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presents.....

Magical Deceptions

by Charles Crayford

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PREFACE

EVERY deception contained herein has been performed by the author. In this collection the reader will find simple so-called "pocket" tricks, advanced big-apparatus tricks, and also some of the finest stage illusions ever seen on any stage in any country at any time.

If, therefore, the reader cannot find something herein to suit his pocket, taste and ability, he must indeed be very hard to please.

A quarter of a century of magic (before the Public) has taught me this one great lesson, viz., it is not always the most costly experiments which go best with an audience; on the contrary, I have frequently found a childishly simple item, well worked up with suitable and witty patter, will gain applause more quickly than a really difficult sleight which has cost one months of hard practice.

I suggest, however, that the student always studies his audience and tries to make up his programme to suit the taste of the onlookers, e.g., if you are going to perform at a smoking concert--where men will be in the company--then deceptions with cards, cigarettes, matches, cigars, billiards balls, etc., will naturally appeal; but if for the members of a Mothers' Meeting, then I suggest a programme in which flowers, thimbles, wool, cotton, needles and silks, etc.; whilst for children you would again work another programme altogether, in which most of the items were mirth-provoking and the balance consisted of something to eat!

Write your own patter and do not pinch your gags from a conjurer you saw the night before at the Palace. If you are not naturally funny, do not try to be, but simply chat to your audience in a homely kind of way.

It is useless to expect to become a full-blown wizard quickly, for it simply cannot be done; Rome was not built in a day, so you will have to take your time over it, as did the Romans before you.

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INTRODUCTION

THE great charm about a magical act is the "stage setting." This should be neat and effective. Years ago it was usual to have a central table, and two small side-tables. Nowadays the Public expects to see beautiful draperies, a super carpet, several uniformed assistants, and a stage literally covered with huge illusions, and pretty properties.

Again, there is the sleight-of-hand performer who may, perhaps, do a "front-cloth" act, without the aid of even a table or a chair, but, frankly, although his performance may be very clever, he is not wanted, as half the audience cannot possibly see what he is doing, owing to the fact that eggs, cards, coins and similar small objects are not suitable for theatres or music halls.

If you do not perform in fancy costume, I suggest that you always wear evening-dress; never work magic in a jacket-suit or street clothes--it lets the show down at the start, and effect is everything.

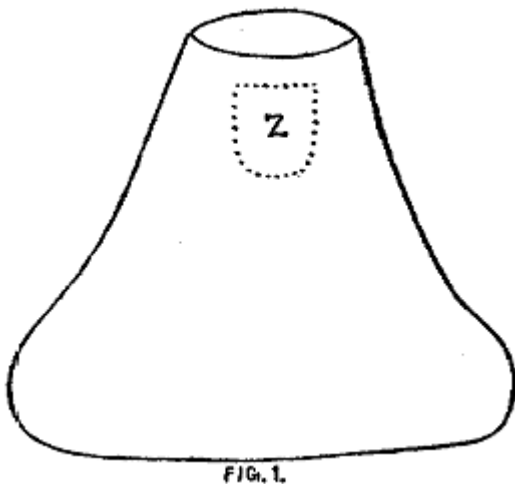
At first you may find a little trouble attached to arranging your programme. Some writers upon this subject would say that each problem should follow the preceding one in a kind of sequence. With all due respect to law and order, I do not consider this need be so, but at the same time I would not suggest jumping from (say) "The Little Wanderer" to "The Vanishing Lady." There is, however, no harm in working the small effects first, and the larger ones afterwards, always remembering to reserve your best item for the last.

It is one big mistake to "specialise" in Magic; one man will specialise in cards, another in coins, another in handkerchiefs or flags: the net result of programmes so arranged is that three-quarters of the audience are simply "bored stiff," whereas such is never the case if the deceptions have been arranged with a keen eye for variety; and the greater the variety the better.

All things being equal, practice is the one and only thing which will "get you there." No one is, was, or ever will be, a born conjurer. It is simply a matter of practice, and the more you practise the better you will become.

THE LITTLE WANDERER

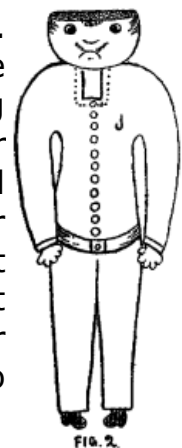
I CANNOT understand why the modern Magician is so keen upon getting the latest novelty which happens to be advertised in some magical catalogue when a vast number of far better tricks (one now never sees) are procurable. The hunting for "the latest thing out" is so common amongst wizards, that the natural result is one sees the same tricks performed north, south, east and west, for no other reason than because it was in So-and-So's Xmas price-list! At the risk of being behind the times, I am now going to explain a deception, which is too small to be performed in a large theatre or hall, but which is quite suitable for drawing-room work, it appears to be due to pure sleight of hand, and is never seen in these days, because it first appeared about 90 years ago, and is therefore "so dreadfully out of date" that the modern entertainer will not entertain it for a single moment, although his grandfather probably thought it extremely smart, and very likely laughed as heartily at it as would the audience of to-day if only given a chance of so doing.



A little wooden doll (like a Noah's Ark man) 4-1/2 ins. in length (and painted) is seen standing upon your table; you next exhibit a cloak, which is 7 ins. long by 6-1/2 ins. at the bottom; it has an opening at the top 1-1/2 ins. wide to admit the Little Wanderer's neck. Turn the cloak inside out, and outside in, and put it upon the figure whom you now command to go to Jericho. He remains motionless, and refuses to obey, so you say, "Oh, I see what it is, he's hard up, and hasn't got his fare; I had better give him some money to go with." So saying, you hold the

little chap by the head with your left hand, whilst your right hand finds its way to your trousers pocket for some cash, which latter is given to Mr. John Jones (or whatever his name is), who at once disappears, and is no more seen. You turn the cloak inside out again to prove his absence.

Both the doll and cloak are faked--the latter has a pocket (Z, Fig. 1) sewn to the back portion and of such size as to accommodate the head of the doll, which latter is removable owing to it fitting into a socket (J, Fig. 2). When pretending to get money from your pocket you palm the body of John Jones (in your right hand) and deposit it in your pocket. To complete the illusion it only remains for you to drop the head into the miniature pocket (Z, Fig. 1), where it will remain, even when the cloak is turned inside out, but remember to keep the pocket side of the cloak towards your person, and thus away from the eagle eye of your audience, who will now be spellbound!



In presenting this illusion, the chief thing to remember is not to look at your right-hand when placing it in your trousers pocket for a coin, because if you do all eyes will at once be centred upon your right hand, and, if you are not particularly smart in palming, the audience may detect a false move, which the money question is intended to cover up. The shoulders of the doll are its widest part, and the feet the narrowest, so you will find it more convenient to turn the body upside down (under cover of the cloak), thus bringing the shoulders towards the hall of the thumb, and the feet towards the fingers, which latter keep well together, so that the onlookers cannot possibly see between them.

UMBRELLA-STAND FROM UMBRELLA

IT IS a common occurrence to see an umbrella extracted from an umbrella-stand, but when it comes to an umbrella-stand being extracted from an umbrella it is a very different story altogether, yet it can be done, as will be seen presently, and as an unusual opening I can, recommend it to those on the look-out for something which has not been "done to death" by the magical fraternity generally.



FIG. 3.

Performer comes in with opera cloak over his arm, umbrella in hand, and opera hat on his head--he raises (and compresses) the hat as he makes his bow to the audience; he throws his cloak over a chair back, and there only remains in his hand the umbrella, which he proceeds to open, and from it extracts an umbrella-stand which he places on the floor; he then closes the umbrella and puts it into the stand!

The umbrella-stand (Fig. 3) is made of black Italian cloth and (like the opera hat) is collapsible, and, indeed, works on exactly the same principle, viz., spring hinges, so that when collapsed it will take up very little room and can therefore be easily accommodated in a large buckram-lined pocket situated on the right-hand side of the Performer's coat (Fig. 4) from which it can be easily extracted by the right hand under cover of the umbrella, which is now opened to its fullest extent and held in the left hand. To make the stand appear more realistic it has a piece of coloured ribbon at the top and a similar piece at the bottom; it also has some imitation flowers worked in silk in the centre, the whole

looking like the japanned article with painted ornamentations, which we so often see in halls.

There is perhaps no special reason why this trick should be used as an opening, except that an umbrella seems to go rather naturally with a hat and cloak, but if no trickery is to take place with the cloak and hat, it may seem well to forego this item as an opening item, and introduce it later, in which case the umbrella might be lying on one of your tables. There is, however, one great advantage attached to working this deception first, and that is, you get rid of the umbrella-stand, which is rather a bulky load, and apt to make the right side of your coat stick out in a manner which does not flatter your tailor, to put it mildly, but, if worked as an opening effect, you can make your entrance from the wings, keeping your right side furthest from your audience.

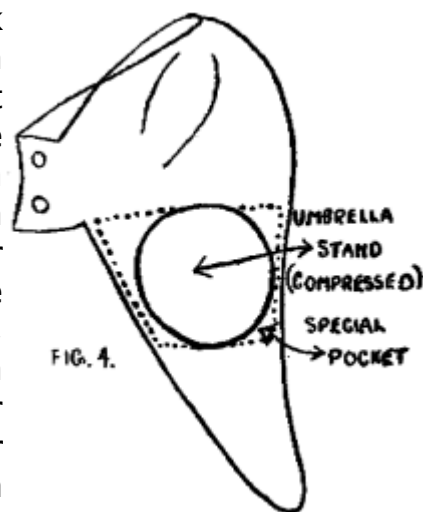


FIG. 4.

ONLY A REEL OF COTTON!

ONE often wonders how a conjurer gains possession of certain articles without the audience knowing, or seeing how he does so. In Magic, however, one must bear in mind things are not always what they seem.

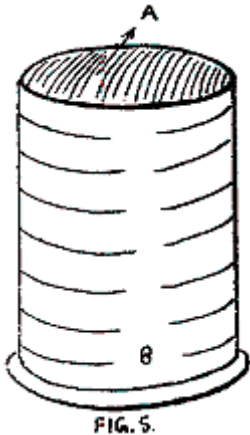


FIG. 5.

Here, for example, is a case where a reel of cotton is seen on the Wizard's table, and, look at it as you will, it appears to be nothing more nor less than an ordinary, common or garden reel of cotton, 1-3/4 ins. high by 1-1/2 ins. in diameter, with a hole at top and bottom (Fig. 5) just like any other reel of cotton. This is picked up with the left hand, and after drawing attention to "Coats' cottons being the best in the world" (or any other remark suitable to the occasion), it is placed down on the table again with the right hand. As far as the audience is concerned that is all that happens, but, during those 20 seconds, Mr. Wizard has gained possession of a nice little silk handkerchief which is the one thing in all the world he

required for his next experiment, and which he desired to produce magically.

