



One Man Mind Reading Secrets

by Ralph W. Read

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"One Man"

Mind Reading Secrets

**A Calostro Secret Monograph
Number One**

**Compiled & Edited by
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Author of The Calostro Mind Reading Act**



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Introduction

The public has always been interested in exhibitions of mind reading from the time of the French conjurer, Robert Houdin, who was the first professional mind reader. His act, which he called "Second Sight," required two persons, as did that of Robert Heller, Anna Eva Fay, The Zanzigs, Mercedes and many others. Stuart Cumberland, many years ago, presented an act in which he worked alone. He called it "mind reading," and it was so classified by the writers of that day, but we now call it "muscle reading" as being a truer description of the tests he performed.

In general, the effects produced by a person working alone are the same as those presented by performers employing one or more assistants. While there are many tests, such as divining the names of chosen cards, numbers, names, etc., the large majority of these acts consists in the performer's revelation of facts concerning questions secretly written by the spectators. Of course, the performer must, in all cases, ascertain through some secret means what has been written in order to play the role of mind reader, and it is these secret methods that are disclosed in the following pages. Where the performer works alone, it is necessary that the spectators write the questions, figures, drawings, etc., on paper, which the performer can manipulate so as to gain secret knowledge of the spectators' writings.

Many of the fundamental principles are the same in the one-man and the two-man acts, but the single performer must necessarily do all the work, and many ingenious subtleties have been devised to enable him to glean necessary knowledge without being detected.

It is not claimed that all of the ideas given herein are original. As a matter of fact, some of them have been used for years, but we have added many new ideas and improvements that will greatly simplify the work. Some of the methods have been given us by practical performers and are now released for the first time. Others are tests which we have witnessed from time to time, and for which we give the methods according to our own solutions.

The "One-Ahead" Principle

This is one of the oldest, and, at the same time, one of the simplest methods ever devised for secretly reading questions. It has been used by mind readers, pseudospiritualists and others with great success for many years before both large and small audiences. As originally performed, it was not a one-man effect; hence, we shall first describe it that way and then give the variations used by the single performer.

Original One-Ahead Method

The spectators are requested to write their questions on slips of paper and to let no one see what they have written. These slips are then folded by the writers so the writing is concealed on the inside. Envelopes may be furnished and the questions sealed within, if desired. This is a fair sized audience where some write questions and some do not.

In any event, a total stranger is directed to collect the questions and dump them on the table on the platform. The performer picks up one of the sealed envelopes, holds it to his forehead, as though to "see" with supernatural vision and shortly announces that he "gets" the initials M. C.--"is M. C. present?" M.C. acknowledges that she wrote a question, whereupon the performer proceeds to give a suitable answer to her question about a trip to Boston, etc. As he finishes the answer, the performer tears open the envelope and reads aloud the question, "Will I go to Boston? M. Clark."

That is what he appears to do, but all is not what it seems. M. Clark wrote a question all right, but M. Clark is a confederate of the performer's, and wrote that question by agreement, secretly bending over a corner of her envelope so as to distinguish it from the others, identifying it as the one to be avoided until the last. The performer has picked up and opened some other envelope, first pretending that it belongs to M. C. Then, as he looks at the open slip, he orally reads "Will I go to Boston? M. C.", but, in reality, he is at the same time mentally reading and remembering the question written on the genuine slip before him--let us assume this slip hears the question, "Will father get well?--signed John Jones."

The performer has thus apparently confirmed his divination of the first question, and now knows a genuine question which he pretends to be the one contained in the next (second) envelope, which he reads while held at the forehead as before. The same procedure is

followed throughout, each new envelope torn open furnishing the data for the next reading.

The performer can stop at any time but if he desires to read all of the questions, he leaves the M. Clark envelope till last, and after it is torn open to apparently confirm the last test, it is tossed among the others, and they may all be returned to the writers.

Stealing Folded Billet from Tray

With a full understanding of the foregoing it will be obvious that no confederate is needed if the performer can secretly gain possession of any one question and ascertain its contents before he starts to give his answers.

One of the ways to do this is as follows:-- The performer carries a small opaque tray and some blank slips of paper about 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" down into the audience. He passes out the slips on which the spectators are requested to write their questions. After this is done, he explains the necessity for secrecy and requests each spectator to fold his slip in half with the writing inside, then fold again in half the other way.

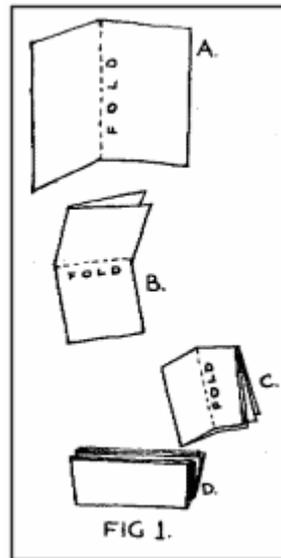
This done, the performer collects the questions on the tray. All the time the performer has held a folded blank slip on the under side of the tray, concealed by the fingers of the left hand. As he returns to the stage, the performer changes the tray from the left hand to the right, at the same time performing two simple secret moves. As the right hand takes hold of the tray, the right thumb slides off one of the question slips lying near the edge of tray. This question is slid over the edge of tray and falls into the right hand where it lies concealed between the right hand and the bottom of the tray.

