

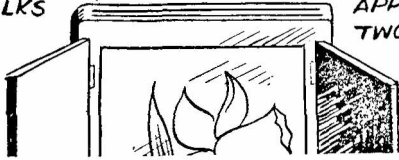
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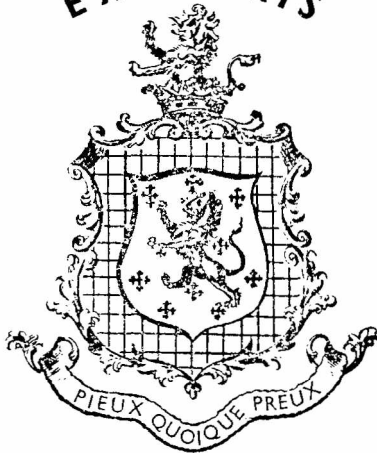
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—The late Dr. A. M. Wilson
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(March 1928).

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CIRCLE

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SERIES

The Odin Rings

THE LAST WORD

on the

Chinese Linking Rings

An entirely new method of presentation

Invented by

CLAUDIUS ODIN

Lauriate of the Concours organised by the
"Chambre Syndicale de la Prestidigitation"

at the

Théâtre Robert-Houdin
Paris.

Compiled by

E. GARDET

Member of the

"Association Syndicale des Artistes Prestidigitateurs"
Paris

Translated and Edited by

VICTOR FARELLI

(Pupil of David Devant)

With Three Appendices

(by the Translator)

Describing MANY NOVEL NOTIONS
in EXPERT RING MANIPULATION

Copiously illustrated by

SID LORRAINE

Copyright

SECOND EDITION

1940

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LONDON

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FOREWORD by the Publisher of the Present Edition.

It is a pleasure to contribute a few notes to a new magical work, and doubly so in the present instance as this volume deals with a classical effect in magic. Here is a specialised routine which, with a little study and application, will produce a most complete and baffling sequence of moves.

Much time and care have been given unstintingly by the translator and artist, so that the student shall be placed in possession of the work in the clearest possible manner. With this end in view, the manuscript has been revised continually, and many of the original illustrations re-drawn. Consequently, I believe that the book will prove of real value to the amateur or professional who desires to make a study of the subject.

A few remarks with regard to learning the Odin routine may be of interest. In order to obtain the maximum effect with any routine it is necessary for the performer to become so well acquainted with it that the working shall be second nature to him and he is thus able to devote most of his energies to the general presentation. The first accomplishment is that of mastering the "Odin System of Linking and Unlinking," and with this as a basis the subsequent moves may then be followed with a set of rings in the hands. Incidentally, the "Odin Count" will be found a perfect deception. Probably the easiest way to learn is to get a friend to read out the instructions, and—with personal reference to the illustrations—the desired effect will emerge.

I myself adopted this plan and I found that it took me about an hour to work through Chapters II, III, and IV. The only item of instruction which was not clear was the Eleventh Passe (Chapter IV), this being described somewhat tersely. The Passe in question has since been enlarged upon and completely re-written by Mr. Farelli and is now quite easy to understand. When the moves have been thoroughly mastered and memorised the routine can be performed with the patten given in the text, and without undue haste, in about eight or ten minutes.

The making of various fancy figures with the rings does not come within the scope of this book, as this subject has been fully dealt with in other works mentioned in the appended "Bibliography," and to which the interested reader is referred. The moves described in the book are complete in themselves, without the introduction of other material, but a few figures may, of course, be added as desired. I think it is generally agreed that the making of a vast number of designs tends to detract from rather than enhance the effect to be obtained—which is simply that of the magical linking and unlinking of unprepared steel rings.

In conclusion, may I again stress the importance of learning the sequence so well that one does not have to think about it—as it is only in this way that general perfection is to be attained, so that the effect of the Linking Rings shall be one of real magic.

EDWARD BAGSHAWE.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

This is a very free translation of a recent French work* describing for the first time in print Monsieur Claudius Odin's method of performing the "Chinese Linking Rings," a most ingenious routine for which he is justly famous in France.

M. Odin is the inventor of the ever popular colour changing handkerchiefs for which he was awarded a prize by "La Chambre Syndicale de la Prestidigitation" of Paris some twenty-seven years ago. I refer to the effect in which two handkerchiefs, tied together by the corners, are caused to change colour upon the magician passing his hand over them, an experiment which is now performed all over the world.

In 1924 I took a number of lessons from M. Odin in his method of handling the "Linking Rings." He gave me several valuable "tips" which are not mentioned by the compiler, M. Gardet. Some of these have been incorporated in the text or given in footnotes, while others are described in an Appendix to this little volume.

In order to avoid any subsequent misunderstanding, I wish to make it perfectly clear that this is by no means a "word for word" translation. Far from it: when judged necessary, numerous alterations and additions have been made, my object being to give English-speaking Magicians a complete explanation of M. Odin's methods, rather than to adhere faithfully to the original text. These methods are practical in every detail and once mastered extremely easy of accomplishment. It should never be forgotten, however, that the simplest routine, gracefully and smoothly performed, is far more pleasing to an audience, and consequently more artistic, than the most perfect series of "moves" imaginable, indifferently executed.

The Odin Routine may be varied in an infinity of ways: the version that I now perform differs in many particulars from that which the inventor taught me. I may not have improved upon the original, but the moves I do suit me better, and that, as every experienced magician knows, is what matters.

I suggest that the reader study the manipulations described in the text, and after having presented them a few times in public, he will then be in a position to devise a series of movements of his own. Until he has done this he will be ill-advised to endeavour to improve on those explained in this book which are the outcome of years of experiment and research. In addition to this they have been tested by hundreds, possibly thousands, of public performances.

However interesting they may be in themselves, I am not in favour of the formation of fancy figures (e.g., the "Swing," "Jacob's Ladder," etc.) in conjunction with this routine. One should guard against over elaboration and the taking of the "last ounce" out of an effect, faults into which the real enthusiast is ever apt to fall.

* "Les Anneaux Chinois," par Odin. H. Billy, Editeur. Paris, 1929.

I am sure that the reader will be pleased with the illustrations, drawn specially for this edition by Mr. Lorraine. Having myself made some of the rough sketches—a little job that took me longer than I would care to admit—I am able fully to realise the intricate nature of the work and the difficulties which have been overcome by the artist.

I must not close this preface without assuring M. Gardet how much I appreciate the work that he has done and without pointing out to him that no one could possibly be in a better position than I am to understand the enormous difficulties with which he has had to contend. The task of translating and editing has been no light one and had I not been under contract with Mr. Bagshawe, I doubt if it would ever have been finished.

VICTOR FARELLI.

London, 1931.

INVENTOR'S PREFACE.

The origin of the "Chinese Rings" is lost in antiquity. Who was the inventor? Nobody knows.

According to Robert-Houdin, the celebrated Philippe was the first to perform the effect in France and he is supposed to have learned the secret from some Chinese conjurers whom he knew in London.*

Since the days of Philippe, nearly every magician has, at some time during his career, introduced this beautiful experiment in his programme. Robert-Houdin has given a very interesting description of the usual method of working.†

Like my confrères I used to perform the rings as described by Robert-Houdin, but, probably because this method of presentation had become too common, it did not obtain as much effect as it used to do in former times. On one occasion, after a performance, a spectator said to me:—

"I have often seen that trick with the rings. At first it used to puzzle me, but after having seen it performed several times I finally found out the secret. I noticed that when you take two or three rings together and apparently link them, you give them for examination. On the other hand, when you show the rings separately before linking them, you do not allow them to be handled by the spectators after they are linked. Thus I came to understand that those which you hand for examination are permanently linked, and for that reason you take them two by two, or three by three. You also use rings which open—these you never give for examination."

This spectator was the cause of the little improvements which I have introduced in the method of presentation of this pretty effect.

I thought that if it were possible to take two rings separately, link them together and hand them for examination, it would be a marvellous feat. That was the problem. All I had to do was to solve it. Therefore I sought for a solution and I was lucky enough to find one.

The idea occurred to me that if I were to take a single ring and exchange it for the chain of two when apparently taking a second single ring, it would appear to the audience that I had merely taken two rings one after the other.

* From "The Annals of Conjuring," by Sidney W. Clarke:—"The first company of Chinese Jugglers reached England about 1830. They were described as from the Court of Peking, and performed at Saville House, No. 1, Leicester Square. They . . . introduced the Linking Rings (using eight rings) for the first time in this country." ("The Magic Wand," December, 1928.)

† "The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic." London, 1878. (Translated by Prof. Hoffmann.) Translator.

The solution was found.

Proceeding further with my experiments I discovered that if after having taken two single rings separately, I exchanged them for the chain of three when apparently taking a third single ring, it would seem to the spectators that I had taken each of the three rings separately.

Still working on the same lines, I hit upon a method by which I could count the rings and show them to be apparently all separate.

Having made these lucky discoveries, I practised enthusiastically for several days, and having devised other moves, I finally produced an entirely new method of presentation which has been most successful.

Several of my colleagues, after having seen my routine, asked me to publish it. I made an attempt at describing the various moves, but although they are extremely simple and do not require any great degree of skill, they are very difficult to explain in print. As I was not successful in describing them in a sufficiently clear manner I gave up all idea of ultimate publication.

Happily, however, Monsieur Gardet, our eminent colleague, took up the task, and with the patience of a saint, succeeded in spite of innumerable difficulties.

I am only the inventor of this method of presentation: the difficult and intricate descriptions are due to M. Gardet, our respected and devoted confrère.

C. ODIN.

NOTE by the PUBLISHER OF THE FRENCH EDITION.

In this method of presentation one must use a key without a plug; the cut should be straight and not on the slant. This ring ought to be made of steel, for preference, and completely closed, the ends flat against each other. The ends of a steel ring spring together, and the ring thus closes automatically after another ring has been passed through the opening.*

We trust the reader will not be alarmed by the apparent difficulty of the descriptions. The moves are infinitely more difficult to describe than to perform, and only by giving many minute details has it been possible to make the various "passes" of the "Odin Routine" sufficiently clear to enable the student, with a set of rings in his possession, to perform the different moves by reading the instructions and examining the drawings. We advise that this little work should only be read with a set of rings in hand.

H. BILLY.

* The reader is referred to Appendix I, in which M. Odin's method of handling this type of key is fully explained, under the heading "The Odin System of Linking and Unlinking," and also to a note on "Forming the Long Chain," in which the standard "joints" are mentioned. Trans.

NOTE REGARDING ILLUSTRATIONS

THE KEY: SHOWN IN FULL

SINGLE RINGS: IN OUTLINE

CHAIN OF TWO: SHADED.

CHAIN OF THREE: SHADED.

Unless otherwise indicated in the text, the various views of the rings and hands are as seen by the performer himself.

It is impossible to obtain even a faint idea of the Odin routine by examining the sketches. The explanations must be carefully studied. In the event of any discrepancy between the text and the illustrations, the former should be taken as authoritative.

V. F.

TECHNICAL TERMS

THE "KEY"

See Note by the Publisher of the French Edition.

THE GENUINE CHAIN OF TWO.

Two rings permanently linked together.

THE GENUINE CHAIN OF THREE.

Three rings permanently linked together.

A "FALSE" CHAIN OF TWO.

Composed of the key and a single ring linked therein.

A "FALSE" CHAIN OF THREE.

A. Two single rings connected by the key, or

B. The chain of two with the key linked into one of the rings.

SECRET LINKING.

To link, unknown to the audience, one or more rings into the key.

SECRET UNLINKING.

The reverse of the above.

"FALSE" LINKING.

Apparently linking two or three rings, while, in reality, these rings are already permanently linked.

"FALSE" UNLINKING.

The reverse of the above.

A. Apparently unlinking a chain composed of two rings, while, as a matter of fact, they are separate rings.

B. Apparently unlinking a single ring from a chain.

AN "OPEN" CHAIN.

A chain of two or more rings held by one end in such a way that it is apparent that they are linked one into the other. See Fig. 5.

A "FOLDED" CHAIN.

As the term implies. Sometimes called a "closed" chain.

A "MOVE."

A manoeuvre. Sometimes a secret manoeuvre.

A "PASSE."

One "trick" in a series of several.

THE "CLAW." See the "Odin Change," Chapter II.

THE ODIN RINGS

CHAPTER I.

OUTLINE DESCRIPTION OF THE EFFECT.

(From the Spectators' Point of View)

In the performance of this experiment the counting of the rings is misdirection. The apparent reason the rings are counted is to show that there are eight. The real reason for counting them is to prove, indirectly, that they are all separate.

The performer holds the set of rings in his left hand. Having stated that they are eight in number, he counts them by removing them, one by one, with the right hand. After removing each ring the right hand moves away to the full extent of the right arm.

After counting the rings the conjurer holds them in the left hand and removes three, one after the other, with the right hand, counting them as he does so. He throws the three rings, which he has just removed separately from the left hand, into the air, and catches them linked together in the form of a chain. This chain is handed to a member of the audience.

The performer now takes another three rings and places the remainder of the set, that is two rings, on the table. Holding the three rings in the right hand he removes them, one by one, with the left hand, counting them as he does so. He now takes one of these rings in the right hand, throws it into the air and catches it linked into one of the two held in the left hand. This chain of two rings is handed to the spectators.

The magician now shows that only three separate rings remain. These he links together, forming another chain of three. He next regains possession of the two chains held by the audience, and proceeds to link all three together forming a single chain.

This is the end of the first part of the experiment. The second and final part consists in the unlinking of the rings.

Holding the long chain vertically, the left hand at the top and the right hand at the lower end, the performer unlinks the bottom ring and passes it to the audience.

Grasping the remainder of the long chain in the middle with both hands, the left holding the third ring and the right hand the fourth ring, the performer separates the chain into two portions. The portion which is held in the left hand, and which is composed of three rings, is given to a spectator. The magician now holds a chain of four rings. Holding this chain vertically, the right hand at top, and left hand grasping the fourth ring, he unlinks the latter and passes it to a spectator.

In the possession of the audience there is now a chain of three rings and also two separate rings. The performer holds a second chain of three.

Calling attention to the fact that the rings he holds are all linked together, he gathers them up in the right hand. With the left hand he takes back a single ring from the audience while, with the right hand, still holding the rings folded together, he takes back the other ring. He then takes this latter ring also in the left hand and places both on the table. The magician now opens out the chain of three, the right hand at the top and the left hand at the lower end, grasping the third ring. This he unlinks and passes to the spectators: he then gives them the chain of two.

On the table there are two rings which have just been taken back from the audience. The remaining six rings (viz., the chain of two, the chain of three and a single ring) are still in their possession. The spectators thus get the impression of having examined all the rings.

Drawing attention to the fact that there are still eight rings, the performer picks up the two from the table. He then takes back from the audience the remaining single ring and the chain of two. These he unlinks. He also takes back the chain of three and unlinks them in like manner *

The counting of the rings, as already pointed out, is a "subtlety," the object of which is to make the audience imagine that the rings are separate and entirely independent of each other.