Fig. 6 is the inside of the homely reel of cotton, from which you will see that the reel is not real after all, but merely a make-believe: in other words, it consists of an inner and outer shell, the latter fitting comfortably and loosely on the former. Into A (Fig. 5) is placed the silk handkerchief of which Mr. Performer desires to gain possession, unknown to the audience; the outer shell is again placed upon the inner one, and put in readiness (with portion B (Fig. 5) uppermost) upon a table, and everything is quite in order.

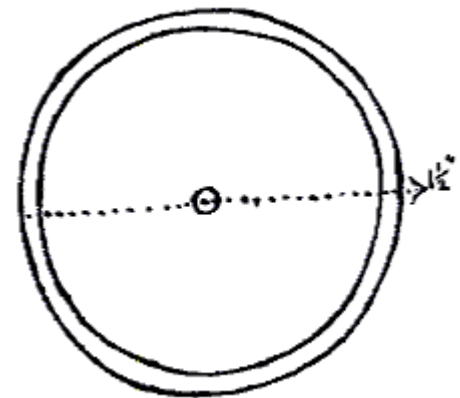


FIG. 6.

We will suppose for the sake of argument you wish to perform "the twentieth-century handkerchief trick," otherwise known as "joining the colours," in which two kerchiefs are tied together, a third vanished, and ultimately found securely tied between the other two! Now we will say the two silks have been joined together and placed in a glass, pick up your reel of cotton with left hand, and allow the lower portion B to fall into the palm; this, of course, contains a duplicate of the third handkerchief which is to be finally found between the other two. With your right hand put the reel of cotton (outer portion only) on your table, and proceed to materialise the third silk from what the audience consider to be your bare hands, but really, all that has to be done is to extract the handkerchief from its little circular hiding-place in the palm of your left hand, and, under cover of the silk, you can easily drop the fake into a well (or open trap) in your table-top, and everyone will wonder what the reel of cotton was for!

THAT ACE AGAIN!

CARD tricks are always popular, and as a pack can generally be found in every house there's no difficulty attached to the provision of the needful properties. I suppose everyone has heard about "the three-card trick," which is mainly practised by so-called "Card-Sharpers," who frequent racecourses, and try to "have" modest people in railway carriages, etc. Well, you can, if you like, call this experiment "the three-card trick" because three cards are employed in it, although, to be quite honest with you, there is no connection whatever between this and THE "three-card trick."

Put down on to the table three cards in a row (as shown in the accompanying illustration), viz., three of Clubs, five of Hearts, and two of Spades: but see to it that the right and left sides of the five of Hearts are covered up by the other two cards, so that the five of Hearts really looks like the Ace of Hearts, which, in fact, everybody will take it to be (Fig. 7).

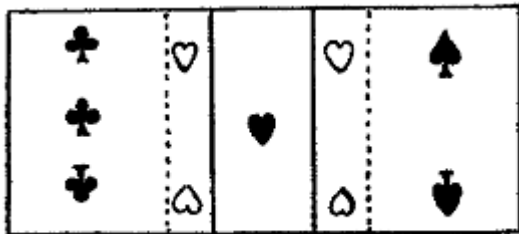


FIG. 7.

Now cover over the cards with a large pocket handkerchief, under cover of which move the two outside cards (i.e., three of Clubs and two of Spades) from off the central one, so that when the handkerchief is removed everyone can see quite plainly that the Ace (?) has vanished into thin air!

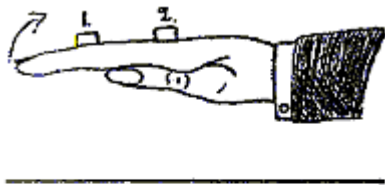
"I will now cause the Ace to disappear from under the Irish linen and fly into my pocket. Watch closely, please, while I just say one, two, two and a half (!), three!" At the word "three" pull off the handkerchief with your right hand and allow your audience to see quite plainly that there are only three cards on the table: (1) Three of Clubs; (2) Five of Hearts; (3) Two of Spades; whilst with your left hand you produce from one of your pockets an Ace of Hearts, which had been there waiting patiently for extraction, since you made your preparations prior to the commencement of the experiment.

An improvement upon the above method is to withdraw the Ace of Hearts from the pocket of a confederate, or, if no confederate can be found who can be trusted "not to give the show away," a very safe plan is to slip the desired pasteboard into a chap's pocket when no one is looking; but, if this latter course is adopted, care should be taken to work the experiment at once, without giving your victim time to discover the evil fact that you have "planted" on him an Ace of Hearts!

COIN JUGGLERY

MANY people cannot distinguish jugglery from conjuring, although, as a matter of fact, they are as unlike each other as ventriloquism is unlike wire-walking!

The little experiment now about to be described is pure jugglery, and requires a fair amount of patience, a good eye, a steady hand, and some nerve.



Place two pennies upon the back of your right hand in the positions indicated by No.'s 1 and 2 in the picture (Fig. 8). Now wave your hand upwards (as indicated by the arrow) thus throwing the coins in the air; as they fall catch them, if you can, and if you can't, well, try again, remembering the ancient maxim, "Rome was not built in a day."



The whole point of this seeming adroitness, and wonderful dexterity, lies in the fact that if you wish to be successful you must catch No. 2 first, as the money descends, for, "as sure as eggs are eggs," if you attempt to catch No. 1 before making sure of No.

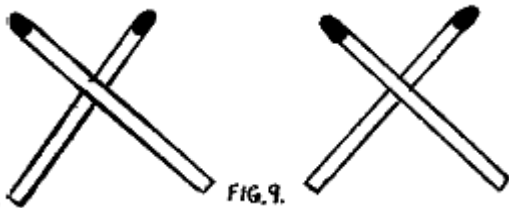
2, failure will follow, and both coins will fall to the floor.

Remember, too, you must not turn your hand over but keep the back thereof uppermost all the time and simply "grab" at the pence in their descent.

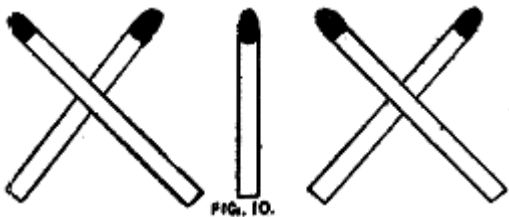
This can also be done with three coins, which, of course, is far more difficult, and therefore requires more practice: but it nevertheless can be done provided the coins are placed in the following order: No. 1 on nail (or first joint) of middle finger; No. 2 on root (or third joint) of middle finger; and No. 3 in the centre of the back of the hand. The coins thus placed, it is merely a matter of keeping cool, and remembering that the last coin to go up into the air must be the first one to be caught on its return journey.

MATCH ARITHMETIC

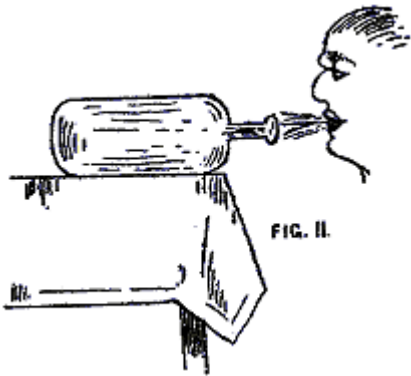
ASK your friends if they can add one to 20 and make 19? Naturally they will think this quite impossible, as one added to 20 would, in the ordinary course, make 21. But they do not see "the catch," so when everybody has decided that "it is impossible," you calmly take a box of matches out of your pocket and arrange them as in the first of the accompanying diagrams (Fig. 9).



You then add one more match taking the precaution, however, to place it between the two Roman figures X and X (Fig. 10); in this way the former numeral for 20 becomes converted into 19 which was what you invited your spectators to do, viz., add one to 20 and make 19, which, after all, is quite simple when you know how to do it!



TRY YOUR LUNGS



PUT a glass bottle down flat on a table (as in our drawing, Fig. 11), and into the mouth of it place a very small piece of cork (say about the size of a pea); now challenge Dick Smith to blow the little piece of cork into the bottle, and watch his face! Poor chap, he will blow, and blow, and blow till his eyes look as if they are coming out of his head, and then he starts to get blue in the face just as if he had had an over-dose of gas at the dentist's! Finally, he gives it up as a bad job, so Bill Jones takes it on "'cause

anyone could do a thing like that, if he's got any lungs at all," so he says, but, after repeated attempts, he, too, finds that the harder he blows so much the harder is it for him to accomplish his task, as the cork simply flies out of the bottle with ever-increasing force, instead of going into the bottle.

There is one way, and one way only, of blowing this little piece of cork into the bottle, viz., get a straw and blow through it as quietly as possible on to the cork, which latter will then fly into the bottle as quickly as if you had said the magic word "Presto"!

A USEFUL CANDLE



THIS can be purchased (from any magical depot), with the aid of which one can produce a very good effect, but the candle is a faked one! A glance at Fig. 12 will at once show the construction of this handy make-believe. About a third of the candle is quite solid and ordinary, except that it is much larger than those in everyday use, the rest is perfectly hollow! It will therefore be easy for the student to understand how a silk handkerchief can be placed inside the candle (before the commencement of the show), and the candle placed in a candlestick and lighted in order to prove, in conjurer's logic, that it is a genuine article!

A duplicate silk handkerchief of the one previously placed inside the candle may now be vanished by whatever method your fancy dictates. The candle extinguished, wrapped up in a sheet of newspaper, and a few mystic passes made over the packet.

Upon breaking open the parcel the candle will appear to have gone, and in its place will be found the missing handkerchief, as illustrated in Fig. 13.

The special charm about this deception is its seeming straightforwardness, no specially constructed apparatus being used (as far as the audience is able to judge) for either the purpose of production or vanishing, and the candle itself certainly appears to have "honesty" written all over it in letters of gold!



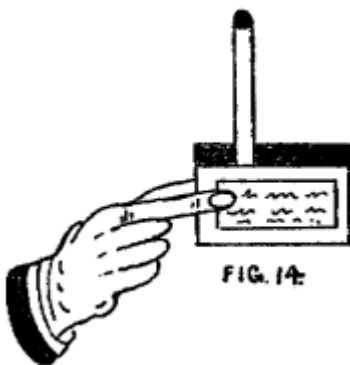
FIG. 13.

The one and only drawback to the trick lies in the fact that an expensive and specially made candle is destroyed at each performance, an objection which some people get over by making their own candles out of white glazed paper and glueing a small piece of real candle to the top thereof. This is undoubtedly a cheaper way of going to work, but at close quarters an enlightened audience is apt to "smell a rat."

THE HYPNOTISED MATCH

HAVING described a candle effect, it will, I think, be suitable if I now give away a little startling match trick, which, if a bit small presented alone, can nevertheless be very well introduced whenever a match has to be used, e.g., to ignite "a useful candle," or a cigarette previously produced from the fingertips, etc.

The match in question is a wooden one, and even at close quarters looks just exactly the same as any other wooden match. With it, however, one can produce an effect which cannot be brought about with any of Bryant & May's manufactured goods.



The effect of this baffling little swindle is as follows: The Performer extracts a match from a matchbox, places it upon the outside of the box, (Fig. 14), makes a few passes over it with his hand, when, "lo and behold" (as writers upon magic used to say in the days of my childhood) the match stands in an upright position without visible means of support and remains in the perpendicular for an indefinite period of time.

