, as represented in the work of another, so soon will his work be reduced to the level of false art.

Now, in view of these self-evident facts, the difficulty of defining the nature of Normal Art in Magic becomes reduced to very small dimensions. In fact, one can scarcely say that any difficulty exists. Just as the average painter has at hand innumerable details of subject and technique, all of which are common property, so has the average magician a wide selection of materials which, in common with all his fellow-artists, he is at liberty to use. Just as the painter uses familiar methods and stock subjects for the production of his pictures, so does the magician use methods and subjects which have a similar relation to his own special art. In either case, the chief characteristic which distinguishes Normal Art from False Art consists in the fact that the former relies upon personal ability, while the latter sponges upon the ability of others. That is perfectly clear.

There need be no hesitation in giving a definition of what constitutes Normal Art in Magic. Obviously, it is the art which employs familiar means to produce its own especial results. Normal Art of every kind, when reduced to its true basis, consists in that, and nothing more. Certain subjects and certain methods are common property. The normal artist utilises those subjects and methods, without copying anyone else. That is to say, the difference between the essentially false and the essentially true, in any art, lies in the respective absence or presence of original effort. One may be a true artist without

possessing creative genius. Individual skill in adaptation will suffice. But no true artist can ever be made from the material contained in a mere copyist. On the other hand, however, a normal artist may only too readily degenerate into a copyist, unless he be careful to keep in view the duty he owes both to his art and to himself.

Upon such points, the man who, even in a very minor degree, possesses the true artistic temperament, cannot help feeling and speaking strongly. He who seeks to acquire or to retain the social position assigned to an artist, can never lose sight of the maxim "*Noblesse oblige.*" He is, perforce, compelled to avoid many practices which, if employed in commerce, would be perfectly justifiable. He who employs the tradesman's methods must be content to remain a tradesman. His ultimate aim consists in the making of money; a thing with which art has no concern. It is true that, in art, even more profit may often be made than in trade; but whatever profit may incidentally accrue to the artist, his ultimate aim is far higher than matters relating to finance. He has, of course, every reason for studying his own interests. Nobody can blame him for that; nor, indeed, can do otherwise than approve his prudence. But, at all times, the interests of his art are paramount. Should there arise an occasion when an artist finds self-interest opposed to the interests of art, he must be prepared to sacrifice profit upon the altar of duty. If he cannot do that, he is no true artist. Let him, then, come down from his pedestal, and take his place among work-a-day humanity. In

doing so, he will suffer no disgrace; but, on the contrary, he will deserve honour. By ridding himself of an unwarrantable assumption of artistic merit, he will be absolved from the guilt of false-pretence.

In magic, then, the normal artist is he who takes materials which are the common property of all who practice his art, and utilises those materials for his own particular ends. His general purpose, of course, like that of all magicians, is the simulation of supernatural effects. ✓ And, in the achievement of that purpose, the work done by the normal artist in magic will fall within one or other of three categories, which may be outlined as follows:

1. The use of familiar methods, in a familiar combination, to produce a familiar effect, but *with some originality in presentation.*

2. The use of familiar methods, *in a novel form of combination*, to produce a familiar effect, the manner of presentation displaying some originality.

3. The use of familiar methods, in any form of combination, to produce *a novel effect*, the presentation of which must, necessarily, possess more or less originality.

Everything which is not contained in those three very extensive categories must be something which is either greater or less than Normal Art in Magic. It must approximate, either to False Art at one extreme, or to High Art at the other.

In our Normal Art, as already defined, it will be noted that every department possesses one characteristic that is common to all, viz., originality of presentation. And, having carried our investigation

thus far, we are able to see that, without the saving grace of original presentation, a magician's work must necessarily degenerate into False Art. The extent of such degeneration will be exactly commensurate with the degree to which that work imitates the work of other magicians. In other words, the degeneration is proportionate to the imitation of art. The very moment we detect the existence of art which imitates art, we know we are face to face with falsity, more or less pronounced. On that point we need have no fear of being mistaken. Knowing what we know, our estimation of a magician's merit will be governed, mainly, by this particular consideration. When we recognise the presence of false art we prepare ourselves to estimate the depth to which the magician will sink. When we note the absence of false art we prepare to observe the height to which the magician will rise. Therein we instinctively act upon the dictates of common sense and common justice.

Turning to the other extreme, however, we find that our normal art presents a very wide field for expansion, and is capable of attaining a very high level of merit. Indeed it may be raised to a level which approximates, very closely, to high art. So closely, in fact, that it encroaches upon the hinterland dividing the two higher sections of art. In this respect everything depends upon the amount of original accomplishment displayed. The essential truth of this latter statement will become more apparent when we proceed to discuss the actual characteristics of High Art in Magic.

We must never lose sight of the fact that in magic, as in all other intellectual occupations, Normal Art is, by far, the most important department. High Art is a sporadic and accidental development that may be productive of beneficial influences, if only it can secure due appreciation. In any event, however, its influence can never be otherwise than for the good. False Art is a parasitic growth that can only be productive of evil, and should never be permitted to live. Between the two there lies the Normal Art, which includes the vast bulk of magical representations; and upon the elevation of which all true progress depends. It is useless to point out the merits exhibited by the work of this or that exponent, and say—"See how high a level magic has attained!" It is unjust to quote the doings of certain so-called "Artists," and say—"See the depths to which magic has become degraded!" The true status of magic, as an art, can only be ascertained by means of evidence derived from the work of accredited Normal Artists. The more really our Normal Art, as a whole, can be made to approach the status of High Art, the greater will be the elevation attained by magic. The more nearly our Normal Art approximates to False Art, the lower must the whole art of magic sink. These statements admit of no dispute, as any man of ordinary intelligence can perceive. By our Normal Art we must either stand or fall. There is no help for it. If Normal Art become debased no individual genius can save it. If Normal Art be represented by men who respect their art, no charlatan, however notorious, can ever degrade it.

The future of our art, then, rests with the Normal Artist. Upon him depends the ultimate development of magic. If he be not true to his art, the false artist will, in the end, reign supreme. In such circumstances magic must relinquish all hope of attaining a position among the Fine Arts. It must be relegated to the position of a mechanical art—an *inferior* mechanical art—lower even than that of a circus juggler. This is obvious, because, from the standpoint of mechanical art, the juggler's attainments are far higher than those of a magician. The latter can only take a higher place by realising that he has to depend for success upon his brains, rather than upon his hands. In manipulative skill, he is hopelessly outclassed by the juggler. The amount of practice and physical training he requires cannot in any way be compared with that which is needed by the juggler. If, therefore, the Normal Artist in magic insists upon regarding his art as a mere *congeries* of mechanical accomplishments, he must be content to occupy a position inferior to that of a common juggler, and immensely inferior to that of a skilled mechanic.

The question of manipulative skill, as considered in relation to the respective accomplishments of the conjurer, the juggler and the artificer, may be put in a nutshell. Where the conjurer requires weeks of practice the juggler requires months. And, where the juggler requires months of practice the skilled mechanic requires years. This is written, remember, by men who know what they are talking about—who are familiar with the three kinds of training in

question. Mere opinion does not enter into the matter at all. As a mechanical art, *i. e.*, as a form of manipulative skill, magic occupies a very low position indeed. Only as an intellectual pursuit can it claim to be regarded as an art.

At times we have conversed with conjurers, professional and amateur, who have become momentarily enamoured of some original or newly-introduced manipulation. In such cases it is singularly interesting to note the attitude of mind displayed by the enthusiast. He is proud of his attainment as though it were an infant prodigy of whom he were the parent. He speaks of it in rapturous terms, as though it represented the highest achievement of which the magic art is capable. And, no doubt, if he were questioned on the point he would say that, in his opinion, the production of such ingenious devices must be regarded as the high-water mark of Art in Magic.

When, however, we apply to such matters the touchstone of actual knowledge, we have no difficulty in seeing that the judgment pronounced by our enthusiast is wildly wide of the mark. Greater folly indeed could hardly be put into words. To say that any mere manipulation can possibly be regarded as a work of high art, is to sound the very depths of absurdity. Manipulative processes are only one small portion of the means whereby the purposes of art are served. They are useful—indeed they are indispensable. But so are the brushes of the painter, and the chisels of the sculptor. In the work of an artist, mere handicraft has a value very little higher

than that of the utensils employed therein. The only adjunct to which pride of place may be assigned is the artistic brain which conceives and directs the purposes of handicraft and utensils alike.

To complete the preliminary stage of our investigation, we will now discuss the essential features of High Art in Magic. As in previous instances, we must first define precisely what we mean by the term "High Art" and ascertain what it is that, provably, constitutes the quality in question.

Herein we are confronted by no shadow of difficulty, either in connection with general principles or with specific details. High Art in Magic is, in every essential, the counterpart of High Art in other callings. It is that which originates and executes truly artistic conceptions. It represents the most complete triumph of mind over matter. It exists only in its power to create, but its creations are, humanly speaking, imperishable. As Shakespeare says:

"Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme."
—Sonnet LV.

Those words are applicable, in principle, to High Art of every kind. When, for instance, we review the history of magic, we cannot fail to recognise the inherent immortality of those works which have possessed the qualities essential to High Art. The work of the magician, like that of the actor, is among the *ephemeridæ* of civilisation. The magician himself leaves behind him very little beyond a name. Yet

how great is the intrinsic value of that little, reckoned in hard cash. Its extrinsic value is, at the same time, immeasurable. In the bare records handed down to us in the history of magic, an immensity of progress and a wealth of honestly artistic accomplishment are epitomized. Those who know the vast amount of hammering that has to be done before even the faintest echo of their work is heard by others, can read between the written lines and can fill in the blank spaces of history. Thus they are able to appreciate the achievements of their predecessors, with some approach to accuracy.

When, from the vantage point of knowledge and experience, we review the history of magic, we instinctively realise that the achievements which *live* are those which truly possess the character of High Art. They are the works of creative genius—the works of Master Magicians, whose mastery was due to an innate sense of the principles which underlie true art. Dispossessed of that sense, those men would never have occupied the place in history which now is theirs by right. The degree to which their work was dominated by artistic principles is evident to anyone who undertakes a dispassionate study of the matter.

If we bring an open mind to bear upon the achievements of Past Masters in Magic, and compare the purely technical merit of those works with that displayed in other branches of invention, the comparison thus instituted is very far from being favourable to magic. On the contrary, it shows magic in a very poor light. Regarded in that light

magic appears to consist merely in a series of second-rate mechanical devices and childish simple processes. Such is the actual fact, beyond all possibility of dispute. Hence the obvious folly, as already stated, of imagining that the Art of Magic is represented by "sleights" and "fakes." Such devices only constitute a branch—a very insignificant branch—of mechanical handicraft, and nothing more.

To regard the Art of Magic in so unworthy a light is a serious blunder; proverbially worse than a crime. The art we profess is not contained in the mere devices we employ, nor does the history of our art consist in a catalogue of the devices handed down to us. If, in magic, such things were all that can be claimed, this book could never have been written. If matters of pure *technique*—mere handicraft—were all we have to discuss, the phrase "Art in Magic" would represent a solecism of the first water. Fortunately for us, however, magic occupies a far higher plane than that of the actual means it employs. Such is the case in every art; for art, of any kind, can only begin where processes end. As grammar is to literature, or versification to poetry, so are sleights and fakes to magic. Such things are the *means* not the *end* of art. In other arts, this fact is clearly understood and appreciated; but, in magic, neither the literature nor the general practice of the art has, so far, shown any indication of a true understanding of this most vital question. Surely it is our bounden duty to do our utmost towards correcting this lamentable defect. When that correction has been duly made—and not until then—magic will attain

the position among fine arts, to which it is justly entitled.

To return, however, to the history of magic, there is one obvious question that arises. In view of what has already been said, wherein lies the true merit—the High Art—of the classic productions handed down to us? That question is easily answered. And, still more easily, can we say wherein the true merit of those productions does *not* consist. For example, it does not consist in the inventive ability, as ordinarily understood, of the old masters. It does not consist in the mechanical ingenuity they displayed. It does not consist in the manipulative skill at their command. It does not consist in the theoretical knowledge they possessed, nor in the practical experience they gained. Such elementary matters barely touch the fringe of true art. Then, by the simple process of exclusion, we arrive at the only possible answer. The true merit of the masterpieces in question consists in the originality they display, and the perfection with which they simulate the operation of supernatural influences. The honours gained by master magicians have been due to a genius for conceiving and fulfilling the requirements of artistic originality. In every art the Master is he who can produce original effects and understands how to present them in an original and convincing manner.

Thus there are three elementary facts which are well worthy of remembrance. Without thorough knowledge no man can become a true artist. Without honourable ambition no man can become a high artist. And, without originality no man can become

a great artist. Of course we cannot all attain the greatness to which the master magicians are so worthily entitled. We cannot all hope to become exponents of the highest art in magic. But we can all, at least, *try* to do so, and in proportion to our united efforts in this direction, we shall raise the status of magic as an art.

In this connection we may advantageously bear in mind the words written centuries ago by Sir Philip Sidney:—

“Who shootes at the mid-day sonne, though he be sure he shall never hit the marke, yet as sure he is he shall shoote higher than who aymes but at a bush.”

That kind of “shootynge” represents a perfect analogy to the methods of high art. The actual end can never be attained; but, nevertheless, every true artist will endeavour to approach it as nearly as his natural abilities will permit. The heights we reach are all that may be counted to us for righteousness. A lifetime of effort, upon one dead level, is of less value than a single step towards higher aims. And, at the same time, every artist knows that, whatever may be the height he attains, his successors will go higher still. He has builded upon foundations laid by others, and others, in turn, will build upon the foundations he has laid. He can only say to posterity, in Kipling’s words:—

“After me cometh a Builder. Tell him, I too have known.”¹

¹ “The Five Nations,” page 66.

Having made ourselves acquainted with certain fundamental truths we may now pass on to the consideration of specific principles. Our best course, undoubtedly, will be to investigate various important qualities associated with the art of magic; and thus deduce certain rules, whereby the production of artistic results may be facilitated.

Here, however, we must be careful to avoid falling into a very common error. We must not be drawn into a belief that, in art of any kind, there is or can be any specific rule which may not be set aside upon occasion. Cast-iron regulations are antagonistic to every form of art. It is impossible to give recipes whereby the creation of artistic effects may be assured. It is only possible to lay down rules for the avoidance of certain ascertained defects, and even such rules are not capable of rigid observance at all times. Their operation is controlled by attendant circumstances; and, in order to use them to full advantage, their scope and meaning must be fully understood. At the same time, there is one *general* rule whereby at all times our procedure may be governed. That rule may be stated as follows:—

(1) *Never set aside any accepted rule, unless it be absolutely necessary to do so for some clearly defined reason.*

The application of this rule will become increasingly evident as we proceed with our investigation. For the present it will suffice to say that, when we have reasoned out and formulated a logical conclusion, that conclusion should be adhered to so far as may be possible. Thus, when no valid reason can

be given for breaking an accepted rule, the latter should be obeyed. With this preamble, we may proceed to the detailed inquiry we have in view, treating each particular quality of art under its own separate heading.

CHAPTER III

UNITY

IN all probability, the quality to which the term "unity" is applied, is the most important factor in relation to every form of art. At any rate, we may safely say there is no quality of greater importance. As in other arts, so in magic, unity is a first essential to success; since, without it, artistic results are impossible. This has been understood and accepted since the earliest days of art. For example, centuries before the Christian Era, Aristotle wrote, concerning the Grecian Drama:—

"As, therefore, in other mimetic arts, one imitation is an imitation of one thing, so here the fable, being an imitation of an action, should be an imitation that is one and entire; the parts of it being so connected that, if any one of them be either transposed or taken away, the whole will be destroyed or changed. For whatever may be either retained or omitted, without making any sensible difference, is not properly a part.—Poetics, Part II, Chap. V.

If, for the word "fable" we substitute the words "magical feat," or other equivalent term, the foregoing paragraph will become as appropriate to the Art of Magic as it now is to Dramatic Art. But, since we are engaged upon an independent inquiry,

we must not be content to accept, without proof, the mere pronouncement of any authority, however eminent. It is necessary to make sure of our ground as we proceed, and to obtain all reasonable proof that the conclusions we adopt are well-founded. Let us, then, review the facts systematically; and, in the light of knowledge thus gained, form our own conclusions as to the characteristics and importance of unity.

At the outset, for very obvious reasons, we may discard the mass of proverbial nonsense which has crystallised around the idea of singleness of purpose and action. Such matters as the impossibility of doing, properly, two things at once—of being in two places at one time (with particular reference to Sir Boyle Roche's bird)—of facing both ways simultaneously, and so forth, such matters may be set aside entirely. Mere impossibility is a consideration which, in magic, has no weight whatever. The essence of the art consists in, apparently, accomplishing things which are impossible. What we are concerned with, just now, is the expediency of presenting each magical item in the form of an harmonious whole, and of avoiding everything in the nature of incompleteness or discontinuity. Therein lies the true conception of artistic unity.

“One imitation,” as stated in the quotation given above, “is an imitation of one thing.” That is obviously true. And one magical act, as presented to an audience, should constitute an imitation of one apparently-supernormal feat, culminating in one apparently-miraculous effect. We have only to re-

flect for a moment to realise the fact that, in order to obtain a perfect effect, the only possible course is to rivet the attention of the audience upon one continuous chain of events, which will lead up to one definite and impressive result. In this connection, it is necessary to remember that an audience is not amenable to compulsion, and cannot be relied upon to make any serious mental effort. Spectators attending a magical performance have no idea of exerting themselves, either mentally or physically, for the performer's benefit. Why should they? They are there to be amused, and for no other purpose. The exertion of following and remembering details which involve any element of complexity, or of trying to understand any matter which exhibits a mere trace of obscurity, is a thing which no magician has a right to demand of his audience. His spectators, very justly, expect that everything connected with the entertainment shall be so presented as to be readily understood. Hence, it is important that, as a matter of ordinary practice, each presentation should consist in an unbroken sequence of events. Here, for the moment, we may pause, to set down a valuable and well-understood rule:—

(2) *Always endeavour to form an accurate conception of the point of view most likely to be adopted by a disinterested spectator.* For a performer to put himself in the place of his audience requires the exercise of an amount of imagination and—may we say it?—of judgment, rarely to be met with, among those who are otherwise qualified to entertain the public. Yet, the more completely a magician can

obey this rule, the greater will be his chances of success. The task before him is gigantic—but he should attempt it nevertheless. He must try to forget the importance of things which appeal to him most strongly. Because, for all the public knows or cares, those things might as well be non-existent. The difficulty of his manipulations; the ingenuity and originality of his inventions; the refinements and improvements he has introduced; and, above all, the distinctive merits personal to himself, should be disregarded. All such matters should be lost to sight, in order that the one supreme consideration may not become obscured, even for a moment. The effect to be made upon his audience is the one thing a magician should keep in view, as the Americans say, “first, last, and all the time.”

The *Effect*—and, bear in mind, the effect upon an audience—that is the sole issue at stake. At the moment of presentation, that is the only thing which matters. In all the wide world, so far as the audience is concerned, there is no other consideration worthy of so much as a passing thought. Consequently, as a general proposition, it may be said that the greatest possible error any magician can ever have laid to his charge is that of “conjuring for conjurers” at a public performance. Such conjuring may be entirely admirable, when the audience is composed of conjurers. But, before the general public, it must be regarded as inartistic; for the simple reason that, in such circumstances, it is bound to fail in its effect. Between the point of view of a conjurer and that of an ordinary spectator there is

a great gulf. Therefore, at a public performance, the production of an artistic effect may often demand the adoption of methods which, with an audience of conjurers, would be quite contrary to rational procedure.

Since the primary aim of a magician's art is to entertain the public, the importance of the following rule is self-evident:—

(3) *Avoid complexity of procedure, and never tax either the patience or the memory of an audience.*

The thing presented should appear to consist in a perfectly regular and natural series of operations; and, when the final effect is produced, it should be capable of instant appreciation. If its appreciation be made to depend upon any conscious mental activity, or any effort of memory on the part of the audience, a proper effect can seldom be achieved. If, in order to understand precisely what has happened, the spectators have to reflect, even for a few moments, upon the various stages of procedure which led up to the *denouement*, it is certain that, from an artistic point of view, the presentation must be unsatisfactory. There must be a lack of unity, in some respect or other. By chance, the audience may happen to have retained an impression of the details relevant to the final issue; and, if so, the result may be fairly good. That, however, will be an accidental occurrence; and no true artist ever trusts to accident. The effect produced should be, as Pope says, "The result of Art, not Chance." In this connection, the following rule may be stated:—

(4) *Never produce two simultaneous effects, and let no effect be obscured by any subsidiary distraction.*

Suppose, for instance, a magician were presenting the familiar "Four-Ace trick"; and, not being an artist, he thought to enhance the effect by either introducing irrelevant manipulations, or by arranging say, that the disclosure of certain previously selected cards should occur, simultaneously, with the discovery of the four aces, what would be the result? In either case, the preliminary operations would introduce an element of confusion, most detrimental to success; and, in the second case, the simultaneous production of two diverse effects would be absolutely fatal. Distracted by the effort to comprehend two problems at once, the audience would fail to appreciate the significance of either. There would be too much to remember, even if the spectators were prepared to exercise their memory. Whereas, if the performer were an artist, he would know that the "trick," as usually presented, is complete and perfect. That is to say, it would be perfect if instead of the four aces, the four kings were used; the three palmed cards being knaves, which could be shown momentarily at the last deal. Nothing can be either added or omitted, without marring its effect. That is obviously true. For, taking the other extreme, if some "hustler" were to omit, say, the first dealing out of the cards and the business associated therewith, anyone with half an eye can see how much the final effect would become degraded. There is, in fact, only one adequate manner of presenting the

effect, for the simple reason that in no other way can the requirements of artistic unity be fulfilled. The imaginary examples quoted are, of course, gross exaggerations of such faults as are likely to occur in practice. But the difference between the illustrations and possible fact, is only one of degree, and not of kind. The principles involved are identical, in either case. The evident conclusion may be embodied thus:—

(5) *Let each magical act represent a complete, distinct, and separate entity; comprising nothing beyond one continuous chain of essential details, leading to one definite effect.*

This rule, of course, must be read in conjunction with rule 4, and requires to be properly understood. It does not imply that two *events* may not occur simultaneously. Very often, the entire effect of a magical presentation consists in the fact that two or more things happen at once. Nevertheless, the rule holds good; for, although there may be a plurality of occurrences, a single, complete and undisturbed effect may thereby be produced.

By way of example, let us consider the details of the "Wine and Milk Trick." In this, three large glass vases are used. To begin with, a bottle of wine is emptied into a vase, No. 1; a quart of milk is poured into vase No. 2; vase No. 3 remaining empty. Vases 1 and 2 are, next, emptied into Vase No 3; the latter thus containing about half a gallon of wine and milk, mixed together, while the other two vases are empty. A flag is then taken up and waved in the air. Immediately, the wine

returns to vase No 1 ; the milk goes back into No. 2 ; and the flag passes into No. 3, from which the liquid mixture has now taken flight. Thus, three events occur at the same moment. Yet there is only one single effect produced. And why? Because the very essence of the feat is the simultaneous occurrence of those three events. Those three changes are mutually related and interdependent; each being the complement of the other two. Such a feat involves no contravention of rules 4 and 5. If, however, it culminated in three simultaneous and *independent* occurrences, there would occur three simultaneous, and, therefore, mutually-destructive effects. Consequently, in such circumstances, there would be practically no residue of combined effect worth mentioning.

Then again, an effect of this kind compels one to realise the importance of completeness in presentation and also impresses upon us the extreme cogency of rule 3, concerning the avoidance of complexity. If the thing be not presented in such a way that the presentation is rendered complete, in every respect, the audience will not understand it. Unless everything be made perfectly clear—nothing being omitted which, in any way, will help the audience to a true idea of the problem to be solved—the effect will fall flat, nine times out of ten. Without completeness in all essential details of word and action, the mere fact that three changes occur together will so confuse an average audience that, in all probability, the real merit of the effect will not be perceived until some hours after the performance is over. Spectators,

having gone home, and had time to think about the matter, will realise that, after all, the thing was much better than they thought at the time. That, of course, is all right in its way. But, so far as the success of an entertainment is concerned, nothing short of immediate appreciation is of any great value. And, for the purposes of art, anything which is not immediately convincing is, undoubtedly, defective.

With reference to rule 3, it is evident that complexity of procedure is as liable to produce a confused impression, as is a paucity of essential preliminaries. In the latter case the audience does not receive sufficient information. In the former the information conveyed is too voluminous. The audience cannot remember what has been said and done. In neither case can an adequate effect be obtained.

With all due respect to a magician's best friend—the average spectator—it is impossible to disguise the fact that, in matters such as those just mentioned, the occasional stupidity of audiences is beyond exaggeration. And, with that fact, every magician must be prepared to reckon. Therein, we are led to recognise the importance of rule No. 2, concerning the spectator's point of view. It is not that the individual units of any audience are necessarily stupid. Far from it. The fact is, merely, that any gathering composed of average persons may, as a whole, readily develop a tendency towards inattention and lack of interest. Many causes may contribute to the existence of that tendency, indeed, almost any accidental cause may suffice to produce serious distract-

tion among most members of an audience. It may be that hundreds of people have paid their money, and have also suffered great inconvenience, in order to have the privilege of crowding together for the purpose of seeing what one has to show. The whole crowd is animated by an intense desire to lose sight of no single detail of the performance; and, for the time being, has no other aim in life. Yet, let one person come in late, or let some unlucky attendant spill a few coppers on the floor, and the whole of that excited audience will leave off attending to the things they want, above all, to follow, and will devote their entire attention to that late comer or those lost halfpence. That is the kind of tendency with which an entertainer must, at any time, be prepared to cope. Hot, oppressive or relaxing weather, any kind of political or national excitement; any person with a bad cough, an irritating laugh, or an inclination to chatter; the presence, even, of a lady wearing a peculiar head-dress, or of a man who ostentatiously reads a newspaper, to show the world he can afford to pay for an expensive seat merely to sit in it; all such matters provide sources of distraction, capable of inducing inattention and apparent indifference among members of an audience.

It is in such conditions that a magician's powers are liable to be taxed to the utmost. It is then he discovers the extent to which he is justified in calling himself an artist. In very adverse circumstances, of course, no man may hope to hold his audience completely. But, short of "battle, murder and sud-

den death," or other violent disturbance among the spectators, a true artist will, undoubtedly, compel attention. If he cannot do that, he may be sure there is either something lacking in his performance, or it contains unnecessary details which cause distraction; that is to say, his presentations, in some respect or other, are at variance with the principles of unity. He either omits something which ought to be introduced, or introduces something which ought to be omitted. Thus, the performance is marred by the existence of either insufficiency, complexity or redundancy. Accordingly, the audience fails to understand what is shown; or, partially understanding, fails to appreciate.

Of course, if one chose to argue the question of unity on the lines of special-pleading, one might contend that, in many instances, the introduction of irrelevant matters may cause amusement; and also that the mere doing of two things at once may give evidence of great skill, whereby an audience may be greatly impressed. That is all very true. The man who, for instance, could play the cornet and violin together, would be very clever and, by some, that cleverness would be highly appreciated. But such cleverness is not ART. Is there, now, any artist in the musical world who would, in his wildest dreams, ever conceive the idea of attempting such a feat? No! it is unthinkable. And, what is true in the case of music, is equally true in magic. Without artistic unity mere cleverness can have but little value. It is that kind of thing which was condemned by Shakespeare, in the words:—

“Though it make the unskilful laugh, it cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o’erweigh a whole theatre of others.”—*Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2.

Although, for obvious reasons, a magician is bound to adapt his performance to the mental capacity of particular audiences, that fact does not, at any time, justify an entire disregard for artistic principles. Every audience, however uncultivated, has a certain range of appreciation. Therefore, however far an artist may have to stoop, in order to reach the intelligence of his audience, he will always endeavour to maintain his work upon as high a plane as circumstances will permit. Only by such means, can the public be led to appreciate good work. Let them see the best often enough, and due appreciation is bound to follow, sooner or later.

A true appreciation of meritorious work in magic will not, probably, become general just yet. The public, especially among its lower grades, has too few opportunities for comparing good work with bad. And, even among the higher strata of society, magicians have every need to maintain their representations at as high a level as possible. There is plenty of evidence to show that, unless sound and solid merit can be kept constantly in view, a retrograde movement is sure to occur. The majority of amusement seekers will, certainly, yield to the common propensity for acquiring an appreciation of work which is meretricious, or showy.

This fact is amply substantiated in the persistent evidences supplied by modern theatrical entertain-

ments. The decadence of Comic Opera, for instance, has reconciled the public to the inanities of Musical Comedy. Artistic appreciation has thus been replaced by an undue exaltation of mere cleverness. It is, of course, commonly supposed that this change has been brought about by the gradual development of a public demand, which Musical Comedy, alone, could supply. In one sense, admittedly, that view is correct. The demand *has* gradually arisen, and has been supplied. But it must be remembered that no possible event can occur, without a sufficient cause. Then, it is obvious that the growth of a public sentiment cannot represent the primary cause of any circumstance whatever. There is something which *created* that public sentiment; and that something, whatever it may be, represents the actual cause to which the result in question must be referred. In the case we are discussing, there can be no reasonable doubt that the decline of Comic Opera was the primary cause of the demand for Musical Comedy. The public turned to the latter, simply because it was the best thing obtainable. People gradually drifted into an appreciation of its incoherences, because they had nothing better with which to compare it. Had not the supply of good Comic Opera been, as it were, cut off at the main, its substitute would never have been in demand. Fortunately, the present conditions cannot possibly be permanent. They have no solid foundation in art. They are based upon a mere fashion, which is bound to go the way of all fashions alike.

These interpolated remarks may appear to be somewhat beside the subject of magic. But, since all arts are one in principle, the digression is useful. What has, unfortunately, happened in the case of musical entertainments may, only too readily, happen in connection with magic; unless, by consistent and conscientious effort on the part of magicians, a high level of artistic excellence be maintained, prominently, in public view.

Returning to our immediate subject, there is one point to which, before concluding our remarks upon unity, we must refer. Notwithstanding the obvious accuracy of the rules we have deduced—or, perhaps, we should say *because* of that accuracy—we must not forget that, in accordance with rule 1, there may occur *special* instances, wherein even the most important laws of unity may be disregarded. Such instances, occur, chiefly, in connection with effects which result from the operation of cumulative processes; and, therefore, may be more appropriately discussed later on. We shall revert to this matter when dealing with such subjects as “Justification,” “Surprise,” and “Repetition.”

CHAPTER IV

CONSISTENCY

IN order of importance, the quality which, probably, ranks next to Unity, is that of Consistency. Indeed, it may be said that, apart from consistency, unity cannot exist. Still, the subject is sufficiently well defined to warrant its separate consideration.

In relation to magic, the term "consistency" represents a quality which may be roughly described as propriety in necromantic details. It implies a general harmony of the various processes, actions, speeches and appliances, with the scheme or mode of presentation with which they are associated. Its absence gives rise, undoubtedly, to sources of distraction; which, as we have seen, should be most carefully avoided, so far as may be possible.

Here again, the importance of rule 2 is shown. Whatever details a performer may wish or require to introduce, these should all be subjected to most intent consideration, from a spectator's point of view. The supreme question must always be:—"What impression will the introduction of this detail produce upon the mind of an ordinary spectator?" No matter how agreeable, or even necessary to the performer may be the inclusion of that detail, he should always endeavour to understand how it will strike his audience. Such understanding is by no means

easy to acquire. It can come only with experience and constant practise. This is a case wherein it is impossible to "try it on the dog." The performer must, in the first instance, form his own conclusions. Nobody else can do much to help him in arriving at a decision. Above all, he must have the courage of his convictions, and must boldly take the course which his own reasoning-faculties and his own experience dictate.

In saying this, of course, we are assuming that the performer understands the radical principles of his art, and is not just making a blind guess at the thing. The man who has no accurate knowledge and who, therefore, works entirely in the dark, can scarcely be said to have the right to form any conclusion whatever. But, when a magician understands his art, he should never allow his own reasoned convictions to be over-ruled by people who know little or nothing of the subject. Stated in a practical form, the point is this. Persons attending a rehearsal, be they employés, friends or what not, *can never represent a normal audience*. Their opinions can form no guide to the views of the average spectator. From the very circumstances of the case, that is clearly impossible. Should any of those persons, however, have an amount of knowledge and experience comparable with that possessed by the performer, that person's opinion may be regarded as having some weight. But, even then, the performer must not be guided by mere opinion. He must demand adequate *reason* for any conclusion he may be urged to adopt. In short, given the possession of

real knowledge, he himself must be the final arbiter of his own procedure. Once a presentation has been submitted to public criticism, it is easy enough to see wherein improvement is needed. And, as a matter of fact, there is always found some minor detail which requires modification. But, in the hands of a true artist, no production ever needs serious revision after being presented to the public. That is one of the numerous directions wherein an *artist* "scores."

Given sufficient time, and unrestricted opportunity for public representation, anybody can, eventually, make his production a success; more or less qualified by repeated failure, in public, on previous occasions. That is to say, in the hands of a dufer, a "magical act" may be rendered presentable, probably, by the time it has become hopelessly discredited and, in the normal course of events, should be entirely worn out. The artist who knows "the rules of the game" and, therefore, understands how to make his productions approximately perfect in the first instance, certainly has an advantage, the value of which is very difficult to over-estimate.

In dealing with such questions, the performer can have no better guidance than that to be derived from the principles of consistency. And, in all points of detail, one may be fairly confident that, if each action, process and so forth, be appropriate to the general scheme, and does not detract from the final effect, there is little fear of producing an undesirable impression. The general rule may be stated thus:—

(6) *Let every accessory and incidental detail be kept well "within the picture" and in harmony with the general impression which is intended to be conveyed.*

For example, we will suppose that the presentation is intended to convey the idea of a more or less serious reproduction of some legendary marvel, say, of a mediæval English origin. In that case, everything said, done, and used, should harmonise with the ideas generally associated with that period in English History. So far as possible, everything should be archæologically correct. Anachronisms should be studiously avoided. Allusions to modern times and modern incidents, phrases of modern origin, appliances of modern pattern, should all be rigidly excluded. The general "atmosphere" of the presentation should convey the idea of glancing backwards through the pages of history and dwelling, in imagination, among scenes that have long since passed away.

That is, obviously, the rational course to pursue, in the case of a *serious* reproduction of mediæval mysticism. When, however, the intention is to give merely a humorous representation, or parody of ancient tradition, the requirements are altogether different. In such circumstances, the more anachronisms one can introduce, the more inconsistencies of sentiment and usage one can perpetrate, the greater the contrasts of time and place one can suggest, the better will be the result. But, even here, the principles of consistency require to be observed. The presentation should be rendered *consistently inconsis-*

ent. The performer must not at one moment throw ridicule upon ancient ideas and methods and, the next moment, expect his audience to adopt a serious view of mediæval magic. The spectators, of course, are always aware that the whole is "make-believe." They have to set aside their critical faculties in order to enter into the spirit of the thing. That, as a rule, they are perfectly willing to do, since all they want is to be entertained. They are ready to take any point of view the performer may suggest, and to imagine, for the moment, that the situation of affairs is precisely as the performer has stated. But, having "made believe" to that extent, it cannot be imagined that they will be able to suddenly change their adopted point of view for another which is equally unsubstantial and entirely dissimilar, without having all their make-believe thrown to the winds and their critical faculties fully revived. No: in such a case, the performer's previous efforts will have been wasted. The impression sought to be produced will be entirely destroyed, and the spectators will revert to the attitude of commonplace scepticism they began with. They will have to commence their mental adaptation once again, upon an entirely new basis, and with the memory of their recently checked self-deception fresh upon them. Any procedure of this kind can only result in confusion and loss of effect.

Conversely, if a purely modern conception be presented, consistency demands that all procedure and all adjuncts shall be entirely modern in character. Were the performer suddenly to depart from his normal procedure, for instance, and adopt the style

of an ancient necromancer, he could never expect to be taken seriously. He would be laughed at, openly, by his audience if he entertained any such ridiculous notion. That kind of thing can only be done by way of burlesque.

There is, however, one very effective method of combining ancient legends with modern ideas, which, in addition to the proof it gives as to the soundness of the principles of consistency, is extremely useful in aiding the modern magician to give his conceptions a definite application. This consists in the supposed introduction of ancient magical traditions into the actual affairs of modern life, and the suggestion that the magical theory had a foundation in fact. Usually, the procedure is somewhat as follows:

It is assumed that the magician has discovered some ancient charm, talisman, incantation or spell, with which he decides or is caused to experiment. On doing so, he finds that, apparently, the legendary powers attributed to the particular fetich in question are really genuine, and remain efficacious even in our own age of scepticism. The possibilities of magical and dramatic effect derivable from a situation of this kind are, practically, infinite. This is a fact which has long been understood and frequently utilised in literature. But, strange to say, this magical idea has not been developed, to any great extent, in connection with the art of magic itself. In plays such as "Niobe," and "The Brass Bottle," for example, this conception has provided a basis for valuable and artistic work. And, in relation

to magic, it presents facilities for introducing legitimate and convincing effects, which should by no means be neglected. An illusionary presentation, conducted on such lines, may be rendered thoroughly satisfactory, with very little difficulty. The effects produced being, apparently, substantiated by the authority of early tradition, and the powers invoked having, as it were, descended from the age of miracles, all criticism as to sufficiency of cause is disarmed, at once. The sceptical attitude common to modern thought becomes entirely out of place, and quite irrelevant to the issues involved. Material scepticism becomes subdued to the influences of that poetic and imaginative faculty which every man possesses, in a greater or less degree; no matter how uncompromising may be his professed antagonism to anything beyond the bounds of plain common-sense.

In this connection, however, as in all matters relating to art, it is necessary to guard against the ever-present danger of allowing originality to be overshadowed by the attractions of blind imitation. Indeed, it is conceivable that what we have said on this present point unless it be consistently read together with the context, may eventually create a serious hindrance to the progress of our art. There is every reason to fear that, if one magician were to achieve a success with some particular development of this idea, that form of presentation would be generally regarded as the *essential* embodiment of the idea, from which no departure may be made. And, in answer to all criticisms, it would be said—

“There is nothing to criticise. This is the very thing with which So-and-so has made so great a success.”

Therein we find typified the common fault which, hitherto, has debased the practice of magic, and has helped to prevent the elevation of magic to the status of a fine art. Until that fault can be corrected—until such slavish imitation of successful work becomes a matter for general and honest condemnation, we must be prepared to admit that after all said and done, magic has not risen above the level of mere mechanical drudgery, the sort of work which is only undertaken by those who are incapable of doing anything better.

This must not be! In itself, magic is a profession which should yield pride of place to none other. It demands the highest abilities that humanity can bestow upon it. Magic will never—*can* never—debase its practitioners; but, unfortunately, history shows that, too often, magic has been debased by those who practise it.

On this point the first essential to be insisted upon is this: The very fact that So-and-so has made successful use of certain methods and devices should, ordinarily, suffice to prevent all other magicians from presenting anything which may be regarded as an imitation of So-and-so's work. If others can improve upon So-and-so's production, well and good. Let them exhibit their new devices; and show, clearly, wherein their improvements consist. All honour to them for so doing. But, if all they have to present is a bad imitation of So-and-so's work, or merely something which appears almost as clever,

let them keep such inferiorities to themselves. Or, if they must needs exhibit their inferior productions, let them admit their own inferiority, and give credit where credit is due.

It is quite possible that this idea of translating ancient conceptions into modern work-a-day life may become hackneyed. Should that occur, the magician who is a true artist would avoid that idea, as the devil is said to avoid holy water. When we find the majority of magicians actuated by such sentiments we shall be in a position to assert, without fear of contradiction, that magic is, truly, an art. Until then, we must admit that the artistic status of magic, however provable it may be, has not been proved. Magicians generally must be content to earn mere money-grubbing profits, instead of gaining the fame and fortune to which they should aspire, by right of artistic merit.

Among the most important considerations relating to consistency, are those arising from the natural connection between cause and effect. In real life, every effect is produced by some appropriate and sufficient cause. We are aware that, in saying this, we merely repeat a childish self-evident platitude; but there are reasons. Since, in real life, every effect must have its cause, and every sufficient cause must produce its natural effect, similar conditions should prevail in the mimic world of the stage. Unfortunately, however, such is often very far from being the case. Too many persons appear to think that, because stage effects are necessarily artificial, the natural relationship between cause and effect can

be disregarded upon the stage. Events are, thus, made to occur, without the slightest regard to attendant circumstances. The producer of an entertainment, very commonly, dictates the occurrence of an event, simply because he wants that event to happen, and for no others reason whatever. He does not trouble himself as to whether or not, in the circumstances revealed, that event would naturally happen, or might possibly happen. Not a bit of it! He *wants* that thing to happen and, for him, that is reason enough. Consequently, that thing is made to happen, no matter how inconsistent with previous events its occurrence may be.

This is a fault which is extremely prevalent in modern stage productions, of every class. It is none the less reprehensible on that account. On the contrary, the more often it is allowed to appear, the more culpable are those who permit such an obvious defect to exist in their presentations. Particularly so, because the fault is one that may be corrected with the utmost ease. Stage effects, being only apparently real, require only apparently sufficient causes; and such causes, undoubtedly, should be introduced in every stage production. The producer, of course, can do precisely as he likes in such matters. Then, whenever he introduces an effect, let him, at the same time, introduce a valid cause. It is easy enough to do, and there is no excuse for neglecting to do it. The artificiality of stage work is always bound to cross the footlights, in ample measure. The spectators are always sufficiently conscious of it, without having it rubbed in by unskilful workman-

ship. And, whenever stage-craft is divorced from consistency, especially in the relations between cause and effect, the result is bound to represent the rubbing-in of a deleterious compound, already too liberally applied.

From these considerations a general rule, of extreme simplicity, may be deduced:—

(7) *Let nothing occur without an apparently substantial cause, and let every potential cause produce some apparently-consequent effect.*

If things occur without any apparent reason, stage work can never be made really convincing. If things be done which, although they seem likely to produce some marked result (and, by the audience, must be regarded as having that intention) do not lead to any result whatever, stage work can never be made really effective. In the former case, there is a paucity of the necessary material. In the latter case, there is a redundancy of useless detail. In neither case is there the consistency which art demands; but, in both cases, there is bound to be distraction, loss of effect, and lack of unity.

That such points as these are of material importance in the art of magic, cannot be denied by any magician who aspires to the rank of a true artist. It is just these little things which make all the difference between good work and bad. They *are* but little things, easily attended to; yet, after all said and done, they are the things which distinguish art from clap-trap. To include them in a presentation adds but little more to the performer's efforts. Still:—

“And that little more, and how much it is . . .
And that little less, and what worlds away.”

—*Browning*, “By the Fireside.”

The requirements of consistency, broadly speaking, may be summarised as follows:

Everything done, used and introduced should be:

(a) Consistent with the “atmosphere” of the presentation.

(b) Consistent with each situation, as revealed.

(c) Consistent with subsequent events.

Everything that occurs should be—

(a) Consistent with the procedure adopted.

(b) Consistent with causes understood by the spectators.

(c) Consistent with the final impression intended to be produced.

CHAPTER V

JUSTIFICATION

FROM what has already been deduced in the course of our enquiry, we can perceive that since, on occasion, specific rules may be disregarded, there arises a very pertinent question. How may we determine the extent to which, in various circumstances, a disregard of reasoned conclusions is permissible? Broadly speaking, of course, we may say that if we introduce details which are not in accordance with accepted rules, we must always be able to *justify* our action. In no case, must we be content with mere excuses. To frame excuses is foreign to the procedure of an artist, because "*qui s'excuse, s'accuse.*" His feeblest plea must never fall below the level of provable justification. Such obvious facts, however, provide but little guidance. Therefore, we must now endeavour to ascertain, with reasonable accuracy, the conditions wherein justification may be proved.

As stated in our first rule, no departure from accepted principles should be made, without some special reason. Among such reasons, there is one of pre-eminent importance. That is, the production of some particular effect which, otherwise, would be impossible. The impossibility, however, should be clearly manifest. If, by any means, the production of that effect can be brought about in conformity

with established principles, no departure from those principles can be justified. In any such case, the only possible source of justification is absolute necessity.

If such fundamental considerations were the only matters involved, the question of justification would be one of extreme simplicity. But, unfortunately, the case is far otherwise. In the majority of instances, justification cannot be pleaded on the ground of absolute necessity. Given the aid of every possible facility, a magician could seldom justify the departure from the normal principles of his art. But, as a matter of fact, magicians usually perform under conditions of an extremely unfavourable nature. Therefore, we find, the most common ground for justification is not absolute necessity, but present expediency. Rules are broken, not because the effect produced demands their violation, but because circumstances render such violation *expedient*. Thus, justification becomes subject to the force of circumstances. At the same time, it must be remembered, valid justification can only exist when the force of circumstances is irresistible.

Suppose, for example, a magician performing at a theatre where every facility is available, produces an act which is artistically perfect. Then, suppose that the magician be compelled to transfer his act to another theatre, where such favourable conditions do not exist; in order to produce his act at the second theatre, he may have to introduce some detail which, according to accepted principles, is inartistic. Or, he may have to omit some important detail, and,

thereby, render his presentation, artistically, incomplete. In either case, his procedure can, undoubtedly, be justified on the ground of expediency. He does as he does, not because of essential necessity, but because the force of circumstances is too great to be overcome. The obvious rule is:—

(8) *Always remember that avoidable defects are incapable of justification.*

This rule applies, equally, to great matters and to small. To broad effects and minute details. Although, in some particular respect, departure from accepted rule may be justified, it does not follow that the principle violated is thereby rendered negligible for the time being. On the contrary, the circumstances demand that every care be taken to insure that the extent of departure shall be as limited as possible. Care should be taken to add every available perfection, in other respects, with a view to compensating for the unavoidably defective procedure adopted. A specific rule may be stated thus:—

(9) *Always remember that a plea of justification is, ordinarily, an acknowledgment of error and, consequently, demands every possible reparation.*

That is to say, when one is obliged to fall back upon the aid of justification, one should use every available means for correcting any deficiency that may be brought into evidence. The greater the divergence from proper and effective methods, the greater the necessity for compensating perfections. If we are compelled to introduce imperfections, they should be reduced to the utmost possible minimum, disguised in every possible manner, and compensated

for by the inclusion of every possible perfection of subsidiary detail. By such means, the inevitable fault may be rendered, practically, imperceptible.

Herein we discover the reason why so many productions, inartistic in themselves, prove to be quite effective before an average audience. With knowledge derived from a process of trial and error, performers are enabled to disguise, to a great extent, the technical faults of their productions. Thus, in course of time, subsidiary perfections become so augmented as to render a very faulty presentation acceptable to the general public. That, however, provides no justification for avoidable faults. However good a faulty performance may appear to the uninitiated, it would appear still better were the faults removed. The majority of spectators may not know why the thing is better in its more perfect form. They may not understand the reasons which have dictated the alterations made. But the performer, at any rate, ought to know when his presentation is defective, and should understand how to remove avoidable defects.

There are always two ways of doing anything: a right way and a wrong way. Any ignoramus can bungle about with a thing until, eventually, he makes it pass muster among those who know as little as himself. But, even then, the thing will not be right, in the eyes of an expert. Anything done in the wrong way can never be really right in itself. The only advantage about it is that the wrong way does not have to be learned. It is available to all who prefer it; but, unfortunately, it does not lead to per-

fection. Not only so, it eventually leads to far more trouble than would be involved in learning the right way, first of all.

Further than this, we must not lose sight of the fact that there is a question of principle involved. An artist prefers to work in the right way, if only to show that he knows how the work should be done. Even though some particular effect could be produced in the wrong way, that would be no excuse for using faulty methods.

The end cannot justify the means, if the proper means would serve as well as the defective means actually employed. For as Aristotle says:—

“If, indeed, this end might as well, or nearly as well, have been attained, without departing from the principles of the particular art in question, that fault, in that case, could not be justified; since faults of every kind should, if possible, be avoided.”—Poetics, Part IV, Chap. II.

To this, we may add that when, as is usually the case, the end may be attained more readily and more perfectly by adhering to the principles of our particular art, there is not even a plausible excuse for defective workmanship. Indeed, the only possible excuse is ignorance. Those who prefer, by implication, to raise that plea are, of course, quite welcome to that dubious privilege. An artist would rather suffer torture than do anything of the kind. “Good enough for the public” is ample justification for defects which are difficult to overcome; but, when the observance of recognised principles would be just as easy, and just as effective, “Good enough for the

public" becomes the plea of either an ignoramus or a fool. In such an event, the performer may be perfectly sure that he appears in one or other of those characters. If he be content to do so, well and good! That is entirely his affair. Our present inquiry does not concern him. For all that, we can see there is no justification for the attitude he has adopted.

Although, as already mentioned, a magician's stage-surroundings are of prime importance in this connection, they are far from being the only ground for justification. The diversities of taste and appreciation shown by various types of audiences may, equally, justify some occasional divergence from normal procedure. This has been previously suggested by our deductions concerning the subject of unity. We may now, with advantage, develop the point still further.

Taking a practical instance, we will suppose a magician intends to present, say, "The Rising Cards," and has at command two methods of performing that trick. One of those methods, let us say, is well known to magicians, but very effective to the public. The other method does not appeal to the public so strongly, but entirely puzzles magicians. In reality, of course, he has two distinct tricks, similar in effect. That fact would be understood by his fellow-craftsmen; but, to the public, either trick would be simply "The Rising Cards."¹ Then the question is, which method should the performer employ?

¹ It must be remembered that, to the public—and unfortunately, to the general Press also—either the effect, or some prominent feature of a trick, is the trick itself. We commonly hear of "The Vanishing Lady," "The Box Trick," "The Cabinet Trick," "The Ghost Illusion,"

The answer must depend upon the kind of audience with which he has to deal. To an audience of conjurers he would, naturally, present the superior method. The other would only bore his spectators. But to the general public, apart from some special reason to the contrary, he should present the more familiar, yet more effective method, less perfect though it be. To the public, either method would be quite inexplicable; and, therefore, there would be every justification for choosing that which appeals to the public more highly. Indeed, one might almost say that, in the circumstances, the use of the superior method would hardly be justified; for the simple reason that it would fail to produce its due effect.

In the practice of an art, one must always keep in view the fact that, in the absence of an effective appeal to the imagination, art is, to all intents and purposes, non-existent. It is true that a poet, a painter or a sculptor may produce a work of art which contemporary opinion may condemn, and future ages may approve beyond measure. But, suppose that, disheartened by present failure, the artist were to destroy the work he had produced, the result would be precisely as though that work had never been attempted. It came into a momentary existence; it made no appeal to the minds of those who saw it; and it disappeared completely.

The work, however meritorious it may have been, was but wasted effort. It did not serve the cause of

"The Slate Trick," and so on. Apparently, most people cannot imagine that more than one trick may be associated with a certain kind of effect, or a particular form of appliance.

art in the remotest degree. It was but ephemeral in its existence, and failed to evoke contemporary approval. In short, it was useless.

Precisely analogous, is the case of a magician who presents work which his audiences cannot appreciate. Apart from its presentation, the art of magic has no sensible existence. It is naturally ephemeral, and demands instant appreciation.

Primarily, the true function of any art is not the promotion of its own advancement, but the promotion of enjoyment and the elevation of the intelligence of mankind. In performing such functions, its own advancement is automatically achieved. That being so, it must be useless to exhibit any ephemeral achievement in art which, to those who see it, is not effective. Such presentations have no artistic value. They can neither serve to raise the level of human intelligence, nor to promote human enjoyment.

We have previously referred to the necessity for maintaining as high a level of merit as possible. But, at the same time, we have pointed out there is every reason for bearing in mind the natural limitations of certain audiences. By all means let people see good work—the best they are capable of appreciating—on every possible occasion. But work which is too good for them is, practically, as valueless as that which is not good enough. Within the capacity of a magician's audience, the higher he rises, the greater will be the appreciation accorded to his work. Beyond that prescribed limit, however, the higher he rises, the less will be the value of his achievement.

It has been said, very justly, that every virtue is, as it were, a middle course between two opposite vices. Thus, courage is midway between cowardice and rashness; thrift is midway between acquisitiveness and improvidence, morality is midway between prudery and licentiousness; and so forth. In like manner, justification stands half-way between the faults of pedantry, on the one hand, and the failures of ignorance, on the other hand.

The rule should be:—

(10) *Cut your coat according to your cloth, but spare no pains in the cutting, or your procedure cannot be justified.*

The foregoing considerations enable us to discuss, upon a more definite basis, the question of dual effect, already mentioned in connection with the subject of unity. We can now readily understand that, in certain circumstances, two simultaneous developments may be presented in such a manner as to justify the departure from the principles of unity. We can see that justification may be proved, on various grounds of expediency. For example, one of the two magical feats may add a climax to the entire presentation, and thus aid the general impression produced in the minds of spectators. Or, on the other hand, the development of one effect may involve certain periods of time which, to the public, would appear vacant, were they not filled in with the processes connected with the second effect. In any case, however, the dual presentation must not involve serious division of interest, or the total result will be neither artistic nor effective. We shall have to return to this subject

later on; and, therefore, we need not consider it further at present.

We may conclude our remarks upon justification by summarising the rational conclusions to be deduced from the facts stated. There is no need for recapitulating all the minor points we have reviewed. It is only necessary to emphasise the main features of our enquiry, as follows:

In order to know what may, or may not be justified, it is essential to acquire an understanding of the purposes of art, and the manner in which those purposes can best be fulfilled. Hence the importance of systematic enquiry and the need for accurate reasoning. Every instance wherein justification has to be claimed represents a special problem, requiring to be dealt with in accordance with the facts of the case. The true solution cannot be arrived at by the aid of mere opinion. The only reliable source of evidence is knowledge. That which serves the purposes of art in the best manner available, is justified. That which does not so serve the purposes of art, is incapable of justification.

We argue that, in everything he does, a magician should be able to demonstrate the grounds upon which he claims that the procedure is either artistically correct or absolutely justified. To an artist, "good enough" is never good enough. His work must be correct; or, failing that, as nearly correct as circumstances permit.

CHAPTER VI

SURPRISE AND REPETITION

WE now proceed to deal with two diametrically opposite methods of producing effect, each method being the converse and complement of the other. Upon reflection it will become evident that, as a rule, the effect produced by a magical presentation depends upon the proper employment of one or other of the two principles now to be considered. In other words, a magical effect is generally associated with some form of surprise, or is derived from some degree of repetition. Since the principles involved in those two methods of procedure are mutually antagonistic, they can seldom be used in combination. Although a certain element of surprise may enter into the cumulative effect produced by repetition, it is clearly impossible to repeat a startling surprise. These examples may best be illustrated by concrete examples, familiar to us all. Then we will at once quote examples which we think will serve to make our reasoning clear. It must be borne in mind, however, that this present discussion has to be taken in conjunction with that which follows next—*i. e.*, the subject of "Gradual Transition."

As our first example, we will take a well-known effect, depending upon the creation of surprise. For this purpose, nothing could serve better than

the illusion known as "The Vanishing Lady," invented by Buatier de Kolta, reproduced by various other magicians, and consistently mangled, for years, by duffers of every nationality. The "dry bones" of this feat, as Professor Hoffmann would say, are familiar to us all. So also is the effective nature of the presentation, when properly carried out.

If we give even a moment's thought to the question, we realise the impossibility of associating such a feat with anything in the nature of repetition. The effect produced is bound to be either a surprise or a disappointment. If the performance does not culminate in a surprise it becomes an abject failure—"condemned to eternal redemption," as Dogberry says. No man who ever stood before an audience would be so mad as to repeat it, in the hope of doing better next time, and thus saving his credit. The audience would simply laugh him off the stage in such a case.

Herein, we perceive the characteristic feature of such presentations. They depend upon the sudden creation of some mysterious change of condition or change of place. The effect must be instantaneous. There is no opportunity for cumulative methods of building up an effect, step by step.

Incidentally, the preceding paragraph suggests a general definition of the characteristic feature of any magical feat—that which distinguishes magical effects from those produced by other arts. Probably no better definition than this can be found—*Something or somebody is caused to pass mysteriously from one place or condition to another.* That is what in-

variably happens when a magical feat is performed. We cannot do any single magical thing which that sentence does not, broadly, describe. In view of this definition, we are led to appreciate the essential limitations of the magic art. And, at the same time, we are impressed with the necessity for knowing the best means for utilising the scanty material at our disposal. The difficulty of producing a new magical effect is about equivalent to that of inventing a new proposition in "Euclid." That, however, is a matter for congratulation, rather than otherwise. The greater the difficulty, the greater the merit. It is a fact which should add much to the dignity of our art. In our present enquiry, the most important point to be remembered is this: Realising the extreme difficulty of raising any worthy superstructure upon foundations so narrow, we have every reason to be careful in our architecture.

Turning to the second principle under discussion we may quote, for example, the well-known feat of catching coins in the air. In a performance such as this, it is evident that the element of actual surprise is practically absent. The mere fact of apparently catching a coin, once only, would produce no effect at all. In itself, the feat is so small, as compared with magicians' other works, that it would leave even the most unsophisticated spectator quite unimpressed. But, by repeating the process again and again, spectators become gradually imbued with a sense of mystification. There is no surprise—there *can* be none; because, every time the performer raises his hand, the catching of a coin is foreseen. Yet, as time

goes on, the spectators are compelled to form the mental query—"Where in the world does he get all those coins?" The more of them he produces, the greater is the effect upon his audience—within due limits of course. No true artist would ever be guilty of continuing his repetitions to the point of wearisomeness.

In this typical instance, we recognise the characteristic operation of the principle of repetition, and the method of utilising that principle for the production of a cumulative effect. We can see that, in performing a small manipulation as an isolated occurrence, the principle of surprise cannot possibly be brought into operation. But, by continued repetition of that insignificant feat, one is enabled to build up an impression of magical achievement, the magnitude of which is out of all proportion to the cause which produced it.

Thus, we may safely lay down a rule to the following effect:—

(II) *Always remember that a notable surprise is incapable of repetition; and that the repetition of an effect, of any kind whatever, cannot create surprise.*

As a further example of the cumulative effect to be gained by repetition, we may here point out the well known efficiency of a "catch-phrase," as a means of attaining effect. There is no walk of life in which the catch-phrase is not a factor of, at least, occasional importance. Even in matters which affect the public welfare it is often exploited in a manner so puerile and so vulgar that, to anyone who understands the game, the process becomes absolutely disgusting.

Still, as a means of legitimate entertainment, and in the honest fulfilment of artistic purposes, the catchphrase has merits which should not be neglected. Take, for instance, Dr. Lynn's "That's how it's done!" or Buatier de Kolta's "Isn't it wonderful?" Those phrases have become classic. They have done yeoman's service, not only to their respective authors, but also to many lesser men, who have adopted the phrases—generally without either permission or acknowledgment. The first time such a phrase is used, it has little effect, if any. The second time, it receives just a mild appreciation. The third time, the audience may smile. The fourth time, the words cause a laugh. The fifth and all subsequent repetitions create a roar.

There we have in a nutshell, all requisitive proof as to the value of cumulative effect. At the same time we are enabled to understand the broad distinction to be drawn between the respective applications of surprise and repetition. We are also enabled to understand the cogency of a general rule, which may be stated thus:—

(12) *A minor conception ordinarily demands the cumulative effect of repetition; a conception important in itself should, usually, create a distinct surprise.*

Here we may revert to the question of dual presentation, previously discussed. Although the antagonistic elements of surprise and repetition can scarcely be combined to produce a single effect, we may readily combine them in a presentation which comprises a dual effect. And, beyond doubt, that

may be done, not only without confusion, but also with a marked amplification of the impression created.

From these considerations, the following rule may be deduced:—

(13) *The simultaneous presentation of two independent feats is permissible when one of them is associated with cumulative effect and the other results in a final surprise.*

When we think about the matter, it certainly seems rather strange that, although one may have heard a full description of some magical or dramatic surprise, such foreknowledge does not detract appreciably from the impression one receives on witnessing the performance. Even though one may have witnessed a play or a magical production many times, one does not altogether lose the impression intended. Commentators have frequently noted this, in relation to dramatic performances; and, no doubt, the true explanation is that originally given by Marmontel in 1787. He says, in his quaint, old-world French—*“La marche de l'action en ecarte la reminiscence: l'impression de ce que l'on voit empêche de réfléchir a ce que l'on fait.”* We are too much absorbed in the action to think of previous information. What we see prevents us from reflecting upon what we know.

A guiding principle adopted by the late Buatier de Kolta may here be mentioned, with advantage. On many occasions, de Kolta and one of the present writers had animated discussions upon this and similar points. One of his most definite and unalterable

opinions was that, if an audience had any idea of what was about to happen, there could be no surprise and, consequently, no effect could be made upon the minds of spectators. "An illusionist," he would often remark, "should never tell the public what he is going to do. If people know what is coming, they will not be surprised. If they are not surprised, there is no effect. The illusion is worth nothing—it *is* nothing."

In one sense, probably, de Kolta was right; but, regarded as a general principle, his view of the question is open to serious doubt. His argument was based upon premises far too narrow. Given ideal conditions, of course, the position he took would be unassailable; but, in everyday life, an abstract proposition of that kind has very little relation to the exigencies of practice. With all due deference to the opinion of a magician so eminent as Buatier de Kolta, we contend that, in practice, one's procedure must be governed to a great extent by expediency. We have already shown that hard and fast rules cannot be prescribed in any branch of art. Contingent circumstances must always be taken into account. Theory, reduced to practice, is a useful guide—but nothing more. Divorced from practice, theory becomes a mere will-o'-the-wisp, the pursuit of which is but waste of time for the average man.

The essential fallacy of the principle just now discussed may be readily shown by de Kolta's own procedure. When, for instance, an illusion is described as "The Vanishing Lady," or "L'Escamotage d'une Personne Vivante," how can one hope to conceal the

fact that the lady will vanish or that the living person will be subject to jugglery? The title itself prevents any such possibility. Yet, at the same time, the title provides more than half the attraction exercised upon the public. It would be absurd not to make the revelation which, unavoidably, has to be made before complete success can be achieved.