* The description given in the French text differs, in one or two minor particulars, with that in a subsequent chapter. For instance, the original reads:—" . . . il reprend au public un anneau séparé . . . et le dépose sur la table." This and a similar slip have been corrected. Trans.

CHAPTER II.

THE "ODIN COUNT"

THE RINGS.

A standard set of eight rings, one of which is a key, is required.*

ARRANGING THE RINGS. To arrange the rings quickly in the correct order proceed as follows: Place the two single rings on a table. On top of these lay the folded chain of three, then the folded chain of two, and finally the key. Pick up all eight rings with the left hand, back of hand upwards.

HOLDING THE RINGS.

Standing full face to the audience, hold the rings in the left hand, about shoulder high, in such a way that the spectators can see through them. The back of the hand is towards the audience. The rings are supported by the fingers, while the thumb is at the top. See Fig 1. (View as seen by the audience.) For the sake of clearness only the key is shown.



FIG. 1

The arm is extended straight in front of the body and parallel to the floor.

ORDER OF THE RINGS. Counting from the performer's body, the back of the hand being towards the spectators, the order of the rings is as follows:—

Single—Single—Chain of three—Chain of two—Key.

COUNTING THE RINGS.

By this method of counting the magician makes it appear to the audience that all the rings are separate. This is brought about by means of the "Odin Change," which will be described in this chapter under a special heading.

The First Ring. Holding the rings as above explained, remove, with the fingers and thumb of the right hand, the first single ring, namely, the one near your body. The right hand, as it approaches the left, must be held in the same way, that is to say, with its back to the spectators.

Having taken hold of the first ring, extend your arm to the right, keeping the ring so that the audience may see through it. Count "One."

* For particulars of the type of key ring used the reader is referred to the Note by the Publisher of the French Edition. Trans.

The Second Ring. Take the second single ring in the same manner. Extend the right arm and count, "Two."



FIG. 2

As the right hand moves away, insert the first finger of the left hand between the chain of two and the chain of three and hold them apart in readiness for the "Odin Change," about to be described.

Fig. 2 is a view of the rings in the left hand, as seen from the performer's right.

THE "ODIN CHANGE."

(Performed in the act of counting the third ring.)

The right hand, holding the two single rings, comes up to the left and exchanges them for the chain of three. In order to execute this "change" proceed as follows:

Position. The backs of both hands are towards the audience. The two single rings are held by the fingers and thumb of the right hand, the thumb on top, the fingers underneath. *

The middle, third and little fingers of the right hand are ready to open in the form of a "claw." (Fig. 3).

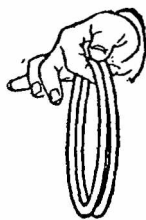


FIG. 3



FIG. 4

The chain of three rests on the middle, third and little fingers of the left hand.

The left thumb is ready to move slightly towards your body.

The audience can see through all the rings.

First Move. Bring the hands towards each other, the right hand covering the greater part of the distance.

While the hands are travelling towards each other, the fingers of the right hand open in the form of a "claw." Fig. 3. The left thumb moves towards your body, forming a sort of hook. Fig. 4.

Second Move. Let the hands meet. The two single rings held in the right hand, are behind those in the left, that is to say, towards your body. They touch the fork of the left thumb.

The chain of three (resting on the middle, third and little fingers of the left hand) enter the "claw" formed by the fingers of the right hand.

Counting from your body, the order of the rings is:—
Single—Single—Chain of three—Chain of two—Key.

* The compiler states that the two rings should be supported by the thumb and held in position by the forefinger. I have given the matter a lot of study and I do not find the position convenient. Trans.

Third Move. (The "Change.") Seize the chain of three with the "claw" of the right hand.

At the same time grip the two single rings with the thumb of the left hand. (In a manner of speaking, they are hung, for a fraction of a second, on the "hook" of the left thumb.)

Separate the hands and the change has been accomplished.
Count, "Three."

Fourth Move. Transfer the forefinger of the right hand from your side of the rings to the audience's side of them.

Note.—With practice these four moves blend into one. They should not be at all hurried or "jerky."

Counting the Fourth Ring. Bring the chain of three, now in your right hand, up behind those in the left (namely, between them and your body) and remove one of the single rings. Count, "Four."

Placing the Rings on the Table. Place the four rings which you hold in the right hand on the table: the single ring on top of the chain of three.

Counting the Second Set of Four Rings. In the left hand, the back of which is towards the audience, you hold, counting from your body:—

A single ring—Chain of two—Key.

First Ring of Second Set. Remove the single ring counting "One."

Second Ring of Second Set. ("Odin Change" again employed). Insert the forefinger of the left hand between the chain of two and the key.

Bring the right hand, holding the single ring, behind those in the left (i.e., on your side of the rings).

Seize it with the hook formed by the left thumb.

At the same time grip the chain of two with the "claw" of the right hand.

The order of the rings, counting from your body, should be:—

Single—Chain of two—Key.

Separate the hands and the position will be:—

In left hand: Single—Key (towards audience).

In the right hand: Chain of two.

Transfer the forefinger of the right hand from your side of the chain to the spectators' side of it.

Third Ring of Second Set. Remove the single ring, with the right hand, counting, "Three."

Fourth Ring of the Second Set. Show the key in the left hand, and without passing it to the right, say: "And this one makes four."

Point to the rings on the table and remark: "Four and four make eight."

Picking up the Rings. Having counted the rings as above described, proceed as follows:

- A. Turn the palm of the left hand upwards, fingers pointing to the audience. Place the chain of two in this hand, next to the key which is already there.
- B. Place the single ring, held in the right hand, on top of those on the table. The order of these rings, counting downwards, will be:—
Single—Single—Chain of three.
- C. Pick up all five rings with the right hand; fingers on top, thumb underneath. Keep the back of this hand towards the audience.
- D. Place these five rings in the left hand with the three others, still keeping the PALM of this hand UPWARDS, fingers pointing towards the audience.
- E. Now turn the back of the left hand to the spectators, and, providing that you have followed the above instructions correctly, the order of the rings, counting from your body, will be:—
Single—Single — Chain of three — Chain of two — Key, which is the same order as they were in before they were counted.

Note. The counting of the rings should be done rather loudly and with emphasis. *

* (a) The reader is referred to the notes on "The Size of the Rings Used," and on "The Position of Table," in Appendix I.

(b) Although there is nothing actually difficult about the "Odin Change," it takes considerable practice to perform it smoothly and to make it convincing. When taking up the study of the Odin methods, the reader might do well to replace the "count" in question by one easier of execution (e.g. the "Drop Count" or the "Wrist Count"). Having acquired proficiency in the various "passes" described in Chapters III and IV, and having presented them about ten or twelve times in public, he could, in subsequent performances, commence with the "Odin Count."

(c) When removing a ring, or rings, from the left hand, the ring (or rings) held in the right hand should always be behind those in the left; that is to say, between the performer's body and those in the left hand.

(d) During the counting the performer should look at the audience and not at the rings.

(e) The noise made in removing a chain from the left hand, by means of the "claw grip," should be the same as when taking a ring, or rings, with the fingers and thumb.

(f) As an excuse for placing the first four rings on the table, M. Odin used to remark as he did so that they were rather heavy.

(g) Having mastered the moves described in this chapter, the reader might be interested in those explained in Appendix I, under the heading, "The Farelli Count." Trans.

CHAPTER III.

LINKING

THE FIRST PASSE.

(False linking of three rings. Disposal of key.)

Remark: "I shall now show you something rather peculiar, using three rings."

Remove two single rings, one by one, with the right hand and exchange them, as described in the previous chapter, for the chain three. Count, "One, two, three," as you do so; then say, "Watch."

Without stating what you are about to do, throw the chain into the air. * Before it reaches the floor, catch it again and let it open out. Observe: "You see they are all linked together." Pause a moment and then add, "I shall do that again. In the meantime, would you, sir, be good enough to hold these rings?"

Give the rings to a spectator, and you may be sure that he will not fail to examine them carefully.

You now hold in your left hand, the back of which is towards the audience, five rings. Counting from your body they are in the following order:—

First single—Second single—Chain of two—Key.

Keeping the back of the right hand towards the spectators, seize the second single ring and the folded chain of two. With the left hand place the key on the table with the remaining single ring on top of it.

THE SECOND PASSE.

("Count" followed by false linking of two rings.)

1. The order of the three rings in your right hand, back towards the audience, counting from your body, should be:—

Single—Chain of two.

They are held with the fingers and thumb pointing downwards, the latter towards your body.

To convey the impression that they are all separate, proceed as follows:—

- A. Let the left hand approach, back towards audience.
- B. Seize all three rings with the left hand, backs of fingers towards the spectators, the thumb towards your body. The two thumbs should almost touch each other.
- C. With the fingers and thumb of the left hand, remove the single ring. The left hand moves in a downward direction, to the full extent of the arm. Count, "One."
- D. Raise the single ring and grip it with the fingers and thumb of the right hand. This ring must be towards the AUDIENCE, not, in this case, towards your body. The fingers of the right hand open, for a fraction of a second, to receive it. Do not let go with the left hand. Now, without the slightest pause . . .

* M. Odin makes the rings spin as they leave his hand. Trans.

- E. Draw down the chain of two, with the fingers and thumb of the left hand, counting, "Two."
- F. Pass the single ring from the right hand to the left and count, "Three." *

II. Now remark: "So that you may understand what happens I shall use only one ring."

Drop the single ring from the left hand into the right. With this hand throw the ring into the air and catch it in the left which holds the chain of two.

While the ring is in the air, or as you start to throw it, let one of the rings of the chain of two drop on to the little finger of the left hand which must now keep it separated from the other.

As you catch the ring you have thrown, release the ring held by the little finger, and it will appear as if the ring which you have just caught has linked itself to the other.

Take the chain of two in the right hand and ask someone to hold it for a moment, remarking: "You see it has passed right through."

THE THIRD PASSE.

(Forming a false chain of two, with a single ring and the key.)

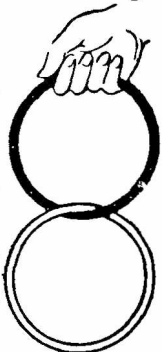


FIG. 5

The position is as follows: In your left hand you hold a single ring. On the table there is another single ring with the key underneath it.*

Still keeping the single ring in the left hand, pick up the key from the table with the right hand. Holding these two rings, one in either hand, remark: "Here are two others."

Take both in the right hand, and while the left hand picks up the remaining single ring from the table, secretly link the two rings together with the finger and thumb of the right hand, observing: "And here is another." †

Display the third ring, and then, in order to have your hand free, let it slide on to the left arm. Remark: "I shall work very slowly.

Watch carefully. A little friction like this, and here we have the two linked together." Show the two rings, the key in your right hand with the single ring hanging in it, as depicted in Fig. 5.

Note. Always link and unlink secretly with the fingers and thumb of one hand under cover of suitable patter or misdirection.

THE FOURTH PASSE.

(Forming a false chain of three.)

Position at start. In the right hand: The key from which hangs a single ring. On the left arm: The remaining single ring.

* I have amplified, to a great extent, the instructions given in the original text for executing this "count." The moves (A to F), which are extremely good, were fully explained to me by M. Odin, and take about three seconds to carry out. As a matter of fact, however, at this point in the experiment, I usually perform the familiar "Drop Count," which is extremely illusive, especially with a small number of rings. I then proceed as described in the text. Trans

† See "The Odin System of Linking and Unlinking" in Appendix I. Trans.

* The reader is referred to a note on "Covering the Key," in Appendix I. Trans.

With the left hand raise the single ring and grip it with the middle, third and little fingers of the right hand.

Slide the remaining single ring from your arm into your left hand. Place this ring in the right hand and secretly link it into the key, at the same time dropping the other single ring.

Cause the ring you have just dropped to spin in the usual manner. Before it stops spinning, release the other single ring, remarking: "And this one has passed also."

Keeping the key ring steady in the right hand make the ring which you have just dropped revolve also.

THE FIFTH PASSE.

(Forming the Long Chain.)

Position at Start. Hold the false chain of three as shown in Fig. 6. The key is in the right hand, the thumb covering the joint, and the two single rings hang from the key.

First Move. (The secret unlinking of a single ring.)

With the left hand seize the single ring (marked "L" in Fig. 7) and raise it to the position shown in the illustration saying: "Notice that there are still only eight rings. Three here. One, two . . ." As you say "two," knock the ring, held in the left hand, horizontally against the key, in the direction indicated by the arrow-head in the sketch. Grip this ring with the fingers and thumb of the right hand. Let go with the left.

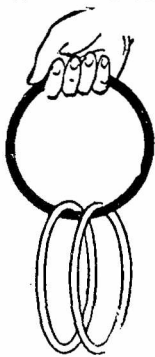


FIG. 6

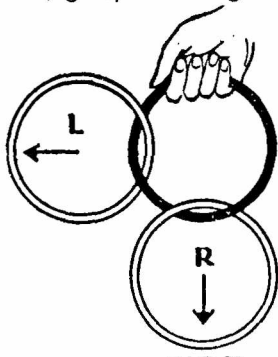


FIG. 7

With the left hand, grasp the ring marked "R" and strike it vertically against the key as shown by the arrow-head, remarking "And this one, three." As you do this secretly unlink, with the finger and thumb of the right hand, the other single ring.

Second Move. (Adding the chain of two.) *

In the right hand, the back of which

is towards the audience, you now hold three rings, which, counting from your body, are in the following order:—

* From this point to the end of the present section (viz., the Fifth Passe), the moves described are those taught to me by M. Odin himself, and of which I took copious notes. They differ in many respects from those explained in the original text, which are extremely complicated. For instance, the student is instructed to pass the rings from hand to hand three times (p. 23, lines 3, 6, 10: "Les Anneaux Chinois") and then again to the right hand (line 19, idem), making four movements instead of two, as demonstrated to me by the inventor. The descriptions of the positions of the various rings held in the right hand are inaccurate and incomplete, although the work, as a whole, has been well done by M. Gardet.

There also exists another method of securing the desired arrangement of the rings for the formation of the Long Chain. This is briefly described in Appendix I, under the heading, "Forming the Long Chain." Trans.

1. The key, from which hangs a single ring.
2. A single ring (unlinked).

Insert the first finger of the hand between the key and the unlinked single ring. This finger must point downwards. *

Remarking: "And two here," take the open chain of two in the left hand, pass it to the right, and, with the finger and thumb of this hand secretly link the upper ring into the key. Release the chain.

The position is as follows: In the right hand, back to audience, you hold five rings in the following order, counting from your body:

1. The key, from which hang:
 - (a) The chain of two, and
 - (b) A single ring.

2. A single unlinked ring.

It appears to the audience that you hold a chain of two and a chain of three. They are not given any time to study this, for, as soon as the chain of two is released, you . . .