At the will of the man-of-mystery the match is removed and placed again in the box, there to remain silent amidst its silent companions till the next performance!

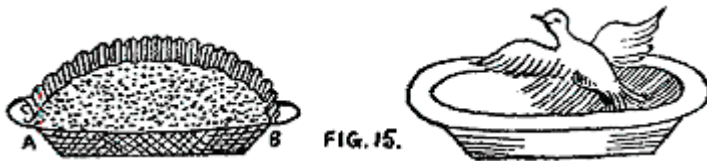
Like all really good magical secrets this is simplicity itself. The performing match, needless to say, is a prepared one, depending for its success upon a miniature metal spike like unto the point of a needles which is inserted in the bottom of the match and which is so very sharp that it will at once penetrate a matchbox or table, and it is so minute that even the operator himself can hardly see it--but he can certainly feel it all right!

To lovers of pocket tricks this should commend itself, and any smoker can gain popularity every time he lights his pipe by hypnotising a match before replacing the box into his pocket.

PIGEON PIE

TRICKS with livestock were at one time very popular, and the applause which such deceptions usually elicited amply repaid one for any trouble involved. Times have changed, likewise public opinion, and to-day deceptions necessitating the use of live-stock are so unpopular that it is perhaps wisest not to include them in one's repertoire. Some years ago however, "pigeon-pie" was to be found in almost every conjurer's kit-bag, but to-day it is seldom seen. The effect is this: Two soup plates are exhibited, one of which is handed round for examination. The other is seen to be overflowing with bran, a little of which latter the magician gently blows on to the floor, and then places the scrutinised plate on top of the one containing the bran. Cabalistic language now volleys forth from the wizard's vocal organs, the upper plate is removed, and the fact revealed that the bran has vanished into thin air, a pigeon having taken its place!

So much for the effect, and now for the explanation.



The plate which was not given for examination was not really piled up with bran as the audience was led to suppose, but contained a tin fake "A-B" (Fig. 15) which exactly fitted the plate and to which was glued a quantity of bran, a little loose bran being sprinkled on the top thereof in order that some might be blown on to the floor to add a little colour to the situation! Mr. Pigeon rested underneath this fake, and when the magical entertainer blew the superfluous bran away he proceeded to place the unprepared plate on top of the fake. On again removing it, however, he removed the fake as well, which latter was not noticed by the audience, all eyes being naturally fixed upon the unexpected bird!

A very good way of working this illusion is to have sweets instead of a live bird. Confection is not likely to offend anybody, and if high-class in quality it is sure to get the performer in favour amongst the audience, who will forthwith proceed to "eat his very good health" as if they had never tasted sweets before!

THE MYSTIC CAULDRON



THIS deception is sometimes called "The Macbeth Mystery" owing to the cauldron being thought to resemble that alluded to in the witches' scene in "Macbeth." The so-called cauldron is nothing more or less than a faked gipsy cauldron now being sold by ironmongers in place of the old-fashioned wooden coal-boxes. The performer first proves the receptacle to be quite empty, then placing one hand into the cauldron he produces a beautiful bouquet of choice flowers which he throws down on the stage (Fig. 16, A), and at the same time flames of fire burst forth from the cauldron as shown in the accompanying illustration. Upon these a big tin stew-pan is placed, the lid of which is forthwith removed, and the performer produces two rabbits (Fig. 16, B), both of which are evidently very much "alive and

kicking"! Two eggs are then placed into the stew-pan and covered by the lid. This latter is once again removed and two doves are seen to fly out (Fig. 16, C).

This forms a pretty illusion, and is quite easy to work, but by no means simple to explain upon paper; however, I will do my best.

To begin with, then, in the centre of the cauldron is an iron cup, 2-1/2 ins. in diameter by 1-1/4 ins. deep. This is secured to the bottom of the cauldron by a screw and nut. Into this cup is placed a little methylated ether, which is prevented from running over by an india-rubber cover fitting over the top of the metal cup, and to this india-rubber cover is attached a small black bag made of Italian cloth and into which a bouquet of silk flowers is placed. These flowers are not seen by the audience owing to the presence of the black bag containing them, and which is provided with a piece of elastic run through a hem at the top, thus effectively closing the mouth of the bag until released by the adroit fingers of the performer.

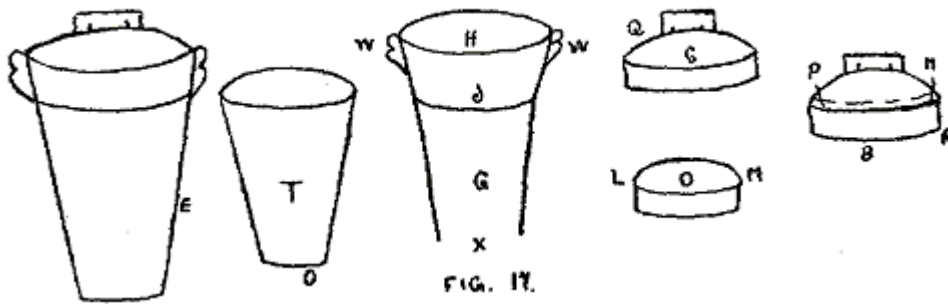
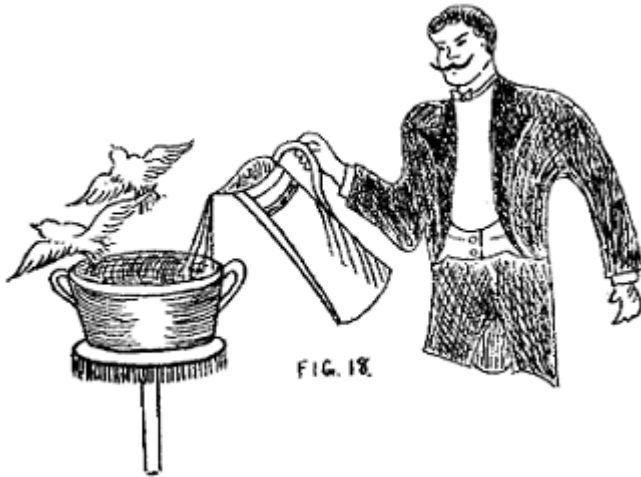


Fig. 17 is the lid, having a solid bottom at B, so that the doves can easily rest between the two portions C and D, which are held together by bayonet catches L, M.; these fit into small slits in the true lid at P and N. Q is the handle, underneath which will be noticed two black dots representing airholes to prevent the birds from being suffocated. This entire lid (complete) fits into the portion I-I, which has a bottom at J, upon which the two doves' eggs are placed.

G is where the rabbits live. This part has no bottom at X, but the quadrupeds are kept imprisoned by a kind of shell, T, which has a true bottom at O, and this entire piece fits exactly over G, being held in position with the performer's left hand whilst the right hand grips one of the handles, W-W. E represents the stew-pan as seen by the audience.

The deception is presented as follows: Tip up cauldron so that the audience can see inside it, place right hand into cauldron, open black bag and produce bouquet of flowers, insert both hands into cauldron, the left hand releasing india-rubber cover from iron cup, whilst the right hand drops a small piece of metal potassium (about the size of a pea) into methylated ether; these two chemicals when brought into contact with each other cause fire. On to the flames put the stew-pan (complete), E, release T and withdraw the balance of the apparatus. The rabbits having escaped through X are now in T, which in turn is inside the cauldron. Take out the bunnies, replace the rest of the paraphernalia and then remove lid (true and false), put two doves' eggs into H, replace lid, giving the handle a sharp turn as you do so which will release the false lid D from the true C, bring away latter and show the hatched eggs!

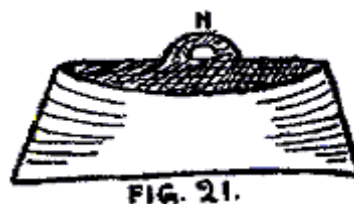
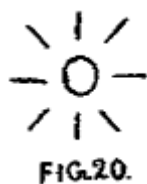
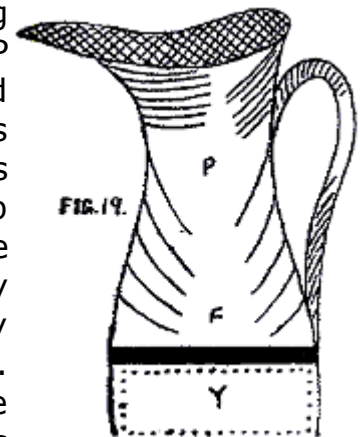
JUG AND TUB ILLUSION



A TUB (similar to an ordinary footbath) is freely exhibited, and a large jug is also shown to be full of water, which latter is poured into the tub, from which a couple of doves immediately fly out (Fig. 18). Such, then, is the effect of one of the most successful of modern stage tricks, and one which is equally suitable for either a pattering wizard or a dumb showman. Pigeons, rabbits, white rats, guinea-pigs, mice, puppies or

kittens, could be substituted for the doves if preferred, whilst the performer who gives long entertainments "off his own bat" can work this experiment in lieu of the more time-honoured "inexhaustible hat," in which case instead of livestock he could create unbounded fun by producing such articles as cups, balls, flowers, flags, handkerchiefs, a bird-cage, sausages, carrots, garlands, ribbons, and so forth.

A glance at Fig. 19 should at once make everything perfectly clear. That portion of the jug marked P contains the water, F is the true bottom of the jug, and Y is the fake containing the doves. The tub is as innocent as the magician himself, and it is 18 inches from handle to handle and 8 inches deep. Jug and tub are both made of metal and are painted (usually) white and gold outside and black inside. Immediately underneath the true bottom of the jug (and completely encircling it) there are a series of ornamentalations (Fig. 20), the circles of which are airholes to prevent the livestock being suffocated. The jug stands 17 inches high, and is 9 inches in diameter at the base. The fake (Fig. 21) has a small protuberance, N, in the centre of which is a little hole through which a piece of metal (not unlike a stout nail) passes and thus through one of the air-holes in the ornamentation. In this way the fake is effectually held in position.



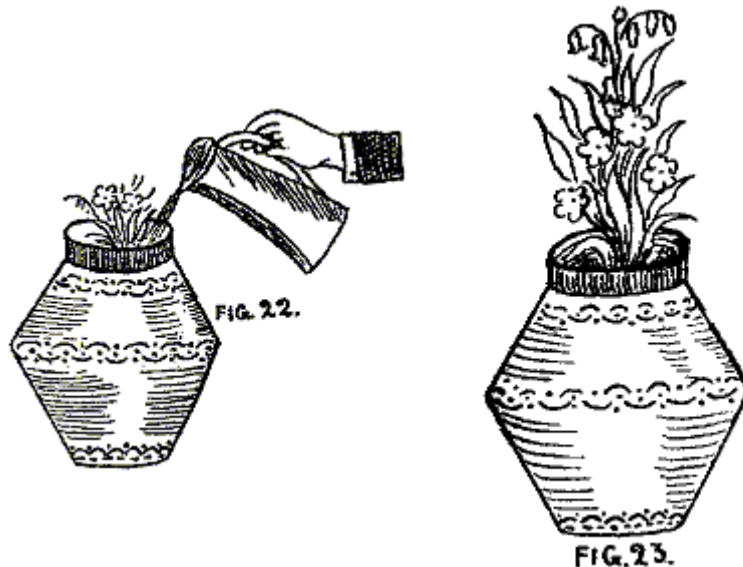
In presenting this clever deception the jug (of course, full of water) should be standing, inside the tub, on a table. Now remove the jug and place it on the floor, pick up tub, turn it upside down in order to convince everybody that it is "free from trickery," replace tub on table and jug within it.