The left hand at the same moment has done the reverse with the fake billet. As the tray is withdrawn from the left hand, the blank folded billet remains in the left hand until the edge of the tray passes over it when a slight motion of the left fingers will flip the billet in with the others on the tray. This fake billet has a bent corner or other secret mark by which it can be easily distinguished, otherwise the performer will have to follow it with his eyes so as to avoid picking it up until the end.

The tray is emptied on the table, the stolen question being secretly held in the palm of the right hand at the roots of the fingers. On the table is a crystal gazing ball resting on a cushion. The performer sits down back of the table, picks up a question slip from the pile, holds it to his forehead and gazes into the crystal. In the meantime, the right hand is back of the cushion quickly opening the stolen billet so it can be read, and announced as the one held at the forehead. The one ahead system is followed throughout, the stolen billet being switched for the blank billet after the performer has pretended to read it at the finish.

Subtle Glimpse of Folded Billet

This method of ascertaining the contents of a genuine billet is subtle because of its very boldness. No one would suspect that the performer would do this bare faced deed, yet it is accomplished with the greatest ease. It can be done before small groups, but is best suited to audiences of thirty, forty, or more.



We have witnessed a performance of this method, the billets, or slips of paper measuring about 2-3/4" x 2-3/4", or a trifle less. This particular performer used paper of a Golden Rod color but white would do as well. Prior to the show, the performer had folded each of these slips three times as in Fig. 1 (Note A, B, C, and D).

After which the billets were just one-eighth of the original size, and they were numbered consecutively on the outside from 1 to 40, or 150 or more, according to the size of the audience.

In his vest pocket the performer has a number of soft lead pencils, and with the folded billets in his left hand, on top of a few opened billets (but with creases), he is ready to proceed. He makes the usual opening talk about mind reading, etc., and explains that he has the spectators write their questions the better to concentrate on them. He steps down in the audience, and as he passes out the billets and pencils, he calls attention to the fact that the slips are numbered--each spectator is to remember his number, then open his billet and write his name at the top, the question underneath, and finally fold the slip in the original creases. No one is to show or tell what he has written but must concentrate his thoughts on the question.

The performer now and then opens a billet before handing it to a spectator. He moves about from one side of the aisle to the other, and

sometimes steps back and forth, always keeping on the move, as he talks and passes out the slips. He finally has only two folded billets remaining in his left hand, on top of the open billets. One of these folded billets, say, No. 5, was originally given a bent corner when folded by the performer so he can distinguish it from the others. He has carefully withheld this No. 5 billet and now hands it to a spectator who is requested to hurry up "as the others are all ready."

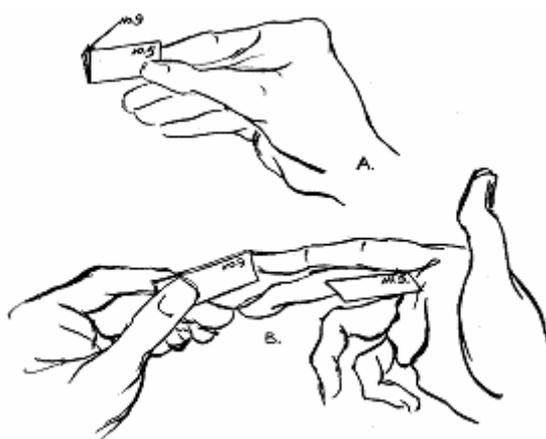
Performer steps across the aisle, says "anybody else?" hands out remaining folded billet to a spectator, and at the same time watches No. 5 to see when he has finished writing, then speaks out "All ready, we will now collect the questions, who will volunteer? Anybody?" (man offers his services). "All right, thank you, sir, go down to the front, and start there--take your hat for the purpose." The performer turns and looks toward the rear, and acknowledges an imaginary request for a slip, by saying, "Yes sir, just a moment, I'll be right there." Performer quickly turns to No. 5, and extends his hand, quietly saying, "Are you ready?" and takes the No. 5 question, turns away quickly and walks toward the rear.

Now comes the bold move. Performer's hands are brought together and he quickly and secretly opens the No. 5 question as he walks rapidly to the rear, inquiring as he goes, "Who was it that wanted a slip?--Where is that party?" Somebody will respond. "Oh, there you are, here's a pencil and paper--and hurry please." Performer takes the bottom, opened slip from left hand and gives it to the spectator, in the meantime getting a good chance to read the No. 5 question which is now lying open on top of the other open slips. This only takes a second, you need not get all the details if hard to read--merely the name, or initials and an idea of the subject matter, such as, "J. C. Wilson, sick father," or anything you can glimpse.

The performer keeps moving about and talking, he quickly refolds No. 5, and turns around, walking toward stage, and as he passes the volunteer collector, remarks, "That's right, get them all," and quietly places his right hand over the hat for a second as sort of a gesture to pull the hat down to see how many collected--but the right hand has the No. 5 billet gripped at the roots of the fingers, and the billet is allowed to drop in the hat with the others. This casual move will not be noticed, and even if it were, you would appear to be dropping in some stray billet that had been handed to you. Nothing is said about it, 'you just do it. If desired, the performer can stop just before he passes the volunteer assistant, and, as though to speed up things, turn to one row and say, "Pass your questions over, please," he taking them and tossing them along with No. 5 into the hat.