There is, however, one direction in which, as previously indicated, this principle may be usefully applied. Marmontel gives us the key to this, in the quotation we have made from his writings. The action in progress before the spectators is that which mainly determines the impression produced. Previous knowledge or information can have but little influence on the final result. A really artistic presentation will so largely absorb one's attention that the existence or absence of foreknowledge becomes, comparatively speaking, a negligible factor. Thus, there is obviously much reason for avoiding, so far as circumstances permit, the *immediate* revelation of what is coming. In fact, from the various points recently considered, we may evolve a rule of some occasional importance:—

(14) *Unless good reason can be shown, never explain, UPON THE STAGE, precisely what you are about to accomplish.*

In effect, this rule represents the true application of de Kolta's advice. "Unless good reason can be shown"—therein lies the whole *crux* of the matter. But, very often, good reason *can* be shown. At times, indeed, it would be the height of folly for a performer not to explain, most fully, the precise de-

tails of the effect he is about to produce. A case of this kind, for instance, would arise when the effect is small in actual dimensions, but very startling if completely understood. Every one of us can call to mind effects which, unless explicitly described beforehand, would never be thoroughly appreciated. An illustration of this fact is the decanter and handkerchief trick, wherein a handkerchief suddenly disappears from one glass vessel and reappears in another. The common experience of every magician will prove that such a presentation loses nothing by describing the effect beforehand. On the contrary, the small dimensions of the articles employed may be said to necessitate a complete disclosure of the coming events, in order to secure their immediate appreciation.

Again, in the case of a highly-important and sensational illusion, demanding close attention on the part of the audience, one may often be well advised in making a theoretically premature revelation of one's intentions. When everybody in the civilised world has heard all about the thing, there may not be much disadvantage in taking the present spectators into one's confidence. They know what is coming, and the effect may perhaps be greatly enhanced if they are told exactly what to expect. In certain cases of this kind, it is true, the performer might produce unqualified surprise in the first few audiences to whom he presents the effect. But, after that, such surprise becomes impossible. The newspapers have given full descriptions of the performance—the wires and cables have spread the

information broadcast, throughout the world. Consequently, the moment he begins his introduction, "even the cats" know what is coming. Among the whole crowd of spectators, the only point of interest is to "see it done."

Conclusive proof of the occasional necessity for complete disclosure of what is about to take place, is provided by such presentations as that of the world-renowned "Box Trick." The very essence of the effect consists in the fact that spectators are fully informed of what is intended to be done and are allowed to try to discover the means whereby the feat will be accomplished. Without such foreknowledge and opportunity for previous investigation, the effect would be lost. They are told that a performer will escape from the box, in spite of the bonds with which it will be secured. They are told that the feat is performed by means of a trick in the construction of the box. They are invited to discover that trick, if they can. Having failed to make such discovery, their amazement when the feat is subsequently accomplished is unbounded. In no other way could the full effect of the invention be attained. Complete premonition is the only possible means for securing due appreciation of any such performance. Reticence, in a case of this kind, would be simply fatal to the ultimate effect and, therefore inartistic to the last degree. Then in such a case the performer's best course, surely, must be to emphasise the salient feature of his presentation, and to impress upon his audiences the extraordinary nature of the thing he intends to show them.

In this, of course, as in all other matters, one's procedure must be governed by circumstances. But we may safely say that, nine times out of ten, when a performer presents an illusion of world-wide renown, he can lose but little, and may gain much, by openly confessing his intentions. At such a time, his attitude towards the public, for all practical purposes, may safely be—"I am going to show you something which has startled the world, and would startle you immensely if you did not know what is coming. When you have seen it done, you will be able to imagine how much you would have been surprised if you had not already heard about it." In response to that suggestion, the audience is almost certain to adopt an acquiescent attitude of mind; and, accordingly, the final effect will resemble that produced by absolute surprise.

It is owing to similar causes that dramatic situations such as that relating to "Hawkshaw" remain thoroughly impressive, even to those most familiar with them. Familiarity does not breed contempt, because the action in progress diverts the spectator's attention from what he knows, and renders him interested only in "seeing it done." He is compelled to enter into the spirit of the performance, and to allow full play to his imagination.

The last sentence forcibly recalls an opinion which the present writers have long entertained, and which can do no harm if stated. At the worst, it can but cause a momentary digression. It relates to the definition of art in the abstract. In the early portion of our enquiry, we touched upon the great difficulty

of answering, and the numerous attempts made to answer, the question—"What is Art?" To make another attempt may be to display unjustifiable temerity, but here it is: *Art is work which stimulates imagination.* Be that as it may, however, there can be no doubt that it is the exercise of imagination which prevents an artistic effect from being destroyed by foreknowledge. A fact well worth remembering.

CHAPTER VII

EFFECTS OF TRANSITION

IN addition to the two chief classes of effect, respectively associated with surprise and repetition, there is a third, to which reference has been previously made, the class which depends upon the gradual and visible development of some mysterious change. A typical example is the so-called "Pepper's Ghost" effect, invented by Silvester some 40 years ago. Another familiar type is that of "The Growth of Flowers." But there can be no possibility of mistaking the classification of such effects as should be placed in this category. They are characterised by the distinctive feature of comparatively slow progression, in contrast to the sudden effects associated with the methods of surprise.

Although less often employed than the two chief classes of magical effect, the effects of transition are by no means of less importance from an artistic point of view. Indeed, owing to the mere fact of their comparative rarity, they appeal strongly to an artist's appreciation. They should be less liable to become hackneyed, and the difficulty of inventing novelties in connection with them should enhance their value as a class.

Unfortunately, however, such is far from being the case in actual practice. It ought to be so, but it

is not. In this, as in so many other instances, "ought stands for nought." The very rarity of original productions of this kind, tends to defeat its own ends. There are so few of them, and so many want to present them, that a new effect of transition is liable to become worked to death in a very short time. Further, it must be remembered that a rare effect usually creates a far greater degree of public excitement than one of more stereotyped form. It is more talked about, more people come to see it and, thus, it more quickly becomes stale. Nevertheless, in this class of effect, there still exist great possibilities, both artistically and financially. There is still a wide field of useful work in this direction, which may be found well worthy of cultivation.

In illusions based upon effects of transition, the question of artistic treatment is of especial importance. Indeed, now and then, the problem of presenting them in the best possible way to insure due appreciation is one of extreme difficulty. The instant appeal to a spectator's perception which, naturally, attends a surprise is entirely lacking. The cumulative effect built up, step by step, in the case of a repetition, is equally unavailable. It follows, therefore, that the adequate presentation of an effect of transition usually involves, in some respect or other, procedure which differs more or less from that which would be advisable in other conditions. We will endeavour to ascertain, with the aid of common sense and practical experience, the nature of the principles which should govern our procedure when dealing with effects of this special class.

Here we may, at once, set down a rule which common sense and experience must inevitably endorse to the fullest possible degree. Yet, at the same time, unless the dictates of those able guides be clearly understood and remembered, the principle underlying that rule may easily become lost to sight. Hence the necessity for a definite statement, as follows:—

(15) *When presenting an effect of pure transition, the first and most important essential is the avoidance of every possible cause of distraction.*

Let there be no mistake about this. Although the rule is merely a specific application of the principle embodied in rule 4, the extreme importance of that principle in the present instance justifies the utmost insistence upon the necessity for keeping it in view. Stated plainly and simply, the fact to be remembered is that, while an effect of transition is in progress, nothing else of importance should be allowed to occur. That is to say, nothing which tends to produce a definite impression upon the minds of the spectators. There should be no sudden change in any of the conditions attending the development of the effect. Only such movements and sounds as accompany the commencement of the transition should be permitted to occur; and, conversely, such sounds and movements should continue until the effect has been completed.

For example, an accompaniment of soft and flowing melody is a most useful adjunct to effects of transition. Rhythmic and continuous movements on the part of the performer—as, for example, mesmeric passes or silent incantations—are also advantageous,

as a rule. But, if such adjuncts are to be employed, they should accompany the transition from start to finish. The only case in which a departure from the letter of this law is advisable, is when the effect occupies but little time and culminates in a definite surprise. Say, for instance, on the stage there were a table with the cloth laid for a meal. The centre of the cloth rises and, gradually, the figure of a man develops beneath it. The figure throws off the cloth and stands revealed, let us say, as Mephistopheles. In such a case, the final throwing off of the cloth brings a sudden revelation, a surprise. Consequently, during the development of the figure, movements and exclamations, directing attention to what is happening, may advantageously accompany the progress of affairs, and may render the climax all the more effective. Therefore, we may say:—

(16) *When an effect of transition ends with a sudden revelation or surprise, the course of transition should usually be punctuated by actions or sounds leading up to and accentuating the final impression.*

Reverting to rule 13, which relates to effects, purely, of transition, there is one consideration which should not be overlooked. It is a point which indicates the essentially different conditions respectively associated with transitions pure and simple, and transitions culminating in an effect of surprise. In effects of simple transition, such as the gradual fading away of a spirit form, there is an absence of any marked change such as is generally associated with magical presentations. Therefore, without some

prompting of their intelligence, the spectators may fail to observe the commencement of the process, or may be unable to realise precisely when it has ended. One can never count upon the exercise of either intelligence or perspicacity on the part of an audience. So, unless steps be taken to indicate, definitely, what is the nature of the intended effect, and to point out precisely where it begins and where it ends, a transition, however marvellous, may fall flat. The spectators may realise the truth of the matter after they have gone home, but that is not good enough for artistic purposes. They must, if possible, be made to understand what they see, the moment they see it. For these reasons, we may advisably prescribe the rule that:—

(17) *In every effect of pure transition, the beginning and end of the process involved should be distinctly indicated by some coincident occurrence.*

That is to say, when such an effect is about to be introduced, its presentation should be subject to most careful preparation. It should be prefaced by stage business which will impress upon spectators the fact that something of a very unusual character is about to happen. Their minds should receive the impression that a weird and mysterious effect, demanding close attention, is on the point of being shown. And, at the moment when transition commences, there should occur a definite halt in the subsidiary action, a distinct point of demarcation, showing that the interesting period has begun. In like manner, at the end of the transition, there should be a similar or, rather, a converse break in the proceedings, showing

that what the audience was specially required to observe has been done. Ordinarily, the most suitable stage business for these two respective occasions is, in effect, such as will suggest the following ideas. When the transition begins, the idea suggested should be, "Look! something mysterious is going to happen over there. What will it be?" When the effect has been shown, the suggestion should be—"Now you know what was coming, because you have seen it done and have watched the process from beginning to end."

As an apt illustration, we may mention the appearing to Hamlet of his father's ghost. The previous dialogue has fully prepared the spectators for what they are about to see. Indeed, Hamlet has gone to the battlements for the express purpose of meeting with the spirit form of his father. All are expecting the ghost to appear. What happens, so far as our present inquiry is concerned, is given by Shakespeare in two exclamations and a stage-direction, thus:—

"Horatio—Look, my lord, it comes!

(Enter Ghost.)

"Hamlet—Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!"

Now, translating "Enter Ghost" as meaning the gradual materialization of a spirit form, we cannot help seeing how well the two exclamations serve their respective purposes. Horatio directly calls attention to the misty outline in course of formation; and, when the development has matured, Hamlet's words leave no doubt that the figure now standing

before him represents the fulfilment of his expectation, and also that of every onlooker. There is no possibility of mistaking the situation. The effect is complete. Nobody can possibly anticipate any further development, for the moment.

Reduced to their most practical form, the facts of this present discussion may be stated thus: When effects of transition are presented, the audience must be shown when to look, where to look and when to applaud. If left to discover those things for themselves, spectators may almost certainly be expected to fail in the discovery. Nine times out of ten, spectators cannot be relied upon to see things which stare them in the face, or to understand things which are as simple as A B C. This is a fact to which some exponents of magic owe a lifelong debt of gratitude; since, but for that fact, they could never hold up their heads in public. And to speak the entire truth, it is a fact in which even the most skilled magicians find comfort when things go wrong.

But we cannot have it both ways. We cannot expect the public to keep a bright lookout for things we want them to see, and, at the same time, preserve their normal blindness to the things we want to conceal. The art of magic essentially depends for its success upon the skilful manœuvring which enables a performer to subdue the critical and observant faculties of his audiences. The subjugation of those faculties is the first necessity imposed upon him by his art. After that comes the process of suggestion, whereby his audiences are led to adopt the particular attitude of mind he wishes them to assume at any

moment. It naturally follows that, when we have lulled a spectator's reasoning powers into a state of comparative rest, it is absurd to expect that he will at once grasp any idea which, in the ordinary course, would occur to him. We must always remember that, having induced a marked condition of mental receptivity, we cannot expect our subjects to conceive ideas other than those we convey, either directly or by suggestion. It is impossible that, at one and the same time, spectators can think as we want them to and also think as they ordinarily would. Such being the case it is easy to see how necessary it is to make everything clear to one's audience; even though, in order to do this, one may sometimes be compelled to state exactly what is about to take place.

CHAPTER VIII

CLIMAX

THIS branch of our enquiry brings us to a point where we meet with a distinct difference between the respective requirements of Magic and Drama. We find that, in this instance, the two sets of conditions are entirely dissimilar. Therefore, except by way of antithesis, the considerations which govern one case, form no guide to rational procedure in the other. But, at the same time, this very divergence provides a source of useful information. We gain a better understanding of our own art, if we ascertain the differences which distinguish its requirements from those of an art more or less allied to it. Thus, we may, with advantage, make a brief digression from our direct course, in order to study "climax" from a dramatic standpoint. By so doing, we shall obtain a truer conception of the principles relating to our own particular case.

Broadly speaking, the primary basis of drama consists in the fulfilment of two vitally essential requirements, each exactly complementary to the other. The play which fails to achieve such fulfilment must fail entirely. In the first place, a dramatist has to create and sustain interest. In the second place, that interest must be fully satisfied. If he cannot interest his audience, his play is obviously hopeless. If, hav-

ing interested his audience, he cannot satisfy the interest he has aroused, his play is worthless. There can be no object in putting on the stage anything that leads to nothing. The play which merely creates an interest to thwart it cannot have any pretension to artistic merit. The pretended art which provides no mental satisfaction is but a travesty of art.

Then, since the drama undoubtedly requires both the creation and satisfaction of interest, we clearly see that the subject of "climax" has a most important relation to the adequate treatment of dramatic themes. It is impossible, simultaneously, to create and satisfy dramatic interest. The two processes must be distinct, and must be carried out in proper order. And between the two there lies the crowning point of expectancy—the climax of the play. The creation and development of dramatic interest represent a *crescendo* of effect, the highest point of which constitutes the climax. Then follows the satisfaction of dramatic interest, the unravelling of that tangled thread of events. Thus, the climax of a play consists in a dramatic situation, the genesis of which has been revealed by previous events, and the supreme interest in which depends upon the suspense and expectation induced in the minds of the spectators. It is a situation in which no sense of finality can possibly exist. In order to bring about finality the situation must be resolved and rounded off, in a manner which shall relieve the suspense and satisfy the expectations of the audience.

Now, in a magical presentation, the case is far different. It is true that the magician, equally with

the dramatist, must both excite and satisfy the interest of his audience. But, whereas the dramatist deals with conceptions and processes of a nature familiar to all men, and the magician's doings are entirely remote from normal experience, certain differences in procedure are obviously requisite in the respective cases. The most notable difference is that, in dramatic work, the satisfaction of the interest created follows after the climax has been reached; while, in magic, the climax of events and the satisfaction of interest occur simultaneously. The dramatist's audience is interested in witnessing events which occur in accordance with normal experience, and which must be made to result in a more or less normal completion of the theme to which they relate. The magician's audience, on the contrary, is interested in witnessing events which have no relation to common experience, and can have no such emotional qualities as those associated with normal occurrences. In this case, the interest aroused is not that of witnessing the vicissitudes of human existence, but of witnessing operations performed, at will, by a being who possesses a power far beyond one's own. Therefore, the magician's audience is not called upon to sympathise with human emotions, but to take an interest in things which are entirely out of the common, and in events which are only interesting from the fact that they occur. So, in magic, the actual climax must necessarily represent finality. The climax comes when the magical event occurs; and, at the same time, the occurrence of that event entirely satisfies the expectation aroused.

From what has been said, it will be readily understood that the climax of a magical presentation demands even more careful consideration than the climax of a drama; because, in magic, the climax is also the completion. If the climax be not efficiently contrived, the completion must be inadequate. The final result must be imperfect. Thus a magician's stage business must be so organised that the procedure which leads to the final effect of a presentation shall fully develop a constantly increasing interest; while, at the same time, due attention must be paid to the fact that the climax of interest and the satisfaction of interest have to be brought about, simultaneously. That is to say, the magician, in leading up to his final effect, must bear in mind two points of radical importance. Firstly, he has to arrange the details of his procedure in such a manner that, as the climax approaches, the audience shall be compelled to anticipate remarkable results and, secondly, he must take especial care to guard against the production of an anti-climax.

The first of those two points is obviously important, and the mode of presentation whereby its observance may be insured is easily understood. The second point, however, concerning the avoidance of anti-climax, may not be grasped so readily. In order to understand it fully, one must first of all know what constitutes an anti-climax, and the reason why it is so detrimental to success. That knowledge having been gained, one may prescribe preventive measures, of an efficient character.

Then, what *is* an anti-climax? It is a thing

people often talk about as though its nature were commonly understood. In a sense, most people have an idea of the true meaning of the term, though it is very doubtful whether one person in a thousand could give a rational definition of it, or explain the detrimental quality it represents. Yet, unless this be done, it is impossible to talk sensibly on the subject; and, therefore, we must endeavour to arrive at the proper definition, and provide the necessary explanation.

In itself, the term "anti-climax" suggests a general definition of its meaning which, although more or less correct, is far too vague to be of any practical value. It is obviously something which opposes the creation of an effective climax; and, as usually understood, it is something which occurs after the real climax has been produced. Beyond this, neither the term itself, nor the ideas usually associated with it, can be said to convey any definite information. Something more is wanted to enable one to speak with authority upon the subject.

We may take it that an anti-climax is an event which occurs after the true climax has been reached, and, thus occurring, detracts from the effect of a presentation. Now, there are only two possible sources from which such distractions can be derived. Either the climax is not complete in itself, or some new subject of interest is introduced afterwards.

On thinking this out, we arrive at the real nature of an anti-climax. It is an occurrence derived from either unsatisfied or redundant interest. The climax has not been efficiently engineered, or is marred

by faults in the subsequent procedure. In short, the effect does not end where it ought to end; the interest does not culminate at one single and definite point, but is sub-divided and, consequently, reduced in its final value. A complete and perfect effect must necessarily have far greater value than an effect which is marred by incompleteness, or by subsequent distraction of interest. It follows that, in order to avoid anti-climax, we must leave nothing to be explained after the climax has occurred, and must introduce no subsequent matter of interest relating thereto. The rule should be:—

(18) *In each presentation, the procedure should lead up to a culminating point of interest; at which point the magical effect should be produced, and after which nothing magically interesting should occur.*

Otherwise, there is bound to be an anti-climax, more or less pronounced, and therefore more or less detrimental to the general impression produced.

Arising out of the conditions imposed by the preceding rule, there is another which is of equal importance in connection with certain forms of magical presentation. We refer to those presentations which include more than one effect. We can all recall to mind a number of instances in which several mutually-related magical changes are revealed in succession. The well-known "Cannon-Ball and Rabbit Trick" is a case in point. Two hats are passed to the audience for inspection. Meanwhile, the performer produces a rabbit from among the folds of a feather boa borrowed from a lady spectator. The

hats and the rabbit are taken upon the stage and, from one of the hats, a large and heavy metal ball is produced. One of the hats is then hung upon a candle, which had hitherto been burning upon a side table. Into the second hat the cannon ball is placed; and lastly, the rabbit is wrapped in a sheet of newspaper. Then follows the mysterious transposition of the various accessories. The newspaper parcel is crumpled up into a ball and allowed to fall lightly upon the stage. The rabbit has obviously disappeared. The hat containing the cannon-ball is taken up and, in an instant, the heavy metal sphere vanishes, the rabbit reappearing in its place. The lighted candle which previously supported the other hat, is taken from the folds of a handkerchief; and finally, the hat is lifted from the candlestick revealing the cannon-ball which has taken the place of the candle. Thus, instead of a definite climax comprising one single effect, we have, as it were, a protracted climax including a number of separate but interdependent magical occurrences.

In such a case as this it may seem that the rule we have stated in reference to climax cannot hold good. But, as a matter of fact, the principle remains entirely valid. The climax is not really distributed over a number of effects, it merely remains in suspense until the final effect is produced. That is clearly so because, until the last development has been reached, the interest increases, step by step. The real climax does not occur until the moment when the final revelation is made or, at any rate, it should not occur until then. Any revelation made

after the true climax has passed, must, necessarily, constitute an anti-climax. Therefore, we may say:—

(19) *When a presentation includes a number of effects in series, the final effect should represent the true climax, and its predecessors successive steps whereby that climax is reached.*

From the differences in treatment required in the respective cases of Drama and Magic, it will be seen that when, as often happens, those two arts have to be combined, special precautions should be observed. Since procedure which may be admirably adapted to the requirements of one art may be fatal to the other, nothing is easier than to play the cat and banjo with both arts when in combination. Thus, if magical effects have to be introduced into a dramatic production, or dramatic effects are associated with a magical performance, a clear understanding of the methods which should be adopted is most essential. Without such knowledge, a presentation which, if properly managed, might be a great success, may easily become a disastrous failure. In the case of a combination of magic and drama, the truth of the saying that "there is no royal road to success" finds a very special application. The only road to be followed with safety is the path of knowledge. We will therefore give a brief consideration to the procedure advisable when magical and dramatic effects are associated.

As a point of departure, we may refer to a fact, not generally recognised, but amply demonstrated by experience. It is a fact that is useful in showing something of the normal conditions to be met when

drama and magic are simultaneously employed. The fact to which we allude is this: Many magical effects which, if presented as separate items in a programme, will evoke thunders of applause, are received with absolute silence when introduced as episodes in a dramatic plot. This, at first sight, may seem strange, but the apparent singularity disappears when one comes to a proper understanding of the circumstances. There is, necessarily, a reason for the result observed; and one that is well worth ascertaining.

Looking at the matter broadly, it becomes evident that when magic and drama are associated, the diverse requirements of the two arts must call for a certain amount of mutual adjustment. Something of each must be modified for the benefit of the general effect. In rule 5, we stated the fundamental principle of unity, which demands that every presentation shall represent a distinct and complete entity, comprising one definite effect. Thus we see that when a magical item instead of standing alone and complete within itself, is adapted to form an episode in a play, it no longer conveys an impression of finality, however complete may be the dramatic situation attending it. That is to say, it ought not to convey such an impression, in the circumstances described. Of course, it is quite possible to pitch-fork a magical effect into a dramatic performance, without reference to the requirements of the plot, and without serving any essential purpose, and then make that interpolated piece of magic go with the audience, just as it would go apart from the play. That

kind of thing, however, does not represent the combination of magic with drama. Neither art aids the other in the slightest degree; while the magic is being presented, the drama has to halt. When the drama proceeds again, the magic must be cleared out of the way. Procedure such as this contravenes every essential rule of artistic unity. It degrades magic to the level of mere padding, as music and poetry have been degraded so frequently in modern plays of the vaudeville order. The simple truth is that the artistic combination of various arts can only be achieved by subjugating those arts, one and all, to the general requirements of artistic unity. They must not each be called upon to provide isolated "turns," one down and t'other come on. Their contributions must be so dovetailed together that each item forms a necessary step in the progress towards one common end.

A magical item presented in the course of a play should, therefore, form an essential part of that play. It should be an episode without which the plot would be incomplete. Preferably, it should be so entirely essential that the play could not be presented without it. At the very least, it should add something of consequence to the general progress, and to the final effect. In any event, it should not be a thing which may be replaced by something else, or left out altogether without materially affecting the action of the play. Aristotle tells us, as already quoted, that everything which may be put in or left out at will, is not properly a part of the presentation; and that statement has never been gainsaid by any subsequent

authority upon the subject of art. Therefore, we must always endeavour to arrange our procedure in accordance with either one or the other of two distinct methods. We must either produce a number of isolated and independent effects in succession, each being complete and self-contained, or we must make the individual items a series of stepping-stones towards one final end.

That, of course, is not to say that a series of magical effects may not be loosely strung together in the form of a sequence of events, or in a slight sketch, wherein the performers personate imaginary characters. Presentations of that kind have no relation to the case in point. The successive effects have no connection with any definite theme of dramatic interest. Each is complete and perfect in itself, and is only related to the others by a kind of natural order. There is no dramatic plot to be served by what takes place; and, for that reason, there is no question of combined effect to be considered.

When, however, we have to deal not only with magical feats, but also with dramatic construction, the "stepping-stone" method has to be adopted. And, in such circumstances, the more we reflect upon the subject the more clearly we see that "the play's the thing." The magical items are, as it were, beads held together and supported by the thread of dramatic interest. Thus connected, the beads form a chain of harmonious proportions. If we remove one of the beads, the general effect is marred. If we try to add an unnecessary bead, we must break the connecting thread in order to do so; and, by so do-

ing, we cause the whole to fall asunder. The thread will no longer join up, and continuity cannot exist. The only thing to be done is to remove the superfluous addition, repair the broken thread and re-string the proper number of beads in their proper order. Thus, we arrive at the following rule:—

(20) *When Magic and Drama are combined in one presentation, the stage-procedure should, primarily, be governed by the dramatic requirements of the case, rather than by the normal principles of Art in Magic.*

By no other means can such presentations be made to accord with the essential principle of unity. It is obvious that no possible sequence of magical happenings can, *per se*, form the thread of human interest requisite in a dramatic plot. At the same time, of course, such a sequence of effects may readily provide the means whereby a dramatic plot is carried out. But that is a very different thing from providing the plot itself. On the other hand, a dramatic plot may undoubtedly form the thread upon which magical occurrences depend, and by means of which they are so connected as to form one consistent and harmonious whole. The conditions upon which the very existence of dramatic effect depends, require a connecting-thread of that kind. Without it, there can be no central support upon which the ultimate issue can turn. Since the principles of magical procedure are inadequate to provide the conditions requisite for dramatic effect, we are bound to fall back on the principles of drama for the main outlines of our presentation. Stated briefly, this

means that when, in a combination of magic and drama, the respective requirements of those two arts are in opposition, magic must take the second place of importance.

No doubt, this may seem to impose rather a difficult task upon magicians. But, to those who are worthy of being described as artists, that apparent difficulty soon disappears. Whatever we may do, as artists, the first essential is to insure artistic unity. That being so, we can feel no pang in doing whatever may be necessary for the purposes of unity. We are prepared to sacrifice any personal foible or favourite method, in order that unity may be obtained. If we cannot sacrifice some small amount of magical effect in order that we may gain the benefit to be derived from dramatic construction, we should drop the dramatic part altogether. We can only benefit by the aid of drama if we are prepared to fulfil the requirements of drama. If we seek to enlist the drama into our service and, at the same time, to retain the normal effect associated with each isolated magical production, we are bound to fail in our endeavours.

There can be no real difficulty in grasping the truth of this matter. A magical presentation is, normally, a thing complete and perfect in itself. It has its own involution, its own climax and its own evolution. If we present magical effects in combination with a dramatic theme, we superimpose upon them a master-plot having a master-climax, and a master-evolution to be fulfilled, in order to produce unity in the final result. That being so, our magical

items can no longer remain complete in themselves, without producing disruption of the dramatic theme and destroying its unity. The climax normally associated with each magical effect must be so modified as to form a stepping-stone to what comes after, instead of conveying an impression of finality, as it ordinarily would. By no other means can artistic unity be preserved; because any other procedure would mean sacrificing that indispensable quality to the caprice of the producer of the performance. Better, by far, leave drama entirely alone, than try to combine it with magic, and, at the same time, disregard dramatic principles.

The variation of procedure necessitated by the combination of drama with magic, of course, relates only to the general scheme of presentation—the unity of general effect. We must not run away with the idea that, because magic must sacrifice something for the sake of unity, everything must be sacrificed to the normal procedure of drama. On the contrary, in matters of detail, magic has the right to demand the chief consideration. The broad lines on which the general effect is planned should certainly be guided by dramatic considerations; even to the detriment of magical interest. But, beyond that, magic steps into the position of command.

This follows as a natural consequence of the possible conflict between dramatic and magical requirements. The respective functions of drama and magic, when the two arts are combined, are perfectly evident. Drama provides the theme of general interest. Magic provides the particular

episodes whereby the dramatic theme is carried out with adequate effect. So long as each art is confined to the fulfilment of its proper end and aim, there can be no logical conflict between them. Therefore, as a corollary to rule 20 we may say:—

(21) *When, in a combination of the two arts, the primary requirements of Drama have been satisfied, all subsidiary details of procedure should be dictated by the normal principles of Art in Magic.*

Satisfactory provision for the exigencies of drama having been made, all other matters must be governed by magical considerations. It is when there exists either ignorance or neglect of the truths embodied in the last two rules, that we find antagonism between magic and drama, in combination. We can quite easily understand how such antagonism arises, by recalling what so often occurs in practice. If a theatrical manager presents a combination of the two arts, he proceeds as though the magical details were of no importance whatever. He works entirely upon his usual lines of procedure. He acts as though he were producing an ordinary drama. The requirements of magic never enter his head. It is only after completing the production, from a dramatic standpoint—stage-business, scenery, furniture, fittings and dresses included—he begins to think about the magical effects which have to be introduced. The natural result is an entire failure in ultimate effect. The performance induces no sense of conviction in the minds of those who witness it. The magical occurrences essential to the theme are ruined, and in their ruin the whole production is wrecked.

Conversely, a magician has to guard against a natural tendency in the opposite direction. Some allowance, no doubt, may be made by others on that account, but he should make none on his own part. He should not allow his ideas to be dominated by the desire to make the utmost of his magical business, without regard to the dramatic theme with which it is associated. Otherwise, he will fail in the final result, just as surely as the dramatist who throws the whole of his energy into a drama, regardless of the magical episodes upon which his ultimate success largely depends.

CHAPTER IX

PRESENTATION

IN relation to what may be termed the "applied-art" side of magic, the subject of presentation has not only the widest scope, but also the most vital importance of all sub-divisions of the Art in Magic. Indeed, since magic is one of the ephemeral arts, which can only attain fruition in actual performance, one might say, that without adequate presentation there can be *no* art in magic. And, apart from mechanical and speculative matters, that statement would be entirely accurate. The final purpose of the art is the presentation of its effects; and, until those effects are presented, the art itself cannot be perfected, but must remain a thing of little importance in the eyes of the world. Therefore, it is in this department of his art that the magician, as it were, puts the coping-stone upon the edifice erected by his skill and labour. In accordance with the manner in which that final work is carried out, will depend the ultimate making or marring of the whole structure. Hence the supreme necessity, in connection with magical presentation, for obtaining a thorough knowledge of such general principles as may be derived from experience and logical reasoning. The subject is, admittedly, one of extreme complexity, and simply bristles with controversial de-

tails. It can never be reduced to even the semblance of an exact science, but must be dealt with upon broad lines, capable of general application. Still, even when we confine our attention to simple generalities, and allow a wide margin of elasticity in the few principles which may be established, there are many valuable truths to be ascertained by discussing the subject. We will, therefore, endeavour to reason out such truths as may serve for our guidance in the presentation of magical effects.

In the forefront of our discussion, we must undoubtedly place the consideration of matters relating to the personal characteristics of a performer. A striking personality is an accidental advantage. It may be of great assistance in the practice of art; yet, in itself, it is not art, but chance. There are many performers who, without the possession of attractive personality or natural distinction, contrive to make their work effective in the highest degree—to hold the attention and gain the appreciation of their audiences, completely and invariably. Now that, clearly, *is* art. It *must* be so, since it is not due to the normal operations of nature.

On the other hand, there are men of charming personality who, in spite of the natural advantages they possess, can never render their efforts convincing to an audience. Men who, in private, would appear to be gifted with qualities which could not fail to command public appreciation; and yet, who fail to touch even the fringe of success in stage-work, or other modes of presentation. This represents the utter negation of art, and is simply a misuse of valu-

able possessions. Instances of artistic failure of this kind will occur to the mind of everyone who reads these lines. Such instances clearly show that striking personality, when divorced from the essential requirements of artistic presentation, may be of as little value as technical perfection which is accompanied by similar deficiencies. In either case, there is just the one thing lacking without which success is impossible. That is, the knowledge of how to adapt personal qualifications to public service—in other words, to present what is shown in a way that will appeal to the average spectator. Attractive personality is a good thing to possess. So, also, is technical ability. But neither of those good qualities, singly, nor both in conjunction, will serve to make the performer an artist. Something more is necessary. *He must understand the proper method of displaying his qualifications.* Given that understanding, he has every reasonable hope for success; however limited his personal advantages, natural or acquired. Without that understanding his prospects are usually hopeless; no matter what personal charm or ability he may possess. Herein we perceive the importance of learning all we possibly can, in connection with this present section of our enquiry. The path of knowledge cannot be otherwise than thorny and full of obstructions. But every step we take is bound to render the next easier, and to lead us nearer to success.

It is clear that the object of presentation comprises two prime factors, upon which all our calculations must be based. Those factors are “person-

ality" and "procedure." Upon the establishment of a proper relation between them—that is, their mutual adaptation to a definite purpose—the artistic success of any performer must ultimately depend. They are both variable factors; and, usually, they are variable within wide limits, though not necessarily so. The greater their variability, the wider will be the performer's range of efficiency, and the more numerous his opportunities for achieving success. Practically, this means that the higher a performer's ability as an actor, the less will his field of operation be circumscribed, and the greater will be his qualifications as a magician. Conversely, the greater the diversity of procedure available in connection with a magical effect, the more readily may its presentation be made to harmonise with the personal characteristics of the performer. In this case the effect becomes more generally available to magicians as a body, because the procedure can easily be modified to suit various individualities. The main principle underlying these considerations may be stated in the form of a practical rule, thus:—

(22) *No magician should ever present, in public, any magical feat in which the procedure cannot be, or has not been adapted to his own personal characteristics and abilities.*

However good an effect may be, and however desirable its inclusion in the performer's repertoire, he should reject it altogether if its presentation involves any essential feature which he cannot readily provide. If the necessary "business" includes either important details or general methods, at variance

with the artist's stage-presence, mentality or personal aptitude, he should throw aside all idea of attempting the presentation. In like manner, if there be the need for any form of manual dexterity, or other skill, which the performer has but indifferently acquired, he should wait until that deficiency has been made good before he tries the thing in public. If the acquisition of that essential skill prove to be beyond his capability, he should sacrifice the production, unhesitatingly. However reluctantly the sacrifice may have to be made, there can be no question as to the need for making it. In any case of this nature, the wish should be subject to the will, and the latter to common sense. The performer who cannot bring himself to make a sacrifice of this kind, will never justify his claim to be regarded as an artist. He may, of course, form mistaken ideas of his qualifications and characteristics, but that is another matter. As an artist, he is bound to do the best that is in him; and, at the same time, endeavour to reject everything imperfect. It is impossible that he can always succeed—but he will always try.

In every walk of life, the same general principles hold good. No two men are precisely alike in constitution or capability. Therefore, no two men can exhibit any artistic accomplishment in identical manner and equally well. This is especially true in relation to the public exhibition of ephemeral arts, such as magic. No two actors, for example, have ever played "Hamlet" in exactly the same way, or with equal success. Indeed, the character has been attempted by some who, although possessing un-

doubted histrionic genius, have shown themselves incompetent to represent "the Dane" as Shakespeare portrayed him. Their failure has been obviously due to the fact that they did not sufficiently understand their natural limitations. That is a fault which invariably brings its own punishment, sooner or later. Every living man has limitations, beyond which he becomes incompetent. The wise man, be he artist or artisan, will endeavour to learn the nature of his limitations and to keep his work well within them.

A natural gift for doing certain things with facility is a common characteristic. In addition to that, most people possess an aptitude for learning to do certain things, which are not exactly in accordance with their natural bent. Anything beyond this, however, must necessarily approach a person's limit of efficiency, at the best; and may, very readily, be altogether beyond his natural limitations. Ordinarily, when a man finds himself lacking in aptitude in certain directions, he acquires an unconquerable aversion to attempting that which presents so much difficulty. But, unfortunately, we sometimes meet with persons whose utmost desire is the achievement of success in directions which, for them, can but lead to absolute failure. Thus, we find the man who, by nature, is qualified to raise the process of "grinning through a horse collar" to the dignity of a fine art, is ambitious to shine as a poetic idealist. Instead of doing the thing for which he was intended by Nature, he wants to discourse upon "Pictures, Taste, Shakespeare, and the Musical Glasses." Sim-

ilarly, the man who has no spark of humour in his composition, cherishes the dream of becoming famous as a comedian. Such men, of course, are abnormal; but they are by no means uncommon. They may be found, here and there, among magicians. Yet, in connection with magic, there is no valid reason why any man should form a mistaken estimate of his own capabilities, or experience a moment's doubt as to what he should, or should not present in public. We may state a practical rule, which is merely the embodiment of a truism, and should prevent all possible doubt of the kind mentioned. It is this:—

(23) *Never attempt, in public, anything that cannot be performed with the utmost ease, in private.*

Anything that cannot be done with facility cannot be done properly. Yet, on the part of public performers, magicians included, we often find an apparent disregard of that self-evident fact. The spectacle of a performer attempting to present in public magical feats which, obviously, have not passed beyond the stage of difficulty in private practice, is by no means unusual. The effect produced in the minds of spectators by witnessing such presentations is, invariably, of a most deplorable character. An audience subjected to such an ordeal cannot fail to be either distressed, or moved to sarcastic laughter. So far as the performer's success is concerned, it does not matter which of those two results is produced. There is nothing to choose between them, for both are equally disastrous. Whether the audience feels sorry for the performer,

or feels inclined to "guy" him, makes no difference in the end; because, either way, the end is failure, writ large. An entertainer, be he magician or otherwise, must be able to make his audience think and feel as he chooses, not as accident may decide. He may excite laughter or arouse sympathy, but it must be on account of his art, not himself. Whatever impressions his spectators receive should be due to an interest in what he is presenting, and not to his own shortcomings. The audience should be made to laugh with him, not at him; to grieve in sympathy with his artistic suggestions, not in pity for his in-artistic failures.

One would think that the strained relations which, in cases of immature or otherwise defective presentations, always exist between a performer and his audience, must necessarily provide a wholesome corrective for such errors. But, unfortunately, some performers appear to be so incurably afflicted with megalomania—in other words, "swelled head"—that their failures never come home to them. They seem unable to conceive the possibility of failing to compel any audience to fall down and worship the divinity of whatever they choose to present. Theirs is the primrose path, the easy pursuit of art, because of the transcendent gifts with which Nature has endowed them. Other men, less favoured than themselves may, no doubt, find it necessary to labour in the vineyards of art, in order to achieve success. It is only fit and proper for such poor creatures to earn their bread by toil, and with difficulty. Let them do so, since they can do no better. The supremely

gifted geniuses, to whom the conquest of art has been rendered a mere holiday task, have no need for such personal effort as others make. The king can do no wrong, and they can do nothing that is right. Why should genius trouble about what it is going to present to a public audience? It will be all right on the night!

Will it? No! almost certainly, it will be all wrong. Men who are capable of arguing in that way are not artists, in any sense of the term; and never will be. In connection with art of any and every kind, there are many things which, necessarily, are open to question and admit the possibility of dispute. There is, however, one point upon which no question can be raised, and no dispute is possible. That is, no matter how great may be the natural ability of any man, he can only achieve artistic success by means of great and persistent effort. Those who think otherwise, and act up to their convictions, are almost certain to fail. Now and then, of course, one of them may be lucky enough to meet with success—of a kind; but it will not, it cannot be, artistic success. He will be a "mushroom man." He will spring up in a night, as it were, and disappear the next day. His only chance of permanent benefit will lie in making all the profit he can, during his brief period of popularity. After that, the public will have found him out, and will consign him to the oblivion that awaits all such impostors as he. Year after year, such men constantly come and go. The lesson taught thereby should be self-evident to anyone who has normal intelligence. In magic, above

all other arts, the phrase "all right on the night" has no place, except by way of sarcasm. Whatever is not entirely right before the night arrives, will be found all wrong as sure as fate. It is an experience common to all men to find that, on any special occasion, such as the production of a magical effect for the first time in public, everything that *can* go wrong *will* go wrong. Whether we must attribute this to the malignity of matter or to the total depravity of inanimate things, whether the exciting cause is hurry, worry or what not, the fact remains.

CHAPTER X

REHEARSAL

A MAGICAL effect of whatever kind, and by whomsoever presented, can be made a public success only by unremitting care and labour. Systematic attention to details and refinement of procedure are required. And such attention and refinement can only be provided by means of adequate rehearsal. The rule suggested by these considerations would be too obvious to require statement, were it not so obvious that it is in danger of being overlooked. It is this:—

(24) *Never present in public any performance which has not been most perfectly rehearsed, first in detail and, finally, as a whole.*

In reality, there is far more in that simple rule than appears on the surface. It opens out and partly defines a point of great importance in practice. Merely to say that everything should be properly rehearsed is very much like telling a pugilist to "go in and win." The fighting-man will go in and win, and the performer will rehearse everything properly without being told to do so. That kind of advice is too plentiful to be of much value, anyhow. What both those men want to be told is how to do the thing. Given that knowledge, further instruction becomes superfluous. In the case of the pugilist, we have no suggestion to offer in this respect;

and, if we had, there might be some danger in offering it. The entertainer, however, stands in another category. In his case, we have opinions of a more or less strongly developed character, which have been gained both in conducting rehearsals ourselves, and in watching other people conduct them. Thirty years or more of that sort of thing naturally tends to create decided views as to the proper way of doing it, and removes all diffidence in connection with speaking one's mind. Such being our position in the matter we will proceed to state our views accordingly.

So far as we can see, there is only one way in which a presentation can be properly rehearsed. That is, as indicated in the foregoing rule, to take everything in detail first of all and gradually combine the perfected details until the whole is gone through, precisely as it will be performed in public. To proceed in any other manner, is bound to incur waste of time at the moment, and imperfection, possibly serious, in the ultimate result. Haphazard rehearsal, "catch-as-catch-can" style, however prolonged, can never be really efficient. One of the greatest dangers to be guarded against is *over-rehearsal*. Some people, as we all know, hold the belief that it is impossible to give a production too much rehearsal. That is one of the wildest fallacies imaginable. Yet, at the same time, we should bear in mind the seeming paradox that a presentation may have been rehearsed to death without, in reality, having had half enough rehearsal. This, of course, requires some explanation; but, properly understood, it becomes clear to the verge of platitude. And,

after due consideration of the point of issue, we think that none can doubt the fact that, so long as a production is efficiently rehearsed, the less rehearsal it has the better it will be. In other words, effort should always be made to curtail the rehearsal necessary, by getting as much value as possible out of the time devoted to it.

By way of elucidating this subject, it is only necessary to explain the reasons to which the dangers of over-rehearsal are due. Broadly speaking, there are two of prime importance, and to which alone we may confine our attention, so far as present purposes are concerned. No doubt, there are many others of minor consequence; but, if we succeed in proving the main points, all the rest may be neglected. Then, firstly, excessive rehearsal produces a sense of weariness, and destroys interest in the work to be done. Thus, all concerned tend to become perfunctory in the discharge of their duties. Secondly, an undue continuance of rehearsal tends to make those in authority lose their sense of proportion. They become unable to determine the relative importance of details, and lack a proper grasp of the true essentials. This second danger is by far the greater of the two, inasmuch as it militates against the very object which the rehearsals are intended to promote. What always follows in such a case is that, the longer the rehearsals go on, the more stale and incompetent will everybody become—especially the man in charge of affairs. The latter person, in fact, eventually becomes reduced to a state of abject hopelessness, without a particle of faith to sustain him. Surely, it

stands to reason that this cannot be the proper way to conduct rehearsals. When every subordinate is worn out and those at the head of affairs have lost all understanding of the difference between good and bad and of the matters which determine success or failure, there is bound to be waste of effort, to say the least. Instead of being devoted to making progress, the time is wasted in hurrying to and fro, without getting any "forrarder."

From what has been said, it follows that the most important matter connected with rehearsal is the organization of procedure upon proper lines. The readiest way to impress upon readers the truth of that statement will be to give an accurate description of the manner in which the haphazard method works. We could quote an example from among our own experiences in various theatres, but we prefer not to risk a charge of wilful exaggeration. We will, therefore, quote an authority against whom no breath of suspicion can be whispered—to wit, Count Leo Tolstoy. His description of an Opera-Rehearsal on the happy-go-lucky system will serve to illustrate this point perfectly. One has only to modify the description in detail to understand how it might, equally well, apply to the rehearsal of some magical presentation. Here is Tolstoy's statement:—

"On an elevation between two lamps with reflectors, and in an arm-chair placed before a music-stand, sat a director of the musical part, *baton* in hand, managing the orchestra and singers, and, in general, the production of the whole opera.

"The performance had already commenced, and on the

stage a procession of Indians who had brought home a bride was being represented. Besides men and women in costume, two other men in ordinary clothes bustled and ran about on the stage; one was the director of the dramatic part, and the other, who stepped about in soft shoes and ran from place to place with unusual agility, was the dancing-master, whose salary per month exceeded what ten labourers earn in a year.

“These three directors arranged the singing, the orchestra, and the procession. The procession, as usual, was enacted by couples, with tinfoil halberds on their shoulders. They all came from one place, and walked round and round again, and then stopped. The procession took a long time to arrange: first the Indians with halberds came on too late; then too soon; then at the right time, but crowded together at the exit; then they did not crowd, but arranged themselves badly at the sides of the stage; and each time the whole performance was stopped and recommenced from the beginning. The procession was introduced by a recitative, delivered by a man dressed up like some variety of Turk, who, opening his mouth in a curious way, sang, ‘Home I bring the bri-i-ide.’ He sings and waves his arm (which is of course bare) from under his mantle. The procession commences, but here the French horn, in the accompaniment of the recitative, does something wrong; and the director, with a shudder as if some catastrophe had occurred, raps with his stick on the stand. All is stopped, and the director, turning to the orchestra, attacks the French horn, scolding him in the rudest terms, as cabmen abuse each other, for taking the wrong note. And again the whole thing recommences. The Indians with their halberds again come on, treading softly in their extraordinary boots; again the singer sings, ‘Home I bring the bri-i-ide.’ But here the pairs get too close together. More raps with the stick,

more scolding, and a recommencement. Again, 'Home I bring the bri-i-ide,' again the same gesticulation with the bare arm from under the mantle, and again, and again the couples, treading softly with halberds on their shoulders, some with sad and serious faces, some talking and smiling, arrange themselves in a circle and begin to sing. All seems to be going well, but again the stick raps, and the director, in a distressed and angry voice, begins to scold the men and women of the chorus. It appears that when singing they had omitted to raise their hands from time to time in sign of animation. 'Are you all dead or what? Cows that you are! Are you corpses, that you can't move?' Again they recommence, 'Home I bring the bri-i-ide,' and again, with sorrowful faces, the chorus women sing, first one and then another of them raising their hands. But two chorus girls speak to each other,—again a more vehement rapping with the stick. 'Have you come here to talk? Can't you gossip at home? You there in red breeches, come nearer. Look towards me! Recommence!' Again 'Home I bring the bri-i-ide.' And so it goes on for one, two, three hours. The whole of such a rehearsal lasts six hours on end. Raps with the stick, repetitions, placings, corrections of the singers, of the orchestra, of the procession, of the dancers,—all seasoned with angry scolding. I heard the words, 'asses,' 'fools,' 'idiots,' 'swine' addressed to the musicians and singers at least forty times in the course of an hour."

No wonder Tolstoy felt impelled to dip his pen in vitriol and to condemn such proceedings with all the force of invective at his command. No wonder he was led to protest violently against the commission of such crimes in the name of art. No wonder he was filled with contempt, even for the opera itself; although, from his account, it appears to have been

founded upon the most beautiful, perhaps, of Moore's poems—"Lallah Rookh." Worst of all, is the fact that there cannot be the slightest doubt of Tolstoy's accuracy in this matter, either in substance or detail. The palpable fact that he had an axe to grind in this connection, must be admitted, of course; but, for all that, his integrity is too well known to permit of anyone to question his statement, in any essential particular.

Surely every man, whose head was made for use and not ornament, must agree that such rehearsals cannot be efficient. Proceedings of that kind, if recounted in a court of law, would most certainly be regarded as evidence of incapacity on the part of the men in authority. No business man—and, above all, no artist—could ever believe such a Ballyhooley to be the proper means for producing a work of art. The amenities of Donnybrook Fair cannot represent the standard for artistic procedure; and, in order to achieve artistic success, it can scarcely be requisite for artists to emulate the conduct of Kilkenny cats. We apologise for this sequence of similes, drawn from the Sister Isle, but it is not our fault that they happen to fit the case like a sticking-plaster.

Imagine the absurdity of having the Musical Director, Stage Manager, Ballet Master, Principals, Chorus, Ballet and Supers, all tumbling over one another in that manner. Why on earth were all those people huddled together on the stage, trying to act in concert when they had not yet learned what was required of them individually? Think of the chaos that must have attended the efforts of such

crowded incompetency! Nearly everything was bound to go wrong; and, at each mistake, the whole crowd had to halt, go back to a certain point and start again. The waste of time resulting from such idiotic procedure is lamentable in the extreme. Let the reader try to put himself in the place of that singer who had the job of bringing home the "Bride!" He must have had a high opinion of the ability possessed by his Management. No matter which of the assembled inefficiently went wrong, he was pulled up, ordered to go back to the beginning of his recitative, and made to sing it all over again. And the same with everyone else. All of them marking time after each step forward and usually, taking three steps back afterwards. This certainly "gives furiously to think," as they say across the channel.

Then, again, consider the discipline of the subordinates, as shown in Tolstoy's account. It was like the snakes in Norway, non-existent. One might safely predict that no assemblage of men and women could be found who would do better in surroundings of that kind. They could maintain no shred of interest in their work. They could see no possible object in paying attention to business, when nothing really mattered. But, when the harassed Musical Director happened to notice somebody chattering, he naturally expressed his opinion in terms of magnitude.

The whole system was obviously wrong. Some may, perhaps, argue that when time is short, it is impossible to adopt any other course. We contend,

however, that the shorter the time available, the greater the need for making the most of it. If one has not time to manage a production systematically, there cannot be time to muddle through with it. The rational way of going about the business would have been as follows:

The first essential in any production is the avoidance of divided authority. There can be only one "producer," who must be in supreme command. But, at the same time, since he alone cannot do all the work, he must not interfere with the minor authority delegated to others. In the case of this particular opera, the Musical Director was also the producer, and properly so. In a magical production, the supreme head of affairs would, similarly, be a magician. Had he been a capable producer, he would never have allowed everything to be rehearsed at once, in that way. At the outset, he would have assigned to each of his subordinate officials their respective duties; and, he and they would each have given the performers in their own individual departments all necessary instructions. To every important member of the company, written instructions would have been issued, for private study. While the principals were studying their parts, the supers and other subordinate performers would have been called for rehearsal in their respective groups. Simultaneously, the orchestra would have been rehearsed, apart from the stage performers. After that, the principal singers and actors would have been called to rehearsal with the orchestra. Then each group of minor artists would have been at-

tended to in the same way. Then, and not until then, would a general rehearsal have been called. Not until then, would everybody have been brought together upon the stage, and expected to attempt combined action.

That would be the time when the producer took general command. He should then find that, in the main, every performer knew exactly what he had to do, and where he had to stand. All the producer would have to do would consist in dovetailing the work of the various departments into one harmonious whole. Whatever he might have to say about the work of any particular department, he would say it to the director of that department and not to the subordinates. What any director might want to say to his own people would have to wait until the general rehearsal had ended. The proceedings would not be stopped and everybody kept waiting, while the Ballet Master scolded his dancers, the Stage Manager called over the coals his supers, stage-hands, extras and assistants galore, or the Conductor gave his French horn socks.

According to Tolstoy's account, the Musical Director appeared to be attending to everything connected with the opera, and trying to combine the duties of all the directors. If he had to teach and direct all the crowd, what did he want with such people as the Stage Manager and the Ballet Master? There is no sense in keeping a dog and doing the barking oneself. Besides, in a big production, it is impossible for one man to be both head cook and bottle washer in that way.

Wagner, we know, tried to do everything himself in the way of supervision. He knew one branch of his productions thoroughly—the musical department. This was surely enough for one lifetime, as things go. But, in addition to that, he was Author, Producer, Stage-Manager, Ballet Master, Scenic Artist, Costumier, Lighting Expert, Stage Foreman, Property Man and everything else, all rolled into one. It is heresy to say so, but sitting through a Wagner opera is, to us, a painful ordeal. In spite of the grandeur of the music, the absurdities in drama and stage-craft to everyone with a sense of humour, cannot fail to be irresistibly comic. Wagner should be heard, not seen. Our culminating experience of Wagner as performed on the stage, was in witnessing the second act of "Die Walkure" in Vienna. Never again! The tortures of suppressed laughter we underwent were too great for words.

It is a mistake to try to do too much. A producer must necessarily know many things. He must have a general knowledge of the work connected with every department of his production. But he cannot do, and must not attempt the work, which should be done by expert specialists in each department. He must be able to say when anything whatever is not right; he may even have expert knowledge and experience in one or two directions; but he cannot know everything, and do everything essential to a great production. The ideal producer is the man who can direct the efforts of his colleagues, in such manner as to bring about the combined effect he has conceived, and which he knows to be essential to success.

We will now proceed to deal with the application of the foregoing illustrations, and of the conclusions to be drawn therefrom, to the procedure advisable, first in the case of purely magical productions, and then in connection with magic and drama combined.

In the rehearsal of magical presentations, the need for avoiding confusion is even more pronounced than in the case of drama. Performers have more to think about in magical work than in other forms of stage business. A magician has not only to play his part as an actor; but, simultaneously, he has to give adequate attention to technical details which involve considerable difficulty, as a rule. In addition to these matters, he is often obliged to study his audience, and adapt his procedure to the requirements of the moment. Compared with the actor's task of playing a set part, the magician's duties are far more complex, and more difficult to perform. Therefore, he requires every advantage to be derived from thorough preparation.

In the case of a single-handed performer, of course, the matter is comparatively simple. Yet, even in his case, systematic procedure will yield better results than haphazard working. His first step should be to get the purely magical part of his work more or less complete. Until that is well in hand he cannot expect to give proper attention to the requirements of actual presentation. When he has arrived at the knowledge of what must be done to render his effects presentable, he will be in a position to decide upon the best way of presenting them. Naturally, while rehearsing the magical details, he will conceive

ideas relating to appropriate patter and business. These he should note down for future reference, without flying off at a tangent, and allowing his attention to wander from the work in hand to details of presentation which, at that stage, cannot possibly be decided. In trying to do two things at once, in that way, he can only waste time. The chances are ten to one that, if he cannot avoid the temptation to imagine what the end of his work will be, while he has still to complete the beginning, more than half the ideas he elaborates will have to be rejected. There is also the danger that in attempting too much at once, he will lose sight of many important details which, otherwise, would have attracted his attention. When he gets on the stage, he will be compelled to attend to several things at the same moment. He should, for that very reason, attend to one thing at a time, while he has the opportunity for so doing.

Having brought his magical details to some degree of perfection, and made notes of any ideas that have occurred to him in relation to the staging of his effects, the performer, even then, is not ready to rehearse his presentation. He has still to decide upon the word and action appropriate to each moment occupied by his stage-work. The incidental patter and business must be prepared before he can reasonably hope to make efficient progress. The fact is, after the purely magical *technique* has been mastered, the magician is required to throw aside, for the moment, his own special work, and take up the dramatic side of his art. He has to prepare himself for playing his part upon the stage, as an actor. To

this end, he must become a dramatic author, in addition to fulfilling his other duties. Even though he may be preparing a "silent act," he has still the dramatic "business" to arrange; and that, after all, is the most important element of drama. When his presentation includes patter also, he has a "speaking-part" to write and play.

Such being the case, his proper course is obvious. Firstly, he should sit down and write out his part—words and business—precisely as though he were a dramatist writing a play. Secondly, having done his duty as an author, he should learn his part, precisely as though he were an actor, pure and simple. Then, and not until then, will he be in a position to commence the rehearsal of his work, *as a presentation*. That is the earliest moment at which he will be competent to rehearse, on the stage, the production he intends to present on the stage.

From this point onward, the whole procedure should be, so far as possible, conducted as though an audience were present. There is some difficulty in so doing, no doubt. Empty seats are a poor substitute for an audience. Cold blood is a very indifferent stimulus, in comparison with the excitement of a public performance. The circumstances are not well adapted to calling forth a performer's reserve force, nor are they calculated to aid him in displaying his ability. Those drawbacks, however, have to be faced at rehearsal by all performers alike. The magical performer cannot expect to provide an exception to that universal rule. The only way in

which his presentation can be efficiently rehearsed is for him to imagine the empty seats are filled, to address them as "Ladies and Gentlemen," and go through the performance as it will be given "on the night."

A young performer often imagines that the ease of manner and ready flow of language possessed by his seniors are, more or less, spontaneous in origin. Even when he has seen a prominent artist present a certain effect several times, and has noted that the patter and business do not vary, he merely concludes that the performer has got into the way of doing and saying the same thing at the same time. But the fact is that, practically, every word and action has been most carefully rehearsed, before the presentation was ever put before the public. Nothing is ever left to chance by an artist. As we have already pointed out, art and chance are entirely antagonistic. All that seeming spontaneity, all that ease of deportment and delivery, are the result of careful preparation. They depend upon an adherence to artistic principles and methods, rather than upon natural self-possession or personal resource. It is only in accidental circumstances that ready wit and promptitude are called into play. Apart from such contingencies, an artist always knows beforehand what he intends to say and do. Relieved of all anxiety in that direction, his mind is free to attend to the work of actual presentation. If his attention is diverted from the work in hand by constant anxiety concerning details of which he is uncertain, he can

never do his best. His performance, consequently, is bound to suffer to the precise extent of the anxiety he feels.

The general handicap due to nervousness, from which all artists suffer more or less, cannot be eliminated by any amount of rehearsal. It is the penalty an artist has to pay for having gained a proper understanding of his responsibilities. Knowing, as he does, the full requirements of his art, he is inclined to doubt his ability to perform his duties efficiently. That feeling, in its acute form, usually wears off with some rapidity, even during the first presentation of a new effect. As the performance proceeds, and everything goes aright, the artist gains confidence from the knowledge that his preparations have been properly made and, in all probability, he has no reason to dread failure.

When we see a performer who, with the utmost assurance and self-conceit, starts off to present a new effect in public, we need feel no uncertainty in "sizing up" his merit as an artist. He cannot possibly realise his true position, nor the nature of his responsibilities. He is confident of success, for the simple reason that he does not understand how serious would be the result of failure. His courage is born of mental deficiency, not of artistic intelligence. When, however, his over-confidence leads to disaster, he obtains a glimmering notion of something lacking in the scheme of creation which has launched him adrift upon the ocean of life.

There is an anecdote related of two officers who served in the Crimean War. One was a Major

Smith—let us say—and the other we will call Captain Brown. Smith was a man who possessed a great amount of brute courage. He knew no fear, because he could not understand danger. Brown, on the other hand, was a man who thoroughly realised danger, but was dominated by a sense of duty and responsibility. During one particular action, Smith was riding along the ranks, and noticed Brown, very pale and anxious, standing at his post. The Major pulled up his horse and said, "Hullo, Brown! You look frightened!" Brown, very quietly, replied, "Yes, I *am* frightened. If you were half so frightened as I am, you would run away."

In this little story, we have a complete analogy to the excessive confidence of the incompetent performer, and the natural diffidence and nervousness of a real artist. The man who knows no fear requires no courage. His education is defective. He is confident because he lacks knowledge. The man who understands danger, and faces it all the same, has true courage. He has been properly educated. He knows the extent of his responsibilities and has learned how to do his duty as it should be done. That is the kind of man to whom the title of artist may be justly assigned, not to the man rendered confident by ignorance and mental obtuseness.

Passing on to the rehearsal of presentations in which magic and drama are combined, a very slight amplification of what has been said is all that is needed. The same general principle of rehearsal in detail applies to this case also. The dramatic side of the question merely adds a further department of

specialisation. Incidentally, of course, it adds a further cause of possible confusion in rehearsal; and one which, unless due precautions be taken, will produce great waste of time in the first place and, ultimately, defective presentation.

The procedure to be recommended in this instance, although it may sometimes appear to involve loss of time, is to keep the magical and dramatic sides of the production entirely separate, until such time as both have been well rehearsed. In many cases, this may be thought equivalent to going the longest way round to the end in view. Appearances, however, are deceptive; and, in such matters, the longest way round is usually the shortest way home, in point of time. To rehearse the whole combination before its individual components have been brought to a reasonable degree of perfection, can but be to reproduce the conditions described by Tolstoy in the account we have quoted.

CHAPTER XI

SPEED IN PRESENTATION

IN magic, speed in presentation is a most important point, artistically speaking. There are some performers who, with half a dozen simple tricks, can fill up a two-hours' entertainment. Others there are who can rattle off a score of big effects in as many minutes. Each class of performer, no doubt, thinks his own method of presentation the best that can be devised. So it may be—for him. But the question is, which method, if either, is best for the art of magic? Allowing for adaptation to personal characteristics, there must be a certain standard in this respect towards the attainment of which a magical artist's aim should be directed. We want to ascertain the logical basis upon which some such standard may be founded. Then, in the first place, we must think out the various points bearing upon this subject and, afterwards, make up our minds as to the conclusion one may deduce from the facts of the case.

Each particular mode of presentation, in point of showmanship, has certain advantages. The rapid method undoubtedly has the advantage of giving the spectators plenty for their money. That is to say, plenty of magic; which, presumably, is the thing they chiefly expect from a magician. The slow method, on the other hand, gives the performer

ample opportunity for getting at home with his spectators and making them thoroughly interested in his work. Herein, again, we are bound to admit the existence of great advantages. In completely interesting and carrying conviction to the minds of his audience, a magician unquestionably fulfils the expectations of the public.