Seize, with the left hand, the lower ring of this chain and fold flat against the key, the fingers of the right hand gripping it and keeping it in position. Do not link it into the key.

The order of the five rings in your right hand, back of which is still towards the audience, counting from your body, should be:—

1. One ring of the chain of two.
2. The key, from which hang: —
 - (a) The second ring of the chain of two, and
 - (b) A single ring.
3. A single ring (unlinked).

Third Move. (Transferring the unlinked ring.)

- A. Extend the left hand, palm upwards, fingers pointing towards the audience. Place the rings in this hand, without turning them round, so that their order, counting from your body, will still be as indicated in the previous paragraph. Close the left hand.
- B. With the right hand take hold of the unlinked ring, at its lowest point, and turn it back on to the left forearm, the fingers of the left hand acting as a hinge. Remove the right hand for a moment. See Fig. 8.

* See note on "Insertion of First Finger" in Appendix I. Trans.

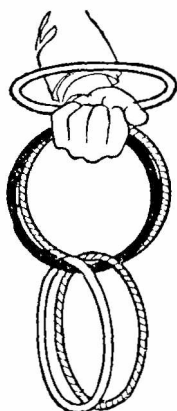


FIG. 8

- C. Touch the left pulse with the tip of the middle finger of the right hand. The palm of this hand must be turned downwards.
- D. With the first finger and thumb of this hand, seize the three rings held in the left hand. The right thumb must be on the audience's side of the three rings. The first finger must point downwards.
- E. Remove the left hand, allowing the unlinked ring (which rests on the left forearm) to fall into position behind the other rings.

Note. As a result of these manoeuvres (A, B, C, D, E), which have taken so long to describe, the unlinked ring is now on the opposite side of the remainder.

F. Give the rings, now in your right hand, a half turn towards your right, bringing the key towards your body.

The order of the rings, counting from your body, back of the right hand being towards the audience, will now be:—

1. The key, from which hang:—
 - (a) A single ring, and
 - (b) The lower ring of the chain of two.
2. The upper ring of the chain of two.
3. The single unlinked ring.

Fourth Move. (Adding the chain of three.)

Insert the first finger of the right hand between the key and the other two rings. Curl this finger round the key, as depicted in

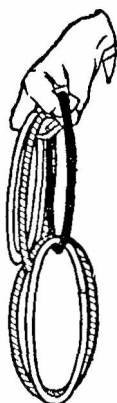


FIG. 9

Fig. 9, which is a view as seen from the performer's left.

Naturally, the actual order of the rings is still as indicated under the heading "F" (Third Move).

At this point in the experiment remark: "Five, and three over there, that makes eight. We still have eight rings."

Take the chain of three, by the upper ring, in the left hand. Pass it to the right, and, with the first finger and thumb of this hand, secretly link the upper ring into the key. Do not drop this ring into the key. Hold it with the first finger of the right hand, curling this finger round it. The first finger also curls round the key, at the opening. Remove the left hand.

The order of the rings in the right hand, counting from your body, back of hand towards audience, is as follows:—

1. Upper ring of chain of three (supported by first finger).
2. Key (supported by first finger).

Hanging from the key:—

- (a) A single ring.
- (b) Lower ring of chain of two.
- 3. Upper ring of chain of two (held by middle, third and little fingers).
- 4. The single unlinked ring (held by middle, third and little fingers).

The reader is referred to Fig. 10, which is a view as seen by the audience. *

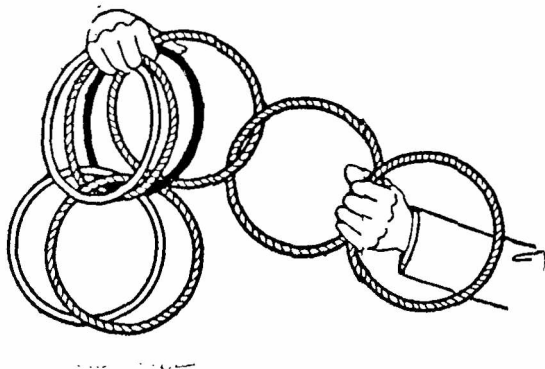


FIG 10.

Fifth Move. (Opening the long chain.)

A. With the left hand seize the chain of three at the junction of the lower and middle ring. See Fig. 10.

B. Straighten the first finger of the right hand, thereby releasing the two rings which it holds (namely, the key and the upper ring of the chain of three).

C. With the middle, third and little fingers of the right hand keep a firm grip of the upper ring of the chain of two and the single unlinked ring.

D. Extend the arms, opening out the Long Chain as depicted in Fig. 11, and remark: "See, the rings which a moment

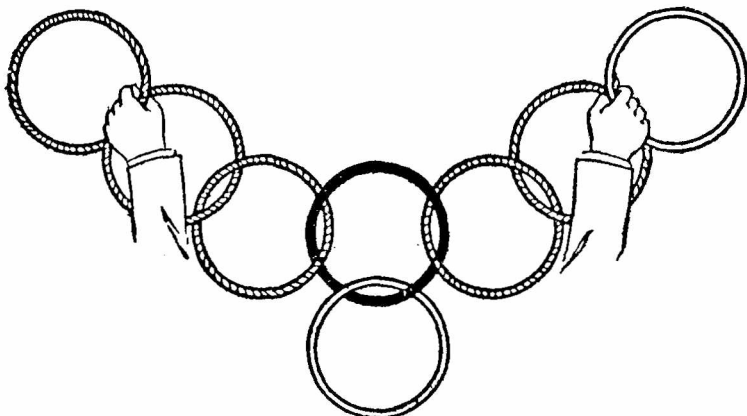


FIG. 11

* In the illustration, for the sake of clearness, the chain of three is held away from the other rings. Trans.

ago were all separate now form a single chain.” *

Notes. The four movements just described (A, B, C, D), blend into one and take about a second to accomplish.

Needless to add the unlinked ring is merely held in place by the fingers of the right hand and is not connected to the chain in any way.

As you extend your arms to open the chain it is advisable to move the fingers of the right hand into the position shown in the drawing, otherwise the ring in question would be gripped by the middle, third and little fingers only, which would look rather awkward. This, however, is a “counsel of perfection.”

* In Fig. II the forearms are shown in a somewhat unnatural position. This has been done purposely, in order to enable the reader to see the exact way in which the chain is twisted. Trans.

CHAPTER IV. UNLINKING

THE FIRST PASSE.

(False unlinking of the first ring.)

Still holding the chain of eight remark: "These eight rings, all separate a moment ago, are now joined, nevertheless, they have no openings. In spite of that I shall unlink them without removing them from your sight." *

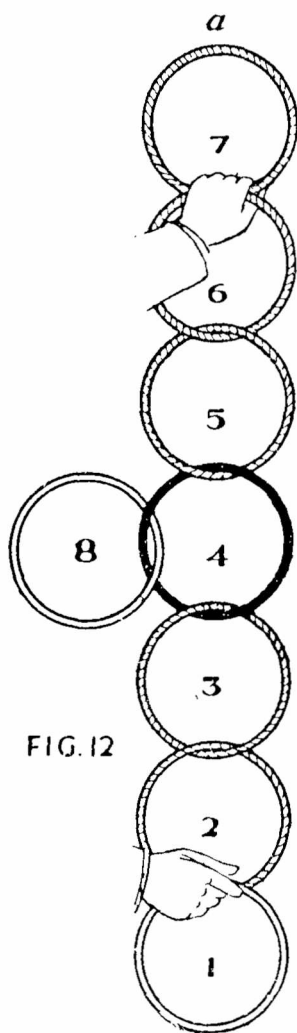
Lower the right hand and raise the left bringing the chain into a vertical position (Fig. 12), remarking: "I shall begin with the bottom ring." Fold this ring (No. 1 in the sketch) against the next ring (No. 2) the fingers acting as a hinge. "Watch." Give it a slight jerk and apparently unlink it. Hand it to a spectator on your right.

THE SECOND PASSE.

(Unlinking the chain of three from the long chain.)

Remarking: "I shall now proceed"—seize the key at the joint, with the right hand. Bring the chain into the position shown in Fig. 12a. Move the left hand to the extreme end of the chain of three (to point "a" ring No. 7, Fig. 12a). Give it a few sharp pulls to prove that it is properly linked. Let go with the left hand and allow the chain of three (rings Nos. 5, 6 and 7), to hang beside the other rings, namely, Nos. 8, 3 and 2

Still holding the key in the right hand, with the left hand take hold of ring No. 5 which is linked into the key. Knock it against the latter, remarking: "The rings are made of metal, not of smoke. They are perfectly joined together." Secretly unlink this ring (No. 5) and grip it with the fingers of the right



* The above is a free translation of the "patter" given in the French text. Personally, I am of opinion that it would be more artistic to refrain from stating that the rings have no openings. It seems to me that the mere fact of saying this is sufficient to raise a doubt in the minds of the spectators, and that it were better to create the desired impression indirectly. See note on "Truth and Patter" in Appendix I. The "passes" described in this chapter are those given in the original text, and are, in all essential particulars, identical with those shown to me by M. Odin. For the sake of clearness, however, I have increased the number of headings: otherwise comparatively little alteration has been found necessary except in the descriptions of the Seventh and Eleventh Passes. Trans.

hand. Let go for a moment with the left hand, then take hold of the ring again and hold it against the key, releasing it from the

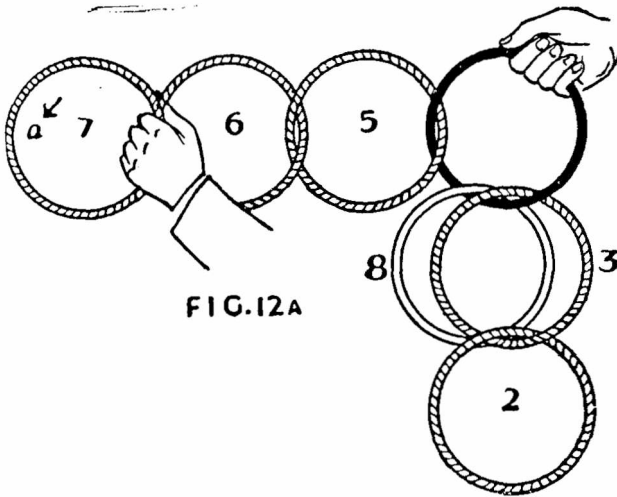


FIG. 12A

fingers of the right hand. Slowly separate the hands, remarking: "This is all I have to do to separate the rings."

Hand the chain of three, just released, to a member of the audience.

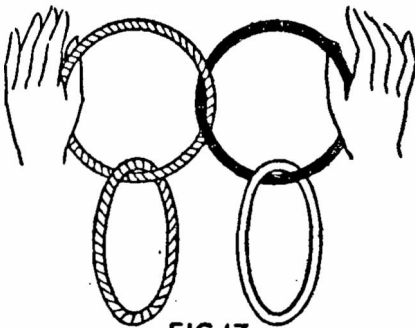


FIG. 13

THE THIRD PASSE.

(Unlinking the second single ring.)

Hold the rings as shown in Fig. 14, the chain of two being in the left hand and the key, from which hangs a single ring, being in the right.* "Only four rings remain." As you say these words, let go with the left hand and turn the key round, bringing the single ring to the left side of the key.

* The illustrator of the French edition of this little work shows the hands of the performer holding the rings in the manner indicated in Fig. 14, namely, with the hands on the audience's side of the rings. There was, by the way, a mistake in the original sketch, the left hand being shown holding the key, and the right hand the chain of two. This slip has been corrected in the present edition.

It is suggested that the rings be held more or less after the manner depicted in Fig. 13, that is to say, with the hands towards the body, the rings towards the spectators. Trans.

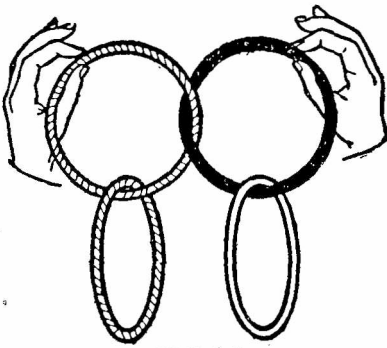


FIG. 14

to bring the single ring next to your body. The back of the left hand must be towards the audience, fingers down.

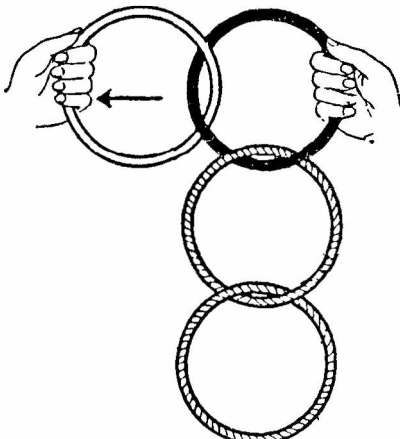


FIG. 15

described is extremely good and should be adopted whenever possible.

THE FOURTH PASSE.

(Exchanging the key for a single ring.)

The position is as follows:—

1. In right hand: The key, into which is linked the upper ring

Seize the single ring in the left hand and knock it horizontally to the left against the key as shown by the arrowhead in Fig. 15. Now raise the ring to the fingers and thumb of the right hand which unlink it secretly, while the left hand knocks the chain of two vertically against the key. "All perfectly linked, one within the other."

Next fold the four rings and grip them with the left hand, first turning them round so as

With the right hand grip the key and raise it vertically, drawing with it the chain of two. By holding the single ring as indicated in Fig. 16 it will appear that you still have a chain of four. Care must be taken to prevent the audience from noticing that the single ring is really unlinked. Endeavour to give the impression that it is still linked therein. *

Remarking: "Watch carefully," raise the single ring a trifle and apparently jerk it off from the lower end of the chain. Hand the ring just released to someone on your left.

* When performing in close proximity to the audience, the reader is advised to hold the unlinked ring as indicated in Fig. 17. Trans.

of the chain of two. See Fig. 18.

2. The chain of three: In possession of the audience.
3. The two single rings: One is held by a spectator on your right, and one by a spectator on your left.

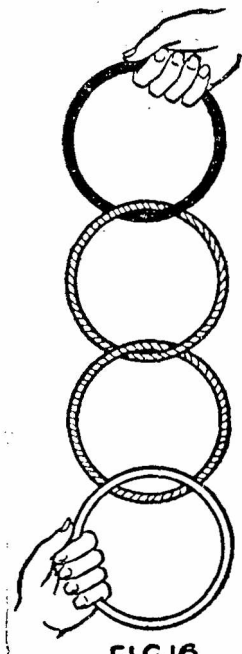


FIG. 16

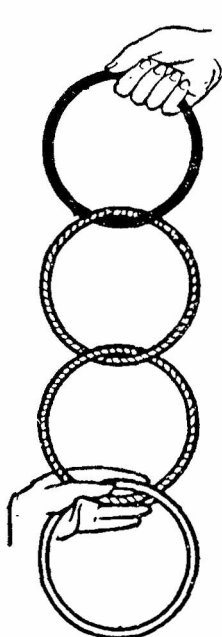


FIG. 17

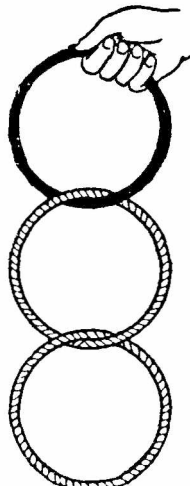


FIG. 18

Remark: "These three rings are still linked: this one in this: this one in this." As you say these words, knock the first ring vertically in the key and then raise it to the fingers of the right hand which secretly unlinks it. Knock the remaining ring, raise it up and grip it with the fingers of the right hand.