In any event, the performer returns to the stage, requests the collector to kindly come upon the stage and dump the folded slips out

on the table, the collector returning to his seat. The performer has spotted the No. 5 question in the pile, either by seeing the number visible, or by the bent corner--he gives the pile a stir with finger if necessary to bring the No. 5 question into view. With right hand, the performer picks up a billet, or what to the audience appears to be one billet, but he really picks up two, the No. 5 along with some other billet, for example No. 9. The actual picking up is done with the right hand and the left hand immediately comes to the right hand, so the two billets are momentarily held as one, between the tips of the right and left fingers. The right fingers instantly let go and the right hand is withdrawn, leaving the billet (really two of them) in full view at tips of left fingers which then raise the billet to your forehead, and you pretend to divine the question--the one by "J. C. Wilson, who has a sick father, etc." This is done in the usual manner, announcing first the name, then the nature of the question, and finally giving the answer.



The left hand has been lowered, the right fingers approach the left, and with the aid of the thumbs, quickly and secretly slide the No. 5 billet into the right hand where it is held or palmed against the roots of the right fingers. See Fig. 1A.

In the meantime, the No. 9 billet is being visibly opened, the fingers concealing the No. 9 on the slip. The same pretense is made, confirming the answer just given, and mentally ascertaining a new question, as previously described. The No. 9 billet is refolded, and in the operation, the positions of No. 5 and No. 9 are reversed--No. 9 being now palmed in the right hand, and No. 5 in full view at left finger tips. No. 5 may now be returned to "J. C. Wilson," or may be tossed out into the audience, or simply thrown upon the floor. It would be well to use all three of these methods of disposal during the performance, as was the habit of John Slater in his demonstrations.

Of course, the readings are continued in the same manner, and all of the billets can be returned to the writers, if desired, but it becomes a bit tiresome to the balance of the audience, and it is much more dramatic to vary the final disposition, as suggested. The performer we witnessed, repeatedly thrust his right hand into his trouser's pocket, leaving the billet there so he could show his right hand empty but he had to dive into the pocket again to get the billet so he could make the final switch, and this pocket procedure did not look so good.

Thumb Tip Billet Steal

All magicians are familiar with the fake known as the thumb tip, which is a hollow shell shaped and painted flesh color to resemble the first joint of the thumb over which it fits. As used in this effect, the thumb tip should be long enough to cover the full first joint of the thumb, and fit easily so there is room to hold a folded billet which lies under the ball of the thumb, and concealed within the tip.

The slips of paper used should measure about 1" x 2-1/2". When folded twice, the billet may easily be concealed within the tip, as described. The thumb tip is used to get secret possession of one of the questions.

One method is to have the blank slips in the left vest pocket along with the thumb tip, the latter being nearest the body with the open end up. An envelope, size 6-3/4, is in your left side coat pocket. After passing out a few slips, allowing time for these spectators to finish writing their questions, the performer withdraws a slip from his pocket and at the same time brings out the thumb tip in position on the right thumb. He uses this slip to show how the spectators should fold them. With this sample folded billet in his left fingers he thrusts his left hand in his coat pocket, leaving the sample billet there and getting the envelope. He spots a spectator whose question is written and slip folded. This spectator and one or two more are allowed to drop their billets in the envelope.

The performer then quickly inserts his right thumb in the envelope as though to open it, withdraws his thumb, leaving the thumb tip inside the envelope through which it is lightly grasped and held upright by the fingers of the left hand. While doing this, the performer requests a spectator to "just put your slip in envelope," however performer does not let this spectator drop it in--performer simply reaches for the spectator's billet, taking it in his right hand between first finger and thumb which go into envelope. Actually, the billet is put into the thumb tip, the right thumb going in with it and the hand quickly withdrawn, thus secretly bringing out the billet in thumb tip. In getting more slips from pocket, thumb tip containing stolen billet is left in pocket.

The envelope is then handed to another spectator to drop in his billet, and he passes envelope along to others, meanwhile performer has been handing out slips to others, and in talking and moving about, has plenty of opportunity to get thumb tip with stolen billet out on his thumb and quickly extract stolen billet and open it. He must not look at it, just get slip opened out and placed underneath slips in left

hand. The next spectator is handed a slip and instructed to "write briefly and plainly and be sure to sign your name--then fold writing inside like this" this giving performer a chance to take stolen slip and secretly read it as he folds it.

Some spectator looks after the collection envelope and brings it to the stage, and is directed to dump the billets out on the table. In the meantime, performer has gotten thumb tip with stolen question in it on his right thumb, and he has also secretly gotten from his left coat pocket, the blank sample billet that he first folded down in the audience, and this blank billet is secretly put on the edge of the pile and used as in previous methods. The one ahead principle is employed, but the use of the thumb tip provides an easy and most natural switch whereby the question just answered may be returned at that moment to the writer.

The right hand, wearing thumb tip containing stolen question, picks up a slip from the pile, and after giving the answer, switches the one ahead billet for the stolen one in this manner: If you take hold of thumb tip with left fingers and thumb, you should be able to withdraw right thumb and billet both at once from thumb tip. With palms towards you, try it before a mirror. The tip remains concealed behind the left fingers, while the billet appears to be taken by the right fingers from the left hand.