From an artistic standpoint, however, each of these methods has its disadvantage. When we consider the final impression produced—and that is the main consideration, so far as art is concerned—we realise that, in neither case, can there exist the completeness and satisfaction of interest which true art demands. The rapid method imposes so much strain upon the attention of an audience, that complete appreciation of the effect presented can never be gained. The slow method, conversely, does not sufficiently occupy the minds of the spectators in the direction towards which their anticipation has been led. Thus, it is easy to see, both methods are lacking in certain artistic essentials. Each comprises too little of the advantage in which the other excels.

Looking at the matter fairly and squarely, one cannot help feeling that any presentation which leaves an impression of either indistinctness or over-elaboration has a very serious defect, from whatever point of view it may be regarded. Even setting aside the question of art, high or low, the fact that a performance lacks one or other of the qualities which the public expects a public entertainment to possess is, in itself, sufficient to condemn the method of presentation adopted. From a magical entertainer,

the public expects two things—magic and entertainment. The man who gives the public plenty of magic, but serves it up in such hot haste that his audience has no time to digest it, merely surfeits the spectators with that particular requirement, without satisfying their other expectations. He occupies their attention more than enough, but he does not entertain them as they rightly expect to be entertained. They have too much of one good thing and not enough of another. The magic they wish to enjoy, instead of being served up properly, is thrown at them—take it or leave it—just as the waitresses at cheap restaurants dump down the food before their customers. Some people, no doubt, can put up with such treatment. They get used to it, as eels do to being skinned. But, surely, the person who cannot enjoy a meal better served must have an exceptional constitution. To most people, good service and time for enjoyment are things to be desired. Satisfaction, and not indigestion, is what normal beings appreciate.

On the other hand, the performer who spins out his magical business, by unduly watering it down with patter or other forms of entertainment, displays a fault of another order, but similar in degree. Retaining the simile of the restaurant one may say the service is far too elaborate and the rations are far too scanty. Or, in the renowned words of a certain governor of North Carolina, we may say, "It's a long time between drinks." The spectators may be greatly entertained by the performance but when it is all over they will feel dissatisfied because they have

not obtained what they paid their money to see. In such conditions the final effect is as incomplete and imperfect as when people have been allowed too little time for appreciation.

Then there seems little doubt as to the kind of standard to be adopted in this respect. The rapid method may suit some performers well, especially those who either lack repose or dispense with patter. The slow method may recommend itself to those whose strong point is either "a gift of the gab" or a special ability in "holding an audience." The question of "personality" or, in other words, individual characteristics both natural and acquired, must be allowed considerable weight in such questions. The man who, although a skilled magician, has no special ability as an entertainer—who has not that easy grip of his spectators' attention which disarms criticism of his procedure at the moment—is bound to rely for his ultimate success upon a more or less rapid method of presentation. The man whose skill is that of an entertainer in the ordinary sense, rather than that of a specialist in magic, has to rely upon his general ability more than upon his magical effects. In his case, the comparatively slow method of presentation is essential to success. But, "there is reason in the roasting of eggs," as the proverb has it. One man may find it best to go ahead, another to go slowly; but every man who professes to give the public good work should remember that, beyond certain limits, in haste and deliberation alike, good work can scarcely exist.

No reasonable doubt, we think, can be entertained

as to the standard of rapidity in presentation which is most desirable in magical performance. The defects inseparable from the respective extremes simply indicate that the happy medium represents perfection. The audience must have time to understand, to consider and to appreciate the successive items presented or the final impression must be confused and imperfect. A magical performance must contain sufficient magic to fulfil the expectations of the audience, or dissatisfaction, more or less acute, is bound to be the after-effect produced. In either case, the ultimate result displays artistic shortcomings, which should be corrected. True art and good policy alike, point to the middle course as being best, and to the wisdom of keeping that course so far as circumstances will permit. It is quite possible to give the public plenty of magic without reducing one's performance to the level of a mere "show," devoid of artistic merit. It is also quite possible to give the public real entertainment without stinting the supply of magic. There is no difficulty in the matter, one way or the other. By avoiding redundancy in either direction the thing is done, automatically.

CHAPTER XII

PATTER

INTIMATELY related to the foregoing subject, is that of "patter" in magical presentations. The diversity of opinion expressed upon this subject has been extreme. Some have held the view that patter is all-important in the art of magic. Others have regarded it as an entirely negligible quantity. Obviously, both views cannot be right; but, nevertheless, it is quite possible that both may be wrong. Indeed, one may feel practically certain that neither opinion can be altogether correct, however much be said in its support. This seems to be another instance where the truth rests mid-way between two extremes. The fact, is, patter is entirely essential in some cases, and quite unnecessary in others. We will briefly review the subject in its various aspects.

Firstly, as to the view that patter is the very salt of magic, and indispensable to the art. Let us see what may be said for and against this proposition. It is certain that some well-known experiments cannot conceivably be performed in dumb show; while others, even though they might be given in silence, would lose immeasurably. The former class comprises effects in which the initial procedure demands explanation. This may arise from the fact that members of the audience are required to assist the

performer, or for various other reasons. The latter class consists in experiments such as those involving extensive preparation, which might prove tedious if not relieved by appropriate remarks and witticisms, and cases wherein some slight diversion of the spectators' attention is requisite. Instances of each class will readily be recalled to mind. Then, in one case, to dispense with patter would be simply impossible. In the other case, it would be most unwise. In either case, artistic presentation demands the employment of patter, as an inevitable necessity. Thus, the performer whose repertoire is confined to silent procedure alone, cuts himself adrift, artistically speaking, from a wide range of effects which would otherwise be available for his use. This, in itself, provides a strong argument in favour of patter. But, at the same time, it in no way represents proof of the contention that patter is indispensable to magic, from an artistic standpoint. It merely proves the value of speech, upon occasion.

Turning to the other side of the question, we undoubtedly find not only effects which lose nothing by being presented in silence, but also a number which must actually gain in artistic value by that mode of presentation. Such are those effects which, on the one hand, include in their performance much that will attract the eye and, on the other hand, those in which close attention is desirable, on the part of the audience. In neither class, can patter be regarded as an artistic essential. On the contrary, the introduction of patter where it must be either unnecessary or detrimental, could only be regarded as

an advantage by those to whom the requirements of art are unknown. Anything not requisite or, at the least, tending to enhance the effect produced, must be a blemish, artistically speaking. Therefore, we are bound to admit that silent presentation *can* be perfectly artistic, and that patter is *not* a necessary constituent of our art, in certain phases.

Most readers, probably, will remember the "Gibson Girl" case; wherein it was sought to prove that the title of "actress" could only be claimed by a lady who played a "speaking part." This contention was vigorously opposed by various witnesses whose opinion is of value. For instance, Mr. Comyns Carr pointed out that Mme. Jane May, whom he believed to be the greatest actress in the world, never played a speaking part, but always acted in dumb show. That is not altogether accurate, for we ourselves have seen her play such a part, and also give very clever imitations of other artists, both in speech and song. Still, her strong point is voiceless acting; and it would be absurd to say that, when she ceases to speak, and, as in "L'Enfant Prodigue," conveys every idea by action, she ceases to be either an actress or an artist.

Once again, we must remember Robert-Houdin's definition of a conjurer, as being an actor who plays the part of a magician. Or, if we wish to express the same idea in more accurate terms, we may say that a modern magician is an actor playing the part of a legendary magician. In any event, the artist in magic is, primarily, an actor. His manipulative or technical skill, however necessary to complete

success, must be regarded as a secondary consideration, in relation to the artistic side of his calling. Therefore, whatever may be true of other actors is equally true of him. If speech be not essential to art in other branches of dramatic work, it cannot be so in magic. And, since speech is, ordinarily, an adjunct of the highest importance in drama, it must be equally so in our own particular case. It follows that, so long as the silent performer does not introduce effects wherein speech is artistically requisite, and the performer who uses patter does not speak when the purposes of art would be better served by silence, each will be equally entitled to rank as an artist in magic. Hard and fast opinions, in either direction, can have no weight in deciding the general question as to the value, or otherwise, of patter. That question is one that cannot be decided upon general principles. It can only be answered in relation to particular conditions. The answer depends entirely upon the artistic requirements of each individual effect, as modified by the circumstances in which it is presented. The rules already set down in this book should provide all the guidance required, at any time, in forming a just opinion in this respect.

This leads us, naturally, to the consideration of appropriateness in patter. Just as there is the need for knowing when one may or should either use or discard patter, it is equally important to know what kind of patter to use if and when necessary. One must not only know when to speak, but also what form of speech to adopt, in each instance. Further, it is requisite to know precisely what form of speech

one is *capable* of adopting, with proper effect. One may know what ought to be said; but, unless one can say it properly, it will be better left unsaid. And it is of no use to *think* one knows such things. This is a case wherein it is necessary to make quite sure of one's ground, especially in relation to personal characteristics and capabilities. By study and experience, the ability to form a sound judgment on such points may be acquired; and yet, for personal reasons, the procedure known to be correct may not be the best to adopt. Nothing can be good that is spoiled by improper treatment; and, unless one can carry out the proper mode of procedure in a competent manner, it would be far better to adopt a less perfect method, but one within the range of adequate performance.

As a practical illustration, we will suppose a performer intends to present a magical item, for which the best mode of introduction would be a serious, well-written, and impressive address. Then, the points the performer has to consider are these. Can he be effectively serious and impressive, and can he write well enough to compose the requisite address? If these achievements be well within his power, he need have no hesitation in going ahead. But, if, in either respect, his personal limitations stand in the way of successful achievement, he should sacrifice something in mode of procedure, in order to bring the presentation within the scope of his ability. It is always better to do an imperfect thing well than to attempt to attain perfection and fail in the endeavour. The transition from art to balderdash may be made in

a single step. The performer who, understanding his art, but not realising his own limitations, undertakes more than he can perform, is almost certain to take that step, from the sublime to the ridiculous, every time.

In writing patter, of course, a performer may obtain assistance. But, so far as public delivery is concerned, he is bound to do the work himself. If he undertakes to give an address which is intended to be impressive, he should be an elocutionist. If the prevailing note of his address be comedy, he should be a comedian. If what he has to say be pseudo-scientific, he should be, at least, something of a scientist. And so on, throughout the whole range of possible methods. The complete magician, of course, would possess all such qualifications. But the complete magician has yet to be born. So far, we are all compelled to sacrifice something of ambition, on account of our individual shortcomings.

It is here that the saving grace of good sense steps in, to protect the artist in magic from disaster. With sufficient good sense, a magician may easily steer clear of the rocks, shoals, and quicksands, to which his personal limitations might otherwise lead him. So long as he knows and avoids the courses in which, for him, there is no thoroughfare, he is safe. But, directly his good sense fails him, he becomes liable to meet with disaster. The good sense to know wherein he is lacking in education or ability, wherein his physical peculiarities represent obstacles to success, wherein he is entirely competent to do what is required and wherein rests his best chance of gaining

public appreciation, undoubtedly provides the best aid to propriety that any man can possess. And, fortunately, it is an aid that may be gained by all who will take the trouble to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" a few simple truths, within the reach of every normal intelligence.

The most obvious of the simple truths to which we have alluded is that the man who lacks education must either be aware of that fact, or be little better than an idiot. The corollary to this truth is that the performer who, not being an idiot, is aware of his lack of education, will take due precaution to avoid mistakes in speaking. Since he cannot rely upon his own knowledge, he will obtain the advice and assistance of others who possess the education he has not acquired. The performer who is wise enough to know that he lacks education, and yet neglects the precautions which such circumstances dictate, must be a hopelessly self-satisfied duffer. He is past praying for, so far as any semblance of art is concerned. But the performer who, lacking education, yet keeps in constant view the deficiencies from which he suffers, and the need for overcoming them, may be as true an artist as though his education were of the best.

Thus, for example, the man who has not learned to speak grammatically must be a fool to speak in public, without first submitting the text of the speech to somebody able to correct the mistakes he is bound to make. The man who has not learned French cannot expect to speak French, except in such manner

as to make himself ridiculous, even though he may have consulted someone who knows the language. The performer who does not understand elocution should not speak in public without having rehearsed before someone who can show him where he goes wrong. Above all, the performer whose accent is low class should *never* speak in public when circumstances render such an accent inappropriate.

To a man of brains there can be no difficulty in knowing the right thing to do, so far as these elementary matters are concerned. The very smallest amount of gumption serves to prevent danger from the pitfalls awaiting those who venture beyond the limits of their own knowledge. So, when a performer trips up over some obstacle which proper care would have enabled him to avoid, his reputation as an artist is bound to suffer. And it is not too much to say that of all the blunders a performer can commit, those connected with mistaken speech are the very worst. Consequently, they demand the utmost care in prevention.

In every audience there are sure to be persons to whom verbal errors are as distasteful as sour gooseberries. A grammatical solecism or a defect in pronunciation will, figuratively, set their teeth on edge. What must such people think of a performer who, for instance, calls a phenomenon a "phenomena"? They can only regard him as one whose ability is, probably, on a par with his education. They will think, and rightly so, that the man who has any capability at all must be, at least, capable of avoiding the use of terms

which he does not understand. The misuse of words cannot be regarded as otherwise than as direct evidence of incompetency.

No sensible man can help knowing that all languages abound in "booby-traps," for catching the unwary or unskilled speaker. Consequently, every sensible man will take good care to avoid being caught therein. But there are others; and, unfortunately, some of those others are magicians. It may be worth while to give an illustration of the kind of mess such people too often make of their native English. We will suppose an address has to be delivered to the following effect:—

"The handkerchief that covers the lady's eyes has been examined by several members of the audience, each of whom guarantees that covering to be free from preparation of every kind. Then there can be no one among those present who doubts the fact that, in circumstances such as these, the lady is rendered quite incapable of seeing what takes place around her. Between you and me, however, blindfolding and every similar precaution are alike powerless to destroy the mental sympathy and co-operation that exist between her and myself. Anything communicated either to her or to me becomes, instantly, known to us both; whatever severity may be exercised in the tests to which either of us has to submit."

Thus rendered the speech is, obviously, both grammatical and sensible. Let us now transcribe it as, without exaggeration, it might be delivered by some performers, thus:—

"The yankerchief tied round Maddy Moselle's

eyes 'ave been ixamined be several of the audience, each of wich say it is quite unprepared or faked in the ordinary way, as usual in all performances of mental thought telepathy like these. Then everyone in the audience see at once that what we do is quite different altogether, because trickery and deception is beyond suspicion, and prevents any doubt about her knowing wot anyone of you do, and me as well. But, between you and I, blindfolding and all those kind of things makes no difference to the mental sympathies and similar influence which exists between the mind of we two. Whatever you tell us pass from each other, without any possible way of communicating; no matter what severity of difficult tests are exercised by the audience, who want to prove if every single one of our statements are not correct, but entirely without collusion or confederacy."

Thus muddled, the speech obviously becomes neither grammatical nor sensible. Yet everyone who reads these words must, occasionally, have heard self-styled artists—or probably *artistes*—make hay of the English language in precisely that fashion. Unfortunately, the foregoing is an actual type, rather than a travesty of the diction sometimes inflicted upon audiences. And, one may rest assured, the *artistes* who address educated people in such ruinous phrases, are the very men most likely to attach the highest importance to their own achievements as "perfeshnals," and to entertain the greatest contempt for the "amechure."

To digress, for a moment, from our present theme, the term *artiste* recalls a memory of the late Corney

Grain. In one of his later sketches, he mentioned the resentment he once felt, on hearing himself described as a "*Comique*." Having, all his life, given the public genuine comedy, he had justly earned the title of "comedian," in plain English. To be called a "*Comique*," simply implied that his artistic rank was equivalent to that of any French clown who tries to be funny. In like manner, it seems to us, the title of "*Artiste*"—adopted by, and accorded to every nonentity and wastrel who disgrace the stage—must be derogatory to the repute of any real artist. When those who cannot even speak the English they are supposed to know, seek aggrandisement by adopting titles from the French they cannot pretend to know, an artist may well consider their ways and do otherwise. Anyhow, the French terms "*Comique*" and "*Artiste*" have their exact equivalents in English; and, to the man whose native language is the latter, the use of such foreign words is entirely needless. For an English-speaking man to call himself an "artiste" is mere affectation of a most transparent character. He uses the term because it sounds and looks more pretentious than "artist," though its meaning is just the same; and that reason is self-evident.

Reverting to the subject of "patter," here are two quotations from Aristotle. He says¹—"*The excellence of diction consists in being perspicuous without being mean*"; and "*In the employment of all the species of unusual words, moderation is necessary: for metaphors, foreign words, or any of the others, improperly used, and with a design to be ridiculous,*

¹ "Poetics," part 2, sec. 26.

would produce the same effect." That is to say, the improper use of words or phrases is just as ridiculous as though the intention were to provoke ridicule. That Aristotle knew what he was talking about is perfectly clear. Yet we, who were born some two thousand years after the date of his death, still find among us people who do not seem to understand these simple truths. And few there are who trouble about learning the right thing to say, or how to say it properly.

That is not as it should be, by any means. The human race has existed for some considerable time. During that period, a fair amount of knowledge has been gathered and made readily accessible to all, in every department of human activity. Then the man who, instead of learning what has been boiled down for his information trusts to luck in finding out for himself what others had discovered ages before he was born, cannot have sense enough "to come in out of the rain." Anyhow, the performer who stands before educated people with the intention of addressing them in a manner that will impress them favourably, must use the language that educated people speak. In so far as he fails to speak correctly, he will suffer ridicule and lose prestige. He should be master of his own language, though not necessarily a *schoolmaster*. Pedantry, indeed, is entirely objectionable; but there is nothing pedantic in speaking properly.

It is impossible to say here all that need be said upon the subject of patter. An entire treatise might, with advantage, be written upon it. But, before

quitting the subject, there are one or two points to which we must refer. The first concerns the practice of making remarks calculated to bring magic into contempt. For example, a magical humorist can be funny without making fun of his art. If he says things which tend to lower the public estimation of magic and magicians, he not only degrades himself and his performance, but reflects discredit upon the whole magical profession. We cannot expect to raise the standing of magic and magicians, if the latter persist in debasing their profession by un-called-for japes and "wheezes," which present their calling in a false light. What respect can the public have for men who do not respect their own work? The only possible sentiment that can be aroused is contempt, pure and simple. Jokes in which magic is allied to humbug, swindling or chicanery of any kind, can only serve to rank the magician among swindlers and impostors.

Although patter of that kind is, perhaps, the most detrimental to our general interests, there are other forms scarcely less objectionable in practice. Among these the practice of "talking at" the audience has a prominent place. People do not like to be talked at, whether they deserve it or not. In fact, the more they deserve it, the less they relish it. When, for instance, a performer finds his audience undemonstrative the very worst plan he can adopt is to show resentment or to make remarks concerning that fact. To do anything of the kind can only result in making the spectators self-conscious, and more than ever reluctant to show appreciation. The

people in front of the footlights must, if possible, be taken out of themselves—must be led to forget their own concerns, and made to think only of the performance they are witnessing. If induced to reflect upon the relations existing between the performer and themselves, and made to feel uncomfortable about what he thinks of them, spontaneous appreciation and enjoyment become impossible. All chance of pleasure in the entertainment is destroyed, both for them and for him.

In the same way, references to the hypothetical poverty of magicians as a class cannot be otherwise than detrimental to us all. Not only so, the poverty of artists, generally, has formed a stock subject for jesters since time immemorial. That subject has been done to death, and should be dropped entirely. The old jokes still raise a laugh, because some people can only see the jokes they know; but most people have long been sick of such antiquated substitutes for wit.

Worse still, are references to the possible poverty of spectators. It is bad enough to find a performer suggesting his own familiarity with the pawn-shop, or his chronic inability to produce a shilling. But, when such jests are made at the expense of the audience, the fault is ten thousand times more reprehensible. Such themes are not agreeable to anyone. What must they suggest, say, to the man who has attended a performance in the hope of finding relief from the memory of financial troubles? Even the careless youth who has pawned his watch in order to get money for giving his best girl a treat, cannot

feel very happy when topics of this kind are brought up. Then, surely, a performer will act wisely in refraining from the use of such debilitated jokes as—"I can see a good many chains, but I suppose all your watches have gone to be repaired, just as mine has." There would be nothing particularly witty about such remarks, even were they original. When let off upon an audience at forty-secondhand, they have no pretence of merit, nor can they add anything to the general effect of a performance.

Then, again, remarks concerning the suitability of a performance to a juvenile audience are, undoubtedly, objectionable. One often hears a magician make a sort of apology for introducing a certain item, on the ground that "so many young people are present." Could there be any readier method of bringing that item into contempt? Probably not. To present the thing as being especially suited to the mental capacity of juveniles must suggest to the adults that what they are about to see is beneath their appreciation. As to the juveniles themselves, the result is even more disastrous.

If there be one ambition more common than another to the youthful of either sex, it is the ambition to appear "grown up" so far as may be possible. Then, the mere fact of saying that what one is about to do will appeal to children especially, is enough to set every juvenile mind against the performance. Every boy, particularly, draws a mental distinction between himself and ordinary "children." Out of courtesy to his juniors and to the opposite sex, he may be disposed to tolerate what pleases children; but he

wants to believe that what pleases *him* really is something that is suited to the intelligence of his elders. To suggest that he requires children's fare can be nothing less than an insult to his understanding.

The fact is, children understand a great deal more than their seniors usually believe. A public performer, at any rate, should be aware of that fact, and should act accordingly. He has full opportunity for observing how very little there is that escapes the understanding of even quite young children. And, if he be capable of learning from experience, he must know that, to profess to bring his entertainment down to the level of childish intelligence cannot be good policy, from any point of view whatever.

CHAPTER XIII

STAGE MANNER AND PERSONALITY

TO a public performer the value of an effective personality is abundantly evident. But, in practice, it is as well to understand the extent to which personality alone is comprised in what commonly goes by that name. We believe that, to a great extent, what is called "personality" is by no means a natural possession, "bred in the bone." We regard it as being, very frequently, a composite manifestation of qualities native and acquired. Habit is second nature, as everybody knows. Therefore, much that passes as personality may be merely acquired habit; and should, correctly speaking, be described as the ability to hold the attention and excite the interest of an audience. That ability, of course, is a personal asset, and one of great value; but it cannot be regarded as one in which personal characteristics are exclusively involved. Such influence over an audience is often due to nothing more than a thorough knowledge of one's business, combined with the confidence due to long experience. It is mainly an acquired habit, and but slightly associated with real personality.

There may be—indeed, there *are*—instances in which a performer's sole claim to public appreciation has been derived from pleasing characteristics

which Nature bestowed upon him. But, on the other hand, there have been performers who, although possessed of no such natural advantages, could exercise upon an audience all the magnetic influence that attractive personality could create. Further than that, some performers, so heavily handicapped by Nature that one might think them possessed of every quality calculated to inspire aversion, have gained public applause and appreciation. Yes! have even achieved success in circumstances that would condemn many well-favoured men to failure. The success attained by such men, no doubt, would be ascribed by their audiences to "personality." We, however, regard the matter in another light. When a man's natural qualities, in themselves, are detrimental to his powers of attracting appreciation, it cannot be personality that gains for him success in public. There must be other factors in the problem. There must be something of such value that it not only renders him successful without aid from "personality," but outweighs the detrimental characteristics operating against him, into the bargain.

Such facts as these must have come within the experience of everyone. Then, in view of these facts, there seems but one conclusion that can be rationally accepted. We are bound to conclude that what is called "personality" consists, very often, in purely artificial methods acquired by the individual, and not natural to him. In other words, it consists in a knowledge of artistic requirements and of their harmonisation with personal peculiarities. By such means, a performer's natural disadvantages may be

not only disguised but actually made useful. The man who can achieve this is an artist, beyond all doubt; whereas the man who succeeds by virtue of personality alone, can claim no artistic merit whatever. We owe him no praise for being as Nature made him. But to the man who impresses us favourably, in spite of Nature's efforts to make him repellent, we owe all the praise that any artist can deserve.

At the root of this matter there is found the principle stated in Robert-Houdin's definition of a conjurer, to which we have so often alluded. The man is an actor, as every magician should be. He does not appear to the audience clothed in his own personality. He assumes, for the time, a personality not his own, but that of the magician he wishes to represent. It is that assumed personality which appeals to his spectators, and is by them regarded as his in fact. They are not allowed to see the man himself, but only the man he intends them to see. Therein we have the highest art, of acting and magic alike. We may call it personality if we will, but, in truth, it is only personal by acquisition. It is no more a natural endowment than a suit of clothes, bought and paid for. It has been bought by experience and paid for by labour and study.

If this be the true state of the case, as it seems to be, there should exist but few men who are incapable of acquiring a "stage manner" that will pass for effective personality. A satisfactory "stage presence," of course, must mainly depend upon the gifts the gods have given. But a satisfactory stage man-

ner is a thing possible of acquirement, at the expense of thought and effort. There may be great difficulty in learning to play the part adopted. In most cases, perhaps, there is *bound* to be great difficulty. What of that? Almost everything worth doing at all is difficult to do. Hardly anything worth doing is easy to do. It is all in the day's work, anyhow. Inferior work, easy to do, can only succeed by accident. Even then, although it may bring in cash, it will never bring credit. It will be "light come, light go," and there an end. Art is cast in another and a very different mould. And an artist, worthy of the name, cannot expect to have an easy time. The primrose path is not for him. Hard days and short nights are his natural expectation.

It is not difficult to state the requirements of an effective stage manner, in general terms. But it is impossible to define the infinitely varied needs of individual performers. What may be best in one case, may be unthinkable in another. In this respect, every performer must be a law unto himself. He may gain much aid from competent criticism of his procedure, but much more depends upon his own judgment and practical experience. His own common sense, properly exercised, should be his best guide. Above all, he should never forget that the opinions of any Tom, Dick or Harry he may happen to meet will probably be worthless, and that the opinions of paid assistants are sure to be misleading. The man whose bread and butter one provides will, naturally, say what one would like to hear, even though it be at the expense of his personal convic-

tions, if such he may happen to possess. As a rule, his only convictions are derived from his employer. What the "guv'nor" likes *must* be right. What the "boss" believes, his employé will swear to—especially if he would get sworn *at* for doing otherwise. Still, when a performer finds Tom, Dick and Harry invariably agree in a certain opinion, he will do well to consider that opinion dispassionately and seriously.

Confining ourselves to generalities, we may state the requirements of an effective stage manner as follows: First and foremost we must emphasise the need for cultivating an earnest desire to please. That is absolutely essential to success. The audience can have no expectation other than that of being pleased by the performance paid for. People who pay to see what a performer has to show them, do so for their pleasure. Therefore, it is their pleasure that should have the chief consideration from the man who receives their money. He is not there to please himself.

Next in order of importance may be placed the need for understanding human nature, especially in relation to public gatherings. No man thinks or feels the same at all times. The thoughts and sentiments of all men vary in accordance with circumstances. Humanity in the aggregate differs very little from humanity in the individual. Every audience has its own particular characteristics, just as much as every person. The general character of either, for the time being, depends on the resultant influence of many causes acting together. At a pub-

lic performance, some of these causes will act in favour of the performer, others will act against him. The resultant influence will vary, from time to time, according to the direction in which the causes preponderate. These are facts with which every performer should be acquainted, and the operation of which he should fully realise. Unless he can understand that audiences are subject to the same accidental influences as affect individuals, and can realise that individuals are merely creatures of circumstance, he is sure to be misled by appearances. He is sure to think that the apparent attitude of the audience towards his performance has a personal relation to himself, either for good or ill. He will think that if the spectators immediately respond to his efforts he is successful; if they do not, that it is hopeless to try to please them. Whereas, in actual fact, he should never pay the slightest attention to the attitude of his spectators. That is an accidental phenomenon, entirely beyond his control.

When a performer goes upon the stage, he should remember that he stands before people who have no personal interest in anything that he does. They may be in the mood to appreciate his work, or they may not. That has nothing to do with him. If the odds be in his favour so much the better for him. If not, so much the worse. In either case his audience is subject to a variety of influences, to which must be added the influence he himself can create. So far as he is concerned, what he has to do is to make his personal influence operate in his favour, to the utmost. That is all he can do, in any case; and,

whatever may be the odds against him, that is what he should do in every case.

Another essential is the maintenance of good humour. Since every audience is subject to the impressions received at the moment, and good humour in the audience is necessary to a performer's success, that is one of the most important impressions he must convey. No matter how ill-humoured an audience may be, the man upon the stage must appear to be in a good humour. In fact, the more out of humour he may find his audience the greater the need for a countervailing influence upon his part. His efforts in this direction will never fail to meet with their due reward.

Diplomacy and expediency may be said to cover the entire ground in this connection. The performer must deal with his audience diplomatically, and act in accordance with the dictates which circumstances show to be expedient. Firmness of purpose, combined with the utmost courtesy, should govern every relation between a performer and his audience. Conscious ability exercised in the service of one's spectators is, perhaps, the most effective aid to success at any time; whatever else a performer may count to his advantage, or wherever he may otherwise fail.

CHAPTER XIV

MENTAL ATTITUDE

AMONG the characteristics most objectionable in a performer, self-conceit probably takes first place. There is all the difference in the world between this and conscious ability. The latter belongs to the man who knows his own capabilities, which have been acquired by prolonged study and effort. Self-conceit usually denotes the man who knows nothing with certainty but vainly imagines his personal gifts to be superior to all knowledge. Believing himself a heaven-born genius, he constantly proves himself an unmitigated ass. Average audiences will "size him up" in a moment, and set up their backs accordingly. They could find no pleasure greater than that of taking him down a peg or two. That frame of mind is probably the worst an audience can adopt, so far as a performer's interests are concerned. The good-will of spectators is essential to his success, and their antagonism is to be avoided by every means.

However detrimental to a performer may be the fault of self-conceit, it is scarcely more so than the failing of self-consciousness. Of course, when a performer is naturally self-conscious, he must remain so to the end. He may in time gain great control over his self-consciousness, but he cannot expect to

destroy it. Yet, however heavily he may be handicapped by this defect, he must prevent the public from knowing how much he is overweighted, or he will never gain the confidences of his audiences. Some people will pity him; others will ridicule his efforts to entertain them; but, in the whole crowd, there will be none who will believe in him. Therefore, the first aim of every self-conscious performer should be to conceal the nervous affection with which he is afflicted, and which diverts towards his own person some of the attention he should devote exclusively to his work. He must learn the knack of keeping his mind from dwelling upon what spectators think about him. In short, he must realise that nobody cares a straw whether or not his necktie is straight, or his trousers are properly creased down the leg.

The true remedy for this personal failing consists in cultivating the ability to assume a character more or less foreign to one's own. That ability is merely what is demanded of every actor in his daily work. And, as we have already had to admit, the man who cannot become a fairly good actor in one particular line at least, cannot hope for any great success as a magician. Then, the chief study of a self-conscious magician should be to assume the character of a self-possessed entertainer. Upon his ability to play that part primarily depends his success as an artist in magic.

A tendency to panic in the event of any hitch occurring, is another detrimental characteristic. Some people are naturally cool in the face of an emergency.

They may be nervous in the ordinary course of events, but an emergency steadies their nerves and braces up their energies. Others, and very often those who possess the artistic temperament in a high degree, are liable to become agitated and distracted by any slight mischance. Thus, they suffer considerable disadvantage as compared with less sensitive men. Their real merits will often be overshadowed by this failing, while men of inferior ability but who are able to keep cool may gain repute far in excess of their deserts.

This defect also is capable of correction by means of mental training, as in the case of self-consciousness. The best remedy consists in acquiring a due sense of proportion, and bearing in mind Hamlet's words—"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

At all times, a performer should remember how greatly his own attitude may influence the thoughts of his spectators. His views and impressions may not always be shared by those who witness his performance. The audience may not be disposed either to accept his abilities at his own valuation, or to agree with the opinions he expresses. But it is practically certain that the *relative* importance of any detail in his performance will be estimated by his own attitude towards it. Thus, any exhibition of panic or discomfiture at once invites the contempt and derision of his audience. Whereas, if he can only control his faculties sufficiently to make light of an accidental mischance, the audience will hardly give a second thought to the circumstance.

Those who perform in public must invariably be prepared to make the best of whatever may happen, even of the very worst that can possibly happen. This can only be done by discarding everything in the nature of agitation or worry, which are the surest means for making the worst of any conceivable situation. Distractions of that kind only waste energy which should be employed to better ends, in providing a remedy for whatever may be wrong. Even though the worst may happen, and there is no possibility of finding a way out of some difficulty or other, it is not a matter of life or death, and the performer therefore need suffer no great anxiety. Even though he must tacitly confess to complete failure in one of his feats, he has no cause for serious distress. There is always another day to-morrow, in which present defeat may be turned to victory. His immediate aim should be to minimise the importance of his mishap, so far as may be possible. In outward appearance, at any rate, he should make light of it. If he can do no better, he should simply laugh at his own ill-luck and pass on to his next item. A well-chosen witticism concerning the malignity of matter, the total depravity of inanimate objects or the natural uncertainty attending the "schemes of mice and men" will usually turn the laugh in his favour. When a mishap can be passed off in this way, ridicule is disarmed at once and no unfavourable impression remains in the minds of spectators. On the other hand, when a performer displays vexation and anxiety with regard to a mishap, he merely assists in turning the laugh against himself. To

laugh at the discomfiture of others is a natural tendency of humanity at large and, in this respect, all audiences are very human indeed. If anything goes wrong—or, rather, we should say *when* anything goes wrong, the audience is almost sure to laugh. Therefore, it is for the performer to see that his spectators laugh *with* him; and not *at* him, as they are sure to do if he loses his head.

CHAPTER XV

THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTISTIC PRINCIPLES

HAVING now covered the range we had mapped out for this section of our book, we will end with a few remarks upon the real importance of our subject. It is to be feared that the majority of readers will largely fail to grasp the true significance of much we have said. Not that we attach supreme value to our own contributions to general knowledge, but that portions of the subject itself will probably be regarded as of little consequence in practice. The aspect in which we have viewed the matter is by no means novel in connection with art in general. In relation to magic, however, our point of view is so unusual that many people are sure to think we have been trying to put forward ideas which are entirely novel and, at times, somewhat eccentric.

We beg to assure those who have formed any such opinion that they are entirely mistaken in their conclusions. What we have said about Art in Magic has its foundation in what has, long ago, been said and accepted in connection with other arts. The views we have expressed have their analogues in the views long since adopted by exponents of other arts, and endorsed by the highest authorities upon art of every kind. Thus, we have not attempted the creation of new principles or new standards, but have

merely adapted to the art of magic those principles and standards already common to art in general.

In order to bring magic into line with other arts the first step, obviously, must be to associate with it those principles and traditions whereby other arts are governed. In so doing, there is no question of bringing magic under the control of artificial and needless conventions. The accepted ideas of artistic rectitude have not been prescribed by illogical tyranny. They are conceptions evolved, in the course of ages, through the mental activity of many able men, to whom experience gave wisdom in their respective generations. If we wish to prove the claim of magic to rank upon an equality with other arts, we must first of all establish its relation to recognised artistic principles and ideals, both in theory and in practice.

In this respect, the greatest danger to be feared consists, not in the possible opposition of young magicians seeking a royal road to success, but in the antagonism of those who have already fought their way to the front rank and, by virtue of their innate sense of artistry, have become successful exponents of magic. This latter class represents the greatest potential stumbling-block to be dreaded by those who realise the proper course to pursue. The reason is that men who, by rule of thumb, have learned something of artistic presentation are the least likely to appreciate the value of systematic knowledge. So long as they are able to stumble successfully along the paths of art, without knowing exactly where they want to go until they get there,

they cannot understand why any other method should be preferable. In the light of their own practical experience, they can eventually reach a position somewhere in the vicinity of their proper destination, and with that they are content. That is what they regard as artistic procedure. It never occurs to them that, by systematising the knowledge they possess, they could learn how to avoid the uncertainty they feel at every step they take, and how to go straight to their destination instead of having to grope their way along devious side-tracks.

As to those who have not the aid of long experience to rely upon, there can be no doubt of the value to them of definite principles whereby their proper course may be decided, thus securing freedom from many disasters which would otherwise be inevitable. Since they have to learn their business somehow, they may as well learn it properly. It is quite as easy to learn in either way, and the proper way will save them a lot of trouble in the end. If, in addition, to the *how* of their business, as represented by "tips," "wheezes," "sleights," and "fakes" they will also learn the *why* as revealed by a knowledge of artistic principles, they will find great advantage therein, increasing constantly with experience gained.

Then, to those magicians who are still in the early stages of their career, we would earnestly suggest the advisability of giving due attention to the aspect in which we have presented to their view the art they profess to esteem—which they profess to regard as something higher than a mere source of profit. We do not ask them to take anything for granted. The

blind acceptance of any doctrine whatever, is a thing we would advise them to avoid, at all times, as a most pernicious fault. We only ask them to think for themselves, and to think seriously. It was the late Professor Huxley, we believe, who said that "irrationally held truths are more harmful than reasoned errors." Anyhow, that fact and the necessity for bringing reason to bear upon ignorance and indifference are the essential points we have tried to illustrate.

To those magicians who have already achieved success and have established a claim to artistic merit, we would say that what we have written is no new thing intended to supplant the knowledge they possess, or to oppose the experience they have gained. If they will only efface from their minds all prejudice and bias, they will surely find that we have simply put into definite shape and order the considerations upon which their experience has been founded, and from which their knowledge has been derived.

To all magicians alike, we would say that unless and until they study their art upon lines such as we have endeavoured to indicate, any real elevation in the status of magic must be impracticable. Due recognition of the artistic claims of magic and magicians can only be brought about by proving that those who practise magic are something more than common jugglers, on the one hand, or common mechanical tinkers, on the other hand. Illusionists, prestidigitateurs, and general practitioners alike, must give proof of their artistic qualifications. This

they can only do by realising that magic is essentially an intellectual pursuit and treating it as a true art—not merely as an embodiment of more or less intelligent skill.

We do not claim to have said the last word upon this subject, nor to have set down infallible precepts throughout the entire course of our enquiry. We are well aware that innumerable details of more or less importance have been left untouched, and we have probably expressed some views, upon minor points, which may be more or less open to question. Yet, with regard to general principles, we are fairly confident of having kept within the bounds of reasonable accuracy. Our immediate aim has been to induce magicians to think, by giving them something worth thinking about. We are well aware that there exists no class of men whose work receives more earnest thought than that of the average magician. What we suggest is that, although magicians are studious and energetic men, they too often fail to think artistically. They are too liable to regard their profession as a branch of "show business," rather than a branch of true art. In this section we have tried to help them in correcting that failing, by pointing out the lines upon which their ideas must run if, by virtue of their calling, they expect to rank as artists. Being public entertainers, they have open to them the path which leads to artistic repute of no mean order. If they do not choose to follow that path, they cannot expect to attain a high position in the world of art. Not only so, every magician who turns his back upon the road to artistic merit helps

to degrade the status of the entire magical profession, and to create obstacles to the advancement of magic itself.

Although, in our endeavour to correct certain errors, we may have fallen, here and there, into errors of another kind, we feel no compunction on that score. No man is infallible, and only one man is supposed to be so. Even he could scarcely be expected to make no mistakes in dealing with questions concerning any form of art. The Pope himself could not hope to settle such questions right off the reel. If we have succeeded in providing food for discussion, and in persuading some of our fellows to think about and discuss the points we have raised, that is all we can reasonably hope to have achieved. We have simply done our best to carry out work which somebody was bound to undertake, because the necessity had become imperative. Our future responsibility in the matter will be confined to aiding whatever efforts others may make in correcting or amplifying the views we have stated. We are confident that, as time goes on, the importance of this particular aspect of magical theory will become increasingly evident, at any rate to those who give the subject their honest and unbiassed attention.

PART II
THE THEORY OF MAGIC

CHAPTER I

TERMINOLOGY

To say that modern magic is dominated by confusion of ideas would scarcely be an overstatement of the case. As a natural consequence the study of magic is too often conducted upon lines that demand a maximum expenditure of energy in obtaining a minimum of resultant benefit. The student is improperly occupied in a protracted attempt to evolve order out of chaos; endeavouring to straighten out for himself a path which should already have been made straight for him. Instead of being devoted to a definite and straightforward course of study his mind is condemned to wander aimlessly among a multitude of apparently disconnected details, which are subject to no general laws, and are devoid of everything in the nature of system or order. Indeed, the chaotic state into which the technical side of magic has been allowed to drift leaves the student in much the same plight as that of an untrained boxer who is told to "go in and win."

To many people, indeed, it may come as a surprise to learn that any such thing as a theory of magic can possibly exist. The idea that magic is, necessarily, an exact science, capable of systematic treatment, seems lost to view, as a rule. The commonly accepted notion is that the technical side of

magic consists in a heterogeneous conglomeration of odds and ends; of isolated facts and dodges which are beyond correlation. This unsatisfactory state of affairs, of course, is but an obvious consequence of the disorder in which magical science has become involved, throughout its entire constitution.

There is, as we propose to show, no reason why magic should be subjected to this exceptional disadvantage. Its technicalities are no more heterogeneous than are those of physical sciences in general. The facts and principles it embodies are no less amenable to order than are analogous details included in other subjects. In short, the technical side of magic is readily capable of being systematised and co-ordinated upon a scientific basis and, accordingly, reduced to the form of a complete and harmonious system, governed by rational theory.

The false conceptions that prevail in reference to magic are, we believe, largely due to the looseness of phraseology which, among other slipshod characteristics, has been fostered by performers and public, alike. In other subjects, no doubt, there often exist matters which are doomed to popular misconception. But, probably, magic stands pre-eminent among subjects which are generally misunderstood. In most subjects, however, the theory has been amply investigated, the essential facts and principles have been clearly demonstrated, and the meanings of technical terms definitely prescribed. In magic, on the contrary, such matters have received but scant attention, with the result that chance and not system has governed its development and progress. Thus, we find

the subject interwoven with ill-arranged ideas which, in turn, have given rise to a vagueness of definition, making confusion worse confounded.

Take, for example, the word "trick." Apart from magic, everybody knows its meaning. But, when used in connexion with things magical, the word "trick" becomes not only vague as to its definition, but also a most fertile source of misunderstanding and false judgment. Worst of all, the term is so dear to magical performers that they cherish it, in all its vagueness, as something even more precious and more deeply significant than "that blessed word Mesopotamia." It is made applicable to almost anything and everything relating to magic, apart from either rhyme or reason. The result naturally produced by such folly might readily be foreseen. The public has become educated in the belief that magic consists in the doing of "tricks," and in nothing beyond that (presumably) trivial end. At the same time, as we have already noted on page 60, there has arisen the habit of associating magical presentations with the appliances or accessories used therein, and of regarding as practically identical all experiments in which a certain accessory or form of procedure is adopted.

Now, it cannot be too clearly understood that magic does NOT solely consist in the doing of tricks; nor can it be too often impressed upon the public that the object of a magical performance is not the offering of puzzles for solution. But, so long as magicians insist upon miscalling their feats by the name of "tricks," so long will the public insist upon re- ✓

garding magic as being primarily intended to invite speculation upon "how it is done." Professor Hoffmann, the doyen of magical writers, has expressed himself in no uncertain tone concerning the persistent misuse of this unfortunate word "trick." To him, the description of a magical feat or experiment as a "trick" is utterly abhorrent. He objects, as we do, to that misuse of the word. He prefers, as we do, the word "experiment." Clearly, in any magical presentation, the "trick" must be the *means* whereby a certain end is attained or promoted. It is the *cause* which produces a certain result, and cannot possibly be both means and end together. Therefore, to describe a magical experiment, feat, or presentation as a "trick," is a "terminological inexactitude" of the first order. It is an offence against good sense and artistic propriety, deserving the fullest condemnation. We ourselves are at times compelled to use the word in this illegitimate sense, because it has been incorporated in the titles of certain well known experiments. We do so, however, with extreme reluctance, and only under protest.

It is obvious that, before one can attempt a rational statement of any kind, all parties concerned must definitely understand the meaning attached to the terms in which that statement is to be made. Otherwise, it is impossible to convey accurate information. Then, at the outset, our treatment of magical theory must embody a few remarks, by way of clearing up some of the misconceptions and slipshod vagaries associated with the terms employed. There is no need to deal categorically with

the errors prevalent in this connexion; nor, indeed, to do so much as to enumerate them. It will be sufficient for us to set down the meanings which ought to be attached to the terms we use, and which are accordingly intended to be understood herein.

The first and most important definition, of course, is that of the term "Magic" itself. In ancient times, the word implied the setting aside of natural laws, in some manner or other. But, since the ancients had a very limited knowledge of the laws of nature—or, practically, no accurate knowledge whatever, concerning the forces by which the laws of nature are made manifest—"magic" was once a term used to denote the cause of any event or achievement beyond the explanation of popular intelligence. In much the same way, modern investigators of so-called "psychical" phenomena describe as supernatural any event for the occurrence of which physical science is not yet able to account. Nevertheless, we who live in the Twentieth Century are, or should be, aware that the laws of nature cannot possibly be contravened. They may be set in mutual opposition, but they cannot otherwise be overcome or defied. The forces of nature, humanly speaking, are incapable of either destruction or suspension. Therefore, at the present day, the term "magic" must have a meaning very different from that assigned to it in bygone centuries. The only meaning it can now possess must relate to the *apparent*, not *actual* defiance of natural laws.

Modern magic, therefore, deals exclusively with the creation of mental impressions. We cannot

perform real miracles, as everybody is well aware. We can only perform feats which *look* like miracles, because the means whereby they are performed have been skilfully screened from observation. Then, in order to define the nature of modern magic, we must find some formula that will represent the common foundation of all the apparently miraculous effects we produce. Since those effects are not really, but only apparently, due to miraculous processes, there is no difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory definition of the meaning now applicable to the word "magic." Here it is:—

Magic consists in creating, by misdirection of the senses, the mental impression of supernatural agency at work.

That, and that only, is what modern magic really is, and that meaning alone is now assignable to the term.

The modern magician does not deceive his spectators—that is to say, the legitimate magician. The modern charlatan, of course, has no more conscience than his predecessors. He will deceive anybody who will give him the chance, and he will try to deceive even those who don't; just to make sure of missing no possible opening for chicanery. He and the legitimate magician, however, are wide as the poles asunder, in aim and procedure. A legitimate magician never deludes his audiences as to the character of his performance. He makes no claim to the possession of powers beyond the scope of physical science. Neither does he, while rejecting the *suggestio falsi*, substitute in its place the *suppressio*

veri. That method is one frequently adopted by charlatans in magic. The latter gentry often refrain from committing themselves to any definite statement on the subject of their powers. In effect, they say to their spectators. "We leave you to decide upon the nature of our feats. If you can explain the methods we employ, you will know that what we do is not miraculous. If, on the other hand, you cannot explain our methods you will, of course, know that we have the power to work miracles."

Since the majority of people attending public performances cannot explain the simplest devices used in magic, it is scarcely likely that persons of such limited capability will arrive at any satisfactory explanation of processes involving even a moderate degree of complexity. Consequently, the mere reticence of the charlatan suffices to convince many people that "there is something in it." So there is, no doubt; but, usually, not much. Certainly, nothing such as the innocent dupe conceives.

The distinguishing characteristic of a legitimate magician is his straightforwardness. He makes no false pretences, either by suggestion, implication, or reticence. This present treatise of course, relates only to legitimate magic; and, therefore, our definition of the term is limited to misdirection of the *senses*, exclusively. We have nothing to do with fraudulent, or semi-fraudulent deceptions of intelligence, as practised by unscrupulous adventurers.

The misdirections of sense which constitute magic as a whole, may be divided into three groups, ac-

ording to the nature of the processes upon which they are respectively based. Thus, magical processes are, in character, either Manipulative, Mental, or Physical. These groups represent the three technical orders of magic.

Each of these orders may be sub-divided into various classes or Types, according to the general nature of the principles they include.

Each Class or Type may, again, be sub-divided into minor groups, according to the particular Principles or Methods respectively involved.

Each of these latter groups may be further sub-divided into specific categories, in accordance with the particular tricks or devices in which the various principles or methods are utilised.

Lastly, we have the sub-division of classes into specific groups, determined by the nature of the results attained.

It would, of course, be possible to still further classify magical processes, in accordance with the objects used in connexion with them, and other details of staging and procedure, but no useful purpose could be served by so doing. From the foregoing dissection of magic we arrive at a number of definitions, as follows:—

A magical *Process* is essentially a means for misdirection of the spectator's senses. It belongs to one of the three *Orders* of magic—Manipulative, Mental or Physical.

The *Type* of a magical process implies the general character of the principles it embodies.

A magical *Principle* or *Method* is a basis upon

which a number of tricks or devices may be founded.

A magical *Trick* or *Device* is an invention, by means of which a certain principle is utilised for the production of a given result.

A magical *Effect* is the final result due to the use of a certain trick, or tricks in combination.

A *Feat* of magic consists in the successful performance of a magical experiment—the accomplishment of a magician's intended purpose.

A magical *Experiment* consists in attempting the production of a magical effect—or, in other words, the attempted accomplishment of a feat of magic.

In accordance with these definitions any magical experiment may be traced to its origin or, at any rate, be assigned to its proper place in the general scheme. It must not, however, be imagined that a magical experiment is necessarily confined within the limits of one group, class or order. On the contrary, it may embody a number of individual tricks or devices, each of which is referable to its own particular line of origin. This point will become increasingly evident as we proceed. Incidentally, it will serve to demonstrate the utter absurdity of describing a magical experiment as a "trick." Such experiments not only may, but usually do, include quite a number of tricks, entirely diverse in character. The combination of those tricks for the purpose of producing a certain effect constitutes an invention, which could be protected by law. The production of that particular result by means of that combination of tricks constitutes a magical feat. The presentation of that

feat, with a view to producing an intended effect, constitutes a magical experiment. It is, beyond question, an experiment; because its success must depend upon the performer's ability, coupled with a fortuitous absence of adverse circumstances.

With this preamble, we may now proceed to the systematic dissection of magical theory, upon commonsense lines. We may hope to show, presently, the foundations upon which modern magic is based, the manner in which the entire superstructure of magical achievement has been raised, the possibilities awaiting development at the hands of magicians, and also the directions in which future developments may be most readily brought about. We do not aim at the description of any and every magical feat ever performed. The existing literature of magic amply provides for the needs of those who seek to know "how it is done." Rather, we wish to aid originality by giving original explanations and suggesting original ideas.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL ANALYSIS

WE have already pointed out that magical technics may be dealt with under three principal headings, according to the nature of the processes involved. Thus, we have the three Orders of Magic—Manipulative, Mental and Physical.

Manipulative Magic is that which depends upon what is called "sleight of hand." In other words, it is a form of jugglery.

Mental Magic is the branch comprising, mainly, the various secret processes which a performer "works out in his head," during his performance.

Physical Magic, by far the most extensive and most important branch, includes those processes which depend upon the use of mechanical appliances, or other adaptations of the physical sciences in general.

These three groups, as we have previously stated, are fixed and determinate only so far as concerns the typical processes used in magic. They must not be regarded as a classification of Magical *experiments*. In fact, very few of such experiments are dependent upon one order of magic alone; while, in many cases, they involve a combination of all three orders. These sub-divisions of the subject relate to the general character of magical *processes*, rather

than to the feats or presentations in which those processes are employed. The due distinction between experiments and their associated processes is of considerable importance in magical theory.

Passing on to the sub-division of respective Orders according to class or type of process, we find that Manipulative Magic has four departments. These may be set down under the headings of Pre-arrangement, Concealment, Interposition, and False Handling.

Mental Magic is not so readily divisible in accordance with the actual type of processes employed, since the matter is so largely complicated by extraneous assistance of various kinds. Still, for practical purposes, there are three sub-divisions which will be found satisfactory. These are Thought Transference, Memorisation, and Divination.

Physical Magic can be appropriately sub-divided, according to the departments of science or invention to which its component types respectively may be assigned. Thus, there are six Classes in this branch of magic, viz., the Mechanical, Optical, Acoustic, Electrical, Chemical, and Molecular.

The foregoing Classes or Types may, again, be sub-divided into groups according to the various Principles or Methods involved, as follows:—

MANIPULATIVE MAGIC.

CLASS OR TYPE.	PRINCIPLE OR METHOD.
Pre-arrangement	{ Collusion Disposition Preparation

Concealment	{	Covering
		Disposal
		Retaining
Interposition	{	Loading
		Duplication
		Substitution
False Handling	{	Forcing
		Securing
		Transposition

MENTAL MAGIC.

CLASS OR TYPE.	PRINCIPLE OR METHOD.
Thought Transference..	{
	Code Work
	Secret Speech
	Secret Conveyance of Documents.
Memorisation	{
	Duplicate Reading
	Artificial Memory
Divination	{
	Counting Down
	Clairvoyance
	{
	Discovery
	Prediction

PHYSICAL MAGIC.

CLASS OR TYPE.	PRINCIPLE OR METHOD.
Mechanical	{
	Outer Casing
	Concealed Access
	Secret Cavity or Receptacle
	Diverse Formation
	Double Facing
	Concealed Mechanism or Motive Power
	Concealed Connection
Invisible Suspension	

PHYSICAL MAGIC (*continued*).

Optical	{	Mirror Masking Reflected Images Transparent Reflectors Lantern Projection Background Work Chiaroscuro
Acoustic	{	Misdirection by Sound Conveyance of Sound Disguise by Sound
Electrical	{	Conveyance of Motive Power through Supports Trigger Action by Current Ignition Electro-telegraphy and Te- lephony.
Chemical	{	Apparent Transformation of Substance Ignition Change of Colour by Chemical Reaction Invisible Writing
Molecular	{	Change of state, from solid to liquid, from either to gase- ous or vice versa Change of colour, properties, or dimensions by variation in temperature, pressure, etc.

Beyond this point we do not propose to carry the classification of magical technics. The two remain- ing sub-divisions, although undoubtedly essential to

the theory of magic, can only be dealt with in a general sense. The items are, in fact, too numerous for tabulation and, fortunately, there is no need for attempting the work. The foregoing analysis will suffice for all purposes in which detailed classification is really necessary.

In this connexion, there is one matter that well deserves attention. We have made an exhaustive analysis of the principle components embraced in the subject of magic. We have set down a list of the general principles, methods, and types of process comprised in the technical side of magic. Yet, in this catalogue of essential constituents, forming the very basis of magic, there is not included one single trick. We commend this reflection to those who believe magic to consist wholly in "tricks."

It is not until we have classified the principles and methods employed in magic, that we come to the particular tricks or devices in which those technical principles and methods are embodied. Thus a "trick" is but a very small thing, in comparison with other essentials in magic. It is but a particular detail in the general scheme. An important detail, no doubt, but not of supreme importance. More often than not, it could be replaced by an entirely different device, which would answer the same purpose equally well.

This fact becomes evident when we pass on to the final sub-division, according to the results attained by means of magical tricks. The final sub-division, be it remembered, from a technical standpoint. On artistic and other grounds, it would be possible to

continue the sub-division of magic indefinitely. Technically, however, the immediate result produced by the employment of a certain trick represents the ultimate basis for classification.

By way of practical illustration, we will suppose that some member of a magician's audience has chosen a card from the pack handed to him. The performer takes the pack, and begs the spectator to replace his chosen card therein. The card, accordingly, is replaced. In the act of turning towards the stage, the performer makes the "pass," and brings the chosen card to the top of the pack, ready to be produced in any manner preferred. Now let us analyse this procedure, which is common enough, in all conscience.

To begin with, we have a certain *result*—the finding of a chosen card. In producing this result, a certain *trick* was employed—the "pass." That trick embodies a certain *principle* or *method*—transposition. The principle in question belongs to a certain *class* or *type* of process—false handling. And, finally, the type of process described as "false handling" belongs to the *order* of Manipulative Magic.

In like manner, every magical operation may be subjected to technical analysis, and thereby a clear understanding may be gained of its true nature and position in the general theory of magic. Of course, not every result attainable by magical processes is so simple as the foregoing in its genesis. Some results are due to a combination of processes, each of which has its own separate origin. But, however simple or however complex may be the operations concerned

in producing a given result, their source or sources can be traced quite readily. It is in such systematic forms of investigation that the science of magic has its foundation. And it is by such means alone that accurate conceptions are to be obtained, and rational progress facilitated, in consequence.

CHAPTER III

MISDIRECTION

THAT time-worn fallacy, "the quickness of the hand deceives the eye" might well form the text for this present chapter. As an example of how not to do it, the catch phrase in question cannot easily be surpassed. Its falsity is so glaring, the principle it embodies is so impossible—and for obvious reasons—that one can only marvel at the audacity which first offered such a flagrant howler for public acceptance. Yet, in spite of its palpable absurdity, that ancient legend has not only been accepted as gospel by the public, but has also received professional endorsement, times out of number. This is misdirection, with a vengeance; but it is not the kind of misdirection which, as we have said, constitutes the fundamental basis of magic.

No! The form of misdirection represented by the phrase we have quoted can only be described as lying, pure and simple. The quickness of even a highly skilled hand cannot deceive an attentive eye, however untrained the latter may be. In fact, of all possible movements, one that is rapid is most likely to attract attention. Still, the world undoubtedly believes that a magician's success largely depends upon the quickness of his movements. And, be it whispered, one may occasionally meet with

professional magicians who entertain much the same belief. This fact is typical of the confusion associated with matters magical, in every department.

The misdirection which forms the groundwork of magic does not consist in telling lies, with the object of deceiving the spectator's *intelligence*. It consists, admittedly, in misleading the spectator's *senses*, in order to screen from detection certain details for which secrecy is required. It militates against the spectator's faculties of observation, not against his understanding. Broadly, it may be said to comprise three general methods, viz.—Distraction, Disguise, and Simulation. Every means employed by magicians for misdirecting the senses of an audience, will be found allied to one or other of those elementary principles.

The principle of Distraction is, perhaps, that most commonly utilised. It operates by direct appeal to the spectator's observation, whereby the latter is drawn away from whatever the performer wishes to conceal. It is a "red herring drawn across the scent," so to speak; and the introduction of such red herrings is often an important item in the procedure connected with a magical experiment. The more direct the challenge, the more certain is observation to be drawn towards the quarter in which the distraction arises. The more haphazard the distraction appears to be, the less likely is it to arouse suspicion as to its true purpose. A carefully pre-arranged "accident" is the most perfect form of misdirection—for one occasion only. It will not work efficiently twice, with the same spectators.

For point-blank distraction, we can recall no better example than that provided by a foreign performer, who appeared in London some years ago. Speaking no English, he employed an interpreter, who spoke some English—though not anything excessive. Holding up, say, a borrowed ring, the performer would remark "*Voici la bague!*" the interpreter immediately following on with "And here is a piece of paper!" The latter sentence, being uttered in a very loud voice, created a distraction which took away all observation from the performer, giving him an opportunity to submit the ring to a process of transposition. When the eyes of the audience had returned to the performer, the original *bague* was represented by deputy.

It is, however, very seldom that distraction of so direct a nature as this can be employed. More often than not, the distraction is mainly derived from some action on the part of the magician himself. Hence, we learn the importance of the maxim that, when a magician has anything "magical" to do, he should never look at what he is doing. For, above all other actions, a movement of the performer's eyes is the most certain to be followed by an audience. A very fortunate thing for the magician, too; so long as he bears the fact in mind. If, owing to nervousness or uncertainty, he permits his eyes to glance at what he does not want the audience to see, hundreds of eyes will take the same direction, at once.

A magical performer should practise the art of "looking out of the corner of his eye." It is not a difficult art to acquire; and, at times, may be found

extremely handy. The schoolmaster, with head bent down, and eyes intently fixed upon the answer he is correcting, has no difficulty in bowling out Smith minor, who is playing the goat behind the end form. In like manner, a magician should be able to see almost everything he can need to see, without actually looking at it. No doubt some eyes are better adapted than others for this purpose, while, in most eyes there is one particular direction in which this sidelong vision is easiest to manage. But, in any case, it is worth a magician's while to try what can be done by practice. There need be no time wasted over it, as the method can be practised anywhere and at any odd moment.

A familiar example of misdirection by gaze is that of looking at the wrong hand, during manipulative feats. The billiard ball, let us say, has been passed (apparently) from the right hand to the left. Both hands have their backs to the audience; the left fingers being closed as though grasping the ball, and the right fingers outspread as though the ball were not still in that hand. Meanwhile, the performer stares hard at his left hand until such time as the supposed ball has been dribbled away to nothingness. It would be interesting to know if any spectator is ever misled by this particular manoeuvre. Not very often, one would imagine. Anyhow, it illustrates our point, very forcibly. No matter how unskilful a performer may be, when presenting this little feat of manipulation he feels, instinctively, the urgent need for keeping his eyes fixed upon the hand which does not contain the ball. It is not until

his right hand drops to the bend of his right knee, or rises to the tip of his left elbow, that he feels safe in looking where the ball really is.

When, in addition to looking in a certain direction, the performer points towards and calls attention to a particular object, the distraction thus created is very potent indeed. However seasoned to magic a spectator may be, the three-fold challenge thus issued to his observation is practically certain to attain its end. It will be strange indeed if he fail to glance, at least, in the direction indicated.

In the main, distraction may be said to consist in the interpolation of non-essentials; *i. e.*, matters which occupy the attention of the audience, to the exclusion of essential details in procedure or construction. Sometimes the distraction may consist in simple incidentals, such as the entrance of an assistant, at a critical moment. Sometimes, it may consist in the introduction of suspicious looking actions or accessories, which have nothing to do with what is going on. But at all times, a magician should remember that the least efficient form of misdirection is anything which depends upon insisting upon the obvious. To call attention to something that all may see for themselves may distract the attention of a few—or perhaps not. At the best, it is a risky procedure, and one to be avoided. To be efficient, a distraction must present some element of surprise, interest, or novelty, either in itself or in reference to what has gone before.

Misdirection by disguise consists in a skilful blending of suspicious and innocent details in such

manner that the former are overlooked. In other words it depends upon making "fakey" things look as though they were free from sophistication. The real inwardness of this principle is far too often unrecognised by magicians, though an audience will never lose sight of it.

