

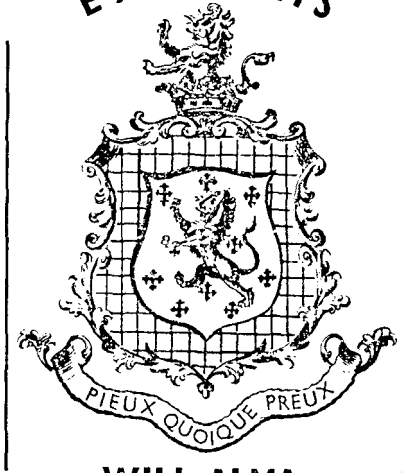


# COMPERE'S CORNER . . .

GEO. M. MACKENZIE



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# COMPERE'S CORNER

GEO. M. MACKENZIE

(THE UNCANNY SCOT)

## PREFACE

ALL the gags and effects in this book have appeared in "Mac's Monthly." Many are original; many are contributed, and a few collected. They are all workable I know, because I happen to have worked each and every one.

Conjuring Compereing is becoming quite a rage. Audiences are rapidly taking to this instead of the old-fashioned M.C. who comes on and tells corny gags which everyone has heard before.

The Compere knits the show together, and, the compere can make or mar a show. Nowadays gags have to be worked fast to click. The old-fashioned idea of telling a long story before one even handles a prop, are dead and gone. The pace must be fast, and it must be entertaining.

Although this has been written for the man who comperes, most of the effects here can be used in the ordinary magic show. Many are. Use your brains and you will get a few continuity gags for any magical entertainment.

"Compere's Corner" is a feature of Mac's Monthly," and if you specialise in this branch, you would do well to subscribe to this monthly magazine.

PUBLISHED BY

GEORGE M. MACKENZIE, 132, West Nile Street, Glasgow, C.2.

## FOREWORD

I AM a Variety Agent. I have never written anything before for a book. When George Mackenzie approached me to write something for the book of gags which he has often worked for me, I did not know how to begin. All I do know is that the gags as worked by George are priceless.

He did a show for me, years ago; the compere was ill. George stepped in. For 83 weeks he worked at one hall, week after week. The people would not hear of him leaving. Every week a new bill was presented. George stayed and did compere for every one. He would be there yet, only he begged to be allowed to do other jobs as he was afraid they might tire of him. That they never did, and I honestly believe never would. I do not know what George means to sell his book for. Even if he charged Ten Guineas, I know he would not be charging too much. Were I a 'pro,' I would willingly give that sum for one or two of the gags I have seen him work. They are worth that amount in entertainment value alone, and that is what I assess any act on, entertainment value.

All I can say to the readers of the book is this; having seen the stuff which is to go in book form, performed before the paying public, the readers will certainly have something novel to put into their own acts; something to my mind which is needed more and more these days, GOOD ENTERTAINMENT.

Yours Sincerely,

Glasgow — 1947.

LOUIS FREEMAN

## THE ART OF THE COMPERE

**FAR** too many magicians seem to think that to be a compere, all one has to do is to meander on, tell a corny gag, then announce the next act. Comperes with their corny gags are two a penny at present, that is why the Conjuring Compere is taking so well. The audience are not hearing something they heard months ago, told in a much better manner over the radio; they are seeing something; they are being amused and entertained. Gradually they come to look forward to the appearance of the magician, and to ask themselves, "What is he going to do next?"

That is why Conjuring Comperes are popular, but it is no use hitting these folks with any old effect and imagining you are the cat's pyjamas as an M.C. The tricks must be humorous, they must be snappy, and they must be **entertaining**. If you are the slow serious type, leave this art to someone else. The style has definitely got to be breezy.

Now for the entrance. Run on, and when I say run, I mean **run**. You should be centre stage as soon as the last act is disappearing into the opposite wing. Give the last act a wave and a nod; you have been applauding as you came on. Then you face the audience. Now when you are facing, do not confine yourself to some bloke in the stalls; look around; remember you are addressing **all** the audience, not a couple of friends down front. Incidentally, this applies to entertaining generally. Keep looking about you. Look up at the gallery often. If there is no gallery, look up now and again just the same. If you are working in front of a microphone keep this just below the level of the chin, and see that you keep at least ten inches from the diaphragm. If you have a mike, play about with it; move it around, caress it, climb up the thing if you wish, but be at ease with it, and the easiest way to do this is, as I say, to carry it around.

If you are merely talking, keep the hands still. You will find that the hardest job of all: to keep the hands still. That is showmanship, knowing what to do with your hands. Just try facing an audience for thirty seconds without moving. It may sound easy. Thirty seconds you will find is one helluva long time to remain actually still and, what is more important, to **look** as if you were enjoying the process.

Get a signature tune. It does not matter what it is, but get one. You will be surprised how effective this is. For example, mine is "I'll see you again." No matter when I appear, this tune is played. When I do anything or say anything, there is the lovely strains of "I'll see you again" in the background.

For your first entrance, that is the actual introduction to the audience, come on with a smile, saying, "I'm sorry to burst in when everyone seems to be enjoying themselves, but, the management insists, besides (drop your voice here) I need the money." Or, "Well folks, you are going to see a great deal of this ugly map; I'm what is known in the Variety world as the lowest form of animal life . . . the Compere. By the way, have you ever seen this one" . . . you are off into the first effect. See that you make "this one" snappy. Then, when you are finished, say, "It's daft, isn't it" or "Silly, but it passes the time." Then into the introduction of the act to follow.

Try and build up the act you are speaking of. Forget the expression, "And now." We hear that everywhere, "And now" Would it not be better if you said, "I would like to draw your attention to a most unusual . . . etc., etc."

Listen to what other compere's are saying, and, when you find out, forget all they said and work out your own line. If you do that, you will find yourself in some demand as Conjuring Compere.

## INTRODUCING THE ACT

I AM often asked, "How does one introduce the next act when I have performed my effect?" Personally, I never make up my mind what I am to say about any act until I have actually seen the performers at the theatre. I find that settling something on the spot is much better than wasting hours of writing, then finding when you meet the turns you are to introduce, you have to scrap all you have written. Find out exactly what an act does on the stage; ask them if there is any particular information or announcement they would like you to make. If you have the trick you propose to do well rehearsed, get the information about the first act then you will have ten or twelve minutes in between spots to make up your mind what you are going to say next. Do not attempt to clutter up your mind with a complete bill or programme. By this means you will get that appearance of spontaneity and will talk that way, too. Remember that if you are making any crack about any artiste, always tell that person what you intend to say. Stage folks are notoriously huffy about anything which they imagine is against them. Some prefer poetry or rhyme in introducing, but, beware of this; it is not everyone's meat. To say this sort of stuff needs timing to the nth degree as well as a good articulation and speaking voice. However, if you must rhyme, the following for a piano act always gets a laugh.

This next act who comes from Rio,  
Always tries to play Handel's Grand Trio,  
But her skill is so scanty,  
She plays it andante,  
Instead of Allegro Con Brio.