"You will not expect me to turn the jug upside-down, as I have just done the tub, I hope, for, you will notice, it is quite full of water!" So saying, sprinkle a little of the water on to the floor with your left hand and proceed to pick up the jug, by the handle, with the right hand, this time, however, taking pains to remove the fake. Pour the entire contents of the jug into the tub and then withdraw the birds, if, indeed, they need to be withdrawn. I think, however, you will most probably find they will immediately fly out, rejoicing in their liberty!

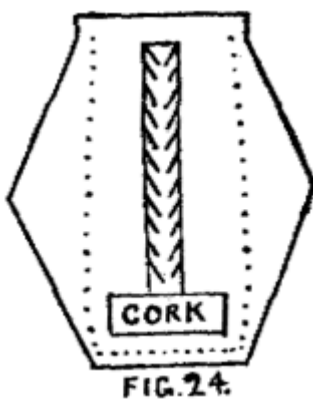
If you desire to prolong the agony by producing endless articles from the tub in place of doves, you will find on the market an immense variety of goods constructed in such a manner as to be handy for magical productions, e.g., bottomless cups, made to fit conveniently one inside the other, balls made of cloth and having a spring inside them, which, when not compressed, gives to the balls the appearance of solidity; flowers, sausages and carrots also made of cloth and having a spring inside them (like the balls), collapsible bird-cages, coloured paper ribbons half an inch wide and rolled (by machinery) into a coil like a roller bandage, silk handkerchiefs, and flags of all shapes and sizes!.

FLOWERS GROWN WHILE YOU WAIT

A HANDSOME flower-pot is seen standing upon a table. Into this the magical entertainer puts a few seeds. He now waters them, when, gradually (but surely) flowers are seen to first put a few petals above the edge of the flower-pot (Fig. 22) and, finally, a most delightful production of flowers is the result of continued watering (Fig. 23).



When I first heard of this trick I was under the impression that the gradual growth of flora was due to clock-work mechanism inside the prettily decorated pot. When I became wiser, however, I found out that I was entirely wrong, and that the deception depended for its success upon something far more simple than clockwork.



Inside the beautifully japanned pot there is yet another receptacle (as indicated by the dotted lines in Fig. 24), at the bottom of which is a large fiat circular cork into which fresh flowers are placed before the rise of the curtain. Water being poured into this inner portion causes the cork to float, and thus the flowers are seen rising higher and higher, little by little. The flower-pot is 7 inches high, the inner lining is 6-1/2 inches high by 3-3/4 inches in diameter, the cork is 1 inch thick by 3-1/4 inches in diameter.

There are two ways of working this illusion. (1) The original way, and (2) the author's. The first method is to make holes in the cork and put fresh-cut flowers in these apertures prior to commencing the performance. The second method (my own) is fully illustrated in Fig. 24. Into the cork is put a wooden skewer (as used by butchers for trussing meat). This

is painted green, and to it fresh-cut flowers are attached by green silk. In either case the preparation is rather a troublesome job, which is perhaps the greatest drawback to the experiment.

The weakest point about the whole concern is that the pot cannot be freely exhibited before the seeds are thrown therein. As a matter of fact, these seeds need not exist at all (except in imagination), but it is as well to pretend to take a few seeds from a little box or packet and to appear to sprinkle them into the pot for appearance sake.

HOW TO INVENT MAGIC

KNOWING that many of the magical effects I produce are my own invention, a friend once asked me, "How do you set about inventing conjuring tricks?" This seems to me quite a reasonable question for the layman to put to the magician, and I venture to believe my readers will be interested in knowing how to invent mysterious deceptions. True we are not all gifted in the same way. To one is given the gift of languages, to another music, and so on. It therefore comes about that some people are so constructed that they possess no talent whatever for the creation of mysteries. Experience proves to me, however, that (for some unaccountable reason) most lovers of the art of magic possess in a greater or less degree "power to invent." This does not mean to say, of course, that one can simply sit down to order and invent a new method of vanishing or producing (say) an omnibus "from the bare hands, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows!" Not at all. But at the same time if you are always studying the art and practice of magic it is quite surprising how an effect will suddenly dawn upon you in a most unexpected manner. As an example of what I mean I will forthwith proceed to explain how I invented a small fake which I term--

CRAYFORD'S VANISHER

I WAS sitting in my study one morning scribbling away at my desk, as usual, when the maid announced, "Mr. So-and-So to see you, sir." "Ask him in, please." Mr. So-and-So entered and sat down upon a chair. We discussed certain business, and, whilst doing so, I found myself (like so many nervy people) toying, in an aimless kind of way, with various articles lying upon my table. Amongst these was a nickel-plated screwtop from an old (and long since broken) vacuum flask. This I used for pins, stamps, wax vestas or other small oddments. At the moment it contained a few drawing-pins. Then I picked up a small tin of ointment, and, I know not why, removed the top therefrom. Having done so, I turned the lid of the tin (containing the ointment) upside-down and pushed it into the mouth of the vacuum flask screwtop, thereby discovering, quite by accident, that not only did the lid of the ointment tin fit exactly into the other lid, but also that the drawing-pins automatically vanished! I noticed, too, that although one might turn the article upside-down, the drawing-pins would not fall out. Further, when my visitor had left the house, I stood in front of a huge mirror (which I have used for many years for practice purposes), and found that at a short distance away the inside of the vacuum flask screwtop looked much the same whether the lid of the ointment tin was in or whether it was not, which, from a magical point of view, was the main desideratum. I now removed the inner lining and palmed it in my right hand (with the upper portion outwards); then I took a small silk handkerchief, which I held by the two top corners with both my hands, and exhibited it freely. I now folded the handkerchief sufficiently small to go into the screwtop (Fig. 27), and, in placing same down upon a table, with my right hand, calmly allowed the fake to fall from my palm upon the piece of silk, which latter was thus hidden.

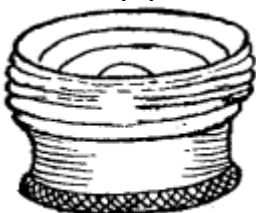


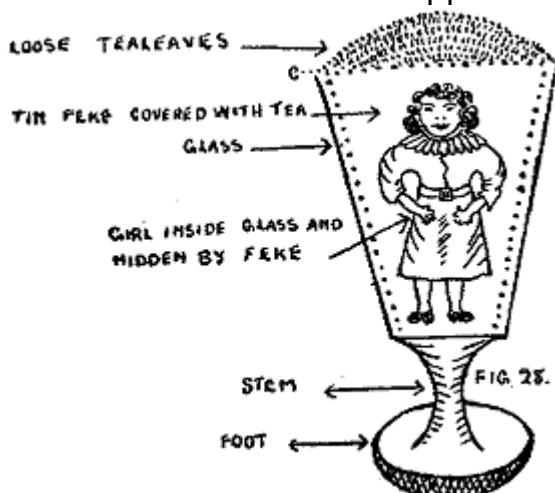
FIG. 27.

The vanish thus effected was, to my mind, so neat and complete that I had the entire apparatus re-nickel-plated, and since receiving it back from the firm to which I sent it, I have worked it in public many times with, I venture to think, great success. Anyway, I am perfectly certain that detection is absolutely impossible, provided the performer takes the precaution to keep the back of his right hand towards the spectators. "The best tricks," said that Master Magician, Mr. David Devant, "are those you invent yourself." He could hardly have said a truer word, and I have here explained how a very small thing will, if you take the trouble to think about it, lead step by step to quite a satisfactory finish.

A REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION

TRICKS and illusions of transformation are always more or less baffling, and the one which I am now about to give away is no exception to the rule; in fact, it is, perhaps, rather more striking than the average deception of this class, and is further benefited by being both new and original.* (* I sold this idea, with drawings, to the late William Ellsworth Robinson (Chung Ling Soo), who died, alas, in March, 1918.)

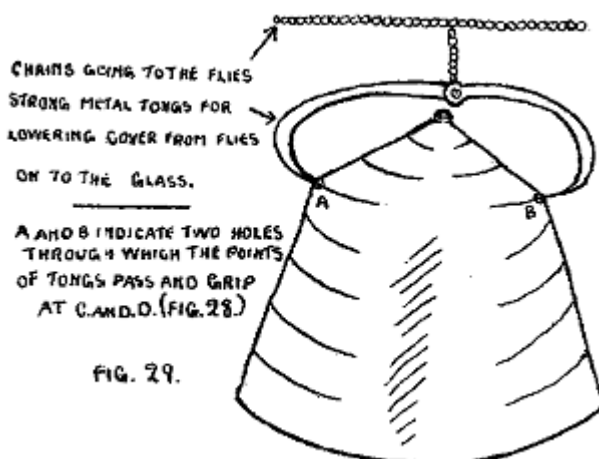
A huge glass with stem and foot is seen to be full of tea-leaves, a metal cover is let down from the flies and proven empty; it is now allowed to completely envelope the glass; a whistle is blown, and the said cover again pulled up into the flies, when (low be it spoken), the tea-leaves are non est, but in place thereof is a young lady, who is now lifted out of the glass, and bows her thanks to the audience for their applause!



In the first place, I will freely and frankly admit that I have framed this original stage illusion on the lines of the old-fashioned "bran-glass," in which a glass is seen full of bran one minute, and a few moments later found to be full of sweets, but, as even that deception may not be known to all of my readers, I will proceed to describe in detail the ways and means of bringing about this strange new transformation from tea-leaves to a human being!

To begin with (needless to say) the glass is very large indeed; in fact, big enough for a live person to get inside it. To this is fitted a fake made of block-tin, and indicated by dots in Fig. 28; this is painted black, and whilst the paint is still wet, tea-leaves are thrown on to it; when the paint dries the tea-leaves adhere to the paint; also at the back of the fake there are a number of small airholes to prevent suffocation.