Some magicians, indeed, seem to act upon a principle entirely opposite to the foregoing. Instead of doing all they can to disguise the "fakey" nature of their accessories and movements they seem to think that everything they use, and everything they do, should be made to look as "fakey" as possible. All their appliances are, obviously, "conjuring apparatus"; all their movements are designed to convey the impression of manipulative skill. Every object exhibited upon their stages is fashioned and decorated like nothing else under the sun. It is done "for effect." They cannot take up any object without proceeding to juggle with it; even the very objects they are about to use for magical purposes. If the next experiment be with billiard balls they begin by showing how easy it is to make a billiard ball seem to be where it is not. If they are about to use cards they preface the experiment with feats of dexterity which will impress upon their audience the idea that the false handling of a pack is, if anything, easier than falling off a log. These jugglings are also introduced "for effect."

But what is the true effect created by such unnecessary padding? Simply to make an audience feel that, whatever happens, there can be no cause for surprise or wonderment. Having seen how

readily the performer can handle his accessories for the production of extraordinary results, spectators are bound to regard the subsequent presentation as a natural consequence. Their further interest can be only of an academic order because, after witnessing the performer's manipulative fireworks, everything else he may do seems to follow as a matter of course.

In like manner, the use of obvious "apparatus" is bound to detract from the success of a magical performance. When appliances are so designed as to show that they are mere covers for mechanical trickery, a spectator's only possible source of interest is in wondering how the machinery is constructed. Granting the existence of mechanism, it only needs the skill of an inventor to produce the results obtained. There can be no impression of magical occurrences when, in the appliances a magician uses, there is clear evidence of sophistication. In fact, a magical effect can be created only when there is no apparent existence of trickery, either manipulative or otherwise. It is bad business for a magician either to display skill in jugglery or to use accessories which arouse suspicion as to their internal structure. Such things are utterly antagonistic to the principle of misdirection by disguise.

The simplest embodiment, perhaps, of this principle is the familiar "covering" of one action by another. When, for instance, a performer has to make the "pass" with a pack of cards, it is absolutely essential that the necessary movements of the fingers be covered by an apparently natural and unsuspi-

cious action. He cannot face his spectators and deliberately make the pass, unscreened, before their eyes. At least, he cannot do so and hope to create an impression of magical results. He is, therefore, bound to do something that will disguise the real nature of his actions and prevent the trick from being disclosed.

It is absurd for a magical performer to imagine that, because he has acquired a certain deftness of manipulation, a facility in juggling with the accessories he uses, he must necessarily be an expert in magic. Such is far from being the fact. In gaining that kind of skill he has travelled only half the journey he must take before reaching his goal. By far the easier half, too. The technical perfection of his sleights has but little value in itself. To be made valuable it requires the aid of ingenious and effective disguise. Without the latter it can only serve to make the spectators think the performer is clever with his hands, and to prevent that idea from being lost to sight. It thus emphasises the very point which a capable magician wishes, above all, to keep in the background. When, however, by continued study and practice the performer has added to his mechanical skill the refinements of disguise, clean and artistic, then only is he in a position to claim the title of magical expert. And then, also, he will find that claim disputed by none capable of forming just conclusions on such points.

In the same way, it is not enough that a magical performer shall provide himself with trick-appliances which will bear more or less examination with-

out the precise nature of their tricks becoming evident. It is not enough to have the sophistications hidden by blobs, thicknesses or deformities of "decoration," so that spectators cannot see what is underneath. On the contrary, magical appliances should be so constructed that their inner devices are not *concealed* by a mere covering of some sort, but are *disguised* by blending with the general structure. In fact, so far from suggesting the possibility of there being anything discoverable, a magician's accessories should rather look like objects of normal construction, which nobody would associate with trickery.

This is particularly the case where an appliance is intended to resemble some article in general use, or the shape of which is familiar. For example, can there be anything more palpably absurd or more utterly unconvincing than the "feather-flowers" one so often sees produced by magical performers? They are like nothing else under the heavens, and are as innocent of any suggestion of magic as a child's rattle. There is no misdirection associated with the use of things like these. There can be none. They are obviously made of feathers; they obviously close up into very small compass; and no amount of ingenuity could ever make an audience even regard their production as clever. As to throwing an audience off the scent in reference to the *modus operandi* of such a production, that is clearly impossible.

On the other hand, as an example of efficient disguise, let us take De Kolta's little dodge of concealing a small silk handkerchief within a half-opened match-box. No device could be simpler than this;

nor, in its way, could anything be more perfect. A common match-box stands half-opened upon the table. With his sleeves rolled up, and his hands undoubtedly empty, the performer takes up the matches, strikes one, lights a candle, blows out the match and closes the box, replacing it on the table. It must be admitted that the act of conveying a handkerchief into one's previously empty hand could scarcely be disguised in a more unsuspecting manner. Unfortunately, the trick of thus concealing a small object soon became known and, consequently, has now but little value. That, however, does not detract from the merit of the original device.

In connexion with disguise, which is in reality nothing more than a special form of concealment, the question of display becomes of importance, by contrast. While the magician must use all his art to disguise and cover up what he does not require to be seen, he is equally bound to make sure that every movement and every detail that ought to be seen *shall* be seen. If, after having effectually secured himself in the matter of disguise, he so bungles his procedure and stage arrangements as to prevent people from seeing, half the time, what is going on, his good work will be wasted.

Simulation is a form of pretence. In disguise, we have the principle of making one thing look like another and entirely different thing. In the misdirection of sense by means of simulation, we have the principle of giving apparent existence to things that do not exist, or presence to things that are absent.

The billiard ball feat, already quoted in this chapter, serves to illustrate the three basic principles of misdirection in magic. In the gaze of the performer and the pointing of the fingers of his right hand we have the principle of distraction. In the extended position of his right hand, intended to convey the idea that the ball is not held therein, we have the principle of disguise. Lastly, in the partially closed fingers of the left hand, we have the principle of simulation. There appears to be something where, in reality, there is nothing.

In mechanical devices also, simulation often plays a most important part. Usually it is employed for the purpose of retaining the form of something or somebody already removed. Examples of this method, from the "Vanishing Lady" to the coin dropped into a tumbler of water will occur readily to all who know anything of magic. The converse method—that of simulating the form of a person or object not yet present—though not so much used as the former, is sufficiently familiar to need no special illustration.

Upon this form of misdirection little need be said. Its employment, both in manipulation and construction, must be governed by the circumstances of each particular case. The one important point in every instance alike, is to make sure that the working shall be "clean." On one hand, the simulation, in itself, must be efficient; and, on the other hand, all evidence that the person or thing simulated has either gone or not yet arrived must be entirely lacking. It is of no use to cover a bird-cage with a handkerchief

containing a "fake" and expect the audience to believe that the cage is still there, if one effects the removal clumsily, or allows the fabric to blow under, as it could not were the cage not removed. If the simulation be not good, spectators cannot be expected to believe that the object simulated is where it is supposed to be. Nor can they be expected to believe, no matter how perfect the simulation, that an object still remains or has previously been in a certain place, if the getting away or getting in of that object is more or less in evidence. Cleanness, both in actual simulation and the procedure connected with it, is the one great essential.

Misdirection, in either of its branches, is not confined to one particular sense. Sight, of course, is the sense most frequently concerned; but other senses also come in for their share of attention. Hearing, for instance, is misdirected when, in "The Aerial Treasury," coins appear to fall into the hat from the performer's right hand, when they really fall from his left. Touch is misdirected when a spectator thinks he drops a coin into a tumbler of water, when he drops in reality a disc of glass. Taste is misdirected when spectators believe themselves to be drinking innumerable choice beverages when, in reality, their drinks are merely compounds of a few special ingredients contained in a "Magic Kettle." In short, every sense is open to misdirection, and thus may be made to serve the ends of a skilful magician.

CHAPTER IV

STYLES OF MAGIC

IN magic, as in every other calling, the modern tendency is towards specialisation. And, as may readily be imagined, each specialist is apt to regard his own particular branch as the most important; and to adopt a high-sounding title by virtue of his hypothetical supremacy. In any profession this latter tendency is objectionable, for obvious reasons. But, in magic, it has also the disadvantage of being utterly ridiculous. The technics of magic, as we have shown, are readily capable of classification according to the processes employed; but are quite incapable of reduction to any sort of system according to respective styles of practice. Since almost every magical experiment includes processes of various types and orders, it is impossible to classify performers according to their respective lines of work.

Yet, for instance, there are performers who pride themselves upon being exponents of pure sleight of hand, and nothing else. There are others who boast of being stage illusionists, pure and simple. And so on, *ad nauseam*. What, after all, do such claims amount to?—Nothing whatever! There is no such thing as a pure sleight of hand performer. Or, if there be, may the gods have pity on him. There is no such thing as a stage illusionist, pure and simple.

Stage illusions which can be presented without the aid of some considerable amount of manipulative ability represent a class of inventions yet to be produced. And so on and so forth, throughout the whole range of magic. It is necessary that every performer shall specialise, more or less, but there is no such thing as a true specialist in any given *style* of magic.

By way of example, consider what can be done with pure sleight of hand. It is true, there are some classical experiments, such as "The Cups and Balls" and "The Aerial Treasury," in which sleight of hand alone is employed. But, when one has exhausted the very limited resources represented by such experiments, "pure sleight of hand" ceases to exist. In order to show his audiences anything worth showing the performer has to use contraptions which, at once, place his feats outside the limitations of pure sleight of hand. He becomes an "apparatus conjurer," a "stage illusionist"—or what you will. Whatever he may think to the contrary, he is no more a pure sleight of hand man than is the boy who has bought a half-guinea box of tricks.

Similarly, the performer who prides himself upon being an "illusionist," and professes to look down upon the man who "does sleight of hand" is entirely at fault. His performances involve as much sleight of hand as do those of the man he pretends to despise. He is no more an "illusionist" than is his confrère, who scorns the title. He is as much a sleight of hand man as the other, who regards slight of hand as the acme of magic. Such considerations,

if only on account of their extreme novelty, may appear somewhat difficult to entertain. Nevertheless, in view of their undoubted truth, they have to be faced, and dealt with in the light of commonsense.

The final conclusion which facts compel one to adopt is that, on the whole, the most important order of magic is the physical. It is only by keeping abreast with the progress of physical science that magic can retain its hold upon the public. In ancient times magic and progress were one. To-day, the progress of physical science constantly tends to outrival the marvels of magic. Such being the case, it is hopeless for a magician to rely upon mere jugglery to maintain his art in the position it should hold in public regard. The day has gone by, and rightly so, when "hanky panky" and "hocus pocus" were powerful fetiches. To obtain and retain worthy estimation, the modern magician needs to be something of a scientist, and a thorough artist into the bargain. He should bring to bear upon his work every resource of modern progress that can be made available.

Antagonism between various styles of magic is an idea that ought to be inconceivable. In every essential point of art and theory all styles of magic are as one. When we come to the bedrock of the matter, we find there are only two definite styles in existence; and even these have no precise line of demarcation between them. They are, respectively, Parlour Magic and Stage Illusion. The consideration which mainly determines the category to which an experiment belongs is a particular suitability for

presentation before either large or small audiences, as the case may be. But, as we all know, many experiments are suitable for audiences of any magnitude; and will prove effective upon a big stage, in no less degree than among a few guests at a private house. So even this broad basis of classifying magic according to style of work, gives way if too hardly pressed.

A performer, of course, may specialise in experiments with cards, coins, balls, mirrors, cabinets, glassware, threads, electricity, second-sight, acoustics, peg-tops, tiddlywinks, or anything else that may suit him. But in specialisations of that kind there is nothing so vitally characteristic that either of them can be said to represent a special branch of magic. In theory and in art alike, such differentiations are too slender to sustain any real class distinction. Still less are they capable of conferring upon their exponents any special claim to eminence in the art or practice of magic. Minor details concerning the methods or accessories a performer employs, and to which his procedure is confined, are too insignificant to create a definite style, to be set apart from the general practice and constitution of magic as a whole.

The question of discriminating between the two legitimate styles of magic is one of great importance to every performer, without exception. Obviously, the choice of experiments must be governed by the conditions in which they have to be performed. Experiments that prove effective in a drawing-room are, usually, quite the reverse when presented upon the stage. On the other hand, those which create the greatest impression when exhibited upon the

stage are, usually, either unsuitable for a drawing-room or impossible to present in such cramped quarters. Size, of course, is the chief factor, though by no means the only one, in deciding whether an experiment be better suited to stage work or private performances. If the appliances and accessories requisite for an experiment be very large they cannot readily be displayed in an ordinary room. If very small, they cannot be seen properly upon a large stage. In either case there can be no good effect produced owing to inappropriate conditions. Thus, the drawing-room magician, as a rule, confines his work to such objects as may be held in the hand, while the stage illusionist relies upon effects in which large objects are employed.

This question of size, however, as we have said, is not the sole consideration involved in the selection of experiments adapted to the exigencies of a particular case. The "Aerial Treasury," for instance, is an excellent item for inclusion in a private performance. Nevertheless, we must not therefore conclude that it will not be effective on the stage. As a matter of fact, we all know that, when properly performed, it is most effective as a stage-illusion. Conversely, there are many experiments, notably those with playing-cards, which are capable of being made very effective upon the stage, and yet are not on that account unsuited for private performance. On the contrary, experiments with playing-cards, in particular, can be shown in private with enhanced effect as compared with that produced on the stage. This is not because, as a rule, the audience in private

can see the cards better than they can be seen by an audience in public. The latter can generally see such distinct objects quite well enough. No, it is because the average man believes there is some special virtue in being close to a magical performer while he is at work. One hears it said, again and again, "I stood within a yard of him all the time, and yet—" The rest can be filled in by the reader, from memory.

Of course, anyone who knows anything of magic is aware that more often than not, the spectator who stands at a performer's elbow, or who faces him at the opposite side of a table, is far less likely to detect trickery than is the man who views him from the stalls of a theatre. It stands to reason that the man who has a performer in view from head to foot, is far more dangerous than one who is too close for making a comprehensive inspection. Matters of this kind, however, are only of importance in so far as they serve to impress upon magicians the fact that, when giving public performances, care in the exercise of misdirection is of far greater importance than is the case with performances given in private. Whatever belief to the contrary may be held by a large majority of persons, a magician ought never to forget that, on the stage, he is at a disadvantage in comparison with his favourable situation in private performances, as a rule; that is to say, of course, so long as he uses rational judgment in the choice of experiments for drawing-room work. Naturally, if he be so ill-advised as to attempt feats which can be properly accomplished only in stage conditions, he

is bound to be handicapped in a dwelling house of average size. Our comparison has reference only to such experiments as are effective either in public or in private.

Briefly, then, in deciding the style of business suitable for a certain occasion, every magician must be a law unto himself. There is no other law to guide him, beyond the very indefinite and often debatable rule that, for private work, small effects are usually preferable; and for stage work, large effects which involve the use of objects which can be seen easily at a distance. So much also depends upon the performer himself, upon his ability to turn certain situations to his own advantage, and upon the limitations which particular conditions impose upon his skill, that nobody but himself can decide this question. There *are* two styles of magic—large work and small. But there are also many experiments of an intermediate character; so many, in fact, that we have a regular gradation from the smallest effects to the largest. Therefore, in point of magnitude, it is quite impossible to draw a precise boundary line between parlour magic and stage illusion. The distinction is not exact, but unquestionably is only thereabouts.

Apart from prejudice, one is bound to conclude that a performer's claim to exclusive specialisation in any particular branch of magic must, to say the least, be very difficult to sustain. The sleight of hand man has to employ mechanical and other devices, which bring his work within the scope of physical magic. The stage performer or illusionist

is equally dependent upon manual dexterity; for the simple reason that a mechanical experiment usually requires "working" no less than one that is purely manipulative. One may have all the requisite apparatus but, without the skill wanted for its proper handling, that apparatus can only be so much useless lumber. As to the specialist in mental magic, his work includes so many devices belonging to the manipulative and physical branches that his position in the art is, perhaps, the most difficult to define with accuracy.

So much for the problematic classification of magicians according to style of work. We may now pass on to the surer ground of distinction based on the characteristic features of magical processes. In our next chapter we shall deal with the principles and methods which constitute the various types of process comprised in magic. The types themselves, being merely convenient groupings of more or less similar principles, need no special comment. Their respective characteristics are sufficiently illustrated by the general nature of their components.

CHAPTER V

MANIPULATIVE PRINCIPLES

BEGINNING with manipulative magic, it will be seen on referring to page 182 that this branch of the subject includes four types, the first upon the list being Pre-arrangement. This, again, has three subdivisions with certain characteristics in common. They all relate to matters which the performer has to set in order before his experiment begins. We will consider them in the order given.

The principle of Collusion is one in which little merit exists. An effect depending upon this principle is simply a put-up job, by means of which the audience is actually deceived, instead of being dealt with legitimately. Nothing can be simpler than to employ an agent, who pretends to be an ordinary spectator and plays into the performer's hands in some preconcerted manner. This can hardly be regarded as a genuinely magical principle, though there may arise occasions when its use may be justified. As a rule, it is to be avoided as a form of procedure unworthy of a magician whose repute is of any value to him.

Disposition, the principle next on the list, represents the pre-arrangement of accessories in a certain place or order, as required for the experiments about to be performed. Examples of this principle are

provided by the stocking of cards, the loading of pockets or other receptacles, and the manifold details incidental to the putting of things where they will be wanted during a performance.

Preparation relates to processes employed in tampering, beforehand, in some unobtrusive manner, with accessories to be used later on. All devices by means of which articles are "doctored up" for some special purpose that has to be served later on, come under this heading. Marked cards give a familiar illustration of the principle. A more familiar, though less direct illustration, is found in the constant insistence by magicians upon the fact that their accessories are *without* preparation. We may remark, in passing, that this custom is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. A direct repudiation, such as this, only serves to arouse suspicion about things in general, even though the article in question be proved entirely innocent. Better far, in most cases, is the indirect proof of honesty which allays suspicion instead of tending to create it. In certain instances, when an experiment depends for its success upon a strict examination of accessories, the disclaimer is bound to be made, in some form or other. But, even then, it is as well to avoid direct reference to preparation or any other form of trickery. To assure the audience that a receptacle has no trap or false bottom, is about the surest way to make people think there may be something of the kind. Whereas, had nothing been said about the matter, they might never have given it a thought. If the thing to be examined can be given

into the hands of a spectator and, upon some pretext, he is caused to handle and inspect it in a manner that indirectly suggests the absence of trickery, that is bound to be more satisfactory than the common plan of bluntly inviting the man to satisfy himself that there is no trick in the thing. When, for instance, it is necessary to show that a pack of cards has to be proved free from preparation, rather than to ask a spectator to see that such is the case the performer would be wiser were he to request that some stranger oblige him by counting and shuffling the cards. Left at that, every useful purpose is served and no harm done.

Under the general heading of Concealment, the first principle on the list is that of Covering. It includes all processes in which one action or object serves to screen another from view. Thus, any device for passing one object behind another, or performing an action, that is not required to be seen, under the cover of a different movement altogether, is included in this type. Thus, dropping the hands while making the pass or holding two cards together so as to appear but one only, may be quoted in illustration of this principle.

Disposal, the principle next in order, refers to processes by means of which objects are finally put out of sight during the course of an experiment. Dropping an article into the *profonde* or other convenient receptacle, is a process of this type. Other examples will readily occur to the reader's memory.

Retaining, the last of this particular group, is the principle of withholding from transit any object

which should, normally, pass from one position to another. Palming a coin in the right hand while appearing to place it in the left, is a process belonging to this category.

In the general type of processes grouped under the heading of Interposition, the first principle set down is that of Loading. Interposition, of course, is the direct antithesis of Concealment. It has to do with the bringing into play something not employed previously; whereas Concealment indicates the putting away of things already at hand. The principle of Loading is eminently characteristic of its group. It is the most direct and most obvious method of bringing new material into a magical experiment. To quote examples in this instance would be superfluous. Even those who have but a nodding acquaintance with the principles of magic, must well understand the nature of this particular item in our catalogue. To prevent misunderstanding, however, we may point out that the process of loading consists in transferring a load from its hiding-place to the receptacle from which the contents of the load are to be produced. It does not consist in placing a load in a place where it can be got at when the time comes for loading it into the receptacle intended for it. A process of the latter type comes under the heading of Disposition. It is just as well to make this point clear, as there appears to be a certain amount of confusion about it. A performer may, sometimes, find it convenient to say that a chair, for instance, has been loaded, when he means that a load has been set behind a chair, ready for loading. In

actual fact, his statement is quite correct; but, in a magical sense, it is not so. Still, so long as the point is clearly understood, and the disposition of a load is not taken to be the same thing as the act of loading, there is no importance in mere choice of words. The only thing that matters is that the meaning of magical terms shall not be subject to confusion, on account of the mixed medley in which their casual use is liable to involve them.

We now come to the principle of Duplication. This includes all processes in which two objects are used where there is supposed to be only one. The familiar experiment in which a coin is apparently made to pass from one hand to another, usually through the performer's knees, is a good example of the uses to which this principle is applied.

The principle of Substitution is nearly allied to the foregoing. The actual difference between them is that, while Duplication interposes an additional object, to be used in conjunction with one exactly resembling it, Substitution brings in a new object to replace one that has been destroyed or otherwise put out of use. The experiment in which a card is torn up and apparently restored, with the exception of one piece held by a member of the audience, is based upon this principle.

The last on the list of types comprised in manipulative magic is False Handling. Though not so precisely defined as the other types in this order, it is still sufficiently definite to warrant its standing as a special subdivision. As a matter of fact, several of the principles which belong to other groups may be

said to represent modes of false handling. The three principles—Forcing, Securing, and Transposition—are, however, so distinctly different in their mode of application that they obviously form a separate group. For the characteristic feature common to them all and denoting the type they represent, we can find no better title than false handling.

Forcing is the principle of controlling the selection of a particular object from among a number, while appearing to allow an entirely free choice to be made. It is, in fact, a covert form of "Hobson's choice"—take which you like, but you will only get the one I intend you to have. Its most familiar application is the forcing of a certain card from a pack, spread out fanwise. Another method is that employed in what is called the Four Ace Trick, wherein a spectator is allowed to make a selection, and the performer interprets the meaning of the choice to be either that the chosen cards shall be used or set aside, according to whether or not they are those he wants to use.

Securing is the principle involved in all manipulative processes for insuring the availability of a certain article in the event of its being required for use. It is closely allied to the principle of Retaining, already discussed. The latter, however, is based upon the concealment of an object; whereas the securing of an object does not necessarily imply that it is concealed. Further, a retained object is merely held back when being apparently passed on, while a secured object is one that is covertly held fast. Thus, when, in the act of passing a pack to be

shuffled, certain stocked cards are palmed off, those cards are said to be retained. In a false shuffle, on the other hand, when certain stocked cards are prevented from being mixed with the others, the cards thus held in place are said to be secured. Again, in the trick known as "dealing seconds," the top card is secured, and, by a process of substitution, the second card is dealt instead. The principle, of course, is not confined to tricks in the handling of cards. It is the basis of every manipulation in which the position of an object, or the arrangement of objects in a particular order, is prevented from changing.

The last principle in this group is that of Transposition. It implies the secret reversal of positions respectively occupied by two or more objects. The well known card trick called the "Pass" illustrates this principle; being a device for transposing the relative positions of the two half-packs. Any other manipulative process by means of which two objects are secretly made to change places will, necessarily, represent an embodiment of this principle.

This brings us to the end of those principles and methods which are applicable to sleight of hand. They represent all that can be done in magic, by means of a performer's hands, apart from other physical aid. The limited number of such principles, undoubtedly, serves to indicate the fact that, in pure sleight of hand, a magician has but slender resources upon which to draw for his effects. Even so, the principles enumerated are not all purely manipulative in their application. A comparison of

this list with that of principles available in physical magic will emphasise the limitations of unaided dexterity, in a manner that cannot fail to strike even a casual observer.

CHAPTER VI

PRINCIPLES OF MENTAL MAGIC

TURNING to the order of mental magic, under the general heading of Thought Transference, the first principle on the list is that of Code Work. So called "second sight" is an example of the manner in which this principle is applied to a code of words. There are, however, in addition to verbal devices, many other tricks in which the code principle is employed. Audible and visible signals of many kinds have been arranged to form a variety of codes, for the general purpose of conveying information secretly. Signals by touch are equally available, when circumstances permit.

The most familiar code, of course, is the Morse, in which signals consisting of long and short sounds, movements or other impulses, are combined in various ways to form signs representing letters and numerals. By such means messages can be spelt out more or less slowly. The usual method is to employ, in conjunction with the signal code, a tabular code similar to those used in cable telegraphy, in which the entries represented by brief signs, contain a comparatively large amount of information. This device is too well known to need special description. The most efficient application of the principle known as code-work is found in the performance of

those who combine various devices or, at any rate, do not confine themselves to one particular device or form of code. Such performances are, necessarily, more effective and more inscrutable than can possibly be the case with but one single device. The so-called "silent" thought transference is, very often, silent only in name, the performers talking almost as much as is the case in the ordinary "second-sight" business. But, where the feats are actually performed in silence, visible signals are generally used. In fact, some exponents of the truly silent device, when presenting their experiments, might almost be mistaken for playmates in the game of "Here we go round the mulberry bush," so pronounced are the signals they adopt. In other instances, the silence is only apparent, not real. The signals are conveyed by audible means, but not such as are evident to the audience.

Secret Speech is the principle of conveying messages from one person to another by means of some concealed device, such as a speaking tube. When this principle is employed, it usually necessitates the intervention of a third person, by whom the actual speaking is done, from some position more or less remote. In this case, obviously, additional means are requisite for conveying to the intermediary the information to be transmitted.

Secret Conveyance of Documents is a principle which, like the preceding, can only be used with the assistance of some physical device. It consists in the actual passing on of written or printed matter, the recipient having facilities for reading it in private.

“Billet reading” as usually performed by two persons illustrates the application of this principle to a device for learning the contents of sealed envelopes.

Duplicate Reading is the principle of using two similar books, newspapers, or what not; one being in the hands of the audience and the other made available, secretly, to a performer. A certain page or paragraph having been selected, particulars are signalled to the performer, who turns to the place notified and proceeds to read out the chosen words, apparently from the publication held by a spectator seated at a distance.

Under the general heading of Memorisation there are only two principles which have any claim to special characteristics. These are Artificial Memory and Counting Down. The former, of course, consists in the adaptation to magical purposes, of the methods of mnemonics or other systems devised for assisting or training one's memory. The principle is useful, not only in combination with devices of other kinds, but even as the basis for experiments in which memory alone is involved. The memorisation, for instance, of a number of articles in prescribed order, the list being read over once only to the performer, has proved to be a most interesting item in magical entertainments. There are some persons whose memories are sufficiently retentive to enable them to perform this feat without the aid of artificial memory. They are, however, few in number.

Counting Down is the principle of committing to memory the order in which certain objects in a series are arranged. The purpose is to enable the

performer to know what will follow in succession, should circumstances render that knowledge useful to him. This principle is largely adopted by gambling sharps in connexion with card games. When it is the sharp's turn to deal, he memorises the names and order of as many cards as he is able, while in the act of collecting the pack together. Making a false shuffle he leaves the memorised cards undisturbed in the middle of the pack. When the pack is cut the known sequence is brought, in all probability, near to the top. Thus, when the cards are dealt, a glance at his own hand will show him a great deal about those of his partner and opponents alike. The method may readily be adapted to magical purposes, and should be more generally recognised as a valuable aid in the invention of new experiments with cards.

The principles relating to the type of magic called Divination, are three in number, viz.—Clairvoyance, Discovery, and Prediction. They are, however, sub-types, rather than actual principles—forms of divination rather than fundamental methods embodied in the devices used for divination. Nevertheless, it is difficult to prescribe any form of classification more suitable in the present instance. As they stand, the terms speak for themselves. In practice, the devices assignable to each particular group are, primarily, related to principles of other types and, therefore, need no special comment in this place.

CHAPTER VII

MECHANICAL PRINCIPLES

WE now come to magic of the physical order and processes of the mechanical type. The principle first on the list is that of Outer Casing. This consists in the covering of an object with a superficial casing, removable at will. The casing may form a double or extra thickness, in exact replica of the real object, or may have a shape entirely different from the object it encloses. The first of these forms is illustrated by the "half-shell" used in billiard ball manipulation, and by the metal cover fitting closely over and painted to resemble a large wooden die. The second form of casing is represented by the "Passe Passe" experiment, in which a bottle covers the glass with which it apparently changes place. Numerous examples of both forms will readily occur to the reader.

The next mechanical principle is that of Concealed Access. This may not be, perhaps, the best title available for the principle to which it relates, but we can think of none better. It implies a secret device by means of which any person or thing is enabled to pass through something that appears impenetrable, or to get at something that seems isolated beyond all human possibility of approach. Traps,

sliding panels, removable parts *et hoc genus omne*, are devices in which this principle is involved.

Secret Cavity or Receptacle is the principle upon which all devices for the concealment of an object within an apparently solid structure may be said to depend. False bottoms, secret drawers, bellows tables, hollow stems, double lids, and so on, are examples of tricks upon this principle.

Diverse Formation is a principle of very common use in magic. It relates to appliances which, though apparently similar in every respect, are either wholly or in part unlike in structure. It is a principle common to many kinds of "prepared" apparatus. Thus, bevelled coins for example, are of diverse formation. In external appearance they resemble genuine coins, with the ordinary square edges. The bevelling is so slight that it can be detected only by careful examination. It is, however, sufficient to ensure that, when spun, the coin shall fall with its larger diameter upwards. Cards with dissimilar halves, with convex or concave sides, with ends of different widths, and so forth, are devices upon this principle.

A good example of Diverse Formation is to be found in the "Chinese Rings." Here we have a number of rings, apparently identical in structure and condition. But, in reality, the case is far other wise. Some few of the rings, it is true, are what they appear to be—genuinely solid and single. Of the others, one has a gap in it, and the rest are linked up in pairs and threes. It depends upon the adroitness of the performer to convey to his audience the

impression that each and every ring is given out, singly, for examination, apparently proving the whole number to be identical in every respect. Any contrivance in which an unobtrusive alteration in shape is the essential feature will come under this heading.

Closely allied to the foregoing is the principle of Double Facing. It is sufficiently familiar, in connexion with playing cards, to render comment superfluous.

Concealed Mechanism or Motive Power, also, is a principle that is well known, even to those who know little else of magic. There are innumerable devices and places for the concealment of mechanical trickeries. So vast, indeed, is the range covered by this section that without unduly occupying space, it is impossible to give even a list of the chief forms of apparatus in which the principle is commonly embodied. Broadly, we may say that most appliances in which a trick is concealed are included in this group. Thus, the trick by means of which the performer is enabled to escape from a locked and corded box is an example of such mechanism; since concealed access alone cannot meet the case. A mere trap or sliding panel is out of the question—assuming, of course, the relative dimensions of box and performer entail a close fit, and that the rope is sufficient and properly applied. There must, necessarily, be some form of concealed mechanism comprised in the trick, whereby the performer releases himself and restores the box to its former state. In this, as in other instances where the trick by which a

magical result is produced consists in mechanism, the existence or nature of which is unknown to the audience, that trick comes under the present heading. Incidentally, we may remind the reader that a "box trick" is the *trick* embodied in a box—not the *feat* of escaping from a box.

Concealed Connexion is another mechanical principle, of the utmost familiarity, to magicians and public alike. It is one of the three principles usually quoted, by that section of the public whose only delight at a magical performance is to explain (?) how everything is "done." The explanation given by such people, when fully engaged in showing their cleverness at a magician's expense, as a rule, consists in either "wires," "machinery," or "mirrors." It may be that the effect could not possibly be produced by either wires, machinery, or mirrors, but that is of no consequence. The fact that, if the effect were actually produced by such means, it would be an absolute miracle, does not matter in the least. "Make it wires!" says the busybody, and "wires" it is, unless it may happen to be machinery or mirrors. This sort of chatter, if loud enough, will always enhance the enjoyment of surrounding spectators. In some cases of the kind, we have seen printed on the faces of those around a chatterer, enjoyment so unspeakably sincere that it would be unspeakable—in public, at any rate. But, if they only had that nuisance alone—my word! However, these common occurrences serve to show that the principle of concealed connexion is one of the most familiar in the whole range of magic. From

the slender thread that lifts the "Rising Cards" to the heavy "Pull" that snatches away the cloth thrown over a Vanishing Lady, the purposes to which this principle is applied in the service of magic are infinite in number and variety.

Last on the list of mechanical principles we have Invisible Suspension. This, of course, is closely allied to concealed connexion. The precise difference between the two is this: In the case of connexion, invisibility is by no means essential and some form of apparent action at a distance is implied. On the other hand, invisibility is the first essential in the present case, and no action, other than that of sustaining a certain weight in mid-air, is implied. Partial suspensions, such as that associated with "The Fakir of Oolu," more correctly belong to the group of concealed mechanism; since the upright rod provides obvious possibilities for the intervention of mechanical support. A truly invisible suspension is one in which the weight supported is apparently isolated from all possible contact with material objects by which mechanical connexion may be concealed. For this reason, the method of suspension in which the support is derived from a rod passing through the stage, behind the performer who "assists," is a concealed mechanical device, rather than an invisible suspension. The application of this present principle is not entirely confined to the professed purpose of mysteriously causing a person or object to float in space. It is also of great utility in giving to heavy objects the appearance of lightness. This method was first introduced in connexion with

the illusion called "Cleopatra's Needle," in which a light framework, containing one or even two performers, could be handled with ease; the weight contained within being invisibly counterbalanced. De Kolta afterwards adopted the method in his well-known illusion "Le Cocon."

CHAPTER VIII

OPTICAL PRINCIPLES

AMONG principles of the optical type, the first is Mirror Masking. It is well known in connexion with devices such as "The Sphinx," where mirrors radiating from the centre of a curved or polygonal recess, and having their edges hidden by the legs of a table, are used to conceal a person behind them.

The Reflected Image principle is the converse of the preceding. Instead of masking an object, the mirrors serve to make an object appear where, in reality, none exists. The illusion introduced by Professor Pepper at the London Polytechnic, and known to magicians as "The Walker Illusion," illustrates this principle excellently.

With Professor Pepper and the Polytechnic is also associated the introduction of Transparent Reflectors. The mention of "Pepper's Ghost" is a sufficient description of the method and its mode of application to magical purposes.

Lantern Projection has been employed in magic, almost from the date of its invention by Kircher. It is, however, seldom employed by modern magicians. Except in an unusually clear atmosphere, the beam of light from the lantern is so distinctly visible, and the need for complete or semi-darkness

so objectionable, that the possibilities of this principle are limited within very narrow bounds.

Background Work is the principle of masking by means of a screen, having the same colour as a plain background, against which it is seen. It has long been used in small effects, such as the appearance of objects within frames with black centres; the objects produced being temporarily concealed by pieces of black material, snatched away at the proper moment. Its adaptation to stage illusions proper was made by De Kolta, at the Egyptian Hall, London, in 1886. The title of "Black Magic," adopted by him for the act in which this invention was employed, has since become a technical term, denoting the use of the background principle with black material. In this sense, however, the term is liable to create false impressions. Firstly, it suggests that the use of black against black, in any way whatever, is a device which De Kolta claimed to have invented. Secondly, it suggests that De Kolta's invention was limited to black alone. Such ideas are by no means in accordance with the facts. Reference to De Kolta's patent will show that his invention relates to the obliteration of visible contour by the destruction of shadow, and that any colour whatever may be used in connexion with it. In practice, the distinction between De Kolta's invention and previous applications of this principle may be said to consist in the production of effects upon a large scale, as compared with the concealment of small objects.

Chiaroscuro is a principle depending upon variations of shade and tint for the creation of deceptive

appearances. The painting of a flat surface to resemble a concavity or convexity will represent an application of this principle. Similarly, the disguising of a hollow or projection to resemble a plain surface will equally fall within this category of devices. An example is the sunken cavity, used as a receptacle for small articles, in what appears to be a flat table-top, decorated with a painted or inlaid pattern.

CHAPTER IX

ACOUSTIC PRINCIPLES

IN the field of acoustics, the principles available for magical purposes are but few. But those are extremely valuable, principally in combination with methods of other types. There are, it is true, one or two well-known inventions in which this branch of physics has been made the basis for illusionary devices; but, as a rule, it is applied to magic only as an adjunct, and by way of subsidiary effect.

The first principle of this type is that of Mock Sound. It comprises all devices for the simulation of characteristic noises, such as normally occur in certain circumstances, but would be lacking when things are not precisely what they seem. In magic, it often happens that, since the things done and the things used are not exactly what they appear to be, sounds that would naturally accompany certain operations do not necessarily occur at the appropriate moments. Thus, if what appears to be a heavy weight is, in reality, nothing more than an inflated envelope, no sound will accompany the action of putting it down upon a carpeted stage. Therefore, in order to complete the illusion, it is desirable that, at the proper instant, the sound of a weight coming in contact with the floor should be imitated. In this case, of course, the best imitation is the real thing;

a weight being dropped, off-stage, as near as may be to the imitation article. The chief point would be to make sure that sound and action coincide. Otherwise, the "artistic verisimilitude" must become not a trifle worse than useless. In some cases, the sound accompanying a secret operation resembles that incidental to the operation apparently performed, thus avoiding all need for other simulation. An instance of this is the chinking of coins when conveyed into the palm of one's hand, while they appear to be thrown from one hand to the other. The devices for imitating characteristic sounds are many and of various kinds. Some are mechanical, like the "ticker" which gives the sound of a watch. Others are manual, like the simple devices used for imitating the rattling of covered objects which are not under the cover. Such methods, in common with the generality of this type, are well understood and require no particular reference in this place.

Conveyance of Sound is a principle which, at first sight, would seem to be capable of wide development in connexion with magic. The fact is, however, that the practical difficulties to be overcome in rendering the mode of conveyance secret or, at the least, not easy of detection, are very great. The conveyance of messages by speaking tube, a method formerly used in certain forms of so-called "second-sight," can scarcely be regarded as an adaptation of the present principle. This particular group of acoustic devices, properly speaking, includes only those intended for the conveyance of sounds audible to the audience. The illusion known as "The In-

visible Orchestra" is an example of tricks upon this principle. In that invention the sound was conveyed by wooden rods from instruments below the stage to their counterparts above. Another trick belonging to this group is that which was used in connection with "The Speaking Head" illusion. In that instance, the sound was carried by tube to a wide-mouthed orifice, and received in another attached to the head itself, and thence to the mouth, from which the sounds were supposed to emanate. The device, however, was not very satisfactory in its operation. As may be anticipated, sounds so conveyed would obviously have their origin elsewhere than in the head itself. These two examples will suffice to indicate the nature of the drawbacks inherent to this principle, from a magical standpoint.

The Disguise of Sound is a principle seldom employed in magic, except in so far as it relates to drowning one sound by another. The converse application is that of preventing the occurrence of sounds, which would, otherwise, disclose operations intended to be kept secret. The latter object, however, is usually attained by physical means, rather than by the aid of acoustic principles. Thus the disguise of sound would ordinarily consist in the prevention of sounds not wanted and the substitution of sounds required.

CHAPTER X

ELECTRICAL PRINCIPLES

IN electricity, we have a branch of physics that has rendered substantial aid to the cause of magic. The vast reputation gained by Robert-Houdin was, in no small degree, due to the facilities which, in its early days, electricity placed at the disposal of magicians. At the present time, no doubt, the continual spreading of scientific knowledge has robbed electrical processes of their former mystery, to a very great extent. We cannot, now, hang up a drum with electrical tappers concealed inside it, and expect an audience to be mystified by hearing that drum played invisibly. The day for that sort of thing has gone by, never to return. Yet, in spite of its shorn grandeur, electricity still remains a most valuable servant to the magician who takes the trouble to become its master.

Among magicians at large, there exists some prejudice against electricity, on the ground of its supposed uncertainty. There is an idea that electrical devices are essentially unreliable, and are subject to frequent failure at critical moments. It may be said, at once, so far as electricity itself is concerned, that this charge of alleged unreliability is entirely without foundation. And, with regard to electrical appliances, when a failure occurs, it is due to some

mechanical fault, ninety-nine times out of a hundred; and the fact of electricity being used as the motive power has nothing to do with the matter. If only the apparatus be properly constructed and installed, the electricity upon which its operation depends may be relied upon, absolutely. There is no form of energy more certain in its action. But, if the construction and installation of the mechanical devices be not efficiently carried out, there are bound to be failures, and many of them. Then, in all probability, the blame will fall, unjustly, upon the electricity; instead of falling, as it ought, upon the tinker who made the appliances and the landscape gardener who put them in place.

It may be admitted, without argument, that the conditions in which electricity has to act when used for magical purposes, differ immensely from those with which it is normally associated elsewhere. The devices it has to control, when used in magic, are necessarily "tricky" in both structure and operation. For this reason, a motive power such as that of electricity, which depends for its efficiency upon the making of proper connexions, necessitates some care in adaptation to the special circumstances of the case. This simply means that, if worked by electricity, tricky devices of faulty construction are more liable to play tricks than if they are operated mechanically. The moral is that string and sealing-wax, not to mention elastic bands and tintacks, are not fit associates for electricity. Primitive materials of that nature may consort well enough with a box of conjuring tricks, as advertised; but an agent

so refined as electricity demands other and better means for its employment.

The first principle set down in this group is the Conveyance of Power through Supports. Here, of course, entirely stationary and solid supports are understood. In other types of physical magic there are devices by which power is conveyed through pillars, legs, cords, chains or what not, to the appliances thereby supported. But in those other types, the devices must include some mechanical trickery in their construction, and some movement of or within the support itself. In the case of electricity, no such requirement exists. Electrical energy demands for its conveyance nothing beyond a continuous metallic circuit—a "line-wire" leading the current from a battery to the device it operates and a "return-wire" completing the circuit by leading back again to the battery. Thus two conductors are always necessary for electrically operated mechanism. These may readily be formed, either in or by the supports themselves. If the support be in itself a conductor, it will require to be insulated from all other conductors except the battery connexion. If it be a non-conductor, a metallic core or other conducting attachment must be provided. Obviously, there must be two supports, at least, if the current is actually conducted thereby. If there be only a single support, an insulated path must be provided internally. The double path being available, all that remains is to make sure of good contact between the ends of the two conductors and their appropriate connexions.

All being in order, one has only to press the button, and electricity will do the rest.

The next electrical principle on the list is that of Trigger Action by Electric Current. In this, we have a means which should be useful for many purposes in the practice of magic. We say it *should* be so, because it has not as yet been adopted so frequently as its merits appear to deserve. The principle consists in the use of an electro-magnet for releasing a motive power already stored up in a piece of apparatus. Thus any form of clockwork may be started or stopped, by moving its detent electrically. A supply of compressed air may be turned on and off; a spring released, or a weight allowed to fall. In short, there are a thousand and one operations in which trigger-action is used, that may be most conveniently controlled by an electro-magnet. There is also a great advantage in the fact that the magnet need have no contact with the device it moves. Its attraction will pass through all substances save those which are themselves magnetic. Therefore, so long as the distance across which the action has to take effect is not too great, the magnet and its "keeper" may be insulated from each other entirely.

The "Crystal Casket" of Robert-Houdin had another form of trigger-action by electric current. At a given instant, a wire, electrically heated, was caused to release coins concealed within the structure of the casket. Many devices of a similar character have been employed from time to time. The modern tendency, however, appears to be to rely

upon threads, and primitive contrivances of that nature, rather than to adopt the more refined electrical methods. In some instances, no doubt, limitations of space would prevent the use of an electro-magnetic release; but, more often than not, it is possible to find room for some compact form of magnet. Therefore, it seems a pity that this convenient agency should be allowed to fall into such undeserved neglect.

The principle of communication by means of Electro-telegraphy or Telephony is so well understood, and its utility and convenience for special purposes of magic so obvious, that nothing need be said about it by way of explanation or illustration.

CHAPTER XI

CHEMICAL AND MOLECULAR PRINCIPLES

THE application of Chemistry to the production of magical effects is of ancient date. Among the earliest technical records are to be found descriptions of experiments upon a chemical basis. Not always strictly magical, it is true; but, very often, of a nature well adapted to the requirements of magic, as we regard it to-day. Of the former kind, the experiment sometimes described as being designed "To terrify with a great Noise without Gunpowder" is an example. "To seem to turn Water into Wine," however, is one of the very old experiments which are not yet out of date and, probably, will survive for many generations to come. Indeed, so far as chemical magic is concerned, many of the older books strike one as being very nearly as much up-to-date as are some of the most modern. The ancient text-books, of course, contain descriptions of hypothetical effects, presumably, supposed to have a chemical basis; but which, in the light of commonsense, can be regarded only as survivals of superstition. Such an experiment, or series of experiments, is that "Of Magical Lights, Lamps, Candles, etc.," quoted in "*The Conjuror's Repository*," a book published towards the end of the Eighteenth Century. The weird and wonderful effects attributed to the burn-

ing of certain oily compounds prescribed in the description given, seem to a modern reader the conceptions of a disordered intellect. Still, there is every reason to suppose that the authors who wrote that kind of nonsense had implicit faith in the nostrums they mentioned. We are bound to believe that, in describing some impossible and horrible thing as "both easy and pleasant to do," they had every confidence in their own veracity. Not only so, they had equal confidence in the reliability of those other persons, from whom their information had been derived. Needless to say, the writers could never have tried the experiments for themselves; or the failures they must inevitably have experienced would, at least, have convinced them that the word "easy" was out of place in their account of the matter.

The first chemical principle in the list is the Apparent Transformation of Substance. In most cases, the transformation is not only apparent, but also real. An illustration of this fact is seen in the experiment, already mentioned, of turning water into wine. The transformation is brought about by effecting a real change of chemical combination. The effect, however, is only apparent, in the sense that the supposed water and wine are not both what they appear to be. The water, perhaps, may be genuine—perhaps not. But, in any event, one may feel certain that what is apparently wine has nothing of the grape in its composition. Still, even that characteristic is not uncommon among commercial vintages, unrelated to the practice of magic. Then,

what we mean by the "apparent" transformation of substance is the changing of what appears to be a particular material or product (*e. g.*, water) into what appears to be one of entirely different nature or composition (*e. g.*, wine). This principle is often employed in combination with mechanical devices, whereby the chemical changes are supplemented and rendered more impressive. By such means, the effect produced is made far more striking than would be the case were chemistry alone employed. It may be accepted as a general rule that, with a mechanical amplification of some suitable kind, skilfully contrived and efficiently manipulated, any form of chemical change is likely to become far more valuable in magic than it could possibly be made, apart from such embellishment.

The principle of Ignition by chemical means is especially familiar in connexion with chlorate of potash and sugar; the igniting reagent being sulphuric acid. Undoubtedly, the cleanest and safest method for bringing the acid into contact with the other ingredients, as and when required, is that of confining it within capillary tubes of glass, sealed at either end. One of these tubes, together with a pinch of chlorate mixture, being twisted up in a scrap of "flash-paper," a slight pressure serves to break the tube and, thus liberating the acid, to ignite the whole.

The principle of chemical ignition, however, is by no means confined to this special device in magic. There are many other reactions, by which heat or flame may be produced, and which are equally adapt-

able to the magician's requirements. Notably the spontaneous combustion resulting from the application of water to potassium is commonly used in connexion with fire-bowls, as they are called. These appliances are, generally speaking, made in the form of shallow dishes, the edges of which are deeply recurved, and their centres fitted with upright metallic points. A pellet of potassium being impaled upon the central pin, the bowl is turned edgewise up and a sufficient quantity of water and sulphuric ether poured into the hollow rim. So long as the bowl remains edge up, nothing happens beyond evaporation of ether. But, so soon as the vessel is turned into a horizontal position, the water comes into contact with the potassium; the hydrogen liberated by the chemical combination that ensues is ignited by the resultant heat; and, in turn, sets fire to the ether.

Whatever form of chemical ignition be adopted, the means for conveying the flame to the material finally burned must receive some consideration. Usually, the ignition is applied to some readily combustible substance, such as the flash-paper or ether already mentioned. In some special cases, handkerchiefs or other fabrics of cotton are treated with the nitro-sulphuric acid used in making flash-paper—thus being converted into a true gun-cotton. These, of course, are readily fired by chemical reagents. But, when some slowly burning substance has to be ignited the semi-explosive combustion of such mixtures as that of sugar and potassium chlorate, is too short in duration to act with certainty. Instead of

setting fire to the substance that requires burning, the sudden flash may only produce smouldering. Therefore, it becomes necessary to supplement the chemical device by some material, sufficiently rapid in combustion to be instantly lighted, but not so rapid as to burn out before the intended substance has caught fire. For this purpose, there is probably nothing better than an ordinary match. Consequently, if the latter be used, mechanical ignition may be found no less convenient and far less complicated than any chemical method.

Change of Colour by Chemical Reaction is, properly speaking, and apart from change of substance, a principle seldom used in practical magic. It relates, exclusively, to change of colour without change of form or substance; and must not be confused with such incidental colour changes as occur in experiments that relate to the apparent changing of one substance to another. The general mode of application consists in treating a fabric or other material with some chemical which, when acted upon by another, and thus modified either in chemical composition or physical condition, changes its former hue completely. The blue colouration of litmus in the presence of an alkali, and its change to red when acted upon by an acid, may be quoted as an example of such effects in general. Again, the bleaching action of sulphurous acid, either in the form of vapour or in its nascent state, as liberated by chemical reaction is a well-known means for destroying colour. It is commonly used in experiments with supposed ink and water; the acid being

liberated from sodium hyposulphite, as a rule. In fact, many of the reagents used in producing apparent change of substance or composition are equally applicable to change of colour alone.

Invisible Writing is a principle almost as old as the hills. Ovid, for instance, mentions several devices by which messages can be written invisibly, even upon a vehicle so unsuspected as the skin of a lady's serving-maid, and rendered legible by the person for whom they are intended. The ancient text-books of magic contain numerous recipes for secret writing; a large proportion, however, being manipulative in character, rather than chemical, come under the heading of preparation. Still the principle of invisible writing by chemical agency was perfectly familiar to the ancients, as the recipes for "Sympathetic Inks" and so forth clearly prove. In a general sense, it may be said that this present principle is but a special application of that relating to colour changes in general. Chemical reactions which are applicable to change of colour upon a larger scale, will often apply equally well to the writing of messages with colourless liquids, which may be coloured by special treatment.

Molecular principles, in so far as they relate to magic, are so nearly allied to those of chemistry that it is difficult to dissociate one from the other. We have an illustration of this general difficulty in the colour changes produced in litmus by the action of acids and alkalies respectively. Although the litmus becomes blue in the presence of an alkali, and red when made acid, there is no reason to suppose

that any definite chemical change accompanies the change in colour. Again when the mixture of two chemical solutions produces a solid compound, the physical difference is undoubtedly due to a change in chemical combination. The change of colour in litmus and the change of state from liquid to solid in the chemical mixture are both molecular in character. Yet, the first cannot occur in the absence of chemical reagents, while the second is absolutely dependent upon chemical combination. Therefore, it is advisable to limit the molecular group of magical processes to those in which chemistry has clearly no prominent part.

CHAPTER XII

MAGICAL INVENTIONS

THE importance of the subject dealt with in this chapter can admit of no argument whatever. Both practically and theoretically, it is one of the most vital topics comprised in the whole range of magical studies. From a technical standpoint, it represents the goal towards which the aims of every honourable magician are directed, when seeking to add to his repertoire—and, incidentally, to his reputation. Like all else in the world, magic cannot stand still. It must either advance with the times or fall behind them. And, in this connection, the one quality which, above all others, is essential to progress is novelty. Without novelty in some form or other, nothing can be achieved in the way of progress. Every step forward is, necessarily, a new step. It breaks new ground, opens up new views, and involves a definite change of position. In short it represents novelty, in every sense of the word. In magic, as in all other forms of applied science, the terms novelty and invention are synonymous. Without invention there can be no novelty; and without novelty there can be no invention. In view of these facts, it is evident that any treatise upon magical technics, in which the subject of invention is not dealt with, must be incomplete and unsatisfactory.

In this present chapter, therefore, we shall discuss the nature of magical inventions, and means by which such inventions may be evolved. Not, be it understood, the means whereby all the inventions in magic have been and are to be made. There are constantly being produced, in every branch of human activity, inventions which even their own inventors could not trace to a definite origin. It is, however, quite possible to demonstrate certain means, available to those who seek real advancement, by the aid of which the work of invention may be greatly facilitated; and, in some instances, actually brought to completion. It is in this connection that the value of theoretical study is most prominently displayed.

There can be little doubt that, however interesting in itself the theory of magic may be, it will receive but scant attention from those who live by magic, unless the study of this particular branch of the subject can be shown to have a monetary value. It is not in human nature to adopt any other attitude upon such a question. The man who has his living to gain is bound to give his chief attention to the making of profits. So, if there be no money to gain by the study of theory, most men will give theory the coldest of cold shoulders. But, as it happens, technical theory usually *is* worth money to those who understand it. In the case of magic, no less than in other callings of a professional character, the results to which theoretical knowledge may lead can be valued in shekels of gold and shekels of silver.

That novelties connected with magic are extremely valuable, must be patent to all. The avidity with

which such novelties are sought, on every hand, to say nothing of the importance attached to them by their inventors, would suffice to prove their value, even if all other evidence were lacking. Then, if it can be shown that the theory of magic constitutes a substantial aid to the production of novelties, its importance to the welfare of magicians, will need no further demonstration. That is what we propose to show.

We feel sure that much of the plagiarism, too common among magicians, is due to the fact that writers upon magical topics have usually given but little incentive to original effort. Instead of putting forward stimulating suggestions, the rule has been to deal only with bald statements and descriptions which, apart from higher knowledge, can only foster a spirit of servile imitation. In the unwarrantable glorification of "How it is Done" the far more worthy consideration of how to do what has not yet been done, seems to have been almost entirely forgotten. The beaten track, and that only in disconnected sections, is what the student of magic, apparently, is expected to regard as his sole field of investigation. The need for seeking new paths, or even for tracing the connection between familiar sections of the old track, is an idea of which one seldom, if ever, receives a hint. To some extent, at any rate, we hope to remedy this very prevalent fault. By indicating sources of inspiration available to all, and pointing out systematic methods of working, we may possibly aid original effort on the part of some who

have hitherto been content to snatch at crumbs, so to speak, from the tables of other men.

In the first place, then, we must define what constitutes an invention, magical or otherwise. This is extremely necessary, because so many people have but vague ideas upon the subject. Some do not realise the difference between an invention and a discovery. Others do not even realise the difference between an invention and an idea. Yet it should be obvious to all that an invention must necessarily be an example of applied science. Therefore, even the newest discovery, or the newest idea, cannot be regarded as an invention. It is only when the discovery has been embodied in some particular device, or the idea has been worked out in some practical form, that we have an invention. And, even then, the invention relates to the particular construction or method involved; not necessarily to the discovery or the idea upon which the invention has been based.

For example, let us take the case of the steam-engine. It is commonly said that this invention was made by James Watt. But, was it? Certainly not! Hero, of Alexandria, constructed a steam engine, 2,000 years before Watt's invention was made. Must we then, ascribe to Hero the invention of the steam engine? By no means. His invention and the 19th century steam-engine are as unlike as chalk and cheese. The simple fact is that nobody invented *the* steam-engine, but various persons have invented various *kinds* of steam-engines. Among those persons, James Watt takes a prominent place, as the

inventor of that form of engine in which the pressure of steam is utilised by means of cylinder and piston. Thus, the use of steam pressure as a source of energy is a *general* principle, to which nobody can lay claim. It is an obvious application of the discovery that steam can produce pressure. The utilisation of a reciprocating piston, as a means for converting the molecular energy of steam into mechanical or kinetic energy, is a *specific* principle, with the development of which James Watt must for all time be associated. Hero's invention was based upon another specific principle, differing entirely from that of Watt, viz.:—the reaction, upon a movable arm, of steam escaping at right angles to it. It is the same form of reaction that causes a sky rocket to ascend, and which, as derived from water pressure, was utilised in the invention known as Barker's Mill. The converse principle, that of producing motion by the direct *action* of escaping steam, instead of its *reaction*, has been adopted by Parsons, in the invention of his admirably efficient steam-turbine.

From the foregoing instances, most of which must be entirely familiar to the majority of our readers, the true nature of an invention may readily be deduced. For example, it is entirely wrong to say that the steam-engine was ever invented at all. "*The steam-engine*" implies and comprises *all* steam engines; or, at any rate, a common basis which all inventors of such engines have utilised. There is only one such basis—that of steam-pressure. The use of steam-pressure as a means for supplying power, however, is an idea which must inevitably occur to any-

one knowing that steam can produce pressure. Left undeveloped, that idea would remain a mere idea, and nothing more. In any event, it could not represent an invention. When that obvious idea had been developed, by the invention of a steam-engine, it became a general principle to which all possible forms of steam-engines are referable. In like manner, the specific principles evolved by successive inventors must each represent a particular basis, upon which subsequent inventors might found new inventions. Thus, the cylinder and piston principle of Watt was applied by Stephenson to land locomotives and, by Fulton (though his claim to priority is contested), to the propulsion of vessels. Yet, we cannot say that Stephenson invented the locomotive engine, nor Fulton the steamship. All we can say, with truth, is that Stephenson invented *a* locomotive and Fulton *a* steamship. The application of the specific principle, originated by Watt, to the propulsion of vehicles, either on land or on water, is a mere idea which any booby might conceive. And any booby, having conceived that idea, would believe that he had made an invention. Then, so far, we have arrived at the following definitions:—

A General Principle is a basis for classification of inventions in definite groups, according to fundamental characteristics common to each group respectively.

A Specific Principle is a basis for invention; and may itself constitute an invention.

An Invention consists in the production of some novelty, in either principle, construction, method, or

purpose, not merely put forward as a vague idea, but worked out in practicable form.

The novelty it comprises, but that novelty alone, can be protected by patent.

An Idea is a conception, which may or may not turn out practicable or valuable, but which has not been developed by embodiment in an invention. It cannot be protected by patent because it discloses no inventive achievement, no practical application of a specific principle; and, therefore, is not an invention. It is simply a suggestion or notion, which some inventor might, perhaps, think worthy of development. But, until that inventor's work has been done, the idea itself must remain but a suggested possibility,—at the best, a problem, which, in the end, may prove to be not worth the trouble of solving.

Having these definitions for our guidance we may justly believe that we stand on safe ground. Since an invention essentially comprises some definite element of novelty, not merely in conception, but in the practical application of a specific principle, it is quite easy to indicate certain sources from which inventions may be derived. The common impression that inventive genius necessarily consists in a faculty for conceiving new ideas, is quite erroneous. It depends, primarily, upon a faculty for exercising the imagination upon possible *combinations* hitherto unknown. The man who possesses the latter faculty, by accident of birth, is a born inventor. But inventors are not necessarily born. They can also be made. What has been withheld by nature may, to a great extent, be supplied by training. The man

who wants to invent, but does not know how to invent, can learn to invent, if he will but take the trouble. There are few men who need despair of becoming inventors. So long as a man has sufficient imagination to form some idea of what would be the immediate result, for example, if it were known for certain that the world would come to an end to-morrow, or if the whole of mankind suddenly turned vegetarian, he has an inventor's chief qualification. The man who has no imagination cannot expect to gain the power of foreseeing possibilities and anticipating results, without which no invention can be made.

Then in the training of an inventor, the first essential is cultivation of that most valuable of all mental gifts—imagination. There is a very common notion that time spent in imagining things must be time wasted. Yet the actual fact is that the most successful men are those who are able to imagine things not yet in existence, and means for bringing those things about. Such men are not dreamers, they are men of imagination. Between the two classes there is a vast difference. The dreamer is one who dallies with mental images—with hazy visions of what might be, if only somebody else would do something or other. The man of imagination, on the other hand, is one who exercises his brains upon problems relating to work which he himself intends to carry through, when those problems have been mentally solved. That is the kind of imagination an inventor wants.

The faculty next in importance to that of imagination is the power of observation. It is, undoubtedly,

true that inspirations seldom come to those who do not look for them. Equally true is it that there is little use in looking for inspiration unless one knows where and how to look. Therefore, it is necessary that an inventor's power of observation be well trained; not only in looking out for inspirations, but also in recognising the channels through which inspiration may possibly come.

One of the most extraordinary facts concerning invention in general is the evolution of conceptions in unbroken sequence. The inventor begins working out a certain problem he has conceived; and, as he proceeds, there grow out of his work suggestions which may lead to many new inventions. Each of these, again, may lead to further inspirations; and so on, indefinitely. As a general rule, inventions are not derived from accidental ideas, happy thoughts, or heaven-born revelations. Their origin is in the fact that inventors are always on the lookout for sources of inspiration, and always endeavouring to imagine novel combinations and novel applications of familiar devices. Then, when in the course of his work an inventor finds some detail lacking, which known devices or methods cannot supply, he is led to seek out in imagination, a new device or a new method—it may be, even, a new principle—that will fulfil his requirements. Having a definite aim in view, and the ability to imagine possible means for achieving that aim, the chances are a hundred to one that he finds what he wants. Thus, an inventor's work consists, not in a happy-go-lucky waiting for inspiration, but in laborious effort devoted to the

building up, mainly from fragments of existing knowledge, complete structures which possess the element of novelty, in some form or other. It is for this reason that the art of invention is capable of being taught; or, rather, learned. Although there is much to be learned, very little instruction can be given. That little, however, is the small key which opens a very big door.

In the present instance, what we have to do is to point out to the would-be inventor of magical novelties, where to seek for inspiration, and how to make use of it when obtained; always provided, of course, that the aspirant to inventive ability has learned to use his eyes and to exercise his imagination. Of course, the man who has a native talent for invention is bound to be more successful than one who has not that advantage. That goes without saying. Nevertheless, a wide field exists for the work of those who, without special gifts, are willing to do their best towards inventing things for themselves.

In magic, as in all other directions, the chief source from which inventors derive their inspirations is the work already done. But, this is where one wants to know where and how to search. It is absolutely useless to read magical works, or inspect magical devices, and then confine one's attention to what has been read or seen. One must not look at just what is directly in view; one must look all round it, above it and beyond it. One must not look at each invention singly, just for the sake of admiring it or copying it. One must seek for what may be got out of it, put into it or suggested by it.