Then for double acts one can always get a giggle by introducing them, in the case of girls as, Miss Hap and Miss Stake; or Kate and Duplicate. For men Pete and Repeat is another. Actually there are scores of this type of remark which always fit in, but if you will only leave it and ask the artists themselves if they would like to have anything particular mentioned, you will do a great deal better and save yourself a lot of heartburning.



The sense of the ridiculous is one most easily awakened, and, if more conjuring comperes would play on this, instead of boring the audience with nonsensical chatter, they would find they get on a lot better, to say nothing of being able to get much more work.

Here are a couple of examples of this type of humour.

Performer comes on shuffling cards, goes to offer the cards for selection, and says, "Who wants to see a card trick anyway." The cards are tossed on to the stage where they fall with a terrific clatter of broken glass. The cards, 8 or 10 of them, are glued to steel crash plates, the kind one buys in novelty shops and known as "window bangers." If this does not get a laugh, well it's time you took up singing.

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Another, and one I have used for years. Have an ordinary matchbox tray filled with lead. There should be enough space left for two or three matches. Place a cigarette in your mouth, take out the matchbox and strike a match, then as the hand approaches the mouth, flick the match into the air. The second match will not light. Throw down in disguise. This goes on the floor with a tinkle: laugh number two (the second match was a 2 inch nail). Third match lit, and the matchbox tossed away to land on the stage with a thud. If you throw the matchbox to your right, look in the opposite side wings, then look at the audience in perplexity. You will find this goes down anywhere.

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One of the funniest gags I have used for a long time is the production of a steaming cup of coffee from a hanky.

Performer comes on smoking, talks rather hoarsely and from his handkerchief brings out a cup of steaming liquid which he drinks? As he speaks into the mike after this, he does so with a roar that nearly shatters the outfit. An ordinary empty cup is held at the left bottom vest pocket by a clip something after the style of a fountain pen clip. The rim of the cup is pushed up, outside the pocket so that the cup is held, handle against body on the left. The outside portion of the clip is now inside the cup. I hope this is clear.

Cough and talk very weakly into the mike; bringing out the hanky in the left hand and this is opened out with the fingers of that hand, the right meanwhile steals the cup off the clip. The cigarette which was being smoked is dropped into the cup, and after pattering how a cup of tea or coffee would revive one, the hanky is whipped off and there is the liquid piping hot. You will be surprised how the cigarette smoke looks exactly like steam. Don't forget to handle the cup as if it were full.

I'm afraid I cannot give the credit where due for this, as it is so long ago I picked this up that I cannot remember where or from whom I got it. One thing I do know: as a gag it is terrific.

No one ever seems to remember that the conjurer was smoking. The surprise production would seem to drive the cigarette from their minds. Incidentally, see that the cigarette is half-smoked before you do this.

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Here's a little gag for the Compere with a Bottomless Glass. Performer comes forward with a glass and a jug of water or the latter may contain lemonade. Jug is laid on a table or on the piano. Compere patters something about "if not being clever he is at least clean" — old stuff but it fits nicely into this. Continually pattering the performer takes out a nice "clean" coloured silk and proceeds to polish the glass. Whilst doing this the silk comes right out of the bottom when the performer catches a corner in his left hand and one in his right hand and gives the glass a twirl or two in the air. Quickly tucking away the hanky the jug is picked up and straightaway a drink is poured out and the compere drinks the health of the next "Act," whilst all the audience can do is stare—and they do. The working will be obvious, I hope. A piece of celluloid palmed and placed on the bottom of the glass as the liquid is poured in does the trick.

Performer extracts a cigarette from his case and places in his mouth. A match is struck, or a lighter may be used. The hands keep waist high when suddenly the flame is seen slowly travelling up into the air until it reaches the cigarette, which is puffed and lit. Simple! A long thread hanging from the cigarette. Try it. I work them regularly, so can vouch for its effectiveness. Merely snuff the match as the thread catches alight No. 40 Machine Twist is ideal.

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**For the Rope fiend.** Dash on, say to conductor or pianist, "Give us a chord, John," and bing! a rope sails into the middle of the stage, where our friend proceeds to tie himself in knots.

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Throw a card case in the air, saying "A trick with a —," and from the case extract a length of rope. If you use the thin rope, do this with a 20 cigarette packet. The rope looks at first as if you were taking out a cigarette.

Magus dashes on and is just about to say something, when one of the band draws his attention with "Psst, Psst." Just about to speak again after an angry glance at the offending member when the bandsman again makes a noise. With an "Excuse me," the performer asks, "Well, what do you want?"

"The packet of Woods you borrowed," yells the musician.

With a shrug, the performer now produces the five cigarettes, one after each other. (These were already palmed in the hand when he came on). Produce these one at a time. If you cannot do this, it is time you learned.

After throwing these down to the man, the necromancer dusts his hands, as much as to say, "That's that." However, the music maker stands up again and in a peeved voice says "It was a large packet, Guv'nor."

With this the magician reaching behind his back, pulls from the back of his coat a large Woodbine Packet. This is the type one sees in the shops as advertising matter, and are quite easy to procure.

If you can make the packet to spring into its full shape with elastic, so much the better, but, it gets a big laugh even in the flattened condition.

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Another one, only this time, be careful where you show it. In the right place at the right time, it is a big laugh.

Compere appears dabbing his lips with a hanky, which he tucks into his breast pocket as he reaches centre stage. "Before announcing the next item, customers, the management wish me to intimate that a certain article has been picked up in the booking hall." (Pause here for a few seconds as you gaze seriously at all parts of the house). "I would not like to embarrass the single members of my audience but, the colour was a sort of, like the hanky I have here." Magus extracts the hanky and holds it up, allows it to unfold when, it is seen to be a ladies' brassiere. "If the lady concerned will see me after the show" (a wink and a shake of the head towards the back) I'll be glad to return the Flimsie Wimsie."

The brassiere was in the pocket all the time. A handkerchief the same colour is used to dab the lips and as this is returned to the pocket, the hank is put in a little too far then the portion of the flimsie brought into view.

As I said above, if this is done with the proper gravity and timing, it will go down very well. Follow this up with a good quick effect, and a comical one if possible.

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Do you do the Six Card Repeat? If so, have a nest of five watches in the vest pocket. Pick up the cards with the right hand, the left brings a watch out of the vest pocket, and you remark, "It usually takes me two minutes to do this." Place the watch down, or drop in another pocket. Count the cards as usual, throw off three, then take another watch out of the pocket and look at the time. This is carried on till the end of the effect.

For those who have not got these watches (these were made in Germany, by the way) use my "Repeat Lit Cigarette." Every time you discard three cards, a "Player's" packet is taken out of the pocket and a cigarette **alight** is brought out. This is the same

as the effect above and does it go over? Anyway, try it. For those of you who have not got the watches, I can supply the "Repeat Lit Cigarette" (packet to hold four lit) for 5/6. (How's that for subtle advertising). I know this will go into your act when once you try it.

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One of the funniest things I have seen for a long time was an "oldie" which I had forgotten though I worked this regularly; it sounds daft, but the audience always love it. Here it is.

The compere strolls in to find the comic waving the hand about as in back palming. "What are you doing?" asks the M.C.

"I'm producing cards," the comic replies.

"But I don't see any cards."

