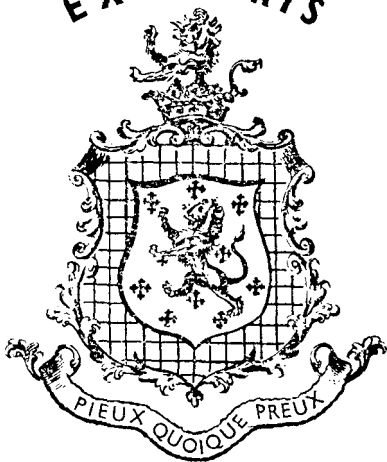


POPULAR
MAGIC
FOR THE
AMATEUR
CONJUROR

BY ZODIA STAR



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POPULAR MAGIC

A Book for the Amateur Conjuror

ILLUSTRATED

BY
ZODIASTAR

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INTRODUCTION

ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE who are content to leave others to do all the entertaining? After all is said and done, it is everybody's duty to do his bit—or her bit. But perhaps you excuse yourself by pleading that you don't know anything that is entertaining. Naturally, you wish you could do something to amuse a company or audience of people. Very well, then, you are holding in your hand just the book you need to change yourself into a brilliant entertainer. In the ninety-odd pages there is a splendid collection of magic-tricks that you will be able to master quite easily. They are suitable for any and every occasion. When you have learnt them, you will be burning to try your favourites on the next person you meet.

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OPENING HINTS

IF you want to be the "star-turn" at your next party or entertainment, give the audience some magic in the form of conjuring. I have sung to gatherings, I have recited to them, I have acted and told stories, I have done practically everything that an entertainer can do, and I am quite certain that what has gone down best and been acclaimed most was the conjuring that I have performed. For a reason I do not pretend to know, audiences always like something with a mystery about it and they enjoy being mystified and intrigued. They will yawn and fidget, perhaps, when a reciter stands before them, but as soon as a conjuring turn is announced they will sit up and become intent.

For these reasons, I say with confidences "Be a conjurer." After all, it is not wonderfully difficult to learn a few tricks,

and, when you have polished them up, to make an effective show with them. Naturally, you cannot expect to be a Maskelyne by the middle of next week, but in a few days you could learn six or seven eye-opening tricks and mystify a whole host of people at a party with them. And, from that small beginning, there is no reason why you should not go on to higher flights, so that before next season opens you are equal to the task of standing on a platform and entertaining a hall full of people.

Of course, you must not think that conjuring will come to you without an effort on your part. You will have to practise every trick several times before it is worth doing in front of an audience, but the practising is not tedious and need not take up much of your time. Certainly, conjuring does not call for more preliminary work than other forms of entertaining—it requires less than a good many kinds.

If you do become a magic entertainer, make up your mind to work neatly and with the utmost precision. A sloppy performance will please neither you nor your onlookers, and it can be avoided by a little more preliminary work. At first, be content to master six to nine tricks perfectly and, as

time goes on, add a trick or two now and again. In this way, you will soon find that your repertoire is as rich as anyone could want it to be.

With regard to the people whom you are endeavouring to entertain, never let them crowd round you, but keep them at some little distance. Generally speaking, you do not want them close to you at the sides, nor behind you. This applies specially when you are working in a drawing-room.

As a rule, audiences are wonderfully good and I have known them to applaud a slip when one might have expected a jeer. But, there is a type of person who crops up now and again who watches you with the sole idea of picking holes in your work. You will hear him exclaim aloud that he knows how the trick is done and that there is nothing in it. What you will want to say to this person will be very obvious, but don't say it. Above all, keep your temper and, if you can, make him look silly. Just how this can be done depends on the circumstances, but the following little story will serve to show how it may be managed. I was giving a little display at a party and a loud-voiced immaculate youth had kept up a running commentary on my tricks. I

heard him distinctly say, at one point, "There's nothing in that; I know how it is done." When the trick was finished, I said with a beaming smile, "Now, will anybody who knows how that was done kindly go out of the room and close the door?" My immaculate friend strode to the door and, in a second, was gone. "Good," I said, with a smile as the door closed, "now we can proceed without interruptions." He stayed outside until my little show had finished, wondering all the time how he was going to be brought into the centre of the limelight.

Now as to patter, which is the silly, funny, outlandish talk with which you invest your tricks. It serves several uses, one being to amuse the audience. There is, however, a far greater use than that. It is to cover up some weak part in the operations. Let me offer an example: Suppose you are doing a trick with a long piece of rope which you pretend to cut in two. Naturally, you do not cut the actual rope, but a similar piece which you haul down your sleeve. Just when you have to fumble with your sleeve, you look at the long piece of rope and say reminiscently, "Ah! that rope reminds me of a piece my father had when I was a

boy." The audience catches your meaning and roars ; and while it is roaring, you do the necessary fumbling without being spotted.

Patter of the right kind is so important that it is wise to practise it just as much as the tricks going with it. In fact, while you are running through the manual operations you ought to do the "talkie" part as well, so that the two synchronise.

I am now going to describe a number of tricks and illusions that will help you to amuse audiences—large and small. Choose those that appeal to you most for your repertoire and, whenever you can, alter them so that they bear your own personal touch.

I am quite certain that once you have made your *début* in things mystical, you will never regret the time spent on it.

ZODIASTAR.

THE UNION JACK

THIS is a remarkably simple trick which will be very effective when you have tried it over two or three times. On the middle finger of the left hand you place a rather loose ring. Then you take a small paper Union Jack, which you can make with stout tissue paper; you roll it up and slip it through the ring, on the palm side of your hand.

With the Union Jack safely in this position, you take three short strips of tissue paper, one red, one white and one blue. These you hold up and show them to the audience; but, as you do so, your left hand is slightly rounded so that the flag under the ring is in shadow.

“Now,” you say, “I hope these coloured papers make you feel patriotic.” Then, you roll them together between the palms of the hands and, as you continue, you manage to slip out the folded Jack and force the wad of papers into its place.

A few more rubs with the palms close

together and you make some remark about red, white and blue being the colours of the flag of Old England. "Ah!" you say in a contemplative manner, "What a vast deal that flag means wherever it is unfurled." Thereupon, you unroll the paper in your hand and, instead of there being three separate coloured slips, you reveal a Union Jack.

THE CONJURER'S HAT

No conjurer will gain the full approval of a juvenile audience unless he does something remarkable with a hat. So, if you are dealing with children, mind you get a hat and, in some way, mystify the youngsters. What they like most is to be shown an empty topper and, then, for all sorts of things to be drawn out of it.

Now, all this is easily done if only you know how to do it. There are several ways, but my method of working the trick is as follows :

Standing before the audience, I ask if any gentleman has a top-hat he is willing to lend me. Presumably, those who possess such hats are not keen on lending them, for it is very, very rarely that somebody obliges.

When there are no offers, I say, "Very well, then, I shall have to knock my own hat about." With that, I turn round and get out the hat I always keep ready for the purpose. "Ladies and Gentlemen," I say, "I am sorry to have to use my own hat because you may think it is one with a false

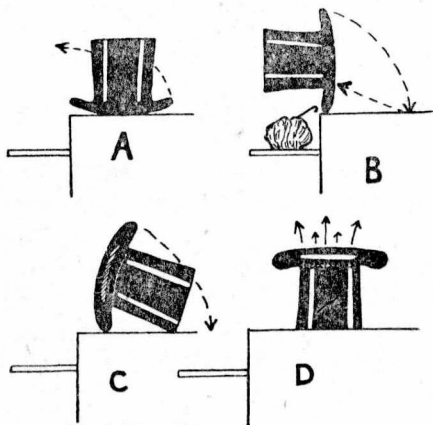


Fig. 1.—The Conjurer's Hat and how it is filled.

bottom, trick sides and other arrangements. But to set your minds easy, I will pass it round to enable you all to see that it is just an ordinary common or garden topper." I then pass it round for inspection. When it comes back to me, I put it on my table as shown in Fig. 1, diagram A. I tap smartly

on the crown and a hollow sound is emitted. "There you are, it is quite empty," I say. With that, I lift it up, as shown by diagram B, so that the audience can see inside. "It's absolutely empty; isn't it?" I add, and, of course, the answer is "Yes."

The position of the things shown in diagram B is important. The edge of the hat rests absolutely on the edge of the table and there is a ledge a little below the table level. On it is a black bag containing the things I intend to produce. Attached to the bag is a thin wire with a fish-hook tip. The hook comes an inch above the table level.

Without taking the hands off the hat, it is possible to engage the hook in the brim of the hat; then, by swinging the brim in the path of the dotted lines the bag is tilted into the hat and nobody has been able to see the manœuvre (diagram C).

Finally, the hat is rested on its crown and the contents are revealed. Naturally, each conjurer can put in the bag just what he fancies. I always aim at putting in things that look bulky, but which can be folded or compressed. Thus, coils of coloured streamers, small fans, paper chains, imitation bouquets which spring out to prodigious size when a clip is removed, and so on, are what

I use. Of course, I open out the things a second before they come to view.

CIGARETTES FROM NOWHERE

THIS is the kind of trick that appeals very much to audiences of a youthful character. First, you want a pink celluloid ring, just large enough to slip comfortably on the second finger of the left hand, and it must be provided with a fairly long pin. I bought the ring I use for sixpence.

Now, place the ring on the finger mentioned, so that the pin points away from the wrist and lies parallel with the fingers. Take a cigarette and force it on to the pin. As long as you keep the backs of your hands out of sight, nobody will suspect the presence of the cigarette.