The tea is heaped so as to appear more real. Upon a given signal the men in the flies let down the cover (Fig. 29), which is tipped-up so that everybody present can see inside, and be quite sure that it is free from trickery; the cover is now pulled up again by the chains (and tongs attached thereto) and once more lowered, but this time completely covering the glass, and the points of the tongs A and B, which penetrate through

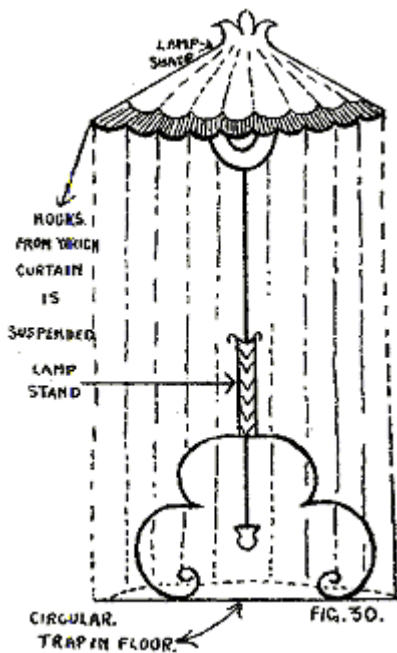


two holes in the cover, catch the fake under C and D (Fig. 28), so that when the cover is once more pulled up out of sight it carries with it the fake, and the glassfull of tea (?) now becomes a glassful of flapper which, to my mind, is a big improvement upon the older and well-worn method of converting a glassful of bran into a glassful of sweets, which latter is merely a drawing-room effect at the best, though effective.

The glass, of course, will have to be made by a firm of glass-blowers, and perhaps, Pilkington, of St. Helens, Lanes., would make it as well and as reasonably as any firm in that line of business. The tongs (which are used for the purpose of hoisting the cover up and down) are not unlike those used by ice merchants for conveying ice from their carts to fishmonger's shops. Ropes can be used in place of chains if preferred, only ropes wear out quickly, by reason of friction, and therefore chains are more lasting and durable; also they can be gilded, and thus act as an ornament as well as being useful, and appearance counts where a magical act is concerned.

It will be noticed that the top of the fake slightly projects over the edge of the glass at C and D (Fig. 28), but from the front of the house it merely looks as if the glass is filled to overflowing, and experience proved that no one can detect the fake from the auditorium. There is just one more point upon which I must dwell before leaving this subject, namely, the packing of the glass. Now in consideration of the fact that the glass has been specially constructed (and charged for accordingly!) it stands to reason that anything in the shape of careless packing would probably result in a fiasco. I therefore suggest that a wicker-work basket be made to exactly fit the glass, and that this basket be suspended inside another (larger) one by strong webbing, like the sashes of Venetian blinds; in this way the glass will be perfectly safe, as there will be plenty of "give," and even a severe knock or drop is not in the least likely to do any harm, which would not be the case if a box or packing-case were used.

VANISHING STANDARD LAMP

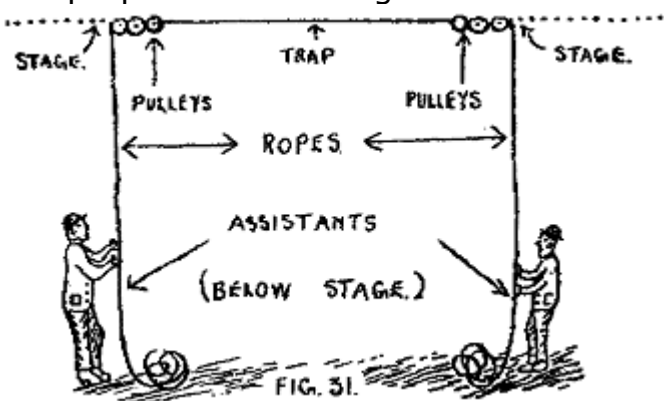


A STANDARD lamp is seen standing upon a fully-lighted, fully-carpeted stage, to the shade of which the performer hangs a light curtain of silk --this latter reaches to the floor. Having hung this covering from the eight points of the shade, the Illusionist proceeds to uncover the lamp again, unhooking the material at the place where he first started, and thus revealing the fact that the lamp has gone altogether, and in its place stands a girl holding the lampshade over her head.

The lamp (Fig. 30) is as per sample to be seen in any and every ironmonger's shop wherever you go. Likewise the lampshade, except for the fact that at each of the points in the wire frame thereof is a hook, conveniently placed there in order to receive the small rings attached to the inside of the curtain for the purpose of draping whilst change is made from lamp to gift.

The shade is a very large one and octagonal in shape; during the process of draping the performer holds the shade with one hand and drapes it with the other, the reason for this is because if he did not do so, when the lamp disappeared (via trap) the shade would naturally drop; it has therefore to be maintained at one level whilst the lamp descends and the girl ascends; when she has done so she can hold the lampshade over her head, whilst the Magician is free to use both hands for the purpose of unveiling.

The most troublesome part of this original illusion (which I now give to the world for the first time) is the trap, which is circular and covered with the same kind of carpet as the rest of the stage--in fact, it is merely a piece of the same carpet, cut circular, and this circular piece is nailed to the trap, so that there is no fear of it moving or slipping out of position, and thus upsetting the work



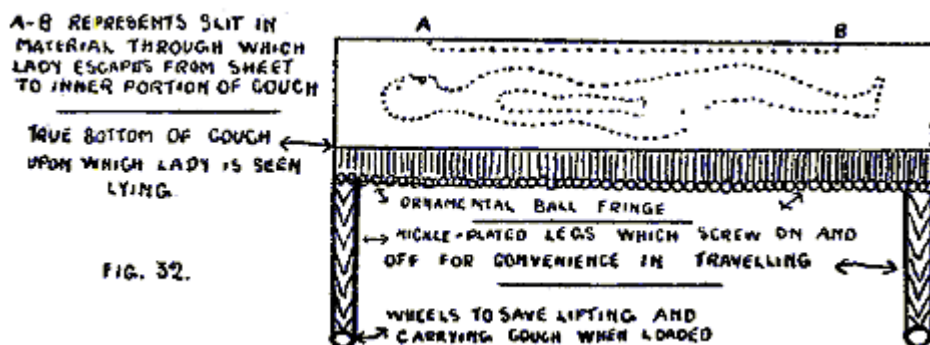
of the trap, which latter has to be specially cut at every theatre visited, prior to the rise of the curtain at first house on Monday night. It is constructed as per diagram (Fig. 31) and worked by two strong assistants, who stand below stage and await the sound of a gentle tap on the floor above; the signal is given by the performer's heel, at that moment when the lamp is completely covered by the drapery.* (** Another, and perhaps better, method of communication is an electric bell, which rings below stage, but which is set in action by the*

Performer putting his foot on a button fixed into the carpet.)

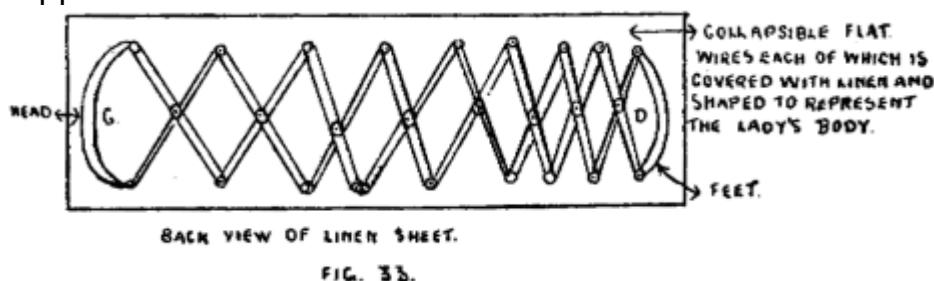
Quicker than it takes to write the explanation thereof, the two muscular chaps underneath "the boards" let out (or slacken) the ropes, taking care to do so equally, so that the trap is lowered evenly: down comes the standard lamp which is now removed, and on to the centre of the trap jumps the young lady (who has been "specially selected"--as the merchants says of certain brands of tea--because she is quick, slim, and very light in weight). The male assistants now pull on the ropes for all they are worth, up goes the trap, taking with it the charming young damsel, who, a moment or two later, is seen on the stage, bowing and smiling as only stage-folk can. This change from an inanimate thing to a human being is most startling.

AN HYPNOTIC TRANCE

A LADY is hypnotised (?) by Illusionist and allowed to fall backwards, being caught by Performer just before she reaches the stage, on which latter she now lies fast asleep (I don't think!); two assistants come forward and pick her up, one taking her feet and the other her shoulders, and lay her down upon a couch provided for that purpose. "The man with the skilled hands" (as I was once billed) then proceeds to cover the lady over with a sheet; having done so he now puts his hands underneath the sheet and picks her up (still covered over) and walks with her in his arms to the footlights, where the sheet is crumpled up and thrown into the wings. Whilst this has been going on the two assistants have been busy removing the couch from the stage to the wings. The lady can reappear as in the first method or by whatever mode the fancy of "the man of the moment" dictates.



In this illusion both sheet and couch are faked, as will be seen on reference to illustrations (Figs. 32 and 33). The couch is in reality a box on legs; it is covered with dark red material, which latter is not actually joined together in the centre, between A and B (Fig. 32), this aperture enabling the lady to escape under cover of the linen sheet without fear of detection; moreover, when the performer covers the lady over he carefully raises the two curved portions of the flat wire fake (C, D, Fig. 33) so that the audience imagine they see the shape of the lady's head, body and feet and are therefore led to suppose she is still there in the flesh!



Whilst spreading out the sheet to its fullest extent to cover the lady over, Mr. Wizard gives the young lady ample opportunity to slip through the slit in the material, and thus hide herself in the box-like receptacle beneath it. Again, when the body is being carried (apparently) in the direction of the

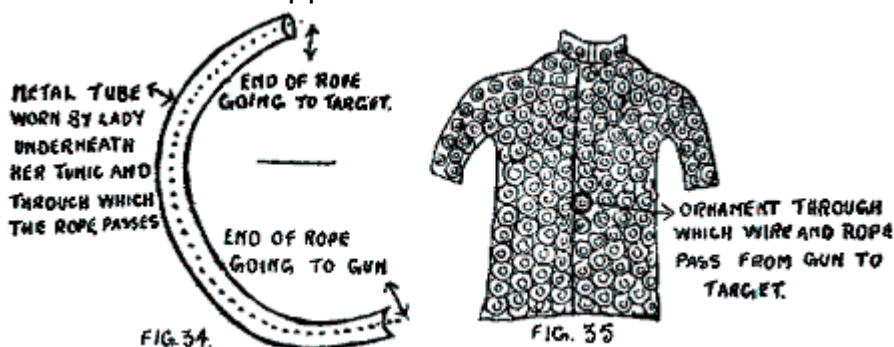
footlights, the assistants quickly wheel the couch into the wings, where the slit in the material covering the couch is again pulled apart, and out jumps the young lady, ready to be reproduced in whatever manner has been previously arranged.

Upon looking at Fig. 33 the reader will see that the spring, which represents the lady's body, is made concertina-wise, and can therefore be either extended or contracted at will; when, therefore, the lady is supposed to be present, needless to say the wires are held in extended position, but the moment she is intended to "go," the spring is compressed, and will now take up very little space indeed. The showman appears to throw the sheet carelessly into the wings, but as a matter of fact he does it with great care, throwing it in such a manner that an assistant standing there "on guard" is able to catch it, and so prevent any noise, which, of course, would be impossible were he to throw the sheet on to the stage. These are points which count--the things that matter. Magic is all detail!