"Oh, I can't do it with cards," says the comic, and walks off. May not sound much, but just try the effect.

Another on the same lines which got a really belly laugh at the Queen's Theatre in Glasgow the other week.

The Compere is going through the motions of juggling with three balls. The balls all fall. The comic comes on, walks behind the compere and looks hard, then off the other side. Again the comic comes across still watching, then as the Compere drops the balls, he says "What are you supposed to be doing?"

"I'm Juggling," the Compere retorts.

"Juggling? But you keep dropping the balls."

"Oh, I can't do it with Balls yet," replies the M.C.

Again daft, but again the audience think it very funny.

The next is a good gag to work with the orchestra, or, if there is no pit, use the rest of the show folk.

A nice bundle tied up with ribbon is handed to the compere by the conductor; "For me?" says the compere. "Now isn't that nice. After the way I have miscalled your boys." Turning to audience: "Isn't that nice folks, all for me. It's quite touching."

As this is being said the parcel is unwrapped, then the object is brought to view and the compere says in a loud voice, "Why, this is a tin of Keating's."

All the orchestra stand up and yell, "We know you're lousy."

As I said, in the absence of an orchestra, this can be worked by the rest of the company. The parcel should be nicely done up with a piece of broad, coloured ribbon; and with sheets and sheets of paper around the tin.

Do not hesitate to rip the paper off; there should be no slowing of the action, and you should appear excited and still more excited as more and more paper is taken off.

Strangely enough, this will get the audience on your side after this; they always seem to feel that the orchestra had no business to catch you like this; I don't give any explanation for this. I merely state that this is what I have found when working this gag. If you can come back on the orchestra, the audience will love it.

For example, when introducing a number by the band, you could lead up by saying, "I may say, that these boys are wanted all over the country. Some day they will eventually give themselves up, so off you go boys, blow your brains out."

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Here is a treasured gag, released for the first time. Firstly, do you do a torn and restored newspaper? If not, you should; this is a grand compere item, and fits in with what follows. Apart from the torn and restored newspaper, have you ever worked the incongruous announcements one gets from a paper. First there are the comic "Adverts"; these are always good for a laugh. Then there is the reading of the various column headings, such as: "Authorities in Burley remove all lamp posts." Then apparently from the adjacent column you read, "400 Dogs run Mad." Daft, maybe, but the customers lap it up.

Well, now for the gag mentioned at first. Tear and restore your newspaper and then appear to find in the paper just restored the details of the show in which you are appearing. Read this out, giving an idea of the programme to follow, then cut out the strip in which the announcement is supposed to be printed. Anyway, cut out a strip of paper from the paper; column width. Now

break the news that you are really the lowest form of animal life in the Variety world: the Compere. It will be your duty to come on every so often and tell them of the joys to follow. After seeing you a few times, the audience will appreciate the horrors of unskilled labour, and so on. Pile it on, then at last the gag that all this has been leading up to. Read off the first act's name from the paper, then fold the paper and cut out the act's name and toss this away; allow the strip, now cut in half, to fall open, and strange to relate, it is still a whole strip of paper. Right, fellows, you've guessed it. The paper was treated with "Clippo."

Keep this up at every appearance, but, unlike the first time, cut out the name of the act, show the paper restored, then read this out, then off you go. Only one thing: do not make this a complete gag. By that I mean, do not come out and do just that. Do the usual compere items, then do the cutting act.

Try the "Clippo" gag; this is one that will suit any type of audience and something they will remember. That too is something for you to remember. If you find that a section of the audience will talk of what you did, it's success my friend; you have something.

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If you blokes do not know how to make "Clippo," invented by Will De Sieve, by the way, get a rubber cement. This is ideal. If the cement is too thick, thin with ammonia. Apply to the centre of the paper, fold the paper, cement side inside, cut across the folded centre and open the strip, this will stick at the edges and is still holding together when the strip is opened out again.

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An audience is never happier than when the performer is in trouble, or things are going wrong. Remember this when you are building up a routine. The following gag is ideal for the fellow who finds he is not naturally funny; the situations are all that is required for the audience to laugh, and, to finally give you a lot of credit. Performer as he comes on, stops and lights a cigarette with a match. As he approaches the front of the stage, he looks around for somewhere to throw the match which is still alight and

burning down rapidly. In desperation, this is placed in a vest pocket. Performer goes to speak, then wriggling, with a look of anguish on his face, reaches into the pocket and takes the match out, still alight. Another hunted look around and then the match alight, is dropped into another pocket. Compere goes to speak again when he wriggles, again takes match out of his pocket still alight and puts this in another pocket. This can be carried on ad lib., but four times are quite enough, and, if you can make a face, or even merely keep a poker face whilst doing this, you will find the audience are helpless with laughter.

There are quite a few fakes on the market for lighting a match; these I have found are not always positive, so I will describe the type I made and have used for the past few years. Never once has the match failed to light when brought out of the pocket. Get a piece of tubing about 3-16ths-of-an-inch diameter. Cut this into one inch and half lengths. Solder a safety pin on the side, then strip the striking portion off a safety match box, cut two strips for each of the tubes and fold and jam these inside. A touch of sealing wax on the bottom end seals this effectively. This gives a small holder for a single match; the action of drawing out the match will automatically light the head. The pin makes this to fasten to the lining of any pocket. I usually have one in each vest pocket (two) one in the left jacket pocket and the last in the right trouser pocket.

The working should now be obvious. You will find if you place a lit match in the pocket and press against the cloth, this will go out at once. Raise your hand as if you were about to speak, then go into your contortions. Apart from being a marvellous compere gag, this can be worked at any stage in your act where you have occasion to use a lit match.

It is entertainment the customer is looking for, so, even if you are a strictly serious worker, try to remember that an effect such as above will be talked about much more than your most cherished moves or sleights; the audience are not a whit interested in sleights or complicated moves, however clever; they want to see something, and above all, they are there to be entertained.



Use safety matches and holding the head, dip the stick into some paraffin or methylated spirits before the show. Actually I paint on the oil about half an inch below the head. This is a gag worth a lot more trouble as you will agree when once you've tried it out.

As you know, I am always stressing to play on the sense of the ridiculous. This is the most easily awakened sense. Why do we laugh at the fat man chasing his hat on a windy day; he looks ridiculous. The drunk trying to wend his way home in a straight line is another example.

If you have a Sterling Egg, try this one. Tear your strip of paper; restore and chew the paper and place the wad on a fan. The usual bouncing until the egg is formed. Have a girl bring on a plate and roll the egg off the fan into the plate, then, as the girl is walking away, call her back and reaching into the jacket pocket, bring out a large streaky slice of bacon and slap this on the plate. Sounds silly, does it not? Try it. You will be absolutely flabbergasted, as I was, at the roar. I did this in desperation once; I did not have a real egg to break. I had done everything I knew during a run of 83 weeks at the one dump and as I had never worked the Max Sterling Egg, I did the effect as a compere item, exactly as described above. All you want is your egg and a piece of bacon, the more fatty the better, in the right jacket pocket, which has been lined with a sheet of paper of the greaseproof variety. Only thing to remember is to hold the egg with the fingers of the left hand as the egg is slapped down, as the wind of the bacon being slapped down is apt to make it move.