In almost every case there will be found something that may prove useful, if not immediately, at some future time.

The most desirable discovery, of course, is a new specific principle. That is, therefore, the first thing for which one should be on the lookout. Next to that comes the suggestion of a novel combination of details or a novel application for existing devices or principles. After having conceived a basis upon which some novel invention may be produced, the real work of an inventor begins. So, at the outset, it is advisable to attempt something not too elaborate. In this respect, at all times, an inventor must be guided by a knowledge of the facilities he has for doing the necessary work of design and construction, or of getting it done by others. And, further, it must be remembered that such work, to the uninitiated, usually seems a lot easier to do than they will find it if they try to do it themselves. Still, if it be worth doing, a man of energy will always find means for putting it through.

Since "an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory," according to the proverb, we cannot do better than to show that an ounce of theory can be made worth many pounds in practice. For this purpose we propose to invent a magical novelty, for the reader's benefit; and to describe, step by step, the process of its evolution. Having done so, we will, further, point out such possibilities of future development as may be suggested by the invention as it stands. At the same time we give our word of honour that the invention shall have been solved precisely in the

manner described; and shall not be one already existing, that has been dissected and analysed for the purpose of making up a story.

In order to begin at the most elementary condition possible, we will take for our starting-point a general principle; preferably, one that is not commonly employed. We will select that of trigger-action by electro-magnet, and see what can be done with it. To this end, of course, our first aim must be to ascertain, so far as possible, what has already been done upon the principle we have adopted. According to our present knowledge, it would appear that there is but one specific principle upon which magical apparatus embodying an electro-magnetic trigger has ever been constructed. That is the principle of concealing, within the appliance containing mechanism controlled by trigger, an electro-magnet to which the current is conveyed through suspending wires. Such being the case, we must get away from that principle, if possible. The most obvious way of so doing is to put the magnet somewhere outside the apparatus containing the trigger mechanism, and to do away with the suspending wires.

Here, we arrive at two perfectly definite conclusions. Since the magnet must be outside the appliance containing the trigger, we must devise some means for effectually concealing or disguising the magnet; at the same time, bringing it sufficiently near to the trigger it has to operate. And, since hanging supports must be discarded, the trigger apparatus must stand on a table of some kind. Electricity being our motive power, the best form of table

to use will be one through which electricity will not pass, and in which electrical conductors cannot

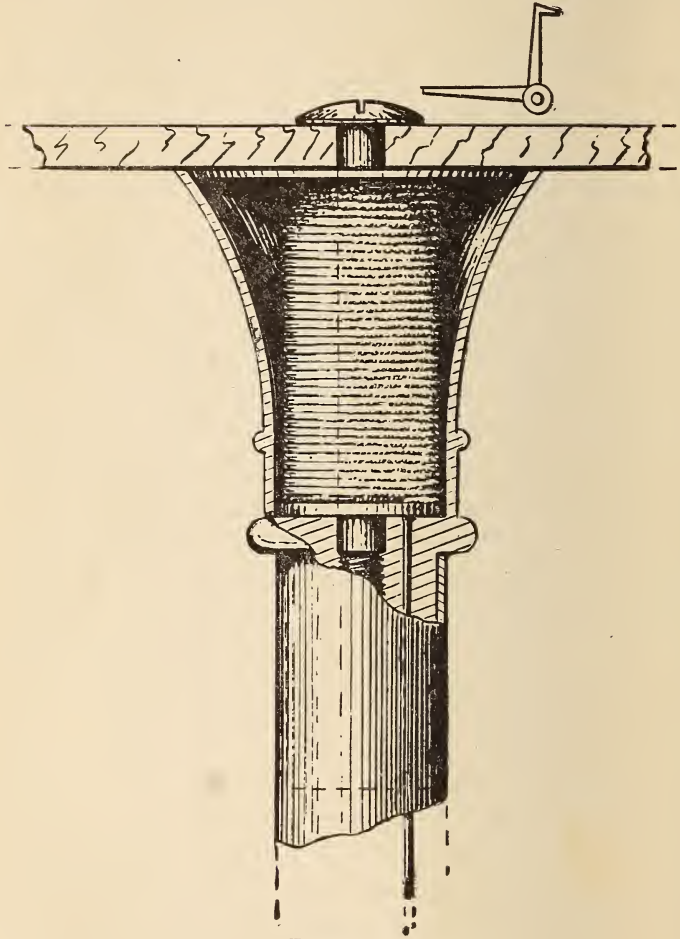


FIGURE A.

be concealed. At once, we recall to mind the glass topped tables commonly used by magicians. The

very thing! The central screw which fastens the glass top to its supporting pillar may form one pole of an electro-magnet concealed within that pillar. And if the hollow head of the pillar be made of iron, it will form the second pole of the magnet it contains. We thus obtain a "concentric" electro-magnet most efficiently disguised, and brought within effective range of anything standing upon the

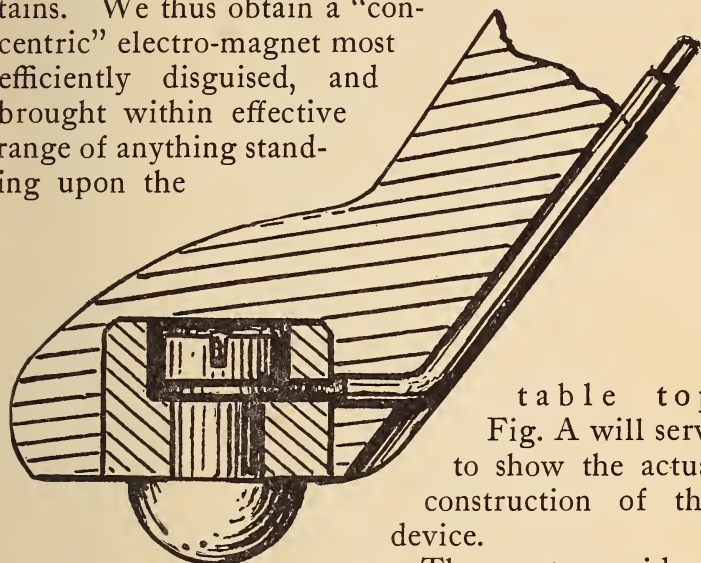


FIGURE B.

table top.
Fig. A will serve to show the actual construction of this device.

The next consideration will be the means of exciting the electro-magnet from without. The most convenient connection, of course, is through the feet of the table. The tripod and pillar, being of metal, will provide one of the conductors, the other may readily be made by passing an insulated wire down the hollow stem, and thence in a groove on the under side of one of the legs to an insulated metal stud fixed into the foot. With this method one end of the bobbin wire would be connected to the metal

tube, and the other end to the wire passing down within it. Two metal discs on the floor, apparently

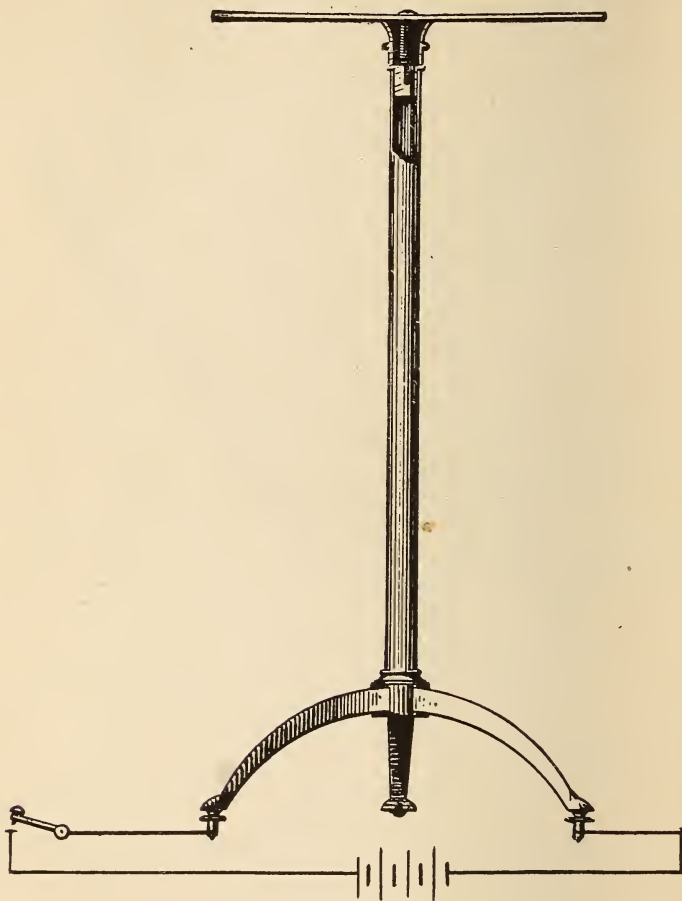


FIGURE C.

carpet pins, would from the terminal ends of the battery circuit. Upon one of these would stand the

insulated stud, and upon the other would be placed either of the solid feet of the tripod. Fig. B shows the method of fixing the insulated block, with metal stud connected to the inner wire which, in Fig. A, is seen passing down from the bobbin. Fig. C shows

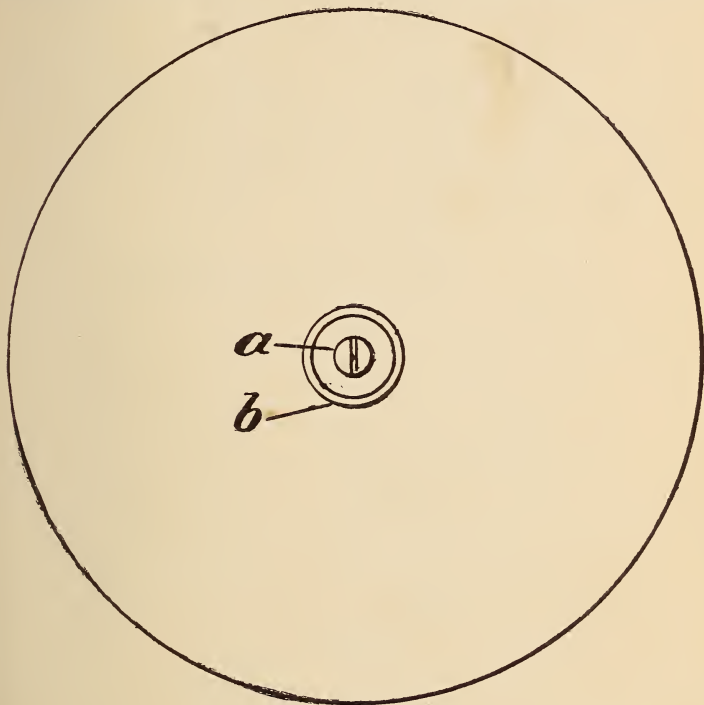


FIGURE D.

the complete arrangement, with battery and operating key represented diagrammatically. In Fig. A is indicated, approximately, the position in which a catch or detent should be placed for operating by the concealed electro-magnet.

Fig. D is a plan of the table top. The central screw, marked *a*, is the inner pole of the magnet, and the annular ring *b* is the outer pole.

Fig. E shows the best way of applying the arrangement to the release of clockwork or other source of

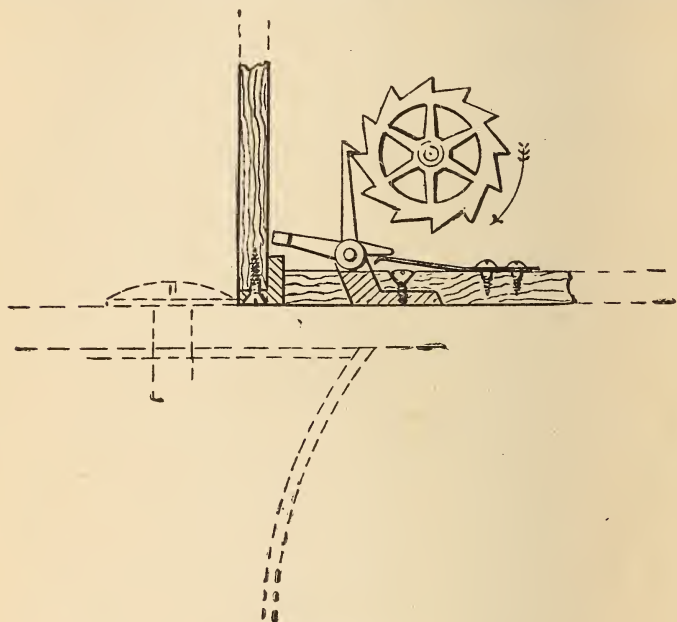


FIGURE E.

energy within a case of any kind. Needless to say, the parts concerned in conveying magnetic force between the two poles should be of iron, and should form the shortest magnetic path. For this reason the metal disc which forms the upper cheek of the bobbin should not be nickelled. Otherwise, nickel being a magnetic metal, a coating upon the disc

which fills in the mouth of the magnet would tend to form an alternative path for their magnetism, and thus minimise the attraction of anything outside.

Having reached this point, we can imagine some magicians saying that they do not see much in the device above described. It is all very well, in its way, but what can one do with it? To this, we answer, one may do with it so many things that it is impossible to foresee more than a minute fraction of the number. This is a question which involves one of the most important points we have in view, and the insistence upon which is one of our chief objects in writing this book.

The common tendency, among magicians, is to appreciate only those devices in which some practical application has been cut and dried; which have been definitely embodied in the production of some particular effect. When every detail has been worked out, when the stage business has been organised, the manipulation arranged and the effect obtained, then only is a device worthy of consideration. The possibilities associated with a device, the purposes to which it may be applied, the money to be made out of it by the exercise of thought and initiative, are passed over as of no account. So long as the device has not been actually used in connection with some successful production, it has no value, in the eyes of far too many among those who practice magic, either professionally or as amateurs. This tendency we most earnestly wish to combat; for it is the chief obstacle to be removed before magic can take its proper share in the world's progress. So

long as an appreciable contingent of magical performers can remain content merely to buy, beg, borrow or steal from others—to do nothing beyond that which others have done, to aim at nothing higher than a slavish imitation of original work, to have no use for anything that does not come to hand complete, lock, stock and barrel—so long will magic remain condemned to unmerited disrepute.

The little invention we have described will show how small is the need for reliance upon other people, in obtaining novelties. In the whole description there is not included one single detail that is new, in actual fact. Yet, taken as a whole, it constitutes a novel method, capable of being patented. Not only so, it comprises a specific principle that is quite new, and may be made the basis of many further inventions. Nevertheless, it has been arrived at by no stroke of genius, but merely by the putting of this and that together, in connection with a general principle selected haphazard. It is an example of the facility with which inventions may be made, by systematic use of the advantages gained by studying the theory of a subject, instead of blindly trusting to luck for possible inspiration. If, instead of waiting for something to turn up, one looks around upon what already exists, to note the directions in which there appears some promise of useful development, the aid of theoretical knowledge will always render the creation of novelties a matter of no great difficulty. So vast an amount of knowledge and so manifold an array of inventions are already common property, that one need only ring the changes upon existing

combinations, to produce something novel, in one sense or another.

There is also another point worth considering and one to which we do not remember any reference being made in works dealing with magic. It is this. The work of originating an invention is, by far, the most pleasant and least laborious of all that has to be done in the course of its evolution. The work inseparable from the perfecting of minor details is the most tedious and the most trying. Thus the man who invents something original has compensations of no mean order, which are denied to one who merely takes up the threads, woven by another man, at the point where all originality ceases. It follows that, since the man who appropriates a magical invention has still to do all the detail work connected with it, he would be far more agreeably and profitably employed had he taken the little extra trouble required for bringing out something of his own creation.

Returning to our present invention, it is obviously capable of being adapted to two general purposes. One is the operation of a detent, or trigger device, the other is the direct production of movement. In the latter case, of course, the range of movement must not be greater than the magnetic attraction will bridge with certainty. These two purposes, it will be seen, relate to a wide range of existing effects in magic, and will yet relate to a far wider range in the magical inventions of years to come. Although it is impossible, herein, to deal with this side of the question in any adequate manner, we will just glance at

one or two applications of the principle, and point out one or two ideas which those applications suggest.

Among well known trigger devices the "Crystal Casket" of Robert Houdin, naturally occurs to mind. The reader will remember that this casket was a small box, rectangular in shape, having glass sides, bottom and lid, mounted in a framework of metal. In the centre of the lid was an ornament of embossed metal, sufficiently large to conceal a few coins. The inner plate of this ornament formed a cover for the coins; holding them in place, and being secured with a piece of thread. The latter was in contact with a fine wire, which became red-hot when a current of electricity was passed through it. Thus, at the proper moment, the coins were released, and allowed to fall upon the glass below. In an apparatus of this kind, if placed upon the table above described, instead of being hung upon wires, a simple catch could replace the burnt thread. Probably more effective would be a device loaded into, say, a borrowed hat standing upon the table. Then, the coins would be heard to fall upon the table itself.

In the case of an appliance with glass sides and metal edges, such as Robert Houdin's casket, it might be possible to utilise the familiar split coins, folding them up within the metal framework. The glass would then be absolutely free from opaque excrescences, behind or within which the coins could be hidden from view. A florin, when cut into four strips, would require a cavity only five-sixteenths of an inch in width. This might readily be provided

within the metal framing of a small glass box. A simple flap, magnetically released, would be all the mechanism required for securing the coins until the moment of their production.

In connection with the second class of applications, where the magnet, instead of controlling a release, produces direct and visible motion, an example is illustrated in Fig. F. That figure shows an adaptation of the present invention to De Kolta's tapping

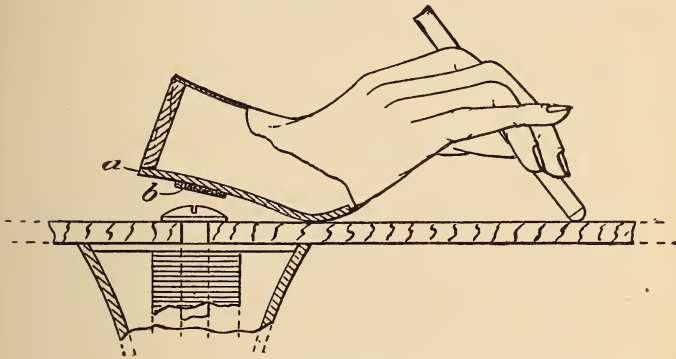


FIGURE F.

hand. It will be seen that the only addition to the hand itself consists in a thin strip of iron concealed within the wrist. The lower end of the strip is placed in proximity to the outer pole of the magnet, while its other extremity stands above the central screw which forms the inner magnetic pole. The attraction between the centre screw and the iron strip, which will occur whenever a current flows through the bobbin wire, draws down the wrist and tilts up the fingers of the hand. On interrupting the current, the magnet ceases to act, and the fingers

fall again upon the table top. A small glass bead, or other hard substance, attached to the middle finger, will give the required "tap," readily heard in all parts of a large theatre. So long as the object to be moved can be made light enough, the possible amplitude of motion, obtainable by systems of leverage, may be comparatively large. For example, it would be quite practicable, given plenty of current, to produce an effect such as the "Rising Cards," by direct movement from the table magnet. Or, again, it might be practicable to load on to an article standing upon the table a card or other flat object lying unobserved upon the table top.

Another idea suggested by this device is the use of a steel magnet in place of the iron armature. In that case, two different movements could be made to occur, at will, in accordance with the direction of the current passing through the magnet-bobbin. Then, when the poles of the table magnet are given the same sign as those of the permanent magnet nearest to them, the latter will be repelled. Reversing the current, of course, reverses the polarity of the electro-magnet, and then the permanent magnet is attracted. In this way, two distinct motions may be finally produced; two distinct trigger actions released; or two distinct motive powers controlled.

This magnetic form of control has an advantage that no possible device of a mechanical nature can possess. It enables one to produce effects such as those we have just mentioned, in an absolutely clean manner, even under a stranger's very eyes. This, in itself, is no small matter; seeing how much depends,

very often, upon the impression a performer can make upon "the man from the audience." When, in addition, the method involves nothing likely to arouse suspicion, and also reduces risk of detection to a minimum, there is good reason for believing that it is a good thing, well worth turning to account.

Before concluding this section of our book, we would, once again, impress upon magicians of repute, and also upon aspirants to that rank, the need that exists for original work. No doubt, it is very interesting to reproduce effects that other men have originated, to practice manipulations that other men have introduced, in short, to do clever or effective things with which other men have achieved success. But, looking at the matter fairly and squarely, it becomes evident that achievements of that subordinate character are of no very great account. So far as personal merit is concerned, second-hand magic, at the best, cannot do more than to show a performer's ability to repeat a lesson he has learned. With regard to the art of magic and its progress, such work can have but little value, indeed. Those who are constantly looking out for novelties to imitate should remember these facts. In truth, one had far better take up old inventions, which give no chance for imitating any living artist, than to stand confessed a second-rate performer who can do nothing unless dry-nursed by abler men. Not only so, it is most likely that nine spectators out of ten will assume that the new but second-hand productions have been appropriated illegitimately: in other words, have been

stolen from the original inventors. That kind of practice can do but little good to the performer himself, and is bound to do great harm to his calling. People can have but small respect for a profession in which the chief aim of its members, as a rule, is to acquire other men's ideas; instead of being to emulate the success of other men, while avoiding the blind imitation of things already done.

There is only one course of action, by which the art of magic can be advanced and the repute of the magical profession enhanced. That is, for each one of us to put his shoulder to the wheel, and do all he can towards pushing forward. It is beyond question that time and effort given to the mere imitation of another man's work can be nothing more than time and effort misspent, in going over old ground. Whereas, by striving to break new ground, every step and every effort must be of some service, to the art and to its followers, alike. Not only so, it must be clear to everybody, either in the magical profession or out of it, that there is far more money in original work than in the unnecessary repetition of past history. Not that the average imitator considers his work unnecessary. On the contrary, he feels that, by scrambling after colourable imitations of all the latest novelties, he is "keeping up to date." That is a curious fallacy; since, beyond all question, the man who works on those lines must always arrive a day after the fair. He can never be up to date, because he perpetually lags behind, waiting his chance to follow in the wake of somebody else.

The simple fact is that, to condemn oneself to an

arduous struggle for existence, and a second rate position, at the best, when better fortune lies within reach, can only be described as sheer folly. To the man who will arouse his mind to some sense of initiative, and will open his eyes to facts that stare him in the face, the doing of original work in magic requires scarcely more effort than would be necessary in imitating work already done. We do not question the fact that some men, more than others, have the faculty for conceiving new ideas. That is so in every calling that gives men a chance of using their brains. In every kind of work, mental or physical, there are bound to be degrees of skill, higher and lower, to which various workers respectively attain. In no case can all be equally skilful. Even the road-sweeper, who displays a positive genius for scavenging the open roadway, may prove incompetent when confronted with the task of clearing the gutters. In magic, as in all other forms of human activity, it cannot be expected that all workers will have an equal facility in carrying out the work that lies before them. At the same time, it may be expected, with justice, that every individual magician shall add his contribution to the sum of magical achievement, according to the talents with which he has been endowed by nature. That is all we have a right to expect; but it is the least he has a right to give, in exchange for the value he receives from others. The man who is absolutely incapable of original work in magic is unfitted for practicing the art, and should seek for a more appropriate calling. The man who could, but will not do such work,

should be sent to Coventry by all magicians who have self respect; and, therefore, respect their profession.

In magic, as in all else, the greatest aid to success is a complete understanding of the subject, so far as available knowledge extends. In any technical subject, such as magic, a complete understanding cannot possibly be possessed by anyone who lacks theoretical knowledge. Unless the theory—the inner constitution of a technical subject—be known, no man, however well qualified otherwise, can realise the present state of knowledge, or plan his future course with any confidence, beyond that due to blissful ignorance. The theory of magic, as such things go, is comparatively simple. It is, however, none the less important on that account. Its very simplicity renders a lack of knowledge the less excusable on the part of those who ought to possess it. And, seeing how useful that knowledge becomes, when one is seeking for novel suggestions and inspirations, the magician who neglects this branch of his subject must be accounted blind to his own interests, to say no more than that.

PART III
THE PRACTICE OF MAGIC

CHAPTER I

WITH PLAYING CARDS. THE TRIANGLE

WITH playing cards the conjurer has countless experiments but surprisingly few different effects, although these have been exploited in innumerable ways. We will take as an example the effect which depends upon a certain card or a number of cards being chosen or selected from a pack and being afterwards discovered in another part of the pack or in some other place altogether.

This effect has been repeated over and over again, in a great many ingenious ways. Probably the most striking of these is that known as "The Rising Cards," in which the chosen cards rise in a mysterious way, one at a time, from the pack, which is isolated by being placed in a glass tumbler or some other receptacle.

Another very successful and therefore very much copied (and, for that reason, hackneyed), feat of magic with cards is called "The Torn Card." A chosen card is torn to pieces by the selector who is asked to retain one piece. The other scraps are usually loaded into a conjurer's pistol, which is aimed at some such object as a plate, or a bottle, a candle, or the crown of a hat. After the pistol is fired, the card, apparently restored, with the exception of the missing portion, appears on the aforesaid object, as

though it had been shot there and had become whole again in its flight. By conjurer's logic this is proved by the missing part fitting exactly into its place. As a final effect, the major part of the card is usually placed in a prominent position, and the small piece is apparently thrown towards it, or again fired at it, and the audience is duly surprised to see it visibly join itself to the rest of the card which, on examination, is found to be whole and without flaw.

Causing a card, or some cards, to pass from one place to another is a favourite effect. So also is the changing of a card for one of a different denomination. A pretty example of this feat used to be exhibited by Verbeck who would take, say, a ten of clubs, and touching a green tie with it, cause the pips to turn green. When the card was passed over a yellow rose the spots would turn yellow, and thus, chameleon like, the ten printed signs would change to the colour of any object touched. Finally, on Verbeck touching his forehead with the card it became his photograph. We quote this as a brilliant and original variant of the changing of a card which feat usually takes the form of transforming an indifferent card into one that has been previously selected.

Causing a number of cards to diminish in size, by manipulation of the conjurer's fingers, and convincing the onlookers, at various stages, that the cards are becoming smaller and smaller, is a charming effect. The converse of this, the enlargement of the cards, or the multiplication of them, has been described in print, but we do not remember ever having seen it.

Feats of arrangement, such as dealing oneself all the trumps at a game of whist, or causing particular cards to be found in a certain given order, may be classed as another kind of effect.

Catching cards from the air, or rather, appearing to do so, and making them vanish, one at a time, from the finger tips, are also effects much in vogue. They are apt to appear akin to the feats of jugglery often exhibited by conjurers, such as throwing cards boomerang fashion, or spreading them deftly along the forearm, springing them from hand to hand, and various eccentric shuffles, which can hardly be called feats of magic. In our opinion they are incomplete; they may impress the onlooker with the fact that the card manipulator is very clever, very dexterous, but the feats convey no mystery, and all idea of watching a real magician is destroyed by such diversions.

A bogus scientific explanation is an excellent excuse for a feat of magic, but it should always have a basis of probability—or rather, possibility. Otherwise, it is a mere insult to the intelligence of the audience, and will be resented by the more educated. It should take a natural physical law as its basis, and show what wonderful things can be accomplished by that law plus magic. The experiment should be quite possible granted that magic was true. An example of this method of presenting an illusion with cards is the following, performed by Dr. Herschell, a distinguished amateur. He called it

THE PERMANENCE OF RETINAL IMPRESSIONS.

The performer brought forward a pack of cards and selected from it the ten of hearts and the ten of spades. The former he placed at the bottom of the pack which he inserted in a box attached to a little easel standing on the table. The front of the box was cut away so as to disclose the ten of hearts. The top of the box was closed and fastened so that it was impossible for a card to leave its position in the pack. He then explained to the audience that any impression upon the retina of the eye lasted for an appreciable time, and illustrated this by showing the common toy, the thaumatrope, in which a horse and its rider upon different sides of a card are combined into one image when it is rotated. He then explained that if anyone looked at an object attached to the centre of a flat surface coloured black by a certain magical pigment the length of the persistence of the retinal image would be greatly increased. He attached the ten of spades to the centre of a small black thin piece of wood about ten inches square, and held it in front of the box containing the pack of cards, so as to hide it from the audience. The eyes of the audience having been kept fixed upon the ten of spades for a few seconds he moved the board away and the image persisted in such a manner that this card was seen to occupy the place in which previously was the ten of hearts. When the performer lowered the board and instantly removed it the ten of hearts reappeared. This change was repeated

several times and lastly both the cards in the box and the ten of spades attached to the blackboard were passed for examination.

Granted the existence of the magical pigment there is no reason why the illusion should not have been a genuine experiment.

Books on magic nearly always devote pages to manipulative devices for use with playing cards, and but seldom does one read of a really new plot. We maintain that a really good illusion with cards is not simply a repetition of an effect which has been worked to death, however new and ingenious the means by which it is accomplished may be. We will not content ourselves with describing a series of devices and leaving the student to combine them into a presentable feat of magic; in fact, we do not propose to set down here numberless ways of gaining one effect, or any dodges or sleights whatever except those which form part of the one illusion which we propose to place before our readers as an example—and simply as an example—of feats of magic with playing cards.

Our plan for the following chapters of this work is this. We have discussed the Art of Magic, have attempted a definition of the Theory of Magic, and now we wish to give a general idea of the Practice of Magic. But, in the same way that the Japanese art collector does not confuse the senses of his visitors by exhibiting several specimens of one class of object but submits one, and one only, at a time, so it is our intention in each of these chapters, to give one

example of a complete and practical illusion with the object or objects named at the beginning of each chapter.

To give a rough idea of the number of sleights, devices, and tricks with playing cards we will refer our readers to a catalogue of a great many of them which they will find at the end of this chapter. This index is the work of our friend, Professor Hoffmann, and was intended only for his private uses. In giving us permission to publish it he wishes it to be distinctly understood that it is not in any way complete. However, with the indexes to the card chapters of "Modern Magic" and "More Magic"—books indispensable to any student—the list would be nearly complete. As our catalogue stands it will be most helpful, for there will be found all, or nearly all, the sleights available for any new effect that the reader may have in mind.

We have pointed out how few really new effects there are in the whole range of conjuring with playing cards, and we would like to give an illustration of what we mean by a really new effect with cards. This was described to us by Mr. G. W. Hunter some years ago. Whether it has ever been presented we do not know, but it struck us forcibly as being quite a novel departure, exhibiting marked originality, in illusions with cards.

The performer shows a table standing away from anything else on the stage. This table is one of the small round-topped variety with a single leg which terminates in three feet. The central upright is formed of glass tubing, and between it and the tripod

below is a small box or drawer large enough to hold a pack of cards.

A large handkerchief is thrown over the table and serves as a table cloth. A pack of cards is put into the box. Now, at the word of command the cards are seen travelling up through the glass tube, apparently journeying from the box to the top of the table. At the same time, the handkerchief slowly rises and a mysterious form is seen to be shaping through its folds. This goes on until the invisible structure is about two feet high, and then the movement stops. Very carefully the conjurer removes the silk handkerchief and discloses a Castle of Cards formed in the same way as those castles which most of us as children used to build, stage by stage, with infinite patience. To prove to the audience that the Castle of Cards has no solid foundations the conjurer gives the table a shake and the whole frail building collapses.

We have not obtained permission to divulge the secret of this Castle of Cards. We have simply described it as a sample of the sort of thing that would be welcomed by audiences as something fresh, and we would predict that the man who presented a feat of magic as novel and as good would be quite a lion among his brother wizards, so rare is a new effect. Unfortunately, as is the case at the Zoo, when the lion roars all the other animals make a noise, and when a conjurer produces a novelty too many other conjurers seem to have no other object in life but to copy it and thus surfeit the public with that particular feat.

We most earnestly commend to these over zealous disciples the wisdom of producing some combination or new effect of their own. To demonstrate how really easy it is to evolve a new combination from most simple means and materials we will describe an illusion with cards which has been proved successful by hundreds of representations before thousands of spectators.

The illusion is called "The Triangle," a title which conveys to the mind many possibilities, but little information as what is actually to be displayed. At the same time it is concise and trips easily off the tongue; therefore, it has all the qualities of a good title either for the magician's programme, or for his advertisements—a most important consideration. Furthermore, the spectators are apt to remember the feat afterwards, and speak of it by name, a distinction not easily obtained.

We fancy that our readers are getting somewhat impatient with us. They wonder why we digress to write of this and that. We will tell them. When we undertook to write this book we determined to make it as helpful to the student and as illuminating to that portion of the public willing to read it as we possibly could. That is why! There are scores of text books giving descriptions of tricks and devices, good, bad and indifferent. There is a mine of information before the would-be wizard. We hope to show him how to exploit this mine to the best advantage.

In Fig. 1 the appliances used for The Triangle are depicted. They are simply a pack of cards set

out on a blackboard, which is fitted with four small shelves, a few yards of broad ribbon of any colour the performer fancies, and a chair, on the seat of which is lying an ordinary oblong Japanese tray.

We will now describe, as carefully as possible, the working details of what the performer does with

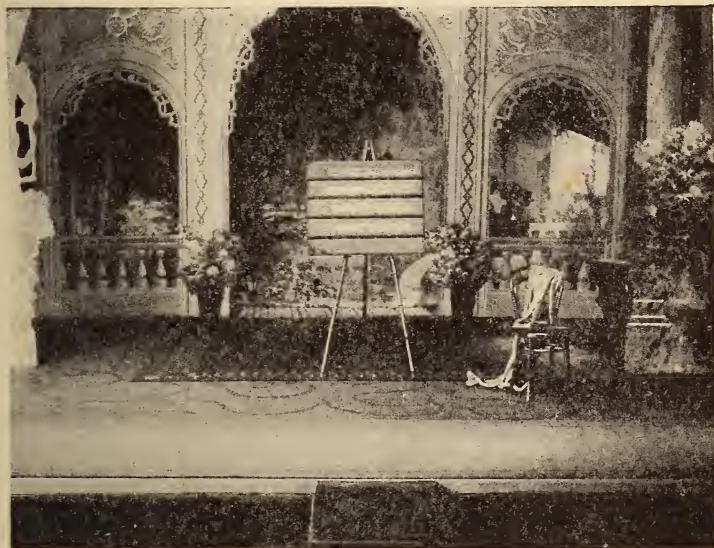


FIGURE I.

these everyday articles. We hope that after the student has read our description he will be in a position to copy the illusion exactly, but, unless the foregoing pages have been written in vain he will not, except, perhaps, as a matter of practice, do anything of the kind; rather will he set to work to evolve a very much more effective piece of magic, which shall be his own.

For the explanation of the secrets of The Triangle we shall adopt the plan of inserting a number at each point at which the conjurer has something to do not known to the audience. These numbers will be repeated at the end of the chapter with full directions as to what he is to do.

The performer commences by inviting a member of the audience to sit on the chair. When he is seated the conjurer calls this gentleman's attention to the 52 cards displayed on the board behind him and points out both to him and to the rest of the audience that there is no card missing; the pack is complete. Casually showing that his hands are empty the conjurer gathers together the cards on the top row and then those on the row beneath. He drops them face downwards on the Japanese tray, which he holds in his left hand, having taken it from the chair to allow the visitor to sit down.

To facilitate the taking up of the cards neatly the right hand edge of each card was placed just over the left hand edge of the one before it, so that by placing the fingers of his right hand under the card at the right hand end of the row and then running his hand along from right to left the conjurer picked up all the cards with one movement.

Half the pack is now on the tray. The performer asks his assistant to take them off the tray, cut them, and turn the two packets thus formed face to face. Handing him the ribbon the conjurer asks his assistant to twist the centre part of it several times around the cards. The conjurer then offers the two ends of the ribbon to two ladies in the front row of the spec-

tators. One end should be given to a lady on the right and the other to a lady on the left, as in Fig. 2.

Proceeding to explain that the experiment is called The Triangle the prestidigitateur asks his assistant if he minds being called The Apex.

"Here," says the conjurer, "we have what dramatic

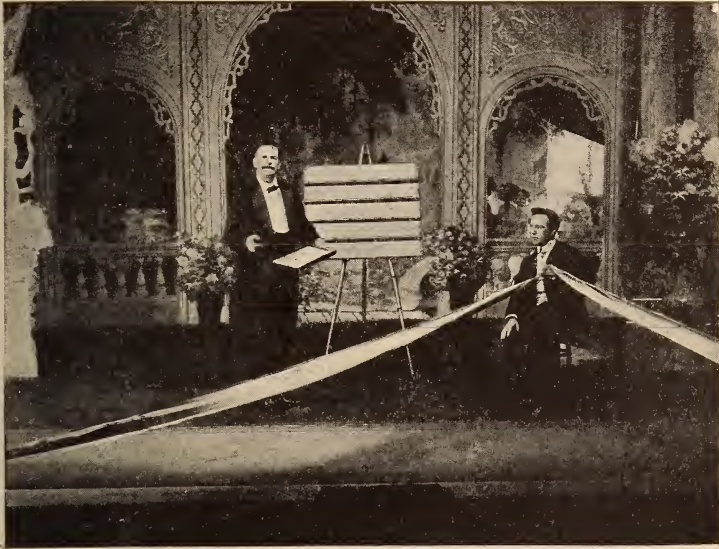


FIGURE 2.

critics call the eternal triangle, which I am told forms the basis of most of the plays of the present day. It consists of two ladies and one gentleman, and very surprising are the plots which can be evolved from such a combination. The other half of the cards I will spread out on this tray." Suiting the action to the words the conjurer takes them from the

board, in the same way as the others, but spreads them all over the tray, face upwards (1).

Advancing to the ladies who are holding the ribbons the conjurer requests them to look at the twenty-six cards on the tray and think of anyone of them without indicating to him in any way what cards they decide upon.

Here it is as well to point out that it is quite possible that both ladies may fix upon the same card and also to impress upon the audience how impossible it is for anyone to know of which cards the ladies are thinking. It is quite impossible, says the conjurer, for any man to know what a lady is going to do until she has done it, and he begs the ladies who are helping him to forego for this occasion that privilege of the fair sex and not to change their minds!

When both the ladies have indicated to the performer that their choice is made he places the tray on the nearest convenient chair, or other object, and gathers together the cards in a packet which he squares up. In doing this he makes it very plain that he does not tamper with the cards in any way or use any sort of manipulation; he simply picks up the cards in a natural manner. Having done this he asks the ladies, each in turn, to hold the pack for a moment in the same way that the ribbon is held and to wish the cards they thought of to leave the rest of the packet (2).

At this stage there is an opportunity for the performer to prove for himself the wisdom of the maxim: "Although no good conjurer leaves any-

thing to chance he should take advantage of all opportunities."

We will suppose that when the conjurer asked a lady to think of a card he also glanced at them and made his own guess as to which one she would select. We will say that the King of Clubs seemed to him—by reason, perhaps, of the way it lay among the others—the one most likely to be chosen, he might address the lady in the following way:

"Will you please wish the card you have only thought of to leave the pack? Of course it is impossible for me to know which card it is, but supposing it is the King of Clubs, just wish it to go."

If by a lucky chance the King of Clubs *was* the card the lady will almost surely admit the fact by some exclamation or movement of surprise, and the artist will appear to be a veritable thought-reader. We have often known this ruse to succeed but whether it does or not matters little. The conjurer continues in this strain: "Will you say King of Clubs go away, come again another day, or words to that effect? Of course I mean you to say them to yourself. I do not wish to incite you to give a recitation."

The second lady is asked to wish her card to go in the same way whilst she is holding the half pack near the ribbon.

The wizard explains that if the experiment has succeeded the two cards that the ladies only thought of will now have left the pack he is holding. Handing another person the tray the conjurer asks him to act as scrutineer, and now for the first time he

asks the ladies of what cards they thought. We will presume that the cards were the King of Clubs and the Four of Hearts.

"Very well," says the performer, "I will deal all the cards I hold before this gentleman and if he or those seated near him see either of those cards among the named will they please say so?"

From the moment that he asked for the names of the cards the conjurer has been particular to hold the cards in such a way that all present are convinced that he is not tampering with them in any way. He now deals them very slowly and deliberately, one by one, face upwards on the tray and those watching bear witness that neither the King of Clubs nor the Four of Hearts is among them (3).

"You hear, ladies and gentlemen," the conjurer continues, "the clever cards have gone; the inference is that they are not here. As a matter of fact when the ladies wished them to depart they travelled invisibly along these ribbons and will now be found in the hands of the Apex."

Having by this time picked up the cards in his left hand and the tray in his right our necromancer now approaches the gentleman who has been so patiently holding the other half of the pack and, placing the tray upon his knees (4) requests him to unwind the ribbon from the cards and deal them on the tray for the purpose of finding the King of Clubs and the Four of Hearts.

Of course the two cards in question are found and exhibited and the gentleman is bowed off, although, before he leaves, if he evinces any desire to examine

the whole pack, now lying on the tray, he is at liberty to do so (5).

Gathering up the ribbons the conjurer may remark that doubtless the experiment has been successful because the ladies wished, for when ladies wish a thing to be done it usually is done.

If all this has been carried out with the confidence and ease essential to good conjuring the audience will be puzzled, entertained, and surprised, and they would be still more surprised to know by what simple means their senses had been deceived. But then, so would the invalid often be astonished to know what very simple things really cured him when those things were administered properly and prescribed with the judgment of the expert.

The experienced conjurer knows that the secret of any good practical illusion is simple, and he admires it accordingly. It is only the novice who scoffs at simplicity and hankers after complexities, because he does not realise the amount of work that has to be done to attain what he is apt to treat with contempt as being too simple. Dear amateur, the bicycle is a simple machine, as it is now. But glance back at the history of its evolution, and consider! So it is with a good illusion.

TRICK OR DEVICE.

Double faced cards. Half of the pack, namely, the twenty-six cards forming the two lower rows on the board are backed with duplicates of the other twenty-six which form the upper rows.

PREPARATION.

Take a whole pack of thin cards and neatly paste them back to back. Place them on the two lower shelves. Take a second pack and select from it the twenty-six cards requisite to complete the display on the board. It will be seen that they must be duplicates of the backs of the prepared cards.

The other half of the ordinary pack is put in the pocket Marked (E) in the diagram of a conjurer's dress coat on page 310.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) During the passage of his hand from the board to the tray the conjurer turns each row of cards over so that the backs are face up when laid on the tray.

(2) When he squares them up he turns them over again and presents one end of the pack only to each lady to hold. He grasps the other end with his finger and thumb and also keeps them low down so that no one near catches a glimpse of the under side.

(3) Again keep the cards low down, so that only one side of each is seen, and for the same reason the persons asked to assist should all be seated in the front row.

(4) The performer has the gentleman on his right. When about to place the tray on the gentleman's knees with his right hand he drops his left hand to his side, drops the prepared cards into pocket (G) as the gentleman is approached, and takes the half pack out of the pocket (E) when bending the body in the act of depositing the tray.

(5) The unprepared half pack is thrown on the tray when the gentleman has found the chosen cards.

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Modern Card Manipulation, p. 41.

Card caught in tambourine. *Mahatma*, Vol. 7, p. 101.

Card caught on plate. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 72.

Four Cards caught at finger tips. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 103.

Cards caught on billiard cue. *Medrington*, p. 5.

FOUR ACE TRICK (or equivalents).

Expert at Card Table, p. 172.

À la Bertram. *Modern Conjurer*, p. 124.

De Vere Version. *Mahatma*, Vol. 5, p. 2.

J. C. Hilliard's version. *Magic*, Vol. 5, p. 63.

An effective addition. *Magic*, Vol. 4, p. 94.

Excelsior four ace trick. *Medrington*, p. 7.

THE ACROBATIC ACES.

With Knaves. *Expert at Card Table*, p. 191.

TWO OR MORE CARDS CHANGING PLACES.

Expert at Card Table, p. 177.

Mahatma, Vol. 1, p. 124.

Aces and Kings in separate envelopes change places.

Secrets of Magic, p. 7.

Card passing from one sealed package to another.

New Era Card Tricks, pp. 91, 185.

Card on table changes place with one on pack. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 148.

Queens and Jacks change places under two plates.

New Era Card Tricks, p. 160.

Chosen cards leave pack and pass into hat. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 190.

Houdin's "Mene Tekel, Upharsim." *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 195.

Card change in glass on table. *Mahatma*, Vol. 4, p. 14.

Four Cards change places with four in tied-up pack. *Mahatma*, Vol. 6, p. 57.

Cards in two different envelopes change places. *Magic*, Vol. 4, p. 34.

New Era Card Tricks, pp. 91, 143.

Card threaded on ribbon changed to another, and itself found in envelope. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 106.

CHAPELET TRICKS, AND TRICKS DEPENDENT ON ARITHMETICAL PRINCIPLES.

Expert at Card Table, p. 179.

New Era Card Tricks, p. 41.

Card read behind back. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 67.

Ne Plus Ultra. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 48.

Cards read in a spectator's pocket. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 191.

CARDS À LA MANCHE.

Expert at Card Table, p. 185.

Bertram's Method. *Modern Conjurer*, p. 83.

Finish by passing cards into trousers pocket, just shown empty. *Magic*, Vol. 4, p. 20.

Six cards counted from hand as seven. *Magic*, Vol. 4, p. 20.

Suggested new finish. *Mahatma*, Vol. 8, p. 41.

DISCOVERING CHOSEN CARD, AND REPRODUCTION IN VARIOUS WAYS.

Telegraphing by manipulation of cigar. *Secrets of Magic*, p. 7.

- Clairvoyance Mysterieuse. *New Era Card Tricks*, pp. 167-170.
- Drawn Card extracted from wrapped-up pack. *Mahatma*, Vol. 6, p. 127.
- To name cut cards of a new pack. *Modern Conjurer*, p. 67.
- Chosen Card caught on a plate. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 72.
- Chosen Card passed through plate. *Sphinx*, Vol. 3, p. 142.
- Chosen Card found under coat collar of drawer. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 78.
- Chosen Card made to adhere to hand mirror. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 171.
- Chosen Card found at chosen number. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 102.
- Chosen Card passed into spectator's pocket. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 151.
- Chosen Card passed through hat. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 238.
- Chosen Card passed into sealed envelope. *Mahatma*, Vol. 2, pp. 70, 94.
Mahatma, Vol. 3, p. 2.
Mahatma, Vol. 4, p. 95.
- Chosen Card passed into covered glass. *Modern Card Manipulation*, p. 47.
- Chosen Card produced at bottom of selected heap. *Modern Card Manipulation*, p. 43.
- Chosen Card produced from performer's own pocket. *Modern Card Manipulation*, p. 46.
- Pack wrapped in paper, knife inserted through paper, divides two chosen cards. *Sphinx*, Vol. 3, p. 64.
- Cards dropped into hat drawn through crown. *Sphinx*, Vol. 3, p. 64.

- Card thought of produced on back of performer.
Sphinx, Vol. 3, p. 150.
- Two cards, freely chosen, produced top and bottom of two out of three heaps chosen by spectators.
Magic, Vol. 5, p. 35.
- Chosen Card shaken out of handkerchief. *Magician*, Vol. 1, p. 52.
- To balance cards on hand. *Magic*, Vol. 1, p. 43.
- The "Piano" Card Trick. *Magic*, Vol. 2, p. 82.
- New Disappearing Card. *Magic*, Vol. 3, p. 10.
- The Travelling Ace. *Magic*, Vol. 3, p. 30.
- One Chosen Card Finding Another. *Magic*, Vol. 3, p. 31.
- Cards changed to photos of selected statesmen. *Secrets of Magic*, p. 51.
- A thought-reading trick. *Expert at Card Table*, p. 194.
- Card drawn through handkerchief. *Expert at Card Table*, p. 198.
New Era Card Tricks, p. 57.
Modern Conjurer, p. 73.
- Selected pairs produced at top and bottom. *Expert at Card Table*, p. 200.
- The Hypnotised Card. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 68.
- A Dancing Card. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 92.
- Card balanced on hat. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 146.
- Names of half a dozen drawn cards found in envelope.
New Era Card Tricks, p. 100.
- Four drawn cards caught, two in each hand, from pack thrown in air. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 103.
- Card changed though threaded on ribbon. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 106.
- Ace of diamonds made to vanish from pack. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 134.

- A Striking divination trick. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 135.
- Cards noted made to vanish from pack. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 143.
- Reading cards in sealed envelopes. *New Era Card Tricks*, pp. 144, 145.
- Cards made to pass from one person's pocket to another. Mlle. Patrice. *Modern Conjuror*, p. 133.
- Card, Ring, and Ribbon. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 153.
- Three cards thought of written down by performer and, after removal, made to return to pack. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 155.
- Everybody's Card. New Version. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 162.
- Name of chosen cards found in suspended envelope. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 173.
- Audacity card trick. Seven of clubs and eight of spades accepted as reverse cards. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 182.
- A Chain of Cards. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 186.
- Predestination Trick. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 192.
- The Fountain of cards. *New Era Card Tricks*; p. 200.
- Card passed through hat. *Modern Card Manipulation*, p. 58.
- Shooting feat. To hit the ace of hearts. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 249.
- Shooting feat. To hit the ace of hearts. Robinson's. *Mahatma*, Vol. 2, p. 61.
- The Card and Broken Mirror. *New Era Card Tricks*, p. 265.
- Pack of Cards changed to flowers. *Mahatma*, Vol. 4, p. 11.

- The Card Ladder. *Mahatma*, Vol. 5, p. 99.
 Cards made to turn over in pack. *Magic*, Vol. 4, pp.
 31, 47.
 Card vanishes in glass of water. *Sphinx*, Vol. 3, p.
 115.
 Missing card found on performer's back. *Medring-*
ton, p. 2.
Sphinx, Vol. 3, p. 151.
 Card production from pocket of spectator. *Magic*,
 Vol. 5, p. 47.

TRICKS DEPENDENT ON AUDACITY.

- Chosen cards instantly reproduced from freely shuffled
 pack. *Magic*, Vol. 4, p. 103.
New Era Card Tricks, pp. 182, 183.

COMBINED COIN AND CARD TRICKS.

- Coins falling through cards into glass. Various
 methods. *New Era Card Tricks*, pp. 125-129.
 Single coin produced on face of card. *New Era Card*
Tricks, p. 257.
 Vanished coin made to appear on edge of selected card.
New Era Card Tricks, p. 267.

TO PRODUCE DRAWN CARD AT A GIVEN NUMBER IN PACK.

- Elliott's method. *Mahatma*, Vol. 3, p. 107.
 To produce drawn card at desired number. *New Era*
Card Tricks, p. 102.
 Card thought of found at chosen number. *Expert at*
Card Table, p. 196.
New Era Card Tricks, p. 85.

TO BRING SEPARATED CARDS TOGETHER IN PACK.

- Magic*, Vol. 3, p. 10.
Expert at Card Table, p. 197.
 Sympathetic Queens. *Secrets of Magic*, p. 37.

CHAPTER II

WITH BILLIARD BALLS. MULTIPLICATION

IN reading over our last chapter we find that we have not impressed upon our readers the fact that broad effect is the quality most prominent in the experiment which was under discussion. To avoid over elaboration, to know when to leave off, is a valuable asset to any artist, especially to an artist in magic.

In The Triangle one could just as easily have had a dozen cards thought of and ultimately found in the other half pack, as two. But nothing would have been gained by doing that; in fact, a cue would then have been offered to the audience as to the secret of the feat. On the other hand, to obtain the broad effect, the fact of thinking of two cards in the pack is made the most of. The artist, having chosen the right tones of colour, lays them on thickly and with a sure hand. No finicking movements are called for. Everything that is done is definite and apparently above board. No sleights with the cards to show off the dexterity of the performer are interpolated; in every way the picture as seen by the audience is clearly outlined and easily remembered.

In Billiard Balls we have a moderate sized object, dear to the heart of the manipulator. As with the cards, so with billiard balls. The manipulator finds the temptation strong upon him to linger lovingly

over sleights, passes, and palms galore, whilst losing sight of the ultimate effect on the mind of his audience. We do not remember ever to have seen an illusion with billiard balls in which the effect was not blurred by this sort of thing instead of being made to stand out in relief like a clearly cut cameo. On being asked afterwards what the conjurer did with a billiard ball the spectator probably replied—"Oh, all sorts of things."

Now, one does not wish to hear a criticism like that if one has been displaying a feat of magic; rather would one hear a greatly exaggerated description. At present, manipulation pure and simple will not carry a conjurer very far if he is using billiard balls and eggs. Let us suppose that a modern conjurer was in the power of some cannibal savages and that his very life depended upon proving to them that he was a real magic man. Even the cleverest sleight of hand performer would stand a very poor chance of living if all he had with him was, say, half a dozen ivory billiard balls and the same number of eggs. He would not know one cumulative feat of magic with them simply because no genius has as yet invented one. But give the same conjurer twenty silver coins and a top hat and he would know what to do. The natives would be astounded to see him catching money from the air, picking coins from all sorts of places, and throwing them into the hat. Even if the savages were so happy as not to know what money was they would wonder at this medicine man who created those shining discs at his finger tips. If, instead of the money and the hat the conjurer

had three cups and a few cork balls of different sizes and three oranges or apples he might still convince

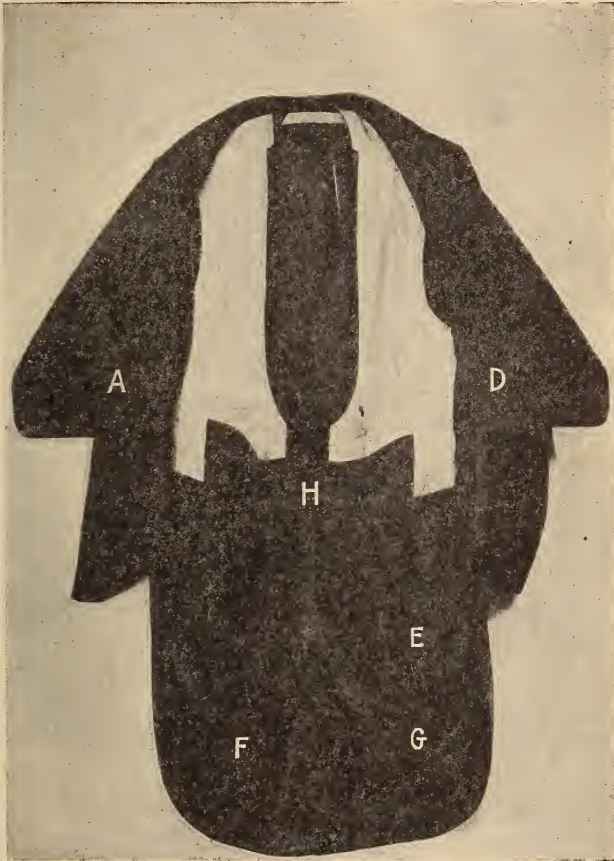


FIGURE 3.

his audience that he was a genuine magician because his play with these articles would have a plot—a

beginning, a middle, and an end. It would be a satisfactory effect.

As a matter of fact, apart from playing cards there are very few complete feats of magic which are not dependent on some form of mechanical aid. We believe that The Cups and Balls and the Catching Money Trick are the oldest and best illusions that have ever been accomplished by pure sleight of hand, or manual dexterity, alone. But, back to our billiard balls and eggs. Given a little help in the shape of mechanical devices the modern magician can make a very good showing with these objects.

Disraeli said of description that "it was always a bore both to the describer and the describee." We will do our best to curtail our description of Multiplication, but we feel bound to give our readers every possible detail that may help them. We believe that the shortest way in the case of the deception which is the subject of this chapter will be to describe first the illusion exactly as it ought to appear to the audience, and then follow that with the plan which we used in the last chapter for imparting the secrets.

Imagine, then, the conjurer commencing by coming forward to the audience with nothing in his hands and asking permission to pluck a billiard ball from a gentleman's beard, preferably a snow white beard. After indicating to those near just where the ball is nesting he reaches forward with his right hand, just touches the beard with his fingers, and sure enough a red billiard ball is produced. On the stage, or part of the room which forms the stage, is a table. The table is on the prompt side, that is to say, on the

right hand side as seen from the auditorium. The conjurer goes up to the table and drops the billiard ball on a plate which is lying there in readiness (1).

Everyone can hear that the billiard ball is a solid one. It is, in fact, an ivory ball. To use wood or other imitation substances detracts much from the experiment. When the balls are knocked together one hears that little click peculiar to real billiard balls. This convinces the audience that the balls are heavy and consequently difficult to manage, which they usually are. But the effect of using ivory balls well repays one for the extra work required in practicing the manipulations.

"I am very glad you brought a white beard," continues the conjurer, "because you see I have a red ball. Now, from a red beard I usually get a white ball, but it is really all the same to me. You observe that this ball is distinctly red. I have only to pass my right hand lightly over it and it becomes a white one. I will tell you how that is done. I use two. The red one is hidden behind the white." On saying this the conjurer, with the fingers of his right hand, takes a red ball from behind the white, which is between the finger and thumb of his left hand (2).

"I will explain how a conjurer can pocket the white." Here he picks up the white ball which he had dropped with the other on the plate. "Look! I throw this into the air and it seems to disappear. In reality it has dropped into this little pocket behind my right knee."

Apparently he throws it up into the air and it

vanishes; immediately afterwards, he reproduces it from behind his right knee (3).

"I am covered with secret pockets. I had nine tailors to make that one." Saying this he transfers the ball to his left hand. "There is another thing I can do with a billiard ball. I can cause it to multiply. I simply touch this one and it becomes two, each quite solid." Again he drops them on the plate.

"That is quite easy with two hands, but it is much more difficult with one hand only. If the ladies will excuse me I will roll up one of my sleeves, and show you what I mean." He pulls his right coat sleeve over his elbow, and rolls up his shirt sleeve over it, and picking up one of the white balls and rapping it on the table top to prove again its solidity he holds it in the position shown in Fig. 4 and is ready to commence the most important part of the experiment.

It will be noticed that if the body be twisted to the left without altering the position of the hand holding the ball the performer will naturally show both sides of the hand as well as the ball and it will be obvious that nothing but the ball is in the hand. When a second ball appears suddenly beside it (4) whilst the conjurer holds his hand thus outstretched, the full length of his arm from his body, and when the conjurer further proves that they are both solid ivory balls by knocking them together (5) then indeed we have a surprise which savours of real magic.

A rule laid down by Professor Hoffmann and insisted on by most other writers is to the effect that no feat of magic should be repeated at the same per-

formance. But, as pointed out in the first part of this book, that rule does not apply to an effect like the present. If it is wonderful to see one ball produced, it is more wonderful to see two balls, and then three. The fourth is considered more wonderful still, but were there a weak point in the trick of

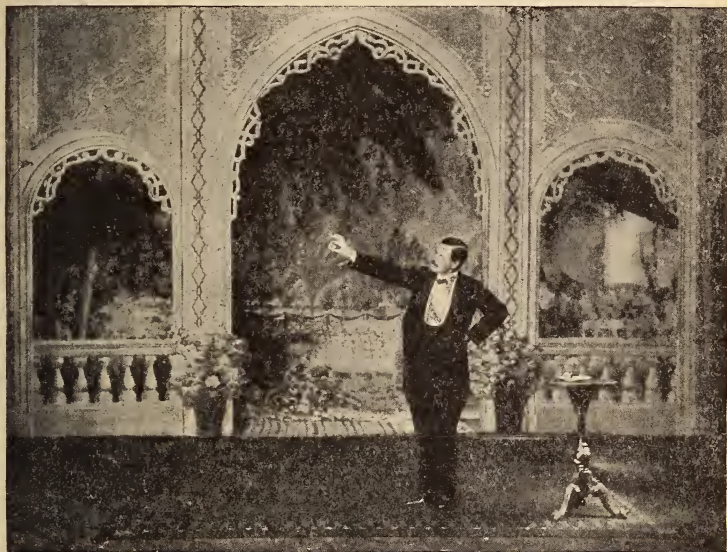


FIGURE 4.

obtaining these balls or any suspiciously unnatural movement used, then it would not bear the repetition which, as it is, forms the perplexing part of this feat. Our conjurer, having proved the two balls solid stretches out the hand containing them, holding one ball between the thumb and first finger and the other between the second and third fingers (6). Again he describes a half circle with his arm, show-

ing all sides of both hand and balls, and again a new ball appears from nowhere (7).

The inexplicable thing about this is that the balls are solid ivory, which fact the conjurer takes care to impress upon the onlookers by taking one of the three with his disengaged hand and rattling it on the other two (8). Having done this the three are shown as before. Slowly the hand is turned in every direction; only three balls can be seen. Again that slight shake of the one hand, and once more a ball mysteriously joins those already there (9). There are now four balls between the five fingers of the hand. The hand can hold no more. The balls are dropped on the plate, one at a time, to show again that they are solid ivory (10).

It must be remembered that we are taking these examples of magic from an actual, existing repertoire, and therefore although the billiard ball feat is now virtually over there is still a second phase of the experiment to describe in which eggs are used. The conjurer continues:—

“There is still another little thing I can do with a billiard ball. I can transform a billiard ball into anything that I happen to want. Suppose I want a mutton chop or a footbath. All I have to do is to pass my hand lightly over a billiard ball and I get what I require which in this case is an egg” (11).

Here the transformation is effected in exactly the same way as the former change from the red ball to the white. In this case it is also as well to use the red ball for the sake of the contrast in colour. It will be found that white balls can be seen by an audi-

ence much better than red ones and that is why white is chosen for the principal effect we have described.

Having got the egg the billiard ball is produced from the back of the hand (12) and thrown on the plate with the others. Sundry movements are executed with the egg—in dumb show, of course. During the production of the billiard balls the conjurer has been talking. We have only indicated the patter actually used here and there, because we cannot communicate the manner of speaking along with the words. The style of delivery cannot be taught here. For instance, one of the little jokes of the original performer was to say, "You notice, ladies and gentlemen, that my hand never leaves the end of my arm." This looks inane in type, but said in a certain manner it always elicited a laugh.