GIRL SHOT TWICE NIGHTLY

THIS is how one of our leading Illusionists tried to pack his theatre, and when business got a bit slack he had some "throw-aways" printed, on which were the words "Another girl shot to-night." Though not a lover of firearms myself, I am nevertheless bound to admit that this effect is baffling to the uninitiated, and was a great favourite with a certain performer who pretended to be a Chinaman, and who met his death some years ago on the Music Hall stage whilst attempting to catch upon a plate a bullet fired from a gun,* however, accidents will happen even in the best regulated families! (* *It is interesting to note that variations of this illusion have, from time to time, caused many fatal accidents, e.g., one performer killed his only son: another his wife.*)

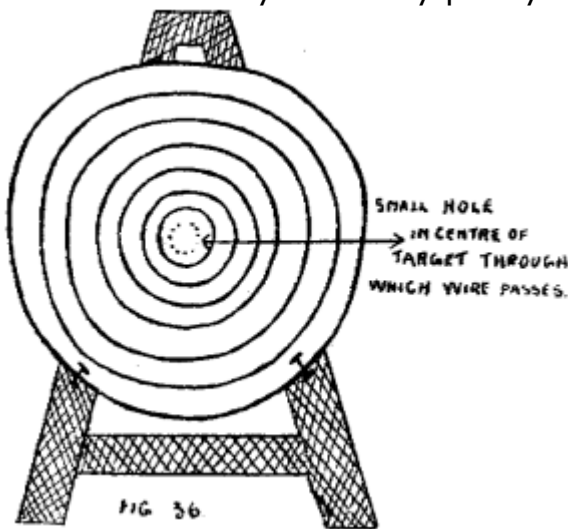
A large target standing upon a kind of easel is seen upon the stage--a gun is brought on by an assistant and given to the Performer, likewise a receptacle containing gunpowder; the gun is now loaded, and a young lady who has been standing unostentatiously in front of the target is fired at, with the result that a thin rope attached to the gun has been shot right through the lady's middle, and has hit a bull's eye in the centre of the target! The lady merely smiles at her troubles and appears to be "none the worse for wear."



For the purpose of this striking effect various properties will be required, and shall now be described in detail. Underneath the lady's tunic she wears a tube which is semi-circular (Fig. 34) and made of copper; it is strapped around her waist, and through it the wire is passed (prior to the presentation of the illusion), and to this wire is attached the rope, which latter is thin and rather of the clothes-line order; one end of the wire goes through the hole in the centre of the target (Fig. 36), and is vigorously pulled by two assistants (off stage) the moment they hear the report from the gun--it stands to reason the rope being attached to the wire; if the wire is pulled the rope will be pulled with it and thus through the tube into the "bull's eye."

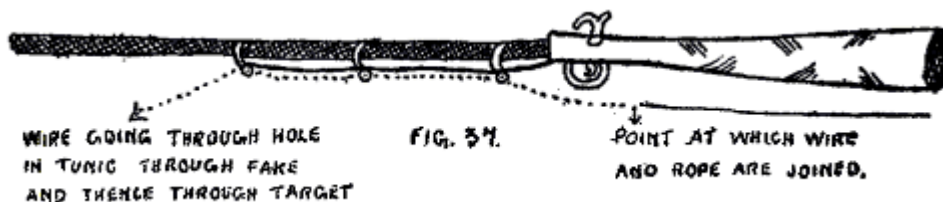
Fig. 35 gives one an idea of the tunic, which is made of black velvet, and literally covered over with circular decorations, each of which is nickel-plated and sewn on separately. Through one of these the wire (and subsequently the rope) passes, enters the tube, and, passing through same, escapes through a similar ornamentation in the centre of the back of the tunic; as all these

decorations are exactly alike, there is no reason to suspect one of them any more than another, consequently they one and all escape undue notice beyond the fact that they look very pretty!



The target (Fig. 36) is made of wood and painted; the hole in the centre of the bull's eye is (in reality) a short metal tube, and through it both wire and rope pass. The target is screwed on to the easel so as to be quite firm, and in order that the easel may not wobble (when the assistants pull the wire) its three legs are attached to the stage by thumbscrews.

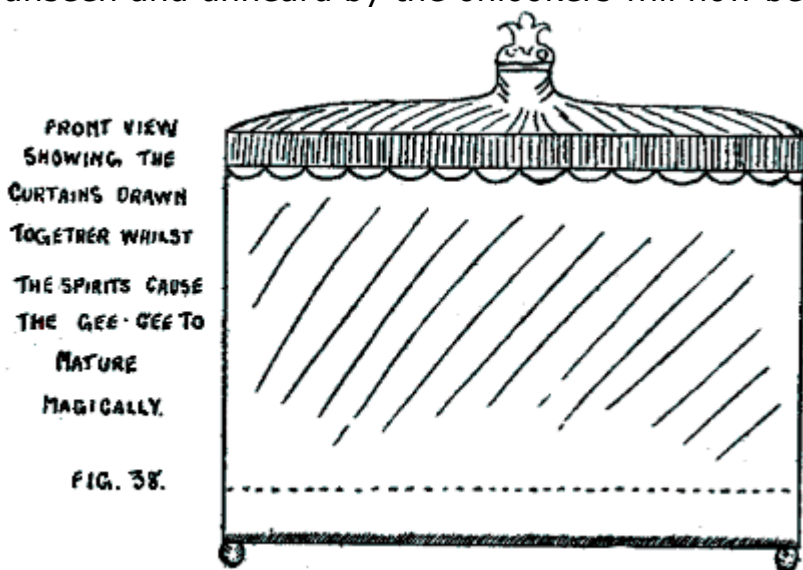
The gun (Fig. 37) is usually of the out-of-date sort and probably picked up cheap at a second-hand shop--the barrel is blocked with lead in order to avoid the possibility of an accident; it is only loaded with gunpowder so as to make an effective "bang," and is quite free from trickery, except for the fact that underneath the wood supporting the barrel are three circular pieces of metal, which not only support the wire but guide the rope from the gun to the target.



In presenting the illusion the performer stands in centre of stage immediately in front of the lady, who holds in her hand the wire; as the gun is handed to the Illusionist he takes it with one hand, whilst with his other hand (behind his back) he takes from the lady the end of the wire, which he proceeds to thread through the loops underneath the gun under cover of loading same. "Bang," coupled with "a long, long pull and a strong, strong pull," and the deed is didded!

PRODUCTION OF A HORSE

A METAL frame stands upon the stage, and consists of four uprights supporting very showy curtains, it also has a grand border and a covered-in top as per Fig. 38. At the commencement of the illusion all the curtains are drawn apart, so that the audience can clearly see that everything is quite above board. The curtains are now drawn together, and when again parted they reveal the fact that a horse has somehow or other made its way into the enclosure, without even arousing the suspicion of a critical modern audience. How so bulky an animal as a full-grown horse can possibly accomplish this unseen and unheard by the onlookers will now be described.



There are altogether four curtains--one for the front, one for the back, and one at each side; these are attached to the framework with rings like drawing-room curtains), so can easily be pulled to and fro by the assistants. The curtains reach the floor, but the idea of stage-traps being used is at once "knocked on the head" by the fact that the stage is fully carpeted. The only idea of the canopy top is to avoid any possible chance of "the gods" seeing the gee-gee make its appearance before it is supposed to do so. The back cloth (as is so often the case with illusion shows) is very suitably made of black velvet, and in the centre there is a huge slit in the material large enough for a horse to get through.

The horse is "on duty" the other side of this black backcloth awaiting the signal to advance--which signal is not given till the curtains have been drawn around the front and sides of the framework, when an assistant at the back of the stage immediately pulls aside a piece of the velvet--from the slit portion--and the horse advances to the place where he has been trained to stand, and which performance he had done dozens of times in private, long before an audience were ever asked to come and witness this strange production. Once in his allotted place, the back curtain is drawn, and the illusionist has now only to

draw aside once again the front curtain to reveal the wonders of his magic. It may be thought by some that the noise of the horse's hoofs is bound to be heard by those sitting in the front row of the stalls; this difficulty, however, was thought out long ago and guarded against in the three ways following: (1) The carpet on (and off) stage is a very thick one; (2) the band plays forte the while; and (3) the horse's hoofs are covered with india-rubber. It will be seen that, by simply reversing the order of things, the animal can just as easily be made to disappear as to appear, though this is not generally done, because it again draws attention to the apparatus used, and affords further time for the development of theories, which as yet may only have had time to half mature in the mind of the audience. Personally I am of opinion in a case like this, the sooner one can get the horse and everything else out of the way the better, and get on with the next item in double-quick time, for, admitted, the whole business is merely one of showmanship, and not a twenty-two carat illusion.

THAT'S THE TA-TA!



FIG. 39.

THIS is strong in comedy, but as a magical deception I do not think a great deal of it. Some of my readers may recognise it as a novel and modern version of that time-honoured trick technically known as the "unmusical tambourine." Three large paper hoops are seen upon the stage, also an assistant in uniform; the Entertainer picks up one paper hoop and bangs his assistant (a man) over the head with it, whereupon the audience at once see him to be wearing a gorgeous lady's opera cloak. Picking up a second hoop, a similar formula is gone through, resulting in the assistant having a beautiful feather boa around his neck. The third hoop is now picked up, and for the third time the unlucky assistant is banged on the head--he is now wearing a wonderful Parisian creation, and may now be considered "fully dressed and nowhere to go" (Fig. 39). "The Lady" curtsseys and retires amidst the laughter (rather than applause) of the whole house, from orchestra stalls to the pit inclusive!

The hoops are made of thin, flat metal, and strongly resemble those which usually surround water-butts. I must explain, however, that what the audience take to be one hoop is in reality two hoops--one slightly larger than the other--fitted one inside the other, having two pieces of the Daily Mail between the inner and the outer hoops: and, as the metal is one inch in width, it stands to reason there must be a space between these two sheets of newspaper. Between these sheets of paper are placed respectively, (1) lady's opera cloak, of very thin material and unlined, so as to take up as little space as possible; (2) feather boa; the feathers are fine ostrich feathers from Cape Colony, and (so I am informed by a dealer in ostrich feathers) are procured from young birds; (3) hat. This last has a wire frame for the outer border only, but not for the crown, which latter is therefore quite collapsible; the huge feather runs through a buckle, and when this hoop is being faked, the feather lies flat and encircles the crown; the moment the hat is upon the "lady's" head "she" (with the fingers of her right hand) raises the feather from the horizontal to the perpendicular--as in Fig. 39. As the Illusionist places the hoops over the head of the assistant, and thus brings into being the cloak, boa and hat respectively, he says: "That's the opera cloak--that's the thing-a-my-jig--and that's the Ta-ta!" At this signal the band should be previously instructed to strike up "So put on your ta-ta, little girlie; do, do, what I want you to!"

CARD PRODUCTION

HERE is something which is right away from the usual run of Magic; indeed, there is really nothing magical about this novel item, but at the same time the spectators think there is, and as they generally roar with laughter, it is worth introducing for that reason alone.