This time an old one, yet which always gets a laugh. As the compere is speaking, a bloke rambles across the stage with a cup of water. Back again, this time with the cup obviously empty, then as compere goes to speak again, out he comes with his water and off into the opposite side again coming back with his empty cup. "What do you mean by meandering around with the cup of water?" asks the M.C. "It's all right," says the bloke, "it's only your dressing room on fire," and off he goes, chased by the compere, tearing his hair.

Bert Douglas gave the magician one of the finest vanishes ever published; the vanish of a golf club. Compere gives his speech with the club under his arm; he can make a swing or two whilst speaking, then, taking a newspaper out of his pocket, the club is wrapped up, crushed up and tossed away. This is only the vanishing wand up-to-date. The shaft is merely brown paper, the head being the usual club head. Wrap a long strip of brown paper, round a billiard cue or similar stick; round and round as you would a puttee. Varnish, stick a brassie or driver head on this, the tapered end, and you have a perfect collapsible golf club. Worked casually this is a knockout.

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Here I am giving a pet gag which never fails to get over to any type of audience. For this you will need a helper; the male act you announce will always oblige, because any act which can start on a laugh before he has begun is sure to make a hit. Before I begin, I had better mention that the credit for this, as far as I know, must, go to that brilliant American performer, W. C. Dornfield (Dorney).

Performer introduces the next act who bustles on and calls the Compere back. "So, you think you're a magician," he says to you. "What about this?" "This" is a watch which he dangles at the magician. "Why you ——" says the conjurer as he pats his stomach where his watch and chain would be. "Why I'll . ." then he smiles. "Well, maybe I am not so hot, but, what about these?" As he says this, the necromancer pulls a pair of socks from his pocket and holds these up. With a "Wow" the other act grabs his pants and pulls these up as high as he can get them, and sure enough, his feet and legs are bare.

The performer, the magician that is, allows enough time for the effect to register, then, as the laugh comes, he dashes off.

You will find the average act only too willing to join in with you and this is a gag which is sure of a laugh anywhere.

Another production gag something after the style of the coffee cup in a previous page. This is best worked in silence. Come on, feeling through all your pockets. Take the handkerchief out of your breast pocket and change this from hand to hand as you search your clothes. Suddenly, from the handkerchief is produced a large ice cream cone. With a smile the handkerchief is replaced and the comperé announces the next act. As he walks off, with his forefinger he dives into the ice cream and has a good lick.

The cone is one of those advertisement affairs seen in ice cream parlour windows. These are made of plaster, and at a couple of feet are like the real thing. I cannot say who turns these out in England, but, here in Scotland, they are used to advertise the cones of Askews Ltd. Anyway, it is worth looking in your ice cream depots.

As most of you will have guessed, the cone is in the left vest pocket; this is easily got whilst fumbling through the pockets, and the hank you are throwing around helps considerably. Do not be too anxious to produce this. Get it safely under the hank and search a couple more pockets before you actually produce the dainty morsel.

The finale was an afterthought of my own. Chip out a chunk of the plaster; this comes away easily, and put in the hole some of the alleged cream they put into cakes these days. It looks white, tastes not too bad, and finishes the gag perfectly. If you cannot get the cream, the baker will maybe, maybe I said, produce a bit of marzipan for you. This in the hole is in the front of the body as the cone is placed in the pocket. It is worth the extra trouble, this little piece of showmanship.

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Far too many magicians at the moment fancy themselves as comperes. They may be fairly competent performers, but compering a show is an art in itself. Even a bright snappy show can be spoiled by an indifferent and inexperienced M.C., just as many a dull show can be made quite snappy by a competent comperé.

One has only to switch on the radio to realise how good and how bad some announcers can be. Listen to Norman Wooland compereing, then listen to some of these "Works Wonders" efforts where some big shot ruins a good show by appointing himself M.C.

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Probably one of the most startling and entertaining items which a compere can perform is where he reaches down and borrows the violinist's bow. This is wrapped in paper, crushed up and the paper tossed away. The bow is now produced from the performer's trouser leg and handed down to its owner.

Beg, borrow or steal a violin bow. Cut this at each end about one inch from the curve. Now make a brown paper cylinder of the appropriate diameter and length and stick the ends of the bow in ends of the paper. See that the cylinder is the correct length to keep the hairs of the bow nice and taut. Give this to the fiddler and borrow his real bow. This is merely the vanishing wand in a new dress, but ten times more effective than any vanishing wand. By reason of its length and apparent solidity you will have them all guessing with this effect. This is an effect of Jack Le Dair.

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This is a grand compere effect which originated, I believe, from the fertile brains of the late Page Wright and William Larsen.

Compere bustles on to make his spiel; there are two tables, one right, the other left, of the stage. As he commences to speak, one of the tables starts to collapse. Take no notice until the audience begins to laugh then, mutter an apology and dash over and pull the table back into its position. Start to speak again; the table behaves exactly as before. Once more the magus goes over and puts this right. Just as this is made all right the other table goes down with a bang. As this is being put right the first table slides down gracefully. A lot of funny business can be got in here by fixing this gingerly and apparently being ready to rush over to table number two. The eyes should be on the other table and not on the one being fixed. He makes several hesitant

steps to the front before he actually comes forward again. Look over your shoulder several times at each table and, just as the speech begins both tables come down with a wallop. Make a step towards them, then shrug and carry on.

As will probably be guessed, the tables are the usual side stands. The legs are a single metal tube of a diameter to allow another piece of tube which is a sliding fit to be mounted on the stand. The top tube slides down into the larger bottom half. These are worked by a couple of helpers at the back, and, believe me, they cause a riot.

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Performer walks on carrying a **large** birdcage and an alarm clock. The cage is deposited at the footlights whilst he explains to the audience that he is strictly limited to time, owing to the length of the programme, and, when the alarm goes off, so must he do likewise.

With this explanation, he ventures into a diatribe about the late Carl Hertz and his Vanishing Birdcage; of the experiences of Hertz in showing this effect in the House of Commons to prove the absence of cruelty to birds. Finishing this explanation, he now tells the audience that they will now be privileged to see the "Famous Vanishing Birdcage." He then counts: "One, Two . ." and, as he opens his mouth for the word "Three" the alarm clock goes off. "Sorry, my time is up" says the performer, as he picks up the alarm in the other hand and with this still ringing, walks off.

This is worked by having an alarm work off by one of the stage hands. Having seen Jack Le Dair work this at the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh, I can vouch for the effectiveness of this gag. Thanks again, Jack, and come again soon.

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This one was given me by Milbourne Christopher when he came up here. I have used it ever since and is a grand effect to get yourself on good terms right away. Another fine part of this is that it will help me sell more spring flowers (cunning basket).

Performer dashes, meanders or trickles on, according to his own idea of entrance (the dash will be found the most effective),

has a telegram in his hand from which he reads: "Success to your efforts at the (Hall where you are appearing), Mother-in-Law," "Aunt Fanny" or anything else which may be considered the victims will laugh at. "Now," says the magish, "isn't that nice of her, but it would have been a lot better if she had said it with flowers." As you say "flowers" the telegram is tossed into the air and becomes a bouquet which flutters into your hands.