Placing the egg on the left hand the conjurer makes it vanish and reproduces it from the elbow (13). It is then put into the mouth, swallowed, and reproduced from underneath the edge of the waistcoat (14). Again it is placed between the lips, swallowed, and found behind the right ear (15). Once more it is put into the mouth, and rediscovered in the right hand waistcoat pocket (16) and then taken in the left hand and passed from the left side of the left knee to the opposite side of the right knee. The effect in this case ought to be as though there were tube through which the egg is thrown. It goes in at one end and is met by the other hand on emerging at the other (17). It is passed through the body in the same way. The performer puts the egg in the left hand, smacks himself on the back, and

meets the egg at about the top button of the waist-coat (18). Now, as a variant, he drops it into his left sleeve from the left hand, and to all appearances it travels across his back and visibly rolls out of his right sleeve (19). Lastly he bangs the top of his

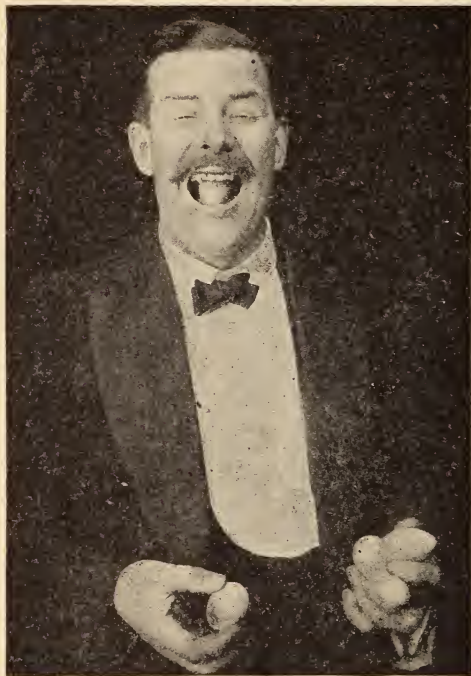


FIGURE 5.

head with the left hand in which he has once more deposited the egg, and this harlequin of an egg appears between his lips. Receiving it in the palm of his right hand (20) he places it in his left (21) and then seemingly to his own great astonishment another appears in his mouth. This he also meets with his right hand and transfers to his left (22). This is repeated thrice more, and thus four eggs have been produced from his mouth to the accompaniment—as rule—of hearty laughter from the whole audience. Fig. 5.

The last part of the feat must be done delicately,

and with the light comedian's sense of humour, but these touches we cannot impart. We have described the illusion and it must be left to the student as to whether it suits his style. Done in the wrong way the production of eggs from the mouth would appear vulgar. Done in the right way it is simply amusing and an excellent finish to multiplication.

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

A shell of celluloid to represent half a white ball. It fits neatly, but not at all tightly over three of the five white balls used. The remaining two white balls are made a little larger than the others. One of them is so large that the shell fits over it fairly tightly, and the other is a little bigger, so that when the shell is pressed on to it the ball can be thrown about without dislodging the shell.

The exact sizes of the balls before us are as follows:—

A. RED, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. B. WHITE, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. C. WHITE, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. D. E. F. WHITE, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. SHELL, $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Celluloid eggs. G. H. I. J. K. We will refer to the balls and eggs by these letters.

A very useful device is the wire ball holder, made of one piece of brass wire twisted into the form seen in the picture of the apparatus, Fig. 6. Three of these are used, but more may be used if the performer desires.

Sleights. Two modes of concealing a ball or egg in the hand are used. The first is what is known as "palming," and consists of holding the

object between the ball of the thumb and that raised part of the palm on the opposite side of the hand.

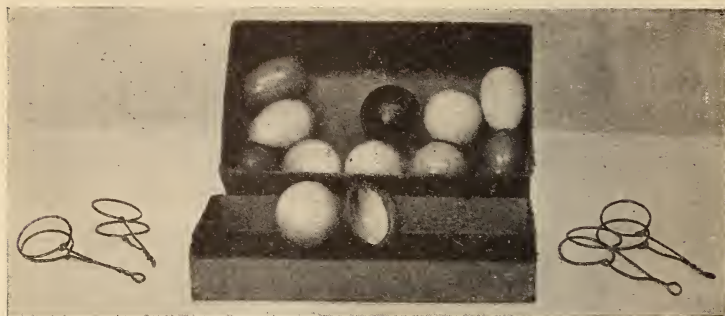


FIGURE 6.

Fig. 7. The ball is held by a slight contraction of the muscles at the base of the thumb. To learn how to palm the ball in this way place the ball in the



FIGURE 7.

centre of the open hand, with all the fingers wide apart, and try to grip the ball by moving the whole length of the thumb inwards without bending any part of it. After considerable practice it will be found that a small

object can be held in this way without moving any of the fingers to any appreciable extent, and the hand can be turned right

over and held in any position without danger of dropping the object. Fig. 8.

The next thing to acquire is the power of using the fingers freely by handling other things, at the same time that the concealed object is "palmed." As concealment is the sole reason for this sleight it follows that the last and not the least important part of the



FIGURE 8.

practice must be devoted to drilling oneself into always holding the hand in such a position that no one sees any part of the palmed article.

Another and easier way of concealing the ball in the hand is used in this combination; we shall refer to it hereafter as the finger palm.

The ball is held as in pictures 9 and 10, and the method is learnt in this way: Slightly bend the fingers of one hand and lay the ball in the hollow



FIGURE 9.

thus formed. Fig. 9. Then bend the fingers just sufficiently to grip the ball and turn the hand over afterwards. Fig. 10. Practice gripping the ball with the two middle fingers leaving the other two free for such use as can be made of

them without disclosing the presence of the concealed ball. They can be stretched out but cannot be spread wide apart.

There are also two "transfers" to practice. We will allude to them as the single transfer and the double transfer. To acquire the first, which



FIGURE 10.

is used to convey the ball from the finger palm to the palm proper of one hand it is necessary to bend

the two middle fingers inwards very quickly. This ought to be done without moving the other fingers. Try it first without the ball and when the tips of the middle fingers can be made to touch the ball of the thumb without much movement of the remaining fingers palm one of the balls and make the same movement, which will roll the ball very quickly into the right position for the palm proper. A pressure of the fingers must be made simultaneously with the grip of the receiving palm which holds the ball, leaving the fingers free to be stretched out again immediately.

The "double transfer" is easier when once the pupil has acquired facility in the other sleights. We use it to transfer a concealed ball from one hand to the other. It consists in finger palming with one hand and palming with the other. The palm of the receiving hand is brought over the ball, finger palmed in the other, or the fingers of the receiving hand are brought over the ball in the palm of the opposite hand. To do this the hands must be brought together on some excuse or other and in the first section of Figures 11, 12, 13, we have first the right hand taking a visible ball from between the finger and thumb of the left hand and at the same time transferring a hidden ball from the palm of the right hand to the finger palm of the left. In the next picture the hands are seen together being taken across the body. In the last the movement is completed, and the hidden ball is finger palmed in the left hand, now back to the spectators, while the palm of the right is exposed. By repeating this movement one gets



FIGURE 11.



FIGURE 12.

the effect of showing both hands back and front without pointedly referring to them. The ostensible reason for doing this is to display the visible billiard ball.

“Apparent transfers” are also sleights which are very important. We will attempt to describe those used in the illusion of “Multiplication.” We will



FIGURE 13.

name the sleights for reference later as “apparent transfer with palm,” “apparent transfer with finger palm,” “apparent transfer with combination palm.”

By “apparent transfer” we mean the apparent taking or placing of a ball in one of the hands while in reality it is retained by the other.

APPARENT TRANSFER WITH PALM.
The ball is held on the open palm of the right hand. The left hand is about to pick it up—as shown in the Figures 14, 15, but the fingers do not close over it although they appear to do so. In reality, as the

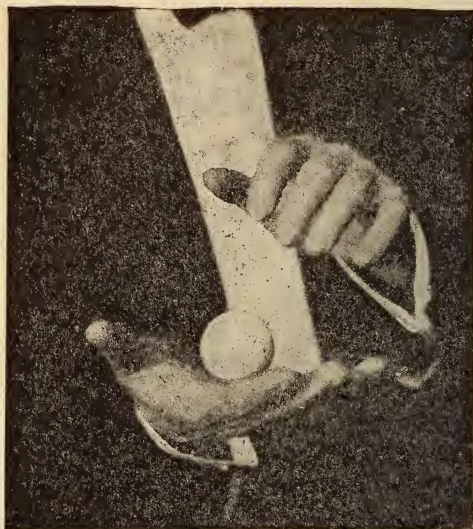


FIGURE 14.



FIGURE 15.

hands are separated, the right is turned with the back to the audience to conceal the ball which is palmed while the fingers of the left are made to curl over an imaginary ball.

APPARENT TRANSFER WITH FINGER PALM.

The ball is held in the grip of the fingers and the hand containing it is turned towards the open palm of

the other hand as though dropping the ball into it. But the fingers do not relax; they retain the ball while the fingers of the other hand curl over as though they had really received it. Just before



FIGURE 16.



FIGURE 17.

making this transfer the ball can be thrown up and caught in the hollowed fingers, or dropped from a position between the finger and thumb and thence apparently tossed into the other hand. Figures 16, 17.

APPARENT TRANSFER BY COMBINATION PALM. In this the action of putting the ball into the opposite hand is simulated, whereas in the first transfer the ball was apparently taken by the receiving hand and in the second it was dropped into the receiving hand.

The ball is held between finger and thumb of one hand and as the hand travels towards the other it is



FIGURE 18.

dropped into the finger palm position, thence transferred to the palm proper, and the fingers of both hands take part in an imitation of giving and receiving the ball. Figures 18, 19, 20.

We hope that the pictures will help the student to understand the movements the

explanation of which, in words, is very difficult. A looking glass will do more for the student than any written description. Once he understands the sequence of any given move let him try it before a



FIGURE 19.

mirror, without the secret palms, and then, when he is quite familiar with the appearance of the real movement let him add the necessary hidden manipulations. If he finds that the real and the imitation appear natural and look alike then he will have

taught himself just how to use the subterfuge. Further, he will realise just how much difference there is between knowing what to do and how to do it,



FIGURE 20.

just where the secrets sink into insignificance compared to the power of acting.

We do not advise the use of the mirror except as a check on preliminary crudities, because one is apt, after long practice before a glass, to depend too much upon its aid.

PREPARATIONS.

The balls and eggs are disposed about the person in the following way. The holders are hung on to spring hooks sewn to the trousers in the position seen in the next picture, Figure 21, and Balls D.E., and C White are put into them, D and E being nearest to the left hand of the performer. The eggs G.H.I.J., are placed under the waistcoat on the left hand side.

Eggs I.K. are put one in the right waistcoat pocket one in coat pocket marked A. Balls A RED and B WHITE (with the shell on it) are placed in pocket E, A RED being nearest the left hand. The

remaining ball F WHITE is put under the waistcoat at about the centre.



FIGURE 21.

To hold the eggs and balls under the waistcoat with safety the waistcoat is prepared in the following way. It is first buttoned up and slit up the back seam. A tab with a large button and a buttonhole are placed behind the collar, a loop of elastic and a button in the middle of the back, and at the back of the waist line, as seen in the picture.

The loop of elastic accommodates itself to the trick by stretching as required, but if this is not thought sufficiently safe the wire holders may be sewn inside the waistcoat.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) After showing the hands, let the left hand rest lightly on the lower edge of the waistcoat and press the ball F WHITE down with the thumb and

“finger palm” it. Act as though you were about to take the ball from the beard with the empty right hand, and pull up right sleeve with the left hand. Then pull up the left sleeve with the right hand and, as the hands cross, execute the “double transfer.” To produce the ball plunge the fingers into the beard or behind some other object and let the ball roll or drop quickly to the finger tips. Immediately afterwards bring it into view very slowly. When turning to the table to drop the ball on the plate bring the left hand, which is hanging at the side, to pocket E, secure the ball RED A from there and “finger palm” it.

(2) The “double transfer” is executed once or twice finally leaving the red ball palmed in the right hand and the white ball between the finger and thumb of the left hand. The right hand is placed in front of the white ball and “finger palms” it. The moment the fingers grip it the finger and thumb of the left hand leave the white ball and grasp the red ball which has been brought by the palm of the right hand just underneath. The right hand is lowered away again taking the white ball with it and this is transferred from the fingers to the palm by the “single transfer,” and the red ball is displayed. The “double transfer” is used, and the white ball is produced from behind the red ball.

(3) The single transfer is executed very smartly. Standing with the right side towards the audience the conjurer throws the ball a couple of feet high. It is caught by the “finger palm,” and while the hand makes an upward motion as though throwing the

ball a second time, the single transfer is executed very smartly and the fingers are spread wide apart. While the ball is being produced from the right knee the conjurer, using the other hand, obtains B WHITE from pocket E and finger palms it. Now an apparent transfer by combination palm is made with F WHITE to the left hand, which discloses B WHITE at the same instant. Another "double transfer" is made to show only one ball, and then F WHITE is produced from behind B WHITE.

(4) Loosen the ball in the shell slightly with the fingers of one hand. Then hold both shell and ball by the first finger and thumb of right hand in



FIGURE 22.

such a way that the second finger can be brought down behind and underneath the ball. Lift the ball and roll it upwards so that it finally rests and is held between the upper part of the first finger and the lower side of the second finger.

The illustrations [Figs. 22, 23, 24] show three phases of the movement as seen by the audience.

(5) The other hand has secured D WHITE and "finger palmed" it, and as the performer takes the

newly produced ball from between the first and second fingers of his right hand with the finger and



FIGURE 23.



FIGURE 24.

thumb of his left he neatly puts the hidden ball into the shell without any effort further than receiving

and holding it with the finger and thumb that holds the shell.

(6) After knocking the solid balls together without disclosing the presence of the shell, which is now on D WHITE the conjurer places B WHITE between the second and third fingers of the right hand.

(7) The second finger is kept close to the first finger and eventually is slipped behind and under the ball in the shell and brings it into view as it did the last ball. The difficulty is greatly increased because the movement of the second finger is hampered by the ball resting above it, which has to be held by the two fingers during the whole operation.

(8) The conjurer obtains E WHITE and gets it into the empty shell as he did D, by taking the last produced ball away from the right hand for the purpose of rattling it against the other two.

(9) When he replaces the ball he puts it between the third and little fingers of his right hand, leaving the space between the first and second fingers to be filled in the same way as before, but the difficulty is increased.

(10) He has once more secured a ball—C WHITE—with the left hand, which carries it behind the shell under the pretext of taking the last produced ball away to drop it on the plate. C WHITE is the biggest ball, and it is pressed well into the shell, which half covers it. When the ball is dropped on the plate with the others it safely carries the shell with it.

(11) Turning to the left the conjurer reaches across to the plate and picks up the red ball with his

right hand. Under cover of this movement the left hand goes to pocket A and finger palms the egg. The double transfer and change are effected in the same way as with the red and white balls.

(12) It is put behind the hand by the apparent transfer with combination palm done very quickly, and rolled back into view very slowly.

(13) Apparent transfer with palm.

(14) Apparent transfer with combination palm.

(15) The same.

(16) It is now really put into the mouth and held there while another egg is taken from pocket B.

(17 and 18) The same as 14.

(19) Apparent transfer with combination palm. While the left hand appears to be dropping an egg down the sleeve, the right hand fingers pull the right hand sleeve over the egg in the palm, so that the egg actually rolls out of the sleeve on its reappearance in public.

(20) Apparent transfer with combination palm. The palm concealing the egg is brought right over the egg between the lips and under the cover thus given the egg in the mouth is drawn back again into the mouth and the concealed egg is held for a moment by the lips and then dropped into the hand which was lowered the moment the second egg was in position.

(21) Visibly and actually, but during the last movement the left hand has secured one of the eggs from under the vest and finger palmed it. This egg is transferred to the right hand when it places the visible egg in the left.

(22) The movements of 20 and 21 are repeated. The last egg to drop into the hand is, of course, the one which has been held in the mouth from movement 16. The particular egg used for this must be selected to fit the mouth comfortably, and may be a little smaller than the others.

CHAPTER III

WITH FIGURES. SIMPLE ADDITION

WE have chosen the subject for this chapter as a direct and striking contrast to the illusion dealt with in the last.

In Multiplication we used a great number of devices dependent upon manual dexterity, and the audience will undoubtedly give the performer credit for phenomenal cleverness with his hands especially if he understands how to present the feat with proper reserve and does not give way to over elaboration, as for instance, causing the balls to disappear again by the same device used for the production, and running through the movements so quickly as to give the general effect of beads on a string being played with.

We will presume that the conjurer has caught the spirit of our teaching, and makes each movement telling and illusive. Even then, the spectators will feel instinctively that they are looking at a wonderful feat of manual dexterity, which is to them baffling and perplexing.

Simple addition is of quite a different calibre. Here the spectators themselves take a great part in the preliminaries, and the impression made upon their minds is totally different. At the end of the feat they should be inclined to look upon the performer as a person who deals in the supernatural.

And yet the tricks used are absolutely simple and do not require the arduous practice necessary for sleight of hand. All the cleverness is concealed in the devices used for misdirection, and the result is an illusion which is superior to the best that can be attained to by the manipulator. Naturally, that is dis-

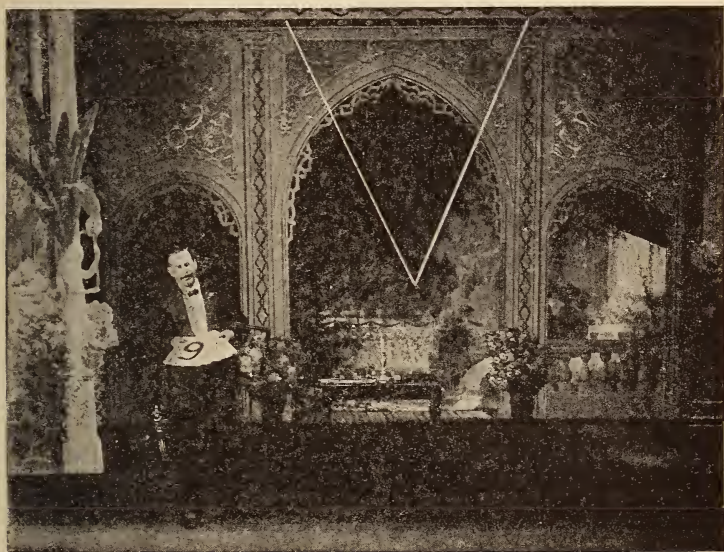


FIGURE 25.

appointing to the man who has spent hours practicing sleights. He finds it hard to believe that some of the best and most striking feats of magic are independent of manual dexterity, and he is slow to admit the beauty of their simplicity. In short, he fails to grasp the fact that sleight of hand only comprises some of the means used to produce an illusion.

In Fig. 25 the performer is seen advancing to

the audience with a number of cards, on each of which is printed a large figure. There are twenty of them—two sets of figures from one to nought. He also holds a skeleton wooden case which is meant to contain them. Behind him is seen a table (any ordinary table answers the purpose) and above the table are hanging two lengths of chain terminating in hooks, hooked together. On the table is lying a Japanese tray (1) a lighted candle in a candlestick, and on the top of some loose sheets of paper an ordinary looking school slate (2).

The chains may be suspended from anything handy as long as they hang in the position indicated (3), and if chains are not available, lengths of cord will answer the purpose just as well.

Handing the cards to one of the spectators and the case to another, the conjurers ask them to examine them, to see that there is no hidden mechanism in the case, and that the cards are ordinary cards. He tells the gentleman who takes the cards that he may mix them up, but requests him not to turn them upside down or face to face.

While the frame and cards are being scrutinised the performer requests the loan of a handkerchief which he takes and throws on the table. From the table he picks up the slate (4).

Showing both sides of the slate which, if he thinks necessary he may rub with his fingers or clean with a damp sponge, the conjurer says:—

“I am also going to use this slate. You observe there is no writing upon it, but as it is sometimes suspected that I have another slate concealed about

me I propose to mark this one. Will one of the ladies suggest which letter of the alphabet I shall write upon the slate?" Someone suggests B. "Very well, we will put B on this side. You see there is nothing on this side. Now I will wrap the slate in this borrowed handkerchief."

He picks up the handkerchief from the table with the left hand holding the slate in the right hand with the blank side facing the audience. Finding he cannot spread out the handkerchief with one hand he throws the slate on the table, marked side upwards, and lays the top edge of the handkerchief along his right forearm. Then, picking up the slate (5), and keeping the marked side towards the audience he holds it in front of the handkerchief and allows the top edge of the handkerchief to fall over the edge of the slate and wraps the handkerchief round the slate as well as the size of the handkerchief will allow. While this is being done he continues speaking:—

"These experiments are very much more interesting when ladies take some part in them. Will one of the ladies be good enough to take charge of this slate? Simply let it rest on your lap and do not allow it to be touched."

Giving the covered slate to one of the ladies the conjurer now collects the cards and the case and asks the persons who have been holding them what the result of their examination is. They can only reply that they have discovered nothing out of the ordinary. "That's what I mean," says the conjurer. "There is no mechanism that you can see." (6). Taking

the articles up to the table he calls attention to the two chains by pointing at them with the packet of cards, so that the audience notices the figure which happens to be on the top. He then drops the cards face upwards on the Japanese tray and stands the case on the top of them. This is necessary because otherwise the conjurer's hands would not be free to unhook the chains, one from the other. Having done that, he immediately hooks the case on to them, and then picks up the cards, squares them up, and grasping them by the top edge, with the figure facing the audience he slides them into the case, helping the operation by holding the swinging case with the left hand and tilting it to a convenient angle for the insertion of the cards (7).

"I hope," he remarks apologetically, "that you are not getting bored with these preparations. There is not much more to do. The only other appliances I shall use are this small slip of writing paper, a playing card to act as a sort of temporary writing desk, and a piece of pencil to write with."

Here he takes these articles from his waistcoat pocket and displays them one by one and then, laying the paper on the card, he advances towards the auditorium and continues:—(8).

"I want three persons—any three persons—to be kind enough to write three figures each on this paper. Perhaps, you, sir, will be good enough to write three *single* figures in a row across the paper." The card with the paper on it and the pencil are handed to the first victim, then to another person who writes

three more figures, and finally to a third party who completes the requisite sum of nine figures.

All these details must seem insufferably dull to our readers, but there is no choice left to us. We must set them down whether they are read or not. We can only excuse ourselves by pointing out that it is on the minute details of any illusion that its success depends, and they are infinitely more difficult to arrange than to describe. Of course in practice the performer keeps the thing going by pleasantries, such as this:—"Perhaps the lady next to you, sir, will suggest what figures you are to write. You know that is an excellent plan in writing figures. Get a lady to suggest the figures and a man to write them. It is often done when writing cheques."

Addressing a fourth gentleman the performer having glanced at the figures on the paper, says, "Now, I want someone to add these figures together. You look a good arithmetician, sir, do you mind finding the total of this sum, and letting us know what it is?" (9).

Handing him the paper, card, and pencil, the conjurer continues:—

"You see what has been done, ladies and gentlemen. Three persons, strangers to me, have written three figures each on a piece of paper. Another gentleman is adding them together. You will admit that it is impossible for me to know the answer to that sum until our accountant tells us what it is."

As soon as the information is forthcoming it is announced by the conjurer who shows the paper to the three persons who wrote the nine figures and

repeats the answer to each one. This gives them the opportunity to recognise their own writing on the paper (10) and is ostensibly done to impress the total on their memory, because the performer tells them that the experiment necessitates the document being burnt. Crumpling it up he sets light to it at the flame of the candle and lays it burning on the card which he holds in his left hand.

“So far anyone could have performed this experiment, but now I can show you a very curious thing,” says the magician. “You will remember that a lady over there has been holding a marked slate which I have not touched. One has heard of pictures by wire. What I am going to do is much simpler. Here is a small piece of chalk. Watch.”

With the chalk he has taken from his pocket, the conjurer points at the slate and moves it as though he were writing in large figures the total of the sum which we will suppose was 1623.

“I might have told you, ladies and gentlemen, that now the paper is reduced to ashes, my writing in the air is sufficient to write upon that slate the answer to your sum. Madam, would you mind uncovering the slate yourself and see whether or not 1623 is now written upon it in chalk.”

The slate is uncovered, and the figures 1623 are seen to be written boldly upon it. The performer hands back the handkerchief to the owner and displays both sides of the slate. When the applause and expressions of astonishment have subsided he continues with the second phase of the experiment which is sure to go well because it is a seasoned and

tried success being nothing more or less than that classical feat so well known to conjurers as the "Rising Cards." But this version has an air of novelty. The large numbered cards—they are six inches by four—replace the ordinary playing cards and, to the lay mind, this change is sufficient to give a new aspect to the old effect. Strangely enough, no one appears to have thought of altering the size and character of the cards although countless means have been devised for the rising process itself.

"You will admit that so far I have not deceived you—at least, not much," the performer continues jestingly, "but the most anxious part of the problem is still to come. (He leans the slate against the candle stick and picks up the tray.) You will remember that a gentleman over there mixed up these cards which have remained isolated over there ever since. (To emphasise this he passes the tray over and around the frame.) What I will attempt now is to separate the figures written on the slate, impossible for me to know beforehand, from the rest written in this case. I shall use a curious motive power very little used even by mechanics.

"For instance, you have heard of Number One looking after himself. Now you shall see. Number one, come out. You see number one rises to the occasion. (He takes the card out of the case and drops it on the tray in his left hand.) The next figure is six. "Six, come out quickly!" (The card which rises is a nine. The performer appears to be confused, but only for a moment.) "I see what it is," he explains confidently, "it is a six, but it is up-

side down. I will put it back again, the same way that it appeared. (He does so), (11). Now turn yourself round, six, and come up properly. (The card rises with the number showing as six.) Now two, come out very slowly, half-way. (While this card is coming up a good effect is produced by the conjurer waving another card over the top of it to prove to the audience that the cards are not being pulled up from above, which is usually their only solution.) That's right. Now show your better half quickly.

"The last figure is three. Three, come out quickly. Three, jump out." (The card jumps three or four feet in the air and is, if possible caught on the tray.) (12.) The complete total is now displayed on the tray and our feat of magic with figures is over. Before we close, it may be as well to point out that the numbered cards can be easily dispensed with when showing in a small room or where the cords cannot be conveniently hung up. The latter part of the effect was designed by the original performer to give spectators at the back of a large hall or theatre something to look at; otherwise, only those in the front rows who handled the slate and wrote the sum, would appreciate what was done and the gallery might feel a little out of it. When arranging a conjuring problem it is as well to remember that it ought to appeal both to the mind and to the eye, to old and young, to gallery and stalls.

TRICKS OR DEVICES, AND PREPARATIONS.

(a) The figures are already on the slate at the commencement but are concealed by a false flap made of cardboard covered on one side with paper similar to the pieces that are lying on the table and on the other side with paint to represent the slate. This false side fits easily but exactly within the frame of the slate, and is kept in position by the performer's finger tips while the slate is being handled.

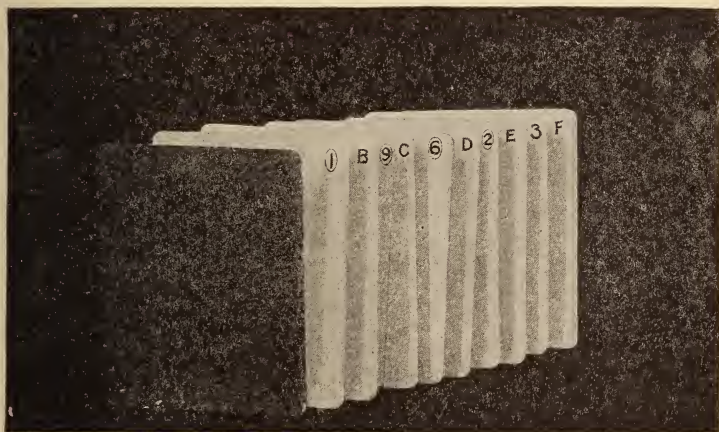


FIGURE 26.

(b) On one side of the paper offered for writing the nine figures upon is already written a similar sum, the total of which is upon the slate. The figures are at the top right hand corner of the paper.

(c) Ten extra cards are prepared. Five of them represent the numbers in the total, the second number being in duplicate. Another card is painted upon

one side to represent the inside of the Japanese tray used, and four more to act as partitions.

In the diagram it will be seen how the cards are arranged to rise. A length of silk thread is knotted at one end, and the knot is engaged in a slit made by a sharp penknife at the lower edge of Card 1. It is then passed behind Card 1 and over partition B, under Card 9 and over partition C, under 6 and over D, under 2 and over E and lastly under 3 and over F. The cards are laid on the Japanese tray with 3 at the bottom and the thread is passed over the back edge of the tray, down to a screw eye in a back leg of the table, near the foot, and thence along the floor to the assistant at the back or side, and the Card A is laid on the top. The tray should be deep enough to receive all the cards and its inside measurement should be a trifle more than the outside measurement of the cards, except in length, which should measure a few inches more than the cards.

INSTRUCTIONS.

- (1.) Which contains the cards prepared as above.
- (2.) The false side is on top.
- (3.) Just over the leg of the table on which the screw eye is fixed.
- (4.) Taking care to put one or two fingers on the flap to hold it in position.
- (5.) Without the false side.
- (6.) If the top card shows one of the figures in the arranged total alter it on the journey.
- (7.) The cards are dropped on the prepared pack in the tray, and when they are picked up again the

prepared cards are taken with them. The squaring up of the cards—which is done by knocking the edges of the cards on the tray) is necessary to prevent the edges of the painted card being observed.

(8.) In displaying the paper the sum is covered by two fingers, and when the paper is laid on the card the sum is underneath the lower end of the paper.

(9.) When the performer receives the card and paper from the third person he takes the paper off the card and again concealing the prepared sum with two fingers, glances at it. When he has found a volunteer to do the addition he replaces the card with the prepared side up.

(10.) On receiving the paper back the performer again takes it off the card and turns it, and when he shows it to the persons who wrote the figures he has his thumb, apparently by accident, over the place where the total should be written. The persons are satisfied with his statement, and the rest of the audience will imagine that they have actually seen the total under their own figures. All the persons who handle the paper should be some distance apart, so that they cannot easily compare notes.

(11.) Taking care to put among the unprepared cards in front.

(12.) This disengages the thread from the slit, and the assistant pulls it in out of sight. The thread must, of course, be invisible to those in the front row of seats. Therefore, the distance and the background must be considered and chosen beforehand, and tested.

CHAPTER IV

WITH A BORROWED WATCH. THE FORGOTTEN GUEST.

COMEDY in conjuring usually depends on the apparent destruction or loss of some confiding person's property, and in this class of magic an assistant from the audience is generally deputed to take charge of the borrowed article. A great deal of laughter is caused when this innocent gentleman is made to appear to lose valuable jewellery or unwittingly destroy things. In this and the following chapter we propose to give examples of this kind of work, which is always popular, especially with juveniles.

Great tact is required by the conjurer who asks anyone to assist him. The conjurer must always remember that the volunteer helper is rendering a service, and that it would be very bad taste on the conjurer's part to repay this favour by making the stranger feel uncomfortable or attempting to score off him in any way whatever. The audience expects to be entertained by the conjurer, not by jokes at the expense of individuals amongst them. On the other hand there is nothing they like better if they feel that the individual is a willing victim or, if the performer can so arrange the affair that no one is offended at the finish.

To accomplish this the wizard will be wise to treat the good-natured man who usually responds to

an invitation to step up and hold something, not as an inferior and ignorant person, but as a good friend who is worthy of all consideration. No man cares to look a fool, but only a foolish person will refuse to take his part in a joke when once he has taken the first step and, when he understands that he is playing part of the game he will rather enjoy it.

An experienced conjurer will not call upon a volunteer assistant without first obtaining his consent to help. After that he will take him into his confidence. A whispered word at the right moment will give the visitor a feeling of importance, especially if the conjurer conveys the idea that the success of the evening depends upon his kind assistance.

Manners make or mar any entertainer who gets into personal touch with an audience, and if our magician lacks the right manner for managing people he had better leave this particular sort of work alone and make up his programme with problems that do not require the assistance of the spectators, for alas, we cannot give him the secret of it.

The presentation of the illusion we are about to describe takes about ten minutes, and it has never failed to keep any audience laughing the whole time. As the actual feat performed, namely, passing a watch from a paper bag into a man's pocket hardly seems important enough to fill that time in a conjuring seance we propose in this instance to give every word of the original patter. Once again we must impress upon the reader that we are simply giving examples of how illusions are built up from very simple material and made entertaining. We do not

ask our would-be wizard to wear our second hand clothes—that is to say, to use our patter. We are ashamed to see our clothes thus set out in the light. Still, the student will see the cut and the workmanship, and he can get his own cloth and cut it to suit his own figure. Our models would never fit him.

When the conjurer commences this experiment he



FIGURE 27.

has a sheet of white paper in his right hand and on a small table behind him is a conjurer's pistol and a silk handkerchief; a box of safety matches is secreted behind some other article on the table—say, a candlestick—and a chair is also provided. The conjurer begins:—

“For one more infliction I will borrow a watch.

Is there anyone who will lend me a watch? I see lots of chains. A modern watch will do, any ordinary watch that will last out the experiment!

"Thank you. That lady offers me her watch. Now, I want a boy to help me with this. Just an ordinary boy; I don't want a boy over fifty. I simply want a boy to hold the watch for a few minutes, so that I don't touch it myself. It makes the experiment so much more interesting. (Here a boy usually gets up from his seat and advances.) Make haste, there's no hurry. You might bring that lady's watch with you. That's right. Now come up here. (The boy puts one foot on the last step leading to the platform.) Bring the other leg up with you. Would you mind standing over there (indicating a position on the left of the platform as the boy faces the audience) and will you please hold up the watch so that everyone can see it?"

"Now do you mind acting as a committee, a committee of one, a sort of watch committee, and will you do everything I ask you? How nice to have a committee that does all you ask!"

The conjurer is holding the paper with his right hand by the left side top corner (1). He now takes hold of the left hand bottom corner with his left hand and pulls it up towards himself and over the corner in his right hand. Then he twists the top corner round inside and the bottom corner round outside. When he has done this he will be in a fair way to form the sort of bag grocers make to hold a small quantity of sugar. We hope the rest will come naturally, because we find it beyond us to de-

scribe the operation further. The bag is finished by screwing the point up in the usual way (2). The inside of the bag is shown to the boy and the bag is then handed to him. All this is done to the accompaniment of a waltz tune played by the piano or an orchestra, and the cue for the music to commence is: "I am going to make this piece of paper into a sort of cornucopia." This information is addressed to the audience and the conjurer proceeds to twist up the paper. Turning to the boy he unexpectedly addresses him:—

"How do you like the weather? It's rather colder than that warm weather, isn't it? What a great many changes we've had after the changes. Such a lot of weather for the time of year. Do you reverse?"

The effect of this should be apparently due to the performer having been suddenly inspired by the waltz tune to give an impromptu burlesque of a dancing couple's conversation as heard through the music, and it must be spoken in a high pitched voice.

"Well, here is my apparatus. (The music stops.) I couldn't use anything simpler, could I?" says the conjurer, showing the inside of the bag to the boy and then placing it in the hand not already occupied in holding the watch. "I want you to hold this bag and to hold the watch above it by the bow, so that everyone can see it. (Steps a few feet away from the boy.) Now, when I tell you to drop the watch into the bag don't drop it on the floor, will you? Don't laugh. This is serious. Now drop it gently."

The boy duly drops the watch into the bag, and the conjurer continues: "I think everyone must be absolutely certain that the watch is now in the bag. Are you certain?" The question is addressed to the boy who, as a rule, promptly makes quite sure by looking into the bag, and the conjurer, amidst much laughter, can bow to the implied compliment. He continues:—

"May I close the bag? I do this myself because I do these things so gracefully, don't I? Like an elephant getting off a cycle on a muddy day. Now will you hold the bag so and stay like that for about three quarters of an hour, if you don't mind?" (3.)

A laughable bit of business is now introduced. Having folded the top of the bag over and instructed the boy to hold it by a finger and thumb, the conjurer turns to the table at the back to get his pistol and handkerchief, but before going he whispers to the boy to feel if the watch is still in the bag. While the performer has his back turned the boy naturally does so; at least, it appears to the audience to be a natural thing for a smart boy to do. Attracted by the laughter that ensues the conjurer turns round, and says, "Well, it hasn't gone yet, has it?" This query also appears natural to the boy and he has no idea that the episode is looked at in a different way by the audience. To them the conjurer appears to have been taken at a disadvantage, and to have stood the test well. Clever conjurer!

Now the performer calls attention to the pistol and handkerchief and also announces what he is about to do, in this way:—

"I have here a small pocket pistol! I will load it with this handkerchief. When I fire this pistol the watch in this bag will take an invisible flight round the room and finally alight in a gentleman's pocket without my touching the boy or leaving the platform. I want one of the gentlemen in the audience to say that he is willing to receive the watch in his pocket. If there is anyone who will do this will he please hold up his foot—I mean his hand. Of course I must have a responsible person—say, a married man. Thank you, sir. It is very kind of you. (To the boy.) That gentleman over there with a black coat and two ears is going to receive the watch. Can you see him?"

Then follows the business of aiming the pistol at the boy as though about to fire and pretending to discover that the boy is frightened of the report.

"Don't look like that. Good-bye." He solemnly shakes the boy's hand in farewell. "You really need not be nervous. I've performed this experiment some hundreds of times and I've killed only one boy (4). He died, but he was only a very small boy. But I see one of the ladies looking nervous. Well, perhaps it would be better if I dispensed with the pistol and made a sort of air gun of this part. Look."

The barrel of the pistol is pulled away from the butt which is thrown on the table. The handkerchief is apparently vanished by the mere act of blowing through the barrel in the direction of the bag. The barrel is then shown to be empty and is laid down with the pistol. The conjurer now takes the

bag and in dumb show extracts an invisible watch from the cornucopia and throws it towards the volunteer who is to receive it. He then unrolls the paper and only the handkerchief is seen. The paper is spread out under the boy's nose and he may pick up the handkerchief and shake it. (He is invited, in



FIGURE 28.

a whisper, to do so.) The watch is no longer there (5).

The conjurer has, of course, been talking during this business. After blowing the handkerchief away he says:—"You see, the handkerchief has gone and is now in this bag. I will take the watch out of the bag invisibly and send it flying into your pocket, sir. It's pretty sure to arrive; it's not going by a south

coast railway. Anyway, it has left the paper. Isn't that an easy way of passing away the time?"

Crumpling up the paper into a ball and taking the handkerchief from the boy, the performer politely thanks him for the help he has given and cordially invites him to take a seat and make himself at home, etc. The performer also contrives to whisper one sentence: "Directly my back is turned, jump up from the chair and look at the seat." The boy will usually obey, and the effect will be that he has had an electric shock or sat on a pin. "Hullo," says the conjurer, with a concerned air, "something wrong with the chair?" Pretending to examine it he says to the boy quietly. "Try that again for a joke. It went well. Sit down, and when I touch the back of the chair jump up quickly." Then, aloud, he says: "Do try it again; I assure you it's an ordinary chair. It must have been your imagination. Please sit down. There, you see it's quite all right. Are you comfortable?"

Here he touches the top rail of the chair back and the boy jumps up as prompted. Apparently with the idea of reassuring the victim again the conjurer sits in the chair himself and persuades the youth to try it once more. This time nothing happens until the conjurer advances to the front of the platform when once more the assistant jumps up and the chair falls over. The secret instructions have again been faithfully carried out. The boy had simply been told in a whisper: "Jump up quickly when I reach the front of the platform and kick the chair backwards."

All this is a very funny interlude for a popular

audience, but of course it is not suitable for all occasions, and can be left out when necessary. If it is included in the performance it is concluded by the conjurer saying:—"What a restless boy. Perhaps you had better sit still standing up." Then, addressing the gentleman in whose pocket the watch is supposed to be, the conjurer continues:—

"Now, sir, I think the watch will have arrived by this time. Will you please look in your pockets and pass the watch to the lady on your left because it is her watch."

All the attention of the audience will now be concentrated on the man searching his pockets, and the performer goes up to the table and deposits the ball of paper and the handkerchief on it (6). Then, returning, he says:—"Is it the same watch, madam? You haven't received it? Haven't you found it, sir? Isn't it in your waistcoat pocket?" In a solemn manner he adds, "Are you serious, sir?"

After a slight pause, during which the conjurer looks suspiciously at the boy on the stage, he remarks:—"It will make things most uncomfortable for my committee." Then he addresses the man again:—

"You aren't joking, are you, sir? Oh, you never joke. Scotchman, perhaps. Whose watch was it? Yes, I remember; it was that lady's. Madam, may I ask if you see the joke? You would rather see the watch? Quite so. But it's most unfortunate for you, isn't it? You remember that I didn't touch your watch, and of course you will quite understand that the experiment is over, so far as I am concerned.

It is a matter to be settled between yourself and that gentleman."

All this must be delivered as though the conjurer was receiving answer to questions which, of course, are imaginary. Now he pretends to overhear a suggestion from another part of the room, and answers indignantly:—

"No! I don't want to search him." Then, to the victim, "Someone over there suggests searching you, sir. Someone who knows you perhaps." Again, to the supposed speaker, with rebuke, "I think it is extremely rude. Really, I see nothing to laugh at." This said seriously only adds to the general hilarity.

With a puzzled air the conjurer turns to the boy on the stage. "What shall we do, Mr. Chairman? Oh, you don't know, and you don't care, I suppose. But something must be done. Would you mind, sir, if I put just two fingers in one of your pockets. I am able to tell whether the watch has ever been there." This is said to the gentleman in a pleading tone, and now, to the whole audience very seriously, "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you my word as a conjurer that I wouldn't deceive you for worlds. If that gentleman will come here for a minute you will see. Would you mind stepping here for one moment, sir, but don't bring that big stick!"

When the gentleman has accepted the invitation (7), the conjurer assures him in a whisper that it is only a joke. Getting him to stand facing the audience, the conjurer takes hold of the right lapel of the gentleman's coat, opens it so as to show the

waistcoat pocket which he assures everybody is his only objective.

To show that everything is above board he calls upon the boy as a sort of witness. "Will you come over here, Mr. Speaker?" He places the boy in a position behind and between himself and the person who is being operated upon. "Now, sir, watch, and

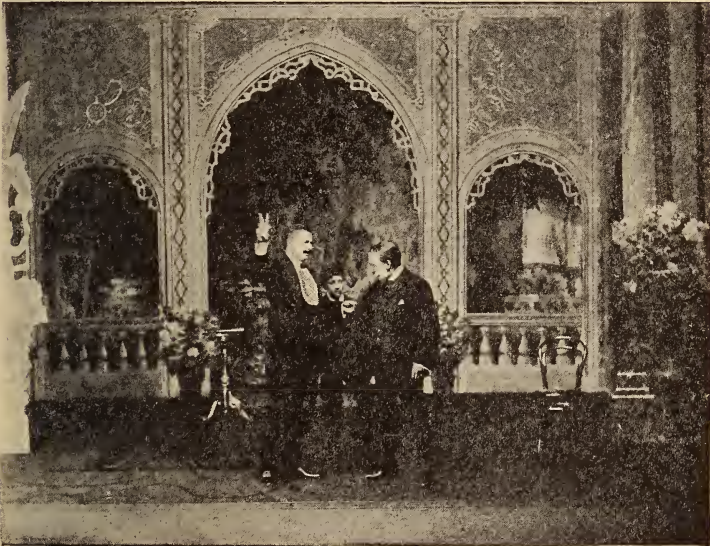


FIGURE 29.

if you find me putting anything into your pocket will you call out and tell the audience. Mr. President," (this to the boy) "If you detect me putting anything in this gentleman's pocket except two fingers, please say so."

Now to the gentleman the conjurer addresses a totally unexpected query. "Excuse me asking, but

do you smoke?" Whether the answer is in the affirmative or negative he goes on: "I really thought you did because you carry matches." Here he apparently produces a box of matches from the gentleman's beard or moustache (8). These he throws on one side; the by-play is over. "Now for



FIGURE 30.

the watch," he continues. The two fingers are thrust into the pocket and the hand is brought away half closed as though containing something (9). "Here it is," cries the conjurer, but when he opens his hand it is empty. Without giving time for thought the conjurer puts his hand back again and this time a good sized live rabbit is brought from under the man's coat and round the rabbit's neck is

a coloured ribbon and hung from the ribbon is the borrowed watch (10).

Attention is called to the watch. The gentleman from whose pocket this forgotten guest was produced is politely thanked and dismissed, and the conjurer puts the rabbit on the smaller table and asks the boy to identify the watch. The boy duly recognises the watch and the conjurer proceeds to untie the ribbon. Pretending to overhear the boy asking whether the rabbit is alive he says:—"Alive? Of course it is. It isn't a Welsh rarebit. You never saw a Welsh rarebit with a watch tied round its neck, did you?" Then, having untied the ribbon, he asks the boy: "Is this the same old watch, the same watch, I mean? Would you mind taking it back to the lady with my best thanks?" Here the conjurer apparently tosses the watch into his left hand and gives it to the boy, but he receives nothing. The watch has vanished (11).

"Now, what have you done?" says the wizard. "You haven't got it? But I gave it to you. Ah, here it is." (12.) The conjurer takes it from behind the boy's ear and now really hands it to him to take back to the owner.

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

- a. A double paper.
- b. A cup in the barrel of the pistol.

PREPARATIONS.

The paper with which the bag is formed is made of a stoutish kind, and measures 44 inches by 35

inches. It is folded once across and the edges are pasted together all round with the exception of about one-third of one end, which is left open in the middle.

A moderate sized rabbit is placed in the large pocket marked D, under the performer's left arm, with its head to the opening. To keep this pocket closed until required, a tab of elastic with a small metal ring attached is sewn to the front edge of the

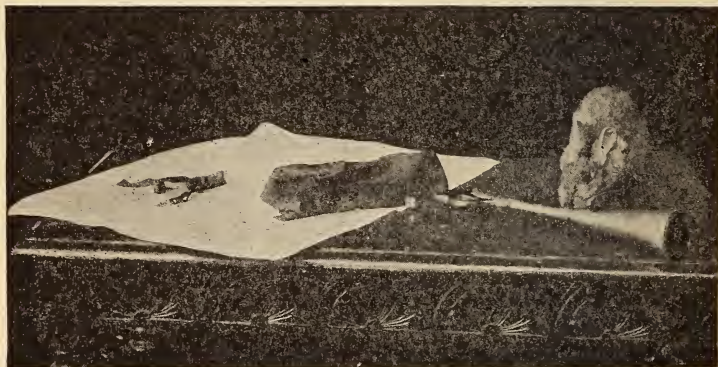


FIGURE 31.

pocket. Opposite this, through the coat itself, a hole like a button-hole is made. The tab is pushed through this and fastened to a hook which is sewn under the hole, outside the coat, and concealed by the lower part of the lapel. The hook used is an ordinary large dresshook fastened on to the coat with the point of the hook pointing downwards. A ribbon is fastened very carefully round bunny's neck, as loosely as is compatible with safety, and tied in a firm bow. In the centre of this ribbon, hanging just

underneath the animal's nose, is a spring hook such as is used for small dog leads. This must be covered with ribbon to hide it as much as possible, the idea being that the watch should appear to be threaded on the ribbon when it is discovered.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) Between the corner of the paper and the middle joints of his fingers he holds concealed a duplicate silk handkerchief. It is neither rolled nor folded, but made into a ball with the corners inside, so that it springs out directly he leaves go of it.

(2) The handkerchief is released and left at the bottom of the bag. The secret opening ought now to form half of the circle described by the mouth of the bag. The inner side of this is seized and pressed over to the other side of the bag, and the hand is passed down into the space between the double paper, which now appears to be the legitimate inside of the bag.

(3) This folding over of the top brings back the one edge of the concealed opening to join the other again.

(4) Saying this, the conjurer lays the mouth of the pistol on his left hand. The cup is clipped between the first and third joints of the fingers and when the pistol is raised again to point at the boy the left hand is quietly lowered to the pocket marked G, and deposits there the cup containing the handkerchief.

(5) This is done in a series of definite movements. First the performer grasps the top of the bag firmly

with the finger and thumb of his right hand and takes hold of the point with the same fingers of his left hand. Having unscrewed the lower end he twists the folded top towards himself until about half the bag is unrolled. Now he transfers his left hand and seizes the centre of the unfolded part. He will find that he is holding the watch through the paper. With the right hand he straightens out the folded top. Having done this, the conjurer transfers his right hand to about the middle of the longest outer edge of the paper, and the rolled up edge is allowed to unfurl into the left hand which supports the watch. (See Fig. 28.) The handkerchief is now on the opened out sheet of paper. The boy takes the handkerchief and the performer carelessly shows all sides of the paper by holding only the edges. Incidentally he contrives to show that his hands are empty. He then crumples up the paper into a ball and while doing so presses the watch partly through the paper, and keeps the parcel, with the watch and the handkerchief, in his left hand.

(6) Just before this, while addressing the boy, the performer has taken an opportunity of disengaging the ring from the hook and pulling the tab through the hole in his coat. Afterwards, to the end of the experiment, he takes care to keep his left forearm over the mouth of the pocket to prevent a disclosure of the rabbit's nose. The watch is attached to the hook on the rabbit's neck at the moment that the paper and handkerchief are placed on the table. The watch must be attached as quickly as possible, but without any hasty movements to call attention to

the fact that anything unusual is taking place. Most of the audience are watching the man who is searching for the watch, and the conjurer has his back to the rest, so that the keenest observer can only guess what the conjurer is doing. He appears to be adjusting the set of his waistcoat or something of that sort. After the watch is safely attached, it is as well to take hold of the left lapel and thus keep the opening of the pocket firmly closed because the rabbit has now been disturbed and has seen the light, and will therefore be a little restless.

(7) While the gentleman approaches, the conjurer coolly walks up to the table, moves it a little nearer and thus gets possession of the matches which he clips between the tips and lower joints of the right hand fingers.

(8) He is holding the gentleman's coat lapel with the hand in which the box is concealed. He simply moves it upwards and produces the box with the same movement used for a billiard ball in Chapter II. When he lets go of the coat with the right hand he takes hold of it with the left in readiness for the next movement.

(9) To do this he approached the gentleman closely and grasped the lapel of his own coat with the disengaged fingers of the left hand, which now holds both coats together for the next movement.

(10) The right hand, having been shown empty, is brought back very quickly. Then it swoops down on the ears of the rabbit and without pausing takes it from the pocket to underneath the gentleman's coat. The short journey is completely covered by the per-

former's body, but the moment the rabbit is transferred the performer moves away sufficiently for everyone to see the rabbit taken from under the gentleman's coat. The performer should pretend to have some difficulty in getting the rabbit away from the coat. Also the performer should remember to let go of his own lapel the moment the rabbit is safely under the other coat and close the coat over the rabbit.

(11) He is holding the watch in the bent fingers of the right hand. He now simply clips it firmly between the upper and lower joints of the fingers and turns the hand over as though he were dropping the watch into the other hand, the fingers of which apparently close over it. Now, with the left hand he gives the boy the watch which is not there, while he takes care to hold the right hand in such a position that no one catches sight of the watch.

(12) When the boy has realised that he has not got the watch the conjurer quickly puts it behind the boy's left ear and slowly brings it into view. It can, of course, be equally well produced from any other part of the boy's anatomy or clothing. To get the right effect the conjurer must, of course, keep the watch concealed until he has it under cover, and his hand travels to the selected spot very quickly. The moment the watch is covered by putting it behind the ear or whatever other object is used, all the fingers are withdrawn from the watch except the first finger and with this and the thumb the watch is very slowly and deliberately brought out again.

CHAPTER V

WITH A BORROWED HANDKERCHIEF. A LESSON IN MAGIC

THE combination we are about to describe includes, perhaps, the best effects with a borrowed handkerchief that have yet been invented, and it will be an excellent exercise for our readers to refer to the books of Hoffmann and Sachs and themselves peruse the instructions there given for experiments, of the comedy class, with borrowed handkerchiefs. Having done this the student will have before him all the information of which the author of this combination made use of. He arranged the series for the special purpose of complying with his wife's expressed wish that he should do one of those "funny tricks in which handkerchiefs are burnt up and restored" at a children's party which was about to be given.

So great was the success of this series of effects that we thought it worthy of place in this book, first as an example of the class of conjuring discussed in the last chapter, and secondly as a specimen of the work that can be done with old material without slavishly copying other performers.

Only ordinary everyday articles are used. A borrowed handkerchief is the principal object of at-

tention. The performer also uses his own handkerchief,—(a dark red silk one)—a pint claret bottle containing enough wine to fill a small tumbler, a sheet of newspaper, two dinner plates, a lighted candle in a stick, a pair of scissors, a table knife, and a lemon which is magically produced in the course of the experiment.

The plot is arranged in this way. The conjurer invites a boy to have a lesson in magic, and he also borrows a white handkerchief of moderate size. The boy is asked to bring the handkerchief to the platform. The conjurer receives it and in doing so incidentally shows that he has nothing concealed in his hands. The boy is asked to stand on the conjurer's left and is told that he will be taught how to turn a handkerchief into a lemon.

The lesson is begun by the wizard rolling up the handkerchief into a ball and showing the boy how to knead it between his hands in a certain way. The boy, being assured that this will have the desired result, is about to begin, but the conjurer pauses to ask permission of the owner of the handkerchief, and promises him that if any damage is done to his property his (the conjurer's) handkerchief shall be treated in the same way.

Having exhibited his own handkerchief the conjurer asks the boy to continue the kneading process with the borrowed handkerchief, and the surprises then follow each other in quick succession. We describe them briefly in tabular form.

1. The borrowed handkerchief becomes a number of pieces of thin cambric.

2. These pieces, being rubbed between the hands of the boy assistant, become a very long strip of cambric.

3. This strip is gathered up into one hand by the conjurer and suddenly becomes transformed into a real lemon.

4. The lemon is put on a plate. A spell is said over it. The lemon is cut open and found to contain the handkerchief, now restored to its proper appearance.

5. The boy is shown how to cut a piece out of the centre of a handkerchief and mend it by the heat of a candle flame.

6. The boy tries it, and the result is the burning of the handkerchief—apparently by accident.

7. The performer, having promised to submit his own handkerchief to any process which damages the borrowed one, allows the boy to try his 'prentice hand on his, with the same result.

8. Both handkerchiefs are now blazing away on plates. The conjurer extinguishes the flames by emptying the contents of one plate into the other and putting the empty plate on the top of the burning material. Then he empties the smouldering ashes into half a sheet of newspaper, and offers the parcel to the spectator who lent the handkerchief. The offer having been refused, the conjurer says a few words of magic import, tears open the package, and discloses the handkerchiefs, both apparently completely restored. When the handkerchiefs are shaken out, the coloured one is seen to have a white centre and the white one a coloured centre.

9. The conjurer throws the disfigured handkerchiefs to the boy in disgust, apologises to the owner of the handkerchief, and asks him to have a glass of wine with him, just to show there is no ill feeling. With this the conjurer pours out into tumblers some wine from the bottle which has been in view of the audience throughout the experiment. The gentleman having tasted the wine, and pledges having been exchanged the conjurer asks him to see if there is any left in the bottle, and also to recork it. Meanwhile he gives his empty glass to the boy and instructs him to wrap the white handkerchief in the red one and put both together in the tumbler. Then, returning to the gentleman, who has had ample opportunity to examine the bottle, he asks him to inform the company how much wine there is left. "About half a tumblerful," replies the gentleman. The performer takes the bottle and places it on the table. Picking up the half sheet of newspaper he covers the glass containing the handkerchief with it. The boy is asked to grasp the tumbler with his left hand, and to hold the paper cover with his right.

10. Taking the tumbler from the boy's hand the conjurer whisks away the newspaper and shows that the tumbler now contains the claret. And then after tapping the bottle all over with a hammer to prove indirectly that it is a whole bottle, he finally smashes it and instead of the wine the two handkerchiefs are disclosed. They are now completely restored.

There is so much meat in the meal, the menu of which we have mapped out above, that we believe it will aid the digestion of our hungry student if we

leave out all sauces and decorations in the way of patter and artifices of serving, and content ourselves with showing him exactly how to prepare the dishes.

The first thing to do is to make a list of the appliances required. The student is advised to provide everything used, and to keep all the things for this experiment only. Here is the list.

1. A lemon prepared with a dummy handkerchief as described in Sachs' "Sleight of Hand," page 210, or Professor Hoffmann's "Modern Magic," page 246.

2. Two handkerchiefs—a claret coloured silk one and a white one—prepared with the wrong centres. See "Sleight of Hand," page 215.

3. Two whole silk handkerchiefs of the same colour as the prepared one.

4. A bundle of pieces of linen or cambric. There should be about ten pieces, each about three to eight inches square. (They can be made from worn dress ties pulled out and cut up.)

5. A strip of cambric about 4 yards long. (This can be made by joining old dress ties.)

6. A separate piece of white linen about three inches square.

7. A couple of sheets of paper. A double sheet of newspaper which can be torn will do. But one side is really two sheets pasted together round the edges.

8. Two pint claret bottles of dark colour, one containing a tumblerful of claret.

9. Three small tumblers, one-half full of claret and covered with a cap, in jam pot fashion, made

of two or three thicknesses of the paper used for the sheets and secured by a rubber band attached to the cap.

10. A piece of string about 45 inches long, with a small leaden weight attached to one end and an ordinary split key ring, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter neatly tied on to the other end.

11. Another ring sewn on to the middle of the waistcoat that is worn, or, if the vest is split up the back as advised, to the centre of the braces.

12. Two plates.

13. A knife to cut the lemon.

14. A pair of scissors to cut the handkerchief.

15. A candle in a stick, and a box of matches.

PREPARATIONS.

The prepared lemon containing the white handkerchief is in pocket E. The two handkerchiefs with wrong centres are laid flat in the centre of the pocket formed by the double sheet of newspaper. This sheet, and the bottle of claret, the two tumblers, the two plates, the matches, candle, and scissors are all on the table at the commencement of the performance.

Behind the scenes is an assistant who has charge of the second claret bottle into which has been pushed, with a pencil, one of the claret coloured handkerchiefs. He is also provided with the table knife and the separate piece of cambric folded as described. Behind the table and close to it must be a curtain with a slit in it large enough to admit of the passage of the bottle. The back edge of the

table should cross the centre of this horizontal opening, which is concealed by a natural-looking fold in the curtain.

The prepared tumbler is carried in pocket G, and the long strip of cambric is rolled lightly round the hand, slipped off, and the loose end is tucked into the centre. The oval bundle thus formed is carefully placed under the left side of the vest in such a way that there is no danger of it slipping down prematurely and showing a white piece against the black clothes.

The second silk handkerchief is put loosely into pocket and on the top of it lies the bundle of pieces of cambric, which is prepared by wrapping them loosely in one of the pieces, made large enough for the purpose. The four corners of this square are brought forward over the rest of the scraps, and secured by a small piece of white tissue paper or stamp edging, so gummed on that the slightest pressure will break it.

One point of the split key ring is opened, and the inside edge of the right hand shirt cuff is inserted in the opening. The ring is then twisted so that it holds firmly on to the cuff. The weight on the other end of the string is then passed through the ring at the back of the waistcoat or braces, and thence to pocket E, where it is laid underneath the lemon.

INSTRUCTIONS.

Having borrowed the handkerchief the conjurer, standing on the right of the boy, folds up the hand-

kerchief into a small bundle by putting the corners in the centre and then repeating the operation, if necessary, two or three times, until the handkerchief is in a small bundle. Without allowing the handkerchief to spring out the conjurer places it on his left hand and then puts his right hand over it. He rubs the handkerchief between his two hands with a circular motion and also changes the position of his hands by turning first the left and then the right uppermost. He tells the boy he is to imitate these movements and while the boy is thus employed the conjurer addresses the lender of the handkerchief and tells him that if any damage is done to the handkerchief he (the conjurer) will gladly submit his own handkerchief to a similar experiment.

So saying, the conjurer puts his hand into his left hand pocket in order to get at his handkerchief. It is quite natural that he should want to show the handkerchief of which he has just spoken. In taking out his handkerchief he secretly takes out the bundle of pieces as well. The rolled up handkerchief is still in the conjurer's left hand, being held there between all his fingers placed close together and the thumb on the top of the handkerchief. About half the bundle is seen above the tips of the fingers, and the back of the hand is towards the audience.

Having taken out his own handkerchief and, unknown to the audience, the little bundle of pieces, the conjurer brings his right hand up to his left, grips one corner between the first and second fingers of his left hand, and takes hold of the opposite cor-

ner with his right hand, in which the bundle is concealed. Then, still addressing the owner of the handkerchief the conjurer takes it in the right hand which releases its hold of the corner of the conjurer's handkerchief. In taking the handkerchief in the right hand the conjurer places the bundle over it but the top of the rolled up handkerchief is a little way behind the top of the bundle. The owner of the handkerchief believes that he is looking at his property. The back of the conjurer's hand is towards the audience.

Now the conjurer can show the inside of his right hand by turning the hand over towards the audience, holding it well down and masking there the two bundles joined with his thumb. Then, bringing his right hand over to his left he grasps the bundle and the handkerchief together with the fingers of his left hand, but it will be seen that it is the bundle that projects beyond the fingers, and the handkerchief is now in the palm. The back of the hand is still towards the audience. In the act of taking away his own handkerchief with his right hand the conjurer places his hand underneath it, and, gathering it up, grasps the borrowed handkerchief concealed in its folds. Figs. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.

The conjurer then replaces his handkerchief in his pocket. The audience believe that they still see the borrowed handkerchief in his left hand, but that handkerchief, of course, is now safely in the conjurer's pocket. Directly the conjurer put his handkerchief—and secretly, the borrowed handkerchief—in his pocket, he quickly got the latter free from



FIGURE 32.



FIGURE 33.



FIGURE 34.



FIGURE 35.



FIGURE 36.

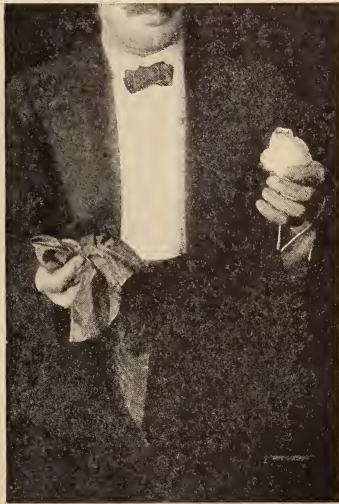


FIGURE 37.