The chain of two and the key are now held in the right hand, the back of this hand being towards the audience, and the key next to your body, the chain of two towards the audience. Say: "You will notice that so far I have unlinked only two single rings. This one, and this one."

As you make this remark, take from the spectator on your left the single ring held by him. Take it with the left hand, holding the hand with its back to the audience. With the right hand take back the ring held by the spectator on your right. Receive this ring on the back of the forefinger, and hold it in position with the middle.

third and little fingers. This is illustrated in Fig. 19. *

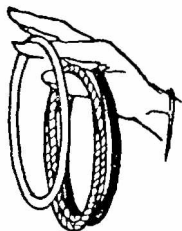


FIG. 19

Now bring up the left hand, and, with the single ring it holds acting as cover and still keeping it in the hand, remove, with the left thumb, the key from behind the rings in the right hand.

The position is now as follows:—

In the left hand: A single ring and the key.

In the right hand: A single ring and the chain of two.

With the left hand place the two rings on the table, the key ring under the single, saying as you do: "I place them on the table for a moment, and shall now unlink the other rings."

THE FIFTH PASSE.

(False unlinking of a single ring from a supposed chain of three.)

You now hold, in your right hand, back to audience, three rings which are supposed to be linked together. In reality it is a chain of two with a single ring in front of it.

Pass the rings from the right hand into the left giving them a half turn as you do so. Take them back in the right hand, but without turning them. The result of this is to bring the single ring towards your body, in order to execute, with greater smoothness, the move about to be described.

With the left hand seize the middle ring (i.e., one of the chain), the right hand keeping the others together. Pull slowly in a vertical direction, at the same time lowering the right hand slightly. This hand, having released the second ring, holds the single ring at the lower end of the chain of two, in readiness to perform the false unlinking as previously described (see the Third Passe in the present chapter), that is by apparently "plucking" or jerking the ring off.

"Here is one." Give it to someone, adding: "You may also examine these two." Pass the chain of two to the spectators and leave it with them.*

THE SIXTH PASSE.

(Reconstruction of a false chain of two.)

Your hands are now free. Go to the table and pick up, with the left hand, the single ring. With the right hand take the key. Standing with the arms apart, say: "Let us count. Here we have two rings." Take them both in the right hand, and add: "Will you give me the one you have, please?"

* As a matter of fact, M. Odin, on the occasion when he demonstrated this move to me, proceeded somewhat differently. He held his hand exactly as shown in Fig. 19, but instead of taking the ring as depicted, he took it between the finger and thumb. Trans.

* See note regarding this Passe in Appendix 1. Trans.

Secretly link the single into the key, with the right hand, while you receive, with the left hand, the remaining single ring from the spectator. Observe: "That makes three, all separate."

The position is as follows:—

In left hand: One single ring.

In right hand: False chain of two. (Closed.)

THE SEVENTH PASSE.

(Exchange of genuine chain of two for the false.)

It is now necessary to exchange the genuine chain of two, still held by a spectator, for the false chain just formed. To execute this "switch" proceed as follows:—

- A. Still holding the single ring in the left hand, extend this hand palm upwards and take back the chain of two, gripping it by one ring. Do not fold it.
- B. Turn the palm of the right hand upwards, fingers pointing towards the audience.
- C. With the middle, third and little fingers of the right hand seize the lower ring of the chain of two (Fig. 20. View as seen by audience).

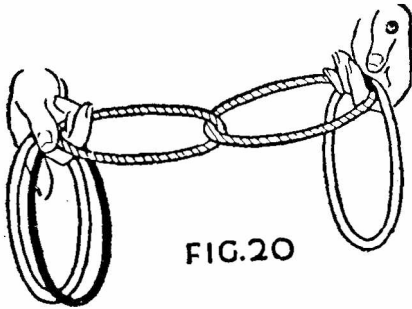


FIG. 20

- D. Fold the chain, placing the upper ring across the same three fingers.
- E. Remove the left hand, still retaining therein the single ring.
- F. Now, TURN THE RIGHT HAND, with its back to the audience, knuckles down, and the order of the rings in it, count-

ing from your body, will be:—

(a) Genuine chain: held by middle, third and little fingers.

(b) False chain: held by first finger, pointing slightly upwards.

Note. Both these chains are closed. The first finger separates them.

- F. Let the left hand now approach, with its back to the audience, and place the single ring that it holds in front of those held in the right hand, that is to say, on the audience's side of the rings.
- G. Seize all five rings with the left hand, and, at the same time grip the key with the finger and thumb of the right hand.
- H. Raise the key, clear of the other rings, drawing with it the single ring linked therein (Fig. 5), the thumb and first finger covering the joint. The position will then be:—
In right hand: False chain of two (i.e., the key, from which hangs a single ring).

In left hand: A single ring. The genuine chain of two.
(Closed.)

Important: Before reading what follows, practise the above moves. They blend into one another and take about three seconds to perform.

Misdirection to cover "Switch." As you fold the genuine chain of two (Move "C") in the right hand, say: "All we have are these two . . ." and as you turn the back of this hand to the audience (Move "E") point to the chain of three, which is in the possession of a spectator, with the single ring held in the left hand, adding: "And those three over there."

Disposal of the genuine chain of two and single ring. Place the genuine chain of two on the table with the single ring on top of it. Remark: "I place these aside and shall now separate the remaining two." *

THE EIGHTH PASSE.

(Unlinking the False chain of two.)

After going through the usual "feints" separate the hands showing the rings unlinked. Observe: "Two here: three on the table: that is five. Three over there; that makes eight. We still have eight rings." Place them on the table beside the other rings. †

THE NINTH PASSE.

(Reconstruction of a false chain of three.)

The audience have now only the genuine chain of three.

"All that remain for me to separate are those three rings over there. The five on the table have just been unlinked." As you say these words pick up the key from the table with the right hand. With the left hand take the single. ‡

Standing with the arms apart show the rings, and say: "Here are two." Pass the single from the left hand to the right, which at once links it into the key, while the left hand picks up the other single ring which was placed on top of the chain of two. Remark: "And this one, three. . ." Immediately pass this ring also to the right hand and link it into the key, at the same time taking the chain of two in the left hand and adding: "And these two, that makes five." §

In your right hand you now hold a false chain of three and in the left hand the real chain of two. Both of these are, of course, folded.

* If the instructions given for performing the actual "switch" are not clear, and I spared neither time nor trouble to make them as explicit as possible, the reader must blame me and not the compiler, for I am entirely responsible for them. As this is one of the best moves in the "Odin Routine" I have judged it advisable to explain it fully.

† The student is instructed to lay the rings on the table: M. Odin used to retain them. I think this is more natural in view of the fact that for the next passe it is necessary to handle them. Trans.

‡ See note on "Covering the Key" in Appendix I.

§ See note on "Reconstruction of a false chain of three" in Appendix I. Trans.

THE TENTH PASSE

(Exchange of the genuine chain of three for the false).

Addressing the spectator who holds the chain of three, say: "Will you please give me the three rings which I handed to you a moment ago? In order to let everyone see that they are still joined together kindly hold the chain by one of the end rings."

With the left hand, palm up, which holds the folded chain of two, take back from the spectator the chain of three, by the middle ring.

Fold this chain in the right hand and exchange it for the false chain, the method being the same as for the exchange of the two chains of two previously described. Fig. 21

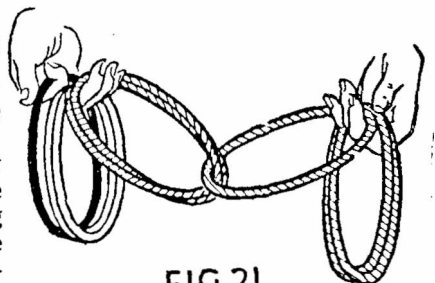


FIG. 21

illustrates the exchange of the two chains of three.*

Place the remainder of the rings on the table retaining in the right hand the false chain of three suspended by the key.† Fig. 6.

THE ELEVENTH PASSE.

(Unlinking a single ring from a false chain of three).

Still holding the key in the right hand, forefinger and thumb at the opening, back of hand towards audience, seize with the left hand, the ring on the left and raise it to the position indicated in Fig. 7.

Knock this ring horizontally against the key in the direction indicated by the arrow-head, remarking: "This chain is quite solid. This ring in this ring . . ."

Having struck it two or three times against the key raise it to the right hand, gripping it with the fingers and thumb. Let go with the left hand.

With the left hand seize the other single ring (marked "R" in Fig. 7) knock it vertically in the key, in the direction shown by the arrow-head, adding. ". . . this ring in this one."

As you say these words, secretly unlink the first single ring from the key, with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand.

With the left hand raise the single ring it still holds to the fingers and thumb of the right hand which immediately grip it, but which do not unlink it. Let go with the left hand.

Counting from your body, the order of the rings in the right hand, back to audience, should be:—

* When preparing for the "switch" of the three rings, M. Odin always kept his forefinger on, or rather, round the key, thus avoiding all danger of getting hold of the wrong ring in the final stage of the move, namely, when drawing out the false chain.

† The remaining rings are, of course, the two closed chains. The chain of two should be placed on TOP of the chain of three. See note on "Covering the Key" in Appendix I. Trans.

(a) Closed false chain of two (i.e., the key with a single ring linked therein).

(b) A single unlinked ring.

The audience think that you still hold a closed chain of three.

Turn the rings round, bringing the single ring towards your body. Keeping the BACK of the left hand to the ceiling, seize all three rings with this hand. With the fingers and thumb of the right hand grip the key and raise it vertically, at the same time slightly lowering the left hand. With the fingers and thumb of this hand hold the single unlinked ring in position already described in this chapter (Third Passe) and illustrated in Fig. 17.

The impression conveyed to the spectators is that you hold an open chain of three rings.

With the left hand apparently pluck off the bottom ring. Give it to someone, remarking as you do so: "You see it is now free." THE TWELFTH PASSE.

(Exchange of the key for a single ring)

While the member of the audience is examining the ring which you have just handed to him, cause the remaining single ring to "spin" in the key. Then fold the chain and unlink the single ring, secretly, of course.

In your right hand you now hold a single ring and the key, the latter towards your body. The spectators imagine you still have a chain of two. With this hand take back the ring just examined. The order of the rings will then be, counting from your body, back of hand to audience. Key, Single, Single.

As you receive the ring from the spectator, say: "Thank you, I shall place it on the table with the others." Instead of doing so, however, you take the key with the left hand, and this you lay on the table, adding: "That makes six, all separate, and all I have left are these two."^{*}

THE THIRTEENTH PASSE.

(False unlinking of the two last rings).

The following is a deceptive move which leads the audience to believe that the two rings are linked.

Hold them across the open palm of the right hand. Close the hand and insert the thumb between them. Now cause the rings to open by means of the thumb, the fingers of the hand acting as a hinge and the back of the hand remaining almost parallel to the floor. See Fig. 22.

Having opened and closed them a few times take one in either hand, holding them as if they were still linked. "Watch." Rub one against the other and then "jerk" them apart. Pause a moment, with the hands widely separated, and say: "Six and two are eight." Then, without any affectation, hand them to the audience for an instant, at once taking them back and placing them on the table.

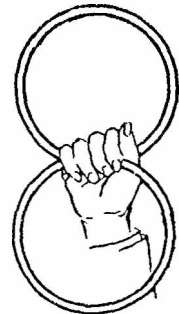


FIG.22

^{*} See notes on "Covering the Key" and "Exchange of the Key for a Single Ring" in Appendix I. Trans.

THE FOURTEENTH PASSE.

(The Final Count).

The experiment may well finish with the above passe. A more brilliant climax, however, consists in gathering up the rings and counting them as at the commencement of the effect.

"The eight rings, a moment ago so solidly welded together, are now all separate. One, two, three, four: and, one, two, three, four. All disconnected as at the beginning of the experiment."*

* Unless the performer can execute the "Odin Count" with absolute perfection, he will be well advised to finish the experiment at this point, or use another method. Personally, I am of opinion that it is better always to finish with the "Drop Count," which is more rapid in execution (it being unnecessary to place four of the rings on the table), but this is a matter for each individual performer to decide. See notes on "Unlinking the Last Two Rings" and on "The Final Count" in Appendix I. Trans.

APPENDIX I.

“TIPS” and IDEAS

As mentioned in the Preface, this section contains a number of valuable “tips” given to me by M. Odin himself when I took lessons from him in Paris. I have included also a few notions of my own.

THE SIZE OF RINGS USED.

M. Odin’s rings were about 8 inches in diameter, but the routine may be performed with rings of any reasonable size. Those I now use are $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches across, but for executing the “Odin Count” smaller rings are much easier to handle.

As regards the metal of which the rings are made, this is not a matter of great importance. Some performers favour brass, nickel-plated. The key, however, must be of steel. See “Note by the Publisher of the French Edition.”

POSITION OF THE TABLE.

M. Odin usually worked with a table placed on his left. The exact position is not of paramount importance.

ODIN SYSTEM OF LINKING AND UNLINKING.

Position of key in right hand. The position is similar to that shown in Fig. 1, but with the forefinger slightly extended under the opening in the key, the thumb being over it. This sketch, however, is a view of the left hand as seen by the audience.

To Link. The ring it is desired to link into the key is placed against the opening. The reader is referred to Fig. 23a, which is a view of the two rings as seen by the performer himself, the single ring being towards the body, the key towards the spectators. For the sake of clearness the fingers and thumb are not shown. The arrow-head indicates their position.

The ring is caused to pass through the opening by pressure of the thumb, the first finger of the same hand concealing from the audience what is taking place. Fig. 23b.

This move is, of course, common knowledge amongst conjurers.

To Unlink. One would naturally suppose that the unlinking of a ring would be performed by a reverse process, that is to say, that in order to cause it to pass through the joint, pressure would be applied by the first finger. This is not the case.