Here is the "Newspaper to Bouquet" streamlined and brought up-to-date. The flowers are attached to the telegram and held in the left hand, the telegram is crumpled up and tossed up, and there you are. A dozen spring flowers will be found ample and make a nice show; the P.M.G. very thoughtfully has the telegrams in odd corners of most post offices where even the average conjurer can swipe a few without giving away the *modus operandi*. Anyway, try it and I'm sure you will want to dash out and send me a four-penny cigar right away.

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Magish comes on and speaks very hoarsely. Tries again, croaking more than ever. Takes a medicine bottle and a spoon from his pockets and pours a spoonful of the dope out. Now takes a swig out of the bottle, pours the muck on the spoon back into the bottle, smiles then lets out a roar, gets a shock, staggers back, then smiles and gets on with the job in a natural voice.

This has got everything a good gag should have, and appeals to that easily awakened sense, the sense of the ridiculous. Try it out, then give thanks to Leslie May.

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Another I have used was suggested by F. Shayler, recently returned from a Prisoner of War Camp. A card is given to a prominent member of the audience and he is asked to show it around so that everyone may remember the name. The selector is asked if he will recognise the card again; usually he affirms. Magus asks if he is sure; again an affirmative. At this point the conjurer announces that in this case, if nobody claims the card within three months the gentleman may keep it. Here again, nothing startling, but it entertains, and that is all you are trying to do.

This next was originated I believe by Frank Lane. I have used it a great deal, so I know Frank won't mind my passing it on to the British brethren.

During rope cuts, everytime you restore the rope, do so by taking a pinch of magic powder from your pocket and pretend to sprinkle the rope before the restoration (Americans call this Woofle Dust). Patter to the effect that this powder or dust is extremely strong during the first couple of cuts, then, when reaching in the pocket again for another helping, palm out a false finger. Sprinkle the dust on the rope, then make a grimace, hold up the finger, give a scream and look at the left hand, the middle finger of which is bent back.

Place the finger in your pocket, then turn to the side slightly and surrepticiously count your fingers, turn round with a broad smile and carry on. This never fails to get a roar, and incidentally; if you have not got that prop, the false finger, a thumb tip is quite as good, merely tucking the left thumb out of sight.

By getting on good terms with the soprano in a show you can work this effect which you will find will bring the house down. I ought to mention that this gag is from the brain of that genial professional performer, Arnold Crowther. All you need are the "Ribbons to Sausages." Five minutes time to alter these a little and you have something you will never leave out.

This gag is an ideal opener when the various acts are doing a throwaway at the beginning.

After announcing the singer, the compere stands at the side of the stage. The lady comes on twisting the usual handkerchief in her hands; she sings a line, making a false note at the end, takes no notice and does the same again. The compere meanwhile in his corner shudders when the false note is sounded, with a more exaggerated motion when the second note is struck wrongly, then tip-toeing up behind the girl he makes a wave, when instantly, the hanky she is holding changes to a string of sausages. The girl sings a few more notes then suddenly notices the string of race-horses, gives a shriek and dashes off.

As will be realised, all that is necessary is to take out the ribbons of the sausages and sew in a piece of white handkerchief.

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While on this subject of using other people in the show, I have had lots of letters asking me if this is good policy. Take it from me that this is the best policy. You will find the average act is only too willing to help you. An act will be very glad to do anything to help build up the show. I refer to bona fide artists, of course. If you find someone hedging when you request anything of this nature, avoid them. They are not, and never will be performers in all that this word implies. There are no more truer bunch of co-operatives than the average music hall and concert artists.

One thing to remember; always tell an act what you propose to say and do before you work the introduction. Most acts are very glad of a build up, but it is not very clever to go on and make funny remarks about the next act without letting them know what you propose to say or do. Take for example an intro. such as the following. "I might say that this fellow moves in the very best circles, that's why he's so Dizzy." This always gets a laugh, but, you ought to make sure you are applying it to a comic or any such act and not to a serious baritone for example.

Get on good terms with the comic in any show you comper; you will find he will be glad to help, and more often than not, able to give you one or two gags which fit in for other occasions.

One other thing; as a Conjuring Comper, try and rely on funny situations for your laughs. Leave the witty stories to the man paid to tell them. If you look back at Comper Corner you will notice that nearly all of my gags depend on situations. I don't mean you do not have to be witty, but, remember the audience should be asking themselves, "What is he going to do next," not "What is he going to say next."



Audiences are becoming tired of the stale jokes served up week after week by so called comperes. That is why the conjuring comperes scores so heavily nowadays. If he is at all competent he will get all the work he wants because, he is a novelty, and novelties are what all managers are praying for. I have proved that the comperes with the novel approach of magic can get all the work he wants, and what is more important, at the money he wants.

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An excellent comperes effect from the brain of that genius, Milbourne Christopher. Where a light is needed for a cigarette, burning an envelope, Flash Paper or what have you. M.C. takes out his lighter and keeps pressing or rubbing this; the lighter sparks all right but does not light. This always gets a laugh. Look down and say "What, have you got one like this too?" Another try, still no light so the comperes strikes the lighter against the sole of his shoe and the lighter brings forth a flame. Just imagine the situation. It will bring a laugh out of a brass monkey. Merely remove the wick from your lighter and insert a piece of match with the head protruding a little. All you have to do is to draw this across the bottom of the shoe and Fanny's your Auntie.

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One of my funniest gags is when I get a laugh at the wrong time or place. Without saying a word, I take a large card from the back of the coat on which in large letters are the words, **"Silence, Genius at Work."** Another I have used for years and did not know anyone else was using was a card with the words **"Danger, Conjurer at Work."** This hangs in a conspicuous place all during your act. As I say, I thought I was the only one using this till I saw Stan Marelle with one at Hereford. Anyway, both the items I have described are extremely funny, and for any of you who want these making up, I can do these on a large card in red. (See price list at the end of this book.)

Bob Moore of Sheffield, sent in a pip which he calls the "Growing Match." When the M.C. walks on, he has the inevitable cigarette in his mouth. He produces a box of matches, and taking out a match tries to strike this on the seat of his pants. As the match will not ignite, he tries again without success, and, on the third attempt, the match suddenly changes to a giant match, 18 inches long by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch diameter. The performer strikes this, lights his fag, and carries on. Method: The giant match is made of wood; a small hole drilled at the end to take a couple of real matches. A bent pin is tied to the end of the match with a length of black cotton about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long. This pin is stuck into the back of the vest just below the collar so that the match hangs down the back, under the jacket. The pantomime of striking is carried out and the third time the match being used is thumb palmed and the end of the large match gripped and tugged. This breaks the cotton, releasing the match which is struck on the matchbox and applied to the end of the cigarette. Thanks, Robert; this is a honey and one I'll use often.

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You may remember I mentioned how Geoffrey Robinson, that cheery secretary of the London Society of Magicians had worked a complete act with items taken from this Compere Corner. Well, Geoffrey has written up the sequence for the benefit of all you fellows, and here it is.

We will call the two performers A and B for the sake of distinguishing the two characters.