Now, with the loaded tip on right thumb, and billet No. 2 held openly between tips of right fingers and thumb (with tip on) you have just completed answering the stolen billet, and you open billet No. 2 to confirm (really to read the one ahead). You refold No. 2 with both hands and finish with it in left hand. To exchange the No. 2 billet for the stolen one in tip, you merely bring the hands together, palms toward you, and put right thumb (with tip on) on No. 2 billet behind the left fingers, grip thumb tip with left thumb and fingers, slide out stolen billet as right thumb is withdrawn from thumb tip, and it will appear to be the No. 2 billet just seen in left hand. See Fig. 2.

Try this before a mirror, and the deceptiveness of the move will be apparent. The stolen billet is now returned to its writer by an usher, or voluntary assistant.

Your left hand holds concealed, the No. 2 billet against the fingers, the thumb tip against the billet, and the left thumb against the thumb tip. The fingers are curled inwards in a natural position and no one suspects anything in the hand.

The next billet (we will call it No. 3) is now picked up by the right

hand which is raised to the forehead and an answer given (to No. 2). The hands are brought together to open No. 3 to verify, and is refolded and finally held in right hand which pushes it into the thumb tip along with the right thumb, and the No. 2 billet is brought into view at the same instant, being grasped between fingers and thumbs of both hands for a second, and may then be returned to its writer. You are again prepared with one ahead for the next reading.

It will be noted that the second move, or switch, is the reverse of the first, and both should be practiced before a mirror until you can make the moves with rapidity and certainty, without looking at your hands. It should be done while you are addressing the audience with some remark, such as, "Where is Miss White, I'll return your question, etc."

Also note that both hands are seen to be "empty" as you answer the first question, and likewise on every alternate billet. You make no comment about it, but the "emptiness" of the hands permits you to make open handed gestures so frequently that no one will suspect that anything is, or could be, concealed in the hands at any time.

Thumb Tip Steal of Billet

This is a slight modification of Method Four, and would be suitable for a large audience. Instead of using an envelope, a lined wicker basket is employed for collecting billets. It is unprepared but the padded lining affords a place to hold a thumb tip at the end, easily concealed by your fingers.

After three or four billets have been dropped in by the spectators, you take the next billet and put it in thumb tip which you withdraw, and then give basket to someone to make collection. The balance of the procedure is the same as in Method Four.

Cards in Envelopes

In the previous methods, folded billets have been used, without being sealed in envelopes. The procedure is altered somewhat when envelopes are employed. Small white drug envelopes are used in this method, and the questions are written on small dull finished white cards, the performer supplying very soft black pencils for the purpose. This insures bold, black writing which is easy to read.

Some of the old timers used very simple tactics, especially the fake mediums. Of course, the confederate could be used in the audience to write the prearranged question so as to start off the one ahead system. Where the confederate was dispensed with, the following plan was often used:

Cards and envelopes were passed around, the spectators sealing their questions within the envelopes. These were collected on a plate or tray. A duplicate sealed envelope containing a blank card was held concealed by performer's fingers on the under side of the tray. While returning to the stage, the performer secretly added this blank one to the others, and palmed off one of the genuine envelopes.

Various means were used to secretly read the stolen question. One performer used to manage to tear open the stolen envelope during the trip back to the stage, thereafter thrusting the torn envelope and card (unread) into his pocket. He placed the tray of envelopes on the table and advanced a few remarks to the audience about the work. During this talk, he would casually put his hand in his pocket and extract the card from the envelope, palming the card in the right hand, and leaving the envelope in the pocket. He remained standing while he worked. He picked up an envelope from the tray with right hand, raised it to his forehead, gave the answer, and using both hands, would tear open the envelope, remove the card and read in the usual one ahead manner. The envelope was dropped on the table or floor and the cards switched under cover of the hands, the stolen one being returned to writer, and the one ahead was palmed for the continued routine.

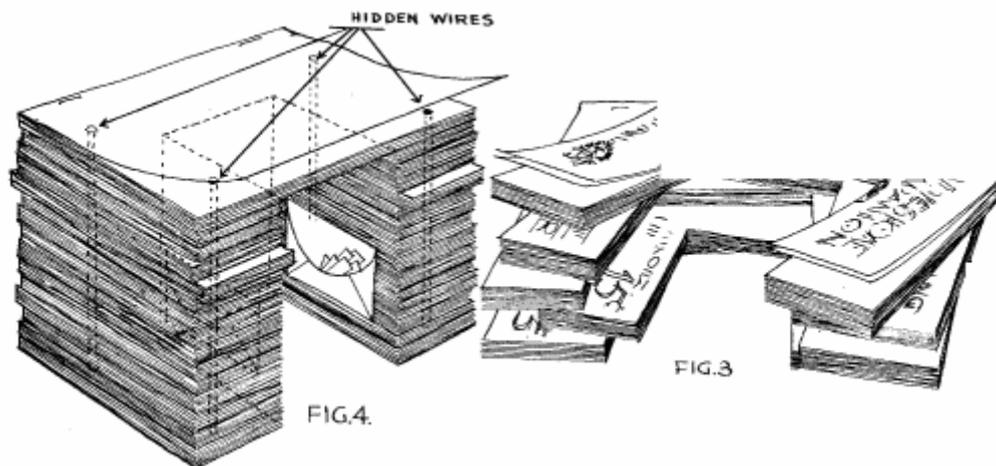
It isn't hard to do, but it does require considerable practice and, in our opinion, hardly warrants the effort, especially in view of the fact that the hands are never empty and cannot be freely used or shown.