“Ah!” you say, splaying out your hands and showing that they are quite empty, “I’d give anything for a cigarette.” Then, looking upwards, you smile, “What’s this coming down?” you say, almost to yourself. You strain your eyes in the direction and snatch at it. It is a cigarette that has come to you from nowhere.

The snatching is done in this way: You

bend the ring finger inwards, which leaves the cigarette projecting. Then, with the right hand, you appear to grab at nothing, but really you pull the cigarette off the pin and hold it. This trick requires that the hands should be shown to be quite empty right up to the moment the cigarette is revealed, if it is to be fully convincing.

HOW TO PALM A COIN

EVERY conjurer should learn how to palm a coin—which is the technical term for getting rid of a coin without being seen—since those who can do so are able to perform many mysterious tricks with money. And, when a coin can be palmed, it only requires a little additional practice for the conjurer to palm other things as well. Thus, a whole range of tricks are then possible.

As a beginning, you are advised to start with a florin, as other coins are either too large or too small to be handled easily. First, hold the coin lightly in the tips of the fingers; then smartly turn the fingers inwards, pushing the coin against the palm. Instantly, crease up the palm in a sort of contracting movement to force the flesh of the palm over the edges of the coin. Then,

immediately bring the fingers back to their extended position (see Fig. 2). The whole series of movements must be done so rapidly that nobody has time to recognise that they have been done.

These actions will be performed more or

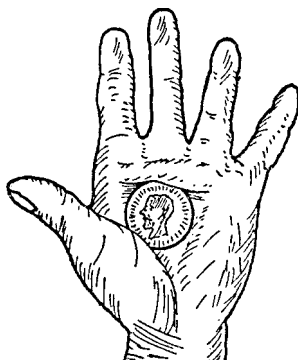


Fig. 2.—How to Palm a Coin.

less clumsily at first, but a little practice will work wonders, especially if you stand before a mirror and watch yourself from the position the audience will normally look at you. Then you will have ample opportunity of noting your imperfections and improving on them.

When you have satisfied yourself on this part of the work, palm a coin, and then try to use your hand for other things,

such as opening out a handkerchief, picking up a book, or lighting a cigarette. If you can do these and similar things without appearing or feeling awkward, you may safely venture to palm coins in front of a critical audience.

Palming has, of course, several uses. You may want to get rid of a coin that the audience does not know is in existence; and you may wish to cheat your onlookers into thinking that the coin is passing from one hand to the other when, really, it is remaining in the same hand. For the first kind of palming the method already explained is suitable; for the latter, the following plan is advised: Hold the coin in the fingers, as before, and allow the two hands to approach each other. The one that is to appear to receive the coin should be open, and, at the moment when the coin appears to pass, it should close with a snap. The other hand is then allowed to fall slightly out of the way, fingers limp and extended. While this is being done your eyes should travel along the direction that the coin is supposed to take. If these suggestions are carefully performed, the audience will be deluded into thinking that the coin has gone from one hand to the other.

CORKS

I HAVE worked this trick before small audiences on dozens of occasions and it has always made the people open their eyes wide.

I sit at a table with my audience standing close in front. On the table I place four corks, one at each corner of an imaginary diamond. The four corks are exactly alike.

I tell the people to note the four positions and I number them 1, 2, 3, 4. "Now," I ask, "where would you like No. 1 to go, Miss Jones?" Miss Jones says she would like it to go to No. 2. "Very well, watch," I add. With that, I put one hand flat over No. 1, and the other hand flat over No. 2. I then utter the mystic word "Wooverwoo," which I explain is the Chinese for "Hurry up, old thing," and, on lifting my hands, No. 1 and No. 2 are lying snugly together.

Next, I ask Miss Brown whether she would like No. 3 or No. 4 to join the jolly twins and she says No. 4. Thereupon, I put one hand flat over Nos. 1 and 2, and the other over No. 4; then I utter the Chinese, as aforementioned, and lo! on lifting my hands, Nos. 1, 2 and 4 are all lying together.

Of course, No. 3 cannot be left out in the

cold, so I repeat the operation once more and, on raising my hands, the four are found to be all together.

The explanation is simple: Previously, it is necessary to practise picking up a cork with the palm, by squeezing the palm around it and, at the same time, keeping the back of the hand quite flat. This will not take more than two minutes to learn.

Then, when I sit at the table, I have a fifth cork, exactly like the others, on my lap. If cork No. 1 has to join No. 2, I put No. 5 in the hand covering No. 2 and release it. At the same time, the hand covering No. 1 picks up No. 1 and eventually transfers it to my lap where it is ready for the next move. The hands must be lifted from the lap on to the table without any appearance of clutching; the fingers should be outstretched, the hands flat but slightly tilted downwards at the front.

A FIST FULL OF CONFETTI

THIS is quite an effective trick and has the merit of being pretty if well done. A day or so before giving a show, take a small egg, make two holes in it and blow out the

contents. If in making the holes you damage the shell, it will not matter much. Rinse out the interior and, when nearly dry, run in some red ink; also dab some on the outside. You will then have a pinkish rather than a whitish shell. When it is quite dry, both inside and out, ram it full of multi-coloured confetti and stick a little dab of paper over both holes.

When you are ready to give the audience a little surprise, place the egg in your coat cuff and, then, show that your hands are quite empty. This fact being fully appreciated, make a sudden darting movement with both hands, bringing the wrist without the egg in front of the one with it. At the same moment, jerk the egg into the hand and close the fingers over it. The hand that is brought in front is moved there merely to hide the coming of the egg into position.

Now move the fingers slowly with the idea of crushing the shell and releasing the confetti, little by little. As the fingers are worked about, the confetti is gradually dropped in a cascade of beautiful colours and the shell can be reduced to small particles, which may be allowed to slip through the fingers along with the confetti. Thus, the cascade came from nowhere and nothing

is left. The hand was empty at the start and empty at the finish.

THE MYSTERIOUS PLATE

THE effect of this trick is as follows: First, you ask a member of the audience to borrow four pennies from four different people and you stipulate that they shall be ordinary pennies, such as one is likely to be given in change on a bus or in a shop.

The moment the money is collected, you go to your table, which should be littered with a crowd of things likely to be of use to a conjurer, and you pick up a small paper bag. This you hand to your helper and ask him to drop the coins in it. When he has done so, you go forward to him and take the bag from him. So that you will not be able to see the coins, you twist the neck of the bag round two or three times and put it carelessly on the table.

Without wasting a moment, you pick up a white plate from the table and hold it out for all to see. You show both back and front, and you take care to keep it moving about all the time it is on exhibition, which should be no more than a quarter of a minute.

So far, nobody knows what you intend to do and you purposely keep everybody guessing. The next step does not assist them to formulate an idea, for you put the plate flat on the table and pour on to it a great heap of sand. It should be darkish in colour and not light silver sand.

Now comes the climax of the show. You pick up the bag of coppers ; you request your helper to dive his fingers into it and bring out one of the pennies. As he does so, you tell him to read the date on it. He selects one of the coins and says, we will suppose, 1934. Immediately, you lift up the plate with the heap of sand on it and turn it sideways, so that the sand slides off. A little of it remains adhering to the plate and this little that remains clearly traces the figures, 1934, on the plate. A really remarkable piece of work.

This is how the trickery is worked. A day or two before the show you paint the figures 1934 in white enamel on a white plate. By the time you want to work the trick the paint should be tacky or sticky, but not hard and dry. When you exhibit the plate the figures will not be noticeable, if you keep the plate moving about. Next, you collect four pennies bearing the date chosen

and put them into a bag exactly like the one you are going to use during the performance. It is this bag from which your helper makes his selection. As they are all 1934 pennies, he must pick one that corresponds to the markings on the plate.

I have performed this trick without uttering a word, giving all my instructions in dumb show. It makes a welcome change from the usual patter, and is very effective if a straight, serious face is maintained throughout.

MAD MAGIC WITH MATCH-BOXES

HERE is a trick that goes down remarkably well, considering how silly and simple it is. Have on your table a packet of a dozen matchboxes, with the outer paper covering intact. Split it open and take the first six or eight boxes that come to hand. Stand one of them on its short end and, then, place the others one by one on top of it. You thus make a sort of tall tower out of matchboxes. Then you carefully take hold of the lowest box and, by reason of your trained eye and steady hand, you can lift

up the whole tower without the boxes toppling over. There are not many people who could do it and that is why you deserve a clap from the audience.

Now for the explanation. You have a whole packet of a dozen matchboxes merely to create the idea that you have not tampered with the boxes. As a matter of fact, you previously undid the paper wrapper, without tearing it, and took the tray out of one of the boxes. Thus one box was merely a cover. Then you re-formed the paper wrapper and made it look as though it had not been touched. When you opened the packet, you were careful to choose the cover, minus the contents, for the first box to form the tower. Then, when you put the second box on top of it, you forced No. 2's tray half an inch into No. 1's cover, and all other trays were depressed a similar amount into the covers just below them. Thus, you have built up a rigid tower that cannot possibly fall to bits.

THE PICTURE POSTCARD TRICK

THE following is a very simple trick and it usually baffles the audience. In the first

place, you show your friends a set of about a dozen picture postcards. The pictures should portray the noted buildings and views of your own locality; but, here, I will suppose we are dealing with London. Your friends thus see St. Paul's Cathedral, The Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and so on. For the sake of the deception, slip the cards into an envelope, when you have shown them, and let the envelope bear some printed information about the cards. The envelope in which the cards were purchased is, usually, just what is wanted.

After that, sit at your table and ask your friends to call out, one by one, the name of any of the places which the cards portrayed. As each name is mentioned, you write it on a separate slip of paper and fold it up.