A enters shuffling a pack of cards; enter B carrying a guitar case who interrupting A, A throws the cards on the floor where they hit with a terrific clatter. (The gag of crash plates glued on the cards-.

B opens the Guitar case and each take a cigarette from this. B closes case and shows the letters ENSA painted on the outside. B shakes his head and turns the case around showing the letters N.B.G. on the opposite side. Case is placed on the floor.

A takes a box of matches from his pocket and attempts to strike one. This is a dud; strikes another which is a dud and the third refusing to light is thrown on the floor which it hits with a tinkle. Fourth match lights all right and box is thrown on the stage with a crash. (Box filled with lead). Lights cigarette and places match in the vest pocket still alight. B asks for a light and A removes the match still alight from the vest. Places this in another pocket, then takes it out still alight and places in yet another pocket, finally he gives the match which won't go out to B who places the lit match in his pocket and B. walks off with the guitar case.

A vanishes his cigarette in a handkerchief. Re-enter B carrying a packet of cigarettes which he opens and takes out a length of rope. This is coiled and placed on the floor. B plays an Eastern tune on a tin whistle and the rope commences to rise snake fashion. A and B are seated on the floor in tailor fashion. 'Phone bell rings; A removes a receiver from his pocket. He replaces the receiver and taking a revolver from his pocket he shoots the snake. As this falls to the floor a large notice appears backstage, "There's a good show at the (Local Theatre). Blackout.

It just shows what can be done by stringing a few good gags together, so come on fellows use your imagination and let's hear the result.

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The Compere comes on to perform his usual duty of making a break between acts and takes a cigarette from his case, placing this in his mouth. A box of matches is next produced, either from the pocket in a natural manner, or, better still, from the back palm. A match is struck and lit but as it is applied to the end of the cigarette, this goes out. A second match is struck and this goes out, as does a third. (A gentle blow through the nose does this). Going to his pocket the compere produces a candle; alight from his pocket and lights the coffin nail.

If you do not possess a candle for the purpose, get an ordinary candle, cut off the wick and with a hot needle make a hole in the top. Now stick in a wax vesta, sew a piece of sandpaper to the inside of the pocket and you have a candle that will light everytime it is taken from the pocket.

I ought to mention that the match gag was sent me by Cpl. J. Rivers now somewhere in India. So, 'Thanks, a lot, "Rivare."

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The old gag of showing a white hanky with a coloured border and asking what colour the audience would like to see it changed into can be improved further and extra laughs and a surprise finish obtained. Make a double Union Jack with a corner opening and fix a catgut loop at the opposite corner of opening inside the double flag; this is as "Blendo." Fold up small, catch the white hanky in the loop—or attach with thread—enter showing the white hanky. Ask the audience what colour they would like you to change the hank into; a stooge calls out "Red, White and Blue." Shake and pull the flag out which of course takes the hanky inside. This is merely Blendo with one silk making it easier to work; the average Blendo always did jam with the three hanks unless one had ridiculously small hankies and a huge flag. The above comes from Cyril Dewey of Castleford, to whom thanks.

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Performer comes on, takes a match from his box to light a cigarette already in his mouth and drops the match on the floor. Looks around for this, then finally takes another match from the box, strikes this and searches on his hands and knees. When he finds the first match, straightens up, throws away the match in his hand and then strikes the match he found and lights the cigarette. All this should be done in silence and with a "Dead Pan" as the American's say. This is one of those ridiculous effects that cause a howl by the very silliness of the situation.

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One of the funniest Compere items which has become popular lately is that, whilst the M.C. is talking, a telephone bell rings. The performer looks around after breaking off his speech and then

takes a telephone from under his jacket and carries on a telephone conversation. Probably one of the funniest conversations is where the compere merely keeps saying "Yes, Mr. Brown"—"Very well, Mr. Brown"—"Of course, Mr. Brown"—"I wouldn't think of it Mr. Brown"—"Yes, Mr. Brown"—then breaks off, replaces the receiver, puts the 'phone back under his coat and says with a smile, "That was Mr. Brown." There are tremendous possibilities in this phone gag, and if you cannot get hold of a real telephone, there are plenty of toys which look like the real thing. Another way of working this; you are talking to the audience and as the bell rings, answer the 'phone, carry on a conversation, then after placing the 'phone back, carry on the conversation from the word you left off when the bell rang. Just try it; you will be surprised how the 'phone gag will go down.

Apropos the gag with the telephone, Capt. Leslie May sends in a nice working. 'Phone rings and M.C. takes this out of his coat, performer speaking as follows: "Hello" (pause); "You don't say"—(pause) "You Don't Say"—(pause) "YOU DON'T SAY"—(pause) "Goodbye." Orchestra leader says, "Who was that George?" Performer replies, "He didn't say."

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Apropos my own Just Chance effect Bayard Grimshaw gave me a honey in this line when I dined with him in Manchester. (I may say, before anyone gets in the wisecrack, Bayard paid for the dinner).

Briefly, this is the How. You have a sixpenny Postal Order in each envelope. Work the effect as outlined, or, with the tray if you are fond of carrying furniture around, then, as the stooge's open their envelopes you ask them to have a half pint with you, at your expense the next time they are in the vicinity of the local Throat Wetting Emporium.

Now you open your envelope, pull out the Pound Note and say, "Thank Heavens I can manage a double whiskey."

As Bayard says, it always get a laugh and the blokes do get something for their trouble and not just a slip of paper which always seems a bit of an insult.

If more of this type of giving were done in magical entertainment, it would create a much better impression than as with some biokes I know who have the delightful habit of getting free help and making their helpers look perfect fools.

One has only to see the difficulty some professionals have in getting up assistants; the public are becoming fed up of walking gaily on a stage at the request of a magician (?) and then being messed around and made look small in front of their friends.

At the risk of digressing from the corner for a few seconds; please remember that when you get anyone up from the audience, he has come of his own free will and good nature to help you. To make him feel foolish is not only bad showmanship, it is positively caddish.

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Now that balloons are coming out again (I saw these being sold in Selfridge's Toy Department in London last week) I must give a gag I used a lot but had to cut out during the war. This by the way is from the fertile brain of Bill Larsen, the editor of the "Genii." Performer dashes on, goes to speak, and his hat sails off his head about a foot; this is grabbed down and replaced; as his mouth opens the hat sails up, and does this four or five times until the magician looks inside and extracts a large balloon. The working is easy when you know how. The hat has two threads up into the flies; the balloon is all set for the Balloon from Hat and is under the hat band. The rising is now obvious.

There used to be on the market, and in a lot of magical books, the *modus operandi* of the Balloons from Hat in which you were sold, or told to use Tartaric acid and other kindred rubbish. I never was able to make a balloon rise with this concoction; What I did use, and have often used, was ordinary Carbide. This is crushed into powder; a teaspoonful poured in the balloon. Now a Fairy Dye tube was filled with water and corked. This was also dropped in and the neck of the balloon tied securely.

Merely pull the cork out of the tube through the fabric and instantly, the balloon will fill up. This gets warm, but there is no danger whatsoever.

The method is positive and has never been known to fail. The balloons may be washed out afterwards, but, I always put them in the lavatory, then prick them with a pin. That Fellow Sorcerers is the **real** method of balloons from the hat; so now you know.