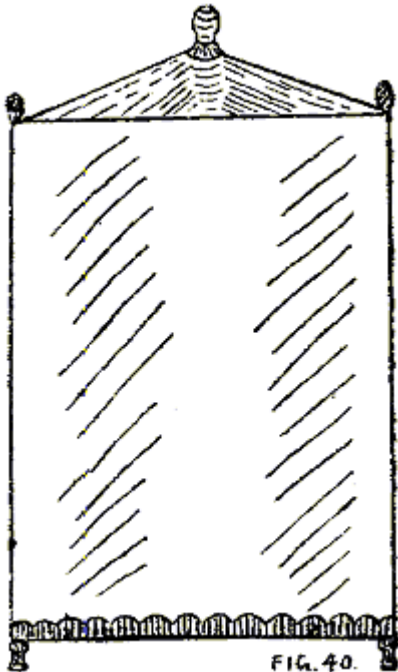
Having worked some card effect, the Magician says: "Well, now I will endeavour to produce any sort or kind of card you like to mention." One person shouts out "Easter Card," another "Christmas Card," "Birthday Card," "Mourning Card," "Visiting Card," "Tram Ticket," "Railway Ticket," "Post Card," "New Year Card," etc., ad lib., but no matter what card is called for, the Wizard is equal to the occasion and produces it from his person seemingly without effort.

For the purpose of this humorous item you must be armed with literally dozens of pockets in all sorts of possible (and impossible) places; wherever there is room for a pocket you must have a pocket made, and varying in size from the smallest card known to a large placard or lithographic poster. Having collected every kind of card you and your friends can think of, you must next set to work in learning the names of them all and their respective positions in your secret pockets, which latter any tailor will be able to make for you. You must always keep the cards in the same order, and never get them out of position, or you will find yourself producing a pawn ticket, when the King of Hearts is called for, and vice versa!

This deception (if such it can be called) is seen to best advantage if it follows immediately upon some other card sleight, e.g., selected card discovered in photograph frame (previously proven empty), or mysterious card star, or rising cards, or anything of a similar nature. Having therefore produced any sort of playing card required by the audience, there is some little excuse for you to prove your power to produce any other sort of card the spectators like to name. It will take you quite a long time to collect all the necessary cards, and when you think that your collection is complete, some nasty person will suddenly "catch you napping" by asking for a card you know too well you haven't got! In this case, you simply pretend not to hear that person's voice, and quickly pass on to some other card called for, and which you know is in stock.

Although this item leads to endless fun, the amusement is mainly due to the rapidity with which you can produce that which is required; if you are slow or uncertain, or stop to think, the experiment will fall flat, and you will probably not get one single hand at the finish of your act. But, if done in lightning time, you will find nothing go better, and the audience will rock in their seats with laughter, whilst the applause which follows will even surprise "the man of mystery" himself.

A CABINET ILLUSION



OF ALL stage illusions perhaps those of the "Cabinet" family are the most popular, and the one about to be described is simple to make, and should therefore commend itself to those who prefer to manufacture their own properties. Furthermore, the cost of building such an illusion (even in these expensive days) would not be considerable, which is a consideration. A nicely-made cabinet with curtain-door is placed upon a fully-carpeted stage (thus doing away with all thought of "traps" in the mind of the audience); this cabinet has four feet, so that the floor thereof is raised a few inches from the stage, thus enabling the spectators to see underneath it. The Showman withdraws the front curtain, so that everybody can see that the cabinet is quite empty; he now draws the curtain and fires a child's penny pistol, which is perhaps an improvement upon the ancient (and more noisy) method of firing a six-

chambered revolver. The curtain is now withdrawn by somebody inside the cabinet, and out jumps a real live teddy-bear to appropriate music by the band!

The teddy-bear is a dwarf in a teddy-bear skin; he is in the cabinet all the time (until production), but cannot be seen owing to a partition by which he is hidden, pro tem, from the mortal gaze of the onlookers.

Fig. 41 gives one an idea of the ground plan, showing the position of Mr. Teddy Bear when not supposed to be in the cabinet, the entire interior of which is made of jet black material, and, as the partition is covered with similar stuff, you will readily understand how and why the company do not see the dwarf prematurely. Fig. 41 shows the cabinet with the curtain drawn, which latter is generally of some bright colour (say, cardinal), and finished off at the bottom with either ball or gold bullion fringe, but this is a matter of fancy.



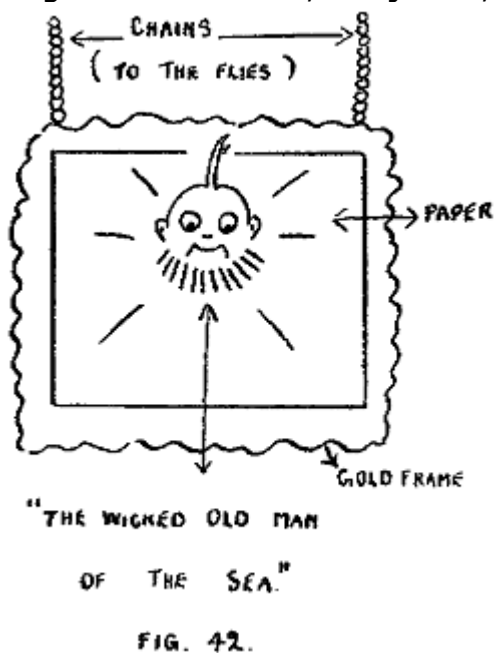
The uprights should be metal tubing and made fast by screwing into the platform at each corner, whilst the platform itself may be of half-inch wood and should be firmly put together. The feet can be made to screw on and off, for convenience in packing, and at the bottom of each should be affixed a "dome-of-silence," which can be procured from an

ironmonger for about sixpence each; these make the moving of the cabinet a matter of ease, but wheels should not be used under any circumstances, as the movement of the person inside the cabinet is apt to cause the wheels to roll, which would rather "give the show away."

As there is plenty of room behind the partition for several persons, it would be a most refreshing innovation to have each individual in a different costume representing various characters from nursery rhymes, e.g., "Little Red Riding-Hood," "Old Mother Hubbard," "Humpty-Dumpty," "Cinderella," etc., or even well-known celebrities, such as "Lloyd George," "John Bull," etc., and topping up with "Britannia" to the strains of "Britannia's the Pride of the Ocean," or, if to terminate an act, "Rule Britannia," which the band should be instructed to play "right through from start to finish," as this will provoke applause and give the Illusionist ample opportunity of taking several curtains!

THE WICKED OLD MAN OF THE SEA!

A LARGE golden frame is seen suspended by two chains from the flies; in this frame is a sheet of paper, upon which is drawn the portrait of "the wicked old man of the sea," but "the picture is upside down," as an assistant points out to "the master of the magicians"--whereupon illusionist and assistant proceed to reverse the order of things by taking out the picture and replacing same right way up. But even now "the picture is no oil-painting, as the performer so neatly puts it, and proceeds to draw in front of the portrait a small curtain which runs on a circular rod from one side of the gold frame to the other; a few moments later and a voice behind this curtain is heard to sing, "Oh, I'm the 'wicked old man of the sea; I'm let up for an hour or two, when the cock begins to crow--oh, Benjamin, Christopher Beans!"

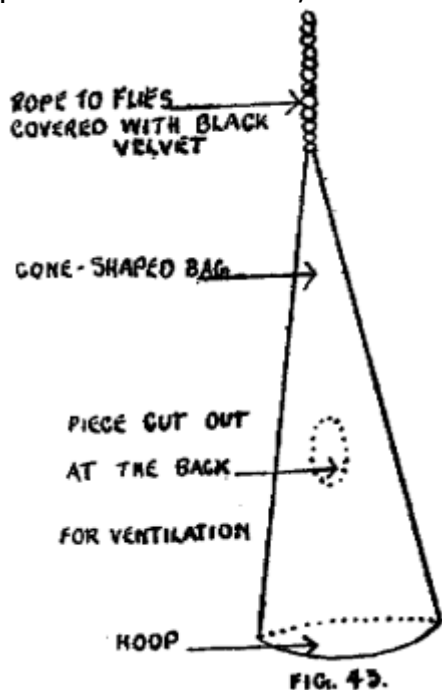


Anxious to ascertain who the "throaty tenor" is, the Wizard withdraws the curtain, and there, poking his ugly head through the canvas (really paper), is the real, live, and one and only "wicked old man of the sea" (Fig. 42), who jumps down out of the frame on to the stage, and, in answer to a command from his superior officer, stands perfectly still immediately behind a brazen receptacle containing something which the Magician proceeds to ignite. At once there is a mighty flash, accompanied by a crash like unto the sound of thunder, and, as you have probably already guessed, "the wicked old man of the sea" has vanished as mysteriously as the Sussex "wild beast" disappears; whilst the audience is held spellbound.

The reason why the picture is put upside down in the first place is in order to form some excuse for taking same out of the frame so that the audience can see right through the frame and thus be satisfied that there is nothing there. But, although they have been satisfied on this point, there is nevertheless something there which, they cannot see--it is a box covered with black velvet and hung in mid-air by ropes (from the flies), which are also covered with black velvet; this box is situated immediately behind the gold frame, and "the wicked old man of the sea" is hidden by a miniature black velvet curtain, which is hung on two hooks at the two top corners of the box; when the picture is reversed all "the wicked old man" has to do is to unhook his little curtain and pull it into the box, where it will not be noticed owing to black being invisible against black; he is now ready to jump through the paper on to the stage--or a pair of steps can be used if he is not sufficient gymnast for this purpose.

Anticipating your remark: "But surely (now that the paper is torn) the audience can see the box behind the frame?" Well, yes, they do see it, but they do not know that they see it, because the back curtains are also made of black velvet, and so they merely imagine that they are looking at the back-cloth.

The paper is affixed to a light frame by drawing-pins, and this light frame runs in a grooved slot either side of the golden frame (at the back, of course), and is held in position by a couple of metal buttons at the bottom of the frame; by the simple process of turning these buttons round, the frame, to which the picture is attached, can easily be removed.