When everybody has given you a name, take up the envelope, get out the cards, splay them out in a fan, with the views facing downwards, and ask somebody to select any one of them at random. Impress on him that he must not let you see the card, and it is not a bad plan if nobody beside him sees the card at this stage of the performance.

Next, turn to the slips of paper with the names written on them. Put them in a

hat, shuffle them well and ask somebody to draw out any one of the slips. When this is done, it is found that the name on the slip is the name of the view shown by the selected postcard.

Now for an explanation of the deception. You have two packets of cards, both being housed in envelopes exactly similar. One set gives a dozen different views; the other gives twelve views all alike. At the commencement of the performance, you show the first lot; but when somebody picks out a card from the fan, you offer the second lot. Naturally, you know the view that recurs all through the second lot and, when people call out the names of various places, you merely keep on writing the name of this place, though they think you are varying them. Thus there is only one name, recurring many times, in the hat, and it is the name of the card that had to be chosen.

GUESSING THE DICE

THE skilful conjurer does not keep to one kind of trick, but varies his performance as much as possible. Thus, he turns to coins, handkerchiefs, matches and a host of other

things, all in quick succession. There is not much that can be done with dice, but the following is a particularly good piece of fun and is well worth putting into the bill.

The conjurer produces two perfectly ordinary dice and asks somebody to blind-fold him, by way of imparting a touch of mystery to the show. "Now," he exclaims, "will any lady or gentleman throw the two dice and note the numbers shown on the top faces?" When this has been done and everybody but himself has glanced at the two top numbers, he gives the following commands:—

(1) For the moment, take the left-hand dice and forget all about that on the right.

(2) Look at the number of this dice and double it.

(3) Now, add 5 to this answer.

(4) Now, multiply the last answer by 5.

(5) Finally, add the number of the right-hand dice to the total, and tell me the answer.

As soon as he is told this answer, he calls out the numbers shown on the two dice.

Here is the explanation:—

(1) Suppose the left-hand dice is 6 and the right-hand dice is 2.

- (2) The first step is to double the 6, i.e., 12.
- (3) Next, 5 is to be added, i.e., 17.
- (4) The next requirement is to multiply by 5, i.e., 85.
- (5) After that, the right-hand dice is to be added, i.e., $85 + 2 = 87$.
- (6) Now here is a step that is not mentioned and which serves to provide the mystery. In all cases, subtract 25 from the last answer, i.e., $87 - 25 = 62$. This number gives the clue always. The unit figure furnishes the number on the right-hand dice and the other figure that on the left-hand dice.

This method works with any fall of the dice, as a few experiments will prove. Of course, it is more a memory stunt than a trick, but the audience need not be told that.

THE BANGLE MYSTERY

I NEVER fail to be amused when I see the look of astonishment which this trick evokes. It is quite a simple thing and can be worked by the novice just as well as the old hand.

With a great deal of mystery, I ask two people to come on the platform, or wherever

I am standing, and tie my wrists together in a definite way. With a single length of cord, they are to put a loop around each wrist and these loops are to be joined by a short length of the cord. They are, in fact, to make a sort of cord-handcuff. Of course, the people who revel in doing a job like this always try to do their part thoroughly, and I usually have to remind them that I want to be able to use my hands after the trick is finished—a remark which always gives rise to a laugh.



Fig. 3.—The Bangle Mystery.

When they have done the handcuff business, I point to a bangle lying on the table. “Give me that,” I say, and someone hands it to me. Holding the bangle in one hand, I ask if anyone thinks he could get it on to the cord joining my two hands. A moment’s reflection will show that it is something that

cannot be done, yet I will engage to do it inside of twenty seconds.

With that, I dart behind a screen and, before my allotted time is up, I emerge with the bangle encircling the cord joining my two wrists. I have performed the impossible.

You will now want to know how I manage the trick. It is simply this: I have two rather large metal bangles, exactly alike. One of them is handed to me, as explained. When I dart behind the screen, I slip it in my pocket and it is not seen again. The second one is pushed up my sleeve and is kept out of sight, but on my arm, while the cording is being done. On going behind the screen, I draw it down and, as it is a trifle large, I can work it over my knuckles and fingers, and then it slips on to the cord joining my two wrists. The swindle is complete.

THE RING AND THE STRING

This trick appears to be impossible, but none the less it is easily done, when you know how. You start by asking somebody to come forward and lend you his two thumbs for a few moments.

When a volunteer has obliged, ask him to

put his two thumbs upright, as shown in Fig. 4. Then, take a piece of string, tie the two ends, so as to make a continuous loop, slip a ring on the loop and hook the string on to the two thumbs. The figure explains all this. Now, you en-

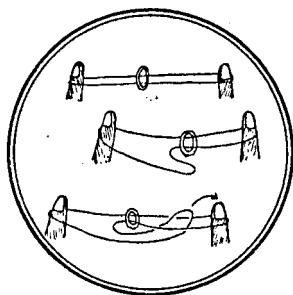


Fig. 4.—The Ring and the String.

gage yourself to take the ring off the string without cutting, undoing, snapping, breaking or otherwise mutilating the string, and you also promise to leave the string on the thumbs while you are doing the trick. It seems incredible, even impossible.

This is how to do it. Pull the loop so that it takes the form shown in the middle diagram. Then take the projecting part, thread it under the main portion of the loop (see the lowest diagram), and hook it on to the right thumb. There are now two pieces

of string round this thumb. Lift the lower piece over the upper piece or, if you prefer it, raise the piece that was there first over the piece put there second; bring it right off the thumb and it will be seen that the ring is freed.

If these steps are done smartly, nobody will be able to follow them and they will give a very startling impression.

ANOTHER TRICK WITH A RING

HERE is another trick performed with a ring and a piece of string which has its amusing and mystifying features.

At the outset, you produce an ordinary ring and pass it round for the audience to see that it is not in any way a fake article—it may be a simple curtain ring of small size or just the usual wedding ring. Then you show a piece of string, about two feet long. It should be soft, pliable string that will bend and fold readily.

Having dispelled any idea of trickery on your part, you slide the ring on to the string and, catching hold of the two ends, you make the ring dance along the string. Everybody sees that the ring is definitely threaded on to the string and that everything is O.K.

You then start talking for a moment on the manifold uses of string: it serves for tying up parcels, butchers use it for tying up joints of meat; tramps use it instead of boot-laces, and so on. While you are making these futile remarks, you are fidgeting with the string and the ring. But you are doing more than this: you are, in fact, re-threading

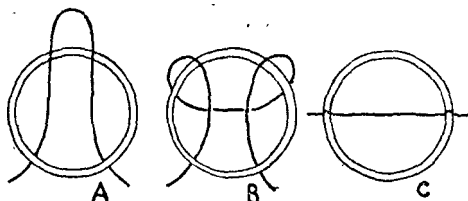


Fig. 5.—Re-threading the String.

the ring as shown in the diagram. Fig. 5, A, shows how you start to re-thread it. B shows your next movement, and C shows what the ring and the string look like when you have finished rethreading. A gentle pull on the string, now, will hold the ring quite firmly.

“Well,” you say, when you are ready, “I must not waste time talking.” You thereupon call for two people to hold the string, one at each end. Before handing them the string, you place a silk handkerchief over the ring and hide it from view.

All is now ready, but you stop and, with a smile, say, "One moment. I suppose I had better show you all that the ring is still on the string." With that, you whip off the handkerchief just long enough for everybody to see that the ring is actually on the string and then put it back.

"Now, will you two people pull hard, but be careful not to let the string go?" you ask. They pull and the ring drops to the floor. Having seen how it was threaded, you know why it comes off the string; but the audience is in the dark about that little matter.

THE BANDAGED LEG

THIS is a delightful piece of deception to foist on your friends at parties and similar functions. You sit on a chair and place one of your feet upon a stool, while your friends gather round in front of you.

Then you take a rather large handkerchief or thin scarf, twist it into a roll and proceed to tie it round your leg. You bind it right round the back and round the front, completely encircling it, and finishing up by making the knots in front.

Having shown everybody that the bandage is free from any suspicion, you take the two ends which should be sticking out at the front, if you made the knots there, and give them a sharp pull. What happens? The bandage comes right through your leg without causing you any apparent damage, and though it encircled your leg, it is now entirely free of it.

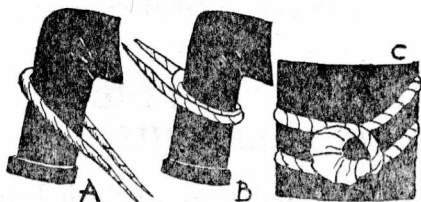


Fig. 6.—The Bandaged Leg.

This is the explanation of the swindle: You begin by laying the bandage across the front of the leg, as in Fig. 6, A. Then you appear to bring the loose ends to the front, as shown in B, but you do not do this. When the right-hand piece of material reaches the middle of the back of the leg, you fold it over and return it to the front on its own side. Then, to prevent it slipping, you bring the left-hand piece of material up to it and twist some of the left-hand material round a “bunch” at the tip

of the right-hand material. This forms a grip and the left-hand material is returned to the front on its own side. Finally, the two ends are knotted at the front.

Of course, the first time you do it the bandage may slip, but when you have tried it over two or three times in privacy you will know just how much material to bunch up to make the bandage hold securely. Then the deception is complete.

THE KNOTTED HANDKERCHIEFS

FOR some curious reason, which I do not pretend to know, there are certain things which audiences expect a conjurer to do. One of the things is that, if he is worth his salt, he will take some handkerchiefs, tie them together and then reveal them untied and separate.