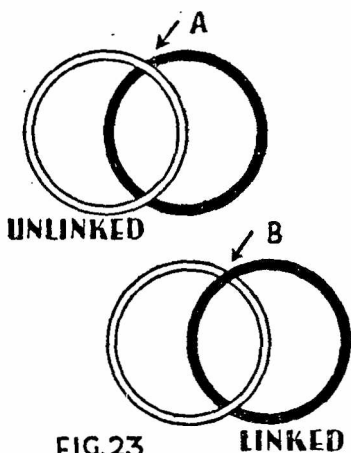
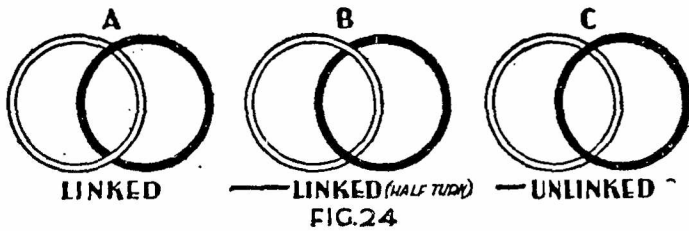


FIG. 23



A half turn is given to the single ring and it is unlinked by pressure of the right thumb. Fig. 24 indicates this clearly. The view is again as seen by the performer.

Variation I. The process is sometimes varied. The ring to be linked into the key, instead of being placed flat against it, as above described, being turned at right angles to it. The double line (Fig. 25a) represents a "side view" of a single ring, as seen by the performer, before it is linked into the key. Pressure is applied in a downward direction, by the right thumb, causing the single ring to pass through the split.

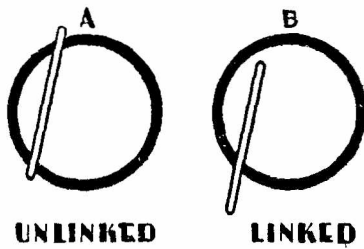
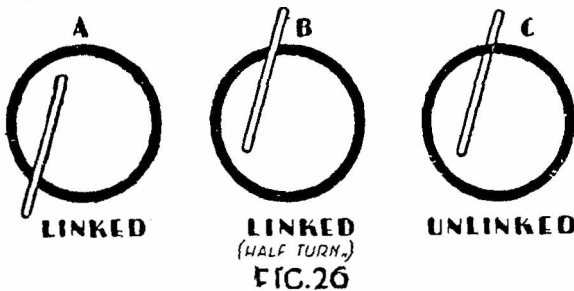


Fig. 25b is a view of the single ring and the key after the former has been passed through the joint.

FIG. 25

To unlink the single ring all that it is necessary to do is to give it a half turn, with the left hand, bringing it into the position indicated in Fig. 26b. Pressure being applied by the right thumb, again in a downward direction, forces it out through the opening. This is shown in Fig. 26c.



The reader is advised to spend a few minutes in experimenting with a single ring and a key. By studying Figs. 25 and 26 he will soon grasp the method of working which is extremely easy of execution when once understood.

Variation II. Instead of extending the forefinger only under the opening of the key, the middle finger may be used in conjunction with it. Personally I prefer the former method.

Note.—The compiler, M. Gardet, does not explain this system of linking and unlinking, acting, possibly, on the assumption that it is too well known to need any description in a work written specially for experts. Be that as it may, I have consulted several standard books on the subject, but I have been unable to find any mention of this exact method, and I take it, therefore, that it is unknown to the majority of English speaking magicians. It is similar, in some respects, to Namreh's "Solo Linking" for which an "open slot" is required.

M. Odin told me that he was the originator of these moves; I have never met any other performer who used them. I would add, in conclusion, that in M. Odin's hands these manœuvres were undetectable.

FOLDING THE CHAIN OF TWO.

When taking back the chain of two from a spectator, M. Odin advised me to seize it at the point where the two rings meet: it will thus fold automatically. Nothing looks more unnatural than to fold it after one has taken it back. Of course there are times when for certain reasons this must be done. It goes without saying that if the chain need not be folded subsequently there is no need to act as above described.

KEEPING THE RINGS IN MOTION.

When it is necessary to remove the hand from the key, as in the Long Chain, the rings should never be kept quite still, otherwise a keen-sighted spectator might notice the joint in the key.

I remember the words he used when giving me this useful "tip". "Lorsqu'on abandonne la clef, toujours un petit balancement."

SLIDING THE RINGS ON THE ARM.

It is by no means necessary always to place the rings on the table as described in the text. M. Odin sometimes lets them slide to the right or left elbow.

COVERING THE KEY.

Another useful item of advice was the following:—"Never, under any circumstances, leave the key on the table, unless covered by one or more rings." The reason for this is obvious. When performing at close quarters there is always the danger of some person endowed with more than average good sight, noticing the split in the key.

Having exchanged the key for a single ring (Twelfth Passe, Chapter IV), M. Odin used to place the key on top of the two folded chains and then turn over all six rings, thus bringing it underneath. This move can easily be covered by the "patter," viz.:—"That makes six . . ." At this point, raise the rings, show them a moment and replace them on the table, turning them over as you do so. ". . . all separate, and all I have left are these two."

Counting down, the order of the rings was then.—Chain of three—Chain of two—Key.

After unlinking the last two rings, they were added to those on the table and all was in readiness for the "Final Count," the order being :—Single—Single—Chain of three—Chain of two—Key, exactly as at the commencement of the experiment.

FORMING THE "LONG CHAIN."

(The Fifth Passe, Chapter III.)

Readers who study this routine thoroughly will very soon find out a very simple way of obtaining the required arrangement of the rings for the formation of the long chain. They will discover, as I did, that after linking the upper ring of the chain of two into the key (The Second Move) that the obvious thing to do is to bring the lower ring of this chain directly between the first and middle fingers of the right hand, which, with the assistance of the third and little fingers, already hold the loose single ring. That is to say that it is by no means necessary to pass the rings from hand to hand and to turn the loose ring on to the left forearm as described in the Third Move.

The arrangement obtained after bringing the lower ring of the chain of two directly into the required position is, at first sight, almost identical to that secured by the more roundabout method, and, after adding the chain of three (Fourth Move) the long chain may be formed just as successfully—sometimes.

Experiment will show that when the more obvious method is employed the opening out of the long chain causes a twist, or kink, therein, with the result that the ends of the key sometimes spring open and overlap. Needless to say such an accident completely ruins the whole experiment. This does not occur on every occasion, but the danger is always there

This danger might be guarded against by gripping the rings in a different way in order to avoid the kink in the chain and the consequent overlapping of the ends of the key. Another way out of the difficulty might be to use a key with a plug instead of the straight cut. When the opening is cut on the slant the ends cannot overlap. I have used this type of key, but, for the Odin method of Linking and Unlinking, it is not quite so good.

For many years I employed a key with an "open slot," which is very good and extremely easy to handle, but, for obvious reasons, it cannot be used in the Odin Routine. I have no practical experience of the "Plug" and, consequently, I am unable to offer any opinion regarding it.

There is also another method of "Transferring the Unlinked Ring" (Third Move, Fifth Passe, Chapter III) which no doubt the ingenious reader will discover for himself.

INSERTION OF FIRST FINGER.

(Second and Fourth Moves, Fifth Passe, Chapter III)

M. Odin invariably inserted the forefinger of the right hand between the unlinked ring and the key. See the Second Move.

The compiler, however, states that the middle finger should be inserted as well.* A sketch showing the rings held in this way is given in the original French edition.

I have experimented with both methods and after due consideration I have come to the conclusion that the one shown to me by

* . . . auquel est joint le majeur . . ." Page 15, last line, "Les Anneaux Chinois." V.F.

M. Odin is vastly superior, as when it is used it is not at all apparent that the performer is holding the rings in a special order. For this reason I favour its adoption and have made the necessary alterations in the text.

Figs. 9 and 10 depict the rings as held with the first finger only inserted between the key and the other two rings.

FALSE UNLINKING OF A SINGLE RING FROM A SUPPOSED CHAIN OF THREE.

(The Fifth Passe. Chapter IV)

In the sub-section above mentioned the reader is instructed to *hand the single ring and also the chain of two to the audience.* The following is, I think, a rather subtle addition. Retaining the chain I go through the usual motions (knocking one ring against the other and so forth) and just as it appears that I am about to unlink the two rings, I apparently overhear a remark and say: "Why, certainly, if you wish." I immediately hand the chain to someone and then proceed with the next passe.

RECONSTRUCTION OF A FALSE CHAIN OF THREE

(The Ninth Passe or Move, Chapter IV)

The reader is instructed to take the key in the right hand and to link the two single rings into it, one after the other, as he picks them up from the table. I find the following a somewhat easier and better plan.

Having performed the unlinking of the false chain of two (see the Eighth Passe and Footnote) retain the key in the right hand and the single ring in the left, remarking "Here are two . . .", pass the single into the right hand.

With the left hand pick up the three rings from the table, namely, the chain of two, on top of which lies a single ring (See "Disposal of chain of two and single ring," Seventh Passe, Chapter IV). Do this with the fingers underneath, the thumb on top. Turn the back of the left hand towards the audience, bringing the single ring towards your body.

Remark: ". . . and three, that makes five." As you add these words, secretly link the two rings in the right hand.

When addressing the spectator who holds the chain of three, it will be found the simplest thing in the world to link the remaining single ring into the key, this being of course done under cover of the chain of two held in the left hand.

During this move the order of the five rings, counting from your body, backs of both hands towards audience, will be as follows:

- A. In left hand: The single ring it is desired to link into the key.
- B. In right hand: The key and the single ring (already linked therein).

NOTE—The first finger is between this ring and the key.

- C. In left hand: The chain of two. (Closed).

EXCHANGE OF THE KEY FOR A SINGLE RING.

(The Twelfth Passe or Move, Chapter IV)

This, in my opinion, is the only unnatural move in the whole of M. Odin's wonderful routine. To my way of thinking it is not

natural to take back the ring just examined with one's right hand (which holds the other single ring and the key), the left hand being quite free.

This obvious defect may be remedied in the following way. While the spectator is examining the ring he holds, remove a handkerchief from the pocket with the left hand, at the same time secretly unlinking the rings in the right. Wipe both rings, remarking, if you care to do so, that they are rather damp, and, still keeping the handkerchief in the left hand, take back the ring just examined in the right hand as explained in the text, at the same time returning the handkerchief to the pocket with the left hand.

UNLINKING THE LAST TWO RINGS.

(The Thirteenth Passe, Chapter IV)

In his own hands, M. Odin's method of handling two single rings as if they were linked was quite illusive. I know it does not "read well" and, consequently, I fear that the expert will consider it a most unnatural move.

Personally, I think that the genuine chain of two might well be handled in this fashion in the earlier stages of the experiment, whenever a suitable opportunity occurs, for instance in the Second Passe (Chapter III) in the act of handing it to a member of the audience. In this way the spectators would become accustomed to a somewhat unorthodox manner of handling two rings.

Instead of proceeding exactly as described in the text, M. Odin, at one time, used to vary the method slightly, by asking a spectator to catch hold of one of the rings and pull. Pretending to unlink them he would then allow both to be examined.

THE FINAL COUNT.

(The Fourteenth Passe, Chapter IV)

In order to be perfectly sure that the rings are in the correct order for the "Odin Count" (Chapter II) a good plan is to run through them first of all by means of the standard "Wrist Count." The magician can then see if all is well, if not, he will be wise to finish at this point, for it is obvious that the slightest hitch at this, the final stage of the experiment, would be disastrous. See footnote, Fourteenth Passe.

THE STANDARD "WRIST COUNT"

To readers unacquainted with this move the following explanation will be of interest.

Hold the rings in the right hand, fingers underneath, thumb on top, the forearm being parallel to the floor. With the left hand turn all the rings back so that they rest on the right forearm, still holding them with the fingers and thumb of the right hand.

Now raise them, one by one, with the fingers and thumb of the left hand, counting them as you do so, and letting them drop forward and down into their original position. The fingers and thumb of the right hand, holding the rings loosely, act as a sort of hinge.

This is the standard "Wrist Count." (See "The Lincoln Rings," by Namreh.)

ANOTHER "WRIST COUNT"

Mr. Grant Stuart, a prolific contributor to the columns of "The Sphinx," performs this count in a slightly different manner. He writes: "I handle them (the rings) loosely and carelessly, counting them aloud, 'one—eight,' and turn them BACK over my wrist as I count." ("The Sphinx," May 1928, p. 132).

Although I have not tried this in public (and until one has performed a sleight several times before an audience, one is hardly qualified to offer an opinion), this method seems to me to be an improvement on the standard version, and, for that reason I mention it here.

ROPES AND RINGS

Having executed the Final Count, M. Odin used to perform a version of "Les Cordes du Fakir," known to English-speaking magicians as "The Ropes and Rings." In this he employed two pieces of sash cord and the complete set of eight rings. Naturally the effect is too well-known to need description in a work of this nature. It is mentioned for the sake of completeness only.

THE "FARELLI COUNT"

(Based on the "Odin Count," Chapter II)

Important Note.—It is suggested that the reader master all the moves of the "Odin Count" exactly as described in the text, before studying the following paragraphs, otherwise there is but little chance of his understanding my meaning.

In view of the fact that in order to execute the "Odin Change" it is essential to grip the rings to be "switched"—first the chain of three and later the chain of two—with the "claw," it seems to me that it is more natural always to take them in this way and not only when the "Odin Change" is performed.

The following is the manner in which I now count the rings. Whether it be an improvement or not, I leave the reader to judge.

The order of the eight rings is as the "Odin Count."

1. Remove the first ring with the fingers and thumb of the right hand. Count "One."

2. Remove the second ring with the "claw," counting "Two."

3. Transfer the right forefinger to the audience's side of the two rings.

4. Again open the "claw" (the position being exactly as shown in Fig. 3) and seize the chain of three. Count, "Three." Transfer the right forefinger.

5. Remove a single ring with the "claw," counting "Four." Transfer forefinger.

6. Slide the four rings from the right hand on to the right arm, taking care that the single ring is towards the wrist, the chain of three towards the shoulder. This is most important.

7. Seize the single ring with the "claw," counting "Five." Transfer forefinger.

8. Remove the chain of two with the "claw," counting "Six." Transfer forefinger.

9. Seize the single ring with the "claw," counting "Seven." Transfer forefinger.

10. Show the key in the left hand, counting "Eight."

11. Place the chain of two in the left hand beside the key. Retain the single ring in the right hand.

12. Let the four rings slide from the right arm into this hand.

13. Place the five rings, now in the right hand, into the left hand, first of all giving them a half turn to the LEFT. This is a point of the greatest importance.

14. Turn the back of the left hand to the spectators and the order of the rings, counting as usual from the body, will be exactly as in the "Odin Count."

The above instructions have been written for the benefit of readers who have already acquired a perfect knowledge of the "Odin Count." Within the limits of the space at my disposal, I have spared no pains to make them clear.

Note re Move No. 6. The reader is referred to Fig. 19 which depicts three rings held by the right thumb and a single ring on the first finger. No notice should be taken of the last mentioned ring.

In order to secure the correct arrangement of the rings on the arm, proceed as follows:—

(a) Hold the chain of three and the single ring on the thumb in the manner illustrated. Chain towards body.

(b) Move all four fingers of the hand inside the ring, beside the thumb.