Faked Pile of Magazines

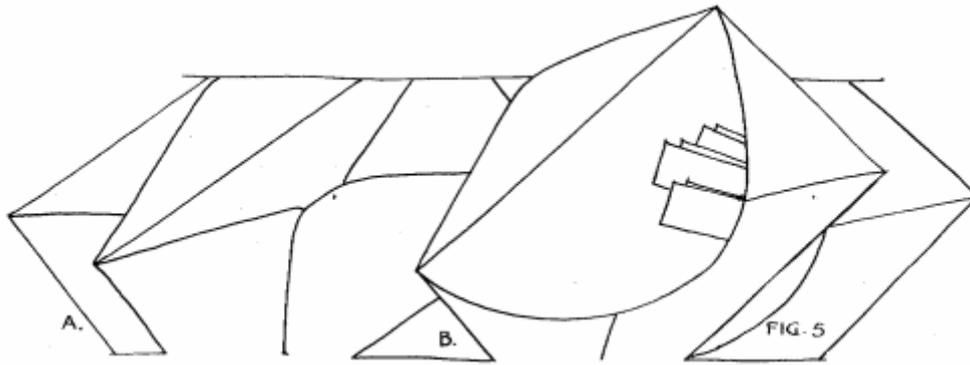
Envelopes and cards are used in this method which make it easy to switch the cards and return each one, as answered, together with the envelope on which the spectator's name has been written.

White envelopes about 2" x 3" with gummed end flaps, are used, and cards a little smaller, that will slip easily in and out of the envelopes. One of the envelopes is prepared by having the glue removed from the flap, that is, most of it is taken off with a moist cloth, and enough glue remains so it will look natural but will not actually stick when it is "sealed" later on. This envelope is empty, it is given a secret identification mark, and we will call it No. 1.

A blank card is sealed in another envelope, bearing a secret identification mark, and this one we will call No. 2.



A special piece of equipment is employed, consisting of a faked stack of magazines some ten or twelve inches high. The magazine on top of the pile is not altered, but the others have all been cut out on the edge (Fig. 3) so as to form a secret recess when bound together as shown in Fig. 4. They are bound together by running wire through holes drilled in the stack, these holes going through all the cut magazines and through the lower half of the top magazine. Thus the wire does not show on top. Two envelopes of the type illustrated in Fig. 5 are glued one on each side of the recess. The position of the envelopes is such that a card can be easily slipped in or out of either one.



Arrange the properties as follows: On the right side of the table is the fake stack of magazines with the recess at the rear, of course. On top of the magazine is a crystal ball resting on a cushion or stand. Resting on table just inside recess is a short piece of soft pencil. In the center of the table is a glass dish or bowl. At the left end of table is a metal or Japanese tray on which you place, first, the No. 2 envelope, then the No. 1 envelope on top of No. 2, and, finally, nineteen unprepared envelopes on top of No. 1, these all forming one pile at one end of tray. A stack of twenty cards is placed at the other end of tray. A supply of pencils is carried in your pocket, and you are then ready to do the act.

Presentation and working: Grasp the tray in left hand, thumb on top of envelopes, fingers beneath tray. This will keep envelopes from slipping around. The cards, being heavier and flat, will not slide so easily, and it doesn't make any difference if they do.

Go down into audience and hand a card only (no envelope) to first spectator, requesting him to write his name across the top of the card, followed by his question. Say nothing about envelopes to him. Pass a card together with an envelope to the next spectator and likewise to other spectators as you quickly go from row to row, until all twenty cards are gone.

At this time, there are two envelopes left on tray, the top one being the No. 1, and beneath it the No. 2. You are talking all the time, you lose no time, you retrace your steps going from the rear down to the front, and you ask first spectator if his question is ready. He has no envelope, and will probably say so, anyhow, performer asks spectator to seal it and the performer holds the No. 1 envelope in his own hand with open flap toward spectator, adding, "turn the writing downwards and put it in this envelope." This done, performer "seals" the flap, places envelope on tray on top of No. 2 envelope, and asks spectator's name, "to identify it." Performer pretends to write name on envelope, but really writes nothing at all. Performer turns to another spectator, his sealed question is taken, his name ascertained,

and apparently written on that envelope, but you actually write the name of first spectator instead, thus preparing for the one ahead system.

This process is continued until you collect all the questions, the last question (the 20th) bearing the name of the nineteenth writer. If the audience is fairly large you can do a little secret business at this point. You want to get the twentieth name secretly written on the No. 2 envelope (containing the blank card). When you are given the 20th name, you quickly repeat this last name (no initials) as you rapidly write down the 19th name, and you walk quickly toward a row farther back, saying, "did I get all your questions here, etc.?" meanwhile secretly shifting the No. 2 envelope to the top of the pile as you straighten up the pile. You turn back quickly to the 20th writer and ask him, "Did I get your name correctly?--and the initials, please"--you look at the No. 2 envelope, you are already writing his name on it, as though going over with the pencil to make it clearer--and you then slowly and deliberately write his initials before his name, then repeat his name aloud (say, "C. W. Smith") as though to confirm. All this takes only a few seconds and merely suggests your desire to have all fair and square.