Now, there are several ways of producing this illusion, and the easiest of them all is as follows: First, you provide yourself with six or eight silk handkerchiefs. They should be made of imitation or real silk, the latter for preference, and it will help if they are red, blue, yellow, green or other gaudy

colours. But this is important ; there must be two exactly alike of each kind. Thus, if you decide to work with six handkerchiefs, there must be three different kinds and two of each ; while if you are using eight, there must be four kinds and two of each, as before.

Next, you will require a silk bag, which anyone can make quite easily. The bag should be about eight inches square and it should be divided into two compartments, internally. Thus, to make the bag, you will require three pieces of material, all the same size. They are placed one over the other and sewn together along three edges, the fourth edge serving as the opening to the bag. It adds to the usefulness of the bag if the middle piece of material is a little larger, one way, than the other two. The extra material then projects beyond the others and serves as a flap, which can be turned over to one side or the other, as the occasion demands. The flap, it will be recognised, hides the fact that there are two compartments, as it always obscures one of them.

Now for the business : You take one set of handkerchiefs, twist each separately into a rope and put them as flat as possible in one

of the compartments. Then the flap is turned over to hide the particular compartment.

Following that, you come before your audience and produce the other set of handkerchiefs. These you hand to the on-lookers and tell them to tie the handkerchiefs tightly together by the tips. That done, you turn to the bag and show everyone that it is quite empty and innocent of any deception. So far, so good; you collect the tied handkerchiefs, stuff them into the empty compartment, pass your wand mysteriously over the bag, utter a few magic words and, then, pick up the bag. You are careful to twist the bag round once or twice in the process and get the flap over to the other side, without being noticed. Then you pull out the handkerchiefs and, lo and behold! they are untied.

PASSING A PENNY THROUGH A SMALL HOLE

You will be able to amaze your friends with this simple trick, if they do not already know it.

First, you take a plain sheet of paper and,

from the centre, you tear out a round hole the size of a halfpenny. The hole can even be slightly smaller than a halfpenny, if you like.

Then you take a penny and challenge anybody to pass it through the hole in the

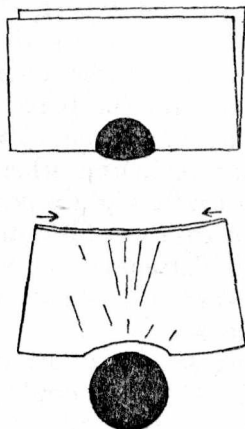


Fig. 7.—By drawing the four upper corners slightly together, as indicated by the arrows, the lower opening widens out and allows the coin to fall through.

paper, which is the size of the halfpenny or a trifle smaller. Of course, there must be no tearing of the paper to get it through, and you may as well explain that there is no mystery about the way you have worded the challenge. It is just simply this: you

are asking your friends whether any of them can squeeze, wriggle or coax a penny through a hole in the paper that is considerably smaller than the coin itself.

When everybody has told you that the thing is impossible unless there is an impudent catch in it somewhere, you take the paper and crease it across the middle of the hole. You stand the penny edgewise in the hole and grip the paper by the four corners. Thus, you have two corners in one hand and two in the other. You now bring the two hands slightly nearer together and, as you do so, the penny drops through the hole. On flattening out the paper, it will be seen that it has not been torn or damaged in any way.

It is a neat little trick which depends on a rather involved fact in geometry and which I do not pretend to be able to explain.

THE PAPER CYLINDER AND THE HANDKERCHIEF

THE following is a very simple trick, yet it always astonishes those who see it. You, first of all, have a cylindrical torch—one that is fairly wide for its length serving best

Then you take a sheet of paper and, showing it to your audience, you roll it loosely round the body of the electric torch. That done, you let the torch slip out and hold the paper roll in your hand. "There," you say, displaying the roll, "it is perfectly empty, of course."

And, then, to make doubly certain that it is empty, you switch on the torch, point it at the audience and pass it once more completely through the paper roll.

Now that everybody knows beyond all doubt that the roll is empty, you switch out the torch, slip it in your pocket, and very slowly and methodically unroll the paper. What a surprise, for there in the centre of the roll is a coloured silk handkerchief!

How did it happen? In this way: You bound some thick, black paper round the torch, making it an inch or two longer at the back end than it was originally. Into this space, you slipped the silk handkerchief and kept your hand over the end to hide it.

On passing the torch for the last time through the roll you loosened the handkerchief slightly, and as the torch went through you gripped the handkerchief by squeezing the paper. The torch being alight and

somewhat dazzling, the people could not see what you were doing behind the light.

THE VANISHING CIGAR BAND

STAND in front of your audience and, at arm's length, hold out a cigar. Draw attention to the band and make a pretence of reading what is on it. "Ah!" you will exclaim, "I thought as much. Flor de Cabbagio. Just had it given me by a man at the club, who promptly borrowed a pound 'off me."

So saying, you wave your arm in the air and then hold it still. The cigar is once more in view, but the band around it has gone. Rather astonishing, don't you think?

The secret is this: there is only the front half of the band; the other half you carefully cut away before the show. Naturally, the remaining half has had to be kept in position by a dab of glue.

While you were waving your hand and arm in the air, it was a simple matter to give the cigar a half-turn, and so bring the non-banded side into view. It is perfectly easy to do if you hold the cigar against

the index finger by pressing with the thumb and, when you want to twist the cigar round, to draw the thumb and, therefore, the cigar along the index finger.

I sometimes use this trick when I want to raise a laugh against myself. I show the band, then I make it disappear. Everybody looks puzzled. I repeat the waving action and bring the band back. So far, so good, but now I wave once more and only give the cigar half the usual twist. The result is that a piece of the band shows and part of the cigar is unbanded. Of course, this gives the show away and the audience roars with delight. Your onlookers have caught you and that is something which pleases them immensely.

THE CHANGING HANDKERCHIEFS

THIS trick consists in producing a match-box from your pocket, which you push open and show your audience that it does not contain matches but a little, red silk handkerchief. "Ah," you say, "that reminds me. I believe I have another box in one of

my pockets." You fumble in your pockets and bring out a second box, exactly like the first. You push this one open and let everybody see that it contains a little, blue silk handkerchief.

"Now, I think I can do a trick with these," you say, as though a sudden inspiration has come to you. Thereupon, you put the box with the red handkerchief on the left of the table. "Be quite clear in your minds," you exhort the onlookers. "This box contains the red hanky," you say while showing it. And as far away as the table allows, you set down the other box. "This, of course, has the blue hanky in it," you exclaim, and, to leave no doubt about it, you display a part of the blue material.

At this stage of the performance, you ask if anybody knows a magic word and, nine chances out of ten, nobody utters a sound.

"Very well," you say, after waiting a second. "I know one; it is *Wallerperoo*. Now, when I count one, two, three, I want everybody to say *Wallerperoo* as loudly as he or she can. You go through the count and get an ear-splitting shout. "Fine," you add, looking pleased. "That's done the trick, for sure."

You then turn to the box that everybody knows contains the red hanky, push it open and show the blue hanky. Next you turn to the box that ought to have the blue hanky in it and show that it now contains the red one. It's simply marvellous that shouting the magic word made the two handkerchiefs change places.

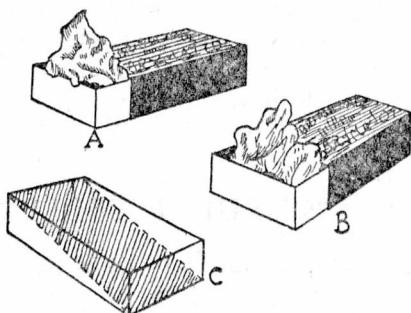


Fig. 8.—The Changing Handkerchiefs.

Well, this is the explanation. Before the show, you get two empty matchboxes, exactly alike, and it is essential that they have similar labels stuck on the backs and fronts. Some brands provide such labels—in fact most of them do, but you must avoid those that do not.

Then you take the trays from the two boxes and arrange the bottom face of each

as shown in Fig. 8, C. This gives the tray a bottom that is like an inclined plane. Thus, when a tray is returned to its cover, it provides a half space, no matter which way you push open the box. In each box you have two hankies, one of each colour. A secret sign on the label tells you which coloured hanky is uppermost.

So now you can see exactly how to work the trick. Of course, you will turn the boxes over as you set them on the table, but you will do it without any show.

THE DECEITFUL BOWLER-HAT

CONJURERS without hat-tricks are hardly conjurers; at any rate, they cannot be the proper kind, so here is a good trick that requires a bowler. It can be done, also, with a topper, if preferred.

First, you produce a dozen strips of thin card, numbered from one up to twelve—I always use ordinary postcards, each cut into four. These you hand out to twelve members of the audience and then you ask your onlookers to write on them the name of whatever article they like best to eat. When they have put this on the cards, they

are asked to add their name. On collecting up the cards, you will have some marvellous attempts at humour. You are certain to be given a large assortment of sweets; but do not be surprised if you are treated to cod-liver oil spread on cake, dogs' bodies, and horse flesh with treacle.

Well, collect up the cards or, better still, get someone else to gather them up and put them in the bowler. Now, what you engage to do is this: you will put the bowler against your forehead—this is to derive the proper bowleric aura, whatever that means, and you will gaze on the audience to complete the mesmeric influence. If the person who had card No. 1 will stare straight ahead and think intently of his answer, you, while holding the bowler above your eye-level, in such a position that you cannot see inside, you—I say—will fumble with your hand among the twelve cards and pick out No. 1. Moreover, before looking at it, you will say who wrote this card and what he or she chose for food. Then you will do the same with No. 2 and, consecutively, with the others, up to No. 12.