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For a change I propose to give a few "quickies." These, it must be remembered, are only incidentals, but very often, as I have pointed out before, incidentals are so often very much more commented on than the actual big effects.

Performer dashes on with a cigarette in his mouth; looks around as he takes out the cigarette with his finger poised above the gasper as if to flick off the ash. Look along the footlight well, walk about, about-turning several times, then, take an ashtray out of your left jacket pocket and flick the ash in this. Now exactly the same performance is gone through: walk around as if you were looking for a place to put the ash tray; shrug, tip the ash on the floor and return the tray to the pocket.

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Another sure laugh raiser is to borrow a ten shilling note. Fold this up very carefully then walk over to your table and place this under the legs. If you do not use a table, work this with the piano. In the case of doing it with the piano, call on a couple of stage hands and get them to lift up the furniture for you to insert the note under. This should all be worked with a dead pan, as the American's call it, and, in dead silence.

If you work fast and the above does not appeal by reason of borrowing the note, come on with a newspaper, rapidly fold this and going right up to the front, stand with one foot on the footlights shade and tear out pieces of paper as if making a design. Keep this up, tearing off the pieces and showering them into the orchestra, then, when you have a tiny piece left, do your stuff with the table legs or the piano.

If you have seen Arthur Dowler work, you can appreciate how funny the imaginary eating of Fish and Chips from a newspaper can be. We can't all be Arthur Dowler's, but here is an enormous gag with Fish and Chips. Come on with a tiny piece of paper and hold as one would a paper of chips. Keep on taking one out, in pantomime, occasionally wiping your fingers on your lapel. (I always eat a piece of bread or cake during this, as it looks heaps better). Now dig around in the paper, look at the audience once or twice, then in the paper, and pull out a Spring Fish. This it will be realised is easily held by the fingers at the bottom of the paper, and apart from the laugh of the pantomiming, the sudden production of the member of the finny species gets a roar. I had a Spring Fish lying about for years and would never use it until I dug this gag up.

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"I do this for a living . . . I'm too nervous to steal."

"I always close my eyes here. I hate to see the audience suffer."

Performer comes dashing on: "Ladies and those who paid for you; an original effort of mine, performed for the first time on any stage." At this the band yell, "What again!"

"Will somebody loan me a pound note please . . . thanks sir, I appreciate that." To a lady in the front, "Would you loan me a pound madam?" As there is no reply, say, "No? Hey, will somebody lend this lady a pound?" Then to lady in a stage whisper, "It's all right madam, no need to go short here." Now announce the next item and go off with the borrowed pound. This gets a big laugh.

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When you come on again, peep round the wings at the direction from where the pound was borrowed, then tiptoe on to the centre. Now ask for the loan of a cigarette. This will get another laugh, most people looking across at the lender of the note to see how he is taking it. When you get a cigarette, work the note in the cigarette effect.



“No, don’t clap; if you like it, merely throw a few pound notes.”

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“I know applause makes some people nervous. Actually it doesn’t bother me.”

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“Are you the conjurer I saw last night?” “Yes, did I surprise you?” “You certainly did, I thought you were going to be good!”

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“These were once the property of a very famous millionaire . . . Mr. Woolworth.”

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“I don’t know how you folks can sleep out there with all these lights on.”

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“I know that one smells, but I am nearer to it than you.”

“I’ll bet when I first came on you thought I was going to be lousy.”

If a gag does not go over — “I did that at the (local) asylum last night; they were crazy about it.”

A most effective one I had given to me by John K. Bays. I tried it out and it got a big laugh; so sticking to my policy of only printing anything which is good, here is the latest gag.

Performer dashes on with a pack of cards in his hands: “Will someone take a card,” he snaps. The cards are fanned out, and hardly so, when on dashes a stooge and grabs the whole lot, leaving the professor helpless.

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Another very funny one, and one which I confess I pinched from the “Juggler’s Bulletin.” Although given as a juggling gag, it is so effective as a Comperé item that I know I will be forgiven for using it as such.

Performer comes on spinning a hoop on his finger (the kind the kiddies trundle). A few remarks on anything he likes, then the hoop is rolled off prompt side. (The side on the performer's left as he faces the audience). No sooner has the hoop disappeared into the wings than it comes on again, this time from the **opposite wing**. Performer merely picks this up, and spins on his finger as at first as if nothing had happened.

The whole secret of the presentation of this grand effect is to do the whole thing in a very nonchalant manner. Actually you act as if you were unaware you were even handling a loop.

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The following is older than I am, yet gets a laugh anywhere with the most blase audience. Performer comes on pulling a rope which is over his shoulder. He should appear to be pulling a tremendous weight. The band plays the "Song of the Volga Boatmen." Performer should keep in time to this. Then the other end of the rope comes on to the stage, and, hanging on to it is . . . the performer.

The how. Performer carries on till he gets to the wings, then an attendant takes the rope off him and slowly pulls. The magician rushing round the back to the side he came on at, grabs up the end of the rope and allows the attendant to drag him across the stage, still keeping time to the music, by the way. A hank of the usual rope is ideal for this.

Performer enters with a length of rope. Patters to the effect that given enough rope a Magician will eventually hang himself. (Who said no such luck!) Rope is folded up into the hand, the scissors picked up, but, when he goes to make the usual cut, the rope is found to be only about six inches long. Audiences have all seen stretching a rope, but here is a new angle: shrinking a rope.

Have two pieces of rope in the left hand, one about six inches long, the other two feet or so. The thumb covers the two ends, which are together, so that it appears you have a piece about two feet six long. Fold up small with the right hand, then, when this is bundled up, palm the bundle and at the same time turn the left hand over back to the audience, so that the customers can still see the end hanging from the hand. As the right hand goes into the pocket for the scissors, the bundle is left there; well, I ask you? You will find this is a grand gag for doing to a bunch of Magicians, who are a simple lot anyhow!

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Here is a very funny gag, given me by Arnold Crowther. I tried it out at a meeting of the S.C.A. and the fellows thought it was a pip. Magish steps on and relates how well trained his assistants are. He has only to clap his hands (does so) and on dashes an assistant who takes up a stiff attitude on the performer's right. Two claps and on dashes number two, who takes up his position on the other side. Three claps sees another dash on. When the performer claps four, all three assistants, as well as everybody in the wings, and the band, sing "Deep in the Heart of Texas." With this the three stooges dash off leaving the wizard to do his stuff.

Where you are using a mike and have a roller skate available, as the Compere comes on carrying the mike, the comic is seen sitting on a small platform, hanging on to the wire of the mike. As he comes centre stage, the compere gives the comic's name, and, still carrying the microphone, goes off the opposite side. This is worked with a piano trolley or with a small board with a roller skate underneath. The comic crouches on this and holds a string, the other end of which is held by the compere. This is to save the strain on the cable of the mike.

Another funny item using a roller skate is to tear across the stage giving the next act in a loud voice, then off. You never actually stop, and the act should be on as soon as you go off opposite. Whilst this may not sound funny, in actual practise it is quite laughable, more so if the show up till then has been of the quick-fire variety.