The No. 1 envelope, now on bottom of pile on tray, bears no name, but contains the first writer's question, and the flap is closed but not actually sealed. This No. 1 envelope is to be secretly gotten behind the magazine stack. It can be palmed off tray during your return to stage, or can be slid over on to bottom of tray and there concealed by the fingers, or it can be held b3/4 left thumb on top of tray when tray (back to audience.) is emptied of its contents into the glass bowl. From any of these positions the No. 1 envelope is easily dropped behind magazines on table.

If there was no opportunity to do the secret writing on the No. 2 envelope in the audience, this envelope is manipulated along with No. 1 so that they are both behind the magazines after the questions are dumped into bowl.

If the name is still to be written on No. 2, you sit down back of table for a few seconds, gazing into crystal and talking to the audience about what you are going to do, etc. You are secretly using the pencil behind the magazines to write the name on No. 2 envelope which is then palmed as you rise and ask for a volunteer in front row to hold the bowl. Of course, the palmed No. 2 envelope is slipped into the bowl, unnoticed. It is so easy to put the name on the No. 2 envelope while down in the audience that we strongly advise that method. It saves a lot of time.

You sit down and talk as you gaze into the crystal, left hand to

forehead, and right hand behind magazines quickly pushing flap open of the No. 1 envelope and letting card slide out, you mentally read the question it bears, and the name, giving the answer. The card is slipped into one of the pockets in the recess, your hands are casually seen empty, you ask volunteer to find that name in the bowl and hand it to you. You tear it open, remove card, and pretend to read aloud the question it bears, but you actually say what is written on the card just answered, as in the regular one ahead system.

Holding envelope in left hand and card in right hand, you look at envelope and say the name, "----- did I get your question correctly?" At the same time, your right hand momentarily drops behind magazines, puts this card in one of the pockets and comes up with the No. 1 card--same name as on envelope in left hand, and these are now returned to the writer.

The one ahead method is continued throughout, the last envelope you call for from the bowl being the No. 2 with blank card which is exchanged for the last question you have just answered.

In the case of certain groups, such as dates in private homes, lodges, clubs, etc., the performer can ascertain in advance the name of one of the spectators, also getting a look at this spectator so he can be found when wanted. This spectator's name is written in advance on the No. 2 envelope. This spectator is given a card and envelope in due time, and it is the last one to be collected.

Novel Idea for Ascertaining the First Question

One performer employed a clever idea for presenting the question answering act before a small group, but it is just as well suited for large audiences.

This method follows the general procedure as given in Faked Pile of Magazines. No fake stack of books was used, and the cards and envelopes were not returned to the writers until all had been answered. The writers' names were put on the sealed envelopes as in the one ahead method just described. The opportunity to get the last name on an envelope was created through a stunt whereby some member of the audience displays his power as a "mind reader."

After all the questions have been collected, the performer states that anybody can read minds if the conditions are right. He offers to conduct such a test, and asks someone to volunteer for the experiment. Performer picks up a blank card and envelope and openly writes something on the card, not telling what it is. He seals this card in an envelope and says, "I will put my name on it," but he actually writes the name of the last question collected.

This envelope is thrown in with the other questions in the basket or bowl, the collector and performer going back to the platform. The volunteer "mind reader" is requested to rise, and to put his mind in a receptive mood--"maybe it will help you if I hold the question (then to party holding basket) just hand me my envelope marked, so-and-so." This is really the envelope first collected, on which performer wrote his own name.

Performer holds this envelope and asks volunteer, "Speak right up, can you tell me what I wrote on this card?" The volunteer may feel a bit embarrassed, and may hesitate a second but he will naturally answer, "No." The performer speaks immediately and triumphantly, "There you are, what did I tell you?--the word "No" is exactly what I wrote on the card, and this party calls out that exact word!"

The performer is standing away from his table as he talks and tears open the envelope, removes the card and glances at it as though to confirm. This gives him the one ahead question with which to continue the act, but as he talks, he openly puts card and envelope in his pocket, quickly removing them, suggesting that the volunteer might like to keep it as a token of his powers--handing it to him. Of course, an exchange was made in the pocket for a card on which the performer had previously written the word "No."

The standard procedure is then followed with the balance.

The Double Cutter

The performer gains knowledge of the first question by a simple trick known to all magicians--that of having a spectator "freely" select a playing card from a pack. This card is "forced," and is therefore known to the performer.

Blank cards and envelopes are passed around for writing the questions. The spectator who chose the card is to write, "What card did I select?" The envelopes are collected, and the one about the playing card is kept track of, so it will finally be on top of the pile in left hand as you start to give the readings.

On the table nearby is a pocket knife with the large blade fully opened. In reality, this knife has two large blades exactly the same size, and both opening or hinged at the same end. Both blades are open, but will appear as one and never be noticed.

The first question about the playing card is answered, the knife is used to slit open the flap to confirm it (in reality, one blade slits the playing card envelope and the other blade simultaneously slits the next envelope) The right fingers seemingly go into the first envelope, but actually go into No. 2, extracting the No. 2 question far enough so you can read it (mentally) and quickly replaces it. You are, of course, speaking about the playing card question and you remove the latter envelope with question inside and immediately toss it out to the writer.

This is repeated with the remaining questions. A couple of empty envelopes are on the bottom of pile to conceal the switch at the finish. If you can't find a knife with two blades as described, you may use a stiff hairpin, the two prongs being used in the same way as the two blades.