It is marvellous how you do it, and it will be still more so if you allow somebody to hand out the cards to the audience in such

a way that you have no means of knowing who has which ; also, if you get somebody else to put them in the bowler and the bowler is covered over until you have placed it against your forehead. And, if you like, the bowler can be inspected before the fun begins. You see, the whole thing is absolutely above board, as people say when they are about to swindle you.

There is just one thing that was omitted from the description : it is that when the bowler is put up to your forehead, you turn up the inside leather lining band so that there is an additional barrier against you seeing into the hat. At least, that is what you tell the audience. What you do not tell them is that, when the hat is being brought up to your forehead, you push the outside silk band into a fold and underneath it is a hole cut through the felt which allows you a very useful view of all that takes place inside the hat.

THE NAME WRITTEN IN ASHES

You want at least a dozen people in the audience for this trick—the more the better, in fact. Give each a slip of paper and com-

mand your onlookers to write the name of a noted man on the papers. If you do not fancy noted men, you can tell them to write the names of animals in the Zoo, flowers in the garden, or any class of things you prefer. Of course, there is to be only one name on a paper.

When that is done, ask somebody to collect up the papers, folded in four, and put them in a hat. The assistant then holds out the hat to you; you dive all round it with your hand, you pick out one of the papers, and, without unfolding it, give it to the assistant. He opens it without letting you see and he whispers the name to the audience, so that they know.

You now take the paper from the assistant, who has refolded it, and standing it edgewise on a plate, you burn it with a match. As soon as it has burnt out, you gather up the bulk of the ashes and rub them on the back of your left hand. Marvellous to relate, the very name mentioned on the paper is imprinted on your hand by the ashes.

How did it all happen so cleverly? You wrote on a slip of paper as well, but you did not mention that fact. It was your slip you chose and you had previously tucked it under the label in the centre of the

crown of the hat. That is why you did a good deal of fumbling when you were diving among the papers. In addition, before presenting yourself to the audience you took a piece of rather moist soap and, with the edge of it, wrote the name on the back of your hand. The letters did not show, but as soon as the ashes were rubbed on they adhered to the sticky tracing and revealed them.

THE SHILLING—LOST AND FOUND

BEFORE you perform this trick, put a large mark, such as a cross, on the back of a shilling, doing it in pencil. Take this shilling and hide it somewhere that is a good way off from where you are going to stand.

Now take up your position and produce another shilling or borrow one from a friend. If you elect to do the latter, have your own second shilling handy and see that it resembles the one you hid. This is necessary because someone may lend you a very different looking one and then the cat

would be out of the bag if you use it. If you happen to be given one that does not look like the one you hid, you merely exchange it for the one that does and, of course, you say nothing.

When the second shilling is ready, ask someone to pencil a mark on it. If they choose to put a large cross on it, well, you are lucky. If they put something else on it, say, "No, no, no; that's much too small; nobody would see that kind of mark." And then you take the shilling and pencil a large cross on the back of it, exactly as you did on the one you hid. "There," you exclaim, when you have finished the mark, "it's something like that we want." You show the mark to a number of people and then take the shilling and stand a little way off. Everybody looks at you intently. You suddenly throw the shilling a little way in the air and on catching it, send it flying up your sleeve. Immediately, you open both your hands and ask where the shilling has gone. Everything has happened so quickly that people are not sure you caught the coin or what you did with it.

When a moment or two has elapsed you ask if someone will be good enough to look

inside that vase on the mantelpiece, or wherever you hid the first shilling. And there, sure enough, the shilling is found. If the person who lent you a shilling thinks to ask for it back, be honest and give it him.

A HALFPENNY FOR A SHILLING

IF you practise this trick until it can be done neatly, the audience will be much puzzled. For it you need two halfpennies and a shilling. One of the halfpennies and the shilling are displayed on the table for all to see plainly, the other halfpenny is held in the palm of the left hand.

When you are ready to begin, you ask for two handkerchiefs to be lent you. Then, with considerable precision, you pick up the shilling with the right hand and one of the handkerchiefs with the left. You show exactly what you have done. And when the actions have been noted, you whisk the handkerchief round and fold it over the halfpenny. At the same time, you palm the shilling in the right hand.

You now hand the handkerchief to

someone to hold and, within it, the shape of the coin can be seen and felt. "What have you there?" you ask, and everybody knows it is the shilling because they can see the halfpenny on the table.

Next you pick up the halfpenny and, using the second handkerchief, go through exactly the same performance as before, except that you envelop the shilling which you palmed and you now palm the halfpenny.

To sum up, you have two people holding handkerchiefs, each with a coin in it. You say to the first, "Now, just to make sure, what coin have you?" and he replies, "A shilling." You ask the same question of the second person and he says, "A halfpenny." Then, holding your magic wand and doing some mystic flourish with it, you tell the audience that the coins have passed. This is the sign for the handkerchiefs to be opened, and the shilling is found where the halfpenny ought to be and the halfpenny where the shilling ought to be.

In your glee at so thoroughly cheating your onlookers do not drop the second halfpenny, or all will be explained.

USING A CONFEDERATE

MANY conjurers think it beneath their dignity to work with a confederate, but for drawing-room performances there is a large class of trick that lends itself admirably to working *au pair*. The only thing about using a confederate is that he must on no account cause any suspicion for, if people spot him as being a helper of yours, all interest in your performance will be lost.

Of course, you must have a rehearsal with your friend before the show, so that there may be a mutual agreement about the signs. The following explanation, however, will be sufficient to show how these signs are arranged.

You take four pencils, or spoons, or cards, or anything, and place them on the table in a definite order, thus, one, two, three, four, and you engage to go out of the room and count twenty. On your return, you will tell which of the pencils, spoons or other things Miss X touched. Your confederate stays inside and, as you re-enter, you see that his handkerchief is sticking out of his breast-pocket. This sign means that she touched No. 1.

If he does a slight cough, you know she touched No. 2.

If his coat is buttoned up she touched No. 3. And if his hands are behind him and not at the sides she touched No. 4.

If all of these signs are indicated, then she touched them all and, if only some are displayed, you can tell which she touched.

Of course, you must not rush up to your friend and examine him minutely; you just glance his way and take in the signs he offers as you walk towards the table.

Naturally, you can draw up a code that will serve for telling you almost anything you want, but do not forget to have a danger signal. A suitable one is for your confederate to turn his back on the table. On seeing this you say immediately, "Something has gone wrong here and somebody is playing a trick. I don't think I'll proceed with this part of the trick." Thereupon, the audience will be amazed how quickly you spotted that, in some way, they were not playing fair.

THE NEWSPAPER CUTTING

SOME little time ago I dropped in at a friend's house and saw what to me was an entirely new trick. A youth who was present picked up an evening paper and asked to be provided with a pair of scissors. He then handed the paper and the scissors to a person chosen at random. I know the person was not a confederate because he offered the things to me, but I refused because I preferred to watch.

"Will you take this newspaper," he asked of the person whom he eventually singled out of the company to do his bidding, "and cut any shape out of it you like? You know, any old jig-saw shape," he added. Then he went on to explain that the entire thickness of the paper was to be cut through, not just a single leaf or sheet.

The person did as requested. "Now," went on the youth, "you have several separate pieces of paper, all the same shape. Select any one of them you like. Keep it and don't let me see it. Finally, give me all the other sheets that are left after you have made your selection. The person did so.

The youth took the papers, bent down before the fire and placed the papers, one

by one, on the hearth, set them alight and they burnt slowly. Then he got up and told the company several things that were printed on the slip of paper retained by the person. Of course, the people who stood around were amazed.

I must admit that I was a little puzzled, so I waited until the trick had been forgotten and then stole over to where the paper had been thrown aside. On examining it, I found that it was not one newspaper, but the halves of two newspapers of that evening's issue. Thus, there were half as many sheets as there ought to have been, but each was given in duplicate. Of course, the secret was out then. The youth only had to run his eye quickly through the jig-saw pieces handed to him and spot which one was not duplicated. Naturally, this was the "fellow" to the one selected by the person who did the cutting, to be kept back. He scanned both sides of this piece while he was burning the others and could then reproduce its features.

This strikes me as an excellent trick you may like to try. If you do, be careful to have the duplicated title-page turned the other way, so that a casual glance through

the newspaper will not reveal it; otherwise, if it is seen, the method of working may be suspected.

MILES AND MILES OF IT

OF course, a conjurer's chief mission is to make his audience sit up and marvel; but there is no doubt that he ought to make his onlookers rock with laughter at times. And, if he cannot do that, he will never be a complete success.

Here is a trick that by its sheer foolery will make everyone burst into peals of laughter. Nobody will for a moment be puzzled as to how the thing is done, but that need not enter into the question.

Before coming into the limelight, you have carefully coiled yards and yards of coloured streamers into a small cardboard cylinder. If necessary, you will glue the ends of the streamers together, so as to make one long run of paper. You can have miles and miles of it if you like, but wait till the glue has dried at the joins before coiling it into the cylinder, otherwise the paper will stick in the wrong places and upset your trick.

Place the cylinder up your coat sleeve and pin it there; then come before your audience. "Ladies and Gentlemen," you will say, "I am about to show you a trick which has the name of 'The Grain of Mustard Seed.' The mustard seed multiplied, you know, and that's why this trick has that name. I have here a piece of paper (and you produce about three inches of a strip of coloured streamer paper). You all see this paper and I want you to note what I do to it. I tear it thus (and you tear it into tiny bits), and now I go so (and you roll it into a ball and throw it down the sleeve opposite to the one harbouring the cylinder). That little ball of paper is like the grain of mustard seed because it will multiply. (Then, with a grin on your face, you say) I can feel it multiplying already."