(c) Let the rings slide, over the back of the hand, on to the arm.

The chain will then be towards your shoulder, the single ring towards your wrist.

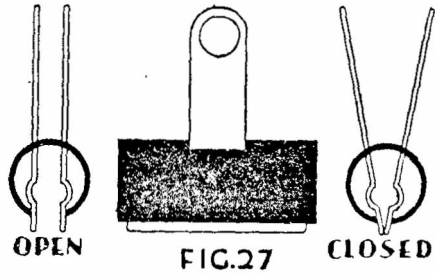
Using an Extra Single Ring. As a rule I replace the key by an extra single ring. After the audience have had an opportunity of examining all eight rings, I exchange the extra ring for the key as explained, in this Appendix, under the caption, "Switching' a Single Ring for a Key."

AN ORIGINAL CLIP.

(For holding the key)

Mr. Namreh (Herman L. Weber) in his work on the rings refers to a clip for holding the key behind the back under the coat. Mr. Ellis Stanyon also mentions a clip for the same purpose ("Magic," January, 1913). Neither of these authorities, however, give any details regarding its construction. The following is a full description of my own clip, for the practicability of which I can vouch, having used it scores of times in public without ever having had the slightest hitch.

It is merely an ordinary clip as sold by stationers for holding documents together.* See Fig. 27. Through both rings of the arms of the clip a five inch length of cord is passed. These ends are tied in a knot thus forming a loop about two inches long. The ideal material to use for this purpose is what is technically known as "Indicator Cord."



It is used by engineers for working indicators on steam engines and may be obtained from ship chandlers. It is tremendously strong, being composed of several strands of the toughest copper or brass wire and is covered with two layers of a sort of webbing. The total diameter of the cord is a trifle over one-sixteenth of an inch.

The loop is bound in the centre with thread and a length of strong twine of the very best quality is passed through the loop. The twine is tied securely to the "V" shaped portion of the braces at the back. This must be done carefully, the twine being passed two or three times through the loop of cord and round the leather of the braces. The exact procedure will of course vary according to the type of braces worn.

The key ring is now inserted, opening down, in the jaws of the clip where it will be held firmly without there being the slightest danger of its making a premature appearance or dropping out before its time. A sharp, not a hard, pull is all that is required to remove it.

The important point to note is that the indicator cord must be passed through both rings of the arms of the clip. A downward pull on the suspended ring causes the loop to draw the arms of the clip towards each other. This movement is very minute, but quite sufficient to open the jaws of the clip. On the other hand, if the cord is passed through one ring only, the clip will not work properly; a most vicious tug would be needed to dislodge the key ring.

It may be as well to mention, at this point, that some little experiment will be required before a suitable clip is found. It must not be too strong, nor too weak; the requisite tension of the spring will only be discovered by a process of trial and error and depends, to a great extent, on the thickness of the linking rings used.

METHOD OF USING THE CLIP.

It may be of interest to the reader to learn how I used to use the clip above described.

All the genuine rings being in possession of the audience I proceeded to take them back in the following order:—

- (a) The chain of two, folded, in the left hand.

* In length, the clip is exactly one and a quarter inches. The spring barrel is half an inch in diameter. V.F.

(b) All the single rings. These I placed with the chain.

(c) The chain of three, not folded, in the right hand.

I then made a turn to the left and under cover of this movement, and some suitable patter about the chain of three, which I held high in the air, I seized the key with the left hand and withdrew it from the clip. Holding all the rings well away from the body I returned to the stage and faced the audience. Letting the chain of three slip to my right elbow, I secretly linked a single ring into the key thus forming a false chain of two which I displayed. The remaining rings (i.e., the real chain of two and the "singles") I allowed to slide to my left elbow. I then proceeded to perform my old routine, not having, at that time, any knowledge of M. Odin's methods.

As already mentioned I used this clip for a considerable time, but having obtained a set of larger rings, about ten inches in diameter, I had to discard it as the shape of the key was distinctly visible through the coat. For smaller rings, however, it is a most useful and practical gadget.*

ADDING THE KEY.

For adding a large sized key, the nickel-plated Tray and the Handkerchief methods, as described by Namreh, are the best that I know, or rather, the best of which I have had any practical experience. By using a handkerchief in conjunction with a tray I have devised a method of exchanging a single ring for a key.

"SWITCHING" A SINGLE RING FOR A KEY.

(As applied to the Odin Routine)

Requirements:

1. A nickel-plated tray, the inside diameter of which is a fraction of an inch greater than that of the rings used.
2. A silk handkerchief.
3. An extra single ring.
4. A table.

Preparation:

The key is placed in the tray where it is concealed from view by the rim. The remaining eight rings are arranged in the following order:—

Single—Single—Chain of three—Chain of two—Extra single. It will be observed that the order is as given in Chapter II, with this difference, that the extra single ring replaces the key.

All eight rings, tied together with the silk handkerchief by means of a loose knot, are placed on the tray, the extra single ring on top. The tray is on the table on performer's left.

Working:

Seize the rings with the left hand, fingers on top, and hold them so that the audience may see through them. With the right hand untie the loose knot, polish the rings with the handkerchief, and then drop it on the tray in which, it will be remembered, the key

* Since writing the above, I have found out that by attaching the cord of the clip to the ring of the two thongs of the braces at the back (instead of to the "V" shaped portion thereof), it is possible effectively to conceal a large key. The jaws of the clip should be on a level with the waist-band of the trousers, the key being hidden by the tails of the coat. V.F.

is hidden.

Perform the Odin Count (Chapter II) and the First Passe, namely, the false linking of three rings, described in Chapter III. Having done this, the order of the five rings, counting from your body, will be:—

Single—Single—Chain of two—Extra Single.

Hand the chain of three to a spectator. Take the folded chain of two and one single ring in the right hand. Allow the two remaining rings to slide on to your left arm.

Now execute the Second Passe (false linking of chain of two) as explained in the text. Give this chain to a spectator and distribute the three remaining single rings to different members of the audience.

Your hands are now empty, the spectators being in possession of all eight rings.

Again call attention to the number of rings: "Three rings linked together, two rings linked together, that is five. Three separate rings, that makes eight in all."

After a few people have had an opportunity of inspecting the rings, take back the three separate ones in the left hand and the open chain of two in the right.

Standing with the table on your left, remark: "I shall now explain exactly 'how it's done.' You may have noticed that before I started the experiment I was careful to rub the rings with this silk handkerchief." As you say these words, lay the three single rings on the tray, with the left hand, with the same hand seizing the handkerchief and pulling it up through the centre of the rings. Let the open chain of two slide on to the right arm. Display the handkerchief with both hands, observing: "That is the secret. All one has to do is to rub the rings with this. Watch!"

Holding the handkerchief in the right hand, pick up, with the left, the three rings from the tray, and with them the key. The latter should be towards the audience. Be careful to hold all four rings close together so that it will be impossible for the audience to detect the presence of an extra ring. Now rub the four rings with the handkerchief, saying: "That is all that is required."

Replace the rings on the tray, with the left hand, the key on top of the others, at the same time allowing the open chain of two to slip down into the right hand which holds the handkerchief. Having polished the chain, put the handkerchief on the tray, with the left hand. Immediately remove, with the same hand, the key and two of the single rings. The extra single ring remains in the tray. The right hand still holds the chain.

Now give this chain, still open, to a spectator, and you will be ready to proceed with the next stage of the routine, namely, the forming of a false chain of two. (The Third Passe, Chapter III).

There is but little danger of the spectators noticing that, at one stage of the "move" you hold four rings instead of three, provided that you exercise proper care and avoid holding them "edgewise" to the audience. A little practice will enable you to accomplish this.

Should you feel at all nervous regarding this point, or should you be performing in a drawing-room, it would no doubt be advisable to add the closed chain of two to the three single rings, and to hold the open chain of three in the right hand instead of the chain of two. For stage work, however, such a precaution would be unnecessary.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, this is the only method ever described in print for the actual substitution of a single ring for a key. The advantage claimed is that all eight rings may be genuinely counted and then handed for examination. After the "switch" has been performed, the rings may be counted as before.

AN ORIGINAL "SUCKER GAG"

(A Single Ring is suspected to be prepared)

With a three-cornered file make a slight mark round one of the single rings so that it will appear that there is a secret opening in it. This ring should be retained in the hand after all the other rings have been passed to the audience, and in all probability, someone will ask to be allowed to inspect it.

Here is an amusing addition. While your victim is examining the supposed secret joint, remove a magnifying-glass from your pocket and hand it to him. This invariably causes laughter provided that one polishes the lens carefully with a handkerchief before giving the glass to the spectator. If one omits this little but extremely important detail, the persons at the back of the hall, or theatre, will not know what has been handed to the member of the audience and, consequently, much of the effect will be lost. This little comedy could be acted in an off-hand way, and it greatly detracts from the effect to call particular attention to the magnifying-glass by naming it. Namreh mentions this joke in his manuscript.

"THE JOCKEY" OR "SEE-SAW" — STANDARD METHOD.

(Formed with the chain of two and the key)

I presume that every devotee of the rings will understand what is meant by the Jockey or See-Saw, as it is sometimes called.

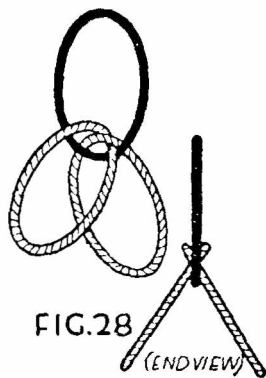
To form this figure, proceed as follows:—

Holding the key in the right hand, link therein the upper ring of the chain of two, thus forming a chain of three. Seize with the left hand that part of the centre ring of this chain which is towards your body. Turn it upside down and pass it through the opening of the key, taking care that it falls towards your body, not towards the audience. The chain of two is now suspended by the key, as shown in Fig. 28.

For complete descriptions the reader is referred to standard works. I mention this move here merely as an introduction to my original version in which no key is used.

ORIGINAL "JOCKEY" OR "SEE-SAW"

(Formed with the chain of two and a single ring)



For this you will require a single ring, slightly larger than the others. It must be just large enough to allow another ring to pass through it fairly easily.

To Connect: Take the large ring in the right hand and the chain of two, folded, in the left, holding them so that the audience may see through them. Place the chain, still folded, in the right hand, the chain being towards your body, the large ring towards the spectators. The fingers of the right hand must support all three rings.

With the left hand seize the rings at the lower end, the palm of this hand being up. Now, with the fingers and thumbs of both hands, push one of the rings of the chain completely through the large ring. Release the chain of two, but retain hold of the large ring in the right hand and the Jockey will be automatically formed as illustrated in Fig. 29.

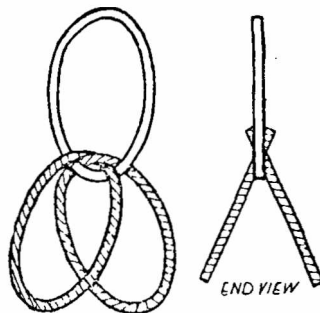


FIG 29

To Disconnect: Hold the large ring in the right hand in such a way that the audience may see through it. With the left hand raise the ring of the chain of two, which is towards the spectators, and fold it up against the large ring.

With the fingers and thumbs of both hands push this ring towards your body and completely through the large ring. Raise the remaining ring of the chain of two and hold all three rings with the right hand.

The order of the rings in your right hand, counting from your body, should now be:—

The chain of two: still folded.

The large ring: disconnected from the chain.

With the left hand seize all three rings, the back of the hand towards the ceiling. With the fingers and thumb of the right hand take hold of one of the rings of the chain of two and raise it vertically in the air, at the same time slightly lowering the left hand. With the fingers and thumb of the left hand keep the large ring in position and it will appear as if you held a chain of three rings after the manner depicted in Fig. 17. This sketch however, illustrates four rings.

Now apparently pluck off the large ring from the lower end of the chain and hand the latter to a spectator. After a slight pause, the large ring may then be passed to the audience.

As the large ring is "plucked off," cause one of the rings of the chain of two to strike against the other, making as much noise as possible. This is important.

It is advisable that the audience have an opportunity of handling the chain of two, but not the large ring, before the Jockey is formed. In this way the knowing ones will be led to suspect the use of a key ring.

Do not hand the large ring to the person to whom you have given the chain of two. He might start to experiment and find out that it is possible to push the rings of the chain of two through the large ring. There is, of course, very little danger of this, but an experienced performer never takes unnecessary risks.

If you do not wish to go to the trouble and expense of having a large ring specially made, you may remove a small section of one of the rings of the chain of two by means of a hack-saw, and then get the ends of this severed ring re-brazed. The exact size of the section to be removed will depend on the thickness of the rings used.

This move may be combined with the two previous items, namely, the "Switch" and the "Sucker Gag."

NOTES ON A NEW PRINCIPLE.

I invented the principle of the large ring—if such a simple thing may be called an invention—as long ago as 1923. The move above described has been performed all over the world, and, using it in conjunction with my "Sucker Gag" and my clip, I have puzzled many experts with it. I am convinced that not one of them ever had the faintest idea of the real means employed, but imagined that I used a wonderfully made mechanical key.

Believing that I had a monopoly of the idea, I guarded the secret most carefully and never imparted it to my confrères. Some time ago, however, Mr. Proudlock, of the Magician's Club, London, happened to mention this principle in the course of conversation. At that time, I was certainly surprised to learn that it was known to others, as I had studied practically everything ever written on the subject without finding any reference to it. When one considers the matter and reflects on the enormous amount of thought that had been given to this effect by expert magicians in Europe and America, it is really astonishing that such a perfect and obvious method should have remained undiscovered until within comparatively recent times. Indeed, one would think that this simple connecting device should have suggested itself to every conjurer who ever experimented with a set of rings and that it should have become common property a generation ago!

Mr. Proudlock informed me that this method was used by Mr. John Northern Hilliard, the editor of Down's "Art of Magic," and had been described in Thayer's "Magical Bulletin."

It would be possible to devise a complete routine on this principle and form a complete chain of eight or more rings without the use of any key. Having already experimented in this direction, I intended to publish a small pamphlet on the subject, but as my little move blends very well with the Odin routine, I have decided to include it in this Appendix, and should any "Master Methods," with this idea as their basis, be evolved, I shall study them with

much interest.*

TRUTH AND PATTERN.

Although truth may be "a virtue always to be cultivated," not even the most exacting person expects the magician, in view of the very nature of his calling, to attain a George Washington standard of truthfulness. It will always be possible to reproach him with the "suggestio falsi" and especially with the "suppresio veri," but between such "mental restrictions" (if the term may be applied) and deliberate falsehood there is an immeasurable distance.

It was the late Mr. Owen Clark who first pointed out to me the inadvisability of a magical entertainer telling untruths on the stage. It is not only quite unnecessary to do so, but also unwise, inartistic and, at times, actually dangerous.