FIGURE 38.

the former so that when he next wanted to take out his handkerchief it was ready near the mouth of the pocket.

The boy is instructed to roll what appears to be the handkerchief between his hands, and the conjurer pretends to be properly horrified when the pieces become

loose and are scattered on the floor.

The performer now secretly takes out the long slip of cambric from under his waistcoat when, having turned to the left, he stoops down to pick up the pieces of cambric from the floor. When he has taken the first piece he puts it in



FIGURE 39.

his left hand placing it over the bundle. He continues to pick up the pieces, and when he has got them all in his left hand he apparently squeezes them tightly together and hands them to the boy with the request to try again. Before doing this, however, the conjurer secretly takes off the pieces with his right hand and, reaching to his pocket, deposits them there, and takes out his own handkerchief.

“Now, then,” says the conjurer, “let us try again.”

He hands the boy the bundle consisting now of the long strip only and proceeds to illustrate with his own handkerchief how the boy should rub it between his hands. The boy rubs what he and the audience believe to be the pieces between his hands and, of course, when he is asked to see how he is getting on with his lesson the long strip of cambric is disclosed. But before asking him the question the conjurer places the coloured handkerchief in his left sleeve and under cover of doing so disengages the key ring which is on his right hand cuff and puts it between the first and second fingers of his right hand.

Getting hold of one end of the long strip with his left hand he places it just within the ring and holds it there with his thumb and proceeds to gather in the rest of the strip in equal folds. Having done this the conjurer pushes all the ends he is holding through the ring and runs the ring along to the centre of the hanging strip folded together. Turning to the left he shows it to the boy and, under cover of the movement and suitable patter secures the lemon from pocket E with his left hand. Bringing the hands together in a natural sort of way he hides the lemon



FIGURE 40.



FIGURE 41.

under the bunch of cambric in his right hand, Figs. 40, 41, 42.

The performer points out to the boy that his attempt to turn a handkerchief into a lemon has failed



FIGURE 42.

and informs him that he will try and do it with one hand. Accordingly he puts his left hand under his coat behind him and thus is able to get hold of the other end of the string which is attached to the weight

lying at the bottom of pocket. Now the conjurer waves his right hand up and down a little until he has pulled the string with his left hand enough to draw the key ring and folded strip just past the edge of his cuff. Finally the conjurer gives a sharp tug on the string which carries the rest of the bunch up his sleeve and leaves the lemon disclosed. With a quick turn of the hand the conjurer displays it to the audience. The conjurer puts the lemon on a plate and gives the plate to the boy to hold. He dictates to the boy a burlesque spell which the boy tries to repeat. While he is reciting this incantation the conjurer calls for a knife and goes to the side of the platform to get it.

While receiving the knife from a hidden assistant there are two things to do secretly. The conjurer has to take the borrowed handkerchief from his pocket and hand it to the assistant and he also has to receive from the assistant a small piece of cambric, about four inches square. This is folded by taking hold of the centre and pulling the corners down, and in this condition it is laid along the handle of the knife with the centre towards the blade. The conjurer takes hold of the handle of the knife in the usual way carrying the piece with him ready for the next phase of the experiment.

With the knife the conjurer cuts open the lemon and invites the boy to pull out the handkerchief which the audience will believe to be the borrowed one restored. The boy is asked to return it to the lender but just as he is going towards the audience to do so the conjurer pretends to remember that after all

the boy has not profited by the "lesson in magic," and asks him if he will try again.

"This time," says the conjurer, "we will attempt only a very simple piece of magic. I will show you how to cut a hole in a handkerchief and mend it again."

The conjurer is still holding the knife in the right hand, and between the handle of the knife and his four fingers lies the folded piece of cambric. Having spread out the handkerchief and, while doing so, transferred the knife but not the miniature handkerchief to his left hand, he holds up the index finger of the closed right hand and tells the boy that one of the most important preliminaries is to find the exact centre of the handkerchief. Saying this, the conjurer throws the handkerchief over the right hand and, as it hangs from the tip of the upright finger, arranges it so that all the corners are level. By these means the exact centre of the handkerchief is found and the conjurer now nips the centre with the finger and thumb of the left hand and withdraws the right hand from beneath it and immediately places the fingers concealing the piece around the upper part of the hanging handkerchief so that the centre point of the folded cambric and the centre point of the handkerchief come together. The fingers and thumb of the left hand now nip both together and the right hand is drawn down a couple of inches. Now the handkerchief and piece are left in the right hand and the conjurer picks up the scissors from the table. But while he does this his right thumb slyly pulls down the point of the handkerchief from be-

hind the point of the piece. Directly it is gathered in behind the thumb the hand can be turned any way and the false piece seems to be part of the real handkerchief. Figs. 43, 44, 45.

Handing the scissors to the boy the conjurer takes

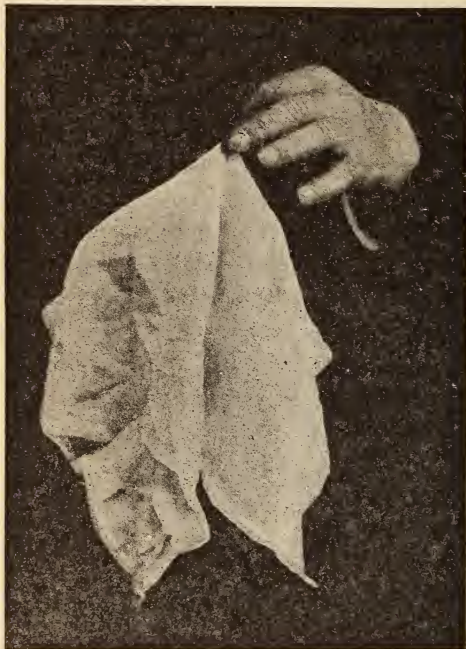


FIGURE 43.

hold of the supposed point of the handkerchief with the left hand and asks the boy to cut across the material between his two hands, thus apparently cutting a hole in the middle of the handkerchief itself. This having been done the mending process is begun. The cut edges are brought together in the flame of a candle.

When they are well alight they are rubbed together, which not only extinguishes the flame but appears to restore the handkerchief, which is shaken out whole. When rubbing the burnt edges together the conjurer has to screw them up and "finger palm" the small parcel while he opens the handkerchief.

Once again the same movements are gone through, but no dummy piece is required. When the cutting is done the handkerchief is opened out for a moment to show the hole (this time it is really there) before the restoration is attempted by the boy.

Directly the boy has set a light to the edges, they flare up because the handkerchief that was put in the lemon was prepared with a little spirits of wine to make it burn easily. The boy is told to drop it and the conjurer must see that one of the plates is handy to receive it. While the conjurer is making vain

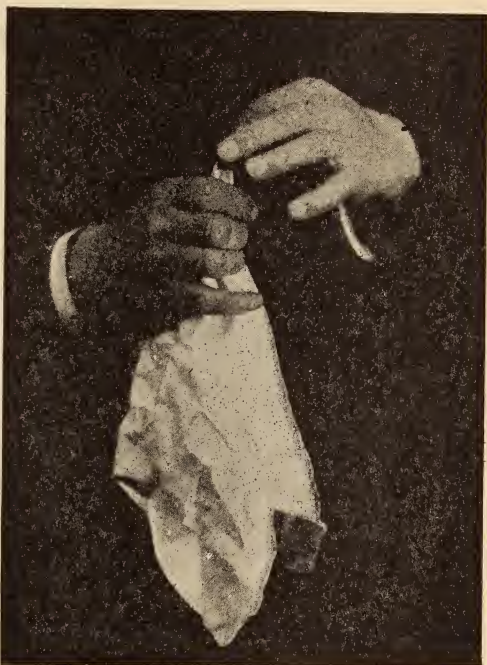


FIGURE 44.

attempts to put out the blaze with his fingers he also drops the little bundle of burnt pieces which have remained "finger palmed" the whole time.

With a regretful air the performer now takes out his own handkerchief and, according to promise, submits it to exactly the same process with precisely the

same result. The burning handkerchiefs are extinguished by putting the plates together as described. Then the conjurer remarks that the least he can do is to make a present of the remains of both handkerchiefs to the lender of the white one. Thereupon he tears off half a sheet of newspaper (which is the prepared one)



FIGURE 45.

empties the burnt pieces into it and screws it up into a round bundle. This, of course, is refused by the lender of the handkerchief and the conjurer pretends to be in a dilemma. Eventually he remembers a spell for the occasion and says it, and,

breaking the paper, pulls out the handkerchiefs with the wrong centres.

Throughout the experiment the conjurer has been talking, and every movement has been naturally led up to by words. By this time he will have found out the importance of arranging every detail of the

“patter” in such a way that the spoken word coincides with the action it describes.

If the talking has been well and properly done roars of laughter will greet the appearance of the “Sun and Moon”—as the centres wrongly restored are called by conjurers—and the performer becomes more and more confused and, to smooth matters over, proposes a glass of wine. He gives the handkerchiefs to the boy who is now asked to sit in a chair well forward on the platform and on the conjurer’s left. Remarking that fortunately he can offer the owner of the mutilated handkerchief a glass of excellent claret—or it may be port—the performer uncorks the bottle and takes it forward with a couple of tumblers in which he empties about half the contents of the bottle. (Therefore about a quarter of each tumbler is filled.) Pledging the gentleman’s health and promising never to repeat the offence the conjurer proceeds to drink the wine and thus empty his tumbler ready for the next part of the feat. This provides against the event of the gentleman not caring to imbibe his portion; whether he drinks or not the tumbler which he holds is allowed to remain with him until after the experiment is finished.

The conjurer now appears to have suddenly thought of a new idea, and he informs the audience that he will try once more to bring the Lesson in Magic to a more desirable conclusion.

Handing the gentleman the bottle he asks him to see how much wine there is in it. “If there is about half a tumbler full,” says the conjurer, “we can be assured of success.” Leaving the bottle where it is

the conjurer gives the empty tumbler to the boy and he is instructed to roll the white handkerchief inside the red one, and put both in the tumbler. Going back to the gentleman—who has probably been holding the bottle up to the light, etc.—and pretending to be most anxious as to the quantity of wine left in the bottle, the conjurer finally takes it back to the stage and places it on the table. Then, picking up the remaining sheet of newspaper from the same table he holds it out in front of him as though judging its suitability for the purpose he has in mind.

The conjurer stands in front of the table, and his body and the spread out sheet of newspaper effectually hide the bottle for a few seconds. If the audience could see through these opaque substances they would see a hand come through a carefully made slit in the curtain hanging immediately behind the table. The hand grasps the bottle and takes it through the slit and then again appears with a duplicate bottle which is put in the same place. This duplicate bottle contains two handkerchiefs, one of them being the genuine borrowed one. The conjurer walks over to the boy and presses the sheet of paper over the tumbler which contains the handkerchiefs, which the boy is left to hold.

The magician proceeds to perform some mystic passes between the bottle and the boy, using the knife as a magic wand. Then, handing the knife to the boy, he asks him if he sees anything peculiar about it, such as a green light reflected in the blade.

In order to take the knife, the boy, who has been told to hold the tumbler carefully with one hand

and the paper on the top of it with the other, will probably take his hand from the paper.

"Never mind," says the conjurer, "let us see whether anything has happened." Grasping the tumbler by the rim through the paper he takes it away from the boy and, putting his left hand underneath the paper takes hold of the glass. Then, uncovering the glass by taking away the paper with the right hand he shows it to be now half full of wine. The handkerchiefs have vanished!

This surprising transformation is brought about by the following simple means. When the conjurer handed the knife to the boy he turned his left side away from the spectators and his left hand dropped down to the pocket G and caught hold of the prepared tumbler. When the right hand brought the tumbler and the newspaper near enough the left hand quickly carried the covered tumbler of wine under the newspaper, which had purposely been left spread out for this purpose. When the right hand uncovered the glass of wine by taking the paper away it also took the tumbler containing the handkerchiefs and the cover from the duplicate glass.

To do this the conjurer, using his right hand, must grasp the rim of the "handkerchief" tumbler through the paper in such a way that his first finger and thumb are left free to nip the cover on the "wine" glass and pull it away. This also has to be managed through the paper. The moment the glass of wine is exposed to view the conjurer hands it to the boy for examination and carelessly crumples up the paper

in which the other tumbler (containing the handkerchiefs) and the top of the "wine" tumbler remain hidden. The crumpled up bundle of paper should be laid aside with apparent carelessness, and if the performer pays no more attention to it than he would give to an ordinary piece of newspaper that he had thrown away no audience is likely to show any desire to investigate it. At the first performance of this deception the bundle of paper evidently seemed quite ordinary, for the servant who cleared up the room threw it into the dustbin without opening it, and the glass and handkerchiefs were never recovered.

The two handkerchiefs are now discovered in the bottle in place of the wine. The performer lifts the bottle by the neck and before smashing it taps it in several places with the hammer. This convinces everyone that it is a genuine glass bottle. It is as well to break it over the plates and to ask the boy to take the borrowed handkerchief back to the owner. The conjurer places his own in his sleeve or pocket and makes his bow.

CHAPTER VI

WITH BELLS. HOMING BELLS

IN this and the following two chapters we will give examples of effects of the spectacular order of conjuring feats, which may be given in dumb show. They will, however, be suitable only for the stage or platform, but we opine that they will be interesting because of the principles involved.

Bells, the "oldest form of advertisement," have not been much favoured by conjurers, probably because of the noise that can be made with them. In professional parlance they "talk" too much. This very quality is turned to advantage in the experiment we are about to describe, and it forms the puzzling part of the feat from the onlookers' point of view.

Four sleigh bells are hanging on ribbons in the centre of the stage, as seen in the picture, Fig. 46. The performer goes behind the ribbons, bunches the bells together and rattles them. (1) He then detaches them, (2) and carries them to the table seen on the right of the photograph. He lays three bells on the table and retains one in his right hand, (3) which he shakes violently, so that the bell makes a good deal of noise. Then he suddenly throws the ringing bell towards the ribbons and—ping!—it becomes attached and pendant to the ribbon, (4) the colour of which had been announced previously. He proceeds

in the same way with the other three bells (5) and they all appear to fly—still singing, as it were—from the magician's hands to the points of the hanging strips of silk.

Mr. Oswald Williams, having obtained permission to copy this effect—a rare courtesy amongst profes-

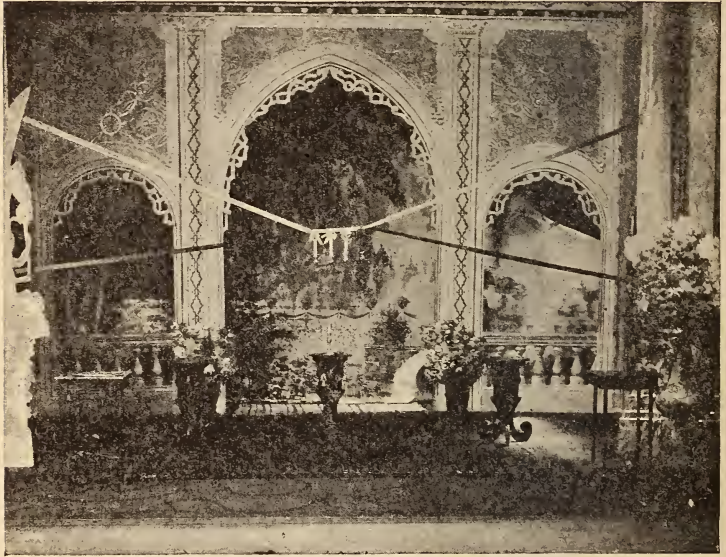


FIGURE 46.

sional conjurers, we are sorry to say—elaborated the feat considerably by having a number of bells of different tones and picking them up and throwing them at the ribbons so quickly that they rang out a tune. Each bell sounded a note of the first few bars of "Home, Sweet Home," as it reached the ribbons. This was a very pretty addition, especially for a "dumb" show.

For the benefit of those who prefer speech we may as well include the "patter," as given. There is very little of it, because as we have said, the whole effect is meant to be a sort of hors d'œuvre to one's programme of other dishes. Here, then, are the words:—

"My next experiment is with bells. Bells are very difficult to conjure with, because one has to deceive the ear as well as the eye. It would be much easier if one used dumb bells, but then, of course, it would not be the same experiment."

By this time the bells are gathered from the ribbons and are being placed on the table.

"Each of these bells has a different tone, and I can easily tell to which coloured ribbon it belongs. For instance, this one belongs to the pink-un; it has quite a different tone from any other pap—ribbon. Now please watch this tinkling bell. You can see it and hear it wherever it goes. (Here it is thrown at the ribbon.) I thought it belonged to the pink. You see, these magic bells are trained like homing pigeons. Will someone choose a colour? Red? Very well. (Picks up a bell, rattles it and throws it.) I rather like this myself. Now there are two left, blue and yellow. Which shall I dispatch first? The blue bell. Good. There it goes (picking up the last). You know I think this is quite charming—to see pretty bells getting so quickly attached to smart beaus (bows)." (The remaining bell is thrown.)

Two attendants now enter and detach the ribbons from the scenery or walls, that is, one of them de-

taches the ends of the ribbons while the other holds it with one hand each side of the four bows to which the bells are hanging (6). Of course something much simpler than these ribbons could be devised for a drawing-room performance. For instance, a man might hold a strip of wood, round which the small bows of ribbon were tied. But we are describing items from a repertoire exactly as they exist, and in this case the ribbons are intended to give a touch of colour and prettiness to the feat. As the objects are quite small it becomes advisable to fill up the picture if it is intended for stage purposes.

In the days of Houdin and Anderson the stage was crowded with pretty things—or things which were considered pretty by early Victorians. Although Houdin, in particular, discarded tables draped to the floor he did not despise a long shelf at the back of the room represented by the scene. On this shelf stood all kinds of ornamental paraphernalia which was not used in his seances. But it served its purpose; it pleased the eye. Present day conjurers would be well advised to study the tout ensemble more than they appear to do at present, and although they need not crowd the stage with useless apparatus they can fill it with tastefully selected furniture and coloured fabrics, to give something for the eye to enjoy. They can have well arranged music to please the ear, and plenty of movement to satisfy the taste of most audiences, who like much to look at while they are listening.

Any attendants or assistants employed must play their parts as well as the magician plays his own.

They must be thoroughly rehearsed in each movement that they have to make, and do what they are set to do with precision and smartness. Nothing must be left to chance in a magical performance. Everything conducive to enhancing the mystery of the illusions must be arranged with painstaking care and thought. This is one of the great secrets of all successful performers, and it is also the reason why an illusion with many people taking some part in it is a more difficult undertaking than a feat of magic that depends upon the performer alone. The complicated illusion demands much more knowledge of the business than the simpler feat. In the latter the performer can trust himself to carry out what he has arranged, but when assistants are required both his anxiety during the representation and his work of pre-arrangement are enormously increased.

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

The Tables. In the picture, No. 46, are seen a set of five tables. These are painted in imitation of the Sheraton style. The square table on the left of the picture is especially prepared for this experiment. If the reader will turn to page 85 of "Later Magic" he will find a description of a most ingenious table which has a top covered with black velvet. There are holes or "wells" in the top, the edges of which are concealed by an embroidered pattern. The same idea, slightly modified, is applied to our table. Instead of the whole top being covered with velvet it is painted and French polished to match the rest of the table, but a square velvet mat lies upon it.

This is prepared in the following way. A square of wood having been neatly sawn out of the table top with a fret saw and laid aside for use when the mat is not required, four slips of wood are fastened underneath the edges of the square hole, and a square piece of deal is cut to fit in and lie on these slips. Four holes, each large enough for one of the bells to drop through quite easily, are now cut in the square of deal. Four tubular shaped bags of black velvet are then required. They must be glued on to the edges of the holes, flush to the surface, and must be of such a length that when the square of wood is in position the bottom of the bags do not quite reach the bottom of the box which forms the table top. The lower ends of these bags are closed by stitching them. Now a square velvet mat is made, an inch larger all round than the square of wood. This is embroidered with yellow or gilt braid with a suitable geometrical pattern which must be so arranged that four circles in the pattern coincide with the four holes in the wooden base. Lastly the velvet within the circles is cut away and the mat is glued on to the square of wood. The table top is eighteen inches square, and the table is two feet, eight inches in height.

The Bells. There are nine bells of the familiar sleigh bell pattern, round in shape, with a loose metal ball inside the hollow sphere. For our purpose four of these balls must be extracted from four of the bells. Four more of the bells are used just as they are. The ninth bell is prepared in such a way that it will

ring or not ring, as required. It is managed thus. Cut off the top of the bell, leaving a hole about half an inch in diameter. Take out the bullet and attach a small wire ring to it. Then take a piece of stiff wire about one and a half inches long and bend one end into a ring, but before closing it insert the ring attached to the metal ball. The other end of the wire is to end in a small knob of brass. Starting from under this small knob, coil a piece of brass spring wire around the upright. The lower end of the spiral spring must be attached inside one end of a small brass tube, about three quarters of an inch long, and that end of the tube is then soldered over the hole in the bell. The result should be that the bullet is pulled up to the lower end of the tube by the tension of the spring, but a pressure of the performer's finger tip on the projecting wire will force the ball down into the bell, where it has play enough to swing and strike the sides of the bell. When the pressure is released the spring pulls the ball up to the mouth of the tube inside the bell, and it is at once silent. The bells are about one and a half inches in diameter.

The Ribbons. The ribbons are not merely as innocent as they appear to be. Apparently two lengths of ribbon of different colours, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide are stretched across the stage, crossing each other diagonally. Four, differently coloured ribbons about one inch broad are apparently tied round these two in the centre. Each one is finished with a rosette or bow, from which hangs one straight loop

of the ribbon, about five inches long, and on the end of each of the latter hangs a bell. The smaller ribbons draw the larger together for 18 inches of their length and behind them is concealed a lath of hard wood, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide. The broad ribbons are tacked on to the front of this; over them the smaller ribbons are tacked on to the upper edge of the lath by one end. The loose ribbon is then formed into a bow which is stitched on a cardboard foundation. These bows with the covered lath above must be large enough to hide completely the bells, which are hung behind them and enough is allowed to hang down from the middle of the bow and doubled so that the 5-inch loop is formed by tacking the end to the lower edge of the board behind the rosette. Before finally fastening it however, two little wire collars are threaded upon them, and to one of these links is fastened the bell that is to be hidden, and to the other the bell which is seen at the commencement of the trick.

In the diagram (Fig. 47) showing a portion of part of the board the shape of the collars can be seen, and also the means used to suspend the hidden bell. It will be noticed that the S hook is replaced by an oval wire ring, and to this again is fastened a thin wire with a ring bent in it at each end. One of these rings is put between two small wire staples which are hammered into the board, and a wire hook passes through all three, namely, the staples heads and the loops of wire which carries the bell. The other end of the wire hook is formed into a loop through which a wood screw fastens it to the board sufficiently

tightly to prevent it moving unless pulled or pushed. There is also another loop formed in the middle of this wire hook, and a thin cord attached to it. The cord is guided along the board by wire staples (the first of which acts as a step to which to pull the hook back), and along the back of one of the stretched

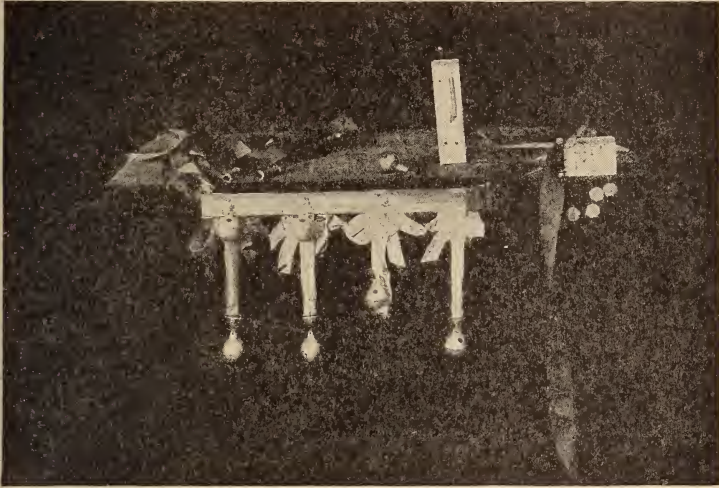


FIGURE 47.

ribbons, by silk loops, and finally through eyes soldered on to a metal plate fixed on to the end of the ribbon. The cord terminates in a button which is coloured to match the colour of the ribbon on which the bell will appear when that particular line is pulled by an assistant at the side. It will be obvious that when the hooks are pulled back by the lines the bells drop instantly by their own weight and the collars slide with them down the further side of

the ribbon loops. Each one comes to rest at the bottom of the loop and behind the collar that is already there. In this way the bells appear to attach themselves instantly to the very loops from which the audience saw the other bells unhooked.

PREPARATIONS.

The four ordinary bells are arranged behind the board as described and the four silent bells, which must be provided with ordinary S hooks, are hung on the collars on the shorter ribbons. The trick bell is finger palmed in the right hand. The end of each of the broad ribbons is sewn round a piece of tube with collars to prevent it slipping off. These tubes act as reels, upon which the ribbons can be wound when not in use. They are also made to fit on to upright spindles fixed on metal plates which can be in turn fixed in suitable positions—for instance, behind two wings. In setting, the ribbons can be kept taut by putting two of these tubes on the spindles on one side, and only unwinding the ribbons from the other two sufficiently to slip them on to the opposite spindles by stretching the ribbons.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) The performer goes behind the bells and gathers the four short ribbons together and shakes them. This shakes and rings the concealed bells, and those that are in view clang together.

(2) The conjurer unhooks the bells with the left hand and holds the dangling ribbons with the right hand, which holds the trick bell. The first three

bells are transferred to the right hand as soon as they are detached, and the shaking of the ribbons is continued to keep the concealed bells ringing, but it is diminished in vigour as each bell is detached and stopped altogether as the last bell is taken away.

(3) The right and left hands are brought together and the bells are allowed to clang together as they are carried to the table. As they are laid on the table one of them is allowed to drop into one of the wells, and the other three are deftly placed so that each is in front of one of the empty wells. There must be no appearance of placing them, however. Apparently, the performer must be simply separating them. The trick bell is now brought into view and is rung by holding the small tube by the thumb and the second finger of the right hand while the first finger presses the knob downwards.

(4) With the action of throwing the bell towards the ribbons the forefinger is upraised and the second and third fingers are simultaneously curled round the bell. Then the first finger is hooked round the wire plunger and the thumb releases its hold and is stretched outwards. In short, the bell is transferred from the position needful for the ringing to the finger palm, and the movements are all very naturally covered by the throwing action. Some exclamation such as "Go!" is given at the instant that the bell would leave the hand if it were really being thrown, and this word is a cue to the assistant to pull the line in connexion with the coloured ribbon announced by the conjurer, and thus release the hidden duplicate.

(5) The conjurer now reaches to the table, which should stand near him, and apparently picks up one of the remaining bells. In reality he merely pushes it into the velvet well under cover of his hand, and then immediately brings the finger-palmed trick bell into view and repeats the process described above. The same ruse gets rid of the other two bells, but when the trick bell is finger-palmed for the last time, in the act of apparently throwing it at the ribbons, it is dropped from the right hand to the left under cover of the body, and the left hand quietly lets it fall into pocket E, and thus disposes of it altogether.

(6) The attendant who takes hold of the ribbons at each side of the four hanging bells is careful not to expose the board, and as soon as the other assistant has detached the larger ribbons he allows the board to hang down from one hand, gathers the loose ribbons towards it, and carries off all in a bunch together.

CHAPTER VII

WITH FLAGS. THE NATIONAL COLOURS

OUR last chapter gave an opening effect with bells, objects which, like umbrellas, are very little used by conjurers. We do not mean to say that conjurers never use umbrellas for protection in wet weather, but that they seldom exercise their magic art upon them. We know of only one illusion with an umbrella, but we could enumerate dozens of feats of magic with flags. These rank with cards, balls, silk handkerchiefs, watches and rings as being convenient—we may say conventional—articles with which to conjure.

We are reminded to refer the reader to Professor Hoffmann's book "Later Magic" for other selections from the repertoire with which we are dealing here. These references are:— "With Silk Handkerchiefs, page 303. With a Jar of Water and a Hat, page 538. With Rings, page 544. With a Flag, page 361." If the reader will turn to page 357 he will find there a footnote referring to the very experiment which we propose to discuss in this chapter. We are going to disclose the secret of the methods adopted to handle the same sort of telescopic staves that Professor Hoffmann has described in every detail on pages 353 to 357. We will ask our

students to read that carefully written description and to treat this chapter as supplementary to it.

We have selected this item for one of our chapters because we believe that the difference between the disclosure of the secrets of the apparatus as given by Professor Hoffmann and the record of an individual artist's manipulation of that apparatus will be interesting and particularly instructive to the beginner.

The effect obtained is instantaneous and startling, and it is capital as a finishing experiment. The author of it began by lighting a small piece of tissue paper at a candle and showing both hands empty. Pulling up his sleeves he smothered the paper by bringing his hands together over it (1). Immediately taking his hands away he disclosed a bunch of coloured silks. Shaking them out, one by one, he showed that they were silk flags of various countries—France, Austria, Russia, Holland, Spain, but neither Great Britain nor America were represented. The flags were shown to the audience one at a time, named, and taken in the left hand. The fingers grasped a corner of each flag. In this manner the flags were taken down to the audience who were invited to convince themselves, by sense of touch, that the silks were real (2). Holding the flags at arm's length the conjurer then returned to the stage. Facing the audience he put the fingers of his right hand under the flags which were still hanging in his left hand and instantly threw both arms wide apart, and in each hand was seen an eight foot staff. with a 12

ft. by 8 ft. flag¹ on each (3). One was the Stars and Stripes; the other was the Union Jack. The effect invariably brought a round of applause so prolonged that the curtain was raised again and again—a rare compliment for a conjurer.

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

(a) The small flags—four or five are enough—are crumpled up into a compact parcel, with all the corners inside, and the black part of the German flag outside. This part should match the performer's own coat, and can even be of the same material. When it is made, the parcel should be about the size and shape of a small tumbler. It is secured with a broad band of black tissue paper, fastened with sealing wax, but no colour must be visible in any part of the bundle. The bundle is placed under the left arm-pit; while the arm is kept fairly close to the side the parcel appears to be part of the coat.

(b) The telescopic staves are closed up, and the flags are folded in the following way. First, they are folded in pleats, the folds of which depend upon where the flag is fastened to the stave. Then, with the flag, laid flat on the floor, similar accordion pleats are made across the others, but when about two-thirds of the flag is folded it should be rolled tightly up to the staff. Secure it temporarily by some means. Arrange the second flag in the same manner and, having done so, hold them together with the butt ends pointing opposite ways. Then

¹ The sizes were altered after Prof. Hoffmann wrote.

secure them by a band of tissue paper of two or three thicknesses wound round the centre and fastened with sealing wax. The ends of the handles should stick out a couple of inches or so at each end of the bundle, because when the two rolled up flags are put side by side they are not kept level with each other.

If the handles at each end of this compact and easily handled load be grasped by the right hand above and the left hand below, and the hands be then thrown vigorously apart, the paper will burst, the flags will unroll and unfold and the staves shoot out to their full length. All this is done so quickly that the eye cannot follow the movements.

One other little detail we have forgotten to mention. Two pieces of old silk flags are wrapped over the flags after they are rolled up. The ends of these pieces are secured under the paper band and the centres of them are over the handles, which are grasped through them.

(c) We have already described a set of imitation Sheraton tables. One of those with a round top is used for the experiment. A black velvet mat lies on the table. If it were lifted up one would discover a hole in the centre of it, three and a half inches in diameter. To the edge of this hole is attached a tube 2 inches deep, and the velvet on the top of the mat is carried over the edge of the hole and covers the inner side of the small tube as well. The whole of this supposed mat is made of cardboard covered with velvet and trimmed with bullion or silk. Behind the hinder legs of the table would be discovered a tube made of zinc, 16 inches long, closed at one end.

The other end is open—4 inches in diameter, and round the edge of this opening is a half inch lip or flange which rests on the table top when this tube is passed through the hole cut in the table top to receive it. There is a slot cut at one point of the edge of this hole, which allows a pin soldered on the outside of the larger tube to pass through to the underneath side of the table. When the tube is dropped in, it is twisted to carry the pin away from the slot and thus prevent the tube being lifted up. A plug of wood to match the table top and exactly fit the hole may be kept for use when the table is needed as an ordinary table.

PREPARATIONS.

Knock the plug of wood out of the table and drop in the tube. Twist it and drop the prepared mat over the tube and fit the latter to the table with three small screws. Then insert the prepared parcel of large flags on staves. On the top of them lay a small piece of black velvet as flatly as possible. On the mat place a candlestick with a lighted candle.

The small bundle of flags is put under the left arm, and a small sheet of tissue paper is held in the hands. This gives an excuse for keeping the elbows close to the sides.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) As the conjurer advances to perform the experiment the attendant brings forward the table ostensibly to put the candle within reach of the performer. Having screwed up one end of the paper

the conjurer holds it in his left hand, and, turning to the right, takes the candlestick from the table and applies the light to one corner of the paper. Then he replaces the candlestick on the further side of the table, leaving the mat clear.

Holding the paper upright, so that it burns slowly, the conjurer takes it by the twisted end in his right hand and runs his left hand along the under side of his right arm, from the cuff to the armpit, dragging up the sleeve at the same time. Taking the paper from the right hand with the finger and thumb of the left and, in doing so, showing the hands are otherwise empty, the conjurer pulls up the left sleeve in the same way. When the hand reaches the bundle the arm is raised, the end of the bundle is clipped by the fingers, and the hand very quickly makes the return journey and, under cover of the arm, conveys the "load" to the other hand, where it is immediately clapped over the flaring paper.

For an instant the hands are held together with the bundle between them. In that moment the paper is broken by a squeeze and when the hands are opened the silks are allowed to expand and are shaken and pulled until the colours are showing. The right hand does the work while the left hand holds the flags (Fig. 48).

In order to display the flags the conjurer pulls one away from the rest and spreads it out, using the fingers and thumbs of both hands, but still grasping the bunched-up flags with the other fingers of the left hand.

Having exhibited one flag thus, he lets go of the right hand corner, transferring his hand from the corner to the middle of the upper edge and lays—or rather drops—it on the table so that the same upper edge covers the hole in the mat. When he has repeated this movement with each flag shown,



FIGURE 48.

except the last one which, after it has been spread out, is retained in the left hand, he picks up the flags from the table in the reverse order. He does this by catching hold of each one with finger and thumb of the right hand at about the middle of the upper edge. He puts the flags in the left hand just as they hang, but when it comes to picking up

the last one the finger and thumb also catch hold of the large bundle by one of the projecting staves and carry it under cover of the flag to the other hand, where both are placed behind the other hanging flags. It will not be found difficult now to hold the flags so that they completely hide the bundle which



FIGURE 49.

hangs in the midst, nor to allow the silks to be touched by ladies to feel that it is real silk and yet not disclose the presence of the concealed "load" (Fig. 49).

(2) The above audacious procedure not only misdirects the minds of the audience completely but gives an opportunity for the assistant to take the table away without being noticed, so that when the dé-

nouement is reached, no clue is left to suggest a possible hiding place.

To produce the flags as described simply grip the top handle through all the loose flags and also the piece of velvet which is still there, and with the right hand grasp very quickly, but firmly, the bot-



FIGURE 50.

tom handle, taking care not to catch hold of any of the loose flags as well. When the hands are pulled apart the one hand takes one of the big flags, all the small flags and also the covering pieces of silk and velvet, while the other hand carries away the other large flag and one of the covering pieces, and the broken paper band usually drops to the floor unnoticed (Fig. 50).

CHAPTER VIII

WITH LIQUIDS. THE THREE VASES

THE experiment we are about to describe ranks with Homing Bells, inasmuch as it is an effective opening number for a programme of magical problems. It may be interesting to trace its evolution, and thus strengthen our argument that a comparatively new and original feat may be created from old material, which may be so completely redressed that even those who are quite familiar with the plans of the former foundations will gaze upon the rebuilt edifice and admire it as a fresh design.

What conjurer has not heard of the Egyptian Pyramids? We do not refer to the colossal monuments of ancient Egypt, but to the feat of magic described under that title at pages 378 of "Modern Magic" and 375 "More Magic," both of which volumes our readers will doubtless have at hand.

We have warned our readers against repeating hackneyed effects for the mere sake of exhibiting improvements in the methods used for producing them. We submit, however, that in this case the feat, which may have been overdone at one time, has been neglected by at least two generations of conjurers and therefore there was a reasonable excuse for showing a new version.

We will presume that Professor Hoffman's de-

scriptions in the books to which we have referred have been carefully read by those who are perusing these pages, and we will now describe the effect which was suggested by reading those explanations.

The curtain rises disclosing three assistants, each of whom is holding a large glass vase with a glass lid. The vases are similar to those used by confectioners for displaying sweets or biscuits in shop windows, or on the counters. They may be of any size in proportion to the size of the room or hall. Those we use are of the shape seen in Figure 52, and are made of transparent glass slightly corrugated.

On a table at one side is a bottle of wine, an ordinary quart claret bottle, and on another table on the opposite side is a jug holding a couple of pints of milk, also a flag on a stick.

The performer on entering takes the bottle of wine from the table and calls the attention of the audience to it. "Here is a bottle of ordinary wine," he says, and then glancing at the label, adds, "very ordinary! I see that it is grocers' Burgundy." He takes one of the vases from an assistant—who has removed the lid—and adds:—"And here I have a large vase or goblet. Goblet! How well it sounds! I pour the wine lavishly into the *goblet*." He empties the contents of the bottle into the vase and hands the latter to the assistant who replaces the lid, but, before doing so makes as though he was going to taste the wine. Seeing this, the conjurer says, "I will give the wine to the man on this side then—only to hold, please," and then adds, apolo-

getically, speaking to the audience, "He's a new man." Having replaced the bottle on the table, the conjurer, crossing over to the other table and taking from there the jug of milk, and the vase from the man on his right, proceeds:—

"I have here a quantity of *ordinary* milk, that is to say, it is partly milk. I pour this into this. While I am pouring you will please notice that these are real liquids, and would be most difficult to get up my sleeve with any degree of comfort."

Putting the empty jug back on the table the conjurer takes the vase containing the milk and walks over to the man in the centre, who takes the lid off his vase. The conjurer pours the milk into it and then returns the empty vase to the man from whom he took it, who replaces the lid (1). In the same way the conjurer fetches the vase containing the wine and pours that into the milk and gives the empty vase back to the assistant, who replaces the lid (2). The man holding the mixture puts the lid on his vase.

"Now you notice," the magician explains, "that I have shown you wine and milk and have mixed them together. I think you will admit that the effect is good. I mean it is such a sweetly pretty colour; it looks like the blush of a negress."

So far two facts have been made plain to the spectators. First, they have seen that the liquids are real liquids and, secondly, that the glasses are genuine enough to hold the liquids. Also, it has been plainly indicated that the wine was on the performer's left and the milk on his right, before the

mixture was made, and that the mixture is undoubtedly in the centre vase. It is as well to mention here that the quantity of wine and milk provided is sufficient to almost half fill each of the side vases, and consequently the mixture nearly fills the centre one (3).

The audience have, up to now, no idea of what is



FIGURE 51.

going to happen. They are simply watching and waiting. The conjurer picks up the flag from the table and instructs the men to walk forward (4). They accordingly do so, and the performer waves the flag. All this fills the scene with action. Evidently something is about to take place (Fig. 51).

The spectators are requested to "Look at these

four objects." The men mutely protest. "I mean the vases and this flag (5); I wasn't referring to the other objects," says the conjurer. "Are you ready? Go! Now you see the wine has gone back; the milk has gone back, and, here, in place of the mixture we have the flag." On the word "Go!" (6) the flag suddenly vanished from the stick; the milk and wine as suddenly appeared in their respective vases, and the mixture turned into the missing flag, which is taken out by the performer, who shakes it out (7) and remarks:—"I always use a Union Jack for this because it gets there every time." The men march away and the experiment is over.

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

The Vases. On looking at the picture of the apparatus (Fig. 52) it will be seen that there are three parts to be specially made, the two lids for the side vases, and the glass shape. The latter goes into the centre vase and forms a watertight compartment, filling half the space of the interior of the vase. The flat side of this receptacle is painted black on the outside, and, in practice, the blackened side appears to be that part of the man's black coat which is seen through the goblet, when it is in position for the illusion.

Each lid forms a reservoir for a quart of clear water, and each is provided with a circular piece of celluloid which fits over the hole underneath the cover. The circle of glass surrounding the hole is ground slightly to prevent the piece of celluloid from slipping about when it is in position. A small pro-

jection or tab is left on the celluloid disc. A metal eyelet is fixed to this tab and attached to it is a length of thread. To the other end of the thread is attached a light metal ring, large enough to slip easily on and off the glass knob at the top of the cover.

The flagstaff is made of brass tubing painted



FIGURE 52.

black. The flag vanishes through a slot cut in this and is taken quickly out of sight by a spring roller arranged in the following way:—

The spring is coiled round a thin rod attached to a solid metal plug and is surrounded by a metal tube to which one edge of the flag is cemented. The spring is tightly wound by twisting the inner rod while holding the tube and it is prevented from un-

winding by a short sliding rod which runs from the plug to a hole in one end of the tube. This rod is carried back and turned at right angles and projects through a slot in the shorter part of the outer casing which is made in two parts. The longer part has a slot its whole length. The plug is fixed in the smaller part of the tube, which is about six inches long and the longer length is passed over it, the hanging flag passing through the slot. The outer case is painted black and represents a stick. The great advantage of this arrangement is that the silk flag is carried quite out of sight and much more quickly than would be the case with an ordinary spring blind arrangement.

PREPARATIONS.

The hollow covers are filled by immersing them in a pail of water and putting on the celluloid discs under the water. They are, of course, kept in position by atmospheric pressure, and, with reasonable care they can be safely handled. The outside is dried. The rings on the ends of the threads are put on the knobs and the lids are put on the vases.

A duplicate silk flag is tucked behind the glass shape, which is put into the centre vase and the man holding it is placed in such a position on the stage that the spectators at the extreme side of the auditorium cannot see any part of the coloured material. The flag can be made into a bundle so that it occupies only the centre part of the space behind the glass partition.

The wine bottle is filled with a strong mixture of

permanganate of potash and water, but the jug contains only ordinary milk.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) The conjurer leaves about half a tumbler of milk in the bottom of the vase; that is to say, he does not pour quite all of it into the centre vase. When the man replaces the lid he takes off the ring attached to the thread and carries it down behind the vase, which he now holds by the stem and base with both hands.

(2) The same procedure applies to the wine and the other man.

(3) As a matter of fact the side vases are only a quarter filled, but appear to be half-filled. This is because the lower part of the goblet is so very much less in circumference than the part nearer the lid. In the same way the centre glass appears to be filled, but it really contains only half the quantity it would hold because only the receptacle is filled.

(4) While the side men are going forward each man inserts the thumb of his left hand into the light metal ring, which should hang just within reach of the thumb of the hand occupied in steadying the foot of the vase. The other hand grasps the stem. The man in the centre must advance only as far as is safe for the side view. He holds his vase in the same way as the others, but with his left hand reaching round the front of the foot.

(5) At the words "This flag" the performer stretches out his left hand which holds the flagstaff in such a way that the hanging flag entirely con-

ceals the centre vase for a second or two, but apparently without that intention. Under the cover so formed, the man twists the vase around, so that the receptacle is nearest his body, and the bunched-up flag faces the audience.

(6) "Go" is the cue for the two men at the side to pull the cords, which they do by jerking their thumbs sharply downwards. Thus the celluloid discs are pulled sideways, and the water in the lids immediately drops with a splash into the vases and instantly becomes coloured by the liquids left in the bottom of each vase. The men must appear as surprised as anyone, and must move the glasses a little, so that the audience see that the wine and milk are really liquid. At the same instant the performer pulls the catch on the staff and releases the spring roller, which takes the flag out of sight. He then takes the duplicate out of the centre vase, and,

(7) He carelessly throws the duplicate over the centre vase, and thus effectually covers the whole vase, so that the man, having put on the lid, can turn and walk out with the others without disclosing the presence of the glass shoe. He also carries away the flagstaff.

CHAPTER IX

WITH A RABBIT, A BALL AND TWO HATS. THE SILVER BALL

GIVEN a couple of rabbits, a six-inch solid metal ball, a sheet of newspaper, a handkerchief, a lighted candle in a stick, and two ordinary hats, one of which is a commonplace bowler (or what the Americans call a "derby" hat), and the other a silk topper, and add to these a feather boa which is borrowed from a lady among the audience, and what can a conjurer do with them?

That is the question we wish to give an answer to in this chapter, and as our answer is fully prepared and is properly attested by experience as a suitable reply, we have no hesitation in putting it into cold print.

Before proceeding we would like to call the attention of our readers to the desirability, merely as an exercise, of trying to evolve a feat of magic from this or a similar collection of articles. Probably they will discover that the resultant combination will take the form of a sort of triple transformation, a kind of general post. All the articles, having been disposed of in various ways, will be made to reassemble magically, or change places. The magician will quickly discover that, to bring about such a dénouement, all the knowledge he had acquired will be

brought into play, because three or four distinct feats must be blended so as to appear as one bewildering effect.

In picture, Figure 53, the performer is seen about to commence the principal part of the experiment, having already given both hats for examination and



FIGURE 53.

then, having magically produced the ball from the tall hat, he is seen about to drop the ball on a board which lies at his feet. He does this to prove the weight and solidity of the ball and thus enhance the wonder of its presence in the recently examined hat. He also strikes it with the hammer which lies on the board to prove that the ball is solid metal and

therefore not easily compressed or manipulated. The rabbit which is sitting on a table on the right of the picture had just been discovered in a feather boa. This was done while the hats were in the hands of the examiners.

It will be noticed that all the appliances used are beyond suspicion. The feather boa was borrowed and has served its purpose to introduce, surprisingly, the rabbit, which is manifestly alive. The hats have been scrutinised and found free from trickery. As for the rest, the tables and chair, the candle and handkerchief, and the sheet of newspaper, they will be used in such a way that no one will have any reason to believe that they are anything but ordinary articles. It is therefore unnecessary to bore the spectators by offering them for inspection; in fact, it would be distinctly bad art to do so. It is excusable to make an exception in the case of the metal ball, first, because it is an unfamiliar object and, secondly, because the surprise of the spectators will be increased by a knowledge of its undoubted solidity. That is why our magician takes care to prove that it is a bona-fide solid metal ball by dropping it on the small board with a resounding thud and striking it with a hammer.

Having done this, the performer calls attention to all the appliances he is about to use—the ball and the tall hat. He puts the ball into the hat and lays both on the chair behind him. At the same moment he picks up the sheet of paper. This is the third article. Having unfolded it he spreads it over the table, from which he takes the rabbit. The rabbit

is the fourth article, and is placed on the sheet of newspaper.

Now the performer picks up the tall hat and the ball and directs attention to the fifth article, namely, the lighted candle. He does this in a curious way. Blowing out the candle he hangs the tall hat on it like a huge extinguisher. He then disposes of the ball by putting it into the bowler hat, which it only half fills, and lays both on the chair, the hat on its side with the ball facing the audience.

The hat which contains the ball is the sixth article, and the silk handkerchief we have mentioned is the seventh. This the performer shakes out and exhibits, and then, nipping it by the centre, with the four corners hanging down, lays it gently on the balanced hat, hiding as little of its surface as possible.

In actual practice this disposition of the various objects occupies only a very short space of time. Now things begin to happen!

The magician takes the rabbit by the ears with one hand, and picks up the sheet of newspaper with the other. He walks forward to the footlights with the rabbit kicking behind the paper screen. Fig. 54. All movement of the animal is suddenly arrested by the performer crushing the paper and screwing it up into a ball about the size of an orange, which he tosses to the audience.

The bunny has vanished but it reappears in a totally unexpected place.

The bowler hat with the shining metal ball in it is picked up and held by the brim with both hands.

It is swung to and fro once, twice, thrice! The ball suddenly disappears and in its place is seen the rabbit. The animal is taken out and put back on the table, and the felt hat is tossed down beside it, manifestly empty, because the audience have had a clear view of all sides.

But where is the ball? This question is credited



FIGURE 54.

to the nearest member of the audience by the deceptionsist, and is answered by his holding up the handkerchief by the centre with the right hand and after displaying the empty left hand, placing it beneath the folds of the handkerchief and immediately producing a lighted candle. He then drops the handkerchief and, lifting the silk hat shows the silver

ball balanced on the candlestick. Apparently it has usurped the place of the candle just discovered and now replaced; the solid ball is dropped with a resounding thud on the board.

The combination ends, as it commenced, with the production of a rabbit. The conjurer confesses to the audience that he has used two bunnies, and asks them to admire the ingenious way that one has been packed inside the other. Then straightway he pulls a second living animal from the side of the first, in quite a casual sort of way, as though it were an encore surprise—merely a side issue.

Here is the “talkee talkee” just as it was originally written, with stage directions, to which are added the reference numbers to the instructions at the end of the chapter.

“No conjuring entertainment is complete without hats, so I’ve borrowed two; one of them is my own. I would like someone to examine them. Will you, sir? And will you take this one, sir? You will see there is nothing inside it. There never has been much. I’ve always worn it myself.

“Now, may I borrow a lady’s fur or feather necklet—if there is a lady who happens to have one that is *not* pinned on. I know the best way—two pins at the back, isn’t it? Thank you. Do you mind if I pull a little bit of this off? I mean this little fluffy white piece. (Produces rabbit) (1).

“The hats are empty, are they not? Thanks. (Takes hats and returns to stage, carrying the rabbit in the tall hat. The felt hat is hung on the rail of the chair, centre) (2).

“It was very kind of that lady to bring this rabbit. Do you always wear rabbit round your neck, madam? (Takes rabbit out of silk hat.) Oh, yes, it’s alive; it isn’t a Welsh rabbit. (Places rabbit on table prompt side and to make room for it, takes candlestick and handkerchief to other table O.P. side) (3). You found this hat empty, sir? Did you look inside it? Really! I suppose you didn’t notice this. (Takes out ball.) It’s a sort of air ball. (Drops on board.) All the air outside. It’s heavy (strikes with hammer), as heavy as a young wife’s first cake, but it is one of the things that I am going to use for this experiment—this solid ball, this tall hat (puts ball back into hat), this newspaper. (Picks up newspaper from chair and lays down hat with ball in it) (4). There is nothing much in this; it’s an evening paper (lays newspaper underneath rabbit on table). This little rabbit I will put on the newspaper (stroking the rabbit). No, you’re not to read the police news; you’re too young. (Any cause célèbre may be mentioned here.) Now for the experiment. (Picks up hat in right and ball in left hand) (5). This tall hat I am going to hang on this candle. (Blows candle out.) A curious place to hang a hat, but it’s my own hat and I shall hang it where I like. (Hangs hat on candle) (6). The ball I will put in the bowler hat. I want you to see that I really do put it into the hat and that I don’t slip it up my sleeve. I will leave it here in full view. (Replaces hat with ball in it on chair.)

“Here then, is my apparatus. This solid heavy ball, the little rabbit, and the tall hat on the candle.

There is one other thing I want to show you—this ordinary handkerchief, which I will fold, so, and lay on the top of the hat—so. (Does so) (7).

“Now I want everyone to keep one eye on that ball, the other eye on this old hat, and another eye on this young rabbit. I am going to put this rabbit behind this newspaper for a moment. (Rabbit is taken in right hand, paper in left) (8). He is rather nervous; he is very young and comes from the country. Now, look. Go! So much for the rabbit. They don't mind this, when they're young. (Smacking the crumpled ball of paper.) Now, for the ball. That is rather more difficult. (Picks up hat containing ball and swings it to and fro.) One, two, three, go! (Ball disappears and rabbit is seen in its place) (9). Here is the rabbit, but where is the ball? (Puts hat and rabbit on table.) That is pure curiosity, but I will try and satisfy it. In the first place I cover my empty hand with this handkerchief, and here is the lighted candle. Here, in place of the candle, is the ball (lifts hat) (10), still remaining absolutely solid. (Drops ball on board and replaces candle in stick.)

“I will tell you how I did that. I had two rabbits, but no one knew, because one was inside the other. (Second rabbit apparently pulled from the other) (11).”

TRICKS OR DEVICES (FIG. 55)

The ball itself is not so heavy as it appears. It is made of aluminum, and the board upon which it is

dropped is raised a little from the stage by its own frame and therefore acts as a sounding-board.

A duplicate trick ball is provided. This is hollow and is formed of two separate hemispheres. One is a little smaller than the other and is pivoted on it by a couple of pins with washers, so that it will lay inside the larger hemisphere but when revolved will form half of what will appear to be a solid ball so long as the point of juncture is hidden. A small knob near the lip of one-half of the ball and a depression at the corresponding side of the other half form a sufficient catch to lock them together. When the semi-revolution is made the projection is sprung into the niche.

The smaller half has the silk lining of a bowler hat glued into it.

The bowler hat has a lining similar to that fastened into the trick ball, and the hat used should have a crown into which the "larger half" of the trick ball will fit nicely. A little cotton wool is



FIGURE 55.

fixed under the leather band of the hat to keep it puffed out a little, so that when the two half balls are in the hat, the edges, which should be just underneath the edge of the hat band, would not be noticed by a person looking into the hat. Also, the outer half of the ball should fit inside the crown sufficiently tightly to allow of the hat being dropped on a table, mouth downwards, without fear of the shells falling out.

The table upon which the rabbit is placed has two specialities. The top is really a shallow box just deep enough to hold one of the rabbits. To this, access is gained by a triangular-shaped lid, the hinges of which are at the base of the triangle and at the front part of the table. The spaces between the edges of this flap and the table top proper are concealed by corresponding lines in the imitation inlaid pattern, and other lines in the design conceal another trap in the triangular board itself. This is cut near the base of the triangle and is therefore close to the front edge of the table. To construct the trap, which is intended for a special purpose, commence by cutting out a hole a little larger than the circumference of the silver ball. Then cut the round piece of wood taken out into half, and fix the two halves with spring hinges so as to form doors to the hole. The doors should be so made that they will open inwards by pressure and immediately fill the aperture when released. They are prevented from rising higher than the surface of the table by suitable stops or tongues fastened on the underneath side of each door. The two slats of wood seen in

the photograph are arranged to move laterally, and are drawn together by two rubber bands which pull them under the doors after they spring up into place; in fact, they are a simple means of locking the trap after it has served its purpose. At the ends and in the middle of an imaginary line drawn across the table just in front of this trap, and extending just beyond its circumference, are fixed three small sharp pin points bent down, with the points nearly touching the table top, and pointing towards the front.

The candle is really a short length of brass tubing covered with glazed white paper with a small "well" at the top into which is put an inch of real candle. A light spiral spring is arranged in the hollow candlestick of just sufficient strength to push the "candle" upward, but when a weight, such as the metal ball, is put on the upper end of the tube representing the candle, the spiral spring is forced down and the candle tube sinks down into the hollow candlestick, which it fits snugly. At the side of the candlestick turned away from the audience there is a slot, and a screw-head is fixed to the lower end of the candle-tube. This screw-head projects through the slot and forms a stop to prevent the candle-tube going too high. The top of the slot is just under the ornamental top of the candlestick. The same screw-head turned into a small opening cut at right angles to the slot, and at the lower end of it, locks the candle-tube when it is required to hold it down out of sight.

A piece of wax candle the same length as the

candle-tube is required. The wick is taken out; a safety wax match, with the head up, is firmly fixed in its place by melting the wax of the candle round it after it has been pushed down to about half its length into the opening left by the discarded wick.

At the back of the table, on the O.P. side, there is a hole cut in the hinder side of the box forming the table top, and just beneath the actual top. At the other side of this hole is a holder made of wire to receive the prepared candle, so that the wick end rests just beneath the table top edge and the remainder goes through the hole into the holder. In the centre of the silk handkerchief is firmly sewn a small square of the prepared wood upon which safety matches are struck.

Three rabbits are used. Two of them must be duplicates, one small enough to go into the trick ball and the other small enough to go into the table top box.

The seat of the chair is padded in such a way that a depression is formed near the back in which the trick ball can rest without danger of rolling out with any movement the rabbit may make inside it.

PREPARATIONS.

One side of the handkerchief is hooked on to the three bent pin points, and the handkerchief is then drawn backwards over the trap which has been prepared by pulling open the slats from underneath and pressing down the spring doors. The metal ball is now put on the handkerchief and allowed to sink down into the table, carrying the loose handkerchief

with it. The other half of the handkerchief is now laid over the projecting half of the ball, and loosely arranged so that it appears to be simply a crumpled handkerchief lying in a bunch on the table. The centre of the handkerchief is gathered together over the base of the trick candlestick which stands just behind, so that the thumb of the hand which grasps the stem of the candlestick will clip the centre of the handkerchief firmly against it and carry both away together. The candle-tube has been duly prepared with the small piece of candle, which is lighted just before the experiment commences.

The duplicate piece of candle with the match wick is placed in its pigeonhole behind the other table.

One of the duplicate rabbits is put into the trick ball, which is placed in the padded cup in the chair seat, with the larger hemisphere of the ball towards the audience. This is covered by the half sheet of paper, which is simply placed against the ball in the way shown in the photograph.

The second duplicate rabbit is put in the pocket H behind the waistcoat buttons, with the head pointing towards the performer's left, and the third animal is disposed of in pocket D with the head towards the opening.

The performer carries the two hats with him when he first walks on to the stage.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) Receive the boa in the left hand and bring it towards the right which is held quite close to the opening of the vest. The moment the boa covers

the right hand insert the fingers and pull out the rabbit by the ears. Take it smartly up to the boa and then, with both hands held away from the body, take the rabbit from under the covering boa and exhibit it. If possible, choose a boa of about the same colour as the rabbit to be produced.

(2) The performer then carries the tall hat with the rabbit in it round to the back of the table which holds the candle. When he is about to take the rabbit out he must be standing on the right hand side of the table and be holding the hat with the crown towards the audience and with the mouth of the hat about level with the ball, which is concealed under the handkerchief.

(3) This is the most difficult thing in the whole experiment to do naturally. The performer picks up the candlestick and handkerchief together in the way described and by lifting them upwards and towards the tall hat rolls the ball into the hat with hardly a sound. The performer must do this without glancing at the objects; in fact, at the critical moment he ought to be looking directly at the audience. When the ball is safely in the hat the performer walks away from the table, thus bringing the handkerchief off the hooks.

(4) Having placed the candlestick and handkerchief on the opposite table the performer transfers the hat from the left to the right hand and holds it mouth downwards while addressing the examinee. The ball is held in by the two fingers of the same hand. Then the hat is turned over and the ball discovered and taken out with apparent difficulty as

though it fitted tightly and was very heavy. When the ball is replaced in the hat it is laid on the chair for the ostensible purpose of leaving the hands free to deal with the newspaper. The left hand lays the hat on the seat of the chair crown outwards, just as the right hand begins to draw the newspaper upwards, and not a second later; otherwise, the trick ball will be disclosed. Should a glimpse of it be obtained by spectators at the extreme sides, after the paper is withdrawn they will simply imagine it is the solid ball which has rolled out of the tall hat.

(5) The performer again holds the hat mouth downwards, holding in the ball as before with the two fingers. He holds the trick ball close to his body and carefully keeps the larger half shell facing the audience. The joint between the two shells is covered partly by his fingers curled round one side and by his arm in front of the other side.

(6) When the hat is lowered over the candle the ball presses the candle down into the hollow candlestick, and the hat is really balanced on the ball the diameter of which is the same, as the length of the candle.

(7) The bowler hat is brought over the ball in the left hand, and the ball is pushed into the hat, while the crown of the hat is towards the audience. When the hat is laid on the chair the spectators are looking at the smaller half shell, which is now uppermost. The pins on which it revolves should be at the sides of the hat.

The handkerchief is shaken out and held by the centre, with the striking surface outwards. It is

laid down on the table for a moment, so that the folded centre just overhangs the place where the piece of candle is hidden. A pretence is made of adjusting the balance of the tall hat on the candle and the opportunity is used for twisting the screw-head to lock the candle tube. When the right hand picks up the handkerchief again two fingers are placed under the centre and bring the candle up hidden behind the folds, and thus concealed it is laid on the hat.

(8) When the newspaper was laid under the rabbit the back edge of the paper was left only just overlapping the back edge of the table top. When the conjurer now lifts up the rabbit with the right hand and the paper with the left (he is standing behind the table) he also lifts the triangular flap, and when he lowers the rabbit behind the paper he really lowers the rabbit gently, but quickly, into the hollow box beneath. The moment the rabbit rests on the bottom of the box the conjurer's left thumb lets go of the lid which is caught by the right hand and noiselessly closed over the rabbit. Now the paper is carried forward, as shown in the photograph, with the right hand still behind it, as though holding the rabbit. The fingers of that hand tap and scratch the paper and imitate the movements of the rabbit which is supposed by the audience to be there.

(9) The bowler is taken in both hands with the fingers curled under the sides of the brim and the thumbs on the ball. When the hat is swung the ball is hidden for a second and the thumbs press the half shell round and force it to revolve. It passes neatly

under the rabbit which immediately sits up, glad to be released from its captivity. It is at once taken out and put on the table.

(10) The performer lifts the handkerchief by the centre—of course holding the candle with it—and when he apparently puts his other hand beneath the folds he really places it behind them and, taking hold of the candle, strikes the match in the upper end on the card at the same side of the handkerchief. Then the performer lifts the handkerchief upwards, as though the candle had appeared in his hand while covered by the silk.

(11) The conjurer now walks over to the opposite table and, during the journey, takes hold of the ears of the rabbit in the pocket—D—with his left hand. When he picks up the visible rabbit he brings the two hands together coolly and quickly. For a momentary exhibition the two animals will appear to be one, and when they are taken apart slowly the illusion is complete.

CHAPTER X

WITH FISH AND LETTERS. THE EDUCATED FISH

HARTZ, a most painstaking and ingenious conjurer, used to say: Give me an idea, and I will find a trick to fit it. He realised that the plot of a feat of magic was all-important. When a story is good the plot is usually clear and easily described, and it is the same with an illusion. Furthermore, one cannot easily add to it, or take away from it; it is fitted together with such nicety that it must remain whole and unaltered or its beauty is marred.