Thereupon you pull out the end of the streamer from your coat sleeve and continue to unwind. You let the coils fall on the floor and, if you are smart, you will be able to unravel so much that, in the end, you have a stack of paper in front of you that almost obscures you from view.

It is the foolery of it all that pleases the audience.

THE SOARING SIXPENCE

THIS is an excellent little performance which is as simple as A B C, if you care to take a slight amount of trouble in constructing the necessary apparatus.

The trick appears to the audience as follows: You stand an empty glass tumbler where all can see it. Then you produce a pack of cards which you hold up and show,

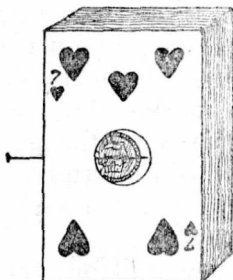


Fig. 9.—The Soaring Sixpence, showing the central hole and the pin, partly withdrawn. The sixpence is seen balancing on the pin ready to fall.

but you do not pass it round for inspection. You have your reasons for not doing that. Next you place the pack over the mouth of the glass so that it entirely closes the glass and there is no way in. Then you produce a sixpence and toss it up in the air. You tell

your friends, while you are playing with the coin, that it is a particularly jolly little coin, that it does all sorts of funny little things, and once——. Just at this point you open your hands and show they are empty. You gaze up and point. "There it goes!" you exclaim. The sixpence, in fact, has jumped out of your hands and is soaring about in the air. You pretend to become excited and point out the route it is travelling. Finally, the coin comes towards you and you try to catch it, eventually crashing into the glass. Of course, it is invisible while in flight.

"Well, I never," you say, "that's remarkable. I tried to grab it, but it dodged me and went clean through the whole pack. And everybody can see it did, for there it is in the glass and the pack is still barring the way in. It was even possible to hear it fall into the glass.

The explanation is quite simple. As you will guess, two sixpences are needed. The one you toss in the air is flicked up your sleeve at the very moment you have made the audience wonder what the funny little coin once did. You work the story up to a climax so that the people have their attention drawn away from your actions.

Now regarding the pack of cards. It is not quite as innocent as it looks. Previous to the performance, you glue about six cards together and, in the centre of the six, you cut out a round hole a trifle larger than the coin. Then you take another card and cut out a circle only a shade larger than the coin. Thus, this circle is smaller than the one first made. This card you glue to the previous stack of six. Now, you can drop a sixpence into the hole, but it would fall out if the hole pointed downwards. So, to prevent it doing this, you get a long pin, or make one out of wire, and drive it from one of the edges of the stack through the cards and across the opening. The coin cannot fall out now.

Probably you can guess at this point how the sixpence crashes through the pack and enters the glass; but in case you are doubtful, I will explain. You pretend the soaring sixpence is approaching and you snatch at it. In reality, you pull out the pin which, by the way, must come out easily. The pin leaves the central hole unbridged and, as there is nothing to support the coin, it falls into the glass.

Naturally, while you are showing the

pack, in the early stages of the performance, you will have some of the loose cards below those with the circular holes, and there is no reason why you should not do a little shuffling, just to give the impression that the pack is undoctored. But, when you are ready to cover the glass, you will slip all the unwanted cards from the bottom to the top of the pack and leave the hole in position.

THE MYSTERIOUS PURSE

THIS magic performance is worked as follows: You have two purses exactly alike. On both of them you make some special mark which is clearly obvious. A large blot of ink will serve the purpose excellently, if the blot is the same shape on both purses. The reason for the mark is evident; it will allow the sceptical people to satisfy themselves that the two purses are really one purse, which is what you want.

In the bottom of one of the purses, you make a neat slit, large enough for coins to drop through readily. Probably, the best way to make the slit is to rip up some

of the stitches. This purse you put on your table, out of sight. The other one you pass round the audience for inspection.

The fun now begins. Taking the unexamined purse, you tell the onlookers that it is a mysterious purse and, thereupon, you hold up a florin and say, "Look, I put this two-shilling piece in this purse, so—" Of course, the coin goes into the purse and you snap the fastener; but at the same time, the coin drops through the slit and falls into your hand. You palm the coin in the manner described under a previous heading, and put the purse in an envelope which is sealed while everybody is looking on. The audience now knows that the coin is in the purse and the purse is in the envelope.

While the sealing is being done, you secrete the coin somewhere. You now get out your magic wand, do a few passes and ask people to look where the coin is hidden. It is found there, although the seals on the envelope are intact. Naturally, the mystery is intensified when you break open the envelope, take out the purse, grip it along the bottom edge to hide the slit and show that it is empty.

PULLING YOUR THUMB OFF

Now here is something especially for the youngsters, which the grown-ups will enjoy, too, if it is done well. It simply consists in pulling off your thumb—no more, no less.

You do it in this manner. Extend the right arm horizontally, with the back of the

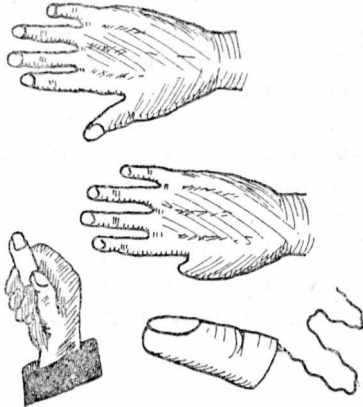


Fig. 10.—How to Pull Your Thumb Off.

hand towards the audience. Have the top edge of the hand slightly nearer the audience than the lower edge. (See the first sketch in Fig. 10.) Note that the thumb is prominently displayed.

Now reach out with the other hand and

make a sudden grab with it for the prominent thumb. At the very second you make the grab, jerk back the right thumb and flatten it inwards against the palm. Your hand has now lost its thumb and looks like the second sketch.

Just to prove you really have pulled the thumb off, hold up the thumb, as shown in the fourth sketch. What you actually hold up is a celluloid thumb that can be bought at any magician's shop for sixpence. A "close-up" drawing of this thumb is shown in the last sketch. As will be seen, it has attached to it a thread of elastic. Thus, when you restore the thumb to put the minds of your juvenile friends at ease, at the very moment you click it back into view, you let go the dummy thumb and the elastic snaps it away out of sight—under your coat, probably.

TABLOID TRICKS

DUST some lycopodium powder on your hand before the show. Then, in front of the audience, put your hand in a bowl of water to fish out a coin, etc. On withdrawing your hand, show that it is quite dry. This is due to the powder, which prevents globules of water adhering to it. Buy the powder at a chemist's; it is colourless.

GET a match book and carefully take out the pin which fastens the row of matches to the cover. Produce the book in front of your friends, tear off a match and light your cigarette. Then hand the book to someone who wants a light. This person, on opening the book, finds it empty, though a moment before he saw it was practically full. The explanation, of course, is that, on handing the book to your friend, you slid out the row of matches and palmed them.

TAKE a square piece of paper and carefully tear it into nine small squares; then put a nought on each of four of the pieces and a cross on the five remaining squares. Now ask somebody to blindfold you and, because you have a most marvellously sensitive touch, you will guarantee to pick out the noughts from the crosses. It's easy. The original piece of paper had been cut square, although this passed unnoticed. The smaller squares were torn. Thus, four of the smaller squares have two cut and two torn edges; the remaining five squares have either three or four torn edges. You were careful to put noughts on the first group and crosses on the second. Of course, you did not point that fact out. And, naturally, your sensitive touch is nonsense; you tell by the edges.

You are endowed with a particular form of magnetism. Just as steel can be attracted by steel, you are attracted by wood. All this you tell to the audience, and you do not forget to mention to your hearers that, curiously enough, your head will not attract wood; it is only your left hand that does.

Then you proceed to prove your statement by placing a match, a pencil, a ruler and other light wooden objects on your hand and they are attracted to it; they stay "put," in fact. Here is the explanation. A short while before coming into public, you smeared your left hand with a little Seccotine, mixed with about twice as much water, and then you wiped most of it off. The trace that is left will be sufficient for your purpose. If you put it on the back of the hand, it will not interfere with your other tricks.

OBTAIN four matchboxes, three of them empty and one only partly filled. Fix the latter just inside the sleeve of your left arm and pin it where it cannot be seen. Then put the three other boxes in a row, on the table. With the right hand, lift up one of the boxes, shake it and say, "It's empty." Now lift up another box with the same hand and shake it. The absence of sound is sufficient proof that it also is empty. Lastly, with the left hand, pick up the third box and shake it. The box up your sleeve rattles and you say, "That's evidently the one with

the matches." So everybody now knows for sure that two of the boxes are empty and one has matches in it. You do a quick shuffle and rearrange the position of the boxes; you are now prepared to wager ten to one that a person cannot pick out the box with the matches in it first go.

HERE'S a simple trick that can be performed with a threepenny bit. First put a dab of bee's wax, soap, putty or other tenacious material on the lower edge of the finger-nail of the longest finger. Then drop the coin in the palm of the hand and show it to your audience. Move the hand about slightly, as though you are going to toss the coin into the air, and keep the coin moving on the palm. When you are ready, get the coin on to the fleshy part of the base of the thumb and close the hand. The finger tips will be shut inwards and so it is quite easy to press the sticky finger-nail on to the coin. Then open the hand with a jerk as though you intend to send the threepenny bit flying off somewhere. Of course, it is sticking to the nail, and if you

display your open hand, with finger-tips pointing downwards, the coin will not be visible. It has, in fact, disappeared mysteriously.