Let me give an illustration of what I mean. The first time a certain magician attempted to perform the Odin Count in public he met with a slight mishap in "switching" the two single rings for the chain of three. Probably through nervousness due to insufficient rehearsal, one of the rings of the chain of two slipped from his fingers, with the result it at once became apparent to everyone that some of the rings were linked. Fortunately for him, little, if any, harm was done, as he had not stated that the rings were separate. He had merely said that he held eight rings, which was perfectly true. Being an experienced performer, he did not lose his head, but immediately handed the chain of two to a spectator and proceeded with the effect. Nobody was any the wiser that such was not his original intention, or that an accident had occurred.

There will be no need to point out to the reader that had the artist in question been less veracious and prefaced the experiment with a remark that the rings were "all separate," he would have been put down by everyone as a "bungler" and unmasked before the whole company as a prevaricator, and, what is far worse, an exceedingly clumsy one! The moral of this little story is that virtue is its own reward.

It is not only when the magician meets with an accident, whether due to his own carelessness or to forces beyond his control, that

* Since the above paragraphs were written, Mr. Hilliard's manuscript (of which mention is made in Appendix III) and Vol. 8 of the "Magic Wand" have come into my possession. On page 73 (June, 1919) of this magazine, a "large ring" move is explained by Walter B. Gibson.

Mr. Gibson's plan is to have both rings of the "chain of two" a trifle larger than the remaining rings of the set. One of the end rings of the "chain of three" is pushed through one of these large rings. The other end ring of the "chain of three" is linked into the key. The two single rings are also linked therein, thus forming a "long chain" of eight rings.

In view of the fact that a "chain of eight" can be formed without any large rings, there does not appear to be any great advantage in this arrangement. It seems to me that in order to obtain the full effect possible out of the large ring principle, the key must not be used in conjunction therewith. In this way all rings may be handed for examination immediately after they have been disconnected. I have just had proof of how unwise it is to claim originality for anything in Magic, but at the present time of writing (July, 1931), I have never heard of any magician other than myself having used a large ring without, in some fashion or other, employing a key as well. V.F.

there is a danger of his "fibs" being found out. In the course of performances given in a circle of friends and acquaintances (who sometimes consider themselves privileged to be obnoxious) the performer always runs the risk of being challenged by some disagreeable person desirous of airing his slight knowledge of conjuring. It will be obvious that the wizard will be in a much stronger position if he refrain from stating, at the outset, that the various pieces of apparatus he uses are "quite ordinary." If the worst comes to the worst and one of his secrets is exposed, he can always point out that he made no claim that the "egg-bag," or whatever it may be, was unprepared.

Of course, I know that, in theory, should the performer possess a strong, and at the same time a pleasing, personality, nothing of this sort will ever happen. Nevertheless, had one the wish, a few stories could be told regarding the awkward predicaments in which some excellent entertainers have found themselves, but as no useful purpose would be served thereby, these tales will be unrecorded.

In entertainments of a public nature, on the other hand, when a magician meets with trouble of this sort it is usually traceable to his own aggressiveness, or want of tact, or to his having been unfortunate enough to run up against some individual who has been looking "upon the wine when it was red."

Another thing to bear in mind is that the average audience, even one composed of young children, is naturally suspicious of the magician. It follows, therefore, that they are apt to doubt the truth of his statements. The mere fact that he says an article is unprepared, or that some rings are separate, is sufficient to raise a doubt (possibly sub-conscious) in their minds on that point.

Many otherwise clever conjurers seem utterly incapable of introducing a piece of special apparatus without stating that it is quite unprepared. Some even go so far as to say "not faked."

The peculiar thing about the patter of such performers is that when they do happen to handle an article of an entirely innocent nature they do not draw any particular attention to it or say that it is ordinary or without preparation.

One must not conclude, from the foregoing remarks, that the magician should refrain from devising suitable bits of appropriate fiction to serve as introduction to his effects, or from giving pseudo-scientific explanations of his marvels. On the contrary, this type of presentation is quite legitimate and very entertaining. Mr. David Devant used it freely and with great success.

For instance, in presenting "Biff," the Vanishing Motor Cycle, the disappearance was attributed to the "D.D. Rays"; in the Production of Flowers, the "Ultra-Violet Rays" were responsible; while the motive power which caused the ball to run up the plank used to be a "Jimmy o' Goblin," but, in latter years, a "Golly Wog" invariably deputised. I well remember how conscientious the Master used to be, often remarking, as a prelude to some fanciful explanation: "I want you to imagine that . . ."

From 1903 until shortly before his retirement from the stage I followed, with the keenest interest, the work of this great magician, assisting, whenever possible, at his public performances (sometimes travelling long distances to do so), and I cannot recall his ever having said that a piece of apparatus was unprepared, even when such was actually the case. When considered necessary, he would pass articles for examination, or merely give them to someone to hold. Needless to add, I never heard him tell his hearers that he had nothing "palmed" in his hand, or talk about the absence of hidden mechanism.

In his "Boy, Girl and Eggs," the bowler was introduced in an off-hand, almost a careless, way, and referred to as an "old hat"—never was it an "empty hat" or an "unprepared" one. The excuse given for its use was that it would be required as "a sort of dark-room" to develop some bubbles which were supposed to be floating about. The strip of oilcloth was called a "Magic Carpet," his little assistants being assured that it was an essential item in the feat about to be performed.

I mention these masterpieces of Mr. Devant's and give a few short extracts from his patter (or "lines" as he is wont to call them in order to prove to the reader that I cannot be far wrong when I state that the artistic performer should avoid all "terminological inexactitudes" regarding his paraphernalia and his actions, and, further, that this should not prevent him from inventing as many "fairy tales" as he likes to serve as introduction to his experiments, assuming that this type of presentation suits his particular style.

To return to the subject of the Linking Rings, I do not think that it is wise or artistic to say that they have no openings, or that they are separate, even after having unlinked them. The audience should get this impression, but it should be conveyed to them by suggestion and proved by ocular demonstration.

APPENDIX II.

A CHUNG LING SOO METHOD

RINGS HANDED SINGLY FOR EXAMINATION.

When I was in Paris in 1924 some conjurers whom I happened to meet assured me that the late Chung Ling Soo, when performing in that city, used to throw out each ring separately for examination and then formed a long chain as in the standard effect. Having on innumerable occasions, in other countries, witnessed Soo's beautiful presentation (upon which, by the way, my own routine was based), I not unnaturally concluded that my informants had been deceived by the wonderful misdirection of that master magician.*

Considering what I had been told as rather a good joke and a striking example of how even professionals may be misled by a first class showman, I laughingly recounted the story to M. Odin. To my great surprise, he replied: "C'est vrai" (It is true). As may be imagined, I pressed him for details. Without the slightest hesitation, he immediately made a rough sketch, from which Fig. 30 has been drawn.

Examination of this illustration will show that the end rings are not really linked into the others, but are held in position by the hands. Three keys are used, each of which is linked into two rings. A single ring hangs from each key.

M. Odin explained that nine rings were thrown out for examination and that the three keys were added by the assistants. He was careful to point out that all the keys were not added by the same attendant.

The chain was finally unlinked, but, naturally, the rings were not again passed for examination.

I have mentioned this matter to a number of experienced English magicians, among them the late Mr. Owen Clark, an intimate friend of Chung Ling Soo's. Without exception, they were just as incredulous as I myself had been.

It is absolutely inconceivable that M. Odin (a greater master of the rings than even Soo himself) could have been mistaken in a matter concerning his own speciality. My opinion is that Soo did use this method, in Paris, at least at some of his performances, and

* For a description of most of these moves, the reader is referred to "Magic," January and February, 1913. V.F.

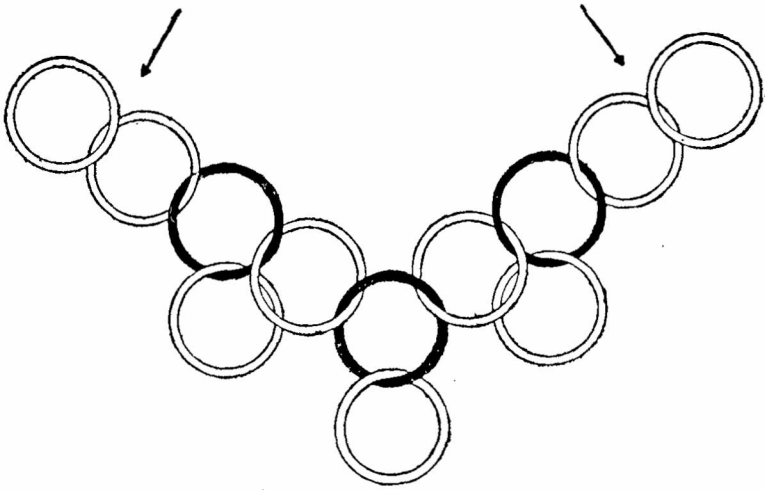


FIG. 30

that no doubt, realising that no useful purpose was served by "conjuring for conjurers," he discarded it in favour of his old routine, which was, in its own way, as perfect as it is possible for a feat of magic to be.

There was also, it seems to me, a grave risk of the addition of three extra rings being noticed by an observant spectator. This may be the real reason Soo returned to his old method.

It seems to me that a better plan would be to give twelve rings for examination instead of nine, and then (either before or after adding the keys) secretly to get rid of three of them. This would not be so simple as it may appear at first sight and would take a good deal of working out.

Another Parisian magician, whose name I cannot recall, suggested that special rings were used—rings which could be examined by the audience without the secret openings being discovered. This performer, however, was not a "ring expert," and I prefer the explanation just given.

Of course, for years past it has been common knowledge that such mechanical keys exist, but I do not think that they are practical. A new type has recently been put on the market. It will stand a fair amount of inspection, but it is extremely dangerous to handle, the edges of the opening being as sharp as razor blades.

Believing that this short description of one of Chung Ling Soo's methods will be of some interest to the magical student, I put it on record in this little volume concerning Monsieur Claudius Odin's most brilliant handling of the ever-green

FINAL NOTES

Since the completion of the translation of Monsieur Odin's little book and the writing of Appendices I and II, three manuscripts dealing with the subject have been published in America. One of them is by Mr. Dariel Fitzkee; the others are by William Larsen and the late T. Page Wright. Mr. Hilliard's pamphlet has also come into my possession.

A few notes regarding these and other works may be of interest.

"THE MASTER METHOD OF PRESENTING THE CHINESE LINKING RINGS." (Hilliard).

A series of articles which originally appeared in "The Magical Bulletin" in 1924 and which have since been re-issued in typescript form. Mr. Hilliard's ingenious methods in connection with the large ring principle are fully and clearly described. All interested in this branch of the subject will be well advised to add a copy to their library. See also under the heading "The Hilliard Penetration" in this Appendix.

"LINKING RING MANIPULATION." (Fitzkee).

Published in 1930. I honestly consider this treatise, although somewhat hastily written, to be one of the very best yet produced, and I can recommend it with every confidence to anyone who may wish to devise an original routine based on the latest subtleties in Ring Manipulation. To such students it is almost indispensable.

"METHOD OF PERFORMING THE LINKING RINGS WITHOUT A KEY." (Larsen and Wright).

Published in 1930. Up to the present time of writing this is the only method of performing the Linking Rings without a key ever published. Of interest to enthusiasts and collectors.

"PATTER AND PRESENTATION FOR THE LINKING RINGS." (Larsen and Wright).

Published in 1930. Contains two methods of presentation—one of them extremely good. A few valuable "tips" for working. Recommended.

Other excellent works are the following:—

LESSON 47 OF THE "TARBELL COURSE."

This lesson was posted to students in 1928. One of the best works ever written on the subject. Mr. Eugene Laurant's brilliant routine very fully described and profusely illustrated. Much valuable material.

"LINCOLN RINGS." (Namreh).

First published about 1923. A standard work. Describes practically every known "Fancy Figure." Indispensable to all students. A veritable mine of priceless information.

"FOR MAGICIANS ONLY." (Charles Waller).

Published in 1923. Contains a beautiful method of presentation and some good moves. Recommended by all authorities.

A list of other works dealing with the subject will be found at the end of this volume. Many of them are of real value, but space will not admit of the insertion of any information regarding them.

THE " FITZKEE COUNT."

By means of this method of counting the performer makes it appear to the audience that the eight rings are separate. The basic idea is that the two single rings are of such a size as to pass easily through the chain of two and the chain of three. It is absolutely essential that they slip through without the slightest pressure being applied. It seems to me that the following version of Mr. Fitzkee's method would blend very well with the Odin Routine and form a substitute for the Odin Count. It is certainly easier of execution. I have worked it out in experiment, but as I have not yet had an opportunity of performing it in public, my opinion as to its practicability cannot carry much weight.

Holding the Rings.

Exactly as in Monsieur Odin's method, except that the rings are not held so that the audience may see through them. They are held "edgewise" to the spectators. That is to say, that a person standing on the performer's right, or left, could see through them.

Order of the Rings.

Again exactly as in the Odin Routine. Counting from the performer's right (not, in this case, from his body), the order of the rings in the left hand is: Small single—Small single—Chain of three—Chain of two—Key.

Counting the First Four Rings.

1. Holding the rings as above explained, remove, with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, the first small ring. Move the hand to the right, keeping the ring edgewise to the audience. Count "One."

2. In the same way remove the second small ring, counting "Two."

3. When appearing to take a third ring, allow the two small rings to slide through the chain of three. Remove this chain, with the right hand, counting "Three."

The position is now as follows:—

In right hand: Chain of three, held edgewise to audience.

In left hand (counting from your right): Small—Small—Chain of two—Key; all held edgewise to spectators.

4. With right hand remove a small single from left hand. Count "Four."

Placing the Rings on Table.

Place the four rings which you hold in the right hand on the table: the small ring on top of the chain of three.

Counting the Second Set of Four Rings.

A. With the right hand remove the small ring from the left hand, counting "One."

B. When appearing to take a second ring, allow the small ring, held in the right hand, to slip through the chain of two.

Remove this chain, counting "Two."

C. Remove the small ring from the left hand and count "Three."

D. Display the key in the left hand, and, without passing it to the right hand, say, "and this one makes four."

Picking up the Rings from the Table.

Exactly as described, under the above heading, in Chapter II, to which the reader is referred.

When the rings have been picked up, their order should be, counting from your body (not from your right, as before)—Small—Small—Chain of three—Chain of two—Key.

You are now ready to proceed with "The First Passe," Chapter III.

Caution.—When handling the rings, the small ones have a tendency to slip through the "closed" chains. For obvious reasons, care must be taken to avoid this.

Size and Thickness of the Rings Used.

Mr. Fitzkee states that the rings which he uses are twelve inches across, but he does not give their thickness or the exact dimensions of the small rings.

Those with which I have been experimenting have an external diameter of $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches and are one-quarter of an inch thick. In order to obtain smoothness in working, I find it necessary to use small rings of $8\frac{15}{16}$ ths or $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches in outside diameter.