Old Fashioned Mediums' Switch

This has been used by mediums for years and among "believers" was never questioned.

Spectators write their questions on small cards, about 1" x 2-1/2". They are not sealed but are placed by the spectators, writing side downwards, on a tray held in performer's left hand. Concealed by left fingers, is a bunch of fake questions held against under side of tray.

On his return to the platform, the performer palms off the genuine questions with his right hand and slips the fake questions in their place. These are poured onto a separate stand or tabourette. The regular table has a crystal on stand with handkerchief nearby. At back of table is a secret shelf.

Performer sits down behind table, wipes off crystal, gazes into it, and pretends to get impressions from it. He simply manipulates the genuine questions on the shelf with one hand so he can secretly read them, and thus he proceeds through the whole bunch. Of course, no questions are returned. Sometimes the questions (fakes) are burned before the readings start. This looks more mysterious, and at the same time destroys that part of the evidence.

The Double Envelope Switch

We are indebted to a fellow magician for the following method which he is using with great success. Questions are written by the spectators on slips of paper which they then fold two or three times. No envelopes are passed out but the performer carries one or more envelopes (6 3/8 size) with him in which to place the questions as they are collected.

These envelopes are really the old trick double envelope known to magicians as the Bewitched Envelope, or the Magic Envelope. The preparation is simple indeed--two identical envelopes are used to make the trick envelope. The flaps are opened, and one of them (No. 1) laid back down on the table with its flap away from you. The other envelope (No. 2) is laid back up on top of No. 1, but the flap of No. 2 is toward you. In this position, with both flaps open, you now paste the faces of the two envelopes together. One flap at top closes on one side, and the other flap at bottom, closes on the opposite side. Both sides look like the back of an envelope so you will remember to expose only one side as you use it in the performance.

One compartment of the fake envelope is loaded in advance with fifteen or twenty folded fake question slips, all kept at one end. When ready to collect the spectators' questions you get the fake envelope from your pocket, holding it flat on palm of left hand with loaded side down, while your right hand collects the question slips and puts them in the upper empty compartment at the end opposite the fake load.

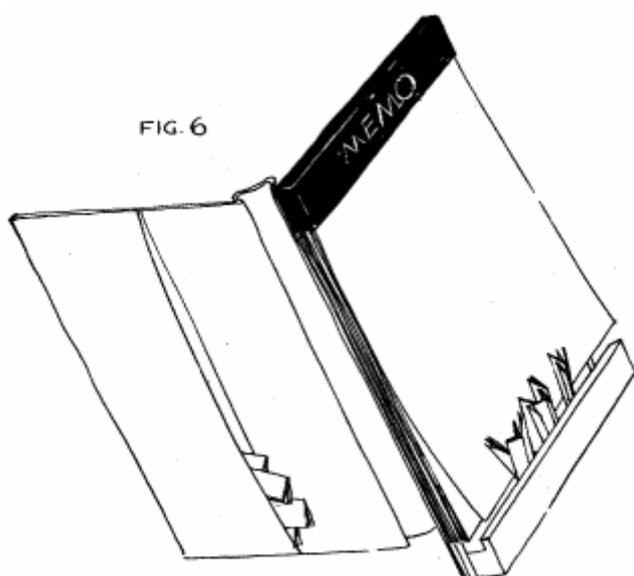
The envelope is then secretly turned over and the fake slips dumped out in a pan or bowl to be burned. Our friend now turns to get a box of matches from table, secretly palms out the genuine questions with right hand, sees no matches on table, thrusts right hand in pocket getting matches, and leaving the stolen questions in pocket. As the flames develop, he tears up the envelope and tosses it into the fire. The questions being in one end, makes it easier to get them out in one bunch by the use of the fingers.

This method of securing the genuine questions requires skill and adroitness, and, if you prefer, we suggest you use the following method: You dump the fake questions into the bowl, then carelessly tear the envelope in half, carefully avoiding exposures of the genuine questions which are inside, take both halves in right hand and thrust right hand in pocket, also left hand in pocket, for matches--left hand gets match box, and right hand comes out empty. Hand spectator matches to light the fire, and as attention is centered on him, you quietly reach right hand in your pocket and pull out the two halves of

a duplicate unprepared envelope, these being given spectator to put in the fire. This is easy and looks very natural.

When you tear the fake envelope in half, nothing is said, but it accomplishes three things--it creates the impression of emptiness--it enables you to get the torn halves all the way in your pocket--and makes it easy to get hold of the questions when you want them.

The volunteer assistant returns to his seat while performer gets a memorandum book, or writing pad, from the table and sits down. He explains that he uses the pad to record and piece together his impressions. The answers are given in the usual way.



The memo book is constructed as shown in Fig. 6 and is used as a blind to conceal the opening and reading of the billets. When performer gets memo pad from table with left hand his right hand palms a bunch of billets from his pocket and secretly deposits them on the pad where they are held by the lip at the bottom. Of course, nobody is permitted to

see behind the pad. With pencil in right hand, performer makes occasional marks on the pad as he talks, meanwhile right hand secretly opens a billet and gives a reading. This billet is then slipped into pocket in cover of pad, and the operation repeated with the remaining questions.

Obviously, the performer should practice the moves of opening and handling billets so he can do it rapidly. The lower edge of pad rests against performer's stomach while he scribbles his notes on the pad, the left hand and arm supporting the pad.