TAKE hold of a glass tumbler, as shown in Fig. 11, and then poise two dice, one on top of the other, on the flat edge of your

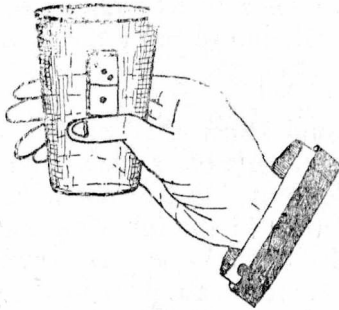


Fig. 11.—How to throw the Two Dice into the Glass Tumbler.

thumb. You have now to jerk one of the dice into the glass and, having succeeded in doing that, to make the second one do the same thing. In other words, you have to toss the two dice into the tumbler, but they must jump in one at a time, and not both together—and they must stay in the glass.

Getting the first one in is merely a matter of carefully judging the necessary upward jerk. Anybody could manage it with a little practice. But with the second dice, there is an unforeseen difficulty. As you repeat the jerk to fling it into the glass, you toss out the first one.

The only safe way of doing the trick is to toss in the first one, in the way already suggested. Then to let the second one fall off the thumb and to bring the glass quickly down and catch the dice as it is tumbling.

You would think that everybody could tell a half-crown from a florin and a penny from a halfpenny, but it is not so easy if you arrange matters in the following way: Put, say, a half-crown in a glass tumbler and then slide a second tumbler inside the first. The two glasses should be exactly alike. Now wrap your hands round the glasses so that the fact of there being a pair of glasses is not too apparent. Ask your friends to look down on the coin and tell you what it is. Unless they know the trick or suspect the answer, they will be sure it is a florin which, of course, it is not. Naturally, you will arrange any coin you use with the head, and not the tail, showing.

THIS is a puzzler which seems to be quite impossible, if done smartly and without bungling. Take a piece of string, about a yard long, and tie the ends, so that the string is one continuous piece. Make the knot as small as possible and clip off the ends; otherwise they will get in the way. Now pass the loop through the top buttonhole of your coat and be very careful to keep the string untwisted.

Next slip your two thumbs into the loop, one each side of the buttonhole, and draw the loop tight. The thumbs should point upwards. Having done this, catch up the top strand of string on the left of the buttonhole with the little finger of the right hand and, similarly, catch up the top strand of string on the right of the buttonhole with the little finger of the left hand. Pull on the string so that all the strands are tight.

Now let go with the left thumb and right little finger, but keep the right thumb and left little finger tight. The pressure of this last thumb and finger will cause the string to lengthen out with a jerk and, what is more, it will be no longer threaded through the buttonhole. The impression caused is that it has torn its way through the coat.

THIS trick will amuse your audience, though it will not set them wondering a good deal. Stand squarely before them and light a match, holding it by the left hand. Then, turn sharply and blow down your right sleeve. As a result, the match goes out.

If you blow and, at the same time, the flame is extinguished, it will appear that one is the result of the other. But such is not the case. When you blow, you give the base of the match a flick with the second finger and out it goes.

Note that you must act before the flame has a strong hold on the wood, otherwise it will not blow out.

TELL your friends that if they will put a penny on the table and cover it over with a sheet of paper, all without you seeing, you are able to discover whether it is heads or tails uppermost. And you promise not to lift the paper.

It seems rather a great deal to offer to do, but this is the simple method. Just rub a pencil a few times across the paper and

you will soon see enough of the pattern to decide.

THE Two Tantalising Buttons provide a very fine drawing-room mystery. Fig. 12 shows a sheet of paper with two parallel slits cut for a considerable distance along

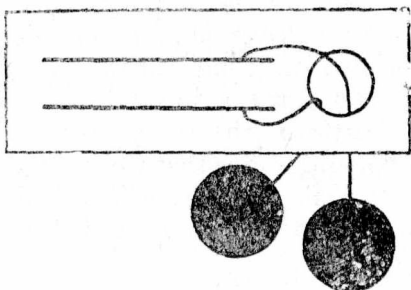


Fig. 12.—The Two Tantalising Buttons.

the length. In addition, there is a circular hole, seen on the right, which is a trifle wider in diameter than the distance between the slits.

Some person who likes to annoy his fellow creatures has threaded a piece of cotton under the slits and through the hole and to the ends of the cotton he

has tied two buttons which are, unfortunately, larger than the circular hole in the paper. I say "unfortunately," because the thing you have to do is to separate the buttons, with the cotton, from the paper, and you must not tear the paper, and the buttons happen to be made of bone or some other non-pliable substance.

Of course, you say the thing is impossible, but it is not. When all your friends have tried and been driven almost to desperation, bring the two short ends of the paper close together and force a bulge of the paper, coming between the cuts, through the circular opening. See that the cotton passes through as well. Then it will be quite easy to slide the buttons away and free them from the paper.

HAVE you ever played this trick on anybody? You select a person who likes smoking cigarettes and sit him or her comfortably in a chair; then, having bandaged the eyes of the said person, you put a cigarette in his or her mouth and light it. After one or two puffs have been taken, you remove the cigarette and replace it by

one that is unlighted, telling the person that it is not alight.

Thereafter, you keep on changing the cigarette from the one that is burning to the one that is not. The marvellous thing is that the smoker puffs away at the unlit cigarette and enjoys it just as much as he or she does the other one. The company will be hugely delighted at the manifest ignorance of the smoker who has to be able to see to be able to tell whether he or she is actually smoking or not.

You have a bowl of water, fairly deep, a glass tumbler, empty, and a handkerchief, a trifle small; now how can you plunge the hanky under the water and not get it wet?

Stuff the hanky right down to the bottom of the tumbler, invert the latter and carefully force it down into the water. Water will rise up into the glass, but not to the level of the water in the bowl. The air imprisoned in the glass prevents the water filling the glass and, in the space taken up by the air, the hanky can repose safe from a wetting.

A TRICK to do while sitting at table, after a meal, is to pick up a lump of sugar and set it alight by using a match. When everybody has seen what you did, ask if others can do the same. Instantly there will be a raid on the sugar basin and it will be as well if the lighted matches are held over plates. Probably nobody will be able to get their lump to fizzle before the match threatens their fingers and they have to drop it. Then how did you do it so easily? Simply by dabbing the portion of the lump to catch alight in some fine, warm, cigarette ash and, of course, you did this before people took an interest in your actions.

ANOTHER trick to perform while at table is to put a sixpence in the bottom of an empty wine glass and, then, to drop a two-shilling piece on top of it. You now ask your friends if they can get the sixpence out of the glass, but they must not touch either coin, and the two-shilling piece must remain in the glass all the time. Thus, some weird way of turning the glass upside down is certainly not permitted.

How do you do it? Tilt the glass slightly

towards you and give a hefty blow down the lower side. The two-shilling piece turns over and jerks the sixpence up into the air out of the glass.

HOLD your hand horizontally from wrist to knuckles and let the fingers droop. Then put a box of matches on the flat part of your hand. Open the box a trifle and then shut it, so as to nip in a little piece of flesh—not enough to hurt, however. The box is lying on your hand, but if you lower the wrist ever so little it will stand up on end. Thus, by lowering and raising the wrist, the box appears to be bewitched, for it gets up and lies down, time after time.

TAKE out a handkerchief, twist it into a rope and lay it flat on the edge of the table. It must be a fairly big handkerchief. Now ask your friends to take the hanky and tie a knot in it. Of course, there is nothing unusual about the request so far, but you go on to impose just one restriction, which is that once they grab the hanky by

the tips they must not let go until the knot is tied.

Your friends will make heroic attempts to comply with your instructions and you will probably have to remind some of them that the knot had to be tied in the hanky and not in themselves.

When they have given it up, stand squarely before the hanky, fold your arms and make the fingers project as far out as possible. Bend first towards one tip of the material and then towards the other. As you bend, grab a tip. Now unfold your arms and the fact of doing this causes a knot to be tied in the handkerchief.

MAXIMS FOR MAGICIANS

It is not advisable to tell your onlookers what you are going to do before you do it. Go through the performance and let them find out what it is all about.

Never do a trick twice, just to fill up time. On the second occasion the audience knows what is coming next and will be ready for the weak links in your actions.

Be funny and full of good spirits if you can. But don't try to be funny if it is not at all in your line. Remember that sometimes a mournful demeanour is more funny than a face radiating beams of smiles.

Practise all your tricks in front of a mirror. You will see then what the audience sees.

Always try to say something startling just when you are about to reach the weak part of a trick. The attention of the audience is divided then.

Never do a trick in public unless you are sure of it, absolutely.

When you pass things round for inspection, keep your eye on those who are

doing the examining, but appear to be unconcerned. You never know what trick somebody may be trying to play on you.

Endeavour to be original. All the tricks in this book may be presented in some different way. Think out how you can offer them.

If you are interested in tricks with playing cards, Owen Grant's shilling book, *Card Tricks*, will prove helpful. It is No. 11 in this series.

CONJURING EQUIPMENT

Most of the tricks and illusions described in the foregoing pages require no apparatus beyond that which the conjurer can easily make himself. It is well to remember, however, that a great deal of specially-made apparatus can be bought from the stores which supply conjurers' materials. The amateur is therefore advised to pay a visit to one of these stores and to examine some of the gadgets offered for sale.

By selecting a few of the items the amateur will be able to add to his stock of tricks at no great cost, and as the illusions, in these cases,

depend more on the cunning way the apparatus is constructed than on the cleverness of his manipulation, it will be recognised that an amateur with a supply of these goods is able to add considerably to the interest of his performance.