Unfortunately, the difference in size between these and the standard rings is rather noticeable. If a large ring is also used—as in Mr. Fitzkee's own routine—I fear that the difference between it and the small rings could hardly pass unobserved by the audience. In all probability, however, when using rings of about a foot in diameter, the difference between the three sizes (the regular, the small and the large) will be undetectable, or very nearly so.

Should I decide to experiment further along these lines, I may possibly announce the result of my "researches" in the columns of the *Magical Press*. It should not be forgotten that the greater the thickness of the metal, the greater will be the difference in diameter between the various rings. Hence, it follows that the metal must not be of too heavy a gauge.

Notes.—1. Mr. Fitzkee gives a version of his "count," using one small ring instead of two. He says that the latter is vastly superior, a statement with which I agree.

2. For a full explanation of the actual methods used by Mr. Fitzkee the reader should consult the originator's own manuscript. The version above described has been devised to blend with the *Odin Routine*.

THE LAURANT "CRASH."

This move, or series of moves, is very well described in Lesson 47 of the *Tarbell Course* and also in Mr. Dariel Fitzkee's manuscript. I give the following explanation of it for the benefit of readers unacquainted with these works.

A number of single unprepared rings and a key with an open slot are required. I understand that the width of the gap in the key used by Mr. Laurant is about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch, the diameter of the rings being 8 inches.

Four rings having been distributed to as many members of the audience, each one is instructed to hold his ring with both hands, one above the other, "edge on" towards the performer, the lower edges resting against their knees. The rings are held in such a way that anyone sitting beside a spectator in possession of a ring would be able to see through it, whereas the conjurer, facing the audience, would get an "end view" of it only.

The magician now advances, gripping the key with both hands, their position being almost identical to that adopted when holding the wheel of a motor-car. The grip should not be too firm. The ring should be held lightly, yet securely, as an expert motor driver holds a wheel. The performer's left hand conceals the slot.

A spectator is asked to touch this ring at any point he may fancy. In all probability he will touch the side which is towards him. If otherwise, the conjurer reverses the key, bringing the chosen side to the front. With the forefinger of the right hand he points to the spot touched by the spectator and states that he will link each of the four separate rings into the one he is holding, at the selected point.

Approaching a spectator who is holding a ring against his knee, as above explained, he removes his right forefinger from the selected spot and grasps the key as at first. Stating that he will merely touch the spectator's ring, he places the chosen point on the key against the ring held by the person in question.

Instructing this man to grip his ring firmly, he raises the key a trifle, tilting it slightly to the right (that is to say, that the left side of the key is raised a little higher than the right), and brings it down sharply, at an angle of 45 degrees, on top of the spectator's ring.

The force of the blow drives the spectator's ring to the left (to the "prompt" side, to use a stage term) and through the opening of the key. The fingers of the left hand open, for a fraction of a second, to allow the ring to pass through the slot in the key. As the man is holding his ring very tightly, it will immediately spring back to its original position, the audience, and the voluntary assistant himself for that matter, being quite unaware of the fact that the ring has moved while in his hands. The effect is that the ring has penetrated the key ring at the chosen point.

As soon as this is done, the magician thrusts his right hand through the spectator's ring and carries it away on his right wrist. He repeats this move three times, collecting rings on his left and right wrists alternately and proceeds with his routine, using the usual chain of two and chain of three.

Referring to the Laurant Crash, Dr. Tarbell writes: "This is a very important move, and it alone is worth many dollars to the magician performing linking rings. Practise it well until you

absolutely master it. You will be well repaid for your time and effort."

Mr. Fitzkee tells us that "it is one of the finest moves ever devised, and probably the most deceptive of all."

Experience has taught me that it is often inadvisable to give an opinion regarding the value of any particular "move" until one has seen it demonstrated by the originator himself. Personally, I have never had an opportunity of witnessing Mr. Laurant's splendid routine, of which all authorities speak so highly, but I trust that this is a pleasure in store.

I must not omit to point out that before adding the key, Mr. Laurant gives all the rings for thorough examination. The key he forces on a spectator, and, by means of a very subtle manoeuvre, he apparently proves that this ring is unprepared. These moves are not mentioned by Mr. Fitzkee in his description of the "Crash."

THE HILLIARD PENETRATION.

Like my "Jockey," this move depends on the large ring principle of which Mr. J. N. Hilliard is in all probability the original inventor. Of course, as he himself points out, it may have been discovered previously by other magicians, although never disclosed by them. He states that the idea first occurred to him in 1897 and that he revealed the secret to less than half a dozen other performers.

Size of Rings.—In his manuscript Mr. Fitzkee also describes the move under consideration and states that the extra ring must be large enough to pass easily over the regular rings. The originator, however, gives fuller details. The outside diameter of the ordinary rings is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches and the inside diameter of the large ring is about the same. The thickness of the metal is $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch. The outside diameter of the large ring is 9 inches.

It appears that in order to obtain perfect results, the large ring must be so adjusted that one of the small rings may nest comfortably therein, but without dropping through by its own weight. It should not fit so tightly that any appreciable strength will be needed to force it through. Mr. Hilliard writes: "My own rings are so accurately fashioned that the amount of force used to press a small ring through the large one would not crush the most delicate bird's egg. A set of rings to conform to these requirements must be wrought out of the best grade material and the workmanship must be flawlessly accurate."

Mr. Hilliard does not state definitely of what metal his rings are made, although one would gather, from a certain remark in his manuscript, that they are of steel.

Working.—The key is held in (say) the right hand, the upper ring of the chain of three linked therein. Fig. 18 illustrates the position, except that this sketch shows three rings only. The large ring is taken in the left hand and knocked a few times against the lowest ring of the "false chain of four," which is caused to swing backwards and forwards. The bottom ring is allowed to slip into

the large ring and worked up the chain towards the key into which it is then linked.

Should the performer be using a closed joint, he may release the key and display the "false chain of five" thus formed, gripping it, with the left hand, by the large ring now at the upper end.

As the large ring is caused to ascend the chain, the latter should be made to twist continually, first towards the body and then away from it.

This twisting motion must not be omitted or it will be apparent to all that the large ring merely passes over the chain and not through each link.

Disconnecting.—The large ring is then secretly unlinked and passed slowly down the chain and off at the lower end. As the large ring passes down, the four rings are caused to twist as above described.

Note.—Space will not admit of a full and complete explanation of this and subsequent "Hilliard Moves," for which readers are referred to the inventor's own manuscript.

HILLIARD'S "JUMPING RING."

This is also performed with a "false chain of four" and a large ring. This ring is allowed to slide on to the right forearm. The key is held in the right hand, the fourth ring in the left, the chain being thus extended in front of the body like a mammoth watch-guard.

Both hands are now raised high above the head, allowing the extra ring to slide from the right forearm to the shoulder.

The arms are now brought suddenly downwards—and slightly towards the right—thereby "shooting" the large ring completely over the key on to the chain. The extra ring now hangs between the key and the next ring of the "false chain of four." The audience will imagine that it is actually linked therein.

This up and down movement is repeated three times, causing the large ring to jump from link to link and finally off on to the left wrist.

The arms are again raised, allowing the extra ring to slip downwards to the left shoulder.

Notes.—(a) I am of opinion that it is advisable to hold the chain in such a way that the audience may see through the large ring. It will then appear to be linked therein. If an "end view" of it be obtained, an observant spectator might notice that it is not really linked into the other rings. A few seconds spent in experimenting with the rings should make my meaning perfectly clear.

(b) It occurs to me that the "Jumping Ring" might be performed with the genuine chain of three instead of the "false chain" of four. It would then be possible immediately to pass all the rings for examination, care of course being taken to hand the chain of three to a spectator seated at some distance from the one to whom the large ring has been given.

THE HILLIARD "KNOT" OR "TUG-OF-WAR"

In Mr. Hilliard's own routine this move follows the one just described.

The hands are again jerked downwards, propelling the large ring from the left shoulder over the ring held in the left hand. (As a matter of fact Mr. Hilliard holds the key in the left hand, but this is a mere detail).

Once more the hands are raised and lowered, causing the extra ring to jump to the centre of the chain.

The position is then as follows:—

In right hand: The key.

In left hand: The left hand ring of the false chain of four.

The large ring: At, or rather, over, the junction of the two middle rings of the chain.

The left hand ring is now secretly linked into the key, but the performer does not let go of either of these rings.

The appearance is that all five rings are tied in a complicated knot.

A spectator is requested to take hold of the bottom ring of the "knot," namely the large ring, and to try to pull it off. A "Tug-of-War" is then engaged in between this individual and the magician. While this contest is taking place the conjurer secretly unlinks the left hand ring from the key.

Without giving warning of what he is about to do, the performer suddenly releases the left hand ring and pulls the chain of four—by means of the key—completely through the large ring held by the spectator.

THE MELTING RINGS

These notes on the large principle would be incomplete without mention of this move of which—although he makes no definite claim—I believe Mr. Fitzkee to be the originator. It is not described in the Hilliard pamphlet.

The key is held in the right hand, the chain of three hanging therefrom. The large ring is also linked into the key. Fig. 15 gives a good idea of the position of affairs. (One must assume that the ring to which the arrow-head is pointing is the large ring and that it is hanging from the key, on a level with the uppermost ring of a chain of three, not of two, as illustrated).

The bottom ring of the chain is seized with the left hand and passed through the large ring, pulling with it the remaining rings of the chain. The key may be released by the right hand and the "false chain of five" displayed in the left. The order of the rings, counting from the top, will be:—

Chain of three—Key (closed joint)—Large ring.

When properly performed a perfect illusion of rings melting through each other is produced.

ADDING 12-INCH KEY FROM THE BODY

Mr. Fitzkee fastens a twelve-inch key to the right side of the vest, by means of a clip, in such a way that it lies on the flat part of the hip. The lower edge of this ring is about two inches above the lower edge of the dinner-jacket, known in America, I under-

stand, as a "tuxedo." The originator of the move does not explain what type of clip he uses, but I have experimented with my own clip, with fairly satisfactory results. (See "An Original Clip," Appendix I.)

An obvious defect in the method is the somewhat unorthodox manner in which the rings, to which the key is to be added, must be held in the right hand. As the "copy" is ready for the printer, I regret that it is now too late to get a block made to illustrate my meaning, but I shall do my best to explain.

The natural way to carry a "bunch" of rings is to treat them as if they formed the handle of a fairly large and heavy basket. The arm being held perfectly straight, the lower edge of the rings would be near the performer's knees. This is not the way they are held in this instance. Assuming one were carrying a small drawing-board, made of some heavy wood, and about 20 inches square, one would hold it between the body and the arm, the latter being held perfectly straight, the fingers curling round the lower edge, the knuckles of the hand against the thigh. It is after this fashion that the rings must be carried, the lower edges being gripped by the fingers, the upper edges being near the elbow joint.

Holding some rings, say, the "closed" chain of three and the two single rings, as above explained, let the fingers slip under the edge of the coat and grip the key. Under cover of a turn of the body, when taking back the chain of two, pull the key from the clip. Mr. Fitzkee writes that the "load" is "absolutely undetectable if you are careful not to do any preliminary fumbling," and adds, "It is NOT necessary to fumble, as the ring is right there waiting for you, if you have placed it right."

"WELLING" A KEY

This novel idea is due to the ingenuity of Messrs. Larsen and Wright. In the table the magician has a special well. After the first part of his routine, he gets rid of the key by means of the well and then gives the remainder of the rings for examination. Prior to the performance a silk handkerchief is spread out inside a wire letter basket. On this a duplicate key is placed. A second "silk" of the same pattern conceals the key. The rings having been returned to the performer are laid in the basket. Both handkerchiefs are then pulled up through the centre of the rings, thus adding the duplicate key. (Compare with note on "Switching a Single Ring for a Key," Appendix I.)

THE LATEST "SUBTLETY"

Here is my latest subtlety in connection with actual presentation. Before the rings are introduced they are heated slightly by placing them on a radiator, or better still, in front of a good fire.

Should any spectator mention the fact that the rings are warm, request him not to say anything about it, or pretend not to overhear his remark. He will thus be led to believe that he has discovered part of your secret.

LINKING RINGS WITHOUT A KEY

Messrs. Larsen and Wright describe in their manuscript, "The L. and W. Method of Performing the Linking Rings without a Key,"

a series of moves using a set of eight rings (a chain of three, a chain of two and three single rings).

The reader is instructed by the authors to add a key and with it "launch into a spectacular finish."

It would seem that a really effective and convincing routine, without the use of a key at any stage in the experiment, has yet to be published. The following suggestion may be of interest to the enthusiastic student of the rings.

Suggested Method.

- A. Form the "Jockey," Fig. 29.
- B. Through the large ring pass one of the end rings of the chain of three, thus forming a chain of six.
- C. To complete the chain of eight: Hold one of the single rings against the upper ring of the chain of three. Hold the remaining single ring against one of the rings of the chain of two, Fig. 30.
- D. Disconnect and pass all rings for examination.

Important Note.—This is merely a suggestion which is offered for what it may be worth. I am fully aware that the method, in its present state, could not be performed with any degree of smoothness. I am convinced, however, that the idea has great possibilities.

THE IDEAL ROUTINE.

During the last few years great strides have undoubtedly been made in the presentation of the Linking Rings, but I do not think that the effect will be absolutely perfect until someone invents a perfect mechanical key, or else a method of exchanging a single ring for a key, without approaching a table or other piece of furniture.

Here is my notion of the ideal routine:—

Rings genuinely counted. (Odin or any other good method).

"False" linking of both chains.

All rings given for examination.

Chain of eight formed by means of the large ring principle.

Chain disconnected and all rings again passed for inspection.

Rings collected.

Key added. ("Body" method).

One of the single rings disposed of.

Rings again genuinely counted.

Long chain formed. (Odin Routine).

Unlinking of all rings. (Odin Routine).

Of course, one could add a key by means of one of the "body" methods, and then, with one's back to the audience, it would be a comparatively easy matter to "pocket" a single ring, but that would be very bad magic.

No doubt one day some practical means will be devised, and it may be safely said that the magician who will invent a thoroughly workable and really artistic method will be a man of outstanding ability, a Magical Genius—or perhaps not. Quite conceivably, the fresh eye of a novice may solve a problem that has been staring experts in the face for years.

V.F.

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Note.—Various dealers have published instructions for performing the feat, and many magical periodicals have described versions of the effect. Obviously, it would be next to impossible to compile a complete list, but mention may be made of the “Linking Ring Contest” which ran in the columns of “The Sphinx” from May to August, 1928 (Nos. 3 to 6 inclusive, Vol. XXVII) and of Ellis Stanyon’s articles which appeared in Nos. 4 and 5, Vol. XII of “Magic” (1913).

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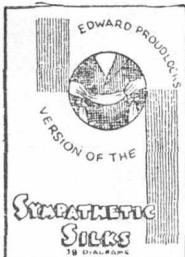
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