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On asking a volunteer for his name: "What's your name? Bill, all right George, I'll call you Alf for short."

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"I'll now sing, wending my way to the madhouse, accompanied by the orchestra."

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"How's that Mastoid" (To orchestra leader). "What do you mean Maistoid? "A Mastoid's a pain in the neck. That's right Mastoid."

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One fellow told me I was so bad he had to come three times to see me to get his money's worth.

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"So I said to him I must be off. He said I was."

"Nice fellow, I told him I was the magician; he said he was sorry, but was broke too."

Performer dashes on: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I will now, for the first time on any stage present——" orchestra all stand up and yell, "What? Again."

One very funny gag De Vega worked at the S.C.A. Produces an 18 inch Union Jack. Takes a cigarette from his case and lights it, then places the cigarette in a small metal tube just the size to hold this; a cap placed on and the case laid down in full view. The flag is vanished by the aid of a vanisher, performer lifts up the case in which the cigarette was placed and draws out a tiny Union Jack about two inches square, then reaching into the inside pocket of his jacket pulls out a cigarette about 18 inches long and proceeds

to smoke this. This may not sound very funny, but the night De Vega did this, we all howled; it was excellent entertainment, and that folks is what we are paid to provide. The tube is the usual cigarette to match effect. The handkerchief is vanished with a pull, and the giant cigarette is made of paper with metallic paper at the end. Anyway it is a grand gag as you will find when you try it out.

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John Bays sends in one with the electric light which glows at the finger tips. This is marketed I believe at 20/-. Compere briskly forward with the bulb in his hand, makes comment about the bulb which he thinks will light up if he strays from the script. A cunning story follows and as compere works the climax he glances at the bulb, continues and as the story ends with its double meaning the bulb glows Red. Of course if you use the other type story, this will naturally call for a Blue Bulb. A novel use of this mechanical item which you no doubt have in your kit.

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One which I used for a long time and which most of the boys here asked me to sell, was my own routine with this prop. Compere comes on with a cigarette in his mouth feeling through his pockets, obviously searching for a match. Not finding one he goes to the footlight well and extracts a bulb. Picks this up, makes it light, places the cigarette against this and the cigarette immediately glows and compere now puffs the gasper. Now turning to the lit globe, performer blows and this goes out; the globe is now returned to the footlights. All this is done without a word being spoken.

One of the globes above mentioned can be used. Actually my own is slightly different and I do not intend to give my own method away. On the globe is a small piece of blotting paper, stuck to the side and this is soaked and laid in the footlight well. The cigarette has a small pellet of Metal Potassium in the end. When you take the lit globe out, this is laid down quickly and the hand

shaken as if you had been burned. Now the globe is picked up again, this time being the fake bulb. This is lit, the cigarette applied to the end and smoked, then the bulb blown out. This is merely placed down and the M.C. carries on with what he intended to say or do.

One tip; when using potassium in cigarettes, always use a cork tip or one way cigarette so that you know which end the pellet rests. This is only the size of a pin head and to place this in the mouth would result in a frightful burn, so remember, a Craven A or other cigarette of this type will always assure you light the right end. I may say that my particular type of bulb is **Not** for Sale.

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Here is one item which has proved a riot wherever shown. I can imagine that Eric Williams or Arthur Dowler would have them stretched out with this. I may say first, that this idea came from that American funny man, Frank Lane. Performer enters; on a small table is a piece of newspaper; on top of this a plate or saucer. The magician holds a wand. Picking up the plate he merely says "Solid wand." Taps the plate which shatters into a hundred pieces. Merely looks surprised and then wraps the wand in the newspaper, saying, "Solid wand." Tries to break the wand in the accepted manner, wrestles and struggles until all the paper is torn off the wand.

Goes over to his table, saying "solid wand." Taps the table and this splinters into a dozen pieces, most of it hanging drunkenly by the drape. Throws wand down and there is a terrific crash. Picks wand up again, throws off and again there is a crash, followed by the smashing of glass.

Goes off quickly. Comes on along backcloth on tiptoes never looking at the audience. Tiptoes in an exaggerated manner right up to table, gives one look at the audience and grabbing the table, dashes off like a streak.

You do not have to be an actor to get howls with this, but, if you can use your face, believe me, you'll paralyse the spectators.

First the wand is made of a solid iron bar. Half an inch in diameter and painted black with white ends. The table top I make with an old Kipper box and cover with black out paper. This has a piece of fringe around it. (Woolworth has the ideal stuff).

The only other preparation is a couple of biscuit tins, with a heap of broken glass in one of these.

Any old music stand will do for the table top. The working will now be obvious from the description of the act above.

Next time you come on, draw a wand out of the pocket, throw the left arm across the face as if someone is going to throw something at you; place the wand back in the pocket, smile, and do something else.

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A rather good opening is that of John Bays; Magician enters, extracts flower from button hole and tosses same into top hat, hat placed back on head. Flower immediately re-appears in button-hole. The hat is tipped over and a silk floats down, printed on which is a large question mark.

The silk is folded to represent a flower and in such position is pinned to the lapel. The only thing to answer is the flower in buttonhole, this being the length of elastic and the flower caught under the armpit.

## APPARATUS

In the preceding pages, quite a few props are mentioned for use in the various gags. These are all made by Mac's Mysteries and can be supplied at the following prices:

<b>Card Crash Plates</b> (set of 8)	- - - - -	<b>3/0</b>
<b>Lead-filled Match Box</b>	- - - - -	<b>3/0</b>
<b>Bottomless Glass</b>	- - - - -	<b>4/6</b>
<b>Hanks of Rope</b> (36 feet)	- - - - -	<b>2/8</b>
<b>Repeat Lit Cigarette Packet</b> (hold 4)	- - - - -	<b>5/6</b>
<b>Rubber Cement for "Clippo"</b>	- - - - -	<b>2/6</b>
<b>Fake for Lit Match</b> (Pin anywhere)	- - - - -	<b>2/0</b>
<b>Telegram to Bouquet</b>	- - - - -	<b>8/6</b>
<b>Solid Wax Finger</b>	- - - - -	<b>1/3</b>
<b>Ribbons to Sausage</b>	- - - - -	<b>8/6</b>
<b>"Silence, Genius At Work"</b> (Large Card)	- - - - -	<b>4/6</b>
<b>"Danger, Conjuror At Work"</b> (Large Card)	- - - - -	<b>4/6</b>
<b>Giant Match</b>	- - - - -	<b>2/6</b>

Other excellent compere items are those enumerated below:

<b>Cards to Matchbox</b>	- - - - -	<b>2/9</b>
<b>Cigarette Tanks for Vest or pin anywhere</b> (Lit)	- - - - -	<b>3/0</b>
<b>Curious Cocktails</b> (Glass empties and refills)	- - - - -	<b>10/6</b>
<b>Newspaper to Bouquet</b>	- - - - -	<b>8/6</b>
<b>Gloves to Bouquet</b>	- - - - -	<b>15/0</b>
<b>Repeat Note Trick</b> (10/0 Notes)	- - - - -	<b>5/6</b>
<b>Lighter to Matchbox</b>	- - - - -	<b>10/6</b>