Recently I paid a visit to one of these shops, and here are some of the things which struck me as being particularly attractive.

First, there was a penny which, by the way, cost sixpence. It looked like any ordinary penny, but when you held it up to the audience and pulled on it slightly, it became twice as long as it was broad. I can see quite a lot of fun being derived from that penny, especially if a normal coin were borrowed and palmed, and this one substituted for it.

Then, for one and six you could buy a penny that would give some people pleasure and some just the reverse. Through its diameter a tiny tunnel was bored, and in the tunnel a pin was fitted. Presumably, it was to be used in this manner: You ask some member of the audience to come out and hold one half of the coin while you hold the other half. Then, while you are indulging in some meaningless patter and

people are wondering what is coming, you push on your end of the pin and the point pricks the other person's finger. Though it gives no more than a slight prick, it takes the person unawares and he jumps, much to the delight of the onlookers.

There were many other mysterious coins for sale. Some stood on their edges and refused to lie down; others split up, with the result that pennies changed into farthings; and others again vanished mysteriously when handled.

What was described as the Japanese egg trick was particularly mystifying. There was a bag and in it a real egg was placed. The moment the egg was inside, the conjurer banged and hit the bag, and on looking inside there was not what one expected—a horrid mess made by the egg—but absolutely nothing at all.

Another gadget consisted of an egg and a glass tumbler. The egg was put into the tumbler, in full view of the onlookers, and then a silk handkerchief was dropped over the tumbler, effectively enclosing the mouth or opening. A second later, the handkerchief was whipped away and the tumbler was found to be empty. The egg had vanished!

As may be imagined, there were all sorts of pieces of apparatus that had to do with plants and flowers. For instance, there was the floral miracle which consisted of a flower pot filled with earth. You sprinkled a few seeds on the surface of the earth and covered the pot for a few moments with a cylindrical tin. On lifting the tin, the seeds were found to have grown into a fair-sized plant in full bloom.

Of course, there were match-boxes that enabled the conjurer to do almost anything with them, and handkerchiefs that permitted of miracles. There was one piece of apparatus that enabled the conjurer to show two empty hands and then, by slowly moving them, to bring a handkerchief into view, and all while his sleeves were rolled back. Another handkerchief was rolled up and, when gripped, it was transformed into yards and yards of coloured ribbon. And there were handkerchiefs that could be knotted without any skill or effort.

One particular gadget was calculated to mystify the most astute onlooker. It was merely a long cylinder, just wide enough to take a table-tennis ball. One of these balls was dropped through the tube to show that it was empty and then the tube was

tapped and a second ball fell out. How it got inside the tube is the mystery.

Then, of course, there were bottles that enabled the conjurer to pour out claret, sherry, champagne and other beverages at will, and all from the same bottle.

But probably the smartest gadgets of all were the trick billiard balls. Though outwardly they looked perfectly innocent, it was possible to balance three of them, one above the other, or to stand one on the tip of a cue.

Of course, there were hundreds of other interesting things which were worth considering. Five shillings spent on them would make a great deal of difference to one's show.

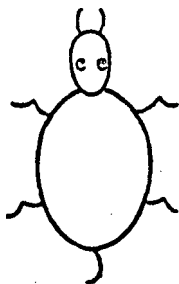
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The most popular, of course, is our BEETLE GAME. It is the most fascinating round table entertainment of the century. From the word "go" it is a riot of breathless excitement and laughter.

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All U.P.L. Party Games are sold in very attractive and distinctive striped red, white and blue boxes, and are obtainable from all stores, stationers, and booksellers, or direct, post paid, plus a penny in the shilling.

THE BEETLE GAME. Sufficient cards and dice for 12 players, 1s. od.

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A kind of Treasure Hunt for any number of players of all ages. It is the perfect game for indoor or garden parties. Action and frivolity are the keynotes of its characteristics.

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Produced in the form of a pad with eighteen identical pages giving the essential parts of a humorous story, leaving spaces for the guests to fill in their own elaborations. This is an up-to-date and quite new version of the well-known game of Consequences. The instructions are so absurd that the final result of the game must create roars of laughter.

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Each pad provides for 18 players.

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Like "Crazy Post" action and frivolity are their chief characteristics.

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For 12 players, 1s. 9d. If more than 12 players are taking part extra answer cards are obtainable in packets of 12 for 6d.

Both of these games are adaptable for 5 to 500 players, anywhere, and at any time—viz., Motor Outings, The Beach, Holiday Camps, Sports Clubs, Garden Parties, Cycling Clubs, Picnics, Fêtes, Gymkhanas, Hotel Parties, House Parties, large Social Events, etc.

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No preparation is necessary, simply hand the many printed humorous phrases to the players, and the ablest narrator will then read aloud the story of Beryl. When he pauses at the blanks in the story each player, in his turn, immediately fills in the blanks by reading aloud one of the stupid phrases in his possession. The resulting revelry has to be experienced to be believed.

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Each Hunt contains full instructions as to what to hide and where to hide it. (The Hides are ordinary household articles).

Each pad provides for 16 Hides, with 12 copies of each Hide, i.e., sufficient for 12 players. If more than 12 players are taking part, extra pads will be required. The following is an example:

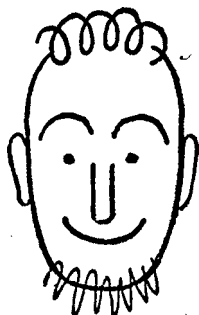
"I'm not an apple, nor a pair:
For both of me are right.
You'll find me in a corner, where
It's almost black as night."

WHAT TO HIDE. Set two shoes, both for the right foot, in a dark corner of one of the rooms.

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BEDLAM

It's funnier than Beetle and
that's why U.P.L. have
named it Bedlam.

The rules are learned in one minute, but
the joy of the game will last a lifetime.

Sales of the U.P.L. Beetle game have exceeded 2,250,000 in less than two years. Bedlam is certainly more ridiculous, which we think is sufficient description of the pleasure it will create at any party, whether the number of players be 4 or 400. Just try it, and we guarantee that its absurdities will cause you to talk and laugh about it for years to come, and it takes about the same time to play as does Beetle.

SMALL SIZE. Sufficient Cards and Dice for 12 players, 1s. 0d.

LARGE SIZE. Sufficient Cards and Dice for 20 players, 1s. 6d.

EXTRA LARGE SIZE. Sufficient ditto for 40 players, 2s. 6d.
For replay, cards are obtainable in packets ... 25 for 1/.

FIND YOUR PARTNER

The perfect "introducing" games for dispelling that atmosphere of reserve among strangers at a party.

There is a choice of four different games which are so arranged that the players are compelled to ask one another many subtle and jovial questions before they can be sure of having found their correct partner. They provide an ideal way of "getting your party going."

In boxes, sufficient material for 24 players, 1/3 each.

MIXED GRILL

By DOT PRIESTLY and DAVID BOYCE.

2s. NET

Short Sketches and Burlesques.

Monologues (Including Gunga Din) and Patter Acts. For one to five Actors

The whole is ideally arranged for Amateur Theatricals,
Camp Concert Parties, etc.

SCRAMBLE, 1s. 9d.

"Scramble" consists of nearly 150 well-known couplets, proverbs, songs, hymns, etc., all of which are divided by perforation so that one half of each can be placed anywhere about the area chosen for play. The other halves are retained by the M.C. who hands these out to the competitors one at a time. The object of the players is then to compete with each other to see who can "pair" the largest number of couplets, etc.

Example: Distributed: "MY LITTLE GREY HOME."
Handed to the Competitor: "IN THE WEST."

This game is designed for any number of players up to 14, and will provide 40 minutes of rollicking fun. Where more than 14 players will be taking part, additional boxes of the Game will be needed to cover the number of extra players.

A U.P.L. SHOPPING EXPEDITION

For 12 players 1s. 9d. When more than 12 players are taking part, extra Shopping Cards can be obtained in packets of 12 for 6d.

The game is designed for small family parties of, say, 5 people and large parties of any number up to 500 by using extra Shopping Cards.

It is adaptable for either indoor or outdoor entertainment—viz., for the Home, Social Hall, Women's Institutes, Youth Clubs, and it makes the perfect game for Garden Parties, School and Club grounds, etc.

The Shopping Cards provide for two distinct expeditions, each taking about 30 minutes.

Action and frivolity are its chief characteristics.

GOT IT!

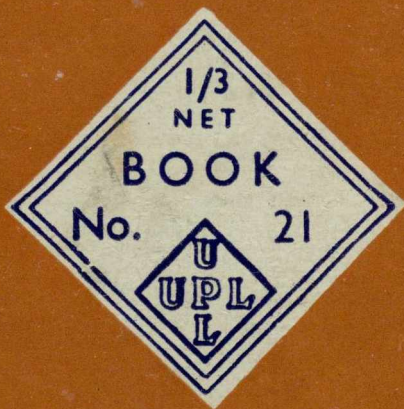
For 12 Players, 1s. 9d. For 24 Players, 3s. 0d.

A progressive table game of exceptional merit combining laughter and concentration.

When play commences an equal number of competitors (3 or 4) must sit at each table. The game consists of developing the names of well-known personalities from jumbled letters. These jumbled letters are obtained by the throwing of specially designed dice and therefore as play progresses an animated competitive spirit is created.

Approximate time allowed for the game is one hour, but if desired, this can be shortened.

There is such a distinct air of originality and fascination about this game that it can be rightly termed the SUPREME Party Game.



1/3

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