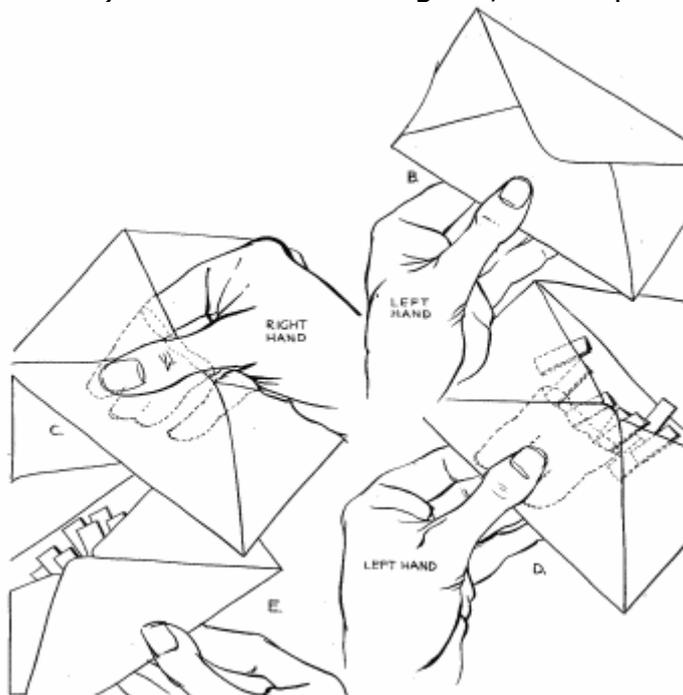
The Calostro Three-Finger Shell

While discussing methods of "stealing" questions one day, the publisher of this monograph disclosed that he had invented an improvement on the thumb tip fake for stealing folded billets. The improvement consists of a metal shape, or shell, made to slip over the first three fingers of the right hand, and cover as far as the second joints. (See Fig. 7A). (Some might prefer the last three fingers.)



The inventor suggests having this fake shaped over a mold of the performer's hand, so as to fit and resemble it correctly. But the fit is an easy one, not tight and not loose, with room to hold several billets and still be worn on the fingers. Flesh tinted, of course, and done to match the performer's own skin.

The working is as follows: Have one or more of these fakes in the right trouser's pocket, and several No. 6-3/4 size envelopes in left coat pocket. Removing one envelope with the left hand, the performer starts collection of billets as in Thumb Tip Billet Steal (One Ahead). But before doing so, he slips the three-finger fake in the



envelope (Figs. 7B and 7C) in the act of opening it, leaves it there, and then he collects several questions and pushes them into the fake. (Fig. 7D). fake is then removed under cover of stuffing a last question into the envelope with the three fingers. The right hand with shell on fingers underneath and thumb on top (Fig. 7E) takes the envelope from the left hand, and envelope

(still containing some billets) is given to spectators to pass along their row as they put in their questions. The sequence of moves is natural. The shell is hidden under cover of envelope most of the time and

when the envelope is passed out, the shell with stolen questions, is emptied in right trouser's pocket.

Another envelope is given outright to spectators in one row to hold their several billets.

A third row is worked with the same or another three-finger shell, thus stealing some more questions.

In this manner, the performer gains possession of any number of scattered questions, yet spectators do the actual sealing of all envelopes and all envelopes are held in possession of the audience, but the envelope from any one row is given to a spectator elsewhere to hold.

In much less time than it takes to describe them, the various moves may be made naturally and without suspicion. The brief time the fake is in sight, the hand is kept in motion, same as with thumb tip.

When sufficient questions are stolen in various parts of the house, performer returns to the stage, in transit palming one question out of bunch in right trouser's pocket. On reaching stage, he throws a foulard over his raised left forearm, and places a gazing crystal in left hand. The foulard, on the side draped towards performer, has two pockets concealed in its folds, or in the design. The pockets must be convenient to reach so that the billets may be secretly transferred from performer's pocket into the first foulard pocket, and when answered, it is disposed of in the second pocket. Of course, the foulard hangs down far enough to conceal these moves, and it is used now and then to wipe off the crystal.

Another way is to place the crystal ball on a tall stand, the top of which is draped with the foulard with the secret pockets towards the performer.

A Stunt with a Finger Tip

A "finger tip" is made like a thumb tip, but as the name implies, fits on the finger instead of the thumb. It might be well to carry a finger tip in the pocket in case some skeptic insists on retaining his question slip instead of putting in the collection with others.

You have an envelope (size 6-3/4") in your pocket, ready for the occasion, unsealed but containing a folded blank billet. The skeptic is requested to fold his slip, and while this is being done, the performer gets his envelope out, and secretly gets the finger tip on the index finger. This finger dives into the envelope to open it up, leaving the tip behind, as with the thumb tip in a previous effect. You boldly take the skeptic's question, put it into the envelope (in tip, of course) finger comes out with tip on and billet inside, the envelope is sealed and handed to skeptic who can feel the slip inside. At the first opportunity the performer secures a glimpse of the question, he approaches the skeptic again and asks him to rise and hold up the envelope and after a little showmanship, the answer is given. Then without a word of warning, the performer reaches out quickly for the sealed envelope and tears it open, pretends to remove the question for verification but actually produces the original question which he had palmed between his fingers. This is read aloud to the audience and handed back to the writer.