When we say this we refer only to the main idea and plot, not to the means used for the illustration which, in an illusion, may be controlled entirely by the author. For instance, in our version of "The Egyptian Pyramids," described in Chapter 8 we have not tampered with the original plot: "Two different liquids are mixed together in one vessel, and are then magically separated and discovered in two other vessels." That is the plot, concise, easily understood, a complete tale of magic, which will be told and retold for generations.

Here is another. "Catch money in the air, and find it everywhere." This also is a classical plot for an illusion. Mr. Nelson Downs presented it under the title of "The Miser's Dream," and introduced many new devices and clever manipulations.

But, if we may be permitted a friendly criticism, he rather spoilt the interest of the story by adding to it a sort of appendix of coin manipulations, which seemed to be an anti-climax and a distraction. Such manipulations, admirably performed as they were, had no place in the original plot, and immediately following it as they did, tended to confuse the minds of spectators. People were left with the impression that they had been witnessing an exhibition of marvellous dexterity; they had seen the King of Coins and his obedient subjects, but the mystery of the original legend was gone. True, they had seen a man making money, catching it in the air and finding it everywhere, but they had seen him do so many things with the same magically minted silver that the impression conveyed by the original plot faded from their minds and the performer became to them a coin manipulator, rather than a magician.

At the commencement of his career as a public performer Servais Le Roy presented a very fine version of the "Catching Money." He commenced in the usual way by catching coins one at a time and dropping them into a tall hat, but he finished by finding handfuls of silver in the pockets of members of the audience. Surprised elderly gentlemen were asked to empty their pocket and they found fifty or sixty half-crowns at the bottom of it. They themselves poured the coins into the hat. The audience were roused to a pitch of enthusiasm. Where does it come from? they asked each other, and none could answer. Here was a proper finish. The story was told in a way that listeners would remem-

ber. They were left with the rattle, the glitter and jingle, of money. Le Roy, having reached the climax, wisely went on with an experiment of quite a different nature. We ourselves give away real money to the audience, a convincing proof that we catch it easily, that we make it out of nothing.

At the time of writing Owen Clark is practising a new way of presenting the same plot which will appeal to those who know it by heart. He has revolutionised the means by which the money is apparently caught. He will be able to show every side of both his hands slowly and deliberately, without any of those unnatural movements which adepts in sleight of hand are unfortunately too prone to make. As a matter of fact, he will not use any sleight of hand, because he has discovered a new trick for producing the illusion. At our suggestion he has also changed the receptacle into which the coins are dropped. A tall hat held in one hand has been used by conjurer after conjurer. Owen Clark will have a large clear glass bowl standing on a tripod of bamboo rods in the centre of the stage. He will catch coins with both hands and will toss them into the bowl, and thus he will tell the tale again.

"How very rare a really new trick is," we hear people remark. We would reply that they are mistaken. Novel tricks or illusions are comparatively abundant, but a new plot which at once appeals is indeed rare; in fact, very few such plots have ever been devised. "Fish spell words" is our plot for the illusion we are about to describe, and the title we give it is "The Educated Fish."

The appliances visible to the audience are a bell-shaped glass aquarium, set in a slender three-legged stand in the centre of the stage. The bowl is nearly filled with water and in the water are four live gold-fish. On the top of the glass aquarium is laid a sheet of glass upon which are placed, in little piles, twenty-six small wooden tablets. Upon each of

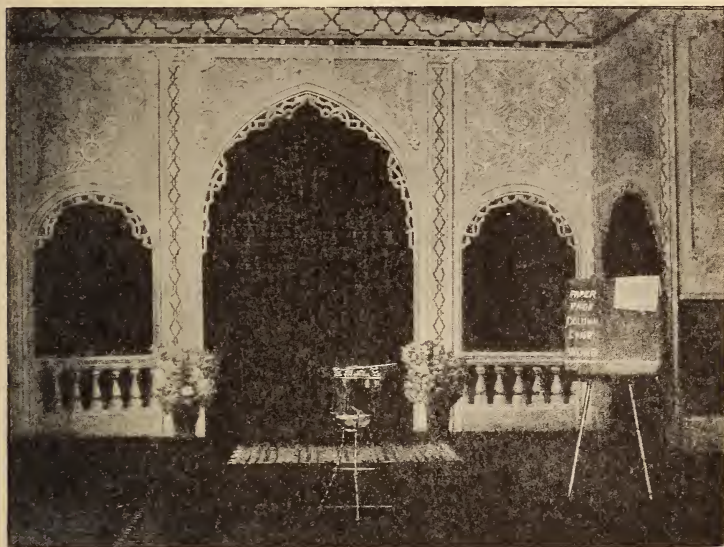


FIGURE 56.

these is painted a letter of the alphabet. A current copy of a daily newspaper, a small landing net, and a blackboard upon which are printed the words: "Paper, Page, Column, Line, Word," complete the equipment. (See Fig. 56.)

When the performer comes forward to present the illusion he takes the sheet of glass from the top

of the glass bowl and two electric lights are directed upon it from the sides (1). This is what he says:—

“I have here a number of wooden tablets. On each tablet is roughly printed a letter of the alphabet and each one is weighted at one end so that when the tablets are dropped into this aquarium—which I ask you to notice contains nothing but water and a few fish—they stand upright at the bottom of the bowl. Otherwise, they are unprepared pieces of wood, and they will be dropped into the bowl, one at a time, in front of you. (Hands glass slab with tablets to attendant who proceeds to drop them in such a way that the audience can plainly see them sink to the bottom and stand upright there) (2).

“While that is being done I will ask members of the audience to choose a word from this newspaper, which is a copy of to-day’s *Daily Telegraph*, with twenty pages of words. Will a gentleman choose one of those twenty pages? Just say which—number 5? Very well. We will select a word from the fifth page of to-day’s *Telegraph*. There are seven columns. Would you, sir, mind saying which of the seven columns we shall use? The third—very well. Now I will ask a lady to say how many lines we shall count from the top of that column and then, from that particular line I will ask someone to choose a word. Will you, madam, please say which line? How many? Seventeen? Will the gentleman near be good enough to count them (takes paper down) and when you have found the line, sir, will you please select any word in which the letters are

all different, because I have only one set of letters to drop into the bowl. (Goes back to stage.)

"I hope these preparations haven't bored you. I only wish to prove, as far as is possible, that the word used cannot be pre-arranged. (Goes to blackboard.) In case anyone may wish to verify this for themselves afterwards I will jot down the particulars on this blackboard. (Writes *Daily Telegraph*, 'fifth page, third column, seventeenth line.' Walks over to aquarium and takes up sheet of glass and net which attendant has left on top).

"Now, in this aquarium there are four educated goldfish; at least, two are fish and the other two are fishes. I think myself that fishes are really more intelligent than fish. The only difference between fish and fishes is that fish have votes.

"Here is a solid sheet of plate glass which I lay over this, to prevent anything getting in at the top. You see it stands isolated from anything else on the stage. (Passes net handle all round and under) (3).

"Now, to prove how intelligent these fish are, I will get them to spell the word that this gentleman has selected. Have you found one, sir? What is it? (Gentleman replies. We will assume that the word is 'bleat.')

"Well, it was impossible for the fish to have known beforehand that the word was to have been 'bleat.' (Writes it on board.)

"Now Agnes—Agnes is the name of the stout fishess—Agnes, raise B. If you watch closely you will see how Agnes separates the letter B from the others and causes it to rise slowly to the surface of

the water. Look! (4) (Letter rises, is taken out with net and dropped on sheet of plate glass, which is replaced.) Now, Cuthbert—Cuthbert is that little

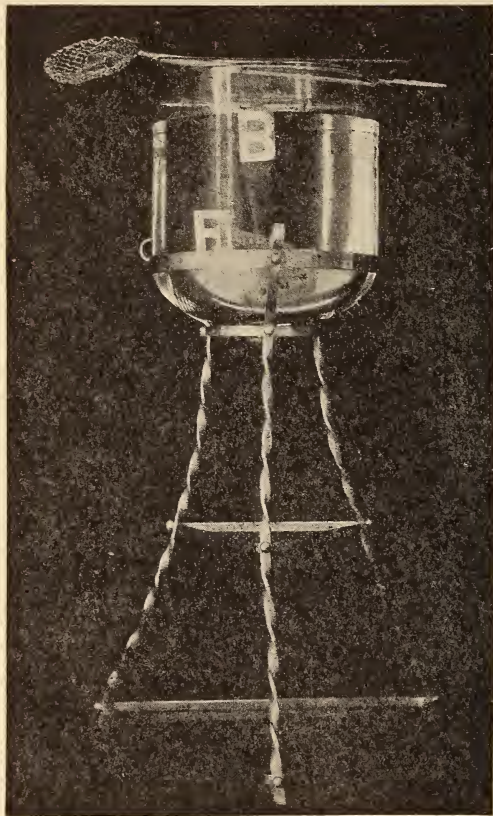


FIGURE 57.

chap with the cast in his eye—he brings up the next letter. Cuthbert, raise L. (Letter taken out as before.) Caroline—the step-sister of Agnes—next letter, please. Quite right! Horatio, your turn. Horatio is a very clever fish, raise A. Now, one more letter completes the word. Agnes, your turn. If you do this nicely you shall have some nuts.

B.L.E.A.T. There is the word correctly spelt. I think you will admit that my fish are intelligent. Sometimes they answer questions. Agnes, do you

want to spell any more. (N & O rise.) Agnes doesn't." (5.)

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

The aquarium is an ordinary bell-shaped glass bowl, without preparation, set in a special metal



FIGURE 58.



FIGURE 59.

stand. The three pictures, Figures 57, 58, 59, show every part of the stand and the secret receptacle upon which the illusion depends. In picture 57 we see

the bowl at close quarters, as set for the experiment, a back view of the same bowl in picture 58 and finally a side view in picture 59 and in this last picture our principal device is fully exposed.

To construct this a plate of tin is bent to fit the bottom of the aquarium and cover about two-thirds of the space. On this are fixed 26 metal boxes, each open at one end only, and of such a size that the tablets used can be slid in and out without friction. These boxes are arranged in two rows with 13 on each side, and it will be observed that a triangular space is left between them. Attached to the front of the series of compartments is a flat piece of polished metal, of such a shape that it fits the bottom and sides of the bowl, and when in position forms an upright partition between the part of the bowl in which the boxes rest behind it and the unoccupied portion in front of it. The top edge of this partition is cut straight, and this straight edge must be at the same level as the larger of the two metal rings which support the bowl. When the whole thing is in position it should rest just below the top edge of the ring. As will be seen in Figure 57 the strip of metal reflects the water and glass in front of it and forms a perfect illusion, particularly as the surrounding ring just cuts off the view at the juncture between the real and the unreal. The spectators in front of the bowl will see nothing but what is apparently water and clear glass, while to those in the balconies above the view is the same because in their case the top edge of the strip is well concealed by the refractive qualities of the water.

The letters that rise are painted on paraffin wax tablets made in a brass mould, and they are exactly the same size as the wooden ones, namely, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 2 inches. They are about a quarter of an inch thick and are weighted at the bottom end with a few small shots to prevent them from rising too quickly. Before the tablets have the letters painted on them with white enamel they are coated with green anti-sulphuric enamel. When they are loaded into the boxes they are held down by small squares

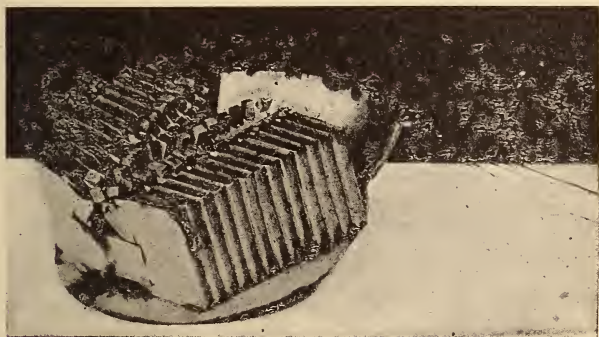


FIGURE 60.

of lead fastened to small wire arms which, in turn are fastened to short lengths of tube which revolve on rods running on each side of the triangular receptacle. (In Figure 60 we have a clear view of this minus the front piece.) To each of these is soldered a small ring, and to each ring is attached a black silk thread, which runs down through thin copper tubes which carry each thread, protected from entanglement with its neighbours, from the base of the boxes, underneath the metal plate, to the

top of the curved edge at the back. The threads are then carried over the rim of the glass bowl and are guided by a series of small rings soldered on the back of the supporting metal ring of the stand. They are finally fastened to another series of rings at the base of the stand, and above each of these rings is marked (See Figure 58), a letter of the alphabet. These letters correspond with those on the metal blocks which are marked with the letters which are on the tablets underneath them.

The stage is prepared by cutting a narrow trap or slot which can be closed from underneath. When open it is concealed by the strip of metal to which the threads are attached, and it is long enough and wide enough to allow the passage of a small hook—a common button-hook answers the purpose—with which the assistant pulls the threads as required. A slight pull is sufficient to turn the block over and away from any particular letter which is wanted to rise. The tablets shown to the audience are weighted with a slip of lead at one end, heavy enough to prevent them from rising.

PREPARATIONS.

The receptacle is lifted out of the water, as in Fig. 59. The wax tablets are carefully placed in the marked boxes. Every precaution is taken against the threads being entangled or any obstruction being lodged between the tablets and the sides of the boxes.

This having been done, the receptacle is gently lowered into the water without disturbing the arrangement. All the metal work should be nickel-

plated, and care should be exercised in choosing a suitable background for the threads which, of course, must remain invisible even to those who are seated nearest to the front.

Footlights should not be used if they reflect in the glass, which they are apt to do and in that case the view of those in the balcony will be spoilt.

The assistant should be provided with a dictionary.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) These arc lights are directed in such a way that the threads lying over the back part of the aquarium are not illuminated.

(2) The attendant drops the first two or three tablets, with the letters facing the audience, in front of the metal partition. The next six or eight tablets, with the backs towards the audience, are dropped in front of these, so as to hide the letters completely. All the rest of the letters are allowed to fall in the triangular space behind the partition.

(3) The plate of glass will not interfere with the pulling of the threads. The handle of the net is rattled between the back and front legs.

(4) After dropping the tablets into the bowl the attendant goes beneath the stage and opens the trap. When he hears the word he looks it up in his dictionary—should he feel at all doubtful as to the correct way to spell it—and then carefully takes hold of the right thread with his hook and, after a short pause, following the performer's words, pulls it. This process is repeated for all the other letters in the chosen word.

(5) The last effect is omitted if either "N" or "O" has been used, or the answer can be altered to "Yes" by the performer giving the cue by putting his question in this form: "Are you sure you have spelt the word correctly?"

CHAPTER XI

WITH DOVES AND RATS. THE POINT OF VIEW

THE idea of our next experiment is this. "A conjurer demonstrates to the audience that they cannot believe their own eyes when magic rules the roost."

The plot is as follows: Two doves are placed between two straw hats and changed into rats, and the birds reappear in the wire cage from which they are taken.

"Not nearly such a good plot as the last chapter," our readers may remark, "too overloaded. Why not simply 'Doves changed to rats.' Why the anticlimax?" Our readers will be quite right, but still we think that in this case the plot is married to an idea for an original scheme of patter, and that the twain cannot well be divorced.

We will not attempt to twist about our work to suit our own theories. If all our results fitted our theories of course both would be beyond reproach. We are willing to admit that the present combination is not one of those effects that have all the qualities of a really good plot such as, for instance, that of "The Chinese Rings" (solid metal rings that are linked and unlinked at will) or "The Inexhaustible Bottle" (any drink called for supplied from one bottle), or "The Magical Growth of Flowers" (Instantaneous Germination). These are

plots for perpetuity, masterpieces of the magic art, monuments to their inventors, themes that lesser men will build reputations upon so long as there are wizards to bewitch the world.

We will relate how the combination we are about to explain was suggested. Mr. Martin Chapender, one of the most promising young wizards we ever introduced to the public, was overtaken by death on the very threshold of his career. After this lamentable event certain of his properties and pieces of apparatus came into our possession. Among them was a cage for the sudden appearance of two doves, in which a principle of our own invention was cleverly adapted. The cage was from the workshop of Mr. Henry Bate, who had designed and constructed the ingenious mechanical parts. Mr. Chapender unfortunately used it only a few times at the Egyptian Hall. His manner of exhibiting it was as follows:

The cage was hung up in the centre of the stage. Two doves were made to vanish, and when Mr. Chapender fired a pistol they appeared in the isolated cage. This was an effect of transposition that was being exhibited at the same time by many conjurers with canaries instead of doves. Mr. Chapender's version, however, was on a different principle from the others, and had the advantage of being done with larger objects.

Now, having that piece of apparatus before us we cast about for a mode of presentation which would introduce it differently and, if possible, without calling direct attention to the cage as the principle object. We decided that the cage must appear

in its usual capacity, simply as a dwelling house for birds in captivity.

Only a short time before we had actually seen a conjurer bring on a cage, take it to pieces, and put it together again and then cause two canaries to appear in it. He was quite proud of it and evidently thought it was a vast improvement on the procedure of the man he was imitating. This man brought on two canaries in a cage, took them out and put them in a paper bag. He then fired a pistol through the bag and the birds appeared again in the cage.

In our opinion the conjurer who took the cage to pieces and carefully exhibited each section to the audience was not only giving himself a lot of unnecessary trouble, but was also almost telling them that he was using a mechanical trick in the cage, by directly calling attention to it in the way he did. He might just as well have said: "Here is the cage. Puzzle: Find the birds I am about to produce in it."

On the other hand the original performer called too little attention to his dénouement. When the birds were taken out, the cage, from the audience's point of view, was finished with. All eyes were on the paper bag and only when it was blown to pieces was their attention drawn to the cage once more. By that time the birds had already arrived, but the spectators had just missed the moment of the reappearance; in fact, the whole performance was akin to a pantomime trick, in which the clown jumps through a window and suddenly springs up through

a star trap on the other side of the stage. "Here we are! Bang!! Gone! Here we are again. Ha! ha!" No more direction or misdirection of the mind of the audience was attempted either by words or action.

Again, Mr. Chapender called just a little too much attention to the cage by having it hung up empty beforehand. He produced the doves during the performance and then, after causing them to vanish, pointed a pistol at the cage. The audience undoubtedly saw the magical appearance of the birds, but the cage was obviously there for that purpose, and the spectators probably concluded—especially as no other reason was suggested—that they had witnessed a very clever trick—with a cage.

We wished to avoid the weak points in the three examples we have quoted, and we were also desirous of bringing in an element of surprise and of using some new objects to lend an air of freshness to the experiment. We had noticed that straw hats had never been used in any magical feat of which we had ever heard. We decided to put the doves between a couple of straw hats and instead of making them vanish, to change them to something of about the same size and colour. We thought of many things and finally decided upon tame white rats. These fitted into our scheme or idea, which we entitled "The Point of View."

The cage with two white doves or pigeons stood on a table in the centre of the stage, and the two straw hats lay on a tray on a table to the right of the performer. The conjurer, having accepted a white

handkerchief from an assistant, thus addressed the audience:—

Ladies and Gentlemen:

“My next experiment is called ‘The Point of View.’ You know, your point of view is a very important part of your outlook, as it were; in fact, I believe that, in the near future, people will no longer ask each other how they are in health but will greet their friends with the question: ‘How is your point of view?’

“I have heard that Indian conjurers do not really present the marvels to which they lay claim; they simply alter the point of view of their audience. I will show you what I mean. (Walks up to cage.) Here, in this cage, are two white doves, and here is an ordinary white handkerchief. Now, will the audience oblige me by watching these birds for a second or two? (Twisting up handkerchief he holds it by opposite corners and twirls it in front of cage.) Now, I assure you, your point of view is altered.

“I have here two ordinary straw hats. (He goes to the footlights and shows the hats to be empty. He also bangs them together to show that they are ordinary straw hats).

“They are very old, but I believe in making use of everything; my father was Scotch. (He walks up to cage, hands one hat to assistant, takes doves and puts them into other hat) (1). I put these doves, one at a time, into his hat. This is Mr. Dove and this Mrs. Dove. No quarrelling, please. I cover them with the other hat—so (here takes other hat

from assistant and does so) (2). Now, I daresay every person in this theatre really thinks I have put two straw hats between two doves—I mean two doves between two hats. There is a lady down there who even imagines that she can hear the doves fluttering. Can you not, madam? (listening to fluttering himself) (3). I thought so. Well, I must tell you that although I put something between these hats they were not doves, but rats. (Takes off top hat, and puts on tray) (4). Real live rats (takes them out) (5). If there is any lady here who does not believe that they are real I shall be delighted to pass them for examination, tails and all. No? Very well. (Puts hat and rats on the tray, picks up handkerchief.) Now to restore your point of view. (To assistant.) Bring that cage. (Here he lifts it up (6); the performer waves the handkerchief in front, as before, and the doves appear). Watch! (Taking cage from assistant the performer shows all sides of it to the audience (7) and continues). You see, the birds have never been taken out of the cage at all. They have been here all the time. It was simply your point of view, ladies and gentlemen, that was changed."

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

The two straw hats are provided with devices which can be seen in Fig. 61. The hat on the right of the picture is carefully fitted with a tin lining, or box, which can be pushed into it fairly easily. When in position it appears to be the lining of the

hat because the inside of the receptacle is covered with an exact duplicate of the real lining.

Beside the other hat is seen a tin cover or lid which fits nicely into the mouth of the hat, and when this cover is in position the crown of the hat forms a sort of box with ample accommodation for a couple of doves or small pigeons. On the brim of the hat will be seen two small hooks which move laterally on two pins riveted through the straw, and

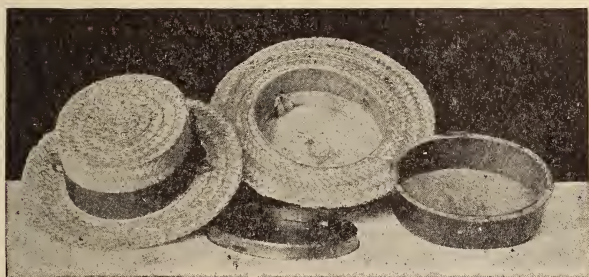


FIGURE 61.

the points of these hooks go through holes made in the side of the crown. When it is necessary to fasten the lid to the mouth of the hat these hooks are pushed through the holes by the thumbs of the performer, and engage in two slots which are cut in the flange of the lid.

In this picture (Fig. 62) it will be seen that the metal lining and cover also form a box and lid independently of the hats. There is a narrow rim on each. The one on the box has two lugs or tongues of metal turned or bent over on to the rim, one on each side. The flange on the lid is carried only half

way round the oval; the ends of this half rim are at each side, and are chamfered off so that when the lid is slid on from one end, as in the picture, the ends of the top flange are pushed under the lugs on the under one, and wedge pretty firmly.

Now this box, with a lid which can be taken off only by sliding from one end, is large enough to contain two large tame white rats. We will sup-



FIGURE 62.

pose that when the next picture was taken, Fig. 63, the two rats were in the box which is seen in the hat on the left of the picture. The performer intends to put this hat over the one on the right of the picture which we will suppose contains the doves. In Fig. 64 the performer has turned the hats over, so that the rats are now in the lower one and the doves in the upper, and we see him in the act of pushing home the hooks. When he wishes to complete the operation he simply has to slide one hat on

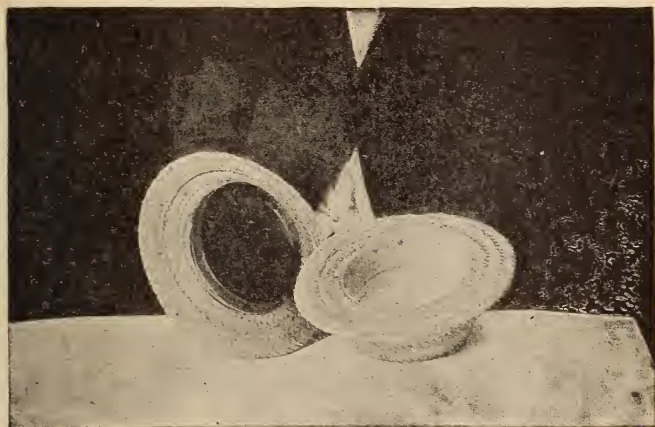


FIGURE 63.



FIGURE 64.

the other, as in the next picture, Fig. 65. The lid is pushed off by the hat and, being fastened to it by



FIGURE 65.

the two hooks, is carried away with it, with the two doves inside, while the rats are disclosed in the other hat, and the apparent change is complete.

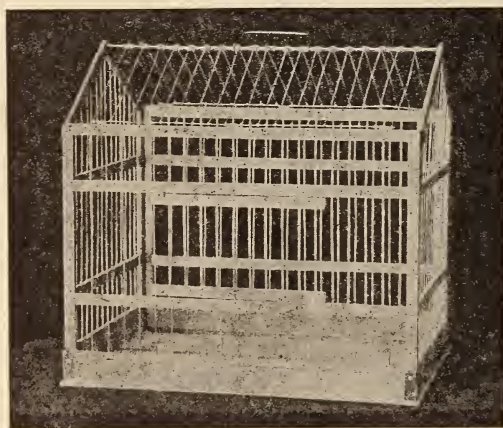


FIGURE 66.

The cage is seen in Fig. 66 as it appears to the audience when ready for the illusion, except that there should be two doves inside it. The principal device is contained in the back panel. This device is

based on a principle invented by us in 1880; it has since been applied to many effects and illusions. from "The Artist's Dream" downwards. If a plain, flat, dark-coloured velvet curtain forms the background of the stage or room, and a similar piece of material be hung up, or held, in front of it, and if the edges of the hanging panel are covered by some sort of frame, and if both panel and background are equally lighted, the frame will appear to be empty to the onlooker, providing it is placed at such a distance from the larger cloth and in such a position that an observer, placed in any part of the auditorium, could not, even if the frame were empty, see anything through it except the back cloth.

In the present case the back frame filling the space between the sides, the floor, and the triangular roof of the cage, is covered with velvet similar to the background, and over this are arranged dummy cross-pieces and wires, duplicating the real back of the cage which is hidden behind the illusive panel.

A side view in Fig. 67 clearly shows the trick parts. The birds that are to be produced are held in the annex at the back, and when they enter the cage proper the panel, which is fastened to a strong spring hinge, falls very quickly, and lies flat on the floor of the cage. The back of the panel is similar to the bottom of the cage and completely covers it. At the same time the wire chamber closes up and lies flat against the back of the cage; in fact, it actually forms part of it, as will be seen by looking at the next picture, Fig. 68, which gives a back view

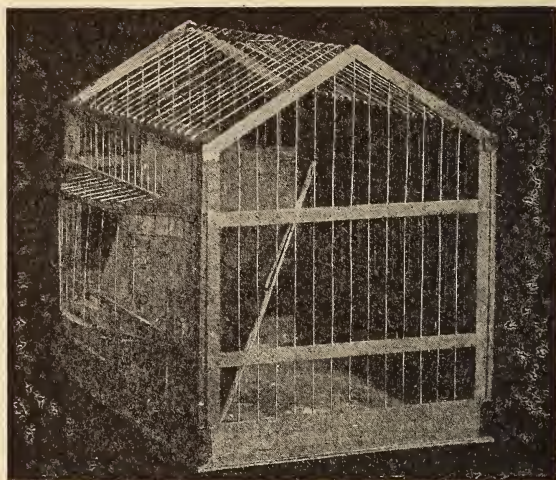


FIGURE 67.

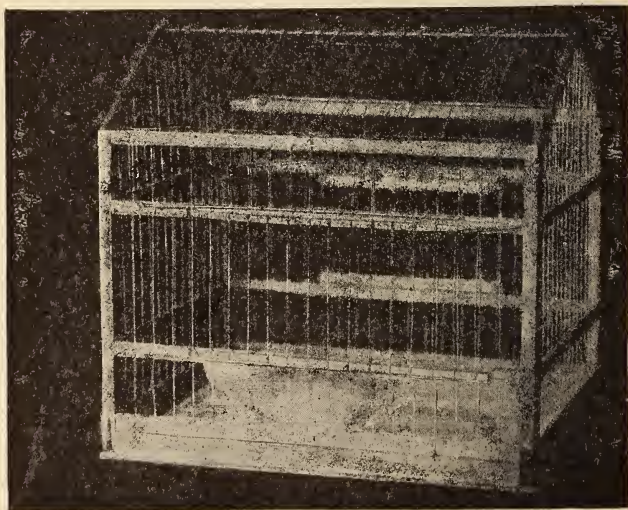


FIGURE 68.

of the device after the concealed birds have been produced.

This is managed in the following way. About a dozen of the wires in the centre of the back are cut away from between the slats of wood that run round the cage. These are replaced by a number of wires fastened to two strips of clock spring which are in turn fastened at one end only behind the wooden bars. Normally this wire fence lies flat against the back of the cage, but it can be bent into a semi-circle and held back by two small loops which are formed in the fourth wire from the right hand side. This wire terminates at its base in a small loop projecting at right angles, and it answers two purposes. It is arranged to slide up and down, and is allowed a movement of about a quarter of an inch. When it is pushed right up the two loops in it are brought level with the top and bottom of the wire fence, the free ends of which can be bent under them. Also, the top of the same wire goes through a hole in a small plate fixed on the top edge of the false back, and it is thus held in place. When the wire rod is pulled down both the panel and the wire fence are released and the latter is quickly pulled into the right position by two spiral springs, fixed at one end to the wires and screwed at the other end to the wooden frame. These springs can be clearly seen in the photographs.

The semi-circular compartment requires a roof and a floor. These are provided by soldering graduated lengths of wire at right angles to two thin strips of metal which are made into light spring

hinges fastened on to the wooden cross-pieces. When the fence is bent into position two hooks formed at the end of the middle wire of each of these flaps are sprung over the top and bottom rails of the fence. On the collapse of the compartment the rails of the fence go inwards leaving the hooks, and the two flaps are pulled up and down respectively by the spring hinges, and as the short lengths of wire lie behind the wires of the cage they are not perceived. The lower flap is covered with celluloid to prevent the claws of the birds being caught in the wires, and this is much more noticeable in the picture than it is on the platform. Being made of clear celluloid it is hardly perceptible at a short distance.

We trust we have now made it quite clear how the birds are so suddenly produced in the seemingly empty cage. They themselves have no choice in the matter. If they do not tumble in when the flap drops they are propelled through the opening by the spring fence, and in either case there is the satisfaction of knowing that they cannot be hurt or injured in the process.

PREPARATIONS.

The cage is set by lifting up the false panel and while holding it against the back, pushing up the wire rod. The wire fence is bent back so that the free ends of the top and bottom rails may be inserted behind the stops on the same wire. The lower flap is hooked into position, and the two birds are placed in the compartment and secured by the top flap.

Two duplicate birds (small white pigeons are the most suitable kind to use) are put inside the cage, which is placed on a small thin topped table in the centre of the stage. The table is placed so far back that persons in the balcony can see nothing through the back of the cage except the back cloth, which must be of plain dark-coloured velvet hung to show a flat surface.

Two rats are placed in the tin box, which is closed with the sliding lid. The ends of the box are marked, as also are the hats; this enables the performer to place both hats and box in the right positions for the movements which follow.

A second table is required. This stands on the O. P. side, halfway between the centre table and the front edge of the platform. On this table is a tray with two hats upon it.

The box with the rats is left in charge of the assistant who has to enter with it from the O. P. side. The performer has a large white handkerchief.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) The assistant has just entered from the O. P. side, and is standing between the two tables with his right side to the audience and, unknown to them, he is holding the box of rats in his left hand against his coat with the box portion nearest his body and in such a way that no part of the box can be seen by the audience. He grasps it with the fingers spread over the lid part. When the conjurer hands him the hat (the one without hooks) he is standing on the conjurer's right and a little behind him. Di-

rectly he takes the hat, which he holds by the brim, crown outwards, he brings his two hands together and coolly pushes the box into it. He then turns face to the audience and holds the hat with both hands at right angles to his body, and crown upwards, grasping it by the brim with thumbs on top and fingers underneath. He takes the opportunity of pushing the box well up into the hat and waits, ready to hand it to the performer. The audience meanwhile are occupied in watching the performer putting the doves into the other hat, but even if they were all looking at the assistant there is nothing suspicious about his movements, if he remembers to move his hands slowly and himself watch the conjurer.

(2) Here the assistant hands it to him with his right hand, and the performer, who is holding the hat containing the doves in his left hand, also receives it in his right hand, taking it by the brim, with thumb on top and two fingers well underneath, to support the box until it is safely resting on the second hat.

(3) This is the excuse for turning both hats completely over. This is done as they are raised to the ear. When they are lowered the brims are resting on the thumbs; they are allowed to do so entirely for a moment, while the fingers are slipped underneath and the thumbs are again brought on top. The performer next pushes home the two hooks and then slides the top hat away from him until the lid is off the box. Both these actions are accomplished with the thumbs. The necessity for marking the

hats and the box and making each movement with them definite, and always the same, will be obvious.

(4) Having now transferred the left hand from the sides of the hats to underneath the crown of the lower one the performer lifts off the upper one by grasping it by the crown, and laying it on the tray which is on the table on his right, and near which he ought to be standing.

(5) The assistant crosses the stage behind the performer, and in front of the cage, and stands near the cage.

(6) The assistant lifts it up from the table, but does not bring it forward. To lift it without exposing the presence of the panel he takes hold of the back and front of the base of the cage, bringing his hands up to it from beneath. (Hence the necessity for a small table.) The thumb of his right hand is brought over the projecting loop.

(7) A smart downward pressure of the assistant's thumb pulls the rod and releases the catches. The performer takes the cage by the top handle and exhibits it freely.

CHAPTER XII

WITH A CANARY AND A TARGET. "THE PHŒNIX"

A CANARY to be cremated and rise from its ashes in imitation of the mythical Phœnix. That was the idea of the plot, but how could the bird be burnt without suggesting roast canary and the callous cruelty of conjurers?

We decided that the deed must be done quickly and in itself form a surprise, and our thoughts wandered to flash-paper. What could be more effective? The little yellow songster should be gently taken from its cage and carefully transferred to a tissue paper bag. The bag and its fluttering occupant should be hung up in an isolated position and then, at an unexpected moment, a sudden blinding flash of fire, and instant annihilation of both bird and paper.

Having solved the first difficulty we boldly faced the next one. The reincarnation must quickly follow the destruction. Were it long delayed the audience would have time to imagine things and tremble for the safety of the bird. Further, when it occurred, all doubts and fears must be allayed by the canary reappearing obviously unhurt and chirping merrily.

Now it occurred to us that a sudden transformation of the paper bag to another and totally differ-

ent object at the time of ignition would be quite surprising, especially if that object could be found to contain the bird with unruffled plumage.

A cage naturally suggested itself as the most suitable article for the bird to be discovered in. Anyway, we could think of nothing better, and so the next task was to invent a means of changing a suspended paper bag into a cage.

Our attempts to solve this problem were many, and we will not weary the reader with a catalogue of our failures, although a record of such trial devices is well worth keeping for future reference. Very often some of the discarded ideas prove useful for a purpose quite different from that for which they were originally intended.

The result of our experiments was the notion of shooting at the bag, which was hung up in front of the bull's-eye of a suspended target. This target transformed itself into a cage containing a bird at the same instant that the spontaneous combustion of the paper took place. The transformation was to follow the successful shot made by a member of the audience, and, to introduce a little comedy, we decided to make use of another object which might be apparently hit by accident. A short time before, the late Mr. Frank Hiam had shown us a trick candle which would light or go out at will. This he hoped we would present in our performance and thus introduce it to the profession. Here was the opportunity. A member of the audience might be asked to fire at the target with an air gun loaded with mysterious pellets which would work wonders.

He fires and misses the target but seems to hit the lighted candle standing near it and out goes the light. We take the gun and with a second shot re-light the candle. Once more the spectator fires, and this time successfully.

We then devised and constructed a target which would turn into a cage automatically, and at the same time set fire to the paper bag. We also invented a means by which the canary first shown could be vanished, and an understudy could take its place in the appearing cage. Then our Phœnix was hatched and ready to fly in the face of the British public. (Figures 69, 70, 71.)

The next thing to do was to write the words, which were as follows:—

“My next experiment is called The Phœnix. I wasn't able to obtain a real Phœnix, so I bought this canary; it is a real canary. The first stage of the trick is to put the canary into this little paper bag. I assure you the bird is not, and cannot be, hurt during this experiment; in fact, it rather likes it. It doesn't hurt a canary to put it into a paper bag; it isn't like putting a paper bag into a canary. (During this speech the bird is taken out of the cage and put into the bag) (1).

“I want to call your attention to that small target which is hanging quite away from anything else on the stage. I will hook this paper bag on to the top of the target here, so that the bird hangs just in front of the bull's-eye (2).

“Now I want the assistance of a gentleman who is a good shootist. I mean a man who, when he

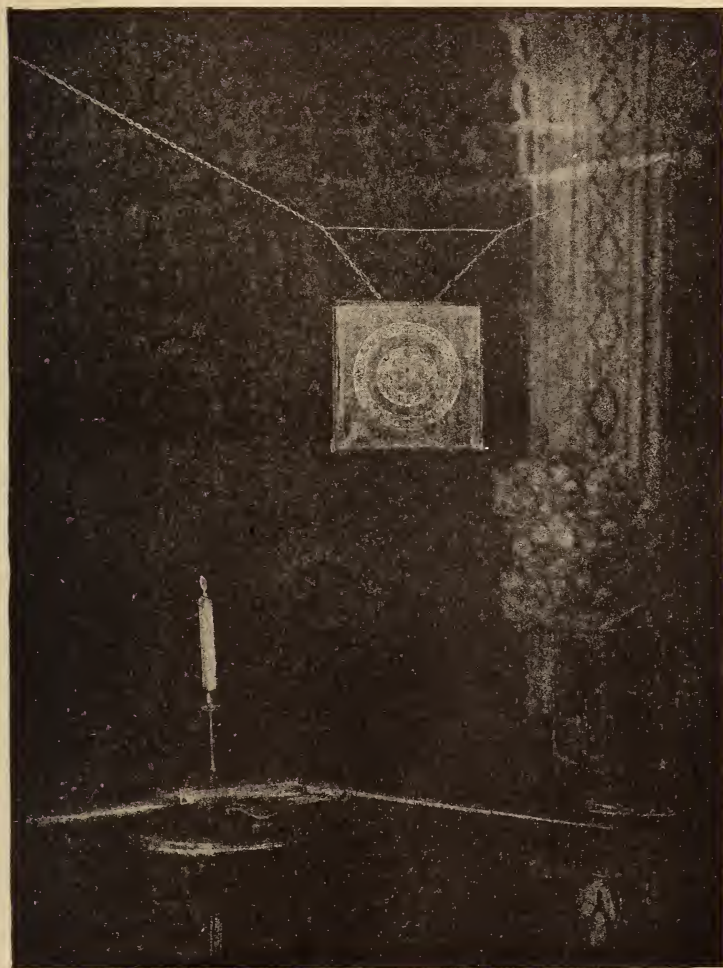


FIGURE 69.

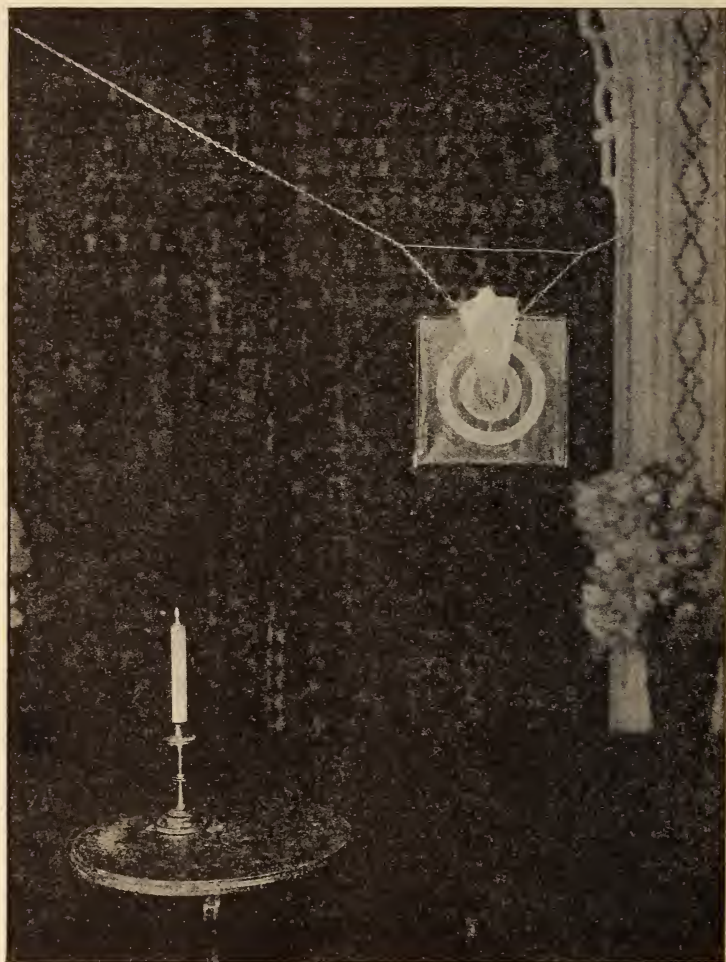


FIGURE 70.

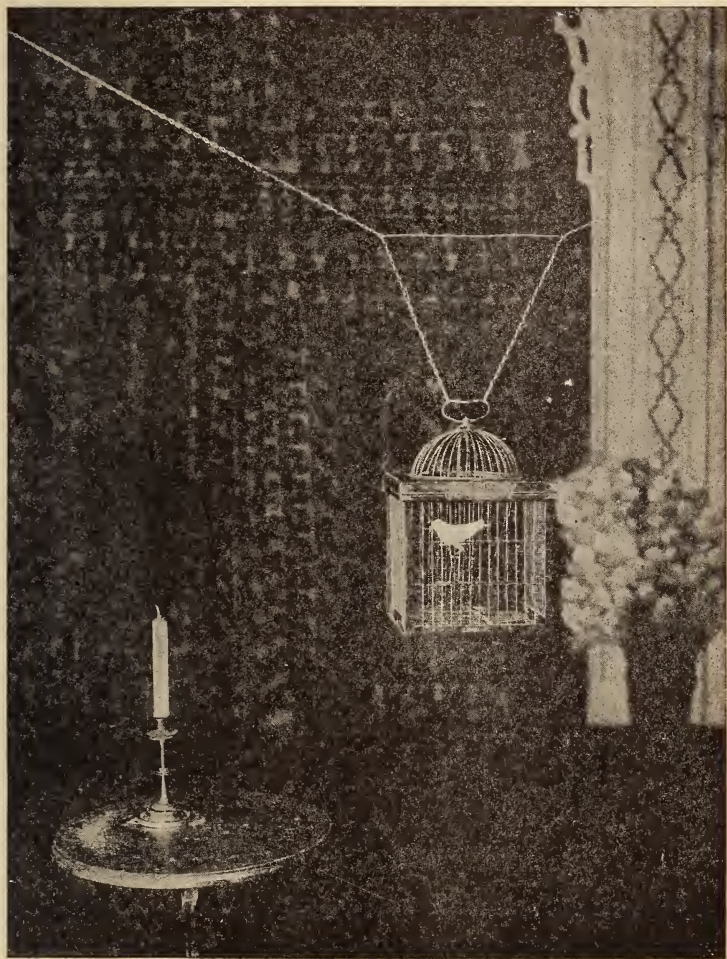


FIGURE 71.

fires, always hits something. Perhaps there is a volunteer present, or a gentleman who has shot the moon. (The performer goes down to the audience and persuades someone to take the gun.)

"Now, sir, when I say 'three,' shoot at the bull's-eye. You shoot out of this end, where the little hole is. Aim at about right angles to the circumference. One! Mind that lady's ear; she wants it. Two! Three! (The candle on the stage goes out) (3). You've put my light out, sir; that's a scandalous shot. Allow me. (Performer shoots and candle lights again) (4). There, how would I do for a *match*? Have another shot, sir. Three shots for nothing; all the fun of the fair. One, two, three, fire! (The paper bag bursts into flames and the target becomes a bird cage, with the bird inside; the performer goes to the stage and unfastens it from the cords) (5). That's a capital shot, sir. It isn't every man that brings down the birds, let alone cages with them. Perhaps the ladies would like to satisfy themselves that the bird is unhurt. (Takes down cage and offers it to a lady to examine.) No, it won't tell you how it is done; this is not one of those little birds that tell things."

TRICKS OR DEVICES.

The small cage is an ordinary one, such as can be purchased at any bird shop, but some additions are necessary. There is a small board which fits within the roof of the cage and also forms a false bottom to it when required. In picture 72 it is seen halfway between the two positions. Projecting

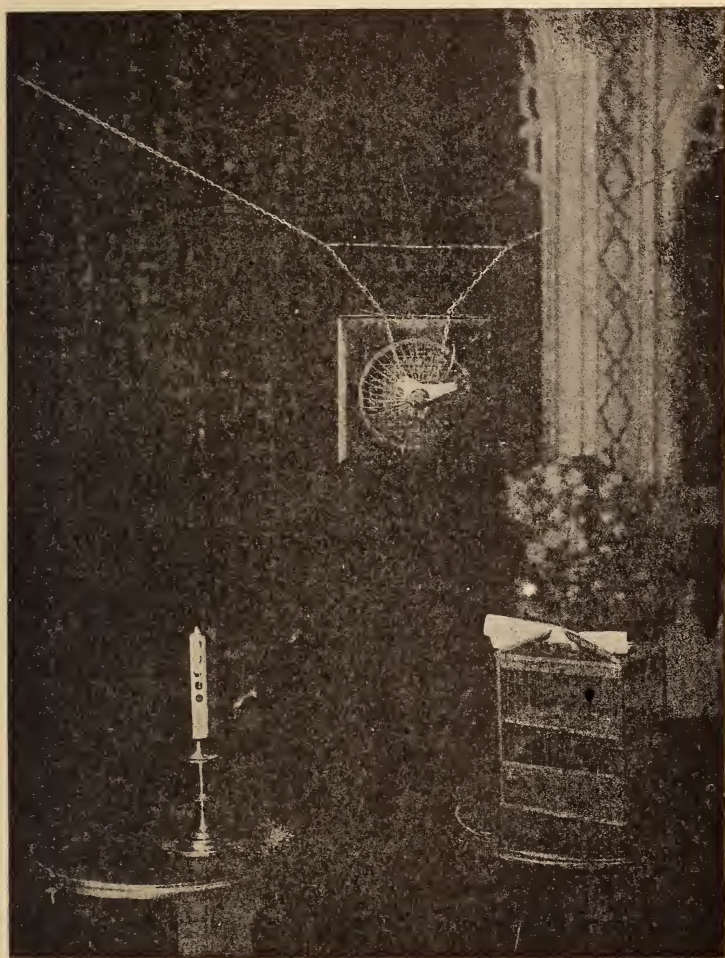


FIGURE 72.

from the front edge of the board a small metal ring will be observed. This is the handle by which the performer carries down the board when he wishes to move it. The ring is also the terminal of a strip of metal which passes right through the thickness of the board and emerges at the opposite edge, finishing in a point which fits into a hole at the back of the cage. When it is desired to fasten the board to the top the strip of metal, which is allowed to slide backwards and forwards, is pulled outwards. The board is placed in position and the strip is pushed inwards. The ring goes into the notch cut for it in the front, and the point passes through the hole at the back. There are two swinging perches—crossbars of wood hung on strings. One of these is pendant from the false top, and the other hangs from the actual roof. Space is allowed for the latter perch to lie between the board and the top. When the board rests at the bottom of the cage its ends rest on two slips of wood nailed inside the cage, at such a height that the canary has ample room.

The candle is an imitation one made of metal. It is simply a piece of brass tube covered with glazed white paper and containing a small cylindrical lamp, with a wick of about the same size as a candle-wick. The top of the tube is closed with the exception of a small hole through which the wick can pass, and a few air holes are drilled in it. The latter are very necessary because, although the lamp rests on a spiral spring which forces it to remain at the upper end of the tube it can be drawn down into the tube when the light is required to disappear or, as the

audience imagine, go out. This is managed by attaching a thread to the lower end of the lamp. This thread is passed right through the hollow candlestick and a hole in the table down to a screw-eye in the floor, and thence to the hand of the ever-useful hidden assistant.

Flash-paper can easily be obtained ready-made. It is paper dipped in a solution of nitric and sulphuric acids; it is then passed through water and allowed to dry. Paper so prepared will, on ignition, practically disappear, like gun cotton, in a brilliant flash.

The Target is practically a folding cage covered by a spring blind representing the face of a target. This is so constructed that it opens out automatically and instantaneously by pulling a thread. We propose to describe the cage by a series of photographs which, at the same time, show how it is set for the illusion. We will therefore at once pass on to the necessary preparations, commencing with this piece of apparatus. We will first ask the reader to glance back at Figures 70, 71, which show the cage before and after the transformation, and also at Fig. 72, giving a back view of the device when ready for exhibition.

PREPARATIONS.

The target cage is held upside down, as in Fig. 73, and the telescopic perch, which is hung from short lengths of brass wire, sliding one on the other, is shaken down into the roof. A stiff piece of wire fastened at right angles to one of the curved wires,

forms a special perch for the bird, which is now put into the domed top; this part of the cage does not collapse in any way.

Two short lengths of chain are attached to the handle of the cage by spring hooks. On the front of the wooden frame are seen a small plate with a hole in it, and two square-headed staples. These

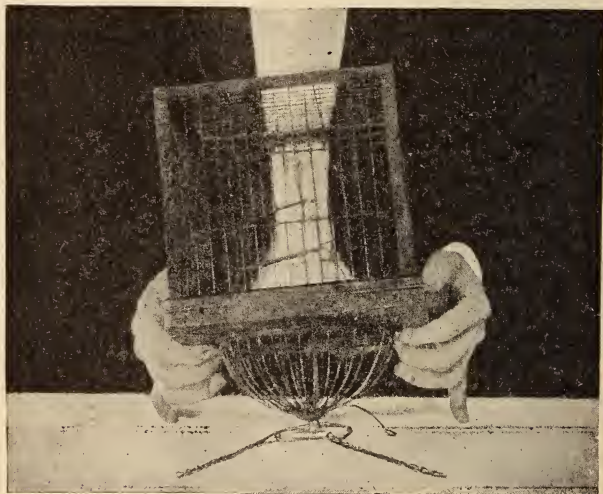


FIGURE 73.

will be on the top edge of the target when it is prepared. In the next picture, Fig. 74, the operator is seen folding in the side of the cage. To do this he has to lift up a wire in the bottom panel, which is bent upwards to keep the side frame pressed against the metal stop. This stop can be seen at the edge of the bottom frame. The bent up wire offers no obstruction to the side panel falling into



FIGURE 74.

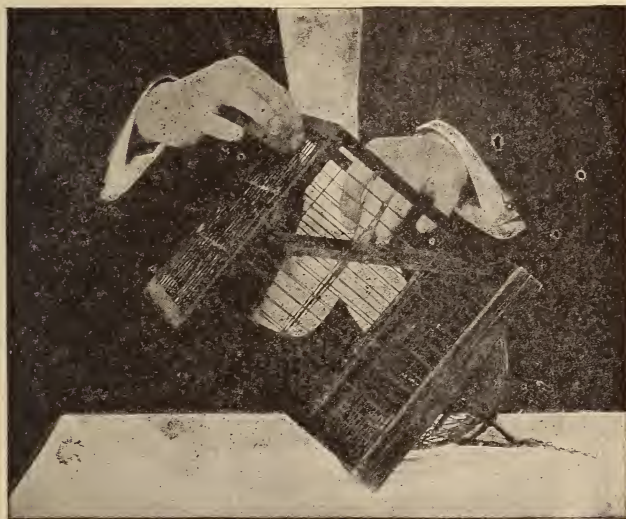


FIGURE 75.

place, but once it has passed the point of the wire the latter must be pulled out of the way before the panel can be folded back.

The next picture, Fig. 75, shows the folding, in the same way, of the opposite side. Each of the panels is on spring hinges.

The floor of the cage is now folded against the front, and both together are laid upon the sides.

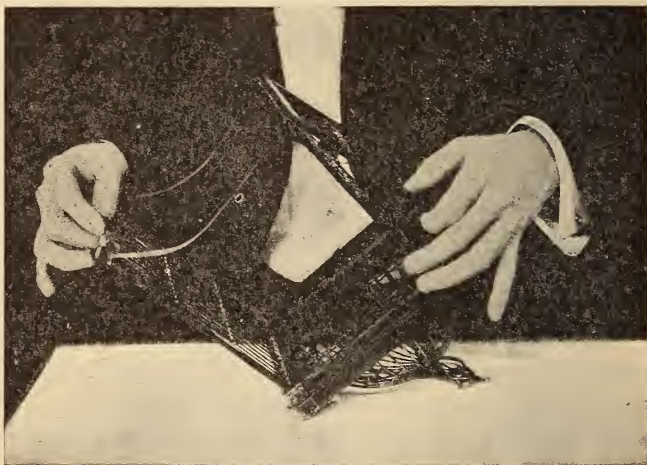


FIGURE 76.

The tapes stretched from back to front are to support the bottom when it falls. See Fig. 76. Finally, in Fig. 77, the back of the cage, with the tapes lying against its frame, is being laid on the others.

In Fig. 78 we see the spring blind being pulled out from its hiding place in the back of the upper frame. The wire rod upon which the end of the

blind is stitched, and which the operator is holding, has two small rings upon it, and when the rod is

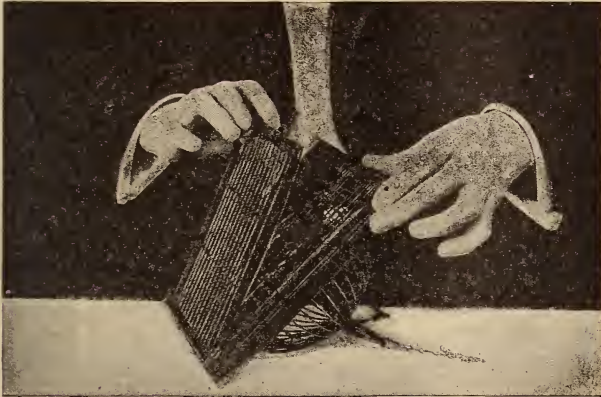


FIGURE 77.



FIGURE 78.

laid on the opposite edge of the frame and over the folded panels the two short lengths of chain are

brought up to meet it. Now a length of steel wire with a loop formed in one end of it is passed through both the rings on the blind, and also through a single link in each of the chains.

In Fig. 79 the operator is seen passing a strip of clock spring—which has a slip of sand-paper cemented underneath it—over the head of a wax match and under the two square-headed staples. The head of the match has been pressed firmly into

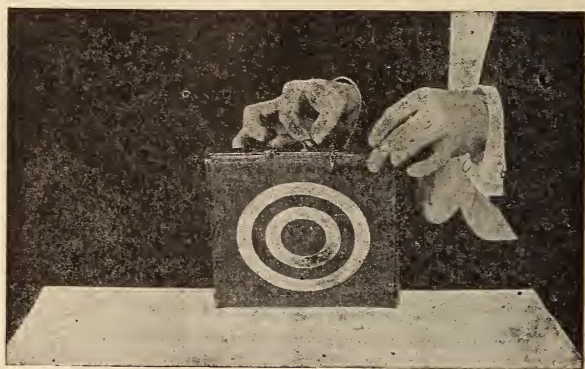


FIGURE 79.

the little hole in the frame in Fig. 73. At one end of the strip of metal is an eyelet hole to which is attached a strong thin silk thread, and this thread is passed across the stage to an assistant at the side. A second piece of thread is fastened on to the steel wire and joined to the first with some "slack" between, as seen in the picture.

In the last photograph (Fig. 80) the preparation of the cage-target is seen quite complete, and the operator is ready to hook the links he is holding to

the hooks on the hanging chain. These hooks are small enough to be mistaken for links a short distance away.

When the assistant pulls the thread, the clock spring is drawn over the head of the match. This lights the flash-paper. The pull, being continued, draws out the steel wire and thus releases the blind, which flies back to its place. Simultaneously the links being freed allow the cage to drop over and



FIGURE 80.

hang from its proper handle. Finally, the back, front, bottom, and sides fall down into their places.

The small cage is arranged with the false piece fastened up in the top, and a duplicate canary is placed within.

The candle lamp is filled with cycle lamp oil, and the wick is carefully trimmed.

INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) Having rolled the piece of flash-paper into the shape of a cornucopia the performer holds it in the left hand. He then hooks the little finger of

the same hand into the wire ring on the top of the cage and turns the cage round so that the wooden back faces the audience. The ostensible reason for doing this is to open the door for the purpose of catching the bird. The conjurer does this with his right hand while the left hand is employed in releasing the false top. There must be no hesitation and no undue haste. The moment the cage is turned the left hand leaves the handle and takes hold of the projecting ring and, pulling it, gently lowers the square of wood, thus covering the bird. Simultaneously the little door is thrown open and a pretence is made of catching the bird with the right hand. The left hand which, even to a keen observer, had apparently been lowered only for the purpose of steadying the cage while the catch was being undone, now returns to the wire handle, and again twists the cage front to the audience, showing the right hand inside it. The hand is closed and appears to contain the canary. It is immediately withdrawn and raised behind the cage to the mouth of the bag in the left hand. The fingers are inserted and lightly tap the inside of the bag and rustle the paper to imitate the movements of a fluttering bird. Now both hands are brought away from the apparently empty cage and the right hand finishes the deception by withdrawing from the bag very quickly and closing the bag with a twist.

The performer stands at the left side of the table—which is on the prompt side of the stage. Thus his body masks the operation of lowering the false top from that side, and when he turns the cage round

he must twist it a little to his left so that the other end is also safe.

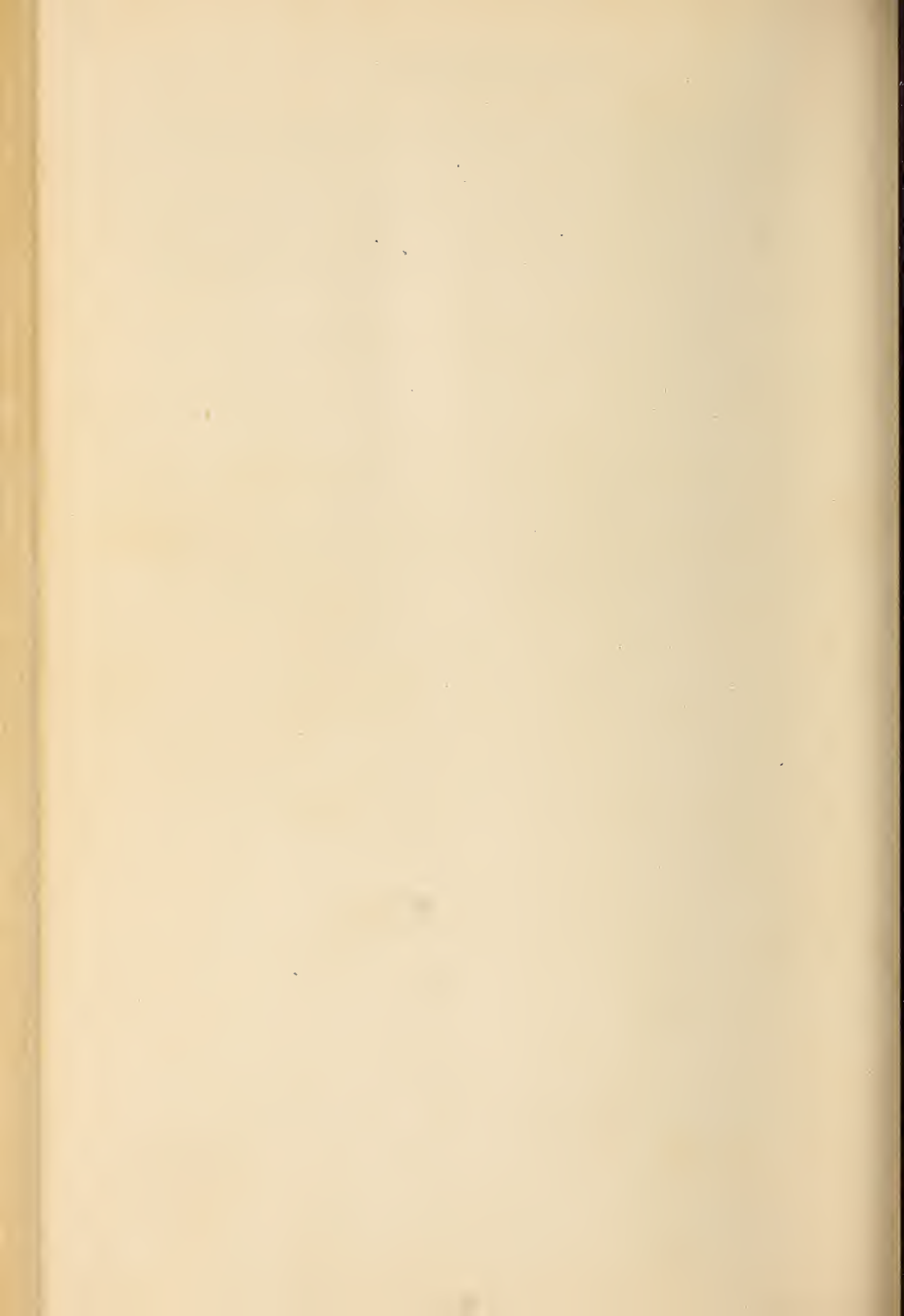
(2) The end of the bag is tucked under the steel wire and close to the match. The assistant now hands the performer the gun and takes away the empty cage.

(3) On hearing the report the assistant pulls the line attached to the lamp and draws it quickly into the tube forming the dummy candle and holds it there.

(4) He releases the line slowly; too sudden a jerk would probably put out the light.

(5) At the next and third shot he pulls the line which lights the match and releases the blind and allows the cage to open.

THE END



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