So much, then, for the production of "the wicked old man of the sea"; now for the vanish. The carpet is black velvet (or rather velveteen). The "old man" merely stands on the stage, upon a given spot, previously decided upon at rehearsal, and when the "flash" comes the fly-men drop a cone-shaped bag (Fig. 43) down on to the stage and right over the head of the "wicked old man," who is now completely enveloped in black velvet, which, as before stated, cannot be seen by the spectators owing to the black back-cloth. This bag is kept open at the bottom by a child's wooden hoop, which latter is thickly covered with wool before being sewn into the bottom hem of the bag; this wool tends to silence the sound which would otherwise arise from the hoop coming into contact with the stage, and in order to still further produce silence (which is certainly "golden" on

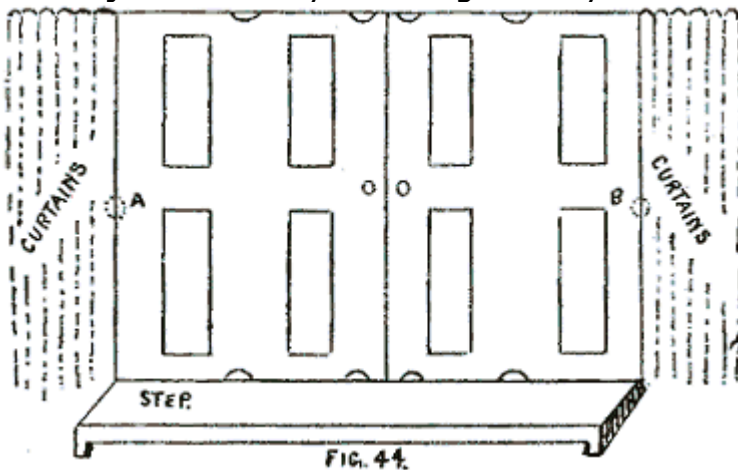
this occasion), there is a thick layer of felt underneath the carpet and in that spot where the hoop falls. The back of the bag (Fig. 43) is cut away for ventilation, otherwise "the wicked old man of the sea" would not live to see a second house on Monday night!

Re the flash, if you are a photographer, and take portraits at night, you will not need me to tell you how to bring about this particular effect, but in any case I suggest the simplest way of producing a flash (there are several methods) is by using what is known to every magical dealer as "flashpaper"; this is thin paper chemically prepared in such a way as to produce a huge flash the moment it is ignited with a lighted match: there is nothing at all magical about the brazier which contains the flash-paper, but I suggest the more antique (or Indian or Burmese) it looks the better, for the sake of appearance.

With regard to the awful crash which accompanies the flash, this is brought about in a variety of ways, viz., the entire band strike a discord as loud as possible in a hundred different sharps and flats, men behind stage beat on sheet iron with metal rods, others drop a basketfull of broken crockery, others beat gongs and yell, shout and scream in a diabolical manner. No wonder, then, "the wicked old man of the sea" disappears!

THE MYSTERIOUS ENTRANCE

AS AN illusion this falls distinctly flat, but merely viewed in the light of a strange and peculiar entrance it is suitable as an opening for a magical show. The curtain goes up and displays a dimly-lighted stage draped with dark curtains, but in the centre of the stage and at the back of it is a doorway--the door, however, is closed. Gradually and slowly the door opens--seemingly on its own account--and the Illusionist makes his way through the doorway and advances to the footlights. He again goes towards the door, and makes passes with his hands and outstretched fingers, in obedience to which the door again closes just as slowly and as gradually as it had previously opened.



There are really two doors (Fig. 44, which meet each other in the centre; these are mounted on a step, and surrounded by curtains at the top and sides; each door is provided with a brass handle, and is also fitted with a brass ring (Fig. 44, A and B), which latter are sunk in each door, and cannot be seen from the auditorium. The doors also are enclosed in a casement having a slot cut away either side to allow the doors to be withdrawn at a moment's notice. Behind the curtains and either side of doorway stands an assistant, and behind the doors stands the Performer awaiting his "chord on". When the band strike up the two assistants slowly draw towards them a door by inserting a finger through the aforesaid brass ring; as they do this simultaneously, it stands to reason the doors must needs part company and in doing so reveal the Illusionist standing and waiting to make his entrance--the assistants still being hidden from view by reason of the side curtains.

Behind the door is a black curtain attached to the doorway casement, and the Showman stands between this curtain and the doors, which latter run quite smoothly, and almost noiselessly, being provided with wheels (top and bottom) which work in grooved slots, and are invisible owing to the fact that they are sunk into the wood. These wheels are indicated by eight semi-circles at the top and bottom of the doors in Fig. 44. Having made good his mysterious and

unusual appearance, the Performer may now proceed to pretend to switch on the electric light, which can, by previous arrangement, be the cue for the electrician to switch on head and footlights galore.

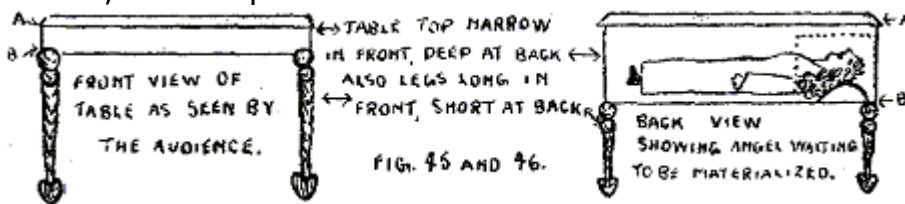
THE MAGIC GROTTO

HAVING myself presented this sweetly pretty and interesting illusion, happen to know what a great applause winner it is, appealing equally to young and old, rich and poor. It has, however, two unfortunate drawbacks: (1) It is expensive to build and (2) extremely heavy to travel.

A huge square table, made of wood, is seen in the centre of the stage. Mr. Performer jumps upon it and requests an assistant to hand him a screen, which he proceeds to place on the left side of table and halfway along the back; he then takes a second screen and places it on the right side and halfway along the back, thus joining the first screen in the middle (at the back), where they are fastened together. A cloth is now thrown over the top, and curtains suspended upon a rod hung in front and supported either side by hooks attached to the aforesaid screens.

The Illusionist now comes down from the table top, and as he does so draws together the curtains, which now convert the table into an enclosed space. The lights are gradually lowered whilst the gentleman presenting the illusion enters into conversation with an assistant, or by some other appropriate by-play kills a little time, so as to allow "the angel" (?) to make all preparations for her materialisation amidst suitable surroundings. Presently the curtains are drawn apart, and there on top of the table is an angel, clothed in flowing garments of fine white and standing in a kind of grotto, with rocks at her feet and around her, clouds in the background---the whole being lighted up by invisible electric lamps. The stage is in absolute darkness, and the house lights are also "off"; the effect, therefore, is most pleasing to the eye.

Illusionist assists the angel down from the table top, and may even hold sweet converse with her if suitable patter can be provided, and, if desired the angel can be vanished by whatever pet method the Performer may keep "up his sleeve," so to speak!



To begin with I must emphasise the fact that the table is square and of a very large size; further, it has really two tops--vide A and B. Figs. 45 and 46. A is hinged at the back, and kept down in the front by two metal buttons; to the underneath side of this is painted a most beautiful seascape with fine clouds above. When the screens are adjusted and the curtains drawn, the Illusionist turns the two metal buttons with his hands (personally I used to turn them with my feet before coming down from the table), and thus it was a simple matter to press upwards the entire table top; this was done by the angel, who was lying between the true and false table-top (Fig. 46).

This done, other pieces of rock, seaweed, etc., were carefully placed in position; these parts were all inside the table--which is practically a box--all made of three-ply wood and painted to represent rocks, etc. They have a hinged back portion, so that they can either be made to lie down flat or stand upright as desired.

There is also a small hole in the table-top through which passes an electric wire; there are lamps, too, inside the table and near the front of it, so that, by connecting up with a plug, the grotto at once becomes illuminated. You may perhaps wonder how and why the table-top manages to remain in the upright position when once so placed by the aforesaid angel. I must therefore explain that the table-top is provided on the underneath side with a brass folding arm, which keeps the top from falling down again till such time as the apparatus needs refaking for the "second house."

A glance at Fig. 46 shows that the damsel in question has plenty of room to lie at full length, and as she is provided with a pillow is not at all uncomfortable; furthermore, the dotted lines in Fig. 46 indicate where the wood is cut away so that suffocation is out of the question--indeed, the danger is that the hidden assistant may be too comfortable, and, in consequence fall fast asleep, as actually happened in the case of one of my assistants, whom, I may add, did not appear at subsequent performances!

The public do not notice that the table-top is narrow in front and deep at the back, because they never get a chance to compare the back and front at any one time, and, not only so, but the legs being longer in front than they are at the back, the one counterbalances the other, owing to the fact that there is a "rake" on the stage, which, in farmyard English, means that the stage is higher at the back than it is in front.

THE BIRTH OF A PEARL

A SHELL, surmounted upon a stand, is opened and seen to be empty; the shell is now closed, turned round so that the audience can see both back and front of it--again opened and a nymph is seen lying in the shell. Quite a charming production. At the fancy of the Performer the nymph may be either vanished magically or not at all, but generally speaking the nymph is allowed to remain in full view of the audience till the fall of the curtain, or else is lifted out of the shell and runs "off" stage.

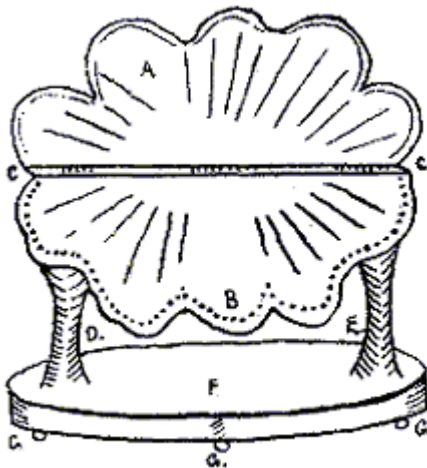


FIG. 47.

Fig. 47 is the apparatus, the shell portion of which is constructed of papier-mache. The upper portion (or lid), A, is affixed to the lower portion, B, by a strong metal hinge, C, C. which runs the entire length of the shell, so that the shell may be either opened or closed with the greatest ease.

D and E are supports of wood, and screw into the base, F, at the bottom and into the lower portion of the shell by thumbscrews, otherwise known as "butterfly screws" from their similitude to a butterfly's open wings.

G, G, G are wheels (of which there are four, the fourth being at the back and therefore unseen in the illustration).

The outside of the shell is painted to represent what it is supposed to be, but the inside is lined with a pinkish tinted material, of either silk or else a mixture of silk and cotton, but the former gives the better effect, although the latter is perhaps stronger and therefore more serviceable.

Between the upper and lower portions of shell (A-B) there is a strong steel wire, indicated by dots (in the diagram) and attached to hinges C, C; to this wire is sewn material of a similar character to that which lines the shell; this piece is movable, and, when preparing for presentation, is held up against the top portion of the shell; the nymph (a boy or girl suitably dressed for the part) is then placed in the lower portion of the shell, and the fake and top lowered.

In the illusion the Performer first raises the lid, taking care, however, to leave the fake as a covering for the nymph, under which circumstances, of course, the nymph cannot be seen by the audience; the lid is again shut down, and the whole concern turned completely round in order to gain faith with the spectators, lest they should be uncharitable enough to suppose that "there is something behind." When again the illusionist opens the shell, he this time takes good care to raise the fake with the lid, thereby revealing the nymph, who at once appears to awake from a sound sleep (a la Rip Van Winkle). I must explain that the material attached to the wire fake is not stretched taut (or it would be noticeable from the front), but is quite loose and flimsy. The child should be a pretty one.

L'ENVOI

ALL things must come to an end, and a booklet upon the fascinating Art and practice of Magic is no exception to the rule. For the time being, then, I wish my readers "Farewell," hoping that they have (one and all) found what I have written both useful and interesting.